

The Stranger Within: Identity and Psychological Conflict in Satyajit Ray's *Agantuk*

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ABSTRACT

Nowadays, the problem of psychological insecurity, distrust and identity crisis have become a serious issue which affects human relationships and social values. *Agantuk*, directed by Satyajit Ray, delves into these questions by having an enigmatic step-relative, Manomohan Mitra, arrive at the household, sparking questions, curiosity, and unease among the middle-class Bengali family. The paper attempts to explore the psychological dilemma of trusting or doubting, and the film's critique of the modern notions of civilization, identity, and human relations. Ray's characters represent contemporary urban people suffering from emotional loneliness and mental disintegration, and fear and materialism have taken the place of true human contact. Manomohan Mitra is both an enigmatic other and a philosophical commentator on the hypocrisies of social convention, set and overwhelmingly dominant cultural identity markers. The film speaks in a symbolic language of dialogue, silence, interpersonal tension, and brings to the fore the suppressed anxieties of today.

The research in this study, following psychoanalytical and existential theories, maintains that the film of *Agantuk* is more than just a mystery film but a profound psychological study of alienation, selfhood and the fear of the unknown. The paper also examines how Ray uses both the elements of a detective tale and the questions of philosophy to bring to light the precariousness of trust in today's society. The film's impact on today's world is still felt today, as in our globalized society, emotional alienation and identity crisis remain prevalent in human experience. As a result, *Agantuk* is a significant psychological work, which portrays the intricacies of today's life by shrouding them in mystery and human introspection.

Keywords: *Agantuk*, Satyajit Ray, Identity Crisis, Psychological Conflict, Existentialism, Alienation, Self and Society, Bengali Cinema, Indian Parallel Cinema.

Introduction

Cinema has been the mirror of the society since long time and it has been showing the fear, to the anxiety and the psychology of human beings. Satyajit Ray is one of the filmmakers who managed to combine philosophy, psychology and social realism in a successful manner and therefore stands unique in world cinema. Many of Ray's films explore the intricacies of relationships human beings have with one another, as well as the evolving values of contemporary society. His last feature film was *Agantuk* (1991) which is one of his most complex and psychologically nuanced films. While it is a mystery film, *Agantuk* does not have a traditional mystery plot, but instead a mystery of deeper questions of trust, identity, civilization, and alienation through the use of a stranger's arrival.

The film is about an old man, Manomohan Mitra who suddenly knocks on the door of Anila and says that he is her long lost uncle who vanished decades ago. The sudden appearance of his family upsets and spies on them, particularly Sudhindra, Anila's husband. The stranger knows the family's history, but he doesn't have any legal proof of his identity, so the family gets caught in a psychological conflict of acceptance versus doubt. In this easy narrative, Ray embarks on a philosophical journey on contemporary human consciousness.

The trust crisis in the contemporary urban society is the central theme of the film. Traditional societies sometimes used emotional attachment and social belief as the basis for their familial relationships. But in the contemporary capitalist society suspicion and material insecurity prevail in interpersonal relations. The question of Manomohan coming back as an imposter takes precedence over the emotional value. This fear is a symptom of a broader social malaise of mistrust of others.

Meanwhile, the film delves into the concept of identity as malleable and ambiguous. Others question Manomohan Mitra, but he questions fixed definitions of civilization, nationality and culture. He has visited various nations and been among the tribal people, thus opposing any fixed hierarchies and adopting a more universalist perspective on human beings. His ideas bring forth conflicts in the middle class Bengali society, thus revealing the intellectual inability and hypocrisy of urban civilization.

The film's psychological symbolism is the fear of the unknown. The stranger appears as a symbolic representation of projection of the family's fears and uncertainties. Different

characters react differently to Manomohan's appearance, uncovering deep emotional conflicts and social fears. A tense psychological atmosphere is established through a careful interplay of conversation, silence, facial expression and domestic space, all of which Ray plays out in a meticulous manner.

This research paper is based on psychoanalytical and existential approach to *Agantuk*. It seems like more than just a mystery movie; it is a strong statement about a contemporary identity crisis, isolation and emotional fragmentation. The paper aims to explore how Ray condemns the modern society and demonstrates the psychological complexities of the modern human life through an analysis of the characters, themes, symbolism and cinematic techniques.

Research Gap

While there have been a number of scholars who have explored *Agantuk* from a philosophical, social, and cinematic point of view, few have given an interdisciplinary analysis that brings together postcolonial theory, psychoanalytic theory, existentialism and identity theory. The current studies of Ray have mostly concentrated on his realism and critique of modern civilization, and failed to consider the interrelated psychological and existential aspects of the film.

The previous studies have tended to explore the themes of alienation and civilization without also addressing the psychological conflicts that exist in the family. Likewise psychoanalytical notions like repression, the uncanny and the subconscious fear are not developed in relation to Manomohan Mitra as a familiar relative and threatening stranger. Moreover, little research has dealt with the colonial concepts of civilization and cultural superiority as a catalyst towards the characters' actions and lack of confidence.

This research is an attempt to close this gap by positing a combined analysis of *Agantuk* from postcolonial, psychoanalytic, existential and identity perspectives. The study is designed to give a clearer insight into the representation of identity crisis, mistrust, alienation and feelings of modern civilization in the study of Ray.

Research Questions

- How do you think identity crisis and social mistrust have been depicted in the novel *Agantuk* in the context of modern urban society?
- What is psychoanalytic theory telling us about the fear, suspicion, emotional insecurity within the family?
- How does the film challenge postcolonial notions of civilization, modernity and cultural superiority?
- What do you think of the existential alienation and outsider identity Manomohan Mitra embodies?
- How does the use of film techniques enhance the psychological realism and/or philosophical dimension of the film?

Objectives of the study

The main purpose of this research is to explore the psychological, philosophical and postcolonial aspects of *Agantuk* through the interdisciplinary theoretical approaches.

Specific Objectives are:

- To explore the theme of identity crisis and social mistrust in the movie.
- Using psychoanalytical theory to analyse the psychological conflict and emotional re-pression in the family.
- To discuss and explore the concepts of alienation, outsider identity, loneliness and freedom in an existential context.
- To explore the postcolonial challenge to civilization, modernity and cultural superiority.
- To examine the use of film techniques to produce psychological realism and psychological tension.
- To assess the relevance of the film in today's context of identity and emotional insecurity.

Research Methodology

This study is qualitative and analytical and aims to explore the psychological, philosophical and postcolonial aspects of *Agantuk*. The study primarily examines the textual

and cinematic analysis of Satyajit Ray's films to comprehend how the filmmaker depicts the sense of identity crisis, emotional alienation, social mistrust and the psychological consequences of modernism through the concept of narrative, characterization, dialogue and cinematography. The film involves complex human emotions and philosophical issues, which makes it best suited for a qualitative approach to examine the deeper meaning and symbolism of the film.

The method used in this research is interpretative, because the research is carried out to analyze psychological conflict, cultural anxiety and philosophical ideas and not numerical or statistical data. The research explores the reflection of emotional fragmentation and identity crisis in the post-colonial urban society through interpretative analysis. The study explores the actions, dialogue, and feelings of the characters to gain insight into the dynamics of fear, suspicion, and alienation below the level of normal middle-class life.

Agantuk is the main source of this research. The story, character relationships, character dialogues, visual arrangement and symbolism in the film are closely examined throughout the study. The character of Manomohan Mitra takes center stage since he acts as a psychological stranger, an existential outsider, and a philosophical critic of modern civilization. Close-up analysis of important scenes related to family conflict, emotional tension and philosophical discussion is conducted to gain insight into how the film is psychologically real.

Secondary sources used in the research are books, scholarly articles, film criticism and theoretical texts about psychoanalysis, post-colonialism, existentialism, identity studies and cinematic realism. Theories and concepts of scholars like Sigmund Freud, Jean-Paul Sartre, Albert Camus, Edward Said, Homi K. Bhabha and Amartya Sen are applied in analysing the study and for its theoretical framework.

The theoretical approach that is used in this research is a combination of postcolonial theory, psychoanalytical theory, existential theory and identity theory, which is an interdisciplinary theoretical approach. The film is examined through postcolonial theory, examining the subject of colonial mentality, colonial civilization, cultural anxiety and identity formation within the film. The concept of fear, repression, suspicion and Freud's uncanny is explored in the light of psychoanalytic theory and the presence of Manomohan Mitra being ambiguous in the family. Existential theory is used to analyze the themes of alienation, loneliness, outsider identity and search for meaning in contemporary life. Social

mistrust, role conflict and the instability of selfhood in urban society are studied in the context of identity theory and social psychology.

The study also analyzes Ray's film techniques and the close-up shots, silence, realistic dialogue, framing and the limited domestic space in the films. They play an important role in the film's psychological atmosphere and heighten the emotional tension between characters. The analysis of how the emotions of insecurity and social fragmentation can be portrayed in a natural and effective way in the context of a cinematic realism is analysed.

There are also some limitations to the methodology. As the research is qualitative and interpretive, some conclusions may be subjective and subject to different interpretations. The interdisciplinary theory approach, however, is useful in maintaining the analytical depth and balance of the academic study throughout.

In all, this methodological framework enables the research to take a look at *Agantuk* as a psychological, philosophical and postcolonial study on identity crisis, emotional alienation, and modernity. The study's qualitative analysis is complemented by the use of several theories to gain a more in-depth understanding of the ongoing relevance of the film in modern society.

Literature Review

Agantuk is an interesting film for scholars due to its philosophical insight, psychological intricacy and criticism of modern civilization. The film explores themes of mistrust, identity crisis, alienation and emotional disintegration with the arrival of the enigmatic Manomohan Mitra, who turns out to be a long lost family member. The film has been viewed from a variety of perspectives such as postcolonial theory, psychoanalytic theory, existentialism and identity theory by critics and scholars.

Agantuk is a postcolonial critique of the modern urban mindset that is formed by colonial ideas of 'civilization' and 'cultural superiority'. According to the postcolonial theorists, besides dominating territories, colonialism also shaped the psychology and identities of the colonized society. Amartya Sen theorizes that identity is not single, but a composite of several cultural identities and a multitude of historical contexts in the book *Identity and Violence: The Illusion of Destiny* (Sen 34). The concept is reflected in the

character of Manomohan Mitra, a traveler who traverses the globe, and interacts with tribal communities, who do not fit into simple definitions of nationality, culture or civilization. The middle-class family tries to establish him in official documents and social validation, in an attitude that is characteristic of the colonial concept of establishing identity by official documents and social validation.

In the same way, Ashis Nandy in *The Secret Politics of Our Desires: Innocence, Culpability and Indian Popular Cinema* points out that in postcolonial societies, colonized conceptions of modernity and civilization are often internalized (Nandy 91). Ray attacks this attitude in *Agantuk* through Manomohan's reverence for tribal subcultures and simplicity and human bond. The characters in the urban middle class believe themselves to be civilized, but are insecure, suspicious and detached. Ray thus asks himself whether modern civilization is a sign of "moral or emotional progress. The movie reveals the psychological struggle of postcolonial urban culture, its notions of superiority, materialism and cultural anxiety.

An other way to analyse the film is to do so by psychoanalytic theory, especially the concepts of Sigmund Freud. The Uncanny is Freud's explanation of why fear occurs when a person simultaneously feels familiar and unfamiliar, which causes emotional discomfort and psychological tension (Freud 124). A sense of uncanny is crucial to understanding Manomohan Mitra's presence in the film. He claims to be a family member, but his mysterious disappearance and uncertain identity makes him appear threatening. He is not a part of them and yet he is, the family members cannot completely accept him or reject him.

Freud's *Civilization and Its Discontents* also elaborates on how civilization is a cause of repression and emotional uneasiness in modern times (Freud 72). In *Agantuk*, the middle-class family conceals fear, greed and insecurity behind the veil of a polite social façade. They are fascinated with legal proofs and inheritance, and their subliminal concerns are about trust and social respectability. The domestic domain is psychologically charged and expresses internal emotional conflicts through silence, hesitation and suspicion, as described by Ray. Psychoanalytical critics therefore read the movie as a movie about repression, multiply selves, fear of the other.

Another important role in the understanding of *Agantuk* is played by existential theory. Some philosophers focus on own freedom, own identity, sense of alienation, and quest for meaning in an erratic world. Jean-Paul Sartre's *Existentialism Is a Humanism*

suggests that people must make their own meaning and identity through their own choice and not their society's (Sartre 29). This is the philosophy of Manomohan Mitra who brushes aside the institutionalized social order and opts for a life of travel, curiosity and intellectual freedom. He has lived in many cultures and thus transcended the limits of social categories and nations.

Similarly, Albert Camus in *The Myth of Sisyphus* speaks of the meaninglessness and isolation of contemporary human life (Camus 18). Manomohan serves as a sort of outsider looking in, who observes society's activities with a critical eye, but is unaffected by them emotionally. His solitude is emblematic of the condition of modern people who are unable to find genuine relationships in a materialistic world. Ray thus describes contemporary society as an emotionally disarticulated society, a society in which people are psychologically detached from one another, even though they live together in the same society.

Other connections to the film are also within the framework of identity theory and social psychology dealing with selfhood, recognition, social roles and interpersonal trust. In modern identity theory, it has been argued that identity is formed in the process of social interaction and recognition by others. In *Agantuk*, Manomohan has not been accepted emotionally by the family without the institution's proof of his identity. This presents an identity dilemma between personal and social identities.

Role conflict and social anxiety occurs within the middle-class family. Sudhindra is the rational male in the urban setting, and his values are logic, property and social respectability. His distrust of Manomohan is a result of the uncertainty surrounding the identity of the middle classes today, where fears of being deceived and losing money outweigh feelings of affection. Anila, however, feels a conflict in her emotions because she feels that she should believe her uncle on her instincts but is swayed by social pressure and family anxiety. These wars reveal a socially negotiated and psychologically fluid notion of identity.

The National Film Awards later invited several scholars to participate in the study of Satyajit Ray's films, of which Andrew Robinson was one who believed that Ray's later works were more philosophical and introspective and dealt with loneliness, morality and the crisis of human values in a modern society (Robinson 214). Robinson says that *Agantuk* is a reflection of Ray's concern with emotional alienation and the breakdown of trust in urban

civilization. Likewise, in his own words in *Our Films, Their Films*, Ray shows his dedication to the realism and psychological verisimilitude of film (Ray 56). Avoiding melodrama, Ray shows emotional conflict through everyday speech, silence and subtle human interaction.

Cinematically, Andre Bazin, in his *What Is Cinema?* stresses realism and natural representation as factors of meaningful Cinema (Bazin 13). In *Agantuk*, the realism of Ray's style is very evident and in a way, strongly influenced by Bazin's theory. The limited domestic setting, limited acting, and philosophical discussion provide psychological realism that further enriches the emotional and intellectual connection with the film.

While there have been a number of discussions on Ray's realism, his postcolonial themes, his existential themes, his themes of identity, etc., there are relatively few studies that integrate all four foci: postcolonial, psychoanalytic, existential, and identity. The film is critiqued either by itself as a philosophy or a social critique. So, in this regard, this research tries to fill that gap by examining the interaction of identity crisis, emotional alienation, colonial anxiety and psychological insecurity in the story construction of *Agantuk*.

Theoretical Framework

The postcolonial theory, psychoanalytical theory, and existential theory and identity theory are four major theories employed for this research. These explain the psychological, philosophical and cultural aspects of *Agantuk*.

Postcolonial Theory

Postcolonial theory is an analysis of the impact of colonialism on identity, society and modernity. Colonialism created concepts of civilization, superiority and cultural identity, as seen in the works of scholars like Edward Said and Homi K. Bhabha. *Agantuk's* opposition to tribal simplicity and urban sophistication is indicative of the postcolonial fears of modernity and Western cultural impact.

Manomohan Mitra offers a critique of ideas of progress as they relate to colonialism by taking up the question of whether urban civ can make emotionally fulfilled people. His love for tribal people is against middle class ideas of superiority and modernity. In this

regard, the film is an expression of postcolonial theory and provides an explanation for the cultural anxiety and identity crisis that is so apparent in the movie.

Psychoanalytic Theory

Psychoanalytic theory is primarily based on the unconscious fear, repression, anxiety, emotional conflict and hidden psychological tension involved in human behavior as theorised by Sigmund Freud. This theory is very much applicable in the psychological setting of the film *Agantuk*, which delves into the realms of suspicion, insecurity, mistrust and emotional disintegration of the normal Middle class life. Freud was a psychologist who found that people sometimes act out of their rational conscious mind because of desires and fears in their subconscious mind. The attitude of the family towards Manomohan Mitra brings into the fore the underlying fears and insecurities

Among the most significant of Freud's ideas for the film is that of the “uncanny” as it is explored in *The Uncanny*. The uncanny is a phenomenon that simultaneously seems familiar and strange, which gives the viewer a sense of unease and anxiety. This is the uncanny presence of which Manomohan Mitra is the perfect illustration. He states that he is a long lost relative, but his family doesn't know who he is and he seems threatening and suspicious to them. As he exists in the space between familiarity and strangeness, there is emotional tension throughout the narrative.

The family's fear goes beyond and is a sign of deeper subconscious anxieties around aspects of trust, inheritance, deception and social reputation. Sudhindra is particularly a middle-class insecurity, for he gives more importance to the proof and rational verification than to the understanding. By depicting modern urban society as psychologically disunited and emotionally unstable, despite its sophistication and rationality, Ray makes a strong point of how unstable this society is.

Existential Theory

An important theory in philosophy is existential theory which emphasizes individuality, freedom, alienation, loneliness, uncertainty, meaning of human life, etc. Jean-Paul Sartre and Albert Camus believe that people have to make their own identity and

meaning in an uncertain world, instead of relying solely on the social expectations or institutional definitions. This theory is very relevant to the understanding of the philosophical depth of *Agantuk* and especially of Manomohan Mitra.

Manomohan is an outsider who lives his life in a way that is not in tune with society, and who embraces a life of travel, curiosity, intellectual exploration and personal freedom. He is not a family with property, profession or social status, like the middle-class family in the urban environment. His impressions from the various cultures and tribal groups are a reflection of existential thoughts on individuality and self-discovery. He challenges modern civilization, materialism and restrictive social identity in his philosophical dialogues.

In existential theory too, alienation and emotional isolation in modern society are highlighted. Manomohan has wisdom and experience, but he is a man apart from society, in terms of trust and understanding. Ray describes the emotional disjointedness in urban life even though people are physically near, and socially developed. *Agantuk* is about conflict for 'true' life, significant relationships and individual identity in a psychologically ambiguous contemporary world.

Theories of identification and Social psychology theory

Identity theory is a theory that focuses on the construction of identity through social interaction, recognition and social roles. *Agantuk* undoes identity as the family doesn't trust emotional truth until formal proof is provided. Whereas Manomohan's identity is not clear cut as society has more value for documentation than human connection or personal experience.

Role conflict and social anxiety in middle class life are also portrayed through the film. Sudhindra's focus is on rational and social standing, and Anila is torn between her emotions and social pressure. Thus, identity theory has been found to account for the precariousness of the self and the process of recognition in modern urban society.

Interruption of a Journey of Identity

The main conflict of *Agantuk* is identity. The story is about if Manomohan Mitra is indeed the long-lost uncle he says he is, or if he's just a fake posing as an uncle to trick the

family. This uncertainty is an issue that becomes psychological and philosophical, rather than just a matter of fact.

The family made a point to demand proof of the law, because they were relying on the modern institutional need for proof. Emotional memory and the intuition of humans are deemed to be unreliable, and documents and rational evidence become the main basis for recognition. In this condition, Ray condemns the lack of emotional trust and inter-human relationships found in modern civilization. Ray condemns this condition by demonstrating how the conditions of modern civilization have weakened the emotional trust and relationships between humans.

Manomohan himself refuses to fit into any of the preconceived notions of what his identity might be. He experiences different culture and tribal communities, which enables him to have a wider understanding of the human beyond nationalities and social status. Ray uses his character to represent a fluid, experiential, and ever changing identity, instead of a fixed or singular identity.

Uncertainty is also widespread in the film, a result of the identity crisis in the film. The processes of classification, of authority, of rationality, all of which are within the framework of colonial modernity, continue to exert psychological influence on urban middle class society. When identity is not recognised on an emotional level it shows the atomisation of the self in modern civilization.

The psychological conflict and fear of the stranger

Agantuk is an atmosphere of psychological tension. Manomohan Mitra's arrival immediately makes us uncomfortable as he is a familiar stranger. Freud's notion of the uncanny is that all the family members are afraid of him and he is calm and intellectual.

As the family suspects, their feeling of insecurity grows deeper. Sudhindra is afraid of being deceived, losing money and being embarrassed socially. These fears are the fear of middle class of property, trust and social reputation. The mundane becomes tense in the mind because the waiting and hesitation unveils the hidden inner struggle of the mind.

Ray is not depicting fear by means of violence or action, but by the way fear is present in the normal interactions of everyday life. Emotional discomfort is heightened by

the limited space in the house, which also leads to a more unpleasant psychological situation. The movie is thus a journey into the subconscious fears and emotional repression that lies beneath civilized behaviour and action.

Civilization vs Humanity

The opposition between civilization and humanity is one of the primary philosophical conflicts being portrayed in the film. Manomohan Mitra asks many questions regarding the progress of modern urban civilization in his writing. He believes that the honesty, creativity and emotional connection that tribal cultures are good at maintaining is stronger than modern society.

The family's behavior of the middle class is used by Ray as a means of criticizing materialism and social hypocrisy. They feel civilized, educated but are emotionally insecure and suspect. Their fascination with inheritance, social respectability reveals their moral vacuity, that of urban modernity.

Colonial notions of the primitive are also critiqued in the film, as are the notions of the "civilized" and "primitive" indigenous peoples. The "civilized" and "primitive" indigenous peoples are also critiqued as is colonial definitions of the "primitive" and association of tribes with primitiveness. Manomohan's liking for the indigenous communities is against the framework of Western concepts of superiority and progress. In this struggle, Ray depicts a kind of psychological fracturing of civilization as opposed to moral progress.

Existential Alienation and Loneliness

Existential alienation is a theme in Manomohan Mitra's character. He is an outsider, beyond the norms of society and its identities. He had a life of travel and a free mind and his attitudes to individuality and self-definition are existential.

Though Manomohan is wise and philosophically enlightened, he still remains emotionally cut off from the society for there are people who cannot accept those who reject the conformity of the society. The solitude is a metaphor for the present-day human

condition in which it has become harder to find a genuine relationship in a materialistic society.

Alienation is suffered by the family members themselves. They live in the same house, but are not emotionally connected due to lack of trust and fear in their interactions. Ray thus depicts the emotional and psychological disintegration and fragmentation of contemporary urban existence.

Film Methods and Authentic Psychology

Satyajit Ray's film-making realism enhances the psychological depth of *Agantuk*. He does not use melodrama to build up tension; instead, he builds emotional tension through realistic dialogue, lack of dialogue, close-up shots, and small domestic spaces.

The shots frequently zoom in on the line of sight and moments of doubt of the characters, giving the audience the opportunity to see the uncertainty of the characters. Silence can be a more effective movie weapon than a dramatic confrontation, with its ability to instill fear, discomfort and distrust.

Excessive confinement is symbolized in the domestic environment. The middle-class apartment looks normal, but slowly turns into a place of fear and inner disintegration. The psychological struggle seems realistic and believable because of Ray's understated film style.

The role of relevance in today's society

Themes which are discussed in *Agantuk* are very much relevant in the present day society. It is evident that contemporary man still suffers from identity problems, feelings of alienation and distrust in more materialistic and technologically oriented societies.

Nationality, belonging, cultural identity, social recognition are issues that are of paramount importance in today's globalized world. The film also expresses contemporary concerns on emotional isolation, social anxiety and loss of human connection as it is a critique of civilization.

The themes of distrust and disintegrating identity, then, continue to be relevant to contemporary audiences and audiences in the future. In the end, *Agantuk* brings viewers to an understanding that modern civilization often times does not give emotional fulfillment, and that despite the progress of the world, the human person remains psychologically isolated.

Conclusion

Agantuk is one of the most intellectually rich and psychologically complex films produced by Satyajit Ray. On the surface level, the film is about the sudden appearance of a mysterious relative in the middle-class Bengali household, but as the film unfolds is a philosophical and psychological study of identity, civilization, alienation, mistrust and human existence. Ray's subtle realism, limited cinematic style and rich philosophy in the dialogue make this a typical situation that becomes a universal one, a reflection of the emotional and cultural state of contemporary society.

The results of this research show that the main conflict of the film is related to the problem of identity crisis and recognition. Manomohan Mitra's identity is one of the many uncertainties surrounding selfhood in contemporary urban civilization. The family's lack of faith in emotional memory or in the gut feeling of peoples' intuition is a testament to the increasing reliance of the modern society on rational systems, documentation and social validation. The film's identity is then divided, malleable and a product of social rather than emotional experience. Ray's image of a world is a one where human relationships are being increasingly defined by suspicion, fear and material concern rather than empathy and trust.

In addition, the use of postcolonial theory also shows the film's criticism of colonial concepts of civilization and cultural superiority. The love of tribal culture and indigenous communities in Manomohan Mitra's work brings into question the urban middle class notion of moral and intellectual development in modern civilization. Ray asks himself what the world has become more humane, and if it has not become more humane, then what's happened? Ray wonders if the world is more humane today or if it's more emotionally removed and psychologically insecure. The simplicity of the tribes and the sophistication of the towns or cities reveals the hypocrisy, greed, and emptiness that lurks beneath the surface of civilized behavior. The film has brought up and reflected the postcolonial fear of identity, modernity and cultural values through this critique.

The psychoanalytical theory also has a significant contribution towards grasping the emotional tension in the story. The uncanny is a term to describe something that seems sinister, frightening, or disturbing, yet is not; it is a concept that helps explain why Manomohan Mitra is psychologically threatening, though calm and intellectual. He is somewhere between known and unknown, making them uncomfortable and suspicious of him in the family. The movie illustrates the effects of the subconscious fears of inheritance, deceit, fragility, and social respectability on human interaction under normal domestic conditions. Ray's rendering of silence, hesitation and emotional restraint adds to the psychological ambiance of the story and uncovers the insecurities of middle-class life.

The film is also a basis of existential theory which further enhances the philosophical reading of the film. Manomohan Mitra is an existential outsider, one who cannot be categorized within the strictures of a society; he elects instead to defy those strictures, and to take up the path of freedom, curiosity, intellectual exploration. The sense of loneliness and isolation he feels is a reflection of the existential state of modern humanity, where people are seeking a sense of authenticity and connection in a materialistic world. Although he has the wisdom and experience, he is not fully accepted by society as he does not fit into the identities and belonging that society expects. The film thus does not only convey a feeling of alienation as an individual experience, but also as a social and psychological state of today's civilization.

The study also highlights the significance of film techniques in the making of psychological realism of the film. The small scale of the action, the domestic settings, the realistic dialogue, the lack of sound and the understated acting establishes a sense of emotional awkwardness and philosophical unease. But instead of melodrama and sensational conflict, Ray lets psychological fear come out in a natural way, through talking and human interaction. Emotional imprisonment, suspicion and broken ties are represented by the average middle-class family. The film-like approach is realistic, which adds to the depth of the story's emotional and intellectual resonance.

The other significant contribution of this study is the ongoing significance of '*Agantuk*' in present day society. The problems that the film addresses: identity crisis, emotional alienation, social mistrust, cultural anxiety, and loneliness are all very relevant issues in today's life. People are still feeling lost in an increasingly globalized and technologically driven world in terms of identity, belonging, and human connection. It is

therefore very significant that the film denounces the sense of civilization, since in the modern era, progress has not always led to emotional satisfaction or psychological stability.

But Satyajit Ray doesn't just question the authenticity of Manomohan Mitra being the missing uncle. Rather, he poses more profound questions about civilization, humanity, trust, identity and the emotional state of the current society. The film is a provocation to rethink ideas of progress, rationality and human relationships. In both psychological realism and philosophical observation of life, *Agantuk* is not only a masterpiece of cinema, but a timeless reflection on the tenuousness of the human soul and the emotional loneliness that exists within the modern civilizations.



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