

Eurocentrism in “The Heart of Darkness” by Joseph Conrad”

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ABSTRACT

Keywords: Heart of Darkness, This research addresses to analyze Eurocentrism in “Joseph Conrad’s *Heart of Darkness*. The type of

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in “Joseph Conrad’s *Heart of Darkness*. The type of this research is descriptive qualitative. Data were classified into primary and supporting data. The primary data were mainly from the Conrad’s *Heart of Darkness*. The supporting data were from books, articles, and journals related to colonialism perspective. The design of this research focuses in revealing the colonial life in Conrad’s *Heart of Darkness* through Eurocentrism perspective. The result of this research is this colonization actually begun not only by economy factor but also it is empowered by creating discourse about such colonized country. Colonial discourse means how the west, colonizer or conquer create opinion to legitimate their conquest. This discourse also explains how the Europe (colonizer) constructs their identity and their colonized. This constructing creates binary-opposition judgment where in this novel through Marlow (as main character) depict that Europe’s colonization is based on their negative stereotyping. It is stated that the native Congo is wilder, cannibal, uncivilized and so on. So, at Marlow’s spirit in early they (colonizer) desire to civilize them (the native).

INTRODUCTION

"The heart of darkness" is one of Conrad's works that depict about Africa (Congo) in colonial era. In the nineteenth century Europe became advance industrialist country. Industrialization mean massively material production through it needed of market and material resources. Therefore, Europe countries create a competition among them in order to find "new land" for their market and material resource. In Marxist perspective it is a capitalism consequence where they have to find new market and resource to make their machine keep work. They need new market because there is over-production in their country and they need new land because they need new material resource. Through this assumption Europe explore extensively to find "new world" or "new land", unfortunately, they did not find the empty land but "living land". They interact and create of trade cooperation. But finally, because they (Europe country) are superior in technology (weapon, machine and so on), they took over, control and rule that country through the occupation physically (Europe people). This situation can be called colonial or imperialism. Rosa Luxemburg (Kowalik, 2014:128) claims the colonial or imperialism competition among capitalist countries to win colonies and spheres of interest, opportunities for investment, the international loan system, militarism, tariff barriers, the dominant role of finance capital and trusts in world politics, are all well known.

This colonization actually is not begun by their (Europe) claim that they superior in technology but also they are superior in "culture". This perspective is begin by create or define them self/ Europe countries (as colonizers) and colonial country (as colonized). They create opposite identity as colonizer through create positive identity for instance they claim as civilized people while the colonized country as uncivilized or savage people. This construction is socialized in discourse dimension. Discourse in this case means the construction of subjectivity within certain historical, social and cultural systems of knowledge in a society (Ashcroft, Griffith & Tiffin, 2007:205). This identity construction put Europe as superior and colonized countries as inferior. This is also created in Europe perspective or we call it as Eurocentrism where it is The conscious or unconscious process by which Europe and European cultural assumptions are constructed as, or assumed to be, the normal, the natural or the universal (ibid, 84).

As it is stated above, through his work "the heart of darkness", Conrad depict about colonization era where he describe about colonized country (landscape, people and culture) through depicting their life under colonizer power. Even though, through to Marlow (main character in "the heart of darkness", Conrad criticize the colonial (especially colonizer), but as realist writer Conrad also depict his object (colony) based on euro (west)'s assumption toward their colony (Congo). This paper aim to study about how the west construct the colonized country identity and the effect this identity construction toward their (colonizer) toward colonized people.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Theory Eurocentrism in colonial era

In Ashcroft, Griffith & Tiffin, (2007:205) Eurocentrism is the conscious or unconscious process by which Europe and European cultural assumptions are constructed as, or assumed to be, the normal, the natural or the universal. The first, and possibly most potent sign of Eurocentrism, as José Rabasa explains (1993), was the specific projection employed to construct the Mercator Atlas itself, a projection that favored the European temperate zones in its distribution of size. This map of the world is not merely an objective outline of discovered continents, but an 'ideological or mythological reification of space' which opens up the territories of the world to domination and appropriation.

This conception actually is begun by definition based on map or location of country where Europe locate in certain territory through creating a discourse where it constructs the identity of Europe. Edward said In (Ashcroft, Griffith & Tiffin, 2007:205) *Orientalism* examines the ways in which Eurocentrism not only influences and alters, but actually produces other cultures. **Orientalism** is 'a way of coming to terms with the orient that is based on the orient's special place in European western experience' or 'the western style for dominating, restructuring and having authority over the orient' (3). This authority is, in Said's view, a product of a systematic 'discipline' by which European culture was able to construct and manage the Orient during the post-Enlightenment period.

So that the main idea of eurocentrism is focused how they Europe see and construct another country (people, culture and so on). This effort is worked through creating identity by comparing their (Europe identity). This is can be called as binary-opposition where it The concern with binarism was first established by the French structural linguist, Ferdinand de Saussure, who held that signs have meaning not by a simple reference to real objects, but by their opposition to other signs. Each sign is itself the function of a binary between the signifier, the 'signal' or sound image of the word, and the signified, the significance of the signal, the concept or mental image that it evokes. Saussure held that although the connection between the signifier and signified is arbitrary (that is, there is no necessity in nature for the link between the word 'dog' and the signified dog), once the link is established, it is fixed for everyone who speaks that language ((Ashcroft, Griffith & Tiffin, 2007:18). They added (ibid) that perspective actually is used by colonial or imperialism era through Development of that tendency of Western thought in general to see the world in terms of binary oppositions that establish a relation of dominance. A simple distinction between centre/margin; colonizer/colonized; metropolis/empire; civilized/primitive represents very efficiently the violent hierarchy on which imperialism is based and which it actively perpetuates. Binary oppositions are structurally related to one another, and in colonial discourse there may be a variation of the one underlying binary - colonizer/colonized - that becomes rearticulated in any particular text in a number of ways, e.g

colonizer: colonized

white : black

civilized : primitive
advanced : retarded
good : evil
beautiful : ugly
human : bestial
teacher : pupil
doctor : patient

This binary-opposition actually the point of colonial discourse where it is greatly implicated in ideas of the centrality of Europe, and thus in assumptions that have become characteristic of **modernity**: assumptions about history, language, literature and 'technology'. Colonial discourse is thus a system of statements that can be made about colonies and colonial peoples, about colonizing powers and about the relationship between these two. It is the system of knowledge and beliefs about the world within which acts of colonization take place (Ashcroft, Griffith & Tiffin, 2007:37)

Through such binary-opposition will create imbalance relation where put the one as superior and the other as inferior. So that, this principle that used in colonial era will create imbalance relation between colonizers and colonized. Colonizer claim as high civilized country meanwhile colonized as uncivilized country or with negative attribute. This category politically and culturally creates a legitimating for colonizer to colonize the other country. They will create a "truth" that this colonization in order to "civilize" another country (colonized).

METHODOLOGY

Source of Data

The data were classified into two types. They were primary data and secondary data. Those were explained further below:

1. Primary Data : Primary data were the important data of a research or the data that were directly related to the object of research. The primary data were taken from the Short story and Novel (*Heart of Darkness*).
2. Supporting Data : Supporting data included all sources which supported the main data. The supporting data were taken from other sources, such as books, article, encyclopedias, internet, and other sources related to this writing as well as from library research.

Method of Collecting Data

This research is used a library research to obtain the data, and to make this research much better, the researcher read intensively the works from Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* investigated the narration (sentence/s or dialogue/s) of the characters in the story. The investigation that the researcher meant is gathering some narrations (sentence/s or dialogue/s) of the characters which indicated the potrait of eurocentrism perspective.

The narrations (sentence/s or dialogue/s) in the works that had been gather, it was correlated and grouped into the explanation about colonialism perspective based on the understanding in chapter II. The researcher also

conducted some library research to find some useful resources that were related to this issue.

After gathered, correlated and grouped the narrations (sentence/s or dialogue/s), the researcher determined the colonialism during colonial life that the characters reflected in the story. The colonialism perspective was determined after seeing the characters portrayed colonialism issues in the story.

Method of Analyzing Data

In method of analyzing data, the researcher library research to obtain the data that supported the researcher. The researcher used genetic structuralism idea who stated by Goldmann and eurocentrism perspective as the theory to conduct the researcher to analyze text, especially the narration of the characters of the story, and used the comparative method to reveal the similarities and dissimilarities about colonialism perspective in both works. The analysis of data tended to be mainly focus on what the character's narration, conversation between another character.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

This short novel actually put Marlow is narrating the story as if it were first-hand experience. Story is begun by Marlow who sail to Congo for his first order or command. A sailor, Marlow, whilst waiting for the tide to turn so that his ship can get under way, recounts to his passengers an experience he had as a young man. His story is about his first command. a Belgian company had commissioned him to sail up the River Congo into the heart of Africa to find a European ivory trader named Kurtz. He is an employee of the same company, which has lost touch with him. Marlow feels that he will make a name for himself, have exciting adventures, learn how civilization is being taken to Africa and return a wiser man. He receives his final instructions in Brussels, where he meets, amongst others, two rather daunting ladies and a doctor.

These make him feel rather uneasy even in the excitement of picking up his first appointment as captain, and of speculating about his experiences of the Dark Continent. He is partly reassured about his journey when he looks at a map of Africa and sees how far European civilization has already penetrated. He is taken to Africa in another ship and his first sight of the continent is of a French man-of-war shelling the jungle, an incident that Marlow, a very practical man who needs a good logical reason for everything he does, finds inexplicable. Once he reaches Africa, Marlow's expectations of finding good organization and creative activity are disappointed: he comes across abandoned machinery, a fire-fighting water bucket with a hole in the bottom, a brick maker with no materials with which to make bricks, and various other examples of inefficiency. Expecting to find the Europeans in Africa humane and enlightened, he discovers that the natives are cruelly ill-treated, abused and exploited. He is eager to press on up-river to explore the little-known interior, but is considerably and frustratingly delayed because his ship is grounded and cannot be repaired for lack of rivets- a major hold-up caused by a

comparatively minor problem. His first impressions of European culture in Africa are entirely different from his expectations. After much frustration and hanging about, Marlow and his command, complete with African cannibals and assorted European 'pilgrims' steam up-river through the encroaching jungle. On the way his enthusiasm is at first dampened by an attack from the river bank by Africans; but it is rekindled when he picks up a Russian traveler who knows Kurtz. Marlow becomes increasingly curious about Kurtz as the stories and reports about him get ever more extravagant, and fears that the extraordinary ivory-trader will die before he can meet him. Ultimately he does meet Kurtz, and discovers that the truth of his life is even more fantastic and horrifying than the rumors had been. Kurtz finally die and Marlow has promised to return Kurtz's possessions to his fiancée in Brussels, and his story concludes with his meeting with the woman. Instead of telling her the truth, he tells her what she wants to hear, that the dead man's last word was her name.

The eurocentrism perspective is begun by describing the landscape of Congo where as it is stated in the following quotes

But darkness was here yesterday. Imagine the feelings of a commander of a fine ... trireme in the Mediterranean, ordered suddenly to the north; run overland across the Gauls in a hurry; put in charge of one of these craft the legionaries - a wonderful lot of handy men they must have been, too - used to build Imagine him here - the very end of the world, a sea the colour of lead, a sky the colour of smoke, a kind of ship about as rigid as a concertina - and going up this river with stores, or orders, or what you like. Sand-banks, marshes, forests, savages, - precious little to eat fit for a civilised man, nothing but Thames water to drink ... cold, fog, tempests, disease, exile, and death- death skulking in the air, in the water, in the bush. They must have been dying like flies here They were men enough to face the darkness The fascination of the abomination. . . (TOD 34).

"And this also," said Marlow suddenly, "has been one of the dark places of the earth

This is Marlow's statement about the land he visit where outlines in his introduction - forests, ferocious savages, a hostile climate, disease, the permanent presence of death, a kind oftin-pot old boat - are paralleled in the main story. Even though it can be interpreted that this statement because he found there is no light but it is also imply that "the dark place of the earth" refers to Congo generally (because the light place actually refers to colonizer country). The following quotes also describe about how Marlow depict about the situation, environment and nature in Congo

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 ... nothing but black shadows of disease and starvation, lying confusedly in the greenish gloom These moribund shapes were free as air- and nearly as thin (TOD 44)

Depicting the nature in Congo above actually in "negative" perspective, so that it can be contribute to people or colonizers' perception in identifying the native people. Quotation above is also further explanation that to prove the

previous statement “the dark place”. Partly they are described in that way because in the darkness of the jungle and the dim light they are difficult for Marlow actually to make out; but, more importantly, describing them as indistinguishable shapes emphasizes the way in which those men have been dehumanized. Meanwhile in depicting the Congo people this novel identify them in “the other” people where it tent to negative judgment. The following quotes describe about

Near the same tree two more bundles of acute angles sat with their legs drawn up. One, with his chin propped on his knees, stared at nothing, in an intolerable and appalling manner: his brother phantom rested its forehead, as if overcome with a great weariness; and all about others were scattered in every pose of contorted collapse, as in some picture of a massacre or a pestilence

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. Brought from all the recesses of the coast in all the legality of time contracts, lost in uncongenial surroundings, fed on unfamiliar food, they sickened, became inefficient, and were then allowed to crawl away and rest. These moribund shapes were free as air – and nearly as thin (Heart of Darkness 19).

In some inland post feel the savagery, the utter savagery, had closed round him – all that mysterious life of the wilderness that stirs in the forest, in the jungles, in the hearts of wild men. There's no initiation either into such mysteries. He has to live in the midst of the incomprehensible, which is detestable. And it has a fascination, too, which goes to work upon him. The fascination of the abomination – you know. Imagine the growing regrets, the longing to escape, the powerless disgust, the surrender, the hate.

Even tough quotation above content of Marlow’s perspective that he actually interrupt about the Europe’s opinion toward the native as enemy, but through this quotation we also conclude that there is public opinion in colonizer’s mind that they assume the native as their enemy. Colonizer call them (Congo native people) as *wilderness* (it synonym to savage or uncivilized people) or extremely, there is assumption about the native (Congo) as cannibal as it is stated in the following quotation.

Their headman, a young, broad-chestlike black, severely draped in dark-blue fringed cloths, with fierce nostrils and his hair all done up artfully in oily ringlets, stood near me. ‘Aha!’ I said, just for good fellowship’s sake. ‘Catch ‘im,’ he snapped, with a bloodshot widening of his eyes and a flash of sharp teeth – ‘catch ‘im. Give ‘im to us.’ ‘To you, eh?’ I asked; ‘what would you do with them?’ Eat ‘im!’ he said curtly, and, leaning his elbow on the rail, looked out into the fog in a dignified and profoundly pensive attitude. I would no doubt have been properly horrified, had it not occurred to me that he and his chaps must be very hungry (HOD 50).

Thus, based on explanation above, there is continuity between the description of nature and the people where in colonial era colonizer label the

native as uncivilized (cannibal), hunger, stranger, savage and so on. so that, through this attribute contribute to colonizer's mind that their "holy duty" to make them become "civilized" people "to enlighten them(tod 146)". This holy duty is associated for empire sake as it is stated the following quotes

Hunters for gold or pursuers of fame, they all had gone out on that stream, bearing the sword, and often the torch, messengers of the might within the land, bearers of a spark from the sacred fire. What greatness had not floated on the ebb of that river into the mystery of an unknown earth!...The dreams of men, the seed of commonwealths, the germs of empires.

Therefore colonization can be legitimated as civilized mission, but in fact as it is describe in this novel that colonization is another form of oppression through exploiting and oppress the native and their material resource. The following quotation explains about that.

*Mind, none of us would feel exactly like this. What saves us is efficiency – the devotion to efficiency. But these chaps were not much account, really. They were no colonists; their administration was merely a squeeze, and nothing more, I suspect. They were conquerors, and for that you want only brute force – nothing to boast of, when you have it, since your strength is just an accident arising from the weakness of others. **They grabbed what they could get for the sake of what was to be got. It was just robbery with violence, aggravated murder on a great scale, and men going at it blind—as is very proper for those who tackle a darkness.** 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's the idea only. An idea at the back of it; not a sentimental pretence but an idea; and an unselfish belief in the idea." (1.13*

*They were **conquerors**, and for that you want only brute force--nothing to boast of, when you have it, since your strength is just an accident arising from the weakness of others.*

Those quotations explain about how colonization create terrify situation in colonized land, this novel illustrate the colonizer as conquer, robbery with violence. This conclusion in colonial discourse perspective is based on the situation that colonization not only in order to civilize the native people but also colonizer exploits their material resource. Through Marlow where he expects to find the Europeans in Africa humane and enlightened, but he discovers that the natives are cruelly ill-treated, abused and exploited. Colonization also creates the situation of the native people under the rule of colonizer.

Colonization has created slavery system where it is refers to exploit the peoples extremely in order to serve their master by denying their right as human, the following quotation explained about the depicting of colonizer's treatment toward the native speaker.

"A slight clinking behind me made me turn my head. Six black men advanced in a file, toiling up the path ... each had an iron collar on his neck, and all were connected together with a chain whose bights swung between them, rhythmically clinking." (TOD, 44)

Marlow very often tells us about the life in the Congo, the scenery, the people and their behavior. So we also hear about the slaves' appalling fate. As we know from history, slave traders attacked the natives' villages, caught the defenseless people and sold them to companies, who used them for various labors.

CONCLUSION

Even though this novel describes anti colonial or imperial, this novel at least describes about how the colonizer colonizes the colonized country. This colonization actually is begun not only by economy factor but also it is empowered by creating discourse about such colonized country. Colonial discourse means how the west, colonizer or conquer create opinion to legitimate their conquest. This discourse also explains how the Europe (colonizer) constructs their identity and their colonized. This constructing creates binary-opposition judgment where in this novel through Marlow (as main character) depict that Europe's colonization is based on their negative stereotyping. It is stated that the native Congo is wilder, cannibal, uncivilized and so on. So, at Marlow's spirit in early they (colonizer) desire to civilize them (the native). This good propaganda is actually far from its reality because its colonization has created new oppression, slavery and suffering to native. They treat them like animal for instance by giving the iron around their neck or chain them. The Europeans are in Africa not to bring enlightenment but to get as much wealth as they can, and are willing to exploit the native population in order to achieve their selfish ends

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