Heart of Darkness Critical Lens Research Paper

You will write a 5-6 page Critical Lens Interpretation/Research paper based on Joseph Conrad’s *Heart of Darkness*. The paper should follow standard MLA format and include an introduction, strong thesis, body paragraphs, and a conclusion. The paper should have one primary source (Heart of Darkness) and 3-5 secondary sources based on the lens you choose to focus your textual analysis. A rubric will be provided for you.

It is highly suggested that you keep a “Congo Journal” as you read to help you organize your thoughts, notes, and to remember key elements to support your analysis.

Joseph Conrad’s Heart of Darkness is among the most studied, debated, contested, and theorized works of Western literature. The novel can be viewed through many critical lenses. **You may choose from any of the following:**

* A post-colonial reading might critique, celebrate, and even reconcile Europe’s colonialization activities throughout Africa in the 19th century.
* A Marxist reading might point to ways in which the story depicts the violence and cultural repression which surrounds capitalistic enterprises.
* A psychoanalytic reading might focus on the complicated psyches of Kurtz or Marlow and explore their unique psychological motivations and the ways in which their encounters with and within the Congo shift their psychological perspectives.
* A feminist reading might explore the three female characters —Marlow’s aunt, Kurtz’s native lover, and Kurtz’s fiancée —and point to the lack of power and authority given to women in the decidedly patriarchal society.
* A new historicist might consider how the novel both critiques and celebrates imperialism and, also, how it functions as something of a counter-historical account that documents that horrors and ravages of European imperialism.