

# Gloom and Darkness in Joseph Conrad's Novel "Heart of Darkness"

P.Indhu,  
Assistant Professor of English,  
Bharathiyar Arts and Science college for Women, Deviyakurichi.

## Abstract

Joseph Conrad explains about the African people and the British people control over the African people in this novel. The title "Heart of Darkness" refers to the mind of the England people who never allows the African people to stand on their own leg. The title symbolizes the heart of African people. In this novel "Heart of Darkness" Conrad explains the themes of Imperialism and the sufferings of American people's during the period of Colonisation and also explains the cruel heartiness of English people.

**Keywords :** Gloom,dark,suffering,Imperialism,monarchy

*Heart of Darkness* (1899) is a novella by Polish-British novelist Joseph Conrad about a voyage up the Congo River into the Congo Free State, in the heart of Africa, by the story's narrator Marlow. Marlow tells his story to friends aboard a boat anchored on the river Thames London, England. This novel's setting provides the frame for Marlow's story of his obsession with the ivory trader Kurtz, which enables Conrad to create a parallel between London and Africa as places of darkness. Central to Conrad's work is the idea that there is little difference between so-called civilised people and those described as savages; *Heart of Darkness* raises questions about imperialism and racism. The character of this novel is Marlow, Kurtz, General Manager, Brickmaker, Chief Accountant, Pilgrims and Cannibals. Charles Marlow the protagonist of this novel. He is philosophical, independent-minded, and generally skeptical of those around him. He is also a master storyteller, eloquent and able to draw his listeners into his tale. Although Marlow shares many of his fellow Europeans' prejudices, he has seen enough of the world and has encountered enough debased white men to make him skeptical of imperialism.

Kurtz is a man of many talents we learn, among other things, that he is a gifted musician and a fine painter. The chief of which are his charisma and his ability to lead men. Kurtz is a man who understands the power of words, and his writings are marked by an eloquence that obscures their horrifying message. At the beginning of the novella *Heart of Darkness* Marlow, a thoughtful mariner, sets off a journey up to the Congo River to meet Kurtz, a man known for his great abilities. Marlow is offered a job as a riverboat captain by a Belgian Company to trade in the Congo. As he travels to Africa and then up the Congo, Marlow encounters prevalent disorganization and cruelty in the Company's stations. The

native inhabitants of that region have been enforced in the Company's service, and they undergo a terrible overwork and ill treatment at the hands of the Company's agents. Marlow arrives at the Central Station that was run by the general manager, a conspiratorial character. He has been trapped there because his steamship has been sunk.

Marlow spends several months waiting for the parts to repair it. While his stay at the central station, his interest in Kurtz grows. The manager and the brick maker seem to be afraid of Kurtz as he can be a great threat to their position. It is rumored that Kurtz is severely ill, so the repair of the sunken ship is delayed. Marlow finally gets the parts he needs to repair his ship. After the maintenance of the ship the manager sets out with a few agents and a crew of cannibals on a long, difficult voyage up the river. The dense jungle and the deadening silence make everyone aboard a little nervous and the occasional glimpse of a native village and the sound of drums worsen the situation.

Marlow and his crew arrive at a hut with stacked firewood. It is written on a note saying that the wood is for them, but they should approach the fire very cautiously. Shortly after the steamboat has taken on the firewood, it is surrounded by a dense fog. When the fog clears, the ship is attacked by an unseen group of natives, who throw arrows from the forest. The African helmsman, a crew member of the ship, is killed. After sometime, Marlow frightens the natives away with the ship's steam whistle.

Marlow and his companions arrive at Kurtz's Inner Station, thinking that Kurtz might have died. They come ashore and meet a half-crazed Russian trader, who assures them that everything is fine and informs them that he is the one who left the wood. The Russian claims that Kurtz has gone mad and cannot be explained on the normal moral judgment. Marlow finds that Kurtz has established himself as a god with the natives and has gone on several brutal raids in the surrounding territory in search of ivory. The method of his raids for the collection of ivory is very brutal and barbaric which can be proved by the human heads hanging on the fence posts. The pilgrims bring Kurtz out of the station-house on a stretcher, and suddenly a large group of native warriors comes out of the forest and surrounds them. Kurtz speaks to them, and the natives disappear into the woods.

The manager brings Kurtz, who is quite ill, aboard the steamer, a beautiful native woman, seemingly Kurtz's mistress, appears on the shore and glares at the ship. The Russian reveals to Marlow, after vowing him to secrecy, that Kurtz himself had ordered the attack on the boat to make them believe he was dead so that they might turn back and leave him to his plans. The Russian then leaves the crew in the boat and sails by canoe. The same night, Kurtz disappears and Marlow goes out in search of him. He finds him crawling on all fours toward the native camp saying that he has to be there for a ritual. Marlow stops him and convinces him to return to the ship. They set off down the river the next morning, but Kurtz's health is degrading very fast.

This novella "*Heart of Darkness*" is astonishingly powerful and equally enigmatic. Its condemnation of Western imperialism of the greed, violence, and exploitation that so often accompanies ventures to bring "light" and civilization to

the “dark” and needy areas of the world and its poignant look at the destructive influence of colonization on the colonized and colonizer alike, have been widely praised. Finally, Conrad discusses about the gloominess of the African people though this novel.

**Workscited :**

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