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Racial Complex and Cultural Paradox in Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*

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Dedication

With great honor, I dedicate this work to my beloved

Parents Athmane and Reguia who have been my source of strength and love.

To my loving brothers: Hossam and Hani, and my sister Hana.

I also dedicate this work with love and respect to my best friends: Ferial, Soumia, Chaima Radhia and Kamar with whom I lived the best moments in my life.

To my supervisor Lamdjed El Hamel and to all my teachers.

I dedicate this work to the best girl Safia who helps me a lot to do this work.

To my auntie Warda and my cousin Kalthoume who have supported me.

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Abstract

This study aims at examining the racial complex and cultural paradox in *Heart of Darkness* written by the Polish-British writer Joseph Conrad. This novel is considered as masterpiece and one of the interesting novels that tackles many issues including racism, colonialism, and imperialism. *Heart of Darkness* is based on Conrad's journey to the Congo River. The novel portrays the evils of imperialism on African people. This work attempts to shed light on the main themes of the novel (the racial complex and cultural paradox) using postcolonialism and new historicism, as well as taking into consideration the historical contexts and policies that surrounded the novel; mainly colonialism, imperialism and the Scramble for Africa. Also, Conrad's ambivalence toward Africa and European imperialism. Moreover, this study aims to explore racism in *Heart of Darkness* from a postcolonial perspective based on the critical thoughts of Chinua Achebe, Cedric Watts and Edward Said.

Key Words: Racism, Heart of Darkness, Civilization, Paradox, Colonialism, Imperialism, Postcolonial theory.

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General Introduction

The nineteenth century was an age of nationalism and an age of imperialism. The greatest of all imperial powers was England, which came to control a quarter of the earth's surface. It was the largest empire ever known in history. Many colonial writers and British in particular depicted racism and colonialism during this era, among those writers is Joseph Conrad.

The novel *Heart of Darkness* was written in 1899 in Blackwood Magazine. It was first published in a full book in 1902. It can be seen in many ways as the first twentieth-century novel. The novel recounts Conrad's journey to the Congo. It can be considered as an autobiography of Conrad's tragic journey to the Congo. At that time, the European countries were competing for expansion in Africa especially France, Spain, and later Germany and Belgium. Their scramble to Africa started by king Leopold II of Belgium around 1880's who started to get interested in the Congo after knowing about the richness of the area.

In his masterpiece *Heart of Darkness*, Joseph Conrad tells the journey of Marlow through the African jungle and his search for the European Kurtz who exploits the natives by imposing violence on them. It is mainly based upon Conrad's own experience in Congo when he learned how Europeans exploited and traded the natives for their own benefits during his own journey.

The novel gives importance to the pretexts of civilization which were used in order to hide the real aims of colonialism under the umbrella of helping black Africans who were considered as backward people and savages.

Since much ink has been shed on discussing Conrad's attitude toward imperialism and Africans in the novel, the focus of this study is to explore the racial complex and the cultural paradox of Joseph Conrad in his novel *Heart of Darkness*, based on the views of some postcolonial critics such as Chinua Achebe, Cedric Watts, and Edward Said.

Many researchers have studied the novel *Heart of Darkness*, however; little studies have approached the racial complex and cultural paradox in the novel. In this study, the researcher will analyze the novel *Heart of Darkness* written by Joseph Conrad who is thought to be ambiguous, ambivalent, and indecisive in his novel. In addition, it would highlight how Conrad through his protagonist Marlow contradicts himself by a set of racial judgments that prove the weakness of his civilized stance.

To deal with this issue the present research tends to provide an answer to the following chief questions:

1. To what extent did the historical contexts affected the themes in the novel?
2. What evidences prove that Conrad is anti-imperialist (cultural paradox) ?
3. What are the racial judgements presented in the novel?
4. What arguments postcolonial critics and others presented in their criticism?

The study aims to;

1. Explore the influence of historical contexts on the themes of the novel.
2. Examine the ambivalence, paradox and racial attitude of Joseph Conrad in his novel *Heart of Darkness*.
3. Highlight the main arguments of postcolonial critics who believe that Conrad is racist, in addition to the arguments of other critics.

This investigation may provide a significant data for students in literature who are interested in the novel of *Heart of Darkness*. Furthermore, it would enlarge their horizons of perception to explore new aspects concerning Joseph Conrad's literary tendencies or other areas of study in *Heart of Darkness*.

This study will rely on Joseph Conrad's novel *Heart of darkness* as a primary source as well as a number of reliable essays, books, articles. The researcher will apply two

approaches, new historicism and postcolonialism. The new historicist approach sees that the literary text not as somehow unique but as a kind of discourses related to the historical, cultural, and political contexts. Secondly, postcolonialism is literary approach that explore the effects of colonization on colonized nations.

The study includes a general introduction, three chapters, and general conclusion. The general introduction introduces the research topic. The first chapter is a theoretical background and a key concepts account of the main approaches that will be applied to the novel, and its definition, emergence, concepts and principles. While the second chapter contains a theoretical background of the historical context of the novel such as: colonialism, imperialim, and the Scramble for Africa. In addition to the ambivalence and cultural paradox of the novel. The last chapter explores racism through the novel in general and from a postcolonial perspective especially that of Chinua Achebe. Also, considering other critics such as Edward said. At last, it contains a general Introduction which sum up the research and states the findings.

Chapter One

Theoretical Background of New-Historicism and Postcolonial Studies

Introduction

New historicism is a current critical approach which focuses on a parallel interpretation of literary and non-literary text. It is a term used to define the studies carried out by many scholars in the early 1980, mainly in Renaissance studies. Scholars gave this approach many names among them “cultural poetics”, “historical materialist criticism”. New Historicism sheds the light on the strong relationship between literary texts and history.

The postcolonial approach seeks to investigate how colonized people suffer from colonialism. This later leads to the emergence of the postcolonial theory which tackles issues such as migration, hybridity, identity crisis, diaspora.

This chapter is divided into two parts the first part deals with the New Historicism approach from its emergence to its wide spread popularity. Moreover, the chapter tackles the difference between old and New Historicism and presents some assumption in the field. The second part deals with the postcolonial approach including the definition, some key concepts such as Bhabha’s concepts of hybridity, ambivalence, and mimicry.

1.1.New Historicism

1.1.1.Emergence and Definitions

New historicism is a literary approach that emerged in 1980 by the American anthropologist Stephen Greenblatt who coined the term in his book *Renaissance in Self Fashioning: from more to Shakespeare*. He refers to the term by cultural poetic. Later on, in 1982 Greenblatt used “New Historicism” in his *issue The Forms of Power and The Power of Forms in the Renaissance* considering it as perspective and critical method. He states:

Set apart from both the dominant historical scholarship of the past and the formalist criticism that [...] the new historicism erodes the firm ground of both

criticism and literature .It tends to ask questions about its own methodological assumption and those of others [...] the critical practice represented in this volume challenges the assumption that guarantee a secure distinction between artistic production and other kinds of social production (Greenblatt 6).

New historicism is a recent critical concept that demonstrates a revival of interest in history. It is a restoration of the past from present stance, and an emphasis the role of the present in preserving the past and making it more relevant for the present. It refers to initial response towards unhistorical fields and a distinct focus especially in literary work's social and political context (Baldick187).

New historicism is established as reaction against the New Criticism and Russian Formalism approaches which focuses on the form rather than the social, biographical and historical context. Moreover, formalist criticism focuses on the text as an isolated work that has no relation neither with the author's life or intention nor with the historical, cultural and social backgrounds of the text. It focuses only on the form, style and language. However, New Historicism tends to focus on all the contexts that help in the production of the text as Abrams stated that instead of dealing with text as an isolated work, new historicists focus primarily to "the historical and cultural conditions of its production, its meanings, its effects, and also of its later critical interpretations and evaluations" (Abrams 183).

1.1.2. Old Historicism versus New Historicism

While old historicism makes a separation between a literary work and its historical background which is considered as a setting. New historicism considers the history as text. In this sense Barry pointed out: "As historical events are irrecoverably lost, history can only be known by the texts which have come down to us" (175).

In new historicism, unlike other approaches, time and culture are prominent elements in this field. It considers the literary work as a unit or institution rather than an isolated work. Hence, the text is a production of time and place and other circumstances because it is the portrayal of that time as Abrams declares: “the literary text interacts as both a product and a producer of that culture” (183).

In addition, new historicism focuses on new objects and histories unlike the old one which focuses on old objectivity and history. Cox and Reynolds declare:

New historicism is tends to regard texts in materialist term as, objects and events in the world as a part of human life, society, the historical realities of power, authority and resistance; yet at the same time, it rejects the idea of history as a directly accessible, unitary past, and substitutes for it the conception of histories, an ongoing series of human construction, each representing the past at particular present moments for particular present purposes (3).

1.1.3. The Main Concepts and Assumptions

New historicist scholars are interested in revealing the historical context in which literary text initially appeared and where it was published. Also, they are interested on understanding the sense of the past for the present, paying particular attention to the types of power that existed in the past and how they are represented in the present. Literary texts are instruments of power that serve as practical objects of analysis in that they contain the same power and subversion as they typically exist in society. In this sense, literary texts have become an important focal point for current attempts to resist power. New historicism can also be seen using the past as an inspiration for present-day political struggle and clearly stating that the field of literary studies is not excluded from the political sphere. (Brannigan 6)

New historicism sheds the light on the strong relationship between history and text, and the assumption that the literary texts are products of history. Hence, it gives importance to the role of the historical contexts in analyzing history. According to Louis Adrian Montrose the American new historicist, the concepts of “historicity of text” and “textuality of history” are the mainstream of new historicism. He points and explains that:

By the historicity of text, I mean to suggest the cultural specificity, the social embedment, of all modes of writing - not only the texts that critics study but also the texts in which we study them. By the textuality of history, I mean to suggest, firstly, that we can have no access to a full and authentic past, a lived and material existence, unmediated by the surviving textual traces of the society in question -traces whose survival we cannot assume to be contingent but must rather presume to be at least partially consequent upon complex and subtle social processes of preservation and effacement; and secondly, that those textual traces are themselves subject to subsequent textual mediations when they are construed as ‘documents’ upon which historians ground their own texts, called ‘histories’ (Veeseer 20).

New historicism considers culture as a prominent concept. Thus, the literary text is a cultural aspect rather than a part related to culture; culture can be symbols, behaviour or a text. The American anthropologist Clifford Geertz introduced his term ‘thick description’ which became a practice in new historicism. This practice paves attention on the result of a text in a multiple practices, without giving importance to the meaning of a text according to the intention of the author or the work itself. We could “focus on the effect of a text in a network of practices”. In addition, we could see the text as “an effective symbol: a social fact which makes action meaningful and is part of culture’s way of performing its actions in an

ordered and understandable way". He says: "Description of texts would be thick if they referred to the social and cultural forms in which the texts operated" (Colebrook75).

New historicism changes the way of interpreting texts because it does not separate literature from history. It believes that through the historical context, we can understand texts. It focuses on creating boundaries between the reality and the text. It challenges the canons of other critical approaches (Colebrook 23).

In this sense, Greenblatt confirms that New Historicism refuses any theory that can link between literature and history. As an opposite to Marxist and Post-structuralist approaches that rely on relating Capitalism to historical background. Also, He confirms that a text cannot be a unified unity and not an aesthetic tool because there is always interaction between political and poetic that helps to the creation of historical boundaries (154).

The notion that the text's meaning which is produced through the historical context is crucial concept in this approach; it is known as contextuality which assumes that the text is meaningless outside its original source. According to new historicists, understanding the meaning requires understanding its context. The shift from literary to culture poetic and from textual to contextual interpretation, Greenblatt explains the shifting in focus from text to context; he says:

Recent criticism has been less concerned to establish the organic unity of literary works and more open to such works as fields of force, places of dissention and shifting interest, occasions for the jostling of orthodox and subversive impulses [...] renaissance literary works are no longer regarded as a fixed set of texts that are set apart from all other forms of expression and that contain their own determinate meaning or as a stable set of reflections of historical facts that lie beyond them. The critical practice [...] challenges the assumption that guarantee a

secure distinction between ‘‘literary foreground’’ and political background or, more generally between artistic production and other kinds of production (Leitch2254).

In new historicism approach, contextual and intertextual readings are the required ways in order to read and interpret a text .In this sense, Colebrook asserts that the analysis of new historicism requires this:

New Historicism in many ways defines its practice against any theory of meaning in which the text would have its own single and determinate semantic content and moves towards the idea of the text as a practice: the critic focuses on the material effects and circumstances produced by the text and in which the text is produced. Against interpretation which would reveal a text’s hermeneutic depth, new historicism concentrates on a description of the discursive and material domains in which a text is situated. This anti-interpretive stance is a clear reaction against all those previous accounts of literary history which would see the text as possessing a meaning which could be related to, or explained by, a somewhat extraneous history (Colebrook 28).

According to Aram Veesser in his book *The New Historicism*, the main assumptions in New Historicism are as follows:

1. That every expressive act is embedded in a network of material practices
2. That every act of unmasking, critique, and opposition uses the tools it condemns and risks falling prey to the practice it exposes;
3. That literary and non-literary texts circulate inseparably;
4. That no discourse, imaginative or archival, gives access to unchanging truths nor expresses inalterable human nature;

5. Finally, [...] that a critical method and a language adequate to describe culture under capitalism participate in the economy they describe (xi).

1.2.Postcolonialism

1.2.1.Definitions of Postcolonialism

According to many scholars the approach of postcolonialism did not exist as an academic discipline before 1970. But, nowadays this field has its status over the world. However, this idea does not mean that postcolonialism works do not exist before 1970 because many journals and books tackle issues that related to postcolonialism such as colonialism and imperialism, and anti-colonial movements. In this sense, Neil Lazarus points in his book concerning the term postcolonial:

Postcolonial (or postcolonial the American variant), in these usages from the early 1970s, was a periodising term historical and not an ideological concept. It bespoke no political desire or aspiration, looked forward to no particular social or political order. Erstwhile colonial territories that had been decolonized were postcolonial states. It was as simple that (02).

The term postcolonialism is hard to define because it is a contested term. It is debatable due to the use of hyphen between 'post' and 'colonial' which gives different meanings towards colonialism and its effects. However, the current meaning of postcolonial does not mean after colonialism or the era after the independence but it means the first encounter of colonialism until the present day.

Postcolonialism is the period after the end of colonialism; it focuses on the study of colonial legacies after its breakup. As he states:

Postcolonialism can be seen as a theoretical resistance to the mystifying amnesia of the colonial aftermath. It is a disciplinary project devoted to the academic task of revisiting, remembering and, crucially, interrogating the colonial past. The process of returning to the colonial scene discloses a relationship of reciprocal antagonism and desire between coloniser and colonised (Gandhi 4).

There is no real separation between the end of colonialism and the beginning of postcolonialism. Alternatively, even after the process of decolonization and independence, the effect of imperialism still exists even today because of the hangover of interference in all the aspects of life. Bill Ashcroft et al define the term with hyphen in the second edition of the work, *The Empire Writers Back*, as all the cultures impacted by the colonial process, from the moment of conquest until today (2).

The field of postcolonialism was traced back to Frantz Fanon in his work *The Wretched of the Earth*, as Peter Barry declares: “the ancestry of postcolonial criticism can be traced to Frantz Fanon’s book *The Wretched of the Earth*, published in French in 1961, and voicing what might be called ‘cultural resistance’ to France’s African empire” (195). He supports for a violent response to the western rule. Many scholars find this resistance the cornerstone of postcolonialism. The theory is based on the reclamation of one’s own memory and past.

From another perspective, Ania Loomba argues that it has been proposed that it is more useful to consider that postcolonialism is not only a rising literary theory after colonialism and signifying its end, but more flexibly as a legitimation of colonial dominance and colonial legacies(20). She implies that if such a role is taken, people who are dispersed in the diaspora by the evil of colonialism will be included. For instance, people who are from

African-American origins and also people who have their origin or roots in the Caribbean but who reside in the United Kingdom would be included as postcolonial, even though they reside in the metropolitan world.

Postcolonialism resulted from the links with other fields. The connection between post-structuralism and postmodernism to Marxism leads to the creation of postmodernism. Leela Ghandi asserts that Many aggressive voices were eager to relate the connections between post-colonialism and post-structuralism to temporal volatility, and thus to academic style only. However, the connection with post-structuralism has made it possible for post-colonialism to achieve influential position within the framework of metropolitan academia. Thus, in a move from Marxist thoughts primarily economic paradigms, postcolonialism has learned to identify the material consequences and repercussions of colonialism as an epistemological apathy at the core of Western rational thinking (25-26).

Postcolonialism is an interdisciplinary research discipline devoted to the examination of Western colonization and its social, cultural, historical, political effect on previously colonized areas such as the African continent, the Caribbean, the Middle East, South Asia and the Pacific (Cuddon 550).

Postcolonial studies seek to assist the complete and full decolonization of communities in both psychological and political terms involving large and strong recoveries of pre-colonial culture (Ashcroft et al 194).

Postcolonialism aims to shift the direction of western perceptions of the East. As Young states: "Western knowledge was organized philosophically through binary oppositions which had the effect of demonizing or denigrating what western people often term the other: instead of master/slave, man/woman, civilized/uncivilized, culture/barbarism,

modern/primitive, colonizer/colonized, the postcolonial seeks to develop a different paradigm”(15).

Postcolonialism attempts to interfere and push its alternative understanding into the western and Non-Western power systems. It aims to change the way people think, the way they behave. It’s about changing world. It challenges privilege and power. It fails to accept Western culture’s dominance (Young 7).

In this sense, Young adds that postcolonialism is the outcome of what the indigenous people endured under the colonial rule. He insists that postcolonial:

Is the result of different cultural and national origins, the ways in which the color of your skin or your place and circumstance of birth define the kind of life, privileged and pleasurable, or oppressed and exploited, that you will have in this world (13-14).

Therefore, postcolonialism is a field that came to emphasize the importance of postcolonial peoples in the world. It emphasizes the postcolonial identity as distinct from the colonial one. According to Paolini, the postcolonial reverts to a recently established identity, far from western one, he declares:

Postcolonial writers “rehabilitate” the self against European appropriation. In fracturing imposed European master narratives and perspectives, postcolonialism replaces them with an “alternative vision”. This is particularly the case for indigenous peoples (India, Africa) who are able“ to challenge European perspectives with their own metaphysical systems (Paolini79).

1.2.2.Principles of Postcolonial Theory

The field of postcolonialism opens the door to the emergence of postcolonial theory. It is a theory that focuses on the relation between colonizer and colonized and to examine the heritage of colonialism. According to Oxford Dictionary, postcolonial theory explores confused cultural-political questions of national and ethnic identity, otherness, race, imperialism, and language during and after the colonial times. To dissolve the complicated relationship between imperial "centre" and colonial "periphery" it depends on post-structuralist theories such as those of deconstruction sometimes it is attacked for being too esoteric.

The postcolonial theory is based on the experience of colonized people who involved in independence movements across the world notably in Africa, South and South East Asia, and Latin America (Rukundwa and Aarde19). Moreover, they state: "Postcolonial critique can be defined as a dialectical discourse which broadly marks the historical facts of decolonization. It allows people emerging from socio-political and economic domination to reclaim their sovereignty; it gives them a negotiating space for equity" (4).

Postcolonial theory deals with various issues such as identity, migration, slavery, place, displacement...postcolonial theory is defined as the discussion of "Migration, slavery, suppression, resistance, representation, difference, race, gender, place, and responses to the influential master discourses of imperial Europe [...] and the fundamental experiences of speaking and writing by which all these came into being" (Ashcroft et al 2).

Postcolonial theory tackles issues such as language, hegemony. In addition, it addresses other ones including place and displacement, as Ashcroft et al say: "the special post-colonial crisis of identity comes into being; the concern with the development or recovery of an effective identifying relationship between self and place" (Ashcroft et al 8).

Postcolonialism is the child of postmodernism. In the third part, Blackwell companion starts by suggesting that postcolonialism and postmodernism arose almost at the same time that is why people find difficulty to differentiate between the terms. One of the statements used regarding postcolonial theory that is the child of postmodernism (Schwaz and Ray 431). In addition, they provide the example of Dirlik's argument that postcolonialism is a child of postmodernism. Dirlik condemns postcolonial theorists for their "residual classical Marxism". Since postcolonial theory does not exist in the field of postcolonial studies only, but also in other areas such as globalization, feminism, and cultural studies.

Postcolonial theory originated from the colonial testimony of Third World countries and from the discourses of minorities in the geopolitical division of East and West, North and South. They engage in those political discourses of modernity that aim to give hegemonic normality to unequal development and disproportionate, sometimes marginalized, history of country, ethnicity, culture, citizens (Bhabha171). From another perspective, Postcolonial theory arises from the European theory's failure to cope effectively with postcolonial writing's problems and varying cultural provenance (Ashcroft et al 13).

Postcolonial critics are concerned with the effects of colonialism in general, and its association aspects such as gender and class, they question how colonialists construct colonized regions and populations as weak, and even investigate how colonialism impacts colonized countries. Their main interest is the overarching concept of imperialism: how individual nations create relationships that protect their dominance. They use literature as a prime example of how colonial ideologies are conveyed via literature, often requiring a re-reading of Western canonical texts to reveal prejudices that exist in what is believed to be universal humanism (Cuddon551).

The search for identity is crucial notion in postcolonial field. As well as, the notion of resistance and reclamation. According to Young: “Postcolonialism has been created from the political insights and experience that were developed in the course of colonial resistance to western rule and cultural dominance, primarily during the course of the anti-colonial struggles of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries” (14).

Thanks to the Palestinian American theorist Edward Said and his seminal work *Orientalism* which points out to the cultural superiority of the west over the east. According to him Orientalism is seen “as a western style for dominating, restructuring, and having authority over the Orient” (3).

In addition, in his landmark *Culture and Imperialism* (1994), Said made the critical argument that imperialism is not only about occupying geographical territories, but also about legitimizing Western myths that claim the right to conquer. The idea is that, in the context of imperialism; European culture arises as superior to non-European culture.

However, before Edward Said other theorists have already dealt with this issue such as Frantz Omar Fanon in his works *Black Skin White Masks* (1952) and *The Wretched of the Earth* (1961). His works show the psychological effect of racism and colonialism on the colonizer, he focuses on the dichotomies such colonizer, colonized; self and the other.

Homi K Bhabha is one of the prominent figures in postcolonial theory and criticism, he brings into focus new concepts such as: hybridity, ambivalence, stereotype, and mimicry. Hybridity is a term coined by Bhabha to highlight the presence of hybridity of cultures, or mixedness in all types of identity. In the case of hybrid identities, hybridity refers to the fact that cultures are still in contact with each other, and this interaction contributes to the cultural mixture (Huddart 4).

From another perspective, hybridity is one of the most commonly used and controversial words in postcolonial theory. It refers initially to the development of new intercultural forms in the colonization contact zone. The hybridization process may take several forms such as linguistic, economic, political, racial... (Ashcroft, Griffiths, Tiffin 108).

Ambivalence is applied by Homi Bhabha to colonial theory of discourse, it explains the complicated mixture of desire and revulsion that characterizes the relation between colonizer and colonized. The relation is ambivalent, because the colonized subject is never opposed to the colonizer, clearly and absolutely (Ashcroft et al 10).

Moreover, Mimicry connoting the ambivalent relationship between the colonizer and the colonized also plays a significant role in the study of Bhabha. While the colonial discourse urges the colonized subject to "imitate" the colonizer, the result is never a clear replication of those characteristics, but the colonizer's "blurred copy". Thus, Mimicry locates a gap in the stability of colonial domination, an inconsistency in its regulation of the colonized behaviour (Ashcroft et al 139).

In addition, Huddart argues that mimicry in the writing of Bhabha is an exaggerated copy of language, culture, manners, and ideas, and here the exaggeration means mimicry is duplication with distinction (39).

Postcolonial theory shifts and changes the traditional thinking about the dominance of the west over the rest and gives voice to the marginalized and weak people. In this sense, Robert Young views postcolonialism as: "a body of writing that attempts to shift the dominant ways in which the relations between western and non-western people and their worlds are viewed" (2).

According to Young, postcolonial analysis has adopted a set of goals: the re-examination of the historical background of colonialism from the point of view of the

colonized; the evaluation of the economic and cultural effect of colonialism on both the colonized people and the colonizing powers and the analysis of decolonization process and, most of all, to engage in the strategies of democratic emancipation that include fair access to natural resources, the challenging of systems of dominance and the enunciation of cultural and political identities (Habib739).

Postcolonial theory has proven to be one of the most complex and controversial areas of literary and cultural studies since the publication of *The Empire Writes Back* in 1989.

Conclusion

To conclude, this chapter deals with the main two theories used to approach the themes of the novel; new historicism and postcolonialism. The first part tackles the definition of New Historicism as an important critical field that gives interest on the strong relationship between literature and history; also the key concepts and the main assumptions.

On the other hand, the second part deals with postcolonialism's definitions as controversial field that concerns mainly the nations who suffered from the process of colonization. In addition to the principles of postcolonial theory which deals with many issues such as: racism, migration, identity crisis. Also, some key concepts including Homi Bhabha's concepts of hybridity, ambivalence, mimicry, and the main landmarks of Edward Said: *Orientalism* and *Culture and Imperialism*. The researcher will use these approaches in order to analyze the themes of racial complex and cultural paradox in Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* in the next two chapters.

Chapter Two

The Cultural Paradox of the Imperialist Journey

Introduction

After highlighting the main theories in the first chapter, this chapter deals with the historical contexts of the novel as an application for the new historicist approach. The first historical background is colonialism and imperialism, in addition to the scramble for Africa and how the Congo River suffers from the Belgian and European dominance under the rule of the king Leopold II.

Also, the chapter sheds the light on the relationship between Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* and the Congo River. The novel recounts his experience to the Congo through his frame narrator Marlow. Finally, it explores the ambivalence and cultural paradox of the journey and how Conrad rejects the evils of European imperialism in Africa.

2.1.The Historical Context of the Novel

2.1.1.Imperialism and Colonialism as Historical Context

Imperialism is a controversial term. Historians and theorists have proposed various definitions for the concept of imperialism. Imperialism signifies the policy of expanding one country's position or authority over other countries and colonies. According to *Longman Webster English College Dictionary*, it is identified as “the strategy, action or support of expanding a nation's power and dominance, especially through territorial acquisitions or acquiring indirect control over the political or economic aspects of other countries” (735).

Additionally, another definition focuses on the goals and circumstances of British imperialism; It is a system of expanding the authority or power of an empire or state towards other nations whether through overt conquest territory or through covert controls of economic or political matters; a strategy of obtaining and maintaining colonial territories and

dependencies; a policy that tending to unify the various sections of an empire with different states in such a way as to guarantee essentially one state for all purposes (755).

Within his work *Culture and Imperialism*, Edward Said describes imperialism as the custom, ideology, and behavior of ruling faraway area over the metropolitan centre. Imperialism is basically the method or strategy of building or holding an empire (09). Furthermore, he states that at the end of the nineteenth century, there was barely untouched sector by the realities of the empire in Europe, the economies starving for overseas markets, raw materials, cheap labor and highly productive resources, and the establishments of defense and foreign policy where huge tracts of faraway lands and large numbers of subjugated people are increasingly being maintained (08).

Edward Said not only demonstrates the economical features of imperialism, but also reflects on the notion of cultural supremacy of one over another. He focuses on the prominent role of culture in contemporary colonial experience, and he notices that the unprecedented global scope of classical European imperialism in the nineteenth and early twentieth century always casts a tremendous influence over present time.

In his book *Imperialism: A Study* (1902), John A. Hobson the British economic journalist explains imperialism as the most influential ideology in the Western world and among the most successful politics; and he views it as a political and economic philosophy that first appeared in England directly after the Boer war. Also, Hobson explores and examines the basic concepts which underlie the imperialist system, and he studies the British imperialist method particularly in the nineteenth century.

He argues that imperialism is a strategy established by the producers, merchants and financiers of a nation who wanted to use their government to profitably dispose of their economic resources and thus protect their specific use of some distant undeveloped countries.

In addition, Hobson discusses the economical roots of imperialism. According to him, the key reasons behind the implementation of imperialism as a political strategy and action are a need for global markets for factories and investments. Imperialism was the duty of the finance chiefs and their associates. He says that they required imperialism because they wanted to make use of their country's public resources to find lucrative jobs for their money that would otherwise be extraneous (83).

On the other hand, Colonialism which is regarded as a result of imperialism, and often thought to precede imperialism, is the implantation of settlements on distant territories. Colonialism can be defined as the process under which a nation retains foreign colonies for its economical exploitation.

Colonialism involves the relation between the colonizer and the colonized. Tyson Lois states : "colonialist ideology [...] was based on the colonizers' assumption of their own superiority, which they contrasted with the alleged inferiority of native (indigenous) peoples, the original inhabitants of the lands they invaded" (419).

According to Elleke Boehmer, In her book *Colonial and Postcolonial Literature*, colonialism is: "The consolidation of imperial power, and is manifested in the settlement of territory, the exploitation of resources, and the attempt to govern the indigenous inhabitants of occupied lands often by force" (02).

Moreover, according to Hobson, Colonialism is a spontaneous explosion of nationality and he believes the test of colonialism is the colonists' ability to transfer the society they serve into the new environmental and social world in which they find themselves. Also, he stresses the fact that one of the goals of colonialism is ostensibly to portray true European civilization in a distant region, but there has always been a tension between colonial actions and imperial

needs in reality. Therefore, Hobson sees colonization as an effort by a nation to overwhelm its natural banks and to conquer the near or far from unwilling and unassimilated people (06).

From another perspective, civilization is a prominent concept that works alongside with imperialism and colonialism. Thornton states that smart people everywhere in the nineteenth century history believed they were the masters of an epoch of change and the agents of civilizing missions. He adds that Instead of civilizing the barbaric natives living in faraway lands, the primary goal of the colonial powers was to build the capital on which the neglected and the careless stood (34).

The writer of seminal works on British history, Archibald Paton Thornton, asserts in his book *Doctrines of Imperialism* (1965) that imperialism is mostly a statement made by those under control of their rulers, and made in the promise of immunity (27). Furthermore, in another book, he identifies imperialism as a policy that allows the city to establish and sustain an extrinsic scheme of efficient Management (03). Also, he contends that such control can be exercised through political, economic, military, cultural, religious or ideological methods or by a mixture of either or both of these, and that imperialism prevails with domination (05).

2.1.2.The Scramble for Africa

The scramble for Africa lasted from 1881 until the start of the First World War. Hence, the majority of the African continent was under the European rule in the nineteenth century. It was named so because it occurred in a limited time; when, from the late eighteenth century to the late twentieth century. The European countries began to spread in Africa. The Industrial Revolution and the Great Depression of 1873 helped it to emerge. The involvement of Europe in Africa began with the Portuguese and the triangle of slave trade, spanning from 1500 to 1850 (Vandervort29).

Technological innovation played a significant role in the expansion of both colonialism and the African scramble. New means of communication such as telegraph supported communication, even to the invention of the iron steamboat which at the time marked a revolution in the history of transport (Vandervort29).

During the last decades of the nineteenth century, substantial European existence in the Congo revived the rapid expansion of imperialist intervention. The European imperial powers have spread their control to almost one-fifth of the world's landmass and more than one-tenth of its population between 1870 to 1910. In a few years, Britain, France, Germany and Portugal controlled approximately 80 percent of the land of Africa between them. The scramble for Africa which introduced the massive change to the relation between Europe and Africa. Also, the economical status of Africa within the globe and to millions of Africans who found their lives unexpectedly under colonial government's political control (Rutz1).

The scramble for Africa has created a sort of rivalry among European countries. Thus, they began colonizing Africa to obtain more raw materials, such as palm oil and rubber, but the greatest resource was ivory, which was very costly (Graseck5).

The European countries decided to set up trading posts along the expense of East and West Africa. They also desired to extend their culture and Christianity through the development of Christian missionaries. They felt that civilizing the people was their priority, since they thought they were barbaric (Vandervort26).

Among those countries was Belgium, headed by King Leopold II, who was especially involved in Central Africa, the Congo. Around the age of thirty, in 1865, the king Leopold II ascended the Belgian throne. Since the time before taking the throne, he looked to the colonies overseas as a way to boost his authority and Belgium's national reputation (Rutz7).

The Congo River basin was a huge territory in central Africa, essentially disconnected from the effects of the global economy till the second half of the nineteenth century. The river currently extends for almost 3000 miles; it includes the largest tropical forest in Africa. It traverses central Africa and flows into the Atlantic Ocean. This vital region was filled with natural resources like palm oil, rubber, diamond, gold, and mostly ivory.

In 1876, the King Leopold II organized a conference to extend the Congo, in which he asked for the help of privileged explorers and geographers, he stated that the main aim of this conference was to civilize Africa. The conference concluded with the formation of the International Association of Africa. This was an organization designed to organize the last Central African exploration and to enable conquer Africa's borders under the goal of commerce with Europe (Graseck1).

Most of the conference leaders were struck by the King's concern for Africa. The actual intention was to take portion of Africa and promote navigation and discovery of Europe towards African rivers. As demonstrated by the passing of Henry Morton Stanley from continent to Congo River between 1874 and 1877. As a result of his epic journey, Stanley became a universal star and captured King Leopold's attention (Rutz7).

In a clandestine quest to discover the Congo, the king Leopold II sent Henry Morton Stanley, an American explorer; this quest lasted from 1879 to 1884(Hodge13). This journey's primary purpose was to conquer the vital area. He concluded treaties with local tribal chiefs to give Belgium full trade privileges. In order to do so, Stanley used misleading and aggressive ways; in the end, more than 450 treaties were agreed to sign. Those treaties allowed Belgium to have twenty-three years of control to the Congo Free State (10). This envied the other influential European countries and labeled as the start of the scramble for Africa and the new imperialism.

Between November 1884 to 1885, the Berlin Conference called for the participation of fourteen countries among them the United States. Its main goal was to reduce the likelihood of war between the strong countries: England, France and Germany.

The inspiration for the Berlin conference came from the concern that colonial rivalries in Africa could disrupt the European balance of power. To Leopold, the conference offered its best opportunity to justify its claim to the Congo through the recognition of the international Congo association by the great powers. He introduced the treaties signed by Stanley along the river, he pledged the IAC as target to end the slave trade in East Africa, and he promised to open the Congo for free trade. As well as to improve his purpose, he cautiously promoted his reputation as a humanist and philanthropist (Rutz8-9).

Since the king Leopold was founded, the International African Association was not welcomed to the conference. However; Stanley was present at the meeting to interview him with facts. After a huge discussion, they agreed to divide Africa; every European country has a piece of it. The latter resulted to the departure of many ethnic communities, as well as the coronation of the king Leopold II as the ruler of the Congo Free State on June 1, 1885. Like all of his time's European rulers, Leopold never enter to Congo because they feared about their safety. He was really the only person in history who controlled this huge territory by his own. In fact, all his pledges to civilize Africa expired, and he began to exploit Congo's natural wealth (Graseck11).

2.2. Conrad's Heart of Darkness and the Congo River

His original name Jozef Teodor Konrad Korzeniowski. He was born in Ukraine, 3 December 1857. He was an English and Polish poet, seaman and artist. His parents were polish patriots fighting for the polish liberation from Russian imperialism; however, they were exiled. He grew up to be a seaman after a hard childhood, and settled in England.

Despite knowing few words in English, he became a worker at a British merchant marine. He began to learn English by speaking and listening to his crew after joining the service. Conrad became an English resident in 1886 (Eagleton 161).

His career as a sailor, and his dream to be a seaman from his early childhood existed in all his works, especially in his work *Heart of Darkness*. The dark continent had been Conrad's vision. Approximately, all of his literary works consider the sea as their main setting and recount his journeys to specific areas. He says:

It was in 1868, when I was nine years old or thereabouts, that while looking at a map of Africa of the time and putting my finger on the blank space then representing the unsolved mystery of the continent, I said to myself with absolute assurance and amazing audacity which are no longer in my character now: When I grow up I shall go there (qtd. in Kossi Logan 137).

Joseph Conrad was motivated by his experience as a seaman to write many memorable literary works such as: *Almayer's Folly*, *The Nigger of Narcissus*, *Lord Jim*, *Typhoon*, *Nostromo* and other ones. According to him: "the appeal of the sailing ship goes far beyond her inner grace and beauty; the ship is the sailor's most intimate friend and partner". However, he was known for his masterpiece *Heart of Darkness* which was published in 1898 in the Black Wood Magazine.

Once he became a sailor in "Roi de Belges", he written his novel *Heart of Darkness* which was based on his trip into the Congo River. He remained there for six months but this eventually damaged his health and he was forced to return to England (Alexander 315). In *Heart of Darkness* and through his elegant, vague style that is marked by the use of multiple narrators; this made him the leader of fiction stories. The novel explains Marlow's journey to

the Congo on a quest to meet Mr. Kurtz. It is a reflection of his vision to the world as a theatre for the conflict between good and evil (Miller10).

Cedric Watts asserts that *Heart of Darkness* is a masterwork which simultaneously addresses several paradoxical themes. He states:

Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* is a rich, vivid, layered, paradoxical, and problematic novella or long tale; a mixture of oblique autobiography, traveler's yarn, adventure story, psychological odyssey, political satire, symbolic prose poem, black comedy, spiritual melodrama, and skeptical meditation (qtd in Bloom 19).

A lot of critics including Edward Said and the Nigerian critic Chinua Achebe have theorized on the novel. It has been the subject of several debates; whether it embraced or dismissed imperialism and colonialism.

2.3.The Ambivalence and Cultural Paradox of the Journey

Heart of Darkness by Joseph Conrad is among the most contradictory novels that portrays the evil of European imperialism; in particular the Belgian rule in the Congo River. Binary oppositions are linked to western ideas and beliefs; they used them to distinguish between colonizers and colonized people (Ashcroft et al 20).

In *Heart of Darkness*, Conrad does not accept the hegemony of western civilization over colonized countries, nor promotes the supremacy of European imperialism on the African continent. Actually, his impression towards colonialism and imperialism has been challenged and affected by his stressful childhood when he experienced Russian imperialism in Poland.

Based on Acheraiou views, Marlow's ambivalence represents what Conrad sees and feels about colonialism. Furthermore, he notes that Conrad simultaneously represented the colonized and the colonized; firstly because he witnessed the Russian imperialism and exiled. Last, as a colonizer due to his British citizenship (Acheraiou154).

Additionally, Terry Eagleton suggests that Conrad neither defends the cultural superiority of western civilization nor opposes colonialism, he declares:

Conrad neither believes in the cultural superiority of the colonialist nations, nor rejects colonialism outright. The message of *Heart of Darkness* is that Western civilization is at base as barbarous as African society a viewpoint which disturbs imperialist assumptions to the precise degree that it reinforces them (Eagleton135).

Heart of Darkness views as a great example about the ambivalence of colonial debate, which simultaneously supports and rejects both Africans and Europeans (Said 25).

In the novel, Marlow wanted to express a message that Africans as well as Europeans should remain where they belong; African in the jungle and European in their nations. However, this message clashed with the European policies of development, focused on moral reasoning or the aim of civilizing the savages (Collits100). As it is quoted from the novel:

The conquest of the earth, which mostly means the taking it away from those who have a different complexion or slightly flatter noses than ourselves, 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; not a sentimental pretence but an idea; and an unselfish belief in the idea something you can set up, and bow down before, and offer a sacrifice (Conrad10).

Conrad's ambivalent vision regarding Africa and African people is expressed by Marlow, the frame narrator. In the beginning of the novel, he views his journey as an exploration to the center of the world, although he shifted his point of view: "I felt as though, instead of going to the centre of a continent, I were about to set off for the centre of the earth" (Conrad 22). Then, he says: "Going up that river was like traveling back to the earliest beginnings of the world" (Conrad 67).

Conrad sent a letter to the Roger of the casement endorsing the creation of the African Association, in 1903. He declares: "It is an extraordinary thing that the conscience of Europe which seventy years ago...puts down the slave trade on humanitarian grounds tolerates state today"(Brantlinger363).

Throughout this letter, Conrad's support for Belgian colonialism contradicts his thoughts in *Heart of Darkness* and represents his ambivalence to imperialism (Brantlinger365). On the other hand, he states in another letter that black man shares the earth consciousness with white man: "The black man shares with us the consciousness of the universe in which we live no small burden. Barbarism per se is no crime deserving of a heavy visitation; and the Belgians are worse than the seven plagues of Egypt" (Watts 52).

As well as, he sympathizes with Africans as they were slaves. He demonstrated the effect of slave trade on them. Additionally, the novel represented the African's misrepresentation as criminals, outraged law:

It was the same kind of ominous voice; but these men could by no stretch of imagination be called enemies. They were called criminals, and the outraged law, like the bursting shells, had come to them, an insoluble mystery from the sea. All their meager breasts panted together, the violently dilated nostrils quivered, the eyes stared stonily uphill. They passed me within six

inches, without a glance, with that complete, deathlike indifference of unhappy savages (Conrad 29).

Joseph Conrad takes complicated and ambiguous views of European imperialism. In *Heart of Darkness*, England depicts both; the concept of efficiency and liberal imperialism according to Kurtz (Conrad49), and an outstanding wish through Marlow's audience (Bloom52). His paradoxical stance makes readers confused to differentiate his perspective toward European imperialism.

Based on Edward Said perspective, *Heart of Darkness* has two different sights. Firstly, it is an aspect of the western Colonial Strategy and Extension of the European imperialism. Secondly, it is 'less objectionable' because Conrad views Africa as a gift to Europeans:

One argument allows the old imperial enterprise full scope to play itself out conventionally, to render the world as official European or Western imperialism saw it, and to consolidate itself after World War Two (...) Conrad does not give us the sense that he could imagine a fully realized alternative to imperialism: the natives he wrote about in Africa, Asia, or America were incapable of independence, and because he seemed to imagine that European tutelage was a given (Said 25).

His tone of narration played an important role in establishing his ambiguous vision regarding Western imperialism in Africa. Since Conrad himself did not tell the story but his frame narrator Marlow. As Frances B Singh asserts that *Heart of Darkness* is neither colonialist, nor ironic. He says: "It is neither colonialist enough to be damnable nor ironic enough to be completely untainted by colonialist bias" (qtd. in Miller171).

Heart of Darkness is an anti-imperialist novel that showing a rejection of the western expansionism. By using his frame narrator Marlow, Conrad gives two visions concerning

imperialism. Firstly, it is the ironic vision that considers imperialism as a progressive collapse of European's morals. Secondly, the vision that views imperialism as an existential mission and desire.

In the novel, Conrad describes the failure of the Belgian rule in the Congo and the abuse of the natural resources through Marlow's sarcastic style. He says:

Once a white man in an unbuttoned uniform, camping on the path with an armed escort of lank Zanzibaris, very hospitable and festive— not to say drunk. Was looking after the upkeep of the road, he declared. Can't say I saw any road or any upkeep, unless the body of a middle-aged negro, with a bullet-hole in the forehead, upon which I absolutely stumbled three miles farther on, may be considered as a permanent improvement (Conrad38).

Conclusion

After pointing out to the historical contexts that surrounded the novel *Heart of darkness*: colonialism and imperialism, and the Scramble for Africa. Also, this chapter tackles Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* and the Congo River; and how he was motivated as a seaman to write his works especially his masterpiece Heart of Darkness.

Lastly, this chapter deals with the ambivalence and the cultural paradox of the imperialist journey and the different paradoxical views of Conrad concerning European imperialism and African people. The next chapter aims at exploring the main aspects of racism in Heart of Darkness based on the views of postcolonial critics such as Chinua, Edward Said and other scholars.

Chapter Three

Exploring Racism in Joseph

Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*

Introduction

Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* recounts his experience in the Congo River during the 19th century and describes his journey through the character Marlow. The novel deals with racism which is clear because of the conflicts that are between blacks and whites, and it explains the real aims of colonialism and imperialism in Africa.

Many critics believe that Joseph Conrad in his novel *Heart of Darkness* is racist. Mainly, because he gives much importance to black people's shapes and behaviour as an ugly people rather than criticizing the imperialist behaviour against the Africans.

Hence, this chapter aims to explore the features of racism in the novel. Also, it attempts to shed light on the main postcolonial critics such as Chinua Achebe who declares that Conrad is a bloody racist. The chapter also focuses on other critics who believe that Conrad is more realist rather than racist because he was against the white colonizer's behaviours towards the native Africans. Among them, Cedric Watt who defends Conrad and opposes Achebe, and Edward Said who declares that *Heart of Darkness* has two visions.

3.1. Racism in *Heart of Darkness*

In several works of British literature, racism is apparent because English writers place great emphasis on British superiority. They believe in the supremacy of whites over non-whites, and that whites have the burden and duty of giving to other races the privilege of their superior society.

Heart of Darkness by Joseph Conrad is a clear example of British literature that gave a vision of the Congo in the 19th century. Due to the cruelties of colonialism and imperialism, the Congo is regarded as a dark place. There was a fight between whites and blacks in the novel, and according to Conrad's portrayal, black Africans are viewed as criminals or barbaric

people, meaning inferior, although the whites are regarded as superior empires and they explain their existence in the Congo through civilization missions.

Heart of darkness is Conrad's 1890 account of his travel to the Congo. He was both a sailor and a writer. The novel is classified within the type of colonial literature. He presents his experience of his time in the Congo and Africa in the early mid 1890s through the character Marlow. The story is one of the nineteenth century's novels that describe the era of colonization and imperialism of Western countries in Africa. Africa was the target for many European countries that have fought each other to colonize more lands; the latter led to the scramble for Africa. They claim that their existence in Africa is very necessary in order to civilize and educate them; however, their acts were the opposite.

Europeans, and particularly during the nineteenth century, were interested in acquiring power and wealth without giving much attention to the ways in which they did it, they focus on their own interests. Africans were viewed as savages and animals or criminals because European nations claimed that Africa was a dark continent in which no civilization or religion existed.

Heart of Darkness is an effective and great representation of what is said before. It was set in the 19th century in the Congo when Britain was the dominant force as it dominated more territories in the world, and particularly in the Congo. The novel exposes the colonial power's hypocrisy and how they are racist particularly in the Congo and Africa in general. Conrad utilizes vivid imagery in his novel to show how colonialism destroys black African souls due to the ill treatment and greed of whites towards them.

From the beginning of *Heart of Darkness*, racism is apparent. Marlow began to recount his experience by telling his fellows: "I do not want to bother you much with what happened to me personally" (Conrad 10). He attempts to say that his journey is a weird and

upsetting one because of what he saw there and his comment served as a message to his fellows.

Heart of darkness represents an obvious picture of how the natives or Africans are viewed because of colonization and the ambition of imperialism. They are treated as slaves or artifacts rather than as human beings: “Black figures strolled about listlessly, pouring water on the glow, whence proceeded a sound of hissing; stream ascended in the moonlight, the beaten nigger groaned somewhere” (Conrad 37).

Heart of Darkness is a novel about racism and British supremacy since the British claimed that blacks or niggers like they named them lived without aim or objective because they had no civilization, no education, and even no religion. They claim that the blacks in Congo act like animals and their behaviours upset them:

It is paddled by black fellows. You could see from afar the white of their eyeballs glistening. They shouted, sang; their bodies streamed with perspiration; they had faces like grotesque masks- these chaps; but they had bone, muscle, a wild vitality, an intense energy of movement, that was as natural and true as the surf along their coast (Conrad 20).

Also, the novel describes the suffering of black people in the Congo who are forced to work hard without responding as Marlow sees them dropping and bringing a number of packages under the rule of white masters as a cattle of animals: “They were building a railway, six black men advanced in a file, toiling up the path. They walked erect and slow, balancing small baskets full of earth on their heads, and the clink kept time with their footsteps” (Conrad 22).

According to the novel, black Africans suffer from hunger and disease, and also from the racist attitudes of colonial powers that took their territories and wealth away. Everywhere

in Africa there is darkness; Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* is considered as a strong symbol which portrays colonialism and imperialism in Congo and Africa. He began to discover the brutality, horror and hypocrisy of imperialism and imperialists as Marlow goes into the Congo.

Marlow feels as he could not believe what he has seen, hence his portrayal is packed with details of darkness:

Black rags were wound round their loins, and the short ends behind wagged to and fro like tails. Could see every rib, the joints of their limbs were like knots in a rope; each had an iron collar on his neck, and all were connected together with a chain whose bights swung between them, rhythmically clinking (Conrad 22).

In the novel, there is no civilization in Africa because Europeans believe that Africa and Africans in general are uncivilized which means backward or primitive people. Therefore, Marlow describes his trip as a journey back in time as he says: "going up that river was like travelling back to the earliest beginning of the world" (Conrad 48). So, the British adopted all types of racism in order to get what they want which led to the misuse of power that reflected the evils of colonialism.

Heart of Darkness can be seen as a journey of a man who faces a number of political, moral and spiritual horrors. The Congolese are treated as slaves under the rule and dominance of the white man who tried to create excuses to punish or torture them since they are masters and superior. In this description, Marlow insists on the suffering of the Africans because they were alive physically but morally dead as shadows, he says: "Black shapes crouched, lay, sat between the trees, leaning against the trunks, clinging to the earth, half coming out, half effaced within the dim light, in all the attitudes of pain, abandonment and despair" (Conrad 24).

Furthermore, each statement in the novel depicts the suffering of the Congolese who are obliged to work under the white master's dominance who uses all kinds of racism and violence in order to scare and kill them. In the novel, Congolese have no names, they are only dead people or as shadows or black shapes suffering from starvation and diseases: "They were dying slowly-it was very clear. They were not enemies, they were not criminals, they were nothing earthly now,-nothing but black shadows of disease and starvation, lying confusedly in the greenish gloom" (Conrad 24).

The British invaded Africa and sought to spread their religion, language and civilization, claiming their duty to spread their civilization's dominance. Furthermore, they thought that their mission was to lighten the dark continent of Africa, and they claimed that Africans had no sense of identity that is why they wanted European assistance.

On the other hand, the British practices were against their civilization's mission as their presence was not in favour of Africans, but in their interest for Congo's natural resources, particularly ivory. Kurtz is a clear illustration of what is said previously. He is a man of high talent who wants to be a man of virtue, but Kurtz is the leader of the Congo's inner station.

His aim is to civilize and aid African natives, he sent to the Congo in order to bring values and European enlightenment to the weird and Dark Continent. Yet because of his ambition, he changes from a man with morality to an evil or monster, and he became inhuman. Nevertheless, he represents the British colonialists who see themselves as men of great values and civilized ones while they oppress and exploit Africans, and take their lands and natural resources.

Kurtz turns out to be the greatest evil of all as he changed his ideals and became a thief who violently takes away the wealth of the natives. Also, Kurtz forces blacks to work for his own benefit, he forces them to bear heavy baskets and handles them like animals.

3.2.Racism in Heart of Darkness From Postcolonial Perspective

Multiple critics consider Joseph Conrad in his novel *Heart of Darkness* as a racist writer because they assert that his novel defends white man's attitude in Congo in Africa, and it reveals the white man's supremacy. Among them, the Nigerian writer Chinua Achebe who delivers a lecture in the University of Massachusetts entitled *An Image of Africa: Racism in Conrad's Heart of Darkness*.

Chinua Achebe accused Conrad for misrepresenting Africa and the African people. Furthermore, he refers to Conrad as a "bloody racist" (Watts198). He declared that Joseph Conrad was racist in his essay: "The question is whether a novel, which celebrates this dehumanization, which depersonalizes a portion of the human race, cannot be called a great work of art. My answer is: No, it cannot. I would not call that man an artist" (Achebe9).

Additionally, he views that Joseph Conrad's depiction made the Africa as a place of horror and devils when he started his description by saying to his fellows "I don't want to bother you with what happened to me" (Conrad10). Thus, Achebe thinks that Joseph Conrad attempts to make Africa, a place of monsters and nightmares where there were ugly things, and the Europeans have the ability to see them.

Joseph Conrad begins the novel by describing the Thames River as a place of tranquility whereas his description to the Congo River is uglier because he viewed it as place of horror and darkness. To Chinua Achebe, the two rivers; the Thames and Congo River; are

portrayed in different way; the Thames river depicts modernity and civilization while the Congo River depicts darkness and devils.

As well as, he criticized Conrad for depicting Africa as the antithesis of Europe and civilization since he starts his novel with a scene from the Thames river; when the sky and the sea are related to each other without a joint, with a calm and peaceful atmosphere as he states:

The sea-reach of the Thames stretched before us like the beginning of an interminable waterway. In the offing the sea and the sky were welded together without a joint, and in the luminous space the tanned sails of the barges drifting up with the tide seemed to stand still in red clusters of canvas sharply peaked, with gleams of varnished sprits. A haze rested on the low shores that ran out to sea in vanishing flatness (Conrad 02).

In contrast, the Congo River is represented as a pre-historically, unearthly dark place, an unknown planet. Achebe suggests that Conrad gives an image that the Thames River is good and the Congo River is bad: "Going up that river was like travelling back to the earliest beginnings of the world" (Achebe 01).

Chinua Achebe believes that Marlow is interested in the African institution because he gives much importance to the behaviours and the shapes of the Africans. Also, Conrad insists on the inferiority of the Africans who are living in a dark continent without having any purpose, so he describes and expresses his personal thoughts which are considered as racist views.

Chinua Achebe asserts that Conrad's use of words such as niggers and savages reflects racism because these words dehumanize the Africans and transform them from people into animals or objects, and these descriptions pushes Chinua Achebe to classify Joseph Conrad as

a racist writer. Achebe accuses Conrad due to his use of words such as black shapes rather than Africans. Also his description means that Africans live without any purpose or goal. Through the description of Joseph Conrad, Europeans became superior because of their pride with their civilization and their race, whereas the African race became inferior because of their civilization and their behaviours which are presented by Joseph Conrad in an ironic way.

Furthermore, Joseph Conrad's description makes the African ways of expressing themselves an ugly one because they behave in a mysterious and strange way: "They howled and leaped, and spun and made horrid faces" (51). So, Conrad's use of words such as howled, leaped...dehumanizes the Africans.

In addition, Chinua Achebe believes that Joseph Conrad tries to relate everything bad and awful to the Africans especially when he describes their physical appearance: "In the evening three woman of whom one one albino, passed our camp; horrid chalky white with pink blotches; red eyes; red hair; features very negroid and ugly" (Conrad 65). So, he supposes that Joseph Conrad is a racist in his description because he relates the ugliness to the black Africans who have red eyes which means that African women are frightening, and he shows a kind of superiority, because he believes that the black race is a race of ugliness while the white race represents purity.

Many readers believe that Conrad did not respect the native Africans because of his representation which treats the Africans as sub-humans on which Regelin Farn said: "Conrad's representation of the Congolese as "savages" without merit can inspire a real craving for a historical facts .Because it depicts central Africa as being without a history and geographical unspecific "(07).

Also, Achebe criticizes Conrad for the image of the Africans; he supports his argument with two passages from the novel in which Conrad describes the Africans as black

shadows, savage, ugly and inhuman: “Ugly. Yes, it was ugly enough”, “it was unearthly, and the men were-No, they were not human”...etc.

Adding to that, Achebe refers to Marlow’s portrayal of the African mistress, he considers it as an irony since Marlow assimilates her to the wilderness: “She was savage and superb, wild eyed and magnificent She stood looking at us without a stir and like the wilderness itself, with an air of brooding over an inscrutable purpose” (Achebe 6).

In *An Image of Africa*, Achebe claims that Conrad is a racist and that a novel which so depersonalizes a position of the human race should not be considered a great work of art (Achebe 176). He points out his opinion:

The point of my observations should be quite clear by now, namely that Joseph Conrad was a thoroughgoing racist. That this simple truth is glossed over in criticisms of his work is due to the fact that white racism against Africa is such a normal way of thinking that its manifestations go completely unremarked (Achebe 176).

3.3. Otherness in Heart of Darkness

According to Aziz Fatima, Anila Jamil, Sidrah Hanif in their work entitled *A Postcolonial Analysis of Conrad’s Heart of Darkness*, westerns and colonized people look at each other; the Europeans believe on the inferiority of colonized people and regard them as “Others”. In addition, they believe on the richness of their culture, therefore they treated colonized people as sub humans. They split the universe into two parts and established distinctions between them and those colonized people (40).

By the thorough study of the novel, the hegemony of white races as dominant and colonizers over blacks as weak and colonized. Conrad has described Africans as wild, barbarian, weak, and blacks. In addition, he has depicted Africa as place of darkness, and the

Africans as cannibals. Africa is defined as a limbo of prehistoric origin. In the novel, Men are described as blacks and savages. According to the frame narrator Marlow, African natives are depicted as sub humans and nothing earthly but as diseased shadows of death and misery. He does not call them inhuman, He states that they are human but he still calls them barbaric, instinctive and savages. (Aziz Et al 40-41)

Africans are characterized as wild, savages as well as using an unrefined speech consisting of short sentences and howls that sound like a harsh gibberish (Achebe 127). Moreover, they are robbed of speech and viewed in some way as others since they use ambiguous language without sound. As Lahcen E. Ezzaher (98) declares; it is the influence Kurtz holds over them and through which he controls them: "They shouted periodically together strings of amazing words that resembled no sounds of human language; and the deep murmurs of the crowd, interrupted suddenly, were like the responses of some satanic litany." (Conrad66)

In *Heart of Darkness*, the African people were misrepresented by Europeans as others. As Aziz et al says: "Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* has been considered as one of his most famous and valuable works with reference to the specific phenomenon of othering" (40). Throughout this way, westerns views not only African natives as others, but also everything related to Africa. Africa is represented as the other world with bestiality that contrasted with Europe's intellect and elegance (Achebe3).

In the novel, Conrad tackles many themes including justification, power, and individual responsibility. Although Conrad's great story telling, he viewed as a racist by some of his critics, and he is considered as one of the pioneers who has established binary oppositions between the West and East in his novel. Chinua Achebe is among the critics who accused Conrad for being racist and depicting East as the other world.

According to Achebe, “Heart of Darkness” considers as a “resentful and lamentable book” that “set[s] Africa up as a foil to Europe, as a place of negations at once remote and vaguely familiar, in comparison with which Europe’s own state of spiritual grace will be manifest” (170). He adds that the main aim of Conrad is not to write a book of imperialism.

The novel of Chinua Achebe *Things Fall Apart* is contrasting debate against Joseph Conrad’s *Heart of Darkness*. In the novel, the Europeans work as traders for their own profits with the African natives. It recounts the trip of Marlow who search for Kurtz through the African continent. Kurtz abuses African natives. The novel deals with many issues including racism, imperialism, and colonialism. As well as, it highlights the western’s brutality toward Africans in 19th century. *Heart of Darkness* views as a major work in the agenda of the Western world.

Achebe, in his essay *In an Image of Africa*, asserts that Conrad has portrayed the Africans as the “other world, third world, uncivilized, barbarians, instinctive, pre-historic limbo, Orientals and impulsive”. They are mocked by triumphant bestiality. Besides that *Heart of Darkness* is considered as an anti-colonial and anti-imperial work by some critics, however; others such as Chinua Achebe assert that *Heart of Darkness* depicts dehumanization to African natives.

For Fanon, Africa is depicted as place of savages, barbarians and uncivilized people. It is a cannibalistic area, a Negro country and place where there is fanaticism. In his landmark *Orientalism*, Said declares that the colonized nation are considered as orient, uncivilized, rational, barbaric, romantic haunting landscape people (Aziz et al 43). Hence, Europeans misrepresented the Africans and their culture, history, and identity.

When he watches six Africans forced to work with chains about their necks, Marlow does not intervene or complain. He points out what he sees in their eyes the “deathlike indifference of unhappy savages” (Conrad 29).

He describes the black African as “a savage who was no more account than a grain of sand in a black Sahara” (49). Hence, Conrad represents Africans as slaves, savages, barbaric and uncivilized, however; he depicts Europeans as masters, civilized and intelligent. Marlow describes the “savage who was fireman” as “an improved specimen” (Achebe172). As well as, he relates him to “a dog in a parody of breeches and a feather hat, walking on his hind legs” (Conrad 43).

Joseph Conrad is viewed as a racist who portrays the Western vision of supremacy and the inferiority toward Africans, also he would combine ignorance with racism when he portrays the natives. He says: “They howled and leaped and spun and made horrid faces, but what thrilled you was just the thought of their humanity –like yours – the thought of your remote kinship with this wild and passionate uproar, Ugly” (Conrad 42).

In *Heart of Darkness*, Marlow is telling a story in which the black people’s dignity is in doubt. They are depicted as “exotic others, inferiors and uncivilized” While the picture of Africa that we see in his book did not originate, it was and still the major picture of Africa in the Western world. It is the classification that westerns make, by which they embody themselves as powerfull and African natives as powerless. Throughout his book, Conrad has categorized people socially which contributed to racism’s conformity. As state: “His ignorance of not completely “giving the natives human status” leads him to social categorization” (Aziz et al 44).

In *Heart of Darkness*, there are binary oppositions between the colonizers and colonized. The west is depicted as the “Self” and Africa as the “Other”. Otherness is a

prominent process in the novel. Achebe considers Conrad as a racist. He declares that Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* represents dehumanization for human being and cannot be a work of art. "Othering" is concept utilized by westerns to establish an African identity from a European perspective. European writers play a major role in the establishment of an African identity. The novel portrays the contrast between barbarism and civilization. Africans are depicted as blacks, barbarians, lazy, cruel, and uncivilized, as well as they are viewed as "Others". On the other hand, the whites symbolized civilization.

3.4. Heart of Darkness and Other Critics

Chinua Achebe's criticism raises several responses; some agree with Achebe that Conrad is a bloody racist, others reject it. For instance Cedric Watts who wrote an essay entitled *A Bloody Racist about Achebe's View of Conrad*, also Edward Said.

Cedric Watts sees *Heart of Darkness* as a great work of fiction and a gateway to the modern British literature (Watts196). According to him, Achebe disregards the novel's historical context, which was written during the peak of the European imperialism under the rule of Queen Victoria. Besides to that, Watts rejects Achebe's appeal that Conrad is "a bloody racist".

He believes that Conrad's representation of the blacks as a non-racist one by contrast to Achebe who viewed to it as a kind of dehumanization (Watts 198), he declares: "yet it is precisely against such dehumanization that the tale amply protests. Of all the people described, by far the happiest, healthiest, and most vital are the group of blacks seen paddling their canoe through the surf of the coast" (Watts198).

Furthermore, regarding the description of the African mistress, Watts finds it fair since both were affected by the death of Mr. Kurtz. He claims that Conrad's style enables the reader to see differences as well as the similarities (201).

Additionally, Edward Said is one of the principle critics of Joseph Conrad. He attacked Conrad and identified him as an employee of the imperial system. Also, Said asserts that Conrad uses the character of Marlow to express the world view about imperialism; the development, science, liberty and rule for the white, the weak and lesser for the primitive.

Although, Conrad reported the difference between the Belgian and the British colonial plan, he believes in the superiority of the westerners (Said 23-24). Nevertheless, Edward said has praised Conrad's narrative style in *Heart of Darkness*. He thinks that it as a reference to "the mission civilisatrice" under the goal to civilize the African continent. Both Kurtz and Marlow represent the European imperial dominance in the Dark Continent. Kurtz is the depiction of the white man who crossed the wilderness and Marlow as a frame narrator while the "other" is neglected "unthinkable" and the exploitation of the African ivory (Said 29-30). Conrad makes Marlow as a limited person in Africa since his comments goes to the narrative which he brings to us. He further comments on how the narrative gives us a view that there is nothing else just the past power and the spread of imperialism (24).

Conclusion

The main conclusion to be drawn from this chapter is that many critics had classified Joseph Conrad as racist and others had classified him as a realist. Chinua Achebe believes that Joseph Conrad is more racist in his novel *Heart of Darkness* because of his ugly description of the Congolese and he believes that his novel supports the white colonizer's behaviours towards the natives.

However, other critics such as Cedric Watts and Edward Said classify Joseph Conrad as realist. They believe that his novel depicts the white colonizer's ill-treatment towards the

Africans and reveals the real aims of imperialism which suggest that colonialism is for the benefit of the Africans while Joseph Conrad considered it as a lie for expansion.

General Conclusion

This research aims at examining the racial complex and cultural paradox in *Heart of Darkness* written in 1902 by the British writer Joseph Conrad. The novel fitted into the genre of colonial literature in which European writers portrayed the colonialism and imperialism of European nations from Africa to the Far East in the 19th century. The main aim behind this work is to analyze the main themes (racial complex and cultural paradox) of the writer who is thought to be ambiguous and ambivalent in the novel. Thus, the research will highlight how Joseph Conrad; through his protagonist Marlow, contradicts himself by a set of racial judgements that prove the weakness of his civilized stance.

The first chapter has dealt with the literary theories used to approach the main themes in the novel (racial complex and cultural paradox): postcolonialism and new historicism. The first part discusses new historicism approach, its definition, emergence, the difference between old and new historicism, and finally the main concepts and assumptions. The second part deals with the main definitions of postcolonialism as literary approach that explore the effects of colonization on colonized nations and its emergence as controversial field. The latter leads to the emergence of postcolonial theory. Also, this part tackles the main concepts including hybridity, ambivalence and mimicry.

The second chapter has analysed the cultural paradox of the imperialist journey. The first part deals with the historical context of the novel including colonialism, imperialism, and the Scramble for Africa. In addition, the second part highlights Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* and his journey to the Congo River. Finally, the last part explores the ambivalence and cultural paradox of the writer towards Africa and imperialism.

The third chapter has explored racism in Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*. The first element deals with racism in the novel from general perspective. Secondly, it explores racism from postcolonial perspective focusing on the critical thoughts of the Nigerian critic Chinua

Achebe in his essay *An Image of Africa: Racism in Conrad's Heart of Darkness*. Thirdly, it discusses otherness in *Heart of Darkness*. Finally, it illustrates the views of other critics on the novel including Edward Said and Cedric Watts.

To conclude, this work provides interesting information about Joseph Conrad's attitude in *Heart of Darkness*. It proves that Conrad is both a racist; according to his racial hints, and also paradoxical by his realistic portrayal of the evils of imperialism and his sympathy towards Africans. *Heart of darkness* is a masterpiece and one of the most paradoxical novels that depicts the evils of imperialism. Due to his complexity and his narrative style that played an important role in creating his ambivalent view concerning the European imperialism, he inspired many writers and open the door to the new era of modernism. This study is a humble attempt to add a new understanding to the field of postcolonial studies as well as an account of information that may help students in the literary field and open the door for new research.

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الملخص

تهدف هذه الأطروحة الى تحليل المركب العنصري و التناقض الثقافي في رواية قلب الظلام للكاتب البولندي الانجليزي جوزيف كونراد. تعتبر هذه الرواية القصيرة كعمل فني مميز و واحدة من اكثر الروايات المتناقضة التي تتناول العديد من القضايا العنصرية، الامبريالية، الاستعمار. تتركز هذه الرواية حول رحلة كونراد الى نهر الكونغو. تصور هذه الرواية شرور الامبريالية اتجاه الافارقة. من خلال هذه الدراسة نحاول تسليط الضوء على اهم النظريات الادبية المستعملة من اجل تحليل الرواية : التاريخية الجديدة و ما بعد الاستعمارية ، اضافة الى السياق التاريخي الذي يحيط بالرواية و المتمثل في الاستعمار و الامبريالية، الزحف نحو افريقيا. ايضا، تتطرق هذه الدراسة الى ازدواجية و تناقض الكاتب جوزيف كونراد اتجاه افريقيا و الافارقة. اخيرا، تناقش الدراسة العنصرية من منظور مابعد الاستعمارية خاصة من وجهة نظر الناقد النيجيري تشينوا اتشيببي، علاوة على ذلك، تصور ايضا ردود افعال مجموعة اخرى من النقاد امثال ادوارد السعيد و سيدريك واتس.

الكلمات المفتاحية : العنصرية، قلب الظلام، الحضارة، التناقض، الاستعمار، الامبريالية، نظرية ما بعد الاستعمارية.