

Dialogic Signs of Resistance: a Case Study of Reading Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*

Ayman Abu-Shomar

English Department, Faculty of Language and Translation
Imam Muhammad Ibn Saud Islamic University, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia

Fatin AbuHilal

English Department, Faculty of Arts
Yarmouk University, Jordan

Abstract

Dialogic criticism constitutes an ideal case for reading and interpreting literary texts as it does not talk *about* the text but *to* the text or more precisely *with* the text so that neither voice is excluded. It, according to Clifford, proposes a reading transaction that is precisely the space readers wish to explore as the borderland between 'self' and 'other' and a potent location to ask questions and have discussions. Both the reader and the text are opened, exposed, and the 'self' is strengthened rather than diminished. For a further investigation into these claims, a case study through the application of participant observer is conducted on four groups of graduate students in a 'post-colonial' educational setting to explore their dialogic engagement with a literary text. We contend that 'dialogic readers' go through a complex cultural exchange whose identities constructed not as an 'archaic survival' (Clifford), but as an ongoing process, politically contested and historically unfinished. Such a proposal could be taken up as providing sufficient power to guide literary criticism particularly in post-colonial educational contexts, and contributes to the field of literary theory and criticism. It also provides readers of an alternative approach to textual meanings and analysis.

Keywords: Dialogism, dialogic criticism, post-colonialism, literary criticism, classroom literature