1 | **This is fun!(?)**

1.1 | **Prompt**

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Heart of Darkness Analytical Essay

English 10: Landscapes of the Self and Other

For your first literary analysis paper, you will be coming up with your own interpretive argument about

OPTION 1: Choose a recurring word, motif, pattern, or character

Choose a word, motif, pattern, or character that you've noticed throughout the book, and construct an a
you need to add something new to the conversation. For this option, I recommend looking at a repetition

OPTION 2: Choose a moment in the text

Pick an excerpt of no more than 1/3-1/2 a page from the book, and construct an analytical, argumentative
you need to add something new to the conversation. Our recommendation is to choose an excerpt we haven'

You will likely make connections to other parts of the text, particularly as you engage broader implicat

OPTION 3: Propose your own analytical adventure
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1.2 | **Wait, thesis is due Thursday?**

- Topics
  - Futility?
    * Imagery of
  - Uselessness and contradiction
    * Examples
      · Blindfolded woman with torch
      · Bucket with hole in it
      · Doctor
      · Brickmaker
      · Giving biscuits to the dying black man
    * Whats the larger concept?

shoes…?

1. Thesis: Conrad uses ironic imagery in the Heart of Darkness to convey the dangers of placing independent and dissociated value in ideas. :CUSTOM$_{ID}$: thesis-conrad-uses-ironic-imagery-in-the-heart-of-darkness-to-convey-the-dangers-of-placing-independent-and-dissociated-value-in-ideas. our dangerous attachment to ideas.

   the danger of false inherent value in ideas.

the dangers of placing inherent value in ideas

the dangers of placing independent / disassociated value in ideas

the unreliability of ideas.

"The ideas outrun the actual"

Can be applied to the European culture / colonialist movement at large.

1.3 | **Evidence bin**

- bucket

    - "One evening a grass shed full of calico, cotton prints, beads, and I don't know what else, burst into a blaze so suddenly that you would have thought the earth had opened to let an avenging fire consume all that trash. I was smoking my pipe quietly by my dismantled steamer, and saw them all cutting capers in the light, with their arms lifted high, when the stout man with moustaches came tearing down to the river, a tin pail in his hand, assured me that everybody was 'behaving splendidly, splendidly,' dipped about a quart of water and tore back again. *I noticed there was a hole in the bottom of his pail.*"

    - "I strolled up. There was no hurry. You see the thing had gone off like a box of matches. It had been hopeless from the very first. The flame had leaped high, driven everybody back, lighted up everything—and collapsed. The shed was already a heap of embers glowing fiercely. A n[word] was being beaten near by. They said he had caused the fire in some way;"

- blindfold with torch

    - "Then I noticed a small sketch in oils, on a panel, representing a woman, draped and blindfolded, carrying a lighted torch. The background was sombre—almost black. The movement of the woman was stately, and the effect of the torchlight on the face was sinister.

    - (less important) "It arrested me, and he stood by civilly, holding an empty half-pint champagne bottle (medical comforts) with the candle stuck in it. To my question he said Mr. Kurtz had painted this—in this very station more than a year ago—while waiting for means to go to his trading post."

- ship

    - "Now and then a boat from the shore gave one a momentary contact with reality […] For a time I would feel I belonged still to a world of straightforward facts;"

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

1.4 | **Let's outline, shall we?**

TODO: change "idea" to something like "form over content" TODO: change order to bucket, ship, torch

- Intro: Conrad uses ironic imagery in the Heart of Darkness to convey the dangers of placing independent and dissociated value in ideas.

- p1: bucket

  – Bucket has a hole in it,
    * not actually putting out the fire. It is an idea of a bucket devoid of the context of the hole (real world)
    * wonderful metaphor for colonialism
      · pretending to help, but not actually
      · goes and punishes a native,
      · justifying hurt and exploitation with the guise of the savior
  – To *close* read:
    * smoking my pipe quietly
      · indifferent passive.
      · about futility? passive mentioning being used to signal to the broader theme?
      · fire contained vs fire uncontained
      ·
    * "splendidly, splendidly"
      · not about truth, about appearance.
      · applies to conrad's view on European culture / colonialism
  – This action stems from placing inherent value in ideas, devoid of context.
  – idea becomnes mental model not ties to reality

- p2: torch

  – the torch is being used simply for the sake of using a torch, for the idea of using a torch

  – 'excuse' of vision, while truly being blinded.

    * just like.. you guessed it! colonialism!

  – to close read:

    * background was somber

      · claims to be seeing the somberness, but is blind to the true sadness and of their situation

    * movement was stately

      · stately, like the state (doi)

      · positions the woman as representing the colonists / europe

      · painted by kurtz pre-trip, reflects those views?

      · majestic, yet blinded. another bit of justaposition?

    * the effect of the torchlight was sinister

        · again, kurtz pre-trip. The truth is sinister, scary.

        · corrupting the colonizer

        · shown by kurtz rejecting the colonialist ways

        · dont see the torch, nor the effect of the torch

- p3: ship

  - fires at a supposed enemy, which doesn't exist (doesn't matter if it exists, it's irrelevant)

  - uses words like "lazy" to represent how the reality of it doesn't matter, only the idea

  - to close read:

    * hidden out of sight somewhere

      · justification

    * lazy, slimy, ect

      · explained above, can be expanded upon easily

    * lugubrious drolly in the sight

      · points out the sadness

    * feeble screech – and nothing happened. Nothing could happen

      · solidifying that it is just about the idea, not about reality

    * Momentary contact with reality

      · yes, but!

      · the ship is not in reality (doi)

- conclusion:

  - its all about the true nature of colonialism!

    * that its a misplaced attempt to do what worked in one context that doesnr work in another

    *   mindless aplication of processs

- looser

  - examples:

    * blindfold with torch

    * bucket with hole

    * ship

    * order…?

  - meta:

    * colonialism

2 | **Writing Thyme :sunglasses: (?)**

- Intro: Conrad uses ironic imagery in the Heart of Darkness to convey the dangers of placing indepen-
  dent and dissociated value in ideas.

2.1 | **UNEDITED VERSION**

Converting ideas from the abstract to the real in order to achieve a goal requires process. In fact, that's what processes are for. In Heart of Darkness, Conrad explores the madness that occurs when processes become ends in themselves - disconnected from the ideas and goals they are intended to serve. This disconnection is inherent in colonialism, where the goal is to transplant ideas - in this case, ways of doing things and even ways of being - to unsuitable contexts. Conrad repeatedly demonstrates that when processes are taken out of context, they lead to absurd behaviors and outcomes - the very definition of irony. In Heart of Darkness, he repeatedly uses ironic imagery of decontextualized processes to warn the reader of the dangers they create.

Through ironic imagery of a bucket, Conrad shows the danger of using processes in the absence of context. Marlow describes one of the evenings on his journey, in which a massive fire suddenly "burst into a blaze" (citation). He details how a "stout man with moustaches came tearing down to the river, a tin pail in his hand, assured me that everybody was 'behaving splendidly, splendidly,' dipped about a quart of water and tore back again. I noticed there was a hole in the bottom of his pail" (citation). Of course, this man isn't truly helping put out the fire – after all, there is a hole in his bucket. Instead, he is engaging mindlessly in the process of putting out a fire. The actual reality of the fire is entirely irrelevant. The "stout man" is not incorrect when he describes the situation as going "splendidly," because splendid is defined as following the process. The actual state of reality has no bearing upon whether or not something is going "splendidly." This instance is the second time where this man has said this line; in response to hearing that Marlow's steamer had sank, he says his signature line then insists in agitation that Marlow must follow the process and go "see the general manager at once" (citation). This exact repetition of phrase——"splendidly, splendidly"——only goes to show the man's further detachment from reality and adherence to process. Marlow then goes on to describe that "A n[word] was being beaten near by. They said he had caused the fire in some way;" (citation). This situation is a microcosm of colonialism as a whole, in which processes applied without context by the colonizer leads to the hurt and exploitation of the colonized——justified under the guise of a savior.

This concept does not only apply to singular people, but to larger institutions and systems as well. Marlow notes that sometimes he gets "momentary contact with reality." However, these were fleeting, as "something would turn up to scare it away" (citation). He goes on to describe one such thing, and speaks of a warship "In the empty immensity of earth, sky, and water, there she was, incomprehensible, firing into a continent" (citation). This warship resides in the "empty immensity," where, of course, there is nothing to fire at; the warship fires anyways. Marlow goes on to describe the ships firing with words like "feeble," "tiny," and "little," finishing by saying that "nothing happened. Nothing could happen" (citation). The warship and the many who keep it running are, in Marlow's words, "scar[ing] away" his contact with reality. Not only is engaging in processes without context supported by systems, but it is actively spread by them. When one lives in a reality surrounded by those who do not, coexistence requires some sort of conformity. When one does not live in reality, the processes they partake in are unfalsifiable. This deadly combination is what allows systems like these to spread so effectively, and what "scare[s] away" Marlow's connection with reality. The members of the crew justify their firing, claiming that there are enemies "hidden out of sight somewhere" (citation). This justification could be confused with needing ties with reality, and hence, the distinction between justification and connection to reality must be drawn. Of course, there are no enemies. This lack of need is what allows the firing to be "feeble." The fact that there are no enemies is irrelevant. The justification has no ties in reality, and its content is arbitrary. All that matters is that some justification exists. This lack of connection to reality and ease of spread contributes to the danger of engaging in processes without context.

Conrad's ironic imagery of a torch serves as a metaphor for the colonists, showing the effects of partaking in mindless processes. Marlow notices a painting which he describes as "a small sketch in oils, on a panel,

representing a woman, draped and blindfolded, carrying a lighted torch."(citation?) The juxtaposition and irony of a blindfolded woman carrying a torch is immediately evident. Of course, a torch is useless when blinded, just as a bucket is useless when it can't hold water——both examples of following processes without the context of reality. Marlow goes on to describe that "the background was sombre—almost black. The movement of the woman was stately, and the effect of the torchlight on the face was sinister." The use of the word stately to describe the woman clearly eludes that she is meant to represent the state. With this information, it can be inferred that the torch represents that which the state——or more specifically, the colonists——are bringing to the colonized. Not only are the colonists blinded to what they are truly doing to the natives, but they are blinded to what they are doing to themselves. Marlow describes the "effect of the torchlight on the face" as sinister. Marlow is referring specifically to "the face;" not the surroundings, and not *her* face. The effect of the torchlight applies only to "the face," as the background is "almost black." This specific verbiage shows how the colonists are themselves becoming sinister, being made sinister by what they bring to the natives. The use of the word "the" instead of *she* is meant to generalize the statement. Another important distinction is that the torch is not revealing the colonists to be sinister, but making them so, hence the use of the word "effect." Not only is the torch futile and useless as with the bucket, but it is actively making those who partake in processes detached from reality——in this case, colonialism——sinister.

These examples illustrate the effects of decontextualized processes. They are useless in achieving the goals they are intended to, they lead to violence, they are supported and propagated by systems and institutions, and they make those who partake in them sinister. We would like to think that we have overcome the horror present in colonialism, that it is only something we read about in school. The truth is, the root of colonialism – what caused it to become so evil – is not only present in colonialism, but present in so much today. Processes disconnected from reality is what allows institutions and systems to act without morality or concern for reality, what allows systemic problems to come into play, and what can turn even the kind hearted evil. The best way to overcome these problems, is to first understand their root, to re-attach these processes to reality.

3 | [[`https://docs.google.com/document/d/1onR1CQQjFge81saVBogQp7YOgZCGOrWp`
   `edit?usp=sharing`][**Final**

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