The Conflicting Political Ideologies in "Heart of Darkness"

Marian Sebastian Lupu[1]

Abstract: The present academic research undertakes to evince the political ideologies which reside at the narrative level of the novella under discussion. The political ideologies share a common feature which is conflict. "Heart of darkness," a short story written by Joseph Conrad, is structured inasmuch as to illustrate the effects of the political tensions from the individual to the entire humanity. The narrative evinces the imperial enterprise set in action in the Belgian Congo colony at the end of the 19th century, a period characterized by an insatiate race for colonial acquisitions which was ensued between great imperial powers of Europe, Asia, and North America. Moreover, the central character functions as a symbol of the shattered individual between two distinct worlds, a viewpoint which illuminates him on the actual truth behind the humanitarian ideals defended by great powers of Europe, Belgium in the present case. In short, the novella contains two kinds of conflict: the conflict at the level of the individual who is caught between the civilized European world and the native, and the conflict radiating from political interests where humanitarian ideals serve to justify the actual imperial enterprise which is based on exploitation similar to the mechanisms employed by the capitalist system.

Keywords: conflict; ideology; politics; imperialism; capitalism

1. Introduction

Conflict is a keyword in the scientific investigation of politics in general. In "Heart of Darkness," Marlow experiences a cultural conflict in his struggles to achieve meaning in an oppressive realm. Moreover, he witnesses the noxious effects in the Belgian colony of Africa enacted by agents of imperialism. Conflict is an inherent feature of ideology: without the former, the latter becomes extinct.

---

[1] PhD in progress, Alexandru Ioan Cuza University, Romania, Address:11 Carol I Blvd, Iasi 700506, Romania, Tel.:+40 (232) 201000, Fax:+40 (232) 201201, Corresponding author: lupumariansebastian@yahoo.com.

One cannot regard politics without the concept of *ideology* in mind. Ideology, according to James Decker, is the set of mental parameters, inherited from the ancestors, which guides one's life, convictions, decisions, knowledge or even thinking. It may be acquired consciously or unconsciously. It may be subjective, social or institutional (2004, 3, pp. 6-7). Eagleton proposes ideology as the force which engages human history itself to the path of evolution (1991, p. 1). We can agree then, that ideology incorporates politics which, in its turn, is a human social relationship whose purpose is the distribution of material interests among the members of the community. In its attempt to share the material interests, politics is based on a set of ideas, norms which defines the political agenda.

As such, Decker notes, political ideology, in the present case, aims to adjust reality to the particular political agenda (5). In the process, there issues a binary opposition between what it is and what is meant to be, and, as Hawkes signals, falsity appears due to representation (2003, 8). In other words, representation is the political undertaking to adjust reality according to ideal coordinates or to attach to social reality an ideal status. Decker compares the opposition between the real and the ideal to Bakhtin's *Dialogics* to highlight that politics, like ideology, is the source of human perverted demeanor as it impresses upon the individual false ideas to stand for when faced with truth. (p. 4). Political ideology, we may agree, makes use of linguistic power to express lofty ideals in opposition with the actual historical circumstances. (4). Kurtz is the monolithic example in this situation who possesses nothing more than linguistic grandiloquence to subdue potential contradictory political visions, either by agreement or murder.

Why does politics resort to deceive the community? Niccolò Machiavelli believed that the masses are skeptical about innovation as their mentality is flooded with traditional values. In order for a society to evolve, the political figures have to deceive the community into believing that tradition should remain unharmed (Hawkes, pp. 30-1). Eagleton considers that politicians deceive to justify their deeds or to manipulate the masses into believing to be right what is wrong (28). By advancing Eagleton's idea we can extrapolate that politics is nothing more than getting access to power even under the guise of lies.

What we can agree on presently, is that politics is based on conflict for it aims to eliminate the gap between idea and reality through representation. Furthermore, it presents a certain ideology which, as Machiavelli realized, is in a conflicting relation with the norm or tradition of a certain society, and aims to achieve power. One should consider that each ideology, political in our case, cannot appear out of

thin air: it must rely on previous ideas to overthrow the actual political ideas, either peacefully or by force and violence.

2.   The Conflicting Political Ideologies

As I have specified earlier, the focus falls upon the political stances recurrent in Conrad's works under discussion. In his analysis of "Heart of Darkness" (1899), Steve Smith considers it a "*political gesture*" for it attempts to expose the colonial enterprise in Africa (Tallack, 1987, p. 185). The novella, as simple as it may be to narrate, struggles to render universal meanings as the central character "*sat cross-legged right aft, leaning against the mizzen-mast. He had sunken cheeks, a yellow complexion, a straight back, an ascetic aspect, and, with his arms dropped, the palms of hands outwards, resembled an idol.*" (*HD*, 6). An unnamed narrator clarifies later that the protagonist is in "*the pose of a Buddha*" (10). It is about Marlow, a seaman who ventures to the African lands to realize that what he has been set to believe is in conflict with the actual reality. In the meantime, he experiences confusion, delusion, and contempt for humanity.

Richard Adams underlines the significance of the title as a paradox since the vitality of the *heart* is connected to a negative element, *darkness,* which can be associated with death: it also hints to tension, conflict. (1991, pp. 1-3). In his journey to the Inner Station, Marlow is not aware what he experiences and feels like part of a dream, a trance like meditation which discloses the gap between appearance and reality. At a certain point in the novella, Marlow confuses his heart beats with drum beats coming from the natives. Marlow gains an insight into the dark realm of humanity.

It is obvious that Conrad seeks to explore the uncharted human realm as Marlow himself feels attracted to maps (*HD*, 11-2). As the narrator describes the surroundings of their location in impressionistic manner, Marlow interrupts him to state: "*And this also, has been one of the dark places of the earth.*" (7). He has in mind the Roman conquest of Britain, nineteen centuries earlier, when he delivers his moral story to the crew aboard *Nellie*. He actually predicts the main narrative for the Roman settlers experienced starvation, disease, abomination, death, and complete lack of comprehension of the natives (9). Marlow himself experiences what the Roman settlers have faced when he reaches the African lands. Indirectly, Marlow displays his philosophical standpoint concerning the circular movement of history which is similar to Mircea Eliade's perspective. Eliade agrees with the

Hegelian philosophy concerning circularity that it is designed to express the cosmic movement, the ideal motion of the elements of nature and universe (1954, 90). He advances the concept of the *Lunar Myth* to define the cosmic motion of the cycle principle where chaos is in a binary opposition with creation and order ad infinitum (1954, 88). Conrad acknowledged that the true vision upon the evolution of time is not that which proposes evolution but circularity.

When it comes to Conrad's vision of politics, the cyclical principle opposes the triviality of humanity's attempt to change the world through conflicting political ideologies. Marlow, like Kurtz, is an agent of imperialism, "*one of the workers, with a capital…like a emissary of light, something like a lower sort of apostle.*" [*sic*] (*HD*, 18). He descends to Congo as an English with imperialist mentality in the Belgian imperial enterprise. When Marlow discloses his passion for maps he envisions the unexplored realms as lands of romantic settings. As he reaches the African lands, Marlow thinks he explores "*a God-forsaken wilderness*" (19). At this particular stage, Marlow surfaces one of the first tensions that he experiences between the ideal world which the imperialists aimed to achieve and the cruelties of the imperialist enterprise. Edward Said in *Culture and Imperialism* defines imperialism as "*the practice, the theory and the attitudes of a dominating metropolitan center ruling a distant territory*" whereas colonialism as "*the implanting of settlements on distant territory.*" (1994, p. 9). London, like Brussels, attempts to achieve power in distant lands for material gains: in their attempt they have to justify the enterprise.

How did the European imperial powers justify their deeds? Abdul R. JanMohamed's "The Economy of Manichean Allegory: The Function of Racial Difference" (1985) suggests that the colonizer identifies with the European culture or the *self*, whereas the natives are perceived as incomprehensible or the *Other*. To understand each other, one dimension of the two has to negate one's own culture or the self. JanMohamed suggests that the export of culture from Europe to the colonies resembled a process of fabricating identity, be it natural, artificial or mixed. The natives, by adopting the imperialist culture and mentality, functioned as reflectors of the European cultural settings, and became alienated since their natural self was suppressed (Ashcroft et al., 1995, pp. 18-9). Marlow tackles the problem of fabricating identity in scenes as the one where six shackled natives who carry baskets of earth on their head at the Company Station are called *criminals* for the simple fact that they do not obey the law of the colonizer (*HD*, 22). Marlow himself agrees that the helmsman on the ship towards Kurtz's station "*was useful*

because he had been instructed" (53). Conrad deals with what JanMohamed notices in the imperialist a desire to seek recognition and superiority before the natives as the reenactment of the myth of narcissus (20). In exposing superiority and grandeur over the native, the imperialist *fetishizes* the *Other* by asserting natural inclination to evil, inferiority (20-1). JanMohamed writes: "*If every desire is at base a desire to impose oneself on another and to be recognized by the Other, then the colonial situation provides an ideal context for the fulfillment of that fundamental drive.*" (20). Similar convictions are present in Panikkar's *Asia and Western Dominance* who informs that the British displayed great pomp, luxury, and exquisite ceremonies before the natives of India in the belief of impressing them into admiration and increasing prestige (1993, pp. 117-8). Marlow, the imperial agent, renders the African Congo colony and its inhabitants as any regular imperialist: he cannot make any difference among the natives, renders the imperial work worthless, confusion is disseminated in the air, and the sense of imminent death permeates on each and every individual. He treats the helmsman with irony for the native resembles "*a dog in a parody of breeches and a feather hat, walking on his hind legs.*" (52).

JanMohamed describes the imperialist's attempt to reenact the narcissus myth and the negative fetishizing as what he denominates the *Manichean Allegory*, the binary opposition between the superior, scientific, and good European imperial agent and the inferior, evil native. When the native is presented as the embodiment of evil, the flaws acquire universal meaning, and the imperial enterprise is set to interfere endlessly in the affairs of the *Other* (22). Jan Mohamed's observation is paralleled in Marlow's recollection of the Roman colonial mission in Britain: he makes use of this particular historical event to highlight the European imperial enterprise as a continuation of "*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 ...*" (10).

The unnamed narrator recalls the early wave of British imperialists as the "*bearers of a spark from the sacred fire*" but also "*bearing the sword.*" (7). The scene is a direct parallel to the times matching the first phase of British colonialism up to 1783 when loot and plunder prevailed over the acquisition of territories in the New World. The narrator mentions about Francis Drake or John Franklin, historical figures who performed atrocities in the newly discovered realms under the guise of cultural enlightenment and humanitarian principles. Drake was a pirate who would bring ordeal in the territories he reached. *Erebus* and *Terror* were the names of

John Franklin's expeditionary ships which were lost in the Arctic Ocean in an attempt to direct a new trade route to India via North America. Adams resembles the respective ships to the "*horrors of hell*" (1991, p. 11). Whereas Britain was getting richer the atrocities toward the natives were increasing In other words, Britain's bounty was based upon ordeal in the New World (11). At the Central Station Marlow notes: "*The word "ivory" rang in the air, was whispered, was sighed. You would think they were praying to it*." (33). The Belgian enterprise in Congo was set in action by ivory trade under the pretense of civilizing the natives. Belgium followed the same policy as the British Empire in its first phase of colonialism: loot and destruction for a bundle of ivory. Therefore, in the first phase of the British Empire, as well as the 19th century Belgian imperialism, the politics of violence was instilled over linguistic eloquence.

Imperialism aimed at subduing the natives by taking advantage of scientific and cultural development, and professed authority and dominion over the world only for markets and eventual profit (Morris, 1998, 99). Armitage in *The Ideological Origins of the British Empire* evinces that the British Empire, in the second phase, resided on the paradox of dominion in the colonies while promoting worldwide liberty (2004, 11-2). The British agents in the colonies, at least in the first phase of the Empire, were unaware they were acting imperialist politics: they thought in terms of welfare for the nation. (16). It is implied that instincts as the need to dominate predate reason. Armitage goes further to state that the imperial enterprise, in its process of domination, at least in the second phase, resides upon the *language of power* (29). What Armitage aims to illustrate is that the imperial powers exploit the colonies, and justify their enterprise through linguistic eloquence. We can agree that, throughout the ages, imperialism has evolved from a violent enterprise to one where linguistic power is used to deceive the public eye, and divert it from the destruction and exploitation of the colonies.

Linguistic eloquence defines Kurtz who bears no other quality. Marlow refers to him as a voice, not as a person: he imagines the illuminating power of words in Kurtz's speeches although they have not met yet. Kurtz is the imperial prophet who deceives the world with illusions. Morris displays the mentality of ardent imperialists such as Charles Gordon, the *archetypal Christian soldier* (24), Arnold Wilson or Cecil Rhodes who perceived the imperial enterprise as their religion (26). Arnold Wilson, a true worshipper of the imperial mission, believed he was a member of the "*acolytes of a cult – Pax Britannica – for which we worked happily and, if need be, died gladly. We read our Bibles, many of us…*" (27). Kurtz has

been an *acolyte* of the European imperial ideals for "*All Europe contributed to the making of Kurtz*" (*HD*, 71). As a European, Kurtz is a Christian who, blinded by the illusions of the colonial politics, has become a crusader of enlightenment: he makes use of his eloquence to gain worshippers for the Pax Britannica cult, as Wilson stated. His bible is the report for the *International Society for the Suppression of Savage Customs* which promotes the idea of divinity of the white man before the natives. It ends in the famous quote which sums up the entire report: "*Exterminate all the brutes.*" (72). The report parallels the first phase of the British imperial enterprise exposed by the unnamed narrator at the beginning of the novella. Kurtz, full of illusions but "*hollow at the core*" (83), is easily trapped by wilderness; Marlow believes that wilderness "*whispered to him* [Kurtz] *things about himself which he did not know... and the whisper had proved irresistibly fascinating.*" (83).

What has wilderness revealed to Kurtz? Before giving an answer, one has to analyze Kurtz's demeanour at his station. The harlequin praises Kurtz as a true master of the words for "*You don't talk with that man – you listen to him.*" (76). Kurtz, we may argue, behaves like an autocrat who accepts no alternative. As he mentions in the report, he sees himself as a god worshipped by the natives. Kurtz, as an autocrat, and made in the image of a god, parallels Mr de P— in *Under Western Eyes* for the latter believes that "*the thought of liberty has never existed in the Act of the Creator […] God was the Autocrat of the Universe...*" (*UWE*, 1989, p. 59). From this standpoint, we can perceive what Kurtz stands for: in order to successfully instill world imperialism, one has to be an autocrat whose subjects revere their leader as a god. I shall quote what Morris understands by the imperialist's final mission for a better comprehension of what I intend to portray:

"*They would so distribute across the earth their own methods, principles, and liberal traditions that the future of mankind would be reshaped. Justice would be established, miseries relieved, ignorant savages enlightened, all by the agency of British power and money.*" (26).

In order to bring world peace, justice, and happiness, as God Himself prophesies in the Bible, Kurtz, the symbol of the ardent Imperialist, has to resort to world chaos and eventual death for the opponents of the system. The imperial ideology admits no alternative for it blindly believes in the divine mission to make the world better, no matter the costs.

Adams denounces Kurtz as the embodiment of duplicity (93) for he speaks grandiloquently but performs ordeal among the natives, everything for a pile of ivory. Kurtz threatens to kill the harlequin, one of the worshippers, for a pile of ivory which the Russian received from a native. (80-1). Kurtz's parsimony surfaces the rapacity of the imperial powers for land acquisition between the 1880's to WWI (Arendt, 1958, p. 123). The harlequin discloses that Kurtz does not fear the natives for he walks alone among them in the jungle (80). Morris states exactly the same thing but about another man, Cecil Rhodes. (93-4). Rhodes was one of the most ardent imperialists at the turn of the century, and envisioned expansion as the crucial movement of humanity towards progress. He created his own country in South Africa, Rhodesia, for the sole purpose of diamond mines. Peter Edgerly Firchow brings a very interesting piece of information in that Kurtz's overtaking of the native villages for ivory and submission was a tactic used by the Tippo Tib Arab faction located at Stanley Falls, the alleged Inner Station's resting place in Heart of Darkness (Bloom, 2009, p. 36).

Kurtz, like Rhodes, has undergone what Frances Singh in "The Colonialistic Bias of *Heart of Darkness*" (1978) calls the process *of tribalization* (Watt, 2004, p. 90) which is the replacement of the western knowledge with the primitive life of Africa due to his exposure to such conditions. Their *tribalization* is evident for both understand the primitive mind, and can exploit these lands as divine individuals in the eyes of the natives. Kurtz, the individual who has undergone tribalization, is seen by Marlow wearing ritualistic garments: "*It had horns – antelope horns, I think – on its head.*" (94). Still, Singh's *tribalization* is not complete in Kurtz for Marlow spots an inner conflict: "*I saw the inconceivable mystery of a soul that knew no restraint, no faith, and no fear, yet struggling blindly with itself.*" (95-6).

Kurtz is nothing more but a *shadow* (*HD*, 94) wandering between two worlds: Marlow's confusion is fueled by the same conflicting situation of residing at the borderline between the primitive and modern societies. Kurtz, as *tribalized* as he may be, has not found the truth: Marlow struggles to grasp it. Marlow's identification of the inner conflict in Kurtz is self-identification. When Marlow engages to steer the ship towards the inner station he experiences dream like sensations and insecurity: he perceives the arrows of the attacking tribe as little sticks, and acknowledges the helmsman's death only after his feet are soaking wet with the dead body's blood. Kurtz and Marlow are in the conflicting position of denial or suppression between the self and the *Other* described by Kaplan in "Colonizers, Cannibals, and the Horror of Good Intentions in Joseph Conrad's

Heart of Darkness." She points out that "Heart of Darkness" annihilates the imperial ideology's established barrier between the primitive and the civilized: as such, the binary opposition is transformed into a unifying vision of humanity degraded, morbid, rapacious and morally corrupt. By making reference to the *Manichean Allegory* Kaplan alludes to the fact that the European colonists in Heart of Darkness face the unconscious side which resides in themselves unawares. In other words, when the ground is supportive, humanity returns to its roots regardless of the morality impressed by a supposed elevating culture. Moreover, the flaws the imperialists display upon the natives are identified to reside within themselves when exposed to exotic lands and in the absence of European norms of conduct. (Bloom, 2003, pp. 67-9). It is only towards the end of the novella that both imperialists realize the everlasting truth about the duplicity of imperialism when the famous line is uttered: *"The Horror! The Horror!"* (*HD*, 100). In other words, the Belgian loot and destruction in the Congo colony under imperialist designs is only a glimpse in the darkness of human history, a continuation of the never ending cycle of human greed, rapacity, wickedness, and destruction.

Steve Smith develops the problem of the conflicting situation about residing at the borderline between two worlds as he portrays the existence of Marlow's cultural patterns of a traditional seaman in opposition with the New Imperialism promoted by Kurtz. (1987, pp. 189-90) The narrator mentions Marlow as a man who still *"followed the sea."* (7). Marlow's world is that embedded in "Youth" (1898) where adventure and illusion go hand in hand. It is also a world of solidarity, trust, order, and romantic exploration of the seas where pecuniary issues are not prevalent. On the contrary, the New Imperialism promoted profit and destruction over romantic adventure and communion with the sea.

The conflict resulting from the clash of the two worlds triggers what Mark Wollaeger calls the *psychology of skepticism* in Marlow (Bloom, 2009, p. 62). Wollaeger believes that Marlow reaches this mental status when the lofty aura of morality assigned to Kurtz has been stripped off. Marlow has seen in Kurtz a voice of morality in agreement with the humanitarian ideals promoted by imperialism. When Kurtz proves the other way round Marlow experiences alienation and his moral support becomes evanescent.

Let us see what Marlow witnesses in the Belgian colony in terms of political economics. The protagonist himself admits he is an agent of imperialism with a *capital*. Arendt professes that the New Imperialism relied upon the export of capital in the colonies. As there was no more room left for the expansion of

domestic markets, the investments were made in the colonies abroad. Given the fact that labour was needed, the new wave of colonizers was collected from the bourgeoisie or the unfortunates at home. The political power, whose warrant was the nation state, protected the money invested in the colonies, as well as the labour force (1958, pp. 135-6). Marlow encounters the Belgian exported capital in Congo when he describes the rotten pieces of machinery at the Company Station. Said perceives "Heart of Darkness" as a panorama of the imperial machine set in action. Marlow delivers his narrative to a band of businessmen to express that what was once an individual enterprise for wealth and social recognition, imperialism has turned into a worldwide money making machine. Marlow is caught between two worlds just as Conrad was: a Polish expatriate serving under the British Empire. As such, Marlow realizes he is nothing more than a piece in the greater scheme of the imperialist machine and can do nothing to stop it. (1994, pp. 22-5).

The whole imperial enterprise in the Congo colony portrayed in "Heart of Darkness" is a glimpse into the Belgian attempt under Leopold II (1865 – 1909) to extract as much ivory as possible. It is directed by the imperial capitalist system in Brussels, whose headquarters is in the Company building (*HD*, 16). Its "tentacles" reach the isolated Company Station, the Central Station, and the Inner Station. Marlow acknowledges them as trading places "*where the merry dance of death and trade goes on in a still and earthy atmosphere as of an overheated catacomb*" (20). The image of death is overwhelming as the imperialists do not trade but murder the natives for loot and profit.

The idea of trade may be put forth to hide the actual meaning of trade: it is designed to yield profit for the exploiters. Kurtz's means employed toward highly lucrative trade are those exposed in his last line of the report. Whatever hindrance, it must be eliminated. The General Manager admits that Kurtz yields most of the ivory but he employs destructive means. He resembles Kurtz in many ways for both are hollow on the inside: when they open their mouths darkness is revealed. Whereas the Manager's smile looks as "*a door opening into a darkness he had in his keeping*" (31), Kurtz's open mouth seems "*as though he had wanted to swallow all the air, all the earth, all the men before him.*" (85-6). They profess death: the former plots with his uncle the extermination of Kurtz, whereas the latter exterminates all the natives who reject his vision. The Accountant is obsessed with his entries, and hates anyone who disturbs him from his work. He illustrates the struggle between the empires for each and every patch of land as a potential colonial trade market.

Cedric Watts identifies that the covert plot in "Heart of Darkness" is the General Manager's deliberate delay to provide the rivets so that Marlow's ship may not be repaired in time to save Kurtz's life. When Marlow arrives Kurtz is already in a precarious physical state. Watts states that the hidden plot is made so by the non-chronological presentation of events which creates the impression of confusion, irrational atmosphere. (Bloom, 2009, 59 - 60). The brick maker's role is to supply the General Manager with information about Kurtz, and to plot the extermination of the successful agent; the opposition between the meaning of his profession and his actual role suggests plot, cheating. This trinity of evil, the Manager, his uncle, and the brick maker, plot against Kurtz out of fear that the chief of the Inner Station may assume leadership of all the stations in Congo. (44-6).

They worship material interests, and Marlow states: "*I've seen the devil of violence, and the devil of greed, and the devil of hot desire*" (23). Kurtz embodies all the devils as he is eager for recognition back in Europe, rapacious when it comes to ivory, and violent toward the natives. He is both a god for the natives but also a zealot of the trinity of devils above mentioned. It is very obvious that these perverted agents of imperialism have sold their souls to the devil and relinquished the alleged humanitarian cause.

Throughout the novella we are invaded with denominations of professions not names. They serve as reflectors of the economic stance of imperialism: "*I came upon more pieces of decaying machinery, a stack of rusty rails.*" (22). With the advent of capitalism, due to the industrial revolution, humanity is able to exploit the entire world mercilessly. As the tools of capitalism rot so does humanity in giving up morality for material gains. At the Company Station Marlow witnesses an event when "*A heavy and dull detonation shook the ground, a puff of smoke came out of the cliff, and that was all.*" (22).

The passage highlights the absurdity of all the enterprise in the primitive environment. All the three stations resemble chaos, confusion destruction, and worship of false gods. Kurtz is revered for what he does: he performs primitive rituals, walks alone in the jungle, and beheads native enemies. The most brutal scene in the novella, I assume, is when Marlow finally realizes that the round objects on top of six poles fending the Inner Station are nothing more than impaled heads (82-3). Kurtz may be perceived as a fallen angel in the God forsaken realm. He has experienced the greatest inner fall, and repentance comes in the end. We may conclude that Kurtz, like Marlow, is the victim of the system: those who cannot bear the requirements must be exterminated, be it colonizer or colonized.

They are all victims of the system: the system is, paradoxically, sustained by the victims themselves, deliberately and unawares.

3.   Conclusion

Joseph Conrad brilliantly reveals the colonial enterprise in Congo, the ideology on which the Belgian imperialists rely to fulfill their material interests, and the destruction which ensues out of the human greed to exploit and extort people of different complexion. It is worth notice that Conrad himself was subject of conscription to a berth on a Belgian ship toward Congo in 1890, an experience which shattered his few ideals upon the supposed humanitarian endeavour of imperialism. The novella was meant as a critique of the imperial agenda worldwide, the plague which would endanger the future of humanity, as the writer himself believed: it was a sort of prophecy disclosed before the reader, an ultimate illuminating attempt in the writer's task to make people aware of the actual tragedy of humanity.

4.   Acknowledgements

5.   Bibliography

Adams, Richard (1991). *Joseph Conrad: Heart of Darkness*. London: Penguin Books.

Arendt, Hannah (1958). *The Origins of Totalitarianism.* 2nd edition. Cleveland: World Publishing Co.

Armitage, David (2004). *The Ideological Origins of the British Empire*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Conrad, Joseph (1994). *Heart of Darkness*. London: Penguin.

Conrad, Joseph (1989). *Under Western Eyes*. Ed. Boris Ford. London: Penguin.

Decker, James M. (2004). *Ideology*. New York: Palgrave MacMillan.

Eagleton, Terry (1991). *Ideology*: An Introduction. New York: Verso.

Eliade, Mircea. (1954). *Cosmos and History: The Myth of the Eternal Return*. Trans. Willard R. Trask. New York: Harper & Brothers.

Firchow, Edgerly Peter (2009). Envisioning Kurtz. Ed. Harold Bloom. *Joseph Conrad's 'Heart of Darkness.'* New York: Infobase Publishing.

Hawkes, David (2003). *Ideology*. 2nd edition. London: Routledge.

JanMohamed, Abdul R. (1995). The Economy of Manichean Allegory: The Function of Racial Difference in Colonialist Literature. Eds. Bill Ashcroft et al. *The Post-Colonial Studies Reader*. London, New York: Routledge.

Kaplan, Carola M. (2003). Colonizers, Cannibals, and the Horror of Good Intentions in Joseph Conrad's Heart of Darkness. Ed. Harold Bloom. *Joseph Conrad*. Broomall, PA: Chelsea House Publishers.

Morris, Jan. (1998). *Pax Britannica: The Climax of an Empire*. London: Faber and Faber.

Panikkar, K.M. (1993). *Asia and Western Dominance*. Kuala Lumpur: The Other Press.

Said, Edward W. (1994). *Culture and Imperialism*. New York: Vintage Books.

Smith, Steve. (1987). Marxism and Ideology: Joseph Conrad, Heart of Darkness. Ed. Douglas Tallack. *Literary Theory at Work: Three Texts*. London: B.T. Batsford Ltd.

Watt, Ian. (2004). *Essays on Conrad*. Ed. Frank Kermode. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Watts, Cedric T. (2009). Covert Plots. Ed. Harold Bloom. *Joseph Conrad's 'Heart of Darkness.'* New York: Infobase Publishing.

Wollaeger, Mark. (2009). Skepticism and the Search for God in Man. Ed. Harold Bloom. *Joseph Conrad's 'Heart of Darkness.'* New York: Infobase Publishing.