

صور التناقض والمقارنة في رواية جوزيف كونراد قلب الظلام

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الاستاذ المساعد في الأدب الانكليزي

كلية السلام الجامعة

**Images of Contradiction and Comparison In Joseph
Conrad's *Heart of Darkness***

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في رواية قلب الظلام يستخدم جوزيف كونراد أسلوب عرض صور التناقض والمقارنة لإظهار الاختلاف بين ادعاء المستوطنين في نقل الحضارة للأفريقيين والوحشية التي يستخدمونها لكبحهم . البحث يبين كيف تعالج الرواية موضوعها من خلال عرض صور التناقض بين إفريقيا البدائية و أوروبا المتحضرة , بين النظام الذي يسود في محطات المستوطنين و التخريب الذي يحدثونه في كل مكان في الكونغو. بين الضوء والظلام , بين اناقة المستخدمين الأوربيين وتشويه الشخصيات الإفريقية , بين فصاحة المستعمرين و غياب التعبير لدى سكان المستعمرة , وكذلك من خلال المقارنة بين حاضر انكلترا وماضيها , كونها دولة استيطانية حاليا ومستوطنة سابقا. وتتضمن هذه التناقضات والمقارنات شجب كونراد لفكرة الاستيطان كعملية تنوير و تظهر ممارساته الشريرة.

Abstract

In *Heart of Darkness*, Joseph Conrad utilizes the technique of presenting the images of contradiction and comparison to reveal the discrepancy between the colonizers' claim of civilizing the Africans and the savagery with which they control them. The research shows how the novel treats its theme through the presentation of the contradictory images of primitive Africa and civilized Europe, of the order in the colonizers' stations and the devastation they inflict everywhere in Congo, of light and darkness, of the elegance of the European employees and the deformity of the native characters, and of the eloquence of the Europeans and the lack of expression of the Africans, as well as through the comparison between Kurtz, the protagonist of the novel, and Marlow its narrator, and between England's past and present, being a colonized and a colonizing country. These contradictions and comparisons imply Conrad's denunciation of colonization as a process of enlightening and betray its atrocious deeds.

Key words: Heart of Darkness, contradiction, comparison, colonization

Heart of Darkness appeared in a book form at a time when the idea of conquering foreign lands was at its peak among the Europeans. King Leopold II, king of Belgium, decided to make Congo a center of introducing civilization to whole Africa. He claimed that his purpose was to civilize the natives and bring progress to the whole continent. Casement's *Report*(1903) about the faulty happenings of the Belgian King helped to start the campaign of public opinion in England in particular and in Europe in general against these atrocities. He says in "The Congo Report" of December 1903: When I visited the three mud huts which serve the purpose of the native hospital, all of them dilapidated ,and 2 with the thatched roofs almost gone, I found 17 sleeping sickness patients, male and female, lying about in the utmost dirt... .Few pages later he comments on the incongruities of the colonial realities: In somewhat striking contrast to the neglected state of these people, I found within a couple of 100 yards of them, the Government workshop of repairing the steamers. Here all was brightness, care, order and activity.¹ The set of values the colonizers claimed they have as messengers of progress and national missions backed the cause of imperialism, providing it with intellectual support and injecting its members with the power to implement the empire's ideology of domination and expansion. Though Marlow, the novel's narrator, in his ruminations on the essence of imperialism in the early pages of the novel, condemns the colonists' brute attitudes towards the people they control, he shows his admiration towards their own idealism: The conquest of the earth, which mostly means the taking of it away from those who have 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 only idea. An idea at the back of it ; not a sentimental pretence but an idea, and unselfish belief in the idea-something you can set up, and bow before, and offer a sacrifice to.² Marlow's contradictory views of condemning imperialism as an act of plunder and domination on one hand and his approval of Europe's illusions of idealism is itself a commentary on the contradiction imperialism carries in its very essence, a contradiction that Conrad deliberately intended in order to give and withhold cogency to his narrator's attestation. The insistence on the word 'idea' in Marlow's above-quoted statement warns the reader of the irony it is burdened with. Hay sees in the 'idea' a sense of religious devotion that it makes an idol and the worshipers, as its slaves.³ It seems that Conrad while working on his novel is quite convinced that the situation of the colonists does not suggest any sign of civilization and progress. In the manuscript of the novel they are described as weary and confused people. In a passage that Conrad dropped from the present version of *Heart of Darkness* Marlow says:They filled the dining room, uniforms and civil clothes, sallow faces and purposeless expressions. I was astonished at their number. An air of bewilderment at finding themselves where they were sat upon all the faces, and in their demeanor they pretended to take themselves seriously just as the greasy and dingy place that was like one of those infamous eating shops you find near the slums of the cities where everything is suspicious, the linen

, the crockery, the food, the owner, the patrons, pretended to be a sign of progress.⁴ The image is suggestive of the contrast between Marlow's concept of faithfulness to the moral idea, the sentimental, pretence, and the false claims of the conquerors. What redeems the conquest of the earth is the inner strength, a belief in justice and loyalty to the moral idea. It is evident then that the claims of the colonists are but pretences, and their posts which are supposed to be centers of civilizations turn to be places of utter abomination and savagery.

Heart of Darkness takes its structure from the very course of contradictions of the Europeans' verbal postures and their debased actions. This discrepancy is made clear through Marlow's commentaries on the incidents of his tale. Marlow's critical reflections on the Roman invasion to Britain through the Thames and the comparison he draws between the Roman conquest and the present European colonization in Congo are but an implicit message to the reader that the novel's narrative technique corresponds to a great extent to the very substance of its subject. Marlow says:

I was thinking of very old times, when the Romans first came here, nineteen hundred years ago-the other day... . Light came out of this river since-you say knights? Yes, but it is like a running blaze on a plain, like a flash of lightning in the clouds. We live in the flicker-may it last as long as the old earth keeps rolling! But darkness was here yesterday... . 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.(Pp.8-10) Marlow compares two historical periods of colonization to suggest that Britain, like Africa, once an obscure, debased, uncivilized, and savage nation was degraded by the Roman invasion. The application of the word "savage" to designate the ancient Britons or the way they must have been looked at by the Roman conquerors is a parallel that, as Jan Mohamet sees it, betrays Conrad's inclination "to dehistoricize Western colonialism."⁵ This ironic implication of the comparison lies largely in Conrad's disapproval of colonization as a process of enlightening, and his *Heart of Darkness* is, as Norman Sherry describes it, "an inquiry into the nature of 'light' and 'darkness' in this context."⁶ The images of inefficiency presented in *Heart of Darkness* suggest the absurdity of the colonial existence in the Congo. In the Company Station Marlow is confronted with extraordinarily striking images of disorder and horror which reflect the meaninglessness of the activities of the colonists and insubstantialities of their claims I came upon a boiler wallowing in the grass, then I found a path leading up the hill. It turned aside for the boulder, and also for an undersized railway truck lying there on its back with its wheels in the air. One was off. The thing looked as dead as the carcass of some animal. I came upon more pieces of decaying machinery, a stack of rusty nails... . Then I nearly fell into a very narrow ravine, almost no more than a scar in the hillside. I discovered that a lot of imported drainage-pipe for the settlement had been tumbled in there. There wasn't one that was not broken. It was a wanton smash-up.(Pp.22-24) More remarkable and appalling to Marlow is his encounter with a group of six natives roped together with a chain. The passage is an outrageous example of the process of dehumanization practiced by the westerners on the tribal people of Africa

They were called criminals, and the outraged law, like the bursting shells, had come to them, an insoluble mystery from the sea. All their meager breasts panted together, the violently dilated nostrils quivered, the eyes stared stonily uphill. They passed me within six inches, without a glance, with that complete, death-like indifference of unhappy savages.(Pp.22-23)

Marlow introduces the "achievement of character"(p.26) of the Company's chief accountant, attracted by his elegant appearance with his neat linen clothes and parted, brushed oiled hair. The reader will easily realize the irony when he compares the accountant's neatness with the chaos evident everywhere in the station:"Everything else in the station was in a muddle."(p.26) The difference between the exaggerated notions of imperialism and the pettiness of its reality is strikingly presented in the narrator's portrayal of the callousness of the empire's employees. He is appalled by the inhumanity of the accountant who "was making correct entries of perfectly correct transactions; and fifty feet below the doorstep I could see the still tree-tops of the grove of death."(p.28) What Marlow thinks of as insincerity of the chief accountant could be interpreted as being implementation of the colonial line thought, the absence of the colonized and their sufferings utterly from the perspective.

The journey Marlow sets up the river of Congo to meet Kurtz, "a universal genius"(p.40) of power and rhetoric, gives the story its form. The deeper he goes into the heart of the colony, the more the imperial atrocities and exploitation he encounters. The white agents are portrayed through a host of images all vibrating the powers of darkness within them:

They beguiled the time by backbiting and intriguing against each other in a foolish kind of way. There was an air of plotting about that station, but nothing came of it, of course. It was as unreal as everything

else-as the philanthropic pretence of the whole concern, as their talk, as their government, as their show of work. The only real feeling was a desire to get appointed to a trading-post where ivory was to be had, so that they could earn percentages. They intrigued and slandered and hated each other only on that account.(p.35)

Their degeneration is represented by the absolute order that the bookkeeper imposed on his surroundings, the brick maker's backbiting and intriguing, the Russian's naive adventures that sustain him in unreality. All their endeavours are proved to be false for they are imposed externally and superficially, and the Europeans themselves lack the inborn strength one has to have in order to meet the destructive chaos of the Congo. They proved to be hallow as Marlow describes them: the accountant is like a hair dresser's dummy, the manager has nothing within him, and the brick maker is a papier-ma'che' Mephistopheles.

Kurtz, the imperial agent that "all Europe contributed to"(P.71) embodies the duality of the empire. His character is figured through the dichotomy of his humanity and his savagery . Marlow's first hears about Kurtz from the Company's accountant: " one day he remarked, without lifting his head , 'in the interior you will no doubt meet Mr. Kurtz'. On my asking who Mr. Kurtz was, he said he was a first-class agent... 'He is a very remarkable collector of ivory that all believe that he will go far, very far... .He will be somebody in the administration before long. They above- the council in Europe, you know-mean him to be' "(p.28).Kurtz came to Africa with grandiose ideals. Marlow talks with admiration of his gift of eloquence specially in reference to the report he wrote to the 'International Society for the Suppression of Savage Customs' which shows Kurtz as a man with principles. In his report, Kurtz argues that the whites "must necessarily appear to them(savages) in the nature of supernatural beings-we approach them with the might of deity."(p.71)Though he came to Africa with a civilizing mission, his morality prompts his brutality, and the 'idea' he came with has gone rotten at the end of his reports "Exterminate all the brutes"(p.72).The civilizing mission turns to be a source of destruction to the African tribal culture. In the name of efficiency and idea, Kurtz proceeds his disreputable methods of detribalization. He uses local tribes to raid the country for ivory. The natives adore him. The skulls hung on the poles in front of his house stand for the lack of restraint over his avarice. By drawing such an apt and powerful image, Conrad ironically defeats the whites' claim of civilizing the African continent. Singling out this example, Michael Thorpe argues:"If he depicts Africa as the familiar conventional symbol of black' savagery' , Conrad points out ironically how thoroughly the civilizers are at home there."⁷ Through the presentation of Kurtz' squalid career in Congo, Conrad presents his perception of the cotemporary European political mind .When a journalist tells Marlow that Kurtz was a " splendid leader of an extreme party", Marlow asks him 'What party?' 'Any party', the other answers: 'He was an-an extremist.' " (p.104)What Kurtz does there represents Europe's endeavor to search for power and wealth which finds its echo in his gratification for ivory. His brutality makes the natives to fear him as they fear a 'god'. Power is the only base for the human relationship: a jungle rule applied by the civilized Europeans as it is applied in the African primitive wilderness. It is Conrad's message to the politicians and economists of his age-a denunciation of their totalitarian policy for the "absence of meaningful belief and the drive for advancement and aggrandizement without larger considerations"⁸

Kurtz is criticized more for the extremity of his unsound methods than the tenor of his manners. Marlow's narration of Kurtz' story portrays him as a man who assumes a larger size than life itself:"You should have heard him say 'My ivory'...' My Intended, my ivory , my station, my river, my-' everything belonged to him... The thing was to know what he belonged to, how many powers claimed him to be their own."(p. 70) His appetite for Ivory and his cannibalistic drive incarnate the imperialist craving for conquering the world : " I saw him open his mouth wide - it gave him a weirdly voracious aspect, as though he had wanted to swallow all the air, all the earth, all the men before him."(Pp.85-86)

The encounter between the Africans and the Europeans is delineated on a dual iconography of the black and the white : a duality long established in the structure of the western mind, in which the white stands for truth and idealism and the black for ignorance and moral baseness. The European's attitude towards Africa is foreshadowed by the way it seemed to Marlow the child:"A black space of delight mystery... a white patch for a boy to dream gloriously over."(p.12) As the reader proceeds through the novel, the color assumes the qualification of other western terms used to describe the Africans, like 'savage' , 'negro', 'nigger', 'abject' and so on. And the imagery in the novel rests on a set of polarizations all evolve around dichotomy of white versus black: light versus darkness, civilization versus savagery, good versus evil , and ultimately all summed up in one cosmic opposition between the European and the native, and this opposition attracts the attention of critics who discuss its implication thoroughly. For Jan Mohamed, it "provides the central feature of the

colonialist cognitive framework and the colonialist literary representation: the Manichean allegory."⁹ And Brantlinger calls it "the common property of racism and authoritarianism which constitute the imperialist political theory."¹⁰ And colonialist fiction adapts this mechanism to transform certain surface realities into metaphysical suppositions. Images of light and darkness are predominant all through the novel. Human beings are depicted through black - white colored figurations: A white woman wore a starched white affair on her head...and a silver-rimmed spectacles hung on the tip of her nose...knitting black wool."(Pp.15-16) They are even figured through colored fragmentations:"then, glancing down, I saw a face near my hand. The black bones reclined at full length...and slowly the eyelids rose and the sunken eyes looked up at me enormous and vacant, a kind of blind, white flicker in the depth of the orbs... . He had tied a bit of white worsted round his neck."(Pp.24-25) Depersonalized, in this way, the Africans take on a representative role: they stand for a culture being exterminated. This delineation of colors extends to the surroundings: white surf and black jungle, white ivory and black wilderness.

If the white, for the European , stands for truth and the black for evil, in *Heart of Darkness* , the white is associated with the imperialists' tremendous desires for gold, ivory, and silver, the implements of dissolution, and Conrad finds the black as highlighting the ultimate truth. In *Heart of Darkness*, the opposition of colour indicates a moral antithesis: Kurtz, the supposedly civilized white agent of wisdom and bearer of illumination is described as " a shadow darker than the shadow of night."(p.105) Imperialism itself is described as the darkness that intruded the peace of the whole earth. Kurtz, its agent, descends into the world of the "inconceivable mystery of a soul that knew no restraint, no faith, and no fear."(Pp.95-96),and is finally defeated by abominable satisfaction. The reversed meaning assumed by the colors of black and white is quite evident in the picture Kurtz portrays for a lady; Marlow describes it as "representing a woman, draped and blindfolded, carrying a lighted torch. The background was somber-almost black. The movement of the woman was stately, and the effect of the torchlight on the face was sinister."(p.36)The portrait speaks of Kurtz' errand in Africa as a light bearer. The words 'stately' and 'sinister' indicate no difference in meaning for they suggest that Kurtz's mission has gone wrong. He becomes a 'god ' among the native worshipers who suffer to death his methods of exterminating them. The background of the portrait is black while the light on the lady's face reveals it as a sinister. Conrad reverses in this image the old established connotation of colors. The blackness of Africa bears the good whereas the European light assumes badness.

The darkness in Africa is not a literal reference to the ignorance of its people rather it is, in terms of the influence on Marlow, of his experience there; the European self-delusion that brought corruption to them. Marlow first becomes interested in Congo through seeing a white patch on a map. Africa was really virginal and , as Peter Nazarette puts it , " a white patch before European colonists got in and he[Marlow] was taught to think of it as dark."¹¹ It is black on the map because Europe has not yet put its colonial prints on it. So the implication of the moral emblems of the world are radically reordered. Black and white, good and evil, civilized and uncivilized are allotted in places other than the ones traditionally known to be theirs. The whiteness of the European comes to denote corruption signified by his craving for ivory..Ivory becomes a trap for the invaders. Their greed ruins them as well as the place they invade:"I am not disclosing any trade secrets...Mr. Kurtz's methods ruined the district."(p.83)Mahood says:"Ivory, a metaphor for whiteness in Europe , proved in Africa to be the pitch that defiled."¹²

Kurtz's story as seen by Norman Sherry and J.M. Stewart among others who depend on the narrator's words "culminating point of my experience"(p.11), is the climatic point of the novel.¹³ But from the low decadence of the prose it seems that the final significance of Marlow's tale comes quite at the end when he returns to Brussels, the capital of the Belgian Empire. The low tempo of the narration suggests the moralizing mode on the brutal actions of imperial Europe. He searched a refuge in the 'sepulchral city' from the inner disturbance they caused him:

I found myself back in the sepulchral city resenting the sight of people hurrying through the streets to filch a little money from each other, to devour their infamous cookery, to gulp their unwholesome beer, to dream their insignificant and silly dreams. They trespassed on my thoughts. They were intruders whose knowledge of life was to me an irritating pretence, because I felt so sure they could not possibly know the things I knew.(p102)

The nature of darkness these scenes emit is not different from that of the darkness he has encountered in Africa. And the opulence that prevails these scenes is set in contrast with the ruthlessness of the previous scenes in Africa, and the description of the luxury in the Intended's house suggests that ,in Goonetilleke's words, "the prosperity in the metropolitan country is based on the inhumanity in the empire."¹⁴

Marlow's relationship and attitude to his tale is an essential part of the novel's thematic process. Conrad, to support his moral integrity, makes him meditate on his moral vision:

You know, I hate, detest, and can't bear a lie, not because I am straighter than the rest of us, but simply because it appeals to me. There is a taint of death, a flavor of morality in lies-which is exactly I want to forget. It makes me miserable and sick, like something rotten would do. Temperament, I suppose.(Pp.38-39)

The comparison between Kurtz and Marlow can be found in different parts of the novel. Against the devilment of Kurtz, Marlow presents a somewhat positive picture of the Africans. He finds nobility in them when he says that their "pure uncomplicated savagery a positive relief, being something that had the right to exist-obviously- in the sunshine."(Pp.83-84) Unlike Kurtz whose 'civilizing' method dehumanizes the natives, Marlow admits so plainly that they are by no means different in humanity:"They howled and leaped and spun, and made horrid faces, but what thrilled you was just the thought of their humanity- like yours- the thought of your remote kinship with this wild and passionate uproar."(p.51) He even attempts to find cultural parallelism. He suggests that in their drums there is "as profound a meaning as the sound of bells in Christian country."(p.29) He is sympathetic with them , he offers biscuits to the man of the grove of death(p.25), and he warns the Africans in order not to be shot by the 'pilgrims'.(p.53) Though he calls the natives 'savages' or 'niggers', it is only because these are the names which are common at that time. He makes many references that emphasize their aloof nature. He describes the 'cannibals' on his steamer as "Fine fellows-cannibals- in their place. They were men one could work with."(Pp.49-50) He considers it a moral behavior on their part not to eat the whites. Moreover, at this moment Marlow realizes that the natives are not different from himself. It is a moment when he feels his weakness and their powerful situation. The point expresses the European habit of what they believe in about the others. This cannibalism is a projection of the other side of the European self. While the whites appear to be a symbol of the abominable, the natives show, as Marlow describes his crew, a sound example of humanity, self-dignity and self-control. They have a code of primitive honor, and inborn strength to fight hunger properly. The crew has imposed self-restraint and have maintained their code amidst the heart of darkness, and their behavior denies any European claim of superiority. The only chasm Marlow finds as unredeemable between his race and that of the blacks is speech. The leader of Marlow's cannibalistic group knows only few pidgin- creole words. They have little English : "catch 'im, eat 'im" (p.58) , or "Mitah Kurtz, he dead."(p.100)The language that draws Marlow to Kurtz is itself an expression of consciousness that the Africans lack. It is, on part of the author, an emphasis on mind rather than on heart, an announcement of the Western tenet of reason.The details of the events of the novel are registered as natural but in a way that the familiar is looked at as if seen for the first time, thus it invites the reader for a readjustment. The colonists and colonial practices are rendered through Marlow's narration as unfamiliar and different. The novel presents imperialism as devoid of its 'traditional morality' of civilizing the whole world and turns its agents who supposed to be the messengers of the European ethics of illuminating the dark corners of the earth into bearers of the germs of transgression. The artistic technique of the novel together with the stylistic vigor of its narrator convinces the reader to mistrust their judgment and disprove their eloquent claims. This is because the potency of art and the style is set in contrast with the inanity of the protagonists' rationality. This contradiction between the evident eloquence with which the colonists' motives are described and the baseness of these motives is quite clear early in the novel:The tidal current runs to and fro in its unceasing service, crowded with memories of men and ships it has borne to the rest of home or to the battles of the sea. It had known and served all the men of whom the nation is proud,...knights all , titled and untitled- the great knights-errant of the sea. It had borne all the ships whose names are like jewels flashing in the night of time...It had known the ships and the men ... Hunters for gold or pursuers of fame, they had all gone out on that stream, bearing the sword and often the torch, messenger of the might within the land, bearers of a spark from the sacred fire. What greatness had not floated on the ebb of that river into the mystery of an unknown earth....The dreams of men, the seed of commonwealth, the germs of empires.(p.7)

The antithesis between the reverence of the motives and their subversion is evidently apparent in the fiction and the speaker's presentation of his remarks is strikingly ironic. The narrator's words carry an implicit warning that beneath the glory there are the seeds of decay, and that under the mute wilderness of the old faraway parts of the world is suppressed the voice of reality. As Marlow proceeds into his journey through the African jungle, the silence of the wilderness is made vibrant of the overwhelming old realities that are invisible to the western 'pilgrims'. The duality of the motives gives the language of the novel ironic tone. Each praise of any evident attribute attached to the imperialistic action carries with it the implication of its

refutation. Commenting on Marlow's attitude toward his story, the first narrator says that "to him the meaning of an episode was not inside like a kernel but outside, enveloping the tale which brought it out only as a glow brings out a haze, in the likeness of one of these misty halos that sometimes are made visible by the spectral illumination of moonshine."(p.8) And three pages later Marlow comments on the significance of his experience of going to the furthest point of navigation:"It seemed somehow to throw a kind of light on everything about me- and into my thoughts. It was somber enough too-and pitiful-not extraordinary in any way-not very clear either- no, not very clear. And yet it seemed to throw a kind of light."(p.11) Brantlinger does not agree with Marlow's audience and with critics who say that the meaning of the story lies in its "misty halos" and "the spectral illumination of moonshine." He believes that illumination is "as false as most white men- as false as white ' civilization', the truth, or at least the meaning of Conrad's story, lies in darkness."¹⁵ It is darkness that constitutes the real significance of the tale. Its protagonist, to whom Marlow is attracted, proves to be a 'shadow', or a hallow man. The meaning of Marlow's yarn depends much on its moral 'uncertainty' which shows the author's idea that the world lacks any possibility of distinction. The darkness of the title of the novel is deliberately chosen to indicate the dislocation of meaning, it is a central part of the thematic scheme of the story. What Brantlinger calls" the problem of rendering any judgment whatsoever-moral, political, metaphysical-about Marlow's narrative"¹⁶ is one of the novel's best features , that is Conrad's sound expression of the disorientation of the political and moral values of the people represented by its protagonists. Both Kurtz and Marlow are subjected to the test: the conflict between the wilderness and their capacity to endure its pressure. Marlow says:"could we handle that dumb thing or would it handle us."(p.38) The journey up the river and through the wilderness of Congo is but a terrifying experience through which one can test himself, in other words, can discover himself. The jungle is described by Marlow as " a rioting invasion of soundless life, a rolling wave of plants, piled up, crested, ready to topple over the creek, to sweep every little man of us out of his little existence ." (p.43) Marlow's is a journey into the unknown and the world of the African jungle is portrayed as a dangerous one:

The reaches open before us and closed behind, as if the forest had stepped leisurely across the water to bar the way to our return. We penetrated deeper and deeper into the heart of darkness. It was very quiet there. At night sometimes the roll of drums behind the curtain of trees would run up the river and remain sustained faintly, as if hovering in the air high over our heads, till the first break of day.(p.50)

The description of the scene emphasizes the isolation and strangeness of the reaches of the river and the oppressiveness of the place and its emptiness of habitation except few isolated villages and factories. Congo is but a stretch of water with a station "clinging to the skirts of the unknown."(p.50)

Marlow attributes Kurtz' failure to his lack of 'inborn strength', the power that backs men when confronting the dark powers(in both senses the physical and the metaphysical) of Africa. Kurtz, a representative of the pilgrims of civilizations, is a hallow man, empty of any moral vision that holds him up. Against the description of the natives, the Europeans are described by Marlow as utterly desperate human beings: I perceived – in a new light, as it were-how unwholesome the pilgrims looked, and I hoped, yes , I positively hoped, that my aspect was not so- what shall I say?-so- unappetizing : a touch of a fantastic variety which fitted well with the dream-sensation that pervaded all my days time.(p.59)

The restraint that Marlow insists that man should have in order to resist his fall means the capacity to be faithful to business and ethical codes. In order to achieve something you have to have a sort of commitment to some order. Self-realization is needed to back man's capacity for things. Kurtz is human, he has something to say, but he doesn't evaluate what it means to be human and he trespasses limits of humanity to be a devil god. Marlow on the other hand, is aware of this. He admires every symbol of restraint. To him the seamanship manual is valuable for it represents the devotion to the ethics of work: an outside control which at the same time suggests the self aspiration to be human. Marlow' praise of work and work ethics leaves us with the impression that he is a man who devotes all his physical and mental powers for the preciousness and perfection of any task he is in charge of. He attacks the Eldorado Exploring Expedition for the lack of high goals:

Their task, however, was the talk of sordid buccaneers: It was reckless without hardihood, greedy without audacity, and cruel without courage; there was not atom of foresight or of serous intention in the whole batch of them, and they did not seem aware that these things are wanted for the work of the world. To tear treasure out of the bowels of the land was their desire, with no more moral purpose at the back of it than there is in burglars breaking into a safe.(Pp.43-44)

Though Marlow attacks the men of his race for their ferocious instincts, he implies in his meditations a reference to the same irrational impulse within himself. He admits his kinship to the same old, wild, atavistic passion: "if you were man enough you would admit to yourself that there was in you just the faintest trace of a response to the terrible frankness of that noise" (p.51); the response to what Savenson calls "the primal unconscious"¹⁷ which Marlow generalizes: "The mind of man is capable of anything- because everything is in it, all the past as well as the future.(52) Conrad, then, wants to make it clear that danger lies not in savagery itself but in the potential for savagery in civilized man when boundaries of rational society are lacking."¹⁸ Like Kurtz, Marlow is drawn to the world of the abomination that Kurtz falls under its spell but unlike him, he is saved by that "same knowledge of yourself-that comes too late." (p.100) His awareness of the futile danger of the nightmare of his choice makes him retreat to his native world of relative values. The wisdom he ends his journey with makes him tell Kurtz' Intended a lie¹⁹. When she asks him about Kurtz' last words, the whole place where they sit persistently whispers "The horror, The horror", but Marlow answers: "Your name ." (pp.110-111) He tells a lie to conceal Kurtz' defiled reputation: a European's allegiance to the European dogma despite his knowledge that he is violating his own morality. Hiding the truth is part of his loyalty to Kurtz and to save the world of bourgeois ladies, the beautiful and the fragile one. The image that Marlow draws of her is that of barbaric queenly mistress, and her world is a romantic one that appeals to the European readers. Like the world of the Intended, the western world is in need of a lie to preserve the reputation of its men who carry out its dirty work of destroying the people and disrupting the culture of the colonies. Kurtz' course of deception and criminality is a sound articulation of Conrad's idea that civilization depends on a combination of lies and forgetfulness to conquer the others' lands.

NOTES

1. Roger Casement, 'The Congo Report' in P. Singleton-Gates and Maurice Girodias (ed.) Roger Casement: The Black Diaries (London: 1968) ,p.98.
2. Joseph Conrad, Heart of Darkness (London: Penguin Popular Classics, 1994), P10. All subsequent references will be to this edition and only page number will be parenthetically cited in the text
3. Eloise Knapp Hay, The Political Novels of Joseph Conrad: A critical Study (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1972), P.136.
4. Janah Raskin, 'Heart of Darkness: The Manuscript Revision' in The English Studies vol.XV111, No.69, Feb. 1967, p.35.
5. Abdul JanMohamed, 'The Economy of Manichean Allegory: The Function of Racial difference in Colonialist literature' in Critical Inquiry 12, Autumn 1985, p.64.
6. Norman Sherry, Conrad's Western world (Cambridge: The University Press, 1971), p.121
7. Michael Thorpe, 'Echoes of Europe (IV): Conrad and Caliban' in Encounter, vol. LXVI, No.3, March 1986, p.47.
8. Frederick R. Karl, 'Introduction to the Danse Macabre : Conrad's Heart of Darkness' in Modern Fiction Studies Vol.XIV, No.2, Summer 1968, p.150. See also N. Hooti and M.A. Mousaabadi, 'Joseph Conrad's Heart of Darkness: A Postcolonial Study', Studies in Literature and Language, Vol,2, 2011, Pp.60-69.
9. JanMohamed, op.cit., p.63.
10. Patrick Brantlinger, 'Heart of Darkness: Anti-imperialism, Racism or Impressionism?' Criticism Vol. 27, No. 4, Fall 1985, p. 374. For more details about accusing Conrad of racism, see M.A. Raja, 'Joseph Conrad', Postcolonial Text, Vol.3, No.4, 2007.
11. Peter Nazarette, 'Out of Darkness: Conrad and Other Third World Writers' Conradiana, 14, 1982, p.117.
12. M.M. Mahood, The Colonial Encounter: A Reading of six Novels, London: Rex Collins, 1977, p.17.
13. Sherry, Conrad's Western World, p.92. See also J.I.M. Stewart, Joseph Conrad, London, 1968, p.77.
14. D. C. R. A. Goonetilleke, Developing Countries in British Fiction, London Macmillan, 1977, p.116.
15. Brantlinger, op cit., p.376.
16. Brantlinger, p.373.
17. John E. Savenson, 'Conrad's view of Primitive people in Lord Jim and Heart of Darkness' in Modern Fiction Studies, Vol.XVI.No.2 Summer 1970, p.179.
18. Gloria L. Young, 'Quest and Discovery : Joseph Conrad's and Carl young's Africa Journeys' in Modern Fiction Studies vol.28, N0.4 Winter 1982-83, p.583.
19. For the effect of the 'lie' on the reader's reaction to Marlow as a narrator, see P.V. Allingham, 'White Lies Sepulchers in Conrad's Heart of Darkness', Victorian Web, Faculty of Education, Lakehead University, Ontario, Dec. 10, 2000.