

# **Student Essay on Paragraph Seven in Heart of Darkness**

## **Paragraph Seven in Heart of Darkness by Joseph Conrad**

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# Essay

In the seventh paragraph of his short novel *Heart of Darkness*, Joseph Conrad uses careful syntax and diction to show a change between the Thames' appearance and the conclusion that it has become an empire. The first sentence has the narrator looking back on the Thames and showing that a shift has caused the serenity of it to become "more profound." In reflecting upon the river, Joseph Conrad has the narrator emphasize the "good service done to the race that peopled its banks" and also its "dignity of a waterway leading to the uttermost ends of the earth." Conrad, in describing the Thames, does not specifically refer to the people of the Thames, but strictly to its accomplishments. Conrad places his point of emphasis on the river, and nothing else. His focus is how the river has done the people well, but now the people have functioned. He shows the importance of the river by making the Thames an "outlet" to the rest of the world rather than the world being an "outlet" to the Thames. The narrator's recollections upon the river show what the river has done to the people who surround it, "... in its unceasing service, crowded with the men and ships it had borne to..." Conrad continues his motif of the importance of the river by saying how the Thames has "served all men of whom the nation is proud...the great knights-errant of the sea." This quote shows that the men being portrayed as knights of the sea are held in higher regard than if they were portrayed as knights of the nation. Subsequently, Conrad goes further to conclude "what greatness had not floated on the ebb of that river...The dreams of men, the seeds of commonwealths, the germs of empires." In this statement alone, Conrad is concluding that everything in the land that is great had flowed down the Thames, and if it "had not", then it surely could not be great. By establishing the importance of the river, and not the importance of the people, Conrad shows an ample change in the Thames' appearance until it builds its empires.