

Applying Edward Said's Concept Of Orientalism On The Novella Heart Of Darkness

1. Yousaf Kamran Bhatti , 2. Humaira Imran , 3. Asma Rahim , 4. Samia Shakeel , 5. Aqsa Saleem

¹Lecturer, Department of English, Forman Christian College, A Chartered University, Lahore.

²Lecturer, Department of English, Edwardes College, Peshawar.

³Lecturer, Department of English, National University of Modern Languages, NUML, Peshawar.

⁴Lecturer, Department of English, National Institute of Modern Languages, Regional Campus, Peshawar.

⁵Lecturer, Department of English, Gomal University, Dikhan.

Abstract

A field of philosophy and activity known as orientalism creates images of the East or the Orient. This paper examines how Orientalism, according to Said, is used to stereotype the east as exotic, feminine, frail, and vulnerable in the book Heart of Darkness. The study's major claim is that, while viewing the East as something different, the west has been able to dominate, recreate, and exercise authority over the Orient. Postcolonial theory is the foundation of the study. The terms self or Occident and "other or Orient" are strongly related to this idea. The Occident is constantly in control and regarded as superior, whereas the Orient is seen as inferior and weak in contrast. Later, Orientalism developed into a colonizer's mindset and was frequently applied in occupied territories. The study found that the colonisers, the Europeans treated the colonised, the Africans, as others. It also explores that orientalism is an overtly political work that aims to analyse discourse from the perspective of an oriental where the East is associated with danger and menace.

Key Words: Orientalism, postcolonial, Occident, Orient, Other, Heart of Darkness.

Introduction

Edward Said's Orientalism, which has had a considerable influence on postcolonial studies, is evaluated in relation to the early modern life of African writing. It examines how Said's approach is inconsistent and contrasts reactionary interpretations of Said's theory with more recent, ethno - cultural study. The purpose of this study is to highlight the novella Heart of Darkness as a colonial mindset's focus effort. Researchers can easily identify colonialist attitudes of superiority or constantly being in charge while Africans are denied a voice, treated less favorably than others, and dehumanized in this novella. Similarly, if we apply it to the novella, we can quickly see that the literature generated had a clear image of Eurocentric superior ideology and colonial

superior mind-set.

Statement of the Problem

In order to evaluate imperialist superior ideology and embedded prejudice or state of mind towards Africans, the current study analyses Edward Said's postcolonial theory, a significant figure that Robert Young sees as one of the "holy trio" of postcolonial thinkers. According to Marxist-feminist Spivak, who wrote the essay "Can Subaltern Speak?" even knowledge was not always pure. She thought of it as a delivery from a producer. In a similar vein, if we apply it on

the novella persuades the reader that while Europeans are violent, egotistical, and arrogant, Africans and Orientals are dehumanized, cognitively, politically, and economically

inferior beings. Conrad depicts Africans as living in servitude and uncivilized conditions, and Kurtz is seen as a representative of White philosophy. Said's theory had assumed certain things from the outset.

Literature review

Few mentioned racism in the early reviews of the novella *Heart of Darkness* and the phrase "race" was utterly disregarded. Instead, they concentrate on the novella's format. Some people have discussed how the adventure experience presents the human character philosophically. It's also noteworthy that someone even said that there was no bias in it. This is not surprising given that racism was not even a recognised term, and it demonstrates that "race-thinking" was regarded as being so commonplace that no one in the novella even noticed it.

In prior criticism of the novella, none commented on racism. The burning issue of "race" was totally ignored. Along with that, contemporary critics focused on the form of the novella. Few of them had written about its adventurous and philosophic picture of human character. Even thought it was also discussed, it does not have prejudice. Racism was considered an ordinary word at the time, and no attention was paid to this particular word or its implication that it contained a race mentality.

Nigerian author Chinua Achebe critiqued the novella and charged Joseph Conrad with racism. He claims that Conrad's obsession with darkness stems from the novella's extensive use of dark images. Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* is strongly criticised by Chinua Achebe in his well-known essay, *An Picture of Africa*. He argues that Conrad was a racist and that a novella that so dehumanizes a segment of humanity shouldn't be regarded as a great work of art. In Achebe (176) Edward responded to Achebe by saying he stood up for Joseph

Conrad. The 1993 publication of Said's study can be seen as a response to *An Picture of Africa* by Chinua Achebe in many aspects. Said claims that we should not hold the Europeans responsible for the current woes in the opening paragraph of his critique, *Two Visions in the Heart of Darkness*. Instead, we should consider the history of imperialism as a network of interconnected histories that, while useful and intriguing to comprehend, would be inaccurate and pointless to repress. (Said, 1978, p.19)

According to Guven S (2013), Europeans traded and exploited Indians for their own gain. The researcher denounced the unethical treatment of European colonisers in Africa throughout the 19th century in a critique of imperialism. Researchers also discovered that these issues were dealt in an ambivalent manner, which is truly typical of how they regarded Africans. The researcher discovered that Conrad wrote to criticise colonialism, and the aim of this study was to demonstrate that by examining European imperialism and colonialism in relation to Africa. In addition, the researcher wished to demonstrate that Conrad had deconstructed binary oppositions of colonialism by subverting the general idea of the Europeans towards Africa.

Jones (2013) examined why and how dark personalities overlap in his research. It exposed manipulation and callousness and fully explained the correlations between the psychopathy, narcissism, and Machiavellianism scales' aspect scores. It also featured a social dominance orientation component.

Ward (2005) explained in his research that there was a task of state crime which prevailed a lot of catastrophe and spread fear among citizens just because the governing body had to have control over the area and to achieve their personal agenda. This research was conducted to explore the fear which colonizer spread with their arrival in Congo; moreover it led to moral degradation and cruel treatment for indigenous people.

Hawkins (1979) writes that Colonizers came with a mission that they had a noble cause of civilizing Africans. Now instead of a progressive development with long term planning king Leopold ii's capital-poor imperialism resulted in hasty exploitation of surface resources through forced labor. Thus Conrad took this liberty to show this exploitation of indigenous cultures which was very cruel for local people and it showed imperialism's inefficiency.

Theoretical Frame of the Study

In terms of intellectual, political, and cultural interchange, there have been misunderstandings and tensions between the East and the West. Many attempts to theorise orientalism as an Indian phenomena were made as it was a continually developing idea. According to philosopher S. Radhakrishnan, the East has always been a romantic conundrum to the West; it is the setting for tales of adventure like those in the Arabian Nights, the birthplace of magic, and the territory of hearts' desire (Radhakrishnan, 1962, 251)

A contentious and contested idea of Eastern culture is the word "Orientalism." It typically refers to academic studies and research papers that outline and clarify the variety of cultural traditions found in the Middle East and East Asian regions. It is a dynamic idea that the East and the West differ from one another in terms of cultural diversity, architectural quirks, and literary representations.

The term became well-known when Edward Said's book *Orientalism* was published in 1978. Several academics define the term "orientalism" in various ways, but it is generally understood to refer to the belief that the West is superior to the East in all respects, including Asia, Africa, and Arab territories. He became well-known as a cultural critic by writing the book *Orientalism* (1978) and outlining the

methods and effects of the Western study of Eastern culture. The book focuses on the classic strategies used by European and British rulers to dominate and oppress non-Europeans.

The concept of "Orientalism" is divisive and controversial in regards to Eastern culture. It usually refers to scholarly studies and research articles that describe and elucidate the range of cultural traditions found in the Middle East and East Asian regions. The idea that the East and the West are different from one another in terms of cultural diversity, oddities in architecture, and literary depictions is a dynamic one.

The term became well-known when Edward Said's book *Orientalism* was published in 1978. The belief that the West, which includes Asia, Africa, and Arab countries is superior to the East in all ways. The term "orientalism" is defined differently by various academics. He became well-known as a cultural critic by writing the book *Orientalism* (1978) and outlining the methods. In the preface of *Orientalism*, Said offers numerous definitions of orientalism. "Orientalism is a method of understanding the Orient that is founded on the Orient's unique place in the experience of Europeans and Westerners." (Said, 1978, p.1)

As stated before, "Orientalism" was defined as Western understanding of the East based on their own particular beliefs, which they attempted to essentialize for all individuals of Asian heritage that was false because there are people in one country who come from various racial, cultural, and ethnic backgrounds. No one can be treated equally as a result.

In addition to being geographically close to Europe, the Orient is also home to some of the largest, richest, and oldest colonies on the continent. It is also the source of many of the continent's civilizations and languages, a competitor in terms of culture, and one of its most profound and pervasive representations of the Other. (Said, 1978, p.1)

Said argues that the civilization, language, culture, and psyche of the East are distinct. The core of the philosophical movement known as "Orientalism" is an ontological and epistemological difference between "the Orient" and "the Occident" (Said, 1978, p.2). According to the official definition, "Orientalism is a Western strategy for changing, ruling, and conquering the Orient," it is used to portray the Orient through the lens of Western ideals. (Said, 1978, p.3)

Said made it clear in this remark that Westerners have surpassed Easterners in power. They came to subdue and tame the savages of the East. They had made it their mission to enlighten people. The relationship between the West and the East is one of dominance, convoluted hegemony, and varying degrees of power. (Said, 1978, p.5)

"Orient" and "Occident" are artificial terms (Said, 1978, p.4). Keeping in mind that these two phrases were entirely based on artificial information that was constantly changing "Orientalism makes sense in any way depends more on the West than the East, "Several Western strategies directly contributed to this meaning," the author says. (Said, 1978, p.22) Another name for it was "European superiority over Eastern backwardness" (Said, 1978, p.7). The relationship between the West and the East is one of dominance, convoluted hegemony, and varying degrees of power. (Said, 1978, p.5)

In comparison to all other non-European peoples and cultures, European identity is seen as superior. (Said, 1978) concept of "Oriental was built mostly on a sovereign Western consciousness," says the author" (p.8). They graded it using a framework that was founded on their Eurocentric preconceptions centred on "What "we" do versus what "they" cannot do versus what "we" understand". (Said, 1978, p.12)

Colonizers arrived arrogantly and mistook all Orientals for people who were unlike them as stated "Orientalism is nothing but a system of myths or lies" (Said, 1978, p.6). Said acknowledged the otherization and raised his voice in protest, stating that the colonisers' understanding was incomplete and prejudiced and did not accurately portray the East.

Analysis and Discussion

The dissimilarity between being "other" and really not becomes evident when Heart of Darkness describes African living situations. The image of the Congo and of Africa is gloomy and dreary. That was a "extremely grave, really grave" situation (Conrad, 1994, p. 32). It shows the rudimentary instincts of humans, civilization, discontent, and the helplessness of unfortunate Africans in the Congo who are forced to obey White rule. They have an idea that civilizing other people is something that only Europeans can do. But Africans are viewed as uncivilized brutes. The makeover of Dane Fresleven is the first illustration. After arriving in the Congo, he is said to have changed from a serene, kind, and peaceful guy into a fierce, violent individual. Also, he was in the following frame of mind when he wished to buy chickens.

The transformation of Dane Fresleven is the first illustration. After arriving in the Congo, he is said to have changed from a serene, kind, and peaceful guy into a fierce, violent individual. Furthermore, he considered himself to be superior during the time he wanted to buy hens, thus he should be treated with more respect when haggling. He came in with the assumption that he was superior and was there to rule.

Conrad's portrayal of European imperialism and African plight parallels Said's theories that a certain freedom of discourse was always the luxury of the Westerner; because his culture was greater, he could probe, grapple with, and give the great Asiatic mystery form and meaning. Your strength is really an accident

that resulted from others' weaknesses, as it was stated. (1994, Conrad, p. 10)

Heart of Darkness by Joseph Conrad saw Africa as a primitive continent populated by cultureless black people who loitered aimlessly. When they were treated very severely and left to die in the jungle without receiving medical attention, as demonstrated by the phenomenon what a row the brute makes, he once again used the word "African as "nigger groaned someplace.". Discourse analysis even depicts that the choice of words is not good for Africans, who are called "brutes," while on the other hand. Europeans considered them on a self-imposed mission to tame uncivilized Africans. As Conrad says that something like an emissary of light; something like a lower sort of apostle." There is an evident difference in discourse for "self" and "others."

The living conditions of Blacks and Europeans in the novella differ significantly from one another. The majority of the folks there were black and moving around naked like ants. (1994, Conrad, p. 21) The joints in their limbs were like knots in a rope, and "I could see every rib; each had an iron collar on his neck, and all were connected by a chain." (p.22)

Africans, who were treated like animals and were to be ruled by an iron yoke, had this state of health. The food had changed significantly. Another time, it was said of Europeans that they were excessively thick, "too meaty," and of unexpected elegance. I observed a high collar, white cuffs, a light alpaca jacket, snowy pants, a transparent necktie, and varnished boots. (1994, Conrad, p. 25) Marlow, on the other hand, advises Africans to go barefoot.

The indifferent attitude of Europeans is described as how Africans were regarded as others. Their standard was different, and it was different for Europeans. "One comes to hate those savages—hate them to the death."

(Conrad, 1994, p.25) They were beaten very severely as Marlow listened to the voices of niggers being beaten nearby. Even when they were ill, they were not given medical aid; rather, they were left to die unattended in the forest. Kurtz is regarded in the novella as a "universal genius," and he is considered a demi-god for Africans. A very superior position is given to him by Conrad.

They had come to Africa apparently with the preconceived mission of civilizing natives, but in fact they had no such aim, as Conrad wrote, "with no moral purpose at the back" (Conrad, 1994, p.44). Colonisers had different standards for themselves and colonised people, treating them differently. Africans were treated as animals, while Europeans were treated as others. They were beaten severely and left to die unattended in the forest. Kurtz is seen as a demi-god for Africans and is given a superior position by Conrad. Colonisers had different standards for themselves, or they were considered "self," and colonised people were considered "others."

Conclusion

The untenable dual image of East and West presented by Orientalism has been disregarded in some way by every study that has been addressed here. The historical emphasis has shifted away from the overall interaction between imperial and representational powers since the publication of Orientalism and towards more specific instances of cross-cultural contact. A comprehensive analysis of the particular factors, such status and race that affected how Africans understood foreign cultures has been made possible by later research. As we have seen, postcolonial history continues to define itself in light of Said's ground-breaking theories, making his methodology still pertinent today. As a result, Heart of Darkness by Joseph Conrad symbolises the colonialist notion of superiority. It has shown the oppression and violence of colonisers. It is stereotyped that Africans are less intelligent and

unable to resolve their problems. Africans are stereotyped as being less intelligent and unable to resolve their problems in an adult, mature way. They have no voice. The company's ivory collection was taken into consideration when crafting each and every policy. While Europeans are portrayed as deliberate and thoughtful, Africans are exuberant and spontaneous. Hopefully, the current analysis has demonstrated the shortcomings of this extrapolation of European views about invaders.

References

1. Achebe, C. "An Image of Africa" in *Things Fall Apart: A Norton Critical Edition*. Ed Francis Conrad, J. (1994). *Heart of Darkness*. Penguin Group: London
 2. Güven, S. (2013). Post-Colonial Analysis of Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*. *Journal of History Culture and Art Research*, 2(2), 79-87.
 3. Harris, W. (Spring 1981) "The Frontier on Which *Heart of Darkness* Stands." *Research in African Literature* 12.1: 86-93.
 4. Hawkins, H. (1979). *Conrad's Critique of Imperialism in Heart of Darkness*. *Pmla*, 94(2), 286-299.
 5. Jones, D. N., & Figueredo, A. J. (2013). The core of darkness: Uncovering the heart of the Dark Triad. *European Journal of Personality*, 27(6), 521-531.
 6. Murfin, R (1996). *Heart of Darkness*. New York: Bedford/St. Martin's. Print.
 7. Radhakrishnan, S. (1962). *Eastern religions and western thought*. India: Oxford University Paperbacks.
 8. Said, E. (1978) *Orientalism*, Penguin Group: London
 9. Said, E. (1994) *Culture and Imperialism*. New York: Vintage Books, Print.
 10. Ward, T. (2005). State crime in the heart of darkness. *British Journal of Criminology*, 45(4), 434-445.
-