ALLUSIONS

Allusion - The Bible: Matthew 23:27-28 – "a whited sepulchre" (1.22)

Allusion - Moirae (Greek Fates): "two women…knitting black wool" (1.23), "knitting old woman" (3.27)

Allusion - Plato (1.26)

Allusion - Dante: the Divine Comedy – "some Inferno" (1.38)

Allusion - King Arthur: "round table" (1.52)

Allusion - Bunyan: The Pilgrim’s Progress – "faithless pilgrims…with their absurd long staves in their hands" (1.54)

Allusion - The Devil: "with a forked little beard and a hooked nose" (1.56), "A black figure…it had horns" (3.29), "that Shadow" (3.29)

Allusion - Astrea, Greek goddess of justice: "a woman, draped and blindfolded, carrying a lighted torch" (1.57)

Allusion - Goethe: Faust – "Mephistopheles" (1.61)

Allusion - "Sleeping Beauty": The enchanted forest – "a state of trance" (2.13), "an enchanted princess sleeping in a fabulous castle" (2.15)

Allusion - Jupiter, Roman king of gods: "the thunderbolts of that pitiful Jupiter" (3.11)

Allusion - Poe: "A Descent into the Maelstrom" – "I had peeped over the edge" (3.48)

Allusion - Wells: The Island of Dr. Moreau – "a danger it is unable to comprehend" (3.49)

Allusion - Dickens: A Christmas Carol – Marley’s face – "he seemed to stare at me out of the glassy panel." (3.51)

Historical References

Historical Reference -Sir Francis Drake: the Golden Hind (1.6)

Historical Reference- Sir John Franklin: the Erebus, the Terror (1.6)

Historical Reference- East India Company: "commissioned ‘generals’ of East India" (1.6)

Historical Reference- Ravenna, Italy: Roman naval base (1.11)

Historical Reference- Buddha (1.13), (3.87)

Historical Reference- Freiesleben, Johannes, A Danish captain, Conrad’s predecessor in command of the Florida, was killed on 29 January 1890 at Tchumberi in a dispute over hens: "Fresleven" (1.21)

Historical Reference- Roman gladiators: "Ave! [...] Morturi te salutant" (1.25), ("Hail! [...] Those who are about to die salute you.")

Historical Reference -El Dorado: "Eldorado Exploring Expedition" (1.72)

Historical Reference -Towson, J.T., published two volumes of navigation tables: "Towson" (2.9), (2.37)

Historical Reference -International Association for the Exploration and Civilizing of Africa, of which King Leopold was the president: "International Society for the Suppression of Savage Customs" (2.29)

Historical Reference -Government of Tambov, Russia (2.35)

Historical Reference -Latin maxim "Fiat justitia, ruat coelum" or "Let justice be done, though the heavens fall": "The heavens do not fall for such a trifle." (3.86)

**Discuss The Theme of Hypocrisy of Imperialism**

**Discuss The theme of Madness as a Result of Imperialism**

**Discuss The theme of the Absurdity of Evil**

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**Discuss The Theme of Darkness**

Explain the Following Quote:

*“It was unearthly, and the men were—No, they were not inhuman. Well, you know, that was the worst of it—the suspicion of their not being inhuman. It would come slowly to one. They howled and leaped, and spun, and made horrid faces; but what thrilled you was just the thought of their humanity—like yours—the thought of your remote kinship with this wild and passionate uproar. Ugly. Yes, it was ugly enough; but if you were man enough you would admit to yourself that there was in you just the faintest trace of a response to the terrible frankness of that noise, a dim suspicion of there being a meaning in it which you—you so remote from the night of first ages—could comprehend. And why not?”*

Explain the Following Quote:

*“The brown current ran swiftly out of the heart of darkness, bearing us down towards the sea with twice the speed of our upward progress; and Kurtz’s life was running swiftly, too, ebbing, ebbing out of his heart into the sea of inexorable time. . . . I saw the time approaching when I would be left alone of the party of ‘unsound method.’”*

Explain the Following Quote:

*“I was within a hair’s-breadth of the last opportunity for pronouncement, and I found with humiliation that probably I would have nothing to say. This is the reason why I affirm that Kurtz was a remarkable man. He had something to say. He said it. . . . He had summed up—he had judged. ‘The horror!’ He was a remarkable man.”*

**Respond to the Following Statement:**

*The Nigerian writer Chinua Achebe has claimed that Heart of Darkness is an “offensive and deplorable book” that “set[s] Africa up as a foil to Europe, as a place of negations at once remote and vaguely familiar, in comparison with which Europe’s own state of spiritual grace will be manifest.” Achebe says that Conrad does not provide enough of an outside frame of reference to enable the novel to be read as ironic or critical of imperialism. Based on the evidence in the text, argue for or against Achebe’s assertion.*

**Respond to the Following Statement:**

*Discuss the importance of the Congo River in this narrative. Why does Marlow travel primarily by boat and seldom on land?*

**Respond to the Following Statement:**

*Why does Heart of Darkness have two competing heroes? Make the case for either Marlow or Kurtz as the true “hero” of the book.*

**Respond to the Following Statement:**

Discuss the framing story that structures *Heart of Darkness.*Why is it important to narrate Marlow in the act of telling his story?

**Respond to the Following Statement:**

Interpret Kurtz’s dying words (“The horror! The horror!”). What do they mean? What are the possible “horrors” to which he is referring? Why is Marlow the recipient of Kurtz’s last words?

**Respond to the Following Statement:**

Contrast Kurtz’s African mistress with his Intended. Are both negative portrayals of women? Describe how each functions in the narrative. Does it make any difference in your interpretation to know that Conrad supported the women’s suffrage movement?

**Respond to the Following Statement:**

Describe the use of “darkness” both in the book’s title and as a symbol throughout the text. What does darkness represent? Is its meaning constant or does it change?

**Respond to the Following Statement:**

How does physical illness relate to madness? How does one’s environment relate to one’s mental state in this book?

**Respond to the Following Statement:**

Why does Marlow lie to Kurtz’s fiancée about Kurtz’s last words? Why not tell her the truth, or tell her that Kurtz had no last words, rather than affirming her sentimental and mundane ideas?