



**SATIRICAL ASPECTS OF "THE WHITE FATHER" BY JULIAN  
MITCHELL**

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**Annotation:** This article deals with the problems of the modern world from the work, Mitchell shows alienation of the colonial administrator from both the colony and his homeland. Julian Mitchell who is contemporary satirist of our time. Especially, from the work of Julian Mitchell's *The White Father*.

**Key words:** colonialism, Neo-Colonialism, religion hypocrisy, post-colonial Africa, irony.

A modern satirist, Julian Mitchell's *The White Father*(1964) is a satirical play that critiques colonialism and Neo-Colonialism, religion hypocrisy, and the liberal guilt of Westerners Identity crisis through the lens of a British missionary's visit to post-colonial Africa. The satire appears primarily from its dark humor (Juvenial satire), irony, and several absurd situations.

A British author, literary critic, David Lodge in *Spectator* says about Mitchell's works that "His narratives carry the weight of its purpose lightly, and he displays everywhere an acute and ear for contemporary styles of speech and behaviour".<sup>1</sup>

In *The White Father* by Mitchell, main hero is Hugh Shrieve who is a British colonial District officer. He is responsible, idealistic to the Ngulu tribe in South Africa. Shrieve considers himself a "father" to the Ngulu, which echoes his title. Even the title of the book "White" comes from this intention and has metaphorical meaning. However, his well-intentioned control is a form of gentle domination,

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<sup>1</sup> Julian Mitchell, *The White Father*, 2013, Faber & Faber, 334 p.



rather than empowerment. Mitchell criticizes the myth of the benevolent colonizer, showing how good intentions often mask control and denial. At the same time, Shrieve's decisions have unforeseen consequences, and the line between helping and harming is blurred. Mitchell challenges readers to consider what morality looks like in systems built on inequality.

Shrieve's idealistic expectation is broken down behind the reality. He was a man caught between two identities: the colonial world he believed in, and Britain moving on. When he is summoned to London to attend a constitutional conference that will determine the colony's future. Shrieve finds himself disoriented, not only by the bureaucratic coldness of British politics, but also by his own sense of detachment from his homeland. Hugh returns to England for the first time in years. But there he soon feels lost in his own country. He felt useful in Africa, he felt out of place in Britain. This speaks to the broader crisis of identity faced by colonial officials during the decolonization period.

As he engages in political negotiations, Shrieve begins to question his role as a colonial officer and the very moral foundations of the empire he has served. The more he tries to "do the right thing," the more he becomes entangled in contradictions between paternalism and exploitation, loyalty and complicity, tradition and progress.

Basically, the novel reveals Shrieve as a man caught between two worlds, neither of which is fully accepted by Africaans. Mitchell mocks the continued perception of Western superiority even after the formal end of colonial rule. The novel is set against the backdrop of the overthrow of British colonial rule. It is characterized by a sense of quiet melancholy and inevitability, as the empire fades away and its agents (such as Shrieve) are left without leadership. The novel suggests that the true reckoning is not only political, but also personal.

*The White Father* is full of different colorful characters. Among them, the character of Father Foss also is an aging British missionary clinging to his past role in Africa, Foss becomes a caricature of a well-meaning but condescending





white savior. He fails to recognize how inappropriate and outdated his presence has become in the newly independent African country. Here, Mitchell uses witty dialogue and irony to highlight the contradictions between the characters' ideals and actions.

Used literature:

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