

ABSTRACT

NARRATIVE STRATEGIES AND RACE ANALYZING THE TREATMENT OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLE IN IMPERIAL NOVELS

Grayson Scott Wolf

Director: Kristen Pond, Ph.D.

This thesis posits a hermeneutical principle by which a contemporary reader can understand the function of racism in imperial literature. Rather than ascribe racism to the author without consideration for how it is used within the novel, a reader ought to attribute racism to the narrative strategy in order to fully comprehend the thematic importance of racism. This is true for any given work of imperial literature. Having made this assertion, the thesis examines how the hermeneutical principle aids in the analysis of three Imperial novels initially written for a British readership: Flora Annie Steel's *On the Face of the Waters: A Tale of the Mutiny*, Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*, and Philip Meadows Taylor's *Confessions of a Thug*. In the thematic analysis of these tales, it is demonstrated that the narrative's message is incomprehensible if one does not ascribe racism to the narrative strategy.

APPROVED BY DIRECTOR OF HONORS THESIS:

Dr. Kristen Pond, Department of English

APPROVED BY THE HONORS PROGRAM:

Dr. Andrew Wisely, Director

DATE: _____

NARRATIVE STRATEGIES AND RACE
ANALYZING THE TREATMENT OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLE IN IMPERIAL
NOVELS

Thesis Submitted to the Faculty of
Baylor University
In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the
Honors Program

By
Grayson Scott Wolf

Waco, Texas

May 2016

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Acknowledgments	iii
Dedication	iv
Chapter One: The Problem of Race in Imperial Literature Criticism.....	1
Chapter Two: Flora Annie Steel's <i>On the Face of the Waters</i>	11
Chapter Three: Joseph Conrad's <i>Heart of Darkness</i>	28
Chapter Four: Philip Meadows Taylor's <i>Confessions of a Thug</i>	44
Chapter Five: Summation and Extension of the Hermeneutical Principle	61
Bibliography	66

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I foremost would like to thank Dr. Kristen Pond for directing my thesis project. I also wish to acknowledge Dr. Sarah Ford and Dr. Christian van Gorder for serving on the Thesis Defense Committee and helping me articulate my ideas. I am indebted to the faculty of Baylor University, especially Dr. James Barcus, Dr. Bill Pitts, and Professor Andrew Telep; their scholarly expertise and Christian instruction was instrumental in the formation of my worldview.

DEDICATION

It is only by the help of my family and friends that I have been able to have any iota of success in this life. I thank God for them every day, and I would like to dedicate this thesis to my family and friends for their boundless love and continual support.

CHAPTER ONE

The Problem of Race in Imperial Literature Criticism

It is rare to find a culture that has remained static for over a century, especially in an age of globalization. Accordingly, people who identify with one cultural group might be confused when encountering vestiges of their forerunners that seem counter to their own intuitions. It is often tough to reconcile a culture's modern day values with those of yesteryear. This holds true when a contemporary Western person reads literature written and set in the Age of Imperialism of the 17th through early 20th centuries, the term imperial literature hereafter referring to this broad category. Whereas an overabundance of modern readers reject racism, being the products of numerous 20th century civil rights campaigns, much literature written at the height of imperialism used pejorative language to refer the indigenous peoples of the conquered lands and depicted them in exceedingly demeaning manners. Such blatant racism violates the sensibilities of many readers, yet its presence should not necessarily mean that the modern world should ignore the wealth of literature from this age. In my thesis, I will posit a hermeneutical principle for reading imperial literature, a mindset that allows readers to read racism as part of a narrative instead of rejecting the text altogether. In order to best analyze a narrative, one must ascribe racist language to the narrative strategy rather than the author.

The treatment of indigenous peoples in imperialistic texts is indubitably demeaning because racism was an inherent part of the imperial worldview. Imperialism was foremost an economic ideal. Nations sought to claim territories and establish

colonies so that they might appropriate the resources found therein. This preoccupation with foreign domination and prosperity is what gave rise to imperial literature, which exposed the ordinary citizens of imperialistic nations to the exotic and wealthy lands across the world (Pratt). Imperial literature affirmed the notion that the untamed, uncivilized regions of the world needed overlords to establish order and make good use of the resources (Sen). Unfortunately for the civilizations already occupying these lands, the native inhabitants were seen more or less as part of the goods that come along with conquest. Mary Louise Pratt notes that even the most benign of exploration texts rested on this assumption, as consistently in 18th and 19th century literature, “subjugated peoples undertake to represent themselves in ways that engage with the colonizer's own terms” (Pratt 7). The indigenous people were not altogether of little consequence. In fact, imperialistic texts often celebrated how the native population shaped their territories both topographically and culturally. Nevertheless, the imperialistic literature, like adventure novels and travel narratives, primarily focused on the fortunes that their respective countries might gain by ruling such a people. The land and the people were thus a commodity; they were something to conquer, to tame, and to make glorify the conquering nation (Firchow). It is seen in the literature from this time period a justification for conquest and domination, that a group of people that exists for the financial gain of the imperial powers must have a natural disposition to being subjugated. Consequently, indigenous people were as a rule portrayed as inferior beings physically, mentally, and morally. While a white man who failed to live up to society's expectations was generally taken as an aberration from typical white people, the foreign, darker-skinned person who had these same qualities was noted as proof of that entire race's natural inferiority. The

following implication of this notion is that only the exemplary native person is worthy of interacting equally with the imperials or being seen as a worthy foe (Abrahams 224-226). In this manner, native people were depicted as subhuman, and it was their wildness, their uncivilized state that accounted for much of the allure of imperial literature (Klein). This thesis will accordingly use the term “racism” to describe the stereotypes and other denigrating devices that are used to impose the imperial worldview at the expense of the indigenous people.

A survey of racism in imperial literature demands one also consider the presence of sexism since the two forms of discrimination were found alongside each other, often intertwined, in the writing from this time period. By projecting gender roles onto both themselves and the native population, imperialists used patriarchal ideals to support imperialism’s hierarchical model. Thus, sexism was another tool by which imperial powers further denigrated the subjugated people. Historically speaking, women in imperialist countries had limited opportunities since the imperial society was also male-centric. Those who pursued typically feminine positions, such as teachers or missionaries, in a colonial world gained some autonomy and adventure, yet even this apparent freedom was permitted only as a tool for patriarchal imperialism. Women “played a central role in shaping the social relations of imperialism” by virtue of being “members of the inferior sex within the superior race” (Rosner 57). Moreover, imperialism stripped the conquered people of any claim to masculinity. Forcing the conquered people to interact primarily with women controlled the conservative elements of those societies, thereby weakening the strongest opposition voices (Rose, Sarkar). By equating the original inhabitants of their conquered territories with femininity, the imperial powers further rationalized their

domination. In this manner, women were a bridge between the imperial powers and the subjugated indigenous people. Women, like the people they were trying to civilize, were thus seen primarily as a commodity for the advancement of imperialism. Literature from this era shared this conflation of race and gender. Indigenous people were often portrayed with passive, feminine qualities. Likewise, female characters needed to assume “masculine” qualities in order to maintain their imperial identity (Lake, De Groot). In imperial literature, racism and sexism aren’t quite synonymous, but they are regularly conflated. Feminizing the indigenous people was another way of asserting the imperial powers’ self-proclaimed natural superiority.

Although a few authors tried to reject the blatant racism and sexism present in imperialism, imperial literature as a whole was unable to separate itself from an imperialistic and Eurocentric worldview. In discussing the portrayal of women in British literature, Mary Rosner argues, “women may not be as powerless as Victorian culture seems to define them, and patriarchs may not be as powerful as we have long believed” (Rosner 103). Woman protagonists often did not meet the expectations of Victorian England, whose ironically patriarchal ideals are inextricable from imperialism by and large, and thus found themselves existentially at odds with the patriarchy (99, Janiewski). In a similar vein, the abundance of Mutiny novels and the rare yet significant presence of non-European protagonists challenged notions of the subjugated peoples’ proclivity to passivity and natural weakness (Sen, Archibald). While being significant voices of dissent, these sorts of texts ultimately failed to reject patriarchal imperialism because they were also reflections of the society for which they are written. These texts indirectly validate the existence of the imperialistic system by borrowing its chosen terminology

and set of assumptions (De Groot). Showing a struggle against a particular hierarchical structure unfortunately necessitates one also show that hierarchical structure.

Additionally, a character who refuses to accept the imperial worldview constituted a real threat to the imperialistic world both within the particular narrative and for the society that gave birth to that tale; such opposition demands in both realms destruction of dissenting worldviews (Rosner). As such, the voices of dissent were largely silenced in, and by society, the only message gleaned from their texts therefore being a tacit and unintentional affirmation of the hierarchical structures found within imperialism.

Imperialism and its values embedded in imperial literature have proved troublesome for generations of critics who question the moral efficacy of studying racially charged literature. However, preoccupation with placing a moral judgment on racism can inhibit the reader's ability to understand its function in the narrative. The hermeneutical principle, the mentality one has when approaching a text, that I propose is intended to make the process of interpreting imperialistic texts more clear by allowing for the thematic role of racism in a narrative to be stated before any moral judgment is pronounced upon it. Edwin Black's theory of rhetoric argues that the persona an orator assumes is the one with which one his or her audience identifies (Black). Consequently, it is of tremendous concern to opponents of the imperial models that continued identification with such models leads to casual acceptance of them (Sethi). With this consideration in mind, Postcolonialism, which broadly applies to worldviews founded under imperialism that no longer accept its precepts, has tended to focus on the people abused by imperial literature such as women and indigenous people. Postcolonial interpreters tend to use "obscure theories" to contort the narratives and interpret the

depictions of the disenfranchised to somehow be positive (Sethi). The critics of these modern methodologies “fear anecdotal evidence might oversimplify certain dynamics of the text or the historical epoch in which it was written” (Edin 157). I perceive this vein of hermeneutics as fallacious. The chosen methodology is more important than what is actually found within the text when readers have in mind the message they wish to extrapolate from the text. In doing so, the interpreters are allowing the mere presence of racism to dictate the interpretation of the text instead of considering what function it may have in the story. Rather than explaining away racism in imperial literature, I would like honestly examine what role it has in any given narrative. Readers’ immediately attributing racially charged language and uncharitable depictions of indigenous peoples to the author of a book runs the risk of making racism a *bête noir* that inhibits proper interpretation of a text. Therefore, I propose the following hermeneutical principle: One recognize racism as a narrative strategy in imperial literature in order to fully analyze the text.

I will show the efficacy of this hermeneutical principle by utilizing it in three separate imperialistic texts. The principle is not a complete methodology by itself. It must be noted that the hermeneutical principle does not attach any moral judgment on the presence of racism; it only provides the means to understand what effect racist elements have on the overall narrative. It effectively is an appeal to withhold a moral judgment on racism until one properly names its function. Consequently, I intend to show how following the principle enables interpretation of the larger narrative. I will provide a thematic analysis of each selected narrative that takes into consideration themes, motifs, and formal structure of the tale. Then, I will show recognizing racism as part of the

narrative strategy enables one to define racism's role within the narrative and thus facilitates a better interpretation of the tale.

The first analytical chapter will focus on Flora Annie Steel's *On The Face of the Waters: A Tale of Mutiny*. It shows how ascribing racism to the narrative voice plays a vital role in accounting for demeaning portrayals of Indians that are inconsistent across both the narrative and in its form. At times, the depiction of Indians is demeaning; other times, it shows them in a positive light. The analysis of this novel is the first chapter because it shows how my hermeneutical principle is vital for determining the thematic importance of inconsistent racism in the book. I chose to include this book in my thesis for number of reasons. Foremost, it was written by a woman. Given the relationship between emasculation and discrimination in imperial literature, I thought it was altogether fitting on an ethical level to examine the writing from someone directly ignored by imperialism. Of even greater consequence, being a woman provides Flora Annie Steel a unique position to comment on imperialism since women bridge the gap between the patriarchal imperial world and the subjugated people. Secondly, Steel's personal life is fascinatingly relevant to any attempts to reconcile imperialism's racism to contemporary, more charitable views of indigenous peoples. Although she was herself a colonist in the British Raj, Steel worked alongside Lockwood Kipling to promote Indian culture (Rao). Consequently, her life suggests that there is greater complexity to racism in imperial literature, and the proposed hermeneutical principle aims to enable a better understanding of these very same complexities. Finally, this novel chronicles an Indian mutiny, as may be gathered from the title. This setting makes the novel a very apt item by which to compare and contrast demeaning portrayals of Indians to an event that seems at

a very simple level to contradict those portrayals. Ultimately, *On the Face of the Waters* was chosen to be the first book analyzed in this thesis based on the fact that it heavily emphasizes the discord caused by racial divides.

The second piece of literature I will investigate is Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*. I have chosen to study Conrad's work because Conrad was a Polish man writing about Dutch imperialism in the English language. This seminal book is included to show that this hermeneutical principle applies broadly to all literature and is not limited to just the British flavour of imperialism. I chose to make this story the focus of the second chapter due to its critical reception. Chinua Achebe famously labeled Conrad a racist and reduced criticism of this story to one single point:

The real question is the dehumanization of Africa and Africans which this age-long attitude has fostered and continues to foster in the world. And the question is whether a novel which celebrates this dehumanization, which depersonalizes a portion of the human race, can be called a great work of art. My answer is: No, it cannot. (Achebe 30)

This story has often been censored or outright banned from public schools for its demeaning description of native Africans (*Sewlall*). Accordingly, I have selected this book because its reception illustrates how fixating on racism in a book rather than analyzing it as part of a larger narrative inhibits one from interpreting the text fully or, in the case of banning *Heart of Darkness*, inhibits people from interpreting the text at all. This chapter will show that, especially in a text seemingly saturated with racism, attributing racism to the narrative strategy is necessary to ensure the narrative can be analyzed to its fullest extent.

The final novel I will analyze is Philip Meadows Taylor's *Confessions of a Thug*. While he, like Steel, was a British citizen living in British-controlled India, his 1839

novel was published nearly sixty years before Steel's 1896 *On the Face of the Waters*. In exploring the wealth of imperial literature, having two persons of the same cultural identity yet from different times exhibits the continuity of imperialism as well as proves how the hermeneutical principal can be used equally across generational gaps. In addition to representing a different time period, *Confession of a Thug* contributes to the complexities of race issues in imperial literature. The book chronicles the exploits and horrific deeds of the Thuggee cult. The practitioners of this cult are called Thugs and shouldn't be conflated with the modern use of the term "thug." Conrad wished to show the horrible crimes committed by Thugs, but he also wanted to write a book that "belongs to the people of India Hindus and Mahommedans only" (Finkelstein 11). Taylor's chosen protagonist in his novel also happens to be a Muslim Indian. Thus, the paradoxical intentions of the author need clarification in order for a cohesive message to be drawn from the book. I believe that ascribing racism to the narrative strategy best ensures the possibility of achieving this task. *Confessions of a Thug* is the final book to examine because racism is thematically present in the story but is only a secondary consideration. This chapter will show how my proposed principle can help interpret a text even when there is little to no risk of the presence of racism inhibiting interpretation.

By focusing the reader's attention on function of racism instead of its mere presence, the hermeneutical principle allows the reader to ascertain racism's role in the larger narrative. In Steel's *On the Face of the Waters*, the reader is confronted by an imperialistically hierarchical worldview in which both the narrator and the British characters repeatedly disparage the Indian population. However, the hermeneutical principle helps highlight and advance themes within the narrative that ultimately

undermine this imperial worldview. In Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*, there is an abundance of racial slurs, and the native Africans are portrayed as simple-minded commodities in accordance with the imperial hierarchy. Application of the hermeneutical principle to this tale allows the reader to determine that racism is integral in asserting one should fear her or her own self; every instance of pejorative language or demeaning depiction of Africans is equally an indictment on the moral decay of Western civilization. In Taylor's *Confessions of a Thug*, racism is most blatantly present in the occasional slur and in a narrative structure that removes agency from the Indian narrator. Although the tale seems to affirm imperialistic values subtly, the hermeneutical principle shows that racist elements within the narrative asserts Indians to have the same moral agency as the British, thereby rejecting the "us" versus "them" dichotomy of imperialism. These three books exemplify how the hermeneutical principle can be applied to various works of imperial literature in order to ascertain the thematic function of racism. The stories of Flora Annie Steel, Joseph Conrad, and Philip Meadows Taylor illustrate for all of imperial literature that one must ascribe racism to the narrative strategy rather than to the author in order to analyze a text fully.

CHAPTER TWO

Flora Annie Steel's *On the Face of the Waters*

Flora Annie Webster Steel's *On the Face of The Waters* provides an ideal arena in which to first test this hermeneutical principle. Steel, like many of her peers, was a British expatriate living in colonial India. For nine years, she resided in the Punjab region of India. She was a notable associate of John Lockwood Kipling, and together they promoted Indian art and culture as well as advocated for impoverished Indians. This work allowed her a unique perspective on the Indian people in her writing. *On the Face of the Waters* is set over the course of the Indian Mutiny of 1857. Although many characters were admittedly fabricated or altered significantly, Steel claims the overall presentation of war and the people groups concerned is accurate for she has "drawn chiefly from the lips of those who saw it" (Steel v). Derived from both British and Indian accounts, Steel attempted to give an accurate portrayal of life in the British Raj. However, there are clear fictional elements to this novel, and attached to them are sentimentalities that merit analysis. At points, the inclusion of racism seems blatantly to contradict the narrative as a whole. The principle that demands one recognize racism as part of the narrative strategy reveals that despite the inconsistent use of pejorative language and stereotyping of Indians, *On the Face of the Waters*, relative to other examples of imperialistic literature, offers a wholesome ideal for relations between the British and their subjugated people.

The narrator of *On the Face of the Waters* seemingly paints a bleak picture about the state of Indian-British relations, one that is altogether congruent with other examples

of imperialistic literature. Even so, the narrator prophetically denounces this worldview over the course of the novel. In its place, the narrator envisions a British Raj where British and Indian alike can live harmoniously. True peace is no longer about establishing order or about restoring Britain's majesty through conquest; it is now about reconciling two people groups to each other. The solution offered by the novel ultimately rejects the social hierarchy demanded of imperialism.

The narrator tells a dynamic story in which the assumed worldview the reader is brought into at the beginning of the novel is deemed faulty and must be replaced through the plot of the novel. The narrator's ability to bring the reader into the imperial worldview only to tear it down perhaps becomes most apparent in comparing the beginning and the conclusion of the novel. The first words of the novel are the sound of an auctioneer proclaiming in a town square a distinctly Western phrase: "'Going! Going! Gone!'" (1). The narrator imputes mystical meaning in "Those three cabalistic words, shibboleth of a whole hemisphere's greed of gain." (1) This opening highlights the sheer degree of cultural and economic domination the British exerted, and, more importantly, it created a precedent within the novel for the reader to view the world in fashion that privileges the imperial powers. However, the narrator demands that particular privilege be renounced by the end of the novel for as John Nicholson, the embodiment of British masculinity, is laid into his grave, the words "'Going! Going! Gone!'" (468) are repeated. Although he successfully quelled the Indian Mutiny, the singularly British focus of the narrative now extends "to the dark face and the light alike" (469). The narrative, as will be shown below, gradually pushes the reader to forgo imperialistic thought and instead embrace a more egalitarian society.

In order to undercut the typical British attitudes towards conquered people, *On the Face of the Waters* must first present the might and flaws of the contemporary imperial vision. One of the means by which this is accomplished is showing the rigid social structure of British India. The narrator, intending to shed light on this system, describes “majesty being thus vested in the representatives of the annexing race... A position which comes naturally to most Englishmen.” (2-3). Interactions between Indians and the British throughout the novel make the hierarchical model abundantly clear; the subservient Indians were seen as an economic resource by their British masters. In one instance, the British ‘Huzoors’ “Lied about enlistment, about prize-money and leave, about those cartridges” (166) in an effort to utilize the Indian militias at low cost. By glossing over ethical concerns of their subjects and misleading them about the risks and rewards of service, the British manipulated the indigenous people for imperial gain. This lack of consideration of the Indian people was commonplace. In a seemingly innocuous incident, Jim Douglas encountered a beggar woman “who had lived on bounty, and who was starving for the lack of it. There were hundreds in her position... even among those whose pensions had been guaranteed; for they had not been paid as yet” (81). The value of an Indian was found in their usefulness to the British regime. Once it had been depleted, there was little cause for the British to concern themselves with reciprocity. This economic view of the conquered lands dominated British-Indian relationships consistently through the beginning of the book, even though the paternalistic decisions of the British sometimes benefited the Indians. For example, Jim Douglas prohibits his servant Tara from committing ritual suicide upon the death of her husband, yet he accomplishes this by stealing and threatening to destroy one of her spiritual keepsakes, a

“grotesque threat, which suggested itself to his sardonic humor as one suitable to the occasion, and which in sober earnest was terrible to one of her race, involving as it did eternal damnation” (78). His acts are patently paternalistic, made possible through the exertion of power rather than empathy. In this manner, the British are forthright in treating the Indian people as natural inferiors.

The British tendency towards domination is seen most clearly in the character Alice Gissing. In British imperial literature, British women often adopt what were thought to be masculine qualities out of necessity to differentiate themselves from the weaker, emasculated race. (Nielsen 3) Alice is portrayed much the same way. Her lover, Major Erlton, notes, “It is a cruel world, Mrs. Gissing, the sex is the cruelest thing in it, and you, as I’m always telling you, are the cruelest of your sex.” (Steel 5) Jim agrees, noticing that when he had felt “Alice Gissing’s heart beat beneath his handle there had been no womanhood in that touch.” (147) These men don’t admire Alice while essentially ignoring more traditionally feminine characters like Kate Erlton in spite of her more masculine traits. Rather, they have found a strange attraction to these very characteristics. The narrator has a peculiar knack for changing tone when focusing on one character. The world is described in the manner that particular character would perceive it, which is further accentuated when the narrator includes the unspoken thoughts of these characters. This technique is seen as Alice, who is widely celebrated for her manlike gumption, enacts the masculine-female ideal early on in the novel. When driving Major Erlton’s buggy, an act significant in its own right, she accidentally runs over an Indian child. The reader is informed the child ran over thankfully was “only the girl.” (62). Alice further distances herself from wrongdoing saying, “but it doesn’t feel to me like killing a

human being, you know. I'm sorry, of course, but I should have been much sorrier if it had been a white baby.'” (63) Alice Gissing seemed rattled by the incident and therefore needed to rationalize according to what she believed to be true. Meanwhile, Major Erlton successfully convinced the wailing Indian mother to admit no one was at fault, and he appeared much more collected than Alice. In the juxtaposition of these characters, there is an unmistakable difference in narrative styles: the self-assured Erlton gets a brief treatment whereas the disturbed and frantic Alice Gissing is given much more attention by the narrator to show her cognitive efforts to resume the masculine female archetype. In both characters, there is a disturbing callousness exhibited by these prototypical British characters; it seems they have accepted the notion that the British are superior and have superior rights and beneath them lies the vanquished indigenous people. In this worldview, the British not only possess all of the power but are also the only ones whose lives really matter. This imperial hierarchy is not a mere stratification of society; it is a redefinition of who is human. The shocking portrayals of class struggles within the novel reflect the external world. The narrative must choose to accept or reject the imperialistic premises underlying racial and gender discrimination.

While the caricatures of British colonists are somewhat repulsive, the narrative's disdain for the hierarchical system is magnified in the events of the story, in which the imperial model is rebuffed by showing the British-Indian dichotomy to be unstable. The narrator's choice to include scenes from the Indian Mutiny in the tale shows how the ever-present cultural conflicts became physically manifested. The collision of cultures inevitably became a violent clash; the established hierarchy set in motion the Mutiny. Indian militias serving the British refused to use cartridges coated in cow fat, a religious

taboo for the Indians, and some resisted. The British reaction was to issue a death sentence to those who would not convert to Christianity. The intentional use of lard-covered cartridges, an ostensible use of religious domination, has unwisely created discontent among the people any empire would least desire to antagonize: its military. An even more foolish act would be to humiliate the angered people, which precisely happened. To further establish their sovereignty, the British selected 85 of the dissident troops and sentenced them to ten years of labor. They were being placed in chains, “But suddenly from a single throat came that cry for justice, which has a claim to a hearing, at least, in the estimation of the people of India. ‘*Dohai! Dohai! Dohai!*’” (169-170). In maintaining a system in which the subjugated peoples feel so oppressed to the point of revolution, the heavy-handed actions of the British made mutiny seem inevitable. As Alan Johnson asserts, “In other words, the moment when the tautological structure supposed to guarantee and justify British rule falls into place, its historicity and, hence, fragility emerge unbidden and inevitably to light” (Johnson 507-13). Consequently, this narrative leads the reader to believe that had the British not been so bent on fully dominating their subjects there would have been less cause for revolution. The narrator’s account of the affair further explicates the discordance of social stratification. The mutinous Indians and their years of subjugation were suddenly unleashed upon the British and each other “as they plundered and fired the houses. Joining in the license helplessly, drifting inevitably to violence, so that some looked on curiously, unconcernedly, while others, maddened by the smell of blood, the sounds of murder, dragged helpless Englishmen and Englishwomen from their carriages and did them to death savagely.” (Steel 197), and those who protected the English were treated much the

same. Just as the British had committed unforgiveable atrocities against the Indian people, at least by their reckoning, the Indian people had in turn risen up to afflict their masters.

Despite the atrocities against the Indians by the British, the narrative fails to uphold either faction as morally exemplary; the Indians, too, commit egregious and barbaric acts. Following the first surge of mutiny, the Muslim soldiers rushed to the palace of the former Muslim rulers, who were now mere figureheads, so that their royalty may lead a holy war. In this, the narrator posits the mutiny is predicated on a fundamental understanding of each culture in relation to the others. Furthermore, the desire to subjugate all dissent is once again demonstrated in the division in the Indian ranks. The Indian Mutiny became almost strictly a Muslim uprising even before the Muslims petitioned their royalty for support, and the Hindus were left somewhere between mutiny and subservience. Soma, a Hindu soldier, realized during the initial uprising that “a Mohammedan trooper was after him, shouting ‘*Deen! Deen!* Death to the Hindoo pig!’” (198). The conflict of religions between West and East was thus repeated between Muslim and Hindu; the need to distinguish friend from enemy caused a split amongst the revolutionaries. For each party involved, sovereignty came at the expense of the others. Perhaps the narrative implies that the prevalent imperial cycle of conquest, domination, and then revolution is self-perpetuating, but it is certainly strange that a narrative that has shown the darker side of imperialism’s hierarchical structure fails to show the subjugate people in a flattering light.

On the Face of the Waters doesn’t offer any redemption for imperialistic factions, yet is still makes an allowance for the presence of racism in the narrative strategy. Within

the Indian Mutiny are complex issues of morality; no faction seems wholly supportable. The actions of the Indians certainly seem “savage” and “devilish” as described by both the narrator and in dialogue by the characters, but one must not forget that they are reacting to numerous abuses at the hands of their British lords. The callousness of the British characters and the viciousness of the uprising indicate that neither the mass penal sentencing by the English nor the massacre by the Indians can be lauded as a moral exemplar. The Indians themselves are reduced to in-fighting as well. Indeed, victory for any one side can only create a temporary peace. Major Erlton, in reflecting on the nature of the conflict, realizes, “The ethics of the question did not interest him, and in truth mere revenge was lost in him the desire, not so much to kill, as to fight. To go on hacking and hewing for ever and ever” (327). The clearly delineated factions are incapable of establishing a greater society by continually resorting to racial conflict. The tendency to reduce people to social classes has in fact reduced the perpetrators of the system, whether British or Indian, to brutishness. Neither side is innocent. As such, neither side can lay claim to moralistic hegemony.

To further complicate the relationship between the British and their subjugated people, the reader need also consider the inner turmoil of the moderately tempered characters like Soma. He feels attachment to the English and is nauseated by the violence surrounding him, but, swept up in the tide, he chooses to join the fight for his liberties. His sister Tara, Jim Douglas’s servant, is in a similar position. She hates that Jim Douglas has denied her the ability to act out her strongest religious convictions, yet she respects him enough to prove invaluable in ensuring his and Kate’s survival. It is characters like

as Soma and Tara who offer a compromise between the opposing sides that appear most relatable, but not even they can escape the terms demanded by the imperial system.

In *On the Face of the Waters*, the Indian Mutiny of 1857 serves as more than a historical setting for the plot; it achieves an allegorical status through which the narrator presents the events as a sort of warning or lesson on how to avoid similar events in the future. This depiction of the Indian Mutiny largely respects the historical events of the Indian Mutiny. The story's account of the uprising, the re-conquest of Delhi, and the eventual resolution of the Mutiny are reasonably accurate albeit dramatized, as can be corroborated by Ainslee T. Embree's *1857 in India: Mutiny or War of Independence?* As a real historical event, the Indian Mutiny by itself cannot be the device by the narrator undercuts the prototypical imperial worldview. This lack of univocal meaning is exhibited in Embree's book, which explores the vast conflicts of opinion on how the war should be interpreted. The narration's additions to the uprising thus become the interpretative lens for the event. Moreover, a novel that presents the manifestation of real cultural problems cannot be satisfied ending with affairs in the same state as they began. The British eventually retake the city and suppress the revolution, yet the condition of the British Raj is no different than when Britain originally conquered the subcontinent. In accordance with the narrator's portrayal of British imperialism and its self-perpetuating conflict, having the victorious once again assert their will over the opposition will not fix the systemic issue. Even though Britain triumphed, even at the loss of its mighty leaders, the underlying social stratification upon which the conflict of the novel is predicated still remains. The book would have come full circle. We as readers, in a particularly Western fashion, expect a story to move from one point to another, not return to the original

setting with the same issues as before. Therefore, the narration must insert something somewhere to indicate that things can change, and studying the narrative voice demystifies the interpretation of the Mutiny. As a consequence of this, the narrative strays from historical fact to include necessary fiction. Steel wrote in her preface that “An Englishwoman was concealed in Delhi, in the house of an Afghan, and succeeded in escaping to the Ridge just before the siege. I have imagined another; that is all. I mention this because it may possibly be said that incident is incredible.” (Steel v) This fictional woman, Kate Erlton, has therefore become the focus of the allegory. The complex and now violent relationship between British Imperialists and the Indian whom they conquered centers on her part of the narrative.

Jim Douglas’s function in the narrative to foreshadow the revelation that comes through Kate. It is he who first discovers the solution to the novel’s underlying predicaments. Formerly of the army, he is of middling respectability on the British half of the social structure. His story differs from that of the typical soldier though in that he was once married to an Indian woman, Zora. After her death, he is torn between devotion to the memory of her and infatuation with the ever-alluring Alice Gissing. Even he who has some love for India can be attracted to the most powerful statements of British imperialism. He seems to have concern for the well being of his former servants Tara and Soma, but is overbearing in his paternalistic treatment of them. Despite this peculiar background, he too follows traditional English modes of thinking. When he attended an Indian play, he referred to Indian actors as scoundrels and “had every intention of asserting his race by licking one at least of the offenders when the show was over.” (68) Upon the conclusion of the play, Jim realizes the Indian actors have an uncanny ability to

alter their appearance so as to take on a new identity almost at will (71). Jim, exhausted by his current life, offers one hundred rupees, double the asking price, to learn this ability from the Indians (74). Jim's character experiences a sudden and literal transformation. The narrator, offering a glimpse into Jim's mind, notes, "if there was anything certain in this world it was the wisdom of forgetting Western prejudices occasionally in dealing with the East." (72) Jim's new identity, both English and Indian at the same time, proves enormously beneficial for him. It allows him to survive the initial violence in the revolution as well as secure the favor of Tara and Soma once more. Moreover, he uses his abilities to great effect in scouting out Delhi for the British besiegers. Jim Douglas's dual-nationalities lead to both a change of his worldview as well as a change in his fortunes. By renouncing his privileged position as a British male, Jim Douglas has found a more fulfilling life for himself. Most meaningfully, his discovery of how to successfully span the gap between British and Indian is what enables Kate Erlton, and hopefully the imperial powers, to later do the same.

Kate Erlton is the literary device by which the narrator posits the Mutiny's issues can be resolved. The narrator originally characterizes Kate as "one of those women whose refinement stands in their way; who are gourmets of life, failing to see that the very fastidiousness of their palate argues a keener delight in its pleasures than that of those who take them more simply, perhaps more coarsely" (14). As an exemplar of Victorian womanhood, her daily aspirations revolve around the appearance of propriety. She keeps her house "English in every twist and turn of foreign flowers" (15), and her biggest fear is that her son will discover his father, Major Erlton, is a good-for-nothing adulterer. In all aspects, she is set up as the opposite of Alice Gissing. Whereas Alice is

assertive and an active participant with extramarital affairs, particularly with Major Erlton, Kate is the passive victim of society and happenstance. Her inability to cast aside womanly characteristics in the world of masculine domination, as seen in her motherly care for her neighbor's child, has driven her down the social ranks. Nevertheless, she, not Alice, survives the Mutiny. She is the privileged one in the narrative. While trapped in Delhi during the siege, the disguised Jim Douglas takes her under his protection. She lives in-house with the strict command that no one must ever know an Englishwoman walks free in Delhi. Tara, who also cares for her, takes it upon herself to dress Kate in Zora's old clothes and jewelry, thereby hinting that she too will bridge the gap between British and Indian. Jim Douglas teaches her a little of the art of disguise, which allows her to walk in the city a little. Thus, Kate too has become transformed: the literal transition from Englishwoman to Indian, the spiritual succession of Zora. In her transformation, "Kate relinquishes her hegemonic values to survive and learns not only the colonizing power these values have over her and her body, but also the possible physical and ideological freedoms allowed through the practice of Hinduism." (Nielsen 5)

Danielle Nielsen, Murray State University, offers wonderful insight into this motif by explaining how this change benefits Kate:

Transculturation and interactions in the contact zone are nuanced processes that appear to benefit the dominant culture as the subordinates adapt outside culture; however, transculturation also allows the subordinate group to carefully choose what and how to represent the new culture. The marginalized group selects practices to ensure the continuation of their own culture while at the same time refigures the power of the dominant group. In essence, transculturation helps the subordinate culture survive and enter into a conversation with and even possible representative framing of the dominant group. (6)

Kate's transformation therefore doesn't demand her to reject her previous qualities, to embrace a masculine conqueror identity, as did Alice Gissing. While dressed in Indian

garb to evade her pursuers, Kate takes solace in the fact “that it was not England where a lonely woman might be challenged all the more for her loneliness...that down-dropped veil hedged even a poor grass-cutter’s wife about with respect (Steel 268). As Nielsen notes, “Her character development contrasts the colonized female body with the autonomous woman when she experiences both the potentially repressive attitudes of Victorian femininity and the seeming freedom of Hinduism” (Nielsen 4). Being woman and being Indian are no longer disadvantageous as they are in the traditional British hierarchy. Instead, reimagining these traits ensured Kate’s survival. The solution put forth by the narrative in *One the Face of the Waters* is a complete and utter rejection of typical British imperial attitudes. Women are not engaged “in a cult of passion” (Steel 80), as some characters would assert. Rather their ability to state their identity even if the face of imperial norms is a saving grace. In following the intertwining stories of Jim Douglas and Kate Erlton, the reader can see that the narration demands one relinquish imperialist egotism and to consider the value of Indian culture beyond economic gain. This, as Kate comes to realize, is “The Spirit which had moved on the Face of the Waters, bringing their chance of Healing and Atonement to so many” (460). The privileged class, though it may prevail, must recognize the value of the other classes and occasionally defer to them.

The use of racist language is part of the same narrative strategy as multiple identities motif in that both guide the reader to recognize and reject imperialism’s particular hierarchical model. Even though the narrative has at this point rejected the fundamentals of racism, it is noteworthy that it still has a role in the narrative strategy. Through adopting racially pejorative and insensitive language, the narrator can better establish a British male-oriented world before undermining it. The narrative voice is thus

inconsistent from start to finish in the novel because an entire worldview is gradually being replaced over the course of the narrative.

Due to a constantly changing narrative style, the problematic use of disparaging language ought to be ascribed to the narrator's attempts to fully convey the untenable social hierarchy found in imperial institutions. The narrator often switches between psycho-narration and quoted monologue in the novel. Psycho-narration provides insight into the mind of a character by simply describing how he or she feels, but narrated monologue occurs when the narrator emulates those feelings and thoughts by writing as the character would (Keen 60-61). If taken into account in Steel's novel, it becomes clear that sometimes the randomly placed slur indicates how the character feels while the narrator may or may not share the sentiment. The narration of Major Erlton's story is a good case study for this exercise. Major Erlton at one point calls Indians "little black devils" (160), which provides no problems for the narration as it is quoted. However, describing the Indians as "savages" or "ruffians" during the uprising makes the reader question how the narrator actually feels about the Indian people. Here is where the differing narrative styles should be considered. During the first part of the rebellion, the narrator is focused on Major Erlton's actions and describes goings-on as any imperialistic British person would:

Ten minutes after it dawned upon Herbert Erlton that no warning had been given, that no succor would be sent, he had changed horses for the game little Arab which had once belonged to Jim Douglas, and was off, to reach Delhi as best he could; for a woman slept in the very city itself exposed to the first assault of ruffianism, whom he must save if he could. (Steel 201)

In this passage, the narrator clearly slips from the psycho-narration of Erlton's realization to the narrated monologue. This "first assault of ruffianism" is how Major Erlton

perceived the Indian Mutiny while the rest of the novel hints that the narrator views the situation in much more complex terms. Likewise, that apparent attempt of narrator to explain away the earlier trampling of the Indian girl by saying “it was only the girl” should actually be seen as the attempts of Alice Gissing, whom the narrator had been describing with the psycho-narrative style, to rationalize the child’s death in a manner that befits her worldview. If the reader ascribes disparaging language to the role of the narrator, as I have proposed, it becomes apparent that these terms are an integral portrayal of a certain worldview to be abandoned; the shift away from these previously espoused positions is reflected in the language.

The paradigmatic shift experienced by Jim Douglas and Kate Erlton is reflected in the narrator’s language choices. Kate never exhibits a proclivity to pejorative language, but her foil, Jim Douglas, has a sharp tongue. Jim Douglas’s initial transformation marks a shift from racially charged language to neutral terms. Jim Douglas, in an instance of narrated monologue, initially refers to the Indian men that tutor him in the art of disguise as “scoundrels” and “general vagrants” (68-69). Afterwards, those words are peculiarly missing from his vocabulary. Instead of calling them savages, Jim Douglas thinks of the Indian revolutionaries as “mutineers” (286) even when supremely exasperated. Likewise, Kate transitions from being a passive character to one who can make demands. These demands, however, don’t portray her in a masculine light but rather illustrate her empowerment. When Kate and Jim determine to drug the little boy Sonny so that they can sneak him out of the city, Kate demands, “Give it me, please... he will take it best from me. I have some sugar here” (364). Her empowerment is not hindered by her feminine qualities but rather is made possible through them. Despite his initial

conversion, Jim Douglas does remains relatively blind to Kate's feminine empowerment, which is to be expected since "The British projected themselves as humane social reformers on a 'civilising mission' of rescuing the 'native' woman from patriarchal practices –thereby also justifying the need for their continued presence in India" (Sen 37) His antagonistic demeanor towards women is residue of his old worldview. He says they are "born temptresses of virtuous men" (80) and "all women were alike in this, that they saw the whole world through the medium of their sex; and that was at the bottom of all the mischief" (285-286). However, in protecting and nurturing "a woman who was not his wife, a child who was not his child, and feeling vaguely that they were as much a part of his life as if they were" (357), he realizes "The passion of protection, of absolute self-forgetfulness, seeking no reward... was a better thing than that absorption in another self" (Steel 358). Through his relationship with Kate, he comes to realize women "are very brave" (364) without ceding their femininity. Thus, the changed dialogical styles of Jim, which are explicit statements of his dispositions respective to different point in the narrative, prove him to have grown more like Kate and show them both to holistically to embody the new ideal interaction between the privileged and disadvantaged people groups.

The narration in *On the Face of the Waters* most certainly uses discriminatory language. However, I have shown in this exercise that the usage of these terms was an intentional and integral part in setting of the typical British imperial worldview. They reinforced the notion that British domination of the Indian people would lead to such cultural and religious disdain that a violent mutiny was inevitable. Most critically, this language was ultimately abandoned by the narrator in favor of a grander vision for

Indian-British relations put forth in the characters Jim Douglas and Kate Erlton. The hermeneutical principle was necessary to analyzing racism's function within the scope of the narrative. Had one assumed the opposite the principle, that racism should not be attributed to the narrative strategy, then the reader would have been unable to fully reconcile the revolt against imperialism in *On the Face of the Waters* with the presence of denigrating stereotypes of the Indian people. The people who take this approach would only be able to see the inclusion of racism as inconsistent and problematic for the overall message of the narrative. Not being stumped by this conundrum, the suggested hermeneutical principle allows the reader to look for the function of racism. In calling attention to the fact that racism has a role, the principle enables that the presence of racism is critical to setting the imperialistic worldview that Kate and Douglas abandon. Rather than being used inconsistently, racisms' continual presence actually mirrors their gradual transition into a more harmonious worldview. In this way, racism has a key function in the narrative strategy by reinforcing each portion of the narrative's arc.

CHAPTER THREE

Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*

This next chapter focuses on Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*, this novella being possibly the most controversial example of imperial literature due to its abundance of racially demeaning imagery. *Heart of Darkness* has been interpreted in a variety of differing and possibly mutually exclusive ways. Scholars like Chinua Achebe read this story as a gross enactment of imperialistic ideas wherein the portrayed natural inferiority of indigenous peoples justifies their domination. On the other hand, critics such as Thomas Moser and Avro Fleishman argue that *Heart of Darkness* actually shows the moral failings of the Belgian Empire and is thus fundamentally anti-imperialism. Some academics have chosen to shy away from the discussion of racism altogether and instead consider *Heart of Darkness* primarily an adventure story chronicling humanity's natural yearning for wilderness (Edin 137-148). Any of these positions, and many more, can be justified from the text. However, their treatment of racism in the text ultimately searches for a moral pronouncement on the presence of racism in the story instead looking for the thematic importance of racism. For the person focused on interpreting the text before pronouncing judgment upon it, application of the proposed hermeneutical principle is necessary. One cannot ascertain the relationship between racism and *Heart of Darkness's* thematic declarations without first ascribing racially charged imagery and language to the narrative strategy of the work.

As a relatively short tale with a simple plot, *Heart of Darkness's* great difficulty in interpretation lies not in understanding the chronology of the novella. It is a frame narrative whose primary narrator remains mostly silent. Instead, bulk of the narration comes from narrator a character known as Marlow. One night aboard a ship, Marlow recounts to his companions his adventure into the thick of the Congo rainforest. Marlow, being an ambitious young man at the time, had obtained captaincy of a riverboat in service of a Belgian company, for whom he was expected to amass great fortunes by navigating dangerous trade routes. Once there, Marlow learned that he was to take over the command of the Inner Station, a trading post formerly run by John Kurtz. Kurtz previously had great success in an inhospitable region, yet for some reason his station had become unprofitable. For this reason, Marlow was chosen to replace Kurtz. Although their voyage was beset by various mishaps and attacks, the crew reached the Inner Station. There, Marlow and his crew quickly learned that Kurtz's success came about by his domination of a local tribe. However, Kurtz was incredibly sickly and most likely about to die. He was taken aboard Marlow's boat against his and his worshippers' wishes. After some skirmishes with the Africans and an attempted escape by Kurtz, Marlow and his crew made their way back home, never to return to the heart of the Congo. The real difficulty in analyzing *Heart of Darkness* thus isn't deciphering its plot but rather trying to make sense of its various themes and motifs.

Analysis of *Heart of Darkness's* cannot be achieved without giving deference to its genre. Consequently, I shall argue that this novella falls under the umbrella of Gothic literature. I will first define the Gothic genre and then show how Conrad's book conforms to the definition. This will be accomplished by showing how *Heart of Darkness* not only

includes an exorbitant amount of Gothic elements but also relies on them to invoke the desired response from the readers. Once the novel is characterized as a Gothic work and thus the impact it has on the reader is identified, I can piece together what the thematic message of the book.

Understanding *Heart of Darkness* as a Gothic text has value whereby this hermeneutical lens concentrates on the reader's reaction to the story, thereby creating space to analyze vehement reactions to the racism within the text. Gothic as a genre is hard to define beyond asserting it is predicated on eliciting an emotive response from the audience by ensnaring their attention through various motifs. The various Gothic subgenres, such as Southern Gothic, Traditional Gothic, and Terror Fiction, vary greatly in form and content, but they all are considered Gothic due to the emotional toil experienced by readers that each style effects. In her book *Art of Darkness*, Anne Williams notes that setting objective criteria for the Gothic genre is often counterproductive since "The attempt to define Gothic thus challenges almost everything we thought we knew about genre as a critical concept" (Williams 15). She further asserts that the Gothic must be understood on its impact on the readers, which is typified by a loss of comfort and security by the readers as they are forcefully exposed to 'otherness' (18). There is sublimity in Gothic texts, which, according to Edmund Burke, is produced by "an unnatural tension and certain violent emotions of the nerves" (Burke sec V, book 3). The Gothic genre is therefore a literary nexus where readers are subjected to experiences beyond their comfort zones, and the sublime attempts to effect physical and psychological responses from the reader: "With regard to such things as affect by the associated idea of danger, there can be no doubt but that they produce terror, and act by

some modification of that passion; and that terror, when sufficiently violent, raises the emotions of the body just mentioned” (sec V). The Gothic genre is thus best defined by its ability to imbue terror in its readers, to make them experience horror vicariously, rather than being a mere description of horrific events. As will be shown later, qualifying the reader’s response to racism in the story helps in discerning why the Gothic is effective in eliciting a response from the reader and ascertaining the thematic importance of *Heart of Darkness*’s being a Gothic tale.

The setting of *Heart of Darkness* indicates to the readers that this tale is Gothic and thus prepares them subconsciously for the Gothic experience. While there is no way to define a Gothic setting, Gothic tales, wishing to magnify the effect of the story on the reader, generally take place in locations that mirror the unnatural tension and violent emotions experienced by the reader. Across the Gothic genre, descriptions of the setting play a symbolic role in which their simple presence subliminally conditions the reader to experience a tumultuous and unnatural story. Kamilla Elliot theorizes that “Where Gothic fiction deems words inadequate to represent extreme emotion, a rhetoric of portraiture throws up ‘faces’ as canvases and paints them with affective diction” (Elliot 208). The setting, along with other Gothic motifs and images, is a shorthand device that suggests to the reader that he or she has entered the Gothic and therein amplifies the subliminal machinations of the Gothic. One example of the Gothic setting is the Central Station in the Congo. Meant to be a symbol of imperial power, it was merely “on a back water surrounded by scrub and forest, with a pretty border of smelly mud on one side, and on the three others enclosed by a crazy fence of rushes” (Conrad 35). The station is diminutive compared to the raw force of the jungle. Jennifer Lipka describes the effect of

the juxtaposition: “the initial descriptions make the reader uneasy with the unknown, which is slowly drawing them in to a shock” (Lipka 11). The settings highlight the tension between the goals of imperialism and the natural power of the land imperials are trying to subjugate. This juxtaposition is mirrored at the commencement of Marlow’s journey into the heart of the Congo. In the midst of preparing for his voyage, Marlow recalls, “I had my shoulders against the wreck of my steamer, hauled up on the slop like a carcass of some big river animal... the high stillness of primeval forest was before my eyes. The moon had spread over everything a thin layer of silver – over the rank grass, over the mud, upon the wall of matted vegetation standing higher than the wall of a temple, over the great river” (Conrad 41). Although a measly steamboat and wretched trading outpost aren’t typically thought of as quintessential Gothic settings, they more than suffice as Gothic shorthand. Even though the Gothic genre emerged alongside the 18th century resurgence of physically striking Gothic architecture, a Gothic setting need not have gothic arches or catacombs to manipulate the sublime and have the desired effect on the reader (Ovenden 127). Instead, a Gothic setting illustrates humanity’s efforts to maintain the illusion of control in the face of untamable forces extrinsic to them and imposes a sense of futility on the reader (Fanthorpe 127). Likewise, the Belgian Company and Marlow are ambitious and ultimately foolhardy thinking their emblems of progress, the Central Station and the steamboat, can withstand the wild forces of the jungle. By attempting to wage war against the Congo with these so-called bastions of civilization, Marlow has set himself up for failure (Lipka 20). In this way, the setting of *Heart of Darkness* has prepared the audience to experience the Gothic by making them await Marlow’s impending doom.

Gothic imagery further prepares the audience to for Marlow's fall by compelling the reader to see the world in Gothic terms; in doing so, the reader begins to experience the Gothic. One type of Gothic image found in *Heart of Darkness* is the grotesque and abject object. According to Neil Cornwell, the grotesque "As a form of artistic representation it may be characterized as a deformation of the real-life, with verisimilitude yielding to caricature, often of human features... and of plant and animal forms" (Cornwell 175). The grotesque is complemented by the abject, which "is an overpowering sensation of disgust and rejection" (Conrow 106). Whereas the grotesque exploits the subliminal response of readers, the abject accentuates the readers' attention to the object. A good example of the grotesque and the abject working together is the physical appearance of Kurtz's Russian disciple. The Russian is completely enthralled by his admiration for Kurtz and his learning (Conrad 70-71), and his physical appearance reveals how the reader should feel about him. His appearance is described as "a harlequin. His clothes had been made of some stuff that was brown Holland probably, but it was covered all over with bright patches" (68). As grotesque image, the reader is meant to be repulsed by his appearance and thus dislike him. Nevertheless, the abject nature of the image entraps the reader and in doing so changes the repulsion of the Russian's appearance to disdain for the ideologies that corrupted him both mentally and physically, Kurtz's teachings. In another instance, Marlow discovers that some cultish practice had made Kurtz surround his house with human heads in posts. They are described as "black dried, sunken with closed eyelids – a head seemed to sleep at the top of that pole, and, with shrunken dry lips showing a narrow white line of teeth" (73). Just like earlier, the grotesque and abject is so revolting that it compels the reader to react emotively against

the thing that brought about the images, in this case the cult of Kurtz. Grotesque and abject imagery is effective Gothic shorthand in *Heart of Darkness* because it evokes negative responses to elements contained within the book. Another common Gothic motif that is found in *Heart of Darkness* is the subversion of light and dark imagery. Other genres tend to let light represent good, appealing items and dark symbolize negative, undesirable things. Gothic tales borrow this imagery and then subvert it. While darkness is foreboding, it also mysterious and holds a certain allure (Williams 15). Marlow initially was repulsed by darkness. During his exposition concerning his desire to explore new lands, Marlow contrasted the purity and innocence of unexplored “blank” spaces against the darkness of ink spots, civilization, on the map (Conrad 21). Upon arriving at the Central Station, Marlow is “horror-struck” at the dark grove where the black helpers would go to die and accordingly decides, “I didn’t want any more loitering in the shade” (32). Nevertheless, Marlow becomes fixated on the darkness, and he finds himself desperate to satiate the deep, dark jungle’s beckoning (Hill 5-6). At the Inner Station, Marlow, who has now come to identify with Kurtz, is enthralled by the appearance of “a barbarous and superb woman” (Conrad 83). Her conflated masculine and feminine qualities are themselves a Gothic motif (Heller 162). More importantly, she as the embodiment of darkness represents a physical impediment for Kurtz and a spiritual inhibition for Marlow that keeps the two men from returning to civilization uncontested. The apt name for this novella, *Heart of Darkness*, illustrates that the allure of the unknown wild is a constant danger. Gothic imagery such as grotesque, abject objects and the subversion of light-dark imagery is how Marlow delivers his account. Being only

privity to Marlow's narration, gothic imagery coerces the reader to view the world with a Gothic lens and thereby begin to experience the Gothic.

The narrative structure of *Heart of Darkness* fully immerses the reader in the Gothic experience. In Gothic literature, the use of first person narration is often a tool to make the reader identify with the narrator (William 4). This allows the reader to more easily project themselves into *Heart of Darkness* (Lipka 19). First person narration accomplishes this very task in Marlow's tale. Marlow's narrative style features gratuitous amounts of first person pronouns like "I", "my", or "me". In the first section of this novella following the start of Marlow's narration, there are no fewer than twenty-four paragraphs that begin with some variation of these pronouns (Conrad 17-40). This style of storytelling forces the readers to hear only the perspective of the narrator, Marlow, and therefore causes them to experience each event vicariously through the narrator. Stephen Tabachnik offers commentary on this narration style in "Two Tales of the Gothic Adventure", claiming the forced point of view of this text influences the reader to view Marlow as "one of us" (Tabachnik 12). The solidarity of proclaiming Marlow "one of us" asserts an emotional connection between the reader and Marlow (14). This personal connection with Marlow allows the Gothic to flourish by exploiting the emotions of the readers they progress through the plot. Over the course of his journey, Marlow fixates on finding Kurtz because he views him as a kindred spirit. Marlow progressively begins seeing himself in relation to Kurtz until the climax of the book when their two identities are merged:

I came upon him, and, if he had not heard me coming, I would have fallen over him, too, but he got up in time. He rose, unsteady, long, pale, indistinct, like a vapour exhaled by the earth, and swayed slightly, misty and silent before me; while at my back the fires loomed between the trees, and the murmur of many

voices issued from the forest. I had cut him off cleverly; but when actually confronting him I seemed to come to my senses, I saw the danger in its right proportion. It was by no means over yet... A black figure stood up, strode on long black legs, waving long black arms, across the glow. It had horns -- antelope horns, I think -- on its head. Some sorcerer, some witch-man, no doubt: it looked fiendlike enough. 'Do you know what you are doing?' I whispered. 'Perfectly,' he answered, raising his voice for that single word: it sounded to me far off and yet loud, like a hail through a speaking-trumpet... I did say the right thing though indeed he could not have been more irretrievably lost than he was at this very moment, when the foundations of our intimacy were being laid -- to endure -- to endure -- even to the end -- even beyond. (Conrad 81)

At this moment, Albert Guerard argues in *Conrad the Novelist*, exhibits the extreme solidarity Marlow feels with Kurtz because they were both “a white man and sometimes idealist who had fully responded to the wilderness: a potential and fallen self... At the climax Marlow follows Kurtz ashore, confounds the beat of the drum with the beating of his heart... and brings [Kurtz] back to the ship. He returns to Europe a changed and more knowing man” (Guerard 39,38). This is the moment when all the Gothic images and motifs converge and Marlow wholly identifies with Kurtz. He thus fully understand Kurtz’s fall from grace and can empathize with Kurtz’s last words: “The horror! The horror!” (Conrad 85). Throughout this narrative, the audience sees how Marlow is gradually slipping into the maddening darkness like Kurtz. Moreover, the audience has already come to identify with Marlow and experience the world vicariously through him. Their being powerless to stop Marlow’s march towards doom is also being powerless to stop their own march toward doom, to change the direction of the narrative (Lipka 20). Therein lies the experience of the Gothic. There is an honest experience of terror at the climax of the novella because the reader has anticipated this moment but remains powerless to affect it in any way. Kurtz’s summation of the experience, “The Horror! The Horror!” fittingly describes the shared experience of Kurtz, Marlow, and the reader.

Examination of the Gothic elements in *Heart of Darkness* has shown how the reader comes to experience the Gothic, but it has failed to ascertain the thematic importance of that experience because it has thus far neglected to examine the function of racism. Richard Sime, among other academics, believes one of the chief purposes of the Gothic is to “discover the unsettling truth that lies in the dark, irrational depths of the human mind (Sime 261), essentially to instruct the audience what to fear. This task can only be achieved by taking account of all the major themes in a narrative. Being a tale concerned with the ethics of imperialism, racism can rightfully be considered a major theme that needs to be examined. This is the point where the hermeneutical principle is necessary. If one wishes to examine the function of racism in the tale, one must attribute racism to the narrative strategy rather than simply dismiss the author as racist. As will be detailed in greater length shortly, the treatment of race as a narrative strategy is very complicated, even duplicitous. Nevertheless, analysis of racism in the novella will further explain how the Gothic is effective in eliciting a personal response from the reader and will reveal what it is that the reader is to fear from the Gothic.

The depiction of indigenous peoples is extraordinarily demeaning throughout *Heart of Darkness*, but it insufficiently answers the question of the Gothic’s thematic import. At many points, Marlow’s narration assumes a prototypically imperialistic view of the worth of the indigenous people. He frames his narrative according to worldview where the white man is obligated to “bring civilization to a barbarian world” (Conrad 20-21), a trope he returns to multiple times in his narrative. Marlow also refers to the Africans, especially those unaffiliated with the Belgians, as “savages” and “niggers” (55-58, 82) These terms are less than complimentary. Furthermore, the indigenous people are

portrayed just one step above animals; although conscious, they remain nameless and often formless in Marlow's narration (Firchow 33). When describing the work conditions of the Africans, Marlow can only describe them as "nothing earthly now – nothing but black shadows... These moribund shapes" (Conrad 31). Likewise, the portrayal of Kurtz's followers as a faceless mob denied the Africans any human qualities, thereby making them subhuman (Achebe). Moreover, Marlow's portrayal of the Africans' doing the absolute bidding of Kurtz, whom they think is divine, reinforces the stereotype that indigenous people are naturally passive and ignorant, thus giving the imperials the right to dominate them (Firchow 12-16, Archibald). In Marlow's clearly delineated hierarchy, there was no doubting the white man's natural superiority the African natives. This worldview is affirmed by other characters in *Heart of Darkness*. Marlow's superiors were concerned more for profit than for the lives of the indigenous people, thereby exhibiting the commodification of the native people. Kurtz, too, viewed the Africans as a commodity. Marlow found in Kurtz's writings an instruction manual for dominating "savages" so that they might be used for profit (Conrad 87-88). Thus, charges of racism in *Heart of Darkness* cannot be contested. Edward Said wrote, "Conrad's tragic limitation is that even though he could see clearly that on one level imperialism was essentially pure dominance and land-grabbing, he could not then conclude that imperialism had to end so that 'natives' could lead lives free from European domination" (Said 29). Despite its overwhelming presence, the presence of racism itself cannot teach the reader what to fear when experiencing the Gothic. If the chief fear found in the Gothic is the native Africans, the climax of the novella and the height of the Gothic experience make little sense. Marlow is supposed to be changed by this event, but there is no evidence of him

becoming more racist as this interpretation would require. This explanation insufficiently answers the question of the Gothic's thematic importance because it asserts a theme that is simply not found at the height of the Gothic experience. The reader must therefore turn to the depiction of the privileged race, the Belgian imperials, to ascertain better racism's function in the narrative.

Although the Belgian imperials, much like the Africans, are portrayed in a negative light, this depiction only confounds the function of racism in the narrative. There is little to no idealization of imperialism as a system. Even though the Belgian believed they were bringing civilization to a wild and savage land, Peter Firchow notes that the bickering, corruption, and nepotism exhibited by the imperial powers shows them to be woefully incompetent custodians of civilization by even the standards of the most ardent Imperialists (Firchow 82). Criticism of imperialism is additionally found in its mistreatment of the Africans. Marlow may imply that Africans are nameless and faceless when describing their moribund, diseased appearance before death, but it needs to be emphasized that their condition came as a direct result of imperialism. For Marlow's audience, this narration would have made them "sympathize and even identify with the oppressed African population of the Congo, since the latter were being maltreated by Belgian 'administrators' in much the same way that their own ancestors supposedly had been by the Romans" (Firchow 92). Marlow marvels, "The work was going on. The work! And this was the place where some of the helpers had withdrawn to die" (Conrad 31). It is a jarring scene, one that fulfills the Gothic motif of grotesque and abject imagery. The abject qualities compel the reader to react violently not against the Africans themselves but rather the cause of their squalid condition: the Belgian Empire. The

narration highlights the evil aspects of commodification, thereby implicating the Belgian Imperialists. The so-called privileged race is therefore depicted negatively for mismanaging and abusing their power. Yet the misuse of power cannot be source of the Gothic experience. Imperialism's dark side does elicit a response from the reader at various points in the narrative, but, like the assumed inferiority of the African people, this motif cannot be the source the Gothic force because it is not found at the climax of the novel. The negative portrayal of imperialism means the object to fear in the Gothic cannot simply be the uncivilized savages because there are significant anti-imperialism themes. On the other hand, imperialism's racist tendencies are also not the source of the Gothic force because the novella assumes the imperialist consistently assumes the imperialistic attitude toward native Africans. The function of race can thus only be determined once the contradictory imperialism and anti-imperialism themes are resolved.

Deconstruction of the text reveals that racism is a critical part of the narrative strategy in *Heart of Darkness*, which in turn shows precisely what it is that the reader fears when experiencing the Gothic. Deconstruction is a form a literary criticism that acknowledges that humans "tend to think and express our thoughts in terms of opposites", which establishes a dichotomy wherein humans understand their relation to each other (Murfin 206). This method of criticism focuses on the parts in literature where this hierarchical, binary method of thinking has created contradictions. The point of deconstruction is thus to allow natural tensions within a text to qualify each of the components of a hierarchy in relation to each other (Murfin 219, Miller *Fiction* 5). In "*Heart of Darkness* Revisited," J. Hillis Miller maintains that the prototypically imperialistic racism in Conrad's novella contradicts the anti-imperialistic themes and the

overall arch of the narrative. Although the savage state of Africa constitutes a lower place on the hierarchy, imperialists like Kurtz and Marlow are altogether too easily seduced into savagery (Miller 241-242). Miller argues, “*Heart of Darkness* is perhaps most explicitly apocalyptic in announcing the end, the end of Western civilization, or of Western imperialism, the reversal of idealism into savagery... They (the Westerners) turn into opposites because they are hollow at the core. They are vulnerable to the horror. They *are* the horror” (Miller 242). These Belgian Imperialists come to identify with the savage rather than the civilized because it is their natural disposition to do so. In the words of Nidesh Lawtoo, “Conrad’s representations of frenzy cannot simply be dismissed as a distorting ‘image’ of African reality but, rather, emerge out of a carefully crafted artistic ‘picture,’ a mimetic picture that struggles to make us ‘see,’ in a self-reflexive turn, the horrors that ensue when massive forms of ritual frenzy break out, not so much at the heart of Africa but at the heart of Europe” (Lawtoo). While native Africans are portrayed in a demeaning manner, Europeans are shown to be equally capable of descending into savagery and darkness. As such, the hierarchy is more of a spectrum than a rigid binary, and every measure the imperial powers take to impose their binary mode of thinking ironically brings them closer to the bottom of the spectrum. The Gothic is experienced because the reader, who identifies with Marlow and Kurtz, also possesses the capacity to fall from civilized to grace into savage ignominy. The object to fear in *Heart of Darkness* is actually oneself. The presence of racism, being a point of tension in the narrative, is thus critical to establishing the hierarchical spectrum that generates the Gothic experience.

In addition helping establish deconstruction's societal spectrum, racism accentuates the experience of the Gothic in *Heart of Darkness*. The Gothic motifs all reinforce this spectrum. The grotesque and abject imagery makes the reader detest the "civilizing" forces that abused the native Africans. The subversion of light and dark did reinforce the notion that darkness is bad, but darkness was also honest because it "represents the dark forces in Marlow's subconscious" (Hill 6). Both of these characters discovered themselves too weak to face the Gothic setting and thus had to be extracted from the jungle to preserve their non-dark heart, which they associate with their European identity. Racism also becomes a type of Gothic shorthand. As Miller notes, Marlow's irony makes his speech in its own way another version of that multiple cacophonous and deceitful voice flowing from the heart of darkness" (Miller 244). Each instance of pejorative language and each demeaning depiction of native Africans ironically emphasize Marlow's capacity to fall. The lower Marlow places the indigenous people on his hierarchy ironically heightens the degree Marlow can and will fall. The reader, by identifying with Marlow, thus fully experiences the horror of the narrative's climax because the imperialistic worldview has placed the savage incredibly low on the societal spectrum, yet Marlow and the reader together descend into the depths of savagery. This reading of the climax is supported by Marlow's changed character. In prefacing his narrative, Marlow tells his companions that "England was once uncivilized" (Conrad 20). Marlow's narration necessarily must chronologically come after his experience in the Congo, so it is entirely relevant that Marlow concedes at the beginning of his narration that even a civilized empire once was, and presumable can still be, a savage state. Thus, a

reader may balk at the presence of racism in the text, but in doing so, it amplifies the purpose of its inclusion.

Ascribing racism to the narrative strategy has thus shown racism has a definite function at every level of the narrative that has herein been examined. Had it been instead ascribed to the author, many readers would have been unable to examine fully the Gothic nature of *Heart of Darkness*. Likewise, other readers may be stumped by the seeming contradiction of imperialistic language and anti-imperialistic themes. Like many critics, they would be apt to focus on only one of those elements. The hermeneutical principle allows the reader to see that racism exists in the text to amplify Marlow's capacity to fall and to accentuate the reader's own experience of that fall. It allows for the fusion the imperialist and anti-imperialist interpretations of the text by acknowledging that there are racist elements while also recognizing that each instance of racism highlights the fetid immorality of the imperialistic Europeans. Nevertheless, the principle doesn't entirely alleviate concerns about the inclusion of racism. Why is it that "savage" Africans are the lowest part on the spectrum and that horror is experienced by becoming like them? Arguing that the worst thing that can happen to the readers and to civilized people is that they become like indigenous people is not flattering to the indigenous people, no matter what language is used. Some may also question why the manipulation of racism is an appropriate narrative strategy at all. My proposed hermeneutical principle doesn't have an answer for these questions; it can only assert that racism has a role in any narrative in which it is included. As seen in *Heart of Darkness*, those that wish to fully analyze imperial literature must ascribe racism to the narrative strategy.

CHAPTER FOUR

Philip Meadows Taylor's *Confessions of a Thug*

Thus far, racial conflict has been the focus of both *On the Face of the Waters* and *Heart of Darkness*. The use or absence of racial language in Steel's novel served to establish a prototypical imperialistic worldview and then undermine it. In Conrad's work, the embedded tension between the racially charged language and the protagonist's emotive response to his surroundings necessitated a rejection of a civilized man versus savage binary. In its place, Conrad posits a spectrum by which every civilized man is naturally capable of descending into savage, primitive state of being. In these two novels, the adoption of uncouth stereotyping by the authors was critical to driving the plot and arriving at a moral, yet it is not the case that all examples of imperial literature are keenly focused on racism. For the proposed principles to hold true, it must be applicable to imperial literature in which racism is present but is only a secondary theme. Accordingly, I shall now examine Philip Meadows Taylor's *Confessions of a Thug*. The ancillary inclusion of racial themes within *Confessions of a Thug* ultimately affirms Thugs as complete human beings despite a formal structure that would indicate otherwise.

As "thug" is often considered a racially pejorative word, it is necessary to explain what the term means and the connotation it carries in Taylor's 1839 novel that bears the term in its title. The Thuggee cult religion dates back to at least the 13th century. Its practitioners, known as Thugs, worshipped the Hindu Goddess of Destruction, Kali (also called Bhowanee), and believed it to be a sacred commandment to enact regular acts of

destruction on humanity. Thugs typically fulfilled this commandment by murdering unsuspecting travelers and stealing their valuables. Groups of Thugs would pose as travellers along trade routes and invite their victims to join their caravan under the guise of increased safety. When the time was most opportune, the Thugs would overwhelm their fellow travelers by strangling them with a garrote, a length of cloth generally worn inconspicuously around one's waist or as a turban. Once the victims were stripped of valuables, the Thugs disposed of the bodies in mass graves that were far enough from the road to not draw attention. Furthermore, the bodies of the victims were often lacerated and the bones broken so that the ground would not swell during the bodies' decomposition and thus give away the misdeeds that occurred there. The presence of Thugs in India was certainly known, and their acts were the source of terror for many travellers. However, the most terrifying aspect of Thuggee was perhaps the inability to easily distinguish a Thug from the society by and large. Thugs were notoriously discrete in their dealings as murder is universally taboo. If a Thug were to be discovered, he would almost certainly be subjected to a painful, ignominious death. Thugs therefore kept their Thuggee dealings private and assumed more respectable roles in their public lives. They were assimilated into their towns and cities, often working as merchants, tradesmen, or farmers when not strangling people. In this way, Thugs remained hidden from their peers, and Thuggee's secretive nature made it seem akin to folklore. (Taylor xi-xvii, Finkelstein 8-12)

In the middle of the eighteenth century, the East India Company gained sovereignty over much of India, essentially making India a colony under the rule of Britain. The British rulers oft heard whispers of Thugs in their colonies, but little proof of

Thuggee activity kept them from addressing the issue of marauding bands of murders traipsing along trade routes. In fact, as late as 1816 there were no formal measures for suppressing the Thuggee cult. However, the continual inactivity of British rulers encouraged increasing Thuggee activity, and they were no longer able to ignore it. Despite having known of its presence, the British were soon flabbergasted in realizing the magnitude and audacity of the cult's activities. To their astonishment "there was hardly a province in the whole of India where Thuggee had not been practiced, where the statements of the informers were not confirmed by the disinterment of the dead!" (Taylor xv) In Colonel Sleeman's recollection of his time as a magistrate, he claims, "If any man had then told me that a gang of assassins by profession reside in the village of Kundélee, not four hundred yards from my court; and that the extensive groves of the village of Mundésur, only one stage from me on the road to Saugor and Bhopal, was one of the greatest *bhils*, or places of murder, in all India... I should have thought I'm a fool or a madman. And yet nothing could have been more true: the bodies of a hundred travellers lie buried in and among the groves of Mundésur" (Taylor xvi). Through military campaigning and intelligence gathering through informants, the British effectively contained Thuggee by the 1830s; they killed or imprisoned no fewer than 3,226 Thugs from 1832 to 1837 alone. All told, Thugs were responsible for upwards of 500,000 murders over the centuries. One Thug captured by the British was particularly effective with the garrote, having claimed at least eight hundred victims (xvii). Despite the atrocities of Thuggee for nearly a millennium, this Thug became the unlikely inspiration for the protagonist of *Confessions of a Thug* (Taylor xviii-xx).

Ameer Ali's adventures as a notorious Thug and his subsequent denouement constitute the main plot of *Confessions of a Thug*. Set in 1832, the outermost level of action within *Confessions* is the interaction between Ameer and his British captors. They are attempting to persuade Ameer while he is in prison to denounce his former partners and provide much needed insight into Thuggee that can help eradicate the cult. In exchange for this valuable information, Ameer will not be executed. The narrator of this outermost plot, an Englishman, is identified only as Meer Sahib, an honorific term used by Ameer. He listens to and records Ameer's account of becoming a Thug. The majority of the novel is Ameer's story, told through his first person perspective. As such, he is the second narrator of the book. When he was just a young boy, Ameer's parents were killed by Thugs, but Ameer was spared by the leader of the Thugs, Ismail. Ameer came to view Ismail as a father figure, and he was eventually inducted into the Thuggee cult. Although he was often troubled by senseless massacre, Ameer, like Ismail before him, became a great Thuggee leader who led multiple successful campaigns. He started a family and had a great reputation in his town, but neither his wife nor his fellow townspeople knew he was a Thug. When he had grown somewhat disinterested in Thuggee campaigns, he joined the Pindharees' military campaigns against British-affiliated Indians. Although it was profitable, Ameer left the Pindharee army because of their brutality in war. At this point in time, the British were actively seeking to destroy Thuggee. Ameer was ultimately betrayed and imprisoned. Although he at first remains proud and obstinate, Ameer eventually agrees to give the British information about his former cohorts, especially those with whom he credited his fall. Although the tale is fairly long and intricate, the story resolves with Ameer's renunciation of Thuggee.

As a bildungsroman of sorts, exposure to Ameer's life story gradually brings the reader to support Ameer and his Thuggee activities. Ameer allots a significant amount of time telling the story of his first kill, the moment that marked his complete induction into Thuggee. The modern audience, unless themselves Thugs, likely views this episode as incredibly disturbing. Ameer approached this moment with great trepidation, saying, "I almost wished I were back again at our village. But it was too late to retract; I had a character to gain, and the esteem of him who best loved me, my father, to secure" (Taylor 66). Despite his wavering conviction and against the ostensible wishes of the audience, Ameer does strangle the man and emerged a changed person. He recounts, "I was mad with excitement! My blood boiled and I felt as though I could had strangled a hundred others, so easy, so simple had the reality been" (71). These two quotations, pulled respectively from the middle and the end of this drawn out episode, imperfectly mirror the emotions of the reader. The reader, knowing the villainy of the Thugs from both history and when Thugs murdered Ameer's real family, sees this story as a slow, pronounced fall into ruin. They too experience fear and excitement in Ameer's first kill although they don't yet accept Thuggee as a possible agent of good. Despite his alignment with Thugs, the reader still has ample opportunity to root for Ameer to succeed in matters not directly related to Thuggee. Nearly one-fifth of the novel is devoted to a love story between Ameer and Zora, a dancing girl he rescued from a particularly despicable noble. For all intents and purposes, they have an honest love for each other. However, Zora's family, once she is returned to them safely, refuses to permit their union since he isn't noble enough. In retaliation for their ingratitude, he throws a shoe at Zora's mom. In retelling this scene, Ameer recalls, "Well though I, as I went along, I have not

got Zora, but I have slippered the old devil, her mother, which is some satisfaction, and Bhudrinath will laugh rarely when he hears of my exploit” (206). The reader may feel indignation at the unjust treatment of Ameer, but they too can laugh a little and retain a positive outlook on Ameer’s fortunes. Any vocal objections the reader may have to Ameer’s Thuggee lifestyle are eventually set aside as his narrative begins to describe Thuggee casually. In his narration, Ameer very often glazes over or even merely implies the murder of entire caravans of travelers. The entirety of one such death scene is as follows:

The travellers came up. One was young and the other an old man. I marked the younger one, and as he passed me a Thug laid hold of his arm; he turned round to resent it, and I was ready. These two were carried away, and after collecting our dispersing party, we once mere [sic] pursued our route without interruption.
(Taylor 288)

The description of his victims’ deaths is clinical and bereft of emotion. Contrasted to the excitement of his first kill, Ameer’s subsequent murders are banal. Just as Ameer comes to be comfortable with killing countless people, the reader is forced into assuming comfort as well. The brevity of these encounters inhibits the reader’s ability to dwell on the moral implications of murder, and thus the audience is encouraged to accept Thuggee as an ordinary activity. At this point in the narrative, the reader supports Ameer as the protagonist despite his being a Thug, but Ameer’s continued narrative compels to actually began sympathizing with Thuggee. Ameer, in his adventures, comes across a Pindharee soldier whose actions are far more horrific than even Ameer’s: Ghuffoor Khan. Ghuffoor Khan, when ransacking a house, left “Three dead bodies lay on the floor weltering in their blood, which poured from the still warm corpses” (370-371). The wives of these dead men “were engaged in a fruitless scuffle with the others of Ghuffoor

Khan's party; and their disordered appearance and heart-rending shrieks too well told what had been their fate" (371). The patriarch of the house was made by Ghuffoor Khan to drink his own son's blood before being burned alive and then beheaded (372-373). Ameer's response is to vow to kill Ghuffoor Khan: "Ghuffoor Khan's cup too was full; for my own determination was made on that spot, - I swore it to myself as I looked at the dead and rushed from the house... From that hour I made a determination to destroy him" (376-377). This is single most gruesome, horrific scene in the entire novel. It is of considerable importance not only because it shows the Thugs aren't the most villainous characters in the novel but also because it also shows how the Thugs can be an agent of good. This murder is one of the most important moments to gain the reader's sympathy. Because Ghuffoor is so much more horrific than Ameer, we find ourselves rooting Ameer on in his attempt to kill Ghuffoor Khan. By supporting Ameer's desire to enact divine justice by murdering Ghuffoor Khan, the reader becomes sympathetic towards Thuggee. Accordingly, the reader begins identifying with Ameer.

Beyond the simple plot of Ameer's narrative, there are numerous devices within the book that help the reader to be sympathetic towards Ameer. The English narrator's own narrative helps the reader feel sympathy for Ameer by being able to describe Ameer's physical and emotional appearance. When Ameer tells of his parents' murder in the first chapter, the English narrator notes, "At this period of his narrative, Ameer Ali seemed to shudder; a strong spasm shot through his frame, and it was some time before he spoke" (6); his interrogator, the Englishman, gives him water so that he may collect his thoughts (6). By seeing Ameer's mental anguish through the Englishman's eyes, the reader is inclined to be sympathetic to Ameer before the rest of his account (Poovey 7).

Moreover, the fact that the Englishman can show sympathy for a Thug makes the audience predisposed to pitying Ameer's tragic tale. Another device that connects the reader emotionally to Ameer is the motif of omens. According to Ameer's father, omens are how Bhowanee guides her Thugs. If they do as she pleases, her blessing will not be withdrawn; when Thugs have been discovered "such instances have been permitted on purpose to punish those who have in some way offended our protectress, by neglecting her sacrifices and omens" (35). Over the course of Ameer's narrative, good omens invariably bring prosperity. In one episode, Ameer is invited to the home of a man whose wife's family had been killed by Thugs in her youth. Although the man's tale was just an ordinary description of a Thug attack, Ameer was greatly affected by the tale. Upon approaching the house, Ameer recalls, "I imagined I knew the names of the different places near them, -one in particular, the abode of a fakir, around which was a small garden. I almost started when I approached it, for it seemed like the familiar friend one meets after a long, long absence, when one hesitates to accost him by name, though almost assured of his identity" (457). Inside the house, the family marvels at how similar Ameer and the man's wife appear (459). Although Ameer doesn't comprehend it, Ameer seems to recognize subconsciously this woman is his sister, her house his childhood home. Even so, he plots to kill her. Whereas Ameer was mostly desensitized to murder at this stage in his career, he agonized over the prospect of killing this woman with whom he shared a bond. Right before her murder, this woman offers to dismount her horse so that Ameer may rest his cramped legs. Hearing her kind voice, he exclaims to himself, "It was that of my victim! She who was to die under my hand ere a quarter of an hour elapsed" (463). Almost immediately, a hare crosses the road in front of Ameer, "the

fearful omen to a Thug, - one that could not be disregarded, or, if disregarded, was certain to be followed by the most dire calamities, nothing less than death or long imprisonment” (464). Despite the omen and the connection he feels to what is ostensibly his sister, Ameer kills the woman. Immediately thereafter, he realizes his grave misdeed, although he still doesn’t understand his connection to the woman. Feeling remorseful, Ameer orders that other Thugs not loot her body and he prevents “their mutilating it with their knives as they had done the others” (466). In this cathartic scene, the audience detests Ameer’s acts, but it also deeply pities his depravity. The omen motif plays a small but significant role. The truthfulness of omens early in the novel informs the reader that defying the omen of the hare will end poorly for Ameer. The hare contributes a sense of foreboding before the murder as well as the lens by which to understand Ameer’s actions thereafter. By killing his sister, Ameer is exposed as a wretch of a human being. Even though the reader has previously rooted for Ameer in his exploits, the reader now only has sympathy for Ameer’s pathetic life. These various motifs help the reader gradually identify with Ameer as a person and feel intensely sympathetic for him.

While the narrative forces the reader to acknowledge Ameer as a person, the formal structure of the book asserts his subhuman condition. The outermost plot and the formal structure of the novel together are point of the greatest racial tension within Taylor’s novel. Although Ameer is the narrator for almost the entirety of the story, it is important to bear in mind that this a condition of the frame narrative. He is only a prisoner during the outermost level of action; a British man is the final narrator. The captor-prisoner dynamic is subtly acknowledged in Ameer’s formal diction when addressing his interrogator. Ameer, rather than using any particular name, addresses the

British man as “Meer Sahib” This term, which roughly translates to “good sir” (Poovey 18), is used a term of endearment for Ameer by his followers (Taylor 173) as well as an honorific title Ameer uses to charm the leaders of numerous Indian courts (409). His use of the term indicates that he is aware the Englishman holds a certain degree of power over him in their relationship. Despite the unbalanced power dynamics in their relationship and that fact that by form the Englishman is the ultimate narrator of the novel, Ameer’s ability within the novel to narrate his story from first person perspective is a source of empowerment. According to *Stones of Law; Bricks of Shame: Narrating Imprisonment in the Victorian Age*, the capacity to tell one’s story as a first person narrative was a source of empowerment for prisoners who otherwise had no rights or means of self-expression. (Alber 30) Likewise, Ameer can assert his identity and his will through first person narration despite being imprisoned. If this were the only consideration, the formal structure of the novel would seem to be preferential for Ameer.

Unfortunately, any privilege the prisoner-interrogator dynamic grants Ameer as a narrator ultimately is nullified by the outermost level of plot. The plot of the novel exacerbates racial tension in the formal relationship between the Englishman and Ameer Ali. Ameer denies that “it should ever be said that Ameer Ali had become a traitor, and, for the sake of a daily pittance of food and the boon of life, had abandoned his profession and assisted to suppress it” (Taylor 537). Even so, “the fear of the horrible death... caused my resolutions of dying with the rest to give way to a desire of life (538). Of his fellow Thugs, Ameer alone is given the opportunity to renounce Thuggee and aid the British and the British-affiliated Indians. Thus, Ameer’s ability to narrate his own story maybe somewhat empowering, but it doesn’t negate the fact that he is coerced into

betraying his people. Therein lies the inherent racial tension in the prisoner-captor motif. Moreover, this tension remains ever present yet unresolved throughout the novel. The competition between coercion and exertion of one's will is seen in the concluding lines: "I am proud that the world will know of the deed and adventures of Ameer Ali, the Thug" (544). Despite betraying his fellow Thugs, he expresses loyalty to his kind. Even though he is coerced to give up the names of other Thugs, Ameer only "uses the position the English impose upon him to take revenge upon the man who indirectly made him a Thug" (Poovey 21). Using his plight to his advantage, Ameer has successfully retained his identity and his free spirit even though he is bound in chains. However, the racial tension is yet unresolved. Ameer's final words merely conclude his portion of the narrative. At the outermost level of narration, the novel concludes with the implication that Ameer will assist the British in rounding up his fellow Thugs. He was the narrator of his tale, but going forward, he has no rights any longer as a narrator. While the overall formal structure of the novel doesn't laud the British per se, it alienates Ameer from his rights as a narrator, thereby elevating the stature of the English relative to him.

As seen in the formal structure of *Confessions of a Thug*, prototypical imperialism asserts dominance over indigenous peoples. Ameer isn't the ultimate narrator of the book. Instead, he is a captive of the British Empire, coerced to do its will, while his story is recorded to be used as his captors see fit. At the outermost level of narration, he is accordingly more object than person. This imperial worldview naturally and inherently favors the imperial powers at the expense of the conquered people. Nevertheless, the audience as well as Ameer's English interrogator come to experience vicariously the full personhood of Ameer: the range of his emotions and the complexity of his passions.

Formally, the captive Ameer is deemed subhuman. Functionally, Ameer's story exerts his independence and fully affirms him as a person. Thus, it seems an irreconcilable bifurcation in this novel that the reader comes to identify with Ameer while the book ultimately denies him rights as a narrator. The novel thankfully provides the means to deconstruct these present tensions, which is in part assisted by Ameer's own use of pejorative language.

The disconnected messages of *Confessions of a Thug* are reconciled by arguments within the book that state meaningful interactions with other individuals is possible even when there are fundamental disparities between the natures of those persons. Martin Buber once said, "I become through my relation to the Thou; as I become I, I say Thou... All real living is meeting. (Buber 64-65). Essentially, recognizing someone as a person necessarily establishes a relationship between you and him or her. If one accepts Edwin Black's rhetorical theory that readers primarily identify with the relations position that a narrator claims to have, the recognition of Ameer's personhood by both the reader and his captor is a key part of conceptually moving beyond the simplistic, hierarchical prisoner-captor relationship. The imperial and the reader can have a meaningful interaction with "the other" despite, even paradoxically because, the manner in which a rigidly hierarchical worldview demands they view the subjugated person. This new paradigm is exhibited, as it ought to be, in the interaction between Ameer Ali and the English narrator. Even though Ameer is in the process of being coerced by the British to aid the slaughter of his kindred, Ameer notes the effect of his tale on his interrogator: "After all, sahib, cannot you now understand the excitement which possesses the soul of a Thug in his pursuit of men? Cannot you feel with us, as you hear my story, and follow us

in my recital? (Taylor 423). Simply put, one need not fully understand another culture nor even agree with it in principle to engage with the other meaningfully. In fact, understanding seems to be the product of such an interaction, not the cause. The prerequisite is recognizing the ability to interact with each other, admitting that the other person is indeed a complex entity. This sort of intercultural interaction is exhibited in Ameer's travels, wherein he utilizes it primarily as a nefarious tool to practice Thuggee and unintentionally as a method to understand himself better. The immense success Ameer has as a *sotha* stems from his ability to impersonate various castes. Noa Reich observes in "Between Admiration and Administration: Code-switching, Style-shifting, and Sociolinguistic Crossing in Philip Meadows Taylor's *Confessions of a Thug*" that "The novel focuses on the Thugs' impersonation of members of different tribes, castes, and professions... This strategy is perhaps in part a way of making Ali's character more sympathetic to the reader, but it also offers a view of disguise and the taking on of different identities as not intrinsically wrong or evil, setting up a more nuanced context for the novel's engagement with linguistic performance" (Reich 6) Throughout the novel, Ameer is shown winning favors from royalty and enticing merchants to join the Thugs' caravan by presenting himself as a charming nobleman among other disguises. In one instance, Ameer seeks to win the favor of an elderly gentleman by impersonating a well-dressed soldier, telling him, "I am nothing but a poor soldier, a syud by birth... I am come from Hindostan; my father who is at our camp, is a merchant going to the city with merchandise" (Taylor 91). Quite enamored with Ameer's wonderful garb, the gentleman replies, "By all means, Meer Sahib, we delight to see good and stout-looking fellows. Any one such is a pearl in the eye of an old soldier like myself" (91). In this exchange,

Ameer feigns mock humility and assumes the guise of a soldier so that the elderly gentleman, himself a former soldier, would quickly lower his guard and unwittingly welcome Thugs into his household. By recognizing that his victims held different worldviews and altering his mindset to best impersonate those worldviews, Ameer accordingly won renown as a Thug. As dastardly as these various encounters with were, they allowed Ameer to gain a more complete self-awareness. In his own words, “‘Like a tiger, which once having tasted human blood, will if possible take no other, and runs every risk to get it, so I feel it will be with me’ And it was so. Sahib, I knew myself – I had spoken truly” (62). Moreover, his various charades gave Ameer cause for self-reflection from time to time. After swapping war stories with one seasoned warrior who the Thugs had chosen to sacrifice, Ameer thought to himself, “I often wished I had met him as a friend, or enrolled myself under him when I might have followed his banner and endeavored to equal his deeds of valour” (237-238). By coming to know each new character that he impersonates better, Ameer gains a greater understanding of himself. Whether prisoner-captor or victim-Thug, the place naturally occupied in a hierarchy doesn’t preclude one from engaging with the complexities of another person or allowing that interaction to inform one’s own identity.

Ameer’s own use of pejorative language further affirms a commonality that permits the imperial powers to interact with Thugs and also provides an arena wherein listening to Ameer’s tale allows the British to reflect on their relationships with the indigenous people of India. Moreover, his racially charged language indicates that a reconfiguration of the social hierarchy has occurred as a result of the intercultural interaction. Ameer uses the occasional slur to distinguish himself and his fellow Thugs

from other people. Once in his narration, Ameer remarks about some other ethnic groups, “Who cares about Mangs and Dhers? They are always villains and robbers” (440). In this particularly egregious example of stereotyping, Ameer’s shows tinges of racial superiority. Ameer likewise thinks himself better than the Pindharees he once fought alongside: “‘I will neither trust you nor your master,’ said I; ‘you are a parcel of vagabond Pindharees’” (453). In these exchange, it ought to be noted that Ameer denigrates the Mangs, Dhers, and Pindharees for the very untrustworthiness that characterizes Thugs. Although they are all engaged in similar professions, Ameer herein shows pride in ranking himself, a Thuggee leader, superior to these other groups. In another case of establishing identity, Ameer tells his father, “the Francese and Ungréz are at bitter enmity; and if there is a fight... then will be the time for true believers to rouse themselves, and free their country from the yoke of both” (93). This shows his disdain for the English and the French, which is later emphasized by his use of the slur *Feringhees*, which is derogatory term for white-skinned foreigners (Feringhee), to describe Europeans (Taylor 444). Thus, Ameer not only displays his own racial prejudices through his occasional slurs but also exhibits a clear dichotomy of self versus others.

Nevertheless, Ameer has a complex view of race. When he asks his father how is it that Muslim and Hindu can both be Thugs, Ismail simply replies, “you will be thrown much into the society of Hindoos, all of good caste, and you will find them as faithful and as worthy of your friendship as any Moosulman” (35). Considering that Ameer’s closest friend, Peer Khan, is Hindu, Ameer seems to have accepted the notion that one’s background doesn’t necessarily indicate how good of a person one is. Fundamental differences don’t constitute disparity in valuation of persons. By predicating their identity

on a sense of self established through pejorative language, Ameer and his fellow Thugs assert themselves as part of a societal spectrum. The British are also included therein by virtue of being referred to diminutively. Yet the camaraderie shared by the Thuggee Hindus and Muslims and the inclusion of the imperial powers indicates this spectrum is based on morality rather than class. Whereas the spectrum constructed from *Heart of Darkness* shows that civilized people are capable of descending into barbarism, the reconfigured worldview of *Confessions of a Thug* argues that the British colonialists and the Thugs, by virtue of simply being human, are equally capable of achieving moral heights or depths. Some may argue that the reader, in identifying with the English narrator, was bamboozled by Ameer in coming to identify with him. After all, his code-switching means he could easily and dishonestly contort his description of Thuggee to something more easily digestible. In fact, it should be expected that he would want to make his audience feel empathy for him. While it is important to distinguish when a narrator is honest or unreliable, it makes no difference in this particular instance. Even if mislead, the audience recognizes in Ameer the capacity for being good; it doesn't necessitate that he actually be good. Since the argument is that Thugs are as capable of morality and immorality as their British rulers, it only matters that the reader and the English narrator vicariously experience the highs and lows of this moral spectrum in hearing Ameer's tale.

The principle that demands readers attribute racially insensitive language to the narrator rather than the author is critical to understanding the function of pejorative language in this novel. It is apparent that Ameer's use of racial slurs cannot be readily ascribed to the outermost, English narrator. Simply reading the book and acknowledging

two separate narrative voices makes the principle an enthymeme. Thus, the reader already assumed that racist language belongs to the most immediate narrator, and its role is now capable of being properly ascertained. As explicated in the preceding paragraph, Ameer's occasional bigotry helped show continuity between the imperial powers and him, which accordingly alleviated concerns about racism in the formal structure of the novel. Even though the novel had accomplished this task by making the reader and the English narrator empathize with Ameer and thusly insert themselves into his moral spectrum, the occasional racism indicates Ameer is a complex character who, like the British, is capable of being on a moral spectrum at all. His slurs therefore aren't absolutely necessary, but they validate his personhood in the novel, especially in the context of the rampant racism of imperial literature. While ever present, racism was never the primary focus of the book; it was an ancillary consideration. As such, the role of racism is naturally going to be occupied by some other item, and it will serve to reinforce some greater idea. Thus, it is fitting that one narrator's use of racist language has a defined role within the narrative but isn't critical to interpreting the story. *Confessions of a Thug* exemplifies how even the causal use of pejorative language still plays a role in piecing together the larger narrative.

CHAPTER FIVE

Summation and Extension of the Hermeneutical Principle

The intent of these previous three chapters was to demonstrate how one's focusing on racism as a narrative strategy is a useful principle to which to adhere when interpreting imperial literature. They are case studies on how the principle operates. In Flora Annie Steel's *On the Face of the Waters*, the principle was used to focus on the text's themes. The inconsistent use of pejorative language and demeaning depiction of native Indians discombobulates what message ought to be drawn from the text. My hermeneutical principle provides needed clarity. Intently ascribing racism to the narrator forces the reader to acknowledge that the narrative voice changes to mimic particular worldviews, which subsequently enables the reader to focus on the themes found in Steel's novel instead of fixate on the seemingly eccentric inclusion of racism. In Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*, the principle similarly allows one to focus on the role racism plays in the narrative. Critics have reached no consensus on whether *Heart of Darkness* is prototypically imperialistic or represents a rejection of imperialism. By attributing racism to Marlow, the exegete is better equipped to see that Marlow's racism emphasizes the depravity of indigenous peoples but also, by identifying with them, shows how great his own capacity is to fall into a depraved, savage state. Most interpreters have read Conrad's novella by exclusively focusing on what sort of statements it makes about a particular worldview. As cynical as it may be, the principle shows that the seemingly mutually exclusive readings are no longer incompatible; *Heart of Darkness* is an

indictment on both the natural state of native Africans and the abject failures of civilized society. The principle, when applied to Philip Meadows Taylor's novel *Confessions of a Thug*, argues that racism has a role within a larger narrative even in texts whose quality of being discriminatory is tenuous. The reader naturally ascribed the racism found in Ameer's narration to Ameer, yet keen awareness of that fact that the principle is in effect permits the novel's racist attributes to dramatically reinforce major themes found elsewhere in the novel. The principle was not absolutely necessary because minute instances of racism were no inhibiting factor to exegesis of the text. However, application of the hermeneutical principle shows that these otherwise needless racist elements do have a place in the larger narrative. Analysis of three above texts, which possess vastly different narrative styles and themes, demonstrates that attributing racism within a text to the narrative strategy enables one to examine racism's role in the text. Since imperial literature's inherent racism has become something of a *bête noir* and has often inhibited readers from understanding the themes of the specific texts, I believe that adhering to the asserted hermeneutical principle is vital when one is confronted by racism in imperial literature.

There may be weaknesses in my thematic analysis of the three imperial narratives, but those weaknesses should have little bearing on the efficacy of my proposed principle. No interpretation can claim a monopoly on the meaning of a text. Whatever lens people don when reading a text necessarily influences how they interpret the text. In my chapters, I am aware that reading these three stories consecutively naturally influences the thematic import I draw from each text. Reading these three texts in quick succession may have affected my analyses, and individual readers are bound to experience a text

uniquely. Some may simply not agree with my analysis, and it is each reader's prerogative to do so. No matter the paradigm a reader chooses to inculcate into a text, I am confident my hermeneutical principle is applicable. Just as in symbolic logic when one discharges extraneous assumptions, what particular case studies I chose to use is of little consequence. It does not assert any specific view of racism; it merely exhorts the reader to examine racism's function in a narrative. If one wishes to examine the totality of a book, it logically follows that one also consider the function of racism if it is present. Any work of imperial literature that features demeaning depictions of indigenous peoples or refers to them with pejorative language could have been utilized in this endeavor. The three texts demonstrate how the principle might be used and, having proven its efficacy, can be discharged. The proposed hermeneutic thus stands alone, not predicated on any particular tale. While some disagree with analysis of the three primary texts, any weaknesses found in the exegesis accordingly don't reflect upon the principle itself.

It is here necessary to concede limitations of the hermeneutical principle. It fails to make any moral judgment on racism and therefore fails to direct the reader on whether or not to tolerate racism in imperial literature. The principle does show how racism has a role in any given text, but it makes no statement on if that role justifies the inclusion of racism at all. To determine whether racism's inclusion in a text is appropriate or not, there needs to be some moral standard. I simply have not asserted any moralizing authority by which this may be accomplished. Consequently, my hermeneutical principle is only one part of a two-step hermeneutic. The first step is determining what role racism plays in imperial literature. The second step, the one the asserted principle fails to achieve, is determining if the role racism plays in a text allows one to tolerate its

presence. This principle doesn't assert racism is appropriate in works where it has a defined role; it merely allows the reader to better analyze the narrative when the presence of racism would otherwise inhibit interpretation. It is a tool that benefits only those who wish to more fully understand a text, its value being inconclusive for any other purpose.

The hermeneutical principle is applicable beyond imperial literature. Naturally, it can also extend to racism present on other works of literature. For instance, it would enable a reader to examine the racist elements of Mark Twain's *Huckleberry Finn* within the context of the narrative. The principle likewise isn't limited the issue of racism or the medium of literature. It can be used to analyze distasteful, off-putting elements in all forms of expression. For those who find elements of the Bible like Levitical law or heaven-sanctioned genocide to be unsavory, the ascribing the distasteful elements to the narrative strategy enables the reader to see what function those elements have in the narrative. At which point, they may find their inclusion acceptable, or they may not. Similarly, there are those who refuse to watch movies with gore or go to avant-garde art exhibits that may offend conservative sensibilities. Embracing the mindset demanded by the hermeneutical principle would hypothetically entreat the viewers to examine what artistic statement these grating elements makes. The principle still maintains all of its earlier discussed limitations. The fact that gore has a role in a movie is insubstantial proof that one should watch gory movies. Even so, the hermeneutical principle demands one appreciate of the role distasteful elements have in art. For those interested in fully understanding any artistic expression in any medium, they, in a manner of speaking, must ascribe the distasteful elements to the narrative strategy. The herein examined books of Flora Annie Steel, Joseph Conrad, and Philip Meadows Taylor illustrate the merit of

ascribing racism to the narrative strategy in imperial literature, and embracing this mindset should allow for individuals to discern the function of distasteful items before attaching a moral judgment to those items.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Achebe, Chinua. "An Image of Africa." *Massachusetts Review* 18. (1977): 782-94.
Reprint in *Joseph Conrad: Third World Perspectives*. Ed. Robert D. Hamner.
Washington: Three Continents, 1990. Print.
- Alber, Jan, and Frank Lauterbach, eds. *Stones of Law, Bricks of Shame: Narrating Imprisonment in the Victorian Age*. University of Toronto Press, 2009. Ebook.
- Archibald, Diana C. *Domesticity, Imperialism, and Emigration in the Victorian Novel*. Columbia: University of Missouri, 2002. Ebook.
- Black, Edwin. "The Second Persona." *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 56, no. 2 (April 1970): 109–19. EBSCO. Web.
- Buber, Martin. *I and Thou*. Mansfield Centre, CT: Martino Publishing, 2010. Print.
- Burke, Edmund. *A Philosophical Inquiry into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful*. Simon & Brown, 2013. Ebook.
- Conrad, Joseph. *Heart of Darkness*. Ed. Ross Murfin. 3rd edition. Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2010. Print.
- Conrow, Colette. "The Abject." *The Handbook of the Gothic*. 2nd edition. Washington Square: New York University Press. Print.
- Cornwell, Neil. . "The Grotesque." *The Handbook of the Gothic*. 2nd edition. Washington Square, New York: New York University Press. Print.
- De Groot, Joanna. "Coexisting and Conflicting Identities." In *Nation, Empire, Colony: Historicizing Gender and Race*. Ed. Ruth Roach Pierson, Nupur Chaudhuri, and Beth McAuley. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1998. Print.
- Edin, Kayla, and Ross Murfin. "A Critical History of *Heart of Darkness*." In *Heart of Darkness*, 3rd edition, 137–59. Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2011. Print.
- Elliott, Kamilla. *Portraiture and British Gothic Fiction: The Rise of Picture Identification, 1764-1835*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2012. ProQuest ebrary. Web.

- Embree, Ainslie Thomas. *1857 in India: Mutiny or War of Independence?* Boston: Heath, 1963. Print
- Fanthorpe, U.A. "Goth, Gothic." *The Handbook of the Gothic*. 2nd edition. Washington Square, New York: New York University Press. Print.
- Feringhee. *Oxford Online Dictionaries*. Oxford University Press, 2016. Web.
- Finkelstein, David. *Philip Meadows Taylor (1808-1876): A Bibliography*. Victorian Fiction Research Guides. Australia: University of Queensland Press, 1990. Print.
- Firchow, Peter Edgerly. *Envisioning Africa: Racism and Imperialism in Conrad's Heart of Darkness*. University Press of Kentucky, 2000. Web.
- Guerard, Albert J. *Conrad the Novelist*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1958. Print.
- Janiewski, Dolores. "Gendered Colonialism." In *Nation, Empire, Colony: Historicizing Gender and Race*, edited by Ruth Roach Pierson, Nupur Chaudhuri, and Beth McAuley. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1998. Print.
- Johnson, Alan. "'Sanitary Duties' and Registered Women: A Reading of On the Face of the Waters." *The Yale Journal of Criticism* 11, no. 2 (1998): 507–13. ProQuest ebrary. Web.
- Keen, Suzanne. *Empathy and the Novel*. Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2010. Ebook.
- Klein, Gillian. *Reading into Racism: Bias in Children's Literature and Learning Materials*. London ; Boston: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1985. Ebook.
- Lake, Marilyn. "Frontier Feminism and the Marauding White Man." In *Nation, Empire, Colony: Historicizing Gender and Race*, edited by Ruth Roach Pierson, Nupur Chaudhuri, and Beth McAuley. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1998. Print.
- Lawtoo, Nidesh. "A Picture of Europe: Possession Trance in Heart of Darkness." *Novel: A Forum on Fiction* 45, no. 3 (Fall 2012): 409–32. Web.
- Lipka, Jennifer. "'The horror! The horror!': Joseph Conrad's Heart of Darkness as a Gothic novel." *Conradiana* 40.1 (2008): 25+. *Academic OneFile*. Web.
- Miller, J. Hillis. "Heart of Darkness Revisited." *Heart of Darkness*. Ed. Ross Murfin. Third Edition. Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2010. Print.

- Murfin, Ross. "Deconstruction and *Heart of Darkness*." In *Heart of Darkness*, 3rd edition, 205–221. Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2011. Print.
- Nielsen, Danielle. "Survival and Acceptance in Flora Annie Steel's *On the Face of the Waters*." *Nineteenth-Century Gender Studies*, no. 8.1 (Spring 2012). Web.
- Ovenden, Graham "Gothic Art." *The Handbook of the Gothic*. 2nd edition. Washington Square, New York: New York University Press. Print.
- Pierson, Ruth Roach, Nupur Chaudhuri, and Beth McAuley, eds. *Nation, Empire, Colony: Historicizing Gender and Race*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1998. Print.
- Poovey, Mary. "Ambiguity and Historicism: Interpreting 'Confessions of a Thug.'" *Narrative* 12, no. 1 (2004): 3–21. JSTOR Web.
- Rao, C. Hayavando. *The Indian Biographical Dictionary*. Madras : Pillar, 1915. Ebook.
- Reich, Noa. "Between Admiration and Administration: Code-Switching, Style-Shifting, and Sociolinguistic Crossing in Philip Meadows Taylor's *Confessions of a Thug*." *The English Languages: History, Diaspora, Culture* 4, no. 0 (December 30, 2013). JPS University of Toronto. Web.
- Said, Edward. "Two Visions in *Heart of Darkness*." In *Culture and Imperialism*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1993.
- Sarkar, Tanika. "Orthodoxy, Cultural Nationalism, and Hindutva Violence." In *Nation, Empire, Colony: Historicizing Gender and Race*, edited by Ruth Roach Pierson, Nupur Chaudhuri, and Beth McAuley. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1998. Print.
- Sen, Indrani. "Gendering the Rebellion of 1857: 'The Loyal Indian Woman' in 'Mutiny Fiction.'" *Indian Historical Review* 34, no. 2 (July 1, 2007): 36–57. Web.
- Sethi, Rumina. *The Politics of Postcolonialism: Empire, Nation and Resistance*. Accessed April 8, 2016. Web.
- Sewall, Harry. "Joseph Conrad in the popular imaginary: the case of *Heart of Darkness*." *Journal of Literary Studies* 30.2 (2014): 17+. *Academic OneFile*.
- Sime, Richard. *Elements of Literature: Fifth Course Literature of the United States*. Austin: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1997. Print.
- Smith, Johanna. "'Too Beautiful Altogether': Ideologies of Gender and Empire in *Heart of Darkness*." *Heart of Darkness*. Ed. Ross Murfin. Third Edition. Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2010. Print.

Steel, Flora Annie. *On the Face of the Waters: A Tale of the Mutiny*. New York: MacMillan Company, 1897. Print.

Tabachnick, Stephen E. "Two Tales of Gothic Adventure: *She* and *Heart of Darkness*." *English Literature in Transition, 1880-1920* 56.2 (2013): 189–200. Print.

Taylor, Philip Meadows. *Confessions of a Thug*. 2010 edition. New Delhi: Rupa Publications, 2001. Print.

Williams, Williams. *The Art of Darkness*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995. Print.