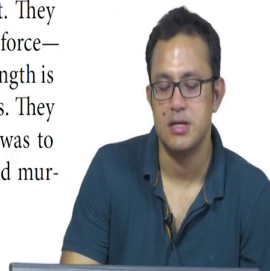


Twentieth Century Fiction
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Lecture – 08
Heart of Darkness – Part 3

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'Mind,' he began again, lifting one arm from the elbow, the palm of the hand outwards, so that, with his legs folded before him, he had the pose of a Buddha preaching in European clothes and without a lotus-flower—'Mind, none of us would feel exactly like this. What saves us is efficiency—the devotion to efficiency. But these chaps were not much account, really. They were no colonists; their administration was merely a squeeze, and nothing more, I suspect. They were conquerors, and for that you want only brute force—nothing to boast of, when you have it, since your strength is just an accident arising from the weakness of others. They grabbed what they could get for the sake of what was to be got. It was just robbery with violence, aggravated mur-



So, hello and welcome to this NPTEL course entitled the Twentieth Century Fiction where we are looking at Joseph Conrad's Heart of Darkness. So, we have already started with this text, and I believe you had couple of lectures in this text already. So, we just dive into the text and just continue from where we left off because if you remember the final point in which we ended last lecture. We talked about the quality of Marlow's narrative which was described by the you know omniscient narrator, the narrator outside the frame as something which the narrative contains a meaning not in the center, but on it is periphery right.

So, there is a center less quality about Marlow's narrative which has been emphasized already. And now we will just move on to this next section which is important for us for the purpose of this course, and this should be on your screen where the comparison with the Buddha is very directly made. And we saw already the beginning in the very introduction of Marlow, the way he is introduced into the text there was this image of an

idol god, a tired god, an exhausted god if you will with which Marlow was equated and then you know described.

But now the Buddha image comes in quite clearly and quite directly, but of course the entire epiphany, the entire enlightenment, that Marlow embodies over here is one of darkness not of illumination, but the irony is the only knowledge available the only illumination available, the only epiphany of wisdom available is that of darkness and so only true knowledge in this particular cultural political setting is that of darkness. It could be a darkness of horror of guilt of exploitation or the knowledge of exploitation that imperialism represents etcetera. So, you know this is what the novel is about.

And as I mentioned in the previous lecture it is a bit erroneous to look at *Heart of Darkness* as a critique of imperialism, it's not really critique of imperialism, it is not really criticizing, it is not really saying imperialism should be done away with, because remember Conrad was a conservative writer, and he was very much in a conservative tradition of writing. But instead of a straight and direct critique of imperialism, what *Heart of Darkness* represents or offers us is an ambivalent attitude about imperialism. This ambivalence about imperialism is what is important for us to understand.

And there are politically incorrect qualities about *Heart of Darkness* you know it is in present day standards, it is quite racist in terms of the narrative, there is no non-white voices that we get to hear in *Heart of Darkness*, but it is precisely because of its you know politically incorrect quality that is so relevant today, it is not trying to be politically correct at all. It is a novel about confusion, about cognitive confusion, about political confusion about cultural confusion.

So, the Buddha image that we are about to see over here is embedded with irony I mean it is not an image which is one of straightforward enlightenment or wisdom or clarity of thought, or clarity of knowledge etcetera. It is rather a knowledge embodiment of confusion because only knowledge available as I mentioned is one of darkness and confusion ok.

So, now we see the image quite clearly describe to us. A mind, he began again, and this should be on your screen. Mind, he began again, this is Marlow, lifting one arm from the elbow, the palm of the hand outwards, so that, with his legs folded before him, he had the pose of the Buddha preaching in European clothes and without a lotus-flower. So, again

this very curious juxtaposition of Buddha in European clothes and without a lotus-flower, it is part of the entanglement is part of the confusing and confused entanglement that Marlow embodies.

Mind, none of us would feel exactly like this. What saves us is efficiency – the devotion to efficiency. But these chaps were not much account, so these chaps were not much account, really. They are not colonialist; their administration was merely a squeeze, and nothing more, I suspect. They were conquerors, and for that you want only brute force – nothing to boast of, when you have it, since your strength is just an accident arising from the weakness of others. This particular phrase is very important.

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be got. It was just robbery with violence, aggravated murder on a great scale, and men going at it blind—as is very proper for those who tackle a darkness. 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 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. ...'

He broke off. Flames glided in the river, small green flames, red flames, white flames, pursuing, overtaking, joining, crossing each other— then separating slowly or hastily. The traffic of the great city went on in the deepening night upon the sleepless river. We looked on, waiting



And this is perhaps the most honest description of imperialism offered in this particular novel, as a form of strength which arises just as an accident from the weakness of others. So, there is nothing really to boast about imperialism is not really civilizing mission far from, it, it is an exploitative mission it is a show of force a show of superiority through brute physical force, which is actually an accident which emerges from the weakness of other people ok.

It was just robbery with violence, aggravated murder on a grand scale, and men going at it blind – as is very proper for those who tackle a darkness. The conquest of the earth, which mostly means taking it away from those who have a different complexion or slightly flatter noses than ourselves, is not a pretty thing when you look into it too much.

So, again this insight into imperialism is important, and insight is one of cynicism, discomfort, ambivalence, and generally one of guilt, but again it is not a direct critique of imperialism that is something I want to emphasize over and over again.

So, it is a little erroneous, little problematic, to look at *Heart of Darkness* as a very straightforward, you know a deconstruction of the imperialism, it is not that at all. It is very much an insider's insight into imperialism and looking at imperialism as what it is, and not really a civilizing mission. And look at the simplicity in Marlow's description over here the conquest of the earth, which mostly means taking it away from those who have a different complexions and non-white people.

So, basically what imperialism is you just go to a place where you do not live, you take it away, you take away the resources, and the you know the riches you know wealth and territorialize the place you know where people with a different complexion live of slightly flatter noses right. It is not really the European or Caucasian race, we are talking about. So, definitely non-Caucasian races, and how do they basically cater to the greed of the Caucasian race, the greed of the white imperialists is what is being described over here. It is not a pretty thing when you look into it too much, it is not really a pretty thing it is not a noble narrative, it is not a civilizing mission, it is nothing of that sort.

What redeems it is the idea only. An idea at the back of it; not a sentimental pretense, but an idea and an unselfish belief in the idea – something you can set up, and bow down before and offer a sacrifice to. So, you know what he is saying over here is interesting that one of the only possible redeeming factor of imperialism is the idea of efficiency, the idea of supremacy, an idea which is not sentimental. But you know something which is an unselfish belief, an unwavering subscription to an idea, or the idea could be one of supremacy, that idea could be one of efficiency, the idea could be one of celebration of supremacy and efficiency put together, but that is the idea which backs imperialism and you know that is something you can set up and bow down before and offer sacrifice to.

So, what is told over here is very important because what Marlow's saying is you know as an individual you find imperialism as loathsome as something which is detestable despicable, because you clearly see it as something of an exploitative machinery, you exploit other people who look different, who have different complexions, who have flatter noses, but you know what is the only possible redemption about imperialism

according to Marlow in this particular section is a grand idea of efficiency, a grand idea of you know efficiency along with supremacy right.

And that grand idea, the grand narrative about efficiency and supremacy is something that he bow down before and offer sacrifice to. So, you sacrifice your own agency you know you know in the face of the idea and you know because you have to bow down and subscribe to the idea. So, the idea of supremacy the idea of the grand narrative about European Caucasian supremacy is something according to Marlow over here, and that is something which is worthwhile the only worthwhile justification only backbone of imperialism that can possibly redeem it at any level ok.

So, you know so we can already see the discomfort and the confusion, and the very, very ambivalent attitude about imperialism embodied by Marlow, because he is he is refusing to look at it as a sentimental thing, he is refusing to look at it as a civilizing mission as something which is noble, as something which is you know one of redemption for the people who are being exploited. And there is something to be said about the kind of imperialism he is actually representing because you know his was I mean the story over here is sort of Belgian imperialism in Congo, which actually did not have any pretence of any Christian Christianizing mission or civilizing mission unlike British imperialism in India for instance which had a you know very lofty narrative about civilizing mission.

You know if you see the writings of Rudyard Kipling which talks about how imperialism in India was meant was designed to civilize the natives who presumably according to Kipling had no civilization whatsoever.

So, it was a British civilizing mission that you know made imperialism a good thing, but Marlow's imperialism that brand of imperialism over here I mean all those are European imperialism, but this Belgian imperialism and Congo which never had any pretence or any sentimental pretence as Marlow put it over here of civilizing or redemptive or whatever in that category. So, the very clear-cut idea of imperialism was one of efficiency and supremacy. And Marlow says that the only way you can redeem imperialism was by believing in these narratives of supremacy and efficiency ok.

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than ourselves, is not a pretty thing 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. ...'

He broke off. Flames glided in the river, small green flames, red flames, white flames, pursuing, overtaking, joining, crossing each other— then separating slowly or hastily. The traffic of the great city went on in the deepening night upon the sleepless river. We looked on, waiting patiently—there was nothing else to do till the end of the flood; but it was only after a long silence, when he said, in a

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HEART OF DARKNESS



So, and then of course, we have a very panoramic view of London and you know it is interesting how the visual narrative, in Heart of Darkness is very cinematic in quality, and there have been lots of films loosely based on Heart of Darkness. And the most famous example will be Apocalypse Now by Coppola which is the setting is different, but you know if you interested to watch it I do recommend it quite heavily, the setting is in Vietnam, Cambodia, and setting is an American Vietnam war, and the entire imperialism in that film is about is one of American imperialism.

But in apart from that setting, the difference in setting, the rest of the story is very similar there is a Colonel Kurtz, and the film this role is played by Marlon Brando. And you know the whole story is about recovering and retrieving Colonel Kurtz and the process you know getting rid of him. So, and that, so this particular story Heart of Darkness, it does it has historically lent itself, to cinematic narratives through filmic adaptations.

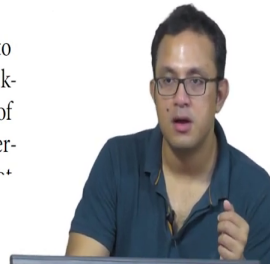
And you can if you see the visual narratives over here, the visual scenes, and the visual grammar is depicted, it is quite panoramic in quality. We have this very close up of Marlow's face, where you can see his wrinkles, his shrunken faces, you know tired, veins in his body, and then you take a long shot of London which is very panoramic in quality, where you know it describes, it is described as a slowly breathing city a slowly moving city is something slithery and serpentine about London and Thames which can only be described using a long shot visual narrative.

So, it is what is described over here it is how it's described over here. Flames glided in the river, small green flames, red flames, white flames, pursuing, overtaking, joining, crossing each other, then separating slowly or hastily. The traffic of the great city went on in the deepening night upon a sleepless river. We looked on, waiting patiently – there was nothing else to do till the end of the flood; but it is only after a long silence, when he said in a hesitating voice.

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hesitating voice, 'I suppose you fellows remember I did once turn fresh-water sailor for a bit,' that we knew we were fated, before the ebb began to run, to hear about one of Marlow's inconclusive experiences.

'I don't want to bother you much with what happened to me personally,' he began, showing in this remark the weakness of many tellers of tales who seem so often unaware of what their audience would like best to hear; 'yet to understand the effect of it on me you ought to know how I got



I suppose you fellows remember I did once turn fresh-water sailor for a bit, that we knew that we were fated, before the ebb began to run, to hear about one of Marlow's inconclusive experiences. And look at the way in which the ebb of the river, and Marlow's story as a river you know they are sort of conjoined with each other. The fluidity of the river and the fluidity Marlow's stories you know you know they are very dialogic with each other.

So, in that sense the setting in River Thames the fact that the story is told in a floating boat, on River Thames you know that that makes a lot of sense symbolically speaking existentially speaking, and also functionally speaking, because we are told that Marlow's stories are one of inconclusive experiences. So, it is not conclusion, there is no you know termination.

So, the whole inconclusive quality about Marlow's stories is very much part of the fluidity, the part of the liminality of his experiences. There is no conclusion to be drawn.

And that inconclusive quality is part of the cognitive confusion in Heart of Darkness right. So, the phrases in Heart of Darkness is very important as we speak, and take a good look at, right.

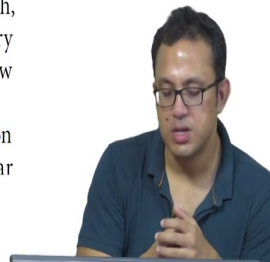
So, again just to reiterate the ebb beginning to turn, and you know waiting for the ebb to turn, and you know listening to Marlow's inconclusive experience in a form of a very hotchpotch entangled narrative, they are very dialogic with each other in that category ok.

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inconclusive experience

'I don't want to bother you much with what happened to me personally,' he began, showing in this remark the weakness of many tellers of tales who seem so often unaware of what their audience would like best to hear; 'yet to understand the effect of it on me you ought to know how I got out there, what I saw, how I went up that river to the place where I first met the poor chap. It was the farthest point of navigation and the culminating point of my experience. It seemed somehow to throw a kind of light on everything about me— and into my thoughts. It was sombre enough, too—and pitiful— not extraordinary in any way—not very clear either. No, not very clear. And yet it seemed to throw a kind of light.

'I had then, as you remember, just returned to London after a lot of Indian Ocean. Pacific. China Seas—a regular



So, this is a point in the story, you know where this story really starts. So, we get to hear Marlow's story, the real story of Heart of Darkness, and before that prior to that whatever you read so far is part of the unnamed narrator telling us what happens. So, we have different frames of narrative in Heart of Darkness, we have the unnamed narrator who is telling us a story about how he is on a River Thames on a boat along with Marlow and some other people. And then inside the narrative we have Marlow's story beginning to brew, and now we are about to get Marlow's story. And then inside Marlow's story there are other stories as well particularly and most famously the story of Kurtz – the renegade soldier of imperialism ok.

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clear either. No, not very clear. And yet it seemed to throw a kind of light.

'I had then, as you remember, just returned to London after a lot of Indian Ocean, Pacific, China Seas—a regular dose of the East—six years or so, and I was loafing about, hindering you fellows in your work and invading your homes, just as though I had got a heavenly mission to civilize you. It was very fine for a time, but after a bit I did get tired of resting. Then I began to look for a ship—I should think the hardest work on earth. But the ships wouldn't even look at me. And I got tired of that game, too.

'Now when I was a little chap I had a passion for maps. I would look for hours at South America, or Africa, or Australia, and lose myself in all the glories of exploration. At



So, you know this is what Marlow begins, Marlow starts the story with this particular section, and it should be on your screen again. And this is Marlow telling the rest of the group in that particular boat. I had then, as you remember, just returned to London after a lot of Indian Ocean, Pacific, China seas – a regular dose of the East – six years or so, and I was loafing about, hindering you fellows in your work and invading your homes, just as though I had got a heavenly mission to civilize you.

So, this whole idea of civilizing the fellow white people is ironical in quality, the heavenly mission to civilize you, you know it is it is an ironic, there is an ironic tone in this particular description, because that was the common rhetoric used of imperialism that the heavenly mission to civilize the non-natives, the non-white natives. You know that was used rampantly especially in British imperialism that you know the whole idea of imperialism is one of Christianizing civilizing etcetera. So, this heavenly mission to civilize you fellow, fellow white people is ironical in quality at this point of the story.

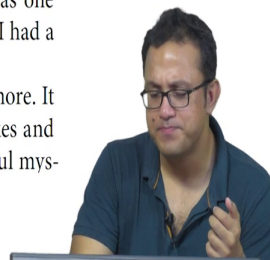
It was very fine for a time, but after a bit I did get tired of resting. Then I began to look for a ship – I should think the hardest work on earth. But the ships would not even look at me. And I got tired of that game, too. Now, when I was a little chap, I had a passion for maps. And this particular section is important, so we have how cartography or map making becomes a political process, a political performance and that is what is described

over here. When I was a little chap, I had a passion for maps. I would look for hours at South America, or Africa, or Australia, and lose myself in all the glories of exploration.

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that time there were many blank spaces on the earth, and when I saw one that looked particularly inviting on a map (but they all look that) I would put my finger on it and say, 'When I grow up I will go there.' The North Pole was one of these places, I remember. Well, I haven't been there yet, and shall not try now. The glamour's off. Other places were scattered about the hemispheres. I have been in some of them, and ... well, we won't talk about that. But there was one yet—the biggest, the most blank, so to speak— that I had a hankering after.

'True, by this time it was not a blank space any more. It had got filled since my boyhood with rivers and lakes and names. It had ceased to be a blank space of delightful mys-



At that time there were many blank spaces on the earth, and when I saw one that looked particularly inviting on a map, but they all look that I will put my finger on it and say, When I grow up I will go there. So, you know this little section was is actually very loaded in quality. So, map making as you all known was very much of cartographic construction, was very much part of the imperial mission, because map making in order to make a map, you need to classify territories. And classification can only happen through a particular point of view, a particular political point of view.

So, you know the whole idea of territorializing unfamiliar places, militarily territorializing, politically territorializing, economically territorializing is accompanied by classifying those places giving names to those places. So, map making has always been a every political activity. And Marlow talks about a time where there were blank spaces on the earth, the map would have real have blank spaces which meant that there were still not invaded territories, or not territorialized spaces. So, those are places which were still open for imperialism, still open for exploration, open for territorialization.

So, in a map making was very much territorializing activity as you all know was a very political territorializing activity. And Marlow's allusion to blank spaces on the earth, sort of spaces which have not been visited yet that is important over here, because what that

means is he has his fantasy of territorializing, he has his fantasy this very European white fantasy of territorializing, and controlling those spaces right. So, you know that that is very, very you know clearly evident even in Marlow's imagination from his early years.

So, when he talks about his fantasy for map making, his fantasy for looking at maps, and his entire projected fantasy to go to the places which are blank on earth that is very much part of the white masculinist, supremacist narrative of white imperialism right. So, I will put my finger on it, and say, when I grow up I will go there. The North Pole was one of those places, I remember. Well, I have not been there yet, and shall not try now. The glamour's off, because it is not really a place for imperialism, North Pole there is no resources, there is no oil mine, there is no diamond mine, there is no wealth to be had from the North Pole. So, it is not really.

So, one, one thing is very, very clear that when Marlow says the glamour's off, the whole fantasy, the whole fascination to travel to unnamed places, unclassified places, uncharted places, is not really one of geographical travels, not really one of that of that of a pure traveler, it is very much part of the political fantasy to territorialize, it is very much part of the political fantasy to control, to classify then that that particular space.

And so it is very much part of the imperial grid where you can go to a place, territorialize and take away the wealth, because North Pole would not serve the purpose there is no places there is no natives over there, there is no wealth over there, there is no resources over there unlike you know South America, Australia or Asia, where there are land mines, there are there are gold mines, so there are gold mines, or diamond mines there are oil fields and there are other kinds of resources to be you know looted or controlled.

So, the glamour of the North Pole, North Pole never really had a glamour and imperial fantasy is because of this, there is not really an imperialist kind of space. Other places were scattered about the hemispheres. I have been in some of them, and well, we will not talk about that. But there was one yet – the biggest, the most blank, so to speak – that I had a hankering after that, of course, it is Africa.

See, Africa over here becomes the fantasy space for the white imperial imagination, the biggest blank space, the most blank so to say. The place which had not been traveled to the place which had not been trodded or territorialized yet and that territorialization is

still the waiting, still pending. So, Africa becomes very much that kind of space. So, he had a hankering for that kind of space, fascination or fantasy to control that space.

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yet—the biggest, the most blank, so to speak— that I had a hankering after.

True, by this time it was not a blank space any more. It had got filled since my boyhood with rivers and lakes and names. It had ceased to be a blank space of delightful mystery— a white patch for a boy to dream gloriously over. It had become a place of darkness. But there was in it one river especially, a mighty big river, that you could see on the map, resembling an immense snake uncoiled, with its head in the sea, its body at rest curving afar over a vast country, and its tail lost in the depths of the land. And as I looked at the map of it in a shop-window, it fascinated me as a snake would a bird—a silly little bird. Then I remembered there was a big concern, a Company for trade on that river. Dash it all! I thought to myself, they can't trade without using some kind of craft on that lot of fresh water— steamboats!



True, by this time it was not a blank space anymore. It had got filled since my boyhood with rivers and lakes and names. So, again you know the whole idea of filling up the blank space with rivers and lakes and names means that you know the white imperialist travelers are going there and territorializing and taking over, because you can only give names to places from particular perspective. Obviously, those places had names; obviously, those places had cultures and names, and designations, and everything else, but it is just that it was all African local names which unknown to the white imperial European imagination.

So, map making was very much Eurocentric imperial process. It was a process of classification, a process of containment, a process of territorialization. So, when you give names to places, basically you authorize, you legitimize territorialization, you consolidate and confirm territorialization. And I am reminded at this point and of Robinson Crusoe, the novel by Daniel Defoe which is quite possibly one of the first you know definitely one of the first novels about white territorialization in a non-white space. Those of you who have read the novel and I suspect most of you have you would know that when Crusoe rescues a native from that place from cannibals, he names him Friday

or man Friday which would say that you know he gives him a name, he gives him a Christian name makes him a Christian.

And in the process he brands him as his property you know he sort of territorializes him. So, by naming him Friday, he is doing two things, first of all he is erasing away his pre-imperial identity, because of course a man had a name we never got to hear the name. And secondly, he is giving him a classified category he is giving him a classified construct Friday the name given to him, it was a white man's name, it was a white name. So, in the process, he is claiming and consolidating him as a property.

So, likewise when Marlow says over here that Africa is getting filled in the big blank space of Africa is getting filled in with names, and rivers, and different kinds of lakes, which is to say that you know more and more African more and more European travelers are going there imperial travelers going there and giving names to those places, you know taking over those places territorializing those places.

So, it had ceased to be a blank space for delightful mystery – a white patch for a boy to dream gloriously over. So, again look at the very masculinist fantasy over here, a boy dreaming gloriously over, a white patch for a boy, a white patch for a white boy actually to dream gloriously over. So, that is a mystery space, an exotic space without a name. So, that exoticism, that exotic quality is very quickly going away, very quickly disappearing, because more and more white imperial narratives are happening in Africa and with those imperial narratives way of classifications coming in.

It had become a place of darkness. But there was in it one river especially, a mighty big river, that you could see on the map, resembling an immense snake uncoiled, with its head in the sea, its body at rest curving afar over a vast country, and its tail lost in the depths of the land. So, again this fascination with Congo which is hardly named in Heart of Darkness the river.

But the way it is described an immense snake uncoiled. So, it is very serpentine in quality, it is very exotic in quality, and you know it is described in very exotic markers, reified, commodified exotic markers, and definitely it is feminized as well. So, the entire space of Africa the entire people of Africa they are feminized by this white masculinist imagination as exotic signifiers as exotic you know locales so to say.

So, the whole idea, the immense snake uncoiled becomes you know first of all it's dehumanized, secondly, it is reified into something of an exotic quality and an exotic entity so to say. So, the River Congo was not named, but described as a mighty big river as an immense snake uncoiled, with its head in the sea, its body at rest curving afar over a vast country, and its tail lost in the depths of the land. So, it is like a tail biting snake. So, there is no tail left at all. So, again this inconclusive quality, of Marlow's storytelling is evident in the very beginning when it is describing certain things.

And as I looked at the map of it in a shop-window, it fascinated me as a snake would a bird – a silly little bird. So, again look at the way in which this gaze is happening. I looked at the map of it in a shop-window, so it is very much a consumerist kind of a thing. So, you know Marlow goes to a shop-window, and he sees a map of Africa over there. So, it is very much something to be consumed by the white male imagination, adventure loving imagination, and it fascinates him as a snake would a bird – a silly little bird.

So, you know interestingly the entire hunting narrative is reversed over here, which is very ironical in quality. So, the River Congo, or the white space of Africa that little patch the white little patch which is still unnamed. It appears to Marlow as a snake, and he thinks of himself as a bird and about to be gobbled devoured by the snake, why, you know historically and politically it was the other way round, as we know it was the white travelers, it is the white imperialist who would go to Africa, and take control you know, take it over territorialize it completely.

So, the bird snake imagery over here is interesting, it is very interesting and ironic reversal of historic phenomenon of imperialism, where you know it was a white imperialist going over hunting down the non-white spaces and non-white people and non-white locales, but over here the hunting narrative is reversed in terms of its markers. So, the white man compares himself as a bird, and he looks at himself looks at the mighty black River quote unquote, black river, Non-white River in a shop-window which is completely consumerist in quality as a snake.

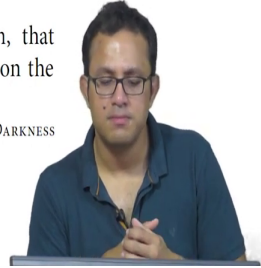
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in the sea, its body at rest curving afar over a vast country, and its tail lost in the depths of the land. And as I looked at the map of it in a shop-window, it fascinated me as a snake would a bird—a silly little bird. Then I remembered there was a big concern, a Company for trade on that river. Dash it all! I thought to myself, they can't trade without using some kind of craft on that lot of fresh water—steamboats! Why shouldn't I try to get charge of one? I went on along Fleet Street, but could not shake off the idea. The snake had charmed me.

'You understand it was a Continental concern, that Trading society; but I have a lot of relations living on the

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HEART OF DARKNESS



Then I remember there was a big concern, a Company for trade on that river. Dash it all. I thought to myself, they cannot trade without using some kind of craft on that lot of freshwater – steamboats. Why should not I try to get charge of one? I went on along Fleet Street, but could not shake off the idea. The snake had charmed me. So, again he thinks that you know there is a Company which is trading on the river, and they obviously, need steamboats. So, you know he thinks he can advertise for a position, he can apply for a position sorry as a captain of a steamboat presumably, and then he goes on Fleet Street in London, but could not shake off the idea, the snake had charmed me.

So, you know it is almost biblical in quality how he has been sort of bitten by the snake, and now he is tempted to buy the forbidden fruit of imperialism. So, now, he is about to take or taste the forbidden fruit of imperialism in Africa, because snake has charmed him. So, it is like a snake in a garden of Eden who was about to destroy Marlow's innocence so to say.

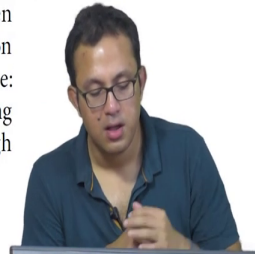
So, again this kind of metaphor is very ironic in quality, because we are given an image of the naive white man is charmed or intoxicated by the non-naive surreptitious, and potentially problematic, and pernicious African marker which is the river Congo over here. And as a result of which the naive white man is becoming a victim to that kind of an imagination, becoming a victim to that kind of idea of imperialism. And that whole reversal as I mention of the hunter, hunted narrative is important to for us understand

over here right, because historically we all know it was other way around all the time consistently, it was the white man who was the hunter who hunted and territorialized non-white spaces, but you know in this particular session it is reversed in a very ironic way.

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Continent, because it's cheap and not so nasty as it looks, they say.

'I am sorry to own I began to worry them. This was already a fresh departure for me. I was not used to get things that way, you know. I always went my own road and on my own legs where I had a mind to go. I wouldn't have believed it of myself; but, then—you see—I felt somehow I must get there by hook or by crook. So I worried them. The men said 'My dear fellow,' and did nothing. Then—would you believe it?—I tried the women. I, Charlie Marlow, set the women to work—to get a job. Heavens! Well, you see, the notion drove me. I had an aunt, a dear enthusiastic soul. She wrote: 'It will be delightful. I am ready to do anything, anything for you. It is a glorious idea. I know the wife of a very high



You understand it was a continental concern that trade in society, but I have a lot of relations living on the Continent, because it is cheap and not so nasty as it looks, they say. So, continent of course, here is Europe, so you know it is European company. So, now, you know Europe means you know Brussels and interestingly even then Europe meant, meant Brussels to Joseph Conrad in this is very, very dialogic way, Europe is perceived by English people today you know he use always Brussels today.

So, I am sorry to own that I began to worry them. This was already a fresh departure for me. I was not used to get things that way, you know. I always went on my own road and on my own legs where I had a mind to go. I would not have believed it of myself, but, then – you see – I felt somehow I must get there by hook or by crook. So, again this whole compulsion to be there somehow get a job in that particular company just so you can be in Brussels, and in Congo just so you can be in this projected fantasy space something which pushes Marlow to really you know go after people nag them for the job etcetera, you know use all his contacts, use all his relatives contacts in order to get the job.

My dear fellow, the men said, my dear fellow and did nothing. Then – would you believe it? I tried the women. I, Charlie Marlow, set the woman to work – to get a job. Heavens, well, you see, the notion drove me. And this is the point that I want to spend some time on and end the lecture here today. The presence of woman figures in Heart of Darkness of female figures of Heart of Darkness, so look at the condescending way the patronizing way Marlow talks about the women that you know I went to the extent of using woman to get a job. So, the presumption is women cannot get you anything.

So, women are powerless, but I used them as well in order to get a job. So, again the location of the woman, location of the female figure apropos of white male imperialism is very problematic in Heart of Darkness, I think I did touch upon a little bit of that issue at the beginning of the introductory lecture.

But what Marlow says over here and what he continues to say about the woman is interesting and problematic at the same time I mean it is interesting because it is problematic. So, he says I even tried the woman I and then he mentions one of his aunts. I had an aunt, a dear enthusiastic soul. She wrote, it would be delightful. I am ready to do anything for you. It is a glorious idea.

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that way, you know. I always went my own road and on my own legs where I had a mind to go. I wouldn't have believed it of myself; but, then—you see—I felt somehow I must get there by hook or by crook. So I worried them. The men said 'My dear fellow,' and did nothing. Then—would you believe it?—I tried the women. I, Charlie Marlow, set the women to work— to get a job. Heavens! Well, you see, the notion drove me. I had an aunt, a dear enthusiastic soul. She wrote: 'It will be delightful. I am ready to do anything, anything for you. It is a glorious idea. I know the wife of a very high personage in the Administration, and also a man who has lots of influence with,' etc. She was determined to make no end of fuss to get me appointed skipper of a river steamboat, if such was my fancy.

'I got my appointment—of course; and I got it very quick.



I know the wife of very high personage in the administration, and also a man who has lots of influence with etcetera. She was determined to make no end of fuss to get me appointed skipper of a river steamboat, if such was my fancy. So, his aunt very

conveniently comes and gives Marlow the right contacts to apply for the job. And she happens to know people, she happens to know the wife of someone who is very placed in a company and an administration, and then someone who has a lot of influence as well. So, she puts them in touch with the right people and that gets his job done.

So, again I am going back to Robinson Crusoe if you look at the Daniel Defoe narrative, I am sure some of you most of you have read it, you find that there are hardly woman figures in the narrative at all. I mean Crusoe Marries in the end of the novel, and his wife just inhabits one sentence in entire novel, where we are told that Crusoe marries her and then she produces male children and then she dies very conveniently all within one sentence.

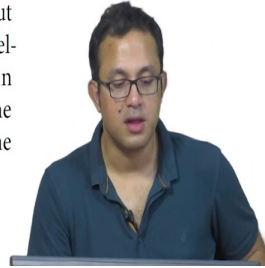
So, the entire presence of women in Robinson Crusoe which is essentially and symbolically one of the first European imperial narratives and fiction that to the presence of woman, the function of woman is strictly you know has that of a breeder, is there someone who is backing the men, someone who seems subservient and secondary to the entire male fantasy of territorialization and imperialism.

And we have this aunt over here who is not even named, you know we never know the name of the aunt, but he, she, she gets a job done for Marlow, she occupies a little section in the novel where we are told that she puts him in touch with right people she knows another woman who is the wife of someone high in the administration and then the man who has some influence in the company and that is how he gets his appointment.

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personage in the Administration, and also a man who has lots of influence with,' etc. She was determined to make no end of fuss to get me appointed skipper of a river steamboat, if such was my fancy.

'I got my appointment—of course; and I got it very quick. It appears the Company had received news that one of their captains had been killed in a scuffle with the natives. This was my chance, and it made me the more anxious to go. It was only months and months afterwards, when I made the attempt to recover what was left of the body, that I heard the original quarrel arose from a misunderstanding about some hens. Yes, two black hens. Fresleven—that was the fellow's name, a Dane—thought himself wronged somehow in the bargain, so he went ashore and started to hammer the chief of the village with a stick. Oh, it didn't surprise me



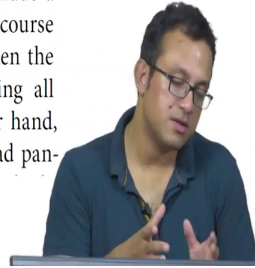
So, I got my appointment – of course; and I got it very quick. It appears the company had received news one of their captains had been killed in a scuffle with the natives. This was my chance, and made me the more anxious to go. It is only months and months afterwards, when I made the attempt to recover what was left of the body, that I heard the original quarrel arose from a misunderstanding about some hens.

Yes, two black hens. Fresleven – that was the fellow's name, a Dane Danish person who was a earlier captain and in whose place Marlow would be going as the captain of a particular steamboat – thought himself wronged somehow in the bargain, so he went ashore and started to hammer the chief of the village with a stick.

So, you know this is where the imperial narrative began to make its presence felt. The Danish guy called Fresleven who was in charge at steamboat he thought, that he had been conned, he had been robbed of some bargain over two black hens. So, he went all the way ashore and started to hammer and whip the chief of the village with a stick.

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in the least to hear this, and at the same time to be told that Fresleven was the gentlest, quietest creature that ever walked on two legs. No doubt he was; but he had been a couple of years already out there engaged in the noble cause, you know, and he probably felt the need at last of asserting his self-respect in some way. Therefore he whacked the old nigger mercilessly, while a big crowd of his people watched him, thunderstruck, till some man— I was told the chief's son—in desperation at hearing the old chap yell, made a tentative jab with a spear at the white man— and of course it went quite easy between the shoulder-blades. Then the whole population cleared into the forest, expecting all kinds of calamities to happen, while, on the other hand, the steamer Fresleven commanded left also in a bad pan-



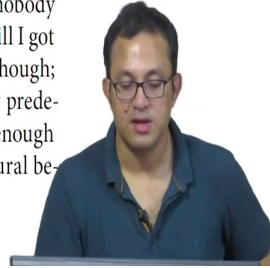
It did not surprise me in the least to hear it, and at the same time to be told that Fresleven was the gentlest, quietest creature that ever walked on two legs. So, this is a very important point, because we are told that Fresleven is a very European a gentle European, but look at what happens to gentle Europeans in Africa in the Congo. So, this atavistic avatar has unleashed and it becomes a cruel sadist in that colonial setting, and this is what Marlow tells immediately after. No doubt he was; but he had been a couple of years already out there engaged in the noble cause, the noble cause of imperialism it is very ironic over here you know, and he probably felt the need at least at last of asserting his self-respect in some way.

So, the whole white supremacist idea of asserting, supremacy asserting, self-respect asserting you know, in superiority compared to the natives was what drew Fresleven to whip the chief of the particular village. Therefore, he whacked the old nigger, again the word nigger appears in heart of darkness it is a banned word now. But again, then again this is exactly why the novel is important for us today because of its political incorrectness.

He whacked the old nigger mercilessly, while a big crowd of people watched him, thunderstruck, till some man – I was told the chief's son – in desperation at hearing the old chap yell, made a tentative jab with a spear at the white man – and of course it went quite easy between the shoulder-blades.

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his self-respect in some way. Therefore he whacked the old nigger mercilessly, while a big crowd of his people watched him, thunderstruck, till some man—I was told the chief's son—in desperation at hearing the old chap yell, made a tentative jab with a spear at the white man—and of course it went quite easy between the shoulder-blades. Then the whole population cleared into the forest, expecting all kinds of calamities to happen, while, on the other hand, the steamer Fresleven commanded left also in a bad panic, in charge of the engineer, I believe. Afterwards nobody seemed to trouble much about Fresleven's remains, till I got out and stepped into his shoes. I couldn't let it rest, though; but when an opportunity offered at last to meet my predecessor, the grass growing through his ribs was tall enough to hide his bones. They were all there. The supernatural be-



Then a whole population cleared into the forest, expecting all kinds of calamities to happen, while, on the other hand, the steamer Fresleven commanded left also in a bad panic, in charge of the engineer, I believe. So, you know it was just the white man's the chief of the village his son could not bear it anymore could not bear his father being beaten, so mercilessly anymore. So, he drove an arrow in Fresleven's shoulders in order to kill him instantly. And what is interesting to see how the entire village disappeared immediately after, because they thought because the white man has been killed some natural calamity will happen to them.

And again look at the way in which the idea supremacy is ingrained in imperialism, you know you have to convince the non-white people that you know white man is superior, the white man is god. So, killing the white man is almost you know sin not a crime. So, there will be a divine retribution there be a divine calamity.

So, the entire village just disappeared fearing the calamity to happen, and the steamer on which Fresleven commanded that that ran away as well that that that escaped as well in bad panic, because this was an accident it was an interruption of what normally happens the normative, normal narrative imperialism where the white man beats a non-white man, so that narrative has been interrupted with the white man being killed over here; so that that steamer had left in charge of the engineer.

Afterwards nobody seemed to trouble much about Fresleven's remains, till I got out and stepped into his shoes. I could not let it rest, though; but what an opportunity offered at last to meet my predecessor, the grass growing through his ribs was tall enough to hide his bones.

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out and stepped into his shoes. I couldn't let it rest, though; but when an opportunity offered at last to meet my predecessor, the grass growing through his ribs was tall enough to hide his bones. They were all there. The supernatural being had not been touched after he fell. And the village was deserted, the huts gaped black, rotting, all askew within the fallen enclosures. A calamity had come to it, sure enough. The people had vanished. Mad terror had scattered them, men, women, and children, through the bush, and they had never returned. What became of the hens I don't know either. I should think the cause of progress got them, anyhow. However, through this glorious affair I got my appointment, before I had fairly begun to hope for it.

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HEART OF DARKNESS



So, when Marlow finally meets the corpse of Fresleven, he finds the grass was had grown long enough through his ribs to hide the bones. So, it is a very symbolic image of the white man going and meeting his predecessor, the early imperialist who had been killed and whose skeletal remains are present now ok. So, and then this whole idea of calamity, the whole idea of you know fear of having killed a white man and that that is described in some details.

And then we are told the mad terror had scattered them, in the village there was a mad terror, because they were convinced that some calamity would befall them. Men, women, and children, through the bush, and they had never returned. What became of the hens I do not know either. So, again look at the there is almost a dark comic quality in heart of darkness as well which keeps making its presence felt, because this entire the entire quarrel over here the entire tuff over here tiff over here is about some hens.

So, Marlow says I do not know what happened to the hens, because entire beating was because of hens, the entire murder happened because of the hens. So, I should think the cause of progress got them, anyhow. However, through this glorious affair I got my

appointment, therefore I fairly began to hope for it, before I had fairly begun to hope for it. So, you know it is because Fresleven the Danish captain of the particular steamboat got killed because of two hens bargain over two hens is because of why you know Marlow gets his job.

So, you know look at the way I mean that reason why the entire thing is trivialized and that tells us something as readers. When you when you actually come to the bottom of it, how the you know imperialism is actually about a bargain, it is actually about bargains going bad it is about one sided bargains is about the terror that comes of the bargains, but essentially it is about bargains, it is about a mercantile activity, a merciless mercantile activity, it is the mercenary mercantile activity which is what it is all about.

So, everything around imperialism the normal narrative about civilizing, superiority, supremacy, etcetera; you take all that away it all comes down to the bargains. So, the two hens over here are important they are quite symbolic presences in this point in the story, because what we are told is you know the entire quarrel the entire a tussle the you know the tiff that happened was because of two hens.

And the Fresleven the Danish person was very gentle, otherwise he somehow thought because he got a bad bargain, he had to make his superiority felt he had to assert his superiority. So, he got ashore started whipping the black man, then you know the chieftain of the village and at some point when the son of the chieftain could not take it anymore he drove a you know an arrow through Fresleven's ribs and that killed him immediately. And that was the reason why Marlow got the job in the first place, so he had to fill in a vacancy which had emerged which had which had happened because of an accident which happened because of a bargain.

So, it all came down to a bargain about two hens and the two hens over here become a symbolic presence over here, because you know that tells us that imperialism at the end of it all at the bottom of it all it is about bargains. So, I will stop with this point today, I will continue with a story as we move on next lecture.

Thank you for your attention.