



# INIJOSS

İnönü University International Journal of Social Sciences / İnönü Üniversitesi Uluslararası Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi

Volume/Cilt 9, Number/Sayı 2, (2020)

<http://inonu.edu.tr/tr/inijoss> --- <http://dergipark.gov.tr/inijoss>

## ARAŞTIRMA MAKALESİ | RESEARCH ARTICLE

Gönderim Tarihi: 14.05.2020 | Kabul Tarihi: 05.12.2020

### DOMESTICATION OF THE EXOTIC AS THE VIOLATION OF ETHICS IN BERNARD MALAMUD'S *GOD'S GRACE*

Zeynep YILMAZ KURT

Doç. Dr., İnönü Üniversitesi  
zeynep.yilmazkurt@inonu.edu.tr  
<https://orcid.org/0000-0003-1194-67-18>

**Atıf / Citation:** Yılmaz Kurt, Zeynep. (2020). Domestication of the Exotic as the Violation of Ethics in Bernard Malamud's *God's Grace*. *İnönü Üniversitesi Uluslararası Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi*. (INIJOSS), 9(2), 328-337.

#### Abstract

In his novel *God's Grace*, Bernard Malamud depicts a post-apocalyptic world, the only survivors of which are Calvin Cohn, a scientist, and a group of apes. Depending on Cohn's domineering attitude over the apes, natives of the island where he finds refuge, this study reads the novel as a work allegorising the colonisation process. Despite his religious and moral discourse, Cohn violates the native's rights. His selfishness and failure in understanding the apes in their natural context lead him to a tragic end when apes rebel against him. It is concluded that as the "everyman", Cohn represents men's potential for destruction of not only others but also themselves, regardless to former tragic experience.

**Key Words:** Bernard Malamud, *God's Grace*, post-colonialism, exoticism

#### BERNARD MALAMUD'UN *GOD'S GRACE* ADLI ROMANINDA SÖMÜRGELEŞTİRME SÜRECİNDE AHLAKİ DEĞERLERİN İHLALİ

#### Öz

Bernard Malamud'un *God's Grace* adlı romanı, bilim insanı Calvin Cohn ve bir grup maymunun hayatta kalan tek canlılar olduğu, kıyamet sonrası bir senaryo üzerine kurgulanmıştır. Bu çalışma, Cohn'un sığındığı adanın yerlisi olan maymunlar üzerinde hakimiyet kurmasından yola çıkarak, romanı bir sömürgeleştirme süreci alegorisi olarak

değerlendirmektedir. Dini ve ahlaki söyleminin aksine, Cohn yerlilerin tüm haklarını ihlal eder. Bencilliği ve maymunların doğalarını anlamadaki basiretsizliği, maymunların isyan etmesine yol açarak onu trajik bir sona sürükler. Cohn'un "içimizden biri" olarak, insanın sadece başkasını değil, kendi kendisini de yok etme potansiyeline sahip olduğunu en iyi şekilde örneklediği sonucuna varılmıştır.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Bernard Malamud, *God's Grace* adlı roman, sömürgecilik sonrası, egzotizm

The Jewish writer Bernard Malamud juxtaposes the basic Christian and Judaist principles in his novel *God's Grace* (1982). Deep down, however, he aims to achieve a neutral space where to display vanity and egoism that is common to all human beings regardless of their religion and beliefs. By claiming that "all men are Jews", Malamud proposes a universalist idea; he suggests "an ontological rather than an ethnic statement—often sustained his superb representations of the figure of the Jew as Everyman" (Freese, 1995:169). The ethnic and religious Jewish culture predominating his fiction therefore provides a social and cultural background against which he discusses human nature and ethics. He displays, in other words, the universal human essence and moral codes that are generally associated with religion. Avery consolidates this fact by referring to Malamud as a humanist who ". . . uses the particular to express the universal" (2001: XI). For him, the writer and the reader are two persons meeting in a restaurant during which ". . . one [the writer] had time only to tell the other [the reader] they are both human, and here, and this story proves it" (Zucker,1994:159). In *God's Grace* Bernard Malamud, similarly, recreates Biblical parables in the fantastic context of an apocalyptic island after a futuristic nuclear war. The main character, Calvin Cohn, a palaeontologist exploring the bottom of the ocean at the time of explosion is the only human surviving, together with Buz, a chimpanzee, which is kept on the ship for experiments by another scientist. Like all his other novels which are considered to be "social, moral, racial, *religious*, [and] scientific" *allegories* (www.times.com.books), *God's Grace* explores moral issues beyond its surface ethnic and religious discourse.

Finding refuge on an island where a group of five chimpanzees, some baboons and a gorilla have been living after they are shipwrecked, Cohn is inspired by the idea of building a community through the intermediation of Buz. This process in the novel, however, is developed through Biblical allusions. Beyond the surface of Biblical parables Malamud reveals his belief in man's potential for destruction of both himself and others. This study, in this context, reads Malamud's *God's Grace* as a novel allegorizing the abuse of the exotic through colonial domination. It is a satirical moral allegory reflecting the process of colonisation, especially, in terms of destruction of the exotic by the coloniser in the process of domesticating it. *God's Grace*, thus, is a colonial allegory reflecting the process of familiarisation/ domestication of the exotic by the coloniser as an act of destruction not only of the indigenous but of the nature as well as the coloniser himself from the moral and humanistic point of view.

Avery claims, in her introduction to *The Magic Worlds of Bernard Malamud*, that "Malamud . . . experimented . . . [with] 'exotic' " in *God's Grace* (2001:XI-XII). Cohn represents the occident colonising and dominating the native space of apes. Considered from post-colonial perspective, the term "exotic" refers to the indigenous people as they are viewed through the lenses of the western observer. This attitude, which places the observer to the center as the occident, discriminates the exotic as the other. Cohn furthers his commitments, however, by attempting to transform even their

ontological being. He violates, thus, not only the exotic, but the occident itself in the long run. By employing apes rather than human ethnic communities as natives, Malamud aims to create that satirical effect of teasing the reader's ethic codes as a response to the cruelty of unjust colonial domination of the exotic and distortion of the subject's ontological being. "The idea of exoticism, like that of the primitive is also a Western construct linked to the exploring/conquering/cataloguing impulse of colonialism" (Lindenbaum, 2004: 475). The defamiliarization of the familiar process of colonial domination through Cohn's obsessive commitment at "humanising" the ape by teaching them human culture and Judaism regardless to their ontology and epistemology, satirizes the violation of the exotic in post-colonial terms.

Malamud's mastery as a writer reflects in his ability to achieve an internal conformity between his subject matter and techniques. For Garrison, "Malamud's subjects, settings, worlds and atmospheres are as varied as the ways in which he narrates them, since his command of prose is so masterful that he can write any kind of tale or novel with a perfect adaptation between the genre and the story it conveys" (1989:13). *God's Grace*, in this sense, is important in achieving the same conformity in combining Malamud's theme of culture's destructive effect upon nature with the violation of ethics. The way he develops Cohn as a character who behaves selfishly under the guise of adapting the scientific truth, identifies him with western civilisation. In allegorical terms, thus, the exotic apes' island functions as a microcosm in the background of which self-destroying macrocosm of human civilisation is developed. Cohn, as the only survivor of the apocalyptic nuclear war, never hesitates in destroying the island as well as the apes. Considered from the Biblical point of view, as the only human survivor of the nuclear flood for being at the bottom of the Pacific Ocean at the time of nuclear explosion, Cohn arrives on the tropical island with Buz, the chimpanzee. While Cohn and Buz are swimming to the shore from the cracked vessel, the narrator identifies them as father and son, or "brothers, if not father and son" (1989 :26). On the allegorical level, Cohn and Buz are Biblical counterparts of Abraham and Isaac, whose roles, Peter Freese claims, are reversed. The Cohn-Abraham and Buz-Isaac parallel does not follow the pattern of the sacrificial father, who sacrifices his son for the sake of God, " but the son who sacrifices the father to complete the demise of self-destructive man from the face of the soiled earth and to create room for a new cycle of evolution" (Freese, 1995:65). Not only this parable but all the rest of the Biblical allusions serve to the figurative aim that man is "a constant disappointment to himself" (Benedict qtd. in Freese,1995: 165). Ethical concern in the background of the novel is reflected through Biblical references by drawing parallels between the civilised as the corrupt. Cohn'n obsessive commitment, on the island where he and Buz discover a group of other Chimpanzees and some Baboons, to make a community by civilizing chimpanzees, brings the end of not only Cohn himself but all humanity, when he furthers his moral obsession into creating a new breed, ironically "homo ethicalis", by mating with the only female chimpanzee. Cohn's violation of religious ethics, however, ends up in disaster when, first, his "hybrid" child is killed by the male chimpanzees, rather than sacrificed as in the Bible, and then Cohn himself. Beyond Biblical allusions that pave the way for the discussion of Cohn's religion and ethics, Bernard Malamud develops the theme of colonisation and deployment of the exotic by alluding to *Robinson Crusoe*. He depicts Cohn's arrival on the tropical island as the only human survivor of the apocalyptic nuclear war and his settlement on and his attempts at domestication of the island and its natives, the apes, parallel that of Robinson Crusoe. Freese defines Malamud's intertextual concern with *Robinson Crusoe* as another referent that "... make[s] the relationship between man and ape an ironic variation

of that between British empire builder and dark-skinned servant.” (1989:165) The novel’s exotic atmosphere provides a “hybrid” setting for the allegorical handling of the confusing ontology and etymology of its human and ape characters. By having Cohn copulate with the female chimpanzee, the writer achieves not only a sharp satirical effect but also displays the coloniser’s hypocritical and immoral attitude in relation to the colonised natives. While imposing his ethical codes on natives, Cohn represents at the same time how these codes are easy to violate by the ruler himself.

In its original context exoticism is “. . . that which is introduced from or originating in a foreign (especially tropical) country or as something which is attractively strange or remarkably unusual” (O.E.D.). Exoticism first appears as a concept on the western agenda, consequent to travels to distant places, generally to the orient, from where they return with impressions and images of plants, people, clothing, customs etc. of these places. Since its first emergence in the first half of the 19th century, exoticism “. . . has shifted repeatedly between two semantic poles, one signifying an exoticness essential to radical otherness, the other describing the process whereby such radical otherness is either experienced by a traveller or translated, transported, represented for consumption at home” (Forsdick,2001:14). In other words, when exoticism becomes associated with the second process, the process of its becoming subject to consumption at home, it comes within the scope of postcolonialism. Exoticism’s “. . .originally colonial overtones were slowly transformed until it re-emerged as a common yet contested item of currency in a postcolonial context”, and “. . . postcolonialism depends . . . on the displacement, re-cycling and re-interpretation of colonial concepts” (Forsdick, 2001: 13). Thus, the meaning of the word exoticism has been changing in parallel to the westerner’s developing involvement with colonisation. Following the westerner’s mostly colonial concern with the exotic other, “exoticism” has been used interchangeably with “post-colonialism”. So, this novel which covers all the elements of the appeal of the exoticism of the westerner that is followed by destruction in the process of its familiarisation/domestication is going to be analysed as a colonial allegory in the context of post-colonial terminology.

This novel represents “exoticism as process” through Cohn’s reversed endeavour of “translation, transportation and representation” of not the native culture to his own but his own culture to that of the ape’s (Forsdick, 2001:14). Regardless of the ontological and epistemological differences between man and ape, “Cohn attempts to civilize the chimpanzees in Man’s image, organising them, setting up rules and acting as their leader, ‘humanising’ them in the social sense of the word” (Shaw, 2000: 273). Short after Cohn lands on the island and discovers it, he brings from the vessel before it sinks, on a raft like Robinson Crusoe, some goods that he may use on the island. Among all other things he brings two books, “. . . the *Works of William Shakespeare* [and] . . . *The Great Apes*, a classic textbook containing three excellent chapters on the life cycle of the chimpanzee” (1989: 40). Cohn’s choice of these books when considered from the allegorical point of view is not coincidental as he makes use of both books in the process of “civilizing” apes. Like the allusions that Malamud makes to *Robinson Crusoe*, as an important text about the British colonial expansion, the *Works of William Shakespeare* symbolizes cultural colonization of the periphery. The other book, a scientific research on the nature of chimpanzees, however, symbolizes the abuse of the scientific mind that relies on theory rather than observation. In practice, however, science is used as a means of oppression rather than understanding the other. Munro defines, with reference to William Gregg, how the western opinion makes use of science to assert their superiority over the others as follows:

*Belief in the inherently teleological nature of human development – ever progressing to the inevitable victory of civilization – led to ‘rational’ explanation of the perceived inequality of races. The English essayist William Greg, for example, argued that ‘the negroes are made on purpose to serve whites, just as the black ants are made to serve the red.’” (1989 :57)*

Munro elaborates on Greg’s perception of the self and the other further by asserting that “[a]s Greg’s comments suggest, scientific racism relied heavily on the concept of natural selection in its explanation of racial difference and ‘inequality’.” (2003: 57) Colonisation is grounded, thus, on scientific bases. Malamud, in fact, develops the theme of the abusive use of science by the colonizer further through Buz, the chimpanzee, who is enabled to speak through an instrument fixed on his throat by the scientist who had been experimenting with him. Intermediating between Cohn himself and other apes, Buz is the “colonial elite” through whom Cohn can control the apes. Considered to be “a miracle” for Cohn, Buz’s speaking ability is something that animals do naturally for Buz himself. Buz turns out to be the main force that helps Cohn dominate natives. He teaches them Cohn’s language even though Buz claims that all “living onimal” can speak;

*“I was already talging on my libs but he [the scientist Dr Bündler] didn’t hear it  
/// I would hovtalged oz I do now . . .”  
“How without a proper larynx?”  
“Because onimols con talg /// . . . We talg among ourselves/// May be someday  
you will hear our phonemes oz we hear yours///If you con communicade with  
one living onimal///you con communicade with all his relations/// It is pozzible  
if you will odmid the pozzibility///” (1989 :66)*

It is possible to see a harsh criticism of the colonising process that discriminates natives rather than trying to understand them in their own context. Lacking the cognitive capacity to learn from the destructive nuclear explosion, Cohn goes on abusing his last refuge as well as its natives. He fails to communicate with them even though he makes all the apes learn English through Buz, as he lacks the emotional capacity to empathise with them. He worries about flowers that are not going to be pollinated as there are no insects surviving the flood on the earth. His attitude to his fellow survivors, however, is still destructive as he tries to “civilize” them against their nature.

Cohn’s gradual colonization of the island begins, just like Robinson Crusoe, by naming it after himself as “Cohn’s Island” – rather than the “Broken End Island” or “Chimpan Zee” as he thought at first. (1989 :45) After legitimizing himself as the only “colonial authority” of the island thus, he takes it for granted to assimilate the natives who are viewed, in colonial discourse, as “passive, ignorant, irrational, outwardly submissive but inwardly guileful, sexually unrestrained and emotionally demanding . . .” (Luhrmann, 1994 :349) Regardless to the ape’s nature and habits, Cohn imposes his own human nature and habits on them. He begins with Buz by deciding to convert him. He considers, very ironically, the religious multiplicity as a threat to the integrity of his island. He believes that “. . . if one of them was Christian and the other a Jew, Cohn’s Island would never be Paradise” (1989 :54), and projects to convert Buz into Judaism when Buz comes to the age that is equalent to thirteen by offering him a “Bar Mitzvah”. Cohn fails to understand the ape’s nature (allegorically the colonised), which he tries to change in the process of civilizing them. What Cohn imposes upon the ape symbolizes, in post-colonial terms, the “racist oppression inflicted on

indigenous populations”. (Komlosky qtd. in Lemon, 2009:1) Cohn, thus, intrudes not only into their geographical space, but also into their cultural and ontological space.

Following the first chapter, “Cohn’s Island”, that refers to the geographical colonisation of the ape’s Island, the second chapter, “The School tree”, symbolizes the cultural colonisation of their space as he decides to educate them while apes are seated on a tree, very creative of Cohn, that serves as a school building. All throughout the process of his education of the natives, Cohn is reflected in a very humorous light through his vanity and fake idealism. An intruder himself, he welcomes and greets, for example, the native survivors of the Island, five chimpanzees, in the manner of a politician expecting to communicate with them in his own cultural context despite their etymological and ontological differences. Believing, first of all, that they waste most of the fruit that they eat for food, he decides to regulate their eating habits. “ ‘Don’t, for instance,’ Cohn pleads in a very serious manner, ‘eat just to eat, or because you’re bored. Kindly eat only when you’re legitimately hungry, and then only enough to satisfy that hunger’” (1989 :100). Cohn’s emotional blindness creates humour when he tries to tell stories to teach apes moral lessons about how to be careful about food. One of the stories through which he tries to teach the chimpanzee a moral lesson, indicates, ironically, to his own stupidity and greed, and also foreshadows his own vanity in failing to understand the animal nature of apes : “ They understand, he thought excitedly, and went at once into an old tale of a chimpanzee named Leopold, an absent-minded gentleman, somewhat a narcissist, who ate without thought of other chimps’ natural rights, until he ate himself into such swollen proportions that, swallowing one last grape, he burst” (1989:101). Like the “narcissist” Leopold in the story, however, Cohn brings his own downfall by behaving selfishly through his egoism and blindness to animal nature of the apes when he reserves the only female chimpanzee for himself.

As also alluded by her name, Mary Madelyn, brings Cohn’s end when she rejects all the male chimpanzees. Easy seduction of Madelyn by human culture is reflected by the narrator through her native response to Cohn’s patting her hand to comfort her for failing to understand the cultural significance of some Judaistic traditions: “Cohn explained in a whisper, patting her hand, and she affectionate creature, patted his” (1989 :111). Deeply influenced by this alien culture that is different from her native one, Madelyn desires to be assimilated into it, especially, after Cohn reads her the balcony scene from *Romeo and Juliet*. Inspired by the idea of romantic love, she feels unhappy about her “chimpanzee hood.” As a cultural hybrid, thus, she denies her nature by complaining to Cohn about the mating habits of chimps as that “It’s humiliating to present myself every time a male approaches. I wish to be independent and free.” (1989 :119) She rejects the male apes who try to mate with her, by mimicking the human female, in reserving her “virginity” for Cohn, as the only possible match for her romantic aspirations. She tries to prove her purity to Cohn by claiming that she bathed that morning, and goes on saying that “I have kept my virginity for you ever since you explained the word to me when you first read me *Romeo and Juliet*.” (1989:160) Her process of cultural hybridization is even furthered when she wishes for ontological transformation from “chimpanzeehood” to the “humanhood”. She wonders, “Wiw I someday be human?” (1989: 147) Madelyn’s artificial transformation is absurd when viewed in the light of her re-imagining the balcony scene, which she likes most, in *Romeo and Juliet* as that,

*She had never seen a balcony and imagined a vine-entangled baobab tree, in which Juliet was confined by two hefty, threatening guardian apes. Then Romeo, a youthful, handsome chimpanzee, appeared, scared off the*

*offensive apes with a display of strength, and released Juliet from her prison-tree. They lived together, afterwards, in his happy flowering acacia. [As] Cohn didn't tell her about the sad future fate of the lovers. (1989 :158)*

Cohn's superficial censoring of the end of Romeo and Juliet parallel Madelyn's superficial identification with the human while imagining Romeo as a young and handsome chimpanzee.

*"Am I wovwy as Juwiet?" she asked Cohn.*

*"You have your graces."*

*"Wiw you ever wov me?"*

*"He couldn't say yes nor did he say no." (1989:158)*

Cohn, however, can never realize that the more he tries to humanise the ape the more he is driving himself into an awkward position. Considered from the post-colonial perspective, Cohn reverses the process of "colonial exoticism [that] tends to accentuate the polarities of difference and to deny the implications of contact," for "The Virgin on the Tree", Madelyn (Forsdick, 2001:13). He inspires not only Madelyn, with the fantasy of becoming human some day but he is also infatuated himself by her by convincing himself as that "alluring these days, amiable brown eyes, silken black hair; her features approached human." (1989 :159)

Cohn's consequent unnatural choice of Madelyn as a mate distorts the natural balance of the ape society. The young rebel, Esau, who has been waiting for Madelyn's coming to heat to be able to mate with her suffers most. He accuses Cohn for destroying Madelyn's nature and attempts to attack Cohn. Cohn, on the other hand, speaks very ironically about peace and brotherhood. Esau calls Cohn an "idiot, and he goes on accusing him for his acculturation and assimilation of Madelyn saying that "Your stupid school tree has made her [Madelyn] too proud to dip her butt for friends." (1989 :153) Cohn disregards the ape's not only polygamous habits but violates their nature by involving into a monogamous relationship with Madelyn, which means the expiration of the ape's species at the same time. Considered as a postcolonial allegory, however, he castrates them all by disregarding their sexual instincts. It conforms to the discourse of feminisation of the colonised by the coloniser, as a process during which the "colonizing Westerners" are "hypermasculinized" (Luhmann, 1994: 333). Alongside with his masculine position as a coloniser, Cohn's later ambivalence in getting involved in Madelyn is the tragic flaw that leads him to downfall in the end. Mandatory to ethics, justice is an individual act depending on "–the assumption that the individual exercises choice, possesses volition, that he or she is more or less autonomous" (May, 2008: 903). Cohn fails to transmit the cultural code in Biblical reference that forbids "mating with animals". He says ". . . the act was forbidden to him – 'to copulate with an animal.'" / "Is that aw I am to you" / "Certainly not. But I have to take other things into account . . ." (1989 :160.) Yet, despite the forbidding discourse of his religious belief that has been Cohn's main referent, he cannot help thinking that "She was an altogether interesting lady chimpanzee . . . she would look lovely in a white dress . . ." (1989: 119). He imagines her within the carnal rituals of his own culture. When he finally decides to mate with her for "practical reasons" such as promoting a "moral" evolution through "a man-chimp child", he makes a "white dress" from the vessel's sails, "that he had used as a tablecloth before : "When Mary Madlyn, groggy from outrunning pursuing males all day, returned to the cave, Cohn presented the white garment to her as a friend-ship gift." (1989:168) Thus, Cohn takes the first step for his carnal union with

Madelyn. He admires her in her white dress believing that Madelyn has been so touched by this gift “that she would have cried a little if chimps could. Maybe someday –another step in their humanization. Turning the lamp low, he proposed that she and he mate . . .” (1989 :169)

Transcending beyond both religious and moral boundaries as a human being, Cohn is obsessed with evolution as a scientist, which he also teaches to his pupils –the chimpanzee. Rather than behaving morally himself, he expects that “evolution might produce a moral explosion via a gifted creature, homo ethicalis,” which he believes he can produce by mating with Madilyn (1989 :162). This hybrid product, he believes, will be “a man-chimp child, the two most intelligent of God’s creatures might produce this new species –ultimately of Cohn’s invention – an eon or two ahead the molecular clock.” (1989:165) Cohn’s mating with Madelyn is defined in an ironical way as that “a clear headed, honest man, lying with biophilial affection and shut eyes, against the warm furry back of a loving lady chimpanzee who spoke English well and was mysteriously moved by *Romeo and Juliet*?” (1989:165) This sarcastic depiction of Cohn’s ambivalent position satirizes, in his person, man’s obsession with the science and development rather than justice on the macrocosmic scale. Cohn’s egoistic and immoral commitment problematizes and threatens the posterity of both humans and apes as only remaining species.

The clash of cultures, even in the hybridised circumstances, is reflected in many instances, especially between Cohn and Madelyn. Madelyn’s naive logic reflects Cohn’s self-betraying violation of the truth. Cohn cites the Bible in order to explain that man is forbidden to mate with animals. Madelyn first resents being allied with “cattew” or “beast” then asks him “. . . if he had a mind of his own.” (1989 :160) Cohn tries the limits of the sexually frustrated male natives, by also imposing a vegetarian diet on them. Cohn endangers his personal position as well as the future of his civilization by punishing males for killing and eating baby baboons. By using Cohn’s own Darwinian discourse against him, Esau tries to warn him about their nature; he says that “every chimp he had known ‘in the good old days in the highland’ had hunted small baboons. It was a perfectly natural, naturally selective, thing to do.” (1989 :194) Esau’s evolutionary discourse naturalizes the ape’s cannibalism, the habit of eating their own species. Lindenbaum, however, refers to cultural cannibalism by asserting that “. . . the figure of cannibal was created to support the cultural cannibalism of colonialism through the projection of Western imperialist appetites onto cultures they then subsumed.” (2004: 476) So, by oppressing them, Cohn’s is also cannibalizing the ape as he interferes with the posterity of their species and tries to absorb their culture into his own. Esau rebels as there are no “unattached females [and] . . . masturbating gave him a headache and he would prefer something more practical.” (1989:187) Then he goes on accusing Cohn for this, ‘You’re a lucky prick,’ said Essau, regarding him enviously. ‘I bet you get it every night.’”(1989:187) Rather than realizing the further implications of this accusation, Cohn advises him “sublimation” by suggesting Essau to use his “sexual energy creatively –in thought, art, or some satisfying labor,” (1989 :187) moreover, he expects them to be grateful to him by saying that “. . . you owed me some consideration for how comfortable I have helped make your lives? You have work, leisure, free schooling and health care.” (1989:199) Cohn expects, selfishly and vainly, the apes to be grateful to him and adopt all the rules and ethical codes that he has been imposing upon them, while he violates not only all scientific, ethic and religious norms but also destroys nature. He expects animals, rather than himself, to learn from man’s tragic experience by suggesting that “[r]emember [that] man



destroyed himself by his selfishness and indifference to those who were different from, or differed with, him,” while he repeats the same pattern on his microcosmic island. (1989:200)

Cohn’s personal fear of God does not help him to use his second chance for a better life in moral sense. Due to the basic human inclination for selfishness, Cohn repeats himself as a human being. Cohn’s tragedy originates, thus, from his failure in understanding the ethic codes beyond religious principles. May defines this attitude, as expecting help from “beyond the world”, some metaphysical being, “for ethical engagement [and] moral judgement” (2008: 906) Cohn uses his power for the suppression of the other whose basic life rights he violates in order to impose the “ethical conduct”, to which he himself fails to conform. Cohn’s oppressive attitude transforms the novel into an allegory of colonisation process of the exotic by the selfish coloniser’s double standards. The ape’s rebellion and murder of Cohn’s hybrid child, “Rebekah, [who] though a half-chimp infant, looked more than half-human” represents the rebellion of the oppressed colonised against the coloniser (1989:206). For Shaw the chimpanzees recover their identity, “. . . by rebelling against Cohn and shedding the humanity he had imposed . . . chimps . . . seek and recover their real selves through their rebellion against oppressing or ruling . . . Cohn respectively. And Malamud’s depiction . . . functions as a metaphor for race relations . . .” (2000:274). The last thing Cohn sees before his death is Madelyn’s, as befits to her nature, mating with the male chimpanzees, Buz and Esau.

To conclude, Bernard Malamud employs Jewish characters in *God’s Grace*, like he does in his other novels. As the only human survivor in a post-apocalyptic world with a group of apes, Calvin Cohn functions as “everyman” to Malamud’s aim of criticizing human selfishness. This study furthers Malamud’s critical attitude to involve the destructive nature of western culture of itself as well as others. This novel is read to be a satire that allegorizes the occupation of the native space by the occident. Cohn’s domineering attitude over the apes, natives of the island where he finds refuge after the destruction of his own space, allegorises the colonisation process and also creates a sub-context for post-colonial discourse. While aiming to construct his new society on moral and religious grounds, Cohn fails to behave morally himself as he violates the native’s rights. Malamud reveals through this parable human temptation for hypocrisy and selfishness either in religious or colonial terms. The apocalyptic nuclear war that constitutes the background of Calvin Cohn’s involvement with apes as the last representative of human race foreshadows, at the same time, humankind’s expiration from the surface of the earth in Cohn’s person.

## REFERENCES

- Avery, E. (2001). *The Magic Worlds of Bernard Malamud*, Ed. Evelyn Avery, USA: State University of New York Press.
- Freese, P. (1995). Surviving the End: Apocalypse, Evolution, and Entropy in Bernard Malamud, Kurt Vonnegut, and Thomas Pynchon, *Critique*3, 163-175.
- Forsdick, C. (2001). Travelling Concepts: Postcolonial Approaches to Exoticism. *Paragraph*, 24 (3), 12-29.
- Garrison, C. (2001). Recollecting Bernie: Colleagues at Oregon State. *The Magic Worlds of Bernard Malamud*, Ed. Evelyn Avery. USA: State University of New York Press.

- Lemon, R. (2009). Imperial Mystique and Empiricist Mysticism: Inner Colonialism and Exoticism in Musil's *Törless*. *Modern Austrian Literature*, 42 (1), 1-22.
- Lindenbaum, Shirley. (2004). Thinking about Cannibalism. *Annual Review of Anthropology*, 33, 475-498.
- Luhrmann, T.M. (1994). The Good Parsi: the Postcolonial Feminisation of a Colonial Elite. *Royal Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland* 29, 333-357
- Malamud, B. (1989). *God's Grace*. New York: Farrar Straus.
- May, B. (2008). Extravagant Postcolonialism: Ethics and individualism in Anglophonic, Anglocentric Postcolonial Fiction; or 'What was (This) Postcolonialism?' *ELH*, (75), 899-937.
- Munro, M. (2003). Wild Thing: Noble Savages, Exoticisms and Postcolonial Space in Jacques-Stephen Alexis's *Les Arbres Musiciens*. *French Studies*, 8 (1), 55-67.
- Shaw, M. U., (2000), *Ethnic Identities in Bernard Malamud's Fiction*. Spain: Universidad De Oviedo. [www.times.com/books/97/09/28/reviews/malamud-obit.html](http://www.times.com/books/97/09/28/reviews/malamud-obit.html)
- Zucker, D. J. (1994). Malamud as Modern Midrash. *Judaism*, 43 (2), 159-171.