*Heart of Darkness* Part 2 Questions

Directions: Use these questions to further your understanding of Heart of Darkness. **In a group of 2-3 people, write out your answers to at least 10 of these questions** on a separate sheet of paper. Or, type your answers.

1. In what dual sense is Marlow “penetrating deeper and deeper into the heart of darkness”?
2. What do the circumstances of his journey contribute to his assertion that human beings need “a deliberate belief”? Do you agree with him? What is his belief in?
3. What does Marlow learn from An Inquiry into Some Points of Seamanship?
4. Marlow again insists on the importance of his work, of being at work. Why?
5. Marlow says that the “essentials of this affair lay deep under the surface.” How does his subsequent description of the landscape capture that hiddenness? How does the fog affect Marlow’s attitude toward his work?
6. Marlow is very complimentary of the cannibals on board his ship. Why? Think about the ways in which the Europeans Marlow has met have not shown “restraint.”
7. Why does Marlow react as he does to the murder of his helmsman? Why does he throw away his shoes?
8. The pilgrims shoot into the jungle. Remember the warship shooting into the African coastline? What is Marlow suggesting is alike about the two?
9. VOICE: Marlow describes Kurtz Consider the voices: the voice of Kurtz, of the first narrator, of the Intended. What is the “voice” of civilization? What is its value? What do these voices mean? Why does Marlow describe Kurtz as just a voice?
10. Marlow says that all of Europe is responsible for Kurtz. In what way is this true?
11. Consider the “pamphlet” that Kurtz wrote, that ended with “Exterminate all the brutes!”. Marlow even says that he must have forgotten that post-script because Kurtz was still proud of it later. What is the significance of this post-script?
12. What do we learn about Kurtz's methods of securing ivory and of his relationship with the natives? Cite passages which indicate these things.
13. What is the bond Marlow feels for Kurtz? How is the theme of restraint important here?
14. What does Marlow admire about Kurtz? Disapprove of in Kurtz?
15. What do Marlow and Kurtz have in common? How are they different?
16. When Marlow looks at the Inner Station through his binoculars, what exactly does he see?
17. What is Kurtz's place like? What has been going on?
18. What is the young Russian sailor's attitude toward Kurtz? What information does he give Marlow about Kurtz?
19. How does Part II change the portrait we see of Kurtz?
20. Discuss the imagery of light and dark in one of the scenes.
21. What protections does Marlow list from the temptations of savagery in the absence of civilization?

Part 3 questions

**You DO NOT have to write your answers to these questions. These are for your information, to help guide your reading as you finish the novel.**

1. Part III begins as the conversation between Marlow and The Russian continues.  Study their conversation: "I directed my glass..."  What does Marlow learn about Kurtz?  Why does Conrad have the Russian convey this information?
2. Marlow encounters the "round knobs" up close.  Study how this experience affects him from: "I directed my glass..." to: "Suddenly round the corner..."
3. Compare Kurtz’s African bride with his “intended”.  Does Conrad imply a degree of respect for one or the other, both, neither?
4. Consider this quote: “—but in this, that I had to deal with a being to whom I could not appeal in the name of anything high or low. I had, even like the niggers, to invoke him—himself—his own exalted and incredible degradation. There was nothing either above or below him—and I knew it. He had kicked himself loose of the earth. Confound the man! he had kicked the very earth to pieces. He was alone, and I before him did not know whether I stood on the ground or floated in the air. […] but his soul was mad. Being alone in the wilderness, it had looked within itself, and, by Heavens! I tell you, it had gone mad. I had—for my sins, I suppose, to go through the ordeal of looking into it myself.”
5. Why do you think Kurtz says “the horror, the horror!” as his last words? What is he referring to?
6. Now that Marlow has returned to Brussels, how has his understanding of humanity changed?  Study: "No, they did not bury me..." to: "Thus I was left..."
7. Why does Marlow visit Kurtz’s intended? Consider the description of the scene, especially the images of “darkness”. What is the significance of this scene? Why does he lie to her, and refuse to tell her his last words?
8. How does “ivory” play a larger, symbolic/representative role in the story. (hints of the century: “whited sepulcher”, “The word ‘ivory’ rang in the air, was whispered, was sighed. You would think they were praying to it.” (second station) “Oh I wasn’t touched. I was fascinated. It was as though a veil had been rent. I saw on that ivory face the expression of somber pride, of ruthless power, of craven terror – of and intense and hopeless despair.”(just before “the horror”))
9. What does Marlow respect about Kurtz?  Does this respect in some ways seem justified or justifiable? Compare this respect to contrasting judgments “They only showed that Mr. Kurtz lacked restraint in the gratification of his various lusts. …he was hollow at the core.” (Marlow discussing the heads in Kurtz’s compound;  consider especially the accountant, all dressed in white).