Outline Lecture Eleven—Imperialism’s “Heart of Darkness”

Key Focus:
1) Imperialism in theory vs. imperialism in practice
2) “Superstructure” of imperialism vs. its socio-economic legacy in Africa

I) The Scramble for Africa 1875-1900
   a) Averting Economic Crisis at Home
      i) Targeting African continent by 1870s
      ii) Berlin West Africa Conference 1884-1885
   b) Types of Colonial Administration
      i) Frederick Lugard (1858-1945)—Doctrine of “indirect rule”
      ii) King Leopold II’s “Congo Free State”—Direct rule model
         (1) Between 1890-1908 resulted in the death of at least 4 million Africans
         (2) Roger Casement, British Consul to Congo

II) Mapping the “Heart of Darkness”
   a) The Testimony of Edmund Morel (1873-1924)
      i) Profits of the Anglo-Belgian India Rubber Company
      ii) Extraction of rubber through military force
         (1) “An armed soldier behind every producer”
         (2) Use of cannibalistic tribes: the Batetla, Manyema, and Asante
   b) “Carnival of massacre”
      i) Congo river as a heavily militarized zone of butchery
      ii) Nature of recruitment
         (1) De-humanizing the recruits
      iii) Extortion of quotas through terror
         (1) King Leopold’s explanation to the European press
         iv) Morel’s verdict
            (1) Europeans grafting their own “savagery” onto the heart and mind of the Africans
            (2) Africa as the ruthless playground for Europe’s unbridled “id” vs. the moral rationalizations of its “ego”
   c) Joseph Conrad’s Psychoanalysis of Imperialism
      i) Conrad’s personal experience with the imperialist project
      ii) Deconstructing the “Civilized/Savage” Distinction
         (1) The ominous opening of Marlow’s narrative
            (a) “This too has been one of the dark places of the earth”
         (2) The Thames as the “navel” of imperialism
            (a) “Umbilically” connects the fate of both empire and colonies
      iii) The “Heart of Darkness” at home
         (1) The “home-office” of the Company in Brussels
         (2) The veil of self-delusion
            (a) The aunt who believes in the Company’s “civilizing mission”
            (b) Kurtz’s “Intended”
      iv) Kurtz as the incarnation of imperialism
         (1) Highest product of European “civilization”
(2) “International Society for the Suppression of Savage Customs”
(3) Kurtz’s “voracious aspect”—the insatiable greed of imperialism
v) Kurtz’s final pronouncement of “The horror! The horror!”