A rhetorical analysis of Joseph Conrad's Heart of darkness

Shyh-chyi Wey

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A RHETORICAL ANALYSIS
OF JOSEPH CONRAD'S HEART OF DARKNESS

A Thesis
Presented to the
Faculty of
California State University,
San Bernardino

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts
in
English Composition

by
Shyh-chyi Wey
June 1994
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Abstract

Language is used as a tool of communication. It conveys a writer’s message to a reader. Style is seen as the writer’s choice of language and stylistics is the study of how the writer conveys the message through her use of language.

A stylistic analysis of Conrad’s *Heart of Darkness*, the present study aims to provide an explanation and demonstration of the rhetorical function of style. The study is based on Edward Corbett and Leech & Short in terms of theoretical approach and methodology. Specifically, I will use their method of counting stylistic features to determine deviation and salience. Then I will analyze these features of relation to their rhetorical function.

The stylistic features indicate that Conrad’s specific uses of language serve specific functions. In terms of diction, Conrad’s use of concrete and abstract nouns suggests a balance of ideas. Lexical repetition reveals the theme of the story. At the sentencial level, Conrad appeals to the reader’s emotion and sympathy so that he can convey a dream-like experience. At the paragraph level, the shortest one is a transition and the longest one is the climax of the novel, conveying a multitude of complicated ideas.

The findings of this study suggest that stylistic analysis is indeed beneficial for literary criticism. For
it offers linguistic evidence for the interpretation and appreciation of the work that would not otherwise be discovered.
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Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1. Introduction to the thesis

1.1.1. Aims

According to Kinneavy's information theory in "Discourse and the Field of English," "basic to all uses of language are a person who encodes a message, the signal (language) which carries the message, the reality to which the message refers, and the decoder (receiver of the message)" (19). As readers, therefore, we receive writers' messages and intentions only through their language, the carrier of such messages. It follows that the study of the linguistic features of a written text can tell us how the writer's messages are communicated, as Edward P.J. Corbett and Geoffery N. Leech & Michael H. Short have shown.

Corbett, in his study, "A Method of Analyzing Prose Style with A Demonstration Analysis of Swift's A Modest Proposal," emphasizes the importance of examining "the 'weight' of a man's style and to account for the effect that his style creates." According to him, style can be investigated in three aspects: words, sentences, and paragraphs. When a writer creates prose, she has to determine what message to convey and how to convey it. These decisions can be seen through her use of language. Therefore, through the writer's use of language, readers can discover the artistic principles underlying the writer's choice of language. Specifically, words can be analyzed to
discover how images are created and how the theme is brought forth. Also, varieties of sentence patterns can reveal a writer's ways of qualifying and ramifying her thoughts. In addition, the length of paragraphs, particularly those significantly above or below the mean length, can be suggestive of stylistic density and the pace of development.

This thesis, a linguistic analysis of Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*, aims to explore how the author uses language to convey his theme and to create a style of his own. The second aim of this thesis is to offer ways to examine language use so that one can better understand and appreciate the literary work in front of her. In other words, readers of literature can sharpen their aesthetic sensibility by being able to appreciate how language is used.

1.2. Methodology

To analyze Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*, I will apply the methods from Corbett's "A Method of Analyzing Prose Style with A Demonstration Analysis of Swift's A Modest Proposal" and Leech & Short's *Style in Fiction*. First, I will read Conrad's work to get some general impressions. Second, I will create a checklist of what appeared to be the most significant style markers. The third step is counting and categorizing. I will concentrate on linguistic features at three levels: the lexical level, the sentencial level, and
the paragraph level. At the lexical level, I will analyze concrete and abstract nouns in order to determine how Conrad’s ideas are expressed through those nouns. I will also look at adjectives to see what kinds of attributes the adjectives ascribe to the nouns they modify, such as color terms—black and white. At the sentencial level, I will first will calculate the average sentence length of the whole novel, then analyze those sentences which are significantly longer or shorter than the average. I will also categorize the grammatical types of sentence—simple, compound, complex, compound-complex. At the paragraph level, I will count the average length of all paragraphs, then identify those paragraphs significantly below or above the average. I have decided on these features because through my initial observations, they seem to me the most revealing of Conrad’s style. Moreover, stylisticians such as Corbett, Leech and Short have shown them to be the structures that are most suggestive of a writer's style.

The fourth step is to tabulate the frequencies of these features to determine salient stylistic characteristics. Last, I will analyze my findings based on Leech & Short’s *Style in Fiction*; namely, I will discuss how these features contribute to Conrad’s style and his themes.

The study’s primary focus is on the functions and effects of linguistic structures. To be able to relate stylistic features to their rhetorical function, I also
refer to some biographical works, literary histories, and critical articles to better understand the text. It should be noted, however, that these secondary sources are meant to assist, not to replace, the stylistic analysis.

1.2. Stylistics as a discipline

1.2.1. What is stylistics

Stylistics is style analysis "with a hint of scientific or methodological approach" (Turner 8). Style is interpreted by Macpherson Nkem as an individual's effort to "establish a symmetry between [his] expressive capacity and his other characteristics" (113), which is constituted by his "selection from a total linguistic repertoire" (Leech & Short 11). The relationship between style and stylistics is that

Style is a way in which language is used.... Therefore style consists in choices made from the repertoire of the language.... A style is defined in terms of a domain of language use (eg what choices are made by a particular author, in a particular genre, or in a particular text).... Stylistics has typically been concerned with literary language. (38)

In the field of English, the task of a literary critic is to interpret and evaluate literary texts as works of art by finding out what aesthetic experience or perception of reality the work is attempting to convey. The student's primary concern is to explicate the individual message and code of the writer. On the other hand, the linguist is
interested in finding out how a piece of literature exemplifies the language system, and if it contains curiosities of usage, how these curiosities might be accounted for in grammatical terms. The purpose of stylistics, therefore, is to link the two approaches by combining the linguist’s literary intuition and the critic’s linguistic observation in such a way that their relationship is made explicit.

Stylistics can be seen as the application of structural linguistics to literary texts. Stylisticians analyze style to clarify and explain the relation between language and artistic function from both the linguist’s angle, "what use is made of language" as "why does the author here choose to express himself [sic] in the particular way" and the critic’s viewpoint, "how is such-and-such an aesthetic effect achieved through language" (Leech & Short 13).

1.2.2. How does stylistics work

Different stylisticians devise their own methods of analysis. This means that there may be as many analytical procedures as there are definitions of style. All writers and texts have their individual qualities. Every analysis of stylistics is an attempt to find artistic principles underlying a writer’s choice of language. Style gives a reader the deeper sense an author wants to convey from word to word and line to line. Stylistics provides us a
functional basis for why the linguistic choice is made rather than merely pointing out linguistic structures without identifying functions. Stylistics can, therefore, enable us to appreciate the artistic effect of the work and how specific linguistic structures fit into the whole. Through understanding all discernible signs of the author's artistry, we can see the work as a product of conscious choices rather than as self-existing.

In analyzing style, Leech & Short, in particular, emphasize the concept of deviation as a means of the study of style. In other words, a writer makes constant linguistic choice when she writes, consciously or unconsciously. These choices determine the way the text is written and the way the theme is expressed. Therefore, style can be "measured" by linguistic evidence suggestive of the writer's choices. Stylistic features are associated with literary function. But, these features of language must deviate from some norm of comparison. Therefore, statistical deviation is a quantitative measure of linguistic differences between the domain and the norm.

For instance, to sum up Leech & Short's and Corbett's studies, the linguistic data can be categorized into four levels: lexical, grammatical, figures of speech, and context and cohesion. In lexical level, the reader can examine how the writer decide to operate at different levels of diction to suit different purpose and different audience. The
writer may choose simple and concrete words and expression, or she can settle for the abstract, ornate or latinate words and expression. However, the diction of a writer should reflect sufficient audience sensitivity because the ultimate goal of a writer’s message is consumption by a targeted audience. Also, there are other revelations that can be made through diction. One of them is tone. The reader can identify the tone of the writer from her choice of words. The writer’s attitude to her subject matter colors her tone in her writing. A writer’s or speaker’s tone can be sentimental, reverential, authoritative, arrogant, mock-serious, self-deprecatory, reflective, exclamatory, neutral, cynical and sarcastic. The reader can identify these possible tones from a network of lexical selections which predominate in the text.

The next level is the sentential level. The interest here is in the types and functions of sentences at both the grammatical and rhetorical levels. At the grammatical level, there are simple, compound, complex, and compound-complex types of sentences. The intention here is not to provide an unnecessary taxonomy of features but the examination of the combinatory patterns of these sentence types in the discourse. To achieve effective discourse, there has to be a good mix of all types in one discourse event as each type mentioned has its unique stylistic advantage. Therefore, the over-use of one of them can weary
At the rhetorical level, the reader is concerned essentially with the functions she can ascribe to the sentences. Are they ordinary statement, questions, directives or replies? At this level, there are loose, periodic and balanced types of sentences. These latter types can be used to locate different segments of the utterance in different emphatic positions. This involves internal patterning of the message structure. An important point to remember in this apparent segmentation of discourse is that the ultimate aim here is to examine how all the parts act in concert to form the whole. Lexical and grammatical categories show that style can be analyzed by counting the frequencies of the features it contains and measuring these features against equivalent features which are normal for the language in question. The style is then to be measured in terms of deviations—either higher frequencies or lower frequencies—from the norm.

Examining figures of speech ("departing in some way from general norms of communication by means of the language code" (Leech & Short 78)) can tell how grammatical and lexical schemes produce the rhetorical effect; how phonological features interact with meaning; and if the deviations are the clue to special interpretations associated with metaphor, metonymy, synecdoche, paradox, irony, the reader can discover the kind of special
interpretation involved. Schemes can be used for the internal ordering of message structure. The reader can find schemes like parenthesis, antithesis, apposition, parallelism, periphrases. All these constitute obvious effort by the writer to create balance. In addition, the context can be understood by the study of how the writer addresses the reader, by what linguistic clues (pronouns), with what attitude, and in what method (direct, indirect, or free indirect speech). Cohesion can be analyzed from the use of logical links and its implicit connections of meaning, repetitions of words and phrases, and elegant variation. Co-ordination and subordination patterns of the text can be looked at if they are stylistically significant. Attention can also be turned to the paragraphing of the text. The purpose is to see how the ideas in the text are developed. Is there a logical progression of ideas from one paragraph to the next? Does each begin and conclude the issue raised in it? When these questions are answered we, as readers, would have placed the paragraph structure of the text in proper perspective.

Corbett particularly proposes that when the reader has examined these various elements of the text, it is important to make general statements on how they combine to give the text a unity and how they have been combined for the communication of the subject matter. The conclusion the reader can reach from this step by step analytical procedure
may be that the message has been effectively or ineffectively conveyed. However, this conclusion may not always be a matter of success or failure as the writer can achieve some measure of success in conveying her message even when there are obvious lapses in her analysis. The linguistic stylistician can sign off at this point since she claims that her analysis is objective as it is intratextual and intertextual and based on the content of the text under analysis. But the literary critic, who may not have adhered to the linguistic procedure suggested in this section, will feel free to bring in details about the context of the text, the reason being that the writer must have been influenced by certain contextual considerations before she wrote. She will argue that the text is not written in isolation from the immediacy of its environment but within a contextual framework which must be referred to if a rich analysis of the text must be achieved. She can then feel free to invoke extratextual events to explain issues in the text. The literary critic also strives to identify the figures of speech prevalent in the text, and addresses how they combine with other paralinguistic affective devices to give the text under analysis a definite quality.

1.2.3. Previous stylistic analyses of literary work

Stylistics has been a very active area of research. There are several professional journals on the subject,
notably *Language and Style*, and two bearing the same name, *Language and Literature*, one by Trinity University and the other by The British Association of Poetics. Also, there are volumes of books published each year and numerous articles in various journals on the subject of stylistic analysis of literary works.

To illustrate how stylistics enables us to get a deeper understanding of the work studied, I will discuss Leech & Short and Corbett and adopt their methods in this study.

Leech & Short apply their proposed method to analyze three different author's style with examples. They make a checklist of linguistic and stylistic categories and follow step by step to interpret their finding at four levels, according to the statistical categories. They apply the categories selectively to the opening passages of three short stories. The three texts, which are comparable in length, are Joseph Conrad's "The Secret Sharer," D.H. Lawrence's "Odour of Chrysanthemums," and Henry James' "The Pupil." The procedure in each case is to begin with some general first impression of the passage, and then to make selective uses of the checklist in order to bring the attention to what appear to be the most significant style markers of each.

In example 1, Joseph conrad's "the Secret Sharer," they give the reader the first impression of the passage about a meticulously detailed setting of the scene for the story so...
that they can reconstruct the whole topography. The passage creates a vivid sense of the loneliness of human observer and apply the critic’s words about Conrad’s theme: "a mind energetically stretching to subdue a dazzling experience outside the self, in a way that has innumerable counterparts elsewhere in Conrad." After the brief description, they analyze four linguistic features which reveal Conrad’s theme.

In terms of lexical features, they discover that the passage contains concrete nouns matched by nouns that are more abstract so that concreteness is subordinated to abstraction (such as: lines of...stakes, system of...fences). Also, more than half of the concrete nouns refer to topographical features (sea, sky, river, shore, earth) and abstract locative nouns (head, track, line, curves). This explains why the observer seems to stand apart from the scene he experiences.

In terms of grammatical features, they examine sentence length, sentence structure, and prepositions. The sentences move to a peak of length, and at the end, a short sentence of statement is powerfully placed (66-59-61-88-61-44-18). The longer sentences describe the speaker’s experiences in detail, and the final one is a summary of these experiences. This provides readers with a convincing realization after they have felt the isolation of the speaker in all its particularity, and have seen the last vestige of human life
disappear over the horizon. Sentence structures are all complex and with trailing constituents. They function to imitate the movement from the observer's eye toward the distance and illustrate this characteristic reaching out effect. The syntactic complexity of the sentence comes from the use of prepositional phrases, particularly the role of of, such as "the straight line of the flat shore," "a group of barren islets." It suggests that "perception and cognition go hand in hand: the eye does not passively record objects in the raw, but structures and schematizes them in cognitively coded groupings" (88).

In terms of features of figures of speech, Leech & Short analyze quasi-simile, metaphor, and schemes. They say that Conrad's use of constructions, which express or imply similitude, strengthen the impression of a mind stretched to explore and understand. The civilizing metaphor (such as stable, floor, dome) allows islands to have foundations and indicate an unreal calm, for they render the immensities of nature in terms of things which are familiar, solid, and manmade. However, other metaphors (like animated, impassive, devious) refer to an animacy which seems to threaten by its very absence, and "give[s] an uneasy impression that what is apparently so lifeless may have undisclosed resources of power and activity" (89). Besides, the use of rhetorical schemes produces an "emotively reinforcing effect" (without an effort, without a tremor;
fainter and farther) (89).

Finally, in terms of features of cohesion and context, they conclude that for "continuity between the parts of the description depends on the observer whose vantage point is the pivot around which the cycloramic picture unfold," most sentences begin with a reference, actual or implied to the first-person narrator (90). Also, through the progression, the reader builds up a vista in the round, the lone figure of the narrator at its centre, then in sentences 4 and 5 of the paragraph, the eye focuses on a particular point: "the distant river and vanishing tug, whose disappearance from the scene reinforces the narrator's isolation" (90). And in the final sentence the reader's attention is abruptly brought back from the remote horizon to the observer himself.

In example 2, Leech & Short apply the same method to analyze D.H.Lawrence's style in "Odour of Chrysanthemums" in terms of comparing with Conrad's style. The first impression of the reader is that Lawrence presents a setting, following a path of unfolding detail until the sense is evoked in all its particularity, drawing the reader's attention to focus on the predicament of humanity within that setting. At lexical level, unlike the Conrad's passage, there are more than two-thirds of concrete nouns (engine, wagon, salt, grose, railway, etc) in the text. The description is more direct and concrete. Abstract nouns
occur only when they refer to movement and action (speed, winding, movement). In addition, verbs are more frequent and indicate movement and related physical position or posture (trailing, grew, stood, cleaved, clanking, thumping, etc). The intransitive verbs are striking and produce a cause-effect relationship; "the impression we get is that movement is divorced from purpose: all the strident activity of the industrial scene seems to be self-generating and uncontrolled" (92). They also point out that the adjectives bring visual imagery, especially of color (red, scarlet, pink) and contrast with black, tarred and ash. This color use brings into relief small signs of light of life against the drab and brightens background.

At grammatical level, Lawrence uses much simpler sentences than Conrad. Complexity occurs only in the adverbial specifying place and direction and in the noun phrase. Like Conrad's final sentence, the sudden brevity of the sentence at the end of the passage summarizes and interprets a setting which invites the reader to become humanly involved, to see herself as an insider.

In addition, the features of figures of speech indicate that Lawrence makes use of verbs which are intrinsically onomatopoeic (clanking, thumped, rapped) as well as words which are phonaesthetic in a less direct sense (stumbling, slumsy, clutch), in which "the similarity of sound connote similarities of meaning" (95). Metaphor and simile serve to
animate and humanize what is inanimate (the engine "stumbles", the headstocks are "clumsy", the cottage "squat"). Nature is given lifeless quality of the human world.

In terms of cohesion and context, lexical repetition of various kinds is the most notable feature of cohesion (*pink chrysanthemums* like *pink cloths*). Besides, the definite article is seen as an alternative device of cross-reference because it is accompanied by a noun identifying a previous reference. But, when human being are brought on the scene, they are introduced by indefinite nouns phrases: "This [sic] makes them stand out as new and unfamiliar against the industrial background, as if they are somehow out of place" (97). The third-person narration of Lawrence is paradoxically more humanly subjective than the first-person narration of Conrad. In the Lawrence passage, there is no intermediary like Conrad’s to deflect the reader from direct participation in the fictional world (97).

In the final example, Leech & Short again identify features of style Henry James’s "The Pupil" to provide us a better understanding of how stylistics works. In the same way, they give the first impression of the James’s passage at the beginning. The opening passage resembles "the preceding extract in its in medias res technique" (97). He is concerned with a world of human values and relationships and the eternal universe of nature has no part to play in
Moving to lexical features, this passage has a low frequency of nouns as compared with the previous two passage. Moreover, over half of the nouns are abstract and refer to social or physical plane (effort, terms, money, feelings). Similarly, James's adjectives have nothing to do with physical attributes (unwilling, conventional, affable, casual). In contrast, verbs appear frequently and refer to attitudes (hesitated, liked, treating), cognition (known, supposed, reflected), and perceptions (hear, looked, appear). And the most notable classes of adverb are those of manner (straight, nervously, familiarly), and of degree (somewhat, precisely, extravagantly).

As far as grammatical features are concerned, James's syntax is more complex than Conrad's. James tends to mention antecedent events after subsequent ones, where produces after effects. And his anticipatory and parenthetical structures increase difficulty "because they require the reader's mind to store up syntactic information which it will use later on" (102). Most importantly, James, unlike the other two writers, makes substantial use of modal and aspectual auxiliaries like "should catch," "could find," "had been invited." Thus, these involve awareness "not only of a narrative point of time, but of circumstances which, in relation to that point, are past, future, or hypothetical (104). Commenting on James's use of negation, they indicate
that his negation is a device to "cancel" the expectation of its positive (104).

In James's figures of speech, his words do not just have their face-value meaning, but are to be interpreted as indicators of tone and attitude and serve the purpose of irony. For example, the double negative "unwilling ... without ..." suggests a contrast between the willingness that seems to be expected of Pemberton and the reluctance that his own circumstances force upon him. Also, in a similar technique to Lawrence's, there is an associative incongruity in the way words are combined in such phrases as: "fat jewelled hand" and "soiled gant de Sudes" to come to seem pretentious.

In the last category, cohesion and context, Leech & Short point out that James's partiality for elegant variation is well illustrated in the way he varies the manner of referring to the three characters and lends itself to irony. For example, as they indicate, Pemberton is referred to as "the poor man," "the candidate for the honour of taking his education in hand" and "this personage." Similarly, Mrs. Moreen is called "a person who spoke only of feeling and, sa it were, of the aristocracy," and "the large, affable lady who sat there ... liked to hear," and "his mother." Moreen Junior becomes "the little boy," and "the poor child." Such references "draw attention now to this, now to that aspect of the same person, and so build up
a many-sided picture of each character (107).

In context, the passage is almost in third-person narration and contains indirect speech. James's indirectness expresses the content of Pemberton's inner consciousness: "Pemberton gathered that the weakness was in the region of the heart."

These style markers, in turn, are related to other style markers within the context of the passage's literary function. In addition, Leech & Short give a table of quantitative data from these three passage, so that their analysis can be seen to be based on 'hard evidence.' The finding of the analysis is that through cross-connections between one section and another, there has emerged a common literary focus on which linguistic features of widely differing kinds seem to converge. All three writers deal with a haunting problem which humanity faces in coming to terms with its specific use of language. That is, varied aspects of a writer's style pointing towards a common literary purpose is something that can only be demonstrated through a detailed stylistic analysis.

Another analyst, Edward Corbett, also recommends the laborious practice of counting and tabulating in stylistic studies. The result of this, he believes, can heighten our judgement, aesthetic sensibility, and rhetorical sense. He uses Jonathan Swift's A Modest Proposal as an example, examining its purpose, thesis, and organization. His
analysis focuses on words, sentences, and paragraphs; in particular, he examines in the essay the author’s abnormal use of technique. For example, in support of the observation that Swift uses abnormally long sentences in A Modest Proposal, he cites much shorter sentences from a sample of Swift’s A Tale of a Tub. The long sentences in Swift’s ironic essay literally promoting cannibalism are explained by Corbett as a stylistic expression of the persona Swift adopts in order to intensify the impact of his outrageous proposal. The finding reveals that through the stylistic features that perform rhetorical function, the reader can see that the persona created by Swift is so filled with his subject, so careful about qualifying his statements and computations, so infatuated with the sound of his own words, that he rambles at an inordinate length. Also, at the level of diction, he discovers that Swift uses a series of animal metaphors and images to achieve his purpose ("dropped from its dam," "reserved for breed," "the carcass," "the fore or hind quarters," "the skin of which, artificially dressed"). Swift reduces his human beings first to the status of animals and then to the status of food furnished to the table when these animals are slaughtered. The proposer points up the inhuman treatment when he says that if his proposal were adopted, "men would become as fond of their wives, during the time of pregnancy, as they are now of their mares in foal, their cows in calf,
or sows when they are ready to farrow."
Chapter 2: Conrad and "Heart of Darkness"

In this chapter, I will briefly summarize the story in the first section to provide a background for subsequent analysis. It is necessary and useful if a short summary of the text or speech is provided, since I am going to relate subsequent aspects of my analysis to the success or failure of the writer or speaker in conveying the message of his text or speech. In the second section, I will discuss Conrad's life based on biographical works, literary histories, and related critical essays in order to provide a better understanding of the author, the situation in the story, and the audience of the story.

2.1. Plot summary

The story is primarily narrated by Marlow, a sailor and adventurer. Marlow recalls his experiences as the captain of a steamboat in the Congo River, far from civilization. There, at a station on the edge of the jungle, he hears rumors of Mr. Kurtz, a remarkable white man who operates a trading post located deep in the wilderness. The more Marlow learns of Kurtz, the more interested he becomes, for Kurtz has cut off contact with the outside world, and there are suggestions that he is seriously ill.

After numerous delays, Marlow steams up the winding, snakelike river toward Kurtz's trading post. Marlow feels that he is heading into a prehistoric time. Along the way,
his boat is attacked by savages, and when he finally reaches
Kurtz's station, Marlow is shocked to see a display of human
heads, the spoils of cannibal wars. Kurtz himself is
clearly demented and dying, and Marlow slowly realizes that
the man is regressing to a primitive state, consumed by his
own inner capacity for savageness.

Before Kurtz dies, he recognizes the extent of his
change and is appalled. When Marlow returns to England, he
lies to protect Kurtz's good name. Like Kurtz, Marlow has
seen the heart of darkness within all men.

2.2. Conrad as a writer

Words, groups of words, words standing alone,
are symbols of life, have the power in their
sound or their aspect to present the very
thing you wish to hold up before the mental
vision of your readers. The things "as they
are" exist in words....

-----Conrad, Letters

Heart of Darkness is the most famous of Joseph Conrad's
novels. He first published the story of Kurtz in 1898 as
"The Heart of Darkness" for Blackwood's Magazine. But he
revised it heavily for inclusion in Youth: A Narrative, and
Two Other Stories in 1902. As many critics perceive, the
story is Conrad's longest journey into the self. Although
it depends heavily on symbolism, Heart of Darkness is more
psychological and more socio-political than it is symbolic.
And what gives Conrad's story psychological force is the
fact that "it operates precisely on the front where issues previously lodged in the unconscious are moving into consciousness, where the implicit is becoming explicit, both individually and collectively" (Ong 246).

As a child, Conrad had witnessed his native Poland convulsed in revolutionary turbulence, and with his parents he trekked across Russia to a concentration camp in Siberia, to which the Korzeniowskis had been exiled for their political radicalism. The premature deaths of his mother and father left him an orphan at the age of eleven. For the next few years he travelled from one relative to another, seeking a home. In his late teens he served as an apprentice sailor after having made the difficult decision to leave home. He journeyed to Marseilles, though not before he sailed to the West Indies and explored the coast of South America. Returning to Marseilles, he indulged in a frenetic bohemian life style, where he possibly became involved in political intrigue and a gun smuggling venture, lost all his money gambling, and nearly lost his life by his own hand. Next he went to England where he filed papers for permanent citizenship and became a merchant seaman. Afterwards he sailed to Singapore and the mysterious East, where he advanced to the rank of master pilot and absorbed the exotic rhythms of the area. Then he descended into Africa, where he became involved with a continent which only a handful of Europeans had dared to explore (Najder 1964).
As Zdzislaw Najder has indicated, Conrad’s background "not only enforced his alienation, but was at the same time giving him an original impulse to fight it." His national, philosophical and psychological influences worked "in the direction of anything but dispassionate objectivism and traditional, direct realism" (Billy 21). Conrad’s early fiction dramatizes the real precariousness of life. He involved himself as explorer and artist. Writing provided a world where he could survive in his fiction.

As Otto Bohlmann points out, in his study of existentialism, Conrad perceives the individual as "a solitary being hurled by chance into an irrational world, battling--and sometimes transcending--the indifferent obstacles that stalk his pursuit of a fuller life and induce in him an alienating state of anxiety amid his tragic awareness of his own finitude" (Bohlmann 2). Zdzislaw Najder indicates that Conrad’s concentrating on general problems and typical situations in his works is to "overcome the oppressive consciousness of man’s loneliness" (Billy 27). Conrad senses the inevitability of death as well as the necessity of working for a living and of existing in a world already inhabited by other men. The experience of writing for him was a dangerous journey into the unknown, similar in many ways to his audacious expedition into the Congo in 1890, out of which arose Heart of Darkness.

The title, Heart of Darkness, suggests self-
destruction. "Heart," in Dictionary of Symbol and Imagery, is defined as the seat of the life-essence and emotion and soul and "darkness" means primeval chaos. In the seat of the heart, one can find love, idealism, even truth in the darkness of physical and moral decay, death, corruption and the general monstrosity of human nature. Conrad's title has at least two possible interpretations. One is that he is going to say something that cannot be visualized, for human beings are created blind to nature, where truth is unknowable and uncertain; the other is that darkness does not have a heart, but that the heart has darkness. This lexical arrangement increases the complexity of the story to be discussed in the next chapter, appealing to the reader's curiosity to see through the journey as Marlow experiences it. However, the complexity arises from its determined efforts to map this ambiguous terrain, making the story difficult for readers in general. For Conrad's art, as many critics have indicated, parallels complex psychological awareness and uncertainty. Through Conrad's written correspondence, we come to know how completely he lived in the world of his fiction and how dependent he was upon art to sustain his life. A vivid example of this may be seen in a letter he wrote to Edward Garnett in 1899, describing how he was struggling to complete Heart of Darkness:

The more I write the less substance do I see in my work. The scales are falling off my eyes. It is tolerably awful. And I face it, I face it but the fright is growing on me.
My fortitude is shaken by the view of the monster. It does not move; its eyes are baleful; it is as still as death itself—and it will devour me. Its stare has eaten into my soul already deep, deep. I am alone with it in a chasm with perpendicular sides of black basalt. Never were sides so perpendicular and smooth, and high. Above, your anxious head against a bit of sky peers down—in vain—in vain. There's no rope long enough for that rescue.

In writing to Cunninghame Graham on 19 January 1990, Conrad complained that although he had completed upwards of a hundred thousand words, "I have lost all sense of reality; I look at the fields or sit before the blank sheet of paper as if it were in dream" (LCG 131). His fictional metaphor often became literary reality to him, causing the distance between art and life temporarily to diminish. His imagination would create an image of terror that the artist could neither dismiss nor rationalize as insubstantial fantasy. This can be illustrated by what Marlow, his spokesman, says about Kurtz:

He [Kurtz] was just a word for me. I did not see the man in the name any more than you do. Do you see him? Do you see the story? Do you see anything? It seems to me I am trying to tell you a dream--making a vain attempt, because no relation of a dream can convey the dream sensation. (82)

Conrad might have felt as if he were in a dream when he was writing and worried about communication with his readers, but in a large, philosophical sense he never doubted their existence, as he declared in his letter to Cunninghame Graham:
I am very sincerely delighted to learn that you can stand my prose. It is so hard to realize that I have any readers! - except the critics, who have been very kind and moral, and austere but excessively indulgent. To know that You could read me is good news indeed - for one writes only half the book; the other half is with the reader. (LCG, 46)

The job of a writer to convey the truth of his own dream, which is doubt, fear, a black horror, to his unseen readers is a difficult one. Conrad chooses to make his readers see and hear these unpleasant experiences rather than actually experience them.

The darkness, in its symbolic sense, is both overwhelmingly powerful and virtually unknowable, because it almost never manifests itself in unmediated experience. Conrad is sharply aware that he is trying to express the inexpressible, to speak the unspeakable. His rhetorical strategy is to invoke the inexpressibility. To convey a dream-like message is certainly difficult. However, Conrad never ignores his reader’s existence when he is writing. He, on the one hand, makes his character, Marlow, consistently turn to his audience, challenging them with the fact that they are seeing the experience of death so that they will understand what he is trying to say. On the other hand, Conrad fully knows how to make use of language and concrete forms to manage this dream-like journey.
Chapter 3: Analysis

In this chapter, I intend to show how the apparatus of linguistic description can be used to analyze the style of a prose text. I first gather data by counting and tabulating words, sentences, and paragraphs. The categories are placed under two general headings: diction and grammatical features. Then I analyze these stylistic features as they are related to the message of the novel, how they affect the expression of the message, and how they reveal Conrad's style.

It should be noted that in my discussion, I can concentrate on the lexical and grammatical levels of language use in the text. In other words, I examine two of Leech & Short's four levels: lexical, grammatical, figures of speech, and context and cohesion. Because of the scope of this project, I leave the other two levels for future study.

3.1. Diction

It is useful to have a checklist of features which may or may not be significant in the given text. Providing data which may be examined in relation to the literary effects of the text in which they are used, the list serves a heuristic purpose: It enables us to collect data on a fairly systematic basis. It is not meant to be exhaustive. Rather, it is a list of 'good bets,' categories which, in
our experience, are likely to yield stylistically relevant information. In this section, I present results of counting Conrad's use of diction and discuss the effects it produces.

3.1.1. Concrete and abstract nouns

Concrete nouns are those which refer to physically observable objects. An abstract noun, on the other hand, refer to something one cannot see, hear, taste or smell. The following table is the result of count of Conrad's use of concrete and abstract nouns.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Major noun class</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>2056</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Concrete</td>
<td>1010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abstract</td>
<td>1046</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Abstracts:</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>conception</td>
<td>278</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>human emotion</td>
<td>205</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>physical movement</td>
<td>196</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>action</td>
<td>128</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nature</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>social quality</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>direction</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>moral quality</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>event</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sound</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Instead of treating single words, I examine collocations of words which occur in close proximity in deviation to find out how choices of words produce various types of meanings. In the Figure above, more than half of the amount are abstract and most of them refer to conception (thoughts, power, truth), human emotion (anger, confusion)
and physical movement (touch).

Conrad wrote to his friend in a letter, "I don't start with an abstract notion. I start with definite images and as their rendering is true some effect is produced" (Carnett 64). It is certainly true that an abstract image is brought out through a concrete object, as its title indicates: "heart" is concrete, but followed by the word "darkness." Toward the end of the text, "darkness" becomes "immense darkness," very abstract indeed. This is Conrad's strategy to speak something unspeakable and express something inexpressible. In writing in general, concrete language helps the reader to share experience with the writer and abstract language is usually used for conclusions and implications. This seems precisely what Conrad has done throughout the novel: starting with the concrete and ending with the abstract. Writing for Conrad is the transition from the life of a sailor working for the concrete nature of the tasks that have to be undertaken by collective, physical labor to sitting in front of a sheet of paper and spending time searching for the right word in a concrete, direct and immediate way which must have struck him.

Figure 1 shows a balance between abstract and concrete nouns: The concrete nouns are matched by nouns which are more abstract in one way or another; the abstract nouns have been used as a precise tool to connect human physical reality to the text. The whole story contains a large
number of physical movements and human emotions. Without concrete nouns as a supplement, the abstraction would have no basis. On the other hand, with too many concrete nouns, the thematic uncertainty of truth can not be successfully conveyed. In this sense, Conrad, in the story, seems to be filling in an empty space in the journey with concrete things, but which, until then, is absolutely nothing, is abstract, and is darkness. This writing style exactly parallels the development of the theme, revealing Conrad’s ability to use abstract and concrete things in a balanced way.

Another example to show more specifically how Conrad makes use of this strategy is his creative power of arranging particular characters and scenes for particular purposes. He begins with the concrete description of the river Nellie to start "a definite image," and then he creates an anonymous narrator, who can not be visualized by the reader, to tell an ambiguous, real or unreal, story about a concrete man, Marlow, to increase the abstraction of the story and to convey a more dream-like experience. It shows that abstraction and concreteness appear not in nature, but in an artificial arrangement. It also implies that Conrad intends to balance concrete and abstract.

By using concrete nouns, Conrad enables the reader to see, hear, and feel the experiences. The reader sees characters’ movements, nature, hears the voices and sounds,
feels the human emotions and then understands the implications of all this. On the other hand, Conrad is concerned with the human need to find a social or intersubjective ground for his self. Man’s inner mind has been produced by the same forces which have formed the physical, concrete world; its experience is abstract, since by their very nature as physical objects, the forms of the material world have a solidity of being which is denied to consciousness. This explains the numerical balance between abstract and concrete nouns in Figure 1.

3.1.2. Repeated nouns

Lexical repetition is a type of linguistic deviation, in Leech & Short’s terms. Figure 2, below, lists Conrad’s repeated words and their frequency of use.
### Figure 2: Repeated Words

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>No.</th>
<th>percentage</th>
<th>Words (times)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 158-50    | 8   | 0.38%      | man(men)(110),  
time(71),      
thing(s)(68),  
water(60),     
river(s)(56),  
head(s)(56),   
table(s)(54),  
eye(s)(52)      |
| 49-40     | 8   | 0.38%      | something(49), 
day(s)(48),     
sign(s)(48),    
nothing(44),   
hand(s)(43),   
station(43),   
manager(40),   
voice(s)(40)   |
| 39-30     | 7   | 0.34%      | earth,way(s),life 
word(s),face(s),  
pilgrims,moments |
| 29-20     | 28  | 1.36%      | ivory, bank(s),air, 
feet, back(s),work 
place(s),bush(es),silence,arm(s),  
fellow(s),darkness,forest(s),heart(s),  
tree(s),idea(s),  
end(s),everything 
side(s),wilderness,anything,light(s),  
soul(s),night(s),sea(s),stream(s) 
thought(s),course |
| 19-10     | 78  | 3.79%      | not being discussed |
| 9-6       | 145 | 7.0%       | not being discussed |
| 5-1       | 1682| 81.8%      | not being discussed |

A story in general is logically arranged in the framework of six WH elements: "who," "where," "when," "what," "why," and "how," with "who" as the most important.
Heart of Darkness is no exception. Man, as Figure 2 shows, is the main figure in the activity of the story, and the major assumption of the story is that the readers want to find out the truth about man and his essential nature. This assumption involves the evolutionary view that civilization is something imposed on man’s essential nature. Conrad’s having an anonymous narrator to tell Marlow’s journey without explaining his impulse to go to Africa conveys two messages to the reader: The dream-like journey and dream-like writing indicate something unknown and stimulate the reader’s impulse to exploit Marlow’s motivation. The frequent use of man implies that only man has strength to confront the dark experience and seek for the essential nature.

In Figure 2, we find a particular group of words frequently repeated, a group that describe the scene of the story: wilderness, streams, river, forest, cannibals and darkness. This helps create a dream-like experience, making the reader see the anxiety and tension established between Marlow’s conscious awareness and his secret desire. Also, Conrad arranges European invaders and colonizers in Central Africa to force Marlow, and the reader for that matter, to seek opposition and challenge in order to identify reality and unreality. Therefore, sea, water, river, become another means to reflect Marlow’s venture into the Africa jungle. This effect is seen in Marlow’s description of recalling the
storm scenes in "The Nagger of the 'Narcissus'":

The great wall of vegetation, an exuberant and entangled mass of trunks, branched, leaves, boughs, festoons, motionless in the moonlight, was like a rioting invasion of silent life, a rolling wave of plants, piled up, crested, ready to topple over the creek, to sweep very little man of us out of his little existence. (86)

In addition to the visual impression, the frequent use of the word, voice, shown in Figure 2, is another important stylistic feature. The reader may feel confused at the high frequency of both silence and voice, but it is Conrad's strategy of contrasting. Conrad uses an "extreme silence" to convey a message, which implies something inaudible and unspeakable, and then creates a narrative, a voice, so that his reader can sense the author's elaboration of trying to speak this unspeakable darkness.

The most obvious contrasting piece can be seen in the comparison between the first page and the last. In the beginning of the story, Conrad gives us the impression of silence through language like "at rest," "the wind was nearly calm," "the tide seems to stand still," and the like. However, at the end of the text sound dominates the whole page until the very theme has been brought out: "The horror! The horror!" "The heavens do not fall for such a trifle" (79). Conrad uses cries and responses in the narrative, calling the reader's attention to the sense of mystery. For example, Kurtz first enters the story through the storyteller, Marlow, "He was just a voice for me" (22), and after
he appears, his voice takes over: "He was very little more than a voice. I heard him--it--this voice--over voice--all of them were so little more than voices" (40), "A deep voice reached me faintly" (50), and "A voice! A voice! It rang deep to the very last" (57). Most importantly, Kurtz's last act is his final voice of cry "The horror! The horror!" (71). The story even ends at Marlow's utterance of telling the lie before he concludes the journey of darkness. Voices enable us to see that Conrad not only notices both the importance of auditory sense and reader's response but also makes his reader feel the same horror as Marlow does by hearing those cries in the very contrasting silence. The effect of creating sound in silence is explicitly expressed in Conrad's own writing:

A great silence around and above. Perhaps on some quiet night the tremor of far-off drums, sinking, swelling, a tremor vast, faint; a sound weird, appealing, suggestive, and wild--and perhaps with as profound a meaning as the sound of bells in a Christian country. (20)

Another notable word that Conrad uses is station. Marlow's journey in *Heart of Darkness* is made in several stages: he must pass through, both literally and spiritually, three stations known as the Outer, Central and Inner Stations before he can see and hear the object of his search, Kurtz. The journey is one from a familiar world into an unfamiliar one, from world of instinctual darkness, a world which can only be grasped by a reason beyond the ordinarily reasonable. The description of the
Central Station and the traders whom Marlow calls "a lot of faithless pilgrims" enriches the conflict between the sounds of civilization and silence of the wilderness with a descriptive vehemence unequaled in Conrad's writing. It appears that Conrad is attempting to render some force which exists not only outside, but also inside, the self. When Marlow arrives in the Central, he starts suspecting that two groups are engaged in some sort of power struggle. He forgets his attempt to remain uninvolved and keeps his impulse and curiosity to go into the contest. This process of engagement, forming the central part of narrative, is reflected in Conrad's rhetorical strategy to force both his character and reader to exploit the Inner by his power of language—a lie of a life.

The word, sign, is another important word. Sign has been repeated forty-eight times in the text. Instances in which the word is used are: "I had to keep guessing at the channels; I had to discern, mostly by inspiration, the sign of hidden bank,...I had to keep a lookout for the sign of dead wood we could cut up in the night for next day's steaming" (34), "We could not understand because we were too far,...leaving hardly a sign--and no memories" (36).

The importance of sign is perhaps related to the times Conrad lived in. Britain in Conrad's time was a society in which human relationships and the relationship between human beings and the material world were effected through complex
systems of mediation. Conrad often directed his attention to the indirectness of the mediation between writer and reader, to the way in which messages can become detached from those who formulated them and can travel about with, as it were, an identity of their own. The dream recurs throughout Conrad's work as the symbol of reality or unconsciousness, and Marlow's distinction between "relating a dream" and "conveying the dream sensation" is just a sign. For Marlow, Kurtz was "just a word." In a world dominated by signs, where human beings relate to one another through the mediation of signs rather than directly, it is not surprising that human beings should end up appearing to be signs rather than people. Conrad felt as if he was in a dream when he was writing. The connection here is not an accidental one. It is when human beings relate to one another more and more through independent signs that their resultant isolation from immediate human contact inspires the feeling that they are living in a dream.

However, nothing is more important than the frequent use of the word nothing. It is repeated forty-four times. At the end of the story, Marlow says: "But nothing happened. The heavens do not fall for such a trifle" (79), for nothing can be visualized in the real darkness so that the world, of course, would not be changed, as result of Kurtz's evilness and horror. It is the word mostly revealing Conrad's pessimism and a sense of nothingness of a solitary
being. "Nothing" is what removes the restraint and allows Marlow to tell a lie, because he regarded it as nothing.

The number of syllables a word contains is another stylistic feature. In the category of both nouns and adjectives, over four-fifths are polysyllabic. But of the nouns and adjectives most frequently used, over eighty percent are monosyllabic. These monosyllabic words seem to a reader strong and powerful. Besides, the polysyllabic words always come along with monosyllabic words such as "unspeakable pain," "the stream of darkness," and the like. This combination makes the narrative sound abrupt. Polysyllabic words carry with them a sense of dragging along. When reading these words, readers become aware of this dragging effect. However, monosyllabic words used immediately after defeat such expectation. They create not only a sense of variety, but also a sense of strength that results from abruptness.

The nouns are used to explore the nature of heart of darkness: symbolic opposition (light/darkness, white/black, man/woman), elements of mythical nature (snake, jungle, river), literary allusion (the Dantesque grove of death), religious image (pilgrims, Lotus, Buddha), anthropomorphism (the forest as 'an implacable force brooding over an inscrutable intention') and the like. Writing in this way has expressed—and on the whole with remarkable success—the sense of writing about a dream and in a dream. Conrad’s
moral sense is expressed less in terms of a systematic ethical statement than through dramatic action. This also helps to convey Marlow's feeling of unreality because they work within the context of a much more directly mimetic use of language.

However, Conrad's device of language is not merely to convey a dream or to confuse his reader. He seems to imply that only people in a dream would regard the journey of life as a dream; in other words, only awakened people can fully realize the truth behind the journey—the reality and the human's role. And readers know, as they read to the last period in the text, that they are awakened and back to reality, in a way a composer or painter ends an artistic dream, for nobody can always be in the dream. Conrad senses that human beings are always in a dream, which is an act of escaping from the truth or confronting the darkness. They never feel like to be awake. Therefore, conveying a dream-like journey of facing the reality becomes a means to reflect the human conduct of hiding the self in a dream, in order to evoke the reader's awareness of existing as a solitary being, and to accept this unchangeable truth.

3.1.3. Positive and negative adjectives

"Positive" and "negative" are used here in their general sense. Positive words describe those aspects of experience and objects that people in general like: "The
bright side" in everyday language. Negative is the opposite. The negative words refer to the darker side of things, a side that people in general dislike. The following table lists Conrad's use of positive and negative adjectives.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Amount</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total Adjective</td>
<td>1243</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive</td>
<td>256</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negative</td>
<td>437</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>550</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The first noticeable observation in Figure 3 is that there are many more negative adjectives than positive adjectives (437 as opposed to 256). The novel conveys a message which is hard to convey. For the character, it is to experience something nonvisual; for the audience it is to understand something incomprehensible; and for the writer himself it is to tell something unspeakable and inexpressible. Therefore, the negative adjectives become an unavoidable means to achieve this effect.

Mystery, savagery, and darkness are the words that are perhaps most revealing the story's meaning. Darkness makes the readers feel mysterious, incomprehensible, and more. They evoke negative images which suggest the writer's negative view of the human condition. Conrad takes his
deepest look into the human condition and comes to his most pessimistic conclusions. In the novel, a positive description is often followed by a negative word, and this pattern is constantly repeated: "the reality—the reality, I tell you, fades" (34), "of human beings--of naked human beings" (60), "a smile, a smile of indefinable meaning" (68), and so on. This shows Conrad’s view of the social and moral condition of human life. The difficulty of finding a positive answer to the question about man’s value and nature grows out of a conflict between Conrad’s basic yet sometimes only suggested pessimism and his explicit affirmations. Words like, dark, evil, devilish, wild, lead the reader into a world of a symbolic heart of darkness and cause the reader to doubt the reality and effective value of all social and personal order. Also, in the face of the evoked moral disintegration, Conrad’s use of negative vocabulary like dead, miserable, deserted, intolerable often affirms a morality of decency and fidelity, as well as of human solidarity. As Zdzislaw indicates, Conrad is different from general pessimists, for an average pessimist seems to perceive "'the world could have been good, it can be good--but it won't be,'" but Conrad suggests that "'the world has never been good, it cannot be good, but there is some possibility of our diminishing the amount of evil'" (24). Conrad’s contradiction between pessimism and affirmation becomes a complex combination for readers to experience.
In terms of semantic categories, the concept of negation is seen not only in adjectives, but also in the negative particle not and other word classes such as negative indefinite pronouns (nothing, nobody) and reflectional morphemes (in, im, un, dis and so on). This is a strategy of balance. As Barry Stampfl writes in the article, "Marlow's Rhetoric of (Self) Deception in Heart of Darkness," negative particles, pronouns, and function words function as "mechanisms of psychic liberation." Barry also says that "the content of a repressed image or idea can make its way into consciousness on condition that it is negated" (185). In descriptions like "swung to her anchor without a flutter of the sails" and "the sea and sky were welded together without a joint," the two withouts imply something is going to happen because the civilized world and nature are not as good as human beings have visualized: They are devoid of things that human beings want and need. Marlow develops the pattern: "I did not see the real significance of that wreck. I fancy I see it now, but I am not sure—not at all" (46). Not's here permit Marlow to express his wonder in good faith, thus letting him go to the heart of the darkness with his ideal self-image to investigate and test an absolute standard of conduct. Through this pattern, Marlow makes telling a lie at the end allowable and acceptable:

But nothing happened. The Heavens do not fall for such a trifle. Would they have
fallen, I wonder, if I had rendered Kurtz that justice which was his due? Hadn’t he said he wanted only justice? But I couldn’t. I could not tell her. It would have been too dark--too dark altogether....(97)

With the use of negative particles, Marlow’s lie and his realization become logical, for NOs have been telling that no absolute can be sustained and all things are possible.

Conrad’s use of negative words also includes adjectives derived from transitive verbs, lexical items of the type imperfect, incomprehensible, unexpected, and so on. The device increases the tension which is established between Marlow’s conscious awareness and secret desire. It suggests a compulsion to force one’s experience to an extreme, necessary for the character to seek opposition and challenge in order to authenticate selfhood. In the meantime, its surface structure functions as a technique to get a glimpse of truth, then get frustrated at the inability to have the full vision of truth.

However, Conrad’s use of negative description is understandable. Central to his pessimism is a subversive perception of the vacant, indeed malevolent, nature of reality, a perception which grew steadily in Conrad’s mind. He spent his childhood with a sick and pessimistic father in political exile from his native Poland. And he spent half of his manhood without roots in any homeland, sailing the world’s ocean as a merchant seaman (Najder 127). In Conrad’s view, reality provides human with a shattering test
to the endurance of their human identity, to the value of their every thought and act. And in his stories, the heart of the vision of reality toward which everything leads and from which all falls away is hollow, both literally and symbolically an inhuman and thus malevolent core.

Besides, negative description in Conrad’s story suggests an unconscious identification of imperialist history. The heart of darkness into which he leads the reader is itself at the center of European colonialism. The novel evokes, in the reader’s mind, some detailed, impressionistic visions of human life in Europe’s imperialistic venture in Africa. These visualizations are brilliant, rich, and surely constructed; yet as each is imaged, the envisioned life is, of course, profoundly reflected on the societies and nature of the characters. The reader is invited to penetrate and to question the reality and value of a world which has been given the illusion of depth and substance. This paradox is central to the power and to the modernity. And the value here is not just in exposing the theme that human experience is inevitably destructive and that man must strive to confront life with all possible integrity and honesty, but it is in Conrad’s reliance on the reader’s ability to use his own imagination, a reliance which Conrad often voiced.
3.1.4. **Contrasting adjectives**

Conrad's pessimistic attitude toward his physical world is nowhere more evident than in his use of contrasting adjectives. The adjectival insistence upon the inexpressible and incomprehensible darkness suggests that the power of language used in the novel is not only stylistic, but also thematic. His use of adjectives to contrast heart and darkness, the visualized world and the invisible mystery, is seen in the contrasts set up in the pairs of antonyms: light/dark, black/white, good/evil, old/young, last/first, great/little, civilized/savage, long/short, and others. Conrad perceives that Marlow, like every white man in the civilized society, has always put self in the dream; on the one side of the scale, every white man grants himself too much self-respect and moral confidence and, on the other side of the scale, every white man ignores the sense of truth and thus produces for himself an unbalanced world and life. Conrad perceives this bias and uses contrasting negative adjectives to offer a direction of this journal which suggests the disturbing truth that awaits these adventures. In observing all the adjectives applied in the text, it is interesting to find that when balancing bad and good images, Conrad always puts "good" images or descriptions first. He uses positive images before negative, such as calm river--Nellie, "a benign immensity of untainted light" (4). It is a light at
the Outer Station but a light that does not penetrate into the center of things. This ordering causes whatever is expected to be seen as a moral weight for Marlow. Even the reader is caused to raise a superficial confidence, which will then be defeated. Then he keeps adding the weight of evil images with words such as dead, savage, frightful, and sick. In the ending of the story, words like terrible, inconceivable, unspeakable, and dark expose the appeal of the wilderness, to weaken the good side and defeat the reader's confidence and expectation in order to make an understanding of "nothing" when it is in balance.

3.2. Grammatical features

Language is generally used as a need to refer to reality. A particular need creates a particular form, and the form is then used whenever the need recurs. Conrad's description reveals the theoretical overtones of the language he was striving for in writing the story. The effect between impressionistic language and the recreation of subjective experience dramatizes in the text the difficulty of translating the memory of visual and oral sensations into words. However, Conrad makes a choice to successfully overcome this difficulty by relying on verbal expression rather than the realism of visual impressions to convey the effect which the Congo experience had on Marlow. It is evident in the shifts from "seeing" to "hearing" in
the tale's imagery with its thematic structure—narrative. Also, the arrangement of sentence and paragraph reveals Conrad's elaboration of making his theme acceptable.

3.2.1. Grammatical features to enhance the narrative

Plot, incident, and characterization are essential constituents of the story; they are inseparable from one another or from the author's profound feeling for reality. Writing a story requires intelligent sensibility to make it both authentic and aesthetic. Conrad uses his wisdom to apply narrative as a concrete form, on the one hand, to balance his abstract notion and, on the other hand, to make the unreal real. The form serves a dramatic as well as didactic function. In order to make his use of the persona effective, Conrad must create a character who is credible and authoritative.

Conrad, as an impressionist as many critics like Ian Watt have perceived, makes Marlow (a knowledgeable and self-conscious narrator) a tour guide for the audience to see everything through difficulty and obscurity. He uses verbal strategies as a way to recover truth, to help him reveal his emotion and consciousness, in order to appeal to the audience's attention, sympathy and support. In the earlier part of the novel, the frequent interruptions, "you know," are more supportive, and in the later, they become more anxious: "Do you see him? Do you see the story? Do you see
anything? It seems to me I am trying to tell you a dream—making vain attempt..." (82). Still later, they are more sympathetic: "I beg your pardon. I forgot the heartache which makes up the rest of your price... or do your tricks very well. And I didn’t do so badly either" (94). These interruptions on the one hand provide commentary on his own apparently futile attempt to reconstruct in words the experiences that he has undergone. And on the other hand, they reveal his notion of the individual as a solitary being and "solitude" as an element of the human condition that is "inescapable."

Also notable is the use of qualifiers—like, as if, as though, and seem. Marlow narrates: "And the river was there—fascinating—deadly—like a snake" (10), "And at last, in its curved and imperceptible fall, the sun sank low, and from glowing white changed to a dull red without rays and without heat, as if about to go out suddenly, stricken to death by the touch of that gloom brooding over a crowd of men" (46). These qualifiers offer readers a way of seeing things directly and immediately. These qualifiers offer Conrad's means to convey a dream-like sense of experience. Another example as Marlow remarks: "I began to feel slightly uneasy. You know I am not used to such ceremonies, and there was something ominous in the atmosphere. It was just as though I had been let into a conspiracy—I don’t know—something not quite right; and I
was glad to get out" (56). "As though" here allows Marlow to devote to mystification rather than discovery.

3.2.2. **Sentence lengths**

For this study, a sentence is defined as a group of words beginning with a capital letter and ending with some mark of terminal punctuation. Figure 5 presents results of the count on the sentence and paragraph length in the novel. Both this section and the next, 3.2.3. will be based on this figure.
Figure 5: Total and Average of Sentence and Paragraph

Total number of words-------------------------- 38461
Total number of paragraphs-------------------- 196
Total number of sentences-------------------- 2408
Average number of words per paragraph-------- 96.2
Average number of sentences per paragraph--- 12.3
Shortest paragraph I #11 (2 words)
Longest paragraph II #28 (1534 words)
Average number of words per sentence-------- 16
Longest sentence in I: 87 words (para 30, sentence 2)
   II: 88 words (para 5, sentence 13)
   III: 86 words (para 50, sentence 1)
Shortest sentence: 1 word
Number of simple sentences------------------ 931
Number of compound sentences---------------- 443
Number of complex sentences----------------- 529
Number of compound-complex sentences------ 301
Number of phrase--------------------------- 156

One observable element in Conrad's style is the sentence-length. The average sentence-length in this story is 16.3 words per sentence. Over half of the sentences are not simple sentence. Most of the compound and complex sentences are loose sentences. The qualities of a loose sentence, according to Leech & Short, are "easiness, relaxation,
informality" (229), unlike the anticipatory tension of the periodic sentence. A loose sentence can be very complex, as is the longest sentence in the text:

I had to keep guessing at the channel; I had to discern, mostly by inspiration, the signs of hidden banks; I watched for sunken stones; I was learning to clap my teeth smartly before my heart flew out, when I shaved by a fluke some infernal sly old snag that would have rippled the life out of the tin-pot steamboat and drowned all the pilgrims; I had to keep a look-out for signs of dead wood we could cut up in the night for next day’s steaming. (34)

It is very complex but does not cause difficulty in comprehension. The long, rambling sentences and the frequent compounding might suggest a "spoken" style. The linear chain of ideas follows the linear progress of the text, like a train with its linked wagons moving along a railway track. The links are semi-colons. Not surprisingly, this loose structure is characteristic of a literary style which produces the effect of natural simplicity and the directness of a narrative style.

Another noticeable strategy is narrator’s use of compounding elements. Readers receive details through the writer’s stringing out words and phrases beyond the common trail. This is typical of common eighteenth-century practice of using doublets and triplets. The following are some examples:

the attitudes of pain, abandonment, and despair (17)

for humanizing, improving, instructing (33)
I have been very happy—very fortune—very proud (77)

deeep shadow, high houses, innumerable window (10)

in the forest, the creek, the mud, the river (33)

they howled and leaped, and spun, and made horrid faces (36)

a curiosity of their impulses, motives, capacities, weaknesses (47)

he had collected, bartered, swindled, or stolen more ivory (48)

their glance was guiltless, profound, confident, and trustful (71)

My Intended, my station, my career, my ideas (69)

his soul, his body, his station, his plans, his ivory, his career (74)

What is observable about the narrator’s ampliation is that his epithets are rarely just synonymous variations. They are words with different meanings. Conrad sometimes adds to the compounded elements the scheme of alliteration, as "hours at South America, or Africa, or Australia" (8), "there came an invasion, an infliction, a visitation" (30), which shows that the author communicates the visual events not only "with intense realization," but "with a sense of wonder". This comes in part from patterns which have an emotively "reinforcing effect" (Leech & Short 140).

In the story all of the compounding is done within the framework of parallelism. Conrad seems to know when and how
to use parallel structure. As Leech & Short indicate, the aesthetics of form, such as parallelism, "tends to attract the reader’s attention." They also point out that the elaboration of form inevitably "brings an elaboration of meaning" (17). Conrad elaborately stimulates the reader’s realization of the horror of the image by arranging the pattern of parallelism throughout the story. On the first page, he creates a man, with "sunken cheeks, a yellow complexion, a straight back, an ascetic aspect," which is an idol, a white idol, and other black characters in the middle of the story, "The eyes twitched with the strain, the hands trembled slightly, the eyes forgot to wink" (41). He also conveys Marlow’s cry in the last parallel pair, "of inconceivable triumph and of unspeakable pain."

On the other hand, Conrad’s use of lexical sets is woven through the entire story in a patterned way to approach to the theme, such as "set into the depths of darkness" (19), "deeper and deeper into the heart of the darkness" (35), "flow from the heart of impenetrable darkness" (48), "out of the heart of an impenetrable darkness" (69), "the beating of the heart--the heart of a conquering darkness" (75), and to the final words, "lead into the heart of an immense darkness" (79). His method is to fulfill the ordinary and routine requirements of coherence, the quality of writing that makes interpretation possible. He intertextualized each of the motifs--the
river, the forest, the men themselves, and his own reactions and judgements as a whole. His historical and mythological allusions develop the semantic components of his discourse and cause them to cohere.

Lexical repetition is also stylistic. Typically, Conrad makes total repetitions like "very grave, very grave" (23), "truth—truth"(37), "Save me! Save me!" (63), "too dark—too dark" (79), and so on, to produce the effect of emphasis. He also reinforces the effect of an idea by repeating the words followed by explanation, such as: "death—death skulking in the air, in the water, in the bush" (6), "it is impossible; it is impossible to convey the life sensation of any given epoch of one's existence" (28), "a smile, a smile of indefinable meaning"(68), and others. He starts with a question-like image or an expression, then repeats it before he either answers the question or explains. Parallelism and repetition seem to be a characteristic of the narrator's, accordingly, Conrad's style, in general. Conrad knows the principle of variety that "too much repetition (parallelism), either of lexical items or of reduced forms, can be tedious"; and the use of elegant variation is sometimes "an allowable, and indeed welcome" (Leech & Short 247). We have already seen in the discussion that this can become a powerful thematic device in the style of literature.
3.2.3. Paragraph lengths

Moving to the level of paragraph, we find that the longest and the shortest paragraphs are important, for each has its particular functions. The shortest paragraph has only two words: "He paused" in the first section. It serves as a transition and makes a stop right at the time the narrator starts to bring out the theme—darkness, "the growing regrets, the longing to escape, the powerless disgust, the surrender, the hate" (6). This transition helps the narrator, the listeners, and the reader to calm down after their emotions have almost been raised to the extreme madness. It also shows Conrad’s sensibility of being aware of the existence of the reader.

The longest paragraph contains a number of ideas interrelated to one another threaded together by the theme. In the story, the longest paragraph, which is a key paragraph, is placed at the time that Marlow gets a glimpse of understanding that there is nothing in a human being. The main theme is brought out at the time he confronts Kurtz’s death; it is not from Marlow’s realization of the immorality of Kurtz but from his perception of man’s search for value. In the passage, Marlow states how Kurtz’s corpse is devoured by nature: "The wilderness had patted him on the head...it had taken him, loved him, embraced him, got into his veins, consumed his flesh, and sealed his souls to its own by the inconceivable ceremonies of some devilish
initiation." But his anxiety appears when he perceives Kurtz’s achievement—Intended, ivory, station, river as a trifle. This casts the unavoidable result of telling a lie because of this realization—"[the] heavens do not fall for such a trifle." In order to conquer and defeat his anxiety, his unexpected understanding, and discover a glimpse of light of his own existing value, he praises Kurtz in terms of finding immortal values on man, even though he knows that Kurtz’s doing is very ironically evil: "He won’t be forgotten. Whatever he was, he was not common" because:

[he] had the power to charm or frighten rudimentary souls into an aggravated witch-dance in his honour; he could also fill the small souls of the pilgrims with bitter misgivings: he had one devoted friend at least, and he had conquered one soul in the world that was neither rudimentary nor tainted with self-seeking. (51)

Furthermore, he values an invaluable helmsman who is "no more account than a grain of sand in a black Sahara" in terms of missing him because of the understanding of being a solitary being:

---how can you imagine what particular region of the first ages a man’s untrammelled feet may take him into by the way of solitude—utter solitude without a policeman—by the way of silence—utter silence, where no warning voice of a kind neighbor can be heard whispering of public opinion. (50)

Marlow’s state of anxiety amid tragic awareness of his own finitude brings out Conrad’s anxiety of presenting this truth as well. In the paragraph, Conrad turns many times to his readers, asking them to share his anxiety and offer him
sympathy: "I am not trying to excuse or even explain--I am trying to account to myself for--for Mr. Kurtz--for the shade of Mr. Kurtz." The number of short and simple sentences help to tie the ideas, for the short and simple sentences present an oral style which makes those ideas acceptable. Thus, if the shortest paragraph is at the threshold of the theme, then the longest one is at the heart of darkness, the revealing of the theme.
Chapter 4: Conclusion

Style is a way in which language is used. Stylistics is the study to examine how the author uses language to convey messages. It provides the means whereby the reader can relate the writer's message with her own experience through linguistic communication. This study demonstrates that style can be studied and the rhetorical function of language can be determined through its linguistic features, as Leech & Short and Corbett suggest. It confirms that the analytical procedure of both Leech & Short and Corbett can help the analyst select features of stylistic significance from the mass of data. This might form part of a linguistic description so that she can relate features of linguistic description step by step to aspects of critical interpretation.

Based on Leech and Short's theory of stylistics, particularly their concept of deviation, I analyzed Conrad's style in Heart of Darkness. Specifically, I discussed the following.

First, in terms of diction, I found that Conrad uses an equal number of abstract and concrete nouns. This semantic lexical balance mirrors Conrad's intention of a balance in idea. That is, he generally uses an abstract word after a concrete one. Taken as a whole, the concrete words enable the reader to see, to hear, to smell what he is describing, to experience the experience of Marlow and Kurtz. However,
to provide concrete description of the experience is not Conrad's only objective. He wants the reader to see the human condition, the darkness in the human heart, from the experience. The human condition is an abstraction itself, which requires abstract language. This explains the statistical balance found at the diction level.

Conrad frequently repeats words. This lexical repetition serves not only to make the text coherent, but also to reveal the theme of the story. For example, the word voice, a highly repeated words, suggests a strong sense of mystery and about Kurtz. Also at the lexical level, I discovered that Conrad uses more negative words than positive. This seems closely related to Conrad's negative view of the characters' experience in particular and of the humanity in general. More important, perhaps, is the fact that negative and positive words are often used in contrasting pairs. This seems to reveal Conrad's view of life, that we struggle to make sense of the external world, choosing between the good and evil, although very often we end up on the wrong side, as Kurtz does.

At sentencial level, I discussed Conrad's use of words, which indicates his appeal to the reader's emotion and consciousness, asking for her attention, sympathy, and support. This is necessary because he is presenting a dream-like experience, an experience that is not easy to comprehend, to appreciate.
Also noticeable at the level of sentence is Conrad’s use of parallelism. These parallel structures reinforce the message as well as help the thematic progression of the text.

At the paragraph level, I discussed the shortest and the longest paragraph. The shortest one is a transition in the event while the longest one occurs in the climax of the story, when Marlow, and the reader for that matter, gets into the inner most part of Kurtz’ heart, his heart of darkness. This, I believe, is not a mere coincidence. It describes a most complicated topic, one about what is in the human heart. Therefore, the form seems to be closely related to the function.

In conclusion, Conrad’s Heart of Darkness has been found to be highly stylistic. His use of specific structures serve particular literary functions, and the style, as a whole matches the theme of the story.

Theoretically, I hope that the present study has produced further evidence that stylistics does have something to offer to literary criticism. Although it is not meant to replace literary criticism, it can yield concrete evidence for the critic, thus helping her to appear less impressionistic, thus more objective.
Work Cited


