**THE UNIVERSITY OF HULL**

# *The Legacy of Empire and the Politics of the Family in the Neo-Historical Fictions of Egypt, Ireland and India*

**being a Thesis submitted for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the University of Hull**

**By**

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## Abstract

This thesis addresses neo-historical novels dealing with the legacy of the British Empire and its enduring impact on family. It focuses on the colonial experience in three countries colonized by Britain: Egypt, Ireland and India. It examines fives neo-historical novels: *Sunset Oasis* (2007) by Bahaa Taher, *The Map of Love* (1999) by Ahdaf Soueif, *Star of the Sea* (2002) by Joseph O'Connor, *The Story of Lucy Gault* (2002) by William Trevor and *The Inheritance of Loss* (2003) by Kiran Desai. These texts revisit and reframe the colonial past to further understand the present. The novels give voice to the dispossessed of history and are set against the backdrop of major historical events: the Urabian Revolution in Egypt, the Kitchener Campaign in the Sudan, the Battle of Omdurman, the Irish Famine, the Irish War of Independence and the Gorkha Movement in India in the 1980s. These novels accentuate the impact of such events on the micro-level of the family

This research draws on postcolonial thinking and on critical work on the historical and neo-historical novel. It focuses on the suffering of both the colonized and the colonizer during and following colonialism. It highlights the profound intricacy and multi-layering of the colonial experience as the colonized people resist colonialism but also suppress each other. It examines the entrapment of the colonized between patriotism and the need to survive in the colonial environment. It emphasizes that both the colonized and the colonizer have stereotypical views of each other. In addition, it investigates how the innocent members belonging to the colonial enterprise are haunted by the sins of the colonial past and present. This thesis scrutinizes how the marital, fraternal and parental relationships within the families of the colonized suffer under colonialism.

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**For My Parents**

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# Introduction

"The past is not dead. It's not even past". William Faulkner makes this observation in his 1951 novel *Requiem for a Nun* (85). This thesis examines the past and how the past returns and is re-imagined, re-framed and reworked in a number of contemporary fictions of Egypt, Ireland and India. All of these countries were subject to the British Empire and the legacy of empire, and colonialism is the past that is not dead. It is, as these fictions explore, not even past. In *Dreams of Adventure, Deeds of Empire* (1979) Martin Green argues that "imperialism has penetrated the fabric of [British] culture, and inflected our imagination, more deeply than we usually realize". Green calls it an "infection" and argues that we cannot take "imperialism for granted" or "ignor[e] its political character" (Green, 1979: 338).

Politics and literature are involved, as this thesis shows, in an inevitable and inseparable relationship. In the Victorian period, in particular during the period of high imperialism in the late nineteenth century, British fictions of empire tended to defend imperialism convincing the population that they were saving people and realizing moral objectives. In his preface to *The Language of Empire* (1994) Robert H. MacDonald notes that he "grew up in Britain" just before the "Empire was dismantled" so the "imperial past" had "conditioned" his "understanding" (xi). MacDonald demonstrates how in the late nineteenth century the "acquisition of territory and a campaign of propaganda, physical conquest and making imperialism 'popular', went hand in hand" (2). During the late Victorian period poets and writers produced robust writings and compelling poems to commemorate and celebrate the empire's victories,

to encourage the military forces in the far-flung colonies and to praise Queen Victoria (Macdonald, 1994: 8). Catherine Wynne further observes:

> As well as the empire having material existence it carried an immense weight of imaginative and ideological significance: imperialism was cultivated at home and abroad by cultural production aimed at promoting the notion of adventure with the prospect of wealth, the desire to foster Christianity abroad (the 'civilizing mission'), and the propagation of nationalistic fervour, described as jingoism. (2008: 154)

After all, patriotic poetry can rouse enthusiasm and inculcate the spirit of colonial hegemony. For example, Alfred, Lord Tennyson commemorated the opening of the Indian and Colonial Exhibition in 1886 by composing a poem addressing the Queen:

> Welcome, welcome with one voice!
> In your welfare we rejoice,
> Sons and brothers that have sent,
> From isle and cape and continent,
> Produce of your field and flood,
> Mount and mine, and primal wood. (Cited in Boehmer, 1998: 63)

And he concluded it with these lines:

> Britain's myriad voices call,
> 'Sons, be welded each and all,

Into one imperial whole,

One with Britain, heart and soul!

One life, one flag, one fleet, one Throne!'

Britons, hold your own! (cited in Boehmer, 1998: 64)

Literary scholars, particularly those working within a postcolonial framework or influenced by postcolonial thinking, convey the miseries of people caused by political decisions in a way that is persuasive. In one way or another, they expose readers to the atrocities of wars, empire and colonialism by highlighting the plight of the victims. This thesis is conditioned to some extent by this thinking as it explores the effects of imperialism and colonialism and their legacies in the family in contemporary neo-historical fictions and the mutual impacts on the colonizer and the colonized. The study focuses on the nature of the relations between female and male members of the family in light of the consequences of the colonial enterprise. The violence of empire often had its effects not only on the conquered but also on the colonizers. Likewise, imperial ferocity had its counterparts within the colonized families, represented especially by the male characters. Although the physical nightmare of colonialism has been dispelled, its repercussions are still evident and deeply rooted in the feelings of both parties: the conquerors and the conquered. To paraphrase Faulkner, the [imperial] past is not dead and it is certainly not past as far as the fictions examined in this thesis are concerned. Essentially this summarizes the gap in current criticism that my thesis addresses by tracing how the colonial past is still alive in contemporary fictions that address the past. The research concentrates on the literature of three countries colonized in different ways by Britain: Egypt, India and Ireland. Although Ireland is the oldest colony, I will start with Egypt, the most recent colony, followed by Ireland and then India. The variety of the locales and the cross-cultural authors examined in

this thesis will enable comparisons between these writers and texts and yet will remain sensitive to each country's different experience of empire.

Although shaped by postcolonial thinking and writing within a postcolonial climate, the primary texts in this thesis can be defined as neo-historical fictions in that each of these are either set in the past or return to the past for part of the narrative, focusing on alternative voices or telling other stories, stories that have often been suppressed by the nineteenth- and twentieth- century imperial project. As Hamish Dalley argues, "the postcolonial world is characterised as a space in which history can never be taken for granted, and is subject always to conflict over past events and their meaning for present generation" (2014:4). Postcolonial texts, according to Dalley, addresses the past regardless of their various formats: "Postcolonialism is thus, to a large extent, a discourse of and about the writing of history in multiple forms – one that necessarily engages with debates in which aesthetics are as much at stake as politics" (2014:4). All of the texts in this work are working within a postcolonial context or have been shaped by postcolonial thinking but all engage in a rethinking or reframing of the past. What unites these texts is their engagement with an aspect of the traumatic past in particular: Bahaa Taher's *Sunset Oasis* (2007) takes as its starting point the 1882 Egyptian Nationalist rebellion; in Ahdaf Soueif's *The Map of Love* (1999) the Victorian traveller, Lady Anna Winterbourne, is impelled to go to Egypt after her traumatic widowhood following her husband's return from Kitchener's suppression of the Mahdist forces in Khartoum. Joseph O'Connor's *Star of the Sea* (2002) focuses on the Irish Famine of the 1840s and is partly set on an emigrant ship to America; William Trevor's *The Story of Lucy Gault* (2002) starts in the midst of the Irish War of Independence (1919-21) and Kiran Desai's *The Inheritance of Loss* (2006) is set in the 1980s during unrest caused by the Gorkha movement. Dalley observes that "the postcolonial historical novel is a formally and thematically diverse genre centered

on a defining epistemological premise: that 'fiction is a way of knowing' the past (Fleishman x)" (2014:10).

I came across the term 'neo-historical' in Elodie Rousselot's introduction of *Exoticising the Past in Contemporary Neo-Historical fiction* (2014) and adopted it to describe the novels I am working on. Rousselot defines the "neo-historical" sub-genre of contemporary historical fiction; this category comprises novels which are "not solely set in the past, but conduct an active interrogation of that past" (Rousselot, 2014: 2). She defines neo-historical fiction as 'striv[ing] for a high degree of historical accuracy, while on the other it is conscious of the limitations of that project. The mode of verisimilitude employed by the neo-historical novel therefore confirms its simultaneous attempt *and* refusal to render the past accurately' (Rousselot, 2014:4). This interrogation is a very important point in the genre of the neo-historical novels because they question the truths imposed by imperial and orientalist writers and this is evident, for example, in Soueif's text when she put her protagonist in the heart of the harem in order to refute orientalist stereotypes of the harem. "The initial impulse for Lady Anna Winterbourne's … decision to travel to Egypt is typically Orientalist" (Boccardi, 2009:108). This is shown when "Anna goes to Egypt armed with the notoriously Orientalist Cook's travel guide, quotes Edward Lane's translation of the Arabian Nights as an early mediator in her experience of Egypt" (Boccardi, 2009:109). However, in Egypt the situation changes as the English Anna penetrates the stereotype of the harem. Soueif deploys the fictional English woman to disrupt or rebut longstanding allegations about the East. If the map is at the centre of empire, then Soueif takes the map and redraws it. It is the Englishwoman who rectifies the misinformation in her own society. There is both a 'simultaneous attempt' by Soueif and a 'refusal to render the past accurately' and it is only by doing this that neo-historical can redraw maps. Boccardi argues: "Soueif's strategy, then, consists of

providing a gendered perspective that complicates the power relations played out in the colonial context … of offering private documents as additions to the colonial archive that may destabilize its homogeneity, and of arguing for the possibility of individual relations founded on love (real, sustained contact between East and West) that defy the hegemony of colonial discourse" (2009:109-10). As Boccardi argues, "The retracing of the past that the contemporary characters undertake thus begins with a politically significant act of restitution, a recognition that the history whose narration had been appropriated by the West ought to be retold from the perspective of the subjects of that history" (2009:112). The neo-historical texts in this thesis retell stories from the points of view of the subject of that history, whether that history is the Irish Famine, the Irish War of Independence, the Egyptian Revolution, the Ghurkha movement in 1980s India.

I am categorizing these novels as neo-historical fictions rather than neo-Victorian because not all of the novels in my thesis are set in Victorian period. *The Inheritance of Loss* is set in the 1980s and goes back to 1935 when the Indian judge, a central character in the text, went to pursue his education in Cambridge. *The Story of Lucy Gault* commences in the Irish War of Independence in 1921 but extends into the 1990s as it follows the life of Lucy. One can further argue that neo-Victorian, with its implicit imperial connotations, is not an appropriate term to define texts emerging from countries which were colonized in the nineteenth century such as Ireland and Egypt, even though both Taher's, O'Connor's and parts of Soueif's texts are set in the nineteenth century. Accordingly, the term neo-historical is a more appropriate to define my texts. All of these texts deal with suppressed voices or articulate alternative viewpoints and function as narratives of recovery and re-examination. As Linda Hutcheon argues,

> In challenging the seamless quality of the history/ fiction (or world/ art) join implied by realist narrative, postmodern fiction does not, however, disconnect itself from history or the world. It foregrounds and thus and contests the conventionality and unacknowledged ideology of that assumption of seamlessness and asks its readers to question the processes by which we *make* sense of and *construct* order out of experience in our particular culture. (1989:53-4)

In her examination of the female historical novel Diana Wallace argues that "exclusion from recorded history, whether as a subject, reader or writer, is a serious business". Wallace notes that an

> historical setting has frequently been used by women writers (as by male writers) as a way of writing about subjects which would otherwise be taboo or of offering a critique of the present through the treatment of the past. Perhaps even more important for women writers has been the way that the historical novel has allowed them to invent or 're-imagine' … the unrecorded lives of marginalised and subordinated people, especially women, but also the working classes, Black people, slaves and colonised peoples, and to shape narratives which are more appropriate to their experiences than those of conventional history. (2005: 2)

This thesis follows Wallace's lead in rethinking texts set in the past but looks at neo-historical texts which re-work and revisit the colonial past and which work through the implications of the past on the family. Wallace contends that a "common perception is that the historical novel is a nostalgic, reactionary genre" but "the truth

is far more complex" (4). "Any historical novel," Wallace argues, "always has as much, or perhaps more to say about the time in which it is written" (4). Wallace argues that the historical novel is an "escape and political intervention" and that the "need for escapism itself indicates a dissatisfaction with what is available" (2). This dissatisfaction with conventional narratives of history has led to the phenomenal rise in the publication of novels dealing with the past over the last two decades. As Wallace points out, "'history' is not straightforwardly 'what happened in the past' but has always been the result of selection, presentation and even downright falsification based on particular ideologies and viewpoints" (3). Manipulating these traces of history, the historical novelist shapes his narrative. Hutcheon observes: "We only have access to the past today through its traces – its documents, the testimony of witnesses, and other archival materials. In other words, we only have representations of the past from which to construct our narratives or explanations. The representation of history becomes the history of representations" (1989:58). Similar to Wallace, Hutcheon suggests that representing the past is subject to personal interpretation: "Knowing the past becomes a question of representing, that is, of constructing and interpreting, not of objective recording" (Hutcheon, 1989:74). Rousselot observes that "historical fiction has experienced a remarkable recrudescence" in recent years (1). Mariadele Boccardi in *The Contemporary British Historical Novel* states:

> [N]eo-Victorian novels are acutely aware of both history and fiction as human constructs', but do not wholly relinquish their representational aspirations; rather, they propose a version of informed realism, exploring 'the ground between writing as though there is indeed a recoverable past' (Shiller 540 and 541). In so doing, they participate in 'the resurrection of the Victorian tradition', whose prior perceived absence 'is expressed in terms of loss – loss of a feeling subject, loss of

authenticity, loss of aesthetic integrity'. (2009:62)

According to Boccardi, neo-historical novels interrogate the inheritance of the past and do not take it for granted: "the novels … are prepared to confront all aspects of the past and to dispute its comfortable heritage dimension" (2009:102).

The texts I examine deal with historically traumatic moments: the 1882 Egyptian War of Independence and its aftermath in *Sunset Oasis*; British war in the Sudan under the command of Kitchener and the *de facto* British colonization of Egypt in the late nineteenth century in *The Map of Love*; the Famine and famine emigration in *Star of the Sea;* the Irish War of Independence and Civil War in *The Story of Lucy Gault* and nationalist unrest in 1980s in *The Inheritance of Loss.* Marie-Luise Kohlke and Christian Gutleben in *Neo-Victorian Tropes of Trauma* suggest that focusing on trauma and the suffering of the victim is a phenomenon in neo-Victorian fictions as the contemporary reader is obsessed by such scenarios. Kohlke and Gutleben argue that

> [w]ars, catastrophes, atrocities, crimes, and accidents are constantly circulated on the web, exhibited on television, displayed by the cinema, highlighted by newspapers, and harnessed by the publishing and museums' industries, as well as permanently inscribed on the cultural landscape by memorials, monuments, and public rituals of commemoration. (2012: 8)

However, trauma in the neo-historical fictions under discussion in this thesis is associated with empire or the legacy of empire. Of course, as Miller and Tougaw add, "In a culture of trauma, accounts of extreme situations sell books", but the return to

the past in a variety of texts that come under the umbrella of *neo* is doing much more than simply appealing to a market (Kohlke & Gutleben, 2012: 9). As Kohlke and Gutleben observe, "[N]eo-Victorian fiction highlights interconnections between aggravated historical violence and their long-term cultural and political aftershocks still resonating well into the twentieth and twenty-first centuries" (2012: 3). Also crucially for this thesis, fiction which re-engages or revisions the past "plays out more insidious personal kinds of trauma linked to individual crises (of personal identity, family, belief, and inheritance) as much as collective catastrophe" (Kohlke & Gutleben, 2012: 3). Neo-historical novels in this work highlight childhood trauma and show how it resonates into adulthood. This is, for instance, shown in Horahan, the Irish youth whose adulthood is ruined by his involvement in the attack against the Protestant landowner of Lahardane in *The Story of Lucy Gault*. Roger Luckhurst argues that "trauma is a piercing or breach of a border that puts inside and outside into a strange communication" (2013: 3). In the late 1980s

> advocates of recovered memory therapies claimed to be unearthing pristine memories of repressed or dissociated childhood traumas many years after the fact in vast numbers of patients. This relied on the conviction that traumatic memory was preserved in pristine form outside conscious recall, but could be recovered complete with appropriate therapeutic intervention. (2013:11)

The novels under discussion in this thesis evolve with the evolution of our understanding of trauma. Sabir, the head of the Easterners in *Sunset Oasis,* is another example of how childhood trauma impacts on one's adulthood. As a result of the violent treatment of his father in front of him when he was five years old, Sabir has internalized violence and malice against the rival tribe and plotted against it since then.

Luckhurst observes that "recovered memories of abuse led to criminal proceedings and imprisonments" (2013:11). Luckhurst also underlines how post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) can be contagious. He states that "at first PTSD was only attributable to those directly involved, but 'secondary' victim status now includes witnesses, bystanders, rescue workers, relatives caught up in the immediate aftermath, a proximity now extended to include receiving news of the death or injury of a relative" (2013:1). This is demonstrated in Anna Winterbourne who has witnessed the trauma of the colonial war through her husband. Looking at her traumatised silent husband and feeling sorry for him and helpless impacts on her psychological welfare. Trauma, Luckhurst notes, "appears to be worryingly transmissible: it leaks between mental and physical symptoms … and between victims and their listeners or viewers who are commonly moved to forms of overwhelming sympathy, even to the extent of claiming secondary victimhood" (2013:3). Pius Mulvey in *Star of the Sea* grows up in Connemara in County Galway, the place that has witnessed the horrors of the Irish famine. That catastrophic atmosphere contributes to his artistic ability to compose ballads and his violence against his own family. Luckhurst suggests that "the pathological environment of childhood abuse forces the development of extraordinary capacities, both creative and destructive" (2013:98).

The neo-Victorian project, as defined, by Ann Heilmann and Mark Llewellyn, is "more than historical fiction set in the nineteenth century", rather it is fiction that "must in some respect be *self-consciously engaged with the act of (re) interpretation, (re)discovery, and (re)vision concerning the Victorians*" (cited in Rousselot, 2014: 1). For Elodie Rousselot, Heilmann and Llewellyn identify a "self-analytic drive" in these neo-Victorian fictions (2014: 2). Neo-historical fictions are "aimed at answering the needs and preoccupations of the present" or indeed the questions of the present (Rousselot, 2014: 5). Moreover, Heilmann and Llewellyn in *Neo-Victorianism: the Victorians in the Twenty-First*

*Century, 1999-2009* argue that neo-Victorian fictions function through storytelling as a medium exposing the traumatic past with the aim of finding a remedy for it: "the very act of storytelling and (self)narration in relation to the historical past serves as a cathartic moment of traumatic unveiling so essential to providing a resolution" (Heilmann & Llewellyn, 2010: 28). As such, the neo-historical texts I am working on address what Heilmann and Llewellyn refer to as the traumatic past and highlight its causes. Heilmann and Llewellyn reiterate that the function of contemporary writers is shown through the way they "reinterpret the identity politics of imperialism though giving voice not only to the colonial subject but also to writers and thinkers within the imperial elite" (Heilmann & Llewellyn, 2010: 29). This is, for instance, displayed when Ahdaf Soueif gives voice to the Western Anna Winterbourne who is considered as part of the imperial elite but who sympathizes with and defends the colonized Egyptians. "As such", Heilmann and Llewellyn add, "the creative acts of reimagining serve as potent and important reminders of the complexities of terminologies, identities and subjectivities" (29).

All the texts I examine in this thesis exhibit a "self-analytic drive" in their active interaction with history. All are shaped or influenced in some way by postcolonial understanding and work within a "postcolonial environment", either explicitly in the case of Soueif and Desai or less explicitly in the case of Trevor (Schultz, 2012: 4). As such it is important to examine postcolonial theory and its implications for these texts.

The rest of this introduction is divided into key sections. The first section focuses on postcolonial theory which is mainly based on *Culture and Imperialism* (1994) by Edward Said and "Can the Subaltern Speak?" (1985) by Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak. Said attempts to trace the relationship between culture and imperialism from the eighteenth to the twentieth century and demonstrates his definitions of imperialism and postcolonialism. According to Said, imperialism is "the practice, the theory, and the attitudes of a dominating metropolitan centre ruling a distant territory" (1994: 9), whereas colonialism "which is almost always a consequence of imperialism is implanting of settlement in distant territories" (1994: 9). As exhibited through these

definitions, imperialism and colonialism bolster each other. Moreover, Said indicates that imperialism has a cultural influence and domination going beyond the military forces, and we must not read these texts for pleasure exclusively, but also to understand them within their imperial context. Following Said, Declan Kiberd (1995) has provided further definitions for imperialism and colonialism that coincide with Said's. Kiberd illustrates that imperialism is "a term used to describe the seizure of land from owners and their consequent subjugation by military force and cultural programming: the latter involves the description, mapping and ecological transformation of the occupied territory" (Kiberd, 1995: 5). However, colonialism "more specifically involves the planting of settlers in the land thus seized, for the purpose of expropriating its wealth and for the promotion of the occupiers' trade and culture" (Kiberd, 1995: 5). Spivak addresses the suffering and dilemmas of the colonized women who suffer constantly from the men in their families and the foreigners colonizing them. As a result, their voices are strangled; consequently, they cannot be heard and they become incapable of expressing their ambitions and desires.

The second section of the introduction focuses on the psychology of colonialism with brief reference to historical backgrounds. This section manifests a key approach of the thesis: the psychological approach. The impacts of colonialism and imperialism are apparent through the way the life is conducted in the houses and communities of both the colonized and the colonizer. An early theorist, Frantz Fanon, advocates in *The Wretched of the Earth* (1963) the use of the language of violence to resist the colonizers, and he claims they only understand and hear the same language they use when dealing with the conquered. Fanon underlines the fact that the colonized internalize violence while they experience colonial horrors and that they can actualize decolonization only through violence.

In order to fully understand the postcolonial fictions of Ireland, Egypt and India, it is essential to understand the historical background of these three countries during the period of British colonial rule. Ronald Hyam's *Britain's Imperial Century, 1815-1914* (2002) aligns the crucial historical events with the colonial and postcolonial context, such as the Indian Rebellion of 1857, which instead the British forces intentionally called the Indian Mutiny to undermine its power, the Irish Famine between 1845 and 1852, the occupation of Egypt and the cutting of the Suez Canal between 1859 and 1869. Additionally, he addresses the calls for nationalism and independence, which represent the ultimate natural reaction in the countries under discussion.

The third section traces the relationship between imperialism and violence in the nineteenth century and its effects on the family in selected Victorian fictions. Imperial violence is displayed in family relationships as well as the prohibition of legal marriages with foreigners, which is an outcome of colonialism. In Arthur Conan Doyle's "The Adventure of the Speckled Band" (1892) a stepfather while living in British-controlled India kills his Indian servant in cold blood. When he returns to England, he arranges to murder his two stepdaughters because of his greed for their money by using an Indian snake. This story reveals to what extent the tyranny of the colonial ruling power was transferred from Empire to the English home, which initially fostered the imperial endeavour. Focusing again on India, two short stories by Rudyard Kipling, an English novelist who was born in 1865 in British India, are examined. Kipling is noted for his racist views and his glorification of the British Empire (Said, 1994: 135). "Beyond the Pale" (1888) and "Without Benefit of Clergy" (1890) form the basis of discussion. In "Beyond the Pale" an Englishman falls in love with a beautiful young Indian girl, and his love is reciprocated. After a month of their secret love, their affair becomes known, and as result the girl's hands are cut off by her family. Subsequently, the Englishman reveals his regret for what he does, but it is too

late. The end of the story is tragic and violent; he is stabbed in his groin by her uncle. Kipling deliberately portrays the moving ending in such a way to display how hazardous approaching the foreigner is. Cross-cultural relations, he suggests, end in violence. As the title of the short story indicates, the Englishman extends beyond the boundaries of his native people, which explains the cause of his suffering. In "Without Benefit of Clergy" an Englishman and a young Indian girl love each other and have a secret relationship beyond a legal marriage. Regardless of the fact that he loves her, she always believes he will leave her for an Englishwoman, so this kind of unbalanced love, according to Kipling, makes her life disturbed. Their son dies of fever. Then the girl develops cholera and passes away leaving her lover disconsolate. This traumatic ending is chosen as if Kipling wants to warn his native people of becoming involved; the prohibitions of Empire have repercussions on the family. He focuses on the Indian women (the colonized) who suffer from the masculine domination of their people and of the colonizers. The theme is evident in earlier fiction. A postcolonial reading of *Wuthering Heights* (1847) highlights how the foreign Other (Heathcliff) disrupts the English home. Heathcliff is mistreated by his foster family and, consequently, after he has grown up, he decides to take revenge and becomes an abuser himself to the extent that he ruptures the bonds of his own family and mistreats his son. The microcosm of the home, this part argues, reflects the workings of empire and colonialism in the Victorian period.

As section three of the introduction tackles imperialism and violence during the Victorian period, the emphasis in chapter one is on the legacy of Empire focusing on Egypt and a neo-historical novel set in the nineteenth century. It will show how the Empire governs the nature of the relations among the family members and the consequences of mixed marriages between the Westerners and the Easterners. It represents how women negotiate imperialism. Egypt was the 'youngest' British

colony, coming under Britain's sphere of influence in 1882. I chose to start with Egypt because culturally and linguistically Egypt is closer to my own culture. As Arabic is my first language I was able to read Bahaa Taher's *Sunset Oasis* in its original Arabic although for the purposes of this thesis, I work on the English translation. Ahdaf Soueif writes her novel in English and is 'bi-cultural' (living in London with family and roots in Cairo where she was educated to MA level before undertaking a PhD in Linguistics at Lancaster University) and deploys a lot of Arabic terminology in her writing. The second country I focus on is Ireland, Britain's oldest colony. One of the primary characters in *Sunset Oasis* is the Irish Catherine so undertaking work on Ireland provides continuity with my Egyptian material. In-between, we have the 'middle' colony: India. The Indian novel in this thesis, *The Inheritance of Loss*, picks up the Empire in its final stages through the figure of the judge who was educated in Britain to the postcolonial tensions of the 1980s. The novel 'takes up' where the O'Connor *Star of the Sea* ends. O'Connor's novel ends as those fleeing the Irish Famine berth in America; in *The Inheritance of Loss*, the emigrant Biju discovers that America of the 1980s is not a land of opportunity. The novel presents how the imperial past is not past but lingers into the 1980s and shapes how Indians treat each other both in India and in America. However, my break with the historical timeline of imperialism (Ireland, India, Egypt) also reflects the neo-historical project. Part of the neo-historical project is to disrupt history to enable other voices. O'Connor is an example of a writer who breaks historical continuity at will. In his most recent novel *Shadowplay* (2019) which is set in the London theatre world of the 1870s to the 1900s, O'Connor gives a cameo appearance to Mulvey, his convict figure, from *Star of the Sea*, thus breaking chronology, as Mulvey was incarcerated in a British prison in the pre-Famine years in the earlier novel.

The first chapter focuses on Taher's *Sunset Oasis*, the only text in this thesis which

is examined in translation (although I also refer to the original Arabic). Taher is an Egyptian novelist, who won the first International Prize for Arabic Fiction in 2008 for this novel. He builds the events of this work on the story of an Egyptian official, who experiences psychological conflict as a result of the British colonization of his country. *Sunset Oasis* depicts East-West relations from a family perspective when this official marries an Irish scholar who shares a similar hatred of the British colonial policy as Britain also occupies her country. Despite shared political sympathies their marriage is still affected by their different cultural, social, historical and religious backgrounds. The text moreover highlights the unfair treatment of a widow in the oasis where the Egyptian official is sent and how her clan confines her to her home. As family relations are instrumental to the thesis, *Sunset Oasis* accentuates these relations under the umbrella of colonization in Egypt of the late nineteenth century. The second novel under discussion in the Egyptian section of the thesis is Soueif's *The Map of Love*. Soueif is a prominent Egyptian novelist and a political commentator and currently lives in London. In *The Map of Love* Soueif displays a mixed marriage between an English woman and an Egyptian man in Cairo at the turn of the twentieth century. Their descendants cross continents to meet each other at the end of the twentieth century. Soueif highlights how the cultural and historical crises on the eve of the millennium promote the search for the family's identity – a search that takes them into the past.

The Irish section commences with O'Connor's *Star of the Sea*. Set in the 1840s it addresses the implications and complications of the Irish Famine. O'Connor, a contemporary Irish writer, focuses on Irish refugees who flee the Famine by heading to New York on what becomes known as famine ships. O'Connor delineates the miserable voyage of these emigrants and their dreary lives before fleeing Ireland and after arriving at their destination. These refugees are members of families constituting

a miniature Irish society; the notion of the family experiencing the curse of colonialism underpins the story. Shortlisted for the Booker and Whitbread Prizes in 2002 Trevor's *The Story of Lucy Gault* focuses on the Protestant settler community and family relations between a girl and her father when they meet after a long absence. Her life has become unstable and tragic over the years because of this absence. The series of the events took place in Ireland during the Irish War of Independence showing the disturbance in an Anglo-Irish family who experienced the impact of a war of decolonization and how they were perceived as colonizers by the revolutionaries who tried to eject them from their home.

The last section in this thesis focuses on India. Chronologically this is the most recent text as it is set in the 1980s. The Man Booker Prize winning *The Inheritance of Loss* written by the Indian author Desai in 2006 highlights the suffering of the Indian-Nepalese family in West Bengal in India in 1980s as they were doubly colonized by the British and then by the Indians. This novel further addresses the problems encountered by the colonized migrants in the West, in this case, America, as the novel moves from an Indian context to explore globalization. In America the settled Indian community control and abuse their newly arrived compatriots, functioning, as we will see, in ways that Fanon recognized in his analysis of the psychology of colonialism. I have chosen this text as the only novel in the Indian section because it is a substantial work wrapping up the themes discussed earlier in the other novels, including layers of colonialism, how the colonized is suffering at the hands of his own people, the curse of the Big House, the blight of colonialism on those who are innocent but are affiliated to the imperial powers. The chronological range of this novel is ideally structured to offer a smooth continuation to the chronology of the previous novels as *The Inheritance of Loss* highlights the British Empire in its final stages in India to the present moment of the 1980s and tackles issues of globalization.

This thesis investigates the effects of imperialism and colonialism in the family in neo-historical fictions, taking into consideration the historical, political, psychological and cultural backgrounds in three countries: Egypt, Ireland, and India. It examines how contemporary writers engage with legacy of empire and re-interpret the past and how empire and colonialism shape family relations. This investigation is promoted by examining the postcolonial theory.

**Rethinking the Literary Past and Postcolonial Theory**

"Robert Young calls Edward Said, Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak and Homi K. Bhabha, as the 'Holy Trinity' of postcolonial critics" (Ghaforian, 2011: 104). Their work highlights the ramifications and the sustained damaging impacts of colonialism on the colonized. Said paves the way for a new understanding of the relationship between literature and culture and how canonical literary texts produced in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries replicate the culture of imperialism. He draws on these readings to outline the enormous imperial project and discloses the colonial authors' conspiracy (conscious or otherwise) with the empire to repress the colonized by employing their pens in endorsing the empire. Another overarching pillar in the postcolonial theory that is central to my thesis, is Spivak's "Can the Subaltern Speak?" where she, as a feminist, examines the Western discourse about the third world subordinates and how the West strips these subjects of their rights of self-articulation, especially women. Spivak's interpretation is deployed in this thesis to further examine the treatment of women by their own families and cultures.

Said's *Culture and Imperialism* (1994) is based on ideas collected by him while he was writing *Orientalism* (1978). In *Orientalism,* Said contends that the Orient (defined by the territory of the Ottoman Empire) was seen in the European imagination

of the nineteenth century as a place of love adventures and exotic creatures. For the West the Orient became "one of its deepest and most recurring images of the Other" (Said, 1978: 9). It was a place inferior to Europe and Europeans had the desire to dominate. "[T]he Orient has helped to define Europe (or the West) as its contrasting image, idea, personality, experience" (Said, 1978: 9-10). Said argues that Europeans created a concept of the Orient which was, according to them, a place of primitive "Others" in contrast to the European superiority. In *Sunset Oasis* Catherine is an Orientalist, drawn to a remote part of Egypt in pursuit of the tomb of Alexander the Great. Said's *Culture and Imperialism* focuses on the Western writings on Africa, India, the Far East, Australia and the Caribbean. According to Said these writings always rehearse stereotypes, pertinent to people living in these lands, depicting them as barbaric, subjugated and inferior. The writers of such texts determine that the colonized do not behave properly, so they must be punished and treated harshly since violence is the only language they can comprehend. This allegation grants them the right and encourages them to appropriate their homes. Due to its self-confidence, power and sense of superiority, Britain could control and rule its overseas territories with a limited number of its administrators regardless of the tremendous distance between the two places. For example, by the 1930s, only 4000 British administrators could dominate 300 million Indians (Said, 1994: 11). Thus, Said highlights the outcomes of the presence of the colonizer on the land of the conquered; the effects of colonizing also resulted in armed and cultural resistance by the suppressed indigenous people, specifically in the nineteenth century (1994: xii). This resistance faced the arrogance and condescension of imperialism and led to decolonization, but decolonization, as this thesis demonstrates particularly through Trevor's novel, has its own price.

As Said argues, the canonical works of European literature plant the seeds of

imperialism. "[A]s culture may predispose and actively prepare one society for the overseas domination of another, it may also prepare that society to relinquish or modify the idea of overseas domination" (Said, 1994: 200). Writers of the nineteenth century did not give voice to the indigenous peoples in their works and the neo-historical project of the last few decades is addressing this. Literature of the nineteenth century, consciously or unconsciously, underpinned military expansion. Kipling endorsed the British colonization of India and purposefully regarded the Indian rebellion of 1857 as mere mutiny, not as a weapon for opposing the invading forces (Said, 1994: 75). Kipling resolved to obliterate through his fiction the genocides perpetrated by the British colonizers. In the same way, William Dalrymple argues, the British tend to efface their imperial past and represent themselves as "paragons of peace, and global champions of freedom and "British values"". (Dalrymple, 2015). To realize that, they employ their school textbooks; these textbooks instil the notion that it is "only the Germans who imagine racial hierarchies and commit racially inspired genocides" (Dalrymple, 2015). Equally, Kipling works hard through his literature to extinguish the flames of the national resistance. In *Kim* (1901), Kipling implies that the British existence in India is a necessity and a civilizing duty, so Said contends that "[t]he English, with the pompous, cold-blooded religiosity of the Raj at its worst, see Indians and their history as barbaric, uncivilized, inhuman" (1994: 206).

As the neo-historical texts under discussion in this thesis demonstrate, the British Empire brings about the emergence and the creation of new narratives about it. Some of the recent fictions of the decolonized countries are dealing with, revisiting and reimagining the colonial past and the attendant resistance to domination. Deeply influenced by Saidian thinking, Soueif's *The Map of Love*, for instance, allows for the voice of the indigenous people to be heard by re-imagining these voices and re-

presenting the past. At the same time Soueif demonstrates through some of her fictional and historical characters that not all British citizens subscribed to the myth of the civilizing mission or believed in the expansion of empire. According to Dalrymple, the empire is a crucial topic in postcolonial writings, yet "so little truly great literature" was produced by the British before 1947 regarding imperialism and colonialism, in spite of the 350 years of the close political and economic relationship with India (Dalrymple, 2015). As the British tend to neglect the gloomy past of the empire, the ones who have experienced its tyranny fail to turn their backs on affliction resulting from it. Paul Gilroy states that "[d]escendants of the victims of past injustice are often more familiar with the bloody annals of colonial government than British subjects, safely insulated at home from any exposure to the violent details of conquest and expropriation" (Dalrymple, 2015). As such, these descendants invigorate such a fiction that revisits the imperial past and depicts the areas that are deliberately hidden in British literature written during Empire concerning the dilemmas of the colonized. Likewise, the resistance in the Third World initially stems from the powerful narratives calling for it because the strength of narration plays a key role in laying the foundations of the writer's aspirations and fulfilling them. Said argues that "[t]he power to narrate, or to block other narratives from forming and emerging, is very important to culture and imperialism, and constitutes one of the main connections between them" (1994: xiii). Neo-historical fictions of empire reframe the imperial past, enable new voices and demonstrate the complicated relationship between the colonizer and the colonized. The thesis rejects any simple binaries between evil colonizers and innocent victims. Within a colonial context, relations, as theorists such as Fanon demonstrate, are complex. The neo-historical fictions in this thesis grapple with these complexities.

The work in this thesis builds on some of Said's ideas to analyse the legacies of colonialism and rework them in modern fictions of Egypt, India and Ireland while

bearing in mind Faulkner's understanding of the past. The past is never dead even after the passing of three centuries after the incursion of the British into India. Said's *Orientalism* is considered a key text for understanding postcolonialism as Said focuses on how the Western texts represent the Western powers, underestimate the East and view the Easterners as Others. By so doing, the study of the Orient by the Western intellectuals was used as a fundamental tool, Said argues, to support the imperial project and pave the way for its political and cultural dominance in the East. This is demonstrated, for instance, in *The Inheritance of Loss* where the strong impact of the influence of Western culture was evident on the Indians in 1980s. They believed they gained social status by associating themselves with England and immigrating to England and the USA to improve the conditions of their lives. The past is not dead and the neo- historical fictions in my thesis offer a challenge to the present and present alternative interpretations of history. For instance, a contemporary British journalist and historian Andrew Roberts is still boasting about the British colonialism in India and claiming that the Indians must be grateful to the British for colonizing them. After some Bollywood celebrities have demanded to restore the Koh-i-Noor diamond that is kept by the British, Roberts contends that

> [t]hose involved in this ludicrous case should recognise that the British Crown Jewels is precisely the right place for the Koh-i-Noor diamond to reside, in grateful recognition for over three centuries of British involvement in India, which led to the modernisation, development, protection, agrarian advance, linguistic unification and ultimately the democratisation of the sub-continent. (Dalrymple, 2015)

Similarly, an understanding of nineteenth-century imperial stories informs an

understanding of modern texts which revisit the colonial past; the past is key to interpreting the present. As Said demonstrates, T. S. Eliot, in one of his essays, confirms the importance of history. He notes that former days have left their marks in the current time. Neither the past nor the present has value if they are perceived separately. Eliot illustrates that the "historical sense" is "what makes a writer most acutely conscious of his place in time, of his own contemporaneity. No poet, no artist of any art, has his complete meaning alone" (Said, 1994: 4). The present and the past complement the image of each other. When history is put under the microscope, the land that is stolen from its people under the name of imperialism is being investigated. Dalrymple notes that "[w]e must never be allowed to forget that whatever its achievements, the British Empire, like every empire before or since, was both gained and maintained by military might, and built over the graves of those it conquered and colonised" (2015).

Said reminds us that culture "is not the exclusive property of East or West, nor of small groups of men or women" (1994: xxiv). The universality of the culture is a fundamental aspect showcased in *Culture and Imperialism.* For example, Beethoven's music is not exclusive to Germany, yet it belongs to "the human heritage" (xxv). Dalrymple backs up Said's claim when he writes about the *Artist and Empire* exhibition at Tate Britain in 2015. Dalrymple observes that this exhibition represents "fusion with the arts of other cultures" (Dalrymple, 2015); the paintings of the English painters during colonialism, for instance, reflect the nuanced details about the Indian life and the spirit of that time, and vice versa. Some of the colonized artists might have used materials provided by the empire and drew on and transformed some aspects of the imposed life. Eventually, these fused cultures are set together side by side on the soil of the former empire to prove that culture is not exclusively possessed by one side of the world. This explains why Said never merely criticizes the empire, but also

condemns the nativism that glorifies tribalism. This type of nativism weakens societies and enhances religious and ethnocentric malice, which in turn, keeps the colonized backward and always in desperate need for the West even after independence. Accordingly, the nature of culture in this vein will be narrow and distorted. Although the Empire has brought about many atrocities humanly, socially and ethnically by separating the Europeans and the colonized of the overseas territories, one of its great privileges is that it renders the world globalized and brings the West close to the East. At the same time, Desai's novel questions the impact of globalization through the story of Biju in America in the 1980s.

Although Said establishes a relationship between culture and imperialism in light of the literature of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, he does not explore issues of gender in relation to colonizing. Spivak makes an important intervention in this area and her work on the subaltern, particularly the subaltern female, is critical to this thesis. In "Can the Subaltern Speak?" (1985) Spivak states that in the eyes of the colonial authority and intellectuals, the subordinate is considered an identity that cannot represent itself consciously and that his or her knowledge is marginal (Spivak, 2016: 80). As a result, these intellectuals undertake to represent them. Spivak highlights that this is intentionally orchestrated, not only to show the superiority of the colonizers, but also to naturalize this fact and render it as a norm and a common sense. Many intellectuals start discussing the case of the subordinate and classify it under "Subaltern Studies" (Spivak, 2016: 78). However, she predicates that these studies should ask the question: can the subaltern speak?, rather than concentrating on the accomplishments of the colonizer and presenting him as a benevolent spokesman. Spivak argues for allowing the subalterns to speak for themselves. Furthermore, she draws attention to how the colonizing forces work on underestimating and disparaging the native epistemology to convince people of its inappropriateness: "disqualified as

inadequate to their task or insufficiently elaborated" in contrast to the perfection of Western knowledge (76). Spivak considers this racial view as "epistemic violence" (76). Of key significance is Spivak's analysis of the British annulment of widow sacrifice in 1829 and at the same time the colonizing practice of muting their colonial subjects. She clarifies that although it was ostensibly a benevolent decision and well-intentioned, it had many imperial implications. The British abolished the widow sacrifice without the consent of a single Hindu, despite its holiness in their belief system. Likewise, it is an indication of interfering into the affairs of the Other religiously and politically and an endeavour to exhibit the sharp contrast between the civilized British and the barbaric Other. As a consequence, Spivak portrays the relationship between the subordinate and silence and clarifies that the subaltern cannot articulate his or her feelings as long as he or she is muted. The case is exacerbated when the subaltern is a woman, more atrociously if she is black and poor. Said ignores gender in his analysis of empire, so Spivak's pivotal work becomes a crucial corrective by focusing on gender issues and highlighting the suffering of a female doubly subordinated in the colonized society: the female subaltern is doubly colonized by her native people and the colonial power. Spivak's ideas about the voice of the conquered women are central to an understanding of family relations in the colonial and postcolonial texts and crucial to my thesis as they can be seen in the representation of some female subaltern figures in the fictions under discussion. For example, my reading of the muted Maleeka in *Sunset Oasis* draws on Spivak's interpretation, as Maleeka experiences the cruelty of the irrationality of her community's customs, male dominance and the power system of external (British) colonization. Mary Duane in *Star of the Sea* is also muted and doubly colonized by her own people and by the imperial power.

Spivak draws our attention to the intricacy of the relationship between the

colonized and the colonizer through the history of Sati. She examines the nature of the reciprocal correlation between the colonizing men and the Indian patriarchal dominance on one side and the subordinate females on the other: “White men are saving brown women from brown men” (Spivak, 2016: 92). To demonstrate, one of the rituals and conventions in Hindu society was that the widow immolated herself on the pyre of her deceased husband as a sign of devotion and love. However, the British colonialists considered this act inhumane and cruel, so the British abolished this rite in 1829, as if the white men were saving the brown women from the brutality of the brown men. Contrary to that, the Hindu Indian males were not satisfied with this decision and stated that the Indian women actually wanted to die, for these men reckoned this act a sign of devotion, bravery, love and piety (Spivak, 2016: 96). In both cases, the voice of this Indian victim was muted. Even in the police reports, the voices of the miserable widows did not exist, and their names were written wrong in the records showing lack of respect and dignity towards them: “As one goes down the grotesquely mistranscribed names of these women, the sacrificed widows, in the police reports included in the records of the East India Company, one cannot put together a 'voice'” (Spivak, 2016: 93). The Indian woman and other women, contiguous to them in Bengal, experienced the same pain and repercussions of colonialism: they were prey of the violence of the hegemonic masculinity of the indigenous culture and the imperial rapacity of the colonizers. Spivak demonstrates that Ashis Nandy comments on the spread of widow sacrifice in Bengal, which is located in the eastern part of the South Asian sub-continent and was affected by British conquest in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, and ascribes this to various reasons, such as “population control” and “communal misogyny” (96). Similar to the Indians, the Bengalis claimed that the woman performed immolation of her own accord. In effect, unlike the Indian women, the Bengali women could inherit property, so the greed for the victim’s

fortunes encouraged burning the widows, apart from the reasons related to Hinduism (96). The Bengali women as well as the Indian women endured a distressing life under these tough circumstances. The existence of empire empowered the indigenous masculine dominance to demolish the lives of these women. In all respects, the Indian woman was humiliated inside and outside her society because "the ideological construction of gender [kept] the male dominant. If, in the context of colonial production, the subaltern has no history and cannot speak, the subaltern as female is even more deeply in shadow" (83).

Spivak notes that colonial elitism and bourgeois-nationalist elitism attribute the Indian achievements to themselves, not to the rest of the nation as they reckon the local people subjugated. Consequently, she addresses the nationalist elite and warns them of being involved in creating the subaltern and proposes that to be economically self-sufficient, the production of the west must be ignored (86-7). This is demonstrated in *The Inheritance of Loss* where bourgeois Indians, like Lola, Noni and the judge, boast about the West and feel ashamed of their own indigenous heritage. By so doing, they contribute to increasing the pain of and silencing the impoverished colonial subjects. This leads me to explore the complex psychology of the colonial project.

**Psychology of Colonialism and the Historical Contexts of Ireland, India and Egypt**

This section explores the psychological legacies of colonization in the family of the conquered and the conquering. It highlights how the empire undertook to put down any forms of revolt and quell any voices calling for national liberation as a means of protecting its political and economic gains. The notion of superiority and inferiority is dominant in the psychological understanding of the effects of empire. The colonists

used a particular language when referring to the colonized, whereas the colonized tended to use violence to redress that injustice. For the theorist of colonialism, Albert Memmi, the colonizer dehumanises the colonized: "He is hardly a human being. He tends rapidly toward becoming an object. As an end, in the colonizer's supreme ambition, he should exist only as a function of the needs of the colonizer, i.e., be transformed into a pure colonized" (Memmi, 1974: 130). Following Memmi, Fanon suggests, "The colonial subject is therefore 'dehumanized' by colonialism to such an extent, that 'it turns him into an animal'" (Pallas, 2016). Memmi also notes that colonization corrupts both colonialists and colonized and "distorts relationships" (1974: 195): this destructive force bedevils both parties. Accordingly, as he argues, the absolute solution to this conflict is through "a complete end to colonization" (1974: 194). For the colonized being "confronted with this image of himself, set forth and imposed on all institutions and in every human contact, how could the colonized help reacting to his portrait?" (131). For Memmi, the "bond" between the colonizer and the colonized turns one into an "oppressor" and "the other into an oppressed creature" (133). Psychological pain and conflict are inevitable. "The truth is that colonialism in its essence was already taking on the aspect of a fertile purveyor for psychiatric hospitals" (Fanon, 1963: 249).

Máire Ní Fhlathúin (2007) points out that the British Empire lasted for about four hundred years from the sixteenth century to the end of the twentieth century (Ní Fhlathúin, 2007: 21). This long period of time could easily leave its deep and long-lasting marks on the psyche of both protagonists of the imperial scene: the colonized and the colonizing. She adds that the success of its domination can be ascribed to many reasons, such as the consecutive governments and the efforts of the individual imperialists who sought revenues and national reputation. The British Empire could psychologically prove to its people that it undertook the imperial enterprise for their

prosperity. Britain constantly attempted to persuade the world of the benevolence of imperialism; it claimed it wanted to propagate British civilization in the colonies.

The British colonization of Ireland started gradually in the twelfth century and reached its final juncture during the reign of the Tudor dynasty (Ní Fhlathúin, 2007: 21). The English kings named themselves "Lords of Ireland" in addition to their other titles. Henry VIII changed that to "King of Ireland" instead (2007: 21). Elizabeth I continued her military attacks against the Irish Gaelic forces and defeated them. All these circumstances brought about the expropriation of the lands of the Irish; English and Scots settlers occupied the richest terrain. It was part of the British scheme to bolster its national identity by bringing together the Scots and the English on the lands of the Irish and by sponsoring the imperial settlement enterprise. Although not responsible for the actual potato blight, the mismanagement of Ireland and British colonialism resulted in the disastrous Irish Famine between 1845 and 1851, which adversely affected the size of the population through death and exodus. Furthermore, the Irish were perceived as inferior *black* people when compared with the *white* English. Luz Mar González Arias points out that Roddy Doyle calls the Irish "the black of Europe" in his novel *The Commitments* (1987). The Irish musician Bono describes the Irish as "The White Nigger" in the eyes of the British for being vagabonds, aliens and displaced (Arias, 2007: 118). All these aspects of injustice and aggression, including the long period of invasion, imperial settlement, military attacks, racial discrimination and the catastrophic Famine, are more than sufficient to generate and perpetuate hazardous mental and psychological problems for the Irish family experience.

In the nineteenth century Irish nationalists demanded "Home-Rule" or self-government. The British government voted for it in 1912 but it was suspended in 1914

because of Britain's engagement in the First World War. As a result, Irish rebels engaged in the Easter Rising of 1916. The Rising became the rallying call for nationalist violence, and a three-year guerrilla war against the British forces known as the Irish War of Independence broke out in 1919. At the end, Ireland was partitioned (the six counties that comprise Northern Ireland remain a contentious political battleground today). The autonomous twenty-six counties were self-governed from 1922 with a parliament in Dublin. Then, in 1949, Ireland named itself the Republic of Ireland. Lucy Gault was a child in 1921 and lived through the turbulent twentieth century incarcerated, as we will see, in her Anglo-Irish family home.

Under British rule, the Irish language started to collapse in the nineteenth century and was replaced by English which became the dominant language in the political, social and economic sectors, Ní Fhlathúin argues that the hegemony of the English language over the Irish was unprecedented: "English became a language of the élite and governing classes across the empire, although it never replaced indigenous languages in Africa or India to the extent that it did in Ireland" (Ní Fhlathúin, 2007: 22). According to Stephen Howe in *Ireland and Empire*,

> By the late medieval period, the English Crown had a long-established if uncertainly grounded claim to sovereignty over Ireland; and significant parts of Ireland including most of the existing major towns were effectively dominated by English conceptions of lordship, language and law. (Howe, 2000: 21)

The English degraded the Gaelic Irish culture and described it as backward in an attempt to promote English, the language of Empire, and efface Gaelic. Nicholas Canny underlines this: they "tended to see Gaelic Irish tradition as barbaric, but 'their

preferred solution … lay in persuading the members of the ruling elite in Gaelic society to adopt English ways and to become agents of reform within their lordships'" (cited in Howe, 2000: 26). The awareness of the importance of the Irish language as a medium of enhancing the national and psychological identity was high among the Irish writers; Louis de Paor, for example, opposed the translation from Irish to English in the nineteenth century. Biddy Jenkinson, likewise, rejected any translation of her works into English (Arias, 2007: 117). Conversely, some of the Irish writers were conscious of the significance of English, for it could assist them to reach a larger audience, regardless of the fact it was the language of the colonial power. They considered English "their 'stepmother tongue'", which would remain a sustained psychological reminder of imperial atrocities (Arias, 2007: 117).

Ireland was a predominantly Catholic society in the nineteenth century as the Catholic Church had "a dominant position within Irish society" at the time, as argued by John Newsinger (Newsinger, 1995: 255). The reasons behind this as Newsinger points out were "the growing effectiveness of Catholicism itself" and the involvement of the Catholic Church in the politics of nineteenth-century Ireland in its encounter with Britain (1995: 255). Newsinger states that the Catholic Church was associated with "popular movements that challenged both the Protestant Ascendancy and the British state" (1995: 257-8). Prior to the nineteenth century, between the medieval period and the seventeenth century, Ireland maintained its Catholicism, and this explains the failure of the Protestant Reformation in Ireland, regardless of its success in England and Scotland (Howe, 2000: 21).

Catholic Ireland was stricken by the Famine in the nineteenth century – a turning point in Irish history. "However much refined and analysed," F.S.L Lyons in *Ireland since the Famine* states, "it still remains an appalling phenomenon, etching itself

ineradicably on the hearts and minds not only of those who experienced it, but of all the generations that have lived in Ireland since those terrible years" (Lyons, 1971: 4). Lyons argues that the Famine is "clearly of fundamental importance in determining the political and psychological climate of Ireland, and deeply significant also for its subsequent economic and social configuration" (Lyons, 1971: 5). According to Lyons, the explicit psychological legacy of Famine was demonstrated through the bitterness of the poor and suppressed Irish against the British that was carried away with them overseas as they emigrated from Ireland (Lyons, 1971: 4). Cormac O'Grada in *Ireland before and after the Famine* attributes the Famine to three factors: "an ecological accident that could not have been predicted [the fungus causing the potato plight], an ideology ill geared to saving lives [the policies taken by the Irish landlords and the British] and, of course, mass poverty" (O'Grada, 1988: 122). Despite the fact that the Irish had served as recruits in the colonial British army in India as they were imperial servants, they overall inspired the Indian nationalists to follow suit freeing and decolonizing themselves from the British colonists. The Irish fuelled the anti-colonial climate in India: as argued by Michael Silvestri in *Ireland and India*, "From the late nineteenth century onwards, Ireland stood as an example of anti-colonial resistance for Indian nationalists, providing examples of both violent resistance and constitutional agitation" (Silvestri, 2009: 6). Solidarity was evident between both colonies as they shared a similar colonial experience.

Similar to Ireland, the psychological legacies of imperialism are also explicit in India. The English traders took over the Indian coastline and allied with the Indian rulers relying to some extent on Indian recruits against their French and European competitors. Subsequently, the English East India Company (EIC) was established in 1600, basically for trading in the East Indies and having three main centres: Calcutta, Madras and Bombay. The English succeeded in imposing itself on the Sub-continent

and preparing the Indians psychologically for the colonial future through trade at the outset. As shown by Ní Fhlathúin, EIC partially embarked on a particular course of ruling the Sub-continent and then became the ultimate power in India, taking over Ceylon, Burma and some parts of Malaysia. Robert Clive, Ní Fhlathúin demonstrates, ruled Bengal and had full dominance over income.

The arrival of the British and the ruling of the EIC impinged on Indian society. In contrast to the white English colonies, India was not a place of settlement for many English nationals. The English solely headed to it as workers in the EIC, and instantly after they finished their tasks, they went back home. Some were impelled to go to India by the government so that it would eliminate its excess citizens. In India Britain accomplished its imperial and financial dreams. The relationship between the peasants and the landlords was affected; middle-class strength increased and the old aristocratic classes were compromised. In addition, Bengal experienced famine and economic downturns. Western education, Ní Fhlathúin states, spread across India by the missionaries who failed to alter the religion of the Indians (2007: 26). Concomitant to the spread of Western culture, the dissemination of English language was explicit as English was the key language of the EIC. Its employees needed to communicate with the indigenous people whose native language was not English. In the middle of the nineteenth century, the EIC became the direct and ultimate ruling power in India. This resulted in igniting fury among the Indians, especially the elite, who rebelled between 1857 and 1858. The rebellion, called the Indian Mutiny by the British, failed to expel the British forces. Eventually, India was ruled directly from Britain instead of the EIC. The events of 1857 are a defining moment in Indian history and in Indian-British relations. Atrocities were committed on both sides as Anita Anand explains: "By the middle of June, the whole of northern India was in open revolt. Rebels rampaged across the region and a minority committed unspeakable atrocities against British

civilians". Cawnpore, as it was then known, "saw some of the worst of the bloodlust, culminating in the massacre of 204 British women and children on 27 June 1857". British relief forces found "floors 'ankle deep' in blood, and rooms littered with bonnets, children's shoes and hair, matted in gore" (Anand, 2019: 25). Retaliation was brutal: "Within four months, the British had executed around 100,000 sepoys, most of whom had played no part in any atrocity. The manner of their killing exemplified the vengeance that drove the British. Sepoys were tied to the mouths of canons and blasted to pieces for sport" (26).

British technology in India, such as "print industries" and "the expansion of the railways" contributed to the aspirations and ambitions of Indian nationalism since these inventions tied together the motley parts of the country and brought the colonized Indians closer to each other (Ní Fhlathúin, 2007: 29). These technological contributions "had the effect of practically and psychologically unifying the large spaces of India during the nineteenth century" (Ní Fhlathúin, 2007: 29). Following their assistance to Britain during the First World War, the Indians expected that the British would grant them the right of Home Rule, yet the Indian wish was disappointed. Another defining moment in Indian-British relations took place in 1919 when British forces fired on a peaceful protest in Amritsar on 13 April in a walled garden in the city (Anand, 2019). That the lieutenant governor of the Punjab was an Irish Catholic who condoned the massacre conducted by his subordinate Rex Dwyer highlights the complexities of colonial allegiances. Indians, however, were mobilised by Gandhi's peaceful resistance. In the aftermath of the Second World War, Britain retreated from the area after forging two independent countries: India and Pakistan in 1947. Britain never left the area peaceful. It withdrew after it implanted the seeds of loathing and malice between people by means of the divisions. Persistent disputes between India and Pakistan over the borders underline this. Desai's novel examines

unrest in the 1980s, unrest that is a legacy of partition.

Many writers in Britain during imperialism endorsed British colonial ventures overseas and exhorted citizens to participate in this glory. These authors diligently attempted to prepare the British nation mentally and psychologically to fight for the imperial project and contribute to its success. MacDonald argues that British imperialism was "Anglocentric" and "defin[ed] itself against" and "assert[ed] its superiority to all other systems" (1994: 6). Charles Dilke's *Greater Britain* (1868) and J. R. Seeley's *The Expansion of England* (1883) "argued for the value to Britain of its overseas possessions as well as the special fitness of the English to rule over other people" (Ní Fhlathúin, 2007: 27). John Ruskin gave a lecture in 1870 at Oxford University, a destination of the educated elite and thinkers. Ruskin urged Britain to expropriate any lands it could reach and harness them to the full. England, Ruskin stated,

> must found colonies as fast and as far as she is able, formed of her most energetic and worthiest men; – seizing every piece of fruitful waste ground she can set her foot on, and there teaching these her colonists that their chief virtue is to be fidelity to their country, and that their first aim is to be to advance the power of England by land and sea. (Ní Fhlathúin, 2007: 27)

In the wake of the decolonization of the British Empire, paradoxically, many Indian emigrants headed to the UK, particularly after the Second World War. They were granted the right to work and live in Britain, especially after the passing of the British Nationality Act in 1948 which in turn sparked the outrage of the British indigenous population who feared "economic competition" with these foreigners (Ní Fhlathúin,

2007: 31). The Indian "continued presence, and their contribution to the cultural life of an increasingly multicultural country, serve as a reminder of Britain's imperial past" (Ní Fhlathúin, 2007: 31). This repeats Faulkner's comprehension of the past and contends that the psychological repercussions of conquest can permanently remain. It is not an easy task, if not impossible, to erase the colonial influences from minds, as is the case with the palpable impact of imperialism on the ground.

As Kiberd acknowledges, it is "less easy to decolonise the mind than the territory" (cited in Arias, 2007: 113). For instance, although the Egyptians gained independence in 1922, the painful memories following the Tripartite Aggression against Egypt are still evident. The attack was a response to nationalising the Suez Canal by President Nasser in 1956. Although Egypt became independent in 1922, the Suez Canal remained under the dominance of Western powers for more than thirty years until 1956. Egypt was strategically important to Britain, especially for its canal, as Gladstone declared that "for India the Suez Canal is the connecting link between herself and the centre of power" (Hyam, 2002: 180). Besides, the majority of the shipments passing through the canal were British, as Ronald Hyam points out. For its crucial location, Egypt furthermore was an ambition for France to drain its resources for its wars in Europe and to disrupt Britain's access to its overseas colonies in the East, which ended in Napoleon Bonaparte's campaign in Egypt between 1798 and 1801 (Abul-Magd, 2012). Following France, Britain colonized Egypt in 1882 because the economic situation of Egypt allowed European intervention: Egypt was immersed in huge debts. The National Debt in 1876 increased to £91,000,000 leading to the declaration of bankruptcy (Hyam, 2002: 179). What increased the grievances of Egypt was that the British exported vast numbers of its antiquities and monuments to the British museums in the first half of the nineteenth century and excavated its tombs (International World History Project). Prior to the invasion, Ahmad Urabi, an Egyptian

nationalist and an officer in the army, led a revolt between 1879 and 1882 to overthrow the Khedive Tewfik and cease the "Dual control" of Britain and France on Egypt (Davies, 2009: 307). This revolt ended in the occupation of Egypt and a bombardment of Alexandria by Britain in 1882. The current clashes in the world pertaining to race may be attributed to the residual effects of the empire. Abigail Ward states that "certainly many of today's racial anxieties in Britain may be traced back to Britain's colonial past and its historical relationships with its formerly colonised countries" (Ward, 2007: 201).

Psychology is at the heart of the colonial legacy and impacts on the mental condition of both the colonized and the colonizer. For Hussein Abdilahi Bulhan, the past must be examined from a psychological point of view to comprehend the legacies of the colonial process (cited in Ward, 2007: 191). Abigail Ward argues that it is fundamental not to separate colonization from decolonization. It is vital to remember past conquests, despite how agonising they were, to access a psychological recuperation. Much of the early work on the psychology of imperialism came from an analysis of French imperialism in North Africa during the period of decolonization in the mid twentieth century. Francophone theorists, such as Albert Memmi (Tunisian) and Frantz Fanon (Afro-Caribbean), show empathy with the colonized and sift through the psychological impacts of imperialism on both the conquered and the conquering.

Albert Memmi's *Portrait du colonisé précédé du Portrait du Colonisateur* (1957, trans. *The Colonizer and the Colonized*) contends that it is imperative to "reproduce, completely and authentically, the portraits of the two protagonists of the colonial drama and the relationship which binds them" (Ward, 2007: 193). Memmi calls for studying the problems of the victims on the grounds of their relations to the conquerors. Memmi points out that the main reason that motivates the colonizer to

settle in the colony for generations and leave his homeland and his own people is "substantial profit" as the colony for him is a place where he "earns more and spends less" (Memmi, 1974: 48). The settler will think of returning home only if his profit is in danger and this underlines the essential motive behind settling in the colony (Memmi, 1974: 50). The colonizer heads to the colony "because jobs are guaranteed, wages high, careers more rapid and business more profitable" (Memmi, 1974: 48). Prior to his arrival, the colonizer is suffused with false stereotypes about the colonized. Memmi contends that the colonizer "had some idea of the colonized from his childhood books; he had seen a documentary movie on some of their customs, preferably chosen to show their peculiarity" (51). This indicates the colonial efforts of the Empire in brainwashing its own individuals and shaping their conception of the Other. However, upon his arrival, the colonizer will overlook these stereotypes and focus on forging a relationship with the colonized as this relationship brings him privilege and profit:

> The colonizer "finds himself on one side of a scale, the other side of which bears the colonized man. If his living standards are high, it is because those of the colonized are low; if he can benefit from plentiful and undemanding labor and servants, it is because the colonized can be exploited at will and are not protected by the laws of the colony; if he can easily obtain administrative positions, it is because they are reserved for him and the colonized are excluded from them; the more freely he breathes, the more the colonized are choked. (Memmi, 1974: 52)

Fanon is a key critic in relation to the psychology of imperialism. Being a psychiatrist who experienced the impact of the Algerian War of Independence, Fanon engaged in the psychological analysis of the impact of this war as the French

empire was violently dismantling. His key texts are *The Wretched of the Earth* (1963) and *Black Skin, White Masks* (1952). Fanon articulates that black people are seen as mere objects and recognized based solely on the way they are conceived of by the white colonizers; the presence of the black becomes apparent when contrasted with the white. Consequently, the black adopt "two dimensions" and behave in a specific way when dealing with the white, different from when dealing with the black. For Fanon this creates "a traumatic split in the psyche" (Ward, 2007: 194). As a consequence the oppressed internalize violence. Fanon proposes that the intricacies of the relationship between the black and the white spring from the notion of slavery. The white strive to propagate the Western culture among the young black, and Fanon considers this tool as mental enslavement. In the same way, Memmi builds a strong connection between conquest and the preceding slavery. Also, Memmi suggests that the intermediate solutions to end the colonial dispute are useless; "the colonial condition cannot be adjusted to; like an iron collar, it can only be broken" (Ward, 2007: 195). Similar to Fanon, Memmi advocates rebellion, violence as well as insurrection and considers them remedial options for both the subjugator and the subjugated: "for the coloniser to be rid of the 'disease' of colonisation, and for the colonised to 'become a man" (Ward, 2007: 195).

The overwhelming notion in Fanon's *The Wretched of the Earth* is the advocacy of violence to expel the colonizers. Writing during a period of violent decolonization, Fanon justifies the call for violence and argues that as long as the enemies draw on violence and aggression to conquer the land, then only an equal level of violence can balance the condition and purify the area. He observes that the settler uses only the language of force:

> The colonial regime owes its legitimacy to force and at no time tries to hide this aspect of things. Every statue, whether of Faidherbe or of Lyautey, of Bugeaud or of Sergeant Blandan—all these conquistadors perched on colonial soil do not cease from proclaiming one and the same thing: "We are here by the force of bayonets." The sentence is easily completed. (Fanon, 1963: 84)

For Fanon, the settlers engage in brutality to change the economic and social systems of the colonized for their own interests, and therefore the conquered must not hesitate to consider the same technique. Also, Fanon indicates that the settler must not be surprized by the violent reaction of the native since the settler "is the bringer of violence into the home and into the mind of the native" (Fanon, 1963: 38). Fanon's views are controversial. Indeed, the novels in this thesis display extremes of colonial violence but also demonstrate how the violence has a continued impact on the psychology of both the colonizer and the colonized. For Fanon, however, liberation from colonialism requires violence: "decolonization is always a violent phenomenon" (Fanon, 1963: 35). Fanon criticizes the native intellectual and the political parties who warn against the use of violence to counter the colonial power and urges them to cease from discouraging the natives: "They do not assert that the people have to use physical force, and it sometimes even happens that they go so far as to condemn, in private, the spectacular deeds which are declared to be hateful by the press and public opinion in the mother country" (63). They seek to convince the natives of their helplessness to encounter the colonizer's military power, increase the divide between them and make the press describe their actions as "hateful" (63). By so doing, Fanon highlights the psychological impact of this act on the natives: "in the innermost recesses of their brains", the settler with his advanced military equipment is invincible (63). The texts of this thesis accentuate the division and the feud between the colonized that Fanon

warns of. On the same land, the natives' allegiances fail to be completely devoted to their homeland and people: some of these allegiances are granted to the colonizers. This feud and different allegiances are born of the success of the colonial mechanisms in dismantling the bonds connecting the natives.

The colonizers are never reluctant to attribute "the absolute evil" to the colonized and represent the native as "the enemy of values" (Fanon, 1963: 41). To "dehumaniz[e] the native" (42), the colonizers refer to them using animalistic terms; the settler "speaks of the yellow man's reptilian motions, of the stink of the native quarter, of breeding swarms, of foulness, of spawn, of gesticulations" (42). European imperialism undermines any unity in the colonized by subdividing them into several religious and tribal parties to undermine solidarity and weaken them psychologically. As Fanon argues:

> The enemy, in fact, changes his tactics. At opportune moments he combines his policy of brutal repression with spectacular gestures of friendship, manoeuvres calculated to sow division, and "psychological action." Here and there he tries with success to revive tribal feuds, using *agents provocateurs* and practicing what might be called counter-subversion. (Fanon, 1963: 136)

As such, Fanon warns the colonized of the divide between them as this prevents them from unifying and hence from repelling the enemy. Like violence that brings the nation together, Fanon believes that the national culture bonds the nation at the face of the settlers and therefore advocates preserving it. Fanon emphasizes the importance of the past native culture as this culture rehabilitates the natives and provides them with aspirations to "a future national culture" (210). Fanon highlights the role of the

national culture as the colonial power relentlessly works to undermine it in the eyes of the natives. By so doing, the settler inculcates the superiority and the ascendancy of his culture over the natives: the colonizers aim to instil in the natives the idea that without the colonizers and their splendid culture, the natives will "fall back into barbarism, degradation, and bestiality" (211). The colonized consequently feel ashamed of their own heritage and seek to adopt and revere the settler's culture instead. This is explicit in the story of the judge in *The Inheritance of Loss* who shuns his Indian heritage as he considers it a source of shame and clings to English traditions at home. Colonialism succeeds in brainwashing him and disfiguring his culture in his eyes. As a result, the judge isolates himself from his fellow natives. This substantiates what Fanon observes that losing the national culture wreaks havoc in the unity of the nation. Fanon states:

> Colonialism is not satisfied merely with holding a people in its grip and emptying the native's brain of all form and content. By a kind of perverted logic, it turns to the past of the oppressed people, and distorts, disfigures, and destroys it. This work of devaluing pre-colonial history takes on a dialectical significance today. (1963: 210)

Fanon notes that after the colonized individual moves to the home of the colonizer and seeks to assimilate its culture, he gains social status in his society upon his arrival in his homeland. This makes him treat his fellow citizens in a conceited way as is the case with the judge in *The Inheritance of Loss* who travels to Cambridge and comes back home qualified as a judge, treating his fellow Indians haughtily though psychologically suppressed in the West.

Most importantly for the purposes of this thesis, Fanon in the last chapter of *The Wretched of the Earth* highlights the psychological and mental disorders plaguing both the colonized and the colonizing. He represents stories embodying psychological effects of mental pathology emanating from colonialism and postcolonialism on the family members of the both parties. Fanon adds that during colonization, there is "a regular and important mental pathology which is the direct product of oppression", emphasizing the inseparable relationship between colonialism and psychological disorder (Fanon, 1963: 251). The colonial war resulted in certain psychological symptoms different from those resulting from the two World Wars. Fanon recorded his observations on the patients in Algeria, such as insomnia, suicidal obsessions, continued headache, impotency, anxiety and others between 1954 and 1959.

One of the cases was a young Algerian who was forced to be away from his wife and daughter for two years due to the circumstances of the war because he was one of the warriors. Subsequently, he received the news that his wife was raped by the French soldiers. As a result of the shock, he developed impotency. Another case is an Algerian who tended to persistently and randomly kill anyone he saw following survival from a mass slaughter. A nineteen-year-old Algerian suffered psychologically after the murder of his mother and the rape of his two sisters by the French. At first, he decided to revenge and headed to the French officer's house where he only found the officer's wife. She drew his attention to the fact that she had children and beseeched him not to murder her, but he did. As a result, he suffered "an unconscious guilt complex" (Fanon, 1963: 262). Another story is the suffering of a European policeman who was annoyed at night by screams piercing his ears. The reason was that he used to torture the Algerians during the interrogations to forcefully elicit their confessions. Their innocent screams kept chasing him to his bed. Another European became aggressive with his wife and children as a result of his job: inflicting atrocious pain on the

Algerians for long hours. Furthermore, Fanon encountered children aged 13 and 14 years old having murdered their European friend; this underlines the gravity of the impacts of the colonial war on the psychology of all the ages of the family. A young Frenchwoman felt ashamed of her father who killed and tormented the innocent victims in Algeria and embarrassed with regard to her Algerian friends who suffered her father's acts. She was psychologically and mentally damaged by the screams of the victims who were tortured by the whip of her father. She frankly announced to her father that if she had been Algerian, she would have fought the French.

As shown above, colonialism causes psychological confusion. "Although those remaining fragments of the empire comprise together only a minute fraction of the land and people once dominated by Britain, the legacy of British imperial domination remains" (Ní Fhlathúin, 2007: 30). The imperial ventures embedded a legacy in both the colonizer and in the colonized which plays out at a microcosmic level in complicated family dynamics. This colonial inheritance moves from one generation to another. The primary texts in this thesis explore the ramifications of colonialism in families where mental distress and psychological disarray prevail. As many of my neo-historical fictions are set in the nineteenth century and rework a nineteenth-century past it is useful to briefly look at some nineteenth century fictions which reveal empire's implications for the family.

**A View of the Family in Nineteenth-Century Fictions**

The Empire's impact on the family is traceable to nineteenth-century fictions. It is important to foreground how Victorian writers dealt with empire and the family as much of the neo-historical project engages with the Victorian past: O'Connor deals with the Irish Famine, and Taher and Soueif address Egypt under British rule in the

late nineteenth century. Moreover the Victorian novel is point of reference in the fictions in this thesis: Lucy Gault reads Victorian novels in her self-imposed incarceration. She becomes like a Miss Havisham figure from Charles Dickens's *Great Expectations.* *Wuthering Heights* appears in both *Star of the Sea* and *The Inheritance of Loss.* Indeed the story of ill-fated love in Brontë's novel is recaptured in the ill-fated young lovers of Desai's novel. Fundamentally, however, in order to reshape the past, to rethink the family, we have to understand how imperial writers interpreted empire.

The Anglo-Indian Rudyard Kipling was an advocate of empire. For George Orwell Kipling "was the prophet of British Imperialism in its expansionist phase" (Orwell, 2015). His works always demand the separation between the East and the West: "East is East, and West is West, and never the twain shall meet" (Kipling, 1889: line 1). Yet his fiction explores their meeting: when the twain meet, according to Kipling, tragedy and distress will be engendered and ruin the normal course of life. "Beyond the Pale" illustrates the intricacies of the West-East relations and their implications on the family and on the female. The text also prefigures the plight of some of the women in my neo-historical fictions.

"Beyond the Pale" is cautionary for both races warning them of stepping beyond the allowed limits in terms of contact and relations:

> A man should, whatever happens, keep to his own caste, race, and breed. Let the White go to the White and the Black to the Black. Then whatever trouble falls is in the ordinary course of things — neither sudden, alien, nor unexpected. (Kipling, 1888: 2)

The use of the term pale is suggestive of the Irish land outside Dublin which was not under the control of England in the late Middle Ages and consequently it was deemed

to be backward and uncivilized; if one goes beyond the pale, one transcends the acceptable limits. Beyond the Pale was the domain of the native Irish. Pale also signifies colour. Kipling tackles the case of an English civil servant working for the British government in India and falling in secret love with a fifteen-year-old Indian widow to highlight the peril of such a meeting between the East and the West: "This is the story of a man who wilfully stepped beyond the safe limits of decent everyday society, and paid for it heavily" (2). The story concludes with the girl's hands cut off by her uncle and the Englishman stabbed in the groin, leaving him with "a slight stiffness" (6). Violent and savage punishment is the consequence of crossing the line or going beyond the pale. Hugh Ridley maintains:

> Brutality is, of course, a common feature of colonial literature. Since colonial society was, individually and collectively, based directly on violence, it is hardly surprising that this theme should dominate the literature of the colonies. Kipling is no exception to this. (Ridley, 1973: 867)

Yet Trejago goes back to his normal life and "pays his calls regularly" (Kipling, 1888: 6). The Englishman does not pay heavily for the secret affair with the Indian widow. The epigraph of the story is: "I went in search of love and lost myself" (2). However, the one who has lost herself is Bisesa not Trejago. Kipling's tale suggests that the colonized pay a heavier price.

Trejago is an Orientalist who is so enamoured by Eastern knowledge that he can easily decipher the codes of the objects sent to him in a letter from Bisesa: the broken glass bangle means a Hindu widow, the flower of the dhak means "come" and the eleven cardamoms stands for time. He deduces that she wants him to come to her place at eleven o'clock. Kipling here makes a judgement that "[n]o Englishman should be

able to translate object-letters" (3), so he keeps on setting out the prohibition lines that a British man should never exceed so that he will not expose himself to dangers. Robert Macdonald points out that "[t]he Englishman Trejago has an odd, "un- English" name; he is perhaps a Cornishman, a Celt, born outside the pale, the deceiver Jacob, the betrayer Iago" (Macdonald, 1986: 416). Accordingly, this suggests that Trejago is not purely White, as an attempt to manufacture excuses for his odd behaviour as an Englishman. Trejago hides his secret involvement with the Indian girl even from his colleagues at the station, and as a result he leads a double life: during daytime, he is practising his job and at night, he moves to "his dearer, out-of-the-way life" (Kipling, 1888: 4). This is intentionally meant by Kipling to display how turbulent the life of those seduced by oriental knowledge becomes. Furthermore, Trejago is dressed in an "evil-smelling boorka" (4) when he heads to Bisesa's house so that no one will notice him, as if Kipling uses the "smelly boorka" to indicate the sin relating to the East. Trejago went back to his normal life instantly after he "threw away his boorka and went home bareheaded", in other words once he gave up his interest in the knowledge of the East (5).

As this thesis tackles the wretchedness of the family in the light of imperial conquest, the case of Bisesa is pertinent to its construction. She is the real victim in the story, for she is subjected to the cruel treatment of her own people from both genders and the injustice of the West. "Patriarchal superiority joins racial superiority" (Macdonald, 1986: 417). She undergoes the conventions relating to widows in Hinduism in which a wife after the death of her husband is expected to abandon life and its pleasures. Bisesa appears isolated in her room behind a grated window that overlooks a cow-shed behind a slum; this gloomy atmosphere is suggestive of the miserable life she is experiencing as her uncle's servant. For Trejago his love affair with Bisesa has the quality of a dream: "Trejago to-day sometimes wonders if it were

not all a dream" (Kipling, 1888: 4). For Bisesa, who has lost her hands, it is a nightmare. Kipling deliberately makes the cross-cultural encounter a violent one. The story concurs with Spivak's point about the woman trapped between two cultures and casts doubt on the alleged statement that "[w]hite men are saving brown women from brown men" (Spivak, 2016: 92). Bisesa is a victim of both the colonizer and the colonized. A similar abuse of women is found, as this thesis explores, in the subaltern figures of Maleeka in *Sunset Oasis* and Mary Duane in *Star of the Sea*.

In "Without Benefit of Clergy" Kipling explores the plight of a sixteen-year-old Indian girl, Ameera, a victim of the British imperial presence in India and the greed of the natives. She is trapped between the superiority of Britain and the moral inferiority of her family. Her mother has sold her to John Holden, an Englishman, working as an administrator in India. She regards her daughter as a cheap commodity that can be abandoned and disposed of without compunction. The mother throughout the story is represented as acquisitive; in particular it is apparent after the death of Ameera who is stricken with cholera. Just immediately after Ameera has closed her eyes after death, her mother starts to think about the furniture of the house, taking an inventory of it, and how it can all be hers to the extent that she "forgot to mourn" (Kipling, 2001: 14). Also, when Holden allows the mother to take all the furniture of the house, except the bed on which Ameera has died, the mother again demonstrates further signs of avarice: "That beautiful red-lacquered bed. I have long desired ---" (13). This underlines the fragility of the family and the abnormally frail bonds between a mother and a daughter that should have been stronger, more compassionate and more intimate, especially after the emergence of disastrous circumstances, such as sickness and loss; here the opposite is the case. This turbulent relation between a parent and a child can be ascribed to the imperial influence that works on undermining the solid relations between family members. A similar case recurs in *Sunset Oasis* in the relationship

between Maleeka and her mother. Colonialism works on draining the resources of the people and this in turn generates poverty that weakens affiliation among the family.

Ameera's affair with Holden is doomed from the beginning. Like Trejago in "Beyond the Pale", Holden, as an Englishman, is not allowed to have an affair with an Indian woman, nor can he declare it in consequence of the racial, social and religious differences between them. Instead, Holden treats Ameera as merely a concubine, for imperial concubinage is the only recourse. The woman is the victim of such a secret nocturnal life: "Taking the form of a secret concubinage or nocturnal trysts, such a relationship is revealed to be tragic, short-lived and destructive of the woman - subverting thereby the 'rescue script' of colonial discourse", as demonstrated by Indrani Sen (2000: 24). Kipling traps Holden between the demands of his career as an administrator and his commitments towards his concubine and his son Tota. Like Trejago, Holden leads a double life: in the daytime at his work and at nightfall with his small family. Both his son and Ameera succumb to disease. Holden cannot declare them as his family and therefore he cannot move them to safety unlike the English families who flee the outbreak of diseases. Ameera declares: "Oh, that I had married a man of mine own people — though he beat me — and had never eaten the bread of an alien!" (Kipling, 2001: 10). "'Without Benefit of Clergy' undeniably suggests that the races should not intermarry" (Ridley, 1973: 867). The innocent product of the short-term relationship between Holden and Ameera is Tota, and because his existence challenges the *values* of the empire, he dies. Hugh Ridley points out Kipling's opposition to "interbreeding" and that "his belief in white superiority" is clear (867). The victims are women and children.

Doyle's "The Adventure of the Speckled Band" examines the impact of imperialism on the English family when an imperialist comes home. Like Kipling,

Doyle was an imperialist and the story ultimately holds the East responsible for crimes committed in an English rural community. Ostensibly the work explores the violent and psychological impacts of colonialism on the lives of two young English sisters: Helen Stoner and her twin Julia. After the bizarre death of Julia, Helen consults Sherlock Holmes. A woman leaving the house before six in the morning in the late century is suggestive of the extensive terror she experiences. "[W]hen young ladies wander about the metropolis at this hour of the morning, and knock sleepy people up out of their beds, I presume that it is something very pressing which they have to communicate" (Doyle, 1892: 1). To communicate the suffering of this woman, Doyle relies on depicting her physical appearance. Her hair is "shot with premature grey, and her expression [is] weary and haggard" (1). Helen suffers horrific mistreatment by her stepfather who, in turn, has been affected by his prolonged residence in the tropics. A ruthless individual, Roylott foils the natural flow of his stepdaughters' lives by planning to deprive them of marriage to ensure that he retains their income. Helen is shivering when she arrives at Baker Street: "It is not cold which makes me shiver"; "It is fear, Mr. Holmes. It is terror" (1). Placing a frail woman in this gloomy situation is an effective technique used by Doyle to draw attention to the counterproductive outcomes of conquering others that can chase the conquerors and their families to their homeland. Stephen Arata highlights reverse colonization and its fear and guilt characteristic (1990: 626). The civilized world, he argues, fears to be colonized by "primitive" forces originating inside or outside its borders (Arata, 1990: 623). "Such fears are linked to a perceived decline - racial, moral, spiritual - which makes the nation vulnerable to attack from more vigorous, "primitive" peoples" (623). Also, reverse colonialism, Arata argues, is associated with "cultural guilt" from the colonizer's perspective as a result of the abuses perpetrated against the colonized (623).

As this thesis tackles the repercussions of the East-West relationships on the

fabric of the family, the scenario of the events in Roylott's family epitomises such notions. Dr Roylott's time in India has adversely affected his state of mind and impinged on his treatment of the young stepdaughters. Lisa Fluet points out the impact of India upon Roylott as his sense of "physical superiority" is threatened. "[T]he colonial sphere [has] a debilitating influence upon his own body" and on his mind (1998: 153-4). In India Roylott was a killer as he killed his Indian butler. At home he kills one step-daughter and the other must be saved by Holmes. Helen observes: "Violence of temper approaching to mania has been hereditary in the men of the family, and in my stepfather's case it had, I believe, been intensified by his long residence in the tropics" (Doyle, 1892: 2). Susan Harris notes that India became a laboratory for Britain "by identifying and branding its [hereditary] criminals" (Harris, 2003: 459). If Dr Roylott, Harris argues, did not go to India, he would not be labelled as a criminal. When Helen attributes Roylott's violence to his residence in India, this suggests how India is stereotyped as a place of corruption and degeneration in the late nineteenth century. There has been a "tendency, evident since the 1820s, to portray India, or at least a substantial part of it, as fundamentally pathogenic" (Fluet, 1998: 150).

Thus, when the family has returned from India, he plans to seize the stepdaughters' annual sums of money, 250 pounds each, left to them by their late mother. To achieve his goal, he slyly plots to end the lives of the young women before they wed, because according to the mother's will, in the event of the daughters' marriage, they are entitled to receive their inheritance. The development of the plot centres around "the emergence of The Married Women's Property Act (1822) which marked a time in which women began to receive rights exclusive to their male betrothed" (Gordon, 2011: 3). This act triggers Roylott's *hereditary* tendency for crime. Rapacity cultivated in India eradicates family bonds and Roylott uses an Indian

snake to kill Julia. Roylott's involvement in the imperial enterprise cultivates his abuse of the family. Holmes destroys this deformed entity that betrays his family. Roylott is an "inadequate representative of Britain-as-imperial-power", so he deserves death for the misrepresentation of Empire (Fluet, 1998: 133).

The story illustrates the impact of Empire on the family. In this case, the returned and degenerate colonizer with a disturbed mind imports abuses conducted in India to the English home. He inflicts serious physical and psychological pain on the twin sisters, culminating in murder. Witnessing her sister's painful moments of death, Helen Stoner is plagued by a psychological trauma, accompanied by doubts, insecurity and fear. The woman is in desperate need for protection against the villainous outcomes of the relationship between East and West: she needs to be safeguarded by Holmes and then given to her fiancé to protect her. Although she survives death and transcends the barriers facing her marriage, the death of her twin sister leaves a permanent scar in her life. Ultimately, because this is a story produced in a period in which empire was powerful, Holmes was able to eradicate the source of the threat in the English home, predicating "the power of reason, patriarchy, and Empire" (Favor, 2000: 399). However, neo-historical fictions rewrite the stories of empire and reveal the ongoing impact on the family.

In *Star of the Sea* Joseph O'Connor draws on Emily Brontë's *Wuthering Heights* (1847). *Wuthering Heights* embodies a miniature version of a domestic British colony with its actual practices on the Yorkshire moors of the late eighteenth century. The text reveals how white women and foreigners experience an unfair treatment under the umbrella of imperialism but the case is worse for the colonized. Isabella suffers from abuse by her husband Heathcliff, for his mind is affected by racial mistreatment. Moreover, Catherine has no access to her money unless she gets married as her father follows masculine traditions regarding money, bequeathing all his property to his son (Meyer, 1996: 108). As Susan Meyer

notes: “White women and races subject to imperialism both experience an oppressive disempowerment” (108). The work accentuates many harrowing features, such as the destruction of the psyche, violence against one’s family, masochism, acquisition and rapacity. To sum up, the text is an early example of the consequences of reverse imperialism, as illustrated by Meyer, which the alien character Heathcliff performs.

As his looks are of those of a foreigner, Heathcliff suffers from racial abuse from the Earnshaws and the Lintons. Meyer points out that “Heathcliff is subjected to the potent gaze of a racial arrogance deriving from British imperialism” (1996: 97). Brontë’s imaginary colony in Gimmerton elucidates the capacity of colonial violence to be reversed against its originator and advocate, as is the case with Heathcliff. In the beginning, Hindley beats Heathcliff: he impels him to sit with the servants and work on the moors and deprives him of literacy. In contrast, Heathcliff “would stand Hindley’s blows without winking or shedding a tear” (Brontë, 1847: 47). Moreover, Hindley locks him out several times and tries to kill him with a bladed pistol, symbolizing the violence of power. This act internalizes violence in Heathcliff and feeds his desire to avenge, to the extent that he is pining to kill Hindley. Heathcliff has suffered Hindley’s cruelty for three years until his mind becomes ignorant, deprived of education and love of family. He has left Gimmerton for three years, coming back rich and ready to rebel. He makes Hindley mortgage his house to him. Treating him as a mere animal, Heathcliff makes Hindley’s son Hareton his servant. The most hideous aspect of this reverse violence is what Heathcliff perpetrates against his wife and his son. For being a sister of his enemy Edgar who marries his love Catherine, Heathcliff from the outset despises Isabella who later becomes his wife. He uses his invalid son to plot marriage with Catherine and Linton’s child. He declares: “I have no pity! I have no pity! The more worms writhe, the more I yearn to crush out their entrails! It is a moral teething, and I grind with greater energy, in proportion to the

increase of pain" (Brontë, 1847: 194). Traumatized in childhood Heathcliff becomes an adult aggressor. Brontë prefigures Fanon's observation that the oppressed becomes the oppressor. This work foreshadows the Western perception of the Other in subsequent fictions of empire. Similar to Mr Linton who desires to hang Heathcliff for no crime, Kurtz in *Heart of Darkness* (1899) is racist and orders the massacre of the Africans: "Exterminate all the brutes" (Conrad, 1990: 46). Although written fifty years before the publication of *Heart of Darkness*, *Wuthering Heights* presages the European ideology of colonialism, race and the genocide of indigenous people.

Heathcliff is also transformed in O'Connor's novel into Pius Mulvey – a rapacious figure who stalks the lives of his family and wreaks destruction. What Brontë's, Doyle's and Kipling's fictions reveal is that Victorian writers were engaging with the impact of empire on the family. Brontë's text, written decades before high imperialism and a hundred years before Fanon articulated a psychiatric model for the impact of imperialism on the colonized and the colonizer, prefigures the consequences of imperialism on the family. Kipling's and Doyle's texts of high imperialism are more anxious to stabilize the family and rid it of the contamination of empire. The neo-historical texts in this thesis return in one way or another to the imperial situation to explore the impact of empire and colonialism on the family. The first chapter commences with Egypt in the aftermath of the 1882 revolution.

**EGYPT**

## Chapter One

### Colonial Layering and the Impact on Family in Bahaa Taher's *Sunset Oasis*

Born in Cairo, in 1935, Bahaa Taher is an established Egyptian novelist and a short-story writer who writes in Arabic. He worked as an Arabic translator at the United Nations in 1981. He is interested in examining the tensions between tradition and modernity in the Middle East. As a social critic, he demonstrates this interest in *Sunset Oasis* that he penned in 2007. Aleya Said observes that *Sunset Oasis* "throws light on the post-colonial theme of strained subject/ruler relationship" (2009: 94). For this novel, Taher "became the first winner of the newly created International Prize for Arabic Fiction, an award administered by the Booker Prize Foundation in England" in 2008. Previously, he earned the Egyptian State Award of Merit in Literature in 1998 (*Tahir, Baha, 1935-*, 2008). Humphrey Davies subsequently translated the novel from Arabic into English in 2009. The events of *Sunset Oasis* are set in Egypt at the end of the nineteenth century when the British colonization of Egypt had commenced. Taher aims to highlight this troubled period of Egyptian history which, Rachel Aspden notes, is "largely forgotten by its British colonisers" (2009). The text centres on the turbulent psychological life of a middle-aged nationalist Egyptian police officer, Mahmoud Abd el Zahir, who is sent to a remote desert community in Siwa to administer the collection of taxes. Mahmoud is caught between love for his country and submission to British occupation. His problem is that he fails to be completely loyal to either. His feelings are interlocked and in conflict, and this compounds his suffering.

*Sunset Oasis* is set in the nineteenth century and written in the first person mode. The narrative is mainly told through Mahmoud and his Irish wife Catherine, who move us between their past and present. Mahmoud tells us about his childhood and youth and his traumatic memories during the bombardment of Alexandria 1882 and then takes us to the present moment when talking about his mission in Siwa. Catherine evokes the memories of her troubled marriage in Ireland and brings us to the present moment while she is in Siwa. Some parts of the story are told by two characters from Siwa, Yahya and Sabir. The historical section about Alexander the Great is told by himself in the first person point of view.

Mahmoud's love for his Irish wife, Catherine, emerges when he knows that she shares with him the hatred of the British as they colonized her country as well as his. However, Sameer Rahim points out that "their first-person accounts" reveal the instability of their relationship (2009). Their marriage is troubled as it is affected by the colonial atmosphere. Also the terrific storm that batters them on their way to Siwa prefigures the tragic end of their marriage, as argued by Aleya Said (2009). Though reflecting "inter-racial harmony at the beginning", this marriage, Arifa Akbar argues, "begins to crack as it is informed, to some degree, by the politics of occupation" (2009). They, for instance, have different views of the past and dissimilar characters. Catherine is an Orientalist, "a classical scholar and Egyptologist", deeply interested in antiquity and the historical past, and this desire makes her insist on accompanying her husband to the outlying oasis, Siwa, located in the north-west in the Western Desert (Aspden, 2009). Siwa today is a place that attracts tourists to Egypt and its people speak Arabic. However, M. Lynx Qualey argues that "at the time when *Sunset Oasis* is set, Siwa was a very different place – back then, Siwis closely guarded their language, their secrets, and their borders" (Qualey, 2009a). Catherine reads that Alexander the Great passed by Siwa to meet the Oracle of Ammon to acquire

assurance from him that he was the son of Zeus. Contrary to Catherine, Mahmoud dislikes the past because his past is chaotic, painful and fraught with traumatic distress.

Mahmoud sympathized with the 1882 Egyptian army rebellion against Khedival rule and foreign occupation. As a punishment for his sympathies with the nationalists, Mahmoud was sent to rule Siwa. In *Sunset Oasis*, this area is inhabited by the Berbers who are averse to Egyptian dominance. The novel demonstrates complicated layers of colonization: Egyptian occupation of the Berbers and British occupation of the Egyptians. Furthermore, the Berbers have fights between their two clans: the Easterners and the Westerners. Thus, this conception of colonialism extends Said's position on the East-West divide and examines how variations and gradations of colonialism exist: British rule over Egypt, Egyptian rule over the Berbers, internal divisions in the Berber community and oppression of women. Such levels of oppression are witnessed in family relations as the political structures and tensions play out in human relations.

This text, then, is central to my thesis as it re-visions the past and rethinks and reappraises its complexities. It approaches family issues in relation to the complex layers and forms of colonization and the consequences of this situation on the psychologyof the individual. In addition to his wife's intense interest in the historical past, Mahmoud's old forbidden love for his servant girl Ni'ma and his admiration for his wife's beautiful sister Fiona contribute further to destabilizing his marriage. Moreover, his identity is caught and lost between the colonized and the colonizer. As a result of this confusion, he suffers from psychological trauma. *Sunset Oasis* probes how the colonized reacts against the colonizers at the various levels of occupation. Mahmoud resents the British, and the Berbers resent the Egyptians and consider Catherine, who has just come to their oasis as a visitor to survey the area for her study,

a provocation. Likewise, the two clans of the Berbers consider each other an enemy. The tribal dissensions heighten the racial treatment against their women. This is exemplified in the character of Maleeka, a young widow, whose tribal customs confine her to her house for being a widow, and violence against her culminates in her death. This chapter will explore these issues in detail.

**The Historical Background of *Sunset Oasis***

Like Taher, Humphrey Davies, the translator of the text, does not view *Sunset Oasis* as an historical or a neo-historical novel, but as a representation of themes: "It's a novel about universal human issues which happens to be set in a particular period which isn't our own" (Qualey, 2009b). Throughout his forty-year-career, Taher addresses, Rachel Aspden argues, significant themes, like death, exile and love (2009). *Sunset Oasis* begins during the reign of Khedive Abbas Helmi II (1892-1914) which is characterised by serenity. The crucial events, however, took place during his father, Khedive Tawfiq's rule (1879-1892). Khedive Tawfiq came to power after the British had deposed his father Khedive Ismail (1863-1879) who immersed Egypt in huge debts, for he spent a great deal of money on the completion of the Suez Canal, his battles with foreign countries and his sumptuous lifestyle, as indicated by the translator Humphreys Davies in his note about the novel (2009: 307). Large sums of money as a result went to pay the debts of the foreign loans until the government became unable to make any further payments. This impossible situation of financial hardship granted the West an unmissable chance to interfere in Egyptian affairs and justify their reasons for that. Following the financial crisis, the Dual control of France and Britain, Davies adds, emerged to supervise the revenues and the government itself. In consequence of that, Ismail was deposed and went into exile. Ruling a country riven by debts and under

the control of the West, his son Tawfiq became the Khedive of Egypt, as pointed out by Davies. Subject to the orders of the British, he was forced to follow an abstinent fiscal policy (Davies, 2009: 307). The power of the army as a consequence lessened and this situation gave way to a nationalist movement that opposed the dominance of foreign countries in Egypt (Davies, 2009: 307).

In 1881, an army officer, Ahmad Urabi defied Khedive Tawfiq and the control of Egypt by the West. By proclaiming his demands, he gained great public support. In *Sunset Oasis*, Urabi articulates freedom: "God created us to be free men, not chattels or property to be inherited. I swear by God, than whom there is no other, that we will never again, from this day on, be handed down from one master to the next, or treated as slaves" (Taher, 2007: 39). Historically, Tawfiq appointed Urabi minister of war as a result of his appeal, as indicated by Davies (2009: 307). France and Britain were not happy with Urabi serving a high position in the country, so they plotted against him with the Khedive and the governor of Alexandria Umar Basha Lutfi. To provoke Urabi, the Dual Control ordered a naval force to head off the shores of Alexandria, for they knew this action would fan the flames of resentment amongst the Egyptians and chaos would ensue. Davies adds that Umar Basha then took advantage of the resultant anarchy by instigating more disorder on 11 June 1882 (Davies, 2009: 308). He aimed to illustrate that Urabi was incompetent to run his ministry and sustain order in the country. Following the riots, in order to quell Ahmad Urabi, the British bombarded Alexandria under the lead of Admiral Seymour on 11 July 1882, bringing about a huge number of casualties. Headed by General Wolseley, the British army subsequently continued its victories and defeated the Egyptian army led by Urabi at Tel el Kabir in September 1882 with the assistance of traitors (Davies, 2009: 308). Urabi was subsequently tried and sentenced to be banished to Ceylon. Historically, Urabi's uprising is seen as an anti-imperial and nationalist movement aiming to end Western

influence on Egypt – those who believe in this movement refer to it as the Urabi Revolution, yet those who are against it refer to it as Revolt or the Riots.

The archive of history keeps on its shelves the stories of gallantry alongside treason, and the actions of *Sunset Oasis* reveal both sides of the coin, thus highlighting the complicated relations between colonizers and colonized. *Sunset Oasis* mixes factual historical events with fiction to expose the complexities of family and society under colonialism. Illustrated in *Sunset Oasis*, the Egyptian Officer Yousif Khunfis, for instance, is a factual historical figure who disappoints Urabi and betrays him in the Battle of Tel el Kabir by assisting General Wolseley and providing him with the information and secrets about the Egyptian army. This challenges the stereotypical image of the colonial enterprise and betrays its complications, as the colonized individual betrays his own people's nationalist movement. Sometimes this colonized individual turns to be more aggressive to his people than the occupying strangers. On the other hand, the Egyptian officer Mohamed Ebeid, a real historical figure commemorated by Taher in *Sunset Oasis*, fights for Egypt and is loyal to Urabi until he dies in the battle, "firing at the British till incinerated by the heat of his gun" (Taher, 2007: 47). Moving from Tel el Kabir to the other side of Egypt: Siwa Oasis, "almost 800 km from Cairo and close to the borders of Libya", we come across stories of loyalty and treachery amongst the Siwans (Hroub, 2008). To begin with, Siwa remained independent for hundreds of years before Mohamed Ali Basha annexed it and integrated it into Egypt (Taher, 2007: 18). As the Egyptian Yousif Khunfis's disloyalty paved the road for the British occupation of Egypt which lasted until 1956, in the history of the Siwan community there are examples of individuals who collude with the Egyptian forces allowing them to fight their people. After the Siwans murder the Egyptian commissioner, the Egyptian army is sent to restore order. Like the hero

Mohamed Ebeid, the Siwan mayor Hassouna (a fictional character) resists the military expedition until his munitions runs out. The heroes along with the traitors therefore participate in shaping the history of the oasis, yet only the heroic actions reap respect and admiration locally and globally.

Courageous men, as well as their daring acts, compel the enemies and even the traitors to reveal their appreciation and reverence towards them. For example, in *Sunset Oasis,* Mahmoud, living in the murdered mayor Hassouna's house, admires him regardless of the fact that Hassouna has participated in assassinating the Egyptian commissioner: "I respect him for his courage" (79). Psychologically affected by his state of being trapped in *middleism* and by his frustration of his country's hopes for independence from Khedival and British rule, Mahmoud longs for courage to resist oppression and praises individuals whose actions reflect his stifled loyalty: "Urabi Basha had more honour than ten khedives put together. And Lieutenant Colonel Mohamed Ebeid had more honour than all the traitor khedives and bashas who sold us to the British" (Taher, 2007: 285). Despite the final result of a battle, history, therefore, immortalizes actions of resistance and gallantry and disseminates them on a larger scale. Fiona notes that her father admires Urabi's resistance of the British and defence of his country: "His picture hung in his study and it remained there for a long time" (235). As Catherine Wynne illustrates, William Butler, an Irish officer in the British army, venerates Urabi's gallantry and bravery at war and commends his sense of dignity. Butler comments on the arrival of Urabi to Abdin Palace in Cairo following his capture by the British army:

> When Arabi arrived at the palace a 'large group of officers had gathered on the verandah' to see him. 'He was brought under escort in a carriage. He alighted, and began to ascend the steps as one tired and weary. When he saw the group of

officers he pulled himself together, drew himself up, and saluted us with dignity' William returned Arabi's salute. (Cited in Wynne, 2019: 126)

Unlike Mahmoud who hesitates to explicitly stand by the revolutionaries from the outset, the Irish Fiona demonstrates clarity and straightforwardness in her attitude towards the resistance, which provides her with psychological stability throughout the novel: "The uprising of many of our leaders in Ireland against the British ended in defeat but we still consider them heroes. At least they tried" (Taher, 2007: 235).

Respect for Urabi also existed within Wolseley's army of invasion; William Butler notes in his 1910 autobiography, the valour of the Egyptian soldiers at Tel el Kebir: "they were betrayed on every side, yet they fought stoutly". Butler adds, "The heaps of dead lying with and across their rifles facing the up-coming sun bore eloquent testimony to that final resolve of these poor fellows. Peace be to them" (Butler, 1911: 237). When an enemy pays homage to his own enemy, then this underlines the intricacy of war and the complex interweaving of colonial threads.

**Layers of Colonialism**

The colonial situation, as this thesis demonstrates through the fictions under discussion, is not straightforward. Its complications reverberate in the psychology of individuals, society and the family. The series of the events in *Sunset Oasis* appear as layers of an onion, and this kind of multi-layering highlights the complexity of the colonial process. As Fanon argues, the oppressed become the oppressors and oppression seeps into the fabric of Siwan society: "Can he [the oppressor] not here recognize his own cruelty turned against himself? In the savagery of these oppressed peasants, does he not find his own settler's savagery, which they have absorbed

through every pore and for which there is no cure?", as indicated by Jean-Paul Sartre in the preface of Fanon's *The Wretched of the Earth* (Sartre, 1963: 16). The British come to invade Egypt, fuelled by British support, the Egyptians invade Siwa and the Siwan clans attack each other to gain sole domination over the oasis rather than uniting their effort to fend off the Egyptians. Furthermore, within the one clan, there exists class differences where the higher classes oppress the lower classes. For his sympathy with Urabian revolutionaries, the British wreak revenge on Mahmoud. By sending him to the oasis, they know that it is likely that he will be killed. Exerting his colonial influence on Mahmoud, Mr Harvey, an English official in Cairo, says to him, "Do not forget that your first task will be to collect the taxes. A difficult task, as you are aware. A very difficult task. Your survival instinct will teach you this, and other policies, Major", reminding him of the horrifying place he will go to and provoking him by repeating the military rank he has obtained as a promotion for being a commissioner in Siwa (2007: 7). Harvey is, in effect, communicating a message to Mahmoud that high ranks and promotions are meaningless and worthless in such a place in comparison with life-death matters. "The posting means almost certain death" as argued by Rachel Aspden (2009). The novel reveals, however, that repression is not always bound up with the Western invaders, but can emerge from inside the community itself. This section will now explore the layering and pairing of oppression in this novel.

Colonized by the British and accompanied by ingrained psychological wounds, Mahmoud comes to the oasis as a colonizer and an agent of the Empire to enact the same oppression on the Siwan clans. A supporter of Urabi, but unable to fully commit to the cause of Egyptian nationalism, he shares colonial wounds with his Irish wife, Catherine, who opposes British rule in Ireland. Both colonial victims arrive, however, in the oasis to extract extortionate taxes from the Siwans: "I am to send to Cairo

immediately on my arrival two thousand camel-loads of dates, five hundred camel-loads of olive oil, and a late fee in cash five thousand riyals" (2007: 38). When Mahmoud asks for a reduction of the taxation, he is ordered to increase taxation by the authorities in Cairo. Mahmoud witnesses the severity of poverty in the oasis and perceives that this critical situation accounts for the sustained uprisings in the oasis against the government in Cairo and for the plots against him and Catherine: "the more I think about what we've done to them since we came as rulers, the more I find their behaviour perfectly natural" (164). In addition, his existence along with his wife in the oasis intensifies the use of the outmoded traditions that lead to the death of the young woman, Maleeka: "I imagine that no death or murder occurred as a result of this custom [the ghoul-woman] until outsiders came" (223).

Catherine is shaped by the colonial history of Ireland, which forces her to leave the country, but also leaves her traumatized:

> [T]hey had seized the best lands and farms and given them to British settlers, who had taken control of two-thirds of the island. They had banned the Catholic inhabitants from owning land and holding government positions and made these into a preserve for the British Protestants settlers. At certain periods, they had even forbidden the Irish to practise their religion, and, whenever they rose up against the oppression, savagely suppressed their uprisings. Then they dispersed them around the world, to the point that their migrants came to outnumber those who remained in the country. On one occasion, they drove off sixty thousand of them, men, women and children, and sold them into slavery in the West Indies. (88-89)

This furthers the notion of layering and brings out more pairings between individuals in the text. Behind her strong character, Catherine hides hurtful memories of the British occupation of Ireland. Both Mahmoud and Catherine experience the calamity of colonialism. Catherine, however, tends to harbour her colonization-induced agony and conflicted persona by putting all her effort into searching for the tomb of Alexander the Great. Also, back in Ireland, she suffered from the breakdown of her first marriage with her Irish husband. Therefore, going to Egypt originally is to search for healing from the painful past as "[t]his is her chance to triumph" (Qualey, 2009a). In order to release the torture of the past, Catherine uses this search as a means of catharsis, whereas Mahmoud releases his traumatic past on himself, committing suicide in the end. This underlines the fact that in *Sunset Oasis* "east touches west, and the past touches the present", as argued by Margaret Drabble (2009). Affected by the use of the passive voice following in the footsteps of the British, Catherine is a colonial subject and simultaneously a colonizer and outsider in the oasis. Yet as a middle-class woman and a British subject (Ireland is under British rule in the nineteenth century and the Irish had a complicated relationship to Empire as many Irishmen, like William Butler, served in the army), Catherine has status in Cairo and in Siwa. When she comes to record her marriage with Mahmoud, the British consul tries to protect her, as he fears for her future if she marries an Egyptian. Though she is militantly Irish in her political opinions, she is officially a British woman. When it becomes an East-West matter, British measurements differ strikingly to accommodate all their Western subordinates and treat them as British in terms of dignity and rights. This adds more layers of intricacy to the nature of the colonial project: any Easterner despite his rank is inferior to any Westerner.

The colonial layers continue to overlap among the Siwans who resist the British-supported Egyptian invaders. The Siwans, Rachel Aspden observes, "despise

Egyptian rule as profoundly – though more murderously – as the Egyptians despise that of the British" (2009). The Siwans are divided into two main clans where battles and fights never end: "These battles are a part of their lives", for each tribe yearns to gain sole dominance of the whole oasis to the extent that a battle may break out over which clan has the exclusive right to sing a particular song (Taher, 2007: 7). This riven society is ready to easily fall victim to their serious enemies, and these internal disputes blunt their resistance. The constant uprisings fail, the oasis is invaded and they are further subjugated by having to pay outrageous taxes. "The oasis proves to be a microcosm of colonial woes: bankrupted by extortionate taxes, bloodied by periodic bombardments by the Egyptian army and riven by a long-running feud between its two clans" (Aspden, 2009). Though building their town within a fortress, the Siwis fail to survive the Egyptian occupation. Also the class differences within the one tribe contribute to their defeat: the clan is divided into the owners of the gardens (the agwad) and the cultivators (the zaggala) who sleep in the gardens rather than inside the town. Even when their councils are held, the zaggala, who have no right to articulate their opinions in any case relating to the oasis, are to sit in the far end, whereas the agwad occupy the front. "Sheikh Idrees […] raised his voice angrily and said, 'Shame on you, Mabrouk (a zaggal), boy! We invited you to our council so that we might hear what you have to say, not for you to offer advice to your sheikhs, so don't forget your place'" (63). In consequence of this discrimination, the community turns out to be fragile, an easy target for all sources of aggression, like the raids of the Bedouin. In order to ensure their interests and ascendancy in the oasis, the British find a fertile land in the fragile oasis to manipulate the clans, ordering Mahmoud to make alliances with

one clan for a period and then switch allegiance to the other. It is a policy of divide and rule: "Keep shifting your support between the factions and in this way you will prevail", as explained by Khaled Hroub (2008). Fanon highlights this trick used by the

colonizer and warns the colonized of falling victim to it. Fanon points out: "By its very structure, colonialism is separatist and regionalist. Colonialism does not simply state the existence of tribes; it also reinforces it and separates them. The colonial system encourages chieftaincies and keeps alive the old Marabout confraternities" (1963: 94). He argues that violence is the vital weapon to encounter this technique of divide and rule and bring the people together:

> Violence is in action all-inclusive and national. It follows that it is closely involved in the liquidation of regionalism and of tribalism. Thus the national parties show no pity at all toward the caids and the customary chiefs. Their destruction is the preliminary to the unification of the people. (1963: 94)

As a means of combating Egyptian rule, the Siwans first murder the Siwan mayors appointed by Egypt as a message to the Egyptian commissioners that they are not beyond their reach. The Siwans consequently murder two commissioners, and the reply from Cairo is strict: an army is sent to put them down and restore peace, hanging and imprisoning the rebels. This constant external and internal war scenario in Siwa inevitably impinges on the family unit and empowers the retrograde traditions.

By examining the society in Egypt under the umbrella of Britain, we find out that it comprises Egyptians, Circassians, Turks, Europeans and Bedouin, and this mixture of various nationalities plays an instrumental part in layering the society and cementing the iron fist of the colonial occupation. In *Sunset Oasis*, the Circassian Captain Wasfi always praises and admires the Western civilization and the power of the British army and as a result of his allegiance, though young, he makes this rank: colonel. Wasfi suffers from an inferiority complex, as Fanon defines it, after he

abandons his "local cultural originality" (1952: 9). Wasfi is keen to speak fluent English because as a colonial subject he thinks this will raise him "above his jungle status" (Fanon, 1952: 9). Another Circassian is the governor of Alexandria Umar Basha Lutfi who uses the Bedouin looters to incite violence and chaos in Cairo in an attempt to depose Urabi. Lutfi is both an historical figure as well as a character in the novel. The Circassians consider themselves as masters over the Egyptians and the Egyptians as slaves, so when the Egyptians rebel against them, the Circassians resort to their masters for help: the Turks and the British. The betrayal is not limited to the Circassians – officials with Egyptian blood also betray their indigenous people: Mahmoud is the incarnation of this strand, emphasizing the intricate layering of colonialism. In the novel, during the bombardment of Alexandria, despite the gravity of the situation that includes "the crackling of the flames, the weeping of the children, the wailing of the women and the insults of the men, who cursed the British, the Khedive, the army and the police", the Khedival forces abandoned the city (2007: 44). They withdrew and leave the people to face the British bombardment. The Khedive, the head of Egypt, moved from one palace to another, seeking British protection and neglecting the weeping of the Egyptian children. These events in the novel parallel real historical events. The Egyptian family in consequence becomes bait to the Bedouin and the plunderers. Consequently, colonial traumatic memories haunt their minds for life. As well as the diversity of the community in Egypt, newspapers also play a fundamental role in increasing the colonial layers, deepening the fissures in the fabric of the society and creating more conflict. According to the novel, *Misr*, el *Tigara*, *el Lata'if* (Taher, 2007: 10) and *el Mu'ayyad* (Taher, 2007: 93) are factual names of Egyptian newspapers, newspapers endorsing the Urabian Revolution and condemning the Western domination of the government sectors. On the other hand, newspapers, like *el Muqattam* (a factual name of an Egyptian newspaper), advocate

the colonial enterprise (Taher, 2007: 93). This conflict of media leaves members of the family lost, caught in-between and submerged in the sea of multi-layers.

To sum up, the West represented by Britain succeeds in bridging the gap between its components, decreasing the number of its social layers, uniting its efforts and overlooking the catastrophes among them to defeat the East. This is shown in the relationship between the British officials and the Western Irish subject Catherine in Egypt. In contrast, the various representatives of the East work on widening the gap between them and increasing the colonial layers, drawing on conspiracy, betrayal and political covetousness.

**Mahmoud: Middleism, Hesitation and Death**

Mahmoud is the embodiment of the impacts of British colonialism of Egypt on personal and family levels. He is caught between the colonizer and the colonized as the novel is set during the Khedival reign in Egypt. Khedives Ismaeel and then his son Tawfeeq were known for their complete obedience to the British domination of Egypt. Simultaneously, the protagonist Mahmoud witnesses the Urabian revolution that appeals to him and provokes the nationalist ambitions of this young Egyptian man. After being bankrupted by a Greek trader, Mahmoud's father seeks to find an appropriate job for Mahmoud so that his salary can keep their house open and sustain

the welfare of his mother and brother Suleiman. The job that the father finds for Mahmoud is an officer post in the Khedive's police. This job contributes to Mahmoud's agonising entrapment between the colonized and the colonizer: he fails to have the courage to oppose to the practices of the Egyptian government since he and his family rely on its income. This incident, as argued by Qualey, reflects "the thorny choices in a landscape of colonial power" (2009a). This situation is counterproductive. His love for his wife Catherine, as a result, is not secure and not fully pure. Because

of his psychological disturbance, his marriage is originally a means of escape from his turbulent life, as he hopes that his "unruly self might finally calm down" (2007: 12). In addition, he marries her "after much hesitation" as he is preoccupied with his old love for his servant girl Ni'ma and he also seeks out the company of other women more generally (2007: 12). Although Mahmoud loved Ni'ma, he "did not have the courage to marry" her, as argued by Arifa Akbar (2009). Mahmoud cannot violate the social constraints of his society. However, Catherine notices that not all his emotions are devoted to her: "are you being unfaithful to me?" (2007: 16). Their relationship as a family and a couple is influenced by Mahmoud's past and present.

As a legacy of colonization, throughout the novel, Mahmoud endures middleism: he is always between things and cannot decide to be on one side and fully abandon the other: "never was I one person, complete on the inside" (216). During the bombardment of Alexandria in 1882, the police station in Cairo sent him with other soldiers to Alexandria to restore domination over the city. Although he helped move the wounded Alexandrians to hospital, inside himself, he felt that this action was inadequate to prove that he was still loyal to his people because, as he argued, even women participated in moving the wounded. Breaking into and burning the Alexandrians' shops, Gangs of Bedouin wounded Mahmoud by a bullet in his shoulder during the bombardment. He refuses to consider this as heroic, for it is ultimately an injury acquired defending himself, not someone else, not for purely protecting the properties of the Alexandrians. The injury is not acquired by repulsing the invaders. This shows that he is swinging between selfishness and selflessness. Moreover, when the Italian chief accuses him of supporting the mutineers in Alexandria and standing by the Urabian *revolt*, he denies it out of fear for his position and because of his own lack of conviction: "I was a supporter for a time of the nation and the revolutionaries, and when it came to the test I denied them" (216). This regret

haunts him for the rest of his life and contributes to his psychological disorder. He realizes how much he is trapped in the middle and that it is an impossible situation: "It's no good in this world being half good and half bad, half a patriot and half a traitor, half brave and half a coward, half a believer and half a womanizer. Always in the middle" (216). Albert Memmi is aware of the adverse effects of revolt. Thus, to see the colonized fully cured, he argues for the end of all forms of colonization - "including the period of revolt" (Memmi, 1974: 185).

Accompanied by doubts, hesitation undermines all aspects of Mahmoud's life. Symptoms of indecisiveness become so apparent to the extent that he notices them after he is sent to the oasis. For instance, when he sees the young girl Maleeka seemingly attacking his wife, he hesitates to kill her. Instead, he publicly kicks her out of his house so that her people will carry out the duty for him and murder her. "I didn't kill Maleeka but I let her be killed," Mahmoud said (Taher, 2007: 216). Another instance of his hesitation and fear for himself is demonstrated when he is reluctant to rescue the young Mahmoud: "I wanted to save young Mahmoud but in the midst of the attempt I let Ibraheem break his leg" (2007: 216). Mahmoud takes his wife to the temple of Umm Ma'bad, accompanied by sergeant Ibraheem, an old man, and a small boy called Mahmoud. A rock, from the temple, falls on the young Mahmoud, and even though Mahmoud is closer to the boy than Ibraheem, Mahmoud refrains from stepping forwards to rescue the boy whereas Ibraheem passes Mahmoud, flies towards the boy and pushes him away. The cost of this heroic action is that the large stone smashes the sergeant's leg making him limp permanently. In that very moment when Mahmoud guarantees his own safety and when all possibilities of danger have vanished, he throws himself on Ibraheem but it is too late. The permanent limp that befalls Ibraheem becomes a permanent scar in Mahmoud's mind because once he sees Ibraheem limp,

his cowardice flashes before his eyes. In consequence of his hesitation and indecisiveness, he always questions his honesty with himself and compares it to that of Tal'at, a colleague and friend of his youth. Regardless of the fact that Tal'at lies about Mahmoud and falsely accuses him of opening fire on the Bedouin looters for no reason and that Tal'at has tried to stop Mahmoud, Mahmoud admires Tal'at's honesty with himself and lack of hesitation:

> Tal'at was more honest with himself. Since he'd been a traitor once, let him follow the road to its end. He sold himself and pocketed the price he'd asked for. I, I sold myself for no price at all, content to be bitter at myself, the British and the whole world without knowing what I'm asking for. (216)

Tal'at is "a traitor but honest with himself": he is clear with himself and precisely knows what to choose. In the presence of Mahmoud and while looking him in the eye, Tal'at courageously decides to lie about his colleague and old friend because he does not want to be imprisoned or lose his job, which in turn reflects his decisiveness and clarity (138). On the other hand, Mahmoud sympathizes with the revolutionaries and is attracted by Urabi's fiery speeches. During the interrogation, Mahmoud, however, denies any involvement because of his doubts and reluctance:

> Question: "Did you support Ahmad Urabi and his followers?"
> Answer: "On the contrary, I was one of those who most bitterly condemned the actions of those miscreants". (138)

This illustrates that Mahmoud, as Khaled Hroub notes, suffers from "a lack of decisiveness, the same decisiveness that Mahmoud sees practised by others and envies them for" (Hroub, 2008). Both reap the harvests of their actions: Tal'at gains

promotions until he becomes a brigadier general and is content with himself, yet Mahmoud spends his life aggrieved at his reluctance and cowardice and eventually paid for that heavily in the end. Aleya Said states that Mahmoud "betrayed the cause and was betrayed in the same manner by a fellow-colleague" - a deserved equivalent reaction (2009: 88).

Shocked by the painful end of his friendship with Tal'at and ashamed of his disgraceful reactions towards the cause of his country and the revolutionaries, Mahmoud becomes preoccupied with thoughts of death. Like his marriage, death for him is a means of escape and salvation from shame, so he is longing for its speedy arrival:

> "I wished for death with all my heart. The thought 'let it come!' flashed into my mind […]. It was painful but not frightening. Let it come quickly! I want the end, as a beautiful relief from a burden I can no longer carry. Let it come!" (2007: 33)

Later on, he begins to think about the various forms of death that he might face along with admissions of fearing death:

> Am I afraid of death? Of course. Who isn't? I ask myself how it will take me – at the oasis with a bullet? Or as an ordinary death after an illness, long or short? In some passing accident? By strangulation in the bathhouse or poison put in my food? Will it come without any preamble whatsoever? (27-28)

He attempts to adjust himself to the notion of demise. His desire for death accelerates

on his way to Siwa when a massive storm cloud and a hail of gravels and stones heap on him and his wife, and they are about to die. He senses the closeness of death and realizes that it is not awful as one might imagine. In that instant, he embraces the concept of death:

> [I]t might be said too that I was as afraid of it as they were, but when it came close to me and I touched it, I found it smooth and soft, and it whispered to me, "Come. The faster you come, the better." It's not the first time I've faced death. But here, in this desert, there's something I can't explain, something beckoning, or calling". (35)

This experience dispels all fears of death and he finds it acceptable to the extent that he longs for it: "it was the nearness of death which had made it familiar and desirable" (34). The fact that Mahmoud finds the prospect of death appealing speaks to his psychological wounds as death becomes a better choice than living a life of compromise. He admits to Yahya, the wise man of the oasis, "I'm not afraid of death!" (252). The insight of this eighty-year-old man is capable of detecting Mahmoud's tendency towards death: "Indeed, you long for it" (252). On the other hand, Catherine seems vivid and adores life as she is away from her occupied country: "The death drive that is characteristic of his personality seems high keyed in juxtaposition to his wife's embrace of life" as noted by Aleya Said (2009: 88). Thoughts of death keep invading his mind. In his journey to the oasis and deep in the desert, he, for example, remembers the sudden death of his mother. He went back home from work and found her waiting for him as usual. She asked him to bring her a cup of water, and during the period of time he spent leaving the room and returning to it which took "a minute or two" to bring the water, she passed away: "when I opened the door, cup in hand, I saw her

head drooping on her chest. I went up to her, calling out, but she didn't answer me and I discovered she was gone" (2007: 28). Yet Mahmoud's actions suggest that his desire for death is mere words. When dangerous actions need to be taken, he withdraws from the scene. He does not rescue the small boy from the stone, although this might have meant death for him. Sometime later he realizes the discrepancies of his acts:

> I say to myself, 'Right there I faced the death which I philosophized about in the desert, talking about its seductive qualities and the voice that called to me. But when I see it descending, in the shape of a stone, from the sky, I was terrified. (143)

This demonstrates his unstable psychological condition and inward ambivalence as a result of the power of British occupation and the complicity of his country's government with the invaders. Mahmoud's life, as argued by Humphrey Davies, contains "endless dark moments" (Qualey, 2009b). This culminates at the end of the novel as he determines to commit suicide by exploding the temple of Umm Ma'bad – the place where he evaded rescuing the boy. After he lights the fuse of the dynamite, he thinks that the spark is moving slowly which displays his eagerness to die. However, shortly after that, when the temple explodes and the stones are falling, he does not enter the temple to meet death - he remains standing outside. He is aware of his hesitation and weakness: "Why, then, am I waiting outside? Is cowardice going to take me again at the last moment?" (2007: 302). When he moves to go inside the temple, he falls before reaching the temple, then a stone hits his head and he dies. This timely falling is symbolic and implies a key message: victory and realization of goals are not granted to those who spend their lives in hesitation in the middle ground. Mahmoud is a coward, who can neither commit to the role of oppressor nor join the liberators, so Taher confers

on him a suitable ending which synchronises with the way Mahmoud spends his life. His suicide can be viewed as an attempt to substitute for his cowardice in encountering his hesitant self and the colonial project. Arifa Akbar argues that Mahmoud's suicidal act is the only option for an anti-hero to be a hero. It "re-enact[s] Urabi's fight, and prefigure[s] the 1952 revolution which brought an end to British rule" (Akbar, 2009).

**Maleeka: a Victim of Internal and External Oppressions**

The colonial legacy erodes, not only Mahmoud's life, but also Maleeka's. She is the innocent figure of the oasis who suffers from the regressive traditions of the Berber community. Her struggle starts from birth because she is a baby girl born in Siwa, a place in which women's rights do not exist. Patriarchal dominance, as well as the tribal system, heavily contributes to the oppression of women. Masculine dominance impinges on women's confidence to the extent that they fail to understand their subjugation. Women think that being lower to men is the normal position for them in life. As long as women accept this derogatory type of relationship, they unconsciously participate in humiliating themselves and intensifying male dominance. Such women may abuse their own daughters to gain status in a hierarchal system that places them at the bottom. However, as pointed out by Mona Kattaya, "Maleeka is the agent of resistance who is able to act outside of the imposition of values made upon her by the patriarchal authority" (2017). Also Kattaya reiterates that "Maleeka is the embodiment of the struggle which is concerned as much with freedom from colonialism as with liberation from the suffocating authoritative patriarchal social system of" Siwa (2017). The relationship between Maleeka and her mother embodies this obedience. The tribal system of the oasis represented in the two clans of the East and the West and the constant fights between them over power contribute to the injustice against woman: they use Maleeka to wreak revenge on one another. The inhabitants of the oasis cling

on to the inherited superstitions and prophecies of the ancestors, adding to Maleeka's psychological distress. Furthermore, the presence of the district commissioner Mahmoud and his wife Catherine hasten Maleeka's fate - a death caused by her own family and by her mother Khadeeja.

**Khadeeja: a Paragon of Siwan Women**

Being a woman in a Siwan society overwhelmed by its unreasonable instructions, Khadeeja is psychologically and mentally prepared to be a loyal member of the community and subscribe to its values. Due to the extensive abusive treatment imposed on her by men, her mind becomes pliable and programmed to accept this treatment as normal. Blinded by the tyranny of the inherited communal customs, Khadeehja is ready to sacrifice the innocence of her only four-year-old daughter by applying the meaningless customs to her - an attempt to inculcate this ideology in her daughter, like the rest of the Siwan mothers. She, for instance, feels ashamed when Maleeka who is not past four years old imitates others. As a child, Maleeka likes to imitate men and women and changes the features of her face to resemble the person she is imitating. While everyone is laughing and amused by the way Maleeka is acting, her mother Khadeeja refrains from laughing and considers what Maleeka does to be a disgrace and "scandalous". Khadeeja, consequently, "would hit and kick her to stop her speaking". Her physical violence against her daughter is an attempt to make her conform to and absorb the dictates of the community in order to be an ideal Siwan woman in the future. Maleeka's maternal uncle Yahya is one of the people who laugh when Maleeka imitates Sabir, an Easterner, which angers the mother and makes her ask her brother Yahya to stop encouraging Maleeka to be "shameless" (2007: 61). Her harsh judgements about her young daughter are undeserved.

The outmoded ideology of Siwa promotes the distortion of the relationship

between the mother and the daughter. Before Maleeka was fifteen years old, Khadeeja "married her off […] to the aged, feeble Mi'bid, who could be her grandfather" (69). She forces her young daughter to marry him because as a Siwan woman representing the regressive Siwan ideology, she reveres marriage for a girl and considers it as an exigency, regardless of the age of the groom. She thinks that a man is the only protection and refuge for a woman: "it was enough that she had the shadow of a man in which to shelter" (198). When Maleeka complains, Khadeeja scolds her and orders her to stop complaining, for being married to a man, she believes, is a blessing and an indication of fortune. Simple-minded and ignorant, Khadeeja, like all the Westerners (one of the two clans of Siwa), believes in what the Senoussi, who is "a member of a militant reformist Islamic order" (310) ruling from Jaghboub in Libya. He proclaims: "Let the Easterners and the Westerners marry one another that they may be one clan and the wars between them come to an end" (69). Without considering the consequences for Maleeka, she does not hesitate to carry out this advice. She decides the future of her daughter based on advice of a man of religion who lives far away from them and who issues advice based on political considerations, rather than on the happiness of the individuals. He uses religion to control people from a distance and she thinks because she is following a man of religion, this justifies the way she treats her daughter. Such advice empowers Khadeeja to immerse her daughter in the conflict between the two tribes of the oasis. Memmi is aware of the role religion plays in heightening the colonial project and oppression. He argues that if the colonized wants to free himself from colonization, "[h]e must conquer himself and be free in relation to the religion of his group, which he can retain or reject, but he must stop existing only through it"- Maleeka here is colonized by the power of religion (Memmi, 1974: 196). Rapacious and acquisitive, Khadeeja marries her young daughter to a wealthy old man, financially exploiting her daughter and treating her as a commodity.

Maleeka becomes trapped between her overbearing mother and her failed marriage. Maltreated as a teenage wife for two years by her husband Mi'bid, the distressed Maleeka flees to her mother hoping that she might find mercy and compassion. However, her mother is equally abusive. Although she complains to Khadeeja that her husband keeps beating her for no reason and that she is still a virgin, Khadeeja, rather than being sympathetic, enacts the same physical abuse that Maleeka has experienced from her husband- she beats Maleeka. The mother's reaction adds substantially to Maleeka's psychological trauma because she believes that her mother, despite the fact that she has forced her to marry the aged man, will be her only salvation at this critical time. Psychologically traumatized Maleeka becomes averse to all men and women of the oasis, including her mother and brothers. For this reason, she escapes her family's house to see Catherine because she is a foreigner who, Maleeka thinks, offers escape from the Siwan community: "she loved the woman [Catherine] more than her mother" (2007: 198). When the degree of love devoted to a stranger is more than that to a mother, then it suggests that Maleeka is psychologically damaged and her home is devoid of familial warmth. Frustrated, however, by her visit to Catherine, Maleeka realizes that she has no more options. Returning to her mother's house, she locks herself in her room and shouts that she hates all men and women of the oasis. Just before her death, Maleeka interrogates her mother: "why had she sold her? Why had she thrown her to Mi'bid?" (198). She does not live to hear the answers for death is faster than the reply.

Maleeka's death is revealing on various levels. Her mother alleges that Maleeka has committed suicide by thrusting a large knife into her breast. On the other hand, her uncle Yahya, who knows how Maleeka was vibrant and loved life, casts doubt on this allegation. He, however, perceives that it is useless to think of how she

dies: “Lost, so what was the point of anything?” (199). Even if her mother’s account of the scenario of Maleeka’s death is correct, Khadeeja is still not acquitted of her death. If she did not kill her literally with a knife, she slowly murdered her emotionally and psychologically with the knife of oppression and ignorance. Khadeeja forces Maleeka to seek warmth and tranquillity outside the walls of the house, for Maleeka feels insecure with her family. Right before her death, she spits at her mother, which suggests how a mother-daughter relationship is distorted to the extent that there is no residual respect in Maleeka towards her mother. Maleeka, furthermore, faces her mother’s violence with violence through spitting, cursing and loving strangers more than her birth mother. Maleeka’s death makes it clear that she is the intelligent and brave woman of the oasis who refuses to conform to its outmoded customs. Yet “her mother buried all that intelligence with Mi’bid and they expected Maleeka to accept that destiny” (75). Maleeka is different from the stereotyped Siwan women who are too afraid to resist the oppression perpetrated against them. Contrary to these women, Maleeka rebels against the unfair treatment imposed on her. Her rebellious reaction is expected as argued by Memmi: to emerge from a strained colonial atmosphere, a colonized needs to rupture (1974: 172). After the knife is forced into Maleeka’s breast, “a fountain of blood spurted from her towards her mother” as damning evidence against Khdeeja that proves her apparent complicity in her daughter’s death. After the violent death, when her daughter is still lying in her blood, Khadeeja is still obsessed by the power of communal customs: “The funeral, Shaikh Yahya? When is the funeral?” (2007: 198). Conformity is more important than her daughter’s violent demise. Khadeeja has so absorbed the patriarchal traditions of her society that her maternal feelings are destroyed. Khadeeja, however, is not the only one who contributed to Maleeka’s misery.

**The East and the West: an Alliance against Women**

The Easterners and the Westerners are responsible for Maleeka's psychological disorder and her death. They forcibly involve Maleeka in the discussions that are pertinent to the conflicts conducted between them. Yahya notes, "you'd thrust Maleeka into the cauldron of East and West? She's no longer just a wife estranged from her husband but a problem for the whole town?" (68-69). When Maleeka, for instance, flees her husband who is an Easterner, the people of the East feel offended: "how could a girl from the West refuse a shaikh of the East?" (70). "Why had they placed her between the grindstones of war, feuding and conflict that crush all men?" Yahya exclaims (73). The East, in one respect, regards a refusal by a girl as an insult, which displays the inferior position of women in such a society. Sally Ahmad describes Maleeka as "victim of ignorance caused by superstitions, worn-out tradition and the endless battles between the tribes of Siwa oasis" (cited in Metwaly, 2014). Also, each clan thinks that it is superior to the other, so when Maleeka flees the Easterners, the East regards this escape to be another insult: how a Westerner dares to rebel against the East. The two clans take advantage of this issue to take revenge on one another. Sabir, for example, wishes to wreak vengeance on the West, so he uses the story of Maleeka to carry out his old plan of vengeance: "The moment for which I have been waiting so long has come and all of you together will be the willing instrument in my hand" (2007: 174). He pretends that he pays a great deal of attention to the ancestors' prophecies that warn of the dangers caused by the escape of a widow in the oasis. He dramatizes the seriousness of these prophecies and intimidates the Siwans to eliminate Maleeka who roams the oasis while she is a widow. He uses Maleeka to ignite the feud between the two clans and vex the East.

Similar to her mother, the men of the two clans treat Maleeka as a commodity.

Taher, as Mona Kattaya argues, shows Maleeka's marginality "as a colonized woman and as a woman living in an extremely male – dominated community" (2017). After Maleeka flees her husband, the two tribes negotiate solving the dispute. At first, the Westerners claim that she should return the bride price to him if he divorces her. Moreover, they offer Mi'bid "the most high-born of all the girls of the Westerners" if he accepts divorce (Taher, 2007: 70). In response to that, the Easterners note that he already has wives of "the most high-born of the Easterners" (70). What matters to them is their manly dignity. Women from both clans are regarded as commodities to be exchanged between men of the oasis for the men's advantage. They feel that their dignity would be insulted if they obeyed the Westerners' dictates and agreed to the girl's wish for divorce. In an attempt to provoke the West, an Easterner questions the Westerners, "Do they have no control over their daughter?" (2007: 70). This is an attack on their masculinity. When masculine power is linked to the taming of women, the outcome is female subjugation. Yahya points out that divorce is widespread in both tribes:

> There's nothing easier for either you or us than divorce. There's a divorcee, or more than one, in every house in this town. There are those who were divorced before even their husbands knew about it because their mothers-in-law hated the girls and concluded the divorce themselves. (71)

Their refusal to allow Maleeka a divorce highlights how she is caught up in a political struggle between warring factions. They manipulate the readings of religion and employ it to grant themselves the right to maltreat women and gain political dominance. As an Easterner argues in relation to Mi'bid, "He's asking for God's Law" (70). They use religion and utilize its power to actualize their political ambitions.

**The Inherited Customs and Superstitions of Siwa: the Underlying Motives of Oppression**

The East and the West rely on the meaningless customs of the forefathers to collude against Maleeka and the women of the oasis at large. Maleeka's beauty is mesmerising since she was a child: her beauty "put all the belles of the oasis to shame" (73). Thus, according to the superstitions of Siwa, this kind of beauty might create envy, and to prevent this during Maleeka's childhood, "Khadeeja would smear [Maleeka's] face with soot and dress [Maleeka] in dirty clothes" in an attempt to conceal her beauty so that she was not affected by an evil eye (73). Addressing Maleeka, Yahya says, "You tormented your mother, Maleeka, and she tormented you. You tortured her first with your beauty" (73). The Siwan women think that hanging amulets on their children have the power to "ward off envy" (73). They believe in the influence of devils and hidden spirits and think that the antiquities are possessed by devils. Therefore, after Maleeka comes back from visiting the antiquities, her mother believes that the jinn possessed Maleeka's body. Because of her conviction of these misguided beliefs, "she'd summon the witches to cast the devil out of [Maleeka's] body by beating [Maleeka] with sticks and reciting spells" (74). They beat her to the degree that her body was "bruised and blue from the beating" (74). Khadeeja allows such beatings as long as it, according to her view, is going to benefit the child and she applies the ancestral customs. Khadija does not view this beating as physical violence as it is licensed by the power of superstition. By so doing, the mother instils credulity and superstitions in her children's minds: "my mother says that a devil possesses me, and she's right" (72). This explains how the customs remain powerful over the years and how they function as mechanisms of oppression.

In a society obsessed with superstitions, the Siwan widow faces abuse from

men. The story of Maleeka concurs with Spivak's analysis of Sati in nineteenth-century Hindu culture. Like the Hindu widow she becomes the victim of competing forces in the oasis. She is confined to her house immediately after the death of her husband. This imprisonment purifies her of the evil spirit that possesses her and causes the death of the husband. Blaming the wife for the death of her husband is another example of the society's misogyny. In addition to house arrest for several months following the death of her husband, the widow is not allowed to bathe, wear make-up and jewellery, change her white robe or comb her hair before the end of the confinement. Similar to other widows of the oasis, Maleeka's "hair wasn't braided or combed", and "she wasn't wearing any jewellery and that her face was without any make-up, even the kohl that all the girls put on their eyes" (169-196). She is also forbidden from speaking to anyone, except her closest relatives who are brave enough to dare to do so, and she is spoken to from behind a wall. This is why Memmi maintains that if the colonized wants to be free, he must eradicate "the past, tradition, ethnic characteristics" (1974: 196). This custom of isolation betrays an anxiety about single women and the potential power of the widow released from her husband's shackles. Physical isolation promotes psychological distress in Maleeka. Her treatment and the treatment of widows contrast with the experience of widowers. "[T]hey didn't impose this punishment on the widower; he was free to remarry even before a single month had passed after the death of his wife" while the widow is deprived even from the means of expressing herself: speaking (2007: 170). The men feel their ancestors authorise them to practise discrimination against women on all levels.

This discrimination goes beyond isolating the widow: they call her a ghoul-woman and have a strong belief that if a widow breaks the rule by leaving the house and roaming the oasis, she will bring about environmental catastrophes and calamities in their houses as she spreads a curse all over Siwa. This risk becomes extreme in the

moments preceding her cleansing in one of the springs of the oasis, which takes place at the end of her confinement. However, Maleeka rebels against this imposition, for she is "the rebellious girl who dared to break the taboos of" Siwa, as depicted by Mona Kattaya (2017). When Maleeka escaped from her house to visit Catherine, Sabir claimed that "[p]alm trees on the road to Aghurmi that had been healthy fell over dead when the ghoul-woman passed by them! Fires started in houses where not an ember burnt" (2007: 173). Fever, Sabir claimed, struck children and women began to abort. He exaggerates his account to wreak revenge on the other tribe by exploiting these superstitions of the ghoul-woman. Sabir uses the simple-mindedness and naivety of the men around him. As a result, Sabir succeeds in making Maleeka the focus of evil in the men's eyes.

Repudiating these oppressive claims attached to Maleeka, Yahya emerges as the most judicious figure in the oasis and combats their superstitions and allegations. When Sabir, for instance, is counting the alleged disasters caused by Maleeka, Yahya refutes him: "it had been rotten for a while" (180). He challenges their attempt to blame Maleeka: "I could smell the rottenness in this fallen palm tree every time I passed it, and the black scorpions come and go, so what fault are these things of Maleeka's?" (193). It is a daring announcement by Yahya that these prophecies of the ancestors are fragile – similar to the fragility of the Siwans - and have no existence in reality. He attempts to focus the Siwan's attention on serious political issues. He advises Sabir to stop the zaggala – the cultivators – who are intending to attack the district commissioner, for Yahya knows that this attack, not Maleeka's rebellion, will inflict the real disasters on the oasis. If the commissioner is injured, the Egyptians will punish them in return. "[S]top those madmen!," Yahya orders, "They're the ones who'll bring ruin on us!" (182). In an attempt to nullify them, he stands in the face of

the challenges of the tribal customs that are complicit in the physical violence against Maleeka. When Khadeeja brings the witches to cast the devils from Maleeka's body by beating her, Yahya equally withstands this physical oppression. As the witches beat her with their sticks, he uses his stick to beat them: "I'd rush to the house and thrash them in turn with my stick, shouting that they and no one else were the devils" (74). Maleeka and Yahya resist violence with violence in a similar way to Fanon's logic: "violence is a cleansing force. It frees the native from his inferiority complex and from his despair and inaction; it makes him fearless and restores his self-respect" (Fanon, 1963: 94). Concerning the Siwan customs, putting an abaya outside in front of the door of the house is an indication that a woman is inside, so this prevents men from approaching until she leaves. After Maleeka returns from the commissioner's house, Khadeeja puts an abaya in front of the door. Yahya supposes that she does so in order to prevent him from entering and defending Maleeka: "Maybe Khadeeja had planned it that way so that I wouldn't see Maleeka or interfere in what they were planning for her" (2007: 194). When he realizes that Maleeka is in danger, he publicly rebels against the customs and raids the house despite the abayas outside, and thus combats the customs for a second time. Maleeka's death traumatizes Yahya. After his long resistance to the tribal mentality, Yahya confesses his failure to safeguard the innocent of the oasis: "I've been able to do nothing for you, Maleeka. Your uncle wasn't able to protect you, as a child or a woman" (72). The power of the customs outweighs Yahya's wisdom, rationality and sustained attempts to stand by Maleeka and the Siwan women, which highlights the sustained influence of the customs and the inability to eradicate them. Adding to the difficulty of confronting them, the intricacy

of these traditions and their lack of logic make them incomprehensible and inexplicable. Despite his age, Yahya fails to understand them: "all my life long I've never understood this superstition" (194).

**Catherine and Mahmoud: Hands Bloodstained by Maleeka's Blood**

The tribal customs are not the only mechanisms that determine Maleeka's fate. As sources of external oppression, Catherine and Mahmoud inflict considerable psychological and physical harm on her. Following Spivak's analysis Maleeka can be seen as a representation of the colonial subaltern, doubly colonized by her own culture and by the colonizing culture. Maleeka is doubly muted and caught between her culture's abusive patriarchy and the colonial administrator's ignorance of local customs. After Maleeka loses hope in her people including her mother and brothers, she seeks friendship from the outsiders. For this purpose, she visits Catherine whom she first sees when Catherine visits the Temple of the Oracle. Maleeka escapes to Catherine's house and embraces Catherine's legs and kisses her feet, an act which demonstrates subjugation. Entering the house at this moment, Mahmoud is unable to understand what is going on and believes that his wife is being assaulted: "Without thinking, I pointed the revolver at the kneeling girl" and pulled its trigger (165). Because Catherine struck his hand, "the bullet went wide" in the room (165). Overlooking the fact that she is a child whose physical strength is incomparable to his, his reaction demonstrates the power relations in the oasis. The Siwans oppress their women and the commissioner oppresses the Siwan men and women. Mahmoud kicks Maleeka out the door – a sign of full abasement that ultimately brings about her murder by her own family. Intending to assure them her well intentions and in desperate need for them to help her, Maleeka again kneels on the ground and clings to Catherine's feet. When she attempts to embrace Catherine, Mahmoud flung himself "on her from behind and took hold of her neck" and he "almost did strangle her" (167). Catherine also hit Maleeka's head with a palm rib, and "a trickle of blood ran across her brow" while Maleeka was trying to free herself from Mahmoud's grip (167). Without

attempting to understand or help the young woman, Catherine mimics the violence of Maleeka's mother and initiates the bloodshed that culminates in her death. Catherine, locked in the ancient world in her pursuit of Alexander's grave, has no knowledge or interest in the local customs. Her ignorance of Maleeka's plight is another form of colonization. This oasis in the desert is only of interest to her because of its ancient remains. Despite her railing against British colonial rule in Ireland, Catherine's practices in another colonized country replicate the colonial practices against her country. She is there to pursue knowledge at the expense of the indigenous population.

The existence of Catherine and Mahmoud in the oasis precipitates Maleeka's death as they empower the absurd customs and intensify the malice between the East and the West. By pushing Maleeka out of his house, Mahmoud exposes her to the community that realizes Maleeka has contravened her period of imprisonment following her widowhood. Mahmoud further seeks her punishment in the oasis. Alienated from the tribes and rejected by the foreigners, Maleeka wants Mahmoud "to shoot her with the revolver" (166). This affirms Memmi's claim: "In order to witness the colonized's complete cure, his alienation must completely cease. We must await the complete disappearance of colonization" (Memmi, 1974: 185). Ultimately, Maleeka forfeits her life for the scandal caused by Mahmoud. This demonstrates how she is a victim of both her culture and the colonizing power.

Rebuking Mahmoud, Yahya vindicates Maleeka's visit to Catherine from a humane perspective: "She went to your house looking for affection and you met her with hatred and then killed her" (Taher, 2007: 254). The astonished Yahya questions why Mahmoud wants revenge: "Revenge for what? Did she kill your wife?" (253). This is an attempt to make him realize the gravity of his actions. She is seeking friendship but she is unable to communicate through language. Her physical actions

are misunderstood. In an attempt to make Catherine understand her, Maleeka devises two small statues of women alongside her gestures. On one hand, her attempts to make a connection fail. On the other hand, Catherine misses out the opportunity of embracing and observing Maleeka's artistic talent as Catherine is preoccupied with the ancient Egyptian art.

In conclusion, Maleeka is the rebellious figure in the oasis and, as described by Qualey, "the thematic atom of social rebellion" (Qualey, 2009a). She, for instance, does not regard Mi'bid as a real man, for real men do not abuse young women. In her opinion, Mi'bid, not her, must be the ghoul-woman because he is the one who ruins the world by despising women's rights: "the ghoul-woman must be Mi'bid because he wasn't a man" (2007: 197). Alongside the power of the tribe system and the violence conducted by Mahmoud and Catherine, the adherence of the narrow-minded mother to the unreasonable traditions costs her daughter's psychological welfare and her life. Traumatized and persecuted, Maleeka becomes the focus of oppression in the novel. Addressing Mahmoud, Yahya observes, "All of them, all of you, took part. Even the ancestors who invented the story of the ghoul-woman" (254). There to extract taxes from a defiant community, Mahmoud and Catherine operate as figures of oppression. The Siwan community, riven by internal feuds, oppresses its women, and mothers, in turn, oppress their daughters. The layers of oppression converge on the innocent figure of a young woman, who becomes more and more psychologically disturbed by the mistreatment of family, community and the governing powers.

**The Psychological Impacts of Conflict on Children**

In the novel, the turbulent history of the oasis and the multi-layering of oppression inevitably influence children and shape their characters as they grow up.

The forefathers pass their wounds and aversion to their enemies on the fathers, and the fathers then hand down the inherited violent dictates to the children. Therefore children imbibe the ideology of the adults. In *Sunset Oasis,* the Siwan children inherit xenophobia from their fathers who loathe men of the other tribe, the Egyptians and the British. Although "his bare feet [are] on the burning sand", the young Mahmoud, for instance, refuses to take the pair of shoes offered to him by the Egyptian district commissioner (90). For him, the commissioner is the enemy. The child is merely performing the instructions, learnt from his family: hating and avoiding the foreigners. In an attempt to transcend the social barriers, Catherine shows the young boy an image of the goddess Isis; however, he spits on it, shouting angrily "Unbelievers!" (102). He demonstrates verbal (saying unbelievers) and practical (spitting) commitment to the racial orders of his forbearers. Memmi contends that "though the xenophobia and racism of the colonized undoubtedly contain enormous resentment and are a negative force, they could be the prelude to a positive movement, the regaining of self-control by the colonized" (Memmi, 1974: 176). Memmi's claim, however, does not operate in *Sunset Oasis*. This potent mechanism of the inheriting of violence sustains a profound divide between the Siwan clans on one hand and between the Siwan community and the outside world on the other hand. The smiling Catherine's efforts to approach the boys and the girls who play outside her house are rebuffed as they run away. At the same time, Catherine's ignorance is again highlighted. The ancient Egyptian goddess Isis is regarded as idolatry by these children. Catherine has no

understanding of their religious practices. She is a cultural colonizer, interested only in the ancient artefacts. The children enact their parents' prejudiced instructions against the outsiders: Catherine and Mahmoud. In addition, as the fathers segregate themselves from the rest of the world inside fortifications and behind high walls, their children are by no means different. "The most important thing, though, was that they

[the Siwan children] weren't forgetting to build high walls of sand around their gardens. They had been taught about the walls since they were little" (159). This kind of seclusion contributes to the continuous conflict that cracks the walls of the Siwan community.

Sabir, the head of the Easterners, is an archetype of a traumatized child whose old psychological wounds fail to heal as time goes on. His agonising past affects his present which underlines the relationship between the past and the present according to Margaret Drabble (2009). In consequence of the engrained animosity between the two clans, Sabir's psychological state is damaged since he was five years old, and the impacts of this distortion haunt him until he becomes old, affecting the course of his life. In an attempt to eradicate the Easterners, the Westerner Yousif arouses the Eastern zaggala to murder a European and persuades them that the European has come to Siwa to steal its antiquities. Yousif then proposes to them to murder the European and burn his tent, for he knows this act will anger the Egyptians who care much for the Europeans. The zaggala burn the tent and steal his belongings while Yousif is hiding the European in his house. Subsequently, Yousif takes him to Cairo and accuses the Easterners of trying to kill the European. As a result of this spurious loyalty, Yousif becomes the mayor of the oasis and returns to Siwa with "a large force of Egyptian troops and Bedouin" (2007: 175). Drawing on deceit, Yousif succeeds in handing the Easterner sheikhs to the Egyptians: one of them is Sabir's father. The horrendous way of detaining his father leaves deep and permanent scars in the five-year-old child's mind. While Sabir clenches his father, one of the soldiers hits Sabir with a huge stick on his head, leaving him half blinded. He, in consequence, suffers permanent physical and mental pain: an injured eye and silence. Because of the ordeal of his childhood,

he becomes a victim of terror that makes him silent and aloof, avoiding the company of others.

Even when he gets older, Sabir tends to be silent in order to guarantee the success of his plots against his enemies, following in the steps of Yousif who relies on "secrecy and trickery to achieve his goals" (175). Never does Sabir tell anybody about his schemes, even his own people, the Easterners: he trusts nobody but himself. When his uncles want to send him to study at el Azhar in Egypt, he implores them to let him study instead at the Zeitouna mosque in Tunisia. Sabir does not reveal to them his hatred of the Egyptians: he justifies his decision by claiming that the Egyptians do not speak the Siwan language whereas the Tunisians do. Being oppressed and traumatized as a child, Sabir harbours intentions for revenge and internalizes malice towards his adversaries. This substantiates Fanon's claim: victims internalize violence (Sartre & Fanon, 1963: 18). Also, Sabir hides from the Siwans the fact that he cannot see with his left eye as it looks intact. Mimicking Yousif's fashion of plotting against the Easterners and Cairo, Sabir continuously attempts to ignite feuds between the Egyptians and the Westerners. Sabir begs his tribe to pay the taxes to the commissioner so that the Westerners will be the ones who refrain from paying and thus deserve the punishment. He never tells his clan about the wisdom behind it. He furthermore provokes the Westerners to attack Mahmoud so that Mahmoud will fight them. Sabir's choice of the peasants to enact revenge is a prudent one, for he knows that they fear nothing. Fanon argues that the underprivileged peasants realize that "only violence pays" (Fanon, 1963: 61). Therefore, according to Fanon, the peasants accept no compromise nor concession (61). Sabir's extensive scheme requires a great deal of patience which he is endowed with and he is aware of its importance: "I will bide my time with you [Yahya] as I bide it with them [the Siwans]" (2007: 178).

The past, as this thesis illustrates, influences the decisions of the present, especially if the past is traumatizing. Siwa is an ideal location in a postcolonial discourse because it, as argued by Aleya Said, "functions as a necessary link between past and present" (2009: 86). It juxtaposes the characters' present in relation to their past to comprehend their motives. In *Sunset Oasis*, for instance, due to the psychological distress Sabir experienced when he was a child, he makes unfair overgeneralisations: "I will forgive no one, not the Westerners, nor the Egyptians, nor even the Easterners. I will never forget what I have suffered at your hands" (2007: 174). Blinded by his past, he decides to seek revenge even on his own tribe. His wish for revenge is fuelled by his re-living his traumatic memories. When he sleeps, he is chased by frightening dreams of the stick that hits his eye and when he is awake, his half-blinded eye sparks vengeance. His ambition for revenge as a result becomes so immense to the extent that killing Yousif, before Yousif completes a year as a mayor of the oasis, does not satisfy his desire: it "has not assuaged my rancour" (177). In this way, colonialism, Fanon points out, "turns to the past of the oppressed people, and distorts, disfigures and destroys it" (1963: 210). Sabir is not the only victim in the novel whose past traumatizes him – another version of Sabir exists in Tunisia. He meets an Easterner in Tunisia who is traumatized by the oppression he has experienced from the Westerners. Like Sabir, this man is physically and mentally scarred and is committed to revenge: "a deep scar running from one side of his neck to the other, revealing white flesh not covered by skin" and "an arm amputated at the elbow" (2007:176). He, therefore, beseeches Sabir to wreak revenge on the Westerners, providing him with a book of prophecies. This exemplifies how "a man with revenge to take will not forget it" (214). Though not believing in the seriousness of those prophecies, Sabir uses them to terrorize the opposing clan since he trusts the power of fear: "It is only through fear that I can rule them" (177). In addition to guile, secrecy

and deception, Sabir draws on terrorism as a mean of achieving vengeance.

Like the Siwan children, the historical figure of Alexander the Great is interpreted in the novel as a character influenced by the violent behaviour of his parents: the severity of his father Philip and the brutality of his mother Olympias. His mother "never shrank from killing and didn't know remorse" (124). This violent heritage allows him to invade the East and the West. Similar to Sabir and because of the manner of his development, Alexander believes in the power of fear for ruling individuals: "I learnt that fear, not wisdom, is the basis of rule. I learnt that one must make the common people live in constant fear of punishment and torment on Earth and in Heaven so that they may know obedience and righteousness" (126). His father's advice intensifies his cruelty: "the fearful can never be victorious in war" (119). In order to fulfil his aims – knitting together the East and the West – he becomes a tyrant and ignores the sea of blood of the Asians and the Europeans. Alexander, Aleya Said argues, "turned despotic even towards those who loved him and fought for him (2009: 93). He attempts to airbrush the atrocities he has committed by saying that he does so for their good. Taher presents Alexander, like Sabir, as a figure who is affected by his savage past which generates his actions of the present. Even though the Persians invaded and burnt Athens two hundred years before Alexander's time, his desire for revenge did not die and was inflamed by the legacy of ancestors and descendants: this parallels Sabir's desire for vengeance that starts from the age of five. "It was only justice, after this, that I should destroy his [the Persian king's] capital [Persepolis], burning it to the ground. Had not the Persians burnt beautiful Athens, the pearl of the Greeks, two centuries before?" (2007: 120). Obsessed with hatred, Alexander savagely defeated the Persians and ended their state in only three battles. Alexander's history in the novel substantiates Taher's concept of the nature of imperial oppression. It further

complicates Catherine's role and representation in the novel. A professed anti-colonial figure, Catherine, nonetheless is obsessed with Alexander and ignores oppression, whether the historical oppression of Alexander or the oppression of women in the oasis. The layers of colonialism are complex.

**Allegations against Empire**

To ensure their permanence, Empires proclaim their idealism in order to attract exponents, deepen their roots and stretch their branches across the globe. *Sunset Oasis* demonstrates, though separated by hundreds of years, two empires whose central principles are the same: the Macedonian and British Empires. Alexander the Great decides to wage a war that ends all wars and spreads justice throughout the world. He subsequently announces that he will unite the East and the West through marriage and language – Greek – to have only one race, void of illness and conflict. This is a "grand dream of a Utopia" as described by Aleya Said: "I dreamt of filling the world with a new strain, from the lions of the Europeans and the Asians, after which there could be no ill will among them or wars" (2009: 121-122). To actualize this imperial move, in the novel, Alexander marries the daughter of the Persian king and marries eighty of his soldiers to noble Persian women, and subsequently substantial marriages ensue. In effect, Alexander, as Fiona observes in *Sunset Oasis*, wants to "to unite them as slaves in his empire" (2007: 264). He carries out his aims at the cost of a great deal of human life. The utopian image he pursues has blinded his eyes and made him overlook the huge number of fatalities. When he, for instance, invades Tyre, he is resisted by its people, and this provokes him and hurts his dignity. In consequence, he besieges the city for a long time and ultimately murders thousands of the victims "by slaughter and crucification" (263). This underlines the discrepancy between his claims and his acts.

The British Empire is no different from Alexander's, as Fiona argues: "Don't the British today say that the mission of their empire is to spread civilisation and its benefits to the world? Just take a look at this civilisation, steeped in blood from Egypt to India to I don't know where!" (264). To cement its authority, the British Empire announces quixotic promises yet simultaneously creates bloody scenes built on the dismantlement of the family. In an interview with Mona Anis in 2008, Taher asserted that his novel was not meant to highlight the "clash of civilisations" (cited in Anis, 2008). Rather, he indicated that he was interested in human beings, despite their ethnicity. However, some areas in the novel show otherwise. During the occupation of Egypt, the British Empire sought to embed its colonial conceptions in the Egyptian mind. It succeeded through various mechanisms, one of which was imposing British history and banning Egyptian history in the schools of Egypt. Through the curriculum, it cultivated its colonial ambitions. The history of England teaches the Egyptians "order and strength", whereas the history of Egypt, as illustrated by Wasfi, teaches them "civil conflict and treachery, and thus the pollution of their minds" (2007: 235). With time the populace absorb these ideas and consider them as a fact: "Our government cannot do without the British. We need them" (283). Influenced by this intellectual technique of the Empire, the individuals may justify and accept the imperial existence: this is illustrated when Wasfi defends and glorifies Catherine's practices in the oasis that she wants to reveal the greatness of the Egyptian forefathers. He, in contrast, deemsthose opposing her as "ignoramuses" (283).

In Siwa colonial ambivalence between the allegations and the real acts engenders stereotypical judgements, not only from the colonizers but also from the colonized. The word *unbelievers* is used in the text by the Siwan adults as well as children when they refer to any Westerners. This echoes their bigotry and the racist views about the Other and the successful transmitting of them from one generation to another with the

same degree of severity. Memmi notes that the colonized deems all the Europeans in the colonies as colonizers. For this unfair overgeneralization, Memmi observes, the colonized is "a xenophobe and a racist" (1974: 174). In order to murder them, the Siwans in the novel stalk the European travellers who come to explore the antiquities. These foreigners are enabled by the power of colonial rule but do not play any direct role on the colonial stage. The Siwans view any European as a colonizer. They also deem the Irish Catherine as British: they "usually spoke to me, as a foreigner and a British woman in a country occupied by the British, with total subservience" (2007: 14). On the other hand, Harvey considers the fights within the one group as "extremely oriental", and in fact this, Mahmoud argues, can happen both in the East and the West (7). This substantiates Memmi's claim: "Colonization distorts relationships, destroys or petrifies institutions, and corrupts men, both colonizers and colonized" (Memmi, 1974: 195).

Taher, in his interview with Anis, negates the argument that *Sunset Oasis* reveals East-West divide or racism and affirms that he is interested in the notion of "domination and subordination" (Anis, 2008). Racial discrimination however is showcased through the marriage of the Muslim Egyptian Mahmoud with the Catholic Irish Catherine. The responses of the individuals from both sides to this marriage reflect apartheid born of the inherent stereotypes about the Other. For instance, the notary in Cairo who notarises their nuptials is aggrieved at seeing a Muslim Egyptian marry a non-Muslim foreigner. The irony is that Islam does not disallow this marriage; however, this notary, who is supposed to know the rules of religion well, condemns this relationship. This reveals that the strength of customs and inherited stereotypical views outweighs that of religion. Fuelled by the power of traditions and supressing views about the Other, the notary seeks to dissuade Mahmoud from marrying her: "She

isn't a virgin? A widow? Two years older than he? There was no father or brother to act as her proxy for the marriage contract? She was giving herself away?" (2007: 15). In the same way, the British consul and Catherine's parents disapprove of her marriage. Though her father is dead at the time of her marriage, she imagines his potential reactions: "Being a zealous Catholic, he would never have agreed to this marriage from the outset" (19). He encourages her to learn about the East but not to get involved with the Easterners. This segregating behaviour participates in the creation of more barriers between the East and the West. As Beena Agarwal argues, "There is also a resentment of East in the context of West and expansion of the horizon of Western thought that can accommodate the best of the Orient without a reciprocal interaction of the two currents of human thought" (2009: 219). His conviction is enforced by the negative views about the Easterners - his belief in the superiority of the West and his religion and the inferiority of the East and its beliefs. Her father ordered her that she keep "a distance from the living people of the East, who were a mere repository of history. [She] was always to remember that [she] was Irish, and a Catholic" (19). Her mother is unhappy about her marriage, and this explains why the mother writes to Catherine only briefly (20). Catherine's marriage compromises her

relationship with her mother. Both cultures reject the relationship between Catherine and Mahmoud. Neither Catherine nor Mahmoud finds comfort in their marriage.

In conclusion, *Sunset Oasis* is a representation of the actual colonial process: the colonial condition is revealed as multi-layered and complex. It highlights the psychological impacts of oppression on the family: fathers, mothers, daughters and sons. The text demonstrates how the colonial condition exacerbates the oppression in the community as Maleeka's fate is sealed when she is cast out of Mahmoud's house. Both the colonized and the colonizer are complicit in the continuation of aggression.

The outmoded traditions of the oasis undermine the community and makes it an easy target of rule from the centre of Cairo, which is itself controlled by Britain. Breaking the meaningless social taboos and violating the regressive customs are necessary to facilitate and accelerate decolonization. To be strong in the face of colonization, according to Taher, we need to make our own history, rather than resorting to the past. Catherine cannot see the present by looking at the past. Mahmoud, troubled by his past failure, eradicates the ancient past as well as himself.

## Chapter Two

## Anna's Trunk:

## Family and Colonialism in Adhaf Soueif's *The Map of Love*

*The Map of Love* moves through time and across continents to re-examine colonialism in the nineteenth century and the legacy of empire on the family at the end of the twentieth century. Soueif's novel is partly set in the nineteenth century and focuses on the story of Lady Anna Winterbourne, a fictional Victorian traveller in Egypt at the end of the nineteenth century. Anna's trunk, which contains diaries and newspapers, is rediscovered at the end of the twentieth century by her descendants, an American Isabel and an Egyptian Amal. The cousins come together to piece together Anna's life and to try to make sense of their own lives at the end of the twentieth century. In *The Map of Love* Soueif travels from the present (1997) to the past (the first decade of the twentieth century) and her main narrator is Amal. She tells us about the stories of the present through her direct contact with her distant cousin Isabel and her brother Omar. The Victorian past is conveyed through Anna's journals, diaries and letters found in the trunk. The past is brought into the present moment through Anna's records. The novel shifts continuously from the present moment following Amal and Isabel to Anna's past life. This chronological shifting creates connections between these three women across time and continents. This chapter focuses on the Victorian sections of the novel. By revising and reinterpreting Victorian Egypt, Soueif's novel becomes what Wallace would define as a "political tool" (Wallace, 2005: 2).

Soueif's novel is defined by Ann Heilmann and Mark Llewellyn as a "post-colonial neo-Victorian novel" (2010: 105). As Heilmann and Llewellyn argue, Souief in *The Map of Love*, draws on "[t]he structuring device of interlocking narratives of

(personal/political) liberation set against the backdrop of colonial and cultural-imperialist rule": by so doing Soueif combines "women's voices from the past and the present", the voices of Victorian Anna and her sister-in-law Layla and contemporary Amal and Isabel (Heilmann & Llewellyn, 2010: 91). *Weaving* and *embroidering* repeatedly occur in the novel as demonstrated when Layla and Anna weave throughout the novel. The English Anna weaves a tapestry that finds its way across the generations and the continents until it reaches her Egyptian great granddaughter Amal at the turn of the millennium: this enables the contemporary generation to revisit and rethink the past and try to understand the present.

Notions of weaving and embroidering are used metaphorically in the text to indicate the continuity of the past to the present and that the legacy of the past is never dead. This is demonstrated through the birth of the second Sharif who forms a meeting point for the past and present generations across the continents. As Heilmann and Llewellyn contend, "In *The Map of Love* weaving, as a metaphor for the feminist project of revision, is closely related to the (proto)postcolonial espousal of hybridity, reflected in Amal's (and other characters') multilingualism, translationism and interculturalism" (2010: 91). Heilmann and Llewellyn view the triptych as a representation of "the continuity of the past in the present" (2010: 93). According to Heilmann and Llewellyn, *The Map of Love* is a neo-Victorian novel as it demonstrates the continuity of Victorian politics in Egypt at the end of the nineteenth century to the end of the twentieth century: it seeks "nationalist struggles for internal democracy and independence from imperial control" (2010: 93).

Amal is considered as the neo-Victorian version of her Victorian great grandmother Anna. Similar to Anna who suffered from her dysfunctional marriage in England at the turn of the century, Anna experienced an unsettled marriage with an

English husband in England at the end of the twentieth century. As a result, she isolated herself in Cairo purging her accumulative pain through revisiting and reworking her ancestral past. As Heilmann and Llewellyn state: "As To Amal her life in Britain, in 'a house out of a Victorian novel' is just as lost and yet as palpably real as is Victorian fiction; as is her late-Victorian ancestor and heroine Anna" (2010: 94). For them the novel as a "story of severed cross-cultural/racial family relations" (92).

Soueif is a feminist-postcolonialist, deeply influenced by the thinking of Edward Said. The immediate context for the start of the novel's Victorian section is the Sudanese campaign of the late nineteenth century and the Battle of Omdurman, when the forces of Lord Kitchener put a brutal end to the control of the Sudan by the Mahdists who had controlled the Sudan for over a decade. Kitchener reconquered the Sudan for Egypt and the British Empire. The historical sections of Soueif's novel combine real historical figures with fictional ones to rethink Britain's imperial wars of the period and their impact on the family and on subsequent generations. By examining the contents of Anna's trunk Amal and Isabel piece together Anna's life in England and in Egypt, and prompt a reflection on the imperial history of Egypt.

**Anna and Edward and the Consequences of Imperial War**

Anna Winterbourne lives a happy and stable life with her husband Edward in England. During Edward's participation in Kitchener's Sudan campaign in 1898, he witnessed appalling scenes of torture as a weak and poor nation was overpowered by a superior military force. The brutality of what he saw forced him to eventually realize that his belief in empire was false. He initially regarded being a soldier in the imperial army as an honourable act that would allow him to faithfully serve his country. As a result, he is deeply traumatized and this seriously impacts on his health and his relationship with his devoted wife and his father.

Heinous crimes were committed by Kitchener in the Battle of Omdurman in 1898, where Soueif places her character, Edward, as a participant. Soueif recalls the history of this event in her novel. Britain in 1884 ordered the Egyptians to neglect and leave the Sudanese, as Edward's father, Sir Charles states:

> In 1884 we forced the Egyptian Government to abandon the Soudan and leave it derelict, and now, the opportunity having occurred, we are taking possession of the country as belonging to nobody. It is a comment on the tone of the age that we should be doing this with the apparent approval of the whole world, moral and religious. (Soueif, 1999: 32)

Khartoum and the Sudan had fallen to the Mahdi, an Islamic revolutionary in the 1880s, and in 1885 the British sent one of their heroes, General Charles Gordon, to evacuate the Sudan of British and Egyptian troops and civilians. Gordon was killed by the Mahdi's forces in Khartoum. To recapture the Sudan and to avenge Gordon, Kitchener embarked on the battle: "An army of 7000 British and 20000 Egyptian soldiers loses 48 men and kills 11000 of the Dervishes and wounds 16000 in the space of six hours" (Soueif, 1999: 34). Moreover, to guarantee that no one could stop or ease the massacre in Omdurman, Kitchener cut the communications with London and ordered that all the wounded be killed by the 21st Lancers, one of whom was Edward. They started "spearing the wounded where they lay and leaning with their whole weight on their lances to pierce through the clothes of the dying men", as the papers state in Anna's trunk (34). Also, General Kitchener allowed the British and Egyptian soldiers to loot and rape in the town for three days. He also desecrated the body of the Mahdi "whom the natives believe[d] to be a Holy Man" and "Billy Gordon cut off his

head that the General might use it for an inkwell" (33). Kitchener profaned the Mahdi's tomb, "digging up the body and throwing the skeleton in the Nile", as corroborated by Lee Heide (Heide, 2000: 73). Michael Asher in *Khartoum: the Ultimate Imperial Adventure* (2005) interprets the events:

> [Kitchener] ordered the Mahdi's tomb destroyed. Mohammad Ahmad's bones were disinterred and thrown unceremoniously into the Nile, where the Mahdi's men had hurled Charles Gordon's headless body fourteen years earlier. He pondered what to do with Mohammad Ahmad's skull, and toyed with the idea of using it as an ashtray or desk ornament. Finally, he had it buried in a Muslim cemetery in an unmarked grave. (Asher, 2005: loc 6803)

Philip Ziegler views Asher as an advocate of Kitchener who glorifies his military behaviour: "He is kind to Kitchener, whom he extols as a military commander and defends as a human being, even exonerating him from any serious intention of turning the Mahdi's skull into an ashtray" (Ziegler, 2005). Accordingly, Asher applauds Kitchener's strong determination in fighting the Empire's enemy in the Sudan: "Khartoum would be retaken, and Gordon avenged" (Cited in Asher, 2005: loc 5459). Furthermore, Asher praises Kitchener's military genius during the war: "no one could argue that Kitchener was an 'an intellectual soldier'" (Asher, 2005: loc 4919). Kitchener, according to Asher, established the railway at the heart of the desert expanding towards his "enemy territory" (2005: loc 5466). Soueif's interpretation of the Battle of Omdurman is substantiated by witnesses such as Winston Churchill who was a reporter in the Sudan and described Kitchener's actions as barbaric: "Revenge may be a good inspiration for soldiers in action. It is not, however, an incentive to which Gordon would often have appealed, nor is it a dignified emotion for a great

people to display" (Churchill, 1899: 393).

In *The Map of Love,* Edward, before he set off to the Sudan, thought he would fight for the Empire to restore order and quell the *recalcitrant* Dervishes. However, on the battlefield, he realized the sorry state of the Dervishes and that they were not mutinous, merely demanding freedom and justice. To achieve these demands and wrest back control of their land, they fought the advanced Anglo-Egyptian army with the only power they possessed: their beliefs and primitive weapons:

> [T]he fanatical dervishes transformed themselves in front of his eyes into men – men, with their sorry encampments, with their ragtag followers of women and children and goats, with their months of hunger upon their bodies, and their foolish spears and rifles in their hands, and their tattered banners fluttering above their heads. (Soueif, 1999: 36)

The Empire failed Edward at that critical moment as he felt fooled and his dreams and hopes of honouring himself by serving his homeland evaporated. However, "it was too late, too late to do anything but stand and fire" (Soueif, 1999: 36). Not being able to leave this situation accelerated his trauma.

Soueif draws on an historical figure of William Butler to underline that not all British opinions favoured war. Although Butler, an Irishman and high-ranking officer in the British army, fought the wars of empire and most notably was involved in the suppression of the Egyptian revolution in 1882 and in the failed rescue campaign of Charles Gordon at Khartoum in 1886, he was deeply critical of empire's territorial aims and was particularly sympathetic to Egyptian nationalism. Despite his engagement in the colonial enterprise in Egypt and its colony the Sudan and by putting the imperial prejudice aside, Butler commented on the Mahdi and commended his

devotion to his nationalist cause. Catherine Wynne quotes Butler's views on the Mahdi:

> To his friends he was a genius, a guide, a Mahdi; to his enemies an impostor, a villain, a fanatic but to history he will be a man who proved his possession of a great genius by the creation of empire out of nothing, and by the triumph of his revolt of Islam over the highly disciplined efforts of the most powerful of European nations. (Cited in Wynne, 2019: 132)

As Commander in Chief of forces in Dover when Kitchener returned to Britain, Soueif has Butler quoted as condemning the barbarism conducted on the Sudanese by Kitchener's monstrous acts, "Well, if you do not bring down a curse on the British Empire for what you have been doing, there is no truth in Christianity" (Soueif, 1999: 31). Soueif here is drawing on the diaries of Wilfrid Scawen Blunt, a Victorian English poet, a sympathizer with Egyptian nationalism and an anti-imperialist. Blunt quoted Butler's comments in his diaries. It is useful to re-state what Blunt has recorded as it is exactly reproduced in Soueif's novel. In *My Diaries: Being a Personal Narrative of Events, 1888-1914*, Blunt observed: "Meynell tells me that when Sir William Butler (who is his brother-in-law) met Kitchener on his arrival at Dover, he said to him, 'Well, if you do not bring down a curse on the British Empire for what you have been doing, there is no truth in Christianity.' Kitchener only stared" (Blunt, 1921: 311). In his diaries, Blunt expressed his bitterness against the colonial wars and policies in the East. He communicated his views on Egypt and what has happened in the Sudan through his relationship with politicians and the press in England. He stated:

> My diary in the meagreness of its political entries corresponds with my political

> abstention during this weary interval. Nevertheless there were moments when I said my say with our politicians on Egyptian affairs, and in the London "Times," notably in the year of the new invasion of the Soudan under Kitchener in 1896. (Blunt, 1921: 138-9)

Instead of incriminating Kitchener's brutal crimes in Omdurman, Parliament was convinced by Arthur Balfour to reward Kitchener and grant him "a peerage and £30000" (Soueif, 1999: 40). It is well documented by historians that Kitchener returned a hero. Indeed, Butler's wife, the famous war painter, Elizabeth Butler, recalled his reception by the crowd at Dover on 27 October 1898. Kitchener came "with the prestige of his new-won honours shining around him" (Butler, 1922: 272) and Elizabeth recalled how she had "never, before or since, seen such spontaneous enthusiasm in England" (273). Soueif's novel shows that the government's satisfaction with the General deepens the dismay of the English anti-colonialists such as Edward's father and impedes Edward's healing. Soueif describes the historical Sudan Convention which was signed by Lord Cromer and Boutros Pashas in Cairo in 1899 and played a considerable role in worsening Edward's psychology. As Sir Charles observed, this convention stated that the British were the actual rulers of the Sudan and Egypt, and this treaty presented Egypt with both the cost of the war in the Sudan as well as the deficits in the Sudanese budget. This injustice fanned the flames of Edward's resentment and loathing of himself and the Empire.

When he returns home, Anna observes that "Edward, [her] husband, is not himself" (Soueif, 1999: 27). He is physically and psychologically transformed: "For seven months I prayed for his safety and for his return unharmed. And now he is back I hardly know him. He is grown thin, and though his face is flushed with the sun of

the south, it is as though a pallor lurks beneath" (27). The "pallor" signifies a deep pain inside him. Anna further notes (27): "For all that ails his body, I now fear that worse is a sickness of the spirit" (28). His desire to speak to his wife fades away because his mind is preoccupied with an appalling colonial experience: "He will not speak to me about anything of consequence and barely answers when I address him on common place matters" (28). Edward is unable to speak about the scenes he has witnessed which reflects the brutality of colonial acts in the Sudan: "Edward will not speak and I am afraid" (31). The marriage is one of silence and fear: she "cannot, for instance, guess what thoughts are at this moment in his mind. Except that they are not thoughts of a happy – or even comfortable – nature" (28). He exerts all his mental and physical efforts to respond to the incessant interrogations of his conscience about the recent past he has participated in to advance the colonial project. In consequence of this hidden process happening inside him, he appears to be fatigued, though sitting in his chair, and he does not tolerate any disruption from the external world: "He will sit listless in the library for many hours and yet start if someone should enter of a sudden, so that I have learned to make some small noise before entering a room and to conduct a business with the doorhandle" (28). This experience depletes his energy and makes him so fragile and oversensitive: "He cannot bear the clatter of the teacup against its saucer" (28). "He is grown weaker and cannot or will not leave his room" (33). Edward suffers from what is now called post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). As the NHS states, "(PTSD) is an anxiety disorder caused by very stressful, frightening or distressing events" (NHS, 2018). Anna observes: "My husband is in the grip of something evil, something that will not allow him to shake off this illness and come to himself" (Soueif, 1999: 31). The NHS further notes that witnessing violent deaths and military combat can be causes for this psychological disorder. It can develop instantly after one experiences the horrifying event and it can occur for months and years, as

shown by NHS. Ava Jarvis defines PTSD as "the intrusion of traumatic memories in life" (2009). She argues that these traumatic memories "remain unprocessed—vivid and … so immediately accessible that they slip into consciousness at the drop of even tiny triggers" (Jarvis, 2009). This is applied to Edward's experience in Omdurman after he stabbed the ragged Dervishes after realizing that they were not mutinous but seeking freedom. As a result of this order, a small movement can disturb him and trigger violence. His marriage with Anna begins to disintegrate and the camaraderie between them starts to pall and fray: he "suffers her to sit with him – no, suffers her to sit in the same room" (Soueif, 1999: 28). In the beginning, he grudgingly allows her to bring him tea, hoping that the time of drinking the tea will be over soon and she will leave the room. Shortly after, he is unable to conceal his resentment of seeing her and refuses to allow her to bring him the tea. He is alienated from his wife, imprisoned in his room and in his mind with the scenes that he has witnessed. Physically, he experiences fever: "Anna bends further and places her lips and then her cheek against his brow. It feels hot and slightly damp" (29). He deteriorates: "[Edward] is unable to take any nourishment but the thinnest broth and some crusts of bread" (31). "Edward brings up everything we give him now. His stomach cannot retain so much as a cupful of thin gruel and I fancy he is attempting to purge himself of- all manner of things" (33). The "purge" is emblematic of his intention to purify his mind from memories, pain, thoughts, sorrow, the faces of the dervishes in Omdurman and his role there as a lancer (33).

Anna, in the beginning, has no understanding of the Sudan Campaign. She thought that the Sudan campaign was restoring order and taking back control. Sometime later, she knew from her father-in-law Sir Charles and his friends that what happened there was otherwise: the extermination of the Dervishes who sought independence. As a result, this explains to her the dramatic transformation in her

husband's condition. Lady Anna by the time of her husband's return from the Sudan, has lost both parents, and her family consists of Edward and his father. She loves her husband dearly and dedicates her life to please him and sustain his welfare: "I did strive – do strive – to be a faithful and loving wife and companion" (Soueif, 1999: 11). She is so caring about the comfort of her husband to the extent that when she notices that the clatter of the teacup against the saucer annoys Edward, she places "folded muslin napkins under the cups" to avoid the noise. Furthermore, she suggests that he go to Horsham "for a few days" so that he "can ride, be out in the air" (28). Though feeling unwanted, Anna does not succumb to the colonial grip – a grip that is strangling her husband and working effectively to demolish their intimate life. Therefore, she uses her body to provide him with some warmth and to ease his seclusion: "She puts her hand on his, trying to ease her fingers between his palm and the armrest. When she fails, she simply lets her hand lie on his" (29). Subsequent to the failure of physical power, she resorts to verbal power to explain herself as she is conscious of the probability of misunderstanding her. She reassures him: "I have no desire except to help you; to help you come back to yourself. Please, dearest, will you not tell me what I can do?" (29). Regardless of all her efforts to relieve his agony, she feels inadequate: "All your thoughts should be bent on him, devoted to him. He is in need for rest, and he cannot find it" (30). In addition to her physical and verbal attempts, she takes refuge in religion: praying for him. "I pray constantly for my husband's mind and for his soul" (33). She also wishes that her mother was alive so that she might provide her with a "womanly way" to deal with her husband (33). As she experiences her husband's deterioration, she herself withers away and her life becomes bleak: "your little face is getting quite peaky, Anna, my dear. He [Charles] had put his hand to her chin and under that gentle touch she had felt the tears rise to her eyes" (30). Charles realizes that the broken-hearted Anna needs an escape from this depressing life in an

attempt to rescue her from falling apart: “This is no life for a young woman” (30). He and Edward’s doctor Winthrop suggest that she go out for a walk every day.

As a result of the traumatic memories of his duty in the Sudan, Edward eventually dies. Anna blames herself: “I had not even been able to persuade him to take the air. If I had understood him better – if I had been able to make him speak to me” (39). Anna constantly accuses herself of exacerbating his condition: “I have failed him. I am constantly and repeatedly failing him” (31). The Empire disappointed Edward as it deprived him of meeting his honourable dream and then dying in peace like other people – a situation that breaks Anna’s heart before his death and afterwards. “If I could believe that he died for a noble cause” (41). Amal, Anna’s great-grandniece, who, as Heilmann and Llewellyn note, functions as Soueif’s “avatar” (2010: 91) in the novel, points out: “How can you reach someone who does not want to be reached?” (Soueif, 1999: 44). Following his death, Anna vents her grief speaking with Charles when she voices her regret and inability to rescue her husband: “What should I have done?” (39).

Anna is persuaded to visit Rome to aid her recovery. Caroline, Anna’s closest friend, who accompanies her to Rome, suggests that Anna add “a corsage or some jewels” to brighten her (widow’s) weeds before they go to the Costanzi (40). Anna declines the suggestion as “unbecoming” since a year has not passed since Edward’s death (41). This indicates the depth of her respect and love for Edward who due to the traumas of imperialism has turned his back on her. The trauma of imperial war, witnessed second hand through the breakdown and death of Edward, reverberates in Anna’s mind months after her husband’s death.

The wife-husband relationship is not the only bond that can be adversely affected by the consequences of colonialism as Soueif’s novel demonstrates. The father-son

bond is also worn away by the practices of the British Empire. Before Edward fights in the Sudan, he has an ideal relationship with his father which subsequently deteriorates. As an English anti-colonialist, Charles tries hard to dissuade his son from engaging in this war, yet Edward fails to listen: "I told him this was not an honest war. This was a war dreamed up by politicians, a war to please that widow so taken with her cockney Empire" (30). When Charles notices the enormous change in Edward's behaviour towards his wife as well as his declining health, he becomes furious that his advice is not heeded: "I feel like taking a whip to him. If he had not the stomach for it, what drove him to go? He requested that commission – he would not be denied" (30). Meanwhile, Anna attempts to compensate Charles for his mentally absent son, seeking to alleviate his sadness as he observes his son's descent into death. Anna plays the role of a mediator between her anguished husband and her morose father-in-law: "He believed he was doing the right thing", Anna says in an attempt to ease Charles's anger (30). Furthermore, she does not ask Charles to talk to his son about his experiences in the Sudan despite the son's strikingly transformed behaviour and her

desperate need for someone to undertake an exploration of her husband's fears, while attempting to contain and reverse the situation. Because Charles is "too impatient and of too volatile a temper" and she cares about her husband's psychological welfare, Charles is not her option (32). The Empire has sown in Charles fear, concerns and doubts about the mental health of his son. As he sees Edward's deterioration, he fears his son may commit suicide, so Charles orders the butler "to take all the shot out of the guns" (29). Following Edward's death, Anna observes the colonial-induced pain and weakness in Charles: "I saw an old man, minding where he stepped. And I was filled – God forgive me – with a wicked anger against Edward – that he should have been more careful of himself, for his father's sake" (43).

Charles twice loses his son: the first time is when Edward was sent to the Sudan and the second one is after Edward's death. Since Anna is conscious of the rapidly increasing fragility of the brave veteran Charles, she does not raise the issue of Edward's death with him so as not to rouse his melancholy. Although a fighter in the British Army against Urabi, in Egypt in1882, Charles is powerless to halt or alleviate the army of the occupation's atrocities: "he is helpless – save for letters to The Times", condemning and criticizing the beliefs, policies and practices of his government (Soueif, 1999: 40). Charles would live happily with his son and daughter-in-law if the reach of colonialism did not seduce his son: Charles forfeits his son to satisfy the Empire's ambitions. In this way, *The Map of Love* substantiates the notion that the colonized family is not the only one who suffers from colonial projects: the colonizing family also pays a price for fulfilling imperial dreams, as is the case with Anna, Edward and Charles. Edward is lured by the propaganda of the Empire. He envisions himself returning from the battlefield triumphant and proud, having restored peace to an area of mutinous conflict. His relationship with his wife deteriorates, while his inability to speak reveals the severity of his situation. This produces insurmountable difficulties for Anna as he shuns her every attempt to re-kindle the slightest intimacies of their marriage. Edward also fails his father: first when he ignores his advice of not going to the Sudan and then by forcing Charles to experience his deterioration – this becomes an impossible situation for the old father.

**Anna and the Museum**

Sir Charles encourages Anna's interest in Egypt since she was a child. As part of her recovery, Edward's doctor encourages her to leave the sickroom and walk to help her escape the regret and blame that she cannot understand her husband. Her walks take her to the South Kensington Museum where she encounters the Egyptian

paintings of the English Orientalist painter John Frederick Lewis which provide her with visions of harmony and domesticity. Lewis was a figure who lived in Egypt for a number of years and adapted to Egyptian life. Soueif writes in *The Guardian*:

> I find Lewis's work so attractive that it became a source of sustenance for the heroine, Lady Anna Winterbourne, of my novel *The Map of Love*: recently widowed, Anna visits the South Kensington museum and takes pleasure in "the wondrous colours, the tranquility, the contentment with which [Lewis's paintings] are infused". Of all the "oriental" paintings I had come across, only those of Lewis beckoned me in. At the simplest level, the world he shows is a happy one, filled with sunlight, people, animals, flowers, food. But something else is transmitted from his surfaces: empathy. Lewis lived in Cairo for 10 years, and "went native" in adopting Egyptian dress. But that wasn't it. Edward Lane did the same, and I find his work unreadable. I was reminded of his *Manners and Customs of the Modern Egyptians* a few years ago when attending a London briefing for a British ambassador about to be sent out to Egypt. The "experts" gathered round the table displayed full possession of facts and figures about my homeland. What they lacked - or what there no room was for - was the merest inkling of everything that gave it value, that made it, uniquely, itself. Lewis's truth, expressed in colour and brushstrokes, was a truth about the spirit of the place. (Soueif, 2008)

Lewis used his English wife as the model for the Orientalist paintings as a tribute to his marriage. Anna misses this sense of domestic comfort in her own marriage. Lewis's intimate relationship with his wife is seen in his paintings. By placing an English woman in the Egyptian domestic context, Anna can find an

identification, or what Soueif argues, a sense of "empathy" (2008). Lewis painted scenes of domestic tranquillity. In *The Siesta* (1876) a woman is quietly sleeping in sharp contrast to Anna's state of mind. In *Life in the Hareem, Cairo* (1858) a woman is bringing coffee to her female companion. The Victoria and Albert Museum (formerly the South Kensington Museum) describes the painting as containing a story of love:

> [T]he posy of flowers held in the lap of the main figure is a love letter, in the language of flowers, used in Turkey and Egypt as well as Britain … The whole scene could be interpreted as a showing a woman about to take coffee with her confidante to discuss the newly arrived love letter and its implicit offer. Then they will read the future in the coffee grounds in the traditional manner (still practised in Cairo), to see how the affair may turn out. (*Life in the Hareem*, 2017)

Fig. 1. *The Siesta* (1876) by John Frederick Lewis (Lewis, 1876)

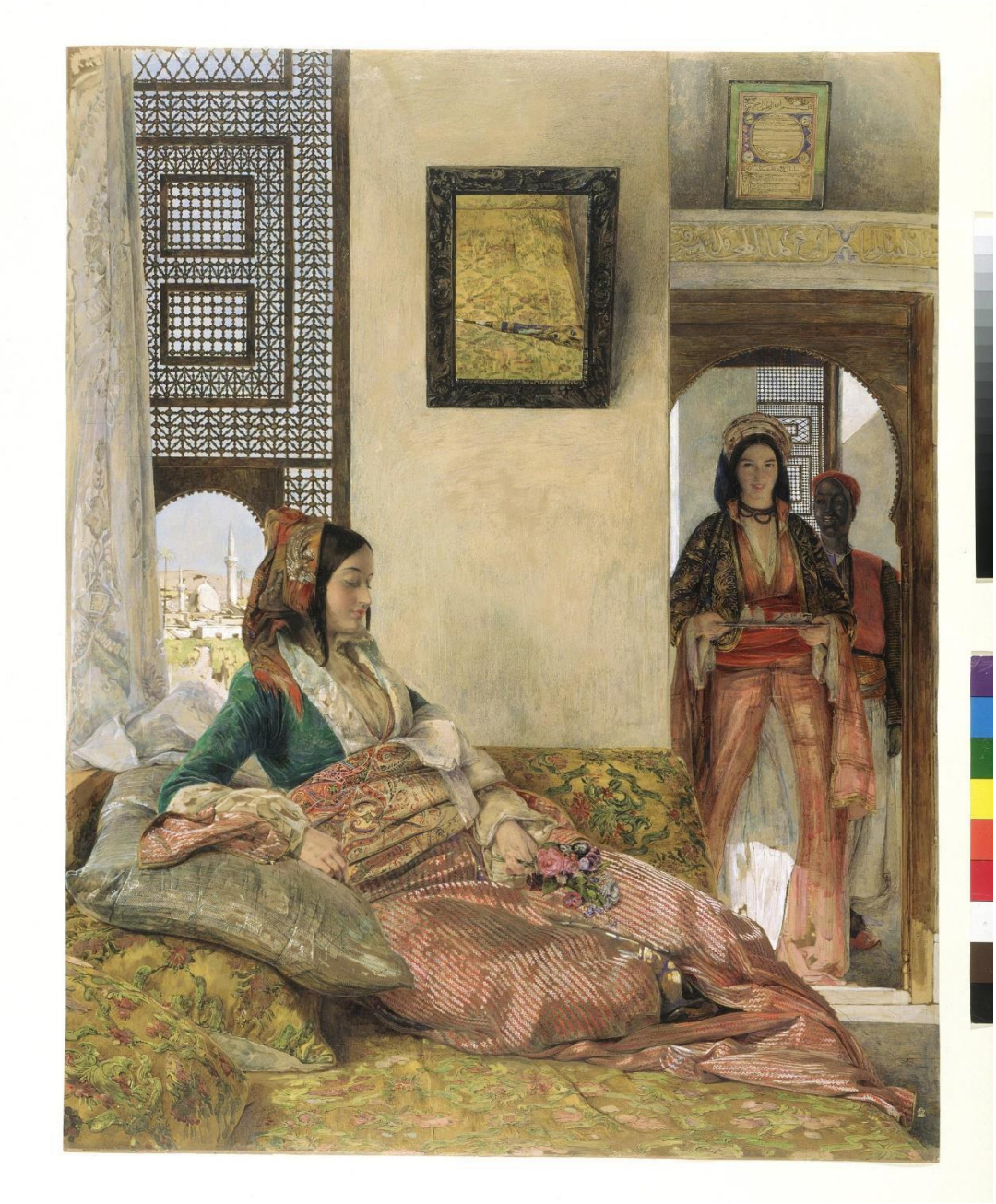

Fig. 2. *Life in the Hareem, Cairo* (1858) by John Frederick Lewis (Lewis, 1858)

Lewis's paintings provide Anna with emotional healing for her traumatic life and restore peace and serenity: "They are possessed of such luminous beauty that I feel in their presence as though a gentle hand caressed my very soul" (Soueif, 1999: 27). These paintings become a source of happiness and assistance at a time of hardship:

"My feet led me to the South Kensington Museum and I found those wonderful paintings by Frederick Lewis, I had, I believe, some sense of divine ordination. For it seemed as though those paintings had been placed there to cheer me and give me succour" (101). Anna comes to Egypt in pursuit of the warmth found in them:

> "What brought you to Egypt, Lady Anna?
>
> The paintings" (215).

Later, after waking up after the first night spent in Sharif's house after being mistakenly abducted, she notices "the intricate dark wooden latticework and beyond it a most benevolent, clear blue sky" – a scene constantly featuring in Fredrick Lewis's paintings (134). As Heilmann and Llewellyn observe, "Anna believes herself transported into both a Lewis painting and the *Arabian Nights*, and starts composing her own 'Arabian' tale" (Heilmann & Llewellyn, 2010: 101). After she marries Sharif, she chooses and fashions the furniture of her bare rooms relying on the furniture found in Lewis's paintings as a source of "inspiration" (Soueif, 1999: 324). She wants to create her own world of tranquillity and immerse herself in the long-waited domesticity that turns out to be real and seems transmitted from the paintings to her own life and marriage with Sharif. Consequently, she submerges herself in the new culture of these paintings and the new language. In Anna's trunk, Amal finds "[s]everal books of Arabic calligraphy practice" and "[s]everal books of Arabic exercises, quotations, notes, etc" – an embracement of the life of the colonized that the colonizer ridicules (5). Like the women in Lewis's painting, in Egypt Anna finds love, but it is only in the trunk that her descendants find that her future can be read and we discover how the affair turns out.

**The Impact of Empire on the Colonized Family**

Like Anna, Sharif, her Egyptian husband, has a complicated past. Sharif, "Landowner and Notable and Member of the Consultative Legislative Council and by profession a Lawyer", has endured the legacy of the British occupation of Egypt (319). His uncle Mahmoud Albaroudy was the prime minister in Urabi's government and then a participant in the failed revolution. Subsequently, his uncle was banished with Urabi to Ceylon and they both returned after long years spent in exile. Mahmoud Pasha was allowed to return as he lost his eyesight, and the Khedive pardoned Urabi. After the return, Mahmoud compiles Arabic poems in marked contrast to his previous duties in Urabi's government. With regard to Sharif's father who was also a participant in the revolution, after the close of the abortive revolution, he finds himself helpless to resist the occupation or to accept its presence in Egypt. Therefore, he has secluded himself for eighteen years in a room in his house beside a shrine of a sheikh – a bleak situation resulting from colonialism. Identical to Edward who alienates himself from his wife in his bedroom, the traumatized 66-year-old father imprisons himself in that room and spends the rest of his life by the tomb.

Albaroudi's family is deeply affected by British occupation. Sharif and his father parallel Charles and Edward: the father-son relationship erodes. Sharif feels ashamed of his father's reaction to the revolution and the occupation and he considers it passive. Anna notes:

> My husband is unfailingly courteous to him but I sense he is impatient of him, not because of his present infirmity but because of the path he chose some twenty

> years ago. They are so different to each other that it is hard to think of them as father and son. But I used to think that of Edward and Sir Charles. (354)

Following the psychologically acute trauma, Albaroudi is incapable of running the affairs of his house. In consequence of that, Sharif bears the responsibility of looking after his father, mother and sister Layla: "And had he no thought for him, for the son that he had left to take up his responsibilities? The son who had no longer been able to allow himself his youth but had to calculate his every move with his mother and his sister firmly in mind?" (276).

Identical to Anna and Edward, Zeinab and Albaroudi suffer from the consequences of the occupation. Zeinab endures the pain of seeing her psychologically traumatized husband isolate himself from her and of her weakness to wrest him from the colonial grip: "How many times must his mother have wept in front of him? How many times must she have tried to draw him gently back – to no avail?" (276). Similar to Anna who assumes the role of a mediator between Edward and Charles, Zeinab seeks to soothe the strained relationship between the father and the son: "Don't carry bad feelings in your heart towards your father" (278). Sharif articulates to his mother his anger with his father as Sharif considers what his father decides to do as unfair to her: "My heart does not forgive him" (278). Zeinab is fully aware of the impact of the occupation in altering the course of the relationship between herself and her husband and loosening the intimate bonds of their marriage. This explains why she defends him against his son: "He has done nothing to me. He was kind and good to me for twenty-six years and then this catastrophe came to us" – a statement illustrating her deep understanding of her husband's motives and suffering (278).

The occupation as well as the traditions of the Egyptian community in terms of

marriage brings out the fragmentation of the newly-wed family. Sharif's first marriage was adversely affected by the tumultuous political situation in Egypt at the end of the nineteenth century. An accelerated series of crucial events takes place: Urabi's revolution, British occupation and the exile of Urabi and Sharif's uncle Mahmoud Albaroudi. These circumstances cast a shadow over the marital life of the young couple. Sharif finds out that there is a huge difference between his interests and hers. He cares so much about the political situation and its impact on Egypt, whereas she is immersed in housekeeping and does not have the slightest interest in politics. As a politician who lives under the curse of the occupation and endures colonial pressures throughout the day, Sharif is in desperate need of a wife with whom he shares his ambitions of political reform and nationalist sympathies. His first wife, however, does not acknowledge the turbulent political situation in sharp contrast to Anna, his second wife, who shares the minute details of Sharif's interest and dedicates her intellectual power to support him. Sharif notes:

> I cannot live my life with a woman who has no key to my mind and who does not share my concerns. She cannot – will not – read anything. She shrugs off the grave problems of the day and asks if I think her new tablecloth is pretty. We are living in difficult times and it is not enough for a person to be interested in his home and his job – in his own personal life. I need my partner to be someone to whom I can turn, confident of her sympathy, believing her when she tells me I'm in the right. I want to love, and be loved back. (Soueif, 1999: 151)

Another factor that contributes to the disintegration of Sharif's first marriage is the traditions pertinent to marriage in Egypt – an allusion to the fact that the occupation is not the only reason to blame for the family collapse. The husband is not allowed to

speak with his wife before marriage: "Where would I have met an Egyptian woman to love her? Yes, I see them at family occasions, but to sit with one and talk to her – can this happen?" (Soueif, 1999: 280). This deprives both the husband and the wife of scrutinizing the mind of one another and thus in the case of Sharif and his first wife they become victims of a *fait accompli*. Consequently, Sharif divorces his wife after six months of marriage.

In contrast to his irrationality in terms of his relationship with his father, Sharif is very rational in dealing with the issues outside his house. Unlike Mahmoud in *Sunset Oasis* who commits suicide as a result of his inability to resist the pressures of the occupation, Sharif is not fanatical and tends to solve the political problems through negotiations. To overthrow colonial rule, Sharif advocates internal reform and change: "We all felt his impatience," Layla points out, "and his desire for change grew more acute, and he worked constantly to bring about this change in all the spheres in which he was involved" (Soueif, 1999: 373). As a writer in *al-Ahram* and *al-Liwa*, he communicates the needs of Egyptian citizens and advocates his pacifist plans of reform. He builds a school in his village for the fellaheen children – both boys and girls – as he believes in investing in people and the power of learning to defeat the occupation, rather than violence and uprisings: "they should be educated citizens more able to look after their own interests" (256). In addition, he offers loans for the fellaheen "with one per cent interest and the crop as surety" so that they will not be victims of the high interests of the loans offered by Cromer (257). Suffering from the bankruptcy of the textile factory of his family due to Cromer's policy of controlling national industries, Sharif advises the fellaheen:

> [H]e has persuaded the fallaheen not to shift wholesale into cotton as Cromer would have them do and put themselves at the mercy of a market over which

they have no control. Some cotton, yes, but they still plant their beans and their peas, their wheat and barley. (257)

Sharif, simultaneously, pays more attention to unity. He believes in *united we stand, divided we fall*. Following Urabi's return to Egypt after the Khedive pardoned him, Mustafa Bey Kamel in *The Map of Love* writes an article inveighing against Urabi. This conduct angers Sharif as he sees it as "an expression of division among the nationalists" (349). He strives to bridge all the gaps that the colonizer may take advantage of to justify their presence. For example, following the inadvertent abduction of Anna by young nationalists, Sharif is outraged because he knows that such an act will arouse the British and open the door for them to wreak havoc. He observes: "This is not the way we want to go. It goes in the balance against everything we have tried to do over the last eighteen years. What the British want is to accuse us of fanaticism. If we give them reason, we lose out." (140). Sharif is attentive to the many disillusionments and difficulties threatening his enterprise of unity and expulsion of the enemies: "Abbas Hilmi broke our hearts by standing with Cromer under the British flag in the court of 'Abdin Palace and surveying the Army of Occupation on the occasion of King Edward's Birthday", Layla states (393). All the Khedive's attempts to make progress for the good of Egypt were oppressed by Cromer. Consequently, Abbas Hilmi put all his effort to gain himself money: "He had ascended the throne and each time he made a move Cromer threatened him with his guns. Now all his intelligence had curdled into cunning and all his energy was gone into plotting and making money" – an archetype of the behaviour Sharif feared and fought. Cromer succeeded in forming a wide fissure between the ruler and the ruled (370). In sharp contrast to a patriot, a politician, Sharif realizes, requires shrewdness and intelligence in dealing with the political situation: "None of them were clever enough. A collection

of army officers, poets and lawyers — even 'Urabi would sooner hold forth on Byron than discuss strategy. Patriots but not politicians" (372). Their incapacity to manage politics is testimony to the veracity of the colonizer's claim that the colonized are unfit to rule themselves. *The Map of Love* highlights the fact that the colonized can aggravate the consequences of colonialism by opposing every attempt to progress. Some of the Egyptians in the text are sceptical about building a university and about the education of girls: "to what extent should these people interfere in the practical development of the country? And notice," Sharif adds, "that their interventions are always in a negative direction – everything in their book is haram" (265). Sharif is a progressive who believes in the education of women.

Sharif epitomizes the moderate Egyptian character who is keen on the development of his country and the education of its individuals. At the end of *The Map of Love*, Sharif is murdered and the group who carry out the murder are left anonymous: it might be the British or the Egyptian nationalists, the forces of the Khedive or the fanatics. The Turks are angry with him as he seeks independence from them. The radical nationalists think he hesitates to take actions and the Islamists resent him because he encourages education of boys and girls and advocates a school of art. Because of his marriage with Anna, some people may accuse him of conspiracy with the British and having double standards. In this way, Soueif breaks the conventional idea that Britain is the only oppressor. This is mirrored in the novel's contemporary moment of the 1990s in the discussions between the left-wing Amal and her intellectual friends who are critical of their recent government and the nation since independence. As one of Amal's friends states:

"We have now fifty years – fifty-six years of our own – of national government,

and what have we done?" Another observes: "I think we're a nation of cowards… we live by slogans. We take comfort in them: "The Great Egyptian people." … When 'Urabi spoke up for them, they sold him out. They ran away and let the British in" (224). They blame themselves as well: "We're a bunch of intellectuals who sit in the Atelier or the Grillon and talk to each other. And when we write, we write for each other. We have absolutely no connection with the people. The people don't know we exist". (224)

**Views of Anna and Sharif's Marriage**

Unlike the reaction towards Mahmoud's marriage with Catherine in *Sunset Oasis*, the reaction of Sharif's family towards his marriage with Anna is positive. His mother welcomes the news of his marriage, particularly after the failure of his first marriage. She furthermore reminds her son of the sacrifices Anna is making as her own people will disown her. She also observes that Anna will not be able to speak her mother tongue as Sharif does not speak English. Zeinab does not consider the difficulties her son might encounter as a result of this marriage: all her attention is given to Anna. She advises Sharif:

> If you make her unhappy, who will she go to? No mother, no sister, no friend. Nobody. It means if she angers you, you forgive her. If she crosses you, you make it up with her. And whatever the English do, you will never burden her with the guilt of her country. She will be not only your wife and the mother of your children – insha' Allah – but she will be your guest and a stranger under your protection and if you are unjust to her God will never forgive you. (Soueif, 1999: 282)

Later, while preparing for the wedding, Zeinab and Layla embroider clothes for Anna, and following the marriage, Zeinab opens her house for Anna to live with them and teaches her how to cook Egyptian food. This shows how this colonized family is open to the world and differentiates between colonialists and anti-colonialists. Like Zeinab, Sharif's father celebrates the marriage by reciting a verse from the Quran: "And we have created you of nations and of tribes that ye may get to know one another. The most honoured among you in the eyes of God are those who fear Him most" (277). This marriage brings some relief to the traumatized father who has isolated himself. He teaches Anna Arabic and looks at her while she embroiders: this mitigates the father's colonial wounds.

Contrary to the Sharif's Egyptian family, Cromer objects to this marriage, but he fails to hinder it as the marriage is already contracted and they merely need the ratification of the Agency. Cromer does "not offer to shake his [Sharif's] hand" when Sharif goes to the Agency for the ratification (320). Moreover, Cromer does not offer them tea nor coffee. During this encounter, Anna shows immense support to her husband by using French rather than English so that her husband can understand the discussion. As a colonizing authority, Cromer feels responsible for Anna and requests that she speaks with him on her own. When she refuses, he warns her about her marriage: "'My dear, you are making a mistake,' the Lord said, and his voice was sorrowful now, and anxious. 'My staff will tell you of the young women we find wandering about, having contracted such marriages. They will tell you of their condition –'" (321). This substantiates what Memmi observes about the colonizer being exposed to false pictures about the colonized since childhood. Cromer's reaction towards Anna's marriage reflects what the West falsely believes about the colonized. The Western authors in the West picture the Easterners as barbaric and cruel to women.

As Heilmann and Llewellyn point out:

> In the figure of Sharif Soueif exposes Western cultural and literary fantasies of the depraved Muslim despoiler of Western virgins, the 'wicked Pasha who would lock you up in his harem and do terrible things to you', as explored in nineteenth-century Oriantalist paintings (such as Thomas Rowlandson's *The Pasha*) and pornography (photography, and fiction such as *The Lustful Turk*). (2010: 94-95)

Anna is devoid of these stereotypes of the East and negates the negative views of Egyptians. The Egyptian nationalists did not hurt her after mistakenly abducting her. She testifies to the savagery of Kitchener's Sudan Campaign as her husband was permanently scarred by his involvement in this war that immediately caused his death. Therefore, "Soueif," as Heilmann and Llewellyn indicate, "illustrates that it is not the 'Pasha' but rather the Western imperialists who wreak barbarity on the innocent" (2010: 95). According to Said, the essential notion of Orientalism is centred on creating distinctions between the East and the West by the Westerners and these distinctions are taken for granted by the Western writers when dealing with Oriental issues. As Said argues:

> Orientalism is a style of thought based upon an ontological and epistemological distinction made between "the Orient" and (most of the time) "the Occident." Thus a very large mass of writers, among whom are poet, novelists, philosophers, political theorists, economists, and imperial administrators, have accepted the basic distinction between East and West as the starting point for

> elaborate accounts concerning the Orient, its people, customs, "mind," destiny, and so on. (1978: 10-11)

Anna succeeds in liberating herself from the Western stereotypes about the East and discovers the truth of the East by herself without being influenced by the Western standards. Heilmann and Llewellyn illustrate that Anna has transformed "from Oriental tourist to adoptive Egyptian" who "embraces harem life, whose reality she finds very dissimilar from the Western imagination" (2010: 102). As she obtains access to this harem, she finds that it is a place for women's gathering and interactions as Heilmann and Llewellyn observe (2010: 102).

Cromer, however, reminds Sharif that "[s]he is a woman of rank and position" in an attempt to abase him. "His tone," Anna states, "would have not been inappropriate used to a tradesman whom he suspected of shabby dealing" (Soueif, 1999: 322). Furthermore, he seeks to embarrass Sharif in front of Anna by refusingto allow him to marry an additional wife. Sharif, however, disappoints Cromer by informing him that this condition is already in his marriage contract. Sharif only intends to have one wife and that is Anna.

*The Map of Love* showcases the reactions towards Anna's marriage on varying levels from the British side. Her perpetual supporter Charles displays his concerns about the marriage: in "the first letter … he wished me happiness – 'although, my dear, I cannot say I confidently expect it'" (354). Charles doubts the marriage's chances of success despite his sympathies with the Egyptians and his anti-colonial sentiments. Since her arrival in Egypt, her servant Emily has been waiting for the moment to leave. On a trip to the Great Pyramid, Emily is "keeping her distance and pinching herself to a little space on the rug" – a state reflecting her disgust with the colonized land (99).

Soueif foreshadows Emily's opposition to the marriage. Emily parallels Cromer in terms of the refusal of the Egyptian husband: "I had a similarly dreadful interview with Emily" Anna observes (323). Following Anna's marriage, two English women with whom Anna has "a slight acquaintance" shun her at the jeweller's: "Six months ago they would have been flattered that [Anna] recognised them" (362). Anna's marriage is regarded as disgraceful.

**Racial and Prejudiced Beliefs about the Colonized**

The colonizer manufactures excuses to justify invasion and airbrush his country's territorial ambitions. The colonizer claims that the invaded people are backward, and his job is to refine and civilize them: "it is agreed by the Powers that the aim of African operations is to civilise Africa in the interests of Europe and that to gain that end all means are good," George Wyndham states in *The Map of Love* (Soueif, 1999: 32). Despite the claims of civilizing the Africans, the quotation reveals that the interests of Europe are paramount, and all methods and procedures – savage or otherwise - are authorized. The colonial discourse goes further and interrogates the right of the colonized to live: "The question of whether savage nations had a right to exist came up, George arguing – from Darwin and the survival of the fittest – that they hadnone, and the rest of the company being of much the same mind" (13). The colonizer uses this technique of dehumanizing and trivializing the colonized repeatedly: this kind of repetition engrains this belief among the colonizers and the colonized and establishes it as a form of truth or normality.

The colonizer insists that the colonized are not aware of themselves and of how they develop without the guiding hand of the empire. Anna observes:

> [W]hat we are doing is denying that Egyptians have a 'consciousness of themselves'… and that by doing so we settle any qualms of conscience as to our right to be here. So long as we believe that they are like pets or small children, we can remain here to 'guide them' and help them 'develop'. But if we see that they are as fully conscious of themselves and their place in the world as we are, why then the honourable thing is to pack up and go — retaining perhaps an advisory role in economic matters — which I think the Egyptians themselves would wish. (247)

To ensure the success of their scheme and to quell any possibility of the awareness of the Egyptians, the colonizers paralyze the intellectuals and higher classes so that they are helpless to advance their country and thus remain at the mercy of the colonizers: "we were 'emasculating' the Egyptian upper classes to ensure they would be unfit to rule" (248). They sow in the mind of the colonized a belief that they cannot run their lives without the assistance of the colonizer so that the colonial power will not face resistance from the colonized. In an invitation for the former President of the United States to the University in Egypt, addressing the Egyptian intellectuals, Mr Roosevelt emphasized the fact that "it would take 'generations' before they learned to govern themselves" – an example of how the West seeks to instil in the colonized the belief of helplessness to rule themselves (456).

The novel is shaped by Saidian thinking. Layla states: "Europe simply does not see the people of the countries it wishes to annex – and when it does, it sees them in accordance with its own old and accepted definitions: backward people, lacking rational abilities and subject to religious fanaticism" (483). Anna's guidebook about Sinai by Thomas Cook accentuates this aspect. It describes the land more fairly than

its people as Anna observes:

> The Bedouins … are of a very prosaic character; rude ignorant, lazy and greedy, they offer no points of attraction … the ordinary Arabs are destitute alike of grace and strength; their clothing is ragged, their feet are never furnished with shoes, and only occasionally with very rude sandals, and their hands and faces show very plainly that water is scarce … [They] are ignorant and careless of the advantages of civilised life. (209)

Anna visits St Catherine's monastery in Sinai in the company of Sharif and other Egyptian nationalists. She enjoys the visit with their company as she is not affected by the opinions and views of the British. She can form her own views without the intrusion of a biased influence. Sometime later Anna and her British friend pass by a café where a group of nationalists are reading a newspaper and discussing an article in it. As they pass, the nationalists look at them and resume talking. This friend uses this situation to disparage the Egyptian nationalists and describes them as "rascals" (239). He observes that they sit at cafes waiting for a passing European woman to dishonour, especially if she is English. "I had not been aware of anything untoward in the gentlemen's looks," Anna notes (239). Anna observes the exaggeration in his description and his unfair judgement that springs from old stereotypes about the colonized which are difficult to change or erase. Anna has already by this stage spent sixteen nights under the protection of the nationalist Sharif and his company against whom her British friend fulminates: "I … only wished I could expect the same chivalry in an English country house as that I had received from him" (240). Anna tries to rectify or mitigate these stereotypes about the colonized by telling the people at the

Agency about her experience with the Egyptians, and that their knowledge about the colonized is limited to "hearsay only" (247). They listen to her until she finishes, but they immediately revert to their deeply rooted convictions. This demonstrates Anna's effort as an anti-colonialist negotiating with her own people and defending the colonized based on her lived experience with the Egyptians.

**Anti-colonialism**

*The Map of Love* illustrates that not all the British are exponents of the colonial project of their country. British rationalists voice their disgust at the colonial policies and practices of the Empire by various means, one of which is resignation. Some of them cannot tolerate holding their official posts in the government, so they resign: "It was a sad day for England when a man like Sir William [Harcourt] resigns from the Leadership because of the conversion of the Party to Jingo Imperialism. He spoke harshly of Rosebery and Chamberlain calling them men of war" (27). The best solution for an old man – helpless to oppose and fight "the spirit of the age" – is to disappear from the scene to save his face, live with a clear conscience and make sure that he has not compromised his principles (27).

Identical to William Harcourt's views of imperialism, Sir Charles's position on the acts of the Empire is definitive and overt: "I am sure that Sir Charles's opinions are well known here – indeed they must be, for, far from making a secret of them, he has published and declared them whenever possible," Anna states (69). He was angry as he was forced to participate in the battle of Tel el-Kebeir against Urabi in 1882. As Anna notes, "I heard him talk of heroism and treachery and politics and bonds, and I felt his anger at the job he had been made to do" (31). The indelibly hideous scenes he witnessed there formed his permanent views of colonization, and this explains why he sought to prevent his son from enlisting in Kitchener's army in Omdurman. The anti-

colonialist Charles shared his anti-colonial views with the ten-year-old Anna by relating the stories of Urabi and the battle he was involved in alongside his frank viewpoints on the scene. He gave her a map of Egypt, and this in turn helped shape Anna's conception about Egypt and its people and cultivated her love and sympathy. After Anna grows up, she continues to listen to Charles's tirades against the Empire and its spirit because he is vexed by Kitchener's practices which have led to the loss of his son Edward. "Sir Charles and his friends" further opposed the Sudan Convention that burdened Egypt with the deficits of the Sudan budget: "his friends" implies that many people were not happy with the doings of Lord Cromer (32). They voiced their resentment through writing to the *Times*: "The invention," Charles stated in the paper, "The British Empire, will be the ruin of our position as an honest Kingdom" (32).

The text highlights anti-colonial attempts to alleviate the severity of colonial abuse. The historical anti-colonialist, Wilfrid Scawen Blunt undertook "the fund to defray the expenses for the defence of 'Urabi'" (Soueif, 1999: 34). The Duke of Cornwall also "has promised to intercede for Urabi Pasha with the Sultan and the Khedive" – a move which pleased Anna as she regarded it as a way of rectifying some of "the wrong" enacted over the years (308). After Arthur Balfour persuaded the House to reward Kitchener for his victory in the Sudan, "his fellow peers left the chamber without speaking to him" (40). This reaction reflected their disgust and loathing. Some fathers in England who were not satisfied with the injustice and the colonial propaganda rescued their children from absorbing bigotry and racism: "John Evelyn, who declared his intention of sending his son up the Nile to 'learn Arabic, keep a diary and acquire habits of observation and self-reliance and not to imbibe Jingo principles'" (13). He viewed Egypt as a place for acquiring a language and to develop independent thinking away from prevailing racist opinions.

Anti-colonialists, as Soueif's text reveals, can be found among Cromer's retinue, one of whom is Mr William Willcocks, "who is responsible for the building of the great dam and reservoir at Assouan" (Soueif, 1999: 96). He has a concrete plan for development: "He spoke with a clear conscience since as an engineer he is engaged in a task that is of benefit to the country and intends to leave when it is done" (99). Unlike the colonists who merely repeat slogans – with no actions taken – to reinforce their presence and control the colonized, Mr Willcocks is a man of actions and honesty: he executes what they claim to do for the advantage of the colonized. He supports the newspapers that denounce Cromer's policies and speaks out his opinions against the Empire regardless of Cromer's bitterness: he "subscribe[s] Five Pounds to a National paper, al-Mu'ayyad, and lives under Lord Cromer's consequent displeasure" (96). He defends the substantial role of the national papers in Egypt that highlight the atrocities of the colonial project and observes that they are many: two-hundred native papers. He assumes this role since Mr Boyle, the Oriental Secretary, diminishes the role of these papers and commends al-Muqattam and the Gazette because they uphold the British existence in Egypt. He also challenges the intention of the Empire to reform Egypt because if they aimed to do so, they would pay attention to educating the Egyptians so that they "might be able to govern themselves" (99). He is aware of the importance of education as an indispensable means of reform and equally conscious of the intentional neglect of education by the colonizing power. Mrs Butcher, another colonial rationalist, agrees with Willcocks: "while material progress was, naturally, to be commended, our administration could be reproached for having ignored the spiritual life of the nation we govern" (99).

Some anti-imperialists are not inclined to proclaim their anti-colonial opinions, yet their actions reveal them. Mr James Barrington is an anti-imperialist who accompanies

Cromer to Egypt. Unlike Sir Charles and Mr Willcocks, he tends to hide his feelings against the Empire from people in power due to his gentle nature. However, his doings betray his sympathies with the colonized and his anti-colonial behaviour. On a trip to the Great Pyramid with Anna and her compatriots, "[i]t is he who insists on extracting a portion of food from the picnic and hands it to his manservant Sabir … to share among the waiting natives"– an action revealing his kindness and mercy though serving the empire (98). He masters Arabic and this contributes to his rational understanding of the natives and their demands and forms his own opinions. Sometime later, he decides to go back to England, and because of his mastering of Arabic, he is offered a post in "British foreign policy" – an offer he refuses (412). This demonstrates that he eschews this offer as he does not want to contaminate his reputation, compromise his conscience and be enmeshed in corruption. His principles are paramount. By so doing, he remains "truer" to himself, as Anna notes (412). Similar to Barrington, Sir Hedworth Lambton fails to articulate his viewpoints on the colonial enterprise verbally in front of the colonial personnel. He skirts speaking about his meet-up with Urabi in Ceylon at the Agency: "When we dined here he made no mention whatsoever of that" Anna observes (246). He, however, shares this experience with his counterpart Charles.

English intellectuals, as *The Map of Love* illustrates, use the power of their pens to criticize the practises of Britain in Egypt. For instance, Mr Rothstein wrote *Egypt's Ruin*, in which he criticized Cromer's practices on the ground of Delta as he overwatered that area and ruined it. Anna, as an anti-colonialist, is happy with the publication of this book and is keen on having it translated into Arabic. The reason as she states is to remind the Egyptians "that not all Englishmen are their enemies" (465). Despite the fact that the Egyptians might be fully aware of the subject matter of the

book and it might add nothing to their knowledge, she wants to establish that many of her people are disgusted by the colonizing agenda. She, for example, tells Sharif that she is ashamed of the atrocities against the Egyptians. However, he eases her embarrassment by his awareness of the different attitudes among the English towards the Empire and the colonized: "Listen. You must not – ever – feel like this. This is not to do with being British. …And your Mr Barrington and Mr Blunt are British" (429). The power of anti-colonial writing and mastering English by the anti-colonialists is key to reach the British readership who might be misguided by the colonial propaganda, so it contributes towards rectifying the widespread fallacies about the colonized. Anna, after her marriage with Sharif, contacts people and informs them that the Egyptians are abused by the decisions of the Agency.

Anna fully embraces her new life in Egypt. The couple find neutral territory in speaking French and find happiness in Rome away from the turbulence of English-occupied Egypt: "'We cannot speak each other's language. We have to use French.' 'Well,' Isma'il Sabri reflects, 'perhaps that is better. You make more effort, you make sure you understand – and are understood" (272). Yet she does not want to take Sharif to Britain as she worries about the impact on him and how their cross-cultural marriage will be viewed:

> It is too soon to start worrying about my homesickness. And indeed, I would not wish him to come to London and be stared at – or worse. One day, perhaps. When Egypt has her independence, we can take our children and open up Horsham for the summer months and I can show him – but that is a long time away. (311)

Anna is incorporated into the East and becomes an inherent part of it to the extent that to her "the world of the Europeans takes on an outlandish, quasi-Oriental character" (Heilmann & Llewellyn, 2010: 102). Furthermore, she supports her husband Sharif in his nationalist cause of liberating his country from the British occupation: she communicates his voice to the West by translating his French articles into English. Heilmann and Llewellyn argue that "she establishes a platform for the Egyptian independence movement in the heart of empire" (Heilmann & Llewellyn, 2010: 104). In Egypt she makes "a study of the trees and plants" and embraces her new life (Soueif, 1999: 244). He asks her:

> 'Do you miss it? That life?'
>
> 'No,' she says immediately. 'I am here. I would not be anywhere else for the world' (Soueif, 1999: 157).

She rejects to give birth away from her husband's house:

> My husband has tried repeatedly to persuade me to engage the services of a British physician and he has even – once only, and that in the early days. – suggested that I might like to go 'home' to be confined among 'my people'. I have refused both offers and said I could not feel safer or better cared for than I am here in this house. I am determined that I will not countenance any arrangement that might hinder his joy in the occasion. (Soueif, 1999: 392)

She dresses in the Egyptian fashion: she has "expressed a wish to have some costumes made in the Egyptian fashion" (349) and loved the old house more than the houses built in the European style (310-11). However, the house which reminds her of Lewis's paintings, cannot protect her or Sharif. She lives temporarily in that world and the

harmony she finds in Lewis's paintings vanishes in the assassin's bullet. She is left with a child and has to come back to Britain. The family is displaced and scattered and her trunk reunites her distant relatives, the cousins Amal and Isabel, who try to forge a family in uncertain times at the turn of the millennium. The novel ends with Amal holding Isabel's baby with Amal's brother Omar. The baby Sharif brings the family together again but the future is uncertain.

Like *Sunset Oasis* Soueif's novel has a cross-cultural marriage but the marriage of Sharif and Anna is a successful one until he is killed. Anna immerses herself in the local culture and customs. She lives the life of the Egyptians while Catherine in *Sunset Oasis* is preoccupied with the ancient past and ignores the present and the plight of Maleeka. Ruaa Al-Doori and Yousef Awad point out:

> Anna's journey into native spaces continues to enrich her experience and alter her perception of the other. This is illustrated in the Harem scene. Stories from the Western Oriental tales depict the Harem as exotic, a place where women are oppressed and subjugated. However, Anna finds out that 'the harem is not a place of licentiousness and sexual indulgences, but a secluded space where socially and politically active women discuss political and cultural matters in a safe and quiet environment.' In fact, for Anna, the Harem becomes a space of peace, harmony and spiritual indulgence; it 'brought a certain awe into my heart and I realized it was like being in church'. (2018)

Soueif's novel advocates progressive politics, one devoid of violence. Her historical research reveals English figures who occupy what she calls in one of her essay collections the mezzaterra or common cultural ground – individuals like Lewis and the

English aristocrat Wilfrid Scawen Blunt. Soueif defines the common ground as a "territory" that is "valued precisely for being a meeting-point for many cultures and traditions" (Soueif, 2004: 6). She calls in *Mezzaterra* for the openness to Western culture and observes that this differs from supporting colonialism. She, for instance, mentions that her mother worked as English Lecturer at Cairo University because of her love for English literature, despite her rejection of the British occupation of Egypt (Soueif, 2004: 6). By so doing, she follows Said's stance, as she argues, "This is the stance that Edward Said describes: 'what distinguished the great liberationist cultural movements that stood against Western imperialism was that they wanted liberation within the same universe of discourse inhabited by Western culture" (Soueif, 2004: 6-7). For Lutzoni,

> being educated in Victorian literature, Soueif does not intend to undermine the Western literary canon, but to bring to light those texts that remain silent, thus supplying an alternative version of history and creating a fusion between Eastern and Western traditions. (cited in Falchi et al., 2017)

Soueif's neo-historical, postcolonial novel creates fictional figures like Anna and Charles who recognize Empire for what it is and seek to reach out to other cultures.

# IRELAND

## Chapter Three

## The Irish Famine and the Blight on the Family:

## Joseph O'Connor's *Star of the Sea*

> A man had died from hunger, and his widow had gone into the plowed field of her landlord to try to pick a few potatoes in the ridges which might be remaining since the harvest; she found a few—the landlord saw her—sent a magistrate to the cabin, who found three children in a state of starvation, and nothing in the cabin but the pot, which was over the fire. He demanded of her to show him the potatoes—she hesitated; he inquired what she had in the pot—she was silent; he looked in, and saw a dog, with the handful of potatoes she had gathered from the field. The sight of the wretched cabin, and still more, the despairing looks of the poor silent mother and the famished children, crouched in fear in a dark corner, so touched the heart of the magistrate, that he took the pot from the fire, bade the woman to follow him, and they went to the court-room together. The judge gave her three pounds from his own purse; told her when she had used that to come again to him. This was a compassionate judge,— and would to God Ireland could boast of many such. (Nicholson, 1851: 34)

Asenath Nicholson, a New York philanthropist, travelled throughout Ireland for four years before the Famine and then recorded the events of 1847, the Famine's worst year, which she witnessed first-hand. Nicholson's tours of Ireland revealed to her the extreme suffering of Irish families as she distributed funds from Americans and corresponded with Americans to relieve the plight of the Irish poor. Her letters worked

to help the Americans understand the Irish emigrants who appeared on their shores during the Famine years. Nicholson's travel writing focuses on both on the economic and political conditions of the Famine as a neutral observer. She visited the cabins of the dying and mingled with the women and children and assisted the emaciated Irish, helping to provide the starving with soup. Her experience of the Irish was that they accepted their fate and she recorded no instances of theft or social crimes. Her focus is on the family. The opening quotation details the experience of a widow and her famished children and Nicholson records how, on this occasion, the woman was assisted by a compassionate judge. Others do not fare so well:

> It is expected that mothers will suffer, and even die for their famishing little ones, if needful; but to see children suffer for one another was magnanimity above all. Two little orphan boys, one about nine and the other five, called at the door of a rich widow of my acquaintance, and asked for food. The woman had consumed all her bread at breakfast but a small piece, and giving this to the eldest, she said, "You must divide this with your little brother; I have no more." She looked after them unperceived, and saw them stop, when the eldest said, "Here, Johnny, you are littler than I, and cannot bear the hunger so well, and you shall have it all." They were both houseless orphans and starving with hunger. (Nicholson, 1851: 120)

Against this background of extreme starvation Nicholson records how "[t]he people of Dublin, among the comfortable classes, whatever hospitality they might manifest toward guests and visitors, had never troubled themselves by looking into the real home wants of the suffering poor" (Nicholson, 1851: 51). She identifies the "comfortable classes" as unresponsive to the plight of the starving (51).

On another occasion she describes how responsibility rested with a child, demonstrating the strength of the familial bonds:

> I have fed a little boy, once a day, whose parents and brothers and sisters are dead, with the exception of one little sister. The boy is seven years old, the sister five." They were told they must make application to the poor-house, at Castlebar, which was ten Irish miles away. One cold rainy day in November, this boy took his little sister by the hand, and faint with hunger, set off for Castlebar. And now, reader, if you will, follow these little bare-footed, bare-headed Connaught orphans through a muddy road of ten miles, in a rainy day, without food, and see them at the workhouse, late at night. The doors are closed—at last, they succeed in being heard. The girl is received, the boy sent away—no room for him—he made his way back to Newport the next morning, and had lived by crawling into any place he could at night, and once a day called at the door of my friend who fed him. (Nicholson, 1851: 120-1)

Nicholson is detailed on the fate of those who have died: "in a lone bog … those who had died by famine and pestilence were buried, like dogs, unshrouded and uncoffined" (Nicholson, 1851: 126-7). Nicholson describes how

> [w]e have often seen an ass passing our window carrying a corpse, wound about with some old remnant of a blanket or sheet; and thus, flung across its back, a father or mother, wife or husband, was carried to the grave. Sometimes, when the corpse was a little child, or it might be more than one, they were put into a couple of baskets, and thus balanced upon the sides of the ass, this melancholy

> hearse proceeded on without a friend to follow it, but the one who was guiding the beast. (Nicholson, 1851: 140)

Nicholson describes the desperation of one woman who wanted to bury her husband with dignity:

> One Sabbath, when I was in Erris, the day was so stormy that the church service was suspended. A barefooted woman, who one year before had called to sell milk and kept a fine dairy, came into the house where I was, and calling me by name, said: "Will ye give me something to buy a coffin to put on my husband; he died yesterday on me, and it would be a pity to put him in the ground without a board, and he is so swelled, ma'am, not a ha'porth of his legs or belly but is ready to burst, and but a fivepence-halfpenny could I gather, and the little boys are ashamed to go out and ask the charity for him". (141)

Nicholson's first-hand account is a powerful testimony to the plight of families. She calls on the aristocracy of Britain to make reparation for crimes committed in Ireland. Both the Irish landlords and the imperial aristocracy and political classes contributed to the suffering of the Irish family and compounded the consequences of the Famine with poor administration of relief and the brutality of administrators and relief officers: "If the aristocracy of the United Kingdom have heaped evils unnumbered upon Ireland, why should not the people of the United Kingdom make ample restitution?" (Nicholson, 1851:274). As Matthew Schultz states:

> There is, however, a bitter argument over the attribution of blame, which has continued to rage since the late nineteenth century. Arguments have largely played out in historical representations of the Famine, which typically adhere

> to one of two ideological perspectives: the Irish nationalist argument that British mismanagement of the potato blight caused the Famine, and the British loyalist argument that Ireland's underdeveloped social and economic structures simply collapsed when one-third of the population's only food source was destroyed by disease. (Schultz, 2012)

My thesis challenges the conventional thought of simply blaming the colonizer, arguing through focusing on Joseph O'Connor's *Star of the Sea*, that the situation was complex. In his novel O'Connor also holds the Irish landlords to account for their responsibility for the Famine. O'Connor notes:

> One of *Star of the Sea*'s intentions is to reassess the culpability, and redistribute the blame. "In my own childhood, the Famine was all the fault of the English. As recently as 1997, Tony Blair issued an official apology to the people of Ireland," says O'Connor. "When you look at it closely, you see how little the wealthy and powerful Irish did to protect the poor. The people who benefited most, economically, were the merchant class and slightly wealthier farmers. Vast fortunes were made out of the Irish Famine, almost invariably by Irish people who shut up and joined the chorus of anglophobia". (*Joseph O'Connor*, 2003)

He adds that "some English people were humanitarian friends of the Irish, while some of the Irish – usually the wealthy ones – did absolutely nothing to alleviate the plight of the starving" (cited in Fegan, 2011: 7).

In another interview O'Connor states:

> Up as far as the 1970s, the famine was taught in schools in Ireland through the

> prism of Irish nationalism. It is dealt with in an Anglophobic and in a very nationalistic way. We were the victims. They, the English, were the enemies. We were all supposed to share this victimhood equally. It was a way of telling us boys and girls how we were supposed to view Ireland. But if you scratch beneath the surface the history is much more complicated. The people who died in the famine were the poor. The wealthy, the Irish landlords and the rich farmers, did nothing to help them. In fact if you look at most of the charitable work, it was often done by English people, such as the Quakers. (cited in Croft et al., 2004)

The Famine is and remains a defining moment in Irish history and one that changed the destiny of families. "The Great Famine is often referred to as the most haunting event in modern Irish history" (Schultz, 2012). An estimated four million people died or emigrated, mostly to America. Emigration, as O'Connor observes, "became a tradition in Ireland, not just a phenomenon, but actually a way of life" (Cited in Fegan, 2011: 2). Christine Kinealy calls the Famine the "defining event in the history of modern Ireland" (1997: 1). She notes: "Between 1846 and 1851, at least one million people died out of a base population of over eight million people" (Kinealy, 1997: 2). Clíona Ó Gallchoir explains why Irish famine is considered "the defining event of nineteenth-century Ireland" (Gallchoir, 2013: 345). It is

> because afterwards, everything changed: the population fell sharply; emigration surged; farming and landholding practices changed; the Catholic church became increasingly well organised and influential; political attitudes hardened; the Irish language declined to the point of what seemed inevitable extinction, and the landlord-tenant system, for reasons both political and

economic, was irretrievably damaged and weakened. (Ó Gallchoir, 2013: 345)

Kinealy observes how the population of Ireland never recovered. Writing at the end of the twentieth century Kinealy argues that "[p]sychologically, it is only beginning to be recognized that the scars left by this tragedy have been deep" (1997: 2). In an interview O'Connor observes:

> It's notable when you look at contemporaneous, eyewitness accounts of the Famine how very often the language of wordlessness features. ("I can't describe what I saw," "language fails me," et cetera.) And subsequent writers have felt similarly dumbfounded by the sheer biblical scale of the disaster. One in ten of the entire Irish population died. Whole districts were emptied, almost overnight. Populous villages and settlements simply disappeared from the landscape. How to put the immensity of such a cataclysm into words? And how do you do it in such a way that the reader will maintain engagement and not be exhausted by endless descriptions of suffering, which, no matter how accurate to the historical verities, must be numbing to read? It's a problem contemporary journalists face when writing or broadcasting about, for example, disasters in the developing world: we are so inured to images of suffering that the greater the attempt to describe it, the more anesthetized we become. And this is a major paradox through which the would-be writer about the Irish Famine must negotiate a viable path. Otherwise nobody would read the story, and the silence would therefore be allowed to continue. (Estevez-Saa & O'Connor, 2005: 164)

Nicholson provides an excoriating account of the Irish Famine which she witnessed first-hand and she often lapses into silence as she is overwhelmed by what she has seen. She gives important testimony in her own right but also her text is one

of the key underpinning resources for O'Connor's Famine novel. The Famine background of O'Connor's novel draws on Nicholson's eyewitness testimony. O'Connor obtained a degree in history as noted in an interview with Robert Birnbaum (n.d). Similar to Baha Taher, who does not consider *Sunset Oasis* as an historical text, O'Connor also dislikes to view his novel as an historical one. As O'Connor states:

> I would hate *Star of the Sea* to be seen as an historical novel; rather it's a novel that happens to be set at a particular time. I did a huge amount of research. I must have read every single first-person account that exists. Of course this is a novel, I don't want people to think it's like a history textbook, but it's important to get the background accurate. This was a huge and traumatic event and it was real people who suffered and died. I didn't want to lose sight of that fact. (cited in Croft et al., 2004)

As Terry Eagleton observes, "In this self-consciously epic work, O'Connor mixes gothic and picaresque, history and biography, thriller and adventure story, to recreate all the sprawling diversity of high-Victorian fiction" (Eagleton, 2003). Like Nicholson's emphasis on the suffering of families, O'Connor focuses on the plight of interconnected families revealing layers of victimization in a period of extreme social distress, made worse by social and political powers. Despite the immediacy and power of her vision of a ravaged Ireland, Nicholson's writings have only recently received critical attention, with her work recovered by the historian Maureen Murphy in 1998. Indeed, O'Connor's drawing on Nicholson's writings has helped the recovery of this important historical voice and at the same time his novel provides a view of the Famine that is multi-layered and complex.

While the focus of this chapter is on O'Connor's novel, my reading uncovers how O'Connor draws on Nicholson for portraits of some of his characters. O'Connor

produces a Gothic fiction just as Nicholson writes in a Gothic mode to describe the extreme conditions of Ireland. As Julian Moynahan argues, "nineteenth-century Ireland was an impressive candidate for Gothic treatment. The country was in fact sometimes seen as a sort of living Gothic, or agonized Gothic romance that had turned real" (1995: 111). With its coffin ships, workhouses, extreme destitution and disease and layers of victimization O'Connor's neo-historical novel of the Irish Famine works within a Gothic mode. Here we see the abusers and the abused, the suppressors and the suppressed, betrayal, prostitution, adultery and incest. The novel engages with *Wuthering Heights* which David Merridith reads and O'Connor draws on the novel for the story of the love triangle, the blighted (incestuous lovers) as well as revenge plots (Fegan, 2011: 332). "O'Connor's novel which attempts to recover the 'slow, painful unrecorded deaths of those who meant nothing to their lords' also questions the Anglo-centric bias of Victorian literature and its appropriation of marginalized viewpoints and silenced histories" (Fegan, 2011: 332). O'Connor observes: "I like stories that aren't afraid to take a big bite at experience. So while *Star of the Sea* is absolutely not an attempt to reproduce a nineteenth-century novel, I'd be pleased if it had some of that capacious spirit and sense of liveliness" (Estevez-Saa & O'Connor, 2005: 169).

In *Star of the Sea*, the story is told by Grantley Dixon, the American reporter of the New York Times, who begins the narrative at the present moment aboard the ship in November in 1847 and visits the characters' past using newspaper clippings, interviews with the main characters, reports on them and their relatives, advertisements, logs told by the captain of Star of the Sea. The novel provides a straightforward chronological narrative describing each day of the twenty-six-day voyage that started on the 8th of November, 1847.

In O'Connor's novel "historical sources interplay with fictional creations in

ways that generate harmonies and disjunctions that allow the reader to get a broad, complex understanding of the period" (O'Malley, 2015: 136). The landscape reveals graves and pits, with the dead barely buried, in which a father kills his child before taking his own life and a ship on which many die before reaching America. "Famine is aboard the ship [Star of the Sea], and its presence exposes the various ways in which different classes of Irish emigrants were affected by, and dealt with, its wide-ranging and farreaching consequences: displacement, starvation, and death" (Schultz, 2012). Moreover, Terry Eagleton describes Star of the Sea as "a microcosm of Irish society, the place where a number of different narratives converge, as they do in a piece of fiction" (Eagleton, 2003). Furthermore Caroline Moore comments on the coffin ship Star of the Sea: it "is a claustrophobically enclosed world, which naturally tautens narrative, intensifies relationships, and sparks gripping fiction" (Moore, 2003). All of these emigrants aboard the coffin ship are haunted by "the spectre of the Famine" (*Joseph O'Connor*, 2003). The Big House is a place of secrets and lies. O'Connor's terrain is the Gothic. Here a victimized woman, Mary Duane, is abused by her half-brother, David Merridith, and her brother-in-law and former lover, Pius Mulvey, and here the sins of the past return to haunt. The chapter focuses on the interconnected lives of characters blighted by the Famine and by the social conditions of Ireland in the 1840s: the criminal Pius Mulvey, the landlord David Merridith and the woman they both love and destroy, Mary Duane. This chapter examines the family within the colonial matrix.

**Pius Mulvey: Destroyer and Destroyed**

Pius Mulvey is the central character of *Star of the Sea* and the exemplary figure of a troubled Irish man undergoing the repercussions of famine and starvation. Pius comes from Connemara in County Galway whose poor people are described as "white

Ethiopians of the Dickensian world" and the Irish in general as "the blacks of Europe" (O'Connor, n.d.). Pius embodies the psychological impact of famine. Regardless of the dire starvation in Ireland, Pius initially lives happily with his family and his brother Nicholas and enjoys the warmth of his loving and sacrificing parents. His parents are tenant farmers on the estate of the cruel Irish local landlord Commander Henry Blake of Tully. Following the death of his parents, he experiences horrific circumstances and abject poverty. Subsequently, the turbulent political and social situation in Ireland impinges on his fraternal relationship. Pius's relationship with Nicholas experiences fluctuations of nearness and remoteness since they have been children until the relationship collapsed altogether in 1844. Pius becomes both an abuser and abused, an oppressor and oppressed in tandem in a Fanonian manner: the colonial project "is the bringer of violence into the home and into the mind of the native" (Fanon, 1963: 38). Like a ghost, he haunts others' lives and completely destroys them. Justine McCarthy points out that when he later becomes imprisoned in London, "[h]e becomes known as the Monster of Newgate, evoking memories of Punch magazine's Irish Yahoo, "a creature manifestly between the gorilla and the Negro"" (McCarthy, 2002). Pius's survival instinct is paramount to him. Pius, when very young, falls in love with a dark-eyed girl called Mary Duane from his village Carna. He loves her dearly, but he loves himself more. Out of cowardice and selfishness, he prioritizes his life and safety and in consequence chooses to abandon her. He leaves Mary pregnant and flees to Belfast then to England in order to evade starvation. Rather than staying with Mary to raise their child and encounter famine together, Pius fails her. The disappointment emanating from a close individual is more painful than that from a stranger as shown by Melissa Fegan: "Landlords and governments might have been expected to abandon and neglect, but the failure of neighbours, friends and family members to help each other was still more shocking" (2011: 4). He only returns to attempt to reclaim the

child after thirteen years. The child, however, has died. By fleeing, Pius surrenders to selfishness and cowardice and opts to shirk responsibility to escape. For the rest of his life, he suffers the sins of the past and pays for them heavily: he forfeits the peace of his mind and heart and remains harassed and uncomfortable throughout the novel. During his years of exile he is haunted by the memory of the child he has abandoned.

First of all, the first signs of the troubled relationship between himself and his brother superficially emerged when they appeared very young children in consequence of the way they were brought up and the physical and mental differences between them. Inadvertently their mother Elizabeth Costello sowed the seeds of the dispute between the two brothers, and the crop became ready to harvest shortly after her death: Nicholas "battled with his sibling for the greater part of their mother's love, and the principal weapon was the ability to read" (O'Connor, 2002: 86). Costello was in the first place a foundling child of Irish Catholic refugees and was brought up by the nuns who taught her the skill of reading and made her appreciate its importance. She passes the love of reading to her two children and teaches them the significance of reading: she considers it to be a sign of decency. However, Sangwook Kim points out:

> Pius Mulvey's literacy, a legacy of his mother, ironically accelerates his detachment from communal values, whose instances are his desertion of Mary Duane and his manipulation of the public mind by inventing ballads tailored to public tastes for his bardic purpose for money. (2017: 60)

Though one year younger than Nicholas, Pius Mulvey appears as the precocious child of the family as he inherits his mother's intelligence. Nicholas on the other hand is less intelligent: he used to take hours to master what Pius could do in minutes. However, Nicholas obtains his father Michael Dennis Mulvey's

determination and consequently perseveres by spending the long hours improving his vocabulary, grammar and pronunciation until he becomes closer to Pius's level and sometimes surpasses him. Nicholas is physically "stronger, better looking and far more likeable" "with an eldest child's sense of fussy protectiveness, which waged constant war with his eldest child's dread of being quietly superseded" (O'Connor, 2002: 86). They are conscious of the differences between them as these differences can be distancing or inviting to their mother's love. As children, instead of showing love and strong fraternal attachment, they compete with each other to impress their mother, as if they were students, not siblings. The competitive nature of their upbringing incrementally undermines their attachment to each other.

The death of their parents, however, brings them closer to each other for a short time. Pius finds in Nicholas a sanctuary from the cruel world outside, particularly following the death of his mother. Pius and Nicholas experience the tight grip of hunger and simultaneously work so hard all day in their father's rented farm, possessed by Commander Blake. They fail to pay the accumulated back rents for months because what they gain from the farm is so insufficient. These severe tensions increase warmth between them and strengthen their relationship. To cover the rent and survive eviction, the brothers find themselves compelled to pawn the few pieces of furniture of the cottage - a painful decision to abandon possessions reminiscent of their parents. However, they keep their parents' bed and sleep together in it in an empty cabin save for their increasing fraternal affections and the extensive memories of their parents. They compete with each other to pretend that they have no appetite for the food so that the other person can eat it – a sign underlining reciprocated love and eagerness of sacrifice. Nicholson describes such scenes of deprivation and sacrifice in her travels through Ireland. Nicholas succumbs to the symptoms of starvation and mostly appears

weak, and Pius stays by his side and nurses him. One day Nicholas is at the pinnacle of a starvation-induced fit of madness, an advanced stage of the impact of starvation on the mentality and psychology of the starving individual, as noted in Nicholson's *Annals of the Famine in Ireland*. Nicholson describes the stages of starvation experienced by the victims of Irish famine:

> [T]o those who have never watched the progress of protracted hunger, it might be proper to say, that persons will live for months, and pass through different stages, and life will struggle on to maintain her lawful hold, if occasional scanty supplies are given, till the walking skeleton is reduced to a state of inanity—he sees you not, he heeds you not, neither does he beg. The first stage is somewhat clamorous—will not easily be put off; the next is patient, passive stupidity; and the last is idiocy. (1851: 37-8)

Nicholas savagely scourges his back with a horse-flail. At this appalling sight Pius does not stand idly by: "Tendrils of his brother's flesh were attached to its thongs, and he shakingly threw it into the fire" (O'Connor, 2002: 102). He eliminates the tool of torture and rescues his brother. Pius moreover hides the news of receiving the final notice of eviction from his brother, fearing to madden his brother again – another demonstration of care and attention. Another instance is shown when Nicholas decides to join the seminary to become a priest. Pius seeks to dissuade him from his decision: "Don't leave me here, Nicholas. I can't stick it here alone. At least wait till the spring comes" (O'Connor, 2002: 104). This asserts Pius's desperate need for his brother and the burning loneliness shrouding him. The situation is compounded by the fact that both of them are bachelors, and Pius fears the possibility that they might die alone:

> More than poverty and hunger it began to claw at him: the picture of himself and

> his heartbreakingly courageous brother growing old and then dying in that mountainside cabin. Nobody to mourn them or even to notice they were gone. No bedmate, ever, except for each other. (O'Connor, 2002: 87)

However, the lack of a wife and a child reinforces the sibling bond and makes Pius think of their future with sympathy and seriousness.

The fraternal relationship as shown in this text deteriorates afterwards as a result of injustice, starvation and human failings. Fraternal love and sacrifice disintegrate as the hunger intensifies yielding many devastating circumstances on the familial level. To rescue Mary from her abandonment by his brother and from the shame of pregnancy without a marriage, the righteous Nicholas marries her – a catastrophic milestone in the siblings' relationship. After thirteen years of absence, Pius returned from the dead in September of 1844: he came back to Clifden to find his beloved Mary married to Nicholas – an act igniting loathing and jealousy in his heart. "The thought of her being married to anyone else was unbearable" (O'Connor, 2002: 213). In the beginning, Pius abandons Mary of his own accord, and some years later he changes his mind and decides to return to her. This ambivalence towards Mary is what Sangwook Kim refers to as "a psychopathological symptom coming from attachment disorder due to the loss of mother in the early period of [his] life and resulting to personalityproblem in [his] later period of life" (Kim, 2017: 58). At that moment, he already reaches a very advanced level of violence and adopts inhumane behaviour as a result of the thirteen-year-period of camouflage, theft, deceit, robbing and murder in Belfast, Scotland and England. Trained in violence in England he wreaks violence on his brother and Mary. In England, he kills Moloch, the Scottish guard in Newgate Gaol where he has been an inmate. Despite the fact that his Welsh friend the school teacher William Swales has shown great compassion and sympathy with the Irish and spent

nineteen days travelling with Pius, Pius murders him in order to appropriate his position as a schoolteacher at the village of Kirkstall. Though extremely weak and crippled, Pius gathers all his strength to kill Swales: he beats his head with a branch of an oak. Thomas O'Neill Russell interprets this profound and complex level of betrayal:

> Hunger and wrongs turn people soon into beasts; . . . men who might have been thought incapable of any cruelty, actually trampled down and walked over feeble women and children in their eager haste to secure the food which was thrown at them by brutes in the shape of men. (Russell 1860: 166-167)

As Clíona Ó Gallchoir notes, Pius's

> two acts of murder illustrate both the strength of his desire for autonomy and the extent to which the poor struggled against what seemed overwhelming circumstances: 'No other choice was the phrase in his mind' (214). However brutal Pius's choices are, he is characterized by the determination (and ability) to make choices. (Gallchoir, 2013: 356)

Following this massive detachment from home and his hideous crimes and heinous imprisonment in London, Pius becomes psychologically tortured and stone-hearted. Therefore, in the wake of his return, he is ready for violence and the Irish situation as well as his discovery of the marriage of his former lover to his brother unleashes his brutality. He raids Nicholas's and Mary's lives and tortures them by first claiming his portion of his father's land, out of revenge. He builds a cabin for himself on the land. He harasses them with his hateful looks every time they leave their cabin. Maliciously staring, he terrorizes not only Nicholas and Mary, but also their infant

daughter Alice-Mary. Moreover he intimidates them by looking in through their cabin windows. The desire for revenge inflates Pius's veins to the extent that he exterminates their sole source of living: he ruthlessly kills their cow and ruins their potato bed. More shockingly, he sends a letter to Commander Blake telling him that he will pay him a higher rent for the whole property, resulting in Blake evicting Nicholas's family. Fegan notes that "Mulvey has murdered two men in England, but his worst crime is his betrayal of his brother. To take the land of an evicted neighbour was a heinous enough offence in Ireland, where possession of land meant life, but Mulvey has taken his own brother's land" (2011: 334). This situation contrasts strikingly with the one in which Pius beseeches Nicholas not to leave him following Nicholas's decision to join the seminary. Mary Duane states:

> [W]e were evicted by cmndr blakes agent in Ottober 1845 for not paying of the rent, a driver-man came down from Galway with fifteen peelers to bate us out of it. they bet my husband in front of myself and his own child while his brother watched. (O'Connor, 2002: 270)

The sight of seeing his brother being evicted and beaten fails to quench his vengefulness: he laughs as if he was watching an archenemy being beaten, not a brother with whom he cried and shared concerns. In an attempt to persuade Commander Blake to reconsider his decision of the eviction, the worn-out Nicholas walked on foot for three days in the bitter winter of 1845 from Clifden in County Galway to Delphi at Bundorragha in County Mayo. His strenuous journey was doomed to failure as he was driven away from Blake's mansion and threatened to be killed – an act of agonizing humiliation and suffering brought on by his own sibling. In

consequence of this traumatizing journey and in an attempt to rescue his daughter from the pains of famishment, he commits infanticide and suicide by drowning: the "religiously inclined" Nicholas is driven to become an abuser by his brother Pius (O'Connor, 2002: 86). Pius's jealousy and selfishness including his experience with destitution in London turn him into a callous abuser and accordingly he demolishes his brother's family and undoes its tight-knitted bonds. This demonstrates how famine brings about "the horrific destruction of social relations" (Fegan, 2011: 3). Like Heathcliff he comes back to destroy and he also enacts his vengeance by taking land and destroying a family.

Various paradoxes converge in the complicated character of Pius. Though appearing callous, traces of mercy lurk in the depths of his heart and occasionally emerge. For example, while Pius works as a schoolmaster of students aging "from five to eleven", he shows sympathy with the students, in particular with the poorest among them because he has experienced destitution (O'Connor, 2002: 211). He never punishes them for not doing their assignments: "he never used the cane that hung on the schoolhouse wall and one night he snapped it and threw it into the little pot-bellied stove" (212). Another example is demonstrated when he is charged with the assassination of David Merridith. He implores the Irishmen to relieve him of the task because the victim has children: "The man has children", Pius observes (28). Assaulting children according to Pius is a monstrous and unforgivable sin. Aboard the ship, though wielding a knife and ready to attack the child in his cabin, Pius never attacks David's child Robert: "He could not bring himself to do it. No question of morality but of visceral disgust", in sharp contrast to the killings and aggression he has committed earlier (279). His heart fails to stand the sights of the emaciated children, women and men on Star of the Sea, so he resorts to sleeping during the day and staying

up all night to avoid seeing them. Though socially located in steerage, he differs in education from steerage voyagers: "he had the vocabulary of a scholar and was certainly literate, which many of those in steerage were not" (284). Regardless of his shabby appearance and ash-coloured clothes and shortage of water in steerage, he cares about his looks: "he was more careful than many in his habits and was frequently observed to use half his water ration to wash his comically tangled hair, as meticulous as any débutante preparing for a ball" (270). Furthermore, at one point he spends his share from pickpocketing on clothes, unlike other criminals spending their money on whoring and drinking, particularly in London's East End. Another striking contradiction in Pius's personality is represented following the murder of his Welsh friend:

> He buried William Swales in a pit he scraped out of the forest floor; covered him with branches and broken bracken; filled in the grave as respectfully as possible and wept for the only man in England who had ever shown him a kindness that was totally uncomplicated. (211)

While starving people in Ireland of 1840s struggled to find a decent place to bury the bodies of their beloved relatives as noted in *Annals of the Famine in Ireland*, Pius Mulvey, the murderer, scraped out a pit for the betrayed William Swales in order to bury him. He also did not leave the pit bare: he covered it with branches in an attempt to observe the dignity of the murdered friend. Shedding tears for the friend following the crime calls attention to the considerable paradoxes in Pius.

Though full of paradoxes, Pius draws on his intelligence and resourcefulness

in order to survive the ordeals he encounters on his journey to his doom, to abuse others and to secure his life. For example, he joins a travelling circus and enacts his geometrical and engineering faculties to set up and dismantle the circus tents. He relies on his power of logic and quick-wittedness to handle the various and mostly serious situations where indecisiveness in taking a rational decision can be fatal. By landing this job, he gains sufficient money for living decently. He grapples with predicaments where he desperately needs to assume many identities and go by many aliases. As argued by Sangwook Kim:

> His name change for his life foreshadows the fate of every Irish emigrant who keeps in his heart the two contrary emotional orientations towards his home country: at once his desire to be attached to an Irish identity and his emotional need to be detached from it. (2017: 60)

He appears as a "convertite African" to gain money from compassionate onlookers (O'Connor, 2002: 188). For two years in Whitechapel and the East End, he is Frederick Hall, and on the coffin ship, he introduces himself as William Swales. Sometimes he claims he is a soldier who has fought against France, a miner who has survived an awful explosion, a widower with seven famished children and a shop owner whose greedy partner has cheated him. As Aidan O'Malley argues, "A man with many names is also, perhaps, a man with no identity, and we learn at the novel's conclusion that Pius dies in New York and is buried in an unmarked grave in a site known as "Traitor's Acre" (O'Connor 2003: 401)" (O'Malley, 2015: 143). His experience with starvation during the long journeys between Ireland and Britain sharpens his shrewdness. At one

point Pius poses a direct threat to the beggars of London by dominating the market of beggary. In consequence, they report him to the police, and he is sentenced to seven years with hard labour in the notorious prison Newgate Gaol in London, "a den of legal sadism" as portrayed by James Kincaid (2003). Pius is infused with loathing for his incarceration and obsessed with a potent desire to escape, particularly as an Irish farmer who is accustomed to liberty and open lands: he is used to combing the fields from dawn to dusk. Pius enacts his acumen and patience to overcome the ghost of the dark dens and the savage warders and guards. He endures the burning of flogging, demonstrates patience and works hard to achieve his goals. By so doing, he ingratiates himself with the Governor of Newgate and the guards: he knows the news of his patience and good reputation will spread rapidly. As signs of loyalty, he reports about other inmates who are recently released to the guards from time to time so that he will not rouse suspicion and ensures appreciation for his cooperation – an evident sign of cunning. They grant him a privilege: they allow him to tidy the yard of the prison where he studies the place for two months to find a way of escape. This signals his substantial patience. He applies his detective and geometrical powers to probe a twenty-foot wall whose top is covered with spikes. He mentally divides the wall into sixteen sections and memorizes them: he depends on his memory and attentivenessto escape and ultimately succeeds. Furthermore, on Star of the Sea, he carries out the plot of murder he is charged with so intelligently. He is on a mission to kill the Englishman and landlord of Kingscourt in Connemara, David Merridith. Being destitute and a vagabond, Pius is placed in steerage whereas his first-class victim lodges the upper deck. Despite the fact that his poverty and inferiority form an obstacle to reach his victim, he harnesses his mental powers to execute his mission. In order to secure closeness to the victim, he slyly tells the victim that he is sent to kill him. Consequently, to reward him for his fake honesty and bogus compunction, Pius is

offered a cabin on the upper deck, an act accentuating Pius's overwhelming power of deviousness.

Regardless of his mental talents, these traits fail to save Pius from serious destruction. Pius experiences highly traumatic events throughout his life commencing at the wake of the loss of his parents. This indicates the salient role of the warmth of the family in maintaining good psychological, emotional and physical health and in facing the hardship of life. Pius's character before his mother's death distinctively contrasts with his character after her death. After her loss, he becomes psychologically lost and destroyed. First of all, the Irish revolutionary group called the Hibernian Defenders or Else-be Liables charge him with the duty of killing the English landlord David Meridith on Star of the Sea because David and his father have evicted them from their lands. Pius has committed the crime of having his brother evicted and he must pay a price for this by murdering David Merridith. These revolutionaries terrorize Pius and threaten to savagely murder him if he fails to assassinate David before arriving to New York Harbour: "You'll watch your own heart getting cut out and burnt" (O'Connor, 2002: 28). After Pius showcases signs of dissatisfaction with their order, they increase the dose of physical assault: they begin "choking, wrenching, tearing at his face" (29). They physically and psychologically scar Pius by using animals as methods of torture:

> One had a mongrel, another a hunter. The yaps, the howls were the worst things to remember: the hot, wet breaths of the starving hounds, the scrape of their claws and the urgings of the men. A clod of gravelled earth was snatched from a ditch and forced into his choking mouth until he gagged. (29)

They gouge him, stone him and spit in his face – significant acts of humiliation deepening his mental wounds. They further terrify him by telling him that he will be watched by their spies aboard the ship and on the quay of New York. Prior to this attack, Pius dreams of fleeing Ireland to pursue his dreams in the Promised Land of America. However, following the assault, Pius's dream evaporates: Pius finds himself trapped in a highly complicated dilemma from which escape is unattainable. Theses Irishmen traumatize their victim Pius by leaving lifelong wounds on his skin in order to remind him of his duty and shatter his sense of security: "a large scar 'shaped like a heart with a H in it' had been slashed across Pius's chest and upper abdominal area" - the slogan of the Hibernian Defenders (294). This hinders any hope of surviving the trauma.

Pius is re-traumatized aboard the ship and experiences ongoing stress and violence. One day he sees the slogan of the Defender drawn on the wheelhouse - an unequivocal emphasis of the seriousness of their threat. He also finds an envelope with his initial M written on it, and the letter reads: "GET HIM RIGHT SUNE Els Be lybill" – an act adding to Pius's anxiety and lack of security as he is repetitively haunted and traced by the Irish revolutionaries (357). Alongside the miserable situation of the rat-infested steerage, Pius experiences bullying by a member of the Defenders in steerage called Shaymus Meadowes. This troublemaker intimidates the vulnerable Pius and accuses him of a theft taking place in steerage and reminds him of his scandalous act against his brother Nicholas: "Lick the filth off my boots,' Meadowes ordered, and his wretched victim commenced to do so" (220). By so doing, Meadowes agitates the steerage voyagers to wreak havoc on Pius. "His teeth had been chipped in the beating in steerage; every time he slept they ground against his tongue" (277). In addition to the large scar formed like the slogan of the Defenders on Pius's chest, the chipped

teeth function as a perpetual reminder of torment. Upon their arrival to the quay in New York, Pius is further traumatized physically and mentally by the news of some Irishmen enquiring about his wellbeing, knowing for certain they belong to the Else-be Liables. "The news was imparted to try to reassure him; but he did not appear reassured at all. Moreover he was said to have grown very pale, and moments later to have become physically ill" (356).

Pius undergoes another extreme form of violence. Upon his arrival as an inmate to Newgate Gaol and before placing him in his cell, they tie Pius to a chair and force him to drink saltpetre by using a funnel in order to "quell [his] natural desires" – a systematic attack against humanity carried out in that notorious prison adding to his mental wounds (190). They lodge him in a cell that is "a seven-foot cube with an opaque leaded window the size of a handkerchief" (190). Moreover, the den lacks hygiene: the mice scamper across his feet. This solitary confinement exacerbates the destruction of Pius's mental health because he is deprived of any social interaction. The severity of the punishment if a person talks while carrying out hard labour is horrendous: fifty lashes for every word uttered. The Scottish warder scourges Pius two hundred lashes for saying "I didn't hear you" to the extent that his flesh is flailed off him (192). The Scottish warder Moloch rapes Pius twice and makes him live under constant threat of castration. This extreme undeserved punishment braces him to enter the world of criminality and foreshadows his involvement in aggression and assault. Paul C Holinger points out:

> The evidence shows that physical punishment is stunningly deleterious at every developmental level. Meta-analyses of hundreds of studies document that physical punishment is associated with: verbal and physical aggression;

> delinquent, antisocial, and criminal behavior; poorer quality of parent-child relationships; impaired mental health; and later abuse of one's own spouse and children. (2011)

As Sharon Shalev states, “Research demonstrates that solitary confinement has a negative impact on the health and well-being of those subjected to it, especially for a prolonged time” (2014: 27). “Solitary confinement,” she adds, "can affect rehabilitation efforts and former prisoners’ chances of successful reintegration into society following their release” (Shalev, 2014: 27). This explains his violence against the two men he has killed and against his brother after his release. Kevin Bennett suggests:

> [T]he threats to mental health posed by prison confinement and, more generally, risk factors associated with living in physical spaces that promote social detachment. Among them are hypersensitivity to external stimuli, hallucinations, anxiety, panic attacks, memory deficiencies, concentration issues, paranoia and impulse control. (2018)

This applies to Pius aboard the ship, following his imprisonment: “Frequently he had a look of bewilderment or foreboding” (O’Connor, 2002: 133). Furthermore, on the ship he is characterized by “the perpetually frightened watchfulness of the abused child” and by shunning the sailors and night-stragglers (138). Pius is dispossessed of his identity: it is abased and obliterated. He is ordered to wear a black leather mask while performing hard labour. All the inmates’ black leather masked faces are equal: they are featureless.

Following his escape from Newgate, Pius experiences the ultimate level of harm

and violence. Though paid well in his job as an engineer working with the travelling circus, Pius is haunted by the ghost of unfortunate luck since he departs from Ireland: the happy moments in his life are doomed to disappear. “He was bitten by a lion and lost the greater part of his left foot” while dismantling a cage (204). Unwanted and incapacitated, Pius is deprived of this profitable work and of any future chance of decent work – an indication of his doomed future. This distorted foot adds another layer to his indelible scars obtained earlier. Similar to his brother, Pius dies in the bitter snowy winter of December, corresponding with the death circumstances of Nicholas. In contrast to the phrase: “the Promised Land”, America, for Pius, proves to be the land of doom. He experiences highly horrific forms of homelessness and despair (375). James Kincaid observes that “in a nasty twist, the promised land that awaits these "frightened strangers" offers yet more cruelty and death. Their ship is quarantined in New York Harbor, and many of the steerage passengers are permitted to die there of cold and starvation as New Yorkers, fearful of contagion, seek to save their own skins” (2003). Begging for bread crumbs, he is avoided by people, attacked constantly and sleeps in the street – a parallel situation to that of his brother when dismissed by Commander Blake and forced to sleep on the roads following the eviction caused by Pius. Violence culminates at the moment of his death: Pius is “knifed to pieces in a Brooklyn alleyway near the corner of Water Street and Hudson Avenue, in the ragged Irish shanty town of Vinegar Hill” (O’Connor, 2002: 390). Moreover, “Prior to death he had been tortured and horribly disfigured. It was reported by the City Coroner who examined the remains that the heart had been cut out and flung in the gutter, probably while the victim was still alive” (390). The technique of murdering, cutting his heart out, and the location of the crime, an Irish town in America, suggest that the Irish Defenders are his killers. These revolutionaries earlier threaten him to cut his heart out. The brutality of his assassination chimes with the way Pius has murdered his

flogging Scottish warder Moloch:

> Mulvey began beating him hard with the rock, pummelling him in the face until his cheekbones collapsed and his left eye burst open like a shattered egg. He tried to call out and Mulvey stepped on his neck, grinding his foot as though crushing a snake. He began to gurgle and whisper for mercy. It was tempting not to give it to him, to let him suffer before death. (O'Connor, 2002: 198)

The violence-ridden Pius experiences dramatic and overpowering levels of aggression in consequence of the oppression he enacts against others. In Ireland Pius experiences the torment of starvation, in England he remains strikingly valueless and in America nobody is charged with his assassination: his life is meaningless. He also vanishes from the community memory: nobody remembers the location of his grave – a rapid evaporation from physical and mental existence. However, Pius is commemorated by erecting a statue inspired by his character in the Toronto Park in 2007. Pius subscribes to Fanon's identification of the oppressed who becomes the oppressor. We see this in *Wuthering Heights.* "Brontë was of course half-Irish herself, and Heathcliff, in as much as he might be "any kind of alien" found on the streets of Liverpool, is "quite possibly Irish" as well (Eagleton 1995: 3)" (Fegan, 2011: 12). A version of Heathcliff, Pius returns as a vengeful revenant enacting his anger on those he has loved. Pius's story also reveals the layers of oppression as Pius's crimes come back to haunt him by the secret society who force him to commit the crime against David Merridith.

Fig. 3. The statue of Pius Mulvey in Toronto Park, 2007 (Hiking the GTA, 2018)

**David Merridith: Failed Landlord, Failed Father and Failed Husband**

Another central character in *Star of the Sea* is Lord David Merridith who exemplifies how the colonizer pays heavily for his enmeshment in the imperial project. As Kate Ayers observes, David is "a product of his past and his choices, as indeed we all are" (Ayers, 2011). Though not cruel with his tenants and attempting to work for their welfare, David Merridith is punished by the Hibernian Defenders for his father's and the Empire's sins. As a result of the political tensions in Ireland, his upbringing as well as the natural disaster of the Famine, David's life is destroyed physically, socially and morally. In consequence of the pressures imposed on him being an English landlord residing in Ireland, David's relationship with his wife, children and father severely deteriorates. This indicates that alongside the colonized, the colonizers reap serious repercussions on their lives and families.

Being a youngster in a mansion in Ireland and an English landlord's son intensifies the difficulties around him. Fegan observes:

> The family tree from which Merridith's gallows has sprung had been rooted in Ireland around 1650, clearly part of the Cromwellian plantation. Yet to be born in Ireland does not equate to being a "true native"; Merridith's blood, class and religion separate him from his tenants, and complicate his relationship with his homeland. (2011: 328)

The Merridiths are reaping the vengeance of the past: they acquired their lands through Cromwellian plantations. Cromwell looms over Irish history for killing and terrorizing the Irish off their lands. Following a Catholic uprising in Ulster in 1641 which killed hundreds of Protestant settlers, Cromwell drew together a force to subdue Catholic

Ireland conducting massacres at Wexford and Drogheda in 1649. Cromwell's invasion also resulted in famine. Chris Durston notes that "most Englishmen applauded the series of victories won there, 'sensible of the fertility of the soil, the number of cattle, the plenty of corn … the temperature of the climate and the fitness of the place to plant a new colony of English'" (1986: 111). The name of Cromwell resonates through Irish nationalist discourse and still haunts the present.

In *Star of the Sea* David Merridith grows up on an estate that is increasingly in debt and early on develops some psychological issues. He later marries the woman whom he loves and chooses Laura Markham from Sussex. He thinks that this marriage might mitigate the chaos of his life and alleviate his depressive and anxious symptoms. Following his marriage, he enjoys his new life and realizes that the marriage partly instigates a good change in his psychology. On their honeymoon, the newly-weds visit Egypt, Turkey, Morocco, Biarritz, Greece, Rome, Paris, Florence, Constantinople and Venice. They stay in Venice for a while, and Jonathan, their first child, is born there. Laura revives David's bored life in Italy by holding literary evenings where poets, critics and novelists gather and discuss literature. Being the only daughter of a rich family, she fills the house with books, paintings and sculptures. Laura's generous father gifts "a five-and-a-half-year lease on a townhouse on Tite Street in the fashionable borough of Chelsea" to his daughter and son-in-law for their wedding (O'Connor, 2002: 222). She dedicates her life to pleasing her husband and herself by creating an appealing environment. For example, she decorates the ceiling of their bedroom with a fresco she buys from Italy – an aesthetic touch to resuscitate his monotonous life. The literary evenings continue after they return to London: she seeks a purposeful life and works hard to fulfil this goal. She is furthermore a good house wife: she cares about the welfare of her children and the home.

Regardless of Laura's great efforts to maintain the warmth, health and happiness of the family, David is discontented with his marital life: he feels more anxious and disturbed. For David, their marriage seems "like living on a stage set" (226) or "a kind of masquerade" (225). He does not sense the genuineness and sincerity in his marriage. In the wake of their return to London, his personality substantially changes for the worst as the old symptoms of the anxiety and depression of childhood persist. He is also plagued by insomnia and weight loss. His marriage initially improves his psychological health. However, the familial life later contributes more to his mental deterioration. He finds himself unable to be incorporated in Laura's literary evenings: he sometimes leaves the house when she goes to her bedroom. The more he stays in the house with her, the more distress blasts him, and the sole way to escape this tribulation is through escaping to the Thames. "To stand quietly alone on the bank of the Thames – it brought the relief which only water brings" (226). The soothing sounds of the water flow of the river induce immense therapeutic effects on David's wounded psyche. Simultaneously, the white noise the flowing water provides helps excavate the memories deeply rooted in David's life, like those of his old love Mary Duane. However, it is an insufficient and temporary relief because he goes back home and reverts to his troubled mental state. He becomes insufferable and fights with the guests and the waiters. He annoys the servants by focusing on their grammatical mistakes and correcting them. Engaging in arguments and altercations becomes an inseparable part of his character: this argumentative behaviour ignites tensions and distress in the house.

At that moment, he has no connection with his furious father who opposes his marriage with Laura, and his mother Lady Verity is dead. Similar to Pius, David at one point is void of the warmth of his own family that can alleviate the pain in his psyche. He is endowed with a beautiful wife, two healthy sons and a fine house;

nevertheless, he is persistently uneasy and morose. He seeks to bridge the gaps of his vacant life by making unfinished plans and drawing disturbed figures: this reflects his unsettled feelings and his painful experiences. "The scribbled pictures are haunting: the work of a man in torment": he records his agonies in his charcoal drawings (O'Connor, 2002: 229). David is a creative artist, and this is a remarkable feature Laura loves in him. However, being an artist, like David in this work, is associated with psychopathology. "Arnold Ludwig has reported that highly creative individuals are twice as likely to have significant psychopathology as noncreative ones" (Lafayette, 2015: 223). Moreover, "Ludwig has asserted that being mentally ill contributes to the creativity of the artist": this elucidates the reason behind David's artistic talent (Lafayette, 2015: 223). Another examples denoting his artistic side is his plans to build fine and fashionable houses in New York, similar to the style of Connemara houses.

The artist David suffers from insomnia to the extent that he seeks medical advice, and he is advised to take laudanum which aggravates his nightmares. "Opiate tinctures and lozenges were suggested by his apothecary, but still the dreams were fearful dazzlings; exhaustions of images he did not understand" (O'Connor, 2002: 228). As a result, the doctor teaches him how to use a syringe to inject opium as injection is more effective and wards off addiction. Eventually, another physician "prescribe[s] the smoking of hemp to soothe the patient's nerves" (236). As his depression exacerbates, David found an outlet in brothels and adultery in 1841. He frequents the East End of London at night and enjoys watching the women undressing. He knows the place by heart: "He came to know every sidestreet and back lane of Whitechapel as a prisoner would know every brick of his cell" (233). Despite the fact that he is deemed a gentleman and such places are inappropriate for such individuals, he continues to go: this highlights his deep loss and desperate need to escape from his agonizing reality. In lieu of gaining satisfaction and gratification by haunting these

suspicious places, David contracts fatal sexual diseases which inevitably cast a shadow on his marital and familial life. First he develops gonorrhoea on his thirtieth birthday and later syphilis. These self-inflicted diseases exacerbate his suffering. Consequently, he severely suffers from the appalling symptoms induced by syphilis: he begins to lose his vision, develops urinary infection and has grinding pain in his groin. Towards the end of the voyage, he is at the end of the third stage of the four stages of syphilis. As the disease advances in his body, he becomes more prone to the destruction of his "nervous or cardiovascular systems" and "quite severe personality changes" (331). This explains the reason behind the noticeable changes in his behaviour in the wake of his visits to the brothels. Furthermore, his remaining life expectancy is estimated between six months and a year, and he will be admitted to a hospice in New York upon his arrival. David experiences the by-products of his own choices and of the colonial dynamics at large. In the aftermath of receiving the letter of the eviction of Kingscourt from the insurance company, David becomes severely depressed and accordingly haunts the brothels again in Belfast, though vowing not to return to these places following his contraction of gonorrhoea. David resorts to adultery because he considers it as a way of escaping the depressive fits.

In consequence of the dramatic changes in David's psyche, his wife Laura becomes a victim of his mood swings and his adventures in the East End. The pressures in David's life erode his marital bond with Laura. In consequence of his infectious sexual diseases, the physical relationship between them becomes impossible: as David observes, "Our marriage is entirely celibate" (O'Connor, 2002: 333). However, avoiding the physical relationship does not guarantee that Laura is devoid of the diseases: she might already carry syphilis as the latency can exceed a decade. This demonstrates that David likely damages her physical health for the long

run. They start sleeping in separate rooms, and this separation blunts their emotional bonds. David also shatters her confidence by turning her down when approaching him: he makes her feel "a whore for wanting to love him" (147). He never responds to her physical and emotional needs, yet he feels at ease with seclusion and escape. His bad temper is conductive to ending long-term friendship with some of their friends. Therefore, the physical and affective distance between Laura and David increases every day: they exchange "barely a word in months" (229). Once they converse, they get involved in heated arguments: "On one occasion constables came calling at his home, alerted by the neighbours to the sound of a furious argument" (229). The intimate separation is more exacerbated to the extent that he does not care about her absence from the house, even if it is permanent. She tells him that she will take the children to Sussex for a holiday, and David shows no objection. "Viscount Kingscourt told a friend he was unsure if she would return, adding, perhaps truthfully, that he did not care any more" (232). On board the ship, she asks him to divorce her as she is unable to tolerate his indifference. Despite the fact that they are not divorced, their marriage is over. As a result of David neglecting her for a long time, her intimate feelings towards him diminish, and he infects her with indifference. Laura becomes uncaring of his absence or presence: when he sneaks to the brothels, she does not interrogate him about his whereabouts or the reasons.

Another level of the betrayal stands out through David's relationship with their maidservant, Mary Duane, whom he later discovers that she is his half-sister. Before he discovers that, he "almost every night for the last seven months … had come to [Mary's] quarters at midnight to sit on her bed and watch her undress" (O'Connor, 2002: 44). As Fegan points out, "This abuse ends only on Merridith's discovery that Mary is his sister; the revelation that his voyeurism is incestuous shocks him into acknowledging his culpability" (2011: 11). Mary Duane is his childhood sweetheart

and now he likes drawing her undressed, and sometimes when he finds the circumstances impossible to draw her in his mansion, he takes Mary to his travelling friends' house to draw her naked. As well as exploiting the vulnerable maidservant who cannot resist him because she is powerless, David breaks Laura's trust and her sense of security. The betrayal goes beyond the physical infidelity: he also betrays Laura emotionally. Emotional betrayal is damaging. When stealthily going to the Thames, David submerges himself in memories of childhood with Mary. At that point at the river Mary is not their maidservant as he has not seen her since childhood. He used to love her and is still in love with her. Regardless of the absence of Mary's physical presence, he escapes from Laura and goes to Mary through his mind and feelings. While standing on the banks of the river, David listens to the flow of Mary Dunae's memories – the girl whom he was brought up with on the estate of Kingscourt and later loves but is forced to abandon. He contemplates: "She would be twenty-eight now. Her appearance would have changed. Already she might be grey and her face might be wrinkled, for they aged early, the women of Connemara: the rain and the salt wind leathered their skin" (O'Connor, 2002: 227). Thinking of her reduces David's stress. At that point, David discovers his father's huge debts and mortgages. David Ley suggests that male infidelity increases as the income decreases. He adds, "It may be that men use sex as an escape from the emotional burdens of poverty" (Ley, 2010). This explains one of the reasons behind David's infidelity that he experiences financial hardship.

In sharp contrast to David, Laura demonstrates nobility and decency towards him. First of all, when he expresses his love for her, he tells her that he has been engaged to Amelia Blake for two weeks. Regardless of her admiration for him at that moment, she is never selfish as she does not ask him to break up with his fiancée: "she wouldn't act unfairly towards another girl" (O'Connor, 2002: 159). Following David's

physical and emotional neglect of her, she falls in love with Dixon, the American journalist, and descends into adultery while married to David. However, unlike David's cheating, her betrayal is under control and accompanied with regret. She allows herself to get involved in this dishonest relationship hoping that later she will gain divorce from David and then marry Dixon. Realizing that her divorce is impossible, Laura abstains from this relationship. "She had told him her decision earlier in the day: whatever had happened between them was over. They would part at New York and not meet again. His letters were returned, and a number of small tokens. No, a friendship would not be possible" (O'Connor, 2002: 321). Furthermore, on board the ship, she avoids Dixon's company: she does not want David to be irritated by noticing anything suspicious between her and Dixon which reflects her care about David's feelings. Another instance demonstrating her loyalty to David is when the Wingfields, their neighbours in Galway, invite her to accompany them for a holiday in Switzerland at the time of the famine. She courageously declines the offer in order to stay with her husband during his dire financial hardship at Kingscourt.

Despite Laura's caring about him, David drains her financially. She comes from a wealthy English family from Sussex: her father owns many large pottery factories. She was educated in Switzerland and lived a luxurious life. She has "eleven thousand guineas per annum from her family" (O'Connor, 2002: 223). After receiving the letter of eviction from Kingscourt, David uses Laura's trust fund to pay the fares of seven thousand tenants of Kingscourt to migrate to Quebec. In addition, he exhausts her funds by paying the fees of the driver-men who carry out the eviction. Seeing her husband bankrupt and overwhelmed by the debts, Laura finds herself compelled to sell her beloved paintings, books, sculptures as well as the Italian fresco. She dares to sell her children's stocks and shares and her mother's jewellery. David does not only deprive her of intimacy, but he also strips her of her fortune, an act her father John

Markham refuses and opposes. Markham for the most part feels his daughter's money is insecure because of David. He suspects David and hires a detective to trace his son-in-law in London and see how he spends his money. Out of fear for the future of his daughter, Markham encourages her to divorce David. Markham warns his daughter if she touches her capital, he will cut off her money. This displays how David ruins the relationship between Laura and her father because she finds herself forced to disobey her father and help her husband. David destroys her emotionally, socially and financially.

In sharp contrast to Laura who is infatuated by her two sons, David perceives fatherhood as a heavy burden. "Often, in shameful fact, he found fatherhood a millstone. The noise of nannies clattering through the beautiful house had an irritating tendency to interfere with his plans" (225). "He loved his [boys] but he could not love [them] that much" (225). Similar to his indifference and neglect to Laura, he is uncaring about his children. He fails to pay full attention to their needs. In addition to the dismantlement of the family, the negligence also brings about David's catastrophic end: his brutal murder. One day aboard the ship, his son Robert on his brother Jonathan's birthday party observes that Pius Mulvey who is among the guests enters his cabin while covering his face with a black mask and wielding a big knife. Though Pius's identity is hidden, Robert recognizes Pius from his limp. Rather than understanding his son's fear and discussing the serious matter with the child, David slaps him in front of the guests. Later when his murder is unavoidable, David realizes that Pius is a killer sent to assassinate him and that he is mistaken for not taking the warnings of his son seriously. Another example of his carelessness about the wellbeing of his children is demonstrated through his visits to the brothels. The infected individual can pass on congenital diseases to his children alongside his spouse. Robert develops a patch on his back, and no one can guarantee for one hundred percent that

this patch has nothing to do with his father's sexual diseases. As the ship's surgeon William Mangan points out, "Children in such distressing cases of an infected parent are often born with no symptoms, going on to develop severe rhinitis (and other conditions) later" (338). Following his murder, David causes a lifelong and indelible scandal for his wife and children. "The truth emerged in court about Merridith's visits to brothels and it was a difficult time for Laura Markham and her sons. Inevitably the details of his medical condition were also revealed" (383).

In her research on syphilis in the late Victorian period, Elaine Showalter observes that Victorian medics identified syphilis as one cause of madness:

> This understanding of general paralysis – otherwise known as GPI, syphilitic insanity, syphilis of the brain, dementia paralytica, or cerebral syphilis – was the perfect confirmation of late Victorian psychiatry's belief in heredity and visible vice. Among special predisposing causes of insanity, wrote Sir George Savage, 'heredity stands first in importance. … The torch of civilization is handed from father to son, and as with idiosyncrasies of mind, so the very body itself exhibits well-defined marks of its parentage. (Showalter, 1996: 167)

Showalter adds: "In its association with prostitution, adultery, perversity, and violence, furthermore, the characteristics of syphilitic insanity seemed to violate and subvert all of the society's most potent moral norms" (1996, 168). This elucidates why David' social life is ravaged. Moreover, Showalter shows how children inherit the sins of their fathers in the form of syphilis. She points out: "Most importantly, feminists viewed syphilis as scientific evidence that the sins of the fathers were visited upon the children. It was well known that the worst physical as well as mental effects of syphilis

were hereditary" (1990: 197).

In his short story, "The Third Generation" (1894), Conan Doyle, a trained medical doctor who has studied syphilis, examines the transmission of congenital syphilis from generation to generation. Here a young aristocrat visits the specialist Dr. Horace Selby "who has a European reputation" (Doyle, 2017). The young man shows him a lesion on his shin. Then the doctor examines his teeth and eyes. Selby has "a constitutional and hereditary taint" – the father and grandfather had a similar condition. The latter was "a notorious buck" of the 1830s who apparently "died horribly" and the doctor now considers that his deeds are "living, and rotting the blood in the veins of an innocent man" (Doyle, 2017). The doctor tells him that thousands carry the same disease in the same way he inherits it, then the patient rages at the injustice as he is about to be married. This young man, of course, has general paralysis of the insane (GPI) with the hereditary stigmata of Hutchinson's teeth and an Argyll–Robertson pupil. Rather than infecting his future wife, the young man commits suicide. By the end of *Star of the Sea* David invites his own assassination as he has no future.

In his treatment with his wife and children, David re-enacts his father Merridith's treatment with him and his mother Lady Verity. David's father descends into an unfaithful relationship with one of his tenant women, Margaret Duane, and he has a daughter out of this infidelity, Mary Duane. As a result of the physical betrayal, Merridith, like his son, develops syphilis, although this is not stated directly in the text. He develops similar symptoms: he has bleeding blisters on the back of his hands, and later they are aggravated and appear on his neck, face and ankles. Similar to Laura, David's mother Verity suffers from her husband's infidelity and his mood swings resulting from his engagement in advancing the imperial enterprise. As Melissa Fegan observes, "Kingscourt is a war hero, but a domestic villain, a threat to his own family

through his adultery, tyranny, and financial mismanagement, and to those of his tenants, whose rents he doubles and whom he threatens with eviction" (2011: 329). Merridith suffers from the impact of war trauma. Merridith participated in the Battle of Trafalgar and witnessed the killing of his leader Admiral Nelson: "He had seen Admiral Nelson shot through the spine. He had helped to carry Admiral Nelson's coffin" (O'Connor, 2002: 49). Moreover, Merridith was injured in this battle: "A bomb had exploded beside him at Trafalgar and burnt the hair off his head but not his beard" (49). He also participated in the Battle of Baltimore where British troops were defeated. He feard the eternal deprivation of his son and wife: "What I feared that night at Baltimore, David. Was not just the pain – the physical pain. But that I should never. See you and your mother again" (165). In consequence of these traumas accumulated in Merridith's mind, his paternal feelings towards his son are adversely affected. Creech and Misca unravel "the vast influence of military-related parental PTSD on the quality of the parent-child bond and on children's well-being, with an emphasis on internalizing-externalizing behaviors" (cited in Horesh & Brown, 2018). Internalizing his traumatized father's behaviour, David enacts neglect and indifference towards his own family. Also, Merridith infects his son with the impacts of his post-war traumas, and this is one of the factors causing David's anxiety and depression. Danny Horesh and Adam Brown argues that traumas can be contagious:

> [T]rauma was often found to be 'contagious,' as manifested in numerous studies of secondary traumatization (e.g., Dekel et al., 2016), i.e., post-traumatic symptoms experienced by those who were only indirectly exposed to trauma, whether by hearing stories about the event, or by witnessing their negative effects on their loved one (Figley, 1995). (Horesh & Brown, 2018)

Another study is conducted by Shrira et al. on "aging individuals who are second generation to Holocaust survivors". The study shows how the impacts of parents' traumas are substantially conveyed to their next generation through "more than half a century after the Holocaust" (cited in Horesh & Brown, 2018).

As a result of the conflicts between Lady Verity and Merridith, Lady Verity had left her son "in Ireland for the first six years of his life" and departed to London (O'Connor, 2002: 48). She took her daughters with her, but not David. The little boy was left alone in the immense mansion as his father was most of the time away at wars. He was raised by the help of the woman his father had an affair with, Margaret Duane, and his drunken aunt. The first five years of a child are crucial in determining and drawing the features of his character for the rest of his life. His behaviour is moulded according to the way he is raised up. The Australian parenting website maintains:

> In the first five years of life, your child's brain develops more and faster than at any other time in his life. Your child's early experiences – his relationships and the things he sees, hears, touches, smells and tastes – stimulate his brain, creating millions of connections. This is when the foundations for learning, health and behaviour throughout life are laid down. (*Child Development*, 2018)

In addition, Amanda Tomlinson notes:

> Every year of a child's life is precious, but when it comes to development, the first five are the most important. This is when a child becomes the person they are going to be. It is when they learn appropriate behaviour, boundaries,

> empathy and many other important social skills that will remain with them for life. (2015)

David in his early childhood experiences absence of his parents and the lack of family warmth, and therefore he obtains no intimacy to impart to his children. Similar to Pius who experiences solitary confinement in Newgate, David spends most of the time of his first five years in solitary confinement in Kingscourt: "One night he wept bitterly when Mary Duane's mother was bringing him back up to Kingscourt to put him to bed" (O'Connor, 2002: 51). Sangwook Kim maintains that the happiest years in David's life are those Lady Verity has spent in Connemara after her return from London. Also Kim points out:

> Mulvey's extremity in his detachment from any relationship and [David's] severe trouble in making a new relationship are all assumed to be attendant on their early trauma from losing their mothers: the absence of mother during childhood spawns their ongoing insecurity in their later interpersonal life. They all turn into persons dysfunctional in their marital interrelationship, while making themselves emotionally crippled. (2017: 46)

The absence of David's mother affects his marital life later because he prefers to seclude himself from Laura's literary evenings and his house.

Merridith's involvement in imperial wars and their ensuing traumas impinge on his paternal emotions towards his only son. Merridith himself inherited strictness from his own father and later enacted it on his son. One day, David sees a poor

smallholder sell kale and turnips with his son. They look happy, and David observes "a tenderness between them, an embarrassed affection" (O'Connor, 2002: 9). Another day he sees them laughing and playing with a ragged football. He envies them because he lacks this embarrassed affection between him and his father as Merridith never plays with him: "He wasn't sure his father would have recognised a football" (10). In addition, Merridith fails to properly manage his estate and his tenants as the land needs improvement and investment. Therefore, he abuses his son David: he tries to force his son to marry the daughter of the wealthy Blake. Merridith plans to use this marriage for his own financial advantage because he will use Blake's money to pay the wages of the farmers and improve his estate. This speaks to his indifference about his son's happiness as his own interests take precedence. Alongside his selfishness, Merridith uses physical violence against his son. When David tells him he wants to marry Laura, not Blake's daughter, Merridith slaps him in the face: "He clutched his own hand, the blow had been so violent" (169). He also spits at him and expels him from the house. Following the expulsion, David continues to send letters to his father from London informing him about his grandchildren's births and seeking reconciliation: the only response he elicits from his father is silence over eight years. Fegan observes that "Kingscourt is a war hero, but a domestic villain, a threat to his own family through his adultery, tyranny, and financial mismanagement, and to those of his tenants, whose rents he doubles and whom he threatens with eviction" (2011: 9). Merridith haunts his son's life by passing the debt-ridden estate to David and by provoking the poor tenants who later take revenge on his son.

Following the death of his wife, the psychologically traumatized Meridith feels regretful for her loss and not appreciating her: "God knows I was very far from what she deserved. I failed her so often. Through anger and stupidity" (O'Connor, 2002: 165). He consequently neglects his physical appearance and becomes a heavy drinker:

"His teeth discoloured: yellowed and blackened as antique piano keys" (58). Alongside his debts, his wife's death impacts on him as it renders him cruel. He used to be known as a fair landlord and magistrate, but not after his wife's death and the financial hardship. He becomes savage to the extent that he sentences a famished father to death after stealing a lamb and killing the gamekeeper. Poets record his savagery in their ballads. Because of his debts and overdue mortgage payments, he doubles the rents and sends agents to warn his three thousand tenants of eviction in the event of late payments. As retribution for her father's wrongs, "[a] woman in Clifden market had spat at Natasha's [Merridith's daughter] feet. A little boy had shouted: 'Landlord's bitch'. One day, while out walking, she had been followed across the fields by a trio of men in hoods and cloaks" (242). In the aftermath of Merridith's death, none of his tenants attends his funeral: instead they turn their backs on him. "One man who had been evicted was seen to spit on the ground. Another called out: 'May the bastard rot'" (243). They internalize violence as they are oppressed by him and externalize it by so doing. Furthermore, these tenants alongside the Hibernian Defenders desecrate Merridith's grave as well as his forefathers' graves.

Contrary to Lord Merridith, Lady Verity is far more kind-hearted than him: she rescues thousands of the tenants on their estate of Kingscourt and on that of Commander Blake from famine. Verity can be read as an embodiment of Asenath Nicholson. Similar to Nicholson who prepared the Indian meal every morning for the starving Irish, Verity put up a kitchen to make soup for the poor tenants during the potato blight in 1822. Moreover, she visits tenant women who just give birth and gifts their babies with gold guineas. She sets up a laundry for women whose cabins are remote. Verity teaches her little Viscount David to feel for the poor and respect them: "In the eyes of God that poor man is exactly the same as you or I. He has a wife and family. He has a little son. And he loves his little son just in the way that I love you"

(O'Connor, 2002: 55). Furthermore, she involves him in the process of preparing the soup: she makes him "chop the turnips" - a practical step following her theoretical teaching in order to help him understand their ordeal (54). Though English and representing the colonizing power, Verity is kind and sympathetic towards the colonized Irish to prove that not all the colonizers are evil. As Kim argues, "Verity Merridith figures a humanitarian bridge between Englishness and Irishness" (2017: 63). She celebrates her birthday with the poor every year, and this celebration brings the poor and the rich together. Like her birthday, Verity's funeral brings the Irish together and sutures the differences between them: rich and poor, Protestant and Catholic. In contrast to Merridith's funeral, hers is attended by seven thousand mourners packing the cemetery at Clifden.

Being the son of the benefactor Lady Verity who teaches him sympathy and kindness, David is not savage with his tenants. Justine McCarthy states that one of the issues this novel tackles is

> the myth of the famine that there were only bad landlords and (a few) good ones. Joseph O'Connor sets out to show that there were also landlords who fell victim to the potato blight. For example, the Right Honourable Thomas David Nelson Merridith, the Viscount of Roundstone and ninth earl of Cashel and Carna. (2002)

Furthermore, Kim notes:

> O'Connor tackles a simplified historical view of the English landlords only as merciless exploiters of the Irish peasantry … In Joseph O'Connor's *Star of the*

> *Sea* Merridith's parents as well as Merridith himself are shown to be a conscientious case countering the villainous English landlords in Irish accounts of the Famine. (2017: 44-45)

Out of mercy, David never takes rent from his tenants for the four years of the famine. When he is forced to evict a tenant, he compensates him first. At the start of the famine while in London, he sends two hundred pounds to his sister in Ireland to help the poor. When the police ordered him to evict the three thousand tenants from the estate, he "told the constables to leave and not to return. He could not put starving families on the roadside" (O'Connor, 2002: 254). Furthermore, aboard the ship and towards the end of the voyage, he orders the captain to divide the food equally between steerage and first-class passengers, an act revealing his empathy is inculcated in him by his mother.

He has plans to improve the quality of the tenants' lives. He is determined to build "a pier and moorings" for them (247). On a more developed level, he intends to change their outmoded convictions; for example, he wants to teach them not to rely on potatoes so that they can survive famine. He dreams about making Kingscourt the best place in Britain. His dreams, however, are shattered by his father's mismanagement of the estate. David's father epitomizes the negative example of a landlord in Ireland. His reckless policies submerge his estate in debts, and this unhinges the stability of his tenants. For instance, Merridith overdraws his accounts over the years. He fails to pay the fees of his lawyer for thirty years. Also he does not pay the money borrowed from Blake for fourteen years.

Despite being a benefactor and the son of Verity, the tenants' saint, David forfeited his life "[f]or his class, his genealogy, the crimes of his fathers, for the pedigree bloodline into which he had been born. For the church he attended and the prayers he

uttered" (O'Connor, 2002: 29). He is assassinated for his English colonizing ancestors' sins: for inheriting the big house for nine generations in revolutionary Ireland. The Liable revolutionaries impart their threats to him in London. They warn him of shooting his family members for his father's strictness. Drawing on Nicholson's first-hand accounts O'Connor's text shows the extreme suffering of the colonized but he also demonstrates complex layers of oppression. David is a neglectful husband and father but tries to be a good landlord. It is too late for him to change the fortune of the estate as social and economic circumstances outpace him. David inherits the hatred that his father has engendered among his tenants. As an individual he does not deserve the violent death which Pius is forced to carry out: "The cause was seven deep stabs to the upper back, and one to the back of the skull. Yet more horrifically, the throat had been so severely cut that the head was almost completely separated from the body" (367). David receives a Gothic death: he invites death to his door. First, he gives Pius five shillings, lodges him in the first-class quarters and later invites him to his son's birthday party. David "handed" his assassin "a cut-throat razor" so that he could shave prior to Jonathan's birthday party (298). Like the vampire Dracula, which is seen by postcolonial critics as an embodiment of Irish landlordism, David's head is severed. For Seamus Deane, Dracula's "vampiric appetites consort well enough with the image of the Irish landlord current in the nineteenth century" (Deane, 1997: 90). Like Dracula, David demonstrates his "vampiric appetites" by preying on the vulnerable. "As Terry Eagleton has noted of Heathcliff, David is "oppressor and oppressed in one body… contradiction incarnate… and in the end that contradiction will tear him apart"" (Carroll, 2019). In a twist to the vampire tale he invites his killer in, just as Stoker's vampire must be invited in.

**Mary Duane: Haunted and Haunting**

David is vampiric in his exploitation of Mary Duane who is another representative of Spivak's subaltern as she is a victim of both Pius and David – the colonized and the colonizer. "In fact, Mary Duane might easily be seen as a symbol, not only for every Irish woman who had to struggle for survival, but for Ireland itself" (My Book Affair, 2011). Mary is the product of her mother's relationship with David's father which represents another instance of Merridith's abuse. Mary is not raised as David's half-sister but instead she is raised in a cabin. She haunts those who abuse her. Mary's relationship with David represents her internal contradictions. When they are teenagers, she allows him to touch and kiss her: "She felt no shame, no remorse of any kind" (O'Connor, 2002: 67). Later, as an adult, she appears disgusted as he touches her: "She would close her eyes while he touched her and imagine being somewhere else. It helped quell her desire to weep or vomit" (46). Simultaneously, she articulates no objection to his wishes of drawing her: "She had sat by the window and permitted him that privilege" (44). She gives him more than what he asks for: he expresses his wish to draw her bare arms, and "[w]ithout replying, she had removed her robe and nightgown. She could not bear to listen to any more lies" (45). During these exploitative encounters Mary remains mute: she is the silenced subaltern. Mary is represented "as the symbol of the unarticulated and unindividuated past" as argued by Clíona Ó Gallchoir (2013: 357). Her actions are ambiguous as she allows his advances, and at the same time she considers telling his wife about their affair. Mary is a complex figure, traumatized by abuse. At this point in the novel, she has lost two children – a third one towards the end - and her husband has committed suicide and infanticide after being tortured by Pius. David finds her in Dublin after a visit to a brothel where she is working as a prostitute.

Mary is an oppressor and oppressed with regards to her relationship to David. Mary is David's first love interest because they grew up together on the fields of Kingscourt. This love is destined to end as his father orders him to end this relationship. Merridith's fear of the incest is not the reason behind his prevention of this relationship. Fegan notes: "The illegitimate daughter of [David's] father and his nurse, Mary was [David]'s first love, discarded due to his father's objections not to their unknowing incest, but to the breach of class barriers" (2011: 330). Merridith furthermore seeks his financial interests through marrying his son to a wealthy girl whose family's fortune is deemed a great help to the improvement of his debt-ridden estate. Merridith oppresses his own daughter Mary by neglecting her and threatening to evict her and her family if this relationship never stops. Moreover, his son David oppresses her following his knowledge that she is his half-sister: he makes her a servant to his wife and a nanny to his two sons, but does not recognize her as his sister. Mary accepts this unfaithful relationship because she fears to be evicted from the house if she refuses it: "It would not be Lord [David] who would be flung from the house to walk the streets or beg for a bed" (O'Connor, 2002: 46). Moreover, rather than treating her as a human being having feelings and dignity, David considers Mary as a mere commodity: "a precious possession that was worth protecting. An object from his father's collection of rare and extinct animals. An auk's egg, perhaps; a dinosaur's skull" (46). On the other hand, Mary haunts David's life: she promotes the destabilization of Laura's marital life as she widens the gap between the married couple. She haunts David's memories at the Thames after he escapes his house: "often as he stood at that muddy, peaceful river, he would find himself remembering a girl he had once known" (226). Her spectral shadows chase him while he is fully awake: after he buries his father, he sees her sister Grace thinking she is Mary. Grace wears a "black" bodice and "black" boots and is behind the church singing an ominous tune

(244). She represents a Gothic figure further tormenting David. We later learn that Grace dies in the Famine.

Mary is also Pius's love interest and abused by him. First he tells her that he loves her, but he abandons her after telling him she is pregnant. Following the disappearance of thirteen years, he returns as a ghost haunting her life. Pius comes back and takes revenge on her for marrying his brother. Pius keeps annoying her and appears as a ghost at night through the windows: "he would come up and look in through the window of our house at night and I undressing myself. his face would come up at the window" (268). He seduces her to have a relationship with him and the food for her daughter is in return. Out of need and fear, she accepts his offer. However, he lies to her and blackmails her by threatening to inform her husband about what has happened. Pius smears her reputation by informing her neighbours that her daughter is not a legitimate child of his brother Nicholas. Alongside his destruction of Mary's and Nicholas's livelihood, he plays a crucial role in ending the lives of Nicholas and his daughter. He forces his brother to escape starvation by drowning his daughter then himself. Mary observes, "It's yourself did it and you know it, too. As certain as if you held her down in the water and squeezed the life from her body with your own murderer's hands" (292). Famine accounts for the cruelty of Pius against Mary and her family: "Hunger and wrongs turn people soon into beasts; […] men who might have been thought incapable of any cruelty, actually trampled down and walked over feeble women and children in their eager haste to secure the food which was thrown at them by brutes in the shape of men. (Russell 1860: 166-7)" (Fegan, 2011: 3-4). Pius emerges as a curse plaguing Mary's life as he pushes her to a crueller world beyond the boundaries of Connemara. She escapes the appalling life in a workhouse in Galway and experiences the long famine walk, like her husband to the Blake residence in Delphi. She crawls 180 miles to Dublin where she wades through beggary and

prostitution.

Fig. 4. *The Irish Famine, Scene at the Gate of the Workhouse, c.1846* (Wheatcroft, 2016)

*Star of the Sea* shows that the [Famine] "past is not dead. It's not even past" (Faulkner, 1951: 85). As O'Connor observes:

> I spent my summers in Connemara, and even in 1971 people would talk about the famine as though it happened last week. They would point out the scars on the landscape, the famine graves where 1,000 people were buried in just one day. In Ireland these events were recent history - 150 years wasn't so long ago. And the images and stories stayed with me. (cited in Croft et al., 2004)

Fig. 5. Dunshaughlin Famine Graveyard (The Haunted Sites Team, 2012)

The text looks into intricate layering of victimization: the vulnerable Mary abuses the rogue Pius alongside the landlord David. The spectral Mary haunts Pius's life until his violent death despite the fact that she forgives him at one point. While he works as a schoolteacher for pupils between five and eleven years old, the phantom of his abandoned child haunts him and tortures him. As he puts all his efforts to avoid remembering the child, the presence of the pupils around him fuels and sharpens his feeling of the guilt of abandoning the child and his mother: "Such thoughts had haunted him before in England but always he had managed to put them away. Surrounded by children, it was harder to do" (O'Connor, 2002: 213). The pupils appear as ghosts of his rejected child, and this renews his pain and resuscitates his regret. Mary haunts his

memories during his absence of thirteen years. Another form of torturing him is demonstrated when she reinforces the Defenders' decision to kill Pius by sending them a letter seeking revenge for his atrocities against her and her family. By so doing, Mary adopts the Fanonian practice of violence and considers it as the effective way to meet violence. As argued by Fanon, "The starving peasant, outside the class system, is the first among the exploited to discover that only violence pays. For him there is no compromise, no possible coming to terms" (1963: 61). In the end Pius dies at the hands of the Defenders in New York. At the crucial moment of leaving the quarantined ship that is granted merely to women and children and their male relatives, Pius appears emaciated and ragged begging Mary to acknowledge him as a relative and save his life. "O'Connor offers a more redemptive vision through Mary's refusal to enact her revenge. She is given an opportunity to deny that Pius is her relation in order to prevent him taking a seat on the lifeboat used to escape from the quarantined Star of the Sea" (Fegan, 2011: 16). He humiliates himself to her as he is at her mercy: he begins "to weep and to clutch at her hands", in a sharp contrast to his haughtiness and tyranny following his return from England (O'Connor, 2002: 364).

Mary Duane, the illegitimate daughter of the Big House, interconnects with the English landlord David Merridith and the Irish tenant Pius Mulvey and is abandoned by both. As argued by Fegan, "Mary Duane [is] a product of ethnic, religious and class miscegenation, O'Connor redefines both the Irish family (literal and microcosmic) and its implication in its own destruction" (2011: 11). She is victimized by pernicious landlordism, famine and selfishness of the Merridiths and Pius. As a result of the atrocious circumstances of famine, landlordism and politics, she experiences the deaths of twelve members of her family: her parents, her husband, her three children, her three sisters, her three brothers, one of whom is killed in an explosion after trying to escape a prison in England. He is imprisoned after killing an English policeman in

an attempt to oppose British rule in Ireland. In consequence of that, she internalizes oppression and enacts it against those mistreating her. She haunts their lives until they pass away. She returns from the brothels of Dublin as a reverent to haunt the Big House, the tumbled cabins of Connemara and the coffin ship. She is a victim who is not innocent as she allows Pius, David and those who frequent the brothels to exploit her. She disappears in Manhattan, and it is impossible to locate her despite the substantial number of advertisements to find her. In this way, she is a ghost who may indeed return or cannot be put to rest. Gillian Devine states:

> Meanwhile, there is the unexplained disappearance of Mary Duane – she embarked upon the New World never to be seen again. Hints of her whereabouts, and possible identity, crop up all over the country, but no-one can be sure that it is in fact Mary, because she disappears again just as quickly. (Devine, 2013)

As Gallchoir observes, "At the end of the novel, therefore, Mary Duane is both stripped of all individuality and endowed with the symbolic power to represent all those whose lives are undocumented and beyond the reach of textual representation" (2013: 359).

*Star of the Sea*, like *Sunset Oasis*, is a novel of layers. Pius is a victim and a victimizer, abused and an abuser. David Merridith inherits the failure of Irish landlordism and his father's sins of abusing his tenants. He tries to mitigate the effects of landlordism without success but also abuses Mary. Mary is the figure who torments both with the knowledge of what they have done or what they have lost. Abuse reigns at the heart of the family and shaping all their lives is the spectre of colonialism. The colonial representations of the imperial power - the big house, its contents and occupants - vanish at the end of *Star of the Sea*. Kingscourt, the Big House, is leaking and falling apart. David gives the keys of

Kingscourt to the valuer in order to sell the house and the lands. Blake later commands Kingscourt. Blake's role in the text reveals the complicity and enmeshment of the rich Irish landlords in exacerbating the famine and abusing their own people. My thesis aims to show that the colonized is not always innocent and that the colonizer can be a victim in some way. Fegan states:

> O'Connor explicitly critiques this communal trauma-memory, and the amnesia of those who benefitted from the Famine, many of whom were Irish-born: the most successful Famine survivors are the Blakes, who make a fortune through evictions, and become "active in Irish politics" (O'Connor 2003: 395).

Fegan further argues that "Merridith, on the other hand, is identified as one of the 'violated people' (388); like Pius, he is both victim and perpetrator" (2011: 337). O'Connor wants to emphasize that injustice and racism that have occurred in *Star of the Sea* still exist in the world we live in today in a way that shows the past is not dead (Croft et al., 2004).

Though costing thousands of pounds, the Big House's imperial contents become valueless and unwanted and swarming with maggots. David struggles to eliminate the once precious possessions of Kingscourt: he barely finds a museum to accept his father's collections, such as the eggs and skeletons. He gives some gypsies a sabre-tooth tiger for free, knowing that if they refused, he would pay them to take it. The rest of the articles are burned in a deep pit: this is emblematic of the complete disappearance of the family's possessions, like the tiger - possessions that are derived from imperial exploitation. The colonizers' goodbye ceremony will be inevitable, regardless of the immense wealth and luxury they once had in Ireland. Merridith, who once had an umbrella stand made from an elephant foot, passes away leaving his treasure to vanish like him from this life. David is committed to the sea, having no

grave to commemorate his memories. O'Connor deliberately hides him physically by depriving him of a grave in order to exterminate all he represents in *Star of the Sea*. O'Connor completely obliterates David when his widow marries an American and his two sons adopt their step-father's name. The next chapter returns to the trauma of the Big House and the family in a novel set in another difficult period of Irish history: the 1920s.

## Chapter Four

## The Haunted 'Big House':

## The Sins of the Past in William Trevor's *The Story of Lucy Gault*

> Captain Gault no longer spent his nights at an upstairs window but stood alone on the cliffs, staring out at the dark, calm sea, cursing himself, cursing the ancestors who in their prosperity had built a house in this place. (Trevor, 2002: 33)

Shortlisted for the Booker and Whitbread Prizes in 2002, William Trevor's *The Story of Lucy Gault* is set in the closing stages of the Irish War of Independence. In this novel Trevor provides a straightforward chronological narrative as we follow Lucy Gault from childhood in 1921 to old age. The story is told in six chapters by Trevor as an omniscient narrator. The Protestant Gault family have been living in a Big House called Lahardane in County Cork for two hundred years after "a soldier of fortune had established their modest dynasty" there (Trevor, 2002: 4). The text provides a view on pre-independence Ireland in the early 1920s as noted by Pamela Bickley (Bickley, 2008: 63). The Big House signals the hegemony of Britain in Ireland: "*The Story of Lucy Gault*," Bickley notes, "treats a traditional theme: the 'Big House', English- owned and as such a symbol of imperial domination over a country seeking independence" (2008: 62). She points out that this is "the period of firing the historic Anglo-Irish houses and driving away the English landowners" (2008: 62).

At the novel's opening the Gault house comes under attack from nationalists who perceive the inhabitants of the big houses as both complicit in the colonial enterprise and enemies. The Big House, Mary Fitzgerald-Hoyt adds, symbolizes "the

Ascendancy usurpation" of the natives (2003: 206). As such the Gaults become political targets: Thomas Mallon refers to them as "the besieged owners of Lahardane" (Mallon, 2002). When three young men attempt to set fire to the house Everard Gault, a veteran of World War I who carries shrapnel fragments in his body, attempts to shoot above the heads of the arsonists to warn them off. However, he superficially wounds a youth named Horahan. This causes, as Patricia Craig notes, "[d]ire repercussions [to] spiral outwards from this event" (Craig, 2002). The Gaults, Everard and his wife Heloise, fearing reprisals decide to leave the Big House, but do not explain the political context to their eight-year old daughter. Traumatized by political events, the parents fail to consider how leaving will impact on their child. To avoid leaving, Lucy runs away, causing her parents to believe she has drowned when she goes missing as some of her clothes are found on the beach. As Patricia Craig points out, Lucy becomes "a lost child, lost to parents, lost to a 'normal' upbringing, lost to life's fulfilments" (2002). The parents then swop the Big House for an itinerant life on a traumatized Continent of Europe, similarly scarred by its own wars, unaware for 30 years (after the death of Heloise from influenza in Switzerland) that Lucy is still alive.

On the eve of his departure from his home, Gault, as the introductory quotation demonstrates, curses himself and the ancestors who built the house there. This ancestral legacy causes the dual suffering of the loss of his daughter and subsequent nomadic life. Although financially secure in exile, Everard and Heloise suffer the belief of having lost the outcome of their happy marriage: their daughter. The novel shows the Big House becoming a site of trauma to all involved or who become involved in the family tragedy. Bickley observes that the opening sentence in the novel (as quoted) suggests the inevitability of the tragedy as the English name, the military rank and the date itself indicate (2008: 62-3). This chapter explores family trauma from the viewpoint of the colonizer in a period of the turbulent 1920s and the legacy

of the Irish War of Impendence on the Gault family.

In the midst of the War of Independence it becomes clear that Everard sees himself as a colonizer. Nevertheless, as Hermione Lee notes, being a Protestant landowner of a Big House, Everard is "caught in the battle between the IRA and the British army" (2002). Though Irish, his family is of English Protestant descent and he marries an Englishwoman. He reflects on this later in the novel when he sees his life as a

> punishment inflicted for those sins of the past to which his family might have contributed. Had it been greed that the Gaults had held their ground too long? While Penal Laws were passed there had been parties at Lahardane, prayers said in the church for King and Empire, the aspirations of the dispossessed ignored. (Trevor, 2002: 146)

The events of the pivotal night of the attempted burning of the house suggest that Everard's sense of alienation is accurate, propelling the family into a state of social and familial dispossession. Although they do not lose their big house, loss runs through their individual stories and the tragedy of their lives. Each member of the family is trapped in their own ways by the tragic events of the night of the attempted fire. Each enters into a type of life in death. Their very surname echoes the notion of a vault. In Gothic literature, vaults are synonymous with enclosure and entrapment and the fear of not getting out alive. Equally the big house in this novel is cursed.

The Irish War of Independence started in 1919 and ended in July 1921. During that period, the firings of Big Houses occurred. "Martial law prevailed, since the country was in a state of unrest, one that amounted to war" (Trevor, 2002: 3). During the Irish War of Independence direct military control was imposed on a large portion

of Ireland by Britain. For the Gaults the fateful night was 21 June 1921: "Captain Everard Gault wounded the boy in the right shoulder on the night of June the twenty-first, nineteen twenty-one" (3). Everard neither meant to kill or maim: "He had not sought to inflict an injury, only to make it known that a watch was being kept" (3). In remorse he tries to reach out to the family of the wounded man: "He wrote to Father Morrissey in Enniseala, asking him to pass on his sympathy and his regret" (3). The priest "passed the message on, he wrote, but no acknowledgement had come back from the family he referred to" (4). Then Everard writes to the family and when he does not get a response to his letter, he visits them in their house. He said "he was ready to pay whatever was asked of him in settlement of the affair" (11). "But no response came, apart from the immediate civilities" (12). He tries to identify with their political affiliations by describing how Daniel O'Connell, the champion of the colonized and the oppressed, had once stayed at Lahardane. Neither this nor his offer of compensation appeases the family. They make him tea but do not accept his offer. "The son who had been wounded sat at the table, disdainful of the visit, and not speaking, his arm in a sling" (12). Everard is disappointed, feeling that they have not believed anything he has said and they continue to believe his shot was intentional. Although the children are barefoot and miserable, the family's failure to accept any money demonstrates their nationalist feelings outweigh monetary considerations. They see any acceptance as a betrayal, and as a whole "the mood of the day is one of opposition" (Bickley, 2008: 62).

As a result, Heloise becomes increasingly alarmed: "I'm frightened, Everard" (Trevor, 2002: 7). Being an English national heightens her feelings of alienation and fear: "All this has happened because I'm here. Because I am an English wife at Lahardane" (7). However, her presence is not the sole reason for the political tension, as what has happened in the Gault's Big House is a microcosm of the political

turbulence occurring at many other similar locations across Ireland, though the combination of the Big House and the military connections with the Empire contributes to intensifying the situation. Heloise and Everard have family military connections. Her father died in the Boer War, and Everard's father was once a soldier. Despite the advanced age of some owners, displacement and leaving the Big House become the inevitable option for the owners of the Big Houses in order to survive the colonial curse - a curse that never differentiates between old or young occupants. Though past seventy, "[t]he Morells have gone from Clashmore". "The Gouvernets [have] gone from Aglish", "the Priors from Ringville, the Swifts, the Boyces. Everywhere, what you heard about was the going" (Trevor, 2002: 9). Everard identifies with the Irish condition of exile. In that time, the Irish – Protestant and Catholic - forfeit their stability as a result of the chaos of politics: "'It is our tragedy in Ireland,' he was heard to remark more than once, 'that for one reason or another we are repeatedly obliged to flee from what we hold dear. Our defeated patriots have gone, our great earls, our Famine emigrants, and now the poor to search for work. Exile is part of us'" (80). They leave their ground and fuse with another part of the world for years and become part of it. Consequently, they forge a bond of belonging with such a place and as a result feel outsiders in Ireland: "Exiles settled in their exiled state, often acquiring a stature they had not possessed before. He had observed this often in those who came back to Enniseala only to find themselves restless in a town that was too small" (80). Once burning the Big Houses and shooting start, a sense of non-belonging strikes Everard and Heloise. "'I belong nowhere else,' Everard Gault said, and Heloise said that by now she belonged nowhere else either" (11). As Patricia Craig asserts, *The Story of Lucy Gault* "is charged throughout with a pervasive disquiet, and a plangent melancholy"(2002). Everard's and Heloise's fatal decision to leave Ireland adversely affects the life of their maids, one of whom is Kitty Teresa who has worked for them

for more than twenty years. Her "eyes [were] gone red and her apron [was] soaking with the tears that streamed on her cheeks and her neck" (Trevor, 2002: 13). The impact of their decision leaves her jobless and traumatized. She also suffers the curse of the Big House.

Trevor's highlighting of the impact of the political and religious tensions on the maid shows the novel does not focus on colonization per se, but rather on personal and family histories. Trevor dives to the depths of human experiences and encounters life chances. The word "chance" is repeated thirteen times in the novel, thereby highlighting the significant role chance plays in moulding the personal lives of the characters. The outcomes of these chances vary between salvage and torture. For example, "chance was so cruel" when Ralph, a private tutor for the two children of the Bank of Ireland's agent and later Lucy's lover, by mistake came to Lahardane to embark on a journey of agony (Trevor, 2002: 224). On the other hand, Lucy is fortunate when Henry, the house servant, finds her by chance, after she is lost, injured and starving in the woods. Furthermore, she is rescued by finding Paddy Lindon's cottage after seeking shelter from the cold.

*The Story of Lucy Gault* is "perhaps the most autobiographical of Trevor's fictions", as noted by Mary Fitzgerald-Hoyt (2003: 194). It reflects some of Trevor's personal history: the happy marriage of Everard and Heloise and the sustainable intimacy between them align with Trevor's "happy 50-year marriage to Jane Ryan" (Fitzgerald-Hoyt, 2003: 194). In addition, Trevor, like Ralph, attended a boarding school in Ireland and spent some of his youth in Cork. Like Mr Ryall, Ralph's employer, Trevor's father worked for a bank, as Fitzgerald-Hoyt points out (2003: 194). Rather than concentrating on colonialism and what is going on the battlefields of the Anglo-Irish War, the Irish Civil War and the Second World War, the period covered by this text, the focus is on personal and family histories. Following the

departure of her parents, Lucy isolates herself from all the chaos and conflicts of the external world. In so doing, she revisits and settles in another era of history where she finds relief and comfort: Fitzgerald-Hoyt observes, Lucy "lives a half-life, suspended in a nineteenth-century existence: with her affection for nature, her bee-keeping, she might be a romantic heroine; her avid reading of Victorian novels and her painstaking needlework place her later in the century" (2003: 193). The way Lucy is created and described provides us with the impression that she belongs to the Romantic Age despite the fact that she physically lives in the early twentieth century: Fitzgerald-Hoyt describes her as "Wordsworthian Lucy" because of her isolation, beauty and love for nature (2003: 192).

Despite the fact that the novel is set during a vast period of history Trevor's concern is not to foreground the pains of the victims, but to find redemption and bring people together. Vera Kreilkamp maintains that

> Trevor is not satisfied with merely depicting the ongoing and self-perpetuating effect of violence on the consciousness of the victims or observers of political outrage. Instead, he seeks for solutions, finding them in the notion of redemptive suffering, or more specifically, in a vision of healing sainthood that comes to those who endure and miraculously transcend the violence that has scarred them. (1998: 223)

Lucy, for instance, finds solace in reading Victorian novels, bee-keeping, embroidery and in the rural landscape. The fact that she reads English novels, like *Vanity Fair* by William Thackeray, emphasizes her attachment to the British Empire and its cultural heritage as she is Irish of English descent. She seeks to resist the tight grip of the consequences of the violent past. Lucy finds another solution to escape the pain of the

loss of Ralph's love in visiting the now insane Horahan, the boy wounded by her father.

Like her parents, who flee the guilt-ridden world in Ireland by travelling, Lucy, following the death of her father, resorts to travelling to Italy and Switzerland in order to visit her mother's grave, accomplishing her father's wish for her to visit it. Another redemption emerges in the form of a visit to her by the two Catholic nuns. Previously, Horahan finds limited redemption in a confessional visit to Everard. Ralph finds some redemption in being loyal to his wife and child while drowning himself in the noise of his family's sawmill. By focusing on a particular family, Trevor's novel enables a broader understanding of the complexities of Ireland emerging from colonial rule and how the vicissitudes of history create victims.

**Lucy and her Parents: Miscommunication and Tragedy**

Alongside the troubled political situation, Lucy's parents play a major role in complicating the family tragedy. The way they respond to their daughter's enquiries is ineffective and unpersuasive. "'Why must we go?' she cried. 'Because they don't want us here,' her father said" (Trevor, 2002: 22). He does not explain the reasons behind this decision, and this leaves the eight-year-old girl puzzled and not convinced enough to accept the idea of abandoning her childhood house and the countryside. The novel also shows the devastating repercussions of the postponement of answers. "'Why'd they bring petrol with them?' she asked. 'One day I'll tell you about all that'" (21). This shows the father's unawareness of the child's need to know the truth: he neither takes the child's questions seriously, nor does he elucidate the issue in a simple way. The parents fail to understand the strong attachment between Lucy and the landscape of Lahardane where she is completely obsessed by the glen, shrimp pools, woods, the orchard, the fields and the shore. Their actions will strip her from her world,

which they want her to accept without considering her feelings. “At eight years old,” Pamela Bickley adds, “she knows nothing of the wider political world she inhabits; she knows only that she clings to the place she loves with even greater longing than her feeling for her parents, even though she is a cherished only child. ‘Couldn’t I stay with Henry and Bridget?’ she constantly asks” (2008: 63). As Tim Adams notes in his review, Lucy “cannot fathom their cruelty in taking her from Lahardane” (2002). William Trevor illustrates how both ignoring the child’s concerns and complaints and not taking them seriously bring about a disaster. Lucy tries to complain while showing her fears and concerns, but her parents inadvertently disregard her apprehension: “everything she said to them on the way back they didn’t hear. They didn’t want to hear, they didn’t want to listen” (Trevor, 2002: 17). Everard prioritizes the travel arrangements over listening and responding to Lucy. He is busy buying the suitcases and packing them. Consequently, for Lucy, “eavesdropping became the source of her information” (9). They realize their mistake too late: “We told her lies,’ her father said” (31). Moreover, Heloise “remembered the reassurances and the half promises, and remembered knowing that the promises might not be kept. Disobedience had been a child’s defiance, deception the coinage they had offered her themselves” (31).

Lucy is the only child in this Big House, and she desperately seeks friendship. She urges her parents to allow her to keep a stray dog, as a replacement for their dogs which are poisoned by the arsonists. Her parents and the retainers refuse her demand, with none of them sharing or showing curiosity in her interests and enthusiasms, nor do they provide her with an alternative, so she compensates these deficiencies by making friends with strangers. This work highlights the world of the child who does not understand the political complexities but whose worries are real. Absorbed by their own concerns, Everard and Heloise further the problems in their lives by not listening to the child or paying attention to what she is doing. Henry, the retainer of Lahardane,

tells Lucy about Paddy Lindon, the wild man who lives in the woods and gets drunk after selling the mushrooms people give him. Lucy subsequently meets him and forges a friendship with him, though he emerges as a prominent source of peril by providing her with misleading information: he tells her about a shortcut - steep and dangerous - to her house from the woods. Lucy relies on this shortcut to return home quickly after her secret swims in the sea. Later, she uses this shortcut when escaping the house when she runs away from her parents in an attempt to prevent them from leaving. On this shortcut she stumbles on spiky branches and breaks her ankle. When she is not found in the immediate days after her disappearance, her parents think she is dead and leave Lahardane for a nomadic life in Europe.

Resulting from the lack of understanding between Lucy and her parents is another close association she develops with another adult outside the family. This is with the housemaid Kitty Teresa, an affiliation unnoticed by the parents. Lucy thinks she can flee to Kitty Teresa's home to seek refuge: "What perversity had been at play when no one had thought of a friendly upstairs maid with whom a distraught child might find a haven?" (Trevor, 2002: 54). Lucy knowing Kitty Teresa has returned to her hometown, Dungarvan, after being dismissed from the house, consequently plans to escape to her in Dungarvan, despite not knowing how she will get there or where Teresa exactly lives. This signifies both the dangers of the parental neglect and the limited and unrealistic judgements of a child.

Like Mahmoud in *Sunset Oasis*, Everard is plagued by "confusion and contradiction" (27). Like Lucy, he is very much attached to Lahardane and the land inherited from his ancestors. Nevertheless, his feelings are conflicted, and evidence of ambivalence and hesitation are demonstrated throughout his journey of exile in Europe. The Gaults disappear in Europe without leaving an address and when Lucy is

discovered in Lindon's cottage, all the attempts to find Heloise and Everard fail. Heloise, believing her daughter dead, wants to sever all connection with Lahardane. Everard hesitates to contact home: "More than once he had written, but each time had drawn back when the moment of posting came" (83). He is concerned he might receive replies to his letters - an act his wife will not be happy with. Similarly, Everard continuously postpones sending a letter to his brother in India: after writing an elaborate letter following the death of Heloise in Switzerland, he discovers his brother has been killed in action. Before leaving Ireland, he does not think that he will miss and long for Lahardane – a signal of his uncertainty. "In the brief time that had elapsed since their departure he had begun to sense that he'd been wrong to imagine he would never wish to return to the house they had abandoned" (46). He becomes lost with no guidance in his feelings after he finds himself wifeless and childless, most particularly after his wife has lost a baby by miscarriage while touring Europe. Everard, like Mahmoud, fails to act and his failure to act results in devastation.

Contrary to Everard, Heloise is set on leaving, and she has no contradictory feelings towards her decision. On the way to Dublin, she shows aversion to the Irish landscape, considering it to be a reminder of the tragedy: "She asked no more than to be separated for ever from landscape that had once delighted her" (Trevor, 2002: 36). As Fitzgerald-Hoyt argues, "Trevor makes it clear that this English mistress of an Irish estate, by blaming Ireland for her misery, contributes to that misery's continuance" (2003: 202). Furthermore, she decides not to go to the villa her husband has rented in Sussex considering it not too far enough away from Ireland. The "cursed lovers", as Thomas Mallon calls them, embark on "a vagabond life in Europe" (2002). During the years of the purposeless travelling, she becomes more affiliated with the hosting countries than England or Ireland: "Her mother had belonged here. More than England, more than Lahardane, she had made this ordinary small town her own, and

Italy her country" (Trevor, 2002: 204). She is attuned to exile and "was not always unhappy" (197). "Heloise's contrary feelings had strengthened with every mile they had covered. Exile was what she longed for, where all her faith was, and her hope" (46). In addition, she never wants to hear about the news of Ireland, which reflects her passivity and selfishness. As a mother, she should have demonstrated more care and attention to the news in Ireland in case any news about her daughter might emerge. She deflects attention from discussing anything related to Ireland by immersing her husband in her childhood memories. Another act emphasizing her indifference is demonstrated in the way Heloise Gault treats her aunt. Following the death of Heloise's parents, as an orphan she stayed for years with her aunt. However, after Heloise married Everard, she "long neglected" her aunt, apart from sending her Christmas cards (58). In contrast, when the invalid aunt learns of her niece's tragedy, she seeks their whereabouts in English newspapers. Later, when Heloise passes away in Switzerland, her grave is seen as a stranger's grave despite her feelings of belonging, which are eventually meaningless. There is a sense of unbelonging about Heloise in Ireland: she is not happy in Ireland and perceives herself as an English interloper, but she also fails to make connections with her child or her aunt. Everard and Heloise are itinerant figures in a physical and an emotional sense. As Lucy grows up alone in the big house, the *Titanic*, she is haunted by the ghosts of her absent parents as she waits forever for them to return, just as they are haunted by her loss.

With Heloise's death, Everard is released and returns home to find his adult daughter. The initial encounter between Lucy and her father is shown as cold: he wants to embrace her when first seeing her, but eventually abstains, "sensing something in her that prevented him" (Trevor, 2002: 154). His overdue arrival means Ralph, the man Lucy loves, but refuses to marry in order to punish herself for her parents' absence from Lahardane, is married by now: "Why now?" "was a whisper [Everard] heard"

(154). Lucy's punishment, like Everard's, is self-inflicted – both had an opportunity to re-connect but Everard chose exile with his wife and Lucy refused the happiness of marriage. Finding each other does not offer consolation as Everard and Lucy are physically and emotionally separate, functioning as ghosts: the two sit "at either end of the long table in the dining-room" (156). He finds speaking with the retainers of Lahardane much easier than with Lucy. As regret strikes Lucy, it also haunts her father following his discovery that she is still alive. He regrets his quick departure from Ireland after her initial disappearance: "I should have resisted that careless haste" (159). A similar regret haunts Aloysius Sullivan, Captain Everard Gault's friend and solicitor, as he blames himself for not searching more carefully for the Captain, despite his focused and sustained efforts. He regrets choosing an incompetent investigator to hunt for Everard and Heloise in Switzerland. Furthermore, guilt drew "Bridget and Henry closer when they had suspected Lucy of bathing but hadn't said" (60). The Captain's delayed return adds another layer of agony to this

tragic scene of regret and guilt. In compensation for the sins of the past, Everard pays undivided attention and care to his daughter. He does his best to please her by attending to small personal details, like his outfits and appearance: "He [has] his hair cut regularly in Enniseala. He clip[s] his fingernails close; he knot[s] his tie with care" (164). He polishes his shoes every day. Seeking to wrest his daughter from her aloofness, he buys a new motor car, taking her to various places of entertainment, like the cinema, the races, the Opera House in Cork, the Mitchelstown Caves. He teaches her to drive. Despite his continuous efforts to create happiness, an inner voice in Lucy wonders, "All these years to have so stubbornly waited for no more than an old man's scattered words?" (170). Later she is ashamed of her feelings towards her father – another example of the endless series of guilt and regret brimming through this work. Fitzgerald-Hoyt notes, "after so many years, they cannot recapture the easy intimacy

of Lucy's childhood, and just when they begin to break through the awkwardness between them, Everard dies" (2003: 193). One has to question the strength of that "easy intimacy" as they were not intimate enough for Everard to explain the political situation to his child (193). Similarly, as Hermione Lee argues, Everard and Lucy "settle into an uneasy companionship, with too much unspoken" (2002).

**Ralph: A Victim of the Big House**

Ralph is a private tutor for the children of a Bank of Ireland agent, Mr Ryall. He lends Ralph his car, allowing him a half-day every Wednesday – a Wednesday leading to another layer of tragedy. By mistake, Ralph goes to the avenue leading to Lahardane, with no idea that it leads to a house. He meets Lucy now a young woman in her twenties and becomes besotted with her: "He loved her, more than he could ever have loved anyone" (Trevor, 2002: 107). Canon Crosbie, the vicar, is pleased by the news that someone at last calls in and may commence a marriage project. The vicar beseeches Ralph to visit Lahardane again to befriend the solitary girl as after the dramatic results of Lucy's actions as a child, she is shunned by everyone apart from the solicitor, the vicar, Henry and Bridget. The children see her as guilty for running away from her parents as a child and that she is responsible for their departure. Lucy becomes a legend and a monster. At school her fellow pupils avoided her: they "didn't want to play with her, when they eyed her and stared at her, or glanced and nudged one another, not giggling because what she had done was too bad for giggling" (61). Another student loathes to be touched by her while playing Oranges and Lemons: "Don't come near me" epitomising the social marginalisation she experiences (71). Furthermore, the schoolteacher Aylward does not put his arms around her as she expects upon her return to school after her disappearance. This sharply contrasts with the way Aylward received her with her father when they came to say good-bye to him

when the family was about to leave Lahardane: he kissed her. Considering her a pariah, Mrs McBride, the saleswoman at the grocery shop, does not "like her any more" (64). Consequently, both the vicar and the solicitor regard Ralph as a saviour and a redeemer. Lucy, however, comes to haunt and torment Ralph.

The relationship between Lucy and Ralph is imbued with gothic features, one of which is the element of invitation to a shadowy area. Though Ralph initially travels the road to Lahardane by mistake, Lucy invites him to visit the Big House again, which contributes to shaping its tragedy: "Before you go away for ever come and say good-bye. Come and have tea again. If you would like to" (94). Again, she observes, "Will you come again next Wednesday?" (105). Sometime later, "Won't you stay a while when you finish with the boys?" (108). She suggests he read *Vanity Fair*, a novel of six hundred and forty-two pages, in an attempt to prolong his stay at the Big House: "'You mustn't leave Lahardane,' she said, 'until you have finished *Vanity Fair*'" (110). The more he comes, the more he struggles and becomes enmeshed in her Gothic life and eventually becomes traumatised. Though himself not living in a Big House, while living happily with his parents, Ralph experiences the curse of the spurious privilege of the Big House merely by accepting the invitation to enter it. Like Jonathan Harker who willingly enters Dracula's castle, he finds that he cannot get out. Unlike Jonathan, his entrapment is emotional.

Ralph experiences his own childhood trauma. Like Lucy who is almost forced to leave her cherished County Cork, Ralph is forcibly separated from his beloved parents and cosy house when sent to a boarding-school as a youngster. He understands Lucy's desire not to leave her home as a child and understands why she could not

> abandon without protest what she loved. He thought of her in that time and saw her clearly as she must have been, and remembered his own powerlessness in

> the boarding-school where he'd been assured he would be happy, his pillow drenched with tears, the home he'd been torn away from seeming like a heaven. (100)

Both Lucy and Ralph are the only children in their families. Regardless of the similarities between them and although Ralph offers to live with her at Lahardane so as not to disturb her and hinder their marriage, Lucy constantly declines his offer and love: "It's no good, loving one another" (111). Lucy compares herself to *Jane Eyre*'s Mrs Rochester: "Like poor Mrs Rochester! Whom nobody had sympathy for!" – another signal of the gothic madness attendant within the novel (118). By underestimating herself and regarding herself unworthy of his love: "I'm not someone to love" (111), she believes her distraught life will disturb his: "loving me will make you unhappy" (116). The romantic conversations between Lucy and Ralph are rich in negatives: "never" and "not", as Hermione Lee observes, foreshadowing the impossibility of their union (Lee, 2002). As Tim Adams argues, "Lucy is given her one chance of redeeming happiness by Ralph, a young teacher" – a chance she grudgingly turns her back on (2002). The reason of her rejection is that she cannot marry him until she acquires forgiveness from her parents for what she has done: "You must go back to your contented life. Not be a visitor in mine" (Trevor, 2002: 119). Lucy feels guilty for the seemingly permanent disappearance of her parents. Lucy was anxious about Ralph during his six-year engagement in World War Two. She promised herself to visit him on his unscathed return, but broke her promise since she was contented to live with the memory of their Gothic love that was shrouded in darkness.

> 'How can we forget today?' she whispered and was not heard. 'I could never not love you,' Ralph said, and this was lost as well (117).

When a moment of harmony emerges, Trevor intentionally makes the two mis-hear

each other's sweet words in order to underline the doomed Gothic love. As Tim Adams points out, "Even when she dares believe her life might hold happiness, Trevor allows it to die on the wind. Standing on the shore in a raging storm, beside the sea in which her parents believe she perished, the couple's words escape them" (2002). Constanza del Río-Álvaro asks William Trevor in a telephone conversation about Lucy's renunciation of an important part of life: sex, love and family and if that decision results from stoicism or guilt. Trevor simply states: "I don't know, I really don't know" (Río-Álvaro, 2006). Trevor suggests in the conversation that he finds it difficult to explain himself or analyse his style because he writes instinctively. Therefore, he leaves the interpretation of his fiction open for the critics and the readers to add their own understanding and analysis (Río-Álvaro, 2006).

Ralph marries another woman. The return of Captain Everard traumatises Ralph more, and he feels that this news is a stab in his heart. He never shares his abandoned love with either his army companions or his wife, always keeping it hidden. Being incessantly haunted by the spectres of that tormenting love, he flees to the clatter of the sawmills to dilute the noise in his head of his scattered emotions. "For Ralph, it was always easier in the sawmills. Practicality brought relief; emotion was belittled by the hum of the saws and the rasp of planes, the men intent and careful, the smell of sweat and resin and dust" (Trevor, 2002: 167). However, Thomas Mallon challenges Ralph's love for Lucy. As Mallon suggests, Ralph knows that "his heart's desire can only be gained by the Gaults' return" (2002). Nevertheless, he does not bother to search for them, despite being young, healthy and financially secure: he spends years serving the army in and after World War II. Ralph, like Everard and Mahmoud, is a figure of failure in his inability to act.

Despite the fact Lucy has known about Ralph's marriage from the newspapers,

she still yearns for him hoping that he will return to her and abandon his wife after he knows about her father's arrival. She exceeds the allowed limits of expectations and ambitions by never considering or minding the ruining of the stable life of a happy woman. Despite the reciprocated love between Lucy and Ralph and his extreme longing for her, Ralph is much more rational and wiser in his final decisions and fateful choices than Lucy, who is immersed in romanticism and distant from realism. While Ralph could have returned to Lucy and married her after ending his current marriage, he did not. As pointed out by Fitzgerald-Hoyt, "Ralph is a man of honour and remains in Enniscorthy with his wife and child, running the family sawmill while seeking solace in nature" (2003: 195). Subsequently, after their permanent separation, Lucy cherishes and lives on the love scenes between herself and Ralph for the rest of her life. As Mallon notes in his review, Lucy manages "to live for decades off a handful of romantic recollections" (2002).

Mallon suggests that the story is both allegory and fairy tale. Indeed, Lucy's and Ralph's Gothic love parallels the forbidden love in "The Lady of Shalott", a poem written by Alfred, Lord Tennyson in 1842 (Tennyson, 2014). Similar to Lucy, the lady of Shalott is isolated in a building of four grey towers and four grey walls – a colour that mirrors bleakness and lifelessness. Similar to Lucy, who spends her time embroidering, the lady of Shalott weaves a magical web while secluding herself from the living world. The lady of Shalott hears a whisper telling her that she will suffer a curse if she looks at the town of Camelot. She only sees shadows in a window hanging in her room. Suddenly a handsome knight, riding through the fields of barley, passes by her, and the glitter of his brass armour draws her attention. She eventually decides to abandon the shadowy place and follow the knight to the town of Camelot – a town that will fulfil the curse. Like Lucy and her forbidden love for the married Ralph, the

lady of Shalott blindly follows the cursed love thereby destroying her life: her blood freezes in her veins and a similar tragedy freezes Lucy's life. Lucy's curse is that she runs away, disobeying her parents, subsequently becoming now stuck or imprisoned in the Big House as the lady of Shalott is incarcerated in her own tower.

**Horahan: A Victim of the 'Cause'**

Both Horahan and Lucy are victims of political and religious tensions. Both are "petrified" in their past, tied by its sins (Trevor, 2002: 139). For the rest of his life, he is held hostage by his conflicted mind, while similarly she becomes a lifelong hostage at Lahardane. Lucy's life, Bickley argues, "will become an image of frozen immobility: her parents leave without her, believing that she is drowned" (Bickley, 2008: 63). Being victims of religious and political tensions, both fail to live in the present normally, being haunted by ghosts of the past. The Brothers at his school and the clergy incite Horahan to violence. Consequently, he develops as a Catholic and a revolutionary whose aim is to dispossess the Big House's owners of their privileges. The deprived Catholics welcome and hail any violence committed against the Protestants, regarding that as both righteous and courageous. This blind revenge has negative consequences as it does not differentiate between adults and children: this is shown when Lucy as a child becomes a victim of the calls of violence for the rest of her life. This challenges Fanon's limitless endorsement of violence against the colonizers. Horahan's insurrectionist action brings prestige to his family: "They had honoured him as an insurrectionist, although he had never belonged to a revolutionary organization" (Trevor, 2002: 75). This sense of victory is heightened by the swift departure of "a one-time officer of the British army and his English wife" (76).

Years after the attack on the Gaults' Big House, Horahan is haunted by dreams of that eventful night. These dreams spoil his job as a porter and a sweeper at Enniseala

railway-station. The real events of that night mingle with those of his dreams to the extent that it becomes difficult for him to separate them which increases his confusion and loss. Like Lucy who becomes solitary after the departure of her parents, Horahan realizes that he is lonely in the morning following the first night of the dreams, particularly after the emigration from Ireland of his two companions in the attack, as well as the death of his father. This suggests both Lucy and Horahan experience the curse of the Big House regardless of their backgrounds. Frightening visions of the burning house unhinge Horahan's social life at the platform. In reality the house was not burned as Everard resisted the attack but in Horahan's dreams the house is burned and Lucy dies in the blaze. These dreams then become Horahan's reality as he becomes increasingly deranged. He becomes quieter losing interest in communicating with the passengers at the railway station, while the relentless repetition of unchanging dreams distracts his sleep and erodes his psychological welfare.

The same dream – unchanging and vivid in his sleep – continues to disturb his nights: "In his dream the curtains of the house had blown out from the windows, blazing in the dark. There was the lifeless body of a child" (76). He also repeatedly dreams of a hearse passing through the streets, of himself digging the child's grave and of her coffin. His situation worsens when the delusions haunt him in broad daylight since the scenario of the dream is vivid before his eyes. This is a Gothic dream of a dead child, a child he believes he has killed. In many ways, he has contributed to the *death* of Lucy. She is incarcerated in the Big House which has become her coffin. Consequently, Horahan is both another actor in and a victim of the colonial tragedy. The decolonizing moment in Irish history and its attendant violence produce victims.

Like Ralph, who utilizes the noise of his father's sawmills to escape the overbearing memories, Horahan resorts to a job as a house-painter, which, he believes,

might make him busier than the unbearable emptiness of his previous job and its accompanying illusions. "[S]ome instinct suggested to him that he imagined a house-painter's day would be busier, that graining doors and skirting-boards, fixing putty and mixing colours, would allow him less opportunity for brooding" (76-77).

However, despite the change, his mental state deteriorates and he finds it more difficult "to establish reality" (77). Like Ralph who did not share his concerns with any one, Horahan "told no one of the disturbance that afflicted him, not his mother, not his employer, nor anyone who stopped to speak to him as he worked" (77). Feeling uneasy and more disturbed, he enlists in the army to submerge himself in the rigors of the military life. "He joined the army in the hope that military discipline and the noisy communal life, feet on the march and a healthy tiredness, would be more salutary in his affliction than the solitary nature of house-painting or the occupation of a railway-station porter" (95). Horahan seeks peace of mind – an objective he fails to accomplish. Despite the fact that Horahan is an active person in the camp and the first person to volunteer if asked, symptoms of confusion and perturbation cannot be swept under the rug: everyone in the camp – officers and soldiers – notice his strangeness, news of which is passed on to other camps. Even when learning later that the child is safe, the dreams continue to torment him.

Horahan is delighted by the return of the Captain, which allows him to go and seek forgiveness – an act that might alleviate his chaotic psyche. Horahan reveals his secret about the disturbing dreams and his sense of guilt to nobody but to Everard, feeling comfort in his confession to him. He explains the way he was brought up to be a revolutionary and how honour and patriotism are coupled with violence committed against the Other. Furthermore, he believed the Big House to be the archenemy: "There was a Brother used say to us the big house is the enemy" (184). He tells the Captain

how his enmeshment in that attack deprived him of the girl he loved as she shunned him after knowing of his role in the attack on the house. Again, Horahan's actions, like those of Ralph and Lucy, forfeit his chance of happiness. During his visit, it is very evident that he is anxious and disturbed:

> The ex-soldier's awkward occupation of the armchair he had hunched himself into was confirmation of the unease he referred to. From time to time, while silences gathered or his fragmentary talk continued, his hands touched his clothes in different places, appearing to search for something. Abruptly, they would become still and then the knuckles of one were again rubbed by the fingers and palm of the other. His eyes squinted perpetually to the floor, to the rugs that covered most of the wide floorboards, to the corners of the wainscoting. (185-186)

Lucy is deeply traumatised by the return of Horahan to her house because she thinks it is Ralph returning, which demonstrates how enmeshed the stories of these three character are: "She cried out after the man who had gone, her anguish echoing in the trees of the avenue, her tears damp on her father's clothes when he held her to him" (191). Regardless of all the troubles Horahan has inflicted on her and her family, Lucy sympathizes with him as she notices his madness. Twenty-nine years after the attack, Horahan was admitted to the asylum whose windows he had once painted. Horahan's family who once took pride in him shunned him after his admission to the asylum – an act Trevor highlights to unfold the mockery of the colonial situation: "A family would be ashamed" (220). Horahan is left psychologically, mentally and socially destroyed. During the years of his madness and silence in the madhouse, Lucy is the sole person to stand by him: "At the beginning and in the middle of a month she always came" to visit him. (Trevor, 2002: 214) By so doing, "Lucy becomes a sort of Protestant saint", as observed by Lee (2002). She gifts him one of her embroideries

and plays Snakes and Ladders with him. This pastime is emblematic of the troubles they have been through and the dramatic development of their relationship. As Fitzgerald-Hoyt observes, "Snakes and Ladders was originally a game of morality; as the *Oxford English Dictionary* notes, "snakes and ladders" evolved into an adjective to describe life's vicissitudes – highly appropriate in this novel of chance and mischance" (2003: 196). Horahan's involvement in arson and murder is an apparent example of life's vicissitudes. An act initially regarded as a source of pride for Ireland and eulogized by the clergy is later seen as a disgrace, thus highlighting and emphasising the inevitable change of social and political concepts and standards. Similar to Lucy, who is shunned as a result of her childish impulse to flee her home, Horahan is avoided by his Catholic community for his past action. Her visits create happiness in Horahan's life while he is in the asylum. Eventually, she walks behind his coffin: she is a redemption in his riven life, despite the fact that he never knew her identity when she visited him in the asylum. Horahan believes that he killed her as a child. In many ways, both Lucy and Horahan occupy a madhouse. Lucy's madhouse is the Big House – the site of family trauma. Like Horahan, she never recovers. Similarly, Horahan pays dearly for shredding the Gault's lives.

Horahan contributes throughout the text to the creation of a series of distressing silences linked with Gothic narratives. His engagement in the life-changing violence on the night of the attack stifles Lucy's emotional outbursts following his arrival at Lahardane; she does not openly blame him for what he has committed. Moreover, her father is aware of her "grief over Ralph, but he never broaches the subject. He silently berates himself for withholding from the child Lucy the truth about their departure from Lahardane, feeling he might have prevented her running away", as suggested by Fitzgerald-Hoyt (2003: 204). Silence is coupled with blame and fear. Ralph remains silent with regard to his romantic feelings towards Lucy after he gets married: he

shares them with no one. Horahan himself becomes plagued with silence for the rest of his life: after his meeting and confession to Everard in the drawing-room, he never articulates a word. As Lee points out, the title of this work "The Story" does not only tell us the events Lucy encounters, but also indicates that these events transform from a story of telling and retelling into a myth, then a legend (Lee, 2002). The events of this story will become a myth after its main character Lucy passes away, as Trevor indicates (Trevor, 2002: 138). However, Lee regards this as ironic "because no one in this quiet book is outspoken. Silence, secrets, muteness tell the loudest stories here" (Lee, 2002).

Trevor seeks obliteration of the sad legacy of the past. Towards the end, Lahardane, a madhouse and a site of solitude, will be converted into a social place: a hotel – an emphasis on the fact and power of change which Lucy is subjected to and eventually accepts. The other madhouse, the asylum, is pulled down. Accordingly, Trevor is interested in a positive progression of life and the creation of a thriving future, which Fitzgerald-Hoyt refers to as "the fluidities of the future" (2003: 191). Despite the pessimism and gloom filling this work, Trevor asserts the impermanence of pain and the power of the ongoing progression of life. As Craig maintains about this text, "All kinds of upheavals, wars and social revolutions, are enacted elsewhere. We reach a time when the streets of the town of Enniseala are full of foreign tourists, and people walk about with telephones clamped to their ears" (2002). At the end of the novel, the power and the fast speed of history is unequivocal. As Lee maintains in her review:

> Lucy in old age sees people with phones to their ears and hears on the wireless about the internet, and wonders what it is. Hers is an Ireland of keening

> fishermen, ruined graveyards, and John McCormack singing "Down by the Salley Gardens", not of tourism, dotcom businesses, real estate, and the euro. (2002)

Moreover, Trevor creates a glimmer of hope at the end of the story by dissolving the religious tensions which underlie the political hostility. Living on into old age in a decaying house, the lonely Protestant Lucy is visited by two Catholic nuns who have heard about her melancholy loneliness and come to her as *healers*. At this time Lucy is never lonely – another emphasis on the power of time passing in changing the seemingly unchangeable truths, like Lucy's seclusion. They traverse fourteen miles to see her and bring some food with them to please her and to enjoy their time together despite the opposition of another old Catholic nun: "Wouldn't her own do that for her?" (Trevor, 2002: 223) The two nuns defeat the call for division by the opposing nun. Trevor here is bringing the Irish together by melting class and religious differences, hoping to see the Irish form a one well-knit, solid Irish identity. Vera Kreilkamp maintains that Trevor "evokes a community of victims in Ireland, for the agony of the country's history is shared by Catholic and Protestant alike" (1998: 223). Another example is demonstrated when the Protestant Lucy walks behind the coffin of the Catholic Horahan – an act admired by the Catholic society. Transcending class barriers, Everard, the Protestant Captain, helps Lahardane's Catholic retainers Henry and Bridget with the maintenance of his house. According to Trevor in this work, the effective solution to face the evils of the past is by overtaking and forgetting them and looking forward to a prosperous future for Ireland: "bygones were bygones" (Trevor, 2002: 181). Time in Trevor's work is a double-edged sword. On the one hand, Lee points out that time in this text functions as a "destroyer" (Lee, 2002): "Time has settled our hash for us", Everard addresses Horahan (Trevor, 2002: 183) On the other

hand and on a more optimistic level emphasizing the notion of the bright future, Lee observes that time can be an "appeaser" (Lee, 2002). "What happened simply did" Lucy confesses in the end (Trevor, 2002: 227).

*The Story of Lucy Gault* revolves around the fact that the past is "the enemy in Ireland" (Trevor, 2002: 10). This unforgettable past demolishes the lives of Everard, Heloise, Lucy, Ralph and Horahan. Regardless of the dazzling beauty of the Irish landscape depicted in the novel, it is blanketed in ills of old age, hopelessness, death, regret, crying, tears, drowning and loss. Gothicism is the predominant characteristic of the story. Everard, once an officer in the First World War, ends up as skin and bones. Lucy who used to be infatuated with nature and life resorts to the graveyard of her ancestors where she finds comfort, in sharp contrast to her former days when she found a safe haven in swimming in the sea. These appalling consequences result from the complete succumbing to and inheritance of the ancestors' sins. As a result, Trevor looks forward to a powerful future rather than clinging to the sins of the past – historical or personal. This novel underlines the fact that the colonized are not the only victims of colonialism: the colonizer also pays heavily in this novel and falls victim to the imperial enterprise. Everard is represented as both a colonizer and a modest heir of the colonial past. He endures the curse of this inheritance, regardless of his good nature. He treats his Catholic servants with respect and gratitude and loathes violence. However, the accidental shooting precipitates the destruction of his family. The colonial past is violent and has riven Everard, Heloise and Lucy to pieces.

**INDIA**

## Chapter Five

## The Endurance of Empire:

## Kiran Desai's *The Inheritance of Loss*

*The Inheritance of Loss* has been defined as a postcolonial novel written by the Indian author Kiran Desai and first published in 2006. It is also a neo-historical novel in that it reconsiders, reappraises and reworks the recent historical past. The novel is set in the 1980s but stretches back to the 1930s when India was part of the British Raj. Desai won the most prestigious British literary award The Man Booker Prize in 2006 and then in 2007 the American prize: The National Book Critics Circle Fiction Award (Das, 2018: 84). The story in *The Inheritance of Loss* is told by an omniscient narrator in fifty-three chapters, alternating between the judge Jemubhai Patel's past in Cambridge and in India in the 1930s and the present of all the characters in the 1980s in India and of Biju in America. The narrative commences in Kalimpong in 1986. Desai pits the past against the present, traditions against modernity and colonialism against postcolonialism. She highlights the impacts of British imperialism on the politics of the colonized society and family. Her novel also investigates the impact of the Empire on the Western individuals living in its colony. This work focuses on the struggle of the immigrants and racism encountered in the West. Like *Sunset Oasis, The Inheritance of Loss* demonstrates layers of colonization as a by- product of the colonial project: the Indians themselves suppress each other and corruption breaks out. The caste system, exacerbated by British rule, widens the gap between the Indians and creates many social classes among them to increase the divide in the social fabric by setting barriers between the classes and preventing the individuals from mingling and uniting. This situation generates the emergence of many separatist movements demanding their own

independent states within India. Because of the extensive number of the social layers created by the British enterprise in India, the individuals of these layers find themselves different from those surrounding them ethnically, religiously and linguistically, and consequently demand their own territory. Desai addresses a focal point in this work: the loss of the identity in this chaotic politics and the development of a colonial neurosis running through the generations.

This novel pursues the impacts of imperialism on a family during colonial and postcolonial eras. The retired judge Jemubhai Patel, a colonial relic, exemplifies the colonial era. In the 1940s, he attended Cambridge University to study Law and came back to India and joined the Indian Civil Service and worked as a judge. He is trapped between the East and the West and loses his identity. He treats his parents, wife and daughter badly. His westernized granddaughter Sai, when nine years old, comes to live with him in his crumbling mansion Cho Oyu at the picturesque foothills of Himalayas in a town called Kalimpong. Biju, whose father works as a cook for the judge, epitomizes the postcolonial era of the text. In the 1980s he immigrated to the United States and overstayed his visa for money doing menial jobs in the basements of the American restaurants and encountered racism and humiliation. Gyan is an Indian-Nepalese, torn between his love for Sai and his loyalty to the Gorkhaland movement which fights for the rights of the Indian-Nepalese. The Anglophiliac Lola and Noni, the judge's neighbours, fall victim to the political trouble and are suppressed by their own people. Father Booty and Uncle Potty are Westerners living in India and are affected by the unease and represent how the former colonizer can be mistreated by the colonized.

**The Historical Backdrop of the Work**

*The Inheritance of Loss* is set in India in 1986, 39 years following Indian Independence from British Empire in 1947. Desai focuses on the overlooked area of Kalimpong and Darjeeling where the Indian-Nepalese have lived for many generations in West Bengal. The Indian-Nepalese are victimized in the beginning by the policies of colonial Britain and by the Indians subsequently. They were doubly colonized and internalized violence and hatred as a result. They demanded the "subdivisions of Darjeeling, Kalimpong, and Kurseong, and extending to the foothills, parts of Jalpaiguri and Cooch Behar districts, from Bengal into Assam" (Desai, 2006: 243). They found themselves a majority comprising 80% of the population of West Bengal, but were treated as a minority by the Indian government.

The British Empire granted India its freedom but the boundaries created after decolonization caused deep fissures in the social fabric which guaranteed longstanding dispute and chaos. Madhu Shalini notes: "The novel is set in post-colonial India but the ominous presence of the colonial period can be seen and felt casting its shadows on a country which has been given a wakening call to the glorious morn of independence" (2009: 199-200). The partition of India resulted in the formation of two countries, India and Pakistan, with many subdivisions within each country, dissecting the same people into parties by fatally thin borders. "It's an issue of a porous border". "You can't tell one from the other, Indian Nepali from Nepali Nepali" (Desai, 2006: 136).

This partition is described in the text as the "[f]irst heart attack" to India "that has never been healed" (136). The "messy map" drawn by the British is deemed a lethal legacy of the empire eroding the unity of the independent country (16). As this

legacy exacerbates the differences between the individuals, it urges each ethnicity to demand its independent statehood. Lola observes:

> This state-making [is the] biggest mistake that fool Nehru [the Indian Prime Minister from 1947 to 1964] made. Under his rules any group of idiots can stand up demanding a new state and get it, too. How many new ones keep appearing? From fifteen we went to sixteen, sixteen to seventeen, seventeen to twenty-two. (135)

The Gorkhas were no exception: they demanded their own independent state within the independent state of West Bengal. As indicated by Sonali Das, "Desai harks back to the past and employs the Gorkhaland movement as a springboard for *The Inheritance of Loss*" (2018: 61). Das adds that "[t]he Gorkhaland Movement is aimed at securing a state for the Gorkhas in the same way as India had become for Indians after the departure of the colonial power. Kiran Desai dives deep into the heart of the Gorkhaland Movement with sympathy and understanding" (2018: 95). The Gorkha people moved from Nepal to West Bengal and settled there for hundreds of years and believed they owned the right to run their issues by themselves. As a result of the colonial policies and practices, India, the new-born country, became submerged in the internal conflicts amongst its castes and tribes and the separatist movements and in external fights with its external enemies, like Pakistan and China, rather than developing the quality of its individual's life. The Gorkhas were one of those ethnic groups who remained troubled by India of the 1980s, as Desai's novel explores.

The Gorkhas encountered double colonialism in India. First, they were used by British Empire in its two World Wars: they fought bravely alongside British troops across the continents with little reward or compensation. Like the British, the Indians

long suppressed the Gorkhas and harnessed their energy. India imposed Bengali language on the Gorkha students at school and deprived them of using their mother tongue, Nepali, in a place where the Gorkhas comprised the majority of the population. The Gorkhas are presented as oppressed in Desai's text: "thin as sticks", the Gorkhas work on tea plantations and carry heavy stones (Desai, 2006: 166). The Gorkhas worked as soldiers defending India against their own old friends, the Pakistanis. In addition, they were not allowed to own a tea plantation or hold a government job. The Indians drained their resources: "Every day the lorries leave bearing away our forests, sold by foreigners to fill the pockets of foreigners. Every day our stones are carried from the riverbed of the Teesta to build their houses and cities" (166). The Indian-Nepalese found themselves unable to gain scholarships to study abroad like other Indians. Similar to the Gorkha men, their women worked as labourers on tea plantations and carried heavy stones. As the Gorkhas long experienced enslavement by the Indians, they internalized loathing and desires for revenge against the Indians. Fanon comments on the oppressed: "The practice of violence binds them together as a whole, since each individual forms a violent link in the great chain, a part of the great organism of violence which has surged upward in reaction to the settler's violence in the beginning. The groups recognize each other and the future nation is already indivisible" (Fanon, 1963: 93).

The young Gorkhas formed their own separatist movement called Gorkha National Liberation Front (GNLF) in 1986 seeking an independent state from West Bengal and an administrative body run bythem. Das observes: "In *The Inheritance of Loss* Desai globalizes the local by highlighting the GNLF movement, while at the same time bringing the global to the local, and contrives the return of Biju to India. The novel becomes a blend of the global and local in the 21st century. Hence, it can be described aptly as a glocal novel" (Das, 2018: 95). The Gorkhas urged their own people

to create a strong army for Gorkhaland and to resign from the Indian army. Their motto was "Gorkhaland for Gorkhas", and their symbol was the kukri denoting their courage and relentlessness in wars (De, 2014). They promised they would build hospitals, schools and universities and employ their own children. In order to meet their objectives, they recalled the old atrocities perpetrated against them to ignite their hatred and spur themselves for retaliation. "[W]hen they had disinterred it [their rage], they found the hate pure, purer than it could ever have been before, because the grief of the past was gone. Just the fury remained, distilled, liberating" (Desai, 2006: 168). Their violent past and subjugation resurrected their old rage and fueled their willingness for liberation: "at one time or another, that old hatreds are endlessly retrievable" (168). In order to fund their movement, the Gorkha insurgents sold the cassette tapes of their fiery speeches and calendars by force to people. They confronted the Indian army and the police forces on several occasions, and this brought about chaos and violence. The insurgents, for instance, pushed the army vehicles into the ravine and set alight the bamboo jungles. Suspicion and tension intensified among people as they feared to be accused by the Indian army of supporting the movement, and vice versa. During the riots accompanying the burning of the Indian-Nepali treaty of 1950 by the Gorkha recalcitrants, the cook in Desai's novel sought to escape the turbulence, and then stopped by the Victorian tower of the Criminal Investigation Division, built by the British during the colonization era. This sight encapsulates the whole political situation: this British tower 40 years after the independence witnessed the success of the colonial project as the fights and riots among the independent Indians intensified. Furthermore, corruption broke out in the vital places of the government, like the police station and the army compounds. Because of the prevalent unease, some people in charge thought of their own interests neglecting the interest of the whole country. They extracted bribes, and some of the retired officers of the army

taught the Gorkha rebels how to make and set bombs and attack the police as illustrated in *The Inheritance of Loss*.

Similar to *The Story of Lucy Gault*, this text starts with a cowardly attack against the judge's house Cho Oyu by the Gorkha boys who are under twenty years old. They become frightened when they see the little dog Mutt. They encroach on the house searching for weapons, food and money to support their movement. In this visit, they humiliate the judge who considers himself a foreigner living in India. They force him to cover the table with a tablecloth and repeat their motto:

> "Say, *'Jai* Gorkha,'" they said to the judge. "Gorkhaland for Gorkhas."
>
> "*Jai* Gorkha."
>
> "Say, 'I am a fool.'"
>
> "I am a fool."
>
> "Loudly. Can't hear you, *huzoor.* Say it louder" (14).

They terrorize the frail occupants of Cho Oyu by pointing the rifle at them threatening to kill them. They steal two trunks, one of which is the judge's and the other is Sai's. They fill them with food and grooming products. They take the judge's three hunting rifles that he cherishes dearly. The Gorkhas unleash their long internalized malice against the occupants of the house. Those colonized become colonizers and oppressors at that moment, and this further complicates the notion of layering of colonization in this work. This leads to further discussion about the judge who plays the focal role of a colonized and a colonizer.

**The Judge: A Mimic Man**

Jemubhai Patel is the main focus of this text as he lives in both British India and postcolonial India. His past heavily scars him and distorts his present. He is a

victim of the caste system which is born of the colonial period: his family belongs to the peasant caste and is suppressed by the higher classes. He experiences poverty and lives "under a palm roof scuffling with rats" (Desai, 2006: 63). Like the Gorkhas, the judge internalizes desires for revenge and resentment against his own people. He is aware that the only way to wreak revenge on those who suppress his caste is through obtaining imperial education. He is studious and because of this he gains a scholarship to college. Subsequently, he enters Cambridge University to study Law and comes back as a judge and succeeds to work in the high court. His job, a judge at the high court, enables him to demonstrate authority on his old suppressors: "he relished his power over the classes that had kept his family pinned under their heels for centuries" (68).

Another sure way, he believes, that can release him from the grip of the caste system and enable him to turn against it is through forging loyalty and a sense of belonging to a more powerful entity than that of the caste system: England. "Affiliation with the West makes a person much more valuable than someone with no affiliation" (Das, 2018: 82). The first signs of this respect towards England appear when he is a schoolboy. Every morning he contemplates a portrait of Queen Victoria hung at the entrance of his school – one of the policies used by the colonizers to indirectly instil love for the British Raj in the hearts of the colonized at a young age. "The more he pondered this oddity, the more his respect for her and the English grew" (Desai, 2006: 65). Later, after his arrival from England, he adopts the English ways of

life: he keeps a dog as a pet and have cheese straws, scones, cakes, bed tea, toast and marmalade. In an attempt to imitate the English, he dedicates himself to his work, but in an exaggerating way. "He is unfortunately one of those 'ridiculous Indians' who is incapable to come out of the strong clutches of foreign exposure. He leads a busy life totally devoted to work and work only, thus ignoring his family and children" (Singh,

2009: 269). Unlike the Indians who use their hands while eating, he eats the chapatis [a kind of Indian bread] using a fork and a knife. He creates his own social status in his community by associating himself with England: he considers himself as a king and his certificate of Law from Cambridge University as a crown on his head. For instance, when he goes on tour to the villages around his area, he stays in several tents put up at the same place: a huge bedroom tent, "an attached tent bathroom, dressing room, drawing room, and dining room. The tents [are] very grand, Kashmiri carpets, silver dishes" (Desai, 2006: 67). The judge also dresses "for dinner even in the jungle, in black dinner jacket and bow tie" (67). Before his current cook, the judge used to have several servants - an indication of his determination to avenge suppression and poverty he experienced in the past.

In contrast to his parents' dilapidated house with a palm roof imposed on them by the power of the caste system, he later manages to live in the mansion Cho Oyu by the power of his association with the colonizer, in a similar way to the Gault family in *The Story of Lucy Gault* who live in the mansion Lahardane. He is privileged by studying and living in England for five years and in this way feels entitled to enjoy some of the colonial privileges. In 1957 and in a poverty-stricken terrain, a Scotsman built this mansion for the judge in an English style using the advanced techniques of building with regard to tubing, tiling and piping. The ceiling had "the reach of a public monument and the rooms were spacious in the old manner of wealth" (13-4) with "fancy wrought-iron gates" (19) and a lightning conductor. Because of his connections with the West, the judge becomes distinguished by owning this grand building.

The judge takes advantage of the process of building Cho Oyu in order to revolt against the suppression of the past. He is cruel against his own people and this problematizes the notion of double colonization in this work: the colonized judge plays the role of a colonizer against his people using his judicious authority and connection

with the West. The Indian porters carry boulders from the riverbed to the top of the hill where the site of his mansion is located in the north-eastern Himalayas. The porters are in a sorry state with "legs growing bandy, ribs curving into caves, backs into U's, faces being bent slowly to look always at the ground" (19). The judge now relishes what he has long condemned: he abuses and uses the poor. Because of the old grudges and a sense of oppression, he feels a foreigner in his homeland and this explains why he becomes aloof isolating himself on top of the hill so that he can avoid any contact with his people. According to Shaleen Kumar Singh, Desai describes him as "an introvert personality who is more at ease in the company of his pet dog Mutt than his family and his children" (Singh, 2009:269).

Later, the judge begins to lose these privileges. The sentence "The [judge's] clothes were frayed" is emblematic of the unravelment of all the privileges he enjoys: the house, the authority, the certificate and more significantly his health (Desai, 2006: 40). Like the crumbling Lahardane, Cho Oyu falls apart in a similar way to the dismantlement of British Empire in India. The house becomes swarming with snakes, scorpions, rats, mice droppings, termites and beetles. The decaying furniture is soaking with wet and covered in fungi because of long months of the "aqueous season", and the leaks are everywhere (113). The monsoon batters the high pillars of the house and penetrates the windows. The walls swell "with moisture and billow forth" (14). This highlights "a sad state for the civilized man" (123). This questions the spurious reality of the wealth obtained through the connection with the West as this once grand mansion becomes useless: "less of it was habitable" (117). Like the uselessness of the judge's colonial heritage of Cho Oyu, his authority as a judge becomes meaningless: he quits his job because of the riots and injustice diffusing West Bengal by the Gorkha movement. The intellectual weapon he inherits from the West becomes futile: his certificate from Cambridge University is hung on a wet-soaked

wall and covered with stains, symbolizing the temporariness of colonial benefits. In a similar way to the crumbling house, his health deteriorates as he develops sensitive gums and wears false teeth. Desai describes him as "a shrivelled figure", emphasizing his physical weakness and fragility which are according to Desai consequences of his connection with the West (40). The colonial power provides him with a magnificent lodging, but in an isolated area to rot with his colonial heritage. By so doing, Desai discourages and warns of cultural diversity. Mishra notes that "Desai takes a sceptical view of the West's consumer-driven multiculturalism" (Das, 2018: 72). As Das states, "*The Inheritance of Loss* does not celebrate the concept of cultural diversity. Instead, it provides another perspective on cultural difference; the discomfort caused by belonging to a space 'in-between' or on the periphery of cultures" (2018: 69). He fails to completely belong to the Western culture as he is Indian and to the Eastern culture as he is ashamed of it.

Before his arrival to England, the judge believes that his new destination will be a Utopia: a refuge from the cruelty of the caste system and a realm of ideals. Upon his arrival, he encounters the disillusionment of his dreams and grapples with racial discrimination and xenophobia. "It took him by surprise because he'd expected only grandness, hadn't realized that here, too, people could be poor and live unaesthetic lives" (Desai, 2006: 45). He experiences racism in a way that impacts on his view of himself dramatically and challenges the human side of himself. He tries twenty-two houses to rent a room and every time the landlords refuse him. The only woman who agrees to let him a room is desperate for money. Alongside the old women who avoid sitting beside him on the bus, the girls laugh at him: "Phew, he stinks of curry!" (46). As a result of this humiliation, he develops an inferiority complex. "The rejection by foreigners instilled in his soul a feeling of shame, an inferiority complex and a dislike for his heritage, his culture and the color of his skin. He became a stranger to himself"

(Das, 2018: 64). In consequence of this and in order to protect his fragile feelings, while in England, he isolates himself and avoids talking to people who also ignore him. In this way, his practice of English is lacking which makes his spoken English affected by his Gujerati accent. This proliferates the racial remarks he receives which further undermines his self-esteem and confidence. When he recited poetry during the final exam before the English students, "they were all chuckling" (Desai, 2006: 120). As Arpita Chattaraj argues, "The confrontation of cultures instils in him a sense of ineffectuality, he is haunted by a feeling of worthlessness that issued from his belief in his racial inferiority" (2009: 260). Furthermore, he does not find the quantity of food served to him sufficient, and this triggers nostalgia in him and awakens his longing for his home in Piphet. As a result of racism, he feels less than a human being. When someone says "how do you do?", he feels astonished as this compliment reminds him that he is still a human being who is worth attention (Desai, 2006: 172). This example accentuates his distorted conceptions of himself. Another example demonstrating this point is when he buys a shaving brush, identical to another brush owned by an English man. He finds this fact an overwhelming thought that he and the English man have "identical human needs" (47). He is ashamed of revealing his gums, teeth and clothes to the English and prefers the cloudy day to the sunny one as the sun betrays his defects. "According to Said, such things happen due to "the clash between culture and civilization" (334), between the West and the East" (Das, 2018: 64). As Madhu Shalini observes, "gradually all these residual traces and memories of subordination play havoc on his senses and restructure his psyche thereby playing a major role in shaping him" (2009: 202). He exerts the same colonial influence he has experienced in England on himself before abusing those he encounters in his work and his family: he imbibes racism in England which causes self-loathing. He internalizes racism to the extent that he sees his own people as inferior.

The embracement of the alien culture comes at the expense of suffering from an identity crisis. The judge abandons his native culture, and the new association with the West makes him rebel against his parents and feel ashamed of them. Despite their poverty, his parents deluged their only son with all their attention and love: "Each day, he was given a tumbler of fresh milk sequined with golden fat. His mother held the tumbler to his lips, lowering it only when empty, so he re-emerged like a whale from the sea, heaving for breath" (Desai, 2006: 65). They looked after his education and they were honoured by the fact that he was the first one from their town Piphet to study abroad. According to Madhu Shalini, "By equipping him with a colonial education the family rewrites its history" (2009: 202). Nevertheless, he greets their dedication with contempt and disgust. This acute shift of identity plagues him with a colonial neurosis: he shies away from his Indian heritage and on a more appalling level distances himself from his parents. He, for instance, never cries when leaving India. Upon his arrival in England, he dusts his face with white powder in order to hide his dark skin which reveals his Indian identity. He seeks to resemble the English by applying white and pink powder to his face. However, this is regarded as a superficial resemblance which Homi Bhabha describes as "a 'partial' presence". He means by "partial" "both 'incomplete' and 'virtual'" (1994: 123), "not quite/not white" (1994: 131). Sonali Das suggests that the "judge sets off on his journey (of mimicry) to Cambridge, with an eagerness to be recognized, which, however, turns out to be "a subject of difference that is almost the same, but not quite" (Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* 86)" (Das, 2018: 64). Das also adds that hybridity does not mean the enforcement of one culture onto another, but the mutual merging between them (65). She notes that the judge after mingling with the Western culture comes back with strange behaviour (65). Following his return to India, the judge seeks to enact Englishness in his locale. However, Arbita Chattaraj observes: "The space he inhabits is a space of mimicry and hybridity that

cannot essentially incorporate or take up the life he had left behind" (2009: 261). His awareness of his failure to completely mimic the colonizer further adds to his psychological problems regarding the identity. "He envied the English. He loathed Indians. He worked at being English with the passion of hatred" (Desai, 2006: 126). As a result of being ashamed of his identity, he feels disgraced with his *self*. In order to become detached from this disgraceful self, he avoids using the first pronoun - an indication of a profound sense of self inferiority when he compares himself with the superior English: ""Don't work too hard." "One must, Mrs. Rice." He had learned to take refuge in the third person and to keep everyone at bay, to keep even himself away from himself like the Queen" (118). On the ferry heading to England, he feels ashamed of the smell of the food prepared in an Indian way and wrapped by his mother in case he cannot use the fork and knife while eating on the ferry. He does not consider this as attention and care, but as humiliation because of his ailing identity. He describes her love as "[u]ndignified love, Indian love, stinking, unaesthetic love" which reflects the newly wide fissure in his relationship with his mother (45). He despises their religious practices of Hinduism and renounces them on the voyage to England - an act never shown before: he does not throw the coconut in the ocean in order to bless him as instructed by his parents. Alongside the destruction of the tight-knit bonds between the judge and his parents, his identity is fractured because of his adoption of the new precarious culture of the West. He views his new identity as superior to his parents' identity. He finds himself torn between the East and the West and abandoned by both: "for what he would become, he would be despised by absolutely everyone, English and Indians, both" (126).

*The Inheritance of Loss* accentuates the intricacy of the colonial project as the judge forges allegiances with the colonizer by his own accord. This illuminates the success of the colonial scheme as it affects the loyalty of the colonized to his country.

Despite the fact that it was 1939, at the pinnacle of the dominance of British Empire in India, the judge's family worked hard to send their son to England. They identify with the colonizer in order to escape their poverty and caste. Moreover, the judge chooses to marry an Indian girl whose family are wealthy because of their connections with British army. His wife's grandfather helped the British army in its skirmishes with the Gaekwads, a Hindu clan, and provided them with food. He fed the enemy that was killing his own people thus adding another layer of complexity to the term *colonized*. The judge's father-in-law Bomanbhai also provided the British soldiers with "unauthorized women": he harnessed the poverty of the women of his country to fill his pockets with the money of prostitution (96). Desai problematizes the colonized's homage to the colonist which highlights the extensive discrepancies accompanying the relationship between the subjugator and the subjugated. Another example which highlights this aspect of contradiction is shown when people in Piphet, the judge's hometown, know about the judge's intention to pursue his education in the colonial metropolis: they grovel to him and his father and offer their daughters in marriage. "The dowry bids poured in and his father began an exhilarated weighing and tallying: ugly face—a little more gold, a pale skin—a little less. A dark and ugly daughter of a rich man seemed their best bet" (96). The bride's family that the judge chooses belongs to a caste regarded higher than his, and this family is only allowed to marry within fifteen families according to the constraints and confines of their caste. However, the bride's father Bomanbhai completely overlooks his traditions and marries his daughter to this poor man of a lower and different class for the sake of acquiring colonial honour and distinction in his community. The judge's father considers the English certificate a social elevator that can lift him from the caste system to better status in his community. Following the return of Jemubhai, "his father transformed into a king holding court, as neighbors, acquaintances, even strangers,

streamed by to eat syrup-soaked sweets and offer congratulations in envy-soaked voices" (125). The phrase "envy-soaked" suggests they are dying to be in his place, relishing the privileges of their tormentor: England.

In sharp contrast to his father's great expectations, the judge comes home mentally and psychologically wounded: "It was a mistake to send you away. You have become like a stranger to us," his father observes (313). This emphasizes Madhu Shalini's view on colonialism: "colonialism does not end with the end of colonial occupation" (Shalini, 2009: 199). She adds: "The process of decolonizing the mind is a difficult and complex procedure for the act of colonization moves deeper than mere geographical or surface realities. It involves and is concerned with men and therefore there are deeper complexities involved" (Shalini, 2009: 199). This explains the complexity of the judge's permanent mental and psychological agony. The judge's father witnesses how his son mistreats and oppresses his young wife. In the beginning, he marries an under-aged girl who is fourteen years old. By the power of the Indian traditions and his masculine superiority, even before travelling to England, he exploits her financially: she gives him a huge dowry, buys a ticket for his voyage to Liverpool and gifts him with woollen cloth in order to protect him from the cold in London. However, this cloth fails to safeguard him against the strict coldness of his emotions towards her. Out of selfishness and rapacity, he marries her despite the fact that he knows he will stay with her for only a month and will leave her for five years.

Following his arrival back in India permanently scarred by racism in England, he consequently vents on her his long-accumulated rage and desire for revenge. He, for instance, deprives her of food when she fails to say the name of the food in English: this results from the psychological complex he has developed during the five years he spent in England when reciting English poetry with a Gujerati accent. Back in England, "[f]or entire days nobody spoke to him at all, his throat jammed with words

unuttered" (Desai, 2006: 46). This traumatizing experience furthers his psychological trauma to the extent that he enacts it on his wife. He isolates her as he was isolated in England: "Weeks went by and she spoke to nobody" (179). He is incensed by the simple acts of his wife. When he finds out she has hidden his powder puff in her chest, he becomes infuriated and rapes her - an indication of contempt and loathing. Moreover, he is ashamed of the fact she is his wife and of her Indianness: "In public, he never spoke to or looked in her direction" (177). Nimi does "not accompany her husband on tour, unlike the other wives" (178). Spending plenty of time in England switches his standards of beauty which impinges on his relationship with his wife. For example, considering his native culture alien, he unleashes a torrent of abuse and criticism over her "gaudy"- coloured clothes and her hair oil, regardless of the fact his mother is Indian sharing with Nimi the same culture of fashion and haircare style (179). According to Das, "Her Indianness irritates him and reminds him of his sense of rejection in Cambridge for the same reason. His repressed feelings of anger and hatred surface, and he directs them at his innocent housewife" (2018: 77-8). His insidious and psychologically tormented character aggravates her humiliation by empowering the servants to degrade her: "the servants thumped their own leftovers on the table for her to eat, stole the supplies without fear, allowed the house to grow filthy without guilt until the day before Jemubhai's arrival" (Desai, 2006: 179). His cruelty is demonstrated when he discovers that she squats on the toilet. He "could barely contain his outrage, took her head and pushed it into the toilet bowl" - an act revealing his blatant opposition to his native culture exacerbated by the fact that it is embodied by his detestable wife (180). His savagery culminates when he knows about her innocent enmeshment in welcoming Nehru, the Prime Minister of India at that time:

> He emptied his glass on her head, sent a jug of water swinging into the face he

> no longer found beautiful, filled her ears with leaping soda water. Then, when this wasn't enough to assuage his rage, he hammered down with his fists, raising his arms to bring them down on her again and again, rhythmically, until his own hands were exhausted and his shoulders next day were strained sore as if from chopping wood. He even limped a bit, his leg hurting from kicking her. (311)

He subsequently sends her home to her family who brings about her death.

The marital relationship is not the only bond disintegrating by the contact with the invader. The father-daughter relationship is destroyed in *The Inheritance of Loss.* Nimi's father Bomanbhai is notorious for his association with the British army in India which in turn provides him with wealth, and as a result he enjoys living in a spacious high-walled house called the haveli. Bomanbhai immerses his family in luxury: "He ordered a set of stained-glass panes that flooded the haveli with luscious multi-fruit-colored light under which the children played, entertained by how they might look orange or purple or half orange and half green" (97). He furthermore brings South African diamonds to his wife. However, this opulence bestowed by the colonizer becomes a curse on Bella, in a similar way to the colonial wealth of the Gault family in *The story of Lucy Gault.* This affluence destroys her dignityas her father offers her as a bride to Jemubhai: her father treats her as a commodity and this justifies her husband's mistreatment of his wife, like changing her name from Bella to Nimi, as if she was a pet. Her father's wealth makes his daughter more desirable and more prone to financial exploitation. She is suppressed by the Indian traditions in a similar way to Maleeka in *Sunset Oasis*. Her father enforces purdah on her, her mother and sisters which means he keeps them isolated and locked in this big house, the haveli, which becomes a colonial *big* house. Then she moves into another form of incarceration with

her husband and jailer Jemubhai. As Das notes: "By writing about indigenous people of their homeland, postcolonial writers create an alternative history (different from that of the colonizer's) and seek to recreate national identity. This identity is established through the cultural representation of characters. Desai has done it well in *The Inheritance of Loss*" (Das, 2018: 69). Like Said and Soueif, Desai gives voice to the silenced characters in Western literature, creates an alternative history for them and highlights their suffering, as is the case of Nimi who is triply colonized by the colonizer: the English, the colonized: her father and her husband and the communal traditions. This complicates the impacts of colonialism on family relations.

Alongside the loss of his identity and the broken relationship with his parents, wife and community, the judge, the colonial hangover, is haunted and tormented by his past. He "seemed not to have traveled forward in time but far back" (Desai, 2006: 40). His memories traumatize him as they can be easily triggered by, for example, Gyan's unease when Gyan recites poetry in front of him. This incident reminds the judge of the old humiliation and laughter at him when reciting English poetry with an Indian accent – a mental scar that never fades through the years. The sight of Sai's trunk when arriving at Cho Oyu jogs his memories: he remembers his own trunk when leaving India and embarking on the self-destructive voyage. Moreover, the persistent memories of the daylight robbery of his rifles and his humiliation at the hands of the Gorkha insurgents torment him. Sai herself reminds him of his old guilt against his daughter: he shuns his daughter and dumps her in a convent boarding school: "The older nuns remembered her [Sai's] mother and the fact that the judge paid for her keep but never visited" (35). Therefore, the judge is in desperate need for redemption. Despite his frustration upon her arrival in the beginning, the judge clings to Sai, his granddaughter, especially after discovering the similarities between them: "There was something familiar about her; she had the same accent and manners. She was a

westernized Indian brought up by English nuns, an estranged Indian living in India" (217). She becomes his real "calmpose" when the material calmpose fails to eject the painful memories haunting him (47). In order to repent his colonial guilt or because she reminds him of the self he wanted to become (an English self), he treats Sai well by providing her with private qualified tutors: first Noni, then Gyan. Furthermore, he maintains her English manners: "Can't send you to a government school, I suppose . . . you'd come out speaking with the wrong accent and picking your nose" (41).

Similar to Sai, Mutt is another source of solace. She reveals his paternal warmth that is lacking between him and his daughter: "Mutt followed him to his room. As he sat brooding, she leaned against him with the ease that children have when leaning against their parents" (120). He buys her an expensive vaccine against rabies and has a coat tailored for her. He cares about the quality of her food: he feeds her with peanut butter, pumpkin, soy Nutrinuggets, chapati and powdered milk. Like parents who show altruism towards their children, the judge prioritizes Mutt, as if he compensates for his negligence against his daughter. For example, during the shortage of food accompanying the Gorkha insurgency, "she'd already had the last of the meat; the judge had barred himself and Sai from it, and the cook, of course, never had the luxury of eating meat in the first place" (295). In sharp contrast to his cruelty against his wife, he cares about Mutt's feelings. ""Silly girl," said Sai [to Mutt]. "Little pearl," said the judge when Sai left, in case Mutt's feelings had been bruised" (112). Additionally, he pampers her by calling her "diamond pearl", "sweetheart", "queen" and "duchess": he personifies his pedigreed dog to compensate for the lack of intimacy between him and Nimi and his daughter (300). He develops misanthropy: he hates both the English and the Indians. He prefers animals to mankind because they are not racist or contradictory:

> He couldn't conceive of punishment great enough for humanity. A man wasn't equal to an animal, not one particle of him. Human life was stinking, corrupt, and meanwhile there were beautiful creatures who lived with delicacy on the earth without doing anyone any harm. "We should be dying," the judge almost wept. (299)

However, Mutt highlights his capacity for affection but also shows how distorted his emotions are towards humans. When he loses Mutt, he realizes that this is a deserved punishment for his sins against his parents, wife and daughter: "was it paying him back? For sins he had committed that no court in the world could take on" (308). The judge's story stretches from the Raj to the present moment of the 1980s where ethnic tensions and desires for independence amongst the Gorkhas destabilize the insecure foundations of his world. Like Lucy Gault's home, the judge's home becomes a mausoleum. However, Desai does not simply focus on this relic of empire and his treatment of his family, she also examines the story of a victim of a globalized world, Biju, the son of the judge's cook who sought a better life in American in the 1980s.

**Biju: The Oppressed Abroad**

Immigrating in the 1980s to the USA to pursue his livelihood, Biju is the postcolonial version of the judge. Natasha Walter argues:

> [S]cenes in which the cook's son, Biju, tries to make a life in the US are paralleled by the judge's experience studying in England in the 1940s. In both situations, we see a young Indian man setting off full of idealism about the cultural and material opportunities of the west, only to find himself ground down by the reality of being a second-class citizen. (2006)

Biju encounters the real bitterness of life on New York streets as he moves from one restaurant to another as an illegal cheap labourer exploited by greedy employers. "[L]ike a fugitive on the run—no papers", he endures the bitter winter of New York while delivering food to customers wearing light clothes (Desai, 2006: 10). The only way to protect himself from the cold is by putting "a padding of newspapers down his shirt" (58). In order to accentuate the physical and psychological agony of the exploited immigrant, Desai draws a picture of Biju in words showing him crying from the cold while delivering the food. However, this weeping is not a mere reaction to the cold weather per se, but a symptom of other buried pains obtained during his journey to the West: "the weeping unpicked a deeper vein of grief—such a terrible groan issued from between the whimpers that he was shocked his sadness was so profound" (58). As an illegal immigrant, he spends his life in New York in the cellars and basements of the restaurants experiencing the lowest standards of hygiene thus dispelling his self-esteem and dignity. Desai intentionally provides the reader with a minute and detailed description of the slovenly circumstances among which the immigrant lives to focus attention on his suffering. Also, she attracts our attention to the factual nature of globalization. Melissa Dennihy suggests that "globalization still relies upon the same processes of exploitation and manipulation that were used during colonialism and imperialism" (Dennihy, 2009: 15). Pankaj Mishra observes that Desai is "adept at using physical descriptions to evoke complex states of mind" (2006). For example, the bakery he works in is an archetype of the filthy environment encompassing immigrants like Biju: they live side by side to "a burst sewage pipe, a hiccupping black drain, knives stored behind the toilet, rat droppings in the flour, and in a forgotten basin of eggs, single-celled organisms so comfortable they were reproducing on their own without inspiration from another" (Desai, 2006: 109). This evokes in the postcolonial

reader a palpable sense of empathy with the immigrant.

Another obstacle confronting the immigrant is maintaining social and emotional communication with people he/she treasures. In order to overcome homesickness and emptiness, Biju lives off his letters to his father in Kalimpong and the letters from his father to him in New York in order to alleviate the torture of exile However, correspondence is susceptible to loss, as the name of the novel indicates, because of the harsh conditions of the weather and the political turmoil in India: "They would never know how many of them went astray" (102). Desai draws attention to the impacts of globalisation on the colonized. Melissa Dennihy notes:

> These inequalities in economics, culture, quality of life, and ability to maintain relationships with one's family and one's people are perhaps the best examples of the fact that globalization is not a "new" world system that embraces "positive" ideals such as multiculturalism, progress, and modernity, but is, rather, a newer version of the same form of world domination upon which imperialism and colonialism were founded. (2009: 14)

Furthermore, Biju seeks to communicate with other immigrants abroad to compensate for the yearning for his family and quell the symptoms of homesickness. Michael Carlisle suggests Biju tries to maintain his emotional connection with others (Carlisle, 2005). Biju forges a strong friendship with Saeed, an immigrant from Zanzibar; however, this bond is doomed to end "since the shadow class [is] condemned to movement" (Desai, 2006: 109). Illegal immigrants are described as "the shadow class" because they cannot settle down in one place (109). They spend their lives in exile as runaways, Saeed finds himself coerced to leave the bakery where he works with Biju because the authorities receive complaints about the lack of hygiene standards at the

bakery and may raid it anytime. As a result, Biju is disappointed by the movement of his best friend: "The emptiness Biju felt returned to him over and over, until eventually he made sure not to let friendships sink deep anymore" (109).

Being an illegal immigrant makes him prone to fraud and deception. In pursuit of a green card, Biju becomes an easy target for financial fraud in New York as he trusts a group of people claiming to secure a green card for him if he pays them a large sum of money. They lie to him, and he never sees them again: "The cost of this endeavour once again emptied Biju's savings envelope" (108). Prior to this, he falls victim to imposters in Kalimpong claiming to be recruiting agents for an American cruise ship thus swindling eight thousand rupees from the impoverished cook and his son Biju. This indicates that suffering is ingrained to the very core of the impoverished individual in a globalized world. Biju is an inheritor of loss whose dreams of escape release him into the torment of immigration. Desai draws on her own experience as an Indian immigrant in Britain when she was fourteen and then on her experience of living in the United States: these experiences, as Smriti Daniel argues, have "shaped her identity" (2011). "After all, what she wants to do is write, and "writing doesn't come from being famous or happy, it comes from more difficult places…it comes from doubt, worry and all those more uncomfortable emotions"" (Daniel, 2011). Although Desai is educated, unlike Biju, she understands the sense of exile.

Biju's immigrant experience reveals how the recently decolonized citizens rush to the colonizing power in order to gain social status in their society, highlighting a serious identity crisis. Similar to the judge's parents who encourage him to pursue his education in Britain, the cook urges his son to apply for the job with the allegedly American cruise ship which turns out later to be a fake offer, despite the fact that Biju if accepted will do menial work there, such as toilet cleaning. According to Sonali Das, "His migration can be seen as a result of globalisation" (2018: 67). The decolonized

individuals face the pressures of globalization and find themselves desperate to follow it. “As Hadley observes, “Kiran Desai addresses herself to an Indian culture in which globalization isn’t imagined but experienced, whether in exile abroad or as a result of painful social and cultural displacements within the country itself”” (Das, 2018: 67). The cook does not want to squander the opportunity of working with the West, regardless of how mean or humiliating this opportunity is. Subsequently, the cook feels proud of his son working in New York restaurants and as a result brags to everyone he meets about Biju: "My son works in New York". "He is the manager of a restaurant business” (Desai, 2006: 91). The cook unquestionably believes in the superiority of the Western culture compared to his own Eastern culture, and clinging to it, as he believes, will raise him and his son socially and financially. Regardless of the fact that at this point colonialism does not officially exist in India, the cook acts as a complete subject to the colonial powers. Gramsci maintains that “the ruling classes achieve domination not by force or coercion alone, but also by creating subjects who ‘willingly’ submit to being ruled” (Loomba, 2005: 30). The cook “was sure that since his son was cooking English food, he had a higher position than if he were cooking Indian” (Desai, 2006: 24). Similar to the judge who shuns his Indian heritage, the cook’s acts bespeak of identity crisis. As pointed out by Michael Carlisle, “All of these characters struggle with their cultural identity and the forces of modernization” (2005). Out of pride, the cook does not want his son’s experience in the land of fulfilling the dreams to fade away with time: he intends to commemorate these memories for the record as they provide him with honour and dignity which are missing in his own life. Consequently, following the raid of the policemen in his shabby hut, *“*the cook [is] careful to place the pages of the letters in the correct envelopes. One day he’d return them to Biju so his son would have a record of his

journey and feel a sense of pride and achievement" (Desai, 2006: 27). Holding a low position in the caste hierarchy and as a result impoverished, the cook takes advantage of his son's work in the USA to gain status in his community, similar to the judge's father who relies on his son's British education to bolster his identity in his community. The cook plays the role of an important person to whom locals resort for favours, a role he would never dream of occupying if his son had not escaped to America. The "cook wrote on the blue airmail form: "Dear beta, please see if you can help the MetalBox watchman's son"" (87). The cook succeeds in playing such a role, and people flock to him demanding help and showering him with gifts for this purpose: "They brought him chickens as gifts, little packets of nuts or raisins, offered him a drink" (101). This in itself suggests an identity crisis and underlines the hardship of their lives as the majority of the community believe escaping to the West that long has suppressed them is the sole way of salvation. Even the policemen who force their way into the cook's hut examine his son's letters in an attempt to find a way for themselves to travel to the USA.

The cook is not the only character exhibiting an identity crisis during Biju's immigrant experience: the cook is an instance of a larger ailing society and a globalized condition. When Biju goes to the American Embassy to apply for the visa, he witnesses how his fellow Indians abase themselves and grovel to the American officials in order to obtain a visa. "In this room it was a fact accepted by all that Indians were willing to undergo any kind of humiliation to get into the States. You could heap rubbish on their heads and yet they would be begging to come crawling in" (191). Calling Biju by one of the Indians "the luckiest boy in the whole world" following his success in obtaining the American tourist visa suggests the ultimate ambition of such individuals is to gain the honour of being granted access to the Western borders (194).

They intend to distance themselves from their Indian heritage unpicking all the links tying them with their Indian identity. Instead of staying and reforming the defects of their scarred country, they abandon it leaving it bleeding in a way showing the colonized are complicit in the success of the colonial project. Studying in New York, the Indian female students, Biju comes across, seek to forcefully associate themselves with the upper classes to compensate for their inferior background by studying in the USA and practising Western-style romance. "One day the Indian girls hoped to be gentry", "despite being unwelcome in the neighbourhood" (56). This reiterates the thread of the loss of self-esteem running through the characters of *The Inheritance of Loss* because of connecting themselves with the West at the cost of their identity. Furthermore, on a global level, Zanzibar had been a British protectorate since 1890 and remained under the influence of Britain until its independence in 1963. The mentality of the decolonized individual is the same across the decolonized territories. When the Zanzibari citizen Saeed is deported to his country as a result of being detained as an illegal immigrant, he is welcomed, "hailed as an American" and served luxury food and drinks (85). Similar to Biju and the judge and because of residing in the West, though illegally, Saeed is elevated socially in his decolonized country. This experience, like the judge's, makes him more desirable as a husband since forging a relationship with him will improve the life quality of the chosen family. The girls' fathers "encouraged them to climb out of their windows at night; the girls climbed down the trees and onto Saeed's lap, and the fathers spied, hoping to catch the lovers in a compromising position", an act substantiating a fundamental deformation of the national identity (85).

Back in America, Biju as an immigrant witnessed colonial practices, despite the fact that it was in the 1980s when India was a decolonized country. "In an interview, Kiran says that *The Inheritance of Loss* is a book that tries to capture what

it means to live between East and West and what it means to be an immigrant" (cited in Agrawal, 2009: 253). The restaurants he works in symbolize the colonial system that divides people into superior colonists and inferior colonized. "Above, the restaurant was French, but below in the kitchen it was Mexican and Indian. And, when a Paki was hired, it was Mexican, Indian, Pakistani" (Desai, 2006: 28). The colonial mentality was still present in the 1980s, and this was demonstrated in the way the restaurants were designed. For example, the French restaurant Le Colonial represents for Biju "the authentic colonial experience". "On top, rich colonial, and down below, poor native. Colombian, Tunisian, Ecuadorian, Gambian" (28). Moreover, the restaurants symbolize the supremacy of the powerful countries over the weak nations and become a live demonstration of political influence. "On to the Stars and Stripes Diner. All American flag on top, all Guatemalan flag below. Plus one Indian flag when Biju arrived" (28). Another aspect of colonialism encountered by Biju is the colonial stereotypes created by the colonizing power. Colonized and suppressed, Biju does not have the time to dedicate to self-care as he is busy combating poverty and communal injustice to gain a living and survive. The colonizer helps draw a stereotypical picture of the colonized demonstrating him as a filthy person without interrogating the vital reasons beyond such behaviour. The wife of the owner of an Italian restaurant who illegally employs Biju observes:

> "He smells". "I think I'm allergic to his hair oil." She had hoped for men from the poorer parts of Europe—Bulgarians perhaps, or Czechoslovakians. At least they might have something in common with them like religion and skin color, grandfathers who ate cured sausages and looked like them, too. (55)

Her preference for labourers from poorer European countries to Biju places him at virtually the lowest level of social hierarchy based on his Indian identity and culture, in a position closer to animals more than humans. “The colonial subject is therefore ‘dehumanized’ by colonialism to such an extent, that ‘it turns him into an animal’” (Pallas, 2016). Biju in New York in the 1980s experienced a parallel situation to that of the judge who at the height of colonialism had encountered racism in London where English women and girls avoided him. Biju tries “to smile at female American citizens: "Hi. Hi." But they barely looked at him” (Desai, 2006: 130). By so doing, Desai seeks to emphasize the falsity of the American dream. As Melissa Dennihy observes:

> [W]hile Biju himself makes little to no impact upon “America” (even as “America” makes such a grave impact upon him, as well as upon the people he has left behind in India) the novel itself plays an important role in understanding the idea of the “American dream,” which is perhaps the most popular and idealized notion that is “exported” to other cultures through the processes of globalization. (Dennihy, 2009: 11)

The prolonged period of colonialism implants undying desires for revenge in the colonial subjects against the colonial power, especially after realizing the disillusionment of their dreams. *The Inheritance of Loss* establishes this notion as the Indian owner of Ghandi Café in New York observes:

> "And they think we admire them!" He began to laugh. "Every time one enters my shop I smile"—he showed his skeleton grin—"‘Hi, how ya doin,’ but all I want is to break their necks. I can’t, but maybe my son will, and that is my great hope. One day Jayant-Jay will smile and get his hands about their sons’

necks and he will choke them dead". (Desai, 2006: 156)

Although it is forty years after Indian Independence, the desire for revenge is still alive in his heart, fuelled by the frequency of the American customers to his café. He intends to bequeath this loathing to his son who will fulfil his father's vengeful wish. "As Fanon views violence as the currency of colonialism, it becomes an omnipresent feature of daily life for the colonial subject" (Pallas, 2016). Another example is displayed in the reply of an Indian to an English man who asks him to go back to his country: "Your father came to my country and took my bread and now I have come to your country to get my bread back" (Desai, 2006: 142). Revenge can take any form possible and available within the colonial subject's capacity, like staying illegally in the colonizing country and competing with its citizens in earning a living. Illegal immigrants as this text reveals manufacture stories and draw on false documents to obtain visas in order to escape the political unease and the exploitation of other castes. By so doing, being illegal and undocumented immigrants, they pose a threat to the Western society in a way showing they repay the colonial debt indirectly by destabilizing the system and security of the West, promoting the complexity of the consequences of the colonial scheme. The fact Biju envies "the legalized foreigners" who unlike him can shop freely and enjoy the discounts and offers indicates how the suppressed can internalize hatred. This feeling is an outcome of the colonial policy of favouritism and discrimination between individuals applying for a visa based on their social background (106). As a result, the colonial subjects seek to vent their accumulative loathing and desires for revenge on other races they consider lower than them socially and politically. The Indians in the novel, though suppressed by the grip of the colonial power, despise the black people: "Black people [are] living like monkeys in the trees, not like us, so civilized" (192). Suffering from inferiority

complex, the colonized Indian compensates for this feeling by enacting the colonial practices he has experienced on other colonial subjects, which furthers and complicates the layers of colonialism. This underlines Fanon's notion of inferiority complex as discussed in *Black Skin White Masks*. This text "examines how colonialism is internalized by the colonized, how an inferiority complex is inculcated, and how, through the mechanism of racism, black people end up emulating their oppressors", as in indicated by Ziauddin Sardar in the foreword of Fanon's *Black Skin White Masks* (2008: x).

The imperial power works on unpicking the ties of the Indian identity by dividing the continent into multiple subdivisions undermining the national feeling and compounding conflicts between the indigenous individuals of the Indian Sub-continent. Borders separating India from Pakistan by proclaiming the Partition in 1947 are considered a destructive colonial legacy igniting loathing and longstanding dispute between the two nations. These feelings of animosity are movable and capable of crossing the local boarders to the West. This novel shows the Indian Biju in New York in 1980s fighting with a Pakistani in a basement kitchen - a scene allegorical of the success of the imperial enterprise: "The sound of their fight had traveled up the flight of steps and struck a clunky note, and they might upset the balance, perfectly first-world on top, perfectly third-world twenty-two steps below" (Desai, 2006: 30). The cook warns his son of the Pakistanis abroad as he views himself as a superior Indian to the inferior Pakistanis: "Surely Indians were better liked [than Pakistanis]—"Beware," the cook wrote to his son. "Beware. Beware. Keep away. Distrust"" (29). This project succeeds in sowing the seeds of hatred and discrimination between the colonial subjects, and consequently, the colonized individuals play the role of the colonizer and suppress each other. This, as Fanon argues, undermines the formation of a strong national identity capable of resisting the colonial power (1963: 94). This

scheme forges a conviction among the colonial subjects: the more the colonial subject abandons his national identity and clings to the colonizing power, the more he becomes privileged and survives. At the airport in India, Air France is "only giving compensation to nonresident Indians and foreigners, not to Indian nationals" (305). Furthermore, "American, British, and Indian passports were all navy-blue, and the NRIs tried to make sure the right sides were turned up, so airline officials could see the name of the country and know right away whom to treat with respect" (306).

Biju exemplifies a colonized native who is suppressed and further colonized by his own people whether Indians or Pakistanis. He is financially exploited by a legal Indian immigrant who employs Biju in his restaurant in America. Following his knee injury and being an illegal immigrant, Biju is not allowed to see the doctor, and the owner is unwilling to pay for his treatment: "Do you know what is medical expense in this country?!" (194). Biju waits for his knee to heal on its own, which reflects the cruelty of the successful Indians against their own people abroad. The owner treats Biju as a commodity when Biju complains about the poor condition of living following his injury: "Know how easily I can replace you?" (195). Another instance is demonstrated when a Pakistani shopkeeper in America, out of distrust, continuously eyes Biju, who wants to shop in his store, making Biju feel guilty: "his eyes clutched onto Biju as soon as he entered, making Biju sting with a feeling of culpability. But he had done nothing. Everyone could tell that he had, though, for his guilty look was there for all to see" (240). While delivering food on his bike in New York, Biju is harassed and disturbed by the Pakistani taxi drivers, terrorizing him by blowing their horns. Biju is deserted by his father's friend Nandu in New York: Nandu "deposited" Biju in a basement, and "Biju had never seen him again" (106). The dramatic form of colonizing Biju by his own people culminates at the hands of the Gorkha insurgents who, when he returns home, rob him, seizing his small savings and stripping him of

his clothes and more appallingly of his pride. In order to aggravate the level of humiliation of Biju at the hands of the Indians, Desai in her narrative unleashes "battered and balding" dogs to further attack Biju - a demeaning welcome after four years spent in exile (324).

Unlike the judge who is ashamed of his Indian identity, Biju is proud of it, boasting to his Zanzibari friend Saeed about Indian movies. Biju is committed to Hinduism and is critical of fellow Hindus who violate Hinduism and eat beef, like the Indian bankers in New York. He avoids working in restaurants selling beef regardless of his need for money. "One," Biju observes, "should not give up one's religion, the principles of one's parents and their parents before them. No, no matter what" (143). Despite the severe poverty in India and the harsh weather conditions, Biju is determined to voluntarily return home ignoring his friends' warnings about going home: "the minute you arrive, Biju, you will start to think of how to get the bloody hell out" (276). Despite his long stay in America, as argued by Beena Agarwal, Biju is "lacking in belongingness" to this country (2009: 216). Because of his intense longing for home, through the phone call with his father, Biju feels the beauty of the lush landscape of Kalimpong which illuminates his pure love and loyalty to the land of his upbringing:

> The atmosphere of Kalimpong reached Biju all the way in New York; it swelled densely on the line and he could feel the pulse of the forest, smell the humid air, the green-black lushness; he could imagine all its different textures, the plumage of banana, the stark spear of the cactus, the delicate gestures of ferns. (Desai, 2006: 237)

William Sofran describes this feeling as a feature of the diaspora. Sofran states, "The retention of collective memory, vision or myth about the original homeland - its

physical location, history, etc. is one of the six features of diaspora" (cited in Agarwal, 2009: 216). This underlines Desai's effort to rescue the lost Indian identity by creating nostalgia and longing in the heart of the Indian character abroad. He struggles to transcend the obstacles preventing him from going home and ultimately arrives in Kalimpong. Anita Desai notes: "That is why you bring your character back, the Cook's son struggles practically on his knees to get back" (cited in Das, 2018: 61).

Similar to the rest of the characters in this text who inherit loss, Biju inherits the loss of his pride and the disillusionment of his father's and his dreams in the land of countless opportunities. As Das observes, "This flags up the negative impact of globalization which leads to problems like loss of culture, displacement, loss of identity, loss of relationships, frustration, distorted personality and so on" (2018: 68). His frustrated father is dreaming of having a sofa, bank account, TV and many grandchildren drawing on his son's savings from the West which are doomed to vanish. Biju is dreaming of "a house with solid walls" to replace his father's crumbling wooden hut (Desai, 2006: 293). According to Beena Agarwal, Biju "finds that retreat is the only solution to escape the trauma of cultural crisis (2009: 217). Similar to Lucy Gault who ends up with a permanent limp reminding her of her trauma-related guilt, Biju comes back with a chipped tooth he has ground while sleeping. Cracking his teeth is a psychological reaction to his constant encounter with humiliating episodes in the cellars and basements of New York. Biju's adventures and mistreatment in New York could be encountered by the Irish immigrants in *Star of the Sea* if Joseph O'Connor took us beyond New York harbour.

**Gyan: Entrapment and Confusion**

Gyan exemplifies the Indo-Nepalese community demanding independence within West Bengal. He experiences deprivation of opportunities like studying abroad

and poverty in Kalimpong. He has a bachelor's degree in accounting, but he is positive he will never be employed because of his class and ethnicity. "Gyan recalled his last job interview well over a year ago, when he had traveled all the way to Calcutta by overnight bus" (Desai, 2006: 165-6). He "knew he would never be hired" (166). The political situation in West Bengal and the legacy of his ancestors' past impact on his life and fill him with paradoxes and hesitation as demonstrated in his relationship with Sai and the Gorkha Liberation army.

Similar to Lucy Gault who spends her life surrounded by the old retainers, the solicitor and the vicar, Sai is surrounded by old people, likethe judge, the cook, Lola, Noni, Father Booty and Uncle Potty. Spending her life in constraint and seclusion, like a huge squid, Sai considers Gyan as a saviour rescuing her from her boring life in Cho Oyu and the company of old people. As Garima Chauhan notes, "For Sai, luck comes in the form of Gyan, an accounting student who comes to serve as her tutor" (2014:418). Before knowing Gyan, Sai cheers up at the arrival of the rainy season that lasts for several months because it guarantees no one will visit her and interrupt the solitude that has become part of her. However, Sai shuns this seclusion after the emergence of Gyan since he provides her with "real companionship", as Mary Whipple notes (Cited in Le, 2008). After she falls in love with Gyan, she becomes more aware of how her life is drained in Cho Oyu. For example, after she spends a day with Gyan, she returns home and finds the cook waiting for her at the gate. ""Why don't you leave me alone?" she said, conscious for the first time of the unbearable stickiness of family and friends when she had found freedom and space in love" (Desai, 2006: 150). Accordingly, Gyan is "a welcome relief" for Sai as indicated by Chauhan (2014). Moreover, as a westernized Hindu girl, Sai is controlled in her choices by her caste and social status. According to Jati Sankar Mondal, "The unfruitful, almost a one year stint of love between Sai and her maths tutor Gyan is probably an escape and an effort

from confinement to dissolve the boundaries of caste and class" (2009: 278). Out of happiness and because of the new romance she experiences, Sai becomes more interested in others' love stories and reads novels addressing love affairs, like *Wuthering Heights*. However, this romantic remedial relationship is doomed to end as Gyan becomes involved with the Gorkha Liberation movement that sabotages West Bengal and creates dilemmas in the community. "[S]ick with the desire to be desired", Sai does not give up on hope that he will come back to her as she is fed up with her longstanding solitude (Desai, 2006: 257). Mary Whipple observes that "Gyan provides her with an emotional escape from Kalimpong" explaining why she clings on to him (Cited in Le, 2008). Moreover, Sai seeks to protect this relationship by caring about Gyan's feelings: she avoids telling him that her parents have been engaged in the space program in Russia so that he does not feel inferior (Desai, 2006: 148). Eventually, despite Sai's attention, Sai and Gyan fail to communicate successfully or accept each other's flaws. Natasha Walter argues:

> [T]he point of this novel, constantly brought home to us in small and big ways, is how individuals are always failing to communicate. Desai flicks from a failed telephone call to a failed marriage, a lost dog to lost parents, and the cumulative experience is of atomisation and thwarted yearning. (Walter, 2006)

Gyan's relationship with Sai disintegrates after he shows allegiance to the movement. The political unrest accentuates the class and social differences between them, and as a result they become aware of their inequality. Mumtaz Mazumdar points out:

> It is observed often that love takes place amidst unequal partners. The result of this love also is unequal. Their bash-up adds to her loneliness too. The extremist rebellion has dented their kinship and spurted out the repressed differences. Both Sai and Gyan suddenly start becoming aware of the class of each other. The turmoil of the public agitation seems to unearth many truths about the characters. The revolution acts symbolic here. (2011)

Previously, he used to enjoy climbing the hill for two hours to reach Cho Oyu and teach Sai, and later go with her to restaurants and for a walk. After his nationalist feelings are awakened by the chanting of the movement members: "Victory to the Gorkha Liberation army", he realizes how huge the gap is between him and Sai on all levels and begins to interrogate the reasons and take action (Desai, 2006: 163):

> Moody and restless, Gyan arrived at Cho Oyu the next day, upset at having to undertake that long walk in the cold for the small amount of money the judge paid him. It maddened him that people lived here in this enormous house and property, taking hot baths, sleeping alone in spacious rooms, and he suddenly remembered the cutlets and boiled peas dinner with Sai and the judge. (169)

Furthermore, Sai used to talk with him about how she celebrated Christmas, and he showed no objection. The fact that Sai celebrates Christmas indicates the hybridity of culture. According to Bhabha, "all forms of culture are continually in a process of hybridity" (Das, 2018: 77). However, this hybridity is refused by Gyan. After the internal revolution in his patriotic feelings, he denounces the way she imitates the Westerners and describes her as a slave to them. These cultural and ideological

differences undermine their relationship: "conflicting ideologies, circumstance and delusions pull them apart", as Soumya Bhattacharya suggests (2006). He weighs the matters up and chooses the movement over Sai. Aamer Hussein states: "Gyan rediscovers his Nepalese heritage, and joins the insurgents, bursting the bubble of Sai's adolescent fantasies" (2006). This political cause is the only opportunity for Gyan to gain a better life and revenge for his long oppression and exploitation in that suppressing community where conflicting social classes exist in the same place: privileged and underprivileged, explaining why he clings to the movement. Pankaj Mishra argues that Gyan "joins what sounds like an ethnic nationalist movement largely as an opportunity to vent his rage and frustration" (2006).

Similar to Mahmoud in *Sunset Oasis* who is trapped between his nationalist feelings and the orders of the British commanders, Gyan's character is brimming with ambivalence and contradiction. He is caught between his love for Sai and loyalty to the Gorkha movement, and eventually he succeeds in neither. Shaleen Kumar Singh states that "Gyan is portrayed as the victim of circumstances who cannot but join the liberation army forcibly" (Singh, 2009: 270). In the beginning, he falls in love with Sai and relishes some aspects of the elite life. Subsequently, he feels ashamed of himself spending time with Sai who belongs to a social class, he believes, is exploiting and suppressing his:

> It was a masculine atmosphere and Gyan felt a moment of shame remembering his tea parties with Sai on the veranda, the cheese toast, queen cakes from the baker, and even worse, the small warm space they inhabited together, the nursery talk. (Desai, 2006: 168)

Vandana Singh observes that Gyan is "alienated from Sai as well as himself. The conflict inside confuses Gyan and he does not know where his allegiance lies" (Singh,

2009: 225). With regard to his actions towards the movement, in the beginning he is impulsive joining their procession and repeating their slogan. This loyalty to the insurgency that originally rebels against the Indian rule and the inherited legacy of British borders contrasts with his ancestors' complete allegiance to the British Empire for a hundred years. His ancestors fought with the English in their two World Wars and gained fortunes from this engagement: Gyan's father works on a tea plantation as a schoolteacher funded by the legacy of the ancestors who helped the English. Mary Whipple states: "Gyan's commitment to the insurgency offers an ironic contrast with the commitment of his family to the colonial British army in India, just as the judge's hatreds, learned in England, are ironically contrasted with his affectations of British behavior in later life" (cited in Le, 2008). Subsequently, when the movement needs action, he retreats to his home and becomes happy when his grandmother manufactures an excuse for him so that the movement pardons him from joining its individuals while burning the Indo-Nepal Treaty. He "felt sweet peace settle on him, and though he pretended frustration, he was very relieved by this reprieve into childhood" (Desai, 2006: 279). However, he feels guilty after telling his friends, members of the movement, about the judge's house, his rifles, Cambridge certificate and that there is no phone in Cho Oyu to ask for help: this divulgation of these secrets makes those members target the Big House. Regret tortures him: "The guilt took over again and he felt dizzy and nauseous" (321). Similar to Lucy Gault who invites Ralph to her gloomy world, Sai invites Gyan to her solitary world and as a result he is plagued by the imperial curse of the big house that comes in the form of guilt, hesitation and contradiction. ""Don't [go]," she squeaked, "you might get killed by lightning"" (115). They meet for tuition for two hours every Tuesday, similar to Lucy Gault meeting Ralph every Wednesday which eventually ruins his psychological wellbeing.

At the close of the novel, tormented with guilt, Gyan asks the cook to tell Sai

about his sincere intention to help: "Tell her that I will look for Mutt", seizing the only opportunity available for redemption and getting rid of guilt (321). Desai does not determine the end of the relationship between Sai and Gyan leaving it open for the reader's interpretation. By so doing, Desai, like Trevor, creates rays of hope of possible reunion between the two contrasting identities: Sai and Gyan epitomize two different classes, upbringing and cultures. On a larger scale, this potential reunion makes the reunion between the East and the West possible too. This unfinished event of Gyan's willingness to search for Mutt plants glimmers of hope among the events of the novel fundamentally characterized by loss and failure of communication.

**Lola, Noni, Father Booty: Colonial Relics, Colonial Victims**

The elderly women Lola and Noni view themselves as Anglophiles seeking to associate themselves with British colonialism. The emotional and loyal links they form with the former colonial power grant them social status in their society: "Lola and Noni represent the few Indians who have been able to benefit from the British influence", as argued by Sissel Marie Lone (2008: 20). Lola and her late husband Joydeep after retirement chose to live in Mon Ami, a big cottage in Kalimpong, a long time before the political chaos took place: by so doing they distinguished themselves from the poor Indians and lived in a similar way to wealthy colonizers. Moreover, Lola and Noni rejuvenate the links with the empire constantly by visiting England every two years and stock up with English products:

> [S]uitcases were stuffed with Marmite, Oxo bouillon cubes, Knorr soup packets, After Eights, daffodil bulbs, and renewed supplies of Boots cucumber lotion and Marks and Spencer underwear—the essence, quintessence, of Englishness as she [Lola] understood it. Surely the queen donned this superior hosiery. (Desai, 2006: 53-4)

They are interested in assimilating the English ways of life, even the smallest details, like buying English seeds. For example, their broccoli patch is planted from English seeds. Similar to the English, they keep an orchard and read the English novels of Jane Austen. Lola is so keen on sending her daughter to England for work as Lola wants to protect her from the dilemmas in India and ensure her social status. This shows how parents during the postcolonial era play a role in bequeathing the love or hatred of one's country to their children: she urges her to work in England and warns her of their own country India and describes it as "a sinking ship", reflecting identity blight in the Indian society (54). This emphasizes Sonali Das's view on the Indian national identity. She states that before 1947, there

> was a strong sense of communal, national identity, fostered by a shared resentment of British colonial powers. However after 1947 – after independence – India's population slowly disintegrated into an increasing number of divided factions, as the "national" identity shrunk, and people found other groups with common interests. (Das, 2018: 62)

In this case, Lola's daughter's sense of national identity is lacking as she follows her interests abroad. Observing themselves as high-class ladies, Lola and Noni grant themselves the right to draw precise boundaries between them and the lower classes so that their high standards remain intact: "It was important to draw the lines properly between classes or it harmed everyone on both sides of the great divide", Noni observes (Desai, 2006: 74). They, for example, despise Mrs Sen because she belongs to a lower class despite the fact that she is westernized like them and sends her daughter to the USA. This explains how individuals contribute to the creation of soft multilayers among them through sharing the same ideologies, making life in that community unbearable and more complicated: the gaps between its individuals

become so wide. This clarifies the impacts of what Das refers to as the "tide of globalisation" that refuses diversity in cultures (Das, 2018: 62). She argues that this tide "swept through the world's diverse cultures, destroying stable communities, displacing peoples, bringing about a market-driven 'branded' homogenization of cultural experience, thus obliterating the differences between locality-defined cultures which had constituted our identities" (62). Lola and Noni do not accept diversity and difference as they exclude people who do not adopt their exact modern lifestyle. The two sisters find Sai similar to them, westernized and taught in a Catholic convent, and accordingly they feel responsible for maintaining her high standards and protecting her from being contaminated by the lower classes: "If it wasn't for Lola and herself, Noni thought, Sai would have long ago fallen to the level of the servant class herself" (Desai, 2006: 74).

Despite the colonial privileges the two sisters enjoy, they pay heavily at the end. Similar to Lahardane, the big house in *The Story of Lucy Gault*, Mon Ami (translated from French as My Friend) is considered a colonial curse against Lola and Noni causing them repercussions (250). Their luxury rose-covered cottage is located in the poorest district in Kalimpong causing envy. Alongside the location, the period is one of political unrest among the Nepali majority of Kalimpong: "every now and then, somebody suffered the rotten luck of being in the exact wrong place at the exact wrong time when it all caught up" (248). Mon Ami and the two sisters stand out in that poor area and become easy and attractive targets for the Nepali insurgents who encroach on their property: "The wealth that seemed to protect them like a blanket was the very thing that left them exposed. They, amid extreme poverty, were baldly richer" (249). The Gorkha insurgents chop down the two sisters' bamboo trees, strip the orchard of its fruits and vegetables, build huts and a temple and populate the property

with their families. Powerless and hopeless, Lola complains to the head of the Gorkha movement in Kalimpong, who despises her. The two elderly sisters realize that they are victims of social and political forces and targets for hatred and old desires for revenge that fail to die with the passing of time:

> It didn't come from nothing, even Lola knew, but from an old feeling of anger that couldn't be divorced from Kalimpong. It was part of every breath. It was in the eyes that waited, attached themselves to you as you approached, rode on your back as you walked on, with a muttered remark you couldn't catch in the moment of passing. (248)

This refers to Fanon's aspect of internalizing violence and hatred by the colonized against the colonizers as the Nepali insurgents view the two sisters as members of the colonial process in India. Consequently, Lola and Noni were conscious of the fact that they "would pay the debt that should be shared with others over many generations" (249). Like the Gault family who had inherited the colonial land in Ireland for two centuries and had to pay the cost in the 1920s, Lola and Noni have to pay for the sins of the past: accumulating colonial wealth in a way that is provocative to the suppressed and choosing to luxuriously live amongst the poor. This is demonstrated when Lola blames her late husband for moving to Kalimpong: "look at what you've done, you bloody fool!!!" (252).

The two sisters are not the only victims of the chaotic political situation in India. Father Booty, a Swiss man running a dairy in Kalimpong, is another victim suppressed by the Indian army, not the Gorkha insurgents. After he, by mistake, photographs a vital bridge linking India with the north, he is detained and his camera is confiscated. Indian policemen find later that Father Booty has been residing illegally in India for 45 years, and as a result decide to deport him. This means Father Booty

loses his Big House, called Sukhtara, his dairy and his farm. Father Booty works for the advantage of the people of the hillside of Kalimpong improving their lives, supplying them with quality dairy products and teaching them how to make such products and benefit themselves. He is considered more useful to the Indians than the Indians themselves; however, he is treated badly. Similar to Mon Ami and Cho Oyu, Sukhtara is a curse invoking misfortune and loss to Father Booty. However, despite the fact he loses his possessions at the end, Father Booty's experience as an illegal immigrant in India contrasts with that of Biju in the USA. Biju lives a fugitive life moving from one basement kitchen to another, sleeping with rats and insects and fleeing the authorities. On the other hand, the European Father Booty enjoys the privileges of being a white man having connections with the colonial power: he has lived peacefully for 45 years in India with no disturbance. Lone argues: "Through this contrast Desai emphasizes the privileges of the white man, who due to race, gender, class and authority often are able to settle in a foreign culture without being suppressed or degraded" (2008: 22).

*The Inheritance of Loss* tackles issues of immigration, racism, globalization and the endurance of colonialism. The judge never heals from the colonial wounds regardless of the end of the colonial period. Biju witnesses colonial practices in the neo-empire America and seeks to return home to rescue his residual identity. The text portrays the suffering of the silenced triply colonized figure Nimi as Desai attempts to use literature to provide a platform for such suppressed characters in their community and in Western literature. Desai warns of the convergence of the East and the West. She furthermore highlights how the colonized suppress each other and wreak havoc on innocent Westerners residing in their homeland. In her glocal text Desai brings the global and the local together demonstrating how the global impacts on the local family.

## Conclusion

In *Sunset Oasis*, the analysis centred on the complex multi-layering of the imperial enterprise and its impact on the family unit. Britain colonized Egypt at the end of the nineteenth century and Egypt by the orders of the British colonized Siwa, an oasis inside Egypt. Mahmoud as a result of this colonial condition is trapped between his love for his country Egypt and his inner suppressed hatred towards the invaders who provide him with a job and a salary to keep his house functioning. He is haunted by his betrayal of his country's nationalist cause and his suppression of the helpless poor Siwans. A colonized individual becomes a colonizer through the characters of the Egyptian Mahmoud and his Irish wife Catherine in the doubly colonized society of Siwa. In Siwa the power of masculinity is reflected in the treatment of Maleeka, the icon of resistance, who rebels against the dictates of her society and forfeits her life. She is triply colonized by the colonizing British, the colonized Egyptians and Irish and her own people. Maleeka's fate demonstrates colonial layering, reflecting the intricate nature of colonialism. The chapter explored how the painful past of the characters shapes their present. For instance, Mahmoud's forbidden love for his servant Ni'ma leads him to marry Catherine, not because he loves her, but as an attempt to escape the thought of Ni'ma. His shameful acts against the nationalist Egyptians during the bombardment of Alexandria lead to his suicide in an attempt to prove to himself he can do what heroes do. Catherine escapes her agonizing past as her country is torn by Britain: she resorts to Egypt and becomes besotted by the past of Alexander the Great. The examination of Sabir demonstrated how the trauma of the past sharpens his desire for violence in the present. The chapter further illustrated that the colonizer has stereotypical views of the colonized and the

colonized have stereotypical views of the colonizer. Racism is a two-way process, further demonstrating the complex layers of the colonialism. This is particularly evident when Mahmoud and Catherine contracted their marriage through the reaction of the notary and the reaction of Catherine's father to her interest in Egypt. The notary advises Mahmoud not to marry a foreigner and Catherine's father instructs her not to interact with the Egyptians but to focus on the ancient history of Egypt. The bias and hostility each experiences, as well as the colonial context they are shaped by, ultimately destroy any hope for them as a family.

In *The Map of Love* the colonizing family falls victim to the slogans of the colonial enterprise and pays heavily for the colonial project, resulting in the swift collapse of the happy marriage of Anna and Edward Winterbourne as Edward is plagued by the colonial curse following his participation in the Battle of Omdurman. This neo-Victorian novel allows the English anti-colonial voices of Edward's father to be heard - the voices long stifled in European novels about the East. Here Soueif is re-engaging with the past and giving voice to silenced resistance to empire. The chapter examined how the English Anna is devoted to her Egyptian husband: she conveys his plans for reform to the Western community by translating his articles into English. The chapter explored Anna's willingness to connect and merge with the Eastern community through dressing in an Egyptian fashion and seeking to learn the Arabic language and Arabic calligraphy in sharp contrast to Catherine in *Sunset Oasis* who shuns the Egyptians and focuses only on tracing the ancient past in Egypt. The marriage of Anna and Sharif is welcomed by Sharif's family and is an example ofthe common ground Soueif calls for between the East and the West. The contents of Anna's trunk discovered by her descendants create new bonds, combining the East with the West and the past with the present. Ultimately, political forces bring about the destruction of Anna and Sharif's family unit in Egypt, but their descendants live

on to ponder what will happen to the family at the end of the twentieth century. The novel ends with an uncertain future as the baby that Amal rocks to sleep is a promise of hope in a world that is uncertain.

The chapter on *Star of the Sea* examined the Irish Famine and its impact on family. Key to the initial exploration was Nicholson's *Annals of the Famine in Ireland*, which O'Connor consulted, and where Nicholson recorded the events of the Famine, especially in 1847, describing the famished families who struggled to buy a shroud or a coffin. British mismanagement of the relief efforts and the greed of the Irish landlords exacerbated the impact of famine on families. David Merridith is haunted by the sins of Empire and the sins of the past. As an English landlord he forfeits his life for the sins of his cruel father against the Irish tenants. David also suffers from the curse of the Big House in Ireland. The chapter explored the multi-layered nature of colonialism in this gothic text. Pius Mulvey becomes a victim of famine and the practices of Empire and a suppresser of his brother and his brother's wife, Mary Duane. David Merridith mistreats his wife by draining her financially and compromising her health. His paternal relationship with his two sons based on this is affected. Mary Duane is a haunted and haunting figure, much like Lucy in Trevor's novel.

The chapter on *The Story of Lucy Gault* examined the personal histories of the characters against the backdrop of the Irish War of Independence. Violence is committed against the colonizer's family: Captain Everard's house is attacked by the Irish revolutionaries forcing him to leave Ireland and causing the breakdown of his family. Everard inherits the sins of the past and pays heavily for inheriting the ancestral Big House at the heart of colonized Ireland. The miscommunication between Lucy and her parents leads to a separation for thirty years. The chapter examined how the past

in Ireland is a ghost haunting and torturing the characters of the novel. Moreover, the colonized child falls victim to the radical dictates of his family and his teachers through the character of Horahan who is torn by guilt and ends up in a madhouse shunned by those who have agitated him. Despite these divisions Trevor attempts to bring the Irish together through this novel.

In *The Inheritance of Loss*, the legacy of colonialism is explored in the twentieth century between 1930 and 1986. The chapter explored the impacts of the blurred borders that divide India into subdivisions deepening the fissures between the members of the Indian society. This lethal colonial legacy has a negative impact on the family. The chapter explored the racism faced by immigrants in the West and the complex multi-layering of oppression in colonial and postcolonial India. Biju is not only exploited by the Westerners, he is further suppressed by the Indians in India and in America. An identity crisis is embodied in the character of the judge who is ashamed of his Indianness and ultimately becomes a figure with no identity – a mimic man. Victimhood is multi-layered as the Swiss Father Booty loses his home and the high-class ladies Lola and Noni become victims of political tensions. The crisis of the big house is evident in this text as we come across four big houses: Cho Oyu, the haveli, Mon Ami and Sukhtara, all of which are plagued by the colonial curse.

The novels of my thesis are neo-historical ones engaging with the colonial past and reframing it. They highlight traumatic moments during the colonial history of Egypt, Ireland and India focusing on their repercussions on the family unit of the colonized and the colonizer. The thesis focused on the suffering of the colonizer in the colony and back home unlike the conventional views showing the colonized as the sole victims of the colonial project. All the novels underline the suffering of the individuals who have any links with the colonial power regardless of the fact that these

individuals – whether Westerners or from the indigenous community – exert no influence or direct control on the colonized. The texts demonstrate these characters as miserable, fragile, psychologically and mentally unwell and haunted for the rest of their lives by the curse of their connection with Empire. The texts demonstrate the destruction of the marital relationship. For example, in *Sunset Oasis*, Mahmoud and Catherine's marriage is unstable and he commits suicide in the end. In *The Map of Love*, Sharif supports his community and seeks reform and advocates educating men and women. However, he is eventually assassinated and his assassin remains anonymous. In *Star of the Sea*, David and Laura's marriage disintegrates. His parental role is impacted. He never enjoys his ancestral big house. Despite his kindness to his tenants, David Merridith as an English landlord in Ireland is a desirable target for the Irish revolutionaries and he is murdered on board *Star of the Sea*. In *The Story of Lucy Gault*, Everard's family scatter across Europe, and he and his wife suppress the remembrance of their daughter.

The colonized suppress each other. In *Sunset Oasis* Catherine, who sees herself as a member of the colonized Irish, oppresses, physically assaults Maleeka and plays a role in her death by driving her away from her house – she refuses this woman sanctuary. Mahmoud is colonizing his own people and is complicit in their oppression. Divisions in *The Map of Love* lead to Sharif's death. In *Star of the Sea* Pius Mulvey is an example of the Fanonian oppressed who comes back to oppress his own family. Horahan is isolated in his community and by his own people in *The Story of Lucy Gault*. In *The Inheritance of Loss* Biju is oppressed at home and in America by his own people and returns to be stripped naked by the Ghurkhas who are also presented as oppressed.

The final word on imperial oppression is a timely one. In April 1919 just over a hundred years ago, the Amritsar massacre took place when British Indian troops fired

on a peaceful protest in the city, "killing at least 379 (the number the British would admit to), effected a lasting rupture in British-Indian relations" (McGreevy, 2019). The lieutenant-governor of the Punjab who supported this massacre and defended it until he was assassinated many years later by one of the witnesses, was an Irishman called Michael O'Dwyer. The tragedy underlines how the oppressed can oppress each other. As McGreevy notes in *The Irish Times*,

> O'Dwyer is an affront to the story we tell ourselves about the Irish being a perennially oppressed people in sympathy with other oppressed peoples. We make much of how the Irish revolution inspired countries like India to strive for independence. We are less inclined to highlight Irish support for British colonialism. (2019)

The neo-historical novel is an important means of demonstrating the complexities of oppression, how the legacy of empire lives on, how the past is not past and how more stories need to be told.

# AFTERWORD

Lahardane is a village in County Mayo in Ireland, a place famed for suffering, *per capita*, the greatest loss of life on the Titanic. In an article in *The Telegraph* in 2012 Sarah Rainey describes how Lahardane lost eleven locals on the ill-fated ship: "High on the hills above the tiny village of Lahardane in County Mayo, a wooden cross juts from a mound of earth towards the sky. The cross sways back and forth, creaking as gales blow across the valley, through what locals call the "Windy Gap"" (2012). Rainey notes:

> Little has changed in a hundred years. It was from here, in the shadow of the distant crags of Nephin mountain, that the group known as the Addergoole Fourteen had a last glimpse of home as they made the long journey to board the RMS Titanic. Three men and 11 women left the parish of Addergoole that spring morning in 1912. They travelled 19 miles on foot to the nearest station, where they caught a train to Queenstown, County Cork, 16 hours away. There, they joined 111 other passengers who boarded the Titanic in Ireland, a day after it started its maiden voyage from Southampton. (2012)

Just four days into their voyage "11 of the Addergoole Fourteen were dead; their bodies lost at sea. Although the remaining three survived, none returned to live in Ireland" (Rainey, 2012).

Rainey argues that the "impact on Lahardane was unique: proportionately more people from this tiny village lost their lives on the Titanic than anywhere else in the world. In a population of 200, 11 deaths was more than a tragedy. It ripped the heart out of the community" (2012). Yet for years the villagers refused to talk about it. In 2002 they "started to hold a bell-ringing ceremony, marking the time the Titanic

sank into the Atlantic. Every year, at 2.20am on April 15, relatives of the victims chime the church bell – 11 mournful rings followed by three joyous rings – paying their respects to those who never returned" (Rainey, 2012).

Like the neo-historical novels discussed in this thesis, the Lahardane locals have just started since the beginning of the twenty-first century to recover, remember and re-engage with their tragic history. Lahardane is also the name that Trevor gives to his tragic Big House in *The Story of Lucy Gault*. Of course, the Lahardane villagers boarded the ship in County Cork where Trevor's novel is set. No critic to date has recognized this connection.

The recent recovery of this loss of these people in Lahardane on the Titanic is mirrored by Joseph O'Connor's comment that he wants "the same events told from different points of view, because a book about how history gets written depends who's telling the story" (*Joseph O'Connor*, 2003). O'Connor observes: "Indeed, all history is a form of fiction, since every historian engages in selection, editing, interpretation, and so on. No truly objective history is really possible" (cited in Carroll, 2019). Indeed, objectivity itself is a form of bias: "We should do more to help those many millions of the world's poor people who are suffering and dying from famine today. If our history means anything, it must mean that" (cited in Schultz, 2014: 46). This is what the neo-historical novels in this thesis are doing: recovering and reinterpreting the past to understand and change the present.

The inhabitants of Lahardane in Mayo died in the ocean or never returned from exile; the inhabitants of Lucy Gault are exiled and die or live like Lucy entombed in the house. Like the Titanic the house expels its inhabitants but continues to haunt. Many of the texts in this thesis focus on houses or in the case of *Star of the Sea* a ship. Not only do we have the crumbling house of Lahardane but the Cho Oyu of *The Inheritance of Loss* and Kingscourt of *Star of the Sea*. The ship of O'Connor's novel

is another version of a crumbling house holding within it the various social classes. Like the tragedy of the Titanic that is commemorated in a tiny Mayo village the novels in this thesis also deal with, rethink and reappraise big events in history: the Urabi revolution, the bombardment of Alexandria and its aftermath in *Sunset Oasis*; the Kitchener campaign against the Mahdi forces in Khartoum and the Battle of Omdurman and its consequences in *The Map of Love*; the Irish Famine in *Star of the Sea*; the Irish War of Independence in the 1920s in *The Story of Lucy Gault* and the Gorkha movement in 1980s India in *The Inheritance of Loss.* The purpose of this thesis was to examine how this legacy of empire and colonialism impacted on the family. Big historical events have consequences at the microcosmic level – each of the writers in this thesis probes the often historically silenced victims of the colonial experience. For Soueif her purpose is to give voice to the suppressed just like Edward Said's project in *Culture and Imperialism* that gives voice to the silenced figures of European fiction. In each novel examined in this thesis we see problems within the colonized communities: individuals tortured by split allegiances and identities, figures of colonial mimicry and the psychiatric complexes of colonialism which have been identified by Fanon. The seeds of empire spread beyond the end of the imperial age. Although Egypt, Ireland and India had different experiences of empire, common ground and themes are evident.

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