

Heart of Darkness *Redux*.

Charles Travis

I

Now when I was a little chap I had a passion for maps. I would look for hours at South America, or Africa, or Australia, and lose myself in all the glories of exploration. At that time there were many blank spaces on the earth, and when I saw one that looked particularly inviting on a map (but they all look like that) I would put my finger on it and say, When I grow up I will go there. (Heart of Darkness.¹)

The story of Marlow's journey in Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* (1902) is one that describes a psychological voyage to the 'Inner Station' of the Jungian *Shadow* archetype lurking in the unconscious meta-narrative of the Western imperial project.

Conrad's mapping of the relationship between subconscious mindscapes and the perception and appropriation of corporeal landscapes in his novella is the narrative of Marlow's employment by the 'Company' to travel up river to its 'Inner Station' located in colonial Africa to relieve a top Company agent, Mr. Kurtz of the ivory, that he has been hoarding. The journey encapsulates a descent into human physical and spiritual depravity that is palpably inherent in the agency and structure of colonialism, as Marlow steaming upriver first encounters the myth of Kurtz and then his writings from his diary before actually meeting the man who has elevated himself to the level of an imperial demi-god above the natives in the African interior.

The commentary provided by the Saharan travel diary of Sven Lindquist, the poetry of Robert Bly and the critical literary approaches of Edward Said, allow a means to map relevant themes emerging from the narrative within *Heart of Darkness*. These textual maps trace the nineteenth century roots of Western imperial thought, discourse and action as they took purchase in the soil of the subconscious landscapes of Europe and America and their subsequent territorial possessions. But first we shall begin with Conrad, the sailor, whose journeys beyond the occident, took us inside the psychic architecture of our own Western imperial assumptions.

¹ Joseph, Conrad, *Heart of Darkness* (London: Penguin, 1902) 11.

II

He was a seaman, but he was a wanderer, too, while most seamen lead, if one may so express it, a sedentary life. (Heart of Darkness.²)

Joseph Conrad, originally named Jozef Teodor Konrad Korzeniowski, was born on December 3, 1857 to Polish parents in Berdichev, a town in the Ukraine, which was dominated by the Russian Empire at the time. In 1862, his father Apollo, a Polish patriot, was found guilty of conspiracy against the Russian state and took his wife Evalina and young Jozef with him into exile to the northern province of Vologda. By the time Conrad was eleven he was an orphaned and living in Poland with an uncle in Cracow. He left Poland when he was sixteen and went to Marseilles in France to become an apprentice on the ship *Mont Blanc* and began his training as a merchant sailor. Eventually plying his trade in the West Indies, he allegedly was a gunrunner for supporters of Don Carlos, the Spanish pretender, on the ship *Tremolino*.

In February of 1877 after acquiring substantial gambling debts on borrowed money, he attempted suicide, but failed when the bullet he intended for his heart, missed its mark. In 1878, after recuperating from his self inflicted wounds, he joined the British Merchant Navy and by crewing on the various ships, including the *Narcissus* and the *Otago* among others, travelled widely to the colonial backwaters of the South Pacific, Asia, the East Indies and the Belgian Congo. In 1902, after retiring as a merchant sailor, he published *Heart of Darkness*, a striking critique of Western imperialism culled from his experiences travelling as a seaman.

III

But it was a beautiful piece of writing. The opening paragraph, however, in the light of later information, strikes me now as ominous. He began with the argument 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 approached 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,"...It gave me the notion of an exotic Immensity ruled by an august Benevolence...This was the unbounded power of eloquence –of words- of burning noble words...It was very simple, and at the end of that moving 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!" (Heart of Darkness.³)

² Conrad, 8.

³ Conrad, 71-72.

Like Conrad describing the travel diary of Kurtz, the Swedish writer Sven Lindqvist wrote as well about his own physical and psychological journeys. In a travel diary that he kept during his trek across the Sahara by bus, Lindqvist meditated generally on themes within *Heart of Darkness*. But specifically, one particular sentence within the text caused him to brood very deeply. In his diary he described his own reflection on the import of that sentence,

The core of European thought? Yes, there is one sentence, a short simple sentence, only a few words, summing up the history of our continent, our humanity, and our biosphere, from Holocene to Holocaust. It says nothing about Europe as the original home on earth of humanism, democracy, and welfare. It says nothing about everything we are quite rightly proud of. It simply tells the truth we prefer to forget. I have studied that sentence for several years. I have collected quantities of material that I never have time to go through. I would like to disappear into this desert, where no one can reach me, where I have all the time in the world, to disappear and not return until I have understood what I already know.⁴

The sentence was, '*Exterminate all the brutes!*' And when Lindqvist published his diary in 1992, nearly ninety years after Conrad published *Heart of Darkness*, he chose that epithet of Kurtz's as the title. Over the course of his journey, he pondered the Enlightenment project's cultural contribution to the development of Western imperialism.

The 'Age of Reason' had transformed Europe from a collection of feudal states emerging from the Dark Ages into a crucible of democracy and humanism, but by the late nineteenth century, the emergence of European nationalism combined with developments in the study of the natural sciences created an ethno-centric rationale to validate the European imperial project.

In his diary, Lindqvist explores in a hermeneutic fashion the writings of notable scientific figures of the nineteenth century such as the zoologist Georges Cuvier, the geologist Charles Lyell, the botanist Charles Darwin and the geographer Friedrich Ratzel, to gauge the impact of their work on the course of the natural sciences during the 1800s and their subsequent contribution to the ethos of imperialism. In Michel Foucault's term, these individuals could be viewed as rare figures, founders of a '*discursivity*'⁵ that contributed to the development of the theory of evolution, its racialist assumptions and

⁴ Sven Lindqvist, *Exterminate All The Brutes* (London: Granta, 1992) 3.

⁵ Michel Foucault, *The Foucault Reader: An Introduction to Foucault's Thought*, ed. Paul Rabinow, (London: Penguin 1984) 100.

generally, to the philosophy of the natural sciences during the 'halcyon' days of the European imperial project.

Lindqvist begins his hermeneutic analysis with the writings of Georges Cuvier (1769-1832), the founder of vertebræ palaeontology. In January 1796, Cuvier lectured at the *Institut National de France*, in Paris, first publicly introducing the idea of extinction, which he based upon the discovery of fossilized remains of the mastodon. His audience, having lived through the 'reign of terror' of the French Revolution, during which many old established French patrician families had been killed, found in Cuvier's lectures an equivalent experience echoing from the distant geological past.

In 1812 Cuvier published *Recherché sur les ossemens fossiles des quadrupèdes* [*Research on the Fossil Bones of Quadrupeds*]. In its introduction entitled *Discours sur les révolutions du globe* [*Discourse on the Revolutionary Upheavals on the Surface of the Earth*] he wrote,

Why has not anyone seen that fossils alone gave birth to a theory about the formation of the earth, that without them, no one would have ever dreamed that there were successive epochs in the formation of the globe?⁶

Between 1827-1835, Cuvier published *The Animal Kingdom*, a 16-volume text that divides humans into three races, and in describing the 'Negroid' races he states, 'The hordes belonging to this variant of human being have always remained in a state of total barbarism.'⁷ This racialisation of African continental culture already had its precedent in the work of anatomist William Tyson's text, *Orang-Outang or The Anatomy of the Pygmy*, (1708) which delineated the search for a missing link in the hierarchy of species.

In 1829 the British Geologist Charles Lyell (1797-1875) visits Cuvier, and greatly admires his work. He goes on to write one of the classic works of nineteenth century British geology, *Principles of Geology* (1832) claiming the ultimate cause of extinction was an organism's lack of flexibility and ability to adapt when unfavourable environmental changes occur. Like Cuvier's experience of the French Revolution, Lyell was influenced by socio-cultural historical changes occurring within his own *habitus*⁸. He had observed similar

⁶ George Cuvier's study *Recherches sur les ossemens fossiles des quadrupèdes* [*Research on the Fossil Bones of Quadrupeds*] was first published in France in 1812. The *Discours sur les révolutions du globe* [*Discourse on the Revolutionary Upheavals on the Surface of the Earth*] was the introduction to his larger work. The translation contained in this text is based upon the Third French Edition (Paris and Amsterdam, 1825). The introduction (which is excerpted from in this text) to the earlier work had been translated into English (in 1813) and German (in 1822), and had added considerably to Cuvier's international reputation as one of France's most important scientists.

⁷ Coleman, William (1964) '*Georges Cuvier, Zoologist*' Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press. Pp.143-165 in Lindqvist, S. (1992) *Exterminate All The Brutes*. Granta. p. 99.

⁸ A concept generated by the French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu, which he defined as 'a system of lasting, transposable dispositions which, integrating past experiences,

phenomena, albeit on a social scale, in the emerging labour markets of the Industrial Revolution that were spreading across Europe, and subsequently sensed the traces of this phenomenon taking place in nature as well.

The British naturalist Charles Darwin (1809-1882) carried Lyell's *Principles of Geology* with him on his famous voyage on the *Beagle*. It influenced his research in the Galapagos Islands and in the spring of 1834, during his time in Patagonia, he observed, 'Certainly no fact in the long history of the world is so startling, as the wide and repeated extermination of its inhabitants⁹.' Darwin published his famous *Origin of Species* in 1859, concluding that the study of fossils will throw light not only on the destruction of living creatures but also on their origins. Darwin's assertion towards evolution created a debate in which his scientific beliefs and those of Cuvier and Lyell, were generally at odds with each other.

Cuvier simply did not believe in organic evolution. Species he contended were essentially inalterable in form. If there were morphological changes occurring within a species, there would be convincing fossil evidence of the existence of such intermediate species forms. In contrast, Lyell believed that the destruction of a species was actually the result of a small number of environmental and biological processes occurring slowly over time.

Darwin sceptically questioned the assumptions held by Cuvier and Lyell. He speculated that if old species did indeed die slowly, then why couldn't the converse occur -that new species could arise slowly as well, with their intermediate forms being forced out quickly without necessarily leaving any geological or fossilized traces or remains? Darwin contended that the fiercest evolutionary struggle took place between species that most resemble each other genetically.

In regard to this fiercest of evolutionary struggles he stated, 'Hence the improved and modified descendants of a species will generally cause the extinction of the parent species.'¹⁰ In a letter to Lyell in 1859, Darwin speculated that this evolutionary struggle may also occur between the human races, resulting in, 'the less intellectual races being exterminated.'¹¹ In 1871, Darwin published *The Descent of Man* and in it claimed that gorillas and 'savages' are intermediate forms between lower primates and 'civilized' man. He concluded that these species forms were indeed dying out. He stated in his text, 'At some future period not very distant as measured in centuries, the

functions at every moment as a *matrix of perceptions, appreciations and actions* and makes possible the achievement of infinitely diversified tasks, thanks to analogical transfer of schemes permitting the solution of similarly shaped problems.' In David Swartz, *Culture and Power* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997) 100.

⁹ Charles Darwin, *The Voyage of the Beagle in Exterminate All The Brutes*, Sven Lindquist (London: Granta 1992) 105.

¹⁰ Charles Darwin, *The Origin of Species- Chapter 9*, in *Exterminate All The Brute*, Sven Lindquist (London: Granta 1992) 106.

¹¹ Charles Darwin, *1856 Letter to Lyell in Race, Culture and Evolution: Essays in the History of Anthropology* in *Exterminate All The Brutes*, Sven Lindquist (London: Granta 1992)107.

civilised races of man will certainly exterminate and replace throughout the world the savage races.’¹² Lindqvist in his text, observes in regards to the debate between these three discursive figures of nineteenth century natural science,

Cuvier, Lyell and Darwin –they are all, in their work, fictional characters. The story of how they made their discoveries is nothing but a story, as it says nothing about them themselves. The omission of all that is personal makes the scientific ‘self’ into a fiction lacking any equivalent in reality.¹³

Their inherent assumptions of racial inferiority of the ‘darker’ and ‘savage’ races informed other evolutionary discourses of the nineteenth century. In 1850, the anatomist Robert Knox (1791-1862) published *The Races of Man: A Fragment*. He had studied comparative anatomy with Cuvier, and in his text racial prejudice already infusing the developing theory of evolution is framed in scientific rationality and given moral validity. With little empirical evidence to support his claims, Knox writes,

I feel disposed to think that there must be a physical and consequently, a psychological inferiority in the dark races generally...To me, race, or hereditary descent, is everything; it stamps the man...race is everything: literature, science, art, in a word, civilization, depend on it.¹⁴

Lindqvist observed that the racialisation of evolution, emerging from biology and zoology, spread to other disciplines, including geography, the discipline charged with mapping those surfaces of the earth that the imperialist project was intent on appropriating. Between 1882 and 1891, the German geographer Friedrich Ratzel, (1844-1904) originally a zoologist/biologist, wrote the classic *Anthropogeographie*¹⁵. In the tenth chapter of his text he focused on ‘the decline of peoples of inferior cultures at contact with culture.’¹⁶ In 1897 he continued with this theme in *Politische Geographie*¹⁷ within which he claimed that

¹² Charles Darwin, *The Descent of Man*. in *Exterminate All The Brutes*, Sven Lindqvist (London: Granta 1992)107.

¹³ Lindqvist, 104.

¹⁴ Robert Knox, *The Races of Man: A Fragment*. in *Exterminate All The Brutes*.Sven Lindqvist (London: Granta 1992) 125.

¹⁵ Friedrich Ratzel’s, *Anthropogeographie*, was actually published in two volumes, in 1882 and 1891. The first volume was ‘an application of geography to history’ and the second volume concerned ‘the geographical distribution of man.’ Both volumes must be placed in the context of the debate over the relationship between the cultural sciences and natural sciences taking place within the German intellectual community of Ratzel’s time, as shown in R.J. Johnston, D. Gregory & D.M. Smith *The Dictionary of Human Geography 3rd Ed.* (Cambridge: Blackwell 1984) 18.

¹⁶ Lindqvist, 144.

¹⁷ Ratzel’s attempt to conduct a nominally scientific study of the relations between society and nature through the elaboration of a system of social, biological, political, geographical and cultural concepts can be seen to culminate in his text *Politische Geographie*. Writing in a historical milieu that can be described as characterized by an

'stunted hunting people in the African interior'¹⁸ along with 'innumerable similar existences'¹⁹ are classed as 'scattered people with no land.'²⁰ In 1900 Ratzel began to develop the idea of *Lebensraum*, by linking the biological theory of evolution with geographical theory concerning space, in which he 'equated a nation with a living organism and argued that a country's search for territorial expansion was similar to a growing organism's search for space.'²¹

In 1904 he published these ideas in *Der Lebensraum*, based upon his earlier travels in North America in the late nineteenth century and his observations of the conflict between European whites and Native Americans in their struggle over land. This struggle became the paradigm upon which much of Ratzel's conceptualisation of *Lebensraum* was based. He observed of the Western expansion in America, 'The result was an annihilating struggle, the prize for which was the land, the space.'²² He added 'The history of primitive peoples dying out on the appearance of a people of higher culture provides many instances of this.'²³

In concluding his survey of the effects that the discourse of natural science in the nineteenth century had upon the emerging century, Lindqvist notes that the racist assumptions of evolution first emerging in the fields of biology and zoology had spread with devastating effect into the twentieth century infusing and transforming the direction of nationalism, social theory and politics.

In 1924 Adolph Hitler was given Ratzel's *Politische Geographie* when he was incarcerated in Landsberg Prison after his failed 'Beer Hall Putsch.' The text influenced his writing of *Mein Kampf* (*My Struggle*) during his yearlong prison stay. The German School of *Geopolitik*²⁴ appropriated the concept of *Lebensraum* in the 1930s to justify the Nazi programme of territorial expansion. Hitler's incorporation of the 'annihilating struggle' contained in *Lebensraum* emerged in his belief that under the Third Reich, Germany and

'imperialist frenzy' Ratzel described the state as 'a living body which has extended itself over a part of the earth and has differentiated itself from other bodies which have similarly expanded.' Johnston, Gregory & Smith, 18.

¹⁸ Friedrich Ratzel, F. *Politische Geographie* in *Exterminate All The Brutes*. Sven Lindquist (London: Granta 1992) 145.

¹⁹ Ratzel, 145.

²⁰ Ratzel, 145.

²¹ Johnston, Gregory & Smith, 329.

²² Ratzel, *Der Lebensraum* in, *Exterminate All The Brutes*. Sven Lindquist (London: Granta, 1992) 154.

²³ Ratzel, 154.

²⁴ *Geopolitik*, A school of political geography developed in interwar Germany which was associated with the geographer Karl Haushofer and the journal *Zeitschrift für Geopolitik* (1922-44) was a crude form of environmental determinism (a doctrine that human activities are controlled by the environment, which became *leitmotif* during the early decades of twentieth century American Geography as well.) The concept provided a spurious basis and rationale to justify German expansion, which provoked WWII. Along with Ratzel's work it also appropriated the German philosopher Georg Hegel's concept of the state as a community based upon on a transcendental spiritual union in which and through which all nationals are bound spiritually into an organic 'oneness.' Johnston, Gregory & Smith, 162,228,230.

England were to divide the world between them, possibly due to the royal blood lines shared by the two countries. Hitler's concept of *Lebensraum* led eventually to the institution of the Nazi extermination policy towards the Jews, Gypsies, homosexuals, the mentally handicapped and other 'social undesirables,' and underlay his justification of the 'final solution.'²⁵

IV

I thought his memory was like the other memories of the dead that accumulate in every man's life –a vague impress on the brain of shadows that had fallen on it in their swift and final passage;
(*Heart of Darkness*.²⁶)

I had to beat that Shadow –this wandering and tormented thing.
(*Ibid*.²⁷)

The image imbedded in the title *Heart of Darkness* in psychoanalytical terms is an allusion to the Jungian *Shadow* archetype, whose domain exists within the subconscious elements of the human psyche. The psychoanalyst Carl Gustav Jung (1875-1961) wrote that the *Shadow*, along with the *Animus* and *Anima*, (gender expressions of female and male, respectively) are archetypes stemming from the collective unconscious²⁸ (shared by a cultural group) that enter the personal unconscious and influence the ego with the most frequency.²⁹

Jung believed that the collective unconscious is rooted in a person's heredity and culture and consists of archetypes, (from the Greek, *arkhetupon*: literally, 'first moulded') which are inherited.³⁰ Jung wrote that,

²⁵ Lindqvist, 158.

²⁶ Conrad, 105.

²⁷ Conrad, 94.

²⁸ Frantz Fanon, the post-colonial theorist and psychiatrist interrogated the subtle strains of racism and anti-semitism in Jung's work. Positing psycho-analysis as a Euro-centric colonial discourse, Fanon wrote that the construct of the collective unconscious 'is purely and simply the sum of prejudices, myths, collective attitudes of a given group...[and]...the expression of the bad instincts, of the darkness inherent in every ego, of the uncivilised savage, the Negro who slumbers in every white man.' Frantz Fanon, *Black Skins, White Masks*, (London: Pluto 1989) 186-187. This interrogation of Fanon's could possibly be based upon Jung's observation concerning the collective unconscious of people of colour that, '...It does not matter that his skin is black. It matters to a certain extent, sure enough –he probably has a whole historical layer less than you. The different strata of the mind correspond to the history of the races.' Carl Jung, *The Collected Works, Vol. 18* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul 1952) 46. Jung was developing his research in the social sciences at the time that the racist Euro-centric scientific discourses were influencing all levels of scientific inquiry, and it seems his work as well was not entirely insulated from this strain.

²⁹ Carl Jung, *The Portable Jung*, ed. Joseph Campbell. (New York: Viking 1971)

³⁰ Jung.

This collective unconscious does not develop individually, but is inherited. It consists of pre-existent forms, the archetypes, which can only become conscious secondarily and which give definite form to certain psychic contents.³¹

Jung believed that access to the collective unconscious was found in the realm of dreaming, images and what he termed the active imagination, essentially the domain of *Poesis* (from the Greek, *poiesis*: literally, 'making poetry.')

The contemporary American poet Robert Bly informs his work with this Jungian *Shadow* archetype. For Bly, the Shadow represents the instinctive side of the psyche, that which 'has lots of hair and a tail.'³² He notes that a Puritanical streak in Western culture in general and in America in particular, tends to repress the *Shadow* and equate it with evil.³³ He observes that in oriental cultures this archetype is symbolized by the 'Yin' energy of the Yin-Yang, in which the white part and the black parts of personality are united inside a circle.³⁴

In the Western cultural psyche, there is apartheid dividing this unity and the projected effect of this separation is structured into space in the forms of racism, sexism and other quasi-imperialistic discourses and manifestations. Jung wrote that such projections are psychic resistances against the archetype and the effect of this is to

Isolate the subject from his environment...instead of a real relation to it there is now only an illusory one. Projections change the world into the replica of one's own unknown face.³⁵

The face of American imperialist projections first emerged in February of 1899, the year Conrad was finishing *Heart of Darkness* and Rudyard Kipling was publishing his poem *The White Man's Burden*, a leading expression of British imperialist ideology in *McClure's Magazine*, in which he proclaims:

*Take up the white man's burden
Send forth the best ye breed
Go bind your sons to exile
To serve your captives' need³⁶.*

The Philippine-American War began on 4 February 1899, and two days later the U.S. Senate ratified the Treaty of Paris that officially

³¹ Carl Jung, *The Portable Jung* in Charles Travis *The Fifth Province: Seamus Heaney and the Reinterpretation of the Cultural Morphology of Border County Ireland*, The California Geographer. XLI: 2001, 15-16.

³² Robert Bly, *A Little Book on the Human Shadow*, ed. William Booth. (Element :1988) 24.

³³ Bly, 24.

³⁴ Bly, 24.

³⁵ Jung, 146.

³⁶ Rudyard Kipling, "The White Man's Burden." *McClure's Magazine* 12 (Feb. 1899). <http://www.boondocksnet.com/ai/kipling/kipling.html> In Jim Zwick, ed., *Anti-Imperialism in the United States, 1898-1935*. <http://www.boondocksnet.com/ai/> (May 9, 2002)

ended the Spanish-American War, ceded Puerto Rico, Guam, and the Philippines to the United States, and placed Cuba under U.S. control.³⁷ American imperialists latched on to Kipling's poem to justify the US global expansion as a noble cause, but even before the signing of the *Declaration of Independence* in 1776, the institution of slavery fed by the 'Atlantic triangle' trade among the United States (and the Caribbean), Western Africa and Britain, had laid a deep foundation for American *Shadow* suppression.

In 1901, after two years of devastating warfare in the Philippines, Mark Twain remarked: 'The White Man's Burden has been sung. Who will sing the Brown Man's?'³⁸ Bly's analysis of the psychological state of Kurtz, as the personification of *fin de siecle* Western imperialism in *Heart of Darkness*, informs us that within this historical milieu 'for a white man to recover his *Shadow* at the same time he is exploiting blacks is...beyond the power of a human being.'³⁹ Yet Conrad, as an author was able to trace the darker elements of the collective unconscious and travel to the 'Inner Station' of the *Shadow*, through his novella.

In contrast, Bly as a poet begins his journey to the darker elements of the 'American' mindscape with images traced from the stone motif of 'Plymouth Rock' along the cold Northern Atlantic coast of New England. He argues, 'If the American drama begins with Puritans killing turkeys, then Kissinger's and Nixon's bombing of Cambodia [itself an example of the burgeoning effect of imperialism enshrined in the military-industrial complex] takes place in the third act.'⁴⁰ He traces the narrative of this drama in the following sketches of poetry, weaving a landscape from various threads. He begins with the Puritans, who have landed in New England to escape religious persecution and consequently create a deadly 'theocracy' of their own.

*It is that darkness among pine boughs
That the Puritans brushed
As they went out to kill turkeys.
We have carried around this cup of darkness.
We hesitate to anoint ourselves.*⁴¹

Bly observes that, 'most Puritans did not distinguish darkness from Satan.... Hatred of the Yin side of the circle begins as a small thread in the first American cloth.'⁴² He follows this thread of hatred trailing the Conestoga wagon caravans across the prairie carrying the faith of

³⁷ Jim Zwick, ed., *Anti-Imperialism in the United States, 1898-1935*. <http://www.boondocksnet.com/ai/> (May 9, 2002)

³⁸ Zwick.

³⁹ Bly, 64.

⁴⁰ Bly, 12.

⁴¹ Bly, *Selected Poems*, (Harper and Row: 1986) 67.

⁴² Bly, *A Little Book on the Human Shadow*, 11.

'Manifest Destiny,' an ideology that gained prominence in the nineteenth century, in which divine sanction was given to justify the westward expansion of the United States.

*Lie after lie starts out into the prairie grass, like mile-long caravans
of Conestoga wagons crossing the Platte.
And a long desire for death flows out,
Guiding it all from beneath:
"A death longing if all longing else be in vain..."⁴³*

This thread of hatred, emanating from a fear of the *Shadow* side of the soul, wove itself into the social cultural fabric of the emerging 'American' landscape. The genocidal aim of the Indian Wars (which contributed to Ratzel's development of the concept of *Lebensraum*) during the late nineteenth century has imprinted itself within the American military industrial consciousness of the early twenty-first century.

*We fear every person on earth with black hair.
We send teams to overthrow Chief Joseph's government.
...Underneath all the cement of the Pentagon
There is a drop of Indian blood preserved in snow:
Preserved from a trail of blood that once led away
From the stockade, over the snow, the trail now lost.⁴⁴*

Bly picks up this lost trail in the desolation of the late twentieth century American experience in Vietnam and reflects back on the Indian wars of the past century. He observes, 'The South Asians, representing a civilization more reconciled to the moist dark than ours, merged with ghostly Cherokees or Crows far down in our psyche.'⁴⁵ He recognized that the Vietnam War '...emphasized how estranged from nature the entire nation was.'⁴⁶ Bly, in his reading of certain trails in the American psyche seeks the *Shadow* image of inward darkness rising from the *poesis* of the American landscape, and asks:

The literature of the American earth is many thousands of years old, and its rhythms are still rising from the serpents buried in Ohio, from the shells the Yakuts ate of and threw to the side. The literature of the American nation is only two hundred years old. How much of the darkness from under the earth has risen into poems and stories in that time?⁴⁷

In this regard, the earthy darkness in the American psyche of Henry David Thoreau's pond in *Walden* (1845) and the sensuous engagement with grief over the Civil War during the 1860s in Walt

⁴³ Bly, *Selected Poems*, 79.

⁴⁴ Bly, 75.

⁴⁵ Bly, *A Little Book on the Human Shadow*, 12.

⁴⁶ Bly, *Selected Poems*, 63

⁴⁷ Bly, *A Little Book on the Human Shadow*, 63.

Whitman's *Leaves of Grass* (1881) had been traded for the illusory bright limitlessness of the Puritanical metaphor of America as a 'Shining City on a Hill' (as utilized by President Ronald Reagan's speechwriters during the 1980s.)

To borrow a phrase from Edward Soja, it is a 'Synekism' of thought which first entered the American mindscape in a sermon entitled *A Modell of Christian Charity* written in 1630, by Puritan leader John Winthrop. His proposal of a utopian *synoikismos*, -which translated from the Greek means, 'literally the condition arising from dwelling together,'⁴⁸ was intended for the Puritan faithful travelling together by ship to New England to escape religious persecution in England. Winthrop wrote,

...For wee must consider that wee shall be as a citty upon a hill. The eies of all people are upon us.⁴⁹

The establishment of the Massachusetts Bay Colony later that same year concretely grounded the Puritan's utopian aspirations towards the 'New Jerusalem' and laid the foundation for the promulgation of the ethos of 'Manifest Destiny.' During the twentieth century 'America' as both a notion and a nation took on global significance. In the latter half of the century discourses promulgating this motif and ideology were revived and reconstructed in an attempt to shape and contour the political, social and cultural landscapes within the United States.

This was indicative of the strict Puritanical impulse that runs through the fabric of the country's history. Bly in his deconstruction of this cultural impulse that masks the *Shadow* states, 'As Americans, we have always wanted the life of feeling without the life of suffering. We long for pure light, constant victory. We have always wanted to avoid suffering, and therefore are unable to live in the present.'⁵⁰ In repressing this archetype, Bly states that in regards to males in general, 'the dark side... is clear. Their mad exploitation of earth resources, devaluation and humiliation of women, and obsession with tribal warfare are undeniable.'⁵¹

Commenting on President George H. Bush's decision to attack Iraq, launching the Persian Gulf War in 1990, Bly lamented that it was, 'The greatest mistake ever made by an American president. Because

⁴⁸ Edward Soja, *Postmetropolis*, (Cambridge : Blackwell 2000)12.

⁴⁹ This lay sermon was written in passage aboard the *Arbella*, and was part of the 'Arbella Covenant', one of the discourses upon which the premise of the Massachusetts Bay Colony was founded in 1630. John Winthrop (1588-1649) one of its founding fathers, set Boston in Massachusetts, as the capital of his "citty upon a hill." He attended Trinity College, in Cambridge England and studied law at Gray's Inn in London. He was governor of the colony four times until his death in 1649. Reuben, Paul P. 2002. Chapter 1: Early American Literature to 1700 -John Winthrop. *PAL: Perspectives in American Literature-Research and Reference Guide*. WWW URL: <http://www.csustan.edu/english/reuben/pal/chap1/winthrop.html> (7 April 2002)

⁵⁰ Bly, *Acceptance of the National Book Award for Poetry* March 1969.

⁵¹ Bly, *Iron John: A Book About Men* (Addison-Wesley:1990) x.

the soul of the nation is still torn by the Vietnam War...the government decision gives no hint of *Shadow* motives. We see Iraq's *Shadow*, but not our own.'⁵²

An example of the national self deception and *Shadow* suppression inherent in Bush's decision to attack Iraq could be seen in the creation of a Persian Gulf War *mediascape*, inaugurated in the USA by Cable News Network (CNN) in 1991 to cover '*Operation Desert Storm*'. Within the penumbra of the nation's repressed *Shadow*, a endless stream of broadcast images of the war (described by Lewis Mumford as the 'Supreme drama of a completely mechanized society,'⁵³) started flowing twenty-four hours a day via global mass media outlets. This type of coverage delivered market-share and was quickly copied and multiplied by other broadcast media corporations.

This audio-visual narrative, composed of *hyperreal* information, distorted the effects of the mechanised violence (itself a by-product of the military-industrial complex,) of American air and ground forces against Iraq's meagre forces. This narrative created a seductive *simulacra* of reality and reinforced the American public's mythological meta-narratives concerning the idea of freedom to justify the U.S. military operation that 'liberated' Kuwait from Iraqi possession.

The violent corporeal projections of the *Shadow* embedded in this narrative flowed out before uncomprehending eyes and anaesthetized consciousnesses of the nation. Jean Baudrillard [father of the conceptions of *mediascape*, *hyperreality* and *simulacra*] interprets this type of seduction '...as a game at the level of appearances, ...something fundamentally artificial.'⁵⁴

Thus an artificial sense of American national invulnerability was re-enforced by this *hyperreal* narrative, only to be shattered by the events of 11 September 2001, which were broadcast globally and fulfilled a premise of the post-modern age, that if *mediascapes* can promulgate images that construct mythological political narratives, it can be perceived that mobile phones, the internet and passenger airlines can as well, become tools of deconstructive political messages within in this medium. And thus in this post-modern milieu, as Martin Amis notes, '*terrorism [becomes] political communication by other means*.'⁵⁵

V

We could have fancied ourselves the first of men taking possession of an accursed inheritance, to be subdued at the cost of profound anguish and of excessive toil.

(*Heart of Darkness*⁵⁶)

⁵² Bly, *War Is the Health of The State* in Minneapolis Star Tribune, February 24, 1991.

⁵³ Lewis Mumford, *The Lewis Mumford Reader*, ed. Donald Miller (New York: Pantheon, 1986)

⁵⁴ Robert Peet, *Modern Geographical Thought*. (Cambridge: Blackwell,1988) 214.

⁵⁵ Martin Amis, *Fear and Loathing*, The Guardian, 18 September 2001, G2.

⁵⁶ Conrad,51.

Conrad, operating in a historical milieu devoid of broadcast mass media, but still inculcated with imperialist propaganda (such as *McClure's Magazine*), did not ignore the suffering inflicted by the imperialist project in his narrative consciousness. The literary theorist Edward Said notes, 'As a creature of his time, Conrad could not grant the natives their freedom, despite his severe critique of the imperialism that enslaved them.'⁵⁷ But did contribute a penetrating critique on the imperialist project through a piece of literature. And, Said locates two different critical lines anticipating the apotheosis of the post-modern age event of 11 September 2001, leading out of Conrad's narrative consciousness in *Heart of Darkness*.

The first critical line that Said recognizes in Conrad's work is the emergence of a 'Striking lack of faith in...the great legitimising narratives of emancipation and enlightenment.'⁵⁸ As discussed by Jean-Francois Lyotard, 'Our age... is post-modernist, concerned only with local issues, not with history... not with a grand reality but with games.'⁵⁹ And Foucault observes, 'since power is everywhere it is better to concentrate on the micro-physics of power that surround the individual.'⁶⁰

In the writings of both continental philosophers, observes Said, 'We find precisely the same trope employed to explain the disappointment in the politics of liberation: narrative, which posits an enabling beginning point and a vindicating goal, is no longer adequate for plotting human trajectory in society.'⁶¹ He continues in a commentary that describes the emerging global landscapes of the 21st century, 'Enter now terrorism and barbarism... a new phase of history....'⁶²

The second critical line Said locates in Conrad's writing is the explicit reference in the *Heart of Darkness* to a sense of the narrative's perspective being *outside* of the conception of the imperialist project. Marlow and his listeners on the deck of the yawl, *Nellie*, although enveloped in the 'God, King and Country' ethos underlying imperialism, are represented in a manner that suggests that they have a more secular perspective that is perhaps outside the imperialist project in its perceptive focus. As Marlow surveys the setting sun over the Thames estuary he gazes upon London and says suddenly,

*And this also...has been one of the dark places of the earth.*⁶³

⁵⁷ Edward Said, *Culture and Imperialism* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1993) 34.

⁵⁸ Said, 29.

⁵⁹ Lyotard, Jean-Francois, *The Post-modern Condition: A Report on Knowledge* trans. Bennington & Massumi, (University of Minnesota Press: 1994) in *Culture and Imperialism*, Edward Said (London Chatto & Windus, 1993) 29.

⁶⁰ James Miller, *The Passion of Michel Foucault* (N.Y.: Simon & Schuster, 1993) in Said, 29.

⁶¹ Said, 29.

⁶² Said, 30.

⁶³ Conrad, 7.

Said writes, concerning this narrative twist, 'It is beholden neither to notions about historical destiny, and the essentialism that destiny always seems to entail, nor to historical indifference and resignation.'⁶⁴

In identifying these critical themes in Conrad's work, Said reflects upon his own identity as Palestinian in exile, who has experienced the occupation of his homeland by a foreign power. And as a Palestinian Said writes from an *outsider* perspective when he states, 'I feel outnumbered and out-organized by...a Western consensus that has come to regard the Third World as an atrocious nuisance, a culturally and politically inferior place.'⁶⁵ In regards to this consensus he observes that it has, '...taken up a strident chorus or rightward tending damnation, in which [it] separates what is non-white, non-Western, and non-Judeo-Christian from the acceptable and designated Western ethos, then herd it all together under various demeaning rubrics such as terrorist, marginal, second rate, or unimportant. To attack what is contained in these categories is to defend the Western spirit.'⁶⁶

To attack these categories is perhaps to engage in an element of *Shadow* projection, and to further the structures of nineteenth century imperialism in which the oppressors and the oppressed, much like Kurtz and his native followers become linked in a violent tautological cycle which sinks deeper and deeper into conflagration, chaos and entropy, firmly re-enforcing narratives and discourses emanating from the architectural failures of the Enlightenment project to disengage itself with its own cultural and ethnocentric bias. In this regard we can inform ourselves with Said's observation that

The discourse [concerning the imperial attitude] of resurgent empire proves today that the nineteenth-century imperial encounter continues today to draw lines and defend barriers. Strangely, it persists also in the enormously complex and quietly interesting interchange between former colonial partners...But these exchanges tend to be overshadowed by the loud antagonisms of the polarized debate of pro- and anti-imperialists, who speak stridently of national destiny, overseas interests, neo-imperialism, and the like, drawing like minded people – aggressive Westerners and ironically, those non-Westerners... away from... ongoing interchange.⁶⁷

⁶⁴ Said, 31.

⁶⁵ Said, 31.

⁶⁶ Said, 31, 32.

⁶⁷ Said, 28-29

VI

*The offing was barred by a black bank of clouds, and the tranquil waterway leading to the uttermost ends of the earth flowed sombre under an overcast sky –seemed to lead into the heart of an immense darkness.
(Heart of Darkness.⁶⁸)*

The interchange provided by the commentaries on *Heart of Darkness*, by Lindqvist, Bly and Said, offer an ontological mapping of a psychological journey into the unconscious to the 'Inner Station' of the Western imperial *Shadow*. In this regard Marlow and Kurtz represent to a degree, the polarized 'Yin' and 'Yang' energies of the human psyche. Marlow alludes to his narrative emerging from a subconscious landscape when he states

It seems to me I am trying to tell you a dream –making a vain attempt, because no relation of a dream can convey the dream sensation.⁶⁹

Of his journey on the steamer upriver, he states it

...was like travelling back to the beginnings of the world.⁷⁰

And relates,

It was the farthest point of navigation and the culminating point of my experience. It seemed somehow to throw a kind of light on everything about me -- and into my thoughts. It was sombre enough, too -- and pitiful -- not extraordinary in any way -- not very clear either. No, not very clear. And yet it seemed to throw a kind of light.⁷¹

Marlow floats on the edge of an emerging *fin de siècle* consciousness, and when he arrives at the Inner Station he encounters Kurtz who has raised himself to the level of an imperialist demi-god over the natives slowly expiring in a hut surrounded by posts adorned with impaled heads. The barbarism, that the Western imperialist project is intent on civilizing is found deeply rooted within its own cultural structures. Conrad, in painting Kurtz's last living moment, forms a prescient image to warn Western consciousness as it enters into the twenty first century,

Did he live his life again in every detail of desire, temptation, and surrender during that supreme moment of complete knowledge? He cried in a whisper at some

⁶⁸ Conrad, 111.

⁶⁹ Conrad.

⁷⁰ Conrad, 48.

⁷¹ Conrad, 11

image, at some vision –he cried out, twice, a cry that was
no more than a breath –The horror! The horror!⁷²

Finis.

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⁷² Conrad, 100.

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