Chapter - III

The Infra Man

Apes of the Sinister Jungle

You are no more to me one way or another than that fly there.

Just so. I'd squash you or leave you alone. I don't care what I do.

Martin Ricardo

How long can they live like this? Soon they are going to be separated
and we are going to see that.

Mohana

The tragic man is pushed irrevocably to their inevitable
doom and their transgressions are aggravated through the satanic interference
by a despicable menagerie of characters who are identified with the lowest and
the meanest among mankind. These are the characters who belong to the
second category of people, namely, the infra men and women. The infra
humanity always remain in darkness, not even once making an attempt to
come morally alive. In fact, they are apes in a sinister jungle polluting the
entire world with their unmitigated villainy. Conrad calls them "fools" and
Mu.Va., "numb people". Conrad's Marlow says: "Of course you may be too
much of a fool to go wrong – too dull even to know you are being assaulted by
the powers of darkness. I take it, no fool ever made a bargain for his soul with
the devil... " (HOD : 207). In a similar vein, Mu.Va.'s Aṟavāḷi says, "some
people are too numb to realise whether they are pricked or not " (NOM :
520).
The company’s Chief Accountant, the Manager, and the Brick-Maker in *Heart of Darkness*, Mrs. Almayer, Babalatchi, Lakamba and Dain Maroola in Almayer’s Folly and *An Outcast of the Islands*, The German skipper, the Chief Engineer, Cornelius, and Brown in *Lord Jim*, Sotillo in Nostromo, Schomberg, Jones, Martin Ricardo and Pedro in Victory, Vacikaram, Saralambal, Rajapushpam, Kaṇakaṅkaṅkam and Kiritarasamy in Kayamai, Tāyammā in Akalviḻakkku, Cuppurattinam’s Aunt and Syamala in Allī, Kaṇakā and Vachiranāṭān in Vāṭāmalar, Kesavarāyan in Maṅkuṭicai, Manivanṇaṅ, Balaganapathy, Sornam, Sarojini, Devadossar, Inspector Senathipathy and Sakasambal in Peṟṟamaṇam, Kāṅcaṅai and Naṅkanāṭāṅ in Malarvilī are some of the infra humanity of the Conradian and Mu.Vavian worlds.

The characters of this category of humanity are the intensified versions of the dark aspect of the tragic humanity, living without the benefit of moral codes and that is why they are termed, "Infra Humanity". Some of them are odious, callous, vengeful and scheming hypocrites, some others are evil incarnates and sexual immorals. Whatever evil qualities they are associated with, they serve as accomplices of dark powers aggravating the downfall of their tragic counterparts which invariably ends in their death. For example, Schomberg is the alter ego of Heyst, Cornelius of Jim, Mrs. Almayer of Almayer, Aissa of Willems, Vacikaram of Anavar, Kaṇakā of Tāṇappan, Naṅkanāṭāṅ and Kāṅcaṅai of Collector Celvanāyakam.

The fate of Kurtz, the tragic prototype of Conrad, is aggravated by the company’s Chief Accountant, the Manager and the Brick Maker. Similarly, the fate of Anavar, the tragic prototype of Mu.Va., is
precipitated by Vacikaram, Saralambal, Rajapushpam, Kaṇakaliṅkam and Kiritarasamy. The company's Chief Accountant in the African wilderness -- where death is sulking in the air, in the water, in the bush -- looks elegant like a sort of vision. His high-starched collar, white cuffs, a light alpaca jacket, snowy trousers, a clean neck-tie and varnished boots, with brushed, oiled hair, clearly imply that he is a man of moral emptiness. When the natives are dying of starvation, this man is making himself smart like that of a "hairdresser's dummy". He is totally unconcerned of the inhuman surroundings, but quite devoted to his work of making correct entries. He is least bothered about the agony of the ailing agent. He says callously that the groans of the sick person is annoyingly distracting. His neat clerical entries are more important than the sufferings of the agent who has been left under his care. Soon the sick man becomes too ill to groan. He crosses the room gently to look at the sick man and on returning tells Marlow that he does not hear. Marlow is startled and asks with agony whether he is dead, for which the latter answers with great composure, "No, not yet" (HOD: 159). The same attitude is continued and maintained towards Kurtz's illness in the Inner Station.

The Manager is in no way better, in fact, is more callous than the Chief Accountant. He is commonplace in complexion, features, manners and in voice. His eyes are cold and is capable of making his glance fall on one as trenchant and heavy as an axe. But at the sametime he knows the act of hiding his intentions. There is always an indefinable, faint expression on his lips, something stealthy. He does not smile, and even if he smiles it cannot be taken as the smile of a human being. He talks in such a way that even the commonest phrase appears absolutely inscrutable. He takes
extraordinary pleasure when his negro servant-boy treats the whitemen under his very eyes with provoking insolence. In short, the Manager represents naked commercialism devoid of human concern of any sort.

The Manager is totally indifferent to the degradation and mortal illness of Kurtz. Rather, he expresses his concern only for the "harm" done by "unsound methods" and that a very important station is in jeopardy. He is prepared to involve himself in any murderous plot for a few rivets. The fire accident in the inner station and the subsequent inhuman punishment given to the young negro are the further chances to study the callousness of the Manager. He casually confides this to Marlow with the question, "Did you ever see anything like it — eh? It is incredible" (HOD: 167), and then simply walks away, quite unconcerned.

To add fuel to the fire, the Manager's uncle arrives there as the leader of the so-called Eldorado Exploring Expedition with a band of cut-throats in the name of explorers. He himself resembles a "butcher in a poor neighbourhood" and his eyes have a look of scheming cunningness. They seriously discuss Kurtz and the ivory — ivory which Kurtz was able to procure in large and unimaginable quantity — his authoritative attitude and his prospects of becoming the company's supreme authority. The Manager feels that his immediate future is endangered and it is time to put an end to this unfair competition and hang one of the agents of Kurtz's district. His uncle replies with a grunt:

Certainly, get him hanged, why not? Anything — anything can be done in this country. That's what I say; nobody here, you
understand, here, can endanger your position. And why? You stand
the climate—you outlast them all (HOD: 181).

The Manager's hostile attitude towards Kurtz and his total disregard for human
virtues are further exposed when he makes a complaint to his fat uncle over
Kurtz's intention when he was there last:

Each station should be like a beacon on the road towards better
things, a centre for trade, of course, but also for humanizing,
improving, instructing. Conceive you—that ass! And he wants to be
Manager! (HOD: 182).

After that black display of confidence they move away swearing aloud.

After Kurtz's death, the Manager has been seen in a state of
triumphant survival, horrifyingly "serene", "quiet", "satisfied" and in
possession of a vast quantity of ivory. All this is in shattering contrast to the
struggle, torment, horror, and victory associated with Kurtz's death. Coldly
malevolent, motivated only by unprincipled greed and ruthless ambition, he
sees humane and idealistic intentions as no better than noxious nonsense. To
the Manager, Kurtz's talk of high ideals is dangerous because it would ruin his
business prospects, if put into practice.

The Brick-Maker, the Manager's spy and partner in crimes
is equally callous and unprincipled in his avarice for material prosperity. He
is young, and cunning, carefully studies the inner workings of other men and,
in short, he has all the qualifications, to become a first class agent in that God-
forsaken dark continent. He is called sarcastically an "Young Aristocrat" and
looks like a "Papier - Mâche Mephistopheles", having nothing inside "but a
little loose dirt" (HOD : 171). Though he is specifically appointed for brick making, not a single brick is to be seen in the station. Perhaps, he may be waiting for raw materials from Europe or the physical impossibility of brick making makes him do secretarial work for the manager.

Like his master he is also quite averse towards any attempt to make the natives civilized. They could prosper only as long as the natives are kept savages, so like his master he is callous and is an enemy of mankind. His cruelty to humanity and his total disregard for human dignity are revealed when he recommends, callously, severe punishment to the young negro who is alleged to have caused the fire in the station:

Serve him right. Transgression — punishment — bang! Pitiless, pitiless.

That's the only way. This will prevent all conflagrations for the future. I was just telling the Manager... (HOD : 170).

Evidently, therefore, everyone is very particular about their own safety and prosperity and quite indifferent to the sufferings of Kurtz in the Inner Station. If Kurtz, who came to the dark continent with an altruistic intention is changed into an atavistic man-hunter, it is all due to the concerted villainy, treachery and callousness of these people. They are entirely responsible for the isolation of Kurtz in the wilderness without food, medicine, trading goods and other connections whatsoever. The Manager's reaction to the death of Kurtz testifies to their murderous plot. They evoke a total sense of disgust through their actions and attitudes and provoke the apt comment of Harold R.Collins: "Most of the whitemen Marlow meets donot merit the compliment he pays the cannibals" (1954 : 104).
Similarly, Ānavar meets his downfall due to the concerted attack of these dark forces. Vacikaram, as her name denotes, is voluptuously attractive. She belongs, as her fellow-clerk, Vēṅkatēsan observes, to the fifth category of women (K: 34), who live an immoral life all along without a pinch of conscience. Everyday she comes to the office at her own time, wearing costly dresses, applying all the cosmetics available in the world as though she is going to appear for a beauty contest. With the blind support of Ānavar, she behaves with her colleagues in a high-handed manner and uses arrogant and abusive terms such as, "shut up your mouth", "mind your business", "who are you to question me?", "so what?", 'are you an officer?' "hai! come here!" etc. She is in the habit of carrying tales to Ānavar (K: 77) and whenever her fellow-clerks are taken to task, harassed, abused, or humiliated, she derives a satanic pleasure (K: 217). She is behind all the vindictive transfers in the office (K: 90). Nallayyan, a clerk in the office, rightly points out the character of Vacikaram:

It is not possible to correct her even by Ānavar. Death alone can do that. Is it possible for her to be a family woman and be the wife of a man? By birth she belongs to a different category; it is impossible to correct her (K: 200).

Life without regular sex is quite unimaginable to her. The moment Ānavar ignores her for Saralambal, she allows Sahayan, a clerk in the office, to take up Ānavar's place (K: 295). Professor Geetha observes: "Vacikaram is a saddist. She has absolutely no scruples. She thrives at the expense of others" (1975: 64). All her atrocities in the office aggravate the downfall of Ānavar. He loses the respect and sympathy of everyone in the
office because of her satanic influence on him. Again, it is Vacikaram who separates him from his wife and children and corrupts him to the extent of being invited to "live with him in his house as his wife" (K:101). Her immorality precipitates the downfall of Anavar in such a way that her sexual relationship with one of her colleagues provokes him and the result of which is her murder and the subsequent arrest of Anavar. All the characters in the novel are affected by her one way or the other. Vacikaram’s life ends with her shameful death.

Saralambal, as her name denotes, is available to everyone. She is the concubine of Kanakaliṅkam but is not faithful to him in spite of his providing all comforts. When Anavar comes to her house in search of his friend, her behaviour with him speaks volumes about her moral character. She treats him with liquor and her voluptuous sex-starved body and retains him the whole night. The next morning when he is in a hurry, she comforts him and infuses confidence by saying:

You don’t worry about him. There is another way behind the house.

Even if he comes, you can go out that way. I’ll take care of it. I don’t think he’ll come back. When he had been here last time, we had a bitter quarrel and he left the house abusing me (K: 267).

The result of this interlude is that a bitter quarrel ensues the next day both with his wife at home and with Vacikaram in the office. It ultimately leads to a permanent separation from his wife and the murder of Vacikaram.
Rajapushpam, as her name denotes, is a high-class prostitute. Her original name is Ammu, but now she has changed it according to her social status. She is always in search of rich victims. Presently she is living with a sixty year old rich business-man. Anavar himself has had sexual relationship with her. Now she is the Vice-President of the women's Seva Samaj. She is an active participant in all the women's organisations, meetings and conferences. Whenever a foreign guest comes to the town, she will be the first woman to extend an invitation. Ironically, she is going to be honoured soon for her service to the cause of women. Whenever and wherever Anavar happens to see her, he gets infused with a wild sexual urge. Thus, she becomes indirectly responsible for the downfall of Anavar.

Kanakalinkam is a bosom friend of Anavar. He is a commission-agent by profession and his only aim in life is material prosperity for which he is prepared to stoop to any level. That is why he is able to maintain a concubine with all comforts. It is from him that Anavar learns how to exploit a corrupt society to one's own advantage. Sometimes, it is through him that Anavar receives bribes for his illegal official services (K:57). For him, keeping a concubine is a symbol of social status. But, as professor Deva Sangeetham says, "to his every action an equal and opposite reaction is given at the end of the novel" (1975:81). His talks on 'election' and 'moral books' leaves a deep impression on the psyche of Anavar and corrupts his moral nature to the core which ultimately aggravates his downfall. Anavar is spellbound when he says:

Didn't we read Tirukkural? Bagavat Gita? Are we transformed by these books? We just read them as ideas of our ancient people who
lived two thousand years ago. Do you think we become statues when we look at them? Similarly, do you think people become good by reading these books? I put to you this simple question — can you show me a good man who ever contested an election? Can we dream of it? Even if he contests, can he win? People never support such a man. If Sundaravināyakar managed to win the election, it is because of the help and support rendered by rogues like us. Otherwise, he would have lost his deposit. No one can win any election without the support of rogues. You bear it in mind, people are generally fools. You have to tell them certain things repeatedly and sometimes a bit loudly. That's enough. Then the people will simply dance to your tunes. This is called an election (K:63).

Kanakaliṅkam is an adept at contriving election strategies. His advice to Thankasāmy, Sundaravināyakar's nephew on how to earn respectability and popularity in the society and win elections, shows his experience and resourcefulness. He is clever enough to understand the psyche of the corrupt society and to exploit it neatly to his advantage. His ultimate aim is to earn the confidence of Thankasāmy and later exploit it to his benefit. His hypocrisy and callousness are completely exposed when he advises Thankasāmy what must be said in a public meeting:

Talk about all the noble principles and stress the importance of discipline. Firmly declare that liquor is the root-cause of all social evils and the illegal gratification of any kind should be rooted out. This is a sacred land and many great men are born here. We should
follow strictly the path taken by our ancestors. Keep two kugals ready in your memory to quote and then mention the names of Lord Buddha, Rāmalinka Swāmikal and Mahatma Gandhi. Stress the importance of social service and your commitment for that noble cause and declare your promise to be honest and never to be selfish.

(K: 147).

Ironically, Kanakalīṅkam has nothing to do with any of these virtues in his own personal life. Moreover, he is not able to squeeze as much money as he expected. Thankasāmy gives him a car but he is not satisfied. Anavar uses the same car to murder Vacikāram and is arrested by the police. Meanwhile, his concubine pester him for a house. Since he is very badly in need of money both to save his friend and to satisfy his concubine, he makes a desperate attempt and lifts fifty thousand rupees from Thankasāmy at gun point. But he is overpowered by the watchman and the public and ultimately lands in jail.

Kiritarasāmy is a government officer full of prejudices and lacks common sense and individual judgement. It is through his hypocrisy that Anavar's treachery takes alarming proportions and results in his downfall. He foolishly thinks that people who apply ash-powder on their forehead are good and others are infidels (K:28). Anavar exploits this weakness of his officer to advance his ulterior motives. The officer is very much pleased when Anavar comes to his house with two packets of ash-powder and kumkum saying that he is just coming from the temple. But at the same time when Nallayyan makes a visit to his house to give him a clear picture of the office, he treats Nallayyan with contempt and retorts:
Do you think I can run the office only after getting information from you? Do you think I don’t have the shrewdness to understand the people myself? Am I a blind man? (K:281).

Then, he foolishly asks Nallayyan why he is not wearing sacred ash on his forehead. Sacred ash on one’s forehead, obviously, is a false passport to get into his confidence.

The same officer is very much pleased when Anavar garlands him on his birthday and takes his entire family to all the temples. As a reward, this spineless officer asks him to revive the file against Nallayyan and Menmolji. His hypocrisy and prejudice never allow him to think rationally whether Menmolji is really a bad girl. Nallayyan rightly observes on the character of Kiritarasamy:

He has no faith in moral values of human life. Even if he becomes a disciple of god, I won’t believe him. He uses religion, literature, arts and history as outward garments of his life. He wears them when they suit and throws them away whenever they pinch. It is absolutely foolish to believe him (K:325).

Anavar’s dismissal of Menmolji and Nallayan creates a storm in the office and everyone turns against him and ultimately Anavar is completely isolated from his subordinates. This is one of main instances that aggravates and expedites the downfall of Anavar.
I

The German skipper in Lord Jim looks "like a clumsy effigy of a man cut out of a block of fat" (LJ:17). He is the "fattest man in the whole blessed tropical belt clear round that good old earth of ours" (LJ:28). Whenever he walks, he reminds one of "a trained baby elephant walking on hind legs" (LJ:28). His drinking and eating habits are quite disgusting and make one say, "Tfui" (LJ:28). The eight hundred pilgrims look like "cattle" (LJ:11) and they are in no way better than "human cargo" (LJ:12) to him. The Chief Engineer is no better. The eight hundred pilgrims look like "vermins" (LJ:19), "reptiles", "pink toads" and "black mastiffs" (LJ:39). He treats them as untouchables.

Cornelius is an unspeakable Malaccan Portuguese known to Mrs. Stein and appointed as the manager of Stein & Co's trading post in Patusan. But he has already swindled everything there with nothing left but rats. Even the account books are all torn and some are missing. He is a "mean, cowardly scoundrel" (LJ:211) with malevolent, mistrustful, underhand glances. He treats his wife and daughter in an "appalling" manner using "filthy denunciations". He reminds one of everything that is unsavoury in human life. His slow laborious walk resembles the creeping of a repulsive beetle.

He is respected neither by his wife nor by his step-daughter. In fact, they have nothing but contempt for him. His wife dies of weeping and never allowed him to come anywhere near her death-bed. Jewel keeps him away eventhough he knocks at the door repeatedly. Her contempt for him is revealed when she says, "Ah! I should never forgive him. My mother
had forgiven — but I, never!” (LJ:231). Marlow’s estimate of him gives us a clear picture of his loathsome personality:

It was the element of his nature which permeated all his acts and passions and emotions; he raged abjectly, smiled abjectly, was abjectly sad; his civilities and his indignations were alike abject. I am sure his love would have been the most abject of sentiments — but can one imagine a loathsome insect in love? And his loathsomeness, too, was abject, so that a simply disgusting person would have appeared noble by his side (LJ:209).

Cornelius tries his best to send away Jim from Patusan, but when Jim says that he is going to stay on, he replies in a satanic tone: "You shall d-d-die h-h-here" (LJ:214). Since his livelihood is taken away, nowhere to turn to and with no other source of income, he becomes furious and asks Marlow:

Who is he? What does he want here— the big thief? What does he want here? He throws dust into everybody’s eyes, he throws dust in your eyes, honourable sir; but he can’t throw dust into my eyes (LJ:245).

Suddenly his tone changes and indirectly asks for some money in exchange for his step-daughter, Jewel. When it is bluntly denied, he leaves disappointed with a heart full of venom ready to spit it out at the right time on his enemy, Jim.

Brown is a ruffian who lives a lawless life with his band of cut-throats. He is in the habit of kidnapping natives and lonely traders and
after robb[ing them] would call the half-dead victims for a fight with him at his gun point. His misdeeds are quite countless and he is marked for a vehement scorn for mankind at large, and for his victims, in particular. He derives satanic pleasure in shooting and maiming his defenceless victims. Twenty years of such a mean, shameless, fierce and aggressive life have yielded him nothing in way of material prosperity except a small bag of silver dollars.

It is in one such misdeeds that Brown and his men are about to be arrested and put behind bars by Spanish authorities. They are sixteen in all and none of them wants to be arrested. They escape in a stolen ship and with a stolen ship they do not dare to go to any port. They take their own course and ultimately land in Patusan. Brown cleverly exploits Jim's absence and in the company of Cornelius and Kassim works out a plan to make a thorough loot of the place. The land already seems to be his to be torn to pieces, squeezed dry and thrown away. He also wants to teach those people who received him with shots. The lust for battle, the desire for life, the wish for one more chance of luck returns to his satanic breast. Jim's neat clothes, canvas leggings and the pipe-clayed shoes simply add fuel to the already burning fire of his jealousy.

This unspeakable and abominable Brown has a diabolic capacity for ferrating out the thoughts of others by keeping an air of frankness to his manner. He talks to Jim with such an air:

I came here for food. D'ye hear? — food to fill our bellies. And what did you come for? What did you ask for when you came here? We don't ask you for anything but to give us a fight or a clear road to go
back whence we came.... I am here because I was afraid once in my life. Want to know what of? Of a prison. That scares me, and you may know it — if it's any good to you. I won't ask you what scared you into this infernal hole, where you seem to have found pretty pickings. That's your luck and this is mine — the privilege to beg for the favour of being shot quickly, or else kicked out to go free and starve in my own way... (LJ:281-82).

Whatever might be his pretences, we know that he has already slapped the world in its face, spat on it, thrown upon it an immensity of scorn.

Sotillo in Nostromo is a ruthless Colonel and an inhuman rascal. He is a product of the culture of Costaguana that is based on, like the Malay culture, savagery, betrayal, deception and greed. The history of Costaguana is largely determined by individuals, very often with their stupidity and lusts. Sotillo is one among them and stands a class apart by himself in interrogating, torturing and killing his victims. As Captain Mitchell says, Sotillo and his soldiers are uniformed thieves. He comes to Sulaco with his cut-throat soldiers in a steamer to loot the six months store of San Tome Mine's silver.

Mrs. Almayer in Almayer's Folly is commonly referred to by her own people as a "witch woman". She is the adopted daughter of Tom Lingard who picked her up from a ship of pirates, when quite young. Inspite of good education and care she remains a savage. Almayer marries her keeping in mind the enormous wealth of Lingard, but from day one, he lives only with a witch. She never inspires confidence in her husband. Infact, he is under constant fear that she may poison him and so she is not even allowed to prepare food in the house. Even the girl, Nina is not safe in the house because she
always watches the child with jealousy for her attachment to Almayer. Sometimes, she used to burn the furniture and tear down pretty curtains.

Mrs. Almayer is more loyal to her savage kinsmen than her husband. If they have left Almayer alive it is only for the gold treasure, the whereabouts of which is known only to him. Mrs. Almayer has tried all her savage tricks on him—persuasion, coaxing, abuse, railings and even desperate beseechings or murderous threats to drive him into an alliance with Lakamba, but in vain. Sometimes, out of frustration, she used to scream at Almayer with her devilish eyes pouring out venom:

Why don't you go to the Rajah? Why do you go back to those Dyakes in the great forest? They should be killed. You cannot kill them, you cannot; but our Rajah's men are brave! You tell the Rajah where the old white man's treasure is. Our Rajah is good! He is our very grandfader. He will kill those wretched Dyakes, and you shall have half the treasure. Oh, Kaspar, tell where the treasure is! Tell me! Tell me out of the old man's Surat where you read so often at night (AF : 35).

During such ravings, she used to scratch him on his face with her claw-like hands. But she is simply driven away with contemptuous words.

Lakamba is the old chief of Malay settlements in Sambir on the banks of the river Pontai. He is aold warrior, a pirate and has taken part in several fierce battles under the leadership of blind Omar. He lives in a big house with his several wives and slaves. He is always discontented, ungrateful, a man full of envy and greed, ready for intrigue, with brave words and empty promises for ever in his life. Even his minister, the one-eyed and
evil Babalatchi is very much afraid of him.

Babalatchi is the one-eyed devil incarnate of Sambir. He is the most faithful minister of Lakamba and carries out all the orders of his Chief very cleverly. Like his master he has no sympathy for the whites. He is an ardent lover of the Malay tradition and its savage customs, barbaric manners and ridiculous superstitions. Treachery is his religion; betrayal is his profession; destroying enemies and their business interests, sometimes their entire families - his vocation. Like his master, he is a cold warrior and pirate and a good servant of blind Omar. He is gifted with a voice that very much suits his cunning counsels. He has stood faithful by his chief in his long career of throat-cutting, kidnapping, slave trading, murder and robbery. He is a man of varied experiences which equalled the most successful politicians of any age. With his inborn crookedness, cunningness, persuasiveness and firmness of purpose and ruthless methods he occupies a permanent place in the mind of Lakamba.

Whenever Lakamba is in a crisis or any of his unholy associates, Babalatchi's help is sought. He is always behind the success of his master with his wise counsels and deep-rooted plots. The whole east coast from Poulo Laut to Tanjung Batu is aware of Babalatchi's wisdom. If Lakamba escaped many dangers, faced many enemies bravely and many white men were circumvented, it was by the timely counsel of Babalatchi.

Schomberg in Victory is a big, manly, bearded creature of Teutonic persuasion with an absolutely ungovernable tongue. He is a forty five year old man, a hotel-keeper by profession, first in Bangkok, then
somewhere else and now in Sourabaya. He maintains the hotel with the help of his wife. He is a noxious ass, who satisfies his lust for silly gossip at the cost of his customers. He derives devilish pleasure in talking ill of others, especially Heyst. His thoughts, actions, talks and his entire mind are obsessed with Heyst. He is, in fact, a beast in human shape.

Whoever associates with Heyst becomes the object of his ridicule. Heyst, in fact, helps Morrison when his ship is impounded by Portuguese authorities. Later, he dies of cold in Europe. Schomberg exploits Morrison's death to his advantage and says:

That's what comes of having anything to do with that fellow. He squeezes you dry like a lemon, then chucks you out - sends you home to die. Take warning by Morrison (V:23).

He becomes jealous of Heyst becoming the Manager of the Tropical Belt Coal Company and ridicules his appointment:

All that is very well, gentlemen; but he can't throw any of his coal dust in my eyes. There's nothing in it. Why, there can't be anything in it. A fellow like that for Manager? Phoo! (V:25).

When he uses the term "swede", he puts the stress on the word swede as if it meant scoundrel. When one of the customers asks him out of frustration whether Heyst owed him anything, he tells with a similar expression that Heyst has not paid for three visits altogether to his establishment. But it is a lie and Heyst owes him nothing. He also gives many labels to Heyst—"Heyst the Spider", "Enchanted Heyst", "Heyst the Hermit".

Heyst's running away with the orchestra girl, Lena provokes Schomberg. He calls Heyst a "vagabond, imposter, swindler, ruffian,
Schevein - hund!" (V:49). What Heyst has done is, "it's disgusting - tfui" (V:61). But what he has done is still worse. After understanding the helplessness of the girl, he plans to retain her with him and dispose of his ugly wife. But she has been snatched away under his nose by "that swede" apparently without any trouble worth speaking of. Heyst becomes for Schomberg the deepest, the most dangerous, the most hateful of scoundrels. His bottled up indignation is fermenting venomously. Schomberg feels that he could not be himself till he takes revenge on Heyst. In his state of moral weakness Schomberg allows himself to be corrupted.

Jones is an embodiment of evil. He is a bony man, quite reserved, menacingly unceremonious and everything about him is dangerous and mysterious. He hates the very sight of women. He is a globe-trotting gambler and an adept at overcoming any adverse situation. He puts up himself with his secretary in Schomberg's hotel as tourists. In no time, he converts the hotel into a gambling den and Pedro as a waiter of the hotel. In fact, Pedro is his personal bodyguard and an expert in killing people at the shortest time. After making Schomberg a pawn to their business, he returns to his trade. Schomberg, without knowing that this world is no more than a great, wild jungle for Jones, wants to get rid of him and when he expresses his desire indirectly, Jones asserts:

Here we are and we stay. Would you try to put us out? I dare say you could do it; but you couldn't do it without badly hurt - very badly hurt. We can promise him that, can't we, Martin?... What I mean for instance, is that he, quiet and inoffensive as you see him sitting here, would think of setting fire to this house of entertainment
of yours. It would blaze like a box of matches. Think of that! It wouldn't advance your affairs, would it? ... And you have been used to deal with tame people, haven't you? But we are n't tame. We once kept a whole angry town at bay for two days, and then we got away with our plunder. It was in Venezuela. Ask Martin here—he can tell you (V:112-113).

Jones is very plain in his warning to Schomberg.

Martin Ricardo is the secretary and faithful henchman of Jones. Basically he is a sea-man, has served as a mate both in a steamer and a schooner. He is, like his 'governor', the very embodiment of evil. He represents all that is ugly and disgusting in human life. He is impulsive and lacks what is called "restraint". Even a wicked man like Schomberg is frightened when he listens to his adventures. He makes Schomberg breathless when he says:

Now, here we sit, friendly like, and that's all right. You aren't in my way. But I am not friendly to you. I just don't care. Some men do say that; but I really don't. You are no more to me one way or another than that fly there. Just so, I'd squash you or leave you alone. I don't care what I do (V:129).

The casual way in which he narrates how he was ready to kill his own skipper in the company of Jones to steal his cash box and how he narrowly escaped simply chills his heart. Like his master, Martin Ricardo threatens Schomberg in his usual way when he tells him that he wants his room back:
And if I thought you had been to the police, I would tell Pedro to
catch you round the waist and break your fat neck by jerking your
head backward—snap! I saw him do it to a big buck nigger who was
flashing a razor in front of the governor. It can be done. You hear
a low crack, that's all—and the man drops down like a limp
rag!(V:152).

Pedro is more an animal than a man with his hairy body
and loathsome behaviour. He is treated by everyone with utmost contempt.
In the company of Jones and Ricardo, he has involved himself in violence,
arson, looting and scores of murders in different countries. Whenever a threat,
or intrusion or a challenge comes, Pedro is summoned and the enemy is finished
off in no time. It is Martin Ricardo who takes care of him, passes orders and
tames him whenever the necessity arises. Martin sums up Pedro's character
thus:

Dog!... You murdering brute, you slaughtering savage, you! You
infidel, you robber of Churches!... You carrion eater! Esclavo!

(V:231).

Tāyammā in Akalviḷḷakkku is a well-built, dark-browed,
broad-eyed, thirty years old, dark, voluptuous woman of easy virtues. She is
a coolie in an estate at ooty. Even when her husband was living with her, she
had led an immoral life. She is the root-cause of her husband killing a man
and his ten year imprisonment. Like Vacikaram, she finds it almost impossible
to live without regular sex. She is on the look out for an equally lustful sexual
partner. In that part of the estate, no one, including children, talk well of
Mohana in Vāṭāmalar is the step-mother of Tāṇappan and Cuṭarvili. She belongs to a very poor family and her father is a cunning man who is seen most of the days with his daughter. Her husband spends the whole day in his jewellery shop and does not know what happens in his house. Both father and daughter treat Tāṇappan and Cuṭarvili as though they were untouchables. Mohana keeps her husband under her control and involves herself in all kinds of atrocities. She is jealous by nature, fond of spreading scandals and in the inhuman company of Tāyārammā, interferes in the personal lives of so many people. She develops enmity towards Kulantaivēl and his wife and tells Tāyārammā:

How long can they live like this? Soon they are going to be separated and we are going to see that (VM:112).

Kaṇakā in Vāṭāmalar is a native of Madras, brought up by ugly and arrogant rules of humanity. She is neither beautiful nor virtuous. Her manly body, hair style, excessive make up, manner of wearing clothes, endless talking, noisy laughter and everything else about her is quite disgusting and nauseating. Most of the time she is found talking about movies and very proud of having seen many popular films on the first day of its release. She knows the life history of almost all the actors and actresses. But at the same time she does not know anything about cooking and is reluctant to take up any family responsibilities. Like Vacikaram, she hates the company of women and always wants to be in the company of men.

Vachiranātan in Vāṭāmalar is an young man of no education and distantly related to Kaṇakā. Inspite of his poor income, he is always seen in fine clothes, with an air of casual attitude. Except Kaṇakā, no
one likes him, including the servants in the household of Tānappan. In fact, he is treated by everyone with extreme contempt. Yet, he comes to the house of Tānappan almost everyday and sometimes stays there the whole day and involves in noisy conversation with the lady of the house. Sometimes he takes her to his house in the absence of her husband. He is too numb to realise what others think or talk of him.

Cuppurattinam’s Aunt in Alli is a woman of mean understanding, little information and unpardonable arrogance. She is a widow, blessed with a son and a daughter. Her daughter marries a teacher, who is very simple, quite a scholar, morally sound, intellectually strong and spiritually very deep. But she is alien to all these human virtues and her vanity does not allow them to live in peace. When her daughter dies of typhoid fever, she takes away her children Ilangō and Manimegalai from their father. She does not like the Tamil names of the children and calls them Ratnakumar and Swarnam. Though she is old enough to retire from active life, she involves herself in gossip and odious luxuries. She is always seen in costly silk sarees with matching blouses. She is so fond of jewels that she always takes immense pleasure in wearing diamond ornaments. As a mark of civilization, she always keeps a well-folded hand kerchief in her right hand.

Syamala in Alli is the wife of a rich silk merchant and a nymphomaniac. She has been living a sexually immoral life even when her husband was alive. After his death she breaks loose of all controls and her house becomes an asylum for immoral people. She changes her lovers as she changes her garments without any moral fear. In course of time she becomes the store house of all sex-related diseases. She requires medical attention every
day and if it is delayed, she writhes in pain. Dr. Parameshwari who attends on her tells her friend Dr. Alli:

I give her medicine after medicine. Of course, that is my duty, but she is not following my instructions strictly. What can I do? One day I even asked her, as if jovially, why couldn't she avoid it at least now, but she replies that it is absolutely impossible for her to return to normal life (A:274).

Rather she asks the doctor to give her still more costly and effective medicines and she is not worried about spending any amount of money. Of course, she pays five hundred rupees to the doctor every month.

Kāńcanai in Malarviḷḷi is a thirty five year old woman, the wife of Collector Celvanāyakam, who is endowed with intelligence, beauty and an aesthetic sense. But all these gifts are wasted, since she is unable to exercise any control over her mind. As professor Sachithanandan says, "Kāńcanai is a hedonist who seeks sexual fulfilment through the exercise of her art because she is a slave to her passions" (1975:34). She wants to start a business since she is not able to make both ends meet:

Our monthly income is only seven hundred rupees. We try our best to adjust ourselves within that income but in vain. The seven hundred rupees go away in seven hundred ways within ten days. At the end of the month we suffer a lot. This man spends a lot and exceeds his limits in helping others. He shows utmost sympathy to everyone as if he is the only saviour for them. He never understands that there is a limit for everything (MV:24).
Actually what matters is neither her family responsibility nor Celvanāyakam’s generosity but her own prodigality and desire for luxury. Malaiikkannar, Celvanāyakam’s friend is also of the same opinion when he says, "... she was fond of a luxurious life and always had a greed for money" (MV:247).

The narrator, Muthaiyan’s comparison of Kāncaṇai with Lord Buddha is highly ironical. Buddha preached that ambition is the root-cause of all human predicaments. But Kāncaṇai is longing for more and more money. Perhaps, it is a symbolic indication that like Buddha, Kāncaṇai is also going to renounce her family life with her husband. Again Muthaiyan is young and inexperienced when he observes:

That lady with her white dress and ear rings studded with white stones reminded me of the goddess of wisdom. The face also reflected her intellectual embellishment. Though she was about thirty five years of age, she looked much younger and beautiful. She was blessed with the physical softness of western women. One cannot but admire and appreciate how she was naturally endowed with the optimum flesh required for her physical frame when one happens to see her (MV:25).

But the worldly and much experienced man Maṇi, a good friend of the narrator, rightly points out what ultimately becomes true of Kāncaṇai:

If this woman, without satisfying herself in life with what she has, goes on longing for money, tomorrow when the student learns the ways of earning money, her relationship may also change (MV:94).
The narrator after seeing all the beautiful pictures with apt quotations from Caṅkam Lyrics and the poems of Çilapathikāram thinks that those pictures represent the ideal family of Kāñcañai and Celvanāyakam. He fails to notice the absence of her signature in the picture of Tāyumānavar, a mystic genius greatly loved by Celvanāyakam. The absence of her signature in that picture conspicuously points out the emotional gulf between husband and wife. Had she endowed her artistic brilliance with some ethical code like her husband, she would have had control over her emotion. It is rightly pointed out in the novel:

To bring the mind of ordinary people under control is like controlling an ordinary horse. But to bring the mind of an artist under control is like controlling the horse that had drunk arrack (MV:275).

The same view is expressed by Malarви across later with reference to the same Tāyumānavar picture: "That lady thinks that art is for the sake of love. She doesn't know anything beyond that" (MV:246).

In the beginning of the novel itself it is understood that Kāñcanai is living with her husband without real love and emotional attachment through a nature imagery (MV:36) of the mongoose and the tomato plants which has sinister overtones and casts aspersions indirectly on the manliness of the head of the family and further hints at the future catastrophe. In other words, both Celvanāyakam and Kāñcanai are absolutely incompatible. She is young and is bubbling with youth, whereas. Celvanāyakam is almost retired from active life and takes refuge in moral books. He likes simplicity, whereas Kāñcanai is wedded to luxury and vanity. Celvanāyakam avoids coffee
but it is the staple drink of Kāñcanaī. Celvanāyakam is a smoker, but Kāñcanaī not even once asks her husband to refrain from smoking at least from the health point of view. He seems to believe in socialism, whereas, Kāñcanaī is fond of imperialism. Celvanāyakam is very strict about means but Kāñcanaī has no concern for the means but only for the end.

Nākanātan is the adopted son of Celvanāyakam and Kāñcanaī. He seems to be a quiet boy but he is deceptively calm. Professor Sachithanandan compares him with Gerald of Somerset Maugham’s Mrs.Craddock (1975:24). He enters the household of Kāñcanaī when she has reconciled herself to an everlasting life of emotional starvation. He is a bloodless character who follows her wherever she goes like a well-trained, faithful dog. He is always kept in the background and his activities are reported and never dramatically presented. He marries Malarvilī only to ruin her life.

Balaganapathy and Sornam in Peṛgamaṇam are an old and childless couple. Both are social and religious hypocrites and proverbial misers. In their speech, thought, action and in everything they differ not even in degrees and in all aspects they are made for each other. They live in a palatial house with a sprawling beautiful garden. They have income from many sources but are living a ridiculously stingy life. When their gardener, Kandasamy asks for money to buy medicine for his ailing wife, they reply in one tone:

Don't you know we are building a new bungalow? Don't disturb us by asking for money when there is a scarcity of funds (PM:55).

But the same couple spend hundreds of rupees for poojas alone. They buy five kilos of camphor, several kilos of ghee, a variety of fruits and sweets, to offer to God. They spend hours in offering poojas and immediately after that they
eat everything themselves and never give anything even to their servants. To
get a good flavour for the coffee, they roast the coffee beans in pure glue.
Whenever a servant hands over the balance of money after buying provisions,
they check his pockets thoroughly and put several embarrassing questions.

On one occasion, when Kandasamy asks for a loan of five rupees to be deducted in his wages, they become angry and reply in their characteristic way:

You stupid! Didn't I tell you already? As long as the building work
continues, don't ask for even a single anna. Prices of commodities
have gone up beyond our reach; you are asking for a loan now?
Understand our difficulties (PM: 66).

He himself agrees that the prices of commodities have gone up. But is it not applicable to his poor servant? At the same time, right before him, they give three hundred rupees to a priest to offer special poojas. Both husband and wife live a thoroughly useless life and never realise that the real love of god lies in helping the poor people, not in offering special poojas.

Devadossar is a school-inspector and Sarojini, his wife. They are blessed with two children. Devadossar is an immoral man and wants variety in sex. Sarojini is in no way better. The moment her husband and children leave home, she beautifies herself and goes out in search of the same pleasure that her husband is after. So, both regularly indulge in extra-marital sex. Since both are betrayers, their mutual guilt does not give them the moral courage to question the other. Poor Muniyammā, the tragic-heroine and servant-maid in their household is an unfortunate witness to such a wretched life led by husband and wife.
Inspector Senathipathy and Sakasambal are husband and wife, but not blessed with any children. He is working in the same office where Devadossar is employed. Senathipathy is a shameless man who allows his wife to develop intimacy whenever a new officer comes. She is also an artful woman, quite experienced in that field and can bring any officer under her spell in no time. She curtails her immoral activities within her house. There is full understanding between husband and wife in selecting their victims. And Devadossar becomes one of their victims which undermines his family life.

Manivannan is the adopted son of Professor Seeralar and Tenmol. Right from his childhood he grows as a jealous, cynical, arrogant and evil-minded boy. He is highly mischievous and a headache to the entire school. He is also a bully, quite disobedient and not even a single day passes without a complaint against him. He harasses his fellow students without any provocation. Throwing other boys' books and their belongings into the ditch, pulling them down to the floor, throwing mud and sand on their heads, pinching and teasing them in the class room are some of his routine mischiefs. In short, Manivannan as a small boy possesses all the criminal potentials of a future rogue. One of the teachers in the school, gives a correct picture of Manivannan, in reply to a complaint by Muttan, infact, his own blood brother, on behalf of his master's son:

I think he is evil by birth. He deserves to be the son of a rogue, but unfortunately he belongs to a good family. His parents are educated, rich and highly cultured. His mother is an influential and widely
respected woman. Do you know his father? A professor in a college.

We are after all poor school teachers getting a salary of twenty or thirty rupees per month. Can we punish a professor's son? Even then I advise him almost everyday but in vain. All right, you go, I'll take care of him (PM : 245).

Kesavarāyaṇ in Maṅkuṭicai like Ānavaṇ in Kayamai is the product of a society that is corrupt and money-minded with defective electoral, judicial and administrative systems. There is not even a single crime that he has left uncommitted. He derives inhuman pleasure in harassing the poor people by beating, kicking and spitting on their faces in the open street. He is the patron of all anti-social elements and the brain behind all the violence, cheatings, extortions, murders and similar atrocities in the town.

Many people seek Kesavarāyaṇ's help during general, Municipal and Panchayat elections. He has both money and muscle power and adopts all sorts of undemocratic methods in the polling stations. The polling officers are very often his men and even others are quite afraid of going against him. Generally the party which he supports wins the election. However, he collects a huge amount from the candidates he supported and utilizes their services in obtaining various licences to increase his business interests. No wonder, he owns a fleet of buses.

Kesavarāyaṇ also extends his evil-influence on to education and brings almost all the schools in that area under his complete control. He involves himself in all the examination-related malpractices. He even goes to the extent of throwing human excreta on the house of the headmaster who had refused to award good marks to his daughter. He is also highly immoral.
He expects all women teachers to give in to his lustful demands. Indeed, he has many concubines and considers it a symbol of his social status.

II

Jim's downfall has two phases - the first phase takes place in the passenger ship, Patna and the second phase in Patusan. Jim's downfall in Patna is aggravated by the German skipper and the Chief Engineer and in Patusan it is effected by Cornelius and Brown. When the passenger ship Patna is caught in an accident at mid-sea at midnight, their first impulse is to escape before the ship sinks. It never occurs to them that there are eight hundred pilgrims fast asleep and it is their professional and moral duty to save as many lives as possible. Unashamedly, violating all human decency and throwing to the winds human solidarity, they ready themselves to bring down a life boat for their escape. As Richard Curle says, the white officers on board the ship Patna are "a nondescript and dubious set of men" (1957: 34).

When Jim asks the skipper whether he is not going to do something, he replies callously, "Yes - clear out" (LJ: 68). The Chief Engineer says to Jim when he helps him to come out, "Don't! don't! I thought you were one of them nigger" (LJ:68). The next moment they fly away trampling, wheezing, shoving, cursing everyone - the boat, the ship, and the pilgrims in the ship. They are more worried about their own safety than any body else's including their non white crew. Jim rightly observes: "when the beggars did
break out, their yelps were enough to wake the dead" (LJ:80). At one stage, they were reduced to the level of animals: "They came to me separately: one bleated, another screamed, one howled – ough!" (LJ:81).

When Jim stands still astounded with the inhumanity of his white officers, they shout at him to jump, "Jump, George! jump!, Oh, jump!" (LJ:81). Jim is forced to act, feels as if he is on the edge of an abyss and makes that ill-fated jump into the boat, for which he suffers the rest of his life. Once they are safely in the boat, they make a lot of noise about their marvellous escape. They try to hide their guilt and shame by saying, "I knew from the first she would go", "Not a minute too soon", "A narrow squeak, b' gosh!", "She was gone! She was gone! Not a doubt about it", "Nobody could have helped", "Never doubted she would go", "she had to go", "Just shot down like a flatiron". The Chief Engineer declares that the mast head light at the moment of sinking seemed to drop, "like a lighted match you throw down." At this the second engineer laughs hysterically, "I am g-g-glad, I am gla-a-ad" (LJ:85). It is quite surprising and shocking the way they talk, as if they have left behind them nothing but an empty ship. But their relief turns into bitter grief when they come to know that the Patna actually did not sink and a French gun-boat towed it ashore safely with all the pilgrims. However, a court of inquiry follows in a police court of an eastern port.

Jim faces the inquiry boldly and after the verdict, both to hide his shame and start a fresh life, he goes to Patusan, a place, "right out of civilization" (Curle 1957:39). But neither the German skipper nor the Chief Engineer are prepared to face the inquiry. The arrogant German skipper not only fails to co-operate with the inquiry but also abuses the sitting judges.
His moral degradation is such that leaving his ship with eight hundred pilgrims is a "little thing" for him and even goes to the extent of spitting on his certificate.

The Chief Engineer is also in no way better than his skipper. He is suffering from delirium and is raving because of a three day drinking bout. He sees pink toads everywhere and cries in the hospital:

"They are all awake -- millions of them. They are trampling on me! ... I'll smash them in heaps like flies" (LJ:40) and then collapses completely with a panic-stricken yell of "Help. H-e-el-p!". The pink toads are certainly the pilgrims he deserted. Even now he is not repentant, rather he still wants to smash the pilgrims "like flies".

The opportunity for Cornelius to take revenge on Jim comes in the form of Brown. It is from Cornelius that Brown learns everything about Patusan, Jim's character and the events of the last three years and what he should do first:

The proper way is to kill him the first chance you get, and then you can do whatever you like. I have lived for many years here, and I am giving you a friend's advice (LJ:271).

Brown understands the mind of Cornelius and cleverly exploits him to his maximum advantage. Again, when Jim returns to Patusan from the interior provinces, he urges Brown to kill Jim without giving him time:

Just you kill him, and you shall frighten everybody so much that you can do anything you like with them afterwards -- get what you like -- go away when you like. Ha! ha! ha! Fine... (LJ: 278).
But Brown does not kill Jim when he appears before him. Cornelius is very much disappointed and leaves Brown dejectedly.

Once again Cornelius gets an opportunity to take revenge on Jim through Jim himself. Jim chooses Cornelius to carry a note to Brown because he could speak English, is known to him, and is not likely to be shot by some nervous mistake in the dark. The same note of "clear passage" to Brown is sent to Dain Waris through his body guard Tamb' Itam. Cornelius, after delivering the note, plays his old trick to take revenge on Jim and tells Brown that there is another way out of the river which he knows very well. His intention is to spoil the entire plan of Jim and make him unpopular among his people. Brown, in turn, utilizes this invaluable information and stealthily lands his men at strategic points and they spread themselves fully armed. At the right moment Brown yells and fourteen shots are heard as one. Dain Waris and many of his trusted soldiers are killed. The death of Dain Waris seals the fate of Jim.

Sotillo harasses everyone including Dr. Monygham to reveal where the silver is hidden. When nobody gives any useful information, he grinds his teeth with rage and Senor Hirsch becomes his victim. He is subjected to innumerable cruelties. As Sotillo waits for him to speak, Hirsch only spits violently into his face. He snatches up his revolver and fires twice in his chest. When he hears of the likely arrival of Petro Montero to the town at any moment, he runs away with his soldiers into the mountain.

Sotillo appears in only one scene but its impact is catastrophic. It is his troop-ship that dashes against the steamer and damages it badly, which ultimately leads to hiding the treasure and the sinking of the
boat. Symbolically by sinking the boat, Nostromo sinks his incorruptible image. In the impact of the collision, Senor Hirsch, who has been hiding in the steamer, is thrown into the troop-ship of Sotillo and ultimately reaches Sulaco as a prisoner of Sotillo where, he spreads the news of the accident by which everyone believes that both the steamer and the men in it sank in the gulf. Again, it is Sotillo who kills Senor Hirsch by which an eye-witness who knew what all happened in the sea is destroyed. Moreover, Sotillo is indirectly responsible for the lonely and miserable death of Decoud. With the death of Decoud, the entire accursed treasure comes into the complete possession of Nostromo. He decides not to disclose its whereabouts but to use it to enrich himself. Thenceforth Nostromo is corrupted.

Mrs. Almayer has developed a deep-rooted hatred towards whitemen and their customs. Her desire to marry a strong man of her race is defeated in her marriage to Almayer. Ever since, she wants to take revenge on her husband. She is more faithful to her old lover, Lakamba than to her husband. She reveals all the trade secrets of her husband to him through Babalatchi. If she has left her husband alive, it is only for the gold hidden up the river. She wants her daughter to marry a man of her race and also uses her as a trump-card to take revenge on Almayer. She allows her daughter to move freely with Dain Maroola, a strong man of her race, who looks like a "Rajah from Heaven". In the evil company of her savage kinsmen she succeeds in persuading her husband to have an alliance with them in the illegal gun powder deal and also in the gold hunt. When her husband works day and night in making preparations to go for the gold hunt, she is equally working hard to send her daughter away with Maroola from Sambir. When the Dutch
authorities come to arrest Dain Maroola for his involvement in the illegal
gunpowder deal causing the death of two of their colleagues, it is Mrs. Almayer
who smashes the head of a dead body and makes her husband and the Dutch
authorities believe that it is the body of Dain Maroola. When her husband
takes gin in excess to forget the failure of his last attempt to get out of Sambir
with his daughter, she utilizes the opportunity to send out her daughter with
Maroola. Once her evil mission is fulfilled, she carries with her the money she
got from Maroola for her daughter and takes refuge in the camp of Lakamba.

Both Lakamba and Babalatchi exploit the services of
Mrs. Almayer and Aissa to destroy Almayer and Willems respectively. The
arrival of Willems makes their evil minds over work. They cleverly use the
services of Willems to destroy the influence of their enemy, Captain Lingard.
In order to escape from the wrath of Lingard, Babalatchi has already written
to Syed Abdulla for protection. When the question arises what is to be done
with Willems once he betrays Lingard, it is Babalatchi who answers into
Abdulla’s ears: "When your wisdom speaks, there may be found a little poison
that will not lie. Who knows?" (OL:103). Again he is the brain behind
Willems’s attack on Almayer and the subsequent loot of fire arms from the
warehouse of Lingard & Co. When Willems is found no longer useful, he is
left alone with Aissa, quite mercilessly again by the evil council of Babalatchi.

When Babalatchi encounters Lingard, he is on the defensive
and carefully studies his mind whether he has come to kill Willems or not.
He injects the venom gradually by telling him how Willems betrayed him,
spoke irreverently of him, how he boasted before them all that she alone has
made him less than a child. Babalatchi wants to see the death of a whiteman
in the hands of another white man. But he is disappointed to know that Lingard has not come to kill Willems. When Lingard retorts that Babalatchi had much to do with everything that happened in Sambir lately, he senses danger and quits the place immediately.

Schomberg who is already morally corrupted, is awaiting an opportunity to take revenge on Heyst. As a blessing in disguise, three desperadoes—Jones, Martin Ricardo and Pedro arrive at his hotel and Schomberg soon understands that they are thieves, murderers and gamblers, quite fit enough for the purpose of revenge on Heyst. With his usual cunningness and loquacity he sets them against Hyest saying that he is living alone with a lot of money swindled from many share holders. When the three desperadoes set sail in his boat, his heart begins to thump in joy. He also takes vengeance on them for changing his hotel into a gambling den, by filling up one of the two containers with salt water.

The three desperadoes—Jones, Martin Ricardo and Pedro set their feet in Samburan with an unquenchable thirst for water. The thirst for water soon changes into thirst for the blood of Lena and Heyst. When Martin Ricardo suggests to kill Heyst immediately and take away the plunder at the earliest, Jones expresses his desire to have some fun with Heyst. His desire speaks volumes about his perversion and his contempt for civilized society and the moral principles of human life:

You don't even understand my purpose. I mean to have some sport out of him. Just try to imagine the atmosphere of the game—the fellow handling the cards—the agonising mockery of it! Oh, I
should appreciate this greatly. Yes, let him lose his money instead of being forced to hand it over. You, of course, would shoot him at once, but I shall enjoy the refinement and the jest of it. He's the man of the best society. I've been hounded out of my sphere by people very much like that fellow. How enraged and humiliated he will be! I promise myself some exquisite moments while watching him play (V:336-37).

In the case of Martin Ricardo, the thirst for water soon changes into thirst for Lena. The man who wanted his governor to finish off Heyst and leave at the earliest, has now forgotten everything and waits for hours together, endlessly looking at the bungalow for a look of Lena. He no longer cares for the plunder:

"And who cares?" he retorted recklessly. "I've had enough of this crawling on my belly. It's you who are my treasure. It's I who found you out when a gentleman had buried you to rot for his accursed pleasure.... For you? For you I will throw away money, lives all the lives but mine!" (V:396).

Jones's encounter with Heyst makes him understand that he has been fooled not only by a silly, rascally minded inn-keeper but also by his own secretary who hides the presence of Lena from him with an ulterior motive. He recollects how he shaved right under his nose and asked him to keep Heyst engaged in friendly conversation till he makes a signal. The betrayal of Ricardo provokes Jones and he grinds his teeth with savage ferocity. Though Jones expresses his gratitude to Heyst, what follows is quite inevitable.
Chandran, the protagonist of the novel, *Akalvilakku* becomes a prey to such a voluptuous and sex-starved woman, Tāyammā. She develops a strong grip over him since he is ten years younger to her and an equally good sexual partner. Even if his arrival is delayed by a few minutes, she comes out of the house and anxiously waits for him. A few months of such an active sexual life makes her highly possessive. That is why he leaves her cunningly, without giving room for any suspicion. Though Chandran's stay with Tāyammā is only for three months, it leaves a permanent scar in his psyche and makes him immoral and her influence dominates his shameful sexual atrocities till his death.

Mohana ill-treats both Tānappaṇ and Cuṭarviḷi and always keeps them under constant fear. She extracts maximum work from them and treats them as slaves. She utters nothing but abusive terms against them and derives satanic pleasure whenever Tānappaṇ is beaten by his father. She harasses him by sending him repeatedly to different shops and he is left with no time to study or to do his home work. She gives a standing order to them not to be anywhere near her or her daughter, Manōṃmani whenever they are eating. She gives fresh and delicious items to her daughter, whereas Tānappaṇ and Cuṭarviḷi are given only the previous day's food even without a pickle. When Mohana gives birth to another daughter, Cuṭarviḷi is stopped from the school and treated like a servant-maid. Tānappaṇ is denied food frequently. Sometimes, he is locked in a room for hours together, even without water and beatings by his father becomes a routine affair. Mohana celebrates the birth days of her children quite lavishly. They are always seen in costly silk garments, gold chains and ear rings. But at the sametime Tānappaṇ and Cuṭarviḷi are
always seen in rags only. Both brother and Sister have become orphans in their own house. Things come to such a pass that Tānappan is left with no other choice but to run away from home. When he actually runs away, Mohana is not at all bothered, rather, she feels very much relieved of a burden. It is she who has made a good, obedient, brilliant boy into a social outcast.

Both Kanakā and Vachiranātan involve themselves in illegal sexual life. Their affair becomes an open secret and everyone in the household of Tānappan is annoyed and in this context the cook of the house asks:

Is it correct? Relation! What relation! Even for a relation there is a limit. It is a pity that such a good man has got such a bad wife

(VM:229).

Before the affair becomes a scandal, Tānappan divorces his wife and sends her back to her parents. Even the divorce fails to bring any change in her because, as her husband says, "She is a rain drop fallen on dirty ditch-water" (VM:303).

The real nature of Cuppurattinām's Aunt is revealed when she makes a visit to his house. Her X-ray eyes scan everything in the house. Even though she is rich and her son earns thousands of rupees in business, she burns with jealousy. She asks Cuppurattinām, with malice, what makes him to live in a rented house instead of living in the house gifted by his father-in-law. She is very much pleased when Cuppurattinām replies that he is cheated and his father-in-law is a beggar. She simply adds fuel to the fire when she remarks:
Is it your fate? All right. What about the car? I thought you would own a car and be useful to go round the city for a few days (A:66).

When Cuppurattinam replies sarcastically that he never became an engineer to get a car from somebody, she utilizes the opportunity and continues her satanic work:

I warned you well before your marriage. But you didn't listen to me. What is the use of talking about it now? Why should I open my mouth? I don't want to earn the displeasure of other people. The right persons to question it is your parents. But they seem to have deserted you to your fate. That's what I have understood of the situation here (A:67).

On another occasion, when the children are quarelling over a coin, Alli goes in and as she brings some coins, she finds to her surprise the woman murmuring something evil to her husband. When the boy gets hold of the coin, she asks him, "Ratnakumar! let me see whether it is a gold or silver coin" (A:68). Alli rightly wonders what would have been the sufferings of the teacher, her son-in-law. The next day when Alli is alone, the servant-maid makes a complaint against the woman. Though her visit is brief, its impact is quite heavy and it undermines the family life of Alli and her husband.

Cuppurattinam becomes one of the the lovers of Syamala after his separation from his wife. He is infected with venereal disease. Their immoral life not only causes diseases but also innumerable mental worries. Her household is in disarray and frequent thefts take place. Even her servants
vye with each other to steal something from the house as they understand that she is a sinking boat. Cuppurattinam also steals some jewels and a cheque-book with the connivance of a servant-maid and later elopes with her to Bombay.

Of all the immoral women in the Mu. Vavian fictional world, Kāñcanai stoops to the meanest level of developing illegal sexual relationship with her adopted son, Nākanātan. She is always seen in his company and under the pretext of business, she undertakes frequent travels—sometimes, for days together. Even after his marriage to Malarviţi, Nākanātan is seen only in the company of Kāñcanai. They go together to cinema theatres, art gallaries, public meetings and social gatherings. In the name of business, they simply squeeze Celvanāyakam and land him in debt. Things come to such a stage that the talk of the town is Collector Celvanāyakam's lack of moral courage to control his wife. If Nākanātan injures Celvanāyakam, Kāñcanai adds insult to that injury. Malarviţi rightly observes that if Celvanāyakam's family is ruined, it is not because of his detachment from the family, but Kāñcanai's illegal attachment with her husband, Nākanātan.

Celvanāyakam's letter to Malarviţi reveals certain facts about Kāñcanai:

Infact, if there is one man to worry, it is none but myself. Only I must seek your pardon. I am guilty of destroying your life and so my conscience pricks me constantly (MV:244).
He admits that whatever misery she suffers, he is responsible for that. In other words, he is quite conscious of the betrayal by his wife and his so-called adopted son. His failure to put them in the right place makes him feel guilty. Again when he says, "Instead of taking anything she loved best, you have taken a thing I loved best for which I am thankful to you" (MV:245), he expresses not only his contempt for his wife but also how she is morally unfit to present anything to anybody.

Malarvilī wonders what prevented Čelvāyanāyakam from putting his wife in her place. She consoles herself with the thought that there must be some valid reason. Muthaiyāṇ, the narrator admits that it is true. As Professor Sachithananandan says, "What Muthaiyāṇ has understood and Malarvilī is not able to understand is the impotency of Čelvāyanākam" (1975:34). His early immoral life and its consequences do not give him the moral courage to put a moral question to his wife. Whatever might be the reason, Kāncaṅai has ruined the life of Malarvilī and brought disrepute not only the honest collector but also to the dignity of the whole of humanity.

Both Balaganapathy and his wife, instead of giving Kandasamy a loan of five rupees, ask him to work during day time in the garden as usual and during night at the site where the construction work is going on for which they will give an additional wage of eight annas per night. But his careful and devoted wife makes it clear that the work should be neat, otherwise he would lose his wages at both the places. It never occurs to them whether it is possible for a poor man to work both day and night. However, in a few days, Kandasamy is killed in an accident in his new place of work. When Munjyammā, Kandasamy's wife and her son with a few others come and ask for compensation, he replies:
All right, I agree with you. But what can I do for his death? Do you think we collect money from the trees? We, too, earn money by doing hard work. His wife may do some work to look after the family. Her son can also go to work as an apprentice so that he may get two or three rupees in a month. Unfortunately, we don't have any work here at present. I pity you. Please don't expect anything from me (PM: 79).

But, when they are adamant about the compensation he comes forward to offer ten rupees which Muniyammā refuses. Her refusal is quite symbolic of the denial of salvation for their sins.

The real domestic crisis between Devadossar and Sarojini arises when her husband's salary becomes thinner and thinner, month after month. The result is frequent quarrels and sometimes it ends in an exchange of blows and bleedings. So, both husband and wife realise that it is impossible for them to live together any longer. Even in separation they maintain the uniformity of their immorality. The wife's lover is kind enough to send her a few silk sarees, as a farewell gift and also a car to drop them in the station and the so-called husband, ironically an educational officer, rejuvenates his house by bringing his concubine, Sakasambal into his house with the intention of regulating her illegal part time services on a permanent basis. Once she enters Devadossar's house Muniyammā, the servant-maid understands that she is an immoral woman. She stops Muniyammā's son from the school to look after the garden and reduces the kitchen provisions drastically, not to save money for her paramour but to swindle as much as possible at the earliest. Shamelessly, her husband also comes there and eats. By means of such immoral,
unscrupulous and shameful activities, Inspector Senathipathy has earned as much as fifteen thousand rupees.

But Sakasambal's doom comes in the form of a doctor who is himself an equally immoral man. The doctor who comes to give treatment understands the situation and exploits it to his advantage. Everyday he comes there to have sex with her under the pretext of giving her medical treatment. Had the doctor been as spineless as Devadossar, she would have handled him as a school inspector handles a poor teacher. But the doctor is an assertive man and that brings her downfall. As she tries to avoid him, the spurned doctor revenges by poisoning her and informs the police that it is a case of suicide.

Manivannan's evil nature continues even in his high school days. He creates problems to others and takes extraordinary pleasure in their suffering and misery. For instance, he drives his cycle deliberately against a blind man and delights at the latter's helplessness and suffering (PM:255). On another occasion his victim is a poor servant-maid with a basket full of vegetables. To her shock and dismay, instead of regretting and coming to her rescue, he scolds her that she has damaged his cycle (PM:256). He gives innumerable troubles to that girl, Mānvilī who works in the next house. He harasses her by making lewd sounds, throwing small stones on her and sometimes even throws silver coins on her. In the absence of his parents, he asks Muṇiyammā, in fact, his own mother, "to go between them" (PM:319). When Muṇiyammā advises him in tears that it is wrong, he tempts her with money. His damned psyche works in such a way that to him all servant-maids are characterless. Professor Seeralar rightly observes Manivannan's contempt
for poor people and shares it with his wife:

I don't like our Mani's attitude. He treats poor people with contempt.

He seems to think that poor people are not human beings but something else. Sometimes it occurs to me that he will become all right only when he comes to know of his past history. His pride and arrogance will vanish only when he comes to know that he is the son of a poor peasant. Till then, I think he will be like this only (PM:333).

Manivannan becomes completely contemptible in our estimate when he falsely informs the police that Muttan and Manvili are the real culprits of the theft in the next house. He delights in their suffering and humiliation and quite unconcerned of poor Muniyamma's agony over the arrest of her son, Muttan by her other son, Manivannan.

Kesavarayan, such an inhuman rogue, quite ironically becomes honourary magistrate of the town. With the new status, he takes revenge on many unyielding officials and sends some of them to jail. Meyyappan, the tragic protagonist of the novel, becomes one of his victims. He succeeds in foisting a murder case on him and sends him to jail.

III

Both the German skipper and the Chief Engineer aggravate the downfall of Jim in the first phase of his life. They are responsible for Jim's jump into the boat and thereby his moral fall, which ultimately
lands him in Patusan. Jim's shameful past follows him to Patusan in the form of Cornelius and Brown. Through the death of Dain Waris, Jim knows that his fate is sealed. He does not want to be taken unawares by the dark forces once again. So, he offers himself to Doramin to be shot dead. In a similar fashion Sotillo succeeds in adding and leading to the moral corruption of Nostromo and thereby his death. Both Almayer and Willems die a lonely miserable death due to the concerted villainy and treachery of Mrs. Almayer, Lakamba, Dain Maroola and Babalatchi. After all what reward is Babalatchi given? As he himself says, "I have given my counsel here and there for a handful of rice" (OI:189). Schomberg, Jones, Martin Ricardo and Pedro make the personal life of Heyst and Lena so miserable and ultimately cause their death. Jones shoots his secretary down for his betrayal and runs to the boat, tumbles and falls down into the water. The next day he was found:

Like a heap of bones in a blue silk bag, with only the head and the feet sticking out, Wang was very pleased when discovered him (V:411).

And it is Wang who kills Pedro. In a similar way, the infra humanity precipitates the down fall of tragic men and women in the Mu Vavian world.

Tāyammā, with her sexual immorality corrupts the moral nature of Chandran and undermines his future. If Chandran destroys the modesty of so many young girls in the later part of his life, suffers from the dreaded disease leprosy and has become contemptible in the eyes of his fellow human beings, it is due to her sexual influence on him and thus aggravates the downfall and tragic death of Chandran. If Tānappan becomes a social outcast, involves himself in illegal arrack business, lives with an immoral woman, approaches every institution in the society with vengeance and has developed
a heart of stone it is all due to the vengeful and scheming nature of his step-
mother, Mohana. After his marriage, his wife Kanakā and Vachiranātan, with
their sexual immorality precipitate his downfall. His wife poisons him and
though she also dies along with him, she "looks more ugly and ghastly than
ever" (VM:321).

If Cuppurattinam’s Aunt succeeds in destroying his family
life, Syamala completes his moral downfall by her sexual immorality. She not
only leaves him a sick, helpless man but also a thief and a betrayer who dies a
lonely, miserable death. Kāñcanai and Nākanātan with their sexual immorality
not only bring disrepute to Celvanāyakam’s social status and land him in eternal
debt but also hasten and cause his death. Like Kanakā, Kāñcanai also looks
ugly in her death and her body stinks to the extent of "eagles hovering over
the house" (MV:271). Professor Sachithanandan says, "For a sinful woman
belonging to a community governed by a rigid moral code, there is no future.
Hence, Kāñcanai commits suicide and ironically seeks 'freedom' through

The hypocrisy and callousness of both Balaganapathy and
Sornam cause Kandasamy’s tragic death and thereby the disintegration of his
family. His wife, Muniyamma who goes out in search of her son given to
Professor Seeralar and Tēnmoţi due to acute poverty by her husband in her
absence, ultimately lands in the household of Devadossar and Sarojini and faces
innumerable problems. The two spineless school-inspectors, just to save their
face, inform the court that they are family friends and Muniyamma developed
enmity towards Sakasambal to have stopped her son, Muttan, from the school
and as a revenge she had poisoned Sakasambal. The court of law finds
Muniyamma guilty and awards her fifteen years imprisonment. The police, judiciary and education departments take pride in having punished a criminal. After the fifteen years jail term, when Muniyamma lands in the household of Tēnmoji and Seeralar again as a servant-maid, she is harassed and humiliated by her own son, Manivannan. These infra men and women are entirely responsible for the disintegration and tragic suffering of poor Muniyamma.

Kesavarayan’s evil nature destroys the personal as well as the family life of Meyyappa. Meyyappa is sentenced to six years imprisonment and when he returns to his family after completing the jail term, his wife deserts him in the name of family reputation. Not only the personal and family lives of tragic humanity, but also the society and human dignity at large are affected by the lives of these callous, immoral and evil-natured people.

Thus, the men and women of the infra humanity in both the authors are, undoubtedly sinister apes in a jungle. They are wolves, mongrels and devils in human shape always found insidiously involved in a sexual, murderous or immoral plot. They are completely governed by animalistic impulses and, therefore, are too numb to sense or see the moral side of human life. They are like weeds in a field, the accomplices of dark forces, the agents of destruction and annihilation, the ambassadors of human agony and totally devoid of redemptive potentials. Like weeds in a field, they closely penetrate into the lives of the tragic men and women and do more harm than good and succeed in aggravating their downfall which very often ends in their tragic death. However, such aggravation/precipitation perpetrated by the infra humanity to the tragic men and women is defused by the surra humanity.
CHAPTER - IV

THE SUPRA MAN