

## ***Mimic Men and the Cult of Personality in Postcolonial Africa*** ***IB Literature: 11th Grade English Literature***

### **Unit Goal:**

The ultimate goal of this unit is to increase the understanding of how the cultural interactions and exchanges of the past have ongoing ramifications in the contemporary world. To achieve this understanding, students will look at Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* and a selection of contemporary African poetry and scholarship. This will include primary source research done while on the Fulbright-Hays to show how the Rwandan genocide was in many ways staged by policies of mimic men who took control following their independence.

### **Concept Map:**

Historical Context → Literary Context → Cultural Interactions and Exchanges in the Text → Contemporary Impacts

### **Anticipated Pre/misconceptions:**

This is history, not contemporary

Life stops when the west leaves

Conrad's sympathies will be with the colonizers

Awareness of the problems has led to repairing systems

### **Lesson Overviews and Materials: [Time: Standards]**

1. Pre-test and Terms [40 minutes: 1.2 ]
2. The Endless March of Time And Conrad Bringing the Light [45 minutes: 1.2 / 2.1 / 2.2]
3. Cult of Personality and Mimic Men in Postcolonial Africa [60 minutes: 1.1 / 1.3 / 2.1 / 2.2]
4. Cultural Interaction and Exchanges in *Heart of Darkness* [35 minutes: 1.2 / 1.3 / 2.1 / 2.2]
5. Legacy in Contemporary African poetry (Mashingaidze Gomo) and Scholarship (Michela Wrong) [ 40 minutes: 1.3 / 2.2]
6. The Cult of Personality in *Heart of Darkness* [40 minutes: 1.2 / 1.3 / 2.1 / 2.2 ]
7. Post-test and Thesis Statements [40 minutes: All of it]

**Standard 1:** The student will be able to read and analyze a text regardless of its mode or purpose with a balanced, context derived understanding.

#### **Targets**

1.1- I can understand the core purpose of a text.

1.2- I can understand the deeper purpose of a text shown through structure and style used by the author.

1.3- I can combine my interpretation of a text with other works to form a contextually appropriate and insightful understanding of how multiple texts relate to develop meaning.

**Standard 2:** The students will be able to take their understanding of a text and use that to develop clear, accurate, and insightful expressions with or without a prompt to guide them.

#### **Targets**

2.1- I can use my analytical and research skills to create and answer questions about a text whether they are generated by me or someone else.

2.2- I can customize my writing process to suit a purpose determined by either my own personal goals or the expectations and needs of an audience.

2.3- I can alter my compositions to suit other modes of expression, be that writing style, audience, or format (including verbal/visual presentation of written content).

### **Terms:**

Colonialism

Postcolonialism

Mimic Men

Resources

[*Heart of Darkness* Derived Vocab]

**Essential Questions:**

- What is the purpose of colonialism?
- In what ways does Conrad represent the interactions between colonizers and colonized?
- What is the cultural exchange made between Europe and Africa in the text?
- How does Conrad anticipate the mimic men of African leadership in the postcolonial era in terms of the supplemental texts studied in the unit?
- Looking back more than 100 years since the novel was released, how is the moral nature of the text best described? Is it a celebration of colonialism, a satire, an apology for what would follow, etc.?

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Hour: \_\_\_\_\_

Due: Before you leave today

***Mimic Men and the Cult of Personality in Postcolonial Africa: Pre-test and Vocabulary***

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**What are potential goals of colonizers?**

**What are potential goals of the colonized?**

**How has popular culture (literature, film, and music) helped to frame your understanding of African countries?**

**How would you characterize the exchanges between Europe/the United States and Africa?  
What has been gained/lost by the two sides?**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Hour: \_\_\_\_\_ Due: Next Class Period

***Mimic Men and the Cult of Personality in Postcolonial Africa: Conrad and the discussion of how Europe 'also has been one of the dark places of the earth' and what that means for African colonization.***

Do a close analytical reading where you determine the topics Marlow discusses in his impromptu soliloquy on pages 6-8. While doing so, start formulating potential commentaries Conrad is making on the topics through the connotation of the words and phrasing used.

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**What is the purpose of colonialism that Marlow seems to be hinting at in this passage?  
What phrases give you this impression and why do they do so?**

(Create a space in your journal to catalogue instances in his journey into the Congo where Marlow does or does not see examples of this type of colonial activity)

**What is the exchange Conrad is suggesting between colonizers and colonized in this passage? What is given and what is gained by each?**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Hour: \_\_\_\_\_ Due: Next Class Period

***Mimic Men and the Cult of Personality in Postcolonial Africa: Michela Wrong, Rwandan Independence from Belgium, and the Contemporary African Dictator***

Read the following excerpt from *In the Footsteps of Mr Kurtz* by Michela Wrong and answer the highlighted questions below. As a part of your answer, make sure you reference direct quotes from *Heart of Darkness* and use them to contextualize your analysis.

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**How does Conrad anticipate the mimic men of African leadership in the postcolonial era in terms of the supplemental texts studied in the unit?**

**Looking back more than 100 years since the novel was released, how is the moral nature of the text best contextualized? Is it a celebration of colonialism, a satire, an apology for what would follow, etc.?**

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***Mimic Men and the Cult of Personality in Postcolonial Africa: Conrad and the discussion of how 'everything belonged to him--but that was a trifle. The thing was to know what he belonged to' and what was exchanged between cultures in the colonization of Africa.***

Do a close analytical reading of pages 72-76 where you determine the exchange between cultures during African colonization by Europe. Determine the validity of Marlow's claims from pages 6-8 by contrasting the ideals put forth earlier in the novel with the reality Marlow faced when arriving in the Congo.

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***Mimic Men and the Cult of Personality in Postcolonial Africa: the legacy of Colonialism in contemporary African poetry and scholarship.***

Read the selections of poetry from Mashingaidze Gomo's *A Fine Madness* and the chapter of Michela Wrong's *In the Footsteps of Mr Kurtz*. Combine your reading and understanding of these texts to develop a claim about the legacy of colonialism in more contemporary African literature and scholarship.

Michela Wrong  
***Living Above the Shop***

Mashingaidze Gomo  
***The Light of Western Civilization***  
***The Drunken Pilots***  
***Divine Abstraction***

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***Mimic Men and the Cult of Personality in Postcolonial Africa: Kurtz and the cult of personality. An analysis of Kurtz, the traits so admired in him, and how those values were made manifest in the colonizers of Africa.***

Look back at your notes with an emphasis on the values, actions, and writings of Kurtz. Compare those traits with the behaviors of his subordinates and other Europeans in the colonization enterprise. Determine based on your findings what traits and behaviors have been passed down long enough to remain when Europe finally withdraws from Africa over the course of the next century.

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***Mimic Men and the Cult of Personality in Postcolonial Africa: colonialism, post-colonialism, and the intersection of literature and life in Africa.***

***Mimic Men and the Cult of Personality in Postcolonial Africa***

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