



---

## The Colonial Evils Depicted in Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*

Md Masihur Rahman

### Abstract

Written in the colonial context, Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* is a potential exploration of the nature of colonial evils and hypocrisy. Set in an atmosphere of gloomy darkness dominated by criminality towards humanity the narrator reveals his agonising experience and realisation regarding organised plunder of the colonial human/natural resources. The novella published in book format in 1902, is partly based on the writer's experience in the Congo basin where he was appointed a captain of a river steamer named *Roi Des Belges* in 1890. The novella published during heyday of European colonialism represents in its multi-layered capacity some distinct forms of evils associated with Colonialism. As part of postcolonial study this article would like to explore forms of such colonial evils. Three distinct forms of evil are prominently found in the novella: the base, primitive instincts like lust and greed associated with individual take the shape of evil in some characters; the banality of ordinary mankind whose wilful silence and assumed denial helps the evil to grow; and the colonial European hypocrisy and trading secrets shows its evil aspects in Congo. Although *Heart of Darkness* has highlighted more the primitive and base evil, the other colonial evils have been depicted in its ugly shape through the images, metaphor and phrases in the novella. Going through these colonial evils this article would like to contribute to broader understanding of inclusive humanism.

**Keywords:** Evil, Colonial Site, Hypocrisy, Torture, Humanism.