

The narrative structure of heart of darkness assignment

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The Narrative Structure of Heart of Darkness Peter Brooks's "An Unreadable Report: Conrad's Heart of Darkness" discusses the narrative style of the book. And may I take the time here to say, Wow! , I have never thought about this before and it is warping my mind. HoD not only tells a story; it explores why the story should be told in this manner as well as the limitations of telling the story in this manner. Conrad uses the "organizing features of traditional narrative" (Which are?

The detective story and frame story) to tell his story, but by using them, he points out their weaknesses. HoD is a detective story with an inconclusive ending. HoD is a frame story; but the observance of the action from different perspectives does not, as is traditionally meant to, bestow upon the reader a complete understanding of whatever took place; the different perspectives, because they are not definitive, give only an indication of what happened Relation to the detective story Marlow's experience is secondary to Kurtz's. his journey is a repetition, which gains its meaning from its attachment to the prior journey" As is typical of the detective story he will retrace the footsteps of his predecessor. The classic detective story is constructed by events running at two tracks of time; time the crime occurred and the time in the present when the crime it analyzed. In Heart of Darkness all we know about the first track of time is what the people in the second track find out. And yet the purpose of this second track is only to do just that: to give us a vague representation of the first.

In this manner the detective story may lie at the heart of any narrative structure; it retraces "events that have already occurred" The narrative style ??? the way in which the story is told ??? is based upon the detective, <https://assignbuster.com/the-narrative-structure-of-heart-of-darkness-assignment/>

Marlow, trying to uncover what happened with Kurtz and why. Marlow's goal and his quest for summation. Marlow wants to know the wisdom that Kurtz can impart in other words the meaning of his life. "Kurtz has reached further, deeper than anyone else, and his gift of expression means that he should be able to give articulate shape to his terminus."

Kurtz has reached the end of his life and because of his ability to express himself he should be able to impart better than most the great meaning, wisdom of his life which includes going deeper into the heart of darkness than anyone else. For Marlow "and the end of the journey lies, not ivory, gold, or a fountain of youth, but the capacity to turn experience into language: a voice" But that is not what he finds. Kurtz merely utters "The horror! The horror!" which is more reminiscent to a "primal cry, to a blurred emotional reaction of uncertain reference and context" ??? not articulate in the least.

Marlow interprets this cry as an indication of what Kurtz must feel toward all that he has experienced. But Brooks takes it further by saying that this lack of articulation is due to Kurtz's expedition into the heart of darkness, which is throughout the novel characterized as "unspeakable" "What stands at the heart of the darkness??? at the journey's end and at the core of this tale??? is unsayable, extralinguistic" Kurtz is where the rules of society (and language is a primary tool of society) do not apply.

But! Whatever they may mean, Kurtz's last words "cannot represent the kind of terminal wisdom that Marlow seeks." It does not provide a conclusion, and in this sense it points out the "impossible end of the perfect narrative

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plot. " Marlow can't tell Kurtz's story definitively and thus he cannot find the true summation for which he was searching. And because Marlow can't find the meaning, the summation of the events just by himself he will tell it to other people and this telling will help shed some light.

Although a useful tool the retelling of the story is also an interminable process that has no end. In trying to discern the meaning of the story it'll have to be retold because " meaning will never lie in the summing-up but only in transmission: in passing-on the ' horror. "' Meaning is also dialogic in nature. It requires dialogue between the narrator and the listener to be understood. " The reader is solicited not only to understand the story, but to complete it. " In this sense the story is an ongoing never ending project. It has no end.