

HISTORICIZING JOSEPH CONRAD'S HEART OF DARKNESS: ACRITIQUE OF KING LEOPOLD II'S COLONIAL RULE

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ABSTRACT

In this paper, I would like to examine how Conrad's Heart of Darkness has played an important role in exposing the brutal reality of Belgian colonialism of the Congo Free State under the pretence of a civilizing mission. The study focuses on how historicizing Conrad's Heart of Darkness has been instrumental in uncovering atrocities committed by King Leopold II's agents in their desperate scramble for the rich resources of Congo like ivory and rubber. King Leopold II's atrocities may account for the death of almost ten million Congolese natives, a crime of a genocidal scale which has terribly affected the future of the Congo and its people till today. Conrad renders his own ant colonial critique through his central character, Charles Marlow who learns about the brutal methods of Belgian colonialism while he is on a journey to the Congo searching for the infamous, ivory agent, Kurtz. The study concludes how Conrad's Heart of Darkness critique of King Leopold II's colonial rule has contributed to the launching of International protest campaign that strives to expose, and put an end to the inhuman genocide committed against the Congolese natives in the name of civilization, science and progress. A campaign which has finally forced King Leopold II to quit the Congo Free State in 1908 paving the way for uncovering one of the most heinous crimes in history committed in the name of so called civilization.

Key Words: Joseph Conrad, Heart of Darkness, Colonialism, King Leopold II, The Congo Free State.

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INTRODUCTION

For Joseph Conrad, Africa is an image of the unknown or an unsolved mystery which he loves to discover since his childhood. Hence, we always find Conrad dream of going to Africa once he sees it on the map by putting his finger on the blank space symbolizing the unsolved mystery of Africa expressing his wish to go there one day. (Conrad 2010)

In 1890s, news has been rife in London about Henry Stanley's successful Emin Pasha's expedition. During these times, Conrad has been looking tirelessly for a job at sea to fulfill his childhood fantasies by sailing to the exotic regions of Africa. Back to Brussels, Conrad applies for work on the Congo river.

At the height of the colonial campaigns in the world done by Britain, France, Portugal, Holland and Belgium, Joseph Conrad, like everyone else in Europe, has been saturated with beliefs that these colonial campaigns are done to civilize and educate ignorant people in Africa and Asia. These campaigns are also seen as a noble cause motivated by the call of duty and Victorian moral ethics.

In 1890, Joseph Conrad, appointed to serve as the captain of a steamer on the Congo River by a Belgian trading company, has sailed on a ship carrying the first batch of rails and ties for the building of a railway over the Crystal Mountains from the sea to Stanley Pool, from which boat steamers can reach into the heart of Africa. In regard to the railway over the Crystal Mountains, it is King Leopold II who has convinced, recruited and financed Henry Stanley's plan of building the railway in order to control every part of Congo. Stanley "would first set up a base near the river's mouth and then construct a road around the rapids, through the rugged Crystal Mountains—a precursor to a railway" (Hochschild 1999:38)

Joseph Conrad's trip to the Congo has arguably been an eye-opening experience for him. During his journey, Conrad has noted "evidence of atrocities, exploitation, inefficiency, and hypocrisy, and it fully convinced him of the disparity between imperialism's rhetoric and the harshest reality" (Watts 1996:48) of plundering and looting. Conrad has also witnessed the forced labor and corruption perpetrated by King Leopold II's agents and Force Publique in the Congo. This leads us to examine the relationship between King Leopold II and the Congo Free State.

2-King Leopold II and the Congo Free State:

King Leopold's desire for colonial control in Africa is tangibly expressed by his lobbying and bargaining to secure for himself a place during the frantic European scramble to colonize Africa.

In 1890s, Congo has been called the Congo Free State under the absolute control of King Leopold II of Belgium. Leopold is able to claim the Congo by lobbying, maneuvering and convincing the European powers like Britain, France and Germany that he is involved in a philanthropic and civilizing mission in the Congo. In his opening address of the conference in Brussels, King Leopold II explains that the conference's aim is "to open to civilization the only part of our globe which it has not yet penetrated, to pierce the darkness which hangs over entire peoples, is, I dare say, a crusade worthy of this century of progress." (Hochschild 1999:44) For Leopold, it is a holy mission to enlighten and civilize the lives of the Congolese natives. Hence, through the use of several sham organizations, Leopold has been able to lay claim on the Congo which is almost the size of Europe. Within this context, Peter Eichstaedt argues that,

King Leopold of Belgium claimed the country now known as the Democratic Republic of the Congo as his personal property in the 1870s, setting in motion one of the most monstrous plunders ever by a colonial power. Ivory, gold, rubber, and an array of minerals were taken in his name, along with millions of lives. (2011:1)

In fact, the colonial scramble for Congo in particular, and Africa in general, starts ironically with slogans as abolishing slavery, civilizing and weaning the ignorant African natives in an attempt to divide the wealth of Africa. In this regard, Adam Hochschild says that, "in the nineteenth century European drive for possessions in Africa, people justified colonialism in various ways, claiming that it Christianized the heathen or civilized the savage races or brought everyone the miraculous benefits of free trade. (1999:38) The moral rationalization of the civilizing mission is used by European colonialists to justify colonialism. Moreover, to Christianize and civilize the heathen and the savage races may construe why these colonial campaigns are usually preceded by Catholic and Protestant missionary missions in the colonized areas like the mission of David Livingstone in Congo.

King Leopold II's infamous reign in the Congo is notably marred by brutality, mistreatment of the natives, deliberate plundering and looting of natural resources like ivory and rubber. For example, villagers are terrorized and forced into extracting ivory and tapping rubber. If they fail to collect the required quotas, they are severely punished. The hands of Congolese are cut and collected in baskets by King Leopold II's agents to account to their masters for used ammunition since it is so expensive exporting it overseas. Ivory and rubber are collected for sale abroad by Leopold's agents though his so-called purpose is to civilize, educate the natives and abolish slavery. But it turns out to be a war of exploitation and enslavement of the Congolese natives. For example, forced labor, for King Leopold II, is "the only way to civilize and uplift these

indolent and corrupt peoples of the Far East." (Hochschild 1999:37) Furthermore, to fulfill his colonial aspirations, we find that Leopold took Holland as an example of a small colonial country which has managed to accumulate huge profits out of its colonies overseas. And it is also time for Belgium to perfect the art of exploiting colonies if it has to survive among the big colonial powers like France and Britain.

3-Historicizing Joseph Conrad's Heart of Darkness: A critique of colonialism : A critique of King Leopold II's rule

After spending six memorable and hellish months in the Congo, one may argue that murder, forced labor and atrocities, committed by King Leopold II's agents in the Congo Free State, have inspired Joseph Conrad to write his novella, *Heart of Darkness*. Conrad's experience has indeed provided "a basis for the knowledge indignation of '*Heart of Darkness*'. (Watts 1996 :48)

Conrad's trip may also account for his realistic depiction of the atrocities, perpetrated in the Congo Free State and that is summed up in Conrad's words that "*Heart of Darkness* is experience ... pushed a little (and only very little) beyond the actual facts of the case." (Conrad 1999:64) The fact that Conrad has lived for a few months in the Congo "gives *Heart of Darkness* an authenticity that undoubtedly has contributed to its enduring power and appeal." (Firchow 2002:22). In other words, it is actually based on real events and people Conrad has either seen directly or heard about them. Therefore, a historical understanding of the Congo Free State is very crucial to our own deep understanding of *Heart of Darkness* and its implying messages.

In this paper, I would like to examine how Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* has played an important role in exposing the brutal reality of colonialism under the pretense of a civilizing mission.

The study focuses on how historicizing Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* has been instrumental in uncovering atrocities committed by King Leopold's agents to loot and extract the rich resources of Congo like ivory and rubber, "which may account for the death of almost ten million Congolese natives" (Hochschild 2005:1), a crime of a genocidal scale which has affected the future of the Congo and its people till today.

My argument is that Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* is a critique of the Belgian colonialism and its far reaching impact which has terribly affected the lives of the Congolese natives. Conrad renders his own anti colonial critique through his central character, Charles Marlow. We find that Marlow learns about the real motives and brutal methods of colonialism while he is on a journey to the Congo to search for the infamous, ivory agent, Kurtz.

For Edward Said, Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* provides "an extraordinary account of the imperial attitudes of conquest and the tremendous devastation that accompanied it." (2008: Xiii) Conrad's account of colonial devastation in the Congo is supported by his trip to the Congo in 1890 which makes him feel disillusioned about colonialism and its real motives. These colonial motives are in a complete contradiction to what is celebrated, circulated at home and coined as the white man's burden. It is a sobering journey for Conrad which turns out to be a nightmare rather than a romantic dream he always cherishes since his childhood. Joseph Conrad sums up his feelings after landing in the Congo, "A great melancholy descended on me. Yes, this was the very spot. But there was...only the unholy recollection of a prosaic newspaper" stunt" and the distasteful knowledge of the vilest scramble for loot that ever disfigured the history of human conscience." (Curle 1926:187)

For Conrad, the romantic dream of seeing the exotic land of Africa is now shattered and the noble concept of the white man's burden has ironically turned to be a disgusting crime of looting and robbing people of their natural resources, humanity and life. It is an experience which has moved Conrad from unconsciousness to self-awareness.

Conrad's experience in the Congo has, in fact, heightened his revulsion and wariness of imperialism which has served as a reminder of the "Russian Empire which destroyed his family and ravaged his childhood." (Fincham, Hooper 1996:43). Conrad's skepticism about colonialism can be related to the fact that he was born into a Poland which has been divided by Austria, Prussia and Russia. Besides to this, his parents are patriots who are exiled by the Russian authorities as a punishment for their national feelings.

When it comes to colonialism, we find that the colonial policy of looting and extortion is supported by oriental ideology which grants the colonial powers the right to control other people, just merely because they have either different complexions or cultures. Such policy makes Conrad muse disapprovingly on the futility of the whole colonial project through his mouthpiece, Marlow, "The conquest of the earth, which

mostly means the taking it away from those who have a different conception or slightly flatter noses than ourselves, is not a pretty thing when you look into it too much. (Conrad 1902:13). This passage reflects how Marlow, like his author Joseph Conrad, is tremendously appalled by the extent of brutality and greed seen among the Belgian colonialists in the Congo that his view of colonialism and its real motives has permanently been transformed. It makes Marlow wonder who gives us the right to colonize and persecute other people, just because they are simply different from us!

For Hunt Hawkins, Conrad is critical of the Belgian imperialism and shows his sympathy for Africans since they are humans like Europeans. He adds that Conrad rejects imperialism "because it disrupted indigenous cultures." (2013:97).

In *Heart of Darkness*, we find the narrator, Charles Marlow is employed by an ivory-trading company to captain a steam boat sailing to Congo river whose shape looks like "an immense snake uncoiled, with its head in the sea, its body at rest curving afar over a vast country and its tail lost in the depths of the land."(16)

Marlow's destination is a post where the company's ambitious agent, Mr. Kurtz, is stationed. It is rumored that Kurtz has collected legendary quantities of ivory using unspeakable means of cruelty, oppression and violence against the native Congolese. Marlow's journey is an eye opening experience which gradually makes him see the brutal true reality of colonialism and its destructive impact on both the colonizer and the colonized stripping both of their humanity.

During his trip to the Congo, Marlow realizes that the situation is completely contrary to what is propagated at home about the great work done by Belgian colonialists in civilizing ignorant people as Marlow's aunt is made to believe but it is ironically a panorama of brutality. In his first encounter with the true abominable nature of colonialism, we see Marlow pass a group of laborers working on building of railway over the Crystal Mountains.

A slight clinking behind me made me turn my head. Six black men advanced in a file toiling up the path. They walked erect and slow, balancing small baskets full of earth on their heads, and the clink kept time with their footsteps I could see every rib, the joints of their limbs were like knots in a rope, each had an iron collar on his neck and all were connected together with a chain whose bights swung between them, rhythmically clinking"(31)

In this passage, we see Marlow appalled and shocked by the dehumanization of the chained black Congolese who are building a railway contributing to white expansionism. Words like "every rib" and "the joints were like the knots in a rope" indicate the miserable health condition of the workers. We see emaciated chained black prisoners who are being marched to work. They are degradingly chained like animals which tells us about the nature of the forced labor. In another incident, we see Marlow meet several starving railway workers who have crawled away to die. "now and then a carrier dead in harness, at rest in the long grass near the path, with an empty water-gourd and his long staff lying by his side."(39). Here, Conrad sheds light on the question of forced labor and the oppressive and inhuman conditions Congolese laborers undergo. They are reduced to mere animals where they are left to starve and die miserably. In another case, we find Marlow see a "body of a middle-aged negro, with a bullet-hole in the forehead"(40) lying beside the road or hear a black worker screaming horribly from beating for accidentally causing a fire. "A nigger was being beaten nearby. They said he had caused the fire in some way; be that as it may, he was screeching most horribly."(47) Furthermore, during his walk around the Rapids, Marlow describes how people have fled their villages to avoid being conscripted as porters and escape the brutality of Kurtz.

The population had cleared out a long time ago. Well if a lot of mysterious niggers armed with all kinds of fearful weapons suddenly took to traveling on the road [in England] between Deal and Gravesend catching the yokels right and left to carry heavy loads for them, I fancy every farm and cottage thereabouts would get empty very soon.... I passed through several abandoned villages. (39)

Marlow sees abandoned villages whose inhabitants have fled deep into the forests to escape being recruited as porters. They are afraid of revenge from Kurtz, an example of King Leopold's Force Publique, who kill, cut hands, rape women systematically and burn houses. Put differently, villagers are either killed or

left to die deep in the forest due to lack of healthy food and diseases if they refuse to obey orders. Marlow has no whims about why this brutality is tolerated. It is the Belgian colonialism which is described by Marlow as conquest of "those who have a different complexion or slightly flatter noses than ourselves," (13) under the guise of "the philanthropic pretense." (47) The scene of cleared villages and cases of brutality make Marlow wonder what would happen to the English country side if it is similarly subjected to African imperialism. "I fancy every farm and cottage thereabouts would get empty very soon.... if a lot of mysterious niggers armed with all kinds of fearful weapons suddenly took to travelling on the road between Deal and Gravesend." (39) The English villagers will obviously clear out their villages fearing for their lives and safety of their families, exactly as done by Congolese villagers. Besides to this, For Marlow, to hold a comparison between the Europeans and Africans, it symbolically signifies their equal humanity and there is nothing as such a lesser person as claimed by Orientalist colonial ideology.

Moreover, Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* renders a harsh critique of the King Leopold's colonial policy and economy which is based on blood, forced labor and tyranny in return for precious loads of Ivory. For instance, Marlow narrates to us how Leopoldian colonial economy works: "a stream of ... rubbishy cottons, beads, and brass-wire set into the depths of darkness and in return came a precious trickle of ivory." (36) It seems that precious ivory is taken from the Congo in return for some cheap beads and cottons. In 1890, Ivory still constitutes the backbone of the Congo's economy before the discovery of rubber and other mineral resources. Ivory is ironically described by Marlow as an idol colonialists pray for. "The word 'ivory' rang in the air, was whispered, was sighed. You would think they were praying to it." (46) It is also every agent's dream to get appointed to a trading-post "where ivory was to be had, so that they could earn percentages." (46) This may account for the system of commissions bestowed on King Leopold's agents to encourage them to extract more ivory under any means.

When it comes to Conrad's character, Kurtz, we find that he represents the image of the "lone white agent far up the great river, with his dreams of grandeur, his great store of precious ivory, and his fiefdom carved out of the African jungle" (Hochschild 1999:144) Kurtz's shadowy nature is spurred by something dark which lurks deep in Africa, a dark force which lures Kurtz and leaves him unrestrained so that you "you can't judge Mr. Kurtz as you would an ordinary man" (113) This dark force which we see in Kurtz's heart and lurks deep in Africa cannot be symbolically other than the concept of colonialism and its brutal methods and agents.

The darkness Kurtz holds within himself reflects symbolically the darkness of the so called civilizing mission itself. Kurtz can also be seen as an example of colonial "Europeans who have brought an unknown inhumane behavior that seared the soul of the continent." (Eichstaedt 2011:211) And tragically sealed the future of millions of people who live in Africa.

Moreover, one may argue that Conrad's Kurtz is the incarnation of exploitation, and evil spirit of King Leopold II and his policy of merciless colonial expansion in the Congo. Historically speaking, Kurtz character is inspired by several agents whose sole mission is to make money as fast as possible and collect large amounts of precious ivory and send it back to Belgium. Kurtz's character might be based on Captain Leon Rom of the Force Publique whom Joseph Conrad has really met at Stanley Falls, in the Congo in 1890, "he passed through Leopoldville, the station chief there was Leon Rom." (Hochschild 1999:147). The scene of a collection of heads of Congolese rebels surrounding Kurtz's House, "heads on the stakes.... look black, dried, sunken, with closed eyelids." (113) reminds us of Captain Rom whose bed is similarly decorated by heads of Congolese rebels collected after a merciless military expedition against the Congolese rebels and their families.

Linking the character of Kurtz to Captain Leon Rom may account for the importance of historicizing Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* if we want to grasp fully the genocidal scale of merciless killing in the Congo by King Leopold II. For example, we see Marlow, on the steamboat, looking through binoculars at what he thinks are ornamental knobs atop the fence posts in front of Kurtz's house and then shockingly find that each is only "black, dried, sunken, with closed eyelids - a head that seemed to sleep at the top of that pole, and with the shrunken dry lips showing a narrow white line of the teeth" (113). It seems that Kurtz has a fondness for the sunken heads since his fence posts are ornamented with them. These skulls belong to the Congolese rebels who refuse to comply to Kurtz's orders or comply but fail to bring the designated quota of ivory. They are consequently punished by killing. Furthermore, we understand that decorating Kurtz's house with heads can

be a sign of power, fear and a stern warning that this will only be the same fate for those who refuse to obey orders or fail to collect ivory. Within this context, Michiko Kakutani writes that, Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* records in detail "the actual facts of King Leopold II's brutal rule of Congo in 1890, just as one of history's most heinous acts of mass killing was getting under way"(1998:1)

However, King Leopold II's colonial hypocrisy is seen through the way he calls his agents as "all powerful protectors and benevolent teachers who are engaged in the work of material and moral regeneration"(Brunner, Mills 2003:8) For that reason, we find Kurtz see himself as a defender of high principles and an author of a report on "The Suppression of Savage Customs". It is ironically the same prevalent Oriental thinking Marlow's aunt is made to believe when Marlow bids her goodbye before sailing to the Congo. She talks about "weaning those ignorant millions from their horrid ways"(24), to such extent of making Marlow uncomfortable. He is almost about to confess to her that "the company was run for profit"(24)

Supporting this, we see that King Leopold II's agents go about exploiting and looting the Congo in the belief that they are bringing civilization and serving "the noble cause."(17) We also observe that besides to being a killer, Kurtz is portrayed as an intellectual "emissary of pity, and science, and progress."(50) He is also shown as an artist who paints "a small sketch in oils, on a panel, representing a woman, draped and blindfolded, carrying a lighted torch."(49)

Kurtz's portrayal of being both a killer and a messenger of progress and science may symbolize the colonial strategy of colonizing other countries which is a combination of both cultural and colonial conquest.

Kurtz's hypocritical intellectual pretensions have let him succeed "getting himself adored"(112) by the Congolese natives in the inner station. "let us say— nerves, went wrong, and caused him to preside at certain midnight dances ending with unspeakable rites."(100) Here, we see that tribes' chiefs crawl on the ground before Kurtz engaging in unspeakable rites where people obey him with a slavish devotion. They worship him as a man /god. Kurtz is himself involved in unspeakable and shocking rituals which Marlow refuses disgustingly to report. It is reported that "the rituals involve human sacrifice and subsequent consumption of a portion of the sacrificial victim."(Moore 2004:192)

The International Society for the Suppression of Savage Customs asks Kurtz to write a report on the superiority of White Europeans which is eloquently written. It is merely a reflection of the Belgian colonial strategy adopted by King Leopold II. Kurtz starts his report arguing that,

We whites, from the point of development we had arrived at, 'must necessarily appear to them [savages] in the nature of supernatural beings— we approach them with the might as of a deity,' and so on, and so on. 'By the simple exercise of our will we can exert a power for good practically unbounded.'(100)

Kurtz ends his report, scrawling with a shaky hand, with an appeal to "every altruistic sentiment it blazed at you, luminous and terrifying, like a flash of lightning in a serene sky: 'Exterminate all the brutes!'"(101) The order by Kurtz to exterminate all the brutes may reveal a genocidal logic hidden beneath the rhetoric of Kurtz's missionary benevolence as seen in his official report for the International Society for the Suppression of Savage Customs. It is "a satirical parody of King Leopold's speeches on the Belgian's civilizing work in the Congo Free State."(Peters 2010:147)

King Leopold II's brutality and his colonial conquest of the Congo is whispered by Kurtz's final words while dying "The horror! The horror!"(142). His final words reflect the sheer horror experienced by the Congolese population who have faced two bitter choices either working to death or extermination. They are "virtually enslaved and cruelly maltreated in the quest for rubber and ivory."(Bloom 2011:29) It is also a clear message to the whole world that what is happening in the Congo is simply horror beyond imagination which must stop immediately.

However, what is unique about Conrad's revulsion at the scale of the genocidal slaughter seen in the Congo is his literary genius in and allowing us to "grasp the numbing regularity in which the slaughter was carried out." (Brunner, Mills 2003:8).

To sum up, for Conrad, Kurtz is an imperial man. He is a symbol of imperialism and its darkness. His excesses "are portrayed as the natural extension of a system of extracting ivory at any cost." (Brunner, Mills

2003:7) He is also an arch European since "All Europe contributed to the making of Kurtz"(100) taking note that his father is half –French and his mother is half-English, a symbol of the most powerful colonial powers at that time. Finally, Conrad's Heart of Darkness and its character, Kurtz, "are the creations not just of a novelist but of an open-eyed observer who caught the spirit of a time and place with piercing accuracy."(Hochschild 1999:152)

CONCLUSION

In spite of criticism leveled by both Achebe and feminists like Straus against Conrad and his novella, Heart of Darkness, Conrad's novella has been instrumental in helping the Congolese cause by drawing attention to the atrocities committed against them, where "the murderous exploitation of the Congo by Belgium's King Leopold has attained almost mythic status." (Jones 2006 :42). In practice, Heart of Darkness has contributed to the launching of International protest campaign that strives to expose, uncover, curb and put an end to the inhuman genocide committed against the Congolese natives.

Furthermore, Joseph Conrad himself has participated personally in the International protest campaign to save lives in the Congo. For instance, Conrad has sent letters of support to E.D. Morel's companion Roger Casement who, in turn, submits a parliamentary report documenting crimes against humanity committed by King Leopold II and his agents in the Congo. Joseph Conrad's Heart of Darkness has also explored the human plight of the Congolese natives confirming the revolutionary role of literature in bettering our lives and alleviating our sufferings. It also emphasizes Conrad's awareness that "the novelist is a historian, the preserver, the keeper, the expounder of human experience."(Panichas 2007:156). Furthermore, Conrad's role as a novelist, a public intellectual, and a defender of human rights along with the efforts of activists like E.D. Morel and Roger Casement have, in fact, stirred an international outcry for world powers to intervene and stop the process of hidden ongoing genocide in the Congo. This has consequently led in forcing King Leopold II to relinquish the Congo Free State to the Belgian government in 1908.

It has also paved the way for Belgian authorities to investigate its colonial legacy and especially, well documented claims of genocide committed in the Congo where it is noted that during King Leopold's rule, countless deaths are attributed to forced labor, working people to death, merciless killing and sleeping sickness.

Finally, Conrad's Heart of Darkness has proved to be "a head of its time" and exceptionally prophetic text."(Watts 1996:48) in rendering an extraordinary critique of colonialism, exposing its true brutal nature and its lasting impact on the colonized Congolese natives who are left to suffer till today. Conrad's Heart of Darkness has been an outcry for stopping genocide in the Congo committed in the name of civilization, progress and science and simultaneously respecting the human rights of the Congolese who are our brothers in humanity.

Notes:

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 8. For more on the history of the Congo Free State, see, Kimbrough, Robert .ed.Heart of Darkness. An Authoritative Text; Backgrounds and Sources; Essays in Criticism; Bibliography. New York: Norton Critical Editions,1963.
 9. On May 29, 1885, king Leopold II named his new colony the Congo Free State. The state included the entire area of the present Democratic Republic of the Congo and existed from 1885 to 1908.
 10. In 1876, Leopold II hosted a geographic conference in Brussels, inviting famous explorers, philanthropists to stir up interest in a "humanitarian" endeavor for Europeans to take in central Africa so as to improve and civilize the lives of the Congolese natives.
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 13. With John Dunlop's invention of tubes and the growing popularity of the automobile increased the global demand for rubber which can be tapped easily in the Congo compared to the rubber found in Latin America.
 14. For more information on crimes committed in the Congo for the sake of ivory and rubber, see, Glassman, Jonathon.War of Words, War of Stones: Racial Thought and Violence in Colonial Zanzibar.Bloomington: Indiana University Press,2011; Likaka, Osumaka.Naming Colonialism: History and Collective Memory in the Congo, 1870–1960.Wisconsin: Wisconsin University Press,2009; Ndlovu-Gatsheni, Sabelo J. Coloniality of Power in Postcolonial Africa. Myths of Decolonization. Dakar:Codesria Book Series, 2013. Vanthemsche, Guy. Belgium and the Congo, 1885-1980. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012.;Haskin, Jeanne M. The Tragic State of the Congo: From Decolonization to Dictatorship. New York:Algora Publishing, 2005.
 15. Leopold's false promises can be seen in his pledges to suppress the East African slave trade ,promote humanitarian policies, guarantee free trade within the colony, impose no import duties for twenty years and encourage philanthropic and scientific enterprises. For more on slavery in Africa, see, Green, Toby. The Rise of the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade in Western Africa, 1300–1589. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011; Laband, John, ed. Daily Lives of Civilians in Wartime Africa: from slavery days to Rwandan genocide. Westport: Greenwood Publishing Group, 2007.

16. For more information on Dutch colonialism, see, Knight, Gordon Roger. *Narratives of Colonialism: Sugar, Java and the Dutch*. Nova Science Publishers, 2000.
17. When it comes to the question of genocide, it is about "processes by which hundreds of millions of people met brutal ends." (Jones 2006 : xix) Till the Second World War, genocide was defined as " a crime without name." It is only coined and placed in a global and historical context by Raphael Lemkin .For more on genocide, see, Jones, Adam. *Genocide: A comprehensive introduction*. London: Rout ledge, 2006;Schabas, William. *Genocide in international law: the crimes of crimes*. Cambridge University Press, 2000;Kuper, Leo. *Genocide: Its political use in the twentieth century*. CT: Yale University Press, 1982.; Fein, Helen. *Genocide: A sociological perspective*. California: Sage publications, 1990.; Andreopoulos, George J., ed. *Genocide: conceptual and historical dimensions*. Pennsylvania: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1997;Whitehead, Neil L., Jo Ellen Fair, and Leigh A. Payne. *Genocide: truth, memory, and representation*. Eds. Alexander Laban Hinton, and Kevin Lewis O'Neill. North Carolina: Duke University Press, 2009;Totten, Samuel, and William S. Parsons, eds. *Century of Genocide: Essays and Eyewitness Accounts*. London:Rout ledge, 2012;Mamdani, Mahmood. *When victims become killers: Colonialism, nativism, and the genocide in Rwanda*. New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2014.
18. For more on Conrad's anti colonial critique, see, Hawkins, Hunt. "Conrad's Critique of Imperialism in Heart of Darkness." *Publications of the Modern Language Association of America* (1979): 286-99; Parry, Benita. *Conrad and Imperialism: Ideological Boundaries and Visionary Frontiers*. London: Macmillan, 1983;Basnayake,Lakminrade." Heart of Darkness: Joseph Conrad's Anti-Imperialistic Perspective through Racism, Pessimism and Impressionism." *Asian Journal of Multidimensional Research*.1 .5(2012):1:10
19. "The White Man's Burden" is a poem by the English poet Rudyard Kipling. It is interpreted that white people have an obligation to rule over, and encourage the cultural development of people from other cultural backgrounds until they can take their place in the world economically and socially.
20. All references will be henceforth taken from Conrad, Joseph. *Heart of Darkness*. Virginia: University of Virginia press, 1902.
21. In 1900,Edmund Morel noticed that ships that brought vast loads of rubber from the Congo returned only with guns and ammunition for the Force Publique. A discovery which drove him to be an ardent activist trying to expose and discredit King Leopold's regime.
22. For more on King Leopold II's agents, see, Ray, Martin. *Joseph Conrad: Interviews and Recollections*. Iowa:University of Iowa Press, 2010;Orr, Leonard, and Theodore Billy, eds. *A Joseph Conrad Companion*. CT:Greenwood Publishing Group, 1999.Sherry, Norman. *Conrad's Western World*. Cambridge:Cambridge University Press, 1980;
23. For more information on captain Leon Rom, see , Mills, Nicolaus, and Kira Brunner, eds. *The new killing fields: Massacre and the politics of intervention*. New York: Basic Books, 2003.
24. For more on the role of culture and colonialism, see Said, Edward W. *Culture and Imperialism*. New York:Random House LLC, 1993.
25. in regard to Achebe's criticism of Conrad's Heart of Darkness and the question of African representation, see, Achebe, Chinua. "An Image of Africa." *Research in African Literatures* 9.1 (1978): 1-15.
26. In regard to the feminist criticism of Conrad's Heart of Darkness and the question of the representation of the woman , see,Straus, Nina Pelikan. "The Exclusion of the Intended from Secret Sharing in Conrad's" Heart of Darkness"." *Novel: A Forum on Fiction*. Brown University, (1987):123-137London, Bette. "Reading Race and Gender in Conrad's Dark Continent." *Criticism* (1989): 235-52.
27. The international campaign and the Congo Reform Association are led by dedicated individuals like Joseph Conrad, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, E.D.Morel and Sir Roger Casement.
28. For more on E.D.Morel and Sir Roger Casement and their human activism, see, Morel, Edmund Dene. *The black man's burden*. New York: BW Huebsch, 1920; Morel, Edmund Dene. *King Leopold's rule in Africa*. Portsmouth: W. Heinemann, 1904; Morel, Edmund Dene. *Red Rubber: The Story of the Rubber Slave Trade Flourishing on the Congo in the Year of Grace 1907*.London: TF Unwin, 1907; Louis, William Roger. "Roger Casement and the Congo." *The Journal of African History* 5.01 (1964): 99-120; Hawkins, Hunt. "Joseph Conrad, Roger Casement, and the Congo Reform Movement." *Journal of Modern Literature* (1981): 65-80.

29. According to the Belgian commission estimates, that during" Leopold period and its immediate aftermath the population of the territory dropped by approximately 10 million people." (Jones 2006:43).
30. During this time, the Congo Free State is also swept by an epidemic of "sleeping sickness," one of the most disastrous plagues recorded in human history." The impact of this disease is exacerbated by slavery and privation and adverse conditions imposed by Leopold.
31. Unfortunately, the Congo continues to be a land of chaos, massacres, and looting. The neo colonial scramble is still going on for the Congo's richest resources of gold, timber, diamonds, tin and coltan which has turned the eastern parts of the Congo to permanent killing fields. Tin and coltan are both very critical to the high circuitry found in cell phones and computers. For more on the sufferings of the Congolese people due to the Belgian colonial legacy, see, Stearns, Jason. *Dancing in the Glory of Monsters: the Collapse of the Congo and the Great War of Africa*. New York: PublicAffairs, 2011; Eichstaedt, Peter. *Consuming the Congo: War and Conflict Minerals in the World's Deadliest Place*. Chicago: Chicago Review Press, 2011; runier, Gérard. *Africa's World War: Congo, the Rwandan Genocide, and the Making of a Catastrophe*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008.

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