1. Introduction: Conrad's ghosts

> "Mr MOREL has served the natives, but I must insist on this point: that he has served others as well. […] He has appealed to the honour, to the soul of the white races, and the appeal has not been unanswered. He has restored to many of us those beliefs which we should desire to have; he has helped to reassure many of us to whom such words as progress, civilisation, and even Christianity had begun to lose all meaning".[1]
> Arthur Conan Doyle

A fierce critique of the colonial and racist underpinning of the modern human rights movement once called it a "project for the redemption of the redeemers".[2] As the above excerpt from a speech of Arthur Conan Doyle suggests, the movement for 'Congo reform' is probably one of the most pronounced pieces of historical evidence to support such serious charges. The world-famous creator of Sherlock Holmes was one of the most prominent 'Congo reformers'. With this eulogy, he praised his friend and ally Edmund D. Morel, a journalist and former shipping clerk who played a vital part in turning an initially isolated criticism of the infamous Congo Free State, which had evolved in the 1890s, into mass movements on a national scale in Great Britain and the United States.

Today, the Congo reform movement is not only considered the "first great international" or even the "first global" human rights campaign of the 20th century, but it has also been praised as a form of modern "heroism" and as "one of the noblest manifestations of […] liberal altruism". In particular, it is acclaimed for "the greatest human rights achievement" of its time, the exposure of the so-called 'Congo atrocities'. This murderous and notoriously violent system of ivory and rubber exploitation in the extensive Central African colony, proclaimed by the Belgian King Léopold II in 1885, terrorised the Congolese population through forced labour, hostage-taking, torture and iniquities such as the cutting off of hands, and it brought death, mutilation and trauma to millions of Africans. Nevertheless, led by activists of a "heroic nature", one is told, the

1 Speech of Arthur Conan Doyle, reproduced in Lord Cromer [Evelyn Baring] et al., eds., *The Public Presentation to Mr. E. D. Morel*, Whitehall Rooms, Hotel Metropole, 29 May 1911. In the footnotes of this study, references are only made to shortened titles. For further information, please consult the bibliography.

2 Makau Mutua, *Human Rights* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2002), 14.

public protest in the imperial metropole eventually overcame this shocking episode of New Imperialism. This success made the Congo reformers simply "some of history's most underestimated heroes", as a TV documentary noted in 2007.[3]

However, as Doyle's speech at a public reception in honour of Morel in the London Hotel Metropole indicates, more interests than those of the down-trodden Congolese were served by this colonial reform movement. The other group of beneficiaries, the strong 'we' and 'us' evoked by the renowned author, apparently transcended the walls of the White Hall Rooms, where several hundred notable supporters of the reform movement assembled in May of 1911. Moreover, marked as 'white', 'civilised', 'progressive' and 'Christian', as Doyle's words imply, this collective was strictly demarcated from the 'natives' and defined by a whole range of racist ascriptions that accounted for an alleged natural superiority over others stigmatised as 'coloured', 'backward', 'savage' and 'heathen'. That these classifications started to become empty, 'meaningless' signifiers reveals a second crisis beyond and beneath the humanitarian disaster of the 'Congo atrocities'. Likewise, the fact that, after two decades of reform agitation and near its official end in 1913, 'heroic' activists such as Morel were publicly praised for restoring faith into these central ideological constituents of contemporary racist identities suggests that this pioneering campaign at the transition between Victorian humanitarianism and the modern human rights movement had indeed always aimed at the 'redemption of the redeemers', more precisely, of an imagined community of 'whiteness' and 'progressive, Christian civilisation'.

These suspicions led to the broad questions that have informed the study at hand. How could the political events in this far-off colony so severely unsettle the British and American societies? Was the more profound catalyst of the Congo reform movement indeed not African suffering but a far-reaching calamity of racist relations? How could this Congolese crisis shake the representational, political and social foundations of 'white' and European supremacy? What role did racism play in the ideology, strategy and success of this allegedly 'altruistic' and 'noble' human rights movement? In addition, and against the backdrop of the theoretical challenges of sociological racism studies, this study asks what the role of racism in the Congo reform movement reveals about the parameters and characteristics of racism at this specific historical conjuncture. Ultimately, a critical approach to this research problem leads to another vital question: Should we hold onto a narrative that transfigures those into 'heroes' who exploited human rights and humanitarian empathy to follow a racist and imperialist agenda?

3 Adam Hochschild, *King Leopold's Ghost* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1999), subtitle ('heroism'), 2 ('first great'); Robert G. Weisbord, "The King, the Cardinal and the Pope," *Journal of Genocide Research* 5, no. 1 (2003): 35 ('global'); Neal Ascherson, *The King Incorporated* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1963), 260 ('noblest'); Angus Mitchell, *The Amazon Journal of Roger Casement* (London: Anaconda Editions, 1997), 24 ('greatest'); Ramona Austin, "An Extraordinary Generation," *Afrique & histoire (Paris)* 4, no. 2 (2005): 75 ('heroic'); Peter Bate, *Congo* (Chicago: Facets Video, 2006 [2004]), min. 70 ('history's').

'Congo reform' racism and the literature canon

That those committed to lionizing these apocryphal heroes are little inclined to focus on the shortcomings and 'dark sides' of the Congo reform movement is hardly surprising. How broadly the racism of this pioneering human rights movement has generally been ignored, trivialised, or denied in the broader academic discourse is, nonetheless, astonishing considering the deep marks this humanitarian racism left in the Western literature and theory canon. Together with sometimes vague, visual reminiscences of photographs of maimed African children and severed hands, fragments from Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* are, for many Westerners today, probably the first thought that crosses the mind when they think of the Congo atrocities. The famous last words of the ivory trader Kurtz, "The horror! The horror!", are engraved deeply in the collective cultural memory and have become a cultural metaphor for "Leopold's rape of the Congo" or even the genocidal violence of colonialism as such. As historians must admit, this fictional novel, which is only loosely based on its author's brief experience in the Free State, remains probably the "most famous account of Leopold's Congo".[4]

During his lifetime, the Anglo-Polish writer born Józef Teodor Konrad Korzeniowski had already become one of the most eminent contemporary authors. After the Second World War, leading British and American literary critics honoured him as a representative of 'The Great Tradition' of English novelists and acknowledged the "canonical place" of *Heart of Darkness* in modern literature. Until today, the short tale remains one of the most widely studied and certainly one of the most controversial works of English literature.[5]

First published as a serial in *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine* in 1899 and reaching bookstores in 1902, *Heart of Darkness* certainly had the most lasting impact of all texts produced in the great Congo controversy. Primarily, however, it unfolded as a psychological parable. In this, the fateful voyage of the seaman Charles Marlow into the interior of an unnamed Africa colony, up the river but "deeper and deeper into the heart of darkness",[6] becomes the expression of an exploration of the powerful lusts and instincts that slumber beneath the thin veneer of 'civilised' behaviour and self-control. However, its setting in a specific geographic, socio-historic, and discursive context gave this psychological study an explicitly political dimension – and turned it into a profoundly racist piece of fiction.

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4 Joseph Conrad, "Heart of Darkness," in *Heart of Darkness*, ed. Paul. B. Armstrong, 4th ed. (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2006), 69 ('horror'); Hochschild, *Leopold's Ghost*, 146 ('rape'); Tim Zeal, "Belgium's Heart of Darkness," *History Today* 62, no. 10 (2012): 49 ('famous'). For the broader uses of the 'horror'-metaphor, see for instance Bartolomé Clavero, *Genocide or Ethnocide, 1933–2007* (Milano: Giuffrè, 2008), 227; Fabian Klose, *Human Rights in the Shadow of Colonial Violence* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013), 92.

5 Frank R. Leavis, *The Great Tradition* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1979); Lionel Trilling, "On the Modern Element in Modern Literature," *Partisan Review* 28, no. 1 (1961): 25 ('canonical'). The most comprehensive entry in the controversy around Heart of Darkness remains the excellent Norton critical edition Paul. B. Armstrong, ed., *Heart of Darkness*, 4th ed. (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2006), which has recently gone in its 5th edition. Also very valuable are the essays in Attie de Lange and Gail Fincham, eds., *Conrad in Africa* (Boulder: Social Science Monographs, 2002).

6 Conrad, "Heart of Darkness", 36.

Like in his first Congo short story,[7] Conrad painted a devastating image of the colony that contemporaries easily identified as the Congo Free State. A "chain-gang" of imprisoned Congolese, the "pain, abandonment, and despair" of dying West African workers, and the "glorious slaughter" that Europeans on Marlow's steamboat were happy to commit were hints of the brutality that lurked in this colony that Léopold II had presented to the world as a disinterested trustee of Europe's historic 'civilising mission'. In Conrad's Congo, though, any "philanthropic pretence" was debunked through "imbecile rapacity". The physical and moral erosion of the famous ivory trader Kurtz, whom Marlow was sent to rescue, and whom he found infested with fever and insanity, fraught with deadly fantasies of omnipotence, and committed to horrifying atrocities, becomes in this context the central symbol for the transformation of an allegedly benevolent colony into an oppressive regime. Once committed to 'civilising', the well-educated Kurtz eventually developed a genocidal programme: "Exterminate all the brutes", he demanded, as Marlow reads on a handwritten note.[8]

Conrad's Congo literature reached the public in a crucial period of the escalating reform debate. Based on eye-witness accounts of colonial agents; missionaries and merchants, the at first loosely bound circle of devoted British activists gathered around the veteran humanitarians Henry Fox Bourne and Charles Dilke from the Aborigines' Protection Society, soon supported by the journalist Morel and the evangelist Henry Grattan Guinness, had begun to protest against the breaking of Léopold's philanthropic promises in 1897. In this context, Conrad knew that his Congo novellas would be understood as a political commentary, and the reformers appreciated the intention. In May 1903, the British House of Commons dispatched Vice-Consul Roger Casement for a mission of inquiry that broadly confirmed the allegations and resulted in a broad stir in the international press. When Casement planned the formation of a new, specialised humanitarian organisation upon his return, he directly approached the famous writer with the request that he take a leading position.

Although Conrad could not see himself as a political activist, he assured Casement of his "warmest wishes for your success" and criticised the Congo State for its "ruthless, systematic cruelty towards the blacks" and its "bad faith" towards the commerce of other states.[9] Others took the lead of the 'Congo Reform Associations' that were formed in 1904: in Great Britain, Morel and the missionary couple Alice Seeley Harris and John H. Harris; in the United States, the journalist and future sociologist Robert E. Park, the Presbyterian missionary William M. Morrison and Thomas S. Barbour from the American Baptist Missionary Union. Both Morel and Park, however, would quote elaborately

7 See Joseph Conrad, "An Outpost of Progress," in *Tales of Unrest*, 124–70 (London: Eveleigh Nash & Grayson, 1897), which was first published 1897 in the magazine *Cosmopolis*.

8 Conrad, "Heart of Darkness", 16 ('chain-gang'), 17 ('pain'), 23 ('rapacity'), 24 ('pretence'), 50 ('Exterminate'), 51 ('slaughter').

9 Conrad to Casement, 21 December 1903, quoted in Hunt Hawkins, "Joseph Conrad, Roger Casement and the Congo Reform Movement," *Journal of Modern Literature* 9, no. 1 (1981): 69–70, here 69 ('warmest'), 70 ('ruthless', 'bad'). Hawkins suggests a general depression, severe illness and ideological dissent as reasons for Conrad's refusal to join the Congo Reform Association; see ibid., 72–73.

from the "admirable sentences" of the "well-known author" Conrad, praised "the powerful picture of Congo life drawn […] in the 'Heart of Darkness'", or recommended the novel to their supporters.[10]

Based on this embeddedness in the Congo controversy, literary critics focusing on the political dimension of the novel had, until the last quarter of the 20th century, generally agreed that *Heart of Darkness* should be read as "a vehement denunciation of imperialism and racism" and have even called it "the most horrifying description of imperialism ever written". However, since a now-seminal speech of the Nigerian writer Chinua Achebe at the University of Michigan in 1975, a counter-narrative emerged that accused the same story of embracing racism and imperialism rather than challenging it.[11]

In his speech, Achebe called Conrad a "bloody racist" whose Liberal opposition to imperial violence "always managed to sidestep the ultimate question of equality between white people and black people". Indeed, Conrad had made sure that *Heart of Darkness* could not be read as a rejection of imperialism per se. The "red" on imperial maps was "good to see at any time", Marlow once noted, "because one knows that some real work is done". Like almost all Congo reformers, Conrad was convinced that a just and humane form of colonial rule was possible and had been realised in the British dependencies marked in this way.[12]

Moreover, Achebe rightfully attacked *Heart of Darkness* for its "image of Africa as 'the other world'". Undeniably, Conrad described the Congo as a prehistoric and natural space of mythical darkness where "vegetation rioted on the earth and the big trees were kings". The absence of human interference and signs of cultivation within the abundant and royal ruling forests that Conrad described serve as the backdrop for the dehumanisation of the Congolese characters in the novel. The occasional "roll of drums" and "burst of yells" proved that humans breathed in this 'other world'; however, their existence remained a "black and incomprehensible frenzy" for Conrad and his readers. Like the "cannibals" working on his steamer, the Africans on the riverbanks were almost speechless, simply howling, leaping and stamping, and they remain phantom- or ghost-like characters.[13]

The "wild and passionate uproar" of lusts that Marlow projects onto their dances and screams signifies that both the forests and inner human nature in the Congo remain uncontrolled and unmastered. The African inhabitant of the Upper Congo was

10 Edmund D. Morel, *King Leopold's Rule in Africa* (London: W. Heinemann, 1904), 174 [footnote] ('powerful'), 351 ('admirable', 'well-known'). A pamphlet issued by Robert Park reproduced the 'Statement of Joseph Conrad' over a whole page and referred to 'Heart of Darkness' for the experience of the author; see Robert E. Park and Edmund D. Morel, *The Treatment of Women and Children in the Congo State 1895–1904* (Boston: Congo Reform Association, 1904), 30.

11 Eloise K. Hay, *The Political Novels of Joseph Conrad* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1963), 112 ('vehement'); Arnold Kettle, *An Introduction to the English Novel*, 2 vols. (London: Hutchinson, 1953), Vol. 2, 65 ('horrifying').

12 Chinua Achebe, "An Image of Africa," *The Massachusetts Review*, 18, no. 4 (1977): 787 ('always'), 788 ('bloody racist'); Conrad, "Heart of Darkness", 10 ('red', 'real work').

13 Achebe, "Image of Africa", 783 ('image'); Conrad, "Heart of Darkness", 33 ('vegetation', 'cannibals'), 35 ('frenzy').

"not inhuman", as Marlow emphasised, but on the lowest stage of evolution, a "prehistoric man" in a state of nature, neither master of himself nor of his surroundings. This undomesticated wilderness was described as a counter-image to 'civilised' Europe, where nature was subjugated but was at the same time a worrying reminder of Europe's own, 'savage' past. What really unsettles Marlow is the thought that there is actually an evolutionary affiliation between him, the 'civilised' European, and these 'savage' creatures.[14]

Hence, despite the exposure of imperial voracity and the humanitarian empathy that can be read into Conrad's depiction of exploited Africans, the mystification of the Congolese space and debasement of its inhabitants turn *Heart of Darkness* into an unvarnished "document of the racist European image on Africa", as Patrick Brantlinger has contended.[15] In particular, it can be read as a homage to the writings of Henry M. Stanley. Ever since the Welsh-American journalist descended the Congo River in the hey-day of Central African 'exploration', the region had become a sort of cultural obsession for the Victorian imagination. In his tremendously popular travelogues, integrated into geography curricula, lent by school libraries and reprinted in many anthologies, Stanley had described the Congo as 'Darkest Africa', the most radical expression of African alterity, inhabited by the most ferocious 'savages' and most primitive 'races'. Conrad's literature not only fully embraced the colonial myths that framed the contemporary European representation of 'the Congo'. In fact, further refined by a sophisticated novelist, it was *Heart of Darkness* that transported this racist narrative to the new century and culturally pinned a colonial imagery that powerfully resounds in literature, media and political representations of the Congo until today.[16]

At the same time, Conrad's mythical imagination of a 'dark' and 'savage' Congo and its subhuman inhabitants was intrinsically interwoven with the political dimension that gave his text its humanitarian character. In the moral and physical decay of Mr Kurtz, both layers of meaning inseparably converge. As much as it symbolised the greed and materialism that affected European 'civilisation', Kurtz's transformation from a philanthropist to a murderous ivory trader, and the conversion of an allegedly philanthropic colony to an atrocious robber economy that this transformation symbolised, directly pointed back to Africa itself. In describing how Kurtz took a "wild" woman as his wife and presided over 'savage' rituals, Kurtz' moral degeneration is described as a cultural regression to the state of subhuman Africans, an adaption to the rule of nature over reason.[17] As Achebe has pointed out, Conrad presented the decay of morality and the

14 Ibid., 36. See chapter 3.2 for an analytical discussion of this motif.

15 Patrick Brantlinger, "Heart of Darkness," in *Heart of darkness*, ed. Ross C. Murfin, 2nd ed. (Boston: St Martin's Press, 1996), 277 ('document').

16 See Henry M. Stanley, *Through the Dark Continent*, 2 vols. (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1878); Henry M. Stanley, *The Congo and the Founding of Its Free State*, 2 vols. (London: Sampson Low, Marston, Searle & Rivington, 1885); Henry M. Stanley, *In Darkest Africa* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1890). For the continuities from colonial to modern representations of the Congo, see the extensive studies of Kevin C. Dunn, *Imagining the Congo* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003); Johnny van Hove, *Congoism* (Bielefeld: Transcript, 2017); Frits Andersen, *The Dark Continent?* (Aarhus: Aarhus University Press, 2016); and my own essay, Felix Lösing, "Nachrichten aus dem 'Herz der Finsternis'," in *Sprache – Macht – Rassismus*, ed. Gudrun Hentges et al. (Berlin: Metropol, 2014).

17 Conrad, "Heart of Darkness", 49 ('unspeakable'), 60 ('wild', 'savage').

outburst of violence in the Congo as an "avenging recrudescence" of Europe's own forgotten darkness and past, a past that is allegorically described as mirroring contemporary Africanness. Ultimately as, inter alia, Patrick Brantlinger and Frances Singh have clarified, this metaphor suggests that colonial excesses are a consequence of Europe 'going native': "Evil, in short, is African in Conrad's story; if it is also European, that is because some white men in the heart of darkness behave like Africans".[18]

Conrad's ghosts in the theory canon

One can still appreciate Achebe's astonishment that a novel that so clearly "celebrates [the] dehumanization" of Africans had reigned basically unchallenged in the Western Canon for decades. At the end of his lecture in 1975, Achebe provokingly turned to his academic audience. Apparently, he concluded, "white racism against Africa is such a normal way of thinking" among experts of English literature, its critics and its teachers, "that its manifestations go completely undetected".[19]

That this harsh criticism could also be extended to one of the most eminent political thinkers of the 20th century is clear the example of Hannah Arendt. In her first grand oeuvre *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, published in 1951, the icon of liberal philosophy set out to investigate the "subterranean stream of Western history" that had "finally come to surface" in the totalitarian regimes and the "absolute evil" of her century. In this monumental project, Arendt offered one of the first theoretical reflections on racism and the history of its genesis.[20]

She defines racism primarily as "[the ideology] that interprets history as a natural fight of races". The "invention of racism" (as a 'race-ideology'), she claims, took place during the so-called scramble for Africa in the 19th century. Afterwards, racism became the globally enhanced "powerful ideology" of New Imperialism and eventually achieved a "monopoly over the political life" of the involved European nations even in domestic politics – one of the "boomerang effects" of the imperial experience, as she famously argued.[21]

With this narrative, Arendt rightfully acknowledged that racism was "neither a new nor a secret weapon" of European fascism. At the same time, she less convincingly contended that there existed an "abyss between the men of brilliant and facile conceptions" that had speculated about race in the context of philosophy, philology and other science since the 18th century and the "men of brutal deeds and active bestiality" of later years "which no intellectual explanation is able to bridge". Much of this early race-thinking was still bound to a "humanistic tradition" and Enlightenment ideals of human brother-

18 Achebe, "Image of Africa", 783–84 ('avenging'); Patrick Brantlinger, *Rule of Darkness* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1990), 262 ('evil'); see Frances B. Singh, "The Colonialistic Bias of 'Heart of Darkness'," *Conradiana* 10, no. 1 (1978): 43. See chapter 3.1 for further discussion.

19 Achebe, "Image of Africa", 788.

20 Hannah Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, 2nd enl. ed. (Cleveland: Meridian Books, 1962 [1958/1951]), viii ('evil'), ix ('subterranean', 'surface'). All references here are from the second enlarged edition of 1958.

21 Ibid., 158 ('powerful'), 159 ('natural fight'), 183 ('monopoly'), 206 ('boomerang').

hood, Arendt claimed. Moreover, since European discourse on race lacked an ideological component, it could only count as 'race-thinking before racism'.[22]

Moreover, there was no "'immanent logic'" that led from race-thinking to its 'degeneration' into an ideology, Arendt argued. For the formation of ideologies, their "scientific aspect" was always only "secondary", one can read, since they emerge "in response to experiences or desires" and "not as a theoretical doctrine". Race-thinking, Arendt concluded, might have even disappeared "if the 'scramble for Africa' and the new era of imperialism had not exposed Western humanity to new and shocking experiences".[23]

This shocking experience, Arendt outrageously maintains, was the discovery of the revolting 'savagery' of African 'natural men'. In the middle of her chapter on imperialism and her reflections on the emergence of racism, Arendt deployed a vision of the 'The Phantom World of the Dark Continent' at the eve of its European conquest that is so full of dehumanising stereotypes that one is inevitably baffled to find such distortions within an otherwise highly sophisticated and critical study. Tellingly, Arendt does not substantiate this narrative through historical sources, as she abundantly does throughout the rest of her work, but rather with references to the fiction of Joseph Conrad, particularly through short quotes and long excerpts from *Heart of Darkness*, which she called "the most illuminating work on actual race experience in Africa", and whose racist imagery she uncritically accepts as displaying actual facts about pre-colonial Africa.[24]

In contrast to "almost empty" Australia and America, which had simply "fallen into the hands of Europeans", a shameless belittlement of Europe's genocidal expansionism, Africa had been "an overpopulated continent", Arendt writes. When greater numbers of Europeans poured "into the interior of the Dark Continent" in the later 19th century, they reached a space inhabited by "prehistoric tribes" that "do not know any history", but which were "numerous enough to constitute a world of their own".[25]

However, this creation is represented as "a world of folly". Like in *Heart of Darkness*, the radical otherness of Arendt's African phantom world is rooted in the incapability of its inhabitants to alienate and emancipate themselves from both external and internal wilderness: "What made them different from other human beings was not at all the color of their skin but the fact that they behaved like a part of nature, […] compared to which they appeared to be phantoms, unreal and ghostlike".[26]

The first Europeans that were confronted with this "world of black savages", Arendt claims, had been the Boers on their Great Trek in the 1830s and 1840s. According to a troublingly sympathetic review of Boer history, the descendants of Dutch settlers from the 17th and 18th centuries that left the Cape Colony to escape the newly established British rule "were never able to forget their first horrible fright" before these 'natural men' they found in the South African inland. What "frightened and humiliated the immigrants" the most, as Arendt writes in a plain analogy to Conrad, was the "humanity"

22 Ibid., 158 ('new', 'before racism' [title of chapter]), 160 [footnote] ('humanistic'), 183 ('abyss', 'brutal deeds', 'bridge').

23 Ibid., 159 ('scientific', 'secondary', 'response', 'doctrine'), 183 ('immanent', 'scramble').

24 Ibid., 185 [footnote] ('illuminating'), 186 ('Phantom World').

25 Ibid., 182 ('empty'), 186 ('fallen'), 191 ('overpopulated', 'Dark Continent', 'numerous'), 192 ('prehistoric', 'history').

26 Ibid., 191 ('folly'), 192 ('different').

of these 'savages' and the kinship between the Europeans and this African world of folly, which resulted in the same desire once expressed by Kurtz: "Exterminate all the brutes". The "emergency explanation" of the Boers to the frightening 'savages' and their own genocidal thoughts was the discovery of "race as a principle of the body politic" in the Boer Republics. The Boers thus 'invented' racism even "before imperialism exploited it as a major political idea".[27]

Eventually, according to Arendt's genealogy, Boer racism became the vantage point for the global triumph of the 'race ideology'. In the 1870s and 1880s, thousands of "adventurers, gamblers, criminals" arrived in South Africa to search for their fortune in the diamante fields and newly discovered gold mines. When these "superfluous men" of the 'civilised' societies, whom Arendt compared to Mr Kurtz from *Heart of Darkness*, "were confronted with human beings who […] were as incomprehensible as the inmates of a madhouse", they looked to the Boers for answers. Quickly, these "won the consent of all other European elements" for their establishment of a racist society. From these European gold rushers, the desire to "push one's own people into the position of the master race" reached all African and Asian empires, until it became "the main ideological weapon of imperialistic politics",[28] resulting in "the most terrible massacres in recent history", like the "wild murdering" of a Carl Peters in German Southeast Africa, or the "decimation of the peaceful Congo population".

It is remarkable that Arendt's racist theorisation of racism has so long remained unchallenged. Even more astonishing is that *Origins* continues to be considered a pioneering contribution to a postcolonial tradition of radical Black intellectuals like W.E.B. Du Bois, Aimé Césaire or Frantz Fanon, who challenged the novelty of Nazi atrocities by emphasising their similarity to "colonialist procedures" and the long tradition of Europe's outrages "against colored folk in all parts of the world", but who at the same time vigorously attacked the "mystification" of Africa through the Western humanist and idealist philosophy that Arendt considered 'pre-racist'.[29]

The central purpose of Arendt's reflection on imperialism and racism, in contrast, seems to create a "buffer that separates the bulk of Western history from the Holocaust", as Robert Bernasconi has maintained. Indeed, on the basis of one of the most central texts produced within the Congo reform discourse, Arendt produced a stunning account in which racism emerged "isolated from the current of European history" and as an "answer to the overwhelming monstrosity of Africa". As such, she not merely ignored or belittled the colonial genocides in Australia and the Americas and the horrors of the

27 Ibid., 185 ('Exterminate', 'emergency', 'body politic'), 191 ('black savages'), 192 ('horrible fright'), 195 ('exploited').

28 Ibid., 160 ('weapon'), 188–189 ('adventurers'), 189 ('Kurtz'), 190 ('madhouse'), 199 ('consent'), 206 ('master race'). For the following, ibid., 185.

29 Du Bois, W.E. B[urghardt], *The World and Africa* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), 15 ('colored folk'); see Aimé Césaire, *Discourse on Colonialism* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 2000 [1972/1955]), 28 ('mystification'), 36 ('colonialist'); also see Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks* (London: Pluto Press, 1986 [1967/1952]), 130–32. On the reception in postcolonial studies, see Patricia Owens, "Racism in the Theory Canon," *Millennium* 45, no. 3 (2017): 404–5.

transatlantic slavery but also tends to "blame the 'victims' rather than the 'offenders'" for racism and imperial massacres.[30]

King Léopold's ghosts

Hannah Arendt thus illustrated how uncritical acceptance of Conrad's imagined Congo inevitably reproduces its racist structure and arguments. Remarkably enough, even historians continue to suggest *Heart of Darkness* as a "Witness of History" and declare Conrad an accurate "Observer of Empire", as a recent teaching compendium reveals.[31]

Among those who claimed that the novel was the work of "an open-eyed observer" is Adam Hochschild. In his award-winning *King Leopold's Ghost*, the American journalist recommended that *Heart of Darkness* should not be read as a work of fiction but indeed as a representation of "'actual facts'" about Léopold's Congo. First published in 1998, Hochschild's study of the Congo reform movement was translated into eleven languages, went through several editions, and within the first decade sold over 400,000 copies. Praised by literary critics as a "superb" and "remarkably engaging" piece of popular history, and awarded by the American Historical Association "as a key text in the historiography of colonial Africa", it has had influence like no other text in the last 20 years in the public, political and academic debate about the reform campaign.[32]

Hochschild's bestselling 'Story of Greed, Terror and Heroism in Colonial Africa', as the subtitle announced, was pivotal for the "heroic spin" in the movement's modern representation. His narrative reduced complex political conflicts to a cut-and-dried collision of moral opposites personified by two radical antagonists. On one side, personifying 'greed' and 'terror', Hochschild put Léopold, "a man as filled with greed and cunning, duplicity and charm, as any of the more complex villains of Shakespeare". On the other side, as the incarnation of the 'heroism' of the story, stood the leader of the British reform association. "[I]mpassioned, eloquent, blessed with brilliant organizing skills and nearly superhuman energy", Morel was "[b]rought face to face with evil" – and did "not turn away".[33]

In this dichotomist confrontation between 'good' and 'evil', little analytical space is left for ambiguities such as stalwart racism on the side of the reformers. In his epi-

30 Arendt, *Origins of Totalitarianism*, 158 ('monstrosity'), 191 ('isolated'); Robert Bernasconi, "When the Real Crime Began," in *Hannah Arendt and the Uses of History*, ed. Richard H. King and Dan Stone (New York: Berghahn Books, 2007), 57 ('buffer'); Kathryn T. Gines, "Race Thinking and Racism in Hannah Arendt's The Origins of Totalitarianism," in *Hannah Arendt and the Uses of History*, ed. Richard H. King and Dan Stone (New York: Berghahn Books, 2007), 48 ('victims').

31 Mark D. Larabee, *The Historian's Heart of Darkness* (Santa Barbara: ABC-Clio, 2018), 13 ('Witness').

32 Hochschild, *Leopold's Ghost*, 143 ('facts'), 149 ('open-eyed'); Jeremy Harding, New York Times Book Review ('superb'); Scott McLemee, Newsday ('remarkably'), both reproduced in Hochschild, *Leopold's Ghost*, second page after front page; American Historical Association, "2008 Theodore Roosevelt-Woodrow Wilson Award Recipient," https://www.historians.org/awards-and-grants/past-recipients/theodore-roosevelt-woodrow-wilson-award-recipients/2008-theodore-roosevelt-woodrow-wilson-award-recipient, ('key text'). On sales numbers, see Hugo de Burgh, *Investigative Journalism*, 2nd ed. (Abingdon: Routledge, 2008), 145.

33 Robert M. Burroughs, *African Testimony in the Movement for Congo Reform* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2019), 161 ('spin'); Hochschild, *Leopold's Ghost*, 2 ('impassioned', 'evil', 'away'), 2 ('Shakespeare').

taph, Hochschild praised the reform movement as an upholder of a universalist and thus implicitly anti-racist perspective. The movement kept alive "a human capacity" for empathy that crossed geographic boundaries and those of "color", and upheld the belief that "basic freedoms […] are rights to which all human beings are entitled by birth", he argued. He believed that this tradition could be traced back to the French revolution, American slave revolts and the great abolitionist campaigns of the 18th and 19th century, and continued in the resistance that brought Nelson Mandel into power in South Africa and the work of modern organisations such as Amnesty International. During its time "on the world stage, the Congo reform movement was a vital link in that chain, and there is no tradition more honorable", he wrote in the last paragraph of his book.[34]

These grandiloquent words reveal that, for Hochschild, racism was reserved for the 'villains' of history. To declare racism to the exclusive ideological property of anti-Enlightenment reactionaries, slaveholders, proponents of Apartheid, or old and new Nazis and right-wing extremists, is a common misconception in popular, political and media discourses that dangerously underrates its political range and ideological versatility in the past and the present. However, a declaration of the Congo reform movement as a stronghold of 'colour-less' European morality and human empathy and its glorification as a contrast to the moral corrosion of New Imperialism was only sustainable through a wilful or at least negligent ignorance of the fact that racism and an imperial agenda actually provided an ideological common ground between the colonisers of the Congo and their critics in Great Britain and the United States.

Nothing makes this ignorance in Hochschild's case as obvious as the title of his study, which is drawn from Vachel Lindsay's poem 'The Congo', one of the most popular American verses in the early 20th century. The experimental sound poetry contains a lustful scene of vengeance in which the deceased Léopold got a taste of his own atrocious medicine. "Listen to the yell of Leopold's ghost / Burning in Hell for his hand-maimed host / Hear how the demons chuckle and yell / Cutting his hands off, down in Hell", one is advised. For Hochschild, the fact that the Belgian king was in a poem written in early 1914, only a few months after the closure of the reform campaign, no longer commemorated in "terms of the monuments and buildings he was so proud of but of severed hands" epitomised the discursive triumph of the Congo reform movement. Thus, it apparently seemed legitimate to inspire the title of his literary monument to this 'honourable' and 'heroic' human rights movement.[35]

This could have been a promising vantage point for a critical investigation into the racist underpinning of the reform discourse. After all, humanitarian satisfaction was only a small part of Lindsay's nine-page long poem. Designed as "A Study of the Negro Race", as the subtitle declared, it began with a section on the "basic savagery" of African-Americans. Once the scene changes to the Congo River banks, Léopold's loud 'yells' are heard clearly indeed. However, they were actually more than drowned out by what Lindsay called "the boom of the blood-lust song": strange and 'savage' performances of highly

34 Hochschild, *Leopold's Ghost*, 305 ('color', 'freedom'), 306 ('world stage').

35 Vachel Lindsay, "The Congo," in *The Congo and Other Poems*, 3–11 (New York: The Macmillan company, 1919), 5 ('yell'); Hochschild, *Leopold's Ghost*, 266 ('monuments'). The four lines are reproduced in ibid., 266–267.

stereotypical African characters such as warriors, witch doctors and cannibals that directly emerged from the colonial imagination. Vividly, the author warned his audience of the haunting character of this spectacle: "walk with care", he wrote, or "Mumbo-Jumbo will hoo-doo you"! The poem ends with a celebration of the on-going imperial intervention until the land is truly "transfigured", its inhabitants are "[r]edeemed" and the threatening 'Gods of the Congo' subdued.[36]

Upon a closer examination of Lindsay's poetry, Hochschild could have also realised that a direct path leads from this imagery to the ghosts of Conrad's racism. In a private letter published in the 'Opinions' section of *The Crisis* in 1915, Lindsay named manifold "implications, whispers, echoes" from the commodified spectacle of the late 19th-century discourse on race and colonialism that had helped him to write his famous piece. In particular, he recalled the lingering connotations that the term 'Congo' sparked in his mind. "'Congo, Congo, Congo, Congo, Congo, Congo' I said to myself. The word began to haunt. It echoed with the war drums and cannibal yells of Africa". The poet traced this haunting 'yelling' and 'drumming' directly back to two foundational texts of the European Congo myth. With his new piece, he had attempted to reproduce the "same weird thrill" recalled from browsing "through Stanley's 'Darkest Africa' when a boy", and he had "hoped to imply Joseph Conrad's fatalistic atmosphere in his story *Heart of Darkness*", including the "spiritual African fever he shows us there", Lindsay acknowledged.[37]

In fact, 'The Congo' not only reproduced the colonial imagery of Stanley and Conrad but also subscribed to the latter's shameful political message. By framing the short reference to mutilations in Léopold's Free State with widespread hints to an alleged African ferociousness, Lindsay's poem similarly suggested an African cultural responsibility for colonial violence, as Rachel Du Plessis had convincingly argued. Atrocities such as the "hand-cutting depredations by Leopold", Lindsay later wrote in a private letter, were "a case of Mumbo Jumbo Hoodoing Civilization": a capitulation of European morality in front of African 'savagery'.[38]

Contemporaries such as Joel E. Spingarn of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People and the poet Marianne Moore condemned this "Aryan doggerel" for its "strange" and segregationist image of African culture.[39] More recent critics have continued to emphasise that 'The Congo' was full of "white mythology", describes Black men in "racist types and tones" and promotes "messianic imperial-

36 Lindsay, "The Congo," subtitle ('Study'), 3 ('Basic'), 4 ('boom'), 8 ('walk', 'Mumbo-Jumbo'), 11 ('transfigured', 'redeemed').

37 Private letter of Lindsay, reproduced in 'A Poem on the Negro', *The Crisis*, 1915, 10, 1, 18–19, here 18.

38 Lindsay to Harriet Moore, quoted (and discussed) in Rachel B. DuPlessis, "'HOO, HOO, HOO'," *American Literature* 67, no. 4 (1995), 677.

39 Marianne Moore, "An Eagle in the Ring," in *The Complete Prose of Marianne Moore*, ed. Patricia C. Willis and Marianne Moore (New York: Viking Penguin, 1986), 89 ('Aryan') [a reproduced review essay from 1923]; Spingarn to Lindsay, 6 November 1916, reproduced in 'A Letter and an Answer', *The Crisis*, 1917, 13, 3, 113–114, here 114. Lindsay had complained to Spingarn that his poem had "been denounced by the colored people for reasons that I can not fathom"; Lindsay to Spingarn, 2 November 1916, reproduced in ibid., 114.

ism".[40] Nevertheless, this racist framing of humanitarian indignation symbolised by 'the yell of Leopold's ghost' was either overlooked or, more likely, deliberately ignored by Hochschild, who contented himself with a reproduction of the four above-quoted lines. Instead of following up on intruding questions about how much this poetry revealed about the ideological foundation and broader lines of argumentation in the reform movement, the potentially troubling parts in 'The Congo' were simply elided.

In this way, Hochschild could also deny how much Conrad's racism actually haunted this "extraordinary movement". In contrast to his short reception of Lindsay, he was well aware that *Heart of Darkness* "has come in for some justified pummeling in recent years because of its portrayal of black characters", as he called it. Nonetheless, he claimed that the political message of the novel could be separated from its racist imagery: "However laden it is with Victorian racism", *Heart of Darkness* remained "one of the most scathing indictments of imperialism in all literature".[41]

In this, the popular historian was in line with many writers who have vigorously defended Conrad against Achebe's allegations in recent decades. Among literary scientists and critics, the strong attack on one of England's great novelists – and those who had so long defended the canonical status of his best-known novel – initiated an exceptional fierce debate. There was (and still is) outspoken support for Achebe's charges, but there is also strong opposition. Cedric Watts, for instance, responded that the novel actually unfolds powerful "criticisms of racial prejudice", and debunks comforting "myths" of a superior civilisation instead of purveying them. The historian Henryk S. Zins similarly categorically asserted that charges of "alleged racism and antipathy towards blacks" simply "make no sense", if one considers the prevalent "sympathy and pity" towards the fate of the exploited Africans in the novel.[42] Many others have accepted that Conrad used derogatory stereotypes but attempted to excuse these as a rhetorical strategy of ironic, mimic or subversive criticism that therefore only "seems condescending".[43] Alternatively, they have defended the author, like Hochschild, as "a man of his time and place" who had simply not been "immune" to and had hence been "contaminated" by the racist zeitgeist. Either way, the "lasting political legacy" of the novel, as the poet Hunt Hawkins concluded, was "more than any confirmation of racism […] its alarm over atrocity".[44]

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40 Aldon L. Nielsen, *Reading Race* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1990), 32 ('white mythology'); Tyler Hoffman, "The Congo," in *Encyclopedia of American Poetry*, ed. Eric L. Haralson (New York: Routledge, 2001), 396 ('types and tones'); DuPlessis, "'HOO, HOO, HOO'", 674 ('messianic').

41 Hochschild, *Leopold's Ghost*, 146 ('pummeling'), 147 ('However').

42 Cedric Watts, "'A Bloody Racist'," *The Yearbook of English Studies* 13 (1983), 196 ('criticisms'), 197 ('myths'); Henryk S. Zins, *Joseph Conrad and Africa* (Nairobi: Kenya Literature Bureau, 1982), 122 ('alleged', 'no sense', 'sympathy').

43 Hawkins, "Joseph Conrad", 78 ('condescending'); also see Benita Parry, *Conrad and Imperialism* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 1983), 23; and Wilson Harris, "The Frontier on Which 'Heart of Darkness' Stands," *Research in African Literatures* 12, no. 1 (1981).

44 Hochschild, *Leopold's Ghost*, 146 ('time'); Charles P. Sarvan, "Racism and the Heart of Darkness," *The International Fiction Review* 7, no. 1 (1980), 9 ('immune'); Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o, *Writers in Politics* (London: Heinemann, 1981), 13 ('contaminated'); Hunt Hawkins, "Heart of Darkness and Racism," in *Heart of Darkness*, ed. Paul. B. Armstrong, 4th ed. (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2006), 375 ('legacy').

Hence, both Conrad's radical apologists and those with an intermediate position in the controversy seem to assume that the political message of *Heart of Darkness* and its setting in the Congo reform discourse stood in opposition to and attenuated charges of racism. Herewith, they failed to acknowledge how much Achebe's critique of this 'great piece of art' actually revealed about the racist foundation of this 'great human rights movement'. As much as it is wrong to assume that one could find the 'real Congo' in *Heart of Darkness*, it remains a crucial text for a critical investigation into the contemporary representation of Léopold's Free State and thus into the racist humanitarianism of the Congo reform movement. In his writing, Conrad sensed, handled and even anticipated central motifs and arguments that structured the public controversy about the Congo Scandal before and after his writing. In his creation of the Congo as a dark counterworld, its dehumanisation of Africans, its support of a 'just' imperialism or its reflection of European violence towards Africa, *Heart of Darkness* indeed was a work of visionary scope. Throughout its existence, the ghosts of Conrad's racism have haunted the Congo reform movement.

In Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* already loomed the horrifying prospect of a 'crisis of whiteness' that was the vantage point for the reform movement fully unfurling in the following years. The suggestion that Kurtz had 'gone native', and thus eventually capitulated in front of the wilderness the proud Europeans had come to 'civilise', hints at a fundamental difference between Conrad's narrative and that of Stanley. In Conrad's Congo, written just a few years after Stanley's latest travelogue 'Darkest Africa', the European "pioneers of trade and progress" were no longer heroic 'conquerors' and 'civilisers', neither in power of nor distinguishable from the Congolese 'darkness' and its inhabitants. [45] The 'horror' that Kurtz expressed before his death was not the violence of the colonisers, but the victory of the 'wilderness' and the corroding boundaries between 'civilisation' and 'savagery'. As such, these racist identities, as Doyle called it years later, began to lose all meaning and thus challenged the sustainability of European supremacy. As this study shows, the political legacy of *Heart of Darkness* was neither its racism nor its humanitarianism, but rather the combination of both in a campaign that achieved the support of the overwhelming majority of the imperial public and eventually became a mass movement in Great Britain and the United States.

State of research

Considering the lasting mark that the racist imagination of a prominent Congo reformer left on the Western literature and theory canon, the fact that the relevance of racism for this celebrated first great human rights movement of the 20th century has been disregarded for so long and at times outright denied is staggering. After all, as a recent history of the British reform movement has admitted, "[e]vidence of racism is not hard to find among even [its] most stalwart fighters".[46] With this acknowledgement, Dean Pavlakis laudably set himself apart from the ignorance that had long dominated

45 Conrad, "Outpost of Progress", 158.

46 Dean Pavlakis, *British Humanitarianism and the Congo Reform Movement, 1896–1913* (London: Routledge, 2016), 128.

historiographic research. Even otherwise substantive studies like Paul McStallworth's dissertation on *The United States and the Congo Question* and Jules Marchal's two-volume *E.D. Morel contre Léopold II*, arguably still the standard work for anyone interested in the reform movement, have generally maintained silence upon the apparently evident racism of the campaign.[47]

Unfortunately, Pavlakis avoids further analytical reflection on this entanglement of humanitarianism and racism. In his account, which is rich in detail and sources like only Marchal's volumes before him, only a few lines follow his notable statement. After an assurance that the "position on race" in the British reform association generally accepted "common humanity", although it was "paternalistic at best and at times condescending", the case is closed. In this regard, *British Humanitarianism and the Congo Reform Movement*, like Hochschild's *King Leopold's Ghost*, corresponds to the second central stream in the literature. When it is not merely ignored, the stridency of this humanitarian racism is relativised as less harmful than 'severe' forms of racist disdain or treated as a marginal phenomenon, as the following pages reveal.[48]

Fortunately, the new millennia and the years in which this study has been composed have also witnessed the rise of more (racism-)critical perspectives. Excellent research of the political scientist Kevin Dunn, the historian Kevin Grant and the literature scientists Susanne Gehrmann and Robert Burroughs, to name just four who have influenced this study in its formation phase, have revealed a new awareness of racism on the side of the Congo reformers.[49]

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47 See Paul McStallworth, "The United States and the Congo Question, 1884–1914" (PhD Thesis, Ohio State University, 1955); Jules Marchal, *E. D. Morel contre Léopold II* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 1996). For other major publications on the Congo reform movement without reference to racism on the side of the reformers, see F. Seymour Cocks, *E.D. Morel* (London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1920); Ruth M. Slade, *King Leopold's Congo* (London: Oxford University Press, 1962); Ascherson, *King Incorporated*; S[ylvanus] J. S. Cookey, *Britain and the Congo Question, 1885–1913* (London: Longmans, Green and Co, 1968); Daniel Vangroenweghe, *Du Sang sur les Lianes* (Bruxelles: Didier Hatier, 1986); Martin Ewans, *European Atrocity, African Catastrophe* (London: Routledge, 2002). The general literature on the Congo atrocities and the Congo reform movement is, more than a century after the closure of the latter, extensive, and it includes perspectives from, inter alia, colonial history, the history of human rights, social movement history, sociology, media-, literature-, communications- and postcolonial-studies, and numerous biographies. Valuable introductions into the historiography of the reform movement and the Congo atrocities can be found in Dean Pavlakis, "Historiography of Congo Reform," Research Network 'The Congo Free State Across Language, Culture, Media,' 2014, https://congofreestate.com/?p=161&lang=en; Aldwin Roes, "Towards a History of Mass Violence in the Etat Indépendant du Congo, 1885–1908," *South African Historical Journal* 62, no. 4 (2010).

48 Pavlakis, *British Humanitarianism*, 128.

49 See Dunn, *Imagining the Congo* [which reconstructs the changing transnational imaginations of the Congo throughout Western history]; Kevin Grant, *A Civilised Savagery* (New York: Routledge, 2005) [in which he puts a special focus on evangelical Congo reform activists]; Susanne Gehrmann, *Kongo-Greuel* (Hildesheim: Olms, 2003); Susanne Gehrmann, "Of Degenerated Heroes and Failed Romance: King Léopold's Congo in Popular European Literatures," *English Studies in Africa* 59, no. 1 (2016) [in which she examines the representation of the Congo (atrocities) in fictional European literature]; Robert M. Burroughs, *Travel Writing and Atrocities* (New York: Routledge, 2011) [in which he analyses the emerging eyewitness accounts from the Congo]. More recently, Burroughs has also conducted a long-overdue effort to revoke the "silencing" of African testimony in the reform movement and its historiography, Burroughs, *African Testimony*, 11 ('silencing').

However, already in the 1960s and 1970s, in a period when anti-colonial and anti-racist movements began to challenge not only the philosophical but also the institutional fundament of racism and colonialism, a number of authors had stumbled upon the derogatory views on Africans or Black men and women generally held by prominent reformers and their support for white supremacy and imperialism. While the impact of this critical awareness remained limited, such studies still defined several thematic clusters in which the aggregate of racism has been discussed in recent decades.

The historian Joseph O. Baylen, for instance, has addressed the exchange of letters between Morel and the United States Senator John T. Morgan, who was the parliamentarian spokesperson of the American Congo Reform Association. In the process, he emphasised Morgan's "unshakable belief in the superiority of the white race". Indeed, there was little ambiguity in the politics of the Democrat Morgan, who fought against Black suffrage and promoted racial segregation and imperial expansion. This alliance between Liberal humanitarians in Boston and Liverpool and a radical white supremacist from Alabama, who was one of the "white racist diehards" of his days, as even Hochschild admitted, appears certainly strange, at least at first glance. Nonetheless, it remained not much more than a curious side story within the general historiography of the Congo reform movement, if it was even acknowledged at all. For Hochschild, Morel's extensive correspondence with Morgan merely indicates that the leader of the British reformers "was willing to sup with the devil to help his cause"; hence, it even emphasises the reformers' humanitarian commitment.[50]

John E. Flint has pointedly reassessed the political ideas of Mary Kingsley. His conclusion that the famous West African explorer and ethnographic writer defended the legitimacy of European rule based on an alleged "essential inferiority" of Africans, whom she considered "not of the same species" as Europeans, was of great significance. Kingsley was not only the "strongest intellectual influence" in the life of Morel, as his biographer Catherine Cline has noted, but also the central inspiration for other reformers. However, for Cline, like many commentators, 'Kingsleyism' remained, ignorant of Flint's insights, the base of a "tolerant and respectful" cultural relativism. Although Paul B. Rich has more recently argued that the ideology of the British Congo reformers indeed reflected Kingsley's "polygenism", and authors like Kevin Grant and Nathan G. Alexander have emphasised the influence of her "racial essentialism", it is still held that an alleged attenuation of racist tendencies in the campaign "owed much" to Kingsley's influence.[51]

In his master's thesis on *The British Attitude toward the Congo Question*, the historian Myron Echenberg mentioned that the British Congo reformer Harry Johnston, a famous

50 Joseph O. Baylen, "Senator John Tyler Morgan, E.D. Morel, and the Congo Reform Association," *The Alabama Review* 15, no. 2 (1962): 118 ('unshakable'); Hochschild, *Leopold's Ghost*, 152 ('diehards'), 242 ('devil').

51 John E. Flint, "Mary Kingsley," *The Journal of African History* 4, no. 1 (1963): 100 ('species'), 102 ('essential'); Catherine Ann Cline, *E.D. Morel, 1873–1924* (Dundonald: Blackstaff Press, 1980), 16 ('strongest'), 126 ('tolerant'); Paul B. Rich, *Race and Empire in British Politics* (Cambridge University Press, 1986), 36 ('polygenism'); Grant, *Civilised Savagery*, 34 ('essentialism'); Nathan G. Alexander, "E.D. Morel (1873–1924), the Congo Reform Association, and the History of Human Rights," *Britain and the World* 9, no. 2 (2016): 213–35 Pavlakis, *British Humanitarianism*, 128 ('owed').

former African explorer and colonial administrator, dramatically warned that a continental or even global anti-'white' rebellion could be triggered by the Congo Scandal. This "conflagration"-thesis, he has suggested, might be one explanation for the success of the movement in "an essentially White Supremacist nation". A few years later, Bernard Porter's influential study *Critics of Empire* discussed Johnston's role in the reform movement, as well, and pointed to his belief that the land rights of an 'inferior race' and 'brutish savages' like the Congolese were necessarily limited. Unfortunately, Echenberg and Porter, like most of later research, underestimated the significance of these observations for a broader assessment of the reform movement. Such "inconsistencies" should "only slightly detract from what was a highly creditable moral campaign", the former recommended instead.[52]

Louis Harlan, Booker T. Washington's biographer, noted early on that the famous Black educator and social reformer, who was a vice-president of the American Congo Reform Association, had "thoroughly subscribed" to stereotypes on the "African savage" and to a legitimation of imperial rule as "the 'White Man's Burden'".[53] In recent years, a number of well-grounded works have taken up this intriguing angle. *Alabama in Africa*, for instance, not only discusses the involvement of Washington's Tuskegee Institute in the colonisation of West Africa but is also highly valuable for revealing the attraction of Tuskegee's program of industrial education and the segregationism of the New South for Congo reformers such as Morel and Park.[54]

John G. Turner, Ira Dworkin and Johnny Van Hove's research, which targeted Black Americans involved in the reform campaign, can be credited with pointing out the entanglement of divergent streams of racist discourse in the Congo controversy. While the "Black transnationalism" of Congo opponents such as Washington, the missionary William S. Sheppard or the minister and historian George W. Williams supported the colonisation of Africa and tended to subscribe to "various metaphors of darkness" in the representation of Africans, the "American racial dynamics" of the Jim Crow-era heavily affected the Black Congo reformers themselves.[55]

Moreover, the Belgian historian Jean Stengers, who together with his colleague W. Roger Louis has conducted significant research on the reform movement, not only revealed an early newspaper article written by Morel in 1897, in which he thoroughly

52 Myron Echenberg, "The British Attitude toward the Congo Question with Particular Reference to E.D. Morel and the CRA, 1903–1913" (MA-Thesis, McGill University, 1964), 206 ('conflagration', 'White Supremacist', 'inconsistencies', 'ulterior motive'); see Bernard Porter, *Critics of Empire* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2008 [1968]), 277–79.

53 Louis R. Harlan, "Booker T. Washington and the White Man's Burden," *The American Historical Review* 71, no. 2 (1966): 442.

54 See Andrew Zimmerman, *Alabama in Africa* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2012), 176–88 and 219–22.

55 Ira Dworkin, *Congo Love Song* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2017), 17 ('Black transnationalism'); Ira Dworkin, "On the Borders of Race, Mission, and State," in *Borderlands and Frontiers in Africa*, ed. Steven van Wolputte (Münster: Lit, 2013), 185 ('dynamics'); Van Hove, *Congoism*, 237 ('metaphors', 'darkness'), who, on the other hand, seems to underestimate the centrality of "the Congo-as-Savage" motif in Morel's text and thoughts, see ibid., 162. Also see John G. Turner, "A 'Black-White' Missionary on the Imperial Stage," *The Journal of Southern Religion* IX, (2006). http://jsr.fsu.edu/Volume9/Turner.htm.

defended the Free State against the emerging criticism, but has also exposed Morel's hatred of Léopold and Belgians in general, whom he described as almost "mythical figures".[56] More recently, Kevin Dunn and Jeff D. Bass have added their observation that reformers even tended to declare Belgians unworthy representatives of European 'civilisation', a charge that Pavlakis has attempted to counter with existing positive references.[57]

Robert Reinders has shed light on the often-ignored participation of Morel in the slur campaign against alleged instances of sexual violence committed by Black soldiers during the French occupation of the German Rhineland after World War I. In this context, the leading British Congo reformer produced texts that could have easily been penned by "an American racialist and had appeared in a Klan journal", Reinders argued.[58] Even Hochschild was willing to admit that the "belief that African men had a higher sexual drive than white men and could pose a danger to white women" was one of Morel's "quirks". However, although he sketched the political afterlife of his central protagonists at the end of the book, Hochschild does not mention Morel's involvement in the campaign against the 'horrors of the Rhine'. In the form of general absolution, Hochschild maintains that any such "blind spots" in Morel's ideas were easily outweighed by his accomplishments as the leader of the reform movement. "But whatever his faults", he concluded, "when it came to campaigning against injustice in the Congo, Morel had an unswerving, infectious sense of right and wrong".[59]

In fact, Reinders argued that the kind of 'racialism' he identified in Morel's Rhine polemics was not developed during his Congo activism. These conniving self-constrictions allowed authors such as A.J.P. Taylor and Cline, for instance, to claim that Morel's attitude as head of the reform movement can be conceptually separated from "embarrassing" earlier (as identified by Stengers) and later (as identified by Reinders) periods. In Cline's opinion, Morel's views "changed radically" to a "new-found respect for indigenous institution" due to the influence of Kingsleyism before they once more "became twisted in the European context into an ugly appeal to racial fears".[60] Iris Wigger, who has researched the racist conglomerate of the Black Scourge campaign, explicitly rejected Cline's thesis of two main ruptures in Morel's image of Africans. Rightfully, as this study shows, she has suggested that the stereotypes and discursive strategies that Morel deployed in the Congo and Rhine campaign were largely analogous.[61]

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56 Jean Stengers, "Morel and Belgium," in *E.D. Morel's History of the Congo Reform Movement*, ed. W. Roger Louis and Jean Stengers (Oxford: Clarendon, 1968), 242 ('mythical'). On Morel's article in the Pall Mall Gazette, see ibid., 238–9.

57 See Dunn, *Imagining the Congo*, 51–54; Jeff D. Bass, "Imperial Alterity and Identity Slippage," *Rhetoric & Public Affairs* 13, no. 2 (2010): 301; Pavlakis, *British Humanitarianism*, 182–83.

58 Robert C. Reinders, "Racialism on the Left," *International Review of Social History* 13, no. 1 (1968): 1.

59 Hochschild, *Leopold's Ghost*, 210 ('flaws', 'quirks'), 210–1 ('whatever'), 213 ('blind spots').

60 See Reinders, "Racialism on the Left", 2; A[lan] J.P. Taylor, *The Troublemakers* (London: Faber and Faber, 2008 [1957]), 177; Cline, *E.D. Morel*, 25 ('changed', 'new-found'), 126 ('twisted'), 128 ('embarrassing').

61 See Iris Wigger, *Die 'Schwarze Schmach am Rhein'* (Münster: Verlag Westfälisches Dampfboot, 2007), 40–43; similarly Robert M. Burroughs, "'Savage Times Come Again'," *English Studies in Africa* 59, no. 1 (2016): 40–51.

Moreover, in articles based on his PhD thesis, Kenneth D. Nworah has emphasised that the well-reputed Aborigines' Protection Society, which played a central role in the emergence of the British reform movement, "treated Africans with a spirit of patronizing condescension" and was "not a group of 'Little Englanders', but of imperialists". However, he has explicitly argued that the so-called 'Liverpool Sect' surrounding Morel and influenced by Kingsley constituted a "Third School" beyond the traditional missionary and philanthropic alliance and the "assertive racist school" of majority colonial discourse, which he celebrated as "the true colonial conscience" in the age of New Imperialism.[62]

The fiercest and most extensive debate was triggered by Achebe's criticism of racism in *Heart of Darkness*; however, it was mostly confined to literature theorists, critics and writers. Only a few authors like Susanne Gehrmann explicitly extended their focus to investigate the particular socio-political context in which the novel was created. Gehrmann understands *Heart of Darkness* as a "double *texte fondateur*". As such, it has heavily influenced other fictional configurations of the Congo atrocities, which equally relied upon "the racist and nationalist stereotyping embedded in colonial discourse". In addition, it has anticipated central arguments of non-fictional reform texts, she argued. T. Jack Thompson has similarly emphasised commonalities between Conrad's literature and the Casement-report, for instance. However, many researchers underestimated these cross-influences or maintained that activists such as Robert Park refused to add their "voice to the chorus of support for Joseph Conrad's imagery of Africa".[63]

Kevin Dunn, on the other hand, has asserted that the fierce battle over representation between the Congo Free State and the Congo reform movement left most contemporary stereotypes on Africans unaltered and that the colonial identity composed by Stanley and Conrad "remained authoritative". Burroughs has similarly noted that most of the eyewitness accounts quoted by reform activists such as Bourne and Morel intermingled "evidence of colonial misrule" with "lurid images of African's savagery and bloodlust". Moreover, the observation of Bass, whose postcolonial perspective on one of Morel's main books offers a valuable framework for a critical counter-reading of the reform discourse, that Morel was "not so much concerned with evoking reader pity for the plight of the Congolese as with inciting outrage over the subversion of imperialism by the Belgians' abandonment of their own imperial alterity", indicates that the crisis of white imperial identity Conrad evoked was reflected in non-fictional reform publications, as well. Jeanette E. Jones, on the other hand, while admitting that American Congo reformers subscribed to notions of 'savagery', still claims that Congo critiques served as "forums for […] challenging the myth of Darkest Africa".[64]

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62 Kenneth D. Nworah, "The Liverpool 'Sect' and British West African Policy, 1895–1915," *African Affairs* 70, no. 281 (1971): 349 ('treated', 'Third School', 'true conscience'), 350 ('assertive'); Kenneth D. Nworah, "The Aborigines' Protection Society, 1889–1909," *Canadian Journal of African Studies/Revue Canadienne des Etudes Africaines* 5, no. 1 (1971): 85 ('Little Englanders').

63 Gehrmann, *Kongo-Greuel*, 102 ('double', [translation F.L.]); Gehrmann, "Degenerated Heroes", 60 ('racist'); see T. J[ack] Thompson, *Light on Darkness?* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2012), 200; S[tanford] M. Lyman, *Militarism, Imperialism, and Racial Accommodation* (University of Arkansas Press, 1992), 69 ('voice').

64 Jeanette E. Jones, *In Search of Brightest Africa* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2011), 80.

Particularly in recent years, a number of authors have critically investigated the visual representation of the Congolese atrocities through photography as an "essential element" of the reform campaign. While these studies have revealed the power of the iconic photographs depicting, inter alia, maimed children, to arouse public sentiment, their hints that these images "emphasised the distance between the white viewer and the mutilated black body" as much as they created empathy and that their display in public demonstrations reduced the suffering of the Congolese to an "undifferentiated, exchangeable" object of a 'phantasmagoric' spectacle, highlight that any critical discussion of racism with the reform movement cannot be limited to its written statements.[65]

Finally, the success of the reform movement remains steeped in controversy. As early as 1953, the PhD thesis *The Idea of Economic Imperialism* pointed to the persistent oppression after the annexation of Léopold's private Congo Free State through Belgium in 1908, which was generally considered the largest political achievement of the campaign. After all, "none of the aims of the Congo Reform Association had been realised, neither free labor, free trade, nor recognition of native tribal and communal rights in the land", Robert Wuliger asserted. The Belgian colony that the reformers ultimately celebrated as liberation for the Congolese population remained "a tightly held, autocratically managed system", he argued.[66] Paul McStallworth noted more carefully that it was "debatable" whether the "ills of the Congo had ended" with the dissolution of the Congo Reform Association or were simply "dormant".[67] *King Leopold's Legacy* by Roger Anstey similarly concluded that "there was no major departure from the broad lines" of the Free State policy in the Belgian Congo.[68]

Louis and Stengers, on the other hand, pointed to a decline of the murderous rubber exploitation through the notorious concessionary companies as an indicator of the 'Triumph of the Congo Reform Movement'.[69] This evaluation is widely shared today, despite Robert Harms' insistence that 'The End of Red Rubber' was not the result of metropolitan activism but of extinguished wild caoutchouc reservoirs.[70] The Congolese historian Georges Nzongola-Ntalaja, however, rejected all myths of a Belgian 'model colony', which were still perpetuated in the Universal Exhibition of 1958 in Brussels, for instance, as "imperialist propaganda". Even after the annexation through the Belgian

65 Christina Twomey, "Severed Hands," in *Picturing Atrocity*, ed. Geoffrey Batchen and Jay Prosser (London: Reaktion Books, 2012), 39 ('essential'); Christina Twomey, "Framing Atrocity," *History of Photography* 36, no. 3 (2012): 261 ('emphasised'); Sharon Sliwinski, "The Childhood of Human Rights," *Journal of Visual Culture* 5, no. 3 (2006): 353 ('undifferentiated').

66 Robert Wuliger, "The Idea of Economic Imperialism" (PhD Thesis, University of London, 1953), 287.

67 McStallworth, *United States and the Congo*, 335.

68 Roger Anstey, *King Leopold's Legacy* (London: Oxford University Press, 1966), 261.

69 See W. R[oger] Louis, "E.D. Morel and the Triumph of the Congo Reform Movement, 1905–1908," *Boston University Papers on Africa* 2 (1966); Jean Stengers, "The Congo Free State and the Belgian Congo before 1914," in *Colonialism in Africa 1870–1960*, ed. Lewis H. Gann and Peter Duignan (London: Cambridge University Press, 1969), Vol. 1, 261–92, here 270–71; Robert Harms, "The End of Red Rubber," *The Journal of African History* 16, no. 1 (1975), 77.

70 See Louis, "E. D. Morel"; Stengers, "Congo Free State", 270–71; Harms, "End of Red Rubber", 77.

state, he emphasised, the Congo was marked by "a system of economic exploitation, political repression and cultural oppression".[71]

With regard to this controversy, authors such as Hochschild and Pavlakis have added a question mark to their chapters on the "Victory" of the reform movement, at least. The latter nonetheless rejected more fundamental objections and argued that the reformers were "neither liars nor hypocrites when they proclaimed that the reform movement had largely succeeded in 1913". Because free trade flourished only for a few years and forced labour soon regained importance, it might be called a "flawed triumph or a partial success", Pavlakis admitted. In acknowledgement of the continuity of brutal forced labour and severe punishments such as flogging under Belgian rule, towards the end of his eulogy, Hochschild was inclined to see the lasting impact of the reform movement less in its material improvements for the Congolese than in its symbolic relevance as representative of an 'honourable' human rights tradition that upheld "the example of men and women who fought against enormous odds for their freedom".[72]

Such an argument is hardly convincing. While the Congolese population 'fought against enormous odds for their freedom' ever since the European plan to establish a permanent occupation became apparent, the Congo reformers have at no point in their long-lasting activism politically (not to mention practically) supported this anti-colonial struggle. Instead, it was the overwhelming consensus among American and British Congo reformers that the imperial rule of Africa was legitimate and should be sustained. Inevitably, any endorsement of the 'altruistic' Congo reform movement had to engage with the imperial attitude of its protagonists in one way or another. To avoid the moral dilemma of openly endorsing imperialism, some authors deny the imperialist foundation of the reform movement. Against all evidence, it is claimed, for instance, that the reformers shaped "an anti-imperialist mindset", that Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* was an "anti-colonial and anti-imperial" novel, or that Morel was the "great organizer" and "chief" of an 'anti-imperialist' movement.[73]

Those who have not been willing to engage in such misrepresentation have often ignored this aspect, and on other occasions have engaged in rather inept and problematic excuses. Hochschild, for instance, admits that Conrad was "an ardent imperialist where England was concerned" and that Morel similarly saw "nothing inherently wrong with colonialism" as long as it was "fair and just". While this was certainly one of its political "limitations", it was also a reason for the "success" of the reform movement, he argued. Had they challenged the legitimacy of imperialism as such, the reformers could have never achieved such broad public support for their campaign against the Free State atrocities. That the reformers' support of the European occupation of Africa

71 Georges Nzongola-Ntalaja, *The Congo from Leopold to Kabila* (London: Zed Books, 2002), 26 ('oppression'), 27 ('propaganda').

72 Pavlakis, *British Humanitarianism*, 1 ('Victory'), 245 ('liars'); Hochschild, *Leopold's Ghost*, 275 ('Victory'), 306 ('example').

73 Henryk S. Zins, "Joseph Conrad and British Critics of Colonialism," *Pula: Botswana Journal of African Studies* 1, 1&2 (1998): 58 ('anti-colonial'); Lewis S. Feuer, *Imperialism and the Anti-Imperialist Mind* (New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, 1989), 151 ('great organizer'), 153 ('chief'); Anne Meisenzahl and Roger Peace, "Bellwether Fiction," *JAISA - The Journal for the Association of the Interdisciplinary Study of the Arts* 10, Special Issue. Gender, Sexuality, and Marginality (2010): 55 ('mindset').

profoundly contradicted his conclusion that the 'honourable' tradition of the reform movement promoted 'freedom' or "the idea of full human rights, political, social, and economic" was ignored.[74]

Nzongola-Ntalaja had already emphasised this weak point. Since the Congo reformers "did not call into question the colonial and imperialist base of exploitation", the Congolese historian responded to Hochschild, they could hardly count as radical and progressive human rights activists, since they still treated only symptoms, not causes. "Their triumph, the transformation of the Congo from Leopold's personal possession to a Belgian colony in 1908", the Congolese historian concluded, "did not represent a major advance for the Congolese people and their quest for freedom and self-determination".[75]

More recently, Nathan Alexander has rejected the label of a 'human rights movement' for the Congo reform campaign as "anachronistic and misleading" since the reformers did not possess "a coherent and comprehensive ideology of human rights". Despite his awareness for the racist and colonial mentality of Morel, for instance, Alexander still avoided a more fundamental reassessment, though. The Congo Reform Association's "work is no less laudable for not being a human rights organisation", he assured his readers.[76]

For Pavlakis, criticising the reform movement for its support of colonialism was "an inappropriate standard". If most "Congo reformers found colonialism acceptable and even desirable as long it was administered well", the persistence of colonialism could not be seen as a failure.[77] Hence, while the agenda of the reform movement was colonial, it was still radical since it believed in the right of a humanitarian intervention similar to modern notions of a 'responsibility to protect', he suggested. Moreover, even though Belgian Congo "was one of the more oppressive colonies in Africa", he concluded on the last page of his study, this "was nonetheless an improvement" compared to the horrors of the red rubber regime.[78]

In all, the above pages affirm that an in-depth analysis of the role of racism in the movement is both necessary and, by all accounts, worthwhile. Hints at the white supremacist agenda of John T. Morgan, Harry Johnston's conflagration thesis, Mary Kingsley's polygenism, the ambivalent position of African-American Congo reformers, anti-Belgian rhetoric, Morel's Rhine campaign, the paternalism of the Aborigines' Protection Society, the objectifying effect of atrocity photographs and racism in *Heart of Darkness* have been valuable vantage points for the study at hand. However, as has been shown above, these observations have been often ignored, their validity has been outright denied, and their relevance has been belittled. At times, the researchers who stumble over evident racism in this broadly glorified humanitarian campaign seem to be afraid of their courage, and quickly but often implausibly agree that their observations

74 Hochschild, *Leopold's Ghost*, 146 ('ardent'), 210 ('wrong', 'fair'), 212 ('limitations', 'success'), 306 ('full human rights').
75 Nzongola-Ntalaja, *The Congo*, 26.
76 Alexander, "E.D. Morel", 214 ('anachronistic', 'coherent'), 235 ('laudable').
77 Pavlakis, *British Humanitarianism*, 258.
78 Ibid., 259.

can only represent a curious exemption. Moreover, even those who explicitly reject such elusive conclusions often only cursorily discuss the subject.

A systematic, comprehensive analysis of the subject of racism and the Congo reform movement, the different shapes, dimensions, ambivalences and variances of this racism, its relevance for the overall discourse and policy of the campaign, and its relation to its humanitarian programme and commitment to human rights, which my historic-sociological study attempts to offer, remains lacking. I based this analysis on the hypothesis that racism is neither marginal nor negligible for this pioneering human rights movement, but one of its central ideological cornerstones.

The results of this project might also lead to a revaluation of the 'success' and 'triumph' of the reform movement. To determine the transition from one form of colonial oppression to a 'less oppressive' form of colonial oppression as the epochal success of the first great human rights campaign of the 20th century is unsatisfactory, at least. If one accepts that all forms of colonialism are intrinsically racist and based on violence, one should also conclude that the Congo reform movement was a racist campaign that promoted and possibly prolonged the violent subjugation of the Congolese and Africans in general. Without this consequence, one remains implicitly open to increasingly popular revisionist interpretations of colonial history which claim, as Peter Firchow did in his defence of *Heart of Darkness*, "that imperialism was not a universal bogeyman but could be both good or bad, depending on what nation was practicing it".[79]

In consideration of the on-going appraisal and at times open glorification of the reform movement, a critique of its imperial and racist ideology seems to be desperately needed, particularly if one accepts the widespread suggestion that this campaign served as a prelude to the modern human rights discourse in civil society or the United Nations. After all, contemporary critics continue to point to the persistence of the "colonial trappings and 'First World' hegemonic underpinnings" of human rights[80] and condemn political norms such as the 'responsibility to protect' as an instrument of neo-colonialism.[81] Regarding these challenges to the effectiveness and normativity of human rights, a full appreciation and critical evaluation of the racist and colonial foundation of this pioneering movement from the 'childhood of human rights' seems inevitable.[82]

Racism – and its crisis

The controversial discussion summarised above to a certain extent reflects the conceptual vagueness and analytical restrictiveness of racism's scientific designations. Theoretical definitions of racism have been formulated from a broad spectrum of methodological and epistemological approaches and "remain manifold" until today. They include characterisations as 'ideology' or 'prejudice', its location in 'structure' or 'institu-

79 Peter E. Firchow, *Envisioning Africa* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2015), 17 ('bogeyman').

80 Ratna Kapur, "Human Rights in the 21st Century," *Sydney Law Review* 28, no. 4 (2006): 684 ('trappings').

81 See Fidèle Ingiyimbere, *Domesticating Human Rights* (Cham: Springer International Publishing, 2017), 97–114.

82 Sliwinski, "Childhood of Human Rights".

tion', or its understanding as 'ill-will' or 'construction'.[83] Moreover, while it is generally assumed that the modern formation of racism is closely related to the experience of colonisation, slavery and imperialism, analysts have identified racism as far back as Classical Antiquity and emphasised that it is "not limited" to the European relation with non-Europeans.[84]

At the same time, racism-theory has never fully emancipated itself from the reductionist association with the race-concept that once gave the former its name. In the aftermath of the Nazi terror and the shocking revelation of the concentration camps, the belief that people can be divided along the lines of natural 'races' was increasingly politically delegitimised and eventually scientifically refuted. However, while there is broad consensus by now that 'race' is a "social construct" and an 'invention', hence neither mere fiction nor a natural but a 'social fact', authors have continued to define racism as "discrimination based on essentialist categories of race".[85]

Such a restricted understanding has inevitably faced difficulties with accounting for the quick and easy predominance of a 'racism without races' after the delegitimation of the latter, as it was expressed in the anti-immigrant discourse emerging in last two decades of the 20th century, or anti-Muslim- and 'colour-blind'-racism of the 'New Right' until today.[86] Proclamations of a 'new' racism, defined as 'symbolic' and distinctively 'cultural' and 'differentialist', have attempted to transcend these conceptual limitations and still heavily influence the analysis of present racist formations.[87] However, these conceptions ignored not only, as Étienne Balibar had warned, that the "idea of hierarchy" remains a central feature of all so-called neo-racism focused on 'difference' but also that a 'culturalist' racism "has always existed", even before the emergence of the "pseudo-biological concept of race".[88] As this study confirms, even in the heyday of scientific racism and imperialism in the late 19th and early 20th century, racism was always also a form of cultural and 'differentialist' discrimination.

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83 See Wulf D. Hund, *Rassismus* (Bielefeld: Transcript, 2007), 27–28; Anja Weiß, "Racist Symbolic Capital," in *Wages of Whiteness & Racist Symbolic Capital*, ed. Wulf D. Hund, Jeremy Krikler and David Roediger (Berlin: Lit, 2010), 38 38 ('manifold').

84 See Benjamin Isaac, *The Invention of Racism in Classical Antiquity* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004); Theodore W. Allen, *The Invention of the White Race*, 2nd ed. (London: Verso, 2012 [1994]), Vol. 1, 29 ('limited').

85 Michael Banton, *Racial Theories*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 196 ('social construct'); Allen, *Invention of the White Race*; Eduardo Bonilla-Silva, "The Essential Social Fact of Race," *American Sociological Review* 64, no. 6 (1999); Michael Omi and Howard Winant, *Racial Formation in the United States* (New York: Routledge, 1994), 71 ('essentialist'); similarly see David T. Goldberg, *Racist Culture* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1993), 122.

86 On 'racism without races'; see Étienne Balibar, "Is There a 'Neo-Racism'?," in *Race, Nation, Class*, ed. Étienne Balibar and Immanuel M. Wallerstein (London: Verso, 1991), particularly 23–28; on the low significance of race in German anti-Muslim discourses, see Yasemin Shooman, '*… Weil Ihre Kultur So Ist*' (Bielefeld: Transcript, 2014), particularly 80–81; on the colour-blind 'new right', see Amy E. Ansell, *New Right, New Racism* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1997), 106–8.

87 Martin Barker, *The New Racism* (London: Junction, 1982); David Sears, "Symbolic Racism," in *Eliminating Racism*, ed. Phyllis A. Katz and Dalmas A. Taylor (New York: Plenum, 1988); Pierre-André Taguieff, "The New Cultural Racism in France," *Telos* 83, Spring (1990): 109–22, where he also developed the notion of a 'differentialist racism'.

88 Balibar, "Is There a 'Neo-Racism'?," 23 ('always', 'pseudo-biological'), 24 ('idea').

Moreover, if racism is older than the concept of race, the latter – like other racist ascriptions – cannot be considered the foundation but only a "product" of the former. This conclusion also implies that racism does not describe a 'natural relation', as the essentialising sociology of 'race relations' suggested, nor is it "directed against someone of a different race", as the Oxford Dictionary claims even today. Neither can it be explained as a 'fear caused by strangers' and hence a "subtype of xenophobia", as sociology students are made to believe.[89]

On the contrary, racism describes the very creation of this alleged 'otherness' or 'difference', thus "the social construction of natural disparity". Racism is, consequently, a distinctively "social relation", created by and established between human beings. A sociological approach to racism should, it has been argued, be able to account for the different dimensions of the social – "structural, performative, material, ideological, and historical" and their interrelation, beyond dichotomies of 'interaction/macrosocial' or 'base/superstructure'.[90] Based on Pierre Bourdieu's reflections on masculine domination, the sociologist Anja Weiß has in this regard identified the interplay between "classifications" ('prejudice' or stereotypes), "institutions" (discourse, power) and "practices" (group formation) as three integral dimensions of the social relation of racism.[91]

"Historically, and systematically", racist classification had led to diverse forms of stereotypes, generally expressed in dichotomous opposites that have divided people as "either human or monstrous, cultivated or barbaric, valuable or worthless, pure or impure, chosen or cursed, civilised or savage, white or coloured". Although these binary oppositions describe different forms and epochs of racism, they are strictly distinguishable as ideal types only.[92] Indeed, the 19th-century 'myth of the dark continent' that so powerfully resounded in Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* and structured writing about Africa throughout the Congo reform movement serves as a prime example of a transcontinental and cross-temporal transformation and recreation of racist ascriptions that were combined, reinterpreted and adapted to new social and material conditions.

Adorno and Horkheimer once described 'myths' as allegedly common-sense belief systems, taken for granted explanations that obtain a grade of indisputable "natural" truths and a "[f]alse clarity". In this sense, the literary works of the pioneers of African 'exploration' like David Livingstone, Richard Burton, John Speke or Henry M. Stanley,

89 John Solomos, "Making Sense of Racism," in *Konjunkturen des Rassismus*, ed. Alex Demirović and Manuela Bojadžijev (Münster: Westfälisches Dampfboot, 2002), 160 ('product' [translation F.L.]); The Oxford English Dictionary, "Racism," https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/racism ('antagonism'); Georg Ritzer, *Introduction to Sociology* (Los Angeles: Sage Publications, 2013), 344 ('subtype'). On the race ontology of Robert E. Park, one of the pioneers of the study 'race relations', see my own essay Felix Lösing, "From the Congo to Chicago," in *Racism and Sociology*, ed. Wulf D. Hund and Alana Lentin (Wien: Lit, 2014), particularly 115–20.

90 Hund, *Rassismus*, subtitle ('disparity' [translation F.L.]); Wulf D. Hund, "Negative Societalisation," in *Wages of Whiteness & Racist Symbolic Capital*, ed. Wulf D. Hund, Jeremy Krikler and David Roediger (Berlin: Lit, 2010), 59 ('social relation', 'structural'). Also see Hund, *Rassismus*, 27–28 and Weiß, "Racist Symbolic Capital", 38.

91 Ibid., 50 ('classifications', etc.), also see 43–45.

92 Wulf D. Hund, "'It Must Come from Europe'," in *Racisms Made in Germany*, ed. Wulf D. Hund, Christian Koller and Moshe Zimmermann (Berlin: Lit, 2011), 71 ('Historically', 'monstrous'); Hund, "Negative Societalisation", 59.

which approached the interior of Central Africa starting in the mid-19th century, were indeed "large-scale operations in myth-making". Travel and exploration literature from the 1850s until the 1870s was generally enriched with fantastic and often fantasised descriptions of hostile tropical forests, drawings of wild animals and spectacular accounts of dramatic encounters with furious Africans and cruel 'Arabs'. Through these reports, larger spheres of the European metropoles were for the first time confronted with an image of Africa as a dark and dangerous space full of mystery and misery. As Patrick Brantlinger has argued, "Africa grew dark" exactly when explorers, missionaries and scientists "flooded it with light".[93]

In doing so, these writers firmly relied upon a well-established archive of knowledge from the long history of European racism. The travel reports that reached Europe in the second half of the 19th century integrated, as an analysis of Stanley's Congo writing later in this study shows, ancient 'wild' and 'monstrous' creatures and 'barbarians' that Europeans had imagined existing on the fringe of the known world since antiquity, patterns from medieval demonological and religious racism about 'heathens' and 'sinners',[94] and combined them with the ambivalent typecasts circling in the "Imaginative Geography" of Orientalist discourses.[95] Most significant, however, was the adaption of the 'savage' and the 'race' stereotype.

Initially developed in the course of westward colonial expansion starting in the 15th century and based on memories of Europe's own "domestic" 'wild men', the concept of the "extra-European" 'savage' was long exclusively applied to Native Americans. It was only in the course of the 17th and 18th centuries that it slowly transferred to Africa.[96] The antagonism between 'civilised' and 'savages' is as "complex" as it is "ambivalent". In its temporal dimension, it asserts an asynchronous status of historical time and cultural development, which declares the latter to be the "contemporary ancestors" of the former. "Thus in the beginning all the World was America", John Locke famously wrote in 1728, claiming that America's original inhabitants still dwelled in a 'state of nature' that was not simply 'backward' but 'pre-history'. Only Europeans, it is held, 'progressed' through a sequence of stadia of human development to a higher standard and finally achieved 'civilised' perfection.[97]

Different aggregations of the 'savage' stereotype allowed specific gazes from the 'civilised', however. The 'nobility' of the savage allowed the projection of desires for a non-alienated life and a form of utopian social criticism. His alleged 'laziness', on the other hand, asserted a lack of 'civilising' effort that incurred the wrath of Europeans

93 Theodor W. Adorno and Max Horkheimer, *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, new ed. (London: Verso, 1997 [1972]), xiv ('clarity'), 24 ('natural'); Jan Nederveen Pieterse, *White on Black*, Repr. ed. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998), 64 ('large-scale'); Brantlinger, *Rule of Darkness*, 173 ('grew', 'flooded').

94 For the relevance of these racist stereotypes from antiquity to the Middle Ages, see Hund, *Rassismus*, 36–60; for the following,

95 Edward Said: Orientalism, 49 ('Imaginative')

96 Charles W. Mills, *The Racial Contract* (Ithaca: Cornel University Press, 1997), 43 ('domestic', 'extra-European'); also see Nederveen Pieterse, *White on Black*, 36–39.

97 Gustav Jahoda, *Images of Savages* (London: Routledge, 1999), 134 ('ancestors'); John Locke, *Two Treatises of Government*, 5th ed. (London: A. Bettesworth, J. Pemberton, and E. Symon, 1728), 175 ('America'); Hund, *Rassismus*, 61 ('complex', 'ambivalent' [translation F.L.]). For the whole paragraph, also see ibid., 61–64.

frustrated about their own deprivation.[98] In its eastward transfer, the 'savage' would lose much of its former ambivalences, however. While it became a central motif in African travel writing produced between the 1850s and the 1870s, the emerging phantasmagorias of cannibalism, human sacrifice and polygamy emphasised almost exclusively the negative and 'dark' character of savagery. The 'African savage' was also understood as a 'child'; however, when the stereotype eventually became "common currency" in European discourses on Africa, his 'ignobility' became the dominant feature.[99]

The division between 'white and coloured', on the other hand, was a natural determinism that assumed that humans had different biologically defined moral and cultural capacities and had been marked by nature accordingly.[100] A racist social formation that had imagined 'white over black' and the first "color-coded" and "pseudoanthropological" uses of the formerly class-connoting race-category had already emerged over the course of the 17th century. However, the construction of race as a scientifically acceptable category to divide humanity was the intellectual endeavour of the European Enlightenment.[101] Naturalists such as Comte du Buffon and philosophers such as Lord Kames (Henry Home) or Immanuel Kant, some of the most pivotal thinkers of the modern era, theoretically developed race-schemata that were often bound to continents and marked by skin colour. In this regard, the claim that people were "white in Europe, black in Africa, yellow in Asia, and red in America" became probably the most widely accepted but never exclusive colour-pattern.[102] Despite the failure of scholars such as Pieter Camper and Johann Friedrich Blumenbach to prove these schemata empirically through investigations of skulls or bones, the race-concept was soon stipulated in academic, political and cultural elite discourses in Europe and the United States. By the early 19th century "the word 'race' [was] on every lip", it has been maintained.[103]

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98 See ibid., 64–65. For birth of the 'noble savage' in European thought, see Ter Ellingson, *The Myth of the Noble Savage* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001), particularly 11–98. For the creation of its 'ignoble' counterpart through social scientists and philosophers in the 18th century, see Roland L. Meek, *Social Science and the Ignoble Savage* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010 [1976]).

99 Nederveen Pieterse, *White on Black*, 34 ('currency'). On the differences in the imagination of 'savage Americans' and 'savage Africans', also see Jahoda, *Images of Savages*, 15–35.

100 See Hund, *Rassismus*, 122.

101 Gary Taylor, *Buying Whiteness* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), 257 ('color-coded'), 308 ('pseudoanthropological'). Hund has distinguished the stages of "imagination, construction and constitution" in regard to the historical development of the race concept and modern racism: Hund, "Negative Societalisation", 60. The first stage comprised the experience of colonialism and transatlantic slavery in the 17th century; see ibid. 64. Winthrop D. Jordan, *White over Black*, 2nd ed. (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2012 [1968]), particularly 44–98.

102 Henry Home, Lord Kames, *Sketches of the History of Man*, 3rd ed., 2 vols. (Dublin: James Williams, 1779), Vol. 1, 14 ('white'). Kames adopts this nomenclature here from Buffon, who in turn heavily influenced Kant's colour schemata. On the contribution of the Scottish moral philosophers to the construction of race, see Hund, "Negative Societalisation", 57–70; on Kant's race theory, see Hund, "'It must come from Europe'", 78–81 and Charles W. Mills, "Kant's Untermenschen," in *Race and Racism in Modern Philosophy*, ed. Andrew Valls (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2005), 172–83.

103 Léon Poliakov, "Racism in Europe," in *Caste and Race*, ed. Anthony V. S. de Reuck and Julie Knight (London: J. & A. Churchill, 1967), 229 ('lip'). On this phase of the scientific development of the idea

The view persists, as already Hannah Arendt has claimed, that these early uses of 'race' did "not necessarily imply ranking" or advocate "unequal treatment", and thus, as mere "racialism", must be distinguished from racism.[104] However, despite controversies about denomination, quantity and distinctive physical marks, or the sharp disputes between monogenists and polygenists, race was in all concurring typologies and facets a "hierarchising term", in which the 'white' or 'Caucasian' or 'Aryan' reigned over 'inferior' and primitive 'coloured races'. In this way, the emerging race nomenclatures were synchronised with and retroactively legitimated the violent relation of colonisation and slavery. Moreover, they integrated older culturalist stereotypes and theories of progress to claim that only the 'white race' was capable of full historical development.[105]

When G.W.F. Hegel declared in 1830, still before the 'unlocking' of Central Africa, that the "Negro represents natural man in all his wild and untamed nature", notions of 'savagery' and 'race' were fully entangled. From its philosophical origins, the 'race'-concept soon "became paradigmatic in anthropology and spread in the sciences and humanities".[106] The era-defining American (armed, political and cultural) battle over slavery, emancipation and reconstruction in the 1860s and 1870s, just as much as the emergence of (Social) Darwinism with its 'naturalisation' of political and academic discourses, greatly accelerated the triumph of 'race' in the second half of the 19th century. Hence, in the age of the great Central African 'explorations', 'race' had reached the phase of its constitution.[107]

Soon, as this study shows, classifications of Africans as 'savages' were increasingly supplemented, although never fully replaced, in travel writing by their interpellation as 'negroid' or 'black'. However, neither the 'savages' nor the 'negroes' lived, as Hannah Arendt seemed to believe, in Central Africa. On the contrary, the European already brought these concepts with them on their treks and caravans as part of their ideological baggage, which was formed by discriminatory practices over several centuries and systemised by key thinkers of the Enlightenment and subsequent scientists.

The activation of these stereotypes for a widely accepted classification of Africans through 'explorers', missionaries and other travellers was constitutive of the 'darkening' of Africa in the 19th century. This complex racist manoeuvre included the deculturalisation and dehistoricisation of African space, hence the active forgetting of what Europeans knew about its rich culture and past, and the defamiliarisation, inferiori-

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of race, also see Ivan Hannaford, *Race* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996), 187–234 and Nederveen Pieterse, *White on Black*, 45–48.

104 Brian Alleyne, "'Race' and Racism," in *Encyclopedia of Social Theory*, ed. Austin Harrington et al. (Abingdon: Routledge, 2006), 490.

105 Hund, "Negative Societalisation", 65 ('hierarchising'); also see Hund, *Rassismus*, 68–74; Hund, "'It must come from Europe'", 71–90.

106 Georg W. F. Hegel, quoted in Nederveen Pieterse, *White on Black*, 34 ('untamed'); Hund, "Negative Societalisation", 59 ('paradigmatic'), 60 ('constitution').

107 For the American debates about slavery and race, see George M. Fredrickson, *The Black Image in the White Mind* (Middletown: Wesleyan University Press, 1987), 1–165; on Social Darwinism and race, see Hannaford, *Race*, 273.

sation and naturalisation of its inhabitants until Africans were recreated as subhuman beings.[108]

By the time the Congo reform movement appeared on the world stage, this mystification had coagulated into a truly commonplace myth about the 'savagery' of Africa. Eventually, this myth-making process implemented what Theodore Allen has described as the "hallmark" of racist oppression: "all members of the oppressed group" became "reduced to one undifferentiated social status, a status beneath that of any member of any social class". As such, they were solely defined as representatives of allocated racist group identities, were denied the social differentiation of the dominant group and overtaken by a "social death".[109]

Racism thus established a social relation in which the degradation of the oppressed allowed the upgrading of the oppressors. In fundamental contrast to those stigmatised and debased as 'savage' or 'negro', the powerful identities of the 'civilised' or 'whites' emerged. Following Benedict Anderson's definition of the nation as a socially constructed and "imagined" community, collectives such as 'civilisation' and 'whiteness' have been characterised as *racist* "imagined communities" that allow people who never meet each other to recognise themselves as part of a superior group.[110]

Racism in general, and the 'myth of the dark continent' in particular, were never merely representational and discursive, nor an insulting fantasy about 'the other', however. These soon transformed into what has been described as 'political racism' and became ideologically structured into "projects and programmes" and state practice. The myths produced by explorers and missionaries were converted into influential legitimation discourses and institutionalised in the imperial formations of New Imperialism.[111]

That racism forms a "consubstantial" and "intrinsic" part of imperialism and colonialism is widely accepted. However, to categorically assume that "ideology did not precede racist practices" but "emerge and reproduce to justify practices of oppression" is not always historically evident. In the case of the 'scramble for Africa', ideological legitimation preceded its material realisation. After all, when 'explorers' and missionaries approached the interior of Central Africa between the 1850s and the 1870s, the European presence on the continent was still limited to the coastlines or offshore islands.[112]

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108 Hund, *Rassismus*, has described dehumanisation (83), defamilarisation (83–88), inferiorisation (96–99) and the deculturalisation of colonial space (106) as central 'methods' of racism.

109 Allen, *Invention of the White Race*, Vol. 1, 32 ('social death', 'hallmark'). Allen writes of 'racial oppression'. Nonetheless, as Hund has argued, the social death is a decisive characteristic of all racist discrimination (Hund, *Rassismus*, 31). Both Allen and Hund build their notion on Orlando Patterson, *Slavery and Social Death* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1982).

110 Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, Rev. ed. (London: Verso, 2006 [1983]), 6 ('imagined'); Hund, "Negative Societalisation", 59 ('communities').

111 Michel Wieviorka, *The Arena of Racism* (London: Sage, 1995), 40 ('political racism', 'projects', 'acts').

112 Jan Nederveen Pieterse, *Empire & Emancipation* (London: Pluto, 1990), 223 ('intrinsic'); Albert Memmi, *The Colonizer and the Colonized* (London: Earthscan, 2010), 118 ('consubstantial'); David Camfield, "Elements of a Historical-Materialist Theory of Racism," *Historical Materialism* 24, no. 1 (2016): 43 ('ideology'); Fabian Georgi, "The Role of Racism in the European 'Migration Crisis'," in *Racism after Apartheid*, ed. Vishwas Satgar (Johannesburg: Wits University Press, 2001), 101 ('emerge').

From the start, these groups' writings opened up an imperial perspective, though. Identifications of raw material deposits indicated the profits of unlocking the undeveloped Central African markets, while geographic surveys and ethnographic observations facilitated future imperial infiltrations and the organisation of colonial governance. Furthermore, the evangelical and humanitarian zeal that pioneering missionaries and 'explorers' integrated into their writings and the anti-slavery agenda they promoted was pivotal for the emergence and popularisation of the so-called 'civilising mission' narrative. In this, a wretched African awaits its salvation both from Arab slavery and from his own moral 'darkness' through the introduction of 'Commerce and Christianity', a popular slogan among imperialists in the second half of the 19th century. In public discourse, "humanitarian aims" and "imperial encroachment" became from then on closely interlinked.[113]

The civilising mission narrative was conceptually bound to what has been called the tradition of "humanitarian racism". Induced by Enlightenment thinkers who upheld the unity of humankind as one species, this racist strand announced that the 'savages' and 'primitive races' were in principle able to be 'civilised' or 'up-lifted'. At the same time, the 'bloodlust' of the savages and the social Darwinist "mantra" that 'primitive races' were doomed to 'vanish' on their own emphasised that this 'civilising' programme could only be accomplished under foreign 'tutelage': the choice was submission and assimilation or extermination.[114]

Any attempts to trivialise this 'humanitarian' racism as less harmful than its 'exclusionary' forms necessarily belittle not least the essential role that the former played in the legitimation of murderous invasions of the Americas, Africa and Asia.[115] Through the initiation of a colonial 'civilising' project by the Belgian King Léopold II in 1876, the analogous rhetoric of the Berlin Congo Conference in 1884/85 and the subsequent formation of the Congo Free State as an allegedly philanthropic colony, the mission to civilise the 'Dark Continent' reached the sphere of high policy. Eventually, it became the central ideological self-legitimation of New Imperialism.[116]

Moreover, the racist 'myth of the Dark Continent' also deeply influenced the popular imagination. Imperial travel and exploration literature "took the Victorian reading public in storm". It thus became a crucial asset of a shift from an elitist "scientific racism" to a popular "commodity racism" in the second half of the 19th century, when colonial exhibitions and colonial advertisement further turned imperial relations "into mass-

113 See Andrew Porter, "'Commerce and Christianity'," *The Historical Journal* 28, no. 3 (1985): 616; Brantlinger, *Rule of Darkness*, 181 ('humanitarianism', 'encroachment').

114 Neil MacMaster, *Racism in Europe 1870–2000* (Houndmills: Palgrave, 2001), 13 ('humanitarian racism'); Patrick Brantlinger, *Dark Vanishings* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2013), 6 ('mantra'); see Hund, *Rassismus*, 63–64.

115 See Alana Lentin, *Racism and Ethnic Discrimination* (New York: Rosen Publishing, 2011), 6.

116 See Michael Mann, "'Torchbearers upon the Path of Progress'," in *Colonialism as Civilizing Mission*, ed. Michael Mann and Harald Fischer-Tiné (London: Anthem Press, 2004), 1–26; Hund, *Rassismus*, 63. For more information see Alice L. Conklin, *A Mission to Civilize* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1997) and Miguel Bandeira Jerónimo, *The 'Civilising Mission' of Portuguese Colonialism, 1870–1930* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015). In German language, valuable contributions that allow a comparative understanding of the various European civilising missions are included in Boris Barth and Jürgen Osterhammel, eds., *Zivilisierungsmissionen* (Konstanz: UVK-Verlagsgesellschaft, 2005).

produced consumer spectacles", as Anne McClintock has shown.[117] During these years, the emergence of new consumer culture, advanced through progress in capitalist production and communication technology; the rise of photography; and a 'new', mass-oriented journalism led to a period of "popular imperialism". This, in turn, also induced a "popularisation" of racist stereotypes and in particular the race concept. Through its inclusion in "popular culture", race was transformed from an "élite ideology" to a "property of many", as has been argued.[118]

Indeed, in the second half of the 19th century, the American and British working classes began to develop a widespread 'white consciousness'.[119] Traditionally, analysts have attempted to understand the emerging working-class racism as a form of 'false consciousness' that was contrary to labour interests and beneficial to capital, since it divided trade unions and therefore depressed the wage level.[120] Others, however, have challenged the claim that racist workers acted irrationally by emphasising, in contrast, that there was much to be gained from racist social relations even for lower societal strata.

David Roediger has discussed the material benefits of racist relations for 'white' workers, such as privileged access to better-reputed jobs and residential areas under the notion of 'wages of whiteness'.[121] In the course of his study, the historian also referred to a now often-quoted passage of the sociologist W.E.B. Du Bois. There, the latter noted how 'white' labourers in the late 19th century American South were "compensated" for their low wages "by a sort of public and psychological wage", which regulated their privileged admission to social spheres and had a great effect upon the "deference shown them". In the same context, Max Weber has written about the "ethnic honour" that the racist dominant but economic 'poor whites' develop through the debasement of Black labour.[122]

More recently, Anja Weiß has advanced the model of a 'racist symbolic capital' to illustrate the centrality of 'immaterial' benefits for a general sociological understanding

117 Brantlinger, "Heart of Darkness: Anti-Imperialism, Racism", 180 ('reading public'); Anne McClintock, *Imperial Leather* (New York: Routledge, 1995), 33 ('spectacles'), 34 ('scientific', 'commodity').

118 Nederveen Pieterse, *White on Black*, 77 ('popular'); Hund, "Negative Societalisation", 70 ('popularisation'); Kenan Malik, *The Meaning of Race* (New York: New York University Press, 1996), 116 ('popular culture', etc.).

119 For the role of 'whiteness' in the constitution of the American working class, see David Roediger, *The Wages of Whiteness*, new ed. (London: Verso, 2007 [1991]). For the slow transformation of the 'racial' status of British workers, see Alastair Bonnett, "How the British Working Class Became White," *Journal of Historical Sociology* 11, no. 3 (1998).

120 See Carter A. Wilson, *Racism* (Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications, 1996), 146, who refers for example to the 'false consciousness' argument of Michael Reich, *Racial Inequality* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981) and Robert D. Cherry, *Discrimination* (Lexington: Lexington Books, 1989).

121 See Roediger, *Wages of Whiteness*. Conceptually transported to imperial relations, a broadened access to classical colonial commodities such as coffee, tea or ivory, but also bicycles, whose popular success was rendered possible through the exploitation of rubber in the colonies, could be understood as wages of (imperial) whiteness.

122 Du Bois, W.E. B[urghardt], *Black Reconstruction* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1935), 700 ('compensated', 'psychological wage'), 701 ('deference'); Max Weber, *Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft* (Köln: Kiepenheuer und Witsch, 1964) ed. by Johannes Winckelmann., 303 and 309 ('ethnic'), quoted in Hund, "Negative Societalisation", 64.

of racism. Based on Bourdieu's theory of multiple social inequalities, the concept described a "collective resource" which can be accumulated and "utilized by individuals as representatives of a group" and whose asymmetrical distribution regulates the access to social interaction and society and thus has considerable influence on the "life chances of its owners".[123]

Based on Weber's observations, and recently further supported by Weiß's insights, it has been suggested that racism should be understood as a form of 'negative societalisation'. In societies that are hierarchised along the lines of, inter alia, class, gender or age, racism can create a form of cohesion since it allows subaltern spheres to subsume themselves under the same allegedly superior identity (like 'civilisation' or 'whiteness') as the dominant groups of society. While this process does not necessarily bring access to economic resources or political power, all those included into these imagined communities, irrespective of social status, are allocated a certain 'racist symbolic capital', an 'ethnic honour' arising from the right to despise those declared to be 'savages' or 'coloured'. As such, this process described a form of "negative social integration" since it was solely based on the "exclusion of others".[124]

The commodified spectacle organised around the exploration and conquest of the mythologised African continent and the Congo, in particular, greatly extended this potential for the process of racist group formation. For the first time, large spheres of the middle and lower classes, hence the 'masses' in the metropole, experienced their inclusion in the superior racist imagined communities and the related material and symbolic benefits. At the same time, the popularisation of the 'race' concept led to a new predominance of the opposition between 'white' and 'coloured' in racist discourse. Despite its connection to natural ascriptions, 'whiteness' always had a social and cultural core; it described "not really a color at all, but a set of power relations", as the philosopher Charles Mills has argued. Increasingly, this power relation obtained a geopolitical dimension, as well. In 1898, Rudyard Kipling rephrased the 'civilising mission' as the 'white man's burden', and the establishment of 'white men countries' around the world was legitimised by a "special right" of 'white men' to land in the temperate zone. The imperial subjugation of 'Darkest Africa' through Léopold's armies in the 1890s became, in this context, a powerful symbol of the inevitability of global 'white' supremacy.[125]

Surprisingly, perhaps, it was exactly when white racial chauvinism and European political and economic domination were at their peak that a lurking self-doubt captured political and cultural elites in Europe and the United States, and particularly Australia. This fear circled around what was interpreted as worrying signs of 'racial' and cultural decline, political and economic vulnerability, and the social and political fragmentation of 'whiteness', 'civilisation' or the European 'family of nations'. In this context, Alastair Bonnet has written about the multidimensional "crises of whiteness" that eventually

123 Weiß, "Racist Symbolic Capital", 47.

124 Hund, "Negative Societalisation", 86 ('negative', 'exclusion'). For the model of negative societalisation, see ibid., 84–88.

125 Mills, *Racial Contract*, 127 ('power relations'); see Rudyard Kipling, "The White Man's Burden," *The Times*, 4 February 1899; Marilyn Lake and Henry Reynolds, *Drawing the Global Colour Line* (Cambridge: University Press, 2008), 6.

became the subject of an "intellectually omnivorous debate" peaking after World War I but with roots at the turn of the 20th century.[126]

These crises were constituted by deep concussions of the three dimensions of racism discussed above and eventually endangered the stability of racist relations as such. "Chief among these prophets" of 'racial' and cultural pessimism, as the American sociologist Franklin H. Giddings noted in 1898, was the English-born Australian historian, politician and social reformer Charles F. Pearson. In his *National Life and Character*, first published in 1893, Pearson challenged the general assumption, as he called it, that "higher races of men" or those of the "highest forms of civilization, are everywhere triumphing over the lower". Instead, the high mortality of Europeans in tropical and semi-tropical climates and the worrying fact that "the lower races of men increase faster than the higher" pointed for him to the "unchangeable limits" of white and European superiority.[127]

In the United States, Pearson's theses heavily influenced Theodor Roosevelt, whose warning that the low reproduction rates of the middle- and working-class and Anglo-Saxon Americans were an act of 'race suicide', became a "forceful element" in his presidential ideology.[128] As reasons for both declining birth rates and the 'unfitness' of the 'white races', many contemporaries identified the negative influences of distinctively new social phenomena (such as the emancipation of women and modern city life) on social institutions (such as the family and masculinity).[129] In this regard, the 'racial' pessimism fundamentally described a cultural crisis. It tied in with a thriving conservative and romanticising critique of progress that emerged in the late 19th century and targeted the disintegrating forces of overly materialistic modernity and 'decadent' civilisation on traditional values and communality. To the obsession with racial 'decay' and cultural 'degeneration' that captured European artists and intellectuals at the 'fin-de-siècle',[130] Pearson's warnings about a rise of the 'coloured races' added a much more practical, political dimension. The "day will come, and perhaps is not far distant", the Australian writer predicted, when "black and yellow races", ever more powerful and better 'educated', would no longer accept the supremacy of the "Aryan race" and "Christian faith" in political, economic and social relations. Soon, "[w]e shall wake to find ourselves elbowed and hustled, and perhaps even thrust aside by peoples whom we looked down upon", he concluded.[131]

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126 Alastair Bonnett, "From the Crises of Whiteness to Western Supremacism," *Australian Critical Race and Whiteness Studies Association Journal* 1 (2005): 9 ('crises'), 11 ('omnivorous').

127 Franklin H. Giddings, "Review of L'Avenir de la Race Blanche by J. Novicow," *Political Science Quarterly* 13, no. 3 (1898): 570 ('Chief'); Guy Burrows, *The Land of the Pigmies* (London: C. Arthur Pearson, 1898), 31 ('limits'), 32 ('higher', 'highest'), 68 ('faster').

128 Thomas G. Dyer, *Theodore Roosevelt and the Idea of Race* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1992), 150 ('forceful'). Roosevelt had adapted the term from the sociologist Edward A. Ross (see ibid., 15).

129 See Bonnett, "Crises of Whiteness", 11.

130 See William. M. Greenslade, *Degeneration, Culture and the Novel* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994) and the essays on 'fears and fantasies of the late 19th century' (subtitle) in John Stokes, ed., *Fin De Siècle, Fin Du Globe* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1992).

131 Charles F. Pearson, *National Life and Character*, 2nd ed. (London: Macmillan, 1894), 89 ('day', 'black'), 90 ('Aryan', 'Christian', 'elbowed').

Initially, most readers might have considered this pessimism hyperbolic. However, only a few years later, in 1897, the unexpected defeat of Italy in Ethiopia once and for all took "away the gloom of inevitability" from Europe's path to global domination. For some, the fact that a European army well equipped with modern weapons could be defeated on the field by Africans was a shock; for others, however, it was a beacon of hope. The 'battle of Adwa' gave rise again to 'Ethiopianism' among African-American intellectuals, and it fuelled anti-colonial desires in Africa and the emerging Pan-African movement.[132]

Nonetheless, this was only a small foretaste of the discursive shockwaves that the "spectacular naval victory" of Japan over Russia in 1905 at Tsushima sent around the globe. If Japan's astonishing economic and technological development in the years before already challenged the assumption that modernisation was only possible under European rule, the totally unexpected triumph of a 'coloured over a white people', of 'the East over the West', in the Russo-Japanese War 1904/05 was considered an event of exceptional historic significance, probably marking the end of 'white' expansion and pride. Indeed, correspondents from all over Africa and Asia reported the excitement the Japanese success aroused. Among the colonised people, it had ignited hopes for independence and racial equality. Suddenly, the motif of the 'white man under siege' that Pearson had created years earlier seemed no longer only a pessimistic fantasy, but an anti-colonial and anti-white revolt of a global scale that was probably imminent.[133]

Many 'white' contemporaries in Great Britain and the United States received the climatic, demographic, cultural and military challenges to racist predominance as a "call to arms". Popular 'defensive' measures proposed and implemented included the improvement of 'racial hygiene' through eugenics and restrictions of immigration, programmes of bodily fitness and armament suggested to increase military power, and the establishment segregationist regimes to replace the ill-fated project of 'multi-racial democracies'.[134]

At the same time, appeals to "transnational solidarities" within the imagined community of 'whiteness' were raised. However, as Bonnet has argued, the ideal of "white solidarity" in the early 20th century remained "doomed". He describes the apparent failure of racism to create a solid geopolitical identity together with challenges to its negative form of cohesion as the aspect that comprises the crisis-prone state of racist relations in a period marked by the increasing political and social fragmentation of universal racist imagined communities such as 'whiteness' or 'civilisation'. For instance, notions of 'race' and 'nation' became conceptually intermingled, which signified the rising

132 Raymond Jonas, *The Battle of Adwa* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2011), 6 ('gloom').

133 Lake and Reynolds, *Global Colour Line*, 2 ('spectacular'); also see ibid., 166–8.

134 Bonnett, "Crises of Whiteness", 13 ('call'); also see ibid. 9–10. On eugenics, see Steven Selden, *Inheriting Shame* (New York: Teachers College Press, 1999) and Lindsay A. Farrall, *The Origins and Growth of the English Eugenics Movement, 1865–1925*, repr. ed. (New York: Garland, 1985). On fitness, see Jay M. Winte, "Military Fitness and Civilian Health in Britain during the First World War," *Journal of Contemporary History* 15, no. 2 (1980): 211–12, and Ina Zweiniger-Bargielowska, *Managing the Body* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010). On segregation, see Lake and Reynolds, *Global Colour Line*, 49–74.

importance of 'national identities' closely tied to a rise in national chauvinism. Nationalism and imperial rivalries had "left [their] mark" on international relations and increased the hostility and danger of military confrontation between 'white' and 'civilised' nation-states in the period before World War I.[135]

Moreover, both higher and lower social strata were torn between the "politics of white racial solidarity and class consciousness". Although significant parts of the British and American working classes fought vigorously and violently for their inclusion in the 'white' master group, 'proletarian internationalism' and 'class solidarity' remained powerful slogans propagated by a strengthening labour movement as well. Signs that these ideals were put into practice, even if only in spatially and temporally limited ways, such as the fraternisation of Black and 'white' workers on some picket lines in the United States or the formation of the Second International in 1886, were profound warnings that the cross-class alliance established by racism could always be revoked from those without economic power.[136] At the same time, traditional elites, worried by a weakening grasp on political power, pushed the kinds of 'self-referential racisms' (such as eugenic discourses) that increasingly targeted certain 'degenerated' elements of subaltern milieus or working classes, as well, declaring them harmful to society and 'unfit' for full membership in the imagined 'racial' community. Thus, the union between 'white' elites and the masses was also challenged 'from the top'.[137]

Therefore, when the Congo reform movement entered the world stage, racist relations were at a historic crossroad. The second half of the 19th century had culminated in, first, the consolidation of the 'myth of the dark continent' to a solid regime of representation; second, the rise of the 'civilising mission' narrative as the principle legitimation discourse and its institutionalisation in the allegedly philanthropic colonies of New Imperialism; and third, the emergence of a popular and commodified imperialism leading to a new universalness of racist societalisation. However, the early 20th century began with the shocking revelations of the limits of racial and cultural superiority, the limits of white and European supremacy, and the limits of geopolitical and social solidarity among the dominant spheres of racist and imperial relations. It was the discursive battlefield of the Congo Scandal where these two strands ultimately clashed.

Subjects and methods

Since Stuart Hall's assessment that racism is always "historically specific", and that therefore multiple "racisms" exist and existed, it has become widely accepted that racism is necessarily "historically situated" and "embedded in a particular historical

135 Ibid., 23 ('transnational'); see ibid., 23–28, 128–134; Bonnett, "Crises of Whiteness", 11('doomed'); James Joll and Gordon Martel, *The Origins of the First World War*, 3rd ed. (Hoboken: Taylor and Francis, 2013), 219.

136 Bonnett, "Crises of Whiteness", 10 ('consciousness'). For examples of cross-racial solidarity in strikes and trade unions, see, for instance, David Montgomery, "Strikes in Nineteenth-Century America," *Social Science History* 4, no. 1 (1980): particularly 95 and Alex Lichtenstein, "Racial Conflict and Racial Solidarity in the Alabama Coal Strike of 1894," *Labor History* 36, no. 1 (1995).

137 MacMaster, *Racism in Europe*, 33 ('self-referential'); see Bonnett, "Crises of Whiteness", 13–14.

context, a particular social formation".[138] Nonetheless, much as postcolonial research often tended to "do history ahistorically", as Frederick Cooper has warned, sociological reflections continued to be restricted by "a lack of historical reflexivity", as Les Back and John Solomos have criticised.[139]

As such, this field of research reflected a broader "retreat of sociologists into the present" in a discipline that its 'founders' Durkheim, Marx or Weber had always explicitly understood as historical. There is, in fact, "much to be gained by reconstituting history and sociology as historical sociology", as critics of this process have maintained, particularly as applied to the analysis of the social relation of racism. The investigation of racism has to be both "sociologically well-founded" and "historically differentiated", and the research of a specific racist formation must be "rigorously contextualised", it has been demanded.[140]

Such a research agenda can, of course, not be implemented by solely using secondary literature or by a cursory overview over more 'background'. It requires that sociologists engage in a thorough primary analysis to investigate, as Hall has called it, "the concrete historical 'work' which racism accomplishes".[141] Hence, while my historic-sociological inquiry uses insights from a wide range of existing historiographic and other studies, it comprehensively examines primary sources to explore the conglomerate of racism within the Congo reform movement.

British and American criticism of the Congo Scandal has been formulated on several interrelated levels. First, former Free State agents and officers, missionaries, merchants, private travellers and diplomats who had spent some time in the Congo published books and articles, wrote open letters and (official) reports, gave interviews or publicly spoke about their personal experiences of wrongdoings in the Free State. Based on these accounts, reform activists produced extensive monographs and substantive series of articles in newspapers and magazines. These major accounts documented and discussed the available evidence; disclosed new eyewitness accounts in the form of letters, diaries or testimonies; integrated the insights of original research into official proceedings, laws and statistics of the Free State; and offered systematic analyses of the Congo Scandal and the history of its emergence. Additionally, reformers produced shorter, more pointed pamphlets, sold through bookstores or for little money in public meetings and distributed via mail order. Similarly, leading activists wrote numerous

138 Stuart Hall, "Race, Articulation and Societies Structured in Dominance," in *Sociological Theories*, ed. UNESCO (Paris: UNESCO, 1980), 336 ('historically', 'racisms'); MacMaster, *Racism in Europe*, 2 ('embedded'); John Solomos and Les Back, "Conceptualising Racisms," *Sociology* 28, no. 1 (1994): 150 ('situated'); also see Goldberg, *Racist Culture*, 90; Robert Miles and Malcolm Brown, *Racism*, 2nd ed. (London: Routledge, 2003), 62–63.

139 Frederick Cooper, *Colonialism in Question* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005), 17 ('ahistorically'); John Solomos and Les Back, *Racism and Society* (London: Macmillan Education, 1996), 97 ('reflexivity').

140 Norbert Elias, "The Retreat of Sociologists into the Present," *Theory, Culture & Society* 4, 2–3 (1987): 223; Philip Abrams, *Historical Sociology* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1982), ix ('to be gained'); Hund, *Rassismus*, 35 ('well-founded', 'differentiated' [translation F.L.]); Solomos and Back, "Conceptualising Racisms", 156 ('rigorously').

141 Hall, "Race, Articulation and Societies", 338 ('concrete').

articles in newspapers, magazines and special publications such as the *Congo News Letter*. These short pieces summarised or highlighted specific aspects of the Congo Scandal and propagated concrete political demands for its redemption.

Congo reformers also petitioned decision-makers in parliaments and governmental offices; the debate thus became part of official political discourse. Through sympathetic senators, American Congo opponents were able to introduce several memorials to the United States Congress that were discussed in the plenary and the Foreign Relations Committee. Several influential British reformers were members of parliament and initiated smaller and larger debates in the House of Common and the House of Lords. Repeatedly, resolutions drafted by Congo opponents demanded the American or British government to take a stance on the Congo controversy, which led to consular investigations, diplomatic correspondence and official reports, which reformers once more turned into pamphlets.

In the same vein, Congo reformers held speeches on related conferences, gathered for public meetings and lectured on hundreds of smaller and larger Congo demonstrations in towns halls, churches and assembly rooms throughout the United States and Great Britain. Moreover, Congo criticism was not only formulated in written and oral language but also visualised through cartoons, drawings and photographs. Particularly influential were the so-called atrocity photographs that were widely printed and also screened through limelight projectors in public protests.

These critical monographs, pamphlets, articles, memoranda and speeches represent various formats, genres and styles. Some of them were a rather clinical presentation of facts that were designed to convince an expert audience; others, however, were highly polemical works dedicated to arousing the sentiment of the public. Either way, these accounts were never objective but were instead highly interested.[142] Together, this cluster of written, oral or visual statements – which I subsume under the discourse-analytical notion of 'texts' – situated within the Congo reform movement as a specific field of social action and related to the Congo controversy as a binding macro topic, forms the American and British Congo reform discourse investigated throughout my study.

In addition, travel literature, mission reports and lectures by Henry M. Stanley and other pioneering Congo colonists; speeches and statements by the Belgian King Léopold and his advocates in Europe and the United States; official communication and laws by the Congo Free State and its predecessor organisations; the protocols and concluding acts of the Berlin Congo conference 1888 and the Brussels Anti-Slavery Conference 1890; and various bilateral agreements have been consolidated.

Of course, a debate in the public sphere embracing three continents and a period of 24 years always eludes clear-cut boundaries, and its containment as a specific discourse remains an analytical construct. Moreover, my study is restricted by the limitations in resources and my potential mistakes as an individual researcher, as well as the state of the source material. The sheer quantity precludes an all-embracing analysis of public meetings, valuable articles might still have been overlooked, and not every pamphlet has survived in libraries and archives. Nonetheless, I was able to compose a text corpus

142 Both sides used sharp tone and style, worked with exaggeration and omission and sometimes bended the truth to serve their argument and cause.

that, to the best of my knowledge, satisfactorily represents the British and American Congo reform discourse from 1890 to 1913, without raising a claim of completeness or totality.

Although this study primarily handles (written, oral or visual) 'texts', its analytical interest is not limited to linguistic phenomena or a text-immanent critique. Instead, it is focused on the intertextual relations between the various subjects analysed as much as the interdiscursive influences and interferences. At the same time, non-linguistic social or sociological variables, situational frames, and the broader historical and socio-political context in which the analysed discursive practices are embedded form an intrinsic part of my entangled interpretation of different layers of (racist) meaning. In this context, my study is methodologically influenced by a discourse-historical approach that has been formulated within the broader field of critical discourse analysis, with its interdisciplinary orientation and commitment to the "principle of triangulation".[143]

Therefore, this study remains problem-focused and is not restricted to a fixed set of analytical categories or methodological tools; rather, it adapts its theoretical and methodical orientation primarily to enable an investigation of its specific research problem. Hence, while the text corpus established here is processed discourse-analytically, my study is equally bound to the long traditions of hermeneutic interpretation as a method in social science; hence "sociology as an 'understanding' activity" in search of 'hidden meaning', as Zygmunt Bauman has called it. At the same time, it is dedicated to the tradition of a critique of ideology, hence the "deconstruction-reconstruction process of dialectical analysis", which attempts to unmask allegedly natural truths as the myths that they are.[144]

Structure

In any case, this process of analysis, interpretation and critique implies a constant back and forth: between specific phenomena and their wider intertextual, historical and social contexts, and between theory and data. Thus, from the "particular to the universal and back", as the notion of the 'hermeneutic circle' suggests. In the course of this circular progress, a systematic order evolved that is both theoretically induced and grounded in the historical discourse itself.[145]

Since the study is primarily organised on a synchronic, analytical basis, a certain overlap of subjects is unavoidable. At times, specific topoi, arguments or controversies are examined from a further perspective or re-evaluated to reveal an additional layer of meaning. *Colonisation and 'reform' of the Congo* enables the reader to orientate herself historically throughout the study. In its course, the relevant individual and collective actors, central (discursive) events and contributions to the reform debate are introduced and contextualised to provide a general socio-historic conspectus.

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143 Ruth Wodak and Michael Meyer, "The Discourse-Historical Approach," in *Methods of Critical Discourse Analysis*, ed. Ruth Wodak and Michael Meyer, 2nd ed. (London: Sage, 2009), 89.

144 Zygmunt Bauman, *Hermeneutics and Social Science* (London: Routledge Revivals, 2010 [1978]), 160 ('understanding'); Lee Harvey, "Methodological Problems of Ideology Critique," Birmingham Polytechnic, 1983. *Research Unit Discussion Paper* 11, n.p. ('deconstruction').

145 Bauman, *Hermeneutics and Social Science*, 16.

The central analytical part of my study is divided into three chapters. *Chapter 3* focuses on the realm of *representation*, that is, the formation of racist classifications, stereotypes and ideas and the 'social construction of natural disparity'. Next, *chapter 4* concentrates on the level of *politics*, meaning the formulation of racist programmes and legitimation discourses, their materialisation in imperial formations and transformation into institutionalised state practice and power. Finally, *chapter 5* emphasises the aspect of *societalisation*, racist group formation processes through the creation of negative social cohesion and the allocation of racist symbolic capital and economic benefits.

Each of these main chapters is once more divided into three sections. Although these subdivisions generally follow a chronological order, they primarily reflect an analytical structuration of the Congo reform discourse.[146] Hence, the first subchapters investigate the grandiose *promises* that the Belgian King Léopold and his first officer Stanley made in the formational years of the Congo colony, and they discuss the resulting tremendous expectations that the international imperial community invested in the colonisation of the Congo. Only with this background is it possible to grasp the vehement reaction of the Congo reformers, almost all of whom had admired Stanley's quests and supported Léopold's colonial movement in its early years, when they realised the fundamental and overreaching *betrayal* of these promises and expectations. The multiple aspects of this crisis, entangled by the reformers in the motif of the Congo Scandal, are discussed in the second subchapters. Finally, the last sections focus on the various forms of *redemption* propagated and enacted by the Congo reformers. These included political changes, performative acts and discursive manoeuvres.

These main- and subdivisions are interlinked and create a sort of analytical matrix that, hopefully, allows a comprehensive understanding of racism in the context of the Congo reform movement and leads to a full disclosure of the fundamental '*Crisis of Whiteness*' emerging in the '*Heart of Darkness*'. With the so designed project, I intend to contribute to a more accurate historiographic perception of the Congo reform movement and to provide insights into the historical formation of racism at a crucial discursive crossroads. My choice to examine the commonalities and peculiarities of the British and America reform movement together, not merely comparatively but explicitly concerning cross-national influences, ties in with the pioneering role that social or cultural histories of various protest or reform movements have played in the implementation of transnational research agendas.[147] Moreover, the subject of a metropolitan-based colonial reform movement is well suited to investigate "metropolitan and colonial formations within the same analytical frame", as postcolonial scholarship has demanded.[148] Lastly, the unmasking of the colonial and racist foundations of this pioneering human rights movement might help to finally "set aside epic-like narratives" about humanitar-

146 In this, I resort to the work of Kevin Grant, who has identified the sequences of "promise, betrayal and redemption" as a reoccurring dramaturgy in religious Congo demonstrations; see Kevin Grant, "Christian Critics of Empire," *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 29, no. 2 (2001): 37.

147 See for instance the works reviewed in Akira Iriye, "Transnational History," *Contemporary European History* 13, no. 2 (2004).

148 See Lake and Reynolds, *Global Colour Line*, 10.

ian champions and colonising villains in the Congo and colonial history in general.[149] Indeed, it is time to end the constant (re-)creation of 'enlightened' heroes that embody an alleged moral pre-eminence of Europe – even in the face of its worst colonial crimes.

149 As has been called for by Nancy R. Hunt, *A Nervous State* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2016), 12.