

Colonizers, Cannibals, and the Horror of Good Intentions in Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*

by Carola M. Kaplan

Man can embody truth but he cannot know it." Nowhere is William Butler Yeats's adage more clearly illustrated than in the narrative of Charlie Marlow in *Heart of Darkness*. Throughout the text, Marlow insists upon the distinction between truth and lies; between men and women; between civilization and savagery; and, most of all, between Self and Other. Of these, the most important distinction is between Self and Other, for it is this opposition that sustains the colonial enterprise. The lure and the fear of the Other initiate the pursuit and "discovery" of colonialism; the conviction of the inferiority of the Other justifies the undertaking. Yet despite Marlow's insistence, all binary oppositions collapse in the course of his narrative: colonists prove to be conquerors, the gang of virtue is indistinguishable from the gang of greed, the illusions of women merely echo the illusions of men, and there is no clear distinction between lies and truth. Most importantly, the fundamental difference between Self and Other disappears and, with it, the unbridgeable gulf between men and women and between savage and civilized that sustains the power structure of western civilization. But this awareness offered by the text eludes Marlow for, enmeshed in his own culture, he would find this awareness "too dark—too dark altogether."

In psychological terms, the Other is but the undiscovered territory in the self. In the colonial enterprise, this territory of the unconscious is displaced onto another people who both allure and terrify. The colonizer, fearing to succumb to the Other, attempts to contain it—through subordination, suppression, or conversion. These strategies of containment are designed to preserve the opposition and inequality between Self and Other that justifies the imperialist enterprise. The central trope of imperialism is what Abdul R. JanMohamed terms "the manichean allegory" that converts racial difference "into moral and even metaphysical difference" (80). This allegory characterizes the relationship between dominant and subordinate culture as one of ineradicable opposition (82). Although the opposing terms of the allegory

change—good and evil, civilization and savagery, intelligence and emotion, rationality and sensuality—they are always predicated upon the assumption of the superiority of the outside evaluator and the inferiority of the native being observed.

Colonialist literature, as byproduct of the imperialist enterprise, necessarily reinscribes the manichean allegory either to confirm or to interrogate it in an effort to move beyond its limits. As a result, colonialist texts take two forms, which reflect, respectively, these two different responses: the “imaginary” and the “symbolic” (JanMohamed 84). These designations derive from Jacques Lacan’s descriptions of sequential stages of human development. The “imaginary,” according to Lacan, dates from the mirror stage of infant life, in which the child of six to eighteen months jubilantly identifies itself with its mirror image, the wholeness and integrity of which belie the internal flux and fragmentation the child experiences (Lacan 4). Because of the unbridgeable distance of the specular image with which the child identifies, the child situates within it rivalry, opposition, and aggressivity (Gallop 59). The relation between the self and its image, which Lacan terms “the imaginary,” is one in which mirroring forestalls intersubjectivity or the interaction between two separate selves, each with its own distinct perspective.

In the “imaginary” colonialist text, JanMohamed observes, “the native functions as an image of the imperialist self in such a manner that it reveals the latter’s self-alienation” (84). This self-alienation consists in the failure to recognize as inherent within the self despised attributes the imperialist projects onto the Other. Thus, the “imaginary” colonialist text adheres to a fixed opposition between the self and the native, insisting upon the homogeneous identity of the indigenous population and taking refuge in the “superior,” more “enlightened,” and more “civilized” perspective of the dominant culture. Interpreted through the narrative perspective of Marlow, *Heart of Darkness* exemplifies the “imaginary” colonialist text.

The second type of colonialist fiction, the “symbolic,” parallels the stage at which the young child, once having become convinced of its wholeness and integrity, is able to recognize and identify with an imago or subject-image as a counterpart; and is then able to enter into a dialectic that links the self or I “with socially elaborated situations” (Lacan 5). At this stage, the child is able to enter into social exchange, dialogue, and relationship (Gallop 59–61). An equivalent stage in culture would make possible a dialectic encounter between Self and Other in which the dominant culture is able to bracket its own values and thus radically to question its basis for cultural inference and interpretation. Such a dialectic or exchange would aim at resolving cultural oppositions through syncretic solutions (JanMohamed 85). Such, I would argue, is the larger narrative perspective of *Heart of Darkness*, which exposes the limitations and self-contradiction of Marlow’s views to

imaginary =
no interaction
between two
selves

symbolic =
child can enter
social stage
or dialogue

dialogue between
self + other

open up a complex dialogue on issues of history, culture, race, and gender.
Thus the entirety of Heart of Darkness attempts to deal with the Other in symbolic terms, although Marlow is able to deal with the Other only in the realm of the (Imaginary). = self + other are opposites or at odds → othering

Heart of Darkness points to awarenesses beyond Marlow both by revealing his limitations and by systematically undercutting the polarities and distinctions that Marlow takes pains to establish. From the first, Marlow's narrative invites the reader to reach an understanding beyond him when he states that his experience was "not very clear. And yet it seemed to throw a kind of light" (70). Among his many limitations in dealing with cultural differences, Marlow displays his xenophobia when he reluctantly accepts his relatives' choice of living on the Continent, explaining, "It's cheap and not so nasty as it looks, they say" (71). Further, he exhibits contradictory ideas about entering another culture, revealing his determination to get to Africa "by hook or by crook" but, once there, feeling like "an imposter" (77) when he observes that the natives (unlike him) "wanted no excuse for being there" (78). He insists that he detests and avoids lies, yet acknowledges three separate lies in the course of the narrative—to the station manager, to Kurtz, and to the Intended. He maintains that the conquest of the earth is redeemed by "an unselfish belief in the idea—something you can set up, and bow down before, and offer a sacrifice to" (69–70). Not only is this assertion undercut by the language of idolatry, but it prefigures evidence, as the narrative unfolds, that Kurtz' belief in the idea of "humanizing, improving, instructing" (101) leads to the most ruthless exploitation and most appalling idolatry of all, as Kurtz turns himself, the emissary of the idea, into an object of worship. Further, Marlow dismisses as foolish his aunt's notion of "weaning those ignorant millions from their horrid ways" (76), but describes as "a beautiful piece of writing" Kurtz' kindred assertion, "By the simple exercise of our will we can exert a power for good [among the natives] practically unbounded" (123). Throughout the text, Marlow works hard to separate savage customs from civilized behavior, yet an observer might be pressed to distinguish Marlow's noisy jig with the boiler-maker (when he finally gets rivets to repair his boat) (98) from the "whirl of black limbs" (105) on shore that he condescends to regard as "not inhuman" (105). Similarly, Marlow's distinction between the comprehensible language of civilized discourse and the incomprehensible noise of savages—"the roll of drums" (105), "abrupt burst of yells" (141), "savage clamour" (113), "savage discords" (110), "tumultuous and mournful uproar" (110)—breaks down. All voices, European and native, degenerate in Marlow's memory into "one immense jabber, silly, atrocious, sordid, savage, or simply mean, without any kind of sense" (120–21).

fear of
other
cultures

Marlow is
a jumble
of contradictions

Because most of Marlow's attempts at separations prove unstable and many of his distinctions blur, they serve to reveal his intense need to sustain

the manichean allegory so necessary to his sense of Self in contradistinction to the Other. Underlying Marlow's efforts to maintain binary oppositions is the colonizer's intense anxiety about being taken over by the Other. Marlow's strategy of containment emerges most forcefully throughout the text in his parallel descriptions of women and of natives.¹

or intense desire to maintain hierarchy

substituting a part for the whole

Throughout his account, Marlow both denigrates and overestimates the power of women. Through synecdoche Marlow reduces the women he sees in the waiting room of the Belgian shipping company to "one fat and the other slim" (73), one young and one old, "knitting black wool as for a warm pall" (74). At the same time, they are oddly "uncanny and fateful" (74); and Marlow after his encounter with Kurtz observes, "the knitting old woman with the cat obtruded herself upon my memory as a most improper person to be sitting at the other end of such an affair" (142). Analogously, the secretary, who seems to know all about Marlow's fate, he reduces to "a white-haired secretarial head, but wearing a compassionate expression" (74).

takes away their individuality thus their humanity

Similarly, Marlow downplays his aunt's power, while inadvertently revealing his reliance upon her. After disavowing his dependency on women—"Then—would you believe it? . . . I, Charlie Marlow, set the women to work—to get a job. Heavens!"—he acknowledges that he relied upon his aunt to get him the job as captain of the Congo steamer. His aunt, who clearly wields more social power than Marlow, he describes patronizingly as "a dear enthusiastic soul" (76), although her influential recommendations of him haunt him along his Congo journey and serve to ally him with the similarly "gifted" Kurtz. As he describes her, he confines his aunt to a drawing room "that most soothingly looked just as you would expect a lady's drawing room to look" (76), a description that contrasts markedly with his later description of the disquieting drawing room in which he encounters Kurtz' Intended. Marlow's adverb "soothingly" suggests his discomfort at the idea of encountering a woman who is not contained in a drawing room, a discomfort he will experience at its most extreme in his meeting with the "savage" woman in the jungle. Once he returns from the Congo, no lady's drawing room will again be a "soothing" place because he will have found out—although he never consciously admits it—that neither women nor domestic space offer sanctuary from the knowledge of the pervasiveness of evil.

* conversation w/ Kurtz's intended

Marlow's self-deluding ability to polarize his experiences—in particular, to separate the "soothing" female world of illusions from the larger male world of shocking realities—collapses in his interview with the Intended. Despite Marlow's efforts to keep these worlds separate, after his jungle

OR he just can no longer keep woman to a drawing room...

¹These display "an imperialism of the metaphor rooted in a patriarchal language that conflates racial difference with sexual difference in the field of Western representations" (McGee 130).

encounter with Kurtz, they fuse in the nightmare atmosphere of the Intended's drawing room, inhabited by Kurtz' ghost, whose words echo and eerily combine with hers to form the ghastly chorus Marlow hears. This chorus suggests a terrifying intertwining of purpose between Kurtz and his Intended—a collusion between the "soul as translucently pure as a cliff of crystal" (149) and the "soul that knew no restraint, no faith, and no fear" (144). For this reason, when Marlow asserts, "I saw them together—I heard them together" (154) in the drawing room, he experiences "a sensation of panic in my heart as though I had blundered into a place of cruel and absurd mysteries not fit for a human being to behold" (154). (The phrase "cruel and absurd mysteries" eerily echoes the "unspeakable rites" attributed to Kurtz in Africa). In this scene, Marlow's language and observations suggest, although his panic and confusion indicate he does not consciously understand, that domestic bliss and female innocence in Belgium are predicated upon the exploitation of natives and the pilfering of ivory in the Congo; that marriages between ambitious young men of insufficient means with young women of substance are facilitated by the colonial enterprise, in which enterprising young men make good in the name of doing good. ("I had heard that her engagement with Kurtz had been disapproved by her people. He wasn't rich enough or something . . . He had given me some reason to infer that it was his impatience of comparative poverty that drove him out there" [155]).

no one is free of corruption. Everyone is complicit

Many apparently innocent features of the drawing room recall sinister aspects of the colonial enterprise presented earlier in the story. Thus, the grand piano "like a sombre and polished sarcophagus" (153) recalls the image of Brussels, the city outside her door, site of the colonial Company's offices, as "a whited sepulchre" (73); the piano, symbol of feminine refinement, has keys of ivory, the ivory Kurtz pilfered from Africa; the apparently noble image of the Intended's white forehead "illuminated by the unextinguishable light of belief and love" (154) against the dark background of the room recalls Kurtz's ominous painting of her "draped and blindfolded, carrying a torch" in which "the effect of the torch-light on the face was sinister" (92). In the drawing room scene, she is in effect blindfolded by her enduring and willful illusions about Kurtz and she carries the torch of his ideas, which cast a sinister light back upon her. Fittingly, the image of her hair as an "ashy halo" associates her apparently angelic goodness with death. Consequently Marlow, in acknowledging that the Intended's claim, "I knew him best" (107), may be accurate, aptly notes that "with every word spoken the room was growing darker" (107)—that is, more unfathomable, more remote from truth, more connected with evil, more suggestive of death. In this scene all details combine to point out that domestic innocence colludes with global evil in death-dealing conspiracy. Yet, in the Intended's drawing room, as in other stations along his pilgrimage, Marlow shrinks from the enormity of the knowledge he is offered.

place of burial.

Similarly, in his descriptions of the African natives, as in his glib generalizations about women, Marlow likewise attempts to deny the power of the Other he fears by resorting to stereotypes. Just as his descriptions of women are reductive, so too are his accounts of the natives, whom he acknowledges only in generic descriptions. "Dark human shapes could be made out in the distance. . . . two bronze figures, leaning on tall spears, stood in the sunlight under fantastic head-dresses of spotted skins, warlike and still in statuesque repose" (136). Even when described individually, they are stereotyped: "The man seemed young—almost a boy—but you know with them it's hard to tell" (82). Marlow's stereotypical descriptions of both women and natives serve a strategy of containment that enables him to deny both their importance for him and his affinity with them.

Nowhere, however, is Marlow's containment of the Other through discourse so sustained as in his treatment of the "savage" woman, the figure in which race and gender emblematically intersect. This is not to say that racial and sexual difference are to be equated. Since the value attributed to each is culturally determined, interpretations of racial and sexual superiority vary from one culture to another; and within any particular culture these constructions may conflict rather than intersect. Yet when *Heart of Darkness* presents an African tribal culture that reverses both the racial and sexual hierarchy of the West, these reversals constitute a powerful double threat to Western social constructions that Marlow views as natural and inevitable.²

Marlow's compelling but ambivalent description of the "savage" woman enables the reader to see the contrast between her authority and unique attributes and Marlow's repeated attempts, throughout the text, to deny the power and individuality of African natives. Marlow responds to her dangerous allure—dangerous because he sees her as partly responsible for Kurtz's "going native"—by insisting on her ineradicable twofold otherness, the savage and female as distinguished from the civilized and male. By designating her the living embodiment of these dualities, Marlow shores up the binary oppositions upon which his understanding of Western civilization rests.

The "savage" woman, as Marlow describes her, is a distillation of alluring but frightening otherness. His view of her highlights her beauty, leadership, and ferocity. She is "wild," "gorgeous" (136), and proud. Wearing a helmet, armor, and magic charms, she is fearless in the face of the pilgrims' bullets, and is obeyed by her tribesmen. She is "like the wilderness itself, with an air of brooding over an inscrutable purpose" (137), a description sufficiently ominous but all the more so for echoing the previous description of the wilderness as "an implacable force brooding over an inscrutable intention" (103). Although she is without words, the "savage" woman is not without

²For persuasive discussions of the difference between sexual and racial alterity and of the need to distinguish clearly between them, see Spivak, Mohanty and Suleri.

stereotypes
dehumanize
AND separate
without
them Marlow
would be
complicit
in the "savage"

careless

Marlow afraid
of women
with power

she is also
highly sexualized,
making her both
complicit and
guilty for
Kurtz's
attraction
to her

purpose—and this, her “struggling, half-shaped resolve” (137), is all the more menacing for being unknowable. Her threatening otherness is most fully articulated by Marlow’s parodic double, the Russian “man of patches” (88) who finds her so frightening that he proclaims: “If she had offered to come aboard [the steamer] I really think I would have tried to shoot her” (88). The contrast between the harlequin’s nervousness and the “savage” woman’s composure, between his ragged attire and her “gorgeous” adornment highlights her formidable power.

In her overt sexuality and aggressive claims upon Kurtz’s person, Marlow finds her both enticing and menacing. Voracious and diabolical, she appears to belong to a matriarchal and polyandrous female warrior culture. Equated with the wilderness—she is its “tenebrous and passionate soul” (137)—she is a kind of succubus that has made Kurtz her concubine and thereby drained him of his vitality: *and his power over her*

The wilderness had patted him on the head. . . . it had caressed him, and—lo!—he had withered; it had taken him, loved him, embraced him, got into his veins, consumed his flesh, and sealed his soul to its own by the inconceivable ceremonies of some devilish initiation. He was its spoiled and pampered favourite (121).

The “savage” woman is one with the wilderness that has claimed Kurtz for its harem. This image of Kurtz as the “spoiled and pampered favourite” in a male harem directly threatens the patriarchal and ostensibly monogamous structure of the society from which he has emigrated.

So threatening is the “savage” woman in her sexual otherness that Marlow adopts a strategy of subduing her power through grief: “she stopped as if her heart had failed her” (137). Finally the text supplants her with—in effect, turns her into—the Intended, in perpetual mourning and domestic confinement, whose outstretched arms mirror the “savage” woman’s gesture but lack her power to command a tribe or to enshroud a pilgrim ship in shadow: “Suddenly she [the “savage” woman] opened her bared arms and threw them up rigid above her head. . . . and at the same time the swift shadows darted out on the earth, swept around on the river, gathering the steamer into a shadowy embrace” (88). Thus Marlow’s narration quells the anxiety the “savage” woman evokes: It demonstrates that her “barbarous” charms are in fact “powerless” (156). Her inconsolable grief, in paralyzing her, restores the male—in the person of her paramour, Kurtz—to primacy.

The colonialist anxiety of being taken over by the Other surfaces even more frighteningly in the cannibalism that Marlow imputes to the native workers aboard his boat who, at any moment, may devour Marlow and the pilgrims. In *Heart of Darkness*, cannibalism serves as the metaphor for the absolute violation of boundaries between one human being and another, the

a demon assuming
a female form
to have sexual
intercourse w/
men in
their sleep.

physical equivalent of the cultural absorption or ingestion by the Other that the colonizer fears.

On another level, the cannibalism Marlow imputes to the natives may be merely a guilty projection of the rapacity of the white colonizers who, as Jonathan Swift noted about earlier British colonial exploiters in "A Modest Proposal," have already devoured the native population in less literal ways. Since the European intruders have invaded territorial boundaries, have violated property rights, and have in fact confiscated the natives' most personal property—their bodies—for their own uses, the Europeans are but one step from literally devouring the inhabitants. In fact, Marlow describes the insatiable Kurtz as threatening to do so: "I saw him open his mouth wide—it gave him a weirdly voracious aspect, as though he had wanted to swallow all the air, all the earth, all the men before him" (135). Even Marlow's approval of the apparent restraint of the natives aboard ship, whom he takes to be hungry cannibals, may simply suggest the guilt he feels at the Europeans' lack of restraint toward the indigenous population.

Marlow's attribution of cannibalism to the natives—an accusation never borne out by their behavior—is a violence Marlow inflicts on the culture. This violence is characteristic of all linguistic descriptions of the members of one culture by members of another culture who exercise power over them and exploit them. Throughout, *Heart of Darkness* suggests that physical violence originates in the violence of language—the language that is used to justify intrusion, usurpation, and conversion. As Jacques Derrida observes, human violence originates in the violence of the letter, which takes many forms:³ in *Heart of Darkness*, the map of Africa, divided and colored according to the greedy claims of European nations; the inscription upon the land of roads and railroads; the delivery of mail from home to European intruders; the keeping of accounts to tally the loot; the written recommendations of outsiders to legitimize the coercion of natives; the Bible that justifies the pilgrims in converting and (if resisted) in killing the natives; and the law that labels some natives "enemies" and others "criminals" and thereby legitimizes clapping them in irons and forcing them into chain gangs. Thus Marlow correctly describes Kurtz primarily as a "voice" whose "unextinguishable gift of noble and lofty expression" (146) authorizes and smoothes the way for

³Noting that all language is violence, speech as well as writing, Jacques Derrida makes the point that "the essential confrontation that opens communication between peoples and cultures, even when that communication is not practiced under the banner of colonial or missionary oppression," takes the form of war (107). As examples of violent inscription, Derrida cites the road, the path, and other instances of the opening and spacing of nature (107–08).

yet another
racist
stereotype

language is a
tool for doing
evil.

Kurtz's
manifesto

indulging his consummate greed.⁴ The text suggests the inevitable course of Kurtz's report to the International Society for the Suppression of Savage Customs that begins by arguing that the godlike status of white men in the Congo enables them to "exert a power for good practically unbounded" and ends by urging "Exterminate all the brutes!" (123). As Marlow ironically yet revealingly suggests, this last admonition "may be regarded as the exposition of a method."

The text's recognition of the violence inherent in language also helps to explain the narrative event most puzzling to critics, Marlow's apparent lie to Kurtz's Intended. In reply to her request for "His last word—to live with," Marlow responds, "The last word he pronounced was—your name." By this assertion, Marlow inadvertently tells her the truth. For Kurtz, the Intended is not a distinct person. Just as she has no name of her own, she has no intrinsic reality for Kurtz. She is the expression of his intentions, of the life he intends for her, one that reflects his culture-based ideas about marriage, sexuality, and the subordination of women. She is, in effect, colonized by Kurtz's intentions, which confine her in the drawing room and limit her discourse to an echo of his.

Similarly, the African natives exist in the text as expressions of Kurtz's—and Marlow's—intentions. They exist for Kurtz's uses and are confined to Marlow's conceptions of them. To have intentions toward a people is to appropriate for oneself the right to subdue, to convert, and to use—all in the name of benevolence. Thus "the horror" is indeed the name of the Intended: it designates the violence that results from the intentions of the powerful who impose their will upon the powerless.⁵

Further, the designation "the Intended" signals an awareness that permeates the text of the unreliability and slipperiness of language. "The Intended" is the shifting signifier, sign of the unbridgeable gulf between aim

⁴Jacques Derrida warns of the dangers of phonologism, "the exclusion or abasement of writing"(102). Phonologism privileges speech over writing because of an erroneous belief that speech is originary and therefore naturally more innocent than writing (106). Perhaps the greatest danger of phonologism is that the eloquent speaker—such as Kurtz—persuades his audience by appearing to stand in for the presence that words necessarily lack.

⁵For previous discussions that suggest that "the Horror" is the name of the Intended, although they interpret the horror she represents in different ways than I do, see Bruffee, Ellis, Kauvar, Stark, and Milne. Of all these interpretations, mine is closest to that of Stark, who maintains that the Intended is herself a "whited sepulchre." Stark, however, goes further than I do in his dire assessment of the Intended: he asserts that the house of the Intended is the "symbolic center of the Inner Circle of the Infernal System" (543), that is, the inner center of Hell; and that the Intended's glittering eyes signal her infernal character, which manifests itself in part through her seduction and manipulation of Marlow.

and achievement, the gap in meaning that cannot be sutured. Without heeding the text's warning about the unreliable and equivocal nature of language, the reader may trust too much to Marlow's words, just as Kurtz' adherents have trusted too much to his eloquence; and potential colonist-conquerors may fool themselves as well as others into believing in their noble intentions. Repeatedly, in recording the booming voice but essential hollowness of Kurtz, the text underlines the tricky nature of language itself that conceals as it apparently reveals, that denotes presence while signifying absence, that signals meaning while lacking it.

By the time Marlow tells the truth he considers a lie when he suggests that "the horror" is the name of Kurtz' Intended (that is to say, the name for what he had intended), the text has effectually blurred the distinction between truth and lies, much as it has blurred the distinctions between colonists and conquerors, between savagery and civilization, between men's realities and women's illusions.

If, as has often been claimed, Marlow represents a white, patriarchal, Eurocentric view of late nineteenth-century history,⁶ the text suggests, although it does not develop, a perspective on contemporary global politics that is more complex and more problematic than Marlow's. Unlike Marlow's conflation of all historic periods into one universal time and his insistence that Africa mirrors the beginnings of Western civilization, the text marks a specific moment in the European imperialist enterprise, the moment in which late nineteenth-century England, disconcertingly akin to the more overtly ruthless Belgium, was frantically grabbing territory in outlying regions of the world. Unlike Marlow's erasure of class differences through his creation of an artificially egalitarian community aboard a yacht (in which a plain seaman rubs elbows with a lawyer and a director of companies), the text recognizes that even in the jungle class barriers exist between colonial officials and working men, such as mechanics and boiler-makers.

Further, although Marlow posits an essential and innate ideological difference between men and women, the text recognizes that late-Victorian society assigns very limited roles to women so that, if their social views are unrealistic, it is because they lack education and therefore merely echo male platitudes. In addition, the text briefly notices—in the dress and status of the "savage" woman and in the dialect of her tribe—the particularities of a specific African tribal culture and recognizes that this culture has language and meaning, while observing that these are unreadable to outsiders. Thus Marlow's dying helmsman appears to want to speak but cannot do so to those who do not and will not understand him (119).

⁶For fuller discussions of Marlow as embodiment of the ideology of European imperialism, see Said 48; Brantlinger 173–97; and McGee 127–32.

Finally, the narrative stipulates that what it arbitrarily equates with darkness is in fact universal—an ineradicable core of evil in all human beings, whatever their culture of origin. When Marlow observes about modern England, "And this also . . . has been one of the dark places of the earth" (67), his use of the perfect tense brings his observation into the present. By the time Marlow ceases to speak to his audience on the "cruising yawl," symbolically the privileged site of the dominant culture, all persons on board must acknowledge that the apparently "tranquil waterway" of modern European history leads "into the heart of an immense darkness" (158), located not only in the outposts of empire but always already within the human breast.

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