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Failure of Individual Values in Aravind Adiga's *Last Man in Tower*

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Letter of Recommendation

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Letter of Approval

This thesis entitled “Failure of Individual Values in Aravind Adiga’s *Last Man in Tower*” submitted to the Central Department of English, Tribhuwan University, by Mr. Bhoj Raj Sapkota, has been approved by the undersigned members of the research committee.

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Abstract

This dissertation explores the protagonist's failure due to the capitalist ideology in Aravind Adiga's novel *Last Man in Tower* where the characters are depicted from lower middle class in contrast to the images from upper middle class. Adiga's *Last Man in Tower* develops an image of interpellation of the individual that is constructed and associated with capitalist society. Some of his characters are demure and docile and suppressed by capitalist ideology. They are ready to do according to their societal structure because they are in the trap of capitalism. This dissertation highly concentrates on the protagonist's fight against capitalist ideology to establish his individual values where he is doomed to fail as capitalism does not permit him to move against its pace.

CONTENTS

Abstract

Acknowledgements

Letter of Approval

I. Failure of Individual Values in *Last Man in Tower* 1

II. Impact of Ideology for the Failure of the Hero in *Last Man in Tower* 12

III. Representative of the Failures in the World of Capitalism 40

Works Cited

I. Failure of Individual Values in *Last Man in Tower*

The present research is an inquiry into the impact of ideology as a social construct mainly upon the characters Yogesh A. Murthy, known as Masterji and Dharmen Shah, a redeveloper in Mumbai in Arvinda Adiga's *Last Man in the Tower*. Masterji, Dharmen Shah and even other characters suffer pathetically in the later phase of their lives. They are the subjects living under the ideology set forth by the late capitalism of the 21st century. Since their subject hoods, roles, obligations and responsibilities are determined by the ideology all pervasive in their society, they look like puppets and internally void. So they suffer from a radical sense of alienation. Dharmen Shah and Masterji respectively represent the capitalist and the middle class residents of Mumbai who live in the materialist society. Throughout the novel, the narrator often depicts these two characters as two stereotypical depictions of their class rather than their own individuality. Though they know the interests of the evil capitalism lurking behind the dominant social ideology, they are doomed to practice the same ideological rituals and practices spread through various kinds of Ideological State Apparatuses – court or law, religion, press, social workers and others.

This research work revolves around the ideological impact upon the characters and their lives that is exposed in the novel. There are so many instances of upshots of dominant ideology upon the characters living under it where we can see many mental as well as physical ups and downs undergone by the characters especially Masterji, Mrs. Puri, Ajwani and Kothari and others due to the effects of their society's dominant ideology.

The term ideology has whole range of meanings. It is a text woven of a whole tissue of different conceptual strands: it is traced through by divergent histories. Some early definitions of it are related with the interest of the dominant social or political

class or power as distorted and illusionary body of ideas. In this regard, it is defined as a body of ideas characteristic of a particular social group or class; ideas or false beliefs, which help to legitimate a dominant political power; as forms of thought motivated by social interests; as socially necessary illusion. Some later definitions of ideology see it as a form of discourse related with power, identity, and meaning in social life. It is defined as a process of production of meanings, signs, and values in social life; as that which offers a position for a subject; as identity thinking. Finally, it is defined in terms of its relation with the linguistics and semiotic phenomena on the one hand and with natural reality on the other.

There are two dissonant traditions inscribed within the term ideology. One central lineage, from Hegel and Marx to George Lukacs and some other later Marxist thinkers, has been much preoccupied with the ideas of true and false cognition, with ideology as illusion distortion and mystification; whereas an alternative tradition of thought has been less epistemological than sociological, concerned more with the function of ideas within social life than with their reality or unreality. While defining it, Eagleton in his text *Ideology* writes:

To climb in ordinary conversation that someone is speaking ideologically is surely to hold that they are judging a particular issue through some rigid framework of preconceived ideas which distorts their understanding. Viewing things as they really are also involves an over simplifying view of the world – that is to speak or judge ideologically is to do so schematically, stereotypically, and perhaps with the faintest hint of fanaticism. So the opposite of ideology, here, then, would be less absolute truth than empirical or pragmatic. (234)

Aravind Adiga was born in 1974 in Madras (now called Chennai), and grew up in Mangalore in the south of India. He was educated at Columbia University in New York and Magdalen College, Oxford. His articles have appeared in publications such as the *New Yorker*, the *Sunday Times*, the *Financial Times*, and the *Times of India*. His first novel, *The White Tiger*, won the Man Booker Prize for fiction in 2008. *Last Man in Tower* is his second novel published in 2011.

Aravind Adiga deals with the social structure and the process of social change or the lack of it, and various ills affecting our society. His writing provides samples of gross malpractices in India's democracy and society. He concentrates on the social criticism focusing on the poverty and misery of India, and its religio-socio-political conflicts, presented through humour and irony. So far as Adiga's writing trend is concerned, his novels describe the modern India – poverty and corruption overlaying a seething economy and the radically changing social fabric of a rising superpower.

Last Man in Tower centers on life in a middle-class apartment building in a run-down neighborhood of Mumbai. When real estate developer Dharmen Shah asks the residents to vacate for a princely sum, most of them promptly pack their bags. But one holdout remains, a retired schoolteacher named Masterji. The novel pits the ascetic yet self-righteous Masterji against the cutthroat but charismatic Dharmen Shah.

Adiga views that a novel as a piece of work has to be ambiguous, and a reader's response to it should be an ambivalent one, uncertain of exactly what the book is saying, because if the book is clear in what it is saying, it ceases to be a good work of art and instead becomes a political statement. India, for Adiga, is a country of corruption, but it also has a sense of idealism. He admires people who fight for corruption, but he's also concerned that they are too strident or too convinced that

their solution is the correct one. That can end up as a danger. As an artist, he states, “my job is to dramatize what’s happening without indicating that there is any obvious answer to what’s going on around me.”

Last Man in Tower is all about Real estate developer Dharmen Shah who rises from nothing to create an empire and hopes to seal his legacy with a building named the Sanghai, which promises to be one of the city’s most addresses. Larger-than-life Shah is a dangerous man to refuse but he meets his match in a retired schoolteacher called Masterji. Shah offers Masterji and his neighbours – the residents of Vishram Society Tower A, a once respectable, now crumbling apartment building on whose site. Shah’s luxury high-rise would be built—a generous buyout. The characters can’t believe their good fortune except Masterji who refuses to abandon the building to which he has long called home. As the demolition deadline looms, desires mount; neighbors become enemies and acquaintances turn into conspirator who risk losing their humanity to score their payday.

Last Man in Tower has been able to draw attention of many critics. Different critics have interpreted the text differently and have opened many new avenues of approach commenting on *Last Man in Tower*. Andrew Riemer, in *The Age*, argues:

(A) passionate indictment of the social and ethical bankruptcy of contemporary India, particularly Mumbai [. . .]. I don't know, of course, whether Adiga consciously took Dickens for a model but in structure, tone, attitudes and in its sharp, at times caricatured portraits of a large cast of characters, *Last Man in Tower* is strikingly Dickensian. Now and then, Adiga even mirrors some of Dickens's stylistic devices. (3)

Here, Riemer prefers to show the influence of Dickensian style in Adiga's style of writing. The novel explores different approaches to the social reality of the contemporary hollow Indian society. For Riemer, it seems, *Last Man in Tower* is a social manifesto.

Jose Borghino, another critic in *The Australian*, focuses on the novel's concern with the language the characters use. The novel uses so simple and day to day language that it is easily understandable even to an ordinary reader. Not only this, Borghino also tries to emphasize that though Mumbai is so sophisticated in its overt level, it has very pitiable lives living in its covert level. Borghino remarks:

It won't spoil the plot to say that, in the end, Adiga delivers a mixed portrait of Mumbai. His writing vibrates with the energy of the city. It's full of Indian words and slang and, paradoxically, at its most evocative and affectionate when describing the garbage on which Mumbai is built and the pollution it generates. The result is an ironic saga that's morally and ethically engaged, without being judgmental about characters as they do whatever it takes to survive the chaos of Maximum City. (6)

Last Man in Tower depicts a genteel middle-class impoverishment of imagination and hope. The builder and the inflexible Masterji also have much in common: both are migrants to Mumbai, widowers and lonely old men whose sons didn't turn out the way they were supposed to. The novel accumulates evidences for the unequal treatment meted out towards lower middle class people by the capitalists in an advanced and capitalistic society. Besides, the novel also depicts Dharmen Shah, the redeveloper, who is the stereotypical representative of the real capitalist, as the real

hero of the novel in the juxtaposition of Masterji who, in the surface level, seems to be the hero of the novel.

Thus, this novel has drawn attention of many critics who have interpreted the novel focusing on different themes like modernization of Mumbai, hidden reality or the dark side of the so-called modern Mumbai and impact of capitalistic ideology upon the maximum number of struggling people in the capitalistic era. Hence, studying the text from the ideological perspective will help the better understanding of the characters and their condition. So this dissertation will focus upon the impact of ideology on the characters and an endeavor will be made for its discussion in detail.

The false consciousness view of ideology seems unconvincing. Aristotle held that there was an element of truth in most beliefs. Ideology must communicate aversion of social reality to its subjects. However, ideologies quite often contain important proposition which are absolutely false. Many ideological statements may be true in their surface but false in underlying assumptions.

Even though Dharmen Shah is a capitalist; he seems to be understanding and sympathetic towards the problem of the residents so he offers them a higher amount of money than the market rate no matter his self-interest is hidden behind the curtain. Most of the characters, therefore, are excited to hear the news of the sale of their apartment in the hope of happy and comfortable future in the days to come. This is why, Mrs. Puri, whose 18 years old son is afflicted from Down Syndrome, is mad with excitement and says, “If this is really true, it will be the first miracle of my life” (75). She weaves many dreams for her son’s future. So she goes on convincing one after other characters. All of them are ready to sell their apartments for they see the rays of hope in their lives in the sale of their flats. But Masterji, the stubborn 61 years old retired teacher is never convinced and keeps on disagreeing the sale. It seems that

he needs nothing for him. And the consequence is so tragic: he had to lose his life unexpectedly. He is murdered by his own fellow residents who are ideologically-driven by capitalistic dream.

The rigid and inflexible view of ideology was elevated in the post-war period. For the American political theorist Edward Shils, ideologies are explicit, closed, and resistant to innovation. They require total adherence from their devotees. The 'end-of-ideology' ideology tends to view ideology in two contradictory ways: on the one hand, it takes ideology as some pseudo-religious faith which the technocratic world of modern capitalism has outgrown and on the other hand, it is considered an arid conceptual system which seeks to reconstruct the society. Alvin Gouldner, in his *the Dialectic of Ideology and Technology*, writes, "Ideology is the mind-inflating realm of the doctrinaire, the dogmatic, the impassioned, the dehumanizing, the false, the irrational, and of course the extremist consciousness" (12). So he defines ideology as consisting of ambivalences.

When his disagreement of the sale goes on lingering as a long chain, almost all the residents give Masterji pressure to agree. His closest and best friends and neighbours turn to be his closest but worst enemies. He is even threatened several times. He is attacked physically by some hired goons. Masterji is all alone on his stand. Still he is determined in his decision so he publishes a notice of disagreement:

Tower A is my home, and it

Will not be sold

Will not be leased or rented

Will not be redeveloped

Signed (And this is the real signature of the man)

Yogesh Murthy. (262)

Not only his neighbours but his own son Gaurav, who is living separately with his wife Sonal and son Ronak, is also not happy with Masterji's decision of not selling his flat. However, Masterji visits Gaurav with the hope that his only son will help him to being firm in his decision. But Gaurav is not ready to take the side of his father. Masterji had never seen Gaurav sound and look so decisive. He felt the strength draining from him, "Don't you see what's behind this nothing? You. You think you are a great man because you're fighting this Shah. Another Galileo or Gandhi. You're not thinking of your own grandson" (297).

Masterji never expected Gaurav to argue with him like this. He feels that his individual values are hurt. He is insulted by his own son. If the same commentary on his deeds had been made by somebody else rather than Gaurav, Masterji could have digested it but the only connection of his blood, Gaurav's remarks are indigestible for him. He feels that his individual values are shattered inadequately.

Value is a concept that describes the beliefs of an individual or culture. A set of values may be placed into the notion of a value system. Values are considered subjective and vary across people and cultures. Types of values include ethical/moral values, doctrinal/ideological (political, religious) values, social values, and aesthetic values. It is debated whether some values are innate.

Personal values evolve from circumstances with the external world and can change over time. Integrity in the application of values refers to its continuity; persons have integrity if they apply their values appropriately regardless of arguments or negative reinforcement from others. Values are considered to be appropriately applied when they are applied in the right area. For example, it would be appropriate to apply religious values in times of happiness as well as in times of despair.

Personal values are implicitly related to choice; they guide decisions by allowing for an individual's choices to be compared to each choice's associated values. Personal values developed early in life may be resistant to change. They may be derived from those of particular groups or systems, such as culture, religion, and political party. However, personal values are not universal; one's genes, family, nation and historical environment help determine one's personal values. This is not to say that the value concepts themselves are not universal, merely that each individual possesses a unique conception of them i.e. a personal knowledge of the appropriate values for their own genes, feelings and experience. Standing on the ground of his personal or individual values, Masterji defends Gaurav:

I am thinking of Ronak. This man Mr Shah threatened the Pintos. In daylight. Would you want Ronak to grow up in a city where he can be bullied or threatened in daylight? Gaurav: listen. Dhirubhai Ambani said he would salaam anyone to become the richest man in India. I've never salaamed anyone. This has been a city where a free man could keep his dignity. (297)

Masterji is audacious and firm enough to keep his individual values intact. He is not ready to come to the point of compromise. He is not convinced even by his son Gaurav who requests Masterji to agree to sell the apartment for the sake of his only grandson, Ronak if not for him. But Masterji is not at all ready to accept his son's request. Tired Gaurav, therefore, sends a letter to the Vishram Society acknowledging that Masterji alias Yogesh Murthy is no more his father:

I am shamed by the actions of the present occupant of flat 3A, Vishram. After promising my wife and me that he would sign the proposal, he has not signed. My son Ronak, my wife and I will perform

the one-year Samskara rites of my mother on our own. We request all of you not to associate us with the actions of the present occupant of 3A, Vishram Society. (320)

Thus, one after other, Masterji's individual values goes on failing. The ultimate failure of his individual values is his murder. Masterji is ruthlessly murdered by his own fellow neighbour-turned-enemy residents. And they publish the news in a local newspaper that Masterji committed a suicide because he was mentally disturbed from past few days.

There is an objection to the designation of ideology as rigid sets of beliefs. It refers not only to belief systems but also to questions of power. It legitimizes the power of a dominant social group or class. According to John B. Thompson, to study ideology is to study the way in which meaning (or significance) serves to sustain relations or domination. The process of legitimating seems to involve at least six different strategies. A dominant power may legitimate itself by promoting beliefs and values congenial to it. To render the self-evident and apparently inevitable, it tries to universalize and naturalize them. It denigrates the ideas which challenge it. The dominant power excludes the rival forms of thought and obscures social reality. Such mystification masks or suppresses social conflicts from which arises the conception of ideology as an imaginary resolution of real contradictions. The political philosopher Seliger defines ideology as sets of ideas by which men posit, explain and justify ends and means of organized social action, specifically political action, irrespective of whether such action aims to preserve, amend uproot or rebuild a given social order. So the legitimating theory of ideology concerns the nature of power. Michel Foucault replaces ideology with more spacious "discourse". Ideology is a matter of discourse rather than language.

Some theorists of ideology drop the notion of epistemological sense of it in favor of a more political or sociological sense as the medium in which social and political battles are fought out at the level of signs, meanings and representation. Ideology denotes the way in which the power process gets caught up in the realm of signification.

For Althusser, the criteria of truth and falsehood are thus largely irrelevant to ideology. Ideology, he says, represents the way “I live” my relations to society as a whole. Ideology, for him, is a particular organization of signifying practices, which goes to constitute human being as social subjects, and which produces the lived relations by which such subjects are connected to the dominant relations of production in the society.

II. Impact of Ideology for the Failure of the Hero in *Last Man in Tower*

Arvind Adiga's *Last Man in Tower* is one of the creations of literary excellence that presents a vivid picture of interpellation of an individual in the capitalist world. It also presents the contemporary life situations of the people living under the capitalist ideology in the advanced capitalist society, Mumbai. The victimization of the characters especially Yogesh Murthy, popularly known as Masterji, throughout the novel, is the main concern of this analysis. Along with this, the domination and exploitation of the characters under the capitalist ideology will be the key to such analysis.

The disintegration of Masterji's family and his economic failures and decay of human relationship get momentum in the tragic death of Masterji. Besides, the last fading days of the fragmented and alienated condition of the protagonist is also vividly presented in the masterpiece of Mr. Adiga.

The plot has no twists and turns, no real surprise; there is no sleight of hand. The novel just rolls on like an Indian Railways train from one stop to another. The novel is divided into nine chapters excluding the epilogue Murder and Wonder. It is in the form of a journal which begins on 11 May with an exposition of two visitors' visit to the Vishram Society, the cooperative apartment in Vakola, Mumbai and ends on 23 December with Mrs. Rego and Ajwani's honour speech in front of young boys in the memory of Masterji after the latter's death. There live the characters of different background by religion and by their profession. Alexis Burling, a critic, concerning the background of the characters and their neighbourhood, states:

The crux of the conflict revolves around a Mumbai apartment co-op, the Vishram Society. Built in the late 1950s on the birthday of Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru, the Vishram is a bastion of hope and

development for modern India. Its mixture of Catholic, Muslim and Hindu residents are respectfully middle-class, though they do a good job in trying to block out the slums creeping onto their doorstep, the noise of the roaring 747s flying overhead from the adjacent airport, and the fact that water is only intermittently available in their unconvincingly well-equipped homes. At first glance, the Vishram's tenants are a close-knit group with general concern for each other's well-being and a collective governing body regulating important building-wide decisions. But soon enough, they turn into a teeming mob that turns out one of their own with enough venom reserved for only the deepest, vilest enemy. (17)

Mr. Shah, a slippery real estate baron of the aptly named Confidence Group, and Shanmugham, his equally smarmy left-hand man are the two "Arch Coals" in Adiga's world. The two hope to make more of a name for themselves in Mumbai by tearing down the Vishram and replacing it with two spiffed-up luxury towers. In exchange for vacating their homes, the Vishram's occupants would be given what amounts to \$300,000 --- enough to buy an apartment, a car and many more.

Since the time immemorial, our world is spoiled by the ideas of bourgeoisie and the proletariats which thereby have led to the domination by the so-called higher class upon the lower class. The social structure has been set up in such a way that there is a wide gap between the bourgeoisie and the proletariats. The bourgeoisie class think themselves superior class and the proletariats are supposed to be inferior ones. Adiga's *Last Man in Tower* reveals a prevalent Neo-Marxist tract.

Presented with the promise of wealth and prestige, most of the Vishram's residents take the deal immediately. Three hesitant parties take a bit (i. e. a

“sweetener”) to be convinced, but eventually crumble. As the deadline to accept Shah’s offer edges closer, Masterji faces inordinate pressure from his neighbors. What begins as organized attempts at subtle persuasion blossoms into full-blown physical violence (on Mahatma Gandhi’s birthday, no less), until the widower loses not only his credibility but also his sanity.

Ideology is no baseless illusion, but a solid reality; an active material force which might help organize the practical lives of human beings. Zizek, in his “The Spector of Ideology”, writes: “Ideology has nothing to do with illusion, with a mistake, distorted representation of its social content” (7). All ideological language does not involve falsity. The dominant ideology may falsify social reality suppressing and excluding certain unwelcome features of it. Ideological statements may be true at present but false for blocking off the possibility of transformed state of affairs.

According to Terry Eagleton, ideology can be defined in six different ways. Ideology, for him, means the general material process of production of ideas, beliefs and values in social life. Here, it denotes the whole complex of signifying practices and symbolic process in a particular society. It would allude to the way individuals lived their social practices. It involves the relation between the signifying practices and processes of political power. It symbolizes the conditions and life experiences of a specific socially significant group or class. It refers to the promotion and legitimization of the interests of such social groups in the face of opposing interests. Dominant ideologies help to unify a social formation in ways convenient for the rulers. The false or deceptive belief of ideology arises from the material structure of society as a whole.

The capitalist system survives on account of the social division between various groups it exploits. As Gramsci argues, the consciousness of the opposed is

usually a contradictory amalgam of values imbibed from their rulers and notions which spring more directly from their practical experiences. Purely technocratic forms of management play central role in the public values to the advanced capitalist societies. The German philosopher Jurgen Habermass, in his *Towards a Rational Society* (1970) and *Legitimation crisis* (1975), writes that ideology is synonymous to the attempt to provide rational technological scientific rationale for social domination. The complex systematic operations weld the capitalistic system. So, Marx insists on the commodity as automatically supplying its own ideology. The routine material logic of everyday life keeps the system on.

Terry Eagleton, in his *Ideology* (1990), observes the meaningless material life in the advance capitalistic system as:

Ideology is essentially a matter of meaning but the condition of advanced capitalism is one of pervasive non-meanings. The way of utility and technology bleach social life of significance, subordinate use value to the empty formation of exchange value. Consumerism bypasses meaning in order to engage the subject subliminally libidinal, at the level of visceral response rather than reflective consciousness.

(37)

Ideology, in its classical sense, is superfluous; politics is a matter of technical management and manipulation; form rather than content. Education is absorbed into the technological apparatus which provides certification for one's place with it. The citizens are expected to be at one level the mere function of this or that act of consumption or media experience and at another level to exercise ethical responsibility as autonomous, self-determining subjects. So, late capitalism requires a self-disciplined subject responsive to ideological rhetoric as father, juror, patriot,

employee, etc. engaged in its consumerist and mass-cultural practices. So, Althusser, in his essay “Ideology Interpellates Individuals as Subjects”, writes:

[. . .] shall then suggest that ideology ‘acts’ or ‘functions’ in such a way that it ‘recruits’ subjects among the individuals (it recruits them all), ‘transforms’ the individuals into subjects (it transforms them all by that very precise operation which I have called interpellation or hailing, and which can be imagined along the lines of the most commonplace everyday police (or other) hailing. (131)

Adiga’s commentary forcefully comes at the expense of narrative suspense and character development. He writes pervasively about the friendship of Masterji, the protagonist of the novel, with his neighbours. Masterji and Mrs. Puri are the two examples for good neighbourly relation in the Vishram. But even they are divided in their individual beliefs or values. While Masterji never agrees to sell the apartment, it is both a compulsion and opportunity for Mrs. Puri as her 18 years old son is afflicted with Down’s syndrome, a terminal illness and she is in a desperate need of money for the treatment and care of Ramu. To show the deep friendship of Masterji and Sangeeta Puri, Adiga writes:

“When her boy was diagnosed with Down’s syndrome, Sangeeta Puri, before telling her mother or sister, had told her immediate neighbour. Masterji, listening to the news with a hand on his wife’s shoulder, had begun to cry. She still remembered those tears falling down his cheeks: a man who had never wept on any other day, even when there was death in his family.” (34)

Likewise, Adiga further writes about Masterji and the Pintos’ friendship: for the past three decades, the residents of Vishram Society 3A (Murthy) and 2A (Pinto) had been

four people with one set of sleeping habits. If one couple went to bed early the other couple turned off their television and went to bed. If one couple chose to sing along to Lata Mangeshkar late into the night the other couple also sang along to Lata Mangeshkar late into the night (75).

Last Man in Tower can be called a satirical novel for the once good neighbours are fractioned due to the evil money. Money makes most of them blind and they even forget their humane feelings towards their fellow beings. In the beginning, besides Masterji, even other characters are of the opinion that the Vishram society should not be sold no matter how much generous offer they get from any redeveloper if not from Dharmen Shah only. The Pintos and Mrs Rego are on Masterji's side. The Society is not only their home but also their life in which the income of their whole life is invested. They believe that both their blood and sweat have a sweet connection with the Vishram.

Along the long way, Adiga does a decent job of describing the divide between the haves and have-nots and the way the working class is treated. He is particularly good at showing the fraction between the residents who, before getting Dharmen Shah's offer, were like more than kith and kin. Here, it seems as if Dharmen Shah has thrown a stone at the beehive. But unfortunately, the bees, instead of fighting against their common enemy, start fighting with each other. Masterji is so determined in his belief that the Vishram Society should not be sold. Almost all of his neighbors try to convince him but in vain. Mrs. Puri, the closest and best neighbour of him, is quite sure on herself regarding Masterji's agreement. 'Masterji?' Mrs. Puri laughed. "He's just a big jack fruit. Prickly outside, soft and sweet inside. He's a born quarreler, not a born fighter, always complaining about this, about that. But the moment the Pintos

say yes, he'll say yes. I know my Masterji" (157). However, Mrs. Puri's belief on 'her' Masterji goes all futile. His logic for not selling the apartment seems rather silly:

"I have memories here, Mrs. Puri. My late daughter, my late wife. Shall I show you Sandhya's sketch book? It is full of drawings of the garden. Every tree and plant and spider's web and stone and [. . .]" (185).

In the novel, Adiga creates two desperate worlds: The first is the place of absolute hopelessness where most of the characters such as Mrs. Puri, Kothari, Mr. Ajwani and many others are living. They do think that their life is miserable due to the lack of money, and life would be very luxurious and comfortable if they get the money from Dharmen Shah, the redeveloper, after selling their flats. On the other hand, there is a majestic life like that of Mr. Shah is living. Masterji, the third party, excluding the afore-mentioned two, is doubtlessly a stubborn fellow. But more stubborn than him is none other than the antagonist, Dharmen Shah, the juxtaposed character to Masterji. Shah takes Masterji as the blocking stone on the path of his dream project of building Sanghai, the majestic apartment by replacing the Vishram Society. So, he does not hesitate to clear the stone on his path. He wishes he could chop the school teacher as the Salsa fish, his lunch. "Shah looked at the fish: and he had a vision of the old teacher, sliced and chopped the same way, salted and peppered [. . .]" (288).

Once an ideal and respectable teacher to everyone is now taught by almost every other characters. "Just for today, Masterji, let this Ajwani be a teacher to you. Will you walk down the road, and take a look at what Mr. Shah is building beyond the slums? And then will you honestly say that you are not impressed by this Mr. Shah" (153)? Ram Khare, the guard, threatens Masterji:

“Before that I was the guard at the Raj Kiran Housing Society in Kalina. There too they had an offer of redevelopment from a builder. One man refused to sign the offer – a healthy young fellow, not like you – and one morning he tripped down the stairs and broke his knees. He signed in his hospital bed.” (206)

Similarly, Ibrahim Kudwa, whose sons were once Masterji’s students and the biggest fans in the world, teaching Masterji, says, "Let me teach you something today, Masterji: there is no *maybe* in this matter. We think you should go and meet Mr. Shah in his house. Have a talk with him" (214).

Althusser argues that ideology represents the imaginary relationship of individuals to their real condition of existence. Masterji, with the hope of getting approval in his stand of not selling his flat, visits Gaurav. But beyond his expectation, both Gaurav and Sonal insist him to accept the redeveloper’s proposal. Sonal, his daughter in law, is so excited regarding the selling of the apartment that she begins the calculation of their land and the money it generates: "It’s 810 square feet, you say, Father-in-law? That would be [. . .] 1.62 crores. She said it loud: ‘One-six-two-zero-zero-zero-zero-zero!’" (193-94)

Family ties mean a great deal here and it is the family that decides what happens to the various members. Not only the different residents in the Vishram, but even Gaurav, for the first time in his life, complains Masterji about his deeds and becomes the teacher to his father:

Every other parent in Vishram Society has thought of their children. But not you [. . .]. You made my mother’s life a living hell. Don’t you remember what she said, on her death bed, when I asked if she had a

good life? She said, I had a happy childhood, Gaurav. *A happy childhood*, Father – and nothing after that. (298)

As for Eagleton, ideology is a rigid set of beliefs that gives legitimacy to a dominant political class and motivates it to rule over its people; the key point of his understanding of ideology is that such a rigid framework of beliefs would not be always true or convincing for each and every section of society. If a particular section of society holds a kind of ideology true, it does not imply that everyone must necessarily view it with the same perspective. Other people may differ on it. Eagleton has conspicuously focused on the term 'rigid' by which he means that ideology tends to cleave the society into two or more sections. He says that all proponents of a particular ideology think that the way they view the society is flexible than what political philosophy other people adhere to.

The protagonist is not only boycotted by his fellow residents of the Vishram Society, but even Gaurav seems to be interpellated by the capitalist ideology so he, instead of taking side of his helpless father, chooses to be one of the important factors to make Masterji a failure. Just other characters as Ibrahim Kudwa, Ram Khare and others, he enjoys being teacher to his old dying father where he makes his father aware of the probable attack that capitalism is likely to target him:

'Just once let me be a teacher to you, Father. Do you know what it is you're dealing with, Father? Construction. They're mafia. Sangeeta Aunty tells me you love to talk about tidal waves and meteors in your science class. Worry about knives, Father: not the ocean. Haven't you seen those big posters near the construction sites? "Your own swimming pool, gym, TV, wedding hall, air-conditioning". When you sell dreams like that, you can murder anyone you want. The deadline is

just a few days away. Keep saying no to Mr. Shah and we'll find you one morning in a gutter. (298)

Even though both his son and daughter in law, being ideologically moved by Dharmen Shah and the residents of the Society, give him pressure to agree on the proposal, Masterji is firm enough in his stand. He is ready to get his head cut but moves not a single inch. And to the reply of his disagreement, the residents reach to the extent of the conclusion that they, with the majority, decide to expel him from the society: It was unanimously agreed to approve of the resolution, expelling Mr. Murthy from the Society, and asking him to vacate his premises within thirty days. (273)

The residents might have been expecting the stout Yogesh Murthy to vacate the flat once they hanged the notice but beyond their expectation, he doesn't take name of moving an inch from there. Unable to tolerate the unwanted man, the teacher's presence in their flat, women put Ramu's shit on Masterji's door. Something brown, freshly applied by hand, the finger marks still visible in it, covered Masterji's door. A fly buzzed about it. Kothari's wife complains to Kothari regarding the schoolteacher's selfish decision:

Let him smell what we think of him, Mr Kothari [. . .]. It's Ramu's shit – that's all. Masterji talked to the *Mumbai Sun*, didn't he? Famous man. He wants Mrs Puri to clean it herself for the rest of her life, doesn't he? So let him clean Ramu's shit one morning, and see how much he likes it. Let him use that same *Sun* to clean it. (327)

Adiga has created a memorable tale of the schoolteacher's hellish experience in modern India. Told with close attention to detail, Adiga writes like a professional. untill now, Masterji is boycotted by all the residents in the Vishram. All his good friends and neighbours become his enemy. None of the residents, including not only

Mrs Puri but Pintos too, communicates with him. He is almost alone. Even his son and daughter-in-law have become strangers to him. Masterji is totally alone now. He has no companion to share his pains and sorrows. He has no more human friends. He, therefore, calls birds and animals to protect him from human beings. “Pigeon, crow, humming bird; spider, scorpion, silverfish, termite and red ant; bats, bees, stinging wasps, clouds of anopheles mosquitoes. Come, all of you: and protect me from human beings” (346).

Not only this, his own son Gaurav, the only hope of his life, also writes an acknowledgement letter to the Society by stating that Yogesh Murthy is no longer his father. Besides, he also asks the Vishram residents not to associate him with any of the affairs related to the latter: “I, Gaurav Murthy, son of Y. A. Murthy, am putting this notice up to say I have no father. We request all of you not to associate us with the actions of the present occupant of 3A, Vishram Society” (320).

Adiga wants us to see all this as emblematic of the new India. The idea of a resentful, oppressed protagonist getting murdered by his own fellow beings and pursuing his ideal of social mobility is not much of a novelty. Any innovation must therefore be sought in the novel’s narrative voice. Howsoever alienated and frustrated from everywhere and everyone, Masterji doesn’t lose his hope. He goes on fighting for his individual values. But he is not able to keep his individual values intact in his society. Instead of making his values triumphant, he happens to surrender himself both physically and ideologically before the evil capitalism. His own kith and kin take him as the blocking stone on his path so they conclude to carnage his life to clear the blocking stone from their path:

At once, Ibrahim Kudwa lifted the hammer he had brought from the Secretary’s office, lunged forward, and hit Masterji on the crown of his

head. Who, more from surprise than anything else, fell back into his chair with such force that it toppled over and his head landed hard on the floor. Now he felt a weight on his chest: Kothari, pressing a knee on his torso, turned the hammer upside down and stubbed it on his forehead using both his hands. It hurt. He tried to shout, but he heard only a groan from his mouth. Kothari was pounding his forehead with the hammer again and again. 'Kothari. Wait.' Now Sanjiv Puri came from the bedroom with a large dark thing. The pillow from his bed. It pressed down on his nose and crushed his moustache: Sanjiv Puri was sitting on it. His legs thrashed: not to free themselves, but to take him down to the bottom of the lake faster. He was in very cool and black water now. (388-99)

Thus, a failure hero is collapsed along with the failure of his individual values. This is the failure of not an individual but all the individuals who hold such value and belief as Masterji. The murder of Masterji is not simply the murder of a common citizen, rather it is the murder of the dreams of such individuals who wish to fight against the evils of capitalism and want to establish an ideal world where the individual values of both wealthy capitalists like Dharmen Shah and poor people like Masterji are regarded highly.

A brutal view of Indian people's desire-to-be-rich is cunningly presented in Adiga's masterpiece. Dharmen Shah is from the Darkness from where he manages to escape his village and move to Mumbai to become a redeveloper after a long struggle both legal and illegal. Telling his story in retrospect, the novel is a piecemeal correspondence. Adiga's existential and crude prose animates the battle between India's wealthy and poor as Masterji suffers.

Ideology constructs subjectivity. The capitalist ideology creates (human) subject. All the characters are known by their professional subject hoods for instance Ram Khare, the security guard; Ramesh Ajwani, the real-estate broker; Ashvin Kothari, the secretary of the Society; Ibrahim Kudwa, the internet-store owner; Mr. Pinto, the retired accountant; Sanjiv Puri, currently an accountant; Mrs Rego, the social worker and the most importantly Yogesh A Murthy, Masterji and Dharmen Shah, the redeveloper.

So the dominant capitalist ideology of their society designates several epithets upon them. Dharmen Shah gets his existence by his interaction with the society and by the epithets given to him by the existing ideologies. Similarly, Ajwani, the broker, presents his opinion regarding Masterji's subjectivity. "Late Mr. Yogesh Murthy was my neighbour, he came here I think after his marriage. Wherever he came from, he came, and became typical man of this city. I mean he became a new kind of man. I think about him more now than I did when he was my neighbor" (416).

The society depicted in *Last Man in Tower* not only confers subject hood upon the characters but also subjects them as subjects to the particular definition of their roles. Dharmen Shah and Masterji fulfill the duties of the subjects as required upon them by the existing contemporary ideologies. However, as fathers both of them do not seem responsible toward their sons, Satish and Gaurav respectively, and their education. Even as patriarchal husbands, they are not protective to their submissive wives Rukmini and Purnima. Dharmen Shah thinks himself like a Messiah but he does not hesitate to share the story of his struggle even with his workmen:

This Dharmen Shah of yours knows what it is to work and walk and sweat in the heat. He did not grow up in the luxury like other rich men. He grew up in a village called Krishnapur in Gujarat. When he came to

Bombay he had just twelve rupees and eighty paise on him and he came in summer. He took the train, he took the bus, and when he had no more money for the bus, he walked. His chappals wore away and he tied leaves around his feet and he kept walking. (62)

Shah encourages his workers to work even in the hot scorching sun. He even ignores his health for money. He doesn't follow his doctor's advice that he needs an intense rest. His health is degrading for he has been working day and night in the dusty redevelopment sites. However, it seems money has bigger values for him more than his health. He also doesn't like his competitors going ahead than him in terms of name and fame. To encourage his workers, therefore, he himself is present in the construction site. He says:

I know it is hot. The coconut palms are turning brown. But we have only a month before it starts raining, and we must finish pouring concrete now. If we don't, I will lose a month and half-two months, if the rains are heavy. And time is one thing I cannot lose. And the hotter it becomes, the more gold there is in the air. I will increase your pay [. . .] 300 rupees per day per man. That's a hundred rupees more than you are getting now, and more than you'll get anywhere else in Santa Cruz. You say you want to go home. Don't I know what you'll do? Work your farms? No. You'll lie on a charpoy in the shade, smoke, and play with a child. When the sun sets, you'll drink. (62)

Along with constructing the (Human) subject, ideology (as a system of mass representation) transforms, qualifies and deconstructs the subjects. Dharmen Shah has no fixed unity and consistency as subject in the Mumbai city of the capitalist world. His subjectivity is shifting frequently. He is transformed into different subjects during

different models of his life. His subjectivity changes from a street commoner to a leading capitalist of Mumbai. He experiences the subjectivity of a penniless common citizen, a husband, a widower, an irresponsible father and a shameless lover. Finally, however, he becomes a merciless icon of the capitalist. His philosophy in terms of payment to the workers is “When it comes to work – hurry, hurry, hurry. When it comes to payment – delay, delay, delay (94).

So powerless in an ideologically overwhelming society, Masterji, on the other hand, experiences himself only as socially mediated. The institutions made by peoples such as law, media, police, family and others are additionally fetishized. As a subject, Masterji has known himself as an exponent of institutions which has acquired the aspects of something divinely ordained. Theodor W. Adorno, in “Message in a Bottle”, writes, “Not to be a member of anything is to arouse suspicion: when seeking naturalization, you are expressly asked to list your membership” (34).

New and different kinds of qualifications are necessary for a subject to exist and comply within the capitalist bourgeoisie society. Masterji and Dharmen Shah both are required to learn the scientific and technical skills to be qualified as a competitive labour power of the capitalist market. As a labour power, they must be competent i.e. suitable to be set to work in the compiled system of the process of production. They should be dynamic according to the requirements of the socio-technical division of labour, its different jobs and posts. As a capitalist, Dharmen Shah sets the rules and orders as established by the capitalist society. He, being the ruling bourgeoisie class, dominates the other characters by manipulating the capitalist ruling ideology. Dharmen Shah is completely up-to-date with the pace of time i.e. the technological and scientific change. He had known it ten years ago that India was going to be a rich

country. He had planned for the future. Skip out of slum redevelopment. Start building glossy skyscrapers, shopping malls, maybe one day an entire suburb (289).

On the contrary, Masterji is not able to develop himself to fine-tune with the technical and scientific development of the advanced capitalism. He has not even seen the entire Mumbai as a cloud of electric light enveloped the buildings like incense. Noise: a high keening pitch night was not traffic and not people talking but something else, Masterji could not identify. A huge sigh "LG' - stood behind the main bulk of towers; beyond it, he recognized the white glow from the Haji Ali shrine. To his left was dark ocean" (223).

Masterji suffers a lot throughout his life. His is ruined physically as well as mentally. In the later phase of his life, he is in an existential crisis. He lives in a world in which he feels at odd with devoid of meaning. Masterji feels frustration, alienation; he suffers from boredom, isolation and anxiety; he sees the ideological degradation of the society into materialism. Loss of familial and social ties further aggravates the situation. Masterji tries to face the predicament but the prevailing capitalist ideology brings him time and again in the dark cave of exploitation, domination and submission prevalent in the capitalist ideology. He imprisons himself up in a loony bin.

Masterji's choice of life fails to exist in the society, culture and state. His dream of an ideal world is shattered time and again. It becomes difficult for him to survive in the capitalist world but he struggles hard with the materialist ideology to create a social unity in his latest days. For Masterji to fit in this capitalist ideology, Adiga shows the need of amendment with the capitalist system.

As Althusser argues that ideology hails or interpellates concrete individual as concrete subject, Masterji is interpellated as a subject by ideology. His identity is a

poor man who is appointed as subject in and by specific familial ideological configuration. He is subjected to the social unjust and exploitation. As Louis Althusser sees ideology as a determining force shaping consciousness embodied in the material practices signifying ideological state apparatus and enjoying 'relative autonomy', all the poor believe that they should agree and do what the rich order them.

Money, in reality, is just an embodiment, a condensation and a materialization of a network of social relations. It functions as an equivalent of all commodities. In the Mumbai city, where Masterji and Dharmen Shah are living, the everyday spontaneous ideology reduces money to a simple sign giving them when they possess it, a right to certain parts of the social product. Adiga's antagonist Dharmen Shah knows there are many things magical about money. In his social activity, money always inspired Dharmen Shah. He is fetishist in practice. He can even ignore his health for the sake of money. He is always followed by his doctor day and night as his shadow to keep his health sound. When he has infection in his chest, his doctor gives him a very serious advice:

It is a bit worse each time I see you, Dharmen. That thing is growing in your chest and head. Chronic bronchitis. Worse and worse each time. You have infected mucus in your lungs and in your sinuses. The next stage is that you have trouble breathing. We may have to put you in a hospital bed. Do you want things to come to that? You're picking up fevers, coughs, stomach illnesses. Your immune system is weakening. Leave Bombay. At least for a part of each year. Go to the Himalayas. Simla. Abroad. The one thing money can't buy here is clean air.' (52-53)

In spite of such a serious counseling regarding his health, however, Dharmen Shah turns a deaf ear to his doctor. It seems as if money matters more for him than his health. He is not only deaf but blind too for money. By neglecting his health and at the same time, his doctor's advice, the antagonist is trying to prove that he can go to any extent to gain the power through money. He views that when one has money; s/he acquires power and can be the ruler.

Marx and Engels, in *The German Ideology*, comment that the ruling ideas of each epoch are the ideas of the ruling class. Ideologies are often thought to be unifying, action oriented, rationalizing, legitimating, universalizing and naturalizing. An important device for achieving legitimacy is universalizing and eternalizing itself. In *The German Ideology*, they argue:

Each new class, which puts itself in the place of one ruling before it, is compelled, merely in order to carry through its aim to represent its interests as the common interests of all the members of the society that is expressed in ideal form: it has not given its ideas the form of universality and represent them as the only rational, universally valid ones. (65-6)

They remark that the interests of an emergent revolutionary class really are likely to be connected to the common interests of all other non-ruling classes.

Ideology originally meant the scientific study of human ideas. But soon it came to mean a system of ideas themselves. An ideologist was then someone who expounded them. In fact, the early French ideologues did believe that ideas were at the root of social life. Its roots lie deep in the Enlightenment dream of a world entirely transparent to reason, free of the prejudice, superstition and obscurantism of the ancient regime. The early ideologues of the eighteenth century France drew heavily

on John Lock's empiricist philosophy in their war against metaphysics. The aim of the Enlightenment ideologues, as spokesmen for the revolutionary bourgeoisie of eighteenth century Europe, was to reconstruct society from the ground up on a rational basis. They inveighed fearlessly against a social order which fed the people on religious superstition in order to buttress its own brutally absolutist power.

Money, undoubtedly, is a very necessary means to run one's family and life smoothly. *Last Man in Tower*, as a representative of such people, portrays Mrs Puri as the neediest character of Dharmen Shah's money. She is successful in convincing all the other characters except the stubborn Masterji, once the closest and the dearest neighbour of hers. Quite excited and hopeful for selling her flat to Mr Shah, Sangeeta Puri inquisitively, along with Ibrahim Kudwa, watches Tower B residents leaving the Tower:

Mrs Puri and Ibrahim Kudwa watched from her window. Wooden beds and Godrej cupboards, carried down the stairwell of Tower B, were loaded on to the back of the truck. Having received their second installment of money from the Confidence Group (paid by Mr Shah, in a surprise move, ahead of schedule), the families of Tower B were leaving for their new homes, one by one. (314)

Mrs puri, with jealousy to the residents of Tower B and anger with the cunning Yogesh Murthy, can not hold the sight of the adjacent building residents leaving for their new home with the hope of better and bright future. She feels that even her Down syndrome afflicted 18 years son's future is hidden behind the money Dharmen Shah would give her after the sale of her old house. As Dharmen Shah, she also understands now who the blocking stone on her path is. So, by closing her eyes, she prays Lord Ganesha at the temple in Siddhi Vinayak to remove the stone on her path:

[...] you punished us by placing a stone in everyone's path. Now move the stone, which only you, God, with your elephant's strength, can do (248).

The emergence of the concept of ideology has the most intimate relation to revolutionary struggle and figures from the outset as a theoretical weapon of class warfare. It arrives on the scene inseparable from the material practices of the ideological state apparatuses, and is itself as a notion and a theatre of contending ideological interests.

Karl Marx's theory of ideology is probably best seen as part of his more general theory of alienation expounded in *The Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts* (1844) and elsewhere. The theory of ideology embodied in *The German Ideology* belongs to the general logic of inversion and alienation. Consciousness is in fact bound up with social practice but for the German idealist philosophers, it becomes separate from these practices fetishized to a thing-in-itself and it can be misunderstood as the very source and ground of historical life. If ideas are grasped as autonomous entities, then they help to naturalize and dehistoricize them; and this, for Marx, is the secret of ideology.

Gramsci normally uses the term hegemony to mean the ways in which a governing power wins consent to its rule from those it subjugates. Since ideology may be forcibly imposed, it is different from hegemony. Hegemony is a broader category than ideology. It may be discriminated into various ideological, cultural, political and economic forms in non-discursive practices as well as in rhetorical utterances.

Gramsci associates hegemony with civil society. The dominant power is diffused throughout habitual daily practices, intimately interwoven with culture itself.

Capitalism, Gramsci suggests, maintains control not just through violence as well as political and economic coercion but also ideologically through a hegemonic culture in

which the values of the bourgeoisie become the “common sense value” of all. Thus, a consensus culture develops in which people in the working class identify their own good with the good of the capitalist system. Lenin held that “Culture was ancillary to political objectives” but for Gramsci, it is fundamental to the attainment of power. Intellectual and moral leadership is necessary for any class to be a dominant class. Gramsci, in his *Prison Notebooks* (1971), writes:

That the supremacy of a social group manifests itself in two ways as “domination” and as “intellectual moral leadership.” A social group dominated antagonistic groups which tends to “liquidate” or to subjugate perhaps even by armed force, leads kindred and allied groups. A social group can, and indeed must, already exercise “leadership” before winning governmental power; it subsequently becomes dominant when it exercises power but even if it holds it firmly in its grasp, it must continue to “lead” as well. (58)

Gramsci’s theory of hegemony is tied to his conception of the capitalist state which, he claims, rules through force plus consent. He divides the state between ‘political society’ which is the arena of political institutions and legal institutional control and ‘civil society’ which is commonly seen as the ‘private’ or non state sphere including the economy. The former is the realm of force and the latter of consent. The intermediary institutions in the civil society – school, church, family, newspaper etc. – count as hegemonic apparatuses binding the individuals to the ruling power by consent. Coercion is reserved for the state for legitimating of violence.

Rather impatient Mrs Puri can not wait for the money any longer. She is quite aware of the fact that sooner they (including her neighbours in the Tower A) get money from the redeveloper, sooner they can shift to their new house and plan for

their future like the residents of Tower B. Therefore, her guts guide her to Mr Shah's house. Mr Shah whole heartedly welcomes her as she is the best helping hand who played the most important role for him to buy Tower A. Encouraging the innocent but (because of her misfortune) needy Mrs Puri, Shah manipulates her mind to take some action against the retired schoolteacher:

‘That old teacher makes you clean your son's bottom. I know this. Have you made him understand what it is, to clean a child's bottom day in and day out for the rest of your life? [...] He has a son in Marine Lines who is fighting with him. I am told you are close to this boy. Then use him. Don't you know how much a son can hurt his father (318)?’

Dharmen Shah, who can be analyzed from the spectacles of the harbinger of development, civilization and industrialization on the one hand while on the other, he is a selfish capitalist, can murder the life of any innocent if it meets his goal and fulfills his self interest. Through the aforementioned citation, it can be easily predicted that the count down of Masterji's life has begun now. That is to say, Masteji's life is now on Mr Shah's hand. He proves himself as such a divine power who can decide who is to live and who is to sacrifice his/her life to make his dream come true.

Mrs Puri, merely a catalyst in the reaction of making Dharmen Shah a successful capitalist icon, is indirectly assigned the second mission by her lord. As her first mission was to convince the residents of the Vishram to sell their flats, her second mission, now, is to convince them to murder the teacher so that their dreams of being billionaires will be accomplished. She goes on convincing everyone for her mission and she is almost successful in it. We readers come to know about it through Mrs Pinto's conversation with her husband as she mentions: ‘Sangeeta and Renuka

Kothari came today and said, if all of us agree to do something – a simple thing – would you and Mr Pinto agree (332)?’

Here, the ‘simple thing’ refers to nothing other than ending Masterji’s life up. Adiga presents his characters as such crazy people who forget everything even their family members and lose their humanity when they have only money in their sight. The writer, in this regard, is unbelievably successful in showing the evil aspect of capitalism which can ideologically make the people nothing more than the puppets who can dance only in the rhythm of capitalists for whom the relations of blood and feelings do not count much.

Gramsci gave much thought to the question of the role of intellectuals in society. Famously, he stated that all men are intellectuals in that all have intellectual and rational faculties but not all men have the social function of intellectuals. He claimed that modern intellectuals are not simply talkers but directors and organizers who help build society and produce hegemony by means of ideological apparatuses such as education and media. Furthermore, he distinguished between ‘traditional’ intellectuals and organic ones. The traditional intellectuals are professional, literary, scientific, intellectuals. The organic intellectuals, likewise, are distinguished less by their profession than by their function in directing the ideas and aspirations of the class to which they organically belong. Gramsci, in his *Prison Notebook* (1971), further says:

Every social group coming into existence on the original terrain of an essential function in the world of economic production creates together with itself organically one or more strata of individuals which give it homogeneity and an awareness of its own function not only in the economic but also in the social and political fields. The capitalist

entrepreneur creates alongside himself the industrial technician, the specialist in the political economy, and the organizers of new culture of a new legal system (5).

For the Frankfurt School Marxist Theodor Adorno, the mechanism of abstract exchange is the very secret of ideology itself. Commodity exchange affects an equation between things which are in fact incommensurable and so does ideological thought. Frederic Jameson has suggested that the fundamental gesture of all ideology is exactly such a rigid binary opposition between the self or familiar which is positively valorized and the non-self or alien which is thrust beyond the boundaries of intelligibility.

Ideology, for Adorno, is thus a form of identity thinking. On this account, the opposite of ideology would be not truth or theory but difference or homogeneity. Ideology homogenizes the world equating distinct phenomena and to undo it thus demands a negative dialectics. Identity is, in Adorno's views, the primal form of all ideology. The aim of socialism is to liberate the rich diversity of sensuous use – value from the metaphysical prison – house of exchange-value to emancipate history from the false equivalences imposed upon it by ideology and commodity production. The identity principal strives to suppress all contradictions. This process has been brought to perfection in the reified, bureaucratized and administered world of advanced capitalism.

Dharmen Shah, who thinks himself as the king of the redevelopers in the capitalist world of Mumbai, does not like anyone rising as his competitor. Despite the fact that even he came from the ground level and got this height after a long struggle, he does not welcome anyone reaching the same status as his. Not only the wealthy enough capitalists as he himself but even the retired schoolteacher, whose income

could be hardly 10% of his, is a thorn in the bush of rose. He views himself as rose and the teacher as thorns. He expresses his disliking of teachers to his model girl friend as: "Teachers are the worst kind of people, Rosie. All that time they spend beating children, it makes them cruel. Twisted on the inside. Unlike builders, of course" (304).

When Dharmen Shah's contempt towards Masterji is to the highest extent, so is the former's son Satish's contempt towards him. Even though Mr Shah thinks himself the successful ruler of the entire elegant Mumbai, he is a failure to rule his own house. He has no time to take care of his teen-aged son Satish. As he neglects his health, he neglects more to his son. The consequence of this is that Satish is not in the company of good friends. He is once caught drunk by the police and Dharmen has to go to the police and plea them for his son's release. He feels that his head is cut. His name is brought down by his son. So he rebukes Satish. And the son's reply is that he prays Lord Ganesha for the failure of his father: "Please Lord Ganesha, make my father's new project fail and I'll write you a much bigger cheque when I have money" (100).

For the later Frankfurt School philosopher Jurgen Habermas, ideology is a form of communication systematically distorted by power – a discourse which has become a medium of domination which serves to legitimate relations of organized force. For the hermeneutical philosophers like Hans George Gadamer, misunderstanding and lapses of communication are textual blockages to be rectified by sensitive interpretations. Habermas says extra discursive forces affect discourse. Ideology marks the point at which language is bent out of communicative shape by the power interests which impinge upon it. Such domination inscribes itself on the inside of our speech. Dominative social institutions are, for Habermas, somewhat akin

to neurotic patterns of behaviours since they rigidify human life into compulsive set of norms and thus block the path to critical self-reflection. In both cases, we become dependent on hypnotized powers, subject to constraints which are in fact cultural but which bear in upon us with all the inexorability of natural forces. The gratificatory instincts which such institutions thwart are then either driven underground in the phenomenon Freud calls 'repression' or sublimated into metaphysical world views, ideal value systems of one kind or another which help to console and compensate individuals for the real life restrictions they must endure. These value systems thus serve to legitimize the social order channeling potential dissidence into illusionary forms; and this is the Freudian theory of ideology.

There is a parallel between ideology and psychical disturbance. For Freud, neurosis is the confused glimmerings of a kind of solution to whatever is awry. Neurotic behaviour is a strategy for tackling, encompassing and resolving genuine conflicts even if it resolves them in an imaginary way. The behaviour is not just a passive reflex of this conflict but an active form of engagement with it. Just the same can be said of ideologies which are no mere inner by products of social contradictions, but resourceful strategies for containing, engaging and imaginarily resolving them.

Ideology can be viewed less as a particular set of discourses than as a particular set of effects within discourses. What is bourgeois about this mixed bunch of idioms is less a kind of languages they are than the effects they produce: effects for example of "closure" whereby certain forms of signification are silently excluded and certain signifiers are 'fixed' in a commanding position. These effects are discursive not purely formal features of language; what is interpreted as closure will depend on

the concrete context of utterance and is variable from one communicative situation to the next.

Last Man in Tower, thus, is a realistic novel. Although his own son prays for the failure of his dream project, it does not make any difference to Dharmen Shah. He has so much pride in his money that he thinks he can purchase the whole Mumbai. It seems that the entire people living in Mumbai, excluding Masterji, are in his grasp. His son's curse proves to be blessings for him. He keeps on prospering. But on the contrary, Masterji's life goes on fading away. He is alone from all the sides; from everywhere and everyone. Though he spends more time by himself, he would not say he has been bored; he is conscious, indeed, of a strange contentment. But now, when he wants to talk to someone, he finds himself all alone.

We can't hear Masterji's voice here because the author seems to have given no power to his protagonist. The novel, however, has its share of anger at the injustices of the new, globalized India and it's good to hear this among the growing chorus of celebratory voices. But its central character comes across as a cardboard cut-out. The paradox is that for many of this novel's readers, this lack of verisimilitude will not matter because for them India is and will remain an exotic place. This book adds another brick to the patronizing edifice it wants to tear down.

Gramsci defines social hegemony as the spontaneous consent given by the great masses of the population to the general direction imposed on social life by the fundamental group i.e. the ruling class. Hegemony, for him, is the power of the ruling class to convince other class that their consents are the interests of all, that a social class achieves a predominant influence and power not by direct and overt means but by succession in making its ideological view of society so pervasive that the subordinate class unwillingly accepts and participates in their own oppression.

Hegemony consists of socio-political power that flows from enabling the spontaneous consent of the populace through intellectual and moral leadership or authority as employed by subalterns of the state.

Thus, in the novel, Adiga takes on the lefty issue: the unhappy division of social classes into haves and have-nots. The plot centres on the have-nots' struggle to comfortably sustain their lives. This novel seems like a dazzling twist by the narrator's sharp and satirical eye for the realities of life of India's poor. In short, *Last Man in Tower* is that kind of novel which is about men who become restless and disconnected as they learn about the huge gap that separate the world they come from and the world they aspire to and how they are perceived by the privileged members of that other world.

III. Representative of the Failures in the World of Capitalism

The dominant capitalist ideology of the society confers several epithets upon Masterji. Different subjectivities compete for domination upon him so he is fragmented. He frequently feels that as a subject, he is reduced to a void, to an empty place in which his whole content is procured by others, by the symbolic network of inter subjective relations. Masterji, during the later struggle with Dharmen Shah and his own fellow members, feels that he is in himself nothing; his positive content seems what he is for others. So sometimes he feels a radical sense of alienation of the subject. He feels the severe sense of alienation, isolation and frustration because of his personal experiences of the encounters with the various ideologies prevalent in his society. Masterji's content what he is individually would be determined by an exterior signifying network offering them points of symbolic identification conferring on them certain symbolic mandates. He has to face the pain of disintegration of the familial and social ties; he is humiliated and estranged. Masterji is rendered manic and depressive. He doesn't feel free in the society he is living.

However, rather than losing himself in the status quo and its dominant ruling ideologies, Masterji is prepared to risk everything in order to destroy the compromised system and its ideologies and replace them with his own utopian artistic, imaginative, dreamy and unconscious worlds beyond capitalist social reality. But his sincere beliefs and insistence that he was not working for the restoration of western capitalism of course proves to be nothing but an insubstantial illusion. And he is, in the eyes of his society, proved nothing but a bunch of heroic daydreamers.

Masterji is not a conformist on the ideological belief in the unproblematic non-antagonistic functioning of capitalist social state. Masterji harbours hope in the revolutionary outcome out of the crisis of the capitalist ideology until the last hours of

his life. He is manic and depressive. But, instead of the concrete analysis of the external actual social condition, the society lobotomies him for resolving his psychic change. He is a rebel who challenges the society through the means of irrational resistance.

But the paradox in the novel is that despite his continuous efforts to step out of his social ideology, he is enslaved by it. He is overtaxed by the social reality on all sides. The everyday consciousness proceeds from the assumption that social reality is an objective, low-governed nature like sphere. He is at odd with the materialist ideology and finds the outside world too hard. The materialist concept of a free and self-determining society tries to include him in the society only on condition that he is the constitutive subjects of his social world.

Almost as if in determined oppositions to all the India-rising narratives, the novel unflinchingly chronicles many of the harsher truths about the country: the perpetually wary relationship between the deprived and the privileged with the resentment and hunger of one set against the paranoia, guilt and insecurity of the other. *Last Man in Tower* stands at the opposite end of the spectrum of representations of poverty from those images of doe-eyed children that dominate our electronic media that sentimentalize poverty and even suggest that there may be something ennobling in it. Masterji's lesson in *Last Man in Tower* is that poverty creates monsters and he himself is the victim of such monsters.

Thus, in the novel *Last Man in Tower*, Adiga creates two disparate worlds, Masterji's tiny Vishram Society and the silver of Mumbai. The first is the place of absolute hopelessness. The city, for the residents of the Vishram Society, consists of the glittery mall which they can't enter. These two settings set out a chasm that is utterly unbridgeable. Thus, when Masterji is murdered by his kinfolks (a fact

established at the very beginning of the novel), it seems less a tragedy than the outcome of impeccable logic. Adiga skilfully portrays Dharmen Shah as an entrepreneur, one whose tiger's leap is equally the product of social forces which Masterji cannot control.

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