

An analysis of heart of darkne



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Conrad's novel, *Heart of Darkness*, relies on the historical period of imperialism in order to describe its protagonist, Charlie Marlow, and his struggle. Marlow's catharsis in the novel, as he goes to the Congo, rests on how he visualises the effects of imperialism. Marlow's "change," as caused by his exposure to the imperialistic nature of the historical period in which he lived is one of the main concerns of our study. Because, Joseph Conrad develops themes of personal power, individual responsibility, and social justice in *Heart of Darkness* to reveal the evil produced by man who is seen as the product of society. Marlow is asked by "the company", the organisation for whom he works, to travel to the Congo river and report back to them about Mr. Kurtz, a top notch officer of theirs. When he sets sail, he doesn't know what to expect. When his journey is completed, this little "trip" will have changed Marlow forever! For Colleen Burke, "Like a knight of the Round Table, Marlow sets off in search of strange adventures. He only gradually acquires a grail, as he picks up more and more hints about Kurtz. Like a knight he is frequently tested by signs he must confront, question and interpret. Among these signs we can count the title of the novel, the contrasts made by the narrator throughout the story, the jungle, the ivory trade, the shadows of the jungle, pilgrims, Kurtz, the painting of Kurtz and the last words of Kurtz, and the lies of Marlow when he returns home. On the other hand, since for us all these signs were applied by Conrad for one thing; that is to uncover the evil side hidden in man by plunging deep into the darkness of his heart with great courage in order to find what was laying there and to take it out to the daylight. That is why, *Heart of Darkness* is a story of one man's journey through the African Congo and the "enlightenment" of his soul. It begins with Charlie Marlow, along with a few of

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his comrades, cruising aboard the *Nellie*, a traditional sailboat. On the boat, Marlow begins to tell of his experiences in the Congo.

Heart of Darkness is set in the Congo. However, it is not really set in the Congo. Rather, it is a story that we infer takes place in the Congo, narrated by Marlow from a barge on the Thames. We infer that it is in Africa because we know that Conrad was there, and because of the images he uses. Heart Of Darkness is based on Conrad's own experience as the captain of a West African river steamer in 1890. Conrad reveals the story of Marlow, the protagonist, who travels up the Congo in search of Kurtz, an ivory trader. Marlow's voyage from the coast takes him past signs of Europe exploitation of the natives toward the "heart of darkness," where Kurtz, once an idealistic young man, is now the leader of what Marlow calls "unspeakable rites." Conrad's story hints at horrors that Marlow is unable to describe, leaving the reader to imagine actions that lie outside civilized human behavior. The reality of Heart of Darkness is that the entire time, we never leave the Thames. During the time when Conrad wrote Heart of Darkness, and even before that, during the imaginary time when Marlow went to the Congo, the British colonial empire was at its height. Britain was the preeminent world power during the second half of the nineteenth century. She had colonies around the world, including India, Malaya, Hong Kong, and much of Africa. Britain controlled the Suez Canal, the east coast of Africa, and the route to the source of the Nile. The images from the Thames in Heart of Darkness lend support to the argument that this is, at a basic level, a novel about imperialism. At the beginning of the novel, Conrad connects the Thames to the Congo. The Thames is "a waterway leading to the uttermost

ends of the earth." It is connected to the Congo like " an interminable waterway." It is connected both symbolically and actually. It is connected physically as all rivers are connected to each other. It is also connected by shared humanity, and it is connected economically. One piece of the economic connection is the ivory coming out of the Congo, on its way to Europe. This economic connection is alluded to by the presence of London in the distance — the " monstrous town" — and by the gloom we now see as we sit on the Thames with Marlow — a lightness growing gradually darker, a sense of foreboding that intensifies. From the barge on the Thames, Marlow tells us, " And this also has been one of the dark places of the earth." The Congo was the place that brought about the " partition of Africa." The partition of Africa was a momentous event. It took place between 1880 and 1890, and marked the beginning of the colonial era in Africa. Before the partition of Africa, many European countries had nothing but " toeholds" in Africa. These toeholds were economic and political claims to the coastal regions of Africa. Before the partition of Africa, the map of Africa was, for Europeans, a map with a big blank space in the center. Conrad later admits to a fascination with the big blank space. He writes: It was in 1868, when I was nine years old or thereabouts, that while looking at a map of Africa of the time and putting my finger on that blank space then representing the unsolved mystery of the continent, I said to myself with absolute assurance and an amazing audacity which are no longer in my character now:" When I grow up I shall go there." How was the Congo implicated in the partition of Africa? During the 1870's, this region of Central Africa that we now call Zaire was the domain of Belgium. King Leopold II of the Belgians had created a personal empire for himself in this area of Africa. This was an area rich in

ivory and other minerals, including diamonds. For this reason, it is natural for Europeans to be jealous of others and to be in competition with other countries in exploitation of the area.

The British, French and Germans were jealous that King Leopold owned such a vast rich area of Africa. To resolve the controversy they set up an international conference in Berlin in 1884. The conferencees, not an African among them, decided that all the nations of Europe should have free access to the interior of Africa — to the white spaces. They also decided that a country could not claim a region of Africa for its own unless there was clear evidence of occupation. The 1884 conference led to a scramble for colonies. King Leopold already had a head start. In 1878, he had hired an explorer named Henry Stanley to establish trading stations along the Congo river. Stanley had gone there before, and had essentially “ opened up” the interior of Africa. In 1885, a year after the Berlin conference, King Leopold established the Congo Free State. The Congo Free State was not a Belgian colony, but a personal possession of King Leopold. It was during this time that Conrad went to the Congo. Marlow begins his journey as an ordinary English sailor who is sailing to the African Congo on a “ business trip”. He is an Englishmen through and through. He’s never been exposed to any alternative form of culture, similar to the one he will encounter in Africa, and he has no idea about the drastically different culture that exists out there. Throughout the book, Conrad, via Marlow’s observations, reveals to the reader the naive mentality shared by every European. Marlow as well, shares this naivet in the beginning of his voyage. However, after his first few moments in the Congo, he realises the ignorance he and all his comrades

possess. We first recognise the general naiveté of the Europeans when Marlow's aunt is seeing him for the last time before he embarks on his journey.

Marlow's aunt is under the assumption that the voyage is a mission to “wean those ignorant millions from their horrid ways”(18-19). In reality, however, the Europeans are there in the name of imperialism and their sole objective is to earn a substantial profit by collecting all the ivory in Africa. Another manifestation of the Europeans' obliviousness towards reality is seen when Marlow is recounting his adventure aboard the *Nellie*. He addresses his comrades who are on board saying: “When you have to attend to things of that sort, to the mere incidents of the surface, the reality—the reality I tell you—fades. The inner truth is hidden luckily, luckily. But I felt it all the same; I felt often its mysterious stillness watching over me at my monkey tricks, just as it watches you fellows performing on your respective tight ropes for—what is it? half a crown a tumble—(56).” What Marlow is saying is that while he is in the Congo, although he has to concentrate on the petty little everyday things, such as overseeing the repair of his boat, he is still aware of what is going on around him and of the horrible reality in which he is in the midst of. On the other hand, his friends on the boat simply don't know of these realities. It is their ignorance, as well as their innocence which provokes them to say “Try to be civil, Marlow”(57). Not only are they oblivious to the reality which Marlow is exposed to, but their naiveté is so great, they can't even comprehend a place where this ‘so called’ reality would even be a bad dream! Hence, their response is clearly rebuking the words of a “savage” for having said something so ridiculous and “

uncivilised". Quite surprisingly, this mentality does not pertain exclusively to the Englishmen in Europe. At one point during Marlow's voyage down the Congo, his boat hits an enormous patch of fog. At that very instant, a "very loud cry" is let out (66). After Marlow looks around and makes sure everything is all right, he observes the contrasts of the whites and the blacks expressions. It was very curious to see the contrast of expression of the white men and of the black fellows of our crew, who were as much strangers to this part of the river as we, though their homes were only eight hundred miles away. The whites, of course greatly discomposed, had besides a curious look of being painfully shocked by such an outrageous row. The others had an alert, naturally interested expression; but their faces were essentially quiet. (67). Once again, we see the simple-mindedness of the Europeans, even if they were exposed to reality. Their mentality is engraved in their minds and is so impliable, that even the environment of the Congo can't sway their belief that people simply don't do the horrible things Marlow recounts. On the Nellie, Marlow explains to his comrades, the basic difference between living in Europe, and being in the Congo. He states: "You can't understand. How could you? With solid pavement under your feet, surrounded by kind neighbours ready to cheer you or to fall you, stepping delicately between the butcher and the policeman, in the holy terror of scandal and gallows and lunatic asylums—how can you imagine what particular region of the first ages a man's untrammelled feet may take him into by the way of solitude—utter solitude without a policeman—by the way of silence utter silence, where no warning voice of a kind neighbour can be heard whispering of public opinion(82)?" In Europe, there are "kind neighbours" who are there to make sure that everything is all right. The

European lives his life “stepping delicately between the butcher and the policeman”. Everywhere he looks, there is always someone there who can “catch him if he is falling”. On the other hand, once a man enters the Congo, he is all alone. No policeman, no “warning voice of a kind neighbour”...no one! It is now when Marlow enters the Congo and begins his voyage, that he realises the environment he comes from is not reality, and the only way he is going to discover reality is to keep going up the river... There is one specific theme in Heart of Darkness in which the reader can follow Marlow’s evolution from the “everyday European” to a man who realises his own naivet and finally to his uncovering of his own reality. Marlow, as his aunt declared ‘something like a lower sort of apostle’, plunges deep into the darkness of both a continent and his own soul to find out the reality. As Collin Burke clearly acknowledged the travel of Marlow has symbolic significance and implications. As the Heart of Darkness snakes its way into the savage shadows of the African continent, Joseph Conrad exposes a psycho-geography of the collective unconscious in the entangling metaphoric realities of the serpentine Congo. Conrad’s novella descends into the unknowable darkness at the heart of Africa, taking its narrator, Marlow, on an underworld journey of individuation, a modern odyssey toward the center of the Self and the center of the Earth. Ego dissolves into soul as, in the interior, Marlow encounters his double in the powerful image of ivory-obsessed Kurtz, the dark shadow of European imperialism. The dark meditation is graced by personifications of anima in Kurtz’ black goddess, the savagely magnificent consort of the underworld, and in his porcelain-skinned Persephone, innocent intended of the upperworld.

On the other hand, Freud saw that society creates mechanisms to ensure social control of human instincts.. For Freud, the past is not something that can be completely outgrown by either the individual or society but rather is something that remains a vital and often disruptive part of existence. The emphasis on the past being alive in the present is a central theme in psychoanalytic approaches to the individual and society.(origins). For this reason Freud understood culture as an expression of desires in conflict with one another and with society. He thought religion, art, and science could be richly rewarding. But he emphasized that culture is the product of impulses denied a more directly sexual or aggressive satisfaction. If these cultural practices fail to alleviate the conflicts at the heart of the human psyche, what then, Freud asked, are the consequences for the individual? If forms of social life fail to meet basic psychological needs, what then are the consequences for society of these unfulfilled desires? These remained for Freud the vital questions about the relation between our civilization and ourselves. Hence, he was fascinated by ancient objects as if they were witnesses to humanity's deepest impulses covered over by thousands of years of the civilizing progress. The presence of these objects seemed to speak to him of the distant, yet still active, past. (ders notlar) For this reason he said: " The primitive stages can always be re-established; the primitive mind is, in the fullest meaning of the word, imperishable. sigmund Freud, 1915" The conflicts that Freud stressed were within the psyche: people at war with themselves and sometimes with the cultural authorities they had internalized. But he thought that the way we managed (or failed to manage) those conflicts had everything to do with the explosions of violence that marked the modern world. Freud did not propose solutions to how one might

escape this violence. Instead, his writings on the connection of culture and conflict identified fundamental problems for the century. Heart of Darkness can be seen as an example of answer proposed by Conrad to these fundamental problems.

However, as Freud claimed; “ It is easy, as we can see, for a barbarian to be healthy; for a civilised man the task is hard.” Early in the novel it becomes apparent that there is a great deal of tension in Marlow's mind about whether he should profit from the immoral actions of the company he works for which is involved in the ivory trade in Africa. Marlow believes that the company is ignorant of the tension between moral enlightenment and capitalism . The dehumanization of its laborers which is so early apparent to Marlow seems to be unknown to other members of the Company's management. In Heart of Darkness, there is a real contrast between what is light and what is dark. These contrasts work within the reality of what is considered civilized and uncivilized. The light representing civilization or the civilized side of the world and the dark representing the uncivilized or savage side of the world. Throughout the book, there are several references to these two contrasts. In Conrad's novel, black and white have the usual connotations of evil and good. However, as we mentioned earlier, in Heart of Darkness we can find many symbolic contrasts of dark and light; it is used to depict the contrast between capitalism and moral enlightenment. The tension between capitalism and moral enlightenment in the first twenty pages of this story is evident. Conrad uses Marlow to depict a seemingly good-hearted person caught in the middle of the common dilemma of moral ethics and desire for monetary success. Marlow knows that there is a great deal of repugnance in

what he is doing, yet he finds himself forced to deal with it in his own personal way, which is justify it or ignore it. It is clear that the company also is forced to deal with this same issue, but it does it simply by pretending that it is not dehumanizing its entire work force. This blindness allows the Company to profit and prosper, but only at the expense of the lives of the workers in the jungle who have no way to protest or escape and the “ white collar” workers like Marlow who have to live with their hypocrisy.

The word “ pilgrims” was used by Conrad many times throughout the novel. We were forced to make the same contrast between capitalism and moral enlightenment. Because, as is known, pilgrimage is a religious journey in order of moral enlightenment of the soul, that is to say, in order to serve God and reach spiritual prosperity. However, in Heart of Darkness, we see pilgrims who serve capitalism which is associated here with ivory.

As Marlow travels up the river, he is constantly preoccupied with Kurtz. From the beginning of his trip, he is compared to Kurtz by all people that he comes into contact with, and a great deal of his thoughts are of Kurtz.

The setting also plays a critical role in describing how Marlow feels about the entire adventure he endured. From the very start of the novel, there are signs of what is to come. The colors of items and objects help to foreshadow the tragedy that is to come to Marlow. There are a couple of instances in particular that elude to the difficult future Marlow will face. Further along in the novel there are many more examples of the contrast between light and dark. The ending of the novel also proves to continue to contrast between light and dark, especially when speaking of the savages Marlow encounters

when attempting to save Kurtz. The ultimate contrast of light and dark occurs with the death of Kurtz on the boat after he is saved and being brought back down “ The brown current (that) ran swiftly out of the heart of darkness...” This quote being perhaps the ultimate description of the savagery and uncivilization of the Congo as Marlow and Kurtz try to quickly escape the savagery and death of the Congo. With their escape and these words comes the title of the book, Heart of Darkness.

In the novel, Marlow’s aunt represents capitalism. Her efforts to get him a job are significant because of the morally compromising nature of the work of which she seems totally ignorant. When Marlow expresses doubts about the nature of the work, she replies, “ You forget, dear Charlie, that the labourer is worthy of his hire” (12). It is clear that Marlow has mixed feelings about the whole idea. At one point, trying to justify his actions to himself, he says, “ You understand it was a continental concern, that Trading Society; but I have a lot of relations on the living continent, because it’s cheap and not so nasty as it looks they say” (12). Marlow finally takes the job, however, and tells himself that the pain and unusually harsh treatment the workers are subjected to is minimal.

During the tests and the requirements that he has to undergo before entering the jungle Marlow feels that he is being treated like a freak. The doctor measures his head and asks him questions such as, “ Ever any madness in your family?” (15). In this part of the story Marlow is made to feel small and unimportant. Any feelings or concerns that he has are not important to the company, and as a result, he feels alone. It is only logical that Marlow would have been second guessing his decision and feeling some

kinship with the other (black) workers who are exploited, but he does not reveal any such understanding. Upon reaching his destination in Africa, Marlow finds that things are just the same. At the point when he is denied rest after traveling twenty miles on foot he sees things are not going to change. Marlow then tells of how disease and death are running wild through out the area, which as for Freud “ It is easy, as we can see, for a barbarian to be healthy; for a civilised man the task is hard.”, and the company does nothing in the way of prevention other than to promote those who stay alive. Marlow’s theory on why the manager was in that position was that “...he was never ill” (25). This is a bad situation for Marlow because he sees his boss as a simple man with little else to offer the company other than to be a mindless foreman over the operation. This is an example of the company stripping self worth from its workers in the sense that it does not encourage or expect input from them. This is all significant because Marlow finds himself in a position where he is giving up a big piece of himself and his beliefs to make money. The sickness of the individual is ultimately caused and sustained by the sickness of his civilization.- Herbert Marcuse, 1955 Science is not illusion. But it would be an illusion to suppose that we could get anywhere else what it cannot give us.- Sigmund Freud, 1927 Objects from the Depths: Freud was fascinated by ancient objects — as if they were witnesses to humanity’s deepest impulses covered over by thousands of years of the civilizing process. The presence of these objects seemed to speak to him of the distant, yet still active, past.

The book Future of an Illusion testifies to the fact that the genius of experimental science is not necessarily joined with the genius of logic or

generalizing power.- T. S. Eliot, 1928
The Longings of Religion For Freud, religion was a primitive attempt to deal with the frightening realities of the world and the impossibility of satisfying our fundamental desires. Religion, in his view, was a response to that fear and longing. Love for and fear of the father found symbolic expression, he thought, in the major religious traditions.

It is easy, as we can see, for a barbarian to be healthy; for a civilized man the task is hard. Sigmund Freud, 1938
Thus Freud shatters the humanist hope that high culture itself may succeed religion as a source of moral controls.- Phillip Rieff, 1966
I have never doubted that religious phenomena are only to be understood on the pattern of the individual neurotic symptoms familiar to us.- Sigmund Freud, 1939
CRISES Freud thought that social life originated in unresolvable conflicts and hence that civilization was always vulnerable to radical disruptions. From World War I until his death in 1939, he witnessed increasingly violent social crises, which he took to be irrational “ symptoms” of these primal conflicts. Seemingly senseless wars, escalating anti-Semitism, and the threat of Nazi domination were all interpreted by Freud in terms of his model of psychological conflict. Children, no less than adults themselves, are dominated by their sexual impulses and aggressive strivings.- Anna Freud, 1951
Why Can't We be Happy? In this essay, Freud explored the consequences of repressing impulses in order to live in society. Civilization must curtail the death instinct, but, if people are denied the satisfactions of aggression, they turn against themselves. Freud saw no way out of this dilemma and noted that “ they all want consolation, from the wild-eyed revolutionaries to the conservatives. . . .” He offered none and instead

emphasized the conflicts he saw at the heart of all human life. There are many things to see in this passage. Among them, we observe how Marlow is able to identify personally with “ a savage who is no more account than a grain of sand in a black Sahara.” On the other hand, we observe in retrospect Marlow’s graciousness toward this mere savage — (as if to say) — “ ah, yes, this is a mere savage, and I — such a wonder — could actually see humanity in him — amazing — he is human.” Marlow is simultaneously a good liberal and a racist, and a man struggling quite consciously with both perspectives. Return to top of page

Achebe’s critique and Images of Illness in Africa Those of you who have read the introduction in your edition of Heart of Darkness are aware of Chinua Achebe’s critique of the novel. I would like to go back for a moment to Achebe’s critique. Everyone who writes about Heart of Darkness is aware that Conrad does not explicitly state that it is set in Africa.” as setting and backdrop which eliminates the African as human factor. Africa as metaphysical battlefield devoid of all recognizable humanity, into which the wandering European enters at his peril. Can nobody see the preposterous and perverse arrogance in thus reducing Africa to the role of props for the break-up of one petty European mind?” Let us take the analysis one step further, beyond the mere words at the surface of the story, and beyond the inner struggles of the characters in the story. Let us look now at how Conrad has used imagery in Heart of Darkness as a kind of shorthand of the emotions, invoking shared meanings that, in this case, have their origins in western images of Africa and of the primitive. Images of modernity in Heart of Darkness contrast with images of the primitive. We can think of modernity in two ways. For one, to be “ modern” is to not be savage. In Heart of Darkness, Africans are often savages, though at times, Europeans

are savages. Europeans were savages in the past, and there is some ambiguity in Heart of Darkness about their status as non-savages in the Congo. We also find images of modernity — or its breakdown — in the boiler laying in the grass, the piles of broken drainage pipes, and the pieces of rusting machinery Marlow saw at his Company's Station. Boats fall apart and there are no rivets to fix them. Roads just don't get built, and bricks just don't get made. In Heart of Darkness' Congo, the very essence of the industrial revolution rots, and the most basic structures which define the modern world are frustrated. The Europeans who try to bring roads or make bricks or fix boats are defeated, and their original purposes in going to the Congo are made futile and meaningless. Listen to this passage: Once a white man in an unbuttoned uniform, camping on the path with an armed escort of lank Zanzibaris, very hospitable and festive — not to say drunk. Was looking after the upkeep of the road, he declared. Can't say I saw any road or any upkeep, unless the body of a middle-aged negro, with a bullet-hole in the forehead, upon which I absolutely stumbled three miles farther on, may be considered as a permanent improvement.

Not only does this place lack a road, the most basic signal of civilization, but a dead African blocks the way. Note that it was a bullet and not a spear that did this guy in. The entire scene is ludicrous — a white guy looking after a nonexistent road, the meaning of his mission reduced to absolute futility. I will now talk about the Congo in the nineteenth century, and about some of the images of Africa and Africans taken home to Europe. These images have many sources. Some of them were stories about travels through Africa, and these included several books written by Henry Stanley. These books were

published during Conrad's lifetime. Stanley's book *Through the Dark Continent* was published 1879, and *How I found Livingstone in Central Africa* was published in 1890. *In Darkest Africa* was published in 1891. These were popular books, and it is reasonable to suggest that if Conrad hadn't read them, he was at least influenced by the pictures they presented of Africa. We also know that Conrad read anthropology, and apparently Conrad was very intrigued by one particular anthropologist who wrote about the Arctic. He may have read early anthropological accounts of Africa. But many of these writings which we see in retrospect as "anthropology" really came from missionaries and specialists in tropical medicine who had gone to Africa to save souls or to cure the sick or both. Many of these people came back to Europe and N. America to write accounts of their experiences. In the place in Kenya where I did my research, Quaker missionaries were the first ones to learn the indigenous language and to produce reliable writings about the culture. First, Africa was seen as a place of physical darkness. I think the titles of Stanley's books are dead giveaways. *In Darkest Africa*. *Through the Dark Continent*. *In Darkest Africa* cover has a picture of a continent with a black middle not a white one. Yet the middle is blank. *Through the Dark Continent* has an engraving of Stanley in a military uniform on a boat in a dense jungle. The background of the jungle is black, and the book is green. A lot of this imagery came from the tropical rain forest. Aside from "black wool" and "black hens," Conrad fills the pages of *Heart of Darkness* with descriptions of slithering, shining blackness. I went through at one point and circled every reference to the colors of the people. Here are some examples: "black shapes crouched, lay, sat between the trees," "strings of dusty niggers with splay feet arrived and departed," "a whirl of black limbs," "the

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bush was swarming with human limbs in movement, glistening, of bronze colour." Of course there is another kind of darkness being alluded to here. There was Kurtz's darkness — " an impenetrable darkness." All the dark images in the book — the black/green jungle, the black shapes that lay or splay or whirl or stare or die — all of these allude to this other kind of darkness. The second image that was associated with Africa historically is that of paganism. Many Bantu-speaking African societies had a multi-layered way of thinking about God and the spirit. In addition to a supreme God, traditional African religions also included a belief in ancestral spirits. These ancestral spirits had the power to act in the lives of living people, and their actions could be good or bad. Living people would do things to keep the spirits of their dead ancestors from harming them. But the notion that this was paganism was like saying the center of Africa was blank, that it was up for grabs. The African had religion, but it was African religion. Many Christian missionaries were appalled by beliefs in ancestral spirits, which they interpreted as witchcraft and sorcery. In addition, they were appalled by other practices, including female circumcision, traditional healings which included facial scarification, sacrifice of animals at gravesides, and the pounding of drums. African religious celebrations such as funerals were interpreted as frenzied, wild-eyed dances. All these things were often associated with evil, because godlessness was considered dark and evil. For this reason, Africa was and continues to be seen as a battleground between good and evil. Indeed, Conrad uses images of flames and fire, even of Mephistopheles, to allude to images of hell. Disease is a third image associated with Africa. The west coast of Africa was once known as " the white man's graveyard." Half the Europeans who went there died in the first

year. Europeans just did not have immunity to disease that the Africans had. Yellow fever was especially problematic. It was a disease that killed adults, but was rarely fatal in children. African children would survive yellow fever and therefore ward it off as adults. But Europeans who went to Africa were already adults, so their chances of surviving a bout of yellow fever were much worse. Malaria was also rampant. Malaria is a parasite transmitted by a mosquito. The first bout with malaria is the worst, and thus many Europeans succumbed to it. Schistosomiasis is a parasite that spends half its life in the body of a snail, and the other half in the body of a human being. It enters through the skin and leaves the human body through waste products. Sleeping sickness was also problematic. I could go on and on with the list. In Heart of Darkness, Europeans are plagued with African diseases. Indeed, disease is so common in Heart of Darkness that lack of disease is considered remarkable. The one man in Heart of Darkness who did not ever seem to get ill was the incompetent manager at the station. Even Conrad had been sick.

The Symbol of the Wilderness in Heart of Darkness by David Dunson

English2/8/93 Revised 3/11/93 The wilderness is a very significant symbol in Joseph Conrad's Heart of Darkness. It is not only the backdrop against which the action of the story takes place, but also a character of the story in and of itself. The vastness and savagery of the wilderness contrast with the pettiness and foolishness of the pilgrims, and the wilderness also shows the greed and brutality that lie under the noblest of ideals. The wilderness is not a person as such, but rather an ominous, brooding, and omnipotent force that continually watches the "fantastic invasion" of the white man. The activities of the white people are viewed throughout the book as insane and pointless. They spend their existence grubbing for ivory or plotting against

each other for position and status within their own environment. Their whole society seems to have an air of unreality about it. It is as if they are building their whole lives on nothing more substantial than a morning mist, easily blown away by the merest puff of wind. Marlow comments: “ The word ‘ ivory’ rang in the air, was whispered, was sighed. You would think they were praying to it . . . I’ve never seen anything so unreal in my life” (37). In contrast, the wilderness appears solid, immovable, and ominously threatening. During Marlow’s stay at the Central Station, he describes the surrounding wilderness as a “ rioting invasion of soundless life, a rolling wave of plants, piled up, crested, ready to . . . sweep every little man of us out of his little existence” (49). It is difficult to say, however, what the intentions of the wilderness actually are. We see the wilderness entirely through Marlow’s eyes, and it is always somewhat of an enigma. It is “ an implacable force brooding over an inscrutable intention” (56). The wilderness is not just an impersonal force that is unconcerned with anything else but itself. It is, rather, a mirror in which one can see clearly the darkness hidden in one’s heart. The force of the wilderness is only malevolent towards pretense. The natives, who are too simple to have false motives and pretenses, live perfectly at peace with it. In fact, in many places in the story their voices can be considered the voices of the wilderness. Specifically, when they are crying out in grief through the impenetrable fog, their voices seem to be coming from the wilderness itself. (“ . . . to me it seemed as though the mist itself had screamed . . .”) (66) The natives reflect the savage but very real quality of the wilderness. Consider Marlow’s description of the natives in the canoes on the coast: “. . . they had bone, muscle, a wild vitality, and intense energy of movement, that was as natural and true as

the surf along their coast. They wanted no excuse for being there" (21). The environment of the jungle, in contrast with the European society from which the white men have come, imposes no restraints upon the behavior of an individual. It is a harsh environment that tests one's ability to hold onto sanity without the structure of society. The people who are successful in fighting the wilderness are those who create their own structured environments. As long as they keep themselves busy with surface activities, they cannot hear the whisperings of the wilderness, and the darkness in their hearts remains buried. For example, the chief accountant of the government station preserved himself by maintaining an impeccable appearance. Marlow says of him, ". . . in the great demoralization of the land he kept up his appearance. That's backbone. His starched collars and got-up shirt-fronts were achievements of character" (28). Marlow himself must also face the truth that the wilderness reveals to him. He sees the wild dancing and chanting of the natives, and though he says at first that the spectacle is utterly incomprehensible to him, upon reflection he admits that he feels a remote kinship to the "passionate uproar." Marlow says, "The earth was unearthly, and the men were-No, they were not inhuman. Well, you know, that was the worst of it-this suspicion of their not being inhuman" (59). But, like the chief accountant's clothes, Marlow's work piloting and repairing the steamboat distracts him from such thoughts. On the whole, the white men are successful in fighting the influence of the wilderness. They are either too greedy and stupid to realize that they are under attack, such as the pilgrims who are hunting for ivory, or they have managed to insulate themselves through work, such as the accountant. There is, however, one notable exception. Kurtz, the fabulously successful chief of the Inner Station who has

come from Europe to civilize the natives, succumbs to the savagery of the wilderness. He gives up his high aspirations, and the wilderness brings out the darkness and brutality in his heart. All the principles and aspirations of European society are stripped from him, and the abominable passions and greed of his true nature are revealed. He collects a following of loyal natives who worship him as an idol, and they raid surrounding villages and collect huge amounts of ivory. The chiefs must use ceremonies so horrible in approaching Kurtz that Marlow cannot bear to have them described. Marlow says, “. . . such details would be more intolerable than those heads drying on the stakes under Mr. Kurtz’s windows. . . . I seemed at one bound to have been transported into some lightless region of subtle horrors . . .” (98) The full significance of the wilderness can be seen only through Kurtz, because it is he who most succumbs to its powers. Through the influence of the wilderness, basic human nature is revealed in him. Consider the following comment by Marlow about the power of the wilderness over Kurtz: “. . . the wilderness . . . seemed to draw him to its pitiless breast by the awakening of forgotten and brutal instincts, by the memory of gratified and monstrous passions . . . this alone had beguiled his unlawful soul beyond the bounds of permitted aspirations. (112) The degradation of Kurtz has implications for more than just himself. It is a commentary on all of humanity. At his death, he sees the true state of mankind. His gaze is “ piercing enough to penetrate all the hearts that beat in the darkness” (119). His final statement of “ The horror! The horror!” is his judgment on all of life. The wilderness brings Kurtz to the point where he has a full awareness of himself, and from there he makes his pronouncement about all mankind.

Thus, in the story the wilderness is more than a backdrop for the plot. It is a relentless force that continually beckons the characters to shed the restraints of civilization and to gratify the abominable desires of their hearts. The wilderness destroys man's pretensions and shows him the truth about himself. Marlow finds himself in a position where he is faced to accept the fact that the man he has admired and looked up to is a madman. He realizes that Kurtz's methods are not only unethical, but also inhumane. Marlow comes to realize that Kurtz is evil, and that he himself is also evil, thus Marlow's disillusion makes his identification with Kurtz horrifying. As Marlow travels up the river, he is constantly preoccupied with Kurtz. Marlow says "I seemed to see Kurtz for the first time...the lone white man turning his back suddenly on the headquarters, on relief, on thoughts of home...towards his empty and desolate station" (32). From the beginning of his trip, he is compared to Kurtz by all of the people that he comes into contact with, and a great deal of his thoughts are of Kurtz. He wonders how he will measure up to the standards that the company set for him, what Kurtz's personality is like, and what Kurtz would think of him. The more obsessed he becomes with Kurtz, the more he sets himself up for the horrible reality of what his new idol was truly made of. Upon reaching Kurtz's station, Marlow's disillusion begins to set in. He is greeted by an English-speaking Russian whom he takes for a man who on the surface is a decent level-headed person, but after short conversation it is apparent to Marlow that he is talking with a disturbed individual, but that was not what bothered Marlow. Hearing of and seeing the acts committed by Kurtz made Marlow uneasy, and even afraid. It was at this point that Marlow begins his denial of any affinity he feels with Kurtz. He says in regard to the Russian "I suppose that it had not occurred to him that

Mr. Kurtz was no idol of mine_(59). Marlow sees all of the atrocities committed by Kurtz, and is appalled, but when he looks deep with inside himself he sees what he could easily become, and he desperately wants to suppress it. Once Kurtz is on the boat, and headed with Marlow back to civilization, things take a strange turn. Though Marlow and Kurtz have little to talk about, they develop a distinct respect for each other. As Kurtz dies, Marlow accepts this death easily and remains loyal to his dying requests. It troubles Marlow a great deal that there is so much of himself in the things Kurtz did. There is a point where Marlow finds the evil that lurks in heart of all men, and he simply accepts it. This is mostly clearly demonstrated at the end of the story when he claims to be thinking Dont you understand I loved him-I loved him-I loved him_(79). In this quote Marlow lets it all out. On the surface he hated Kurtzs actions, but he loved his power to fight the standards of society and to live as a true man.

Marlow finds out that there is a savage beast in himself, and in all men in his mind. There are a lot of problems that Marlow faces and he maintains his composure. It Kurtzs lack of composure that Marlow privately admires. In this story Marlow is forced to accept his disillusion with Krutz, and is terrified of the identification that comes along with this acceptance. It is only then when Marlow realizes the true nature of man.

Joseph Conrad's novel Heart of Darkness is about a seaman named Charlie Marlow and an experience he had as a younger man. Early in the novel it becomes apparent that there is a great deal of tension in Marlow's mind about whether he should profit from the immoral actions of the company he works for which is involved in the ivory trade in Africa. Marlow believes that

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the company is ignorant of the tension between moral enlightenment and capitalism. The dehumanization of its laborers which is so early apparent to Marlow seems to be unknown to other members of the Company's management.

During the tests and the requirements that he has to undergo before entering the jungle Marlow feels that he is being treated like a freak. The doctor measures his head and asks him questions such as, "Ever any madness in your family?" (15). In this part of the story Marlow is made to feel small and unimportant. Any feelings or concerns that he has are not important to the company, and as a result, he feels alone. It is only logical that Marlow would have been second guessing his decision and feeling some kinship with the other (black) workers who are exploited, but he does not reveal any such understanding. Upon reaching his destination in Africa, Marlow finds that things are just the same. At the point when he is denied rest after traveling twenty miles on foot he sees things are not going to change. Marlow then tells of how disease and death are running wild through out the area, and the company does nothing in the way of prevention other than to promote those who stay alive. Marlow's theory on why the manager was in that position was that "...he was never ill" (25). This is a bad situation for Marlow because he sees his boss as a simple man with little else to offer the company other than to be a mindless foreman over the operation. This is an example of the company stripping self worth from its workers in the sense that it does not encourage or expect input from them. This is all significant because Marlow finds himself in a position where he is giving up a big piece of himself and his beliefs to make money.

The tension between capitalism and moral enlightenment in the first twenty pages of this story is evident. Conrad uses Marlow to depict a seemingly good-hearted person caught in the middle of the common dilemma of moral ethics and desire for monetary success. Marlow knows that there is a great deal of repugnance in what he is doing, yet he finds himself forced to deal with it in his own personal way, which is justify it or ignore it. It is clear that the company also is forced to deal with this same issue, but it does it simply by pretending that it is not dehumanizing its entire work force. This blindness allows the Company to profit and prosper, but only at the expense of the lives of the workers in the jungle who have no way to protest or escape and the 3white collar workers like Marlow who have to live with their hypocrisy.

Joseph ConradIn Joseph Conrad's Heart of Darkness, there is a great interpretation of the feelings of the characters and uncertainties of the Congo. Although Africa, nor the Congo are ever really referred to, the Thames river is mentioned as support. This intricate story reveals much symbolism due to Conrad's theme based on the lies and good and evil, which interact together in every man. Today, of course, the situation has changed. Most literate people know that by probing into the heart of the jungle Conrad was trying to convey an impression about the heart of man, and his tale is universally read as one of the first symbolic masterpieces of English prose (Graver, 28). In any event, this story recognizes primarily on Marlow, its narrator, not about Kurtz or the brutality of Belgian officials. Conrad wrote a brief statement of how he felt the reader should interpret this work: " My task which I am trying to achieve is, by the power of the written word, to make you hear, to make you feel-it is above all, to makeyou see.(Conrad

1897) Knowing that Conrad was a novelist who lived in his work, writing about the experiences were as if he were writing about himself. " Every novel contains an element of autobiography-and this can hardly be denied, since the creator can only explain himself in his creations."(Kimbrough, 158)

The story is written as seen through Marlow's eyes. Marlow is a follower of the sea. His voyage up the Congo is his first experience in freshwater navigation. He is used as a tool, so to speak, in order for Conrad to enter the story and tell it out of his own philosophical mind. He longs to see Kurtz, in the hope's of appreciating all that Kurtz finds endearing in the African jungle. Marlow does not get the opportunity to see Kurtz until he is so disease-stricken he looks more like death than a person. There are no good looks or health. In the story Marlow remarks that Kurtz resembles " an animated image of death carved out of old ivory." Like Marlow, Kurtz is seen as an honorable man to many admirers; but he is also a thief, murderer, raider, persecutor, and above all he allows himself to be worshipped as a god. Both men had good intentions to seek, yet Kurtz seemed a " universally genius" lacking basic integrity or a sense of responsibility (Roberts, 43). In the end they form one symbolic unity. Marlow and Kurtz are the light and dark selves of a single person. Meaning each one is what the other might have been. Every person Marlow meets on his venture contributes something to the plot as well as the overall symbolism of the story. Kurtz is the violent devil Marlow describes at the story's beginning. It was his ability to control men through fear and adoration that led Marlow to signify this. Throughout the story Conrad builds an unhealthy darkness that never allows the reader to forget the focus of the story. At every turn he sees evil lurking within the land. Every image reflects a dreary, blank one. The deadly Congo snakes to

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link itself with the sea and all other rivers of darkness and light, with the tributaries and source of man's being on earth (Dean, 189). The setting of these adventurous and moral quests is the great jungle, in which most of the story takes place. As a symbol the forest encloses all, and in the heart of the African journey Marlow enters the dark cavern of his won heart. It even becomes an image of a vast catacomb of evil, in which Kurtz dies, but from which Marlow emerges spiritually reborn. The manager, in charge of three stations in the jungle, feels Kurtz poses a threat to his own position. Marlow sees how the manager is deliberately trying to delay any help or supplies to Kurtz. He hopes he will die of neglect. This is where the inciting moment of the story lies. Should the company in Belgium find out the truth about Kurtz's success in an ivory procurer, they would undoubtedly elevate him to the position of manager. The manager's insidious and pretending nature opposes all truth (Roberts, 42). This story can be the result of two completely different aspects in Conrad's life. One being his journey in the Congo. Conrad had a childhood wish associated with a disapproved childhood ambition to go to sea. Another would be an act of man to throw his life away. Thus, the adventurous Conrad and Conrad the moralist may have experienced collision. But the collision, again as with many novelists of the second war, could well have been deferred and retrospective, not felt intensely at the time (Kimbrough, 124). Heart of Darkness is a record of things seen and done, Then it was ivory that poured from the heart of darkness; now it is uranium. There were so many actual events and facts in the story it made it more an enormity than entertaining. His confrontations as a man are both dangerous and enlightening. Perhaps man's inhumanity to man is his greatest sin. And since the story closes with a lie, maybe Conrad was

discovering and analyzing the two aspects of truth-black truth and white truth. Both, of which, are inherent in every human soul.

David YuCruelty In Joseph Conrad's book Heart of Darkness the Europeans are cut off from civilization, overtaken by greed, exploitation, and material interests from his own kind. Conrad develops themes of personal power, individual responsibility, and social justice. His book has all the trappings of the conventional adventure tale - mystery, exotic setting, escape, suspense, unexpected attack. The book is a record of things seen and done by Conrad while in the Belgian Congo. Conrad uses Marlow, the main character in the book, as a narrator so he himself can enter the story and tell it out of his own philosophical mind. Conrad's voyages to the Atlantic and Pacific, and the coasts of Seas of the East brought contrasts of novelty and exotic discovery. By the time Conrad took his harrowing journey into the Congo in 1890, reality had become unconditional. The African venture figured as his descent into hell. He returned ravaged by the illness and mental disruption which undermined his health for the remaining years of his life. Marlow's journey into the Congo, like Conrad's journey, was also meaningful. Marlow experienced the violent threat of nature, the insensibility of reality, and the moral darkness. We have noticed that important motives in Heart of Darkness connect the white men with the Africans. Conrad knew that the white men who come to Africa professing to bring progress and light to "darkest Africa" have themselves been deprived of the sanctions of their European social orders; they also have been alienated from the old tribal ways. "Thrown upon their own inner spiritual resources they may be utterly damned by their greed, their sloth, and their hypocrisy into moral

insignificance, as were the pilgrims, or they may be so corrupt by their absolute power over the Africans that some Marlow will need to lay their memory among the 'dead Cats of Civilization.'" (Conrad 105.) The supposed purpose of the Europeans traveling into Africa was to civilize the natives. Instead they colonized on the native's land and corrupted the natives. "Africans bound with thongs that contracted in the rain and cut to the bone, had their swollen hands beaten with rifle butts until they fell off. Chained slaves were forced to drink the white man's defecation, hands and feet were chopped off for their rings, men were lined up behind each other and shot with one cartridge, wounded prisoners were eaten by maggots till they die and were then thrown to starving dogs or devoured by cannibal tribes." (Meyers 100.) Conrad's "Diary" substantiated the accuracy of the conditions described in Heart of Darkness: the chain gangs, the grove of death, the payment in brass rods, the cannibalism and the human skulls on the fence posts. Conrad did not exaggerate or invent the horrors that provided the political and humanitarian basis for his attack on colonialism. The Europeans took the natives' land away from them by force. They burned their towns, stole their property, and enslaved them. George Washington Williams stated in his diary, "Mr. Stanley was supposed to have made treaties with more than four hundred native Kings and Chiefs, by which they surrendered their rights to the soil. And yet many of these people declare that they never made a treaty with Stanley, or any other white man; their lands have been taken away from them by force, and they suffer the greatest wrongs at the hands of the Belgians." (Conrad 87.) Conrad saw intense greed in the Congo. The Europeans back home saw otherwise; they perceived that the tons of ivory and rubber being brought back home was a sign of orderly conduct in

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the Congo. Conrad's Heart of Darkness mentioned nothing about the trading of rubber. Conrad and Marlow did not care for ivory; they cared about the exploration into the "darkest Africa." A painting of a blindfolded woman carrying a lighted torch was discussed in the book. The background was dark, and the effect of the torch light on her face was sinister. The oil painting represents the blind and stupid ivory company, fraudulently letting people believe that besides the ivory they were taking out of the jungle, they were, at the same time, bringing light and progress to the jungle. Conrad mentioned in his diary that missions were set up to Christianize the natives. He did not include the missions into his book because the land was forcibly taken away from the natives, thus bringing in a church does not help if the natives have no will. Supplies brought in the country were left outdoors and abandoned, and a brick maker who made no bricks, lights up the fact that the Europeans do not care to help the natives progress. When Marlow reached the first station, he saw what used to be tools and supplies, that were to help progress the land, laid in waste upon the ground. "I came upon a boiler wallowing in the grass, then found a path leading up the hill. It turned aside for the boulders and also for an undersized railway truck lying there on its back with its wheels in the air.... I came upon more pieces of decaying machinery, a stack of rust rails.... No change appeared on the face of the rock. They were building a railway. The cliff was not in the way of anything, but this objectless blasting was all the work going on." (Conrad 19.) George Washington Williams wrote in his diary that three and a half years passed by, but not one mile of road bed or train tracks was made." One's cruelty is one's power; and when one parts with one's cruelty, one parts with one's power," says William Congreve, author of The Way of the

World. (Tripp 206.) The Europeans forcibly took away the natives' land and then enslaved them. All the examples given are part of one enormous idea of cruelty - cruelty that the European white men believe because its victims are helpless. These are mystical revelations of man's dark self. 1. Conrad, Joseph. *Heart of Darkness: Backgrounds and Criticisms*. New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1960. 2. Meyers, Jeffrey. *Joseph Conrad*. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1991. 3. Conrad, Joseph. *Heart of Darkness* 3rd ed. Ed. Robert Kimbrough. New York: Norton Critical, 1988. 4. Williams, George Washington. *A Report upon the Congo - State and Country to the President of the Republic of the United States of America*. *Heart of Darkness*. By Joseph Conrad 3rd ed. Ed. Robert Kimbrough. New York: Norton Critical 1988. 87. 5. Tripp, Rhoda Thomas. *Thesaurus of Quotations*. New York: Thomas Y. Crowell, 1970. The Horror! In *Heart of Darkness* it is the white invaders for instance, who are, almost without exception, embodiments of blindness, selfishness, and cruelty; and even in the cognitive domain, where such positive phrases as "to enlighten," for instance, are conventionally opposed to negative ones such as "to be in the dark," the traditional expectations are reversed. In Kurtz's painting, as we have seen, "the effect of the torch light on the face was sinister" (Watt 332). Ian Watt, author of "Impressionism and Symbolism in *Heart of Darkness*," discusses about the destruction set upon the Congo by Europeans. The destruction set upon the Congo by Europeans led to the cry of Kurtz's last words, "The horror! The horror!" The horror in *Heart of Darkness* has been critiqued to represent different aspects of situations in the book. However, Kurtz's last words "The horror! The horror!" refer, to me, to magnify only three major aspects. The horror magnifies Kurtz not being able to restrain himself, the colonizers' greed, and Europe's

darkness. Kurtz comes to the Congo with noble intentions. He thought that each ivory station should stand like a beacon light, offering a better way of life to the natives. He was considered to be a “universal genius”: he was an orator, writer, poet, musician, artist, politician, ivory producer, and chief agent of the ivory company’s Inner Station. yet, he was also a “hollow man,” a man without basic integrity or any sense of social responsibility. “Kurtz issues the feeble cry, ‘The horror! The horror!’ and the man of vision, of poetry, the ‘emissary of pity, and science, and progress’ is gone. The jungle closes’ round” (Labrasca 290). Kurtz being cut off from civilization reveals his dark side. Once he entered within his “heart of darkness” he was shielded from the light. Kurtz turned into a thief, murderer, raider, persecutor, and to climax all of his other shady practices, he allows himself to be worshipped as a god. E. N. Dorall, author of “Conrad and Coppola: Different Centres of Darkness,” explains Kurtz’s loss of his identity. Daring to face the consequences of his nature, he loses his identity; unable to be totally beast and never able to be fully human, he alternates between trying to return to the jungle and recalling in grotesque terms his former idealism. Kurtz discovered, A voice! A voice! It rang deep to the very last. It survived his strength to hide in the magnificent folds of eloquence the barren darkness of his heart.... 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, avid of lying, fame, of sham distinction, of all the appearances of success and power. Inevitably Kurtz collapses, his last words epitomizing his experience, The horror! The horror! (Dorall 306). The horror to Kurtz is about self realization; about the mistakes he committed while in Africa. The colonizers’ cruelty towards the natives and their lust for ivory also

is spotlighted in Kurtz's horror. The white men who came to the Congo professing to bring progress and light to "darkest Africa" have themselves been deprived of the sanctions of their European social orders. The supposed purpose of the colonizers' traveling into Africa was to civilize the natives. Instead the Europeans took the natives' land away from them by force. They burned their towns, stole their property, and enslaved them. "Enveloping the horror of Kurtz is the Congo Free State of Leopold II, totally corrupt though to all appearances established to last for a long time" (Dorall 309). The conditions described in Heart of Darkness reflect the horror of Kurtz's words: the chain gangs, the grove of death, the payment in brass rods, the cannibalism and the human skulls on the fence posts. Africans bound with thongs that contracted in the rain and cut to the bone, had their swollen hands beaten with rifle butts until they fell off. Chained slaves were forced to drink the white man's defecation, hands and feet were chopped off for their rings, men were lined up behind each other and shot with one cartridge, wounded prisoners were eaten by maggots till they died and were then thrown to starving dogs or devoured by cannibal tribes (Meyers 100). The colonizers enslaved the natives to do their bidding; the cruelty practiced on the black workers were of the white man's mad and greedy rush for ivory. "The unredeemable horror in the tale is the duplicity, cruelty, and venality of Europeans officialdom" (Levenson 401). Civilization is only preserved by maintaining illusions. Juliet Mclauchlan, author of "The Value and Significance of Heart of Darkness," stated that every colonizer in Africa is to blame for the horror which took place within. Kurtz's moral judgment applies supremely to his own soul, but his final insight is all encompassing; looking upon humanity in full awareness of his own degradation, he projects his

debasement, failure, and hatred universally. Realizing that any human soul may be fascinated, held irresistible, by what it rightly hates, his stare is “ wide enough to embrace the whole universe,” wide and immense.... embracing, condemning, loathing all the universe (Mclauchlan 384). The darkness of Africa collides with the evils of Europe upon Kurtz’s last words. Kurtz realized that all he had been taught to believe in, to operate from, was a mass of horror and greed standardized by the colonizers. As you recall in Conrad’s Heart of Darkness, Kurtz painted a painting releasing his knowledge of the horror and what is to come. A painting of a blindfolded woman carrying a lighted torch was discussed in the book. The background was dark, and the effect of the torch light on her face was sinister. The oil painting suggests the blind and stupid ivory company, fraudulently letting people believe that besides the ivory they were taking out of the jungle, they were, at the same time, bringing light and progress to the jungle. Kurtz, stripped away of his culture by the greed of other Europeans, stands both literally and figuratively naked. He has lost all restraint in himself and has lived off the land like an animal. He has been exposed to desire, yet cannot comprehend it. His horror tells us his mistakes and that of Europe’s. His mistakes of greed for ivory, his mistakes of lust for a mistress and his mistakes of assault on other villages, were all established when he was cut off from civilization. When Conrad wrote what Kurtz’s last words were to be, he did not exaggerate or invent the horrors that provided the political and humanitarian basis for his attack on colonialism. Conrad’s Kurtz mouths his last words, “ The horror! The horror!” as a message to himself and, through Marlow, to the world. However, he did not really explain the meaning of his words to Marlow before his exit. Through Marlow’s summary and moral

reactions, we come to realize the possibilities of the meaning rather than a definite meaning. "The message means more to Marlow and the readers than it does to Kurtz," says William M. Hagen, in "Heart of Darkness and the Process of Apocalypse Now." "The horror" to Kurtz became the nightmare between Europe and Africa. To Marlow, Kurtz's last words came through what he saw and experienced along the way into the Inner Stati