

The University of Maine

DigitalCommons@UMaine

Honors College

Spring 2015

Ideologies of Empire: Perpetuating Imperial Culture Through Definitive British Literature of the Congo

Shelby Lynne Hartin

University of Maine - Main, hartin.shelby@gmail.com

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.library.umaine.edu/honors>



Part of the [English Language and Literature Commons](#), and the [Journalism Studies Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Hartin, Shelby Lynne, "Ideologies of Empire: Perpetuating Imperial Culture Through Definitive British Literature of the Congo" (2015). *Honors College*. 220.

<https://digitalcommons.library.umaine.edu/honors/220>

This Honors Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by DigitalCommons@UMaine. It has been accepted for inclusion in Honors College by an authorized administrator of DigitalCommons@UMaine. For more information, please contact um.library.technical.services@maine.edu.

IDEOLOGIES OF EMPIRE: PERPETUATING IMPERIAL CULTURE THROUGH
DEFINITIVE BRITISH LITERATURE OF THE CONGO

by

Shelby Lynne Hartin

A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for a Degree with Honors
(English and Journalism)

The Honors College

University of Maine

May 2015

Advisory Committee:

Gregory Howard, Ph.D., Assistant Professor of English, Advisor
Laura Cowan, Ph.D., Associate Professor of English
Sarah Harlan-Haughey, Ph.D., CLAS-Honors Preceptor of English
Margaret Lukens, Ph.D., Professor of English
Stephen Miller, Ph.D., Professor and Department Chair of History
Joshua Roiland, Ph.D., CLAS-Honors Preceptor of Journalism

Abstract

The Congo reform campaign in Britain was the largest humanitarian movement in British Imperial politics during the late 1800s and early 1900s. The texts used in this analysis emerged from the conflict and attempted to make sense of the atrocities committed against the people of the Congo Free State.

This analysis examines the impact of imperial ideology on the subjects of empire. It uses the texts of three authors, Arthur Conan Doyle, Joseph Conrad, and E.D. Morel, analyzing the literary underpinnings of imperial culture. It utilizes theoretical frameworks through which this literature can be understood and considers three manifestations of imperial culture: a preoccupation with violence, an inherent sense of national duty, and racist language. These manifestations reveal an inherent sense of superiority, effectively perpetuating imperial culture despite an effort to correct its impact.

Acknowledgements

Special thanks to my thesis advisor, Gregory Howard, for supporting my ever-changing views and committing to a project of such significance to me.

Thanks also to my professors, whose teachings have helped me become more aware of the failures of my own mindset – an idea that helped form the foundation of this thesis.

Table of Contents

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION	1
CHAPTER 2: THE CHANGES TAKE PLACE INSIDE, YOU KNOW	5
CHAPTER 3: DOYLE: THE UNCONSCIOUS PERPETUATION OF VIOLENCE	10
CHAPTER 4: CONRAD: A NECESSARILY SUPERFICIAL ACCOUNT	23
CHAPTER 5: MOREL: DEBAUCHED, DEGRADED, MUTILATED, TORTURED	30
CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION	39
WORKS CITED	40
APPENDIX A	42
APPENDIX B	42
AUTHOR'S BIOGRAPHY	45

Chapter 1: Introduction

This thesis is an analysis of the effects of culture on the author. More specifically, it analyzes the ideological impact of the British Empire on the authors Arthur Conan Doyle, Joseph Conrad, and E.D. Morel, each who chose to write about a vicious and repressive system in the Belgian controlled Congo Free State. Conrad chose to write about the dark heart of philanthropic imperialism. Doyle and Morel intended to raise awareness about what they considered unnecessary atrocity in Belgium's creation and management of the Congo Free State, despite Britain's involvement in similar conflicts on the same continent. Manifestations of imperialism within these texts, including a preoccupation with violence, an inherent sense of national duty, and racist language reveal a sense of superiority, effectively perpetuating imperial culture despite the effort to correct its impact.

The British relationship with the situation in the Congo was complex. The Congo reform campaign in Britain was "the largest humanitarian movement in British Imperial politics during the late Victorian and Edwardian eras" (Grant 28). Missionaries supported the formation of the Congo Free State because they thought it would help expand their work into central Africa (28). Missionaries did not try to end European expansion into the Congo; instead, they aimed to correct what they perceived as imperial evils (29).

In fact, the primary relationship to the Congo was evangelical. It was missionary and explorer David Livingston who helped create Britain's popular idea of Africa as the "Dark Continent," a place unknown to the western world (29). In 1877, British missionaries had allied themselves with King Leopold II of Belgium, who had his own

interests in acquiring the Congo as an imperial territory (29). Leopold built relationships with British missionaries, merchants and abolitionists, aiming to push them to lobby the British government to support his interests against those of France and Portugal (31).

“Leopold's British allies were convinced that a French or Portuguese regime would be hostile to their proselytization, trade, and campaigns against slavery. They were therefore receptive to Leopold's promises to promote free trade, sponsor the expansion of all Christian missions - whether Catholic or Protestant - and to fight against the slave trade in the Congo” (31).

In 1876, Leopold covered a geographical conference in Brussels during which time he “proposed establishing an international benevolent committee for the propagation of civilization among the peoples of Central Africa (the Congo region)” (Schimmer). This committee, the African International Association, was intended as “a multi-national, scientific, and humanitarian assembly,” but with the establishment of other committees operating under the same premises, he used these organizations to expand his influence in the Congo (Schimmer). His original intention was to exploit the ivory market, but rubber extraction became more profitable (Schimmer).

Leopold gathered European powers for the Berlin Conference of 1884-1885, using the same humanitarian goals to secure the support of the British government (Grant 31). In 1885, the Congo was placed under the authority of the Association Internationale du Congo (31). Five months later, Leopold dissolved the AIC and declared sovereignty over the land he named l'État Indépendant du Congo — known in Britain as the Congo Free State (31). “The philanthropic declarations of the Berlin Conference were subsequently ignored by Congo State officials, who negotiated with slave traders and

launched punitive expeditions to compel African villages to provide them with labour or supplies under the pretence of taxation” (31). In 1891 the state issued a decree that claimed all vacant land in the Congo and the produce of those lands. Leopold gave this land to concessionaire companies in which he held major investments. He expanded his exploitation while avoiding the costs of administration (31). Under Leopold’s rule, “[m]utilation became so commonplace that a Belgian captain adorned his flower beds with the heads of 21 natives killed in a punitive expedition. Villages were burned and children murdered as routine punishments. Under Leopold’s regime, millions of Congolese were murdered or perished from disease or brutal conditions imposed by their oppressors” (Horvitz and Catherwood 278).

Doyle’s narrative decisions created a text reflective of the imperial culture he intended to disgrace. Joseph Conrad, aware of the effects of this culture on those under its control, created a cynical text reflective of the culture’s impact. Finally, E.D. Morel, a man with a sympathetic stance toward the Congolese and intentions to improve their quality of life reflected imperial culture through his narrative decisions. Their decision to write about the conflict of this peoples’ land was to make their own people, those of the western world, aware of the evils perpetrated against the Congolese by Belgium; however, these men were part of western culture, born or brought into privilege. Part of the inherent problem within the approach of these authors lie in the process of writing the “other,” or people who do not share their race and culture.

Writing the other is a practice meant to understand lives lived differently from our own. Its intent may be to bring awareness to an issue or understand a conflict, much like

the intent of these authors. Writing the other is problematic because of the racial and cultural divide portrayed by these men.

Conrad, Doyle, and Morel did not know what it meant to look at the world through the eyes of a Congolese person; they knew only what it meant to look at the world through the eyes of a westerner. Furthermore, as subjects of the British Empire, they knew only how to look at the conflict through the eyes of empire. Each author had his own experience with this imperial culture, which influenced his narrative decisions. These narrative decisions found themselves through cultural perceptions and the author's own feelings, experiences, and history, acting as a framework through which this conflict came to be understood. It is a simple concept, but becomes more complex when one considers that the intent of these authors was to eliminate this problem, rather than perpetuate it. Following the theoretical frameworks of Louis Althusser and Edward Said, an examination of these authors and the texts they wrote of this conflict will consider the different ways in which imperial culture colored their responses to, what Doyle called, *The Crime of the Congo*.

Chapter 2: The Changes Take Place Inside, You Know

We can understand how imperialism operates by reading literature of the time period produced by those exposed to the cultural and racial manifestations of imperialism. The influences suffuse the literature of Joseph Conrad, Arthur Conan Doyle, and E.D. Morel. Despite the effort to stop the violence that takes place in the Congo, these authors perpetuate imperial culture by using manifestations of that culture in their narratives. These manifestations of imperialism include violence, racism and duty.

Arguing that the influence of imperial ideologies prevalent in the time of the British Empire is what impacts these writers and their viewpoints suggests that nurture overcomes nature. To add to his argument, it is not only education, but culture that molds human intellect. Imperial culture results in unintended preconceptions of cultural and racial superiority and a civilizing mission for the authors of this analysis. The narratives analyzed in this thesis reflect the ideologies these authors fight, a result of their environment – an Ideological State Apparatus.

Louis Althusser's work *Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses* asserts that a person's judgments, preferences, and intentions are the products of social practices. He explains through his theories of Repressive State Apparatuses (RSAs) and Ideological State Apparatuses (ISAs) that individuals are born into subjugation from "the political apparatus by subjecting individuals to the political State ideology," and "the communications apparatus by cramming every 'citizen' with daily doses of nationalism, chauvinism, liberalism, moralism, etc." (Althusser 97). Althusser claims that RSAs are used by the ruling class to dominate the working class (97). The function of RSAs is to intervene and act in favor of the ruling class by using violent and coercive means (97).

ISAs, on the other hand, reinforce the rule of the dominant party through ideology (97). Instead of fear of prosecution or violence, people submit out of fear of social ridicule (97). The ISAs of the British Empire, rather than being submitted to out of fear of social ridicule, became an ingrained notion within the culture and society itself. What originally may have started as fear to comply evolved into a cultural norm. Instead of adhering to ideas of superiority and imperialism out of fear, the culture became imbued with established notions resulting from years of foundational and transformative fear.

Althusser also says that “individuals are always-already interpellated by ideology as subjects,” which implies that “individuals are always-already subjects...even before he is born” (106). He notes the “ideological ritual that surrounds the expectation of a ‘birth.’” (106). A child is always-already a subject, appointed as a subject in and by the specific familial ideological configuration in which it is expected once it has been conceived (106). British subjects, then, are that even before they enter the world. As soon as they enter it, they are immersed in ideologies of the culture they’re surrounded by.

Conrad had experience with oppressive Russian authority. His parents were Polish patriots, and at the time of his birth, “Poland had been annexed by Prussia and Austria–Hungary to the west and by Russia to the east... the country had virtually disappeared from the map of Europe” (Watts). His experience affected his text

Doyle was under the rule of the British Empire, and while living within it was privy to its power. Only after experience in Africa was Doyle able to confront racism; even so, ingrained ideologies resulted in an unconscious perpetuation of particular manifestations of imperial culture, such as those of violence, racism, and duty, evidenced by his preoccupations with these themes in his text *The Crime of the Congo*. Morel, on the other

hand, was a naturalized citizen of England, coming first from France. His aims appeared to be pure in intent, but his text often slipped, revealing the influences of his culture, much like Doyle.

Picking up on the work of Althusser, Edward Said discussed how the west created an image of the Oriental in order to control it. Said says:

I use the notion of strategy simply to identify the problem every writer on the Orient has faced: how to get hold of it, how to approach it, how not to be defeated or overwhelmed by its sublimity, its scope, its awful dimensions. Everyone who writes about the Orient must locate himself vis-à-vis the Orient; translated into his text, this location includes the kind of narrative voice he adopts, the type of structure he builds, the kinds of images, theme, motifs that circulate in his text – all of which add up to deliberate ways of addressing the reader, containing the Orient, and finally, representing it or speaking in its behalf (Said 20).

The unique aspect of this idea is that it does not have to be contained to eastern countries; rather, it becomes a universal approach to the west's attempt at literature concerning unfamiliar places.

Said investigates how the Orient was created through texts and knowledge. He describes a "textual attitude," explaining that this attitude is favored by two situations: "[o]ne is when a human being confronts at close quarters something relatively unknown and threatening and previously distant. In such case one has recourse not only to what in one's previous experience the novelty resembles but also to what one has read about it" (93). The second situation is the "appearance of success" (93). Said says that "if one reads a book claiming that lions are fierce and then encounters a fierce lion...the chances

are that one will be encouraged to read more books by that same author, and believe them” (93). The point in bringing this portion of Said’s reasoning into this argument is to show how one is influenced by those things within their culture – ISAs.

For example, an advertisement for Pear’s Soap (Appendix A) reads, “The first step towards lightening the white man’s burden is through teaching the virtues of cleanliness. Pear’s Soap is a potent factor in brightening the dark corners of the earth as civilization advances, while amongst the cultured of all nations it holds the highest place – it is the ideal toilet soap” (The First Step). The advertisement was in print in 1890 during Doyle’s lifetime. Another example is found in yet another Pear’s Soap advertisement, which depicts a black child entering the bath. An accompanying scene then sees him exiting the bath with white skin (Ramamurthy). Advertisements, a common method of societal discourse, perpetuated ideas of the Dark Continent previously established and were prevalent during the time of these authors. Advertisements like these create images of the native as helpless, unclean, uncivilized, and in need of saving.

In addition, popular literature of the time period, like Rudyard Kipling’s *The White Man’s Burden*, acted as praise for the imperial mission (see Appendix B). Phrases like “half devil and half child” dominate the discourse of this poem and help to define the western world’s perception of the African people. The very title of Kipling’s poem shows that popular opinion held that it was the duty of white men to civilize and take on the burden of colonizing Africa. Even so, Kipling explains that this mission reaps “the blame of those ye better/The hate of those ye guard” (Kipling). Other discourse, like Cecil Rhodes *Confession of Faith*, asserts a superiority complex inherent to British views during this time period. Rhodes piece reads, “I contend that we [the British] are the finest

race in the world; and that the more of the world we inhabit, the better it is for the human race” (Rhodes).

What then are the implications of this problem? As Said says, “no one has ever devised a method for detaching the scholar from the circumstances of life, from the fact of his involvement (conscious or unconscious) with a class, a set of beliefs, a social position, or from the mere activity of being a member of society” (10).

Richard F. Taflinger of Washington State University argues, “average people depend on their own senses to identify what is in the world around them” (Taflinger). “Due to the limitations on perception the world must be a construct,” Taflinger says. The world exists only as we see it, so fundamentally, separating oneself from their cultural upbringing is impossible. What one may believe is proper to state in one culture could be ignorant in another because of unconscious cultural biases. Journalist Walter Lippmann touted this idea earlier, in 1922. He said, “‘For the most part, we do not first see, and then define, we define first and then see.’ He added that we tend to pick out what our culture has already defined for us, and then perceive it in the form stereotyped for us by our culture” (Patterson and Wilkins 27). When considering this, an unbiased view of a situation becomes impossible, not due to our own failure, but due to our humanity itself.

Doyle knows violence, racism, and duty. He knows the cultural, racial, political, and religious supremacy that act as manifestations of imperial ideology. What he doesn’t know is that these are inherently a part of him and influence his writing to a fault. He becomes a humanitarian, complete with no sense of the other. He creates a viewpoint of a situation that depends entirely on the eyes of an outsider — eyes unable to comprehend past what his culture has taught him to see.

Chapter 3: Doyle: The Unconscious Perpetuation of Violence

Life in the eastern portion of the Democratic Republic of Congo has only deteriorated since the time of British rule. Displacement, horrific acts of violence, and violations of human rights have resulted in the DRC becoming the least developed country on earth — conditions for those in the DRC are among the worst in Africa (Autesserre).

Despite the multitude and complexity of problems in the DRC, three particular narratives have dominated conversations about the country: the illegal exploitation of natural resources, sexual abuse against women and girls, and reconstructing state authority (Autesserre). In *Dangerous Tales: Dominant Narratives on the Congo and Their Unintended Consequences* Séverine Autesserre argues that simple narratives like these are necessary for policy makers, journalists, advocacy groups, and practitioners because they resonate with foreign audiences. The three themes Autesserre reveals are prevalent in the culture in which these reports originate: the western world. Dominant narrative themes result from cultural experience: we write what we know – the past and the present come together here as much the same idea of dominant narratives can be found in works like Doyle's.

Sir Arthur Ignatius Conan Doyle was born in Edinburgh, Scotland (Edwards). His mother was an immigrant from Ireland and he attended preparatory school with help from wealthy uncles, entering medical school in 1876 (Edwards). He remains most recognizable as the author of Sherlock Holmes, but his experiences in Africa and resulting literature reveal a sympathy for African American slaves (Edwards). He

supported British efforts in the South African War and wrote a nonfiction piece called *The Crime of the Congo* in which he denounced the actions of Belgian forces and encouraged the British to intervene. Upon closer examination, his sympathies are tainted by ideologies instilled through imperial culture. Recurring themes throughout the text become fixations of Doyle's. Recurring narratives of violent actions and an obvious idea of national duty to British society dominate his tone and reveal an unconsciously perpetuated identity. Doyle was born into imperialist Britain, a country that exercised its power and influence through colonization and use of military force to establish empire. The imperial century took place during his lifetime in which millions of square miles and people were added to the British Empire, which led to war, rivalry, and domination (Edwards). In spite of Britain's occupation in affairs outside the Congo, Doyle's focus, and the focus of the Empire itself, fell on Belgium. The Congo became a disputed territory, and though primary control rested with Belgium, Britain was beginning to get involved in the name of duty.

Doyle begins his pamphlet *The Crime of the Congo* by claiming that he is convinced "that the reason why public opinion has not been more sensitive upon the question of the Congo Free State is that the terrible story has not been brought thoroughly home to the people" (Doyle 3). This terrible story is one he intends to tell.

He claims that because this meaning has not been clearly conveyed, it is his goal to do so, yet he admits that his account may be "superficial" in nature (3). He says that "this account must be necessarily superficial...if it is to be produced at such a size and such a price, as will ensure its getting at that general public for which it has been prepared. Yet it contains the essential facts, and will enable to reader to form his own opinion upon the

situation” (3). Doyle’s cultural influences determine what he deems the essential facts of this situation. Doyle frames his story by revealing the nature of Belgium’s control in the Congo:

...they have had enacted one long horrible tragedy, vouched for by priests and missionaries, traders, travellers and consuls, all corroborated by a Belgian commission of inquiry. They have seen these unhappy people, who were their wards, robbed of all they possessed, debauched, degraded, mutilated, tortured, murdered, all on such a scale as has never, to my knowledge, occurred before in the whole course of history... (8).

Doyle establishes a sympathetic viewpoint, referring to the situation as “one long horrible tragedy” (8). His reference to the Congolese as “people” is important here, as he establishes the viewpoint that the Congolese are human and able to feel emotion, an idea often lacking in colonial thought (8). This selection is punctuated by language expressing violence perpetrated against the people of the Congo. He uses terms like “debauched, degraded, mutilated” and “tortured” to explain the scale of destruction in the Congo and to its people (8). He also includes a condemnation of Belgium within the selection by aligning their interests with the action. The narrative choice to include violence perpetrated against the people of the Congo is important because of its ties to his culture of violence.

During the lifetimes of the authors of this analysis, the British Empire enjoyed its imperial century, during which time it emerged as the world’s premier power (Parsons 9). In the 1870s, Britain’s rivals began expanding – a threat to their supremacy and control; the competition spurred Britain to expand their control to “economically and strategically

important” areas of the world (9). Soon enough, Britain became dependent on the “free flow of commerce and capital” (11). Africa held many important regions for economic gain, and therefore became a target of British imperial control.

British imperialists often had to resort to military force to convince more hesitant African states and societies to surrender their economic and political autonomy... Britain used late-nineteenth-century advances in military technology to subdue its African colonies at a fraction of the cost in manpower and resources. Repeating rifles, lightweight field artillery, and the maxim gun (a precursor of the machine gun) allowed a handful of British troops to kill vast numbers of Africans at little risk to themselves. Furthermore, British imperialists reduced the cost of these operations by employing large numbers of inexpensive African soldiers and auxiliaries (71-72).

Perhaps the most potent examples of this ingrained culture of violence in Doyle’s work come in the form of his fixation on the hands of the Congolese, which stand as a metonym to represent control. The hands of the Congolese were cut off, marking the “fruit of the policy of ‘moral and material advantage of the native races’” (Doyle 22). Doyle highlights observations and narratives from others that focus specifically on this particular act of violence:

Among the hands were those of men and women, and also those of little children...I have previously heard of hands, among them children's, being brought to the stations, but I was not so satisfied of the truth of the former information as of the reports received just now by Mr. Harvey from Clark...The methods employed are not necessary. Years ago, when I was on duty at the Equateur without soldiers, I

never had any difficulty in getting what men I needed, nor did any other station in the old, humane days. The stations and the boats then had no difficulty in finding men or labour, nor will the Belgians, if they introduce more reasonable methods (22-23).

By taking these hands away, control over actions requiring the use of the hands is possible. To deprive a person of their hands is to deprive them of their ability to create, eat, work, and live freely. Those who ordered the action forced this control: the Belgians. Once again Doyle condemns another country, despite the fact that his own country is committing violent acts in other areas of the same continent. His focus on this conflict rather than others occurring in his lifetime establish Britain and its empire as a positive force. By juxtaposing the actions of Belgium with a sympathetic viewpoint he creates a savior complex, justifying the expansion of British control due to the need of the Congo for their interference.

Doyle goes on to explain why and how the hand mutilation is committed. He says: "these hands — the hands of men, women and children — are placed in rows before the Commissary, who counts them to see the soldiers have not wasted the cartridges. The Commissary is paid a commission of about a penny per pound upon all the rubber he gets; it is, therefore, to his interest to get as much as he can" (24). The native is dehumanized here because the hands are recognized as an item of assurance, not as a part of a person. Separating the hands from the body force a control because of their indispensable power. By taking away the hands, the native becomes powerless. In addition to graphic descriptions of this violence, Doyle's pamphlet is preceded by a simple, yet powerful photo: that of a small African boy wrapped in a stark white sheet

with his arm bent at the elbow to reveal a handless stump. Doyle unintentionally fixates on one particular issue, creating a theme of violence in the Congo, which focuses on one particular metonym: the hands. Doyle did not order these actions, but because of what these actions represent and his own representation of them in this text, he effectively perpetuates the ideas to his British audience. The Congolese children become helpless and in need of aid.

Interspersed throughout this text are multiple examples of Doyle's interest in this particular method of control. From phrases like "carrying a basket of hands," and "they came with their smoked hands," this particular form of violence forms the core of Doyle's argument (25-26). This preoccupation is an interesting one and can be representative of that of control.

By the second half of the nineteenth century Victorian England had succumbed to colonial-hand envy. This condition overturned one of the central tenets of Orientalism as defined by Edward Said: that the Westerner had to negotiate 'a whole series of possible relationships with the Orient without ever losing him the relative upper hand' (7). The Crystal Palace Exhibition of 1851 initiated widespread admiration for the handcrafted work of Indian artisans in contrast to British machine-made art and design. As Tim Barringer has argued, this shift was 'deeply corrosive of widely held mid-Victorian assumptions concerning national and racial superiority, progress, and mechanisation' (260). The Indian worker's hand was the locus of this admiration, as evidenced in the Illustrated Exhibitor's comment that '[n]early everything in [the Indian] collection which is the work of a man's hand indicates a vast expenditure of time for its production and a great

display of taste' (318). Colonial hand envy flourished in a climate that mourned the figurative amputations of the English artisan, who had supposedly lost his hand to the standardization of the machine. The South Asian hand offered access to traditional forms of craftsmanship that England was believed to have forsaken through industrialization (Briefel 1).

These observations, made by Aviva Briefel in *The Potter's Thumb/The Writer's Hand: Manual Production and Victorian Colonial Narratives*, is preoccupied with compensating for a loss – the loss of the hands and the loss of what they create. In Britain's empire, economic integrity equaled power, hence its expansion into territories in order to provide an economic boon. Briefel notes that “contemporary critics fantasized about the effectiveness of the Indian hand if appropriated by the British corpus. They described this hand as a tool that could be detached from the rest of the Indian worker's body, which they defined through its general inefficacy” (1). The focus here is on the hand as a tool able to be detached, much like the fixation on the hands in Doyle's piece. This fixation lends itself to greater meaning than what one may originally see. Because the hands are considered tools, and tools are for building, creating, and mastering economy, the detaching of the hands in Doyle's work is representative of violent control over the native people and their ability to support themselves. The preoccupation with this is intriguing given the colonial hand-envy previously explained. This hand-envy is being transferred to the Congolese. The British aren't inflicting the punishment, yet the fixation is still there because taking away the hands takes away an individual's power to create and contribute, therefore making the individual weak, inhuman, and in need of saving: one of the very tenets colonialism is built upon. The preoccupation with the hands

becomes a perpetuation of an imperial mindset. In addition, he makes interesting choices about those who commit the action. Doyle says:

Each agent was given control over a certain number of savages, drawn from the wild tribes, but armed with firearms. One or more of these was placed in each village to ensure that the villagers should do their task. These are the men who are called ‘Capitas,’ or head-men in the accounts, and who are the actual though not the moral, perpetrators of so many horrible deeds (17).

These “savages” that the agents have control of are men from Africa forced to commit the deeds of those who control them. Oftentimes, if they did not comply, they were murdered, but Doyle conveniently makes this point only after painting the perpetrators in a certain light, electing instead to focus on the “savages” under the control of agents who terrorize the Congolese. He later introduces a letter written by Lieutenant Tilkens, one of the agents committing crimes in the Congo. Tilkens writes: “What can I do? I am paid to do my work, I am a tool in the hands of my superiors, and I follow orders as discipline requires” (19). Doyle then condemns the regime in place, showing a system of corruption. He humanizes one group by dehumanizing another, a method that is both effective and also complicated because of its foundations in imperialist thought and his defense of some agents that results afterward. He also condemns the white man:

Often the white agent far exceeded in cruelty the barbarian who carried out his commissions. Often, too, the white man pushed the black aside, and acted himself as torturer and executioner. As a rule, however, the relationship was as I have stated, the outrages being actually committed by the Capitas, but with the approval, and often in the presence of their white employers (17).

Violent acts and their perpetrators are cast in a savage light, one that causes the reader to sympathize with the victim. This singular narrative in relation to the Congolese is what captures the reader, but the questions that result from his complex system of condemnation also results. Even Doyle asks questions that the reader poses. He says:

Where did the responsibility for these deeds of blood, these thousands of cold-blooded murders lie? Was it with the Capita? He was a cannibal and a ruffian, but if he did not inspire terror in the village he was himself punished by the agent. Was it, then, with the agent? (19).

Doyle seems to grapple with the ideas he is supposed to hold and the questions he has. He places blame on those committing the action, but when considering who ordered the action, he seems to become confused.

Doyle's pamphlet, however, is not just a piece of writing meant to tell the story of the crimes in the Congo Free State — it is a call for action. Doyle's narrative asserts it is his country's duty to resolve the conflict and bring peace to the Congolese. In addition, making it seem as if his country's reputation and safety are at stake only helps to solidify Britain's duty to get involved.

Doyle sets the public's mind at ease by using reason to show who would support them in their efforts and why they should not fear defeat:

Let us look this danger squarely in the face. Whence does it come? Is it from Germany, with her traditions of kindly home life...Is it likely that those who so justly admire the splendid private and public example of William II would draw the sword for Leopold? Both in the name of trade rights and in that of humanity Germany has a long score to settle on the Congo. Or is it the United States which

would stand in the way, when her citizens have vied with our own in withstanding and exposing these iniquities? Or, lastly, is France the danger?...I know too well the generous, chivalrous instincts of the French people. I know, also, that their colonial record during centuries has been hardly inferior to our own... It is an impossibility that France could ally herself with King Leopold...Surely, then, if these three Powers, the ones most directly involved, have such obvious reasons for helping, rather than hindering, we may go forward without fear. But if it were not so, if all Europe frowned upon our enterprise, we should not be worthy to be the sons of our fathers if we did not go forward on the plain path of national duty (4).

Doyle eliminates danger in this piece, but he also reinforces the power of the British Empire while simultaneously supporting other colonizing countries guilty of violent expansion. He supports the French, claiming that they are generous and chivalrous, but mainly supporting their colonizing efforts, which he claims are “hardly inferior to our own” (4). His support of colonization is obvious here, and by claiming that the efforts of the French are “hardly inferior,” he still asserts that the British Empire is superior, a mindset that fails his supposedly pure intention in this text. In addition, he surprisingly defends Leopold:

He chose the obvious path, that of a civilizing and elevating mission, taking the line of least resistance without any definite idea whither it might lead him. Once faced with the facts, his astute brain perceived the great material possibilities of the country, his early dreams faded away to be replaced by unscrupulous cupidity, and step by step he was led downwards until he, the man of holy aspirations in 1885,

stands now in 1909 with such a cloud of terrible direct personal responsibility resting upon him as no man in modern European history has had to bear (7).

His defense of Leopold in this instance is surprising and shows that his text reveals a established ideology of British national duty rather than an attack against the atrocities committed under Leopold. Doyle seems sympathetic toward Leopold, claiming that he gradually fell due to the material possibilities of the country. Rather than condemn Leopold's evil, his viewpoint reveals an understanding and sympathy toward imperial aims – an impact of imperial culture.

To supplement this, he claims that involvement in this conflict is on “the plain path of national duty” (4). Doyle also says that “if all Europe frowned upon our enterprise, we should not be worthy to be the sons of our father if we did not go forward on the plain path of national duty” (4). What is this if not support of the actions of the Empire itself? Doyle is not eliminating fear – he is gathering support for the colonizing mission. Fear is not reasonable for those of the British Empire to feel because of its scope and power, but support for their mission is plainly what spurs them to action. Doyle doesn't recognize that he is perpetuating this idea. By eliminating potential fear, he weaves in the idea of support without making it the primary reasoning for action.

In addition, involvement in the conflict would extend their own influence and heighten their own prestige, effectively achieving the goal of empire.

“Had the nations gathered round been able to perceive its future, the betrayal of religion and civilization of which it would be guilty, the immense series of crimes which it would perpetrate throughout Central Africa, the lowering of the prestige of all the white races, they would surely have strangled the monster in its cradle,” Doyle says of the

crimes of the Congo (7). Here he works with shame to build on his initial push toward the duty that Britain must fulfill. Doyle blames other countries who initially supported this conflict, countries like the United States, but he illustrates how the actions of these countries reflect upon Britain. He claims that these actions have led to “the lowering of the prestige of all the white races” (7). The word “all” is important here, as he is revealing how Britain is part of a collective group of the “white race” and the actions of some can speak for all. He uses shame to push the need for involvement, or the duty to fulfill an obligation that is necessary because of Britain’s reputation. This reputation is important because the country cannot extend power or influence without respect and support – a tenet of imperial thought. These depend on the opinions of others in relation to action, or reputation. A negative reputation impacts the support others have of Britain, which, in turn, impacts their ability to control and influence others.

The negative reputation cast upon what Doyle paints as the harmless British observer reveals imperial culture. Doyle claims that, “a firm word, a stern act at that time in the presence of this flagrant breach of international agreement, would have saved all Central Africa from the horror which has come upon it, would have screened Belgium from a lasting disgrace, and would have spared Europe a question which has already, as it seems to me, lowered the moral standing of all the nations, and the end of which is not yet” (10). Doyle simultaneously elicits sympathy for the actions against the Congolese people and introduces the conflict as negatively impacting Britain by illustrating how the actions of the country of blame, Belgium, reflect directly on Britain and “other nations” (10). Doyle works with this situation in terms of the self, not the other, a foundation of imperialism itself. Neighboring violence perpetrated by the British seems to escape

Doyle. Instead, he condemns the violence of Belgium and creates a situation in which only British involvement can result in a solution.

It is important to note how Doyle's use of violence works with the national duty he uses to spur action. He uses violence and appears to sympathize, but frames his work in a way that condemns Belgian rule and strengthens the cause of imperial Britain. Doyle chooses the accounts of certain people, mostly British and American, whose views of the situation create a certain picture — one primarily of a sympathetic viewpoint and a desperate need for change that only Britain can bring about. Doyle presents an argument to help support this analysis, while the others of choice, like Conrad, bring different dimensions to it. Where Doyle exhibits imperial culture through his narrative choices, Conrad reveals that they exist.

Chapter 4: Conrad: A Necessarily Superficial Account

Chinua Achebe claimed that *Heart of Darkness* by Joseph Conrad divulged a need within western psychology. “If there is something in these utterances more than youthful inexperience, more than a lack of factual knowledge, what is it? Quite simply it is the desire — one might indeed say the need — in Western psychology to set Africa up as a foil to Europe, as a place of negations at once remote and vaguely familiar, in comparison with which Europe's own state of spiritual grace will be manifest” Achebe said (2).

Achebe may have felt the same about Doyle’s work, which sets up Africa as a place in need of saving; however, this is an unconscious perpetuation of culture. The unique portion of Conrad’s work, however, is that he recognizes it as such, using it to reveal the nature of the imperial enterprise in the Congo.

Joseph Conrad, formerly Józef Teodor Konrad Korzeniowski, was born in 1857 in Berdyczów, Ukraine. By the time of Conrad’s birth, Poland had been annexed by Prussia and Austria-Hungary to the west and Russia to the east (Watts). The country had disappeared from the map (Watts). His parents conspired against oppressive authority and were eventually sentenced to exile (Watts). Conrad was left as an orphan after their deaths, yet his upbringing had already taken hold. Conrad’s literature (especially *Heart of Darkness*) found a “preoccupation with a repressive state apparatus that limited the awareness of certain thoughts or feelings in its people” (Watts). Conrad’s work mimicked his experience with a powerful regime (Watts). This is more potent given his change of nationality (Watts). In 1886, Conrad took British nationality (Watts). *Heart of Darkness* was written after Conrad journeyed to the Congo Free State in 1890 and experienced Belgian cruelty and the powers of colonialism (Watts). This piece has welcomed various

critical interpretations, but considering it in conversation with the texts of this analysis help create an interpretation participating in a larger idea of perpetuations of empire through the written word. *Heart of Darkness* can be both sardonic and critical of empire and regime. Conrad's rhetorical strategies pair with his knowledge of imperial culture to create a story that seems to hint at a need for reform, but results in realizations that such involvement is simply an offshoot of imperialism itself.

All of Europe went into the making of Kurtz, a figure in a story that has bred much criticism. What more is to be said about *Heart of Darkness*? Perhaps nothing if examined singularly, but in conjunction with other texts addressing the same conflict it becomes a reflective surface through which to examine various viewpoints revealing imperial underpinnings of British involvement in the Congo Free State.

As Patrick Brantlinger explains in *Heart of Darkness: Anti-Imperialism, Racism or Expressionism?* "Conrad entertained no illusions about imperialist violence" (Brantlinger 3). Conrad was not ignorant to the fact that imperialism resulted in violence across Africa. He was well aware, but took a cynical view of the situation by presenting the situation as it would be seen through the lens of those experiencing the conflict from a place of privilege. In fact, Conrad revealed that an outside viewpoint could never tell a story devoid of the culture in which one has grown. He did so by using graphic description and presenting the conflict as it would be interpreted.

Bodies, flies, and those on the verge of death are images that swim through Conrad's text. In Achebe's opinion it's a dehumanizing view of people reduced to nothingness, explained in racist language inappropriate in addressing the situation. Achebe's statement is true, but these subjects are not used in the way Achebe claims.

Doyle and Conrad are both aware of violence perpetrated in the name of empire. Where Doyle unconsciously perpetuates this violence, Conrad recognizes it but takes a cynical viewpoint. He sees the conflict as it is through the eyes of the British and translates that image into his text. Conrad is writing what he knows based on his experience with a repressive regime. He writes what he knows the subjects of empire see. He is effectively skipping the step in which the reader interprets the text, doing it instead for him or her:

They were dying slowly — it was very clear. They were not enemies, they were not criminals, they were nothing earthly now — nothing but black shadows of disease and starvation, lying confusedly in the greenish gloom... The black bones reclined at full length with one shoulder against the tree, and slowly the eyelids rose and the sunken eyes looked up at me, enormous and vacant, a kind of blind, white flicker in the depths of the orbs, which died off slowly (Conrad 32).

Conrad creates a picture of a dehumanized individual, reduced to nothing but “black bones” and “sunken eyes” (32). These people are seen in terms of their individual parts, not as whole people. They are reduced to nothing but disease and starvation. This is the picture the people of the British Empire are predisposed to seeing.

In thinking about narrative and audience, turning back to Said writes, “there is a rather complex dialectic of reinforcement by which the experiences of readers in reality are determined by what they have read, and this in turn influences writers to take up subjects defined in advance by readers’ experiences” (Said 94). This is exactly what Conrad does. Conrad takes up subjects that have already been defined in advance by readers’ experiences. Achebe realizes this as well. He writes, “Conrad did not originate the image of Africa which we find in his book. It was and is the dominant image of

Africa in the Western imagination” (Achebe 13).

However, he precedes his illustration with an important message: “...they were not enemies. They were not criminals,” he writes (Conrad 32). Conrad shows that the imperial enterprise has treated these people as if they were enemies and criminals when truly, they were simply in the way of an empire bent of expansion and power. They’re described as unearthly creatures because that is what empire sees them as. They are not human, but creatures reduced to nothingness simply because they are already seen that way. Eventually, they’re destroy as if they are an enemy or a criminal, when they were only the victim of a supposed philanthropy that was truly an imperial mission to seize power and control – this is vastly present in Doyle’s text.

Perhaps the main difference between Conrad and Doyle lies in their focus. While Doyle uses images of the violence, condemning the men who commit it, Conrad focuses on those who have suffered through it, but uses imagery that dehumanizes.

...two more bundles of acute angles say with their legs drawn up. One, with his chin propped on his knees, stared at nothing, in an intolerable and appalling manner: his brother phantom rested its forehead, as if overcome with a great weariness; and all about others were scattered in every pose of contorted collapse, as in some picture of a massacre of a pestilence (32).

This selection sees the people in terms of the things that parts of their bodies resemble, like “bundles of acute angles” (32). These men are phantoms, no longer earthly due to the dehumanization that took place long before the western world arrived. These men and women were inhuman before Conrad described them this way; he is conveying both what has been physically done to them and also what the British Empire expects to see – less

than human creatures. Imperial culture has instilled the idea that those of Africa are less evolved, less human, and in need of saving. Conrad depicts this idea through illustrating these scenes.

Doyle fixates on a particular violent act, Conrad fixates on the violence of dehumanization. Through his words and imagery he creates a scene in which the Congolese are shapes, bundles, creatures, phantoms. They are no longer human — no longer “earthly,” as Conrad writes (32). The “no longer” portion of this is important, however, as it shows that these were once people who have been reduced to nothingness, not because of who they are, but because of the violence of the process of dehumanization they face due to the perspective of the outsider (32). They are no longer beings as the British are. Instead, they have been reduced to nothingness, in sight and by the preconceptions of others.

Doyle uses violence to rationalize an unfamiliar situation — a recognizable story of dehumanized natives in an unrecognizable landscape of different people. Doyle plunges from the irrational into the rational, using preconceptions of Africa to describe people so they are recognizable. Conrad, on the other hand, begins with rationality and plunges into an irrational world, creating an unfamiliar story. If one were to view Conrad’s story and say “this was the fault of my country,” it would make more sense; however, no one of this country would place the blame on themselves because of the idea they are invested in: the idea of imperial philanthropy. Perhaps this work has been the subject of so much criticism because of the inability to reconcile an action and a person behind it – the action being dehumanization, and the person behind it being the very one who attempts to create literary works about the conflict in order to achieve what they believe is a deeply

sympathetic solution. Conrad did not dehumanize the Congolese — it had already been done for him and he simply saved the steps in between. Conrad did not create a racist image; rather, he reflected that which he knew cultural biases had already created.

As Thomas Osborne writes in *Agents of Evil*, “Africa is not, in this sense, situated in some original corrupt darkness, but becomes darkness through the fascinations and abominations of imperialism” (Osborne 234). Conrad reflects the images in his text that have been established through this imperial fascination and abomination, effectively creating a text definitive of the views western audiences hold concerning African peoples.

Brantlinger says, “white racism against Africa is such a normal way of thinking that its manifestations go completely unnoticed” (Brantlinger 293). All of imperial culture went into the making of these texts, just as all of Europe went into the making of Kurtz — a figure reflective of the process the outsider takes in making the suffering of others an ordeal for those who inflict the suffering. It is not only violence, but also racist language, and especially a call for duty which create in these texts manifestations that go completely unnoticed due to their inherent presence in the lives of those whose culture has foundations of imperial ideologies.

A mind already made up holds a pen, which has already determined how the situation will be framed. Said also considers this idea:

A text purporting to contain knowledge about something actual, and arising out of circumstances similar to the ones I have just described, is not easily dismissed. Expertise is attributed to it. The authority of academics, institutions, and governments can accrue to it, surrounding it with still greater prestige than its

practical successes warrant. Most important, such texts can create not only knowledge but also the very reality they appear to describe (94).

Conrad has made these conclusions. Rather than attempt to create a work against the imperial philanthropy, he shows what every text coming out of this conflict will represent. The texts resulting from this conflict began to create not only an altered version of knowledge, but the realities they described: the realities veiled by imperial culture.

It seems as though with Conrad's language and imagery of violence and the natives, he would also be a supporter of intervention, but his text instead reveals a criticism of imperial philanthropy. One could say that Kurtz represents Leopold himself, altered to the point of believing that his horrific actions were justifiable, which is interesting given Doyle's previous defense of Leopold; however, Leopold was never in the thick of the conflict himself. Rather, just as all Europe went into the making of Kurtz, Kurtz represents all of Europe. Rather than a being unto himself, he is a representation of a western ideal. His Intended, representative of his original purpose, is lied to and continues to believe that his mission was pure, when, in reality, a horrific outcome results. Kurtz represents imperialism itself, the intention, the action, and the result of something that may begin as a philanthropic inclination and end in genocide. "It would be interesting," Conrad writes in *Heart of Darkness*, "for science to watch the mental changes to individuals, on the spot" (35). Conrad reveals that no matter the intention behind philanthropic action it will inevitably result in greed and corruption due to the nature of western ideals and the imperial influence under which Europeans, bent on being saviors, operate within.

Chapter 5: Morel: Debauched, Degraded, Mutilated, Tortured

E.D. Morel was a naturalized English journalist who helped to reveal the atrocities taking place in the Congo. He began writing articles calling for the defense of free trade in West Africa against the protectionism of the encroaching French (Caedel). He became instilled with hatred for the Foreign Office because they deemed West Africa a low priority (Caedel). He also gained sympathy for African culture (Caedel).

By 1900 Morel began campaigning against the system of forced labor employed by Leopold II (Caedel). In 1903 he launched a paper, *West African Mail* and in 1904 he helped found the Congo Reform Association (Caedel). His campaign achieved its original aim in 1908 when the free state was handed over to Belgium (Caedel). Following this exchange, some success in reforms resulted (Caedel).

E.D. Morel's begins *King Leopold's Rule in Africa* by saying that "the struggle in England against the misrule of the Congo State really dates back from September 1896, when the Aborigines Protection Society, tired of making representations to the authorities in Brussels, appealed to the British Government" (Morel ix). We immediately have Morel's stance defined for us: the misrule of the Congo is a problem. However, this Congo is introduced as a problem of Britain's, rather than a problem of those living in the country itself. Immediately we have set a foundation that shows that correct rule of the Congo is Britain's responsibility to correct. Morel uses a third person point of view in his preface, making it seem as if another is speaking of his intention. He says "the author of this volume, who has no commercial interest of any kind whatsoever in Africa, was in 1902 invited, through his work as a writer on West African questions, to become a member of the Committee of the West African Section of the Liverpool Chamber of

Commerce” (xi). The issue at hand in analyzing Morel’s work is the way he puts forth his text outlining the conflict in the Congo. Morel capitalizes on the “British effort against an evil which is both gigantic and unique,” analyzing the situation in terms of the achievements and efforts made by those of the culture (xvii). In praising Britain, he condemns Belgium, an act that shows that this fight, no matter how noble, has other underlying intentions. Morel ends the preface of his piece by saying that “if we organise our forces, and pursue resolutely the course which duty and honour alike order us to follow, the issue is certain” (xvii). He effectively makes the same narrative choices as Doyle, claiming that duty and honor should be the driving force behind involvement in the Congo.

The part of Morel’s work that makes his viewpoint unique is his slight recognition of those things that Doyle unconsciously perpetuated throughout his narrative. Morel realizes the facts of British imperial culture. He says the following:

...the fact remains, that, as a rule, the aim of every Government is to promote the interests of its own people, to the exclusion and, if necessary, to the detriment of the interests of other peoples. The sentiment is natural, and until the millennium is reached, frontiers abolished, and universal brotherhood established as a working basis, its selfishness is as justifiable in ethic as it is inevitable in practice” (3).

By asserting that the aim of every Government, including his own, is to promote the interests of its own people, he makes a connection that Doyle seems to be ignorant of. Doyle does not admit within his text or to himself that the interests of his people have led to the detriment of the interests of others, particularly those of the Congo. Morel takes this a step further, connecting it in many ways to the thesis of this analysis: he says that

“the sentiment is natural...its selfishness is as justifiable in ethic as it is inevitable in practice” (3). Morel makes this point in relation to government interests. Just as the sentiment of governments is natural, its selfishness justifiable in ethic, and its practice inevitable, so is the perpetuation of imperial culture that finds itself embedded in the texts written by these authors. Morel claims that until this realization is made and actions are taken to remedy the practice inherent to government itself, nothing can be changed. Similarly, until the realization is made that the underlying foundations of these texts – pure in intent yet riddled with expressions of imperial culture – is realized, nothing can be done to discover and uncover underlying cultural assumptions to come to a greater understanding of a particular outlook on a situation.

In addition, Morel realizes the power of an imperial culture’s effect, much like Conrad. Instead of admitting to it metaphorically and leaving it as is, like Conrad, Morel condemns it.

Morel’s text begins simply, with a recounting of much of the history given earlier in this piece, but as part two of the text begins, a shift is obvious. Morel slips into a creative piece of writing, recounting how trade may have began between those of the Congo and white men. The creative set-up Morel uses is interesting, because his writing makes the quiet evening along the banks of the Congo River a portrait of universality. The only portions of the text that make it any different from a quiet night after a day of work is the surroundings – the people, however, are the same as anyone. Morel says, “in those native communities there are good men and bad, just as at home – good according to their lights, bad according to their individual characters, just as at home. Their lights are not our lights, but who shall say which bring the greatest happiness?” (34). Morel

does something unique in his approach here: he creates people. Morel is different from the others in this instance. Rather than dehumanize, he humanizes, using creative language and framing in order to create a universal situation applicable to any person, European, Congolese, or other. Yet still, there is a hint of something else – a hint of something within that believes that the life of the westerner is more evolved than that of the African native. Morel says, “Thus is trade born in Western Africa...the awakening of desires before undreamt of – a page in the evolution of the human race” (35). Morel may have humanized the African, but he also shows through this sentiment that they were less evolved than the white man. This selection, however, is a deviation from his previous thoughts and the note he makes below. He claims, “there are still people to be found who think that the African native is a brute beast impervious to human sentiment, and that a writer who endeavours to paint a different picture is sentimentalising in order to improve the case” (35). He uses an excerpt from another author who recounts seeing a young Congolese man carry his wife across the river because she is fatigued. All portions of this particular excerpt point toward an exhaustive effort to help Britain realize that the Congolese are as human as any other, but the one point about evolving still shows traces of the idea that the native is somewhat less than those westerners he or she encounters.

At some points, Morel seems to almost study the people of the Congo, and though his text has points of unencumbered speech, the influence of imperial culture is still present. His work acts mainly as a historical, factual, and explanatory text aiming to make sense of the situation in the Congo for the British public. It is interspersed with many of the same qualities Doyle’s work holds, though Morel is more sympathetic toward and accepting of the people of the Congo. Perhaps the most interesting parallel is

Morel's choice to include photographs and descriptions of violence surrounding the cutting off of hands. He includes the photo young boys who lost their hands. Each is wrapped in a white sheet in the same pose. Morel comments on the actions as well and chooses to include accounts of others who were privy to the information. Morel says that he "had always thought, until the early part of 1901, that these mutilations were carried out upon dead people only" (112). Morel finds, however, that they are carried out on the living. "But it was only towards the end of 1901 that I ascertained...that mutilations were frequently practiced by the Congo soldiery upon the living; upon men, upon women, upon poor little innocent children of tender years" (113). Much like the other two authors, Morel once again brings children into the pictures, which inherently act as an emotional appeal.

Perhaps what is most intriguing about the decision by both of these authors to include these accounts is that the action wasn't actually perpetrated by the white soldiers, but by the Congolese under their control. Congo soldiers, not white officers, commit the act of cutting off the hands. The white officers ordered the mutilations to take place, but did not do it themselves. This creates a dehumanizing effect. Perhaps the westerner would claim that no reasonable subject of the British Empire would do such a thing, but the Congolese are inhuman so they see no harm in it. The act becomes associated immediately with the people of the Congo, no matter how many times each author comments that they were made to carry out the mutilations by the white officers. Morel says that "the systematic hand-cutting and worse forms of mutilation which for over a decade have been practiced all over the Congo territories – mutilation of dead and living – must be assigned to the direct instigation of State officials and agents of the Trust

appointed to terrorise the rubber districts” (119). Although Morel attempts to assign blame to white officers, the damage is done initially due to the explanation of the person committing the action – the Congolese.

Morel’s text contains portions in which he follows the common discourse of the Congo adopted by the other two authors, but the overwhelming tone of his piece is that of sympathy toward the plight of the Congolese citizen. He defends the cannibals that others deride, calling them “progressive” (123). He also blames the Congo Government and its Trusts for arming the natives and inciting violent behavior. Morel makes the point to place blame on those in charge of the Congo. He reveals lies and atrocities committed and makes a compelling and emotional argument for the people of the region; however, there are still hints at ideas within imperial culture, such as his choice to use photos of children without hands and men with ropes around their necks, leashed like dogs. Photographs of this violent action were popular in Britain’s push for interference in the Congo. The first photographs of atrocities committed in the Congo are credited to Alice Harris, a Catholic missionary accompanying her husband, John Harris in the Congo (Grant 28).

The photographs were used both to dehumanize the native Congolese and condemn the actions of the Belgian regime. The subjects wrapped a white cloth around themselves to create a stark backdrop for their dark skin. They appear powerless. The majority of photos are of children and women as well, establishing a viewpoint of ignorance, innocence, and helplessness. But Morel seems to use these differently than Doyle. He displays obvious sympathy in his writing, crying out for the people he sees and considering them as people. In his introduction he condemns Leopold, while Doyle

believes that Leopold simply got into a situation too deep and was taken in by it – something that could happen to any man. Doyle does not blame Leopold – he blames the lure of economic promise. Morel blames everything that has happened in the Congo on Leopold, whom he says is “the sole arbiter of and legislator for the destinies of the Congo Natives.” Morel calls for reform and mutually beneficial relations. This may seem progressive, but its relations between the two countries still function positively for the Empire, while maintaining the attitude that relations will result in the civilizing of the native people. Doyle uses terms that show an idea that the western world has helped the African evolve. Perhaps he chose the word “evolve” to mean, “learn,” but the choice itself speaks volumes.

Perhaps Morel’s sympathetic views came from his mother, who was a Quaker and raised him after his father’s death (Caedel). Perhaps his struggle throughout life lent him a different perspective than Doyle, who began his life with meek beginnings but was eventually supported by wealthy uncles.

Morel’s difference from Doyle, however, is further complicated by his piece titled *The Black Man’s Burden*, a response to the poem *The White Man’s Burden* by Rudyard Kipling. Morel’s tone in *The Black Man’s Burden* is inflammatory. He is angry and it is obvious. He cries out for Africa, who he refers to as a she (an interesting gender assignment given the power of men over women during this time period and the previous discussion of control), and condemns Britain and the actions of the colonizer in Africa itself. He sympathizes with the African, claiming that the colonizer has uprooted the African from his lands, invading his family life, destroying his natural pursuits and occupations, and enslaving him in his own home (Morel). Morel outlines the struggle of

the African against disease and claims that when the system of British labor is forced on the African, he “droops and dies,” much like some sort of plant (Morel). Although sympathy is established, there are a variety of problems in his word choice. Morel always refers to the people of Africa as “the African” (Morel). He does not refer to individuals, but collectively lumps Africa into one person who suffers the same in all situations, thereby creating an object rather than a group of people. It is not individuals who suffer, but the African, an object representative of collective Africa. Morel fails to grant the varying peoples of Africa their nationality. Each one comes from the African continent, but they are different, just as an Englishman and a Swede would be. Though Morel sets up a sympathetic viewpoint for African peoples, his language is inherently problematic.

Morel says that, “to graft upon primate passions the annihilating evils of scientific slavery, and the bestial imaginings of civilized man, unrestrained by convention or law; ...to kill the soul in a people – this is a crime which transcends physical murder” (Morel). There are two portions of the selection that are important, the first being that he identifies the African people with primates, claiming that the colonizer puts their scientific slavery upon these primate passions. Though he simultaneously condemns colonization in this phrase, he also equates the African people with an animal, a dehumanizing image common to discourse concerning the African people.

Finally, a portion of the final part of this text reveals language that is difficult to unpack, but reveals once more the idea that the people of Africa are not as evolved as the white man:

For a time it may be possible for the white man to maintain a white civilization in the colonizable, or partly colonizable, areas of the African Continent based on

servile or semi-servile labor: to build up a servile State. But even there the attempt can be no more than fleeting. The days of Roman imperialism are done with forever. Education sooner or later breaks all chains, and knowledge cannot be kept from the African... [When] he becomes alive to his power the whole fabric of European domination will fall to pieces in shame and ruin. From these failures the people of Europe will suffer moral and material damage of a far-reaching kind (Morel).

Morel says that “education sooner or later breaks all chains, and knowledge cannot be kept from the African” (Morel). He treats the people of Africa as if they do not realize they are being enslaved. By claiming that education breaks all chains, he implies that the African people are not as intellectually proficient as white men and must learn, over time, from the white men in order to come to the realization that they are meant to be free.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

Is it hurtful or helpful to write the other? Attempting to see others through the cultural frameworks we've been given throughout our life leads to obvious problems. The process contributes to a discourse destructive to the group it may intend to assist. It leads to the perpetuation of ideologies that reinforce certain notions about anything from race, to religion, to gender. One could also claim that help comes from this process, because we are able to know something we previously did not, albeit through a veil of culturally preconceived notions.

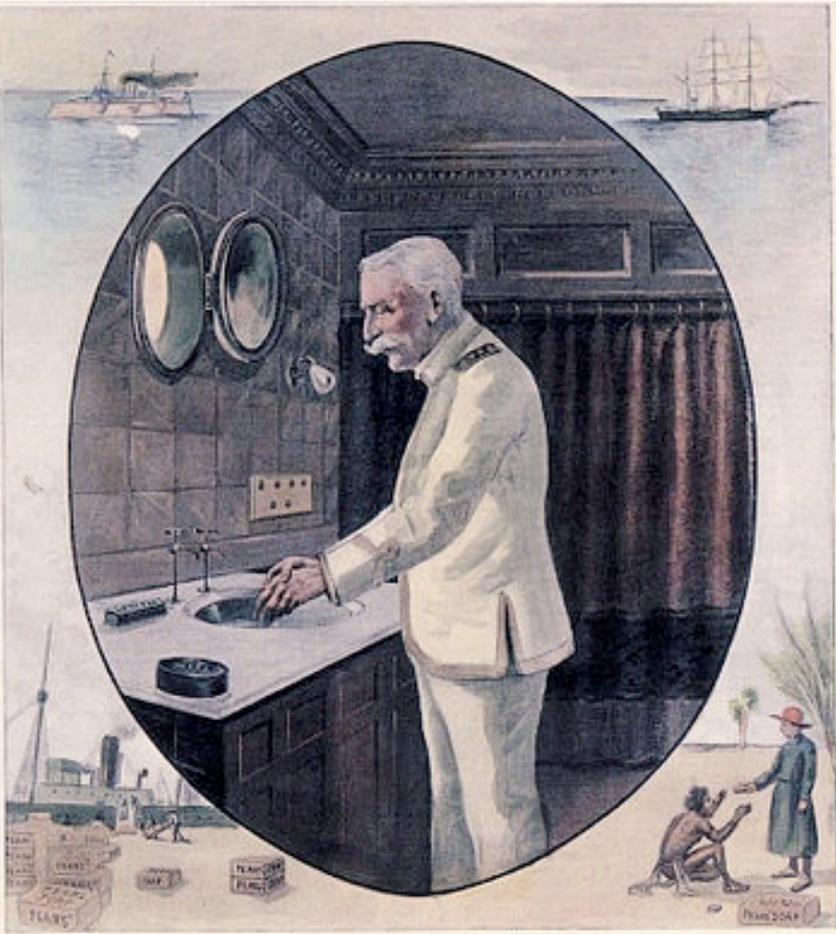
Morel, Doyle, and Conrad all tried to address colonial violence using the methods available at their disposal. Because of their subject positions those narratives were complicated. We are all reflections of the culture we are brought into, and this point is proven through the analysis of the previous texts, which intended to assist a group and perpetuated ideas inherent to imperial culture, thereby adding to the volume of texts that make up colonial discourse. Conrad's choice to illustrate the Congolese as they were already perceived in the west may have incidentally led to a perpetuation of that view rather than an elimination of it. Doyle and Morel are examples of the impact an imperial culture has on those brought up within it and how that view leads to an unconscious, yet obvious impact on their writing. And yet there's no escape from it. To place blame on these men for the way they approached these situations is futile, due mainly to the fact that their narrative decisions were unconsciously led by the stories they were predisposed to hearing, knowing, and telling.

Works Cited

- Achebe, Chinua. "An Image of Africa." *Research in African Literatures* 9.1, Special Issue on Literary Criticism (1978): 1-15. *JSTOR*. Web. 20 Apr. 2015.
- Althusser, Louis. "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses (Notes toward an Investigation)." *The Anthropology of the State: A Reader*. By Aradhana Sharma and Akhil Gupta. Malden, MA: Blackwell Pub., 2006. 86-111. Print.
- Autesserre, Séverine. "Dangerous Tales: Dominant Narratives on the Congo and Their Unintended Consequences." *African Affairs* 111.443 (2012): 202-22. *JSTOR*. Web. 20 Apr. 2015.
- Brantlinger, Patrick. "Heart of Darkness: Anti-Imperialism, Racism, or Impressionism?" *Criticism* 27.4 (1985): 363-85. *JSTOR*. Web. 20 Apr. 2015.
- Briefel, Aviva. "The Potter's Thumb/The Writer's Hand: Manual Production and Victorian Colonial Narratives." *NOVEL: A Forum on Fiction* 42.2, Theories of the Novel Now, Part I (2009): 253-60. *JSTOR*. Web. 21 Apr. 2015.
- Caedel, Martin. "Morel, Edmund Dene [formerly Georges Edmond Pierre Achille Morel De Ville] (1873–1924), Campaigner on International Issues and Journalist." *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*. 2004. *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*. Oxford University Press, 2008. Web.
- Conrad, Joseph, and Ross C. Murfin. *Heart of Darkness: Complete, Authoritative Text with Biographical, Historical, and Cultural Contexts, Critical History, and Essays from Contemporary Critical Perspectives*. Boston: Bedford-St. Martins, 2011. Print.
- Doyle, Arthur Conan. *The Crime of the Congo*. London: Hutchinson, 1909. Print.
- Edwards, Owen Dudley. "Doyle, Sir Arthur Ignatius Conan (1859–1930), Writer." *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*. 2004. *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*. Oxford University Press, 2013. Web.
- The First Step toward Lightening the White Man's Burden through Teaching the Virtues of Cleanliness*. Digital image. *Library of Congress*. Cosmopolitan, n.d. Web.

- Grant, Kevin. "Christian Critics of Empire: Missionaries, Lantern Lectures, and the Congo Reform Campaign in Britain." *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 29.2 (2001): 27-58. Web.
- Horvitz, Leslie Alan, and Catherwood, Christopher. *Encyclopedia of War Crimes and Genocide*. New York: Facts on File, 2006. Print.
- Kipling, Rudyard. "The White Man's Burden." *Peace Review* 10.3 (1998): 311-12. Web.
- Osborne, Thomas. "Agents of Evil." *Evil, Barbarism and Empire: Britain and Abroad, C.1830-2000*. By Tom Crook, Rebecca Gill, and Bertrand Taithe. Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire, UK: New York, 2011. 231-34. Print.
- Parsons, Timothy. *The British Imperial Century: 1815-1914: A World History Perspective*. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 1999. Print.
- Patterson, Philip, and Lee Wilkins. *Media Ethics: Issues, Cases*. Boston, MA: McGraw-Hill, 1998. Print.
- Ramamurthy, Anandi. *Imperial Persuaders: Images of Africa and Asia in British Advertising*. Manchester, UK: Manchester UP, 2003. Print.
- Rhodes, Cecil. "Cecil Rhodes Confession of Faith, June 2, 1877." *Africa and the West: A Documentary History*. By William H. Worger, Nancy L. Clark, and Edward A. Alpers. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2010. 221-26. Print.
- Said, Edward W. *Orientalism*. New York: Vintage, 1979. Print.
- Schimmer, Russell. "Belgian Congo." *Genocide Studies Program*. Yale University, 2010. Web. 21 Apr. 2015.
- Taflinger, Richard F. "The Myth of Objectivity in Journalism: A Commentary." *The Myth of Objectivity in Journalism*. Washington State University, 1996. Web. 20 Apr. 2015.
- Watts, Cedric. "Conrad, Joseph [formerly Józef Teodor Konrad Korzeniowski] (1857–1924), Master Mariner and Author." *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*. 2004. *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*. Oxford University Press, 2011. Web.

Appendix A



The first step towards lightening

The White Man's Burden

is through teaching the virtues of cleanliness.

Pears' Soap

is a potent factor in brightening the dark corners of the earth as civilization advances, while amongst the cultured of all nations it holds the highest place—it is the ideal toilet soap.

The First Step toward Lightening the White Man's Burden through Teaching the Virtues of Cleanliness. Library of Congress.

Appendix B

“Take up the White Man's burden--
Send forth the best ye breed--
Go bind your sons to exile
To serve your captives' need;
To wait in heavy harness,
On fluttered folk and wild--
Your new-caught, sullen peoples,
Half-devil and half-child.

Take up the White Man's burden--
In patience to abide,
To veil the threat of terror
And check the show of pride;
By open speech and simple,
An hundred times made plain
To seek another's profit,
And work another's gain.

Take up the White Man's burden--
The savage wars of peace--
Fill full the mouth of Famine
And bid the sickness cease;
And when your goal is nearest
The end for others sought,
Watch sloth and heathen Folly
Bring all your hopes to nought.

Take up the White Man's burden--
No tawdry rule of kings,
But toil of serf and sweeper--
The tale of common things.
The ports ye shall not enter,
The roads ye shall not tread,
Go mark them with your living,
And mark them with your dead.

Take up the White Man's burden--
And reap his old reward:
The blame of those ye better,
The hate of those ye guard--
The cry of hosts ye humour
(Ah, slowly!) toward the light:--
"Why brought he us from bondage,
Our loved Egyptian night?"

Take up the White Man's burden--
Ye dare not stoop to less--
Nor call too loud on Freedom
To cloke your weariness;
By all ye cry or whisper,
By all ye leave or do,
The silent, sullen peoples
Shall weigh your gods and you.

Take up the White Man's burden--
Have done with childish days--
The lightly proffered laurel,
The easy, ungrudged praise.
Comes now, to search your manhood
Through all the thankless years
Cold, edged with dear-bought wisdom,
The judgment of your peers!" (Kipling)

Author's Biography

Shelby Hartin grew up in Crystal, Maine and graduated from Southern Aroostook Community School in 2011. She majors in English and Journalism and has a minor in Professional and Technical Writing. She is a member of Phi Beta Kappa, Golden Key, and Order of Omega Honors Societies. She has received Presidential Award from the University of Maine and the Nellie Ruth Pillsbury King Scholarship, awarded by Stephen and Tabitha King.

Upon graduation, Shelby will work in the Sales Department at the Bangor Daily News. She plans to attend graduate school in the fall of 2016 to pursue a master's degree.