

Research Article

A Far Cry for Enlightenment: Power Shapes Perception in Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*

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Abstract

Joseph Conrad is celebrated for his profound portrayals of postcolonial experiences. His *Heart of Darkness* reveals how the power dynamics shape the perceptions of enlightenment. This research sheds lights on the binary oppositions inherent in British colonialism which erodes the established norms and enlightening ideals. Colonialism has created a detrimental impact on modern humanity, fostering detachment, loss of faith, existential turmoil, and the disintegration of social structures. Conrad's depiction of Africa underscores the harsh reality of unconscious fears and deep-seated anxieties projected by English interference which stifles African autonomy. Through the dual lenses of Edward Said's postcolonial theory and Sigmund Freud's psychoanalysis, the research, explores the decline of western values critically addressing the colonial mindset and interrogating European civilization's alleged superiority. The research investigates how the imposition of power dynamics reshapes Europeans' perceptions of indigenous African population exposing the civilizing mission as a façade for hypocrisy and brutality under the pretense of moral edification. The findings offer significant insights into Conrad's enduring influence and persistent resonance with contemporary literary enthusiasts.

Keywords

Power Dynamics, Duality, Civilization, Corruption, Moral Awakening

1. Introduction

As a Postcolonial literature, *Heart of Darkness* sheds light on the conflicts between different cultures, particularly on the tension between the West and African continent. Against the backdrop of the late nineteenth century, *Heart of Darkness*, among the most remarkable colonial writings of modern era, explores the complexities and contradictions inherent in colonial domination. The Europeans embody dehumanizing impact of imperialism while the African landscape reflects fears and fantasies representing the silent marginalization, suppression of guilt and denial of responsibility. The narrative exposes the moral and ethical ambiguities of colonialism. Incorporating psychoanalysis into this analysis, *Heart of*

Darkness depicts the ruthless exploitation of labor and resources through violence, cruelty, and inhumanity exercised by the Europeans. Joseph Conrad portrays the African continent as a place of darkness and savagery, simultaneously criticizing the destructive nature of colonialism and exposing how power corrupts the ideals of enlightenment. Through *Heart of Darkness*, Conrad unveils the hidden nature and concealed truth lurking within the souls of European colonizers focusing on their journey toward self-awareness and moral awakening.

Edward Said's observations in his *Culture and Imperialism* highlight the hegemonic influence exerted by powerful na-

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tions. He notes that "In Europe itself at the end of the nineteenth century scarcely a corner of life was untouched by the facts of empire. The economies were hungry for overseas markets, raw materials, cheap labor and profitable land. Defense and foreign policy establishments were more and more committed to the maintenance of vast tracts of distant territory and large numbers of subjugated peoples" [9]. *Heart of Darkness* is a descent into the abyss, disguised as a pilgrimage of enlightenment. Joseph Conrad's narrative reveals the insatiable thirst for power corrupts the inherent goodness of an individual. In his *Heart of Darkness*, Joseph Conrad, highlights a striking difference between the lofty and idealistic notion of enlightenment espoused by the European colonizers and the grim reality of their actions. Europeans, who profess high ideals, actually engage themselves in slavery, forced labor, and genocide. *Heart of Darkness*, thereby, displays the malevolent face of European colonization emphasizing the stark division between two opposite spheres: the civilized domain of the colonizers referred to as "us" and the savage territories occupied by the indigenous populations labeled as "them". This binary classification underscores the constructed dichotomy between civilization and savagery, where imperialist endeavors are justified under the name of progress and enlightenment. Europeans are presumed to be more civilized and enlightened possessing superior intelligence and capability compared to the Africans [3]. However, aligning with Sad's examination, Conrad depicts that the Europeans' animalistic behavior of towards the vulnerable African demonstrates how their quest of power has transformed their perceptions of enlightenment into the acts of barbarism.

The concepts of power, perception and enlightenment are intricately connected. Power is a force that distorts the perception of civilized men. The false perception of enlightenment serves to justify their oppressive actions, perpetuating a cycle of violence and exploitation. *Heart of Darkness* is a comprehensive critique revealing how power corrupts in the hands of a few, perception deceives as a tool for domination and the quest of enlightenment becomes a justification for barbarism. It will not be wrong saying-absolute power corrupts absolutely.

European colonizers wield absolute power in their relationship with African natives, misusing this power to control the local population. This power dynamic is reinforced by the racist and paternalistic mindset, where the colonizers believe in their superiority and consider it as their duty to civilize the inferior beings through autocratic decisions denying any responsibility of the natives. The idea of cultural identity unveils the real face of new comers in *Heart of Darkness*. The European colonizers attempt to impose their culture on the Africans, thinking it a form of illumination. However, this imposition leads to a loss of cultural identity and creating a sense of alienation among the natives. Instead of changing the natives for the better, the colonizers become engulfed by the very darkness; ultimately abandoning their original mission. The economic exploitation inherent in the larger system of

global capitalism perpetuates a cycle of class conflict and inequality particularly evident in *Heart of Darkness*. The African continent serves as a substantial provider of natural resources for European colonizers who extract wealth from this region only to expand their own economy. Marlow's voyage into the depth of darkness brings to light the underlying motives of European capitalist ambitions, highlighting the exploitative nature of colonialism. Conrad's narrative suggests Africa is perceived dark due to the absence of religion, motivating Europeans to impose their own religious and cultural values in the name of spreading enlightenment. This mission purportedly aims at transforming African societies from primitive to civilized, instead results in the profound disruption of indigenous ways of life.

Conrad's portrayal of colonialism extends beyond physical exploitation to encompass psychological and moral degradation. *Heart of Darkness* delves into the complexities of human nature, exploring the "dark places of human psyche" [8]. European colonizers initially feigning mild intentions end up with barbarism. This duality underscores the psychological abnormality and moral decline precipitated by their imperial endeavors. *Heart of Darkness* establishes itself as literary cannon by not only portraying the dual images of civilization and barbarism but also examining the complex shades of human nature. This research aims to explore the conflicting images of savagery and culture. Conrad's narrative also touches on the transformation of natural law into civil law as discussed by Rousseau and Hobbes. This transformation highlights the tenuous nature of civil law when disconnected from a genuine foundation, illustrating how power can corrupt the very ideals. The veneer of European civilization is thin and easily stripped away, revealing the inherent savagery beneath.

Objective of the Study

The purpose of this research is to make the readers deeply understand how unlimited desire for power changes the mindset of a civilized individual and leads him to the grave of sin and immorality. Power when sought without limits or ethical boundaries, often erodes the values and principles that define a person as civilized. The relentless pursuit of control and dominance drives individuals to commit immoral acts, justifying any means to achieve their ends. They lose moral codes and become monstrous. It also invites readers to question the legitimacy and humanity of colonial enterprise.

2. Literature Review

The research aims to display multi-layered themes of colonialism, power and the unconscious examining through the lenses of critical theorists and philosophers. The depiction of colonialism as a ruthless battle for control, power struggle for supremacy and quest for dominance over the domains of fellow beings highlights its catastrophic consequences on native populations, as explored in various literary works. This novelette examines the detrimental fiscal and communal re-

percussions stemming from imperialism casting suspicions on European claims of “civilization, progress, and humanity” [4]. Edward Said in his seminal work “Two Visions in Heart of Darkness” addresses the racist underpinnings of Conrad’s narrative. Said argues that “Independence was for whites and Europeans; the lesser or subject peoples were to be ruled; science, learning, history emanated from the West” [10, 14]. This perspective underscores the inherent racial hierarchy and the exclusion of non-Europeans from the discourse of progress and civilization.

The consistent portrayal of Africa as uncivilized, uncultured, primitive, savage, uneducated, and barbaric reflects the mindset of the conquerors. So, the colonizers want to practice their morality in the new land; yet they fail to uphold the ethical principles they promote. To various extents, the colonizers are more savage beasts than of the black people. In *Heart of Darkness*, the interaction between the realms of Europe and Africa reveals the emptiness of colonial morality. Europeans consider the preeminence of imperial authority, the subjugation of African people, and the insatiable quest for power and wealth as an appropriate method of civilization over a dark continent [2]. A new empire has risen in Africa, forged through the domination of the natives and the obliteration of their vibrant cultural heritage and identity “Between the idea and the reality, between the desire and the spasm, between the potency and the existence, between the essence and the descent falls the shadow” [12]. This analysis offers a nuanced understanding of ethical justification for colonialism.

Chinua Achebe projects Africa as ‘the other world’ an antithesis to the civilized West, thus perpetuating racist stereotypes in his exposition “An image of Africa: Racism in Conrad’s *Heart of Darkness*”. Achebe accuses Conrad of racism for refusing to see the black man as an individual in his own right and using Africa as a symbolic backdrop for darkness and evil [1]. C. P Sarvan has criticized the novelette, Africa, for being an exemplar of an “accursed inheritance” confronted with lies about civilization and the outward look of existent things [11].

Nietzsche’s philosophy of “will to power” offers a profound framework for understanding the motivation of characters in Joseph Conrad’s *Heart of Darkness*. Nietzsche posits that the world is fundamentally driven by a certain will inherent in every human being, which he identifies as the will to power. He asserts “This world is the will to power-and nothing besides!” .Nietzsche further elaborates that human desires are never ending, fulfilling one desire inevitably leads to the emergence of another. He explains “Only where life is, there also will: not will to life, but - so I teach you - will to power!” [7]. This continuous cycle of desire and fulfillment underscores the perpetual striving for power and control. Within this context, Kurtz of *Heart of Darkness* epitomizes the will to power. Kurtz’s actions and ambitions are driven not merely the need to satisfy immediate desires, but by the desire to secure his legacy and influence even after his death. Kurtz relieves Marlow to ensure his reputation is preserved exem-

plifies the relentless pursuit of power.

Sigmund Freud’s *The Ego and the ID* offers a psychoanalytic perspective on *Heart of Darkness*. Freud’s theory of the unconscious suggests that individuals harbor repressed thoughts, emotions and desires that are difficult to confront in daily consciousness. Freud claims “The repressed is the prototype of the unconscious for us” [6]. Marlow’s journey up the Congo can be interpreted as a descent into the subconscious, where innermost fears and hidden desires drive characters’ actions in unexpected and often terrifying ways. This psychoanalytic reading reveals deeper psychological layers in the narrative beyond its surface themes of trade, corruption and political oppression. *Heart of Darkness* unveils “the knowledge of self, of the unconscious, and violence and oppression of and also of corruption of European civilization, and evil in human nature” [15].

3. Methodology

The study has been conducted with a thorough study of Conrad’s *Heart of Darkness* particularly using postcolonial and psychoanalytic approaches to examine the real life of the colonized African people and the hypocritical attitude of the English colonizers. Employing the qualitative method, the research aims to bring the idea of social alienation and dehumanization into the public domain. This method enables a deeper examination of psychological and social dimensions of colonialism emphasizing critical interpretation of *Heart of Darkness*. Also specific examples from the text are taken to prove that fact that Africans have been treated badly by the self-centered, deceptive and egoistic Europeans who claim themselves the harbinger of hope and illumination.

4. Discussion and Result

4.1. Crushing Cultures: Duality Complex and Identity Crisis

Heart of Darkness reveals the horrors of colonialists and their inhuman attitude. The natives are punished for violating the laws of white-men. They are quite indifferent to the imperialists and are often tortured mercilessly. Chinua Achebe emphasizes how Africa is ruled in the palm of European hands that come to establish white domination as a “civilized” culture delimited from the dark continent of Africa. Achebe accuses Conrad of being a “bloody racist” for invading Africa and depicting the inhabitants as “niggers” and “ordinary savages” [5]. Achebe claims that the Polish British novelist Joseph Conrad grossly misrepresents his African characters. As a result, he reinforces the perception of African culture and civilization as violent and archaic [1].

Imperialism and insanity inextricably linked blurring the lines between center and periphery, between civilization and barbarism. This blurring contributes to the stark contrasts

between light and darkness. The duality is evident; torches, fires and sunlight are juxtaposed with shadows, haze and darkness. Missionaries, explorers, traders, soldiers and conquerors all contribute to this complex image of heart. The tension between consciousness and lunacy pervades the narrative. The reason for this descent into madness remains a mystery, though it becomes apparent that it is driven by avarice and egoism. Freeing someone from his mental state seems straight forward, assists from such base motivations.

4.2. The Illusion of Civilization: Exposing Colonial Lies

Michel Foucault states about the powerful that “Discourse is the power which is to be seized,” [17]. Discourse simply expresses struggles and mechanisms of dominance. Through the mastery of discourse, Colonizers get power and can easily conceal their intentions. They establish bureaucratic institutions to control the natives, to organize the society and to distribute their wealth. The Africans have actually been touched by the white civilization but mostly in the negative way. However, the greatest atrocity against the natives is obviously done by Mr. Kurtz who puts the heads of the natives around his house to prove his power; “these heads were the heads of rebels. There had been enemies, criminals, workers—and these were rebels.” Thus, Kurtz has forgotten all his original idealistic notions of bringing civilization and has turned into a murderer of the natives who wants to “Exterminate all the brutes!”

African people live under the domination of European supremacy where many atrocities are committed in the name of civilization. Marx claims that Economic and historical considerations preoccupy human societies. The white people legalize their illegal actions using their good faces. In the Eurocentric societal portrayal of enlightenment, words appear enlightened, selfless, and mature. It outshines the interior regarding the psychosomatic setting in which humans are formed. Conrad uses the contrast of black and white to demonstrate the illusory masquerade of light in the backdrop of an imperialist, morally decaying world. Yeats in his “The Second Coming asserts about power and perception:

Things fall apart; the centre cannot hold;
Mere anarchy is loosed upon the world [16].

4.3. The Universality of “Will to Power”: Intellectual Development of Human Experience

A savage environment can have a profound impact on a civilized man. In *Heart of Darkness*, the story of Kurtz, an imperial agent, is chronicled. Kurtz travels to Africa with the intention of civilizing the natives by teaching them science and culture. However, he quickly develops into a tyrant exploiting the natives to death. According to Nietzsche, all human instincts, drives and emotions are manifestations of ‘the

will to power’. The ‘will to power’ is not limited to the body, but is a general law of evolution, driving the consequence of disparities according to a necessity that demands growth”. It encompasses intellectual activities such as moral reflection. Nietzsche asserts “There are no moral phenomena at all, but only a moral interpretation of phenomena”. He claims that the human body is more than just an assembly of organs; it is a hierarchy of impulses, each corresponding to a value and applied with a certain amount of force. These impulses function well when they are coordinated, but can lead to decadence when they become anarchic.

Nietzsche’s concept of the ‘will to power’ is universal, extending far beyond the human sphere. It is a fundamental nature of human being from the most miserable form of life to the highest. The entire world is based on power and nothing else. The term ‘power’ evokes might, physical force and even violence. However, for Nietzsche ‘the will to power’ is not primarily about the strength of a great man. He argues that power, as the source and objective of the will, is primarily of the mind. A great conqueror cannot be measured in terms of wealth or territory but in terms of his will. Nietzsche supports the intellectual development stating that “only a renewed aristocratic sensibility, a new cultural elitism, can save us” [7]. European power is generated by the weakness of the African natives. In Congo, there is no law that determines the individual, no superior authority to administer the justice. The absence of law does not mean absolute freedom as the law of the African jungle is governed by the European relations and behaviors. The wilderness awakens primal instincts in men allowing them to follow corrupt needs, passions and embrace extremities. Marlow feels the influence yet resists it; Kurtz, however, succumbs to it; perceiving the wilderness as a deity. Taking Nietzsche’s thoughts into account, a man can know himself when he starts to discover and develop his will to power. Instinct is a subconscious tyrannical process, aiming to satisfy a need or relieve tension. It is an innate component of the will to power, a need for domination that seeks to impose its values on other instincts. Power in *Heart of Darkness* illustrates the abolition of the spatial distance between the past and the present. Kurtz’s descent into Africa represents another reality of holding power but his ideal only emerges when he commits acts of savagery in the heart of wilderness. Thus, Kurtz portrays primitive instincts in any evolved person and his ruling thought is ‘the will to power.’

4.4. The Conflict between Internal Desire and Social Norms in the Pursuit of the ‘Overman’

A man driven by his ‘Will to power’ always strives to satisfy his dominant desires which makes him an ‘Overman’. Guided by these desires, a man may lose his internal world of feelings and thoughts, eventually descending into dark nature consumed by horror. An ‘Overman’ is a superior individual who transcends social norms and acts on his own ‘will to

power'. He aims to become someone who is more than a man surpassing his humanity. Nietzsche's 'Overman' is not merely a creative individual but an artist of his own life. His superiority stems not from evolution, but from self-mastery. By achieving power over the self, the 'Overman' gains absolute freedom. He seeks to rule, dominate and if necessary, resist and break all norms. He is obsessed by power; "My intended, my ivory, my station, my river, my-" everything belonged to him." [13].

The Europeans exercise their immense power to dominate the African natives justifying their wrongdoings pretending to bring light to the savages. Industrialization evokes the Europeans to believe in the theory of the 'Super man'. The colonists' relentless ambition for territorial expansion and accumulation of wealth reflects 'the will to power'. Though intellectually inferior, the natives excel in hard labor. In *Heart of Darkness*, Kurtz embodies Nietzsche's 'will to power'. Colonial expansion grants him the pathway to establish the essential resources and cultivate the conditions necessary to sustain his power and dominance. He has completely severed all connections to European civilization, casting aside its cultural and societal influence to pursue his own ambitions. Through Nietzsche's perspectives of 'will to power' and 'the Overman' a compelling parallel can be drawn between the ambitions of Shakespeare's *Macbeth* and Kurtz in *Heart of Darkness*. Both the characters embody the "will to power", driven by their overwhelming ambitions and desires for dominance. Macbeth's transformation from a noble warrior to a tyrannical ruler mirrors Kurtz's descent into madness and savagery. Both characters abandon their moral compasses in their pursuit of power. Macbeth's initial hesitation gives way to a relentless drive to secure his position, regardless of the cost. Kurtz, once a man of great promise and ideals, becomes consumed by his own god-like self-image. Both of them have rejected societal norms and created new values. They strive to transcend their humanity, seeking absolute freedom and power. However, their inability to master themselves ultimately leads to their downfall. Their "will to power" leads to ultimate destruction, demonstrating the perilous nature of unchecked ambition. Macbeth and Kurtz serve as cautionary tales about the consequences of allowing ambition to override ethical considerations and the human capacity for empathy and self-restraint.

4.5. Self-Mastery, Absolute Freedom and Spiritual Emptiness: Kurtz's Transformation from Idealism to Brutality

Kurtz has transgressed the bounds of civilization being corrupted by the pursuit of power and wealth that colonialism provides. Mr. Kurtz descends into insanity increasingly consumed by his desire for power and control over the African people. His descent into madness for absolute power mirrors the moral decay of the colonial enterprise as a whole. Initially depicted as a "universal genius" and representative of

"Western Civilization" Kurtz, more than just a collector of ivory, is seen as "an emissary of pity, and science, and progress". His mission, in his own eyes is not merely "to tear treasure out of the bowels of the land with no more moral purpose at the back of it than there is in burglars" [5]. To Europeans, Kurtz is an idealist, a visionary mind; a beacon of European heritage plunged into the obscurity while to the natives, he is glorified as a God. Kurtz sees himself entitled to rule over the natives brutally that Marlow critically observes. He never refers black people as humans. Skulls of the disobedient circle his hut, their faces purposely angled toward his home, serving as a grim reminder of his power and authority. Kurtz perceives himself as responsible for the education of the natives asserting that "Each station should be like a beacon on the road towards better things, a center for trade of course, but also for humanizing, improving, instructing" [5]. Kurtz's imperialistic endeavors to gain more power and influence result in his demise. About Kurtz's horrifying character, Marlow notes "I had to deal with a being to which I could not appeal in the name of anything high or low." [5]. Conrad illustrates the transformation of a civilized man into a savage when the allure of profit comes to play. In the quest of controlling his own destiny and building his own empire, Kurtz transforms himself into a superior demigod, isolated from his society.

Power gives identity although a man is consumed by the darkness of his soul. Kurtz becomes fierce, driven by the dread of losing what he owns. He begins to indulge beyond his needs reveling in the thrill of his newfound power. Kurtz, driven by his selfish desires, becomes consumed by a single purpose harboring a ruthless mindset that allows him to eliminate anyone who stands in his path. Kurtz ventures into a prehistoric land believing that he is on a noble mission to civilize its people. However, this façade of altruism conceals a more selfish motivation- his insatiable hunger for power and personal glory. Joseph Conrad paints Kurtz as a formidable figure with preeminence and an authoritative character wielding a seemingly limitless influence of holding the universe in his hands. Kurtz's ambitions are darkly tainted embodying "the colossal scale of his vile desires, the meanness, the torment, the tempestuous anguish of his soul". *Heart of Darkness* draws the readers into the episteme revealed while Kurtz confronts his death. Kurtz dramatizes power and terror. His pursuit of power manifests vividly in his interactions with the natives whom he dominates using his superior technology as a weapon. This dynamic creates a complex mix of awe and fear, elevating Kurtz to the status of a demigod in the eyes of the indigenous people. Yet, his obsession with power ultimately transforms him into an unscrupulous ivory trader responsible for widespread devastation and genocide. This greed of ivory and lust of power reflect not only personal downfall but also the colonial drive for empire expansion by an unrestrained quest for wealth.

Marlow observes Kurtz "had taken a high seat among the devils of the land," and contends "no fool ever made a bargain

for his soul with the devil" [5]. Articulate and domineering Kurtz insists that everything should be under his control. His passion permeates the atmosphere. Similarly, in *Doctor Faustus*, Christopher Marlowe presents Dr. Faustus as a personification of internal evil when he makes a pact with Mephistopheles to gain knowledge and power, ultimately leading to his downfall. Both narratives revolve around characters who confront the forces of the unknown for filthy lucre, leading to disaster for themselves and others. They make a pact with the devil crossing the forbidden boundaries and transforming into devils themselves embodying the dual meanings of both evil and light bearer driven by insatiable ambition and the thirst for enlightenment. Kurtz declares "Soul! I am the man who has ever battled with a soul" [5]. "The Hollow Man" by T.S. Eliot echoes the descent men like Kurtz fall from lofty European ideals into stark barbarism, leaving civilization populated by 'hollow men' [12].

4.6. Marlow's Journey to Knowledge and Self-Awareness

Psychological and *Heart of the Darkness* serves as a powerful symbol of a man's inward journey into the shadowy recesses of his repressed thoughts and emotions. It is an experience of entering into a primitive land and a penetration into the murky layers of the unconscious mind. These hidden thoughts and emotions outside of conscious awareness influence a man's behavior: "I saw the inconceivable mystery of a soul that knew no restraint, no faith, and no fear, yet struggling blindly with itself" [5]. Marlow illustrates a terrible picture of Congo with an allegorical storytelling technique to reveal a realistic understanding of the gloominess of human mind. Instead of bringing enlightenment, imperialists exploit native people. So, the purpose behind spreading enlightenment in Africa is a typical facade for exploitation. "Wearing those ignorant millions from their horrid ways" [5]. Marlow perceives the brutal truth beneath the pretense of civilization. He somehow manages to resist succumbing to the same darkness, grounding himself with a pragmatic awareness, reminding himself; "Try to be civil, Marlow".

Marlow's arduous odyssey into the Heart of Darkness and "the Inner Station," involves a profound inner voyage towards self-knowledge. This journey reflects the ancient adage: "Know thyself". It emphasizes that a drop of water in the ocean is more fleeting than the illusion of a dream. Marlow narrates his tale, shriving like the Ancient Mariner presenting himself as a 'voice' rather than a 'body' as his power lies in his words. He asserts, "The most you can hope from it is some knowledge of yourself that comes too late with a crop of inextinguishable regrets" [5].

Marlow emerges as creation shaped by the foundations of European society embarking on an expedition into the African Congo. By journey's end, Marlow returns to England not merely a traveler but as an enlightened man; yet profoundly unprepared to face cruelty and savagery he witnessed at the

heart of darkness. Hence, Marlow is often compared to Buddha for his timeless journey of knowledge. He peers beyond the veil of ignorance confronting the repressed thoughts and emotions haunting his unconscious mind. Marlow witnesses the tragic unraveling of a man's humanity recognizing how perilously he too has come to the edge and takes a deliberate step back. Marlow's path is marked by disillusionment. Forced to summon his inner reserves of self-control, he clings to the "surface reality" to shield himself from the terrible truth Kurtz has discovered encapsulated in those final haunting words: "the horror, the horror." The journey into the *Heart of Darkness* becomes a trial, a moral crucible where one either succumbs to destruction or emerges illuminated. The essence of insight and identity is found in the awareness of the conscious self. *Heart of Darkness* delves into the profound struggle of maintaining one's moral and philosophical compass amidst a world where darkness reigns.

5. Conclusion

In light of the observations made in this study, the professed goal of colonialism is education and enlightenment. However, Europeans, driven by imperialistic ambitions often use these noble intentions to justify the seizure of new territories. They engage in corruption and enslave the natives to exploit their resources. Despite the claims of bringing civilization, the invaders ultimately foster savagery plunging nations into the ocean of darkness and ignorance as absolute power corrupts absolutely. Their hidden immorality and suppressed desires often drive them insane. It is essential to acknowledge that all individuals live under the illusion of increasing profit and power, but misapplied power distorts human behavior and transmutes individuals into demon. This research concludes that imperialism is never a harbinger of light, but a disseminator of turmoil, disorder and subjugation. A man may start with a good will to spread enlightenment but he ends with an intention of overpowering. In this context, Conrad's exploration of enlightenment through power transcends literary endeavor offering a profound commentary on the complexities of multicultural societies. His narrative invites readers to contemplate the intricate tapestry of human experience in an increasingly interconnected world.

Author Contributions

Asma Yasmin is the sole author. The author read and approved the final manuscript.

Conflicts of Interest

The author declares no conflicts of interest.

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Research Fields

Asma Yasmin: Modern Literature-Cultural Studies, Eco-criticism, Trans-nationalism, Post-colonial Literature-Identity and Hybridity, Gender Studies, Comparative Studies, Visual arts