3. Congo reform and the crisis of racist representation

> "In no part of the world can be found such painful differences between promise and performance, grandiloquent phrasing and sordid and imperfect achievement".[1]
> Edgar Canisius

Racism has been defined as the "social construction of natural disparity". In this sense, to denaturalise and historicise the set of stereotypes and pseudo-scientific classifications that racism uses to hierarchise humanity and create the 'otherness' and 'inferiority' that these categories claim to represent always has to be a key agenda of racism analysis and critique.[2] The imperial literature of the Welsh-American journalist and empire-builder Henry M. Stanley is a particularly rewarding object for researching the cultural production of racist 'knowledge' that eventually consolidated into a racist regime of representation that remains discursively potent today. As *chapter 3.1* reveals, Stanley's tremendously influential writing and lecturing about his four Central African expeditions between 1871 and 1890 composed and popularised the modern myth of 'the Congo' and 'the Congolese' as the most radical expression of African alterity. At the same time, the Congo narrative produced a similarly artificial yet potent pseudo-identity for an imagined community of 'civilised' and 'white' Europe through differentiation from "Darkest Africa" and the story of its confrontation and submission through the heroic, imperial explorer.

However, when the deplorable condition of the Congo Free State became notorious, more and more observers painfully realised the inconsistency between imperial promises and actual performance in Central Africa, as the above-reproduced words of the German-American Edgar Canisius, the former agent of the Free State and the Société Anversoise who turned into a fierce critic of Léopold's colony, suggest. As *chapter 3.2* claims, the international Congo reform movement perceived a broad sense of betrayal through the Congo Scandal. The allegation of a 'corrosion of alterity' through the brutalisation of the civilised colonial state, the realisation of civilisation's weakness

1 Edgar Canisius, *A Campaign Amongst Cannibals*, incorporated in Guy Burrows, *The Curse of Central Africa*, 63–178 (London: R. A. Everett & Co.), here 63.

2 See Hund, *Rassismus*, subtitle ('disparity' [translation F.L]); see Weiß, "Racist Symbolic Capital", 51 (research agenda).

through the menace of a 'triumph of the wilderness', and the emergence of a 'civilised savagery' as a signifier of a profound aberration of Western modernity were interpreted as appalling signs of a crisis of racist representation and 'white' and 'civilised' culture.

Next, *chapter 3.3* shows that not the proposed remedy was not the actual 'liberation' of the oppressed population in Central Africa, which the reform movement never achieved nor aspired to, but the establishment of a humanitarian liberation narrative in which 'civilised white saviours' rescued 'helpless victims' from their 'savage perpetrators'. This racist dramatic triangle of the humanitarian imagination re-established the discursive boundaries between 'civilisation' and 'barbarism' and restored the power of European 'light' over African 'darkness'. Finally, the self-declared victory of the saviours in the redemption of the Congolese symbolised the ultimate prevalence of idealism regarding the worrying tendencies of an overly materialistic modernity. Thus, the Congo reform movement successfully vanquished the crisis of racist representation beneath the Congo Scandal and achieved its deeper aim: the redemption of the redeemers.

3.1 'Darkest Africa', Brightest Europe: Stanley's imagined Congo and the promise of its submission

In contrast to the first generation of Central African explorers, who were medics, traders or military men, Stanley was a man of words. As a trained journalist who was treasured for his vivid reports from the 'Indian Wars', Abyssinia and the Spanish Civil War, the most iconic representative of 19th-century 'heroic' African 'explorers' did not produce elaborated scientific tracts. Instead, he combined imageries of tropical landscape and exotic peoples with spectacular accounts of battles and adventures into dramatic and bestselling literature oscillating in form between travel report, adventure novel and Gothic fiction.[3]

Thus established, the Congo narrative contained two opposing poles. On the one side were the colonised 'space' and 'people'. Stanley indelibly inscribed into the European collective consciousness the idea that 'Darkest Africa' was a 'prehistoric' place of rich but remorseless 'nature' fraught with a horrifying spirit of 'evil' and inhabited by exceptionally 'savage' Africans and 'fanatic' Arabs. This discursively ascribed identity for the new territorial construction and the people attached to it defined the European image of 'the Congo' and the 'Congolese' for generations to come. Always at the centre of attention was, however, the character of the 'explorer' and 'empire-builder'. Stanley's 'heroic' confrontation with 'Darkest Africa' evoked a similarly powerful myth of 'Brightest Europe'. The sensational accounts of 'civilising' and 'conquering' the alienated Congolese other through a single heroic 'white man' contained the discursive promise of Europe's

3 See Stanley, *Livingstone* [which described the search for the 'lost' Scottish missionary form 1871 to 1872]; Stanley, *Dark Continent* [which recounts the quest for the sources of the Nile and the descent of the Congo River between 1874 and 1877]; Stanley, *The Congo* [which reports on the establishment of the colonial stations, towns and roads that laid the material foundation for the Congo Free State between 1879 and 1884]; Stanley, *Darkest Africa* [which retells the fate of the relief operation for the besieged Soudanese governor Emin Pasha between 1886 and 1890]. For Stanley's reception in the media, see chapter 5.1.

cultural and 'racial' superiority and its entitlement to global imperial supremacy, and to the tremendous resources of Central Africa in particular.

The people of 'Darkest Africa'

The formation of stereotypes, prejudices and rumours about a specific group of people is a fundamental aspect of racist discourse. Stanley's imperial gaze on the Congolese resorts to traditional stereotypes from the long history of European racism that had been only recently concatenated in the myth of the 'Dark Continent'. His claim of encountering 'savages', 'monsters' and 'devils' on his 'discovery' expeditions relegated the inhabitants of the Congo Basin to the lowest scale and degree of humanity. Slightly above this image of radically subhuman beings, Stanley's racist depiction ordered the semi-cultured and orientalised 'Arabs'.

Both the 'African Congolese' and the 'Arab Congolese' were subsumed under the notion of "the coloured races of Inner Africa". The 'race stereotype' combines natural and cultural arguments and insinuates that nature had both capacitated humans differently and marked them accordingly. As a radical naturalist determinism based on the claim of the inherent and unchangeable inferiority of certain human groups, the race stereotype primordially separated these from allegedly superior types of the human species or even excluded them from humanity as such. In his last book, Stanley fully established an elaborate racial taxonomy of the people of Central Africa. The veteran traveller identified "five distinct types", hierarchically ordered from the lowest Pigmy, to Negro, Semi-Ethiopic, Ethiopic and Arabs, as well as another great "number modified by amalgamation of one with another".[4]

Stanley then explains the cultural history of Africa as a natural process of 'racial' expansionism and conflict. The first two groups were defined as the true "indigenous races" of Africa who had been, for 50 centuries, under the pressure of "waves of migration" by "barbarous multitudes", yet from "superior races". These superior "Semitic tribes" of a "Caucasian type" had "emigrated from Asia across the Red Sea and settled on the coast, and in the uplands of Abyssinia, once known as Ethiopia". On their way further to the South and East, these 'Ethiopians' allegedly formed superior 'tribes' and nations along their course from the Gulf of Aden to the Cape of Good Hope, to the "vast improvement" of the cultural standard of the "old primitive races of Africa". The remaining indigenous 'races' were forced to retreat into the jungles of Central Africa or were either "thoroughly extinguished" or "conquered".[5]

In the latter case, they were either integrated as an inferior caste or absorbed and assimilated, as in most of South and Central Africa. Afterwards, the physical distinctiveness of racial groups allegedly soon collapsed under the social reality of "miscegenation". The 'Semitic' became "tainted with negro blood", Stanley remarked, and "produced a mixture of races". As a result, in the Southern, Eastern and Northern fringes of the Congo, Stanley occasionally identified "Caucasian heads and faces" and even "graceful-

4 Stanley, *Darkest Africa*, Vol. 2, 398 [footnote]; see chapter 1.

5 Ibid., 385 ('emigrated', 'conquered'), 387 ('superior races', 'Caucasian'), 388 ('barbarous'), 389 ('indigenous', 'vast', 'primitive', 'extinguished'), 398 [footnote] ('waves').

looking herdsman with European features". This process of displacement and miscegenation had allegedly much more recently been repeated by two 'waves' of migration by Omani 'Arabs' to Zanzibar, who had pushed further into the interior of the African continent starting in the 19th century to establish slave and ivory trading networks, plantation systems, towns and conquest states.[6]

However, in the 'jungles' of the inner Congo, the last retreat of the 'primitive' African 'races', "pure negroes", or at least tribes "so nearly allied to the true negro type as to bear classification as negroid", allegedly prevailed. It is there where "the negroid features" defined as "the flat nose, the sunken ridge, and the projecting of the lower part of the face" were allegedly still most perceivable.[7] On a strip of twelve-degree longitude "from Equatorville on the Congo to Indesura on the Upper Ituri", and thus roughly embracing the entire Congo Basin, the people "do not show a difference of race" and are "all purely negroid in character". Here, it is claimed, "we have hundreds of tribes bearing a most close resemblance to one another", both in 'cultural' as in 'racial' status. A traveller would not only marvel at "the similarity of dress and equipments, but also of complexion". Small variations might occur, but "in the main, I see no difference whatever", Stanley asserted.[8] These were the true 'Congolese', he argued, visually the most "degraded in feature and form" and inherently created as inferior human beings. "[W]e must remember", Stanley argued, "that all the tribes of the forest are naturally the most vicious and degraded of the human race on the face of the earth".[9]

Hence, Stanley ethnographically divided the Congo into a 'negroid', hence radically inferior, interior and a borderland of 'mixed races' improved through 'Semitic' and 'Caucasian' influences. Thus, his late work exposed the overwhelming influence of the increasingly popular racial thinking that had been imagined in the context of early European colonialism and the experience of transatlantic slavery, turned into a scientifically accepted form by the philosophers of enlightenment, and evolved to a paradigm in science and humanity towards the close of the 19th century.[10]

Initially, however, Stanley's work showed a certain restraint with such biological determinism. In his early travelogues, he rejected recent speculations that the 'coloured races' of Africa were "simply the 'link' between the simian and the European" or that "the negro knows neither love nor affection" as the "absurd prejudices" and "selfdeception of the civilized", for instance.[11] It was a "necessity", he emphasised, that the "white stranger" admitted "that negroes are men, like himself, though of a different colour" and that their "tastes and feelings" are "in common with all human nature".[12] Neither "his colour, nor any physiognomy should debar him with me from any rights he could fairly claim as a man", Stanley postulated.[13]

6 Ibid., 385 ('miscegenation', 'tainted', 'produced'), 386 ('Caucasian'), 387 ('graceful-looking').
7 Ibid., 385 ('pure', 'allied'), 387 ('features', 'nose')
8 Ibid., 97 (›in the main‹), 98 (›Equatorville‹, ›do not show‹, ›purely‹, ›hundreds‹).
9 Ibid., 88 ('remember'), 387 ('feature and form').
10 See Hund, "Negative Societalisation", 59.
11 Stanley, *Dark Continent*, Vol. 1, 46 ('link', love'), 47 ('absurd').
12 Stanley, *Livingstone*, 9.
13 Ibid., 10.

Nonetheless, these were not anti-racist statements, but rather expressions of internal controversies within European racist discourses concerning different evaluations of the significance of cultural and biological influences in the hierarchical ordering of humanity. Stanley assured his readers that he was not "taking a too bright view of things" and was far from questioning the inferior status of the inhabitants of Central Africa. Still, he requested that such judgment should be "free from prejudices of caste, colour, or nationality".[14] Instead, Stanley's 'cultural' or 'historicist' racism established an identity for 'the Congolese' and the 'Arabs' that focused on the cultural incompleteness and historical immaturity of the alienated other. To define the image of 'the Congolese', the pioneer of European imperialism fundamentally relied on the 'savage' stereotype, one of the oldest patterns of racism, and in Stanley's case, it was used almost synonymously with notions of the 'barbarian' and the 'primitive'. "Civilisation, so often baffled, stands railing at the barbarism and savagery that presents such an impenetrable front to its efforts", Stanley once marvelled. "[A]t this late hour there still emerges into light the great heart of Africa with its countless millions without the lightest veneer of artificialism over man's natural state", he continued – the "African savages".[15]

Chapter 1 has introduced the multifaceted and ambivalent character of the savage stereotype. For one, this pattern of racist classification asserts an asynchronous historical time and cultural advancement. The 'late hour' of 'civilised' time that Stanley mentioned apparently had no validity in the 'heart of Africa'. For the millions of African 'savages', clocks run at a different pace, if they tick at all. These, it is claimed, had failed to move forward and upward on the unilinear timeline of history as quickly as the 'progressive' Europeans. In its temporal and historical dimension, the 'savage' stereotype is based on the idea that societies and cultures 'progress' over time through stadia of human development to 'civilised' perfection; just like individuals, who mature from child to adult. Even though they were not necessarily biological inferior, the full human disposition of Stanley's Congolese 'savages' had (still) not developed. The 'backward' people in the interior of the Congo had allegedly "just emerged the Iron Epoch" and had been "left behind by the improvements of over 4000 years". Stanley urged his readers to recall "the origin of his own race", the "Briton before St. Augustine", the "wild Caledonian", and compare the "circumstances and surroundings of Primitive Man" in Europe's past to the contemporary status of the Africans. The Africans of the 19th century, it was implied, were the European's 'contemporary ancestors'.[16]

Moreover, the further Stanley approached the Congolese forests, the further were his readers taken on a racist journey back in time. "[I]n the centre of Africa" the 'savage' stereotype finally became all-embracing. There were "savages before you, savages behind you, savages on either side of you", it is proclaimed.[17] Here, deep in the Congolese 'jungles', lived the "oldest types of primeval man, descended from the outcasts of the

14 Stanley, *Dark Continent*, Vol. 1, 48 ('free'), 49 ('too bright').

15 Stanley, *The Congo*, Vol. 2, 373. On the analytical distinction between accentuation of 'historicism' (with circles mainly around "claims of historical immaturity") and 'naturalism' (which focuses on "inherent racial inferiority") in racist discourses and state practices, see David T. Goldberg, *The Racial State* (Malden: Blackwell Publishing, 2002), 74–79, here particularly 74 ('claims', 'inherent').

16 Stanley, *Dark Continent*, Vol. 1, 48; see chapter 1.

17 Ibid., Vol. 2, 258.

earliest ages, the Ishmaels of the primitive race", Stanley stated, the so-called Congolese 'pigmies' or 'dwarfs'.[18]

This historical immaturity and incomplete humanity of the Congolese expressed itself in overlapping and at times contradictory aggregations of savagery. The 'natural savage' was believed to dwell in a 'state of nature', a philosophical model which had been conceptualised as "kind of a human degree zero" prior to the development of intellectual, moral or social consciousness. What has been established as a hypothetical state for Europeans, however, was considered a real condition for non-European, in this case, Congolese, 'savages'. The absence of any civilising 'veneer' over the human 'natural state' that Stanley assessed was expressed on the one hand in the constantly accentuated "shameless exposure" of nakedness, and on the other hand in a limited human interference with the surrounding nature. "Populous though the river banks are", Stanley once claimed, "they are but slightly disturbed by labour". This allegation of a lack of effort and ability to achieve emancipation and alienation from nature, and hence historical progress, characterises the second central dimension of the traditional 'savage' stereotype.[19]

In sharp contrast to older American and Pacific notions of savagery, however, the naked bodies of the Congolese were generally pictured without erotic desire. Occasionally, Stanley praised the appearance of an outstanding woman,[20] but mostly he asserted the lack of beauty (according to European standards) among the womankind of Central Africa. The bodies of the savages in the Congo were mostly "unlovable to look at", and some were even "intolerably ugly", Stanley announced. In 'Darkest Africa', the European writer located "the most degraded, unpresentable type it is possible to conceive".[21] Ostensibly, the 'savage' stereotype had lost much of its older ambivalence on the way across the Atlantic. Congolese 'savagery' was hardly suitable for romantic projections of an unalienated and happy 'Golden Age'. There was "no one feature about them that even extravagant charity could indicate as elevating them into the category of noble savages".[22]

Moreover, the Congolese "barbarian" was "almost stupefied with brutish ignorance" and possessed "beyond doubt all the vices of a people still fixed deeply in barbarism". The traditional vices that racist discourse applied to savages included polygamy, human sacrifice and especially anthropophagy. Although Stanley admitted that he saw only "circumstantial evidence", he accepted it as "indubitable proofs" of the persistence of cannibalism. While not every Congolese community might be anthropophagic, the

18 Stanley, *Darkest Africa*, Vol. 2, 40.

19 Nederveen Pieterse, *White on Black*, 33 ('zero'); Stanley, *The Congo*, Vol. 2, 100 ('shameless'), 373 ('slightest'); Stanley, *Darkest Africa*, Vol. 1, 155–56 ('Populous'). Also see Hund, *Rassismus*, 62–67.

20 See for instance the account of Queen Gankabi in Stanley, *The Congo*, Vol. 1, 425. However, Stanley was quick to declare her an exception: "Probably I have seen 200,000 African women during my many years of travel in the Dark Continent, and I cannot remember to have seen more than half-a-dozen such women".

21 Stanley, *Dark Continent*, Vol. 2, 212, 74 ('unlovable', 'ugly'); also see ibid., Vol. 1, 308 and Stanley, *Livingstone*, 205.

22 Stanley, *Dark Continent*, Vol. 1, 308 ('noble'). On the ambivalences of the savage stereotype, see chapter 1.

Congo was still essentially presented as a murderous "cannibal world" to the European and American audience. "For the most part", Stanley claimed, the Congo Basin was "peopled by ferocious savages, devoted to abominable cannibalism and wanton murder of inoffensive people".[23]

This 'ferocious and cannibalistic savage' became the central character of the Congo narrative. On Stanley's epic journey down the descending Congo stream starting in November 1876, caricatures of blood-thirsty warriors, "hideously be-painted for war" and "launching spears and shooting arrows" allegedly "lined the banks, beat their drums, shouted their war-cries, and performed for our edification the gymnastics of a true aboriginal fight". In its 'simplicity' and 'backwardness', this was described as a fascinating exotic spectacle for the traveller, but also a deadly menace. In the middle of the continent, his travelogues essentially consisted only of reoccurring descriptions of "persistent attacks night and day" by the "furies of savageland".[24]

From the 'ferocious and cannibalistic warrior', it was only a small discursive step to the image of the 'wild and bestial savage', which finally called into question the humanness of the 'Congolese', notwithstanding that the younger Stanley had once explicitly rejected any 'missing link' speculations. Nowhere was this as explicit as in Stanley's crushing judgement of the so-called 'pigmies' or 'dwarfs'. All "aborigines" of the Congolese forests "are wild, utterly savage, and incorrigibly vindictive", Stanley argued; however, the "dwarfs […] are worse still, far worse". The 'pigmies' had "eternally" lived "the life of human beasts in morass and fen and jungle wild", a life barely countable as human. Stanley also inscribed this social existence, little above the level of animal life of persons insulted as "human parasites", into their physiognomy through descriptions of a "fell over the body [that] was almost furry".[25] However, other 'savage' inhabitants of the Congo Basin beyond 'pigmies' were also described as "living the life of a beast" or labelled as "human beasts of prey in the midst of Primitive Africa". At times, when encountering some of the "most degraded" 'beings', even Stanley's commitment to monogenism risked breaking: "[A]nd though I knew quite well that some thousands of years ago the beginning of this wretched humanity and myself were one and the same, a sneaking disinclination to believe it possessed me strongly", he told his readers.[26]

This process of radical dehumanisation was also implied in recourses to categories of 'monsters' and 'devils', even older patterns of racist classification, that supplement the multi-layered 'savage' stereotype. Since antiquity, the borders of the known world had been populated in the European imagination by 'monstrous' and 'wild' creatures that existed on the fringes between human and animal life.[27] Stanley's conviction that

23 Ibid., Vol. 1, 48 ('vices'), 80 ('stupefied'); ibid., Vol. 2, 274 ('circumstantial'), 282 ('cannibal world'); Stanley to Albert Jung, 7 January 1879, quoted in Stanley, *The Congo*, Vol. 1, 29–32, here 29 ('ferocious').

24 Stanley, *Dark Continent*, Vol. 2, 159 ('launching'), 261 ('hideously'), 277 ('lined', 'persistent', 'furies').

25 Stanley to A.L. Bruce, 4 April 1888, reproduced in 'Letter from Mr Stanley, *The Scotsman*, 2 April 1889, 5 ('incorrigibly'); Stanley, *Darkest Africa*, Vol. 2, 40 ('fell'), 41 ('eternally', 'morass'), 103 ('parasites').

26 Stanley, *Dark Continent*, Vol. 1, 80 ('living'), ibid., Vol. 2, 72–73 ('degraded'), 73 (wretched humanity'), 466 ('human beasts').

27 See Wulf D. Hund, "Rassismus," in *Enzyklopädie Philosophie*, ed. Hans J. Sandkühler, vol. 3, 2nd ext. ed. (Hamburg: Meiner, 2010), 2192.

"something strange must surely lie" in the land of "mystery and fable", maybe "the anthropoids, the pigmies, and the blanket-eared men", noticeably recalled the mythical creatures established by antique authors like Herodotus or Pliny, the Elder and as expressions of medieval legends of Europe's own 'wild men' and 'dwarfs'. Stanley did not doubt that the contemporary 'Pigmies' in the Congo were representatives and direct descendants of the fabled creatures Greek and Carthaginian 'explorers' had described 26 or even 40 centuries before his encounter.[28]

Moreover, Stanley added motifs of the Gothic, a favourite genre of the Victorian neoromantic literature, and patterns of a 'demonological racism', widespread in European thinking since medieval times, to his imagination of the Congolese. By deploying Christian dichotomies, this religious racism divided the world into 'good and evil', 'light and darkness', 'life and death'.[29] In its most drastic form, the demonological racism Stanley deployed declared the Congolese to be "screaming black demons" and armed "devils". Like the 'vampire', one of the most popular villains in gothic fiction, the threatening Congolese 'cannibals' feed on the living. In addition, descriptions of human skulls, bones or "necklaces of human teeth" "provoked morbid ideas" and pushed the Congolese towards the realm of the dead.[30]

However, between the totality of good and evil, demonological racism leaves room for 'sinners', 'pagans' and 'heathens'. Thus labelled were those Congolese who were covered in "deep stains of bloodred sin", but whose "moral darkness" was believed could eventually be overcome by the Christian missionary.[31] Likewise, 'historicist' racism conceded to the 'savages' the capacity of progress under the tutelage of the civilised master. Stanley explicitly rejected the idea "that the African savages are irreclaimable" on various occasions: "However incorrigibly fierce in temper, detestable in their disposition, and bestial in habits these wild tribes may be to-day, there is not one of them which does not contain germs, and by whose means at some future date civilisation may spread", he argued, given that, "once brought in contact with the European", the 'natural', 'ferocious', and 'bestial savage' allegedly "becomes docile enough", accepted his inferior status and was willing to learn. "[H]e is awed by a consciousness of his own immense inferiority, and imbued with a vague hope that he may also rise in time to the level of this superior being", Stanley assured his readers in Europe and the United States. In the short term, under fierce discipline and "judicious management" of a European, this 'docile savage' can "be made good, obedient servants". After being colonised, under training and as

28 Stanley, *Dark Continent*, Vol. 2, 126–127 ('strange', 'mystery', 'anthropoids'); see Stanley, *Darkest Africa*, Vol. 2, 41 (Carthaginian).

29 Traditionally, demonological racism had targeted especially Jews and Muslims but was in the course of the colonial expansion also implied with respect to Native Americans or Africans, especially by Christian missionaries. See Hund, *Rassismus*, 53–54.

30 Stanley, *Dark Continent*, Vol. 1, 229 ('demons', 'devils'); ibid., Vol. 2, 288 ('necklaces'. 'morbid'). For the analogy between the gothic vampire and the savage cannibal, see chapter 3 in Howard L. Malchow, *Gothic Images of Race in Nineteenth-Century Britain* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1996), 124–66.

31 Stanley, *Darkest Africa*, Vol. 2, 332 ('deep'), Stanley, *The Congo*, Vol. 1, 497 ('moral'). Also see Hund, *Rassismus*, 58.

"subjects of some enlightened power" they will be "as powerful for the good of the Dark Continent, as they threaten, under the present condition of things, to be for its evil".[32]

This alleged docility was closely related to the image of the 'childish savage'. Even a powerful Central African king displayed the "joyous moods […] of youth" or a "child's unstudied ease of manner", Stanley noted after his encounter with the Emperor of Uganda. The "barbarous man […] is like a child which has not yet acquired the faculty of articulation", it is claimed. He is "very superstitious, easily inclined to despair, and easily giving ear to vague, unreasonable fears", but also ready to accept the 'white man' as his fatherly master.[33]

Alongside and above the African 'savages', 'monsters', 'sinners and 'devils', a second group populated Stanley's Congo literature, the so-called 'Zanzibari Arabs'. As mentioned above, the category of the 'Arab Congolese' for Stanley described no clearly distinguishable 'ethnic' or 'racial' group in Eastern Africa. Instead, it was imposed of a variety of East African elites of the Muslim faith that controlled most of the Eastern region of the territory claimed by Léopold for the Congo Free State in 1885. Through widespread "miscegenation" with the local African population, the descendants of Zanzibari immigrants could "scarcely be distinguished from the aborigines" in Eastern Africa, Stanley had claimed in 1878.[34] What has prevailed, though, were essential 'Arab' customs and the Muslim religion. Culturally, the "Arab never changes", it is claimed. He is, Stanley wrote, "as much of an Arab" in Eastern Africa "as at Muscat or Bagdad"; "wherever he goes to live", he carries with him "his religion, his long robe, his shirt, his watta, and his dagger".[35]

This 'Oriental' culture elevated the 'Arabs' in Eastern Africa to an intermediate stage of cultural evolution between the 'savage Africans' and 'civilised Europeans'. Hence, mainly cultural factors such as naming, clothing, the Muslim faith, but also economic wealth, social status and technological developments such as superior weaponry, plantation systems and literacy distinguished the 'Arab Congolese' from the allegedly 'uncultured' 'African Congolese'. Since every East African of Muslim faith could, by this logic be classified as 'Arab', the stereotype was in thus a cultural ascription that discursively separated the existing pre-colonial, Muslim civilisation in the Eastern Congo from its African environment and defined it as relics of foreign, non-African influence.

In more detailed elaborations of the so-called 'Arab culture', Stanley revealed the ambiguousness of European Orientalism, which could disguise its inferiorisation of the Eastern behind acknowledgements of the "'greatness of Oriental civilizations", and combined warnings about the "terror" and "devastation" of Islam with "the escapism of sexual fantasy".[36] Likewise, Stanley's image of the 'Arab' tended between romantic admiration for the rich Eastern culture and hysterical fear of fanatical Muslims styled in recourse to traditional racist stereotypes of the 'barbarian' and the 'devil'. In the first

32 Stanley, *Dark Continent*, Vol. 1, 47 ('servants'), 52 ('judicious'), 53 ('subjects'), 80 ('docile', 'awed').
33 Ibid., 195 ('joyous', 'ease'), 80 ('barbarous', 'superstitious').
34 Ibid., 44 ('miscegenation', 'scarcely').
35 Stanley, *Livingstone*, 5; also see Stanley, *Dark Continent*, Vol. 1, 26 and 43.
36 Edward Said, *Orientalism* (London: Penguin Books, 2003 [1978]), 40 ('greatness'), 59 ('terror', 'devastation'), 190 ('escapism').

dimension, Stanley marvelled that the "sensualism of the Mohammedans is as prominent here [in East Africa] as in the Orient" and that the "conduct of an Arab gentleman is perfect". Moreover, he described at length icons of exotic wealth, such as "Persian carpets, and most luxurious bedding, complete tea and coffee services, and magnificently carved dishes". The "essential feature of every Arab's household" in Eastern Africa "as in Persia, Afghanistan, and Turkey" was, of course, the "harem".[37]

At the same time, this romantic admiration was embittered by negative assessments about the many "moral blemishes" that are equally defined as essential 'Arab' features. This ambiguity was already inscribed into the myth of the harem, the central stereotype of the Orientalist imagination, which was a fascinating place of unrestrained sexuality for Europeans but was entangled with notions of despotism, slavery and polygamy. Moreover, Stanley excoriates the same aforementioned 'Arab gentlemen' as unreliable due to tropes of their "true Oriental spirit of exaggeration" and "uncontrollable desire to make more profit". They can be "fanatics" (although on Zanzibar less than in Arabia) and are committed to blood revenge; one is reminded.[38]

The fluctuating emphasis between these two poles of the 'Arab' stereotype in Stanley's Congo narrative closely followed the changing material relation between Europeans and Muslims in Eastern Africa. In the early days of strategic-political cooperation between European explorers and Muslim caravan leaders, Stanley's travelogues strongly inclined towards generous descriptions.[39] "Naturally, they have the vices of their education, blood, and race", Stanley penned about the 'Arab'. However, these vices are seldom present. Generally, they are "sociable, rank, good-natured" and, of the utmost importance, "hospitable" towards European guests.[40]

Stanley particularly praised, in a most cordial tone, the famous ivory and slave trader known as Tippu Tip, who had assisted him, like Cameron and Livingstone before, on his approach towards the interior of the Congo Basin. He was "a remarkable man" and "almost courtier-like in his manner", one can read, with "a fine intelligent face" and the impressive appearance and charisma of "an Arab gentleman in very comfortable circumstances". That Tip's comfortable circumstances were based on exploiting slave plantations and human trafficking was only marginalia in Stanley's second travelogue.[41]

37 Stanley, *Dark Continent*, Vol. 1, 46 ('conduct'); Stanley, *Livingstone*, 265 ('sensualism', 'Persian carpets', etc.).

38 Stanley, *Dark Continent*, Vol. 1, 46 ('blemishes', 'fanatics'), 55 ('exaggeration'); Stanley, *Darkest Africa*, Vol. 2, 17 ('uncontrollable'). On the motif of the harem, see Reina Lewis, *Rethinking Orientalism* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2004), here particularly 96.

39 The early European 'exploration' of Central Africa since the mid-19th century would have been impossible without the assistance of Muslim traders, who were willing to sell their geographical knowledge and the comforts and security of their caravans to the European travellers.

40 Stanley, *Dark Continent*, Vol. 1, 45.

41 Ibid., Vol. 2, 95 ('remarkable', 'courtier-like', 'fine'), 96 ('circumstances'). In 1887, Stanley even made Tip a Free State governor at Stanley Falls in an attempt to consolidate European interests with the Muslim regents in Eastern Congo. Additionally, the wealthy merchant and regional potentate once more assisted and partially accompanied Stanley on the Emin Pasha Relief Expedition. See chapter 2.1.

Nevertheless, the political-economic relation between European colonisers and Muslims in Africa had already begun to deteriorate radically. Insurrections in German East Africa, rising conflicts in Eastern Congo, and of course, the Mahdi rising in Soudan had evolved into hotspots of resistance against the consolidation of European power on African soil. In Stanley's last major book on the Congo, tropes of Oriental fanaticism and the motif of a Muslim threat to Christian civilisation came to the fore, embodied by characters like "fervid and fanatical warriors" or the "ferocious fanatics who had already eradicated every vestige of civilization from the Soudan". No longer hospitable and rich gentlemen, but the "Mahdist hordes advancing with frantic cries and thrilling enthusiasm crying out, 'Yallah, Yallah'" now haunted Stanley's imagination of the 'Arabs'.[42]

Moreover, the subject of the 'Arab' slave trade had shifted more to the centre of Stanley's narrative. As early as 1885, he had more severely criticised the "vast sacrifice of human life, of all this unspeakable misery" of the slave trade in the Congo, caused by "[n]othing, but the indulgence of an old Arab's 'wolfish, bloody, starved, and ravenous instincts'". Although Stanley distanced himself from the "crusader style" preached by the French Cardinal Lavigerie, the impetus of anti-Muslim rhetoric in the upcoming abolitionist debates in Europe still altered Stanley's representation of the 'Arabs' in Central Africa.[43]

Even the wealthy 'Arab gentlemen' he had once praised in the highest tones were now rejected as blood-lusty slavers. "Every tusk, piece and scrap in the possession of an Arab trader has been steeped and dyed in blood", Stanley remarked, and "if due justice were dealt to them, [they] should be made to sweat out the remainder of their piratical lives in the severest penal servitude".[44] In this group, Stanley now explicitly included his old ally Tip, whom he blamed for the disastrous fate of the 'Emin Pasha relief expedition' and accused of deliberately breaking his contract due to a 'typical' Arab lust for profit. The fragile alliance soon collapsed, and thus the fragile understanding between the Free State and the Muslim rulers of the Eastern Congo. Hence, by 1890, two years before the war between the Free State and the Congolese 'Arabs' broke out, the image of the fanatical Muslim warrior and brutal slaver had almost completely replaced the earlier admiration for a rich Oriental culture in the portrayal of the 'Arab Congolese'.[45]

In summary, Stanley's imperial literature reduced millions of people to undifferentiated representatives of stereotypes about the 'black', 'savage', 'devilish' and 'monstrous' Africans and 'semi-cultured' yet 'fanatical' 'Arabs'. As such, far from establishing a social identity for inhabitants of the Congo, Stanley's representation discursively stipulated their "social death", a process that has been defined as a "hallmark" of racist oppression. Denied any social and cultural differentiation, as mere representatives of racist stereotypes and classifications, the colonised multitude of Central Africa was relegated to a homogenous social status beneath any member of any social class of the dominant group, in this case, the imperial societies.[46]

42 Stanley, *Darkest Africa*, Vol. 1, 112 ('fervid', 'hordes'); ibid., Vol. 2, 459 ('fanatics').
43 Stanley, *The Congo*, Vol. 2, 150 ('indulgence'); Stanley, *Darkest Africa*, Vol. 1, 240 ('crusading').
44 Ibid.
45 Ibid., Vol. 2, 17; also see chapter 2.1.
46 Allen, *Invention of the White Race*, Vol. 1, 32 ('social death', 'hallmark'); also see chapter 1.

The space of 'Darkest Africa'

While racism is a fundamentally social phenomenon, the act of imagining, measuring, mapping and classifying the colonial space was a similarly essential aspect of colonial discourse. However, the spatial identity that Stanley's literature allocated to the new territorial invention of 'the Congo' always described a social space. It further obscured the region as 'Darkest Africa' as much as it mirrored, underpinned and reinforced the alienation of its inhabitants.

In its spatial dimension, the Congolese darkness had a 'physical', a 'metaphysical' and an 'epistemological' aspect. As a historic epistemological condition, it was the absence of the 'light' of Christian civilisation that obscured the "Dark Unknown" in the interior of the African continent. Like the German philosopher G.W.F. Hegel, who had claimed in 1830, at the eve of the new explorations, that Africa had been completely untouched by the "Light of Spirit", Stanley defined the Congo as wrapped in "night-black clouds of mystery and fable" that had thus far insulated the region from the enlightened and enlightening European gaze.[47]

Thus, the epistemological darkness of the Congo found its complementary expression in its creation as a "space occupied by total blankness on our [European] maps". Stanley's claim that the Congo was a "region justly marked with whiteness on the best maps" emphasised his conviction that the lack of European information about "the Unknown" was equivalent to the absence of reason and meaning per se.[48]

Stanley knew of course, that the "leagues upon leagues of unexplored lands, populous with scores of tribes, of whom not a whisper has reached the people of other continents" that he imagined on his path when he first crossed Central Africa were only 'unknown' for Europeans like him. After all, he frankly stated that his African and 'Arab' guides told him the names of countries, villages and peoples in front of them. However, these "uncouth" and "barren" names, as he snidely remarked, "conveyed no definite impression" to his understanding. The European 'explorer' did not accept African knowledge as constituting meaning. "They conveyed no idea, and signified no object", Stanley judged, but only referred to "darkness, savagery, ignorance, and fable".[49]

In its most radical occurrences, this epistemological obscurity of the Congo was compared to that of "the time of the Creation", since the space Stanley reached allegedly matched "perfectly the description that 'in the beginning the earth was without form and void, and darkness was upon the face of the deep'". Prior to its imperial 'discovery', this biblical reference suggested, God had never redeemed the Congo from its eternal darkness; time and history had never actually begun.[50]

Presenting Africa as "out of place in the historical time of modernity" was an important pattern in the colonial imagination. Untouched by the 'light' of European 'spirit',

47 Hegel, *Philosophy of History*, 99 ('Light'); Stanley, *Dark Continent*, Vol. 2, 126 ('Dark'), 148 ('clouds').

48 Ibid., 148 ('blankness'), 197 ('Unknown');Stanley, *Darkest Africa*, Vol. 1, 111 ('whiteness'). At the same time, the blankness on European maps enabled "the subsequent processes of dispossession and annihilation", as has been emphasised. Chris Tiffin and Alan Lawson, introduction to *De-Scribing Empire (London: Taylor & Francis, 2002)*, 5.

49 Stanley, *Dark Continent*, Vol. 2, 126–127.

50 Stanley, *Livingstone*, 86 ('Creation'); Stanley, *Darkest Africa*, Vol. 2, 355 ('perfectly').

Hegel had decried, Africa formed "no historical part of the world; it has no movement or development". That the spatial approach towards the interior of the African continent was, in Stanley's narrative, "equated with temporal reversal" was not only suggested through the encounter with the 'natural savage' and 'primeval men', as discussed above, but also through the motif of 'savage' and 'primeval' nature.[51] "Nature" in the Congo was "so old, incredibly old", Stanley noted. Through the depiction of the "primeval" woods, the extensive Congolese forests with their "ancient trees", the Congo was formed as motionless and stuck in 'prehistory' or a 'state of nature', defined as what has been called the trope of "anachronistic space" by Ann McClintock. "The eternal woods", Stanley philosophised, "will stand in their far-away loneliness for ever. As in the past, so they will flourish and fall for countless ages in the future".[52]

In the all-embracing and wild tropical nature, especially in the "immense and gloomy extent" of its forests, the darkness of Stanley's Congo also became a 'physical' condition. Descriptions and drawings of the Congolese landscape, its stupendous grasslands and, above all, the 'endless' Central African 'jungles' were among the most recurring themes in Stanley's travelogues. They formed primary scenes of the 19th-century colonial imagination and framed how future generations of Europeans and Americans, and of course also the Congo reform activists, believed that 'the Congo' looked, sounded and smelled.[53]

The few types of grassland in the interior of the Congo Basin were exposed to the equatorial sun. However, the "black forests", despite an at-times detailed commingling of exotic "colors" and "queer noises", were still substantially described as a location of everlasting "cold blackness" and "silence". In the interior of the great Congolese 'jungles', "under the impenetrable shade" of "that black wall" of giant trees, Stanley physically located not merely darkest Africa but also "one of the darkest corners of the earth, shrouded by perpetual mist, brooding under the eternal stormclouds, surrounded by darkness and mystery".[54]

Stanley composed literature in sensory details with images of giant trees, through which small creeks and mighty rivers flowed, and beleaguered by an exuberant luxury of tropical vegetation and exotic animal life that became the archetype of a persistent 19th-century cliché of tropical jungles further popularised by authors such as Edgar Rice Burroughs. This effigy of the 'Great Congo Forest', "vast as a continent", as Stanley claimed, was so striking for the European imagination that it soon became a synonym

51 McClintock, *Imperial Leather*, 40 ('out of place'); Hegel, *Philosophy of History*, 99 ('historical); Dunn, *Imagining the Congo*, 32 ('equated');

52 Stanley, *Darkest Africa*, Vol. 1, ('primeval'), 155 ('incredibly'); ibid., Vol. 2, 478 ('eternal'); Stanley to A.L. Bruce, 4 September 1888, reproduced in 'Letter from Mr Stanley. The Explorer's Narrative of His Experiences', *The Scotsman*, 2 April 1889, 5 ('ancient'); McClintock, *Imperial Leather*, 40 ('anachronistic').

53 Stanley, *Darkest Africa*, Vol. 1, 5 ('immense').

54 Stanley, *Dark Continent*, Vol. 2, 126 ('cold'), 148 ('black forests'); Stanley to A.L. Bruce, 4 September 1888, reproduced in 'Letter from Mr Stanley', *The Scotsman*, 2 April 1889, 5 ('colors', 'noises', 'impenetrable'); Stanley, *Darkest Africa*, Vol. 1, 4 ('silence'), 111 ('wall'); ibid., Vol. 2, 325 ('darkest').

for Central Africa as such. The Congo, it was from then on believed, was a jungle, and the Congo was a natural space. [55]

Concurrently, the image of the abundant yet dark Congolese nature contained a discursive promise of tremendous tropical wealth. Immediately after his descent of the Congo River, Stanley proclaimed to the world that he had found the future "grand highway of commerce to West Central Africa". In a speaking tour through 50 larger cities in France and England, the imperial pioneer enthusiastically lectured about the economic potential of the Congo Basin.[56]

Especially to the textile mills of Manchester and New-England, Stanley praised the poorly dressed 'savages' as potential customers for fabricated wardrobes, if only one "could persuade the dark millions of the interior to cast off their fabrics of grass clothing.[57] In its possibilities as an outlet market, the Congo was presented as a new China, as British and American reformers would later repeat.[58] In exchange for their manufactured goods, merchants could expect an abundance of natural resources. Stanley inscribed into the European consciousness the image of a "fertile region unsurpassed for the variety of its natural productions", which "excels all other known lands for the number and rare variety of precious gifts with which nature has endowed it".

For the cautious European trader who "with one hand receives the raw produce from the native, in exchange for the finished product of the manufacturer's loom", the Congo Basin would become the "commercial El Dorado of Africa", Stanley guaranteed.[59] However, according to Stanley, this abundant natural wealth had thus far been wasted, untapped by its 'savage' inhabitants and mostly even unknown to them. The Congo was not only a space of fertile but also of "virgin" nature, "untouched and apparently unvisited by man", as the imperial community was assured.[60] Hence, the imperial narrative established the myth of a 'terra nullius' or 'no man's land' in the interior of the African

55 Ibid., Vol. 1, 282 ('vast'). Burroughs stated that he composed Tarzan with the aid of "a 50-cent Sears dictionary and Stanley's In Darkest Africa". Quoted in Marianna Torgovnick, *Gone Primitive* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991), 26.

56 Stanley to the Daily Telegraph, 12 December 1877, quoted in Ewans, *European Atrocity*, 54 ('highway'); Stanley, *The Congo*, Vol. 1, 377 ('gospel'). On the speaking tour, see ibid., 365.

57 Ibid., Vol. 1, 130. Here, Stanley also mentioned the especially visionary idea of using Africa as a market for second-hand clothes: "See what a ready market lies here for old clothes!", he prompted. He had "seen many thousands of dark Africa's sons who would not feel it to be a derogation of their dignity to wear the cast-off costumes of the pale children of Europe, but would put themselves to some little trouble to gather enough raw produce to give in legitimate exchange for them" (ibid., 130–131).

58 See Edmund D. Morel, in "Meeting on the Kongo Question", 46; Morgan and Barbour, *Memorial Concerning the Kongo*, 22 and Congo Reform Association [U.S.], *Conditions in the Congo State* (Washington, D.C.: Judd & Detweiler, 1904), 14.

59 Stanley, *The Congo*, Vol. 2, 366 ('fertile'), 372 ('El Dorado'), 374 ('excels'), 376 ('one hand'). Long and detailed lists and tables of the quantity, quality and potential exchange values of the Congo's 'precious gifts' were offered and included products such as ivory, palm oil, palm kernels, groundnuts, gum-copal, orchilla weed, camwood, cola nuts, gum tragacanth, myrrh, frankincense, furs, skins, hides, feathers, copper, india rubber, fibres of grasses, beeswax, bark-cloth, nutmeg, ginger and castor oil nuts (see ibid., 368).

60 Stanley, *Livingstone*, 444; Stanley, *The Congo*, Vol. 2, 374; Stanley, *Darkest Africa*, Vol. 1, 475, ibid., Vol. 2, 83 and 100 ('virgin'); Stanley, *The Congo*, Vol. 1, 93 ('untouched').

continent. "All is nature", Stanley once noted while observing a region allegedly without any "human structure". The eastern grasslands of Eastern Africa are termed "as much a wilderness as the desert of Sahara" that shows "no traces of cultivation", and the vast woods of the interior as being "without a track or a path". Notwithstanding that millions (of potential customers) inhabited the Congo Basin, the constant emphasis on the absence of settlements, roads or agriculture still transfigured large parts of the "untrodden and apparently endless wilds" of Central Africa into a structurally 'empty land'.[61]

Even when the existence of human settlements was not simply denied, the colonial narration still emphasised the lack of economic utilisation of the 'savages' simply dwelling upon, but not truly occupying, the soil. Where the Congo was not presented as empty, it was still 'vacant' and waiting for its appropriation by European entrepreneurs. "What expansive wastes of rich productive land lie in this region unheeded by man", Stanley noted, emphasising the legitimacy of appropriating these Congolese '*terres vacantes*' through the Congo Free State. "Nature" only "bides her day" until "that appointed time when she shall awake to her duties" of serving the coming imperial master. The "dark virgin regions of Africa" are "her latest gift to mankind", Stanley cheered, immediately clarifying that humankind, in this case, meant the imperial races: "As a unit of that mankind for which nature reserved it, I rejoice that so large an area of the earth still lies to be developed by the coming races".[62]

In the imperial myth of virgin and empty lands, it has been held, patriarchal and imperial dispossessions were closely related. Metaphors of 'virginity' and 'fertility' established, at the same time, a distinctively gendered image of nature and space. As was ubiquitous in the European imagination of Africa, Stanley compared Congolese nature to a female body,[63] and ultimately termed the land itself a "virgin locked in innocent repose". Beyond economic potential, there was also "natural beauty" inscribed into the feminine spatial identity of the Congo. At times, Stanley praised the "beauty which belongs to this part of Africa" and allowed himself to marvel at a "picturesque and lovely" scene or a "magnificent view". Moreover, the abundant natural wonders and exotic wildlife that Stanley evoked in his books and lectures on the Congo stimulated the phantasies of Europeans dreaming of hunting expeditions and other tropical adventures in the Congo. The beauty of the Congo and the "fascination of its mystery", one could read, caused the traveller's "heart to yearn towards it".[64]

Still, Stanley consistently reminded his readers of the "hypocritical" state of these Congolese temptations. 'Darkest Africa' was, after all, not an exotic paradise, but a tropical hell. Despite its beauties, the Congo was a "hateful, murderous river", he reminded, and the forest a "remorseless and implacable" jungle. "Horrors upon horrors" emerged

61 Stanley, *Livingstone*, 86 ('Sahara', 'traces'); Stanley, *Dark Continent*, Vol. 2, 480 ('untrodden'); Stanley, *The Congo*, Vol. 1, 93 ('All', structure'); Stanley, *Darkest Africa*, Vol. 1, 112 ('track').

62 Stanley, *The Congo*, Vol. 2, 374 ('gift', 'unit'); Stanley, *Darkest Africa*, Vol. 1, 155 ('wastes', 'bides').

63 See McClintock, *Imperial Leather*, 30; also see, for instance, the speech of Stanley at the reception tendered by the 'Emin relief committee' in London, reproduced in 'In the Depths', *The Saline Observer*, 18 September 1890, 2.

64 Stanley, *Darkest Africa*, Vol. 1, 155 ('repose'); Stanley, *The Congo*, Vol. 1, 401 ('natural beauty'); Stanley, *Livingstone*, 86 ('belongs', picturesque'); Stanley, *Dark Continent*, Vol. 2, 148 (magnificent', 'yearn'), 197 ('fascination').

from it, and "death" lurked "everywhere, and on every day, and in every shape".[65] It could befall the traveller in the form of starvation, of road accidents, attacks by wild and poisonous animals, or, perhaps even more disturbing, by an entirely invisible enemy, extreme temperatures and the humidity of the 'tropical climate'. "Malaria is in the air we breathe", Stanley desperately complained, and all sorts of diseases and infections, above all the ever-present fever and dysentery, thrived in the "impure air" and "impure atmosphere" of the Congolese 'jungles'.[66]

Fever also challenged the moral stamina and mental health of Europeans who constantly struggled under the 'outburst of passions' caused by 'tropical fancy', Stanley's narrative suggested. The delirium marked the fringe between physical and psychological threats in this "region of horrors". In the "fever-land" of the hallucinations that grasped the European mind, the "pall-black darkness" of the Congolese forest fully evolved into a mysterious land of death and despair, filled with "eerie shapes" and "whispers […] of graves and worms".[67] However, the morbid horror of this 'metaphysical darkness' was not limited to delirium. It was provoked by the "forbidding aspect [of] the Dark Unknown", the "oppressive" and "evil" atmosphere of the jungles. This facet was "chilling to the poor, distressed heart" of Stanley's African porters, and he observed how "the horror grows darker in their fancies" the longer the expedition lasted in the endless forests, and it also haunted the European explorers. Even in times when there was no tangible threat, the "horror of the silence of the forest", the "soul wearying" feelings of isolation, loneliness, exasperation and despair "harrowed" their minds and hearts.[68]

For it was more than the lack of sunshine that obscured the Congo and made it a space of eternal darkness. Stanley sketched the Congolese 'jungles' as a space of constant physical and psychological peril, a fundamentally hostile realm, described, like its inhabitants, with Gothic themes such as 'mystery', 'horror', 'the unknown' and 'the supernatural', and combined with Christian motifs of 'evil' and 'darkness' to create a particularly morbid atmosphere. "This is all very uncanny if you think of it", Stanley remarked: "There is a supernatural diablerie operating which surpasses the conception and attainment of a mortal man". The Congo was thus located in the centre of a "pagan

65 Ibid., 464 ('hypocritical', 'hateful'); Stanley, *Darkest Africa*, Vol. 2, 30 ('everywhere'), 282 ('remorseless').

66 Stanley to A.L. Bruce, 4 September 1888, reproduced in 'Letter from Mr Stanley', *The Scotsman*, 2 April 1889, 5 ('atmosphere'); Stanley, Darkest Africa, Vol. 1, 156 ('air'); Stanley, *Livingstone*, 648 ('Malaria'). "Were a bottleful of concentrated miasma, such as we inhale herein, collected, what a deadly poison, instantaneous in its action, undiscoverable in its properties, would it be! I think it would act quicker than chloroform, be as fatal as prussic acid", Stanley continued there. As other health issues in the forests, he named asthma, chest diseases, heart sickness, lung problems and rheumatism (see Stanley, *Dark Continent*, Vol. 2, 114). Stanley's formulations reveal the still-existing misbelief that malaria was spread through the inhalation of infectious tropical air that gave the disease its French name '*mal aire*', see Joseph F. Conley, *Drumbeats That Changed the World* (Pasadena: William Carey Library, 2000), 78.

67 Stanley, *Darkest Africa*, Vol. 1, 138 ('region'); ibid., 70 ('fever-land, etc.).

68 Stanley, *Dark Continent*, Vol. 2, 126 ('forbidding'), 137 ('evil'), 148 ('oppressive'); Extract from the speech of Stanley at the reception tendered by the 'Emin relief committee' in London, reproduced in 'In the Depths', *The Saline Observer*, 18 September 1890, 2 ('chilling', 'fancies', 'silence', 'soul'). Also see Stanley, *Livingstone*, 44; Stanley, *The Congo*, Vol. 1, 95.

continent" trapped in the "purgatory of heathendom" and reduced to a "forest hell" that resembled scenes of "Pandemonium", the capital of Satan in John Milton's *Paradise Lost*. Stanley's narrative of exploration equated the spatial advancement towards the centre of Africa not only with a journey back in time but also with a metaphysical descent through a "gleaming portal to the Unknown" and into a "region of fable and darkness": A descent towards the borderlands of myth and reality, a space that was closer to "an unsubstantial dreamland than to a real earth", and a particularly nightmarish underworld.[69]

Gothic literature characteristically confronts its protagonists with a 'marginal or strange place', and once more, the image of the "dark, relentless woods" most noticeably revealed the gothic setting of Stanley's Congo narrative. Like the archetypical spooky old castle or mansion, the forest was covered in "mist" and "deluging rains", its trees were "shadowy as ghosts in the twilight", its gloom was only ruptured by "dazzling lightning", bursts of rolling "thunder" and the "howling of the wild winds". The 'jungle' was like a trap, a "prison and dungeon" from which escape became a matter of life or death.[70]

Until then, as in every decent gothic novel, scenes "of extreme threat and isolation […] are always happening or about to happen". In its gothic perspective, the material struggle of the explorer with Congolese 'nature' became correlated to a no less deadly interior fight with its spiritual and metaphysical darkness. The "malignant influences" of the gloomy world ranged from "melancholy" to "depression" and even "suicidal thoughts", especially for a "diseased imagination" caused by the ever-present fever.[71] Ultimately, the Congolese darkness became more than a mere epistemological condition and physical setting. In Stanley's literature, Congolese space itself seemed to be enlivened by a mysterious agency. The "great forest", the founder of the Western Congo image once wrote, was like "a great beast, with monstrous fur thinly veiled by vaporous exhalations". A mysterious soul, a "dark power", enlivened 'Darkest Africa'. There was "a supernatural malignant influence or agency at work" in the Congo, the pioneering European traveller warned his readers.[72]

Civiliser and conqueror: the imperial hero and 'Brightest Europe'

Like all Victorian travel literature, Stanley's writing on the Congo and the Congolese was primarily a racist act of myth-making. The notion of 'Darkest Africa' became the central motif in Europe's imagination of Central Africa as a 'prehistorical', 'natural' and 'evil' space of darkness, inhabited by the cultural and 'racial' sediment of humanity. The

69 Stanley, *Dark Continent*, Vol. 1, 197 ('gleaming', 'region'), 229 ('Pandemonium'), 282 ('hell'), 405 ('purgatory'); Stanley, *The Congo*, Vol. 1, 95 ('dreamland'); Stanley, *Darkest Africa*, Vol. 1, 511 ('uncanny', 'diablerie').

70 ibid.,221 ('woods'), 282 ('prison); ibid., Vol. 2, 478 ('shadowy'); Extract from the speech of Stanley at the reception tendered by the 'Emin relief committee' in London, reproduced in 'In the Depths', *The Saline Observer*, 18 September 1890, 2 ('mist', 'deluging', 'dazzling', 'howling'). Also see John Bowen, "Gothic Motifs," British Library, 2014. Discovering Literature: Romantics & Victorians, https://www.bl.uk/romantics-and-victorians/articles/gothic-motifs.

71 Ibid., ('scenes'); Stanley, *The Congo*, Vol. 1, 264 ('malignant', etc.).

72 Stanley, *Darkest Africa*, Vol. 1, 282 ('beast'), 51 ('dark power').

imperial gaze of the traveller, who by guesswork and speculation classified the inhabitants of Central Africa as 'savages', 'monsters', 'devils' and 'coloured races', conveyed his belonging to an imagined community of the 'civilised', 'humans', the 'elected' and the 'white race'. By approaching the Congolese counter-world both as 'conqueror' and 'civiliser' embodied with the ability to subdue 'Darkest Africa', Stanley performatively codified the superiority of this collective one could term 'Brightest Europe'.[73]

In the role of the civiliser, Stanley's racist superiority was mainly defined by the collective cultural and scientific capital of a 'progressive European civilisation'. After all, "the muscles, tissues, and fibres of their bodies, and all the organs of sight, hearing, smell, or motion, are as well developed as in us", Stanley reminded his European readers in a description of the inhabitants of Central Africa. However, "in taste and judgment, based upon larger experience, in the power of expression, in morals and intellectual culture are we superior".[74] Through the commitment "to extend civilising influences among the dark races" of the Congo, this superior European and Christian culture also proved its righteousness. As chapter 4.1 shows, Stanley and the Belgian King Léopold successfully portrayed the Congo Free State as the institutional embodiment of a benevolent and charitable 'civilising' spirit'.[75]

As an envoy of the promised 'salvation mission' in the Congo, the character of the imperial 'explorer' Stanley was equipped with the spiritual power "to brighten up with the glow of civilisation the dark places of sad-browed Africa" and, thus, to disperse the 'epistemological darkness' obscuring the Congo. Merely through his physical and spiritual presence, a single 'white man' allegedly redeemed the region from its prehistoric and stagnating state by opening it to the gaze of the 'civilised world'. Robert E. Park, by then leading American Congo activist, would state with open admiration three decades later that Stanley had "by one bold stroke tore aside the veil of mystery that had up to that time concealed the interior of the dark continent". With the arrival of the first European who came "to flash a torch of light across the western half of the Dark Continent", as Stanley wrote about himself, the Hegelian world spirit had finally reached Central Africa. His mere presence served as the "trumpet-call of civilization" to wake the region from its "immeasurably long ages of sleep". The 'civilised explorer' brought not only enlightenment but time, meaning and reason to the Congo. In filling the blankness on imperial maps with European names for African rivers, lakes, mountains, towns and people, the 'explorer' eradicated any existing culture and demonstrated civilisation's exclusive and totalitarian claim to the power of expression.[76]

In the story of the education and conversion of the Muslim Emperor of Uganda, the role of the 'civiliser' as a worldly and spiritual educator was most symbolically created. During his three months with Mtesa in 1878, Stanley became "a scientific encyclopaedia to him" and tried to "expound the secrets of nature and the works of Providence, the

73 See Hund, "Negative Societalisation", 85–87.

74 Stanley, *Dark Continent*, Vol. 2, 73 ('muscles', 'taste').

75 Stanley's speech in front of the London Chamber of Commerce, 19 September 1884, quoted in Morel, *Affairs of West Africa*, 312 ('extend', etc.).

76 Ibid. ('brighten up'); Park, "King in Business", 631 ('stroke'); Stanley, *Dark Continent*, Vol. 2, 127 ('torch'); Stanley, *Darkest Africa*, Vol. 1, 155 ('trumpet-call', 'immeasurably').

wonders of the heavens, the air and the earth".[77] The "great potentate of Equatorial Africa", whom Stanley portrayed as a stereotypical example of 'the childish' and 'docile savage', is discursively reduced to the role of an ignorant student. The "dread despot sat with wide-dilated eyes and an all-devouring attention" to listen to his omniscient teacher and priest and readily recognised the superiority of the foreigner, it is argued. Stanley let the character of Mtesa summarise the discursive message of this episode: "'the white men know everything'", the emperor supposedly proclaimed to his followers. Soon after, he allegedly concluded that, religiously, "'the white men are greatly superior to the Arabs. I think therefore that their book must be a better book than Mohammed's'", Mtesa announced and, so the story goes, he converted to Christian faith.[78]

Nonetheless, the 'civiliser' Stanley was always also a 'conqueror'. On his African expeditions, Stanley employed a "larger military force" than any previous 'explorer' before him, as his contemporaries realised. Wherever the superiority of European and Christian culture was not as easily accepted as it allegedly was in the Mtesa story, Stanley used, without hesitation, brute force and naked violence. As mentioned before, the transformation of scientific and philanthropic journeys into "geographical raid[s]" full of "bloodshed and slaughter" even led to objections in contemporary Britain.[79]

However, the racist representation of the Congolese inhabitants actually allowed Stanley to project this unparalleled ruthlessness onto those under attack. The announced willingness to accept the 'savages' as, in principle, able to become 'civilised', was, as in the earlier American context of the stereotype, flanked by the suspicion of cannibalism, one of the most persistent racist myths.[80] With 'cannibals' and also 'devils', there was no room for negotiation or cooperation. To surrender to or compromise with these would mean to offer one's "throats like lambs to the cannibal butchers" and end in the "horrid barbecue they intended to hold", Stanley argued in the racist figments of the imperial imagination.[81]

In the Congolese narrative, it was the cannibalistic fury of the African 'savage' that made it an "inevitable necessity of putting into practice the resolution which we had formed before setting out on the wild voyage – to conquer or die". The 'civiliser' accepted no objection or resistance. The choice of the Congolese was assimilation through colonisation or extermination. The "savage only respects force, power, boldness, and decision", it is claimed. Stanley portrays himself as an African version of the highly popular gunslingers of the American frontier he had once reported on as a journalist: "as soon as the first symptoms of manifestation of violence had been observed, I had sprung to my feet, each hand armed with a loaded self-cocking revolver, to kill and be killed".[82]

The ultimate success of these 'wild voyages' of conquest, it is argued, was based on individual bravery but also on the superior firepower Stanley was able to use. Stanley's 'scientific voyages' were equipped with hundreds of modern automatic rifles, ar-

77 Stanley, *Dark Continent*, Vol. 1, 320.
78 Ibid., 188 ('potentate'), 320 ('despot'), 321 ('everything'), 324–325 ('greatly superior').
79 'Letters of Henry Stanley from Equatorial Africa to the Daily Telegraph', *Edinburgh Contemporary Review*, no. 147 (1878): 167 ('private').
80 See Hund, *Rassismus*, 63 and chapter 1.
81 Stanley, *Dark Continent*, Vol. 2, 203 ('barbecue'), 278 ('butchers').
82 Ibid., Vol. 1, 230 ('to kill and be killed'), 276 ('decision'); ibid., Vol. 2, 221 ('to conquer or die').

tillery and machine guns, including, as has been mentioned, a prototype of the "terrible Maxim machine gun" for his last expedition. This automatic weapon had well "contributed", as Stanley called it, "a moral influence" on the attacked African population, who were mostly equipped with old rifles, spears or arrows.[83] When greatly outnumbered, or when confronted by too "powerful, well-equipped, and warlike tribes", Stanley ordered a retreat; however, whenever tactically useful, "the command to fire was given", and automatic rifles and machine-guns of Stanley's expeditions "were doing terrible execution". In this way, the European emissary of culture and civilisation "laboured strenuously through ranks upon ranks of savages", leaving behind him a traumatised people and wasted land. The apostle of 'light' and 'civilisation' bluntly accounted for his destructive expedition: "We have attacked and destroyed 28 large towns and three or four scores of villages, fought 32 battles on land or water", Stanley frankly summarised only a small part of his first journey of 'exploration'.[84]

The account of Stanley's skirmishes with the 'wild' and 'hostile' Congolese environment further specified his identity as the most iconic symbol of the power of imperial civilisation. "Like the waves beating on a rocky shore" had 'superior races', science, trade and 'civilisation' been defied "for ages" by the physical hostility of the "equatorial regions of Africa". However, as Stanley proudly noted in his second book, it was his "destiny to move on, whatever direction it may be that that narrow winding path […] takes us".[85] In "all that spirited narrative of heroic endeavour", the journalist, social reformer and future member of the British Congo reform Association William T. Stead once remarked, "nothing has so much impressed the imagination" than Stanley's desperate marches through the Congolese jungles. It was in the vast forests that most of the "marvellously narrow escapes from utter destruction" that Stanley strung together in his Congolese adventure stories took place. However, no matter what "nameless horrors awaited" them, no matter how dense the undergrowth was, Stanley's columns "entered the forest […] with confidence" and "cleared a path through the obstructions". Inexorably, they "pushed on and on, broke through the bush, trampled down the plants", challenging the resisting and hostile Congolese nature.[86]

In contrast to and confrontation with the motionless Congolese nature, Stanley's commitment to spatial advancement became a symbol of Europe's equation with historical progress. At the same time, historical progress and imperial expansion were defined as a masculine and manly virtue. "Step by step", Stanley claimed, "we gain our miles, and penetrate deeper and deeper into that strange conservatory of nature, the inner womb of a true tropical forest". Discursively, the imperial explorer had turned

83 Stanley, *Darkest Africa*, Vol. 2, 366.

84 Stanley, *Dark Continent*, Vol. 2, 174 ('execution'), 277 ('powerful', laboured'); Stanley quoted in James L. Newman, *Imperial Footprints* (Washington, D.C.: Potomac Books, 2004), 145 ('28 large towns').

85 Stanley, *The Congo*, Vol. 2, 372 ('waves', etc.); Stanley, *Dark Continent*, Vol. 2, 127 ('destiny').

86 Stanley, *Darkest Africa*, Vol. 1, 5 ('marvellously'), 230 ('nameless', 'pushed on'); William Booth and William T. Stead, *In Darkest England and the Way Out* (London: International Headquarters of the Salvation Army, 1890), 9 ('spirited', 'impressed', 'impenetrable'); Stanley, quoted in ibid., 10 ('entered'). The book was ghostwritten by Stead but published under Booth's name.

himself into a phallic symbol desperate to be the first 'in utero', to "penetrate that cold, dark, still horizon before us": the fertile and virgin interior of the continent.[87]

Given the deadly image presented of this 'virgin land', this allegory could only evoke a violent subjection of feminine African nature through the 'white man', and the sexual and military penetration of the virgin African void assured both masculine and imperial patrimony. Intimidated, for instance, by how "the chaos of stones" around Vivi, the future capital of the Congo Free State, "breathed a grim defiance", Stanley was desperate "to temper this obstinacy; […] to reduce that grim defiance to perfect submission".[88] It was for the "pulverization of rock", the power to form the landscape in Lower Congo according to the needs of the colonial power, that in October 1879 Stanley gained the nickname "Bula Matari – Breaker of Rocks", as he proudly told his readers. Stanley had come to finally break the 'rocky shore' that had so far defied alien civilisation, both metaphorically and literally.[89]

Thus established, the narrative assured the European readers that its protagonist would always return to "civilization, uninjured in life or health". As a true gothic and imperial hero, Stanley was able to defeat the 'horrors', keep his body, soul and mind strong, pass the test of his belief and return from the mythical underworld of the Congo. Stanley's "constitution of iron", his almost superhuman physical and moral strength, the tremendous recklessness, courage and volition to confront this 'hostile' African nature, its 'savage' inhabitants and the forces of 'darkness and evil' soon became legendary.[90]

Despite the controversies mentioned above, the majority of the British and American public admired Stanley's heroic adventures, and so did the most prominent Congo reformers. Morel and Park both asserted, "there is nothing grander in the history of exploration and geographical discovery" than Stanley's accomplishments in the Congo.[91] Harry Johnston, himself a famous African traveller involved in the exploration of the Congo River, ungrudgingly recognised that Stanley was at "top of the role of African explorers". Even the anti-imperialist American writer Mark Twain admitted that Stanley's achievements excelled even those of "the really great men who exist in history".[92]

The Victorian fascination with new 'heroic myths of empire' has been described as part of a romantic cultural response to the perceived mundane reality of an overly materialistic present. British literary discourse of the 19th century "experienced an 'eclipse' and numerous attempts at resurrection of the hero", a development that became particularly obvious in the context of New Imperialism. This process included a revived fascination with the mythical heroism of the past, and "classical and medieval heroic cults

87 Extract from the speech of Stanley at the reception tendered by the 'Emin relief committee' in London, reproduced in 'In the Depths', *The Saline Observer*, 18 September 1890, 2 ('womb'); Stanley, *Dark Continent*, Vol. 2, 127 ('penetrate').

88 Stanley, *The Congo*, Vol. 1, 140.

89 Ibid., 147–48.

90 Stanley, *Darkest Africa*, Vol. 1, p 2. ('civilization'); Joel T. Headley and Willis F. Johnson, *Stanley's Wonderful Adventures in Africa* ([Philadelphia]: Edgewood Publishing, 1889), 21 ('iron').

91 Morel, *King Leopold's Rule*, 15 [footnote]. Similarly see Park, "Terrible Story": 764.

92 Harry Johnston and Mark Twain quoted in Newman, *Imperial Footprints*, xvii.

were recreated, modified, and adapted for a new age".[93] Indeed, for Stead, Stanley's acts contained "as much material for poetic or romantic treatment as the wanderings of Ulysses, the labours of Hercules, or the quest of the Holy Grail". Stanley's adventures proved that "in the heart of this plain, prosaic nineteenth century, from which materialism and steam are supposed to have exorcised the Ideal", idealistic altruism and "chivalric romance" were still alive.[94]

However, the public worshipped both the 'civiliser' and the 'conqueror'. It was not so much the rescue of Emin Pasha that was admired, the *London Times* noted upon Stanley's triumphal return to England in 1890. What the masses loved was "the magnificent display of all those qualities which men recognise as truly heroic whether they are seen on the field of battle or in the longer and more deadly conflict which these men have waged with the relentless forces of nature and barbarism".[95] Stanley's power to subdue the Congolese nature and its inhabitants raised him to the level of an almost superhuman creature in the imagination of Morel, as his later description of "the breaker of stones and of hearts, the man of elemental forces" revealed. Before his "sledge-hammer blows and will of steel the forest rolled back, the river's impetuosity was curbed, the rapids were conquered, and primitive communities were alternately charmed into acquiescence and pulverised into submission". However threatening the Congolese 'darkness' was, Stanley's Congo narrative claimed that a single heroic 'white man' was stronger. The Congolese explorer became the most radiant icon of 'imperial masculinity'. It reassured a whole generation of Westerners about the right and power of European civilisation to conquer, subdue and exploit even the darkest space of the globe, the Congo. Not simply in demarcating this 'savage Africa' but in narrating its submission and conquest, Stanley created his version of 'Brightest Europe'.[96]

3.2 'Ugly': Racist classification and 'white' culture in crisis

For about two decades following his first passage through Central Africa, Stanley's imperial Congo narrative remained essentially unchallenged. The numerous publications of the travellers, traders, missionaries and colonial agents pouring into the region over the course of its colonial subjugation generally conformed with the established tone and content set by the imperial and literary pioneer. They anchored the myth of the Congo ever deeper in Western minds as a space of radical otherness and spread the exaltation of Europe's on-going accomplishment to conquer and open up to 'civilisation' and trade what had been described as the most 'savage' and 'backward' part of the planet.[97]

93 Brantlinger, *Rule of Darkness*, 36 ('experienced'); John MacKenzie, "Heroic Myths of Empire," in *Popular Imperialism and the Military, 1850–1950*, ed. John MacKenzie (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1992), (title), and 110 ('classical').

94 William T. Stead, "Mr. H. M. Stanley," *Review of Reviews* 1, no. 1 (1890): 20 ('Holy Grail').

95 'London, Monday, April 28, 1890', *The Times*, 28 April 1890, 9.

96 Morel, "History of the Congo Reform Movement", 17.

97 See for instance publications such as: Joseph Tritton and Baptist Missionary Society, *Rise and Progress of the Work on the Congo River*, 2nd ed. (London: Alexander and Shepheard, 1885); Herbert

Nevertheless, the two Congo novellas of the British-Polish author Joseph Conrad published at the turn of the 19th century, while the international Congo reform movement slowly took shape, brilliantly conveyed that the exposure of what Edmund D. Morel called the 'Congo Scandal' was synonymous with a fundamental rupture in the Western Congo discourse.[98] Since the early 1890s, slowly but steadily emerging reports about systematic breaches of laws and international treaties by the Free State administration, its arbitrariness against Europeans and atrocious brutality against Africans had reached the imperial metropoles. More and more observers of imperial policy and active colonialists became aware of the tremendous gap between colonial discourse and its scandalous political enactment in the Congo.[99]

This discursive rupture did not imply an alteration of the stereotypical representation of the alienated Congolese other. Far from it, Conrad's two stories *An Outpost of Progress* and *Heart of Darkness* continued to confront their readers "with pure unmitigated savagery, with primitive nature and primitive man", thus a vision of Central Africa that firmly relied upon well-established racist patterns. In their natural décor of the river and the forest, their highly stereotypical depiction of 'cannibalistic' and 'savage' Africans and their gothic atmosphere of horror, Conrad's novellas were a literary homage to Stanley's Congo literature.[100] Nonetheless, in the way that Conrad related 'civilisation' and his 'civilised' protagonists to the mythical Congolese darkness, he effectively shattered the idea of an imagined community of 'Brightest Europe' that achieved its superior identity by demarcating and subjugating 'Darkest Africa'. At no point in Conrad's alternative draft of the Congo narrative did Europe or its pioneering envoys show the ability to conquer the tropical nature and its 'savage' inhabitants or to disperse the metaphysical 'dark power' that Stanley had located in the Congolese jungles. Additionally, profit-seeking and extermination phantasies had long suppressed all moral commitments to the 'civilising mission' in Conrad's Congo.

As has been mentioned earlier, prominent Congo reformers highly esteemed Conrad's novellas. The spearhead of the British reform campaign Morel publicly praised Conrad's picture of the Congo and, in a personal letter to Arthur Conan Doyle, even called *Heart of Darkness* "the most powerful thing ever written on the subject". Robert Park similarly recommended the novel in a pamphlet, and the British liberal politician, journalist and executive Congo reformer Harold Spender termed Conrad's first Congo

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Ward, *Five Years with the Congo Cannibals* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1891); Edward J. Glave, *In Savage Africa* (New York: R.H. Russel & Son, 1892); Burrows, *Land of the Pigmies*. All of these authors would eventually become outspoken critics of the Free State.

98 See Conrad, "Outpost of Progress" [originally published in the magazine Cosmopolis in 1897]; Conrad, "Heart of Darkness" [originally published in Blackwood's Magazine in 1899] and Morel's (unsigned) series of articles titled 'The Congo Scandal', published in *The Speaker* between 28 February 1900 and 6 October 1900.

99 See Canisius, *Campaign Amongst Cannibals*, 63 ('no part'). Also see Congo Reform Association [U.S.], *Conditions in the Congo*, 39 and Park, "Terrible Story", 765 for further references on the gap between "Promise and Performance".

100 Conrad, "Outpost of Progress", 129 ('pure'). Conrad's work actually leveraged this imagery to a new discursive impact through the linguistic skills of a grand literate of world format. Nowadays, it is generally through Conrad that readers and students of literature approach Stanley's vision of 'Darkest Africa'.

tale, *Outpost of Progress*, "a story of genius" in which "Joseph Conrad has shown us how the thing happens" in Léopold's colony.[101]

Since scenes of actual atrocities, as they were discussed later in the Congo controversy, were rare in these texts, the reformers hardly applauded Conrad's novels as a source of documentary evidence. What made Conrad's fictional literature so valuable was its brilliant literary exposure of the crisis of racist representation, identity and culture beyond the Congo Scandal. With the allegation of a 'corrosion of alterity' through the brutalisation of civilisation, the realisation of civilisation's weakness through the menace of a 'triumph of the wilderness', and the emergence of a 'civilised savagery' as a signifier of a profound calamity of Western modernity, this crisis had three entangled dimensions that were all conjured by Conrad's Congo literature, and they were widely reproduced and refined through the American and British humanitarian activism.

'The horror': a corrosion of alterity

"If the administration of the Congo Free State was civilisation", the Liberal politician and prominent British Congo reform Herbert Samuel once asked in the House of Commons, "what was barbarism"?[102] This often-reproduced probing question articulately hinted at the first dimension of the crisis of racist representation triggered by the Congo Scandal. The international Congo reform movement exposed to the European and American public the systematic forced labour, hostage-taking, torture, mutilation and murder committed by the agents of Free State and monopoly companies. Given these cruel practices of colonial governance, a significant part of the humanitarian Free State opponents developed profound doubts about what essentially distinguished their imagined community of the 'civilised' from the 'savage', 'devilish' and 'monstrous' Africans and the 'fanatic' and 'despotic' Arab slave-traders that occupied their imperial imagination. Stanley's 'Darkest Africa', as the previous chapter has shown, had been created as a nightmarish counter-world of absolute and condensed otherness. The suggestion that the Congo Scandal signified corrosion of this imperial alterity and thus of the phantasm of a negative civilised identity created in opposition to the Congo was a radical allegation against the policy of the Free State.

The recognition of a worrying essential equivalence between the allegedly binary oppositions of the 'civilised' and the 'savage' was a central theme of Conrad's Congo literature. As Stanley had until his latest work in 1890, Conrad assertively rejected radical naturalist segregation between Africans and Europeans, but he heavily relied upon the 'savage' stereotype to describe the contemporary superiority of civilisation as a historical expression of European progress and African stagnation. Moreover, even more directly than Stanley had done before him, Conrad equated the strenuous spatial advance of Captain Marlow and his steamboat towards the interior of Central Africa, the subject of his second Congo novella, with a journey through time. "Going up that river was like

101 Morel to Doyle, 7 October 1909, quoted in Louis, "Morel and the Congo", 205 ('most'); Spender, "Great Congo Iniquity", 46 ('genius'); also see Morel, *King Leopold's Rule*, 174 [footnote] ('picture'); Park and Morel, *Treatment of Women and Children*, 30.

102 Herbert Samuel: 'Congo Free State', HC Deb 20 May 1903 Vol. 122 cc 1289–1332, here c. 1298.

traveling back to the earliest beginnings of the world", Marlow noted. There, he saw himself confronted not only by "prehistoric earth" but by "prehistoric man". Conrad's Congolese characters, like Stanley's 'natural savages', "still belonged to the beginnings of time", one could read.[103]

However, the confirmation of an evolutionary affinity of the human race that the representation of Congolese 'savages' as Europeans' contemporary ancestors Conrad's narrative implied was not described as a noble humanitarian commitment but instead discussed as a harrowing concussion of 'civilised' identity. The "thought of your remote kinship" with these 'savages' was deeply unsettling. It "was the worst of it – this suspicion of their not being inhuman […]. They howled and leaped, and spun, and made horrid faces; but what thrilled you was just the thought of their humanity – like yours. Ugly".[104]

Marlow soon had to admit "that there was in you […] a response to the terrible frankness of that noise, a dim suspicion of there being a meaning in it which you – you so remote from the night of first ages – could comprehend". For the romantic novelist, in sharp contrast to Stanley's narrative, the 'dark and anachronistic thing' outside, the Congo's 'primeval' nature and its 'savage' inhabitants, was always an analogy for the 'dark and anachronistic thing' inside, the forgotten instincts and relics of the European's 'savage' past. 'Darkest Africa' was not the "negation of the habitual, which is safe", as Conrad wrote, but stood in a "dangerous" relation to the European self, "vague", but closer than was commonly suggested. The disruption of the thin veneer that separated 'civilisation' from 'savagery' was the true "horror" realised by Mr Kurtz, the legendary ivory trader who fell sick at the remote Inner Station in Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* at the moment of his death, until today a fundamental metaphorical equation with the Congo Scandal.[105]

This Conradian leitmotif, a horrifying corrosion of cultural distance between European self and Congolese other, was mediated through varying images reformers evoked that worked on different levels of political agitation. The most frequently reproduced symbol of a rapprochement between 'European civilisation' and 'African savagery' was the image of the Congo's 'cannibal army'. The army and police corps of the Free State, the so-called Force Publique, was established in 1886 and constantly strengthened until it became the largest colonial army in Central Africa. Even in 1895, a few dozen European and American officers commanded a force of 6,000 African soldiers, largely recruited or forcibly conscripted from the Congo region, but also from other West African countries and Zanzibar, and additional thousands of local auxiliaries. These forces provided the human resources to the provisional military victory over the rebelling Central Congolese polities and the Muslim regimes in Eastern Congo. In 1890, the American traveller George Washington Williams was the first to combine humanitarian criticism and colonial myths into a motif that would become widespread within the Congo reform discourse. Outraged, he claimed that "bloodthirsty cannibalistic" Congolese soldiers were

103 Conrad, "Heart of Darkness", 35 ('earth', 'man'), 40 ('time').
104 Ibid., 36.
105 Ibid., 35 ('frenzy'), 36 ('response'), 69 ('horror'); Conrad, "Outpost of Progress", 129 ('negation', 'dangerous', 'vague').

eating "the bodies of slain children".[106] A few years later, an English journalist claimed that the Congo "has been overrun by armed hordes of savages". In 1897, two publications claimed that 'The Fall of the Congo Arabs', widely celebrated as a successful abolitionist crusade in Europe, had heavily relied on the use of 'cannibalistic' auxiliaries by the Free State. "During the campaign against the Arabs by the soldiers of the Congo Free State many cannibals were to be seen—so officers tell me—provisioning themselves from the killed", the recently deceased traveller and journalist Edward J. Glave noted in his diaries. Moreover, the English officer Sidney L. Hinde, who had participated in the Congolese-Arab War, remarked that "cannibals […] proved a great element in our success" and claimed that the Force Publique had actually tolerated, even encouraged them to follow their "disgusting custom" instead of providing sufficient food.[107]

Such dubious allegations were enough for Charles Dilke of the Aborigines' Protection Society to contend, on the occasion of the first major Congo debate in the British Commons after the Stokes affair, that it was proved "beyond all conceivable doubt" that the Free State administration was "habitually raiding" its territory with its "25000 cannibal allies" and actively provided those with "smoked human flesh"; thus, the myth of Léopold's 'cannibal army' was born.[108]

Now and then, new stories about the excesses of armed forces in the Free State gave the trope of the 'cannibal army' a fresh impetus. The diaries and letters of the Rev. Joseph Clark of the American Baptist Missionary Union, the report of the American Presbyterian William S. Sheppard about a murderous raid of state auxiliaries or the accounts of the Cape-to-Cairo traveller Ewart S. Grogan all included more or less casual remarks about the 'cannibalistic' and 'savage' character of the Congo soldiery. In 1904, even the official report of Roger Casement for the British Foreign Office included a testimony recalling that "cannibal soldiers" had been provided an old woman to eat by a white superior of the colonial administration.[109] That the Free State formed its colonial army of "cannibal tribes" and its auxiliaries of "various barbarous tribes, many of them cannibals"; that the typical capita and sentry placed in the village to enforce the demands of the State and concessionary companies like the Abir was "a cannibal and a ruffian", as Doyle proclaimed to his readers, grew into one of the most enduring and widely distributed themes of the reform discourse.[110] Reproduced in all sorts of pamphlets, books and articles, raised in parliamentary speeches, memorials and official government publications, the trope of a "cannibal army" (or "cannibal troops", an "army of savages" or

106 Williams, "Open Letter", 12.

107 Decle, "Murder in Africa", 86 ('hordes'); Edward J. Glave, "New Conditions in Central Africa," *The Century Magazine* 53, 4–5 (1897): 913 ('during'); Hinde, *Congo Arabs*, 69 ('wolves', 'disgusting'), 124 ('success').

108 Charles Dilke: 'Africa (European Powers)', HC Deb 2 April 1897 Vol. 48 cc 425–50, here c. 430 ('25000').

109 Casement, "Report on Upper Congo", 74 ('troops'); see Grogan and Sharp, *From the Cape to Cairo*, 265. For Sheppard's report, see 'Cannibalism in the Congo', *Manchester Courier and Lancashire General Advertiser*, 22 February 1900, 6; for Clark's diaries, see Morel, *Red Rubber*, 48–79, particularly 53.

110 Doyle, *Crime of the Congo*, 10 ('cannibal tribes'), 12 ('various'), 25 ('ruffian').

other varieties) under European control became, next to the 'severed hand', perhaps the most powerful symbol the reform movement established.[111]

Of course, through the propagandistic exploitation of the 'cannibalistic savage' stereotype, the humanitarian activists deeply engaged in racist myth-making. None of the aforementioned and often reproduced 'testimonies' could prove systematic acts of anthropophagy. In general, they were no less circumstantial than the evidence once offered in the exploration narrative and consisted of hearsay and dubious interpretations of local customs and myths through imperial eyes and ears. Not African actions or customs, but Stanley's racist creation of the Congo as a "cannibal world" gave the reform image of a 'cannibal army' its credibility and propagandistic power. When a brilliant writer like Doyle, for instance, requested that his readers "[i]magine the nightmare which lay upon each village while this barbarian squatted in the midst of it", or prominent reformers evoked images of "orgies of cannibals" in which European officers "allowed [the soldiers] to gratify their own cannibalistic and other savage tastes", they actively appealed to the stock of racist knowledge and beliefs that their audience had aggregated about the horrors of 'Darkest Africa'.[112]

Morel himself acknowledged that the image of the 'cannibal army' was itself a propagandistic tool and was not based on widely shared anthropophagic practices. "The term 'cannibal troops'", he once argued, was "perhaps, open to misconstruction. It is not suggested that the Congo soldiers are all active cannibals at present, and feed upon recalcitrant rubber-collectors, as well as mutilate them, or indulge in the same cannibal orgies". Nonetheless, Morel defended his use of the term with a non-specific reference to the general existence of cannibalism in the Congo: "But a considerable portion of them are recruited from tribes which are still notably cannibalistic", he noted. "Cannibalism clings"; hence, "if you stick a rifle into a cannibal's hand, and put a uniform on his back, you don't thereby convert him into a vegetarian". Thus, to "speak of the 'cannibal' troops of the Congo State does not appear", he concluded, "to lend itself to the epithet 'exaggerated'".[113] Herewith, Morel had already established the set of stereotypes he would shamelessly reproduce in his later protest against the so-called "reign

111 Morel, "Belgian Curse", 364; Morel, *Affairs of West Africa*, 321, 350, 368, 376; Morel, *Congo Slave State*, 18, 27, 97; Morel, *King Leopold's Rule*, 104, 176–77, 219; Morrison, "Personal Observations", 39; Alfred Emmott: 'Congo Free State', HC Deb 20 May 1903 Vol. 122 cc 1289–1332, here c. 1312 (all 'cannibal army'); Samuel: 'Congo Free State', HC Deb 20 May 1903 Vol. 122 cc 1289–1332, here c. 1292; Dilke: 'Class II.', HC Deb 9 June 1904 vol, 135 cc 1235–96, here 1265; (all 'cannibal troops'); Congo Reform Association [U.S.], *Conditions in the Congo*, 4; Morgan and Barbour, *Memorial Concerning the Kongo*, 11 ('army of savages'). The latter memorial, introduced to the United States Senate, also referred to the "marauding band of cannibal savages" (7) and the "barbaric hordes" (11). For further variations of the image, also see Address of Rev. W.H. Morrison', reproduced in The Secretary of the Congress and Rose, *Universal Peace Congress*, 238; Bourne, *Civilisation in Congoland*, 175; John Daniels, "The Wretchedness of the Congo Natives," *The Voice of the Negro* IV, no. 1 (1907): 23 and Lord Monkswell: 'The Congo Free State', HL Deb 29 July 1907 Vol. 179 cc 402–437, here c. 404.

112 Stanley, *Dark Continent*, Vol. 2, 282 ('cannibal world'); Doyle, *Crime of the Congo*, 23 ('nightmare'); Morgan and Barbour, *Memorial Concerning the Kongo*, 6; Morel, *King Leopold's Rule*, 120; Bourne, *Civilisation in Congoland*, 242 (all 'orgies'); ibid., 258 ('gratify').

113 Morel, *King Leopold's Rule*, 120.

of terror" that African soldiers had allegedly established in the German Rhineland after World War I.[114]

The 'cannibal army' was a powerful means to create specifically gruesome images of bloodshed and murder, but it also emphasised the deliberate loss of cultural distance, the corrosion of alterity that the Congo Scandal implied. The army of African 'savages' in the Free State was "led by no less savage Europeans", Congo opponents stated, for instance. A "great source of weakness" in the Congolese methods was that European officers were "too familiar" to African soldiers, it was argued. A disastrous habit, since "it is indispensable to emphasize the distinction between black and white" in the colonial relation.[115]

All in all, the declaration that a 'civilised' European government was actively allying itself with the "forces of savagery",[116] even though for the allegedly greater good of defeating the East African slave trade, was a scandalous accusation. Of course, Doyle remarked in his bestselling account on the *Crime of the Congo*, the "suppression of the slave trade is a good cause, but the means by which it was effected", which were "the use of Barbarians who ate in the evening those whom they had slain during the day, are as bad as the evil itself".[117]

An actual political alliance with the 'Arab Congolese', on the other hand, was not among the accusations of the Congo reform movement. After all, as mentioned above, the successful military realisation of the abolitionist crusade against the Arab slave-trading empires that had been demanded by Europe's revitalised anti-slavery movement towards the end of the 19th century was among the most admired accomplishments of Léopold in humanitarian spheres. Nonetheless, the reform movement still accused the Free State of transcending the cultural distance that should separate European civilisation from the despotic Orient present in the Eastern Congo. This argument was evoked mainly through the motifs of the 'slave state' and a 'barbarous despotism'.

Williams had already reported about violations of the contracts of conscripted African labourers and soldiers and had accused the colonial state of "being engaged in the slave trade". Later, reformers would rightfully assert that the defeat of the 'Arabs' had not been tantamount to the abolition of slavery and the liberation of the Congolese, as had been promised. The "bondsmen of black slave owners may have been taken from them", Bourne admitted, "but only, or often, to fall into worse bondage under white masters". In general, "people are enslaved instead of being freed from slavery", the secretary of the Aborigines' Protection Society asserted in the first book-length contribution to the Congo controversy.[118]

114 Edmund D. Morel, *The Horror on the Rhine*, 8th ed. (London: Union of Democratic Control, 1921 [1920]), 7

115 Decle, "Murder in Africa", 586 ('led'); Grogan and Sharp, *From the Cape to Cairo*, 266 ('source', 'familiar' 'indispensable').

116 Bourne, *Civilisation in Congoland*, 303; Washington, "Cruelty in the Congo", 376; Morgan and Barbour, *Memorial Concerning the Kongo*, 16 ('forces').

117 Doyle, *Crime of the Congo*, 10 ('suppression', 'Barbarians').

118 Williams, "Open Letter", 13; Bourne, *Civilisation in Congoland*, 72–73 ('bondsmen'), 223 ('instead').

To be clear, the Congo reformers did not fundamentally oppose the idea that a colonial administration had to rely on forced labour.[119] However, the year-long servitude for former slaves and so-called orphans, the almost limitless and arbitrary labour tax and the forced recruitment of soldiers were seen not merely as disproportional compulsory labour, but as point-blank, systematic slavery. Hence, a civilised government had established a "slave state", the Congo reformers maintained. Such "an avowed Slave State", Herbert Samuel added, was "an anomaly and scandal in the modern world".[120] The pre-existence of 'white' or 'civilised' slavery scandalously obliterated one of the central markers of cultural difference between 'civilised Europe' and 'barbarous Orient' and of the central discursive legitimations of the imperial invasion of Central Africa. Instead of abolishing 'Arab slavery', the Free State had established similar or even worse bondage in the Congo, the reformers furiously criticised.[121]

Furthermore, in the course of exposing the centralised administration of the Free State and the almost unlimited legislative and executive power of the *Roi-Souverain* Léopold, criticism of the Congo system as an absolute and pure "despotism" became prevalent.[122] On the one hand, the allegation of 'despotism' implied a regress from modern liberal democratic institutions and control towards Europe's monarchist past. However, through the close connotation of the term with an anti-democratic Orient and Islam from its Aristotelian origins to modern notions of Montesquieu and Hegel, the assessment of a "barbarous" despotism in governance also contained the accusation of a convergence between this outpost of European 'civilisation' and the Oriental other it had intended to overcome.[123]

The temporal and cultural dimensions of this argument were concurrently evoked through the association of Léopold's atrocities and his absolute political power to the ancient tyranny of the Egyptian Pharaoh.[124] A political cartoon by F. Carruthers Gould for

119 Forced labour "is good, for when once broken in, the natives continue to work", Edward J. Glave claimed, for instance: "It is no crime, but a kindness, to make them work" (Glave, "Cruelty in the Congo", 702).

120 Morel, *Congo Slave State* [title]; William T. Stead, "Leopold, Emperor of the Congo," *The American Monthly Review of Reviews* 28, no. 1 (1903): 38; Resolution voted by the Executive Committee of the Congo Reform Association, 7 July 1909, reproduced in the appendix of Morel, *Great Britain*, 282–84, here 284; Herbert Samuel, "The Congo State and the Commission of Inquiry," *Contemporary Review* 88, December (1905), 881 (all 'slave state'); ibid. ('anomaly').

121 See for instance Burrows, *Curse of Central Africa*, 196; Morrison, "Personal Observations", 39.

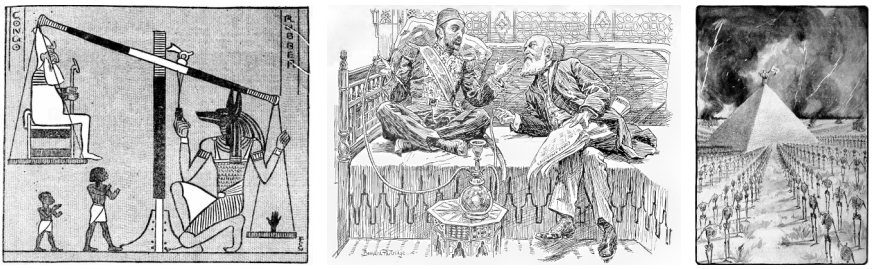
122 Morel, *Affairs of West Africa*, 313; Morel, "Belgian Curse", 358; Morel, *King Leopold's Rule*, 59; Morel, *Red Rubber*, 179; Burrows, *Curse of Central Africa*, 270; Morrison, "Personal Observations", 38; Congo Reform Association [U.S.], *Duty of the US*, 8; Congo Reform Association [U.S.], *The Congo State*, 3; Doyle, *Crime of the Congo*, 96. Morel directly credited the assessment of an "absolute despotism" in Leopold's rule to the Belgian jurist Félicien Cattier, although the referred book Félicien Cattier, *Droit et Administration de l'État Indépendant Du Congo* (Bruxelles: Vve F. Larcier, 1898) only contains the notion "régime de centralisation et de despotisme" (202).

123 Edward Cahill, "Humanity and the Open Door," in *The Congo News Letter*, ed. Congo Reform Association [U.S.] (Boston: 1906), 7–8, here 8; Congo Reform Association [U.K.], *Present State*, 40 ('barbarous'). For a history of the concept of Oriental despotism, see Robert Minuti, "Oriental Despotism," European History Online: Leibniz Institute of European History, 2012. http://www.ieg-ego.eu/minutir-2012-en.

124 See Canisius, *Campaign Amongst Cannibals*, 170; Morel, *Red Rubber*, 137, 200; Davis, *The Congo*, 32.

the *Westminster Gazette,* reproduced as the frontispiece of Morel's most popular Congo book, *Red Rubber*, visualised such Oriental allegories (Fig. 1). Sketched in the style of ancient Egyptian mythology, the cartoon showed an adaption of the *Book of the Dead*. In this case, Anubis with his canine head did not weigh the soul of a recently deceased before his entrance to the underworld; instead, this was represented with a single black hand, a symbol of the Congolese atrocities, and a figure of Léopold outfitted with the insignias of a Pharaoh. A caricature in the satirical magazine *The Punch* similarly stridently appealed to this Oriental metaphor (Fig. 2). It presented King Léopold and the Ottoman Sultan Abdul Hamid II lounging intimately on what appears to be the divan of an Ottoman palace and sharing a water pipe. While Léopold, holding a newspaper with the headline 'Congo atrocities' in his hand, complains about "the fuss they're making about these so-called atrocities", the Sultan Hamid, responsible for the massacres of hundreds of thousands of Armenians between 1892 and 1896, advises him to sit the criticism out: "Only talk, my dear boy. They won't do anything. They never touched me!".

Fig. 1 "The Weighing of the Soul in the Scales. Adopted from 'The Book of the Dead'."; Fig. 2 "Expert Opinion."; Fig. 3 "A memorial for the perpetuation of my name."



'The Congo Scales', *The Westminster Gazette*, 12 October 1905, 3. Newspaper image © The British Library Board. All rights reserved. With thanks to The British Newspaper Archive (www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk); Cartoon by Bernard Partridge, *The Punch*, 31 May 1905, 381. https://archive.org/details/punchvol128a129lemouoft; Twain, *King Leopold's Soliloquy*, 2.

Moreover, Mark Twain's reform pamphlet incorporated the Pharaonic symbolism both textually and visually in the idea of a hypothetical monument that could be erected to the imperial violence in the Congo (Fig. 3).[125] "Out of the skulls" of the millions of victims of Léopold's regime should be erected an exact "duplicate the Great Pyramid of Cheops […] in the centre of a depopulated tract", he suggested. On the top stands Léopold with his "'pirate flag' in one hand and a butcher-knife and pendant handcuffs in the other". Moreover, "[r]adiating from the pyramid, like the spokes of a wheel, there are to be forty grand avenues […] fenced on both sides by skulless skeletons".[126]

Thus, the skilled author Twain pushed Léopold and the 'slavery' of the Free State to the Oriental margins (and hence casually relegated the long European and American involvement in the slave trade to the historical background). He equally resorted to

125 Twain, *King Leopold's Soliloquy*, page after 2.

126 Ibid., 27–28. The idea of Léopold's "pyramid of Congolese skulls" was also reproduced in Spender, "Great Congo Iniquity", 43. Also see Decle, "Murder in Africa", 586 ('a line of skeletons').

the gothic motifs and patterns of demonological racism that had been a fundamental aspect of the alienation of the Congo. Allegations from an evangelical missionary that "the devil's work is in full swing" in the Congo, a connotation of the Congo Scandal to a general rise of "the forces of evil", an assessment of the state's "diabolicism" and "devilish" methods, or the description of the Free State as "Inferno" or "hell" linguistically related the violence of colonialism to the satanic counter- or under-world of the Congo, corroding the racist binary opposition between 'good/evil' and 'light/darkness'.[127]

Reformers frequently resorted, as Stanley had before, to horror fiction and popular themes of the gothic in their depiction of the Congo colony. Twain, for instance, imagined the Free State as "The Land of Graves". While Stanley had resorted to Milton's *Paradise Lost*, Morel referred to the *Divine Comedy* and Mary Shelley in remarks about "a cannibal orgie [sic] which rivals Dante's inferno" and the allegation that the European Powers had with the Free State, "like Frankenstein", raised a "monster". The notion of 'horror' itself is omnipresent within the reform discourse, and its centrality as a motif in Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* turned "the horror" into a popular cultural reference to the Congo atrocities.[128]

The gothic allegories culminated in Robert Park's taunts of the Belgian king as a "Vampire", this most popular villain of gothic fiction, who was "sucking the lifeblood of the victim that has slowly ceased to struggle". Léopold was denounced as a "diabolic" character, as "Apollyon in the dark", as a "monster of cruelty" who had "offered up tens of thousands of human lives on the altars of his greed and his lust for gold". Even "Death […], with his scythe and hour-glass" would beg Léopold to "to marry his daughter". To the "uppermost" of their "totem of demonology", the historian W. Roger Louis once rightfully formulated, the reformers sat the character of Léopold as the personification of the fundamental immorality of the Free State.[129]

Instead of eradicating the powers of 'darkness' with 'civilised light', as Stanley had promised, the reformers accused Léopold and the Free State he symbolised of an alliance with the 'African savagery', 'oriental despotism' and 'spiritual evilness' it was supposed to subdue. The colonial state had, in the logic of the argument, finally become part of the African other. Léopold had, as Mr Kurtz in *Heart of Darkness*, "taken a high seat amongst the devils of the land". The central character of Conrad's second Congo novella eventually "forgot himself amongst these people", became an "initiated wraith" and lost his 'civilised' identity. Kurtz even chose "to preside at certain midnight dances ending with unspeakable rites, which […] were offered up to him", a formulation widely thought to suggest cannibalism. For the Congo reformers, any civilised identity in the Congo had likewise been annihilated. The reformers accused Léopold and the Free State

127 Edgar Stannard to Morel, 7 April 1905, reproduced in Morel, *Red Rubber*, 78 ('devil's'); Spender, "Great Congo Iniquity", 43 ('evil'), 54 ('Inferno'); Morel, *Red Rubber*, 88 ('diabolicism'); Davis, *The Congo*, 43 ('devilish'); Park, "Terrible Story", 763; Doyle, *Crime of the Congo*, 94 (both 'hell').

128 Twain, *King Leopold's Soliloquy*, 40 ('graves'); Morel, *King Leopold's Rule*, 120 ('Dante'), 295 ('Frankenstein'); Conrad, "Heart of Darkness", 69 ('horror'). For the use of 'the horror' as metaphor, see chapter 1.

129 Louis, "Morel and the Congo", 217 ('totem'); Park, "Terrible Story", 763 ('monster' [editorial prefix], 'altars'), 772 ('Vampire', 'sucking'); Park, "Blood-Money", 60 ('diabolic'), 61 ('Vampire'); Spender, "Great Congo Iniquity", 46 ('Apollyon'); Twain, *King Leopold's Soliloquy*, 26 ('Death'), 36 ('monster').

of what had been termed 'the sin of becoming the other', of obliterating the cultural boundaries between Europe and Africa and 'going native'.[130]

The result was a murderous colonial regime and the creation of 'monstrous' cultural crossbred, the "Africanised civilisation of modern Europe", as Morel once formulated. When the reformers denounced Léopold, as mentioned above and the Free State in general as a "monster" or a "political monster", they not only appealed to notions of fear and abnormality but to the objectionable hybridisation that was evoked in the concept of the metaphor. This hybridisation took place not as in Stanley's racist stereotypes of the pigmies defined by a mixture of animal and human life, nor in the realms of life and death as with Frankenstein's creature, but through the amalgamation of 'civilisation' and 'savagery', of Europe and Africa. This monstrosity was visualised, for instance, in pointed form by political cartoons that showed Léopold as an almost naked and black-skinned man, eating away at what appears to be a human bone (Fig. 4), or via a composite of Léopold's head put on the body of a serpentine rubber vine strangling a terrorised victim (Fig.5).[131]

Fig. 4 "A Lesson in Philanthropy."; Fig. 5 "In the Rubber Coils."; Fig. 6 "Mulunba Chief of Cannibal Tribe Near Luebo, Congo State."

'More about the Congo', *The Voice of the Negro* IV, no. 1 (1907), 15. https://hdl.handle.net/2027/hvd.32044051702538; Cartoon by Edward L. Sambourne, *The Punch*, 28 November 1906, 389. https://archive.org/details/punchvol130a131lemouoft/page/388/mode/2up; Twain, *King Leopold's Soliloquy*, page after 24.

Such images of the "roi-sauvage"[132] suggest that the Congo Scandal was understood as a corrosion of alterity, the collapse of the absolute counter-world that established the negative identity of the imagined community of 'Brightest Europe'. As a later chapter discusses in more detail, some secular Congo reformers such as Morel and G. Stanley

130 Conrad, "Heart of Darkness", 49 ('seat', 'wraith'), 56 ('forgot'); Bass, "Imperial Alterity", subtitle ('sin').

131 Morel, *Affairs of West Africa*, 351 ('Africanised'); Morel, *Red Rubber*, 213; Morel, *Great Britain*, 246; Robert E. Park, "Is the Congo State an International Outlaw?," in *The Congo News Letter*, ed. Congo Reform Association [U.S.] (Boston: 1906), 14 (all 'monster').

132 Gehrmann, *Kongo-Greuel*, 303. Gehrmann has identified cartoons with a similar visual setting from an Italian, a Dutch and a Belgian newspaper, see ibid., 303–07.

Hall saw this particular 'sin' of the Free State reinforced by a broader false premise of contemporary colonial policy, precisely through the misguided programs of Christian and Western education.[133]

In this, the reformers heavily relied upon the intellectual influence of Mary Kingsley, who had once declared the "missionary-made man" to be "the curse" of West Africa.[134] The confounded and cursing in-between status of the Westernised African found particular expression in his ridiculed 'failed' attempt to imitate a European appearance, a hint at his only thin "'veneer of civilisation'", as Morel suggested. "His adoption of European clothes causes him to be looked upon partly with suspicion, partly with ridicule", and "[h]is unfortunate habit of adopting the latest vagaries of European fashions […] is the butt of constant sarcasm".[135] In its journal, the Aborigines' Protection Society showed a similar refrain about the "showy dressing" of the educated West African and his desire to imitate English manners. Moreover, the motif was also reproduced by a drawing in Twain's Congo pamphlet, which depicted Mulunba of the 'Zappo-Zapps' wearing a Leopard-fur skirt combined with European hat and jacket and a modern rifle (Fig. 6).[136]

Moreover, in the case of the brutal and atrocious Free State regime, the opposed 'Europeanisation' dogma in colonial policy had resulted in a particularly worrying process of 'cultural amalgamation'. After all, the political threat of Léopold's 'cannibal army' was its reliance on "men of the Stone Age, armed with the weapons of the nineteenth century", as Doyle once wrote. Léopold's "striking force", the Bishop of Oxford decried, was composed of "savages, in many cases cannibals, armed with weapons of precision, with all the force of civilisation put at the disposal of their own untamed and savage passions".[137] Thus, Léopold had made the Congo much more dangerous, as Morel asserted; the "one lesson learned from contact with European 'civilisation'" was for the Congolese "savages" the "improvement in the art of killing their neighbours".[138]

In the Congo, the colonisers "have grafted upon the native's failings […] the worst vices" of Europe, Morel wrote. On "a natural […] savagery", the leader of the British reform campaign asserted, "the authorities have grafted the vices of the European savage". In this way, they have "converted the Congo territories into an earthly hell for African humanity, and have raised a monster which is already outgrowing, and will one day entirely outgrow, their control". Such cultural monstrosity had no right to exist, the reformers agreed. The Free State was "a monster which should not be allowed to live", American reformers wrote, and the European Powers responsible for its creation should "have strangled the monster in its cradle", as Doyle proclaimed.[139]

133 See Morel, *Nigeria*, 11–12 ('identity'); Hall, *Adolescence*, Vol. 2, 706. See chapter 4.3 for more details.
134 Kingsley, *Travels in West Africa*, 661 ('missionary-made');
135 Morel, *Affairs of West Africa*, 230.
136 Aborigines' Protection Society, quoted in Nworah, "Aborigines' Protection Society", 86 ('showy').
137 Doyle, *Crime of the Congo*, 10 ('Stone Age'); The Bishop of Oxford [Francis Paget], quoted in 'Congo Reform', *The Times*, 20 November 1909, 8. ('striking force', etc.).
138 Morel, *Affairs of West Africa*, 351.
139 Ibid. ('failings'); Morel, *King Leopold's Rule*, 124 ('natural', 'authorities', 'converted'); Congo Reform Association [U.S.], "The Correction of a Misunderstanding," in *The Congo News Letter*, ed. Congo Reform Association [U.S.] (Boston: 1906), 6–7, here 6 ('lived'); Doyle, *Crime of the Congo*, 7 ('strangled').

A 'triumph of the wilderness': the erosion of superiority

The ideological legitimation of racist discrimination always included processes of differentiation and inferiorisation.[140] As the previous chapter has described, Stanley had created 'the Congo' as radically different and naturally inferior to 'European civilisation' and 'the white race'. The account of the epic conquest of the Congolese space and people through the heroic white imperialist symbolised the paramount position of the power of 'Brightest Europe' about 'Darkest Africa'. In the second dimension of the discursive crisis of racist representation, the Congo opponents extended their identification of the corrosion of cultural difference between the 'civilised' Free State and its 'savage' surroundings to the equally scandalous exposure of a fundamental weakness of the colonial state, its agents and the 'civilisation' they represented.

As chapter 3.1 has discussed, narrating the submission of Congolese nature as the physical condition of its eternal darkness symbolically contained Europe's entitlement to dominate Central Africa. 'Bula Matari', the breaker of the rocks, became the nickname for the 'empire builder' Stanley, who used dynamite to impose a colonial network of roads upon the defying Congolese landscape. Besides that, it became a synonym for the Free State and herewith linguistically comprised the promise of civilisation's power to control the Congo. More than 20 years after Stanley's first journey through the continent, and more than a decade after the formation the Free State, Joseph Conrad literarily described the illusionary scope of these pledges from the optimistic time of exploration.

In the surroundings of the colonial capital Stanley founded, Conrad's protagonist Marlow quickly unmasks the myth of 'Bula Matari' as a farce. While he observes some explosive works indeed, these are nothing more than "objectless blasting" without any lasting effect: "No change appeared on the face of the rock". Such a passage was an explicit metaphor for the greater powerlessness of the colonial state. Deeper in the interior of the continent, Conrad's readers find the Congolese jungles that Stanley had so proudly 'penetrated' with his columns impressive and mighty like ever before. The abundance of tropical nature emphasised the insignificance of the isolated European pioneers: "Trees, trees, millions of trees, massive, immense, running up high […]. It made you feel very small, very lost", the British captain Marlow noted. Nature in the Free State was far from being reduced to the "shackled form of a conquered monster" one can find in Europe, but still "a thing monstrous and free".[141]

The bad state and weakness of the colony are mirrored in the "pieces of decaying machinery" that Marlow comes upon on his journey. European technology was not merely incapable of subduing African nature, but it was broken and corroded by the environmental impact. A "railway-truck lying there on its back with its wheels in the air" which "looked as dead as the carcass of some animal", "a stack of rusty rails", a pile of "imported drainage-pipes" in which there "wasn't one that was not broken, a steamship

140 See Hund, *Rassismus*, 91.

141 Conrad, "Heart of Darkness", 15 ('objectless', 'change'), 35 ('lost'), 36 ('shackled', 'monstrous').

laying damaged "at the bottom of the river", "all the things broken" at a colonial station, were symbols for civilisation's failure in the Congo despite its technological advances.[142]

Moreover, the health status of the proud European conquerors of 'Darkest Africa' was devastating. Stanley had, as discussed in the previous chapter, extensively described the impure and infectious Congolese climate and the forbidding atmosphere of horror and loneliness. He had nonetheless also embodied European confidence that the 'white body' and the 'civilised mind' were able to resist and colonise even in this most hostile region of the earth. The reality was extremely different, though. Fever, dysentery and other diseases frequently plagued the undernourished Europeans in the Congo and became prominent themes in the travelogues of colonial pioneers starting in the 1890s.[143]

"I lay sick and helpless on my bed of grass, suffering almost all the horrors of the damned", Ward noted in his second book on his experiences with the Emin Pasha Relief Expedition, for instance. Conrad eventually made the physical and psychological deterioration of Europeans in the Congo a central theme of his Congo literature, as expressed in the inglorious death of his fallen hero Kurtz, who was ultimately carried off by a deadly fever that shattered his starving body and mind.[144]

John Harris, the British reform activist and former missionary, suggested in a report from a journey to the Congo that "all whites going to West Africa should brace themselves to the duty of visiting the cemeteries", although it "may be a melancholy undertaking", he added. Indeed, for many of the missionaries, traders and colonial agents that had invaded the Congo after Stanley's 'exploration', their 'journey' ended less than heroically at the graveyard.[145] Of the 263 Europeans agents establishing the Congo colony between 1879 and 1885 under the command of Stanley, 24 died through sickness. In 1890, 15% of European officials still died annually, while the death rates among militaries and missionaries were significantly above average. For Victorian evangelicals, the Congo became the deadliest destination in the 'white man's grave' of Africa and gained the macabre reputation as being a "shortcut to heaven". Only six of the first 35 Congo Balolo missionaries survived until 1900.[146]

The experience of the physical weakness and catastrophic mortality among Europeans in the Congo exposed the shallowness of Victorian beliefs in the resilience of the 'imperial white race'. "Africa – always cruel – has taken them in the very flower of

142 Ibid., 15 ('decaying', 'railway', 'rusty'), 16 ('drainage-pipes'), 21 ('river'); Conrad, "Outpost of Progress" 125 ('all the things'). That the actual condition of the Congo River marine was devastating and for Edgar Canisius was similarly a prime illustration of his initially quoted assessment of the huge gap between phrasing and achievements in the Congo: Canisius, *Campaign Amongst Cannibals*, 69.

143 See Burroughs, *Travel Writing*, 29–30.

144 Herbert Ward, *My Life with Stanley's Rear Guard* (New York: Charles L. Webster & Company, 1891), 47 ('sick'), [an excerpt that had also been quoted by Burroughs]; see Conrad, "Heart of Darkness", 69.

145 Harris, *Dawn in Darkest Africa*, 75 ('cemeteries').

146 Eugene M. Harrison, *Giants of the Missionary Trail* (Chicago: Scripture press Foundation, 1954), 59 ('grave', 'shortcut'), who also called the Congo the deadliest African missionary destination. For the death rate among Stanley's officers, see Stanley, *The Congo*, Vol. 2, 306 [table]; among European officials in general by 1890, see Gann and Duignan, *Belgian Africa*, 107; among Force Publique officers, see ibid., 68; among Congo Balolo missionaries, see Conley, *Drumbeats Changed the World*, 76.

their manhood and womanhood", Harris noted about the many tombs of Europeans, a formulation that emphasises that these fatalities were also conceived as a collective European defeat in the struggle with African nature.[147]

Many reformers soon admitted their conviction that while East and South Africa might eventually become a "white man's land", the Congo "can never be so". In contrast to the message of Stanley's optimistic imperial narrative, the Congo Basin would remain a "Black man's land", forever impregnable for permanent 'white' settlement or labour.[148] As such, the Congo became a worrying reminder of the looming edges of 'white' racial superiority and political supremacy that had become the subject of a thriving 'white crisis' debate in the late 19th and early 20th century, ever since the Australian historian Charles Pearson had warned of the inevitable limits of 'white' proliferation in tropical climates.[149]

Moreover, in contrast to Stanley's claims, Conrad denied that the arrival of European envoys had effectively initiated historical progress and dispersed any 'epistemological darkness'. The trading post that Conrad only ironically called the 'Outpost of Progress' ridiculed such naming through the underlying motifs of stagnation, triviality and idleness. It was "perfectly insignificant" and "useless", Conrad noted, just like the two men that equipped it.[150]

In contrast to Kayerts and Carlier from the 'Outpost', the character Kurtz was initially created as a personification of European culture, reason, science and morality. The famous ivory trader was a "universal genius" and the only coloniser who had arrived with "moral ideas of some sort" in the Congo, Conrad wrote.[151] However, the expectation of this "emissary of pity and science and progress" that the superior cultural status of the 'white race' "must necessarily", as he believed, lead to a social position of mastery that would give him "the might of a deity" among the Congolese 'savages', was declared an illusion. Only on the surface had Kurtz and the European 'civilisation' he symbolised reached a godlike position of power. The 'tribes' surrounding the Inner Station "followed" and "adored him", their 'chiefs' "would crawl" in front of him. "'My Intended, my ivory, my station, my river, my –' everything belonged to him", Kurtz believed. However,

147 Harris, *Dawn in Darkest Africa*, 75 ('cruel'). It took until 1897 for the bite of an infected female anopheles to be identified as the malaria vector instead of the long blamed *mal aire* of Africa. See Conley, *Drumbeats Changed the World*, 78.

148 Private letter of George Grenfell, 1903, quoted in Johnston, *George Grenfell*, Vol. 1, 482–4, here 482 ('never'); Morel to Johnston, quoted in Cline, *E.D. Morel*, 65; Morel, *Great Britain*, 28 ('Black man's land'). Also see Williams, "Report upon the State of Congo", 20; Rev. A.E. Scrivener, quoted in Doyle, *Crime of the Congo*, 51; Davis, *The Congo*, 115; Emmott: 'Congo Free State', HC Deb 20 May 1903 Vol. 122 cc 1289–1332, here cc 1310–1311; Emmott, in "Meeting on the Kongo Question", 39; Morel, *King Leopold's Rule*, 36; John H. Weeks, *Among Congo Cannibals* (Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott Company, 1913), 83; Booker T. Washington, "The Future of Congo Reform," in *The Congo News Letter*, ed. Congo Reform Association [U.S.] (Boston: 1906), 9–10, here 9.

149 See Pearson, *National Life and Character*, 31–90; Bonnett, "Crises of Whiteness", 9–11; Lake and Reynolds, *Global Colour Line*, 75–94; chapter 1.

150 Conrad, "Outpost of Progress" 149 ('useless'), 158 ('insignificant').

151 Conrad, "Heart of Darkness", 32 ('moral'), 46 ('universal'), 49 ('Europe'). Kurtz was a "prodigy" (25), a great painter, musician and poet, (see 47 and 58).

the surficial obeisance, the fantasy of lordship and the mastery of civilisation over savagery were a mere illusion. It was a distortion of reality that would make "the wilderness burst into a prodigious peal of laughter that would shake the fixed stars in their places". Quite in contrast, the "powers of darkness" had since long "claimed him for their own", enchanted by "the heavy, mute spell of the wilderness". According to Conrad, Kurtz, like the Free State and European culture he symbolised, was captured by "the heart of a conquering darkness".[152]

Nothing symbolises that scandalous reversal of power relations between Europe and Africa in Conrad's narrative more symbolically than the relation between Kurtz and the mysterious African woman he introduces as his 'intended'. As in the exploration narrative of Stanley, the African space and its spiritual core are here imagined as a female body. Kurtz' intended is "like the wilderness itself", Conrad remarked, "the image of its tenebrous and passionate soul". However, far from being a submissive, sleeping 'virgin' waiting for the 'penetration' and 'insemination' of the imperial male, this Africa/woman was mature, self-assured, dominant and commanding, as Conrad described in detail: "She was savage and superb, wild-eyed and magnificent; there was something ominous and stately in her". Additionally, there was no doubt who 'belonged' to whom: "The wilderness […] had taken [Kurtz], loved him, embraced him, got into his veins, consumed his flesh, and sealed his soul to its own by the inconceivable ceremonies of some devilish initiation". But in contrast to Kurtz' patriarchal habitus, his engagement with the wilderness did not create a proud representative of imperial masculinity; rather, it reduced him to a child: the 'wilderness' "had patted him on the head, […] it had caressed him, and—lo!—he had withered […] He was its spoiled and pampered favourite".[153]

Chapter 4.2 shows in detail how British and American reformers were outraged by the revelations about the Free State's failure to control an increasingly rebellious population. Hence, it discusses how the discursive crisis of racist representation that was expressed in the incapacity to honour the pledge of conquering the Congolese darkness was related to a political crisis of white supremacy on the African continent and beyond. For Conrad, however, the weakness of the European colonisers in relation to the Congo's 'primeval' nature and its 'savage' inhabitants was always, as stated above, a symbol for their defeat by their own dark interior. The true 'heart of darkness' that Conrad approached on his literary journey was not the interior of the Congolese 'jungles' but the instincts and lust that slumber under the thin veneer of civilisation and each 'civilised subject'. The lack of control over the external (African) darkness was a symbol of the ultimately even more frightening loss of control over this inner darkness. The real changes "take place inside", the author hinted at the very beginning of Marlow's journey.[154] "The wilderness had whispered to [Kurtz] things about himself", Conrad later noted, "and the whisper had proved irresistibly fascinating". In fact, it had seduced and "beguiled" the European pioneer "by the awakening of forgotten and brutal instincts, by the memory of gratified and monstrous passions", as one can read. Hence, Kurtz had

152 Ibid., 25 ('emissary'), 43 ('powers', 'claimed'), 48 ('My', 'burst'), 50 ('must, 'might'), 56 ('followed', 'adored'), 74 ('heavy', 'conquering').

153 Ibid., 48 ('embraced', 'patted'), 60 ('image', 'superb'), 61 ('itself').

154 Ibid., 11 ('inside').

not only 'gone native', been absorbed by the African wilderness that surrounds him, but had 'gone wild', allowing "his unlawful soul" to go "beyond the bounds of permitted aspirations.[155]

Moreover, while the alliances with the 'forces of savagery' and evil discussed above were conceptualised as a conscious approach towards Congolese darkness by the Free State, Conrad suggested that this process of 'becoming the other' was also a sign of civilisation's essential weakness. Ultimately, Kurtz lost any "restraint in the gratification of his various lusts", and he lost his identity in the "inconceivable mystery of a soul that knew no restraint, no faith, and no fear, yet struggling blindly with itself". The European pioneers, who had come like Stanley to 'conquer' and 'civilise' 'Darkest Africa', had themselves become the powerless object the external and internal 'darkness' that had seduced, subdued and incorporated the raiding Europeans. It was "a terrible vengeance for the fantastic invasion" of the African continent, Conrad concluded, and a shocking "triumph for the wilderness".[156]

A 'civilised savagery': the failure of modernity

Finally, the discursive impact of the doubts about 'racial' and cultural distinctiveness and superiority was intensified through the interpretation of the Congo Scandal as a symbol and symptom of a broader intrinsic cultural crisis of Western civilisation. Modern myths of the empire that Victorian literature had evoked around the heroic African adventurer Stanley and the public admiration for the philanthropic civiliser Léopold had contained the promise that "chivalric romance" and "the Ideal" had not been fully exorcised from a century of "materialism and steam". Beyond question, the reality of murder, torture and exploitation in the name of civilisation, deeply unsettled those Europeans and Americans who had personally, politically or discursively affiliated with the romantic period of exploration and the movement of civilising the Congo.[157]

The failure of Congo colonialism to meet these lofty expectations was a central theme of Spender's reflection on the 'Great Congo Iniquity': "While we have been dreaming of progress and benevolence", his article continued, "there has grown up among us a strange product". The "magnitude" of offences in the Congo pointed to the emergence of "nothing less than a civilised savagery, infinitely more dangerous and terrible than primitive barbarism", the liberal journalist asserted.[158] In a similar tone, Morel suggested that Léopold had introduced the "European savage" or a "civilised barbarism" to the Congo that was no less atrocious than the slave trade of the Arabs, "these semi-barbarians" that it had replaced. [159]

Thus, there was an additional frame of interpretation opened up by the reform movement in which the violence of colonialism in the Congo was defined as a "new thing", a "new savagery", hence a phenomenon of European modernity, neither bound

155 See ibid., 57–58. Morel once extended this metaphor when he described the Congo Scandal as a "cesspool of iniquity and naked human passions", Morel, *Red Rubber*, 127.

156 Conrad, "Heart of Darkness", 57 ('restraint'), 66 ('inconceivable')

157 Stead, "Mr. H. M. Stanley", 20.

158 Spender, "Great Congo Iniquity", 45.

159 Morel, *King Leopold's Rule*, 124 ('European'); Morel, *Red Rubber*, 84 and 210 ('civilised'), 84 ('semi').

to the European past nor the African present. According to Spender, this new, civilised savagery was "born of the union between greed and science".[160] Indeed, within the international reform campaign, the motif of the intrinsic brutality of Western civilisation was generally conveyed through the disclosure of the destructive potential of capitalism and technology and thus material progress as such.

The transformations in the political economy of the Free State since the 1890s form a central aspect of all three dimensions of the Congo Scandal discussed in this study.[161] In the representational dimension of the Congo Scandal, many reformers interpreted the exposed Congolese economy as a sweeping sign of an on-going aberration of economic and political culture at the centre of the worrying 'civilised savagery' that was expressed through the rising dominance of a state-controlled monopoly capitalism, the intermixture of political and business milieus, and the dominance of high finance over the production process and the state.

Imperial capitalism at the turn of the 20th century was at a crossroads. Despite the ideological framing of New Imperialism as a project based on the principles of free trade, European economies steadily evolved towards the centralisation of capital and the establishment of monopoly-controlled economies. Often, this implied a substantial involvement of the state as a separate economic agent. The economic transformations in the Congo, which had "been appropriated by the Government" and "either been farmed out to monopolistic companies for exploitation or […] retained by King Leopold as his private domain" until there was "no longer freedom of trade" nor an "open market", as William Morrison asserted, was in this context apparently received as a particularly ruthless spurning of the principles of the Gladstonian laissez-faire capitalism so powerfully represented by the Berlin Congo Act of 1885.[162]

The territories in the Congo Basin "which were supposed to be dedicated forever to free trade, have been given over to shameless monopolies", Stead portentously asserted. "Any "'commercial' relationship between the European and the African has been eliminated as a factor in the political conception of its European rulers", the former trading clerk Morel sorrowfully diagnosed. For a devoted free-trade activist like Morel or his patron, the merchant John Holt, the significant government involvement in the Free State economy, the trading monopolies and the heavy taxation of private enterprise formed the practical as well as philosophical "kernel" of the Congo question. However,

160 Spender, "Great Congo Iniquity", 45.

161 As chapter 4.2 reveals, reformers of all ideological streams generally agreed that atrocities against the colonised Africans, "the lash, the raids of soldiers, the terror of the villagers, the weighing of baskets of rubber brought in by trembling natives, the scourging with the chicotte, of hippopotamus hide, the burning of villages, indiscriminate massacre, the severed hands, the excesses of cannibalism" (Morgan and Barbour, *Memorial Concerning the Kongo*, 8 ['lash']) but also the repression towards concurring colonisers and independent traders such as Stokes or Rabinek were structurally related to the mode of ivory and rubber production implemented by the Free State administration. Moreover, the restrictions of free trade not only challenged the political legitimation of the Free State as a collective and international colony but endangered, as chapter 5.2 discusses, the promised universal economic benefits for the international imperial community.

162 'Address of Rev. W.H. Morrison', reproduced in The Secretary of the Congress and Rose, *Universal Peace Congress*, 237.

even evangelical and humanitarian reformers heavily opposed the radical restrictions of free trade through the Free State as fundamental political deterioration.[163]

Furthermore, American Congo opponents, in particular, expressed fierce outrage at how the Free State's king-sovereign commingled his roles as head of state and capitalist entrepreneur as much as the resulting style of governance. Park called Léopold a "business monarch" who ruled the Congo "rather as a business concern than a political organization", while his successor John Daniels complained about the Belgian "business king and his business people". Richard Harding Davis similarly asserted that the "Congo Free State is only a great trading house", and that Léopold "is not a monarch. He is a shopkeeper".[164]

Indeed, through the high involvement of the state in the concessionary trusts and his direct exploitation of the Domaine de la Couronne, Léopold had become the central economic actor in the Congo. This "strange, fantastic, and ominous" figure of a head of state who "unites in himself the political and social prestige of a reigning monarch with the vast material power of a multimillionaire" was for Park a sign of the ever-blurring boundaries between the economic and political sphere in a society which had reached a problematic new "business age".[165]

However, this assessed commingling of politics and economy, of the realms of the ideal and the material, was not only defined by increasing economic activity and profit-seeking of government institutions symbolised by the "king who is capitalist" but by a similar worrying gain in power of 'money' and 'finance'. This situation was caused by Léopold's engagement in what the editorial secretary of the American reform association called "the great game of high finance", that is, the approach of the financial markets in search of credit for the initially chronically underfunded colonial state and investments into the monopolistic trusts. Léopold "has gone openly into stockholders, the money market", where he sought "money and the power money gives", Park analysed.[166]

As a result, however, Léopold and the Free State had allegedly become puppets of the financial market themselves. It was repeatedly emphasised that modern trusts and syndicates like those operating in the Congo and the capital and banks behind them were "generally strong enough in influence at home and power abroad to menace any administration". According to Spender, the 'civilised savagery' he decried was "fortified by a moneyed command of brainpower in every country". However, "while other countries have shown an increasing disposition to take from capital its control of the industries", Park asserted, "in Belgium we may see a country where capital, represented

163 Morel, "'Commercial' Aspect", 448 ('relationship'); Morel and Congo Reform Association [U.K.], *Economic Aspect*, subtitle ('kernel'). For John Holt, see 'Treatment of Natives in the Congo', *The Standard*, 16 May 1902, 6: for a prominent evangelical missionary on the 'free trade question, see the speech of Morrison quoted above; for a leading humanitarian, see Bourne, *Civilisation in Congoland*, 298–302.

164 Park, "King in Business", 627 ('business monarch'), 632 ('concern'); Daniels, "Congo Question", 901 ('business king'); Davis, *The Congo*, 94 ('trading house'), 95 ('shopkeeper'). Also see 'Address of Mr. E.D. Morel', reproduced in The Secretary of the Congress and Rose, *Universal Peace Congress*, 232.

165 Park, "King in Business", 624 ('strange', 'unites'), 633 ('age').

166 Ibid., 624 ('capitalist'), 625 ('game', 'power'), 637 ('stockholders').

by the king, has taken possession of the government". Of the "the results of this policy the Congo Free State is, however, the capital illustration", he concluded.[167]

The increasing control of the industrial sector and political institutions through finance was an important aspect of the cultural crisis beyond the Congo Scandal. In the big picture, Congo reformers interpreted it as the defeat of an allegedly productive industrial capitalism and honest trade by a merely destructive financial capitalism. This "far-reaching change" of commercial methods, John Harris assessed, was essentially defined by an exchange of economic actors. The traditional colonial merchant who heroically engaged in exotic trade on the frontiers of civilisation was a romanticised character of the colonial imagination. In the Congo, one could witness his replacement by new, more ruthless actors; Harris argued: "As I have already pointed out, the old-time merchant is giving place to the highly organized syndicate, which possesses neither heart nor conscience".[168]

These 'organised trusts' in the Congo were "buccaneers […] with no more moral purpose at the back of it than there is in burglars breaking into a safe", Conrad wrote. The stereotypical counterpart to the old-school independent merchant was the impersonal and unscrupulous syndicate or trust and also the small "clique"[169] (as Morel frequently named them) of rich and intriguing stock-speculators that control the trusts – and the Congo State: the "few millionaire subordinates and a handful of shareholders" that had invested in the state or the concessionary companies "for the purpose of speculation on the Brussels and Antwerp Stock Exchanges". In contrast to the traditional merchants, these speculators are described as lacking any higher moral standards, their objects "are purely financial", and they seek only "a rapid accumulation of riches. Since they measure "success merely by the quotations of the Antwerp rubber market" and they run their business in the Free State "merely as a commercial speculation", they made the African "a slave to minister to the requirements of speculators", no matter how ruthless and brutal the methods had to be.[170]

Even the "slave-raiding, slave-dealing Arab was, at least, constructive", Morel once wrote: "He destroyed, but to build again. He was a coloniser – a ruthless one, but still a coloniser". However, the Congolese capital investors were "not attached to the soil" and were "absentees". They simply drained "the life-blood of thousands of miserable negroes" to "spend those riches out of Africa", Morel bristled with anger. In contrast to the trope of an 'insemination' of 'virgin' and 'fertile' African soil through the 'penetration' of a European trader and coloniser, as Stanley's Congo narrative sketched it, the

167 Harris, *Dawn in Darkest Africa*, 267 ('influence'); Spender, "Great Congo Iniquity", 45 ('fortified'); Park, "King in Business", 633 ('disposition').

168 Harris, *Dawn in Darkest Africa*, 267.

169 Conrad, "Heart of Darkness", 30 ('buccaneers'); Morel, *Affairs of West Africa*, 204; Morel, *British Case*, x; Morel, *Congo Slave State*, 6; Morel, *King Leopold's Rule*, 62 (all 'clique').

170 Morel, *Great Britain*, xiii ('millionaire'); Morel, *British Case*, x–xi ('purpose'), xiii ('slave'); Morel, *Red Rubber*, 88 ('purely', 'rapid'); Park, "Real Issue", 1 ('success'); Grogan and Sharp, *From the Cape to Cairo*, 154 ('merely').

Congolese stockholders and consortia created no value but only parasitically lived on the wealth of the Congolese resources.[171]

The logic of this line of criticism culminated in the characterisation of the Congo as "a vampire growth, intended to suck the country dry", a "vampire State" and the "vampire of the nations". Vampirism was a plurivalent metaphor in the reform discourse. It not only related the Free State to the gothic aspect of the imperial Congo stereotype but was also used to describe an allegedly boundless financial capital that only served the personal greed of distant speculators, bankers and financiers. The emerging patterns of modern antisemitism proved that this metaphor was a powerful discursive tool to arouse a regressive opposition to capitalist modernity.[172]

In this tradition, the reformers did not use the vampire-metaphor, as Marx had done, to illustrate the "appalling nature of capital" to feed upon living labour but to artificially distinguish between good (constructive) and evil (parasitic) modes of capitalist exploitation. Some insights into the correspondents of rubber growers left Roger Casement outraged about "the dastardly mind inhabiting the bosom of the Stock Exchange". The "financial 'soul' of this country is a thing to kick and spit upon", he added. And like in its antisemitic context, the reform trope did not primarily target the (financial) game, but its players, the "financial vampires" or "vampire groups of financial associates" that secretly controlled the colonial state and economy in the Congo. The most radical expression of the 'blood-sucking' and money-grubbing capitalist behind the Congo atrocities was, however, always the "Vampire" King Léopold himself, who fed upon the blood of the Congo and the Congolese.[173]

For the Congo reformers, the exceptionally voracious character of Léopold was expressed by "a shameless and unscrupulous clutching after gold", a new and worrying feature for an aristocrat. "Lust of conquest is royal; kings have always exercised that stately vice", Mark Twain similarly elaborated, "but lust of money – lust of shillings – lust of nickels – lust of dirty coin, not for the nation's enrichment but for the king's alone – this is new". This "awful king, this pitiless and blooddrenched king" was the "sole butcher for personal gain findable in all his caste", the American novelist added.[174]

With these riches, the king "whose private life has been a public scandal", as reformers felt obliged to point out, financed what they described as decadent debauchery, his

171 Morel, *Red Rubber*, 88 ('slave-raiding', 'destroyed', 'attached', 'spend'); Morel, *Great Britain*, xiii ('absentees'); [Morel], "The Congo Scandal VI", 228 ('life-blood').

172 Stead, "Leopold to Be Hanged?", 246 ('State'), 247 ('nations'). Also see Williams, "Open Letter". The notion of Grogan is reproduced in Bourne, *Civilisation in Congoland*, 257 and Morel, *King Leopold's Rule*, 206. At least in the case of Robert Park, the influence of a pseudo-romantic critique of progress and anti-Semitic attacks against financial capitalism he had absorbed during his doctoral studies in Germany through the lectures of the historian Georg Friedrich Knapp and the anti-Semitic peasant novels of Wilhelm von Polenz is more than obvious (see Lösing, "Congo to Chicago", 113).

173 Mark Neocleous, "The Political Economy of the Dead Marx's Vampires," *History of Political Thought* 24, no. 4 (2003): 684; Casement to Morel, quoted in Andrew Porter, "Sir Roger Casement and the International Humanitarian Movement," *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 29, no. 2 (2001), 66 ('soul'); Morel, *Red Rubber*, 160 ('financial vampires'); Stead, "Leopold to Be Hanged?", 246 ('vampire groups'); Park, "Terrible Story", 772; Park, "Blood-Money", 61 (both 'Vampire').

174 Park, "King in Business", 633 ('shameless'); Twain, *King Leopold's Soliloquy*, 41 ('Lust', 'awful').

chateaux and palaces in Belgium, luxury estates at the Cote d'Azur, and especially his young affairs. Léopold, it is argued, had spent "untold thousands upon the women of the half-world who chance to please his fancy – the Queens of the Congo, whose jewels are bought with human lives".[175] This imagery of a "money crazy" Léopold was visualised in various contemporary caricatures like the one published in Twain's pamphlet (Fig. 7). It juxtaposed a scene of colonial violence, two kneeling Black persons attacked with a stick by a man in European clothes, with the drawing of a well-dressed Léopold, recognisable by his archetypical long white beard, sitting at a desk and avariciously guarding coins and bags of money that symbolise the richness gained from the exploitation of the Congo.[176]

However, not every Congo opponent was willing to reduce the negative forces of capitalism in the Free State to the suppression of commercial freedom or the character of a few exceptionally avaricious agents. The former Free State officer Canisius once suggested that the Congolese had fallen victim to the "white man's greed" in general. For Morel, the "cupidity, hypocrisy, cruelty, and lust", negative qualities that others embodied in the distortion of Léopold, were what he called the "vices" intrinsic to modern civilisation. And as Spender rightly suggested, Conrad's Congo prose was a radical literary exposure of the "insatiable commercialism" behind the 'civilised savagery' in the Congo.[177]

Conrad relentlessly exposed how greedy and ruthless profit-seeking had entirely superseded any humanitarian idealism that might have once existed in the Free State. Repelled by the "rot let loose in print and talk" in Europe that celebrated a philanthropic pretence, Conrad's alter ego Marlow felt obliged to remind his listeners that the company he had signed up for "was run for profit", even before he had ever set foot in the Free State. Once in the Congo, Marlow soon realises that a "taint of imbecile rapacity blew through it all, like a whiff from some corpse". Not only the absent shareholders or the capitalist king but every European 'pioneer of civilisation' is described by Conrad/Marlow as steeped in personal greed: "The word 'ivory' rang in the air, was whispered, was sighed. You would think they were praying to it".[178]

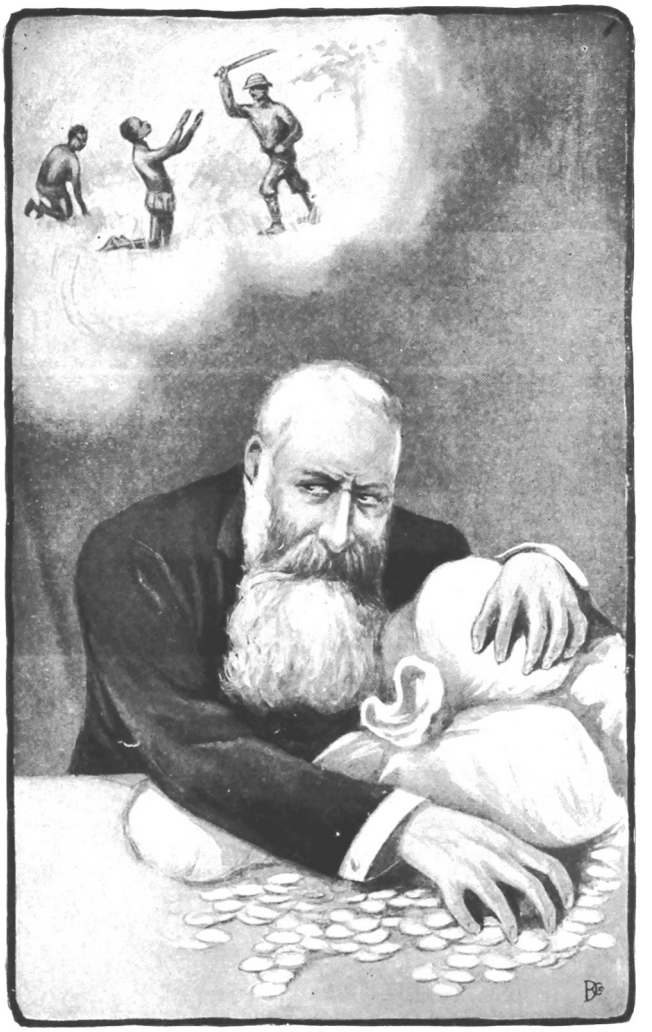
175 See Morel, *Red Rubber*, 127; Park, "King in Business", 633 ('scandal'); Park, "Blood-Money", 69 ('Queens'). Park did not hesitate to spread a common but dubious story of those days, which suggested that it was one of Léopold's liaisons mocked as his "Queens of the Congo" who primarily came up with the idea of the notorious concession system to finance her greed for jewellery. He probably took up this topos from a "violent attack on the private life of King Leopold" in a Belgian newspaper in 1906 that was discussed in the American press as well, in which it was claimed the king was "using his money wrung from the Congo […] to satisfy the caprices" of Caroline Lacroix, the latest of his affairs. According to the press, the Belgian Socialists used the affair to "declare that the King is unfit to govern" since he was "in the hands of a rapacious and ambitious woman" ('Young Morganatic Wife of King Leopold Stirs Up a Nest of Trouble in Belgium', *The San Francisco Call*, 26 August 1906, 28).

176 Twain, *King Leopold's Soliloquy*, 41 ('money-crazy').

177 Canisius, *Campaign Amongst Cannibals*, 78 ('greed'); Morel, *Affairs of West Africa*, 351 ('cupidity'); Spender, "Great Congo Iniquity", 46 ('insatiable').

178 Conrad, "Heart of Darkness", 12 ('rot', 'profit'), 23 ('taint', 'ivory'). Later, the English missionary Scrivener would report from the Domaine de la Couronne that "the one and only reason for it all

Fig. 7 "My yearly income from the Congo is millions of guineas."



Twain, *King Leopold's Soliloquy*, page after 28.

Even the character of Kurtz at the Inner Station, sketched by Conrad as a personification of European culture and morality, later follows the call of the elephant tusks: "Evidently the appetite for more ivory had got the better of the – what shall I say – less material aspirations", Marlow assessed. The author called storehouses in *An Outpost of Progress* "the fetish" because they contained "the spirit of civilization", as he suggested.

was rubber. It was the theme of every conversation": Scrivener, quoted in Doyle, *Crime of the Congo*, 52. "Rubber is his god!", Morel wrote about the average Congo coloniser in Morel, *Red Rubber*, 96.

Profit, it appeared to Conrad, had since long become an end in itself. Western civilisation as a whole had raised material profit as its real god. In sharp contrast to Morel, for instance, who still believed in (free) trade as a civilising tool, for the pessimist novelist, the old imperialist proverb "that civilisation follows trade" had become nothing more than a sarcastic way of ridiculing the work of "the Great Civilising Company" at the end of his first Congo novella. Confronted with the profane reality of colonialism in the Congo, Marlow felt entitled to put the old "noble words" about an idealistic civilising mission "for an everlasting rest in the dust-bin of progress, amongst all the sweepings and, figuratively speaking, all the dead cats of civilization".[179]

Such motifs point to a fundamental disillusionment with the European modernisation narrative. Nonetheless, Conrad, like Park, was not a progressive promoter of anti-capitalism or social reform, but primarily a deeply disillusioned romantic novelist with little confidence in the potential to obliterate the evils of the world he portrayed. He believed more in moral regression than cultural progress. It is "no small burden" to share "consciousness of the universe in which we live", he wrote in a public letter devoted to the Congo reform campaign. The fact that "the conscience of Europe, which seventy years ago put down the slave trade on humanitarian grounds, tolerates the Congo State to-day" tended to negate the existence of any superior universal cultural community as such: "One is tempted to exclaim (as poor Thiers did in 1871), 'Il n'y a pas d'Europe'".[180]

Conrad was beyond doubt the most outstanding illustration of the discursive meddling between the Congo reform debate and a broader fin de siècle cultural pessimism that grasped various European and American artists, intellectuals and politicians on the eve of the 20th century.[181] However, Conrad was not the only Congo reformer who related the incidents in the Free State to signs of a general moral and cultural decline of what was understood as an increasingly materialistic and decadent modernity.

Arthur Conan Doyle, like Conrad a figurehead of Britain's late-Victorian, neo-romantic literature, was similarly worried how the Congo Scandal cast a "strange light upon the real value of those sonorous words Christianity and civilisation". In retrospect, in the speech quoted at the beginning of this study, he described a deep philosophical and personal convulsion in which classifications such as 'whiteness', 'progress', 'civilisation' and 'Christianity', and the racist imagined communities of superior human beings they described, were on the way to becoming meaningless.[182]

Morel was similarly shocked how "at the close of a century memorable for material progress and moral reform, a slave State has arisen in Darkest Africa". Even such a fundamentally optimistic British activist at times admitted that the public seemed to be "suffering" from one of these "waves of materialism and indifferentism which sweep over the intellectual world from time to time", although he believed these waves to be

179 Conrad, "Heart of Darkness", 50 ('Evidently', 'everlasting'), Conrad, "Outpost of Progress", 134–35 ('fetish'), 169 ('Company').

180 Conrad to Casement, 21 December 1903, reproduced in Hawkins, "Joseph Conrad", 69–70, here 70.

181 See chapter 1.

182 Arthur C. Doyle, introduction to *Great Britain and the Congo*, by Edmund D. Morel (London: Smith, Elder and Co., 1909), xii ('strange'); see speech of Doyle, reproduced in Cromer, *Public Presentation*, 22. Also see chapter 1.

"periodical" and already abating at the time he wrote.[183] Further, Robert Park expressed his deep "melancholy" resulting from "that terrible process of civilization" he could observe in the Congo, and he asserted that the Congo atrocities were the sign of a "blind and well-nigh fanatical belief in material progress for its own sake". Moreover, for the president of the American reform association Hall, it was "not pessimistic to realize that our civilization is not only a doom and disease when forced precociously upon lower races" but "in general has a dark as well as a bright side".[184]

For prominent reformers, it was precisely the systematic bloodshed in the Congo that signified a striking disparity between technological and cultural 'evolution'. "What is progress?" Doyle asked his readers. "Is it to run a little faster in a motor-car, to listen to gabble in a gramophone? – these are the toys of life. But if progress is a spiritual thing, then we do not progress. […]. We live in a time of rush, but do not call it progress. The story of the Congo has made the idea a little absurd". Morel and Park expressed similar consternation: "The out husk of civilisation no doubt exists in the Congo State", the former admitted, and listed railways, steamboats, telegraph lines and buildings, but beneath "there flourishes a foul and sanguinary despotism". While the Free State was "[a]rmed with all the machinery of modern civilization", the latter agreed, it had only established what he called a "tinsel civilisation".[185]

Hence, the technological achievements that had been in times of Stanley's 'exploring' and 'civilizing' expeditions celebrated as a marker of cultural superiority became, at the beginning of the 20th century, ambivalent, at times openly negative symbols. As was initially remarked, science was, beyond capitalist greed, the second component of the 'civilised savagery' Spender identified. It was "armed in its own work with all the machinery of destruction that science has given to the modern man", the British journalist asserted. Stanley had, as the previous chapter has shown, celebrated the new automatic weapons he carried to the Congo. Reformers' references to the "usage of modern weapons of destruction" or the "machinery of death" by the Free State soldiers and sentries, or to their instruction in the "science of forest warfare", the "science of slaughter" or "the art of scientific destruction of human life" point to a new concern about the deadly component of modern technology.[186]

Moreover, the 'machine', the icon of industrial modernity, evolved into a strictly negative metaphor in the reform discourse. Remarks about the "judicial and administrative machinery" of the Free State, or about its "elaborate" or "gigantic machinery" of propagandistic agitation were used to indicate the immense challenge the humanitarian activists had to confront in the public relations struggle against Léopold's admin-

183 [Morel], "The Congo Scandal II", 488 ('close'); Morel, *Congo Slave State*, 6 ('suffering', 'periodical').

184 Park, "Recent Atrocities", 1328 ('melancholy'); Park and Morel, *Treatment of Women and Children*, 4 ('blind'); G. Stanley Hall, "The Relations between Lower and Higher Races," *Proceedings of the Massachusetts Historical Society* 17, January meeting (1903): 12 ('pessimistic').

185 Doyle, *Crime of the Congo*, 86 ('progress'); [Morel], "The Congo Scandal VI", 228 ('husk'); Park and Morel, *Treatment of Women and Children*, 4 ('machinery', 'tinsel').

186 Spender, "Great Congo Iniquity", 45 ('armed'); Morel, *Affairs of West Africa*, 351 ('usage', 'forest', 'slaughter'); Morel, *Great Britain*, 112 ('death'); Morel, *British Case*, 9 ('destruction).

istration.[187] Morel and Park also denounced the violent state itself as "machine-like", "a great and organized machine", "a formidable engine of oppression", "a mighty engine constructed for the sole purpose of exploiting the country and the people", a "vast, impersonal machine", a "machine, huge, and grinding tirelessly night and day". Such mechanical imagery shows the persistent scepticism about the disintegrating and alienating dynamics of an artificial and mechanical modernity that reformers saw revealed by the Congo Scandal, "steeled, against all human feeling of pity", operating with "passionless regularity", and "disregarding every human and personal relation of the men it employs".[188]

Thus, the "epistemological, existential and even ontological doubt" about the dehumanising and destructive power of capitalism and technology that has been identified in *Heart of Darkness* was not limited to the literary portrayal of the Congo atrocities. The significance of a fin de siècle cultural pessimism, combined with a regressive and romantic repudiation of capitalist modernity for the Congo reform debate, has generally been overlooked. This outrage can be understood as a major calamity of European culture and Western civilisation at the turn of the 20th century. In combination with the motifs of an appalling corrosion of imperial alterity and erosion of racist superiority that the previous pages have elaborated, it becomes apparent how the Congo Scandal was conceived as a deep and lasting crisis of racist representation – of the Congolese other, but most importantly of the white and European self.[189]

3.3 'Savage perpetrators', 'helpless victims', 'white and civilised saviours': The dramatic triangle of racist humanitarianism

In December 1903, after Roger Casement had approached him about potential involvement or even a leading role in the emerging Congo Reform Association, Joseph Conrad wrote to a friend about the reasons for his refusal: "I would help him but it is not in me. I am only a wretched novelist inventing wretched stories and not even up to that miserable game". However, the majority of the Congo opponents were not disposed to follow the philosophical fatalism of the distinguished British novelist. "Are the pessimists right, after all", Morel asked, in a direct answer to Conrad's dark assessment. "Is the conscience of Christendom dead? […] Have we gone back, and not forward, these last fifty years? Surely it cannot be". As activists, the Congo reformers believed in the

187 Park and Morel, *Treatment of Women and Children*, 4 ('steeled'), 12 ('judicial'); Park, "King in Business", 624 ('elaborate'); Spender, "Great Congo Iniquity", 43 ('gigantic').

188 Morel, *Red Rubber*, 96 ('machine-like', 'passionless'); 'Address of Mr. E.D. Morel', reproduced in The Secretary of the Congress and Rose, *Universal Peace Congress*, 232 ('great'); Edmund D. Morel, "The Future of Tropical Africa," *The Southern Workman* 41, June (1912): 357 ('formidable'); Park, "Real Issue", 1 ('mighty', 'vast', 'disregarding'); Park, "Blood-Money", 68 ('huge'). Also see Lösing, "Congo to Chicago", 113–15.

189 Rochère, Martin H. D. de la, "Sounding the Hollow Heart of the West," in *Conrad's 'Heart of Darkness' and Contemporary Thought*, ed. Nidesh Lawtoo (London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2012), 235 ('epistemological').

power of social and political reform to resolve the Congo Scandal that had shattered the discursive promises and expectations aroused by the imperial Congo narrative.[190]

Their discursive resort was the establishment of a humanitarian imagery of perpetrators, victims and saviours. Thus, the pioneering Congo activists were perhaps the first to develop what has been called, in reference to Stephen Karpman's classical model of social interaction, the "dramatic humanitarian triangle". Makau Mutua, the critic of the colonial and racist foundation of the grand narrative of human rights, who was quoted on the first page of my study, has called this trio a "damning metaphor". Perpetrators were presented as 'savage', victims as 'helpless', and both were generally non-European and non-white, he argued. Saviours, on the other hand, were almost exclusively 'white' Westerners who emphasised their cultural and racial superiority by defending 'backward' and 'inferior' people. "The metaphor is thus laced with the pathology of self-redemption", he concluded.[191]

Indeed, the dramatic humanitarian triangle established by the Congo reformers was ultimately a project of 'saving the saviours' from the crisis of racist representation. First, the caricature of an 'African perpetrator' driven by racial and cultural instincts to murderous violence, and the depiction of a morally degenerative influence of the 'dark' Congolese space and spirit on Europeans transformed the colonial misconduct in the Congo into an African crime and re-established the corroded boundaries between 'civilisation' and 'barbarism'. Second, the imagination of the Congolese victims as 'helpless' and 'childish' allowed the formation of pseudo-empathy for the distant sufferers while it counterbalanced the discursive shock triggered by the horrifying prospect of a 'triumph of the wilderness'. Finally, between 'savage perpetrator' and 'helpless victim', the position of the 'white and civilised saviour' emerged. As a racist stereotype, the image of the saviour emphasised the cultural superiority and moral integrity of 'heroic humanitarians' and the 'Western public'. The self-declared success of the saviours in the redemption of the Congolese pointed to the restored power of 'civilisation' with respect to African 'darkness' and also to the ultimate prevalence of idealism about the worrying tendencies of an overly materialistic modernity.

The identification of the perpetrator: 'where was the guilt'?

In heavy reliance on the stereotypes of the European Congo discourse, the reformers created their version of the perpetrator as 'savage' and 'black', although, in the early years of the reform campaign, there were still voices that warned of an exclusive focus on African soldiers and sentinels. Instead, "blame and the punishment in all its force" ought to be on the European district commissioners, as Rev Sjöblom demanded in 1897, for instance, or even on "all the white Belgian officials from the highest to the lowest", as his colleague Morrison asserted in 1900.

190 Conrad to Cunninghame Graham, 26 March 1903, quoted in Hawkins, "Joseph Conrad", 71 ('wretched'); Morel, *King Leopold's Rule*, 372 ('pessimists').

191 Jane Lydon, *Photography, Humanitarianism, Empire* (London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2016), 6 ('triangle'); see Stephen Karpman, "Fairy Tales and Script Drama Analysis," *Transactional Analysis Bulletin* 26, no. 7 (1968): 39–43; Mutua, *Human Rights*, 10 ('damning'), 14 ('underpinning', 'self-redemption').

The accused colonial administration strongly disputed such statements with a set of arguments strikingly, broadly similar to the metaphors later used by the reformers. Concerning the early charges of excessive violence and murderous raids against European officers raised by missionaries and the Aborigines' Protection Society, Morel, at this time still defending the Free State against the emerging criticism, pointed to the motifs of imperial travel literature that described the Congo as an 'impure' space with a deadly and hostile climate: "Many well-known African travellers […] have admitted the proneness of violent outbursts of passion, when the frame is debilitated by constant fever, and all the nerves ajar through the frequent and exasperating vexations inseparable from residence and travel under the torrid skies and in the pestilential jungles of tropical Africa", he wrote. Hence, it was "in a great measure to these climatic drawbacks that we owe those deplorable acts of ferocity on the part of European to native".[192]

Léopold and other high ranking officials pointed to the inherent violence of what they described as a 'barbarous' region. The severed hands described by Sjöblom and other missionaries were defined as remains of the "sanguine habits" of the "wretched negroes" who were "necessarily" the recruits of the State's army, the Belgian king claimed in an open letter. "Our refined society", he added, "attaches to human life […] a value unknown to barbarous communities". Towards his international critics, he guaranteed that the "example of the white officer and wholesome military discipline [would] gradually inspire in them a horror of human trophies".[193]

Nonetheless, the image of the severed hand became one of the most drastic and effective symbols of the Congo atrocities. In 1903, after Henry Fox Bourne had collected existing evidence about the practice, an extensive pamphlet claiming to disclose the 'Truth about Civilisation in Congoland' reproduced several pages of testimonies from prominent explorers, missionaries and administrators about the alleged "Barbarous Customs" of the Congolese populations, including the central imperial stereotypes of anthropophagy and human sacrifice. In particular, it was suggested that bodily mutilations were either "the surviving results of Arab cruelty" or an African tradition. "These abominable customs cannot evidently disappear in a moment", the veteran authority on the Congo, Henry M. Stanley, is quoted as saying.[194]

When Roger Casement compiled his Congo report for the Foreign Office soon after the publication of the aforementioned Belgian manifesto, however, he made "it perfectly clear that this hand-cutting horror is not a native custom", as American Congo reformers underlined. Indeed, the report, which collected evidence about several such mutilations in the Lake Mantumba region and Lulongo, stressed that the cutting off of hands was based on European instructions, and not on African tradition or predisposition: "It

192 Testimony of Rev. E. V. Sjöblom (1897), reproduced in Morgan and Barbour, *Memorial Concerning the Kongo*, 26 ('blame'); William M. Morrison (1900), quoted in Dworkin, "Borders of Race", 192 ('all'); 'A Word for the Congo State', *Pall Mall Gazette*, 19 July 1897, 2 ('well-known').

193 "'Letter from the King of the Belgians'", 286. Also see the reaction of Governor-General Wahis in 1897, reproduced in Bourne, *Civilisation in Congoland*, 225.

194 See Bourne, *Civilisation in Congoland*, chapters 10 and 11; Harry Johnston, the well-known former Congo explorer, colonial administrator, and author on African imperial history, quoted in A Belgian, *The Truth*, 9 ('surviving'), also see 47; Henry M. Stanley quoted in ibid., 52 ('abominable'). Ironically, the pamphlet also had recourse to Morel's early defence, without knowing its author.

was not a native custom prior to the coming of the white man; it was not the outcome of the primitive instincts of savages in their fights between village and village; it was the deliberate act of the soldiers of a European Administration, and these men themselves never made any concealment that in committing these acts they were but obeying the positive orders of their superiors".[195] In the same year, Morel independently, as he declared, reached a similar conclusion: "I assert deliberately that the employes [sic] of the Congo State in Africa have themselves introduced these practices" which "were unknown until the policy of 'moral and material regeneration' was introduced". Even more, they were a "direct outcome of that policy". To support his argument, Morel quotes the Casement report along with personal testimony of Ward, Conrad and Guinness, who all declared that, from their experience in the early years of the Free State, there was no such Congolese custom. All in all, there was no doubt for the leader of the British reform association that the "systematic hand-cutting and worse forms of mutilation" were, in contrast to the arguments of Free State apologists, "an exotic" both for the "Congo natives" as for the "Arab half-castes".[196]

Any attempts to use the position of the reformers in the severed hand controversy as an indicator of a progressive or anti-racist foundation of the Congo reform debate are unconvincing, however. Instead, the centrality of the severed hand image for the Congo reform propaganda explains the boldness of the reformers' response to the Free State's racist excuses in this particular case. Harry Johnston, for instance, was eager to point out that, in his opinion, "the Congo Basin was not a region of ideal happiness and peace for the Negro before the white man or the Arab broke in upon the life of the Stone Age, burst upon primitive peoples who had lost all contact with the Caucasian for two thousand years", but was marked by perpetual warfare, slavery and cannibalism. "These men", he wrote about the soldiers of the Free State, "accustomed, before ever a Belgian or Arab set foot on the Congo basin, to torture and mutilate men, women, and children, and to ravish women, continued these practices as the agents of a far-off white Sovereign".[197]

In this assessment, there was no structural dissent between a radical white supremacist like Johnston and other more 'cautious' racists like Morel or Casement. On the very first page of his report, the latter revealed his commitment to Stanley's discursive framework when he declared the Congo "one of the most savage regions of the world" populated by "rude savages", "dwarf races" and "cannibals" who had "lived their own savage lives in anarchic and disorderly communities" before the advent of European rule.[198] The "source" of the Congolese atrocities "need not be sought far", he suggested, when a state relied upon "an admittedly savage soldiery".[199]

195 Park and Morel, *Treatment of Women and Children*, 15 ('perfectly'); Casement, "Report on Upper Congo", 76 ('superiors').

196 Morel, *King Leopold's Rule*, 115 ('assert', 'unknown', 'direct'), 117 ('exotic' etc.), 120 ('systematic'). For the statements of Ward, Conrad and Guinness, see ibid., 117–118.

197 Harry Johnston, *Introductory Chapter*, xii ('Basin'); Johnston, *George Grenfell*, Vol. 1, 465 ('accustomed').

198 Casement, "Report on Upper Congo", 21.

199 Ibid., 59; also see 30.

Likewise, in the same sentence that Morel emphasised that there was "absolutely no trace in Congo native custom" of "a system of cutting off of hands", the leader of the British reformers claimed that many of the soldiers would still "eat the dead bodies of the slain". Morel vigorously defended his stereotype of the 'cannibal army', as discussed in the previous chapter, and did so only one page after he rejected the African guilt for bodily mutilations.[200]

As has been described, the 'cannibal army' became a central discursive tool evoked by the reform campaign. A broad set of well-established racist stereotypes oscillated around the depiction of African soldiers described as 'cannibalistic', 'savage', 'barbarian' and 'wild'. Such appeals to the racist imagery of the Congo narrative have never been a merely ornamental or unconscious expression of a racist zeitgeist. Instead, reformers strategically used the widely accepted racist beliefs in the intrinsic brutality of Central Africa and its inhabitants to arouse public outrage against the Free State and its scandalous corrosion of alterity. Moreover, the image of the 'cannibal army' was closely related to the identification of Africans as the 'actual perpetrator' of the Congolese crimes. In this process, the Africans in the service of the Free State became identified as "the actual, though not the moral, perpetrators of so many horrible deeds". Through its discursive clout and the prominence in the reform debate, the image of the savage and cannibalistic soldier put the 'African perpetrator' at the centre of the humanitarian debate, and the initially described focus on the European perpetrators by Morrison or Sjöblom began to collapse.[201]

Furthermore, despite the aforementioned insistence that the cutting off of hands was a European import, prominent reformers actually agreed with apologists that Africans in Free State service became perpetrators of the 'horrible deeds' in the Congo due to a primordial disposition towards violence. "Unrestrained by natural sentiment of compassion these barbaric hordes are let loose upon the people", Protestant American Congo missionaries wrote in their first manifest to the Senate, "practically without restraint upon [their] savage propensities". They were, as the sculptor Herbert Ward suggested, "naturally cruel".[202]

When "these savages, some even cannibals" are at war and "do as they please", one can repeatedly read in reform publications, they "are like devils".[203] As Park claimed, the "natural tendency of the savage to bully those weaker than himself" had "made of the black an ideal instrument of an inhumane policy". He suggested that "the armed

200 Morel, *King Leopold's Rule*, 116; also see 120.

201 Doyle, *Crime of the Congo*, 23 ('actual'). While Casement's report, for instance, still included accusations directly targeted against Europeans, these were anonymised by the Foreign Office prior to publication. While some reformers, including Casement, criticised this procedure, it actually corresponded to a larger tendency within the later reform discourse. More and more, direct European responsibility was disguised, although not as openly as the disclosure of names.

202 Morgan and Barbour, *Memorial Concerning the Kongo*, 11 ('Unrestrained'); Herbert Ward, *A Voice from the Congo* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1910), 226 ('naturally').

203 Diary of the missionary Joseph Clark, reproduced in Morel, *Red Rubber*, 53; Edmund D. Morel and Congo Reform Association [U.K.], *The Congo 'Crown Domain'* (Liverpool: John Richardson & Sons, 1907), 43 and Doyle, *Crime of the Congo*, 48.

savages" with their "lawless lust and violence" had been a willing tool of the colonial regime.[204]

While such formulations complied with the dominant image of the 'blood-thirsty' and 'ferocious' African Congolese that Stanley had created mostly through recourse to the culturally argued 'savage' and religiously connoted 'devil' stereotypes, other depictions of the African soldiers by reformers reveal the same rising dominance of naturalist race-racism that had emerged in Stanley's latest Congo book.[205] Frequently, reform publications reproduce, for instance, a remarkable conclusion of the traveller Glave about the cruelties he had witnessed in the Congo: "Black delights to kill black, whether the victim be man, woman, or child, and no matter how defenceless", he stated. Consequently, the "black soldiers" of the Free State simply "want to shoot and kill and rob".[206]

Remarks that the Africans enforcing the colonial regime in the Congo "thoroughly enjoy" the massacres they conducted on European orders "merely for the exquisite pleasure of witnessing human suffering", that they "kill without pity",[207] that "there is no despot more cruel than a black given control of other blacks, when unrestrained by ties of race, family or tradition", or that "no one is or has been so cruel to the negro as the negro" and "of all the races of mankind perhaps the negro is the most inherently martial"[208] are formulations that show the strong inclination of the reformers to discursively connect the brutality of the Free State to a primordial predisposition of the 'black race' to violence and sadism. The Congolese "army is composed of Negroes, cannibals by instinct", it is argued, and repeatedly, such biological racism is combined with the radically dehumanising language of animal metaphors that compare the African soldiers to a "pack of hounds"[209] or that uses the terms "human wolves" or "parasites" to describe them.[210]

Hence, not only were Africans the 'actual perpetrators' in the Congo. In addition, it was their cultural backwardness and racial viciousness that made them offenders in the first place. For the reformers, the 'moral guilt' of the European Congo Administration was that they had not fully executed their colonial authority over the African military and police forces. The source of the brutality was that Congo officials had sent them

204 Park, "Terrible Story", 771 ('tendency'), 772 ('lawless'); Park, "King in Business", 632 ('armed').

205 See chapter 3.1.

206 Glave, "New Conditions", 908. Also reproduced in Doyle, *Crime of the Congo*, 28; Bourne, *Civilisation in Congoland*, 183; Morgan and Barbour, *Memorial Concerning the Kongo*, 11.

207 Canisius, *Campaign Amongst Cannibals*, 105 ('enjoy', 'merely) [reproduced in G. Stanley Hall, *Adolescence*, Vol. 2, 669]; Commission of Enquiry appointed by the Congo Free State Government, *The Congo*, 71 ('pity') [reproduced, inter alia, in Congo Reform Association [U.S.], *Duty of the US*, 2; Daniels, "Wretchedness of Congo Natives", 29; Morgan, *Alleged Conditions*, 11; Twain, *King Leopold's Soliloquy*, 48 [Supplementary]; Congo Reform Association [U.S.], *Indictment Against the Congo*, 28].

208 Morgan, *Alleged Conditions*, 11 ('despot'); Johnston, *George Grenfell*, Vol. 1, 464 ('cruel', 'martial').

209 Eduard Picard, member of the Belgian Senate, quoted in Bourne, *Civilisation in Congoland*, 249 ('composed', 'hounds'). Also reproduced in Morgan and Barbour, *Memorial Concerning the Kongo*, 11; Congo Reform Association [U.S.], *Conditions in the Congo*, 10; Congo Committee, Massachusetts Commission for International Justice, "Congo News-Letter: July," (Boston: 1904), 1.

210 Hinde, *Congo Arabs*, 69 ('wolves'); also reproduced in Bourne, *Civilisation in Congoland*, 157; Park, "Terrible Story", 772. The official report of the commission used the term "parasites" in references to the African perpetrators; Commission of Enquiry appointed by the Congo Free State Government, *The Congo*, 73 ('parasites').

"away without supervision" and thus allowed them to follow their 'racial' or 'savage' instincts. "This should not be allowed", Glave agreed: "Blacks cannot be employed on such an errand unless under the leadership of whites".[211]

For others, the true problem was the reliance on armed Africans in the first place. The American Canisius connected the misconduct of the Force Publique to what he called "the scandalous conduct of some of the negro regiments of the United States" to "justify" the conviction that "the African, as a general rule, is not suitable material for making a good soldier" since he lacks "patriotism", "devotion to duty", "intelligence" and "discipline".[212] Harry Johnston came to a similar conclusion, and, in particularly plainspoken words, he formulated the logical deduction this racist imagery implied. The "atrocities and misdeeds" in the Congo, he wrote, were the "necessary consequences" of enforcing taxation through an "army from the more warlike negro tribes".[213]

Hence, the image of the 'cannibal army' and the 'African perpetrator' was not only a powerful propagandistic tool and a potent symbol of the discursive crisis or racist representation triggered by the Congo Scandal. It was at the same time an excellent strategy of derailing. As such, it turned a public scandal about European colonial violence into a narrative about an inherent predisposition to ferocity; presented as either an expression of racial characteristics, frenetic savagery, diabolic viciousness, or a mixture of all facets. Of course, it could not entirely be denied that there were Europeans in the Congo with blood on their hands. Although, as "a rule", the outrages in the Congo were "actually committed" by Africans, as Doyle wrote, he emphasised that the violence happened "with the approval of, and often in the presence of, their white employers". Moreover, he admitted that, at times, these have "far exceeded in cruelty the barbarian who carried out his commissions" or even "pushed the black aside, and acted himself as torturer and executioner".[214]

However, Doyle, as with the vast majority of the reform movement, engaged in various discursive manoeuvres to minimise the role of this European perpetrator. Moreover, as the following paragraphs discuss, the Congo reform movement deliberately resorted to stereotypes of a threatening natural and spiritual 'darkness' that Stanley had declared to be the essence of the Congo's spatial identity. As the previous chapter has described, the poor mental and physical health of the imperial pioneers in the Congo was a central symbol of the worrying prospect of a 'triumph of the wilderness'. At the same time, the assessed weakness of the 'white body' and the 'enlightened mind' was frequently used to explain the violence of the 'civilised' colonisers via certain deteriorating influences of

211 Diary of the missionary Joseph Clark, reproduced in Morel, *Red Rubber*, 53 and Doyle, *Crime of the Congo*, 48 ('supervision'); Glave, "New Conditions", 910 ('allowed', 'Blacks') [also reproduced in Doyle, *Crime of the Congo*, 28]. The Commission demanded that the capita and sentry institution had to be suppressed like "the sending, in general, of black soldiers unless accompanied by a white man" (Commission of Enquiry appointed by the Congo Free State Government, *The Congo*, 73). Also see Bourne, *Civilisation in Congoland*, 209.

212 Canisius, *Campaign Amongst Cannibals*, 177–78. The "African, as a general rule, is not suitable material for making a good soldier", he claimed.

213 Johnston, *George Grenfell*, Vol. 1, 464 ('atrocities'). Also see, for instance, Washington, "Cruelty in the Congo", 377.

214 Doyle, *Crime of the Congo*, 23–24.

the Congolese environment. In such tropical regions, it was difficult for Europeans to "maintain their civilized morale", Doyle remarked, for instance: "Human nature is weak, the influence of environment is strong", and all colonisers have sometimes "yielded […] to their surroundings".[215]

The reformers never disputed the argument of Congo apologists that the tropical climate and the cultural and spiritual 'darkness' of the Congo was a central cause of the Congolese atrocities. Morel, for instance, maintained his conviction that the climate in West and Central Africa was "most trying to the constitutions and temper of Europeans" and that its "disordering", "pernicious" effect is an important cause of the cruelties of the "demoralised" European.[216] For the vice-president of the American reform association, David Starr Jordan, such arguments were a fundamental motivation for his anti-imperialist activism. He had become convinced that the "Anglo-Saxon or any other civilized race degenerates in the tropics mentally, morally, physically". Although "[v]ice and dissipation are confined to no zone", as he admitted, "in the tropics few men of northern blood can escape them".[217] In the Commons, Samuel argued that "it was not to be wondered at that the results were disastrous" considering that the Congo officials, among other things, "were subject to the influence of a deadly climate, affected by malaria".[218]

How much exactly "this [environmental] factor has to do with the condition in the Congo" was difficult to determine, according to Robert Park; however, "that it has to do with it, is very sure". The influence of the African surrounding was "subtle, intangible, yet indisputable", the leading American reformer was convinced.[219] Others, such as Guy Burrows, expressed a certain reluctance to resort to the same arguments as those defending the state. The "thesis that the extreme climate conditions in tropical latitude" made Europeans "prone to acts which in a temperate clime they would shrink from with horror" was among the "usual excuse for excesses" like the cruelties in the Congo, he wrote. "This may be true; I do not know if it is", Burrows, himself for several years in colonial service in the Congo, wrote in a sceptical tone. However, "if there is any foundation for it as a theory", he admitted at the same time, "certainly extenuating circumstances can be pleaded in the case of the man who commits the crime".[220]

'Extenuating environmental circumstances' were found in the tropical climate and in the allegedly severe psychological effects of the 'wild' and 'savage' Congolese inhabitants and nature and its 'dark' and 'evil' atmosphere, which Stanley evoked in his descriptions of the Congolese 'jungles'. "With barbarous surroundings even the mildest character often becomes brutal", the traveller Glave noted. "This is pardonable", he added, due to the lack of "finer feelings" among the Africans. Everyone knows

215 Ibid., 85.

216 Morel, *Affairs of West Africa*, 13 ('trying'), 260 ('disordering'); Morel, *King Leopold's Rule*, 303 ('pernicious, 'demoralised'); Also see Edmund D. Morel, *The Sierra Leone Hut-Tax Disturbances* (Liverpool: John Richardson & Sons, 1899), 17.

217 Jordan, *Imperial Democracy*, 94 ('degenerates'), 95 ('zone'). For Jordan, this threat of "race decline, personal degeneration, and social decay" (94) made imperialism a danger for the imperial nations, which was the main reason imperialism should be opposed.

218 Herbert Samuel: 'Congo Free State', HC Deb 20 May 1903 Vol. 122 cc 1289–1332, here c 1299.

219 Park, "Terrible Story", 769 ('gradual'), 769–70 ('subtle'), 770 ('factor').

220 Burrows, *Curse of Central Africa*, 55.

"the demoralising effect of living in an unhealthy country under circumstances of isolation from European influence and among a savage and degraded race", the Lord of Chudleigh similarly argued in his plea for "sweeping away" the present Congo system.[221] The "effect of living amongst this gloom and silence is most depressing", one can read in Morel's first book, is like "the grip of some hideous nightmare from which there was no escape". All European visitors to the Congo region "have been alike impressed by its grandeur and its melancholy", he claimed, while naming only Stanley; "their feelings have been wrought upon by the natural phenomena with which they were surrounded".[222]

The outcome was amplified through the "'profound feeling of solitude'" that grasped Europeans in the "'utter loneliness of this great gloomy wilderness'", the "[l]oneliness, homesickness, the overwhelming sense of exile" experienced by the pioneering imperialists.[223] In this situation, the isolated Europeans had no chance of upholding their 'civilised' standards, ideals and morality, the reformers suggested. The imperial pioneers in the Congo "cannot fail to be impressed with the atmosphere of gloom and mystery that overhangs the dark land like the shadow of a pall", Park claimed. The "almost inevitable influences of climate and environment upon the white man's temperament and character", he added, caused not only "physical debilitation" but also a "gradual alteration of standards and ideals, often a loosening of moral fiber".[224]

When the Commission of Inquiry finally published its devastating report on the conditions in the Free State, it fully embraced these strategies of exculpation the reform movement evoked. According to the Commission, it was possible to "understand", although "not condone, the ill-treatment, even the acts of brutality of the white man towards the native". After all, the colonial agents in the Congo are "enervated by a terrible climate, always debilitating and often fatal, are isolated in the midst of a savage population; and the life of each day presents to them nothing but demoralizing spectacles". The report claimed what the Congo reformers also wanted their audience to believe. The colonisers "left Europe filled with respect for human life and they soon see in the barbarous circle into which they are transplanted, that this has no value".[225]

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221 Glave, "New Conditions", 900 ('mildest character'); Lord Clifford of Chudleigh: Congo Free State, HL Deb 29 July 1907 Vol. 179 cc 402–437, here c 418 ('demoralising'), c 419 ('sweeping').

222 Morel, *Affairs of West Africa*, 201 ('grip'), 202 ('effect', 'feelings').

223 Dr. Austin Freeman, quoted in ibid., 201 ('profound', 'utter'); Park, "Terrible Story", 770 ('homesickness'); also see Samuel: 'Congo Free State', HC Deb 20 May 1903 Vol. 122 cc 1289–1332, here c. 1299. Loneliness, in this context, always meant the absence of other Europeans – the feeling of being "very much alone" (Conrad, "Outpost of Progress", 128–29) does not emerge from the absence of other human beings, but from "the sentiment of being alone of one's kind, to the clear perception of the loneliness of one's thoughts, of one's sensations" (129). That a European man is supposed to feel lonely and isolated among Africans is first of all, of course, a brutal example of the dehumanising effects of racist discourse, which denies the African the ability to comprehend, speak and bond with the superior foreigner: Equal social relations between 'savage' and 'civilised' are rendered impossible by racism. Also see Glave, *In Savage Africa*, 71; Ward, *Voice from the Congo*, 24 and 228.

224 Park, "Terrible Story", 769–70

225 Commission of Enquiry appointed by the Congo Free State Government, *The Congo*, 163–64.

"Where, then, was the guilt?" as Arthur Conan Doyle asked his readers. "Where did the responsibility for these deeds of blood, these thousands of cold-blooded murders lie"? As American Congo reformers bluntly stated, "[p]roofs of individual guilt", hence of actual criminal offences of European colonisers, were only "of secondary consequence". Morel defined the question of who was "responsible for these atrocities" in "a much more specific and direct sense" as a cultural question: Was it Africa or Europe?[226]

In its answer to this probing question, the Congo reform movement showed a fundamental ambivalence and inner inconsistency that partially explain the great variance in its historiographic and political assessment until today. On the one hand, as a political campaign of humanitarian prosecution targeting state-sponsored and systematic crimes, the Congo reformers needed to prove the actual accountability of the colonial administration. As a structurally racist intellectual movement, on the other hand, their reaction was to deny or downplay the cultural responsibility of European 'civilisation' and charge African 'savagery' instead. Hence, while they challenged the Free State's rejection of responsibility for the cutting off of hands, Congo reformers and apologists actually had recourse to the same set of racist stereotypes, although with different goals. While the defenders of the Free State administration attempted to repel the political and legal responsibility of the Free State administration for the crimes committed under its authority, the Congo reformers struggled to deny a European cultural responsibility for the Congo Scandal.

The 'actual perpetrators' were Africans; it is claimed, driven to violence by their cultural and racial characteristics. Behind the racist caricature of the African soldier, European delinquents and responsibility vanished. Even when European offences were still present in the reform discourse, they were explained by the physical, psychological and cultural influences of the African environment and thus once more relegated to the Congolese 'darkness' and 'savagery'. According to Harold Spender, Joseph Conrad rightfully showed how the violence in the Congo had happened: "Dragged down by the very barbarism which they went to reform […], these men have gradually descended to depths of which the modern European was assumed to be incapable". Ultimately, it is suggested that the European colonisers turned from respectful philanthropists to murderous chauvinists only after they had entered the Congo. This was intentional. The Free State was, as presumably the editorial officer Robert Park had noted in a revealing manner, "the uncouth monster that the jungles of the Dark Continent have brought forth" – and not European civilisation. To reduce the discursive disturbances triggered by the crisis of racist identity beneath the Congo Scandal understood as corrosion of alterity, the reform activists strategically used imperial stereotypes about the 'dark' and 'savage' Congo and about an 'inferior' black 'race' to define this "greatest crime in history", as Arthur Conan Doyle called it, as an essentially 'African' crime.[227]

226 Doyle, *Crime of the Congo*, 25 ('responsibility'), 26 ('guilt'); Morgan and Barbour, *Memorial Concerning the Kongo*, 18 ('individual'); Morel, *King Leopold's Rule* ('responsible').

227 Spender, "Great Congo Iniquity", 46 ('Dragged'); Congo Committee, "Congo News-Letter, July 1904", 1 ('uncouth'); Doyle, *Crime of the Congo*, 101 ('greatest').

The imagination of 'the victims'

However, as a racist humanitarian campaign, the Congo reform movement necessarily acted in a paradoxical discursive sphere. From an activist position, racism presented at the same time a severe obstacle for the activists. First, there was a persistent tension between promoting indignation and empathy for the African other within the imagery of the reform movement itself. Historically and strategically, the mobilisation of empathy was an essential element of humanitarianism. To arouse public sentiment and mobilise protest, humanitarian activists needed their audience to feel the pain of the suffering, distant victim.[228] However, as sociologists have noted, the "breakdown of empathy" is an essential aspect of racism that necessarily accompanies the "dehumanization of the other".[229] Second, apologists of the Free State tactically resorted to the same stereotypes evoked by the reformers to legitimate forced labour, land grabbing and the use of oppressive force.

In retrospect, Morel manifested his critical awareness of this tension in his reflection on the reform campaign. He pointed out how Free State apologists used to "accentuate particular characteristics" of the Congolese population such as cannibalism to repel public criticism. Moreover, he addressed a problematic lack of Europeans' compassion for African pain that the reformers were confronted within their campaign. When "victims belong to a non-white race", Morel concluded, the "Anglo-Saxon type of mind […] is not naturally and intuitively sympathetic towards coloured races".[230]

Although the British reformer obviously understood this socially constructed emotional distance as an expression of pathological racial antagonism and exceptional for the otherwise just Anglo-Saxon, he was still aware that discursive practices enforced this lack of sympathy. The solution was, the Honorary Secretary of the British reform association argued, the promotion of a strategically constructed image of the 'victim' of Congolese atrocities to accompany the (African) 'perpetrator'. The "realisation of a great human tragedy" was only "vivid and historically enduring in the measure in which we are able to fashion ourselves a mental vision, which shall also be an accurate one, of its victims", he asserted. To give substance to the written accounts of atrocities, a European must "construct a mental picture" of those affected, he had argued earlier.[231]

'Accurate', in this context, meant consistent with the strategic challenges of the reform campaign. Thus, the construction of a mental vision or picture of the 'victims' of the Congolese atrocities was both directed against the set of stereotypes evoked by those defending the existing culture of oppression and violence in the Free State and an attempt to arouse empathy for the alienated Congolese other. In this process, the reformers produced many of those passages that are frequently used to attest to the 'anti-racist' and 'respectful' standing of the movement. Indeed, the active rejection of specific racist stereotypes seems particularly progressive from today's perspective. However, in

228 See Richard A. Wilson and Richard D. Brown, introduction to *Humanitarianism and Suffering*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 1–30; Lydon, *Photography, Humanitarianism, Empire*, 4–5.

229 Hernán Vera and Joe R. Feagin, "The Study of Racist Events," in *Researching Race and Racism*, ed. Martin Bulmer and John Solomos (London: Routledge, 2004), 73 ('breakdown'), also see 75–76.

230 Morel, "History of the Congo Reform Movement", 7.

231 Ibid., 7 ('realisation'); Morel, *King Leopold's Rule*, 32–33 ('construct').

many cases, the reformers merely constructed new, artificial images of the African or rearranged the different aggregations of the savage stereotype established by Stanley to describe the inhabitants of the Congo Basin.

Especially opposed in their apologetic function were references to the 'vacant land' myth. Popularised by Stanley's Congo literature in correlation to the stereotype of the 'natural savage' who allegedly only dwelled upon the African soil without occupying it through manual labour, the idea had been incorporated into the regulations of colonial governance to legitimise the appropriation of land through the Free State. Although Park described the Congolese rivers, forest and bushlands with the same fragments used by Stanley and Conrad to establish the Congo's spatial identity, he still emphasised that a "[t]eeming black life" of agriculture and craft "lurks in that jungle", for instance.[232] Morel similarly pointed to economic developments such as "native industries" and forms of political organisation such as "agricultural communities", "nomadic confederations" or even "states". In his review of the reform movement, he noted that "the existence of a native polity on the Congo" at the time of European conquest was beyond doubt. Hence, in opposition to Stanley's narrative, and to counterbalance arguments that the Congolese population had been "but a few wandering tribes" without "any proprietary rights in land", reformers described the Congolese space as 'cultivated' and 'claimed'.[233]

Even before the advent of European rule, according to Morel, the average Congolese was, like most West Africans, a hard-working "agriculturist, a farmer, a herdsman" and, "above all […] to the marrow of his bones, a trader". The claim that the "dominating characteristic" of the inhabitants of Central Africa, even of those that Morel labelled as the "most primitive people", was "veneration for their land" (as peasants) and "eagerness for commercial pursuit" (as traders) was also an objection to the 'lazy native' stereotype, the "chief indictment against the African", as John Harris has once remarked.[234] Part of the 'natural savage' stereotype of Stanley's Congo image, the trope of the 'lazy native' was widely reproduced by explorers, travellers and imperialists throughout Europe. In particular, it was frequently used by the Free State to emphasise the cultural necessity of its compulsory labour system. Free State opponents, on the other hand, rejected the accusation that the Congolese were not disposed to hard work as "the usual stereotyped manner" of depicting Africans and "grotesque distortions". It was a "[p]rejudice" that was often disproved, and all experience suggested that "the negro is not an idler".[235]

232 Park, "Terrible Story", 765 ('life', 'lurks').

233 Morel, *Red Rubber (b/1919)*, 93 ('industries'); Morel, "Economic Development": 134 ('communities', 'confederations', 'states'); Morel, "History of the Congo Reform Movement", 8 ('polity'); 10–11 ('wandering', 'proprietary').

234 Morel, *Nigeria*, xiii ('agriculturalist', 'above all'); Morel and Congo Reform Association, *Memorial on Native Rights*, 31 ('dominating', 'veneration', 'eagerness') [reproduced in Morel, *Great Britain*, 69]; Morel, *Affairs of West Africa*, 181 ('most primitive'); Harris, *Dawn in Darkest Africa*, 125–26 ('indictment').

235 Harris, *Dawn in Darkest Africa*, 28 ('usual'); Morel, *Affairs of West Africa*, 179 ('grotesque'); Glave, "Cruelty in the Congo", 701 ('prejudice') [reproduced in Bourne, *Civilisation in Congoland*, 189 and Doyle, *Crime of the Congo*, 29]; Samuel, "Congo State", 881 ('idler') [reproduced in Congo Reform Association [U.S.], *Indictment Against the Congo*, 17. Also see the Baptist missionary George W. Macalpine, *Ab-*

However, such formulations were not a sign of an anti-racist critique but rather of a symbolic struggle between concurring sets of racist stereotyping. It was not only the omnipresence of motifs of 'barbarism' and 'savagery' and Stanley's archetype of the 'ferocious and cannibalistic warrior' in the depiction of the 'African perpetrator' by the reformers that revealed the shallowness of these statements. Even in their rejection of particular stereotypes, the reformers' arguments reveal their deep commitment to the belief that these socio-economic formations are products of inferior cultural and racial characteristics, inscribed 'into the bone marrow', as indicated further above. After all, it was "the instinct of primitive man" that let "races of relative low development" become "imbued naturally" with an inclination towards trade and agriculture, as Morel argued.[236] Moreover, when the reformers praised the great "energy and endurance" that the African had shown "directed by his white master" as a 'worker', 'boy' or 'carrier', they always glorified the colonial framework of the international division of labour. Hence, in their objection to the idea of a naturally existing laziness, the reformers never escaped their own colonial mind-set but rather resorted to the motif of the 'docile savage' established by Stanley's Congo narrative.[237]

Additionally, the motif of a Congolese peasant and trading culture established by the reform movement was itself as much an artificial stereotype as the opposing images of 'laziness' and an 'empty land'. According to the historians Louis and Stengers, the "almost idyllic description of the native races of the Congo in pre-European times" that Morel composed in his history of the Congo reform movement, for instance, had "only literary" value. In none of the books had Morel referred to any imagery "even remotely resembling his own".[238] As a matter of fact, the stereotype of a natural Black or African peasantry established by Morel and Park was itself a product of the primitivistic exoticism of its creators. "They are happy, these people, in their primitive way", Morel asserted, "primitive, savage, but as happy perchance, as a small village in Devon". For Park, this allegedly primitivistic African life was actually a counterbalance to the failures of 'white' civilisation. His mystical valuation of rural Black life in the American South directly correlated with the romantic transfiguration of a traditional peasantry Park had absorbed during his doctoral studies in Germany into the American tradition of 'romantic racism', which increasingly turned the Black American into "a symbol of something that seemed tragically lacking in white American civilization" and "a vehicle for romantic social criticism".[239] Hence, while the reformers successfully challenged the central legitimation of forced labour and the appropriation of land through the Free State, there was little reflection on their own commitment to racist stereotypes and

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stract of the Report of the Commission of Enquiry into the Administration of the Congo Free State (London: J. Clark and Co, 1906), 11–12 and 80–81.

236 Morel, "'Commercial' Aspect", 432 ('imbued'), 433 ('instinct').

237 Weeks, *Among Congo Cannibals*, 82 ('directed', 'endurance', worker); see Harris, *Dawn in Darkest Africa*, 126 (boy) and Morel, *Nigeria*, 18. "If I were a poet I would write an ode to the African carrier", Morel added.

238 W. Roger Louis and Jean Stengers, "Critical Notes," in *E.D. Morel's History of the Congo Reform Movement*, ed. W. Roger Louis and Jean Stengers (Oxford: Clarendon, 1968), 257 ('remotely').

239 Morel, *King Leopold's Rule*, 38 ('happy'); Fredrickson, *Black Image*, 108 ('symbol'), 109 ('criticism'). For Park's romantic racism developed during his reform activism, see Lösing, "Congo to Chicago".

colonial discourse, although Morel apparently at times came into conflict with a more self-confessed racist such as Harry Johnston about accentuating Congolese 'savagery' and 'barbarism'.[240]

Second, as initially indicated, the reformers were aware that the dehumanising European imagery was an obstacle to their goal of producing public outrage through the promotion of empathy with the distant sufferers in the Congo. To think of the African as "a brute beast", Morel observed, was often tied to the belief that he was "impervious to human sentiment". It was hence viable for the humanitarian activists to convince the imperial public that the African "was before all, a man, and he must be treated as a man, and not as a brute"; a "man", as Morel conciliated his readers, who was, of course, "more highly developed in some places than in others".[241] Additionally, public sentiment needed to be persuaded that a "black man – say of Upoto has nerves, feels pain, can be made physically miserable", as Joseph Conrad once asserted, and that, despite all "differences of colour, climate, environment and evolution, the main channels along which travel the twin emotions of suffering and joy are much the same in all races", as Morel emphasised. "They are deeper, more sensitised, with civilised man", he once more pleaded with his racist audience, but "they exist in primitive communities".[242]

In order to reach this goal, the reform movement deployed several discursive strategies. First, they accentuated different shades of Congolese darkness ranging from cruelty to innocence.[243] While every inhabitant of the Congo Basin was, for the reformers, legitimately subsumed under the categories of the historically immature 'savage' and the biologically inferior 'coloured races', they still pointed to variations in the value of 'savagery' and 'inferiority'. The bloodthirsty African perpetrators, the soldiers and sentries, and auxiliaries of the colonial regime were defined as exceptionally radical representatives of the Congolese other. They were drawn from the "most savage", "the wildest" communities,[244] from "the fiercest" cannibals and "the lowest" types of the Congolese and even of all African 'natives', the reformers asserted.[245] Their 'victims', on the other hand, such formulations suggest, were at least partially of a minor and less pronounced cultural inferiority. Morel and Johnston, for instance, claimed, as Stanley had, that the Congolese forests accommodate with the 'Pygmies' and other 'forest dwellers' "the lowest type of African humanity", representatives of the "earliest types of humanity". In the reformer's vision of the Congo, however, there were also more "sophisticated people

240 Louis, "Morel and the Congo", 213.

241 Morel, *King Leopold's Rule*, 35 [footnote] ('brute', 'impervious'); Morel, in "Meeting on the Kongo Question", 46 ('before all', 'highly').

242 Conrad to Casement, 21 December 1903 ('Upoto'), reproduced in Park and Morel, *Treatment of Women and Children*, 32; Morel, *King Leopold's Rule*, 351; Morel, "History of the Congo Reform Movement", 7 ('differences', etc.).

243 See Gehrmann, *Kongo-Greuel*, 67.

244 Morel, *Red Rubber*, 25; Lord Monkswell [Robert Collier]: Congo Free State, HL Deb 29 July 1907 Vol. 179 cc 402–437, here c 404 (both 'most savage'); Morel, *British Case*, 174; Testimony of Rev. E. V. Sjöblom (1897), reproduced in Bourne, *Civilisation in Congoland*, 213; Morgan and Barbour, *Memorial Concerning the Kongo*, 24; Morel, *Red Rubber*, 47 (all 'wildest').

245 Morel, *Congo Slave State*, 19; Morel, *British Case*, 174; Morel, *King Leopold's Rule*, 428 (all 'fiercest'); [Morel], "The Congo Scandal V", 17; Morel, *Red Rubber*, 64; Morel, *King Leopold's Rule*, 203; Sheppard, "Light in Darkest Africa", 220 ('lowest').

living in a Neolithic culture", who had developed cultural institutions such as complex "language", traditional "customs" and "unwritten laws".[246]

While Casement had, as reproduced above, described the Congolese population as generally 'savage' and 'archaic', he still referred to the "large and flourishing centres of population" he had seen during his first time in the Congo, which were severely depopulated after the installation of the rubber regime. In the rubber zone, the region most affected by the Congo atrocities, also lived the 'Kasai natives', "the finest races on the Congo", according to Morel and others. These were celebrated for their "'moral and physical beauty'", and it was even conceded that they developed a "high level of art".[247] Among them were the Kuba, praised by William Sheppard for their art industries and well-organised capital, which he had 'discovered'. This was not a town, but a "city", the American missionary stated, "laid off in perfect blocks – like a checker-board", the "blocks and streets all named" and the latter "broad and clean".[248]

A second strategy was to create a gender and age bias in the representation of the sufferers of Congolese atrocities. While the 'perpetrators' were exclusively presented as adult men, 'victims' in the Congo reform discourse were overwhelmingly described as women and children. The monumental Casement report, for instance, elaborated in particular detail and at length about the suffering of children. In the same year, Morel's first book-length contribution to the reform campaign summarised how women and children "do not enjoy as much protection as a dog in this country", and Park issued a whole pamphlet concentrating solely on the treatment of women and children.[249]

The iconic photographs were similarly biased and were without question the most effective tool to define the collective symbol of the 'infantile victims' of the Congo Scandal.[250] Staged by its uncredited missionary photographer, the first atrocity photograph published by the reform movement showed a young boy placed on a wooden stool of European style in front of a scenery of abundant tropical vegetation (Fig. 8). The child, described as a "victim of a rubber raid", faces the camera and points the limb of his right arm, which contrasts with his white clothes, towards the distant philanthropic observers. The picture defined the visual framework for the Congo atrocity photographs that was frequently reproduced, as prints published by Park emphasise (Fig. 9 and Fig. 10). The vast majority of the photographs in magazines and pamphlets and projected as magic lantern slides in so-called atrocity meetings displayed children, adolescents or women.

When there were no pictures available, a reader had to "allow some play to his imagination", as Morel advised. In *Red Rubber*, which contained no photographs, he actively

246 Morel, *Affairs of West Africa*, 202 ('type'); Morel, "Economic Development", 134 ('language', 'customs', 'laws'); Johnston, *George Grenfell*, Vol. 2, 724 ('earliest', 'sophisticated').

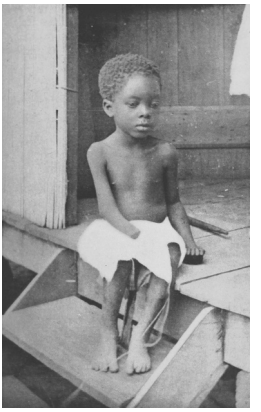
247 Casement, "Report on Upper Congo", 22 ('large'); Morel, *Red Rubber*, 93 [footnote] ('art'), 144 ('beauty').

248 William H. Sheppard, "An African Missionary in Africa," *Missionary Review of the World* 28, no. 11 (1905): 811–2 ('city', etc.).

249 See Casement, "Report on Upper Congo", 52 (about their imprisonment), 37–38 (trafficking), 36 and 56 (murder) [also see Park and Morel, *Treatment of Women and Children*]; Morel, *King Leopold's Rule*, 242 ('dog').

250 See Gehrmann, *Kongo-Greuel*, 290.

Fig. 8 "The Victim of a Rubber Raid."; Fig. 9 "Two or three days after a fight a dead mother was found with two of her children."; Fig. 10 "A Boy Maimed by Congo Soldiers."


Morel, *Affairs of West Africa*, page after 334; Park and Morel, *Treatment of Women and Children*, 33; Park, "Recent Atrocities", 1330.

guided his readers through such a mental journey. In the same sensory detail that Stanley had once used to create his image of the Congolese 'jungles', Morel attempted to make his audience see, smell and feel the 'victims' of the Congo atrocities in a fictive hostage house scene. "Look inside that hostage-house, staggering back as you enter from the odours which belch forth in poisonous fumes", Morel began. "As your eyes get accustomed to the half-light, they will not rest on those skeleton-like forms – bones held together by black skin – but upon the faces […] A woman, her pendulous, pear-shaped breasts hanging like withered parchment against her sides, where every rib seems bursting from its covering, holds in her emaciated arms a small object more pink than black. You stoop and touch it – a new-born babe, twentyfour hours old, assuredly not more. It is dead, but the mother clasps it still".[251]

The fragments integrated into this short passage – emaciated bodies, withered breast and dying babies – would become central images of the humanitarian discourse of the 20th century. Likewise, emphasising the suffering of women and children has since become an effective, although thoroughly criticised, standard method of humanitarian and charity campaigns in their quest for political, and most importantly, financial support. The example of the Congo reform movement reveals that this method was also an attempt to solve the inner contradictions of racist humanitarianism. While 'victims' described as "poor helpless women and harmless children" became legitimate projection screens of empathetic pity for the distant Europeans, they could maintain their racist contempt for and fear of 'black' and 'savage' Congolese, channelled towards the image of the grown-up and male African 'perpetrator'.[252] Hence, to allow sympa-

251 Morel, *Red Rubber*, 97.

252 Rev. John B. Murphy, reproduced in 'The Congo Free State', *The Times*, 18 November 1895, 6; Bourne, *Civilisation in Congoland*, 210; Doyle, *Crime of the Congo*, 33. Also see Morrison, "Personal Observations", 39.

thy for the African victims, the reformers graded different levels of savagery and compartmentalised the 'savage' stereotype along the lines of age and gender. Ultimately, the weakness and naïveté of specific young and female sufferers were extended to become a characteristic of the "harmless", "innocent" and "unarmed" 'victims' of the Congo atrocities, described as "[h]undreds of thousands" or even "millions of helpless creatures".[253]

Third, the prominence of atrocity photographs and stories in general points to the reformers' attempt to vanquish the racistly induced insensibility of their 'civilised' audience through revolting and 'horrifying' depictions of explicit scenes of violence and particularly abused bodies. Thomas Barbour remarked how the "graphic and detailed" atrocities stories the reformers constantly reproduced made "the reader almost a spectator of the scenes of horror", and Robert Park praised how "one hears always the quaint and plaintive voice" of the tortured Congolese themselves in the testimonies collected by Casement.[254]

Once more, photographs displaying prisoners, scenes of lashing with the chicotte or Africans whose hands had been either smashed by shots or blows or cut off were particularly effective in triggering emotional responses. At the public demonstrations of the Congo reformers, the atrocity pictures were projected on large screens to be observed by hundreds or thousands of spectators, with a generally dramatic effect.[255]

Although the humanitarian spectacle evoked by the reformers successfully aroused emotions, it radically reproduced the objectification and alienation of imperial practices such as ethnographic photography and included multiple processes of dehumanisation. "How comes it that the millions of the Congo subject to the most cruel bondage the world has ever known, say nothing, do nothing to save themselves from slavery and death", John Holt once asked Morel in a private letter. "Alas they are speechless", he added. For the reformers, the 'victims' they imagined not merely lacked the ability to alter their fate but also to articulate themselves: only "inarticulate sounds" emerged from their lips if they were not "almost past speech" or simply "mute". Lacking any capacity of autonomous human agency, the subject status of the 'victims' was decisively denied.[256]

Moreover, Morel's aforementioned hostage-house scene paradigmatically revealed the ruthless, almost pornographic exposure of African bodies in the reformers' depiction of the 'victim'. Indiscreetly and meticulously, Morel described the black female body; without any distance, or ability to elude, the suffering mother and her dead baby are reduced to consumable objects of the 'civilised' European and American audience.

253 Doyle, *Crime of the Congo*, iii ('harmless'); Edwin D. Mead, "Daniel Webster, John Hay and Elihu Root," in *The Congo News Letter*, ed. Congo Reform Association [U.S.] (Boston: 1906), 8–10, here 8 ('innocent', '[h]undreds'); Park, "Terrible Story", 772 ('unarmed'); Morel and Congo Reform Association [U.K.], *The Crisis*, 8 ('millions').

254 Morgan and Barbour, *Memorial Concerning the Kongo*, 7 ('reader'); Park and Morel, *Treatment of Women and Children*, 29 ('hears').

255 See chapter 5.3 for a discussion of the racist spectacle of Congo protests.

256 Holt to Morel, quoted in Louis, "Morel and the Congo", 214 ('bondage', 'speechless'); Morel, *Red Rubber*, 197 ('inarticulate', etc.). This classification legitimised the exclusion of Congolese from the public sphere and the stages and texts of the reform movement that are in chapter 2.3.

Such a display could never create real empathy and a human relation between a humanitarian activist in the imperial metropoles and those affected by imperial violence in the periphery. The atrocity photographs might have given some victims of colonial exploitation a "face" and sometimes even a "name". However, they effectively obliterated the actual personality of those exhibited through the primacy of the 'body' and their reduction to a symbol of an abstract pattern of outrages, such as the cutting of off hands. Their suffering and the injuries were publicly displayed, exhibited, printed in books and pamphlets, projected in front of thousands of Europeans, rearranged, commented and contextualised, all, of course, without any chance of those displayed to consent or disagree. Photographic and textual displays of the victims or their bodies were always instrumental appeals for political support and donations to advance a political agenda that was not framed or advanced by the Congolese themselves. As Sharon Sliwinski has convincingly argued, the discursive framing of this humanitarian 'phantasmagoria' established by the reform movement turned a relation between 'Me and You', into a relation between 'Us and Them', and finally between 'Me' and an abstracted 'it'.[257]

Furthermore, the Congo reform movement essentialised the asserted 'victimhood', broadened it to a primordial, racial and cultural characteristic of Central Africa. At his personal celebration at the end of the reform campaign, Morel remarked that Equatorial Africa "has two peculiarities". For one, it stores the world's greatest vegetable riches. Secondly, its people "are most helpless in the world" and have been "[v]ictims for several centuries", and still "are today".[258] There are constantly mental leaps from the descriptions of concrete, real victims to an abstract totality of victims, and finally to the collective of the Congolese 'peoples', 'natives' or 'races'. Victimhood and the implied speechlessness and helplessness were ultimately converted into a primordial condition of Congolese social and cultural identity, a stereotype in itself, forced upon the population of Central Africa and described with terms such as "helpless natives", "helpless folk", "helpless blacks",[259] "helpless races" or helpless "race" of the Congo.[260] The atrocities and outrages, the reformers wrote, had been practised on a "helpless", "harm-

257 Gehrmann, *Kongo-Greuel*, 288 ('face', 'name' [translation F.L.]); see Sliwinski, "Childhood of Human Rights", 353. For a critical discussion of the use of atrocity photographs in the Congo reform movement, also see Grant, "Limits of Exposure".

258 Morel, quoted in Cromer, *Public Presentation*, 27.

259 Park, "Terrible Story", 772 ('natives'); Doyle, *Crime of the Congo*, xv; Morel, *Affairs of West Africa*, 342, Morel, *Great Britain*, 5 (both 'folk'); Park, "Terrible Story", 768 ('blacks);

260 Lord Monkswell and Edmund D. Morel, *A Reply to the Belgian Manifestos* (London: Congo Reform Association, 1909?), 3 ('races'); Morel, *Great Britain*, 212; The Archbishop of Canterbury [Randall T. Davidson], quoted in 'Congo Reform', *The Times*, 20 November 1909, 8 ('race'). Also see Congo Reform Association [U.S.], "Present Status", 6; William W. Keen, ex-President of the American Medical Association, quoted in Congo Reform Association [U.S.], "Weighty Utterances," in *The Congo News Letter*, ed. Congo Reform Association [U.S.] (Boston: 1906), 15–16, here 15; Congo Reform Association [U.S.], "Association Organises More Permanently," in *The Congo News Letter*, ed. Congo Reform Association [U.S.] (Boston: 1908), 1.

less", "unarmed" and "innocent" population and people: the "voiceless millions of Central Africa".[261]

At the same time, infancy was extended from a reference to the young age of those affected by colonial violence in the Congo into a symbol for a backward, immature status of cultural and racial evolution. The Congolese, Park argued, "display in their character a temperament more than any other race the attitudes and manners of children", and their "racial youth" expressed itself in a "habitual light-heartedness". Moreover, for the racist humanitarians, social evolution was analogous to arrested political development. These "savages peoples", Park once wrote, are "the children among the nations".[262] In a quote of G. Stanley Hall, the president of the American reform association, that prefaced the whole pamphlet, it was claimed that "[m]ost savages in most respects are children or more properly adolescents of adult size. Their faults and their virtues are those of childhood and youth".[263]

Thus, the American reformers closely tied their agitation to Stanley's recourse to the temporal and historical dimension of the 'savage' stereotype and his conviction that the Congolese were 'like a child'. Moreover, they also connected their agitation to persisting discursive traditions of American abolitionism. To delegitimise slavery, abolitionist activists had turned the 'child' stereotype, cultivated by "the most sentimental school of proslavery paternalists and plantation romancers", against the institution of slavery itself. If the African is innocent, good-natured and childish, they argued, then his enslavement is against all common morality.[264] A similar argument was raised by the evolutionary psychologist Hall, who was convinced that the mental development of 'primitives' and 'savages' was comparable to that of 'civilised' children or juveniles. Hence, "[t]o war upon [primitive peoples] is to war on children. To commercialize and oppress them with work is child labor on a large scale".[265]

All in all, the interjectional demand for accuracy in the initial quote can hardly hide the fact that the reformer's 'mental vision' about the 'savage victims' was no less stereotypical than the more apparent contempt for the 'savage perpetrators', or the colonial imagery of the Free State's apologists. In this context, the racist humanitarianism of the Congo reform movement developed at best what has been called a 'false empathy' in the context of paternalistic anti-racist struggles.[266] As effective as the image of the 'victim' evoked by the Congo reformers was in triggering compassion and challenging the attempts to legitimise the Free State regime, it always reproduced the discursive

261 John Holt, quoted in Morel, *British Case*, 202; Morel, *Great Britain*, 5; Doyle, *Crime of the Congo*, iii ('helpless', 'harmless'), xiv ('unarmed'); William M. Morrison, quoted in Bourne, *Civilisation in Congoland*, 261 ('innocent'); Park, "The Congo News-Letter", 2 ('voiceless').

262 Ibid., 2 ('nations'); Park and Morel, *Treatment of Women and Children*, 4 ('display', 'youth', 'habitual').

263 G. Stanley Hall, reproduced in ibid., 3. The idea was developed by Hall in an earlier speech, where he had recourse to Booker T. Washington to claim that one the "unique distinctions" of African-Americans was that they "live like the young in the realm of emotion and feeling"; Hall, "Lower and Higher Races", 7.

264 See Fredrickson, *Black Image*, 111.

265 Hall, *Adolescence*, Vol. 2, 649. Robert Park choose to reproduce Hall's statement at the beginning of Park and Morel, *Treatment of Women and Children*, 3.

266 See Richard Delgado, *The Coming Race War?* (New York: New York University Press, 1996), 31.

framework, of an evolutionary – both cultural and biological – state of underdevelopment of Africans.

The emergence of 'the saviours'

Between 'savage perpetrators' and 'helpless victims', the discursive space was opened up for the emergence of the 'white and civilised saviours': the Congo reform movement that took up the fight to stop the orgies of Léopold's cannibalistic soldiers and redeem their suffering prey from their misery, and ultimately succeeded, so one is told, in obliterating the notorious Free State system.

As the previous chapters have argued, the reformers perceived the Congo Scandal as a severe betrayal of the promises pledged during the imperial Congo narrative. Stanley's depiction of the region as 'Darkest Africa' had construed a similar powerful image of 'Brightest Europe'. His classification of the inhabitants of Central Africa as 'savages', 'barbarians', 'devils', 'monsters' and 'coloured races' created a pseudo-identity in differentiation to the alienated Congolese, an imagined community of the 'civilised', 'elected', 'human' and 'whites'. This process of negative identity formation was severely disturbed by the abuses of the European colonial administration of the Congo, which was interpreted by the reformers as an expression of European civilisation 'going native', hence of corrosion of alterity. The recourse to Stanley's terminology in the description of a 'barbarous' and 'dark' Congo, its bloodthirsty 'savage' and 'black' perpetrators, and the 'primitive' and 'childish' victims of oppression by the reformers can in this context be interpreted as the attempt to reinstate the corroded racist identity promised by the Congo narrative. As such, the degradation of both Congolese perpetrators and victims in the humanitarian discourse produced a stabilised image of 'civilised', 'progressive', 'mature' and 'white' European saviours.

Moreover, the Congo Scandal was portrayed as a worrying sign for a 'triumph of the wilderness', which turned the promised superiority of the imperial conquerors and civilisers over 'Darkest Africa' ad absurdum. In delimiting the 'defenceless', 'helpless' and 'voiceless' Congolese 'victims' on the other hand, their distant observers could once more conceive themselves as powerful, sovereign subjects capable of human agency, both materially and discursively. "The helpless, defenceless native on the Congo have no formal Ambassador and no Premier of England, no Rabbis of their church, Editors of their own faith or hundreds of thousands of their co-religionists in America to plead for them", American reformers emphasised. They "depend solely" on "those of other races, other colors and other countries" who "cry aloud in [sic] their behalf".[267]

This hierarchy was amplified by the aforementioned infantilisation of the Congolese victims and the objectification of their abused bodies in the humanitarian spectacle. There was a clear geometry of power inextricably entangled in their photographic and textual representation. When gazing down at the "faces turned upwards in mute appeal for pity" in Morel's fictive hostage house or at the pictured victims of mutilations deliberately seated on a chair or step by the missionary photographers, the European

267 Keen, quoted in Congo Reform Association [U.S.], "Weighty Utterances", 14–15. Also see Sliwinski, "Childhood of Human Rights", 356.

and American audience was discursively elevated to a social position of superiority and dominance.[268]

Two realms of agency were presented as embodying the role of these powerful and superior saviours. For one, these were the leading activists and organisers of the campaign. The British press enthusiastically celebrated Casement as an embodiment of imperial masculinity and the chivalric incarnation of a British gentlemen's commitment to justice soon after the publication of his investigation, for instance.[269] Figureheads such as Bourne and Morel were declared by their fellow campaigners to be "synonymous with unselfish devotion on behalf of subject races which cannot protect themselves", blessed with a "keen sense of injustice" and "generous mind" and working with "self-sacrificing devotion".[270] The self-appointed evangelical and humanitarian proxies who, like Morrison, spoke "in the name of the millions of black men in Central Africa" or, like Park, appealed "in the name of the voiceless millions of Central Africa […] to the civilized world", rose to an almost super-human position of influence and moral integrity through their standing for the dehumanised masses of Congolese victims. In the case of Morel, who was "the leader" and "hero of the cause", admiration quickly evolved to a worship that barely fell behind the popular glorification of the classical imperial heroes, as is detailed down.[271]

The second embodiment of the saviour to emerge in differentiating the perpetrators and victims was 'civilised public opinion'. Disillusioned by the reluctance of the Free State's administration to respond to the initially discrete criticism of Protestant missionary organisations that had not been "allowed to reach the public ear", leading Congo opponents eventually became convinced that they "were well advised in stirring up public opinion" at the beginning of the organised phase of the reform movement in 1904.[272] "This is not a matter for lawyers but for enlightened statesmanship and civilised public opinion", Morel stated in his first major Congo book. Furthermore, Park was convinced that "between these peoples and their oppressors there exists no power but that of the public opinion of the world" and pledged his "faith in the power of an international public opinion to compel a King to keep faith with the natives and do his duty to the helpless peoples submitted to his care".[273]

The interaction between 'civilised public' and 'enlightened governance' was the defined purpose of the newly established Congo Reform Associations. "Public opinion to be vigorous must be informed, and to be effective in moulding governmental action,

268 Morel, *Red Rubber*, 97.

269 See Dean Pavlakis, "British Overseas Humanitarianism", n.p. Casement, however, was reluctant to become a national celebrity. At first, he was concerned about corroding his integrity as an official representative of the British Empire by obtaining a prominent position in a political campaign. As discussed in chapter 5.3, his increasing Irish identity made it impossible to embrace the role of a British imperial hero.

270 Morel, *Red Rubber*, 9 ('synonymous'); Doyle, *Introduction*, xi–xii ('keen', 'generous'); Congo Reform Association [U.S.], *Indictment Against the Congo*, 13 [footnote] ('devotion').

271 Morrison, in "Meeting on the Kongo Question", 41 ('black men'); Park, "The Congo News-Letter", 2 ('voiceless'); Doyle, *Crime of the Congo*, 118 ('leader' etc.).

272 Bourne, *Civilisation in Congoland*, 199–200 ('allowed'); Samuel, in "Meeting on the Kongo Question", 49 ('stirring').

273 Morel, *King Leopold's Rule*, 88 ('lawyers'); Park, "The Congo News-Letter", 2 ('between', 'faith').

it must express itself in a concentrated and concrete way", the American organisation stated. "The Congo Reform Association has the two functions of supplying to the public reliable information concerning conditions in the Free State and of representing to the Government public", they proclaimed.[274]

Initially, the imperial public was led astray, though, and actually "captivated" by Léopold's colonial movement, as the reformers realised. Léopold had managed "to throw dust in the eyes of European public opinion", Morel stated, to "bamboozle"[275] and "deceive public opinion" about the real structure of his colonial state in order to achieve international recognition of his endeavour. Hence, it was "of the utmost importance […] that public opinion throughout the world should be brought to understand this question". By taking "the process of instructing Public Opinion" in hand, the Associations could turn "humanitarian feeling" into "an efficient power for good of a lasting kind", the leading British reformer asserted.[276]

However, Léopold and the Free State apologists were aware of the "great force of public opinion", as well, and they developed a "mastery of the art of swaying it through the press", as Park, himself a trained and experienced journalist, stressed. Especially in the early years of the organised reform campaign, the public sphere was understood as a highly contested discursive battlefield with concurring versions of 'the truth' between the reformers and the Free State apologists. Reformers warned that Léopold used his wealth "to buy newspapers and manufacture public opinion", "to hoodwink public opinion and offset criticism" through the establishment of a modern Press Bureau and "to disseminate lying literature".[277]

The activists were still optimistic that they could win this battle of representation. "Does the Sovereign of the Congo State really imagine that he can deceive public opinion in Europe or in America by such obstetrical pedantries, and dishonest trifling", Morel asked early in 1904. Ultimately, he was not, as the reformers asserted. By accepting to install an international Commission of Inquiry, Léopold had been "bowing to the storm of public opinion", as Samuel proudly summarised. Indeed, by late 1905, when the Commission confirmed most of the charges brought by the reform movement, the reformers had won the public controversy about the facts that constituted the Congo Scandal.[278]

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274 Congo Reform Association [U.S.], "The Association's Financial Needs," in *The Congo News Letter*, ed. Congo Reform Association [U.S.] (Boston: 1907), 12–13', here 12.

275 Morel, *Affairs of West Africa*, 341.

276 Morel, *Red Rubber*, 12 ('captivated'); Morel, *Affairs of West Africa*, 330 ('dust'), 341 ('bamboozle'), 348 ('deceive'); Morel, *Congo Slave State*, 10 ('utmost'); Morel, *King Leopold's Rule*, xii ('instructing', etc.). Also see Morel, *Great Britain*, 43.

277 Park, "Blood-Money", 61 ('force'); 'Address of Mr. E.D. Morel', reproduced in The Secretary of the Congress and Rose, *Universal Peace Congress*, 232 ('buy') [also see Morel, *Great Britain*, 112]; Park, "Terrible Story", 772 ('hoodwink') [also see Park, "King in Business", 624]; Morel, *Red Rubber*, 100 ('disseminate'). The Lord Bishop of South-Wark, Edward Talbot, warned in the Lords that the Congo controversy showed that "there is danger of influence behind the Press, of lobbying and suborning public opinion", apparently "even in free countries": Congo Free State, HL Deb 29 July 1907 Vol. 179 cc 402–437, here 426.

278 Morel, *King Leopold's Rule*, 149 ('Sovereign'); Samuel, "Congo State", 875 ('bowing').

In contrast to their expectations, though, public success did not translate into a political triumph for the reformers. The 'enlightened statesmen' in London and Washington showed few signs that they would follow the demands of the reform movement to convoke a new international conference on the Congo or increase diplomatic pressure on Léopold to accept a Belgian annexation of his colony. Disappointed by cautious governments, reformers began to increase their focus on an idealised 'public': "My colleagues and I have done our utmost. We have given of our best. We have appealed to Governments and to Statesmen", Morel stated. "It is only left for us to appeal to […] Public Opinion", as he pointed out.[279]

Concerning the strategies of protest, this assessment was accompanied by the transformation of an elitist lobby and pressure group into a popular movement. Instead of producing parliamentarian memorials, collecting criminalistic evidence and expert opinions to convince policy-makers and those holding governmental offices, the reformers concentrated on arousing the outrage of the masses through public demonstrations, atrocity lectures and local organisation. In terms of discursive strategies, public opinion became increasingly represented as the true embodiment of 'civilised' morality and righteousness and as the sole actor with the will and means to save the 'helpless victims' in the Congo from their 'savage perpetrators'.

Public opinion was the true sovereign in Western democracies, Morel argued, for it "creates Governments and invests Statesmen with executive authority". And the "power of aroused and intelligent public opinion" was the true "power of moral influence", the American *Congo News Letter* urged, "stronger than callous indifference or greedy tyranny". Only the public could set the diplomatic process in motion that would lead to a true abolishment of the Free State system, "and public opinion is the power which will keep it in motion till the work decided upon is completed", American reformers argued. It had the power to "force King Leopold to stop the evils" in the Congo.[280]

Ultimately, the reformers saw their trust justified. As chapter 2.2 has described, the Congo reformers and their supporters believed that the ultimate terms of the Belgian annexation in 1908 and the extremely limited reforms the new colonial secretary Jules Renkin implemented later signified the major success of their campaign. Enthusiastically, they celebrated their victory and the role of the leading activists and the general public as 'saviours' of the Congolese natives. A public ceremony organised for Edmund D. Morel in May 1911, the first in a series of events that celebrated the 'success' of the colonial reform movement, praised the Honorary Secretary of the British reform association. A letter from the Bishop of Winchester, hindered from presiding over the

279 Morel, *Great Britain*, 234.

280 Ibid. ('creates'); Mead, "Daniel Webster", 10 ('intelligent', 'influence', 'stronger'); Letter of the Administrative Committee of the Congo Reform Association to Senator Lodge, 5 May 1907, quoted in Congo Reform Association [U.S.], "Association Expresses Gratitude to Senators for Congo Resolution," in *The Congo News Letter*, ed. Congo Reform Association [U.S.] (Boston: 1907) April, 10 ('keep'); Rev. Robert H. Nassau, quoted in Congo Reform Association [U.S.], "Congo Abuses Unabated," in *The Congo News Letter*, ed. Congo Reform Association [U.S.] (Boston: 1906), 17–18, here 18 ('evils'). Also see Congo Reform Association [U.S.], "Postscript to News Letter", 5; Congo Reform Association [U.S.], "Latest Developments – the Call to Action," in *The Congo News Letter*, ed. Congo Reform Association [U.S.] (Boston: 1908), 4.

gathering by illness, opened the praise: "I am not ashamed to believe and say that for a great moral emergency the providence of God gave us the man", the Bishop wrote. "I believe Mr Morel to have done a hero's work, with a hero's motive and a hero's courage, and across difficulties which make a hero's task never more difficult than in our complex modern day."[281] Afterwards, notable friends and political allies applauded Morel as the man who "has saved the peoples of the Congo", as "the organiser of victory, the pioneer Workman […] he who compelled the blind to see, the deaf to hear", and praised "his splendid and heroic crusade", or "his heroism, classic in its nature".[282]

Among the many guests were prominent editors and representatives of the British press, and so headlines throughout the country proudly announced the birth of a new national hero. One could read about "the highest praise" of Morel, "the champion of the native races of the Congo", his "boundless energy, enthusiasm, and unselfishness", who "wrought almost alone a heroic work", a "heroic labour".[283] Without the "great ambition", "indomitable will", "boundless knowledge", "remarkable linguistic endowments" and "iron constitution" of Morel, it was stressed, "the triumph for justice" in the Congo would have been limited.[284]

In the immediate aftermath of the Congo reform movement, prominent reformers like Morel and Johnston and their close personal and political environment, such as the American journalist Herbert A. Gibbons, the British Labour politician F. Seymour Cocks and the philosopher and anti-war activist Bertrand Russel, established the base for the hero narrative that dominates the modern historiographic representation of the campaign.[285] These early triumphal retrospections reduced, like Adam Hochschild decades later, the complex and ambivalent history of this international humanitarian movement to the "romantic" and "incredible" personal battle of a few brave individuals such as Casement and, above all, the "David in the person of a poor shipping clerk", Morel. These two 'saviours', painted like legends of biblical and Greek mythology, were blessed, it was held, by the "unimpeachable character" and "heroic simplicity" to embrace the "Herculean difficulty" ahead of them. Ultimately, they overthrew the vicious "Goliath" Léopold and his realm of pillage and slavery in Africa, and thus saved the suffering Congolese from their misery: "Victory at last", one is assured.[286]

281 Bishop of Winchester, quoted in Cromer, *Public Presentation*, 3–4.

282 Émile Vandervelde, quoted in ibid., 9 ('saved', 'splendid'); C. Silvester Horne, quoted in ibid., 14 ('organiser'); Félicien Challaye, quoted in ibid., 17 ('classic').

283 'A Modern Hero', *Nottingham Daily Express*, 31 May 1911, reproduced in ibid., 41 ('highest', 'wrought'); 'Honouring Mr. Morel', *Bristol Times*, 30 May 1911, reproduced in ibid., 41 ('champion'); *Westminster Gazette*, 20 May 1911, reproduced in ibid., 39 ('labour'). Also see 'A Liverpool Hero and His Work', *Liverpool Echo*, 31 April 1911, reproduced in ibid., 40; 'Honouring a Congo Hero', *Ipswich Star*, 30 May 1911, reproduced in ibid., 42; 'Honouring a Real Hero', *The London Signal*, June 1911, reproduced in ibid. 48.

284 'The Hero of Congo Reform', *Christian World*, 1 June 1911, reproduced in ibid., 44.

285 See chapter 1.

286 Harry H. Johnston, *A History of the Colonialization of Africa by Alien Races*, new rev. and enl. ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1913), 355 ('romantic', 'incredible', 'David', 'Goliath'); Herbert A. Gibbons, *The New Map of Africa, 1900–1916* (New York: The Century, 1916), 152 ('unimpeachable'); Bertrand Russell, *Freedom and Organization* (London: Taylor & Francis, 2009 [1934]), 350 ('heroic'); Cocks, *E.D. Morel*, 99 ('Herculean'); Morel, *Red Rubber (b/1919)*, 214 ('Victory') [title of new chapter].

The formulation of these eulogies is strongly redolent of the praises of Henry M. Stanley, the most glorified of Europe's imperial heroes from the age of African exploration and conquest. The reformers answered the corrosion of colonial heroism that Conrad and others had diagnosed in the Congo with the creation of new imperial heroes. Although they were not adventurers or empire-builders but humanitarians, these new imperial heroes were believed to have picked up the almost extinct torch of enlightenment once carried by Stanley and his fellow explorers to the heart of the 'Dark Continent'. They became similarly influential symbols of the power and superiority of European civilisation, which had once more triumphed over African savagery and European depravation.[287]

The creation of the saviours, the position that completed the dramatic triangle of racist humanitarianism, was the final discursive response of the Congo reformers to the crisis of racist representation, the thriving self-doubts about cultural degeneration provoked by the Congo Scandal. As a racist stereotype, the 'civilised and white saviour' reinstated imperial alterity, reinstalled Europe in its promised position of power and superiority over the African other, and debilitated the cultural crisis of Western civilisation. As such, the "white light of criticism", as Park called it, discursively created a new position of humanitarian 'whiteness' and 'civilisation'. Morel was particularly praised for "rousing the conscience of Christendom", "enlightening the conscience of the civilised world" and "awakening the public conscience of the white peoples".[288] The Congo reformers "have prevented Europe from standing absolutely silent and indifferent before the greatest crime of all the ages", Doyle admired, and their appeals to the "soul" and "honour" of the white races were eventually answered.[289] After the first "faint stirrings of conscience", the "growl of national disapproval" arose, American reformers recalled, there were "resolutions, and discussions, and cries of pity and shame". Finally, the "heart and conscience of America and Europe cr[ied] aloud".[290]

The more optimistic activist had always pleaded for an understanding of the cultural decay that European 'civilisation' had exposed in its governance of the Congo as an opportunity. The Congo Scandal was "a request and a challenge to the solidarity of Christendom and the ability of civilized peoples to act in a single-hearted way in a righteous cause", Park announced to the members of the American reform association. Similarly, the Archbishop of Canterbury once proclaimed in front of a mass demonstration of religious Congo opponents in Royal Albert Hall that a "great issue of moral righteousness stands large before our eyes". The potential of a selfless humanitarian intervention in the Congo was a chance to prove the survival of past idealism in materialistic modernity. "Such opportunities, as it seems to me, occur more rarely nowadays in a striving and complex age of restless competitive commercial stir than they did

287 The glorifying public perception of Morel but also of Roger Casement, is unbroken until today; see chapter 1.

288 Park, "Terrible Story", 770 ('white'); Rev. Reginald J. Campbell, quoted in Cromer, *Public Presentation*, 36 ('rousing'); 'A Liverpool Hero and His Work', *Liverpool Echo*, 31 May 1911, reproduced in ibid., 40 ('enlightening'); 'A Modern Hero', *Nottingham Daily Express*, 31 May 1911, reproduced in ibid., 41 ('awakening').

289 Speech of Arthur Conan Doyle, quoted in Cromer, *Public Presentation*, 22.

290 Park, "Terrible Story", 772 ('growl', resolutions'); Mead, "Daniel Webster", 9 ('heart').

at some former epochs in English history", he added.[291] Hence, in saving the 'helpless millions' of the Congo, 'civilisation' could prove that the 'civilised savagery' diagnosed as an expression of the murderous aberration of technology and capitalism was not the dominant characteristic of modernity. In this way, the reform movement weakened the cultural crisis of European civilisation that reformers decried in their outrage about the Congo Scandal. "All the forces of unscrupulous capitalism were brought to bear against the Congo Reform Association", a Liverpool newspaper remarked towards the end of the campaign. "Happily, all the powers arrayed against the forces of humanitarianism have not prevailed, and the cause of righteousness has triumphed, as it is always eventually bound to do in a universe governed by moral law".[292]

In re-establishing the boundaries between 'civilisation' and 'barbarism' and re-assuring Europe of its cultural and moral supremacy, the representational crisis of racism within the Congo Scandal, fuelled by doubts about racial and cultural decline, was resolved. Even though, concerning the fate of the Congolese, there remained "very much to be desired", as it was admitted, the assembled guest at Morel's public ceremony and the reporting press seemed to agree that one main goal of the reform movement had been achieved. Morel had "saved the reputation of Europe, the honour of England, and the soul of the Church", it was maintained. The "horrid blots on humanity and Christianity have gone", and the "stain from the records of civilisation" has been removed. The Congolese population had endured almost half of a century of colonial oppression under Belgian rule when the British reform association finally declared the victory of its campaign. What was rescued by the saviours of the Congo reform movement, however, was the integrity of the European self. [293]

291 Park, "The Congo News-Letter", 2 ('request'); The Archbishop of Canterbury [Randall T. Davidson], quoted in 'Congo Reform', *The Times*, 20 November 1909, 8 ('great').

292 'A Liverpool Hero and His Work', *Liverpool Echo*, 31 May 1911, reproduced in Cromer, *Public Presentation*, 40.

293 'Honouring Mr. Morel', *Bristol Times*, 30 May 1911, reproduced in ibid., 41–42, here 42 ('desired', 'blots'); 'Honouring a Congo Hero', *Ipswich Star*, 30 May 1911, reproduced in ibid., 42 ('stain'); Speech of C. Silvester Horne, reproduced in ibid., 13 ('soul of the church').