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## **Monsters in the Crown: Anatomizing Indian Thuggees through Orientalist Lens**

**Priyanka Pathak**

### **Abstract**

We are afraid of the unknown. Anything that challenges our validated identity with its creepy presence engenders uneasiness. We try to merge the unknown with the realm of our knowledge and reality, but the moment we realize that these unknown may have different nature of reality, we resist unification with these strangers, as that may obscure our own well framed reality. The anxiety and discomfort about the unseen, uncharted, uncategorized have always encouraged human beings to seek after an enlightened existence, where nothing under the sun slips into the vortex of incognizance. But this insatiable curiosity of Renaissance man has also made them bump into a different pattern of life that they have cautiously pressed at the periphery. Hence, society has an ambivalent attitude towards these outlying creatures. The normative structure of society overbearingly intends to disempower and domesticate these not so human entities. This is how humans have created 'Monsters,' to conceal all the disorders, anomalies, deformities, and disruptions behind a thin veil. But the divider between the humans and non-humans, well-formed and deformed, normal and abnormal, is so fragile that shuttling between the domains is regular instance. Natives for their culture, rituals, behavior may appear monstrous to the colonizers but when the people on throne practice barbarous deeds to exert power, do they also ally with monstrosity? This paper intends to unravel the mystery and history behind the presence of profuse monsters in European colonies and will critically discuss how Orientalist stereotypes help in constructing the phenomenon of 'Monsters'. Are thugs of India merely metaphors for colonizers who intentionally produced an embellished description or an enigma?

**Keywords:** Monsters, Thugs, Colonialism, Postcolonialism, Orientalism.