



THE CONCEPT OF CULTURAL IDENTITY IN JOSEPH CONRAD'S *HEART OF DARKNESS*

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Abstract

This article aims to examine the conception of cultural identity in Joseph Conrad's *The Heart of Darkness*. The problematic of identity is not a situation of our present day, but it goes back to our ancestral times. In the novel under study, this research will investigate on the problematic of race, gender, culture and religious aspects. The work, also explores the vision of western on African civilization and culture, and the strategies they have used to control population through practices such as: racial discrimination, assimilation, apartheid.

Key words: Cultural identity, race, culture, civilization, Western.

Résumé

Cet article vise à examiner la conception de l'identité culturelle dans l'ouvrage le cœur noir de Joseph Conrad. En effet, la problématique de l'identité n'est pas un événement récent, mais celui des temps ancestraux. Dans cet ouvrage, l'attention sera focalisée sur la problématique de la race, du genre, de la culture et de la religion. Cet article, parlera aussi la vision de l'occident sur la Civilisation et la culture Africaine, les stratégies utilisées par ce dernier pour contrôler le peuple Africain à travers certaines pratiques tel que : La discrimination raciale, le rajustement et l'apartheid.

Mots clés : Identité culturelle, race, culture, civilisation, Occident.

Introduction

For many centuries, the situation English people and African ones have been faced with is the cultural identity problem in its different aspects. The major parts of the fight against colonialism and neo-colonialism in Africa have focused mainly on the cultural freedom of the old and the new generations. This fight still continues today.

Cultural identity is a feeling of belonging to a group. It is part of a person's self-conception and self-perception and is related to nationality, ethnicity, religion, social class and generation. It is also a kind of social group that has its own culture. So, to speak, cultural identity is both characteristic of the individual and the culturally identical group of members sharing the same culture.

The concept of identity in the novel under study can be used in two different ways. First, it can be employed as a reference to the collective self-awareness that a given group embodies and reflects. It is in this option that Stephen Bochner substantiates

the scope of identity in these terms: "The cultural identity of a society is defined by its majority group, and this group is usually quite distinguishable from the minority sub-groups with whom they share the physical environment and the territory that they inhabit" (Bochner 1973, p. 23).

Bochner relates identity to collective awareness and shared values. Identity connotes idea of a social character which describes a set of traits that members of a given community share with one another above and beyond their individual differences. Such traits almost always include a constellation of values and attitudes towards life, God, and nature. Used in its collective sense, the concept of cultural identity includes typologies of cultural behaviours. Such behaviours are the appropriate and inappropriate ways of meeting people's basic needs and solving life's essential dilemmas. The concept of cultural identity incorporates shared premises, values, definitions, and beliefs and the day-to-day, unconscious pattern of activities.

A second specific use of the concept revolves around the identity of the individual in relation to his or her culture. Cultural identity in this sense is a functioning aspect of individual personality, which is a fundamental symbol of his existence. It is in reference to the individual that the concept is used in this work. In this perspective, Erik Erikson defines identity as: "An elemental form of psychic organization which develops in successive psychosexual phases throughout life. (Erikson E, 1959, p.101)

The main problem raised in this dissertation is Conrad's and Greene's perceptions of African and non-African identities in some of his novels. The problematic of identity is a long standing issue that goes back to ancient times. Through a critical analysis of Joseph Conrad's selected novel, this research aims to show that Joseph Conrad is a realistic writer who portray devoted characters whose mission is to travel to Africa in order to bring enlightenment to the untamed, the uncultured and the savage.

This article helps to uncover the different ways in which Joseph Conrad deals with the concept of cultural identity in his different novels to address the issue of change and the need for it in the target society. It also attempts to show that Africa's representation in the novels under study takes negative connotations based on racial discrimination, gender and ethnicity.

It also uses literary data which are classified into two categories: the primary and secondary data. The primary data are the texts from Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* and the *Lord Jim*. The secondary data are the literary criticism, articles, thesis and other materials related to the study.

1. Colonial period in Heart of Darkness.

Since the 14th century, African peoples were organized in kingdoms. They tried their best to keep their land fertile and safe from others over the years. But by the arrival

of the western on their coasts, the situations were changed. They come and destroy Africans and enslave them.

Some centuries later, after hard fights, slavery was abolished and Africa, despite all her lost had to turn her back on and to look forward her future. But no sooner had she started her exercise to heal her wounds than she was once again visited in the name of Civilization. So, a new chapter had begun in the history of Africa.

The Belgium King, Leopold II believed that overseas colonies were the key to a county's greatness, and he worked tirelessly to acquire some colonial territories for Belgium. After a number of unsuccessful schemes for colonies in Africa, Leopold II, in 1876, organized a private holding company disguised as an international scientific and philanthropic association, which he called the International African Society.

In 1876, under the auspices of the holding company, he hired the famous explorer Henry Morgan Stanley to establish a colony in the Congo region. Much diplomatic manoeuvrings resulted in the Berlin Conference of 1884-1885, at which representatives of thirteen European countries and the United States recognized Leopold II as sovereign of most of the area he and Stanley had laid claim to.

On February 5th, 1885, the Congo was the Free State (later the Belgian Congo, then the Zaire, and now the Democratic of Congo), an area which Leopold II was free to rule as a personal domain through his private army. Reports of outrageous exploitation and widespread human rights abuses including enslavement and mutilation of the native population led to an international protest movement in the early 1900s. Finally, in 1908, the Belgian parliament compelled the King to cede the Congo free. Historians of the period such as John Harris tend to take a very dim view of Leopold II. He is still a controversial figure in the Democratic Republic of Congo. In 2005, his statue was taken down just hours after it was re-erected in the capital, Kinshasa.

2. The mission and the role played by the colonizers

By 1800, the voices raised in opposition to the international slave trade were becoming more common. These voices originated from Africa, as well as Europe and America. Then, in 1571, France had banned the implantation of slaves. The opposition to slavery came more slowly to England, which refused to organize the status of slave in 1772. There are many reasons for this opposition. Clearly, many observers throughout the world were appalled at the inhuman treatment of slaves. However, there were also economic forces at work. The Industrial Revolution was turning the old international economy to the new one that emphasized manufacturing. Increasingly, Europeans and Americans looked to the rest of the world for two reasons. First, raw materials for their manufacturing enterprises, and second, markets for their finished products. Slavery was becoming less relevant in

this new economic environment. In fact, in Europe and America, many were arguing that slaves should be returned to Africa, which had been devastated by the loss of its working population to the traders. These returned slaves would provide the foundation for the new economic relationships, the labour to extract raw materials and the markets for finished products.

This new approach to Africa led to intense competition among the Europeans nations. According to the economic beliefs of the time, wealth was limited to resources. If one nation gained in its acquisition of wealth, the second must lose its. Therefore, as the nations jockeyed for position around the globe, they kept a careful eye on their competitors. If one nation gained colonial possessions, then the others would have to meet that challenge by gaining their own.

Europeans established control in many diverse ways sometimes by violent conquest, and other times by less direct means. One method was based on the argument that Africans had no identity, no culture, and the Europeans were just the ones to provide this assistance. This argument developed from new scientific theories of the time that were based on Charles Darwin's biological principle of "survival of the fittest". Westerners argued that the race was superior to all others and that its economic successes were attributable to racial characteristics with the scientific proof on their side, they set out to dominate other non-white peoples.

The novel emphasizes the interface of personal and social identities in different conditions: Conflicts between personal and public codes. This can be illustrated by Kurtz, a civilized man whose work in Africa especially in Congo appears to be more of a missionary work. The mood while reading the book is horrific. It makes a reader think about his /her heart, but it leaves him/her with a glimmering sense of hope.

Heart of Darkness can be analyzed in terms of its forms on an historical period, imperialism, colonialism, and cultural events of the era. The theme of European's travelling to under developed and uncivilized countries is noticeable in the book, which had a wider social and artistic scope. Conrad's works provide a link between Victorian values and the ideals of Modernism.

Joseph wrote the novel certainly to locate geographically the Europeans, since he didn't have enough information about Africa. That is the reason why literary critics, especially, Chinua Achebe, in his article: "An image of Africa: Racism in Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*" has criticized him for having a racist thought throughout the novel. Despite the book's intentions to expose the atrocities in the Congo, critics have objected to the depiction of Africans as primitives, and savages.

That image of Africa is negative, a portrait of a dark continent which lacks prestige, and language. In this novel, Conrad portrays Africa as it existed in his own mind

since he has no longer stayed in it. The title implies that Africa is the "Heart of Darkness", the evil place where there is no culture, no civilization, and no identity. Darkness is conceptually part of the book's title. However, it is difficult to determine what it means; everything in the book is shrouded in darkness. Africa, England, and Brussels are all described as depressing and gloomy, even if the sun is shining intensely. Here, darkness might be the description of the human condition which has thoughtful implications. Surely, Conrad's main purpose is not to express the inhabitants' condition. It must react imaginatively and assess aesthetic rather than sociological or ideological conditions. *Heart of Darkness* has become by many literary critics a very mixed work, a fiction full of ambiguities and contradictions. The novel makes us see not only a simple symbol, but also the revelation of conflicting and incomprehensible world they lived in.

Conrad's purpose in *Heart of Darkness* is to convey a vision of Europe through characters in his novel. He made Kurtz, a trade agent sent to Africa by the company to examine social cultural, economic and psychological problems.

Many travelled to Africa in the nineteenth Century described the same situation as Stanley wrote in his book, *The Dark Continent* published in 1897. It seems that Conrad had read these books and had been influenced by the images of Africa.

Africans in *Heart of Darkness* are seen as primitives, savages and inhuman. Savagery and primitiveness are present in every part of the story. Conrad respects savages clapping their hands stamping their feet, and maintaining their own cultural values and customs.

Moreover, the feelings of Africans in the *Heart of Darkness* are not the same as those of Conrad, but those of his narrator Marlow. Then, Marlow is the first narrator in the novel. His role in the story is not only an observer of truth, but also the one who sees the attack of the Congo by King Leopold II:

They were all dying slowly – it was very clear. They were not enemies, they were not criminals, and they were nothing earthly now—nothing but black shadows of disease and starvation, lying confusedly in the greenish glooms. Brought from all the recesses of the coast in all the legality of time contracts, lost in uncongenial surroundings, fed on unfamiliar food, their sickened, became inefficient, and were then allowed to crawl away and rest. These moribund. Shapes were free as air and nearly as thin (Conrad, J 1968. P15)

Peter Edgerly examines thoroughly aspects of racism in his work *Envisioning Africa, racism and imperialism in Conrad's Heart of Darkness*. In his view, the image set of the book is negative, a portrait of a dark, timeless place populated by a dehumanized race of savages who were lacking language. This image of Africa is as Peter tells us: The dominant image of Africa in the Western imagination and Conrad merely brought the peculiar gifts of his own mind to bear on it (Edgerly 1999, p.22)

It seems to me that the intention of the author in the novel is not only to show Africa as a place of wickedness and savagery, rather he wanted to show how the white man confronts his primitive nature to find his true inner self.

He mostly focused on the conflicts and moral ambiguities of Europeans' explorations and development of their colonial empires. Not only *Heart of Darkness* is a realistic novel, but also it portrays a real story of Africa in which many people suffered, and died because of Europeans' violence during the time of slavery and colonization.

Moreover, African vision is dependent upon a peculiar form of blindness to what Africa really is; and deafness to what Africa is saying. Conrad is blind to the ways in which Africa and the Africans continually interrogate their definition and implementation of the enterprise of progress. The image of Africa that Europe has worked with during the past hundred years is amazingly insulated from what is actually happening in Africa and what the Africans themselves think.

It is possible that the need to preserve that image is at the heart of the fact that some Western readers find Chinua Achebe's attack on the novel as racist both shocking and hard to take. When Conrad wrote *Heart of Darkness*; he did not foresee an African readership. Although he may have written from the best liberal and humanitarian intentions, he was unaware that the stereotypes and conventional attitudes about Africa that he took for granted would one day, be confronted by a readership that would not instantly recognize itself in them. It would probably have shocked Conrad to hear that these images that he took for granted as a natural way of talking about Africa may be "the *Heart of Darkness*".

They are the source of the unexamined idealism upon which the civilizing mission was based and the seeds from which its betrayal among its agents in Africa inevitably grew. Achebe was simply pointing *Heart of Darkness* towards a long overdue dialogue with people it projects as Europe's others. However, a postcolonial interrogation of *Heart of Darkness* need not be restricted to pointing out the racist stereotypes and assumptions, which underpin its image of Africa. One could also try to recuperate the narratives that Conrad suppresses. Africans had opposed the European domination of their continent from the beginning. Whenever this opposition gained momentum, the superiority of European military technology prevented any long-term success. A European writer, in a satirical poem on the Scramble for Africa, wrote that whatever happens to grin, Europeans had got the Maxim gun, and Africans not.

3. Colonial perception in *Heart of Darkness*

3.1. Europeans perception on Africa

The subject of European perception on Africa cannot be addressed without mention being made of Joseph Conrad whose name is intimately linked with Africa,

especially in the English-speaking world. Conrad and his novel *Heart of Darkness*, published when Europe's so-called civilizing mission in Africa was reaching a peak, seems to be a necessary reference for all people who write about Africa, and specifically about Central Africa. It is in this option that Hochschild in his work *King Leopold's Ghost* (1998) argues that "Literary scholars have made too much of the psychological aspects of *Heart of Darkness* while scanting the moral horror of Conrad's accurate recounting of the methods and effects of colonialism" (Hochschild 1998, p.160).

The colonial regime of the Belgian King Leopold II, the Congo Free State, became one of the infamous scandals of the turn of the century. Leopold II had acquired the vast Congo region through considerable investment of his own fortune in setting up his administration there, and by cajoling the great powers at the Berlin Conference of 1884-5 to award his International Congo Association title to what was to become the Congo Free State. By the mid-1890s the Congo Basin and its products became a source of great wealth to Leopold who used his riches to beautify his Belgian capital Brussels while using his agents in Africa to establish a brutal exploitative regime for the extraction of rubber in the interior forest regions of the Free State.

Leopold II ability to administer the Congo government coupled with his gift for self-promotion and dissimulation, kept knowledge of what was taking place to a minimum. Inevitably the truth leaked out as it became known through missionary reports and the like that the natives were being willfully exploited and brutally treated in the interest of amassing revenue for the King and his agents. Foremost in the campaign to expose the regime, based on forced labour and various forms of terror, was E.D Morel whose ceaseless pursuit of Leopold II's regime resulted in questions being raised in the British House of Commons, for Britain, after all, had been a signatory to the Berlin Act which bound the Congo Government, to bind themselves to watch over the preservation of native tribes and to care for their moral and material welfare.

The notion of the strong oppressing the weak- and the weak powerless to revolt surfaces in *Heart of Darkness*, where the White traders wantonly murder the Congolese in pursuit of riches and power. They came in Africa as military, merchants, and missionary; they divided Africa in order to rule. Another noble mission they had to achieve according to them is to civilize, enlighten and ennoble the savages that Africans are; they decided to corrupt us with and by some aspects of their cultures. They laid Africans on their ways of Holiness, for them, the Christianity is truth and real religion. They shared holiness with who needed to be guided to the road of the Lord Jesus. By force, curiosity or pleasure some Africans joined them leaving their own ancestral practices, gods, habits and customs to follow their white shepherds in hope of a paradise of which honour, they could not aspire to when alive on earth.

The white pastors tend to be kind to their congregation contrarily to Kurtz who was neither satisfied with the human. He put in trophies neither the atrocities he inflicted to Africans nor the restraint ideas they for them. Like Kurtz in *Heart of Darkness*, colonizers did not only rape Africa, they shot fires, killed his men, women and children. They also settle battles, destruction, tear and weaken in Africa. As if not delighted by the horrors in Africa, they imposed their values to Africans and this time as we could see in *Things Fall Apart* by Chinua Achebe, where some Africans walking Bible in hands and some in trousers and shorts really ridiculous; imitating whites in their clothing styles. Achebe, in his article, he argues that "*Heart of Darkness* is not a piece of great literature, but 'an offensive and deplorable book'" (Achebe 1989, p. 57)

Achebe condemns Conrad as a racist. He structures his argument around a few central ideas, such as the grotesque perception of the Africans by the protagonist, the antinomy between the Thames and Congo Rivers, the lack of historical fact, and the parallel between the African and the European women, among others. He misinterprets Conrad's work, and exhibits opacity to the narrative's message. He seems to purport, as any reader, a subjective interpretative reading of Conrad's book, with the peculiarity of continuously taking fragments out of their contexts, and creating an entire ideology behind them.

His main argument was that the European presents Africa as "the other world, and defines it as "the antithesis of Europe and therefore of civilization, a place where man's vaunted intelligence and refinement are finally mocked by triumphant bestiality" (Achebe 1989, p.76)

He misreads, and disregards the fact that many other readers see Conrad's Africa as a place where the white man brings and meets his own darkness and bestiality. Having no real emotional availability of exploring this continent what so ever, Conrad's European responds to it either by exploiting what he can (as the manager, the Company, and its representatives do), destroying what he cannot (e.g. killing the locals and blowing up hills unnecessarily), or displaying occasional prejudice, indifference and confusion as Marlow does in the novel.

Everything the reader knows about Africa is through Marlow's subjective perception of what he sees or does not see, of what he hears or does not hear, and, ultimately, of what he self-ironically understands or fails to understand. The reader has another type of anxiety than the one mentioned by Achebe: she anxiously waits to see if any truly significant contact with Africa, its people, or its culture occurs throughout the book.

Conrad assumes no task of presenting a good, objective or factual image of Africa, as Achebe would prefer; instead he critically exposes a refraction of this image in the European white middle class tainted perception. Indeed, many normal readers,

whom Achebe credits to be well armed to detect and resist underhand activity from the part of a writer, read into the novel its universal psychological implications that override Africaness or Europeaness. Marlow remains insulated from any real contact with the local culture; his stuck to the river journey serves to preserve a confused and contemplative attitude in him, rather than an involved state of mind. His African experience comprises very little fact, proves mostly sensorial, observant and rather interested in itself as an object of study than in the surroundings. Describing the other's eyes or looking into them serves just as a mirror.

It is said that if Africans were not interested in Conrad's compassion, what could be perfectly justified, maybe they would be interested in the honour Conrad bestows upon this continent by choosing Africa as a valuable background to shed truth on how limited and horrific the psychology of the white man is under all his civilized veneer. In spite of being safely dead, Conrad reminds the entire world that there is an Africa that was brutally colonized. In Frantz Fanon's view, the debate going about the past and present fate by having put his talent at work to write about this particular place.

Another argument brought in order to prove Conrad's racism is the apparent antithetical significance of the two rivers. Achebe thinks that "Conrad presents a Congo River as posing a danger to the white man, who could fall victim to the avenging recrudescence of the mindless frenzy" (Conrad 1968, p.237).

The description of a hostile animistic nature suggests resistance rather than obstinate racism. Nature seems to have a mind of its own, perceiving and reacting to invade aggression. The sabotaging message that it sends is a leitmotiv often employed in world literature.

Conrad uses Colonization in this novel to explore the questions about man's capacity to do evil. But the end of colonization has not rendered *Heart of Darkness* less relevant, since Conrad was interested in making a modern world in which colonization was simply a facet. By reading the novel, we can note that Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* prepares us for a new generation in which a new man has had to endure the psychic and physical pain of displacement and all the concomitant confusion of watching imagined concrete standards become mutable. Problems such as: discrimination, famines, war, genocide and murder attempt caused by some Islamist groups in some Africans countries seem to be early prefigured by Conrad in some of his novels especially in *Heart of Darkness* which bounds with passages that seem terrifyingly contemporary in their descriptive accuracy.

3.2. African perception of the Europeans.

On the surface, *Heart of Darkness* is a dream like tale of mystery and adventure set in Africa, especially in the Congo. However, it is the story of a man's symbolic journey

into his own inner being. A profusion of vivid details that are significant on both literal and symbolic levels contributes to the ambiguity of Conrad's narrative and has led to conflicting interpretations of its meaning.

Many critics such as Chinua Achebe and others have commented on Conrad's evocative powers in *Heart of Darkness*, paying a particular attention to his use of imagery, which manages to evoke a sinister atmosphere through the accretion of objectively described details of the African jungle and natives. The visual imagery, which heavily depends upon contrasting patterns of light and dark, contributes most appreciably to the consistently ambiguous tone of the work. To demonstrate the moral uncertainty of this world and of life in general, Conrad consistently alters common symbolic conceptions of light and dark. Thus, the white is neither synonymous with good, nor black with evil as Conrad portrays, but rather both symbols are interchangeable. The term White and Dark not only is in Europe, but also in Africa, and even everywhere. Throughout the novel, white characters have identities and black characters are portrayed as uncultured (no identity), and they have negative connotations. For me, White and Black characters are alternately examples of acute suffering, civilized, dignity, moral refinement, or violent savagery, and all of them have identities. This demonstrates that no race is wholly good or bad, and that all human beings are a confusing mixture of propensities for all types of behaviour. Conrad's presents a picture of the principal characters and events. The ambiguity of description lends a psychological depth to the story that demands the close attention and involvement of the readers.

In the novel, Conrad proves that "it is the Africans who are the fittest to survive in their native land. In similar fashion, the work ethic that Marlow seems to embrace, praising its effectiveness in keeping his mind free of undesirable thoughts is in fact instrumental in blinding him to the events around him" (Conrad 1968, p.90).

Conrad's portrayal of the failure of various European ideologies in Africa suggests the consequent failure and moral bankruptcy of Europe.

Moreover, the racist observed in *Heart of Darkness* is expressed due to the western psychology, this being to show Africa as an antithesis to Europe. So, Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* invites us to make a profound reflection, and presents us with this timeless book. It sheds a bright light onto the inherent darkness of our human inclinations to know what happened in the past and at the same time what will happen tomorrow.

In the present civilization, I find many menacing emotions that keep us, humans from doing good deeds. We have different states of mind, and consciousness. There are levels that allow us to openly express what we are thinking. But there are also levels we know exist, but we refuse to allow others to know. Also, there are even states of mind we can't even comprehend on our own. In Joseph Conrad's *Heart of*

Darkness, the three states of the conscious mind are connected, displayed and ignored as the Europeans conform to what everyone else is doing and disregard their own true thoughts.

Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* contrasts light and darkness, to represent the civilized and uncivilized sides of the world. Conrad uses light to represent the civilized side of humanity while contrasting the dark with the uncivilized and savage. Throughout the thematic stages of the novel, that is the Thames, the company's office in Belgium, the journey to the "heart of darkness" and the conclusion. Light and dark are used to represent these sides of humanity, but on a deeper level many assumptions of darkness and light are challenged, with the appearance of light and dark, and in turn good and evil contrasting with the reality. In the book, *Heart of Darkness*, all the characters are pulled into a well of black despair. Conrad uses the darkness of the situation contrasted to the light of society to show man's dependence on western morals, and how when these morals are challenged by the darkness, the light crumbles under its newly weakened foundation. The contrast between light and dark is most stark in the themes of setting, the changes in Europeans as they drive farther into the Congo, and the white man's collapse under the ultimate darkness of the Inner Congo.

This make me understand Achebe when he claims that Conrad was a racist and that a novella which so depersonalizes a portion of the human race should not be considered a great work of art. The following quote from Achebe is a good demonstration of 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 1989, p.176)

According to Achebe, Conrad has an obsession with skin colour; he describes a man as being black, having long black legs and long black arms. Achebe mentions a scene in the novella where after Kurtz' death, the manager's boy is described as putting his "*insolent black head in the doorway*". (Conrad, J. 1968, 69)

He further rejects the idea that Conrad is not racist because he is merely describing what Marlow thinks and sees; this idea is ridiculous because there is no alternative reference and the readers have to take what the characters say as true since no one is disputing them.

The main point in Achebe's criticism is that Conrad thinks everything should be in their right place and how tragedy happens when fine Europeans travel into the heart of darkness. He depicts the way Conrad portrays African culture. Africans are described as savages with wild eyes using an unrefined language consisting of grunts and short phrases sounding like a violent babble. Achebe defends African culture and identity. Africa is shown as the "other world" with bestiality contrasting

the intelligence and refinement of Europe. Africans are sometimes referred to as specimens, "Marlow comments on how one African is an improved specimen because he can fire up a vertical boiler" (Conrad 1968, p. 172)

The point is further exemplified in the discussion of the meaning of the two rivers in *Heart of Darkness*. The description of Africa includes "a prehistoric earth with prehistoric men acting in a black and incomprehensible frenzy" (Conrad 1968 p.35).

The Africans are howling and leaping and are described as inhuman, meaning he did find them inhuman at one point. It is probably at this point Marlow realizes that: "the tribesmen are in fact human, even if he still considers them as brute savages" (Conrad, J. 1968 P40). He mentions how they have faces like grotesque masks, strong muscles, energy and a wild vitality. To explain why Achebe feels so strongly against Conrad one must look at what happened in Africa around this time. That's why any honest discussion of African culture today must face the question of identity existence. By the question of identity existence, I do not mean that the race question has any worthwhile with culture. Also, the identity is not unique; there is also a diversity of cultures in Africa. Here, the question of the existence of identity in African culture is that of finding out what we mean when we use the phrase "African culture". Africans must naturally direct themselves towards the past, and think about its socio-cultural identity. This naturally does not mean "exclusively" as has often been taken to be the case. In fact, the "naturalness" of such an orientation to the past as a privileged part of culture is contestable and suspicious as it looks too much like a relic from the times when African people and cultures, apparently because they were generally poor, peasant and pre-industrial. They were treated by curious foreign cultural anthropologists as retarded fossils from the past of humanity. So, *Heart of Darkness* is more than a mere exploration of the harsh realities of European colonialism in Africa during the late nineteenth century. The Socio-cultural identity aspect developed in the novel is less pleasant.

Conclusion

The issue in this article is to uncover the different ways in which Joseph Conrad deals with the concept of cultural identity in *Heart of Darkness* to address issue of change and the need for it in the target society. It also shows that Africa representation in the novel under study takes negative connotation based on racial discrimination, gender and ethnicity. Conrad has stressed on human discrimination, either ethnical or racial discrimination for selfish political outcomes. He also has discussed the identity issue and come to the end that, identity is dynamic and can change within the time. He has shown through his novel the strategies the European leaders have used at that time to control the the world, especially Africa. For Conrad, people's discrimination and marginalization are the problems of life nowadays, and

it couldn't continue being a problem, if we stop to consider our countrymen differently.

In terms of the results, Conrad's shorts biographies show that they have taken their inspiration from their own lives stories. Moreover, this study has pictured Conrad's and Greene's vision of the problems of the society and their solutions to them. This work has largely dealt with the issue of socio-cultural identity today.

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