Université de Montréal

KURTZ IN FACT AND FICTION
AN INTERTEXTUAL STUDY OF HEART OF DARKNESS

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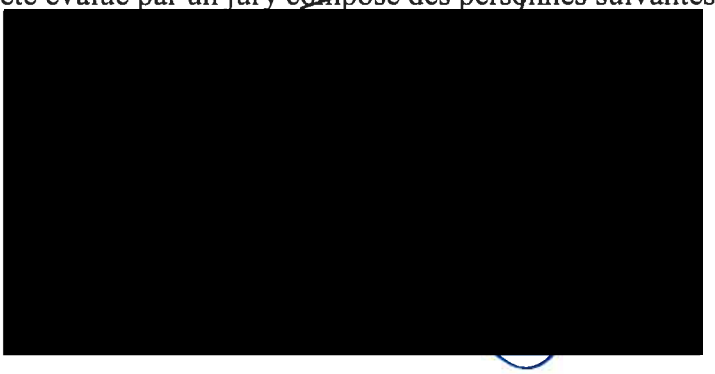

Abstract

This study examines Joseph Conrad's Heart of Darkness in the light of the prevailing theories of intertextuality. Literary theorists and critics such as Julia Kristeva, Roland Barthes, Gerard Genette and Mikhael Bakhtin maintain that texts are permutations of present and previous texts. A writer borrows from his contemporaries and/or predecessors their ideas and images, which he transposes to generate new material. However, writers not only borrow from literary sources but also from historical, biographical, mythical, and ideological sources that shape their contemporary culture.

Conrad's Kurtz is formed out of the author's real experience during his journey to the Congo, the ideological, the philosophical discourses of the time, and Conrad's readings. Moreover, the depth and the contradictions of the complex multiple meanings of Conrad's novel inspired other texts. This study shows that British writers such as Graham Greene and Evelyn Waugh extend the meanings of Heart of Darkness, a text to which they are linked by a deep bond of affiliation. Conrad's novel, moreover, had a tremendous impact on African writers such as Ayi Kwei Armah, whose text implicitly deforms and parodies Heart of Darkness.

Résumé de synthèse

Selon Mikhael Bakhtine, Julia Kristeva, Roland Barthes et Gérard Genette, le texte littéraire serait imperceptible hors de l'intertextualité. ''Tout texte se construit comme une mosaïque de citations, tout texte est absorption et transformation d'un autre texte'' (*Sémiotiké*). En transformant et en se servant du matériau de ses contemporains et/ou de ses prédécesseurs à sa guise, l'écrivain génère de nouveaux textes. Cependant, l'emprunt n'est pas seulement littéraire: l'écrivain insère aussi dans son oeuvre les intertextes historiques, biographiques, mythiques et idéologiques qui forment la culture.

Cette étude s'appuie sur les recherches de Julia Kristeva sur le phénomène de l'intertextualité qui guide notre analyse du roman de Joseph Conrad *Au coeur des ténèbres* (Heart of Darkness). Nous examinons, dans les premier et deuxième chapitres, Kurtz comme personnage inspiré, d'une part, par l'expérience traumatisante vécue par l'auteur durant son voyage au Congo. D'autre part, nous considérons Kurtz comme un protagoniste élaboré à partir des lectures de Conrad ainsi que des courants philosophiques et idéologiques de la fin du dix-neuvième siècle. Le troisième chapitre est consacré à l'influence exercée par Conrad sur certains écrivains anglais et africains. Alors que Graham Greene et Evelyn Waugh prolongent et revivent les thèmes exploités par Conrad, *Au coeur des ténèbres* est vu sous un oeil critique par Ayi Kwei Armah qui le déforme et le parodie.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This thesis is dedicated to the memory of my father.

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Introduction

Joseph Conrad, a Pole naturalized a British citizen, exercised a tremendous influence not only on writers and poets of his generation but also on writers after him, ranging from European and American to African and Carribean writers. For Ted Billy "[n]o other novelist (excepting, perhaps, James Joyce) has had a more profound and pervasive influence on twentieth-century fiction than Joseph Conrad" (1). The appreciation of Conrad's writings is still being demonstrated through the amount of criticism that his books have generated. His literary production was prolific, even though English was his third language after Polish and French: he produced thirteen novels, twenty-eight short stories and two volumes of memoirs. His works were translated into several languages. In addition to using the literary heritage of his predecessors, Conrad introduced new writing techniques that allowed him to handle such extremely delicate and sensitive preoccupations of the twentieth-century. He is among the founders of English Modernism. His life and works also inspired journeys and films such as Francis Ford Coppola's spectacular *Apocalypse Now.*

One of Conrad's most widely acknowledged masterpieces is Heart of Darkness, which, is in Cedric Watt's terms: ''[...] a rich, vivid, layered, paradoxical, and problematic novella [...] a mixture of oblique autobiography, traveller's yarn, adventure story, psychological odyssey, political satire, symbolic prose-poem, black comedy, spiritual melodrama, and sceptical meditation. It has proved to be ahead of its time: an exceptionally proleptic text'' (The Cambridge Companion to Heart of Darkness 45). Heart of Darkness is, moreover, rich in its multiplicity of meanings that go beyond those produced by the simple interrelations between the actual words in a piece of literature. For instance, with

its parables and its many allusions; it carries with it many narratives, it sends the reader back to the Romans' discourse, to the battles and the crusades of the Christian world.

It is said that Eliot's use of ''Mistah Kurtz--he dead'' as an epigraph to 'The Holow Men' is a major contribution to Conrad's influence. F. Scott Fitzgerald based The Great Gatsby (1925) on Heart of Darkness, and he warned Ernest Hemingway ''...against the influence of Conrad in dialogue'' (The Cambridge Companion, 227). William Faulkner, for his part, declared that his two favorite books were Moby Dick and The Nigger of the Narcissus and he ''[...] recommended Lord Jim and Nostromo as books that young writers might read with profit'' (228).

Conrad's legacy is, moreover, obvious in the novels of Graham Greene and to a lesser degree, Evelyn Waugh. Conrad's ghost was omniscient in all of Greene's oeuvre and his vow "never again" to read Conrad proved to be vain, as I am going to demonstrate. For example, It's a Battlefield, where the protagonist is called Conrad Drover, is modelled on Conrad's The Secret Agent. The Man Within shares affinities with Under Western Eyes, and Journey Without Maps; A Burnt-Out Case with Heart of Darkness. Commenting on the failure of his first novels, Greene says: ''there was nothing of myself in them [...] All that was left in the heavy pages of the second [novel] was the distorted ghost of Conrad'' (A Sort of Life 206). Like Conrad's, most of Greene's novels are set in foreign settings. In this connection, John Spurling remarks that ''[n]o European writer since Conrad has put the hot, poor and foully governed places of the earth on paper as vividly as

Greene [...] like Conrad's, [Greene's descriptions] are moral landscapes, characterizations of what is there and of whom it is experienced by" (206).

Evelyn Waugh, for his part, inherited Conrad's pessimistic vision as far as human nature is concerned. Both writers pointed at the 'shadow line' between civilisation and savagery. With the use of the same setting as Conrad and the manipulation of the " heart of darkness" motif, Waugh's Black Mischief reads as a continuation of Conrad's themes and imagery.

Moreover, Heart of Darkness has generated a lot of political criticism over the course of the last three decades. It has often been attacked by feminist critics and African writers who feel undermined by Conrad's story, which is considered sexist by the former and racist by the latter. Chinua Achebe writes that Conrad is a " [t]horoughgoing racist" and states that his first novel is meant as a reply to Conrad's novel and Joyce Cary's Mister Johnson (Morning Yet on Creation Day (123). Heart of Darkness is, moreover, the main intertext in Ayi Kwei Armah's Why Are We So Blest. Unlike Achebe, whose reply to Conrad is outspoken, Armah implicitly transforms, deconstructs, and parodies Conrad's text.

The present study investigates the nature of the existing interrelations between, on the one hand, Heart of Darkness along with the previous texts that shaped Conrad's themes, characters and worldviews, and, on the other hand, between Heart of Darkness and the texts it has generated in both English and African literatures. This study examines Conrad's transmutation and transformation of his factual and fictitious material, and then will touch on Greene's, Waugh's, and Armah's different uses of Heart of Darkness. Our interest

is in elucidating what these writers absorbed, transformed, subverted, and rejected in their borrowings from Conrad.

We have mentioned influence, response, legacy, relationships between texts, absorption, transformation and subversion, all of which lead us to the notion of intertextuality. Eighteenth century critics considered influence in relation to the genius of an author, his influence on others and whether he is original or not. Intertextuality, however, relies on the de-authorization of texts and discards subjectivity. Harold Bloom states that ''there are no texts, but only relationships between texts. These relationships depend upon a critical act, a misreading or misprison that one [writer] performs upon another'' (Map of Misreading 3). For Kristeva ''[t]he notion of intertextuality replaces that of intersubjectivity''[1](Desire in Language 66).

Theories of intertextuality elucidate how texts can be read as absorption and transformation of one or many other texts. A text resembles the World Wide Web: an intertext always links the reader to another or more links/interexts. Intertextuality came into use in the sixties with Julia Kristeva, who developed it in accordance with the writings of the Russian Michael Bakhtin. For her intertextuality is as old as literature. In her investigation of Bakhtin's Dialogism, she found that Socratic dialogues ''are characterized by opposition to any official monologism claiming to possess a ready-made truth. Socratic truth ("meaning") is the product of a dialogical relationship among speakers [...]'' (81). In " Word, Dialogue and Novel", Kristeva, moreover, explains what she has discovered in Bakhtin: "[a]ny text is constructed as a mosaic of quotations; any text is the absorption and transformation of another" (66). It is mainly this view of

intertextuality that we are going to rely on in the present study. The theory of intertextuality is further elaborated by many critics, among them: Roland Barthes, Michael Riffaterre, Gerard Genette, Laurent Jenny, Michel Foucault, and, to some extent Harold Bloom.

Bakhtin praises 'polyphony' in the novel. The latter, according to him, allows the integration of old traditions and diverse linguistic and cultural components. These confront one another through the process of 'dialogism'. The struggle of voices for survival is called 'heteroglossia' as opposed to 'monoglossia', which is oppressive and authoritatian. For Bakhtin, the novel is the best genre, since it incorporates diverse languages, polyphony, transformation and other cultural discourses. 'Novelization' is Bakhtin's reference to a text when it becomes intertext. For him, moreover, the novel interracts with: "extraliterary genres, with genres of everyday life and with ideological genres [...]"[2] (The Dialogic Imagination 300-301).

Roland Barthes, for his part, provocatively announced the "Death of the Author" in S/Z. Barthes's theory of intertextuality is a reader-response oriented one. The reader is invited to cast out his hitherto acquired reading habits to become the producer of meaning. For Barthes, who distinguishes between work and text, text is traversal and intertexts belong to infinitude.

In an effort to clarify further the nature of intertextuality, Gerard Genette published Palimpsestes: La Littérature au Second Degré in 1982. While in agreement with Kristeva, Genette considers intertextuality within only literary texts and suggests transtextuality as a more conclusive term. He calls intertextual any effective presence of one or more texts in another text. Another contribution

came from Harold Bloom with his publication of Anxiety of Influence; he defines influence as an Oedipal struggle between the anxious present writer and his predecessors (the fathers) over originality.

The present study is organized into three main chapters. The first one is devoted to the investigation of the historical and autobiographical intertexts contained in Heart of Darkness. Conrad's journey informed him about the shocking disparity between the rhetoric of imperialism and reality. We will examine some of the explorers of Africa and the ideological discourses that shaped Conrad's Kurtz.

Heart of Darkness is also built as a web of previous mythic and literary texts. Our interest is, therefore, to elucidate some of them in chapter two and show Conrad's complex handling of the heterogeneous material, which he transformed and parodied. Chapter three is divided into two sections. The first one will place an emphasis on the fortunes of Heart of Darkness in English literature. Are Graham Greene and Evelyn Waugh struggling against Conrad's (the father's) influence upon them, or are they continuing his tradition? Unlike their western counterparts, how do African writers respond to Heart of Darkness? If they subvert and parody Conrad's novel, as Ayi Kwei Armah does, is not intertextuality the best weapon for the re-writing of Heart of Darkness? This is going to be our concern in the second section.

[1] Kristeva, Julia. Desire in Language: A Semiotic Approach to Litrature. Trans. Thomas Gora, Alice Jardine and Leon S. Roudiez. Ed. Leon S. Roudiez.

New York: UP, 1980. 66 "L'intertextualité évince l'intersubjectivité" Sémiotiké : Recherches pour une Sémanalyse. Paris: Seuil, 1977. 146

[2] Bakhtin,Mikhael Mikhailovich. The Dialogic Imagination. Ed. Mikhael Holquist. Trans. Caryl Emerson and Mikhael Holquist. Austin: Texas Press, 1981. 300-301 '[Bakhtin] studies the polyphonic novel as an absorption of the carnival and the monological novel as stifling of this literary structure, which he calls "Menippean" because of its dialogism [...] a text cannot be grasped through linguistics alone. Bakhtin postulates the necessity of what he calls a *translinguistic* science [which] would enable us to understand intertextual relationships.' Desire in Language 69

Chapter One

Kurtz: The real man

Historical and autobiographical intertexsts

The extent to which Heart of Darkness is transcribed from Conrad's own experiences has preoccupied critics since its publication. The author himself defined his novel in the Author's Note to Youth, a Narrative; and Two Other Tales as "experience pushed a little (and only very little) beyond the actual facts of the case" (Baines 117). Indeed, Conrad lent his narrator many of his personal details such as his childhood love of maps as well as his delight in reading books about famous explorations[1] and explorers. In Conrad's boyhood, explorers were the equivalent of today's Hollywood stars, and, in his adulthood, he witnessed audacious expeditions of exploration that enjoyed a lot of publicity, mainly through the newspapers, which contained explorers' reports.

In 1877, Conrad applied for a job at the Societé Anonyme Pour le Commerce du Haut Congo, but, as he received no answer, he resorted to his aunt's influence in Brussels. In the novel, Marlow's job was secured by his aunt. As he puts it: "Would you believe it? –I tried the women. I, Charlie Marlow, set the women to work - to get a job" (HD 12). It was not until 1890 that Conrad was able to sail to the Congo after the death of a captain, Friesleben whose name changes only slightly and becomes Friesleven in the novel. Conrad sailed on the Roi des Belges to rescue Georges Antoine Klein, chief of a station at Stanley Falls who was seriously ill. Heart of Darkness closely follows the details of Conrad's journey.

The question is: what is Conrad's purpose in fictionalising facts? And how does he proceed? With its consciousness of evil, Heart of Darkness shows how deeply Conrad was affected by the human degradation he saw in Africa; his voyage also informed him of the frightening gap between human pretensions and

practice. It is this knowledge that made him confess to Edward Garntt that "before the Congo [he] was a mere animal" (Baines 119). In transposing his Congo experience Conrad was not only reporting his ready-made material otherwise a newspaper article would do; instead, the events, the characters, and the setting are distorted and transformed to suit what he refers to as the "sombre theme.'' As he puts it:

> Heart of Darkness [...] is experience pushed a little beyond the actual facts of the case for the perfectly legitimate, I believe, purpose of bringing it home to the minds and bosoms of the readers [...] that sombre theme had to be given a sinister resonance, a tonality of its own, a continued vibration that, I hoped, would hang in the air and dwell on the ear after the last note had been struck (Baines 223).

In Théorie de la Littérature (1965), Tynianov argues that a given literary work is constructed not only out of the previous literary corpus but is also related to other non-literary signifying systems. As he puts it: ''L'existence d'un fait littéraire dépend de sa qualité différentielle (c'est-a-dire de la corrélation soit avec la série littéraire, soit avec une série extra-littéraire), en d'autres termes de sa fonction'' (124). Tynianov's idea of "série extra-littéraire" accords with Kristeva's definition of text and intertextuality. Unlike Gérard Genette who favours intertextual studies between literary texts only, Kristeva has widened the notion of text to include non-literary systems: the text is placed within another larger text, which is culture, and the intertextual practice is considered in relation to, in addition to literature, ideology, history, and the unconscious. Drawing on Bakhtin, Kristeva locates the text ''[...] within history and society, which are then seen as texts read by the writer, and into which he inserts himself by rewriting them.''[2] Intertextuality is

then a way of referring to the role of literary and extra-literary materials that coexist and weave together in a textual space.

In this respect, this chapter integrates historical and biographical elements which are very closely related in Heart of Darkness and seem to us to be definitely necessary to a complete understanding of Conrad's novella. My concern is not the recreation of the circumstances under which Conrad's novel is produced. Instead, I will consider the way Conrad incorporates the historical and biographical intertexts into his novel. In order to do this, I will compare Kurtz to some explorers, examine the affinities he shares with them and show the author's denunciation of both the colonial abuses and the colonial agents, the explorers whom Conrad used to admire. With this aim in mind, I have chosen to compare Conrad's character to David Livingstone, the ''humanist in Africa'', Henry Morton Stanley the ''tyrant'' and Hodister the ''best agent.''We will see that the variegated figure of Kurtz is actually each one of these and none of them at the same time.

KURTZ/ LIVINGSTONE

David Livingstone (1813-1874) was a licentiate of the Faculty of Physicians and Surgeons of Glascow. He later became one of the most well-known travellers of Africa. During his last years of exploration no news was heard from him until Henry Morton Stanley found and assisted him in 1871. After Livingstone's death, his body was preserved in salt by his faithful natives and he was sent to England and buried in West Minister Abbey. In Last Essays, Conrad recalls:

> Neither will the monuments left by all sorts of Empire builders suppress for me the memory of David Livingstone. The words Central Africa bring before my eyes an old man with a rugged, kind face and a clipped, grey moustache, pacing wearily at the head of a few Black followers along the reed-fringed lakes towards the dark native hut on the Congo headquarters in which he died, clinging in his very last hour to his heart's unappeased desire for the source of the Nile [...] a notable European figure and the most venerated perhaps of all the objects of my early geographical enthusiasm (234-235).

Kurtz undoubtedly draws heavily on Livingstone's heroic image of a devoted solitary explorer who refused Stanley's offer to take him home and pursued his wanderings in Africa instead. Livingstone's "unappeased desire for the sources of the Nile" echoes Kurtz's frustration --"I had immense plans" (HD 94)-- even on the verge of death. Moreover, despite Marlow's scepticism about Kurtz's grandeur right at the very beginning, he still makes it clear that he is advancing towards a becoming hero. When he incidentally hears the manager and his uncle gossiping about Kurtz (HD 46), this only strengthens the image he had of his hero:

> As to me, I seemed to see Kurtz for the first time. It was a distinct glimpse: the dugout, four paddling savages, and the lone White man turning his back suddenly on the headquarters, on relief, on thoughts of home –perhaps; setting his face towards the depths of the wilderness, towards his empty and desolate station. I did not know the motive. Perhaps he was just simply a fine fellow who stuck to his work for its own sake (HD 46).

However, Marlow's above last two sentences prepare us to meet with disillusionment as the story unfolds: "it is against this first vision that the subsequent [heroic dimension] must be measured; and the intensity of Marlow's later reaction against Kurtz is a direct function of the intensity of his initial admiration for him (Firshaw 77). His concluding observation that Kurtz is after all no more than ''a fine fellow who stuck to his work" can be read as Conrad's

own disappointment in Livingstone. As he recalls again in "Geography and Some Explorers": "With his memory enshrined in West Minister Abbey [Livingstone] can well afford to smile without bitterness at the fatal delusion of his exploring days" (235).

It is worth noting that another image imputed to Livingstone by Conrad is the one of "Empire builder." This is precisely Kurtz's principal function in Heart of Darkness. In his lifetime, Livingstone was convinced that he had a divinely assigned mission to accomplish in Africa. On June 1, 1840 he was involved in the creation of the "African Civilisation Society" (229). He was often described as an anti-slavery crusader, a successful missionary, the explorer par excellence and the colonialist for whom ''[the] two pioneers of civilisation-Christianity and commerce should ever be inseparable" (Rotberg 44). His approach of combining trade with humanitarianism helped pave the way to the Brussels Conference (1876), the Berlin Conference (1884) and the subsequent partitioning of Africa a few years after his death. He had always referred to Central Africa as ''the dark interior"; the phrase is ironically distorted in Heart of Darkness. The title Heart of Darkness signals intertextuality regardless of its content. Conrad goes beyond the geographical and religious meaning of the phrase to explore the psychological dark interior of man. The Inner Station is symbolic of the dark instincts that lie in the depths of Mr Kurtz. As a Livingstone figure, Kurtz is described as an "emissary of pity, science and progress" (HD 36); he is in charge of the guidance of the "International Society for the Suppression of Savage Customs", and he recommends that "each station should be like a beacon on the

road towards better things, a centre for trade of course, but also for humanising, improving, instructing" (HD 47).

Conrad undoubtedly saw beyond the rhetoric of the civilizing mission and understood the essence of the colonial discourse for economic profit (HD 18). In the long run, both Livingstone and Kurtz move from being theoreticians to active militants of the Empire; Livingstone finds no better solution for the ''heathen" natives than colonization. As he puts it:

> I have a very strong desire to commence a system of the honest poor; I would give 2000 or 3000 for the purpose [...] Colonisation from a country such as ours ought to be one of hope, and not of despair [...]the performance of an imperative duty to our blood, our country, our religion, and to humankind (Helly 241).

Kurtz, for his part, goes farther and recommends the extermination of "all the brutes" (HD 72).

Amazingly, the two light-bringers and representatives of the ideal of the "white man's burden" are actually portrayed as being rather the burden of the Africans; Livingstone had his natives carry him on their shoulders for a purpose about which they could not have cared less, or, at least, which was not a priority for them. The explorer himself acknowledges in his journal that his servants were suffering with him. On January 24, 1873, he wrote:

> Carrying me across one of the broad, deep sedgy rivers is really a difficult task [...] The first part, the main stream, came up to Susi's[one of Livingstone's servants] mouth, and wetted my seat and legs. One held up my pistol behind, then one footprint, he required two to lift him, so as to gain a footing on the level which was over waist deep [...] a strong current came [...] and each time I was lifted off bodily, and put on another pair of stout willing shoulders, and fifty yards put them out of breath: No wonder! It was sore on the women folk of our party (Livingstone 268-269).

Moreover, in addition to nursing Livingstone, the natives carried his corpse for five months until they made sure it would be sent to England. Conrad was certainly aware that Livingstone's heroic image in England is actually debatable, and that his worldwide reputation is kept safe only because, as Listhowel puts it:

> The British were given a new hero at a time when heroes were scarce. Some members of the Foreign Office and the Colonial Office knew better [than the legend that Stanley had created], but they kept their peace. With the growing demand for colonial possessions, which developed a decade later into the Scramble for Africa, Livingstone became a useful symbol, and later on his ideas influenced the shape British colonial rule was to take (233-234).

In addition to Stanley, who actually created the Livingstone legend, Horace Waller reinforced it by his publication of Livingstone's Last Journals in which notes that could stain the explorer's reputation of a saint were omitted, according to Dorothy O.Helly in Livingstone's Legacy. In Heart of Darkness, Marlow tears out Kurtz's post-scriptum and he does not disclose Kurtz's secrets even though he "[...] hate [s] and detest[s] lies"(HD 38). His telling lies to Kurtz's fianceé implies that the myth of Kurtz is itself a lie, just as the Livingstone legend is. On another plane, despite Marlow's disgust towards the colonial machinery, his lie can also be interpreted in the light of his belonging to the lie itself: whatever his denunciation of colonialism, he still believes in and idealizes the 'idea'. As he makes clear at the beginning: "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 idea when you look at it too much. What redeems it is the idea only. An idea at the back of it" (HD 10).

As we can see, Marlow's presentation of Kurtz follows the image Conrad had of Livingstone; he goes from hero to sham, from an ''emissary of pity" to a hollow man. We have already mentioned that, for Conrad, Livingstone was "the most venerated [...] of all the objects of [his] early geographical enthusiasm" (Last Essays 235). But after his Congo experience, his confrontation with the bitter reality of the explorers, and the use to which exploration was put, the older Conrad does not even concede the full title of explorer to his childhood hero in Last Essays, where he refers to "[...] the fatal delusion" of Livingstone's "exploring days" (235). In this connection, Judith Listhowel points out in The Other Livingstone that the explorer very often fell into error during his last years and he often refused the help of others .As she puts it: "With his character, in order to save his life's work, he was bound to prevaricate, and lie. His determination, his endurance, his courage - all his great qualities- were used for a false purpose" (207).

It is perhaps his use of rhetoric and refined speeches that distinguishes Livingstone from other explorers of Africa. His incalculable impact on the history of Africa is a long term one. His writings can be read as an invitation to colonise but not to exploit. He was better remembered by the natives, and compared to the German Carl Peters or Henry Morton Stanley, he was, according to Listhowel, ''[...] one of the few explorers [...] who achieved his results without bullying Africans'' (15). Then, Conrad's Kurtz is Livingstone as the representative of the policy of the ''torch", the civilising mission as well as its failure. However, given his variegated figure, Kurtz is also a ruthless violent agent, the opposite of Livingstone as humanist; he is also a tyrant, a Henry Morton Stanley.

KURTZ/ STANLEY

Henry Morton Stanley was born in North Wales, the illegitimate son of John Rowlands and Elizabeth Parry was put in a workhouse at the age of five. In 1857, at the age of eleven, he flew to America, where he later became a correspondent for The New York Herald. Stanley's starting point toward fame was when Mr James Gordon Bennett, son of the proprietor of The New York Herald, entrusted him with the historical mission: to find Livingstone and bring him back. Stanley later led many other expeditions to Africa; between 1895 and 1900 he was a Member of Parliament, and he died on May 10, 1904.

The atmosphere in which Heart of Darkness was produced was a "Stanleyesque" one. Conrad visited the Congo in 1890-1891, one month after Stanley had come back from Africa as a hero and had published the account of his expedition to relieve the German Emin Pasha (1840-1892 born Eduard Schnitzer), another Kurtz figure; Pasha passed as a Muslim in Sudan, refused Stanley's offer to take him back home, and was eventually killed by Arab chiefs near Stanley Falls.

According to Norman Sherry, it was Stanley who first called Africa "the Dark Continent" (Conrad's Western World); his publications often bore the darkness motif as the very titles of his books show: Through the Dark Continent (1878) or Darkest Africa. The explorer may not only be a basis for the figure of Kurtz, but it is as Goonetilleke points out: "the immense heart of Africa' and the 'Dark Continent' that passed into general parlance and that figure in Conrad, and

the adventurer appears to have indeed very much a presence behind Heart of Darkness" (20).

Not only does Conrad use the word darkness in the title of Heart of Darkness, but the motif of darkness pervades the text and is indispensable to the understanding of Conrad's aims. But, whereas Stanley uses darkness to justify colonialism, Conrad undertakes a complete distortion and demystification of Stanley's cliché. Conrad recalls in "Geography and Some Explorers" that as a child he viewed "[...] the heart of Africa [as] white and big" (232), but when he went there, as he promised himself, he found its heart dark; it had already been darkened by Stanley and others like him

It was Stanley who informed the Europeans of the importance of commerce in the Congo; he helped the Belgian King Leopold II create the inappropriately named Congo Free State, which was in fact the King's personal property. The King's Congo was, according to Murffin, composed of stations which were ruled by officials who were allowed to dispossess the natives and ill-treat them. This reminds us of Conrad's pilgrims. Moreover, ivory was a Belgian monopoly and non-Belgians were not allowed to possess it, and they could even be shot if they were found to possess it (Murffin 6-7).

Stanley made his reputation thanks to his expedition to relieve Livingstone (1871) and the publication of his journey in How I Found Livingstone (1872). The title of Stanley's book echoes Marlow's quest, which can also be read as "how I found Kurtz." As he tells his audience: "You ought to know how I got out there, what I saw, how I went up that river to the place where I first met the poor chap [Kurtz]. It was the culminating point of my experience"(HD 11). The interplay

between fact and fiction in Heart of Darkness reaches its highest peak in the case of Stanley and Livingstone; it is really difficult to disentangle myth from reality. Stanley goes to give assistance to Livingstone and to bring him back; this is precisely Marlow's mission as well. In his search for Livingstone, Stanley was not only advancing towards a hero but also towards the father he was seeking. Marthe Robert points out that Stanley "followed the itinerary of the hero of a novel. A quest for a name, an identity, the route of Stanley is that of an illegitimate child" (Darras 64). Livingstone, for his part, was devastated by the death of his son, Thomas, who enlisted in the Federal Army in America and succumbed to his wounds. The meeting of the two men is one between father and son. All this takes place in a remote land, which serves as a place for myth-making considering the two men's motives in Africa, especially their desire for fame, which they could not have attained in Europe.

In this connection, Hunt Hawkins studied Heart of Darkness and the psychology of colonialism in the light of O. Manoni's Prospero and Caliban: The Psychology of Colonization (1950), which deals with the inferiority feelings of both the colonizer and the colonized (Murffin 208). Even though these feelings are not apparent in Kurtz, they are still there in him. He is a "universal genius", but he is not accepted in Europe, as Marlow finds out during his encounter with the fiancée. The latter informs him that her family did not approve of Kurtz. As Marlow makes it clear: "[...] her engagement with Kurtz had been disapproved by her people. He wasn't rich enough or something. And indeed I don't know whether he had not been a pauper all his life. He had given me some reason to infer that it was his impatience of comparative poverty that drove him out there"

(HD 108). Apparently, Conrad did anticipate Manoni's theory of the poor colonizer who dominates the natives to prove his superiority. Kurtz depended on the natives to be seen as a God and to achieve his status as the company's best agent; Marlow also reports that Kurtz dreamed of having "kings meet him at railway stations [...]" (HD 98).

This inferiority feeling is at the core of the presence of both Livingstone and Stanley in Africa. Judith Listowel notes in The Other Livingstone that Livingstone was born at a mill where both his parents worked, and she suggests that the explorer's enjoyment of aristocratic circles in London is partly explained by the sense of inferiority that had stayed with him throughout his life. It is in the case of Stanley that the inferiority feelings are more blatant, though; in his search for Livingstone, Stanley behaved like an actor on a stage; being aware of the importance of his mission, he calculated every step. Jacques Darras reports that the explorer "repeated his lines like an actor" (64). Stanley himself acknowledged in How I Found Livingstone that he did his best to do what a respectable Englishman would have done in a similar situation. As he confesses his happiness when seeing Livingstone:

> What would I not have given for a bit of friendly wilderness, where, unseen, I might vent my joy in some mad freak, such as idiotically biting my hand, turning a somersault, or slashing at trees, in order allay those exciting feelings that were well-nigh uncontrollable. My heart beats fast, but I must not let my face betray my emotions, lest it shall detract from the dignity of a white man appearing under such extraordinary circumstances. So I did that which I thought was most dignified [...] As I advanced slowly towards him I noticed he was pale [...] I would have run to him, only I was a coward in the presence of such a mob-would have embraced him, only, he being an Englishman, I did not know how he would receive me; so I did what cowardice and false pride suggested was the best thing-walked deliberately to him, took off my hat and said "Dr Livingstone I presume?" (Stanley 411-412).

Stanley's legendary greeting of his hero and their mythical meeting are completely distorted in Heart of Darkness. It is hard to disagree with Jacques Darras that Conrad's novel "undertakes a complete heartbreaking investigation of Stanley's cliché" (Darras 63). Conrad's shocking experience allows him to deconstruct the Western myths and to construct new ones to illustrate the different reality he actually came across in the Congo, as well as the extent to which he was disappointed in the explorers he used to admire.

For a better comparison of Stanley with Kurtz, it would be interesting to reverse Stanley's quest for Livingstone. We can assume that Livingstone is Marlow in search of Stanley/Kurtz. Marlow's humanitarian attitudes are akin to those of Livingstone; the latter always rises against the natives' sufferings, and so does Marlow. We have already mentioned Livingstone's conviction that he was entrusted with a divine mission in Africa. Marlow, for his part, is described as "something like a lower sort of apostle" (HD 18). Moreover, as subjects of the Empire, Livingstone and Marlow never question their presence in Africa, they wanted to go there and they did, both of them enjoy immunity and the status of "Civis Romanus sum" which is, in Darras's terms, "St Paul's reply to those who came to arrest him. He was telling them that a citizen of Rome enjoyed immunity from arrest. In the nineteenth-century, British citizens enjoyed a similar status in foreign countries" (Darras 55). In his search, Livingstone/ Marlow advances towards Stanley/Kurtz, but the image of the "great man" he has built in his mind collapses at the end; Livingstone/ Marlow meets with a ruthless monster, with a Stanley/ Kurtz. Stanley's savagery towards the natives is perhaps unique

compared with the other explorers; he is the true colonialist whose methods and deeds are blatant and unmasked by the rhetoric of progress. Robert I Rotberg reports in Africa and its Explorers that a report to the Foreign Office after Stanley's expedition (1874-1877) says: "If the story of this expedition were known, it would stand unequalled in the annals of African discovery for the reckless use of power that modern weapons placed in his hands over natives who never before heard of a gun fire" (Rotberg 242).

At the end of Heart of Darkness, Marlow pays tribute to the man who has cried "The Horror! The Horror!" and describes him as a "remarkable man" (HD 89). Moreover, even though he reduces Kurtz to no more than a "voice", he insists that Kurtz's voice is not any voice but one that "could speak English to [him]" (HD 71). Both of them are united by Britishness and Europeanness since "all Europe contributed to the making of Kurtz" (HD 71). This is the justification of the two men's complicity; there is a common job to do in Africa. Marlow pretends to lie to the Intended out of humanitarianism but he does it "out of obedience to a bigger lie" (Darras 67) to secure Europe's plans in Africa, he himself describes his sidedness with Kurtz as "an act of unconscious loyalty" (HD 105). The blind complicity between Marlow and Kurtz is similar to that between Livingstone and Stanley. Even though Livingstone disagrees with Stanley's cruel methods in dealing with the natives, he still does not denounce him openly (Rotberg 242). This is because Kurtz is the lost-then-found-son who is needed to help his surrogate father and carry on his plans; both are needed by the Empire.

KURTZ / HODISTER

In the manuscript of Heart of Darkness Conrad wrote first Klein, then he substituted it with Kurtz (Baines 117). This not only strengthens the evidence that the novel was actually based on a true story but it has also led some critics to insist that the story is entirely Klein's. George Antoine Klein, a twenty-nine year old French agent employed by the Société Anonyme Belge (SAB), was rescued by Conrad but died on the author's steamer, the Roi des Belges. This episode provided Conrad's critics with the justification for the argument that Marlow's "culminating point of [his] experience" (HD 11) and his meeting with Kurtz is actually Conrad's one with Klein. However, this is shown to be at least partly untrue by Conrad's biographer and critic Norman Sherry in Conrad's Western World.

Sherry acknowledges Conrad's meeting with Klein but he does not consider it to be so important as to inspire such an episode as the pathetic one between Kurtz and Marlow, because Klein was not that fantastic Kurtzian figure, and there was no moral dilemma to lead Conrad to side with Klein. Moreover, while Kurtz was buried "in a muddy hole"(HD 100), Klein was given proper burial. For Sherry, Klein is the source for the fictional Kurtz only in his job, his illness, death, and place of burial. Kurtz's sensational characteristics, however, would seem to stem from someone else whom Conrad heard about during his journey, and of whom Sherry says:

> If a man ever approximating to Kurtz in [his] attributes existed in the Congo during 1890, Conrad must surely have heard of him. And there was such a man. Klein was [...] working under the orders of a much more

> important agent. This man was Arthur Eugene Constant Hodister, and his character, charisma and success, as I have been able to re-discover them, suggest that he was a highly successful commercial agent and explorer, a man of wide abilities, and a man of principles who was definitely on the side of virtue. He had, moreover, influential friends in Europe, and he did go far in terms of his career. I do not think that Conrad ever met Hodister, but I believe that he heard of him, through gossip and hearsay, much the way he records Marlow's hearing of Kurtz [...] (Sherry 95).

When Conrad was in the Congo (1890-1891), Hodister had already achieved a reputation as a successful agent and a collector of ivory. The gossip Conrad heard about Hodister's exploits must have ranged from jealousy to admiration. This provided the author with a technique for the presentation of Kurtz through hearsay. The hatred between Marlow, the manager, and Kurtz is based on the real rivalry between, first, Camille Delcommunes and Conrad himself (Sherry 103). Moreover, Sherry reports that Hodister was highly influential in Europe; this is revealed in Heart of Darkness when Marlow hears a secret conversation between the manager and his uncle, the leader of the Eldorado Exploring Expedition. The uncle is worried about Kurtz's influence in Europe. As he tells his nephew: "[...] the danger is in Europe; but there before I left I took care to..." (HD 46). In Heart of Darkness, Marlow's job was secured by his aunt, Marguerite Paradowska, who was also a good friend of A. J. Wauters, one of Hodister's patrons in Europe. This led Sherry to deduct that "as a result of the influence of [Conrad's] aunt, Wauters could be considered Conrad's patron also" (Sherry 104), and Camille Delcommunes must have regarded both Conrad and Hodister as employees of the same administration and men.

Another important characteristic that Conrad borrowed from Hodister is eloquence. Hodister was very close to the natives who adored him (Sherry 103),

and he even took a native wife with whom he had children. In Heart of Darkness Marlow reports that the native chiefs "would crawl [before Kurtz]"(HD 83), who has also taken a native mistress. In addition, Hodister was said to be a man of "high principle" (Sherry 104) and Kurtz is presented as "a torch bearer." Nevertheless, both Hodister and Kurtz eventually fell victim to their unlimited aspirations and to the very environment they thought they dominated. Hodister was killed in a revolt by the Arabs with whom he was supposed to be on friendly terms, and Kurtz is destroyed by the wilderness that took on him "a revenge for the fantastic invasion" (HD 83).

No evidence has been found that Conrad actually met Hodister, but even if he did not, he must have come close to him and heard enough of the exploits of the agent, who might have served as a design for Kurtz. The agent's success and fate are telescoped for Marlow's narrative. Kurtz is Hodister in his achievements, courage, audacity, and ultimate downfall. Kurtz's tragedy is not due to a revolt at the Inner Station. Conrad introduced changes in the dramatization of his character's death to suit his treatment of man's egotistical nature and suppressed instincts that lead to downfall when released. It is this that Conrad might have referred to as "the sombre theme."

[1] Conrad says of Sir Leopold McCllinck's The Voyage of the Fox in the Arctic Seas which was published in the year when Conrad was born: ''There could hardly have been imagined a better book for letting in the breath of the stern romance of polar exploration into the existence of a boy [...] The great spirit of the realities of the story sent me off on the romantic explorations of my inner self; to

the discovery of the taste of poring over maps...'' Conrad, Joseph. ''Geography and some Explorers'' Last Essays London: Dent, 1924. 229-230

[2] Kristeva, Julia. Desire in Language: A Semiotic Approach to Literature and Art. Trans. Thomas Gora, Alice Jardine, Leon S. Roudiez. Ed. Leon S. Roudiez. New York: Columbia UP, 1980. Kristeva states that ''Le terme d'intertextualité désigne cette transposition d'un (ou plusieurs) systeme(s) de signes en un autre.'' La Révolution du Langage Poetique. Paris: Seuil, 1974. 60

Chapter Two

Heart of Darkness: absorption of other texts

Just as Heart of Darkness reads as of mosaics drawn from factual experiences, it also weaves in a variety of details drawn from the author's reading. Conrad's novella carries with it many narratives: it sends us back to the Romans and the crusades. A vast literature was certainly absorbed by Conrad before he wrote his novel. Given the complexity that characterizes Kurtz, he cannot simply be the outcome of Conrad's encounters with real personnages in Africa. Kurtz is endowed with other aspects that lift him higher than a mere ivory trader or station chief. Robert Burden writes in The Critics Debate: Heart of Darkness (1991) that after

> Conrad had sent off the manuscript of Part One to Blackwood's Magazine claiming that the story was almost finished, he then claims that the thing had grown on him [...I and " the poor chap" becomes the hollow man. By the final scene with the intended it would be hard to claim that the subject is still criminality and inefficiency" (Burden 7).

Marlow first asks the question "who is Kurtz" to the chief accountant at the outer station, there he learns that Kurtz is "a first class agent" (HD 27). After that, the brickmaker informs Marlow that Kurtz is "a prodigy [...] an emissary of pity, and science, and progress [...]" (36). Later, Marlow is told that Kurtz is "a universal genius" (103): a painter, a musician, a journalist, a poet, and that he could have been a politician, "an extremist" (104). Kurtz is a multi-dimensional character, and Marlow's difficulties in defining him are partly due to the many intertexts at work in the novel. An intertext is, according to Gérard Genette, the presence of one or more texts that intersect in a given text and they help the reader understand the allusions, analogies, and signification of a literary work. Indeed, a

writer may borrow from contemporary sources in fiction and then transform his raw material into something different.

However, borrowing is not only done from fiction; Julia Kristeva maintains that a writer borrows from at least three sources without citing them because they form the ambient culture: these are the mythical, scientific and political texts. In addition, Kristeva distinguishes three dimensions in a text. These are: "[the] writing subject, addressee, and exterior texts" [1](Sémiotiké 332). The text is defined both horizontally and vertically. Horizontally, the text belongs to the writing subject and the addressee. Vertically, it is oriented towards the previous literary corpus because any literary work includes **absorption** of other texts and takes on meaning only in its relationship with them. Literature is then considered as a whole cloth wherein each literary work is an intertext, i.e. a thread or a stitch. Roland Barthes illustrates this point in his distinction between text and work:

> The text is like language [...] it is structured but decentered, without closure [...] the text is plural [...] it achieves plurality of meaning, an irreducible plurality. The text is not coexistence of meanings but passage, traversal, it answers not to an interpretation, liberal though it may be, but to an explosion, a dissemination. The text's plurality does not depend on the ambiguity of its contents, but rather on what weave it (etymologically the text is a cloth; textus, from which text derives means "woven"). Every text, being itself the intertext of another text, belongs to the intertextual. [...] The quotations from which a text is constructed are anonymous, irrecoverable, and yet already read: they are quotations without quotation marks (Barthes 76).

In this section, we shall consider Heart of Darkness as a text woven into a variety of intertexts. The question is why such a proliferation of voices? Are we to read the text as a disconnected collage

of voices? Or is this simply a deliberate and disruptive practice aimed to create a unique and rich narrative, which with its multiplicity of voices, obliges the reader to acquire new reading habits and discard the hitherto linear ones?

Conrad has made use of many classic texts and voices. But he does not regard these as unquestionable sacred authorities; rather, he subverts and deconstructs them; then he transforms and rebuilds them into new material. In a resourceful study, A Preface to Joseph Conrad (1982), Cedric Watts discusses the various discourses and influences that shape Conrad's writings. Among them are: Polish literature, the influence of French novelists like Maupassaut and Flaubert, in addition to some nineteenth century discourses and ideas, including Darwinism, psychology, religion, and philosophy.

Indeed, the detection of the various borrowings at work in Heart of Darkness would exceed our present concern; therefore, we shall deal with only those borrowings that can help us appreciate the ironies of the story, its multiple meanings, the parallels and analogies with other texts. To this end, we have elected to examine Kurtz's greed and subsequent tragic destiny in the light of those of Christopher Marlowe's Dr. Faustus. Also given the importance of Conrad's religious lexis, we cannot but compare Marlow's journey with the quest for the Holy Grail. Another comparison worth pursuing is that of Heart of Darkness to H.G. Wells' The Island of Dr Moreau with particular reference to the two writers' interest in human nature. Finally, we shall consider Kurtz's "superman-ness" in the light of Friedrich Nietzsche's Will to Power and general philosophy as expounded in Thus Spoke Zarathustra.

Kurtz: A Faustian destiny

The presentation of Kurtz, his extraordinary achievements, and his ultimate downfall parallel those of Christopher Marlow's Dr Faustus. Both characters are presented as intellectuals of renown: Faustus is an admired doctor, and Kurtz is depicted as a "universal genius" (HD 103). However, both of them desire more than they actually have: Faustus sacrifices his soul to Lucifer so as to have whatever he wanted for twenty-four years. Kurtz for his part goes farther and farther into the jungle: his unlimited greed leads him to preside over " some midnight unspeakable rites" (HD 71) and to become a self- proclaimed god for 'savage' tribesmen. Kurtz's midnight ritual recalls Faustus's appointment with Mephistopheles to sign his contract at midnight. "Go and meet me in my study at midnight" (DF 11), says Faustus to Mephistopheles. Marlowe's hero indulged in "magic and concealed arts" (DF 5) and Kurtz resorted to "unsound methods," according to the manager of the Outer Station.

The manager is described by Conrad's Marlow as "a papier- mâché Mèphistopheles" (HD 37). It is the first time in the novel that Conrad hints at Marlowe's play by comparing the ruthless villainous manager to Mephistopheles. Let it be recalled here that names, titles, sub-titles, notes and epigraphs are official indicators of intertextuality according to Genette. This can be best illustrated by Conrad's attribution of the playwright's name to the narrator Marlow. It is as if Conrad wanted to write his own version of the Faustus legend. Intertextually speaking, a writer does not need to mention the material he is referring to, the

reader is invited to recognize it thanks to allusion, which is the intertextual rhetorical figure par excellence. "L'allusion suffit à introduire dans le texte centreur un sens, une représentation, une histoire, un ensemble idéologique sans qu'on ait besoin de les parler [...] Le texte-origine est là, virtuellement present, porteur de tout sens sans qu'on ait besoin de l'énoncer" (Poétique 266). For instance, when Marlow says: "I take it, no fool ever made a bargain for his soul with the devil [...]" (HD 70), we are obviously meant to think of Faustus.

In addition to his Faustian dimension, Kurtz is also distinguished by his Luciferian claim to challenge God. Lucifer was once the brightest angel, his pride and jealousy brought about his banishment from Heaven to Hell, where he became king. Kurtz also wanted to outgrow the powers that had made him create his own empire. Kurtz, who controls both Europeans and natives alike, acts as a God in a hell-like environment. The African setting is distorted and takes on a symbolic meaning. Statements such as "to fire into a continent," "faithless pilgrims" in addition to the "palpable" darkness are all suggestive of Hell; where Kurtz "has taken a high seat among the devils of the land" (HD 70). Phonetically, Kurtz suggests "cursed," eternally damned.

Faustus's soul flew during his lethal kissing of the gorgeous Helen of Greece. Similarly, Kurtz embraced the wilderness that is embodied in the Black mistress. The wilderness also takes on the form of a malevolent character that consumes and destroys Kurtz because he strives to possess her. As Marlow puts it: "But the wilderness had found him out early, and had taken on him a terrible vengeance for the fantastic invasion" (HD 83). Moreover, Kurtz shares with Faustus his terrible death: both die in torment and remorse as they realize the absurdity and

unworthiness of their hazardous undertakings. In the end, Faustus confesses his sins to his friends and meets a pitiful death. Similarly, just before he dies, Kurtz is also vindicated by the terrifying realization of his horrifying experience, which he sums up with his last cry: "The Horror! The Horror!" (HD 100).

In his presentation of Kurtz, Conrad seems to have mainly aimed at showing Man's capacity for evil and that once man goes beyond permitted aspirations, tragedy is inevitable.

Marlow / Kurtz: The search for the Holy Grail

Marlow's quest for Kurtz has been subject to various readings. In addition to being a journey into the depths of the self, it can also be interpreted as the reenactment of the medieval Grail quest wherein Marlow follows the archetypal model with its conventional obstacles. The traditional illumination at the end of the legend is deformed in Heart of Darkness; instead of light, darkness prevails.

The Holy Grail is "The cup or chalice traditionally used by Christ at the Last Supper [...] Joseph of Arimathea [was supposed to have] preserved the Grail and received into it some of the blood of the Saviour at the Crucification. He brought it to England, but it disappeared." [2] In his novel, Conrad purposefully applies the language of the spiritual to the material, the Grail takes on the form of the ivory, which is venerated by all the "faithless pilgrims", "the word ivory rang in the air, in murmurs and in sighs" (HD 50). The pilgrims are ironic replicas of the Knights who set out to find the Holy Grail in the medieval legend. Despite his misgivings, Marlow perseveres in his quest for Kurtz, actually he is the only one

who has the privilege of talking to Kurtz. In the Grail legend when the Grail is "approached by anyone not of perfect purity it vanished."[3]

Considering the hardships that Marlow and the pilgrims encountered on their way to meet Mr Kurtz, the latter's appearance can be considered as a resurrection. As Jacques Darras has already pointed out: "Kurtz's covering has fallen off, and his body emerged from it pitiful and appalling as from a winding-sheet" (HD 85). Kurtz's emergence as from a winding sheet recalls Christ's appearance over the Holy Grail, but Christ sheds his blood to give life to his disciples while Kurtz is his negative image. Christ represents life, while Kurtz stands for death: he is seen as a skeleton by Marlow, who "could see the cage of his ribs all astir, the bones of his arm waving" (HD 85). The transubstantiation process is deformed in Heart of Darkness; Kurtz's human substances vanish and leave room for an object since his head has taken on the form of an ivory ball. As Marlow remarks: "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" (HD 69).

In Conrad and Religion (1988), Lester John investigates two aspects of Conrad's use of religious vocabulary that deserve close scrutiny: "[…] his use of the demonic and its natural prey, the soul" (Lester 87). Demonic associations are extensively used, especially with Kurtz, the manager, and the faithless pilgrims. They are the inmates of a demonic land, as is suggested by the very title of the novel. The demonic setting in Heart of Darkness comports well with Northrop Frye's definition of the demonic world as opposed to the apocalyptic one[4] (Frye

150). Moreover, Conrad's above-mentioned characters are all referred to as devils; the word devil as used by Marlow throughout the narrative is mainly associated with greed and rapacity. Kurtz is the worst of all devils because he is the representative of Europe's rapacity at large. The demonic imagery is also used to describe the deviation from the so-called "Civilizing Mission."

Deformation, which is one of the chief characteristics of intertextuality, is extensively used in Heart of Darkness. The "Civilizing Mission" and the colonial enterprise are shown to be as hollow as Kurtz. The distortion of the Christian myths shows the extent to which the Christian mission in Africa has become a vulgar material venture. Kurtz, the supposedly best representative of Christianity, has been reified into an "ivory ball". At the end of the novel the reader does not meet the saviour but a monster ready "to swallow all the air, all the earth, all the men before him" (HD 85-86).

Kurtz / Dr Moreau: Between evolution and degeneracy

The nineteenth century witnessed great discoveries and improvements in scientific knowledge. Progress and the change it operated in society influenced fiction writers who responded deeply to their changing environment. Some of them did not wait to see the atrocities of the world wars or the use to which science was put to realize that, in fact, scientific progress does not mean advance of civilization, and that man's happiness depends only partly on science but very much on his humanity. This is mainly dramatized in H.G Wells' The Island of Dr Moreau (1896), which influenced Heart Darkness . In both novels, the main

characters, Moreau and Kurtz, the representatives of science, end up as degenerates, and any process of evolution is irretrievably coupled with a counter process of regression, i.e. of degeneracy. Conrad read Wells's novel, and was on friendly terms with the author, whom he considered a " very original writer with [an] astonishing imagination."[5]

To deal properly with the idea of degeneracy, we need to place it in its epistemic environment: both Wells and Conrad published their novels when Darwinism was in its heyday. Both of them were sensitive to evolutionary theory (it is reproduced in their novels). However, they also subverted Darwinism to suggest that man does not always improve for the best, he can also regress and lose his human characteristics.

In The Origin of Species (1859), Charles Darwin denies to man the status of being a divine creation. He argues that man is the result of gradual evolution in accordance with natural laws and struggle for life entails the survival of the fittest. This evolution is fictionally translated into The Island of Dr Moreau, wherein Moreau, a surgeon, is convinced that since man descends from animals, he can transform beasts into men by thanks to surgery. He somehow succeeds, since his " Beast people" look like men; they can speak and abide by Moreau's laws. However, after some time, Moreau's humanoids regress to their initial state and, in an unexpected rebellion, kill their master.

The influence of Darwin's theory on Conrad can be read in Heart of Darkness through the use of a very peculiar spatial dimension. The story is set in the African jungle wherein struggle, is set on many levels. It is first between the

whites themselves, and, second, between the African natives and the Europeans. The latter seem to be the fittest, since Kurtz contrived a tight hold on the natives.

Nevertheless, since it is in his tradition to relish paradox, Conrad is also anti-Darwinian. He subverts Darwin's theory and directs it against the seemingly fittest Europeans. Marlow notees that the African natives fit with their setting and that they "wanted no excuse for being there" (HD 20). The Whites, however, survive in the jungle only as ruthless creatures like the manager, the pilgrims, and Kurtz, or as ludicrous creatures like the brickmaker who dresses up in the jungle. The brickmaker's suffocation, as he lacks air to breathe, suggests that he is smothered by the environment, which is not his. Conrad apparently mocks any proud idea of white superiority by asserting that civilization can, in fact, be only skin deep and just sophisticated savagery. Moreover, evolutionism is subverted in both Wells and Conrad to suggest that there is evolution, but toward the horror; the forces of regression outweigh those of civilisation, as is illustrated in Moreau's and Kurtz degeneracy.

The aforementioned feature is investigated by Max Nordau in his pseudo-scientific book Degeneration (1905). The author claims that "there are some geniuses of super abundant power whose privilege consists in the possession of one or other extraordinarily developed faculty, without the rest of their faculties falling short of the average standard" (23). These, Nordau calls the "higher degenerates" who may show a "gigantic bodily stature or a disproportionate growth of particular parts [and may have] some mental gift exceptionally developed at the cost [...] of the remaining faculties" (23). Even if the protagonist in Wells does not exhibit any physical particularities of degeneracy, his genius is

one of a "higher degenerate." Moreau is presented as "a prominent and masterful physiologist, well-known in scientific circles for his extraordinary imagination and his brutal directness in discussion. [He] was known to be doing valuable work on morbid growths" (81). Moreau moves to an Island to conduct his research. Prendick, the narrator, is shocked by the doctor's egotistical and inhuman attitudes towards his suffering victims, but the latter is interested only in finding out the limits of plasticity in a animals and humans. Egoism is also one of the characteristics of a degenerate according to Nordau.

Nordau corresponded with Conrad and he may have provided him with elements used in the presentation of Kurtz.[6] Kurtz accords with the description of a "higher degenerate" both mentally and physically. Even if Kurtz is figuratively named short, since the name means short in German, he is disproportionately high, "he looked at least seven feet long" (HD 85) to Marlow. Mentally, Kurtz' soul is ''mad'' (HD 95). Second, he is highly gifted. He is "a universal genius" (HD 100) but his especially developed gift is that of eloquence. Marlow reports that he has "never imagined Kurtz as doing but as discoursing" (HD 67). When his boat was attacked, Marlow was afraid that "the gift had vanished. [...] I was cut to the quick at the idea of having lost the inestimable privilege of listening to the gifted Kurtz" (HD 68-69). Marlow is also informed that Kurtz "electrified large meetings [and] he would have been a splendid leader of an extreme party" (HD 104).

However, the abnormally gifted Dr Moreau and Kurtz end in failure: Moreau is killed by the humanoids he thought he dominated and, Kurtz, who, thanks to his eloquence also acted as a god, is eventually caught by the very wilderness he wanted to possess. The enterprises of the two men turn out to be

vain and hollow. Dr Moreau and Kurtz are doomed to fail because degenerates, as Nordau argues "are leading men along the paths they themselves have found to new goals; but these goals are abysses or waste places" (24).

Nordau further maintains that, as leading men, degenerates are "guides to swamps [...] those who believe in them are hysterical [they are] predominantly females than males". These are characterized by "an extraordinary emotionalism [and a] disproportionate impressionability of their psychic centers" (13). This definition finds its illustration in Heart of Darkness. Marlow's aunt, Kurtz's Intended and the Russian harlequin belong to this category of easily impressed and emotional people. For example, the Intended is not only impressed by Kurtz, but her whole life seems to depend on him. She believed in him, in his words, and, after his death, she wanted "something to live with" (HD 110). Her hysterical attitude somehow makes Marlow tell her lies. He tells her just what she wants to hear: that the last word Kurtz pronounced was her name.

It is mainly at the end that Conrad's and Wells' novels meet: both narrators confess the same deception as far as man's nature is concerned. Degeneracy is extended to all men in Europe in the epilogue of The Island of Dr Moreau. The narrator is terrified to find out that the humans he meets resemble Dr Moreau's humanoids. In this connection, it is worth quoting him at length:

> I could not persuade myself that the men and women I meet were not also another, passably human, Beast People, animals half- wrought into the outward image of human souls, and that they would presently begin to revert... [...] I would go out into the streets to fight with my delusion, and prowling women would mew after me, furtive craving men glance jealously at me, weary pale workers go coughing by me, with tired eyes and eager paces like wounded deer dripping blood...[...] Then I would turn aside into some chapel, and

> even there, such was my disturbance, it seemed that the preacher gibbered Big Thinks even as the Ape Man has done; or into some library and there the intent faces over the books seemed but patient creatures waiting for prey. Particularly nauseous were the blank expressionless faces of people in trains and omnibuses; they seemed no more my fellow-creatures that dead bodies would be, so that I did not dare to travel unless I was assured of being alone. And ever it seemed that I, too was not a reasonable creature, but only an animal tormented with some strange disorder (140-141).

This ending recalls that of Heart of Darkness, where Marlow is fed up with the humans because they fail to realize Kurtz's perdition. Like Wells' narrator, Marlow pays for the experience he has gone through; he has gained experience, but he has lost his innocence. Marlow's nausea is quite explicit:

> I found myself back in the sepulchral city resenting the sight of people [...] their bearing, which was simply the bearing of common place individuals [...] was offensive to me like the outrageous flaunting of folly in the face of a danger it is unable to comprehend. I had no particular desire to enlighten them, but I had some difficulty in restraining myself from laughing in their faces, so full of stupid importance (HD 102).

The intertextual affinities between Wells' and Conrad's novels can be found not only at the level of themes and characters, but also at the level of narrative structure. Both stories take place in remote settings wherein the narrators witness the ultimate and decisive moments in the protagonists' lives. Moreover, the same mysterious atmosphere envelops both narratives; Kurtz is an undecipherable enigma for Marlow, and so is Doctor Moreau for Prendick. When the latter tries to retrieve back Doctor Moreau's full name, he first says: "Dr Moreau Hollows" and when he does remember, it is "Moreau Horrors." The phonetic contiguity of the

terms "Hollows" and "Horrors" can allow us to infer that there is a plausible semantic equation between the two. Dr Moreau's morbid and useless experiments on his beasts make of him both a hollow and a horrible man. It is precisely in these terms that Kurtz mainly existed for Marlow; Kurtz is " hollow at the core" (HD 83) and just before he dies, Kurtz sums up his existence and his wasted enterprises into the ultimate and shocking cry: "The Horror! The Horror!" (HD 100).

Kurtz: the Nietzschean hero

Close scrutiny of Conrad's novel allows for the discovery of multiple meanings, which usually reveal the dark side of something related to the human experience. Heart of Darkness is just as rich in themes as the nineteenth century was rich in philosophical theories. Conrad seems to have made use of the philosophical discourses of the time, but he subverts and transforms them. We have already hinted at the extent to which Heart of Darkness reflects Darwin's evolutionism and its counter process, degeneracy. However, Kurtz can not be seen as a degenerate; only, because he is also a good example of a man with a superior mind. In this respect, he could be likened to the Nietzschean overman. With Friedrich Nietzsche (1844 – 1900) the Darwinian struggle takes on another aspect namely that of power and superiority. For him, the stage of being human should be outgrown to that of an overman.[7] In this respect, Heart of Darkness mirrors many aspects of Nietzsche's philosophical and shares intertextual affinities with Thus Spoke Zaratustra.

Nietzsche applies to the individual the same criteria he applies to a state. The individual is seen as microcosm of a state. Consequently, it is perfectly legitimate for the individual to aspire to be the best and the strongest according to Nietzsche's central concept: the will to power. The philosopher claimed that the only drive in all men is power for its own sake. The will to power can readily be applied to Kurtz's motivations. Kurtz's change from an "emissary of light" to a figure intent exclusively on power can be seen as positive. He is seen by both his enemies and admirers as a "special being"(HD 36). He is a poet, a musician, a painter, a journalist while sending in huge quantities of ivory, and his eloquence is unparalleled. The will to power is clearly evoked in Kurtz's report to the "International Society for the Suppression of Savage Customs". Kurtz, who came to Africa as a "civilizer", writes: "We Whites must necessarily appear to them (the natives) in the nature of Supernatural beings

[...] by the simple exercise of our will we can exert a power for good practically unbounded" (HD 71-72). Another indication of Kurtz as an overman and the failure of the other agents to understand him is the harlequin's confession to Marlow: "you can't judge him [Kurtz] as you would an ordinary man" (HD 80).

According to Nietzsche, once the individual discards traditional and religious values, he can rebuild new ones, since values should always be deconstructed and rebuilt.[8] The fictional Kurtz finds himself acting adequately in this Nietzschean environment. Kurtz's desire for more power is but the logical consequence of the greed of the whole of colonial Europe. Moreover, his hair-raising audacities do make of him a strong-willed being above the norm; even on his last legs, he informs Marlow that he "had immense plans [and he was] on the

threshold of great things"(HD 94). Kurtz belongs to the category of men whom Zarathustra says: "je ne les ai pas nourris avec des légumes qui gonflent, mais avec une nourriture de guerriers, une nourriture de conquérants: j'ai éveillé de nouveaux désires" (353- 354).

Another important aspect that Kurtz shares with Zarathustra is solitude. Zarathustra withdraws from society and goes to the mountain, where he spends ten years enjoying solitude. He then decides to come back to men to teach them how to become overman. As he fails in his self -imposed mission, he again returns to solitude. Kurtz seems to be lonelier because Zarathustra, at least, has his eagle and serpent, and even if he is not understood, he is still acting within his community. Kurtz had nobody and nothing to remind him of who he was. For instance, Faustus had the Good Angel and the old man, but Kurtz was alone in the wilderness that drew him and destroyed him in the end.

Conrad seems to have deliberately used the character of Kurtz to sustain the novel's central theme: that deep inside man, once restraint and civilisation are discarded, horror is the only thing that can be found at the core. Once man casts away social cultural inhibitions, the result is not the emergence of an overman but rather a hollow one. Nietzsche dug and looked deeper into his soul while the fictional Kurtz, whose soul "has gone mad", seems to end up just like the philosopher himself, i.e. sinking into madness. Kurtz looked deeper to the core of himself and he was shocked by the horror he saw. As Marlow says: "His was an impenetrable darkness. I looked at him as you peer down at a man who is lying at the bottom of precipice where the sun never shines"(HD 99).

The overman in Kurtz is destroyed by the jungle, which seems to be older than any civilization and more powerful than any overman. Marlow describes the wilderness as mocking Kurtz's achievements when he says:

> You should have heard him [Kurtz] say [...] My intended, my ivory, my station, my river, my - everything belonged to him. It made me hold my breath in expectation of hearing the wildness 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 (HD 70).

For Nietzsche "great wickedness, even, is preferable to weakness, because it gives ground for hope: where there is great crime there is also great energy, great will to power [...]" (195). That is, better an evil man than one whose goodness consists in not doing evil or in not being able to do evil. This is similar, to some extent, to Marlow's attitude towards Kurtz whom he admires despite his depravation and bestiality. The difference is that, for Nietzsche, "le mal est la meilleure force de l'homme" (329). Marlow, however, condemns Kurtz's evil deeds but, for him, Kurtz is redeemed by his judgement upon his soul and his knowledge and realization of evil before he dies. Marlow says: "better his cry –much better. It was an affirmation, a moral victory" (HD 101). It is as if Marlow inferred that the overman is he who realizes the evil in him.

Conrad seems to have subverted Nietzsche's passion for great men.[7] Kurtz's desire to be a god in Africa ends up in a soul "gone mad" and in proto-fascism as revealed in "exterminate all the brutes." Kurtz's recommendation can be considered a prophecy of twentieth century totalitarianism. Conrad (through Marlow) despises men like the manager, the pilgrims, but Kurtz's extraordinariness is not a solution. Maybe someone like Marlow can be the

alternative because he is not perfect but is equipped with humanitarian qualities that may inform the reader of Conrad's belief in social solidarity as the only means to redeem mankind. The question is whether Conrad is not just destroying the myth of Kurtz and substitute for it a new one: the myth of Marlow.

Conrad's transformation of the various heterogeneous materials accords with Robert Burden's remark that "the recognition of Heart of Darkness's undecidability is a problem for those who still talk of the text's unity" (Heart of Darkness 71). Conrad's novel is a good illustration that texts are not eternally unified wholes but instead contain a collage of conflicting discourses, which do not cohere in a single meaning. Marlow's narrative is composed of many narratives that inform us about Kurtz's origins ranging from the Bible up to the nineteenth century literature, psychology and philosophy. The diverse texts that Gérard Genette refers to as "une classe de textes"[9] do not function as separate parts but, rather, as a means that the writer used to deconstruct, transgress, transform and then reconstruct a new material out of the old ones.

Works cited

[1] "Pris à des textes mythiques [...] scientifiques [...] ou politiques [...] les prélèvements laissent voir l'engendrement à travers cette triple orientation qui ramène sur la page les trois lieux déterminant notre culture. Vestiges de livres désormais consomés et repris dans le texte [...]"Julia Kristeva, Semiotiké: Recherches pour une Sémanalyse. Paris: Seuil, 1969. 332

[2] "According to others it was brought from Heaven and entrusted to a body of knights who guarded it on top of a mountain [the Grail] appears to be a fusion of Christian legend and pre-Christian ritual origins [...] The first Christian Grail romance was that of the French TROUVERE Robert de Borron who wrote his Joseph d'Arimathie at the end of the 12th century, and it next became attached to the Arthurian legend." Brewer's Dictionary of Phrase Fable. 500

[3] Brewer's Dictionary of Phrase Fable. 500

[4] The apocalyptic world is characterized by: "[...] a straight road, the highway in the desert [...]" The demonic one is "[...] that one that desire rejects [it is characterized by] the labyrinth or maze, the image of lost direction, often with a monster at its heart like the Minotaur." Frye, Northrop. Anatomy of Criticism. Princeton: Princeton U P, 1957.

[5] Baines, Jocelyn. Joseph Conrad: A Critical Biography. New York: First McGraw–Hill Paper back Edition, 1967. 231 Later the two writers fell out because of the many differences between them. Wells' ideas were revolutionary while Conrad was a conservative. Conrad summed up the differences in a letter: "The difference between us, Wells, is fundamental. You do not care for humanity but think they are to be improved. I love humanity but know they are not." Baines 232

[6] Conrad was influenced by Max Nordau and Cesare Lombroso. He mainly applied the psychiatrist's physical and psychological characteristics of a degenerate in The Secret Agent.

[7] As Zarathurstra puts it: “je vous enseigne le Surhomme. L'homme est quelque chose qui doit être surmonté [...] Qu'est ce que le singe pour l'homme ? Un objet de risée ou une honte douloureuse. Et c’est ce que doit être l'homme aux yeux du Surhomme: un objet de risée ou une honte douloureuse.” Nietzsche, Friedrich. Ainsi Parlait Zarathoustra. France: Gallimard, 1963. 18

Chapter Three

Heart of Darkness as pretext

The themes and the techniques employed by Conrad inspired not only his contemporaries but also the generation of writers after him, including Evelyn Waugh and Graham Greene. For example, Waugh's Black Mischief and Greene's A Burnt-Out Case shed light on the anxiety of the modern world. These writers' tales remain in Marlow's words, ''[...] sombre enough [...] not very clear either. No not very clear. And yet [they] seem to throw a kind of light'' (HD 11).

The world as seen by Waugh and Greene is an absurd and infected one. Such a disillusioned view of life pervades all of their respective oeuvres. Like Conrad, Waugh and Greene depict their themes through the central metaphor of light and darkness, as we will demonstrate. This Conradian motif is transposed in Greene and Waugh: in Heart of Darkness, Marlow enthusiastically goes to Africa only to find there fellow westerners worshipping ivory. In Waugh's Black Mischief, Basil flees London's boring life, and he offers his services in an effort to 'modernize' Azania, in Africa, but he ends as a cannibal. In Greene, however, Querry achieves worldly success in Europe, becomes bored, then flees to seek peace in Africa. The term 'transposition' is first introduced by Julia Kristeva to refer to the transformations that a motif undergoes when it is transposed from one text to another. For Kristeva, intertextual relationships do not only include a simple reference to one or more texts, but they are involved in a process of absorption and transformation.

Given the impact that Conrad's novel enjoyed on other texts, we can assert that it belongs to the category of texts which Roland Barthes calls ''writerly'' as opposed to the ''readerly'' text. In this chapter, we will place emphasis on Waugh's and Greene's use of Heart of Darkness as a reference text or pretext. But there are also other

intertexts at work in Greene and Waugh, as intertextuality allows the drawing of additional links and analogies. It is therefore important to consider Conrad's influence upon Waugh and Greene for the representation of the world as an eternal wasteland.

A/ Evelyn Waugh, Black Mischief

Following Kurtz's footsteps, Basil tells Marlow's "unspeakable rites"

The story in Black Mischief (1932) is that of Basil Seal, a young middle class English-man, who is fed up with London. He decides to journey to Azania where Seth, an old African university friend, has just become the Emperor. Seth appoints Basil as the General Control of the "Ministry of Modernization." The setting of the novel is familiar enough to the author. It is Abyssinia (today's Ethiopia), which Evelyn Waugh visited as a newspaper correspondent at the time of Hail Sellassie's coronation. Waugh's hero, Basil Seal, also goes to Africa as a reporter just like the author himself. Thus we again have the same transmutation of facts into fiction, in Heart of Darkness.

Knowing that continuity is an aspect of intertextuality, Black Mischief provides a good example of an enlarged form of Heart of Darkness. The character of Bazil is to some extent a copy of Kurtz: factually, Basil undertakes a journey to Africa to 'civilize' and there he is, like Kurtz, subjected to an ever-accelerating cycle of horrors. However, it is not only Basil who can be considered as a Kurtz; Seth is equally entitled to such a description. Both Kurtz and Seth have drunk at the fountain of European civilization and both of them are ultimately 'poisoned' by the civilizing mission.

To make our comparisons clear, let us assume that Basil is Marlow in search of Seth/ Kurtz; the heightening of effect and the mysterious dark atmosphere that characterize Marlow's advance towards Kurtz are also found in Waugh's novel. This is especially shown through the typically Conradian motif of darkness. It is used to suggest the anti-thesis of civilization: ''Darkness descended upon a subdued city [...] the rain fell regularly and unremittingly so that it usurped the sun's place as the measure of time and the caravan drove on through darkness''(BM 127). The use of dark images establishes a terrifying atmosphere thus intensifying the dramatic movement; witness Basil's journey towards Seth's last abode. Moreover, when Seth meets Boaz, Seth's killer, he does so ''an hour after sunset''(BM 222) and the men he finds at the place ''had lit a fire, but only a small one, because they knew that at midnight the rain would begin again and dowse it''(BM 222). The frightful midnight shadows are there to remind us of Kurtz's ''unspeakable'' midnight rituals.

Basil finds the dead emperor and brings him back. He orders the natives to prepare a ceremony worthy of Seth's lifetime achievements; especially as he was, like Kurtz "shamefully abandoned." He asks them "to kill their best meat" they have. Irony reaches its ugly peak in the ceremony when Basil sits "with big chiefs" to eat the flesh of Prudence, his girlfriend. This shocking scene reminds us of the ring of shrivelled heads around Kurtz's den.

In Heart of Darkness, Marlow never actually shows us those ''unspeakable rites.'' It is as if the reader were sufficiently shocked by the story as it is that there is no need to add insult to injury. Evelyn Waugh leads the character of Basil Seal to the heart of the jungle to speak what Marlow has kept unsaid. In his well-researched article

''The Unspeakable Rites in Heart of Darkness'', Stephen A. Reid discusses Marlow's phrase in the light of James Frazer's study of the primitive man's view of the Man-God. Reid suggests that ''Kurtz's unspeakable rites and secrets concern (with whatever attendant bestiality) human sacrifice and Kurtz's consuming a portion of the sacrificial victim in order to renew his forces of a sick god and overcome death'' (45). In Black Mischief, Seth's grandfather Amourath is thought of as a man-god by his people, who swear by his name (BM 13). Moreover, Amourath ''had a wide reputation for immortality; it was three years before his ministers, in response to insistent rumours, ventured to announce his death to the people''(BM 12). Seth who comes to the throne after his grandfather's death inherits Amourath's god image and thus enjoys all the privileges pertaining to Divinity. We eventually come to know that he dies like ''other great men''(BM 224), i.e. as a god. However if the man-god is weakened, or if he shows any intention to leave-which is what happens with Seth, he runs the risk of being killed. As Frazer reports:

> The people of Congo believed [...] that if their pontiff the Chitomé were to die a natural death, the world would perish, and the earth, which he alone sustained by his power and merit, would immediately be anihilated. Accordingly when he fell in and seemed likely to die, the man who was destined to be his successor entered the pontiff's house with a rope or a club and strangled or clubbed him to death (309-310.)

Indeed, Marlow alludes to the subject matter right at the beginning of Heart of Darkness. His account of Fresleven's death is characteristic of that of a man god:

> It was only months and months afterwards, when I made the attempt to recover what was left of the body, that I heard the original quarrel arose from a misunderstanding about some hens. Fresleven -- that was the fellow's name, a Dane -- thought himself wronged somehow in the bargain, so he went ashore and started to hammer the chief of the village with a stick. Oh, it didn't surprise me in the least to hear this, and at the same time to be told that Fresleven was the gentlest, quietest creature that ever walked on earth on two legs. No doubt

> he was; but he had been a couple of years out there engaged in the noble cause, you know, and he probably felt the need at last of asserting his self-respect in some way. Therefore he whacked him, thunderstruck, till some man -- I was told the chief's son -- in desperation at hearing the old chap yell, made a tentative jab with a spear at the white man [...] Then the whole population cleared into the forest, expecting all kinds of calamities to happen [...] Afterwards nobody seemed to trouble much about Fresleven's remains [...] The grass growing through his ribs was tall enough to hide his bones. They were all there. The supernatural being had not been touched after he fell. And the village was deserted, the huts gaped back, rotting, all askew within the fallen enclosures. A calamity had come to it, sure enough. The people had vanished. Mad terror had scattered them, men, women, and children, through the bush, and they have never returned (HD 13-14).

At the end of Black Mischief, we come to learn that Amourath's son, Achon, is alive and that he is the legitimate heir to the throne. Therefore, Seth loses his power, and his divine status is threatened. We have an analogous situation in Heart of Darkness: Marlow's arrival with the steamer at the Inner Station obviously meant to the natives the departure of Kurtz, their man-god; this is why Marlow's boat is attacked. When Marlow asks the Harlequin about the reasons of the attack, the young Russian answers ''shamefacedly'': ''They [the natives] don't want him to go." This explains Basil's anxiety about Seth and his mad search for him. Basil, however, was powerless to do nothing at any rate. His anxiety is analogous to Marlow's: the latter is afraid that Kurtz would be killed if the natives found out that the boat was there to take him back. As Marlow puts it: "We are too late, he has vanished-the gift has vanished by means of some spear, arrow, or club" (HD 68). Kurtz on the other hand does not need relief from Marlow. Instead, he is disturbed by his presence because Kurtz's situation is different from that of an African man-god. Kurtz is aware that he is not a god and that he attends human

sacrifices only to perpetuate his status, which permits the easy destitution of the natives.

That ritual alluded to consists in "the sacrifice of a young and vigorous man, and the consuming of a portion of his body in order to appropriate the young man's strength" (Reid 48). Given Kurtz's unscrupulous practices and judging from the number of heads, which surround his hut, we can assume that he indulges in these rites quite frequently. As Frazer notes, the head of the sacrificed person "becomes his [the man-god's] fetish and he is bound to pay it honours" (383). Moreover, we may even deduce that Kurtz's desire to keep his godly position is the reason why he wants to kill the Russian; otherwise there is no justification for Kurtz's attitude towards someone who worships and even nurses him. The Russian harlequin is faithful to Kurtz, who "enlarged [his] mind"; the natives then might have seen in him a younger healthy white god, who could replace the sick Kurtz. The agitated Black Mistress would be urging Kurtz to sacrifice himself for the good of the tribe, if we consider what the Russian reports to Marlow:

> [...] she talked like a fury to Kurtz for an hour, pointing at me now and then. I don't understand the dialect of this tribe. Luckily for me, I fancy Kurtz felt too ill that day to care, or there would have been mischief. I don't understand [...] No, it's too much for me (HD 88).

Indeed, what happens to Kurtz is beyond the Harlequin's understanding, and Marlow, who is in the know, cannot tell us what he sees or what he is aware of. Instead, he intensifies his use of adjectives to convey the "moral shock" he experiences. Consider, for example, the scene in which, when Marlow does not find Kurtz in his hut, he then realizes that he has gone to the midnight ritual:

> I think I would have raised an outcry if I had believed my eyes. But I didn't believe them at first _ the thing seemed so impossible. The fact is I was completely unnerved by a sheer blank fright, pure abstract terror, unconnected with any ditinct shape of physical danger. What made this emotion so overpowering was _ how shall I define it (question m) _ the moral shock I received, as if something altogether monstrous and odious to the soul, had been thrust upon me unexpectedly (HD 92).

In a like manner, Basil is shocked by what he experiences, but only in the end. He seems to be forewarned on Marlow throughout the story; he is generally aware of the local practices and of how people react to a particular event. Basil foresees Seth's tragic end. That is why he urges the messenger to announce Achon's death so that Seth would be saved. Moreover, he is the one who warns the European community of Azania to make arrangements for defence in case the natives attacked. But he does not leave with them, he is constantly exposed to danger; yet like Marlow, he comes back safe and sound.

Later on, Basil changes from a Marlow into a Kurtz; the reader is somehow prepared for such a transmutation. Like Kurtz, who ''could electrify large meetings'' (HD 104), Basil is endowed with the gift of gab. Thus, given the fact that Basil is Seth's friend and at the same time enjoys control over the African natives, he is likely to be the new god after the death of both Achon and Seth. Now Basil is the one who gives orders:

> Next day they carried the body of the Emperor [Seth] to Moshu. Basil rode at the head of the procession. The others followed on foot [...] Basil sent on a runner to the chief saying: 'Assemble your people, kill your best meat and prepare a feast in the manner of your people. I am bringing a great chief among you' [...] The wise men of the surrounding villages danced in the mud in front of Bazil's camel, wearing livery of the highest solemnity [...] (BM 226).

Moreover, as the occasion requires "the highest man present to speak some praise of the dead" (BM 227), it is Basil who obliges, "speaking with confident fluency in the Wanda tongue" (BM 227). Basil is thus integrated into the tribe. He is not a mere spectator like Marlow; he is an actor. The ecstasy of the natives during the ceremony could only suggest that they are not worried as is the case when the man-god dies. Instead, everybody is happy and involved in the ritual of the passing away of one god and the ''enthronement'' of another; "Basil and Joab sat with the chiefs. They ate flat bread and meat, stewed to pulp among peppers and aromatic roots. Each dipped into the pot in rotation, plunging with his hands for the best scraps" (BM 227).

Like Kurtz, Basil indulges in the practice of the 'unspeakable rites' but, unlike his predecessor Basil, he comes to his senses when he realizes that he has taken part in a devilish banquet of which his girlfriend was the main course. It is as if Waugh led Basil into the heart of Africa to account for Marlow's ''blank terror.'' Thus Waugh completes, through dramatization, Conrad's linguistic smokescreen, what F.R. Leavis calls "the adjectival insistence upon an inexpressible and incomprehensible mystery" (204).

As we can see, for a candid reader Black Mischief reads only as a conflict between civilization and barbarism, but, for a reader of Heart of Darkness it is very much a continuity. There is in Waugh's text more than meets the eye. He inherited Conrad's use of irony and the sense of the absurd. Seth decides to abolish all the native customs only to have them replaced by the European ones, which are no better. The Secretary of the so-called "Ministry of Modernization" ends up a cannibal. Moreover, irony is present in every action of the novel, and some characters carry it even in their names. For instance, the ill-named Prudence is eaten in a cannibal feast by her

boyfriend. Much of the irony stems from the mixture of the real and the fantastic; so that pity and amusement are interwoven. For example, to express his love for Prudence, Basil tells her: "I'd like to eat you" and he eats her. About this black humor, Malcolm Bradbury has this to say:

> Waugh's power lay in a pure vision of comedy so complete that it became a compelling modern style, a style that seemed to spring fully-grown from the early fiction [...] Comedy is more than a mode of amusement, it is a vision of life in both its romantic possibility and its darkness. It is a high self-consciousness of style, of the play of form and language, and Waugh constructed it in its mode of modern satire, through a mixture of anarchistic delight in ephemeral follies and sheer indifference to externally imposed fictional and ideological orders (241).

Conrad's Heart of Darkness may be said to have inaugurated the twentieth century disillusionment, Waugh's tragi-comic characters such as Tony Last in A Handful of Dust and Basil Seal seem to provide a confirmation of Conrad's disenchantement. Waugh's heroes are inveterate globe-trotters, but their escapism never brings them any salvation. Waugh reactivates Heart of Darkness, whose meaning is then reinforced and extended.

B/ Heart of Darkness / A Burnt-Out Case (1960)

Kurtz, Querry: The Hollow Men

We have shown in Chapter One of this thesis the extent to which Heart of Darkness is a record of Conrad's experiences in Africa. He was contemporary with the explorers who were to serve as raw material for the character of Kurtz. Graham Greene, for his part, experienced the excitement of exploration through his reading as a child of Rider Haggard and Conrad's exotica. As he confesses in Ways of Escape: "We were a generation brought up on adventure stories who had missed the enormous disillusionment of the First World War, so we went looking for adventure" (37). Greene started writing under Conrad's influence. Visible Conradian traces can easily be discerned in Greene's very first novels through the intertextual resonance of the name Conrad Drover in It's a Battlefield and Kurtz in The Third Man. Later, Greene gave up reading Conrad because "[his] influence on [him] was so disastrous" (48), but this was all in vain as we will presently demonstrate.

Exploring Conrad's influence on the whole of Greene's oeuvre is an interesting undertaking that would, however, exceed our present concern. We will limit ourselves to A Burnt-Out Case (1960) since this novel is of relevance to our investigation. We will also include T. S Eliot, who is influenced by Conrad and with whom Greene shares many affinities. The hollowness theme, moreover, pervades Eliot's poetry and this substantiates our concerns in this chapter.

Greene, moreover, adopted a closer narrative procedure to Heart of Darkness. A Burnt-Out Case is built around of Parkinson's account of his meeting with Querry and of essential moments in Querry's history. The transposition is so accurate that even though Parkinson is different from Marlow, he is assigned the same role. In this

respect, we can apply to both novels what Gerard Genette says of Thomas Mann's Doctor Faustus and Faust's image: "in its entirety, [Mann's novel] constitutes a generic contract (of hypertext with transposition) of perfect accuracy" (Critical Inquiry 705).

A Burnt-Out Case is in fact built out of a variety of texts, ranging from the epigraph, a quotation from R.V.Wardelkar in A Pamphlet on Leprosy, to the various intertexts that form the novel's text. Among these intertexts are mainly: Conrad's, T.S. Eliot, and Albert Camus. These various intertexts result in a new text and a meaning that perhaps would not have existed without their fusion.

In what follows, we will see that the exploration of intertextuality in A Burnt-Out Case can contribute to a better understanding of the absorption and transformational processes that make a text. As opposed to source criticism and traditional views on originality, theories of intertextuality maintain that a writer produces his text only within the literary framework that preceded his and that the writer is always in a process of absorbing, transforming or transgressing. Greene incorporates into his text Heart of Darkness, Eliot's poetry, as well as other intertexts, such as Albert Camus' philosophy of the absurd. These intertexts result in new material but never as separated bits; they function as stitches of a cloth, and they carry with them their different respective worlds into the new text they weave. This is why, according to Kristeva, the allusion suffices to introduce in a given text many other intertexts.

"The waste land"

Echoes of Conrad's spatio-dimensional world pervade A Burnt-Out Case. The forest is reminiscent of the imposing jungle of Heart of Darkness. Marlow's

fascination with the overwhelming jungle is also there through Greene's minute description of the forest. The Priest who loves shooting (ABOC 10) is reminiscent of the pilgrims or the French warship on the coast "firing into the continent" (HD 20) in Heart of Darkness. Moreover, just as the jungle in Heart of Darkness is overpowering and takes a revenge on Kurtz, who sought to possess her, it also mocks Querry, who thought that he found peace in the leprosarium while it was his end.

Heart of Darkness depicts the corruption of man and his capacity to resist egoistic instincts in absence of "a watchful policeman or a butcher at the corner" (HD 68). By giving in to his bestial instincts and by practicing ''unspeakable rites"; proves himself to be as hollow as his mission is.

Unlike Kurtz, who comes to Africa to seek wealth and fame, Greene's Querry goes in search of his self; he leaves the world of glory and hides in a leprosarium, in the Congo. Querry leaves the modern world of which he has had enough. His rest does not last long, as the malevolent world finds him through Parkinson, a journalist. The story is that of Querry, a world famous architect and a Don Juan, who loses taste in the comfortable yet tedious life he leads in the Western world. He then flees to Africa just like Bazil Seal in Black Mischief. Querry takes rest in a leper colony for a short time. Then, accused of adultery, he is killed by Rycker, one of the local colonists.

Querry's boredom led him to experience hollowness, which is best illustrated in his words: "nothing, I want nothing [...] I suffer from nothing. I no longer know what suffering is. I have come to an end of all that too [...] to the end of everything" (ABOC 16). Querry's boredom made him feel empty and spiritually mutilated, just as the lepers suffer from physical mutilation. Querry sums up his bitter state of mind in the parable he tells Mary Ricker at the hotel: a clever man transgressed all existing

rules and became very rich. He made beautiful jewels for the king. He was happy at that time, but in the end he became bored and realized that his life lacked sense. He also, like Kurtz, who dreamed "of being greeted by kings at railway stations" realized that "there was no other King but his" (ABOC 154). Greene, moreover, seems to have transferred to his protagonist his belief that the African continent is far from the hypocrisy of political manipulations of the western world. This justifies Querry's escape from the civilized world. His dream of 'Pendele'; a word insistently used by Deo Gratias (his leper servant) is destroyed, first, by the arrival of Parkinson, who reminds him of his past, and, second, by Rycker, who accuses him of having an affair with his wife--Marie-- and eventually shoots him dead.

As we can see, it is during their stay in the African jungle that important transformations occur in the protagonists' personalities. Kurtz becomes a monster while Querry gains the reader's sympathy by his transformation into a 'simple man'. Querry realizes his loss of self-identity and strives to recover it. As he puts it: "I am looking after myself" *(*ABOC 135). Unlike him, Kurtz does not look for self-identity, since he does not need one; he is defined by the many political powers he represents. Querry feels that all human beings are empty like him. His loss of faith in humankind is explicit when he writes in his journal that "human beings are not [his] country [...] don't talk to me of human beings" (ABOC, 51). Human beings are, moreover, neither part of Marlow's nor Kurtz's "country" in Heart of Darkness; Kurtz is a fantastic figure intent only on power, and Marlow cannot identify himself with the human beings he meets in Brussels after his journey. Kurtz's and Querry's lives are absurd.

Conrad's disenchantment is documented in Heart of Darkness through the inherent absurdity that seems to characterize all of the characters' actions. "Droll thing

life is" (HD 100), writes Conrad; Kurtz's life is absurd in many ways indeed: he is a "universal genius", yet he dies 'hollow at the core.' It is Greene who extends and elaborates the heavy weight of nausea and disgust in a man's life. Querry's dying remark, "[t] his is absurd...or else" is reminiscent of Meursault's "un raisonnement absurde" in Camus' L'étranger. Querry's death is in fact absurd: he, a Don Juan, dies accused of an adultery he has not committed. Querry's long discussions about the meaninglessness of life with the atheist Dr Colin find their explanations in Camus' essays. Moreover, the nauseated Querry also invites a comparison with Camus' Jean Tarou in The Plague (1947).

The Hollow Men

In Heart of Darkness, Marlow concludes that Kurtz is "hollow at the core", and, in 1924, T.S Eliot publishes "The Hollow Men" with the epigraph "Mistah Kurtz--He dead"; Eliot takes up where Conrad stops. Being influenced by both Conrad and Eliot, Greene "concretizes" the hollowness theme in A Burnt-Out Case. This hollowness is mainly associated with the sense of emptiness and futility that seems to characterize the human condition in both Conrad and Eliot, and which Greene elaborates in all of his oeuvre. It is also related to the loss of vocation and the subsequent dramatic consequences in a character's life.[1]

In Conrad's novel, we learn about the hollowness of various characters right at the beginning with the notable exception of Kurtz and Marlow. There are the "faithless pilgrims", the ruthless manager, and the famous accountant, who keeps up appearances in the jungle. The news of Kurtz's hollowness is delayed until Marlow at last meets him. Instead of meeting with a 'universal genius', Marlow meets with an

international sham. Kurtz is a poet, a painter, a journalist, and a politician, but there is nothing under his eloquence, as Marlow eventually finds out. Conrad's protagonist succeeds in setting up himself as a deity among the African natives, but the natives are also just as blinded as their western counterparts. After Kurtz's death, Marlow notices that the pilgrims "buried something in a muddy hole" (HD 100). Similarly, Querry's architecture is not sustained by any moral, social or ideological sense. Like Kurtz, Querry reaches the pinnacles of success but inside he lacks depth and feels that he is mere shell. The inertia and the emptiness of the individual and the arid world around him are furthermore thoroughly elucidated in Eliot's 'The Hollow Men' to whom Querry belongs. As this passage illustrates:

> We are the hollow men
> We are the stuffed men
> Headpiece filled with straw. Alas!
> Our dried voices, when
> We whisper together
> Are quiet and meaningless
> As wind in dry glass
> Or rats' feet over broken glass
> In our dry cellar
> Shape without form, shade without colour,
> Paralysed force, gesture without motion; [...]
>
> This is the dead land
> This is cactus land
> Here the stone images are raised, here they receive
> The supplication of a dead man's hand
> Under the twinkle of a fading star. [...]
>
> In this valley of dying stars
> In this hollow valley...

It is noteworthy that another factor that seems always to be leading to hollowness in Conrad, Eliot, and Greene after them is the modern city, which is

depicted as a suffocating "hollow valley" in all three authors. The city as dealt with in Conrad's novels is a place of suffocation, corruption, and political conspiracy. In Heart of Darkness, Marlow, who feels "something ominous in the atmosphere" (HD 15) in the offices of Brussels' administration, gets his job after long bureaucratic procedures characteristic of city. Marlow furthermore announces the death of the city right at the beginning of the novel when he goes to visit the doctor, who is in charge of measuring his crania. Once there, Marlow notices that "[...] the house was as still as a house in a city of the dead [...]" (HD 16). Not only is the city dead in Conrad, but it is also a place that brings death to others: it is in cities like Brussels that the fate of the colonized is decided upon. Meditating on Kurtz, Marlow informs us that "all Europe contributed to the making of Kurtz" whose mother is "half-English", his father "half-French", he was "partly educated in England", and his name is German. Kurtz is also associated with the major colonial capital cities, since he is employed by the "International Society for the Suppression of the Savage Customs." Kurtz's professions are, moreover, ones that relate to the city; he is a musician, a journalist, a painter, and a politician, who could have been the leader of any "extremist party" thanks to his ability to "electrify large meetings" (HD 104). We should note that the manipulation of mass psychology for political purposes is proper to the city.

Conrad clearly points out at the shadow line between civilization and savagery. The city is civilized only because there is a butcher on one corner and a policeman on the other. Once removed to another setting, Kurtz becomes a sham and monster who wants "to devour all the earth" (HD 105). The only means to the

city to survive is through lies: Marlow hides the truth from the Intended so that she would always believe in the values that Kurtz represented in Europe. All this leads Marlow to describe Brussels as the "whited sepulchre."

After he had finished the writing of Under Western Eyes , Conrad stayed in Lac Leman to recover from a mental breakdown. It is interestingly the place where Eliot went to write "The Waste Land"; in which the death of the city is intensified. Critics have often argued that Eliot had succeeded to understand Conrad where Pound failed. The latter dissuaded his friend from using "Mistah Kurtz--he dead" as an epigraph for the "Waste Land", Eliot later used it for "The Hollow Men."We can infer that, Eliot's dead city has its roots in the materialistic one of Dickens and the ominous and sepulchral one of Conrad, "The Waste Land" somehow came as a confirmation of what Eliot's predecessors lamented in the city. Eliot's poem revolves in London, which functions as the culminating point of Western history and culture. London, like other past cities, has come to an inevitable end, characteristic of any civilization. As the poet puts it:

> Falling towers
> Jerusalem Athens Alexandria
> Vienna London
> Unreal

The materialism of the city led to the decay and decline of both humans and nature in Eliot, who writes that "he learned from Baudelaire how to use the city in his poetry to evoke a sense of urban hell in the modern world" (Lehan 130). However, with all his despair there is still some hope in Eliot at the end of the poem, whereas Conrad sees no hope. A possibility of regeneration is offered at the

end of "What the Thunder Said" provided there is a return to the church, inferring thus a return to the Augustian "City of God" as opposed to the modern urban one.

Greene extends even more this sense of nothingness that pervades in the city. It is, interestingly, in the leprosarium that Querry finds some peace of mind and feels regenerated, but the 'heart of darkness' puts an end to his happiness, as he is found by Parkinson.

The motif of the double

Ted Billy writes that Conrad "explored the doppelgänger motif in the tradition of Hoffmann, Poe, Dostoevsky, Stevenson, and Wilde" (10). Long before psychoanalysis undertook their elucidation and treatment, 'doubles' were already prolific in literature. 'Doubles' elucidate the divisions that may underlie man's personality. This is especially dealt with by Dostoevsky in The Double (1846). Let it be recalled here that both Conrad and Greene were very influenced by Dostoevsky. In a double narrative, two characters, who may seem different, end up as one; one is the facet of the other. This 'dédoublement' in a character's personality pervades Heart of Darkness and A Burnt-Out Case. In both novels, the main characters meet with somebody like them, someone in which they see the other side of their fragmented personalities. Doubles are in Sigmund Freud's terms:

> characters who are to be considered identical because they look alike. This relation is accentuated by mental processes leaping from one of these characters to another [...] Or it is marked by the fact that the subject identifies himself with someone else, so that he is in doubt as to which his self is [...] In other words, there is a doubling, dividing and interchanging of the self (The Uncanny 234).

Interestingly, the 'doubling' does not only characterize the characters in both novels but is also a dominant and an incontestable aspect in Conrad's and Greene's personalities. According to Sigmund Freud, the double may stand for "all the futures to which we still like to cling in fantasy, all strivings of the ego which adverse external circumstances have crushed" (The Uncanny 236).

Many of Conrad's and Greene's works invite a Freudian reading and can indeed find some of their explanations in the authors' respective persecuted childhood as well as their pathological personalities. Biographical sources tell us that, at the age of twenty-four, Conrad suffered from a severe mental breakdown, an illness that remained recurrent in the author's life. Moreover, Conrad was known for his extremely bad temper and melancholia. Conrad's 'dédoublement' is multileveled in his origins, profession and world view: he is a Pole who has been naturalized as a British subject, a master mariner as well as a fulfilled writer, a liberal and a conservative, "a moralist and a sceptic, a traditionalist and a modernist, pessimist and a humanist" (1).

Greene's doubling is akin to Conrad's. The young Greene had to undergo a psychoanalytic therapy. The epigraph that he chose for The Man Within (1929) is very suggestive indeed: "There is another man within me that's angry with me". This is revealing of Greene's lack of inner harmony. Throughout his life, he lived as a 'double' par excellence: he was both a skeptic and a moralist writer of catholic novels, a romantic and a realist. Greene's dualism is clearly transferred into his characters. These highly complex personalities of both Conrad and Greene highlight their recourse to the treatment of the double motif as an expression of modern man's

capacity to embrace conflicting views and handle ambivalent situations, ambivalence being a modernist device par excellence.

In Heart of Darkness, Kurtz is seen as Janus, the two-faced god. He is a "genius", "a remarkable man", but he is also "hollow at the core" (HD 83), according to Marlow. Nevertheless, before being found by Marlow, Kurtz is actually a man of an incontestable good repute in Europe: he is chosen as "an emissary of pity, science and progress" (HD36). Once in Africa, Kurtz's other facet comes to the surface. He sets himself up as a god among the natives, and he indulges in the practice of the "unspeakable rites." Kurtz's endowment with a variety of gifts allows him to be a perfect 'double'. His 'dédoublement' enables Conrad to show both the best and the worse of what western civilization is capable of.

The theme of the double is also elucidated through the nature of Kurtz's relationship with Marlow. The two men act as one. Even though Marlow is shocked by Kurtz's deeds in the African jungle, he is still his accomplice. They understood that they are bound to each other during their very first encounter. The only one for whom Kurtz speaks up his mind before he dies is Marlow. The latter starts as Kurtz's pursuer, but after Kurtz's death the roles are exchanged: Kurtz becomes the pursuer as he haunts Marlow's mind. When Marlow goes back to Brussels and when he visits the Intended, Kurtz's vision haunts him (HD 106-107).

The motif of the double highly pervades Greene's A Burnt-Out Case. The Query/Parkinson twin relationship draws heavily on the one between Kurtz and Marlow. Likewise, Query sees Parkinson as his double from the very moment he sees him. Parkinson pursues Query and when the two eventually meet, Query interestingly tells him "you are a man like me [...] we are two of a kind" (ABOC 110).

As we can see, even though Greene avoided reading Conrad for twenty-five years, his vow "never again" appears to be vain; the presence of his master pervaded all of his oeuvre. A Burnt-Out Case is a replica of Heart of Darkness; Querry is Kurtz's avatar just as the former can be seen as a modern Faust. Therefore, in transforming Conrad's material, Greene absorbed the narratives that served to weave Conrad's text. The result is a new text that stands by itself.

1- "[T]he theme of vocation is explicitly discussed on several occasions [in Heart of Darkness] in an inconclusive way and, though in a Catholic context, it implies the engagement of the individual's self in the Conradian sense." Wolodymyr P Zyla, Joseph Conrad: Theory and World Fiction. Lubbock, Texas: The Texas Tech Press, 1974. 182

Ayi Kwei Armah: Why Are We So Blest?

A journey to the "heart of whiteness"

No literary work has ever had such a tremendous impact on African literature and African literary criticism as did Conrad's Heart of Darkness. This omniscient Conradian presence did not certainly come out of the blue. In addition to Shakespeare, the writers of Leavis' "great tradition" constituted the bulk of the English syllabus studied in school by the young African writers. Therefore, the liberal humanist tradition is embedded in diverse degrees in their writings.

We should mention that most of the anglophone African writers who are known today such as Achebe, Ngugi, Soyinka and Laguma started writing after the African continent had already been colonized. Therefore, the writer had not only to take a stand vis-à-vis various prevailing ideologies of the time such as Fanonism, Negritude, Pan-Africanism, but he was also led to elaborate even political systems for his people. That situation resulted in a dualism characteristic of the literary production of that time: while the writers expounded an anti-colonialist discourse, they still resorted to the western literature for stylistic sophistication. Thus, fairness to both the colonial and the nationalist sides are to be found mainly in their early works. Being politicized from the start, the African writer practices art for the sake of political freedom while harboring the vestigial forms of his western counterparts.

The African writers felt that their peoples and the African land were unjustly treated in Heart of Darkness to which they responded differently. Their response is explicit in some of them and implicit in some others. I have elected to study in this section Ayi Kwei Armah's Why Are We So Blest? as an example both of a criticism and a rewriting of Conrad's novel.

Just as women "should be kept out of it" in Conrad's novel, the natives also should be kept in their place. This is in fact the Conrad's worldview. Tragedy occurs when things move; this is also true of Europe's scramble for Africa. Conrad's ideology and his silencing of the Other is clearer in Heart of Darkness. The episode of the death of Marlow's helmsmen, among many others, reveals the author's authoritarian politics. Marlow says of his dying helmsmen: "We too Whites stood over him, and his lustrous and inquiring glance enveloped us both. I declare it looked as though he would presently put to us some question in an understandable language; but he died without uttering a sound" (HD 67) Conrad resortes to multiply the use of adjectives instead of making the native speak.

David Murray studies this episode and its ideological implications in the light of Bakhtin's Dialogism to show the limitations of Bakhtin's theory when dialogue involves two different languages. Murray argues that Marlow's presentation of Kurtz as a hollow man, who only contains the echoes of the wilderness illustrates "[...] the emptiness of monoglossia [and] language which excludes all others [...]" (126). However, Marlow 'dialogizes' Kurtz's words such as the recommendation to "exterminate all the brutes" or Kurtz's crying "the horror, the horror", which Marlow depicts as "a moral victory". For Murray, Marlow is able to dialogize Kurtz's words even though they are expressed by a perverted and a monolithic mind only because Kurtz's voice "[...] could speak English to [Marlow]" (HD 71). Non-communication occurs in the absence of English. Meditating on his helmsmen, Marlow says: "[w] e too whites stood over him, and his lustrous and inquiring glance enveloped us both. I declare it looked as though he would presently put to us some question in an understandable language; but he died without uttering a sound" (HD 67). For Murray

the impossibility of dialogue is not due to the helmsmen's agony, but this is instead a "vivid instance of the general impossibility of dialogue because of lack of a common language. Here we come up against the limits of dialogization" (127-128). The problematics of language and non-communication would have, moreover, occurred between Marlow and the Russian harlequin if the latter did not speak English.

African writers responded differently to Conrad's novel, as we are presently going to demonstrate in what follows. It is Achebe who first declared at a conference that Conrad was "a thoroughgoing racist" (Roberts 117). Achebe's Things Fall Apart, which depicts the African society before the white man's intrusion, is meant as a response to Heart of Darkness. His second novel No Longer at Ease is a further vision of the dislocation of society as a result of the adoption of western values. The title No Longer at Ease signals intertextualty indeed. It is taken from T.S. Eliot's "Journey of the Magi" to signal the writer's disillusionment. Achebe's third novel is titled Arrow of God, which echoes Conrad's Arrow of Gold. We should mention that Achebe's response to Conrad is explicit and outspoken. His main concern seems to be the rehabilitation of an authentic African image.

Another writer on whom Conrad had an extensive influence is the Kenyan Ngugi Wa'Thiongo. His widely known A Grain of Wheat (1964) is considered his best novel. The modernist techniques that Ngugi employs in this novel are indeed similar to those of Conrad. Among these techniques are: irony, flashbacks, the multiplicity of points of view, the psychological analysis of the characters, interior monologues, as well as the technique of withholding information, which is especially dear to Conrad. A Grain of Wheat provides many points of comparison with Heart of Darkness. Thompson, the

white villain character, seems to be Kurtz's avatar. Thomson's enthusiasm about the British mission in Kenya leads him to purge his feelings, as he writes in his diary: "Exterminate the vermin" (117). In addition, A Grain of Wheat is mainly a replica of Conrad's Under Western Eyes at the level of plot and theme. It is as if Ngugi writes under the influence of Conrad's personality, despite his socialist views and his Fanonism.

Against Achebe's outspoken reaction to Conrad and Ngugi's imitation of his master, we have another different influence, which is implicit and takes issue with Conrad's text, not the author. It is an intertextual relationship that employs parody, irony, and it undertakes a process of subversion of Conrad's narrative without hinting at it. This relationship is found in the Ghanaian novelist Ayi Kwei Armah's Why Are We So Blest?.

Why Are We so Blest? (1972) is Ayi Kwei Armah's third novel after The Beautyful Ones Are Not Yet Born and Fragments. Even though the actions and the events of Why Are We So Blest? are rooted in the socio-political reality, like Heart of Darkness, Armah's novel carries a variety of intertexts within it among which is Heart of Darkness itself. The question is: what does Armah do with Conrad's influence? How does he subvert the "heart of darkness" motif?

The story is that of Modin Dofu, a young, educated African who wins a scholarship to study at Harvard University. There, he bitterly realizes that western education is only malevolent and oppressive for him. He comes back to Lacryville (presumably Algiers) with his girlfriend Aimée Reitch, an American niece of an ex-colonial settler in Kansa (probably Kenya). In Lacryville, Modin encounters Solo Nkuman, another disillusioned intellectual, who works as a translator for a magazine

called "Jeune nation." In the end, Modin and Aimée undertake to cross the desert for Congheria (presumably Angola). On their way, they are attacked by French O.A.S members who castrate Modin and rape Aimée. The latter hands over her diary and Modin's to Solo, who decides to edit them into a novel.

A first reading of Why Are We So Blest? shows that it is a parody of Heart of Darkness at the levels of both form and content. Armah deconstructs Conrad's narrative by having his two black protagonists, Modin and Solo, undertake a journey to the "heart of whiteness." In Heart of Darkness Kurtz's and Marlow's journey is a psychological one in an Africa that is set as a moral landscape, and which seems to be always leading to the white man's downfall. The western world (America and Portugal) in which Armah sets his story is seen as oppressive for the African man. While Africa is represented in Heart of Darkness (and in the other literature on Africa in general) as barbaric, unrefined, and sexually free, the western world as seen by Armah is manipulative, corrupt, sexually irrational and incapable of controlling its desire to rape Africa. In this respect, Why Are We So Blest? is reminiscent of Tayeb Salih's Season of Migration to the North (1969).

Even though Armah never hints explicitly at Conrad's novel, implicit, abundant and unmistakable parallels with Heart of Darkness pervade Why Are We So Blest? right at the beginning. For example, Marlow suffers the administrative procedures of the "International Association for the Exploration of Africa" that controls the passage to the "heart of darkness." Likewise, the 'African Education Committee' controls the passage of the African students to the "heart of whiteness" in Why Are We So Blest?.

Interestingly, the same disgust and revulsion envelop the atmosphere in the aforementioned administrations as well as the cities that contain them. In Heart of

Darkness, Marlow says: "In a few hours I arrived in a city that always makes me think of a whited sepulchre. Prejudice no doubt. I had no difficulty in finding the Company's offices" (HD 14). Modin writes: "I went to the African Education Committee Building. People start work late here. Mr. Blanchard's directions were easy to follow. This city is built in straight lines. Everything is carefully numbered. I found the building with no difficulty" (107).

Armah, moreover, presents the African land with a sense of beauty, which contrasts with Marlow's description of the African environment as overpowering, superstitious, and primitive. During his passage to the "heart of whiteness", Modin recalls his visit to the Chritianborg Castle, where the swimming pool is "shaped like a map of Africa" and it is "beautiful" (76). For Modin the presidential wing of the castle is "horrible" (76) because it is European at heart. The idea of the imprisonment of the African leaders is significantly conveyed through the presidential wing, which used to serve as a place where slaves were kept before being transported.

Once in America, Modin resembles Conrad's Kurtz. He is considered by Mr Oppenhardt and the other members of the Committee as "the most unusually intelligent African" (120), and white American females see him as a Christ like figure sent to cure them from their frigidity. This is documented in the following passage where Aimée informs Modin that one of her friends wanted sexual intercourse with him:

> -She [Carol] smoked a joint and the first thing she wanted was for you to screw her.
> -Another of your nympho Cliffie friends.
> -She wanted you, not just anybody [...]
> -What's eating her? [...]
> - Can't get any feeling where she lives.
> -I [Modin] laughed: Sounds like an epidemic hit you all [...]

-This was just dead tissue before.
-Dormant [...]
-This wasn't an awakening, Modin. A resurrection, that's what it was (94-95).

Intertextuality between Heart of Darkness and Why Are We So Blest? is also evidenced by the use of twin characters. Highly interesting are the relationships between Modin and Solo and between Modin and Aimée. These bonds are indeed similar to those between Kurtz and Marlow, on the one hand, and between Kurtz and the Black mistress, on the other hand. Modin and Solo feel that they are drawn together by a deep bond. Aimée seems to be a parodied version of Kurtz's Black mistress, who took hold of Kurtz's soul thanks to her "charms, [and her] gifts of witch-men" (HD 87).

The emblematic character of Aimée is central to the themes of Why Are We So Blest?. She embodies both the European colonial enterprise and imperialist America: she is the niece of an ex-colonial settler in Kensa (Kenya) and an American citizen. Her full name is Aimée Reistch, which could mean either 'aimer la nausée'-- in English; to love to retch -- or 'aimée la rêche', which could be translated into English as 'the crabbed beloved'. The name is indeed paradoxical: for Aimée stands for love and universal brotherhood, whereas Reistch stands for human servitude and racism, since it could also bear a Nazi connotation. Aimée significantly puts down in her diary the western lust she stands for when she writes that she is 'not an unsatisfied woman' but that she is 'insatiable' (85) and that she feels "a strong feeling like an appetite [...] A few times the hunger has gotten into [her] chest, above [her] diaphragm. Never where it should be" (186).

Aimée (America) is presented as a sexual aggressor. In one of her endless fantasies, she sees herself as Capitan Jahneiz Reistch's wife in Kansa (Kenya), where she rapes Mwangi, one of the servants. When her impotent husband comes back, he shoots Mwangi. The recurrence of Aimée's fantasizing about Mwangi whenever she makes love with Modin signals to us that she is a sexual aggressor.

Aimée is, moreover, an oppressor who seeks to silence any hint of African revolution. In one of her fantasy scenes, she hypnotizes Professor Kaufman with her eyes to make him "stop talking of East African revolts" (185). Images of oppression and aggression pervade the novel. It is interesting that the two main African settings of the story are Kensa (Kenya) and Laccryville (Algiers), both of which suffered from colonial domination. For example, on their way to Laccryville, Modin and Aimée spent the night in "la ferme ex-Camus." Modin notices that all of the wall paintings inside bear the same animal imagery:

> The paintings were of animals -- predatory animals. Most seemed to have just sighted their prey and were pouncing, swooping, or in some such attitude of aggressive tension. Four showed the hunting beasts already in possession of their victims (240).

This animal and savage imagery, which highlights the French colonial experience in Laccryville, can also be applied to Kensa (Kenya), where Capitan Reistch is fighting the Mau Mau rebels in the forest (186).

To come back to Aimée, Modin seems to have taken her as a partner out of loneliness throughout the novel; however, their relationship seems to bear a Faustian dimension. Naita, the Black secretary at the African Education Committee failed in her attempt to prevent Modin from any involvement with white women (110). She is like Dante's Beatrice, who would lead Modin out of hell but failed. The result is Modin's

castration and death. Naita is in fact the only woman with whom Modin felt happy. Modin's relationship with Aimée equals that between Conrad's Kurtz with the African mistress. Kurtz's attempt to possess the African wilderness as embodied in the "savage" mistress resulted in his destruction as the "wilderness got into his veins, consumed his flesh, and sealed his soul to its own [...]" (HD 69).

In Heart of Darkness, Kurtz entrusts his letters and his famous report for the "International Society for the Suppression of Savage Customs" to Marlow. The latter discovers, to his horror, that Kurtz's soul has gone mad as it is revealed in his final recommendation "Exterminate all the brutes" (HD 72). In Why Are We So Blest?, Aimée hands over her diary and Modin's to Solo, who remarks as he reads it that the 'notes [Modin's] are not the scribblings of a feeble mind [and that his] soul was not mediocre' (207). Solo finds out that Modin is destroyed in the process of bringing the Golden Fleece of western education. For Modin the only alternative to saving Africans from western education and its destructiveness is the propagation of the myth of a Black revolution, which would be called the maji. "That special something Africans needed to neutralize the material destructiveness of Europe. The maji is not something existent, waiting to be collected and used. It would be something to be created, an antidote to the potent poison of European penetration" (222-223).

The use of diaries, moreover, allows Armah to use a variety of voices. At times, he repeats conversations, whereas, at other times, he incorporates letters. This helps him make a full parody of Heart of Darkness: to display his protagonist's personality, his weaknesses and how he differs from Conrad's Kurtz. In so doing, Armah demystifies Conrad's narrative as well as the whole of the "heart of whiteness."

The blatant distinction between the 'heart of whiteness' and the 'heart of darkness' recalls Northrop Frye's distinction between the apocalyptic world and the demonic one in his Anatomy of Criticism. The apocalyptic world is associated with the Holy City and the garden; it is characterized by: "[…] a straight road, the highway in the desert […]". The demonic one is "[…] that one that desire rejects […it is characterized by] the labyrinth or maze, the image of lost direction, often with a monster at its heart like the Minotaur" (150). Considering Modin's journey to the West, we can assert that it is one to the demonic one. The occult forces that surround Modin there aim to uproot and deprive him of any dignity. This is suggested when Mr Oppenhardt addresses him as a "boy" (120) and gets upset when, in a conversation, Modin contradicts him.

Armah sets Modin's vain action against Solo's inertia. While Solo is reduced to suffering his nauseated existence, Modin decides that "positive action is in the maquis" (233). Given the futility of Modin's action, Armah drops clues of the Sysiphus myth, which he blends with Jazon's Golden Fleece. These myths allow Modin's emergence as a mythic hero. In the hospital, the one-legged man explained to Solo that "l'essence de la révolution, c'est les militants" (25) even if they are not the winners at the end. Solo agrees that "[…] they [the militants] are the fuel for the revolution […] something pure, light, even spiritual, which consumes itself to push forward something heavier, far more gross than itself" (27). Moreover, Armah's protagonist's full name reinforces the idea of the myth of the Golden Fleece: Modin is burned by the fire of the western knowledge, which he sought to steel from the American Olympus. Modin Dufo reads in French like 'maudit du feu'. By placing Modin's action against Solo's despair, it is as if Armah invites us, like Camus, to

imagine a happy Sysiphus, the militants should go on even if the outcome is absurd. The African leaders are bound to fail because the militants' action lacks an authentic African support because the fire that suits the white man burns the African.

Solo is reminiscent of Camus' Meursalt in L'étranger. He is a survivor, detached and unconcerned by the events around him but he is extremely aware of what happens to him and to others like him. He is a literally lonely man, as his name indicates. Solo's speculative mind is reminiscent of Hamlet and Eliot's Prufrock. Solo is a translator, who he acts as an intermediary between the western and the African worlds. He is like the factor, who acts as a go-between for the slave-dealer. Modin recalls the explanation of the factor's job that the guide gave to the teacher during a visit to the Chritianborg Castle. Solo is a traitor to the cause because he interprets everything, 'traduire c'est trahir'; For him all the revolutions are futile because it is not the militants who win. His attitudes send us back to Armah's first novel The Beautyful Ones Are Not Yet Born, which reads as the beautiful revolutions are not yet born.

As we can see, unlike Achebe and Ngugi, Armah's response to Conrad is mute and implicit; it is a relation of subversion. Armah advocates a discourse that is the reverse of Conrad. He subverts the "heart of darkness" motif for his rewriting of the "heart of whiteness" under African eyes. Armah takes issue with not only Heart of Darkness but also the whole western text and the rhetoric of the American dream. Why Are We So Blest? reads as why are we all so cursed. Western culture and civilization are presented in Armah's novel as irrational myths that should be destroyed to regain life. However, we may ask the question: by propounding a totally different myth to counteract the white man's myth, is not Armah entering the irrational myth of the black man as opposed to the white man?

Conclusion

As we come to the conclusion of this study, we realize that intertextuality allows the reader to enjoy many texts at a time. The plural text resembles the World Wide Web: every text links the reader to a present or anterior text(s). The many allusions that pervade the narrative of Heart of Darkness function as links to other texts. Conrad endowed Kurtz with psychological, philosophical, and ideological connotations that make of him a character who finds manifestations in a wide range of literary locales. Kurtz is modeled out of the historical, biographical, ideological, mythical, and fictional intertexts.

These various intertexts do not, however, function as separate bits but instead confront and neutralize one another in the novel. Conrad questions and distorts his sources, which are no longer sacred authorities, and Conrad's genius, indeed, lies in the handling of his complex material. Greene, Waugh, and Armah drew and absorbed many images and themes, whether consciously or not, from Conrad's fiction. Their works illustrate the idea of a text as a 'palimpsest' (Gerard Genette) (i.e., a mosaic of other texts); of a text as transposition of another text. Yet, intertextuality is never innocent; it serves a purpose: while Greene and Waugh consciously or not continue Conrad's text, intertextuality in Armah is a reply and a rewriting of Heart of Darkness. Intertextuality allows Armah to dialogize other texts and authors without citing them. He also uses their techniques as a stolen knowledge, which he manipulates to suit his purpose.

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