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**Abstract**

These letters display Conrad's friendship with an aristocratic Scottish adventurer who was a pioneering socialist. The elaborate annotations set the friendship in cultural and political contexts, and show how Graham influenced Conrad's writings.

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Table of contents. Introduction. Conrad’s letters to Cunninghame Graham Heart of Darkness – An interpretation. Marlow as a narrative device Allegorical short-cuts in Heart of Darkness. The sepulchral city The Company’s offices The knitters of black wool The grove of death Kurtz’ sketch in oil. The text of Joseph Conrad’s novella Heart of Darkness is very dense; there is more to the text than meets the eye. In his book Joseph Conrad and the West, the French critic Jaques Darras coins the concept “allegorical short-cuts” for Conrad’s way of using symbolic imagery to expand the text for the attentive reader and rapidly open up for a deepened understanding (Darras, p 79). His advice is “to read between the lines – why not between the words?” (ibid, p 87).