



Delineation Of “Orientalism” - Post-Colonial Bestowal In Conrad’s Heart Of Darkness

Mr. B.Muthukarthikeyan¹, Mr. Vishwalingam M S², Mrs. R. Suganthi³

¹M.A., M.Phil., PGDCE., (PhD) Assistant Professor of English, P.S.R.R College of Engineering,
Sivakasi.

²M.A., (PhD), Assistant Professor of English,
MEPCO SCHLENK ENGINEERING COLLEGE(AUTONOMOUS),
Sivakasi.

³M.A., M.Phil., Assistant Professor of English, P.S.R.R College of Engineering,
Sivakasi.

APA Citation:

Muthukarthikeyan, B., M S, V., Suganthi, R., (2023). Delineation Of “Orientalism” - Post-Colonial Bestowal In Conrad’s Heart Of
Darkness, *Journal of Language and Linguistic Studies*, 19(4), 44-47; 2023.

Submission Date: 15/09/2023

Acceptance Date: 14/12/2023

Abstract

The purpose of this study is to examine the effects of colonial imperialism on indigenous peoples, who in Post-colonial literature, navigate a problematic terrain between their traditional way of life and the prevailing sociocultural and political system that seeks to subjugate them. From a post-colonial vantage point, it will search out the "sordid realities of a diseased social order" by reevaluating colonial insanity, radicalism, and indigenization. As a result of their oppression and colonisation, indigenous people have had to fight for recognition of their social and cultural identities as well as their national and anti-nativity identities, particularly in the post-colonial period. European exploratory colonisation was a form of imperialism that hit the colonised natives hard on many levels: politically, culturally, socially, and psychologically. The colonisers also sought to erase the natives' cultural heritage and establish a "cultural dominance" state. How the subaltern people are portrayed in literature and how they are exploited by colonial power are both examined in this study. Examining how imperial authority drew ideological and cultural lines between the West and the East through its political exploitation of literature is the primary goal of this article. Looking at Joseph Conrad's Heart of Darkness through the lens of post-colonial research from the 19th century tries to highlight the marginalised and silenced voices.

Moreover, the central focus is on the representation of "Orientals" and "Others" in Conrad's Heart of Darkness within Western colonial discourse. The Western portrayal of Africans in literature is skewed and prejudiced, reflecting the superiority of the "Occident" and the inferiority of the "Orientals" (a term associated with the Western concept of "othering"). This paper seeks to expose this bias and distortion.

Keywords : Imperialism, postcolonialism, Orientalism, Occident, Orient, Othering, and Conrad are some of the keywords we can use.

INTRODUCTION

In looking back at imperialism's past, post-colonial discourse explains how the West wanted colonial lands, how they manipulated indigenous populations, and how they sought political and economic power by exploiting and stifling the colonised. The overarching goal of this survey research is to uncover the novel's role as a cultural and political vehicle for imperial propaganda and the ways in which the novel's protagonist experiences variations in viewpoint throughout Heart of Darkness. Discussing imperialism is like riding a never-ending wave. In this paper, we will examine how the process of colonisation and its effects on the oppressed are mirrored in the work Heart

of Darkness, and how imperialism, defined as "a colonial ideology or attitude about gaining political and monetary dominance formally or informally," and colonisation, defined as "the obscure act of supremacy and disgraceful and inhuman acts," are both present in the modern era of the 21st century. The film also shows how the dehumanisation and savagery of the colonised people, who are seen as "othered" by Westerners, are crucial to the success of colonialism.

Citizens are given a platform to talk about a variety of experiences via the lens of postcolonialism. This field seeks to understand that colonialism and imperialism have left a cultural imprint.

In their 1995:2 ed., Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin state:

We do not mean "post-independence" or "after colonisation" when we say "postcolonialism." To do so would be to claim that colonialism has ended wrongly. The onset of colonial contact is when postcolonialism starts. Discourses of oppositionality are the ones that give rise to

According to post-colonial scholars such as Homi.K.Bhabha in "Post-colonial Criticism" (1992) and Gayatri Spivak, Said's "Orientalism inaugurated the Post-colonial field." Many consider Said's "Orientalism" the seminal work in the Post-colonial canon.

The term "Orientalism" refers to a Western approach that draws on Oriental knowledge, particularly that of the 19th century, to "Orientalize" the Orient. One definition of the term "Orient" is "a set of recurring images and a practice by colonialism and imperialism." The study of the Orient and the study of Europeans' interactions with it constitute orientalism. To be more precise, "Orientalism" refers to the West's efforts to "convince the natives of their inferiority" by bringing civilization and legitimacy to the Orient. He shows in his work how the Western canon of literature and culture has distorted the East and othered its own people. The "Orient" is portrayed by Said as the "Other" in contrast to the "Occident," according to his arguments. According to Said (1978:3), the West sees the "Orient" as "a sort of surrogate and even underground self," which allows it to solidify its own identity and supremacy.

Orientalism is a way of looking at the world where one side represents the privileged self and the other side represents the oppressed, mute, and powerless other. Using Said's "Orientalism" as a lens, this article provides a thorough exposition of the Westerners, or Occident, and the Easterners, or represent/Orient. Colonialists dehumanise indigenous people through the practice of "othering," in which they view the colonised as "not fully humans." A person who practices othering sees themselves as truly human while viewing others as less so. The colonisers represented them as the "Proper Self," whereas the colonised were called "inferior / savage" by them. While the latter saw "savage" as "Primitive beauty or nobility," the former saw it as demeaning and beneath them.

In this study, we examine Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* through a post-colonial lens, focusing on the oppression of the dominant colonial settlers' hegemonic social order as a result of post-colonial legacy, in contrast to the imperialistic discourses of Rudyard Kipling and Conrad, which portray the West as the ultimate power that controls, constructs, and manipulates the Orient. As a result of political readings of literature, misunderstandings about the 'real' West and East have developed, creating of artificial cultural and ideological divides. These questions, central to many post-colonial studies, assess the harsh interaction between Europeans and indigenous peoples.

Heart of Darkness is Conrad's way of revealing the inhumane goal of colonialism—the theft of native resources. Conversely, he portrays the colonisers' anguish as a result of being in an unfamiliar and unpleasant place where they were subjected to and endured terrible treatment. Beyond its original goals, colonialism, in Conrad's view, can only bring "the horror! the coloniser and the colonised are both made victims. The level of hardships endured by the oppressor and afflicted may have been different. Unfortunately, both parties do end up hurting. Actually, from Conrad's point of view, the terrible effects of colonialism are felt by all parties involved; both the coloniser and the colonised ultimately perish. In *Heart of Darkness*, Conrad raises questions regarding colonisation by revealing both the oppressors and the downtrodden as victims of it. Colonialism in Europe is pointless, according to Marlowe. Makes the case that:

"The whole point of what Kurtz and Marlow talk about is infact imperial mastery, white Europeans over black Africans, and their ivory, civilization over the primitive dark continent"

In Conrad's view, the White settlers become apathetic and feeble due to colonisation. They become inflated with the vanity of being White in a conquered and uncivilised land, and their intolerable hypocrisy in masking their selfish ambitions is further reinforced. The colonisers' inherent hatred and evil tendencies are magnified throughout colonisation.

Greed is another way in which colonisation can unleash its savage side on the coloniser. The Whites' inhumane behaviour and horrific crimes were driven by their greed, which was symbolised by their exploitation of the natives' resources. Marlow witnesses the brutal reality of colonisation: physically exhausted labourers in appalling conditions, colleagues scheming for maximum profit and glory, and a colonised population being violently restrained. To make a profit, the corporation seems to be acting like a steamroller ripping through the jungle, crushing everything and everything that gets in its way. Based on what Booker says:

"The savage treatment of numerous Africans by their European masters is one of many European actions that Charlie Marlow, played by Conrad, openly criticises in Africa."

In Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*, there is a scene called Grove of Death. In this scene, natives of the Congo lie sick and exhausted under a canopy of trees, hidden from view by the grove's darkness. The protagonist, Marlow, learns of this only as he walks under the grove; he then informs the reader about it. The imagery of the Congo is symbolic of what is happening today in impoverished nations as large corporations exploit their natural resources and the vulnerable population. These corporations force their workers to work in hazardous conditions for pitiful wages.

The narrative structure of Conrad's work permits two forms of analysis. Firstly, it enables imperialism to present a world to Europeans. As they abandon their former colonies, they hold on to them as markets and as a geographical location that they still ethically and psychologically control.

One of the most powerful scenes in the book occurs when Conrad describes the construction workers constructing the railway line from Matadi, and it is accompanied by Marlow's innocent joy at seeing the "vast amount of red" on the Company's map, which represents British territory. The most harrowing experience, though, was seeing the brutality and injustice inflicted upon the indigenous Africans.

A slight shudder of the soil beneath my feet accompanied the explosion of another mine on the cliff. The work continued, and this was the spot where some of the workers had taken refuge to die. It was evident that they were dying slowly. Black figures crouched, lay, sat, leant against the trunks, clung to the earth, and exhibited all the expressions associated with pain, abandonment, and despair.

Conrad exposed moral bankruptcy of imperialism. If we look at the characters, Unlike Kurtz, Marlow symbolises a man who travelled to Africa to help the uncivilised and he did not change when he arrived there. He can see through the materialistic ideals that people are fascinated with. Marlow has the tolerance and the sensitivity but does not have the power or courage to stop the exploitation. Marlow proved that man's evil side is terrifying. Kurtz is an imperialist, who reommends bringing enlightenment and improvement to Africa; In *Heart of Darkness*, the colonial agent is Mr. Kurtz. When he first came he was "a first-class agent", "a very remarkable person", but when he reached the country his greed motivated him to go after power and wealth. Kutz himself is aware of the two dif

As the Westerner, a "emissary of light" tasked with orienting and "weaning those ignorant millions from their horrid ways," Marlow's aunt is proud of her role in sending Marlow to Africa as a "worker" and representative of the West.

Ironically, the Europeans and other Occidental people have established themselves in the Congo as a guiding light and saviour, but instead of helping the locals, they have resorted to repressing, oppressing, and demeaning them because of their Asian heritage.

The events unfolding in Africa and the lives of the indigenous people who were subjugated by European colonisation were depicted in *Heart of Darkness*. The Europeans, who belonged to the Occident, asserted that they had come to Africa for enlightenment and civilization, based on their belief that the Africans, who were part of the Orient, were "the Other," a primitive and aimless people.

"Their glistening white eyes were visible from a distance. They yelled and sang, and their bodies were drenched in sweat."

Reading between the lines reveals that the main goal was to acquire wealth and land. What's more, Conrad *Heart of Darkness* details the terrible living conditions endured by native Africans, who endured diseases, starvation, racial discrimination, and the cruel treatment of both the colonisers and the colonised, who were enslaved and used as tools in the system of slavery.

"Now they were nothing more than ethereal forms, lost in the verdant darkness, cast by the spectres of illness and famine."

In conclusion, *Heart of Darkness* establishes a binary opposition between the colonisers and the colonised, with the West portrayed as the "Self" and the "Other" respectively. The central process of "othering" is central to the novel. Despite Achebe's accusations of racism against Conrad, the author views colonialism as no different from a robbery or murder. In other words, he denounces the evils of colonial exploitation and cultural dominance. *Heart of Darkness* differs from traditional Victorian novels in that it leads readers to think realistically and reflects the truth of colonialism imposed by England in Africa. As a result, the post-colonial analysis of the novel sheds light on the pain and suffering endured by Africans due to European colonisation. Typically, the novel centres on the moral conflicts that

It is arguable that *Heart of Darkness* exemplifies the brutal relationship between the Self/Occident/Europeans and the Other/Occident/natives and thus reflects the world as it was in the nineteenth century: that is, that Europeans, or the Occident, see Africans as the Other, as too primitive and immature to be colonised.

After colonialism ended, postcolonialism emerged. However, even in independent nations like India, Africa, and Canada, the psychological effects of colonialism live on, shaping ideas like neocolonialism, resistance, subversion, reconstruction, search for identity, alienation, diaspora problems, and national identity. Postcolonialism isn't just about rescuing post-worlds; it's about discovering how we can all get beyond this era together, towards an era of mutual respect.

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