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TO SEE *HEART OF DARKNESS*. ON AN INTERSEMIOTIC TRANSLATION OF JOSEPH CONRAD'S NOVEL*

Abstract

The article examines Catherine Anyango's and David Zane Mairowitz's graphic novel *Heart of Darkness* as an illustration of the differences between the unique possibilities of verbal and visual media. Conrad's metaphor of Marlow's story as a misty halo, interpreted here as an autotelic commentary on the text's elusive meaning, is the starting point for a discussion of visual representations of indeterminacy, which Conrad conceptualizes in visual terms, equating understanding with seeing. Another issue raised is the place of the narrator in visual arts, made problematic by Conrad's use of two narrators and the story-within-a-story device. It is also argued that the graphic novel, though a sequential medium, makes use of spatial juxtaposition of images, which is not only a source of metaphors, but also creates the effect of simultaneity unavailable to verbal arts.

Keywords: Joseph Conrad, graphic novel, intersemiotic translation, visual arts

> Do you see the story?
> Joseph Conrad, *Heart of Darkness*

Following some introductory paragraphs, Conrad's short novel begins with the famous metaphor of "misty halos". Let us regard it here as a self-referential commentary; provided by the author, in a sense this image is an internal interpretive key, a guideline as to where and how to look for the meaning of Conrad's text. But first things first. The compositional principle of *Heart of Darkness* is a story within a story. The main narrator, a nameless man whom it would be all too easy to identify with the author, recounts a story told by Marlow, as a crew of five (the Director, the Accountant, the Lawyer, Marlow and the narrator himself) are waiting for the ebb in the Thames estuary aboard the Nellie, a cruising yawl. To kill time, Marlow begins to spin a yarn about his trade mission to (the unnamed) Congo. As we learn from the narrator, Marlow was known for his storytelling skills, and his talent distinguished him from other seafaring raconteurs. The main narrator tries to capture this difference in the following way:

> The yarns of seamen have a direct simplicity, the whole meaning of which lies within the shell of a cracked nut. But Marlow was not typical (if his propensity to spin yarns be excepted), and to him the meaning of an episode was not inside like a kernel but outside, enveloping the tale which brought it out only as a glow brings out a haze, in the likeness of one of these misty halos that sometimes are made visible by the spectral illumination of moonshine. (Conrad 1990: 3)

The metaphor of a misty halo, which Conrad uses in trying to explain the essence of Marlow's story, is itself a misty halo. It is something blurred, not quite tangible, not translatable into the language of discourse. Since, after all, we are dealing here with an article about translatological problems, and *Heart of Darkness* exists in several Polish translations, I suggest that we attempt to approximate the meaning of this image by looking at three Polish versions of Conrad's text:

> według niego sens jakiegoś epizodu nie tkwił w środku jak pestka, lecz otaczał z zewnątrz opowieść, która tylko rzucała nań światło – jak blask oświetla opary—na wzór mglistych aureoli widzialnych czasem przy widmowym oświetleniu księżyca. (Conrad 1991: 3, trans. A. Zagórska)

> dla niego sens epizodu nie sprowadzał się do jego wewnętrznej treści, niby do jądra, lecz wychodził na zewnątrz, ogarniając sobą opowieść, która wyniosła ów sens na światło dzienne, zupełnie tak, jak blask, który rozjaśnia mgłę na podobieństwo nimbu z oparów widocznych niekiedy w widmowej poświacie księżyca. (Conrad 2009: 8–9, trans. J. Polak)

dla niego sens nie tkwił jak pestka w środku każdej sceny, ale znajdował się na zewnątrz, otulał ujawniającą go opowieść, podobnie jak blask księżyca ujawnia istnienie mgiełki, mglistej aureoli, widocznej dzięki jego upiornemu światłu. (Conrad 2011: 10, trans. M. Heydel)

Let us take stock: according to the narrator of Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*, the meaning of Marlow's tale is outside it; it envelops/surrounds it ("otacza" in Zagórska's translation), enwraps it (Heydel's "otula"), encompasses it (Polak's "ogarnia"). The story does not contain meaning within, but rather brings it out, i.e. sheds light on it ("rzuca światło", Zagórska), reveals it ("ujawnia", Heydel), brings it out into daylight ("wynosi na światło dzienne", Polak); let us take note of the fact that two Polish translators decided to introduce light into the image. This is a case of collaboration, since the story and its meaning are both active voices: they are doing something to each other. The meaning creates an environment for the story, shaping it into a particular form; it delineates the story, perhaps even encompasses it, while the story illuminates the meaning, allowing it to be seen. The subsequent part of the description uses a comparison – a double one at that – as though the author was not able to provide a more precise formulation. It is not possible to say directly what the meaning is; hence, Conrad first resorts to one comparison ("as a glow"), and then to another one ("in the likeness of misty halos"), as though the meaning of the story eluded him, fled somewhere, dissolved, spilled out. A comparison always involves going beyond the area delineated by the topic, pointing to its insufficiency. Let us take a look at the translations: the story illuminated the meaning "**jak** blask oświetla opary **na wzór** aureoli" ("as a glow illuminates haze in the likeness of a halo"; Zagórska) or "**jak** blask rozjaśnia mgłę **na podobieństwo** nimbu" ("as glow brightens up the mist in the semblance of a nimbus"; Polak). In the third version, this double comparison is not preserved: "jak blask księżyca ujawnia istnienie mgiełki" ("as moon glow reveals the existence of mist"; Heydel).

In the above-quoted original passage and its three Polish (i.e. interlingual) translations, we witness attempts at explaining certain verbal expressions by means of other words. Thus, we may speak here of a case of intralingual translation: "the tale brings [the meaning] out" "as a glow brings out the haze". I suggest that we regard this comparison as an interlingual translation, in which the first part is defined (explained) by the other part, expressed in the same language. The Polish versions of this passage will thus involve both intra- and interlingual translation. But what about an intersemiotic translation of this passage, "an interpretation of verbal signs by means of

signs of nonverbal sign systems" (Jakobson 1959: 233)? How could a story told in a different medium, expressed by means of images, approximate this description? How can images reveal their meaning, which is not contained inside them like a kernel, but rather envelops them like a haze, like a halo? Such an attempt at translating *Heart of Darkness* into the language of images has been made by the Kenyan-Swedish illustrator Catherine Anyango and the adapter David Zane Mairowitz, who co-authored a graphic novel adaptation of Conrad's text (Conrad, Anyango, Mairowitz 2010).

Blurred, indistinct contours; silhouettes fading into the dim background; unrecognisable figures; overlapping patches of colour; half-shade, which always hides more than it reveals; omnipresent greyness in place of white; monochromatic panels on black pages – this enumeration more or less captures the dominant style of Anyango's illustrations. Let us consider this haziness of images, the elusiveness of their meaning, as the visual equivalent of Conrad's misty halos.

Interestingly, the notion of haziness, with which the author describes Marlow's narrative art, in fact invokes **optical** experience, **visual** perception, even though here it is used in direct reference to a tale, to verbal art, to words and their combinations, to narratives made up of them. In order to describe the way in which a verbal text, i.e. Marlow's story, functions, Conrad writes about the experience of **seeing**, as suggested already by the adjective "visible". Thus, understanding is seeing, perceiving, and not hearing or feeling something with one's touch. Here, the sense of sight is an absolute monopolist as a source of analogies. And sight, seeing, also and above all involves light. Light and its opposite: darkness. Let us note that in the brief passage under consideration Conrad uses no less than five words associated with various forms of light: "glow", "haze", "halo", "illumination", "moonshine". We could also add "spectral" if we read this adjective as referring to the visible spectrum rather than supernatural ghostly apparitions.

Translating the linguistic description of this darkness-light phenomenon into the visual medium does not seem problematic; after all, image cannot exist without light. It is rather the opposite direction – translating the half-shade interplays of the visual image into words – that might prove challenging. How to render into words the blurred contours, the halo, the haziness? One could perhaps try to create the effect of "syntactic haziness", where grammatical order is not evident or straightforward, and particular lexical parts shimmer with semantic indefiniteness. Such haziness can be achieved in language in structures larger than the sentence: at the level of

the narrative, where particular threads break off or overlap, or, full of gaps, create an atmosphere of uncertainty and confusion. It is this kind of narrative haziness that Anyango's and Mairowitz's transmutation[1] took over on its verbal plane: the authors play it out not by means of lexical or syntactic ambiguity but in a narrative mode that results in an incomplete, fragmentary story. Inevitably shorter than the original, the text of the graphic novel lost many original elements: adaptation equalled reduction. Sometimes reduced to one scene or one sentence, the narrative segments do not line up to create longer narrative sequences; instead, abounding in leaps and ruptures, the narrative brings to mind associative montage. The sequentiality of events, typical of storytelling, here gives way to a juxtaposition revealing the similarities and differences of particular "freeze-frames". Due to this narrative fragmentariness and "leapiness", the graphic *Heart of Darkness* may be incomprehensible to someone not familiar with Conrad's novel.

More interesting is the attempt at rendering Conradian haziness on the visual plane, which, after all, is fundamental for this graphic novel. As we have said, Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* begins with an image of misty halos. The adaptation, in turn, opens with a full-page abstract graphic: a grey background against which a black sphere emerges in the middle; a round concentration of black dots, bringing to mind the eponymous "heart" (or, incidentally, even more so the noun used in the Polish translation of Conrad's title, *jądro*, "core"), shown in such a big close-up that its structure disintegrates. A disturbing image. It could be the sun – once we notice that, although positioned centrally, it is slightly above the imaginary horizontal line dividing the page into halves – and thus it could be interpreted as being up in the sky. But on the next page this heart or core, this black sphere, appears significantly downsized, against a white vertical rectangle. In the next frame, the rectangular background already has two dots on it, positioned symmetrically one above the other, and in the third frame we discover that these dots are in fact domino pips (see Figure 1). Foregrounded in the image, they are so close that they obscure the view; behind them we can glimpse only a narrow piece of seascape with a lighthouse. Standing upright or lying horizontally on their side, at first glance the domino pieces look like houses, with the pips resembling windows. In the subsequent frames, the black dot adopts a different identity. Seen above a cityscape, it represents

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[1] Jakobson uses this term as a synonym for intersemiotic translation (Jakobson 1959: 233).

the sun. On the next page, similarly located above a landscape, it turns bright now; it could be the setting sun, which looks brighter set against the darkening evening sky, or the moon, a white disc obscured by a stormy sky. Manoeuvring between a close-up so big that it makes it impossible for us to recognise the identity of the depicted object, and a wide shot showing us now domino pieces, now an evening sky, the illustrator renders Conradian haziness (indefiniteness) by playing with the identity of the object, and thus reminding us of the unreliability of visual experience, the inadequacy of perception, and the fact that our observations need revisions. Conrad likens the meaning of Marlow's story to "misty halos that sometimes are made visible by the spectral illumination of moonshine;" he writes about the intangibility or ambiguity of meaning. Anyango and Mairowitz perform an intersemiotic translation of this description, albeit not directly: they do not offer us an image of the moon shining through the mist. Instead, the authors show us an object whose meaning is (initially) intangible: a sphere that in one moment is the sun, and in the next a dot or a domino pip. The identity, or indeed multiple identities of this object can be recognised not thanks to a "spectral illumination of moonshine", but thanks to the way the images are edited or "cropped". Indefiniteness results from the nature of this particular medium: after all, "no image of a given object can fully and wholly represent this object" (Tabakowska 2009: 39). The kind of representation present in this case, fragmentary, making use of big close-ups, tearing the object out of its broader context, allows for multiple identifications.

In Conrad's original *Heart of Darkness*, the domino is barely mentioned. The word appears twice in the fourth paragraph: "The Accountant had brought out already a box of dominoes, and was toying architecturally with the bones" but "For some reason or other we did not begin that game of dominoes" (Conrad 1990: 2). And this is it. In Anyango's and Mairowitz's graphic novel, this marginal domino becomes the dominant element of the opening panels, and the metaphorical image of changing systems of signification. It is my contention that the authors introduced domino pieces as their own metaphor of how the meaning of their story is created: as their visual answer to the Conradian metaphor of "misty halos". It is not accidental that the rectangular domino pieces resemble in shape the rectangular panels of the comic. Playing dominoes is an attempt at putting together a coherent narrative, in which one element leads to another, so that there is a noticeable correspondence between adjacent pieces, i.e. the same number of pips.
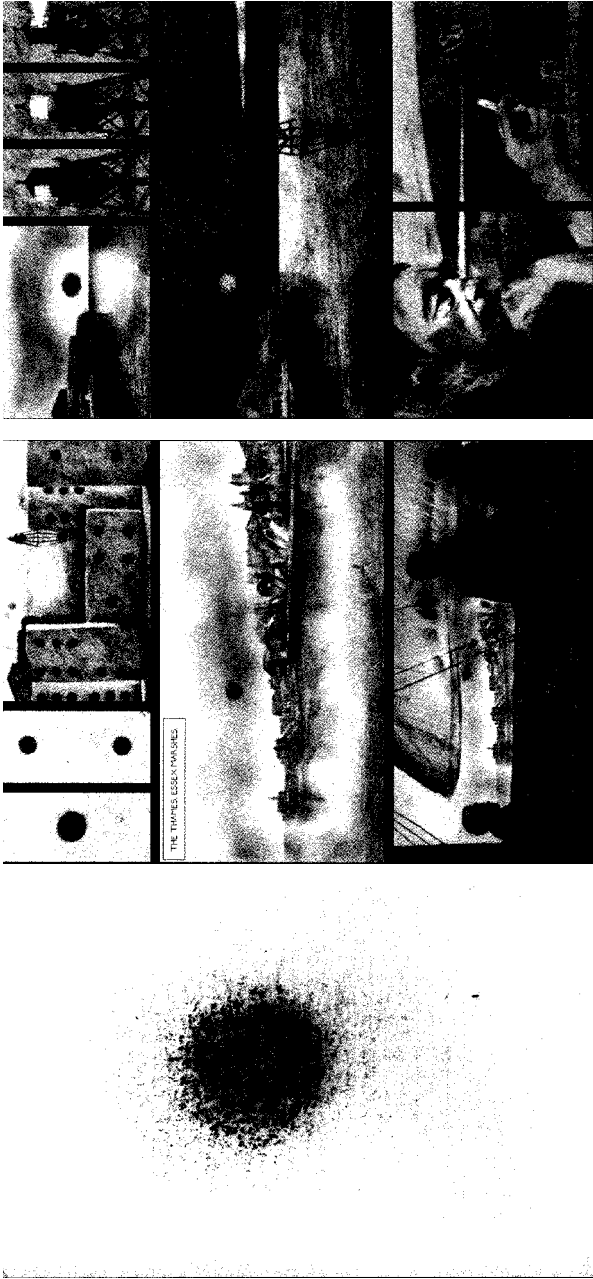
Fig. 1. Panels from the graphic novel adaptation of Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*. Illustrations: Catherine Anyango; text adaptation: David Zane Mairowitz. © SelfMadeHero 2010

As readers, we arrange the subsequent constitutive elements of the graphic novel's meaning as we would put together domino pieces. We must bear in mind that there can be infinitely many such arrangements; there is no one definite sequence. The player may also come across a piece that will break the game, bring it to a halt; a piece that precludes any possibility of continuation. I regard this game of dominoes as a metaphor of reading, looking for similarities and building comparisons, arriving at some meaning in the story, a story whose segments we put together to find a match. This comes as no surprise; after all, comics are a "sequential art", to evoke Will Eisner's way of putting it (Eisner 2008: 127–145), or, to quote Scott McCloud's extended version, "Comics are juxtaposed pictorial and other images in deliberate sequence" (McCloud 1994: 9). Playing dominoes is also about creating sequences. The crux of the matter is that as we arrange images (comic frames) into a sequence, at the same time we are filling in the space between them, and this, inevitably, is a subjective operation. The fact that no arrangement of domino pieces can lead us to a conclusion is signalled in the graphic novel later on, in frames showing dominoes scattered on the yacht deck. Scattered dominoes cannot conclude the sequence.

In intersemiotic translation from verbal into visual art, a particular problem is that of the narrator, and in the case of *Heart of Darkness*: two narrators. The first, frame narrator of the novella – let us call him "Conrad" – would be invisible in a story translated into image, since he is but a voice: we hardly know anything about him save for what he says.[2] And a sequence of images, by its very nature, has no voice: *pictura poema silens*. There is no narrative instance here which we could call a narrator, unless we see one in the point of view adopted in the illustrations. Every drawing in the graphic novel is made from a particular perspective, pointing to the position of the observer; it is this point that determines the way in which the presented world is created in a given illustration. It is up to this observer which elements are foregrounded or placed in the centre, and thus regarded as more meaningful by us, the readers/viewers. It is this observer that organises the space of the image. We see what he sees and how he sees it. This observer can be considered as the equivalent of Conrad's narrator; it is an implied observer, not visible in the graphic narrative itself. Existing outside the world presented, he creates this world.

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[2] To be precise, we also know that this narrator is one of the men sitting aboard the Nellie; I shall return to this soon.

As an organiser of the space of every image, he is present also in that he determines its epistemological and axiological perspective. As a case in point, let us take the prejudices and biases that reveal themselves in the observer's way of looking at people: while white people's faces are usually distinct and individualised, black faces are either invisible or merely suggested. This observer does not see blacks as individuals. Just as no black person has a name in the graphic novel, most of them have no individualised facial features either. The observer, here understood as a name referring to a purely technical function responsible for the perspective adopted, ceases to be anonymous; he becomes a figure with identifiable characteristics, views and preferences, and the perspective adopted in the illustrations is no longer innocent, becoming a carrier of meanings and values.

However, in *Heart of Darkness* we also have another narrator: the teller of the story within a story, who is the protagonist in "Conrad's" narrative, i.e. the main story, as well as the protagonist of his own memoir narrative. It is Marlow. We get to know Marlow's voice thanks to "Conrad", for it is the frame narrator who quotes him; it is he who allows Marlow to speak. Thus, in a sense Marlow becomes one of the main narrator's voices; he becomes "Conrad", or perhaps even Conrad. This happens also because Marlow is telling about an actual expedition in which the Polish author participated. In this context, Anyango and Mairowitz take a radical approach: Marlow, who tells the story of his journey up the Congo, has been portrayed as having the facial features of Joseph Conrad. Consequently, the empirical author is inscribed into the story, becoming its protagonist, rather than just giving an account of it. Let us note, however, that the internal narrator, whom we see telling his story, and then also playing a role in this story, is a broken figure: his name is Marlow yet he physically resembles Conrad; he is the intradiegetic narrator yet he looks like the author of the text or the external, frame narrator.

The source image on which Catherine Anyango based her portrait of Conrad is probably the 1916 photogravure by the eminent photographer Alvin Langdon Coburn. With a moustache and a pointed goatee, the writer is portrayed *en trois quatre*, his right profile turned towards the camera. This is one of the most popular and most reproduced of Conrad's portraits; indeed, it might be the most readily recognised one. In the graphic novel, juxtaposed with comic panels, the image of Conrad is distinctly separate, singular, even though it is composed into the frame. Shown in the foreground, in big close-up, on the right-hand side of the drawing, his face is positioned

in such a way that it dominates over the image, occupying almost one third of it. In a sense, it even extends outside the frame, so it does not fully belong to the picture. The landscape visible behind Marlow/Conrad might be the background, but it might as well be a screen showing a film from his past. In this way – through editing, scaling, and a reference to a well-known photograph – Anyango emphasises the externality of this figure, who does not fully belong to the world presented. Looking at Conrad, we are looking at a graphic version of his famous photo portrait. This face is a portrait face; in the next several pages, it appears unchanged. Statuesque and motionless, captured in semi-profile, it reminds us of its photographic provenance. Conrad's face is never going to turn to us, nor will it ever show the other profile or lean down. Frozen, it belongs to the bygone past, and the Conrad whom it evokes is no longer a living man; he is "Conrad", an image, a vision. This face, the only one in the graphic novel drawn with such attention to detail and so realistically, is like Conrad's name on the title page of the novel, or like the distinctive style of his writing, which inevitably disappears in the intersemiotic translation. It is the author's visual signature, reminding us that he, Conrad, is there.

This image of Conrad reappears halfway into the book, when the illusion created by Marlow, who makes us believe that we are in the Congo, is disrupted by one full-page panel which takes us back to the Thames and the Nellie. Now we see Marlow/Conrad again, as he tells his adventure to his companions, and asks questions fundamental to this novel: "He was just a word for me. I did not see the man in the name any more than you do. Do you see him? Do you see the story? Do you see anything?" (Conrad 1990: 24). These questions, revolving obsessively around seeing, around visual perception, acquire a yet greater significance in the graphic novel under consideration – that is in an attempt at translating Conrad's words into the language of (comic) picture, an attempt to make words visible. Kurtz was just a word for Marlow, but he is just a word for all readers of Conrad's novel as well. He is a literary, verbal construct, which, however, can take a visual shape in our imagination or become visible and concrete in an intersemiotic translation into illustration or film.

In Conrad's novel, there is one other line by Marlow which is highly significant in this context; it was not included in the graphic adaptation. At one point, addressing his listeners aboard the „Nellie", he says: "Of course in this you fellows see more than I could then. You see me, whom you know" (Conrad 1990: 24). In all these cases referring to the story (heard

or read) being obscure, mysterious or dark, **to see** also has another meaning: **to understand**. "Do you see the story?", Marlow asks, but we could translate this sentence into "Do you understand the story?". If understanding means seeing, the intersemiotic translation of a verbal text into image becomes an attempt to make sense of this text. At the same time, Marlow/Conrad's listeners owe the possibility of understanding or "seeing more" to the temporal perspective that separates them from the events described, and to their knowledge of the narrator. They know Marlow, and so they see (and understand) more that he saw himself. Perhaps this might be the point of endowing the graphic-novel Marlow with Conrad's features: we know how much of Conrad is in Marlow. Reading Marlow's story, we read Conrad's story. The authors of the graphic novel do not mention his name even once, yet they use the capacity of their medium to remind us about his presence.

In Anyango's and Mairowitz's graphic novel, Conrad's linear narrative is turned into a sequence of images; however, instead of diachronic sequencing, we often get the synchronicity characteristic of visual arts, and especially comics. To recall G.E. Lessing's distinction, the temporal nature of literature is replaced with a spatial arrangement:

> Since painting, because its signs or means of imitation can be combined only in space, must relinquish all representations of time, therefore progressive actions, as such, cannot come within its range. It must content itself with actions in space; in other words, with mere bodies, whose attitude lets us infer their action. (Lessing 1962: 90)

Thus, diachronicity gives way to synchronicity, even though Anyango's and Mairowitz's comic is a novel, and so it presents narrative development and a sequence of events. This synchronicity of visual representation manifests itself in the combined impact of adjacent images or scenes. Here, more important than chronological consecutiveness is the figure of simultaneity: juxtaposition (Lessing's "actions in space"), i.e. the coexistence of two or more frames intended to be perceived in one glance, so that they overlap or together create a whole. In the verbal narrative mode, linearity means that earlier sequences are left behind before one moves on; it consists in replacing particular elements with others. In the visual narrative mode, earlier sequences, for example those on even-numbered pages, often enter into synchronic and syncopic relations with subsequent scenes from odd pages, with frames situated below or on the right; they are not, or do not have to be, substituted. Time becomes spatial. "In the world of comics, time and

space are one and the same" (McCloud 1994: 100). However, I would not say that the two dimensions are symmetrical; what happens here is rather that time is stopped, subjugated to space.

This synoptic approach to image sequences is visible for example in three horizontal, elongated frames whose contents create a repeated rhythmic arrangement (see Figure 2). The first "strip" features a row of vertically arranged elephant tusks; below we have shotgun cartridges, also placed upright; the third, bottom frame shows a similar composition: black slaves chained together. Ivory, bullets, slaves. This is not a chronological but a metaphorical sequence, based on similarity (short vertical elements strung together). The image uses visual analogy to comment on the connection between wealth and violence, and commodity and man. Three illustrations, three frames which should be looked at simultaneously rather than one by one. This kind of perception would of course be impossible in verbal art. In the linear and consecutive medium of literature, true simultaneity cannot be achieved; this effect can be merely approximated with the device of densely woven alternation. While our eyes can see several images at a time, putting them together and perceiving them as a whole, reading a verbal text precludes simultaneously reading a different passage. The intersemiotic translation of *Heart of Darkness* makes use of this capacity of the medium on a number of occasions.

Another case in point here is two adjacent full-page portraits (see Figure 3). The even page features a close-up of a black man's head, cut off and impaled. With closed eyes and a half-open mouth, his face is twisted into a deadly grimace. Right next to it, on the adjacent page,
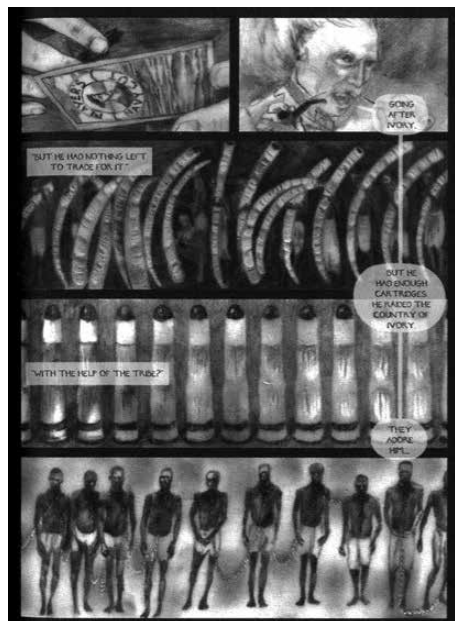

Fig. 2. Panels from the graphic novel adaptation of Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*. Illustrations: Catherine Anyango; text adaptation: David Zane Mairowitz. © SelfMadeHero 2010

we see Marlow's face with eyes wide open; clearly horrified, he is looking in our direction. The immediate mutual proximity of these portraits allows us to superimpose the two faces one onto the other: to see them both at the same time, at one glance. Such synchronic or analogy-based perception is encouraged also by the fact that the two images are of the same size, they both occupy the central position in their respective frames, and they are both *en face* portraits with the same degree of close-up. Marlow's remarks on the disturbing realisation that whites and blacks have a remote kinship here find their visual equivalent: "what thrilled you was just the thought of their humanity – like yours – the thought of your remote kinship with this wild and passionate uproar" (Conrad 1990: 34). In the intersemiotic translation by Anyango and Mairowitz, the thought verbalised by Conrad has been expressed with two neighbouring "simultaneous" portraits.

Catherine Anyango admits that her work has been partly inspired by film. Indeed, many sequences in the graphic *Heart of Darkness* suggest a film provenance, bring to mind techniques we know from cinematic art. This is of crucial importance in a graphic novel, which necessarily employs motionless pictures yet on the other hand tells a story, and thus needs to introduce time and motion. References to film or "motion pictures" make it possible to suggest movement. In film these pictures are shown and gone, however; whereas in the graphic novel an image can simultaneously interact with other images. In Mairowitz's and Anyango's *Heart of Darkness*, in many instances one could speak of film montage: fast-paced, contrast-based, metaphorical. One page, for example, has frames arranged into two columns of three (see Figure 4). The left column, seen from top to bottom, shows the march of ivory-carrying slaves. In parallel, the right one offers three shots of a room; inside, the manager of the trading post is writing in his books and telling Marlow how he hates "savages". The parallel development of the two threads suggests a link between them; they comment on each other thanks to the simultaneity achievable in graphic arts or film.

Another example of capitalising on the specific characteristics of the medium is a sequence of three narrow horizontal strips in which Conrad's face, based on Coburn's photogravure, subsequently turns into the face of Marlow, i.e. young Conrad, to adopt the features of "Coburn's Conrad" again in the last frame. The landscape in the background of these faces is English, Congolese, and English, respectively. Such overlapping of various images, such simultaneity of their perception, again refers to the topic of Marlow's first utterance about the barbarian darkness that used to characterise the now

Fig. 3. Panels from the graphic novel adaptation of Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*. Illustrations: Catherine Anyango, text adaptation: David Zane Mairowitz. © SelfMadeHero 2010.

Fig. 4. Panels from the graphic novel adaptation of Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*. Illustrations: Catherine Anyango; text adaptation: David Zane Mairowitz. © SelfMadeHero 2010

imperial Britain. It is an intersemiotic translation of this important observation which he shares with his colleagues on board: "And this also . . . has been one of the dark places of the earth" (Conrad 1990: 3). Let us note that the Congolese heart of darkness is not much different from the gloom of the English landscape, in which, as the narrator informs us, "the place of the monstrous town was still marked ominously on the sky, a brooding gloom in sunshine, a lurid glare under the stars" (Conrad 1990: 3). These words, which might as well describe the African landscape, here refer to England. "Monstrous", "ominous", "brooding gloom", "lurid glare": in the graphic novel, the characteristics of the two places have been depicted in a simultaneous, parallel sequence of three images.

The cover of the graphic novel *Heart of Darkness* features three names listed in one line, in the same font size: Conrad, Anyango, Mairowitz. This unmistakably identifies the source text, but even more strongly emphasises the relative autonomy of the book, acknowledging triple co-authorship. Discussing this publication, I have used the Jakobsonian term "intersemiotic

translation", although "intersemiotic adaptation" would have been more precise. In the present article, the term "translation" was understood very broadly, to mean a text that is an equivalent of a different text and "stands in some significant relation to a source text" (Robinson 2000: 15). Similarly, Francis Ford Coppola's film adaptation is a translation, but only in this broad sense, which also includes variations, versions, and imitations. That said, by focusing on the concept of translation I could look at Anyango's and Mairowitz's graphic novel from the perspective of correspondence between different solutions adopted in verbal and visual arts, as well as the authors' use of the possibilities offered by their medium. On the one hand, these possibilities enable devices which can be regarded as equivalent to Conrad's verbal devices. On the other, they entail some solutions inherent to visual arts, which enrich the target text, and do not correspond to any particular features of the source. The authors of the intersemiotic translation of Conrad's novel were able to effectively harness these possibilities.

Translated from Polish by Zofia Ziemann

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