

Exterminate the brutes

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



“ The Heart of Darkness” by Conrad is one of the great novels of English literature. This novel exposes the greed, malice and selfishness of the European men. They exploit the wealth of Africa in the name of civilizing the natives. They take away their ivory and in return gave them hunger, destitution, poverty, degradation and death. The English men of this novel lack morals and conscience.

Conrad observed the hypocrisy of his countrymen and exposed it in a marvelous way in this short piece of art.

In this novel he brings before us the nature of “ western superiority” in primitive lands. Reading this story repeatedly, we know that the dark English coast before him recalls for Marlow the darkness of modern Africa, which is the natural darkness of the jungle but more than that the darkness of moral vacancy, leading to the atrocities he has beheld in Africa.

This moral darkness of Africa, we learn later, is not the darkness of the ignorance of the natives, but of the Whiteman who blinded themselves and corrupted the natives by their claim to be light-bearers.

Walter Allen believes that, “ The Heart of Darkness of the title is at once the heart of Africa, the heart of evil- everything that is nihilistic corrupt and malign – and perhaps the heart of man” According to Conrad himself, the story of “ heart of darkness” is about the “ criminality of inefficiency and pure selfishness when tackling the civilizing working Africa”.

In the story Marlow makes much of the inefficiency and selfishness he sees everywhere along his journey in Africa. But it is the criminality of the civilizing work itself that receives the heaviest emphasis in the novel as a

whole. J. W. Beach believes that Kurtz is the representative and dramatization of all that Conrad felt of futility and horror in what the Europeans in the Congo called “ progress”, which meant the exploitation of the natives by the white men.

Kurtz was to Marlow, penetrating this country, a name, constantly recurring in people’s talk, for cleverness and enterprise. But there were slight intimations, growing stronger as Marlow drew near to the heart of darkness, of traits and practices so abhorrent to all our notions of decency, honor and humanity that the enterprising trader gradually takes on the proportion of a ghastly and almost supernatural monster symbol for Marlow of the general spirit of this European undertaking

On his journey up the Congo, Marlow comes across the forsaken railway truck, looking as dead as the carcass of some animal; the brick maker idling for a year with no bricks and no hope of materials for making them; the “ wanton smashup” of drainage pipes abandoned in a ravine; burst, piled up cases of rivets at the outer station and no way of getting them to the damaged steam boat at the Central Station; the vast artificial hole somebody had been digging on the slope- all these and many more are the examples of the criminality of the inefficiency.

Wilson Follet believed that in this novel, “ the European is shown drained, diseased, a prey to madness and unutterable horror and death...” This proves that the white men over there, except the company’s accountant, are inefficient and selfish. They themselves do nothing, whereas on the other hand they exploit the natives to the maximum, they extract the maximum

workout of them and pay them three nine -inch long brass-wire pieces a week, which are insufficient to buy them anything.

As such most of the natives are starving and dying. This novel is a very faithful accord of the cruelties and atrocities perpetrated on the natives of Africa by their European masters. Talking of the roman conquest of England, Conrad says, it was “ just robbery with violence, aggravated murder on a grand scale, and men going at it blind-as is very proper for those who tackle darkness”. What Romans had done in England, the English did in South Africa.

Marlow admits that English conquests, like all others, “ means the taking away it from those who have a different complexion or slightly flatter noses than ourselves,” though Kurtz went to the African jungle with an idea to civilize the natives; he saw his mission in Africa as that of torchbearer for white civilization. But very soon he starts extracting from the natives human sacrifices to himself as god. Finally, his hatred for the natives plunged to the depth out of which came his prescription of the only method for dealing with primitive people: “ Exterminate the brutes!

” The European Whitman in Africa is parasites; they are hollow; they have no personal moral vision of their inhumanity and folly. They are also collapsible, because their society’s institutions are incapable to hold them up. Ivory has become the idol of the foolish run of European pilgrims; and Kurtz is no exception. ” all Europe contributed to the making of Kurtz. ” Joseph Conrad is a modern artist. He uses impressionistic technique of novel writing in his novel, “ The Heart of Darkness”.

The appeal of a novel, Joseph Conrad wrote, “ must be an impression conveyed through senses “. This impression could not be conveyed through the most complete inventory of details; it is an intuitive whole and must be rendered so, instantaneously. ” the meaning of an episode is not inside like a kernel but outside enveloping it,” his spokesman Marlow declared. He avoids generalized narrative. He tell us the story in vivid impressions something like Virginia wolf. E. M.

Forster in his seminal novel “ A Passage To India’ too discuss some what “ the Heart of Darkness” like situation. This novel discusses in detail the severe clash between the two fundamentally different cultures, those of East and West. The administration and their families residing there represent the westerners. Although these western people wish to maintain good relations with the easterners whom they govern, they have no desire to understand India or Indians. The Westerners rule the natives with an iron hand without caring for justice and fair play.