

From: Lesle Misko

Advanced Placement English

Name \_\_\_\_\_

### **Racism in Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness***

Nigerian novelist and critic Chinua Achebe, in a 1975 lecture at the University of Massachusetts, attacked *Heart of Darkness* as "racist." Chinua's comments can be read on pp. 252-261 in your text, the Norton critical edition of *Heart of Darkness*. Achebe says, "[Conrad] projects the image of Africa as 'the other world,' the antithesis of Europe and therefore of civilization, a place where man's vaulted intelligence and refinement are finally mocked by triumphant bestiality ...." He further says, "[Conrad] is a purveyor of comforting myths [and] a bloody racist...." Finally, Achebe states, "That this simple truth is glossed over in criticisms of his work is due to the fact that white racism against Africa is such a normal way of thinking that its manifestations to completely undetected."

**Essay Assignment:** You will write an essay either agreeing or disagreeing with Achebe's perception that *Heart of Darkness* is racist. You will be assigned to one of these two viewpoints. The goal of your essay is to validate your assigned thesis.

Your essay should be approximately two pages typed and double-spaced. In addition to all of the obvious characteristics of effective expository writing, your essay should include the following:

- 3 "pieces of evidence," two of which include some direct quotation from Conrad's novella, to prove your point correct in-text documentation for quotes and any material which is paraphrased or summarized from the novella
- 1 sentence pattern of those covered in class; it should be identified by number in pencil in the margin

The evaluation rubric for the essay is provided on the back of this sheet for your reference.

Advanced Placement English

Racism in Conrad's Heart of Darkness

Rubric for Essay: Essay should exhibit the following:

1. Introduction (clearly states the thesis; provides a clear direction for the essay; is written to generate reader interest/attentiveness)	5	6	7	8	9	10
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2. Conclusion (brings effective closure to the essay and its thesis)	5	6	7	8	9	10
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3. Style (events in novella are stated in present tense verbs; third person is utilized; sentence structure is varied; transitional words/phrases are used to connect ideas; ideas are expressed in a concise manner)	5	6	7	8	9	10
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4. Conventions (spelling; grammar; punctuation; usage; paragraphing; capitalization, etc.)	5	6	7	8	9	10
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5. Sentence Pattern (at least 1 is correctly crafted and identified by number in the margin)	5	6	7	8	9	10
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6. 3 specifics are provided as evidence in support of the assigned thesis; at least 2 are quotes	10	12	14	16	18	20
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7. quotes/paraphrases/summary of novella has correct in-text documentation	5	6	7	8	9	10
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8. Persuasiveness (essay succeeds in convincing the reader that its thesis is, in fact, correct)	10	12	14	16	18	20
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