Reading *Heart of Darkness* in the ESL/EFL Classroom

* A Case Study in Student Response to Literary Didactic Methodologies Designed to Enhance Aesthetic and Efferent Reading of a Literary Text in Language Instruction

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Abstract

The purpose of this degree project has been to examine the implications of the provision of certain methodological support mechanisms, what has often been referred to as "instructional scaffolding" in literary didactics, to assist students in the ESL/EFL classroom in their interaction with the various literary texts into which they come into contact during their English language education at the upper secondary level in Sweden. My primary interest has been to gauge the response of the students involved in this study to the particular types of literary didactic methods utilized, for example, regarding their effectiveness in aiding the learning process as well as their impact on the literary, or aesthetic, experience itself. An analysis of student responses to a literature instruction module based on a reading of Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* will demonstrate that certain forms of literary didactic methods in general, and significantly, particular forms of what can be conceptualized as instructional scaffolding, play a crucial role for both the learning process and the student's aesthetic experience of literature.

Keywords

Literary didactics, Instructional Scaffolding, The Zone of Proximal Development, Efferent and Aesthetic Reading, Polyphony, Reading Journal.
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1. Introduction

The following study, inspired initially by Birgitta Bommarco's research in literature instruction in the Swedish language classroom at the upper secondary level, *Texter i dialog*, as well as my own previous experience as a student of literature, is the result of an attempt to refine, apply, and evaluate the literary didactic methods I chose to employ during my first two student-teacher placements as part of my teacher education program at Linnaeus University in Växjö, Sweden, during the 2013-2014 school year. The primary concern of the current study is the attempt to gauge student response to the literary didactic methods employed during a lesson module based on the reading of literary texts, in this case a reading of Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*. While I did receive some feedback from students from each of my first two student-teacher placements, I wanted to perform a more thorough examination of the subject by carrying out my own study as part of my third and final student-teacher placement. This study would then serve as the foundation of the research underlying my degree project for the teacher education program.

In the following section I will discuss the theoretical foundations upon which the current study rests. Briefly, these include both the European Continental tradition as well as the American Pragmatic tradition, which in the current context are complementary rather than exclusive. Edmund Husserl, Lev Vygotsky and Mikhail Bakhtin are representative theorists from the Continental European tradition. They have provided inspiration to a number of others interested in literary didactics, including Wolfgang Iser, a seminal figure in the development of reader-response theory, Olga Dysthe, Martin Nystrand, and the already mentioned Birgitta Bommarco, all of whose theoretical and practical work was a source of inspiration for this study. From the American Pragmatic tradition, I have chosen to rely on the
educational theories of John Dewey as adapted to the field of literary analysis and/or didactics by theorists such as Louise Rosenblatt and Judith Langer, among others.

Following the presentation of the theoretical framework which underlies this study, I will contextualize the relevant theories, as applied within the field of literary didactics, in relation to the Swedish curriculum/syllabus for the upper secondary school, as well as in relation to the primary text upon which the lesson module was based, that is, Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*.

It goes without saying that any and all research in this area rests upon a broad and varied theoretical and practical foundation. Thus, prior to addressing the methodological approach taken here, including concerns and constraints broadly characterized as practical, ethical and epistemological, that are inevitable in the type of research carried out as a part of the current study, I will discuss previous research in this field which is relevant to, and which will be contextualized within, the structure of this project.

The core of the present study is the analysis of student response to the literary didactic methods, that is, the forms of instructional scaffolding, which were applied during a reading of Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*. This response was obtained through a series of individual qualitative interviews with students following the completion of the lesson module. Through interview material, the students' individual experiences and assessments of the didactic methodologies employed will be presented, analyzed, and discussed in relation to effectiveness from the perspective of the students themselves.

The conclusions drawn as a result of this study will, I hope, help to shape further research into effective methods for improvement of learning outcomes, both linguistic and aesthetic, for students studying English at the upper secondary level in Sweden, especially in relation to the study of literature. Through the use of qualitative interviews following the completion of a lesson module based on a reading of Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*, I
hope to show that the literary didactic methods employed during the lesson module, as experienced by the students themselves, improved learning outcomes while also enriching the aesthetic experience of these students when confronted with what is regarded as a complex text from the English literary canon. In addition, I hope that the conclusions drawn will demonstrate the opportunities for personal growth and development that the reading of literature provides to students as individuals and members of society, and of course, as human beings.

2. Theoretical Background of the Study

2.1 Introduction

In the present section I will discuss the theoretical framework within which the literary didactic methods involved in this study were developed and applied within the instructional environment. The primary theoretical foundation for these methods rests, first, on the Louise Rosenblatt's conception of the nature of the literary experience as an "event," a view which can be situated within the broader field of reader-response theory, and which itself takes inspiration from the pragmatic tradition as embodied in the work of John Dewey. Rosenblatt's theoretical concern is primarily, but not exclusively, with the individual reader's transaction with the text, which she argues is conditioned by the purpose for reading. This purpose she describes as being represented on a continuum in which the reading process can be defined as either aesthetic or efferent.

The work of Olga Dysthe, inspired by the literary theory of Mikhail Bakhtin, also forms an essential component of the theoretical framework which underlies the literary didactic methods employed in this study. The key concept provided by Dysthe is the multi-voiced classroom, which is her adaptation of Bakhtin's notion of polyphony as applied within
the classroom environment. Dysthe is primarily concerned with the social interaction of individuals within this milieu and how this interaction leads to collective meaning-making.

Finally, I will address the theoretical contribution of Lev Vygotsky to the current study. The key concepts taken from Vygotsky include the zone of proximal development and what has come to be termed scaffolding. Vygotsky's contention is that an individual at a particular stage in the learning process can, with assistance or support, that is, instructional scaffolding, progress beyond current capabilities and appropriate knowledge, skills and/or understanding which would otherwise remain beyond reach.

Together, the theories associated with Rosenblatt, Dysthe, and Vygotsky can, and have been here, synthesized to address the individual and social aspects of the teaching of literature in the classroom. This is accomplished through the development of integrative literary didactic methods which encompass both aspects, and which are aimed at providing assistance or support in the achievement of learning objectives so as to facilitate progress through, and hopefully beyond, the zone of proximal development.

2.2 Louise Rosenblatt and the Transactional Theory of the Literary Event

The current study relies significantly on Louise Rosenblatt's conception of the reading process, or what she terms "event," as transactional in nature. This conception of the reading process she elucidates in her The Reader, The Text, The Poem (6). This emphasis on transaction rather than interaction Rosenblatt developed through her application of John Dewey and Arthur F. Bentley's "transactional' terminology" to the field of literary analysis from the field of philosophical pragmatism (17).

In essence, the development of the concept of transaction as a key insight of the pragmatic philosophy of Dewey and Bentley, according to Rosenblatt, was an "attempt to counteract the dualistic phrasing of phenomena as an 'interaction' between different factors,
because it implies separate, self-contained, and already defined entities acting on one
another," (17) rather than the actual situational complexity of human existence (and by
extension the literary experience), one which involves factors, "aspects of a total situation,
each conditioned by and conditioning the other" (17). This re-evaluation of the dynamic
process involved in reading stresses the "evocation" of the poem from the text in any reading
experience through the transaction(s) between the common elements, the reader and the text.

To further elaborate upon the reading process, Rosenblatt suggests that "the physical
signs of the text enable the [reader] to reach through himself and the verbal symbols to
something sensed as outside and beyond his own personal world. The boundary between inner
and outer world breaks down, and the literary work of art [...] leads us into a new world" (21).
It is then through transaction(s) with the literary text that the individual is able to evoke the
"poem," i.e., the work of art, dissolving conceptual boundaries between self and textual other,
thus allowing for the immersion of self in the event of the literary experience. As described
above, this involves a conditioning and being conditioned as essential to the reading process.
The reader creates and is created by the text as the poem is evoked.

Rosenblatt's distinction between types of reading, what she terms aesthetic and
efferent, is essential to an understanding of how a student will engage with a text in the
English language, or for that matter any, classroom. According to Rosenblatt, these two types
of reading represent poles on a experiential continuum which is defined by the purpose for
reading (27). Efferent reading involves a disengagement of attention from "the personal and
qualitative elements in" the response to the text and emphasizes "the information, the
concepts, the guides to action, that will be left when the reading is over" (27). In contrast,
aesthetic reading occurs when the primary purpose of the reader is "fulfilled during the
reading event," as attention is focused on "the actual experience" lived through during the
reading (27). As such, it becomes apparent that a student, or any reader, will approach a given
text in a particular fashion, and with a particular purpose, based on an understanding of what expectations are imposed upon the reading process by either the reader him/herself or, in the context of the classroom environment, the teacher.

In this view, a student/reader will approach, for instance, a scientific or historical text from an efferent perspective, given the typical expectations of what a student will do with or after having read the text, i.e., after having determined the purpose for reading this particular text in this particular context. Further, and what I will attempt to demonstrate below, the student/reader might also, and most often does, approach a literary text from an efferent perspective, if both expectations and purpose align to suggest this perspective. The implications for an aesthetic reading of a literary text in the English language classroom are clear. If expectations and/or purpose favor an efferent reading of the text, the student/reader will remain fixated upon a reading from this perspective. Note that Rosenblatt suggests that the alternative is also possible. That is, it is possible to read aesthetically a text which most often is expected to be read from an efferent perspective (35). She indicates that this applies, for example, to Gibbon's *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* or Lincoln's *Gettysburg Address*, texts for which either an efferent or aesthetic reading is fully appropriate given the reader's expectations and/or purpose (35-36).

2.3 Olga Dysthe and *The Multi-Voiced Classroom*

While Rosenblatt focuses primarily, but not exclusively, on the nature of the individual's transaction(s) with the text, Olga Dysthe seeks to broaden the horizon by envisaging the meaning-making process, and the individual's part in it, as a social rather than an individual project. Basing her notion of the *multi-voiced classroom* on Bakhtin's theoretical position of *polyphony* as the basis for "existence as dialogue," (63) Dysthe posits that "dialogue is thus a fundamental quality in all human interaction, but it is also a goal that we must strive after in the many different interactional situations in which we meet other people,
for example, in the classroom" (64). According to Dysthe's reading of Bakhtin, it is not the individual "I" but the collective "we" that is the force behind the creation of meaning (65). Further, it is a process which does not occur automatically. Rather, the multiplicity of voices, that is, polyphony, represented by the students, the teacher, and the instructional material act in concert, but not necessarily in agreement, to create meaning through linguistic expression (68).

Thus, one can stipulate that it is through dialogue that meaning is created collectively, but also enhanced, as discourse is a constant in the nature of human interaction. As such, the individual's dialog with a text, and the voice which "generates" it or with those voices embodied within it, is as significant as, and in most classroom interactions involving the reading of literary texts, precedes, dialog with fellow students and/or with a teacher.

2.4 Lev Vygotsky and the Zone of Proximal Development

It is Vygotsky's theoretical contribution to an understanding of the actual learning process which serves as a key component of the current study and thus deserves mention here. In *Thought and Language*, Vygotsky presents the concept of the zone of proximal development. Vygotsky posits that there are particular points in an individual's development at which that individual is "sensitive" to the potentiality of acquiring new knowledge, skills, or understanding if previous knowledge, skills and/or understanding serve as an adequate basis for this acquisition (187). The zone of proximal development then refers to the particular position in development in which potential becomes actuality, at which the individual becomes capable of appropriating new knowledge, skills and/or understanding if conditions are propitious.

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1 Note: All translations from Swedish to English are my own.
Thus, the proper application of didactic methods must take into account what it is the individual is capable of achieving in the immediate future rather than remain limited to what the individual is capable of at the current moment. Vygotsky suggests that "the only good kind of instruction is that which marches ahead of development and leads it" (188). Further, Vygotsky argues that it is through the intervention, especially within the social/cultural environment, of one more "competent" in the area of instruction that the progressive development of the individual becomes possible, or rather, more likely (189). That is, those who both recognize the zone of proximal development at which the individual finds him/herself and who are competent in providing an appropriate form of instructional support, create conditions by which the individual can progress through, and eventually beyond, this zone.

A particularly important concept that is seen as facilitating the learning process and that is linked to Vygotsky's theoretical position is that of scaffolding. Instructional scaffolding is described by Roger Säljö as the didactic method(s) which facilitate an individual's acquisition of the knowledge, skills, and/or understanding which lie within the zone of proximal development but outside the individual's current capabilities (194). As Vygotsky explains, through the use scaffolding, "What the child can do in cooperation today he can do alone tomorrow" (188). Such didactic methods can, and in many situations do, take the form, in the sense advanced by Bakhtin, of simple dialogue between individuals, one of whom is often, but in my own view not necessarily, more competent than the other in the area of interest. This view is supported by Martin Nystrand, who, citing research by Forman and Cazden and Daiute and Dalton, argues that peer collaboration can allow reciprocal development of each of the individuals involved in a task of mutual interest (95).
2.5 Theoretical synthesis in light of the stipulations for a course in English 7 in the Curriculum for the Upper Secondary School

It is quite clear that in any pedagogical situation a theoretical framework must align with practical considerations. In the case of the Swedish school system, the Swedish School Law, designated in Swedish as Skollagen (2010:800), as well as various official publications define the conditions and requirements for education at all levels and in all programs and/or subjects. In the context of this study, and in addition to various official Swedish language publications related to the Swedish school system, I will be using an English translation of the course requirements for English 7 which forms a supplement ("Supplement" for citation purposes) to Skolverket's Läroplan, Examensmål, och Gymnasiegemensamma Ämnen för Gymnasieskolan 2011, a Swedish language document which represents the official curriculum for the upper secondary school in Sweden. In addition, I will use the English language supplementary publication, A Curriculum for the Upper Secondary School ("Curriculum" for citation purposes), also a publication of Skolverket.

According to this curriculum, the aim of an English language education includes the development by students of a comprehensive communicative ability in the language ("Supplement" 1). This is achieved through the acquisition of competencies related to two main categories, reception and production/interaction ("Supplement" 1). For the course English 7, in particular, core content to be utilized in the development of these capabilities includes the following:

1. Theoretical and complex subject areas...societal issues...thoughts, opinions, ideas, experiences, opinions, and feelings; cultural expressions in modern times and historically, such as literary periods;
2. Societal issues, cultural, historical, political and social conditions,
and also ethical and existential issues in different parts of the world where English is used. ("Supplement" 11)

In formulating the lesson module which forms the basis for this study, I sought out a primary text which would fulfill these requirements while also providing the students involved with an opportunity to develop their aesthetic sensibilities.

The choice of the primary text that was utilized in this study, Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*, is specifically related to the stipulations of the core content mentioned above with regard to its relevance, especially, to issues that are broadly defined as cultural, historical, political, ethical, and existential (see above). It is also, as a literary text, a seminal contribution to Modernism and the development of English, and world, literature (Parkinson 114). Thus, it fulfills knowledge requirements related to literary epochs found within the curriculum/syllabus for English 7 (see above).

In addition, as with most literature, it represents a vehicle for the evocation and eventual discussion of thoughts, opinions, ideas, experiences, and feelings related to a literary reading by the student. Here the aesthetic dimension becomes relevant. According to Skolverket, knowledge capabilities that should be achieved in the context of a course in English 7 include the following key components: (1) "[The student] can use non-fiction, fiction and other forms of culture as a source of knowledge, insight and pleasure;" (2) "[The student] can obtain stimulation from cultural experiences and develop a feeling for aesthetic values" ("Curriculum" 8). Thus, in approaching the development of literary didactic methods for the English language classroom, the enhancement of an aesthetic sensibility among students, through an approach which emphasizes an aesthetic reading of the text in question, should coincide with rather than represent a secondary consideration to any given efferent reading of a literary text.
Given the goals of this study in relation to the complexity of the text, both in form and in content, I applied what is referred to as instructional scaffolding for the purpose of assisting the students/readers individually, in their transaction(s) with the text, as well as collectively, in their transaction(s) with each other, to develop core competencies related to both reception and production/interaction as well as to enhance their aesthetic appreciation of the text.

On the level of the individual, the reading journal represents a form of instructional scaffolding which, by integrating the reading and writing process, allows the student/reader to engage in both aesthetic and efferent reading while producing a secondary text during the reading process which reflects the student/reader's own experience of the literary event. This secondary text serves as the crucial meaning-creation activity on the part of the individual in his/her transaction(s) with the other voice(s) which are represented by/in the literary text. Further, this form of instructional scaffolding provides the opportunity for the student to develop the core competencies of reception, in this case written reception through textual reading, and production/interaction, which is achieved through written production as a result of transaction(s) with a textual interlocutor either during reading or upon reflection after reading.

The reading journal also functions as a foundation for the second form of instructional scaffolding, the group discussion. The group discussion embodies the crucial meaning-creation/enhancement activity on the part of the individual as a member of a social collective. The polyphonic, that is, "the multi-voiced" classroom, becomes a forum in which transaction(s) among the many voices present, through the mediation of dialogue, condition and are conditioned by that dialogue, the result of which is the creation of a collective tertiary text. Here I introduce an expansive concept of text. This tertiary text then serves as a resource as the student/reader proceeds with the reading/writing process at the individual level. One can see this as an iterative process which stimulates further transactions with the primary text.
and, through subsequent discussion, other students and/or the teacher(s). At the group or collective stage, then, the form of instructional scaffolding utilized provides the opportunity for the students to develop the core competencies related to reception, in this case listening comprehension through interaction with other students and/or the teacher(s), and production/interaction, again as part of ongoing discussion or dialogue.

The two forms of instructional scaffolding have as their primary purpose the facilitation of the learning process and the personal development of the student as an individual, as well as the individual student as a member of a collective, whether one considers that collective the nexus of student-reader/text, the class, the society, or the culture. From the perspective of Vygotsky's zone of proximal development, a reading of Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* without the use of appropriate forms of scaffolding would have possibly compromised the learning/development process, embodied in student transaction(s) with the text and each other, due to the complexity of the content and form of the literary text.

3. Previous Research

While there is a dearth of research in the development of literary didactic methods within the context of English language instruction at the upper secondary level in the Swedish school system, there is, however, a broad range of research related to literary didactics in both L1, or first language, and L2, or second language (in this case ESL/EFL) instruction. Due to practical constraints, only that research most relevant to the current project will be mentioned here.

Especially useful in the preparation of this study was Marzieh Bagherkazemi and Minoo Alemi's review of literature instruction in the EFL/ESL context, "Literature in the EFL/ESL classroom: Consensus and Controversy." Their review presents a summary of the various issues and concerns surrounding the use of literature in ESL/EFL language
instruction. Further, they provide an analysis of the possible theoretical frameworks and literary didactic methods which can be employed in conjunction with the use of literature in the language classroom. Also of interest is Brian Parkinson and Helen Reid Thomas' *Teaching Literature in a Second Language*. Parkinson and Thomas' work, in part, addresses the complexity of utilizing Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* in the ESL/EFL environment. In that sense it was particularly useful in the preparation of the current study.

It goes without saying that Judith Langer represents a significant figure in the development of both literary analysis and didactics. Her view that the literary experience and literature itself represent a "way of thinking," (2) informs her theoretical construct of *envisonment* and the various *stances* which comprise the literary reading process/experience. Her research work with A.N. Applebee, see for instance Applebee and Langer's "Instructional Scaffolding: Reading and Writing as Natural Language Activities," from which the criteria for effective use of scaffolding utilized in this study was taken, and Martin Nystrand, which finds expression in her *Envisioning Literature - Literary Understanding and Literature Instruction*, has provided a wealth of information and ideas with which to conceptualize the reading, and writing, process and the student/reader's engagement with literary texts and each other.

However, while Langer's theories and methods are complementary with Rosenblatt's own, there exist certain differences which, due to practical constraints, did not allow for the integration of certain aspects of Langer's work in literary analysis into the current study. These include differing views on the nature of aesthetic and efferent reading, as well as Langer's adherence to the generally accepted view in reader-response theory, see Iser (21), that the reader's engagement with the text is to be conceptualized as *interactional* rather than as *transactional* in nature (*Envisioning Literature* 15-16, 42).

Dysthe's own research is represented in *Det Flerstämmiga klassrummet*, or "The Multi-voiced Classroom." Her work, discussed above, has contributed significantly to the
content, structure, and execution of the current project. This is also the case with Birgitta Bommarco, whose *Texter i dialog - en studie i gymnasieelevers litteraturläsning*, synthesizes the work of Rosenblatt, Langer, and Dysthe in the study of upper secondary level Swedish language students' use of literature in personal identity formation.

Finally, Martin Nystrand should be mentioned in the current context. In addition to his work with Langer and Applebee, his views on how to structure classroom discussion to enhance the learning process, detailed in his *Opening Dialogue - Understanding the Dynamics of Language and Learning in the English Classroom*, also represent a key contribution both to the development of didactic methods in the language learning classroom, and of those employed in this study. These methods, like Dysthe's based on Bakhtin's notions of *polyphony* and *existence as dialogue*, are grounded in the ideal of the communicative process as fundamental to the learning process (17).

4. Methodological Considerations Which Apply to the Study

4.1 Introduction

The current study can be broadly categorized as action research. As Anita Erickson suggests in *Lära till Lärare*, action research involves a research effort, often qualitative as in this case, which has as its aim the improvement in processes or methods within various sorts of organizations, including within educational institutions (175). In addition, the researcher more often than not has a clear goal of influencing the organization and its processes through the results achieved in conjunction with the research project (175). However, as with much qualitative research, there exists concerns about validity, reliability, and whether or not the results can be generalized beyond the specific milieu in which the research took place. These concerns will be addressed below.
While this study itself lies within the field of action research, the research methods employed within the study utilize a phenomenological approach in the gathering of student response to the literary didactic methods employed during the lesson module centering on Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*. That is, structured qualitative interviews with students regarding their experience(s) of/with these literary didactic methods is the focus of the research. According to Sonja Kihlström, phenomenological research seeks to obtain a view of how an individual experiences different aspects of his/her existential reality (157). In this case, a major goal of the study, based on the requirement of the Swedish school system that instructional content, form, and methods are developed with the influence of the students within the institution, as well as the particular instructional context ("Supplement" 11), is to obtain student perspectives through an assessment, by the students involved, of the methods employed within the instructional context.

4.2 Ethical, Practical and Epistemological Concerns Related to the Study

This study was carried out in accordance with Vetenskaprådet's principles for ethical research in the humanities and social sciences as expressed in its publication, *Forskningsetiska principer inom humanistisk-samhällsvetenskaplig forskning*. In accordance with these principles, confidentiality through the use of pseudonyms was afforded to the students who participated in the interview process. Each student was informed, both verbally and through the provision of this document, followed by discussion of the principles contained therein, of the nature of their voluntary involvement with the research being carried out, as well as their right to withdraw at any time. Written consent to the use of information related to participants was obtained. Further, both the supervising teacher and the headmaster responsible were informed and consented to the execution of the research effort.
As this research was conducted during a ten-week student-teacher assignment, practical constraints are of concern to its execution and results. Among these are the limited time available for the application and assessment of the literary didactic methods which form the core of the study. In addition to this, time constraints allowed only a limited number of interviews with students to take place (eight were conducted of which four will be utilized in the analysis and discussion due to the practical constraints associated with the actual paper presented), thus limiting the amount of qualitative data available for analysis. Further, these interviews were limited in scope, as the students interviewed were available only during normal lesson periods. Thus, the duration of each interview was only thirty minutes and there was no opportunity for follow-up interviews.

From an epistemological perspective, there are two key concerns with the present study. First, as with most action research, my own participation in the classroom environment as both teacher and researcher, as indicated by Eriksson, has implications for the reliability of the results (179). Second, the limited amount of qualitative data for analysis could be seen to affect the study's validity, reliability, and the ability to generalize its results. However, as Alan Bryman suggests, this is the case with qualitative research as a whole (354,369). Further, with regard to generalization of results, he argues that within qualitative research results are generalized in the context of theory rather than population (369). This is the case with the present study. Thus, as with most qualitative research efforts, I expect that the results as they are interpreted by individuals competent in the appropriate area of expertise will be judged to conform to the standards of credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability which, according to Bryman, are more appropriate within the realm of qualitative research (354-355). This is made possible, in part, by the provision of supplementary material (appendices) as well as the availability of the underlying data for review.
A final note regarding materials for this study is relevant here. The interviews conducted, the basis for the qualitative data being analyzed, were recorded and transcribed. These interviews, at the behest of the students, were conducted in Swedish, so the transcription involves an act of translation as well. The translations are my own and seek to retain the meaning and intention of the students' responses while attempting to obtain concision.

4.3 Interview Methodology and Criteria for Assessment of Student Response

The qualitative interviews were structured to assess, through analysis, student responses to the instructional scaffolding applied within the lesson module. This was accomplished through the formulation of questions intended to elicit responses that could be evaluated within the framework of what constitutes effective instructional scaffolding. According to Applebee and Langer, effective instructional scaffolding encompasses five characteristics or aspects, which they detail in their "Instructional Scaffolding: Reading and Writing as Natural Language Activities."

The first of these is what they term intentionality. That is, does the task, in this case the lesson module centered on a reading of Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*, have a "clear overall purpose driving any separate activity that may contribute to the whole" (170). In the current context the overall purpose is defined as improvement in learning outcomes related to language reception and production/interaction as well as the development of an aesthetic sensibility through student transaction(s) with the literary text and with each other.

The second characteristic is appropriateness. That is, does the task "pose problems that can be solved with help but which students could not successfully complete on their own" (170). The choice of Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* as a literary text was determined in part by
its complexity in both content and form. The assumption which underlies this choice was that as a literary text it represents a clear departure from those normally utilized in English language instruction at the upper secondary level in the Swedish school system. Thus, a reading of this text could be seen to require specific forms of instructional scaffolding for the learning outcomes mentioned above to be obtained.

*Structure* is the third characteristic mentioned by Applebee and Langer. Here, one should model an approach to the task which also leads to "a natural sequence of thought and language" (170). In the current context, the structure could be defined as the iterative process which encompassed the reading, writing and discussion sequence throughout the lesson module (Appendix A).

The fourth aspect is referred to as *collaboration*. While Applebee and Langer emphasize student/teacher interaction though formative assessment, in the present context collaboration refers primarily to the provision of instructional scaffolding which allows the students to "recast and expand" on their own efforts, individually or within groups, with a view towards formative development rather than a focus on evaluative assessment (170).

Finally, Applebee and Langer point to *internalization*. That is, "external scaffolding for the activity is withdrawn as the patterns are internalized by the students" (170). As will be seen in relation to the current study, the structure of the lesson module involved the withdrawal of key components of the instructional scaffolding as the students progressed through the instructional sequence.

In the following analysis, questions posed to the students will be addressed thematically. That is, questions related to both of the two main forms of scaffolding, the reading journal and the group discussion, along with student responses to the overall structure of the lesson module and of the primary text itself, form the framework of the analysis.
5. Analysis and Discussion

5.1 Student Assessment of the Reading Journal as Instructional Scaffolding

An important point to consider with regard to the reading journal as instructional scaffolding is that only one of the four students had used one *during* the reading process throughout their previous coursework in English language classes, although another student had used one previously in such a way in Swedish language classes. For instance, when asked about his use of reading journals in previous language classes, Zlatan indicated the following: "I have done something similar [...] except not during reading but after reading [...] during reading we have taken notes [...] or maybe we divided up a book into two parts [...] read half the book then write about that part of the book [...] then the next section" (Personal Interview, 4 November 2014). While Alva had not used a reading journal in English classes, she had in Swedish classes. She pointed out that "we have used them pretty often [...] I have used one almost every time I have read a book [...] I would write about it in a writing journal while reading" (Personal Interview, 4 November 2014). Langer suggests that an integrated approach to reading/writing, that is writing during the reading process, is essential to the student's experience of as well as comprehension of the text (153-154). The above, and other, student responses indicate that the use of a reading journal as envisaged within the current context represented a form of instructional scaffolding that was either completely new or unfamiliar for the majority of students involved.

To further illustrate the point above, the following exchange occurred between Louise and myself when I asked her about what types of writing she had done in conjunction with reading in previous English language courses:

Louise: We read the book and then write a book review. It's not like we analyze or discuss the book while reading it. We read the book and then write a review.
Interviewer: Like about plot, character development?

Louise: Yes, something that shows that we read the book. (Personal Interview, 3 November 2014)

The above exchange demonstrates a particularly interesting point with regard to the tension between an efferent and an aesthetic reading of a literary text in the language classroom. The type of reading engaged in, its purpose, is often determined by the need for assessment or evaluation of student "production" via demonstrated use of the language, usually in the form of a culminating assignment (Appendix I), whether written, verbal, or both, after the reading process is complete. This demand often leads to an emphasis on efferent rather than aesthetic reading. That is, student focus is engaged in the task of being able to demonstrate an objective knowledge through analysis of certain aspects of the text, such as plot, character development, or setting, while relegating the subjective, aesthetic, literary experience to a secondary or negligible role in the reading process. The current study, in concurrence with Rosenblatt's view that one is able to adjust purpose along the continuum efferent-aesthetic, sought to allow both types of reading to receive attention through the use of a reading journal designed to capture student experience/reflection within each domain, or according to the purpose associated with each (Appendix A).

With regard to the use of the reading journal to encourage an aesthetic reading of the literary text, I asked the students if the reading journal helped them to express thoughts or feelings they had about the text while reading. The responses are instructive. For example, Sven stated, "Definitely [...] I think it took awhile to gather my thoughts [...] it was quite worthwhile" (Personal Interview, 11 November 2014). Alva responded by suggesting:

It helped me express my feelings in many areas [...] if one expresses oneself in general about the book then maybe one expresses what one feels about the most important parts [...] but with the help of the
journal and the discussion questions I could express what I thought about all of it [...] the whole book [...] it helped. (Personal Interview, 4 November 2014)

What is interesting about Alva's response is her mention of "the most important parts." The question to ask in relation to this, and in relation to her continuance, is "Important to or for whom?" The implication one can draw is that most often the "important parts" are determined by the teacher. The student's focus remains on what is signaled as purposive by the teacher or towards expectations related to a particular assignment that is coupled to the reading. Further, she mentions discussion questions associated with each reading. These questions (see appendices E-G) were designed to focus the students' attention, both while reading and upon reflection after reading, on both an efferent and aesthetic reading of the text. However, these are what Nystrand terms "authentic" questions (38). That is, they are open-ended questions which were not formulated to seek "correct" answers, but rather to encourage the students to consider what they themselves thought or felt about various aspects of the novel, both in terms of content and form.

In a follow-up question to Alva I asked if she was able to write about thoughts or feelings in her journal that she might have been unwilling to take up in a group discussion. The following exchange was recorded:

Alva: Yes, there were certain things I wrote about in the journal [...] some of my own thoughts [...] that I didn't take up later.

Interviewer: So you thought you could write a bit more freely?

Alva: Yes.

Interviewer: Explain how you felt [...] how you could write more freely?
Alva: I felt more free [...] partly because I knew we were not going to turn them in every time [...] only if it was necessary. When I first started writing the journal it was really fine with proper language and spelling [...] then I became a little more relaxed and realized that it was not something everyone was going to see [...] that it was really just for me [...] who wrote it [...] that no one would be looking at it except me [...] then I felt I could write more of what I thought myself [...] that which reminded me of myself [...] could go a little deeper.

Interviewer: So you thought you could write a little more deeply on certain things that you might not have wanted to discuss in a group?

Alva: Yes, yes. (Personal Interview, 4 November 2014)

The above response is important from two perspectives. First is her concern with how and what she was writing in her journal. She indicated that she wrote in a particular fashion, that is "properly," in the beginning, which seemed to constrain her ability or willingness to express her own thoughts. This is perhaps due to a concern with how the journal would be received by a teacher, both from the perspective of form and of content. As such, it evokes the tension between an efferent and an aesthetic reading of the literary text, as well as of the potential efferent or aesthetic reading by another of her own self-produced secondary text. Her expectation that both content and form would be reviewed, if not necessarily evaluated for the purposes of grading, seemed to act as a constraint on her expression of her own reading experience and/or reflection on that experience. This constraint seemed to lessen over time as she came to realize that the journal was designed to allow her to feel free from such a constraint.

Secondly, she indicates that she could write about what "reminded her of herself" and "could go a little deeper." This indicates that it was through her transaction(s) with the text,
both the primary literary text and the secondary text as represented by the reading journal, that she was made aware of and could reflect upon herself as being, in Rosenblatt's terminology, "conditioned by" the aesthetic experience involved in the reading of a literary text. Instead of focusing only on acquiring objective knowledge for the purposes of demonstrating comprehension of the text or technical ability with the language, she was able to concentrate upon her own lived experience. This is often extremely personal in nature, a point taken up by Langer when she indicates that an individual's experience with a text is "related to that individual's personal, cultural, historical, social, and academic experience" (71). The reading journal provided an outlet to express certain feelings or ideas, aspects of her experience, that due to their personal nature, she was unwilling to take up with her peers, or perhaps have revealed to her teacher if the purpose was evaluative rather than formative in nature. As Dysthe suggests, fear of criticism and judgment creates uncertainty and fear, and thus stymies the development of thought through the writing activity (91). Instead, as it was employed in the context of this study, it serves as a means, a personal forum, in which the individual is able to engage in a process of self-development unconstrained by the public nature of the instructional context.

While the use of a reading journal sought to encourage an aesthetic reading of the text, it also acted as instructional scaffolding for the purpose of assisting the students in an efferent reading. Here the focus becomes comprehension with regard to such aspects as plot, character development, setting, theme(s), and/or symbolism, for instance (Appendices B-C). Is the student able to structure an interpretation of the text through the development of critical skills related to its analysis? The foundation for this capability is represented by the student's proficiency with the language from the perspective of competency, which includes competency in the technical aspects of language use as well as in conceptual understanding. In this regard, the discussion questions provided the students acted to stimulate a critical
understanding of the text through a focus on the analysis of various of its aspects, which found expression in the reading journal, during the reading/writing process.

Each of the students interviewed replied in their responses that the reading journal did assist them in helping to both comprehend and structure an interpretation of the text (Personal Interviews, 3-4, 11 November 2014). Zlatan indicated that its use during the reading process was especially important:

Yes [...] for example if we had not used the reading journal [...] if we had just read the whole book it would have been a little difficult to get down one's thoughts in the same way [...] one could do that with the reading journal. With the reading journal I was active the whole time [...] new things came [...] for example if you read the whole book then you concentrate on the last section because that is what you remember and think about the most. (Personal Interview, 4 November 2014)

This indicates that active involvement with the text, in this case by reflecting upon it during the writing of a secondary text, is important for the student in the ongoing evolution of their understanding of the primary text.

With regard to improvement in linguistic proficiency, each of the students responded positively when asked whether the reading journal was of assistance in this area. Alva answered: "I think so [...] I usually don't write in English [...] so [...] I think it helped me a lot to get into writing in English [...] especially for the writing of the essay later [...] that is something that I really don't usually do [...] so it was pretty important to sit down and write [...] my thoughts [...] several times a week" (Personal Interview, 4 November 2014). One conclusion to be drawn from this response is that regular writing, rather than only a focus upon a culminating assignment, not only assists in the development of linguistic capabilities but prepares the student for those culminating assignments in which demonstration of these
capabilities serves as ground for assessment or evaluation. Here Alva is referring to an analytical essay based on the primary text which served a culminating assignment for the module, and which was designed to allow assessment of the students' capability to demonstrate technical proficiency with the language as well as their efferent reading capability through demonstration of comprehension through analysis (Appendix I).

Thus, by also providing an outlet to develop efferent reading capabilities, the reading journal assists in the fulfillment of the knowledge requirements for the English language course in question, as well as for the fulfillment of the requirements related to the development of an aesthetic sensibility. Further, the reading journal acts as support for the students as they move from a focus on individual activity to the social/collective activity of group discussion.

5.2 Student Assessment of Group Discussion as Instructional Scaffolding

The group discussions were designed, as mentioned previously, to allow the students to engage in dialogue, both for the purpose of improving their capabilities with the language, technically and conceptually, as well as to assist them in a collective meaning-making activity that would then be reflected in their individual transaction(s) upon return to the primary text while the reading process continued. The group discussion as instructional scaffolding can be seen to facilitate the development of what I refer to as a tertiary text. That is, the transaction(s) between the students through the medium of language within the "multi-voiced," or polyphonic, classroom creates a collective text which serves to expose each of them to a broader milieu of thought, of meaning, and allows them to collaborate in its creation. The iterative process of reading/writing, discussion/writing, followed by a return to reading/writing, acts to spur an ongoing and evolving experience for the students, one that is enriched by their collective meaning-making through dialogue.
For instance, the following exchange was recorded with Sven:

Interviewer: Do you think that the group discussions helped you to see aspects of the novel that you otherwise might not have seen without them?
Sven: Yes, I think that [...] definitely [...] one got to see other aspects then [...] concerning [...] I thought quite a lot about [...] I sought to see the good in the whole thing [...] but [another student] he saw the you know with the heads [...] he wondered if [Kurtz] was trying to remind himself of something [...] that was not the first thing I thought.
Interviewer: So getting different opinions from your friends was something useful?
Sven: Yes, I think so.

[...]

Interviewer: So when you mentioned [the other student] and the heads [...] it was helpful to hear about [this student's] views?
Sven: Yes it was [...] I had not thought in that way [...] and then when he said it you could see a pattern [...] connections with it [...] I thought it was really good. (Personal Interview, 11 November 2014)

The above exchange refers to that section of *Heart of Darkness* in which Marlow and his crew arrive at Kurtz's station in the interior to find a number of posts with skulls on them turned to face Kurtz's dwelling (52). Sven's own understanding of what this could represent was broadened after his transaction with another student, one who had been interpreting events or phenomena in the novel from an entirely different viewpoint than Sven himself. It is likewise probable that the other student involved in the exchange of dialogue was also provided with an alternative view of the symbolism behind this phenomenon. Between these students a more
meaningful, expansive text, was generated. Nystrand points to the "transformation of understandings" (19) which result when "conflict, not harmony" (18) in students' acts of interpretation come into contact with each other in dialogic exchange. For Nystrand, "knowledge is something generated, constructed, indeed co-constructed in collaboration with others" (17). This view of "knowledge" of a literary text I suggest is that which can be associated with an efferent reading, although "knowledge" of others, through the exchange of views on an aesthetic reading also serves to create meaning through dialogue.

In this sense, Zlatan's experience of the group discussions further illustrates their value to students seeking a fuller understanding of the text, and each other, for the purpose of self-development. In response to his views on the group discussions he stated the following:

It was actually cool to have discussions [...] one was able to open up and there wasn't anything that was incorrect in what one said. One learned during the discussions [...] someone else I was discussing with maybe had understood a situation in his/her own way [...] it was not wrong [...] but I had another understanding of it [...] and of course there would be discussion. And in that way one learns. (Personal Interview, 4 November 2014)

A point of interest beyond the utility of the group discussions in facilitating the creation of collective meaning is Zlatan's reflection over his own learning process, which leads to the development of meta-cognitive skills, as a result of taking part in dialogue with other students. This reflection accords with Langer's insistence that "students use their interactions with others to explore new horizons of possibilities" (64). Where Langer uses the term interaction I would use the term transaction, in that each of the students, in Rosenblatt's terminology, is conditioned by and conditions the tertiary text which they together evoke through their dialogic transaction(s).
A further point to be made about the group discussions is that they were not being observed for the purpose of assessment/evaluation. Like the reading journal itself, the group discussion as instructional scaffolding was more concerned with providing a forum in which the students could feel comfortable expressing their thoughts and/or feelings about their reading experience, both from an aesthetic and an efferent perspective, rather than focusing on the performative aspects of their dialogue with each other. In regard to this point, my own involvement in these discussions is worth mentioning here. Throughout the lesson periods while group discussions were taking place, I would visit each group occasionally and listen, while also at times interjecting with a comment or a follow-up question to a student to spur additional dialogue between them. This accords with the appropriate role of structuring a dialogic exchange between students as developed by Gutierrez and presented by Nystrand (27).

In addressing the above two aspects, the following exchange was recorded with Louise:

Louise: I was more relaxed because I knew it did not have that sort of importance. I become nervous if I know I'm being graded [...] and I am not willing to say exactly what I think because it might sound dumb or something [...] so I am not as willing.

Interviewer: So you think you would be a little more reserved if the discussions were being graded?

Louise: Yes I think so. (Personal Interview, 3 November 2014)

It is important to point out that several of the students expressed a concern with performance, as noted previously with the reading journal, with regard to verbal interaction in group discussions, especially if the groups were composed of individuals unfamiliar to the student.
This is a concern that found expression in the following comment by Alva when asked about her view of the group discussions:

I thought they were good [...] they were instructive [...] because sometimes one gets stuck in one's own views [...] it was quite useful to get to hear others [...] one thought a little more about what was going on [...] a little more thought on what was going to happen [...] It was also very relaxed [...] I thought it was nice to be able to sit together with who we wanted [...] so everyone didn't sit there afraid to say something. (Personal Interview, 4 November 2014)

This comment suggests that creating an environment in which the students could engage in dialogue involves allowing them to feel a certain security not only vis-a-vis an instructor or teacher, but also vis-a-vis other students.

One of the key components of the group discussion process was the provision of instructor-provided discussion questions for the first three reading assignments. These function as a form of sub-scaffolding to the instructional scaffolding represented by the group discussions themselves. For the fourth group discussion the students were assigned the task of developing their own discussion questions (Appendix H), a selection of which would be presented to the whole class and then serve as a basis for the group discussions during that lesson period. This assignment involved the removal of one form of instructional scaffolding for the purpose of encouraging the students to move through and beyond the zone of proximal development, that is, appropriate and exercise the capability for which the scaffolding was designed to assist them to obtain. I asked the students about their views regarding this particular task. It is worth presenting in full two of the student responses provided during the interviews.
Louise's response indicates that the discussion questions provided by the instructor acted as support in the development of her own capability to interrogate the text. The following exchange was recorded with Louise regarding her views on this particular task:

Louise: It was difficult but it was good because you got to think about how you understood the novel [...] but it was quite difficult.

Interviewer: Explain that a little.

Louise: Well I had to think a little bit differently.

[...]

Interviewer: So instead of answering questions you had to ask them?

Louise: It was a little difficult.

Interviewer: Do you think during this process you developed the capability to replace the teacher as the questioner by beginning to ask your own questions?

Louise: Yes [...] if we had not gotten help in the beginning of the reading we would not have been able to develop such deep questions [...] but we realized we had to think deeper and analyze more.

Interviewer: So the questions you got for the first three sections helped you to develop ideas about how to ask questions?

Louise: Yes [...] we never could have asked the kind of questions we did if we did not have the earlier questions in mind. (Personal Interview, 3 November 2014)

As the purpose of the instructor-provided discussion questions, as instructional scaffolding, were to serve as a model (Applebee and Langer 170), Louise's response above indicates that, for her and other students, they functioned in this fashion.

Alva's response to this assignment is also worth presenting in its entirety:
Alva: I thought it was very exciting because we got to see what everyone else thought [...] that is with the questions [...] what people were focused on [...] there was a question about the women and a question about why the skulls were on the stakes [...] I thought it was pretty interesting because one has to think over again the different aspects [...] how they hang together [...] what they point to [...] and I thought it was pretty fun that we could come up with the questions ourselves because we got to decide ourselves what we thought was important and what we ourselves reacted to [...] and then when we answered the questions we hit upon lots of different points. I thought it was a really good mix.

Interviewer: What would you say if I told you that was one of the main goals of the lesson module [...] was to get you to develop the capability to ask your own questions of the text?

Alva: It was very instructive because we got quite a few questions beforehand [...] so we saw how questions should look [...] we understood what we should take up [...] what was important [...] with help to understand what was meaningful we could react to what we thought were good questions [...] one learned a bit of a pattern [...] one learned how to formulate questions [...] so I think it was good.

(Personal Interview, 4 November 2014)

Alva's focus is upon the student-generated questions. Her response indicates that it was important for her that the students themselves were engaged in structuring the group discussions by generating questions related to what they themselves found interesting or important rather than simply relying on what the teacher/instructor thought were important
issues related to the reading. However, it is also significant that the instructor-supplied questions served as a model to structure an approach towards the development of such questions by the students.

5.3 Student Assessment of the Integration of Reading Journal and Group Discussion

In this section I will present student responses to the combined use of reading journals and group discussions as well as their reactions to the choice of the primary text, *Heart of Darkness*. One of the key elements of the lesson module was the use of multiple forms of instructional scaffolding which functioned both complementarily and progressively, creating a form of iterative activity, as has been discussed previously. Thus, student response to the combination of individual activity in the form or reading/writing followed by group activity in the form of discussion would allow for a proper assessment of whether or not these activities together represented an effective method of instructional scaffolding from the perspective of the students themselves.

Zlatan's response to this particular issue was followed-up with a question regarding what he thought the *product* of the group discussions was, in comparison to the written *product* represented by the reading journal:

Interviewer: Do you think the combination of the reading journal and group discussions improved your understanding of the novel from the perspective of form, inclusive language, and content?

Zlatan: Yes, yes. I think it was cool to have both [...] it would not have been as cool if we only read and then had the reading journal later and left it [...] so I think the combination [...] we got a mix [...] one learned
to work both individually, independently, and then wind up in some
group and discuss.

Interviewer: How would you describe [...] you say that you work
independently when you write a journal, for example, one does one's
own work [...] How would you describe the group work you did
together?

Zlatan: It was effective [...] it was cool, really.

Interviewer: What was the product? If one was to say that the product
of writing in the journal is a written product [...] what would you say
the product was of these group discussions?

Zlatan: Both/and [...] both speaking [...] through discussion [...] after
the discussions maybe you add something to a section [of the journal]
that we had taken up during the discussion.

[...]

Interviewer: If I ask you, have you produced something together, what
would you say [...] through these group discussions?

Zlatan: Solidarity.

Interviewer: Solidarity?

Zlatan: Now, for example, we mixed quite a bit [...] in that way you
learn about each other.

Interviewer: Learn about each other in what way?

Zlatan: Personally, how that person thinks, imagines, understands [...] 
and speaks English, of course.

Interviewer: So you could say that you understand this person a little
better?
In the above response we can see what Dysthe regards as four key aspects of the integration of reading, writing, and discussion in the classroom environment. These four aspects are: (1) The student him/herself achieves the status of active thinker, which provides self-confidence; (2) The reading journal as a student-produced text serves as the ground for discussion, thus shifting the focus from the teacher to the students; (3) "Multi-voicedness" allows for a broader range of perspectives to find a means of expression; and (4) Thematic coherence is maintained through the integration of writing and dialog (122). Further, the above exchange reveals that through this process a certain form of solidarity is achieved as students recognize their mutual interest in reciprocity in their transaction(s) with one another. This fosters the demands of the curriculum that students "strengthen confidence in the own ability to individually and together with others take initiative, take responsibility and influence their own conditions" ("Supplement" 11).

Regarding the effectiveness of the instructional scaffolding as well as the appropriateness of the novel for this particular instructional context, the following exchange with Louise reveals that the text, while difficult, was what I will describe as within the zone of proximal development:

Interviewer: How would you describe the way you worked with novels/stories in your previous English classes in comparison with how you worked with this novel?

Louise: This process was more worthwhile but it took quite a bit more time [...] writing a book review is easier [...] here we had to strain ourselves [...] It was a bit difficult for those who were a bit weaker.

Interviewer: Do you think the novel was too difficult for this course?
Louise: For me it was right on the border, just right [...] but I know others had quite a bit of difficulty with it.

Interviewer: When you said you had to strain yourself, was the strain just right to develop your capabilities to a higher level?

Louise: Yes [...] I put a lot into it [...] but I have gotten something out of it. (Personal Interview, 3 November 2014)

Alva concurs with this view of the relative difficulty of the novel and at the same time, like Louise, she suggests that it lay within her personal zone of proximal development:

Interviewer: What do you think about the choice of Heart of Darkness as a novel to work with in English?

Alva: It was really taxing [...] because we had not read anything like this before in English [...] We have read some of these difficult books in Swedish [...] but it was not impossible [...] that here with the symbolism [...] that question [one of three possible] we got later for the writing assignment [...] I felt [...] no [...] I don't really have a complete understanding of that [...] there were certain aspects I was a bit uncertain of [...] but it was not incomprehensible [...] for the most part [...] so one could manage to read through and understand it. (Personal Interview, 4 November 2014)

That Louise, Alva, and the other students found the novel difficult is no surprise. As Parkinson and Thomas indicate, even undergraduate students in Great Britain for whom English represents an L1 language find that reading the novel:

[...] is itself a difficult task which seems to mimic the journey of exploration, the struggle against the stream which it describes [...] readers may need some reassurance that it is not just their inadequate
command of the language that makes them feel they have missed the point but that this hiddenness at the centre is part of the meaning of the novel. (116)

Given the difficulty of the text, the literary didactic methods employed, the forms of instructional scaffolding, help to determine whether or not the learning objectives prescribed in the curriculum are achieved or whether the task itself lies beyond the zone of proximal development of the students involved with its execution.

6. Assessment of the Study's Results and Concluding Comments

Before I proceed, it is worthwhile to point out that the students' responses presented above represent a mere sampling of those students' responses. As well, only four of the eight students interviewed were able to be included in the analysis due to practical constraints. Further, these eight students were among twenty-one students who took part in the lesson module. While student response to the literary didactic methods employed, that is the instructional scaffolding, were positive, they represent the views of these particular students in this particular context. These students volunteered to be interviewed following the completion of the lesson module, which indicates that they were perhaps more inclined to have viewed the lesson module itself positively.

Nevertheless, the results indicate that for these students at least, the instructional scaffolding provided acted as the support that was necessary for them to transition through and beyond the zone of proximal development which was particular to each of them. Whether or not these methods were appropriate for the other students involved, those who were not interviewed but took part in the lesson module, is not possible to ascertain due to a lack of
data. This cautions the prospective teacher/instructor to consider, perhaps, alternative methods or a varied use of primary texts, perhaps concurrently, in any given instruction sequence involving literature. Further action research in this area would assist in providing a more complete understanding of student response to these methods.

As the student responses above indicate, from the perspective of the students themselves, the instructional scaffolding employed during the lesson module featuring a reading of Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* fulfilled the criteria for the formulation of effective scaffolding as prescribed by Applebee and Langer. This is true when one considers learning outcomes related to knowledge, skills, and understanding, that is, technical and conceptual competency with form, inclusive language, and content, as well as aesthetically, that is, in assisting the students to develop an aesthetic sensibility as understood within the framework of Rosenblatt's theory of the literary experience.

Crucially, it was the integrated approach to the application of literary didactic methods that the students themselves found especially effective in facilitating the movement through and beyond the zone of proximal development. The interplay of primary, secondary, and tertiary texts provided an iterative progression from individual experience and reflection upon that experience to a collective experience. That collective experience generated meaning through dialogue which was then reflected back into the individual experience of the primary text as the reading process continued. The responses related to the development of student-generated questions regarding the primary text during the fourth lesson in the sequence is enlightening from this perspective. That the students themselves were able to recognize a transition, a progression of their capabilities through the interplay of the literary didactic methods employed, is one aspect of the study that is particularly rewarding from my own perspective as an instructor and researcher.
One last point to consider is that the lesson module was designed to combine an approach to the reading of literature which set value upon both an efferent and an aesthetic reading of the primary text. Rosenblatt's insistence that these two purposes for reading represent poles on a continuum rather than, as Langer suggests, are totally exclusionary, informed the structure of the lesson module and the literary didactic methods employed. The results, that is, student responses, indicate that they were able to achieve a perspective in their reading which allowed them to fulfill both purposes simultaneously, although with a certain emphasis at any given time on one purpose or the other. The emphasis on formative rather than evaluative assessment during the core of the lesson sequence was also a crucial factor in the students' ability to engage the literary text individually and collectively without undue focus upon performance. Instead, the students were able to concern themselves with their own and their peers' response(s) to the literary text from both an aesthetic and efferent perspective.

As suggested above, further research is necessary to determine whether the overall methodology employed in this study is wholly appropriate to literature instruction in the EFL/ESL classroom in the Swedish upper secondary school system. However, what can be ascertained from the current study is that for particular students in particular contexts this methodology provided the opportunity for personal development and collective understanding. That is, the students presented here saw themselves as having developed as individuals, and as members of a collective, through their experience of having read, written about, and discussed with their peers the literary text, *Heart of Darkness*. 
References
"Alva." Personal Interview. 4 November 2014.


"Louise." Personal Interview. 3 November 2014.


"Sven." Personal Interview. 11 November 2014.

Appendices

Appendix A The Structure of the Lesson Module

The lesson module was enacted over the course of a ten-week period in which one 85-minute lesson per week was devoted to both preparation for working with the text (four weeks) and the subsequent core of the module (six weeks), which comprised the actual engagement with the primary literary text, Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*.

As part of preparation for the reading of the novel, several preliminary lessons were designed to act as a bridge to the actual core of the lesson module. The first lesson involved a description of the plan for the lesson module as well as the opportunity for the students to write a presentation letter which was intended to provide information to the instructor regarding their previous experience with English language courses, the types of reading they had done in these courses, their general reading habits and their goals for the English 7 course in which they had enrolled. This lesson period served primarily administrative purposes, although the presentation letters provided significant information about the students who were to take part in subsequent interviews related to the study.

The second lesson period was utilized to provide the students information related to the practice of literary analysis, including key concepts pertaining to this
particular activity (Appendix B). In addition, instructions for the use of a reading journal were presented and discussed with the students (Appendix C). The students were then provided with a copy of Kate Chopin's "The Story of an Hour," which they were to read from the perspective of the "Elements of Fiction" document (Appendix B) and which would serve as the basis for group and class discussions concerning their analysis of the text in the subsequent lesson period. The choice of this particular text was based on both critical and practical considerations.

In the third lesson period, the students engaged in group discussions, which were observed and participated in by the instructor for the purpose of providing guidance and answering questions that were raised related to the text and the literary concepts involved in analysis of the text. This activity was followed by a short class discussion which was instructor-led but based on questions raised by the students, again, regarding the text and the concepts involved in literary analysis that were raised during the previous group discussions.

The fourth and final preliminary lesson involved a short class discussion related to student knowledge of the history of European colonialism in Africa. In addition to the class discussion, the students were shown a BBC documentary by Adam Curtis, "The Machine in the Monkey and the Monkey in the Machine," which has as a primary theme the interplay of Western ideology and economic interest in Congo during the second half of the 20th century, and how this interplay is reflected in the self-image of the West which co-evolved with the image of Africa/Africans from the early colonial period of the Congo to the present. Following the video presentation, the students engaged in group discussions with the aid of questions supplied by the instructor (Appendix D). While this lesson had as its purpose the development of context, it can also be viewed as a source of contextualization, one which, while contributing to the reading of the novel from an efferent perspective, can also be viewed as providing a theoretical and
experiential framework through which the individual student could develop a sensibility concerning *self-in-relation-to-other*, which is essential for an aesthetic reading of the text as well as interpersonal and intercultural interaction/transaction.

The following five lessons form the core of the lesson module. Each of these lessons were reserved for group and/or class discussions related to the reading of the novel, which was divided into five sections or units. The students were instructed to read the appropriate section of the novel prior to coming to the subsequent lesson period. As part of the reading process they were to record their experience(s), including thoughts, emotions, etc., during the reading process in their reading journals. In addition, they were provided discussion questions by the instructor, some or all of which they were encouraged to respond to in written form in their reading journals. The purpose of these questions, supplied for only the first three sections or units of reading (see lesson 4 below), was to provide instructional scaffolding to facilitate engagement during the initial stages of their individual transaction(s) with the text, as well as to provide instructional scaffolding to facilitate engagement with each other during the initial stages of group discussions during the first three lesson periods. The questions provided were *authentic*, that is open-ended, and designed to enhance the reading of the text from both an aesthetic and an efferent perspective (see appendices E-F).

It was in the fourth lesson in the five-lesson sequence dedicated to the reading of the text that a significant component of the scaffolding, represented by the instructor-provided discussion questions, was withdrawn. The students were assigned the task of developing, individually, a list of their own questions related to their reading for unit 4 of the text. During this lesson, each group, after consultation amongst its members, was to supply two questions from the group, from a selection of questions that each individual had developed individually, to present to the class as a whole. These questions, collected and presented to the class (see Appendix H for a sample of the
questions generated by the students for this lesson), then served as a foundation for group discussions carried out subsequently during the lesson.

The fifth lesson period related to the reading of the conclusion of the novel. First, the students engaged in a final round of group discussion related to its conclusion, without having been provided questions from the instructor. Following this, the students were presented instructions for the culminating assignment related to the their reading of *Heart of Darkness*, as well as an opportunity to begin the writing process under the supervision of the instructor. The assignment allowed the students to choose from among three different options for the writing of an essay related to the novel (Appendix I). The essay was to be written over the course of the current and the following lesson, which occurred during the final week of the student-teacher placement of the instructor. The students were encouraged to use their reading journals, notes taken during group and class discussions, and any relevant external sources they thought might prove useful in the writing of the essay. They were also encouraged to discuss the assignment with each other while being reminded that the product, the essay, was to be an individual rather than a group effort.

**Appendix B The Elements of Fiction**

*Plot* is a term to describe the arrangement of the action which takes place in a story. Causality is an essential feature of the plot in realistic fiction, while it is less important in non-realistic fiction.

*Structure* refers to the patterns or the "shape" of the story as a completed whole. Important aspects of structure are repeated elements and/or recurrent details, change of point of view or scene, or perhaps the setting. Any aspect which helps to shape the form the story takes can be referred to as an element of its structure.
Characters, whether major or minor, are the imaginary people or personified animals or things about which the story is told. As readers we identify with the characters in the story. As we read we focus on what the characters do or say and how they act as well as how they influence others. We also focus on other aspects of the characters that the author presents to the reader in order to understand the characters better.

Setting refers to the place or places as well as the time or different times that the story takes place in. Settings are often associated with the ideals or the attitudes of a particular time or place. They can also symbolize emotional states or attitudes of the character or characters.

Point of view refers to the author's choice as to how the story is going to be told to the reader. It is closely linked to the type of narrator (or fictional voice) of the story. There are two main categories of narrator: 1st person and 3rd person. Each provides a choice of point of view from which to tell the story.

A 1st person narrator can be either a character who tells his/her own story (and is referred to as the protagonist) or a character who tells a story that he/she was somehow involved in (a witness or non-protagonist).

A 3rd person narrator can be omniscient, meaning that he/she knows everything about the characters involved in the story, including their thoughts and emotions. Otherwise, the 3rd person narrator can be either non-omniscient, meaning that his/her knowledge of the characters is limited, perhaps to one character only, or the narrator can be an external eye-witness who is only able to report the story based on what he/she has actually come to know about the other characters.

The type of language a writer chooses to use, including the choice of words and their arrangement in the structure of the story, defines a writer's style. A writer's style is the equivalent to an identity, one which is often immediately recognizable to the reader.
The writer's particular style helps to reveal a unique view of the world which is expressed in his/her fiction.

The theme of a story can be described as the meaning which can be extracted from the story, often formulated in a more or less general idea or point. A theme in a fable, for example, can be a moral. A theme in a parable can be its teaching. Themes in other types of fiction can often be less apparent but no less defining to the story being told.

Ironic can be described as a contrast or a discrepancy, often between what is said and what is meant (verbal irony) or between what happens and what is expected to happen (situational irony). Other types of irony include dramatic irony, the difference between what readers know and what characters know, as well as ironic vision, which refers to how the author can be said to envision his/her own story.

Symbols are those things within a story that convey meaning beyond the literal meaning in which they are presented. They can include objects, actions, and/or events. These become symbolic through the significance which they occupy within the story.

Adapted from:

Appendix C Instructions for the Reading Journal

What is a reading/writing journal and why is it both useful and a required component of this lesson module?

A reading/writing journal is a document which you will keep throughout the reading process. Remember that reading is a transactional process rather than simply a
passive activity. Your thoughts about what you are reading while you are reading are crucial to consider during the reading process itself. That is to say, reflection over what you read should occur not only when you have finished a text. It should be a continuous process that informs your understanding not only of the text but of your evolving experience while reading the text. Recording such thoughts/responses in a reading/writing journal allows you to recognize and self-assess your development from both a technical perspective and a theoretical perspective. Some things to consider including in your reading/writing journal are your thoughts or ideas concerning the following characteristics of the narrative within the text:

1. The setting(s) and/or scene (time and place).

2. The narrator(s) and the narrative technique, including the point of view of the narrator(s).

3. The type(s) of language and vocabulary as well as the style of writing used in the text – Is it contemporary or perhaps from another era? How do these aspects of the text affect the reading experience? What does the dialogue tell you about the characters or the setting?

4. The characters in the text – What types of characters are involved in the narrative? How are they presented? What is interesting or uninteresting about them? Who is/are the main character(s)? How do the characters develop or, perhaps, remain static throughout the narrative?

5. Plot and structure – What conflict(s), if any, occur in the narrative? How does the plot develop? What is the climax of the narrative? Is there a resolution, and if so, what is it and why do you think the author chose this resolution rather than some other? What might the title tell you about the content of the text? How does the structure of the narrative affect your reading experience?
6. Theme – What theme(s), if any, do you consider the text to incorporate or address? That is, what significant meaning can be extracted from the text?

7. Symbolism – What, if any, meaning is conveyed beyond the literal meaning of various actions, objects or events which form a part of the narrative within the text.

All of the above characteristics or aspects of the text are important to your ability to provide an analysis of what you are reading, whether that analysis is verbal or written. Having a written record of your thoughts and ideas as they occur during the reading process will help you considerably when it comes time to write an essay or give a presentation concerning the text that you have read.

In addition to your thoughts concerning the above characteristics of the narrative text, the reading/writing journal should include citations from the text you are reading which strike you as profound, interesting, funny, and/or strange, etc., and which cause you to pause and reflect over their possible meaning(s). Paired with these citations will be your comments which reflect your reaction(s). These comments can incorporate the thoughts or ideas which occur to you as well as the feelings or emotions that are aroused by the particular portion of the text which you reference.

For example, the following could represent an entry in a reading/writing journal which a student has kept while reading Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*:

The steamer toiled along slowly on the edge of a black and incomprehensible frenzy. The prehistoric man was cursing us, praying to us, welcoming us – who could tell? We were cut off from the comprehension of our surroundings; we glided past like phantoms, wondering and secretly appalled, as sane men would be before an enthusiastic outbreak in a madhouse. (51)

Comment: "I think what Conrad might be trying to say here is that the geographic isolation that the European experiences in the jungle environment with its unfamiliarity
and/or peculiarity is comparable to their cultural isolation when confronted with the native cultures of Africa by which they are surrounded during their trip up the river. Just as they feel that the environment is totally alien, so they feel like the man on the riverbank is totally alien, thus incapable of being understood. They call him prehistoric only because they can't understand him, his apparent primitive nature, because he is not like them, like Europeans. They are appalled by their own lack of understanding, attributing it to the irrationality of the natives and their environment, rather than to some lack within themselves. This passage demonstrates the European colonists' tendency to denigrate cultures which they don't understand or fail to try to understand. It might also suggest at least one overall theme of the novel thus far, which seems to be that the further one goes from one's own home/culture, the more one is in danger of confronting the inexplicable or what seems the irrational, and thus in danger of perhaps joining in the 'enthusiastic outbreak' of 'madness' which might result from a trip into the unknown.”

Alternatively, one could indicate in the reading/writing journal certain words, phrases, or structural components which are interesting or which require a bit of investigation. This is especially true of words or phrases which one simply does not understand. The reading/writing journal is a good place to write down these words or phrases so that they can be paired with definitions/explanations.

For instance, again from Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*: “He had the power to charm or frighten rudimentary souls into an aggravated witch-dance in his honour” (72). Comment: "Rudimentary means here undeveloped or primitive. Aggravated means to intensify something evil, disorderly, or troublesome, so here he means an intensification of the 'witch-dance.' It seems that Kurtz has used his influence among the natives to turn himself into some kind of god figure...this can't end well. ' Honour' is
spelled like in British English instead of American English...that's because Conrad immigrated to England after his travels, according to the introduction to the novel."

Finally, the reading/writing journal can be used in preparing and then presenting your answers to the discussion questions which will be provided with the texts that you will be reading during the module/course. For instance, following are three possible discussion questions for Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*:

1. In the last paragraph of section 1, Marlow suggests that he is curious about how a man like Kurtz, "equipped with moral ideas," will act once he gets out into the bush. He wonders if he will "climb to the top" and how "he would set about his work.” Explain what you think about this. Why do you think Conrad ends section 1 in this way? Can you describe what literary device this might be?

2. At the beginning of section 2, the station manager and his uncle, a prospector, are discussing Kurtz. What more do we find out about Kurtz from this discussion? What attitude do both the station manager and his uncle have towards Kurtz? What does this say about these two men? What might it say about Kurtz? What does it say about Europeans in the Congo?

3. In the same sequence, the discussion between the station manager and his uncle, Conrad again utilizes the symbol of darkness: "I saw him extend his short flipper of an arm for a gesture...that seemed to beckon...with a dishonouring flourish before the sunlit face of the land a treacherous appeal to the lurking death, to the hidden evil, to the profound darkness of its heart.” What do you think Conrad means? What is he referring to? What do you think lies before Marlow in his mission to find Kurtz?

Answers to such discussion questions should be developed through internal reflection during the reading process so that you can contribute to group and class discussions as well as be able to complete a writing assignment which will be based on your reading of a novel.
Appendix D Adam Curtis' "The Monkey in the Machine and the Machine in the Monkey"

1. What do you think about the way that Adam Curtis portrays Africa and Africans in his documentary, "The Monkey in the Machine and the Machine in the Monkey?" What roles do Europeans/Westerners play in relation to events in Africa, as portrayed in the documentary? What sort of inter-relationships exist between Westerners and Africans, again, as portrayed by Curtis?

2. What motivations do you think lie behind Western interest(s) in Africa? What motivations do you perceive Curtis as suggesting lie behind Western interest(s) in Africa?

3. Do you believe in Progress as an ideal? What does Progress really mean? What role, or roles, do you think the idea of Progress plays in Western civilization? What role, or roles, does Progress play in the West's interaction with other cultures?

4. At one point in the documentary, Curtis makes the claim that Diane Fossey, like many Europeans/Westerners, “maltreated Africans” in the interests of a “higher, Western ideal?” What do you make of this claim? Do you agree or disagree? Why/Why not? What instances can you think of which might conform to this notion? Can Curtis himself be accused of this? Why or why not?

5. Who is the primary subject of Curtis' “The Monkey in the Machine and the Machine in the Monkey?”
Appendix E Discussion Questions for Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*

**Unit 1 (pp. 1-20)**

1. What is your immediate response to *Heart of Darkness* after having read the first 20 pages? What sort of tale is being told? What is the significance, if any, of the way the tale is being told?

2. How would you describe Marlow? What sort of view does he have of life in general? Of his own life? How does he relate to the other characters presented in the novel, especially the natives he encounters in Africa?

3. What do you think of the significance of Marlow's reference to Roman Britain that begins on page 3 of the text: "And this also [...] has been one of the dark places of the earth." How do you think it might relate to the unfolding tale that he is telling?

4. Have you ever been on a "journey" into the unknown? If so, what type of journey might this have been? Can such a journey be described in more than simply geographical/physical terms? That is, could such a journey be psychological, or perhaps emotional in nature, instead of or in addition to its geographical/physical nature?

5. What do you think about Conrad's extensive use of the binary symbols *light/dark*? What do you think he might be trying to achieve by utilizing these symbols in the way that he does throughout the narrative? What meanings do you think can be attributed to these symbols? That is, what might they represent in the various contexts in which they are used?

6. On page 11, Marlow suggests that women have a peculiar relationship to "truth." What do you make of this passage? What might Marlow be suggesting? Do you agree or disagree? Explain.
7. How is "nature" portrayed by Marlow? How are the natives portrayed by Marlow? Is there any association between these portrayals? Compare this to Marlow's description of the Company's chief accountant on page 16.

8. How would you describe the Company's chief accountant? What do you think about how he views his position and his surroundings?

9. What goal(s) do the Westerners portrayed in the novel seem to have with regard to Africa/Africans? What is it, do you think, they are trying to achieve through their presence in this foreign land?

10. What image of Mr. Kurtz is presented by the Company's chief accountant? What expectations do you have for Kurtz, given the way he is introduced within the narrative?

11. From your reading thus far, what influence(s) does the African environment seem to have on the various Westerners portrayed in the novel? How does this relate to Marlow's conversation with the doctor at the Company's headquarters in Europe?

12. What sort of view of Progress is presented thus far in the novel? How does Conrad weave this concept into the narrative? What significance might one ascribe to this concept as motivation for the Westerners who venture into Africa?

13. Based on your reading to this point, how do you envision the development of the narrative? Use your imagination!

Appendix F Discussion Questions Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*

Unit 2 (pp. 20-39)

1. How would you describe Marlow's view of the Company's general manager at the station? Do you think it is significant that this character is not named? Explain.

2. Marlow describes the other Westerners at the station as “faithless pilgrims” (22-23). What do you think he means by this? What might this say about Marlow's view of what
is occurring around him? How does this relate to the Adam Curtis documentary, “The Monkey in the Machine and the Machine in the Monkey?” How might this relate to Westerner's actions in Africa in the present day?

3. What, if any, is the significance of the painting by Kurtz that the “bricklayer” shows Marlow (24)? How would you interpret the painting given its description?

4. What is your impression of Kurtz after reading the passage in which the “bricklayer” discusses Kurtz with Marlow? How would you describe Marlow's view of the “bricklayer?” How might this description relate, if at all, to the idea of the “faithless pilgrim?” Explain.

5. What do you make of Marlow's description of the dream-like quality of Kurtz (26) and then of life in general (27)? What do you think he is trying to say? What do you think this might signify, if anything, about the narrative itself?

6. Do you think, as Marlow suggests on page 28, that one person's “reality” is simply a “mere show” to others; that others can never tell “what it means?” Do you think that this statement might suggest something about Conrad's own viewpoint? What impact might such a view have on your reading of the novel? What implications does this viewpoint have for human interaction/communication? Explain.

7. What difference is there, if any, between Marlow's description of the men in the “Eldorado Exploring Expedition” and his earlier description of the Company men? Is the name of the expedition significant in the context of the history of colonialism? Explain.

8. Marlow describes for the others (32) the first time that he felt he had “glimpsed” Kurtz. What do you think of the image that he provides regarding Kurtz “turning his back on the headquarters” and returning to his station in the wilderness? What might this signify? How does this description shape your impression of Kurtz? Explain.
9. The title of the novel is mentioned for the first time (35) in the context of the journey up the river to the Inner Station, that is, Kurtz's station. What do you make of Marlow's description of this journey up the river? What do you make of his description of the natives he encounters? How does this relate, if at all, to the title of the novel?

10. What do you think the warning message found at the hut on the way up-river signifies? Who do you think might have left it and for what reason?

11. How do you interpret Conrad's use of the binary symbols surface/depth? Do you think these symbols are related to the binary light/dark which is also prevalent throughout the text? Why or why not?

12. What do you think might happen if or when Marlow finally meets Kurtz? What expectations do you have as a reader? What do you think about the way that Conrad has shaped your expectations as a reader throughout the unfolding narrative?

Appendix G Discussion Questions Joseph Conrad's Heart of Darkness

Unit 3 (pp. 39-55)

1. Marlow begins to describe, beginning on page 40, the cannibals who make up the steamboat's crew. What image of these men does his description create for you? What does this description say about the relationship between Marlow and these men? Between the Company and these men? And finally, what do you think this description implies about the relationship between Westerners/Europeans and these men?

2. In Marlow's description of the crew, he suggests that "they still belonged to the beginnings of time -- had no inherited experience to teach them as it were" (41). What do you think he means by this?

3. Why do you think that Marlow is so disappointed, having assumed that Kurtz is dead (47), that he might not be able to "speak," finally, with Kurtz? What do you make of
Marlow's image of Kurtz as a "voice?" What might this say about Marlow and his journey? What might this say, if anything, of Kurtz or what Kurtz might symbolize?

4. What might Marlow mean by describing Kurtz as a "gifted creature" (48)? How do you interpret Marlow's description of Kurtz's most important "gift," i.e. that of "words?" How might this "gift" relate to the tale being told by Marlow? How might this "gift" relate to the comment that Kurtz's words represent, perhaps, "the deceitful flow from the heart of an impenetrable darkness" (48)? Why do you think Kurtz would be described in such a way?

5. Marlow, on page 49, again references the "beautiful world of their own" that women supposedly inhabit. Why do you think he has brought this up again in connection to a reference to Kurtz's "Intended," that is, his fiancé? What importance might this have, if any? What importance, if any, might it have that Kurtz has a fiancé?

6. How would you describe your evolving understanding of Kurtz after having read Marlow's description, beginning on page 49, of his actions amongst the natives? That is, what image do you have of Kurtz after having read that "he had taken a high seat amongst the devils of the land -- I mean literally?" What "devils" do you think Marlow might be referring to? How might this relate, if at all, to the description of the "company men" as "pilgrims?"

7. What do you think Marlow means when he describes the effects of "solitude" on Kurtz? What do you think he means by "solitude?" Is Kurtz truly alone if he is with the natives of the region? How does Marlow's notion of solitude relate, if at all, to the concept of "darkness?"

8. What do you make of the name of the organization that Kurtz is associated with: "The International Society for the Suppression of Savage Customs?" What do you think membership in such an association reveals, if anything, about Kurtz? What do you think
the presence of such an organization in the region says, if anything, about Western ideas of native culture and tradition?

9. Why do you think that at the end of his "pamphlet" on native culture Kurtz has written, "Exterminate the brutes!"?

10. On page 51, Marlow again takes up the notion of progress. What do you make of his comments regarding progress and civilization? How does the notion of progress relate to the presence of Westerners in the region? Is there a link between the ideas expressed in this passage and themes from the Adam Curtis documentary, "The Machine in the Monkey and the Monkey in the Machine," that you viewed prior to beginning your reading of *Heart of Darkness*?

11. In conversation with Marlow, the Russian suggests that "you don't talk with that man [Kurtz] -- you listen to him" (54). This is the second time in a brief span of the novel that Kurtz is associated with a "voice." Reflect on what this portrayal of Kurtz might mean. Do you think it is important that Kurtz is portrayed in this way? Why or why not? Explain.

12. The Russian suggests, on page 55, that one must "see things, gather experience, ideas; enlarge the mind," when one is young. What do you think he means by this? Do you agree? If so, how does one go about doing this? How would you go about doing this?

13. After having completed this section, how do you envision a possible encounter between Marlow and Kurtz? Use your imagination and write a description of this meeting based on your perception of each of the characters. What might they do when they meet? That is, how might they react to one another in person? Where might this meeting take place? What might they say to one another? What might such an encounter *mean* to each of the characters?
Appendix H A Selection of the Students' Discussion Questions *Heart of Darkness* Unit 4 (pp. 56-81)

1. In what way did Kurtz's greed change him?

2. Why is Marlow so persistent in his quest to help Kurtz?

3. Why do the natives hand over Kurtz to Marlow and the others?

4. Why did Marlow not stay by Kurtz's side when he was taking his final breath?

5. Why are the heads on the stakes turned towards the house?

6. Why were Kurtz's last words "The Horror, the horror?"

7. Why did Mr. Kurtz want the others to think that he was dead?

8. What is the difference between the woman that is described on pages 62-63 and the description of women earlier in the novel?

9. Why did Kurtz have heads on stakes and what does that say about him?

Appendix I *Heart of Darkness* Essay Instructions

Choose one of the following topics and write a formal academic essay in which you address this topic. You should have a proper introduction, a main body of your essay in which you discuss and reason about this topic, and a conclusion to your essay which briefly summarizes the main points that you raise. You should provide citations from the novel, *Heart of Darkness*, to support your reasoning. The essay should be at least 1000 words. You should utilize 1.5 spacing and your font should be New Times Roman. The essay is due by 23:59 on Thursday, October 23rd. You will turn in your completed essay on Fronter with the following name format: YourName.HeartofDarknessEssay. Make sure to include your name in the actual document file as well.

Enjoy!

Option 1:
At the end of *Heart of Darkness*, Marlow meets with Kurtz's "Intended" (fiancée). He is confronted with a dilemma regarding what to say to her about Kurtz. That is, he is uncertain whether or not to tell her the truth about Kurtz's experience in Africa. Marlow chooses to lie to her about Kurtz's last words, "the horror, the horror." He tells her, instead, that Kurtz's last words were her name.

Why is Marlow confronted with this dilemma? Why do you think he chooses to lie to Kurtz's "Intended?" What does this suggest about Marlow? What does this suggest about Marlow's view of Kurtz's "Intended," or of women in general? Are there wider implications to Marlow's inclination to lie? That is, can the scene between Marlow and Kurtz's "Intended" be viewed symbolically? If so, how?

Option 2:
Throughout the novel *Heart of Darkness*, Joseph Conrad utilizes a series of binary symbols. The primary binary pair of symbols is light/dark. Discuss the meaning of this pair of binary symbols. How does Conrad utilize them in the text? To what effect? Discuss some of the other binary symbol pairs in the novel? Are they related in any way to the primary symbols of light/dark? Why or why not? Can the symbolic binary pairs be related to other concepts or symbols used throughout the text? If so, discuss how and why you think such relationships might exist.

Option 3:
The "wilderness" plays a significant role, one exceeding mere setting, in *Heart of Darkness*. How does Conrad choose to utilize "wilderness" in the novel? How do the various characters of the novel, particularly Kurtz and Marlow, experience "wilderness?" How does it affect each of them? What might it symbolize or represent? What role do the natives play in Conrad's description, through Marlow, of "wilderness"? Is "wilderness" contrasted to anything else in the novel? If yes, what is this contrast and
how is it achieved? What meaning might this contrast have within the text? What are its broader implications?