Chapter III

Critiquing Power Relations in Aravind Adiga

Adiga’s novels depict not only power relations of the dominant class over the lower class but a brilliant exploration of subordinate classes’ resistance. His characters have an irresistible impulse to resistance and who dare to proclaim “I'm tomorrow”(2008:6). In the contemporary scenario the study of power relation is very relevant and challenging where people are governed by the ardent desire for power.

Aravind Adiga makes his debut with The White Tiger. It was published in 2008 and won the Man Booker Prize the same year. The novel is presented as a series of letters written over a period of seven nights. The protagonist Balram writes to the premier of China, Wen Jiabao, who is about to visit Bangalore city in a week's time. In the letters, Balram describes his rise from his lowly origins to his current position as a powerful entrepreneur in Bangalore. His letters to the Chinese premier are a sort of confessions.

Adiga’s second novel Between the Assassinations is a collection of twelve interlinked short stories. It discusses the pathos, injustices and the irony of Indian life. The novel re-constructs India's recent past, specifically the period between the assassination of Indira Gandhi in nineteen eighty four
and the killing of her son Rajiv in nineteen ninety one. The novel depicts
different areas of Kittur. It is a village of two lakhs of people near the west
coast of India. The novel is presented in the structure of a city tour guide. It
explores the interconnected short stories from various locales.

Adiga’s third novel *Last Man in Tower* (2011) is set in Mumbai and it
focuses on the timely predicament of India. The novel is a critical
commentary about the recent business trends such as the real estate and
property development project. In this situation, the land is considered costly
and human life is cheap. The Vishram Society is a middle-class housing co-
operative settlement. Property developer Dharmen Shah is determined to tear
Vishram down and replace it with luxury apartments. Despite Shah's
generous offers, all of the Vishram’s residents are not willing to sell their
settlement. Opposition centres around Yogesh Murthy, nicknamed Masterji,
an obdurate retired teacher and widower. As tensions rise among the
neighbours, one by one those who oppose the offer give way to the majority
and only one man stands against Shah's way: Masterji, the retired
schoolteacher, once the most respected man in the building. Shah is a
dangerous man and as the demolition deadline looms, Masterji's neighbours
and friends become enemies.

The objective of the study is to explore the power relations that exist
in Adiga’s novels. This is an attempt to examine primarily the Foucauldean
concept of power and how it is related in the fields of knowledge, family,
master-servant relations and in the social scenario. The study is relevant in the contemporary Indian situation where many divisions exist on the basis of class, race, gender and economy. His novels depict the social and economic servitude and inequalities in contemporary India. His novels deconstruct the opposition between history and fiction. It justifies that history is not a logical representation of the past and there is no connection between the events. In his novels the distinction between history and fiction merge together. There is no perfect history every historical fact is filtered thrice. Balram states in *The White Tiger:*

> If you ask me to explain how one event connects to another, or how one motive strengthens or weakens the next, or how I went from thinking *this* about my master to thinking *that-* I will tell you that I myself don’t understand these things. I cannot be certain that the story, as I will tell it, is the right story to tell. (200: 113)

Adiga questions the factuality of history by exploring disconnected events. Foucault rejects the concept of universal rationality, and belief in the progress of human history. Human history is not a linear process of progress whose pattern of development is not the same for all. Adiga explores that history is not a linear process and events are not connected with each other. Power is based on knowledge and utilizes knowledge thereby reproducing knowledge by shaping it in accordance with its anonymous intentions. Power re-creates
its own fields of exercise through knowledge. Knowledge is never neutral, it determines force relations. In short, power structures construct and maintain the history.

In Adiga’s novels, family exercises the most profound influence over its members and moulds the character and identity of the individuals. Power is the prevailing force in all relationships whether between husband and wife or parent and child. The novels portray family as a hegemonic mechanism where human relations are based on power. Through his works, he explores how master-servant relations are based on power and domination. Adiga believes servitude is inbuilt in the Indian society. Throughout the novels, he tries to draw a picture of utter servitude that exists among Indian citizens. To him, majority of the India’s citizens are servants; bound by some of the masters.

Adiga tries to explore the different types of power structures that operate in the society and shows how it influences human life. He focuses the interrelated expressions of power such as political power, economic power, physical force, religious power and ideological power which keep people in unjust and unequal positions. The main purpose of the study is to explore and analyse the power relations in Aravind Adiga’s novels.

Resistance co-exists with power. Where power is exercised, there has to be someone who resists. Foucault goes as far as to argue that where there
is no resistance it is not, in effect, a power relation. For him, resistance is written into the exercise of power. In order to analyse a power relation, the total relations of power, the hidden transcripts as well as the public performance must be examined.

Resistance is the hallmark of Adiga’s novels. His major characters derive pleasure in resisting the powerful. *The White Tiger* depicts not only power relations of the dominant class over the lower class but is also a brilliant exploration of the subordinate classes’ resistance. The novel is a narration of an Indian entrepreneur who details his rise to power. The lower class is not a passive sufferer to the higher class but actively produces the counter power. Balram resists his owner’s power, people resist the politician’s power, family members resist Kusum, students resist their teachers, wives resist their husbands and the poor resist the rich. The anti-hero Balram, represents the downtrodden sections of the Indian society and he is juxtaposed against the rich.

His parents preferred Balram to work in a tea shop; however one of the feudal lords took him to Delhi where he began to experience the world of light. Balram decides to be an eater, someone with a big belly. The novel traces the way in which this ambition is played out. The key metaphor in the novel is of the Rooster coop. Balram is caged like the chickens in the rooster coop. Arriving in Delhi with his new master, Balram's re-education begins. He learns a new morality at the heart of a new India. He realizes he is also
caged like the chickens in the rooster coop. Balram, being a white tiger, has to break out of the cage to enjoy freedom. As the other servants flick through the pages of Murder Weekly, Balram begins to see how the Tiger might escape his cage. Gradually he realizes the fact that any successful man must spill a little blood on his way to the top.

Balram’s violent bid for freedom is aggressive. Balram’s journey from a servant, living in the Darkness to the rich elite living in the Light, reveals the struggle of the dark to capture power. Balram shows his perverted psychopathic nature by deciding to break out of the coop betraying his family and society. The novel exposes the ferocious nature of Balram who decides to murder his master: “Of course, a billion servants are secretly fantasizing about strangling their bosses…” (2008:125). He determines to murder his master to make an escape from his master’s clutches and to become a free man. “All I wanted a chance to be a man – and for that, one murder was enough” (2008:318). He never feels guilt of having murdered his master. To him a murder is necessary for his victorious life.

*The White Tiger* is an example of Balram’s resistance from the domination of his masters’. The novel examines how Balram is trapped and subsequently breaks out to freedom. He is rare and eccentric like a white tiger which is very uncommon, a rare occurrence. Adiga warns about the possibility of a revolution that rarely occurs in history to free the poor: “May be once in a hundred years there is revolution that frees the poor” (2008:304).
Thus, the title of the novel is justified by stating that White Tiger occurs once in a generation. Balram learns about the different ways to resist his master’s domination. He decides to cheat his master by siphoning petrol from his car, taking the car to a corrupt mechanic, turning the car into a freelance taxi, etc. Balram says: “The more I stole from him, the more I realized how much he had stolen from me” (2008:230). Thus, Balram’s realization expedites his mission to become powerful and liberated from his master’s clutches.

The consequence of Balram’s crime is shocking but he never feels guilty about the crime that he has committed. Disregarding all civilized ways of life, he becomes a big-bellied man. Balram has broken away from his family which is contrary to the Indian tradition where loyalty to one’s family is upheld as the moral principle. Through his criminal drive, he becomes a businessman and runs a car service for the call centres in Bangalore. Balram escapes from the Coop, as a servant turned villain and a murderer who becomes a self-proclaimed entrepreneur.

Last man in Tower is also a typical example for resistance. The major character Masterji is the embodiment of resistance from the beginning to the end. Shah determines to redevelop Vishram and replace it with luxury apartments but not all Vishram's residents are willing to obey his plan. Initially not everyone wants to leave; many of the residents have lived in Vishram for many years. But none can benefit from the offer unless all agree to sell. Tension arises among the residents and one by one those who oppose
the offer give way to the majority, until only one man stands against Shah. The novel depicts the single man’s resistance against the real estate businessman Dharmen Shah. Thus, the novel proves Power is not mere passive oppression, it reproduces resistance.

Power is not associated with certain people or groups. Foucault stresses the circulatory nature of power. Power should be analysed as something which circulates, or rather as something which only functions in the form of a chain. It is never localized or has any particular space or is never in anyone’s hands. Power is never appropriated as a commodity or piece of wealth. Power is employed and exercised through a net-like organization. Individuals not only circulate between its threads but they are always in the position of undergoing and exercising this power. In other words, individuals are the vehicles of power, not its points of application. In Adiga’s novels the circulatory nature of power is very often perceptible. His characters are not permanently the seats of power but they are the vehicles of power. *The White Tiger* is a typical example for the circulation of power. In the beginning of the novel, the protagonist is a poor and a powerless guy and his owners are powerful but later Balram becomes the powerful.

On some occasions, Dharam the poor relative of Balram uses hegemony over the protagonist but it does not last for long. The relation between Dharam and Balram is also marked by the hegemonic presence of power. Balram is aware of the blackmailing tone of Dharam. It is not out of
love they live together but because of threat. Balram comments about Dharam: “He smiled at me and then he said, ‘give me another glass of milk, won’t you, uncle?’ I tell you….. Little blackmilng thug” (2008: 315-316). Power is not a particular person’s or groups’ possession rather it is transitory. In the novel Last Man in Tower, Masterji was once a powerful man, when he taught at Saint Catherine’s school and was very active and very authoritative in the classroom. His students complained about his strictness and about how he punished his students for minor fractions. In a way, he treated his wife and children who were denied freedom and love thus, made their lives miserable. After his retirement from teaching, his power deteriorated and Masterji becomes an old scarecrow of his past and his son Gaurav Murthy becomes more powerful than his father. Similarly, Dharmen Shah in his early life was devoid of power. Shah arrived in Mumbai with ten rupees to his credit. He lived like a vagabond and only after his continuous struggle, he became powerful. Through the analysis of Adiga’s characters, it is proved that he believes in the circulatory or transitory nature of power. Power is nobody’s possession, to a certain extent it may embrace somebody and pass by. Nobody can be powerful from the beginning to the end. The transitory nature of power is justified throughout Adiga’s works.

Foucault criticizes traditional models of power, it is not simply negating and oppressing individuals, social classes or natural instincts, instead power is productive. His main aim was to turn a negative conception upside
down and attribute the production of concepts, ideas, and the structures of institutions to the circulation and exercise of power in its modern forms. Foucault challenges the validity of absolute truth claims of the human sciences which are articulated within the confines of a particular discourse and regime of truth. Rather Foucault’s point is that regimes of truth, such as those of the human sciences, are infused with relations of power. For him, power exists everywhere and comes from everywhere. It acts as a, complex form of strategy. It has the ability to secretly shape another's behavior. It produces reality and domains of truth.

Adigas’ works describe truth as historical because it is relative to discourse and is the product of power. Truth is relative to social and learned discourses because truth is produced by power relations. If each society has its own regime of truth, then truths must somehow be produced in a way that makes them specific to their respective regimes. Power does not produce truth in any systematic way; power produces truth blindly and non-subjectively. The idea of a single meaning is a philosophical myth; there is no meaning but only countless meanings.

In the novel, *Between the Assassinations*, Gurkha narrates about an accident to Gururaj: “he hit the fellow like some stray dog, and drove away, leaving him there. He is the richest man in this town. He owns the tallest building in this town. He cannot be arrested” (2008:123). The powerful cannot be punished, the government always protects them. In his early life
Dharmen Shah lived like a vagabond but his ardent desire for power transforms his life. Power affirms a new identity to Dharmen Shah, he is not the ordinary man but he was a famous builder and a business man. Power made him the most influential man in Mumbai. His respiratory system has been wrecked by the dust and dirt of his construction sites. His relentless drive for power destroys his health, but he cannot stop himself from achieving fame and power. Power is the basic drive that creates identity and motivates all the ventures in Dharmen Shah’s life.

The concept of God is formed out of power. It is power that situates God in a supreme position. People adore God because God is the most powerful one. Throughout his novels, the concept of god is formed out of power. In his first novel *The White Tiger* the idea is explicitly presented:

God says: I am powerful. I am huge. Become my servant again… And god asks this little man: Isn’t it all wonderful? Isn’t it all grand? Aren’t you grateful to be my servant?.

(2008:87)

Power is the only matter, whereby god is accepted as God. Subsequently God is equal to power or it is the embodiment of power. In *Between the Assassinations* Adiga underlines the idea that god is almighty and more powerful than a loving or caring father. “It seemed more like an icon of a
devil than of God” (2008:56-57). Here, Adiga stresses power is the hallmark of God’s essence than love and sympathy.

Power is not an institution, a structure, or a certain force with which certain people are endowed with; it is the name given to a complex strategic relation in a given society. The powerful administer the power not directly but through effective strategies that can prevent revolutions. Dharmen Shah makes use of all the strategies to overpower the people in Vishram Society. He approaches the people with an exciting offer of demolishing the building and makes it a luxurious apartment. The offer appears very attractive to the inmates of the Vishram society.

According to Foucault, truth, morality, and meaning are created through discourse. Every age has a dominant group of discursive elements that people live with unconsciously. Within Foucault's world view, there is no absolute morality. Morality is created through the exercise of power. In the simplest sense, discourse is conversation, or information. It is through discourse that the subject is created. In an isolated family, a child's knowledge depends upon just a few people. In a sense, those few people create the child's identity. The child cannot know anything but what is communicated by them. The fashioning of truth, in other words, is equivalent to a game at which people succeed when the rules are followed. The complicated dome of concepts of truth is built on an unstable foundation. Truth is consequently anthropomorphic. It is produced only by virtue of
multiple forms of constraint. It induces regular effects of power. Each society has its regime of truth. Foucault’s argument is premised on the fact that social power is ultimately created through individuals internalizing discipline and this internalization is through knowledge. Dharmen Shah who is a powerful builder decides the truth and all the systems support his views. The systems such as the police, hospitals and doctors, media and politicians always go with the powerful. Truth is very often institutionalized. The institutions decide the truth about individuals and what is right and wrong. Thus, Adiga states in Last Man in Tower: “But a man is what his neighbours say he is….In old buildings truth is a communal thing, a consensus of opinion”(2011:216). Truth is not outside power, truth is a construct of this world.

There has been a great deal of discussion about Foucault’s approach to truth. He is often accused of denying objective truth and of introducing an amoral and highly dubious relativism. He argues that there are strict historically and culturally specific rules about how truth is both accessed and disseminated. One cannot make any claims about truth except from within quite specific cultural and historical settings. Any system of rules is also a finite system of constraints and limitations; therefore truth is of necessity the subject of struggles for power. In short truth, like every other category in Foucault’s work, is a subjective category.
Subjective or historical nature of truth is often perceptible in Adiga’s works. In his second novel, *Between the Assassinations* the journalist Gururaj states that the newspaper contains no truth. As an experienced journalist of twenty years he comments about newspapers: “why do you say that? Gururaj shot back. Why are you praising the dog for defacing a paper? The dog is doing the right thing. Because not a word in the newspaper is true.” (2011:119). It describes the way in which truth is formed in a society: “…every night watchman comes for a cigarette to the next and tells him something...Secrets get spread. The truth—what really happened in daytime—is preserved” (2011:122). The journalist in *Between Assassinations* makes comments about the news writers: “Even the writer of the truth should not know the truth entirely. Every true word, upon being written, is like the full moon, and daily it wanes, and then passes entirely into obscurity. (2011:136). Thus, *Between Assassinations* proves that truth is not absolute, very often it is produced for the sake of the dominant group in a society.

The concepts of power and knowledge are related. Knowledge is something fabricated by our will to get power. The will to knowledge is equal to the will to power. The quest for knowledge is quest for power. In essence, Foucault agrees with the adage that “knowledge is power” (1995:56). In *The White Tiger* the protagonist Balram is presented as a lover of chandeliers, he keeps more chandeliers that make him happy. Chandeliers symbolize power (knowledge) which brings light. He knows the reality that
only power can protect a murderer from law and order. There is no law and order existing beyond power system. Here power affirms knowledge. The White Tiger depicts the situation: “Vijay, the bus conductor…was one of the Great socialist supporters, and made speeches every morning in front of the tea shop”. (2008:99) Power (politics) transformed conductor Vijay to a sophisticated gentleman who dares to make speeches regularly.

The Panopticon is a metaphor that allows to explore the relationship between systems of social control and people in a disciplinary situation. It also underlines power-knowledge concept. According to this panoptic surveillance power and knowledge comes from observing others. It marks the transition to a disciplinary power, with every movement supervised and all events recorded. The result of this surveillance is acceptance of regulations. Adiga’s The Elephant is a typical example of the internalization of the surveillance, Chenayya, a lower class servant depicts the situation of the poor:

The next morning, he was going over the hill again, with five cardboard boxes piled up one above the other in his cart, thinking, Because we acquiesce. Because we do not dare leave with that wad of fifty thousand rupees—because we know other poor people will catch us and drag us before the rich man. Because we dare not kill the rich, out of fear of
their police. We poor have built the prison around ourselves.

(2009:15)

Chenayya recollects that the poor servants obey their masters without questioning their intention. The servants do not dare to steal anything from their masters because the other poor people will betray them to the rich. The passage highlights the lack of unity among the poor. The poor dare not kill or harm the rich because of fear. They know the police and other systems are with the rich. Chenayya underlines the point: “There is no one coming to release us from the jail in which we have locked ourselves” (2009:18). Thus, the fear acts as panoptic surveillance, the poor people have internalized the fear. As a result nobody has the courage to challenge the rich.

Suitable behavior is achieved not through total surveillance, but by panoptic discipline and inducing a population to internalize that surveillance. The more one observes, the more powerful one becomes. Thus in The White Tiger Balram says about slaves: “They remain slaves because they can’t see what is beautiful in this world” (2008: 40). In The White Tiger powerless Balram becomes powerful through his meticulous observation of people and surroundings. Balram confesses to Mr Premier the secret of his victorious life as this:

Many of my best ideas are, in fact borrowed from my ex-employer or his brother or someone else whom I was driving
Power comes from the knowledge the observer has accumulated from his observations of actions. Knowledge and power reinforces each other. Power becomes more efficient through the mechanisms of observation.

In *Last Man in Tower*, Masterji after his retirement he “had continued to teach children” (2011:30). It has given him satisfaction and feel of the powerful. The residents of Vishram Society respected him because of his knowledge. Majority of Indian citizens are illiterate so the literate often over power the illiterate. Here knowledge operates as a vehicle for domination. In Indian context illiterates are dominated by literates.

The powerful administer their power through different devices. Language is an effective strategy to over power others. Here, language acts as a means of subordination. Through the words of greetings, insults, counsel, promises, threats, seduction and professions of love, the dominant subordinate the powerless. Adiga’s novels often emphasize the superiority of the English language among other Indian languages. English language is used in the novel as a strategy of power. There are many instances in the novel which highlight the position of the English language. The beginning of the novel itself suggests the superiority of English. Balram writes to Jiabao, “Neither you nor I speak English but, there are some things that can be only
be said in English” (2008: 3). Throughout the novel, English is represented as the language of the masters in India. In Last Man in Tower, people respect masterji because of his effective use of English: “He tried to touch Masterji, who took a step back and glared at him: Did you bring me here to coerce me? Said in English, the force of that word, coerce, weakened both Ajwani and Shanmugham”(2011:225). In the Indian context, people respect those who communicate in English and consider they are superior.

In Between the Assassinations, the power of English language is often stressed. Even the illiterate Xerox boy could understand the power of English and he is very proud of selling those English books: “He cannot read English, but knows that English words have power, and that English books have aura”(2011:46). It is the language of particular class in society the middle class and the higher classes use English. “English is understood by middle class” (2011:139). English is the language of the masters and the regional languages are dominated by English: “Do you read English? He barked. ‘Do you read English? I retorted” (2008: 205). Thus, the dominant group imposes their will on the subordinate group with the help of the language.

In The Elephant the protagonist Chenayya points out the superiority of the English language:

When he finally got to his destination, he found that the owner of the house was a European. He insisted on helping to
unload the furniture, which confused Chenayya terribly. The whole time, he spoke in English, as if he expected everyone in Kittur to be familiar with the language. (2009:14)

The English language is very often associated with the higher class. In the Indian cultural scenario it has been considered superior to the native languages. The lower class is usually ignorant about the English language. English induces a fear in the mind of Chenayya. He approaches the language with tension and anxiety. The European speaks English as the mother tongue of the native Indians. Thus, language has been used as a device for subordination and perpetuating servitude.

History is not a set of facts outside the written text. Here the distinction between history and fiction collapses. History cannot be separated from literature and vice versa. History is not homogeneous and stable pattern of facts and events, which forms a background to the literature of an era that literature simply reflects. The author and the reader are subjects who are constructed and positioned by the conditions of their own era. The text and co-text are seen as expressions of the same historical moment. In this novel, India is presented as brutal, totally corrupt and unjust, where people behave like animals. This picture of India is far distant from the shining India depicted in various articles and publications. The novel deconstructs the concept of the formal Indian history through the view of the marginalized individual. Individual identity is shaped by culture into which human beings
are born. Individual identity is in the process of continuous evolution. Many factors affect the identity of an individual, culture, religion, gender, etc. In the novel Balram’s identity is shaped by his surroundings, the culture, economic condition, social structure, etc. In the novel, history is narrated or interpreted from the point of view of the marginalized. All the grand narratives are irrelevant here, whether it be that of the great nation, Socialism, Gandhism, Democracy, Religion, Naxalism or whatever. The protagonist believes that all these projects never make any difference, but helps in perpetuating the divides and disputes. Identity is not unified, unique, enduring or personal.

Even the colour of the body is associated with power. White colour is considered superior. The whites have power over the blacks. Through the novel The White Tiger Adiga tries to decolonize the concept of the colour of the body:

The white men will be finished within my life time. There are blacks and reds too, but I have no idea what they’re up to – the radio never talks about them my humble prediction: in twenty years’ time, it will be just yellow men and brown men at the top of the pyramid, and we’ll rule the whole world. (2008: 305)
In Indian society, the colour of the body determines the position in the society. Power inequalities are related to racism having its basis in whites who consider other groups as inferior and restricts their rights. Over India, the dark colour is considered inferior and is associated with the poor and the illiterate.

One of the most important devices in the deployment of power is institutionalized confession. In confession, individuals objectify their desires, pleasures, and fears. Once objectified, desires, pleasures, and fears are amenable to theoretical analysis and assessment. Confession establishes specific subject-defining power relations. Confession unfolds within a power relationship, for one does not confess without a partner who is not simply the interlocutor but the authority that requires the confession.

Confession can take the form of interrogations, interviews, conversations, consultations, or even autobiographical narratives. Foucault points out that one confesses to a real or imaginary partner who represents not just the other party of a dialogue but the authority who requires the confession. The authority prescribes and appreciates and intervenes in order to judge, punish, forgive, console, and reconcile the other. Adiga’s first novel *The White Tiger* itself is a confession, a confession made by Balram before the Chinese prime minister about the success that he has achieved in his life. Thus Balram admits: I confess Mr Premier: I am not original thinker- but I am an original
listener (2008: 47). The confessor is not a passive listener but an interlocutor who has the power to determine the client’s destiny.

All interpersonal relations can be explained in terms of power. Power operation has the hierarchical structure such as man-woman, husband-wife, and parent-child. In a hierarchical structure, one group is more powerful than the other. Even romantic love is an oppressive ideology by which males continue to subordinate females. *The White Tiger* represents family as a hegemonic institution where power operates in a subtle way. It can regulate, control and mould the character of its members not by force but with their consent.

Family is the most important primary group in society. It is the first social institution in the history of man. It is considered the fundamental unit of society. It exercises the most profound influence over its members. Family moulds the character and identity of the individuals. Family is the nucleus of other social organizations. The whole social structure is formed from the family. It makes greater demands from its members than any other associations. Family is the microcosm of the society where power structures operate in a subtle way.

People associate power with the ability of a person to dominate another human being, so power is something possessed by certain people who are powerful. Therefore, power is associated with police, military,
rulers and politicians. But in human relations the meaning of power should be understood in a more subtle manner. Family acts as a panoptic surveillance where children are observed by parents. The parents have a complete control over their children’s activities. In The White Tiger Balram is often observed by his grandmother Kusum: “One day Kusum found out about me and the fort. She followed me all the way from our home to the pond with the stones, and saw what I was doing” (2008: 41). Throughout the novel, family is presented as a controlling agent of all human activities. To level the charges of murder onto Balram, Stork first visits Balram’s family and gets his family’s consent. The influence of the family on its members is very clear.

Even the marital relations are determined by power. According to romantic myth, love is exempted from power struggles but in reality couples often encounter power issues. Partners struggle to gain or keep power over each other. Marriage creates new social relationships. Marriage is an institution which helps the formation of family. There is no other institution that can operate power more effectively. Thus The White Tiger states: “Marriage is good institution” (2008: 214-215). The family controls and regulates social and political functions by institutionalizing procreation. It assigns guidelines for the regulation of sexual conduct and character of children. In the novel, the institution of marriage is used as a hegemonic tool to control the male. In The White Tiger, Kusum threatens Balram of
arranging his marriage if he does not send her money. She thinks that marriage is the only solution to control her grandson Balram.

In *The White Tiger*, the protagonist Balram thinks that marriage and family are the impediments for the development of a young man. The hegemonic surveillance will suppress the members, it hurts the freedom, and there is no progress. Balram believes that family is a hindrance for achieving success in life. He notices that only poor people are trapped in the surveillance of the family. Family is the hegemonic space where women are controlled by men. In *The White Tiger* Ashok realizes the fact that man can operate his power in family. Ashok says: “without family, a man is nothing” (2008:189). All interpersonal relations consist of power. In *The White Tiger*, the relationship between Stork and his two sons are determined by the elements of power. His two children are very obedient to him. In Stork’s family, he controls all the activities fathers have absolute control over their children. Thus Foucault states in *Abnormal* about parent-child relation:

Parents to take responsibility for the meticulous, detailed, and almost shameful surveillance of their children’s bodies, at that moment and by virtue of this injunction itself, parents are essentially connected to completely different type of relations and control. I mean that when parents are told to be careful to know what is happening to their children’s bodies… (2003: 249)
The whole family is observed through the powerful surveillance of Stork. Parents choose to have a child because it will bring them more satisfaction of providing care. Adding additional members to the family gives social acceptance.

Women have been subjugated by internalized power relations. To Foucault, there is no centralized oppressor. The habits and compartment of masculinity and femininity that women perpetuate themselves through dieting, exercise, fashion and beauty techniques transform female body as an object. Women are socialized to be for others—for men. A woman’s worth is often dependent on the male gaze. Women try to become an object of masculine desire. Women are other to themselves because they are defined and measured according to masculine perspective that strives to keep them embodied. As Balram recollects:

I had stopped the car at a traffic signal; a girl began crossing the road in a tight T-shirt, her chest bobbing up and down like three kilograms of brinjals in a bag. I glanced at the rearview mirror – and there was Mr Ashok, his eyes also bobbing up and down.”(2008: 199).

Women’s bodies are produced by a phallo-centric desire. The male gaze transforms the female body to an object.
There is a fundamental inequality in sex relations. While men are expected to desire and actively seek sex, women must provide pleasure, but not desire it. Thus, Balram writes:

She gave me a big smile- I knew it well it was the smile a servant gives a master… I climbed on top on her- and held her arms behind her head with one hand. Time to dip my beak in her. I let the other hand run through her golden curls.

(2008: 234- 235)

Even prostitution is meant for men. It is created by men for the satisfaction of their sexual pleasure. The female prostitutes are subjected to brutal male dominance.

There are three ways in which women experience the effects of power on their bodies and those ways are entirely different from that of men. First, disciplinary practices produce a certain image of the ideal size and shape of a woman’s body. Second, women tend to exhibit a specific repertoire of gestures, including reserved movement and limited use of space. Finally, the female body is treated as an ornamental surface to be displayed. Women utilize various techniques of self in order to gain control of their bodies and seek the perfect body through shaving, cosmetics, hair care, etc.
Adiga compares India’s modern predicament to a well kept zoo. The various sections of people are separated strictly. The rich and the poor will never amalgamate with each other. It is tedious to overlap the compartmentalization by the caged people. The modern India is controlled by the zoo law. Balram states: “roosters, stuffed tightly into wire-mesh cages...Yet they do not rebel. They do not try to get out of the coop. The very same thing is done with human beings in this country” (2008: 173-4).

The master-servant relationship is established, based on the philosophy of trust, by which servants are caught in the Rooster Coop. It maintains the perpetual servitude of the poor. A minority possesses all the wealth of the nation. *The White Tiger* depicts the situation:

> Every day millions wake up at dawn – stand in dirty, crowded buses – get off at their masters’ posh houses – and then clean the floors, wash the dishes, weed the garden feed their children, press their feet- all for a pittance. (2008:176)

The majority of Indians have dedicated their daily routine life to the service of their masters’ houses. Through his novels, Adiga portrays how the concept of servitude is inbuilt in the Indian society.

Religion is a powerful social institution which operates in favor of cultivating servitude among the poor. *Last Man in Tower* observes: “…you had religion; they taught you how to eat, marry, live and die” (2011:217).
Religion plays a major role in the justification of slavery. The Holy Bible sanctions slavery. Saint Paul sends back a slave, who had escaped from his master. The Bible justifies slavery by instructing: "Servants or slaves, be obedient to your masters," (Ephesians 6: 5). The Relation of master and slave interferes with the relation of maker and man. In the novel, Adiga portrays Hanuman as the symbol of servitude. Balram writes:

Inside you will find an image of a saffron-coloured creature, half man half monkey: this is Hanuman, every one’s favorite god in the darkness. Do you know about Hanuman, sir? He was the faithful servant of the god Rama, and we worship him in our temples because he is the shining example of how to serve your masters with absolute fidelity, love and devotion. These are the kinds of gods they have foisted us, Mr Jiabao. Understand, now, how hard it is for a man to win his freedom in India. (2008:19)

Even the gods, the rich and poor worship are different. Hanuman is appreciated for his service to god Rama. Lower caste Hindus worship deities of lower rank, while higher caste Hindus worships deities of higher rank. Hanuman is worshipped by lower and Rama is worshipped by upper caste in the same village. Hanuman is the servant of Rama and lower caste Hindus are servants of higher caste Hindus. Adiga states: “What can a poor man’s
prayers mean to the 36,000,004 gods in comparison with those of the rich?” (2008:317). There is a close affinity between the hierarchy of gods and the hierarchy of society.

The novel exposes the poor-rich divide that surrounds India in the background of technological upliftment. Balram, the killer of his master, transforms into a stereotype of his master. Balram is portrayed as a modern Indian hero, in the midst of the technological advancement of India in contemporary times. He murders his employer Mr. Ashok based on a philosophy of revenge and steals his money. Balram represents the poor in India who looks forward to their bright future. He is not only a business man but also a diplomatic criminal capable of glorifying his crime and philosophy. Through the novel, Adiga highlights the ever-widening gap between the rich and the poor and the economic system that allows a minority to prosper at the expense of the majority. The neo-liberal economic reforms resulted in greater economic disparity between the poor and the rich.

In Democratic Practice and Social Inequality in India Jean Drèze and Amartya Sen examine the achievements and limitations of Indian democracy, especially the adverse effects of social inequality. They point out how the quality of democracy is often compromised by social inequality and inadequate political participation, though democratic practice itself is a powerful tool for the elimination of social inequality.
*The White Tiger* is a fictionalized investigation of human inequality that is prevalent in Indian democracy. Statistics show how poverty is on the rise in India. Thus, Neelam Raaj reports in *Sunday Times of India*:

i) In every 10 Indian children are malnourished according to a UN report. ii) India Ranks a lowly 66 out of 88 countries in the Global Hunger Index 2008. The report says India has more hungry people – more than 200 million – than any other country in the world. iii) One third of the world’s poor live in India, according to the latest poverty estimates from the World Bank. Based on its new threshold of poverty - $ 1.25 a day – the number of poor people has gone up from 421 million in 1981 to 456 million in 2005. iv) India ranks 128 out of 177 countries in the UN’s Human Development Index. Aravid Adiga’s story of a rickshaw wallah’s move from the “darkness” of rural India to the “light” of urban Gurgaon reminds us of the harsh facts behind the fiction. (2008: 9)

Statistics show how poverty and injustice are growing day by day in contemporary India. The investigation reports the terrible fact that India has more than two hundred million hungry people than any other country in the world. In this predicament Adiga’s fiction becomes an investigation on the
terrible realities India faces in recent times. Thus, Balram’s story is a depiction of an ordinary Indian citizen’s rise from darkness to light.

Balram recollects what poet Mirza Ghalib wrote about slaves: “They remain slaves because they can’t see what is beautiful in the world” (2008: 40). He came to see the beauty of life and freedom when he visited his native village while his employer Mr. Ashok and his wife Pinky went on an excursion. Balram depicts the momentous occasion:

It was a very important trip for me… while Mr. Ashok and Pinky Madam were relaxing… I swam through the pond, walked up the hill…and entered the Black Fort for the first time…Putting my foot on the wall, I looked down on the village from there. My little Laxmangarh. I saw the temple tower, the market, the glistening line of sewage, the landlords’ mansion – and my own house, with that dark little cloud outside – the water buffalo. It looked like the most beautiful sight on earth. I leaned out from the edge of the fort in the direction of my village – and then I did something too disgusting to describe to you. Well actually, I spat. Again and again. And then, whistling and humming, I went back down the hill. Eight months later, I slit Mr Ashok’s throat. (2008:41-42)
The trip had shown the beauty of life and freedom which he failed to see in his entire life. He realized the humiliation and degradation suffered at the hands of his employer. Balram believes that beauty can only be realized through freedom, a slave can never appreciate the beauty and happiness in the world. The protagonist Balram, realizes that the trustworthiness of servants is the basis of the entire Indian economy. Balram becomes very pragmatic and to achieve his aim, he is ready to disregard any morality.

Adiga’s works focus on the people of India and their nature. To him, the majority of Indian citizens is servants and bears an attitude of servitude. The attitude of servitude is inbuilt in every Indian citizen and people are never liberated from this feeling. As a servant, Balram had suffered humiliation from his masters. He was blackmailed when Ashok’s wife Pinky kills a child in a drunken driving spree. He was forced to sign a statement accepting full responsibility for the accident. He had to suppress his embittered feelings being confined to the Rooster Coop. He could not go contrary to his master’s bidding. He is falsely implicated and forced to accept responsibility for a crime he has not committed. In *The White Tiger* Ashok is uncomfortable with the life in India, and his wife is disgusted with it. He longs to return to New York as soon as possible. But he prefers to be in India because it is a society, prefers a society where the rich are pampered and served by a whole raft of servants such as drivers, masseurs, cleaners, cooks, gardeners which is not possible in America or England.
Bangalore's gleaming call-centres function as a typical exploration of the idea that India is making itself the servant of European and American companies. The call-centre workers meet their clients' every need in the same way Balram attempts to meet Ashok's every need. Adiga highlights the ever widening gap between the rich and the poor. India’s major flaw is the huge disparity between the rich and the poor. In India, even the buildings are designed to perpetuate the master-servant disparity. It is a country where servants have separate markets. Foucault states panopticism is a method of observation that makes possible to induce effects of power. The privacy of a servant is always ignored. In the novel *The White Tiger*, Balram is always observed by his master. His whole life is an open book before his master.

Servitude is an attitude that is deeply rooted in the whole personality of an Indian citizen. Even if he is free, still the bonds of servitude are implicit in his blood. Balram narrates how Indian citizens are trapped as servants. In *The White Tiger* the protagonist Balram writes:

The way I had to rush press Mr Ashokk’s feet, the moment I saw them, even though he hadn’t asked me to! Why did I feel that I had to go close to his feet, touch them and press them and make them, feel good – why? Because the desire to be a servant had been bred into me: hammered into my skull, nail
after nail, and poured into my blood, the sewage and industrial poison are poured into Mother Ganga. (2008:193)

Indian citizens are destined to be servants nothing can liberate them from the instinct of submission and servitude. A servant has no freedom, he or she is always observed by his master’s penetrating eyes. Here, the panoptic observation enables the master to exercise his power over the servant.

Discipline, is a technology aimed at how to keep someone under surveillance, how to control his conduct, his behaviour, his aptitudes, how to improve his performance, multiply his capacities and how to put him where he is most useful. Disciplinary techniques were first developed in the army and the school, and then were very quickly applied to hospitals, factories and prisons. Foucault argues that the examination is able to combine both surveillance and normalization and turn people into objects of knowledge and power. Through the examination, individuals are required to reproduce certain types of knowledge and behaviour. Their performance can be measured, and entered into a data bank which compares them with others. Particular discursive formations of an era determine what time is accounted knowledge and truth, as well as what is considered to be criminal or insane, or sexually deviant.

In the novel, the protagonist is often influenced and controlled by the hegemonic surveillance of the school where he studied. Schools often induce
power through ideology. School is a hegemonic space where power is operated not only at the ideological level, but also through physical torture. The protagonist has gone through mental and physical harassment. Thus Adiga writes: “A school where you won’t be allowed to corrupt anyone’s head with prayers and stories about God or Gandhi. A school full of white tigers, unleashed on Bangalore!” (2008: 319). The teacher, being the independent party, has the power to give marks to the students. Thereby, the teacher can control the behaviour of the students in the class. Students, being the dependent party in this relationship, possess counter power. Students can collectively give a negative feedback about the teacher to the head of the institution. This might ultimately lead to checking the effectiveness of the teacher. So, the teacher in spite of being the independent party in the relationship has to keep the dependent party happy.

Hospitals are part of the hegemonic space. It divides people on the basis of diseases. The mental hospitals exclude some people as abnormal. They decide the norms of normality and abnormality. The novel portrays the hospital lobby in India. In modern times, hospitals not only regulate human nature but also exploit the poor. Observation is the panoptic method used here to discipline the human body. In hospitals human body is transformed into a mere object.

Foucault’s analysis of truth, discourse and the human subject focuses on institutional settings such as the hospital, the asylum and the prison. His
theories apply equally to other institutional and discursive contexts, such as the media organization and the news room. Journalists profess to impart social truths, which value the public interest. In society, truth is formed in the way a journalist interprets a particular news event through a discursive way. Through The White Tiger, Adiga presents unreliable nature of (media) All India Radio:

… and at 11:32 p.m. today, which was about ten minute ago, when the lady on All India Radio announced, ‘Premier Jiabao is coming to Bangalore next week’, I said that thing at once… Now you are visiting us this week, Your Excellency, aren’t you? All India Radio is reliable in these matters. That was a joke, sir. H! That’s why I want to ask you directly if you really are coming to Bangalore. (2008: 3-4)

The media has become one of the most pervasive phenomena. The knowledge about the world is mediated through press and broadcasting institutions. The mass media has become one of the principal means through which one can gain access to a large part of the information of the world. They are powerful sites for the production and circulation of social meanings.

To a great extent, the media decides the significance of things that happen in the world. They represent a potentially powerful force in our society. Balram writes about All India Radio: “This is the kind of the news
they feed us on All India Radio, night after night: and tomorrow at dawn it’ll be in the papers after morning. Amazing, isn’t it?” (2008:291). It is a powerful weapon used to create public opinion. In the novel All India Radio is depicted as a powerful weapon associated with the government of India.

In Freudian psychology, tower represents power. It is the symbol of the phallus which is the sign of strength and authority. In Last Man in Tower Dharmen Shah desires to posses the tower which is equal to his desire for power. It is through this tower, the builder envisages the possession of his power before the public. The powerful make use of different strategies to deploy power over the people and tower is one of the architectural spaces that can bring an atmosphere which is able to wield power effectively.

All the human sciences like psychology, sociology, economics, linguistics and even medicine define and describe human beings. Human sciences work together with such institutions as mental hospitals, prisons, factories schools, and law courts. It has specific and serious effects on people. In Last Man in Tower, the psychologist affirms that Masterji is mentally ill and his statement is considered very authoritative before the public: “Dr C.K. Panickar, a clinical psychiatrist at Bandra’s Lilavati Hospital, says he had shown classic symptoms of mental deterioration…he suggests”(2011:395). The human sciences carefully define the difference between normal and abnormal. It uses definitions to regulate behaviour. The study of abnormality is one of the main ways in which the power relations...
are established in the society. Psychiatrists define abnormality and its corresponding norm in the society. It is always the normal person having power over the abnormal. The psychologist tells us about madmen, the physician about the patients, the criminologist about the criminals, but people never expect to hear the latter talk about the former. Some people get power over others to accept their idea as to who they are?

The study is primarily based on Adiga’s three novels: *The White Tiger*, *Between the Assassinations* and *The Last Man in Tower*. Through the novels, Adiga deconstructs the opposition between history and fiction. It justifies that history is not a logical representation of the past. There is no connection between the events. In his novels, the distinction between history and fiction merges. There is no perfect history, every historical fact is filtered thrice. Adiga’s works explore the relation between power and knowledge.

In Adiga’s novels, family exercises the most profound influence over its members. Family moulds the character and identity of the individuals. Power is the prevailing force in all relationships be it husband and wife or parent and child. Family acts as a hegemonic mechanism where human relations are based on power. Adiga believes servitude is inbuilt in the Indian society. Throughout the novels, he tries to draw a picture of utter servitude. Resistance is the hallmark of Adiga’s novels. His major characters derive pleasure in resisting the powerful. *The White Tiger* is a novel that depicts not only power relations of the dominant class over the
lower class but is also a brilliant exploration of subordinate classes’ resistance. *Last man in Tower* is also a typical example of resistance. The major character, Masterji is the embodiment of resistance from the beginning to the end.

Power is not associated with certain people or groups. Power should be analysed as something which circulates. In Adiga’s novels, the circulatory nature of power is very often perceptible, his characters are not permanently the seat of power but they are the vehicles of power. Adiga believes in the productive nature of power. The ardent desire for power transforms his major characters from their lower level to the higher level. Language is another strategic weapon to administer power. Through out his novels, Adiga stresses the superior nature of English language. One of the most important devices in the deployment of power is confession. *The White Tiger* is a confession made by the protagonist Balram in front of Chinese Prime Minister.

The fourth chapter critically assesses how psychological discourses and activities construct and sustain systems of domination and oppression. Very often they appear to support the well-being of an individual but in fact they subordinate and label the individual. It is an attempt to expose the workings of the psychology industry and the systematic forms of oppression that characterize the modern and the post-modern society. The complex links between psychology and power has become an indispensable factor of
modern power. Another aspect this chapter discusses is that there are certain psychological schools or systems which argue power to be the most important drive behind all human pursuits. Certain psychological schools of Freud, Adler, Maslow and Lacan consider that the quest for power and domination cause a variety of complexes and illnesses in the human personality.