

Marlow in "heart of darkness" essay

[Literature](#), [Novel](#)



Heart of Darkness is a novel published in the wake of the twentieth century (1902). It was authored by Joseph Conrad and Charlie Marlow is the main character. The novel is regarded as one of the most important examples of the use of symbolism in modern literature. Its structure is that of a frame tale where a story is told within a story.

Marlow, according to the story, was the captain of a ferry-boat in Cong-an African country. The title of the novel carries with it great meaning. It covers the various types of darkness experienced by the main character. First, there is the literal sense which is the darkness of the wilderness in the country.

Marlow says, " God-forsaken wilderness" in reference to the African continent (Conrad73). Secondly, the darkness brought about by Europeans who treated the natives with a lot of cruelty-colonization. The third level of darkness that comes out from the novel is that of the tendency of every human being to be evil.

The essay discusses what the character Marlow discovered about European presence in Africa as well as what he realized about the potential of human nature. It also focuses on Marlow's inner being on the journey.

Being the main character, the entire story centers on Marlow, and many literary analysts argue that he reflects the feelings, opinions and the experiences of Conrad, the author. Marlow sees a similarity between the experiences of Britain under the rule of the Ancient Roman Empire and its officials.

The way the Romans perceived the Europeans is the same way the Europeans were regarding the African natives in the 19th century. He is annoyed by the cruelty of the Europeans towards Africans. The natives were facing poor treatment and were experiencing forced labor from the whites. Marlow appears to be a man of immense pride and civilization with some sense of compassion. He also emerges to hold very unique values from the rest of his European counterparts, the Belgians.

In general, Marlow's narration emphasizes the fact that there was a trail of darkness for Europeans and they ought not to have colonized the Africans with such cruelty (Conrad 76). Marlow also discovers that the whites were acting contrary to what they claimed to be in the various reports. Instead of bringing civilization to Africa, in Marlow's opinion, they had turned into oppressors.

Marlow learnt a great deal about the potential of human nature. In his opinion, human nature can either be human or humane. Being human implies acting like a primate, having a mind and to be living. To show compassion, be tender, loving, have a kind heart and considerate is to be humane.

Marlow learnt during his encounters in Africa that one does not affect or influence the other. They two totally separate qualities of human nature. He discovered that human beings can lack the humane nature when dealing with each other. He saw the Europeans maltreating the Africans as though they were slaves.

Marlow says, " I could see every rib, the joints of their limbs were like knots in a rope; each had an iron collar on his neck, and all were connected together with a chain whose bights swung between them, rhythmically clinking." (Conrad 81).

This observation made him conclude that human beings are potentially evil, even more than the devil himself. But he believes the evil nature can be overcome when he says, " even apart from the very natural aversion I had to beat that shadow." (Conrad 142).

As Marlow went on in his journey he discovered his own inner being that made him distinct from the rest of Europeans. As he reflected on the Congo River and his life, the desire to find the truth and face reality grew. He acknowledges that the potential of man to act inhumanly towards fellow man was one of the greatest sins. Marlow noted that man can choose to be humane and should be seen in action rather than mere words (Conrad 51).

The essay has discussed what Marlow discovered about European presence in Africa as well as what he realized about the potential of human nature. It also focused on Marlow's realization of his own inner being during the journey through the jungle in Congo. The novel, through Marlow, provides a vivid picture of how the Europeans treated the natives during the colonization period.