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# Why all the Anxiety? Exploring 'the Horror' of the Darkest Interior in Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* and the Adventure Narrative.

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# Why all the Anxiety? Exploring 'the Horror' of the Darkest Interior in Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* and the Adventure Narrative.

## Abstract:

This dissertation sets out to prove that anxiety in *Heart of Darkness* arises because 'heroic' behaviour abroad inevitably transgresses the values which inform Victorian masculine identities, thereby undermining them. The premise is based on the strong links between *fin-de-siècle* adventure stories set within the empire and notions of Victorian masculinity, with the main focus on Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* (1899), whilst drawing on late-nineteenth-century texts from Stevenson, Rider Haggard, Kipling, Conan Doyle and Stoker, as well as the real-life derring-do of Henry Morton Stanley. This dissertation shows that degenerative behaviour set within the colonial space, where empire and masculine authority 'permitted' violence, is a necessary part of the male hero's *rite de passage*, and such behaviour can be viewed as attractive and forgivable. The conventional/transgressive identity of colonial adventurers is explored through Marlow, with Kurtz offering Marlow the opportunity to experience, *in extremis*, the dilemmas and struggles which reside within the 'self'. This dissertation shows how the anxiety in *Heart of Darkness* is not just discovering and *embracing* the ability to transgress, but it arises from the undoing of an idealised fiction of heroic masculinity by offering a horrific alternative: the 'triumphant darkness' within. In extending the reasoning of reverse colonization so that the returning hero becomes the agent of decay on home soil, this dissertation claims that anxiety is manifold in *fin-de-siècle* imperial adventure narratives, not only from embracing transgressive behaviour which

undermines the ideals of the Victorian adventure hero's identity, but also from the threat to the very foundations of society, because the returning hero brings his barbarian behaviour home with him and, either in action, through finding his new identity no longer fits within societal norms, or through the intended reader; he corrupts his society.

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[1] Joseph Conrad, *Heart of Darkness*, ed. Cedric Watts (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), p.104.

## Introduction:

## ‘Gloom brooding over a crowd of men’

Why is *Heart of Darkness* shrouded in anxiety? Joseph Conrad’s novella of 1899 and the word ‘anxiety’ have become synonymous, so much so, that typing “anxiety in *Heart of Darkness*” into the University of Chester library ‘classic search’ pulls up over 42,600 results. Type the same phrase into Google and there are 10,300,000 results, yet the narrative itself only uses the word ‘anxiety’ twice[2] (though the word ‘anxious’ and other synonyms do appear throughout). As Charlie Wesley says, there is a ‘continual, sustained anxiety throughout Joseph Conrad’s novella’:[3] unease cloaks the silences on board the *Nellie* and the unfinished sentences of Marlow’s narration; misgiving surrounds the behaviour of the white men in Africa and their treatment of the African people; disquiet seeps into the ‘beastly dark’ of the jungle (p.178), the ‘brown current’ of the river (p.176) and ‘the impalpable greyness’ of Marlow’s fevered mind (p.178); even the title is ambiguous.

Literary critics have interpreted the ‘anxiety’ in *Heart of Darkness* from many perspectives. To mention a few: Chinua Achebe argues ‘the West seems to suffer deep anxieties about the precariousness of its civilization and to have a need for constant reassurance by comparison with Africa’;[4] Robert Hampson suggests that anxieties arise from Marlow's 'collusion with imperialism';[5] Wesley argues *Heart of Darkness* acknowledges 'the possibility of resistance, as well as anxiety about maintaining order, [as] central to the dynamic of imperialism';[6] William Greenslade suggests a degenerate energy unsettles the atmosphere which Conrad characterises as disorder and irrationality in Kurtz;[7] and Peter Childs sees the 'savage' Kurtz as the 'civilised' Marlow's double in a Freudian scenario where 'at the core of every civilised individual are violent desires – at the dark heart'.[8]

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[2] Joseph Conrad, *Heart of Darkness*, ed. Cedric Watts (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), pages 124 & 176. All further references to be given in the body of the text.

[3] Charlie Wesley, ‘Inscriptions of Resistance in Joseph Conrad’s *Heart of Darkness*’ in *Journal of Modern Literature*, 04/2015, Vol.38, No.3, p.20.

[4] Chinua Achebe, ‘An Image of Africa: Racism in Conrad’s *Heart of Darkness*’ (1987) in Joseph Conrad and Robert Kimbrough*, Heart of Darkness: An Authoritative Text, Backgrounds and Sources Criticism*, (New York & London: Norton and Company, 1988), p.261.

Cedric Watts, in the notes to the Oxford World Classics edition of *Heart of Darkness*, suggests Kurtz's dying words "The horror! The horror!" (p.178) set the precedent for the many interpretations of literary commentators (p.215). Watts summarises four possible meanings which Marlow expounds from those two words: (1) it is his corrupt actions that Kurtz condemns as horrible and his words pronounce 'a judgement upon the adventures of his soul on this earth' (p.178); (2) Kurtz considers the whole universe as horrible: 'that wide and immense stare embracing, condemning, loathing all the universe ... "The horror!"'(p.182); (3) Kurtz regards the inner nature of everybody as horrible: 'no eloquence could have been so withering as his final burst of sincerity' when his stare 'penetrate[d] all the hearts that beat in the darkness' (p.179); and (4) that Kurtz finds the temptations he has succumbed to hateful but also desirable: the whisper has 'the strange commingling of desire and hate' (p.179). The meaning behind Kurtz's final burst of eloquence is paradoxically both clear and opaque and, as

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[5] Robert Hampson, 'Conrad and the Idea of Empire' in *The Nineteenth-Century Novel: A Critical Reader* ed. Stephen Regan (Milton Keynes: The Open University, 2001), p.498.

[6] Wesley, 'Inscriptions of Resistance in Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*', p.22.

[7] William Greenslade, *Degeneration, Culture and the Novel 1880-1940* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), p.106.

[8] Peter Childs (ed.), *Post-Colonial Theory* and *English Literature: A Reader* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1999), p.189.

Watts suggests, they act as ‘a thematic nexus’ of the various meanings suggested by Marlow (p.215).

It is Marlow’s final scenario that this dissertation is particularly interested in as it sets out to prove that anxiety in *Heart of Darkness* arises because ‘heroic’ behaviour abroad inevitably transgresses the values that inform Victorian masculine identities, thereby undermining them. The premise is based on the strong links between *fin-de-siècle* adventure stories set within the empire and notions of Victorian masculinity. John Tosh argues that the popular imagining of empire was correlative with adventure: ‘Adventure fiction presented its readers with a romanticised picture of the overseas world, in which pluck and guts always won through’[9] so that the imperialist missionary became an idealistic representation of a variation of British manliness: one of patient endurance rather than bravery in battle.[10] The main focus is on Joseph Conrad’s *Heart of Darkness* (1899) but it also draws on *fin-de-siècle* texts from Robert Louis Stevenson, Henry Rider Haggard, Rudyard Kipling, Arthur Conan Doyle, Bram Stoker, and other Conrad texts, as well as the real-life derring-do in the 1870s of ‘British’ adventurer and explorer Henry Morton Stanley.

Chapter One: ‘Adventure Heroes of Empire – a Wholesome and Patriotic Identity’ explores how adventure fiction upholds a notion of a Victorian masculine identity based on heroic endeavour and valour. Both Sally Ledger and Elaine Showalter have argued that narratives of heroic quest in the 1880s and 1890s, such as those of Kipling, Rider Haggard, Stevenson and Conrad, implicitly suggest fears of masculine decline when confronted by the power of the New Woman.[11] The arrival of Stevenson and Rider Haggard onto the literary scene in the 1880s denoted the swift growth of a new genre: the men-only adventure narrative which embraced a masculine fantasy of quest and danger[12] in a world which is 'respectfully' dedicated 'to all the big and little boys who read it',[13] and where, to quote Allan Quatermain, 'there is not a *petticoat* in the whole history' (p.10). Stevenson argues in 'A Humble Remonstrance' (1884) that the adventure novel appealed to the 'almost sensual and quite illogical tendencies in man',[14] believing there was never a child who hadn't 'imbrued its little hands to gore, and gallantly retrieved the lost battle, and triumphantly protected innocence and beauty'.[15] Stevenson related boyhood with imaginative play of hunting for gold, being a pirate, a military commander or a bandit of the mountains, thus the adventure novel fulfilled the heroic fantasy perpetuated during boyhood.

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[9] John Tosh, *Manliness and Masculinities in Nineteenth-Century Britain* (Harlow: Pearson Education Limited, 2005), p.199.
[10] Tosh, *Manliness and Masculinities*, p.202.

Chapter one looks at how texts such as *Treasure Island* (1881) and *King Solomon's Mines* (1885) were considered 'wholesome and patriotic'[16] for the maturing boy and how the adventure text identifies with ideals of Victorian manliness and correlates with ideas of empire. It also looks at how *Heart of Darkness* fits within this genre in relation to Henry Morton Stanley's 'heroic rescue' of Dr David Livingstone in 1871. Peter Childs suggests that the narrative of Conrad's novella is modelled (partly) on Stanley's quest to rescue Livingstone,[17] where Marlow, as the Stanley figure, and 'the civilised white man', cuts a lone path into darkest Africa to rescue his stranded counterpart who, like Livingstone, is failing dramatically in health. In doing so, the 'rescuer' battles valiantly against an adverse environment filled with fraught and danger, and fulfils the ideal traits of the adventure hero.

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[11] Sally Ledger, *The New Woman: Fiction and Feminism at the* fin de siècle (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1997), p.178 and Showalter in Tosh, *Manliness and Masculinities*, p.118.

[12] Tosh, *Manliness and Masculinities*, p.107.

[13] H. Rider Haggard, *King Solomon's Mines*, ed. Dennis Butts (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), p.3. All further references to be given in the body of the text.

[14] R.L. Stevenson, 'A Humble Remonstrance' in *The Nineteenth-Century Novel: A Critical Reader*, (ed.) Stephen Regan (Milton Keynes: The Open University, 2001), p.97.

[15] Stevenson, 'A Humble Remonstrance', p.98.

[16] Joseph Bristow, 'Empire Boys' in *Children's Literature: Approaches and Territories*, eds. Janey Maybin and Nicola J. Watson (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), p.133.

However, there are frequently implicit anxieties beneath the surface of the adventure narrative, even in texts such as *Treasure Island* in which piracy becomes justifiable 'when it provides a vision which satisfies an heroic image of British Colonial identity'.[18] The question of identity was frequently entwined with the entrepreneurial immoderation of the imperial golden age: life overseas offered many possibilities from the opportunity of great personal riches, to exotic lifestyles, from military escapades, to ignoring the boundaries of the law[19] and Chapter Two: 'Heroes or Hydes – the Dark Side of the Adventure Hero' looks at the transient boundaries between violence, transgression and 'madness'. The lack of self-restrain in the individual seriously undermined 'authoritative forms of manliness and civility'; an authority which demanded *repression* of the self[20] and where reason and intellect vanquished indulgence and impulse: 'control of the passions, restraint of the appetites and moderation in sex were emphasized. A man who would have authority over others must first master himself'.[21] The clash between these two sides of the imperial hero (the hero without restraint) became clear in texts such as Kipling's 'The Mark of the Beast' (1890) as well as in some very public controversies, most notably in the divided reactions to Stanley's contentious methods of exploration in Africa.[22]

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[17] Childs (ed.), *Post-Colonial Theory* and *English Literature*, p.189.

[18] Diana Loxley, 'Slaves to Adventure: The Pure Story of *Treasure Island*' in *Children's Literature: Classic Texts and Contemporary Trends*, eds. Heather Montgomery and Nicola J. Watson (Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan, 2009), p.63.

[19] Tosh, *Manliness and Masculinities*, p.199.

[20] Tosh, *Manliness and Masculinities*, p.73.

[21] Tosh, *Manliness and Masculinities*, p.73.

Submission to indulgence and impulse by the individual correlates to a process of 'medical bi-polarity of the normal and the pathological' indentified by Robert A. Nye in *Crime, Madness and Politics in Modern France*.[23] Nye suggests that from the 1870s onwards scientists and doctors saw the powerful persuasion of this polarity in most areas of life: the normal-pathological duality was 'conceptually isomorphic' and lent itself to almost every binary term that classified common perceptions of social life, from moral-immoral, to criminal-honest, from sane-insane, to violent-passive.[24] In post-Darwinian writing the 'secret sharer' or 'double' was characteristically figured as the beast within the man and proliferated in *fin-de-siècle* literature[25] with Hawkins-Silver, Holmes-Moriarty, Van Helsing-Dracula and Marlow-Kurtz as examples of doubling. The double often 'inhabited, obsessed or preyed upon the human subject' whilst representing internal conflict.[26] It is this radical duality of the individual which is explored in Stevenson's *Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* (1886). As Jekyll explains, 'man is not truly one, but truly two'[27] and it is the lack of restraint which 'plunged [him] in shame' (p.52), thus driving him to 'dissociate' the 'extraneous evil' of his 'polar twin' (p.53). The fear of atavism, that is, reversion to a lower state, offered writers a perfect medium with which to express worrying questions regarding the threat to the 'civilised' individual.

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[22] Tosh, *Manliness and Masculinities*, p.202.

[23] Robert A. Nye, *Crime, Madness, & Politics in Modern France: The Medical Concept of National Decline* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1984), p.46.

[24] Nye, *Crime, Madness, & Politics in Modern France*, p.46.

[25] Greenslade, *Degeneration, Culture and the Novel*, p.72.

[26] Greenslade, *Degeneration, Culture and the Novel*, p.72.

[27] R.L. Stevenson, *Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde and Other Tales*, ed. Roger Luckhurst (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), p.52. All further references to be given in the body of the text.

Chapter two looks for recognisable traits of normal-pathological duality in Kurtz as well as in other characters such as Peachy Carnehan and Daniel Dravot from Kipling's 'The Man who would be King' (1888). Ideas of grandeur and the use of violence as tropes of imperial masculine authority are compared with the mythology surrounding Stanley, who, like Kurtz, is reported to have used dreadful force and violence in Africa. Stanley was denounced as being no gentleman and a disgrace to the British flag[28] despite, in 1873, being presented with the Victoria Medal by the Royal Geographical Society for his achievements and crowds meeting him enthusiastically on his lecture tour of the same year.[29] William Greenslade suggests that Conrad drew heavily on degenerationist concepts and that he used them to question the rationality of 'civilised normality':[30] in questioning the boundaries between normality, transgressive violence, degeneracy and madness, chapter two claims that the hero, although understood to uphold Victorian masculinities identified in chapter one, actually undermines the subscribed ideals of civilised manliness due to the violent or degenerate behaviour that often underlies the narratives.

The author Gustave Flaubert, in *La Première Éducation Sentimentale*, ruminated on how 'the corrupting power of prolonged exposure to this world of unreason' would take a character 'into madness and into savagery';[31] however, having established in chapter two the potential of 'revolting barbarity' lying latent within man,[32] Chapter Three: 'Returning Heroes and Agents of Decay' explores the idea of the threat from within, that is, in which the principal symptom of degeneracy is held to be ‘a weakening of the vital forces of its victim and an inability to exercise willpower’.[33] This chapter looks at Marlow, rather than Kurtz, as emblematic of the faltering imperial hero through the proposal that Kurtz is a canvas through which Marlow explores the self. Kurtz both appeals to and appals Marlow and, as a result, Marlow’s anxiety is profound because he has internalised and identified with Kurtz’s ‘exalted and incredible degradation’ (p.174): ‘I had often “a little fever”, or a little touch of other things’ (p.145), therefore Marlow has to decide whether or not to embrace his new found identity.

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[28] Thomas Pakenham, *The Scramble for Africa: 1876-1912* (St Ives: Abacus, 2003), p.28.

[29] James L. Newman, *Imperial Footprints: Henry Morton Stanley's African Journeys* (Virginia: Potomac Books, Inc., 2004), p.79.

[30] Greenslade, *Degeneration, Culture and the Novel*, pp.106-7.

[31] Richard C. Keller, *Colonial Madness: Psychiatry in French North Africa* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2007), p.1.

[32] Greenslade, *Degeneration, Culture and the Novel*, p.85.

The generality of *fin-de-siècle* degeneration theory and the inclination to study social causes[34] meant it became easy for the case of an individual degenerate to be linked to degeneracy as a social problem. Richard Von Krafft-Ebing, in *Psychopathia Sexualis* (1886) warned: ‘Exaggerated tension of the nervous system stimulates sensuality, leads the individual as well as the masses to excesses, and undermines the very foundations of society, and the morality and purity of family life’.[35] The idea of the returning hero’s normal-pathological ‘illness’ as an attack on the nation’s vitality, thereby undermining ‘the very foundations of society’, offers an alternative to theories of reverse colonisation in which ‘England in the Victorian era – an era of prosperity unequalled even by Imperial Rome – throws open wide her arms to receive the destitute, the criminal and the worthless of other lands...’[36] resulting in racial Others or their gothic counterparts inflicting mayhem on British soil.

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[33] Nye, *Crime, Madness, & Politics in Modern France*, p.143.

[34] Nye, *Crime, Madness, & Politics in Modern France*, p.143.

[35] Richard Von Krafft-Ebing in Nye, *Crime, Madness, & Politics in Modern France*, p.331.

[36] Greenslade, *Degeneration, Culture and the Novel*, p.45.

This final chapter of the dissertation explores whether the ‘anticipated apprehension’ of deracination:[37] of seeing Britons dissolving into degenerate ‘savages’ and the implicit anxiety regarding an impending corruption of British national and cultural identity comes from the returning hero. Chapter three claims that men like Charlie Marlow, Major Sholto in Conan Doyle’s *The Sign of Four* (1890) and Jonathan Harker in Stoker’s *Dracula* (1897), initially idealised as heroes and pioneers, degenerate into ‘ineffectual colonisers, threatening savages, and powerless slaves’,[38] and that when they reach home soil, the degeneration becomes more threatening to imperial masculine identity, in that they either attack, ‘corrupt’, or fail to fit within societal norms. A further link is then made between the hero and the intended reader of the adventure genre; in particular, whether the anxiety is multiplied because the normal-pathological hero remains a figure that the reader both *relates* to and *aspires* to be.

Conrad’s writing registered how the implications of contemporary biological and physical theories on ‘human meaning’ were often contradictory and elusive: the links between evolution, progress and the West are drastically disturbed by many of Conrad’s leading men like Marlow, Kurtz, Kayerts and the Captain in ‘The Secret Sharer’ (1909), where the clear divisions between the ‘civilised’, the ‘barbaric’ and the ‘degenerate’ are all blurred.[39] But, it is in *Heart of Darkness* that the anxiety is most amplified and provocative, and, whilst it is recognised that the anxiety in *Heart of Darkness* is a densely written about subject, varying perceptions of the same subject can only ‘add to our knowledge of it [and] at the same time our examination of each individual perception [...] adds to our knowledge of humanity and the ways there are for an individual to see things',[40] thus it is questionable whether a subject can be ever truly saturated.  This dissertation neither attempts to 'justify the conquest, occupation and destruction of non-Western societies' nor expresses anger at the subjugation and exploitation of other worlds often explored in critiques of Empire literature,[41] rather it offers an alternative 'perception' on how romance quests threatened the fabric of Victorian society by undermining the ideals of the hero's manliness, not just because the hero transgresses but because the hero *embraces* a transgressive identity.  The aim of this dissertation is to prove there is a link between the anxiety in *Heart of Darkness*, the normal-pathological dualities within the transgressive adventure hero, and the anxieties caused by fears of the corruption of imperial manliness; particularly how the dual identity of the Victorian man of admirable derring-do turns him into an agent of decay, constructing him as the source of 'reverse colonisation' and 'incredible degradation' on home soil which threatens the very foundations of Victorian society.

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[37] Stephen D. Arata, ‘The Occidental Tourist: *Dracula* and the Anxiety of Reverse Colonization’ (1990), *The Nineteenth-Century Novel, A Critical Reader*, ed. Stephen Regan (London: Routledge, 2001), p.461.

[38] Todd Kuchta, *Semi-Detached Empire: Suburbia and the Colonization of Britain, 1880 to the Present* (Charlottesville and London: University of Virginia Press, 2010), p.15.

[39] Daniel Pick, *Faces of Degeneration: A European Disorder,* c.*1848*-c.*1918* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1996), p.161.

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[40] Neil King, *The Romantics: English Literature in its Historical, Cultural, and Social Contexts* (London: Evans Brothers Limited, 2003), pp.33-4.

[41] Gail Ching-Liang Low, *White Skins / Black Masks: Representation and Colonialism* (London: Routledge, 1996), p.1.

# Chapter One:

## Adventure Heroes of Empire - a Wholesome and Patriotic Identity

Any hegemonic structure is liable to anxiety, and nineteenth-century forms of masculinity intended to sustain patriarchy were open to the threat of dispute and subversion[42] to the extent of being considered in crisis by some. Joseph Kestner suggests that the crisis of late-nineteenth-century masculinity is signalled within the opening chapters of *Treasure Island* which are 'overflowing' with men with maimed bodies: Billy Bones' cheek is scarred; Black Dog is missing two fingers; Pew is blind; Long John Silver is one-legged; and Jim's father is sickly and dying. 'The men are mutilated and inadequate',[43] they are no longer whole or complete and their manliness is threatened.

By the *fin de siècle*, there was a notable thrust of action by women entering the public sphere, accompanied by success in women's rights campaigns, including the Matrimonial Causes Act (1857) and the Married Women's Property Act (1870 and 1882).[44] The New Woman was seen as a threat to Victorian patriarchal order: she was not only engaged in self-improvement but also in sex warfare: 'one did not have to accept the New Woman at face value to see a failure of masculine authority in the most intimate areas of life'.[45] Additionally, by the 1880s, the male professional classes were associating domesticity with feminine constraint, routine and ennui:[46] some men, particularly fashionable writers on science, used theories of evolution and sexual difference 'in an unyielding defence of patriarchal marriage', whilst others, under the pretext of 'Empire', reacted by vacating the disputed ground completely.[47] The trend to vacate the domestic sphere meant there was a climb in club membership, a hike in male celibacy, and a rage for 'adventure'.[48] Additionally, an increasing number of men remained bachelors or postponed marriage until middle age, a tendency that was symbolically epitomised by Lord Kitchener's refusal to admit married officers under his command during the Sudan campaign (1897-8): 'the most coveted military posting of the day'.[49]

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[42] Tosh, *Manliness and Masculinities in Nineteenth-Century Britain*, p.45.

[43] Joseph A. Kestner, *Masculinities in British Adventure Fiction, 1880-1915* (Farnham: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2010), p.29.

[44] Marjie Bloy, 'Victorian Legislation: a Timeline', http://www.victorianweb.org/history/legistl.html [accessed 20 October 2015]

[45] Tosh, *Manliness and Masculinities in Nineteenth-Century Britain*, p.205.

[46] Tosh, *Manliness and Masculinities in Nineteenth-Century Britain*, p.40.

With the arrival of Stevenson, Rider Haggard and Kipling on the London literary scene in the 1880s, there was a noticeable rise in the fictional 'modern masculine novel'[50] which reinforced the rejection of domesticity through the new genre of men-only adventure fiction, also known as quest romance. They became synonymous with the re-masculinising of British fiction in the adventure form which championed action above reflection, re-instated 'a code of male honour in a man's world'[51] and favoured a 'bracing masculine fantasy of quest and danger' that cast asunder the prevailing English novel of marriage and family.[52] In what Arthur Conan Doyle admiringly designated as 'the modern masculine novel' the bachelor became 'the representative man' under the guise of the popular hero,[53] and the pull of the homosocial world around the camp-fire drew men and boys away from the domestic hearth.

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[47] Tosh, *Manliness and Masculinities in Nineteenth-Century Britain*, p.205.
[48] Tosh, *Manliness and Masculinities in Nineteenth-Century Britain*, p.40.
[49] Tosh, *Manliness and Masculinities in Nineteenth-Century Britain*, p.206.
[50] Tosh, *Manliness and Masculinities in Nineteenth-Century Britain*, p.40.
[51] Ledger, *The New Woman*, p.178.
[52] Tosh, *Manliness and Masculinities in Nineteenth-Century Britain*, p.107.
[53] Tosh, *Manliness and Masculinities in Nineteenth-Century Britain*, p.107.

Whilst Stevenson's *Treasure Island* is regarded as one of the inaugural texts in the revitalization of the quest romance, Rider Haggard's *King Solomon's Mines* is a prime example of the masculine novel 'which is written by men, for men or boys, and about the activities of men'.[54] It is a tale of adventure and heroic deeds which reinforces the ideal of the hero as a 'well-adjusted Englishman, competent, strong, sensible, in whom [readers] could believe'.[55] In Quatermain's world there are no heroines - no *petticoats*; penetrating darkest Africa was a man's work, so much so that the only women in the text, Foulata and Gagool, are both expendable and killed off. According to Lawrence Millman the deaths of the women in Rider Haggard's novels solve a problem of 'the enemy' entering the male world and endangering the fundamental maleness of adventuring.[56] Likewise, Conrad's world is an indisputably male world, a world where the men would inhabit a wholly womanless planet.[57] Marlow emphasizes male solidarity, to him the women are 'out of touch with the truth' (p.113) and are better placed 'out of it' in 'that beautiful world of their own' (p.153).

The gender imprinting in *King Solomon's Mines* is unambiguous; *The Athenaeum* (31 October 1885) reviewed the novel as

> One of the best books for boys – old and young – which we remember to have read ... There is some fighting hardly to beaten outside Homer and the great Dumas ... We shall be surprised if it does not also prove to be the best [book of the season].[58]

The Homeric strategies of manly strength and bravery exude the text, especially in the battle scenes in the Kingdom of Kukuanaland against Twala's regiments; as Ignosi says of Sir Henry Curtis and the Grey regiment's second stand: "they are *men* indeed" (p.139). Likewise, prior to the first battle on the hill Curtis tells Quatermain:

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[54] Lawrence Millman in Kestner, *Masculinities in British Adventure Fiction,* p.73.

[55] Morton Cohen in Kestner, *Masculinities in British Adventure Fiction,* p.65.

[56] Millman in Kestner, *Masculinities in British Adventure Fiction,* p.71.

[57] Kestner, *Masculinities in British Adventure Fiction,* p.110.

[58] *The Athenaeum* (31 October 1885) in Kestner, *Masculinities in British Adventure Fiction,* p.66.

> "We are in for it, so we must make the best of it. Speaking personally, I had rather be killed fighting than any other way, [...] But fortune favours the brave, and we may succeed. Anyway, the slaughter will be awful, and as we have a reputation to keep up, we shall have to be in the thick of it" (p.124).

In other words, 'the men must be Englishmen'[59] and prove their valour, even if it means death.

As such, the emphasis on physical strength and bravery in *King Solomon's Mines*, *Treasure Island* and *Heart of Darkness* becomes a validation of maleness where male loyalty 'is all' in an idealised image of Victorian manliness that was originally 'sanctified [by] the powerful spirit of the English public school' only to be re-vitalised in later life.[60] Importantly, the stress in such texts is on the process of adventure rather than the final product, and Conrad, like Stevenson and Rider Haggard, underscores the codes of the all-male adventure literature with Marlow's role distinctly displaying the actions of heroism: individualism; duty; isolation; courage; rescue; and survival. Consequently, when treasure is offered as the reward for a well-executed escapade, it is only as a professed motivation beyond the actual motivation; that is, in the spirit of adventure where the thrill is in the action rather than in the act of acquisition.[61]

The *fin-de-siècle* Western world was pervaded with a fascination of individual identity; as a result, the period's literature reflected the obsession of finding certainty on the chaotic foundations of ‘everyday existence’.[62] Jim Hawkins’s position in the hierarchy at the start of adventure is that of lowly cabin-boy, as allocated by the Squire: “Hawkins shall come as cabin-boy. You’ll make a famous cabin-boy, Hawkins” (p.39). But in learning the lessons of unhindered freedom and how to control individualistic desires[63] he ‘emerges to the fore as the fiction’s perfected dream-hero, the initiator, manipulator and controller of the action’,[64] thus fulfilling a *rite de passage* in which he finds his identity within the homosocial space of the *Hispaniola*.[65] Adventure fiction contributed to a social construction of masculinity in which men were ‘made’ rather than born masculine[66] with masculine identity saluting traditional Christ-like moral qualities (purity, meekness, charity, and long-suffering) alongside the physical display of courage.

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[59] Kestner, *Masculinities in British Adventure Fiction,* p.69.

[60] Kestner, *Masculinities in British Adventure Fiction,* p.3.

[61] Kestner, *Masculinities in British Adventure Fiction,* pp.33-4.

Stevenson argued that his ‘characters need to be presented with but one class of qualities – the war-like and formidable’ because his novels dealt with danger and the fear that the danger ‘idly’ provokes; thus ‘the characters are portrayed only so far as they realise the sense of danger and provoke the sympathy of fear’.[67] However, the ambiguity of language demonstrates that the physical attributes of ‘manliness’ were also indisputably moral labels, so physical words like ‘robust’ and ‘sturdy’ also acquired a moral quality: ‘Virtue was held to be inseparable from manliness’, therefore, an honourable reputation could not rely on behaviour and appearance alone, but depended on the hero displaying the implicit inner qualities of ‘manliness’, such as tenacity, resolution and courage.[68] Valerie Pedlar distinguishes between 'animal' and 'manly' courage, with the latter being the ideal as it embraces compassion and consideration for others:

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[62] Judy Cornes, *Madness and the Loss of Identity in Nineteenth-Century Fiction* (North Carolina: McFarland & Company, Inc. Publishers, 2008), p.5.

[63] Loxley, ‘Slaves to Adventure’, p.67.

[64] Loxley, ‘Slaves to Adventure’, p.62.

[65] Kestner, *Masculinities in British Adventure Fiction,* p.29.

[66] Kestner, *Masculinities in British Adventure Fiction,* p.13.

[67] Stevenson, ‘A Humble Remonstrance’, p.98.

> Whether a man is facing the more dramatic demands on his courage, such as a battlefield, a sinking ship, a mining disaster or a blazing house, or the more likely moral challenges of falsehood, disease, wrong and misery, he is required to show his courage and manfulness.[69]

Thus, the manliness of the adventure hero embraced the dual aspects of moral or cultural aspects of being a man as well as physical facets such as virility or vigour.[70]

As well as belonging to the genre of adventure fiction, *Heart of Darkness*, *Treasure Island* and *King Solomon's Mines* also fit under the heading of empire writing: the two categories overlapped and 'in popular imagining empire was synonymous with adventure'.[71] Indeed, in *Treasure Island*, the narrative supports a strong imperialist philosophy, where all the men, whether the pirates or Trelawney *et al*, believe it their right to invade a province, exploit the territory and seize any treasure they can: the supposedly 'respectable' doctor and squire are as dubious in the morality guiding their actions as the pirates: all are portrayed as 'wealth-grabbing' in their quest to retrieve the gold,[72] albeit an unspoken greed disguised as 'adventure'. By the early 1880s the 'meaning' of geographical space was being drastically redefined from that of a signifier of permanent settlement to that of a temporary settlement and often as a signifier of personal wealth.[73]

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[68] Tosh, *Manliness and Masculinities in Nineteenth-Century Britain*, p.73.
[69] Valerie Pedlar, *The Most Dreadful Visitation: Male Madness in Victorian Fiction* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2006), p.17.
[70] Tosh, *Manliness and Masculinities in Nineteenth-Century Britain*, pp.72-3.
[71] Tosh, *Manliness and Masculinities in Nineteenth-Century Britain*, p.199.
[72] Kestner, *Masculinities in British Adventure Fiction,* p.29.
[73] Loxley, 'Slaves to Adventure', p.68.

A large attraction of the colonial world for middle-class men was the ‘distinctive gender regime’ akin to the regime of adventuring, the colonies offered ‘a homosocial paradise, governed by clear-cut masculine values’ in which the constant mediation with the opposite sex could be avoided,[74] whether it was the New Woman or the threat of feminine domesticity. The colonies embodied a freedom that was generally only available to men (how many Olive Schreiners and Mary Kingsleys were there in Africa?) and sexual difference was unambiguous and uncontested in the colonial space:[75] masculinity could reside unchallenged and at peace. For the man, life overseas was ‘cutting a lone path, of deviating from the norm, of fashioning their own destiny’ as well as offering the potential of an exotic lifestyle, military escapades, great riches and the possibility to operate beyond the law.[76] The texts of Stevenson, Rider Haggard, Kipling and Conrad greatly reinforced this pre-eminent idea of the colonies as a man’s world: ‘their stories were exciting, full of action, bracingly masculine, and staged in a real or invented colonial setting’ in which their heroes explored, hunted, conquered and plundered within the ‘silent bonds of men’s friendship’, unencumbered by female presence.[77]

Indeed, a whole generation of young men and boys was raised on a representation of masculinity which was extrovert, determined, self-reliant, and utterly removed from women.[78] Joseph Bristow highlights that these narratives of adventurous militarism, incorporating rising imperial ideology, were entering the ‘unrestricted world' of the individual boy and his school[79] because the boy was identified as someone who had to be trained to read the right things, and he had to meet the requirements of growing into a responsible citizen. 'Imperialism made the boy into an aggrandized subject – British born and bred – with the future of the world lying upon his shoulders',[80] and it was considered imperative that the boy, as a constituent of an imperial race and for the safety of the empire, could not be allowed to be so uneducated as to be in adequate for his political inheritance, liable to be unable to act should the situation arise and thus destroy national stability.[81]

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[74] Tosh, *Manliness and Masculinities in Nineteenth-Century Britain*, p.208.
[75] Tosh, *Manliness and Masculinities in Nineteenth-Century Britain*, p.208.
[76] Tosh, *Manliness and Masculinities in Nineteenth-Century Britain*, p.199.
[77] Tosh, *Manliness and Masculinities in Nineteenth-Century Britain*, p.206.
[78] Tosh, *Manliness and Masculinities in Nineteenth-Century Britain*, p.207.

If the boy were also a scout, he would find most of his time absorbed by the ideals of empire and manliness in preparation for manhood: where the school took him into the topics of geography and history that positioned him 'at the top of the racial ladder and at the helm of all the world' and scouting provided practical survivalist education embodied by the imperial adventure story.[82] Even the boy's free time was targeted with the qualities of imperialism: magazines like the *Boy's Own Paper* brought together 'aggressive, competitive, and yet gentlemanly behaviour' in a style that appeared 'respectably patriotic' rather than jingoistic: 'Everywhere the nation's young hero encountered texts and illustrations that made him the subject of his reading. Here the boy was both the reader and the focus of what he read'.[83] Texts, particularly those deriving from penny publications which had been denounced by the previous generation as 'blood and thunder', were now regarded are 'wholesome and patriotic',[84] albeit in a slightly altered form, and the school system legitimised a range of classic adventure tales by incorporating Charles Kingsley's *Westward Ho!* (1855) and Stevenson's *Treasure Island* into the school curriculum.[85]

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[79] Bristow, 'Empire Boys', p.136.
[80] Bristow, 'Empire Boys', p.135.
[81] David Vincent in Bristow, 'Empire Boys', p.1
[82] Bristow, 'Empire Boys', p.136.
[83] Bristow, 'Empire Boys', p.141.
[84] Bristow, 'Empire Boys', p.133.

John Tosh argues that texts such as *Treasure Island* and the *Boy's Own Paper* specialised in manliness – in 'making men out of boys': learning manliness was about 'learning to stand up for oneself in the company of men', exampled by Hawkins's courage on the island in both the physical sense and in the social sense of a deeply hierarchical society.[86] The benefit of boyhood roles in Haggard's and Stevenson's imperial adventures enabled an easy transition from youthful innocence to an inheritance of the recently revealed world, a world unsullied by the 'decadent corruption of age and civilisation',[87] thus, the boy is prepared for the colonial mission, founding a brave new world and ready to fulfil the heroic fantasy perpetuated during boyhood.

Loxley argues that part of the boy-hero's role is to demonstrate the desire and capability to explore, discover, observe and hear more than his fellow adventurers, and, through the act of separating himself from his companions on the island, Hawkins signals his impulse to gather knowledge,[88] thereby fulfilling the role of the maturing boy-hero. The boy-hero's maturation includes a test in extreme circumstances – the ultimate challenge in his *rite de passage*.[89] For Hawkins, this challenge lies in casting adrift the *Hispaniola* whilst it is under the command of Long John Silver and, later, singlehandedly overhauling her: 'The scheme had an air of adventure that inspired me, and the thought of the water-breaker beside the fore companion doubled my growing courage' (p.127). Hawkins's actions define his maturation through the 'fundamental primacy of the ideology of individualism': that is, in a context when traditional mechanisms of law and authority are so ineffective over the lawless, that justice must trust upon the individual as a champion of order and as a protector against the danger of anarchy and chaos.[90] In Hawkins's case, he must learn to do the 'right thing' for his microcosmic society by defeating the lawless through whatever means possible.

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[85] Bristow, 'Empire Boys', p.133.
[86] Tosh, *Manliness and Masculinities in Nineteenth-Century Britain*, p.197.
[87] Ching-Liang Low, *White Skins / Black Masks*, p.238.
[88] Loxley, 'Slaves to Adventure', p.67.
[89] Kestner, *Masculinities in British Adventure Fiction*, p.32.

The making of the hero is enabled, according to Kestner, through the adventure fiction's premise of a four-stage process: he lists them as 1) departing; 2) encountering; 3) transgressing; and 4) potential re-integrating.[91] The four stages constitute a rite of passage during which the protagonist must leave home, normally through economic necessity (though a psychological necessity is often masked), he must encounter danger, which often means 'transgressing' Christian morality to surmount the hazardous challenges (such as spying, 'going native' or even murder) to return in a re-formed/transformed concept of masculine identity.[92] The paradox is apparent: a man must breach conformist masculine behaviour to realise the very masculine identity constructed by his culture. In the opening paragraph of *King Solomon's Mines* Quatermain describes himself as: 'a timid man, and [I] don't like violence, and am pretty sick of adventure' (p.9), yet by the end of the novel all of these statements have been undone; this reversal, rather than undermining Quatermain as a masculine model, confirms and reinforces his manliness as he progresses through the four stages to overcome the restrictions of his age and relish in adventure and violence.[93]

Violent colonial methods meant a paradigm shift relating to idealised heroic manliness: the creation of a new fantasy of the 'gentleman barbarian', a figure who sat very much at odds with the mainstream imperial mission.[94] The term 'barbarism' was available for use by both the empire's supporters and critics, as both a justification for civilising efforts and as a metaphor for the indiscriminate violence.[95] Atavism becomes a symbol of might as opposed to weakness or criminality; irrationality and impulse is described as 'passionate masculine authenticity'; and regression, merging into barbarism, presents a permissible fantasy.[96] The purpose of the four-stages of adventuring is to present a 'spectacle of masculinity and maleness' for the intended reader to aspire towards,[97] yet, simultaneously, the shift is uneasy and anxiety arises regarding the slip from 'friendly' colonialist to the violent barbarians who permeate adventure fiction.

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[90] Loxley, 'Slaves to Adventure', pp.63-4.
[91] Kestner, *Masculinities in British Adventure Fiction,* pp.10-11.
[92] Kestner, *Masculinities in British Adventure Fiction,* pp.10-11.
[93] Kestner, *Masculinities in British Adventure Fiction*, p.74.

High imperialism (also known as new or forward imperialism) was a more publically expansionist, forceful, and self-conscious attitude to empire than had been articulated previously,[98] and with the expansion of the empire came what Rudyard Kipling termed 'the White Man's burden' (1899): to serve the needs of 'new-caught, sullen peoples, / Half devil and half child' (ll.7-8)[99] under the rule of what can be questionably termed as 'the superior race'. Joseph Chamberlain (1836-1914) reinforced the benefits of white authority in a rhetoric that explicitly salutes white superiority:

> We feel now that our rule over these territories can only be justified if we can show that it adds to the happiness and prosperity of the people, and I can now maintain that our rule does, and has, brought security and peace and

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[94] Merrick Burrow, 'The Imperial Souvenir: Things and Masculinities in H. Rider Haggard's *King Solomon's Mines* and *Allan Quatermain*' in *Journal of Victorian Culture* (2013), Vol.18, No.1, p.77.

[95] Bradley Deane, 'Imperial Barbarians: Primitive Masculinity in Lost World Fiction' in *Victorian Literature and Culture* (2008), Vol.36, p.205.

[96] Deane, 'Imperial Barbarians', p.207.

[97] Kestner, *Masculinities in British Adventure Fiction,* p.13.

[98] Elleke Boehmer (ed.), *Empire Writing: An Anthology of Colonial Literature 1870-1918* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), p.xv.

[99] Rudyard Kipling, 'The White Man's Burden' (1899) in *Empire Writing*, ed. Boehmer p.273.

> comparative prosperity to countries that never knew these blessings before.[100]

With the discovery of the Zimbabwe ruins by Karl Mauch in 1871, there came the belief (by whites) of previous white occupation in Africa and that the ruins were King Solomon's Golden Ophir. The belief originated from the idea that native blacks would be incapable of constructing such a place and that new exploration 'constitutes restoration of the old (and correct) order' that is, of a white race.[101] As a result, the hidden attraction of empire is epitomised by this prospect of personal authority because 'One of the measures of manliness in common understanding was the degree of mastery exercised over others within or outside the home'.[102]

Empire acted as an unambiguous display of masculinity and 'the popular appeal of assertive imperialism' is highly relevant as men's power at home was called into question during the 1880s and 1890s.[103] The outlet for this 'assertive' power is recognised as Africa in adventure texts where it is used to communicate a reality about masculinity: imperial adventure actually allowed a deplorable freedom to instinctual violent behaviour[104] through 'unchecked indulgence of the appetites', the lure of personal wealth, the pull of personal authority and encompassing 'boisterous homosociality'.[105] Thus, within the empire, adventure permitted a way of measuring masculinity in relation to white authority whilst disguising the more unsavoury drives of imperialism as heroic adventure.

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[100] Joseph Chamberlain, *The True Conception of Empire* (1897) in *Empire Writing*, ed. Boehmer p.213.
[101] Kestner, *Masculinities in British Adventure Fiction*, p.66.
[102] Tosh, *Manliness and Masculinities in Nineteenth-Century Britain*, p.200.
[103] Tosh, *Manliness and Masculinities in Nineteenth-Century Britain*, p.204.
[104] Kestner, *Masculinities in British Adventure Fiction,* pp.10-11.
[105] Tosh, *Manliness and Masculinities in Nineteenth-Century Britain*, p.202.

Ironically, despite adventure heroism displaying these unsavoury traits, a nineteenth-century belief persisted that transgressive behaviour was 'un-English'[106] and, in the case of murder, the act was 'alien to the true national character'.[107] Carolyn A. Conley suggests that murderers provided a stake against which the English could identify themselves, 'Englishmen who killed were not behaving like Englishmen – they were behaving like savages or Irishmen or Americans': killing (except in war) was *not English*.[108] Indeed, in *Treasure Island* when Hawkins tells Livesey, Trelawney and Captain Smollett of the pirate's mutinous plot once the treasure is on board the *Hispaniola*, the squire exclaims "And to think that they're all Englishmen!"[109] Stevenson is expanding the question of masculinity further than Jim's maturation to question the integrity of England itself[110] through the paradox in defining masculine identity: what makes 'an Englishman' - Christian values or the spectacle of heroic transgression?

The Stanley-Livingstone mythology highlights this paradox: whilst Livingstone's diary entry (24th October 1871) emphasises a positive 'heroic' perception of Stanley's rescue: 'But when my spirits were at their lowest ebb, the Good Samaritan was close at hand',[111] Stanley's own writing in *The Meeting with Livingstone* (1886), in contrast, reflects a rite of passage as well as the lure of personal authority and violent behaviour:

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[106] Carolyn A. Conley, *Certain Other Countries: Homicide, Gender and National Identity in Late Nineteenth-Century England, Ireland, Scotland and Wales* (Ohio: Ohio State University, 2007), p.41.
[107] Conley, *Certain Other Countries*, p.67.
[108] Conley, *Certain Other Countries*, p.67.
[109] R.L. Stevenson, *Treasure Island*, ed. Peter Hunt (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), p.69. All further references to be given in the body of the text.
[110] Kestner, *Masculinities in British Adventure Fiction,* p.31.
[111] David Livingstone, *The Meeting with Stanley* (1874) in *Empire Writing*, ed. Boehmer p.41.

> I had also changed for the better. The raw youth who left the coast with a straggling caravan of 192 men of many tribes, willing to be guided by every hint the veteran porters had been pleased to give him, had, through bitter experience, been taught to lead his own force, and to exact ready and immediate obedience.[112]

Stanley admits his severity of discipline could not be enforced without 'a few tempestuous scenes', but by also 'exhibiting liberality to the deserving' he was able to arrive at Lake Tanganika through the ability to survive the diverse problems which plagued an explorer in such wild terrain.[113]

Conrad's narrative is partly modelled on Stanley's quest to find Livingstone with a mirrored journey 'into the depths of the continent to find the solitary white man at its centre' and a reader of 1899 would have recognised the story with Marlow as a Stanley figure travelling across Africa to find 'the great man'.[114] When Conrad himself journeyed up the Congo in May 1890, it would have been extraordinary for him not to have been aware of Stanley's expeditions, in particular, the 1887 expedition to find Emin Pasha. News that Stanley had found Pasha reached London in January 1889 with further news of Stanley's exploits being published throughout the summer just prior to Conrad's own journey.[115]

Conrad begins Marlow's narrative in *Heart of Darkness* with his own 'inconclusive experience' of imperialism (or, as Robert Hampson suggests, 'of [Marlow's] collusion with imperialism'[116]):

> The conquest of the earth, which mostly means the taking it away from those who have a different complexion or slightly flatter noses than ourselves, is not a pretty thing

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[112] Henry Morton Stanley, *The Meeting with Livingstone* (1886) in *Empire Writing*, ed. Boehmer p.45.
[113] Stanley, *The Meeting with Livingstone* (1886) in *Empire Writing*, ed. Boehmer p.45.
[114] Childs, *Post-Colonial Theory* and *English Literature*, p.189.
[115] Hampson, 'Conrad and the Idea of Empire', p.504.
[116] Hampson, 'Conrad and the Idea of Empire, p.498.

> when you look into it too much. What redeems it is the idea only. An idea at the back of it; not a sentimental pretence but an idea; and an unselfish belief in the idea – something you can set up, and bow down before, and offer a sacrifice to... (p.107)

Indeed, on an initial reading there appears to be an emphasis on this redeeming ‘idea’ behind imperialism which suggests the story will be an examination and articulation of that ‘idea’.[117] As Hampson argues, it is only on subsequent readings that the implications of the concluding image (‘something you can set up, and bow down before, and offer a sacrifice to’) can be realised,[118] that is, that the ‘idea’ of conquering empire is shadowed by darkness and the ‘idea’ of assertive adventure, and the masculine ideals of the Victorian hero give way to the detestable wilderness ‘in the hearts of wild men’ (p.106).

Conrad deploys the imperial/adventure narrative to explore the self[119] in which the protagonist’s physical rite of passage masks the psychological necessity for the journey. Marlow narrates that his journey offered ‘the chance to find yourself’ (p.131), an opportunity to journey into the self,[120] and to ‘meet that truth with [your] own true stuff – with [your] own inborn strength’ (p.139). The constant references to ‘darkness’ in the text establish Marlow’s psychological rite of passage as a dense and dark journey,[121] moreover, as the next chapter explores, although a variation of masculine identity based on Christian virtue and patient endurance is set up thorough the imperial adventure narrative; there is a pervasive dark side to the hero. As Marlow says ‘it has a fascination, too, that goes to work upon him. The fascination of the abomination – you know.  Imagine the growing regrets, the longing to escape, the powerless disgust, the surrender, the hate' (p.106).

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[117] Hampson, ‘Conrad and the Idea of Empire, p.498.
[118] Hampson, ‘Conrad and the Idea of Empire, p.498.
[119] Kestner, *Masculinities in British Adventure Fiction,* p.105.
[120] Kestner, *Masculinities in British Adventure Fiction,* p.105.
[121] Kestner, *Masculinities in British Adventure Fiction,* p.111.

## Chapter Two:

## Heroes or Hydes - the Dark Side of the Adventure Hero

Romance fiction has tended to ignore the degree to which the adventure hero's colonial experience was underpinned by violence. Rider Haggard defended the fictionalised violence of his novels by modelling it on primitivity and romance: "man is a fighting animal" and had been from the era of Homer and the Old Testament.[122] Yet, throughout Conrad's narrative, Marlow is explicitly aware of a dark co-existence of the civilised and the barbaric, and the ambition of 'imperial godhead' and its descent,[123] thus, in *Heart of Darkness*, the underlying anxiety coupled with imperial violence is more explicit more than in other Conrad texts. Edward Said suggests that behind the White Man's facade of friendly leadership lies the 'willingness to use force, to kill and be killed'; this brutal mission is dignified by his own sense valour that extends beyond personal profit[124] to bolster his own sense of ideological imperial manliness. Conrad engages with this theory in *Heart of Darkness* in a similar vein to Freud's idea of the same time: 'that at the core of every civilised individual are violent desires – at the dark heart'[125] provoked by the 'surrender' to transgressive desires and the 'hate' in the 'hearts of wild men' of which Marlow talks (p.106).

European domination abroad had been attained through force, and force was necessary in extending the frontiers and in dealing with troublemakers,[126] and, by the 1880s and 1890s, in an atmosphere of prevailing crisis, there were cries for a 'stiffening of masculine resolve' and the unwavering willingness to take whatever measures were necessary in the colonies, that is, to behave as an 'imperial race'.[127] Two years before *Heart of Darkness* was published, Joseph Chamberlain argued in favour of violent colonising methods:

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[122] Haggard in Ching-Liang Low, *White Skins / Black Masks*, p.32.
[123] Greenslade, *Degeneration, Culture and the Novel*, p.114.
[124] Edward W. Said, *Orientalism* (London: Penguin Classics, 2003), p.226.
[125] Childs (ed.), *Post-Colonial Theory* and *English Literature*, p.189.
[126] Tosh, *Manliness and Masculinities in Nineteenth-Century Britain*, p.201.

> You cannot have omelettes without breaking eggs; you cannot destroy the practices of barbarism, of slavery, of superstition, which for centuries have desolated the interior of Africa, without the use of force; but if you will fairly contrast the gain to humanity with the price which we are bound to pay for it, I think you may well rejoice in the result of such expeditions as those which have recently been conducted with such signal.[128]

However, not all reports of colonial violence were accepted as a permissible part of the civilising mission; in particular, there were much divided responses to the activities of Stanley. After Stanley had found Livingstone a report reached the Foreign Office detailing how he had kept a black mistress, captured and sold Africans as slaves, attacked villages without reason, and murdered a man by kicking him to death. Although the report was compiled by the Zanzibar Consul Dr John Kirkwood, a man undoubtedly prejudiced against Stanley who had denounced him for failing to find and supply Livingstone, the Foreign Office agreed that Stanley's behaviour had been discreditable and, 'in plain English, the man was a rotter'.[129] Stanley's very public exploits had broken codes of chivalric behaviour because he had exhibited an indulgence in unrestrained violence that was considered un-British and a disgrace to the flag.

The unprintable act in 'The Mark of the Beast' which disgraces Strickland and the narrator 'as Englishmen for ever' (p.95) demonstrates how imperial authority is deeply connected ‘with the projection and protection of masculinity’:[130] that the ‘wrong sort’ of violence must remain hidden. Their uncontrollable hysteria: the laughing and gasping and gurgling ‘just as shamefully as Strickland’[131] suggest a mirroring of the uncontrollable sadism and violence of the censored torture. However, Max Nordau (1849-1923) defined degeneration as a disease affiliated with hysteria;[132] therefore the hysteria disconnects the strength of the transgressive desire from their manliness as a moment of madness. The hysteria also reveals another worrying threat to imperial masculine identity: hysteria is a condition inherently attributed to women and, as Valerie Pedlar highlights, madness, effeminacy, beastliness and childishness were all placed as the opposite to nineteenth-century manliness.[133] As a result, the valorised manliness normally associated with adventure heroes such as Sir Henry Curtis becomes confused: is it manliness or madness? That is, ‘madness’ as a literary term rather than in medical usage, although imaginary portrayals of madness are inevitably based on contemporary ideas of insanity.[134]

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[127] Tosh, *Manliness and Masculinities in Nineteenth-Century Britain*, p.201.

[128] Chamberlain, *The True Conception of Empire* in *Empire Writing*, ed. Boehmer p.214.

[129] Pakenham, *The Scramble for Africa*, p.62.

From the mid-nineteenth century, travellers, physicians, and novelists created a North Africa that was a space of savage brutality and breathtaking sexuality, but it was also a space of insanity.[135] Theories of the connection between empire and madness varied considerably: psychiatrists had long debated the connection between climate, race, and madness: modern theories extended the effects of climate on physical equilibrium to mental balance where extreme light and heat were considered a cause of considerable danger for European minds more suited for temperate regions.[136] Early studies suggested the weakened nervous systems easily collapsed under antagonistic circumstances, especially when a poor state of health was combined with the stifling heat: the liberal and exotic colonial location became a space for exploring the White Man's temperament when it failed to withstand 'the intense pressures of heavy drinking, drug use, colonial violence, boredom, and intense heat'.[137] Richard C. Keller suggests that some medical theorists had found colonists to be 'self-selected' to degenerate;

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[130] Ching-Liang Low, *White Skins / Black Masks*, p.126.
[131] Rudyard Kipling, ‘The Mark of the Beast’ in *Late Victorian Gothic Tales*, ed. Roger Luckhurst (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), p.95. All further references to be given in the main body of the text.
[132] Pedlar, *The Most Dreadful Visitation*, p.134.
[133] Pedlar, *The Most Dreadful Visitation*, p.16.
[134] Pedlar, *The Most Dreadful Visitation*, p.1.
[135] Keller, *Colonial Madness*, p.1.

> ...as the lure of easy financial gain and the capacity to rapidly climb the social ladder drew members of the purportedly "dangerous" working classes – in which psychopathology was believed to take a disproportionate toll – to the colonies in droves, rendering the settler community a "refuge for the unbalanced".[138]

The threat to the imperial mission by mental weakness is translated into Conrad's 'An Outpost of Progress' (1897) in which Kayerts and Carlier struggle with 'freedom' and 'what use to make of their faculties'.[139] Kayerts and Carlier are proud to be 'the first civilised men to live in this very spot' (p.9), but, as they degenerate gradually, they fail to notice the change in each other's appearance and disposition until, 'being left there alone with their weakness' (p.19), the 'surprising flash of violent emotion within' erupts fatally (p.20).

Authors like Conrad and Stevenson exploited the links between violence and empire as their characters move into this space without boundaries, where their displacement from European cultural restrictions gave a 'free rein to indulgent reveries and dark emotional outbursts' and the menacing presence of madness threatened all rationale.[140] In *Treasure Island*, Hawkins's emergence as the boy-hero is blurred by the act of killing a fellow human in the name of the 'lawful, good' side. The murder is Hawkins's supreme transgression in *Treasure Island* and Stevenson seems to be suggesting that maturation into manhood could involve these extremes[141] as once Hawkins gains control over his emotions and quiets his 'pulses', he 'was once more in possession of myself ... I was my own master again' (p.140). Tosh suggests that one of the reasons masculinity is insecure is from issues arising from its psychological constitution,[142] and insecurities arise from the unclear boundaries between heroic behaviour and transgressive violence, degeneracy or 'madness'. The blurring of these boundaries subverts the distinctions between the polarities of 'legality' and 'villainy', 'honesty' and 'dishonesty', 'good' and 'evil', 'civilisation' and 'barbarity', creating destabilisation[143] and a confusion that results in uncertainty.

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[136] Keller, *Colonial Madness*, p.124.

[137] Keller, *Colonial Madness*, pp.124-5.

[138] Keller, *Colonial Madness*, p.97.

[139] Joseph Conrad, 'An Outpost of Progress' in *Heart of Darkness and Other Tales*, p.6. All further references to be given in the main body of the text.

English, Italian and French psychologists all explored the same key uncertainties: was degeneration, labelled as 'regression', 'atavism' or 'primitivism', removed from the history of progress, or did it reveal that the city, civilisation and modernity, as the agents of progress, were also paradoxically the agents of decay?[144] Reversion, in particular, has long been recognised as providing the *fin-de-siècle* writer with a wealth of sensational themes with regard to the exploration of previously unrecognised emotions or associations; kinship with the degenerate 'other' sat within the conventional tropes of melodrama.[145] The Gothic text focuses eloquently on the 'unspeakable' and in texts like *Heart of Darkness,* 'The Mark of the Beast' and *The*

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[140] Keller, *Colonial Madness*, p.2.
[141] Kestner, *Masculinities in British Adventure Fiction*, p.32.
[142] Tosh, *Manliness and Masculinities in Nineteenth-Century Britain*, p.44.
[143] Loxley, 'Slaves to Adventure', pp.62-3.
[144] Pick, *Faces of Degeneration*, p.106.
[145] Greenslade, *Degeneration, Culture and the Novel*, p.73.

*Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* the ‘silent recognition’ of the narrative is the fear of evolutionary reversion: the horror that a professional Englishman (the embodiment of progress) should hold within him the atavistic being he has purportedly surpassed.[146]

Nordau, inspired by Bénédict Augustin Morel (1809-73), believed degenerates occupied a borderland between reason and distinct madness and he placed the degenerate in the position of moral insanity with characteristics such as ‘egoism’, ‘impulsiveness’, and lack of self-control or restraint.[147] Kipling’s gothic story ‘The Mark of the Beast’ looks at the threat from within regarding these traits, dealing with the dispossession the self[148] as a result of the transgressive desire to experience the ‘Other’. Strickland and the journalist-narrator ‘choose to cross the threshold of civility’[149] when they capture and torture the Silver Man: ‘the legal and moral boundaries separating the civilisation of the colonising culture from the barbarity of the colonised one are transgressed’ so that Kipling matches native evil with colonial evil.[150] By ignoring, during the fight for Fleete’s possessed soul, the ideology which defines the white colonist as superior they become evil themselves, and so severe is the transgression that ‘This part is not to be printed’ (p.94).

According to Nordau, the psychological roots and chief intellectual stigmata lie in, first, limitless egoism and, second, impulsiveness.[151] So as Kurtz’s heroic ‘civilizing zeal’ of the report becomes a ‘monster of exploitation’[152] he crosses a boundary beyond masculine authority and colonial violence, consequently, Kurtz's 'exalted and incredible degradation' (p.174) is breathtaking: he is a man whose 'nerves' went amiss 'and caused him to preside at certain midnight dances ending with unspeakable rites' (p.155): in him Marlow 'saw the inconceivable mystery of a soul that knew no restraint, no faith, and no fear' (p.174). The harlequin describes how Kurtz came to local tribesmen "with thunder and lightning, you know – and they had never seen anything like it – and very terrible. He could be very terrible" (p.162), and in this sense, his admirable 'universal genius' (p.130) has degenerated into an open display of the 'pathological' aspects of his personality which arises from the conquering darkness of his soul. Amongst the traits noted frequently in the fatal degenerative are a morbid vanity and an excessive obsession with the self, including the tendency to put mystical interpretations on the simplest facts and to abuse symbolism,[153] and from such beliefs grandiose delusions can arise, that is, the belief 'that the individual has special powers, is wealthy, has some kind of special mission, or has some type of special identity'.[154] Just as Kipling's Peachey Carnehan and Daniel Dravot, in 'The Man who would be King', achieve 'the biggest confidence trick of all time' by persuading the populace of a remote imperial territory of their status as deities and their divine right to rule,[155] Kurtz proclaims in his report that '[we] must necessarily appear to [the savages] in the nature of supernatural beings – we approach them with the might as of a deity' (p.155); suggesting Kurtz has a grandiose vision through which to propel his desire for authority.

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[146] Greenslade, *Degeneration, Culture and the Novel*, p.84.
[147] Pedlar, *The Most Dreadful Visitation*, p.134.
[148] Ching-Liang Low, *White Skins / Black Masks*, p.125.
[149] Ching-Liang Low, *White Skins / Black Masks*, p.129.
[150] Ching-Liang Low, *White Skins / Black Masks*, p.126.
[151] Max Nordau, *Degeneration* (1895) (Connecticut, Martino Publishing, 2014), pp.18-9.
[152] Greenslade, *Degeneration, Culture and the Novel*, p.114.

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[153] Cesare Lombroso, *The Man of Genius* (1891) in *The Faber Book of Madness*, ed. Roy Porter (London: Faber and Faber Ltd, 1993), p.493.

[154] Richard P. Bentall, *Madness Explained: Psychosis and Human Nature* (London: Penguin Books, 2003), p.298.

[155] Ching-Liang Low, *White Skins / Black Masks*, p.240.

Greenslade suggests that Conrad drew closely on Nordau's summary of the physical and mental traits of the higher degenerate: '[Kurtz] looked at least seven feet long' (p.166) and his 'lofty frontal bone' (p.153) allude to both a degenerate's physical characteristic of 'gigantic bodily stature' and his 'conventionally high intelligence'.[156] The post-Darwinian findings of positivists like Max Nordau offered Conrad explanations for the fascinating states of mind as well as the physical stigmatas which persistently occur throughout his work:[157] the Belgium doctor in *Heart of Darkness* advocated the contemporary trend of diagnosing the predisposition to degenerate through 'recognisable' stigmata such as cranial size. The doctor, who asks to measure Marlow's head, ominously implies that Marlow may 'go wrong' during his journey as he quietly jokes of never seeing the heads of the returning adventurers that have previously passed between his callipers. More suggestively he considers the changes which 'take place inside' in the man would be immeasurable (p.112). Conrad satirises the 'alienist' trend by having Marlow suspect the insensitive doctor as a 'harmless fool' (p.112), but there is a sharp divide between Conrad's approach to physical stigmata and mental degeneration. When threatened by physical danger on route to the central station, Marlow recalls the doctor's words: "It would be interesting for science to watch the mental changes of individuals on the spot" and feels that he is 'becoming scientifically interesting' (p.122)[158] thereby emphasising Conrad's stress on mental degeneration in the wilderness.

The exceptionally developed mental gift which Nordau expounds in the higher-degenerate 'type' lies in Kurtz's eloquence: both in voice ('A voice! a voice! It was grave, profound, vibrating' (p.167)) and in his writing of the report for the International Society for the Suppression of Savage Customs:

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[156] Greenslade, *Degeneration, Culture and the Novel*, p.113.
[157] Greenslade, *Degeneration, Culture and the Novel*, p.112.
[158] Greenslade, *Degeneration, Culture and the Novel*, pp.111-2.

> ...he soared and took me with him. The peroration was magnificent, though difficult to remember, you know. It gave me the notion of an exotic Immensity ruled by an august Benevolence. It made me tingle with enthusiasm. This was the unbounded power of eloquence – of words – of burning noble words (p.155).

The cost of Kurtz's intelligence is the shortcomings of his remaining faculties 'which are wholly or partially atrophied':[159] 'That which nearly all degenerates lack is the sense of morality and of right and wrong. For them there exists no law, no decency, no modesty'.[160] Marlow narrates how of the 'rebels' heads on the fence posts around Kurtz's Inner Station 'only showed that Mr Kurtz lacked restraint in the gratification of his various lusts, that there was something wanting in him – some small matter which, when the pressing need arose, could not be found under his magnificent eloquence' (p.164). The example not only demonstrates Kurtz's barbaric lack of restraint regarding his 'masculine authority', but he is committing his crimes with what Nordau describes as the 'greatest calmness and self-complacency' without the comprehension that others may take offence at those actions.[161] Marlow questions 'whether [Kurtz] knew of this deficiency himself' (p.164) but the harlequin is painfully aware – 'crestfallen' (p.165) when admiration of Kurtz's methods is not forthcoming from Marlow.

Robert A. Nye describes the situation as that in which individuals 'struggle' between 'impulses' and 'emotions': in the 'normal' individual resistive forces end in 'victory' whereas in the 'pathological' individual the resistances are nonexistent or limited, ‘permitting untruly primal drives to dominate the organism’.[162] Nye identifies the emergence of the new binary term ‘normal-pathological’ as one most important legacies of medical perception between 1790 and 1850:[163] the ‘science of man’ used concepts formed by biologists and it devoted itself to subjects such as his behaviour, and his individual and social realizations; therefore the discipline was divided according to the principle of normal-pathological opposition.[164] The term was ‘conceptually isomorphic’, that is, it was able to classify common perceptions of social life through the binary terms of moral-immoral, honest-criminal, sane-insane and passive-violent.[165] As a result of experts speaking a comprehensible and accessible language that covered all social life through ‘normality’ and ‘deviance’, medicine gained its social power that had both widespread influence and significant outcomes not only for the ‘pathological’ members of society but, as with all binary bonds, for the ‘normal’ members of society too.[166]

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[159] Greenslade, *Degeneration, Culture and the Novel*, p.113.
[160] Nordau, *Degeneration*, p.18.
[161] Nordau, *Degeneration*, p.18.

Importantly, the boundaries between normal and pathological behaviour were not a clear line but indefinite and permeable[167] on a linear spectrum or scale which could not separate one from the other: so, like Leggatt and the Captain in ‘The Secret Sharer’, they became different states of the same form. There were a variety of designations, in the nineteenth century, assigned to persons on the scale ‘between reason and pronounced madness’: from Maudsley’s ‘Borderland dwellers’, to Lombroso’s ‘gramomaniacs’ (a ‘semi-insane’ classification), to Valentin Magnan’s

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[162] Nye, *Crime, Madness, & Politics in Modern France*, p.261.
[163] Nye, *Crime, Madness, & Politics in Modern France*, p.46.
[164] Michel Foucault in Nye, *Crime, Madness, & Politics in Modern France*, pp.47-8.
[165] Nye, *Crime, Madness, & Politics in Modern France*, p.48.
[166] Nye, *Crime, Madness, & Politics in Modern France*, p.48.
[167] Émile Durkheim in Nye, *Crime, Madness, & Politics in Modern France*, p.193.

‘higher degenerates’ (*dégénérés supérieurs*);[168] however, it was the accessible binary terminology of normal-pathological which became a way for medical science to sanction social norms and social fears of the nineteenth-century.

Towards the end of the century, the notion of psychological trauma in the colonial space caused by climate and culture fell out of favour as the idea of decay from within took hold.[169] Psychologists like Morel had already theorised that madness could not be seen or heard – rather it loitered within the body[170] and, importantly, Morel concluded that madness had no precise borders[171] meaning the degeneration could afflict anyone, at anytime, to any degree. The influence of contemporary science meant that, for the *fin-de-siècle* writer, madness could disturb ‘our nature’ at any given time and, imaginatively, it offered the opportunity to explore the margins of moral and intellectual affliction,[172] namely through the figure of the double. Narratives such as *Heart of Darkness*, *Jekyll and Hyde*, *Dracula*, *The Picture of Dorian Gray* and even Well’s *The Time Machine* all display a covert Orientalist content whose split worlds can be read as conveying a belief in two kinds of humanity: the ‘civilised, humane, conscious, bourgeois and Western rational self’ endangered by its antithesis: the uncivilised ‘Other’.[173] Whilst Marlow-Kurtz, Holmes-Moriarty, Van Helsing-Dracula, and the Captain-Leggatt are examples of doubling,[174] it is Stevenson’s *Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* that explicitly captures the idea of the ‘normal-pathological’ divided self; in particular, both ends of the normal-pathological spectrum as an integral part of human nature.

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[168] Nordau, *Degeneration*, p.18.
[169] Keller, *Colonial Madness*, pp.124-5.
[170] Pick, *Faces of Degeneration*, p.51.
[171] Pick, *Faces of Degeneration*, p.51.
[172] Pedlar, *The Most Dreadful Visitation*, p.1.
[173] Childs (ed.), *Post-Colonial Theory* and *English Literature*, p.15.
[174] Greenslade, *Degeneration, Culture and the Novel*, p.72.

*Jekyll and Hyde* explores ‘a radical uncertainty about the notion of a unitary of identity’ and the hidden coexistence of opposing physical and psychological conditions:[175] that is, diverse and conflicting states within the body. It isn’t until the final chapter that Stevenson finally reveals to the reader that Jekyll and Hyde are the same person resulting from Jekyll’s attempts to amputate one part of his total self. Jekyll admits to a ‘morbid sense of shame’ with regard to his professed ‘profound duplicity of life’ prior to the severance, but the observation that ‘It was thus rather the exacting nature of my aspirations, than any particular degradation in my faults, that made me what I was’ (p.52) suggests that his ‘weaknesses’ are not extraordinarily ‘pathological’. But when Jekyll’s devil, that ‘had long been caged’ comes ‘out roaring’ (p.60), his immoral side is no longer policed by his moral conscience and is ‘tenfold more wicked’ (p.54), as a result, Hyde becomes an embodiment of pure ‘primitive’ evil (p.53). Just as the young Captain in ‘The Secret Sharer’ would tear himself in two through the act of denying or betraying the existence of his inner self which ‘would amount to self-mutilation’,[176] Jekyll’s severing of good and evil is unsuccessful. Although his ‘pathological’ traits become ‘housed’ in Hyde, Jekyll cannot live without his ‘polar twin’ (p.53) and ‘Jekyll goes mad, for he discovers that a person’s identity cannot be halved, that an individual is composite of all those fears, weaknesses, desires, and flaws that make him/her human',[177] thus Jekyll's madness is a result of his being unable to reject the beast within.

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[175] Greenslade, *Degeneration, Culture and the Novel*, pp.83-4.

[176] Joseph Conrad, *The Nigger of the ‘Narcissus’ and Other Stories*, eds. Allan H. Simmons and J.H. Stape (London: Penguin Classics, 2007), p.xxii.

The biographies of Henry Morton Stanley read as if he were a living example of normal-pathological duality: Stanley remained a man, above all, who believed in extending the British Empire in Africa and after Livingstone's funeral he wrote in his diary: 'May I be selected to succeed him in opening up Africa to the shining light of Christianity!', though he admitted (privately, at least) that 'The selfish and wooden-headed world required mastering'.[178] His finding of the Congo was acclaimed as the most significant geographical discovery ever completed in Africa,[179] yet despite being feted throughout London in 1878, there was a distinct lack of support for his self-envisioned 'emissary of light' campaign. There remained a blot on his copybook: 'he had not behaved like a gentleman towards the natives'.[180] One particular account remained notoriously prominent: in April 1875 Stanley had fallen foul of the tribesmen on Bumbireh Island, Lake Victoria; they had rebuffed his request for food, threatened him, pulled his hair, forcibly dragged his boat, the *Lady Alice*, up the shore, and stolen his oars. Stanley managed to extricate himself, and his oars, without any casualties to his party, but killed fourteen of the tribesmen during his 'escape'. Four months later Stanley returned, captured and chained up the chief of the island. The captured chief was offered to his overlord for a ransom but when the proposal was declined 'Stanley decided to make an example of the people of Bumbireh'.[181] The issue for Stanley partly lay in his approach afterwards, rather than pretending to have hated the whole affair, he seemed to have enjoyed it and, worse still, enjoyed writing about it - his tone was deemed unacceptable.[182]

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[177] Cornes, *Madness and the Loss of Identity in Nineteenth-Century Fiction*, p.143.
[178] Stanley in Pakenham, *The Scramble for Africa*, p.26.
[179] Pakenham, *The Scramble for Africa*, p.59.
[180] Pakenham, *The Scramble for Africa*, p.59.
[181] Pakenham, *The Scramble for Africa*, p.28.

Stanley's force and violence in Africa and his attitude towards the Africans provided Conrad with a template for Kurtz,[183] another 'emissary of light' who, at the peak of his degradation would 'Exterminate all the brutes!' (p.155). However, it is the final chapter of *Heart of Darkness* which reveals to the reader another side to Kurtz: the 'normal' Kurtz before he has embarked in his mission to improve his comparative poverty; a Kurtz untainted by darkness - 'of all his promise, and all his greatness, of his generous mind, of his noble heart' (p.185). The Intended's sentence gifts Kurtz with the virtues of the adventure hero embarking on his quest, the virtues, that is, before he has transgressed; virtues which Marlow's lie regarding Kurtz's last words only serves to preserve and perpetuate. Kurtz's fall from the romantic position of idealised adventure hero and the high level of civilisation he has apparently accomplished is thus felt even more deeply, for in spite of moments of civilizing relativism, most Victorian anthropologists were certain of the moral inferiority of 'primitive' cultures in relation to their own.[184]

Kurtz demonstrates how the empire's alliance with adventure trips into an alliance with personal authority, sexual licence, and violence; Tosh argues that these activities, as 'markers of manhood', were homosocial pursuits intended to forge an identity and earn respect in each other's eyes: they were the means in which masculinity was bestowed or withdrawn.[185] These 'markers of manhood' are placed as admirable pursuits in texts like ‘The Man who would be King’ and ‘The Mark of the Beast’. For Kestner, ‘The Man who would be King’ is one of the nineteenth-century’s unbeatable narratives about imperialism and masculinities, as few would believe these two brutal, mad imperialists could be heroes.[186] Given the construct of the bracing adventurer, loafers do not make conventional heroes, yet Kipling, like Conrad, makes his degenerates charismatic, and the paradox of using loafers as his protagonists means the Kipling reveals the ‘morally upright heroes of empire as con-men driven by an unabashed lust for power’.[187] Carnehan and Dravot are attractive because they take an impertinent, anarchic, and mocking view of the colonial status quo with actions based on their audacious pranks performed entirely for personal profit.[188] Thus, in going to Kafiristan, the two men not only go to exploit the area for personal gain, but they go to affirm their unique variety of masculinity which, compared to conventional standards, is anarchic; their exploits include murder and shows them to be unprincipled tricksters, common fraudsters, blackmailers, womanisers, and drunks,[189] in total, uneducated and dishonest adventurers.

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[182] Pakenham, *The Scramble for Africa*, p.28.

[183] Childs (ed.), *Post-Colonial Theory* and *English Literature*, p.189.

[184] John W. Griffith, *Joseph Conrad and the Anthropological Dilemma: 'Bewildered Traveller'* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), pp.227-8.

[185] Tosh, *Manliness and Masculinities in Nineteenth-Century Britain*, p.203.

Kipling’s males show a tendency to turn toward extremism in conditions where there are disparities of authority: ‘Masculinity in these circumstances becomes a wild card’ because it can lead to deviant conduct and to madness,[190] thus highlighting the conflicting issues which arise from the transient boundaries between manliness and madness. Carnehan’s narration in both the first and third person hints at an emergent madness as he attempts to distance himself from the events that have happened, therefore the tale becomes a parable of what could happen if moral authority is forfeited.[191] Yet whilst Carnehan's and Dravot's pranks remain relatively powerless they can be viewed with indulgence, but as soon as they 'are able to amass a store of rifles and ammunition then the context and reception of their gaming should change', although the narrative records no such change.[192] The lack of change in narrative tone suggests that severely transgressive behaviour can be seen as both an attractive and a forgivable trait.

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[186] Kestner, *Masculinities in British Adventure Fiction,* p.84.
[187] Deane, ‘Imperial Barbarians’, p.207.
[188] Ching-Liang Low, *White Skins / Black Masks*, p.251.
[189] Kestner, *Masculinities in British Adventure Fiction,* p.83.
[190] Kestner, *Masculinities in British Adventure Fiction,* p.85.

If transgressive behaviour is seen as necessary, attractive and forgivable, the stories of lost-world adventure offer a powerful reconceptualization of masculinity, one which rejects Victorian concepts of middle-class, Christian masculinity and accepts new 'barbaric' qualities of manliness: of 'raw strength, courage, instinctive violence, bodily size, and homosocial commitment to other men'.[193] However, anxiety arises in *Heart of Darkness*, not just because Kurtz has 'transgressed', nor because of the extremity of his 'exalted and incredible degradation'; not just because Kurtz has transgressed in isolation, away from the company of other white men who might police the boundaries of transgression, but because this dark side of the adventure hero both confirms his masculinity and undermines it with suggestions of madness. In this light, Kurtz's death-bed words 'The horror! The horror!' (p.178) express an inevitability to Kurtz's surrender to the temptations he finds both hateful and desirable: the whisper has 'the strange commingling of desire and hate' (p.179), the words question the very rationality of 'civilised normality,' that is, that the imperial adventure hero embarks on 'a kind of doomed Faustian (or Kurtzian) mission'[194] in which his attempts to secure a heroic masculine identity turn in on himself and he is unable to avoid the totalising effects of degeneration.

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[191] Kestner, *Masculinities in British Adventure Fiction,* p.85.
[192] Ching-Liang Low, *White Skins / Black Masks*, p.251.
[193] Deane, 'Imperial Barbarians', p.206.

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[194] Greenslade, *Degeneration, Culture and the Novel*, pp.106-7.

## Chapter Three:

## Returning Heroes and Agents of Decay

As Albert J. Gerrard so succinctly writes ‘it is time to recognise that [*Heart of Darkness*] is not primarily about Kurtz or about the brutality of Belgian officials but about Marlow its narrator’,[195] and thus, by extension, about his inner masculine nature. Conrad, more than just pitching his story against the Stanley-Livingstone mythology, deliberately narrates *Heart of Darkness* as a journey of psychological self-discovery;[196] a journey towards the discovery of the true identity lying within Marlow himself. Kestner elaborates on Marlow’s description of the steamboat as the search for masculine identity which only applies to the man who seeks it and not to others:[197]

> [The steamboat] had given me a chance to come out a bit – to find out what I could do. [...] I don’t like work – no man does – but I like what is in the work – the chance to find yourself. Your own reality – for yourself – not for others – what no other man can ever know’ (p.131).

Marlow’s physical journey to the Inner Station culminates in him meeting a man who’s ‘soul was mad. Being alone in the wilderness, it had looked within itself, and, by heavens! I tell you, it had gone mad’ (p.174). But, if Marlow’s movement through physical space represents ‘a journey into the self’ with the African landscape a symbolic geography of the mind, then Kurtz represents ‘a suppressed avatar lurking at the core of the self’.[198] The territory of ‘consciousness’ has always been closely connected with a

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[195] Albert J. Guerard, ‘*From Life to Art*’ in Conrad and Kimbrough, *Heart of Darkness*, p.194.

[196] Childs (ed.), *Post-Colonial Theory* and *English Literature*, p.189.

[197] Kestner, *Masculinities in British Adventure Fiction,* p.105.

[198] Michael Levenson, *Modernism and the Fate of Individuality: Character and Novelistic Form from Conrad to Woolf* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), p.6.

'dark continent'[199] and if 'selfhood' is seen as the central essence, the darkest interior, then its province must be invaded before it will surrender its meanings. Understandably then, Marlow depicts Kurtz's own journey as a 'fantastic invasion' (p.164) into the 'heart of darkness': a phrase which portrays the heart as the central essence which encloses the truth of personality[200] and an opening to understand the stranger within.

In the opening of 'The Secret Sharer' the young Captain confesses to being 'if all the truth must be told, [...] somewhat of a stranger to myself'.[201] Leggatt is created as a medium through which the Captain achieves 'a transforming sense of manliness' via his daring and transgressive act of endangering himself, his crew and his ship; like Hawkins in *Treasure Island*, it appears crucial for the Captain to transgress in order to realise his *rite de passage*.[202] The narcissistic reading of 'The Secret Sharer' is that Leggatt and the Captain are 'the same' individual: that Leggatt is 'the Other' hidden within'[203] and Leggatt's arrival onboard offers a representation of the Captain's hidden side, the foil to his outer, public identity, that has, until then, remained buried: the two sides of his conflicted personality become symbolised by the opposition of his public and private spheres, that is, the ship's deck and the cabin.[204] The literature of the double has always occurred in a mutual relation with psychology[205] and by representing Leggatt as both the self and not the self; Kestner argues that Leggatt and his crime are both the solution to the Captain's problems and the cause of his problems as the emblem of his law-abiding conscience and law-breaking desire, thus, signifying the embodiment of, and the disintegration of, suitably controlled masculine desire.[206]

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[199] Porter (ed.), *The Faber Book of Madness*, p.35.

[200] Levenson, *Modernism and the Fate of Individuality*, p.6.

[201] Joseph Conrad, 'The Secret Sharer' in *The Nigger of the '*Narcissus*'*, p.175. All further references to be given in the main body of the text.

[202] Kestner, *Masculinities in British Adventure Fiction,* p.60.

[203] Kestner, *Masculinities in British Adventure Fiction,* p.56.

[204] Conrad, *The Nigger of the 'Narcissus'*, p.xxii.

[205] Stevenson, *The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde and Other Tales*, p.xv.

In using Nye's normal-pathological spectrum, the 'Other' is no longer separate from the self but a part of the self – the 'Same', and if, as is the Lacanian perspective, it is the 'Self', the unconscious, which undermines established identities[207] then the perceptible British smugness about its lofty civilisation levels,[208] and its ideas of the imperial and heroic manly identity are seriously undermined by the threat from within. So, just as the figure of the 'double' was used as an exploration of the normal-pathological divided self and the inability to reject the Hyde-like beast within, it was also typical that internal conflict, self-discovery and acceptance proliferated within a troubling relationship with the 'secret sharer' or double. The double was a way of embracing duality within the individual where the double is at once attractive and repulsive: like a Moriarty figure, it often reveals the hidden presence of unsettling energy, one which questions the established relations of authority and subordination, of 'civilised and brutish, higher and lower, mind and body, reason and instinct'.[209] Freud suggests that a 'telepathic' connection of mental processes between doubles means that one internalises the other's emotions, knowledge and experience: 'Moreover, a person may identify himself with another and so become unsure of his true self; or he may substitute the other's self for his own. The self may thus be duplicated, divided and interchanged'.[210] Consequently an intimate and questioning connection is formed between the two extremes of a personality.

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[206] Kestner, *Masculinities in British Adventure Fiction,* p.55.
[207] Sean Homer, *Jacques Lacan* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2005), p.98.
[208] Griffith, *Joseph Conrad and the Anthropological Dilemma*, p.6.
[209] Greenslade, *Degeneration, Culture and the Novel*, pp.72-3.
[210] Sigmund Freud, *The Uncanny* (London: Penguin Modern Classics), pp.141-2.

Kurtz serves as canvas against which Marlow can explore his own identity and anxieties, he becomes the physical and psychological 'grail' at the end of Marlow's quest:[211] the very conclusion to Marlow's journey of self-discovery is that he, the 'civilised' white man, has journeyed into the darkest interior to confront his double, his dual nature in Kurtz, the 'savage' white man,[212] a journey which means he barely escapes with his sanity intact. Kurtz both attracts and repels Marlow because he offers Marlow the opportunity to experience, *in extremis*, the repressive dilemmas and enduring struggles which reside in the civilised, *fin-de-siècle* mind.[213] As a result, Marlow internalises and sees within himself Kurtz's 'exalted and incredible degradation' and the same 'strange commingling of desire and hate' (p.179): 'I had often 'a little fever,' or a little touch of other things – the playful paw strokes of the wilderness' (p.145): those playful paw strokes which can be read as 'the playful paw strokes of the mind'. Marlow creates Kurtz as a double that can be both idolised and despised,[214] and, therefore, he offers an identity which Marlow can embrace. Once Marlow realises that 'the mind of man is capable of anything [...] joy, fear, sorrow, devotion, valour, rage' (p.139) he is compelled towards the awful revelation that at his core is his own potential to transgress – to be a violent man.

As Levenson suggests, Marlow's experience in *Heart of Darkness* follows an anxious course of intimacy in which the individual's transcendence culminates in immanence: 'a self-encounter that culminates in confrontation with the Other'[215] within the self and for Marlow the experience of facing his inner self is unbearable:

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[211] Kestner, *Masculinities in British Adventure Fiction*, p.109.
[212] Childs (ed.), *Post-Colonial Theory* and *English Literature*, p.189.
[213] Greenslade, *Degeneration, Culture and the Novel*, p.114.
[214] Greenslade, *Degeneration, Culture and the Novel*, p.114.
[215] Levenson, *Modernism and the Fate of Individuality*, p.11.

> And for a moment it seemed to me as if I also were buried in a vast grave full of unspeakable secrets. I felt and intolerable weight oppressing my breast, the smell of the damp earth, the unseen presence of victorious corruption, the darkness of an impenetrable night... (p.169-70).

Conrad generates a simple but essential understanding of the inner self, one that is outside the scale of degenerationist pathology: 'the man 'gone wrong' is not 'out there' to be labelled by positivist science, he is, of course, the man within'.[216] Despite finding an 'unanticipated solidarity' with that 'remarkable man' (p.169), Marlow finds he is forced to make a 'choice between his old values and the values he has discovered'[217] – and although his 'hour of favour was over' and he is classed as 'unsound' (p.169), Marlow is still unable choose these new values. Whilst Kurtz 'had made the last stride, he had stepped over the edge' to discover 'all the wisdom, all truth, and all sincerity [...] compressed into that inappreciable moment of time in which we step over the threshold of the invisible'; Marlow has 'been permitted to draw back [his] hesitating foot' (p.179). Marlow, in living though Kurtz's extremity finds he cannot 'abandon himself in order to understand' and is 'unwilling or unable to surrender his cultural identity'.[218] Although the White Man travelling into the Dark Continent does not confirm his manliness by subduing the primitive within, but by embracing it,[219] Marlow finds he cannot embrace the beast within; he cannot let go completely.

Writings surrounding the imperial mission incessantly intercepted, diverted, interrupted, and disturbed the 'official colonial perceptions and self-representations',[220] and revulsion at peoples who have 'lapsed into the darkest barbarism' (*King Solomon's*

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[216] Greenslade, *Degeneration, Culture and the Novel*, p.114.
[217] Levenson, *Modernism and the Fate of Individuality*, p.2.
[218] Griffith, *Joseph Conrad and the Anthropological Dilemma*, p.64.
[219] Deane, 'Imperial Barbarians', p.207.
[220] Boehmer (ed.), *Empire Writing*, p.xxiv.

*Mines*, p.18) co-occurred with a magnetism to what that barbarity implied in relation to 'forbidden pleasure and delicious release'.[221] For writers like Rider Haggard, the colonial space presents a space of liberation in which the self can be refashioned and a new masculine identity achieved,[222] albeit fashioned through a Western view of Empire. Whereas Conrad seems to persist on a radical *disorientation* that destroys any stable relation between the Self and the world it inhabits. John W. Griffith argues, 'truly unrestrained liberty' or *anomie* can only be achieved when one is isolated from the markers of one's own culture and set amongst an 'alien' culture – a situation in which the stability of 'a person's identity, his status as a creature of culture is severely challenged'.[223] This results in three primary options: maintaining a sense of one's own culture in the midst of the 'alien', like the Company's chief accountant with his 'starched collars and got-up shirt fronts' (p.119); adapting to the new cultural standards of that society, like R.L. Stevenson who was seen as 'going native' after his emigration to Samoa;[224] or, as Kurtz chooses, rejecting all societal restraints and 'become a self-directed renegade, subject to the restraints of *no* culture': Kurtz is the epitome of the concept of a European who has absolutely abandoned himself to unrestrained desire.[225] But more than utter liberation, Conrad insists on using the lack of boundaries to inform self-knowledge; a self-knowledge that results in Kurtz's identity disintegrating.

Yet, why do texts of imperial adventure, and in particular *Heart of Darkness*, continue to exude so much anxiety? The anxiety arises, not from the act of transgression itself but from *embracing* the act of transgression. Whilst Jekyll tries desperately to reject his transgressive side; neither Kurtz, Carnehan, the young Captain, Hawkins, nor Quatermain, Curtis, Good, nor even Stanley, show remorse or seek forgiveness for their transgressions. Rather they have embraced their darker side, meaning that anxiety arises, not from the revelation of discovering the 'beast within', but from embracing and enjoying their once-suppressed transgressive nature.

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[221] Boehmer (ed.), *Empire Writing*, p.xxiv.

[222] Andrew Smith, 'Beyond Colonialism: Death and the Body in H. Rider Haggard' in *Empire and the Gothic: the Politics of Genre*, eds. Andrew Smith and William Hughes (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan Ltd., 2003), p.115.

[223] Griffith, *Joseph Conrad and the Anthropological Dilemma*, p.226.

[224] Shafquat Towheed, 'Robert Louis Stevenson, 'The Beach of Falesá'' in *Romantics and Victorians*, eds. Nicola J. Watson and Shafquat Towheed, (London: Bloomsbury Publishing Plc, 2012), p.455.

[225] Griffith, *Joseph Conrad and the Anthropological Dilemma*, p.226.

But what happens to the imperial adventurer who, like Marlow, who has renounced his old values and is unable to accept the new ones? How do 'inconclusive experiences' conclude? And how do new identities transfer back to the domestic hearth? Marlow cannot return home to a sedentary life and, as the framing-narrator points out, he remains 'a wanderer'; 'the only man of us who still "followed the sea"' (p.105). Some colonialists did not return home: in Stevenson's 'The Beach of Falesá' (1892), after murdering the antagonist, Mr Case, John Wiltshire chooses to remain at a physical and psychological distance from Europe: 'I'm stuck here, I fancy'[226] and although he 'don't like to leave the kids' there is an implicit suggestion that he would be unable to settle 'down Somerset way' as is 'best' for the missionary Mr Tarleton because there are 'no Kanakas there to get luny [sic] over' (p.71). Uncertainty persists because in most adventure fiction the protagonists are seldom represented back in the metropolis and then, usually, it is only in the concluding pages. When the return home is described, the men are either physically ruined, as in *The Man who would be King*, or psychologically ruined, as in *Treasure Island*, or moving warily, as in *Heart of Darkness*.[227]

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[226] R.L Stevenson, 'The Beach of Falesá' in *South Sea Tales*, ed. Roslyn Jolly (Oxford: Oxford World Classics, 2008), p.71. All further references to be given in the main body of the text.

[227] Kestner, *Masculinities in British Adventure Fiction,* p.15.

The ‘retired’ colonialist’s status was a social incongruity and potentially an ominous threat: the *Times*, in 1891, ran an editorial which described that typical Anglo-Indian in terms of ‘a strange sort of animal’ and ‘a stranger who is not a stranger’.[228] Two years later, *Punch* magazine satirised the Anglo-Indian’s social downfall in a parody of Kipling’s poem ‘The Song of the Cities’ (1893). Re-titled as ‘The Song of the Six Suburbs’ the poem scolds the ex-colonial’s pitiable retirement to the ‘grandiose’ suburbs: ‘Last, loveliest, exquisite, I give to those / Civilian warriors from India rest; / What suburb boasts the dignified repose / That clings to Ealing W.?’.[229] The articles confirm the idea of the ex-colonialist ‘as a failed professional and even a potential criminal’, a perception which informed an especially negative influence on their English life.[230] Arthur Conan Doyle’s ‘The Speckled Band’ (1892) plays ostensibly on this pervasive view of the corrupt imperialist at the heart of the British bourgeoisie.[231] Dr Roylott’s hereditary mania of a ‘violence of temper’ has been ‘intensified by his long residence in the tropics’[232] and the autocratic stepfather, ‘conditioned to murder in India’[233] following beating ‘his native butler to death’ (p.560), murders one stepdaughter and attempts to murder of the other in order to appropriate their inheritance.

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[228] Kuchta, *Semi-Detached Empire*, p.77.
[229] Hartley Carrick, ‘The Muse in Motley’ in Kuchta, *Semi-Detached Empire*, p.77.
[230] Kuchta, *Semi-Detached Empire*, p.77.
[231] Catherine Wynne, *The Colonial Conan Doyle: British Imperialism, Irish Nationalism and the Gothic* (London: Greenwood Press, 1971), p.129.
[232] Arthur Conan Doyle, ‘The Speckled Band’ in *Sherlock Holmes: The Complete Stories* (Ware: Wordsworth Editions Limited, 2006), p.561. All further references to be given in the main body of the text.
[233] Wynne, *The Colonial Conan Doyle*, p.115.

Likewise, in *The Sign of Four,* it is Major Sholto who personifies the common view of the coloniser 'as a demoralised lot – cruel, drunken, and lazy:'[234] he is depicted as gambler who loses vast sums of money and someone who drinks 'a deal more than was good for him'.[235] It was a profile which troubled Charles Dilke, a champion of English values, who bemoaned the typical Anglo-Indian as 'uproariously drunk, [and] kicking every native against whom he stumbled' resulting in what he considered an impossible estimation of the harm done to the English name in India.[236] If the colonialist was considered an 'instant aristocrat abroad', once home they were considered as 'ignoble nobility', returning 'middle-class citizens' with 'second-rate minds':[237] *The Sign of Four* introduces themes of colonial riches and invasive foreign culprits responsible for theft and murder;[238] however, the narrative's true plot is based on the unsettling idea that the real culprit was the retired Major Sholto, a suburban resident, who broke the bonds of an oath, stole from his friend, covered up his death and hide the treasure's existence from his family, all in an un-gentlemanly manner.

Keller suggests that the violence of everyday colonial life distorts subjectivity regarding the moral ideals which usually safeguard social integrity: 'Violence shapes identity as it becomes the subject's principal register for framing the local social world and, in turn, individual and collective action',[239] and, as the men of romance quests conceive and embrace a new conception of their masculine identity, it implies that their new identity includes behaviour that is not permitted at home and, therefore, will not fit within the suburban modernity they sort to escape in the first place. Rider Haggard and Stevenson generally escaped censorship or outcry at the violence in their texts because the distance acted as a dampeners with the violence 'over there' as opposed to 'here' in England,[240] but these texts offer the theory that, once home, the men of imperial adventure can be identified as the primitive force that corrupted the degenerate metropolis.[241] Although, like Thaddeus Sholto's home, 'the suburban home and its inhabitants are themselves exoticized as foreign or savage', the actual threats to British society come from within,[242] from the transgressive ex-colonial who arrives home bringing his corrupting, barbarian behaviour with him and finds his new identity no longer accords with his social environment.

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[234] Kuchta, *Semi-Detached Empire*, p.76.
[235] Arthur Conan Doyle, *The Sign of Four*, ed. Peter Ackroyd (London: Penguin Classics, 2001), p.110. All further references to be given in the main body of the text.
[236] Charles Dilke in Kuchta, *Semi-Detached Empire*, p.76.
[237] Kuchta, *Semi-Detached Empire*, p.76.
[238] Kuchta, *Semi-Detached Empire*, pp.69-70.
[239] Keller, *Colonial Madness*, p.165.

The anxiety of seeing Britons dissolving into degenerate savages lies at the heart of reverse colonization theory where, faced with 'alien' cultures, there was an 'anticipated apprehension' of 'deracination'[243] in which Britons would degenerate in a Kurtzian manner. Gothic novels like *Dracula* played on the fear of regression within civilisation, encapsulated in the threatening power of the Count who embarks on a 'fantastic invasion' of British soil. The Count's blood lust points towards the warrior's desire to conquest, but the horror occurs because Dracula appropriates and transforms his victims; they metaphorically 'go native' and Dracula is seen to threaten the integrity of the nation because he threatens personal integrity: 'his attacks involve more than an assault on the isolated self, the subversion and loss of one's identity', but rather they involve attacks on the racial, political, and cultural selves of his victims.[244] With the move to British territory and, in particular, to London, Stoker transforms the vampire myth into one which reflects the culture's anxieties of its declining status and establishes the heart of empire as the new scene of its struggles.[245] However, texts like 'The Speckled Band', *The Sign of Four* and *Heart of Darkness* suggest that the apprehension of deracination actually comes from within; rather than pitted against a 'marauding, invasive Other', the colonization of Britain is done by the British themselves. In extending the 'logic of reverse colonization' it is the imperial pioneer, the colonising adventurer, the returning hero, who, once on home soil, degenerates into 'ineffectual colonisers, threatening savages, and powerless slaves'[246] and consequently become the agents of decay.

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[240] Kestner, *Masculinities in British Adventure Fiction*, p.11.
[241] Deane, 'Imperial Barbarians, p.206.
[242] Kuchta, *Semi-Detached Empire*, p.69.
[243] Arata, 'The Occidental Tourist, p.461.
[244] Arata, 'The Occidental Tourist', p.460.

It is Jonathan Harker who fills the position of the 'returned adventurer' in *Dracula*, even if he cannot be described as the conquering colonialist, more of a secondary businessman whose position it is 'to serve and to obey';[247] although Dr Seward does write in his diary how Harker 'is a man of great nerve [...] a good specimen of manhood' (p.225). Harker's transgression is sexual rather than violent (although he is witness to horrific violence at Castle Dracula (p.39)), and there is a persistent threat to his masculinity in the first part of the novel by being placed in a feminised role: under the tyranny of an older man; as a diary writer; prone to fainting; and that of 'seducee' rather than seducer as he looks 'out under [his] eyelashes in an agony of delightful anticipation' at the three female vampires (p.38). Importantly, although his physical health recovers, his manliness remains threatened by his weaken mental state once back on home soil: Sister Agatha forewarns Mina that after his ‘violent brain fever’ she must ‘be careful with him always [...] the traces of such illness as his do not lightly die away’ (p.99). The warning foreshadows Harker’s ‘disturbed’ state and forgetfulness after seeing the Count in London (p.172-3) and, later, the ‘stupor’ that he falls under when Dracula visits Mina (p.281). Jonathan Harker admits to Van Helsing “Doctor, you don’t know what it is to doubt everything, even yourself” (p.188), and both Harker and Seward expose anxiety and fear which demonstrates that the boundaries of self-definition are unstable,[248] because they are depicted as either desperately weakened, as in the case of Harker, or, as with Seward, with a growing drug addiction (p.101). Indeed, it appears everyone in the novel has doubts of not only their descent but their own mental health, or they fall into self-delusions,[249] and *Dracula* implicitly shows throughout how manliness is either undermined through feminisation or, later, through violence, or unsound mental health.

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[245] Arata, 'The Occidental Tourist, p.458.

[246] Kuchta, *Semi-Detached Empire*, p.15.

[247] William Hughes, 'A Singular Invasion: Revisiting the Postcoloniality of Bram Stoker's *Dracula*' in *Empire and the Gothic: the Politics of Genre*, eds. Andrew Smith and William Hughes (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan Ltd., 2003), pp.91-2.

The majority of Stoker’s narration is told by Harker and Seward, that is, ‘young professionals’ who were forecast as taking the lead in the society of the future,[250] the idealised young professionals who were endorsed in boyhood literature as the future of the British empire. Yet, once more the boundaries between good and bad become blurred: Van Helsing is difficult to distinguish from his antagonist, and his homosocial following are willing to ‘take it upon themselves to break into tombs, commit burglary and bribery, and forge death certificates, not to mention impaling and decapitating women’, whilst Dracula, in England at least, observes the law punctiliously and is only violent in self-defence.[251] The ultimate threat to British heroic manliness can be embodied in the arrival of little Quincey Harker, whose hereditary credentials can only be described as precarious: Harker proudly announces that his son is named after each of 'our little band of men' (p.378) making them all figurative fathers, which means Quincey's multiple parentage only emphasises the weakness of masculinity when 'five fathers are needed to produce one son'.[252] However, there is also an unmentionable 'sixth' father: after his 'unorthodox exchange of bodily fluids'[253] with Mina, Dracula gloats that she is now: 'flesh of my flesh; blood of my blood; kin of my kin' (p.288) which can only mean that Quincey Harker is directly of the Count's bloodline. Thus, *Dracula* extends the anxiety of masculine degeneration beyond the individual who has been 'cured' to the future generations of the family and the nation[254] by suggesting the worrying potential of a nation comprised in its entirety from a degenerating society.

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[248] Pedlar, *The Most Dreadful Visitation*, p.146.
[249] Pick, *Faces of Degeneration*, p.169.
[250] Pedlar, *The Most Dreadful Visitation*, p.146.

Texts like *Dracula*, 'The Speckled Band', and *The Sign of Four* depict the domestic hearth 'as a microcosm of nation and empire' where the preliminary threat from the external Other is supplanted by domestic duplicity,[255] that is, an innate trait of misplaced transgression within the returning hero. Just as the individual is open to 'psychic invasion', society itself becomes vulnerable to 'malign alien influence'[256] because, rather than foreign 'savages and wild animals' being the threat to society, the true monsters are those which are drawn from *within* the ranks of civilisation itself – just like the piratical figures of *Treasure Island*.[257] Crucially, *fin-de-siècle* degeneracy discourses established a vision of internal threats within Europe: social pathologies such as prostitution, suicide, crime and alcoholism constituting a degenerative process that was endangering the European races.[258] Morel argued that degeneration *within* 'civilisation' was a serious and irreversible problem with the European degenerate:

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[251] Bram Stoker, *Dracula*, ed. Maud Ellmann (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), p.xxvii.
[252] Arata, 'The Occidental Tourist', p.462.
[253] Bram Stoker, *Dracula*, p.xxiv.
[254] Pick, *Faces of Degeneration*, p.215.
[255] Kuchta, *Semi-Detached Empire*, p.69.
[256] Pedlar, *The Most Dreadful Visitation*, p.155.
[257] Loxley, 'Slaves to Adventure', p.63.

> ...susceptible only of a relative amelioration, and hereditary influences will fatally weigh upon his posterity. He will remain all his life what he is in reality – a specimen of degeneration in the human species, an example of a morbid deviation from the normal type of man.[259]

And, by the end of the century, considerable anxiety arose over a growing society of ineffectual and devitalised individuals shaped by forces outside their control:[260] both the family and the nation were considered 'beleaguered by syphilitics, alcoholics, cretins, the insane, the feebleminded, prostitutes and a perceived 'alien invasion' of Jews from the East' who, according to some alarmists were 'feeding off' and 'poisoning' British blood.[261]

Since madness indicated a conflict between the individual and society, degeneration theory was projected onto the suburban masses and the discourse of atavism or reversion offered an outlet for exploring moral dilemmas relating to both.[262] So whilst Marlow's narrative locates the encroaching 'darkness' within himself and Kurtz, it is the framing narrator who links the darkness to London and the heart of the empire:[263] from the 'brooding gloom' which lay across the West (p.103) to the Thames which 'seemed to lead into the heart of an immense darkness' (p.187). The anxiety grows from encounters with the treacherously internalised Other coupled with the threat that man holds within him primitivism which may erupt at any time,[264] and more worryingly, having experienced liberation within the colonies, the internalised Other may 'erupt' on British soil. Indeed one of the most disconcerting enactments of violence in *King Solomon's Mines* occurs on British soil in a kind of domestic, carnivalesque parade of homosocial camaraderie, that is, when Quatermain's son shoots Curtis in the leg during a grouse shoot (p.199): the gratuitous act becomes an 'occasion of bonding and mutual recognition between English gentlemen',[265] yet sits incongruously within a society based on a Christian code of conduct.

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[258] Pick, *Faces of Degeneration*, p.21.
[259] Morel in Pick, *Faces of Degeneration*, pp.40-1.
[260] Godfrey and Lawrence, *Crime and Justice*, pp.119-20.
[261] Pick, *Faces of Degeneration*, p.173.
[262] Pedlar, *The Most Dreadful Visitation*, p.1.
[263] Hampson, 'Conrad and the Idea of Empire', p.504.

There is a further dimension to the anxiety of adventure fictions – that of the 'transferential relation between the speaker and the listener', Ching-Liang Low argues that the story telling of narratives which involve transgressive masculine authority rely on a 'transferential relationship' which in turn relies on anticipated desire.[266] Whilst most readers are too restrained to act on their desires, the framing-narrator links the reader to Marlow because he is as eager to listen to the story as we (presumably) are,[267] or indeed, as the other listeners on board the *Nellie* in *Heart of Darkness* are: '...I knew there was at least one listener awake beside myself' (p.137). The framing-narrator in *Heart of Darkness* beckons our entrance into the fictional world by performing as our surrogate who keeps us at a safe distance from the action and sheltered from the outcomes: the role is highly necessary because 'a secret desire for power' links the reader with the protagonists of stories like *Heart of Darkness* and 'The Man who would be King',[268] thus the reader is able to internalise Kurtz's exalted degradation as much as Marlow.

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[264] Griffith, *Joseph Conrad and the Anthropological Dilemma*, p.228.
[265] Burrow, 'The Imperial Souvenir, p.79.
[266] Ching-Liang Low, *White Skins / Black Masks*, p.249.
[267] Bascom in Ching-Liang Low, *White Skins / Black Masks*, p.247.

The adventure narrative authors would have had a clear conception of the nature of their immediate readership: Stevenson argued that adventure fiction appealed to the 'boyish dream' of questing after gold and that, in being aware of this type of interest, he 'finds a readily accessible and beaten road to the sympathies of the reader'.[269] Similarly, in writing for *Blackwood's Magazine*, Conrad would have known the intended readership to be 'conservative and imperialist in politics, and predominantly male', someone who would have supported the imperial mission and engaged with the adventure hero.[270] Indeed, the opening of *Heart of Darkness* offers, through the framing-narrator, a degree of nationalist past and imperialist expression with which his intended readers would identify, thus lulling the reader into a false sense of the novella's direction.[271] In offering a link to charismatic characters through the framing-narrator, Conrad's intended reader is not only engaged from the outset, but the framing-narrator's fascination is a mirror of the reader's desire to 'experience' transgressive life-stories:[272] as a surrogate narrator/listener, the framing-narrator offers the pleasure of seeing the reader's innermost desires fulfilled at a safe distance. What is more, the fallible qualities of characters like Marlow, Harker, Quatermain and Hawkins means the intended reader can *relate* to them, if not *aspire* to be them or 'join' them on their adventure. Indeed this latter aspiration is a scenario that Stevenson pre-empts in *Treasure Island*, for Hawkins, in 'keeping nothing back but the bearings of the island,

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[268] Bascom in Ching-Liang Low, *White Skins / Black Masks*, p.247.
[269] Stevenson, 'A Humble Remonstrance' (1884), p.98.
[270] Hampson, 'Conrad and the Idea of Empire', pp.499-500.
[271] Hampson, 'Conrad and the Idea of Empire', pp.499-500.
[272] Ching-Liang Low, *White Skins / Black Masks*, p.239.

and that only because there is still treasure to be lifted' (p.9) implies that the readers, armed with such knowledge could, themselves, become adventurers in reality and quest after the 'remaining' treasure.[273]

Thus adventure fiction not only explicitly relates the protagonist's collusion with the imperial experience, but it suggests, by proxy, the intended reader's complicity with *fin-de-siècle* imperial excesses. The anxiety is manifold, because as normal-pathological duality is distinguishable within the hero, if the reader enjoying the adventure fiction were to search within, would they discover the same heart of darkness? Freud links anxiety to an unawareness between the real and the fantastic world: when the boundaries between the two are blurred 'we are faced with the reality of something that we have until now considered imaginary' - an uncanny effect is created where the fantasy, in this case of transgressive heroism, 'takes on the full function and significance of what it symbolises',[274] thereby the transgressive behaviour reaches into the heart of society and is condoned by it.

In *Heart of Darkness*, it is the framing-narrator who understands that Marlow avoids the meaning of his tale: 'to him the meaning of an episode was not inside like a kernel but outside, enveloping the tale which brought it out only as a glow brings out a haze' (p.105), that is, the meaning is not just about finding and liberating the beast within, but the tale is the undoing of an idealised fiction of heroic masculinity.[275] When the framing-narrator says 'We knew we were fated, before the ebb began to run, to hear about one of Marlow's inconclusive experiences' (p.107), he pre-empts that, for Marlow, it is 'the horror' is inconclusive; Marlow is aware that he is capable of surpassing restraint himself, of fulfilling his innermost desires, and of undoing an identity that is constructed by a society that he no longer accords with, but he is also aware that he cannot abandon himself completely.  Marlow's experience through Kurtz means he is able to experience a normal-pathological state which leaves his own masculinity fallible, if not in a state of crisis.

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[273] Loxley, 'Slaves to Adventure', p.61.

[274] Freud, *The Uncanny*, pp.150-1.

[275] Kestner, *Masculinities in British Adventure Fiction*, p.111.

## Conclusion:

## Surveying the Borderlands

The Victorian interest in cultural atrophy was often underlined by the fear of degeneration unleashing primitivistic and atavistic desires in Europeans: reversion, regression, atavism, degeneration, retrogression, *dégénérscense*, *Entartung*: were all late-nineteenth-century terms used in Europe to describe the decline and fall of individual men and civilizations.[276] Questions arose regarding where degeneration stemmed from, including contagion, genealogical, environmental, social, or racial origins, or from a worrying potential of a latent possibility within everyone. Writers such as Conrad, Stevenson and Kipling responded to the typology of degeneration because they could explore the transgressive within a scientific framework. The degenerationist discourse offered Conrad the opportunity to explore the boundaries between the conventional and the transgressive,[277] and his use of the degenerationist typology offers a profound focus on familiar anxieties: an intense distrust about man's ability to improve social and political order; pessimism regarding man's ethical behaviour; and doubt regarding the claims of rational thought.[278] Degenerative behaviour set within the colonial space where empire and masculine authority 'permitted' violence offered a further dynamic where the satisfaction of personal authority, normally limited to a wife or apprentice, was bolstered by racially stratified colonies.[279]

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[276] Griffith, *Joseph Conrad and the Anthropological Dilemma: 'Bewildered Traveller'*, pp.6-7.
[277] Greenslade, *Degeneration, Culture and the Novel*, pp.73-4.
[278] Greenslade, *Degeneration, Culture and the Novel*, p.106.
[279] Tosh, *Manliness and Masculinities in Nineteenth-Century Britain*, pp.202-3.

In *Heart of Darkness* the conventional/transgressive identity of colonial adventurers are explored through Marlow and Kurtz, if 'selfhood' is seen as the central essence, the darkest interior, then it must be invaded before it will surrender its meanings, and Kurtz's own 'fantastic invasion' (p.164) reveals 'the inconceivable mystery of a soul that knew no restraint, no faith, and no fear' (p.174). Marlow's journey into the 'heart of darkness' also reveals an inner normal-pathological opposition. Kurtz both attracts and repels Marlow because he offers Marlow the opportunity to experience, *in extremis*, the repressive dilemmas and enduring struggles which reside in the civilised, *fin-de-siècle* mind,[280] and once Marlow realises that 'the mind of man is capable of anything' (p.139) he is compelled towards the awful revelation that at his core is his own potential to transgress, to be a violent man, because a normal-pathological duality means that the 'Other' is no longer separate from the self but a part of the self – the 'Same'. So whilst Dr Jekyll tries to reject his 'polar twin' and whilst Kurtz, the Captain, Carnehan, Harker, Hawkins, and Quatermain *et al*, choose to embrace and enjoy their transgressive nature, Marlow can neither reject nor embrace that 'strangle commingling of hate and desire', instead he draws back his foot and remains in the borderlands with a complete knowledge of his inner self.

The outcome of Marlow's journey means that the conception of idealised heroic masculine identity is not realistic because, paradoxically, a man must breach conformist masculine behaviour to realise the masculine identity constructed by his culture. And, as a result of his transgressive behaviour there is a pervasive darkness engulfing the hero: as Marlow says 'it has a fascination, too, that goes to work upon him. The fascination of the abomination – you know' (p.106). The 'triumphant darkness' is an amalgam of ‘the absolutely pure, uncalculating, unpractical spirit of adventure’ (p.161) and its required transgressions; transgressions that sit on the border of madness. This dissertation shows how the anxiety in *Heart of Darkness* arises because, in tentatively drawing back his foot, Marlow realises how easily ‘sanity can shade into insanity’ and that the ‘latent seeds of madness’ are harboured within those who hover in the borderlands, where it is difficult to distinguish true madness from ‘mere eccentricity’.[281]

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[280] Greenslade, *Degeneration, Culture and the Novel*, p.114.

Chinua Achebe’s anger regarding the dehumanization of Africa and Africans in *Heart of Darkness* culminates in the line: ‘Can nobody see the preposterous and perverse arrogance in thus reducing Africa to the role of props for the break-up of one petty European mind?’[282] But is it ‘the break-up of one petty mind’? Joseph Conrad wrote to his publisher William Blackwood in May 1902 insisting that it was within the last pages of *Heart of Darkness*, in the final interview between Marlow and Kurtz’s Intended, that

> ...locks in [...] the whole 30000words of narrative description into one suggestive view of a whole phase of life and makes of that story something quite on another plane than an anecdote of a man who went mad in the Centre of Africa.[283]

In that final interview, when Marlow can’t tell Kurtz’s Intended the truth: “But I couldn’t. I could not tell her. It would have been too dark – too dark altogether...” (p.186), he not only perpetuates the myth of the romantic adventure hero’s identity (whose last words are that of his beloved), but, in refusing to cry out, ‘“Don’t you hear them?” The dusk was repeating them in a persistent whisper all around us, in a whisper that seemed to swell menacingly like the first whisper of a rising wind. “The horror! the horror!'' (p.186), he attempts to protect himself too: as if denying the existence of 'the horror' would defend him from a new identity of 'triumphant darkness' that doesn't fit with the values of heroic manliness that he believes in. Therefore the anxiety in *Heart of Darkness* is not just discovering and embracing the darkness within; the narrative is also the undoing of an idealised fiction of heroic masculinity[284] and offering a horrific alternative.

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[281] Pedlar, *The Most Dreadful Visitation*, p.7.
[282] Achebe, ‘An Image of Africa’, p.257.
[283] Joseph Conrad, ‘Extracts from Correspondence’ (31 May 1902) in Conrad and Kimbrough*, Heart of Darkness*, p.210.

Stories of lost-world adventure offer a powerful reconceptualization of masculinity, one which rejects Victorian concepts of middle-class, Christian masculinity, and accepts new 'barbaric' qualities of manliness. Marlow's reconceptualization of his own masculine identity is one he is unable to embrace, it is one that sits at odds with 'a code of male honour in a man's world'[285] and at odds with a manliness which adopts the physical, moral or cultural aspects of being an idealised hero.[286] That is shown to be a fantasy. Not only does embracing transgressive behaviour undermine the values that inform such ideals, thereby threatening the identity of the individual, but it also threatens the very foundations of society when the hero returns home.

Thus, anxiety grows from extending the 'logic of reverse colonization': where returning heroes, who have accepted their inner 'darkness', degenerate into inadequate colonisers, aggressive savages, and helpless slaves[287] once on home soil. Subsequently, they become the agents of decay so that the actual threat to British society comes from within:[288] from the ex-colonial who arrives home bringing his corrupting, barbarian behaviour with him and whose new identity no longer fits his social environment. This ‘degenerate’ behaviour is part of the *rite de passage* of the hero-protagonist abroad, but his encounter with the treacherously internalised Other, coupled with the threat that there is a primitivism within man which may erupt at any time,[289] suggests that, having experienced liberation within the colonies, the internalised Other will also ‘erupt’ on British soil. The anxiety is manifold because, if normal-pathological duality is distinguishable within the hero, what if the intended readers enjoying an inspirational ‘spectacle of masculinity and maleness’[290] were to search within: would they discover the same triumphant darkness? Therefore, this dissertation also claims that the anxiety in *Heart of Darkness* and in the *fin-de-siècle* imperial/adventure genre arises from the ‘barbarian hero’ returning home, where boundaries between the domestic hearth and the campfire become blurred giving rise to the potential for degeneracy to proliferate on home soil.

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[284] Kestner, *Masculinities in British Adventure Fiction*, p.111.
[285] Ledger, *The New Woman*, p.178.
[286] Tosh, *Manliness and Masculinities in Nineteenth-Century Britain*, pp.72-3.
[287] Kuchta, *Semi-Detached Empire*, p.15.
[288] Kuchta, *Semi-Detached Empire*, p.69.

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[289] Griffith, *Joseph Conrad and the Anthropological Dilemma*, p.228.
[290] Kestner, *Masculinities in British Adventure Fiction,* p.13.

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