The Island of Heterotopia: Scientific Racism, Colonial Violence, and the Manufacture of the Colonial Subject

Naeem Majeed[1], Dr. Rajinder Singh Ahluwalia[2]
[1]Research Scholar, Department of English, Desh Bhagat University, Punjab
[2]Professor, Department of English, Desh Bhagat University, Punjab

Abstract

The research paper undertakes a postcolonial reconsideration of H.G. Wells' *The Island of Dr. Moreau* (1896), arguing that the novel functions as a cogent allegory for the violence, racial hierarchies, and ideological justifications of European colonialism. Proceeding beyond conventional readings of the text as a Gothic fable of scientific hubris, the study investigates Dr. Moreau's vivisection experiments as a direct metaphor for the colonial 'civilizing mission' and the structured dehumanization of marginalised people. The study substantiates how the forced metamorphosis of animals into the human-like 'Beast Folk,' their imposed mimicry of human law, and their eventual rebellion potentially align with the historical processes of psychological trauma, cultural erasure, and anti-colonial resistance. Implementing the theoretical frameworks of prominent postcolonial theorists, the paper explores the engagement of the novel with anthropological othering, pseudoscientific racism, and the epistemic violence ingrained in colonial knowledge production. It argues how Moreau's laboratory on the isolated island serves as a heterotopia of deviation, a microcosm of the colonial domain where the application of scientific discourse conceals an agenda of brutal domination and subjugation. Ultimately, this study reclaims *The Island of Dr. Moreau* as an influential, but often undervalued, work of anti-colonial literature that unwraps the grotesque realities and racial hierarchies cloaked by the discourse of progress and enlightenment cardinal to the Victorian colonial enterprise.

Keywords: Postcolonialism, Othering, Epistemic Violence, Dehumanization, Linguistic Imperialism, Vivisection.

Introduction

H.G. Wells' *The Island of Dr. Moreau* has been broadly interpreted as a critique of unchecked scientific experimentation and the dangers of playing God. The novel is also assessed as a Gothic horror and advisory fable regarding scientific ethics. However, re-reading the novel through postcolonial lens uncover deeper layers of meaning, positioning vivisection as a metaphor for colonial violence, dehumanization, racial hierarchy, and colonial mimicry. Applying postcolonial theoretical framework to *The Island of Dr. Moreau* is essential because it enables us to go beyond the popular interpretation of Gothic horror by identifying it as a powerful political text, ingrained with the colonial hegemonic doctrine of power, race, identity,

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and domination. The current study is essential as it reveals the colonial ideologies and anxieties, and racial hierarchies, rooted in the narrative, setting, and characterisation of the novel.

The novel is a significant work of late Victorian science fiction that examines the ethical boundaries of scientific experimentation and the consequences of interfering with the natural order of living beings. The novel begins with the narrator Edward Prendick, a shipwrecked Englishman who finds himself deserted on a remote island inhabited by Dr. Moreau, an unethical physiologist who conducts horrifyingly painful vivisection experiments to transform animals into human-like creatures. These peculiar creations, called as the Beast Folk, are forced to conform to a strict code of conduct called "the Law," (Wells, The Island of Dr Moreau, p. 106) which suppresses their animal instincts in a strange parody of human civilization.

The novel was written during the height of British imperialism where there were widespread colonial exploitation and quasi-scientific justifications for racial hierarchies. The late 19th century witnessed the rise of Social Darwinism which turned out to be a conviction that misused evolutionary theory to validate European domination over 'inferior' races (Brantlinger, Rule of Darkness: British Literature and Imperialism). During this period, vivisection, a controversial scientific practice, became a public debate on ethics drawing anti-vivisection movements that condemned its cruelty (Lansbury, 1985). In response to public protests, Britian passed Cruelty to Animals Act of 1876 to regulate animal experimentation. Being a socialist and critic of imperialist ideologies, Wells utilised these anxieties in *The Island of Dr. Moreau*, generating a narrative that is usually about scientific ethics yet functions as a concealed critique of colonial violence.

While *The Island of Dr. Moreau* has often been studied for its themes of bioethics and vainglory, its postcolonial connotations remain underexplored. Exploring the novel through the lens of postcolonial theorists such as Frantz Fanon, Edward Said, Homi Bhabha, and others, this paper seeks to probe its deeper allegorical critique of imperialism, racial oppression, and the civilizing mission.

This paper argues that H.G. Wells' *The Island of Dr. Moreau* (1896) functions as a profound critique of European colonialism, with Dr. Moreau's vivisection experiments serving as an allegory for the violence of imperial domination, racial hierarchy, and the failed civilizing mission. Utilizing the analysis of forced transformation of the Beast Folk, their performative mimicry of human civilization, and their eventual rebellion, the novel unmasks the inherent brutality and instability of imperial frameworks that seek to remake the marginalized subjects in the likeness of their oppressors.

Drawing on postcolonial theory, especially Frantz Fanon's conception of colonial violence (Fanon, 1963), Edward Said's framework of Orientalism (Said, 1978), and Homi Bhabha's theory of mimicry and hybridity (Bhabha, 1994), the current study demonstrates how a mere scientific gothic narrative envisions central postcolonial concerns about identity, resistance, and the psychological trauma inflicted by imperial regimes on its colonies. Ultimately, the paper positions *The Island of Dr. Moreau* not simply as a forewarning tale about scientific ethics, but as an essential, though often overlooked, text in the canon of anti-colonial literature that reveals the crude realities behind professedly benevolent imperial project of European

powers. This interdisciplinary approach reveals how *The Island of Dr. Moreau* critiques colonialism through its allegory of scientific domination, establishing it a critically important text in postcolonial literary studies.

Science, Empire, and Epistemic Violence

H.G. Wells wrote *The Island of Dr. Moreau* (1896) during the late 19th century which was a period marked by intense intersections between scientific advancement and colonial ideology. Vivisection, an experimental dissection of live animals in which the living animal is cut or operated for physiological or pathological investigation, emerged as one of the most disputable scientific practices of the Victorian era which mirrored the contemporary broader concerns between ethical boundaries and the pursuit of knowledge. As an essential practice to medical progress, vivisection was defended by the scientific establishment but it was vigorously opposed by anti-cruelty activists who discarded it as a barbaric violation of natural rights (Lansbury, 1985). This argument did not surface in disconnection with the fact that it emulated the same ideological frameworks that justified colonial domination just like the belief that progress and development demanded the subjugation of those considered inferior, be it animal or human.

Vivisection was often legitimized using the lens of Social Darwinism, which erroneously employed evolutionary theory to construct hierarchies of existence. Prominent physiologists like Claude Bernard argued that animal suffering was an admissible sacrifice for human advancement, asserting that "we must perform experiments on animals and must necessarily give medicine the experimental point of view, if we mean to found a truly scientific medicine which shall logically embrace physiology, pathology and therapeutics… For pathology we must therefore establish pathological vivisection, that is to say, we must create diseases in animals and sacrifice them at various stages of these diseases" (Bernard, Introduction to the Study of Experimental Medicine, 114). This rationale sinisterly simulated colonial justifications for the exploitation of indigenous societies, wherein imperial powers structured their violence as a necessary act towards 'civilizing' presumably backward societies (Brantlinger, 1988). The discourse of scientific necessity, that in order to gain knowledge sentimental concerns must be renounced, was thus implemented in laboratories as well as in the colonies to silence ethical protests.

Being conscious of these tropes, Wells' depiction of Dr. Moreau's experiments in the novel critiques both the cruelty of vivisection and its ideological engagement with imperialism. Moreau's affirmation that his work transcends morality: "And I tell you, pleasure and pain have nothing to do with heaven or hell" (Wells, The Island of Dr. Moreau, 136). This parallels the colonial mentality where they pay a deaf ear to the indigenous suffering in service of a constructed notion called greater good. Just like colonized subjects, the Beast Folk are made voiceless in their own metamorphosis and lessened to raw material for the desires of a self-appointed colonial superior. As Coral Lansbury argues in *The Old Brown Dog* (1985), that the vivisection debates of Victorian period were completely enchained with the structures of power, determining who could justifiably thrust pain, and who were compelled to endure it. Such issues of power and authority were similarly relevant in colonial contexts as they were in the laboratories where scientific experimentation were practiced.

Moreover, the public retaliations against vivisection highlighted the concerns about the dehumanizing potential of unsupervised science. The establishment of the British Union for the Abolition of Vivisection in 1898, along with feminist campaigns combining animal rights to women's suffrage, illustrated growing resistance to the patriarchal and imperialist logic of domination (Donald, Women Against Cruelty: Protection of Animals in Nineteenth-Century Britain). Wells employed these issues in *The Island of Dr. Moreau*, where island of Moreau becomes a metaphor for the colonial world which an unregulated zone of power where the lines between humanity and barbarity are blurred.

Locating vivisection within this widespread context of Victorian science and imperialism, *The Island of Dr. Moreau* uncovers the hypocrisy of 'progress' narratives that depend on the suffering of the marginalized. The novel compels readers to face the uncomfortable truth that the same ideologies reinforcing colonial violence were functioning in European laboratories where unimaginable atrocities were justified under the name of enlightenment.

The Victorian era witnessed the systematic deployment of pseudoscientific theories to legitimize colonial domination, constructing racial hierarchies that positioned European civilization as biologically and intellectually superior. Social Darwinism, phrenology, and anthropometry became tools of empire, providing "empirical" justification for the subjugation, exploitation, and even extermination of colonized peoples (Stepan 42). These theories, though later discredited, were instrumental in shaping colonial policy, reinforcing the notion that imperial violence was not merely politically expedient but *scientifically inevitable*.

The adaptation of Darwinian theory by Herbert Spencer where he coined the phrase "survival of the fittest" (Spencer, 1864, p. 444) in 1864 offered colonial practices a base for the intellectual and moral justification using the agency of science. European powers designed their conquering project as a natural process in which superior races were predestined to overpower inferior ones. Such articulations cultivated colonial discourse, as described in the writings of imperialists like Benjamin Kidd, who argued that tropical regions could only be adequately developed under Anglo-Saxon because the indigenous populations are innately dormant (Kidd, The Control of the Tropics). These claims were not confined to the ideological paradigm but were practically institutionalized in colonial administration. As an illustration, British government in India used skull measurement methods to categorize castes (Thurston, 1909), while Australian administration utilized similar methods to justify the forced relocation and re-education of Aboriginal children (Anderson, 2006).

Phrenology is a pseudoscience that claimed to determine intelligence and moral character by analysing the shape of the skull which consequently became an instrument of colonial control. It was introduced by Franz Joseph Gall in 1796 and gradually gained popularity in the early 19th century. The practice was later turned into a weapon to prove that the non-European races have mental deficiencies and require European interference for development. Colonial anthropologists like Samuel Morton gathered the skulls of indigenous people to create hierarchies of intelligence ranking Europeans invariably at the top (Gould, The Mismeasure of Man). Such studies were quoted to validate colonial policies spanning from imperialist education in South Africa to the massacre of Indigenous people in the Americas (Chakrabarty,

2000). Thus, the pseudoscience of phrenology offered a dreadful justification for colonial violence, changing colonial brutality into an insensible application of natural law.

The colonial powers established their ideologies through anthropometry in which the measurement of bodily features was used to classify racial types. For instance, Belgian officials in the Congo employed anthropometric data to enforce labour system, asserting that African bodies were biologically appropriate for hard labour (Hochschild, 1998). Similarly, in British India, the Criminal Tribes Act of 1871 declared certain communities as inherently criminal on the basis of their physical traits, enforcing control through surveillance and forced labour (Yang, Crime and Criminality in British India). These practices reflected the vivisection debates of Wells' time, where the suffering of the oppressed indigenous people was discarded as a necessary sacrifice for development.

Although Wells was an exponent of evolutionary theory, but he was strongly critical of its misuse to justify oppression. *The Island of Dr. Moreau* unmasks the hypocrisy of pseudoscientific racism by representing its rationale that the possibility of modifying animals to mimic human traits suggests that categories or binaries like 'civilized' and 'savage' are not natural, but socially constructed. The's tragic existence of Beast Folk in which they are caught between animal instinct and imposed humanity recreates the extremity of colonized people who are forced to obey the European norms. Thus, the island functions as a metaphor for imperial violence and domination, where science was weaponized to enact racial hierarchies and control.

Highlighting strong matches of vivisection to colonial pseudoscience, *The Island of Dr. Moreau* reveals the dark synchronization between Victorian science and colonial empire. Both the domains depended on the dehumanization of the marginalized to sustain the constructed illusions of progress, whether in the laboratory or the colony. Hence, the novel functions as an early warning for the ways in which science becomes another medium of domination, when it is released from moral and ethical restraints.

The character of Dr. Moreau represents the colonial scientist whose experiments demonstrate the systematized dehumanization of subjugated beings (Fanon, The Wretched of the Earth). His laboratory functions as a site of epistemological violence (Stoler, 1995), where humanity is diminished to measurable statistical points for the benefit of European scientific objectives. This precisely reflects the colonial treatment of indigenous populations as objects of study rather than individuals of history.

Moreau's island alludes to the structure of colonial research stations established across the 19th century imperial world. Akin to the Anthropometric Laboratory formulated in colonial India in 1886 (Bates, 2005) and the racial scientific voyages to Australia and Africa (Anderson, 2002), Moreau's laboratory on the island functions as Michel Foucault's "heterotopia of deviation" (Foucault, Of Other Spaces, p. 25), a space where conventional moral and ethical boundaries are overridden under the pretext of scientific progress. The surgical theatre where Moreau performs the vivisection evokes the images of the dissection rooms of colonial hospitals where indigenous bodies were routinely appropriated for medical research without compliance (Arnold, Colonizing the Body).

The Beast Folk's classification system alludes to the colonial racial categories that pursued to establish hierarchies of being biologically. Just as colonial anthropologists developed elaborate and pseudoscientific cranial measurement systems to justify European superiority (Gould, The Mismeasure of Man), Moreau classifies his creations through a pseudo-scientific terminology (the Hyena-Swine, the Ape-Man the Leopard-Man) that will always render them as semi-human. This objectification aligns with Patrick Brantlinger's notion of imperial gaze that turns living beings into simplified taxonomies for the welfare of colonial order (Brantlinger, Rule of Darkness).

Moreau's experiments underscore what Gayatri Spivak described as the epistemic violence in colonial knowledge production (Spivak, 1988). There is total absence of the Beast Folk's identities before vivisection as we never learn what species they (Hyena-Swine) were originally, replicating the colonial erasure of indigenous identities and histories. Dipesh Chakrabarty also argues that colonial science operated through a deliberate neglect of colonized people's pre-colonial existence and selfhood (Chakrabarty, 2000). The creatures on the island are forced to learn and embrace human behaviour which resembles with what Homi Bhabha calls the "ironic compromise" (Bhabha, 1994, p. 122) of colonial mimicry, where assimilation always results in difference.

Analysed through this framework, Wells' narrative envisions later critiques of what Linda Tuhiwai Smith terms "scientific colonialism" (Smith 1999, 58). The novel's frightful vivisections encapsulate the violence of colonial anthropology, where the indigenous body became a text to be read by European anthropologists (Asad, Anthropology and the Colonial Encounter). When the narrator explains his realisation that "The creatures I had seen were not men, had never been men. They were animals, humanised animals, triumphs of vivisection" (Wells 1896, p. 128), he emphasizes the elementary colonial logic that simultaneously transforms its subjects and marks them as others. Wells was not in favour of British Colonialism as witnessed by the novel The War of The Worlds in which he reverses the colonial gaze, placing the colonizers in the place of colonized through Martian invasion of London. The critique is expanded in *The Island of Dr Moreau* by highlighting the terrible atrocities of forced evolution.

Vivisection as Colonial Violence

Dr. Moreau's experiments serve as a metaphor for the dehumanization inherent in colonial projects, reframing biological modification as a degenerate form of enlightenment. His professed objective to raise the beasts to a human level directly conveys the rhetoric of European 'civilizing mission' which justified colonial domination as a humanitarian endeavour to 'uplift' the presumed inferior races. Just like imperial administrators who justified their acts under the guise of bringing progress to 'savage' societies, Moreau justifies his hideous experiments and torture through a logic of science-as-progress, scientific ambition and as a necessary step toward betterment: "You cannot imagine what this means to an investigator, what an intellectual passion grows upon him! You cannot imagine the strange, colourless delight of these intellectual desires… To this day I have never troubled about the ethics of the matter… The study of Nature makes a man at last as remorseless as Nature" (Wells, The Island of Dr Moreau, 137).

The scientific project of Moreau reflects Edward Said's arguments about colonial education wherein the colonizer occupies the role of instructor, forcibly altering the indigenous cultures according to European conventions (Said, Culture and Imperialism). His surgical transformations articulate the attempts of colonial education systems through which they consciously eliminated the cultural difference to create obedient colonial subjects based on European standards. The Beast Folk's forced conformity to the "Law" (Wells, The Island of Dr Moreau, p. 106) in which Moreau forbids animal behaviours like eating flesh or walking on all fours echoes the cultural restrictions imposed on colonized people, from suppression of the native languages (Memmi, The Colonizer and the Colonized) to the marginalization of indigenous cultural practices. As Homi Bhabha observes, such projects of assimilation lead to colonial mimicry where colonial power structures manipulate the colonized to mimic the colonizer's language, norms, and values. Yet, this mimicry is always imperfect and fragmentary by design, making sure that the colonized remain inferior and always excluded (Bhabha, The Location of Culture).

The novel unveils the hypocrisy of this 'civilizing mission' by highlighting violence as a means of control. Like the colonial outpost, Moreau's laboratory operates through violence of empire, brutality of brainwashing and forced re-education. His surgical tools perform the function of colonial whip with similar effect in which the infliction of pain manufacture submissive subjects. The screams of his victims, which Prendick describes as grunts, growling or howls match with Fanon's description of colonial torture: "The native's back is to the wall, the knife is at his throat (or, more precisely, the electrode at his genitals): he will have no more call for his fancies" (Fanon, 1963, p. 58)

The Beast Folk's reversion to animalism represents the frailty of colonial assimilation. Just like the imposed identities were resisted through anti-colonial movements, Moreau's creations rebel and thereby highlight the fickleness of colonial civilizing projects. The regression of the Beast Folk reflects Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o's argument that the colonial suppression of indigenous identity and language mothers mental and cultural repression and these repressed cultural elements resurface through literature, language revival, and other acts of resistance and reclamation (Ngũgĩ, Decolonizing the Mind). Thus, Wells deconstructs the myth of colonial philanthropy, exposing 'uplift' as an indirect term for domination.

The pain and suffering endured by the Beast Folk equates with the suffering of the indigenous people under colonial occupation when their cultures were strategically erased. Like victims of residential schools where instead of education indigenous people were subjected to cultural erasure by eradicating their cultural practices, language, and family structures, Moreau's creatures went through what Aimé Césaire termed "thingification" (Césaire, 2000, p. 42), the complete negation of their original identities along with the violent enforcement of dominant cultural norms.

The Beast Folk's forced recitation of the Law alludes to the linguistic imperialism of imperial education systems:

"Not to go on all-fours; that is the Law.
Are we not Men?

"Not to suck up Drink; that is the Law.
Are we not Men?"

"Not to eat Fish or Flesh; that is the Law.
Are we not Men?"

"Not to claw the Bark of Trees; that is the
Law. Are we not Men?"

"Not to chase other Men; that is the Law.
Are we not Men?" (Wells, 1896, p. 107)

The above excerpt is a direct representation of the practices of Canadian residential schools where Indigenous children were subjected to Christian prayers in the evening, before and after meals followed by restriction and punishment upon disobedience or if they spoke in their native languages (Miller, 1996). The unnatural and imperfect English spoken by the Beast Folk highlights what Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o terms as the "cultural bomb" of colonial language imposition which can "annihilate a people's belief in their names, in their languages, in their environment, in their heritage of struggle, in their unity, in their capacities and ultimately in themselves" (Ngũgĩ, Decolonizing the Mind, 3).

The vivisection procedure to what Moreau calls "animals carven and wrought into new shapes" (Wells, 1896, p. 130), reflects the physical punishments administered in colonial reform institutions. Australian historian Anna Haebich chronicles how Aboriginal children in colonial government institutions underwent forced haircuts, forced European clothing, and physical abuse structured to supress native cultural identities (Haebich, 2000). The Beast Folk's surgical scars thus become visible counterparts of what Fanon calls the epidermalization of colonial inferiority (Fanon, Black Skin, White Masks, 83-84).

Like residential school victims who were neither acknowledged by white society nor able to fully accommodate in their original societies (Truth and Reconciliation Commission, 2015), the Beast Folk exist in what Bhabha refers to as ambivalent position of the native where they hold in-between identities (Bhabha, The Location of Culture). Their broken mimicry where they are conscious of their subjugation yet denied the agency to resist it, embodies the fundamental oppression of assimilationist methods as Bhabha argues that colonial subjects are forced to imitate the colonizer's values and behaviours and yet always prevail as different and inferior (Bhabha, The Location of Culture)

The ultimate backfire of Moreau's scientific project, where his creations go back to their original bestial behaviours, exposes the myth of successful assimilation and the failure of colonial science to conserve its fallacies of control, rationality, and progress. Just as indigenous cultural practices outlived in defiance of colonial suppression, the Beast Folk's regression exemplifies the endurance of primeval identity against forced transformation. Wells' novel provides postcolonial critiques of assimilation by exposing its implicit violence and ultimate inefficacy.

Dr. Moreau's instinctive repulsion toward his own creations mirrors what Ann Stoler refers to as "emotional economy" (Stoler 2002, p. 165), the emotional regimes that encouraged colonial

hierarchies by producing native bodies as fundamentally abhorrent. The narrator's description of the Beast Folk as "abominations" (Wells 93) and " mere grotesque travesties of men" (Wells, 147) parallels the persuasive strategies European colonizers utilized to justify domination through disgust.

Moreau's reactions articulate what William Ian Miller terms as anatomy of disgust (Miller, 1997) that, in colonial contexts, works to dehumanize and exclude marginalized individuals or groups as physical difference becomes moral prosecution. Brantlinger notes how Victorian-era anthropologists documented Aboriginal Australians as "repulsive in their animal-like habits" (Brantlinger 156), dehumanizing them epistemologically. Similarly, in *The Island of Dr. Moreau*, Moreau explains the Beast Folk, specifically the Leopard-man, as animalistic beings whose instincts surface even after vivisection and break human-imposed law: "And they revert. As soon as my hand is taken from them the beast begins to creep back, begins to assert itself again" (Wells, 1896, p. 144).

Jean and John Comaroff noted how missionaries in colonial Africa administered Christian doctrine not just to convert, but to reshape the moral standards of colonized people, portraying African spiritual customs as "savage superstitions" (Comaroff, 1991, p. 158). Instead of regarding indigenous ritual with respect, the missionaries substituted it with harnessed and didactic performativity crafted to inculcate obedience. In *The Island of Dr. Moreau*, the "Law" (Wells 107) functions in similar fashion. The repeated recitations ("Not to go on all-four; that is the Law") are not instinctual traits of the Beast Folk but are forcibly imposed rituals, formulated to govern and internalize the values Moreau declares as civilized. They serve as the mimicry of culture, decontextualized in essence yet employed to dominate mentally and physically.

Dr Moreau's disgust towards the Beast Folk together with egotistic pride in his scientific work communicates postcolonial ambiguity of disdain and fascination. His harmonized attraction and repulsion towards the Beast Folk mirror Victorian freak shows that depicted 'savages' as both amusement and admonition (Bogdan, 1988), Museum displays of indigenous remains as educational and terrifying (Fabian, 2000), and Missionary photography that framed converts as both success stories and cautionary tales (Landau, 2002). This paradoxical aspect illustrates what Homi Bhabha describes as the fundamental volatility of colonial identity construction (Bhabha, 1994).

Beast-Folk as Monstrous Others

Edward Said's conceptual formulations of Orientalism offer a critical theoretical framework to investigate Dr. Moreau's organized construction of the Beast Folk as monstrous Others. Said's framework reveals how Moreau's scientific discourse reveals the colonial methodologies of representation that place non-European subjects as essentially inferior and undeveloped (Said, 1978). The novel's portrayal of vivisection as a 'civilizing project' catches the glimpse of what Said notes as the Western disposition to construct and at the same time contain its 'Others' using the tools of knowledge and power: "Knowledge of the Orient, because generated out of strength, in a sense creates the Orient, the Oriental… the Oriental is contained and represented by dominating frameworks" (Said 1978, p. 40)

Moreau's taxonomic categorization of the Beast Folk elucidates what Said conceptualizes as the grid of codified knowledge that prunes complex beings to governable stereotypes (Said, 1978). By assigning them names like "Swine-woman," "Ape-Man," "mare-rhinoceros-creature," and "Leopard-Man" (Wells, 1896, p. 152), Moreau constructs a pseudo-scientific vocabulary that establishes their identity in animalistic jargon, justifying continued experimentation.

This process mirrors colonial anthropologists' categorization of indigenous peoples through racial typologies that emphasized their supposed proximity to animals (Stepan 1982, 102). The Beast Folk's physical deformities like their "stumpy hands," "misshapen heads," and unsteady gait (Wells, 1896) align with what Edward Said describes as the colonial strategy of othering, where physical appearance and bodily trait are utilized as tools of cultural inferiority and evolutionary retardation (Said, 1978).

Said's evaluation of Orientalist discourse "as a Western style for dominating, restructuring, and having authority over the Orient" (Said 1978, 3) finds its perfect semblance in Moreau's laboratory. Dr Moreau's obsessive documentation of his experiments like his measurements, surgical observations, and physiological assessments as evident from his explanation: "You begin to see that it is a possible thing to transplant tissue from one part of an animal to another, or from one animal to another ; to alter its chemical reactions and methods of growth ; to modify the articulations of its limbs ; and, indeed, to change it in its most intimate structure" (Wells, 1896, p. 131), replicates the colonial administrator's scrupulous recording of the knowledge about indigenous bodies, customs, rituals, manners and their lives which serve as the disciplinary mechanism of surveillance and control (Foucault. 1977). These ideological policies convert native people into objects of study rendering their identities as fixed, categorized, and regulated within the colonial order.

Just as colonial discourse justified the subjugation of indigenous peoples by framing them as savage or degenerate, the construction of the Beast Folk as monstrous vindicates Moreau's violence against them. Moreau imposes the "Law" to make the Beast-Folk 'civilized' and their lack of success to abide by these laws becomes a justification for his violent correction. Furthermore, Moreau asserts that the Beast Folk are inherently degenerate, and only through his continual violence and control can they retain their 'civilized' form: "As soon as my hand is taken from them the beast begins to creep back" (Wells, 1896, p. 144), replicating colonial ideologies that constructed indigenous people as unceasingly in need of discipline and reformation.

Upon analysing through the theoretical framework of Said's *Orientalism*, *The Island of Dr. Moreau* manifests itself as a sharp critique of the discursive and physical violence inherent in colonialism. Moreau's construction of the Beast Folk as monstrous Others represent the schemes of racialized dehumanization that sustained imperial domination, uncovering how cultural and scientific narratives were employed to justify exploitation. The striking revelation of the novel lies not only in the corporal suffering of the Beast Folk but in the ideological methodology that frames their marginalization unavoidable. Representing the colonial logic of Othering, Wells reveals the horrifying consequences of a system that diminishes living beings to objects of control, and experimentation. Through the allegorical representations of such

instances, he presages postcolonial critiques of colonial empire, exemplifying how the discourse of 'progress' obscures a foundation of violence and subjugation.

Conclusion

H.G. Wells' *The Island of Dr. Moreau* (1896) arises not just as a premonitory tale of scientific savagery but as a penetrating allegory of colonial violence, racial hierarchies, and epistemic domination, exposing the brutal instruments of imperial domination using the portrayal of vivisection. Investigating Dr. Moreau's experiments as a metaphor for the European 'civilizing mission,' the current study has demonstrated how the novel critiques the dehumanizing logic of colonialism, its racial hierarchies, epistemic violence, and the misleading narrative of inclusion through assimilation.

Deciphering the novel by applying the frameworks of postcolonial theorists like Frantz Fanon, Homi Bhabha, Edward Said, and Gayatri Spivak encourages a deeper understanding of its ideological mechanisms. Fanon's observations into colonial violence and psychological repression find profound matches in the physical mutilation and mental conditioning of the Beast Folk (Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*). Said's concept of Orientalism and the grid of codified knowledge align with Moreau's taxonomical depersonalization of his creations (Said, *Orientalism*). Bhabha's theory of mimicry and hybridity is represented through the Beast Folk's distorted identity, entangled between imposed civility and supressed instinct (Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*). Spivak's notion of "epistemic violence" (Spivak, 1988, p. 281) is materialized in the erasure of the Beast Folk's original identities, making them voiceless in their own transmutation (Spivak, *Can the Subaltern Speak?*).

The conclusive collapse of Moreau's regime which is accentuated by rebellion and regression underlines the hollowness of colonial projects that aspire to dismantle indigenous identity. As Patrick Wolfe argues that the logic of colonialism "is both as complex social formation and as continuity through time that I term settler colonization a structure rather than an event" (Wolfe, 2006, p. 390), and Wells' narrative elucidates its enduring violence.

Ultimately, *The Island of Dr. Moreau* compels readers to go beyond the surface level of comprehension and confront the ethical outcomes of unrestrained power, whether scientific or imperialistic. By materializing the grotesque consequences of colonial ideology, Wells questions the fabrication of benevolent progress, encouraging a critical engagement with the legacies of domination that persevere in contemporary discourses of science, race, and power. Finally, the novel emerges as an influential text in postcolonial literary studies and a stark reminder of the costs of dehumanization in the name of civilization and progress.

Further research opportunities include the frameworks of Postcolonial Ecocriticism to investigate how Moreau's experiments imitate colonial exploitation of land as well as life. This would include the analysis of the island as an ecologically violated space and can be linked to environmental destruction in colonized territories. The novel could be investigated through the framework of disability theory to examine how colonial power reconstructs and disciplines bodies deemed deviant, as seen in the hybrid bodies of the Beast Folk. Finally, the novel's themes of bioethics and dehumanization stand relevant today. Research could explore how

contemporary discussions about genetic engineering or artificial intelligence (Haynes, 1994) resonate Wells' warnings about scientific egotism.

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