

Heart of Darkness: A Congolese Trove of Pain

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Abstract—This paper is a serious attempt to examine Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* from a postcolonial perspective. It focuses on Europe's major colonial powers in Africa, particularly in the Congo, and studies the relation between the coloniser and the colonised during the period of King Leopold II of the Congo Free State and presents the impact of colonialism on the colonised. Further, it endeavours to historicise the arrival of the Belgian colonialism in the Congo and documents the atrocities and exploitations carried out against the indigenous local populations. It also seeks to conduct an investigation into the stance of Conrad in accordance with colonialism and imperialism and answers the duality behind Conrad's position in terms with the oppressed peoples of Africa.

Keywords—Belgian Colonialism, *Heart of Darkness*, Joseph Conrad, King Leopold II, The Congo.

The conquest of the earth, which mostly means the taking it away from those who have a different complexion or slightly flatter noses than ourselves, is not a pretty thing when you look into it too much. What redeems it is the idea only. An idea at the back of it; not a sentimental pretence but an idea; and an unselfish belief in the idea—something you can set up, and bow down before, and offer a sacrifice too (Joseph Conrad, *HOD* 8).

I. INTRODUCTION

During 19th and 20th centuries, the concept of colonisation was received as an overriding, appalling and an issue discussed and criticised widely in fiction and non-fiction. Literary works, such as, novels, short stories and poetry featured imperialism and colonialism as a double-edged powerful weapon. What makes such issue enigmatic, as far as I can see, is the tortuous irresolution and the latent idea behind colonisation. On that account, readers while indulging colonial literature, they hardly would distinguish whether an author is with or against colonisation, some of them identify with images and dialogues that reveal an author's position. What motivated conquerors to expand their rules is still a matter of no direct answer. Conrad suggests that the "idea only" is the criterion, but this "idea" varies on the grounds of colour, race, religion and the existence of weapons. Colonists claim that what motivates them is a sense of sympathy and civilisation as a justifying motive to colonise those moral agents. In fact, over the course of history and during the rule of European agencies in Africa and South East Asia, genocide was an evident and deliberate act, countries have been exploited only for the sake of bringing peace and harmony instead of darkness, and to civilise the conquered peoples by "weaning . . . [the] ignorant millions from their horrid ways," (*HOD*27).¹Is there a relation between Africa and Europe, Black and White, colonisers and the colonised? A novelist typically makes his writing fully overlapped by showing characters, actions and emotions to his readers rather than telling us about them. For instance, Earnest

Hemingway typically writes short sentences with a minimum number of words. Hemingway's focus lies solely in showing rather than telling. Therefore, this urges readers to have every reason for reading a literary work. In this paper I will examine *Heart of Darkness* (*HOD*) from a postcolonial perspective, and trace the real agonies the peoples of Africa suffered at the hand of the European colonists. This piece written by the Polish and later to become a British subject, Joseph Conrad (1857-1924). Conrad as a prolific author has much to do with English Language and literature though "he wrote in a language that was not native to him, and his novels have little in common with the comedy of manners that was fashionable when he began to write" (*Heart of Darkness, York Notes*79).

II. DISCUSSION

In a tightly-argued manner Conrad is considered as a distinguished figure, for his indispensability and supremacy in the field of belle letters. Edward W. Said in (1993) argues that Conrad is, by no means, can be categorised as a minion of colonisation:

Conrad's tragic limitation is that even though he could see clearly that on one level imperialism was essentially pure dominance and land-grabbing, he could not then conclude that imperialism had to end so that 'natives' could lead lives free from European domination. As a creature of his time, Conrad could not grant the

natives their freedom, despite his severe critique of the imperialism that enslaved them (34).

Since the literary works related to colonisation and post-colonisation are revealing of the reality of imperialism, thus Conrad's HOD is the exact depiction of the colonialist's ends in Africa. Throughout this novella, it resembles a "personal record" for the its inclusion of an autobiographical elements of Conrad's sea voyage to the Republic of Congo in 1880s. In its two major characters Marlow and Kurtz, the materialistic and the selfish endeavours of imperialism are exemplified through them. As far as the narrative is concerned, one is encountered with many words that signify darkness rather than lightness over the not stated territories in the novella. Colonisation plays a pivotal role in shaping and reshaping Marlow and Kurtz's identities and ideologies completely, and even the colonised. This clearly can be noticed through their irreconcilable contradictions that have no definite answers, and this what makes HOD to be considered as one of the greatest philosophical novels of the twentieth century.

What is the difference between blackness and whiteness? This distinction is undoubtedly imbued with fights and bloody conflicts since ancient times. Blacks and Whites invariably have contradictory views about their credos. Frantz Fanon(1925-61)rightly puts it "I was responsible at the same time for my body, for my race, for my ancestors.I subjected myself to an objective examination, I discovered my blackness, my ethnic characteristics;and I was battered down by tom-toms, cannibalism, intellectual deficiency, fetichism, racial defects, slave-ships, and above all else, above all: "sho' good eatin'" (112).

What propels Conrad to use the word "Nigger" throughout HOD for many times? Is he really sympathetic or unmerciful towards the Black? In relation to what Fanon declares in the previous thought, Conrad depicts the real image of blacks' torture in Africa "A nigger was being beaten nearby. They said he had caused the fire in some way; be that as it may, he was screeching most horribly. I saw him, later, for several days, sitting in a bit of shade looking very sick and trying to recover himself: afterwards he arose and went out- and the wilderness without a sound took him into its bosom again" (41).

Ontology and dialectic are essential to understand the real psyches of human beings, for without knowing that, we cannot identify ourselves with the Other. Hegel grabs our attention to this, particularly in the moment of "being for others," as well as, Jean-Paul Sartre. They (Hegel & Sartre) have endorsed the view that existence is something unattainable in any colonised or civilised

society. That is to say, as you are surrounded with colonisation, you will feel that you are alienated and the Other. Consequently, the African inhabitants are no longer themselves as narrated on the leaves of HOD, for they are colonized and afflicted with the pestilence of imperialism. In short they have no ontology and dialectics, for they are dislocated and marginalized without having opposed views about their being.

Pain, atrocity and brutality are the most eminent and notorious tactics that were used and are still used against the oppressed. In another meaning, the White have a phobia from the Black. Therefore, they, the Whites, are brilliant tacticians, so to speak, in dehumanising and demoralising the colonised. On that account, this inequality finds its passionate defenders who argue for the human rights. For instance, Fanon, a great thinker, defender and author of several masterpieces that embody and exemplify the pragmatic shape of colonisation; thus, hecertainlyis an authoritative figure arguing for several human issues. As a result, in*Black Skin, White Masks* (1968), Fanon attacks the ardent and the wrong beliefs about the Black man. Not only this, but he deciphers the indecipherable and delineates the exact image that is taken for granted against the Negros, thus he intentionally begins with Aime Cesaire's few words about the misconception that is held by the white, "I am talking of millions of men who have been skilfully injected with fear, inferiority complexes, trepidation, servility, despair, abasement" (7).

Colonialism throughout HOD is much essentialised in Conrad's pivotal figure that paves the way to draw the universe's attention about the pleasures of imperialism. Charlie Marlow is thirty-two-year-old British sailor who has taken the sea as a profession. He was sent to the Congo upon the request of his aunt. Conrad not only has chosen him to be his alter ego as in HOD, but also in *Lord Jim*1900, *Chance* and *Youth*all of his novels to explain to us the inner feelings and emotions, and indeed his philosophy in life. In short, Marlow is the omniscient narrator as the case of F. Scott Fitzgerald's Nick Carraway who plays the role of major narrator in *The Great Gatsby* (1925).

Whiteness and Blackness as a whole is not a matter of choice, but rather a matter of nature. Racism is a shameful act whenever it is aroused from any ethnic group. Marlow represents the white civilization while Africans represent the black one. Thus, these irreconcilable points of views are set to cast light on the instinctive natures of human beings. I, therefore, say that as we know about Jews and the anti-Semitism since ancient time this also can be attributed to the ambivalent polices between Blacks and Whites. In other words, since

the Jews resent the moment they have are treated with inferiority, just for being Jews, is exactly a resemblance of Black's issue. Yet, this does not imply that one can work as an advocate of the rights of Jews. Negroes are often described as savages, dwarfs, brutes and illiterates, but nobody thinks or agrees on these wrong adjectives. Marlow inflicts the Africans with soot as if he is a virulent and contaminated smoke loitering beneath the sky of Africa. In fact, he is injected with hatred, poison and prejudice against the entire Africa. He once relates, "They were dying slowly-it was very clear. They were not enemies, they were not criminals, they were nothing earthly now, -nothing but black shadows of disease and starvation, lying confusedly in the greenish gloom. Brought from the recesses of the coast in all the legality of time contracts, lost in uncongenial surroundings, fed on unfamiliar food, they sickened, became inefficient, and were then allowed to crawl away and rest" (32).

Conrad implies that these subjugated and plaintive people are diseased and 'unfamiliar' to that of being, for they are segregated and dislocated from their lands. Thus, they are no more than reptiles which creep slowly on the ground. This is what I infer out of that delineation. What is the criterion upon which white people judge whether people of Africa are futile or meaningful, and deserve to be "exterminated"? If there are criteria that judge other people's races, these devices must be fair, unbiased and straightforward. I imagine that equality and quality are completely devastated in the hands of the White since some biased never pass any judgment depending on the principles of morality. The only thing is to intimidate, brutalise, problematize and torment their conscience (the White) irrespective of the others' consciences. In that case, I, on the spot, do think that these inanimate humans should be stopped instantaneously or else several if not many excruciating and endless ordeals will be inaugurated.

Is it a disinterested endeavour to move from a world to another and announce that "I have just come here to civilise you?" Of course, this is a very cunning and prevaricating conquest since it is founded on self-interest, gross and exploitation taken from the helpless and ignorant millions. Moral dilemmas rise one after another, especially in the African tactile landscapes. Should we blame the White for being white and the Black for being black? No right-minded would accept these trivialities. However, Marlow accepts this with ecstasy to lay or let suspicion falls on the Black for being black. Consequently, racism plays a pivotal role in dissecting societies, peoples and even the entire universe into meagre parts. This racism is very clear and transparent in Conrad's alter ego Marlow. Fanon is passionate in transforming racism on the basis of

colour and making it to disappear, so he refers to what depicts prejudice against colour taken from Sir Alon Burns' book *Colour Prejudice*:

It [colour prejudice] is nothing more than the unreasoning hatred of one race for another, the contempt of the stronger and the richer peoples for those whom they consider inferior to themselves, and the bitter resentment of those who are kept in subjection and are so frequently insulted. As colour is the most obvious outward manifestation of race it has been made the criterion by which men are judged, irrespective of their social or educational attainments. The light-skinned races have come to despise all those of a darker colour, and the dark-skinned peoples will no longer accept without protest the inferior position to which they have been relegated (118).

Eminently, we have to amend this misrepresentation and misunderstanding which are embraced by a huge number of people whom they can be decoded as an intractable human, as I could see. I also think that this diabolical view (being black) is to be resolved and never to let it happen again. As I suppose, Marlow's tenaciousness is to distort and degrade the African natives for being/having "different complexion or slightly flatter noses" (19-20).

This policy to liquidate the natives as "brutes" is what makes racism of the Whites in opposition to the Blacks to become the main pivot. Appearing from afar, this policy aims only at taking control upon a spot which does not belong to colonisers; for example, the European one. In other words, Marlow brings darkness to Africa to make amends for the horrible things that are internalised in his mind the minute he was in Europe.

Colonialism deals people with death to life. Life is the only thing that seems sacrosanct but taken out of the tearful and impotent inhabitants. Marlow stresses on this through grudging and deriding the natives of Africa unto death "when one has got to make correct entries, one comes to hate those savages- hate them to death" (35). Not only exploitation, but also hatred and annihilation, for perhaps trivial reasons. The life of developed people cannot be made via the death of the other, and yet this is the outlook of the coloniser to the colonised.

Chinua Achebe, in an opposing essay titled "An Image of Africa" (1978), asserts Conrad's racism to Africa, especially the Congo. Achebe sheds light on the antithesis image that Conrad presents to the universe, yet he incessantly defies that "Of course, there is a preposterous and perverse kind of arrogance in thus reducing Africa to the role of props for the breakup of one

petty European mind. But that is not even the point. The real question is the dehumanization of Africa and Africans which this age-long attitude has fostered and continues to foster in the world” (9).

The European colonialist has brought diseases with him to Africa which accentuates darkness instead of lightness. The condition of Africa was portrayed miserable on account of “pestilence” has not left any place in it without decentralising and obliterating it completely. For instance, the real image of the Congo is an example of the European colonization. Marlow discovers once the bad effects of imperialism in the “grove of death” (35). Throughout the existence of colonisation in Africa (France & Belgium for example), the portrait of health has declined. That is to say, diseases and pains only exist and coexist with the natives of Africa. This indicates the ruthlessness and cruelty of the colonisation. Is it fair to live an incessant life upon the other’s one? Actually, I think that the African natives have nothing to do with the European conquerors, for this (defeating the colonisers) needs “only brute force” that will make the oppressed populations to regain their kidnapped identity, history and home (19).

Being weak, fragile and unconscious are one of the reasons which lead and motivate the other to take control upon others. Concerning the notion of disease and health, Marlow assumes that “They were no colonists; their administration was merely a squeeze, and nothing more, I suspect. They were conquerors, and for that you want only brute force-nothing to boast of, when you have it, since your strength is just an accident arising from the weakness of others” (ibid). Conrad emphasizes that the powerful is undoubtedly taken from that of powerless and helpless people, so as he supposes there is no need for being haughty and snobbish as everything is too clear when ‘you look into it too much’ (20).

Disease is not only the number or kind that we already know, but also that of corruption and distortion of minds. Marlow and the Sweden man have suffered from that dilemma; they both have been corrupted and reshaped as they see the calamities and “a massacre of a pestilence,” which the colonialism has caused in Africa (33). Consequently, the pervasiveness of evil is embodied in the psyches of imperialism in Africa. An image of disease is that as mentioned in the novella; they are two brothers, so their posture and aura present the very nasty condition of disease’s proliferation. Prolifically, Marlow focuses on such images to examine the pragmatic view of that time and place.

Relatively, the theme of health and disease seem very significant via the fiction after the post-colonial era.

In fact, this thematic subject is reverberated through notable thinkers, poets, novelists and short story tellers. As an evidence to this, it recurs in “The Waste Land” (1922) by T. S. Eliot, and “The White Man’s Burden” (1899) by Rudyard Kipling. These aforementioned classics are essential in order to understand the bellicosity and resurrection used by colonialism in any place which looks worth colonising. Therefore, it is noteworthy to draw attention to the latter poem and discuss at length the white man’s burden, and that of which has been allocated on Africa. The white man, in truth, uses several tools so as to resuscitate his being in Africa irrespective of the consequences. What makes diseases, famines, holocausts and perhaps exterminations to be at play is that the burden to live and not to let anybody live. Thus, Kipling (1865-1936) is regarded for his interest in adventure and romance in which he knew in the growing British Empire and known as the youngest person to receive Noble Prize for Literature in (1907). In “The White Man’s Burden,” (1899) he is trying to impart us about the white race’s burden which results in disease and “famine,” but this drives us as he suggests descending to “nought”:

Take up the White Man’s Burden--

The Savage wars of peace --

Fill full the mouth of famine

And bid the sickness cease;

And when your goal is nearest

The end for others sought,

Watch sloth and heathen folly

Bring all your hopes to nought (Rudyard

Kipling, “The White Man’s Burden” 1899).

It is a bid to stop or prevent the ‘sickness’ and ‘famine’ in which Kipling delves into in that awesome poem. However, this endeavour is something impossible when it comes to the African subject “...and upon my word [Marlow is narrating] it did not seem an uncongenial occupation, from the way they took it, though the only thing that ever came to them was disease- as far as I could see” (41). Studying colonisation is essential in order to absorb the philosophy of exploitation. Whites stand for symbol of exploitation and cruelty; Kurtz is a ruthless exploiter, who is well-prepared to kill for a little ivory. Further, Marlow is a central character portrayed as a successful exploiter. He is ready to let the others live in that gloomy inferno.

Perhaps what motivates whites of Europe to reach Africa is that the ivory which is a rare and inexpensive resource in African. Having that orientation is undeniably what aggravates the problem in Africa; the orientation of those selfish ivory hunters who are well-advised to make to make their fortunes in Africa. HOD has, in fact, issued

several lines to portray the real image of these hunters whose role is clear in those pilgrims. On that account, in the course of the very beginning of the novella, Conrad describes these mercenary people as “Hunters for gold or pursuers of fame, they all had gone out on that extreme, bearing the sword, and often the torch, messengers of might within the land, bears of a spark from the sacred fire” (17).

Being prosperous and well-celebrated are also one of the drives that the colonial thought is pondering for a long time, but this ideology is extracted for the benefit of the coloniser. Neither Marlow nor Kurtz has the intention to support or civilise the other. Everything is based on taking advantage of the other. The western mentality is on the basis of a discourse that disowns the third world generation. It is evident during the French and others’ colonial killings in Algeria, Nigeria, South Africa and India. If we try to pinpoint where are these previous and notable places on the map, obviously are captured by the white man. This extraordinary paradoxical view of the British Empire is aiming at delegitimising the people’s land and beliefs only for self-interested desideratum.

Having a pattern of beliefs that assume to be a dominant group of people, the white, since ancient time, held certain beliefs, ideas and feelings regarding black people. I mean that of black. Ideology may be thought of when it turns to the aspects of civilisation, language, discourse and also power which are all subject to change. Because of these tools, everything has been changed. For example, Conrad’s ideology towards the black implies a misconception that denotes that he degrades African natives. After the post-colonial era, there are several critics who endorse the idea that Conrad’s classic HOD may show Conrad’s ambivalent view of Africa. Chinua Achebe, Edward W. Said, Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, Frances B. Singh, C.P. Sarvan, Peter Nazareth and Michael Gilkes are the most famous critics ever in delineating the enigma of HOD. However, Achebe condemns and agrees on saying that Conrad is a thorough-going racist, then as *York Notes* edition concerns with HOD, particularly that of Achebe, so he says in terms of Conrad’s masterpiece “Parades in the most vulgar fashion prejudices and the insults from which a selection of mankind has suffered untold agonies and atrocities in the past and continues to do so in many ways and many places today. I am talking about a story in which the very humanity of black people is called in question” (90). Conrad has much to profess his admiration for identity and ideology. He suggests that change actually “take[s] inside.” The “change” is the taking of the world, and this hegemony is somehow indisputable. Because of this,

Conrad’s alter ego Marlow has also the ideology of the whites as he was in the Congo. He appears as the representative of them, yet this does not refrain from despising those whites who decide to complicit against Kurtz. In other words, Marlow at the very start of his expedition in the Congo, he was totally in agreement that the natives were exploited and oppressed. Definitely, when he sees that the two “bucks”² have been hit with pain. So, this recommends him to detest the white people to the core. Later, Marlow has a contradiction in terms, as well as, in deeds.

In a celebrated article, “Can the Subaltern Speak” (1985), Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak reveals the reality of imperialism, especially the British one, thus she puts it “In the beginning of the nineteenth century, the British authorities, and especially the British in England, repeatedly suggested that collaboration made it appear as if the British condoned this practice. When the law was finally written, the history of the long period of the collaboration was effaced, and the language celebrated the noble Hindu who was against the bad Hindu, the latter given to savage atrocities” (301).

In these eloquent words, Spivak draws our attention to the role that a “language” plays as an ideology and identity to its own people. The Hindu language, as she professes, is one of the tools that makes celebrations and festivals in India. What make this real is that the existence of British colonialism in India for more than two hundred years; therefore, British oppression is no less dangerous than that of other colonial powers in Africa.

Ideology as a term was born with the French revolution which is used imaginatively and discriminately by sublime and superior nations; however, the hegemonic tactic may be effaced overnight as long as it is constructed on dehumanisation of the other. There are many expressions that are shown ideologically incorrect, e.g. Kurtz’s postscript “Exterminate all the brutes!” (75). Besides, what is derogatory and condemnatory of the ideology of the Marlow’s repetition and confirmation of Mr. Kurtz? Edward Said in *Culture & Imperialism* confirms that “Most readings rightly call attention to Conrad’s scepticism about the colonial enterprise, but they rarely remark that in telling the story of his African journey Marlow repeats and confirms Kurtz’s action: restoring Africa to European hegemony by historicizing and narrating its strangeness” (198).

As an imperialist, it is always the case to have a splendid discourse which wins the audience attention. Imperialism is one of the stations that uses language eloquently and also clearly, for this has an intimate relationship between culture and imperialism. Through the

novel, no one is more fluent than Kurtz. Kurtz is a God-gifted man, an orator, a writer, a musician, a painter, a journalist and a politician. In other words, he is a man who amalgamates between several professions in which it is difficult to find an identical picture like him. In spite of the noticeable hostility between him and the manager, Kurtz makes himself intact and not wanting.

Kurtz is used in the novella as the perversion of idealism; he at the very beginning was an idealistic symbol for integrity and virtue; however, later on he was a self-deceived idealist. Imperialism uses orientalism as an appliance or a tool, but Kurtz uses rhetorical language in order to convey his thoughts and beliefs to the natives of Africa. Having such a language within its flamboyant and colourful means, that, as far as I could see, is one of the methods that a coloniser typically use when they tend to lay control on a particular territory. Not withstanding Kurtz is regarded as “a universal genius,” he is also a “hollow man,” (3) because he has been discovered as a person without social responsibility. T.S. Eliot, in his poem “The Hollow Men” (1925) insinuates that the world is not devoid of cunning people like Mr. Kurtz. Hence, the speaker in the poem’s subtitle echoes that Kurtz is dead referring to Conrad’s famous phrase in HOD that reads “‘Mistah Kurtz- he dead’” which (100).

We are the hollow men
 We are the stuffed men
 Leaning together
 Headpiece filled with straw. Alas!
 Our dried voices, when
 We whisper together
 Are quiet and meaningless
 As wind in dry glass
 Or rat’s feet over broken glass
 In our dry cellar (T.S. Eliot, “The Hollow Men”

2627).

The intervention of these rhythmic and eloquent verses is that to show the reality of men who seem dwelling into slippery land that indicates the collapse of morality and ethnicity. Besides, the “The Hollow Men” are deluding people in which they have created a world of make-believe which has nothing to do with transparency, for in HOD the African natives have tended or are inclined to worship Kurtz as a God. In fact, these natives have deficiency in consciousness and awareness about their being. Living in that society is indeed like living in the glittering of civilisations as Conrad suggests “We live in the flicker” (18). Actually, the myth of the clash of the civilisations has blown and ruined the African’s minds forever. As an illustration for this, we see that the Africans have agreed on to worship Kurtz at the end. Undoubtedly, every

civilisation influences one another. Therefore, moral dilemmas are unstoppably rising one after another. Conrad, even though he is somewhat proud of Kurtz, he employs Marlow to relate something regarding his eloquence, so Marlow impressively says “And he had written it, too [Kurtz’s report]. I’ve seen it. I’ve read it. It was eloquent, vibrating with eloquence, but too high-strung, I think. Seventeen pages of close reading he had find time for! [as if Marlow has to yell out of surprise saying “by Jove!”]...This was unbounded power of eloquence-of words-of burning noble words”(74-75). Here, Marlow is amazed at Kurtz’s flamboyant writing which has moved him all the time since he has decided to escort and read Kurtz’s life as though Marlow intends to impersonate Kurtz’s persona.

Goodness and badness are generally juxtapositions to each other, and they can be applied on all races. In this controversial study, I mean HOD; there are several figures that may take the place of being good or evil. For instance, the Swedish captain is a person who is far from egocentricity because he leads Marlow out of the centre Station as a way to pointing out to the menace that is lurking among the bushes of the Congo. Being good or evil, is not a matter of appearance, shape, or size, but it is a matter of having a good human psyche irrespective of your race, complexion and surroundings. It is noteworthy that the white people have been described with “black souls” and the black people with “white souls.” This entails that the skin colour is not always the criterion upon which one can judge of whether somebody deserves moral ethics(6).

White Souls vs. Black Souls

Again, what is the criterion that measure whether Marlow and Kurtz are good or wicked? The enigma is that they both have been reshaped and influenced under the effect of colonisation, so the answer cannot be straightforward, and it is certainly ambivalent. Nonetheless, Kurtz at the final scene he seems to be blasphemous and a demoralising man. In other words, Marlow and Kurtz are vicious and the African natives are the only kind-hearted, genuine and really civilised people in Marlow’s viewpoint.

Fanon is significant revolutionary writer and critic of the French colonialism in Algeria. He advocates that Africa resembles goodness not badness, particularly in his book *Black Skin, White Masks*. He is influenced of Jacques Roumain (1907-44), one of Haiti’s most respectable writers. Fanon recalls Roumain’s poem regarding Africa, and the poem reads:

Africa I have kept your memory Africa
 You are inside me [something internalized]

Like the splinter in the wound
 Like a guardian Fetish in the center of the village
 Make me the stone in your sling
 Make my mouth the lips of your wound
 Make my knees the broken pillars of your

abasement (Jacques Roumain, 135).

HOD is as animated image within contradictions that have no definite answers. Incidentally, these contradictions are identical to that of human life because in it (HOD) we are inclined to express and experience our thoughts and views which are changeable, yet we proceed to say something else to the contrary. One of the shining figures in this novella is that Kurtz within his irreconcilable eloquence “burning noble words,” and his criminal postscript “Exterminate all the brutes!” (75) These ambivalent words and deeds undeniably exhibit to us the tortuous foundation of the Western Civilisation which is founded upon since the dawn of civilisations.

In fact, in fiction, in particular, novel and short story there is no straightforwardness, for the artist suggests that readers should strive to approach the dimensions and implications of a work or art; therefore, Conrad exemplifies the nature of originality in a work of fiction and argues “The only legitimate basis of creative work lies in the courageous recognition of all irreconcilable antagonisms that make our life so enigmatic, so burdensome, so fascinating, so dangerous, so full of hope’ (128). What has this got to do with that? In fact, if one intends to study the soaked spirits, so to speak of colonialism within the works of literature, this may happen when ever readers increase their engagement’s level in understanding colonisation. As a matter of fact, transformation makes Kurtz to undergo major and dangerous schizophrenia, so he once grasps all talents of professions, and once loses them all in the instant he says “Exterminate all the brutes!”

Lightness and darkness are a controversial symbolism since literature has prolifically used them. These concepts represent the illumination and gloominess. In fact, this symbolism abounds in the novella to stand for different interpretations and insinuations. However, HOD’s title is symbolic and represents the impenetrable gloom caused by the European colonial rules in Africa. One inquires why “Heart of Darkness”? Suggestively, Conrad points out to the place where the colonial rulers have to be held accountable for their darkness and inconvenience caused against the original inhabitants. Darkness usually embodies the colonialist ends in the world, but Conrad in this novella deepens it to convey the havoc colonialism has just erupted.

This technique has been brought into play since ancient times, so from the Anglo Saxon period (1485), as soon as Beowulf’s raids on the enemies. Beowulf is used to stand for lightness while his enemies represent darkness and evil. Imperialism signifies darkness and its impact on Africa including its brutality, suppression and the use of totalitarianism against original people. The more meditation over the narrative, the image of colonialism will be evident. This indicates the melancholy of these ignorant people who live in a scattered way in Africa as if they are homeless people suffering from poverty, illness and to some extent deification of the other. As an example to this, when one turns to the opening of the novel, the images of “brooding darkness” will strike readers.

Lightness is once and for all used to represent the sheer civilisation which aims at civilising not delegitimising people by using several means of torture. Therefore, the African people are the only civilised and cultured humans, since they only beseech for liberty and justice, but this does not abolish being in contact with other civilisations. Invoking the quoted words of Mahatma Gandhi (1869-1948) in the “Heritage for Development: Challenging the Comfort Zone,” an article in the magazine of *This Week in Palestine* by Dr. Norma Masriyye. Masriyye in her article recalls that Palestine longs for peace and security as other nations of the planet and suggests that this can be fulfilled when there will be a removal of the Israeli occupation from the occupied Palestinian territories. She came to conclude her article via a direct quote of Gandhi’s words, and that is to insure the potential of open Palestine to all nations round the globe. Gandhi was one of the great advocates for freedom and peace in the world, and the spiritual leader of India says, “I don’t want my house to be surrounded by walls from all sides and my windows closed. But I want the culture of all the countries to blow on my house with the utmost freedom possible. I refuse to be stormed by any of these cultures” (27).

Nevertheless, I would suggest that Gandhi’s words resemble Conrad’s spirit in terms of the exploited natives in Africa. Conrad’s terms such as “rebels,” “enemies,” and “criminals.” Such terms are clearly to the contrary of the nature and ethics of the identity of the Africans. Kurtz and the manager are depicted as a symbol for darkness shrouds Africa, especially the Congo. This is unlike the treatment of those Negro slaves who were sold and bought as indicated in the introduction of *Black Bourgeoisie* (1965) by Franklin Frazier in “The Impact of Western Civilization.” Frazier condemns that “The Negro slaves, who represented many different tribal backgrounds, had been captured in Africa

during tribal wars and slave-hunting expeditions. They had been herded into *baracoons* on the coast to await the arrival of slave ships” (11).

III. CONCLUSION

There is a huge discrepancy between humanisation and dehumanisation; the latter is that making somebody lose human qualities such as kindness and compassion. It was clear that the African people have been dehumanised and treated as subhuman or placed in chains that are used round their necks as though they are cattle. Marlow observes when “. . . [he] could see every rib, the joints of their limbs were like knots in a rope; each had an iron collar on his neck and all were connected together with a chain whose bights swung between them, rhythmically clinking...If you asked him for some idea how they looked and behaved, he would get shy and mutter something about “walking on all fours” (31-45).

In this close depiction, it is evident the derelict and inferior way of treating those poor creatures; they as narrated above are “walking on all fours,” so this, in fact, negates and denounces the human’s attributes. This degrading view is indeed a very cruel and biased against the human nature. Colonisers not only take over their land, but also strongly refuse to accept them as humans. Consequently, there are several marks of oppression throughout this novel that are exclusively fallen on certain and explicit figures.

Eventually, Conrad remains original and innovative, especially in the field of literature, for the novelty and attractiveness of his novels and short stories, particularly HOD which is considered among the most philosophical novels of the twentieth century. Boldly, he succeeded in presenting to us the intricate problems and contradictions of the human psyches. Conrad is undoubtedly an audacious artist who believes and endeavours to reassure us that though of the disastrous and rapacious actions of imperialism, there are certainly auspicious solutions in the near future that will avail humanity with a decent life. Conrad knowingly grabs the attention of his readers in terms of the or deals of colonialism. Yet, as long as colonised people have no acquiescence and acceptability for colonisation’s brutality, soon there will be emancipation and redemption by the leading elite in a society. When the oppressed people will be decolonised and regain their freedom and consciousness? The answer reverberates between the preceding lines. There will be areal “Dying Colonialism” as soon as colonised people knock the doors of liberty and justice. Amin Maalouf’s view in the accordance with imperialist’s fanaticism which brings

about destruction to the world, “But I must remind them [who have no love for religion] that the worst calamities of the twentieth century as regard despotism, persecution and annihilation of freedom and human dignity derived not from religious but from quite other kinds of fanaticism. Some, like Stalinism”(44).

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NOTES:

¹ From now onwards *Heart of Darkness* shall be referred to with the initials HOD.

²Conrad’s usages of certain terms is exclusive for him. Thus, his original terms are enclosed in double inverted commas.