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**Conradian Kurtz and Miltonian Satan:  
Evil and Ugliness Complete?**

I have no words;  
... thou bloodier villain  
Than terms can give thee out  
(Shakespeare "The Tragedy of Macbeth" V.x.6 – 8)

Among numerous associations and interpretations, both Conradian novella "Heart of Darkness" and Miltonian epic *Paradise Lost* are amenable to one significant aspect permeating and gradually shaping existence of Kurtz and Satan. Their enthrallment to iniquity, identified as a prevailing yet detrimental force, is introduced by means of such postulations as "[A]uthor of Evil, unknown till thy revolt, / Unnamed in Heaven, now plenteous [...] / [...] hateful to all, / [...] go [...] / [...] to the place of Evil, Hell" (Milton VI.262 – 264, 275 – 276);<sup>1</sup> in the trader's case, it is, among others: "[t]he wilderness had patted him on the head, [...] it had caressed him, [...] and sealed his soul to its own by the inconceivable ceremonies of some devilish initiation. He was its spoiled and pampered favourite" ("Heart of Darkness," YS 115). Accordingly, by way of those expressions, the reader is steered to consider those two literary characters from a particular, albeit a highly restricted perspective, as incarnations of wickedness, embodiments of the archetype of evil genius.<sup>2</sup>

What is more, endorsement of evil is consonant with acquisition of ugliness and deterioration, perceived as a corollary of their premeditated choices. The process is apparent when Satan, initially the magnificent Seraph that was privileged to be very close to God (Raphael informs Adam of the fact that Lucifer was "of the first, / If not the first Archangel, great in power, / In favour, and pre-eminence" (Milton V.659 – 661)) is violently hurled headlong to Hell, only to commence a brand new existence. Upon instigating insurgence he progressively changes and finally takes on the shape of a serpent consuming ash in his den of

suffering. Analogously, magniloquent, charismatic, and almost invincible Kurtz is visualized as a dreadfully poignant shadow and an emaciated caricature of a man at the end of his life. The narrative voice enlightens the reader that:

The shade of the original Kurtz frequented the bedside of the hollow sham, whose fate it was to be buried presently in the mould of primeval earth. But both the diabolic love and the unearthly hate of the mysteries it had penetrated fought for the possession of that soul satiated with primitive emotions

“Heart of Darkness,” YS 147

And, to continue this train of thought, Clarke puts forth the assertion that while remaining faithful to “the *extremity* of his engagement with evil [...] [Kurtz] has gone to the very limits of degradation and corruption; [...] extremity of corruption” (124), most intensely manifested at the moment of uttering his parting words – “The horror! The horror!” (“Heart of Darkness,” YS 149). Viewed from this standpoint, the trader, like Satan, is defined by, attributed with, and eventually conquered by irrepressible evil – “Kurtz has indulged in unhealthy emotions to gorge his falsely nurtured ego. Since all he does is without any conflict of consciences, he becomes evil incarnate,” as Mathew comments on the agent’s sinisterness (318). In consequence, he, like Foe, implements moral iniquity by a meticulous infliction of suffering and pain upon other characters.

As the story unfolds, both the reader and Marlow’s listeners on board the *Nellie* observe Kurtz taking recourse to crime which, as it held by Camus, originates from two independent sources – “there are crimes of passion and crimes of logic” (3) which become nowadays “as universal as science” (3). He thoroughly avails himself of two springs incessantly while fortifying his position of the natives’ sovereign and idol being in fact an individual without a moral spine. What is important, however, is Marlow’s observation that on his rescue mission he is trespassing frontiers of prehistoric land (“I felt as though, instead of going to the centre of a continent, I were about to set off for the centre of the earth” (“Heart of Darkness,” YS 60)) and even time (“we were travelling in the night of first ages, of those ages that are gone” (96)). Hence, one can formulate the hypothesis that Kurtz, as though submerged in prehistory, is in fact the Cain’s offspring, “cursed from the ground, which has opened its mouth to receive his brother’s blood” (Gen. IV.11). Analogously to the first slaughterer, he is not only an inflictor of crime, and anguish, more importantly he proves to be the evil incarnate heralding the era of violence; his brutality becomes a sinister verification of power and terror.

On the same front of wickedness the prevailing figure of Miltonian Satan emerges. He is the Arch-rebel in *Paradise Lost* that is given to the reader as “the story of his inevitable degeneracy, the result of obstinacy in evil” (Daiches 158). In fact, anything he does, thinks, and utters, it is relevant to malevolence which pulsates as blood in his damned heart unremittingly. While pointing to Foe’s inexhaustible potential for evil Gardner writes that Satan’s:

inveterate hatred against God and his malice towards man belongs to the earliest beginnings of *Paradise Lost* in Milton’s creative imagination. Satan has the objectivity of a dramatic figure, and resists all attempts to reduce him to a mere personification of evil

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Yet, even though he is remarkably persistent in abhorrence, and by doing so he succeeds in presenting himself in colours of audacity, his eternal collapse is predestined – “they themselves ordained their fall” (Milton III.128), asserts the Omnipotent. Satan is indubitably the sole instigator of evil extending its disruptive influence as a pestilence in every part of both physical and moral universe of Milton’s epic. His genuine task is summarized in a harangue delivered to flabbergasted demons after their fall:

‘Fallen Cherub, to be weak is miserable,  
Doing or suffering – but of this be sure:  
To do aught good never will be our task,  
But ever to do ill our sole delight,  
As being the contrary to his high will  
Whom we resist. If then his providence  
Out of our evil seek to bring forth good,  
Our labour must be to pervert that end,  
And out of good still to find means of evil

I.157 – 165

His speech is irrefutably brimful with intrepidity, intimidation, and influence. Nevertheless, the subsequent portrayal of Satan who fervidly shouts: “Evil, by thou my Good” (IV.110) is even more abysmal than the one offered to the reader in the first two Books of the epic; now his proclivity for iniquity is not only grounded on impulse but, first of all, on reckoning. From this time forth it is for him the matter of cautious preference which stigmatizes Foe’s quest for revenge and subjectivity. While analyzing from this perspective the figure of calculating and cunning Fiend who chooses an evil course intentionally, Fish holds that wickedness:

is not a thing; it is a state of being which exists only in and for the will that chooses it; it is the voluntary breaking away from God, a voluntary metamorphosis of the self from unity with God, and therefore with the good, into an isolated bit of evil

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Hence, in Book IV, during Foe's address to Sun, the reader stands an opportunity of perceiving the complete circle of Satan's alteration from evil to good and eventually to even more profound iniquity. Here, archetypality encounters evil in the deepest manner and Fiend's existence confirms his inescapable evolution from bad to worse and ends with complete misshapeness, in fact corruption that is equally experienced by vanishing Kurtz.

In truth, the depiction of iniquity of those two supreme evil masterminds can be enhanced by Shakespeare who, in his play "Julius Caesar," by means of Antony's speech, voices the truth that the "evil that men do lives after them; the good is oft interrèd with their bones" (III.ii.76 – 77). Evil, the meandering history of humanity evidently authenticates this actuality, is more enthralling than its opposition, as Lady Macduff succinctly notes – "I am in this earthly world, where to do harm / Is often laudable, to do good sometime / Accountèd dangerous folly" (Shakespeare "Macbeth" IV.ii.76 – 78). But, is it really possible that both Conradian Kurtz and Miltonian Satan are ontologically unwavering in their wickedness? Are they really deprived of thoughts, deeds, or circumstances that could, at least a little bit, extenuate gravity of their deplorable situation? Is it really feasible that there is not a morsel of good and, consequently, dynamism in their psycho-moral constitution? Can they only be distinguished as stagnant constructs incapable of undergoing any change? Are they then to be read as unreservedly enchanted by the overwhelming sway of iniquity? So as not to give away too much at the onset of the analysis, I will only assert that the answer to all those questions is negative.

The moment the reader is disposed to question firmly established views upon those literary characters as tenaciously iniquitous, one is certain to unearth some fresh veneers of interpretation. While taking their iniquity aside for a short moment and focusing upon two passages from "Heart of Darkness" and *Paradise Lost* the reader can be steered to perceive them from a slightly different perspective. Accordingly, at the end of the novella the reader stands an opportunity of listening to Marlow's conversation with Kurtz's Intended during which one becomes familiar with such a piece of information:

I had heard that her engagement with Kurtz had been disapproved by her people. He wasn't rich enough or something. And indeed I don't know whether he had been a pauper all his life. He had given me some reason to infer that it was his impatience of comparative poverty that drove him out there

that testifies to a magnified desire, as it is put by Ross, “he feels for the Intended, which is stifled by his penury” (43). And, as for Miltonian epic, God issues such a proclamation:

‘Hear, all ye Angels [...]  
[...]  
Hear my decree, which unrevoked shall stand.  
This day I have begot whom I declare  
My only Son, [...]  
[...] Your head I him appoint,  
And by myself have sworn to him shall bow  
All knees in Heaven, and shall confess him Lord:  
Under his great vicegerent reign abide,  
[...] him who disobeys,  
Me disobeys, breaks union

Milton V.600, 602 – 604, 606 – 609, 611 – 612

Unquestionably, the announcement, performed without any public consultation – as it is regularly done in dictatorial states – of Jesus’ supremacy over Lucifer certainly stung the most glorious Archangel that wanted to be treated appropriately in line with democratic standards (until the moment of the proclamation he had not been aware that they would not be met). Furthermore, it is also implied that he desired to be as powerful and influential as God.

There is not any doubt that the upsetting episodes (dire straits supercilious figures are forced to go through), either of being pauper in the world where money is crucial so as to achieve a high social status (Kurtz is rumoured to arrive at Africa on an impulse of the conscious mutiny against poverty that has disqualified him as eligible to enter into marriage; by means of such a move, he would definitely become a more esteemed man in the society), or of having to become subservient to the figure regarded as equal (“Who can in reason, then, or right, assume / Monarchy over such as live by right / His equals [...] / In freedom equal?” (V.794 – 797)), make Kurtz and Satan become defiant, confirming in that way their innate dynamism. In truth, in consequence of the challenging experiences, they cannot be merely perceived as utterly wicked. Rather, they are exposed as being trapped in a situation without exit. What is more, upon closer scrutiny the reader perceives them as being entrenched in the tragic triad of the vicious circle, as I analysed in one of the previous articles.<sup>3</sup> Nevertheless, they have recourse to revolt as it is portrayed by means of theoretical concepts framed by Camus. Generally, their resistance against encountered tyranny is indispensable to them in order to discover autonomy outside the given discourse of power.

In the foreword to Camus' *The Rebel*, Read sheds some light upon the concept of rebellion and it is crucial to grasp some theoretical insinuations in order to comprehend Lucifer and Kurtz's standards of behaviour more thoroughly.<sup>4</sup> He draws the reader attention to the fact that "revolt is one of the 'essential dimensions' of mankind" which is, in truth, "a principle of existence," (viii) and more importantly, it is "the basis of the struggle." Besides, mutiny is the "origin of form, source of real life" (x). The above definition classifies two incarnations of the archetype of evil genius who eagerly avail themselves of such an approach – manifesting its force in evil and infliction of crime – so as to grasp an opportunity of unearthing their own subjectivity. By doing so they condemn themselves "to a make-believe world in the desperate hope of achieving a more profound existence," (Camus 54) unattainable to be discovered in the reality of constantly extolling subjects in the Empyrean and among avarice-ridden imperialists in "the city of the dead" ("Heart of Darkness," YS 57). Camus adds that:

Rebellion is born of the spectacle of irrationality, confronted with an unjust and incomprehensible condition. But its blind impulse is to demand order in the midst of chaos, and unity in the very heart of the ephemeral. It protests, it demands, it insists that the outrage be brought to an end, [...] Its preoccupation is to transform.

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And insurgence launched by Fiend and Kurtz unquestionably recognized as a defence of their own rights legitimizes their struggle upon finding themselves in an irrational situation, since, in their heart of hearts, they sense that some things have gone absolutely awry.

Although seemingly negative, mutiny appears to be intensely positive owing to its power to expose those sections of Satan and Kurtz which should always be fortified. Lucifer, according to the author of *The Rebel*, "considers himself compelled to do evil by his nostalgia for an unrealizable good. Satan rises against his Creator because the latter employed force to subjugate him" (48) and Kurtz, in line with Marlow, experiencing "the torment, the tempestuous anguish of his soul [...] wanted no more than justice – no more than justice" ("Heart of Darkness," YS 156). Furthermore, Miltonian Satan's abhorrence of:

injustice will lead, therefore, if not to the exercise, at least to the vindication, of evil [...] In order to combat evil, the rebel renounces good, because he considers himself innocent, and once again gives birth to evil

Camus 47

It is the aspect that is equally pertinent to the trader who commences his mission, already in Europe, as the harbinger of light and civilization; theoretical premises are brilliantly sketched in his pamphlet. His effort (the objective, in the long run, appears to be phoney on account of the fact that voracity for power and ivory surfaces as the most important – “I ventured to hint that the Company was run for profit” (“Heart of Darkness,” YS 59)) is devoted to obliteration of evil that for him and for the whole machinery of colonialism lurks behind the natives’ savagery as his as well as imperialists’ initial resolve focuses upon “weaning those ignorant millions from their horrid ways” (59). However, he terminates his ‘glorious’ operation as a brutal character, and he, once again, permits evil to flourish, even more horrendous shape of it.

As it has been previously hinted, rebellion both Satan and Kurtz utilize has one fundamental advantage – it offers them the opportunity, denied to other characters, of discovering their genuine subjectivity. Significantly, the reality of revolt is closely associated with another concept that facilitates the process of self-discovery. In fact, if the reader tries to apply the theory of the inward progressive movement to those two epitomes of iniquity, one is certain to perceive that they stand an opportunity of finding truth about themselves; nevertheless the process for both of them finishes up with an inevitable collapse. On account of the horrendous experience in the den of sadness in Book X (a vile and definitive transformation into a serpent), Satan discloses his true nature to the most profound degree. Appreciably, King of Hell embarks on the psychomoral effort analysed by Kierkegaard who holds that, as noted by Podrez, the growth of “subjectivity requires the constant constructing of itself in the ancient dialectics of torment, namely, the yearning for being oneself and the analogous desire for not being oneself” (171).<sup>5</sup> Hence, his triumphant arrival at Hell encompasses the point which signifies the equilibrium between his irresistible craving for being his own emperor (better to reign in Hell) and the analogously constructed longing for not being responsible for the given status-quo (not to be a sovereign who eagerly flees anguish). The philosopher adds that in order to reach maturity existence is to be unavoidably racked with despondency: “rare is the man who truly is free from despair,” (159) in consequence of this fact distress “is a qualification of spirit that is related to the eternal in a man” (150). Significantly, the vice that acts as a root of his plunging into evil is likewise treated as an indispensable element in the painstaking procedure of disclosing his subjectivity – as it is put by Werblowsky, “*hubris* is psychic necessity on the way of individuation and differentiation towards higher levels of consciousness” (80). Nevertheless, from this time forth, he finds himself at such a juncture of his existence that he does not have to fake

anything, his abysmal appearance warped by ugliness equals his innermost desires presenting him as the paradigm of evil genius profoundly racked with iniquity he once approved of so enthusiastically.

With regard to Kurtz's exploration for an unadulterated self, his collapse likewise stained with repulsiveness (Marlow states that "[A]nything approaching the change that came over his features I have never seen before, and hope never to see again. I saw on that ivory face [...] an intense and hopeless despair" ("Heart of Darkness," YS 149)), is being anticipated from the very inception of the story. It is the momentous episode for which the reader and the listeners of Marlow's account are being steadily prepared beginning with the mention of Roman conquerors and their accomplishments – viewed as predecessors of the agent and his own achievements – who, despite their supremacy, experienced failure and concluding with the final moment of Kurtz's existence. This moment in the trader's life is stigmatized with an appalling yell, the ultimate gesture of self-assessment obtained at "that supreme moment of complete knowledge" (149), which completes the backward process of his self-discovery that inescapably "leads," as it is held by Bohlmann, "to his perception of his own nothingness" (46). It is also important to put emphasis on the fact that analogously to an insight of his emptiness, Kurtz is offered the possibility of an encounter with evil face to face, finishing with an utter consummation by this detrimental force. In fact, the agent's descent is introduced by means of other characters' references, either overt or indirect ones. Thematically, they allude to Kurtz's illness, insanity, and eventually demise as the reader glimpses at the agent's immersion into the jungle and natives' rituals; but they, too, disclose alterity from a hypocrite imbued with lofty ideals to a genuine inflictor of suffering and iniquity. Kurtz, in line with Kekes, "came to understand this fact about himself, and when he saw that his natural, spontaneous, unchosen actions were precisely what he abhorred, he disintegrated" (38).

Yet, the hypothesis that Satan and Kurtz could be the only elements that constitute the reality called iniquity would be indeed sheer misconception. It is more than likely that their struggle indicates that the reality and the matrix of social / heavenly relations which they are embedded in are likewise iniquitous. This significant detail makes them be perceived in the context of extenuating circumstances that can reduce severity of their wickedness. The theory of social influence suggested by Kelman in his articles, especially in "Compliance, identification, and internalization – three processes of attitude change" can be here of invaluable help. According to him, the term social influence refers "to socially induced behavior change" that occurs "whenever a person *changes* his behavior as a result of



*induction* by another person or group (the influencing agent)” (128). In truth, while considering this conception and spotlighting it onto Satan and Kurtz, the reader can observe that their existential paths, in their entirety, are remarkably similar to those who are prevailing enough to construct the discourse of the reality. It is indeed not their fault that they exist in social (celestial, in Lucifer’s case) milieu that is soaked with either evil and greed (Europe and the Congo Free State) or duplicity and tyranny (the Empyrean). Is it not the truth that “[A]ll Europe contributed to the making of Kurtz” (“Heart of Darkness,” YS 117) in all probability equipping him – a musician, a painter, and a journalist (testifying to his extant, albeit veiled sensitivity), a remarkable man – with tools of European colonialism such as greed, lack of restraint, and terror? Or is it not possible to consider Satan – correspondingly to Kurtz’s sensibility, Foe discloses a reservoir of positive emotions during his address to Sun in Book IV – from the perspective of his not accepting autocracy of God who honours “his anointed Son” (Milton VI.676) so as to avenge “[U]pon his enemies” (677) who notice that in the Empyrean “most through sloth had rather serve” (166)? Hence, as the association Satan – God, and Kurtz – people responsible for European colonialism demonstrates, it is possible to formulate the hypothesis that they could have led their life differently in absence of such induction. Importantly, Satan explicitly voices the assumption that hadn’t he been created as an excellent archangel, he wouldn’t have thought to rebel against God; he would possibly not have felt and succumbed to an overpowering pride.

While pointing to the imperialistic manifestations in “Heart of Darkness,” Lothe holds that there “is a strong sense in which, for Faust as for Kurtz, the ideal of European enlightenment is reversed, threatening to collapse into barbarism and atrocious crimes” (191) and, what is more, Conradian evil genius’s existence, in line with Krajka, “illustrates the increasing psychomoral depravity of civilized man, the barbarous instincts that under certain conditions dominate his personality” (*Isolation* 226). Perceived in that context, African jungle, menacing environment devoid of any external surveillance and restraints, comes into view as the region of Kurtz’s exceptionally prolific exhibition of brutality, moral evil and violence. Hence, unsurprisingly, an embedment in the jungle and its decrees triggers his hell-within to break loose, progressively transforming him into a callous exploiter. In truth, regardless of being culturally and socially refined (the reader is being informed that “[A]ll Europe contributed to the making of Kurtz” (“Heart of Darkness,” YS 117), and, therefore, all of Europe was wholeheartedly engrossed in the process of imperialism visible in the form practised in Africa), he personifies the basest instincts which in their turn implement him as a tool in the vicious circle of unjustified hostility, the manifestation of his ferociousness.

As an ambassador of the imperialistic crusade, whose demeanour confirms the utter deformation of canons of humanity, he is responsible for bringing rather not the light of torch of enlightenment (the one which is carried by the woman at his painting) but the darkness of his cruelty and degeneration. “Terrifying and ruthless, Kurtz stands for the colonisers [...] as he embraces the rhetoric of superiority,” notes Sikorska (464). He is the impeccable model of yawning inconsistency between praiseworthy intentions heralded by those in charge of the machinery of colonialism and their despicable execution; the trader is thus the most distinguished executor of this discrepancy. By birth he belongs to the line of conquerors for whom ideology offers priority as harbingers of light that, idealistically, ought to be devoted to enlightening, but, also by birth, he is habituated to be the envoy of darkness and wickedness, assuming the shape of moral evil. At length, he turns out to be the colonizer who inscribes the note – ““Exterminate all the brutes!”” (“Heart of Darkness,” YS 118) – added much later to his pamphlet for the International Society for the Suppression of Savage Customs, penned yet in Europe. The truth is that this report becomes a guide for European imperialist thinking by voicing the most edifying example of Kurtz’s concepts upon potential liaisons between the whites and the natives. In this beautiful piece of writing the whites (treated as much more sophisticated and, accordingly, having “the nature of supernatural beings” that are capable of approaching the natives “with the might as of a deity” (118)) are privileged to “exert a power for good practically unbounded” (118) over the Africans.

Madsen in his “Modernity and Melancholy” holds that:

In the heart of the wilderness Marlow meets a synthesis of white and black. But it is a negative synthesis: having become the master of a tribe, Kurtz has deteriorated from an enlightened colonial administrator, with ideals of Europe’s civilizing mission, into an unscrupulous accumulator of ivory and the head of a terror regime. But the natives have changed too: when not its victims, they have become the executive tools for Kurtz’s barbarism. Thus Kurtz synthesizes the double transformation brought forward by the European interference in African affairs

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And although until the last moment of his existence there does not materialize any other option left than to evaluate the trader and his accomplishments disapprovingly, presenting him chiefly as a cruel perpetrator of malevolence in the jungle, the region stained with “a touch of insanity [...] a sense of lugubrious drollery in the sight” (“Heart of Darkness,” YS 62) for Marlow he proves to be the most noteworthy component of inquiry upon evil in both Kurtz’s heart and his lair. Yet, regardless of inflicting a spectrum of atrocities upon the natives, the agent – mainly by reason of lack of restraint and conceit – is likewise depicted as

a threat to the whole machinery of imperialism. The menace is introduced by a reference to both his hyper-active participation in distorted ideals of colonialism and fallaciously deployed methods that guide the reader to de Sade's concepts. Sketched in *Society of the Friends of Crime* they accentuate the fact that "license to destroy supposes that you yourself can be destroyed. Therefore you must struggle and dominate. The law of this world is nothing but the law of force; its driving force, the will to power" (Camus 41), being encapsulated in Spencer's phrase 'survival of the fittest'. For this reason, in order to dominate and, indeed, to be the fittest, Kurtz is constantly plundering the country (conscientiously exercising the law of force as does Nietzschean superhuman) and, in line with the manager, "has done more harm than good to the Company" ("Heart of Darkness," YS 137). It seems that his berserk performance has gone too far even for ivory-obsessed and cruelty-ridden emissaries of imperialism. Consequently, he progressively becomes not only an ugly caricature of the man who has effectively established an insane dominance in the vicinity of the Inner Station, but also "a one-time progressive politician turned monster, and idealist reformer metamorphosed into a terrible killer-despot" (Škvorecký 261) who finally poses danger to everyone he encounters along his way; corpses of victims of his 'glorious' deeds are "the ghastly reflection of his own bestiality," affirms Marx (380). Moral evil is thus so primordially inscribed in his personality like blood in a human body that transports oxygen and energy to one's heart and gives life.

However, this highly biased vision of Kurtz – an indefatigable icon of iniquity, greed and terror, to whom the reality of development cannot be applied – could be acceptable on condition that the reader leaves him entirely alone in a social vacuum. Unsurprisingly, this approach would be misconception on account of the fact that the social setting is one of factors responsible for psycho-moral constitution of a person. Hence, without reference to people and circumstances shaping the discourse of colonialism at that time and place, the reader cannot, and should not, evaluate Kurtz. No doubt this juxtaposition opens the possibility of perceiving Kurtz not only as a character endowed with dynamism, but also as facing circumstances that are in fact extenuatory for his sinisterness.

"Heart of Darkness" – a multi-layered work of literature that abounds in allusions that unavoidably give rise to a wealth of impressions or even intuitions – is indeed a powerful portrayal and assessment of colonialism, called the Scramble of Africa,<sup>6</sup> yet this depiction does not condemn only one person.<sup>7</sup> Hence, perceived from this perspective, Marlow's mission cannot be treated as only a regular journey carried out to rescue Kurtz. Rather, it acts as a potent observation upon one of the most shameful in the history of the world pillage

aiming at grabbing ivory from the indigenous African people; the atrocious process in which Kurtz functions as merely one ingredient. Marlow's comment questioning the pressure of transplantation of the white civilization and its imperatives into Africa points to the dehumanization – one of the most often used approach adopted by those in charge of colonialism – which the natives are so eagerly attributed with. On the thematic level, it is brought into the stage mostly by means of references to their corporeality: they “had faces like grotesque masks” (“Heart of Darkness,” YS 61), being one of similar depictions permeating the whole body of the novella. Among references to natives' corporeality the reader can find an observation that appropriately illustrates the ‘glorious’ character of European colonialism – this lesson Kurtz has learnt exceptionally well – winning freedom for underprivileged Africans:

I could see every rib, the joints of their limbs were like knots in a rope; each had an iron collar on his neck, and all were connected together with a chain whose bights swung between them, rhythmically clinking. [...] All their meager breasts panted together, the violently dilated nostrils quivered, the eyes stared stonily up-hill. They passed me within six inches, without a glance, with that complete, deathlike indifference of unhappy savages

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Furthermore, to add severity to their deplorable situation they, living in their own territory under occupation, are called and treated as criminals who, in Marlow's eyes (expressing indignation at this sight) are nothing more than “[b]lack shapes [...] in all the attitudes of pain, abandonment, and despair [...] black shadows of disease and starvation, lying confusedly in the greenish gloom [...] scattered in every pose of contorted collapse, as in some picture of a massacre or a pestilence” (66 – 67). However, the reproachful irony on the part of the narrator lies not only in reference to black shapes haunting – like fallen demons lying prostrate on the lake of fire – the grove of death, it likewise lies in the juxtaposition of natives' blackness in “the gloomy circle of some Inferno” (66) with Europeans' apparel, especially the chief accountant's:

I saw a high starched collar, white cuffs, a light alpaca jacket, snowy trousers, a clean necktie, and varnished boots. No hat. Hair parted, brushed, oiled, under a green-lined parasol held in a big white hand. He was amazing, and had a penholder behind his ear

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In short, the bureaucrat – he can easily be treated as a symbol of colonialism – is distinguished as the one who “in great demoralization of the land” is capable of keeping up “his appearance” (68) that is vividly marked with white hue; the colour providing a stark

contrast to natives' blackness and enclosing darkness of the jungle. Yet, the reader and the listeners on board the *Nellie* are guided in order to recognize the note of sarcasm in Marlow's voice. Unquestionably, his remarks are constructed in such a way so as to imply that these are not light and good, but rather obscurity, disease, and evil that are conveyed by emissaries of European colonialism who, at best, display merciless apathy to natives' torment. And Kurtz, an outstandingly gifted individual, a character who, as Firchow has it, "undergoes development, even if it is only development of a very peculiar sort" (78), surfaces as the most degenerate epitome of 'fabulous' endeavours of this imperialistic machinery. In the novella, Kurtz, as it is put by Ray,

epitomizes the reality behind the myth of colonization and whatever is carried on in the name of 'progress' – its hypocrisy, its brutality, its corruption, its unrestrained lust, its greed, its inhumanity, the discrepancy between the precept and the practice, its self-deception and its capacity for evil

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Yet, as it has just been hinted, Kurtz is, and should be, treated as only one of elements constituting the discourse of colonialism. Even though he is the most depraved element, it is vital to assert one more time that he is *only* a component. No matter how strongly the reader might discern him in the light of terror, crime, and idolatry, perceiving him as iniquity incarnate, the facts cannot be in dispute.

Teleporting now the reader's attention back in time, one can easily perceive that the period of European partition of Africa was not the only one stained with violence, lack of freedom, and wickedness. The 17<sup>th</sup> century in England was likewise a troublesome time<sup>8</sup> and correspondingly to Kurtz, Miltonian Satan, a hero<sup>9</sup> of the epic that demands sympathy for his deterministic pursuit of autonomy in the face of an absolute power of the Omnipotent, is inscribed in the discourse of the reality brimful with iniquity and terror. The Arch-rebel, indisputably Milton's magnum opus as regards iniquitous characters, thus becomes the voice of his creator who, over a time span of about 20 years, unfalteringly stood up as the guardian of liberty, autonomy of various sorts. The Puritan expressed his dissatisfaction with the reality in England aiming at two autonomous sources of corruption and mayhem, the government and the church. He did so since in his eyes autonomy per se involved both political and religious freedom; those both shapes allowed a man to prosper. The struggle was vividly evident in such pamphlets as *Eikonoklastes* (meaning image-breaker, published in 1649), a harsh indictment of Charles I in response to the publication of *Eikon Basilike* (the King's image), the emotionally charged posthumously published prison memoirs of the sovereign

that portrays the executed monarch as a saint and martyr or in *Of Reformation Touching Church Discipline in England*, published in 1641.

As regards the first tract – being an unrewarding commission on account of having to assault a dead man – Milton kept “drawing attention to the contrast between the pious sentiments it expressed and the treacherous way in which, he felt, the King had behaved towards his subjects” (Potter 26). The latter, his early anti-prelatic pamphlet, focuses its attention upon the issues of church reforms in general, especially advocating abolition of the bishops – regarded as parasites in the heart of the church – who are presented as being “trampled and ravingly abused by all the other damned in hell” (Teskey 187) or being “at the bottom of the heap of the damned” (188). The scholar then adds that “the scene is re-created, with more maturity, in *Paradise Lost*, when the devils are prostrate on the burning lake of hell and when the same devils, during the war in heaven, are crushed in heaps under the mountains that are thrown on them” (188). Importantly, Milton portrays the heap of fallen demons by means of the subsequent simile (which has precedents in works of Homer, Virgil, Dante, and even Ariosto) – they are “Angel forms, who lay entranced / Thick as autumnal leaves that strew the brooks / In Vallombrosa” (Milton l.301 – 303). Next, demons are compared to Pharaoh’s soldiers’ “floating carcasses / [...] so thick bestrewn” (310 – 311) who were “routed [...] in the midst of the sea” (Ex. XIV.27) by God. The Book of Revelations, chapter VI, also includes the analogous simile: “Then the kings of the earth and the great men and the generals and the rich and the strong [...] hid in the caves and among the rocks of the mountains, calling to the mountains and rocks, ‘Fall on us and hide us from the face of him who is seated on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb’” (15 – 16). Since the relationship the Omnipotent – fallen angels (in *Paradise Lost*) and the powerful (in the Bible) is perceived in the context of enemies – it is indeed rewarding to look at one’s enemies as lying unconscious in the heap and being crushed by something heavy – the similar perspective is invoked by Macbeth who, upon being haunted by the Ghost of his father, shouts: “Avaunt, and quit my sight! Let the earth hide thee” (III.iv.91).

However, the most momentous reference to, and grief over lost autonomy that, for Milton, equals blooming of tyranny fills the body of the tract entitled *The Ready and Easy Way to Establish a Free Commonwealth*, published at the end of February 1660, an admonishment against the dangers inherent in a monarchical form of government. One of the most serious arguments against the Restoration amounts to poet’s announcement that it would definitely be a grave transgression against God to allow monarchy to reappear; he likewise voices a warning that a sovereign invariably equals the lack of freedom and virtue.

The time of the English Civil War, the revolution against Charles I – reaching its horrid climax in the beheading of the ruler in 1649 – was indeed the time “when people [were] cut off from the truth and [were] not yet beguiled by falsehoods into living under satanic orders” (Sparks and Isaacs 27), the miasmatic time of tyranny and lack of free will of a man. And those two themes appear as the most crucial in *Paradise Lost* that, employing the words of the critic John Toland, offers “the different effects of Liberty and Tyranny [as its] the chief design” (qtd. in Potter 70). In the discourse of power and autocracy the poem is in truth envisioned as one of the most noteworthy constituents, encapsulating a wealth of concepts that were sketched in Milton’s preceding pamphlets on the current controversies. Significantly, in the context of the discourse Satan materializes as the powerful voice pointing, as if with all of his body and mind, to ‘deficiencies’ of reality.

Already at the beginning of the epic the reader happens to eavesdrop on the conversation between apostate Arch-rebel and his co-partner, Beelzebub. Their harangue alludes to “Heaven’s perpetual King” (Milton I.131) and His authoritarian reign, referring directly to His “high supremacy” (132) in His domain and His sphere of influence. In the context of their dialogue the Omnipotent is the One who “[S]ole reigning holds the tyranny of Heaven” (124) and who hurled them headlong to Hell, the “prison of his tyranny who reigns / By [their] delay” (II.59 – 60). The “Torturer” (64) and “Conqueror,” (I.143) in demons’ eyes, hinders their autonomy from flourishing and, as it is vehemently pronounced by Sin upon her encounter with Satan at the gate of Hell, the Creator “sits above, and laughs the while / At thee, ordained his drudge to execute / Whate’er his wrath, which he calls justice, bids, / His wrath, which one day will destroy ye both!” (II.731 – 733). Deprecatory expressions (drudge, wrath, destroy) that permeate their discourse and refer to the Omnipotent “of all-ruling Heaven” (I.212) are indeed the beacons of Satan’s emotions and his ensuing approach towards the One who embodies oppression and subjugation. They point, however, not only to Satan's innate iniquity; they are also imbedded in the context of his psycho-moral constitution that does not accept unjustified tyranny and hypocrisy of his Creator.

Foe’s deprecatory approach to God thus refers to the circumstances existing in the relation the Creator – Satan that are of extenuating character for the latter party and his course of action. Perceiving Fiend from this particular perspective, Bryson thus holds that “Satan’s decision to resist tyranny places him in the ranks of the great mythological heroes of world literature” (82). Hence, Miltonian Arch-Rebel, analogously to Prometheus and his defiance of Zeus, cannot be assessed entirely in the light of iniquity; even though it appears unbelievable, hyper-proud and conceited Fiend is capable of taking care of others (in his case similarly-

thinking angels). Yet, the reader is motivated to assess Satan's method only as defiance. He is in fact a warrior "who struggles against the greatest and most terrifying tyranny of all - the tyranny of God himself. Satan's downfall is not that opposes God, but that he opposes God on God's own terms, matching threats with threats and violence with violence" (83).

One of the most disparaging slanders of God's rule in Heaven, however, is put to the fore during Satan's verbal controversy with Gabriel. The Arch-rebel answers the Archangel back in such a manner:

'Then when I am thy captive talk of chains,  
Proud liminary Cherub, but ere then  
Far heavier load thyself expect to feel  
From my prevailing arm, though Heaven's King  
Ride on thy wings, and thou with thy compeers,  
Used to the yoke, draw'st his triumphant wheels  
In progress through the road of Heaven star-paved.'

IV.970 – 976

And, although he revolts against his Creator in affirmation of his newly acquired freedom and the previous lack of it, Foe before long becomes cognizant of the fact that he is not free enough to perform deeds he knows to be morally proper.

Seen in that light, *Paradise Lost* – "composed over that boundary time when a free commonwealth seemed at first faintly possible" (Herman and Sauer 97) – is indubitably packed with hidden political overtones. Those insinuations are not only associated with Milton's attack upon the Anglican Church – Stocker, among other critics of Milton and his epic, holds that generally accepted "assumptions regarded the Roman Catholic Church as Antichristian, and to this Milton and Marvell added the corrupt Anglican episcopacy of England. All such corruption finds its archetype in Satan / Antichrist [...] In effect, Antichrist is the embodiment of falsity both religious and political" (63). They also point to his condemnation of absolute monarchies practised by such kings-tyrants as Charles I who ruled for 11 years without the parliament and whose reign was stigmatized with severe religious intolerance aimed at Puritans, Scottish Presbyterians and Catholics.

In fact, the epic dramatizing the equilibrium between liberty and submission, suggests two clashing visions and ensuing interpretations of Satan; both of them distinctly confirm Milton's disappointment with the reality of the 17<sup>th</sup> century England. On one hand, the Arch-rebel, the incarnation of extreme individualism, can be interpreted as allegorizing the Papacy, or the English Monarch – "Satan is the prototype of all that Milton execrates – tyrants, kings, popes, priests even" since they "come dangerously near to being 'of the devil'," notes Saurat



(176). Being perceived in the light of revolting against tyranny, Fiend eventually evolves into a charismatic despot whose ambition is to become a sovereign himself, no matter where: “[t]o reign is worth ambition, though in Hell: / Better to reign in Hell than serve in Heaven” (Milton I.262 – 263), shouts furious Satan. On the other hand, the figure of Foe can be examined with the respect to the wider social context of Post-Interregnum and Restoration England with strong anti-papist and anti-royalist insinuations. As it is argued by Lim, “Milton's Satan can stand for various political figures or constituencies. He can be the Catholic Church, the sects, Parliament, even Oliver Cromwell himself” (115). Hence, Foe allegorically embedded in Milton's revolutionary context and Restoration England's political environment can be perceived as an allegory of Oliver Cromwell who made use of the republican language in order to conceal his monarchical objectives. By means of the revolution (like the celestial battle: “Deeds of eternal fame / Were done, but infinite, for wide was spread / That war, and various” (Milton VI.240 – 242)), he was prevailing enough to rebel against the monarch (that is God). Consequently, Satan revolts against God because He (like Charles I) wields the absolute power in the Empyrean (like Charles I in England) and is definitely highly despotic. It is feasible thus to formulate the hypothesis that Foe's rebellion is a required accomplishment. But, in spite of the fact that it can be perceived as a justified move, it is unavoidably extremely violent (like heavenly confrontation: “Immediate in a flame, / [...] all Heaven appeared, / From those deep-throated engines belched, whose roar / Embowelled with outrageous noise the air” (584 – 587)). And, more importantly, upon attaining his objective – the absolute power – Satan himself becomes a tyrant, correspondingly to Oliver Cromwell whose own decision was to dissolve the Rump Parliament. Thus Milton suggests that akin to Satan, Cromwell's cardinal sin is hyped ambition and ensuing tyranny. However, analogously to Conradian Kurtz, Miltonian Satan could possibly be acting differently if he were not confronted with an indissoluble tyranny and iniquity of those who wield power so as to create the discourse of reality.

It is my intention to recapitulate by inserting Goonetilleke's assertion upon Satan and Kurtz as belonging to one line of literary characters for whom iniquity, of various shapes, is the light upon their paths. The critic explicates that:

Kurtz is a descendant from a tradition that features the hero-villains of Gothic tradition such as Ann Radcliff's Montoni in *The Mysteries of Udolpho* (1794) and Emily Bronte's Heathcliff in *Wuthering Heights* (1847) and goes back to Milton's Satan and Faust. Kurtz is guilty of pride, pride of self, in keeping with the Christian legend of Lucifer which has something in common with the Classical concept of *hubris*, the arrogance resulting from excessive pride that brings on destruction. Lucifer means 'light-bearer', and Kurtz is one such, so that the inspiring

woman in his painting carries a torch and is a light-bearer. Like Kurtz, Lucifer is the brightest of angels that fell

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The truth is that regardless of obvious discrepancies between them (they belong to dissimilar literary discourses; Miltonian Satan's stature is drawn upon the biblical prototype, whereas the figure of Conradian Kurtz is possibly drawn upon historical person – Georges Antoine Klein) there are indeed some features that make them be tremendously similar. Viewed holistically, two incarnations of the archetype of evil genius are certain to be perceived as if weaving a few independent yarns constituting their subjectivity. Those are evil, ugliness, terror, and finally self-discovery.

Evidence examined in this paper shows that, in the main, iniquity appears as the most significant attribute of both Satan and Kurtz. While being inscribed into the role of the voice of their creators expressing condemnation of their reality, they are presented as characters that are utterly incapable of existing without that thrill that an evil approach abundantly offers. Kurtz's wickedness is on one side constituent of his multifaceted personality, but, on the other, it becomes the dominant apparatus of reigning ideology. In truth, his proclivity for iniquity does not only inflict pain and suffering upon his emotionally-leashed devotees – he “becomes a kind of god to them because he has power – indeed, the power over life itself. He is we might say, demonic” (Kahn 17). It also instigates psychomoral, physical, and social deterioration to its possessor (a shadow); the analogous process is likewise noticeable in Foe's existence (the collapse from the Archangel to an ash-devouring serpent). Since, as it is accentuated by Krajka, “Kurtz's life exemplifies first of all an ethical and psychological deprivation of a man, moral emptiness and a victory of barbaric instincts over humanity” (*Konteksty Kulturowe* 33), an ominous portrayal of its greatest trader elevates “Heart of Darkness” to the position of an account of the corrosion of both human culture and morality.

Yet, despite their morbid engagement with primordial iniquity and darkness, they find a faint pulse of an upright approach while building a heightened awareness of balefulness of their achievements. By doing so, they authenticate an intrinsic dynamism that confirms their proclivity for the development; furthermore, it is partially accountable for attractiveness and enthrallment on the part of the reader. William Blake in his *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell* eulogizes Satan's majesty, eloquence, bravery, and magnetism by claiming that Milton was “a true Poet of the Devil's party without knowing it,” (xvii) and Conradian Kurtz is many a time viewed through the prism of his charisma. Hence, evidence accumulated in the article demonstrates that it is requisite to distinguish Kurtz as well as Satan not only in the light of

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their enthusiastic fascination with malice, but, also as searching-for-truth-in-evil characters that eventually become the genuine manifestations of the concept framed by the existentialist, Kierkegaard. Despite their sinisterness, they effectively complete the ultimate phase of their character-development that is indeed “self-discovery, in which the educational process reaches its climax in a new perspective on self and a correspondingly clearer vision” (Halperin 2). The process, however, propels them towards the viscous circle of iniquity that has been triggered by those who brandish power in the discourse of their reality. Hence, they both are initially shown as willingly practising wickedness in defence of their sanity in an iniquitous environment (however, this procedure of self-preservation eventually becomes utterly ineffective), more importantly though, they are capable of being masters of their own lives, shaping their expanding subjectivity by means of evil.

After his address to Sun, with one exception in Book IX, Foe has no hesitation in his course of action and as a machine he continues a solitary mission of destructiveness.<sup>10</sup> Iniquity, in truth, is an overwhelming force that swings him into motion and it finally devours its master-victim; the similar destiny is met by the trader who, as it is noted by Perry, “is transformed into a sadist driven by dark urges no longer buried within his unconscious” (693). Nevertheless, regardless of his being gradually ‘consumed’ by his evil, Satan is utterly committed to shunning God (the process is even demonstrable in his intentional refusal to articulate the word ‘God’ while referring to his Creator) and devising ill repeatedly. And, once more, the analogous approach is adopted by Kurtz who, despite his infirmity, is sturdy enough to come back “alone in a small dugout with four paddlers [...] setting his face towards the depths of the wilderness, towards the empty and desolate station” (“Heart of Darkness,” YS 90), only to “preside at certain midnight dances ending with unspeakable rites” (118). By doing so their antics are like that of an addict who cannot exist (as Stoker’s Count Dracula is incapable of existing without drinking blood) without the thrill of indulging oneself in wickedness.

Furthermore, Foe, a valiant rambler constantly fleeing his Creator, is bent upon searching harmony with Adam and Eve on the mutual ground of evil, inspiring them to follow his trail. In fact, his proclivity for iniquity is so gigantic that he desires to place some amount of accountability for it on the first people’s shoulders, hopefully for them not yet fallen. Similarly Kurtz is perceived as enhancing his inclination for crime-ridden iniquity while assuming the position of natives’ divinity. And, finally, it is what Satan accomplishes. Both Foe and the first parents are fallen, with one slight difference however – the Arch-rebel finishes up with steadfastness to execute evil, whereas Adam and Eve with their self-

accusation, and they subsequently find the Creator's grace. Consequently, iniquity portrays in the most profound manner Satan's identity. It is his signature and coat of arms.

Finally, Conrad's and Milton's incarnations of the archetype of evil genius unavoidably turn out to be, despite their glorious pronouncements (Kurtz's pamphlet and Satan's peroration about independence and sovereignty in Hell), the heads of terror regimes, at times much more dictatorial than those who have triggered their mutiny. Pitifully enough, the revolt against severely felt discrimination forces them to commit exactly the same atrocities, and, what is more, it emerges as deception because of its serving to provoke novel processes of domination. While running away from the tyranny of God who in Satan's eyes curbs his sense of freedom, Foe emerges as likewise tyrannical in infliction of crime upon blameless Adam and Eve shattering in that way their spiritual freedom. As God materializes as an oppressor to the independently-thinking Archangel, to the same extent, or even more, Fiend becomes a tormenter annihilating the first people's idyllic existence in the Garden of Eden. "The God of *Paradise Lost* is a top-down leader inclined to dictatorial pronouncements, war, and destruction, and in resisting this God, Satan becomes just like him. That paradox is the crux of Satan's character," (83) asserts Bryson. And Kurtz, while struggling to find autonomy outside the discourse of power created by the matrix of anthropological-ritualistic milieu in Europe, appears as the most totalitarian constituent in the analogous discourse of power and brutality in Africa, developing into an unconditional master of life and death of the natives. He appears then to be evil and violence incarnate but, as it is held by Ross, the "monstrous desires in which Kurtz indulges while warlord of the Inner Station are the direct result of his frustrated desire for the Intended as it is exacerbated by his 'comparative poverty'" (43), mitigating in that way his appalling situation. Milton's Satan – an implacable wanderer experiencing insufferable alienation, unfathomable hatred mixed with revenge, the figure who allows absolutely free rein to his desires, yearns for only one thing. His innermost yearning is to impose a wealth of crimes upon those who in his eyes are – as he is, in fact, but he does not want to accept this truth – beloved by the Creator. He cannot exist being devoid of this craving for destructiveness and violence, as it is with Kurtz. It is indeed this detrimental energy they fetch with them wherever they betake themselves.

## NOTES

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<sup>1</sup> All quotes of John Milton's epic are taken from *Paradise Lost*. The Roman numeral refers to the number of the Book, whereas the Arabic numeral signifies the number of the verse.

<sup>2</sup> Evil as the significant constituent of both Satan's and Kurtz's existence is analysed by a wide number of critics. As far as Foe's proclivity for iniquity is taken into consideration, it is studied, among others, by such scholars as Eustace Tillyard in *Milton*, Arnold Stein in *The Art of Presence*, John Armstrong in *The Paradise Myth*, Stanley Fish in *Surprised by Sin* or Zwi Werblowsky in his *Lucifer and Prometheus: A Study of Milton's Satan*. As for Kurtz and his inclination for evil, one can take recourse to such works as *Joseph Conrad: His Moral Vision* by George A. Panichas, *Joseph Conrad – The Major Phase* by Jacques Berthoud or less known works of criticism such as *Out of Eden* by Paul Kahn, the part II of the book *A History of the Heart* by Ole Høystad, the chapter II of the book *Facing Evil* by John Kekes, *The Problem of Evil in Conrad's Heart of Darkness* by Steele Commager, or the chapter entitled "Evil in Heart of Darkness" by Prahlad A. Kulkarni (incorporated into the book *Conrad's Art: An Interpretation and Evaluation* edited by R. N. Sarkar). All those works of criticism, generally, perceive iniquity not only as something heinous in its nature. It is likewise presented as an important reality, an integral part of life-time experiences enabling one to solve eternal dilemmas, as well as a fundamental section of the development of human consciousness. What is more, the nature of iniquity is intrinsically associated with a man's proud nature and ensuing rebellion as a symptom of the abuse of free will or betrayal of fellowship and rejection of social responsibility. Wickedness is often allied with the concept of alienation – assuming many forms – designating the state of mind as well as body. The concepts upon evil constitute the body of my doctoral thesis entitled *The Archetype of Evil Genius – A Comparative Study: John Milton, Joseph Conrad, Fyodor Dostoevsky*. They also appear in my article "Sublimely Gifted but Destined to Fall: A Comparative Study of Conrad's Kurtz and Milton's Satan as the Archetype of Evil Genius" that appeared in Volume XVIII of *Conrad: Eastern and Western Perspectives*.

<sup>3</sup> My article entitled "Trapped in a Vicious Circle of the Tragic Triad ... Miltonian Satan and Conradian Kurtz's Process of Unearthing Authentic Identity" that was given at The Self Industry Conference in Ustroń, Poland (22 – 24<sup>th</sup> September, 2011) focuses upon both Satan and Kurtz as being ensnared in the tragic triad. The phenomenon is described by Viktor Frankl who holds that nobody is sure to be saved from coping with three commonly experienced realities in an existence: pain perceived as the reality of anguish, death as the reality of our mortality (transitoriness of a human being), and guilt as the reality of our human imperfection. Those three polarities of the tragic triad comprise a great section of life of a man, and more importantly, they cannot be avoided. However, regardless of being appalling, their significance arises from the fact that they are stimuli to steady development, the self-discovery.

<sup>4</sup> The concept of Lucifer's rebellion that is intricately associated with that of absurdity is incorporated into my paper entitled "Milton's Satan and His Spatially-Sensuous Discovery of Authentic Subjectivity towards Absurdity" that was presented at Surplus of Culture Conference in Ustroń, Poland (16 – 19<sup>th</sup> September, 2009) and that appeared in *The Language of Sense, Common-Sense and Nonsense*, published by WSEH in Bielsko-Biała.

<sup>5</sup> Translations of all Polish quotes are mine.

<sup>6</sup> This procedure, at times called the Race for Africa or Partition of Africa, took place between 1881 and World War I in 1914. It was the process, comparable to three Partitions of Poland (1772, 1793, and 1795), that involved occupation, colonization and, eventually, annexation of African lands done by European powers. Diplomats during the 1884 – 1885 Berlin Conference were responsible for 'distributing' regions of African territory to European countries (also England); they also agreed that the territory along the Congo River was to be run by Leopold II of Belgium as a neutral area called the Congo Free State.

<sup>7</sup> Subliminally bearing the stigma of his Polish origin and his own experiences from childhood and adolescence associated with the Russian invasion (his parents passed away as a result of their political involvement against the Russians), Conrad has been praised as the writer generally opposed to colonialism. Yet, regardless of this fact, Conrad's portrayal of African natives forced Achebe to condemn the author of "Heart of Darkness" for displaying "in the most vulgar fashion" prejudices against Africans, for expressing "antipathy to black people," and more importantly, for reducing Africa to a "metaphysical battlefield devoid of all recognizable humanity" (252, 260).

<sup>8</sup> The truth is that 17<sup>th</sup> century England was marked not only with the change of dynasty, from Tudor to Stuart, the tragic beheading of Charles I, the Protectorate with Oliver Cromwell as its leader, the Restoration in 1660, but it was also stigmatized with the horror of the civil war, 1642, taking its roots, ironically enough, in quarrels over religious divergences. At its core, there was the struggle over two visions of religiosity in England, namely the Anglican and the Puritan one. To make the whole affair even more appalling, a serious split between people was based upon their approach towards the Church itself and its rituals. Puritans, as the name clearly indicates,

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opted for radical changes, legitimizing them to cleanse the Church of England from Roman Catholic aspects. The echo of this purification-ridden approach, tinged with derision, is clearly heard in Book III of Milton's epic where the despondent wanderer, Satan, arrives at the place called "The Paradise of Fools". There Foe becomes a witness to a bizarre phenomenon, brought to the stage with the expression "when, lo!":

A violent cross-wind from either coast  
Blows them transverse, ten thousand leagues awry,  
Into the devious air: then might ye see  
Cowls, hoods, and habits, with their wearers, tossed  
And fluttered into rags; then relics, beads,  
Indulgences, dispenses, pardons, bulls,  
[...] all these, upwhirled aloft,  
Fly o'er the backside of the World far off  
Into a Limbo large and broad, since called  
The Paradise of Fools

Milton III.486, 487 – 496

Seen in that light, Puritans' desire was focused upon having their Church with the simplest liturgy.

<sup>9</sup> In this article as well as in my doctoral dissertation I am using the name 'hero' as regards Milton's Satan so as to point to the important section of criticism of Foe's identity. Almost from the first publication of the epic, in 1667, the figure of Satan has been under special attention given by a variety of scholars who, almost with fanaticism, have been trying to define and defend true nature of King of Hell. Generally, there are two schools of scholars who have been under powerful influence of Satan, the Satanists and the anti-Satanists. The first group, comprising such names as Blake, Shelley, Hazlitt, Landor, Sir Walter Raleigh, Hamilton, Stoll or Waldo, to name only the most important, and who are perceived as "perverse extollers of Satan and all he stands for" or "gallant and chivalrous opponents who feel bound in honour to pay homage to the Great Enemy's nobler qualities" (Werblowsky 3) treats Milton's Fiend as a genuine hero of *Paradise Lost* lavishly endowed with the finest qualities, being in fact a powerful idol. On the other hand, the anti-Satanists such as C. Williams, C. S. Lewis or Musgrove are in favour of the assumption that due to the fact that Satan is attributed with such vices as "meanness, [...] cruelty, falseness and intellectual hollowness" and "ugly and repellent and 'big with absurdity,'" (4) it is for them an unpardonable miscomprehension to treat the Arch-rebel otherwise than anti-hero, or even a failure, in comparison to Son of God or Adam. It is worth acknowledging that as Satan and his abilities are worshipped by the members of the first school, to the same degree, he is repudiated by the opposing camp. The most conspicuous example of Satan's defenders is William Blake, whereas the fiercest slanderer appears to be Mr. Lewis.

<sup>10</sup> Hesitation as to his evil course apparent in that Book is similar to his previous doubting experience that the reader observes in Book IV during Satan's address to Sun. While perceiving Eve's exceptional beauty, the epic voice announces:

Such pleasure took the Serpent to behold  
This flowery plat, the sweet recess of Eve  
Thus early, thus alone; her heavenly form  
Angelic, but most soft and feminine,  
Her graceful innocence, her every air  
Of gesture or least action, overawed  
His malice, and with rapine sweet bereaved  
His fierceness of the fierce intent it brought.  
That space the Evil One abstracted stood  
From his own evil, and for the time remained  
Stupidly good, of enmity disarmed,  
Of guile, of hate, of envy, of revenge.

Milton IX.455 – 466

It is important to add that those two shattering, for Satan, experiences unavoidably testify to the thesis that Milton's Foe, regardless of his steadfast determination and resolve in iniquity, cannot be treated as the static construct that is unable to change. His doubts shed light upon him as a dynamic character.

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