

Colonialism and imperialism in joseph conrad's heart of darkness

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



“ It ceased to be a blank space of delightful mystery” a white patch for a boy to dream gloriously over. It had become a place of darkness” (Conrad 71).

While Marlow is waiting for the Doctor to begin his physical, he notices a map of Africa, color-coded with the nations who have conquered the lands.

Those empire has caused the most damage and committed the most cruel actions to the land and the people. There is a large yellow patch in the middle of the map that marks the area Marlow will be traveling to. In the journey, as he get deep into the jungle, Marlow discover an external darkness and an internal darkness. He sees the reality of European presence, the evil side of human’s nature, and how people even himself get dehumanized by the colonization. The deeper into the Congo, the less humanity they have.

As Marlow travels from the Outer Station to the Inner Station, he sees first hand the reality of colonization. The European colonist enforcing the aimless work onto the Africans. Chained Natives are being forced to dig holes into the ground for the purpose in an unreal charity. “ It wasn’t just a hole, it might have served some philanthropic desire of giving the criminals but basically slaves.” Those natives did not do anything wrong and just be called criminals (Conrad 26). And along the way, Marlow sees the French ship was firing into the depth jungle. Marlow described those fire shot as “ squirt”, to express the useless of those shots (Conrad 20). He also described the Europeans as flabby, devil of a rapacious and pitiless folly, those

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Europeans are using violence to satisfy their own desire and greedy hearts. Marlow begins to wonder about the repercussions of dominating not just the jungle, but the world in this way.

Marlow is who Kurtz used to be when Kurtz first began his journey in the Congo. Kurtz was willing to bring the idea of European civilization to Africans, but became a savage himself when he got into the jungle. There is an evil side lying within everyman, but being repressed by other things. Marlow discovers Kurtz's natural evil secluded from his heart. The Company is only run for the profit and Kurtz becomes corrupt by the power, both of them are ruthless, greedy, and amoral (Conrad 17). Kurtz wants everything get in his control, he states "My ivory, my people, my station, my river" (Conrad 73). Also, Kurtz gets ivory by robbing from the village and put those who "rebel" s head around the house. Kurtz's own desire makes him occupied by the darkness in his heart and show out the evil side in his nature.

This echoes back to the Doctor, who told Marlow the changes take place inside, you know." (Conrad 75). In the beginning, Marlow felt out of place because he did not have the other men's thirst for imperialism. Later, Marlow becomes disturbed by the senseless amount of death and the lack of empathy for the natives. He then becomes disturbed by Kurtz's greed and the unspeakable evils he has committed to get the ivory. Marlow watches the man succumb to his heart of darkness and die weak. He then reflects on the ease that any man, including himself, could fall in the way Kurtz did. At first, Kurtz claims that he was the kind of person who hates lies, however, he lies to Kurtz's Intended the last word of Kurtz was her name (Conrad 157).

Although Marlow has seen the horrors of colonialism, he keeps them to himself and also affected by its darkness.

At the end of the book, Marlow is world-weary and jaded and feels partly responsible for the brutalities inflicted on the natives. His view of imperialism is negative. He comes to realize that The Company is keeping up appearances so that the rest of the civilized world will not know the extent it is ravaging Africa, its land, its animals, and its people.