



Research Article

Volume-03|Issue-05|2022

Colonial Burden on Africa: A Critical reading of Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* and *An Outpost of Progress*

Dr Orieren Olivier Abodohouï*

Enseignant à la FLLAC/UAC-BENIN

Article History

Received: 28.04.2022

Accepted: 11.05.2022

Published: 31.05.2022

Citation

Abodohouï, O. O. (2022). Colonial Burden on Africa: A Critical reading of Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* and *An Outpost of Progress*. *Indiana Journal of Arts & Literature*, 3(5), 18-29.

Abstract: This article examines colonial burden on Africa through a critical reading of Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* and *An Outpost of progress*. Pointing out Europeans and Africans' behaviour during that dark period in Africa, the novels under study reveal the evilness happening in the world and its impact on the emancipation level of Africa. This research will deconstruct Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* and *An Outpost of Progress* through a colonial, neo-colonial and a panafricanist perspective. It will also explore the roots of the Africans emancipation problematic and finally put forward some alternatives to better understand ways and means useful for the emancipation of the African people.

Keywords: Colonialism, Emancipation, Cultural values, Neocolonialism, Panafricanism.

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INTRODUCTION

Humanity is a perpetual evolution reality marked by the dominion of the most strength, intelligent, cunning or possessive over the most weak. Thus, the world is like a wild jungle where strong animals overrun the weakest ones and turn them into great interest of wealth instead they are all beings. Human beings existence is not so different from this jungle's life since the world is subject to conflict of interest and inherent motivation of progress. Then, the narrative of the human evolution from Australopithecus to Paranthropus and then Homo or from Toumaï to the modern people also called Homo-sapiens-sapiens is an archaeological eyewitness of the world evolution. From the XIXth to nowadays the last one has been made through people harassment of all over the world.

The third world is the wealthiest part of the earth considering its soil, climatic and geographical situation. This ownership is the origin of historical assaults of western countries toward other cultural, religious, educational, political and economic properties. Hence, transatlantic trade, imperialism, colonialism and finally neo-colonialism have taken turn especially in Africa, transmuting the black people into human in quest of real freedom and sustainable progress or emancipation. The problematic of Africa's emancipation trouble reveals a further reality which root is evidently focused on the intrusion of the colonialism.

Long before and even several decades after the slaves' trade abolition, Africa had enjoyed a real traditional, cultural and political sovereignty. But during the Berlin conference of 1884-1885, the world has witnessed the formalisation of what is known as the Scramble of Africa. Under the guidance of King Leopold II of Belgium, Europeans greedily shared up Africa. The Western powers, namely Britain, France, Portugal, Italy, Germany etc., met in Berlin, Germany, where they partitioned Africa among one another even without having visited most parts of the continent. Accordingly, in *Africa: A Social, Economic and Political Geography of its Major Regions*, Fitzgerald settles that "each of the Powers concerned sought to acquire for itself the greatest possible area of territory and, without much scruple, of the native inhabitants was never even considered" (79). This quote deals with a conference concerned with the future of Africa, not Europe. The Berlin conference is the culmination of Europe's desire since the beginning of European expansion in the seventeenth century, to impose by force, if need be, its collective will over those of the non-European world, to export its culture and civilization, and above all, to exploit the resources of the world.

Through a reader response theoretical analysis, this reality is drowned in some Joseph Conrad's novels, especially Conrad (1897; &1899). In his narratives, Conrad portrays Africans' misery and domination. *An Outpost of Progress* was published as part of Conrad's collection of five short stories entitled *Tales of Unrest* (1898). In 1906,

Conrad described it as his “best story” owing to the scrupulousness of its tone and the severity of its discipline. In his note to *Tales of Unrest* he confesses that in spite of his best efforts, all his tales revolve around his experiences in the European colonies in Asia and Africa. Accordingly, he said: “We cannot escape from ourselves” (8). Elsewhere, *An Outpost of Progress* is written in a common mind-set with *Heart of Darkness*. Conrad highlights Kurtz’s role in *Heart of Darkness* as captivating and repulsive since he is an image and representation of the European colonisers. Nevertheless, *An Outpost of Progress* is partially built around Makola described at the beginning of the novel as a naïve, stoic, indifferent and snobbish man. During their colonial epoch, both Macula and Kurtz were as greedy as obstinate in purchasing the accomplishment of their goal, no matter how inhuman or horrible the used ways and means were. These characters represent respectively African people weakness and European colonisers or imperialists voracity in invading others for their ownership plundering.

Joseph Teodor Konrad Korseniovsky, better known by his pen name Joseph Conrad, was born in Poland in the 1850s. At the age of 17, he joined the French Navy and some years later, the British one even though he barely spoke English. In the following years, he travelled all over the world as a seaman, visiting and exploring what he considered the most exotic places he had ever been to. In the 1890s, he went on a journey up the River Congo in Africa and this was a turning point in his life. He was appalled by the European venture there, its methods and the treatment given to native Africans. As a writer, Joseph Conrad would later draw on this particular experience. *Heart of Darkness* and *An Outpost of Progress*, which were first published in the early 1900s, somewhat reflects what the author saw, felt and thought as a European in Africa during the colonial times. He attacks and denounces European imperialist behaviour showing a contrast between his European origin and his virulent critical caveat against his own fellows.

The analysis of Conrad’s two novels shows the responsibility of the Europeans in the African people’s emancipation troubles since they contribute to share, invade and settle colonies in most African territories using hypocritical tips to confuse the natives religiously and educationally in order to corrupt their identity and enslave them as shown through Kurtz’s schemes in *Heart of Darkness*. The former colonised people are not in margin to their own current condition from the time when they show weakness, naivety and lack of solidarity in dealing with whites’ assault. Some of them have given interest to the European civilisation. They learn the coloniser’s language, religions and even ways of live serving as tool to alienate their own people for the profit of white men. They were self-centred and snobbish like Makola in *An Outpost of progress*, behaving for their own interest and mainly for the imperialist purposes of the Europeans.

Pointing out Europeans and Africans’ behaviour during that dark period in Africa, the novels under study reveal the evilness happening in the world. Hence, *Heart of Darkness* and *An Outpost of Progress*’ analysis is highly significant as it shows the real portrayal of both European colonisers and African people. Joseph Conrad’s inspiring and fruitful attempt to break down the colonial discourse is a tool to raise African readers’ consciousness over their interest. It also raises pan Africanists’ and nationalists’ mind-set all over each African country in order to first free them from intrinsic trap and then neo-colonialism.

The main purpose of this research work is then to reveal the streak of the European colonialism on Africans emancipation. Specifically, the study focuses on highlighting the roots of Africa’s emancipation problematic in order to share alternatives for relieving Africa from its emancipation trouble.

In the frame of this research, several means and tools such as articles, book, interview of relevant pan African personalities and other non-printed sources available in the World Wide Web, have been manipulated. Therefore, a deep analysis of other scholars’ literary productions has raised needs of personal interpretations and illustrations. Such a literary handling is link to the close-reading of significant excerpts focused on the messages delivered in *Heart of Darkness* and *An Outpost of Progress* and lied to a postcolonial perspective of African emancipation. The major tools rest on the use of literary theories considered as the main weapon of organised and strictly concise and precise critical analysis. There are based on approaches related to the following theories: Reader-response critical theory, historical theoretical criticism, postcolonial theory and panafricanism literary theory. The study also settles the roots of the Africans emancipation problematic and finally put forward some alternatives to better understand ways and means useful for the emancipation of the African people.

OVERVIEW OF JOSEPH CONRAD’S *HEART OF DARKNESS* AND *AN OUTPOST OF PROGRESS*

Historical and Reader-response Critical Analyses of Joseph Conrad’s *Heart of Darkness* and *an Outpost of Progress*

The plots of the novels under study focus on the historical facts of European Imperialism and the tips used to settle colonies into what Conrad appointed as *the Heart of Darkness*. Both *Heart of Darkness* and *An Outpost of Progress* take place in a trading post up the River Congo. In the short story *An Outpost of Progress*, two new agents arrive, Kayerts and Carlier who get the supervision of the outpost. The director who comes with them predicts the failure of their work within the next six months. At the outpost Kayerts and Carlier don’t do any work. The supervision and the

goods' transactions are done by Makola, a Sierra Leone nigger who is better educated than the other station local men and who lives at the Outpost with his wife and his three children. Makola is a cant of subversion to the African identity.

At the early age of the Europeans settlement in Africa, they brought their own civilisation and tried to enrol the natives, a few uncommon one but some enough to serve as recruit who learn to love the colonisers' country instead of their own. They were enslaved in the trap of unknown and farther style of life, trying clumsily to look like their hangmen in an unconscious and raw psychological behaviour. Their motivation was not directed to the better cohesion and future of their community but to the unrealistic pleasure of themselves and the colonisers. Joseph Conrad encounter of their lifestyle is highlighted closely into Makola, a snobbish and self-centred black man who used to claim anyhow, anywhere and anytime that he is "white" and maintains that his name was Henry Price. The narrative is so vividly denouncing against the native disloyalty toward their community that Conrad used to portray them by not only caustic but also very ironical words as seen in the following:

The third man on the staff was a Sierra Leone nigger, who maintained that his name was Henry Price. However, for some reason or other, the natives down the river had given him the name of Macula, and it stuck to him through all his wanderings about the country. He spoke English and French with a warbling accent, wrote a beautiful hand, understood bookkeeping, and cherished in his innermost heart the worship of evil spirits. (53).

The constant use of satirical images toward the natives is seen by several scholars as a proof of Conrad's racism tendency. *Heart of Darkness* is the most representative of this fact. In the next passage, Conrad's narrative tends through a reader-response approach, to raise an accusing willingness of disgust toward the black people frequently named nigger. Thus, it is once again an occasion to show how snobbish natives are.

I had to look after the savage who was fireman. He was an improved specimen; he could fire up a vertical boiler. He was there below me, and, upon my word, to look at him was as edifying as seeing a dog in a parody of breeches and a feather hat, walking on his hind-legs. A few months of training had done for that really fine chap. He squinted at the steam-gauge and at the water-gauge with an evident effort of intrepidity and he had filed teeth, too, the poor devil, and the wool of his pate shaved into queer patterns, and three ornamental scars on each of his cheeks. He ought to have been clapping his hands and stamping his feet on the bank, instead of which he was hard at work, a thrall to strange witchcraft, full of improving knowledge. He was useful because he had been instructed. (42).

More than *An outpost of Progress*, *Heart of Darkness* is very harmful toward the colonised. It seems to be why the Author used to hide himself inside an intradiegetic narrative. This style gives the impression that Conrad has foreseen the impact of his pen on the readers' sensitivity. Hence, Chinua Achebe gives a strong answer to what is considered as one of the better novel of the postcolonial era. He argues that if Conrad's intention is to draw a cordon sanitaire between himself, the moral and psychological malaise of his narrator, his care seems to him to be totally wasted.

Elsewhere, Achebe has not only deconstructed Conrad impress of strict novelist tied to his personal and guiltless narrative arts but also he met a controversial discourse in Caryl Phillips who encountered him for a debate over the real intention of Joseph Conrad. He wrote the content in 2007 under the title *Was Joseph Conrad Really a Racist?* and pointed out Achebe's viewpoint. It sums up that Art is more than just good sentences making the situation tragic. For Achebe, Conrad is a capable artist and as such he is expected better from. Art is not intended to put people down. If so, then art would ultimately discredit itself.

During the debate, Chinua Achebe quoted from that moment in the novel the excerpt where the Europeans on the steamer encounter real live Africans in the flesh:

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 were 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 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 there was in you just the faintest trace of a response to the terrible frankness of that noise, a dim suspicion of there being a meaning in it which you—and you so remote from the night of first ages—could comprehend. (41-42)

Casting a glance at Achebe viewpoint, Caryl Phillips notices that he is, however, aware of Conrad's ambivalence toward the colonizing mission. Accordingly, he concedes that the novel is, in part, an attempt to examine what happens when Europeans came into contact with this particular form of economic and social exploitation. Since Conrad has forecasted the possible impact of his narrative and chosen the style of intradiegetic narrative, it should be significant to highlight his goal centred on denouncing the European colonisers.

Perceived as narratives of one of the African people inner remembrance, Conrad's novellas expose his stark opposition to the imperialist purposes of his own people in a period when their ascension was engaged. Therefore, his tendency in using a controversial style has risen up many scholars' reaction and continues like the present dissertation to attract readers.

Mapping Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* and *An Outpost of Progress*: A Post-colonialism Theoretical analysis

Heart of Darkness is one of the best postcolonial narratives. It shares the perception of the famous novelist Joseph Conrad on colonialism considered as a depreciating, inhuman and unfair reality over the native people of Africa. During a journey up the river Congo, Conrad discovers how horrible human behaviour in his quest of glory and wealth is. Albeit his European citizenship, he stays in a sharp antagonism toward the imperialist system set in Africa through colonialism and denounces it vividly. It can easily be claimed that as he presents Africa like a heart of Darkness, European colonisers seem to have the darkest heart while dealing with the crimes committed toward Africans. Using a caustic and mainly satiric pen, Conrad owns many novels which retrace his compassion to the Africans lot. One of his greatest successful narratives is *An Outpost of Progress* which is fashioned as following the same pathway with *Heart of Darkness*.

In both *Heart of Darkness* and *An Outpost of progress*, place, foreigners, native people and the imperial intention against them are the same. Nevertheless, Conrad appoints African people as accountable of their own condition in *An Outpost of Progress* while settling the Europeans colonisers as the one holding the entire responsibility of Africa's underdevelopment in *Heart of Darkness*. At the beginning of his novels, Africa is presented as a dark and gloomy place denuded of humanity, civilisation and progress as to justify why European settlers invade the area. The title "*Heart of Darkness*" is a connotation of the pretention simultaneously defended and deconstructed through the transmutation from the intrinsic natives' traditional condition to the visible impact of imperialist load on Africa. It clearly sets an ambivalent response in understanding the location of the concept of "darkness" shown through the following excerpts of *Heart of Darkness* first chapter below.

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. (6)

As the colonisers act violently and inhumanly, they were guilty of violating the natives' peace and freedom by showing darkness in their behaviour. The ambivalent response in understanding the location of the concept of darkness is also noticeable in an *Outpost of Progress* as mentioned in the following hot discussion between the outpost manager and Makola.

"No regular trade," said Makola. "They brought the ivory and gave it to me. I told them to take what they most wanted in the station. (...) Kayerts nearly burst with indignation. "Why!" he shouted, "I believe you have sold our men for these tusks!" Makola stood impassive and silent. (...) "I did the best for you and the Company," said Makola, imperturbably. "Why you shout so much? Look at this tusk." (...) "You very red, Mr. Kayerts. If you are so irritable in the sun, you will get fever and die--like the first chief!" pronounced Makola impressively. (62).

In this extract, the Europeans were shocked by what their native servant did. Without their authorisation, he initiates the murder of his own African fellows just to please the director of the station. He proves by such irritable action the evilness and darkness of his heart. Makola, the third man of the staff is a Sierra Leone nigger, who maintains that his name is Henry Price proclaiming his wrong membership to the European citizenship. He is the personification of the snobbish, corrupted and deprived African leaders who behave without giving any mark of sympathy toward their own people living and breathing for their own self-satisfaction.

On the other hand, Kurtz is the typical image of the European colonisers. Through Marlow, Conrad shows them as brute, thieves and murderers as they use the disadvantageous strength rate to frighten the natives and submit them to their will. This nihilistic approach of the colonialism makes Conrad use words and expression which have raised many Scholars attention over his racist tendency. By the use of depreciative adjectives, the natives are described as if they were animals, not humans:

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. While I stood horror-struck, one of these creatures rose to his hands and knees, and went off on all-fours towards the river to drink. He lapped out of his hand, then sat up in the sunlight, crossing his shins in front of him, and after a time let his woolly head fall on his breastbone. (19)

According to Khalil Hassan Nofal, Conrad uses hyponyms to create semantically rich and literally meaningful and well-packed texts to make the text hang together through a lexical cohesive device. He adds thus that hyponyms may significantly add to the descriptive and emotive power of Conrad's language. The following is an illustrative example in *Heart of Darkness*: "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" (18). Hence, this power of language appears in *An outpost of Progress* for the portrayal of either the native people or the Europeans known as Kayerts and Carlier. Such similitudes seem to defend Conrad from being a racist novelist.

Ended, from a postcolonial perspective, Conrad's novels describe the issue of colonialism in Africa and raise great interest about the responsibilities of both the natives and the imperialist's foreigners who act for maintaining their control on the African ownership as a survival instinct: An evil-minded attitude that constitutes today the main cause of Africa's trouble of emancipation.

ROOTS OF THE AFRICANS EMANCIPATION PROBLEMATIC

Africans Liability

Africa's people history shows how tied his communities are to a common ancestor. From Libya to South-Africa and from Somalia to Guinea, Africans commonality shows apart from the same skin colour the inner origin of his people shared and parted by artificial boundaries. As proof, Guinea Conakry, Burkina-Faso, Cote-d'Ivoire and Mali possess some similar ethnic groups. All over these countries, the same surname and traditional customs are observed by communities living nevertheless in different areas. As a matter of fact, it is common to find in several family members, cousins or relatives from different countries. These people are artificially disjointed but belong to the same origin and share common socio-economic difficulties and political realities since they are members of a common colonial legacy or postcolonial areas.

The existence of regional organisation such as the Economic Community of West-African States (ECOWAS) or the African Union (UA) seems to justify the necessity of conserving an African identity, unity, solidarity and fighting for a common economic interest. But as it is noticed all over the world, conflicts are evil situations which affect very negatively the growing plan of countries. A close scrutiny of the various conflicts occurring in Africa reveals two broad categories, namely "intra-state and inter-state conflicts" (Kriesberg 183).

As Mister Johnson of Joyce Cary's novel entitled *Mister Johnson*, Makola is a symbol of the natives who behave and think like the Europeans people in *An Outpost of Progress*. Makola is from Sierra Leone. He maintains that his name is Henry Price. However, for some reason or other, the natives down the river give him the name of Makola, and it sticks to him through all his wanderings about the country. Conrad underlines that "he spoke English and French with a warbling accent, wrote a beautiful hand, understood bookkeeping, and cherished in his innermost heart the worship of evil spirits" (53). He is thus well-educated, speaks two languages (the Europeans one and his mother tongue), wrap like the foreigners and flies between both his African cultural system and European one. This portrayal highlights the very nature of people sought by the Europeans to sit their power on the natives' land. Snobbish and self-centred, they are devoted to the imperialists' case and can be guilty of all devilish acts without any self-reproach to satisfy their masters as much as they can derive profit from it.

Whatever happens in a country, whoever the front runner is, anyhow the aspirations' strength is, the Europeans seem to resist against as they want their "station in good order" to continue exploiting Africa. Elsewhere, many African people are captivated by European living style and are increasingly planning to move in Europe expecting to live a better life over there. Some African young people are so blind by their ego that they seem to have forgotten that the soil of their ancestors is the richest of the world. By leaving it for purchasing the western one they contribute to their own countries impoverishment.

Western Imperialists' Responsibility

Education is a significant mean for people's orientation, societies' organisation and then countries growth. The better education is performed in a county, the more it contributes to the growth of the national economy and socio-political stability. Nevertheless, to reach a real emancipation, cultural valour reinforcement plays a preponderant role in conserving national identity. It also promotes real educated citizens who are devoted to their nation and would fight for its interest. That is, education's patterns are drawn through the necessity of teaching what is useful to improve life and face its conditions. Despite the fact that children were not taught together, Africans have considered the necessity of preparing the young generations by teaching them through traditional models such as initiation directed by elders in most Africans' traditional societies as a rite of passage giving access to a new social status, mysteries, etc. It is quite different from the current models of education sharpened on the Europeans one and leading millions of people into unemployment after years of learning what is useless and unnecessary for future life.

To highlight the sophisticated methods used by the Africans' elders or teachers, Rodney (1973) uses the typical illustration of a particular Africa's people:

Among the Bemba of what was then Northern Rhodesia, children by the age of six could name fifty to sixty species of tree plants without hesitation, but they knew very little about ornamental flowers. The explanation is simply that knowledge of the trees was a necessity in an environment of 'cut and burn' agriculture and in a situation where numerous household needs were met by tree products. Flowers, however, were irrelevant to survival (37).

After twenty seven years in prison, Nelson Mandela shared what is considered as one of the best gift of his life and his campaign for the freedom of Africa: *No Easy Walk to Freedom* first published in 1990. This collection of articles, speeches, and letters from underground is the transcripts of the trials in which he accuses and vividly denounces Europeans colonisers not only in South-Africa but also in most Africa's countries. He shows how the educational programme of the Europeans colonisers stands in sharp contrast with the levelling and antiracial teaching of equality of the western colonial powers. The Bantu education is an illustration of this type introduced during the apartheid system in South-Africa.

Lastly, Post-colonial education is a jam for African's emancipation since it resulted in the frustration of black people. But, another fact is the significant religious interest giving by Africans to their ancestor's spiritual legacy and decide to destroy its imbrication in their cultural behaviour. Nevertheless, carried away and enlivened by a panafricanist fever, a Congolese artist composed a song in 1972 to express his questioning. It is the famous song "Nakomitunaka" which literally means "I wonder". In this song, Kiamwangana Verckys raises a number of unbelievable facts introduced by Europeans to corrupt Africa's traditional religions and destruct simultaneously the spiritual tradition of their colonies. His questioning is clear:

My God, I keep wondering
In church we notice this
All saints' photos show white people
All angels are white
If it is the devil, the photo represents a black man.
Where does this injustice come from?
Where does black skin come from?
The colonialists have thus deceived us
The statuettes of our ancestors, they reject them
Native medicines, they reject them
But in church we notice
We pray, in the church full of statuettes
But these statuettes represent only white people
Why, my God?
(...)
My God, I keep wondering ¹

This song is truthful and very representative of what Europeans did to enslave Africa but it has been fought by the Congolese clergy under the order of a worried and afraid Vatican that the fever would contaminate other Africans all over the continent. Through his song words, Kiamwangana reveals the truth behind the so called missionary campaign of some appointed pastors and priests whose objectives was to create the vagueness and debasement of the Africa's traditional religious believes in order to make them swallow the western religion and banned their own one. By doing so the black skin colour were appointed as the wicked one: an eyewitness of the European colonisers' racist tendency. This is particularly denoted in Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* with an abounding use of callous and caustic expressions.

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... They were dying slowly, it was very clear. They were not enemies, they were not criminals, they were nothing earthly now, nothing but black shadows of disease and starvation lying confused in the greenish gloom. (18).

From this excerpt one could freely and truthfully conclude toward the European colonists that they were the "devils" that made Africa into an earthly hell. Elsewhere, Joseph Conrad denotes a different way of enslaving the native. Instead of bringing a foreign religion to the native, he shows how useful the appearance of the white man can be. At the Station, Kurtz, one of the main protagonists of *Heart of Darkness* does not force the natives to work for him by chains and fetters, but quite the contrary. Finally, Colonialist handled and desanctified not only the native cultural beliefs but

¹ Verckys M. Kiamwangana. *Nokomitunaka*. Song, Veve Musical Edition, 1972.

also the Christianity which is a religion coming from Asia and shared all over the world particularly in Europe revealing the Goodness' sake and its principle of fellow love.

Kurtz embodies the image of the Europeans colonisers. He is driven by the strong desire of making fortune. Knowing that it will not be possible without creating a kinship with the savages, Kurtz produces in the mind of the native a fear and a desire of worshipping him as a deity. Everything is then done by the natives as a natural obligation or duty of their white's deity spiritual needs' satisfaction. This cant of worshipping was seen not as serving a man but as serving a divinity. As a representative of the European colonizers, Kurtz's behaviour and psychology was perceived as coping with the one of his managers. As illustrated by Jiping Zhao, his behaviour of enslaving the natives and even slaughtering them at the Inner Station was neither accused nor stopped by the Trade Company.

Hence, the presence of French military troops, the free-exploitation of Africa by Europeans and their multinationals are the continuation of what is described in *Heart of Darkness and An Outpost of Progress*. As a matter of fact, they signed agreement of cooperation with the host countries in which they had ironically stood the basis of Africa's robbery. Its aim was not to preserve the institution of chieftaincy as such, but to encourage local self-government through indigenous political institutions whether these were headed by a single executive authority or by a council of elders (Seguedeme et al. 2). But former British colonies have grown faster, although much controversy still surrounds the likely mechanisms of transmission of colonial legacy. The colonial economy in most African countries was structured to improve the economies of the colonisers or metropolitan powers.

The colonial agreement is thus used to create a transmutation from colonialism to neo-colonialism. The absurdity and ridiculous features of such an agreement led Europeans try to hide it from the world. During the introduction of Euro-currency, the European Union strongly pleaded the suppression of the system based on this obsolete agreement and meet with the categorical refusal of France. Always remaining in force, this agreement concerns several domains known as military, politics and mainly economy and are presented as the followings:

- Colonial debt for reimbursement of the benefits of colonisation;
- Automatic confiscation of national financial reserves;
- The right of first refusal on any raw or natural resource discovered in the country;
- Priority to French interests and companies in public procurement and public tenders;
- Exclusive right to supply military equipment and train military officers of the colonies;
- The right for France to deploy troops and intervene militarily in the country to defend its interests;
- Speaking French;
- The obligation to use the CFA franc (franc of the French colonies in Africa);
- The obligation to send to France an annual balance sheet and a state reserve report;
- Renounce all military alliance with other countries, unless authorized by France;
- The obligation to ally with France in the event of war or global crisis.

This secret agreement is a real sword of Damocles² hanging ahead the Africa's countries. Symbolically, the natives submitted to Kurtz tyranny, are obliged to worship him, obey him, and devote their entire life to serve him and satisfy his voracious envy not to be hanged or savagely punish for any thought of freedom or rebellion. It is why Conrad portrays the Europeans in *Heart of darkness* saying that as a devoted band they called themselves the Eldorado Exploring Expedition:

Their talk, however, was the talk of sordid buccaneers: it was reckless without hardihood, greedy without audacity, and cruel without courage; there was not an atom of foresight or of serious intention in the whole batch of them, and they did not seem aware these things are wanted for the work of the world. To tear treasure out of the bowels of the land was their desire, with no more moral purpose at the back of it than there is in burglars breaking into a safe. (35)

At the light of the above excerpt, the secret agreement is a heavy load on the European former colonies' sovereignty. Like Kurtz's natives slaves, Africa's leaders are religiously submissive to the former colonial powers trying to enjoy their pretending sovereignty not to undergo the fit of temper (planned coup d'état, murder, popular revolt, terrorist group attack...) of their former colonisers. The Africa of the 21st century is not only the poorest and the most miserable region on the planet but also the only region in the world that is getting evidently and indisputably marginalised on the face of globalization fifty years after most African countries regained independence. Today, Africa is

² The "sword of Damocles" is a modern expression, which means a sense of impending doom, the feeling that there is some catastrophic threat looming over somebody. The expression comes to us from the writings of the Roman politician, orator, and philosopher Cicero (106-43 BC). Cicero's point was that death looms over each of us, and we ought to try to be happy in spite of that. Others have interpreted his meaning to be similar to "don't judge people until you've walked in their shoes". Others, such as Verbaal (2006) argue that the story was part of a subtle suggestion to Julius Caesar that he needed to avoid the pitfalls of tyranny: the denial of spiritual life and the lack of friends.

considered as the poorest continent in the world contributing less than three percent (3%) to international trade (Souare, 2007 cited by Yekini and al.).

The slave trade and mainly colonialism are unfortunately responsible of Africa's low level of development. At the point of independence, some countries came out of colonialism with clear estrangement while some have all the symptoms of total break from the imperialist world whereas they were still deeply sunk in the shackles of imperialism. Nations at the point of obtaining their freedom from the colonial masters merely took flag independence without all necessary economic independence turned out to be mere neocolonies and consequently represent the neocolonial states of the world. Unfortunately, numerous countries reside in the African continent (Seguedeme et al. 5) and the most exploited are those situated in the francophone zone indirectly held by France.

Under the guidance of his illogical thoughts, Kurtz's mind was "capable of a fearless acting out of the whole past of human barbarism" (Watt 225-226). It was the main reason why he enslaved the natives and even killed them when they rebelled, and why he wouldn't let the Russian keep even a small lot of ivory. Kurtz' success in upholding the Inner Station and his position as well as the ivory collection predicts his doomed fate since he is the representative of the colonizers in Heart of Darkness. Meanwhile, the snobbish Makola is their accomplice in An Outpost of Progress. Thus, Kurtz and Makola represent a duet based on their own self-centeredness and their immoderate purchase of interest over the Africa's people.

In the light of the statements above, one should notice that Europeans are capable of malicious conspiracy to safeguard what they consider as a historical legacy. As said by the French former president Nicola Sarkozy (one of the most emblematic figures of European imperialism): "Colonialism was a mistake which has changed the destiny of Europe and the one of Africa by mingling each other together. This common destiny has been sealed by Africans' blood during Europeans' wars."³ These words said during a discourse at Dakar (Sénégal) in 26th July 2007 as a speech's reply⁴ delivered by Francois Hollande in the same country in 12th October 2012 sound like Europeans denial of Europe-Africa closed relationship's break.

Nowadays European army are deployed in the sub-Saharan Africa's countries as a military help to fight terrorists. This terrorist phenomenon have scattered in the regions after the attack of the western coalition of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (OTAN) against the Libya Army of Muhammad Kadhafi⁵ in October 2011. Purchasing the death of the Libya Guide, this assault against an African country sovereignty makes the western powers responsible of the sub-Saharan insecurity since numerous terrorist groups spread all over Africa from Libya regions to frightened and persecute the inhabitants.

Nevertheless, the world progress is tied to the use of New Information and Communication's Technologies (NICTs) and its ability of creating a planetary village where people are imbricated through social networks. People are automatically aware of the evolution of the European swindling in Africa. An anti-European and specifically anti-French's wind are increasingly spreading all over Africa by raising neo-colonialism's denunciations, struggles and riots against the France's presence in Africa. Since decade, the relation between the Europeans and African over their economic and political cooperation is drastically deteriorating as announced by Hollande in 2012 during a discourse in Senegal:

The time of what is called formerly "La France-Afrique" is achieved. There is France and there is Africa. There is the cooperation between France and Africa with respectful, clear and solidary relation. Clarity is the inter-state correlation. Henceforth, Emissaries, intermediaries, and officials will find closed doors in the French Republic presidency and in its entire secretaries.⁶

However, reality and political discourse are quite different. The formers colonisers and Africa's relation is unchanged albeit new human right concept of healthy environment and liberty are introduced in human rights device. However, Mass media represents a strong tool of alienation handled by the western imperialist movement to maintain their hegemony over developing countries. Purchasing this purpose, a wild psychological warfare is conducted by the United States Information Agency (USIA) and the European mass media organisations. Even for the wealthiest nation on

³ Le monde, "Le discours de Dakar de Nicolas Sarkozy" https://www.lemonde.fr/afrique/article/2007/11/09/le-discours-de-dakar_976786_3212.html, 04/02/2022, 22:33.

⁴ Francois Hollande discourse was considered by some French political leaders as a premise of Africa real independence. Hollande words were very compassionate and truly sincere. He gave to African people an impression of France culpability and will of freeing his former colonies from political and economic interferences. See: Jeune-Afrique, "France – Afrique : le texte du discours de Dakar prononcé par François Hollande". <https://www.jeuneafrique.com/173903/politique/france-afrique-le-texte-du-discours-de-dakar-prononc-par-fran-ois-hollande/>

⁵ Muhammad Kadhafi was a very cumbersome leader. He represented a nuisance for the western imperialist interests. In spite of the farther military and economic sanctions imposed on his country, he managed successfully his territory planning to unify Africa in a single powerful nation.

⁶ <https://www.jeuneafrique.com/173903/politique/france-afrique-le-texte-du-discours-de-dakar-prononc-par-fran-ois-hollande/>

earth, the United States of America and France lavish an unusual amount of men, materials and money on this vehicle for its neo-colonial aims.

But it's urgent to find or to pave the way for Africa's real emancipation for Africans' social welfare. To succeed, Africans should look for some alternatives useful to reach the goal of sustainable development.

ALTERNATIVES FOR THE EMANCIPATION OF THE AFRICAN PEOPLE

Understanding Joseph Conrad Approach to Stimulate Africa's Emancipation

Deconstructing the western invasion in Africa, Joseph Conrad's handles *Heart of Darkness* that has a symbolic meaning behind its title like many other great works of literature. The title can actually be interpreted in many different ways. One way the title can be looked at is that it portrays how Conrad viewed Africa. It might also represent entering into a more primitive society, witnessing humans transformation from civilized to savage. Perhaps the Heart of Darkness refers to the colonialism and imperialism that the Europeans were practicing at the turn of the 20th century. In the setting that Joseph Conrad gives the characters in *Heart of Darkness*, Africa was still greatly unexplored by Europeans. It was thought by many Europeans as a dark place of savages and strange beasts. As the journey proceeds from the Coastal Station to Kurt's outpost, darkness increasingly becomes associated with savagery, cannibalism, and human sacrifice, with Africans as the embodiment of these ideas.

To justify that horrible portrayal, Dabideen says in *The Black Presence in English Literature* : "Blacks are little better than lions, tigers, leopards and other wild beasts which that country produces in great numbers (112)." He went on to argue that blacks had no arts, sciences and systems of commerce and, as such, it was acceptable "to buy a great many of them to sell again to advantage in the West Indies". Even today, this viewpoint is led by those who have never lost interest in Africa and kick over his wealth by "stealing" his raw material and using it as a market for the flowing of their own goods and unfair services. Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* and also *An Outpost of Progress* as an illustration peddles myths about black people whom have been manipulated in the past by European who sought to exploit them for material gain.

Then, Conrad revealed that ivory is the main focused natural resource of the colonizers. As a representative of the Europeans, Kurtz is a strong symbol of order because of the fact that he is the most influential medium of European colonisation. He is sure that the ivory trade which he is responsible for is more productive than in any other region. However, his methods are brutal. Conrad clearly describes Kurtz's mistreatments and greediness via his physical appearance through Marlow in *Heart of Darkness*' extract below:

I had a vision of him on the stretcher, opening his mouth voraciously, as if to devour all the earth with all its mankind. He lived then before me; he lived as much as he had ever lived a shadow insatiable of splendid appearances, of frightful realities; a shadow darker than the shadow of the night, and draped nobly in the folds of a gorgeous eloquence (86).

In many description located in the novels, Conrad depicts Africa and the western relation as based on the exploitation of a community by another one. Criticizing Conrad without taking into consideration his historical context and his use of literary devices is not going to result in an effective reading of the work. Even though his pen is caustic and very satirical toward the native people, Conrad enters in the mentality of his European fellows and the one of the submitted African natives so as to reveal the inner intention of the imperialists and their determination in using unbelievable clutches to achieve their goal. Then, this map of both Europeans and Africans make inquiries on the current trouble of emancipation of the Africa's new generation. Many nation-states have their potential for growth hindered by the involvement of developed nations. It is high time for African people to strengthen their solidarity and bar the way to neo-colonialism; the last stage of imperialism.

Strategies against Imperialism and Neo-colonialism: Intrinsic Ways and Means for Africa's Emancipation

Several ways and means embodies Africa's transmutation and positioning on its inhabitant wellbeing long assessed and bitterly hidden by foreigners.

One of those ways and means is the educational approach to Africa transmutation. Most African countries spoil their investment by training the youth in unusual fields up to their graduation without any reinsertion plan and causing huge unemployed citizens. Those Africans who had access to education were faced with certain qualitative problems identical to the colonial period ones and highlighted by Rodney (1973) for who the educational system's quality was poor by prevailing European standards. The books, the methods of teaching and the discipline were all brought to Africa in the 19th century; and, on the whole, schools remained sublimely indifferent to the 20th century. New ideas that were incorporated in the capitalist metropolis never reached the colonies. In particular, the fantastic changes in science did not reach African classrooms, for there were few schools where science subjects were really taught. Similarly, the evolution of higher technical education did not have any counterpart in Africa'' (Rodney, 1973). To sum up, African

educationalists have the duty of implementing a system which matches with the African cultural features (language, religion, geography...etc.) taking technologies and world scientific advancements.

Besides, African leaders need leadership and country management. So, they should identify the various elements that constitute patriotism and nationalism and then promote and protect them; devise ways and means of sharing national wealth transparently and equitably and of increasing national wealth to facilitate the sharing; increase the amount and quality of what is to be shared in discipline and organization; try and innovate as much as possible so as to find solutions that are adapted to African problems and issues; fight corruption by making it very costly to indulge in corrupt practices; work out, adopt and maintain, a wise foreign policy that includes honourable peace with neighbouring countries; ensure that the stability resulting from laws and orders serves the entire citizens rather than a minority; practise discipline in financial and other aspects of management; ensure that elections are held at regular intervals based on consensual constitutional texts; and also review electoral systems in Africa to remove “complete” win-lose and encourage “largely” win-win ones; strengthen regulatory agencies so that competition among enterprises and organizations is fair; and the consumers are not ripped off.

Moreover, economic and monetary transmutation are some of the ways and means African emancipation. The FCFA always manufactured and managed by France sixty-two years after independences is a device of plundering, supervision and childishness of the Africans. The secret colonial agreement, in its African post-independence imperial philosophy, gave the monopoly of several resources of the ground to France. Since sixty two years, several African countries are prohibited to transform their raw materials, to diversify their trade partners apart from the old metropolis and to manufacture the goods produced by the metropolis. These colonial agreements are of this fact a true device of monitoring, plundering, control and childishness of Africa.

This thorny problematic has made Thierry Amougou state in *Afrique noire: Fin des accords coloniaux, sortie de 75 ans de servitude monétaire?* that the pack wounds however because to complete its independence is not a sinecure as far as it requires will and determination. Moreover, he deplores:

Force is to note that silence is worrying whereas Emmanuel Macron and Alassane Ouattara, his ally of the Ivory-Coast, already planted the stakes of the safeguard of the FCFA and in the continuation of the related monetary constraint while ratifying at the French Parliament a mislead-eyes’ reform via a holdup of the ECO project. (4)

Africa under the aegis of the F.CFA can neither develop nor become emergent because the F.CFA is an inapt currency for such objectives. Several solutions can thus be put to Africa’s controlling, to anticipate with an aim of seeing farther for the future. Furthermore, a panafrican army project should be launched whereas only such an army can allow Africa and not France to become “the gendarme of Africa”, in order to leave the military agreements which endangered the African States to eradicate ashamed situations such as the ones committed on Laurent Gbagbo and Mouammar Kadhafi.

Finally, a currency is a social, anthropological, psychological and subjective institution because one can ask it for itself. However, it should be acknowledged that the pride of Africa and the Africans is depreciated throughout the world with the F.CFA and what it represents. To put in place a new currency which makes the Africans proud of themselves and of their continent is very significant for the psychology of a company and its projection in the future in all the fields. Leaving the F.CFA is not only one monetary business; it is also a policy of repair and care, a campaign of revalorization of the pride and identity of Africa.

CONCLUSION

Africa is rich in natural as well as human resources which are the basis of a given nation’s prosperity. Despite its potential the continent is still underdeveloped. Different scholars have tried to analyze the causes of Africa’s underdevelopment in different perspectives. Some from the colonisation perspective and others from the political set up of the continent. Based on this rational, this research paper initiates through Joseph Conrad *Heart of Darkness* and *An outpost of Progress* to identify the streak of colonialism on Africa’s emancipation troubles and to develop appropriate perspectives for Africa authentic emancipation.

Throughout several chapters, a critical approach based on the reader-response analysis of the studied novels and an efficient use of the historical theoretical criticism, the postcolonial theory and the panafricanism literary analysis allow the scrutiny of what is responsible of the Africa underdevelopment in spite of his prestigious position of the wealthiest region of the world. Africa’s geographical position, climate, people, underground feature and civilisational legacy embody the chance of a truthful economic, cultural and political superiority over Europe, America and Asia. Nevertheless, these gears are nowadays responsible of its emancipation’s troubles as denoted in Conrad’s *Heart of Darkness* through a woman portrayal; an illustration of that reality. An interesting stereotype showing Kurtz’s Intended

centred on the savage African “woman” (71). She is peddling myths about blacks who have been manipulated in the past by European to overexploit them economically: She is a personification of the whole continent seductive welfare in Conrad’s novel.

Joseph Conrad narrative style is structured through a multi-level narration: an intradiegetic narration and an extradiegetic narration. In *Heart of Darkness*, Joseph Conrad is disdainful of colonialism and seeks to educate an immature and blinded society to the true nature and horrors of colonialism. Through Marlow’s journey up the Congo and into the Heart of Darkness, and Makola schemes in *An Outpost of Progress*, the horrifying tools of colonialism are laid bare and the true purpose of colonialism and the European capitalist approach are exposed. At the time of his writings, Conrad was by no means the only writer to be so critical against European policy in the Congo basin, as there had already been several publications exposing the atrocities that had been taking place in the Congo under the regime set up by King Leopold II. But Conrad’s pen dug up numerous scholars through his harmful and disgusting description of the black people up to their dehumanization and reification. Scholars like Chinua Achebe, Caryl Phillips, Yèkini Ibrahim and Hergy A. Séguédémè have reacted to his narrative tendency of Africans reification. The most famous is the strong and thoroughly disapproval of Chinua Achebe against Conrad’s narrative concluding in his that Conrad was racist:

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, 255)

Apart from his controversial narrative, Conrad pen deconstructs European imperialist behavior and set out their intention and methods showing his antipathy to his homeland fellows’ greediness.

Moreover, this research work is a British literature contribution to discuss the Africans contemporaneous latent condition in a perpetually growing and sophisticating world and take part to the analysis of the roots of such an abnormal situation. The setting up of colonialism put African institutions, customs, and taboos in a crisis. The traditional sustainable development systems were replaced by an imperial system management. The resource users were separated from the decision-makers. Institutions that fitted the traditional communities and their needs were destroyed in the colonial administrations. Conflicts between African traditional customs and colonial values became the order of the day. Unfortunately, numerous African leaders and people are alienated or formed and used to serve unconsciously the formers colonisers’ intention.

Today, development strategies are based on Western models and geared to serve the colonial master rather than the African natives. In a nutshell, development during the colonial period was dictated by the political and economic considerations of the colonizers who regarded the natural environment as a free good; their major preoccupation was to control and exploit it for their own gains. The current European leaders apprehend Africa as their property and use obsolete, hypocritical, inhuman and unbelievable trip to maintain their influence upon the sovereignty of Africans. They behave as if it were impossible for them to achieve economic stability, social security and regional political power in their own countries without the voracious robbing of the black continent resources.

The socio political set up of African countries has a similarity with those of the Asian nations (China, Japan, India... etc.) which have brought economic progress through exercising developmental state. These countries were able to solve their citizens’ unemployment through implementing technical innovation in their education policy, which is the peculiar feature of developmental state. Therefore, African leaders have to strive for change in the continent to reverse the situation through applying developmental state theory and gradually exercising democratic culture in the region.

This research work has covered the different aspects of the colonialism streak on Africa’s emancipation in Joseph Conrad’s *Heart of Darkness* and *An Outpost of Progress*. On this basis the release of Africa must come from the Africans themselves and not from Europe mainly represented by France. Initially, it will be by their capacity to reconstitute their culture and values and to change by themselves the current paradigms by daring new choices to build the continent. The partnership with the Westerner and its model consumerist showed their limits with many regards. It is then high time for the African natives to start the authentic panafrican fight for the future generation wellbeing and the reconstitution of their countries values and legitimate position among the world powers.

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