THE IMPORTANCE OF THE PRESENCE OF FEMALE CHARACTERS
IN CONRAD'S HEART OF DARKNESS

A Thesis

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By

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Antonius Tri Widjanarko
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ABSTRACT

Antonius Tri Widjanarko: The importance of the presence of female characters in Conrad Heart of Darkness.

This study deals with Heart of Darkness, a novel written by Joseph Conrad. This is based on the writer's interest in the contradictory description of female characters compared to the significant roles played by them and general approach of interaction.

The aims of the study are to explain how female characters are described by the author, the significant roles played by female characters in the story, and the ideas Conrad wants to reveal referring to the condition of women in 19th century.

To accomplish his study, the writer has conducted a desk research. The primary data of this thesis are taken from the novel, Heart of Darkness. Some relevant theories: character and characterization, gender role and patterns of gender inequality, and of historical facts: characteristics of the Victorian age, biography of the author and the contribution of the literature to the admittance of the existence of women are taken as supporting references.

Man and woman in interaction are equal. Both of them play their own roles. In several societies, people do not admit the equality of men and women. Society in the Victorian Age also treated women in that way as it is described by Conrad in Heart of Darkness. His characterisation to female characters reflects the unequal treatment of society. Female characters do not have proper names. They use word hens to call women instead of using proper diction, women. Their participation in the events of each chapter is limited. Basing on the general theory that interaction only works if two participants play their own roles, the writer concludes the female characters also play their own significant roles.

Finally, this study discovers that through the Heart of Darkness, Conrad wants to reveal the idea of how important to understand and to admit the roles played by women. He also wants to teach Victorian society to behave in a more socially and culturally acceptable way by "civilising the civilised world" through his novel.
ABSTRAK

Antonius Tri Widjanarko: Pentingnya kehadiran tokoh-tokoh wanita dalam karya Joseph Conrad, Heart of Darkness

Studi ini berkaitan dengan *Heart of Darkness*, sebuah novel yang ditulis oleh Joseph Conrad. Studi ini berdasarkan pada ketertarikan penulis pada penokohan yang kontraditif dari tokoh - tokoh wanita dibandingkan dengan peran - peran yang berarti yang mereka lakukan.

Tujuan dari study ini adalah untuk menerangkan bagaimana tokoh- tokoh wanita digambarkan oleh pengarang, peran - peran yang berarti yang dilakukan oleh tokoh - tokoh wanita, dan ide - ide apapun yang ingin disampaikan oleh Conrad sehubungan dengan kondisi wanita - wanita pada Jaman Victoria.


Akhirnya, studi ini menemukan bahwa melalui *Heart of Darkness*, Conrad ingin memunculkan ide tentang pentingnya memahami dan mengakui peran - peran yang dilakukan oleh wanita. Dia juga ingin meningkatkan kualitas perilaku and kebiasaan masyarakat yang beradab.
CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

A. Background

In patriarchal culture, all patterns of thought, social structures, and attitudes of society generally are coloured by the dominance and power of man over woman. Fairchild states that:

A society that professes a patriarchal culture places notable dominance and power over others in the hand of male, head of the household kingship group (1970: 225).

Series of unfortunate events written in the Bible also support the idea that woman is subordinate to man. The Biblical version on the creation of the first human being states, we may say an identical idea that the first man came first and then was followed by the first woman. Another verse about original sin or forbidden fruit, which placed woman as a scapegoat, confirms the idea. It seems to sign the other approval from the bible that woman is a weak creature compared to man. At least there are two reasons, which can be drawn from the bible, first: the first woman was created after the first man, and second: the first woman was the first creature who committed sin (Genesis, chapter 2). For a long time, these ideas affect human consciousness to the admittance that man is superior and stronger than woman is. These ideas lead to an asymmetric or unbalanced relation between men and women.

Nowadays, many people still treat woman as second creature and so does woman place herself. Even it may be said that this asymmetric relation is
commonly accepted as natural and normal. This phenomenon cannot be separated from the culture of the society. It is the condition, which is created by the society.

Women have been conditioned to believe that they are inferior to men, and they have assumed that what everyone believes is a fact of nature. Because men occupy the superior positions in almost all societies, such superiority is taken to be a natural one (Montagu, 1953, 23).

In a more practical discussion, the asymmetric relation between man and woman manifests in gender discrimination. Many people still hold the belief that woman does not need any high education, because she will only take care of her children and households. What amazing is that both men and women accept this discrimination as normal and natural phenomena. It is the root of unequal treatment towards women.

Undoubtedly, this unbalanced relationship is a result of a social construction (Montagu, 1953: 24), which is often called culture. Weitzman remarks that:

The varied sex-role assignments given to men and women in different cultures suggest that the basic characteristics of men and women are not biologically determined: rather, they are based on cultural definition of sex appropriate behaviour (1983, 158).

The society holds strongly a set of ideas how to treat man and woman and how they should behave. This set of ideas is what we call gender role. This role is what directs and shapes our behaviours. In this way, gender role becomes an ideology, because they have to follow what is stated in it.
Studying about gender, we will have a definition that gender role is a role that is socioculturally given (Chafez, 1971, 259). Williams explains further about gender role:

*Gender role is easily understood as follows: people are born female and male, but learn to be girls and boys who grow into women and men. They are educated the appropriate behaviours and attitudes, roles and activities for them, and how they should relate to other people. These learned behaviours are what makes up gender identity and determined as gender role (1985, 4).*

Indeed individuals, like actors and actresses in a living stage, interpret their roles and create innovations for their “part”. Chafez (1971: 259) remarks that there is a “part” to be played, and it does strongly influence the actual "performance" in the interaction of men and women in a society. Consequently, they show up their identities. Stone and Church (1968:144) state that within any social group or subgroup, individuals play different roles that they learn to perform in certain expected ways, consonant with their position in a society. This condition prevails generally in almost all societies all around the world. The society puts norms to force the members of society to perform their attitudes in accordance with the expected roles.

Concerning to gender roles, we cannot avoid discussing gender stereotypes. Donald Light (1989: 320) remarks that gender stereotypes are oversimplified but strongly holds ideas about the characteristics of males and females. For example, women are believed to be dependent, passive, unassertive, and emotional, whereas men are seen to be dominant, and aggressive, self-reliant. This understanding of gender stereotypes often leads
people to underestimate the roles of women because women seem weak, compared to the characteristics of men.

The discrimination of gender started to be a controversial issue since the 19th century. At that time, the movement of feminism began to defend women's rights in Britain. The first feminism in Britain triggered another movement to do the same action in the other countries. Now, the feminist movement increases in intensity around the world although some people still do not want to admit that women have the same quality as men do to undertake social responsibility.

In literature, the problem of gender roles, especially the role of women also yields attention. Some essays discuss the roles of women. John Stuart Mill in his *The Subjection of Women* (1869) challenges assumptions about roles of women in society. The other works that concern with the admittance of the roles of women are Mary Wollstonecraft’s *A Vindication of the Right of Woman*, Sarah Sticney Ellis’ *From The Women of England*, George Elliot’s *Margaret Fuller and Mary Wollstonecraft*, Dinah Maria Mullock’s *From A Woman’s Thoughts About Women*, Florence Nightingale’s *From Cassandra*, and Walter Besant’s *From The Queen’s Reign*.

One of many literary works, which evokes the gender discrimination issue, is *Heart of Darkness* by Joseph Conrad. When I read *Heart of Darkness*, I feel that Conrad seems to reveal something concerning with the role of women in the Victorian Age. I am curious with the significance of the female characters, particularly the roles of female characters. I have two questions in
my mind; first why Conrad describes his female characters without referring directly to their proper names and second whether in such characterization, Conrad wants to convey something about the roles of woman in Victorian Age. Through such characterization, the readers may think that Conrad discriminates the roles of woman. If the readers examine further the mission that Conrad wants to conduct, they will realize that his contradictive characterization to female characters is a tool to convey his mission. Conrad seems to satirize the treatment of women in the Victorian society by using such characterization.

Conrad, in this novel, does not mention his female characters in detail. He does not mention female characters' name with their proper names. Instead, he writes "Marlow's Aunt to call a woman who helps her nephew, Marlow. The Kurtz' Fiancée" refers to a woman to whom Marlow betrothed, and the "Savage Woman" refers to Kurtz's mistress at inner station. Marlow mentions "The Company Receptionists" to describe two women in Shipping Company in accordance with their job, as receptionist. It seems that the female characters in this story are considered to deserve to have name as far as being attached to male characters, Marlow's Aunt and The Kurtz' Fiancée". Moreover, the worst treatment is loaded to two kind of woman who do not have relation to a man, the "Savage Woman" and the "Receptionists".

Although they do not have proper names and they just appear in a few parts, the roles of female characters in this novel are as important and significant as the role of male characters are. The presence of female
characters leads the events to a full understanding on the importance of admittance and appreciation of the roles of women in the society.

The roles of female characters can be seen in some incidents, such as, Marlow’s success in finding a job. It happens because of his aunt’s relation to a woman who has a great influence over a very high personage in Administration. The Company Receptionists that are called as “the guards of the door of darkness” warn Marlow about his departure to Congo because they appreciate Marlow’s life. They know well that only several people survive after their departure to Congo. The Savage Woman shows that her unflinching devotion and gestures she makes with her arm parallel with Kurtz’ Fiancée. Both of Savage woman and Kurtz’ Fiancée are faithful to Kurtz. Their devotion and loyalty are unraffled to the goodness of Kurtz. Their way of life and loyalty lead Marlow to a certain understanding how life ought to be.

Many literary critics focus their study on Conrad’s style, biographical aspects of his fiction, and Conrad’s exploration of human psychology, symbolism, civilization, and imperialism. On the other side, the issue of gender discrimination, which is in my opinion also appears in Heart of Darkness, seems to be out of sight, not explicitly exposed. I am invited to elucidate the possibility of this novel bearing a kind of opinion on an alternative idea against gender discrimination.

To properly reconstruct the possible idea on gender discrimination antithesis presented in the novel, I would like to analyse the portrayal of women presented in the novel and to scrutinise the roles they play in the story.
and its relation to the Victorian Age. In this discussion, I employ historical-biographical approach to scrutinize the novel.

B. Problem Formulations

To be more specific, the questions to discuss in this thesis may be formulated as follows:

a. What portrayal of woman is presented in the novel?

b. What are the roles of the female characters in the story?

c. Referring to the treatment to women in Victorian Age, what does the writer actually want to convey?

C. Objectives

This thesis intends to answer the problems concerning the roles of female characters in their relation to male characters in the Heart of Darkness. The objectives may be formulated as follows:

a. to find out what portray of woman in the novel,

b. to find out the significant roles of female characters,

c. to find out the ideas which Conrad wants to convey referring to the condition of woman in Victorian Age.
D. Benefits of study

First, the benefit of the study is to make the readers familiar with literary works discussing the roles of women in relation to men. We see that only several writers explicitly discuss the roles of women in their stories, however, it is interesting to study thoroughly. As a matter of fact, men and women have equal rights and duties according to their roles. However, gender discrimination is still undeniable facts in our lives. With this thesis, I would like to share an understanding that both women and men have their own roles and we have to admit and appreciate those roles. This thesis, I hope, may inspire the readers to adopt the consciousness on the equality between man and woman.

Secondly, this paper provides the analysis of the importance of the roles of female characters and its values in relationship to male characters in the novel. The roles of Marlow’s aunt are important for Marlow to get his job when he is in despair. Without her relative influence over a very high personage Administration, Marlow will not get an ease to be a skipper.

Thirdly, the reader is able to understand more about Joseph Conrad’s work. He wrote so many interesting books in his life. Literary works can be used to enrich the understanding of life, especially in this case to acquire the understanding of the roles of women, particularly in Victorian Age.

Fourth, other researchers that work in the same novel can use this thesis. It may help them as an alternative reference to analyse the work.
E. Definition of Terms

In this thesis, several terms are often used to discuss my thesis. I want to explain the terms in order to avoid misinterpretation and misunderstanding in following the discussion.

_Role_ represents the dynamic aspect of a status (Linton, 1936: 113). Further, Stone and Church (1968: 144) explain that within any social group or subgroup, individuals play different roles, namely, they learn to perform in certain expected ways, consonant with their position.

According to Chafez, (1971: 259) _gender role_ is a 'part' to be played and it does strongly influence the actual 'performance'. Further on, William explains that:

_Human being is born as men and women, but they have to learn as male and female creatures in order to develop as they are. They are educated how to become men and women, how men and women ought to behave and to play a role that should be done properly and how to make relationship. This behaviour education processes them to understand their identity, role, and relationship in society_ (1983, 4).

In _Dictionary of Sociology and Related Studies_, Henry Pratt Fairchild states that _social discrimination_ is unequal treatment of inside or outside group, which is basically in equal status. Discrimination carries with it the element of unfair, unreasonable, and arbitrary distinction in the imposition of burdens and distribution of favours.

The other term, I use in this discussion is culture. _Culture_, according to Thomas Ford Holt in _Dictionary of Modern Sociology_, is all behaviours and related products which men, as a member of society, acquire by means of
symbolic interaction - hence, the universal, distinctive characteristic which sets human social life a part from all other form of social life; as a culture, the total, generally organized by way of life, including values, norm, institution, and artefacts, that is unique, to given people and that is passed on from generation to generation by acquiring and learning alone.

Characters, according to M.H. Abrams in his book A Glossary of Literary Terms, are the persons presented in a dramatic or narrative work, who are interpreted by the reader as being endowed with moral and dispositional qualities that are expressed in what they say – the dialogue – and what they do – the action.
CHAPTER II
THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

A. Theoretical Review

This thesis analyzes Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* by using historical-biographical approach. Some relevant theories: character and characterization, gender roles, historical background of the story, the contribution of literature to the admittance of the roles of woman, and biographical sketch of the writer will be discussed in this chapter. It hopefully may uncover the author's opinion about society in the Victorian Age. The approach is also used to manipulate to reconstruct the author's opinion about woman roles in Victorian Age.

1. Character and Characterization

A character is a participant in the story. Abrams explains further that

*Character is the person in a dramatic or narrative work, who are interpreted by the reader as being endowed with moral and dispositional qualities that are expressed in what they say, e.g. the dialogue, and what they do, e.g. the action. The ground in the character's temperament and moral nature for his speech and action constitutes his motivation* (1957: 20)
Referring to character is characterization. Characterization enables readers to know the characters, to understand them, and to learn the motives of doing certain behaviour. Characterisation according to Barnett is

*the presentation of character, whether by direct description, by showing the character in action or by presentation of other characters who help to define each other* (1994: 1536).

An author may present his characters either directly or indirectly. In direct presentation, the author tells us straight out, by exposition or analysis, what character is like. The author can also use someone else in the story to tell us what he or she is like. We infer what the character is like from what he thinks or says or does (Perrine; 1972: 69). This method has advantages of being clear and economical. Unfortunately, it cannot be used alone. The character must perform acting, if there is to be a story. When they do not act, the story becomes an essay. A story will be successful if the characters are dramatized. The characters are shown speaking and acting. This is called indirect presentation. The successful writer must rely mainly on indirect presentation and may use it entirely (Perrine; 1972: 69).

In Murphy’s *Understanding Unseen*, characters are categorized throughout:

1. *the complexity of their characterization*
2. *the attention given to them by author or by other characters*
3. *personal intensity that they seem to transmit* (1988:17)
To be convincing, the characterization must be based on those categorizes. Regarding to the kinds of character portrayed, it may be helpful to follow the practice of many critics and divide fictional characters into two. In proportion to the fullness of their development, the fictional characters in a story are relatively flat or round.

1. Flat character

Flat character is less representation of a human personality, than the embodiment of a single attitude or obsession in a character. Flat characters can be characterized by one or two traits; he can be summed up in a sentence (Kenny, 1966: 28). E.M. Forster in *Aspect in the Novel* explains further:

*that flat character is built around "a single or quality" and is presented in without much individualizing detail, and therefore can be fairly adequately describe in a single phrase or sentence (1927:112).*

2. Complex character

The complex characters are obviously more lifelike than the simple, because in life people are not simply embodiment of single attitudes (Kenny; 1966: 29). Abrams states clearly that round or complex character is complex in temperament and motivation and is represented with subtle particularity. Thus, he is as difficult to describe with any adequacy as a person in real life, and like most people, he is capable of surprising us. Round character lives by their very roundness, by the many points at which they have in touch with life (1981: 20-21).
Both types of character may be given the vitality that a good fiction demands. The round characters live by their complexities, by the many points on how they colour the fictional life. On the other hand, flat characters, though they touch life at only one or two points of life, may conduct important roles through appearance, gesture and speech. It is, then, an oversimplification to assert that the complex character is a greater asset than the simple (Kenny 1966: 34). We have to examine the characters in the light of story as a whole. We will come to a clue that complexity is not necessarily a greater asset than simplicity. We have to realize that all characters, simple or round, contribute to the story.

In this discussion, we have to understand that character must always be seen as one element in a larger artistic whole in the fiction. The point at which character and plot come together is what we mean by term ‘motivation’. Plot consists of sequence of events as media for characters to conduct roles in a story. Motivation is why they do.

General motivation covers such basic human drives as love, hunger, greed, and so on (Kenny, 1966: 36). Motivation is part of coherence in character and plot. By observing the plot, the reader is able to identify both the general and particular motivation for the action of the characters. It is part of the plausibility of the story in general that the motivation is adequate to the action taken by characters. For example if a man helps a young beautiful woman without request, we should be satisfied that we know why he helps that woman.
We should note further that character is not essential to fiction in the same way that plot is. Without plot, fiction is impossible; it is, on the other hand, possible for fiction to get without what most of us would recognize as character. (Kenny, 1966: 36). The ability of writer to blend the plot and character into a unity in a story is the mark of his fabulous genius.

2. The Condition of Women in the Victorian Age (1851 – 1914)

In this sub-chapter, we focus mainly on the condition of women especially on the condition of woman in the Victorian Age, especially on the unequal treatment of Victorian woman suffered from the society. A woman by her marriage automatically transferred the whole of her properties to her husband. When she was single, she enjoyed the same right properties as a man did. After she was married, she fortified all of these and her husband had absolute power over money she earned and gifts given to her (Mitchell, 1950:627).

He could sell or give away her clothes or jewels; even if he had left her to live with another woman, of his creditors, could seize anything she had. Finally, the husband could dispose of her property by will, and only by the creation of a special trust deed could it be secured to her in any way (Mitchell, 1950:625-626).

Women were not silent to accept this treatment. They struggled to have right that allowed married women to have the right to own and to handle their own property instead of being dependent on their husband

There was a simple and familiar pattern of marriage that could be seen from eighteenth century until nineteenth century:

_Papa attending to his affairs and taking a detached and Jove-like interest in the upbringing of his family, while Mama was fully occupied with the business of childbearing and directing the household (Mitchell, 1950: 628)._ 

_During the Victorian Era, segregation of sexes was almost complete. Women were primarily caretakers of home and children, except in lower class families, where the wife's wages were needed. (Light, 1989: 333)_

The husband's role was directed to conduct all "foreign" affairs while the wife was supposed to be busy with "domestic" affairs. Women were put in such condition that restricted them from developing their capability fully. They were imprisoned in their homes to do household. Permission was given to them to have jobs or activities outside the house with a condition that the men could not afford the whole family to live. Their having jobs in the community was mainly based on economical consideration, not on the admittance of the society on their real capability (Light, 1989: 333).

Society could not tolerate watching celibate woman. The parents could not stand finding their daughter unmarried. For the middle class and upper class, this was regarded as a failure. To avoid it, parents usually tried to give in marriage, by sometimes ignoring the characteristics of the expected
son-in-law and the opinion of their daughter. This simple illustration described how bad the Victorian society treated women.

This account for the urgency with which parents sought husbands for their daughter and for the extreme preoccupation of the girls themselves with men and matrimonial chances (Mitchell, 1950: 630).

The inequality of rights continually happened in all aspect of life. For instance was in Victorian people’s habit in “very intimate relationship”. At that time, free sex was not something strange. They might make some use of the rather unreliable birth-control devices popularised from the 1870’s, but women might commit abortion as a regular means of birth-prevention. Once again, it confirmed that the positions of women were subordinate to men because they became victims of birth control (Morgan, 1984: 493). In intimate relation, woman also received unfair consequences.

With great difficulty, Victorian women forced themselves to study in university. They were allowed to attend lectures and took examination but they could not have the right to the degrees. They were able to have activities outside the house but still it was restricted to the social activities and small access to politics

In education, women also had difficulties. At that time, women began to expect more from life than breeding children and running the household. Women, thus partially liberated, played an important role in charities, churches, local politics and the art, especially music (Morgan, 1984: 493).

It seemed that there were good atmosphere in sharing the rights of receiving education but there were still restrictions from family faced by women. It was difficult to increase the number of educated women because
Victorian parent thought it was far from being economical to educate girls in the schoolroom. One of young woman habit was described as follow:

Many a young woman who, a generation earlier, would have remained at home to wait on her parents and lead an aimless existence found that there was little but prejudice to prevent her from securing training for a full and useful life in which she could develop any talent and qualities that she happened to have (Mitchel, 1950:730).

In political field, there was an evident that women continued to be ranked as second-class citizens. Like million of working-class men, they could not vote or hold office except the highest office of queen (Ford, 1979: 940).

3. Gender Role and Inequalities

a. Gender as a Social Construct

Some discussions written in sociology books convey that the natural characteristics of female and male are specific. They cannot be interchangeable between male and female. Those characteristics are created biologically and prevail universally. Some aspects of biological make-up of women are having vagina, womb, menstruation, and having ability to bear children, whereas some aspects of biological make-up of men are having penis, not menstruation, unable to be pregnant and having no ability to bear children.

Whereas all characteristics that are culturally created by nature and are interchangeable between male and female change from time to
time, different from one place to another, from a social status to another, so it does not prevail universally but it is a social construct. Moffat (1991:5) remarks that cross-cultural research shows that, rather being predetermined or natural, almost all such perceived characteristics have been constructed by society. Some characters are not biologically determined such as: flirtatious, talkative, sentimental, emotional, careless, patient, etc. Those characteristics can be found in both men and women. Those characteristics are changeable, because those things are not biologically determined but they are social construct.

Those above are the differences between things created biologically and things that are not created biologically. Things that are created biologically by nature are known as sex, whereas things that are created culturally are called gender. Hence, gender can be understood as a point of view toward, behaviours, identities as male and female and relationship between the two, as social construct.

*Human beings are born as male and female. They learn to be girls and boys who grow into women and men and are educated with the appropriate behaviours and attitudes, roles and activities for them, and how they should relate to other people (Williams, 1983: 4).*

Gender can change from time to time and sometimes cause inequalities towards women. Recently, gender discrimination becomes a fact to complete exploitation of human beings over human beings.
For centuries, things that are assumed as natural and permanent about the different characteristic between men and women are actually characteristics that can change from time to time, place-to-place and culture-to-culture. People do not understand that those characteristics are called gender roles. They do not realise this phenomenon or it can be said only few of people realise it. These characteristics include both ideas and values about masculinity, femininity, and sets of behaviours and practices.

Unfortunately, people define a certain characteristics as feminine and another as masculine, certain activities considered appropriate only for men and others for women, and certain norms for relationship between them. When asked to describe the characteristic of the typical man and the typical woman, most people gave an answer referred to their definition that was believed to be true in the society.

*Men are viewed as being aggressive, independent, objective, dominant, competitive, logical, self-confident, and ambitious, while women are assumed to generally lack the “masculine” traits. Conversely, women are viewed as being tactful, gentle, sensitive to others, neat, quiet, and easily to express feeling, while men are assumed to generally lack these “feminine” characteristics (Light, 337).*

The characteristics above are called as gender stereotype, a social definition that strongly holds the ideas about women and is believed as the true character. These stereotypes bring us to an expectation about the tasks of men and women should perform in the living “stage”. For
instance, we tend to think that men are strong and hence, they suit to army forces, and when we observe the most army officers are male, then we conclude that our stereotype must be right. It also brings to a belief that gender stereotypes are valid.

Cross cultural research shows that almost all gender roles are shaped and constructed by society. Sociologists have examined gender role cross culturally and they find diversities in roles that assumed natural for men and women.

Weitzman (1975: 301) concludes that the varied gender role assignments given to men and women in different cultures suggest that the basic characteristics of men and women are not biologically determined; rather, they are based on cultural definitions of sex-appropriate behaviour. Linda Moffat in her book *Two Halves Makes a Whole* adds that gender relation and identities are not universal, but vary from culture to culture and sometimes from community to community.

b. Patterns of Gender Inequality

As noted before, gender roles change from time to time and sometimes cause inequalities (Weitzman, 1975: 301). Now we focus our attention to the types of inequalities that appears because of gender biases. The patterns of gender inequality are:
1. Marginalization

It is a type of injustice because of discrimination, where women are pushed away from the centre of attention, power or influence. Her position is weak, has a little chance, gets small amount of salary, etc.

2. Subordination

It means that women are placed lower in rank and position than men are. They are considered less important because they are inferior in quality and weaker than men are. It is the reason why many people still consider women as second creature.

3. Violence

Violence is the use of physical (such as beating, rape and torturing) and mental (such as mocking and harassment) force towards women in order to damage or injure.

4. Stereotype

Stereotype is an oversimplified standardized image or idea held by one person or group of another, that is created for women such as kind of job that is considered suitable for women, kind of toys, kind of sport, etc.

5. Double Burden

It means women have to deal with double difficult or worrying responsibilities or duties. Women are supposed to deal with indoors and outdoors work. (Moffat, 1991:112)
4. Victorian Age and the Characteristic of the Victorian Writers

Victorian Age began in the middle until later decades of the nineteenth century. Queen Victoria became queen on 20 June 1837, and enjoyed the longest reign of any British monarch. It was called Victorian period because it was an interval time of Queen Victoria's reign over Great Britain. She actually ruled from 1837 to 1901.

During the reign of Queen Victoria, there were changes on social development, economy and technology. These changes were one of many aspects, which were resulted by Industrial Revolution. Industrial Revolution was the fruit of the implementation of many inventions in industrial technology and transportation. This Industrial Revolution brought many positive and negative impacts to the society. At the first phase, negative impact appeared dominantly. One of the serious problems was the obvious difference between the have and the poor, a contrast between industrialists and capitalists compared to workers.

One of many positive impacts of Industrial Revolution was visible on the prosperity. With the assistance of science and technology, many people could bring to their lives an easy and comfortable situation. Their ability to fulfil their needs increased drastically. They started to learn to glimpse other needs beside the basic needs. One of these secondary and tertiary needs was intellectual activity. It was no wonder that science grew
significantly at that time. Many inventions were made. Scientist started to learn that electricity could be used to fulfil human need. One of the famous discovers, Charles Darwin (1809 – 1882) stated the theory of Evolution. He explained this theory further in the book, The Origin of Species (1859).

On the other side, literature also grew very well at that time. Many writers produced many qualified verses and prose. The development of general education enhanced Victorian people’s competence to consume the artists’ works. The ability to read and comprehend literary work was not dominated by upper class anymore. The development of technology also contributed to the emergence of literary audiences. More and more people obtained the chance to enjoy the arts. This atmosphere was one of many factors which motivated Victorian writers to pour down their ideas into a piece of literary work. The current condition of their contemporary was one of many themes, which became their concerns. In addition, it was the most obvious characteristic of Victorian literature.

*Much writing of this period, whether imaginative or didactic, in verse or in prose reflected current social, economic, and intellectual problems – for example, the industrial revolution and its effect on the economic and social structure; rapid urbanisation and deterioration of rural England; massive poverty, growing class tension, and pressure towards political and social reform. (Abrams, 1981: 206)*

The other important characteristic of the Victorian Literature, both prose and poem, was that it served to a goal of increasing the morality of
society. Hence, Victorian arts were not only meant to describe the reality, the situation and condition of the society, as it was but also provided alternatives how life should be conducted.

_The writers of the Victorian period tended to take themselves and their mission seriously. They seemed to assume that someone addressing the public on a serious topic had to sound dignified, if not solemn._ (Morgan, 1984: 479)

The end of 19th century and the beginning of 20th century was the peak of the triumph of English Empire of which regions spread out all over the world. Society, especially middle class, enjoyed the high stage of prosperity caused by the development of economics.

The situation and condition of the Victorian society, which yielded serious attention from Victorian writers, was the negative impact of the development of technology, which appeared simultaneously greater day by day. Many critiques were pointed towards Victorian society because they had turned to be seen materialistic minded, self-satisfied, and indifference towards society. Critiques on negative sides of what had been called “Victorianism” reached a critical point. Some writers expressed that condition into satires.

_The literature of the Victorian periods shows a growing social consciousness – a growing concern with the right of labouring people to a decent life_ (Guth, 1981: 549)
The development of literature at the end of Victorian Age contained of critique on the life of society based on the history. It is not surprising because literature is one of the expressions of human soul and because writers are human beings that cannot be separated from their surrounding, where they live.

Considering to the condition of their surrounding, writers at that time wanted to express their feelings and opinions into writings. One of the characteristics appeared in this period was that the writer tried to instruct a good manner towards reader throughout their works.

- most of the Victorian novelists were primarily concerned with man in society and with those aspects of experience categorized by the title of Lionel Thrilling's essays: "Manner, Morals, and the Novels", to which we can add an additional topic – Money (Ford, 1979: 946)

5. A Brief Biographical Sketch and Characteristic of Author

Conrad received his first command in 1888 and in 1890 took a steamboat up to the Congo River. He wrote the Heart of Darkness based on this voyage. Because much of his works talked about see, Conrad was for a long time regarded as a sea writer specialist.
One of his favourite ways in writing his novels is the use of intermediate narrator. He uses unnamed narrator to judge the human action (Ford, 1979: 1852).

There are two alternative methods used by authors to characterize the persons in a narrative. They are: showing and telling. In this novel, in *Heart of Darkness* Conrad uses telling method because he himself intervened authoritatively in order to describe, and often to evaluate the motive and dispositional qualities of his characters (Abrams, 1981: 21).

In *Heart of Darkness*, Conrad was also concerned with the treatment that was faced by the woman in the Victorian Age. He described the condition of female characters as a reflection on what happened in the society at that time. Readers at first may say that Conrad seemed to neglect the roles of women in Victorian Age because of the ways he described the female characters.

In fact, he was concerned with women's condition at Victorian Age. Baines states that:

> realising that a world of men without women is in truth a world of half-horizon, got his heroes’ young women as often into his books as he could. Conrad senses the same thing, left women, for a great part of his writing career, altogether out of his books and supplied their place with the epicene great water, attributing them with all the passion and pretty ways of female rages and feminine coquetties (Baines, 1960: 134).

He adds that:
But as he left the hated sea further and further behind him, women
And, as he went onward, women became more and more and non-
seafarers came more and more into his book
importance in his political romances – and it was more and more
the political romance that occupied his mind (Baines 1960: 134).

6. The Contribution of Literature to the Admittance of the Roles of
Women

Based on the approach, which is also manipulated in this thesis,
namely historical-biographical approach, critics pay attention to the
relation of individual authors to the circumstances of the cultural era in
which they live and write. They paid attention to the relation of literary
works to the society, which they reflected in literary works (Abrams, 1981:
178). Put simply, this approach sees a literary work briefly as a reflection
of its author’s life and times or the life and times of the characters in the
work.

It is a mistake to think that writers do not pay attention to social themes
that focus on the role of woman or that a good literary work cannot deal
with such themes. In fact, there are only several writers who concern with
social life of women. A common issue that is discussed in the Victorian
Age about the roles of women in society is that female characters are
usually placed as the ones who take care of domestic works.

Look at all the heroine, whether of romance or reality – at all the
female characters that are held up to universal admiration – at all who
have gone down to honoured graves, amongst the tears and lamentation of their survivors (Kimbrough, 1839: 1633)

Some of well-known writings that challenge assumption about women roles in society are John Stuart Mill’s *The Subjection of Women*, demand equal life between man and woman. The previous literary work is Mary Wollstonecraft’s *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman*, demanded equal educational opportunities for women. The two literary works concern to the issues of sexual inequality in politics, economics, education, and social intercourse. In politics, women are often treated as a second-class citizen. They are not allowed to vote or hold office except in the highest position of queen. The passing of the Factory Act, which contains of corrections of some of the worst aspect of women’s employment, and Women’s Property Acts (1908) that contains of right of married women to own and handle their own property, are the fruit of women’s movement for equality. The other literary works focussing on the roles of women in society are Sarah Sticney Ellis’ *From the Women of England*, George Elliot’s *Margaret Fuller and Mary Wollstonecraft*, Dinah Maria Mullock’s *From A Woman’s Thought about Women*, Florence Nightingale’s *From Cassandra*, Walter Besant’s *From the Queen’s Reign* and so on.

The admittance on the importance of the roles of women is rarely exposed in Victorian novels and poems. Some of writers try to convey the roles of women in the society. They are several writers who criticize sharply on the unequal treatment towards women, but most of them
describe the roles of women in a stereotype way, that is handling household.

When novelist and poets dealt with feminist topics, they commonly portrayed women's domestic and social role as educated companion of men or as doll-like subordination (Ford, 1979: 941).

There is a general approach used to analyse the relation between literature and society. Literature can be a social document that portrays social facts. One axiom to remember is that writers are influenced by society and vice versa. Some people imitate the characters of a literature. They may adopt opinion, which is communicated in the literature. Literature itself takes some aspects of life as a material for writing.

B. Theoretical Framework

The theories above will be used as tools for the writer to solve the problems. Those theories will be applied mainly to answer the third question because the answers of the first and second questions are based on the text of the story. Theories about the condition of women, the characteristic of the writer, and the biographical sketch of Conrad are important to verify the comparison of the facts fictional world and historical world. The other theories about gender roles and the patterns of gender unequal are used because the study focuses on the implementation of roles in society especially the roles of female characters. The other theory, the contribution of literature to the admittance of the roles of women is used to clarify the truth that this novel
gives contribution to the society to understand about the roles of women.

Basing on the theories explained above, I come to the assumption that the roles of women are also as important as men's roles though society does not realise because social construct that places women as second creature suggests an opinion that women conduct their habits.

Smoothly, the writer conveys his opinion about women. He tells the story in which as if the female characters played no significant role at all. This is a reflection of the condition of women in the Victorian Age, which also becomes the setting of the story. The author conveys carefully the part that has to be played by women.

Hence, Conrad criticises the treatment towards women. He seems to say that those men and women have equal roles. Both play the important roles on their own based on what society demands them to do.
CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

This chapter is meant to introduce the object of the study, that is the novel, the approaches that are used to verify the topic and the steps that are used to answer the questions are presented.

A. Object of Study

Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* is the material of the study. In its literal meaning, *Heart of Darkness* is an adventure tale to the Heart of Africa, Congo. It presents the description of the river and the jungle in Congo, attacks by natives, and characterization of men and women. Symbolically, it can be seen as a journey into the central of blackness to the heart and soul of man. On this interpretation, one can see that in this journey, white men are full of passion, superstition and lust. For example, The District manager undertakes the journey simply to rob the ivory from natives. It can be interpreted as colonization of human being over the other.

Colonialization is easily seen in that way. Through this thesis, I would like to study another side of the story, the discrimination on gender between woman and man. At a glance this novel seems to establish a stereotype view that the women always play trivial roles only. But if we
observe carefully, the novel may suggest the opposite. These phenomena invite us to reconsider our judgment to the role of woman. Although it is not very obvious in the novel, the writer invites us to admit and appreciate the importance of the role of woman in our lives. It is told that when Marlow is in despair because of his failure in finding the job, he beseeches his aunt to find it. Without his aunt’s favor, he will not be a commander of a river steamer. It is one of many important roles played by female characters in *Heart of Darkness*.

This story is divided into three chapters and it is presented in 76 pages. Chapter 1 consists of the introduction of the characters, time setting and the beginning of the story how Marlow gets his job and the roles of his aunt who influences the Administration. Chapter 2 tells about the journey into the central of Congo and how the white men develop their relationship with the natives. Chapter 3 tells us about the ending of the story where Marlow has to lie to Kurtz’ fiancée as an implementation of appreciation and admittance to the role of woman.

**B. Approaches**

This thesis manipulates traditional approach to procure a systematic understanding of the portrayal of women and their roles and the opinion that Conrad reveals through characterization of women in *The Heart of Darkness*. Traditional approach emerges as a response to the
dissatisfaction of the twentieth century literary scholars. Their dissatisfaction are addressed to the practice of the analysis that put a work of art as secondary importance. Such an analysis puts the work of art essentially as material to study history and biography rather than as art.

The traditional approach based its analysis on two assumptions. The first assumption is that a literary work had its intrinsic worth or value. If studied correctly, it might have led to more than just one of media transmitting history and biography. The second assumption is that it does not deny that any information outside the work of literature might be helpful and necessary to produce a viable meaning of the work appropriate to the critic time and place (Guerin; 1988: 29).

Although this approach suggests that primarily the work of literature is an art, it admits that literary work can not be understood separately from the society produced it. It is impossible to expect that the work of literature can exist in a vacuum. Wellek and Warren states that literature is a social institution which makes use a social medium, that is language. It presents life that is nothing else than the social life (1990: 109). Put briefly, it is a creation of an individual at some time in history, and is intended to speak to other about some ideas or issues that has human relevance.

There are two type of traditional approach. The first type is historical biographical approach. This type of analysis assumes that a work of art is a reflection of its author’s life and times or the life and the times
of the characters in the work. The second type of traditional approach is moral philosophical. It assumes that literature can be functioned as material to teach moral and to probe philosophical issues. Literary scholars manipulated this second type of traditional approach usually would interpret the work of art within a context of the philosophical thought of a period or a group (Guerin; 1988:29).

Considering the objectives, this thesis employs the first type of traditional approach, namely historical biographical approach. Rohrberger and Woods states that

Critics whose major interest is the sociocultural-historical approach insist that the only way to locate the real work is in reference to the civilization that produces it. They define civilization as the attitudes and actions of a specific group of people and point out that literature takes these attitudes and action as its subject matters (1971: 6).

Historical biographical approach bases the consideration on how the literature is created in a certain definite culture and embodies ideas to the culture in which it is created. It means that literature cannot be created in a vacuum. Rohrberger and Woods add that:

The traditional historical approach to literature usually takes as its basis some aspect of the sociocultural frame of reference, combining it with an interest in the biographical as well as knowledge of and interest in the literary history (1971:6).

Aspects of sociocultural frame in this thesis do not always mean people and their classes but their custom, convention, belief, and values, their institution, and their physical environment as well. In the thesis, I
employ the historical-biographical approach to examine the roles of woman in Victorian Age. I use some theories that explain about character and characterization, gender role, woman’s relationship and its influence to society to look further the roles of female characters in Heart of Darkness.

Biographical aspects is examined here because this thesis is developed based on an argument that a literary work cannot be separated from the life of the writer, the main source of inspiration.

*Put simply, this approach sees a literary work chiefly, if not exclusively, as a reflection of its author’s life and times or the life and times of the characters in the work* (Rohrburger: 1971:8).

It seems that besides reflecting his life, Conrad also pours down his concern to his contemporary, particularly the roles of women. His experiences when he was in Congo also colors the story. The book as the fruit of his expression of his experience living in a society is the target of my discussion throughout the whole thesis.

**C. Steps of Analysis**

First, I begin to study thoroughly the book, Heart of Darkness. I am interested in the phenomena of the story, which seem to neglect the significant roles played by female characters. It is interesting that female characters only appear for some trivial actions. What makes me more surprised is that the writer does not mention the proper names of female characters. Conrad only writes “Marlow’s aunt”, the “Company
Receptionist”, “the Kurtz’ Fiancée”, and “the Savage Woman”. This
discrimination invites me to scrutinize the roles of these “unimportant”
characters in relation to men in Victorian Age. As I use a desk research
with sociocultural-historical approach and biographical approach, I search
and read some books which enable me to discuss adequately gender role,
condition of women in the Victorian Age, relationship between literature
and women’s struggle for the admittance of equality, and historical
background of the story. Some aspects, which have relation to the topics,
are portrayal of women in the novel, the roles of woman in the story and
the writer's opinion about the presence of women. Then I formulate the
problems into three questions, presented in problem formulation, that
support each other to the analysis.

This thesis is divided into four chapters, chapter one explains the
background, the reason why the topic is chosen amongst other alternatives
for discussion; the problem formulations containing three questions; the
objectives and the benefits of study; and the definition of terms to avoid
the misinterpretation and misunderstanding in following the discussion.

Chapter two is a review of related theories. It contains the explanation
of the related theories used to analyze the work. There are some aspects
that will be used in discussion: the existence of woman in the Victorian
Age, gender role and inequalities, and characteristics of writer in Victorian
Age. The methodology, which explains the physical description of the
work, the approaches, which are used in the analysis, and the steps are presented in chapter three.

Chapter 4 is the analysis. In this chapter, I answer the problems stated in the problem formulation based on the work itself and the theoretical review. Therefore, in this chapter, I relate the work to literary theories, the sociological theories and the historical facts of Victorian Age and Victorian Literature.

Chapter 5 contains of the conclusion for all the discussion. Through this chapter, I conclude the discussion about the significant role of female characters and the Conrad’s mission “to civilize the civilized world”
CHAPTER IV

ANALYSIS

There are 3 items to discuss in this chapter: the description of the portrayal of female characters, significant roles played by female characters, and the ideas that Conrad wants to convey in the *Heart of Darkness*. The first item is intended to describe the portrayal of woman based on the characterization of female characters, dialogue spoken by the female characters, dialogue spoken about the female characters and action taken by female characters. The second item discusses the significant roles of female characters played in the novel. Finally, the discussions above are confronted to some theories of gender roles and unequal treatment suffered by Victorian woman and the characteristic of writers in the Victorian Age. It gives an approval that Conrad wants to instruct society to appreciate the roles of female characters throughout his work.

In discussing female characters and roles conducted by them, we must understand that female characters must always be seen as one element in a larger artistic whole in Conrad’s *Heart of Darkness*. The point at which female characters and plot come together is motivation. Plot consists of sequence of events as media for female characters to conduct roles in *Heart of Darkness*.

Motivation is part of coherence in female characters and plot that the researcher is able to identify both the general and particular motivation for the action of the character. It is part of the plausibility of the story in general that the
motivation be adequate to the action taken by characters. We should note further that character is not essential to fiction in the same way that plot is. Without plot, fiction is impossible; it is, on the other hand, possible for fiction to get without what most of us would recognize as character. (Kenny, 1966: 36).

1. The Portrayal of Woman Presented in the Novel

In this novel, if the readers do not read carefully enough, they conclude that Conrad ignores the roles the female characters. The very little space, which is available for female characters, and the way Conrad calls them may bring the readers to such an impression. This impression will certainly obtain a confirmation on the appearances of the female characters, which are only presented in a series of trivial events. It seems that the roles of the female characters is not that of importance. Hence, female characters in this novel are not far from what we know as simple character.

The other clue that may lead the readers to such conclusion is the way Conrad calls the female characters. Instead of using their own proper names, he seems to be fond of referring to the related male characters.

_I had an aunt, a dear enthusiastic soul (p. 12)._ 

It is Marlow who speaks to give comment on his aunt. He does not mention his aunt’s proper name.
She was savage and superb, wild-eyed and magnificent; there is something ominous and stately in her deliberate progress. (p. 60)

This is a description of the savage woman, Kurtz’s mistress at inner station. Her name is never mentioned all over the story.

There remained only his memory and his Intended – and ...(p 71)

Once again, the proper name of the woman, Kurtz’s fiancée, is not mentioned here.

A discriminative analogy – woman is called hen – will establish the impression that the position of woman is subordinate to man. This discriminative analogy, can be seen on the remarks of male character on female characters.

... that I heard the original quarrel arose from a misunderstanding about some hens. Yes, two black hens (p. 12).

In Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary, hen means female of the common domestic fowl or female of any of several types of bird. The use of word ‘hens’ shows that there is discrimination on the appreciation towards women’s existence in this society.

Another opinion on woman, which appears in the novel, is gender stereotype. Stereotype is a standard image or character that becomes fixed in conventional form without considering the individuality. Company’s chief
Accountant states that one of native women is not suitable to a certain work. He generalizes that women dislike to work.

_I have been teaching one of the native women about the station. It was difficult. She had disaste for the work. (p. 21)_

There are five female characters described in the novel. But as stated before the author only mentions them shortly. They appear to do common duties, which are taken all for granted by society. Marlow’s Aunt appears when her nephew, Marlow, despairs of finding a job. Until Marlow says "then I began to look for a ship -I should think the hardest work on earth. But the ships wouldn't even look at me. And I got tired of that game, too" (p. 11). Marlow’s aunt's readiness to help leads Marlow to utter his admiration by saying "I had an aunt a dear enthusiastic soul (p.12)." Marlow comes to this clue based on the letter from her aunt.

_She wrote: 'It will be delightful. I am ready to do anything, anything for you. It is a glorious idea. I know the wife of a very high personage in the Administration, and also a man who has lots of influence with,' etc., etc. She was determined to make no end of fuss to get me appointed skipper of a river steamboat, if such was my fancy (p.12)._

When he will begin his voyage into Belgian Congo, he comes to his aunt’s house to say goodbye. He spends his days with his aunt having a quite long chat. Marlow characterizes her aunt as an admirable creature.

"One thing more remained to do -say good-bye to my excellent aunt. I found her triumphant. I had a cup of tea -the last decent cup of tea for many days -and in a room that most soothingly looked just as you would expect a lady’s drawing-room to look, we had a long quiet chat by the fireside (p.15)."
There had been a lot of such rot let loose in print and talk just about that
time, and the excellent woman, living right in the rush of all that humbug,
got carried off her feet. (p.16).

Then, we have a portrayal of the two Receptionists of Company, one is
fat and the other is slim. The slim one serves Marlow. She serves him while
knitting black wool with downcast eyes. Her appearance is simple. Her dress
is so simple like an umbrella cover. She shows how to reach the secretary.
They serve the applicants and manage them to see the Secretary.

Two women, one fat and the other slim, sat on straw-bottomed chairs,
knitting black wool. The slim one got up and walked straight at me - still
knitting with downcast eyes - and only just as I began to think of getting
out of her way, as you would for a somnambulist, stood still, and looked
up. Her dress was as plain as an umbrella-cover, and she turned round
without a word and preceded me into a waiting-room (p.13).

The young receptionist serves the applicants and guests while the old one sits
on the straw-buttoned chair knitting black wool.

In the outer room the two women knitted black wool feverishly. People
were arriving, and the younger one was walking back and forth
introducing them. The old one sat on her chair. Her flat cloth slippers
were propped up on a foot-warmer, and a cat reposed on her lap. She
wore a starched white affair on her head, had a wart on one cheek, and
silver-rimmed spectacles hung on the tip of her nose.

The Savage Woman is illustrated as a wild and good-looking woman.
She is Kurtz's mistress at Inner Station who appears to show her sorrow
because of Kurtz's death. She cannot communicate directly with the white
men. She expresses her sorrow in her own way. She is typical of a native
woman. Her hair is cut in the shape of a helmet; she has brass leggings to the
knee, brass wire gauntlets to the elbow, a crimson spot on her tawny cheek,
innumerable necklaces of glass beads on her neck; bizarre things, charms,
gifts of witch-men, that hangs about her, glitters and trembles at every step
(p.60).

And from right to left along the lighted shore moved a wild and
gorgeous apparition of a woman (p.60).

"She walked with measured steps, draped in striped and fringed clothes,
treading the earth proudly, with a slight jingle and flash of barbarous
ornaments (p.60).

She must have had the value of several elephant tasks upon her. She
was savage and superb, wild-eyed and magnificent; there was
something ominous and stately in her deliberate progress. And in the
hush that had fallen suddenly upon the whole sorrowful land, the
immense wilderness, the colossal body of the fecund and mysterious life
seemed to look at her, pensive, as though it had been looking at the
image of its own tenebrous and passionate soul (p.60).

The native woman shows her sorrow and wants to communicate her sorrow
and pain with Kurtz’s friends. She shows that she has maturity for suffering.

Her face had a tragic and fierce aspect of wild sorrow and of
dumb pain mingled with the fear of some struggling, half-
shaped resolve. ......She looked at us all as if her life had
depended upon the unswerving steadiness of her glance (p.60).

At first Marlow thinks that the Kurtz’s Intended is ready to listen the
truth. Referring to the portrait, Marlow illustrates the characterization of her.
Based on her observation, Marlow is so sure that he can tell the real condition
of Kurtz in Congo, he then decides to give the letter by himself.
"Thus I was left at last with a slim packet of letters and the girl’s portrait. .........She seemed ready to listen without mental reservation, without suspicion, without a thought for herself. I concluded I would go and give her back her portrait and those letters myself (p. 73).

She has a beautiful illusion about Marlow. She wants to convince herself that Kurtz is loyal to her. She asks him about his last words. Her illusions about Kurtz are beautiful. In order to save them Marlow lies about the last words.

"She came forward, all in black, with a pale head, floating towards me in the dusk. She was in mourning. It was more than a year since his death, more than a year since the news came; she seemed as though she would remember and mourn forever (p.73-74) I saw her and him in the same instant of time -his death and her sorrow -I saw her sorrow in the very moment of his death. Do you understand? I saw them together I heard them together(p.74). And the girl talked, easing her pain in the certitude of my sympathy; she talked as thirsty men drink (p.74).

Basing on the condition of the Intended as described above, finally Marlow tells a lie to her.

His last word-to live with,’ she insisted. ‘Don’t you understand I loved him –I loved him. I love him’
I pulled myself together and spoke slowly. ‘The last words he pronounced was –your name.’(p.75)

Thus, Marlow allows the light of her illusion to triumph over the truth, which will clearly destroy her if she knows that Kurtz’s last words is “The Horror”. According to Marlow’s observation, “The Horror” suggests Kurtz’s final realization of the consequences of life that a man lightened of all social and civilized restraints goes mad after committing pursuit of evil and depravity, colonialization.
Considering the categories presented by Murphy’s *Understanding Unseen*, about:

1. *the complexity of their characterization*
2. *the attention given to them by author or by other characters*
3. *personal intensity that they seem to transmit* (1988:17)

Female characters in *Heart of Darkness* may be categorized into flat characters. Referring to categories written by Kenny, they are much closer to the embodiment of a single attitude or obsession than representation of a unique human personality (1966: 28). Following E.M. Forster in his *Aspect in the Novel*, those female characters are built around “single idea or quality“ and are presented without much individualizing details. As a flat character, female characters perform limited action and play limited function in the story. They represent average, normal point of reference of the society. Referring to the time which the novel written in 1899, female characters in *Heart of Darkness* represent the condition of woman in the Victorian age.

**B. The Significant Roles of Female Characters**

Round and Flat characters may be given the vitality that good fiction demands. The round characters live by their complexities, by the many points on how they color the fictional life. On the other hand, The flat characters may conduct important roles through appearance, gesture and speech. It is, then, an oversimplification to assert that the complex character is a greater
achievement than the simple (Kenny 1966: 34). The characters should be examined in the light of story as a whole. We will come to an understanding that complexity is not necessarily a greater advantage than simplicity. We have to realize that all characters, simple or round, contribute to the story.

In this discussion, we have to understand that a character must always be seen as one element in a larger artistic whole in a fiction. The point at which character and plot come together is what we mean by term motivation. Plot consists of sequence of events as media for character to conduct roles in a story. Motivation is why they do. Motivation is part of coherence in character and plot that the readers are able to identify both the general and particular motivation for the action of the character (Kenny, 1966: 36). General motivation covers such basic human drives as love, hunger, greed, and so on. It is part of the plausibility of the story in general that the motivation be adequate to the action taken by characters. For example if an aunt who helps her nephew who is in despair of finding a job. She wholeheartedly tries to find it through her relation. It is kind of consolation to one’s despair. Her role to conduct compassion, showing feelings of sympathy for the suffering of others with a desire to help.

This subchapter studies further on the roles of female characters. The discussion about the real roles played by women will be based on the chronological orders in which female characters appear in the text and implement their roles in relation with the other characters. This consideration is made in order to make the discussion easy to understand. The order of the
text begins with the discussion of the roles of Marlow’s Aunt, then The Receptionists, followed The Savage Woman, and at last Kurtz’ Fiancée.

It is important to recall the definition of gender role in order to make an agreement about the role. Gender role is ‘part’ to be played and it strongly influences the actual performance (Chafez, 1971: 144). Considering this theory, female characters show their roles. They have parts to be played and those roles influence the other characters. One thing to remember is that within any social group or subgroup, individuals play different roles and they learn to perform in certain expected ways, consonant with their position in society (Stone and Church, 1968: 144). The roles played by women depend on the demand of interaction. Men and women fulfill the needs one another so that the interaction can work well.

Do Marlow’s Aunt, The Receptionists, the Savage Women, and Kurtz’ Fiancée play significant roles? It is really challenging to prove that there are significant roles played by female characters in the novel, since to do so I have to prove things, which stand on the contrary. First, female characters in the Heart of Darkness are literally described to be unimportant characters. They appear only in a few parts of the story, having no proper names, and having no participation in exploiting ivory and ‘civilizing’ the natives in heart of Congo. Second, on the other hand, if we read the story more carefully, we may find that female characters play significant contributions to the whole story as male characters do.
To lead to a comprehensive understanding on the roles of female characters, the sequences of the events will be presented here. The story of the *Heart of Darkness* begins with an incident about Marlow’s voyage to Congo. Marlow has much experience in voyage. He just returns to London after sailing in Indian Ocean, Pacific Ocean, and China Seas for the last 6 years. He then decides to look for another ship to sail after a long of resting. He says that he wants to get the most important work on earth.

*It was very fine for a time. But after a bit, I did get tired of resting. Then I began to look for a ship – I should think the hardest work on earth (p.11).*

With a great self-confidence, he tries to get a job in a ship. The job that he thinks as the hardest work on the earth is not easy to gain. He fails to fulfill his deed with his own effort. It makes him desperate because he cannot handle it by himself. After he is tired of trying to look for a job in his town, finally he says

*But the ships wouldn’t even look at me. And I got tired of that game too (p.11).*

Suddenly he remembers of his passion to fulfill his idea. A boyhood strong desire to go to Africa motivates him to look for a job in a continental trading.

*Now when I was a little chap I had a passion for a map. ... At that time there were blank spaces on the earth and when I saw one that looked particularly on a map (but they all looked at that) I would put my finger on it and say: When I grow up I will go there (p.11).*

He really has a strong motivation to sail. Then he goes to London trying to find a trading company whose materials are taken from the heart of Congo.
At the beginning, Marlow possesses a very big self-confidence that he can find a job by his own.

*This was already a fresh departure to me I was not used to get things that way, you know, I always went on my own road and on my own legs where I had a mind to go. I wouldn’t have believed it of myself, but then - you see - I felt somehow I must get there by hook or by crook.* (p.12)

But he faces many obstacles that hold him from having a new job. His recklessness brings him to ask his friends’ help. But he finds the fact that his male friends cannot do anything to him. He is so proud of himself that he forgets he cannot always reach his dream like what he wants. Later he realizes that it is not as easy as he thinks to be. Especially when Marlow faces the facts that his friend cannot help and pay no attention to his requirement.

*The men said, 'My dear fellow, and did nothing, ...* (p.12).

His last hope goes to his aunt although he does not really have a belief that she can do it. He asks her to use her relationship to find a job for him. Marlow states that:

*Then would you believe it – I tried a woman. I Charlie Marlow set the women to work – to get a job* (p.12).

An opinion forces him to contact his aunt. He realizes that he has an aunt who pays attention to his problem.

*She wrote: it will be delightful. I am ready to do anything, anything for you* (p.12).

Marlow accepts a different response from his aunt. She expresses a feeling of compassion to Marlow’s despair. He gets the different response from his friends that he meets on the Fleet Street. Finally, Marlow is sure that
he can expect much her aunt’s endeavor. His aunt wholeheartedly is willing to help him. It is important to underline the statement of men and his aunt. The two people, Marlow’s aunt and Marlow’s friend have different ways to treat Marlow’s request for help.

_I know the wife of a very high personage in the Administration and also a man who has lot of influence with, etc, etc (p.12)_

Marlow’s aunt really commits with her effort. Through her connection, the wife of a very high personage in the Administration, she tries to fulfill her nephew’s willingness. Finally, she succeeds in getting a job for him.

_The first man I got my appointment – of course; and I got it very quick (p.12)._

_However, through this glorious affair I got my appointment before I had fairly begun to hope for it (p.13)_

She does not stop taking care of him up to this point. She still pays attention until his departure to Congo. When Marlow says good-bye to her, she reminds him to write some letters and to wear flannel (p. 16). She does not only take care of the things that have been requested to be fulfilled but she still pays attention to the other things that are also important for him, sharing experience through letter.

The second female characters are the receptionists. Two women, one is fat and the other is slim, sit on a chair knitting black wool. The slim woman serves Marlow. She accompanies Marlow to head of secretary. She does her habitual duties as she serves the applicants and the guests.
There is one important role done by them. They warn Marlow and the others not to go to the heart of Congo. Another expression of affection is directed to Marlow and the other prospective sailors. He is actually aware with it. He admits that the fat woman tries to keep him alive. She tries to say that several people who work for her company never come back again.

*She seemed to know all about them and about me too. ... Often far away there I thought of these two, guarding the door of Darkness, knitting black wool as for a warm pall, one introducing, introducing continuously to the unknown, the other scrutinizing the cheery and foolish faces with unconcerned old eyes. Ave! Old knitter of black wool. Morituri te salutant. Not many of those she looked at ever saw her again—not half—by a long way (P.14).*

The old receptionist appreciates human life. She loves the life of the applicants. All she can do is to warn that it is better for them not to go to the heart of Congo. As employees of that company she has to keep the company’s “reputation”. In this case, the Receptionist has to keep the image of the company. Through their attitude towards the applicant and guests, they already break the company’s image that in fact the company sends the employees to death. There is something hidden. It is an excellent moral trait that should be defended. A willingness to appreciate life is one of their expressions of love to others and the important and significant role that Conrad attaches to his female characters as well.

The third one is the Savage Woman. She is Kurtz’ mistress at the Inner station. Her face shows a great sorrow due to the bad health condition of Kurtz.
Her face had a tragic and fierce aspect of wild sorrow and of dumb pain mingled with the fear of some struggling, half-shaped resolved (p. 60).

The African mistress is described as “gorgeous, proud, superb, magnificent, tragic, fierce, and filled with sorrow”. She is an impressive figure and, importantly, her humanity is undeniable. The way she faces the truth of situation and the pain shows that she is able to endure it. She really understands that Kurtz will not cure from the disease. The only one thing she can do is praying to her God with her own way.

She was savage and superb, wild-eyed and magnificent; there is something ominous and stately in her deliberate progress (p. 60.)

She looked at us all as if her life had depended upon the unswerving steadiness of her glance. Suddenly she opened her bared arms and threw up rigid above her head as though in an uncontrollable desire to touch the sky and at the same time the swift shadows darted out on the earth, swept around on the river gathering the steamer in a shadowy embraced (p. 60).

The fourth is Kurtz’ Fiancée, the last female character in the Heart of Darkness. She appears in the last part of chapter 3. She is a typical portrayal of European women in the Victorian Age that spends all of her life to stay at home and devotes all of her life to her Fiancé.

During the Victorian Era, segregation of sexes was almost complete. Women were primarily caretakers of home and children, except in lower class families, where the wife’s wages were needed. (Light, 1989: 333)

In the story, Marlow prefers not to tell the truth to her with a consideration ‘horror’, which Kurtz says before he passes away, will destroy her beautiful
illusion about Kurtz. In the end of the story, it is stated that Marlow tells lie to Kurtz’ Fiancée.

Watching Kurtz’ Fiancée reminds him that woman has the right to have her own world. Thus, Marlow allows her illusion to triumph over the truth. The truth clearly will destroy her by the time she realizes it. He realizes the consequence that will happen to her; therefore, he chooses to tell a lie. He resolves the problem by letting his compassion be his guide.

_It is queer how out of touch with truth women are! They live in a world of their own and there had never been anything like it and never can be. It is beautiful altogether, and if they were to set up it would go to pieces before the first sunset (p. 16)_

C. The Ideas that Conrad Wants to Convey in the **Heart of Darkness**

Literature is a social institution that uses language as medium. With literature, Conrad tries to communicate their ideas on social facts by imitating nature and human life. He does not only imitate but they also put his opinions and judgment throughout his literary works. This literary work is developed based on the facts in which the writer lives in. Thus, a writer sometimes conveys social aspects of life of a certain period.

- _most of the Victorian novelists were primarily concerned with man in society and with those aspects of experience categorized by the title of Lionel Thrilling’s essays: “Manners, Morals, and the Novel to which we can add an additional topics – Money (Ford, 1979: 946)._

Some writers reflect the social, economical and intellectual problem. it is the consequence that cannot be avoided by the writers if social aspects and
culture colors their works. Hence, there is a relation between writers and society. Writers are influenced by society and vice versa. Literature as a part of art not only imitates the life of society but also develops the life of society. It means that literature gives a contribution to repair the manner of society throughout the lessons that are poured down and communicated by characters in the literary works.

In this discussion, a general approach can be employed to analyze the relation between literature and society as social document and portrayal of social facts. One thing that should be underlined is that some writers in the Victorian Age concern the unfair treatment suffered by any member of the society with an intention to increase the morality of society. Hence, novel does not only portray the social facts but also gives alternatives on how life should be conducted.

Much writing of this period, whether imaginative or didactic, in verse or in prose reflected current social, economic, and intellectual problems—for example, the industrial revolution and its effect on the economic and social structure; rapid urbanization and deterioration of rural England; massive poverty, and pressure towards political and social reform... (Abrams, 1981: 206).

Conrad is one of many writers who lived in the Victorian Age. He concerns the improvement of the people’s ways of thinking and behaving in developing their relation with others. As a writer, Conrad is regarded as a sea writer. He writes about the voyage along sea and the circumstances of life on shipboard as a mean to explore certain moral of human beings and some

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aspects of life. He concerns the condition of women in the society and unequal treatment suffered by them. Baines states that

Marryat, realizing that a world of men without women is in truth a world of half-horizon, got his heroes' young women as often into his books as he could. Conrad sensing the same thing, left women, for great part of his writing career, altogether out of his books and supplied their place with the epicene great water, attributing them with all the passion and pretty ways of female rages and feminine coquetries (1960: 134).

Baines adds that:

And, as he left the hated sea further and further behind him, women and non-seafarers came more and more into his books (1960: 134).

Though the underlined theme (atmosphere) of Heart of Darkness is colonization, it also examines about the condition of women in the Victorian Age. One of characters in Heart of Darkness, Marlow, states explicitly that the meaning of the story is not inside the main theme but it is placed outside the episodes. It does not prevail generally, at least he remarks in this novel.

But Marlow was not typical and to him the meaning of an episode was not inside like a kernel but outside, enveloping the tale which brought it out only as a glow brings out a haze, in the likeness of one of these misty halos that, sometimes, are made visible by spectral illumination of moonshine (p. 9).

In this case, the main atmosphere is colonization. The important aspect is the presence of female characters and their roles. According to Marlow's statement, aspect that envelops the story is the meaning of the story. The novel contains some aspects of life. They are: civilization, cultural
assimilation, cultural shock, exploration of ivory, treatment of society towards women and so on.

In this discussion, there are three subchapters that are put in an arrangement. First, it presents the portrayal of women in Victorian Age in the Heart of Darkness. Second, it contains how Conrad uses the omniscient point of view to present characters, actions, setting and events, which constitute narrative in a work of novel. The third, through his novel the Heart of Darkness, Conrad wants to share his ideas on the appreciation of the role of woman. These subchapters are arranged to make the discussion easy to understand. Those subchapters contain arguments that support one another.

1. Female characters in Conrad’s Heart of Darkness as a portrayal of women’s condition in Victorian Age

Many writings of the Victorian Period, whether imaginative or didactic, in verse or in prose, reflect current social, economic, and intellectual problems (Abrams, 1981: 206). Through characters, the writer tries to communicate his ideas and feeling to the readers. The writer must have a reason why he describes a character in a certain way. Conrad may have some certain reason why he describes his characters in such a way. To trace this, some aspects of the story in the novel are used as materials of consideration to elucidate the reason why the writer describes some
characters in a certain way and whether such characterization has a certain purpose or not.

The structure of *Heart of Darkness* is like the Russian doll. When you open each doll up, there is another doll inside. Much of the meaning of in *Heart of Darkness* is not found in the center of the book, the heart of Congo, but on the periphery of the book. One of the meanings of the story is the appreciation and the role of women.

*But Marlow was not typical and to him the meaning of an episode was not inside like a kernel but outside, enveloping the tale which brought it out only as a glow brings out a haze, in the likeness of one of these misty halos that, sometimes, are made visible by spectral illumination of moonshine* (p. 9).

The very first impression that may be caught is that female characters are not important. Strictly, Women do not play significant roles. They appear only in a few parts of the story, having no proper names, and having no participation in exploiting ivory and ‘civilizing’ the natives in heart of Congo. This description cannot be separated from the condition of women in the Victorian Age when the story was written. Unequal treatments towards women can be seen in some aspects of life such as in politics, economic life, education and social intercourse. In politic, there is an evidence that women are ranked as second-class citizens. Like million working class men, women cannot vote or hold office except the highest office of queen (Ford, 1979: 940).
In the Victorian Age, women are not treated equally. In education, with a great difficulty, some women force themselves to study in University. They were allowed to attend lectures and to take examination but they could not have the right to the degrees (Michel, 1950: 628). In social life, Michel describes the condition of Victorian family as follows:

_Papa attending to his affairs and taking a detached and Jove-like interest in the upbringing of his family, while Mama was fully occupied with the business of child-bearing and the directing the house hold (1950: 628)._  

That women are second-class citizen is pointed that they can be called ‘hens’ instead of women. That society treats women as weak creatures is described by the writer that women are staying at home, running household, thus being unable “to participate in exploring ivory and civilizing natives in Congo”.

Man calls ‘hens’ instead of women show gender discrimination. It places female characters as marginal class. The use of word ‘hens’ shows that there is no admittance to the existence of the roles of women and equal rights.

_That I heard the original quarrel arose from a misunderstanding about some hens. Yes, two black hens (p.12)._  

Conrad tries to illustrate the condition of women in his novel. The participation of female characters in the novel is limited. They only appear in trivial parts of the novel. This is a reflection of the roles of women in the society. They have little access to participate in the social life. That society treats women as weak creatures can be described with the following
condition: staying at home, running household, and not participating to explore ivory and to civilize natives in Congo, etc. These conditions are a reflection of historical fact in Victorian Age that is used by Conrad to describe the life of women in *Heart of Darkness*. Hence, it is easy to understand the why Conrad describes female characters in his work, *Heart of Darkness* in accordance with the fact faced by women in Victorian Age.

2. **Civilizing the “civilized world”**

To civilize means to teach somebody to behave in a more socially and culturally acceptable way (Encarta World Dictionary). People want to reach an advanced level of development in society by trying to behave in a good manner so the others can accept his behaviors without complaint. Civilization is not only signed by the physical development but also by the moral developments.

Great Britain in the Victorian Age was well known as industrial state. Mid and late of 19th century England was one of significant industrial and urban development. It is also period of a huge expansion of British Empire. By this time British policy was becoming imperialistic. She annexed countries for commercial gain, including Africa. People thought that they were civilized because of the industrial development. Besides taking possession of the colonies, they said that they wanted to civilize the underdeveloped countries, by spreading Christianity to natives.
Heart of Darkness contains a story about civilization conducted by English and colonialization of English towards natives in Congo. Kurtz is Europe’s proudest product because he can send a lot of ivory to England. It is his mission to civilize the natives. The other English people, the district manager undertakes the journey simply to rob the ivory from the native. Through this novel, Conrad wants to share his opinion about the admittance and appreciation to the role of woman and about civilization and his mission to civilize English’s society.

Conrad in Heart of Darkness uses an intermediate narrator in writing this novel. This anonymous narrator appears in the beginning of the story and in the end of the story. His presence is just to open and to close the story by giving comments on what Marlow does. The other narrator is Marlow, as a major character in this novel.

Marlow is an omniscient narrator, thus he can enter the mind of all characters. He can evaluate the motives and behavior of all characters as well. Conrad uses Marlow as narrator in order to enter the story himself and tell it out of his own ideas. Conrad in this novel uses telling method in characterizing. In telling method, the author intervenes authoritatively in order to describe, and often to evaluate, the motives and dispositional qualities of his characters (Abrams, 1981: 21). It is also a passage in which the narrator contemplates the other characters or event that have become apparent. The character tries to grasp the exact relationship amongst other characters.
Heart of Darkness concerns Marlow and his journey. Marlow retells often enough that he is recounting a spiritual voyage of self-discovery. He remarks carelessly but crucially that he does not know himself before setting out and that he likes to work for the chance “to find you in what no other man can know”. The inner station is “the farthest point of navigation and culminating point of my experience (p.11)” At surface level, a journey is temptation to go back to your old ways that is the discrimination to the treatment to women in society that is described as “remote kinship (p.38)”.

There should be a responsible to the old ways. Conrad states “The mind of man is capable of anything – because everything is in it, all the past as well as the future (p.38)”. Marlow’s temptation is made concrete to through his experience with the roles of female characters, creature that “live in a world of their own” and “out of touch with reality” (p. 16).

Through Marlow, Conrad describes how to appreciate the role of woman in society and he also evaluates mistakes done by man concerning the appreciation and admittance to woman. Supported by his way of sharing the lesson to people in the cruising yawl, he is apparent like Buddhist idol. He teaches how to treat woman:

*They live in a world of their own and there had never been anything like it and never can be. It is too beautiful altogether, if they were to set it up it would go pieces before the first sunset (p.16),*

He explains the role of his aunt to help to find a job,

*Then – would you believe it – I tried the women to work – to get a work. I, Charlie Marlow, set the women to work – to get the work! Heaven! Well, you see, the notion drove me. I had an aunt, a dear*
enthusiastic soul. She wrote: "I will be delightful. I am ready to do anything for you. It is a glorious idea. I know a wife of a very high personage in the Administration and a man with lots influence with ...(p.12)

and leads to the appreciation of the world of woman

"His last word – to live with," she insisted. "Don't you understand I loved him ... I loved him ... I loved him."
I pulled myself together and spoke slowly.
"The last word he pronounced was – your name."
"I heard a light sigh and then my heart stood still, stopped dead short by exulting and terrible cry of unconceivable triumph of unspeakable pain. "I knew it – I was sure! †... She knew. She was sure. I heard her weeping; she had hidden her face in her hands. It seemed to me that the house would collapse before I could escape, that heavens would fall upon my head. But nothing happened. The heavens do not fall for such a riffle. 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 have been too dark – too dark altogether..." (P75-76)

One thing that has to be underlined is that Marlow does not only recount or retell the events into a story. By using the telling method, Conrad can authoritatively intervene in order to describe, evaluate the motives and behavior of the characters. In such a way, he also can give his opinion in the novel through the characters. One opinion revealed by Conrad is an appreciation and admittance of the roles of female characters in the Victorian Age. Marlow's attitude that is when he sits in the posing of meditating Buddha is interesting to study thoroughly because it has a relationship with his opinions on some social events, including the roles of women. He performs this from the beginning of the story until at the end of the story, while telling the story. His attitudes show that Marlow does not
only retell the story but also in his pose of meditating Buddha, he also makes a reflection upon the life of man in society.

_He sat cross-legged right aft, leaning against the mizzen-mast. He had sunken cheeks, a yellow complexion, a straight back, an ascetic aspects, and with his arms dropped, the palms of hands outwards, resembled an idol (p.1)._  

_Marlow ceased and sat apart, indistinct and silent, in the pose of meditating Buddha (p. 76)._  

To make the discussion easy to follow and understand, Conrad’s opinion will be presented in chronological orders in accordance to text. The first opinion that is stated by Marlow is that:

_I had an aunt, a dear enthusiastic soul (p.12)._  

He admires his aunt’s soul. He says this to compare the willingness of the woman to help others with his friends in Fleet Street. He receives a very distinctive response.

_The men said, 'My dear fellow, and did nothing ... (p.12)._  

Woman is described to be full of affection. She takes compassion on her nephew and offers him a favor to find a job. A woman expresses a feeling of pity for Marlow’s despair. She enthusiastically offers herself to do anything for him without conventional phrase of greeting.

_It will be delightful. I am ready to do anything, anything for you (p.12)._  

Through her connection, she easily fulfills Marlow’s need. It also indicates that this female character has a good relation with the society that is useful
in connecting with the company owner. It also shows that in social affair woman has a good ability to develop relationship with those who are over her rank or those who are in the same rank.

*She was determined to make no end of fuss to get me appointed skipper of a river steamboat, it such was my fancy (p.12).*

He realizes that woman has her own world that is different from man. On his perspective, he sees that the dignitary woman has her own world, which is different from his world. From the quotation taken from the novel, it is clearly stated that woman is considered out of touch with reality. Marlow’s experience proves it. When he is in despair because he fails to get a job, the presence of her aunt to help him indicates that woman can lead a man into a certain destination but the man, he meets in the Fleet Street, cannot replace these roles. Marlow admits her aunt as “out of touch with reality” (p.16). To think logically, the truth is that woman does not have her own world that is separated from man’s world. In the point of view of Marlow, female characters have their own way of life that is different from men’s way of life. Finally, Marlow realizes that he has to appreciate it by letting woman enjoy her world.

*Some confounded fact, we man have been living contentedly with ever since the day of creation, would start up and knock the whole thing over (p. 16).*

Kurtz also has an opinion on the way to treat woman. He stresses on the mutual relationship in which a man has to help the woman to live in her own world or man’s life would be worse.
Girl! What? Did I mention a girl? Oh, she is out of it. We must help them to stay in that beautiful world of their own lest ours gets worse. Oh, she had to be out of it (p. 49).

That is the truth about how to treat women. Considering his insight that a man should let women live in their own world, Marlow applies it to Kurtz’ Fiancée when she asks what Kurtz’ last word is. Marlow says that the last word he pronounces is her name. This also helps Marlow to realize himself from what he has experienced in the middle of Africa that women also have a right to be treated in the same way. Appreciation and admittance to the roles of women are a justice that should be conducted.

Marlow allows the light of her illusion to triumph over the truth. He also brings a light not to the savage in the jungles of Africa, but to the people on the board of the cruising yawl ‘Nellie’. He leads that people to the understanding that women play their own roles and they “live in their own world” that is ‘out of touch with reality (p.16) “that cannot be easily understood by men. The anonymous narrator adopts Marlow’s mission and retells the tale to us, the readers. Through Marlow, Conrad expresses his opinion about the importance of women’s roles. They help and fulfill men’s needs. They will warn men that there is danger. Marlow already understands about himself and women. He also knows how to treat women properly. The underlying theme of Heart of Darkness is on the surface of the story. The level of civilization is related to the physical and moral environment they are presently in. It is a much less stable or permanent than society may think.
When it is confronted to the women who are the victims of the unequal treatment of society, his opinion brings to the concept that Marlow will civilize the ‘civilized’ world.
CHAPTER V
CONCLUSION

A clear description about the condition of women in the Victorian Age is reflected in Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*. That is the first impression felt by the readers. Studying thoroughly, readers can understand writer that want to convey about the roles of female characters. In the story, he reflects the real condition of women in the Victorian Age but actually he also tries to communicate his ideas about the appreciation and admittance of the roles of women.

A smooth explanation about the important roles of female characters leads the readers to the understanding that women do not deserve to be treated differently from man. The way of Conrad describes female characters in *Heart of Darkness* reflects the real condition of the women in the Victorian Age. The very little space, which is available for female characters, and the way Conrad describes them may bring the readers to such an impression. This impression will certainly obtain a confirmation on the appearances of the female characters, which are only presented in a series trivial events. It seems that the role of the female characters is not that of importance, thus it does not need be explore the detail action.

The other clue that may lead the readers to such conclusion is the way Conrad calls the female characters. Instead of using their own proper name, he seems to be fond of referring to the related male characters. A discriminative analogy – woman
is called hen – will establish the impression that the position of woman is really subordinate to man. Another opinion on woman, which appears in the novel, is gender stereotype, a standard image or character that becomes fixed in conventional form without considering to the individuality.

The woman is out of touch with her surroundings because women do not participate in the industries, in colonization and even in the war. This represents the condition of women in the Victorian Age in which women are not involved with any kinds of works done by men, such as working in factory, exploring colonies and colonizing new territories.

He comes to a clue that female characters play their own roles in the society. They play their roles in interaction with male characters. Marlow’s aunt helps Marlow to get a job. The receptionists appreciate the life of applicants of their company. They try to warn the applicant not to go to the Congo. They choose to destroy their company image than to destroy their morality to appreciate life. The savage woman and Kurtz’s Fiancée show their loyalty that brings Marlow to understand how to appreciate and admit the roles of woman.

It is important to remember that the roles of man and woman are sometimes different because gender roles are social constructs that are created culturally and are interchangeable between man and woman. Man and woman learn to perform in certain expected ways conforming to their position.

Conrad’s description about female characters in Heart of Darkness is a reflection of society’s treatment towards women in the Victorian Age. It is a
reflection of historical facts that is poured into a novel. He tries to communicate his ideas about the unequal treatment towards women. Through the omniscient point of view, Conrad freely comments on his characters, evaluating their action and motives and expressing his views about human life in general. Marlow realizes that women have their own life and world. They have their own ways of doing something and playing their roles in interaction with society. Men have to appreciate that women are 'out of touch with reality of facts'.

Therefore, through this analysis, it is clear that female characters play important roles in interaction with men. The society in the Victorian Age ignored their existence more ever their roles. Conrad reveals that women play their important roles. In men's point of view, women have their own world and roles. Marlow appreciates the right of woman to have her own beautiful world. He allows the light of Kurtz's Fiancée illusion to triumph over the truth. He leads people to the understanding that women play their own roles and they live in their own world that is 'out of touch with reality' that cannot be easily understood by men. They help and fulfill men's needs. They will warn men that there is danger. Marlow already understand about himself and women. He also knows how to treat women properly. When it is confronted to the women who are the victims of the unequal treatment of society, his opinion brings to the concept that he will civilize the 'civilized' world.
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The Plot of Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*

A group of men sit on the deck of a cruising yawl, The Neillie in the Thames estuary, waiting for the turn of the tide. The group of men still sit silently though the late afternoon pass into evening. Marlow is sitting cross-legged like Buddha idol and he begins to tell a story of the blackest and the most barbarous area in Belgian Congo that he has experienced. Marlow is described as an uncommon seaman. Whereas most seamen's minds are 'stay at-home order', Marlow's mind wanders.

A child dream of going to Africa and a desire to find the hardest work in the world motivates Marlow to look for a job as a skipper. Unfortunately, he does not find that job. He even says that he is tired of that game too (looking for a job). Finally he beseeches his aunt to use her influence to find a job. Then, he quickly receives his appointment to replace the company's captain, named Fresleven. To sign the contract he has to go to the city of Brussels. He visits the company office.

In the company office he meets two receptionists who are knitting black wool and do not talk a single word. When he goes out of the office the fat receptionist stared at him. He feels that the glance seems to warn him about something, but he ignores it.

During his farewell with his aunt, he realises that he has been represented by her to the dignitaries. Through this person, he receives his appointment. Then, he expresses it by saying “It's queer how out of touch with truth women are.”

He makes two laps of journey. He makes the first lap of his journey to the
mouth of a big river on a French steamer. The trip takes thirty days. The steamer stops frequently to unload French soldiers and customhouse officers. The second lap takes Marlow to the Central Company station. In the brick-maker cabin Marlow finds a painting by Kurtz that describes a woman who is blindfolded carrying a torch that lighted darkness.

In the inner company barrack, Marlow meets Mr. Kurtz who is described by the officers he meets before as 'the first-class agent' and a 'very remarkable person'. Thought Kurtz is sick, he still has power over the natives. Marlow also meets a savage woman that is loyal to Kurtz. She realizes that Kurtz can not cure, so that she prays to her God with her custom. She accompanies him to his death.

When Kurtz talks to Marlow, he shows his awareness of how uncivilized he has become and how his plans to educate the natives have been reversed. He gives Marlow a packed of letters and manuscript of an article for his fiancée in Belgium. Finally, Kurtz dies among his savages in Congo.

Marlow returns and goes to Belgium to see Kurtz’ fiancée. She still thinks of Kurtz as a powerful man who has gone with a mission. When she asks Marlow what his last word has been said, Marlow tells a lie. He says that the last word he pronounces is – your name”. “I knew it – I was sure!” she says.

Marlow ceases and sits apart, indistinct and silent in the pose of meditating Buddha.
The Writer and His Works

Joseph Teodor Konrad Nalecz Korzeniowski was born in Berdyczew in Poland. He was the son of Apollo Nalecz Korzeniowski and Ewelina Bobrowska. He was the only child of this family.

His mother died in the 1865, when he was seven years old. When he was in Cracow, he told his uncle his desire to be a seaman. He saw the sea for the first time at Venice. Then, he entered French marine service. He left the cold climate of Poland early in his life to travel to the warmer region of the Mediterranean.

After unhappy ending of love affairs and duel with an American, he left Marseilles. He sailed on British steamer Mavis for Constantinopel. He reached England for the first time on June 18, 1878, in Lowestoft. He decided to settle in this country and to adopt language for his literary style.

In the fall of 1889, Joseph Conrad began his first piece of fiction Almayer Folly. He wrote this when he got command of riverboats on the Congo. This novel was published in London in 1895. In the following year, he published An Out Cast of the Islands. He then began to take a new career as writer. During this time, he wrote The Nigger of the Narcissus (1897), Tales of Unrest (1897), and Youth (1898). Heart of Darkness was published in the spring of 1899.

He revisited Poland with his family in 1914. They were caught by the war in August. Courtland Penfield, American Ambassador to Austria helped them to escape and to return to England in November.
He died suddenly of heart attack on August 3, 1924 at Oswald. He was buried at Canterbury.