

The first draft lacks a title, which would help to focus the essay. A good title might be "River of Empire: The Narrator's Contrasting views of the Thames in Joseph Conrad's Hearts of Darkness"

The opposing views of the Thames presented by the primary narrator, Knights, and by the secondary narrator, Marlow, in Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* ~~serve to~~ <sup>create</sup> certain specific responses in the reader. Knights's positive view of the river, as the medium through which Britain built its empire, comes as no surprise. Marlow's strange and startling account of the Thames's dark past is, however, a complete reversal of this idea, astonishing both Knights and the reader. By juxtaposing Marlow's grim narrative and Knights's homage to the Thames, the readers' curiosity is piqued in order to make them aware of the negative effects of conquest on both conquered and conquerors.

evolve  
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This verb is wordy and bland.

↖ This sentence has a dangling modifier since it is not the reader's curiosity that juxtaposes the narrative, but the author.

→ Note that the name is Knights, so the apostrophe should come after the s. Customarily, the second s is added if it is pronounced.

→ Knight's notion of the Thames as providing "ages of good service" (80) is not an uncommon one: the majority of Conrad's audience would not feel otherwise. There is, after all, more than just a tinge of pride in the primary narrator's description of the river:

"What greatness had not floated on the ebb of that river . . ." (8), he reflects proudly.

Martyrs, such as Sir John Franklin, and explorers, such as Sir Francis Drake, are

remembered respectfully by Knights as men who "followed the sea . . . knights all, titled "hunters for gold" (8), "pursuers of fame" (8), are phrases he uses to describe explorers who voyaged on and untitled" (8). His love of imperialism is not hidden in the least. Indeed, without

the Thames

the Thames, the "seed of commonwealths, the germ of empires" (8) could never have been planted.

Marlow's strange and startling account of the Thames's dark past is quite different. The "sacred fire" (8) Knights values so deeply is just "a flash of lightning in the clouds . . .

Provide supporting examples from the text itself to demonstrate the point being made.

[a] flicker." (8) in Marlow's eyes. To him it is darkness that has prevailed, a darkness

symbolized by the Thames. He substantiates this view by presenting the other side of

imperialism: the darkness and misery associated with, and inflicted on, the vanquished. I

was the Thames that brought the Romans, says Marlow, to a land of “cold, fog, tempests, disease and death” (10), a far cry from the empire it would one day become. There are no Sir John Franklins or Sir Francis Drakes in Marlow’s view, only

“the utter savagery . . . of wild men” (10). ~~While~~ Knights associates the Thames with calmness, serenity, and tranquility, Marlow believes it led to danger, evil, death, destruction: “No Falernian wine here” (10), Marlow says, rejecting the glory and heroism that Knights embraces. For Marlow, there is only “death skulking in the air . . . [men] dying like flies . . . the incomprehensible” (10).

WHEREAS  
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While is a transition most effective to describe time. "Whereas is better used to indicate contrast."

Some wordiness can be eliminated here

→ Though ~~their views are~~ vastly different, the opinions of Marlow and Knights are not unrelated by any means. Knights presents imperialism from a romantic perspective, full of the praise and respect he has for his native land. For him, it is the heart of an empire. By presenting this aspect first, Conrad subtly allows the readers to participate in this familiar view. Almost immediately after, though, the readers face Marlow’s idea of the Thames as the means by which the Romans were able to capture the “unknown earth” (8) that would one day be Britain. Marlow describes a Thames of “nineteen hundred years ago” (9) when Britain was not the conqueror but the conquered, a complete turnabout of the patriotic perspective, and one unfamiliar to most readers. Conrad exploits this unfamiliarity to change the readers’ point of view.\*

"effect" is a noun, not a verb.

Include a paragraph here to indicate why this close reading is important to the meaning of the whole work, and not just a perfunctory exercise.

→ The readers, like Knights, are ~~effected~~ by Marlow’s view of the Thames and by the narrative that follows. In the end, Knights sees the Thames in a changed light: though still “leading to the uttermost ends of the earth” (76), the river now “flowed sombre under an overcast sky—[where it] seemed to lead into the heart of an immense darkness” (76).

affected  
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By using the double narration, Conrad has created a character in Knights whose response to

Marlow's account of the Thames, and to his story, serves as a guide to our own. In this manner, Conrad manipulates us in the hope that Knights's newfound awareness of the price of imperialism is also our own.

\*<paragraph to be added as indicated above>

Such a response from the readers is critical to the rest of the novel. From this point on, the readers have questions about the experiences that have led Marlow to see the Thames in this light. This first difference of opinion leads to Marlow's account of his life in Africa amidst "all that mysterious life of the wilderness that stirs in the forest" (10). Marlow's view of the Thames's history also sets the tone for the story that follows: it introduces the contrast between growth and destruction, the conquerors and the conquered, the civilized and the savage, and of light versus darkness.

<Be sure to add a works cited list. Since references have been added to the draft, we now need to cite the work those references were taken from.>

#### Works Cited

Conrad, Joseph. Heart of Darkness. Ed. Robert Kimbrough. 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. New York: Norton, 1985.