

Review on "heart of darkness" written by joseph conrad

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



From his introduction in the beginning of the novel, the character Kurtz presented himself as a robust personality. In the words of the author, Kurtz is a man of “sombre pride,” (Conrad 2. 29) and his undying will “consumed his flesh,” (Conrad 3. 24). Most of Kurtz’s character is presented by Marlow the narrator and a new traveler into what the audience has come to call, the Heart of Darkness. Kurtz was both adored and despised for his vast degree of influence in the Congo. He often appeared hardened and stout to his fellow Europeans as well as to the natives of the island.

Overall, despite his rugged appearance, Kurtz came to be admired for his leadership, freewheeling spirit, and the salvation he shows Marlow. With such ideals, Kurtz’s personality tends to stand out among the plethora of ‘civilized’ European officers. Unlike the other European leaders, Kurtz sees the ‘primitive’ society as more than a workforce. He creates a persona of superiority, ultimately, winning the influence needed to become a symbol of leadership to the natives. In one situation involving the company manager, Kurtz is criticized for being outgoing and adventurous with his tactics rather than cautious. As the company manager explains, “Mr. Kurtz has done more harm than good to the Company. He did not see the time was not ripe for vigorous action. Cautiously, cautiously—that’s my principle. We must be cautious yet. The district is closed to us for a time. Deplorable!” Armout 2 (Conrad 3. 19).

In this case, what makes Kurtz such a commendable leader is his ability to shift away from the practical option to further advance the productivity of the company. Kurtz becomes a vital part of this system so much so that

when he is rumored to be ill, repairs of the ship become even more apparent. Overall, aside from his intention being for personal gain, he conceives a system which generates success unlike others who followed the cautious and practical route of leadership. While his leadership lies above the surface, his freewheeling spirit is what drives Kurtz's through his indeveres throughout the novel. Such a spirit can only be revealed through a man's behavior and his intentions. Kurtz's actions were guided by two principles: superiority and the end product. In a way, Kurtz represents a ravenous hurricane set to entail the European ideals on the still and peaceful Congo. As the hurricane grows, winds heighten, debris becomes more unpredictable, eventually, turning action into desire. Kurtz's determination doesn't just intimidate the people of the Congo, but in brickmaker who fear him as a threat to their position on the ship.

From the start of the novel, Marlow followed Kurtz's example blindly. He first describes him as " I was curious to see his mingled eagerness and reluctance...The man filled his life preoccupied his thoughts, and swayed his emotions," (Conrad 3. 2). Marlow viewed Kurtz as an investigation waiting to be solved. Kurtz embraced the attention, however, his actions changed Marlow in an unexpected manner. Later in the plot, Marlow comes to realize the wrongfulness Kurtz's intentions, specifically, his lust for greed and power. Marlow, in a way, starts to resent such a notio. Kurtz represents the African Palm Civet, who preys on the weak for their own gain. His looming shadow blocks the drifting breezes of the once untouched Congian society. While Armout 3 unintentional, Kurtz's blatant disregard for morals help aid a

change of behavior, developing Marlow into the sympathetic and inclusive African Forest Elephant by the end of his journey.

All in all, while ill-intentioned, Kurtz's leadership, determination, and influence on others is something to be admired. His leadership guided natives and European sailors to the unexplored depths of Congo. Kurtz's determination and free wheeling spirit remained incessant to the challenges to his position as well as those provided by the environment. Lastly, he taught Marlow, a Russian from a similar background as himself, a valueless lesson. After all, he himself was never given the opportunity to understand the same lesson as his final words stand, "the horror, the horror" (Conrad 3. 12).