

Traumatic Unrepresentability of Colonial Perpetrators in E.M Foster's *A Passage to India* and Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*

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Abstract

Colonial trauma is usually associated with victims from colonized nations, who witness terrifying prolonged experiences in the colonies at the hands of imperial rulers. However, this study's main concern is the trauma from which some colonizers suffer as a devastating repercussion of colonialism. It will be analysed in the light of the colonizer's willingness to participate in or to implement the colonial agenda. The key spark that ignites and drives the colonizer's trauma, and the touchstone with which the effect and the severity of trauma will be measured in this research is the colonizer's willingness to be exploitative or to perpetrate criminal or evil acts. As a postcolonial psychoanalytic paper, the basic focalization will be on the trauma of the colonizer as an oppressor and the way the trauma is represented in colonial novels, that is, novels written in the colonial era, employing trauma theory as well as postcolonial criticism. The research will prove that the contradiction between the colonizer's actions and his/her moral code as the principal cause of the perpetrator's trauma. It also will highlight the post-traumatic symptoms of trauma and the possibility of recovery. Most importantly, this analytic work aims to attach the aporetic unspeakable traumatic representation to the concept of power, showing how unrepresentable traumas are employed in colonial texts in order not to expose the Empire or deface its image; referring to seminal postcolonial theorists as well as to empirical researches for justification. The chosen novels for discussion are E. M. Forster's *A Passage to India* and Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*.

Key Words: colonial trauma, willing colonizer, unrepresentative trauma, hegemony, moral code, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), power

1. Introduction

Colonial trauma is usually attached to the colonized people who suffer from the atrocities of colonization for a long period of time at the hands of colonizers; however, in this study the primary concentration will be on traumatized colonizers who participate in the colonial enterprise out of their own will and interest exemplified by the colonial characters in E. M. Forster's *A Passage to India* as well as Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*. This type of colonizers who willingly accepts to take part in the colonial project for certain reasons will be called a 'willing colonizer' in this study. A willing colonizer is a colonial agent or a person who belongs to a colonizing nation and who accepts to relocate and settle in the imperial colonies whether s/he is cognizant of or ignorant about the imperial agenda. A willing colonizer opts for leaving his/her homeland (the centre of Empire) voluntarily and enthusiastically, regardless of their motives which could be commercial, industrial, marital or merely leaving for securing a profitable job. Albert Memmi in his *The Colonizer and the Colonized* distinguishes among a colonial, a colonizer and a colonialist. A colonial is "a benevolent European who does not have the colonizer's attitude towards the colonized" and who is supposedly ignorant of the goals of colonization, realizing them later usually after settling in the colony (54). The representatives of the colonial Europeans for this study are Mrs. Moore and Miss Adela Quested in *A Passage to India*. As for the colonialist, s/he is the one "who agrees to be a colonizer... [and who] seeks to legitimize colonization" (89) as it is the case with Mr. Kurtz in Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*. Thus Memmi divides colonizers into two groups: the colonizer who accepts and the colonizer who rejects colonization. He believes that to refuse means to withdraw physically from those conditions by going home or to remain in the colony for fighting or changing those conditions (63).

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As for the colonizer who accepts to be a colonialist, s/he supports and defends colonial privileges (55). In the cases used for this study, Mrs. Moore and Miss Quested withdraw from the whole colonial situation and choose to leave India, but Mr. Kurtz remains in the African colony till his death.

The issue of will is viewed as an extremely essential motivator for colonial participants. Edward Said in *Culture and Imperialism* assigns three attitudes as the most necessary catalysts to maintain imperial affairs, which are: the will, self-confidence and even arrogance (1993: 11). He supposes that these three attitudes are at least "as significant as the number of people in the army or civil service, or the millions of pounds England derived from India" (ibid). In one of his interviews, Said asserts that he uses the category of will as the central object of analysis in *Culture and Imperialism* (2005: 187). He envisions the will as a "kind of negative...or insalubrious, devastating thing" (2005: 188). The actions, plans, projects that stem from the colonizer's will to dominate over others or to participate in the colonial agenda will be regarded in this study as the initial instigator of the trauma inflicted on colonial members.

This comparative study treats the colonizers in Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* (1902) and E. M. Forster's *A Passage to India* (1924) as one entity for two reasons: first, both novels belong to the same modern colonial era; second, the colonial characters choose their destination (Congo in Africa and India in Asia respectively) out of their own wills and by their own consents —no coercion is imposed on their decisions. Nonetheless, in Forster's novel colonial figures like Miss Adela Quested and Mrs. Moore disagree to continue and stay in the British colony, whereas Mr. Kurtz in Conrad's work desires to proceed in exploiting the resources of the Belgian colony.

Willing colonizers do not always seem ready enough to assimilate the changes they are going to encounter. The new conditions and accommodations in the colonized countries require changes in the colonizers' characters and principles; these radical alterations thereby bring about traumatic symptoms. In this article a psychological postcolonial reading will be applied to both novels in order to locate traumas that infect the colonialist subjects, elicit traumatic effects and trace the way traumas are represented in the texts.

1.1. Theoretical Background

Trauma is defined as a wound that is inflicted not upon the body but upon the mind after an unexpected event that remains unavailable to consciousness until it imposes itself again repeatedly in nightmares or flashbacks, for instance (Caruth 1996: 4). Trauma occurs because the traumatized person is not being prepared in time and the conscious awareness of the threat to life is recognized by the mind one moment too late (Caruth 1996: 62). For neurobiologists, this repetition or the acting out, in a form of flashbacks or frightening dreams can be more retraumatizing and life-threatening than the experience itself (Caruth 1996: 63). Trauma as a pathological and cruel condition poses an existential threat to the traumatized person: it means losing confidence in the self and in the surrounding tissue of family and community and it creates changes in the views of the world and obstacles in understandings of social life (Erikson 198). Caruth elucidates that such a threat compromises the chemical structure of the brain and can ultimately lead to deterioration or traumatic disorder such as suicidal thoughts (Caruth: 1996, 63).

A traumatic experience is described as linguistically unrepresentable or aporetic because it denies the possibility that language can give a person an access to history (Caruth: 1996, 74). Thus, language cannot refer adequately to the real world or to anything at all. Caruth adds, "The repetitions of the traumatic event remain unavailable to consciousness but intrude repeatedly on sight" (1996: 92). This inaccessibility to the experience of trauma is what cuts off language and consciousness from historical reality and keeps traumatic events unlocatable. Thus, for the traditional Freudian-Caruthian trauma theory, trauma is an incomprehensible experience (it cannot be integrated into conscious memory) and it is unrepresentative; that is, it cannot be translated into speech or become a normal narration due to the fact that shocking experiences bring about gaps, an abyss or aporia in memory that never be bridged (Caruth 1995: 156).

Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) appears as a response to an overwhelming experience. To Caruth, "PTSD seems to provide the most direct link between the psyche and external violence and to be the most destructive psychic disorder" (1996: 57). PTSD explains, for example, for Mrs.

Moore and Marlow's escapist reaction, for Mr. Kurtz's tendency for segregating himself and waiting for death as well as for Miss Quested's hallucination and the disorder of her memory. An unrepresentable trauma remains as an enigma that exists somewhere in the unconscious; it cannot be interpreted into words; yet what remains apparent are its pathological symptomatic responses.

In fact the Freudian-Caruthian notion of trauma and PTSD which is usually applied to trauma survivors or victims is visualized as inadequate to explain for the trauma of colonial perpetrators. In this context, Erin McGlothlin opines that Freud did not articulate the difference between the kinds of trauma suffered by the victims of violence and those experienced by the perpetrators; and that Caruth introduces the figure of the perpetrator into the paradigm of trauma in the form of a survivor of violence rather than an instigator (2020: 102, 103). Thus, the definition of PTSD focuses primarily on the experience and aftermath of severe deprivation, victimization, and personal life-threat rather than on the moral conflict, shame, and guilt produced by perpetration.

Colonial perpetrators practise their perpetration of atrocious or immoral acts in different manners: some use direct violence against indigenous inhabitants like what Mr. Kurtz does and others do harmful deeds such as Miss Quested's awful accusation (which would almost entirely destroy the reputation and subsequently the whole life of a respectable Indian doctor if it were proven true). Both Mr. Kurtz and Miss Quested are willing to take part in the colonial enterprise for their own different objectives and hence called 'willing colonizers' in this research. Their participations in the colonial project spring from their own colonial visions or colonial interests. As colonial perpetrators, the sort of trauma that irritates their psyches stems from a different source of traumatization. Aside from victimization or the persistent sense of victimhood, their traumas generate inside from a disruption in their moral codes which results in moral conflicts. Because the spurs that instigate a perpetrator's trauma is different from those triggering the victim's, the complications and post-traumatic symptoms of the colonizer's trauma should be coped with and measured differently.

When the colonizer experiences a radical change in his/her moral code; that is, s/he transforms from being a normal human being into a perpetrator, then this transformation brings about traumatic symptoms that torture them. Trespassing moral codes results in a confusing sense of guilt or in severe psychic numbing, for instance, that cannot be pacified but with a direct confession or by death. In this respect, Shira Maguen calls trespassing the moral code "moral injury", which forms an internal conflict that grows because of taking another life identity. She defines moral injury as perpetrating acts that transgress deeply held moral beliefs and expectations (Maguen 2017: 2). McGlothlin in "Perpetrator Trauma" elaborates on breaking with moral code thus,

The shock of traumatic ingress into the perpetration of violence thus marks a moment of no return, in which one suddenly (or...gradually) finds oneself on the other side of an existential divide, an experience that occasions a break with one's moral code and a disruptive threat to one's psychological integrity and personal identity. (106)

Consequently, deviation from moral standards and eschewing admittance of the sense of guilt that overwhelms a perpetrator do not only stimulate traumatic stress but also urges the perpetrator into existential dilemma that disrupts his/her identity and self-esteem too.

In this study the trauma of the colonizer will be analysed in the light of his/her willingness to colonize or to implement the colonial agenda. The key spark that ignites and drives the colonizer's trauma, and the touchstone with which the effect and the severity of trauma will be measured is his/her willingness to perpetrate criminal or evil acts, or to be an exploitative colonizer. As a postcolonial psychoanalytic study, the main focalization will be on the trauma of the colonizer as an oppressor and the way the trauma is represented in colonial novels in a way that retains the imperial power's status and its superior image. The next sections will present a psychoanalytic and then a postcolonial reading of the traumatic representations in E.M. Forster's *A Passage to India* and Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* respectively.

2.1. Willing Colonial Perpetrators in *A Passage to India*

In E.M. Forster's *A Passage to India*, the novel introduces the character of Miss Adela Quested as a new English comer who is willing to join the English community in India and be one of the colonial members as soon as her plan of getting married (to the Anglo-Indian

Mr. Ronny Heaslop who occupies a respectable position in the government of the British Raj) there succeeds. Consequently, Miss Quested's willingness to be part of the Anglo-Indian society is prompted by her intention to stay in India and build with Mr. Heaslop her own family. Her wish to settle in India can be also strengthened by the fact that what preoccupies her mind during her visit to Marabar Caves is her future with Mr. Heaslop, her coming "Anglo-Indian life she had decided to endure" (Forster 130).

Thus, Miss Quested's arrival in India is combined with a latent previous intention and a personal will to join the Anglo-Indian colonial society. This willingness to settle in the colony plays a considerable role in the weight of traumatic effect on the traumatized because it aggravates the sense of guilt which is scientifically considered as a post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) (Kinchin 2004: 87). Despite renouncing her intention to settle in India when the Indian physician, Aziz, asks her (Forster 72), she confirms the total opposite when Mr. Heaslop enquires about her previous claim (Forster 94). By offering two contradictory answers to the inquiry about her intention to settle in India, Miss Quested deep inside is hesitant to overtly admit complicity in the colonial enterprise.

Miss Quested who arrives in India endowed with an English open-mindedness and unaffected spontaneity (Forster 29) shows a considerable zeal and interest to know what real India looks like (Forster 30). As well as for Mrs. Moore, Miss Quested's trip companion and her fiancé's mother, she treats Indians at her arrival with a remarkable spontaneity and a kind Christian heart (Forster 27, 44). Nonetheless, such spontaneity and easiness in treatment is opposed and censured by Mr. Heaslop, who treats Indians haughtily, suspiciously and disdainfully believing only in the language of force and power (Forster 36, 37). The resentment of the two ladies deepens at the knowledge that for Mr. Heaslop talking to and dealing with Indians is gravely objected (Forster 34, 76, 80).

Beside Mr. Heaslop's pessimistic position on Indians, Miss Quested and Mrs. Moore receive multiple negative opinions about them from the English folk in the English club. One of the Anglo-Indian women considers not seeing Indians as good luck (Forster 30). Another believes that death is the kindest thing a European can offer to Indians (*ibid*). Moreover, one lady explains how being near native people strikes her with fear saying, "they give me the creeps" (*ibid*). As a result, Miss Quested's desire to "meet those Indians" is stained with these passive, intolerant remarks from her English mates even before these meetings take place (Forster 31).

By this hostility and prejudiced points of view, Mrs. Moore and the 'fair-minded' Miss Quested are disturbed, notifying that the characters of English settlers have been radically changed from what they have been at their homeland (Forster 78, 50). In this respect, with the presence of collective unjustifiable fears which sound xenophobic or traumatic, the psychiatrist Lenore Terr opines that the "danger" of trauma resides in its "contagion", in the "traumatization of the one who listens" (qtd. in Caruth 1995: 10). Thus, Miss Quested's traumatic symptom is initiated or instigated by the negative Anglo-Indian visualizations of India and Indians. Mrs. Moore assures this perspective saying that "it's much more the Anglo-Indians themselves who are likely to get on Miss Quested's nerves" not the hot weather because they "don't behave pleasantly to Indians" (Forster 50). Therefore Miss Quested's subconscious starts to store these pieces of falsified information which will later influence her behavior and affects her moral justice.

Miss Quested's mental faculties get gradually infected with seeds of disturbance and dissociation. She starts to contradict herself in several positions in the novel. First, she tells Aziz that she does not mean to stop and reside in India (Forster 72) and then she withdraws her claim when interrogated by Mr. Heaslop about it (Forster 94). Second, she senses an urgent need to break her engagement to Mr. Heaslop after noticing the drastic change in his character (Forster 81) then she takes back what she says to become again engaged to him (Forster 90). Thirdly, when she has a car accident, she describes what hits the car as a ghost when Mr. Heaslop thinks it is only a hyena (Forster 85). After Mr. Heaslop asks her why she says so, she replies that "she couldn't have been thinking of what I was saying" (Forster 94). This last episode about the hyena and the ghost is very serious and profoundly important to this study. It indicates that Miss Quested's hallucination, false imagination or neurotic disturbance, begins earlier before her expedition to Marabar Caves. She does not comprehend what she says or does. Seeds of trauma begin to grow within her. Her contradiction and mental dissociation culminates at her visit to the caves accusing Aziz of making an assault on her, where only at the court she could restore her memory and drop her accusation.

According to Freud's theory on trauma in his *Studies on Hysteria*, Miss Quested's psychical trauma develops a "splitting of consciousness" and memory (1895: 8). Such a neurosis or a mental illness results in the emergence of abnormal states of consciousness; that is, she starts to imagine different stories about what occurs to her in Marabar Caves claiming that it is Aziz who attacks her or the guide, or even somebody else. The state of memory paralysis or the inability to recall the exact details in the caves turns her trauma to be unspeakable. She cannot describe what is going on in her mind. For Freud, this paralysis at remembering is considered a mode of defense mechanism (ibid).

While Freud's trauma theory fixates on the trauma that generates in the psyche because of fear of death; Caruth argues that trauma is not only an encounter with death, but an experience of surviving one's trauma. To Caruth, trauma becomes an irritating issue when it has a post-traumatic stress disorder which culminates in destructive repetition of trauma in the form of nightmares or recurrent flashbacks, for example (1996: 57). This Caruthian argument about PTSD demonstrates itself in Forster's novel through the vibrating echoes that Mrs. Moore and Miss Quested keep hearing even after leaving the caves, as well as through Mrs. Moore's annoying nightmares and Miss Quested's hallucination. Miss Quested becomes possessed by the Anglo-Indians' formulated images of Indians. Caruth clarifies that "to be traumatized is precisely to be possessed by an image or event" (1995: 4). Miss Quested's trauma begins as an image and ends in the Caves' event. The image Miss Quested shapes for the Indians is only a contagion. In *Treating Complex Traumatic Stress Disorders*, Christine Courtois mentions that "Contagion may represent an unconscious exchange of traumatic material: thoughts, feelings, and imagery" (2009: 206). Miss Quested's as well as Mrs. Moore's traumas formulate steadily by the recurrent strict remarks they receive from Anglo-Indians. They get affected by their fearful comments and by the transformation in their moral code. This point can better be exemplified by Mr. Heaslop who appears in one of the novel's scenes as a good student who absorbs well what his colonial masters of higher ranks have taught him. He uses phrases and arguments that he has "picked up from older officials" (Forster 36). He seems entirely trained and prepared to face the native Indians when telling his mother that it is not his job to be pleasant or to do good in India going against his class and people, but to hold the country with power and force (Forster 51). Being prepared to encounter sources of threat is considered as a protective or defense mechanism against traumatic neurosis (Freud 1961: 25).

Miss Quested and Mrs. Moore are confused by the behavioral contradiction between what English people have used to be in their homeland and how they are completely altered in India. For instance, Mrs. Moore blames her son for his cruelty, "You never used to judge people like this at home", and he replies, "India isn't home" (Forster 36). The moral alteration and the negative notifications on Indians creep slowly and profoundly into the unconscious of the two ladies. Michael Trice in his *Encountering Cruelty: The Fracture of the Human Heart* (2011) elaborates on trauma's contagion asserting that "trauma is excessive when it becomes a contagion that contradicts and transvalues intra-personal well being" (172). They have been saturated with the fears and prejudices of the colonial members before their arrival to Marabar Caves. The trauma in this respect is contagious once it is internalized from cycles of cruelty (Trice 10). The traumatic seeds that Anglo-Indians nourish in the ladies' psyches with their bad remarks climactically crystallize in a form of auditory hallucination and false imagination.

With regard to Miss. Quested trauma, Roger Clubb remarks that by going inside the caves "Adela ... is suddenly thrown into a state of mental shock" (191). On the other hand, Hollingsworth comments, "The echoing sound is a symptom of Adela's neurotic disturbance.... It resembles a type of auditory hallucination not uncommon in schizophrenia.... She is not only cut off from the world, she is divided and out of communication with herself" (214). Thus by entering the Caves, the two ladies' traumas take a full shape. Mrs. Moore cannot stop seeing nightmares and hearing the caves' echoes repeatedly in her ears, and Miss Quested is annoyed by the echoes as well and by fearful imagined stories.

Traumatic contagion, indeed, contradicts, changes, reduces, and transvalues "who we are in ourselves"; it "pierces well-being, disorienting intuitions and convictions" (Trice 175). The moral crisis, which forms an existential threat, culminates in Miss Quested's falsely accusing Aziz of committing a physical assault, and in Mrs. Moore's refusal to witness in the court so that to vindicate Aziz (Forster 192). What ignites Miss Quested's trauma is not merely the instilled fears about India and Indians or the unknown event in the caves. What most irritatingly strikes her is the moral transformation that dissociates her consciousness especially after contaminating the reputation of an innocent and respectable Indian. What Miss Quested has done to Aziz is a sheer perpetration of a harmful act that is almost destroying his career and his private life.

Miss Quested cannot offer one precise explanation to what exactly happened to her in the caves. Even when Mr. Cyril Fielding, one of Miss Quested's English friends, tries to elicit an answer about who has followed her and made the assault, he finds himself before multiple uncertain answers: Aziz, the guide, someone else or a mere hallucination (Forster 224). According to the Freudian-Caruthian trauma theory, Miss Quested's trauma is a single event-based trauma. Her trauma grows out of a falsified image (she constructs from Anglo-Indian feedbacks on Indians and India) and culminates in an event; that is, her visit to the caves. Trauma here stands as an experience that "because it appeared to shatter the victim's cognitive-perceptual capacities, made the traumatic scene unavailable for a certain kind of recollection" (Leys 2010: 9). Thus, Miss Quested's capacity to remember is temporarily or permanently damaged because of its shattering effect on the mind. The unexplained experiences are called aporetic. 'Aporia' means the gap that haunts all attempts at representation (Suttmeier 2002: 52). Thus traumatic events form gaps in memory that function as obstacles in the face of narration.

What controls the trauma's effect on the colonizer and monitors the capability of healing is the way the traumatized handles the gnawing sense of guilt. In an attempt to rectify her error, she admits that Aziz is innocent. One of the promising solutions for traumatic shattering effects on the psyche is bearing witness to what happens. It is considered by Robert Lifton as a part of the recovery process. He states that "[t]he witness is crucial to the entire survivor experience. [S/he] is involved in the transformation from guilt to responsibility" (1995: 138). Miss Quested seems unable to recall what occurs to her in the caves and unable to wake up from the shock she receives until facing the moment of witnessing in the trial. At her confession, she stops hearing the echoes in her ears (Forster 221). Besides, she almost succeeds in transcending her sense of guilt when she accepts to be responsible for her false accusation of Aziz and then bearing testimony to the insult at the cave.

Despite getting liberated from the guilt that burdens her after Aziz's acquittal, she cannot provide one constant story for what exactly occurs in the caves. She only offers false recovered memories, wholly false suggested memories. Caruth explains for this phenomenon calling the experience which may not be available as flashbacks or simple memories as a symptom of disorders of extreme stress not otherwise specified (DESNOS) (1995: viii). The dilemma with trauma is "the very incomprehensibility of its occurrence", the difficulty to transform trauma into a "narrative memory"; that is, not allowing the story to be "verbalized and communicated" (Caruth 1995: 153).

Miss Quested's trauma is not merely restricted to the event of the caves or of being a trauma survivor. Her trauma also results from the shatter in her self-image, and from the disruption in her moral principles. Her traumatic shock is enlarged by Aziz's accusation as she experiences an existential divide, a break with her morals which formulate a threat to her "psychological integrity and personal identity" (McGlothlin 2020: 106). The traumatic contagion that infects her confuses how she identifies with herself. Trice confirms that "traumatic contagion can undermine who and how we are" (178). She is described from the start as "very, very fair-minded" (37); however, she ends up as an unfair colonial oppressor.

2.2. Willing Traumatized Perpetrators in *Heart of Darkness*

In *Heart of Darkness*, Mr. Kurtz's willingness to settle in the Congo (as it was a colony of the Belgian Empire) is motivated by his desire to become rich and then be accepted by his fiancée's people: "it was his impatience of comparative poverty that drove him out there" (Conrad 115). Once he becomes in charge of a trading post in the Ivory Country, he resolves to exploit its ivory to the extremist extent he could reach calling it "My ivory" (Conrad 72). Other colonial traders report that "mostly his expedition had been for ivory" (Conrad 84). In this respect Said confirms that Kurtz is "a creature of will" (2005: 188). To Said, Mr. Kurtz stands for the most powerful example of an extraordinary type of colonial personalities who have an immense will to dominate over others (ibid).

In "Intertwined Traumas: Narrative and Testimony in Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*" Ahmed Ben Amara explains that Kurtz is a troubled soul and a traumatized subject (2019: 7). His trauma proves contagious, since Marlow who witnesses and listens to Kurtz's harrowing story gets traumatized as well. Thus, trauma becomes the crisis of the survivor and the witness (Amara 2019: 2). Amara assures the failure of language as a medium for conveying an overwhelming experience (5). In consequence, Kurtz's traumatic experience which infects Marlow constructs an unrepresentable trauma. In "Representing the Unspeakable Trauma: A Deleuzian Reading of Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*" Che-ming Yang applies the Deleuzian concept on the "impossible writing" to analyse Marlow's disrupted narrativization as a proof on his unspeakable trauma.

In his article on traumatic repetition, "'The Horror! The Horror!': Traumatic Repetition in Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* and Mark Z. Danielewski's *House of Leaves*", Conor Dawson concludes that the repressed past returns as a series of traumatic sounds and these repeated traumatic reverberations have daemonic shapes or characters lying deep in the mind. The aforementioned articles prove two important points to this study: one is that Kurtz and Marlow are traumatized characters, second is that their traumas are unrepresentable.

Mr. Kurtz seems to suffer for a long time from a traumatic experience that he could not describe or speak about. The unrepresentability of Mr. Kurtz's trauma (that is his trauma is not folded clearly or explained straightforwardly) is deduced from Marlow's avoidance of details about Kurtz's daily experiences with the Congolese (Amara 2019: 9). Besides, Marlow's narrative is imbued with gaps, silences and intentionally skipped details (ibid). In addition, readers do not have information about the cause of Kurtz's trauma because, as it elucidated in "The Tragedy of Trauma: Kurtz and Ahab", "Conrad presents nothing explicit about the process of disillusionment and despair, but only its results" (Szczepan-Wojnarska 217). Conrad, as Grey points out, "never allows the reader to see the contents of the parcel Marlow delivers [to the Intended, Kurtz's fiancée]" (Grey 29). Conrad refuses to grant the reader the insight into the "letters of colonization", letters of Mr. Kurtz's "subjugation and extortion of the natives", or letters that "chronicle the slow spiral from idealized man to a twisted god" (ibid). Kurtz's colonial crimes are treated secretly and blurrily. Simultaneously, his trauma remains unrepresentative, untold, and silenced. One can deduce that Mr. Kurtz's unexpressed trauma is correlated to his hidden crimes; therefore his trauma is triggered by the degradation in his moral code. Kurt's dissociating, turbulent trauma is alluded to twice: the first when Marlow states that "[Kurtz's] soul was mad.... He struggled with himself" and when he declares that Mr. Kurtz has an inconceivable mysterious soul that is struggling blindly with itself (Conrad 101).

Kurtz's willingness to participate in the colonial exploitative trade of the Congo's ivory leads him to relinquishing his European good morals and principles, using violence—either by beheading African rebels (Conrad 88) or killing those who compete him over ivory (Conrad 84)—, installing himself a god adored by an African tribe (Conrad 84) and taking "a high seat amongst the devils of the land" (Conrad 72). Thus, the degradation in Mr. Kurtz moral values is the main causative factor of his fatal trauma. His sense of guilt is overwhelming and proves unredeemable; in that, it accompanies him to his deathbed. The horror he suffers from is mainly the ugliness of his atrocities and his brutal acts or merely the discord or dismantling of his moral code.

Mr. Kurtz —by his famous bloody invitation, "Exterminate all the brutes", that he chooses to entitle his pamphlet (Conrad 74) —illustrates a callous colonial perpetrator of an extreme violence. In effect, the cause of Mr. Kurtz's brutality, which transforms him into a colonial perpetrator, is supported by different interpretations. In "Representing the Unspeakable Trauma", the writer believes that Mr. Kurtz's corruption or degeneration is a result of indulging himself in becoming a member of the savage uncivilized natives; hence turning to an animal (5). As for June Christian, he ascribes the colonizer's brutality to what civilization means in the mind of the colonizer; which is to reign supreme, so that the colonizer is willing to murder in order to maintain and assert privilege against the weight of the colonized numbers (95). As obviously demonstrated above, the source of brutality, which leads to moral corruption and then formulates the wick of a perpetrator's trauma, is once attributed to the colonized people and another to the colonizer's civilization. Regardless of the source of perpetrator's brutality and moral degradation, what is contextually manifest is that Mr. Kurtz gets intricately infatuated with accumulating ivory and subjugating African natives. His grudge for wealth and domination, namely, his will to power, blinds his common sense and subverts his moral values. Mr. Kurtz is lost between his old peaceful self-image (he only has been looking for a respectable job for a better living) and the new criminal one (he ends up to be a killer, attending devilish rites and becoming a worshipped god). This disturbing deviation from previously adopted morals and principles ignites an inextinguishable traumatic response.

The severed heads of the Congolese rebels that are drying on the stakes under Mr Kurtz's windows are a sign for a post-traumatic stress disorder (Conrad 88). Psychic numbing as a symptom is often "experienced during the killing.... [It] is an automatic defense that serves to blunt threat and anxiety" (Dutton 138). Mr. Kurtz appears to suffer from psychic numbing or emotional anesthesia; that is, he is entirely indifferent to others' sufferings. Moreover, psychic or emotional numbing is represented in the "feelings of detachment or estrangement from others" (Litz and Grey 199). Thus, this post-traumatic symptom presents an explanation for Marlow's finding Mr. Kurtz alone in the wilderness reporting this twice (Conrad 100, 101). Mr. Kurtz's numbed soul could not find solace but in loneliness. Loneliness is a shape of avoidance which is also considered as a post-traumatic stress disorder (Kinchin 2004: 87). However, his wounds remain inescapable and unavoidable.

Psychic numbing could also be seen as psychic denial of the sense of guilt. However, this state of cessation of feelings does not last till his death. Kurtz's overwhelming roar of despair, "The Horror! The Horror!" (Conrad 117), exemplifies his fears and embodies a break in his nerves (Szczepan-Wojnarska 2010: 218). Fear and neurotic disorder are apparent consequences of the sense of guilt he has long been suppressing. In his experimental study, *Healing the Wounds*, David Noer points out, "... the extensive reports of fear, depression, and stress could be an acting out of deeper survivor guilt" (60). Indeed, Mr. Kurtz's consistent twinges of guilt are invoked by the memories of his immoral violent actions. Being spiritually torn between the old European moralistic human being and the current inhumane selfish perpetrator, Mr. Kurtz cannot endure his agony for long, enunciating at last the groan of despair, "The Horror!" (Conrad 117), as his last words at his deathbed.

Mr. Kurtz cannot release his soul from suffocating unknown fears. Caruth explains for such a case stating that trauma is only destructive and governs a person's life by the repetition of the traumatic experience (1996: 63). In addition, she elaborates that if such a traumatizing experience is not a life-threatening, "it is at least threatening to the chemical structure of the brain and can ultimately lead to deterioration" (ibid). Throughout the novel, there are several hints at Mr. Kurtz's mental disorder or suspected madness (Conrad 85, 101). An actual physical suicide does not occur to Mr. Kurtz as a post-traumatic stress disorder; rather, he has almost been persistently exposed to psychic suicide or psychic death.

Psychic suicide is defined as "willing oneself to die without resorting to external means"^[1]. Fiona Peters states that "trauma can lead to deferred suicide", in particular, when the experience is "beyond representation" (190). Psychic suicide or the suicide of the self is not a choice but, rather, "the only way to escape the daily brutalization" (ibid). For Thomas Garrity, psychic death can be evoked by a significant loss of any highly valued object such as the loss of "self-esteem", which in turn causes strong feelings of grief or fear (208, 209). The metamorphosis from a man "who had come out equipped with moral ideas of some sort" (Conrad 44) into a brutal perpetrator whom nothing on earth would prevent him shooting or killing anybody for ivory (Conrad 84), empties him out of his self-respect and moral values. He seems disillusioned with the fact that he is merely leading a living death or a deathly life.

Mr. Kurtz's inability to confess that he is guilty of colonial crimes perpetuates his sense of guilt as a post-traumatic stress disorder. Kurtz is a leader and a dangerous oppressor who refuses to admit his guilt even to himself (Szczepan-Wojnarska 220). His denial of his guilt is what deepens his trauma and "the self-justifying practice of an idea" (the idea of the empire) does not seem to redeem him (Said 1993: 69).

3. A Postcolonial Reading of the Unrepresentative Colonial Traumas

What joins Mr. Kurtz's and Miss Quested's traumas is their traumas' unrepresentability. Both traumas' causative agents remain secret or unclaimed. In Mr. Kurtz's case, the reader is only left with Kurtz's words, "The Horror! The Horror!", without any clear confessional explanation (Conrad 105). His diaries, reports and even his letters to his beloved are all kept secret. The reader's understanding of his character and experience is obtained from the opinions of others as if it were a puzzle. His trauma remains an enigma. Simultaneously, the traumatic experience of Miss Quested is shown in a blurry style: neither a straightforward reason behind her trauma nor clarity of description of the event is offered.

This type of mysterious or unrepresented traumatic experience —the aporetic experience —is connected in this study with the colonial members who are willing to be part of the imperial groups in the colonies, who are willing to rule and dominate or simply willing to benefit themselves at the expense of colonial subjects from the privileges the colonies can provide. However, the blurriness of traumatic experiences in these novels is opposed by clear denotative racist statements on the superiority of the colonizing race and the inferiority of the colonized. The traumas of Miss Quested and Mr. Kurtz remain obscure and vague or unsaid as Mrs. Moore states, "[not] anything can be said" (Forster 187).

Mr. Kurtz as well as Miss Quested can be regarded as perpetrators; but they nonetheless use different mechanisms or procedures for their perpetration. Mr. Kurtz appears as the more straightforward murderer, the more palpable criminal by proceeding with exploiting and appropriating the Congolese ivory, killing indigenous people or shooting those who compete with him over ivory. As for Miss Quested, her perpetration appears first in her deep inside sensation of being complicit in the illegal colonial agenda once accepting to settle in the colony, and thus cementing or fortifying the colonizers' community.

Then her perpetration is culminated in the false, reputation-devastating accusation of the Indian doctor. Whereas Mr. Kurtz's perpetration includes violent and cruel acts, Miss Quested's perpetrating act is harmful and damaging. Perpetration deepens the sense of guilt that persistently hovers over and haunts the perpetrator. The only method to alleviate this heavy and complicated sensation is to confess what is done or to bear witness to the shocking events or the criminal acts. Inability to tell exactly what the traumatizing act is about formulates the Caruthian unrepresentative traumas. In a perpetrator's trauma, the trauma shapes through committing dreadful deeds which holistically contradict the perpetrator's moral code, and which the perpetrator's mind could not tolerate, and the memory could not process or integrate into the mental structure normally (Caruth 1995: 160). Failure in transforming the event into words agitates and torments the perpetrator's psyche and magnifies the sense of guilt. Next to death, bearing witness to guilt could be the only solution to liberate the mind of trauma's weight.

Indeed, the colonial perpetrator's trauma stems not merely from committing violent actions or from communicating with people belonging to different cultures, but basically from a violation to previously adopted morals and this violation brings about an unexplainable psychic shock. McGlothlin offers an explanation for traumatic provocation, which is mainly because of exceeding held morals as follows:

Efforts to reduce the mental discomfort associated with cognitive dissonance can in turn lead to traumatic stress, especially if one neither acknowledges the discord between one's self-image and one's actions nor admits a sense of guilt but instead pursues a mental strategy of denying the discord of the action with the moral code. (106)

Thus, the discord of Miss Quested's action with her moral results in traumatic symptoms. Her moralistic disruption crystallizes at the moment of accusing the innocent Aziz of a physical abuse after which feelings of guilt increase immensely before attending the court for the trial. Her sense of guilt has only been released at the moment of Aziz's acquittal. Only after the confession in the trial, she could break up with Mr. Heaslop, making her decision of leaving India so that to stop her moral confusion and restore her stability. She refuses at last to be complicit in the colonial project, through declining the idea of settling in a British colony.

As for Mr. Kurtz's dilemma, his deep traumatization cannot be resolved because he cannot reach a compromise or reconcile with himself after the extreme violation of his morals. Being a guilt-ridden creature, he could not emancipate his soul from self-condemnation by bearing witness to his violence and his cruel acts. He could not find a viable solution to release his grave guilt except for waiting for death. To admit guilt through bearing witness transmutes "pain and guilt into responsibility, and carrying through that responsibility has enormous therapeutic value.... [T]he responsibility becomes a very central agent for reintegration of the self" (Lifton 138). Whereas traumatizing experiences could dissociate the mind and shatter the self, being responsible to bear witness to the experience, and to admit guilt is the only way one can feel right and ethically justified in reconstructing oneself and going on living with some vitality (*ibid*).

In fact, if Marlow were to give details, speak the unspeakable, and fill in the gaps, he would expose and convict colonialism. Condemning colonialism openly is a very sensitive issue at the time of writing the novel. In order not to jeopardize the status of the empire, this vagueness and unclear presentations of crimes and traumas are consciously done in order to conceal scandals of imperialism and to protect its symbols from contempt and blame. Furthermore, unfolding traumatic experiences that are brought about atrocities, and presenting the colonizer as a perpetrator deprived of his/her ethics (he or she is almost unable to discern what is morally right or wrong) would annihilate the image of the dignified colonizer and stain his humanitarian mission. What hides behind this traumatic unrepresentability is the empire, which Said describes as functionally "codified" and has "marginally visible presence in fiction" (1993: 63). Marlow, in this respect, says "The conquest of the earth... 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... something you can set up, and bow down before, and offer a sacrifice to..." (Conrad 7). Colonialism is redeemed by the idea, the idea of "imperial mastery", the idea of having an empire with the presence of rulers and the ruled and reinforcing hegemony (1993: 32). With the explicit traumatic representations, the idea will be demeaned or devalued thoroughly.

Conrad and Forster's identical choice for unrepresentable traumas for their characters is not a coincidence. When a reader knows that there is no clear explanation of or evidence on the source of these character's cause of shock and even the potentials for sheer, palpable reasons are hidden, remain unexposed or entirely removed (such as the diaries, reports, and letters written by Mr. Kurtz, as well as the deleted rape scene of

Miss Quested inside Marabar Caves which was present in the novel's draft) then s/he reaches the conclusion that hiding evidence on traumas is intentional. Silver clarifies, "in the published version, not just the violent physical attack but the entire scene in the cave is elided" (86), even Mrs. Moore, the most important eyewitness to Aziz's innocence, departs India before she testifies in the law court. Furthermore, a reader encounters a distortion of truths: one is by Miss Quested when she accuses the innocent Aziz of making an assault and second is by Marlow when he informs the Intended, Mr. Kurtz's fiancée, that his last words have been her name instead of 'horror'. This concealment of important confessing documents, cancellation of certain parts of a novel, and the distortion of truths are evidence of the novelists being doubly conscious and cautious when it comes to tackling vulnerability of their colonial folks or the truth of the colonial experiences. In reality, Forster responded to a question on the ambiguity of the cave scene thus, "it is either a man, or the supernatural, or an illusion.... I will it to remain a blur and to be uncertain" (Elliott 47). Consequently, the colonial traumas of Europeans who show willingness to be colonizers are purposefully meant to remain unrepresentable or unspoken, so that not to expose the real image of empire.

4. Colonial Traumatic Unrepresentability in Reality

Literature is a very essential catalyst in formulating and propagating an overwhelming public view about colonialism. Expressing colonial traumas openly destructs and annihilates the hegemonic image of the colonizer as well as that of the empire. Demeaning or diminishing the powerful image of the empire and its members in the eyes of Europeans themselves and in those of the colonized subjects entails the collapse of colonialism thoroughly. Colonialism is all about imposing power in order to control the other. Once the image of power is shaken, colonial existence is consequently threatened. Colonial traumas of the colonial perpetrator are mainly concerned with the disruption in the moral code. Between the illusion and the reality of colonialism, colonial trauma of the colonizer emerges. The disparity between what is spread about colonial conditions in the metropolis and the truth in the colonies confuses the colonizers, dissociates their psyches and contradicts their moral standards. Traumas that result from cultural confrontation are easier to transcend than traumas resulted from moral inconsistency because the latter entails destruction in the self-image

Most of the colonial experiences of traumatized veterans remain archived in the shelves of large European libraries. They remain unpublished and are hardly reachable. In this position Colin Alexander in *Administering Colonialism and War* says that uncovering historical events and opinions about colonial India using the public archiving is "a somewhat challenging process" and this uneasiness is intentional (2019: 32). Bernard Porters writes that "the history of imperialism and conquest is often consigned to an 'academic ghetto', segregated from more mainstream British constitutional history" (qtd. in Alexander 2019: 32). Within the game of power, camouflaging the real image of the colonizer and the colonized (polishing the former and defacing the latter) guarantees colonial hegemonic continuation. This target; that is, to maintain a superior hegemonic image for perpetrator and inferior defeated one for victims, is pursued by all means of publishing and broadcasting, which are considered as "tool[s] of colonial power" (Alexander, 38). Keeness on reserving the image of stabilized and powerful colonial agents supports colonial mastering and maintains colonized subjects' subordination.

Relying on an empirical study of the political life of Sir Andrew Clow of the Indian Civil Service during the British Raj, Colin Alexander notifies that "Clow was at pains to protect the legacy of his service" when he decides to destroy his diaries (36). Although Clow has published several texts during and after his time in India, those texts "appear to be very careful as to the topics that criticize colonial rule and the extent to which they do so" (ibid). In fact, a considerable amount of caution is deliberately undertaken by writers so as not to expose the colonial atrocities or moral violation. From Gramscian perspective, it is a matter of schooling and programming to respect the Empire, to discuss its glory and to embrace the "nobility of empire" as exactly what had been done in the popular literature produced and published in the late nineteenth century by Conrad and others (Alexander 2019: 21). Thus, it has not been an easy task for Conrad and Forster to expose the wounds and agonies of traumatized colonial agents or to contemplate obviously on the miseries of colonial conditions.

5. Conclusion

In the light of the above postcolonial reading of traumatic representations in colonial novels written by Westerners, one can conclude that this elusiveness and ambiguity (created under writers' will and control) in drawing the scenes of colonizers' colonial traumas is meant to maintain a superior image of the conqueror and to preserve the dignity of Empire.

Colonial Traumatic infection supposes fears, self-condemnation, and disorder in mental faculties and dissociation in consciousness. Colonial trauma, which inflicts the ambitious colonizer who willingly participates in the imperial business, is basically triggered by the colonizers' deviation from or violation of his/her moral code and value system. This contradiction devastates one's self-image and self-respect bringing about wounds in the psyche. Albert Memmi in *The Colonizer and the Colonized* argues that participation in the colonial project and the continual exposure to colonial conditions can lead to the destruction of the humanity and the soul of the colonizer because s/he knows "in his own eyes as well as those of his victim, that he is a usurper" (53).

When such moral transgressions were ascribed to colonial agents openly provided with intricate and concise details, this would compromise colonial projects, shake the dignified image of the Empire and dissuade people who belong to the Empire from implementing or adopting colonizing agenda. Thus the explicit exposition of willing colonizer's trauma would threaten the Empire's sustainability and ring the alarm bell of its decline.

Trauma in itself exemplifies a horrible evil consequence of colonialism. However, and according to Said's viewpoint, novels which illustrate a high cultural form were by the end of the nineteenth century "mysteriously exempted from analysis whenever the causes, benefits, or evils of imperialism were discussed" (1993: 107). The confession of those evils will contradict the essence or the goal of colonization which is, as Leroy-Beaulieu confirms, "to place a new society in the best conditions for prosperity and progress" (ibid). Trauma, by no means, can be defined among the "best conditions". Thus, this explains for the tendency of novelists like Conrad and Forster to opt for encoding traumatic experiences, so that these horrific conditions will remain concealed and ambiguous. Besides, Said asserts that the purport of representations of what lay beyond metropolitan boundaries is embodied in confirming European power (1993: 106). This can best be exemplified by the inferior and devaluated depiction of the subject people. Nonetheless, displaying palpably and illustratively European dissociated psyches or their tormented souls would undermine the image of the empire. Even the end of the traumatized perpetrators with its façade balance and radiant relief serve the imperial enterprise. The one who is overflowed with grief and who appears irredeemable as Mr. Kurtz in this case ends by death; and as for Miss. Quested she succeeds in restoring stability to her life with the amount of money she possesses and through establishing her own family in England. Because the novel and imperialism fortify and explain for each other (Said 1993: 70), the stabilization and balance of colonial members' psyches reflect the solid and stable stance of the empire and vice versa.

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[1]. See <https://medical-dictionary.thefreedictionary.com/Psychic+Suicide>