

# US vs. THEM: A Discourse Study of Register Variation in Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*

**Assist.Prof.Dr. Amin Ukaal Ghailan**

Dept. of English, College of Education for Human Sciences  
University of Basra

## **Abstract:**

This study aims at discussing the registral variations in Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*. For centuries, white colonizers exploited the black native Africans by destroying their humanity and culture showing them as savages and cannibals. So, the Africans were shown as struggling with illiteracy and savagery, the white Man was busy with the idea of colonization and fortune. This study is about the registral variations in the speech of the White Man(US) and that of the African(THEM). The colonizer- colonized discourse in the novel shows the European thinking of himself to be a civilized human being while the African is shown to be savage and humiliated man. He is unable to express himself through language.

**Key Words: Discourse, Register, Heart of Darkness, European Man(US), African Man(THEM).**

(نحن) ضد (هم): دراسة الخطاب للتباين الأسلوبي في رواية جوزيف كونراد قلب الظلام

□ الأستاذ المساعد الدكتور أمين عكال غيلان

قسم اللغة الإنكليزية، كلية التربية للعلوم الإنسانية، جامعة البصرة

## **الخلاصة**

يهدف البحث الى دراسة الخطاب في التباين الأسلوبي في رواية جوزيف كونراد (قلب الظلام). ولقرون مضت، كان المستعمرون البيض يستغلون السكان الأفارقة الأصليين بتدمير إنسانيتهم وحضارتهم من خلال تصويرهم على أنهم متوحشين وأكلة لحوم البشر. ولذلك فإن الأفارقة يبدون وكأنهم يتصارعون مع التخلف والهمجية، بينما الرجل الأبيض يبدو منشغلا بفكرة الاستعمار والثروة. أن هذه الدراسة حول التباين الأسلوبي في كلام الإنسان الأبيض(نحن) والإنسان الأفريقي (هم). أن خطاب المستعمر والمستعمر في هذه الرواية يبين التفكير الأوربي على أنه إنسان متحضر بينما يتم أظهار الأفارقة بشكل إنسان همجي وذليل وغير قادر على التعبير عن نفسه من خلال استعمال اللغة.

**الكلمات المفتاحية : الخطاب ، الأسلوب ، قلب الظلام ، الإنسان الأوربي(نحن) ، الإنسان الأفريقي(هم).**

*US vs. THEM: A Discourse Study of Register Variation in  
Joseph Conrad's Heart of Darkness*

## ***Introduction***

Joseph Conrad is a great writer of the modern novel. His novels are continuously read and evaluated by a lot of readers and critics. *Heart of Darkness* is considered one of the important novels in the English modern literature.

This novel describes the continent of Africa as "the other world," the opposite of European civilization. Achebe (1988: 251) writes:

*Heart of Darkness* describes Africa as "place where man's vaunted intelligence and refinement are finally mocked by triumphant beastiality". The novel opens on the River Thames, but the actual story takes place on the River Congo, the very antithesis of the Thames. The narrator tells the reader that "Going up that river was like traveling back to the earliest beginnings of the world.

The English critic F. R. Leavis thinks that Conrad has special insistence to express incomprehensible mystery in writing his novel. Leavis considers Conrad to guarantee not to put himself in a struggle with the preference of the readers or to raise his need to confront their persistence. Bradley (1996:1) notes that:

*Heart of Darkness* is also a multilayered postcolonial parable. And it is also a story in which racism presents itself so blatantly that, for many, the dilemma of race must be tackled before anything else in the book may be dealt with. Conrad's liberal use of derogatory, outdated and offensive terminology, and the flagrant devaluation of people of color as savages, niggers and cannibals.

For the importance of the speech of characters in conveying main ideas in the novel, the research focuses on the speech of the major characters including Marlow and Kurtz. The difference in the registers shows the difference of the characters. It also reflects the discourse of the characters towards each other and the events in the novel.

## ***The African Image in the Western Mind***

The popular African image cultivated in Europe and the United States was of the white man's graveyard, a place of terrible tropical diseases nearly always fatal to

US vs. THEM: A Discourse Study of Register Variation in  
Joseph Conrad's Heart of Darkness

white-skinned people whose customs and religion were totally strange to civilized men. The Europeans see the Africans practice cannibalism and, throughout the nineteenth century, had been thoroughly corrupted by the slave trade. It is better to quote a page from the middle of the novel when characters of European identity in a steamer, going down the Congo, face the inhabitants of Africa. The page reads:

*"We were wanderers on a prehistoric earth, on an earth that wore the aspect of an unknown planet. We could have fancied ourselves the first of men taking possession of an accursed inheritance, to be subdued at the cost of profound anguish and of excessive toil. But suddenly as we struggled round a bend there would be a glimpse of rush walls, of peaked grass-roofs, a burst of yells, a whirl of black limbs, a mass of hands clapping, of feet stamping, of bodies swaying, of eyes rolling under the droop of heavy and motionless foliage. The steamer toiled along slowly on the edge of a black and incomprehensible frenzy. The prehistoric man was cursing us, praying to us, welcoming us -- who could tell? We were cut off from the comprehension of our surroundings; we glided past like phantoms, wondering and secretly appalled, as sane men would be before an enthusiastic outbreak in a madhouse. We could not understand because we were too far and could not remember, because we were traveling in the night of first ages, of those ages that are gone, leaving hardly a sign - and 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 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 -- you so remote from the night of first ages -- could comprehend.*

*Herein lies the meaning of Heart of Darkness and the fascination it holds over the Western mind: "What thrilled you was just the thought of their humanity -- like yours .... Ugly."*

US vs. THEM: A Discourse Study of Register Variation in  
Joseph Conrad's Heart of Darkness

This attitude of dehumanization of African character continues to be fostered among the European writers. Edward Said writes, in his famous book "Orientalism", about the contrast between the eastern and the western culture because the Europeans divide the world into two sides: the East and the West. The Europeans used Orientalism to define themselves as the superior race compared with the Orientals. They said that it was their duty towards the world to civilize the uncivilized world. They generalized attributes associated with the Orientals which can be seen even today (1978:18). As a critic, Edward Said is famous for his critique of the idea of Orientalism as a source of the inaccurate representations of Western thinking on the Middle East, and of how The Western thinkers consider The East. Such perceptions have served as constant explanations for the colonial ambitions of the European and American powers.

As regards racism , Ashcroft (Ashcroft et al. 2000: 46) states that "in colonies where the subject people were of a different race, or where minority indigenous peoples existed, the ideology of race was also a crucial part of the construction and naturalization of an unequal form of intercultural relations". After the long and blood-soaked course of rebellion to secure their independence, Ashcroft et al. (2000: 50) mentions that "colonial and postcolonial works came out as a result of the relationship between literature and history". It is obvious that the white racism against African man is a regular process of thinking whose manifestations go completely unremarked. As to Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*, Achebe(1988:255) asserts that:

Students of Heart of Darkness will often tell you that Conrad is concerned not so much with Africa as with the deterioration of one European mind caused by solitude and sickness. They will point out to you that Conrad is, if anything, less charitable to the Europeans in the story than he is to the natives, that the point of the story is to ridicule Europe's civilizing mission in Africa. A Conrad student informed me in Scotland that Africa is merely a setting for the disintegration of the mind of Mr. Kurtz.

Achebe's major counts are that Conrad has owned the praise of the white readers through satisfying their prejudices. Conrad portrays Africa as a place of negations, in contrast with European situation of spiritual grace. The black Africans are brutalized and degraded. They are shown as monstrous and a howling flock. Bradley(1996:2)

*US vs. THEM: A Discourse Study of Register Variation in  
Joseph Conrad's Heart of Darkness*

writes that "most of the times that Marlow uses the word nigger, it is when an African has been physically abused by somebody else, when the African has already been completely and totally dehumanized. Otherwise Marlow uses Negro, or Black". The image of the Africans as cannibals and idolatrous heathens did have an impact in the west. It provides a rationale for slavery and an excuse for colonialism. Shaffer (2006: 17) divides English novels into several types depending on the relation of such novels to history and the topic of colonization:

The first type includes "novels from countries in which literature and culture are British or demonstrate a significant degree of continuity with that of Britain". The second group consists of "postcolonial Anglophone novels, which emanated from formerly subject, British-held colonies in which the majority of the inhabitants had been living in situ for centuries. Such formerly colonized nations include present-day Kenya, Nigeria, South Africa, and Uganda".

Said argues that Orientalism should be considered as discourse, otherwise one cannot understand the systematic discipline of the European culture which makes it able to manage the orient at all levels in the present time.

Said's work is important for showing how discourses actually construct the reality which scholars are continuously attempting to study. Auspiciously, this approach to Orientalism has mainly shaped the people understanding of the concept of 'otherness'. Also, the problem of the 'other' in human cultures has taken place in feminism, by black studies and by post modernism in the recent times.

The European thinkers also assume that they are able to produce the Oriental man in the west all by themselves. For the Europeans, the most crucial use of Orientalism is that they can define themselves by defining the Orientals. For instance, bad features such as lazy, irrational, uncivilized, and crudeness should be attributed to the Orientals. In contrast, the Europeans can be described as active, rational, and civilized. Thereby, for achieving this aim, it is very fundamental for the orientalists to generalize the culture of the orient

*US vs. THEM: A Discourse Study of Register Variation in  
Joseph Conrad's Heart of Darkness*

Said argues that the European thinkers divide the world into two parts: "the east" and "ours". They consider themselves as having the superior race in comparison to the Orientals. In this way, they justify their colonization by this concept. They think that their duty is to civilize the uncivilized people. The American different viewpoint of Orientalism permits the study of the discursive Orientalism. For Said, this American Orientalism is "a kind of western projection and will to govern the orient". He (1978:12) also states that Orientalism has much less to do with the "orient" and much more to do with the making of "our" world.

Orientalism explains the general disciplines and processes of investigation by which the Europeans can study the orient over centuries. These studies reached the topmost during the rise of nineteenth- century imperialism. The understanding of Said's interest in the way the Europeans know the orient is that it demonstrates the link of knowledge and power. Therefore, they dominate the Orientals in the process of knowing them. In writing about *Heart of Darkness*, Bradley (1996:3) writes that "Imperialism is a central, underlying theme in this book, although it is not only about imperialism. Conrad stated so himself in various documents. In an 1899 letter, for example, Conrad wrote that the idea behind *Heart of Darkness* is "the criminality of efficiency and pure selfishness when tackling the civilizing work in Africa".

The critical readings of the English renaissance show a noticeable increase of interest in the literary representation of the foreign lands. This interest can be attributed to the influence of post-colonial criticism. Edward Said (1978: 36) writes that: "there are Westerners, and there are Orientals. The former dominate; the latter must be dominated, which usually means having their land occupied, their internal affairs rigidly controlled, their blood and treasure put at the disposal of one or another Western power". He writes in his book (*Culture and Imperialism*) that "colonialism is mainly about political and economic relationships, some of which may or may not continue after a state gains independence. The postcolonial era, on the other hand, is about the intrusion and colonization of minds with ideas". Said also thinks that Conrad "allows the reader to see that imperialism is a system"(1994:xxi).

### ***The Study of Register: An Overview***

In his *Dictionary of Linguistics and Phonetics*, Crystal (1991:295) defines *register* as "a variety of language defined according to its use in social situations, e.g. a register of scientific, religious, formal English". Generally speaking, register refers to specific ways of using language in particular contexts. Also, the term "register" is

*US vs. THEM: A Discourse Study of Register Variation in  
Joseph Conrad's Heart of Darkness*

applied to all varieties of language in any type of generality. *Register* can be associated with the organisation of any situation or immediate context. The following diagram (Martin & Matthiessen, 1991, reproduced in Martin, 1993:132) shows the relation of language and context:

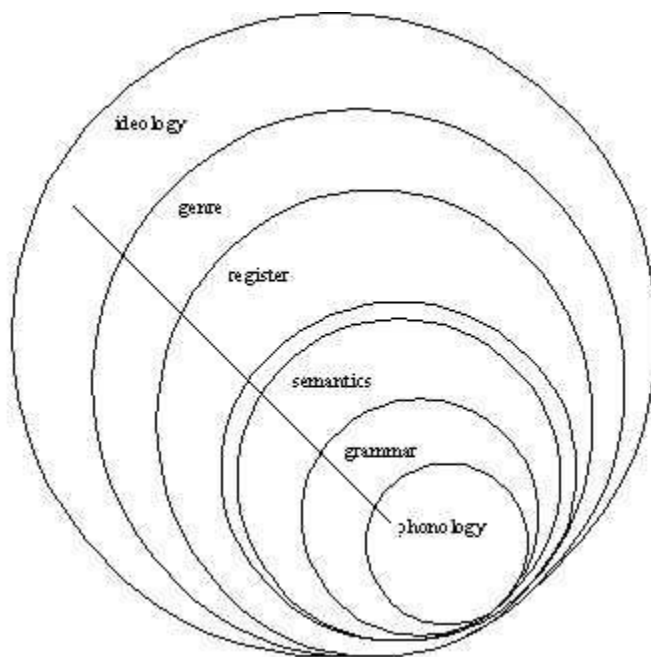


Figure 1. Language and context in the systemic functional perspective

In this regard, "*register* is defined as a particular configuration of *field*, *tenor*, and *mode* choices (in Hallidayan grammatical terms), in other words, a language variety functionally associated with particular contextual or situational parameters of variation and defined by its linguistic characteristics"(David YW Lee,2001:42).

Ferguson (1994:20) considers register a "communicative situation that recurs regularly in a society". He also equates sublanguage with register and offers many examples of *registers* (e.g., cookbook recipes, stock market reports, regional weather forecasts). The following diagram illustrates the use of the register types:

*US vs. THEM: A Discourse Study of Register Variation in  
Joseph Conrad's Heart of Darkness*

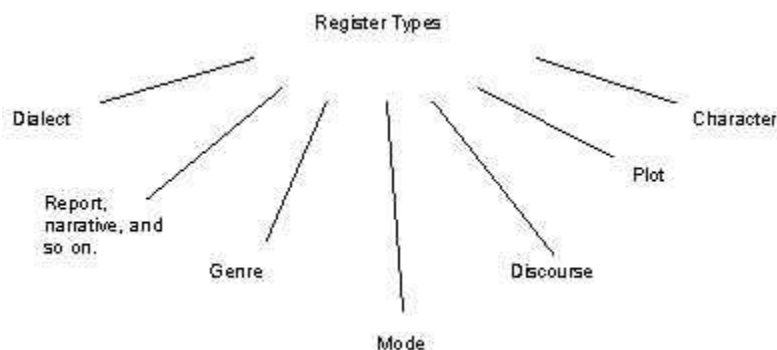


Figure 2. Register Types (after Kress, 1993: 35)

Biber defines *register* as "the general cover term associated with all aspects of variation in use" (1995:9). Biber also sees register as a very fundamental basis of social dialect variation. Register is used when the text is viewed as language. Different situations can represent different configurations of language. So, register is used in the discussion of lexico-grammatical and discoursal- semantic patterns linked to certain situations(i.e. linguistic patterns). Thus, there is the existence of legal register, formal register, literary register, etc. Also, register can be defined as any variety organised by metafunction(field, tenor, mode). Biber(1994:52) discusses the use of *register* by Couture(1986) as follows:

Couture's examples of genres and registers seem to be more clearly distinguished than in other studies of this type. For example, registers include the language used by preachers in sermons, the language used by sports reporters in giving a play-by-play description of a football game, and the language used by scientists reporting experimental research results.

O'sullivan (1994:263) mentions that "register is a stylistic variation in language according to its context of situation. The selection of words and structures by the language-user is strongly influenced by features of the situation". In fact, sentences have the imprint of their contexts. So, features of the original context of situation can be inferred from all of the fragmentary and isolated linguistic structures. O'sullivan (1994:263-264) writes:

The fine tuning that goes on between language and its context of situation operates along three independent parameters. First, the activity or topic on which the talk is based influences the kind of language used, particularly in the selection of vocabulary. Second, the nature of the social relationship will affect the language: talk between friends, for instance, is likely to avoid formal expressions,



US vs. THEM: A Discourse Study of Register Variation in  
Joseph Conrad's Heart of Darkness

unless for ironic effect. And finally the medium of communication adopted – whether face-to-face speech, written text, telephone, dictaphone or whatever – will affect the way utterances are formed. These three parameters are known as *field*, *tenor* and *mode*, respectively. Collectively they shape the register of a particular text.

Certain varieties of language should not be associated with groups nor individuals, but with the situation in which they are used. They are used by a particular group of people who usually share the same occupation as well as the same interests. A specific register is mostly recognised from other registers for having a number of distinctive words, or through using words and phrases or grammatical constructions in a particular way.

Generally speaking, in registers, the interest is on the use and subject matter, the nature of discourse, the medium, mode of discourse, the form of the material (written or spoken), etc. Registers relate to the extent of formality or the nature of discourse (whether grammatical, lexical, or phonological). If the focus is on the user, in this case the concern is on differences, register switching, and the reasons of the user to change his register in important ways.

Register switching happens due to the changes in the roles of the speaker. Thereby, a register needed for talking to a colleague will be different from a register of lecturing in a class. Also, a third register is needed when talking to one's wife or playing with the children. In discussing register, certain relationships may be recognized between features of a certain situation and the use of language. Also, difference of register emphasizes the differences in social context. So, register will vary as there are different social contexts. The changes in a certain situation and context affect the features of language and the variation of social relationships.

An important characteristic of register is the change in a speech to indicate one's viewpoint towards the topic in discussion or the person s/he is talking to. This is done through modifying the pitch or the loudness of the voice.

Rajimwale(2006:194) mentions that "it is so clear that a use of a certain register in any other context appears quite alien or out of place. It is easy to recognize a legal,

*US vs. THEM: A Discourse Study of Register Variation in  
Joseph Conrad's Heart of Darkness*

medical or technical professional register in a gathering by the manner the speaker easily and naturally intersperses his conversation with the professional jargon".

### ***Register and Discourse Analysis***

A text has different linguistic characteristics from other texts that are considered as a register which can be defined as text variations of a language accompanied with specific cases of use. As a fact, different types of texts necessarily have various linguistic features which represent systematic arrangements of variation that are studied within the topic of *register*. In fact, any approach to study discourse analysis should focus on studying language use. It can illustrate how lexical and grammatical features are handled in the texts( for more information see Schiffrrin et al., 2001:1 ; Biber et al., 2007: 1-4).

In general, registers people adopt differ due to several situational characteristics relating to the physical setting, topic, purpose of communication, and the relations among characters. Such differences are associated with important lexical and grammatical levels of language. Understanding these linguistic characteristics that occur in the different texts will provide the basis for comprehending such register variation. It is usual for language users to make use of different situations of use, for it is difficult to have a linguistic text with only one register. So, the registers differ with the change of context. Also, switching among different registers is as natural as human language itself. So, understanding the register variation is central for the description of discourse used by the characters in a literary text.

### ***Register Variation in the Discourse of Characters in Heart of Darkness***

The novel opens with the narrator Marlow acknowledging the tragic predicament when *it is impossible to convey the life-sensation of any given epoch of one's existence-that which makes its truth, its meaning-its subtle and penetrating essence.....We live, as we dream-alone*. Marlow, the narrator, tells his story, and with the end of the story, the image of the "heart of darkness" reappears in England. In this time, out of the group of Marlow's listeners stays an undefined world.

Heart of Darkness discloses the story of the narrator, Charles Marlow, when he was a riverboat captain working as a Belgian company trading ivory along the Congo

US vs. THEM: A Discourse Study of Register Variation in  
Joseph Conrad's Heart of Darkness

River in Africa. Over the stream of his work, Marlow becomes involved with Mr. Kurtz, the company's most successful ivory procurer. Since there is no much physical description or even speech in the text, Conrad aims to develop most of the characters through their actions in the novel. The narrator and the protagonist, Marlow, gets a lot of interest than the other characters. Other characters such as the accountant, the manager, the brickmaker, and Kurtz have less focus than the character of Marlow. In most cases, their actions indicate their real characters than their speech.

Another noticeable fact about the characters is that no one around seems to get a name. Apart from Marlow and Kurtz, all other characters just have a title/profession. So, there is the accountant, the harlequin, the manager, and the Intended. This is enough to illustrate the dehumanization of the African men in the wild jungle of the Congo region.

Since Marlow is the narrator, he speaks and thinks in his own vernacular British. As a general feature in the study of register in this novel, only the white people speak and their speech is given in standard English. Some of the characters, namely the brickmaker and the harlequin, have irregular speech habits. In the following, the harlequin speaks:

*'Brother sailor... honour... pleasure... delight... introduce myself... Russian... son of an arch-priest... Government of Tambov... What? Tobacco! English tobacco; the excellent English tobacco! Now, that's brotherly. Smoke? Where's a sailor that does not smoke?'*

One thing to notice is that the harlequin is a Russian man hence his erratic language that. Also, there is a possibility that the brickmaker is Jewish. However, the important fact about these two characters is that neither of them is exactly "white." So, although they have a white skin, but they're still "the other" which is like their speech; African. In most cases, black and native African characters don't speak, at least not English language. In some cases, they communicate nonverbally through their gestures, signs, and even loud emotional cries.

On the contrary, Achebe talks about the interpreters that had learned the European language and were able to translate freely between the two languages: "the white man began to speak to them. He spoke through an interpreter who was an Ibo man". This African man's ability to convert from the two languages show that he is very excellent to communicate in two very different languages. This proves that the African people are fluent enough in the English language to control complex conversations. Rather, the savage Africans that Conrad describes,

*US vs. THEM: A Discourse Study of Register Variation in  
Joseph Conrad's Heart of Darkness*

in his novel, are not able to communicate any human language.

In his lecture, "*An Image of Africa: Racism in Conrad's Heart of Darkness*", Achebe reports the ways Conrad dehumanizes African men by turning down their religious rituals to a mere superstition and claiming that they should stay in their place, making them unable to speak, and reducing their homeland only to a single jungle. The novel features a movement through time and space, a divided humanity and cannibalism.

Conrad's purpose seems not to argue language on the "rudimentary souls" of Africa. Instead of speech, they make "*a violent babble of uncouth sounds.*" They "*exchanged short grunting phrases*" even among themselves. Also, all the time, they are too working with their frenzy. There are two times in the novel when Conrad leaves this manner and confers English speech, on the savages. The first happens when cannibalism gets the better of them:

*"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. . . .*

The other occasion is the remarkable announcement of the manager's boy of the death of Kurtz. Marlow describes the boy's speech to be said in a tone of contempt:

*"A continuous shower of small flies streamed upon the lamp, upon the cloth, upon our hands and faces. Suddenly the manager's boy put his insolent black head in the doorway, and said in a tone of scathing contempt:*

*"'Mistah Kurtz -- he dead.'"*

Occasionally, a black slave speaks in English to tell some information to Marlow. But still he cannot use correct English. This affirms that any African can't behave as a human in the white man's world represented in human language.

When the illness of Kurtz is disclosed to Marlow, he is sent up the river to restore him from the settlement Kurtz has established deep in the jungle. After a tiring journey, Marlow succeeds. Depending on Marlow's tale, Kurtz has savagely made himself as a ruler of a band of native people. Marlow describes a line of human heads on stakes before Kurtz's hut as an evidence of Kurtz's violent rule. Marlow considers Kurtz as representing the whole of Europe in his kinship and also in his way of living and creed. This appears clearly from the following lines of Marlow:

US vs. THEM: A Discourse Study of Register Variation in  
Joseph Conrad's Heart of Darkness

*Marlow speaks of Kurtz, "His mother was half-English, his father was half-French. All Europe contributed to the making of Kurtz"*

Kurtz is the head of the Inner Station. He is the body of Marlow's adventure. Kurtz has many talents. He is a musician and a gifted painter. As a character, he has a charisma and an ability to lead other men. Although Kurtz is still an enigma even to Marlow but he practices an influential impact on the people around. In doing so, he becomes successful but has also aroused the fury of other white men. The manager and the brickmaker shows some fear of Kurtz as a threat to their position. Waswo illustrates the Western attitude of US vs. THEM to be represented by the character of Kurtz. Waswo (1997:263) writes that "they have no language and no past, unless we give them ours; and that is the effort at which Kurtz, whom Marlow calls "childish" more than once, fails".

However, the narrator can convey the excessive influence of Kurtz's African experience through the story of his voyage into the African inside toward Kurtz's residence. This story is linked with the narrator's personal confidence of European mission in the dark African world. Within the story of the journey to Kurtz's Inner Station, Marlow steps backward and forward bodily in small and large places. The way incidents during Marlow's journey in the river are accompanied by the leading forward direction into what he restores as "the heart of Africa". In an important description of Marlow to the Central Station, we read:

*"The word 'ivory' rang in the air, was whispered, was sighed. You would think they were praying to it. A taint of imbecile rapacity blew through it all, like a whiff from some corpse. By Jove! I've never seen anything so unreal in my life. And outside, the silent wilderness surrounding this cleared speck on the earth struck me as something great and invincible, like evil or truth, waiting patiently for the passing away of this fantastic invasion."*

This quotation depicts Marlow's initial look at the Central Station. In this quotation, the word "ivory" is very important for those who are working for the Company. They consider it farther than the ivory of an elephant. Rather, the word "ivory", for them, represents economic insurance and escape from the life of an employee. Marlow refers to the collapsing corpses of the elephants as well as native Africans who die for the sake of the white European's seeking of ivory.

During the journey, Marlow watches the Eldorado searching Expedition, a group of self-employed criminals, reequip and then leave the Central Station. He mentions this in the following lines:

US vs. THEM: A Discourse Study of Register Variation in  
Joseph Conrad's Heart of Darkness

*“In a few days the Eldorado Expedition went into the patient wilderness, that closed upon it as the sea closes over a diver. Long afterwards the news came that all the donkeys were dead. I know nothing as to the fate of the less valuable animals. They, no doubt, like the rest of us, found what they deserved. I did not inquire.”*

This ambiguous description is the only news he obtains about the fate of the men. In this accord, Marlow evaluates white European men as the *less valuable animals*. Marlow has come to suspect the moral formulations of the white man. For this reason, he does not explore any other information about the trip. Also, he mentions a *patient wilderness*: the Expedition's fate is not important even with the huge disasters in the scope of the jungle's wild nature. As Marlow continues his journey towards the Inner Station, he can have some views of the native villagers on the riverbanks. So, we read:

*“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 were not inhuman. Well, you know, that was the worst of it—the 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..... The mind of man is capable of anything-because everything is in it, all the past as well as all the future, What was there after all? Joy, fear, sorrow, devotion, valor, rage-who can tell?-but truth-truth stripped of its cloak of time.*

Frequent hearing of things like drums, chants, and howls troubles Marlow a lot because he thinks of a blood relation with these people. Whereas he has so far considered them as “inhuman.” This thinking of Marlow and his use of words like “inhuman, remote kinship, joy, fear, etc” grants a reading of *Heart of Darkness* as a critical of colonialism. It also shows how Marlow casts the African men as a primitive form of Man. His register in using specific words for describing the African man shows his way of thinking and viewpoint in their way of living. Afterwards, Marlow retrieves Kurtz with his ivory aboard. Marlow expresses his feeling towards the river through the following lines:

*“The brown current ran swiftly out of the heart of darkness, bearing us down towards the sea with twice the speed of our upward progress; and Kurtz's life was running swiftly, too, ebbing, ebbing out of his heart into the sea of inexorable time. . . . I saw the time approaching when I would be left alone of the party of ‘unsound method.’”*

These lines, of Marlow, come when the steamer starts a voyage back from the Inner Station with Kurtz and his ivory aboard. The quote shows the image of the river slipping out of the “heart of darkness”. This river is the only thing that separates

US vs. THEM: A Discourse Study of Register Variation in  
Joseph Conrad's Heart of Darkness

Marlow from the internal African. In addition, the river is the only way to bring Marlow back to the white man civilization. The first sentence is important to suggest, to the reader, that Marlow and Kurtz are able to leave the “heart of darkness” behind.

Marlow listens to Kurtz speech while he pilots the ship. Also, Kurtz hands over Marlow his personal documents. Such documents include an outspoken pamphlet on civilizing the savage Africans and ends with a scrawled letter that reads, “*Exterminate all the brutes!*” Anyhow, Kurtz dies, uttering his final words—“The horror! The horror!”—in the presence of the bewildered Marlow. Marlow takes sick soon after and hardly survives.

Nevertheless, Kurtz’s life is ending along with the “darkness,”. As a result, the “darkness” is, in fact, embodied, that it is part of Man's internal side. Kurtz's final dying words are among the most important words in the novel. Marlow gives such words, by Kurtz, as having a special importance in the novel:

*“I was within a hair’s-breadth of the last opportunity for pronouncement, and I found with humiliation that probably I would have nothing to say. This is the reason why I affirm that Kurtz was a remarkable man. He had something to say. He said it. . . . He had summed up—he had judged. ‘The horror!’ He was a remarkable man.”*

Marlow's “nothing to say” does not reflect a lack of thinking of some substance. Rather, he realizes that anything to be said will be impossible to put into words. But, the final words of Kurtz's ‘The horror!’ can be almost anything. Kurtz has discovered a way of living that contradicts the accepted social models of civilized Man. Marlow seems to remember Kurtz’s final words (The horror!) for the end of his life. He finds that Kurtz had a great place among the devils, compared with the savages of the land. In fact, Kurtz's last words differ from all what he had said before. His last words reflect the reality of the white man's life in Africa. They imply an evaluation of what the Europeans are doing in Africa.

When he comes back to Europe, Marlow goes to meet Kurtz’s fiancée who is still in mourning although a year passed since Kurtz’s death. She considers him an archetype of virtue and success. She asks Marlow about Kurtz's last words, but he cannot smash her illusions with the truth of Kurtz. Rather, he tells her that Kurtz’s last word was her name. Let's read these lines from Marlow about his first meeting with the fiancée and her speech about Kurtz:

*“Ah, but I believed in him more than any one on earth -- more than his own mother, more than -- himself.*

*He needed me! Me! I would have treasured every sigh, every word, every sign, every glance.’*

*“I felt like a chill grip on my chest. ‘Don’t,’ I said, in a muffled voice.*

US vs. THEM: A Discourse Study of Register Variation in  
Joseph Conrad's Heart of Darkness

*"Forgive me. I -- I have mourned so long in silence -- in silence. . . . You were with him -- to the last? I think of his loneliness. Nobody near to understand him as I would have understood. Perhaps no one to hear. ..."*

*"To the very end," I said, shakily. 'I heard his very last words. . . .' I stopped in a fright.*

*"Repeat them," she murmured in a heart-broken tone. 'I want -- I want -- something -- something -- to -- to live with.'*

*"I was on the point of crying at her, 'Don't you hear them?' The dusk was repeating them in a persistent whisper all around us, in a whisper that seemed to swell menacingly like the first whisper of a rising wind.*

*'The horror! The horror!'*

*"His last word -- to live with," she insisted. 'Don't you understand I loved him -- I loved him -- I loved him!'*

*"I pulled myself together and spoke slowly.*

*"The last word he pronounced was -- your name.'*

Along the journey in the river and back, Marlow has to face the terrors of colonialism and imperialism. This raises several questioning on the essence of evil and the nature of European civilization vs. African brutality. Also, the story examines the dehumanizing result of colonialism on the colonizers. In this way, Kurtz can be the representation of this dehumanization in the story.

The story addresses and portrays the difference of savagery and civilization. The colonial power, represented by Kurtz in the story, think they represent civilization while the native Africans represent savagery. However, as the story develops, the reader finds the civilized imperial powers fall in the predicament of unbelievable brutality. The story shows the nature of evil. The reader can see the characters responds to cruel evils by becoming cruel and evil themselves. As a conclusion, the potential of evil lies within each one of the characters i.e., the British as well as the Africans.

Bradley (1996:5) affirms that "Some critics argue..... that Conrad has constructed Marlow as a well-intentioned liberal". This appears clearly from Marlow's speech when comparing the death incidents of Kurtz and the helmsman:

*No I can't forget him [and here Marlow means the helmsman], though I am not prepared to affirm the fellow was exactly worth the life we lost in getting to him. I missed my late helmsman awfully -- I missed him while his body was still lying in the pilot-house. Perhaps you will think it passing strange this regret for a savage who was no more account than a grain of sand in a black Sahara. Well, don't you see, he had done something, he had steered; for months I had him at my back -- a help -- an instrument. It was a kind of partnership. He steered for me -- I had to look after him,*



*US vs. THEM: A Discourse Study of Register Variation in  
Joseph Conrad's Heart of Darkness*

*I worried about his deficiencies, and thus a subtle bond had been created, of which I only became aware when it was suddenly broken. And the intimate profundity of that look he gave me when he received his hurt remains to this day in my memory -- like a claim of distant kinship affirmed in a supreme moment.*

There are many important ideas to notice in this quote. Among them, Marlow has the ability to determine personally with *a savage who is no more account than a grain of sand in a black Sahara*. Also, we can see clearly Marlow's tenderness with this black savage. It is as if Marlow says to himself that : this is a poor savage, and I can really see humanity in him because he is human being. If we compare the speech of Marlow, about the helmsman, and his description of the savagery of the Africans at the beginning of his journey, we can see the difference in his evaluation of these people. He feels sorry for the death of the helmsman whereas he considers Kurtz(the white man) to be evil and inhuman.

Said (1993:22) states that "*Heart of Darkness* cannot just be a straightforward recital of Marlow's adventures: it is also a dramatization of Marlow himself, the former wanderer in colonial regions, telling his story to a group of British listeners at a particular time and in a specific place".

Chinua Achebe denounces Joseph Conrad for his racist attitude towards the black continent and people of Africa. He mentions that Conrad propagates the "dominant image of Africa in the Western imagination" rather than portraying the continent in its true form (2001: 1793). Africans are portrayed in Conrad's novel as savages with no language other than grunts and with no "other occupations besides merging into the evil forest or materializing out of it simply to plague Marlow" (2001:1792-3).

Achebe writes that, for Conrad, it is very essential that those people are in their own place. "He might not exactly admire savages clapping their hands and stamping their feet," for Achebe "but they have at least the merit of being in their place" (2001:1787).

Certainly Marlow has a problem towards the niggers. His fixation on the black skin is striking as when he gives the reader the following description of an African man. It is easy to notice the repetition of the word "black" three times in only one line:

*A black figure stood up, strode on long black legs, waving long black arms. . . .*

*US vs. THEM: A Discourse Study of Register Variation in  
Joseph Conrad's Heart of Darkness*

It is important to mention the attitude to the Africans in *Heart of Darkness* is not Conrad himself but that of his fictional narrator. Marlow suggests to appreciate Conrad's self-assurance. This is proved by the complete connection between their life careers.

*Marlow comes through to us not only as a witness of truth, but one holding those advanced and humane views appropriate to the English liberal tradition which required all Englishmen of decency to be deeply shocked by atrocities in Bulgaria or the Congo of King Leopold of the Belgians or wherever.*

Therefore,, Marlow can reflect his sentiment to the Africans. The words and expressions he uses to describe the Africans are very important to reflect his attitude and regret to their sort of living. The following lines clearly reflect his sympathy with these people:

*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 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.*

Being told from the viewpoint of the colonizer rather than the colonized, *Heart of Darkness* represents a great success for its emphasis on the European thinking. Throughout the novel, Marlowe is living in Africa till the death of his master Kurtz when he returned to Europe to see his master's sweetheart. Regardless to his identity, Marlowe is not an adventurer character who attempts to change the history of Africa. Rather, he prefers feeling free and behave like any human when not compelled to follow the obligations of his master. On the contrary, his master Kurtz is always thinking of the African man as a savage and barbarian waiting for domination of the colonizer.

## ***Conclusion***

The main topic of what Kurtz and Marlow maintain is the white European mastery on the black Africans, with their ivory and civilization over the savage Africans.

*US vs. THEM: A Discourse Study of Register Variation in  
Joseph Conrad's Heart of Darkness*

Marlow unsettles the reader's impression of the idea of the White European empire as well as its reality.

It is important not to view Marlow as merely a problematic character who counts on the people of modern Europe. Marlow is portrayed as rough, honorable, a self-reliant thinker, and a competent man. However, he is still shattered and damaged. Marlow also interferes between the figure of the rational and the practical person.

Marlow can also be studied via his speech and description of the characters and events as a mediator between the extreme sides of Kurtz and the Company. He is very balanced in his treatment and relation with both of the White and African men to allow the reader to identify with him. Therefore, he is a good guide for the reader to understand the novel. His speech and important description of the characters and events happening to him represent the key for understanding the novel.

Marlow is the narrator and hero of *Heart of Darkness*. He has independent mind, and generally suspicious of the people around. His register and comments can draw the readers into the story. Although Marlow has a lot of the Europeans' arrogance, he is skeptical of imperialism and the European civilization. With the process of events, he becomes sympathetic with the Africans and their suffering. This is very clear from the change of his speech to those people.

Kurtz, unlike Marlow, resembles the character of evil intelligence: the exceptionally talented man and ultimately deteriorated person. Marlow considers Kurtz as "hollow" more than once. Marlow's visits to the Belgian journalist (Kurtz's cousin) and Kurtz's fiancée prove that there is no true Kurtz. For his cousin, Kurtz is a talented musician. To the journalist, he is a brilliant politician and leader of men. Also, to his fiancée, Kurtz is a great and genius humanitarian. All of these considerations are in a contrast with Marlow's real version of the man. Kurtz's character and speech really represent the tradition and thinking of the White European man. In fact, even Marlow's acceptance of Kurtz's relative speech about him may show the inability of Marlow himself to change that despondent thinking. All of what he can do is to tell his beloved that Kurtz died while uttering her name.

Kurtz and Marlow tell about the meaning of darkness, the former when he is dying, the latter as he echoes introspectively on the essence of Kurtz's final words before his death. Marlow and Kurtz are representative of their own time who cannot recognize that what they saw, as a non-European "darkness" was in fact a non-European world resisting imperialism.

**US vs. THEM: A Discourse Study of Register Variation in  
Joseph Conrad's Heart of Darkness**

The novel is written on the disaster and turmoil that African man has suffered from during the colonization period. The characters and events clearly portray the viewpoint of the colonizer towards the colonized (African Men). The novel as a whole produces an embodiment of the despondent relation of the colonizer and the colonized as it is determined by the Western thinkers.

From the colonizer-colonized discourse in the novel, it becomes clear how the colonizer is always thinking of himself as admired and civilized human being for he is the dominant and supreme. Rather, the colonized( African men) should undergo a state of degradation and humiliation. They should not be given any chance to express themselves( for they are unable to give well-formed expressions) due to the imperialistic thinking of the colonial power.

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