

Source:

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## 1 | This is fun!(?)

### 1.1 | Prompt

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

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

OPTION 3: Propose your own analytical adventure

### 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...?

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 nword 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?

- 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
    - wonderful method 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?
  - “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.
- 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
      - painted by Kurtz pre-trip, reflects those views?
      - majestic, yet blinded. another bit of juxtaposition?
    - the effect of the torchlight was sinister
      - again, Kurtz pre-trip. The truth is sinister, scary.
- 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
- looser
  - examples:
    - blindfold with torch
    - bucket with hole
    - ship
    - order...?
  - meta:
    - colonialism