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## **Editorial**

The April 2020 issue of GNOSIS had a very warm response from the readers in India and abroad that articles have been flowing in quick succession to fill the folder for this issue even before the deadline of 28 February 2020. The thumping reception of the journal shows the depth of multicultural issues in literature to which critics and readers are attracted. As a journal committed to quality research and writing, we are aware of the need to delink quality from publication cost. Hence, our decision to charge no publication fee from the scholars whose papers will be published in the issues of GNOSIS. At the same time since GNOSIS is a self-financed venture, co-operation and support in the form of subscriptions are solicited from the readers and admirers of English Literature and Language from all over the world.

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank all the Academicians and well wishers of GNOSIS who recommended GNOSIS for publication. There are five research/critical articles, and three poems in this issue. Before concluding, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to my reverend Associate Editor and our esteemed members of the Board of Advisors and Review Editors for their selfless and tiresome efforts in assessing the articles very sincerely and giving their valuable remarks to bring out this issue in such a grand manner. I am also grateful to the revered contributors who have made this issue of the Journal a beautiful reality. Wishing all the readers a mental feast. Happy Reading!

**Dr. Saikat Banerjee**  
Editor

# Constructing the Idea of Monstrosity and Social Rejection in Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*

KB Veio Pou

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**Abstract:** Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* as a Gothic novel has been extensively discussed since its publication and this often surrounds the theme of the grotesque. But how did this fascination grip the fascination of the period? A closer observation reveals the influence of the eighteenth century politics and social system that marginalizes a few who are 'unlike' the larger section. The rise of the picaresque novel that portrays the wanderer, the orphan, and the rebel as protagonists throws light to the treatment of these outcasts. The creature in *Frankenstein* was not born evil, but his countenance terrified the beholder that they began to treat him adversely. Like all creations, he also wanted to be loved and have a companion. However, on being denied, he turned vicious in defense of his life. This paper argues that 'monstrosity' is a construct of the society. And being monstrous, social rejection follows. Human beings are often judgmental even at observing the exterior. But what matters is what lies in the heart.

**Keywords:** Eighteenth and nineteenth century, Gothic novel, wandering orphan, injustice, compassion, prejudice, monstrosity, benevolent being, social system.

Human beings have a tendency to be flattered by those that are fairer and prettier, though it is well accepted that "all that glitters is not gold". Often, external appearance becomes the basis for judgment, and we end up with a prejudiced mind over those which are less attractive. Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* is a classic example of how social rejection turned the harmless creature into a predator. But the story is not an unusual presentation of a social outcaste. Since

the arrival of the novel into the literary scene in the eighteenth century the *picaro* has found a prominent place.

In the eighteenth century, however, the idea of a rebel, transgressing into the forbidden territory, was not yet as destructive as it would be in the nineteenth century. The writers of that age were more fascinated with the 'milder' version of a rebel, like, Molls Flanders, Tom Jones, Pamela, and other characters. The nineteenth century writings began to portray the more violent of the characters. What is more intriguing is also that they are painted in grotesque manner. Besides the novel in consideration, one may also take the example of Bertha Mason, the creole woman depicted as mentally unstable, in Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice* (1813). Often the theme of marriage and romance overshadows the theme of grotesque in *Pride and Prejudice*. But on closer introspection, one of the reasons for Bertha being locked up in the upper room of Mr. Rochester's mansion is that she looked different, act different, and thus, kept away from others. Her madness was never really explained except for the inference that there were tendencies in the family. Just like the creature in *Frankenstein*, there is high possibility that Bertha became what she became because of alienation and prejudice.

Mary Shelly's *Frankenstein*, simply put, it a story of the creator rejecting his creation, like a father rejecting his own child. In one of the most poignant moment, the creature spoke to the blind old man De Lacey; "I have good dispositions; my life has been hitherto harmless, and in some degree, beneficial, but a fatal prejudice clouds their eyes, and where they ought to see a feeling and kind friend, they behold only a detestable monster" (*Frankenstein* 104). The old man could sympathize with his guest, unlike others, because his physical blindness has made him

overcome the prejudice of those who could see. The creature was good hearted until people rejected him and refused to listen to him. His monstrosity was only in defense of people's physical and mental abuse. Just because he was deformed and ugly, he was taken for a wicked creature, a monster. Is ugliness a manifestation of an inherent evil? Why do people care less for things that do not appear beautiful as if they aren't capable of being good or love people?

Under the lens of Gothic fiction, *Frankenstein* is at times given a larger than life depiction of the grotesque acts of the Victor's creature as a cruel and merciless being. However, on closer observation, the creature is also a benevolent being. In one of the earliest reviews of the novel, P.B Shelley remarked, "The Being in *Frankenstein* is, no doubt, a tremendous creature. It was impossible that he should not have received among men that treatment which led to the consequence of his being a social nature" (196). He further goes on to say that it has a moral lesson for us: "Treat a person ill, and he will become wicked. Requite affection with scorn; - let one being be selected, for whatever cause, as the refuse of his kind - divide him, a social being, from society, and you impose upon him the irresistible obligations – malevolence and selfishness."

A sensible reader of Marry Shelley's novel will sympathize with the ugly looking creature on hearing his narrative. He was full of sympathy for the De Lacey's family and secretly helps them in meeting with their physical needs. Moreover, he often overheard them referring to him as the "good spirit", "wonderful", etc. (*Frankenstein* 88). In short, he bears no grudges against anyone but to his utter surprise he was maltreated despite his good work. That he could not tolerate. Why should one be repaid with evil for good? He was "affectionate and full of moral

sensibility, yet the circumstances of his existence are so monstrous and uncommon, that, when the consequences of them became developed in action, his original goodness was gradually turned into inextinguishable misanthropy and revenge” (Shelley 196).

James O'Rourke has also traced the influence of Rousseau in the story by saying that the story showed how civilization corrupts an essentially benevolent being into a daemon (543). The eighteenth century England, as also the rest of Europe, saw the rapid growth of industrialization since the Glorious Revolution of the last quarter of seventeenth century. Then came the French Revolution that shook the whole of Europe. Lee Sterrenburg argued that Mary Shelley's idea of the monster “rises from the body of writings on the French Revolution” (250). He further points out that the monster was a “philosophical rebel”. The social system has extremely suppressed the individuals that their rebellion horrified the government in power. Hence, the “rebels are monsters” (*ibid* 257). Since then, the Frankenstein myth has influenced the writings, politics, and psyche of the people in the nineteenth century (Baldick 5). Slowly, the word 'monster' acquired larger connotations that everyone who “transgressed the bounds of nature has become a monster”. In other words, “It is the vices of ingratitude, rebellion and disobedience, particularly towards parents, that most commonly attracts the appellation 'monstrous': to be a monster is to break the natural bonds of obligation towards friends and especially towards blood-relations” (*ibid* 13). And as one can see, the nineteenth century literature have traces of this myth, often contaminated, distorted, masked, or disfigured, but unmistakably at large.

Nina Aurbach says, “The figure of the wandering orphan, searching through an alien world for his home, has fascinated generations of novelists” (395). The rise of such an orphan

figure clearly marks the beginning of the rise of the marginalized. Knowledge is, now, not limited to the high class or intellectual group of the society; it has reached even the once ignorant, poor citizens. In this context, we can even see the creature in the novel as an 'orphan', rejected by his own creator, Victor. Like all orphans needed attention and care, the Being implored Victor to 'listen' to his story, how it feels to be rejected. In a more autobiographical level, Mary Shelley's own life can be likened to that of the monster. Her mother having died while giving birth to her, and Mary remained like her own creation in the novel, "a motherless orphan" (Baldick 31).

The idea of the orphan being "a faintly disreputable and possible bastardized offspring of uncertain parentage, always threatening to lose focus and definition, but, with the resilience of the natural victim, always managing to survive; a particular product of the modern world" (Auerbach 395). The picaresque novels of the eighteenth century reflect the nature of the orphan, the slyly potent underground figure. Daniel Defoe's character Moll Flanders is one of such figure; "an amphibious creature', half whore, half gentle(wo)man, fighting desperately in silence to manipulate a social identity out of a hostile world" (*ibid* 397). Even in Mary Shelley's novel we have figures of outcasts, other than the ugly creature, who earned out sympathies. Justine is bullied into confessing for a crime she did not commit: "Ever since I was condemned, my confessor has besieged me; he threatened and menaced, until I almost began to think that I was the monster that he said I was" (64). Now we have another 'monster' figure in the form of a poor, innocent Justine. Here, it may be seen as Shelley's critique of the social system. Sylvia Bowerbank argued that "the tension between the victim and the social order which Mary Shelley sets up in *Frankenstein* resembles a typically Godwinian situation..." (423). In *Caleb Williams or*



*Things as They Are* (1794) William Godwin shows how Caleb, an innocent man, becomes an outcast persecuted and pursued by the socially respectable Falkland, until Caleb turns malicious and “murders” Falkland. However, by the end of the novel, Caleb realizes that even Falkland was noble spirit until the “wilderness of society” which is “a rank and rotten soil from which every finer shrub draws poison as it grows” corrupted him.

This is the moral dilemma which seems to emerge from the creature's own history: initial benevolence is poisoned by an unjust society. His arguments against the social establishment are powerful. First, his viewpoint casts even further doubt upon the “innocence” of his victims. In fact, he claims to be the victim. The creature's “identification of himself with the propertyless” and his situation of an absolute wretchedness makes the reader “regard him as a representative of the oppressed classes, while Victor appears to represent the callous neglect with which the ruling orders treat them” (Baldick 54). The ruling orders of the society are “all self-satisfied partakers in a social system which thrives – or better, which stagnates - on excluding all wretches” (Bowerbank 425). The creature's cry to be loved in spite of his absolute wretchedness act as a moral demand not only that Victor acknowledge his creation but that social community be fluid and dynamic, that it accommodates itself to the aberrations outside its “love”, that it strives to be in relationship to all the living and not content itself with sterile and selective ideas of community. To include the monster, in principle, demands an expansiveness of love.

One of the desperate needs of the creature was a companion with whom he can show his love and communicate with it. A need that all beings crave for, because all human beings are social being and cannot live isolated. When Victor refused to create another being the creature

vowed to be destructive. His stay in the hovel adjoining the De Lacey family sparked off his desire to be able to communicate: "I found that these people possessed a method of communicating their experience and feeling to one another by articulate sounds. I perceived that the words they spoke sometimes produced pleasure or pain, smiles or sadness, in the minds and countenances of the hearers. This was indeed a godlike science, and I ardently desire to become acquainted with it" (*Frankenstein* 185). Peter Brooks, talking about the creature's desire to acquire language, says, "It is hence no accident that what language first reveals to the Monster is human love, and that his rhetorical plea to his creator ends with the demand for a creature whom he might love" (330). Having experienced rejections from all the people he met, the creature found language to be the last option left so that he can "become linked to the chain of existence and events, from which I am now excluded" (115). His desire was that other creatures should recognize him as a being capable of all that a beautiful being can be. Just because he is ugly and deformed doesn't mean that he is deprived of being capable of love and care.

This brings us back to the discussion of the orphan figure of the eighteenth century - the shadowy, manipulative, cloaked figure who tries to attain an identity for himself through trials. Nina Auerbach once again says, "The eighteenth century orphan literally makes himself; he is his own Frankenstein. He has no social origins to give his shape and there is no God to give him soul. He stands supreme self-made man" (403). In Henry Fielding's *Tom Jones* (1749), we find another *picaro* who, initially was too open and sincere but has to undergo a transformation to give him the true picture of a *picaro*. It was only after his banishment from Paradise Hall that Tom Jones learned to dissolve his identity by manipulating it, to be multiple rather than sincere, to take on the colour of his surrounding, wear a mask. He has to break the conventional laws to

be able to give him an identity. Yet, we can still see that though Tom Jones and Molls Flanders might have become unconventional, they still seems to retain their place in the society, perhaps because they are still human enough in their looks, unlike the creature in *Frankenstein*.

The pathetic creature in the novel felt like a “blot upon the earth, from which all men fled” (*Frankenstein* 92) only because his countenance is not pleasant to behold. Because he was ugly, he was treated as an outcast socially, and hence must face the agony throughout: “Alas! I did not yet entirely know the fatal effects of the miserable deformity” (*ibid* 87). The “good disposition” of the miserable creature was recognized only by the old blind, De Lacey: “I am blind, and cannot judge of your countenance, but there is something in your words which persuade me that you are sincere (*ibid* 104-5). If only people had not been prejudiced against ugliness of the creature, the consequences would have been different. And yet, we continue to face this kind of situation even today. We are too quick to judge, too quick to condemn those that are less beautiful externally. But what really counts is the matter of the heart.

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# **An Epic of the Oppressed Communities: A Subaltern Study of Amitav**

## **Ghosh's *Ibis* Trilogy**

**Dr. R. Karthika Devi**

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**Abstract:** The term “Subaltern”, originally an Italian word used by the Italian Marxist Antonio Gramsci to refer to the marginalized social groups oppressed by the politically powerful people, has now become an umbrella term to designate any kind of people who are victims of discrimination based on gender, race, religion, colour, etc.,. The subaltern criticism is considered a part of postcolonial study. In this light, Amitav Ghosh's *Ibis* Trilogy comprising the three novels – *Sea of Poppies*, *River of Smoke* and *Flood of Fire* as post colonial fiction discusses the plight of the oppressed people under western hegemonic power system in a grand scale.

**Key words:** Subaltern, marginalized, oppressed, hegemonic, discrimination.

“Subaltern”, literally meaning ‘of inferior rank ‘was used as a code word by Antonio Gramsci, an Italian Marxist to refer to the peasants and the proletariat during the 1930s, while imprisoned in the Fascist Italy (Hawthorn, 345). Later, the study and analysis of the term by Gayathri Chakrabarty Spivak in association with the reading of postcolonial texts along with her interaction with Ranajit Guha and Dipesh Chakrabarty - India based historiographers, made it include in its purview all marginalized people who could not raise their voices among the dominant hegemonic voices (Boehmer, 353). Amitav Ghosh in his *Ibis Trilogy* has given voice for the suppressed communities as a postcolonial writer.

The semi historical fictional narrative *Ibis Trilogy* comprising *Sea of Poppies* (2008), *River of Smoke* (2011) and *Flood of Fire* (2015) deals with the political and the social conditions of a part of South East Asia in the backdrop of opium trade between British India and China during the middle of the nineteenth century. Poppy cultivation and opium trade changed the normal course of life in a grave manner. It led to war among countries. Systems, political and social, underwent drastic transformation. Native people were marginalized and western hegemonic power swindled the native resources and exploited the people economically. The subaltern experiences under the western hegemonic rule were realized by almost people of all ranks and status - peasants, *rajās*, women, mixed breed people, soldiers etc., Amitav Ghosh with his deep and wide historical scholarship has portrayed subaltern life of Indians during the middle of the nineteenth century in British India. The British interference had made them poorer and their self-sufficient peasant life was modified into a debtor's life ever depending upon the white men for everything.

### **The Condition of the Peasant Life**

India, from time immemorial, has been an agricultural country. People depend on farming for their livelihood. Particularly, the Gangetic plain is one of the most fertile lands in the world producing rice and wheat which make the country not only self-sufficient in its fundamental need of food but also capable of exporting them. But, during the nineteenth century, the British traders had a number of opium factories which demanded a lot of poppies to be processed for their business that yielded them huge profit. Opium export became significant for the English merchants to compensate their import of tea and silk. Hence, they compelled Indian peasants to cultivate them. Amitav Ghosh mentions in his *Sea of Poppies* that the Indian farmers were not interested in the cultivation of poppies as it demanded huge expenditure and

strenuous physical work. Moreover, if they grew rice and wheat, after the harvest they could produce other edible items such as vegetables and dal. But they were compelled by the English *Sahibs* and if the farmers did not obey the *Sahibs*, they would become the victims of the false charges of theft and their thumb impressions would be forged. The white magistrates, getting bribes from the merchants, would punish the peasants severely (Ghosh, 2008, 28-29).

Ghosh, in *Flood of Fire*, says that the preceding rulers of the English, such as Sultans and Moghuls had not been interfered in the trade and commerce of the natives: But, realizing the importance of the profit gained through trade, the British intervened in the profession of the farmer: "...the Company had begun to interfere in matters that previous rulers had never meddled with \_ like crops and harvests ..." (52) Cultivation of poppies transformed the self-sufficient farmer into a poor opium addict who was led to get loan from the British merchant and finally lost his lands to the merchant for his debt. Not only their means of income, i.e. their land but also they lost their life. Because of poverty, most of the people were compelled to leave their countries as indentured laborers to work in the industries and plantations established by the westerners in the foreign countries such as Mauritius and West Indies. And Ghosh has also discussed the mass migration of the people who lost their identity in search of livelihood in the alien lands.

### **Peasant-Soldiers**

Amitav Ghosh both in his *The Glass Palace* and *The Ibis Trilogy* has discussed the status of Indian soldiers. Ghosh describes them, through the eyes of his characters, as very young innocent peasants who did not know why they fought. Moreover, they received hatred from the people of the neighboring countries because of their involvement in the war against them. The

English used them selfishly as their victims. As they interfered in the trade and commerce of the natives, they also tried to interfere in the job market. Ghosh writes in *Flood of Fire* : "... the Company tried to... discourage men from joining any army but their own"(52). The Indian soldiers were given only half the amount of salary received by the English soldier. They were never given the opportunity of occupying the seat of higher rank.

### **Status of *Rajahs***

Not only the poor people, but also the descendants of the royal families also had been betrayed and swindled by the colonizers in a cunning way. Neel Rattan Halder, Raja of Rashkali represents the royal families which had been deprived of their name, fame and property by the colonizers who never hesitated to use any foul means to fulfill their aims. Neel had trade relations with the British merchant Benjamin Burnham who outwardly exhibited himself a philanthropist was but a cruel- minded, selfish materialist always ready to confiscate the property of Indian landlords.

When Burnham's eyes fell on Neel's estate and other Zamindari lands, he never missed a single chance to seize them using illegal method with the help of Neel's own people. Actually, people like Neel considered the beef-eating westerners as "unclean", yet they hosted them with respect wholeheartedly. When the westerners feasted at his home, he fasted. He used to take pains to treat the foreigners in an esteemed way. But, in return, what he had got from them was only bitter betrayal. Despite belonging to a traditional royal family with strict code of conduct and customs, against the usual practice of his ancestors, Neel pleased the foreign guests with wine and liquor. With all his hospitality, Neel Rattan Halder was only betrayed, cheated, deserted, swindled and humiliated being put in prison by the greedy, selfish merchant of the



colonial East India Company, Mr. Burnham. He had debts owed to the English merchants. At the same time, he had his own obligations for his tenants, managers and other subjects who pleaded him not to sell the zamindary for his debt. He told Mr. Burnham that he would declare bankruptcy than hand over his Zamindary to the latter. But, the Englishman conspired with Neel's mistress, Elokeshi and arrested him with the false charge of forgery. The treatment given to him in Alipore Jail can be considered as symbol of the colonial cruelty. He tried to please them with his high sounding English but he was made almost naked and tattooed on his forehead with mark of "forgerer". Tortures on him did not stop there. He was sent to Mauritius as a laborer to work in the plantation by the ship *the Ibis*. There also he was humiliated by the European ship captain and the first mate who ordered him to urinate on the face of another convict, Ah Fatt. With his integrity as a high born noble man, he refused to do that disgraceful act. But, the perverted Europeans, for their entertainment, made Ah Fatt urinate on the face of Neel. At the end of *Sea of Poppies*, Neel escaped from the *Ibis* along with four more members. Despite having been born as a Royal man in India, he wandered serving as *munshi* and translator for various people in foreign countries for his survival. He was pushed to the subaltern status by the English hegemonic system.

## **Women**

Women are considered marginalized creatures throughout the world. Amitav Ghosh shows how colonialism dragged them to the extreme condition of oppression. Deeti was the last daughter of a eight children family. When her turn came for marriage the economic condition of the family had deteriorated considerably due to the marriages of her elder sisters. As the family could not afford to spend much as dowry, Deeti had to marry a crippled man who cannot walk. Before marriage, it was informed that he had lost his legs in the battle field. But, after marriage

Deeti realized that she had been married to an opium addict and it should be here remembered that opium addiction was a disease donated by the greedy English opium merchants. Had the English not popularized the opium, Hukham Singh might not have become an addict so that Deeti would not have suffered such intolerable problems in her life. On the very first night of her marriage, she found her husband inactive and she was also made inactive and unconscious by her mother in law and her brother in law seduced her without her knowledge. The result is the birth of her daughter, Kabutri.

Even at the death bed of her husband, Hukham Singh's brother Chandan Singh tried to make her yield to his temptations saying that if she accepted him, she would beget a male child who might become the legal heir of Hukham Singh. If she became pregnant because of Chandan after Hukham's death, the child would become an illegal one and thereby would lose the possibility of inheriting the property of Hukham Singh. Chand indirectly warned Deeti that he would chase her even after her husband's death. Deeti in order to escape from the cunning hands of Chandan Singh decided to die in the funeral pyre. But she was saved by Kalua, the low caste cart driver. There developed the love between Deeti and Kalua. But a widow remarriage with an outcaste would not be accepted and so hiding her identity she migrated as an indentured laborer. But while sailing by the *Ibis*, she was identified by Subedar Bhyro Singh, one of the uncles of Hukham Singh, who arranged the marriage between Deeti and Hukham Singh. He too, understanding the situation of Deeti, tried to bring her under his control. Being a poor woman with a good for nothing husband Deeti became a constant victim of gender violence. At last, she had to separate herself from Kalua also.

Not only the poor women but also the rich women too suffer just because of being women. Shireenbai, wife of Bahram Modi represents the plight of rich high society women who

suffer due to gender discrimination. She was unable to marry the rich bridegroom who had been betrothed to her due to his unexpected death in an accident. So, automatically she was considered to be unlucky and hence it became impossible for her father to find another bridegroom of the same status. So, the poor but educated Bahram Modi was selected. Bahram Modi stayed in father-in-law's house and established the opium export trade for him. But after Rustomjee Mistrice – his father-in-law's death, his brothers-in-law tried to expel him from the trade concerns as he, being the son – in – law could not claim the equal rights with them. *Flood of Fire* brings out Shireen's own realization of her status in her father's home:

...It wasn't that anyone was unkind to her: to the contrary they were almost excessively solicitous, as they might be with a guest. But it was clear to everyone – the servants most of all- that she was not a mistress of the Mistrice mansion in the same way that her brothers' wives were; when decisions had to be made ... she was never consulted; her claims ... were accorded low priority or even overlooked ... (13)

Women, whether they are rich or poor, they had the same marginalized position in the family system as well as in the larger society.

### **Half Breed Children**

One of the chief effects of Colonization is the rise of new races by the union of the male and the female belonging to two different races. Amitav Ghosh, in *River of Smoke* mentions the conditions of these mixed race children born by the contact of people of various countries because of the colonial rule and the colonial trade.

When Zadig asks Bahram Modi how he satisfies his bodily needs when he leaves home, with much reluctance, he reveals his secret contact with the Chinese washer woman and their son

Ah Fatt or Freddy. Though he gives all financial support to the boy, he is unable to reveal himself as the father of the boy. Amitav Ghosh writes elaborately about the condition of Ah Fatt. He was told by his own mother that he was an orphan and she was being looked after by the eldest widowed aunt and Bahram Modi was introduced as Uncle Barry.

The experience of Ah Fatt as a child represents the plight of mixed race children who are not mostly recognized as legal heirs of their parents. When Ah Fatt, later, comes to know about his real relationship with “Uncle Barry”, actually his own father Sethiji Bahram Modi, he longs to go to Bombay, his father’s place and to see other relatives. But he is not allowed by Bahram Modi due to fear. Bahram Modi does not have the courage to reveal the fact of having a son by another woman in the foreign soil, while his wife Shireenbai longs to have a son of their own.

Amitav Ghosh, along with the imaginary characters, talks of historical people also with reference to the production of mixed breed children. Ghosh discusses the second life of the British painter George Chinnery with an Indian woman during his stay in India. During the colonial exploits of the English, Chinnery got the opportunity of visiting China, India, Macau in order to see, learn and draw classic paintings.

Amitav Ghosh brings into light the major events that took place in the life of Chinnery. He married Marianne and had two children. He came to Madras and Calcutta. He became a successful painter. In spite of his reputation and wealth, Chinnery needed a physical companion. Both Bahram Modi, the imaginative character belonging to the Indian society and the real man, George Chinnery of the western society, in spite of their successful exploits along the colonial route running towards making money, feel a sense of shame about their second life with a foreign woman. When they hide the truth, only the children - the result of their pleasure pursuit

suffer. George Chinnery also had two children, Khoka and Robin. He tried his level best to hide his connection with Sundaree and the two children from his wife but in futile.

This is the plight of almost all second paramours belonging to other races and their progeny. And the colonial history has brought into light the fact that only the men folk of the white society had joined the women of the oppressed community in the colonized country and became responsible for the creation of a new race, which, in consequence, is not recognized as a respectable class of the mainstream society. While Bahram Modi satisfied his needs with Chi-Mei, a washerwoman, leading her life in a boat, Chinnery enjoyed the pleasure of love with a daughter of drum beater who performed dancing and singing in the streets. Both Chinnery and Bahram Modi were not ready to accept them even in remote places among the unknown people. Chinnery's second son Robin inheriting his father's artistic talents followed him to Macau where he was introduced by Chinnery to Penrose Fitcher, an English plant collector, as his nephew, despite his deep love for his son. Only because of affection, he took care of his son in the foreign land and taught him the nuances of painting. But, he was not ready to give him the position of the legal son. In the same way, Bahram Modi also was unable to reveal his identity as the father of Ah Fatt but wore the mask of "god-parent", though he was unable to hide his love and affection.

Even Marianne Chinnery was ready to take care of them. But her daughter married an English district magistrate. In that position, revealing her husband's second life was considered bringing embarrassment to her husband.

Both Robin Chinnery who was instructed by his father to address the latter as his uncle and Ah Fatt who was not taken by his father to India were displeased with their fathers. The

colonizers would preach equality and fraternity but they themselves and the people who are influenced by the colonizers would not follow. Contact between two countries led to union between two races resulting in new race which suffers once again under the colonial yoke.

### **Orphaned Children**

Paulette, daughter of a French botanist, at the demise of her mother during her childbirth, was brought by poor Indian woman in the Indian fashion along with her son. Hence, she was unaware of the European customs and habits. She spoke Bengali, wore sarees and walked without shoes. When she was taken in the home of the Burnhams, she could not stay there casually. She was laughed at by the daughter of the Burnhams for her Indian way of life. She was very much ridiculed and taunted for her lack of knowledge of the *Bible*. She was always reminded of being brought up as part of charity deeds. Mrs. Burnham used to boast of themselves as carrying the responsibility of looking after the well being of the poor whites suffering in the alien lands as the ruling class. But she was blind to her husband's misappropriation of the property of rich Indian Aristocrats such as Neel Rattan Halder and his opium trade which caused irrecoverable damages to families and society. When Zachary Reid happened to stay near the house of the Burnhams in order to repair the pleasure barge of Neel, now in the possession of Burnham, Mrs. Burnham treated him very coldly..

### **The Low Caste People**

The plight of the low caste people has been represented through the character of Kalua. He is introduced in the first chapter of *Sea of Poppies* as the cart driver of the crippled opium addict Hukham Singh, husband of Deeti. When he came to Deeti's house in order to take Hukham to the opium factory, he had hidden his face with a hood so that the upper class caste

Hindus would not look at his face. For, in those days it was believed that looking at the face of a low caste person would bring some harm. Later, he saved Deeti from *Sati*, a practice of entering the funeral pyre of one's husband to sacrifice one's own life in order to go with husband. In order to escape from the wrath of the high caste people, they decided to escape as indentured laborers by the *Ibis* hiding their identity. But, in spite of changing their names, they were identified by the *Subedar* Bhyro Singh who threatened Deeti who refused to yield to his desires. He revealed the identity of Kalua and Deeti to the captain of the ship, Chillingworth and the first mate – Mr. John Crowle a white man. Chillingworth decided to punish Kalua with sixty whips which might take the life of Kalua. When Zachary expressed his sympathy, the white man asked whether they could tolerate any white woman to be touched by a black man. From the words of Chillingworth, it is revealed by Amitav Ghosh that in all societies one group of people oppress another group in terms of race or caste. And the powerful community of one region blindly supports the dominant community of another country. The westerners always preached equality and fraternity but practiced discrimination and prejudices based on one race and caste.

The ship *Ibis* was originally used for transporting the black slaves to work in white men's empire building tasks. The ship showed evidences for the fact that the blacks were not taken to America as human beings but like animals were tied with heavy iron chains and imprisoned in the lower deck of the ship lacking enough air and light. When Jodu entered the place where the black slaves had been kept he was able to smell the vomiting, urination and other human waste once littered the place. Even after the slave trade the ship was not used for any constructive purpose but only for spoiling the life of the Asian people by trading opium. Thus the *Ibis Trilogy* vividly presents how one powerful group of people suppresses another weaker section of society in epic dimension.

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# Multicultural Approach In The Novels Of Aravind Adiga

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**Abstract:** Aravind Adiga's *The White Tiger*, *Between the Assassinations* and *Last Man in Tower* move toward the old set up of society was losing ground. This research paper attempts to trace the various ways in which multicultural approaches have been used in relation to Post colonialism. The relationship between history and culture, reality and its representations, society and aesthetics has been discussed. This paper focuses on impacts of globalization, identity crises, society, culture - Indian village culture as well as life and culture in metropolitan cities. Adiga's novels explore the conditions between old and new generations, impacts of technology on social changes and degradation of contemporary society. This paper displays political, historical and linguistic differences in the view of ethnic, class and gender perspectives.

**Key words:** Multicultural approach, post colonialism, culture, society, globalization and identity crises.

The meaning of term culture is the beam of consciousness and sense, light of truth and justice. Beauty and goodness are the chief characters of culture. Culture related to attitudes, beliefs, language, customs, rituals, behavior, religion, moral values, food, art, literature and music. In 20<sup>th</sup> century the study of culture has developed into cultural studies or the school of multiculturalism through the writing of Raymond William on culture, in meticulous, in his effort to distinguish the countryside life from the metropolitan life.

In the ancient days the empire distorted and the former colonies became self-governing nations. They became politically independent but remained financially reliant on the colonial powers. This formed the condition in which two different cultures – one Eastern or

Southern and the other Western or Northern- survived in the same region at one and the same time. Cultural studies is a discipline that is collected of fundamentals of communalism, New Historicism, Feminism, ethnicity, religions and theology, Sociology, Rural and Urban culture, Culture studies and Postcolonial studies. These are some of the areas related to those social and cultural forces that either create community or cause divisions and alienation. Culture in relation to individual lives with engagement a straight approach to attacking class inequities in society. Western culture is characterized by racial discrimination and expansionism and this has put it in contradiction with the Eastern culture.

Multiculturalism is something that integrates thoughts, attitudes or citizens from several diverse states and cultural backgrounds. While citizens of dissimilar cultures come jointly to celebrate and contribute their diverse customs it is an illustration of multiculturalism. Adiga uses the moment and social structure of that particular society and generate variation between his writings. The word multiculturalism has a variety of definitions inside the circumstance of sociology, of political philosophy and of informal employ. In anthropology it is an equivalent for ethnic pluralism, with the double terms frequently used interchangeably, for instance, a cultural pluralism in which various racial groups work together and into a conversation with one more devoid of possessing to give up their particular identities. It can illustrate a blend of racial population region everywhere various artistic customs survive or a single country.

Multiculturalism that encourages maintaining the uniqueness of various traditions is frequently distinguished to other settlement policies such as social incorporation, artistic absorption and ethnic isolation. The perception of multiculturalism recognizes cultural diversity within a society. It supports others to be sophisticated by valuable contributions to society made

by people from diverse ethnic backgrounds. This chapter highlights the origin and development of multiculturalism in India, with reference to Aravind Adiga's novels. Here the driving force is to envisage an example shift from Post colonialism towards multiculturalism. Multiculturalism efforts a close assessment of Indian novels in English in the light of both support and violation of the principles of multiculturalism in the selected novels by eminent Indian writers such as: *Untouchable* (1935) by Mulk Raj Anand, *Train to Pakistan* (1956) by Khushwant Singh, *Bye Bye Blackbird* (1971) by Anita Desai and *The White Tiger*, *Between Assassination* and *Last Man in Tower* by Aravind Adiga.

The cultural diversity of the great Indian people get reflected in their languages, religions, food habits, family structures, marriage systems, arts, festivals, names, the style of clothing and geographical conditions. The present chapter concentrates on the multicultural approach in the novels of Aravind Adiga. In the postcolonial Indian English fiction love, sex, marriage and human identity in the society are some of the leading themes of the novels written by contemporary novelists. The present era has with the new policy of the world that is liberalization, privatization and globalization. The contemporary writers represent the new era with a new trend that has emerged as multiculturalism. Multiculturalism is the product of the time of the globalization has made people to migrate from one place to another place. This multicultural standpoint of cultural entrenched of human beings, the inevitability and desirability of cultural pluralism and multicultural constitution of every cultural is the prime focus in his novels. However, Adiga's English shaped a new trend in writing as well as an ambassador to multicultural concerns. Among other writers Vikram Seth came into lime light by his novels *The Golden Gate*, *A Suitable Boy*, *An Equal Music* and *Two Lives* portraying the canon of multiculturalism based on post Independent India and lives of young professionals in America.

Arundhati Roy's famous novel *The God of Small Things* radically changed perceptions and meticulously carried on the elements of multiplicity in her fiction.

Multiculturalism is religious clashes and cultural conflicts in India. Adiga portrays his narratives with postcolonial themes and techniques, giving Balram's and Yogesh Murthy's struggle is a sense of identity. Here Adiga characters struggle to establish his identity over the identity crises of historical icons and cultures. The value of pure multiculturalism as a remedy against social conflict is highly considerable in his novel. While Adiga suggest the dangers religious of fundamentalism, he also suggest new found doubts about the advantages of pluralism and cultural hybridity. India is a multicultural space accommodating many races, castes, languages, religions and cultures. These exist ironically as different and at the same time, interconnected, even overlapping, identities, at multiple levels.

Some of the significant multicultural issues that need to be addressed today are cast system, dowry, communalism, drinking, drug addiction, etc. There are so many other issues faced by the nation in general and regions and communities in particular, that all of us should think about. India is a country of diverse religious beliefs and faiths. Persons belonging to variety of communities such as Hindus, Sikhs, Muslims, Christians, Parsees, etc. live in India. The violent behavior of one community towards the other creates tension and clashes between two religious communities.

Adiga's, novels are especially refer to the cultural and social issues of marginal tribes in the early free Indian villages. The novels criticize both positive and negative developments in the places such as Laxmangarh, Dhanbad, Bangalore, Kittur and Mumbai where the end of imperial rule meant new possibilities of cultural identity. The cultural values change on account of rise of materialism and consumerism as side effects of the globalization, weak political system,

capitalist economy, exclusive growth, vote bank politics and importance to influential rich economic class which has given the most significant place for money in deciding over the principles, cultural values, morality and patriotism.

The stream of research focuses on how national culture impacts the characteristics of individual entrepreneurs, specifically, values, beliefs and cognition. Since this chapter's examination is on the individual level, but focus will be on cultural imperialistic loom. Observing cultural norms and values as a resource structure for entrepreneurial activity makes sense when one considers that the rules of economic behavior are embedded in national, regional and organizational cultures. Adiga's novels are special reference to cultural imperialism in the present ultra-modern India. Novels emphasize the major issues of Indian society like identity crisis, cultural discrimination, political corruption, class discrimination, complexity in the socio-economic, influence of foreign culture and degradation of customary values and extreme nature of Indian societies towards the west.

The novels explored the issues related to the dark side of Indian village life, their struggle for their survival. It is the complete postmortem of the India's developing nature of the city life. Adiga often inculcates his own multiple-nationality milieu into his characters, discovering the impact of class and racial differences while simultaneously examining better questions concerning the direction of Indian identity and the experience of Indian residents. Adiga's claim to modern Indian literature arrives from the hybridity his stories obtain through the inclusion of multiple Indian religious and geopolitical identities; however, there is tension with this inclusion. Instead of engaging in direct communalism, Adiga shapes multiple religious identities into a single and united Indian identity. This mastery of the technological

writing skill, weave of traditions, images of India, and growing body of literary excellence has established Adiga's work as worthy of praise and careful attention.

Multiculturalism is the way in which cultural and ethnic discrepancies may be accommodated in social, political and economic arrangements. It contributes to some common themes in the writings of authors from numerous different cultures like exploring personal identity in the society which symbols multiculturalism, shaping individual and cultural values, familial relationships, childhood games, folklore of the culture, societal pressures: rewards and punishments, spiritual background, ecological adjustments that resulted from chronological factors, socioeconomic changes, contact with other cultural group and forming personal relationships such as establishing family or marital roles, understanding gender roles, developing friendships and social groups and adapting to roles, developing friendships and social groups and adapting to roles defined by age.

Multiculturalism focuses on the social scenario in the multicultural societies, on the experiences of the people of these societies, on the blend reception which the minorities may receive in the country of arrival, on experience of racial discrimination and antagonism and on the sense of baseless and the look for identity which can result from displacement and cultural diversity. Multicultural literature maintains a strong ethnic group awareness which is based on a sense of uniqueness. The sense of collectiveness in multicultural literature relates the diaspora to homeland. India unlike Australia, America or Britain does not have a rainbow population; hence the impact of multiculturalism in modern Indian English Literature has been sluggish to seep in. It is just starting to make its presence felt. Authors have started to trade in their identities to package it better in their literary pursuits so as to give their own places broader images. This chapter is a predecessor of a comprehensive piece of work. It explores the

notions of postcolonial theory and multiculturalism and whether they can be regarded as collaborative 'signposts' of discursive practices.

The aim of this chapter is to shift away from the current constructs of race, culture and recognition and into the arena of hybridity and multiplicity and the constituting and reconstituting of self. In the situation I shall use India as a paradigm of a dissimilar communities and English as the language being discussed under the term discursive practices. To examine multiculturalism and its relativity to postcolonial theory, it is required to deconstruct the morphological adjuncts leading to the formulation of the concept. The word culture which shapes the foundations of this opinion is the ability of members within a society to take a position enabling them to communicate and function in accordance with the principles and constructs put in place for that purpose. It is also the process of getting to know, to relate to an advantage from the social systems acting as signifiers for the ongoing development of that society.

In this paper, I have indicated that the concept of postcolonial theory and multiculturalism can be believed collaborative markers of discursive practices. Against a form of postcolonial theory, Bhabha asserts that discourse needs to shift from the identification of images as being positive and negative to an understanding of the processes of subjectification. By embracing the winds of change brought in by economic liberalization and globalization, they fashion their identities. Adiga's second novel explores the conflicts between individual and collective will power, between real estate builder and masterji. Vishram Society which Adiga first describes as anchored like a dreadnought of middle class respectability is shown to be anything but respectable, once money is prioritized.

Indian English writing has acquired a distinct and unparallel position with an individual character of its own in a multicultural setting. Indian philosophy describes that the world is a family. In this context multiculturalism is considered as amalgamation of various cultures, achieving the great ideals of world peace and universal fraternity.

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# **Narrativizing Trauma: Tracing Dani's Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder in *Midsommar***

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**Abstract:** When a person is trapped in a world of imprisoned solitariness, without any blood ties or friends, he/she definitely loses their sanity to certain extent. Witnessing a painful and tragic event in life, gradually leads them to classic trauma and also, subsequently, disorders creep up the person's psyche. When trauma engulfs the mind, it strangles the person emotionally, mentally and physically. Strokes of depression capture the person leaving the pent-up emotions suppressed in him/her. The present study features traumatic incidents accumulated in the main character of Ari Aster's 2019 film *Midsommar*, Dani Ardor, who is literally a schizophrenic. Dani suffers from a serious mental disorder in which people interpret reality abnormally. She witnesses a combination of hallucinations, delusions, and possesses an extremely disordered thinking and behavior that impairs daily functioning, and as a result she is induced into paranoid schizophrenia. A potentially traumatic event death of Dani's parents and sister drastically transforms Dani, leaving her psychologically traumatized. Later on, Dani develops posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD), an anxiety disorder caused by this distressing event. The present study is avant-garde and original as it narrates the trauma faced by Dani and particularly examines how Dani experiences the conditions of the mental disorder. Moreover, here, focusing on the psychological disturbances of Dani clearly articulates how Dani's mind is convulsed throughout the film.

**Keywords:** - Classic Trauma, Posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD), Hallucinations, Schizophrenic, Paranoid Schizophrenia.

At the verge of breakup with a perfidious boyfriend, to stand as a mute witness to a harrowing incident of parricide of Dani's parents by her sister Terri and sister's self-murder, Dani Ardor (Florence Pugh), a girl in her late twenties is abandoned mercilessly at an early stage of life. She is left to endure all the profuse strains of emotional convergence all alone. After hearing the news of her family's death, deep inside, Dani has been shattered into a hundred broken pieces which cannot be easily mended together as there is no one who really stands or identifies with her vicissitude. Director, Ari Aster made a deteriorating relationship the central conflict of the film after he himself experienced a difficult breakup. The film begins by showing the peaceful photographs of Ardor family and soothing Sweden music plays on. Tension starts brewing from the start itself as Dani is shown sniffing from a panic attack disposed by her own sister Terri who left an alarming email which contained "I can't anymore-everything's black-mom and dad are coming too. Goodbye." All the anxiety and depression of the mental cognition, which is inflicted on Dani is evident in the early scenes of the film, after the traumatic occurrence.

An overwhelming amount of stress and tension leads to trauma in Dani when it exceeded her ability to cope, or integrate the emotions involved with this particular experience. Psychological trauma is defined as a bad damage caused to the psyche of a normal person that occurs as a result of a particular depressing event/s. It can be precipitated in weeks, years, or even decades as the person struggles to cope with the immediate circumstances, eventually leading to serious, long-term negative illness and resultive consequences. John P Wilson and Thomas A. Moran in their book *Psychological Trauma: Posttraumatic Stress Disorder and Spirituality* clearly elucidate how trauma affects mental processes:

Lindemann's definition of psychological trauma as "the sudden, uncontrollable disruption of affiliative bonds" is interpreted broadly and the effects of trauma on emotional and cognitive processes, underlying biological changes, resulting psychopathology are reviewed...Post-traumatic stress disorder, perhaps more than any other mental disorder, demonstrates the close interdependence of psychological and physiological reactions.

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Trauma may be a result of a single distressing experience or recurring events of being overwhelmed. Here, the sudden and tragic bereavement of the whole Ardor family casts Dani in an emotionally unstable condition and her mind is losing control to maintain everyday day activities. When people experience different personal accidents or incidents, the impact they have also differs according to the event intensity. So, people will be reacting to similar traumatic events, differently. Certain people who experience a potentially traumatic event will have the chance to become psychologically traumatized, while certain others may not feel any severe or noticeable trauma. However, being exposed to a major traumatic event leads some people to develop post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) or related mental illness such as paranoia or schizophrenia. According to major sources, about 3.5% of adults have Posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) in a given year, in the United States, and 9% of people develop it at some point in their life. Comparing with much of the rest of the world, rates are between 0.5% and 1% during a specific year. It is to be noted that the disorder is more prevalent in women than men. However, it is to be noted that sudden, unexpected death of a loved one is the most common traumatic event type reported in cross-national studies. A survey from the WHO World Mental Health Surveys showed the statistics that there is a risk of 5.2% for developing PTSD after revealing the news of the unexpected death of a loved one. This type of traumatic event is

widespread and it accounts for approximately 20% of PTSD cases worldwide. Hence, it is no revelation that Dani can be considered as a victim of PTSD because majority of women suffer from stages of depression at one point of their life. Posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) can be defined as:

Posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) is a mental disorder that can develop after a person is exposed to a traumatic event, such as sexual assault, warfare, traffic collisions, child abuse, or other threats on a person's life. Symptoms may include disturbing thoughts, feelings, or dreams related to the events, mental or physical distress to trauma-related cues, attempts to avoid trauma-related cues, alterations in how a person thinks and feels, and an increase in the fight-or-flight response.

The study analyses the symptoms Dani exhibits as a PTSD sufferer. Ari Aster specifically draws close angles on Dani's face so as to exhibit her fears and emotional anguish. Dani's face is most of the time anxious and tense due to intense inner turmoil. Unable to contain as forlorn in the tragedy, she seeks the aid of her boyfriend Christian. Christian in turn can't relinquish her due to her current appalling position of being without any family or friends. Dani's boyfriend Christian Hughes (Jack Reynor) even inculcates her for her frequent fits of terror by saying "You go straight into crisis mode" and at another instance, he tells his friend Mark that Dani already have a therapist. At one point, Dani frantically tries to make Christian stay with her and accepts Christian's fault (of not telling Dani about the "The Sweden trip") as her own which is even made worse with her apology. This clearly states how desperate Dani feels and she doesn't want to be solitary in her room and requests Christian to just "understand" her. Dani herself thinks that she is insane and admits to Pelle that he should think she's "nuts" as it is clear from her field of study, psychology.

Dani suffers from the illusionary symptoms of paranoia which normal people usually don't undergo. She clearly believes that others have hidden motives and others set out to harm her. She doubts the loyalty of others. Being hypersensitive to criticism, having trouble working with others, Dani is quick to become angry and hostile, becoming detached or socially isolated, being argumentative and defensive, having trouble seeing their own problems, having trouble relaxing etc... Most people who have schizophrenia will hear voices that no one else hears. Dani hears some voices which are trying to dominate on her.

Several nightmares and flashbacks along with panic attacks cloud up Dani's psyche and she wails most of the time after the death of her family members. Throughout, panic attacks grip her and in one such episode, Dani dreams Christian and his friends abandoning her alone in village. Life has dropped Dani in an abandoned state where she can trust none. Her traumas are carefully manifested by Ari Aster when she screams out but no sound comes out but only an array of engulfing darkness covers the screen during her nightmare. The darkness symbolizes Dani's fear, emotional imbalance and psychological disorder. Later, she sees her mother in a night gown walking in her house and then the scene of the autopsy when the elder man is being stricken with mallet. The elder man's face is collocated with her mother's lifeless face with a gaping mouth. Later on, she visions her father, mother and sister lying under the same cliff.

During Pelle's sympathetic treatment to Dani since both are orphaned due to fate, result is an outbreak of emotions inside Dani. She excuses herself to the bathroom of Christian's friends' flat and Ari Aster craftily and ingeniously slides the scene to the toilet of the airplane, Dani still mewling and whimpering. There is no particular sequence of scenes in which one can observe Dani apparently happy. Immediately after Dani and friends arrive in Sweden, Dani intakes psilocybin mushrooms and behaves exasperated. After she hears Mark's words : "You

guys are like my real family” and all of a sudden, she gasps out of the trance state .With great effort so as to hide her sensitivities, she goes for a walk. On the way, she whimpers and reassures herself that she is alright. Either in her imagination or in real, she faces humiliation from Pelle’s friends who laugh at her. As a schizophrenic, she thinks that she is being harmed or harassed; those certain gestures or comments are directed at her. Her ongoing phantasmagoria persists when she next washes her face and in the bathroom mirror she daymares a vision of her sister with the black adhesive cello tape attached to mouth just like she was at her death time. This is another symptom of Dani in which she detects, visual hallucinations, in which she sees things either during day or in dream that occurs in within her. Later, Dani hallucinates a picture of her parents sitting and sleeping on sofa along with sister Terri and slowly, Terri looks and leers unpleasantly at Dani. Even after Dani is in dream ,she is unable to restrain from her outburst of emotions. She is encapsulated by shrubs and grass growing out of her right hand. She grunts, exhales and screams, “Stop it” and runs away from the crowd into the forest exasperated. This condition of heightened reactivity to stimuli is the result of PTSD. The saddening medical condition weakens her as one can observe her crying soon after she reaches a solitary confinement.

Whenever Dani witnesses any incident, her parents especially her mother and sister crawls up the space. Particular occurrence when the elders sacrifice themselves, Dani juxtaposes her mother’s face to the dead elder man’s mutilated face. Another episode occurs when Dani sees vision of the three of them lying dead on the same setting of the sacrifice that is, under the cliff. Dani grows tensed at Attestupa and she breathes heavily when blood from hands of the elder’s wound (cut by other communards) is sacrificed. Camera focuses on her from the height of the cliff and Dani is frantic. When the elder woman, Yvla, looks at her she stops behaving disturbed

all of a sudden. After the first jump, Dani screams along with Josh. She no more hear any sound. Aster draws her surrounding as blank, empty and engulfing for a minute. Further, when the elder male sacrifices, others strike him dead with a mallet. Each thud of mallet makes Dani feverish, motionless and frenzied.

Dani's sister Terri, a bipolar disorder sufferer who has killed herself by attaching a tube to her mouth with black adhesive cello tape, when she filled their house with carbon monoxide. The next day, Dani, after she dresses in Harga white dress, a Harga girl coerces her to take more psychedelic drugs and makes her participate in the prestigious maypole dancing competition. After she wins the coveted May Queen title, while everyone congratulates her, suddenly Dani sees an illusion of her mother coming to her in white Harga attire and caresses her which is essentially a chimera and a thing which Dani hoped for because of her mental conflict but it is illusory and impossible to achieve.

Victims of PTSD are faced with insomnia and Dani borrows sleeping pills from Josh all the time when they are in Sweden. One can observe that while back at home also, Dani takes Ativan, which is FDA-approved for short-term treatment of insomnia or trouble sleeping that's caused by anxiety or stress. The very common disorder lasts for months and triggers back heart-wrenching pictures of Dani's family of the traumatic accident. For Dani who have suffered enough, towards the end witnesses another tragic sight of sex ritual of Christian with the Harga girl, Maja. Greatly devastated, Dani gasps, wails and sobs. She vomits and her terrible emotions find their way when she cries aloud and other Harga maidens cry rhythmically with their May Queen.

Intermittent gasps are shown in the film. Dani still hasn't recovered from the shock and is not willing to accept the fact that she is abandoned by her family and Christian. When the final custom of sacrifice takes place, all the while Dani is glum, pale and doesn't look around the procedures of ritual. This scene clearly shows how pathetic Dani is, her wan face give clear intentions how depressed she is. Dani is instructed not to talk or move by one of the maidens as she opens her eyes. Emotionless and tired of whole situation, she lifelessly watches on the sacrifice rituals.

Life of Dani before and after her visit to Sweden, her dreams, thoughts and fears are manifested and analyzed in the study. When Dani first have a glimpse of "the tranquil and majestic" Harga community, she smiles wholeheartedly not knowing how emotionally drained out she is going to be. Dani dances for May Queen, she smiles and enjoys herself forgetting all her traumas. Under the influence of drugs, she picturizes her feet to be covered with straws and couldn't even understand what is going on. Dani is happy after winning the title, particularly when a Harga girl says that she is their family now and "like sisters". The sense of belonging comes at this moment and Dani is no longer alone but like Pelle, has the companionship of a whole community who "doesn't bicker over what's theirs and what's not theirs". She soon imitates Swedish ways and songs and the totality of familiarity springs up. She is held together by a group of 7 girls when she is distressed after witnessing Christian's sex ritual. The girls stand with their May Queen just like family. She is a center of worship where there seems to be a flower-festooned cross with rings hanging from the crossbars. Dani feels held by a family, a real family at the end. The long standing abandonment has been transformed into tranquil acceptance that Dani out rightly welcomes through an ironic smile.



A sort of despair and vengeance is inflicted on Dani's mind, when Christian is made to sacrifice in the community as one of the nine. It's Dani who chooses for this act. She helplessly stares and low-spirited, she quivers her lip. Mainly when someone tries not to cry but they are crying, their lip shivers because they are holding back, hence, Dani acts emotionally stable. At the end of the film, when Christian is burnt along with others in the yellow "temple", Dani wails, coughs and gasps loudly just like the other times when she feels weak. She wears the heavy flowery outfit of May Queen, which is advanced at a hefty pace symbolizes all her past experiences being dragged along by her. Later, Dani watches all the comunards of Harga smiling, wailing and enjoying the sacrifice, she accepts the fact that just like the pyramid falls apart, she need to give up her past. The last scene is very scenic and charming as Dani peacefully smiles and returns back to sanity, as she realizes that now whole Harga community is currently accepting her as their family. Calmness, peace and tranquility sediments in her mind as she has become a member of the community.

## Conclusion

Any person in this world would feel extreme levels of mental disturbances when he/she is alone. One who witnesses a tragic incident need to be guarded and cared so that the person doesn't experience any acute traumatic disorders. Ari Aster's Dani is bitterly eradicated from her family and unfortunately no one else belongs to her as her own. Dani has been exposed to an extreme traumatic stress of involving direct personal experience of actual death. Learning about unexpected and violent death of her entire family pushed her into fringes of psychotic depression. An introvert, withdrawn from the world, she falls into severe psychological trauma and develops a medical condition Posttraumatic Stress Disorder. This study has carefully attempted to point out the main character's psychological disturbances, delusions, hallucinations,

nightmares, emotional instabilities and traumas. Dani already have a therapist at the very beginning of the film and she develops major troubles throughout the film. She even cannot accept people as her 'own'. Sweden empathetically changes Dani. Her excessive distress and neurosis are wiped away by the Harga community who at the end of the film gives what she had been in heed all her life; acceptance. Taking a wide angle, it is found that an abandoned Dani undergoes a clear metamorphosis in the end both mentally and physically through lucid catharsis.

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## **Civilization versus Savagery: Exploring the darkness of heart in *Heart of Darkness***

**Azhar Nawaz**

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**Abstract:** The paper seeks to address the question as to what it actually means to be civilized and who the real savages are. The two ideas have been juxtaposed in the context of the novel *Heart of Darkness* where through the absurdity of the colonial enterprise, the inherent evil in human beings has been explored. Taking up the metaphor of 'darkness of heart' an attempt has been made to expose the cruel face of the civilizing mission of the European imperialism and how power degenerate the souls of people. But the saving grace on the parts of humans is the struggle to overpower the dehumanizing evil forces that can turn them into savages and beasts. The novel focuses more on the damage that colonization does to the souls of white colonizers than it does to the physical death and devastation unleashed on the black natives. This damage to the soul of people is the real evil of imperialism.

**Key Words:** Imperialism, darkness, dehumanization, soul, savage, civilize.

Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* was published in 1989. The novel offers a critique of European Imperialism and the shallowness of the colonial enterprise to civilize the so-called savages in the distant and far-flung parts of the world. Although imperialism is at the center of the novel, it explores the very source of evil and its impact on human heart. The narrative, the way it has been developed seeks to expose the violence inherent in both the civilized as well as the savage worlds. In fact, it raises the puzzling question as to what it means to be civilized and how in the absence of the societal restraint even the most civilized tend to transform into savages. Through two central characters, Marlow and Kurtz the absurdity of colonial enterprise

and the subtle working of evil on the hearts of people has been laid bare in the novel. What differentiate the novel from the many works touching upon the same issues related to the idea of imperialism is the strikingly new treatment of the theme. The novel is not reduced to a piece of writing solely concerned with depicting the horrible face of imperial control and authority over the less powerful people. While it does depict the cruel and intimidating methods adopted by the cultured people to civilize the savage world, it traces the deeper recesses of human heart to show the struggle of human soul amidst all moral depravity and dehumanization. And therein lies the appeal and charm of the novel.

The narrating voice of Marlow has autobiographical shades in it lending the account an air of credibility. Conrad had the first-hand experience of commanding a steamship in the Belgian Congo in 1890, which he uses to structure the frame of the novel. Marlow's sea journey up the Congo River and his close encounter with the 'darkness' encompassing the savage world unfolds many realities with regard to the civilizing mission of the imperial power. The unanimous and anonymous listeners to his tale, represent the conventional perspectives and values of the British establishment. Marlow sets himself apart from his fellow travelers by recounting his horrible experiences of witnessing the evil of the colonial exploitation from close quarters thereby unfolding a past in which Britain is not the heart of civilization but the savage "end of the world." Adopting an ironic tone as a narrator, he sets out to suggest to his fellow passengers that their assumptions regarding the British Empire may be wrong but he does not offer an alternative to their assumptions. His take on the question of imperialism is never clear and in this he seems to echo the attitude of the writer himself. While Achebe in *Things Fall Apart* exposes the brutality of the colonial rulers and the resistance on the part of the natives that they offer through language, the Africans in *Heart of Darkness* are portrayed as silent and

inarticulate. In fact it is understood that Achebe writes to combat the stereotypes and offer a corrective to Conrad's take on imperialism. But one needs to pause before one jumps to a conclusion and proves Conrad Eurocentric in his treatment of the imperial business.

Even if Marlow is not deeply involved in the whole affair and sets out on a journey as an adventurer, he has his moments of introspection and meditation on many moral and spiritual questions that his soul confronts. His journey to Africa and Congo brings him face to face with the brutal and inhuman treatment meted out to the native people in Company's stations. They are made to live a life of slavery and overwork. The Company agents ill-treat them almost reducing them to the level of beasts. At one of the company's stations Marlow encounters certain scenes that upset his composure and unsettle his complacency. First he witnesses a rifle bearing black man leading some black prisoners who are chained and then he is horrified to find a group of native laborers who are left to their fate, dying near a grove. He can also see dysfunctional and rusted machinery there and fails to understand why the workers blast a cliff without rhyme and reason. All this fills him with disgust and he can see the foolishness behind the colonial enterprise:

"I've seen the devil of violence, and the devil of greed, and the devil of hot desire; but by all the stars! these were strong, lusty, red-eyed devils, that swayed and drove men - men, I tell you. But as I stood on this hillside, I foresaw that in the blinding sunshine of that land I would become acquainted with a flabby, pretending, weak-eyed devil of a rapacious and pitiless folly." (Conrad 17)

Marlow frequently comes face to face with situations that invite him to go deeper and think seriously over them. But it is suggested that he is in a dark world of moral ambiguity where one has to choose between many nightmares and where one loses one's sense of discretion to

distinguish between good and bad. Marlow becomes a sort of Buddha who is appalled by cruelty, torture, suffering, death and dehumanization but cannot do anything to avoid it. Contrary to the novels written from the colonial perspective that highlight the evil agenda of imperialism, *Heart of Darkness* is chiefly concerned with the ways the colonial enterprise plays a destructive role in degrading and dehumanizing the colonial masters than the victimization of the natives. This damage to the soul of people is the real evil of imperialism. This leads to an exploration of the darkness within. The darkness of the river and the impenetrable dense forests encompassing the white settlements metaphorically projects the darkness of hearts. In fact darkness is all pervasive rendering the possibility of human interaction futile and meaningless.

Another leading character in the novel, Kurtz, has been portrayed with great skill by the novelist and his life actually forms the stuff of the novel. As a Company agent, he has a great reputation and is known for his many talents. Marlow comes to know about him through the Chief Accountant who speaks of him in a tone of veneration and awe. In fact, Kurtz is the “evil genius” who allows his primitive instincts to have free play among the natives. He does not keep up appearances and his “honest brutality” gets him the status of a demi-god for the savages. While the Company agents hide their greed and lust under the name of trade, Kurtz openly pursues his passion of collecting ivory even at the cost of violence and bloodshed. His charisma and ability to lead men helps him control and rule the natives with a free hand and his eloquence and power with words obscures the horrifying messages of his writing. The severed human heads displayed on a pole outside the station house show the physical picture of terror and horror that Kurtz has created but this contrasts with the more subtle and sinister ways in which the Company slyly operates to dehumanize the natives. In fact the novelist brings Marlow and Kurtz face to face to allow the process of realization and acknowledgement of evil to take place. Marlow

witness a degenerate and megalomaniac Kurtz as opposed to his image in the eyes of people including his fiancée Intended who will think of him as a gentleman of many talents. Marlow can see how the darkness of the savage world has wreaked havoc on the soul of Kurtz. When he meets him, Kurtz is miserably ill. As he carries him along, Kurtz slowly loses his breath and ultimately dies, but not before he speaks his last famous words- “The Horror! The Horror!” In *Culture and Imperialism*, Said offers his personal take on the way darkness has been projected in the novel:

Kurtz and Marlow acknowledge the darkness, the former as he is dying, the latter as he reflects retrospectively on the meaning of Kurtz’s final words. They (and of course Conrad) are ahead of their time in understanding that what they call “the darkness” has an autonomy of its own, and can reinvade and reclaim what imperialism has taken for its own. But Marlow and Kurtz are also creatures of their time and cannot take the next step, which would be to recognize that what they saw, disablingly and disparagingly, as a non-European “darkness” was in fact a non-European world *resisting* imperialism so as one day to regain sovereignty and independence. (Said 30)

Of course, the characters need to take the next step of acknowledging the darkness of the savage world as a form of resistance, but it is encouraging to find that they have already taken the first step to turn inward and explore the darkness of the heart. The two characters Marlow and Kurtz have been portrayed as mirror reflections where the former though fascinated by the overbearing and awe-inspiring figure of the latter, causes the process of realization to initiate in him. Kurtz can see the horror of it all and Marlow in turn is burdened with the moral



responsibility to repeat the tale of his experiences to those who will listen. He is like Coleridge's Ancient Mariner who seeks redemption through narrating what befell him.

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## **My Fondest Kite**

**S. Sree Sakthi Prem**

On a road shaded against fluorescent light,  
Marched we, one band of unrelated kinsmen.  
Tis' a scene anointing gentle comfort,  
Imprinted on the skin of my consciousness.  
Not a tint of worry, mixed the pristine water  
Of childhood's thoughtless simple mind.  
The road, the company and even the dusky sky,  
All remain in cordial semblance as that day,  
As reflection mirroring its full original.  
Sweet friend, yet absurdly, somehow,  
Something of cardinal nature takes leave.  
We as men remain just the same,  
Yet all that is cursed to alter with age  
Give the scenery of us, an odd hue.  
Regular tools of our mundane trade,

Took did we from our bag of mirth.  
  
Papers that carried news of yesteryear  
  
Adorned now a purpose simple.  
  
A construction, when measurement  
  
Met with balanced expertise,  
  
Meant a flight to the realm above.  
  
After tolerable hours of failure hopeless,  
  
Alighted the invention of our surplus labor.  
  
Every twine, tail and timber glued,  
  
To the proportion that is merely apt,  
  
Now took flight unto boundless sky.  
  
Blossomed unanimous bliss trapped confined,  
  
In troubled faces awaiting merriment temporary.  
  
All this joy of trivial endeavors stemmed  
  
As the vaguest of memories would suggest,  
  
Is the warmest place life has ever found refuge.  
  
More distant we are now than like strangers

Who meet by eyes on a moving bus that halts.

Has growth succeeded a subtle partition

That which once was labelled inseparable?

I remember our flying object imperfect and pale

Floating amidst this modern myriad of them.

Only in the air of past days can ours fly,

The fondest of all my lovely kites.

## **My Treasure Trove**

**Surajit Panigrahi**

She is in my heart.

I encouraged her to sing inside it.

Her tune vibrated the hearty cord;

that echo the music in my wit.

She is very fond of Stars in the sky;

that made me crazy; to be a Star.

My starring of various performances;

brought her; to my near and dear.

She has shiny radiance.

It is like the radiating flame of fire.

I make her composed intermittently;

with my love, passion, gift and care.

Loyalty and love are her treasure;

But the laughter makes her charming.

She is the queen Luna in the sky;

and her display of elegance is stunning.

Her eyes often converse.

Those relays; some close messages.

I see an oasis in her obliged eyes.  
There my entire dreams are reflected.  
Her eyes & brows are night splendor;  
It is like a still dragger; in the lagoon.  
The facial grace sparkles always;  
due to holy shower of godly boon.

She makes me; to smile 'n' shine;  
with the brush on me; in her arty hand.  
Her embark upon; on all my need;  
makes my art to display; a poised man.  
At times; I lodged me; inside her heart;  
in order to induce bliss; in her move.  
There; I also guard; my dream buds;  
as these are my priceless treasure trove.

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### **Glossary of terms-**

Wit- the capacity for inventive thought and quick understanding; keen intelligence

Shiny- (of a smooth surface) reflecting light, polished. Glossy, Sparkly,

Radiance- light or heat as emitted or reflected by something.

Intermittently- at irregular intervals; not continuously or steadily.

Elegance- Style, Grace, smoothness

Stunning-striking, Fabulous,

Converse- engage in conversation.

Oasis- a fertile spot in a desert, where water is found.

Splendor-Glory, Magnificent, grandeur

Dragger- a fishing boat

Lagoon- a small lake near a larger lake, river or sea

Embark- begin (a course of action); go on board a ship or aircraft,

Poise- graceful and elegant bearing in a person

Bliss- perfect happiness; great joy.

Trove- a store of valuable or delightful things

## Sermon before a Stampede

A. Assunta Cristy

The sermon started with a minimal sound,  
    Sending invites to its brethren,  
        To join the liturgy on a pit.  
Unlike prophets on a pedestal stone,  
    Mounting itself on the infinite sand,  
This acquainted specimen of stoicism  
Manipulated wind, raising voice to maximum.

Content watching the sprouts unfold,  
    Offering itself to be trampled,  
        It rests scattered,  
With it's parched, brown, broken skin.

A fifth season shall never alter,  
    This old ones composed mind.  
All momentous changes thus survived,  
It left lifeless with an utterance loud.



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