



Class Struggle and Alienation in Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* and Kipling's "The Man Who Would Be King": A Comparative Analysis

Nisreen M. Sawwa, Shadi S. Neimneh*, Raja K. Al-Khalili

English Department, Hashemite University, Jordan

*shadin@hu.edu.jo

Received Date: June 28, 2017

Accepted Date: July 04, 2017

Published Date: July 10, 2017

Abstract: The present article provides new insights into Joseph Conrad's novella *Heart of Darkness* (1899) and Rudyard Kipling's short story "The Man Who Would Be King" (1888), by applying two Marxist notions, namely class struggle and subsequent alienation. It argues the Marxist orientation of such texts against prevalent postcolonial parameters. In *Heart of Darkness*, the Company arguably represents the bourgeoisie, while workers like Kurtz represent the proletariat. Kurtz exerts himself in order to procure ivory so that the Company makes profit. Thus, Kurtz is alienated from the product of his labor. As a result, he alienates himself from Africans as well as Europeans. In "The Man Who Would Be King," the imperialist Europeans in India represent the capitalists, while Dravot and Carnehan represent the proletariat because they cannot benefit from the resources of India. Consequently, Dravot and Carnehan alienate themselves from Europeans and go to Kafiristan, where they establish themselves as kings and gods. However, Dravot and Carnehan do not benefit considerably from their positions and their crowns. Hence, the analysis shows that Kurtz, Dravot, and Carnehan are exploited in stratified societies, and they all die after experiencing alienation from the product of their labor and from other human beings. It is our contention that both texts interrogate different facets of oppression operating within imperialistic endeavors, not only racial but also class-related oppression. Since this social and economic oppression extends across different racial and ethnic boundaries, it is argued that colonialism replicates on its own agents the different sorts of exploitation it exercises on the colonized.

INTRODUCTION

Joseph Conrad's novella *Heart of Darkness* (1899) and Rudyard Kipling's short story "The Man Who Would Be King" (1888) have often been discussed and analyzed from a postcolonial perspective because Europeans in both works are portrayed as more civilized than non-Europeans, so they colonize non-Europeans and mistreat them. Critics have often read both texts in light of Belgian colonialism in Africa (the Congo in particular) and British colonialism in India. Thus, both texts have been mainly analyzed as parables about European colonialism. The present article provides new insights into the two works by reading them from a Marxist perspective. Hence, this article mainly applies two Marxist notions, namely class struggle and alienation, to offer a comparative study of these two works. Apparently, Conrad and Kipling seem to be interrogating different levels of oppression, racial and social, which makes our Marxist reading somewhat related to current postcolonial readings of both texts.

Many writers discuss Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* and Kipling's "The Man Who Would Be King" from a postcolonial viewpoint, and some others even draw analogies between the two literary works, showing that there are striking similarities between both works at the level of plot. Carola M. Kaplan notes that the colonizers in *Heart of Darkness* feel superior, and they fear to "succumb to the Other," so they attempt to "contain it—through subordination, suppression, or conversion" (323). Raymond Brebach compares Dravot to Kurtz, stating that

Class Struggle and Alienation in Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* and Kipling's "The Man Who Would Be King": A Comparative Analysis

both of them are perceived as gods, and they make use of natives to extend their power (76). Moreover, Kaori Nagai refers to the idea of the collapse of "the hegemony of European imperialism" in both works, and to the fact that both Dravot and Kurtz are victims of "the unsettling effects of colonialism" (101). Nagai also refers to the notion of colonial fantasy, in which the white man establishes himself as a king or god among natives, and she states that the life story of James Brook, the Rajah of Sarawak, "captivated the Victorian imagination" (90). Nevertheless, Nagai argues that in Kipling's "The Man Who Would Be King" and Conrad's *Lord Jim* and *Heart of Darkness*, Kipling and Conrad illustrate how this colonial fantasy "fails after a short period of fulfillment" rather than "repeat the glorious adventure of Brooke" (91).

Some of the writers who make analogies between the two works stress the similarity of the narrative techniques employed in both works. Brebach states that both works employ frame narrators, and that the narrators Peachy and Marlow in "The Man Who Would Be King" and *Heart of Darkness* respectively are survivors of "a horrific, life-threatening experience" (76). However, Brebach refers to a striking contrast between the two works, arguing that Kipling's novella is "a serio-comic adventure yarn," while Conrad's novel is "a brooding meditation on the nature and omni-presence of evil" (75). Moreover, David H. Stewart points out that both works "use the double frame as a narrative device" (197). Stewart also refers to some differences between the two works, arguing that Conrad represents Africans as stupid, while Kipling portrays the Kafirs as gullible but then as capable of knowing that the god Dravot is fake (200). In addition, Stewart argues that Kipling does not hyperbolize "his heroes' imperialist crime," while Conrad exaggerates Kurtz's crime, and that Kipling's novella is more amusing because Conrad "keeps things somber" (201-02).

Unlike the aforementioned articles that read the two works from a postcolonial perspective or show similarities in narrative techniques, the present article employs two Marxist notions, i.e. class struggle and subsequent alienation, to comparatively read both texts in terms of social and class-related dynamics of oppression. This article argues that Kurtz in *Heart of Darkness* and Dravot and Carnehan in "The Man Who Would Be King" experience alienation. Kurtz, who works for the Company, brings in more ivory than all the other agents combined (Conrad 28). Kurtz works too hard, yet he does not enjoy the fruits of his labor. Hence, he gets alienated from the product of his work and from other human beings, establishing himself as a god among Africans, and considering the other Europeans who work for the Company his enemies. Thus, Kurtz gets physically and mentally ill and dies, due to exploitation and alienation. In addition, Dravot and Carnehan alienate themselves from the exploitative Europeans in India and go to Kafiristan, where they manage to become kings. However, Dravot and Carnehan do not gain much benefit from kingship. In addition, Dravot alienates himself from the product of his work because he states that he will give the crown to Queen Victoria (Kipling 269). Moreover, Dravot and Carnehan alienate themselves from the Kafirs, establishing themselves as kings and gods. Dravot breaks the contract with Carnehan when he decides to get married, and he is killed by the Kafirs. In addition, Carnehan who is released by the Kafirs does not get benefit from being a king. In other words, Carnehan is estranged from his labor, and he gets mentally and physically ill and dies after experiencing alienation. It is our contention, therefore, that both texts interrogate different facets of oppression operating within imperialistic endeavors, not only racial but also class-related oppression. Since this social and economic oppression extends across different racial and ethnic boundaries, it is argued that colonialism replicates on its own complicit agents the different sorts of exploitation it exercises on the colonized.

DISCUSSION

In the *Communist Manifesto*, Karl Marx and Frederick Engels argue that most societies are divided into two social classes: the bourgeoisie and the proletariat (40). According to Marx and Engels, the bourgeoisie is the class of capitalists who own the means of production, while the proletariat is the class of wage laborers who

Class Struggle and Alienation in Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* and Kipling's "The Man Who Would Be King": A Comparative Analysis

sell their labor in order not to die out, for they do not own the means of production (39). As Marx and Engels point out,

The history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles. Freeman and slave, patrician and plebeian, lord and serf, guild-master and journeyman, in a word, oppressor and oppressed, stood in constant opposition to one another, carried on an uninterrupted, now hidden, now open fight, a fight that each time ended either in a revolutionary reconstitution of society at large, or in the common ruin of the contending classes. (39-40)

Class conflict is inevitable in stratified societies, so Marxism advocates a classless society. Marx and Engels maintain that the bourgeoisie exploits the proletariat in order to make a profit (50). Hence, Marx and Engels state that the proletariat unites and revolts against the bourgeoisie with the intention of abolishing exploitation (51-56).

The proletariat is exploited in stratified societies. Marx and Engels describe the proletariat as "a class of laborers, who live only so long as they find work, and who find work only so long as their labor increases capital" (49). Laborers have to work and sell their labor in order to live. In addition, Marx and Engels argue that laborers are like commodities and machines in that they are "consequently exposed to all the vicissitudes of competition, to all the fluctuations of the market," so if "the repulsiveness of the work increases, the wage decreases," and if "the use of machinery and division of labor increases, in the same proportion the burden of toil also increases" (49). Hence, laborers are exploited, for the tasks they carry out are wearisome. However, the main beneficiaries are capitalists.

In Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*, Europeans consider themselves more developed and civilized than Africans, and they claim that they colonize undeveloped countries to spread civilization. However, the capitalist Europeans who work for the Company exploit Africans in order to gain profit. Stephen Ross describes the Company as an "oppressive social organization" (69). Ross also argues that Conrad makes the Company the chief power in the Congo, giving it a "privileged position ... over any political entity" (70-71). In addition, Ross maintains that Europeans do not exploit Africa on political grounds, but rather on the grounds that it is rich in ivory (71). Marlow states that "the word 'ivory' rang in the air, was whispered, was sighed. You would think they were praying to it" (Conrad 34). Marlow also states that "the only real feeling was a desire to get appointed to a trading post where ivory was to be had, so that they could earn percentages. They intrigued and slandered and hated each other only on that account" (37).

African men are chained, ill-treated, and exploited so that the Company and Europeans earn profit. Moreover, Africans suffer from starvation and bad health, and they are described as cannibals. Hence, it can be contended that the Company represents the capitalists or the bourgeoisie, while those who work for it represent the proletariat. The Company, which has too much power, enforces laws, and workers must obey its laws. Ross states that the Company enforces laws not to ensure "the stability of the social organization, but to generate a captive work force" (75). Ross also points out that the Company makes use of Africans and treats them as criminals despite the fact that they obey its laws and help further its interests (74). Marlow describes how Africans are exploited by Europeans, stating that there were "a lot of people, mostly black and naked, moved about like ants" (Conrad 22). The Africans in the novel are chained, and they are called criminals even though they are helpers, toiling away. Africans are depicted as ignorant of their rights and as gullible, which explains why they do not rebel against European capitalists.

Class Struggle and Alienation in Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* and Kipling's "The Man Who Would Be King": A Comparative Analysis

The Company does not only exploit Africans but also the Europeans working for it. At the beginning of the novel, Marlow states that he got an appointment quickly because "the Company had received news that one of their captains had been killed in a scuffle with the natives" (Conrad 12). A Swedish captain also tells Marlow about a Swedish man who has hanged himself on a road (22). In addition, Marlow states that he has traveled with sixty men, referring to the difficulties he and the men encounter. For example, one of the white men who came to Africa in order to make money gets fever, and the steamship sinks (29-31).

It can also be suggested that Kurtz is a proletarian working for the Company in order to earn money and then get married. Kurtz's poverty is an obstacle to his marriage to the Intended, so Kurtz goes to the Congo in order to make a fortune that enables him to marry his fiancée (Ross 78-79). Kurtz works so hard, producing more ivory than all other agents combined. Marlow states that he overhears a conversation between the manager and his uncle about Kurtz. The manager complains that Kurtz wants to take over his position, and he states that Kurtz is sick and may die of a tropical disease (Conrad 47-50). The manager of the Company never cares about Kurtz's health because he regards Kurtz as a threat. The manager tells Marlow that "Mr. Kurtz has done more harm than good to the Company," and they must be cautious because "the trade will suffer" (95). Thus, the ultimate goal of the Company and capitalist Europeans is saving ivory.

The fact that Kurtz establishes himself as a god among the Africans, whom he describes as savages and brutes, should not be ignored. Ivory is "the object-cause of desire," so not only the Company, but also its employees desire to procure ivory because the employees "earn percentages on the profit it generates" (Ross 72). As Marlow explains, Kurtz says "my Intended, my ivory, my station, my river," as though "everything belonged to him" (Conrad 74). It can be inferred from Kurtz's words that he has both capitalist and libidinal desires (Ross 72). Kurtz is obsessed with procuring ivory, and he exploits Africans in order to achieve his goal. Moreover, Ross states that Kurtz comes to the Congo in order to earn money that enables him to marry his fiancée, which implies that he has libidinal desires as well (78-79).

Kurtz oppresses and exploits Africans, and he is exploited by the Company at the same time. Hence, Africans arguably constitute the oppressed class or the proletariat that is exploited by the bourgeoisie represented by the European capitalists who work for the Company. Marlow mentions the report Kurtz writes at the request of the International Society for the Suppression of Savage Customs, in which Kurtz suggests exterminating "all the brutes" (Conrad 77). Marlow is also told that Africans adore Kurtz who "raided the country" for ivory and "got the tribe to follow him" (85). Moreover, Marlow sees the heads of Africans "on the stakes under Mr. Kurtz's windows," and he states that Africans are described as "enemies, criminals, ... rebels" (89). Africans are ill-treated and exploited by European capitalists despite the fact that they help Europeans further their interests.

In Kipling's "The Man Who Would Be King," the narrator describes the state of the continent as bad. The narrator says: "Kings are being killed," and while "sickness really breaks out, ... the Empires and the Kings continue to divert themselves as selfishly as before" (249). In addition, we learn that the narrator himself is a "wanderer" and "vagabond," and so are Dravot and Carnehan (244). Carnehan tells the narrator why he and Dravot want to leave India. Carnehan points out:

The country isn't half worked out because they that govern it won't let you touch it. They spend all their blessed time in governing it, and you can't lift a spade, nor chip a rock, nor look for oil, nor anything like that, without all the Government saying, 'Leave it alone, and let us govern.' Therefore, such as it is, we will let it alone, and go away to some other place where a man isn't crowded and can come to his own. (252)

Class Struggle and Alienation in Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* and Kipling's "The Man Who Would Be King": A Comparative Analysis

Dravot and Carnehan realize that India is not big enough for them, so they go to Kafiristan in order to set themselves up as kings (252). In India, Dravot and Carnehan were not kings or a ruling class because Queen Victoria was the empress of India at the time. It can be inferred from Carnehan's words that Dravot and Carnehan want to leave India because they are not contented and satisfied with their life there, for they are mistreated by the exploitative government, and they do not have the right to benefit from the resources of India.

Dravot and Carnehan are two adventurers and ex-soldiers in India who want to establish themselves as kings in Kafiristan. Paul Fussell states that the primary theme of "The Man Who Would Be King" is "the ironic and paradoxical quality of kingship or nobility" (217). It can be argued that Dravot and Carnehan represent the upper-class or the bourgeoisie who exploit the Kafirs. Dravot and Carnehan's experience is very much like Kurtz's experience in that the three of them have desires to have things which represent power like ivory and crowns. In addition, the three of them take advantage of natives to accomplish their objectives. Dravot and Carnehan make use of the fact that the Kafirs are pagans who "have two-and-thirty heathen idols," longing to be "the thirty-third and fourth" (Kipling 252). Carnehan tells the narrator that Dravot manages to become a king with a gold crown on his head, and he has the Kafirs worship him and obey his orders (266). Dravot deceives the Kafirs, getting them to believe that he is "the son of Alexander by Queen Semiramis," and Carnehan is his younger brother (264-65). In addition, Dravot tells Carnehan that he has the Kafirs make two gold crowns for both of them in a place where "the gold lies in the rock like suit in mutton," so Dravot exploits the Kafirs and the resources they have, for Kafiristan is rich in gold, turquoise, garnets, and amber (265). Dravot states that he has desires to make an empire because he regards the Kafirs as more civilized than the niggers, pointing out that the Kafirs are English, and that "they sit on chairs in their own houses. They're the Lost Tribes ... and they've grown to be English" (269).

Having libidinal desires is another thing Dravot has in common with Kurtz. Kurtz has desire for the Intended, as already mentioned, and Dravot has desire for the Kafir girl. Dravot tells the narrator that "the women of those parts are very beautiful" (Kipling 252). The Kafir girl whom Dravot decides to marry is afraid because she will marry a god, so she bites him when he tries to kiss her, and he bleeds (272-74). As a result, the Kafirs realize that Dravot is a man and realize that they are exploited and lied to, so they turn against Dravot and Carnehan. The Kafirs are like the proletariat who revolts against capitalists to abolish exploitation. The Kafirs revolt against authority, and they capture Dravot and Carnehan. They kill Dravot, and they release Carnehan and give him Dravot's head (274-78). Ultimately, the Kafirs get rid of authority, unlike the Africans in *Heart of Darkness* who obey Europeans and help them further their interests. This explains why Stewart notes that the blacks in *Heart of Darkness* are portrayed as stupid, whereas the Kafirs in "The Man Who Would Be King" are depicted as gullible but then as capable of knowing that the god Dravot is fake (200).

Dravot states that he will hand the crown over to Queen Victoria, which indicates that he is subordinate to the Queen even though he becomes a king worshipped by the Kafirs. After he becomes a king, Dravot is still subordinate to Queen Victoria and is eager to show her that he has managed to become the king of the "the reformed Kafiristan," as Fussell describes it (223). Kafiristan is described as reformed because Europeans at the time firmly believed that they had to civilize the uncivilized. However, Dravot and Carnehan exploit the Kafirs and deceive them rather than help them to get civilized, so it is ironic to describe Kafiristan as reformed. All in all, Dravot and Carnehan are arguably like Kurtz in that the three of them represent the bourgeoisie among natives and the proletariat among Europeans, for they exploit natives, and they are exploited, in turn, by capitalist Europeans.

It has been aforementioned that the worker is exploited in stratified societies in that he performs wearing tasks, yet he does not greatly benefit (Marx and Engels 50). Dravot, Carnehan, and Kurtz are exploited by European

Class Struggle and Alienation in Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* and Kipling's "The Man Who Would Be King": A Comparative Analysis

capitalists. In addition, the three of them get estranged or alienated from the product of their work, from their human species, and from other human beings in consequence of living in stratified societies. T. R. Young defines alienation as "a state in which man is lonely, purposeless, powerless, oppressed, and degraded" (27). Lanny Ace Thompson also draws on Marx's description of alienation as "a function of being estranged from one's product, labor, himself and his social relationships," due to "capitalist exchange relations" (37).

According to Karl Marx, the worker sells his labor in order to make money that enables him to live, otherwise he will starve, so the fact that the worker has to sell his labor power to capitalists makes him like a commodity and a machine (3-5). Marx states that because the product of the worker's labor provides him with work and the means of subsistence, the worker also becomes a servant of the product (29). Marx also states that "the worker need not necessarily gain when the capitalist does, but he necessarily loses when the latter loses" (3). Marx contends that the more commodities the worker creates, the cheaper commodity he becomes and the poorer he gets (28). Moreover, Marx states that the more objects the worker produces and the more effort he makes, the less he can possess and the more the capitalists accumulate wealth (29). As a result, the worker gets estranged or alienated from the product of his labor because his life will belong to an alien object rather than to him, for capitalists enjoy the fruits of his labor. According to Marx, the more a worker produces the more this worker becomes alienated (29-30).

Marx maintains that the worker is not only alienated from the product of his labor, but also from the activity of production, his human identity, and other human beings. The fact that the worker does not enjoy the fruits of his labor makes him discontented with his work. The worker feels that he exerts himself and ruins his body and mind, and the labor he does is forced rather than voluntary. Thus, Marx argues that the worker is forced to perform work that does not belong to him, and the work he performs is merely a means of survival (30). As a result, the worker gets estranged from his own body and from his spiritual or human aspect. Hence, Marx states that the worker gets alienated from his human identity or species being (31-32).

Marx also confirms that the fact that the worker is alienated from the product of his labor, from his activity of production, and from his species being results in the estrangement of man from man. Marx states that the worker alienates himself from capitalists because the product of his labor does not belong to him, but rather to the capitalists whom the worker considers alien and hostile (32-33). John Elliott states that Marx firmly believes that alienation "rises to its highest levels under capitalism and decreases progressively under socialist auspices" (472). In addition, Isidor Wallimann refers to Marx's idea that man is alienated in the capitalist society, but "it would be possible for man to live once again according to his nature" in the communist society (274).

According to Marx, workers sell their labor power in order to earn money and live in capitalist societies (3). Kurtz, who is not able to get married to his fiancée because of his poverty, goes to the Congo and works for the Company in order to make a fortune and get married (Ross 78-79). All the workers of the Company work so hard to procure ivory as though they are servants of ivory, yet the Company enjoys the fruits of their labor. In addition, Dravot and Carnehan, who are poor, go to Kafiristan and establish themselves as kings and gods, for they are discontented with their life in India. Dravot and Carnehan encounter a lot of difficulties for the sake of improving their life and getting over the unpleasant experiences they have had in India. In Kafiristan, Dravot and Carnehan work so hard as if they are servants of crowns, and they are not satisfied with their life there though they are kings worshipped and obeyed by the Kafirs. Kurtz, Dravot, and Carnehan become servants of the products of their labor, on the grounds that the product of their labor is a means of subsistence.

Marx argues that the more workers produce, the less they possess, and the more powerful the labor is, the more powerless workers become (29-30). Consequently, Marx states that workers become alienated from the

Class Struggle and Alienation in Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* and Kipling's "The Man Who Would Be King": A Comparative Analysis

product of their labor and from the activity of production, and workers feel that the labor they do is forced because they make a lot of effort, yet only capitalists accumulate wealth (29-31). In *Heart of Darkness*, the Africans and Europeans who work for the Company exert themselves, and they are worked to death so that the Company gets enriched. Kurtz, who produces more ivory than all the other agents combined, sells the product of his labor to the Company that owns the means of production. In other words, Kurtz works hard, but the main beneficiary is the Company. As a result, Kurtz is estranged from the product of his labor, which is ivory, as well as the activity of production.

Dravot and Carnehan are also alienated from the product of their labor, for they cannot fully benefit from being kings because of the contract they sign. Under the terms of the contract, Dravot and Carnehan should become kings of Kafiristan, they should abstain from alcohol and sex, and they should stay by each other's side (Kipling 254). Dravot and Carnehan should support each other because they are Freemasons, for Freemasonry emphasizes universal brotherhood. Fussell argues that "Dravot and Carnahan, with their adherence to ideals of order and regularity and in their acts of sacrifice and fidelity at the end of the story, behave as if conscious of Masonic obligation" (226). When Dravot tells Carnehan that he wants a wife, Carnehan reminds him of the contract they have signed. However, Dravot breaks the contract and advises Carnehan to get a wife, for the women in Kafiristan are prettier than English women. Dravot insists on having a wife "to breed a King's son," but Carnehan objects to this, pointing out that "the Bible says that Kings ain't to waste their strength on women ... when they've got a raw new Kingdom to work over" (Kipling 271). Both Dravot and Carnehan get alienated from their crowns and their positions as kings and gods in Kafiristan because of the contract, and because of the principles of religion and Freemasonry.

Another thing indicating that Dravot is alienated from the product of his labor is the fact that he wants to hand the gold crown over to Queen Victoria. Fussell describes the crown which Dravot wants to give to Queen Victoria as an "imperialistic jubilee gift" because Europeans firmly believe that they have responsibility for civilizing the uncivilized (223). Thus, it can be argued that Dravot works hard, while the Queen and European imperialists will be the main beneficiaries of Kafiristan, which is rich in resources. In addition, Dravot and Carnehan get completely alienated from the crowns when the Kafirs find out that Dravot and Carnehan are not gods (Kipling 274-77). Despite the fact that Dravot and Carnehan work hard and encounter many difficulties in order to become kings and get crowns, they do not benefit enormously from the crowns. Carnehan, who returns to India after Dravot has been killed, is still poor (258).

As a consequence of alienation from the product of labor and from the activity of production, the worker becomes alienated from the human species and from other human beings (Marx 32). It has been aforementioned that Dravot and Carnehan think that India is not big enough for them, and they are not satisfied there. As a result, they alienate themselves from the Europeans in India because they believe that the Europeans there exploit everything for their own good (Kipling 252). Consequently, Dravot and Carnehan leave for Kafiristan, where they also alienate themselves from the Kafirs by establishing themselves as gods and kings. In addition, Dravot also alienates himself from Carnehan and from kingship when he breaks the contract and decides to marry, saying: "The Contract only lasted till such time as we was Kings; and Kings we have been these months past" (270). Moreover, the Kafirs alienate themselves from authorities, killing Dravot and crucifying Carnehan, whom they release and give Dravot's head and crown to (277-78).

It has been previously shown that Kurtz is alienated from ivory or the product of his labor. As a result, he gets alienated from other human beings. Kurtz alienates himself from Africans, regarding them as brutes that have to be exterminated (Conrad 77). Kurtz also establishes himself as a god among Africans and kills those African men who challenge his authority (87-89). Moreover, Kurtz alienates himself from the Europeans who work for

Class Struggle and Alienation in Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* and Kipling's "The Man Who Would Be King": A Comparative Analysis

the Company, for he regards the Company and the Europeans working for it as his enemies. For example, Kurtz has the natives attack the steamboat of the Europeans with arrows because he does not want to go with them (96). In addition, Kurtz accuses the manager of the Company and the other European men of coming to get the ivory rather than to help him, saying: "Save me!—save the ivory, you mean. Don't tell me. Save me! Why, I've had to save you. You are interrupting my plans now. Sick! Sick! Not so sick as you would like to believe" (94). The manager of the Company and the other Europeans want to get rid of Kurtz, believing that he does "more harm than good to the Company," but Marlow alienates himself from the Europeans who consider Kurtz a threat to the Company, for he believes that Kurtz is a remarkable man (95).

Capitalists do not take the worker's health or length of life into consideration. Chris Yuill states that according to Marx, capitalism and exploitation, which result in the worker's alienation from the product of his labor and from other human beings, have bad effects on the worker's health physically and mentally, on the grounds that the worker gets exhausted, due to hard work and the concentration of the mind (126-33). Marx argues that workers in capitalist societies overwork and "decline to a mere machine, a bond servant of capital" (5). Marx also states that workers also become "the most wretched of commodities" (28). Marlow describes how the Africans, who work for the Company, are chained, ill-treated, exploited, and worked to death (Conrad 23-25). However, Marlow shows indifference when the African helmsman is killed by the natives because what he cares about most is seeing Kurtz (70-71). In addition, Kurtz kills the African men who challenge his authority (89). Kurtz also makes use of the fact that the natives are pagans worshipping him, so he gets them to follow him while raiding the villages for ivory (85).

European capitalists are not only indifferent to the Africans' health but also to the European workers' health. Marlow states that he got an appointment very quickly after "the Company had received news that one of their captains had been killed in a scuffle with the natives" over some hens (Conrad 12). In addition, another man criticizes the colonial officials and tells Marlow about a Swede who has hanged himself (22). The Company does not care about the men killed. The most important thing to them is finding someone quickly so that the work goes on, and the Company makes profit. After signing a contract with the Company, Marlow is checked over by a doctor who tells him that he never sees the men he checks over, and he does not know whether or not they return from Africa. In addition, the doctor asks Marlow if there is any history of madness in his family, stating that he likes to "watch the mental changes of individuals" (17). It can be inferred from the doctor's words that the Europeans who go to Africa either die there or get mentally ill.

Living in a stratified society leads to the alienation and death of Kurtz. The manager of the Company wants to get rid of Kurtz and anyone challenging his authority, and his uncle says: "The climate may do away with this difficulty for you" (Conrad 47). This indicates that capitalists do not care about the health of workers. European capitalists are aware that workers are very likely to catch diseases and die from them. The Russian trader tells Marlow that sometimes he does not see Kurtz for long periods of time, during which Kurtz raids the villages for ivory (85). The Russian trader also says: "You can't judge Mr. Kurtz as you would an ordinary man" (85-86). Hence, Kurtz gets mentally and physically ill as a consequence of exploitation and alienation. Moreover, Dravot and Carnehan both experience alienation from their crowns, from the Kafirs, and from each other. Before he is killed by the Kafirs, Dravot feels discontented with his life despite the fact that he is the king of Kafiristan. In addition, Carnehan gets mentally ill and dies of sunstroke.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, living in a stratified society results in the alienation and death of the main characters of Conrad's novella *Heart of Darkness* and Kipling's story "The Man Who Would Be King." In *Heart of Darkness*, the Company

Class Struggle and Alienation in Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* and Kipling's "The Man Who Would Be King": A Comparative Analysis

exploits the Africans as well as the Europeans who work for it, i.e. the agents of colonialism. Hence, the Company arguably represents the bourgeoisie or capitalists, who enjoy the fruits of the proletariat's labor. Kurtz, who works for the Company, exerts himself in order to procure ivory so that the Company makes profit. Thus, Kurtz is alienated from the product of his labor. Kurtz also gets weak and lonely, and he alienates himself from Africans by establishing himself as a god, and from the Europeans whom he regards as his enemies. Kurtz gets mentally and physically ill and dies, due to exploitation and alienation. In a sense, Kurtz is a servant of an Empire that exploits him just as he exploits the natives.

It has also been argued that the imperialist Europeans in India represent capitalists, while the ex-soldiers Dravot and Carnehan represent the proletariat because they are poor and cannot benefit from the resources of India. As a result, Dravot and Carnehan alienate themselves from the Europeans in India and go to Kafiristan, where they also alienate themselves from the Kafirs by establishing themselves as kings and gods. Dravot and Carnehan are alienated from their crowns, the products of their labor, for a number of reasons. Dravot alienates himself from the crown because he states that he wants to give it to Queen Victoria, and when he breaks the contract, he tells Carnehan that he is no longer a king. The Kafirs also alienate Dravot and Carnehan from their positions as kings when they kill Dravot and give his head and crown to Carnehan. Capitalism does not take the workers' health and length of life into account, so Dravot, Carnehan, and Kurtz all die after being exploited, and after experiencing alienation from the product of their labor and from other human beings in stratified societies. Therefore, Conrad and Kipling make us ponder not only the ruthless nature of colonialism but also its social and psychological violence against its own agents. It has been argued that such texts are worthy of analysis for their postcolonial vision or critique of imperialism and equally for their social import. Conrad and Kipling deal with different levels of oppression and injustice, racial, social, and political. Importantly, they expose the economic oppression and exploitation essential to all imperialistic endeavors and how colonialism is at base a struggle over matter, a struggle that gets directed over the racial other as well as imperial agents. Since under capitalism workers are alienated from the ownership of the products of their labor, imperialism logically becomes a masked form of capitalism. And since alienation makes the exploited imperial agents indifferent and hostile, it also furthers their misery and, hence, results in more oppression for the colonized.

REFERENCES

- Breback, Raymond. "Conrad in Context: *Heart of Darkness* and "The Man Who Would Be King." *Conradiana* 42.1-2 (2010): 75-80. *Literature Resource Center*. Web. 7 Dec. 2015.
- Conrad, Joseph. *Heart of Darkness*. London, GBR: ElecBook, 2001. *ProQuest*. Web. 3 Dec. 2015.
- Elliott, John. "Professor Roberts's Marx: On Alienation and Economic Systems." *Journal of Economic Issues* 9.3 (1975): 471-500. *JSTOR*. Web. 22 Dec. 2015.
- Fussell, Paul. "Irony, Freemasonry, and Humane Ethics in Kipling's "The Man Who Would Be King." *ELH* 25.3 (1958): 216-33. *JSTOR*. Web. 14 Dec. 2015.
- Kaplan, Carola M. "Colonizers, Cannibals, and the Horror of Good Intentions in Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*." *Studies in Short Fiction* 34.3 (1997): 323-33. *Literature Resource Center*. Web. 16 Dec. 2015.
- Kipling, Rudyard. "The Man Who Would Be King." *The Man Who Would Be King: and Other Stories*. Cary, NC, USA: Oxford UP, UK, 1987. 244-79. *ProQuest*. Web. 4 Dec. 2015.

Class Struggle and Alienation in Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* and Kipling's "The Man Who Would Be King": A Comparative Analysis

- Marx, Karl. *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*. Trans. Martin Mulligan. Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1959. *Marxists Internet Archive*. Web. 13 Dec. 2015.
- Marx, Karl, and Frederick Engels. *Communist Manifesto: A Road Map to History's Most Important Political Document*. Ed. Phil Gasper. Chicago, IL, USA: Haymarket Books, 005. *ProQuest*. Web. 8 Dec. 2015.
- Nagai, Kaori. "God and His Doubles: Kipling and Conrad's 'The Man Who Would Be King.'" *Critical Survey* 21.1 (2009): 88-102. *Literature Resource Center*. Web. 17 Dec. 2015.
- Ross, Stephen. "Desire in *Heart of Darkness*." *Conradiana* 36.1-2 (2004): 65-91. *Literature Resource Center*. Web. 11 Dec. 2015.
- Stewart, David H. "Kipling, Conrad and the Dark Heart." *Conradiana* 19.3 (1987): 195-205. Rpt. in *Short Story Criticism*. Ed. Lawrence J. Trudeau. Vol. 207. Farmington Hills, MI: Gale, 2015. *Literature Resource Center*. Web. 25 Dec. 2015.
- Thompson, Lanny Ace. "The Development of Marx's Concept of Alienation: An Introduction." *Mid-American Review of Sociology* 4.1 (1979): 23-38. *JSTOR*. Web. 20 Dec. 2015.
- Wallimann, Isidor. "Alienation — in Marx and Modern Empirical Sociology." *Zeitschrift Für Soziologie* 4.3 (1975): 273-82. *JSTOR*. Web. 22 Dec. 2015.
- Young, T. R. "Karl Marx and Alienation: The Contributions of Karl Marx to Social Psychology." *Humboldt Journal of Social Relations* 2.2 (1975): 26-34. *JSTOR*. Web. 19 Dec. 2015.
- Yuill, Chris. "Marx: Capitalism, Alienation and Health." *Social Theory & Health* 3.2 (2005): 126-43. *ProQuest*. Web. 23 Dec. 2015.

Citation: Nisreen M. Sawwa, Shadi S. Neimneh*, Raja K. Al-Khalili, "Class Struggle and Alienation in Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* and Kipling's "The Man Who Would Be King": A Comparative Analysis". *American Research Journal of English and Literature*; V3, I1; pp:1-10.

Copyright © 2017 Nisreen M. Sawwa, Shadi S. Neimneh*, Raja K. Al-Khalili, This is an open access article distributed under the Creative Commons Attribution License, which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited.