

Heart of darkness: plot overview

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



I selected this book for a number of reasons. The first reason is that you the teacher suggested it and you suggested the last book I read for your class. So, I thought that since you had suggested this book that this would be a hit. I also love controversy and the fact that this book has been deemed racist by some made me want to see if it actually were that. I'd also like to see if the fact that people can get past it being a racist book because of its value to American Literature.

The main story of the book is about a narrated journey that takes place on the Congo River leading into the Congo Free State in the heart of Africa. The narrator Charles Marlow tells the story about his friends on a boat on the River Thames. On this journey, other famous British explorers on remembered from their various voyages that took place on the same path as the characters in the story. The narrator reminisces these voyages and the explorers as sacred and important and they're legendary people. These stories give the narrator a sense of King and Country so-to-speak as in these explorers promoted the growth and knowledge of Great Britain.

Also, one of the main points is that Marlow believes that civilizing and enlightening the African people and their culture is a fruitless effort. Because, they already have their own culture and effective civilization that they don't need to interfere. However, Marlow sees the relationship between him and the Africans, but at the same time he says that the relationship is very distant. This is a point where you could argue that Marlow is either racist or not. I'm inclined to believe that he isn't racist, but just that he's a realist. The fact of the matter is that most African culture is savage given that they have tribes and that they're uncivilized living in villages rather than

industrialized cities. It could be argued that this is the same thing that happened to the Native Americans in the U. S. and that we just drove them out and or made them change their very being.

As a result, to this journey Marlow is forced to confront what is happening around him to these African people. He views the people as intellectual subordinates to the British, but this also reminds him of when Rome colonized Great Britain and how the Romans viewed the British before the colonization as savages. He starts to compare his crew to a lesser evolved European from that time and how the differences aren't that great as he previously thought.

At the Inner Station Marlow starts to realize the symbolism of everything he sees around himself. Kurtz is believed to be a magical being by the natives on account of the guns he has and the power they represent. The natives regard these weapons as lightning bolts rather than guns. Another instance in where symbolism and words are interpreted in more than one way, is that Kurtz has a mistress, but the manager and the Russian aren't willing to name her that. This label represents that a sexual relationship between a black woman and a white man and this doesn't sit well with them.

The story comes to a social struggle between the men. They deem Kurtz to be mad because he doesn't live the way a European should with typical European morals. Marlow sees himself as similar to Kurtz and is worried about his own demise in light of him following in Kurtz's footsteps. So, he gathers that betraying Kurtz would effectively betray himself because of how similar they are at this time. Also, the book sheds some light on how Kurtz

while straying away from typical European culture and social standards that he still practices some and cannot let go from them. A prime example of this is his mistress who has a lavish lifestyle and is a symbol of how European women are treated.

The ending happens when the steamer breaks down on the boat and they have to stop for repairs. In this downtime Kurtz approaches Marlow and tells him death is approaching him and that he's ready. The next day Kurtz dies and this leaves Marlow sad because he realizes he will never get his message across like Kurtz did. Marlow returns to Brussels after having a brief brush with death from his illness.