

# The Retriever and the Rebel: Horror and the Non-Human Category in Sharadindu Bandyopadhyay's "The Red Fireflies" (1929) and "Pintu" (1933)

Arcaprova Raychaudhury

## Abstract

Sharadindu Bandyopadhyay's horror stories reveal a distinct form of engagement with the non-human and nature with regard to colonial interventions. From haunted landscapes, 'uncanny' non-human activities to natural settings which are readily permeated by horrifying presences, the stories address the plight of native ecologies as well as the non-human under the expansionist, gain-based designs of colonialism and its instrumentalist worldview which presupposes nature and the non-human as passive and expendable. The presence of the uncanny in the stories raises the issue of boundaries and the horrifying consequences of transgression. That which is perceived as an 'other' to the colonial ideology serves to expose the latter in terms of its violations and debasement of the native ecological spaces and their assorted values. Among other stories, "Pintu" (1933) and "Rakta-Khadyot" ("The Red Fireflies", 1929) offer significant scopes of understanding the ideas of space, intervention and resistance in terms of the uncanny. Through the plight as well as wrath of the non-human, the two stories explore the underlying horrors of colonialism and its intervening ideology – one which others as it invades. This paper shall, therefore, attempt a study of the two stories with its focus on nature, boundaries and transgression, exploring the problematics of the colonially perceived notions of the non-human and the environment, the resistive functioning of the uncanny, the re-assigning of agencies and the need for reclamation as presented in the narratives.

**Keywords:** colonialism, horror, nature, non-human, reclamation