

# The Phantom of the Demon: A Journey into the Dark Hearts of White Europeans in Conrad's Heart of Darkness

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**Abstract** - The legacy of imperialism looms large in Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*. Torture, persecution, and violations of human dignity are vividly depicted throughout the novel. The imperial world is portrayed as a hellish landscape, where the vulnerable are oppressed and the powerful flourish. Consequently, imperialism endangers the lives of Africans as it influences the destinies of colonisers and shapes their experiences. This study, titled "The Phantom of Demon: A Journey into the Dark Hearts of White Europeans in Conrad's Heart of Darkness," examines the atrocities and aftermath of imperialism, revealing the darkness within white Europeans. Furthermore, it highlights the inherent darkness of whites and investigates their psychological and moral shortcomings, exposing the underlying barbarism and hypocrisy concealed behind their civilised façade. It explores the reasons why powerful nations colonise weaker ones. Drawing on ideas from colonial and postcolonial literary criticism, the analysis investigates how colonialism erodes the identity of colonisers and turns their countries into desolate wastelands. Greed, driven by immense and obsessive ambition, remains a grotesque instinct that compels man to kill, massacre, and oppress. The study's core issue is the factors that led Europeans to establish themselves as standards or canons. It questions the criteria by which all other nations on Earth imitate them, and why anyone without these standards should not pioneer their own culture. Clearly, such a conclusion is neither scientific nor divine; it is most likely the result of pride. The methodology employed in the study is colonialism. Consequently, it views the standard of living in a postcolonial context as animalistic, where agents treat colonisers of imperialism as animals forced to work under harsh conditions and left to die without hesitation. The study also explores the links between imperialism and moral corruption, alongside Conrad's interpretation of morally degenerate individuals. A materialistic attitude driven by greed for wealth exposes their lack of moral integrity and spiritual resilience. Furthermore, this study examines how the text influences and reflects the experiences and identities of people living under and following colonial domination.

**Keywords** - Colonialism, Heart of Darkness, Europeans and Imperialism.

## I. INTRODUCTION

As a postcolonial literary work, the paper examines themes of race, exploitation, invasion, and socio-political issues. The novel is important for critics because Conrad thoroughly discusses a universal problem, emphasising that the weak are often exploited and made to serve as slaves for the strong. The overarching idea reflects a dark attitude common among Europeans. Specifically, British inhabitants believed they were superior, considering other nations inferior, and thought they should govern these nations and bring them happiness. Naturally, these beliefs served as justifications for invasion. Economic interests and the need for raw materials were two key factors that drove these major countries to invade and colonise other nations.

As an examiner and overseer of the calamities faced by people and all other injustices in the universe, literature addresses this issue and explores the meanings and interests behind colonisation. Colonisation is often portrayed as a political matter rather than a literary one; however, literary writers analyse the problem within the context of their texts. As it became a literary theme, it deeply engaged with the literary field. Postcolonial criticism investigates ethnicity, examining the complexity of the relationship between the text and its social background. By the end of the Victorian era, Britain had become a superpower in Europe and a global leader, a tremendous trust carried by the British people. A phrase commonly heard in Britain was 'the sun never sets on

the British Empire'. This reflected the trust and loyalty of the British towards their country, and also showcased their pompous and commanding manner. It is regarded not just as a boast but also as a literal truth. With this in mind, Britain became the world's most powerful and industrial nation. The feature that distinguished Britain during its heyday was its military strength. By the end of the Victorian period, the British military was the strongest among all contemporary forces. The British army paid particular attention to the navy, which allowed them to explore the world and challenge other naval powers; for example, it played a crucial role in defeating the Spanish Armada. This could be seen as a factor in fostering the idea of colonialism when they could travel and explore, they could identify the most profitable countries in the world. Moreover, the weakness of those colonised countries was another factor driving Britain's desire to colonise them (Rinehart 603). Therefore, increasing military and naval power enabled Britain to colonise profitable yet weaker nations.

During the Victorian Age, which lasted roughly 70 years, individuals made significant sacrifices to achieve success in various pursuits. The spirit of exploration was prominent throughout the era, especially at sea, where Queen Victoria advanced the concept of maritime exploration. She also invested considerable funds in this endeavour. The nation's development continued, and the gradual prosperity led to important reforms and expansion. As a result, the British Empire reached the height of its power and influence. Imperialism became a doctrine of economic growth and exploitation, prompting the colonisation and conquest of Canada, Australia, New Zealand, India, South Africa, and many other countries worldwide. Queen Victoria was proclaimed Empress of India in 1876. Rudyard Kipling, a renowned writer, extensively wrote about imperialism in India (Loomba 8, 9). Therefore, the age might be regarded as a period of great exploration and widespread occupation.

There were many reasons behind colonisation, which became Britain's main concern by the end of the Victorian period. One of the reasons was Christianity, as the authorities of Britain at that time believed that Christianity should spread throughout the world and considered themselves responsible for this. They believed the torch of Christianity was in their hands, and they were responsible for enlightening others worldwide. That is why they began to plant their ideas, concepts, religion, culture, and literature in various countries. Another factor that propelled Britain to colonise other countries was its economic motive; the countries it colonised were rich in natural resources. The authorities in those countries were unable to find and utilise natural resources on their land due to their limited educational and scientific capabilities. Therefore, the teachings of Jesus and his apostles concentrated on the importance of sharing the Gospel widely, which became a plea for colonisation. It deserves to be mentioned that it was not merely Heathenism non-Christian practices that were considered to be something to be eradicated; instead, their concentration was upon their definition, and Christians were used as an alibi for the plantation of their identity, culture and values (Jordan 10,11). Therefore, economic motives and substantial humanitarian forces underlie the spread of colonialism. Christian priests and missionaries believed they were offering pagan people a more authentic, civilised, humane, and less superstitious religion. Humanism, a significant force in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, often supported colonialism as a means to improve social conditions and enhance human welfare.

Imperialism and colonialism have deep historical roots. English literature prominently features both concepts as serious issues. They are often explored through the lenses of power dynamics, cultural exchange, and the consequences of exploitation. Writers such as Joseph Conrad and E.M. Forster have poignantly captured the complexities of these themes, reflecting on the moral ambiguities and human experiences that arise from such profound historical phenomena. This thematic approach has become a significant trend in literature, particularly in literary criticism. For instance, Athens and Rome established colonies and expanded their empires primarily for economic reasons. The economy played a significant role in the emergence of colonialism, as the rapid expansion of countries and populations compelled them to cater to the needs of their populace. Consequently, they employed every means to achieve this; that is why big and powerful countries often occupied weak, fertile countries. The lack of understanding and development in those weak countries aids the colonising countries in overcoming all obstacles, allowing them to invade those countries easily. Throughout history, human society has experienced periods of domination and inequality. Imperialism acts as a demon for those nations that have no power. Imperialism takes on a variant of its classic form in a global context. It is a latent phantom in contemporary Asia, Latin America, and Africa. Those areas are politically independent but, in many ways, are as

dominated and dependent as they were when ruled directly by European powers (Said, *Culture and Imperialism*, 19). Therefore, this persistent influence manifests through economic exploitation, cultural hegemony, and political manipulation, often perpetuated by multinational corporations and foreign governments. As a result, the post-colonial aftermath is characterised by a complex interplay between autonomy and subjugation, prompting a re-evaluation of the power dynamics that define modern international relations.

Grain came from regions around the Black Sea to Athens, which exported pottery and other goods in exchange; these trading posts eventually developed into cities. Rome expanded its power over Italy and then established its political control over much of Europe, North Africa, and the Middle East to safeguard its colonies and trade routes. Therefore, the idea of colonisation emerged from interaction, which increased at the start of the twentieth century as countries gathered extensive information about each other through trade. Consequently, settler colonialism involves the process of "domesticating," which includes exercising control over land, populations, and resources to create a manageable, planned "domestic" space. The term "population economy" refers to settlers' ongoing concerns about maintaining and managing their dominance over their territories. These concerns often focus on biopolitical management, modifiable and organising populations through policies, governance, or social systems within the settlers' claimed domains (Veracini 16). Colonialism entailed the forced occupation of entire nations by other nations that exploited the colonised land economically. Modern colonialism persisted until the late 20th century. Postcolonial studies examine both the cultures of colonialism and the complex cultural issues that arose after colonialism ended (Barry 169-170-172). Thus, colonialism's aims, motives, and forms vary depending on its duration and the policies implemented.

## **II. REPRESENTATION OF BLACKNESS UNDER THE COLONIAL DOME**

Postcolonial criticism emerged as a distinct category only in the 1990s. As a critical approach, it profoundly impacts literary criticism because it demonstrates that literature, beyond its primary functions, can also engage with political issues, as evident in post-colonialism. Postcolonial critics place significant emphasis on cultural, social, regional, and national differences. As such, they challenge the universalist claims made on behalf of literature by liberal humanist critics (Barry 160). Therefore, colonialism has had many effects on literature. One of the most notable effects of postcolonialism is its tendency to further undermine the universality of literature because liberal humanist critics believe that literature is timeless and universal, with a perpetual effect on individuals and society; thus, they diminish cultural, social, regional, and national differences. Postcolonial critics, however, reject this notion and focus on the cultural, social, and experiential aspects of specific societies. They argue that judgment should be based on environmental factors and the context in which a text is written. The fundamental idea behind postcolonial criticism is that human culture is divided along ethnic and national lines, and whenever and however humans band together, they form unique and diverse cultures (Ryan 109). Postcolonial criticism is closely related to the period depicted in the text; for example, in "*Heart of Darkness*," a prominent colonial text, the issues discussed are tightly connected to a specific time namely when Britain was at the height of its power and colonising Africa.

Edward Said's *Orientalism* is one of the most important texts which elaborates the ideas concerning the literature and literary criticism, and he is a specific expose of Eurocentric Universalism a concept which give superiority to Europeans, the idea asserts and elaborates the affection of European towards themselves, as they consider themselves to be the best in the world. Another critical writer who exposes the idea of postcolonialism is Fanon in *The Wretched of the Earth*, which was published in France in 1961, and elaborates an issue of cultural resistance as he argues in his book that the first step for colonised people in finding a voice and identity is to reclaim their own past (Loomba26-27). The colonised nation should be aware and resist the colonisers to regain their own culture, history, and peculiarities by rejecting the coloniser's influence. Colonising countries always attempt to impose their own culture, religion, history, and beliefs on the colonised land, justifying their actions by portraying the colonised nations as savage, pagan, and illiterate. Such accusations are unjustified for their invasion; in reality, colonising countries are often unaware of the education, religion, and literacy of those nations, focusing instead on their investments and natural wealth. Coloniser countries frequently try to erase the history of the colonised nations. When a country is colonised, the colonial powers teach them their history and instil the idea that they had nothing and are nothing; additionally, they seek to convince them that they have no

identity and are unknown to other nations, thus presenting it as their duty to give them an identity. Eurocentrism, a term used by Edward Said in his book, carries an element of racism because, as Said describes, Europeans see themselves as the centre of all good things. Just as the Greeks believed they were the centre of civilisation, Europeans similarly view themselves as superior. Eurocentrism defines Europeans as superior and regards the West as the pinnacle, while all other nations are seen as inferior.

In the colonial dome, blackness and whiteness are viewed as a social body, which Charles W. Mills, Jamaican philosopher (1951-2021), has authoritatively called the "racial contract." This concept refers to an in-group agreement among the privileged, enabling them to monopolise moral and political equality for themselves and to define the subordination of the out-group as unequal. Consequently, it is an implicit or explicit pact among white people to sustain systems of white supremacy and to exploit, marginalise, and demote non-white individuals. According to this view, racism is not merely a deviation from societal norms of equality and justice but a fundamental element embedded within political, economic, and social systems. Indigenous people black are depicted by outsiders as phantoms or nonexistent. They are considered as beings outside their true identity, to be eradicated (Veracini 48). Therefore, black people during colonialism were seen by whites as tools or raw materials, from which the colonisers derived benefit. Such policies may be associated with what is known as "Vital national interests," which are driven by a country's priorities and survival needs. Establishing security and prosperity at any cost is often justified by the philosophy that "the end justifies the means." As a result, protecting territorial integrity, ensuring national security, maintaining political independence, and safeguarding economic stability are viewed as worth sacrificing another nation usually weaker. Governments frequently use this rationale to justify their actions. The distinction between colonialism and settler colonialism allows settler colonialism to be masked behind other forms of colonial expropriation. The ideological labour involved in this type of transfer should not be underestimated (Said, *Culture and Imperialism* 20).

Another profound suffering that the colonised people already undergo during their lives under the hegemony of colonisation is what is referred to as cultural assimilation. No doubt, this cultural assimilation resulted in alienation. Such a fact gives rise to the feeling of inferiority, which they cannot rectify. Colonial racism has psychopathological effects because it raises mentally disturbed behaviour. The process of cultural assimilation might be considered the cause of that. In a nutshell, the process is when the culture of the colonial power replaces the native culture of a colonised people. This profoundly damages colonised peoples. This damage is felt on two grounds: collective and individual. First, the culture of colonialism prevents the colonised from developing an independent sense of identity, which, in reverse, hurts their psychological development. Second, because Western popular culture equates whiteness with purity and goodness and blackness with impurity and evil, the colonised people learn to equate blackness with evil (Dini 10,11).

Colonisers perceive non-Europeans as exotic or immoral. Conrad clearly illustrates this idea in his work, showing Europeans viewing Africans as foreign, oppressing them, and exploiting them for their benefit. Overall, postcolonial criticism covers all analyses concerning the effects and consequences of colonisation. Moreover, they see these populations as burdens, believing that colonising is their duty. The inability to form a distinct identity, combined with such a reprehensible attitude, echoes Marx's famous warning to the French peasantry: "They cannot represent themselves; they must be represented" (Rabinowitz 10). Hence, what is exposed is the colonised people's failure to exist on their own terms. They are labelled as subcultures and marginalised to the point of being completely eradicated.

### **III. RACIAL PREJUDICES AND SOCIAL EXCLUSION**

One of the prominent ideas which occupies Heart of Darkness is racism against blacks; the idea is regarded to be the core key or one of the most essential principles of colonisation. Prejudice and racism are also one of the themes of postcolonialism literature. Conrad shows that there is a vast difference between whites and blacks, and this difference is not something normal because whites consider blacks as non-human beings. Racial discrimination is a considerable concept which embodies the entire novel. May Conrad covered his novel with such a concept to show the reality of the Europeans at that time because Europeans consistently asserted and emphasised their superiority over darker-skinned people.

This was most evident in South Africa, whose policy of apartheid was institutionalised in national laws; these laws included the prohibition of mixed marriages and the Immorality Act, which prohibited sexual intercourse and marriage between whites and blacks. The idea of racism against blacks was the most important issue and problem in Europe during that time, which is why Conrad makes it the central theme of his novel (Bressler205). Such a fact establishes the concept of elimination, which is a policy practised by powered colonisers against blacks. They wanted to expel them from their territory. Such phenomenon agitates postcolonial critics to be aware of and focus on race, prejudice, and ethnicity. They believe that such atrocities have been forces plaguing almost every society and region of the world. The difference in appearance, language, and customs have been used to justify designated groups of people, and they are perceived as threatening their security and interests.

There are so many factors behind prejudice against blacks; the most major are Economic and technological enhancement, military power and capability of exploration. Those factors allowed certain groups to dominate and socially expel others. There were places in Europe which were specialised for whites and black skin was not permitted to access there; only workers were used as a service for the whites. The Gropes Areas Act limited black access to areas reserved for whites, and the Population Registration Act categorised Africans into racial groups which were based on personal appearances, education and manner. Such a process is referred to as racial discrimination, in a nutshell, individual or collective act based on the assumption that one race is superior to another. This might include a law favouring one race over another or an individual's treatment of a person based on race (Dini 87). Undoubtedly, the outcome of what is asserted above might be racial tension.

Therefore, postcolonial critical writers must be objective and realistic with exhaustive information concerning history and policy. Being able to show reality as it is. Conrad's description in his novel is realistic because colonisation planted the idea of racism and prejudice in the hearts of European people, especially Britons. They claimed that they would enlighten the world. Still, vice versa, and, it was a fiasco because they claimed that they would spread the principle of Christianity in those uncivilised societies. Still, they acted against the tenets of Christianity, as they were proud and belittled the blacks, and this is one of the deadly sins. The most crucial thing which foregrounds the idea of prejudice against black is the ideology of the European's whiteness and lightness, whom they consider themselves to be attuned and equated to goodness and purity; moreover, they consider themselves to be intellectual and superior, and in contrast they consider that dark people associated evil and debasement, such oppression and ideologies mirrored within the boundary of the Conrad's Heart of Darkness.

The idea of exploitation was very prominent used by the coloniser countries, this idea emerged when they colonised other countries they were not looking to the inhabitants as a human being, they exploited them for their interest, the exploitation emerged as a result of the prejudice and racism, whites never looked to blacks as a human being they discriminate them and they tried to use them for their benefit, the apparent civilisation of the colonisers is only skin deep and there is an indifference to the physical suffering, even to the lives of the Africans, displayed by the Europeans who ignore the effect of their activities upon the natives. There is hypocrisy at the root of all this, and the novel continually emphasises the inability on the part of individuals to see the whole situation clearly.

Postcolonialism asserts that racism and ethnocentrism lead to profound injuries, so racism and ethnocentrism spread among societies due to differences in language and customs. Pride is undoubtedly considered to be one of the most profound factors which catalyse racism. The development of technology and Economic power prefer a specific nation over another. A particular nation is preferred over another not regarding biological specialisation but the social construction. Clour is not considered an advantage to be proud or a demarcation of good and evil. Prejudice against blacks is shown and described in Josef Conrad's Heart of the Darkness as a chronic disease which afflicted nations, especially the Europeans' prejudice against Africans. In the novel, there is a great racism and discrimination as the colonisers treated the dwellers as enslaved people or devices even though there were not sufficient food for them, so Conrad shows and Criticised all those unfair in his novel one can observe in the novel even makes himself a God, and regards that Africans are just enslaved people, the deserve nothing except working under harsh circumstance (Barry171). Therefore, Postcolonial theory elucidates how racism and ethnocentrism, fueled by linguistic and cultural hierarchies as well as nationalistic pride, inflict enduring socio-ethical wounds. In Heart of Darkness, Joseph Conrad critiques the systemic dehumanisation of Africans,



depicting colonial racism as a malignant social pathology rather than a biological inevitability. The novel exposes imperial arrogance, where colonisers elevate themselves to divine status while reducing native populations to expendable labourers.

#### **IV. OTHERNESS AND THE DIALECTICS OF COLOUR**

Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* is a narrative of intricate weaves that examines the colonial epistemology of race and the dialectics of colour through a detailed exploration of otherness. The novella foregrounds how racial difference operates as a semiotic mechanism for legitimising imperial domination and ontological hierarchy. From being a mere physiological descriptor, colour becomes a symbolic apparatus through which the colonised subject is rendered abject, deviant, and epistemologically inferior. Conrad's text, while complicit in certain colonial tropes, simultaneously destabilises fixed racial signifiers, exposing the ideological fault lines that underpin Western constructions of the racialised Other. One of the essential issues Conrad in his text is the contrast between whites and black; whites as it resemble the Europeans, they show to the reader that they are pride because they suppose that they are superior on the contrary, they scorn blacks or the Orientals and they presume they are inferior.

The idea of black and white, which shows in the novella by the writer, is too ridiculous, and more and less Conrad bravely, and readdressing his own identity, satirises the idea, as he elaborates that Europeans looks to the superficiality of the human beings and they depends on it for giving the identity, they regardless the equality between nations, as for them colour is everything and its only colour which creates this bulky barrier between Europeans and Orientals. Colour in the novella is used very effectively and seriously as a symbolism tool. Colours which are definitely black and white are used to symbolise black as evil and white as good, this assessment according to the European's perspective, but Conrad tried as much as possible to refute this concept.

According to Josef Conrad, people are thought to have white souls and black souls depending on their innate; that is to say, colour is not determine good and evil in human beings, moreover for Conrad person's soul often contrasts with the colour of his skin and throughout the novella this idea proved accurately. Europeans are shown in the novella by Conrad as being proud and self-like and having an enormous feeling of superiority over Africans. Mainly those Europeans possess a bright white colour, but at the same time they have a black wicked soul, so Conrad refutes this idea. For Conrad, to be good is to do charity, colour is not goodness. Conrad expands the idea and makes it a total inversion; for him, the white is bad and the black is good. For instance, a white-skinned person is thought to be evil and dishonest. "I met a white man in such an unexpected elegance of getup..."(Conrad 21). The white man is not expected to be good, so elegance of dress and being white resembles badness and holders of black soul. In comparison, the black-skinned person is thought to be truthful and complete with integrity. For instance, those words cited blow, shows how black Africans are pure and amiable. "An athletic black belonging to some coast tribe and educated by my poor predecessor thought all the world of himself."(Conrad 45). Colour as symbolism plays a large role in *Heart of Darkness*, although good and evil are the thoughts most commonly identified by colour in the story, other concepts are represented by colours, including death, industry, and cowardice. Using colours as symbols gives the reader another way of looking at ideas central to the theme of *Heart of Darkness*.

Light in the novella reflects or symbolises any object or concept that is positive, while darkness represents anything that elicits malice, so colour is always shown by Conrad as a paradox. Marlow finds Africans very dark as a cover. Still, at the same time, they possess a pure white heart which is far from greed, lie, theft and pride, and also their land is provoked by Marlow as the darkest place in the world as an appearance, but at the same time it is far from every badness, in contrast, Europeans shows by the author and Marlow having bright and white faces. Still, at the same time they possess a dark heart, that is to say, European's core is dark full of avarice, pride, ambition, enmity and hate with a fake whiteness and canning language, and definitely they resemble colonisers. Racism and ethnocentrism have been plaguing almost every society and region of the world, this bitterness disease is widespread among nations a particular nation has some distinctive qualities which distinguish it from other countries. The idea of pride will be implanted in the mind of its individual and soon they began to consider themselves superior as regard to other countries, the most vital example for that is the British inhabitants which

they consider themselves to be the most intellectual epitome all over the world, and they believed that they are the most suitable elite to govern the globe. Their silly theory is that they consider the superficial colour of their skin to be something which gives them the priority. They fix the white colour to be something ascribed to virtue and goodness, and they ascribe black colour to badness and vice; maybe if originally their colour was black they ascribed the black to goodness.

This idea is noticed very clearly in *Heart of Darkness* Kurtz does not consider black Africans even to be human beings just because they are black. This ideology is due to his pride and his black heart so, there is no doubt that what Conrad wants to say is that Black skin of Africans is not badness and vice versa it is goodness because under this blackness, there is a pure white heart, and the whiteness of Europeans more specifically Britons is not purity and virtue because under this whitening there is a black dark heart (Hall 269).

Therefore, the paradox of colour might be referred to as *The Darkness of Colonialism* because colonialism started to be a holy idea and sacred, as Europeans thought which they stated, to civilise people and educate them. Still, vice versa is practised on the ground. The idea is clear in *Heart of Darkness*: colonialism started to lighten the whole world, especially the lands or areas that seemed uncivilised to the Europeans. Colonialism started to spread Christianity, rescuing people from pagan worship; that is why Europeans, and more specifically Britain, started to invade profitable areas, and all the profitable areas were uncivilised; that is to say, they wanted to gain benefits rather than their fake intention.

Colonisers, were realising the fact that their project will not success, and even they were not aware of the project's failure, because civilising, spreading Christianity and educating uncivilised people was not their aim, those was rather a justifications for invasion, that is why their implantation was fruitless and even it wizens. Colonisation became dark, and it brings calamity, unfair and imperialism, because the colonisers planted the wickedness and unfair, this darkness affected them also so they fail from everything, they colonised countries for the sake of economy, expanding power and profits and their execution was religion, civilisation and education.

The idea of the darkness of colonisation is elaborated and shown by Conrad, as he criticises the coloniser's way of treating the colonised inhabitants, because in the novel, Conrad showed that the colonisers look to the eastern people as a slaves. Even though they are not considered them to be human beings, Britons are shown by Conrad through Marlow. Conrad asserts on the characteristics of Marlow as he embodies avarice, bawdy, pride, exploitation and wickedness, and this resembles the darkness of colonialism. It is not the skin of the Africans nor their Dark land, it is the heart of the Europeans. Conrad's conservative position is that all civilisation is a shame, because it covers and fatuously wishes away the disposition towards violence inherent in human nature.

Marlow, the narrator, takes a job with the Belgian company in charge of the ivory-production colony of the Congo in Africa. He travels up the Congo River towards the camp of Kurtz, an ivory trader who has adopted native ways and increased ivory production, but in a violent and ruthless rather than benevolent way. Marlow discovers that Kurtz has gone over to the side of the Blacks, taken a black woman as his wife, and come to embrace the truth of the "*Heart of Darkness*" that life is cruel and violent to succeed. Racism of the novel resides in its assignment of a cruel and violent. The novel suggests a fear of women. Kurtz's African wife is presented as threatening and powerful, and then asked what Kurtz's final word by Kurtz's fiancée back in Europe, Marlow says "your name" when in fact the words were "the horror the horror" women is the "horror" because she represents the principle of care and empty within European culture that are threatening emblems of weakness (Rean 119).

Overall, colonisation is as dark as the heart of Europe; it presents horror, as Conrad referred to it in Kurtz's final words. It is demolishing a nation and all its culture and history; moreover, its exploitation and dehumanisation mean the project is a failure, and Conrad shows the Europeans as a futile culture. This futility is underscored by the moral decay that pervades the colonisers, revealing a profound disconnect between their self-perception and the reality of their actions. Ultimately, Conrad's narrative serves as a stark reminder of the consequences of imperial ambition, challenging readers to confront the uncomfortable truths of their histories.

## V. FROM CIVILISING MISSION TO MORAL COLLAPSE

Colonialism became a significant issue because its upshot directly influenced colonisers. Europeans expected that colonialism would enrich their land and bring prosperity; moreover, they believed that through colonisation, they could control many countries, and the thread of their economy would be strengthened. They thought the implementation of their ideas in uncivilised countries, especially Britain and Africa, would grow. As a result of the growth, they could prolong their control over Africa forever. Therefore, the novella serves as a searing indictment of the moral duplicity on which the imperial enterprise depends. The rhetoric of enlightenment and evangelism in advertisements masks the practice of exploitation. The novella dismantles the civilising façade of colonialism, revealing its ethical inversions and systemic brutality. Through narrative irony and symbolic ambiguity, Conrad exposes the disjunction between proclaimed imperial virtues and their enactment. This study interrogates how the text subverts colonial morality, rendering it a hollow construct cloaked in ideological artifice. The imperialist project's inherent contradictions are illuminated by the hollow construct covered in ideological artifice. By weaving together stories of both victim and perpetrator, the novella forces readers to confront the uncomfortable truths about power dynamics and the human cost of colonial ambition.

Colonisation's principles were refuted; the colonisers could not obtain their dream, and all their expectations came to nothing. The culture, religion, and civilisation they imposed did not take root, and they lost their own. There are many results behind the reversal of colonialism principles; colonisers or colonisation create an economic imbalance. That is to say, it created classes in society, and the powerful and wealthy people exploited the poor. The capitalist system emerged, leading to the rise of the imperial system. The avarice in the heart of the European people led to the failure of the process, really, there was a purpose behind colonisation it was not for the sake of enlightening or educating other uncivilised nations. Their discrimination and pride were the two most crucial features which led the overall process to failure; the colonisers could not maintain the process, as one can notice in *Heart of Darkness* when Kurtz finally cried out "The horror! The horror!" (Conrad 145), those words were the last words of Kurtz. They resemble the chaos of the colonisation and the unfair which the Europeans created towards the black skin Africans, it resembles the brutality, the greed of Europeans, the failure of the idea of colonisation, the disloyalty of Kurtz towards his wife, the expansion of wealth by thieving and reverse of all principles (Galens 62).

Concerning the previous paragraph, Conrad portrays British imperialism, and Marlow processes the revelation of the imperial mask. Perhaps he might be depicted as naive because he begins the journey with abstract notions of the imperial mission but gradually becomes disillusioned as he confronts the brutal reality of colonial exploitation. Started to be glad to see the vast red signifying the British territory on the company's map. Perhaps because he thought he began to serve his country and Britishhood, but everything is upside down when he dives to the dark Africans. Conrad portrays the reality of colonialism in the form of the District Manager, the real imperialist taking full advantage of his position and of the colony. Marlow depicts Kurtz as a hypocrite -whited sepulchre- and sets him as a man who is bringing civilisation through imperialism to the savages but it was the idea of exploitation and massacre. The looting process stands behind it because ivory was the aim. Colonisation couldn't ever last or be prolonged, because of those factors, and the result was too horrible in the *Heart of Darkness*, Kurtz becomes mad, and the avarice invades him totally, he loses even his identity and sanity, and he is not ready to come back to his motherland. There is another thing behind the reverse of the colonialism principles, which is economic imbalance; it is that colonialism leads to imperialism, that is to say, imperialism is the descendant of colonialism, and the capitalism which is created in Europe was the result of colonialism, and it was the capitalism which makes an economic imbalance, so the result is that colonialism creates a huge economic imbalance and this disaster in the economy affects negatively colonization (Hall 272). Therefore, expansion and economic greed are arguably considered to be two major concerns of colonisers. Besides, they undoubtedly catalyse the reverse principals. In the setting of postcolonialism, economic greed -avarice- is the core factor of colonising. At the onset of the twentieth century, Europe expanded hastily, industrialism became the centre of interest, and competition was ongoing among those European countries due to increasing production. The need for raw materials planted avarice in the minds of those countries, so to quench the thirst of their greed, they started to colonise those countries that could supply their factories with their raw materials.



During the seventeenth, eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, European nations scrambled for control over other countries, replacing and oppressing the peoples inhabiting those regions. The oppression consisted of various kinds; they demolished the history of the colonised nations, informing those illiterate people that they were their sole guide to the world of civilisation, and actually, the sole aim behind this was to replace the culture of the colonised nations by their own culture, then to dwell there as long as possible for the sake of the colonised fruitful country (Barry 173). Hence, the idea of greed didn't rely on raw materials. Still, the Europeans tried to get benefit from all the minerals and metals of those colonised countries. The United Kingdom, when it colonised India, it tried to show the Indians that its arrival aimed to civilise them and to plant the concepts of religion and culture, but what it claimed by Britain was far from reality, because avarice was the cause of their arrival, maybe there where intentions for spreading Christianity, but again their aim for spreading Christianity was for the sake of political enhancement. Kurtz's final destination reflects the ultimate aim of imperialism and the total revelation of the hypocrisy of imperialism. His house in the inner station portrays chaos, decay, and horror; besides, it shows the total falling apart of the imperial mask. It is a striking and sinister place, with heads of victims mounted on stakes, positioned as warnings or trophies around the area. This horrific detail reflects Kurtz's descent into moral and psychological darkness. It is his complete dominance and the corruption of imperialism, perhaps because of the physical manifestation of his autocratic practice and his being godlike among the local people. Such a representation depicts, in particular, the reverse of evangelism. The house and station imagery underscores the novella's central critique of colonial exploitation and the fragile boundary between civilisation and savagery.

Ultimately, colonisation could not achieve its goals; the process was unsuccessful, leading colonised nations to begin preserving their identity and culture and rejecting foreign cultures. This resurgence of cultural pride led to a vibrant renaissance of traditional practices and beliefs as communities sought to reclaim their heritage. Consequently, this shift fortified their sense of self and inspired a broader movement for autonomy and independence across the globe. The colonisers couldn't even establish their ideas, cultures, and religions by force. Greed is a colonialism indictment because it ignores exploitation, which is necessary for greed to exist. This indictment underscores the inherent contradictions within the colonial enterprise, as the pursuit of wealth ultimately undermined the very foundations that supported it. The colonised peoples began to reclaim their narratives, demonstrating that external pressures or impositions could not extinguish resilience and cultural pride.

## VI. CONCLUSION

Colonialism as a plague afflicted some societies, primarily those weak in power and uncivilised in the early 20th century, by the most potent coloniser countries. The idea of the colonisers was to implant their culture, religion and habits in those uncivilised societies and to demolish all their values and history ascribed to those immature countries. Postcolonial literature, highly criticises colonialism and the bitterness of its atmosphere. Moreover, it includes the writings of those who wrote during or after colonisation, which they addressed as aftermath. Their themes primarily include racism, ethnocentrism, imperialism, national identity and gender and sexuality. Great writers wrote about postcolonialism, like E. M. Forster and Isaac Dinesen, but Conrad is the most famous one who wrote about postcolonialism. Finally, postcolonialism is a severe issue that has significantly impacted literature. Writers wrote about it, and they presented how serious the problems are.

Conrad, in his *Heart of Darkness*, shows the adverse effects of colonialism. He shows that the Africans are black, but they are white inside. Therefore, the findings of the study might be that beneath the surface, they possess the same emotions and desires as anyone else, highlighting the absurdity of racial prejudices. Through this lens, Conrad critiques the dehumanising impact of imperialism, revealing how it corrupts both the colonisers and the colonised. He also shows the paradox of colour by showing the white complexion of the Europeans and their dark cores. This stark contrast highlights the moral corruption and emptiness often accompanying imperial ambitions. Through this lens, the work critiques not only the dehumanising effects of colonialism on the colonised but also the profound moral decay that afflicts the colonisers themselves. This duality is a powerful reminder of the complex interplay between power and humanity. Hence, it compels the reader to confront the uncomfortable truths about the nature of imperialism and its far-reaching consequences.

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