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# HEART OF DARKNESS JOSEPH CONRAD

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## Introduction to Conrad

- A Polish national but wrote in English
- Pursued the career of a sailor
- His experiences as a British sailor to the heart of Congo influenced him greatly
- This prompted him to give up the life of seafaring and become a professional writer
- Though critically acclaimed not a selling author in the beginning
- Noteworthy works: Heart of Darkness, Under Western Eyes, Chance, The Secret Sharer, The Arrow of Gold

## Critical Appreciation of Heart of Darkness

- Source: The experience of Conrad at Congo in 1890 – Belgian colonial quests
- Documentary and Historical value: Truthfully represents the contemporary conditions in Africa
- Themes: Imperial aggressions of Europe and a journey beyond reality
- Symbolism: Exploration of human mind
- Characterization: Marlow and Kurtz
- Psychological Analysis: Inner thoughts and ambitions brought alive

## MARLOW:

- A seaman and a wanderer
- Fascinated by the Congo
- Humorous yet sombre portrayal of characters
- Vivid description of natural scenery
- Strong work ethics
- A psychologist and philosopher

## KURTZ:

- First reference to Kurtz
- Building up of his importance
- Arousal of Marlow's interest in Kurtz
- Impact of wilderness on Kurtz
- Influence over the savages
- Hollowness
- Significance of the dying words: "The horror! The horror!"

## SYMBOLISM IN HEART OF DARKNESS

- Greed of the Western world
- White man's love for power
- Influence of barbarism on civilization
- Experience and maturity
- Kurtz
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