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But as my response demonstrates, I have come to see the unhappiness of that ending in a more subtle way, a much better way, I think, thanks to Emerson's critique. I am grateful to him.

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The Narrator in Heart of Darkness

To the Editor:

Garrett Stewart, in "Lying as Dying in Heart of Darkness" (PMLA, 95 [1980], 319-31), like the principal critics whose views he summarizes, does not note that the story is delivered to us by an anonymous frame narrator, who not only reports but also responds to Marlow's account of his quest in search of Kurtz. And Stewart ignores the audience -four nonsailors aboard the Nellie-to whom Marlow addresses his story. Hence, Stewart finds that Marlow "protests too much in his brooding reiterations" (p. 321) and overlooks Marlow's feeling of alienation from an audience for whom he must underline everything: "Do you see the story? Do you see anything? . . . Here you all are, each moored with two good addresses [apparently home and office], like a hulk with two anchors, a butcher around one corner, a policeman around another. ... And you say, Absurd! Absurd be—exploded!" Further, in finding Marlow guilty of a "deep-seated racism" (p. 322), Stewart neglects Marlow's marvelous description of the free black oarsmen who had "bone, muscle, a wild vitality, an intense energy of movement that was as natural and true as the surf along their coast. They wanted no excuse for being there [as their white exploiters did]. They were a comfort to look at."

Without an adequate methodology for coping with complex "I" narratives, Stewart draws the erroneous conclusion that Marlow is discredited as "a morally reliable narrator" (p. 327). Conrad's internal clue to Marlow's reliability is the frame narrator, who at first distrusted Marlow ("we were fated to hear one of Marlow's inconclusive experiences") but who in the end concurs with, and thus implicitly endorses, Marlow in seeing the Thames leading "into the heart of an immense darkness." Stewart may not like Marlow, but the story does!

JOHN V. HAGOPIAN
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Mr. Stewart replies:

The objections that John Hagopian raises in his first paragraph rest on the kind of exceptions that

prove rules. Without debating the exculpating merits of that bone-and-brawn passage, I imagine a writer as subtle as Conrad would know that even racism that goes deep can have its apparent intermissions. By the same token(ism), even a narrator not quite up to the burden of his tragic task may at times worry that nothing at all (rather than too much) is getting through.

Marlow appears not at all shy about offering himself as failed example (or does he intend himself as heroic sacrifice?) of his own principle that lying is a kind of dying. Though he hammers home this morality long before he tells his listeners about the notorious fib to Kurtz's fiancée, he is of course speaking even early on from the vantage of retrospect. He does not then expect his listeners to have forgotten his reiterated aversion to lies—how could they?—when he later capitulates to a falsehood but, rather, to have come at last to realize with him that there are some truths in themselves too damnable and killing. In what I argued as a concentric sequence of literal and symbolic deaths, the tragic "gift" of Kurtz's last words is slain and buried in the last words Marlow quotes from himself-when he tells the Intended that Kurtz died with her name on his lips (words anticipated earlier, when Marlow announces that "I laid the ghost of his gifts at last with a lie")—and further violated in its grave by the last words Marlow is quoted as saying to the men on ship, explaining that to tell her the truth "would have been too dark-too dark altogether." Framing this sequence by an auditor turned narrator (a nesting of "I" narratives that I did not explicitly look into but certainly did not intend to overlook) confirms the inordinate and immanent darkness rather than the logic of its earlier whitewashing by Marlow.

Marlow is out not to deny his own admitted "unreliability," which was a moral issue long before it became a critical one, but to defend it, to justify his strategic dereliction of a tragic charge; the only "internal clue" offered by the dramatized primary narrator exposes the very unreliability of this specious and timid line of reasoning. The "tranquil waterway" of the Thames, in this outer narrator's own last words to us, suddenly "seemed to lead into the heart of an immense darkness" from which Marlow's protective deflection of the truth should not be expected in any sense to defend us. Taking issue with what I assume to be the crux of Hagopian's objection, therefore, I would think this conjecture about the "immense darkness" is designed to imply not that the unnamed narrator "concurs with" Marlow—who has not, as Hagopian seems to claim, made this last remark-but rather that our outer narrator immediately recoils from *Forum* 273

Marlow's closing rationalization ("too dark altogether") into his own, more uncompromising, however half-formed, response to the heart of the tale. The reprise of imagery in the passing over of "too dark" into "immense darkness" thus serves less as concurrence than as a rectifying echo of Marlow's vestigial and escapist idealism. The story's framing voice will not accede even briefly to an ethical standard by which any tragic truth is too appalling to own up to, for that truth's darkest threat lies precisely in such backing off. Stewart may or may not like Marlow, but the tale trusts, at the end, only its frame narrator (after all, its own persona), who does not patronize us the way Marlow patronizes the girl-and who therefore conveys Marlow's whole truth (including its final calculated evasion) more fully and unguardedly than Marlow can be counted on to transmit Kurtz's revelation.

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Expressive Theory and Blake's Audience

To the Editor:

In "Romantic Expressive Theory and Blake's Idea of the Audience" (PMLA, 95 [1980], 784–801), Morris Eaves says that the relationship between the artist and the audience is one of "lover to beloved, a deep, sympathetic communion that requires sexual, religious, or sometimes, for Blake, chemical metaphors to describe it" (p. 791). I agree with Eaves's understanding of this relationship, although he is not the first to point it out (see Roger R. Easson's "William Blake and His Reader in Jerusalem," in Blake's Sublime Allegory, ed. Stuart Curran and Joseph A. Wittreich, Jr. [Madison: Univ. of Wisconsin Press, 1973]). Unfortunately, Eaves neglects those metaphors that most clearly delineate the relationship and connect it to other major views held by Blake.

The metaphor that Blake uses to imply ideal relationships in the broadest possible sense, and, in particular, between the artist and the audience, is the system that destroys systems. Blake's ideas about audience are deeply connected to the understanding of reading-seeing and imagination that this metaphor implies. The metaphor's important feature is its dynamic and open-ended quality, which reading-seeing and imagination also possess but which the metaphor of identity, emphasized by Eaves, does not express clearly enough. Los—Blake's artistic self—opposes, therefore, closed systems (any aesthetic theories, cognitive modes, or world views that tyrannize imagination), and so he proclaims: "I

must Create a System, or be enslav'd by another Mans" (Jerusalem 10.20). With the greatest regard for his audience's freedom and independence, Los goes on to strive "with Systems to deliver Individuals from those Systems" (J 11.5). And with the help of God, his furnaces give "a body to Falshood [false system making] that it may be cast off for ever" by those who perceive (and read) imaginatively (J 12.13).

The system that Los creates resembles the system of knowing and understanding in Eternity and generates other metaphors for Blake's concept of audience and its role. Because Los's system is similar to the multiple and diverse perspectives of Eternity comprised in the "Human Imagination," it demands of his audience an openness to all points of viewthe "multitudes without / Number! the voices of the innumerable multitudes of Eternity," who "abolish Systems" (J 31.3-4, 18). The quaternity of perspectives, "the Four Faces of Humanity fronting the Four Cardinal Points / Of Heaven" described at the end of Jerusalem (98.26-27), symbolizes among other things the openness to multiple points of view that Blake's ideal reader should strive to attain.

Los's system is free from a chaos of points of view, for he knows that his audience can experience a reality more certain than transient states and perspectives. That reality, which gives coherence to Los's system, is the Divine Body of Human Imagination. Thus, Los dedicates himself confidently to his work: "I rest not from my great task! / . . . to open the immortal Eyes / Of Man inwards into the Worlds of Thought: into Eternity / Ever expanding [open-endedly] in the Bosom of God. the Human Imagination" (J 5.17–20).

Los's system coheres also through the reciprocal energies and activities of artists and their audiences—through the interchange and conflict of artists' and audiences' contrary points of view. Los compares the interchange to emanation, a going forth and participating in the perspectives and knowledge of the other (person, text, etc.). Eaves comes close to recognizing this metaphor when he says that "acts of imagination . . . must be mutual" (p. 793). Los, however, clearly articulates the metaphor while at work on his system:

When in Eternity Man converses with Man they enter Into each others Bosom (which are Universes of delight) In mutual interchange, and first their Emanations meet Surrounded by their Children, if they embrace &

The Human Four-fold Forms mingle also in thunders of Intellect. (J 88.3-7)