

A STUDY OF THE FALSE PORTRAYAL OF TRIBAL LITERATURE IN JOSEPH CONRAD'S HEART OF DARKNESS

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Abstract

This paper concentrates on how the people of cannibals situated in Congo River of Africa portrayed by Joseph Conrad. He was a polish-British writer. He was a master prose stylist who brought a non-English sensibility into English language. Conrad is remembered for novels like Heart of Darkness and Lord Jim, which drew on his experience as a mariner and addressed profound theme of nature and existence. Heart of Darkness is a novella, about a narrated voyage up to Congo River into the Congo Free State, so called heart of Africa. This paper focuses on as a English writer how can he estimates the life of Africans because whenever he gives the description of Africa, he describes them as wild, ugly, uncivilized people. He also compares the Europeans and Africans by comparing the river of Thames in London and Congo River in Africa.

What is tribal literature? How it is defined? Tribes' identities are differently by named at different places according to their geographical positioning, their social stratification in the society and so on which makes them distinctive from others. Tribes are rich in their culture, customs, and folk tradition etc. the foremost objectives of this research paper is to analyze the tribe issue in literature as a discourse in societal, tradition, rituals within. At last tribal literature, imbued with tribal consciousness, is also trying to carve out a place for itself in the world of literature and criticism. They asserted that their exploitation was due to their specific identities and to fight that exploitation and discrimination, they forged alliances with other groups/communities with similar identities and launched a joint movement for their emancipation.

Tribe people have their own identity and culture but when they meet their disaster (colonization), their own culture is destroyed. Africa faced European imperialist aggression diplomatic pressures, military invasions, and eventual conquest and colonization. Europeans wanted to conquest Africa for many reason, to prove their military power, destroy African culture and implement the western culture to follow it forcefully by the natives of Africa and also for ivory, gold, cattle, and skins. African people became slaves for the Europeans and imported for wheat farming and viticulture to serve the Europeans settlements. Africans wanted to fight back but they didn't have the military powers, they have only physical strength. After a long period of struggle they got their freedom. Though they feel the freedom air, the air is not their own, it is mixed of European and African culture. It is a period of evolution of African writers to establish their own identity, culture through their writings.

Heart of Darkness is a novella by polish-English novelist Joseph Conrad, it is about a narrated voyage up to Congo River into the Congo Free State, so called heart of Africa. Joseph Conrad, who is regarded as one of the greatest novelist to write in the English language Charles Marlow; the narrator who tells this story to his friends abroad a boat anchored on the river Thames. In this novel, a main character Marlow who is an introspective sailor and his journey up to the Congo River to meet Kurtz, reputed to be an idealistic man of great abilities. When Marlow was a young man, he takes a job as a riverboat captain with the company. He encounters widespread inefficiency and brutality in the company's station. The native inhabitants of the region have been forced into company's service and they suffer terribly from overwork and ill treatment at the central station. When he is on the way to inner station, with his conspiratorial character, the general manager, he finds his steamship has been sunk, on that situation he starts to think about Kurtz, Kurtz is the chief of the inner station_ about his singular success as an ivory collector, but also about the multiplicity of his talents: as a painter of an allegorical figure of justice, as author of an eloquent tract against 'savage customs', as musician, orator, journalist. Kurtz seems to be a person of exceptional talents and cultures. Indeed he appears to be a very embodiment of the civilization which the African wilderness has so comprehensively annihilated. In the middle of the play, he paints a blindfolded woman bearing a torch which depicts against a nearly black background and clearly symbolic for his former views. He is a trader of ivory in Africa and commander of trading post, he monopolizes his position as a demigod. This paper is not concentrate on how Marlow recalling his experience or how Kurtz is dead. It is about how Conrad portrays Africans in this novel. Conrad opens his novel by describing the river Thames which looks so tranquil and also tells about the river Congo antithesis to Thames which is very wild and darkness. This novel is all about the people, Europeans in streamer going down the Congo encounter the denizens of Africa. Conrad tells his

views from the character of Marlow. Marlow tells about the description of Africa like burst of yells, a whirl of black limbs, a mass of hands clapping, feet stamping, bodies swaying, eyes rolling under the droop of heavy and motionless foliage. From this he is trying to say that people of Africa, they didn't even have any manners and a proper language. He considers them as an uncivilized people. In addition to, he describes the surroundings and people as ugly. Marlow speaks about the people of Africa,

'The prehistoric man was cursing us, welcoming us, _who could tell? we were cut off from the comprehension of our surrounding..... we could not understand because we were.... travelling in the night of first ages, of those ages that are gone, leaving hardly a sign - no memories. The earth seemed unearthly. We are accustomed to look upon the shackled form of a conquered monster, but there- there you could look at a thing monstrous and free. It was unearthly, and the men were- no they are not inhuman. Well, you know, that was the worst of it- this suspicion of their not being inhuman. It would come slowly to one. they howled and leaped, and spun, and made horrid faces; but what thrilled you was just the thought of their humanity- like yours- the was just the thought of their humanity- like- yours- the thought of your remote kinship with this wild and passionate uproar. Ugly. Yes, it was ugly enough; but if you were man enough you would admit to yourself that being a meaning in it which you _ so remote from the night of the first ages_ could comprehend.' (Heart of Darkness, chapter 2, page no 57).

As an English writer in the period of imperialism, it is impossible to understand the culture of Africa because in this novella he only tells the negatives of African people, how they behave, walk, shout, frenzy in behavior, but the real thing is Africans are innocent. When strangers (English people) around the place of Congo, they only prefer to protect themselves. They wanted to lead their life to be peaceful but even though they (Africans) are staying in their own place, they are surviving and this is a worst situation for the natives. Africans are struggled between imperialism and racism. He only points out the disadvantage of Africa. The only protection for them is bows and spears. Marlow reaches Congo's inner station with his companions in the steamship. What will be a mindset of an African? Protect themselves from strange situation by not allowing the strangers to their place. The only way is to kill them that's how helmsman dies.

Heart of Darkness, then, can be considered as an inquiry into how strong the hold of civilization is on its members. One of the salient features of Marlow's narrative is his insistence on the 'unreality' of his experience. This is more than a matter of what he says; it is also implied presentation of his story. That 'heart of darkness' makes extended and sometimes obtrusive, use of non-naturalistic devices has been widely recognized. To Marlow, Africa and all it contains may seem strange, mysterious, and even unintelligible: but it is not unreal. The blacks are real

because they want 'no excuse for being there'. They belong to their environment, and their environment belongs to them. Heart of Darkness falsifies Conrad's knowledge that London in 1898 was itself one of the dark places of the earth, and that in the late nineteenth or early twentieth century there was no need to leave Europe to practice barbarities in the name of civilization. Even the title itself obvious to readers 'Heart of darkness' it is not only denotes the color of African people but he also tells that their heart itself is dark and evil.

Heart of Darkness is criticized in postcolonial studies, particularly by Nigerian writer Chinua Achebe. In his public lecture "an image of Africa: racism in Conrad's Heart of Darkness". Achebe described Conrad's novella as "an offensive and deplorable book". Conrad has incorrectly depicted Africa as the antithesis of Europe and civilization. He argued that the book promoted and continues to promote a prejudiced image of Africa that "that depersonalizes a portion of the human race" and concluded that it should not be considered as a great work of art. He tells about the imperialism, racism, and the sufferings of Africa by Europeans in his novel, he overall tells about his people in the beginning and overemphasizes the culture of Africa by his own perspectives. Achebe says about Africa that they are not even called as human instead they are treating as properties like chair, and table. Achebe describes one incident, when Conrad was sixteen, he encountered his first Englishman in Europe. he calls him "my unforgettable Englishman" and also he describes his physical appearances with so many things like calves with rich tone of ivory, triumphant eyes, shiny teeth etc., at the same time he describes Africans as ugly, he is irrational. Conrad was born in 1857, it was certainly not his fault that he lived his life at a time when reputation of the black man was at a particularly low level. It is not a continuous situation for the Africans.

This paper is about a story in which the very humanity of black people is called in question. They are facing obstacles and challenges in their day to day life. Most of the English writers find fault with the other cultures and projecting the false opinion which make them inferior in the society. Not only black people but also others whose have feelings and individualistic characteristics to prove what they are. Conrad may end his novella with the positivistic note for the welfare of black people.

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