

Madness & Geography

A Study on Voice, Discourse, and Polyphony in Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*

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Abstract

In the following thesis I intend to discuss the two distinct yet related forms of voyage at work in Conrad's novella. This journey into Dark Africa, I will argue, has both a geographical and a psychological dimension. Taking into account the ideology that informs nineteenth-century imperialist discourse, as well as its subversive counterpart, verbalized in the sombre reflections of Charlie Marlow, I will look at some of the most salient implications these monologic vocal modes bear on the dichotomy of Self and Other. Having presented the polyphonic and at times cacophonous set of discursive narratives that operate in the novel, be it Kurtz' voice, the screeching of the steamship, or the whisper of the jungle, I will argue that a process of double colonization is at work, whereby the colonizer is in turn colonized by the environment, becoming the host of the very darkness he seeks to enlighten. My analysis will ultimately lead me to the assertion that the notions of geography and madness, as thematized in the novelistic universe, play a central role in the construction (and destruction) of Self and Other. Due to the nature of this reciprocal relation, I have chosen to read the text through the lens of psychoanalytic and postcolonial theory, drawing on the works of Carl Jung, Susan Rowland, Rinda West, Johannes Fabian, Michel Foucault, George Fredrickson, and Michael Adas.

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Introduction

This introduction aims to put *Heart of Darkness* in perspective from a postcolonial and psychoanalytic point of view. To this end, I will examine the dualisms culture-nature, Self-Other, reason-unreason, while entering the liminal space in which deconstruction and representations of the West and “the Rest” in regard to African geography and European imperialism play out. Environmental factors perceived as threatening to Western identity and the way in which they are fictionalized will also bear relevance for my argument. Hopefully such a discussion will help me demonstrate that notions of geography and madness are central to the construction of Self and Other in Conrad’s novella. This I hope to achieve by a close reading of the text, but first I would like to briefly address its literary and historical context.

A spiritual voyage of discovery, Marlow’s journey started with Conrad’s, who sailed down the Congo in 1890 on a steamer named in Leopold’s honour, the *Roi de Belges*. It was there, in the heart of the Black Continent, that he was acquainted with the darker side of a mission purportedly aimed at the suppression of savagery and cannibalism in the name of civilization. Ironically, suffering and brutality were endemic in Leopold’s Congo. This is reflected in the closing lines of Kurtz’s Treatise: “Exterminate all the brutes!” (16). Africa as Other haunted the European imagination at a very dangerous time in history, a time in which technology enabled the exploitation of land and human beings at an unprecedented scale. A Pole whose family had suffered under (Russian) imperialism, Conrad, born Józef Teodor Konrad Korzeniowski, spoke in condemnation of slavery and exposed the conspiratorial nature of the *mission civilatrice*, whose alleged altruism had anything but Africa’s best interest at heart: “their administration was merely a squeeze ... They grabbed what they could get for the sake of what was to be got. It was just robbery with violence, aggravated murder on a great scale...” (6-7). But despite challenging the dominant narrative and being ahead of his time, as far as Western imperialism goes, his position remains ambivalent to critics.

“Conrad wrote in two fields: popular adventure discourse and psychological fiction” (West 36). As he fictionalizes his Congo experience, *Heart of Darkness* becomes the mirrored image of nineteenth-century voyages of exploration, inviting a meta-novelistic reading of the text. There is tremendous amount of evidence to back up Conrad’s anecdotal

experience. First-hand information from different sources such as Peter Casement's Congo report, addressed to the British Parliament, informed the writing of his novel. This example may face up to anachronism, for Conrad was not privy to its publication in 1904, five years after Blackwood's first edition of *Heart of Darkness*. We know, however, that Casement was a personal acquaintance of Conrad's and that the two men exchanged ideas in regard to Leopold's Congo as early as 1890. Another document, in this case quite familiar to Conrad, was George Washington Williams' *An Open Letter to his Serene Majesty Leopold II, King of the Belgians and Sovereign of the Independent State of Congo*, written in 1890, the same year Conrad sailed out to Africa. At a time only a handful of men had the spine to raise these issues, Marlow subverts a discourse controlled by the rapacious greed of private interests. To say that his pen shook the moral ground of a largely complacent readership would not be entirely inappropriate. His denounce of imperialism portrays Europe as the plunderer and dismantler of an-Other continent in the name of profit, a form of financial progress that benefitted the few at the expense of the many. The unspeakable atrocities recounted by Williams and Casement, duly reproduced in the Norton Critical Edition (hereafter NCE), shed much light on Conrad's novella, adding to the vivid memories of mutilation, death, and sheer horror that coloured his African experience.

"I left in a French steamer" (13), says Marlow, and steps into the shoes of a dead man, a Danish captain called Fresleven. By the time he gets a chance to meet his predecessor "the grass growing through his ribs was tall enough to hide his bones" (9), surely not an encouraging prospect. The Dane had been killed in a scuffle with the natives over some hens: "Oh, it didn't surprise me in the least ... to be told that Fresleven was the gentlest, quietest creature that ever walked on two legs. No doubt he was; but he had been a couple of years already *out there* engaged in the noble cause, you know" (9, emphasis added). In the process of double colonization, geography takes over the colonizer. Good old Fresleven is reduced to a rotting carcass, his ribs sticking out, braided with the grass blades and overgrowths of the jungle. Marlow's condemnatory views of King Leopold's "holy mission" to civilize Africa are voiced with irony, a common feature of Conrad's literary style: "What became of the hens I don't know either. I should think the cause of progress got them, anyhow" (8).

Presented as a travelogue, *Heart of Darkness* has a journey structure, with London as a point of departure, and the Inner Station run by a mentally deranged Kurtz as ultimate destination. Soon it becomes evident that we are dealing with more than just another expedition to "the uttermost ends of the earth" (4). In tune with the many anxieties of his

time, Conrad and his alter ego sail across a psychic landscape. It is at this point that we can begin to think about Marlow as more than a colonial agent on board of a mercantile vessel, or an anthropologist collecting ethnographic data, even a forensic criminologist exhuming evidence, for in a second reading of *Heart of Darkness* he emerges as a Victorian time traveller. The necrology of the novella, from visions of prehistoric earth to a Fresleven half-buried in a sea of grass, suggests a deeper concern with the African continent, and thus with otherness. The story he tells is also a psychological journey. But it all ends there; Conrad never ceases to be a Western observer. Looking out into the brink of enlightenment, he re-stages the Renaissance paradigm of history as the great adventure of the European man of letters: “Yes, it was ugly enough; but if you were man enough you would admit to yourself that there was in you just the faintest trace of a response to the terrible frankness of that noise...” (36).

Because the starting point of Marlow’s journey is “the sepulchral city,” metaphor for a culture that has ran out of blood, or numinosity (psychic energy), in Jungian terms, his journey intuitively seeks reorientation and re-energizing in the African jungle, a world teeming with flora and fauna, rich in sunlight and lush vegetation. At home, in the Old World, death is pervasive, for Europeans have allowed their cultural gardens to fester: “In a very few hours I arrived in a city that always makes me think of a whited sepulchre. Prejudice no doubt” (9). Conrad paints a landscape as lifeless as the polished surface of a tombstone; absence of green and preponderance of gray set the mood: “A narrow and deserted street in deep shadow, high houses, innumerable windows with venetian blinds, a dead silence...” (10). In the same brushstroke, however, as his eyes linger on some “grass sprouting between the stones,” he suggests that nature always finds its way. Africa is the inverted image of the “whited sepulchre,” and as Europe fades in the horizon, Marlow enters dangerous territory: “We came to the bank, and on the stack of firewood found a flat piece of board with some faded pencil-writing on it ... ‘Approach cautiously.’ There was a signature, but it was illegible—not Kurtz—a much longer word” (37). Constantly threatened by the noise of vitality and the possibility of spiritual awakening, he cannot fully wake up to an inclusive perception of the Other: “We live, as we dream—alone...” (27).

“*Heart of Darkness* is a framed tale, in which a first narrator introduces Marlow and has the last word after Marlow has fallen silent; and embedded within Marlow’s tale is apparently another, Kurtz’s, which never quite gets told” (Brooks, NCE, 376). The discourse of the second narrator, Charlie Marlow, is informed by cultural conceptualizations of time

and space prevalent in his day. The colonial Other is depicted as existing in prehistory as well as “in outer space”: “We were wanderers on a *prehistoric earth*, on an earth that wore the aspect of *an unknown planet*” (35, emphasis added). Temporal distancing from Others, which Johannes Fabian calls “allochronism” or “denial of coevalness,” is pervasive in Conrad. As Marlow approaches the African mainland, space becomes time, drawing him ever closer: “The reaches opened before us and closed behind, as if the forest had stepped leisurely across the water to bar the way for our return. We penetrated deeper and deeper into the heart of darkness” (35). Spellbound, he plunges headlong into prehistory: “A deadened burst of mighty splashes and snorts reached us from afar, as though an ichthyosaurus had been taking a bath of glitter in the great river” (30). It is then that postcolonial theory leads the way towards a Jungian reading of Conrad. Having succumbed to an allochronic view of Africa, Marlow portrays the natives as dwellers of prehistory, merging them into a monolithic mass of vegetation and darkness: “I had also judged the jungle of both banks quite impenetrable—and yet eyes were in it, eyes that had seen us” (42). His paranoid impressions and his fascination with the primeval forest, a contradictory blend of attraction and repulsion, is candidly revealed in his encounter with its inhabitants:

No, they were not inhuman. Well, you know, that was the worst of it—this suspicion of their not being inhuman. It would come slowly to one. They howled, and leaped, and spun, and made horrid faces; but what thrilled you was just the thought of their humanity—like yours—the thought of your remote kinship with this wild and passionate uproar. (35)

In the words of Edward T. Hall, *time talks and space speaks*. Marlow’s dissociation from nature in spatiotemporal terms is a direct symptom of a worldview that embraces epistemological solipsism. He is safely detached in his “two-penny-half-penny river-steamboat with a penny whistle attached!” (12), looking out of the shutter hole of the pilothouse, but insulation from the outside crumbles as he abandons the confines of Western culture. His journey deepens and nature takes slowly over. The vessel starts to disintegrate, thus revealing the fragility of civilization. A blood-soaked shoe flies overboard, clothes rot away, and rivets fail to arrive soon enough. Reason is as frail as the trail in the water left by Marlow’s advancing ship:

‘Good God! What is the meaning—?’ stammered at my elbow one of the pilgrims ... Two others remained open-mouthed a whole minute ... What we could see was just the steamer we were on, her outlines blurred as though she had been on the point of

dissolving, and a misty strip of water, perhaps two feet broad, around her—and that was all. The rest of the world was nowhere, as far as our eyes and ears were concerned. Just nowhere. Gone, disappeared; swept off without leaving a whisper or a shadow behind. (39-40)

In light of Hall's brilliant chapter titles from *The Silent Language* (1959), "Time Talks" and "Space Speaks," I will attempt to bring Fabian and Adas together, to then suggest how the two, as a unity, can relate to Jungian psychoanalysis. Due to the colonial subject matter of the novella, postcolonial theory will be useful when looking at power relations at a meta-novelistic and fictional level, while psychoanalytic theory will allow me to delve deeper into the topic. On the postcolonial side of things, Adas and Fabian will provide the fundamental tools to analyze temporal and spatial dimensions, as seen from a purely historical perspective, minimally combined with Edward T. Hall's *The Silent Language* for a theory of communication that relates to cultural perceptions of time and space. Jung's work, on the Other side, will rest on two pillars, the works of Rinda West and Susan Rowland, while Michel Foucault's approach to discourse and the historiography of madness, and Lillian Feder's study of madness in literature, will help me close the circle. Because Jung is not as familiar to the humanities as postcolonial criticism, a few words must be said on his behalf before we look at the theoretical framework of his psychology.

In 1925, Carl Jung underwent a transformative process in a journey to Africa. This point is my first argument for having chosen Jungian theory. His experience in Kenya and Uganda was later shaped in the pages of his auto/biography, *Dreams, Memories, Reflections*, published posthumously in 1962. In the "Life and Death" chapter, he writes: "Our age has shifted all emphasis to the here and now, and thus brought about a demonization of man and his world." Jung is persistently fascinated with the spatiotemporal dimensions of the human psyche, thus his reference to *here and now* as coordinates of a western linear and hierarchical way of looking at the world surrounding us. Susan Rowland, a highly regarded and prolific Jungian scholar, uses the familiar metaphor of the mind as "a landscape," and psychology as "a form of mapping the unknown" (Rowland 2005: 2). These geographical images are intimately related to the language of Jung's psychology and provide a second argument in favour of his ideas as they relate to my paper, becoming particularly relevant to the overall result of my analysis, even more so than the postcolonial critics listed on the bibliography.

In regard to the position of the Swiss psychologist in academic discourse within the humanities, it must be pointed out that his voice remains obscure and largely unfamiliar. The

reasons for this are probably many, but to discuss them in depth would fall outside the scope of this thesis. Suffice it to say that despite Jung's evident advantage for literary criticism, which will become apparent as we progress in our analysis, he remains largely neglected in Literary Studies. Rowland points out that the discipline of 'English' has neglected Jung to its own detriment by declaring him *persona non grata*. "In an era of philosophical and ethical approaches to literature, it seems perverse to exclude Jung, as the 'other' " (Rowland 2005: 4). The fact that Jung has become Other to the humanities, otherness being at the core of this thesis, bears out my third and last contention that his work is relevant for a critical reading of *Heart of Darkness*.

Having said a few words in regard to Jung's position in the humanities, I will briefly go back to postcolonial theory to summarize and connect the works of Adas and Fabian. On the one hand, *Machines as the Measure of Men* sets out to demonstrate how achievements within technology and science shaped the European perception of non-Western peoples. These achievements, according to Adas, functioned as a gauge of human progress, which led to the largely uncontested assumption of European superiority and African racial and moral backwardness. On the other hand, *Time and the Other* examines in detail how anthropology created spatial distance from its object of study, which is to say, how anthropological discourse turns space into time. Fabian calls this mechanism *denial of coevalness* and sets it as a standard by which the West assumed a relation of superiority in regard to its geopolitical Other. Fabian and Adas, then, connect in the sense that they are both concerned with the construction of hierarchical distance and heavy discursive machinery as tools of domination. While technology allowed Europeans to get closer to the Other in spatial terms, temporal distancing kept the West far away from "the Rest."

From a pictorial point of view, the absence of grey—with the rare exception of the "sepulchral city"—is one of the most salient features of *Heart of Darkness*, being a novel that tends to trade in absolutes. There is an area of twilight, however, the liminal space that Marlow enters in a strand that runs parallel to his physical journey. Between a postcolonial and a Jungian perspective, Rowland points out that "Travelling in the psyche may condense history into space, but to assert that travels in Africa ... similarly compress time relies upon the assumption that western cultural difference consists of being 'further ahead' in the colonial narrative of 'progress' " (Rowland 2005: 35). Seeing this side of the human psyche is like drawing a curtain: "The inner world is an inner landscape of nature and cities ... and

even travel beyond the earth. To journey into the psyche is to journey in space and time beyond the usual boundaries” (ibid. 35).

To sharpen my point in regard to the idea of a psychological journey as it relates to Jung, I will introduce the concept of archetypes, which will be central to this paper. “The goal of the psychic quest throughout life is to realize—to make real—the Self as the heart of being. The Jungian psyche is thus teleological, goal-oriented, and embraces paradox” (Rowland 2012: Ch. 2). I have stated above that looking into Marlow’s “head” will be like drawing a curtain. This metaphor leads me to another. Human consciousness is like a light switch. It can light up a room in the house, even the attic or the front yard, but it cannot shed light in the entirety of the neighbourhood, the city, the country, the planet, and the universe. The hand that switches on and off the lights is the hand of the ego. The house itself—a very big house—is the human psyche. The ego is our individual consciousness, whereas the Self equals the totality of the psyche, containing the ego. Here we come to a crucial point. Jung argues that the ego is reluctant to acknowledge its smallness in relation to the Self. This would suggest the idea of the collective unconscious being our most immediate Other. In chapter two I will analyze *Heart of Darkness* in light of Jung’s “house dream,” as it is called in academia, which is central to understanding the idea of a collective unconscious. Contained by the Self, the ego refuses to acknowledge being only a fraction of a much larger “space,” thus, ego consciousness tends to be locked in an ambivalent struggle with it-Self. On the one hand, the Self seeks wholeness and balance. On the other, ego refuses to give up its carefully constructed identity, keeping the lights on in one single room, perhaps two, which leads to psychic centralization of power, a complex feat of engineering that extends to a perceptual construction of reality. The Self is the archetype of wholeness; therefore, the journey towards individuation is not an easy one. The “holy mission” of the Self is to colonize the puny ego and its fabricated world. The paradox, however, is that we need ego—which is built in early childhood—to survive and also to individuate. A balance between ego and Self is what the Jungian writer Edward Edinger calls an ego-Self axis: “a capacity to contain in the ego a connection with the unconscious; to cling to the apprehension that ego is not all there is, while avoiding the twin dangers of inflation and madness” (West 98).

We can now look at Marlow’s voyage from a more tangible Jungian perspective. For the sake of clarity, I would like to split his vessel in two halves for a moment. One half has a physical point of departure (Europe) and a physical destination (the Inner Station), whereas the other deals with a process of psychic growth, which can be compared to a journey, *the*

archetype of individuation. To expand on this point, we can think of Marlow's upriver journey. Jung used the image of a riverbed to elaborate on the idea of archetypes:

Archetypes are like riverbeds which dry up when the water deserts them, but which it can find again at any time. An archetype is like an old watercourse along which the water of life has flowed for centuries, digging a deep channel for itself." The water in this image is psychic energy. As an individual passes through different stages of life, libido ebbs and flows in archetypal channels. The channels, or archetypes, are not themselves images or ideas, but simply patterns. Images of these archetypal patterns can be found across cultures. The instinctual nature of the patterns explains why certain experiences and story types move people deeply. (West 12-13)

Having merged the works by Fabian and Adas, we can now see how they fit as a unity in Jung's theoretical framework. By welding the two halves we split a moment ago, we can now bring Marlow's ship to a meaningful whole. My point is illustrated in the memorable image Conrad paints as Marlow nears the Inner Station: "They had come together unavoidably, like two ships becalmed near each other, and lay rubbing sides at last" (55). The name Conrad has chosen for Kurtz's fortress, the Inner Station, suggests an inward journey or quest, as many critics have pointed out. As we sail from the familiar postcolonial to the Jungian abstract, Adas and Fabian will play a pivotal role in building a bridge towards Jungian theory.

Where Jacques Lacan, within structuralism, adapted Freudian concepts to the interpretation of dreams and symbols, Jungians have applied *archetypes* and the *collective unconscious*. However different these two theories may be, in their attempt to bring psychology closer to Literary Studies, the Other remains common ground and a source of numinosity. Africans, as well as Europeans, have their own mystery, their own darkness. And beyond that there is a larger network of meaning, *our common human experience*. Jung called it *the collective unconscious*. It marks his departure from Sigmund Freud, becoming the cornerstone of his approach to psychoanalysis and the source of much criticism. As Rowland pints out, "the founding principle of Jung's psychology is to realize that the unconscious is superior to the capacity of the ego to comprehend it" (Rowland 2005: 4). Embracing this enigma, Jung argues: "whoever denies the existence of the unconscious is in fact assuming that our present knowledge of the psyche is total. And this belief is clearly just as false as the assumption that we know all there is to be known about the natural universe" (Jung *et al.* 6). There is a second archetype that will be of particular relevance for this thesis. Jung called it "the shadow":

Jung was clear that humans individually and collectively have developed consciousness as a means of containing instinct and freeing ourselves from its hold. However, the side effect of that increasing freedom is the shadow. Jung identified shadow as the archetype that has “the most disturbing influence on the ego.” As an individual becomes conscious, or develops an ego (what Jung calls an “ego complex,” suggesting the charged emotions linked to the sense of self), she or he also constructs a shadow, where rejected and repressed potentials reside—impulses and potentials unacceptable in the family, religion, culture, and historical period.” (West 14)

Marlow’s first port of call coincides with his first encounter with shadow, the imperialist Other, which I will discuss in chapter one. But his fellow-westerners are by no means the only projections relevant for my argument. “I, Charlie Marlow” (8) has a number of Others, all of which relate to the Jungian concept of Self. West points out that, “shadow projections divide people from one another and from nature itself” (West 38). In Jung’s work we see an insistence in the smaller as well as in the bigger picture, which is reflected in the *individual* and the *collective* unconscious. In his quest for wholeness, Marlow intuits a reconnection of these opposites. His journey is testimony to that fact. In light of the archetype of individuation, Jung can help us put these issues in perspective. “In its resistance to dualism on an individual as well as a cultural basis, Jung’s thought provides an alternative “both-and” way of rethinking dilemmas” (West 23). When it comes to shadow, the effect of projection, according to Jung, “is to isolate the subject from its environment, since instead of a real relation to it there is now only an illusory one. Projections change the world into a replica of one’s own unknown face” (West 15). A clear example of this, as West points out, is the collective shadow of the Christian world, which is personified as the devil (ibid. 14). It must be underlined that the shadow archetype has both a positive and a negative side, and also that in this paper I will only focus on the negative side of shadow, one of the main recipients of projection being the jungle:

The great wall of vegetation, an exuberant and entangled mass of trunks, branches, leaves, boughs, festoons, motionless in the moonlight, was like a rioting invasion of soundless life, a rolling wave of plants, piled up, crested, ready to topple over the creek, to sweep every little man of us out of his little existence. (30)

Marlow’s projections take the form of a “rioting invasion of soundless life” planning to “sweep every little man of us out of his little existence.” In light of the ruthless invasion carried out by empire, the massacres, and destruction of flora and fauna to extract resources

such as ivory, his fears seem rather ludicrous. From that perspective, Marlow and his fellow imperialists can be said to be projecting “cultural shadow” onto the natives. “Conflating native people and the land they inhabited, (Europeans) split from consciousness their own viciousness, greed, power lust, and cruelty, projecting these qualities onto the people and places they overran and thereby rationalizing their conquest” (West 36, emphasis added). The dark side of shadow tends to lean towards destruction; and once destruction has taken place, in contrast, it tends to lean towards healing. The concept of “healing” is particularly relevant for ecocritics like Rinda West. Ecocriticism, or ecological literary criticism, “takes as its subject the interconnections between nature and culture, specifically the cultural artefacts of language and literature. It negotiates between the human and the non-human”¹ (West 26). Being a marginal figure, an Other of sorts, Jung has been largely embraced by ecopsychology. “To bring a land ethic into practice requires the psychological work of individuation and maturity. Both demand conscious engagement with nature and an acknowledgement of shadow” (West 31). To sum up, shadow and individuation will be central to the discussion of Marlow’s psychological journey. As stated above, these two archetypes are ultimately related to the construction and destruction of Self and Others—as we advance, we will see exactly how—; on top of that, they also provide a basis for a reading of *Heart of Darkness* headed towards “healing,” a key concept in Jungian analytical and medical psychology. Ecocriticism, in that sense, can be seen as a bridge between geography and a politics of healing. As a point of departure, ecocritics stress the relevance of space and time as loci of knowledge:

Ecocritics look at nature as it is represented in literary texts— the myths and metaphors the text creates or references and the attitudes toward the land it reflects or fosters. They replace what ecocritic William Howarth calls “the conviction ... that experience is mind-centered and free of reference to actualities of space and time” with the belief that knowledge is situated not just historically but geographically. (West 26)

Since the dawn of humanism and the first voyages of exploration, the Other has become a mirror in which Europe reflects it-Self. As Susan Sontag² points out, “Europe seeks itself in the exotic . . . among preliterate peoples . . . The ‘other’ is experienced as a *harsh purification of ‘self’* ” (Fabian, 2006, 140, emphasis added). This encounter, I would like to add, was

¹ Cheryll Glotfelty, xix, 1996.

² Sontag, 1970 [1966]: 185.

certainly *harsher* for the victims of colonialism. As an indirect comment on the two previous sentences, Conrad's novella remains ambivalent. West points out: "He can neither accept European imperialism nor escape it" (45). The drama that plays out in Kurtz's front yard, for instance, seems to be of lesser importance than his mental integrity. There is a fine line between the horror of empire and the horror of "going native." This is ultimately how we may connect geography and madness.

The Routledge 2007 edition of key concepts for Postcolonial Studies lists the term "going native" as follows:

The term indicates the colonizers' fear of contamination by absorption into native life and customs. The construction of native cultures as either primitive or degenerate in a binary discourse of colonizer/colonized led, especially at the turn of the century, to a widespread fear of 'going native' amongst the colonizers in many colonial societies. (Ashcroft et al. 106)

I will use the term "double colonization" outside its gender context in Postcolonial Studies, using it instead to refer to those environmental conditions that may stimulate and awaken certain archetypes in the Jungian model of human psyche. Marlow's visit to the doctor reflects nineteenth-century fears of "going native": "The old doctor felt my pulse, evidently thinking of something else the while. 'Good, good for there,' he mumbled, and then with a certain eagerness asked me whether I would let him measure my head ... 'Ever any madness in your family?' he asked, in a matter-of-fact tone." (11). The physician proceeds to examine Marlow with a craniometer, a medical instrument used to measure a patient's cranium, and thereby pronounce a prognosis of possible tendencies towards "moral insanity." This is a direct reference to phrenology, today largely considered a pseudoscience. The Venetian phrenologist Cesare Lombroso, pioneer within the field of criminal anthropology, used the nomenclature "atavistic criminal," "born criminal," and "morally insane" to refer to instances of "madness" (sic. Lombroso, *Criminal Man*, 1876). The cephalic index or cranium of "savages" and individuals with Negroid features provided a standard of degeneracy. In chapter one, I will explore the anthropological discourse and colour-coded "racism" that informed nineteenth-century views on the racial Other, which was largely constructed as "the criminally insane."

Vocal modes of discourse will be a corollary to my discussion on shadow projection. "Marlow is a man of words, a storyteller. Any quality that challenges this sense of himself

also occupies shadow” (West 38). Kurtz fascinates him due to “the great things” he heard about him. He is presented as a voice, distinct and detached from “the silence of the jungle,” yet another shadowy projection of Marlow’s. As West points out: “What’s astonishing about walking through a jungle is not its quiet but its noise. But Marlow cannot understand the language any more than he can comprehend that of the people who live there” (West 38). From a Jungian point of view, Kurtz’s voice can be seen as his “soul” or psyche. Marlow says of his moribund friend: “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” (68). Thereby he acknowledges shadow, “the hollow sham” being the core of empire.

West points out that language “is no bulwark against shadow. If a civilized, articulate, even brilliant man can become this raving skeleton, then what can save Marlow from a similar fate?” (West 40). Language did not save Kurtz from madness; on the contrary, it was probably a factor that contributed to his own detriment, a form of cultural hubris. Conrad inflates him to a cartoonish dimension to stress and lampoon an endemic form of folly among Victorians: “Sometimes he was contemptibly childish. He desired to have kings meet him at railway-stations on his return from some ghastly Nowhere, where he intended to accomplish great things.” (68). His biggest admirer, after Marlow, is in fact a “harlequin.” In that sense, *Heart of Darkness* can also be read—not without a great effort—as an ironical panegyric of empire. Kurtz, the capitalist paragon of entrepreneurship, the most effective procurer of ivory, a charismatic speaker, has found his doom in the heart of Africa.

“Because (Marlow) has identified Kurtz with language, he expects self-control, logic, and reason” (West 40, emphasis added). Discussing Kurtz’s mental state with the harlequin, Marlow says: “ ‘Why! He’s mad,’ I said. He protested indignantly. Mr. Kurtz couldn't be mad. If I had heard him talk, only two days ago, I wouldn't dare hint at such a thing...” (56). If language is equated with reason, then lack thereof can be equated with unreason. “Kurtz offers Marlow a glimpse of his own shadow. Kurtz, who ‘presented himself as a voice,’ stands distinct from the silence of nature and the row of the natives” (West 39). We may safely conclude that construction and destruction of Self and Others, be it reason or unreason, is language structured as voice/discourse. Ambivalence remains intact: “Civilization is the project of language ... and Marlow opts for civilization, even if it is a lie” (West 42, emphasis added). In *Heart of Darkness*, madness falls continually back into dualism. Jung points out:

Consciousness is a very recent acquisition of nature, and it is still in an
“experimental” state. It is frail, menaced by specific dangers, and easily injured. As

anthropologists have noted, one of the most common mental derangements that occur among primitive people is what they call “the loss of a soul”—which means, as the name indicates, a noticeable disruption (or more technically, a dissociation) of consciousness. (Jung et al. 6)

Kurtz’s loss of “soul” can be read as an instance of dissociation, or loss of psychic balance. Simply put, he “lost his head,” just like the heads decorating his front yard “lost their bodies.” Kurtz stumbled, lost his balance, and lo! He fell into the abyss. In that sense, the ego he had constructed since childhood, underpinned by culture, dissolves in the grip of the jungle, *it becomes deconstructed*. Self-destruction is a form of madness, a way in which man can undo his “soul.” The epitome of imperial megalomania, Kurtz is no longer among the living:

And the lofty frontal bone of Mr. Kurtz! They say the hair goes on growing sometimes, but this—ah specimen, was impressively bald. The wilderness had patted him on the head, and, behold, it was like a ball—an ivory ball; it had caressed him, and—lo!—he had withered; it had taken him, loved him, embraced him, got into his veins, consumed his flesh, and sealed his soul to its own by the inconceivable ceremonies of some devilish initiation. He was its spoiled and pampered favourite. Ivory? I should think so. Heaps of it, stacks of it. The old mud shanty was bursting with it. You would think there was not a single tusk left either above or below the ground in the whole country. ‘Mostly fossil,’ the manager had remarked disparagingly. (48)

Marlow describes Kurtz as: “A shadow darker than the shadow of the night ... draped nobly in the folds of a gorgeous eloquence” (73). The jungle has gobbled him up. As Theodore Roszak argues, “The bridge we need to find our way back to a significant sense of connectedness with nature may lie in that shadowed quarter of the mind we have for so long regarded as ‘irrational,’ even ‘crazy’ ” (West 11).

I will now sum up this introduction and put things in a clear perspective. *Heart of Darkness* shows how the Other, as time (history) and space (geography), can be historically constructed and deconstructed. The “native,” the “shadow,” the “feminine” are always under construction; they are an unfinished project. This realization provides a point of departure to examine the colonial situation of those Others vis-à-vis the main agency of discourse: the West it-Self. In Marlow’s story, the conflation of Africans and Africa (human and non-human) emerges as an architected Other. While Self is the archetype of wholeness, Other is

the spatiotemporal framework, white canvas, or in Marlow's language "empty space," where we tend to project our own shadow. This dynamic relationship between Self and Other will help me build my thesis statement, which is twofold: the double colonization of Kurtz, to keep it short, and the contention that geography and madness, as thematized in the novel, play a central role in the construction (and destruction) of Self and Other. Having established an implicit construction of shadow (othering) in the narrators' discourse about Africa and its peoples, our analysis will look at Marlow's "out there" as a metonymic reference to that spatiotemporal Other.

I will divide my thesis in three chapters. Chapter one will look at the dualism culture-nature from different situational perspectives. Chapter two will focus on the spatial and temporal dimensions of colonialism. In chapter three I will examine the feminine Other. But before that, I have to address an implicit question in this introduction, a bigger question mark, and one that resonates beyond the walls of academia. Why *Heart of Darkness*? The answer echoes a universal and timeless warning. Years go by, the geopolitical world map continues to be re-imagined and re-drawn, and new generations of Marlovian vessels circle the Earth. Jet fighters fly over Syria, bulletproof SUVs roll on a dirt road near the Euphrates, and Others keep dying for the greater cause of democracy and civilization. And a voice is heard. Darkness can alienate the heart of man, as it may also be a path to healing. Conrad's warning has much timeliness today.

Chapter 1: The Civilizing Mission

In this chapter I will look at the dualism culture-nature and the relationships between voice and discourse in *Heart of Darkness*, aiming to assess the impact they have on the black-and-white dichotomy that informs Marlow's voyage; on the one hand, the worldview of western imperialism; and on the Other, the sombre reflections that subvert its political ideology. Such dualisms, I will argue, are inextricably bound to domestic perceptions of otherness. In Marlow's Europe we find the criminally insane, the pauper, and the mentally ill. I will continue my line of argument by stating that these maladjusted Europeans provided an immediate reference of moral backwardness to the colonizer and played an important role in colouring the first encounters with African Others. As such, they also provided a scientific standpoint that made slavery a justifiable cause. The commercial venture of empire, cloaked as a "holy mission," sought to rescue the Dark Continent from its own darkness. This argument will inevitably take me beyond the limits of otherness circumscribed to Africa and lead me to representations of the imperialist Other. I will then close the chapter by comparing the cultural stereotype of the cannibal with the cannibalising discourse of imperial cartography.

The garments of civilization

Clothing is a marker of civilization; and nakedness, arguably, stands in equal relation to madness. As the imperial subject advances through the jungle he is despoiled of the garments of culture. His hair grows, his clothes rot away, and his voice dwindles as his vocal chords become less and less used to engage in polite conversation. The foot soldiers of Leopold's "holy mission" are as vulnerable as Marlow's vessel. As they advance, their clothes begin to dissolve in the darkness of the jungle. Sleeves turn to rags and boots to bare feet. Their clothes are made of cotton, a symbol of imperial exploitation of Others, the main textile colonies of the time being the United States, Bangladesh, India, and China. This is relevant from the point of view of forced labour and the impoverishment of these four regions at the hands of empire—the clothing of one section of humanity led to the unclenching of an-Other.

“Many of Darwin’s contemporaries were equally convinced that scientific inquiry and technological innovation had been essential to the ascent of humankind from naked cave dweller to Victorian gentleman” (Adas 308). The emblematic dimension of clothing in my line of argument is reflected in the comment often made by feminist critics of *Heart of Darkness* that “the starched collars of the *mission civilatrice* depend on silencing the laundress” (West 43). I will argue that clothing is part of the “civilizing” discourse of Empire and that nakedness and lack thereof play a decisive role in the construction of the African Other and the “tailoring” of European identity. Culture, as represented in *Heart of Darkness*, can be then compared to a tailor dressing the devil:

I’ve seen the devil of violence, and the devil of greed, and the devil of hot desire; but, by all the stars! these were strong, lusty, red-eyed devils, that swayed and drove men—men, I tell you. But as I stood on this hillside, I foresaw that in the blinding sunshine of that land I would become acquainted with a flabby, pretending, weak-eyed devil of a rapacious and pitiless folly. (16)

Conrad’s inferno has a spark of Dantesque paranoia, but there are no angels in *Heart of Darknes*, only a pair of heavenly “white calves” that have flamboyantly entered the critical narrative. I’m referring of course to Chinua Achebe’s famous quote from Bernard C. Meyer’s, *Joseph Conrad: A Psychoanalytic Biography* (1967). The anecdote retells Conrad’s first encounter with an Englishman. In light of our analysis, it is only fitting he should be partly naked:

“(his) calves exposed to the public gaze ... dazzled the beholder by the splendor of their marble-like condition and their rich tone of young ivory. The light of a headlong, exalted satisfaction with the world of men ... illumined his face ... and triumphant eyes. In passing he cast a glance of kindly curiosity and a friendly gleam of big, sound, shiny teeth ... his white calves twinkled sturdily.” (Achebe, NCE, 345)

Achebe observes: “Irrational love and irrational hate jostling together in the heart of that talented, tormented man” (ibid. 345). Whether Conrad’s appraisal of the Englishman can be seen as irrational love, and Conrad’s inverted representation of Africans as irrational hate is something I will discuss in the next chapter in light of Achebe’s famous claim that Conrad is a “bloody racist.” For the time being, I will point out that in contrast to the glory of the pair of “white calves” there is a disproportionate eagerness in construing the African Other as an abomination, *a monster*. A constant attention is dedicated to his body traits: “A black figure

stood up, strode up, on long black legs, waving long black arms” (65). Fredrickson points out:

The neoclassical conceptions of beauty that prevailed in eighteenth-century Europe and America were based primarily on Greek and Roman statuary. The milky whiteness of marble and the facial features and bodily form of the Apollos and Venuses that were coming to light during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries created a standard from which Africans were bound to deviate. The Dutch sociologist Harry Hoetnik has attributed to nations or ethnic groups “somatic norm images” or stereotypes of the beautiful that influence their attitudes toward people they perceive as physically different from themselves. But these images are themselves cultural constructions that change overtime. Because of the classical revival, Europeans of the seventeenth, eighteenth, and nineteenth centuries valued extreme paleness, as well as the facial features and physiques thought to have characterized the ancient Greeks and Romans. (Fredrickson 60)

A connection between intellectual faculties and standards of beauty is a key instrument in the sculpting of African Others; in the process a cruel caricature is drawn. The Khoikhoi or “Hottentots” of Southern Africa, represented as bloodthirsty cannibals in the tabloids of London and Brussels were “viewed as the lowest of the low both because their nomadic, non-agricultural way of life was considered highly uncivilized and because in physique and physiognomy they were perceived as deviating from the European somatic norm than did other (and much darker skinned) Africans” (Fredrickson 60). We can see once more how the perception of nature and geography play an important role in classifying Others as different and inferior to the European paradigm of beauty and reason. Testimony to this distortion in perception is the objective fact that the Khoikhoi were not even black, but of a yellowish skin. Free to the imagination of neoclassical aestheticism, the African Other in *Heart of Darkness* is a marble block in the hands of European judgement: “their bodies streamed with perspiration; they had faces like grotesque masks—these chaps; but they had bone, muscle, a wild vitality, an intense energy of movement, that was as natural and true as the surf along their coast” (14). The construction of Africa is not gradual; it emerges without warning as a monolithic mass of tangled limbs and murky vegetation:

But suddenly, as we struggled round a bend, there would be a glimpse of rush walls, of peaked grass-roofs, a burst of yells, a whirl of black limbs, a mass of hands

clapping, of feet stamping, of bodies swaying, of eyes rolling, under the droop of heavy and motionless foliage. (35)

The African jungle provides a backdrop to the fatal eclipse of the dualism culture-nature. Thus, western “civilized” man and the “savage” emerge as irreconcilable opposites. To die of infectious disease was preferable than to be smitten by a worse kind of evil. Fear of madness constantly lurked in the shadows of the European imagination. There was no bigger fear than “going native.” *Heart of Darkness* portrays Africans as part of a dark and hostile locus where lush vegetation and human flesh coalesce. Madness is the unavoidable outcome.

The over-insistence on the black man’s body, its shape, colour, and movement is distorted in the mirror of European “somatic norm images.” Science has a few words to say in this regard. Men like Francis Galton, Benjamin Kidd, G. W. Hegel, and Charles Darwin himself, were contributors in the scientific narrative of empire. Such discourse was also informed by European neoclassical aesthetics. Galton invokes the work of the Greek sculptor Phidias as a standard of beauty (*sic.* NCE). In contrast, the African is not described as entirely human; verging on the non-human, his “remote” semblance to a common identity with Europeans is to Marlow an unbearable torment:

No, they were not inhuman. Well, you know, that was the worst of it—this suspicion of their not being inhuman. It would come slowly to one. They howled, and leaped, and spun, and made horrid faces; but what thrilled you was just the thought of their humanity—like yours—the thought of your remote kinship with this wild and passionate uproar. Ugly. Yes, it was ugly enough; but if you were man enough you would admit to yourself that there was in you just the faintest trace of a response to the terrible frankness of that noise, a dim suspicion of there being a meaning in it which you—you so remote from the night of first ages— could comprehend. (36)

The kindest, and probably the only compliment Conrad pays to an African is reserved to Kurtz’s mistress, “a wild and gorgeous apparition of a woman” (60). Marlow’s gaze lingers on her “ornaments”:

She walked with measured steps, draped in striped and fringed cloths, treading the earth proudly, with a slight jingle and flash of barbarous ornaments. She carried her head high; her hair was done in the shape of a helmet; she had brass leggings to the knee, brass wire gauntlets to the elbow, a crimson spot on her tawny cheek, innumerable necklaces of glass beads on her neck; bizarre things, charms, gifts of

witch-men, that hung about her, glittered and trembled at every step. She must have had the value of several elephant tusks upon her. She was savage and superb, wild-eyed and magnificent; there was something ominous and stately in her deliberate progress. And in the hush that had fallen suddenly upon the whole sorrowful land, the immense wilderness, the colossal body of the fecund and mysterious life seemed to look at her, pensive, as though it had been looking at the image of its own tenebrous and passionate soul. (60)

A moment later she stretches out her “bared arms” after Kurtz. As soon as some part of her body is naked, unconcealed by her garments, she becomes just another shadow blending in with the jungle:

Suddenly she opened her bared arms and threw them up rigid above her head, as though in an uncontrollable desire to touch the sky, and at the same time the swift shadows darted out on the earth, swept around on the river, gathering the steamer into a shadowy embrace. (61)

Another revealing encounter comes from an unexpected corner of the jungle: “I looked at him, lost in astonishment. There he was before me, in motley, as though he had absconded from a troupe of mimes, enthusiastic, fabulous. His very existence was improbable, inexplicable, and altogether bewildering” (54). Marlow’s strange acquaintance looks like “something funny” he “had seen somewhere.” I would say he looks like a man literally wearing a map, a reference to cartography. Marlow introduces Kurtz’s greatest admirer, the “harlequin”:

“His aspect reminded me of something I had seen—something funny I had seen somewhere. As I manoeuvred to get alongside, I was asking myself, 'What does this fellow look like?' Suddenly I got it. He looked like a harlequin. His clothes had been made of some stuff that was brown Holland probably, but it was covered with patches all over, with bright patches, blue, red, and yellow—patches on the back, patches on front, patches on elbows, on knees; coloured binding round his jacket, scarlet edging at the bottom of his trousers; and the sunshine made him look extremely gay and wonderfully neat withal, because you could see how beautifully all this patching had been done. (52)

The “harlequin” makes a few inflammatory statements in regard to Kurtz’s mistress:

If she had offered to come aboard I really think I would have tried to shoot her,' said the man of patches, nervously. 'I had been risking my life every day for the last fortnight to keep her out of the house. She got in one day and kicked up a row about those miserable rags I picked up in the storeroom to mend my clothes with. I wasn't decent. (61)

Those “miserable rags” can be seen as the patches from the real African map, what the colonizers are usurping “to mend their clothes with.” Conrad’s critique of empire is often subliminal. The posture assumed by his alter ego at the beginning of the narrative is highly telling: “ ‘Mind,’ he began again, lifting one arm from the elbow, the palm of the hand outwards, so that, with his legs folded before him, he had the pose of a Buddha preaching in European clothes and without a lotus-flower” (6). While Marlow is constantly subverting the de-humanizing discourse of empire, he is also endorsing it. His position is always ambivalent; “A Buddha preaching in European clothes,” I think, is the best way to portray his language.

To talk is a sign of humanity; to deny the faculty of speech of an-Other human being is to dehumanize him. Like a gigantic black mirror, the jungle gives Marlow back his own image. The futility of language in the face of open nature becomes apparent. In other words, the jungle doesn’t speak English. Johnson points out: “Kurtz (on the other hand) is primarily a voice and a talker: one of the principal oppositions in the story is between nature, which can neither talk nor hear, and Kurtz, who is really the archetypal talker” (Johnson 78, emphasis added). As the nature of the exchange becomes apparent, the jungle and the natives emerge as a mute giant in Marlow’s imagination: “Could we handle that dumb thing... I felt how big, how confoundedly big, was that thing that couldn’t talk, and perhaps was deaf as well” (26). Johnson illustrates the lack of communication between Marlow and its numinous Other by pointing out that “the nature surrounding Marlow is mute, while the man jabbered about himself” (ibid. 22).

In the imperial narrative, however, the naked “bronze bodies” of Africans are not entirely devoid of value. The chain gang is testimony to that fact, a group of black men wearing nothing but chains:

A slight clinking behind me made me turn my head. Six black men advanced in a file, toiling up the path. They walked erect and slow, balancing small baskets full of earth on their heads, and the clink kept time with their footsteps. Black rags were wound

round their loins, and the short ends behind wagged to and fro like tails. 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. (15)

The body of the African is meticulously constructed, becoming a stigma, the collective curse he must carry along with his shackles. In the eyes of empire the body of the native woman is also a project—her place in the novel will be discussed in the last chapter. The chain gang is reminiscent of English tread mills spinning in the workhouses of England. The only way the body of the African can be purged, redeemed, exorcized is through hard work—there seems to be no shorter path to salvation. By enslaving the Other, the West can pat itself twice on the shoulder. The meaning of the “civilizing mission” ultimately rests on those two pillars: free treatment of a deranged patient at the heavy cost of bodily exploitation. The altruistic and ethnocentric discourse of European “labour camps,” or ivory stations, as they are called in the novel, was assumed to be the Africans’ only hope of moral betterment. Phrenologists like Cesare Lombroso, in his theory of “social defence,” suggested the introduction of labour camps for the criminally insane, institutionalizing them a priori for the greater good (sic. Lombroso, *Criminal Man*). Lombroso assigned Negroid features to the “atavistic or born criminal.” During Marlow’s visit to the doctor, the latter produces a craniometer (a medical instrument used to measure a patients skull) and proceeds to measure his head. This is a reference to phrenology. Adas observes: “No aspect of what nineteenth century Europeans considered the scientific study of human types had a greater impact on popular attitudes than phrenology” (Adas 294). Today considered a pseudoscience, phrenology—also known as craniometry—was based on skull measurements in order to explain temperament, and intellectual as well as moral development across different races. The fixed preoccupation of nineteenth-century Europeans in regard to the crania of their colonial subjects is highly symptomatic of their constant urge to measure and control the Other, to quantify and qualify him, to held him for close scrutiny and exploitation. The idea of Marlow’s doctor was to see whether any “regressive features” in his cephalic index would reveal a distant semblance with the skull of the “savage,” and therefore a propensity to moral insanity. The following passage reveals the “Company’s” fear of imperial agents “going native”:

The old doctor felt my pulse, evidently thinking of something else the while. 'Good, good for there,' he mumbled, and then with a certain eagerness asked me whether I would let him measure my head. Rather surprised, I said Yes, when he produced a

thing like calipers and got the dimensions back and front and every way, taking notes carefully ... Ever any madness in your family?" he asked, in a matter-of-fact tone. (11)

The possibility of biological evolution, once ruled out from the African's limited number of options, led to the idea of spiritual salvation. This idea was ultimately what made Leopold's mission "holy." The "pilgrims," in that light, assume a particularly pernicious character. This is revealed in Marlow's ironic tone: "They wandered here and there with their absurd long staves in their hands, like a lot of faithless pilgrims bewitched inside a rotten fence. The word 'ivory' rang in the air, was whispered, was sighed. You would think they were praying to it" (23).

If the physical traits of the Other are portrayed as a disease, then it follows that inoculation must target the body. This seems to be one of the main instruments of discourse behind the exaggerated focus of nineteenth-century European colonizers on the anatomy of Africans. Force labour becomes a form of treatment. Their "inborn disease" is set in stark contrast to colonial realities:

"They were dying slowly—it was very clear. They were not enemies, they were not criminals, they were nothing earthly now,—nothing but black shadows of disease and starvation, lying confusedly in the greenish gloom. Brought from all the recesses of the coast in all the legality of time contracts, lost in uncongenial surroundings, fed on unfamiliar food, they sickened, became inefficient, and were then allowed to crawl away and rest." (17)

Nakedness of the Africans is viewed as part of their identity. In the grove of death, Marlow meets a group of moribund black men; but he is less interested in their naked bodies than in a "bit of white worsted" one of them is wearing around the neck:

"I began to distinguish the gleam of eyes under the trees. Then, glancing down, I saw a face near my hand. The black bones reclined at full length with one shoulder against the tree, and slowly the eyelids rose and the sunken eyes looked up at me, enormous and vacant, a kind of blind, white flicker in the depths of the orbs, which died out slowly. The man seemed young—almost a boy—but you know with them it's hard to tell. I found nothing else to do but to offer him one of my good Swede's ship's biscuits I had in my pocket. The fingers closed slowly on it and held—there was no other movement and no other glance. He had tied a bit of white worsted round his neck—Why? Where did he get it? Was it a badge—an ornament—a charm—a propitiatory

act? Was there any idea at all connected with it? It looked startling round his black neck, this bit of white thread from beyond the seas. (17)

Retelling the experience of a French observer in a nineteenth-century confinement house in Strasbourg, Michel Foucault writes: “These cages had gratings for floors, and did not rest on the ground but were raised about fifteen centimeters. Over these gratings was thrown a little straw upon which the madman lay, naked or nearly so, took his meals, and deposited his excrement” (Foucault 73). The feat of engineering is certainly striking, almost reminiscent of the imaginary artefacts painted by Hieronymus Bosch three hundred years earlier. This type of cage was extended in a more subtle way to the heart of Africa. As we shall see more clearly in the next chapter, domestic perceptions of otherness (the familiar) followed the colonisers in their holy mission overseas. Umberto Eco makes the following observation:

The geographical fantasy gradually generated a political project. In other words, the phantom called up by some scribe with a knack for counterfeiting documents served as an alibi for the expansion of the Christian world toward Africa and Asia, a welcome argument favouring the white man’s burden. (12-13)

What Eco calls “the phantom” (he was actually referring to Prester John) can be extended by analogy to the spectral projection of the jungle and its inhabitants as a historical and geographical space ripe for “civilization.” Nakedness provides a tangible example of how the phantom of insanity was projected from one continent onto the Other. Foucault points out the nineteenth-century assumption that maniacs “fear neither heat nor cold, tear off their clothes, sleep naked in the dead of winter without feeling the cold” (Foucault 127). This sort of clinical observations informed the construction of the new colonized. Africans, as Marlow describes them, resemble the behaviour of maniacs:

In front of the first rank, along the river, three men, plastered with bright red earth from head to foot, strutted to and fro restlessly. When we came abreast again, they faced the river, stamped their feet, nodded their horned heads, swayed their scarlet bodies; they shook towards the fierce river-demon a bunch of black feathers, a mangy skin with a pendent tail—something that looked like a dried gourd; they shouted periodically together strings of amazing words that resembled no sounds of human language; and the deep murmurs of the crowd, interrupted suddenly, were like the response of some satanic litany. (66-67)

It is worth noticing the subtle transition from “maniacs” to “demons.” One moment the natives are stamping their feet, shaking convulsively, and shouting “strings of amazing words that resembled no sounds of human language;” the next moment their behaviour resembles a “satanic litany.” The transition from “man” to “demon” would have been too far-fetched had the “madman” not been in between. Michel Foucault illustrates how this sort of representations of socially maladjusted types was carried from the classical period into the nineteenth century:

What the classical period had confined was not only an abstract unreason which mingled madmen and libertines, invalids, and criminals, but also an enormous reservoir of the fantastic, a dormant world of monsters supposedly engulfed in the darkness of Hieronymus Bosch which had once spewed them forth. One might say that the fortresses of confinement added to their social role of segregation and purification a quite opposite cultural function. Even as they separated reason from unreason on society's surface, they preserved in depth the images where they mingled and exchanged properties. The fortresses of confinement functioned as a great, long silent memory; they maintained in the shadows an iconographic power that men might have thought was exorcised; created by the new classical order, they preserved, against it and against time, forbidden figures that could thus be transmitted intact from the sixteenth to the nineteenth century. (Foucault 209)

Outside the field of popular literature, this sort of imagery had also informed the discourse of criminal anthropology, which in turn informs the scene of Marlow's visit to the doctor. The semblance between the cranium of the “savage,” particularly that of the African Negro, and the skull of the primate had been compared throughout the century. Foucault points out:

It has doubtless been essential to Western culture to link, as it has done, its perception of madness to the iconographic forms of the relation of man to beast. From the start, Western culture has not considered it evident that animals participate in the plenitude of nature, in its wisdom and its order: this idea was a late one and long remained on the surface of culture; perhaps it has not yet penetrated very deeply into the subterranean regions of the imagination. (Foucault 77)

The jungle offers Marlow a picture of unrestrained freedom and lush exuberance associated with lack of restraint. In his eyes, that shadowy vegetation is a “conquering darkness” (73). It “invades” everything: Fresleven's skeleton, his own thoughts, and even his friend's cranium.

The double colonization of Kurtz is the fulfilment of the white man's fear of "going native." The exuberant vegetation of the jungle, haunted by the throb of distant drums, adds to this symbol of unrestrained freedom:

It was in relation to unreason and to it alone that madness could be understood. Unreason was its support; or let us say that unreason defined the locus of madness's possibility. For classical man, madness was not the natural condition, the human and psychological root of unreason; it was only unreason's empirical form; and the madman, tracing the course of human degradation to the frenzied nadir of animality, disclosed that underlying realm of unreason which threatens man and envelops—at a tremendous distance—all the forms of his natural existence. It was not a question of tending toward a determinism, but of being swallowed up by a darkness. More effectively than any other kind of rationalism, better in any case than our positivism, classical rationalism could watch out for and guard against the subterranean danger of unreason, that threatening space of an absolute freedom. (Foucault 83-84)

As the steamer continues upriver, Marlow faces darkness. The meaninglessness he sees in the landscape is a reflection of his own fears. If his cultural constructions entirely dissolve, nothing will be left but the "distant kinship" with the natives. Marlow and the anonymous first speaker seem to know this. Kurtz is a witness to that, and there is no grace in his downfall. Marlow fears to give in, to lack restraint, what led Kurtz to his own destruction.

Marlow's obsession with "truth," I will argue, relates metaphorically to the "clothing factory" of culture. Concealing one's nakedness can be seen as an attempt to suppress a state of feral madness. In his journey, dodging flying arrows and greater perils, Marlow risks his own skin, his "cultural fabric;" all he is "out there," the only "truth" left. But the jungle cannot claim Marlow's voice:

Principles? Principles won't do. Acquisitions, clothes, pretty rags—rags that would fly off at the first good shake. No; you want a deliberate belief. An appeal to me in this fiendish row—is there? Very well; I hear; I admit, but I have a voice too, and for good or evil mine is the speech that cannot be silenced. Of course, a fool, what with sheer fright and fine sentiments, is always safe. Who's that grunting? You wonder I didn't go ashore for a howl and a dance? Well, no—I didn't. Fine sentiments, you say? Fine sentiments, be hanged! I had no time. (36)

Ultimately, the common geography of human beings, seen from a psychological point of view, is their own “madness.” Their difference resides in exterior dimensions. Culture can then be seen as a cotton jacket, tailored to fit the needs of who is wearing it. But that construct is fragile, it can dissolve at the mere touch of a shadow of doubt, be undone in the vastness of nature. Foucault makes an insightful observation: “The slowness of revenge, like the insolence of desire, belongs to nature. There is nothing that the madness of men invents which is not either nature made manifest or nature restored” (282, 283). Nature as a common geography that constantly seeks restoration is what culture has othered as madness. This othering, I think, points to the fundamental split in Marlow’s discourse. Upon closer inspection, he realizes the fragility of his own culture projected as shadow onto the jungle, and he is horrified. Unflinching, however, he continues his journey, but why? His ship is dissolving. What urges him on? He and his fellow colonizers are after all the uninvited guests of the wilderness. We know he is not driven by greed. A greater force drives him towards the heart of darkness. From that perspective a new realization looms in the horizon of the jungle: culture is not the opposite of nature. Culture is the construct of man, while nature is what unites all of us, our “common ground.” Kurtz’s failed restraint and Marlow’s obsession with things being in their “right place” also fall back into dualism when they refuse to acknowledge a common ground with the ultimate Other: the collective unconscious, nature itself. This image can be compared to what Rowland calls “the unconscious unbreakable romance with the ego.” By listening to Kurtz’s style, we can recognize his discourse. He has not embraced a common forest of experience with “primeval man.” On the contrary, his ego has been inflated to compensate the intrusion of the Self. The discourse of megalomania, so familiar to King Leopold, can be heard from his own mouth: “I had immense plans” (65). Marlow sharpens my point:

You should have heard him say, 'My ivory.' Oh yes, I heard him. 'My Intended, my ivory, my station, my river, my—' everything belonged to him. It made me hold my breath in expectation of hearing the wilderness burst into a prodigious peal of laughter that would shake the fixed stars in their places. Everything belonged to him—but that was a trifle. The thing was to know what he belonged to, how many powers of darkness claimed him for their own. That was the reflection that made you creepy all over. It was impossible—it was not good for one either—trying to imagine. He had taken a high seat amongst the devils of the land—I mean literally. You can't understand. How could you?—with solid pavement under your feet, surrounded by

kind neighbours ready to cheer you or to fall on 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. (48-49)

Much like technology was a means of harnessing nature, culture was a means of harnessing madness. Ngugi Wa Thiong'o says about European colonialism: "The bullet was the means of the physical subjugation. Language was the means of the spiritual subjugation" (Ngugi 9). But Marlow's loaded Martini-Henry leaning in one corner of his pilothouse is of no use against the wilderness. Language is then all he has left. Kurtz, already falling in the pit of darkness, holds desperately to the remnants of his shattered ego; his clothes, even his skin can no longer protect him against the feral nakedness of the jungle. He is a "raving skeleton," as Conrad's critics use to call him. We only need to listen to his voice and to his language to understand that it is not the voice of nature, but the voice of overinflated ego consciousness the one speaking. In that sense, the jungle always remains silent.

The image of the severed heads decorating the front of Kurtz's house will now allow me to sum up my analysis of Conrad's novel in the light of geography and madness:

You remember I told you I had been struck at the distance by certain attempts at ornamentation, rather remarkable in the ruinous aspect of the place. Now I had suddenly a nearer view, and its first result was to make me throw my head back as if before a blow. Then I went carefully from post to post with my glass, and I saw my mistake. These round knobs were not ornamental but symbolic; they were expressive and puzzling, striking and disturbing—food for thought and also for the vultures if there had been any looking down from the sky; but at all events for such ants as were industrious enough to ascend the pole. They would have been even more impressive, those heads on the stakes, if their faces had not been turned to the house. Only one, the first I had made out, was facing my way. I was not so shocked as you may think. The start back I had given was really nothing but a movement of surprise. I had expected to see a knob of wood there, you know. I returned deliberately to the first I had seen—and there it was, black, dried, sunken, with closed eyelids,—a head that seemed to sleep at the top of that pole, and, with the shrunken dry lips showing a

narrow white line of the teeth, was smiling too, smiling continuously at some endless and jocose dream of that eternal slumber. (57)

Kurtz is not able to transcend colonial alienation. The heads that decorate his front yard have an eerie resonance with Ngugi's words in regard to the future that was to befall the African Continent:

Colonial alienation takes two interlinked forms: an active (or passive) distancing of oneself from the reality around; and an active (or passive) identification with that which is most external to one's environment. It starts with a deliberate disassociation of the language of conceptualization, of thinking, of formal education, of mental development, from the language of daily interaction in the home and in the community. It is like separating the mind from the body so that they are occupying two unrelated linguistic spheres in the same person. On a larger social scale it is like producing a society of bodiless heads and headless bodies. (Ngugi 28)

In a way, the clothes of the imperial agents are like the spikes in Kurtz's front yard. All one can see is a head sticking out of the starched collar:

I didn't want any more loitering in the shade, and I made haste towards the station. When near the buildings I met a white man, in such an unexpected elegance of get-up that in the first moment I took him for a sort of vision. I saw a high starched collar, white cuffs, a light alpaca jacket, snowy trousers, a clear 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. (18)

This "miracle" Marlow comes across has little in common with the natives. To begin with, he is fully clothed, while they are naked. Also, in contrast to the natives, who carry baskets full of dirt on top of their heads, he wears no hat; his hair is parted, oiled, and enjoys the cool shade of a parasol.

Kurtz's "unsound methods" are a testimony to his madness, which is to say, his lack of restraint. The drama that plays out in Kurtz's front yard is considered by Marlow to be of lesser importance than his friend's mental integrity. There is a fine line between the horror of empire and the horror of "going native." This is ultimately how we may connect geography and madness.

The ants climbing the severed heads on the spikes can be seen as nature tearing the flesh and gnawing the bones of the acculturated ego. They are a metaphor of its smallness

being overwhelmed, climbed over, and devoured by the immensity of nature. The jungle takes over, tearing apart the cultural flesh of the colonizers, the garments of civilization. These ants are also a mirrored image of the “holy mission” carried out by those “little men” Marlow fears will be devoured. Leopold’s army brought a lunatic invasion to the heart of Africa. The jungle, in turn, gave him back his own image. It gave him back a bag full of bones: man’s nakedness and truest appearance. Kurtz is the embodiment of that reflection:

His voice lost itself in the calm of the evening. The long shadows of the forest had slipped down hill while we talked, had gone far beyond the ruined hovel, beyond the symbolic row of stakes. All this was in the gloom, while we down there were yet in the sunshine, and the stretch of the river abreast of the clearing glittered in a still and dazzling splendour, with a murky and over-shadowed bend above and below. Not a living soul was seen on the shore. The bushes did not rustle. (58)

“All of Europe contributed to the making of Kurtz” (49). He is Europe’s prodigal son, returning to civilization inside a wooden coffin. He is also a shadow: “a shadow darker than the shadow of the night” (73). In comparison to Leopold’s “holy mission” and the true face of empire, Africa emerges as a bastion of sanity, the sea of murky vegetation and the brooding darkness the padded walls of Victorian hubris:

I could not hear a sound, but through my glasses I saw the thin arm extended commandingly, the lower jaw moving, the eyes of that apparition shining darkly far in its bony head that nodded with grotesque jerks. Kurtz—Kurtz—that means short in German—don't it? Well, the name was as true as everything else in his life—and death. He looked at least seven feet long. His covering had fallen off, and his body emerged from it pitiful and appalling as from a winding-sheet. I could see the cage of his ribs all astir, the bones of his arm waving. It was as though an animated image of death carved out of old ivory had been shaking its hand with menaces at a motionless crowd of men made of dark and glittering bronze. I saw him open his mouth wide—it gave him a weirdly voracious aspect, as though he had wanted to swallow all the air, all the earth, all the men before him. A deep voice reached me faintly. He must have been shouting. He fell back suddenly. The stretcher shook as the bearers staggered forward again, and almost at the same time I noticed that the crowd of savages was vanishing without any perceptible movement of retreat, as if the forest that had ejected these beings so suddenly had drawn them in again as the breath is drawn in a long aspiration. (59)

The triumph of madness is not the triumph of nature in *Heart of Darkness*. On the contrary, Kurtz's death is the victory and defeat of ego consciousness. As the natives carry him away on a stretcher, like the photographic negative of some white-clad orderlies pushing a wheelchair in the corridors of a London asylum, we hear his last words fade into darkness. At the end there is nothing left of Kurtz's narrative, only silence, commingled with the echoes of his voice, but silence nonetheless.

The shadow archetype

In *Heart of Darkness*, we find human and natural Others (the natives, the jungle). In his construction of otherness, Marlow blends them into a monolithic and nebulous whole, which he calls by different names: "the horror," "darkness," "the wilderness." But the natives and the jungle are by no means the only Others in Marlow's narrative. We find women, the pilgrims, and the ultimate Other: the collective unconscious. In this section I will discuss the archetype of the shadow to then see what role it plays in the perception of imperialist Others from a British point of view.

Immunologists know that more than *soi* we are *non soi*; that is to say, ten times more bacteria than body cells. Translated to our argument on alterity: we happen to be more Other than self. It has always been the role of the humanities to explore these issues, the ones that usually pass unnoticed under the everyday gaze of society. An infinite number of Others operate under the headline of shadow. Rinda West points out:

What C. G. Jung called the shadow, the repressed, often frightening and shameful elements of the psyche. Confronting and absorbing these parts of the self into consciousness allow characters to admit the ways they have been projecting their own wild nature onto others, to withdraw these projections, and to learn to practice restraint. (West 3)

"Unrestrained" hate/love engenders shadow. An example of this is Kurtz's famous harangue: "exterminate all the brutes!" Acknowledging shadow, as West points out, "fosters a more ethical attitude to those "Others" previously scorned" (West 20). Libidinal impulses must therefore be harnessed through restraint in order to withdraw projections and be able to adopt an introspective, Self-reflective, critical view of the outside world.

If an individual wants a glimpse of his own shadow, says Rinda West, he will have to examine closely those people he most immediately despises or those places from which he recoils. When referring to Conrad, she points out that we see evidence of the projection of shadow onto both nature and native people. The belief that the jungle is “menacing” or the prairie “empty” justifies their conquest, just as labelling native people “savage” and “primitive” rationalizes their enslavement and devastation (West 15). We see a similar attitude from Marlow towards his fellow imperialists:

They were no colonists; their administration was merely a squeeze, and nothing more, I suspect. They were conquerors, and for that you want only brute force—nothing to boast of, when you have it, since your strength is just an accident arising from the weakness of others. They grabbed what they could get for the sake of what was to be got. It was just robbery with violence, aggravated murder on a great scale, and men going at it blind—as is very proper for those who tackle a darkness. The conquest of the earth, which mostly means the taking it away from those who have a different complexion or slightly flatter noses than ourselves, is not a pretty thing when you look into it too much. What redeems it is the idea only. An idea at the back of it; not a sentimental pretence but an idea; and an unselfish belief in the idea—something you can set up, and bow down before, and offer a sacrifice to. . . .(6-7)

It is in such instances that Marlow will seem to fully acknowledge projections and embrace a critical attitude towards his personal and cultural shadow projected onto Africans and their natural habitat. But if we look closer, we will realize that he defamiliarizes the imperialist Others. Early in the novel Marlow gazes on a map that hangs from the wall at the Company’s office and he notices a “vast amount of red,” the colour typically used to mark the territories occupied and “civilized” by the British empire (sic. NCE). A self-declared Anglophile, that’s good news for Conrad. He remarks: “There was a vast amount of red—good to see at any time, because one knows that some real work is done in there” (10). I will now compare those red patches on the map “at the Company’s office” with the dark patches on a South European map, as projected by central and northern Europeans.

The myth of the Black Legend, crafted by Anglo-Saxons in mid 16th century is an instance of shadow. It portrays the Spanish conquistador as a cruel and rapacious European competitor in the mission to “civilize.” This myth is also manifested in the way in which the English Self, which Marlow wears like a mask, perceives the imperialist Other; the Belgian invader is closer to the Frenchman, and thus gloomier and more vicious than the lowermost

Anglo-Saxon. When Marlow reaches the African mainland, he sees “a French vessel firing into a continent”:

For a time I would feel I belonged still to a world of straightforward facts; but the feeling would not last long. Something would turn up to scare it away. Once, I remember, we came upon a man-of-war anchored off the coast. There wasn't even a shed there, and she was shelling the bush. It appears the French had one of their wars going on thereabouts. Her ensign dropped limp like a rag; the muzzles of the long eight-inch guns stuck out all over the low hull; the greasy, slimy swell swung her up lazily and let her down, swaying her thin masts. In the empty immensity of earth, sky, and water, there she was, incomprehensible, firing into a continent. Pop, would go one of the eight-inch guns; a small flame would dart and vanish, a little white smoke would disappear, a tiny projectile would give a feeble screech—and nothing happened. Nothing could happen. There was a touch of insanity in the proceeding, a sense of lugubrious drollery in the sight; and it was not dissipated by somebody on board assuring me earnestly there was a camp of natives—he called them enemies!—hidden out of sight somewhere. (14)

As Marlow demonizes the French, which are doing in fact nothing better or worse than the British, he is projecting his own Shadow onto them. The French is closer to the Spaniard than to the Anglo-Saxon, and in turn the Belgian is closer to the French. So it all ends there. If we look closely at the mechanics of shadow, we can split it into several events. We know for instance that Conrad was not English, so his identification with British imperial heroics, like his admiration for Kurtz, can be also said to be a more subtle shade of projection. Marlow projects himself onto Kurtz, who is a voice, a language, and an eloquent speaker. Those times that Marlow condemns Kurtz lack of restraint he is actually acknowledging his own shadow cast onto him. Because they are close, united by language and voice (Kurtz speaks English), it is easier for Marlow to withdraw projections. This is due to the fact that he can build a bridge towards Kurtz, but not towards the French, who are in turn too close to the ultimate imperialist Other, the Renaissance Spanish conquistador. We can see this dear English projection onto a modern version of the Spanish Armada. Kurtz calls it Eldorado Exploring Expedition, a historical reference to Spanish explorers in search for South-American gold:

This devoted band called itself the Eldorado Exploring Expedition, and I believe they were sworn to secrecy. Their talk, however, was the talk of sordid buccaneers: it was reckless without hardihood, greedy without audacity, and cruel without courage; there was not an atom of foresight or of serious intention in the whole batch of them, and they did not seem aware these things are wanted for the work of the world. To tear treasure out of the bowels of the land was their desire, with no more moral purpose at the back of it than there is in burglars breaking into a safe.

The Eldorado Exploring Expedition is the clearest example of shadow projection in *Heart of Darkness*, referring back to a time and a geography inscribed by Anglo-Saxon culture as The Black Legend. Rinda west points out:

Jung was clear that humans individually and collectively have developed consciousness as a means of containing instinct and freeing ourselves from its hold. However, the side effect of that increasing freedom is the shadow. Jung identified shadow as the archetype that has “the most disturbing influence on the ego.” As an individual becomes conscious, or develops an ego (what Jung calls an “ego complex,” suggesting the charged emotions linked to the sense of self), she or he also constructs a shadow, where rejected and repressed potentials reside—impulses and potentials unacceptable in the family, religion, culture, and historical period. (West 14)

We can look at shadow from the perspective of the Self. “Territoriality of the ego manifests in the negation of a much larger space: The Self. It is within that liminal area that shadow is to be found and eventually acknowledged. “Like the construction of ego, the construction of culture engenders shadow” (West 14). Jung posits a model of mind in which, in the course of development, the ego differentiates itself from the whole of psyche, which Jung calls the Self. [...] How far an individual and a human group develop depends on whether or not the ego is willing to listen to the messages of the Self. (West 16). The failure of Marlow’s individuation has to do with the fact that he never fully acknowledges shadow. In metaphysical terms, he journeys to darkness and stays there.

Anachronism and race in Heart of Darkness

In order to challenge the claim made by Nigerian literary critic Chinua Achebe that Conrad is a “bloody racist”—or a “thoroughgoing racist,” as he later called him—, I will put the word

“racism” in perspective with the help of G. M. Fredrickson and the Norton Critical Edition of *Heart of Darkness*. After briefly looking at the different arguments in favour and against Achebe’s contention in light of *anachronism*, I will attempt to reach a conclusion. The main point of this section is to assess the value of shadow projection as “racism” and also to discuss whether to call Conrad a word that did not exist in his time would be a legitimate academic claim. Before I outline my argument, I will take a moment to historicize Achebe’s claim.

G. M. Fredrickson makes a distinction between colour-coded racism and other forms of racial discrimination. Clearly, the first has affected Africans more than anybody else. One of the earliest descriptions of “racism” as a social phenomenon goes back to Genesis, and it is known as the “curse of Ham.” All of Canaan’s descendants, according to Scripture, were cursed to be “servants unto servants,” the physical result of the curse was believed to be blackening of the skin. “Popular among religious defenders of slavery was the myth that God had placed a curse on the allegedly black descendents of Ham, condemning them to be ‘hewers of wood and carriers of water’ or ‘servants onto servants’ (Fredrickson 80). But as we move forward from Scripture—which uses the language of myth—, we begin to see that such distinctions had no clear ideological basis, as the modern “concept” of racism does. “Notions of geography before the fifteen century were so uncertain that a clear sense of distinct continents to which racial types could be assigned was lacking” (Fredrickson 43). Fredrickson expands on this point:

A review of the historical discourse on racism that began in the 1920s reveals that the term was first applied to ideologies making invidious distinctions among divisions of the “white” or Caucasian race, and especially to show that Aryans or Nordics were superior to other people normally considered “white” or “Caucasian.” The term “race” has a long history, but “racism” goes back only to the early twentieth century, and the “ism” reflected the understanding of historians and others who wrote about it that they were dealing with a questionable set of beliefs and not undeniable facts of nature. It might be said that the concept of racism emerges only when the concept of race, or at least some of its applications, begins to be questioned. (Fredrickson 156)

When the term was first applied, as Fredrickson indicates, it was inscribed from a future location in regard to a phenomenon that bears a semantic charge unknown to those temporal Others who “endorsed” it. The Norton Critical Edition *Heart of Darkness* points out:

At any rate, critics of *Heart of Darkness* should keep in mind that for Conrad all of these words (colonialism, imperialism, racialism, racist, and racism – parenthesis mine) did not convey the same meaning(s) to him as they do to us. As far as he was concerned, race included ethnicity and nationality; it was an inclusive word, with none or only a few of the ominous connotations it was later to assume for a generation living after the Holocaust. And we should bear in mind as well that imperialism was not a universal bogeyman but could be both good and bad, depending on what nation was practicing it. (NCE 241)

Fredrickson expands on that idea:

I would insist that certain kinds of ideas and beliefs must be present, at some level of consciousness, in the minds of the practitioners of racism. If not, we would have no way to distinguish racism from classism, ethnocentrism, sexism, religious intolerance, ageism, or any other mode of allotting differential advantages or prestige to categories of people that vary, or seem to vary, in some important respect. (Fredrickson 153)

[...] We would be wise, however, to heed the warning of Michael Adas against making racism the ideological essence of imperialism. Although some proponents of imperialism believed that the colonized were subhuman and therefore incapable of improvement beyond a kind of taming or domestication, others affirmed their capacity to be educated and civilized, although the process might take a long time. (Fredrickson 100-109)

As we have seen, the negative connotations of “racism” are quite a recent phenomenon. To call Conrad a “bloody racist” would be to rewrite history. We cannot be oblivious to the fact that if the notion of “racism” did not exist then, or at least did not have the dimension and connotations that has acquired in our time, we are using a term outside of its historical reach, thereby falling back into anachronism. On top of that its nebulous present-day connotations make it an even harder word to employ when looking back at past events. Fredrickson says:

Racism has become a loaded and ambiguous term. Both sides in the current debate over affirmative action in the United States have, for example, have used it to describe their opponents. It can mean either a lamentable absence of “colour blindness” in an allegedly postracist age or insensitivity to past and present discrimination against groups that to be helped need to be racially categorized. Once considered primarily as a matter of belief or ideology, “racism” may now express

itself in institutional patterns or social practices that have adverse effects on members of groups thought of as “races”, even if a conscious belief that they are inferior or unworthy is absent. The term is clearly in danger of missing losing the precision needed to make it an analytical tool for historians and social scientists examining the relations among human groups or collectivities. But few would deny that we need, as a bare minimum, a strong expression to describe some horrendous acts of brutality and injustice that were clearly inspired by beliefs associated with the concept of race. (Fredrickson 151-152)

Having historicized the word “racism” I will now get back to Achebe’s essay, where his claim was originally voiced. “An Image of Africa: *Racism in Conrad’s Heart of Darkness*” had its inception in a lecture given by Achebe at the University of Massachusetts on 18 February 1975. The first version had been published under the title “An Image of Africa” in the *Massachusetts Review* in 1977, later subject to revision for the 1988 third Norton Critical Edition of Conrad’s novella. The two versions of Achebe’s essay are practically identical; he makes, however, an important readjustment. Instead of calling Conrad a “bloody racist” (1977), he calls him a “thoroughgoing racist” (1988). He also calls Conrad’s mental health into question—such is the effect elicited by the ambivalence of *Heart of Darkness*. “Naturally Conrad is a dream for psychoanalytic critics” (345), says Achebe after having pointed out a few pages before that, “As everybody knows, Conrad is a romantic on the side” (340).

It has been the habit of critics to judge the past from the relative comfort of the present. The problem of Conrad’s “racism,” as I see it, rests on the fact that in the nineteenth century the word was not yet in circulation, and therefore the narrative that we have inscribed in that semantic space becomes nebulous and imprecise. Looking back, Conrad’s “racism” was informed by nineteenth-century anthropology. The words “Negro” and “nigger” underwent a process of semantic pejoration in a matter of five decades since the publication of *Heart of Darkness*. Today words like “race” and “racial” are practically ruled out from our everyday language—they just do not fit the twenty-first-century narrative. As modern critics of Conrad’s novella, we should not confuse *correctness* with *accuracy*. This distinction, I think, is particularly relevant from a postcolonial point of view.

We know that Conrad’s depiction of Africans is not complimenting: “A quarrelsome band of footsore sulky niggers trod on the heels of the donkeys” (30), but at no point can I detect the “cruelty” and eliminationist overtones the word “racism” has acquired in modern

times—since 1945. At no point in the story does Conrad endorse a policy of genocide. On the contrary, he subverts the eliminationist narrative of the civilizing mission, epitomized in Kurtz's famous harangue: "exterminate all the brutes" (16). The fact that Marlow does not even despise Kurtz, who is presented, but not resented as a megalomaniac, is a reflection of Conrad's candid and innocent narrative style. We can look at Conrad as a romantic painter smirching black on a very touchy canvass, but to inscribe such a nebulous and defamatory word as "racism" on his otherness as time (history) and space (geography) would be, I think, similar to his depiction of Other "empty spaces." It would be a way of denying the fact that despite Conrad had a voice of his own, he was "speaking" a cultural space and time. Most of his "attacks" on blacks sprout from an unresolved problem with shadow, characteristic of his time. As men of words Conrad and his literary alter ego are simply naming things with the language provided by their own culture. Language, like art, cannot be fully understood outside of its natural boundaries. Therefore, I don't think that Achebe's is a legitimate claim. On the contrary, his accusation falls back into anachronism, posing a serious threat to his intellectual integrity and academic accuracy. No trace of intention complicit in the aspirations of empire based on racial ideology with its present implications is revealed in Conrad's novel. In conclusion, I will restate my contention. Achebe succeeds where he errs. From the point of view of correctness he may be right, but re-considered from the point of view of accuracy I think he is not. Achebe is right, however, when he calls Conrad "thoroughgoing." As a nineteenth-century writer, he certainly went to great extents to transcend and challenge the narrative of his time. It remains *Heart of Darkness* own tragedy and mystery that neither he nor his literary alter ego ever managed to "thoroughly" come out of the shade.

Voice of the cannibal

Cartography is a blank space where Marlow can inscribe a narrative of the Other. Likewise, *toponyms*, geographical names, such as those of a village or a river, can be a tool of domination. They can help in the construction of the Other, the raw material of empire building. In the case of Leopold's "holy mission" to civilize Africa we encounter human hubris, or the inflation of ego, in its gluttonous drive to conquer. Empire, I will argue, created its own brand of cannibalism, and colonial agents and bureaucrats can be seen as *anthropophagites*, or cannibals, themselves. *Anthropo-toponyms* (place names derived from a person's name) are a subclass of *toponyms* and serve as an example of this. We can now see

megalomania, an extreme instance of lack of restraint, morph into *anthropophagy*, or cannibalism. This is reflected in *anthropo-toponyms* such as “Leopoldville” and “Stanley Falls.” The origin of the word cannibal has itself geographical roots, having its etymology in the *Caniba*, or *Caribs*, in Columbian nomenclature (compare to Shakespeare’s *Caliban*, in *The Tempest*), indigenous people from the Lesser Antilles in the Caribbean Sea.

Cartography as a central discourse of empire informs Marlow’s narrative. He is a colonial sailor and also a geographer. In that sense he endorses the European brand of cannibalism. Language structured as imperial discourse, I have contended, is as corrosive. Seen from this angle, *anthropo-toponyms* and *anthropophagy*, translated into the language of empire, become two ways of referring to the same thing. To put my argument in perspective, I will provide a postcolonial definition of cartography, or map-making:

Both literally and metaphorically, maps and mapping are dominant practices of colonial and postcolonial cultures. Colonization itself is often consequent on a voyage of ‘discovery’, a bringing into being of ‘undiscovered’ lands. The process of discovery is reinforced by the construction of maps, whose existence is a means of textualizing the spatial reality of the other, naming or, in almost all cases, renaming spaces in a symbolic and literal act of mastery and control. In all cases the lands so colonized are literally re-inscribed, written over, as the names and languages of the indigenes are re-placed by new names, or are corrupted into new and Europeanized forms by the cartographer and explorer. (Ashcroft *et al*: 28)

In Marlow’s narrative, the voice of the African is the voice of a horror that cannot be conveyed, that of cannibalism, whereas the voice of the “civilizer,” both written and spoken, is the voice of the name-giver: the geographical, the policy maker. In their mission to civilize, Europeans tear limbs apart and swallow whole patches of land. Their uncontrolled instinctual impulses, however, are not seen as lack of restraint. They are not perceived as a form of cannibalism. That “horror” is only reserved to the literal eaters of human flesh. The incorporation of Others through a cannibalistic geopolitical scheme is also reflected in the construction of Africa as shadow space, which in turn is projected by denying an association with “unspeakable rites.” Ashcroft expands on the idea of cartography:

Maps also inscribe their ideology on territory in numerous ways other than place-names. The blank spaces of early maps signify a literal terra nullius, an open and inviting (virginal) space into which the European imagination can project itself and

into which the European (usually male) explorer must penetrate. Such blank spaces invite other cultural superscriptions, such as the elaborately drawn monsters and sub-human wild-men (savages) of most early maps.

Other toponyms such as “The Congo Free State” and “Buma Matadi” (referring to detonations to build roads) lag close behind the eating of human flesh. Marlow intuits this discursive ambivalence and projects it onto Kurtz as shadow to make it more palatable. Truth and lies mean a lot to him, because he is a man of words, just like the “chief of the Inner Station.” Marlow’s discourse in this respect tends to be psychological.

Lies and linear thinking often combine to mislead. In the scramble for Africa we see a number of “geographies” cannibalizing “others.” As cartographers drew the map of Africa, they were organizing rational language into a structured discourse that tended to ignore the right of Others to land and identity. As Hall points out, “Our concept of space makes use of the edges of things. [...] Space is treated in terms of a coordinate system. [...] To us a space is empty—one gets into it by intersecting it with lines” (Hall 174). Renaissance, as well as Victorian journeys of exploration were linear in that sense. They projected their own identity into spatial terms. “Empty spaces” on the world map are consequential to this. The flashback of Marlow’s childhood’s is an instance of such projection of “emptiness” in areas that were not inscribed and eventually digested by ego consciousness: “Now when I was a little chap I had a passion for maps. I would look for hours at South America or Africa, or Australia, and loose myself in all the glories of exploration” (7-8). And he continues below: “At that time there were many blank spaces on the earth and when I saw one that looked particularly inviting on a map (but they all look that) I would put my finger on it and say: When I grow up I will go there.” By filling that “empty space” with their presence westerners imbued it with meaning. Such is the language of the ego. As Rowland points out, “Language creates ego consciousness” (West 42). Many years later, looking at map, he says: “And as I looked at the map ... in a shop-window, it fascinated me as a snake would a bird—a silly little bird ... The snake had charmed me” (8). He projects his own cannibalism onto the map. His paranoia will later re-emerge. Presently he feels he is the one who will be eaten by “the snake”: “And the river was there—fascinating—deadly—like a snake.” Because his discourse tends to lean towards irony, however, it is often hard to tell whether he is really acknowledging his own shadow:

I gave my name, and looked about. Deal table in the middle, plain chairs all round the walls, on one end a large shining map, marked with all the colours of a rainbow.

There was a vast amount of red—good to see at any time, because one knows that some real work is done in there. (10)

In light of Jung's house dream, the "deal table" emerges as the butcher's bench, along with the "plain chairs," the dark furniture of the mind. He notices a "vast amount of red," the colour typically used to mark the territories of the British empire (sic. NCE). A self-declared Anglophile, that's good news for Conrad: *some real work is done in there!* The colour red can be seen here as blood, an unconscious association to his unacknowledged lack of restraint.

His first impressions of African geography are telling. As he sails past a few local *toponyms*, he remarks: "Every day the coast looked the same, as though we had not moved; but we passed various places—trading places—with names like Gran Bassam, Little Popo, names that seemed to belong to some sordid farce acted in front of a sinister backcloth" (13). These to Marlow don't ring "true," they are "lies." From the point of view of his cultural narrative, only European languages can fill "empty space" with meaning. By dismissing unfamiliar names as "farcical" he is endorsing the narrative of empire. Nineteenth-century Europeans tended to stress different stages of mental and cultural development in Africans as negative in their encounters overseas. "The colonized subject is characterized as 'other' through discourses such as primitivism and cannibalism, as a means of establishing the binary separation of the colonizer and colonized and asserting the naturalness and primacy of the colonizing culture and world view. (Ashcroft et al, 155). Yet we can see remnants of ritual cannibalism in the Christian liturgy of ingesting "the blood" and "body of Christ." In that sense Dionysiac ritualism is contemporary to western culture *in its mythic form*. Ritual cannibalism can be then contrasted with the literal ingestion of human flesh. Feder says in this regard:

The cannibalistic act is also the most primitive and most violent confusion of the two impulses (love and hate / libido and aggression); the incorporation of the loved child takes place at the moment that it is being devoured. It is the most primitive form of merging with an object, an act in which love and violence are not distinguished, in which libido does not mitigate the drive of aggression. (Feder 49, emphasis added)

Marlow looks down at the "savages" from the pilothouse of his "river-monster" and he fancies that they are "filled with unrestrained grief." He then comes to a similar realization, connecting libidinal impulses with aggression: "Even extreme grief may ultimately vent itself

in violence—but more generally takes the form of apathy” (43). Bereavement is a form of apathy, perhaps the European way of restraining grief. It would be hard for Marlow to picture the Intended devouring Kurtz’s body, but the idea of merging with a dear object is not impossible to understand. On the contrary, it might have helped him see the libidinal and aggressive impulses that fuelled the devouring of Africa at the hands of the west.

What Conrad leaves out, as well as the political anthropological discourse that informs his narrative, is that the practice of ingesting human flesh among certain African tribes was ritual in nature, and not a means of survival or of mitigating hunger in any way. The taboo of ingesting human flesh is so overwhelming that in Marlow’s language there is not a word for it. He refers to cannibalism as the “unspeakable rites”—in opposition to “restraint.” The cannibal, then, is one of the Others Marlow comes across in his worldliness. He inscribes a narrative in the “empty space” they occupy. As he does so, with Kurtz in mind, we can feel his hand shivering with horror:

And he had written it too. I've seen it. I've read it. It was eloquent, vibrating with eloquence, but too high-strung, I think. Seventeen pages of close writing he had found time for! But this must have been before his—let us say— nerves, went wrong, and caused him to preside at certain midnight dances ending with unspeakable rites, which—as far as I reluctantly gathered from what I heard at various times—were offered up to him—do you understand?—to Mr. Kurtz himself. (40-50)

Hall refers to *monochronism* (doing one thing at a time) as a characteristic of European culture, closely related to the mechanization of time (Hall 150). We can think of it as “going to work” vs. “going native.” The ramblings of Marlow in regard to work ethics have clear *monochronic* overtones, for that is his cultural way of organizing life, his restraint. We know that when he works, he does not eat, pray, or dance. In contrast, non-Western cultures tend to be *non-monochronic*. We can then associate *monochronic* with *western*, and *non-monochronic* with *non-western*. The European culture clash with Africans in regard to cannibalism can be said to have risen from the *monochronic* and *non-monochronic* ways of doing things. This situation led to the cultural misunderstanding of cannibalism as lack of restraint, or as Marlow calls it “the unspeakable rites.” When cannibals consume human flesh they are doing more than one thing at a time. On the one hand, they are eating, which is a nuclear situation of mankind. On the other, they are celebrating a ritual that is contemporary with Christian liturgy, the symbolic ingestion of “the blood” and “body of Christ.” The main difference

between the two can be found in the western notion of “restraint.” Kurtz’s struggle with the wilderness revolves around that dichotomy:

“I am not disclosing any trade secrets. In fact the manager said afterwards that Mr. Kurtz’s methods had ruined the district. I have no opinion on that point, but I want you clearly to understand that there was nothing exactly profitable in these heads being there. They only showed that Mr. Kurtz lacked restraint in the gratification of his various lusts, that there was something wanting in him—some small matter which, when the pressing need arose, could not be found under his magnificent eloquence. Whether he knew of this deficiency himself I can’t say.” (57)

The use of euphemistic language in Marlow’s discourse is worthy of notice. Kurtz’s methods seem to have “ruined the district,” surely a more tolerable way of conveying the destruction of human life. He had “immense plans” (65). By acknowledging there is no profit in the heads decorating the front yard of Kurtz’s hut, Marlow is conveying the idea of pointlessness, a mere “lack of restraint,” such as a slip of the tongue or a white lie. There is a possible trace of cannibalism in the bodies that were formerly attached to those heads. But they do not speak either. Conrad only gives voice to a harbinger of doom: “Mistah Kurtz—he dead” (69). Because Marlow is the one telling the story, and his narrative denies cannibals a voice of their own, we have no way of knowing what is going on in their heads and what happened with the missing bodies. Kurt’s “deficiency” is also a topic he would rather leave untouched. In Marlow’s own words, whether his friend is aware of his shortcomings is something he “can’t say.”

According to the myth of Dionysus, he could inflict madness on mortals, and also restore them to sanity. “Driving people to a state of frenzy is Dionysus’ characteristic means of punishing *those who deny him*” (Feder 59, emphasis added). This “denial” of libidinal impulses points to a psychic space common to all mythologies. The ancestral wisdom of mankind is rooted in myth. Did Kurtz’s denial of an unconscious and symbolic part of himself bring Dionysiac madness upon him? These myths are rooted in a common space outside historical time. Dionysus was in fact identified with the wildness and during Dionysiac worship celebrants would perform acts of cannibalism and dismemberment, in Marlow’s language “unspeakable rites.” The restoration of sanity is ruled out in Conrad’s novel. Neither healing nor individuation takes place. The heart of darkness throbs like an unfettered Dionysiac night: “a God-forsaken wilderness” (13).

Marlow doesn't flinch at the sight of "the cannibal crew." In fact, he goes as far as to forgive their lack of restraint. After all, they are men he can work with: "Fine fellows—cannibals—in their place" (34). But the same rites of Dionysiac frenzy in which Kurtz's partakes are unspeakable to him because they occupy shadow. The orgiastic rites from which Marlow recoils in horror, and does not even dare to name, are those involving someone that is too close to him; too close to his idea of "self." His own libidinal impulses are not entirely unrestrained. He fails to see his cannibalising of Others through the discourse of cartography and imperial conquest, casting shadow onto the jungle as if Africa was the invader: "the gloom of the forests, the glitter of the reach between the murky bends, the beat of the drum, regular and muffled like the beating of a heart—the heart of a conquering darkness. It was a moment of triumph for the wilderness, an invading and vengeful rush" (73). He does acknowledge shadow occasionally, and it dawns on him like a beam of light: "And outside, the silent wilderness surrounding this cleared speck on the earth struck me as something great and invincible, like evil or truth, waiting patiently for the passing away of this fantastic invasion" (23). But he never gets as far as to make a connection between the civilizing mission and the ultimate horror: "the unspeakable rites."

If he would seat by the cannibals on deck and listen to them, maybe share some rotten hippo, he would be able to retrieve historical memory, one he intuitively but neglects. If retrieved, these numinous areas of common experience, ritual and symbolic, could have released shadow and brought him closer to his crew and to acknowledging his own cannibalism. This, in turn, could have led to a new perception of the jungle. A great part of the darkness he sees in there is the projection of his own shadow onto Africa. By being closer to their voices and their myths he could develop a better understanding of him-Self. According to Feder, The ritual forms of Dionysiac worship bear traces of a very old civilization of hunting. "There is a good deal of evidence to suggest that earliest elements of the myth and ritual of the proto-Dionysus derive from the Mesolithic era, when the chief activities of human beings were still hunting, fishing and gathering" (Feder 50). We can trace our mythologies to a timeless "forest" of experience, one Marlow constantly sees as a threat:

The great wall of vegetation, an exuberant and entangled mass of trunks, branches, leaves, boughs, festoons, motionless in the moonlight, was like a rioting invasion of soundless life, a rolling wave of plants, piled up, crested, ready to topple over the creek, to sweep every little man of us out of his little existence. (30)

European cannibalism is reflected in the fear of starvation; “the fear of being denied future access to key raw materials and food supplies—which the Germans graphically labelled *Torschlußpanik*, or fear of the closing door—played a vital role in the scramble for colonial possessions during the late nineteenth century” (Adas 219). The Berlin Conference of 1884 is a glaring example of the cannibalistic discourse of empire. A tool of destruction of African flora, etnia, and fauna, it marked the moment in which Europe carved up the world and Africa was divided up according to the European language spoken in each region. Again, language plays a central role in deconstructing Others and appropriating their geography (space) and their history (time). As we have seen, language, rationalized and structured as geopolitical discourse, such as European cartography, was a tool of domination in the nineteenth-century and also in *Heart of Darkness*.

To cannibalize the Other is a form of madness, a slack in restraint. That is Marlow’s conviction in regard to the “unspeakable rites” and the horror of “going native.” Empire set up a system of production in Africa that ran parallel to a system of anti-production, yet this form of destruction of Others had no ritual overtones. The “unspeakable,” then, as presented in Marlow’s “rhetoric of the ineffable,” as well as in his subversion of the imperial narrative, becomes a metonym of the consumption of human Others.

As we have seen, in contrast to the “unspeakable rites” of the African cannibals, the imperial *monochronic* machine dismembered a continent in the Scramble for Africa, feeding on human life without any spiritual ends. From that realization, we can now look at Marlow’s shadow projected onto the jungle as a threatening darkness. He fears to be devoured, when in reality, his maps, language, and other cultural artefacts serve to flesh out the African continent. In his eyes, the wilderness reduced Kurtz’s to a raving skeleton. His death, however, gives him the possibility to release some of the burden of shadow and thus become “lighter.” *Non-monochronic* cannibalism dispels in fact “the horror” because it becomes sacralised space. Language could have been a bridge towards a point of departure in knowing Others, but in Marlow’s story there is no voice for the cannibal. Their silence is symbolized in “the unspeakable rites.”

We may conclude that in Marlow’s narrative cannibalism remains apparent only when it is literal, encapsulated as cultural Otherness in geographical space and de-sacralised time, whereas in the case of empire it remains less evident. In general, however, the two cannibalisms tend to merge into one nebulous whole: “the horror.” As Marlow resorts to this synthesis he is doing two things that are part of the same mechanism, what Jung called the

projection of shadow. Even though he occasionally allows some light to enter into this dark liminal space, he reduces *non-monochronic* cannibalism to a cultural misunderstanding:

'Catch 'im,' he snapped, with a bloodshot widening of his eyes and a flash of sharp teeth— 'catch 'im. Give 'im to us.' 'To you, eh?' I asked; 'what would you do with them?' 'Eat 'im!' he said curtly, and, leaning his elbow on the rail, looked out into the fog in a dignified and profoundly pensive attitude. I would no doubt have been properly horrified, had it not occurred to me that he and his chaps must be very hungry: that they must have been growing increasingly hungry for at least this month past. They had been engaged for six months. (40)

As we all know, in the mouth of the cannibals there is no restraint, only sharp teeth. Yet Marlow feels empathy for them because they “must be very hungry.” As a human being, hunger is something he can relate to, a form of “unrestrained grief” he can understand. If he would engage in conversation with the cannibals, and let them speak and tell, he would be able to discover more “common ground” with them. He could have stopped “beating around the bush” and made his point against empire more clear in light of what European culture is doing to an-Other culture and Africa’s nature. What we can gather from the scene we are discussing is that cannibals do not look interested in the living—after all they are on board of Marlow’s ship and they have showed restraint by not eating him—; they are interested in the bodies of the fallen natives, possibly in an attempt to merge with a dear object, a means of becoming one with them. But Conrad and his alter ego are men of words. Whether Marlow’s account reflects the actual exchange of Conrad with a cannibal crew is impossible to tell. We can only rely on *his word*. What we can retrieve, however, is that Marlow’s immediate reaction is to assume the cannibals are “hungry.” Ignorant to the ritual dimension of the act, he thinks they only want to eat to quench their thirst for blood; hence a cultural misunderstanding is forged. Earlier in the novel he seems to intuit this fact as he sails across the wilderness: “The idleness of a passenger, my isolation amongst all these men with whom I had no point of contact, the oily and languid sea, the uniform sombreness of the coast, seemed to keep me away from the truth of things, within the toil of a mournful and senseless delusion” (13).

The way in which Marlow endorses the imperial brand of cannibalism can be seen in his expectations in regard to Kurtz as “the name giver.” In his world of truth and lies—of light and shadows—he expects Kurtz to give meaning to an “empty space.” As Bruce Johnson and other authors such as Umberto Eco have pointed out and thoroughly discussed,

the idea of the “name giver” is part of our foundational literature; we find it in Scripture. Kurtz can be then seen as “Adam in the Garden watching the parade of nameless experience” (Johnson 76). The jungle, as an inverted paradise, is sacralised in ritual, it is intuited by Marlow as a shared human experience with its inhabitants: “a distant kinship,” “the sound of distant drums,” “the night of first ages.” He describes this sense of awe as “the fascination of the abomination.” But he does not understand the language of that wilderness, therefore he seeks meaning, but he does so not by approaching or getting closer to the sacralised space of his Others, to their time of ritual; he instead distances himself from nature in the spatiotemporal greed provided by western culture. Without a language, a meaning to inscribe in the “blank spaces” of the map, he risks falling silent, just like the cannibals. Marlow seeks that meaning in Kurtz, “chief of the Inner Station.” As Johnson points out: “Ultimately Marlow looks forward to meeting Kurtz—that marvellous “voice”—as a possible source of authority, as a penetrating honesty that will at least know the proper names for things” (ibid. 76).

Chapter 2: Black Images of Africa

The following chapter will look at *Heart of Darkness* in light of the adventure novel of *fin de siècle*, a corollary of western colonial expansion that played a key role in crafting the image of African Others, turning them into an object held for scrutiny at the hands of science and aesthetic consideration. Approaching the Inner Station, space turns into time as Marlow encounters a stone-age civilization. Echoes of the Industrial Revolution and domestic otherness can be heard. We will look at why Africa emerges as both a threat and a burden in the European imagination. As I analyze the spatial and temporal dimensions of imperial conquest, I will also look at the role of technology in the construction and destruction of the African Other.

On land ethic and the gardening of the Other

The engraving on the frontispiece of Nicolas Andry's *Orthopédie* (1741), showing a stake tied to a crooked sapling, is a visual metaphor that I would like to transplant to my argument on alterity. This iconic image, symbolizing the correction of deformity in children, has informed clinical and academic discourse since the publication of Andry's seminal work on orthopaedics—a full-page reproduction prefacing Michel Foucault's *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (1975).

It has been pointed out by scholars that Andry's image raises questions of agency, in addition to which, I will argue, serves to illustrate how domestic perceptions of otherness were exported—and exploited—to the African continent. The Poor Law Act of 1834 played a pivotal role in this respect, for it saw the rise of the workhouse, a state-run centre of moral betterment for English paupers. Adas points out:

Francis Galton attributed unemployment among Europe's working classes to the same lack of endurance and unsettled disposition that he had observed in "savage" Africa, while many of his French counterparts equated France's obligation to provide schooling for its African subjects with that of educating its own peasants. (Adas 209)

The treadmill, a contraption similar to a hamster-wheel devised to palliate idleness, was very popular in industrial cities like London at the time. It served in fact no other purpose than to

put the indigent to work, having no other produce than the moral improvement needed to be part of society and to eventually enter the workforce.³

One could say that the Poor Laws of 1834 were also devised as a form of punishment. Discipline and subordination to mechanized time, as well as physical sacrifice, were expected from the paupers in the hope of behavioural correction in regard to sexual licence, beggary, alcoholism, indigence, and laziness. In the workhouses of London, for instance, labourers would grind rocks for entire days, later used for road-building, in exchange for a bed for the night and a hot meal a day. We can see this pattern repeat in the African Congo. Michael Adas says in this regard:

The recognition that Europe's civilizing mission among non-Western peoples was in some ways an extension of centuries-old campaigns to civilize the peasant and working classes of Europe itself is suggested by rather frequent comparisons in nineteenth-century writings between these groups and the colonized. (Adas 209)

In cities like Buma Matadi, or "exploding rocks," named after detonations for road building, local forced labour was subject to similar conditions paupers suffered in England. Marlow's geographical observations reveal a culturebound way of looking at space. The narrative he inscribes in that "empty space" is that of a void of meaningless paths:

No use telling you much about that. Paths, paths, everywhere; a stamped-in network of paths spreading over the empty land, through long grass, through burnt grass, through thickets, down and up chilly ravines, up and down stony hills ablaze with heat; and a solitude, a solitude, nobody, not a hut. (19)

Adas makes a timely observation:

Europeans dismissed African roads as meandering footpaths [...] In the long list of African shortcomings, Western observers reported that they could not tell a straight from a crooked line; that an African servant found it impossible to place a centrepiece in the middle of a dining table; and that an African gardener asked to make a straight border would invariably end with a zigzag edge. (Adas 261, 262)

The European and African landscapes show a clear dichotomy between linear European thinking versus the meandering "primitive" mindscape. Straight roads and Brunelleschi's mathematical perspective are non-existent in natural environments, in the same way a perfect

³ Historical references in this section are partly based on Kenneth R. Bartlett's *Development of European Civilization*. See bibliography.

square is a purely man-made object, epitomized in European feats of engineering and architecture. The Western metropolis and the jungle evoke two distinctly opposite mindscapes. In the former man has largely vanquished nature, whereas in the latter man is still subject to its whim. This dialectic has largely informed colonial policies in regard to the obliteration of obstacles that led to progress, be it mountains, trees, or other human beings. The assumption that Europe was destined to be the master of nature had a much sinister implication. It ultimately led to slavery and the European drive to “civilize” the “savage,” which I have presented as the “gardening” of the Other. Human geography played an important role in this respect:

H. L. Duff ... commented on the African's inclination to reroute a path rather than remove an obstacle. He could think of nothing that more vividly revealed the contrast between the European and African character than the image, on the one hand, of the “European engineer forcing with incredible toil his broad and certain way, stemming rivers, clearing marshes, shattering tons of earth and rock; and, on the other hand, the savage, careless of everything but the present, seeking only the readiest path and content to let a pebble baulk him rather than stoop to lift it. (Adas 216)

As Marlow looks at some workers in action, he remarks: “A heavy and dull detonation shook the ground, a puff of smoke came out of the cliff, and that was all. No change appeared on the face of the rock. They were building a railway ... The cliff was not in the way or anything; but this objectless blasting was all the work going on” (15). The comparison between these two groups, the domestic and colonial Other, could also lead us to a discussion about the pauperization of Africa at the hands of empire. Philanthropy is usually given to those in need, which in this case are domestic charities. The idea of seeing Africans as poor and in need of relief was partly due to the projection of familiar otherness onto the African continent. Africa was perceived as indigent because Europeans felt its peoples had no language and history of their own, ignoring geographical and temporal phenomena. Confusing nakedness with poverty, they tended to forget that clothing is largely unfit for the tropics. Africa's oral tradition and its time (history) were also ignored. Africans were perceived as having no culture of their own, for Africa was only nature. In regard to time and timelessness, Adas observes:

The Europeans who explored, colonized, and sought to Christianize Africa and Asia were setting out from societies dominated by clocks, railway schedules, and mechanical rhythms. They “went out” to cultures still closely attuned to the cycles of

nature, to societies in which leisure was savoured, patience was highly regarded, and everyday life moved at a pace that most Western intruders found enervating if not downright exasperating. (Adas 243)

Roaming about the Station, Marlow comes across a hole in the ground: “I avoided a vast artificial hole somebody had been digging on the slope, the purpose of which I found it impossible to divine. It wasn't a quarry or a sandpit, anyhow. It was just a hole. It might have been connected with the philanthropic desire of giving the criminals something to do. I don't know” (16). It is revealing that Marlow should refer to the natives as “criminals.” The construction of otherness happens almost unnoticed, articulated through language. The transition from “savages” to “criminals” is almost “natural.” A philanthropic desire to give the criminals something to do could be read as an instance of Conradian irony, which is among the noblest features of *Heart of Darkness* in light of its critique of empire; but this is somewhat lessened by Conrad's apparent lapse of cognition: “I don't know.” The absurdity and pointlessness of such an endeavour as digging a hole “in the middle of nowhere” only makes sense to Marlow when he connects it to the familiar practice of correcting the “crooked sapling” by means of forced labour; by the end of the nineteenth century, such practice was well-established in European prisons as a form of punishing criminals, and it became Europe's main cultural export in Leopold's Congo. Marlow says about a group of African men: “A slight clinking behind me made me turn my head. Six black men advanced in a file, toiling up the path. They walked erect and slow, balancing small baskets full of earth on their heads, and the clink kept time with their footsteps” (15). He is witnessing corrective work in the form of road-building, one of the main activities of English reprobates apart from the treadmill. The baskets full of dirt they carry on top of their heads are a symbol of the subjugation of their land. There is an evident inversion in the natural order of things: “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. One was off” (15).

The dismantling of nature is accompanied by the failure of Europe's exported systems of civilization. Referring to the railway truck, in the next line, which was “as dead as the carcass of some animal,” Marlow says: “I came upon more pieces of decaying machinery, a stack of rusty rails. To the left a clump of trees made a shady spot, where dark things seemed to stir feebly,” and further down, “Then I nearly fell into a very narrow ravine, almost no more than a scar in the hillside. I discovered that a lot of imported drainage pipes for the

settlement had been tumbled in there. There wasn't one that was not broken" (16). The flipside of construction is deconstruction, and this scene illustrates the futility of Western "soundness" in the struggle to conquer and "correct" nature as "madness." Africans were considered as part of the Dark Continent's "unruly" vegetation; correction was a form of gardening that otherness.

The construction of the colonial Other is subtle and is mostly achieved through language as organized discourse. The dark things that lurk among the trees show how natives are often merged with the jungle, a narrative device that gives *Heart of Darkness* a sense of the unsettling, triggering the readers' imagination while conveying a sense of growing paranoia. In his analysis of the text, Ian Watt calls this technique "delayed decoding," which is, according to him, part of Conrad's "rhetoric of the ineffable," that which cannot be expressed in words, leaving a psychological gap that the reader must fill in, even if just for the flicker of an instant. Watt explains delayed decoding in connection to literary impressionism, term generally applied to Conrad's narrative style:

[I]t combines the forward progression of the mind, as it receives messages from the outside world, with the much slower reflexive process of making out their meaning ... Conrad's main objective is to put us into intense sensory contact with the events; and this objective means that the physical impression must precede the understanding of cause. Literary impressionism implies a field of vision which is not merely limited to the individual observer, but is also controlled by whatever conditions—internal and external—prevail at the moment of observation. In narration the main equivalents to atmospheric interference in painting are the various factors which normally distort human perception, or which delay its recognition of what is most relevant and important (NCE, Watt, 356-57).

Construction of the African Other as related to the nebulous concept of darkness acquires anthropomorphic or human qualities when articulated in the vegetation of the jungle. This is ultimately how geography informs Otherness in the novel: natural and human Others merge to give life to the concept of darkness. The title itself points to this image. Nature and humans are represented as part of one semantic cluster being at sometimes a body, other times vegetation. His ship being attacked, Marlow says:

Then I had to look at the river mighty quick, because there was a snag in the fairway. Sticks, little sticks, were flying about—thick: they were whizzing before my nose,

dropping below me, striking behind me against my pilothouse. All this time the river, the shore, the woods, were very quiet—perfectly quiet. I could only hear the heavy splashing thump of the stern-wheel and the patter of these things. (44)

It is only when Marlow has finished attending to his duty as a captain that his brain can decode the little sticks: “Arrows, by Jove! We were being shot at!” As Watt points out, Marlow perceives the unfamiliar arrows as familiar sticks (Watt 356). Prejudice works in a similar way. In that sense we can connect projection of domestic otherness onto the African continent as very prolonged instances of delayed decoding. Shadow is hard to acknowledge. In this case it was being projected from a human geography (maladjusted Europeans) onto another (the Africa peoples). These projections often translate as “foreign policy.” All that is not self must be Other. Like all forms of bureaucracy this is achieved through written and spoken language, or systematized madness.

Africans in *Heart of Darkness* have no voice of their own. They are always represented, and largely misrepresented; such as we have seen in chapter one in regard to de-sacralised cannibals. Darkness in the novel is pervasive, and it can mislead the eye; therefore an over-insistence in voice. Words are the building bricks of Marlow’s narrative. In contrast to the African silence, there is a strong emphasis on his body, as we have seen when we discussed clothing as a marker of civilization, and nakedness as a form of madness. Seen from that perspective, staged by the writer, the reader is left with a construct and must retrieve evidence from the characters. In Marlow’s narrative the construction of the Other is simultaneous with the articulation of language. African settings, characters, and shadow projections stand vis-à-vis Marlow’s eloquence in a synchronous relationship. It thus follows that if the natives had a voice of their own, the narrative would be different. But they have no voice, because they have no language, the “empty space” of their mouths being filled with silence, sharp teeth, and inarticulate sounds. Such is the inscription Marlow projected onto the “Empty” Continent as a child. He says:

A nigger was being beaten nearby. They said he had caused the fire in some way; be that as it may, he was screeching most horribly. I saw him, later on, for several days, sitting in a bit of shade looking very sick and trying to recover himself: afterwards he arose and went out—and the wilderness without a sound took him into its bosom again.” (23)

This scene can be easily translated in terms of domestic otherness. Africans contrive small ploys such as foot-dragging and starting small fire to disrupt progress, be it road building, ivory or any other errand assigned by empire. This character is testimony to the fact that, if left unattended, “the crooked sapling” will crawl back to nature. He took a beating for playing with fire, and he did not learn the lesson of his white masters

This particular native is punished for a minor mischief that involved a grass shed being burned to the ground. Again, his response to the blows of the whip is not language, but “screeching”, just like a bird, or Marlow’s riverboat. The unruly native is perceived as lacking restraint, being represented as a pyromaniac, an-Other domestic projection. It is through such perceptions that Others can morph into vegetation and darkness in the eyes of the narrator: “the beaten nigger groaned somewhere ... ‘What a row the brute makes! Said the indefatigable man with the moustaches appearing near us. Serve him right. Transgression—punishment—bang! Pitiless, pitiless. That’s the only way. This will prevent all conflagrations for the future” (26).

The concept of the white man’s burden contributed to the stereotype of Africans as unruly children, an-Other instance of shadow projected onto Africans, reflected in the great proliferation of images that flooded European encyclopaedic and editorial pages of the time, some of which are reproduced in the Norton Critical Edition of *Heart of Darkness*. Having painted a cruel caricature of its Other, the colonial powers proceeded to plunge into grotesque distortions and reductionisms that mingled with the lush imagery of exotic landscapes. The Western mind, fascinated with the great nineteenth-century tales of exploration, projected a number of fictions into the African continent; travel and adventure literature entertained these visions as well.

The idea of travelling to a horrific place appears to be absurd. But Victorians were fascinated by the numinous imagery of writers like Conrad, Stevenson (with his ape-looking id), and Carrols geographical forays into madness. The idea of fascination, a commonplace of human existence, frames the attraction and vehement repulsion of opposites. Marlow’s voyage is an instance of this, also his fellow Victorians, who dreamed about far-off places on a map. The distorted Others seen in *Alice in Wonderland* and *Dr Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* are a typical expression of shadow. Sometimes in Marlow’s imagination the primeval forest raises alive, swaying and throbbing full of dark splendour. His encounter with Kurtz’s mistress, as an anima figure, illustrates my point. This is what Jung called numinosity, the unknown that kindles our lives and leads us to journeys of psychic transformation. Jungians agree on all

archetypes having negative and positive sides. In the case of a projection like the civilizing mission, which can be seen in the mirror of the unconscious as the true “conquering darkness,” shadow emerges as a deadly, devastating force, that leads to a grotesque distortion of human and non-human Others and eventually to dissociation, as it was the case with Kurtz’s “immense plans.” A tangible example of dissociation in literature is Stevenson’s *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* (1886), where “the ‘split’ took the form of a physical change, rather than (as in reality) an inner, psychic state” (Jung et al. 7). The tangible and the imaginary often coalesce in Jungian psychoanalysis, such as is the case of the development of a neurosis. The obsession of Europeans with the correction of “failure” in Others led to an exaggerated focus on the black man’s body, which is constructed in *Heart of Darkness* as part of a wilderness. This inevitably causes the jungle to emerge as a perverse garden of “crooked saplings.”

The insistence on vegetation and the African body as one entity is part of the language of numinosity. In its search for meaning, the unconscious projects narratives through images. In this respect, Marlow takes the black man’s assumed propinquity, or poetical closeness to nature quite literally: “But suddenly, as we struggled round a bend, there would be a glimpse of rush walls, of peaked grass- roofs, a burst of yells, a whirl of black limbs, a mass of hands clapping, of feet stamping, of bodies swaying, of eyes rolling, under the droop of heavy and motionless foliage” (35).

If seen as a garden, the colonial other is always under construction, a perpetual project, because true possibility of betterment is largely ruled out. I suggested that these perceptions might have started in the historical time as well as the geographical space of the colonialists home and psyche. The construction of otherness is always a process related to language. The unconscious has none, and therefore cannot claim a history or a time of its own. What it does is to awaken archetypes through the production of numinous images. The colonial subject of *Heart of Darkness* is trapped in that nebula, what we have called “the shadow.” As an object, an “empty space,” the Other is always under construction. Colonial Others are victims of language.

“I, Charlie Marlow” has a number of others, and his expectations are instrumental in the construction of Africans. As we have seen at the start of this section, the commonly held view that poverty and sin were the result of moral failure was pervasive in nineteenth-century Europe. This was a domestic otherness projected onto Africa as a cultural garden. A good amount of gardening was needed for the narrative to resonate with the public. The pauper, the prostitute, the peasant, the criminal, and the mentally were transplanted to the new garden as

sexual licence, leisure, and childish behaviour. Critics like Chinua Achebe have noted Marlow's obsession with things staying in "their place." Cannibals, women, natives, and even the dead, are to be tolerated as long as they remain in their culturally ascribed places and do not deviate from the *status quo* imposed by the gardener.

In *Heart of Darkness* an ethical approach to nature would have led to an ethical approach to Others. "The sense of connection between the people and the land mirrors the connections people feel with one another" (West 89). Africa can be compared to a psychic forest teeming with life and numinosity, a beautiful metaphor of the collective unconscious. Africa is in fact full of colours and sounds, yet a French or English garden is very different to the jungle. Such a natural space has been colonized. Plants are not permitted to grow at their whim and the overall architecture aims to be pleasing the eye of the western observer. In like manner, Africa was colonized by the ships and by the imagination of empire. The psychological counterpart of this mission to civilize can be seen in the ego's relationship with the Self. While Self works towards wholeness, perceived by Marlow as an invasion, the ego reacts likewise by gardening its Other. It is the tension between these two opposites, which can be imaged as the dualism culture-nature that will ultimately lead to voyages of discovery beyond the known boundaries.

Each time the gardener/ego turns his back on the garden, nature will take over and crawl back towards wilderness. Because the Self and the ego are always "fighting" an ethics of colonialism must work towards connectedness and understanding, which is ultimately the redemption of language and the triumph of reason over madness. Marlow's quest for knowledge, for a "true voice," can be seen as part of that universal landscape.

The collective unconscious

Our common mortality is a reminder of the vulnerability, transience, and value of all life. The anthropological "night journey" of *Heart of Darkness* plunges Marlow into the possibility of this realization. As he sails out from London, he looks back on pre-Roman times: "And this also ... has been one of the dark places of the earth" (5). Death is one of the central themes of the novella. The idea of advancing across physical space while travelling back in time, as proposed by Johannes Fabian, is reminiscent of Jung's house dream, as it is commonly known in academia. Jung's dream is of particular importance because it took place and was duly analyzed at the time of his departure from the Freudian paradigm of psychoanalysis,

which also coincides with his “discovery” of a collective unconscious. Jung retells it in *Man and His Symbols*:

I had a dream when I was working with Freud that illustrates this point. I dreamed that I was in “my home,” apparently on the first floor, in a cosy, pleasant sitting room furnished in the manner of the 18th century. I was astonished that I had never seen this room before, and began to wonder what the ground floor was like. I went downstairs and found the place was rather dark, with panelled walls and heavy furniture dating from the 16th century or even earlier. My surprise and curiosity increased. I wanted to see more of the whole structure of this house. So I went down to the cellar, where I found a door opening to a flight of stone steps that led to a large vaulted room. The floor consisted of large slabs of stone and the walls seemed very ancient. I examined the mortar and found it was mixed with splinters of brick. Obviously the walls were of Roman origin. I became increasingly excited. In one corner, I saw an iron ring on a stone slab. I pulled up the slab and saw yet another narrow flight of steps leading to a kind of cave, which seemed to be a prehistoric tomb, containing two skulls, some bones, and broken shards of pottery. Then I woke up. (Jung *et al.* 42-43)

Jung interpreted this dream as “a short summary of my life, more specifically of the development of my life” (ibid 43). A way of reading Conrad’s novel is to look at it as a dream. But if *Heart of Darkness* is a dream, then who is the dreamer? Metaphorically, Marlow is in the twilight of awakening. His fellow-imperialists, in contrast, seem to be dreaming, their eyes closed to the callousness of their own doings and the environmental destruction they brought to the jungle. In his “dream,” Marlow pictures Africa as “the centre of the earth.”

Odd thing that I, who used to clear out for any part of the world at twenty- four hours' notice, with less thought than most men give to the crossing of a street, had a moment—I won't say of hesitation, but of startled pause, before this commonplace affair. The best way I can explain it to you is by saying that, for a second or two, 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. (13)

Dream to some, nightmare to Others, the conquest of Africa can be posited in the realm of the numinous, where an inner struggle for wholeness plays out, vis-à-vis man’s loftiest and

basest potentials. Let us remember that in our Jungian analysis we have always related to geographical spaces, some of them full, others “empty.” Marlow fancies his expedition to the African continent as an inward voyage towards wholeness. The name of Kurtz’s location, the Inner Station, is in that sense revealing. Marlow says: “There was nothing either above or below him, and I knew it. He had kicked himself loose of the earth. (65-66). Marlow’s idea of being “kicked loose of the earth” is synonymous with the concept of “going native.” This is ultimately how Jung and postcolonial studies come together. They meet at a liminal space where the psychological and the merely geographical co-exist with each-Other.

The tension of opposites, as represented in the dualism nature-culture, generates numinous energies; it generates life. The colonial readers of nineteenth century adventure novel—epitomized in the metropolitan bourgeoisie—have no place in the jungle, but they find a space in narrative, informed by their own inscriptions on “empty” Others. The fear of “going native” still lurks in the echoes of that epochal affliction. Restraint have made human beings oblivious to the sound of “distant drums,” to a “distant kinship” with the human and numinous Other. The trees of “darkness” provide the wood to inscribe new stories. Like in Jung’s dream, Marlow sails upriver across the lush vegetation of the jungle, across the furniture of the mind, the wood that grows out of that forest. Jung’s dream reveals the “house” as the fortress of the mind, wherein ego-consciousness stands vis-à-vis the archetype of the Self. Marlow fails to fully wake up to the voice of individuation: “At night sometimes the roll of drums behind the curtain of trees would run up the river and remain sustained faintly, as if hovering in the air high over our heads, till the first break of day. Whether it meant war, peace, or prayer we could not tell.” (p 35). Deaf to the voice of the jungle, that “space without meaning,” Marlow inscribes the narrative he wants to hear. He simply “could not tell” the meaning of that “empty space.” His ego, represented in the image of the “river-demon,” fails to reach the “other” Inner Station. At the end only his inscription prevails. Darkness is all is left.

At the time of the house dream, Jung had been occupied with comparative anatomy and palaeontology. He says: “I was fascinated by the bones of fossil man, particularly by the much discussed *Neanderthalensis* and the still more controversial skull of Dubois’ *Pithecanthropos*” (Jung et al 43). His archaeological inclinations are in many ways connected to the nineteenth-century anxieties surrounding the origins of man, which was part of his cultural nineteenth-century European inheritance. This is clearly reflected in his dream. Marlow’s journey to “the centre of the earth,” in that light, can be compared to Jung’s dream:

the search of Self towards acknowledging a common geography. Are the skulls in the house dream the Self and the Other? And if so, is not the semblance deeper and stronger than any difference comparative anatomy should suggest? Stripped of its skin, a human skull looks very much like the next; colour-coded impressions become irrelevant, for all bones are white, a symbol that also connects us to non-human entities in the animal kingdom, often represented in Other cultures as “spirits” or “voices”. The two skulls in Jung’s dream are tenants of the same dark basement, a symbolic reminder of their mortality, and thus their “common ground.” Marlow makes the following remarks:

The original Kurtz had been educated partly in England, and—as he was good enough to say himself—his sympathies were in the right place. His mother was half-English, his father was half-French. All Europe contributed to the making of Kurtz; and by-and-by I learned that, most appropriately, the International Society for the Suppression of Savage Customs had entrusted him with the making of a report, for its future guidance. And he had written it too. I've seen it. I've read it. It was eloquent, vibrating with eloquence, but too high-strung, I think. Seventeen pages of close writing he had found time for! But this must have been before his—let us say—nerves, went wrong, and caused him to preside at certain midnight dances ending with unspeakable rites, which—as far as I reluctantly gathered from what I heard at various times—were offered up to him—do you understand?—to Mr. Kurtz himself. (49-50)

If we follow in the steps of Jung’s house dream down to the basement of the human psyche, we may find the ultimate realization of Self and the fulfilment of this archetype: his realization as a psychologist and Marlow’s failure as a navigator. From this realization we can see the “International Society for the Suppression of Savage Customs” (49) as the project of ego-consciousness, a ship of fools, the gardener in the midst of an immense and brooding wilderness. At the centre, Kurtz’s ivory skull is “buried ... in the mould of primeval earth” (68). But as opposed to Jung’s house dream, where two skulls face each other, In Kurtz’s dream there is no Other.

Technology as a gauge of human worth

“The European (colonial) administration saw itself as a cog in God’s machinery” (Adas 206, emphasis added). The Victorians, as well as their Western European counterparts, looked at

science and the mastery of nature as gauges of human worth. “By the last decades of the nineteenth century, British colonizers tended to measure ‘evolutionary distance’ in terms of technological development. That gauge impressed them with the “immense distance in time” that separated Europeans from all other peoples” (Adas 310). The two geographies of the mind, “Europe” and “Africa,” reflect in Marlow’s perception of the jungle as one monolithic mass where the human and the non-human Other merge. He calls it “darkness.” The only thing that keeps his ship from falling into a dark void is the faith in his own culture. He calls it “work” and “restraint.” He would be carried off course and eventually capsize if he did not have that knowledge: his navigational tools, his maps, and his language. He makes a revealing statement in this respect: “Now, as far as I did see, I could go to the right or to the left of this. The banks looked pretty well alike, the depth appeared the same; but as I had been informed the station was on the west side, I naturally headed for the western passage” (43). Banks, legs, plants, arms, trees, they all merge into a single undistinguishable whole. He is not able to discern any clear shapes; in fact if it were not for his (geographical) knowledge he would not know whether he “could go to the right or to the left.” The human geography of Europe shows the preponderance of mechanized time in the everyday life of Western man. “As early as the 1830s, European colonial administrators and missionaries came to view railroads, steamships and, and Western machines in general as key agents in their campaigns to ... uplift the “savage” peoples of Africa.” (Adas 224). Marlow keeps reminding us that there is no meaning in “empty space.” “Out there” always looks “pretty alike;” but his navigational tools can help him discern. In “darkness” nothing has a voice; it all sounds and looks “the same.” In contrast, the jungle is mute, even the natives. The only voice that resounds is Marlow’s, “the speech that cannot be silenced;” and, of course, Kurtz’s—even when he is not actually there. Marlow’s imperilled soundness of mind is articulated through his voice: “I hear; I admit, but I have a voice too, and for good or evil mine is the speech that cannot be silenced” Who's that grunting? You wonder I didn't go ashore for a howl and a dance?” (36). He is not willing to walk out of his ship, his safe space, in order to interact because in his own words that would mean a “grunt and a dance.” It would be to willingly sink in “the mould of primeval earth,” to acknowledge his “darkness,” the sound of distant drums, to go mad. Yet there is a fine line between the dualisms “going to work”-“going native” and “being on time”-“being out there.” We have seen what happened to Europe for ignoring its numinous side: “I flew around like mad to get ready, and before forty-eight hours I was crossing the Channel to show myself to my employers, and sign the contract. In a very few hours I arrived in a city that always makes me think of a whited sepulchre” (9). This

micro-journey of Marlow's encapsulates an important aspect of the western mind. He had to get ready, which surely includes dressing; then he used technology to move from one place to the next, which in turns overlaps with the temporal notion of punctuality; he arrives on time and signs a contract. Without signing a contract his venture would not make sense. He had to fill an "empty space" with his signature to imbue the exchange with meaning. His employer would of course expect the same. As well as he would expect Marlow to be fully dressed. If Marlow had arrived too late and as God brought him to this world, his employer would have probably called the local madhouse and sent him off in a white ambulance to a padded cell. The "whited sepulchre" is not a place for a "grunt" and a "dance," he let us know as much. The sepulchral city is the "right place." Marlow says:

That was the reflection that made you creepy all over. It was impossible—it was not good for one either—trying to imagine. He had taken a high seat amongst the devils of the land—I mean literally. You can't understand. How could you?—with solid pavement under your feet, surrounded by kind neighbours ready to cheer you or to fall on 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? (48-49)

Language is both the downfall and the identity of Kurtz, and so is Marlow's. His failure to individuate is largely dependant on technology, I will argue, because it is the *cordon sanitaire*, as Achebe has called it, that keeps him from going to shore for a "grunt" and a "dance." Marlow has no "time" for that. His ethics keep him from falling. Adas points out: "In the speed and regularity of their comings and goings, trains (and steamships) proclaimed the Europeans' mastery of time and space and demonstrated their capacity for precision and discipline" (Adas 224). Mechanized time, in the form of a pocket watch, is not of much use in the jungle. As gauges of human worth, science and technology were also proof of Europe's high work ethics. The railway and the steamboat are symbols of Decartian linear progress, which also inform the ethics of Capitalism: progress and accumulation of capital—ivory in this case—at any cost.

Marlow's time machine, the much-dreaded river monster, is a cultural emblem of his time. "Railways (and steamboats in heavily forested, riverine areas such as that which

provides the setting for *Heart of Darkness*) made it possible for Europeans to open vast stretches of “hinterland” and “undeveloped wilderness” to colonization, settlement, and economic exploitation” (Adas 223, emphasis added). Marlow’s time machine allows him to move back and forward in time and space. As he advances through the “God-forsaken wilderness” (13) he is “making history.” “Out there” is always empty space, an immense “darkness” without a history of its own. Like the clothes of the imperialist, however, his time machine can also fall into disrepair. He must be vigilant, for the wilderness is always watching him: “I had also judged the jungle of both banks quite impenetrable— and yet eyes were in it, eyes that had seen us” (42). His paranoid impressions and his fascination with the primeval forest, a contradictory blend of attraction and repulsion, is candidly revealed in his encounter with its inhabitants:

No, they were not inhuman. Well, you know, that was the worst of it—this suspicion of their not being inhuman. It would come slowly to one. They howled, and leaped, and spun, and made horrid faces; but what thrilled you was just the thought of their humanity—like yours—the thought of your remote kinship with this wild and passionate uproar. (35)

At the slightest slack in restraint he risks might go mad. The much-awaited “rivets” to fix his ship are a desperate attempt at not falling into disrepair, at keeping his senses in “their place.” Images of decaying machinery are recurrent in *Heart of Darkness*. He cannot end up like one of those carcasses of metal rotting in the mud, or like Fresleven, the former captain, half-buried in a sea of grass. After all, he is still “wearing” his shoes. Marlow experiences nature as a threat. In contrast, technology is the only thing that can keep him going on. Marlow’s steamer can be seen as an extension of his identity. The drama that plays out in waiting of the rivets is in reality an inner conflict. Rivets can keep things in “their place”:

I slapped him on the back and shouted, 'We shall have rivets!' He scrambled to his feet exclaiming 'No! Rivets!' as though he couldn't believe his ears. Then in a low voice, 'You ... eh?' I don't know why we behaved like lunatics. I put my finger to the side of my nose and nodded mysteriously. 'Good for you!' he cried, snapped his fingers above his head, lifting one foot. I tried a jig. (29)

The white, radiant silhouette of the rivets supplier riding a donkey is thrown into sharp contrast with the shadowy vegetation of the wilderness. He could be seen as a doctor visiting

the inmates of a madhouse. The rivets, as a symbol of restraint, technology, and self-composure are either utterly lacking or pouring on Marlow's head:

Instead of rivets there came an invasion, an infliction, a visitation. It came in sections during the next three weeks, each section headed by a donkey carrying a white man in new clothes and tan shoes, bowing from that elevation right and left to the impressed pilgrims. A quarrelsome band of footsore sulky niggers trod on the heels of the donkeys. (30)

In Africa Marlow encounters a stone-age society. The donkeys are set in stark contrast to western technological achievement. It was a European, Herbert Spencer—Darwin's social disciple—the one who coined the phrase “survival of the fittest.” Marlow and the natives are not “fighting” on equal ground, yet the jungle has her own “technology.” It always finds its way: “A narrow and deserted street in deep shadow, high houses, innumerable windows with venetian blinds, a dead silence, grass sprouting between the stones, imposing carriage archways right and left, immense double doors standing ponderously ajar” (10). The grass blades sprouting between the stones are proof of the resilience of nature. As Marlow desperately tries to keep his wits with rivets and venetian blinds, his psychic house falls into disrepair and he risks the ultimate “horror” in every Victorian mind, the fear of “going native,” the double colonization of Kurtz: “Being alone in the wilderness, it had looked within itself, and, by heavens! I tell you, it had gone mad” (6).

Despite western technology's superior strength Marlow learns, out in the wilderness, that nature can be as deadly. A piece of sharpened wood reaches his helmsman killing him:

“Poor fool! If he had only left that shutter alone. He had no restraint, no restraint—just like Kurtz—a tree swayed by the wind. As soon as I had put on a dry pair of slippers, I dragged him out, after first jerking the spear out of his side, which operation I confess I performed with my eyes shut tight” (51).

Now the red inscription of the British Empire in the map at the Company's office begins to make sense. His shoes, soaked in the helmsman's blood, fly overboard: “The other shoe went flying unto the devil-god of that river. I thought, 'By Jove! it's all over. We are too late; he has vanished—the gift has vanished, by means of some spear, arrow, or club” (47). The weapons of the jungle cannot be compared to his cartridges and the loaded Martini-Henry leaning in one corner of his pilothouse, evidently no longer a safe place. Again, the process of double colonization affects his ship as much as his clothes; they are cultural artefacts that

stand in metonymic relation vis-à-vis the Jungian drama between ego and Self. The ego-architected boundaries of the cultural garden dissolve as madness and destruction emerge:

Absurd!" he cried. "This is the worst of trying to tell ... Here you all are, each moored with two good addresses, like a hulk with two anchors, a butcher round one corner, a policeman round another, excellent appetites, and temperature normal—you hear—normal from year's end to year's end. And you say, Absurd! Absurd be— exploded! Absurd! My dear boys, what can you expect from a man who out of sheer nervousness had just flung overboard a pair of new shoes. Now I think of it, it is amazing I did not shed tears. I am, upon the whole, proud of my fortitude. (51-52)

Marlow sails upriver while looking at the outside world through the shutter hole of the pilothouse. As we have seen, the steamer can be as a symbol of his identity as a sailor. It is also a way to be isolated from the jungle, akin to the structural relationship between nature and architecture, or ego and Self, the former stubbornly refusing to acknowledge the latter as its true homestead. He sails across open nature while being safely inside a compartmentalized space. The “pilot/house” inescapably conveys the idea of architecture. It is suggestive that Amerindians should describe their first encounter with Spanish caravels as “floating houses.” They were just naming the unknown with familiar words, much like the colonizers did with Africans when they represented them as maniacs and indigent children in need of philanthropic relief. Had Amerindians been acquainted with Greek mythology, and the true meaning of an imperial Spanish caravel, they would have been able to compare them instead with floating Trojan horses. Umberto Eco says that having expected to see unicorns in Asia, Marco polo described rhinoceros as the mythological animal he was *expecting* to encounter: “Marco Polo was a merchant, not an intellectual ... But he certainly knew all the legends current in his time about exotic countries, so *he was prepared to encounter unicorns*” (Eco 71, emphasis added). In like manner, European culture prepared Marlow to see “unicorns” in Africa: “And the river was there—fascinating—deadly—like a snake” (10). What else could he find in that exotic geography if not a “deadly snake.” He also fancies that the natives perceive his vessel as “a river-demon.” “” (). Preconditioning and prejudice, along with visions of the Christian hell coloured the African experience of many Europeans. Ngugi Wa Thiongo retells an anecdote that could have been Marlow’s:

“In his autobiography *This Life* Sydney Poitier describes how, as a result of the literature he had read, he had come to associate Africa with snakes. So on arrival in

Africa and being put up in a modern hotel in a modern city, he could not sleep because he kept on looking for snakes everywhere, even under the bed.” (Ngugi 18)

In the light of Jung’s house dream, it is suggestive that Sydney Poitier should have looked “under the bed.” It is in “the furniture of the mind,” that we can find can find the origin of these shadowy projections. Achebe points out in his critique of Conrad: “Travellers with closed minds can tell us little except about themselves” (Achebe, NCE, 347).

Marlow’s rumblings on imperialism are a bitter reflection about reality, but he fails to look for the origin of those thoughts. Navigating atop a “river monster,” he inscribes a narrative in the “empty spaces” of the African map: a falsification of reality, a forgery, “a mere squeeze.” Writing as a form of technology and discourse as opposed to African oral tradition. The last item reflect his position vis-à-vis the non-human Other. The jungle is the projection of his own shadow, his own association with empire, the true “deadly snake”:

True, by this time it was not a blank space any more. It had got filled since my boyhood with rivers and lakes and names. It had ceased to be a blank space of delightful mystery—a white patch for a boy to dream gloriously over. It had become a place of darkness. But there was in it one river especially, a mighty big river, that you could see on the map, resembling an immense snake uncoiled, with its head in the sea, its body at rest curving afar over a vast country, and its tail lost in the depths of the land. And as I looked at the map of it in a shop-window, it fascinated me as a snake would a bird—a silly little bird. Then I remembered there was a big concern, a Company for trade on that river. Dash it all! I thought to myself, they can't trade without using some kind of craft on that lot of fresh water—steamboats! Why shouldn't I try to get charge of one? I went on along Fleet Street, but could not shake off the idea. The snake had charmed me. (8)

In the imperial mind, uncharted geography is perceived as “an empty space.” Vis-à-vis his own monstrosity, Marlow becomes a “silly little bird.” What redeems his character is the fact that he also acknowledges the “mere squeeze” side of things, the shadow archetype. An instance of this is his admiration for Kurtz, which he associates with languages, words, and reason. When he acknowledges shadow mentioning Kurtz less reasonable side, he does so indirectly:

Hadn't I been told in all the tones of jealousy and admiration that he had collected, bartered, swindled, or stolen more ivory than all the other agents together? That was

not the point. The point was in his being a gifted creature, and that of all his gifts the one that stood out pre-eminently, that carried with it a sense of real presence, was his ability to talk, his words—the gift of expression, the bewildering, the illuminating, the most exalted and the most contemptible, the pulsating stream of light, or the deceitful flow from the heart of an impenetrable darkness. (47)

Language plays always a subtle role in the construction of the natural and human environment. But there is little or no interaction at all—apart from a few bullets and flying arrows—Between Marlow and the “out there.” Technology, as the Victorian time machine, is epitomized in Marlow’s “two-penny-halfpenny river-steamboat with a penny whistle attached!” (12). Marlow is not willing to go on shore for a grunt and a howl, he shows restraint in that sense; the screeching of the ship is Marlow’s only attempt at communicating with the natives:

I pulled the string of the whistle, and I did this because I saw the pilgrims on deck getting out their rifles with an air of anticipating a jolly lark. At the sudden screech there was a movement of abject terror through that wedged mass of bodies. 'Don't! Don't you frighten them away,' cried someone on deck disconsolately. I pulled the string time after time. They broke and ran, they leaped, they crouched, they swerved, they dodged the flying terror of the sound. The three red chaps had fallen flat, face down on the shore, as though they had been shot dead. Only the barbarous and superb woman did not so much as flinch, and stretched tragically her bare arms after us over the sombre and glittering river” (67)

“Kurtz’s mistress,” as most critics call her, might have been privy to the workings of European technology. She might have known that a steam whistle was no threat. But beyond her gendered colonial position in the novel, I think she represents the feminine in a much larger way, the unconscious and the mother myth on which all life depends. She is not afraid and she shows restraint. In fact her movements show balance (she stretches out both arms after Kurtz), she is portly and lush, like the jungle. It is during that encounter that Marlow stands vis-à-vis the heart of darkness, and he does so from the perspective of the ego, the pilot house, that by know has also become a sepulchral place.

The jungle has existed from time immemorial, yet historical time had not been inscribed in that “empty space.” Thereby the colonial narrative encapsulated African space in pre-historical time. This idea can be extended to the unconscious as the “out there” of the

European psyche. Like the unconscious, Africans were perceived as having no history of their own. History is inscribed by the ego. The unconscious communicates in numinous images, not in words; it is timeless. African history, in the imperial narrative, begins with the arrival of the European vessels, with their technology. Civilization through technology is then presented as Europe's first cultural export and presented as mission to civilize. A glaring contradiction lurks in King Leopold's "holy mission." Marlow calls it "philanthropic pretence" (24). It could as well be called "poisoned gift." Under the duplicitous cloak of language, unconscious material floods the margins of Conrad's narrative. Marlow is both a witness and a colonial accomplice. In his childhood he had described Congo as an "empty place" on the map. Europe, conversely, is perceived as being "full." The European machine that takes over Africa with the aim of harnessing nature is seen as a manner of inscribing historical content in that "empty space." Such inscription, as I have suggested above, is the language of the ego; the outside is meaningless, a gaping void. Like geography, ego-consciousness is informed by geographical notions of space, by boundaries: what is not self is Other. We can see Marlow enter a liminal area, a twilight of sorts, each time he acknowledges shadow. His ship provides one of those memorable moments when he calls it a "river monster."

Marlow and the pilgrims steaming upriver in the midst of the wilderness is reminiscent of the Renaissance motive of the ship of fools, or "stultifera navis." These vessels used to contain the morally insane. It was believed at the time that exposure to nature and fresh air would restore mental health:

The "Ships of Fools" crisscrossed the seas and canals of Europe with their comic and pathetic cargo of souls. Some of them found pleasure and even a cure in the changing surroundings, in the isolation of being cast off, while others withdrew further, became worse, or died alone [...] It is possible that these ships of fools, which haunted the imagination of the entire early Renaissance, were pilgrimage boats, highly symbolic cargoes of madmen in search of their reason: some went down the Rhineland rivers toward Belgium and Gheel; others sailed up the Rhine toward the Jura and Besancon. (Foucault vii, 9)

Marlow refers to his crew as "the pilgrims." This conveys the idea that they are on a mission to civilize. Marlow says at the beginning of his journey: "Good heavens! and I was going to take charge of a two-penny-halfpenny river-steamboat with a penny whistle attached! It appeared, however, I was also one of the Workers, with a capital—you know. Something like

an emissary of light, something like a lower sort of apostle” (p 12). In this light Marlow’s ship and his crew of pilgrims emerge as both the colonial paradigm and a metaphor of ego-consciousness navigating it-Self.

Denial of Coevalness

“No writer captured better than Joseph Conrad the sense of adventure and unease that late nineteenth-century European explorers and missionaries felt as they travelled into the African interior—and back in time” (Adas 165). In the Europe of *fin-de-siècle*, space, time, and technology converge in the image of the railway and the steamboat, making these means of travel into the precursors of the envisioned time machine. Johannes Fabian points out: “Time, much like language ... is a carrier of significance, a form through which we define the content of relations between the Self and the Other” (Fabian iv). Fabian talks about a Politics of Time whereby the subject constructs the other in terms of spatiotemporal distance, structured as (anthropological) discourse. Marlow’s impressions of Africa tend towards temporal and spatial distancing when he calls the natives “prehistoric.” His discourse is largely informed by nineteenth-century anthropology, which locates itself in a “present” time in relation to the “past” time of the Other.

The smell of mud, of primeval mud, by Jove! was in my nostrils, the high stillness of primeval forest was before my eyes; there were shiny patches on the black creek. The moon had spread over everything a thin layer of silver—over the rank grass, over the mud, upon the wall of matted vegetation standing higher than the wall of a temple, over the great river I could see through a sombre gap glittering, glittering, as it flowed broadly by without a murmur. All this was great, expectant, mute, while the man jabbered about himself. I wondered whether the stillness on the face of the immensity looking at us two were meant as an appeal or as a menace. What were we who had strayed in here? Could we handle that dumb thing, or would it handle us? I felt how big, how confoundedly big, was that thing that couldn't talk, and perhaps was deaf as well. (26)

The pernicious altruism on board of the colonial fleet is akin to the tongue of a snake. There is no truth in its words, for it speaks the language of lies. Having encountered in Africa the technology of a stone-age people, weapons that look like sticks flying around, technology had

boosted European self-confidence. The Thames is “a waterway leading to the uttermost ends of the earth” (4), Marlow says. Yet at times in his “night journey” he acknowledges a “remote kinship” with the natives: “And this also has been one of the dark places of the earth ... I was thinking of very old times, when the Romans first came here, nineteen hundred years ago—the other day... Light came out of this river since” (5). Darkness is constructed as “space” and “yesterday” becomes time:

darkness was here yesterday ... Sandbanks, marshes, forests, savages, precious little to eat for a civilised man, nothing but Thames water to drink ... cold, fog, tempests, disease, exile, and death—death skulking in the air, in the water, in the bush ... They were men enough to face darkness ... all that mysterious life of the wilderness that stirs in the forest, in the jungles, in the hearts of wild men” (6)

“The object of anthropology is something to be observed: the present tense is a signal identifying a discourse as an observer’s language ... The Other becomes the *monde commenté*, a world that cannot talk but is rather talked about” (Fabian 86, emphasis added). In Marlow’s use of language we see a pervasive belief in temporal distancing. The jungle and the natives merged, encapsulated in a different time, but also in a different space, not only in regard to physical distancing, but also ritual, spiritual. Marlow is in that sense the inheritor of a culture rooted in Renaissance humanism. Fabian observes: “The discipline of anthropology “remembers” that it acquired its scientific and academic status by climbing on the shoulders of adventurers and using their travelogues, which for centuries had been the appropriate literary genre in which to report knowledge of the Other” (Fabian 87). Here Marlow gives an example of such a transaction with anthropology. In his dreaminess he is often haunted by the past:

There were moments when one's past came back to one, as it will sometimes when you have not a moment to spare to yourself; but it came in the shape of an unrestful and noisy dream, remembered with wonder amongst the overwhelming realities of this strange world of plants, and water, and silence. (34)

Fabian underlines that “Enlightenment thought marks a break with an essentially medieval, Christian (or Juedo-Christian) vision of time. That break was from a conception of time/space in terms of a history of salvation to one that ultimately resulted in the secularization of Time as natural history” (Fabian 26). Seen from that point of view, the civilizing mission is on a “holy mission” to save a temporal space, which gives the “pilgrims” an ironical overtone.

Marlow reflects: “Good heavens! and I was going to take charge of a two-penny-halfpenny river-steamboat with a penny whistle attached! It appeared, however, I was also one of the Workers, with a capital—you know. Something like an emissary of light, something like a lower sort of apostle.” (p 12).

Othering stands for one-sidedness, separation, and division. It is the generic tool used by Marlow when distancing him-Self from the natives, often a temporal distancing. One of Fabian’s main contentions is that under the paradigm of evolutionism the temporal discourse of anthropology rested on a conception of Time that was not only secularized and naturalized but also thoroughly spatialized, arguing that anthropology’s efforts to construct relations with the Other by means of temporal devices implied affirmation of difference as distance. (Fabian 16). Conrad gives the jungle human qualities (anthropomorphism) while he gives the natives qualities pertaining to the vegetal and animal kingdoms. In this way he does not only take a step forward in time from the natives, but also from the jungle itself. “It is by diagnosing anthropology’s temporal discourse that one rediscovers the obvious, namely that there is no knowledge of the Other which is not also a temporal, historical, a political act” (Fabian 1). Marlow’s discourse is political when informed and co-opted by the narrative of empire. Fabian points out that “ ‘Universal Time’ was probably established concretely and politically in the Renaissance in response to both classical philosophy and to the cognitive challenges presented by the age of discoveries opening up in the wake of the earth’s circumnavigation. (Fabian 3). It is then that Marlow can be seen as both a Victorian anthropologist and a Renaissance explorer. Psychologically speaking, he is much closer to a past century, and even a “past” geography (Spain, Portugal, France), than to the African mainland. “The philosophical traveller, sailing to the ends of the earth, is in fact travelling in time; he is exploring the past; every step he makes is the passage of an age” (Fabian, 7). We encounter this sort of discursive construction in the following passage.

Going up that river was like travelling back to the earliest beginnings of the world, when vegetation rioted on the earth and the big trees were kings. An empty stream, a great silence, an impenetrable forest. The air was warm, thick, heavy, sluggish. There was no joy in the brilliance of sunshine. The long stretches of the waterway ran on, deserted, into the gloom of overshadowed distances. On silvery sandbanks hippos and alligators sunned themselves side by side. The broadening waters flowed through a mob of wooded islands; you lost your way on that river as you would in a desert, and butted all day long against shoals, trying to find the channel, till you thought yourself

bewitched and cut off for ever from everything you had known once—somewhere—far away—in another existence perhaps. There were moments when one's past came back to one, as it will sometimes when you have not a moment to spare to yourself; but it came in the shape of an unrestful and noisy dream, remembered with wonder amongst the overwhelming realities of this strange world of plants, and water, and silence.” (33-34)

“In the episteme of natural history the exercise of knowledge was projected as the filling of spaces or slots in a table, or the marking of points in a system of coordinates in which all possible knowledge could be placed.” (Fabian 8). Temporal distancing as a political act has direct consequences on the colonized; it is a politics of filling “blanks on a map.” The colonizer is inscribing a narrative in what Marlow calls “empty space.” What Marlow does, and also Conrad for that matter, is to “complete” a missing history, *the gap between the observer and the observed*. It is in that manner that Marlow constructs the natural and human Others in the passage above. Fabian quotes the celebrated French naval officer and explorer Jean-Francois de Galaup, comte de La Pérouse: “Modern navigators only have one objective when they describe the customs of new peoples: to complete the history of man” (Fabian, 8). There is a significant double entendre in the verb to *complete*, as Fabian points out: “As used by La Pérouse, it signifies belief in the fulfilment of human destiny: travel is the self-realization of man. It also has a more literal, methodological meaning and might then be translated as filling out (as in “to complete a questionnaire”). Once that space has been inscribed it acquires a meaningful dimension for the western traveller. In the following passage Marlow compares “the incomprehensible frenzy of prehistoric man” as the voices of the mad:

The steamer toiled along slowly on the edge of a black and incomprehensible frenzy. The prehistoric man was cursing us, praying to us, welcoming us—who could tell? We were cut off from the comprehension of our surroundings; we glided past like phantoms, wondering and secretly appalled, as sane men would be before an enthusiastic outbreak in a madhouse. We could not understand, because we were too far and could not remember, because we were travelling in the night of first ages, of those ages that are gone, leaving hardly a sign—and no memories. (35-36)

“Adjectives like mythical, ritual, or even tribal ... connote temporal distancing as a way of creating the objects or referents of anthropological discourse” (Fabian 30). In Marlow’s journey the “natives” have no names, they don’t speak, they are presented as the inmates of a

madhouse; “savages” become “criminals” and these, in turn, are diagnosed “madness.” These types of cultural constructs project shadow from domestic perceptions of otherness—in this case the “mentally insane”—create a semantics of otherness that is one-sided and fragile. Because of that situation, modern anthropology seeks a language and a fieldwork based on coevalness, or intersubjective time:

To recognize “intersubjective time” would seem to preclude any sort of distancing almost by definition. After all, phenomenologists tried to demonstrate with their analyses that social interaction presupposes intersubjectivity, which in turn is unconceivable without assuming that the participants involved are coeval, i.e. share the same Time. In fact, further conclusions can be drawn from this basic postulate to the point of realizing that for human communication to occur, coevalness has to be created. Communication is, ultimately, about creating shared Time.” (Fabian 30-31)

An embracing of coevalness from the part of ego-consciousness structured as language could eventually lead Marlow towards individuation. The outstretched arms of Kurtz’s mistress, I will argue, re-present a synecdoche of outreaching coevalness that seeks communication; what Marlow experiences in Other phases of his paranoid “night journey” and constructs as an “invasion” and a mass of “limbs” and “vegetation.” Conrad never provides linguistic data that will help understand the natives. In fact, they hardly utter a word. There is a second language, however, which he acknowledges with a heavy heart: the distant throbbing of the drums, the unspeakable rites, the “fascination of the abominable.” Had Marlow developed empathy, intersubjectivity, and thereby a solid acceptance of coevalness, he would have been able to breach the cultural gap with human and non-human Others. The “white man’s burden,” “the civilizing mission,” and other narratives inscribed in the African peoples are largely informed by a language that projects temporal distancing. In this passage, Marlow’s discourse endorses the imperial narrative of “the white man’s burden” as he calls Africans “an accursed inheritance.”

“We were wanderers on a prehistoric earth, on an earth that wore the aspect of an unknown planet. We could have fancied ourselves the first of men taking possession of an accursed inheritance, to be subdued the cost of profound anguish and of excessive toil.” (p 35)

With a heavy heart, he has to accept that his construction has failed. The dim suspicion of kinship is an unbearable torment to him:

The earth seemed unearthly. We are accustomed to look upon the shackled form of a conquered monster, but there—there you could look at a thing monstrous and free. It 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. It would come slowly to one. They howled, and leaped, and spun, and made horrid faces; but what thrilled you was just the thought of their humanity—like yours—the thought of your remote kinship with this wild and passionate uproar. Ugly. Yes, it was ugly enough; but if you were man enough you would admit to yourself that there was in you just the faintest trace of a response to the terrible frankness of that noise, a dim suspicion of there being a meaning in it which you—you so remote from the night of first ages—could comprehend. And why not? The mind of man is capable of anything—because everything is in it, all the past as well as all the future. What was there after all? Joy, fear, sorrow, devotion, valour, rage—who can tell?—but truth—truth stripped of its cloak of time.

Conrad uses the expression “out there” as a metonym of the jungle, which is to say “the spatiotemporal Other.” Time after time, Marlow refuses to acknowledge shadow: “At night sometimes the roll of drums behind the curtain of trees would run up the river and remain sustained faintly, as if hovering in the air high over our heads, till the first break of day. Whether it meant war, peace, or prayer we could not tell.” (p 35). Despite his aural blindness, however, the wilderness is a constant reminder. Like a human heart, it throbs with the sound of distant drums, beckoning him closer to the heart of darkness. The voice of the jungle, then, can be compared to Wagner’s music or the prose of a best-selling author, for it has the power to awaken certain archetypes, such as individuation, the archetype towards wholeness, or the shadow archetype, which lay dormant in the individual as well as in the collective unconscious. In the words of Edward T. Hall, “Time talks, it speaks more plainly than words. The message it conveys comes through loud and clear” (Hall 1).

Chapter 3

In this chapter I will try to slightly break from the most rigorous constraints of literary criticism. I will attempt a more intuitive way of writing, closer to Jung's approach to psychoanalysis. A discussion of otherness without the participation of Others would seem a rather pernicious idea. In a Jungian approach to literary analysis, the (inner) dialogue with the numinous unconscious reflects in attitudes towards the outside. This means, in practical terms, that my register and method of analysis will be somewhat closer to his. In doing so, I will partly rely on Rowland's *Jung as a Writer*. Rowland is a literary critic that in some instances seems to gravitate towards this approach to close reading. Due to these way of approaching my reading of *Heart of Darkness*, this chapter will be somewhat shorter.

By looking at the feminine, I will be able to connect it with the idea that most Jungians embrace that the collective unconscious is gendered. Human beings tend to be dialectic and to fall back into dualisms. This is reflected in many Other facets of their way of structuring language, some of which we have discussed in light of Kurtz's madness and his participation in "unspeakable" rituals. The underlying emphasis in this chapter will be on Marlow's expedition as a quest towards Self and his failure at individuation. A key Jungian concept in this regard is that of "*temenos*":

Confronting the shadow requires what practitioners of analytic psychology call *temenos*, or container, where the painful experience can be sheltered, the difficulty honoured. Twelve-steps programs, for example, recognize that addiction is a form of possession by shadow that can be overcome by the acknowledgement that ego is "powerless" and needs the assistance of a "power greater than ourselves;" meetings provide a community and a container for telling and retelling painful stories. In this process cultural and personal shadow can be held, acknowledged, and gradually absorbed into consciousness. (West 18)

Heart of Darkness can be seen, I think, as one of these instances of liberation from the affliction of personal and collective shadow. "Containers" such as group seminars and lectures in Literary Studies can profit enormously from a reading of Marlow's failed individuation as numinous inspiration towards healing and a "fully" individuated psyche.

The enigma of synchronicity

There are (at least) two forms of displacement in Marlow's journey; their relevance for the topic of my thesis is reflected in the fact that construction (othering) and deconstruction (going native) happen simultaneously at two different yet closely related levels of analysis. What can best describe what I have called the two strands of Marlow's journey (the psychological and the purely geographical) is the Jungian concept of *synchronicity*. This concept is an extreme instance—probably the most extreme—of Jung's take on the human psyche. It is this sort of theorizing that has led to his work being largely excluded from Literary Studies, which have “solved the problem” by othering the Swiss psychologist as some sort of madman, witchdoctor or western shaman. Now we are approaching a crucial point. This thesis, on the Jungian side of things, hones in on archetypal images and their relationship to the collective unconscious; because of that, synchronicity will be minimally addressed. My aim here is *to bring Marlow's journeys together* and thereby have a better understanding of my overall statement. I will try to explain synchronicity as three-dimensionally as I can. For the sake of clarity and brevity, I will use a Conrad-related example and two short anecdotes, one personal, the other collective.

Taking into account free association, “Blackwood,” name of the first publisher of *Heart of Darkness*, is very suggestive, and it can be read as an instance of Jungian *synchronicity*. This is reflected in the name “Blackwood” in relation to the title of Conrad's novel. If my first example results obscure and enigmatic to the reader, the second should make things clear, because it actually carries relevant meaning. The 9 of December of 2015, one day before Mauricio Macri, current president of Argentina, assumed office, nature made her voice heard by unleashing a thundery storm that ripped three quarters of the flag from the National Flag Memorial in the city of Rosario. Argentina's flag is composed of three equally wide horizontal bands, two are light blue and the one in the middle is white with a yellow sun. Even though the country's population is largely European, and as such as sceptical as the people of Canada or France, this dramatic episode was read symbolically, or in Jungian terms, *synchronically*.

The ceremonial atmosphere of Macri's presidential oath of office was heavily charged with nation-wide expectations. The incident was a “big coincidence.” It was the first time in history that this sacrosanct symbol for the people of Argentina, the flag's sun of the National Flag Memorial, had been rent by a storm. This sign in the sky boded trouble for Argentina's

future, and was read by Argentines as “there will be no sun under Macri’s administration.” In other words, it bespoke the beginning of dark times.

The last example of synchronicity relates to my thesis and to numinous energies related to my individual unconscious. I was taking a break from this paper and resting my head on the pillow while listening to Katatonia’s new record, *Fall of Hearts*. I had switched off my desk lamp and the room was feebly lit by a tealight. I had set the alarm at a quarter past. The song “Vakaren” played on my phone and the spectral voice of Jonas Renkse sang the words “*Kylans port, dörren utan lås, dygnets cirkel runt dig. Alarmet...*” at which point the alarm went off.

The examples above are synchronous, not in relation to each other (for they are unconnected), but they are synchronous in relation to their content. Events in “real” time and in the psyche stand vis-à-vis each Other in a synchronic relationship. With the brief analysis of these events I have in fact hit two birds with one rock. On the one hand, they give an idea of synchronicity (here simplified) as an extreme and numinous instance of Jungian psychology. On the other hand, they freed my pen to Jung’s approach to writing, allowing me to momentarily break from the constraints of my academic paper. The above section could be easily read as “wrong register.”

Jungian synchronicity can be compared to the way in which “primitive” people look at the world, such as in the instance of foreseeing a solar eclipse. Possibly what Scripture calls “miracles.” A situation that has been taken advantage of by Europeans, who thanks to technology could anticipate celestial phenomena. The apotheosis of Kurtz is never explained. We know his eloquence would have little or no effect on the “natives,” due to linguistic barriers. The “apotheosis” of Kurtz, or the “miracle” of his coming, is never explained from the point of view of the natives.

We have divided Marlow’s journey in two different strands of analysis, one postcolonial, and the Other psychoanalytical. Each of these journeys can be imaged as a tree branching out into different headlines (empire, coevalness/shadow, myth; etc). Having split Marlow’s journey in two strands, we can now reassemble the parts. A way of doing this would be to look at the two halves *synchronically*. They stand vis-à-vis each Other in a synchronous relationship, like a face looking into a mirror. I would argue that the novel goes beyond that spatiotemporal frame and that it stands in *synchronicity* towards its readership.

Heart of Darkness, as a historical construction of time and space, and a discourse articulated from a geographical and gender location, resonates with our times.

The quest for Logos

Marlow's quest for knowledge is probably as long a journey as life itself; as far as we can tell or distinguish the edges of existence, like Conrad's darkness, a rather nebulous concept. Marlow's journey can be seen as a quest for Logos, "truth," as he calls it. Logos, I will argue, is truth in its pristine Hellenic sense (*word, discourse, reason, relation*), what ultimately allows man to align reason with the Divine word—within or without the constraints of religious dogma. This may not come as a realization to Marlow, but he seems to intuit its presence in the image of the jungle, in the same way "savage man" perceives the voices of nature and ancestors as being coeval to the moment of listening. According to Jung the language of the numinous unconscious is visual. It speaks in images, as the ones we experience in dreams. Taking a step back and looking at *Heart of Darkness* as we would look at a painting, like one does when looking at impressionist art, we may discover a few previously undisclosed details in the brushwork. Writer and protagonist in *Heart of Darkness* become eclipsed by a time and a shared space in the psyche. Maybe Conrad was too close to Marlow's worldview or perhaps Marlow was too close to his. The point made by critics like Chinua Achebe, and rightfully so, is that they are both related. They share the same biological and spatiotemporal roots, albeit separated by fiction. Their communication was coeval vis-à-vis writing. Well spoken and articulate, dexterous sailors and thoroughgoing critics of empire, they seem oblivious to a few landmarks along the way towards wholeness, a different reading of history that might have led to a different writing of *Heart of Darkness*. To a fair extent, I will argue, the novel remains a cultural misunderstanding. The monochronic perception that stripped cannibalism of its dual meaning, reducing ritual to scandal, is one of many arguments in this regard. Both author and writer could have opted for a construction towards empathy for nature, outside of shadow and into enlightenment, the realization of ego's puny existence in relation to Otherness. The collective unconscious, beautifully incarnate in Kurtz's mistress stretching out her arms, would have led to individuation had Marlow opened his arms to embrace it. In that union of Logos and Eros (love and feeling) Marlow could have reached wholeness; he could have transcended the rage

and destruction of empire and achieved humility and a humble attitude towards the jungle. But this does not happen, for he remains in shadow.

The Anima

Curzio Malaparte's political comment that "Hitler is a woman, and he wants war," resonates with Jung's view of the feminine. What Rowland calls "the motive of the nagging and destructive woman" is pervasive in mythology across cultures. Jung says in regard to dreams and dreamers:

Difficult and subtle ethical problems are not invariably brought up by the appearance of the shadow itself. Often another figure emerges. If the dreamer is a man, he will discover a female personification of his unconscious ... The anima is a personification of all feminine psychological tendencies in a man's psyche, such as vague feelings and moods, prophetic hunches, receptiveness to the irrational, capacity for personal love, feeling for nature, and—last but not least—his relationship to the unconscious. (Jung et al. 186)

According to Jung, the influence of a negative anima figure in the male psyche can look to outsiders like complete madness: "The anima in this guise involve men in a destructive intellectual game" (ibid. 187). In this light, Queen Victoria emerges as an anima figure, clad in the splendorous rhetoric of empire. The jungle as a gendered entity can also be said to be an anima figure, embodied, in an alternative analysis, in Kurtz's mistress:

She looked at us all as if her life had depended upon the unswerving steadiness of her glance. Suddenly she opened her bared arms and threw them up rigid above her head, as though in an uncontrollable desire to touch the sky, and at the same time the swift shadows darted out on the earth, swept around on the river, gathering the steamer into a shadowy embrace. A formidable silence hung over the scene. (61)

"I once asked myself," writes Jung in *Memories, Dreams, Reflections* (1962), "What am I really doing? Whereupon a voice within me said, 'It is art.' ... I knew for a certainty that the voice had come from a woman" (Jung 1963: 210-11). He later called this inner voice, which he considered typical or archetypal, the "anima"—Latin for *soul*—describing the exchange like an encounter with a ghost: "I was like a patient in analysis with a ghost and a woman."

Susan Rowland stresses the gendering of the “voice” Jung heard, and makes a few observations in this regard. Firstly, she sees a connection made by Jung between the feminine and the occult. This preoccupation with the supernatural, she argues, is a commonplace of contemporary cultural theory. Ghosts and haunting, as cultural representation of psychic states, are “beings that defy the binary logic of being present and absent, alive or properly dead,” (Rowland 2005: 52). It is suggestive for Rowland that gender, as Jung’s inner Other, arrives in company of ghosts. The spectral quality of the anima is almost tangible in the character of the Kurtz’s Intended. The colour of a bride’s dress is white, as she is described, the chromatic opposite of the jungle and the racial counterpart of Kurtz’s mistress. Back in Europe, Marlow says of the Intended: “She came forward, all in black, with a pale head, floating towards me in the dusk. She was in mourning. It was more than a year since his death, more than a year since the news came; she seemed as though she would remember and mourn forever” (73). The spectral quality of the jungle and the contingency of Self-destruction are represented in these two Anima figures.

A voice in the dark

Like Marlow, Conrad distances him-Self from an-Other time and space, what Jung calls “the geography of the mind.” In *Geography and Some Explorers*, Conrad says: “Has not the key science of modern chemistry passed through its dishonest phase of alchemy (a portentous development of the confidence trick) and our knowledge of the starry sky been arrived at through the superstitious idealism of Astrology looking for men’s fate in the depths of the infinite? Mere megalomania on a colossal scale” (Conrad, NCE, 274). Conrad’s “denial of metaphysics,” as Daphnia Erdinast-Vulcan has call it, is reflected in Marlow’s failure to “fully” individuate and build empathy towards numinous Others, points to disillusionment rather than ignorance. “The failure of metaphysics is nowhere more evident than in Heart of darkness, a novella which hinges on the tension between the strong religious overtones in Marlow’s narration and the explicit denial of the metaphysical which his story carries” (Vulcan, NCE, 415). The fact that he acknowledges alchemy as early chemistry illustrates this point. Rowland points out Jung’s alchemical language:

Jung’s metaphors, frameworks, and conceptual terms such as anima, shadow, etc., are part of the struggle of language to represent an unrepresentable psyche, metaphors

that both represent and shape psychic reality. So Jung's language retains metaphoric status in its acknowledgement of the essential mystery. Among Jung's favourite metaphorical frameworks are notions of map, model, quest, and alchemy. (Rowland 2012: Ch 1.)

I will introduce the concept of alchemy to then attempt a brief analysis of *Heart of Darkness* in light of the feminine. European alchemy can be divided in two strands: early chemistry and philosophical alchemy. The main difference between the two is that one deals with matter (*prima materia*), whereas the other deals with the human mind. What they have in common, however, is their co-temporality. They are coeval, in the sense that both take place in the alchemist's lab, one as physical, the Other as numinous experience. Retorts, pipes, and alembics are a metaphor of an inner transformation. This process was seen as threefold. The first stage is called Nigredo, or "black stage," characterized by depression, darkness, and chaos. The second is called Albedo, or "white stage," the process of ablution, cleansing, whiteness, in preparation for the third and final step, Rubedo, or the "red stage." Rubedo was seen as the moment of transcendence, which in Jungian terms translates as "individuation." Its symbol was "the chemical wedding," the togetherness of opposites, an implicit contingency in Conrad's novella: nature-culture, feminine-masculine-feminine, light-darkness. We see the same patterns of philosophical alchemy retraced in Marlow's adventure. Alchemy, then, becomes a way of incorporating the feminine, the marginalized Other in the hero myth, the journey towards individuation. In the medieval imagination the "chemical wedding" was understood as the production of alchemical gold, symbol of the Self, the archetype of wholeness.

Having established the two strands of alchemy, I will now try to bring alchemy and the novel together. We know that Kurtz "intended to accomplish big things." This is what ultimately led to his inflated ego, and eventually to his downfall. If we look at his intentions, regardless of their "unsound method," the Intended emerges as the Work of individuation, the chemical wedding of medieval alchemy. On the other hand, Kurtz's fails to individuate, dissolving in Nigredo, because his intentions went beyond the Intended. He has a mistress in the wilderness. This side of Kurtz, his lack of restraint, can also be seen as a failed "chemical wedding," an illicit union with Nigredo (darkness), which is a different way of referring to the process of "going native": his illicit union with the wilderness, great part of which had to do with fears of miscegenation, which is to say, having an African mistress.

Echoes of Kurtz's voice resonate in Marlow's metaphysical failing: "There remained only his memory and his Intended—and I wanted to give that up too to the past, in a way,—to surrender personally all that remained of him with me to that oblivion which is the last word of our common fate" (72). The failure of Kurtz to individuate, his inflated ego and his madness led to Self-destruction. At the end of the narrative Marlow *tells a lie*: "The last word he pronounced was—your name" (77). An emotive silence fills the room and we hear the voice of bereavement. All is left is darkness and a fragile trace of silence.

Conclusion

This thesis aimed to engage the reader in a close reading of *Heart of Darkness* in light of postcolonial and Jungian literary theory. I have through these chapters attempted to show some of the psychological and discursive mechanisms that played a role in the construction of history. The way in which African Others emerge in Marlow's narrative, reflecting the realities of colonialism, has been a point of departure and a framework of analysis for the topic of otherness. Hopefully, my reading has yielded fruitful results in bringing postcolonial attitudes towards geography and madness a step closer to Jungian psychology. Rinda West says, "Art that captures the imagination offers symbols that, while they come from the unconscious of the artist, speak to the unconscious of the age" (West 194). In this respect, I think *Heart of Darkness* remains central to the discussion of geography and madness as related to the construction and deconstruction of Self and Other. Jungian aesthetics (symbols, images, dreams), I have argued, can revitalize the humanities by offering new vistas and refreshing angles from which to look at some of the issues we have discussed.

In chapter one, I have attempted to show examples that support my arguments on alterity. To this end, I focused on cultural stereotypes, such as the myth of the cannibal, but also on evolutionary theory, under the headline of race and racism. From the reductionist and quite possibly anachronistic claim by Chinua Achebe that Conrad is "a bloody racist"—which, in a laudable display of restraint and a somehow timid attempt at projection withdrawal, he later changed to "thoroughgoing racist"—to the "realities" of the African experience, I contended that the shadow archetype plays a central role in the construction of otherness.

Having dealt with the "skin" of my argument in chapter one, I then proceeded to look beneath the surface of postcolonial assumptions of madness and geography. In pointing out that "I Charlie Marlow" has a number of Others, I looked at spatial and temporal dimensions of otherness as related to the two strands of his journey, one purely geographical, the Other psychological. In chapter three, my attention was directed towards the feminine Other. By discussing the role of women in *Heart of Darkness*, I attempted to discuss the Jungian archetype of the anima as a germ of shadow in the male psyche. This led me to the assumption embraced by most Jungians that the creative psyche is gendered, at which point the myth of the Sky Father eclipsed that of the Earth Mother, symbolized in Kurtz's death

and the bereaved Intended. The primary, or at least the most evident strand of Marlow's journey, I argued, operated at the level of logos (rational thinking), or ego-consciousness. Eros, the feminine/feminized unconscious, and the voice in Jung's *Memories*, then became the Other side of the coin, thus suggesting a "secondary" strand of Marlow's voyage—now free from hierarchical positioning in time and space—, what led me to draw parallelisms between postcolonial and Jungian theory. Having split the voyage in two, I proceeded to examine the parts within and without the confines of the novel, to finally weld the two halves in a meaningful whole. No longer juxtaposed, I presented them as synchronous; that is to say, co-existent in space and time. My point is illustrated in the memorable image Conrad paints as Marlow nears the Central Station: "They had come together unavoidably, like two ships becalmed near each other, and lay rubbing sides at last" (55).

As opposed to colonial temporal distancing from Africa, which Michael Adas calls "denial of coevalness," or "allochronism," I argued that Marlow's voyage, by a miraculous struck of Jungian synchronicity, could be seen as contemporary to the physical and numinous presence of the natives. While I discarded the imperial view of allochronism—once established as a tool for the construction and destruction of Others—I argued in favour of Jungian synchronicity. In conclusion, a central aspect of my analysis, which I consider to be as evident as fragile, revolved around Marlow's journey having two strands of meaning, imaged by Conrad's intuition as "the two ships becalmed near each other ... rubbing sides at last." While resting my argument on the archetype of individuation, axis of the journey itself, I also hinted that Marlow had failed to fully individuate, a large part of his conscience remaining in shadow. Yet as Rinda West points out:

Individuation is always partial, never finished; it requires the ego to acknowledge its limits, even its tyranny, and to incorporate into consciousness energies from the unconscious. In the course of doing so, the ego becomes more and more self-conscious, alert to the social forces constructing the personality, humble in the face of shadow, and better able to attend to the multiple voices of the psyche. (West 198)

Marlow's failure to "fully" individuate can be heard from his own lips as he sails back to Europe in company of Kurtz's cadaver: "It was a moment of triumph for the wilderness, an invading and vengeful rush which it seemed to me I would have to keep back alone for the salvation of another soul" (73). He does get close to blossoming, however, as close as he gets to embrace a "kinship" with the jungle. His closeness to Others is reflected in a partial

acknowledgement of his own shadow: “Intimacy grows quickly out there ... I knew him as well as it is possible for one man to know another” (74).

Throughout this thesis, postcolonial criticism has given me insight in Marlow’s ambivalent discourse. Polyphony, and sometimes cacophony, we have seen how the many voices that partake of such critique do not seem to reach a verdict in regard to the issue of Conrad’s condemnation of empire or his complicity in it. I have compared this ambivalence to Rowland’s analysis of *Hamlet*, by saying that the novella “occupies a liminal position in the collective unconscious” (Rowland 2005: 211). The postcolonial concept of *liminality* here connected to the *collective unconscious* also serves to sum up the propinquity, or poetical closeness, between Marlow’s two strands of journey, pointing to the shadowy area in which construction and deconstruction of Self and Other plays out.

Liminality relates to madness in an equally relevant way. I have argued that the drama that plays out in Kurtz’s front yard seems to be of lesser importance than his mental integrity. There is a fine line between the horror of empire and the horror of going native. This is ultimately how we may connect geography and madness. Conrad’s horror is in itself a nebulous and complex artefact, a compass whose intricate Victorian clockwork keeps spinning back and forth, referring us to a debate where past, present, and future seem to coalesce. As Otherness leads to Oneness, logos embraces eros and meaning begins to resemble truth. From Dionysiac rituals of madness and the megalomaniac discourse of ego-consciousness taken to the extreme, a Self-regulation of psychic energies constantly takes place in human affairs. By discussing the archetype of individuation, I also addressed the encounter between Self and Other—in Marlow’s case, nature, Africans, the unconscious—as vital part of a life-long journey towards wholeness.

In closing, I would like to re-address a question mark I drew in the introduction of this thesis. Why *Heart of Darkness*? I said the answer was to be found in Conrad’s warning. And at this point we may arguably find it in Jung’s silence. The importance of being a good listener is probably what our discipline has to learn from psychoanalysis. By giving Jung a voice in Literary Studies, I think we can reach undisclosed continents of knowledge about the Other within and the Other without.

Still today, after Leopold’s Congo, WW2, and so many horrors, we tend to retrieve as much meaning from an ominous sign in the sky as we would from a dream or a nightmare. The lack of dialogue between the West and its numinous side is highly symptomatic of its

excluding attitude towards geographic Others. But this imbalance seeks self-regulation, probably a reason why the last six decades have seen so many (failed) attempts towards wholeness and integration. Under the guise of heroic altruism, shadow acknowledgement has led to shame and a new sense of purpose, mostly characterized by a mindless outpouring of “relief” to countries we have largely contributed to destroy. In its ego-orchestrated self-deceit, conveniently fuelled by new interests and old forms of commerce, the West struggles to integrate “the Rest” through open-borders policy and the promise of a multicultural utopia, thereby wiping historical memory and pluralism off the face of the earth. The sinister note of such failure is reflected in today’s geopolitical landscape, as shadow grows larger and the contingency of self-destruction looms in the horizon. By destabilizing regions and absorbing the unavoidable outcome of war, the West has successfully created a new brand of cannibalism, feeding on a strict diet of refugees. While the ancient splendour of Syria darkens and Blackwater rages on in the highlands of Yemen, a luminous reading of *Heart of Darkness*, one that examines shadow in the light of our common existence, seeking true wholeness and mutual acceptance, may contribute to the construction of a better tomorrow.

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