

Silent Coins Destroy Humanity and Reveal Corruption in Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*: A Lacanian Reading

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Abstract

This research offers a Lacanian psychoanalytic interpretation of the Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* with references to the symbolic meaning of the silent coins in order to trace the psych-economic aspects of colonialism. The analysis of these silent coins as signifiers of lack and desire has demonstrated how economical exchanges in the novella indicate more withering orders of corruption, moral and ethical disintegration and dehumanization of the colonial system. Using Lacanian concepts of the Real, the Symbolic and the Imaginary, the death drive and the barred subject, the analysis shows how the failure of the Symbolic Order a system of meaning and morality that imperial ideology depends on is dramatized in the story written by Conrad. The journey of Marlow and the death of Kurtz can be regarded as the experiences of the Real in case the hidden horrors of colonialism intrude into the colonial discourse and reflect the inexplicable outcomes of the imperialism. This work illuminates *Heart of Darkness* in another way since it dwells upon the correlation between economic silence, repression, and moral collapse. It offers an alternative to more traditional readings that are usually focused on the political or the historical parameters of colonialism giving more emphasis on the unconscious psychic economies that enable imperial violence to be reproduced. Finally, the work suggests that the metaphor of silent coins serve as effective symbol of ethical breakdown of modernity and relevance of psychoanalytic criticism in postcolonial literal critical studies.

Keywords: *Heart of Darkness*, Silent coins, Colonialism, Repression, Death drive, Ethical failure

العملات الصامتة تدمر الإنسانية وتكشف الفساد في رواية "قلب الظلام" لجوزيف كونراد: قراءة
لاكانية

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الملخص



يقدم هذا البحث قراءة نفسية-تحليلية لاكانية لرواية "قلب الظلام" لجوزيف كونراد، بالاستناد إلى الدلالة الرمزية للعملات الصامته، بهدف تتبع الجوانب النفس-اقتصادية للاستعمار. تتخذ الدراسة من العملات الصامته بوصفها دالاً مركزياً على النقصان والرغبة اللاكانيين، وتتوسل بذلك إلى كشف أنساق الفساد الخفية والتحلل الأخلاقي ونزع الإنسانية التي أقام عليها الخطاب الاستعماري ذاته. تنطلق الدراسة من فرضية مفادها أن التبادلات الاقتصادية في الرواية لا تمثل مجرد علاقات مادية، بل هي دالة على بنى رمزية متصدعة، وإفصاح عما يكتبه الوعي الاستعماري من عنف واغتراب. تعتمد الدراسة في إطارها النظري على مفاهيم لاكان الأساسية: النظام الرمزي، والخيالي، والواقعي، إضافةً إلى مفهوم غريزة الموت والذات المحجوبة. وتسعى إلى تبيان كيف أن الرواية تمسح فشل النظام الرمزي الاستعماري – أي نظام المعنى والأخلاق والقانون الذي يستند إليه المشروع الإمبريالي – وذلك من خلال انهيار التراتبية الأخلاقية والمعرفية التي يمثلها كل من الراوي مارلو والمستعمر كورتز. تُقرأ رحلة مارلو في أعماق القارة الأفريقية بوصفها اختباراً وجودياً للواقعي اللاكاني، حيث تنهار الرموز الواقعية، وينكشف اللاوعي الاستعماري بما يحمله من قمع ووحشية ورغبة في التدمير. وكذلك يُنظر إلى نهاية كورتز المأساوية – صرخته الشهيرة "الرعب! الرعب!" – بوصفها لحظة مواجهة مع الواقعي الخام، حيث يعجز النظام الرمزي عن احتواء جسامة الجريمة الإمبريالية وتأثيراتها المدمرة في الذات والآخر. وعلى خلاف القراءات التقليدية التي ركزت على الأبعاد السياسية أو التاريخية للاستعمار، تقترح هذه الدراسة مقاربة تختلف منهجياً، إذ تعيد توجيه الاهتمام نحو الاقتصاد النفسي اللاوعي الذي يحرك الخطاب الاستعماري ويسمح باستمراره عبر آليات الكبت والإسقاط والتبرير الأخلاقي الزائف. وتبين كيف أن الصمت الاقتصادي – أي صمت العملة عن النطق بقيمتها الحقيقية – هو مرآة لصمت الاستعمار عن جرائمه، وكيف يتوازى جمود الموضوع الاستعماري مع جمود الوعي الأخلاقي أمام معاينة الظلم. تكشف الدراسة، في خلاصتها، عن أن استعارة العملات الصامته لا تقتصر على وظيفة بلاغية، بل تشكل علامة فارقة في نقد الحداثة، وتقضح علاقة التلازم بين الرأسمالية والوحشية والإبادة الرمزية. كما تؤكد الدراسة على أهمية المقاربات النفسية-التحليلية في سياق الدراسات النقدية ما بعد الكولونيالية، وتدعو إلى تجاوز المناهج الوصفية التقليدية باتجاه تحليل أعمق للبنى اللاوعية في النصوص الاستعمارية. تسهم هذه القراءة، إذن، في توسيع أفق التلقي النقدي لرواية "قلب الظلام"، وإعادة تأويلها في ضوء إشكاليات راهنة تتصل بالسلطة، والإنسان، والمال، والمعنى في سياقات الهيمنة والانتهاك.

الكلمات المفتاحية: قلب الظلام، العملات الصامته، الاستعمار، الكبت، غريزة الموت، الانهيار الأخلاقي.

Introduction

Heart of Darkness (1899) by Joseph Conrad is one of the most popular and disputable works of the modern British literature. It tells the story of Charles Marlow, who ventures into the Congo Free State in quest of the missing ivory agent Kurtz; it is tense with interesting themes of imperialism, identity, civilization and moral corruption. Its pessimistic mood challenges the very principles of European "civilization" especially with the way its main character Marlow is able to confront the harshness of colonial exploitation and the inner decay it produces on a person. The river voyage was metaphorical as much as it was geographical; it turns into a journey into the African jungle and into the depths of the human unconscious.

The main point of *Heart of Darkness* is the denunciation of economic and moral prosthesis disguised as imperial philanthropy. The novella shows the



destructive effects of capitalistic greed in the guise of a civilizing mission that does not only result in the exploitation of African territory and labor but also in the spiritual impoverishment of the colonizers themselves. The linguistic precision, broken narration, and the employment of silences and gaps in Conrad defy the conventions of the narrative and implore further psychological readings. Edward Said has noted that Conrad's work “compels us to consider the connection between what [Europe] projects onto distant places and what it represses about itself” (Said 24). This repression, in *Heart of Darkness*, is perhaps no more tangible than in the symbolic use of money and the concept of value or what this paper will call silent coins.

Problem Statement

Heart of Darkness has already been approached in terms of postcolonial criticism, existentialism and feminism, but a psycho-economic approach is still comparatively underrepresented. Critics like Chinua Achebe, have zeroed in on the racial implications of the novella, others like Cedric Watts and Peter Brooks have analysed the symbolic ambiguity of the work and its narrative strategy. The text has however had little involvement with the interconnection of Lacanian psychoanalysis and the signification of the economics especially the manner in which money operates not only as a material currency, but as a mute signifier of lack, repression and perverted desire. This neglect blurs the fact that the silence in the novella about money, commerce and value creates a structural gap that exposes the perverse colonialist logic and the repressed desires it masquerades.

Research Question

This research investigates the following question: How do 'silent coins' in *Heart of Darkness* represent both repression and revelation of colonial corruption through a Lacanian lens? To be more precise, what does the treatment of economic value, exchange and silence in the novella tell readers about the theories of the Symbolic Order, lack, jouissance and the death drive as pertains to Jacques Lacan? And how does the monetary system Conrad leaves hauntingly silent reflect the psychic fragmentation and moral dissolution of the colonizer as well as the colonized?

Thesis Statement

The current study will attempt to demonstrate in this paper that the economic silence as used by Conrad that refer to as silent coins, acts as a Lacanian signifier of lack that not only reveals the inadequacy of the colonial Symbolic Order, but also the dissolution of ethical subjectivity. Through its examination of the silences that flank economic exchange and the compulsive ivory hunting that Conrad associated with his metaphorical coin this Lacanian reading shows how *Heart of Darkness* colonial corruption is exposed as much a political



system as it is a psychic structure founded upon repression, perverse desire and the death drive. By so doing, the illusion of civilized identity is eventually deconstructed in the narrative to reveal the unconscious processes which not only annihilate humanity and meaning in the name of empire.

Lacanian Psychoanalysis: Lack and Desire

This redefining of Freudian psychoanalysis by Jacques Lacan in the mid 20th century can be regarded as a radical restructuring of the unconscious, identity, and desire. The fact that he insisted on the unconscious being structured like a language not only bring to the fore the symbolic aspects of the psychic life, but also paves way to an interdisciplinary use of psychoanalytic theory in the study of literature, culture and ideology.

Central to Lacanian theory of subjectivity is the notion of lack (*manque*), the structuring absence around which desire is organised. The subject is not ever complete but constructed in correlation to that which lacks a wholeness that is always conceived but never owned. Lacan declares that the desire is not of a particular object but of the lost feeling of plenitude caught a glimpse of at the Mirror Stage. This impossible object is metonymically re tangled by the object-*a*, the object-cause of desire which functions as a surrogate to the real object that is no longer attainable.

In *Heart of Darkness*, ivory operates as the colonial *objet petit a* imbued with metaphysical, economic, and symbolic significance, yet always disappointing in its materiality. It is fetishized by the colonizers not for its actual utility but for the promise it holds of wealth, power, and mastery. Similarly, the metaphor of “silent coins”, central to this analysis, represents these empty signifiers of value economic and ethical circulating within the imperial system. They signify a desire that can never be fulfilled and reveal how colonial ideology masks its own internal void through compulsive accumulation.

The Mirror Stage and the Formation of the Ego

The ego is not a true self but a fiction of unity whose original construction is based on a primitive division. One can see this reasoning reflected in the narrative form given to Marlow, which is recursive, contradictory, and filled to the brim with instances of self-doubt. He often locates himself as a credible observer of colonial reality and at the same time demonstrates his own cracked subjectivity. His repeated experience with the Other African bodies, Kurtz, the wilderness are the so-called mirrors that disorientate Marlow ego and open him to the confines of self-knowledge and ideological delusions that found imperial identity. So, the destruction of the



Imaginary order takes place not only in the form of the narrative but also in the psychic disintegration of Marlow.

Effect of Jouissance and the Role of Prohibition

Jouissance is a sort of excessive enjoyment which manifests itself when the subject goes beyond the framework of the Symbolic law and the most difficult and disturbing concepts introduced by Lacan,. In contrast to straightforward pleasure, jouissance is destructive, painful and frequently associated with transgression or impossibility of desire. It is the failure of the pleasure principle and the outbreak of something that is not a part of normative satisfaction.

The personification of this perilous pleasure is Kurtz. His progress towards insanity and savagery is to be explained not by simply greed or insanity, but by an uncontrolled jouissance released by the lack of prohibition. Being in Congo and out of the reach of the European Symbolic order, Kurtz is set free to deliriously seek ivory, exercise complete authority, and engage in wishes of omnipotence. His notorious last words, The horror! The horror! are not merely a sigh of regret or acknowledgment, but instances of the pure jouissance, when the Real intrudes violently back into the Symbolic. In this reading, Kurtz is turned into a supreme colonial subject a man who is overwhelmed by his appetite and who is not bothered by morality anymore and who is finally destroyed by the ideology he used to believe in.

Literature Review

Although Lacanian psychoanalysis is theoretically very rich, very little of it has been applied to colonial literature in general and *Heart of Darkness* in particular. Patrick Brantlinger and others have remarked the inadequacy of Enlightenment rationality in Conrad, and Peter Brooks has discussed narrative forms of desire, which is roughly parallel to Lacanian theories of signification. Postcolonial theorists such as Homi Bhabha and Anne McClintock have invoked Lacanian concepts such as mimicry, fetishism and ambivalence in colonial discourse, but hardly anyone has undertaken the explicit Lacanian analysis of the economic unconscious or the Symbolic processes which underpin imperial authority.

This gap in the literature indicative of a more general reluctance to combine psychoanalysis and materialist critics. The work of Lacan however offers a key transition between psychic and structural violence and we may thereby regards economic systems as not merely extrinsically coercive but also intrinsically psychically marked.

Justification for Using Lacan

Heart of Darkness is an immensely Lacanian text to analyze since the text is organized around silence, repression, fragmentation, and excess the same features that define the Lacanian unconscious. The ambivalence regarding the concept of truth coupled with the recursive structure and the main metaphor of ivory as an empty signifier of value in the novella point towards Lacanian postulates of lack and desire.

Further, this lack of overt economic discussion the obvious quiet regarding money, profit, and financial systems operates exactly as a Lacanian Real, a traumatic lack that supports the Symbolic appearance of civilization and development. The silent coins of the title function in a number of different levels: as economic abstractions, as the symptoms of the ethical failure, as the signs of the alienation of the subject to the self and to the Other.

It is in Lacanian framework that psychic costs of colonialism can be more rigorously interrogated not just on the side of the colonized, but the colonizer as well. By rearranging the subjectivity into split, desiring and unstable Lacan reveals the imperial subject as the one barred estranged by the lack of wholeness, torn apart by the ideological contradictions, and pursued by the Real of imperial violence. Lacanian psychoanalysis discloses that colonialism is neither a past event or a political institution but a psychic economy, which is organized according to repression, fantasy, and the symbolic failure. It allows us to read *Heart of Darkness* not as an anti-imperial tract, but as a great meditation on the desire of empire and the moral, financial, and ontological abyss that pulse at its core.

Economic Symbolism and Repressed Desire

The colonial economy in the book *Heart of Darkness* by Joseph Conrad functions not just as a setting to the imperial conquest, but as a psychic structure which is a product of repression and desire. Money, ivory and trade are at work not as the effective mechanisms of exchange but as signifiers in Lacanian terms, which reveal the finesse in the colonial ideology and subjectivity. This part discusses how silent coins, coinage of literal money as well as suppressed economic language, function as an indicator of absence, silence and obsessive repetition, undermining the presumed rationality of imperialism and revealing its unconscious desires.



'Silent Coins' as Signifiers of Lack

Lack is essential to subjectivity according to Lacan. The subject does not seek physical things, but the object-cause of desire, or *objet petit a* an impossible rest of a prior integrity that drives all desire (Lacan, Seminar XI 103). In *Heart of Darkness*, the highly noticeable lack of explicit mentions of money as the driving factor behind the ivory trade, despite it being the obvious choice, turns the economic value into a ghost. These mute coins turn into empty signifiers, emblems of abstract value containing no ethical or human substance.

Ivory serves as the main economic image in the novella as Marlow states about it as being like something one dreamt of ivory... "heaps of it, cart-loads of it, tons of it" (Conrad 20). Yet, this abundance does not satisfy; it intensifies the colonizers' desire, functioning as *objet petit a*, always promising but never delivering fulfilment. The delusion of rational trade is undermined in this fruitless quest and what is seen is a neurotic, unconscious urge to accumulate. These coins, in other words, are silent not merely because they are hardly ever called by name, but because they repress that which they indicate, a violent economy of the violence and of the absence.

This repressions are a manifestation of the work of the Symbolic Order, which substitutes the actual human relationships with the abstract system of values. Lacanian money is then a master signifier (Seminar II 18), which imposes order on meaning and conceals its lack. The incapacity of the colonizer to speak the moral effects of economic activity shows the imperialism is founded on the deficiency disguised as law and profit.

The Absence of Voice and the Voice of Absence

The use of silence by Conrad is not just a matter of style, it is very psychoanalytic. According to Lacanian terminology, silence may be interpreted as an explosion of the Real, which cannot be symbolized and reminds the subject of his/her limitations. The colonial system relies on the consistent Symbolic structure laws, commerce, hierarchies but this order is continually jeopardized by what it attempts to keep out violence, exploitation, and trauma of empire. In *Heart of Darkness* silence is transformed into a paradoxical entity, meaning the Unspeakable.

The last words of Kurtz are "The horror!" is such a break. These are not words that describe or make rational his experience; they are the words as an outburst of the Real, the trauma that eludes both the Imaginary illusion and the Symbolic containment (Conrad 86). Marlow struggles to interpret Kurtz's words, stating, "I don't like work. I'd rather laze about and think of all the fine



things that can be done. I do not embrace work. I would much prefer to lay about and dream of all the nice things one can do. I don't like work. I had rather laze and..." a broken monologue which indicates the collapse of the conscious in face of the meaninglessness (Conrad 32). Silence here is not absence, but the trace of something too real to name, what Lacan calls the "extimate" core of the subject (Lacan, *Écrits* 145).

And, more importantly, the voice of Kurtz that was revered by the Company and termed as eloquent gets wiped out, as all that is left is the echo of a man who has become a slave of *jouissance*, the surplus of the forbidden enjoyment, which Lacan asserts, comes along when the subject crosses the law. Kurtz, states Marlow, did not restrain himself in satisfying his lusts, and this reminds of the point where prohibition fails, and the subject is exposed to the unbearable (Conrad 69). The voice of absence, though, is not just the silence or death of Kurtz, but the whole colonial discourse that does not want to speak its truth.

The Colonial System as a Neurotic Structure

Neurosis in psychoanalysis is characterized by repression, formation of symptoms and compulsive repetition. The colonial system in *Heart of Darkness*, responds to a neurotic structure, in which the brutal foundations of empire are unknown, and have been substituted by the ritualized quest after profit and power. Monotony represents the key-note of this system every trading-post is the twin-sister of the other in its organization of plunder and dissolution, every representative imitates the other in his fantasies of imperial greatness and civilizing mission. Lacan states that the neurotic subject "enjoys his symptom" despite being afflicted by it (*Écrits* 324). Similarly, imperial agents seem to be tortured and yet obsessed with their duties. Such is the case of the Manager, who is said to have no perceivable talents yet is insidiously successful and survives because he had no genius or great virtue (Conrad 27). His mediocrity is a cloak to the more fundamental disavowal of guilt that is the neurotic colonial subject: he understands the system is corrupt, and nevertheless proceeds to perpetuate, through the dissociation of knowledge and belief.

This disavowal "je sais bien, mais quand même" ("I know very well, but still...") typifies colonial logic. The system can recognize its own violence only in a euphemism: the natives are savages, the ivory is civilizing, and the atrocities are progress. This is why the symbolic economy of colonialism is a kind of defensive mechanism: it allows its subjects to be protected against the Real by repeating exploitative acts compulsively in a fantasy of legality and order. So, economic symbolism in *Heart of Darkness* works along several Lacanian registers. The silent coins are the symbol of the unspoken economic



transactions, however, it is also the symbols of the unconscious forces and suppressed traumas which allow imperial power to exist. We can read in these silent signifiers in the text of Conrad a colonial system working based on lack, disavowal and the death drive, where the wish to gain a profit hides out a more basic psychic disintegration.. Imperialism is at once a political horror and a symptom of collective neurosis, organized by lack and obsessed by desire.

The Collapse of the Symbolic Order (Corruption and Death Drive)

The expedition of Marlow up the Congo is presented as a metaphorical journey into the psychic underworld of colonialism a shift out of the balancing influence of language, law and ideology into the traumatic experience of the Real. Initially, Marlow is still a part of the colonial Symbolic Order, which is supported by the discourse of progress and civilization and rational power. These institutions provide cover by presenting the basic contradictions and violence of imperialism with an air of moral authority.

Yet, as Marlow goes further into the jungle both geographically and mentally these symbolic reassurances start to wear away. The jungle, which in many instances in Conrad's text is presented as a place beyond the language, indicates the Real: that which cannot be symbolized in any way (Lacan, Ecrits 61). This experience of the unthinkable of imperial violence slowly reveals the abyss at the heart of the Symbolic the lack of any real meaning or moral sense behind the ideological surface of empire.

Kurtz becomes the culmination of this figurative downfall. Having formerly been proclaimed as an embodiment of the European values a talented speaker, a man of letters, a bringer of civilization Kurtz is overwhelmed by the jouissance beyond the frontiers of the Symbolic. His expedience in the Congo results in the dissolution of the ego and its sense of morality. He no longer embodies the law but is himself a law unto himself, the arbitrator of violence, the participant of libidinal excess. This over-pleasure, or jouissance, is a direct breach of the symbolic law and an manifestation of the Real in the most frightening guise.

The last words of Kurtz, are, "The horror!" and the moment of absolute symbolic disintegration are summed up. and then he can no longer support the fictions of order and purpose, Kurtz looks into the abyss of his own unmediated desire and of the system which made it possible. The repetition of horror serves as linguistic stuttering at a moment where language stammered and failed indicating a psychic break and an experience of the traumatic Real (Conrad 86).



Corruption as Lacanian Death Drive

As conceived by Lacan, 'The death drive' explains a paradox in human actions: the repetition Drive that leads to the undermining of life, pleasure and stability. This drive goes beyond the pleasure principle, revealing a dark underbelly to human desire and demands repetition that is self-destructive, and which nonetheless brings enjoyment (Seminar XI 139). In *Heart of Darkness* the colonial project as such can be construed as a construction that is energized by this death drive.

Nevertheless, despite the obvious moral, ecologic and psychological devastation, caused by the imperial exploitation, the colonial machine does not slow down its uncompromising movement. It is not the progress that is pronounced in the Company operation in the Congo but rather stagnation, mindless work, and redundant brutalities. Stations are built only to decay, natives are being enslaved in civilization and ivory trade continues as usual at the expense of so many lives. It is no accident that this is a cycling of violence but rather designed it displays how corruption has been integrated into the very structure of colonial ideology, and is its blood and not its death.

The neurosis of the tribe is the compulsive identification of pillaging and dishonesty, the need to reestablish the colonial rule through destruction. Kurtz embodies this will at the individual, level; the further his bodily self is demeaned, the more he wants to have power and ivory. His fantasies do not go through the symbolic order of rational government in which they are naked unmoderated manifestations of the death drive. His fate is the melodrama of the eventual cost of sacrifice of self to jouissance: the ruin of self, morality and integrity. Colonial death drive is, however, not just a metaphor but, on the other hand, a psychic and institutional logic, a logic of imperial order of things that promises the perpetuation of violence under the guise of preserving order. That which perpetuates colonial repetition is the dark energy that causes corruption not to be a deviation, but a structural inevitability.

The Ethical Void and the “Hollow Men”

By devastating psychological effects that are best described in the creation of hollow subjects who are drained of any moral fiber and torn by conflicting desires that cannot be reconciled. The dynamic is assisted to be spoken by the theory of the barred subject as proposed by Lacan. Because we are creatures of language, we are all alienated: divided between our conscious self-image and our unconscious motivations, we are in permanent pursuit of a unity we can never achieve. This alienation is colonial and is intensified in a political setting. (Écrits 126)

The inner monologue of Marlow creates a character who is suspended between understanding and refusal, cognisance and collaboration. He knows empire is horrifying and he still perpetuates it, unable to entirely withdraw himself out of the symbolic systems which require his silence and complicity. This intestine division mirrors the Lacanian split subject, the subject that feels like it has been hollowed out by its own involvement in the colonial business. The denial of the guilt and the repression of the ethical responsibility leave space where the sphere of the true ethical self must be.

Kurtz is no exception as he signifies the failure of ethical subject. He becomes the most cruel of them all, who was once considered a man full of promise and principle. The change suggests that dehumanization of the most idealistic subjects can be achieved under colonialism. The imperial ideology in its quest to deny the humanity of the colonised thus goes ahead to deny humanity of even the colonizer.

The scenery that T.S. Eliot refers to as scenery of hollow men characters who perform the functions of authority, who are not filled but emptied, who are propelled by ideology and emptied of moral content. This is pre-emptive of the novella by Conrad who demonstrates that ethical gap is not a byproduct of colonialism but its precondition. Thus the imperial subject is rendered morally inert, lost in a figurative system that claims no commitment, no sympathy and human understanding.

The Function of Silence in the Unconscious

The missing links in narration make the reader consider the insufficiency of language in the presentation of the trauma, complicity, and desire. What is forbidden or unmentionable, the silences tell us about: the barbarity of the treatment meted out to the African people, the perverting influences of the agencies of the empire on the principles. The selective voice that Marlow filtered vision raises the subject of which voices are heard and those silenced or taken away as colonial hierarchies of voice and silence.

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Complicity or Silence as Resistance.

The silence in Heart of Darkness is indeterminate and multifaceted. The silence may be taken as the opposition to being a part of the colonial narrative that justifies exploitation and violence. The ironic, sarcastic tone Marlow chooses in most cases and his reluctance to tell everything and the unwillingness to judge may be considered as the examples of the opposition towards the imperial discourse.

On the other hand, however, is also the risk of silence becoming complicity, of being complicitous to the perpetuation of colonial violence via a failure to bring to bear the atrocities of the system by name. The ambivalence is made eminent by the final silence and evasions of Marlow in particular his inability to pass the damning message of Kurtz to the Intended of Kurtz. Is it silence that is protecting the dream of civilization in this case or is he and she making room morally right? This ambiguity is also similar to that of Lacanian psychoanalysis where silence is viewed as symptom of repression as well as the potential basis of truth. Its wavering ending raises the questions to the readers about the strength of words and holes in conquering the historical and psychic trauma.

Conclusion

The current study has examined Heart of Darkness through the prism of Lacanian psychoanalysis on the premise that Joseph Conrad is willful in the application of the metaphor of the silent coins to the extent of exposing the repressed psych-economic process of the cause and perpetuation of colonialism. These dumb coins are not merely the economic deal, but rather the extremely loaded signifiers of loss and fulfilment sought, around which Lacan has constructed his concept of the Symbolic Order. By so doing, they fill the vacuum of the core of the ideology imperialism, an ideology that cannot give an ethical defense of its exploitative foundations.

In the journey of reflection of the main character Marlow and the descent into madness of Kurtz, Conrad unveils the deconstructing moral subjectivity which is dependent on the jouissance and the death drive. These powers recreate corruption, violence and moral decay in non-random, yet regular cycles which are not accidental, but characteristic of the colonial system. The pervasive and multilayered silence is quite impressive in its powers of telling the story, as it represents the traumatic Real of the imperial horror, and allows the disavowal of its consequences. All these motifs prove the dehumanizing nature of colonialism of the colonizers and colonized that leads to the naked souls trapped in the snare of the ideological contradictions and neuroses.



A Lacanian Heart of Darkness is a certain reformulation of the colonial narrative, going further than the unquestionably apparent critique of the imperial brutality to a deeper level of engagement with unconscious structures, which constitute the possibility and bring to life the imperial brutality. The Real, Symbolic, Imaginary triadic approach to colonialism shows that colonialism is not only a historical and political undertaking but also a psychic or more to put it differently a project that forms the subject through repression, misrecognition and desire.

More than economical exploitation is carried in this metaphor of the silent coins; it is an indexing of the occulted psychic exchanges, disowned knowledge on which the colonial gamble relies. The important thing about this reading is the relevance of the unconscious in literature and cultural analysis and how the colonial discourse is justified by processes of symbolism and affective investments that are traditionally not explored using the conventional postcolonial theory.

In addition to that, Lacanian barred subject is instructive with regard to the discontinuous identities and inner divisions, which imperialism brings about. Characters like Marlow and Kurtz are not the agents or the victims of empire they are the symptoms of more systemic psychic traumas of systemic violence and moral breakdown. This Lacanian reading trouble pairs of opposites like colonizer/colonized or civilized/savage, and focuses instead on the similar neuroses and moral breaks produced by empire. Through this, it contributes to the ability of literary criticism to focus not only on what colonial texts stating, but how they mask, mute and emblematicize traumatizing knowledge.

Psychoanalytic readings of colonial literature are timely and urgent today in the conditions of the global society characterized by the new economical forms of domination, systematic inequality, and moral hesitation. The metaphoric vibration of the silent coins in the *Heart of Darkness* travels into the modern capitalism where the abstract financializations of capital have a tendency to conceal the human pain and replicate the past forms of exploitation.

Traditionally, silence still functions as a system of complicity, concealment and control. Silence as a narrative and psychoanalytic symptom alike is a revealing of the Real that cannot be represented the traumas and ethical miscarriages haunting modernity. The paper therefore invites researchers to extend their investigation into the manner in which psychoanalysis can bring light to the unconscious aspects of the empire and its legacies in the post-colonial and neoliberal settings.

Finally, this idea of the silent coins provides the critical perspective, with the help of which the ethical vacuum of the imperial and capitalistic system can be efficiently analyzed. It challenges us to deal with how economic thought and philosophical silence scheme to mask violence and dehumanization.

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