Johanna Smith summaries!

One: The Accountant and the Laundress

¶1: Marlow’s depiction of the accountant allows him to re-claim his masculinity and his support for the imperialist cause. The accountant’s appearance distracts from imperialist cruelty.

¶2: Marlow’s acceptance of the laundress’ treatment illustrates his collaboration with the masculine imperialist views. Smith also points out how ironic it is that the accountant’s femininity is what allows Marlow to restore his faith in the imperialist cause.

¶3: Marlow maintains his masculine power by silencing the native woman. In this way, Marlow mystifies women and imperialism in order to create distance between the sexes and between Europeans and the “savage” jungle.

Two: The Savage Woman

¶1: The savage woman represents the dark African jungle and also femininity. Marlow attempts to control and contain both of these representations by immobilizing both in order to make things less threatening.

¶2: Marlow recognizes grief within the savage woman, which threatens a line of masculine restraint, for Marlow has already shown grief for Kurtz. He quickly removes himself from these emotions to show that restraint is for the masculine and the unrestrained is for the natives and women.

¶3: Marlow puts forth an effort to control both the jungle and sexuality of the savage woman. In these efforts, he silences the savage woman and the laundress which creates a gap in the text of ideological repression.
Three: The Aunt

¶1 Smith asserts that Marlow’s Aunt (and the rest of the female characters in Heart of Darkness) live in a separate world from the male characters. That is, their (women’s) opinions, ideas, and thoughts are unrealistic because they lack the experience the male characters have.

¶2: Both Kurtz and Marlow’s Aunt share a similar view of Imperialism. However, Marlow supports Kurtz claim and dismisses his Aunt’s because Kurtz lives in reality, whereas his Aunt lives in feminine fantasy. It is only possible for men to experience the “truth”.

¶3: Truth is intrinsic to males and this will appear when they are engaged in manly adventure. Acquired truth is perceived as feminine garb, as it is passively received and can not be tested by any kind of experience.

Four: The Intended

¶1: Ideology separates the male world as “fact’ and the female world as “ideas”. The reason Marlow lies to the intended is because he feels the need to mystify her, she can’t handle the actual truth.

¶2: The intended is Marlow’s construction. Marlow thinks that lying to the intended is saving her because women need to be surrounded by positive thoughts.

¶3: Marlow believes he has sacrificed his truth in order to console the intended.