

# "heart of the darkness" book analysis

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



This novel is based on the experiences lived by Conrad as captain of a vapor belgian ship, he is one of the most important writers of the finals of the XIX, and beginning of the XX. Conrad was Polish and he learned to speak English until he was on his 20's, right after learning french. The heart of darkness occurs during the period after the Scramble of Africa, on the final of the XIX century in which diferent European powers divided and owned Africa as if we were talking of a birthday cake. Belgium was seeking the precious ivory which was hidden on the heart of Africa, they did not cared about torturing and oppressing the natives to get it.

The heart of darkness narrates the journey of an ivory trafficker called Marlow, who, under the orders of the Belgium Company, enters to the jungles of Africa searching for a man called Kurtz, whose also seems to be considered as a god and have lost his sanity. The heart of darkness follows the nightmare trip at the center of Africa. In a british vessel called the "NELLIE" in which three different men listen the stories of Marlow as an agent of the Company, an ivory enterpirse. In the journey he presence the brutality, the hate between colonizers and the african aborigines. The relation between kurtz and Marlow changes during the novel, at first instance it is just a name for Marlow as we can see in page 42 line 3 where Marlow asks " please tell me who is this Mr. Kurtz?" and as the story continues he starts like venerating Mr. Kurtz as we can see in line 1 of the page 46 (just a few pages later of the novel) " Mr. Kurtz was an universal genius, but even a genius would find easier working with smart men and adecuade instruments". As we can see just a few moments later he started confesing how excited he was of meeting ths Mr. Kurtz, completely different

from the indifference he talks about him some pages before. His fanaticism for him even leads him to say that he made the whole trip just for talking to Kurtz. During the whole book, Marlow seems like a good guy, but not particularly as an ethical one. He is no saint, because he doesn't make anything over the horrible scenarios of slavery in which he got involved, I do understand that it was also part of the period he lived in, it was not like if he was going to begin a civil right movement for black people on the XIX century, but he does make some little actions that show his compassion, for example: he tried giving bread to a slave who was starving, he treats cannibals in a decent manner, and when the helmsman died he assured that the natives did not eat his body.

Another main character (who got my attention) is Mr. Kurtz, he is a very good agent of the Company. Everyone that knows Kurtz knows that he is a very ambitious, charismatic and eloquent person, some adjectives he uses for getting advantages over other people. He ceded over the implacable and hostage African savagery which cost him his sanity. A very important fact about him is that most of the information we get from him are rumors, which make this character even more mysterious. The African natives adore Kurtz as a god. They know that the White people coming from upstream want to take Kurtz back, so they will attack them in order to keep him with them. Kurtz as a god is also a prisoner of his subdites, he can order massacres for every person that reveals, but he can not go freely. This character got my attention because it is strange and very interesting to see how an upstanding man who had responsibilities can lose his sanity from one day to another and also from one day to another become a god for some natives.

But also he was a niggard person, in lines 5 and 6 of page 65 there is a little conversation in which Marlow says “ OH yes, I could Heard him say: “ My ivory, my fiancée, my station, my river, my...” Everything belonged to him.”

There is this character which I certainly hate as much as Marlow does because he is a lazy person, this character is the brick maker, he is this useless worker at the central station. In some parts of the novel he is referred as the manager’s spy because he wants to get information from Marlow in a “ disimulated” way. At the end we can see that his only goal is to ascend in his position in the Company, the narrator always refers to the maker in diabolic words, for example in page line 13 of page 37 he express him as a “ Mefistofeles of papier-maché” (Mefistofeles was the devil in another novel.

And last but not least I want to talk about Kurtz fiancée who stayed back in Britain while he was travelling to Africa in order to make a lot of money. She is beautiful and some times she is related with the light and the sky. Marlow realizes how inocent she is when he talk to her because she think that Kurtz is a saint that travels to Africa to give away love and civilization. In fact she has no idea of how his real Kurtz is, she represents the behavior of the White europoeans of looking to the other side instead of looking at the bloody, brutal reality. We can see how Marlow talks about her in line 16 of page 64 in which he says “ you should hear how he refeared to “ my fiancée”, then you would realize completely how far she was from everything”.

This novel have very brutal and violent scenes that occured during the explorations of the European countries in Africa, but more specific in the

Belgian congo, I never liked how our world treated black people in the previous centuries, I think they did not deserve how they were treated, and they suffered the same things that Mexico almost 500 years ago suffered, the conquered, the massacres, and the abuse from the developed countries that just wanted to take away the minerals, the materials and nowadays the petroleum. Africa is still suffering because there is scarcity of food and water, some of the people there is still treated as slaves, and the great powers of the world are still taking advantage over them.

I liked this book because it really gets you of how the things were back in the XIX and XX century specifically in Africa during the exploitation of Africa, it narrates the voyage of Marlow and Kurtz of exploration to the Belgian congo leading them to the problems that imperialism brought for explorers especially for the original inhabitants of Africa, it also shows how things were between an imperial country such as Britain, Belgium and the Belgian congo, how the relationship was between natives and the Europeans and I could deeper understand the difference between imperialism and colonialism.