

From Capital to Coloniality: Rethinking Marxist Literary and Cultural Discourse in India and the Global South

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Abstract

Since the 1930s, Marxism has served as one of the dominant frameworks for literary and cultural criticism in the Indian subcontinent. Yet its analytical adequacy in societies where domination is reproduced not only through class relations but through colonialism, caste hierarchy, and epistemic violence has remained deeply contested. This article undertakes a theoretical and comparative reexamination of Marxist literary and cultural discourse in India and the Global South. Drawing on three bodies of sources—classical and neo-Marxist texts, Subaltern Studies and Indian postcolonial theory, and decolonial thought from the Global South—the article argues that the Progressive Writers' Association (1936), despite its pivotal role in linking literature to radical critique, suffered from significant theoretical limitations in representing caste oppression and Dalit identity due to its reliance on European Marxism. Chakrabarty's critique of the universalism of European categories, Spivak's interrogation of subaltern representation, and Ambedkar's insistence on the irreducibility of caste to class, alongside the concepts of coloniality of power hegemony, and epistemic disobedience, constitute the article's theoretical framework. The parallel trajectories of Mariátegui in Peru, James in the Caribbean, and Ngũgĩ in Africa further demonstrate that the critical rearrangement of Marxism from within the Global South constitutes an independent theoretical current, not an exception. The article concludes that the move "from capital to coloniality" is not a rejection of Marxism but its critical extension—an effort to situate capital within a broader matrix of colonial power, caste, language, and epistemic hierarchy. Within this horizon, literary texts are not merely representations of class contradiction but sites where capital, caste, and colonial inheritance simultaneously shape subjectivity, voice, and the possibility of epistemic disobedience.

Keywords: Marxist literary criticism, coloniality of power, Subaltern Studies, Progressive Writers' Association, Global South, caste, epistemic disobedience, postcolonial theory.

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I. Introduction

Marxism has been one of the most frequently employed frameworks of literary and cultural criticism in the Indian subcontinent since the 1930s. Yet the adequacy of this framework for analyzing societies in which colonialism, caste, and epistemic violence have shaped fundamental social structures has remained a persistent site of contention. Chakrabarty (2000, p. 6) argues that the theoretical categories of European modernity, including the concept of class within the Marxist tradition, are insufficient for describing the historical experiences of non-European societies, as these categories are themselves the product of a particular history rather than universal knowledge. Spivak (1988, p. 280), from a distinct vantage point, demonstrates that dominant discourses, including Western Marxism, suffer from a structural incapacity to represent the subaltern subject, particularly the subaltern woman. Quijano (2000, p. 533) articulates this critique on a broader scale, showing that the coloniality of power, the persistence of colonial structures of domination after formal independence, is reproduced through racial and caste-based classifications, and that class analysis alone is unable to account for it.

Against this backdrop, the Progressive Writers' Association (Anjuman Taraqqi Pasand Mussannifeen), founded in Lucknow in 1936, represented the first organized attempt to align Indian literature with Marxist criticism (Coppola, 1974, p. 3; Gopal, 2005, p. 22). The movement played a pivotal role in shaping radical literary discourse during the 1930s through the 1950s, and brought together figures such as Manto, Ismat Chughtai, and Faiz Ahmad Faiz. Nevertheless, Gopal (2005, p. 22) demonstrates that the movement faced serious limitations in its engagement with questions of caste and Dalit identity, consistently privileging class as a framework over other forms of oppression.

The emergence of Subaltern Studies in the 1980s, led by Ranajit Guha and his collaborators, constituted a more rigorous reassessment of these limitations. Guha (1982, p. 1) argued that both nationalist and Marxist historiography were complicit in the erasure of subaltern consciousness and agency. Spivak (1988, p. 308), through her seminal question "Can the Subaltern Speak?", elevated this critique to a more philosophical register, demonstrating that even the project of recovering subaltern voices risks falling into the trap of hegemonic representation. This theoretical turn created a discernible distance from Marxist orthodoxy, yet, as Chakrabarty (2000, p. 255) contends, it did not necessarily entail the abandonment of materialist analysis; rather, it sought to liberate that analysis from the monopoly of Eurocentric narrative.

Gramsci's theory of hegemony and its application to the cultural sphere (Gramsci, 1971, pp. 12–13) has served as one of the most significant theoretical bridges between classical Marxism and postcolonial critique. By focusing on cultural consent and the role of intellectuals in either reproducing or contesting hegemony, Gramsci opened a path for analyzing cultural structures that are not reducible to economic relations alone. This approach has proven particularly productive in the analysis of Indian literature, especially in reading the role

of intellectuals within the Progressive Writers' Movement.

At a broader theoretical level, Mignolo (2011, p. 9), through the concept of epistemic disobedience, argues that radical critique must speak from within the lived experience of the colonized, rather than from the vantage point of metropolitan academies. This argument carries particular weight in the context of Dalit literature. Guru (1995, p. 2548) demonstrates that even within Indian social science research, the lived experience of Dalits, and of Dalit women in particular, has been systematically marginalized, displaced by abstract categories of class analysis.

The present article situates itself within this horizon. The title "From Capital to Coloniality" does not signal an abandonment of Marxism; rather, drawing on the materialist framework that Parry (2004, pp. 1–18) formulated in her critique of postcolonial idealism, this movement can be understood as a critical rearrangement — an attempt to ask what remains productive in Marxism within the context of India and the Global South, and where it must be supplemented or displaced by concepts such as coloniality, subalternity, and epistemic disobedience. Through an examination of the history of Marxist literary discourse in India, a critical assessment of Subaltern Studies, and the situating of this debate within a comparative Global South framework, this article argues that radical literary criticism in India requires an epistemic turn — not a turn that negates the past, but one that honestly accounts for its limitations.

II. Materials and Methods

This study is a theoretical-critical inquiry undertaken with the aim of rethinking Marxist literary and cultural discourse within the context of colonial and postcolonial experience. The central question concerns the relationship between the concept of "capital" in the Marxist tradition and the concept of "coloniality" in contemporary decolonial theory — a relationship that has become one of the pivotal axes of theoretical debate in the analysis of literature and culture in postcolonial societies, particularly in India, where class structures, caste hierarchies, and the legacy of colonialism operate in deeply entangled ways.

The materials of the study comprise a purposively selected corpus of theoretical and critical texts across three principal domains. The first consists of classical and neo-Marxist texts, including the works of Karl Marx, Friedrich Engels, and Antonio Gramsci, which provide the conceptual foundations for the analysis of political economy, ideology, and cultural hegemony. The second encompasses Subaltern Studies scholarship and postcolonial theory in the Indian context, most notably the works of Ranajit Guha, Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, Dipesh Chakrabarty, and Gopal Guru, which foreground the limitations of a purely class-based analysis when confronted with caste, gender, and historically specific forms of social subordination. The third domain draws on theoretical texts associated with Global South thought and coloniality theory, including the works of Aníbal Quijano, Walter D. Mignolo, Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o, José Carlos Mariátegui, and C. L. R. James, which open the possibility of a critical rereading of Marxism in light of the historical experiences of

colonized societies. In addition, historical documents and critical analyses pertaining to the Progressive Writers' Association of the 1930s–1950s are examined as a historically grounded case study of the application of Marxism within Indian literary discourse.

Source selection was guided by three criteria: first, theoretical influence in shaping or critiquing Marxist and postcolonial discourse; second, direct relevance to the concepts of capital, caste, coloniality, and the representation of subaltern subjects; and third, analytical capacity to explain the relationship between political economy, epistemic structures of power, and cultural production in non-European contexts.

Textual analysis proceeds through a theoretical-interpretive framework. Within this framework, concepts including “capital,” “hegemony,” “subalternity,” “coloniality of power,” and “epistemic disobedience” are deployed as analytical categories in order to examine how these concepts articulate with or stand in tension against one another in readings of Indian literary and cultural discourse. The study further employs a comparative approach oriented toward the Global South horizon, situating the Indian experience alongside selected theoretical traditions from Latin America, the Caribbean, and Africa so as to map the various possibilities of a critical rearrangement of Marxism across different historical and cultural settings.

Accordingly, this article does not confine itself to a review of existing literature. Rather, it undertakes a critical articulation and theoretical reconstruction of the relationship among Marxism, Subaltern Studies, and coloniality theory as frameworks for the analysis of literature and culture in postcolonial societies.

III. Literature Review and Theoretical Framework

A. Marxism and Literary Criticism in the Subcontinent: Legacy and Limitations

The relationship between Marxist criticism and Indian literature has deep historical roots, traceable to the 1930s. The Progressive Writers' Association was the first institutionalized formation to articulate this relationship as a coherent literary programme. Coppola (1974, p. 3) demonstrates that the Association took shape within the anti-colonial conjuncture of the 1930s, treating literature as an instrument of mass mobilization. Gopal (2005, p. 22), in a more detailed examination of the movement, argues that its class-based framework carried a serious blind spot during a period when questions of caste and Dalit identity were still being pushed to the margins. In other words, progressive literature succeeded in representing relations of economic exploitation while falling short in its analysis of parallel oppressions rooted in caste and gender.

This limitation was not merely a weakness specific to one movement; it was embedded in the conceptual architecture of classical Marxism itself. Chakrabarty (2000, p. 6) formulates the problem at an epistemological level: the categories of European modernity, including class as the primary unit of social analysis, are products of a particular history, and their claim to universality requires the erasure of non-European

historical experience. This critique is completed by Spivak's (1988, p. 280) argument concerning the structural incapacity of dominant discourses, including Western Marxism, to represent the subaltern subject, and above all the subaltern woman. Spivak demonstrates that this incapacity does not arise from the carelessness of individual researchers but from the inner logic of these discourses themselves.

B. Subaltern Studies

Theoretical Turn and Internal Tensions

Subaltern Studies, which took shape in the 1980s through the collected essays edited by Guha, represented the most direct response to these limitations from within the tradition. Guha (1982, p. 1) argued that colonial historiography and nationalist and Marxist historiography share a common failure: both erase or absorb subaltern agency and consciousness into pre-given narratives. The project entered a more critical phase with Spivak's question (1988, p. 308), “Can the Subaltern Speak?” Spivak showed that the recovery of subaltern voice, when conducted within theoretical frameworks that reproduce hegemony, can itself become another form of silencing.

The relationship between Subaltern Studies and Marxism was, however, complex and non-linear. Chakrabarty (2000, p. 255) makes clear that this theoretical turn did not necessarily entail abandoning materialist analysis; rather, it was an attempt to free that analysis from the monopoly of Eurocentric narrative. This distinction matters: internal critique of a tradition is not the same as its negation. At the same time, the gradual incorporation of the project into poststructuralist and postmodernist frameworks generated legitimate concerns about the loss of the material dimension of analysis — concerns that Parry (2004, pp. 1–18) raises explicitly in her critique of the idealist drift within postcolonial criticism.

Caste, Dalit Experience, and the Limits of Class Analysis

The question of caste in India has posed one of the most significant challenges to the classical formulations of class analysis. Ambedkar argued that caste cannot be reduced to relations of production or economic position, because the system rests on a ritual and social hierarchy whose logic of reproduction is distinct from that of class (Ambedkar, 1936/2014, p. 45). From this standpoint, any analysis that treats caste merely as a form of false consciousness or as a cultural superstructure will fail to grasp the actual structure of domination in Indian society.

Omvedt (1994, p. 67) demonstrates that the reduction of caste to class renders the historical experience of Dalits invisible, and obstructs understanding of the connections among social humiliation, ritual exclusion, and economic exploitation. Teltumbde (2010, p. 22) further argues that while modern capitalism has generated new forms of inequality, the caste structure has in many cases coexisted with it and has even been reinforced by it. This coexistence indicates that the relation between class and caste is not one of substitution but one of entanglement and mutual historical conditioning.

In this same register, Guru (1995, p. 2548) observes that even critical social science in India has frequently represented the lived experience of Dalits through abstract conceptual categories, incorporating subaltern voices into pre-existing theoretical frameworks rather than opening a genuine space of speech for the subaltern subject. This critique sharpens the

necessity of rethinking Marxist conceptual frameworks and provides the theoretical ground for the transition from “capital” to “coloniality.”

C. Coloniality, Hegemony, and Epistemic Disobedience: Extending the Framework

The theoretical framework of this article rests on three concepts, each drawn from a distinct theoretical tradition.

The first is the concept of the coloniality of power in Quijano’s theory (Quijano, 2000, p. 533). Quijano shows that the end of formal colonialism does not signal the end of colonial structures of domination; these structures continue to reproduce themselves through racial, caste-based, and epistemic classifications. This concept carries particular analytical weight for the study of Indian literature in the postcolonial period, since it explains why the political transfer of power did not translate into structural transformations in the cultural and social domains.

The second is Gramsci’s concept of hegemony and its operation within the sphere of culture (Gramsci, 1971, pp. 12–13). By emphasizing cultural consent and the role of organic intellectuals, Gramsci developed an analysis of power that assigned independent weight to cultural and ideological structures. This approach creates a theoretical bridge between political economy and cultural criticism, and has direct analytical utility for reading the role of progressive Indian literature as a form of intellectual practice.

The third is the concept of epistemic disobedience in Mignolo’s theory (Mignolo, 2011, p. 9). Mignolo argues that radical critique must speak from within the lived experiences of the colonized rather than from the standpoint of metropolitan academic institutions. This concept stands in direct relation to Guru’s argument (1995, p. 2548) concerning the marginalization of Dalit experience within Indian social science; Guru shows that even research claiming to defend the subaltern frequently substitutes abstract categories for lived experience.

D. The Global South Horizon: Comparative Readings

Situating the Indian experience within a Global South framework opens possibilities for comparison that have sometimes been overlooked in more specialized scholarship. Ngugi wa Thiong’o (1986, p. 3) argued for the necessity of decolonizing the mind in African literature and insisted that the choice of language in which one writes is itself a political decision. Mariátegui (1928/1971, p. 11) in Peru fused Marxism with the indigenous and agrarian realities of Latin America, formulating the Indian question not as a cultural problem but as a question of land. James (1938/2001, p. 392), in his analysis of the Haitian Revolution, demonstrated that slavery cannot be understood solely within the framework of Marxist labor relations; it must be read in connection with racial experience and embodied resistance.

These three cases, despite their geographical and historical differences, share a common pattern: each represents an attempt to reconstruct Marxism from within — not by rejecting it, but by adding the layers that colonial, racial, and indigenous experience demanded.

E. Research Gaps

Despite the extensive literature on Marxism, Subaltern Studies, and postcolonial theory in the analysis of Indian literature and culture, several significant lacunae remain in existing scholarship.

First, the theoretical dialogue between the Marxist tradition in the Indian subcontinent and Marxist readings in other regions of the Global South has rarely been examined in a systematic manner. Research on Indian literature and culture has largely remained within the boundaries of area studies, while thinkers such as Mariátegui (1928/1971), James (1938/2001), and Ngugi wa Thiong’o (1986) have each attempted to reread Marxism in historically distinct contexts and to articulate it with the problems of colonialism, race, and indigenous culture. The analytical connection between these experiences and the tradition of Marxist criticism in India, however, has received little comparative examination.

Second, in a significant portion of the theoretical literature, the relationship between Marxism and postcolonial theory has frequently been formulated as a binary opposition, in which political economy analysis stands against discourse and cultural analysis. Certain studies, including those of Chakrabarty (2000) and Parry (2004), have demonstrated that these two approaches are not necessarily in intrinsic conflict and that a form of analytical continuity between them can be established. Despite this, theoretical efforts to re-articulate the two traditions within a unified framework have remained limited.

Third, the question of caste as one of the most fundamental social structures in India has not been adequately theorized in many Marxist readings of literature and culture. Classical Marxist analyses have primarily focused on class relations and economic exploitation, while studies such as Guru (1995) and related work in Dalit Studies have shown that caste possesses its own distinct historical and social logic and cannot be reduced merely to a secondary variable alongside class. This situation indicates that the analysis of literature and culture in Indian society requires a theoretical framework capable of accounting for the complex relationship among class, caste, and cultural power.

Fourth, despite the elaboration of the concept of the coloniality of power in contemporary theory, the connection between this concept and the analysis of literary discourse in India has not yet been systematically formulated. Much existing research has examined coloniality at the level of political or epistemological analysis, while its application to the rereading of literary traditions and cultural criticism has received comparatively little attention.

The present article seeks to address these gaps by rethinking the relationship among Marxism, Subaltern Studies, and coloniality theory within a comparative framework on the horizon of the Global South. From this perspective, the conceptual movement “from capital to coloniality” signifies not the replacement of one theoretical framework with another, but rather a critical rearrangement of the Marxist tradition in confrontation with the historical experiences of colonialism, caste, and subalternity in postcolonial societies.

IV. Discussion and Analysis

A. Marxism and Literary Discourse in the Indian Subcontinent

The connection between Marxist thought and literary and cultural production in the Indian subcontinent dates to the 1930s, when the Progressive Writers' Association, founded in 1936, provided the first organized framework for linking aesthetic practice with political criticism (Coppola, 1974). The Association brought together a broad coalition of Urdu, Hindi, Bengali, and Punjabi writers who sought to redirect literature away from courtly aestheticism and toward the lived conditions of peasants, workers, and the colonized poor (Gopal, 2005, p. 47).

This movement represented a meaningful rupture from earlier nationalist literary traditions, which frequently absorbed class contradiction into an imagined unity of anti-colonial sentiment. The Association's insistence on materialist criticism introduced into South Asian literature a vocabulary of base and superstructure, commodity fetishism, and ideological representation. As Gramsci's analysis of cultural hegemony demonstrates, cultural institutions are not merely reflections of economic relations but active reproducers of social consent for the dominant order (Gramsci, 1971, pp. 12–13). The Association's intervention can be read precisely as an attempt to contest this hegemony from within the literary field.

The limitations of this formation soon became apparent, however. The Association's theoretical inheritance drew primarily from Soviet cultural policy and the European Marxist tradition — a tradition that absorbed questions of caste, gender, and colonial difference into the master narrative of class struggle. The caste system — a structure of social domination with no direct analogue in European capitalist formations — was frequently deferred as a problem that would resolve itself following class liberation (Guru, 1995). This deferral was not merely a tactical error but a symptom of a deeper theoretical insufficiency: the inability of classical Marxism, as received in the subcontinent, to theorize the specificity of caste oppression as a co-constitutive axis of domination rather than a secondary residue or a pre-capitalist remnant.

B. The Subaltern, Caste, and the Fractures of Classical Marxism

The emergence of Subaltern Studies in the early 1980s constituted a decisive break from nationalist historiography and the dominant currents of Indian Marxism. Ranajit Guha's founding manifesto called for the systematic recovery of "the politics of the people" — a domain of collective action irreducible to either nationalist or Marxist elite frameworks (Guha, 1982, p. 1). By insisting that the subaltern possessed an autonomous political consciousness that left no trace in official archives, Subaltern Studies challenged the epistemological foundations of a historiography that consistently wrote peasants and the colonized poor not as subjects but as objects of history.

Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak's intervention, working from within and against the Subaltern Studies collective, redirected this critique toward the question of representation itself. Her

landmark essay asked whether the subaltern — and in particular the subaltern woman — could speak within existing discursive structures, or whether the very act of speaking required entry into a symbolic order that effaced the conditions of her subalternity (Spivak, 1988, pp. 280, 308). This was not an empirical claim about silence but an epistemological argument about the structural conditions under which voices are heard or read.

The implications for Marxist literary criticism were significant. If subaltern consciousness cannot be straightforwardly recovered or represented, then the aesthetic politics of realism that animated the Progressive Writers' Association — which assumed that committed literary practice could give voice to the oppressed — required fundamental reconsideration.

In this context, Dalit literary and intellectual production posed a challenge that was assimilable neither to Subaltern Studies frameworks nor to classical Marxism. Gopal Guru's critique drew attention to the fact that even progressive intellectual formations reproduced caste privilege in the production and validation of theoretical knowledge (Guru, 1995). The experiential knowledge of Dalit communities — arising from the experience of untouchability, ritual exclusion, and a distinct history of anti-caste resistance — was systematically devalued against the abstract universalism of Marxist theory. This was not merely a sociological observation but an epistemological claim: the standpoint from which theory is produced is not neutral, and caste inflects the very categories through which social reality becomes intelligible.

C. Coloniality of Power and Epistemic Disobedience

The theoretical resources elaborated within the Latin American decolonial tradition provide a vocabulary for naming what remained implicit in Indian debates. Anibal Quijano's concept of the coloniality of power identifies a pattern of domination that did not dissolve with formal decolonization but persisted through the classification of populations by race and the hierarchical organization of labor, knowledge, and subjectivity along colonial lines (Quijano, 2000, p. 533). The concept's significance lies in its insistence that colonialism was not an external imposition upon otherwise autonomous social formations but a constitutive moment in the formation of modernity itself — and that its effects continued to structure the postcolonial present.

Dipesh Chakrabarty's elaboration of the project of "provincializing Europe" from within a South Asian context converges with this diagnosis. Chakrabarty argues that the social sciences and humanities, including Marxist historiography, have been shaped by a universalist framework derived from European modernity that systematically marginalizes non-Western forms of historical being (Chakrabarty, 2000, p. 6). His reading of Marx accepts the indispensability of Marxist categories for the critique of capital, while insisting that these categories cannot exhaust the analysis of societies in which "the peasant in the field or the worker at the factory is not simply a wage laborer but carries with him traces of other historical formations" (Chakrabarty, 2000, p. 255).

Walter Dignolo's elaboration of "epistemic disobedience"

adds a further dimension to this argument. If the coloniality of power operates not only through economic and political structures but through the organization of knowledge itself — by designating certain forms of thought as universal and others as merely local, certain languages as theoretical and others as simply vernacular — then resistance requires not only political transformation but a “delinking” from the epistemological assumptions of Western modernity (Mignolo, 2011, p. 9). For literary and cultural criticism, this entails sustained critical scrutiny of theoretical frameworks imported from European traditions and the recovery of intellectual resources sedimented in non-Western critical practices.

In the Indian context, this project of epistemic disobedience was anticipated, if not fully theorized, in the resistance of Dalit intellectuals to the universalist claims of both Brahminical nationalism and Marxist vanguardism. The insistence that caste experience constitutes an irreducible epistemological standpoint — that knowledge produced from below the varna hierarchy is not merely an empirical supplement to theory but a challenge to theory’s universalist claims — represents precisely the kind of delinking that Mignolo describes at a higher level of abstraction.

D. The Global South as a Shared Theoretical Horizon

The concept of the Global South, as deployed in contemporary critical theory, designates not a geographic region but an epistemological standpoint: the perspective of those whose experience of modernity has been shaped by colonial dispossession, racial hierarchy, and the systematic devaluation of non-Western knowledge (Ngugi, 1986, p. 3). From this standpoint, the apparent divergence between Marxist and postcolonial approaches to literary and cultural criticism appears not as a fundamental theoretical incompatibility but as a productive tension within a shared critical project.

This tension was already evident in the work of thinkers who sought to reconstruct Marxist analysis from within non-European experience. José Carlos Mariátegui, writing in Peru in the 1920s, refused to accept the Comintern’s insistence that Latin American societies must pass through a stage of bourgeois democracy before socialist transformation could become possible. His analysis of the “indigenous question” argued that the agrarian communalism of Andean societies was not a pre-modern residue to be overcome but a living resource for Latin American socialist politics. C. L. R. James’s account of the Haitian Revolution demonstrated that enslaved Africans were not merely victims of capitalist accumulation but historical actors whose insurrection constituted a decisive moment in the global struggle against colonial capitalism (James, 1938/2001, p. 392). Ngugi wa Thiong’o’s decolonizing of the mind extended this argument to the domain of language and cultural production, insisting that the use of African languages was not a supplementary cultural preference but a condition for genuine epistemic liberation.

These thinkers share a common intellectual movement: a refusal to treat Marxism as a finished theoretical system to be applied to non-Western contexts, and an insistence on reconstructing its categories from within the particular historical experience of colonized and racially dominated populations. This reconstruction does not dissolve Marxism into cultural particularism; rather, it enriches the analysis of capital by articulating its operational logic with race, caste, and colonial difference.

The parallel trajectories of Indian Marxism, Dalit epistemology, Latin American decolonial thought, and African literary nationalism therefore constitute not a collection of isolated regional responses to a universal theoretical problem, but a collective and multidimensional body of knowledge that challenges the metropolitan assumptions of both classical Marxism and mainstream postcolonial theory. The movement “from capital to coloniality” that this article traces is accordingly not an abandonment of Marxist critique but a critical rearrangement of it in response to the theoretical and political demands of societies whose experience of modernity has been inseparable from colonial domination.

What emerges from this analytical trajectory is that the concept of capital, despite its foundational position in the Marxist tradition, proves insufficient for a full understanding of literary and cultural discourse in contexts such as India, where the mechanisms of domination are reproduced not only in relations of production but in the entanglement of class structures, caste hierarchies, and the colonial inheritance. A purely class-based analysis, if it neglects the logic of caste and the matrix of coloniality, inevitably renders invisible a portion of the mechanisms of exclusion, social relegation, and epistemic privilege. This article argues that the conceptual movement “from capital to coloniality” signifies not a rupture from Marxist critique but its extension and rearrangement within a wider framework — one that rereads capital within a network of coloniality of power encompassing race, caste, language, and epistemic hierarchy. Within such a horizon, literary texts are no longer merely representations of class contradictions but scenes in which capital, caste, and the colonial inheritance simultaneously bear upon the formation of subjectivity, voice, and the possibility of epistemic disobedience. The rethinking of Marxist discourse in the Global South therefore requires the articulation of the critique of capital with the critique of coloniality — an articulation that enables a more precise formulation of the historical and lived experience of subaltern subjects and extends the theoretical horizon of the present article, as its title indicates, from capital toward coloniality.

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