

British Colonization versus Belgian Colonization in Heart of Darkness: A Contrastive Textual Study of Imperialism/Colonialism in English Literature

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Abstract

This paper essentially examines the British and the Belgian modes of colonialism. Using New Historicism, this write up argues that while Kurtz symbolizes the Belgian colonizer in the Congo, Marlow represents British imperialism in the Congo, Africa, India and the World and that Marlow serves as a link between the British and the Belgian colonial modes of imperialism. From an in-depth analysis of the novel, it is realized that British imperialism in Heart of Darkness is principally portrayed in Marlow and his crew members in the River Thames and that Belgian colonization in the Congo is depicted in the character of Mr Kurtz and characters like the Chief Accountant of the Outer Station, the Brickmaker, the Manager of the Central Station, the uncle of the Manager of the Central Station and the pilgrims who are said to be bewitched also in the Central Station. Belgian and British colonization's are primarily presented in the novel but other European colonization's are also mentioned in passing in the text like the Romans, the French, the Danes, the Dutch, the Swedes, the Germans and the Russians.

Keywords: Colonization/colonialism/imperialism, high-minded, money-grubbing, mode, ivory, rubber, minerals, London, Brussels, Marlow and Kurtz.

Introduction

In "Preempting Postcolonial Critique: Europeans in the Heart of Darkness" the critic Inga Clendenin in Project Muse: Scholarly Journals Online writes: "Joseph Conrad's classic "colonial" novel, Heart of Darkness. From its beginning Heart of Darkness has been variously and passionately interpreted. Its first audience, a little more than a hundred years ago, read it as a compelling dramatization of the differences between two crudely opposed modes of imperialism: High-minded British versus money-grubbing Belgium"¹. This paper sets out to read Heart of Darkness in this light as a clash between British colonization and Belgian colonialism amongst other imperialisms. Using New Historicism, this write up hypothesizes that while Mr Kurtz symbolizes money-grubbing Belgian colonial master in the Congo and in Heart of Darkness, Marlow represents the high-minded British colonialists in the Congo, Africa, and India and in the world. Marlow is the link between the two colonial modes of colonialism.

This paper intends to answer the following questions: Who are the characters who represent the two imperial modes of colonialism in the text Heart of Darkness? Are the British really superior to the Belgians in colonization in Heart of Darkness? Are the British not also money-minded like the Belgians in Heart of Darkness in their colonization policy? Are the two modes of colonizations not the same or have the same end? Which colonial mode is preferable, the British or the Belgian? John Brannigan sees New Historicism as "a mode of critical interpretation which privileges power relations as the most important contexts for texts of all kinds" (6). New Historicism is a literary approach or theory which examines the biographical, textual and historical facts (political, economic, social, cultural, and scientific) influencing a literary work.

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To better analyze *Heart of Darkness* we take into consideration the life or biography of Joseph Conrad, the text *Heart of Darkness* itself and the historical, cultural and scientific realities which produced the novella. *Heart of Darkness* is deeply entrenched in Victorian thinking about Africa and the world in general. The Victorians saw Africa as a Dark Continent, hence the title of the novel *Heart of Darkness*. It is ironical that the source of darkness we see in Africa does not originate in Africa but has as its source Brussels, the Belgian capital.²

Heart of Darkness as a Colonial Novel

Heart of Darkness is neither a postcolonial novel nor a pre-colonial novel. It is a perfect colonial novel. As a colonial novel, it describes principally two colonial masters and their modes of colonialism who are the Belgians and the British or the English. It begins with the English and ends with the Belgians but the Belgian colonization in the novella is described in detail more than British imperialism. In addition to the British and the Belgian modes of colonialism presented in *Heart of Darkness*, the novel also presents other colonial masters like the Romans, seemingly the first colonial masters in the world who colonized Britain or the Britons, the French, the Danes, the Germans, the Dutch, the Swedes and the Russians. When Marlow leaves Brussels to come to the Congo, he uses a French man of war (Conrad 17-18), going to the Outer Station he uses a steamer driven by a Swede (Conrad 19), his predecessor who was killed by the Africans was called Fresleven, a Dane (Conrad 11), the Russian who represents Russian colonization in Africa and in the novel was tutored by “Good old Dutchman Van Shuyten” (Conrad 73-76). Kurtz is a German name which means short (Conrad 84).

British Colonialism in Heart of Darkness

Heart of Darkness from the very beginning of the novel describes British colonization in the world. The novel opens with the frame-narrator, the unnamed narrator, the omniscient narrator, the par narrator, the Auditor, the interlocutor, or Conrad himself talking about the *Nellie*, a yawl, a yacht or a boat in which they are sitting inside. This boat is on the River Thames. He introduces us to the members of the *Nellie* who are all English or British citizens as follows: The Director of Companies, their captain and host, the Lawyer, the best of old fellows who was lying on the only rug, the Accountant, who had brought out a box of dominoes and was toying architecturally with the boxes and Marlow who sat cross-legged right aft, leaning against the mizzen-mast. In *Human Rights Quarterly* Birgit Maier-Katkin in an article, titled “At the Heart of Darkness: Crimes Against Humanity and the Banality of Evil” “says Conrad often made short pleasure trips on the Thames with G.F.W. Hope (an accountant), and T.L. Mears (a lawyer). These gentlemen were, according to Ford Madox Ford “the society in which Conrad lived at Stamford – le – Hope” between September 1896 and September 1898, just months before the writing and publication of *Heart of Darkness* as a three part serials in *Blackwood’s Magazine* in February, March and April 1899. It is as if Conrad created Marlow, placed him among his friends, preserved his voice for readers, and invested him with autobiographical details of his own experience, including his brief service as captain of the steam ship *Rio des Belges* on the Congo River during the reign of King Leopold, when murder, disease, famine, forced labor, torture, maiming and sadistic cruelties were elements of international trade in ivory and rubber. As many as ten million Congolese may have been victims of crimes against humanity in the period between 1885 and 1905; the first modern human rights organization, the Congo Reform Association, was formed in response. The novel proceeds to tell us the importance of River Thames to British colonization of the world: all British colonizers, explorers, founders of commonwealths and empires, sea adventurers etc used it to go out of England to establish all of these around the world. The novel further demonstrates its Englishness by citing real geographical places in England like River Thames, Gravesend, Essex, Deptford, Greenwich, Erith, Fleet Street and the Channel. The novel talks about London twice in its opening paragraphs or pages as “the biggest and the greatest town on earth” (Conrad 3) and “the traffic of the great city went on in the deepening night upon the sleepless river” (Conrad 8).

Heart of Darkness is therefore a story told by Marlow to his fellow English boat men who are no longer seamen like Marlow, now sitting on the River Thames from dusk to midnight. Marlow who is fond of telling stories which have no end tells the members of the *Nellie* and indirectly we the readers and listeners how he had then, “as you remember, just returned to London after a lot of Indian Ocean, Pacific, China seas – a regular dose of the East-six years or so, and I was loafing about, hindering you fellows in your work and invading your homes just as though I had got a heavenly mission to civilize you” (Conrad, 9). He now tells us how as a child, he had a passion of looking at maps and blank spaces in the world in South America, or Africa or Australia and lose himself in all the glories of exploitation. The North Pole was another area of blank spaces. River Congo charmed or fascinated him as a snake will charm a silly little bird.

Belgian Colonization in Heart of Darkness

He remembered that there is a big company trading on this river, “a continental concern”. He resolved “I must get there by hook or by crook”(Conrad10).He uses his aunt who is British and who lives in Brussels and knows very important people in the Belgian company exploiting ivory in the Congo to be recruited as a steamboat driver. He now tells us how he goes to Brussels ,the headquarters of the Belgian company trading in ivory on the River Congo in a French war ship .In Congo the Belgians have divided the country or River Congo into three stations :the Outer Station, the Central Station, and the Inner Station. He drives the manager of the Central Station in a boat with 4 pilgrims, and 20 African cannibals to go and save Mr Kurtz who is the first class agent of the Belgian company and chief of the Inner Station, which is the richest of all in ivory, supplying half of the company’s total ivory.

London, Brussels and Characterization in the Heart of Darkness

Conrad talks about London twice in the novel without naming it as London. He also talks about Brussels twice naming it as “a whited sepulcher”(12)and “I found myself back in the sepulchral city”(100).British colonization in its capital London which is cited twice and Belgian colonization in Heart of Darkness is symbolized by Brussels also cited twice as well. London symbolizes high -minded British colonialism and this is positively described and Brussels symbolizes money grubbing and morally rotten Belgian colonization in Heart of Darkness. The characters who come from these two towns reflect the two colonial modes respectively.

In Heart of Darkness we are told that Marlow represents a new gang of virtue while Kurtz represents the old gang of vice and money grubbing Belgians snatching ivory, rubber and minerals in the Congo .The Brick maker of the Central Station who has never made any brick since he came to Congo sees Marlow as of the new gang .Even Marlow himself who is and was the only member of the Nellie who still goes to the sea ,considers himself as a civilizing man to the other crew members in the boat on the River Thames. Above all Marlow’s aunt who is in Brussels and who helps him to get a job in the Congo sees him as one such man as seen in the following quotation: “I was going to take charge of a two –penny-half-penny-river steamboat with a penny whistle attached! It appeared, however, I was also one of the workers, with a capital you know. Something like an emissary of light ,something like a lower start of apostle. There had been a lot of such rot let loose in print and talk just about that time,and the excellent woman living right in the rush of all that humbug got carried off her feet. She talked about “weaning those ignorant millions from their horrid ways” till upon my word she made me quite uncomfortable .I ventured to hint that the company was run for profit “(Conrad 16).From the above quotation Marlow knows the Belgians are in Congo to make money not to moralize like the British as seen in Marlow himself of the new gang of virtue. His aunt who is also British has now been corrupted by Brussels but she has not yet forgotten the civilizing or moralizing aspects of the British mode of colonization which should still be in her blood.

Mr Kurtz who symbolizes Belgian colonization in the Congo is also a universal colonial master and a multitalented genius ;musician, poet, painter, journalist, politician of extremism, station manager and ivory merchant. Conrad writes of Mr Kurtz “The original Kurtz had been educated partly in England, and as he was good enough to say himself his sympathies were in the right place. His mother was half English, his father was half French .All Europe contributed to the making of Kurtz.”(Conrad 68).Kurtz in the Congo representing his colonial masters the Belgians raids villages for ivory with his three guns. He is able to smell buried ivory called fossil like a dog and brings it out of the soil .The natives hide ivory by burying it in the ground but the dog smelling Kurtz is still able to bring it out. Mr Kurtz nearly shoots the Russian, his disciple in the wilderness and helper twice when he is seriously sick because Kurtz sees him with ivory given to him by a village chief. MrKurtz threatens to shoot if he does not give him the ivory and go out of the Congo and nothing will happen to him. This was the truth. As a manager of the Central Station says Mr Kurtz has no restaurant in his lust for ivory and his “unsound methods” or no method at all has ruined the companies’ trade in the Congo. Marlow reiterates this ‘I am not disclosing any trade secrets .In fact, the manager said afterwards that Mr Kurtz’ methods had ruined the district. I have no opinion on that point, but I want you clearly to understand that there was nothing exactly profitable in these heads being there. They only showed that Mr Kurtz lacked restraints in the gratification of his various lusts, that there was something wanting in him -some small matter which when the pressing need arose could not be found under his magnificent eloquence. Whether he knew of this deficiency himself I can’t say. I think the knowledge came to him at last only at the very last. But the wilderness had found him out early and had taken on him a terrible vengeance for the fantastic invasion. I think it has whispered to him things about himself which he had no conception till he took counsel with this great solitude -and the whisper had proved irresistibly fascinating” (Conrad 81-82).

In his ivory hunt, Mr Kurtz has chased away his assistant in the Inner Station to go back to Europe. He is sick twice and refuses to go back to Europe to cure himself and has trained an army of blacks to attack his countrymen who come to take him away from the Inner Station. Mr Kurtz even becomes very possessive “My Intended, my station, my career, my ideas—”(Conrad 96). Marlow tells us that “The approach to this Kurtz grubbing for ivory in the wretched bush was beset by as many dangers as though he had been an enchanted princess sleeping in a fabulous castle “(Conrad 59). This statement captions the Belgians’ colonial policy in the Congo. The Manager of the Central Station concludes of Mr Kurtz: “We have done all we could for him –haven’t we? But there is no disguising the fact, Mr Kurtz has done more harm than good to the company. He did not see the time was not ripe for vigorous action. Cautiously, cautiously—that is my principle .We must be cautious yet. The district is closed to us for a time .Deplorable! up on the whole, the trade will suffer. I don’t deny there is a remarkable quantity of ivory—mostly fossil. We must save it, at all events –but look how precarious the position is –and why? Because the method is unsound. “Do you” said I looking at the shore,” call it “unsound method” “without doubts” he exclaimed, hotly “Don’t you? “No method at all,” I murmured after a while.” Exactly, “he executed. “I anticipated this. Shows a complete want of judgment. It is my duty to point it out in the proper quarter. ‘Oh” said I “that fellow –what’s his name?—the brickmaker, will make a readable report for you.”(Conrad 87-88). In an article titled “African Center, Western Margin: Heart of Darkness and Conrad’s Exorcist Narrative “ Athanasius Ako Ayuk writes of Europeans: “Conrad strongly demonstrates by the distorted nature of his narrative that Europe, because of her own greed and insatiable desire, has pushed herself to the margins of basic moral values and lost the claim to any hitherto arrogated superiority. Kurtz, the representative of Europe in Conrad’s novella, is the embodiment of innumerable European lapses such as wayward immorality, exploitation, blind devotion to materialism, unemotional attachment to women, a disenchanting relationship with his workers and subordinates and above all an unbearable ignorance of the ways of others, the belief that the world revolves only around his own social and geographic space .

On the contrary ,the morally sane are traumatized and pushed to the margins”(105). In the groundbreaking paper titled “Terror ,Terrorism ,and Horror in Conrad’s Heart of Darkness” the critic Frances B. Singh qualifies the Belgian rule in Congo as the reign of terror like under Robespierre in France ,where the Belgian state used state terrorism against the Congolese .He says that “in Heart of Darkness Africans are viewed through the lens of Victorian anthropology, which also assumed that if whites “ went native “ they would become evil and savage .In Victorian evolutionary theory, man moved from savagery to barbarism and then to civilization. He says “the scientific Darwinism of the period held the possibility that an evolved European could climb down the evolutionary ladder and degenerate into the more primitive version of the species, the Africans, terrifying thought taken for true in the late nineteenth century .However , through Marlow’s rhetoric, Conrad will eventually present a more frightening ,because more accurate views that Europe values are themselves the cause of European acts of barbarism .Conrad ,thus, presents himself as a counter terrorist ,albeit a literary one, that is, one who , by speaking the truth about the state of terrorism existing in that unnamed African colony ,takes it upon himself to blow away the false pretensions and illusions surrounding that exercise of power. Kurtz is seen as Robespierre in the Jacobin and the reign of terror in France .

Mr Kurtz, no doubts is the prime archetype of money, rubber, mineral, ivory grubbing Belgian colonial masters in the Congo. He is not the only character. We have also other money grubbing Belgians in the text like the Chief Accountant of the Outer Station, the Brickmaker, the Manager of the Central Station and also his uncle who is at the head of the Belgian mineral exploiting company in the Congo known as the Eldorado Exploring Expedition and the pilgrims of the Central Station. In a powerful paper titled “The Women Do Not Travel: Gender, Difference and Incommensurability in Conrad’s Heart of Darkness” Gabrielle MCintire discusses eight women in Conrad’s novella. When she writes “Marlow is displaced Englishman who must rely on female relative in Belgium to secure him a job, while Kurtz is a displaced citizen of all of Europe”. She says “Marlow speaks directly from the metropolitan center of the British Empire –his narration literary takes place on the fluid, shifting territory of the Thames, just upriver from London –while he repeatedly reminds us how important his English language provides the common linguistic ground between him and Kurtz allowing Marlow to converse fluently with Kurtz , a man who is known for his ability to talk his words –the gift of expression”(48). In Notes 3 she writes : “Beginning with the opening words of the text –The Nellie, a Cruising yawl, swung to her anchor without a flutter of the sails, and was at rest (7)–every vessel that carries Marlow from one land to another is also gendered as feminine. While Conrad’s use of feminine names for ships is of course quite conventional for the period ,it nevertheless underscores the fact that he leaves every woman of his text unnamed .

In pointing this out, we might note, though, that *Heart Of Darkness* also participates in a more general absence of naming: other than Marlow and Kurtz, characters are known by function rather than by proper name. This tendency extends equally across boundaries of race and place. Marlow's audience for his tale consists of the Director of Companies, "the Lawyer", the "Accountant" and the unnamed frame narrator while in Africa he speaks of figures: the Manager, the Chief Accountant and the helmsman. Even so, Conrad articulates gender differences through his unarming since the men tend to be referred to by title or function while the women are usually referred to by function in terms of their relation to men: Marlow's aunt, Kurtz's Intended, 'Kurtz's mother', the laundress for the Chief Accountant. Furthermore, geographical place names are rarely specified either: neither the Belgian city nor the Belgian Congo is named: Instead we hear only of a city that always makes me think of a white sepulcher (13), and just once, of Africa "(11). The Congo itself is never named: Marlow describes his childhood fascination with its representation on the map, he recalls only that it looked like "an immense snake, uncoiled" (12). When he arrives in Africa after his ocean voyage, he simply remarks that he finally 'saw the mouth of the big river' "(18). Conrad was well aware of his absence of naming place at any rate, and in the same letter quoted above to O. T. Fisher Unwin, he notes that in his manuscript, "The exact locality is not mentioned" [quoted in Kimbrough 199).

All the Belgian characters who are represented in *Heart Of Darkness* are morally rotten and money grubbing except for the company's Chief Accountant in the Outer Station. Conrad writes: "His appearance was certainly that of a hairdresser's dummy but in the great demoralization of the land, he kept up his appearance" (24). He has been teaching a native woman about the station. He lived a sedentary desk life "with his book—keeping job in the station. Marlow says "moreover, I respected the fellow. yes; I respected his collars his vast cuffs, his brushed hair" (24).

The Brickmaker of the Central Station who came to Congo to make bricks and who has never made any bricks is described as "this papier Mache' Mephistophele. (Conrad 36). He is a spy of the Manager of the Central Station and lives a bourgeois life as he has candles reserved only for the manager at that time and also a collection of spears, assegais, shields and knives. He had wanted to become an assistant manager of the Central Station but the presence of Mr Kurtz in the country threatens this ambition. He knows that Marlow like Kurtz has godfathers and god mothers in Brussels who sent them to come and boss over them in the Congo. He has no future because he has no god father or god mother in the Brussels. The Manager of the Central Station has become manager not because he has any talent, intelligence or business acumen. He becomes manager because his body has resisted tropical diseases others cannot resist. He confesses and confirms that Mr Kurtz was imposed on him from Brussels unlike Kurtz who has no restraint in his lust and raiding for ivory, he preaches a cautious method of ivory grubbing, not the violent style of Mr Kurtz. The pilgrims of ivory grubbing spend their time in the Central Station slandering, backbiting and intriguing against one another. Conrad writes "However, they were all waiting—all the sixteen or twenty pilgrims of them for something: and upon my word it did not seem an uncongenial occupation, from the way they took it, though the only thing that ever came to them was disease—as far as I could see. They beguiled the time by backbiting and intriguing against each other in a foolish kind of way. There was an air of plotting about that station, but nothing came out of it, of course it was as unreal as everything else—as the philanthropic pretence of the whole concern, as their show of work. The only real feeling was a desire to get appointed to a trading post where ivory was to be had, so that they could earn percentages. They intrigued and slandered and hated each other only on that account—but as to effectively lifting a little finger—oh, no (Conrad 33) Marlow says of the pilgrims: "I saw this station, these men strolling aimlessly about in the sunshine of the yard. I asked myself sometimes what it all meant. They wandered here and there with their absurd long staves in their hands, like a lot of faithless pilgrims bewitched inside a rotten fence. The word 'ivory' rang in the air, was whispered, was signed. You would think they were praying to it. A taint of imbecile rapacity blew through it all, like a whiff from some corpse" (Conrad 31)

The Manager of the Central Station's uncle is at the head of the Eldorado Exploring Expedition in the Congo. Conrad writes: "This devoted band called itself the Eldorado Exploring Expedition and I believe they were sworn to secrecy. Their talk, however, was the talk of sordid buccaneers: it was reckless without hardihood, greedy without audacity, and cruel without courage; there was not an atom, and they did not seem aware these things are wanted for the work of the world. To tear treasure out of the bowels of land was their desire with no more moral purpose at the back of it, than there is in burglars breaking into a safe, who paid the expenses of the noble enterprise, I don't know, but the uncle of our manager was leader of that lot" (42). Of the manager's uncle, Conrad concludes "in the external he resembled a butcher in a poor neighborhood, and his eyes had a look of sleepy cunning. He carried his fat paunch with ostentation on his short legs and during the time his gang infested the station spoke to no one but his nephew you could see these two roaming about all day long with their heads close together in an everlasting confab" (Conrad 39).

Heart of Darkness is a very controversial novel which continues to receive critical attention since its publication in 1899 in Blackwoods's Magazine during the Victorian period. In "Autobiography as Evasion: Joseph Conrad's A Personal Record" Lydia Prescott summarizes who Joseph Conrad was Jozef Teoder Konrad Korzeniowski was born in 1857 in Berdyczow, in what had been Poland, was then a Russian province and is now known as the Ukraine. In 1874 he travelled to Marseilles to become a seaman. Four years later, he joined the British Mercantile Marine and in 1886 became a British subject. In 1895 he published his first novel, under the name Joseph Conrad. He died at home in Kent in 1924, and was buried in a Canterbury graveyard. Gene M. Moore discusses Conrad's three Eastern or Malay novels like *Almayer's Folly*, his first novel, *An Outcast of the Islands* and *The Rescue* in a paper titled "Slavery and Racism in Joseph Conrad's Eastern World". He says King Leopold of Belgium was able to maintain a monopoly on Congo River. We are made to know that slavery was banned or abolished in England in 1833, France (1848), Russia (1861), the Netherlands (1863) and the United States in 1865. In "Implication or Application? Theory in Recent Approaches to Conrad" Stephen R. S. uses post-colonial, feminist, gay and ecological theories to examine Heart of Darkness just like Jennifer Lipka who in "The horror. The horror!"

Joseph Conrad's Heart Of Darkness as a Gothic Novel". According to the editor of the most recent Heart of Darkness casebook, the cutting edge of literary criticism seems to swing between formal and cultural historical approaches every twenty years or so with the pendulum whose swath swings or cuts through post colonialism, the adventure genre, historicism, irony, metaphor, the imagery of language, deconstructionism, psychology and psychoanalyses, authorial intention, and the philosophical branches of epistemology, morality and metaphysics (Moore 7). Fred Salinger in "Absurd be – exploded "remembering Experience Through Liminality in Conrad's Heart Of Darkness states "his aim in this essay is to highlight the narrative techniques Conrad utilized to produce these raptures to show why his re-mamboing of Marlow's fragmented experience is effective in exposing the horror of imperialism and to demonstrate exactly how Marlow is speaking from a liminal position, a position that enables him to be if not exactly oppositional, then, at least critical. He says Marlow resembles Conrad in two ways – seaman and the writer: Conrad – Polish expatriate would seem, much in common – with his creation. For Achebe this alignment allows him to damn Conrad and Marlow respectively as "thorough going racist" and his puppet. That is why in "Preempting Postcolonial Critique: Europeans in the Heart Of Darkness" Inga Clendinnen asks how far does the narrator Marlow speak for the novelist Conrad? Always, sometimes? Never? Some critics including Achebe assume full identification, others credit Marlow, the Engineer, with the Mundane or pragmatic pronouncement and metaphysical ones. Conrad himself acknowledges Heart Of Darkness to embody "experience... pushed a little (and only a very little) beyond the actual facts of the case. He adds 'If there were 'civilizing works' to be done in Africa, Conrad probably thought as (Marlow certainly did) that Englishmen were best equipped to do it. Having no wish to offend his adopted country, Conrad was ready to indulge some imperial fantasies." This supports our argument of British Imperial mode of colonialism as high minded. He says Edward Garnett identified the project of Heart of Darkness as analysis of the determination of the white man's morale, when he is let loose from European restraint and planted down in the tropics as an emissary of light armed to the teeth to make profits out of the subject races.

Marlow's organization of European and African natives across a spectrum of humanity /sanity, improved humanity and inhumanity/insanity has led such critics as James Johnson to attribute this scheme to the evolutionary anthropology (17) prevalent in the nineteenth century as Lid an Lin reveals in "The Center Cannot Hold : Ambiguous Narrative Voices in Wu's *The Journey to the West* and Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*". Janice Ho in "The Spatial Imagination and Literary Form of Conrad's Colonial Fictions" says imperialism quickly followed on the heels of European exploration. Imperialism encouraged an unprecedented and fateful sense of expansiveness geographically of course but also imaginatively, culturally psychologically, philosophically, cosmologically, and scientifically- a sense that the world was Europe's oyster" (6). The big question is whether Conrad was for or against imperialism. There seems to be a critical consensus that Conrad's obscurity – variously called his "impressionism" (Watt), his will-to style (Brantlinger), his aesthetic zing strategy (Jameson) and so forth – undermines his ostensible critique of imperialism. Kimberly J. Devlin in "The Scopis Drive and Visual Projection Heart of Darkness" writes "The final destination of Marlow exploratory eye is Kurtz as the narrative fixates on the man whose soul had looked within itself and gone mad." Revealingly perhaps Marlow claims he is punished for his simultaneous scope intrusion: "I had for my sins, I suppose to go through the ordeal of looking into (Kurtz's soul) myself" (65). In Notes 3 he says "As Patrick Brantlinger points out, Evolutionary thought seems almost calculated to legitimize imperialism.

The theory that man evolved through distinct social stages – from savagery to barbarism to civilization – led to a self – congratulatory anthropology that actively promoted belief in the inferiority – indeed, the bestiality – of the African” according to the Victorians. Matthew Rubery in “Joseph Conrad’s Wild story of a Journalist” reveals three newspapers which influenced Conrad and Victorians about Africa like *The Illustrated London Notes*, *New York Herald* and *London Daily Telegraphy*. IhorJnyk in “Beyond the Dialectic: Conrad, Levinas, and the Scene of Recognition” raises the problem of *Heart of Darkness* as an ethical novel as it poses a problem of ethics and Hegelian dialectic of master – slave relationship. Here in the novel we have the oppressors who are the Europeans and the oppressed who are the Africans. “*Geography and some Explorers*” published in 1924 presents African explorers of Conrad’s youth: Mungo Park, James Bruce, Richard Burton, John Hanning Speke and David Livingstone. Stanley and Roger Casement were journalist writers. Stanley was sent to Africa to find out the where about of Livingstone. Casement wrote on the Belgian atrocities for the British government as well as his founding of the Congo Reform Association which eventually helped turn public opinion against the Belgians. Conrad does not mention Casement in his novel.

Conclusion

Heart of Darkness is a colonial novel which presents the British mode of colonialism and the Belgian mode of colonization. The British mode of colonization is presented by the first or frame – narrator while the Belgian mode of colonialism is presented by Marlow in his story on the River Congo where the Belgian colonists trade in ivory. As a story told on River Thames *Heart of Darkness* shows that the English civilizing mode of colonialism in the world has ended as all its symbolic men are sitting in the *Nellie* whereas the Belgian colonization in the Congo of Ivory grubbing will continue in a cautious method of Ivory grubbing not the violent and unsound method formerly used by Kurtz. The Manager of the Central Station and his uncle and pilgrims will still continue to plunder the minerals of the Congo as well as its rubber and Ivory. Thus British imperialism is shown as preferable, high minded and not selfish and money-grubbing as that of the Belgians in the Congo

Notes

1. Articles used in this write up are taken from Project Muse: Scholarly Journals online. Inga Clendenin in “Preempting Postcolonial Critique: Europeans in *Heart of Darkness*” writes: “yet in Conrad’s Congo, Englishmen (along with Conrad himself) had been implicated in some highly questionable activities ... Conrad had actively sought his job with the Belgians and was bitterly chagrined to be left out of the gold-seeking, venture he would later lampoon as the EL Dorado expedition”
2. For a paper on Brussels as a source of darkness in Africa, see Ignatius Nsaidzedze in his paper “The Symbolism of Darkness in Joseph Conrad’s *Heart of Darkness*” in *African Journal of Social Sciences: A Multidisciplinary Journal of Social Science*, Volume 3, Number 4(Special Edition), November, 2012.

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