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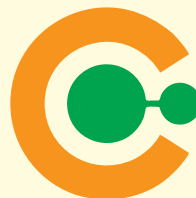
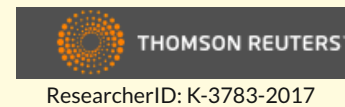
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Dualism or Positive Skepticism in the Select Novel Of Joseph Conrad

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ABSTRACT

Dualism mostly refers to mind body dualism, property dualism, cosmological dualism, cybernetics dualism, epistemological dualism, ethical dualism, monism and soul dualism. Mind body dualism is a kind of philosophical view that holds mental phenomenon of humans in which mind and body are distinct and separable from one another. The present research paper tries to explore the dualistic nature of Conrad's literariness in his novella, *The Heart of Darkness*.

Keywords: *Dualism, Monism, Combination, Janifarm, Manipulation and Domination.*

FULL PAPER

Dualism can be meant for the divisional aspects of human life which includes the opposing thoughts or contrasted ideas in the conceptual framework of literariness. Theoretical term, 'dualism' has a variety of uses in the history of thought and perception. This idea includes two fundamental kinds or categories of things or principles which is believed to be impregnated with the creation or combination of good and bad in the universe. The thought came from the existence of God and Devil for making balance between the good and bad and giving the importance of good in the existence of evils. In this regard one can read about Joseph Conrad, a Polish born English writer who immigrated or expatriated to many different cultural backgrounds. Conrad is known as a marginal man in the exile, a restless figure all through his life, without having a particular root or any belonging. The multi-cultural identity has been one of Conrad's overriding concerns that dominated much of his personal and public life. One can see him, born in Poland, but spiritually bred and educated in the culture; he immigrated to and finally settled in Britain. He was often kept a heightened sense of his social and cultural alienation, having walked in and out of his marginal circles into the several cultures. Conrad was able to free himself from the absolute manipulation of any single culture but he did his best for the sake of dual literariness. His marginal sense of cultures and identity has led him to a richly composite individualities—one that combines basic elements of many cultures. In this way, the use of diverse cultural experiences enabled him to change from his position of marginal form to janiform and he became a writer of dualism. In his writings, it serves as his philosophical foundation for observing and judging the world in the multiple perspectives of life. It can be seen there in his works as he was born in Poland, but he does not try to observe things totally from the glosses of Polish stance, nor does he, totally take a Russian, French, or English stance, or any other single cultural stance.

Joseph Conrad is a Polish born English writer who immigrated or expatriated to many various cultural backgrounds and thus became compel to study all of them and being affected with he had to express his experiences of immigration in his writings. He was actually in the exile in all his life, physically, mentally, emotionally and spiritually. The above concerning question of Arabic story—"who am I?"—once became surely one of Conrad overriding concerns that dominated much of his personal and public life. Conrad finished his physical exile when he settled down in England, yet he never fulfilled his spiritual exile—suffering with and seeking for his cultural identity. The cultural speaking of Conrad is neither Polish, nor English and it can be seen in his works. However, Conrad did not find a cultural entity that his cultural identity should belong to, yet he developed a new form of multi-cultural identities that was combined to many cultures in the world. Having the experience of the marginal circles of the several cultures, Conrad was able to free himself from the

absolute manipulation of any single culture and developed himself in the harmonious culture of the universe. Through his works, he moved from marginal to janiform and finally leading to the concept of dualism, which proclaims a balanced way of knowing and judging the world and people.

Conrad's dualism exists in the common consideration of the scholars that he is a Pole as well as an Englishman, but he totally belongs to none of the two cultural entities spiritually and ideologically. He is looking merged in between the two, describing the marginality of the immigration and the freedom of the nativity commonly in the lingual tone. On the surface level, he is a marginalized outsider to both, Polish as well as English culture. The most benefitted point to be an outsider is that he can observe things very closely happening inside the nation and very aptly he can expose the evils of the country while living in the country he can observe but can't expose. Owen Knowles also exclaimed that: "surprised though the Polish-born 'Joseph Conrad' may have been to become a published English author in 1895 at the age of thirty-seven, it should come as no surprise, given the extraordinarily varied and cosmopolitan influences at work on him, that he should turn out to be the novelist of paradox and riddle" (Knowles, 1-24).

Like his uncertainty about his favorite work, he has no certainty 'in his public as well as private life'. Ford Madox Ford was a literary collaborator of Conrad. His observations on Joseph Conrad provided further interesting facts to his janiform personality. In recalling his early communications with Conrad as a collaborator, Ford affirmed us that: "His voice was then unusually low, rather intimate and caressing. He began by speaking slowly but later on he spoke very fast...He gesticulated with his hands and shoulders when he wished to be emphatic, but when he forgot himself in the excitement of talking, he gesticulated with his whole body, throwing himself about in his chair, moving his chair nearer to yours. Finally he would spring up, go to a distance, and walk backwards and forwards across the end of the room (Ford, 57-58). These words of Ford provide us knowledge about a changeable and emotional Conrad. It was Cedric Watts who used 'Janiform' to sum up Conrad's ambivalent personality and his distinctive way of literary creation: "if any god presides over Conrad's best work, it is the god Janus" (Cedric, 42). The god, Janus is described as a two-faced personality and always looks in the opposite directions at the same time. Like god Janus, Conrad could see things from both opposite sides.

Once, Conrad himself accepted that he is a 'home duplex personality, having the double-faced psychological man in writing to his Polish friend: "Both at sea and on land my point of view is English, from which the conclusion should not be drawn that I have become an Englishman. That is not the case. Homo duplex has in any case more than one meaning. You will understand me" (Conrad, 348-349). It is the reason that Conrad may seem radically paradoxical or self-contradictory in his literary works

and produces a susceptibility to charges of betrayal, since to admit loyalty to multiple allegiances may in itself bearing the appearance of disloyalty to any one of them. Conrad has Polish cultural origins, but he does not see things totally from Polish stance, nor does he do totally from Russian stance, French stance, English stance, or any other single cultural stance. He seems to deal with everything on the concept of dualism and thinks that there is no fixed standing line for the truth, which for him is changeable, ambivalent, and sometimes even contradictory. So is his concept of dualism in the sense of skepticism which is not a negative force but 'the agent of truth—the way of art and salvation'. It is through his skepticism, or 'the agent of truth', that Conrad questions behind Jim's desertion, Nostromo's theft of the fatal silver ingots, Verloc's professional betrayal, Razumov's self-justifying betrayal of his friend Haldin, and Heyst's deplorable detachment and his inability to return Lena's love. However, Conrad questioned a lot about the existence of human beings but never lost 'faith in himself and others' and cherished the creed of 'undying hope': "To be hopeful in an artistic sense it is not necessary to think that the world is good. It is enough to believe that there is no impossibility of its being made so" (Conrad: 13). In his opinion, human society maybe corrupted but the present generation can make it better by the cooperated efforts of each other's. Considering this point as the heightened sensibility of Conrad, Cedric Watts summarized his dualism in viewing thus: "Morality is a sham. Without it, human beings become sham humans. Awareness is better than unawareness. We may become aware that it is better to be unaware, and we may even learn that ignorance is bliss. A person who sells his soul does at least have a soul to sell, and may gain a significance denied to the mediocre" (Cedric, 45-62).

According to such belief, human civilization can sometimes be very barbaric that's why it should be vigilantly guarded, so that it can be both a hypocritical veneer and a valuable achievement for the harmonious nature. Society provides an ordered and well-organized human life and it can't be avoided that's why Conrad takes ambivalent attitude toward British imperialism which may be redeemed by 'an idea of Brotherhood and ignoring the robbery and violence which transcends racial differences. It is Conrad's dualism which revealed the conceptual studies of his paradoxical attitudes toward British imperialism and his national identity. He chose England to settle down mainly not because he was compelled to do but because he was attracted by robust enterprises of Britain imperialism. It can be proved by the affirmation of Ford, "England of Conrad's early vision: an immense power standing for liberty and hospitality for refugees; vigilant over a Pax Britannica that embraced the world" (Ford, 57-58). When Conrad visited many countries of the British colonies, he immediately realized its destructive power for them. In his jungle novels, he fiercely could be seen attacking the exploitation and oppression of European imperialist colonization. Stephen Land is of the view that Conrad's jungle novels revealed his concept of dualism manifesting, "itself ideologically as between idealism and materialism, order and anarchy, or altruism and individualism, but Lord Jim,

being psychological rather than ideological in its general orientation, reverts to the simpler mode of the early Malayan novels, in which the hero pursues his career between two cultures, black and white, Malay and European” (Land, 20).

His novella *Heart of Darkness* can be read best in the manifestation of his concept of dualism. From the very outset, one can see the novella itself can be interpreted either as the reference to the interior of ‘dark Africa’, or the indications of the darkness of the inner corruption of Kurtz. In the growth of the world, the underdeveloped Africa can be said as the ‘heart of darkness’ in the matter of civilizations, while on the other side one can see the River Thames, the centre of the empire ‘on which the sun never sets’, showing the concept of dualism. Cedric Watts claimed that the images in “Heart of Darkness” are in fact subverted: “The city is ‘sepulchral’; London is associated with ‘brooding gloom’; and the very title of the tale refers not only to the heart of ‘darkest Africa’ but also to Kurtz’s corruption, to benighted London, and to innumerable kinds of darkness and obscurity, physical, moral, and ontological” (Cedric, 45-62). The close reading of the novella repeatedly displays dualistic and antithetical associations of white and black, of light and dark, and of civilizing and primitive. Undoubtedly, the presentation of these dualistic nature contrasts does mean something for writing the work in the common consideration of human beings.

Heart of Darkness, like his most of other jungle novels, has a mirror-like effect in which each side appears as a distorted but inescapably recognizing image of the other. Stephen K. Land’s observation is that: “The mirror effect involves not only the revelation of virtual moral equivalence between the two juxtaposed parties, but also a degree of patterning among the characters and events, such that the foremost figures and actions of one party are often counterbalanced by similar but opposing persons and pursuits of the other” (Land, 20). Such mirror effect of dualism is significant to describe Conrad’s jungle fiction as it entails that the significant move towards either pole of the dualism, encountered by an equal but opposite move. In this regard one can see his protagonists, who are always shown into the difficult situation forming by the conflicting forces and turning out to be as paradoxical as the life of the novelist.

The conceptual use of dualism in the works of Conrad can be seen from many aspects of his novel creation: titling, setting, characterization, plotting and theme. He was able to describe dualism not only through the statements or arguments but also through ambiguous images and many-faceted symbols. So, this concept of dualism becomes the key term to explain the process of interpreting the contextual reference of Conrad and his fictions and non-fictions. Readers and scholars are often confronted with contradictions or oppositional arguments as soon as they have formed their ideas of research. It becomes so clearly that the readers can interpret anything in Conrad’s works convincingly from both the opposite stances of dualism. Most of his major

fiction can be constructed out of antagonisms that are never finally resolved through the dualistic contrasts in his writings citing with egoism and altruism, emotion and reason, solidarity and isolation, moral corruption and redemption, heroism and contingency, loyalty and betrayal, idealism and skepticism, piety and scorn, etc.

Therefore, one can see that dualism makes Conrad ambivalent as well as controversial. In this connection, one can see that the novella, *Heart of Darkness*, which seems to be a bold and astute in its attacks on imperialism, is sometimes considered as a pro-imperialist in its endorsement of racial prejudice work by the scholars like Achebe Chinua who asserted that “*Heart of Darkness* depicted African as place of negations ... in comparison with which Europe’s own state of spiritual grace will be manifest” (Achebe, 782-94). Cedric Watts also argued for this point that although *Heart of Darkness* marginalized the Africans, yet Marlow gave them prominence. What the other Europeans choose to ignore, Marlow observes with sardonic indignation.

In addition to, Conrad is a very controversial writer, particularly in the perspective of morality, sexual and racial representation in the cultural and imperial phenomena. Umberto Eco is quoted with, “Conrad’s artistic and intellectual peculiarity attracts, confuses, and makes him an easy prey of arbitrariness, of that identification of interpretation with use which is Richard Rorty’s fashionable battle cry” (Najder, 7). Taking the opinions of many critics, it looks that Conrad’s concept of dualism is the source for the endless argument and controversy. No matter how eloquent, how polemic, and how convincing the argument about Conrad but it seems to be the encounters of the same eloquent, polemic, and convincing argument from the opposite stances. Cedric Watts summarized the thought as, “Conrad’s writing voices a combination of nineteenth-century and twentieth-century preoccupations; he stands at the intersection of the late Victorian and the early Modernist cultural phases; he is both romantic and anti-romantic, both conservative and subversive” (Cedric, 42).

In the last but not at least, Joseph Conrad is not the kind of writer who can be understood with just one reading because of dualism that is his philosophic principle in observing and presenting things in order to represent marginal sensibility. From marginality to janiform, Conrad has developed his concept of dualism in cultural awareness, which is Conrad’s philosophical foundation for observing and judging the world and without understanding the concept, one can’t judge him appropriately. There are deep insights and revelations behind his concept of dualism with which Conrad frees himself from the absolute manipulation of just single cultural convention. Conrad’s fiction was created with many forces combining together the ironies or shock through a dualistic conflict: dual contrast between black and white worlds and between the principles of enlightenment and exploitation. The diverse

cultural experiences and the unique cultural understanding helped him much to form a dualistic way of judging and measuring the world and people in portraying the image of the 'self' and the 'other'. Although such dualism very often produces tensions and ambivalence in his literary contents of dualism yet it might provide instructive understanding of the world.

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