

## COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVE: CONRAD'S AND NGUGUI'S PESSIMISTIC VISIONS

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**Abstract:** This article examines Joseph Conrad's and James Ngugui's pessimistic visions in a comparative study of *Heart of Darkness* and *Weep not Child*. An analysis of the intellectual backgrounds on the writings of these two great novelists of world literature, reveals that their pessimistic outlooks on life reflect on the pessimistic philosophy of some thinkers namely Charles Darwin, Arthur Schopenhauer and Leopardi Giacomo. The article shows that Conrad and Ngugui consciously or unconsciously articulate the pessimistic discourses of these thinkers to interpret life in their respective novels under study.

In the same vein as the pessimist thinkers, Conrad and Ngugui represent the world as a place of conflicts which lead man inevitably towards death, they depict history as a cycle of cruelty and barbarism with reference to the colonization of the Belgian Congo and Kenya. Their attitude towards life in *Heart of Darkness* and *Weep Not Child* discloses that conflicts, suffering and death are the true reality of existence and man's hopes, dreams and beliefs are nothing but illusions.

This study is analyzed and assessed in the light of New historicism and psychoanalysis. New historicism has exposed through intertextuality and inter-discursivity that Conrad's and Ngugui's texts do not only express the history of the colonization of the Belgian Congo and Kenya but also interact with the texts and discourses of Charles Darwin, Arthur Schopenhauer and Leopardi Giacomo. The psychological perspective show how characters in both novels evolve from subjective consciousness to objective consciousness to understand that life is purposeless and lead nothingness.

**Keywords:** illusion, reality, pessimism, self-interest, nothingness.

**Résumé :** Cet article examine la vision pessimiste de Joseph Conrad et de James Ngugi en termes d'une étude comparative dans *Heart of Darkness* et *Weep Not Child*. Une analyse des influences intellectuelles sur les écrits de ces deux géants de la littérature mondiale révèle que leur pessimisme de la vie résulte en partie des idées marquantes de l'époque défendues par des penseurs comme Charles Darwin, Arthur Schopenhauer and Leopardi Giacomo. Dans leurs romans, ils articulent consciemment ou inconsciemment les discours pessimistes de ces penseurs pour interpréter la vie.

Ils représentent le monde comme un lieu de conflits qui mènent l'homme inévitablement à la mort. Ils dépeignent l'histoire comme un cycle de cruauté et de barbarie, en référence à la colonisation du Congo belge et du Kenya. Leur vision de la vie dans *Heart of Darkness* et *Weep not Child* révèle que les conflits, la souffrance et la mort constituent la véritable réalité de l'existence et les espoirs de l'homme, ses rêves et ses croyances ne sont que des illusions.

Cette analyse est basée sur la nouvelle critique historique et la méthode psychanalytique. La nouvelle critique historique révèle, à travers l'intertextualité et l'inter-discursivité, que les textes de Conrad et de Ngugi n'articulent pas seulement l'histoire de la colonisation du Congo Belge et du Kenya mais interagissent aussi avec les textes et les discours pessimistes de Charles Darwin, Arthur Schopenhauer and Leopardi Giacomo. La méthode psychanalytique montre comment certains personnages dans *Heart of Darkness* et *Weep Not Child* évoluent de la conscience subjective à la conscience objective pour comprendre que la vie est dépourvue de sens et d'objectif.

**Mots-clés :** Illusion, réalité, pessimisme, intérêt personnel, néant.

## Introduction

Thinkers or philosophers like Charles Darwin, Arthur Schopenhauer and Leopardi Giacomo made man to question existing moral and spiritual values in contemporary societies. They hold that life is meaningless and man is helpless in a hostile universe devoid God and objective moral values. Also, they insist that man does not know himself and his reason cannot allow him to control his life since he is influenced by destructive and irrational forces. Consequently, his survival depends on his own efforts or struggle but not on a benevolent creator or morality.

The above -mentioned pessimist thinkers' viewpoints helped to challenge the absoluteness of religious and ethical values in favour of a more relativistic point of view. Darwin's *The*

*Origin of Species* and Schopenhauer's *The World as Will and Representation* deny the objectivity of moral and spiritual values. The decline of moral and spiritual values made common people and writers pessimistic about human existence as a result the humanism, the communal values and the optimism about human nature and society which characterized the nineteenth century British novels turned into individualism, conflicts and pessimism. It is from this perspective that we analyzed Joseph Conrad's and James Ngugui's *pessimistic visions in Heart of Darkness and Weep Not Child*.

This study is based on the hypothesis that Joseph Conrad and James Ngugui interpret life in terms of illusion and reality to express their pessimistic visions in *Heart of Darkness* and *Weep Not Child*. An awareness of the disparity between reality and illusion causes characters in the respective novels to achieve self-knowledge and realize that man's endeavour in life is meaningless and his dreams, hopes and beliefs are illusions. For Conrad's and Ngugui's characters the truth of existence is translated by conflicts, suffering and death. The study also seeks to validate the hypothesis that Conrad's and Ngugui's pessimistic visions are influenced by Charles Darwin, Arthur Schopenhauer and Leopardi Giacomo.

Two literary theories are used to analyze this work namely new historicism and Psychoanalysis. Stephen Greenblatt coined the New Historicism concept in the 1980's when he realized that the subject of his study overlapped with contemporary historical documents. He did not use the historical documents in terms of contexts but in terms of co-texts. Greenblatt realized that the subject of his study and the co-texts articulated the same historical moment.

Thus, New Historicists study literary texts as historical texts in contrast to New Criticism which underlines the literariness of the text and show little interest in the historical and social contexts. From the New Historicist perspective Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* and Ngugui's *Weep Not Child* are analyzed as textual history of the colonization of Africa in this study. However, the philosophical and psychological perspectives which sustain the historicity of these texts is highlighted to show Conrad's and Ngugui's pessimistic outlooks on life.

In terms of Psychoanalysis, the object relation theory informs this study. It is from this perspective of object relation theory that we analyze characters in *Heart of Darkness* and *Weep Not child*. This enables us to see how their internal worlds and the needs therein influence their interaction with the external world, their societies. Also, their psychological

evolution from subjective consciousness to objective consciousness is underlined to show how they realize the meaningless of life.

### ***Heart of Darkness and Weep Not Child* historical contexts**

Conrad's indictment of man's inhumanity to man in *Heart of Darkness* is based on the Belgian's colonization of Congo. Belgian king Leopold II realized that the Congo region had great potentials in terms of resources as a result he created the Congo Free State at the Congress of Berlin in 1885. He explained that he created that new State in order "to open to civilization the only part of the globe where Christianity has not penetrated and to pierce the darkness which envelops the entire population" (Kimbrough 1988:80).

King Leopold II encouraged Belgian traders to go deeper into the Congo river region for new sources of ivory but later on, those Belgian traders were accused of the violations of human rights in the Congo Free State. Well documented reports revealed that the native Congolese were brutalized by the Belgians who cut off either their hands or heads whenever they opposed resistance. Also, Leopold II had a private army made of nineteen thousand men who would come into villages and capture the native Congolese who were made to build roads or chop wood for the boilers of steamboats. *Heart of darkness* is the report of Conrad's accusation of the acts of atrocities committed by the Belgians or Europeans against the native Congolese at the end of the nineteenth century (Kimbrough 1988:82).

At the beginning of the 20th century, Kenya's fertile land was occupied by British farmers who had driven away the native kikuyu farmers. They farmed coffee and tea which made them to become wealthy. By the 1930's the number of the British farmers in Kenya amounted to 30,000 and they were given political power for their roles in the economic development of the country. Over a million native kikuyu did not have any piece of land to farm and they could not claim land ownership although it was their ancestors' land. (Online source, Mau Mau, Kenya, Colonialism, Rebellion).

Black Kenyan leaders in reaction to the oppression of the British colonial rulers set up a political organization called K.A.U, Kenyan African union, in 1944. Jomo Kenyatta presided over the K.A.U in 1947 but the British considered it an unlawful political organization and jailed many of its members as well as its leader, Jomo Kenyatta. In 1951, a dissenting group of the K.A.U formed a separate organization called 'Kenya Land and Freedom army' or 'Mau Mau'. Many of its members were war veterans who thought that only violence could put an end to the colonial rule and brought about changes. As the result, they killed many colonial

settlers as well as many Kenyan chiefs who stood for the colonial domination. (Online source, Mau Mau, Kenya, Colonialism, Rebellion).

The conflict between the British and the Mau Mau fighters claimed the lives of about 2000 people including Europeans, Asians, British and African Troops It was estimated that 11000 thousands of Mau Mau fighters died. Finally, the British government put an end to its colonial subjugation of Kenya and as a result Kenya achieved independence in 1963 with Jomo Kenyatta as its first President (Online source, Mau Mau, Kenya, Colonialism, Rebellion).

### ***Heart of Darkness and Weep Not Child intellectual backgrounds.***

During the last years of Queen Victoria's reign, when Joseph Conrad wrote *Heart of Darkness*, England witnessed the development of numerous theories or thoughts which challenged the previously held modes of thoughts and behaviour. The nineteenth century writers such as Jane Austen, Charles Dickens and George Eliot or Charlotte Bronte used fiction to articulate their optimistic visions about human existence and society. They believed in the moral improvement of man and the progress of society. They were optimistic about human nature and human society

The optimism which characterized the nineteenth century or Victorian age was weakened from 1870 to 1901; a period which marked a turning point in the Victorian tradition. All that the traditional values stood for was turned upside down because of the influence of some thinkers or philosophers such as Charles Darwin, Leopardi Giacomo and Arthur Schopenhauer.

According to Charles Darwin, the universe is ruled by natural rather than supernatural laws and it is characterized by the struggle for existence as expressed in *The Origin of Species* "Nothing is easier than to admit in words the truth of the universal struggle for life [...] as more individuals are produced than can possibly survive, there must in every case be a struggle for existence, either one individual with another of the same species or with individuals of distinct species" (1859: 14).

Giacomo Leopardi was the most outstanding poet in Italy in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and he was considered one of the great writers of world literature. His thoughts about existence and the human condition made him to be known as a philosopher of pessimism. In his 1837 poem, *La Ginestra* or "The flower of the Desert" in English, he provides a bleak picture of Nature and Man that he describes as being devoid of purpose. He presents the human condition as being

miserable and influenced by constant evil forces and Nature as a destructive power which brings about the annihilation of man. Also, he adds that although man is mortal he is proud and naïve in that he advocates ideas of progress to project himself into eternity, which according to him, is an illusion. The only truth which man can achieve in this world of desolation is the certainty of death and while waiting for it he must do away with any illusion about himself to understand the misery of existence (Online source: philosophy of literature by Brother Azarias).

In contrast to Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz who holds that this world is “the best of all possible worlds that God could have created”, Leopardi rather notices that weeping, cruelty, injustices and disillusionment prevail all over the world. He shows no respect for life but scorn and affirm that “life is the greatest evil and death is the greatest good” because death puts an end to the suffering of men (ibid).

In the same vein as Leopardi, Arthur Schopenhauer holds a pessimistic view on life and stands against the Hegelian philosophy of history which claims that “history is the progress of humanity towards freedom”. Schopenhauer does not see progress in history he rather sees suffering and unhappiness everywhere in this world where man is born to suffer and die as a result of a misleading power that underlies all things in the universe and causes human beings to live in misery. He calls that illusive power the Will. He specifies that the Will exercises authority in man’s actions, the forces of nature and man’s consciousness that is “his hopes and fears, his loves and hates”. The Will overrules everything in the world of Schopenhauer in which neither God nor the soul exists. It is a world devoid of happiness and purpose; suffering and unhappiness follows the course of the Will. It is an unstable world where everything is ephemeral and disappointing (ibid).

### **Conflicts, suffering and death in *Heart of Darkness* and *Weep not Child***

A close examination of *Heart of Darkness* and *Weep Not Child* reveals that Conrad and Ngugi consciously or unconsciously articulate the ideas or thought of the above- mentioned thinkers or philosophers to show that the reality of existence is nothing but conflicts, suffering and death. In both novels one can notice that man cannot control his life, neither is there any pitiful being as God to relieve people of sorrow.

Marlow journey’s to the Congo region allows him to discover that the reality of colonization is conflicts, suffering and death. As soon as he arrives at the company station he comes in contact with the suffering of the blacks. Many of them die of hunger and health problems.

They lack clothes to put on and the whites do not care. They look like skeletons since one can see all their ribs; they are nearly naked and have iron collars on their necks connected like chains (Conrad, 1995: 40)

Marlow further says that when they become weak to do any work they are abandoned like animals “to crawl away and rest”, which means to die. The sight of the suffering of the black causes Marlow to see the white man as a devil, “I have seen the devil of violence, and the devil of greed, and the devil of hot desire: but by all the stars! These were strong, lusty, red-eyed devils that swayed and drove men, I tell you” (Conrad, 1995: 43).

Marlow compares the administration of the colonists in the Belgian Congo to that of the Roman in the following terms:

*[...] their administration was merely a squeeze, and nothing more, I suspect. They were conquerors, and for that you want only brute force –nothing to boast of when you have it, since your strength is just an accident arising from the weakness of others. They grabbed what they could get for the sake of what was to be got [...] The conquest of the earth, which mostly means the taking it away from those who have a different complexion or slightly flatter noses than ourselves (Conrad, 1995: 32).*

The above-mentioned passage illustrates a Darwinian world where “the survival of the fittest” prevails from the fact that the whites use violence to torture and deprive the blacks of their land. When Marlow says, “The conquest of the earth, which mostly means the taking it away from those who have a different complexion or slightly flatter noses than ourselves” he means the seizing of the blacks’ land by the whites and the expression “slightly flatter noses” denotes the nose of the blacks. The greediness of the colonists is also emphasized by Marlow with reference to the Danish Captain Fresleven who beats a chief in front of his subjects over two black hens. The chief’s son, in retaliation, hits him with a spear which kills him and all the villagers find a shelter into the forest to protect themselves against the white’s revenge (Conrad, 1995: 45).

The journey to the Inner Station for the search of Kurtz exposes the resistance of the native Congolese to the oppression of the colonists. on their way, the Helmsman, a native Congolese whose job is to direct Marlow’s’ boat, is killed when the boat is attacked by the savages. A spear “caught him in the side, just below the ribs”, which causes him to lose blood and die with his eyes opened. In the course of the narrative Marlow explains that he removes the spears out of his side and throws him in the river which flows with his corpse (Conrad, 1995:

50)). The death of the Helmsman shocks Marlow and causes him to understand that the world is an evil place of conflicts, suffering and death.

In the same vein as Conrad, Ngugui depicts the colonization of Kenya in *Weep Not Child* as an articulation of violence, exploitation and dehumanization of the blacks. This is exposed through the activities of Mr. Howlands, a First World War British veteran, who settles down in Kenya after the First World War and grabs the land of the native Kenyans. The uprising of the native Kenyans or the Mau Mau rebels to reconquer the lost land results in a bloody conflict which claims the lives of many innocent people in the novel.

Mr. Howland exploits the native Kenyans by employing them as labourers for his farm. Njoroge's father, Ngotho, works for him and affirms that his father died as a squatter in his ancestral land and the land on which Mr. Howlands settled was originally their family land. Mr. Howlands, the District Officer, implements a policy of terror to subjugate the blacks as a result, many native Kenyans are arrested, tortured and killed in jails or detentions camps. The native Kenyans demonstrate for the release of the prisoners but unfortunately three of them are shot dead (Ngugui, 1966: 46); the barber of kipanga and six other people are arrested in their houses and they are discovered dead in the forest; Njoroge is asked by the police to produce his identity card and he produces a letter from his former headmaster which indicates that he is a school boy but two other men who do not have any document with them are shot dead (Ngugui, 1966: 115) Mr. Howlands is prepared to destroy the Mau Mau who ask for his departure from Kenya "*He would reduce everything to his will. That was the settlers' way*" (Ngugui, 1966: 78)

Boro, a war veteran and Ngotho's son, finds his way into Mr. Howlands's office with his gun. Boro tells him that if he moves he will be a dead man and he informs him that he kills Ngotho because "*He betrayed black people. Together you killed many sons of the land. You raped our women. And finally you killed my father. Have you anything to say in your defence?*" (Ngugui, 1966: 145). After the accusation Boro shoots Mr. Howlands dead, the death of Mr. Howlands as well as of Mr. Ngotho and other characters shows that in Ngugui's and Conrad's world, the reality of life is translated by conflicts, suffering and death. The above - mentioned dark picture of human existence substantiates Conrad's and Ngugui's pessimistic outlooks on life, which relates them to Giacomo, Schopenhauer and Darwin.

### **Hope, dream and belief in *Heart of Darkness* and *Weep not Child***

Conrad and Ngugui represent the world, in *Heart of Darkness* and *Weep Not Child* not only as a battlefield where conflicts, suffering and death prevail but also as a place where man's hope, dream and belief are nothing but illusions. To buttress this assertion, we analyze, in *Heart of Darkness*, Kurtz's dream to civilize the blacks in Africa, his hope to conduct a marriage with his fiancée when he comes back from Africa, the belief of the Europeans about the colonization of Africa and in *Weep Not Child* we analyze Mr. Howlands's hope to crush the Mau Mau rebels, Njoroge's dream to become a great man in his community in the future, Njoroge's disappointment with God, love and the prophesy to reconquer the lost land.

### **Hope, dream and belief in Heart of Darkness**

When Marlow goes back to Europe, he becomes aware that people in Europe live in "insignificant and silly dreams" In contrast to them, he acquires a better understanding of himself and the world. He expresses this idea when he says "I felt so sure they could not possibly know the things I knew" (Conrad, 1995:113)

Marlow's aunt is made to believe, like the other Europeans, that the white agent in Africa is an "emissary of light, something like a lower sort of apostle". Hence weaning those ignorant millions from their horrid ways" (Conrad, 1995:115). Marlow's aunt has no ideas of the reality of the activities of the white man in the Congo region. Her belief about the Europeans' humanitarian activities in Africa is an illusion or dream

Kurtz stands for the European idealism or dream to civilize primitive people. He leaves Europe for Africa equipped with moral values and reason to transform the blacks or savages but when he reaches Africa the Will or "the blind and irrational force" which underlie everything in the universe alienates him by turning him into a savage and criminal. His hope or dream of changing barbarians into civilized men become unrealizable (Ako, 1998: 25).

Kurtz's insatiability for ivory causes him to massacre the natives without hesitation in order to take hold of their ivory. Marlow is surprised at the sight of human heads on stakes around Kurtz's hut, which according to the manager of the station, reveals that "Kurtz lacked restraint in the gratification of his various lusts" (Conrad, 1995: 56). This means that he is influenced by evil forces which supplant his reason. Kurtz's Russian friend tells Marlow that Kurtz wanted to kill him for ivory *I had a small lot of ivory... He declared he would shoot me unless I gave him the ivory and then cleared out of the country*, (Conrad, 1995: 55).

Marlow meets Kurtz in the wilderness but as his health is in a critical condition he finally dies. Before dying, he screams, "The horror! The Horror!" (Conrad, 1995: 68). This scream is

a remorse about his sadism towards the primitive people. He realizes that, out of self-interest, he kills the blacks, amass their wealth only to end in nothingness. His dream or hope to civilize the blacks turns out to become an illusion as well as his scheme of marriage. One of the reasons for which Kurtz comes to Africa is to earn some money for his marriage but unfortunately, this marriage will never take place following his death. When his fiancé is informed about it, she is also disillusioned about her dream of getting married to Kurtz. she screams “I cannot believe that I shall never see him again, that nobody will see him again, never, never, never.” Kurtz’s fiancée is disillusioned with the reality of life, her hope or dream of a happy marriage with Kurtz collapses, which illustrates that in Conrad’s world dream or hope and beliefs are unrealizable but the truth about the reality of life is death and life is meaningless. Commenting on the death of Kurtz, Marlow claims that life is a “merciless logic for a futile purpose. The most you can hope from it is some knowledge of yourself” (Conrad,1995 : 69).

### **Hope, dream and belief in Weep Not Child**

In the same vein as Conrad, Ngugui depicts man’s dreams, aspirations or hopes and beliefs as nothing but illusion. In *Weep Not Child*, Njoroge’s dream is to become a great man in his community and he relies on education to achieve this dream. Moreover, Njoroge wants to acquire education like Jomo Kenyatta who claims that education is “the light of Kenya” and it will “lead to the recovery of the lost land” and. Njoroge sees “himself destined for something big” with education (Ngugui, 1966: 43-44) And he thinks that “The land needed him and God had given him an opening so that he might come back and save his family and the whole country” (ibid). After the High School, Njoroge wishes to go either to Makerere or Britain to continue his studies.

Miwaki notices that Njoroge is too much idealistic by claiming that the country will need him in the future, “you are always talking about tomorrow, tomorrow. You are always talking about the country and the people. what is tomorrow? And what is the country and the people to you?”, but he replies that “he can only put faith in hope” (Ngugui, 1966: 45). Njoroge does well at Siriana Secondary School and he knows that patience and hard work will allow him to succeed. He is motivated by the hope of better days to come ahead. He will often wake up and say his prayers in the morning and then go to a chapel for a communion with God (Ngugui, 1966: 47)

In addition to school, the church also attracts Njoroje who considers it the House of God. He prays God to help him in this prayer “Lord’ let me get learning. I want to help my father and mothers. And Kamau and all my other brothers. I ask you all this through Jesus Christ, our lord, Amen” (Ngugui, 1966: 54). Njoroje likes reading the Bible and the stories in the Old Testament attracts him. He loves David with whom he identifies himself, and “his vision of an educated life in the future was blended a belief in the righteousness of God. Equity and justice were there in the world” (ibid)

When the Kikuyu people plan to go on strike Njoroje prays God that the strike does not fail “he slept and dreamed of a happy moment of wealth and pleasure after the strike” Furthermore, when Ngotho beat his wife who does not want him to go on strike, Njoroje prays God to bring peace in their family, “God forgive me for I am wicked. Perhaps it is me who brought uncleanliness into our home. Forgive my sins. Help my father and mother. O, God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacobo”. (Ngugui, 1966: 58)

Unfortunately for Njoroje the strike fails because of his father who assaults Jacobo when he tries to pacify an angry crowd. The crowd considers Jacobo a traitor and joins Ngotho in the fight. The police intervene and Jacobo is rescued but Ngotho is beaten to death. As a result, he is fired from his job and his family is expelled from Howlands’s land and his father is no longer able to pay for his school fees. This implies that his dream of happiness after the strike was an illusion as God did not listen to his prayer.

The hope of the Kikuyu people for independence and the recovery of the loss land lies with Jomo Kenyatta who is considered the black Moses. He is famous all over Kenya as the leader of K.A.U but he is arrested with some people following a demonstration against the colonial authorities for the removal of the colour bar and the return of the lost land. The colonial authorities decide to try Jomo but “everyone know that Jomo would win. God would not let his people alone. The children of Israel must win. Many people put all their hopes on this eventual victory”. Njoroje is disappointed with the news that Jomo lost as a result “his spirit falls” (Ngugui, 1966:81).

The loss of Jomo at the court of law implies that the fulfillment of the prophecy about the recovery of the lost land is an illusion. There was a prophecy by the overseer who claimed that a leader would come to lead the Kikuyu people to freedom. Ngotho does not advocate violence as a means to recover the lost land but he rather hopes that the prophecy will become

true under the leadership of Jomo. However, he is disillusioned with the defeat of Jomo and realizes that things have turned against him in old age.

Njoroge's dream to become a great man in his society after his education collapses when he is removed from the school by two white police officers concerning a matter related to the death of Jacobo. They torture him and when wakes up "from the coma late in the night" he finds life meaningless and he wishes to die as he realizes that "death was not bad at all. It sent you into a big sleep from which you never awoke to the living fears, the dying hopes, and the lost vision" (Ngugui, 1966:95). Njoroge's preference of death over life is a sheer articulation of the philosophy of Giocoso Leopardi.

All that Njoroge values in the past become worthless and he starts hating himself. He no longer attends school and sells dresses in an Indian Shop to earn a living. He avoids looking at children's faces "because he thought they would see the dreams of his boyhood and laugh at him". However, the image of the children allows him to achieve self-knowledge by contrasting his vision of education when he attends school in the past and his selling dresses in a shop for an Indian as pointing out in the following passage:

*Children came to the shop. They were coming from school. Njoroge saw their hopeful faces. He too had once been like this. when he had seen the world as a place where a man with learning would rise to power and glory. Then he would never have thought that he would even work for an Indian (Ngugui, 1966:145).*

Njoroge's last hope lies with his girlfriend Miwaki, whom he believes, can be a source of consolation. He tells her that he loves her and that she is his last hope but she shows no interest in his infatuation. As a result, he understands that his "last hope had vanished for the first time; he knew that he was in the world all alone without a soul on whom he could lean". His brothers experience a tragic end since Boro is sentenced to death, Kamau to life imprisonment and Kori might die in a detention camp. Njoroge does not have any control of his life and he no longer relies on God to relieve him of suffering. As a result, he becomes a pessimist as "God meant little to him now. For Njoroge had now lost faith in all the things he had earlier believed in like wealth, power, education, religion. Even love, his last hope, had fled from him". (Ngugui, 1966:148). He evolves psychologically from subjective consciousness to objective consciousness to understand that man's aspiration, hope or dream is nothing but illusion.

**Conclusion:** This article has validated the hypothesis that Joseph Conrad and James Ngugi interpret life in terms of illusion and reality to highlight their pessimistic visions in *Heart of Darkness* and *Weep Not Child*. The study has also demonstrated that Conrad's and Ngugi's pessimism, in the above-mentioned novels, is influenced by the discourses of Charles Darwin, Leopardi Giacomo and Arthur Schopenhauer.

It has been shown that the world in Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* and in Ngugi's *Weep Not Child*, is Godless and unethical, like the world of Darwin, Schopenhauer and Giacomo. It is a world of conflicts, suffering and death where the blacks and the whites fight to destroy each other for survival or supremacy. Mr. Kurtz in *Heart of Darkness* and Mr. Howlands in *Weep Not Child* are Darwinian characters that use violence to oppress and kill the natives Congolese and Kenyans for their land.

Both novels expose the suffering of the native Congolese and Kenyans during the period of colonization. In *Heart of Darkness*, the journey of Marlow to the Belgian Congo makes him witness the inhumanity of man to man. He indicts the suffering of the native Congolese who are made to work to death. Since they are not properly fed, Marlow can see their ribs. In *Weep Not Child*, Mr. Ngotho and his family illustrate the suffering of native Kenyans.

It has also been shown in Conrad's and Ngugi's world that hope, dream and beliefs are illusions because they are unrealizable. In *Heart of darkness* Kurtz comes to Africa with the dream of civilizing the savages but he turns into a savage out of self-interest and start killing the savages. He realizes the meaninglessness of his dream or idealism when he is about to die. In *Weep Not Child*, at the end of novel, Njoroge is disappointed with his belief in God, his love for Miwaki and the prophesy to reconquer the lost land. His dream to become a great man in his community fails, which is an evidence that God has not listened to his prayers. His brother Boro is sentenced to death and Kamau to life imprisonment and his father has died. His last hope lies with his girlfriend, Miwaki whom he loves but she rejects him. He feels alone in the world and even tries to commit suicide as he realizes that life is purposeless and meaningless.

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