

PalArch's Journal of Archaeology
of Egypt / Egyptology

**Reimagining Conradian Kurtzas Machiavellian Prince or Kurtz in Joseph
Conrad's Heart of Darkness: The Embodiment of Machiavellian Prince**

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Conrad's Heart of Darkness: The Embodiment of Machiavellian, Palarch's Journal
Of Archaeology Of Egypt/Egyptology 18(4). ISSN 1567-214x**

Abstract:

Conrad's fiction is an ambivalent response to the experiences of ruthlessness and cruelty in the form of adopting Machiavellian strategies. On one hand, Conrad's notorious obscurity attempts to criticize a world that has been thoroughly mapped and remapped for the sake of the selfish motives of some powerful states. On the other, Conrad's formal innovations inextricably coupled with his spatial imagination unveil the reality of the selfish and utilitarian behavior of humans. The paper addresses the 'state of qualitative inquiry'; re-imagining the character of Kurtz as the Machiavellian prince. The theoretical framework mainly focuses on Machiavellian philosophy while the method is close reading. The findings are the chaos in result of 'Machiavellianism' and dishevelment created by it in the present society in general and the world in particular. It offers a working example by connecting the past with the present to pave the way for a bright future.

Conceptual Background:

During its social evolution from its earliest origins to the present day, Europe has undergone many ideological shifts from the barbarous to the spiritual and to the secular. In the 5th century, a major shift occurred in its history: the Roman Empire began to lose its hegemony at the hands of the barbarians from the North before its complete disintegration. With these cross-channel migrations came the transmission of the germ of what was to become medieval thought. The invasion of England by the wild Germanic tribes coincided with the arrival of St. Augustine, a

Christian monk. St. Augustine's work altered the very current of Europe's cultural development (Daiches 1969). In addition, the political impact of the Romans, the intellectual influence of the Greeks and the religious influence of the Jews were the basic reasons for the proliferation of Western political thought. These waves reshaped, rebranded and seasoned Christianity to what it is in our contemporary world (Ekeke 2013). In the light of this checkering cultural, political and religious framework, it can be observed that English literature is an amalgamation of the Anglo-Saxon spirit, Judo-Christian tradition, and Greco-Roman thought. Moreover, till the advent of Renaissance, The Roman Catholic Church remained the indissoluble part of English literature. During the Renaissance, Italy functioned as the epicenter of cultural transformation while England passively followed the shifting paradigm of ideas from the wilting Roman papal center to the budding Renaissance cultural centers. Secular humanism became the new guiding principle (Lamont 1997). Reason then superseded faith as the pole star in many aspects of European intellectual life, such as in one's orientation to the divine and the way in which one read and understood texts (e.g.: Scriptures as allegory), especially in economics and statecraft. Among these secular humanist philosophers who promoted reason over faith was Niccolò Machiavelli. (Alker 1992)

"I love my city more than I love my soul," Machiavelli once wrote in a letter to a friend (Gilbert 1961). In both *The Prince* and *The Discourses*, Machiavelli advises future politicians to remember this principle of service over self and abide by it. This concept had a shocking impact on the early 16th century audience for whom statecraft was an inseparable mixture of civic and religious mores (Berlin 1980). Machiavelli's vision of true political virtue was ineluctably at odds with Christianity and its principles of ethics. However, as Europe's paradoxical conservatism was poised to be disrupted by the end of the 16th century, it was Machiavellian philosophy that proved to be the major catalyst for the release of that tension, the knife that finally severed the traditional ties that bound society to the ossified hegemony of the Church (Berlin 1980). For Machiavelli a prince must be brutally realistic and practical, avoiding idealistic inclinations which will lead to nothing but his own ruin. (Marriot 2008)

Forming the core of Machiavellian philosophy as epitomized in *The Prince* is the acquisition and exercise of excessive power by solidifying one's hold over others through manipulation, cunningness and deception (Machiavelli 2008). Since selfish desires of mankind form the foundation of corruption, the fuel behind such temptations drive one to the extent of becoming Machiavellianistic either for the sake of personal advantages or the welfare of all and sundry. The reason behind such adverse behavior may not necessarily mean that such individuals exhibit Machiavellian potentialities covertly; they could be portraying it openly without taking into consideration the impact it would have on others, as long as it makes them achieve their goals. This idea introduces the structure of formulating the research at hand. The research work focuses on applying the same attributes and potentialities for understanding the character of Kurtz in the light of Machiavellian philosophy of a leader or the prince.

Machiavellianism and Heart of Darkness

By the end of the 16th century, however, Machiavellian ideas had gained in popularity, ultimately influencing kings, princes and other such heads of state; writers like Shakespeare (Grady 2002) and Bacon (Rebhorn 1988); and intellectuals such as Bodin, Harrington, Milton, Spinoza and Rousseau. Though infamous for his controversial philosophy, Machiavelli has nonetheless played a pervasive role in determining the attitude of the European colonizing class, especially the British Imperialists who vigorously employed his strategiesto dominate different parts of the

world (Marriot 2008). The intricate, violent philosophy of Niccolò Machiavelli has been funneled through great writers into sketches of characters who are intent on accomplishing their objectives at any cost. The Machiavellian approach to leadership is through deception and coercion and, at the most extreme end, through physical torture and mass murder. *Heart of Darkness*, as the amalgamation of all these realities, has remained largely unexplored. The novella is a scathing criticism of the Machiavellian approach taken by 19th century imperialists whose true goals were nothing more than national development and economic expansion, no matter what the environmental and human cost was. This project aims to explore, analyze and interpret Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*, whose symbolic shades of meaning hardly need explanation, through the lens of a Machiavellian lust for power, greed, and exploitation. *Heart of Darkness* serves to reinforce negative African stereotypes, acting as a mere cautionary tale wherein one must be careful lest they "go native" as Kurtz does.

Research Question

What Machiavellian influences are found in the character of Kurtz in Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*?

Objectives

- a. To explore, analyze and interpret *Heart of Darkness* from a Machiavellian perspective.
- b. To focus on textual analysis to find similarities between Kurtz and the Machiavellian Prince.
- c. To highlight how Machiavellian strategies are used to suppress the ruled.

Research Methodology

The primary sources for this research project are Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* and Niccolò Machiavelli's *The Prince*. The latter is used as a tool for exploring, analysing, and interpreting the former. For investigating meticulously, the original works of the writers are studied thoroughly and carefully with an array of associated research publications. In addition, the research is a historical research also. Deductive inference applies as a tool to both descriptive and historical types of research for critical analysis of the data. Since the related data is qualitative, the methodical tools are also qualitative that include interpretations and explanations. The researcher has used historical method by gathering and analyzing historical evidence. The primary sources are the original texts and the secondary sources are in the shape of numerous publications on these texts. In the present study, the general theory is Machiavellian doctrine which has been particularized in the character of Kurtz. Further articles as secondary sources are selected from other books, the internet and research journals. The researcher has read the original text of *Heart of Darkness* thoroughly. References from his personal life were also taken in the shape of Conrad's personal accounts. Conrad's *Letters to William Blackwood and David S. Meldrum* played a supporting role. For further support of strengthening the argument secondary sources in the shape of research publications were taken into consideration. In this regard, Roger D. Spegele's *Fiction as Political Theory: Joseph Conrad's 'Heart of Darkness'* (1972) clarified an understanding of Conrad's political vision.

Literature Review

There are different approaches to the reading and analysis of *Heart of Darkness*. Researchers have remained successful in extracting from Conrad's book all superficial trappings of the conventional adventure tale by looking at it through the lens of ecological studies. Parallels continue to be drawn between Marlow's suspenseful journey and the exploration of

psychological realities. Viewed from a socio-political perspective, lust for power and greed for material gains remain the area of focus, most importantly from the perspectives of colonialism and imperialism. The most prominent take on the text is that how it negatively affects notions of race and race relations by stereotyping Africans as nothing more than shadows. This approach dominates the list of research work conducted so far.

In the postcolonial era, the theme of racism is dealt with by academics in a hard-handed manner but it was not always so. Initial research work on the novella was characterized by great appreciation of Conrad for raising awareness for the advocacy of Africans, but with the passage of time the direction of the canons turned on the very creator of the novella. The amount of criticism on the theme of racism led academics to the demand that the novella be struck from the canon of Western literature by pegging Conrad as the representative of white racism. The most quoted work in this regard is by Nigerian writer Chinua Achebe. In a course of lectures entitled "An Image of Africa" delivered at the University of Massachusetts at Amherst on the 18th of February 1975, he takes all such examples that in one way or another carry negative portrayals of Africans that are consciously or unconsciously drawn by the writer. The concluding remarks of his lectures include characterizing Joseph Conrad, in no uncertain terms, as 'a bloody racist'. Though he later altered his condemnation to 'thoroughgoing racist', it proves that to Achebe any value that Conrad might have as a writer is crushed under the juggernaut of his apparent racism. Patrick Brantlinger in his article "Heart of Darkness: Anti-imperialism, Racism or Impressionism?" published in 1985 treats the theme of racism with great severity by openly satirizing Europeans for their discriminatory behavior toward Africans in all aspects of life. He shows Conrad to have been an unconditional ally of the colonizers in his outright rejection of all ideas that seem to make Conrad out to be a critic of European imperialism. Another prominent academic who argues that Conrad was plainly a racist is C.P. Sarvan. In his article "Racism and Heart of Darkness" published in 1980 goes beyond Achebe and Brantlinger by elaborating on the theme of racism in a three-tier structure. Sarvan compares the noble Romans and their relationship with the barbarians of Britain with the noble colonial era Europeans and their relationship with Africans: The Romans behaved in the same manner as the Europeans did by considering themselves civilized and superior to all other races. He states, "When the Romans looked down upon the people of Britain and Europeans on the 'natives' it was because they felt that they have achieved much higher civilization than the people they were confronting or conquering". (8)

The Freudian perspective remains the most dominant one through which Heart of Darkness has been interpreted. As Marshal W. Alcorn states in his article Narcissism and the Literary Libido, similarities run between Freud and Conrad in that both of them felt that the pressures and conflicts of external reality play a vital role in the development of the self (Alcorn 1997). Sarah Assad in her dissertation entitled as A Postcolonial and Psychoanalytical Approach to Heart of Darkness also analyzes the main characters from Freudian perspective. For her, Marlow represents the 'ego', or the rational side of man, while Kurtz represents the 'id', Marlow's 'alter ego', the primitive force of man. (Asad 2006)

NgugiwaThiong'o, in his article "Writers in Politics" published in 1981 says that the world of Conrad and that of African writers is the same, that Conrad's world does not seem different from that of the Africans because both have been dominated by colonialism, capitalism and imperialism (5). Aloise Knapp Hay, in his Political Novels of Joseph Conrad (1963), ponders the

statement from a different perspective. He does not consider Marlow to be the mouthpiece of Conrad, he differentiates between Conrad and Marlow by saying that the latter is a meticulous conservative who respects Britain's competent imperialism. Yet another pro-imperialist critic who preaches the idea of "the white man's burden" is Robert F. Lee. In his work *Conrad's Colonialism*, he states, "One of the major directions of Conrad's colonial fiction is the recognition of and an accord to the conception of Anglo-Saxon superiority in administering the lives of the oriental and other dependent people" (10). In short, a ruthless picture of colonial enterprise is presented by such images of the book. One of the instrumental forces behind Marlow's escapade is to highlight the hidden hypocrisy in the rhetoric used for justifying imperialism. Hunt Hawkins, in his article "Conrad's Critique of Imperialism in Heart of Darkness", states that because we are living in an era of decolonization the modern reader is magnetically attracted to the strongest theme of the novella, namely the colonial and imperial experience. It is an evident fact that the novella has many themes but the theme of colonialism is at the center of all (286). Hawkins gives voice to the positives as well as the negatives of imperialism in general as he further contemplates the issue and says that in *Heart of Darkness* Conrad selected two explicit criteria to judge imperialism: efficiency and idea. Various internal and external factors portray that these values were not advocated by the writer himself; he chooses these views because they were extensively apprehended in England at the time and he was well suited to condemning the type of imperialism practiced in Congo. (288)

The above mentioned articles portray a positive picture of the English in terms of their particular method of civilizing the world. While many academics agree that *Heart of Darkness* is a text criticizing the methods of King Leopold II as differentiated from those of the English imperialists. The list of researchers criticizing European imperialism begins with Roger D. Spegele (1972), who considers Conrad to be a genuine philosophical political novelist given that he shows that such extreme behaviour is part of human nature. Spegele in his article "Fiction as Political Theory: Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*" takes into consideration the performance of the colonialists when he writes, "The colonists' actions are prompted by greed and corruption; their expressed mission is an absurdity. The humanitarian, the civilizers of the Blacks, have become instead tormentors and enslavers" (321). Thus he paints a vivid picture of European imperialists by thrusting into the limelight the torments that they thrust upon the natives. He removes the flattering disguise of their civil works by exposing the destruction they actually caused for the fulfillment of their greed and lust. Another researcher, Edward Said, in his article *Culture and Imperialism*, published in 1993, recognizes the fact that though Conrad criticizes imperialism, he does not offer any alternative, seeming to take the European tutelage of the colonized. Said says, "As a creature of his time, Conrad could not grant the natives their freedom, despite his severe critique of the imperialism that enslaved them" (30). The basis for this opinion is derived from passages that reveal the uselessness of the developmental projects, as well as passages that paint a gruesome picture of the dying natives. This picture is at the forefront of the article *Conrad and Imperialism* written by Benita Parry. She presents *Heart of Darkness* as a text reinforcing odious orthodox perceptions of Africa, as it exposes the intentions of imperialism's avowal in "the dark continent".

Conrad's oeuvre from a political perspective has caught the attention of many researchers in the postcolonial era. The researcher is inspired to probe deeper down the path first set by Spegele, who considers Conrad a genuine philosophical political novelist, but as of yet, Conrad's work has not been studied through a political philosophy lens. This research work seeks to draw a

connection between the political doctrine of Machiavelli in terms of identifying the potentials of a successful leader in his *The Prince* and Conrad's image of a leader in the shape of Kurtz in *Heart of Darkness*. The research work in itself is not only the understanding of Machiavellian thought but also Conrad's political vision. A vision that belongs to a more intricate system of human's conflict and co-operation. It not only objectifies the traces of Machiavellianism in the novella but at the same time proves these influences destructive in the stream of action.

Discussion

In his personal letters Joseph Conrad connects the problems of his world to the very nature of human beings. He believes that the impetus driving every upheaval is born of either man's ill-knowledge of himself or the overwhelming negativity of his nature (Conrad 1958). This belief is shared by Niccolò Machiavelli, whose political doctrine is based on the capricious nature of human beings (Machiavelli 2008). In both *Heart of Darkness* and *The Prince*, man stands at the centre of all catastrophic upheavals, acting as the root cause of it. Machiavelli in his book *The Prince* gives a series of advices, suggestions and lessons to his prince regarding state affairs. He advises that a leader should set his focus on the achievement of goals by any means, no matter whether the means are cruel or brutal. He teaches his prince how to win people over in a methodical manner, ensuring him unconditional obeisance. Machiavelli suggests that the prince fine-tune his general capabilities and knowledge. He also advises that the prince develop the skills of character judgment and intuition for the selection of subordinates. In crucial circumstances the prince is also advised to be willing to strong-arm or bludgeon the population into submission, whether during times of internal or external tension. Grafton in his introduction to the 1996 Penguin edition of *The Prince* calls the text an effective series of lessons about cruelty and ruthlessness to the extent of glorifying bloodshed (Grafton 1996). In the character of Kurtz we certainly hear the echoes of all of these qualities, both the positive and the negative.

Though Kurtz does not appear until late in the story but it is through the minor characters' explicit descriptions and Marlow's obsessive curiosity that the reader himself begins to long for a meeting with Kurtz. Kurtz stands as a prime example of an otherwise civilized man who yields to his baser, more barbaric nature. Though a fictional character, the model for Kurtz is based on the well-documented behavior of European colonialists in Africa. He is a man who embodies Western civilization: a born Belgian with a half-English mother and a half-French father. Kurtz is a character full of versatility, referred to in no uncertain terms as a "universal genius". He is a man of high literary taste who enjoys reading and writing poetry. His technical writing is also well-noted in a report he composed for the International Society for the Suppression of Savage Customs, full of advice to the Europeans for handling the Africans in a manner in which both parties benefit. He also wins the appreciation of Marlow and other European agents for his marvelous painting skills. Despite these qualities, Kurtz remains a hollow man overwhelmed by greed. For the sake of ivory, he willingly gives up his finer instincts, involving himself in the dreadful rites of the natives and allowing his darker essence to become the core of his actions. Marlow describes Kurtz by magnifying his frontal bone with a completely bald head which he calls "an ivory ball", elaborating further on this image to say that ivory has become such an inseparable part of Kurtz, that it has become the part of his very soul, that it lives in his veins (Conrad, 1997). On one hand the description of Kurtz generally proves the philosophy of Machiavelli about human nature while on the other hand the combination and interplay of the destructive and constructive poles of his character make Kurtz the quintessential Machiavellian leader. Roger Spegele writes that it is his fine rhetorical skill that presents Kurtz as the

embodiment of salvation and hope for mankind, energizing huge crowds by winning their faith with his words. He goes on to say that had Kurtz gone into politics he would have made an extraordinary leader of an acute party. (Spegele 1972)

Kurtz goes beyond the conventions of his culture regarding prohibited knowledge by making his dark side dominant. Through him, Conrad deals with the dark heart of politicians, the evil side that is hidden under the clothing of their feigned goodness. In the same manner Kurtz utilized severe violence not only in taking the ivory from the Africans but also in mistreating his fiancée and colleagues. Over the time, he begins to hate his followers, loving only his lustful gains. His hut is decorated with the skulls of dead enemies, each one a testament to his own savagery. Kurtz's ambition, greed and desire for ivory were his reasons for his coming to Africa, after all. In the attainment of ivory, he follows the demands of Machiavellianism to the very letter, undermining the sources and exploiting the people without a care. The barbarity of his deeds, cruelty and greed over time begin to have an adverse impact on his personality, making him mentally ill and leading him to his death.

In *The Prince* Machiavelli stressed the development of a ruler's general abilities. A true leader is portrayed as a charismatic individual, whose bravery and strength must naturally stand out. With this in mind, it becomes clear to the reader that Kurtz harbors the qualities of a charismatic leader, blindly followed by Europeans and worshipped by natives for his bravery and steadfastness. He further secures the devotion of his people through the wise selection of individuals who serve as his subordinates. Joseph Bien says in *Politics of the Present: Machiavellian Humanism* that the negation of reason only leaves the option of intuition, which is the Machiavellian way of seeing reality available to all individuals (Bien 1981). One minor character, the Russian, expresses his admiration for Kurtz by saying that he is not afraid of anyone, and so strong a leader was he that the natives would not even move until Kurtz gave the orders. The chiefs of these tribes came every day to see Kurtz; they would crawl on the ground out of respect for him (Conrad 1997). The inborn charisma of Kurtz and the impact that he has on the people is clearly evident.

Joseph Conrad in his short story *Youth* states that the relationship between Kurtz and his followers mimics the relationship of a guru with his disciples. They perceive him as their savior, and so they obey his caprice and whim (Spegele 1972). He is the emissary of hope for the masses who comes into the dark wilderness to lead the people to the light. Kurtz, like the Machiavellian prince, understands intuitively that the way to ensure their devotion is to provide them with the hope of salvation. Machiavellian philosophy holds that hatred amongst the people will certainly rise if the ruler shows any signs of weakness, capriciousness and cowardliness, second-guessing his own decisions and being wary of his own intuition. The prince must lead from the front in terms of showing the attributes of strength, courage and sobriety such that his followers would not so much stir in his presence, let alone think about plotting against him (Machiavelli 2008). Kurtz is a gifted man, he is a writer, a publicist, an artist and explorer; he is the combination of creative and innovative potentials. He proudly demonstrates his abilities to the maximum both for good and for ill, whether in the role of beloved shepherd to his flock or feared agent of ruthless colonial enterprise. It is this behavior of his that earns him the titles of a 'remarkable man' and 'universal genius' even from his adversaries. Marlow says that whatever he was, Kurtz can never be forgotten, for the magnetic impact he had upon people could overwhelm them to such an extent that they would dance in his honor (Conrad 1997).

A successful body politic comprises a strong and intelligent leader, the bureaucratic machinery for running different institutions, and a substratum of competent men. Kurtz shows that he has the ability to recognize the capabilities of potential and actual subordinates, always remaining a strong supporter of intelligence and hard work. Something that sets Kurtz apart from other Europeans in *Heart of Darkness* is the understanding he has of the natives' character and the knowledge he has of their culture, which he uses as a ladder for the achievement of his goals – absolute control, and the amassing of ivory. Kurtz's power to manipulate the people of an alien culture, as well as his gift for recognizing intelligent men to serve him, are what enabled him to dredge the area of its people and resources and hoard them all to himself (Spegele 1972). Kurtz's control of his subordinates is so strong that his followers, workers and supervisors are found ready for all sorts of circumstances, and even in extreme situations they never step back from their positions. One such character, the Russian, is prepared to sacrifice his life for the slightest advantage of Kurtz. The ivory collected by the Russian is handed over to Kurtz without any argumentation. Similarly, the tribal chiefs are always at his service. Kurtz constructs a bridge of intelligent men which he walks smoothly across toward the attainment of his goals. According to Spegele, in Marlow's tale the description of a charismatic response is given to Kurtz by his followers. He elaborates the reason of the responses by paying tribute to the character of Kurtz that fear does play an important role for keeping the natives in a tight control but it is not fear only but mainly out of sheer love, passionate devotion and enthusiasm (Spegele 1972). As a true Machiavellian, Kurtz recognizes these emotions in his subordinates and molds them to his own advantage. It is because of his devoted subordinates that the Inner Station proves to be the beacon of ivory production for Brussels, achieving fame for Kurtz. Even his adversaries are of the opinion that Kurtz is destined for greatness in the company. He becomes the most famous ivory collector in the Congo. Marlow says of Kurtz that he “was a ‘universal genius’, for even a genius would find it easier to work with ‘adequate tools – intelligent men’” (Conrad 1997). It is a hallmark of Machiavellianism that manipulating the emotions of love and fear in the masses is the primary method of control.

Though Machiavelli in his writings demands personal capabilities from the prince, he values equally the prince's selection of intelligent men for his support. Since a successful body politic is the combination of both the above mentioned attributes, Machiavelli accepts and preaches these ideas to his prince. For Machiavelli the fundamental objective of the advice is to keep the obedience of the people intact and in strong support of the prince. In *Heart of Darkness* the impact of such men can be seen on the people who show their loyalty to their leader by unconditionally supporting Kurtz even to the extent of worshipping him. Kurtz' men act as his personal publicists by touting his prowess as a leader and manager not only to his subordinates but also to his rivals in the field. It is the competency and loyalty of his followers that gives Kurtz an edge that other such leaders do not have. Skinner in his *Internal Quotes to Machiavelli* states that men in a fortunate republic will lead people by their own example by restoring its former vigor (Skinner 1978). It is the selection of competent and loyal subordinates that earn him unconditional obedience of his followers because they start developing a solid trust in the potentialities of Kurtz. Furthermore, incompetency on the part of either the prince or his subordinates defames the leader, bringing a bad name to his ruling tactics. Machiavelli explicitly states that the quality of able men around the prince forms the very first glimpse of his public image. If the selected men are loyal and competent, the prince will be perceived as wise; conversely, if the selected men are disloyal and incompetent then he, too, will be perceived as such. (Machiavelli 2008)

Intelligence is the hallmark of a leader at the helm of a mob. In terms of a state that is already well-organized Machiavelli's opinion is of the opinion that even a layman with average intelligence could lead because the system could almost run itself. But in terms of a newborn or novice state, such as the Inner Station of the Congo, the demands are enormous. Kurtz arrives as a novice to the Congo, and later to the Inner Station where he must build a system from scratch, and it is readily apparent that he has what it takes to construct the new station. Supporting proof of this fact lies in Kurtz becoming the most successful ivory producer, as well as his maintaining unusually strong control of the people. Regarding his high level of acumen, Marlow has this to say of Kurtz: "Believe me or not, his intelligence was perfectly clear – concentrated, it is true, upon himself with horrible intensity, yet clear" (Conrad 1997). The Prince presents the Machiavellian leader in a theoretical manner, prescribing for him the following essential attributes: the ability to recognize the potential in other individuals, an unassailable set of strong personal qualities, natural charisma, and the courage to lead from the front. In *Heart of Darkness*, Conrad fills in the character sketch of Kurtz using precisely this Machiavellian brush.

Statecraft occasionally demands the use of force, not only to quell internal tensions but also to defend against foreign aggression. Over time, waves of disorder can be expected to pass through any society; minor upheavals, external intrigues, civil wars and revolutions can all lead toward total cataclysm. In the paragraphs above, the leadership qualities which, according to Machiavelli, are necessary for safeguarding against internal issues were discussed, but in matters of external aggression or severe internal disruption, Machiavelli's remedy is different: the use of weaponry. In fact, at times he favors arms over diplomatic means. For a ruler whose aim is territorial expansion, the development of his arsenal is imperative for conquering the land and then for keeping the inhabitants of the land in control. Machiavelli says that occupied territories are habituated under the authority of a prince, or familiarized with freedom; a prince either wins these lands with the arms of others or his own, either by destiny or by dexterity (Machiavelli 2008). Going beyond the amassing of weaponry itself, Machiavelli addresses the organization of troops which, of course, depends on the ability of the leader. He states that if a leader possesses knowledge of organizing an army then he can successfully compose it out of any group of people, whether or not they are his own subjects or dependents. (Machiavelli 2008)

Kurtz' human resource skills can be seen in his organization of troops for expeditions, his striking ability is to gather all of the native tribes under his leadership and inspire them to work toward his own goals. Kurtz follows the advice in spirit given by Machiavelli to his prince by making arms and soldiers his utmost priority. This turns out to be the sole cause of the natives bestowing upon him unconditional obedience. The Russian explains to Marlow that normally Kurtz remains in his place, but for the sake of expeditions for ivory he comes out with his soldiers: "The Russian was explaining to me that it was only lately that Mr. Kurtz had come down to the river, bringing along with him all the fighting men of that lake tribe" (Conrad, 1997). Kurtz understands the importance of force for the sake of external expeditions as well as a safeguard against internal intrigues. In the second section a voyage is on the move against Kurtz, who has gained the reputation as the most successful producer of ivory. The manager and his nephew, the leaders of the Outer Station, cannot bear his progress and plan to kill him. The news reaches Kurtz before the arrival of the convoy thus he launches a preemptive attack on them in a grand display of strength, and as a result the convoy hesitates to make their move once they reach him. Describing the attack Marlow writes, "I stood in the doorway, peering, and the arrows came in swarms. They might have been poisoned" (Conrad 1997). Kurtz remains active for all

sorts of external and internal upheavals; he uses coercion for internal issues even to the extent of killing the natives who raise the flag of rebellion against him. In fact, his house is decorated with the skulls of the rebels, serving both to control internal society as well as instill fear in the hearts of external forces. According to Marlow, "They would have been even more impressive, those heads on the stakes, if their faces had not been turned to the house" (Conrad 1997). In two statements that go side by side, Machiavelli highlights the importance of arms for a leader. He says that no one can compare an armed man with an unarmed man, and that expecting the armed man to obey the unarmed man is ridiculous (Machiavelli 2008). Kurtz, in light of these statements, keeps himself armed all the time. Even when his health is at its worst he has his weapons ready. On his deathbed when he is being carried to the steamboat, his personal arms are carried after him by his followers, including two shot guns, a revolver and a heavy rifle. With these thunderbolts, Jupiter may at any time show his wrath. Only by destroying the land and its people was he able to pave his way for a smooth rule. (Bass 1998)

The Machiavellian prince is advised on the fundamentals of keeping a body politic intact with the help of different means, personal potentialities, intelligence, selection of able men and weaponry. But when all these attributes are for naught, Machiavelli moves on to his final lesson: ruthlessness. Violence as a last resort is always available to the Machiavellian prince. He is advised that benefits should be meted out slowly so that the taste may last as long, while violence should be implemented at once and abruptly so that the taste may be quickly forgotten. Such strategies are offered for times of crisis when the storm of intrigue leads to the rebellion of the people against the authority of the prince. Such a threat to the kingdom must be crushed under an iron fist. The Machiavellian remedy for such disease is cruelty, sinking all who create hindrances to the smooth sailing of the prince or his kingdom. Thus he preaches the idea of inflicting injury for the greater goal of the state's existence. He further explains that these injuries should be inflicted in such a grievous manner that no fear of revenge is left. Machiavelli advises that the prince must not even spare his own confidantes if they go against the objectives of the state. If the class of men that the prince relies on is corrupt, be they noblemen, soldiers or ordinary civilians, they must be dealt with decisively. In such circumstances if the leader behaves in a kindly manner, he will turn out to be his own enemy. (Machiavelli 2008)

Joseph Conrad paints the character Kurtz with the colors of extreme ruthlessness and cruelty. "I seemed at one bound to be transported into some lightless regions of subtle horrors, where pure, uncomplicated savagery was a positive relief" (Conrad 1997). Conrad makes him reach the height of devilishness, not even sparing those closest to him. Though the Russian demonstrates his undying loyalty to Kurtz, in the matter of ivory Kurtz threatens him with death. The Russian knows that Kurtz would without a doubt shoot him, so he exchanges the ivory for his life. In fact, Kurtz crushes all those who intervene between him and his goals, decorating his house with their skulls. His civilized nature ultimately gave way to barbarity, the very quality the Europeans sought to eliminate by civilizing Africa (Carroll 1990); however, it is such barbarity that enables his totalitarian rule on his subjects. The Russian illustrates this by stating that there was no fear of the natives in his heart they would not move till Mr. Kurtz gave the orders, "His ascendancy was extraordinary. The camps of these people surround the place and the chiefs came everyday to see. They would crawl..." (Conrad 1997). Kurtz reads through the lens of the Machiavellian prince. His pure savagery ensures the attainment of his goals as well as the control of the chiefs of the tribes; he sows the seeds of fear in the hearts of the natives, referring to himself as their god. For him all these ways and means are of no importance at all; whether he is cruel or ruthless

stands nowhere in the equation as long as his objectives are met. He wears on his face the violence that lies within him: "I saw on that ivory face the expression of somber pride, of ruthless power, of graven terror – of intense and hopeless despair" (Conrad, 1997). Conrad's words paint Kurtz with dark colours by calling him devil, violent and ruthless. Such descriptions bestow upon him the most dominant features of Machiavellianism.

Conclusion

The reading shows that power politics cannot be played without cunningness and shrewdness. The novella in general and Kurtz in particular depict that leaders are well-served when they deal with the masses in an autocratic manner. The strategies of persuasion, intimidation, and seizing of resources are cherished. In the character of Kurtz we undoubtedly hear the echoes of the prince. Kurtz is a remarkable man with great charisma who has an instinct for the selection of intelligent men, who leads his troops with confidence, who takes the needs of the people into consideration, and who extracts as much ivory as he can. He keeps a high seat amongst the devils of the land by crushing anyone who proves to be a hurdle between him and his goals. The problems that the novella highlights are not only connected to states but also to the leaders of the states. The leaders, whether selected or elected, abide by the same set of rules that are outlined by the novella, *Heart of Darkness*. In addition, almost all the leaders of the world with the exception of a scant few follow the path which is shown by Kurtz. Every one of them is focused solely on the benefits of their nation's ruling class, and they go to any extreme to secure them. The leaders of the world have put aside all ideals that could enlighten humanity and in their place have magnified their personal motives. The ruling class in the majority of the world's countries is exact replicas of demeanor shown by Kurtz, and thus the game of authority versus subject is continuously played in every corner of the world. It is in this way that the battle for benefits is fought not only on a macrocosmic scale among governments around the world, but also on a microcosmic scale within each community.

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