

**Dramatizing Civilization in Thomas Hardy's *The Return of the Native* and Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*: A Comparative Cultural Reading**

**تهويل الحضارة في رواية توماس هاردي "عودة المواطن" و رواية جوزيف كونراد "قلب الظلام": قراءة تناصية ثقافية**

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2015/03/01

تاريخ القبول

2014/07/06

تاريخ الاستلام

**المخلص:**

يستعرض هذا البحث وبالمقارنة كيف تتناول كل من رواية توماس هاردي "عودة المواطن" (1859)، ورواية جوزيف كونراد "قلب الظلام" (1899)، مسألتي الأرض والأشخاص وتهويلهما كمكونات أساسية لكل من الحضارتين والثقافتين الأوروبية والأفريقية، وتعرض الروايتان جملةً من الدلالات الثقافية الملفتة للنظر و التي تتبع من الذات المتحضرة في الوجود الإنساني الحديث، وفي "عودة المواطن"، يستثمر هاردي روايته في تتبع شخصيتين رئيسيتين: كليم و أوستاشيا، اللذين اكتسبا تجربة درامية في الرغبات والأيدولوجيات الحضارية المتصارعة. وبالمثل، يحاول كونراد تصوير شخصيتي كيرتز و مارلو بشكل درامي، وهذا كله يعني حالة من تهويل الحضارة المعاصرة وخطاباتها الثقافية ومحدداتها، ويمثل عنصرا المكان في إجدون هيث والأدغال موضوعات ثقافية حقيقية تتحكم في سلوك الشخصيات، كما يستعرض البحث وبشكل وثيق ما لاحظته النقاد حول الجوانب الثقافية التي تشمل صراع الثقافات والحضارات الدرامي بين المتحضر والتقليدي.

**الكلمات المفتاحية:** عودة المواطن، قلب الظلام، الحضارة، الثقافة، هيث، الكونغو، الدرامية/التهويل.

**Abstract:**

*This paper explores how both Thomas Hardy's *The Return of the Native*<sup>1</sup> (1859) and Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*<sup>2</sup> (1899) comparatively approach and dramatize setting of place and characters as basic constituents of European and African civilizations and cultures. Both novels present striking cultural reflections that stem from the civilized self in man's modern existence. In *The Native*, Hardy invests these constituents in tracing major characters, Clym and Eustacia, who experience two dramatic conflicting cultural desires and ideologies. Similarly, in *Darkness*, Conrad invests similar constituents in dramatizing two central characters, Kurtz and Marlow and the setting of place. All of which imply a state of dramatic thematization of modern civilizations and their cultural limits and discourses. Moreover, both confusing places of Egdon Heath, in *The Native* and the jungle, in *Darkness*, represent real cultural objects that control the cultural behavior of the characters. It also relevantly offers what critics have observed about the novels' cultural aspects which include dramatized civilization and cultural conflicts between the civilized and the traditional.*

**Keywords:** *The Native, Darkness, Civilization, Culture, the Heath, the Congo, Dramatization.*

<sup>1</sup> Referred to as *The Native* henceforth.

<sup>2</sup> Referred to as *Darkness* henceforth.

**Introduction:**

Generally, both concepts of culture and civilization are viewed by old and modern theorists as disciplines that embrace knowledge, beliefs, morals, customs, and material and intellectual achievements in any society. For example, Norbert Elias (1978) argues that civilization refers to "dynamic things that move forward and play down differences" (p. 5). So, civilization diachronically extends and remains recognizable with physical, technical and moral qualities. Besides, civilization is a more advanced form of organized human life; it has sophisticated social, political, and ideological forms. Andrew Bosworth (2003) defines civilization as "a cultural infrastructure of knowledge that serves survival and continuity. What distinguishes a civilization from a culture is that this infrastructure ... becomes autonomous from constituent cities, nations, and empires" (p. 49). Here, the concepts of culture and civilization have a close link; yet, culture has a superior role in shaping the basic forms of social and civil life. In his view, Edward Said (1993) argues that "culture is in advance of politics, military history, or economic process... culture may predispose and actively prepare one society for the overseas domination of another" (200). Said specifies the basic

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material and intellectual constituents of culture that may dominate other societies. We believe that the consequences of cultural superiority and conflicts are still valid in the form of anarchy, moral and political corruption, civil wars, and violence, which dominate many regions in the world.

However, civilization is not conceptually similar to culture which embraces intellectual and artistic qualities. Critics and theorists took part in defining culture differently and cognitively. The Chinese anthropologist Godwin C. Chu (2001) defines culture as "consisting of the self's relationship with significant others in his/her life, the material world within which those significant others play an indispensable role" (p. 46). In his words, Stephen Greenblatt (1998) argues that culture is a web of "capabilities and habits" adopted by human beings (p. 478). Accordingly, culture includes a set of beliefs, behaviors and other qualities commonly shared by the members of a particular human society and which characterize civilization. Based on these definitions, culture is an end to establish human values and objectives while civilization is a means to set tools and techniques to achieve this end. Also, civilization is wider than culture, which tangibly constitutes only a portion of civilization. However, one of the most overt signs of the distinctions between cultures and civilizations is obviously the presence or absence of towns which "proliferate in civilizations: in cultures they remain embryonic" (Braudel, 1994, p.17). Accordingly, culture includes a set of beliefs, behaviors and other qualities commonly shared by the members of a particular human community or society and which characterize civilization. Meanwhile, the distinction between culture and civilization varies from country to country, and within one country from period to period, and from one author to another" (ibid, 1994, p.5). These views epitomize other relevant definitions of culture and contribute to the argument of this paper.

In the light of these conceptualizations, one of the dominant themes in *Darkness* (1899) and *The Native* (1859) is the notions of civilization and culture with their basic elements. This paper is a comparative analysis to explore how civilization and culture are represented through places and characters and their behaviors in a dramatic way in both novels. Noteworthy, while *Darkness's* basic setting of place is the Congo in Africa and London in Europe, *The Native's* basic setting of place includes: Paris, Budmouth and Egdon Heath in Europe. They bear different cultural qualities and civilization distinctions. Meanwhile, both novels present us with central dynamic characters with their conflicting cultural behaviors, attitudes and interests. It is important to briefly mention certain events in both Conrad's and Hardy's lives to better understand their ideas on civilization and culture accurately. First, Conrad witnessed Russian colonization in Poland, and his family suffered from much oppression; his father was banished for his role

in an insurgence against occupation. Second, Conrad was a merchant seaman which enabled him to move among different colonies in the East and in Africa (Sherry, 1966, p. 2). So, these events enabled Conrad to form his ideas towards human civilization, culture, and colonization. He also realized that each nation competes the other based on distinct identity and authority.

Similarly, part of Hardy's plaintiveness is attributed to his environment of civilization which witnessed the events of the execution of criminals in his village. Besides, the truth in Hardy's civilized world lies in the darkness of place and human spirit. His grandmother used to intensify his horror by telling him shocking tales about ghosts, wars, and superstitions. Hardy also got shocked by "class divisions and his social inferiority" (Goud, 2014, p. 11). So, Hardy's insight allows him to expose the sufferings of man and nature alike. Despite being written in different countries, periods, and circumstances, the similarities between Conrad and Hardy probe on their common views and questions on human civilization and culture in which man is exposed to the inner darkness of the individual self and the world. Seemingly, writers attended many analogous events in their lives; their sense of alienation in non-native countries and their wandering in the seas.

#### **Dramatizing Civilization in *Darkness* and *The Native***

Both *The Native* and *Darkness* present diverse cultural reflections that offer a fertile ground for interpretation, reactions and controversies worldwide. *Darkness* is as challenging as *The Native* for many reasons. First, they embody the metaphorical cultural darkness internalized in the human souls. Second, they offer multi-thematic cultural discourses which include issues of racism, subjugation, moral corruption, bias and prejudice. Finally, both narratives raise a caution against the dilemmas of letting darkness subdue modern civilizations, mainly the European. No doubt, thousands of pages of interpretations have been written about both novels and their major themes and characters. However, this paper tries to specifically revisit controversial assumptions about culture and civilization which both novels convey based on their narrators' realistic tempo-spatial observations, expectations and experiences. In approaching notions of culture and civilization, Hardy and Conrad present different settings of place and characters that dramatize these notions. One of the best critics on Hardy and Conrad, Philip Weinstein (1984) argues that "for the novelists who come between mid-Victorian and Modern ... neither culture nor nature is privileged. Both systems are in limbo," adding that both writers realize self-discovery via their fragmented selves which signify the "split between nature and culture" (p.4). This means that human individual entity is fragmented and controlled by other natural and cultural forces which hinder actual self-

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integration in body and soul. This view is reflected upon their major characters, mainly Clym, Eustacia in *The Native* and Marlow and Kurtz in *Darkness*.

Civilization and its consequent dramatic impacts of more confusion, miscalculations and indecisiveness may result in skeptical and hostile attitudes towards modern human progress. Critics have noted that the cultural aspects of these two novels question the conflict of values and the reliability of civilization. For instance, Donald Benson (1966) argues that *Darkness* deals with the dramatic nature of civilization and its "inevitable tendency of expanding civilization itself" (p. 340). Meanwhile, it presents the Africans as subordinate and primitive suggesting "an indictment of the hypocritical civilizing mission of the Europeans" (Clarke, 2008). Similarly, *The Native* presents dramatic cultural aspects manifested in civilization-based conflicts between Clym and Eustacia. It also involves values of urban culture fused with other per-civilized social and cultural values as an integral part of the overall dramatic situation. In this concern, Greenblatt (1998) admits that culture is a "network of negotiations" to exchange goods, ideas, and attitudes (p. 480-81). In this process of negotiations the destiny of a society rises or reshapes itself along with its conflicts and objectives.

Comparatively, the conflicting qualities of civilization and culture are dramatically manifested in both Clym and Eustacia in *The Native*, in which Clym defies Eustacia's great expectations of culture and modernity. For Eustacia, civilization stands opposite to backwardness, as it denotes "moral and material values" in which it is characterized by "a mass of practical, technical knowledge, a series of ways of dealing with nature" (Braudel, 1994, p.5). Likewise, such conflicts are manifested in both Marlow and Kurtz in *Darkness*, in which they express their different positions towards civilization. Seemingly, the virtual glory granted for these characters by civilization is not enough and does not help them to live in harmony with their inner selves. Also, cultural conflicts arise in the two novels from a series of internal debates on the values that have been influenced or changed by civilization.

Both Hardy and Conrad set their characters to grab our attention. For example, Marlow epitomizes his tone about Africa and old Britain, which "has been one of the dark places of the earth" (Conrad, 1999, p. 7). This signifies that both places' civilizations and cultures suffer from definite strengths and weaknesses; therefore, Conrad judges Kurtz and means the whole humanity. He considers his strength as "nothing to boast of ... since [it] is just an accident arising from the weakness of others" (ibid, p. 10). For Conrad, the Congo is still undiscovered for its darkness, primitive and superstitious landscape, and people that shape its different, yet, unique cultural beliefs. In this regard, Greenblatt (1998) clarifies that culture

"gestures toward what appear to be opposite things: constraint and mobility" and is shaped by a set of "beliefs and practices" (p. 478). This means that the thoughts and values of any culture prevent people from overstepping society's expectations and patterns.

Furthermore, Marlow experiences the dramatized horrors not only of the Congo, but also of the prejudiced civilized societies. For Conrad, darkness expands outside of Africa to Europe itself, manifested by both Marlow and Kurtz who show their greed for money and their despise and brutality towards the Africans. In this sense, Said (1993) criticizes Conrad's "cultural and ideological evidence" in *Darkness*, in which Conrad could not offer the African natives their liberty on the hands of Eurocentric superior powers (p.31). Said seems to judge Conrad's good intentions despite this criticism since Conrad is a human being of his time who could be wrong or right in his ethnocentric and political views that expose the colonialist preoccupations with the process of civilizing native peoples. Furthermore, Conrad presents Marlow as a character who is trapped between the limits of civilization and wilderness; Marlow embodies the superficiality of modern civilization, when he says, "details would be more intolerable than those heads drying on the stakes under Kurtz's windows. I seemed at one bound to have been transported into some lightless region of subtle horrors" (Conrad, 1999, p. 98). Ironically, instead of bringing light to dark places in the form of civilization they bring more despair and darkness because the forces of darkness never give up their imperialistic greed and supremacy over the less civilized people.

By the same token, Hardy uses special cultural discourses to convey his visions on human darkness, cultural conflicts and socio-ideological antinomies. For instance, *The Native* portrays Eustacia as a pagan goddess: the Queen of the Night, who "had the passions and instincts which make a model goddess, that is, those which make not quite a model woman" (Hardy, 2005, p.75). These words imply that Eustacia is destined not to experience the light of civilization of Paris or similar cities, in a striking conflict with Clym who is destined to return to homeland and practice his conventional life in the Heath. Early in the novel, Clym leaves the Heath to the modern, fashionable civilized Paris and experiences its "especial symbols of self-indulgence and vainglory" (Hardy, 2005, p. 227). But, he never likes such decadence and labyrinth of Paris. Thus, his humanistic feeling for the natural uncivilized Heath pulls him back to purity and chastity. Noticeably, Clym's return implies his failure to come up with civilization and culture in Paris, manifested in its life of superficial business, temptation, and socialization. However, Eustacia views Clym's return as a disappointing retreat from what she aspires for: the radiant life of the civilized great world of Paris. So, this

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return suggests a dramatic interactive conflict between the uncivilized past and the civilized present.

Moreover, *Darkness* traces Marlow's humanity and Kurtz's inhumanity that make readers identify with the Africans based on the narratives' attitudes towards the African citizens and their geography. Evidently, Conrad's Marlow dramatically manifests modern man's estrangement, dilemmas of doubt, prejudice and difficult choice due to his deferred dreams and expectations. Meanwhile, Marlow acquires a clear significance in the light of the pervasive weakness and emptiness of civilization which crumbles on facing a less civilized situation. Familiar with the futility of civilization of Europe and the least civilized and indefinable situation in the Congo, Marlow stands in the midway between the two situations obsessed with a state of confusion and instability. In a word, Marlow's journey towards the inner spatial and human psyche suggests the penetration of a foreign civilization, manifested in "I felt an intolerable weight of oppressing my breast, the smell of damp earth, the unseen presence of victorious corruption, the darkness of an impenetrable night" (Conrad, 1999, p.580).

In addition, dramatizing civilizations entails a web of places to represent the cultural elements in human societies: "space, land and its contours, climate, vegetation, animal species and natural or other advantages ... agriculture, stock-breeding, food, shelter, clothing, communications, industry" (Braudel, 1994, p.10). in this sense, all places in the two novels behave dramatically: Egdon Heath in *The Native* and the jungle in *Darkness*; they represent two states of the ideological and cultural consciousness. To exemplify, Hardy overtly resides on describing such settings with immense deeds, thoughts, and practices to create a sense of cultural conflict between Clym and Eustacia on the issue of leaving or staying in the Heath. However, Conrad's approach is quite different, more controversial and disputable; he resides on describing the Congo and its inhabitants as being observed by Marlow based on the latter's observations of the realistic nature of things: ancient elements of earth, darkness and light. All these features pose a demand that *Darkness* be revisited as literature that would allow readers and scholars to view Conrad a realist who conveys the truth and the cultural facts of the Congo and Europe. Conrad (1999) makes it clear in *Darkness*, "No, it is impossible; it is impossible to convey the life-sensation of any given epoch of one's existence—that which makes its truth, its meaning—its subtle and penetrating essence. It is impossible" (p. 39). These words imply that life, whether civilized or uncivilized, is a mere sensation that is impractical to partake with others and what man can know is but the truth behind his existence. Also, this quote suggests that Conrad got a developed perception of human nature and civilization.

Obviously, Marlow's ambivalence towards European civilization is a critical matter to critics. Marlow experiences the life of the African wilderness and discovers the terrible emptiness of the capitalist culture with a cruel sense of madness that overlies his spirit and encourages him to decide to be different. Meanwhile, wilderness tempts the characters to infuse the curbs of civilization and to satisfy their repulsive desires of superiority. In this respect, Marlow faces a civilization-related dilemma, in which the least civilized and the most civilized get equal in their emptiness of spiritual and cultural significance. As a result, we find that the unsound haste toward civilization in Europe and the continual state of darkness in the Congo endanger the human spirit. So, civilization that Conrad reflects is based on greed for wealth and socio-economic ground that allows him to exploit and enslave other Africans. In his own view, Braudel (1994) argues that society and civilization/culture are inseparable and the two refer to the same reality, adding that "the ultimate phase of civilization wears the emblem of capitalism and wealth" (p.20). At the beginning, Kurtz arrived in Africa with good faith, believing that his main mission is to enlighten and provide a decent life for citizens. European culture has contributed to the formation of Kurtz's character; he is intelligent and genius; yet, he is hollow with no sense of social responsibility. At the end of *Darkness*, Kurtz descended to the lowest rank of decadence, he is a thief and a murderer allowing himself to be worshiped. The narrator lets us hear him saying "My ivory. ... My Intended, my ivory, my station, my river, my ... everything belonged to him" (Conrad, 1999, p. 82). Therefore, Kurtz dominates others either by fear or love; he represents the capitalist mentality and the greed of the Western man, symbolizing the hypocrisy of the white who exploit the blacks allegedly by civilizing them.

Factually, the process of civilization as a whole is received in a skeptical way. For instance, Marlow's concern with the jungle implies his profound thinking which manifests a state of rebellion against the hegemonic cultural views of the civilized society. He admits that man "must meet the truth with his own true stuff-with his own inborn strength. Principles won't do. Acquisitions, clothes, pretty rags-rags that would fly off at the first good shake" (Conrad, 1999, p. 247). So, Marlow touches the absurdity of the civilized practices in the jungle and shows awareness of the injustices and limitations of the civilizing system. In this sense, Benson (1966) says that Marlow's work is certainly one of the civilization's disciplines and "a product of civilization and a vital support of it" (p.343). This means that Marlow is a civilized character who manifests European civilizing project, which hides behind Kurtz's materialistic agenda. Thus, Conrad manages to qualify Marlow's dramatic narrative "at the very juncture of this world with another unspecified and different one" (Said, 1993, p.29). Said draws on



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Conrad's mood of exposing the tension between self-consciousness and the conflicting conditions of the civilized other. In this light, empowering one's civilization through confiscating others' values and mentalities is futile, resulting in more anarchy, unrest and conflicts.

By way of comparison, Hardy presents his characters Clym and Eustacia as two opposing forces in England, the heart of civilization and modernity in the European continent. He criticizes English cultural restrictions on the lives of people during the 19<sup>th</sup> century, in which he is considered a Victorian realist. The Indian critic Sankar Goud (2014) argues that Hardy is both a realist and naturalist in examining the cultural and social constraints that dominated part of the Victorian society and in criticizing such beliefs that limit people's dreams and cause depression (p. 12). Both Clym and Eustacia differently interact with the Heath and with each other manifesting a state of cultural tension and raising questions about the civilized values against the traditional. In this light, Hardy presents Eustacia to "challenge us, to broaden our sympathies and feel with someone who apparently is totally antipathetic" (Rahnuma, 2014, p.39). Eustacia curses the local circumstances for failing to move to Paris and face the modern civilized life of lights and progress. She shows her rooted hatred to the Heath; she aspires to leave it to live in either Budmouth or Paris. Budmouth is another civilized fashionable city for Eustacia in which she finds vitality and excitement with music, dancing, and various cultures.

In contrast, Clym's remarks on Paris reflect a sad impression and create a reversed attitude in the concepts:

When I first got away from home I thought this place was not worth troubling about. I thought our life here was contemptible. To oil your boots instead of blacking them, to dust your coat with a switch instead of a brush- was there ever anything more ridiculous? (Hardy, 2005, p.175)

Here, Clym portrays his own cultural and attitudinal impressions about both places while in the Heath. Thus, *The Native* describes the Heath as a place where the codes of civilization are in constant tension with the codes of primitivism. So, the Heath is dreary represented by "a bleak landscape, whose physical harshness echoes that of an indifferent, spiteful universe" (Rahnuma, 2014, p.39). This view suggests that the Heath is culturally codified, and its inhabitants are ruled by its nature and uncivilized social patterns. Moreover, the Heath is mysterious since "the untamable civilization was its enemy" (Hardy, 2005, p.14).

Unlike Paris, in *The Return* and similar to the Congo in *Darkness*, the Heath is presented as "a place perfectly accordant with man's nature ... but, like man, slighted and enduring; and withal singularly colossal and

mysterious in its swarthy monotony" (Hardy, 2005, p. 4). Here, Hardy dramatizes the Heath as a spirited entity that endures its dwellers, never changed by the faked practices of civilization, in which "The sea changed, the fields changed, the rivers, the villages, and the people changed, yet Egdon remained" (Hardy, p. 3). In this view, the Heath remains a mysterious and unchanged place whose enemy is civilization. Accordingly, both Hardy and Conrad dramatize cultural human relationships based on the influences of place; its people and politics in human modern experiences. Commonly, The Western civilization is characterized by societies of various parts, tensions, moral and intellectual values, ideals, habits, tastes, and the people who practice and pass it on.

Based on Clym's and Eustacia's views, the Heath is a dramatic cultural code in the narrator's awareness, "it had a lonely face, suggesting tragically possibilities" (Hardy, 2005, p.33). Here, Hardy again presents a dramatic stage of human tragedy embodied in nature which consumes and saddens its inhabitants. No doubt, land and its people with their social, political and cultural practices are a major part of civilization and culture. Implicitly, *The Native* presents Clym as a human spirit through whom we recognize the Heath as his natural nativity. Accordingly, the Heath generates a mixture of cultural reactions among its inhabitants; it is "incomprehensible" for it has primitive and supernatural forces which dominate and govern its characters (Rahnuma, 2014, p.40). So, Hardy portrays Clym's humanity and Eustacia's cultural inconformity in their attitudes towards the Heath and its inhabitants. Being the emergent formula of the renewable nostalgia for a simpler and older world than what the civilized world is, the Heath makes the characters' acts contradict their reality values. Meanwhile, Clym's dramatic failure to teach people the moral values and endurance of the misery of life in the Heath is a natural result of his ambivalence that "mars the characterization" of *The Native* (Zhang, 2010, p.93). Thus, this cultural failure of civilization to dominate is perhaps the collective fault of mankind.

By the same token, Kurtz describes the failure of his cultural project to Marlow, "You are interrupting my plans now. Sick. Sick. ...I will return" (Conrad, 1999, p.139). Here, Kurtz is an embodiment of sick modern civilization which bears values that do not work in the Congo. Meanwhile, Marlow confesses that "All Europe contributed to the making of Kurtz" (Conrad, 1999, p.7). So, civilization produces Kurtz and forms his understanding; he becomes the "wayward child of civilization" which subdues his sound to the forces of darkness and devils (Achebe, 1977, p.59). Ostensibly, Kurtz is the dramatic victim of the darkness, who scarifies his soul for his native colonial mission in the Congo. In this light, Said (1993) argues that there is a masked mission that distinguishes the invaders of the

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African/foreign lands manifested in “systematic enterprises” embedded in the notions of “the civilizing mission” (p.35).

Evidently, Conrad devoted *Darkness* to expose the ugly civilized capitalist culture not to praise it, he attacks its fake civilizing mission and its bright pretexts. Conrad characterizes African natives in a unique way, presenting them as victims of the European noxious power of colonizing civilization. Kurtz, representing this civilization, morally fails in his civilizing mission to suggest the overall moral failure of the colonizing civilization. Ironically, it is Marlow who decides to return to London after adventuring the Congo leaving behind him sole memories and the dead Kurtz. Thus, Marlow is compelled to return to the civilized London because he realizes that primitiveness and civilization cannot coexist. Based on his chauvinistic view, Chinua Achebe (1977) argues that the dramatic theme in *Darkness* is to "ridicule European's civilization mission in Africa," denouncing *Darkness* for dehumanizing and misrepresenting Africa and the Africans and criticizing it for depersonalizing "a portion of the human race (p.261).

Relatively, like Marlow's return to homeland, Eustacia's return from Budmouth is viewed as a result of her inability to reconcile with a more civilized and modern society that stands in contrast with the pre-civilized Heath. So, Eustacia keeps rebelling against her deprivation of freedom and self-actualization. Further, Eustacia's dramatic external character is fused with allusive spatial descriptions revealed in,

The subtle beauties of the heath were lost to Eustacia; she only caught its vapors. An environment which would have made a contented woman a poet, a suffering woman a devotee, a pious woman a psalmist, even a giddy woman thoughtful, made a rebellious woman saturnine. (Hardy, 2005, p.19)

Thus, Hardy presents cultural conflicts between the modern civilized man and the inevitable pre-civilized one. In his cultural view, Zhang (2010) argues that Hardy dramatizes such conflicts which are “related to larger historical, social, political, or spiritual themes” (p.91). Besides, the Heath is a monster that “slowly emerges as the greatest tragic power” (Rahnuma, 2014, p.38). Accordingly, *The Native* manifests the inner cultural conflict that internalizes in the narrator and the characters alike. For Braudel (1994) culture is "a set of normative principles, values and ideals-in a word, the spirit" (p.5), a thing that is manifested in paradoxical Clym's and Eustacia's attitudes towards both the Heath and Paris.

Similarly, the jungle in *Darkness*, although it is not as prominent as the wilderness of the Heath in *The Native*, creates a dense place permanent

in the human heart and contains a large body of a river animal, which emits the smell of primitive mud and casts heavy silence on the jungle, "on a prehistoric earth, on an earth that wore the aspect of an unknown planet" (Conrad, 1999, p.63). Thus, the jungle is a signifier that suggests the inner knowledge, impatient expectations and complete unapproachable silence. In this sense, such a jungle is a realistic cultural symbol that suggests Conrad's identification with the Africans who are full of vitality, whereas the white are but hollow greedy men. It is through the narrator's words that "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, is not a pretty thing when you look into it too much" (Conrad 65). In these words, Conrad reflects on the difference between the European version of civilization and its reality as suggested in the torment, abuse, and dehumanization of the Africans. Clearly, Conrad criticizes the evil and greed of humanity personified by both Kurtz and Marlow.

As an equally significant aspect of the place, *The Native* depicts the life of the Heath controlled by strict traditional social practices, where England imposes its ideological instincts of greed and prejudice. Yet, the Heath's darkness is challenged by the bonfires which suggest the humanity's endless revolt against darkness. In this regard, Naureen Rahnuma (2014) argues that *The Native* presents "the dreary facade" of the Heath for Eustacia, where people live in eternal darkness (p.42). In Hardy's words (2005), the Heath is still

The heaven being spread with this pallid screen and the earth with the darkest vegetation .... In such contrast the heath wore the appearance of the installment of night ... darkness had to a great extent arrived hereon, while day stood distinct in the sky. (p.11)

Here, Hardy's dramatic characterization is cultural, humanist, and realist for the Heath bears a collection of reflections that function as cultural indicators. So, *The Native* dramatizes the pre-civilized culture that the Heath embodies.

Correspondingly, *Darkness's* Africa constitutes a major confusing place to a number of critics for it has natural sources and the least civilized inhabitants. In this light, Achebe (1977) criticizes Conrad's description of Africa as "the other world" that stands inferior to Europe and "the antithesis" of the superior European civilization (p. 255). Thus, Achebe shows a mere objection to using these two expressions that elevate the modern western cultures and peoples above the race of the Africans; he thinks that these words are offensive. No doubt, Conrad represents ordinary characters who realistically experienced the exotic and uncivilized places of the native Africans, like the jungle. Accordingly, I see that the jungle in *Darkness* is not good or evil, by contrast, it represents a natural state that enables the

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narrator to compare Europe to the Congo, in which civilization coexists with pre-civilization.

Accordingly, the jungle, like the Heath in *The Native*, lies between these two worlds; it is not the antithesis of the civilized Europe, nor is it a counterpart of the Congo. Rather, it stands unique; dark, mysterious, and timid, suggesting a world of baffling consciousness. Further, the jungle is viewed as a dark kingdom invaded by troubled thoughts and confused contemplations. These thoughts represent the narrator's hesitant anxiousness to the jungle and expose the banality of life in Europe. Said (1993) argues that Conrad's impressions are viewed as "a cornerstone for the conceptualization, dramatization and imagining" of the competence between various cultures (p.380). Here, Said suggests that culture is a dynamic process of actual and shared experiences and practices of human cultures. In this regard, Bruadel (1994) states that Africa is "a group of traditional societies – of cultures - embarked on the difficult and sometimes cruel process of fostering civilization and modern urban development" (p. 17). This thing proves that the Africans have their well-established and recognized civilization and culture that reject being altered or distorted by invaders or foreigners.

By the same token, Clym's journey to Paris on business proves to be dramatic for several reasons. First, on leaving the Heath, Clym leaves his nativity of its own cultural heritage and inhabitants with whom he maintains his identity and intimacy. Second, while in Paris, Clym develops signs of nostalgia to the Heath and its people. Clym shows his intimacy to the Heath, "To my mind it is most exhilarating and strengthening, and soothing. I would rather live on these hills than anywhere else in the world" (Hardy, 2005, p.81). Here, Hardy describes an inanimate place preferred to Paris. Third, he gives up his successful wealth-making business in the city of civilization and money to the Heath, the village of the uncivilized and the poorest. Hardy (2005) tells us that Paris is a place of the civilized present whose dream "was not likely to cohere into substance in the presence of this misfortune" of Eustacia's dwelling in the Heath (p.251). This is why Clym decides to leave Paris and its misfortune and adhere to the Heath and its authenticity. However, unlike the imperialistic and prejudiced mission of Marlow and Kurtz, Clym's mission in Paris is again merely commercial.

It is a matter of fact that *The Native* seeks a convincing cultural discovery in the Heath, which belongs to the continent of the civilizations. To exemplify, the abstract Heath has the ability to "retard the dawn, sadden noon, anticipate the flowing of storms ... and intensify the opacity of a moonless midnight to a cause of shaking and dread" (Hardy, 2005, pp. 11-12). These words suggest that the Heath constitutes a cultural experience which is so chaotic, grim and uncivilized and determines its inhabitants'

destiny. To this end, Rahnuma (2014) asserts that Hardy suggests "the strange darkness in human personality that is complemented by nature itself" (p.42). Likewise, *Darkness*, seeks similar discovery in the Congo, which belongs to the least civilized continent; Conrad dramatizes the equivocal images of the hazy shore and the obscured sea in the Congo.

Consequently, the Heath in *The Native* and the jungle in *Darkness* represent sole sources for cultural consciousness that develops through generations. Both Clym and Eustacia, like Marlow and Kurtz, differently pursue civilization based on their different desires and agendas. For instance, Clym decides to educate the Heath's people although civilization is its enemy. Further, Clym like Kurtz, is dehumanized by the Heath; he is interlaced into the textile of the Heath and bestows on it his personality. In addition, Clym, like Marlow, is typically what he is in reality; normal, simple, and human. However, Clym, in contrast to Marlow and Kurtz, moves to the modern, fashionable world that causes him frustration and pain. In contrast, Eustacia wishes to physically pursue culture and to escape the influence of the Heath, since she realizes that the Heath is unapproachable for civilization. Moreover, Marlow, like Clym, seems to make "a sympathetic and intelligent effort to understand foreign civilizations in both their past and their future forms." (Said, 1995, p.248). So, both Clym and Marlow are intellectuals capable of representing themselves in different environments and rituals. Doubtless, both narratives' characters, mainly Hardy's Eustacia and Conrad's Kurtz, are viewed as manifestations of their values inherited and experienced in the past, present and future. In this sense, Braudel (1994) points out that "every civilization, both yesterday and today, is immediately manifest in something easily grasped ... a philosophy, a fashion in dress, a scientific discovery, a technological advance" which have a short life span (p. 24). Therefore, both Eustacia and Kurtz die and leave almost nothing to remember.

### Conclusion:

In both novels, civilization and culture are dramatized as empty and deceptive in a world of unattainable conciliation of human ideals and extremes. It is the dynamics of human societies that are controlled by cultural fantasies and human stereotypes which may cripple humanity; its civilization and cultural progress. These fantasies are dramatically presented in *The Native*'s Heath and the *Darkness*'s jungle; both the Heath and the jungle constitute cultural conflicts that diachronically dominate humanity. In *The Native*, Eustacia's hatred to the Heath and Clym's rejection to life in Paris as opposing cultural contexts are reflected in the narrator's growing consciousness and discourse. Similarly, in *Darkness*, Kurtz laments the

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failure of his cultural project in the Congo, suggesting that he is the embodiment of modern diseased civilization which holds values that do not work in the Congo. Paradoxically, it is Marlow who decides to return to London after adventuring the Congo, leaving behind only memories of the Congo and the dead Kurtz. Thus, Marlow is forced to return to London because he realizes that brutality and civilization cannot coexist.

Seemingly, the matter of cultural conflict has its roots in human paradoxical powers. This conflict addressed in both novels is approached in a number of cultural, intellectual, and ideological differences, manifested in their places and characters. Yet, there is a chance for different civilizations and cultures to reconcile only through constructive dialogues, based on fixed bases of equality, justice, and mutual respect. Finally, cultural pre-civilization versus modern civilization is the dominant and central idea of these two novels which entail further investigation in our modern societies. Certainly, civilization can rectify itself through the rediscovery of what actually benefits humanity in life all over the world regardless of race, ethnicity, religion and beliefs. In a word, both novels imply a state of dramatic thematization of modern cultural limits and discourses. Like Conrad's dramatic description of the Congo and its African natives, Hardy defamiliarizes the Heath and its characters. Both *The Native* and *Darkness* present characters trapped by culturally less-civilized places and rituals which dramatize the civilizations of these places and people alike. Thus, Hardy and Conrad are similar in presenting a pessimistic view of human existence in both Europe and Africa; a thing that suggests that human civilizations are not totally sound or perfect and they differ in cultural practices and desires. Accordingly, for Hardy and Conrad, culture and nature are not remarkably privileged; both are vulnerable to changes and defamiliarization. Finally, Conrad and Hardy question the cultural boundaries between the modern and the ancient, the past and the present, and the conventional and the civilized.

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