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Symbolism in Francis F. Coppola's
Apocalypse Now: A Journey within.

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Preface.

This paper aims to give an analyzes of symbolical themes within the nature and spirit of the human being, through the scenes of Francis Ford Coppola's masterpiece: *Apocalypse Now*. The sequence of images and symbols that appear throughout every single chapter of the movie disclose a multitude of layers that lead to the ultimate point of no return: deep within the mind and essence of man, at the end of the spring of the "inner river". Ever since the first screening at the Cannes Film Festival in 1979, many critics have been writing and have discussed the connections between this movie and Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*: not only because of obvious references of the storyline, but especially because of the social and psychological themes that both the screenplay author John Milius and the Polish writer expressed in their works. This thesis will take into particular consideration the use of symbols in the movie and its counterparts in the famous novel, following scene by scene, the original screenplay version trying to grasp the spiritual archetypes, the religious icons and the anthropological meaning of the journey within *Apocalypse Now*.

Introduction – F.F. Coppola, J. Milius, M. Herr and “Apocalypse Now”.

The production of this movie is one of the most intriguing ever in the history of film-making.

Since its very first moment of creation, “*Apocalypse Now*” gave rise to many facts, ideas, authors and references which, clashing, merging and step by step developing, created a mixture of influences, effects and internal connections that all left their mark throughout the entire footage. The concept of adapting Joseph Conrad’s work into a movie was at the very base of the first screenplay written by John Milius, who claims its original work dates back to 1969 when the title still was “*Psychedelic Soldier*”. Nothing up to that moment that could properly represent Conrad’s novels had been made, so the main objective was to create an allegory based on “*Heart of Darkness*”(1), a war movie and, ultimately, a psychological story about the depths of human nature. So, while the name *Kurtz* remains unaltered, *Marlow* becomes *Willard* and Congo becomes Vietnam but the streaming up the river is kept as the main focus of the storyline and the principle symbol from which a pantheon of divinities, archetypal fears and nightmares of the soul spring into form.

The “Journey”: we could work our way back centuries in order to find the roots of this theme which was analyzed extremely carefully and in detail by the authors who presented it in the movie by means of a choice of deeply thought series and selection of breathtaking images and references. Mythology is the first original source for this theme. In Sumerian writings we find the hero Gilgamesh and his travels, or in Homer as Ulysses is lost in the waters of the Mediterranean Sea in Greek literature and, while Dante’s *Inferno* was Conrad’s primary inspiration, the work of T.S. Eliot “*The Hollow Men*”(1) acted as a muse for Coppola’s and Milius’s poetic lines. We must also consider the collaboration and the contribution of Michael Herr, author of the book “*Dispatches*”(2), a powerful depiction of the Vietnam war through the eyes of a reporter, which was published just 2 years before the movie’s premiere.

Interestingly enough, he quotes Conrad twice at the beginning of his book: “...*Artaud coming out of some heavy heart-of-darkness trip...*” and “...*what kind of Lord Jim phoenix numbers we was doing*”

in there...” (3). Herr worked alongside Coppola in order to improve the narration and gave the director many guidelines, thus becoming one of the main hands to have crafted this movie. The images that have been selected and used in this movie are indeed some of the most basic and fundamental in the studies of the psychology of symbols. A symbol is most simply something that communicates meaning: what it represents and the system used to express its message are tightly connected. When we want to analyze symbols, in Cinema as in Literature, we find that this connection is best expressed in its simplicity: no matter how well hidden, as many symbols can be considered universal and recognized by any culture, they will strike the viewer or the reader’s attention clicking on something archetypal which lies deep within our souls.

The Symbols chosen in “Apocalypse Now” echo the common western background culture but refer also to an extensive group of images, sounds and words that have been intentionally chosen in order to reach the audience at an almost subconscious level.

Having to take into consideration the many aspects of the film, in order to give a detailed description of its origins, its symbolic system and theme, this thesis has been divided into six main different parts:.

- The “Background” chapter will give a general indication about how the movie started off, what the basis from an initial philosophical point of view was, and what the originally intended narrative goals were. The documentary “*Hearts of Darkness: a Filmmaker’s Apocalypse*” (F. Bahr, G. Hickenlooper 1991) (4), becomes strictly necessary if one wants to approach a complete understanding of what the origins and intention of this production were.
- Before taking into consideration the structure of the movie, a Second part : “ Colors, Music and War”, will be dedicated to the use of colors and music as an integral part of the narration. The choices for the photography and the soundtrack become a sort of internal narrator: from the very first opening scene, they act as a guide to the viewer, telling a story within the lines and

bearing messages which sometimes are direct but at other times are subtle and hidden in between the lyrics or the clouds of yellow napalm gas.

As *Heart of Darkness* is divided into three chapters so is *Apocalypse Now*. Therefore, each of the three sections will be investigated in the following three Chapters, respectively

- Chapter 1: The Path,
- Chapter 2 : Descending. and
- Chapter 3: Reaching the Heart.

in the search for images, abstract or figurative symbols, words and quotes that can lead us through this journey to the core of “the Horror”.

- Conclusion: The final scenes of the movie serve as both an epilogue and an explanation of all the main themes presented.

The Background.

Coppola states is clearly: "*My film is not a movie. My film is not about Vietnam, It is Vietnam.*" These words confirm the fact this film must not be considered as a realistic medium used to remember the past. Throughout 1970's Hollywood Vietnam-set movies filming had simply been "a rape of history" produced only to create a glorified product that could be marketed to the masses. This is a movie meant to drag the audience deeply inside the dimension of war, into the world of the people who were part of the enormous amount of real life footage stocked in filing cabinets of news- agencies around the globe. Not a glorification, but rather a vivid marking of what was really going on in the jungle, miles away from the Interventionism propaganda and the entire political affairs of the state.

Breaking through the 4th wall ,(5), was one of the first goals of Coppola: the viewer had to become part of that "Vietnam" and, only once inside, he could really feel and understand the depth of a message that went far beyond a social political judgment on war.

We could spend words and pages trying to figure out whether the authors were pro- or against war, simply describing a reality were soldiers were young men drawn into drugs, surfing and rock and rolling or if, rather, this movie was, and is, a direct and straightforward condemnation of the atrocities committed during that war, and, actually, in all wars.

Where else does this movie want to lead us? To start my research, as mentioned in the introduction, I took a step back. A Journey begins in the moment when one is looking, consciously or not, for "something" and both Kurtz, Willard/Marlow and the authors were searching for something that was deep within: they called us to follow them, as accompanied by an invisible Virgil, to dive like many times before into the dark recesses of ourselves.

Conrad's work must be an initial starting point and perhaps it is easier to find within his novel the key elements to begin understanding the concept of the Journey. He believed that the truth about a character is the sum of his emotional experience: a man *IS* his history.

Our response to every new event is conditioned by our past and this reveals a profound desire by the author to understand the psychological aspects of each individual. The testing time comes when a man finds himself in a situation where normal public codes do not work anymore and he, either finds the strength within himself or goes down to destruction. The intense evil of 19th Century Colonialism portrayed in his novel is the setting for his “Congo of the mind”. Conrad’s tales are based on his real experience as a steam paddleboat captain in Africa and in Congo where he sets the story of Kurtz and Marlow, both workers for a Belgian trading company that brutally exploits its native African workers. Marlow is the pilot of a river boat sent to collect ivory from Kurtz's outpost, but, when he arrives, he discovers that Kurtz has gone insane and is lording over a small tribe as a god.

He gradually becomes attracted to Kurtz’s image and, when he understands his terrible health conditions, Marlow makes an effort to bring him home safely. Kurtz will finally die on the trip back at the narrator’s voice musing about the human psyche: "*the heart of an immense darkness*".

Congo and Vietnam, Colonialism and 1960s America’s “preventive war” and Marlow becoming Willard, an assassin dispatched to kill Kurtz. Apart from other similarities between scenes like Kurtz’s “*Exterminate the brutes!*” in Conrad and “*Drop the bomb. Exterminate them All!*” in the movie, the connection between the two masterpieces goes far beyond simple storytelling.

For example, Coppola himself tells us that the choice to keep scenes like the death by arrows and spear was purposely placed to constantly maintain alive the criticism of civilization, modernity and progress as to show their weakness and fragility against the wilderness of the Jungle. The frontier, the wilderness itself and the role of America’s civilizing authority above all nations in its mission to bring “Liberty” to every man within their Empire, are well known and common themes which Coppola and Milius keep alive in the tradition. When wishing to reach out with a message to as many people as possible, each hearing with their own listening, we must speak the language of our time and as Christ used parables so does this movie. In other words, the objective was not to talk about these themes, but to use them in order to reach the audience with a communicative system accepted, shared and widely understood.

This is when we can start understanding the reasons behind the choice of the Vietnam war as a theme as more questions in need of an answer start dropping in. The necessity of the War as a basic instinct of mankind has been long argued since Plato who believed it to be the essence of creation but it is the brutality of this conflict in particular, full of political incomprehensible reasons, and the fact that it was still so alive in the memory and imaginary of the society, (with effects much stronger than a movie on a “distant” WWII could have created), made it the perfect setting for this story. It was to show the total and still alive feeling of insanity and loss of contact with any value that *Apocalypse Now* was needed: only in such a distorted world could the viewer feel he was pulled in into the detachment from reality and the complete isolation of the self. Only in this scenario could both Willard and the average American lose every connection with the material world and sink within themselves completely.

War, therefore, as the cruel creator of the path. The Journey, though, needs a reason to be undertaken and followed to the end: *Apocalypse Now* has its own.

The common theme to all journeys is that the main character is never really sure of where he is in time and space: as Ulysses is lost wandering, so is Gulliver and so is Dante in his line “*Che la diritta via era smarrita*”(6). It seems that the journey is not strictly connected with the search of anything else but with the wish to return home, to find the right path or, in other words, to find one’s real self. Joining the two initial points, Willard is lost in the Darkness of his self,: this is just the beginning as to find his center within he must descend deeper and deeper in the abyss of his mind.

In other words, when lost, no reason could be more important to start moving then to find again the way out and survive: again, basic instinct of survival.

War as metaphor of life itself and the Journey throughout it as survival instinct are the first two direct motions of this type of story. To find the third one, we must read the words of Conrad “*And the river was there – fascinating – deadly – like a snake*”(7). In this one single line the entire book could be summarized. It is to be read in its most spiritual meanings to be fully understood for what it is speaking about. Firstly the “River”, the path we could compare with Dante’s Styx: it stretches out

there on the map and we know, as Marlow does, it will lead our character not to the ocean, to new lands, to freedom and liberty but rather to its source, to where all begins. And these springs, are “fascinating”: they are unknown and unreached, hidden and mysterious so much to attract our attention and give vent to our imagination although we are aware of their deadliness, just like the rage of the battle and the savage inner animal instinct that attracts us. Fear and Darkness, ”*The fascination of the abomination...*”(8), repel but attract and charm us at the same time: it is this the third pivoting point, the real engine that leads us to begin our journey.

Since we have been separated from Nature as Human beings, thanks to or because of reason, the inner part of ourselves feels the call to re-join with its lost but still deeply rooted part of our essence. ”*The snake had charmed me*” (9) - “Snake”: the word says it all. The diabolical snake that led mankind out of Eden, out of Nature, or the serpent of Dante down at the bottom of Hell that one must reach in order to begin to rise again through Purgatory. Ultimately, the Kundalini snake of the Indian spiritual tradition that, from the very base of our spinal bone, home of creation and instinct, coils to our minds and unfolds into the Light of Awareness. Was Milius thinking about this when he chose the name for the movie, as he says he took the inspiration from a Hippie badge very common around in the 60s which said “Nirvana Now”?

I would like to synthesize the trinity that stands at the base of almost any Journey based novel and of that of *Apocalypse Now*:

1. Nature, Life, Instinct: War.
2. Reason, Fear, Survival: Journey.
3. Need of balance and harmony between the two opposites: the motion that keeps them connected, the necessary loss of everything while drowning in the inner-self in order to rise again and find the path to clarity.

Now that a general guide line is set out, we might move on to try to understand how each symbol in the movie is a key to the complete understanding of its message. The main problem is that we must take into consideration the fact that we have two main characters, at times so similar and at times so different that it is extremely hard to detect whether they were intended to be opposites and antagonists or simply the two faces of the same medal. Poet and philosopher T.S. Eliot, as mentioned in the Introduction, is quoted directly in a number of scenes. As a main example, shortly before dying, Colonel Kurtz recites part of Eliot's poem "The Hollow Men". This poem appeared in 1925, so shortly after the end of WWI and, marking what critic Edmund Wilson defined as "*The nadir of the phase of despair and desolation....*" (10), it is also regarded as the poet's major work. It is indebted to Dante as anything else in Eliot's early work, as it remains in its form "the continuous parallel between contemporaneity and antiquity" that is so characteristic of his mythical method. "*The Hollow Men*" contains some of Eliot's most famous lines, notably its conclusion, on which we will pick up for the next chapter while discussing about the soundtrack:

This is the way the world ends

Not with a bang but a whimper.

Moreover, Eliot appears to be a bridge between the two narrative worlds of Conrad and *Apocalypse Now*: not only is Kurtz characterized as "*hollow at the core*" or as a "*.....hollow sham*" (11), the poem is preceded in printed editions by the epigraph "*Mistah Kurtz – he dead*" (12), a direct quotation from *Heart of Darkness*. In addition, the two books which lie open on Kurtz's desk in the movie are "*From Ritual to Romance*"(13) by Jessie Weston and "*The Golden Bough*"(14) by Sir James Frazer: these were the two books that Eliot quoted as the chief sources and inspiration for his poem "*The Waste Land*",(15). Another example is when Willard is first introduced to Dennis Hopper's character, the photojournalist describes his own worth in relation to that of Kurtz with: "*I should have been a pair of ragged claws / Scuttling across the floors of silent seas*", from "*The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock*".(16).

Finally, Eliot's original epigraph for "*The Waste Land*" was this passage from *Heart of Darkness*, which ends with Kurtz's final words:

"Did he live his life again in every detail of desire, temptation, and surrender during that supreme moment of complete knowledge? He cried in a whisper at some image, at some vision, – he cried out twice, a cry that was no more than a breath – "The horror! The horror!"(17).

What Eliot creates through his mediation, is an historical connection between Conrad's 19th century world, the 20th century reality of World War I and II, and finally the Vietnam War. Considering all this evident influence of the poet on the screenplay, we might use his understanding of human existence through his poetic language to try to discover who Kurtz really is. We have found an initial line of continuity and logic in Marlow/Willard, but the Colonel is still far from being totally understood.

One possibility is that Kurtz was *really* the "Hollow Men", intended as the character embodying insanity and carrying within the malaria fumes of Death. He is already dead in a way, according to the movie sequence. No matter the rank and the medals, Kurtz went insane and segregated from real life in his god-like trip to the remote jungle. The mission to assassinate him tells us in a way that he is already dead, "judged and condemned" by the society's perspective and ideology.

Kurtz did go deep down the river and maybe because of this he might be seen as the counterpart for Willard: the latter, though, survives and he retrieves himself, whilst the Colonel is immolated like the water-buffalo to pay for the toll of his insanity and cruelty. His defeat and death are the symbol of the defeat of all men that went down the river and never came back: it is the cost for his Hybris, for wanting to be a god, for losing the balance between Nature and Reason. In these terms, he is the opposite of Willard, who fights at the end of his path the harshest of all battles: the one against his counterpart gone insane. We are shown the risk of losing sanity in diving too deep in ourselves and the payment for such grave mistake.

Colors, Music and War.

Senses and emotions, reality and ideology are two of the dualities the movie confronts us with. The understanding of this masterpiece could not be achieved without putting straight the first problem any historian would have while writing the Vietnam war: contradictions. Everything we can relate to this moment in history, ends up being placed in either one of the two extremes or in the chaotic confrontation of themselves with one another. Coppola found the solution in order to tell his story, in one of the extremes: letting words come in only when necessary and leaving all the rest to the images and sounds of the war. Silence is so loud throughout the movie, it is one of the things that subliminally strikes the viewer: all the rest is done by the contrasting colors, the rhythmic and pulsing sounds and music, the few sentences leave in us their mark like epitaphs and one by one become memorable to the spectator (thanks also to the “silence” that surrounds them). What is furthermore striking, is the fact that every color and soundtrack is balanced in order to communicate a precise meaning in every scene. In this chapter, we will take a look at the main features of this aspect, of how Coppola joins this two sensorial perception, sight and hearing, leading the viewer with symbolic accuracy, deep into lines of a story about mankind’s own existence and awareness.

We could use this chapter as an introduction, therefore let us take the very first sequence of the movie, which is itself the preface and the summary of much of the content of “Apocalypse Now”.

From pitch black, no titles, no names on the screen, we are led into the first scene. The fact that Coppola decided not to put the title at the beginning is clearly intentional: that would have been distracting and the attention would have been drifted to words and names rather than keeping us charmed by the powerful introductory scene. Moreover, we could state, words are pointless too in this moment and, anyhow, the only thing one gets to read in the entire movie are just titles of books scattered around during the different scenes.

The Jungle then appears from this pitch black, from the Darkness. Its palm trees and vegetation stand like a wall in front of us. A wall to separate us from the depth of the jungle’s wilderness. Together

with the still muddy water at its base, two main symbols are already placed. Their significance will be taken gradually step by step during the analysis, but first we must focus on the color. Dark green, often repeated by Conrad, and the peaceful blue sky. Ghastly, the cloud, the first of many during the movie, appears: a white mist. These mists will become more and more important in terms of significance, marking time and meaning throughout the movie. White is an ambivalent color: pure as it is, it also carries a profound relation with Holiness and Death. But it is a natural cloud of steam that is almost imperceptible. White mists will be used by Coppola to mark most often the morning moment, dawn and the jungle waking in its humidity from night, still carrying within itself the ghosts and dreams of a night of dread.

In the complete silence, a hushed sound approaches and the nameless jungle suddenly begins to have a place in time: the sound is that of a black helicopter, that in a matter of seconds disappears. From its passage, the wind lifts up a yellow mist, strident against the white one we have just seen. It is not however, a bright symbol related to the Sun we are introduced to. Directly from Conrad's "*I was going into the yellow*"(18), Yellow becomes the color of sickness, disease, malaria and cholera. It bears the greed and envy that came along in these lands, brought by that same black helicopters, angels of death upon earth, death that came in many ways. Coppola in this case, uses yellow as it is the color of napalm. Without giving us time to wonder and think, the scene is devastated and the napalm is unleashed. Red, flaming red of destruction and power burn the jungle suddenly as black smoke erupts. In the famous scene, however, it is not the sound of the blast we hear: rather, music comes in, the first of many significant songs of the movie. "The End" (19), the words echo as the forest is in flames. The song, written by Doors in 1967, encompasses so many meanings that Jim Morrison himself stated: "*Every time I hear that song, it means something else to me. It started out as a simple good-bye song probably just to a girl, but I see how it could be a goodbye to a kind of childhood. I really don't know. I think it's sufficiently complex and universal in its imagery that it could be almost anything you want it to be.*" It was clearly a song of those days, true and vibrant representation of a generation. Here is where the first of a stratus of layers begin. Firstly, the song

clearly defines the time period, as if Coppola was telling us “in case you don’t know anything about this movie, yes, it’s 1967-69 and it’s Vietnam” In the second place “The End” gives us a precise definition and judgment, a clear negative position is taken about the war by the director: the end of humanity, the burning of its life and essence, of its natural beauty and instincts (the jungle) and the end of all morality. In other words, *it is* the Apocalypse, and the title is no longer necessary as the song takes its place. Two more layers, connected to this point can be found again in the songs meaning and are worth mentioning in order to introduce the type of reading of the movie this thesis will follow. The first quote is from an interview by Lizzie James (20), as Morrison was asked to explain the verse “*My only friend / the end*” he replied:

“Sometimes the pain is too much to examine, or even tolerate....That doesn't make it evil, though – or necessarily dangerous. But people fear death even more than pain. It's strange that they fear death. Life hurts a lot more than death. At the point of death, the pain is over. Yeah – I guess it is a friend...” (21).

Friendship with death, the inner connection with it and the acceptance of its reality will soon become a major topic in the movie as an increasingly amount of layers will disclose by the end of it.

The second quote, again extremely relevant for understanding the movie, comes from John Densmore's autobiography “*Riders on the Storm*”, (2009) (22), as he recalls Morrison explaining the meaning of the famous line of the song: “*Father/ Yes son?/ I want to kill you/ Mother, I want to ...*” (with the next words screamed out unintelligibly). Undoubtedly, the connection with the myth of Oedipus is the piece of Greek tragedy Morrison is referring to in his song. This verse is not present in the movie (probably these words were still too strong and infamous in the ‘70s), but it interesting to take in consideration Morrison’s own explanation, as reported by Densmore, as it is linked directly with one of the many messages of the movie:

“Does anybody understand me?’ And I said yes, I do, and right then and there we got into a long discussion and Jim just kept saying over and over kill the father, fuck the mother, and essentially boils down to this, kill all those things in yourself which are instilled in you and are not of yourself, they

are alien concepts which are not yours, they must die. Fuck the mother is very basic, and it means get back to essence, what is reality, what is, fuck the mother is very basically mother, mother-birth, real, you can touch it, it's nature, it can't lie to you. So what Jim says at the end of the Oedipus section, which is essentially the same thing that the classic says, kill the alien concepts, get back reality, the end of alien concepts, the beginning of personal concepts.”

The quote summarizes much of one of the main dualities Coppola wants to confront us with. In a way, Coppola, by placing “*The End*” at the beginning, is telling us that this movie will be about duality and its many different shades. Thesis and Antithesis, however, thanks to the Journey Willard will undertake, will lead to a synthesis which will be explored step by step in the following chapters.

To conclude, with respect to the analysis of the song, as mentioned in the previous chapter, it is interesting to notice how we could easily have one more reference to T.S. Eliot in this scene. Quoting from “*The Hollow Men*” (23):

This is the way the world ends...

Also, in “*Little Gidding*” from “*Four Quartets*” (24):

What we call the beginning is often the end

And to make an end is to make a beginning.

The end is where we start from.

Coppola’s own initiation scene begins in this way. Green, White, Black, Yellow and Red as for colors, hushed sounds of an helicopter and the song “*The End*” to invite us to enter and begin the journey. In the first minute and a half of the movie, the setting and many of the main messages are already displayed. The scenario is set, but just as the viewer is understanding and assimilating the

shocking opening scene and as clear references and connections are set, Willard's face appears upside down fading in the scene. His eyes' movements and the position somehow tell us he is lying down, maybe he just has woken up: a fan fades in too in the scene, recalling the helicopter's fans. The fire in the background keeps burning and a hidden range of layers start coming in again. There is no way to understand whether Coppola is telling us about Willard's nightmares here, about his memories or both. Soon after, Willard will say "*sometimes I wake and I think I am in the jungle*". We are gradually introduced into the psychology of the character, as for now the focus of the scene is still the dream/vision and its colors. A violent red and the burning black shadows of the trees keep passing behind the face of Willard. Then, fading in on the opposite side of the screen, comes the monumental face of a statue. Whether it is an Indonesian Buddha or a pagan idol is indifferent at the moment, its meaning will become clear by the end of the movie. What is rather interesting however, is the fact that Willard's face is still upside down whilst the powerful god seems to be looking at him from a straight standing position: it is possibly a way to tell us that the character we are going to get to learn the story of is a sort of a "hangman". As he is lost and confused, it is interesting to take into consideration the possibility of the deeper significance of this *being hanged* (as it is relevant for the opening scene and the understanding of the "journey"). The tarot card named the "Hangman" (25) represents a man hanging by his left foot from a branch, with the right knee bent across on the 'other leg. The young man depicted on the 12th card, in analogy with the twelfth sign of the zodiac, Pisces, (26), which corresponds, incidentally, to the sacrifice and the feet, experiences the painful torture given in the past to debtors. However, rather than a punishment, the Hanged Man is the symbol of passive initiation, as mystical knowledge is not attained through active research, study, experimentation, as is the custom in the West. On the contrary, as in the Eastern world, by remaining motionless, he is available to the receptivity and the listening. The body of the hangman hangs in the air, between two columns (perhaps the entrance columns of the temple of Solomon, Joachin and Boaz (27), but he is not simply abandoned, he is an ascetic man with his hands tied behind his back, which prevent him from being free to act, so that the liberated soul may now escape the reality of the matter.

The Hanged Man discovers that the secret to penetrate the essence of things is in their reversal. By the reversal of perspective, by the abandonment of common mental schemes, through the experience of loneliness and pain, comes that one Idea clear and illuminating, a prerequisite for the acceptance and transformation of the self.

According to this key of interpretation about “the lost, retrieved and transformed”, the images of Willard and the Idol are surely not coincidental with Conrad’s Marlow being described himself as “*palms of hands outwards, resembled an idol...he had the pose of a Buddha*” (28). A question arises at this stage while watching the scene forcing us to try to understand whether the entire story is itself, a dream, or it is a vision of the future or, as in “*Heart of Darkness*”, it is told retrospectively. The last possibility, however seemingly dismissed by how the story line unfolds, cannot be put aside, as Willard soon will be talking to himself and to us as a narrator: “*It was no accident I had to be the caretaker of Colonel Walter E. Kurtz’s memory...there is no way to tell his story without telling my own. And if his story is really a confession, then so is mine*”. Moreover, as this shifting occurs, we are “forced” to identify and not simply engage in sympathy with the character: this topic will be deeply discussed further ahead but it is from the very first scene that this process begins.

Concluding the description of the opening scene, its colors and music and its depiction of mass destruction (physical and spiritual), we must spare a word on the helicopters disappearing as we are welcomed in the hotel room of Willard. The sound of the helicopters and the fan merge, as from the bedside table the camera moves onto Willard himself who lies in bed half asleep. In the white of his bed sheets, which soon become a relevant key of interpretation, he seems as if dying: under his pillow there is a gun and the song closes with the verse: “*And all the children are insane*”. Insanity and violence come in opposition with the natural purity of its victims as the music fades away. Coppola most often allows these significant connections to reach the spectator smoothly by hiding them, other times he unfolds them with striking force. Depending on the scene, colors and music

become essential to give a complete and comprehensive description of the message he wants to reach us with.

At this stage, what is to summarize and underline before continuing on with the analyses of the movie, given all the examples from the introducing scene, is that

1. The lights and colors do not only serve as scenarios for representing in a situation, but they are filled with symbolic meaning. Namely the main colors will always be:

Dark green: Nature and its wilderness. Most often the river seems rather green than blue.

White: Purity. Used in the morning scenes when it comes as mist. However, it has a dual significance, as it also represents death rituals and demons.

Black: associated most often with either the darkness of the jungle or the evil of the American Empire. It is the color of the helicopters, which in the scene of the attack to the bay, become angels of doom (this will be expanded in the following chapter).

Yellow: physical sickness, greed, napalm when it comes in the form of mist.

Orange yellow: It often seems to represent the sanctity of the river and its metaphysical side. It is used in scenes filmed at Sunset and in the temple scenes.

Red: blood, violence. The passion of war and its direct connection with Power-Royalty.

Dark blue: it is used for the night scenes, it is similar to the black of the jungle in its meaning.

Purple: this color will come in only further on during the film in a couple of scenes connected to the death of two members of the crew. “Purple Haze” Lance says quoting Jimmy Hendrix, signifying madness and psychological loss and illness.

2. The colors are intrinsically connected and coordinated with music and follow the symbols that vividly appear in the movie, will they be characters, particular images or places. The colors therefore help us to recognize and interpret what is Coppola’s message in every sequence.

3. Light director Storaro’s surreal interpretation ultimately creates the hallucinatory effect the war had on those who lived through it. Shadows alternate with bright flashes, which lead the viewer further into this transcendental journey and the nightmares of war’s atrocities.

We can start tracing a guiding line of interpretation about the music and develop it by analyzing the main songs featured in the movie.

Rock music: The 50s’ and the 60s’ songs that appear in Apocalypse Now, as mentioned at the beginning, serve to give us both a frame work of time and a certain atmosphere, they communicate specific messages (at times using the lyrics of the songs themselves) and are necessary in order to deliver the ideological clash of a “Rock’n’Roll” generation against institutions and political power. Moreover, they add an extra layer of authenticity: he who lived through the Vietnam War can instantly relate to the sounds that characterized this era of American cultural history.

From the official soundtrack are the following songs. For each song I will try to frame the basic interpretation that can be given.

"The End", by The Doors (1967): as described above, it frames the entire introductory scene but, significantly, the song appears again at the end of the movie, creating an ideal connection and closing a metaphorical circle. The song, during Kurtz's assassination scene, begins by fading in from the tribal background music of the sacrifice ritual.

"Come on Baby take a chance with us", as to say it is the moment to take a decision and begin the journey: coincidentally the song starts again from these lines as Willard exits the waters, "crawls" near the temple and then stands up straight, dagger in hand. The journey to the land of the Dead, if we want to maintain that Morrison's lyrics are highly influenced by the philosophy of Nietzsche and Heidegger, is coming to an end and the trip back will soon begin. One more interesting thing to underline, which who knows this song might have had the chance to notice, is that there is one more verse in particular that fits within this movie's frame:

The snake is long, seven miles

Ride the snake...he's old, and his skin is cold

The west is the best

Coppola might have purposely not included these lines in the movie, allowing the listener to unveil them by himself: we find in fact the Snake/River and the clear satirical reference to the West/America and its struggle to push its frontiers further and further.

"The Ride of the Valkyries" from "Die Walküre", composed by Richard Wagner, conducted by Georg Solti, performed by Wiener Philharmoniker (as The Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra).

This second most striking song, and the scene it merges in with, is undoubtedly one of those that do not occur in movies without leaving the viewer breathless. At first sight, Col. Kilgore's own explanation of why such a song was used, seems to fit perfectly with the violent methods Coppola presents his character with in this movie. The psychological warfare was one of the main tactics

used by the American army during the war: napalm, the agent orange, the deliberate violence and destruction of villages and the propaganda's loudspeakers described in Michael Herr's *Dispatches* (29) are only a few of the available examples. However, as expected, this song unfolds into deeper meanings and is significantly chosen by Coppola to deliver one more attack to the ideological system and real interests that were behind the war. To understand the message we must look up the origins of Wagner's masterpiece. "The Ride of the Valkyries"(30) appears at the opening of the second of act of the "Der Ring des Nibelungen": an epic creation based on the Norse sagas celebrating the myths of masculine power in art and music. It was written during the dramatic changes in the ideology of artists and composers during the 1850 and was first performed in its complete version in 1870. The historical bases from which this Opera is born (from the Industrial Revolution disillusionment and from a research of past values and nationalistic ideals in Europe) would be enough already to set a frame for explaining why it is featured in *Apocalypse Now*. However, a few details about the story might reveal additional details worth mentioning.

The Ring and the Valhalla: the storyline of the Opera revolves around the almighty Ring which would give power to rule over the World and the defense of the Valhalla, home of the gods, who want to maintain control of this Ring against the forces of evil. The satirical connection suggested by Coppola is even more evident when we take into consideration the fact that the music is played out loud directly from the attacking helicopters to announce a senseless, unnecessary air strike. As mentioned before, the Helicopters are pitch black and descend as "Angels of Doom" upon the enemy: it is therefore interesting to underline the fact that the Valkyries were, in Norse mythology winged female warriors, guardians of the Valhalla. The *Valkyrja*, the "chooser of the slain" has, moreover, the role to decide which soldiers will die in battle and which will live.

To pair such a bombastic composition with the atrocities that unfold below is absurd nearly to the point of comedy. But the comedy dissipates as American soldiers are wounded and a Vietnamese woman throws a grenade into one of the helicopters, killing all on board. Soon, the combination

of triumphant music and deadly combat creates a sense of madness that is reinforced by Kilgore's unconventional "surf or fight" methods.

Eventually, we could even say that the entire concept of the Frontier versus the Wilderness praised in the Western Movies and by the propaganda of the duty of the US to spread its democracy and ideas of Liberty on and among the less civilized countries, is totally ridiculed and demolished by the violence and insanity the entire sequence puts on screen.

"Let The Good Times Roll", by Leonard Lee (1956). (31)

"Surfin' Safari", by The Beach Boys (1962). (32)

"Suzie Q" by the Flash Cadillac's (1957), version by the band Creedence Clearwater (1967) (33).

These three songs appear to carry within the entire issue of the "return Home". A topic Coppola will explore many times during the movie.

At the beginning of the war, 50% of the Americans had never heard about Vietnam or could possibly point its geographical position and describe the political situation that was unfolding there after the Pacific War. It is common knowledge that, at the beginning of the war, the way the full military intervention was promoted and supported by the majority of the American public opinion, was based on three main concepts:

1. The expansion of the Communist front in 3rd world countries is a threat to the USA and must be stopped. To reinforce this idea, comes in the Theory of Domination, a well spread opinion that the invasion and conquest of a country by the Communist, would expand their military power on the neighboring countries too, leading to a complete "contamination" of the Far East in a short period of time. This theme will be deeply analyzed by Coppola during the French scene.
2. American's military force would prevail in a short time and this will set the basis to bring democracy in the area. The war will be concluded in a "blitzkrieg" time.
3. The American Liberty ideology must be spread to reach new frontiers. In these times the concept of duty reaches its peak in consciences also thanks to the results of WWII: the US

upheld this as their duty , that is to reach out to all countries, to help bring peace and form a shield to the Communist expansion and tyranny.

However, as the war continued dragging itself for almost 10 years, the opinion of the vast majority of the Americans changed and the points described above, quickly became fragile dreams or worse as they were seen as mere Imperialistic lies.

This point will be further discussed while we will discover the character of Kurtz in the 3rd Chapter of the movie.

The increase of these opinions and the dissatisfaction was growing in Vietnam: the soldiers that were sent to war, filled with patriotic intentions as they arrived, were soon confronted with a reality beyond anything they could have possibly imagined. Therefore, slowly, the dream, the melancholy and the longing for *Home* became increasingly overwhelming in the hearts of the men fighting. Thus, the songs chosen are in this movie in order to explain this fact. “*Let The Good Times Roll*”,⁽³⁴⁾ a song of the 50s, tells us of a society that bustled with self-esteem and with political power, it tells us about values, about the roaring 50s, the Cadillacs and the rock'n'roll world. But with its anachronism, it shows that people had realized that that world was gone too: the reality, in strident contrast with those dreams, presents scenes as the “beach party” by Col. Kilgore after the destruction of the first village, totally pathetic and surreal. The desire to return, to feel as if home was not so far away, with its music and with its commodities, is the fragile illusion Coppola is communicating us with these songs. The same can be said about the song “*Surfin' Safari*”, part, quoted by the young 17 years old Mr. Clean. Just after the surfing scene, the lines, sang ironically, confirm us the intentions of the director to represent a situation that has gone far deeper into its own insane home-sickness to the point that it affects the entire conduct of the war. Conduct that is heavily condemned by Kurtz himself shortly after and in all the following scenes.

To put it in Kilgore's words, after the surfing scene, "*Someday this war's gonna end*". That would have been, as to say, the victory of the US and the possibility of returning back home. Willard tells us his own view about this theme:

"That'd be just fine with the boys on the boat. They weren't looking for anything more than a way home....Trouble is, I'd been back there...and I knew that it just didn't exist anymore".

Home was not what it used to be anymore: the dreams of the 50s were shattered and the return home, for these young soldiers, would have quickly evolved into the realization of this dramatic changes in America's society.

"*Suzie Q*", in this line of interpretation, has even a most profound significance and relevance. The song is played loud during the U.S.O. Show scene. Down the river, Willard's mission encounters a station where a great event is about to be held in one of the main military bases. The sequence is telling us about two main issues.

1. The Military Base is introduced on the scene by tribal drum percussion music and bright lights, but soon it reveals itself to be a sort of "Babylon" in the middle of the Jungle. As the port is reached, we discover that alcohol, drugs and pornographic posters are sold to the soldiers. Therefore, the first contact they have with the authorities at the base is a "market place" rather than an official place. This "Babylon" of sins and drugs is just one of the examples given to us of the entire issue about how the war was run.

2. As the U.S.O. Show begins, with the descending bright white lights of an helicopter, as if Angels themselves were reaching the Base, we discover a dimension made of frantic illusions. The song "*Suzie Q*" begins at this point, most noticeable, it is played live, with the presentation of one of the feeble "demons" of the movie: the presenter. Together with Kilgore, he is, one more than the other, a symbolical characters that we will try to decipher, as similarities between Dante's Inferno and the Odyssey unfold in the movie. One example of these, are the Playboy girls. J. Milius himself, reveals in the documentary "*Hearts of Darkness: a Filmmaker's Apocalypse*" (35), that they symbolize the Sirens Ulysses encounters during his journey. They literally cast a spell

on the spectators of the U.S.O. Show, by feeding on their desperation and desire to return home, while in reality these latter soon fade away and become just another fragile and shattered dream. During the show in fact, the situation erupts in the chaos of the frenzy, hallucinated soldiers (who, we may notice, do not really sexually assault the girls, but rather desire their signature – a token, a permanent and concrete memory, in other words). The girls, are quickly brought back in the helicopter, which flies away rapidly as soldiers try to grab onto its rail and fall in the water. The illusion itself, as Vietnamese watch silently from behind the fences, disappears as fast as it had appeared. One more detail worth noticing and mentioning is the way the Playboy girls are dressed: a “Cowboy”, a “Marine” and an “Indian”. As a matter of fact, “Cowboys” and “Marines” symbolized in different epochs of the American military image which came to conquer the savages, were it a Vietnamese or dressed-up as a “Native Indian”. Moreover, it is the Indian dressed-up-girl who hints blatantly to the conduct of the war on women, who were forced to sexual violence and abuse by soldiers during the conflicts. Later, to confirm this aspect of the “*Horror*” Coppola puts on screen, the same girls sold as prostitutes in the abandoned base scene. Willard is, however, constantly aware of the real situation unfolding before his eyes during the U.S.O. Show. He stands apart from the crowd and as the helicopter flies away, he states: “*The war was being run by a bunch of four-star clowns, who were gonna end up giving the whole circus away*”.

“Satisfaction” by The Rolling Stones (1965).(36)

This song too has various layers of significance to be taken into consideration. The song itself, although when one first reads the lyrics one may think it seems to be just the representation of the delusions of a young man about his life, a close look reveals that the song is evidently not only talking about sex, drugs and rock and roll. The aim of the song’s message is much higher: it is talking about Life as a whole and about the delusion of a whole generation. Much has been said and written about this topic and we have already started discussing about the collapse of the American dream of the 50s through the nightmares of the 60s’. Let’s then take into consideration

the lines referring to the man on the Radio and on Television. The fact that the singer is telling us that all their news does not make sense, they are no longer “*firing my imagination*” and the promises of “*white shirts*” have lost their meaning, make us understand how this song is accusing directly America’s society. Commercialized dreams have failed to become true and no true satisfaction can be found any longer in terms of life-fulfillment.

The status quo idolatrized by the elite government has lost contact with reality. The passengers of the small boat going upriver are described by Willard as “*kids, rocknrollers with one foot in their graves*” and soon they reveal themselves to be just this while one more proof of Willard’s statement comes as “*Satisfaction*” is played on the radio. Mr. Clean starts dancing, Lance is waterskiing and, as the boat topples and tramples small wooden fishermen’s boats, we clearly understand how the traveling companions of Willard are not only unaware of the risks they going to face, they also seem to be doing anything they can in order to forget where they truly are, which brings us back again to the “Home” theme. To put it in Kurtz’s words (which are read by Willard while the “Satisfaction” is fading out): “*As long as our officers and troops perform tours of duty limited to one year, they will remain dilettantes in war, and tourists in Vietnam. As long as cold beer, hot food, rock 'n' roll, and all the other amenities remain expected norm, our conduct of the war will only gain impotence. We need fewer men, and better. If they were committed, this war could be won with a fourth of our present force.*”.

This part taken from the Colonel’s report, is the clear statement of the opinion about the war that circulated within the higher ranks of the military forces. Coppola, by using the song “Satisfaction” followed by Kurtz’s words reinforces Willard’s statement during the U.S.O. show. It is a clear political attack, which aims to underline the quantity of young lives sacrificed in the name of a glorious victory. It becomes clear that this theme of political disillusion runs throughout the whole movie. That fact that Kurtz himself was a high rank officer is clearly referring to all the main figures of the war that during these years shifted their view from a pro-war one, or “Hawks” as the political slang calls them, to supporters of the withdrawal of the

troops from Vietnam. This difficult topic was already blatant in the 1979 version of the movie but we will see with the “French Scene” (37) later on, how the issue gain much more strength in the 2001 edition.

To conclude our exploration of the songs featured in this movie and the scenes related to them, we must mention the psychedelic and tribal backgrounds that are often integrating part of the setting of the movie. Most of them appear under the title “Collection Musee de l'Homme”, Zoetrope Music Company. (38)

The scenes when these types of music appear are most often two minutes long scenario shots, with contrasting strong colors and hallucinatory images. Two excellent examples, appear in the Do Lung Bridge scene and in the scene after Chief's “funeral rite”.

The Do Lung Bridge sequence, as we will examine later, symbolically represents Dante's gates of Hell and the lost souls of the Styx river. The surreal scenario we are shown, unfolds in fire and white ghastly smoke were a violent, pyrotechnic siege is blasting the bridge camp. As Willard and Lance (who is under the effects of acids) leave the boat we explore the insanity of this battlefield. A dramatic and distorted background ensemble of noises, dissonance rather than music, comes in. The effect is immediate: we are drowned in the surreal landscape, as confusion and nightmare prevail on the scene. Loud, gothic and, in a way, similar to the music of a horror movie set in an abandoned circus, the background soundtrack hints again at the state of abandonment and anarchy the war is in. To confirm what we hear and feel, we witness soldiers who have no commanding officer, no order and just continue fighting sheltering in the forest against invisible enemies. Falling mortars attacks crack the night with flames and flares bright up the night sky. Suddenly, a sibilant rock soul, in true Jimmy Hendrix's style, comes in for a few seconds as we see black soldiers sent far deeper in the jungle as expendable man resources. They are closer in their looks to an army of African guerrillas rather than American soldiers and seem to tell a story of ghettos and “favelas” back in the big cities of the US, where these men came from. Men lost in

the jungle who have returned to a tribal and hunter way of life: tiger paintings decorate their weapons and their bodies.

Completely different in its setting, but very similar in its filming and meaning, is the scene after Chief's funeral rite. The song begins as Chief's body sinks in the orange water at sunset and night unfolds for the three men left on board. In a one minute scene, the savages' reality, so far from the war battles we have described so far, is depicted as a nightmare. The soundtrack has a mesmerizing role and effect as we are shown wooden huts burning in the darkness, fires like candles fading in the surroundings that look like a pagan cemetery: poles that resemble crosses, piles of bones, skulls of men and bulls appear through a deadly mist as morning rises in a world which is too far from "Home". Fear of the unknown, of the wilderness and of what still is to come is prevailing, but the boat carries on down the river. *"Part of me was afraid of what I would find, and what I would do when I got there..."* Willard tells us as he rips the photos and documentation on Kurtz *"I knew the risks. Or imagined I knew. But the thing I felt the most, much stronger than fear, was the desire to confront him"*. This scene is one of the passages that connect the longest sequences: they act as mediation and connect the story's chapters. This one, in particular, leads us through the wild end of the river, with its distorted sounds and misty orange colors. Any contact with human civilization is entirely lost and, as the boat sails down a canyon, the music with its mystical orange shades fades out and the face of the same statue as the one that is in the opening scene appears again we are "welcomed" in Kurtz's territory. This time, though, the statue is a double-faced one and by looking in two different directions, it symbolizes Willard and Kurtz, the lost man's and his rationality descend into Nature's realm of wilderness and instinct.

This chapter here concludes the general analysis of the colors and music and how they relate and merge with their symbols into the Coppola's war scenes. Light and Darkness are balanced throughout the whole movie, in a constant game of dualities, sharing their shades of colors and printing the movie scenarios with hallucination and violence to symbolize the psychological

effect the war must have had. Music, seemingly, carries deep political messages, both helping set a generation's context and "broadcasting" pain, fears, delusions, frustrations and absurdity of the war.

The home-sickness feelings of the soldiers, Imperialistic dreams of glory, Misconduct and, ultimately, the realization of a war carried only for political interests against the lives of many young men, are just some of the messages we receive thanks to the songs of the 60s here presented. A psychedelic spiritual journey, once again, through vision and sound, through the depths of one man's soul, into the horrors of the experience of a generation at war, reaching deep in the most sacred and wild part of mankind's true and hidden nature.

Chapter 1, The Path.

The first part of the movie begins with by unfolding to us the character of Willard. As he awakes from the dream-like visions previously described, we begin to discover a tormented soul that has lost both his place in time and in space. Conrad's Marlow differs particularly in the first chapter of "*Heart of Darkness*" from Coppola's re-proposal: whilst the novel version is clearly told retrospectively, in the movie we are introduced in *medias res* in the scene. Marlow is therefore some sort of "messenger", a story-teller who has already returned from his enlightening journey, as we are told that many years have passed since his journey to Congo. He is, in fact, presented, more than once, as similar to a "meditating Buddha". Willard, on the contrary, begins by telling us his story driving the spectator through his narrative voice, directly into his thoughts. However, all the sentences used by Willard keep skipping from past to present tense: most probably, this was an intentional choice of Milius, meant to let us wonder still whether or not we will be witnessing the moment-by-moment evolution of events or if we are instead listening to a narration, as in Conrad's work. Hints in both directions are possible and keep occurring during all the scenes of the movie.

We are shown a *dantesque* character who could be summarized with the famous incipit of the Divine Comedy itself: "*Nel mezzo del cammin di nostra vita, mi ritrovai in selva oscura che la diritta via era smarrita...*" (39). Willard is, in fact, by no means young, he carries on his shoulders the burden of a "Tour" through Vietnam which has already devastated his psyche, a broken divorced family at home and the constant feeling of having lost contact with reality, to the point in which he tells us "*every time I think I am going to wake up in the jungle*". We will see how, in each chapter, symbolic "demons" of the mind and of the spirit will be presented to us in an intentionally repetitive way. These "demons", as Coppola calls them, become increasingly dangerous and dark as the journey reaches deeper and deeper within the wilderness.

The first of the confrontations Willard must fight with, is a battle within himself. Immediately after the brief introduction narrated, we learn that he heavily abuses alcohol. The entire scene of the

deranged and lonely drunkenness is set to show us a man literally closed in a cage, struggling against the nightmares that live within his own self. The music from “*The End*” breaks in again, as more scenes of napalm fire in the jungle appear: Willard is performing a sort of drunken Thai-chi, representing the fighting of the man to free himself both of the “horrors” within himself and from the walls of the room that constantly closing upon him and feel “*each time...a little tighter*”. It is interesting to underline that, as we learn from Martin Sheen’s (40) interview, in this scene Willard/Sheen was in fact drunk and not just acting: the scene when he smashes the mirror (with the powerful impact of destroying the outside image of himself) was not intentional, for example. The battle within explodes with a visual violence and colors again acts as symbols, as Willard naked and covered in blood drapes himself with the white sheets of his bed: death, in other words, is taking its “sacrificial victim”. The theme of Sacrifice is central and is profoundly connected to the protagonist. We can already mention here how, relatively to this topic, a lot of emphasis will be put in describing the clues within the movie and their connections with the novel. As Sacrifice, so the religious themes of Redemption and Rebirth / Resurrection are central for the understanding of Coppola’s masterpiece. The journey here described is deeply linked at all levels not only to Greek mythology, but as we will see, also with Christian and Pagan roots of spiritual metamorphosis. From this point of view, it is necessary to start explaining how each symbol presented will be connected in a grid of interpretation, following a double method of interpretation. C.G Jung’s archetypes (41) interpretation of dreams and psychology will come in handy to give us an insight which will allow us to follow a more selective and classical ethno-anthropological recognition of the symbols and images presented. Ultimately, we must analyze the reasons of both Conrad’s and Coppola/Milius’s choice of such a “system”, by relating it to both the historical reality of 1900 Colonialism Era and to the “Hollywood” American society of the 60s’ and 70s’.

This opening scene is followed by an equally important sequence which, at first, seems to be irrelevant, whilst instead it carries many important details – demonstrating how every single moment in the movie is meticulously calculated.

Two soldiers come to call Willard in his room to escort him to the base in Nha Dang. In a matter of a two minute scene, we are suddenly brought back to reality after the hallucinated visions of Willard; simultaneously Coppola gives us three main introductive topics. The first one is about of the angel-like figure of the soldiers that act like divine messengers: here like in other scenes further on, the messages, the post and the missions are delivered as if from another reality totally disconnected from what the reality of the Vietnam War is. This reality can be the Commanding Elite or Home in America and their voice reaches the characters as if from out of space and time, delivered by soldiers who always seem to materialize like visions. The initial trance effects are put aside and a sharp and vivid scene introduces the beginning of the journey. *“I wanted a mission and for my sins they give me one”*.

The second topic is that of Sin and Redemption. Although Coppola might somehow suggests it, we are not told which sins Willard feels he is pleaded guilty for and what price he must pay for them. It is important to notice how, during the drunken visions, for one frame only, we see a caption from the ending chapter of the movie and, again, we are induced to wonder in what way this story is told, whether retrospectively or not, and whether the “fall” into insanity were not the Sin itself, for which Willard will have to metaphysically die, reaching the core of the World Beyond and then, eventually, return. However, we are told by his narrating voice, by he himself, that this will be his last mission.

The third point is smoothly hidden by Coppola, but clearly connected to Conrad’s scene of Marlow being employed for his mission. In *“Heart of Darkness”*, five main female figures appear, three of them are connected to the Greek myth of the “Moire” or Roman “Parcae” (42). The “Moire”, Clotho, Lachesis and Atropos, were the goddesses that controlled human destiny. Having quoted the “Valkyrie”, it is interesting to add that these same figures appear also in the Noreen mythology with the name of Disir with the exact same duty. The first two female characters appear in the waiting room of the Company offices: just like in the myth, one is holding the black wool while the other one is knitting it. The third of the “Moire”, the goddess that cuts the threads and ends human life, can be found at the end of the novel as Kurtz’s mourning fiancée. Her description, in fact, perfectly suits

that of a Goddess of Death – almost floating in the air, covered in black living visible only her pale face. As mentioned, a connection with Conrad’s symbolism can be found in this scene too: it is a Vietnamese woman, a hostel cleaner sitting mending white towels, that points to the soldiers Willard’s room. However irrelevant this figure might seem, it, just like in the novel, shows the way to deliver the Message / Enter the room. She is not knitting wool, but the white towels are so easily connectable to the fact that she is the one, the female figure, that will have to clean Willard’s blood-stained blankets of. If the room is the cage, with its window shutters like jail bars, where Willard “dies”, his sepulcher in some way, then she is the one having to wash his burial gown.

This is just one of the many hidden examples within the movie, most of which I will not have the possibility to examine in detail in this thesis. In the research about symbols in this film and their relevance for understanding America’s relation with mythology, religion and search for identity, we will only focus on the main themes and the most evident examples of Animistic, Pagan and Christian – Judaic iconic images.

We are told at this point, by Willard’s narrative voice of, that he will be the “caretaker” of Kurtz memory. This is a key issue to the understanding of this movies central theme. Just as in “Heart of Darkness”, Willard/Marlow will have the duty to deliver Kurtz’s icon as a testament. To “*the dust bin of progress*”, as Conrad states. Willard, as a messenger or an “apostle” tells us how his story and Kurtz’s are connected deeply: to be correct, we are told that this *is* Kurtz’s story, but that, in order to explain the former, he must tell us his own story, too. The choice of calling Willard an apostle is merely a descriptive one. Apostle, is he who is being sent on a mission. We have therefore a character with a double duty: the first one, as we will see in the next scene, to “terminate” Colonel Kurtz, the second one, to bring back his testament. It is extremely interesting to see how the theme develops from now on and how each scene will give us clues and deliver deeper and deeper and significant meaning.

As we enter the room of the generals, we are suddenly brought into another dimension, one of those that cannot but seem absurd in the setting of the Vietnam War. The cabin is organized as a civilian house, Milius and Coppola describe it as:

“They approach a civilian-type luxury trailer. It is surrounded by concertina wire, and its windows have grenade protection, but it still seems out of place in this austere military base. (...) Cool and comfortable, furnished like home. Pictures on the walls, certificates, photos of Presidents Kennedy, Johnson and Nixon and other mementos decorating the room.”

The sequence is the introduction to the figure of Kurtz and to Willard’s mission. Three men, a civilian, a Colonel and a General interrogate the protagonist (and we learn of his past secret service missions, which he denies) and finally welcome him to sit for lunch. Immediately the roast-beef and shrimps meal clarifies a straightforward accusation of the luxury and wealth of the elite military class, linking itself to the “cool and comfortable, furnished like home” trailer. Coppola’s position will be confirmed soon, as Kurtz’s voice on tape will sharply say: *“Those nabobs. I hate them. I really hate them”*.

This political issue will be stressed even further during the movie: as already mentioned, the “*four stars clowns*”, as Willard himself names them, are representative of the misconduct and failure of the whole war.

However, much more related to our analyze is the rest of Kurtz’s tape recorded radio-message that the General has prepared for Willard before sending him on his mission.

“I watched a small snail, crawling on the edge of a straight razor. That's my dream. It's my nightmare. Crawling, slithering, along the edge of a straight razor, and surviving”.

The poetical power of Kurtz’s first words in the movie reach us as if from another dimension. We still do not know anything about the Colonel, however, in the vivid tension lost in the wonder of his words, the scene shares almost all the topics of the movie in one shot. The metaphor in these lines is intentionally unclear. The *snail* might be regarded from an existentialist point of view: as humans

crawling through history, a history made of blood and violence as the sharp razor symbolizes. The snail, a fragile and small creature at the base of the evolutionary scale, all it has is its tiny but beautiful shell to protect itself. The dreams of men “held” in this shell are transported along, regardless of the pain and suffering of centuries of wars, reaching out to nothingness, to the point of the razor. However, the snail survives and so does our society. This is Kurtz’s dream, or rather, his nightmare. These two words are a clear connection to the dream-journey of Willard and the nightmare that will at the end unfold as we discover the meaning of “the Horror” at the end of the movie. In spite of this deep poetic understanding of life (Kurtz, we are later told, is a poet – and so he is Conrad’s version), the tape recording goes on disclosing the clear accusation above mentioned. Non-careful critics of this movie – and so the military officers in the room, might have regarded this second part as an obvious evidence of Kurtz’s “unsound” methods:

“But we must kill them. We must incinerate them. Pig after pig. Cow after cow. Village after village. Army after army”.

On the contrary, this truly brutal description shows just how easy it could be for us to misinterpret Kurtz. The genocide methodology of war is not relating to his belief: here he is accusing the elite, the society, the way the military system thinks and conceives conquest, diminishing to a primitive, violent, barbarian warfare the epic image of the conqueror motivated by ideals of Liberty and democracy. Moreover, the “We” Kurtz uses, is clearly a reference to the fact that this elite (and lets us remind the fact that we are still sitting around a rich lunch-prepared table) does not dirty their hands in blood much preferring to sacrifice (*We must*) the life of many young men forcing them to the battle. And it is, of course, an accusation of hypocrisy, too:

“And they call me an assassin. What do you call it, when the assassins accuse the assassin?”.

We will, in fact, shortly learn that Kurtz has been accused of assassination. Willard himself will state the evident absurdity of this: “*Charging a man with murder in this place was like handing out speeding tickets at the Indy 500*”. The sentence, moreover, is death. Therefore in these short lines, we begin to explore the topic of the *scapegoat*, as Kurtz will gradually become the sacrificial icon of this story, in a way not even Conrad had managed to describe.

The final lines of Kurtz’s voice on the tape are very relevant too: “*They lie. They lie and we have to be merciful, for those who lie*”. These words connect us to the end of the movie when Kurtz tells us that there is nothing he hates more than lies. In this case, lies about himself. The problematic issue surrounding the topic of human judgment is here presented for the first time. We must also take into consideration the fact that, however Kurtz profoundly deplores lies, he urges us to be merciful towards them: the darkened-messiah that Kurtz incarnates is here unveiled for the first time.

Summarizing, thanks to one monologue we are given the following topics, which present the three starting points to begin the journey with:

- 1- The Snail and the razor: human existence is fragile and almost absurdly “crawls” through a history of violence that leads to nothing but nightmares, leaving behinds the slime of men’s dead-lost dreams.
- 2- The War and the Nabobs: the brutality of this war has no excuse. Socially devastating, morally unacceptable at any level and ruled by the chiefs of a barbarian civilization devoted to destruction and income hidden under flags of peace and freedom.
- 3- The scapegoat and his moral integrity: Kurtz is the sacrificial animal placed on the altar of the Gods of War that, with deep hypocrisy, deny to him even his sanity. Kurtz, who we understand to be, however troubled, firmly convinced of his mission and ideals – to the point of refusing the lies that will lead to his death, is “merciful” to his “assassins” .

To further confirm the importance of these three points, we must quote the General's words as he speaks to Willard, which, too, summarize what described above:

"Well, you see, Willard, in this war, things get confused out there. Power, ideals, the old morality, and practical military necessity. But out there with these natives, it must be a temptation to be God. Because there is a conflict in every human heart: between the rational and the irrational, between good and evil. And good does not always triumph. Sometimes, the dark side overcomes what Lincoln called the better angels of our nature. Every man has got a breaking point. You have and I have them. Walter Kurtz has reached his. And, very obviously, he has gone insane".

Even if the General confirms Kurtz's words, he introduces one last central theme to "Apocalypse Now": Man has become God.

Nietzsche's "*Übermensch*"(43), would be a far-out stretch: to be correct, Kurtz symbolizes the complete opposite type of character who has been overcome by his own *Hubris* (44). While the Superman attempts to a purity of civic and spiritual morality, his icon relates to a War-God type of man. However, even in this case two faces of the same coin come in to play in yet another dualistic problematic of this movie. We have so far mentioned how Kurtz can be related to a form of deeper and unreachable evil, that deep within the human soul, is silently awake. In the General's words, he is within all that that is not Rationality, leading us, therefore, to condemn him as insane. However, this profound evil, this temptation that has driven Kurtz to become a blood-lusty god among the natives, hides under a layer of darkness within, yet another mask and another truth. One must ask himself, what is the real opposite of Reason? The simplest answer in such context, the answer the "Nabob" General would probably give, is Insanity. The judgment the Elite will give, almost as a Holy Court, is to punish and "Terminate" with "Extreme prejudice" (aka, assassin in CIA slang) the source of this Insanity.

However, Coppola seems to be telling us an entire different interpretation: the lack of Reason is in Insanity, but Kurtz proves us not to be lacking it at all, he is, actually, the opposite. And the opposite, hints Coppola throughout the movie, is the Spiritual Nature of Instincts. Instincts that Kurtz himself

claims he cannot be judged. They, in their purest form, even in the most animal form, remain pure. Kurtz's image, whose story and philosophy will be slowly unfolded to us and to Willard as we descend the river, will gradually reach that of a God of Instincts: a god that cannot be judged by men, as it is beyond and opposite any reasoning and moral ethic that humans can conceive.

Kurtz, as analyzed in the last chapter, is all that Christianity and other religions of Semitic origin, Dante and Homer, called Satan – the enemy. The Scapegoat God of Reason, deep within ourselves. As Nietzsche would put it: "*hell is the absence of reason*" (45). Therefore, to conclude this part, we could arguably claim, that if this is the character that Conrad and Coppola wanted to give shape to, then, as mentioned before, Willard will first be his assassin and then his apostle: a sort of inverse Judas.

Once the mission has been accepted, Willard can get onboard the boat and prepare to begin his journey. The boat is another fundamental symbol that occurs both in "*Heart of Darkness*" and in "*Apocalypse Now*" with its many layers of meaning and possible interpretations. One main interpretation can be found in this narrative figure. The main point of contact between Conrad's and Milius/Coppola's boat is that this means of water transport is fragile. This is one thing that the authors stress in many ways: it is "*old and rotten*" in Conrad and it is made of "plastic" in Coppola. This fragility carries two main significances. The most obvious, the dangers of this journey, is increased by the bad conditions of the boat itself. The second, more subtle, as this fragility represents the fragility of life itself. We have already started exploring the significance of the River: it is Life, the quest, the going deep down the Kundalini Snake inside of the spirit to reach the depths of our minds and hearts. Therefore, it becomes evident that the boat is the means in which we have endure this journey, that is to say *the body* in which this journey is undertaken. This body, which is also the ensemble of the crew and, therefore, of society, is closely related also to the theme of sacrifice. It is important however, to always remember that the boat is constantly in motion, lost in the fog only when close to its point of arrival at the end of the trip, and prime setting of almost every scene. For

example, one important thing we are told about the boat, during a scene which occurs at the beginning of the second chapter, is that “*one should never leave the boat*”. Because of its relevance, we shall follow also its symbolic evolution during the narration. First of all, the name of the boat must be noted, it is printed on the transom: *Erebus*.⁽⁴⁶⁾ In Greek mythology, Erebus (Ancient Greek: Ἔρεβος, "deep darkness, shadow"), was often conceived as a primordial deity, representing the personification of Darkness; for instance, Hesiod's *Theogony* ⁽⁴⁷⁾ places him as one of the first five beings to come into existence, born from Chaos. In Greek literature the name Erebus is also used to refer to a region of the Underworld where the dead had to pass immediately after dying, and it is sometimes used interchangeably with Tartarus.⁽⁴⁸⁾ So, as we will see through the comparison between Death and Journey, it is as if Willard has entered the Darkness from the moment he stepped on the boat, therefore, by accepting the mission he symbolically dies/enters the underworld to reach Hell's core.

In Judaic-Christian symbolic language, the boat represents the allegoric depiction of Salvation. In the Old Testament it is embodied in the Ark of the Covenant, beholding the power of God and its Law: in other words, the two main columns of the Jewish foundation for the religious and social survival of the community. In the New Testament, it shifts slightly: the boat becomes the place where Jesus appeases the storm on the Sea of Galilee and the image of the Church is often related to that of a ship that survives the tempestuous first centuries of its history, it is Noah's Ark. In either cases, the boat is a gift of Salvation given from Above. Therefore, the boat, as dark as it can be, it is the only way to reach this Salvation.

Even in Greek and Mediterranean pre-Christian allegories, we discover how the boat was, actually since Ancient Egypt, the symbol for immortality, gained after the journey through death. A first connection can already be found in Rah's boat which, surviving the night, reaches dawn and Light again. Ulysses, the most famous lost-seafarer, is obviously closely connected too. The navigation to the limits of the known lands, the limits of knowledge of Earth is in Dante's story of Ulysses,⁽⁴⁹⁾ who dies after crossing Hercules's Columns, an allegory of how man desires to reach the unknown and the

forbidden and, ultimately, is destined to be punished for this. However, far from Dante's moral indications, the original Ulysses is he who travels beyond knowledge, challenges time and space and, as the *Odyssey* is still one of the most important epic pieces of literature ever, finally safely returns home.

The first character the members of the ship encounter is a "Mythological creature" that Coppola names *Kilgore*. Colonel W. Kilgore, whose name seems ironically to blend the words *Kill* and *Gore*, is one of the main characters in the movie. Milius, in one recent interview, reveals this character to be in fact the *Odyssey's* Cyclops. Many aspects of this character suggest this connection, the first of which is his imposing, masculine and powerful figure. Kilgore appears as descending from the sky on one of the famous helicopters, a black chopper with printed on its nose "DEATH FROM ABOVE". Indeed, his apparition on the scene recalls some sort of *deus ex-machina* and the greatness of his power is immediately shown to us as he order to "move" the line of the palm forest 300 yards further in, as if his giant stature needed more space. However, the brutality and primitive ways of Kilgore become clear in the following scene as the Death Cards are picked and placed on the Viet Cong victims. We are told that these cards (a set for poker with printed on the back the logo of the Ninth Cavalry), are to let "*Charlie know who did it*"(50). They are imposing symbols autographing the massacre, a gambling game with Death where not one of the victims is "*worth a Jack*". The cards, alongside with Surfing, are two means by which Coppola shows us the *unsound* methods of Kilgore, whose insane and somehow childish behavior is, as said above, linked to the figure of the Cyclopes. The Cyclops in Greek mythology appears very often: a part from the monstrous creature that holds in capture Ulysses, we find this creature also in the *Theogony* of Hesiod and in other works of Euripides. His main characteristics, as mentioned, are his gigantic stature, a single eye in the middle of his forehead and its connection to the horrific and bestial manners of the monster. The fact that he has only one eye, means that he does not have a clear vision of reality, he does not have measure (he will get drunk and be blinded by Ulysses) and has, most importantly, no understanding of human life's value. This aspect is perhaps the most evident connection the monster has with Kilgore. The

colonel, in fact, shows no understanding of these values as he mercilessly destroys a Vietnamese village. The small village appears as a peaceful community, with a school, a market square and a fishermen's port. Kilgore disintegrates their peaceful life and the parallelism with the Cyclops devouring Ulysses's men and his ignorance of the value of life is evident.

As the *Valkyries* attack strikes the area in one of the most famous scenes of "*Apocalypse Now*", we are shown the absurdity of the warlord's way of conducting the war. Yet again, this is another example of how Coppola prefers the hallucinatory to the realistic depiction of war: although the battle "seems" realistic, we are obviously drawn to realize how insane it is. Even when one of the choppers with wounded soldiers is blown up, Kilgore seems to be lacking any human morality and sentiment. Indeed, he seems to worry about his men, he wants his wounded soldiers to be taken away to the hospital in "*15 minutes*" but when the helicopter is destroyed, once the Vietnamese woman responsible for it is killed and vengeance is done, Kilgore's unethical and inhuman ways show him again as interested only in his favorite sport: surfing.

"*Charlie don't Surf!*" is the famous line with which the Valkyrie battle begins. Surfing represents mainly two aspects of Kilgore's methods. The first, as mentioned above, is that of taking the war seriously but still acting in it as a child would with plastic soldiers in his game. The child-like image of Kilgore is very important and is representative of the Cyclops' primitive intelligence. This almost innocent way of being in his brutality, alongside with his monstrous power of decision upon life and death is the reason for which Kilgore is somehow immortal, it is the reason why we are told that he will not get but a scratch during this war. The other meaning of surfing is evidently the connection with the American world of the 50s back home, as described during the previous chapter. The need to feel closer to their homeland leads the soldiers to insane attitudes and behaviors, like surfing during a battle for example. Connected to this is the beach party scene, during which Kilgore is not depicted as an "entirely" evil person: as a matter of facts, he does care about his men, just like the Cyclopes cares about his sheep herd. Also, this is the main difference he has from Kurtz whose Evil is a mature and reasoned instinctive discipline of life.

The theme of extermination in order to reach victory will be discussed further on, for the moment we cannot describe Kilgore without mentioning his story about napalm. Tacitus's report of Calgacus's speech to his troops "*ubi solitudinem faciunt pacem appellant*" (51) - they make a *desert* and call it peace - perfectly describes the way Coppola tells us Kilgore's ideas of what has to be done in order to reach victory. Napalms' destructive power, its smell, the long-lasting destructive effects on the land, the desolation the morning after the battle, is the way in which this war will be won. "*One day this war will end*" is Kilgore's final statement: indeed he desires the conflict to conclude, but victory, by whatever means must be reached and must be his.

Summarizing, Kilgore is one of the *dantesque* demons Willard encounters: he is the symbol of the primordial force of violence, of ignorance and destruction, of life and the desire to conquer by any available means in order to end the war and return, with his dear soldiers, back to their safe homeland.

Kilgore can also be identified with Charon, the hellish ferryman that transports Dante across the waters of the Acheron, into the lands of hell. The main reason in fact, behind the battle at the Nha Dang delta, is that of escorting Willard's boat and its crew to the river where their journey will begin. Together with the Cyclopes, this other almost mythological creature, links back to Greek-Roman traditions of placing coins on the dead man's eyes before burial or cremation – a coin that will then be given to Charon in order to pay for the transportation. As a matter of facts, the whole scene opens with a funeral ceremony and Kilgore is introduced.

Again this hints at Willard's metaphorical death and journey to Resurrection and Redemption. The funeral scene is maybe the most outstanding confirmation of the highly allegorical meaning of the entire movie.

One priest standing between two soldiers, hands towards the sky, is praying the "Our Father" - The Prayer of the Lord. He is dressed as a soldier and the only thing that identifies him as a Priest is a white cloth on his shoulders. Two crosses are being held by the soldiers at his side on the dead bodies

of other soldiers. “*Hallow be thy name*”, are the main words we hear during the short funeral scene, then suddenly the camera switches image and we are shown a *cow* being risen by an helicopter.

This image is probably the most significant icon Coppola uses to give us his mythological/sacred version of the rebirth path. The cow appears in two scenes, in this one and at end during Kurtz’s “sacrificial” ceremony. It is no coincidence: during its first appearance, the cow is being brought away (stolen from the village) as a funeral is being held. The cow seems to bear the meaning of a sacrificial victim risen to the Gods. The pagan connection with this religious icon and its mixing with Christian cults once again is emblematic and shows us the thick net of connections Coppola wants to create between all myths, religions and spiritual ideologies.

The cow is most often seen as a symbol of fertility and of Mother Earth’s power of creation. So much in the Egyptian Hathor and so in the Hindu Kamadhenu, the Cow Goddess gives wealth, strength and abundance to humanity. “Selfless giving” is another important value related to these Goddesses. Many other religious connections can be found in Hinduism, also, as Krishna had a cowherd and Prithvi, the Earth Goddess, transforms itself to give beneficial substances.

Therefore, from the iconography of Pagan and Hindu religion we can deduce that this Cow, as said above, is first of all an offer to the Gods above. However, we must take into consideration the Semitic and Judaic meaning of the Cow-Sacred Bull in order to have a full view of the subject pictured before our eyes. The famous Biblical episode of the Golden Calf idol, being worshipped in the wilderness of Sinai and then destroyed by Moses, is a fundamental key of interpretation. The Pagan goddess is being risen and somehow worshipped by a Christian priest: no boundaries are set between religions and the meaning of God is confused and lost. There is no God in this land, only His twisted image, the fervent idolatry and pale memory of liturgies.

Most significantly at the beginning of this scene we are shown the ruins of a destroyed (or still to be completed) church. The image passes in the background, as it does also in Oliver Stone’s “*Platoon*” (52), but it is strongly connoted, as a symbol and as a political satire. The house of God is being erected in the flames, and it might even have been hit by bombing, but the mere fact of it being there

tells us two things: that some divinity (even if distorted) is being worshiped (as we can see with the funeral), and that the Church had power in those lands – underlined by the greatness of the church being erected, an extremely significant aspect for the political appreciation of Coppola’s message. The church was heavily persecuted by the North Vietnamese and after the war, until recent days, Catholic people and institutions barely survive in the country. One must however always look at the two sides of the coin: for the North Vietnamese and the Socialist regime, Catholicism is a product of the Western Civilization and a political-spiritual maneuver to gain power in the country. Moreover, the main ally of the US, the Montagnards tribes, were all Catholic. Why should then Colonel Kilgore attacked a village with a church, as Catholic villages should be allied with the South Vietnamese? The political satire and the macabre irony of showing a church at the gates of Hell is evident. Coppola, while depicting the personal religious despair of the soldiers and of the people involved in the war, is also confirming how the Church as an institution was present and part of the Western Propaganda and territorial control.

In the Church, in the Funeral and in the risen Cow we find three connected images: all three of them will reappear at the spring of the River, transformed by a metamorphosis into the Pagan Sanctuary, the Ritual and the Cow as a sacrificial victim that has reached its altar. In fact an ultimate connection can be drawn also between the Cow and the Boat, which is also – and very seemingly – lifted in the sky and dropped on the Delta of the River. It is somehow as if the meaningful power of the Cow was embodied in and by the Boat/Body, which will be sent and guided by the Messianic figure of Willard down to Hell, to reach and re-appear at its destination, summoned again on the Altar of Sacrifice of Kurtz., in the deepest Circle of the *Inferno*.

This final part of the Sacrifice and its iconography and meaning will be discussed in detail later in the Chapter “Reaching the Heart”. So far, let us pin point three main aspects of the beginning of this Journey, as the boat is ready to make its way down the River:

- 1- The Journey begins with a man lost in the nightmares of his tragic life.
- 2- He is summoned by Powers above him to endure a life-mission to reach the “Heart of Darkness”.

3- His Journey is “blessed” and he is dragged by Charon to the Gates of Hell, carrying the power of Sacrifice to Redeem mankind from Evil by facing it deep in its core.

These topics have to be taken into account at each step during the movie to reach a complete understanding of Coppola’s creation. The connection with Dante will develop in each and every scene. It will show us how Coppola followed the *Divine Comedy* nearly more precisely than “*Heart of Darkness*”, to the point that each scene seems to reproduce allegorically one of Dante’s Circles of Hell.(53).

Chapter 2, Descending.

The scene opens soon after Willard has escaped from Kilgore: just as Ulysses did from the Cyclopes, and the Colonel is tricked by Willard-Ulysses, who steals his favorite Surfboard.

The second “chapter” of the movie follows Conrad’s “script”, as it focuses on the down-the-River journey. Examining the Redux version we can see that each scene develops concepts and scenarios that follow almost precisely each Circle of Hell as Dante exposed it. Here is a brief scheme of the relations of the scenes to the “*Divine Comedy*”:

1st Circle: Limbo – Tiger scene and the Jungle.

2nd Circle: Lust – USO Show.

3rd and 4th Circle: Gluttony , Greed, Prodigy – Abandoned camp and prostitution. The sampan.

5th Circle: Anger – The mash of Styx and the City of Dis – Do Lung Bridge.

6th and 7th Circle: Heresy and Violence – the letters and the boat attack.

8th Circle: Maleboge – Part 1. First funeral, the French and Roxanne.

Part2. Attack in the misty Jungle, Second funeral and the Lands before Kurtz.

This parallel might only be a coincidence, however the symbols, re-occurring in each scene, strongly connect to the imaginary Dante created. Some connections are more evident than others, however following this structure allows us to follow the development of the journey. As civilization is left behind, the drama of the story deepens and the characters we encounter become more and more distant from reality. In the 1977 version the full comprehension of the movie was not possible, whereas, in the Redux version, the duration of each scene, combined with the momentary narrative breaks, is strictly connected and measured with attention.

Following the *Inferno*’s structure scheme above, it can be noticed that between each scene we are presented new details about Kurtz and we discover more about his character and his mentality: it is

Willard's preparation to encounter his target. It becomes evident that Willard, just like Marlow, is not just fascinated by Kurtz, he is captured. Willard/Marlow himself says he does not know what he will do once he meets Kurtz, he will discover it only once there. This subject will be analyzed in detail in the next Chapter, which will focus on the Ninth Circle, the Temple, and on the figure of Kurtz.

For each part, as far as possible since many icons and sentences all slightly covered by a veil in the script of the movie, a brief description of each scene and its relevant symbols will be given. All the connections with many different works (from Ulysses to Dante and from Mythology to Conrad) will be examined, trying to avoid too detailed an examination of their ultimate connection as this will be discussed in the conclusive chapter. Kurtz is an extremely complicated and multi-faced character, it is therefore necessary to extract him from the narrative sequence and consider him separately.

1st Circle: Limbo – The Mango and the Tiger in the Garden of Eden. (*never get out of the boat*)

The Limbo, according to Dante, is the place where the souls who were not baptized are incarcerated. It is similar to the Odysseys' Asphodel Meadows (54): a place of sorrow and peace-less afterlife. In this Circle, Dante places great names of History: philosophers like Socrates, Plato and Aristotle, prophets like Noah and Moses, historical figures like Julius Caesar and Cicero. However, the most important character Dante meets, for his relevance to the movie, is Adam. He will reappear redeemed in the Canto XXVI of "*Paradiso*" and, in this part he will speak to the author. The answers Dante receives from Adam are about Time and Language: how long Adam lived in and outside the Garden of Eden, what language he spoke and what the cause of the Original Sin was.

This latter is the part we are interested in. Adam tells Dante the reason of his disobedience to God's command. Moreover, by eating the Apple from the Tree of Knowledge, Adam and Eve crossed the line that leads towards the understanding of Good and Evil. The theme re-occurs in many different ways in other cultures and religions, the meaning, though, remains the same: when trying to reach Knowledge, to reach God's understanding the only result can be perdition. The metaphor of God like a mirror is explicative: the Mirror reflects the light of everything, the only thing that will never be

visible to mankind's eyes is the Mirror itself. The theme of the desire to reach over to the deepest knowledge, fighting the wilderness of the unknown, is present in all novels and poems that talk about growth, formation and the search for the meaning of life. One out of many examples that could be drawn is in the 3rd stanza by Robert Frost in the poem "*Good Hours*"(55):

I had such company outward bound.

I went till there were no cottages found.

I turned and repented, but coming back

I saw no window but that was black.

Let us now analyze the scene in "*Apocalypse Now*". Chef and Willard decide to enter the jungle to find a Mango tree. The Jungle, Nature, seems to become either the untouched Garden of Eden in its purest form outside the boundaries of the Gates of Eden. There are no signs of combat here, nevertheless danger, as night is fading in, is lurking in every corner and Willard's attention is constantly alert. Chef, meanwhile, talking about his culinary career dreams destroyed by the reality of the war, is still searching for the Mango tree. The choice of this fruit is probably significant too and its symbol is often repeated in the movie. It is in fact interesting to notice that the Mango is considered in the Far East to be the fruit of Immortality. It is a sacred fruit in India, a food for divinities and it is often represented in many Hindu paintings. Therefore, it is interesting to emphasize the fact that in Eden, there were two trees: the Tree of Knowledge, as mentioned above, and the Tree of Immortality. These were, in Judaic-Christian philosophy, the main two aspects that separated God from Men. The fact that this fruit is mentioned so often cannot be considered as a coincidence.

As Chef and Willard are in the jungle, another demon is presented to us: the tiger, which attacks them appearing fiercely and, in Milius's words *sarling magnificently*. Worldwide the Tiger symbolizes the demon, the wild power of instinct, as, for instance, in William Blake's poem "*The Tyger*" (56). The

devil Coppola is showing us, however, is yet again an allegory of the Darkness, of the unknown and of the primordial power of Nature, against which men have no hope to escape once they leave their world. The theme is connected with all said so far and, apart from mirroring Willard's desperation scenes at the beginning of the movie during the struggle against his internal demon, the Tiger also appears to underline once again the importance of the boat. "*Never get out of the boat*" screams Chef terrorized. The importance of this sentence is commented by Willard as he goes back to the documents on Kurtz after the frightening experience:

"Never get out of the boat. Absolutely goddamn right. Unless you were going all the way. Kurtz got off the boat. He split from the whole fucking program".

In other words, we are told that Willard is starting not only to be fascinated by Kurtz, but also that he is beginning to understand the nature of his "prayer".

Thus, Limbo is a place which gives the time and space to put all the pieces of the puzzle together – the Jungle here is not burning in the rage of war, but, still in its purity, we are reminded that our characters are in Hell and demons populate it. Alongside, William, starting to understand the meaning of his journey, is somehow allowed to continue upstream: he has left behind the Tree of Immortality, accepted the boat as the only way to survive and can begin confronting the reality of his condition in connection with the man named Kurtz.

2nd Circle: Lust – The USO Show.

The themes, presented both politically and symbolically in the Babylonian USO show, have been examined during the Colors, Music and War chapter. However, it is important to underline once more that it is Milius himself who explains how the Playmate girls are the Odysseys' Sirens and they will shortly reappear in the movie transformed into prostitutes.

The theme of broken hearts by the war in Vietnam, has often been recalled, as for example in the movie "*Platoon*" (57). Similarly in "*Apocalypse Now*", during the hidden "carnality" of the USO show, it is almost impossible not to remember that many of the soldiers had fiancées or wives back

home. Coppola does not explore the topic in detail, if not in the letter delivering scene later on, however we shall notice that the show's strongest social critical message, is the soldiers' loss of love's values.

3rd and 4th Circle: Gluttony , Greed, Prodigy – Abandoned camp and prostitution. The sampan.

Intimately connected to the previous scene, is the sequence in the abandoned station on the River. This moment, which was cut off in the 1977 version, seems to connect to Conrad's similar station. No clear authority is in this place, no soul seems to have a direction and all we witness is a lawless wasteland detached from reality. Just as in Dante's *Hell*, the soldiers are being swept by a tempestuous rain that leaves everything flooded and covered in mud. The Gluttony Circle in a way shows us the over-consumption and over-indulgence of the Western world that leaves an entire station to dwell powerless under the storm. Dorothy Sayers in her notes about this circle will write: *"the surrender to sin which began with mutual indulgence leads by an imperceptible degradation to solitary self-indulgence."*

Memories of the scene of the *Nabobs* come to mind, as a strong example of dichotomy. No food is being shown in this scene, probably because it is all stocked in the luxurious cottages back in America, Saigon and Nah Trang.

The desire for earthly pleasure in material forms is however shown, as Greed is symbolized in lust as the Playmate girls are irremediably transformed in objects of sexual satisfaction and trade. Their personality is obscured by the desire of the soldiers and the dead body appearing during this sequence shows us how Death's touch in this reality is always the warmer feeling one can truly expect.

One more scene can be inserted, although separated from the abandoned camp sequence. The deliberate and non-sense massacre of the family on the sampan. During a check of a passing by Vietnamese boat, a control that has no connection with Willard's mission but that Chef orders, the group ends up insanely killing all people onboard in a frantic, rapid and meaningless shooting. Also Chef's words, "never get out of the boat", can be recalled here as he refuses to go onboard the

sampan, probably feeling that “*something*” was about to happen. The “prodigal” soldiers summon and deliver a violence without meaning: the remorse, like Dante’s stones, strikes the group as soon as they realize their infamous and non-sense act that has all the “taste” of violence executed out of the slow degradation of sanity.

This scene closes the first part of the 2nd chapter. With its brutality, increasing to its maximum with the attack to the sampan boat, the souls of the soldiers of this journey are finally ready to enter the wildest part of their journey. From now on, we will witness them dying one by one, each with a significance in their death and funeral that loses contact with the ethically established world as the rules of the wilderness of the Jungle slowly take over.

5th Circle: Anger. The mash of Styx and the City of Dis – Do Lung Bridge.

Like the USO show scene before, the Do Lung scenario is introduced with hallucinatory effects. The boat is approaching through darkness, which here could symbolize the Fear of the Unknown and the unclear actions one must take. Do Lung is, in fact, a crucial moment in the movie: it is the point of no return, the last check point the men on board have before entering “Kurtz’s land”. Quoting Willard’s own words: “*Do Lung bridge was the last army outpost on the Nung River. Beyond it there was only Kurtz*”.

The duality between Democracy and Communism, the US Army and the enemy is finally put aside in favor of the central theme of warfare against an unexplored savage land. The places where they come from are all pinpointed on a map, the territory in front of them, passed the Do Lung Bridge, is out of the reachable boundaries of America and, therefore, of “Reason”. Moreover, by choosing the bridge as the location of utter anarchy, Coppola is probably also ironically giving us the contrast between his idea of warfare and the military cavalry fantasies of leadership and sacrifice shown in David Lean’s 1957, *The Bridge on the River Kwai*. (58).

The Do Lung Bridge appears under siege, with mortar fires being shot and fires burning all around it. Standing in its magnificent flames, one cannot but recall the walls of the City of Dis. Before it lies the Circle dedicated to the men who died guilty of Anger. Dante shows them drowning in the muddy waters of the Styx river. The same happens in the movie: as the boat approaches, we witness soldiers running up to the crew on the boat, jumping in the river and calling for help in a what Coppola calls “*a mad dash for freedom*”. The sky is lightened up by momentary sparks and flares, mortars being shot from the surrounding jungle. At the sound of rocket attacks and of shooting, on the river banks we see the parts of jeeps sticking out of the water and a smashed helicopter. The desperate soldiers are crying and swearing trying to reach the boat: one of them is even carrying some luggage and an M16 with him. All the pain and the insanity are well depicted in the one scream he shouts “*Take me home! Goddamn you!*” and as Virgil would, Chief replies: “*Get away from this boat*”.

We have reached the walls within which the Damned by their own choice are set. The first man the crew encounters is a messenger, it is the second apparition since the beginning of the movie. He too brings news and new details about the mission in the form of letters from afar. Before disappearing in the violent scenario, he welcomes them, as Dante’s Angelic messenger, to the most obscure part of the world. The worst nightmare in their lives is about to begin. Another aspect, which emphasizes this meaningful passage is the very little unclear speech depicting the fear of the crew. The only thing we learn is that Lance has just taken acid and from now on he will gradually loose contact with reality, reaching his primeval and savage condition once in Kurt’s temple.

Another important aspect is the fact that Willard did not find the CEO in this place, because Chaos has taken over, God is in no way near in sight and further on the situation would become even worse. Heresy, as in the 6th Circle, is in abandoning all connection with the divine world of Reason. As they enter the battle scene the psychedelic music begins and they are surrounded by screaming and the sound of gunfire. Willard and Lance, who is still heavily under the effect of acids, crawl through the trenches that truly appear like walls of an unnamed battlefield: it is interesting to notice how the enemy is never seen, just heard yelling at the G.I.s.

This reminds us of yet another connection and another meaningful message Coppola delivers to us by using Dante's City of Dis.(59). In the poet's work, the city is somehow depicted as Islamic, this to underline the warmongering between Christians and Muslim during medieval times. Similarly, the Vietcong act as "the" enemy above all. The rivalry between West and East is enhanced again, but with the changing of epochs, at the time of the Vietnam war, it has become the US against the threat of Communism. Seemingly, the same methods are applied here and the soldiers are mutated in crusaders for a Holy cause. However, Coppola does not want to show us the Vietnamese enemy but to put on the scene a Battle that bears a universal meaning. What we are witnessing could easily have been World War I, World War II or, given the cruelty and chaos, any war, indeed, any time. Back to the roots of mankind, the "Roach", a black soldier armed as a tribal warrior, shoots his grenade in the Darkness. Willard asks if he knows who is in command and, after answering "yeah", the Roach turns and walks away. Significantly, the meaning of this short scene could be that only one entity is in command, not himself, but a mixture of violence and instinctive murder beyond any control. The men, as in Dante's punishment for the Epicureans, lie in the trenches "burning" under enemy fire, waiting hopelessly for Death to take them.

The sequence ends as the PBR (60) leaves the bridge. Chief, worried and nervous, asks which the direction they should take. This is the type of questions Chief often asks, showing how even if he is in control of the boat, (or because he is in control), he fears this journey and understands how the risk could be mortal. Because of this, he cannot truly be regarded as a genuine Virgil, he rather seems more Dante's consciousness, scared of the horrors they may encounter. With the wise mind of a normal man, Chief even underlines a serious personal and political point:

"You're on your own, Captain. Still want to go on? Like this bridge. We build it every night, Charlie blows it right back up again, just so the generals can say the road's open. Think about it...who cares?"

But, as said before, there is no turning back at this point. Willard firmly orders to move along, showing once again his determination and his devotion to his mission. Sense of Duty and desire to

meet Kurtz, although as in “*Heart of Darkness*” the crew tries to put him off, are stronger than any destructive fear.

As a closing scenario, amid the fires and screams, the Do Lung Bridge is blown up confirming Chief’s words. The Do Lung Bridge is itself like the Stones rolled by the Damned in the Inferno: the eternal sentence mirrors the insane reconstruction of a bridge that stands without real purpose, if not the desire of the generals to continue the war. An Orwellian war that must under any circumstance be never ending, finding or inventing new enemies that fit the time being.

However, Willard is starting to understand how different his mission is. It is no longer the obscene command that was originally ordered to him, that of simply killing a man, an American, an officer. His new mission will be a “sacred” one and it is his desire to reach Kurtz, as in Conrad’s, as he becomes more and more interested in meeting him, that will eventually lead him to unveil this.

Do Lung symbolizes the reaching of a state of mature understanding, and of consciousness in the man who travels within the realms of the physical and psychological Unknown. The bridge must be destroyed: it is behind them now and no barrier or path has been set between it and their reaching point. As in shamanic rituals, the circle where the “*witch man*” stands in the middle is broken and the chosen one is welcomed to reach him inside it. To understand this from a mythological – archetypal point of view, we can take into consideration the difference between the communitarian experience of the primitive tribe during a sacred experience and the same sacred experience as it becomes a representation of itself in the Greek theatre. In the latter, the public is not part of the event, although its judgment is required, but on the contrary detached from the participation: the ritual is put on stage, separated from the public by the chorus which acts as a meta-communicative means to deliver the “sacred” message. Coppola operates an inverse procedure. We are, in the Redux version, exactly half way through the movie: the viewer is entirely engaged in the action and has been given sufficient clues and preparation before entering the darkest part of the world. Once again we are called to enter Willard’s mind, who is told the truth about his mission as the rest of the crew receives the letters from home. We are fully accustomed with Willard’s narrative voice and now totally ready to enter the

character itself. The playful personification in the main character, so important in movies, reaches a level that breaks through the famous 4th wall of theatre (61). A good example would be cartoons' heroes, who children often imitate and simulate in a process of playful learning (just as it happens with their parents).

In the case of "*Apocalypse Now*", the reason for the spectator absorbing concentration reaches a peak that implies a deeper significance. Coppola desires the viewer to truly enter not only Willard, but the symbol that Willard personifies: he is asking us not to witness the descend but to mentally participate in it in our minds. This is not only needed in order to truly understand this movie, but it is a necessity Coppola is asking for the necessary return and purification, for the redemption of each individual and of the scattered, brutalized society we live in, consumed by millennia of war and lies.

The Do lung River (62) is so important that it is quite a challenge to describe its allegorical power. It is the wall being broken and the consciousness being prepared to endure the journey. It stands for the acquisition, as an apprentice passing his initiation trial, of the rules and values of a new unexplored world: it is a land within us that, for our own nature, we should know well but which we have forgotten, neglected, denied or refused, and/or for fear, demonized and exiled.

7th Circle: Violence – the letters and the boat attack.

Exiting the battle area of Do Lung, a sort of peaceful serenity takes over the scene as the members of the crew open the letters and parcels received. Home and its distance are underlined with a subtle line of irony. Lance tells us how Vietnam is better than Disney Land (indeed remarking his loss of contact with reality and perhaps the merchandise side of Vietnam), Chef jokes about his girlfriend back in New Orleans and Mr. Clean finds letters and a cassette from his family. Willard, instead, receives a letter where he is informed that somebody, who had his same mission, had been sent to Kurtz before him, but this soldier, Capt. Coby, presumably joined Kurtz. Coby is maybe the exemplifying character of this sequence, as he has denied (we read in his letter to his family) all that home means: house, car, kids – all of this he has refused and abandoned.

Notable in this sequence is the mentioning of Charles Milles Manson and his slaughter of the Tate and LaBianca families (40): “*Charles Miller Manson ordered the slaughter of all in the home anyway, as a symbol of protest*”, read out loud Chef. The newspaper article piece has the precise intention of telling us how the nightmare that was expanding in American culture was getting darker and insane even back at home. Manson’s *Helter Skelter* (63), the apocalyptic war he believed would arise from tension over racial relations between the black and the white, perfectly fits the Vietnam scenario. This news fragment is also important because it is the only precise reference of time setting we can find in the movie. Charles Manson’s mass murders occurred, in fact, during 1969.

During the moment following the news extract about Manson’ murders it is Lance’s turn to call in another icon of the 60s: Jimi Hendrix. The song “*Purple Haze*”(64), that Lance mentions as a purple gas smoke bomb blows up, is indicative of both his state of mind and again of the developing of the western music culture. Quoting Harry Shapiro (65), this is “*an archetypical psychedelic drug songs of the sixties*”, where love and drug addiction are mixed in a magic connection.

The scene is then covered in purple smoke and the immature game of Lance attracts the attention of the Vietcong who start shooting at them in a frantic, sudden attack. Mr. Clean is killed and his mother’s tape keeps playing as everyone is a state of shock (except Lance who is worried only about his puppy dog which has disappeared).

This striking scene is so distant from the universal disgrace of Do Lung, in its melancholic homesickness and in Clean’s death, that we are brought again to share intimately the feelings of the boat crew, that has now lost his youngest member. Clean’s cassette is a remarkable integration to the movie: Coppola is portraying here the middle class Afro–American family. The attack on the boat intermittently allows us to hear the voice of Clean’s mother until it fades away after he is shot and the crew acknowledges his death. Her words for the teenager are of love and devotion, sharing with us the family values and her broken dream of seeing her son coming back alive from the war. The cassette stands in strong contrast against Colby’s previous brutal divorce letter to his wife, showing us how many different shades of reality were also experienced by the families at home.

Unlike Conrad, whose home country violence is concentrated on the single person of Kurtz, Coppola desires to depict the domestic casualties in the US and in Vietnam by employing the widest possible array of people and culture which allows us to note the racial differences and tensions that Coppola underlines. In Conrad, whose focus is on the human side of the “savage” black people, we find a deep irony towards the pre-conceived ideas of the society of his time, reversing the commonly attributed values of civilization against savagery. This theme is further developed in “Apocalypse Now” in two ways : within the American army the differences between the black people and the white are underlined and even Willard’s behavior towards Clean and Chief might at times be considered as racist. One clear example is when he refers to Clean’s hometown as “South Bronx shithole” or when some tension arises because of the kid’s constant drumming and a reference to African people’s musical and rhythmic spirit is made. When Willard points this out harshly, Clean makes a silent rude gestures behind his back.

We cannot go without mentioning the fact also that as Chief is dying, he tries to kill Willard too. Not by chance the two black soldiers are the first ones to die: this is quite a way to sublimate the slogan-line from the musical film “Hair” “*The draft is white people sending black people to fight yellow people to protect the country they stole from the red people*” (66) . Themes regarding the racial segregation linking, for example, to the “Black Freedom Movement”, (67), could not be left aside in Coppola’s listing of human horrors. Furthermore, the duality of racism within the Army is then obviously extended to the Vietcong. One example is when Clean claims they should have given a medal to that soldier who killed a South Vietnamese officer for stealing a Playboy magazine. Racism towards Vietnamese, and Asian people, in general, has been for a long time, probably ever since, Pearl Harbor, almost a value that was promoted and dramatically meant to underline the moral and racial superiority of the Americans upon the undeveloped Asian countries.

Visually this scene is connected with Dante’s vision of the 7th Circle, that of the Violent. The Circle is divided into three parts, but what we are interested in is the similarity with the punishment of the murderers and the suicidal. The Circle is surrounded by the river Phlegethon, which in Greek

mythology is the river-god that streams through the Erebus burning in flames. It is also the lover of the goddess Styx which Hades has united. In Dante, Centaurs shoot in the bloody waters at the damned that try to escape. The second part of the Circle is immersed in a forest, where the suicidal are instead ripped apart by the Harpies. The mythological creatures are here transformed into the Vietcong that, hiding in the Jungle, attack, invisible, the PBR. The place where the violent and the suicidal are damned is the place where we witness the first death: on board PBR. The violent, who have passed the City of Dis, are, in other words, suicidal martyrs of a war and of a mission which do not belong to them.

Willard has to carry the burden, the sense of guilt, of the death of others; now the soldiers on the boat are no longer just characters, but they have truly become symbols evoking all the memories and different stories of all the dead at war.

Willard's Tiresias (68), whose spirit Ulysses summons by the Phlegethon, is not mentioned, but the divinatory powers are simulated in the overwhelming feeling of death which we perceive is about to hit one by one all the members of the crew. In fact, with Clean's death in mind, we exit into the 8th Circle. The passage between the two scenarios is underlined by blue deadly lights, white ghastly mist, and a music which creates a hunting atmosphere as we see a plane crashed into the river: not even the deadliest flying American weapons, not even napalm, can reach so far in this world.

Out of this visionary parenthesis, we encounter the French Colonial Settlement.

8th Circle: Maleboge – Part 1. First funeral, the French and Roxanne.

In an additional disorienting, almost narcotic, 20-minute segment of the Redux version, the boat comes upon the battered and devastated French Colonial Settlement - it emerges from the smoke on the river bank almost as if from a time warp. Their presence introduces and a new developing theme in the journey. Willard's mission seems in fact to parallel Vietnam's own historical background - from the American outpost, to the French settlement, and, finally, to the natives themselves. The mood is

erie and tense as the patrol boat pulls up to a broken-down wharf. Shortly after disembarking, the blowing smoke slowly dissipates and reveals that they are confronted by a gun-toting squadron of Frenchmen and Cambodians loyal to them. All these soldiers, still because of the time warp effect, seem to be ghosts from another epoch. Their uniforms recall the colonial conquests before, during the World Wars and during the Indo-Chinese Conflict. The French planter Hubert De Marias, Christian Marquand (69), a man that shows "*dignity and strength*", welcomes the PBR crew after learning that they have lost one of their men and underlines that they, the French, always pay respect to the dead of their allies. He explains that generations of his family have been at the plantation site in Cambodia for 70 years. He also asserts: "*And it will be such until we are all dead.*"

The statement clearly embodied with macabre tones. In a way, this French family is, on the one hand just waiting for death to come, holding on to their hopes and traditions, but, on the other hand we could say that, as if in a time warp, they are already dead, waiting just to be forgotten. The political meaning and social message will be developed further in the Dinner Scene.

The first funeral scene for one of the boat's members is held. In a military ceremony accompanied by the French and the Cambodian militia, and within view of the two-story plantation partially hidden by the jungle, Clean is given a respectful burial to the sound of a mourning bugle. We must notice that this funeral will stride significantly with Chief's. The first is a solemn ceremony and his body is buried in the ground, according to the American/Western customs. The burial within the womb of Mother Earth is the re-unification with the land, a type of burial used by societies based on settlements. Coppola hints at ancient origin as. although set in a cemetery, this same cemetery is the jungle and Clean's burial gown, with no coffin, resembles mummifying customs. In Chiefs case we will see instead that the funeral is connected to the water and therefore to a different type of settlement ideology.

Clean's body is momentarily draped with a tattered American flag. before his canvas-wrapped corpse is lowered into the ground, along with his tape player. The body, in other words, strongly characterizes the tragedy of young Americans at war and all their pain far from their families. It also

underlines a world, that of the US, that is witnessing mournfully the disintegration of its values, pride and moral because of this war and of the Elite's political expansionistic strategies. This latter aspect, is what Chief seems to want to emphasize, again speaking for his black middle-class people. He hands the tattered flag over to Willard, who from his point of view is the white-man official, sent by other white men, that is dragging them all, against their will, into a nightmare which is not their own. "Captain," he says with a tone of military and human sorrow "*accept the flag of Tyrone Miller, on behalf of a grateful nation*".

The French

During the funeral scene, Willard also notices for the first time a white woman figure that is looking at them from the balcony of the plantation house hidden partially by the jungle. We will meet this same figure afterwards, as the crew are invited to an extravagant French, white-tablecloth, (with napkins, crystal glasses, wine and sauces), dinner with the extended family of the patriarch/planter - four generations of the plantation-owning family clinging to their past. The waiters are Vietnamese servants and the cook, Vietnamese too, surprises even Chef with his talent (yet another hint at the racist ideas of Americans towards the Vietnamese people's intelligence). The scene is, at the same time, both dreamy and morbid, striking in its setting if compared to the attack witnessed just a few minutes earlier. The choice of light, orange at sunset, enhances this effect giving the photography an unreal, or surreal, nuance.

Two of the planter family's youngest members, Gilles and Francis (Coppola's own sons Gian-Carlo and Roman) recite Baudelaire in French at the dinner table, as De Marias later explains: "*It's a very cruel poem for children. But they need it, 'cause life sometimes is very cruel*", hinting clearly at the cruelty of warfare. The poem that is recited is "*The Albatross*": within the collection of the "*Les Fluers du Mal*"(70) ∴ the poet (or any artist) is similar in his art to the bird whose majestic wings wide open, enable him to fly high in the sky of his intellectual qualities and his imagination, but that, once he touches the ground of real life, he feels lost and becomes an awkward victim of people's

incapacity to understand him just like the Albatross's large wings that represent for the bird an impediment when on the ground. The poem's topic of the cruelty of men towards artistic spirits, is extended by De Marias to a universal paradigm to life in general.

Furthermore, the reference to Coleridge's *Rime of an Ancient Mariner* (71), crime against God and Nature, is immediate. Themes of perdition and damnation, hence Kurtz's memories too mirror the tale of the cursed sailor in Coleridge. The quoted translated lines are:

That winged voyager, how weak and gauche he is,

So beautiful before, now comic and ugly!

— William Aggeler, *The Flowers of Evil* (Fresno, CA: Academy Library Guild, (1954).

As the children leave, the dinner scene begins. At Willard's questions to why they do not return to France, as the danger is evident where they are, the planter irritated vows to stay in Cambodia forever. This is his family's home land, he bangs the table and argues. The topic that unfolds here has a deep connection with the American situation and post war "Hawk" political propaganda. The point is introduced by De Marias' political position and his "French officer mentality", a mentality extended to his family. Even if his country had a long colonial history of losses there and worldwide, he quotes WWII, Algeria and Indochina, he then firmly states: "*But here, we don't lose. This piece of earth, we keep it. We will never lose it, never!*". Dien Bien Phu (72), cited also in *Dispatches*, is taken as the primary example. It mirrors the American Khe Sahn Battle (73) and the politics of France and the US back at home, during the period of these dramatic sieges. on both occasions, the soldiers felt betrayed and sacrificed by both the Elite in command and the "traitors", who were the Communists or the peace movement supporters. The political agenda of the Conservative bellicose parties in America could in no way tolerate the shadow of the defeat and, very similarly to the German Nazi's way of conducting war, they adopted the no-retreat policy – no matter what. However, when it

became obvious the war was lost, and in the following decades, these same politicians could not in any way admit a defeat, which was on some occasion publically denied, or stand the memory of Vietnam and its legacy. A legacy which would have tied the US's armies hands and prevented any further war engagement and international territorial/economical control expansion. Therefore, and Coppola refers to this by letting De Marias speak about the French defeat, the Republican party in particular moved to a propaganda aimed at promoting the power of America by praising the fallen soldiers and by claiming the war could have been won but it was the policy at home and the Communist traitors of the nation who gave the victory away.

Soon, there is further disagreement over the purpose of the present war and the American involvement in Indochina. We are also given in the movie the historical details usually not mentioned very often at all: indeed in 1945, after the Japanese War, "*The Vietcong were invented by the Americans*" as one of Roosevelt's agendas was to push the French out of Indochina. Once the Americans had taken the place of the French, they were forced then to fight the Viet-Minh (74) they had "created". The French planter (and his uncle) to foretell the American fate in the war effort: "*And what can you do? Nothing. Absolutely nothing. The Vietnamese are very intelligent. You never know what they think*". In the part where Philippe breaks an egg, symbol here of the birth of a new World, and separates the white and the yolk, we are once again told how any dream of freedom and economic expansion in this country is a total lie and will never happen. The ethnic, social and political identities will never find a collaborative solution.

During the heated debate, one last interesting political issue is examined. That of the Domino Effect Theory, which warned of the danger that Communist territories would extend their powers to neighboring countries "infecting them" with their ideology first and, invading them after,. Coppola turns the theory around as we hear from one of the young French men at the table: "*When I was in Saigon, I spoke to an American politician, and he explained it very well. He said, "Look, Yesterday it was Korea, today Vietnam, tomorrow Thailand, the Philippines, then maybe Europe."*

The planter concludes the conversation by recounting why they are dedicated to remain there, while the Americans are not and have no chance of winning this war: “...*the Vietnamese, we worked with them, to make something - something out of nothing...We want to stay here because it's ours - it belongs to us. It keeps our family together. (Ironically, almost everyone has left the table by this time). I mean, we fought for that. While you Americans, you are fighting for the biggest nothing in history*”.

The dinner scene ends as the golden-hued sunlight fades and darkness falls over the room.

The political layer is extremely dense in this part and it remains central for the understanding of Coppola's poetics. As mentioned earlier, his Vietnam is an allegory of all wars and the French-Indochina conflict is just the perfect example to prove to the public how every and any war is the same. The horror in this truth, furthermore, it lies in its perpetual renewal of ideologies meant to send men to die for the one archetypal and primitive idea mankind has of conquering the world by any available means. This theme will be taken into consideration in depth during the conclusive chapter of my thesis, as it is strictly connected to the conflictual Duality of Reason and Animal Instinct in human behavior.

Roxanne

This extremely long political digression, however it can be linked to the myths of pantheons at war, does not seem to connect to any of Dante's images of the Maleboge in particular. The one main character that can be linked to the 8th Circle is Roxanne. She is the woman dressed in white whom Willard noticed during Clean's funeral and that remained almost silent at the table until the end of the dinner scene. A line of hers worth mentioning is, as the dinner begins with an embarrassing silence, “*an Angel is passing by*”, a typical French saying. However it denotes her attachment to homeland and desire to fake a normal life condition in the surreal colonial plantation where she has lost her husband. In any case, she, as the other French, feels that this is her home and her place.

Daylight fades gradually into dusk, exiting the dreamy aura that has enveloped everything in the room until now, as we are further introduced to the beautiful, chiffon-wearing and delicate-faced French widow, Madame Roxanne Sarrault (Aurore Clement). She has been making eye contact with Willard during the entire dinner conversation, she looks *"tired of the war."* She recollects: *" 'Twas the same in the eyes of the soldiers of our war. We called them 'Les Soldats Perdus' - The Lost Soldiers."* She invites, and convinces. Willard to share a cognac, to drink rather than attend to the boat and his men: *"The war will be still here tomorrow,"* she reminds him. A line in opposition with Kilgore's mentality. The Colonel is fighting for a war *"that one day is going to end"*, while she, on the contrary, is a detached figure, part of the time warp who is living through a conflict which is no longer meaningful to her or her family. She asks Willard if he will return to America. As he answers he will not, she sees in him the similarity between him and her family condition. We were already told by Willard that he had already been back from Vietnam but that there was no "home" anymore. As that statement is linked more with the socio-political aspect of the soldiers' life returning home, this scene goes on further connecting an introspective analyzes of Willard's personal situation. Again the difference with Kilgore's desire to return, possibly to a family, shows us that Willard is not simply Ulysses returning from Troy dreaming of his homeland. Rather, he seems to link to Dante's Ulysses: the hero who, returned to Ithaca, that sailed off again towards the Columns of Hercules, towards the end of the World. Odysseys' character reappears in Milius' screenplay and the connection with this second journey has definitely more analogies to the movie. Roxanne is one of the characters summoned too. Like Circe, she keeps Willard from staying with his men repairing the boat and leads him to her bed.

In this scene, her character unfolds to the symbolic figure of the Seductress in many ways. She prepares an opium pipe, as she used to do to heal her husband's pain from the wounds of the battle: it is the one only time, we see Willard preferring drugs to alcohol. Possibly the reason for this is the final necessity to exit the crude reality he has been sailing through so far, but it could also be linked to Indian/Asian "holy smoke" rituals. The aboriginal wooden pipe used suggests this also. The

smoking of opium was regarded as a way to bless a visitor or, in particular festivities connected with rites of purification, a way to connect to the gods of death in the land of dreams. Roxanne, by handing the pipe to Willard, simulates this welcoming and prepares him for purification. Her prophetic-magic wisdom, almost shamanic in a way, which furthermore connects to Circe's figure, emerges totally when she says to Willard: "*There are two of you, don't you see? One that kills and one that loves.*" These same words she used to say to her husband and he would answer he no longer knew if he was "*an animal or a god*". However, to Roxanne's eyes, Willard is both. He embodies both images, a dualistic aspect of men's understanding reality. The animal and the divine, again, the instinct that "Kills" and the Reason that "Loves". These two entities of the soul are here mixed and shuffled, as the animal world within the Jungle is in its original place and the Reason of, for example, the American war method is the killing and inhuman factor. Therefore, we must not be confused: the Reason Roxanne is talking about is the illuminated higher understanding of Man's consciousness, whilst the Instinct is the predatory – natural way of life on Earth. In Willard, she tells us, she sees both: in a way, she is predicting his re-union with the symbol Kurtz represents and the Redemption he will find.

"All that matters is that you are alive. You are alive, Captain. That's the truth". Summarizing the deeper meaning of this Redemption and its enveloping of the contra-posed dualities, Roxanne reveals the one single Truth about life to the Captain: these opposite polarities will no longer be separated. She foresees Willard's spirit awakening and his purification in the encounter with Kurtz.

In an ethereal and tender seduction scene, she strips naked and gracefully unties the gauzy curtains that drape down from the canopy over the four sides of the bed. Roxanne, finally embodying the sensual female image of a Lilith-Eve, closes the scene. Her pale image could be compared to and, at the same time, be the opposite of Kurt's black dressed widow we see in Conrad's novel: the former brings a flicker of light and dream in the Darkness, the latter carries a profound symbol of Death in her dark-ghastly representation. Both widows' carry within the Horror of the shattered dreams we

will soon encounter with Kurtz: one is a benign divinity of Life while the “spirit”, whose name we are never told, summoned by Conrad is rather the last of the three Parcae, the one that ends life.

As Willard reaches up to caress her face through the semi-transparent mosquito netting Roxanne’s image fades in the curtains that appear as a pure burial gown. The chapter closes dissolving as she repeats *"There are two of you. Don't you see? One that kills and one that loves"*. A white smoke again is what the boat exits from, as the “time-portal” opens to yet another dimension.

8th Circle: Maleboge – Part 2. Attack in the misty Jungle, Second funeral and the Lands before Kurtz.

The inland of Vietnam: the world and the Jungle as they looked before the white men arrived. The boat is lost in the mist, no reference point can be seen, however Willard wants to proceed as he feels Kurtz is *“close, real close. I couldn't see him yet, but I could feel him, as if the boat were being sucked upriver and the water was flowing back into the jungle. Whatever was going to happen, it wasn't gonna be the way they call it back in Nha Trang”*.

As the fog opens, showing dead bodies and horned totems, the crew is suddenly attacked. Contrary to the shooting in the previous ambush, this time we see primitive arrows and spears flying against them from native tribesmen, presumably some of Kurtz' Montagnards warriors.⁽⁷⁵⁾

This part also requires a brief additional historical comment. The Montagnards, often mentioned in this movie, in Herr's *Dispatches*, and in many other stories about Vietnam, are a very important aspect of the entire anthropological issue about the country. Originally, and this is obviously significant in the following scenes, the *Montagnards* (a name given by the French colonists), were tribes of aboriginal people, living in the Jungle and following a form of animistic-pagan religion: a mixture of Hinduism and Buddhism, which collocated them, in the pre-French occupation, as a separate group of clans considered ethnically different and somehow racially discriminated. These differences between them and the Buddhist/Islamic cultures present in Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam became even more underlined as the Montagnards were the first to be converted to Christianity. This

latter point is central and underlined by the presence of churches being built in both “*Apocalypse Now*” and other Vietnam War movies, for example in “*Platoon*”. The Christian faith was, and still is nowadays, heavily persecuted by the Communist Parties and the situation of the Montagnards worsened when they became the first to join the US army as regulars. They were considered traitors, first religiously and then morally, for having joined with the French and the Americans. They have been victims of several massacres during the past decades – to the point that some local institutions still claim the recognition of this ethnic genocide. Therefore, Coppola’s choice to clearly refer to them as *the Montagnards* in the movie, possibly under a suggestion by Herr’s personal experience in Vietnam, is to be considered as a way to recall also the victims within the country’s troubled situation. Moreover, as this ethnic group seems to have gone back to their primitive origins, the director seems to be hinting again at the infamous role of religion’s elite in the political agenda. It might also be a way to underline the necessity of the native people to return to a pure and true form of religion and belief.

Returning to the ambush attack scene, we witness Chief’s death, who is killed by the only spear among all the toy arrows shot at the crew. Impaled at the back, with his last bit of strength, Chief struggles to pull Willard onto the same spear sticking out of his chest. The hatred born out of desperation bursts in his final gesture. The racist division that has grown wider and wider culminates in his attempt to kill Willard, hence to destroy what for him was the elite that had sent him to die without knowing the reason why or the destination of his last mission. Chief’s death parallels Clean’s, however the death by a spear tells us how deep into the wilderness the crew had arrived. Purple smoke again emerges to envelope the boat as the scene drifts to the second funeral. In the first case, it recalled the insanity, the *Purple Haze*, while here it refers to the original primitive sacredness of this color.(76). As the killing, so the ceremony differs: as mentioned above, Clean was buried under the ground with what somehow resembled a military regular funeral, on the contrary, Chief is abandoned to the stream of the waters. Lance, at this stage completely “*far out*” in his detached mind, holds the ceremony. While Chef and Willard do not seem to be paying attention, Lance paints

camouflage on Chief's forehead, kisses him and drags the body and himself through the water. With a sacred gesture of cuddling the dead body, he then finally lets hold of him and we see the face of Chief slowly disappearing under the water. Lance's final blessing to the body and, touching movements resemble a priest's or even a father's gesture, as he lets the body go deep into the stream, orange at sunset. The shifting of moral values has in this scene the importance of telling us, just like in Conrad's novel, that the crew has finally abandoned any connection with the civilized world.

As a matter of fact, from the Montagnards' ambush until the funeral scene, the sequence mirrors the attack of the natives on the steamboat and the gesture of Marlow in throwing the dead body of his black pilot, who also was killed by a spear, into the river as narrated in "*Heart of Darkness*", and Marlow tells us how the pilgrims in the crew found the gesture repulsive and inhuman, as if any moral value was being abandoned with the dropping of the the body into the waters. However, we are told that Marlow highly respected his pilot and that he found that that was the only way to give burial to his man in a respectful way in a place such as the deep Jungle where they had arrived. Death symbolizes primitive rituals, as the River incarnates the gods of nature, the path to the afterlife and the gateway to rebirth.

Willard finally reveals his real mission to an outraged Chef: he is shocked by Chief's death and cannot believe their mission is actually to kill an American Colonel. However, all he wants is to get to the end of this story, end the mission and return, but only if on board the PBR ("never get out of the boat" has definitely become the motto).

The 2nd chapter ends with Willard telling us about his fears as he gets closer to his destination. The scenery is bathed in bright flaming red and golden hues: "*Part of me was afraid of what I would find and what I would do when I got there. I knew the risks, or imagined I knew. But the thing I felt the most, much stronger than fear, was the desire to confront him.*" Willard rips up his dossier materials and throws them into the river to clearly tell us that all he has learnt so far about Kurtz will be meaningless anyway, as if he was to encounter a different man.

The scenario in which they sail is filled with symbolic elements. At the sound of a haunting music mixing psychedelic environment and tribal drums, we are shown in the following order:

1. A burning wooden hut: it is the last house we see in the movie, meant to tell us that no trace of civilization is admitted further from this point.
2. Candles and Crosses: in the script Milius describes the boat as passing by impaled men, however what Coppola puts on screen is evidently crosses. They are surrounded by flickering candles, to testify the arrival in Death's kingdom. In the mist of the night, they seem to appear as if out of a nightmare. The cross is evidently a Christian symbol, however in the primitive or pagan cultures it had already existed as a way of identifying the holiness of a place and its connection with death.
3. Skulls and horns: the crosses fade away as morning approaches. Dozens of skulls, recalling the violence and primeval cults of death, fill the shore. The mystical meaning of these skulls is clear as they are accompanied by poles with bull horns which will be linked to the water buffalo sacrifice in the last chapter. It is important to notice at this stage that even if the horror and fear of these scenes on screen were meant to show the emotions of the crew, skulls, bull horns, and the bull itself, in ancient cults had a much more vital significance referring to power, divine control over Nature and the circle of life. Only later, during the Christian's demonizing propaganda of pagan rituals, had the horns become a symbol of the devil. We must therefore not confuse these horns with the hellish image one could at first have. Surely the link with Dante's Inferno was intended, as next we enter Kurtz's final Circle.. To rise on poles bull's horns, from the Roman to the Hindu, from the Jewish to the Chinese religion, meant to stand in victory against the forces of Death and destruction. So what Willard and the surviving crew witness, are the glorious symbols of tribes that praise the sacredness of their dead and rise the power of their spirits to the sky either awaiting for reincarnation or casting away the evil from the land.
4. The two headed god: as Lance is practicing moves of tai-chi , as Willard did in the opening scene, the boat enters a canyon and the sun casts a red and gloomy light over the whole scene which

fades into the image of the two headed sculpture of a god, the same that had appeared at the beginning with one face only showing, and which slowly reappears in its tremendous evocative meaning. The boat sails up the river which is streaming between the two walls of the canyon, covered by the forest.. The symmetry is then reinforced as the two faces of the god, looking in opposite directions, appear on the two sides of the canyon so that it seems that the boat is entering the realm of this divinity which casts its power of control and judgment over the land ahead: the temple of Kurtz. This two headed sculpture, part of the gigantic setting created for the movie, is described in the script as “*Great enigmatic Cambodian faces carved out of stone from thousands of years ago*”. In other words, Coppola is telling us that these are not Buddha’s representations, but rather true pagan divinities. The two faces clearly refer to the constant presence of dualities during the movie and, in this particular scene, to the imminent confrontation between Willard and Kurtz. The opposite directions in which the faces are looking could therefore symbolize a destiny not written yet, as a battle between the forces of Light and Darkness is about to begin. Indeed, the final part of the journey of the gods and messiahs in pre-Christian cultures was the battle to maintain the control of Good over Evil, so the scene fits perfectly to close the chapter of the descending into the lowest Circles of Hell and the deepest part of human consciousness.

The descending journey ends here, as in the next chapter Willard will reach his destination and the objective of all the clues he has so far been the recipient of will be revealed. In this long chapter, the movie has touched, in an increasing downward spiral of evil and terror, most of the dark topics of the Vietnam war and of all wars. Both from a political, moral and psychological point of view, each scene develops its own theme representing, by means of the grotesque and the surreal, aspects of the conflicts that have been haunting mankind since its origins. The sailing upstream of the river has brought us back in time to a land where civilization and God as our western culture knows it, do not exist. The final layer can be revealed to the viewer now that he has truly entered Willard’s psyche. As the scene Merges with the next chapter, we see the Captain

appearing, binoculars in hand, between the two heads of the divinity. The journey is not through the reality outside and its destination cannot be seen in front us, but deep down in the microcosm within us.

Chapter 3. Reaching the Heart.

The final part of *“Apocalypse Now”* opens with a striking yet silent sequence: the PBR is moving slowly, approaching a wall of canoes with on board hundreds of natives painted in white. They look savage and primitive, they incarnate something Milius refers to as *“purity”*. All along the banks of the river are other Montagnards, dressed with feathers and tribal ornaments, some of them holding spears, others rifles. With a sense of *“inevitability”*, the canoes move to the side allowing the crew to pass through. An enormous temple with a village and an military encampment reveals itself to the crew: *“It is a strange combination of the very modern and very primitive”*, tells us Milius. A staircase to the citadel acts as an harbor, where dozens of guerrillas stand pointing their weapons at the boat. Hanging bodies and traces of recent battle decorate the scenario of the Angkor Wat (77) styled ruins of this lost civilization. This scene and what follows is entirely taken from Conrad’s novel, with the native appearing through the bushes of the forest and the trade station-temple of Kurtz in the background in the opening of the forest. The majesty of the images is dramatic and in the eyes of the crew the amazement and fear is tangible.

We could compare the line of white ash-covered natives as the guardian demons of Hell’s deepest region, the Giudecca, where Dante encounters Lucifer. However, these ultimate steps away from Kurtz are described as having something pure, as if the entire interpretation was suddenly turned upside down. The question is, therefore, if this is Hade’s kingdom or the shrine of mankind’s original Nature. The two interpretations combine in Coppola’s representation of this mystical and savage land, a place where dead bodies hang on trees and peaceful families with children are shown to co-exist as if there was nothing more natural and obvious to the human primitives.

A realm of different rules, of forgotten customs and of values thousands of miles and centuries afar from our world is presented to us. We can relate to this scenario only by means of our imagination. This is the point that Coppola is underlining: we are no longer in a real place, we are shown an imaginary world completely disconnected from the Vietnam War. It is a place that does not exist in

history books and that lives only in the mind and experiences of the characters of the movie and, by reflection, in the emotions and interpretations of the viewers.

The first character we encounter in the compound is also taken from “*Heart of Darkness*”. In the novel, he is referred to as an adventurer that has been living with Kurtz for a long while. His clothes, described as similar to those of an *Harlequin*, (78) , match his insanity: after such a prolonged contact with Kurtz in the darkest jungle, he has gone mad. The same applies to the unnamed Photo-journalist (Dennis Hooper) in “*Apocalypse Now*”. He is wearing ragged clothes and has three cameras on him, has long hair and an unshaved beard and he is hyperactive, fast-talking and clearly spaced-out. Just as in Conrad’s, he tells the crew to blow the siren on the PBR and at once all the natives, scared, run away in all directions as the boat and its sound must have seemed to them like a frightening metallic monster.

We learn from him that he is a freelance, American war journalist who has been in the temple village for a long time. The babbling, deranged combat photographer, garlanded by his camera equipment, hopes for their sake, that they have not come to take “*him*” - Colonel Kurtz away. He describes the great awe all the natives have for their jungle lord: “*Out here, we're all his children.*” The photojournalist appears to be a fanatical follower of Kurtz. He worships the enigmatic, genius “*poet-warrior*” Kurtz as a personal god and clarifies Kurtz's cause. It is interesting to quote the entire line that the Photo-journalist bursts out with, as it features some particular themes of the movie:

“Hey, man, you don't talk to the Colonel. Well, you listen to him. The man's enlarged my mind. He's a poet-warrior in a classic sense”.

What exactly is a “*poet-warrior*” and why we do not talk but rather listen to him? Combining two such opposite images of poetry and war in Kurtz, Milius leads us to wonder in which way the character of Kurtz is described. First of all it is interesting to notice, that we are not confronted with

a Warrior that writes poetry, but rather the opposite. In the “classical sense” the reference could once again be to Homer’s figure of a poet that tells us about battlefields and heroes, reaching out to the community with aesthetic and moral values. We are told in Conrad’s novel that Kurtz is a “genius” above any limitation, so this characterization could be inserted in the highly inspired spirit of the Colonel. He is, in fact, not merely a man of war, but a *leader and father* to the people of the village. Moreover, he is the inspiring and living voice of the Jungle incarnated in a god, therefore not someone *you can speak to*, but that *you can only listen to* in a sort of ecstatic trance.

“I mean, sometimes he'll-well, you say hello to him, right? And he'll just walk right by you and he won't even notice you. And then suddenly he'll grab you and he'll throw you in a corner and he'll say "Do you know that the 'if' is the middle word in 'life'?"”

The quote seems to be an original invention by Milius, although it could be a line he picked up too.

It is a phrase that perfectly fits with the Colonel. An aphorism that introduces us to his way of thinking about life. It shows the moral responsibility Kurtz feels upon himself, as actions have consequences on every choice in one’s existence. *Life*, even as a simple word, could not exist without the *If*. This choices are personal and, as we will hear more than once in the movie, he cannot be judged for them as they are intimately part of himself. This is further developed in the following part:

“If you can keep your head when all about you are losing theirs and blaming it on you. If you can trust yourself when all men doubt you.” These are the first lines of the poem “*If...*” by Rudyard Kipling, which was written in 1895 (79).

“I'm a little man, I'm a little man. He's a great man. "I should have been a pair of ragged claws scuttling across floors of silent seas”. The quote is taken from T.S. Eliot's “*The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock.*” (80). The quotation from Eliot will be further explored when we are presented with the figure of Kurtz. It is however necessary to underline the connection with the above mentioned poet-

warrior and the examination of the tortured psyche of the prototypical modern man—overeducated, eloquent, neurotic, and emotionally stilted. The epigraph to this poem, from Dante's *Inferno*, (81), describes Prufrock's ideal listener: one who has lost himself, as the speaker has, and will never betray to the world the content of Prufrock's present confessions.

"I mean...He can be terrible and he can be mean and he can be right. He's fighting the war. He's a great man". In other words, to the Photo-journalist, no one can be compared to the greatness of Kurtz as he stands above any average man and fights his own personal war in a world without boundaries. He, then, offers first-hand advice from his own experience: *"So, you just lay it cool, lay cool, laid back, dig it. You don't judge the Colonel."* This is the first time we hear the clear mentioning of the impossibility to judge Kurtz, not because of his powers, but because of his humanity. It is because of the importance of these values and the wisdom the Photo-journalist sees in Kurtz that he will be the first one to ask Willard to return and tell the truth about what he has seen in the temple.

After firmly denying the insanity of the Colonel, the Photo-journalist will re-appear only later, quoting Eliot again *"not with a bang, but a whimper"*, (82) and, then, just like the Harlequin character of Conrad, he suddenly disappears. The symbols demonstrating the importance and the necessity of this character can be traced in Conrad's referring to him as an Harlequin. This mask, so typical at Carnivals and assimilated to the Joker or the entertainer of royal medieval feasts, has ancient origins that date back to shamanic traditions. The Harlequin, in fact, finds its roots in one of the many representations of the Devil: the insanity is reflected in the many colors of his dress and the mask itself is often linked to Dionysius festivities and satyr rituals. The Photo-journalist is the man who has reached the core of his essence but is drawn to madness by the enlightened revelations about his evil hidden nature, a fact he can no longer hide and no longer deny to himself : he can only admit *"I'm a little man"*.

Willard notices Captain Richard Colby (Scott Glenn) holding his weapon with a bloody hand among the native tribesmen, surrounded by children and women holding on to him. It is confirmed, then, that he has “betrayed” his mission and joined Kurtz as this different world has become his new home. Colby’s character stands for the shifting of American people and soldiers from obedient followers of orders to rebels against a system that they feel does no longer represent them. He has become a guerrillero among the enemy, proudly wearing his tribal symbols made of feathers and camouflage body painting. He is also the image, the reflected representation, of what presumably Willard would have become if he had remained with Kurtz instead of returning back. In other words, he is the pure representation of Willard’s natural-self that still has to come to the surface.

The first of the two last sequences is taken from “*Heart of Darkness*”. In the novel, the station is surrounded by poles with decapitated heads on them. These slaughtered men were presumably punished for betrayal and Kurtz keeps them as a warning to testify his powers over Life and Death, thus telling us how close to the divine he has arrived and how his overwhelming powers are the direct cause of his insanity: he has gone beyond his human limits but man cannot detain the position of God, as his spirit and mind is too weak to keep His greatness.

In the movie, leading Willard and Chief on a short tour of the island, the Photo-journalist also describes the compound, cluttered with butchered bodies and decapitated heads:

“The heads. You’re looking at the heads. Sometimes he goes too far, you know, and he’s the first one to admit it”. The Photo-journalist vows however that Kurtz is not crazy, and again becomes ecstatic: *“If you could have heard the man just two days ago. If you could have heard him then, God.”* But, just like in the novel, Kurtz has gone away into the forest and when Willard arrives he is not there to speak to him. We are told that often Kurtz goes to explore the jungle and that *“He feels comfortable with his people. He forgets himself with his people. He forgets himself”*. His “forgetting” clearly defines the need of abstraction from reality that the Colonel, even as an over-reacher, still feels because of the brutality of the war surrounding his world. He is not at peace with himself, and only

the natives – who have become *his* people, and the jungle are the real bridge between his imaginary world and reality. Returning to the PBR Willard and Chief make arrangements. Chief clearly states his point of view on the situation: “*This colonel guy, he's wacko, man. He's worse than crazy, he's evil!*”. He realizes that the locals are worshipping him and desires to eliminate him and leave. However, Willard is not of the same opinion, as his understanding of what is happening is deeper. Still, despite the slow realization of what is happening to and around him, he orders Chief to call in an “*Air-strike*” if he does not return by a certain time. This point is very important in the movie as the Report written by Kurtz, present in both the novel and the movie, will clarify. As a matter of fact, the Report, titled “*International Society for the Suppression of Savage Customs*” in Conrad but untitled in the movie, bears Kurtz’s memories that Willard has to bring back. In Conrad’s work this is described as a sixteen page pamphlet regarding the superior level of evolution of white men as compared to black men to the point that it is logical that the Western colonist might be regarded as god. This “god” must, in Kurtz’s words, bring peace, tolerance and rise the human conditions of the savage. Something must have changed in him however, as on the last page, in big letters written in a frenzy way, Marlow reads “*Exterminate all the brutes*” (83). This is reported in “*Apocalypse Now*” with even stronger and more descriptive words: “*Drop the Bomb, exterminate them all!*”. The Bomb, with a capital B, refers to the H-bomb, thus Kurtz’s words are a sign of the impotence of the Western society to change the world and subdue it to its command, the only solution is to bring extermination rather than peace. Kurtz, in his human condition is not insane: “*the man is clear in his mind*”, we are told by the Photo-journalist, “*but his soul is mad*”. Just as the western world has failed, Kurtz feels he has failed, he hates the hell he has been forced into and feels powerless as he cannot change the world as he would like to. Therefore, the divinity, feeling it has lost its powers, unwilling to abandon his people, prefers to have them all killed with him when he dies.

Thus, the code for the “*Air Strike*” Willard asks Chief to call in for in case he does not return is bound to be “*Almighty*”. Almighty are the powers of the US and its arsenal, Life and Death become a matter of choice between possibility or impossibility of “redemption” and “salvation” of the enemy. Victory,

as mentioned when quoting Kilgore, must be reached at any cost. Willard is still far from becoming fully aware of his new condition and is still following the *mission* that the Colonels in Nah Trang have sent him there for. He too still believes that Kurtz has gone insane. As soon as he steps out of the boat again, however, he understands that the Colonel wants him alive. Lance accompanies him but, while he is left free to roam around as one of them as the men of the tribe recognize in him the mutation that is happening and do not see him as a threat, Willard instead is captured and dragged to Kurtz with his hands tied around his back, as if the natives could sense he still represents a danger. In a cut out scene visible only on the documentary, Willard, first dragged in the mud, is held up by the natives and behind him a cross is visible: Willard, thus embodying the Christ messianic figure, is brought in front of Kurtz, the King of Hell to fight him, redeem himself and return with his testament.

Colonel Kurtz in Coppola and in Conrad.

It is extremely complicated to write about this character: the layers that unfold are so many and even just exploring the symbolic aspects related to him, will require the cutting out of important details. Before describing Marlon Brando's interpretation we shall spend a few words on Conrad's original Colonel Kurtz and on how it inspired Milius and Coppola.

The original Kurtz is an ivory trader, sent by a shadowy Belgian company into the heart of an unnamed place in Africa, generally regarded as the Congo Free State. With the help of his superior technology, Kurtz has turned himself into a charismatic demigod of all the tribes surrounding his station, and gathered vast quantities of ivory in this way. As a result, his name is known throughout the region. He is also a multitalented genius: it is unclear whether he is more of a painter, a musician, a writer, a promising politician or all of these at once. Everyone who knows Kurtz, even his fiancée, who, actually, does not know him at all, agrees that he has all the ambition, charisma, and eloquence to achieve greatness. He starts out, years before the novel begins, as an imperialist in the best tradition of the "white man's burden." The reader is introduced to a painting of Kurtz's, depicting a

blindfolded woman bearing a torch against a nearly black background, and clearly symbolic of his former views. Although he cranks out more ivory than all the stations combined, over the course of his stay in Africa, Kurtz becomes corrupted and turns rogue. He has yielded to the implacably hostile nature of the African wilderness and it has caused him to go mad. By the time Marlow, the protagonist, sees Kurtz, he is ill with "*jungle fever*" (malaria, which is also mentioned by Coppola) and is about to die.

Kurtz represents the first of all the ambitious men who fall prey to the dangers of the wilderness. In the dreamlike world of the African interior, he is affected by the eerie silence and the strange, often barbaric (to him) customs of the native Africans.

He finds that to thrive, not simply survive, one must approach the Africans as a god. As such, he feels he can lead these "primitive" people to the proverbial Light of Civilization. However, his own greed gets in the way of this missionary-like quest. He induces the natives to worship him, setting up rituals and veneration worthy of a tyrant. His insatiable hunger for ivory drives him to make alliances and enemies among the native Africans – raiding village after village with the help of his African friends as he searches for ivory. We see that the obsession has really taken over, so much so that Kurtz is described in terms of the very material he seeks: his head "*was like a ball – an ivory ball.*" . Again, when he utters his final words, Kurtz carries an "*expression of sombre pride*" on his "*ivory face.*" (84). These descriptions represent physical changes in Kurtz that are probably the result of his crazy obsession. The jungle, we see, has overtaken him, has "*got into his veins, consumed his flesh.*" Marlow even identifies two separate "Kurtzes" – one that went into the jungle, and one that came out.

Maybe this is why we are told three times that the problem with Kurtz is that he has "*no restraint.*" Kurtz has become something else altogether. Whereas the Africans do have a sense of decency and restraint, think of the cannibals who eat rotten hippo meat instead of attacking the pilgrims whom they outnumber five to one, Kurtz has fallen a complete victim to the power of the jungle, has transformed into its "*spoiled and pampered favorite.*" This description fits the bill when Marlow tells

us how Kurtz has indeed become a child, infantile in his desires, physical appearance, selfishness, and brutality. Or as Marlow so beautifully says, the "*powers of darkness have claimed him for their own.*"

So why is it that, despite all this, people still look up to Kurtz – worship him, even? They still see in Kurtz the potential for greatness, in spite of his twisted mind. And it is this charisma and ambition that is Kurtz's legacy – not the madness and brutality and darkest realizations of human nature that are perhaps more fitting. This could be Conrad's own condemnation of mankind's blindness.

All of the above mentioned themes about Kurtz and his symbol are developed and re-confirmed in "*Apocalypse Now*". There is indeed an overall addiction of political, social and psychological issues that are expressed by the character Brando interprets, however, we will focus the attention on the allegories and symbols he expresses and represents in the movie.

To begin, it is necessary to summarize a biography of this character. The movie Kurtz is widely believed to have been modeled after Tony Poe, (85), a highly decorated and highly unorthodox Vietnam War-era paramilitary officer from the CIA's Special Activities Division. Poe was known to have dropped severed heads into enemy-controlled villages as a form of psychological warfare and to have used human ears to record the number of enemies his indigenous troops had killed. He would send these ears back to his superiors as proof of his efforts deep inside Laos. Scenes of this type are also narrated in Herr's "*Dispatches*", (86), in several moments. The contribution of this author to the characterization of Kurtz and Willard appears to be fundamental during the creation of dialogues. However, Coppola denies Poe to have been a primary influence and instead says the character was loosely based on Special Forces Colonel Robert B. Rheault, (87), whose 1969 arrest over the murder of a suspected double agent generated substantial news coverage.

We are mostly told the story of Kurtz by Willard's narration-reading of the documents given him by the officials in Nah Trang during his journey. This could lead us, therefore, to a misinterpretation of

facts as they could have been distorted. Nevertheless, it is the only way we have to reconstruct his life-story.

Walter Kurtz was a third-generation West Point graduate and had risen through the ranks . He was seen to be destined for a top post within the Pentagon. In his first tour of Vietnam in 1964, he was sent by the Joint Chiefs of Staff to compile a report on the failings of the current military policies. His overtly critical report was not what was expected and was immediately restricted for the joint chiefs and President Lyndon B. Johnson only, (88). Not long after, Kurtz applied for the 5th Special Forces Group, which was denied to him out of hand because of his advanced age. Kurtz continued with his ambition and even threatened to quit the armed forces, when finally his wish was granted and he was allowed to take the airborne course. Kurtz graduated in a class where he was nearly twice the age of the other trainees and was accepted into the 5th Special Forces Group.(89).

Kurtz returned to Vietnam in 1966 with the Green Berets and was part of the hearts and minds campaign which also included fortifying hamlets. *“October, 1967”*, narrates Willard, *“on special assignment, Kontoom Province, 2-Corps... Kurtz staged Operation Archangel, (90), with combined local forces. Rated a major success. He received no official clearance. He just thought it up and did it”*.

Kurtz located his army, including their wives and children, at a remote abandoned Cambodian temple which they had fortified. From their base, Kurtz led attacks on the local V.C., Viet Cong, and the regular N.V.A., North Vietnamese Army, in the region. Kurtz employed barbaric methods not only to defeat his enemy but also to send fear. At first MACV, (91), did not object to Kurtz's tactics, especially as they proved successful. This soon changed when Kurtz allowed photographs of his atrocities to be released to the world.

After Kurtz failed to respond to MACV's repeated orders to return to Da Nang, Willard tells us the following: *“Late summer, autumn 1968. Kurtz's patrol into the highlands is coming under frequent ambush. The camp started falling apart. November. Kurtz orders assassinations of three Vietnamese*

men and one woman. Two of the men were colonels in the South Vietnamese Army. Enemy activity in his old sector dropped off to nothing. Guess he must have hit the right four people”.

This is when the MACV sent Green Beret Captain named Richard Colby to bring Kurtz back from Cambodia. Following Colby's failure, MACV then selected CPT Benjamin L. Willard.

In order to fully understand the character, we need to take a step back and search in each dialogue for hints of messages and symbols.

The recording of his poetic messages on tapes has already been introduced during the first chapter.

The example of the “*snail on the edge of a straight razor*” is outstanding to develop the concept above introduced of poet warrior. The very reason that leads such a man, whether it is Homer or any poet is indeed to first of all satisfy a basic human necessity: communication. This is to say, communicating values, discussing moral and ethically problematic issues. Directly, by forcing his words out to people in the present and in the future, the poet warrior seeks the deepest treasured desires of any man: happiness and immortality. The former can take many forms: in Kurtz it can be ambition, in Willard finding himself, in the US soldiers to return home. The latter, Immortality, can only be achieved by men through the preservation of one’s memory. As in Greek Epics is so for any writer, artist or musician or for the poet warrior Honor has to be achieved in order to be remembered. It is the fear of being forgotten that urges human beings in their mortal life to accomplish enterprises which will guarantee them an immortality in the pages of history. In the case of Kurtz his lust has brought him to go even beyond the very boundaries of humanity. His genius is expressed throughout his story, there is, however, a point, of no return. We must notice, for example, how his most famous operation bears the codename “*Archangel*”. Milius and Coppola here, hinting at the Luciferian aspect of Kurtz, are telling us that Satan too once was the brightest of all angels. However magnificent and glorious, they were both judged, condemned and became fallen outcasts.

In the movie, this judgment is sealed with the charge for murder but to be called an Assassin in the reality of the war, and in particular in this war, is what Kurtz himself defines as a lie. It is a lie he can

in no way accept all the more because it infects the “memory” he wants others, especially his family, to have of him.

To explore these topics, we can start by quoting the letter sent by Kurtz to his son and to his family.

“Dear Son. I'm afraid that both you and your mother will have worried at not hearing from me during the past weeks, but my situation here has become a difficult one. I have been officially accused of murder by the army. The alleged victims were four Vietnamese double agents. We spent months uncovering them and accumulating evidence. When absolute proof was completed, we acted. We acted like soldiers. The charges are unjustified. They are, in fact, and under the circumstances of this conflict, quite completely insane.”

This first part of the letter is what the director shows us to be true throughout the rest of the movie until we reach Kurtz. At that stage, following the topics of the letter as if it was a summary of all of the Colonel's concepts and ideas, Coppola develops the other two main issues regarding Kurtz. In fact, thanks to Willard's point of view, he will analyze Kurtz's system of moral values and his ideal of judgment as far as both the US army's decision and his new established reality are concerned. Kurtz, in his letter, proceeds and explains:

“In a war, there are many moments for compassion and tender action. There are many moments for ruthless action. What is often called ruthless, but may, in many circumstances, be only clarity. Seeing clearly what there is to be done, and doing it directly, quickly, awake”.

This section is expanded in the monologue about the “*inoculated arms*” story which we will see in detail soon. The last section of the letter, instead, deals with judgment and, again memory.

“I will trust you tell your mother what you choose about this letter. As for the charges against me, I am unconcerned. I am beyond their timid, lying morality, and so I am beyond caring. You have all my faith. Your loving father”.

The insertion of family issues, relating to the theme of Home from which soldiers were alienated is intriguing as it gives us a deeper insight of the human and “clear” state of mind of Kurtz. His

condition as a human being is what will ultimately lead him to the understanding of the “*Horror*”, a concept which only a fully aware and conscious man could understand.

Before reaching this final point, however, we must go deeper into scrutinizing other symbols that appear throughout Kurtz’s words. It is important to keep in mind that many of the dialogues played by Brando were actually improvised. It was by following the main themes and Coppola’s indications that many lines were written, post-production cuttings gave us the final result. A result that, although it may seem confusing at first, if taken step by step, becomes an ensemble of messages that are elaborated and open up to many possible interpretations.

One example is during the first encounter of Willard with Kurtz. In Conrad Marlow’s approach to Kurtz’s monstrosity is described in a brutal and shocking way. Coppola, instead, opts for a quiet introduction to a Horror that is ubiquitous and inescapable.

Three main questions are asked to the Captain as he is tied up and kneeled in front of the god of this savage land.

1. Where does Willard come from. This first question opens up to the memory of the image of Gardenias on the Ohio river. These lines seem to be a welcoming introduction by Kurtz as he is telling his guest that they share a similar background. Moreover, this connects with a bibliography of stories about great American rivers and the adventurers of the past. But there is a deeper message. These flowers, white and pure, stand for human attempts to reach the sublime and perfect representation of Heaven. However, it is just an illusion that is not possible to reach and which perishes like everything else. Kurtz in fact tells us that: “*It’s all wild and overgrown now*”. Kurtz is testing the level of awareness of Willard.
2. What freedom is and why they want to terminate his command. The question is a sort of rhetorical one meant only to see if Willard understands what the value of freedom is and if he does understand what Kurtz is really trying to achieve. Apparently, Kurtz is not satisfied with the overall answer. He does, however, feel that Willard is the person he was waiting for. Somebody

that obediently followed a mission to the heart of the Unknown. The problem is, to Kurtz, whether Willard is aware of his own real condition or not, which leads to the last question

3. What Willard expects and what he really is. Again the first part of the question is not answered, whereas, as Willard declares he is a soldier, Kurtz utters his judgment: “*you're an errand boy, sent by grocery clerks, to collect a bill*”.

Willard is the right man at the right time, but he is not truly prepared yet. As a matter of fact, Kurtz sees him only as a young boy (unprepared) that obeys *the grocery clerks*, in other words, powers above him he does not question as he does not dare fighting. The bill, obviously, is Kurtz's death: the punishment for betrayal is the price to pay for having become an outcast. How could Kurtz's death itself be a primary important mission and concern those in command since American and Vietnamese were dying all around them, is just one of the questions Kurtz understands Willard is not capable to answer to yet.

This is why Kurtz confines him in a cage, as a final preparation to accepting Kurtz's reality and the destiny that unites them. The cage, which in the script is referred to as a “*Tiger cage*”, is the isolation moment that precedes the entrance to the order of the temple. It is an initiation: Willard's spirit, his inner self, must be broken and a new self must rise. Only this reborn man can accomplish the mission Kurtz wants him alive for.

This rebirth path re-occurs in the movie. The abandoning of one's self, the necessary killing of an identity is represented in different ways. One of these is by means of masks. Many masks are presented in the movie, one of these is under the form of camouflage body-painting. The camouflage Lance wears on his face shows the beginning of the personal alteration of his self. The tribal paint camouflage on Kurtz's face instead shows a level of change that is more perfected and advanced. This latter example can be exemplified by the scene of Chef's beheading.

We must notice here how his death, following the line of the deaths of the other crew members, is strikingly extreme and features no funeral at all which is even more remarkable as Chef's had told us

before, he believed his soul could find “*no rest in a place of evil*”. The Jungle is put into practice and Kurtz, by stopping Chef’s attempt to call in the Air strike, is telling us that no “*Almighty*” will save them: he is the only god in this savage land and, as his face painting suggests, he is a merciless god of war.

Willard is then moved to a darker imprisonment, a container, before being released. His spirit has been broken, submitted and finally is ready to be welcomed into Kurtz’s court. A court of dreams Willard reaches after also engaging with fever and delirium, a place where poetry is read and silence can only be broken by Kurtz’s voice.

Entering this sacred space, we are shown a sequence of images. One of these in particular must be mentioned: the native woman sitting in the dark. This is how the inspiring character for Milius appears in “*Heart of Darkness*”: “*And from right to left along the lighted shore moved a wild and gorgeous apparition of a woman....*”, (92). The fact that the woman is described as an “*apparition*” suggests that Marlow does not consider her as fully human but rather as a ghost or a creature of the jungle. It is interesting to notice that the description fits closely the way she is put on screen by Coppola: “*She walked with measured steps, draped in striped and fringed cloths, treading the earth proudly, with a slight jingle and flash of barbarous ornaments. She carried her head high; her hair was done in the shape of a helmet; she had brass leggings to the knee, brass wire gauntlets to the elbow, a crimson spot on her tawny cheek, innumerable necklaces of glass beads on her neck; bizarre things, charms, gifts of witch-men, that hung about her, glittered and trembled at every step.*”

This character will appear another two times in the movie. Again, her face is shown as Kurtz is telling us the story/parable of the “*Inoculated arms*” and again at Kurtz’s death. Parallel to these scenes, Conrad tells us that: “*She was savage and superb, wild-eyed and magnificent; there was something ominous and stately in her deliberate progress. And in the hush that had fallen suddenly upon the whole sorrowful land, the immense wilderness, the colossal body of the fecund and mysterious life seemed to look at her, pensive, as though it had been looking at the image of its own*

tenebrous and passionate soul”(93). What this woman incarnates is, symbolically, the spirit of wilderness. She is a “*warrior-witch*”, a female parallel of Kurtz, carrying within herself the purity of the Jungle and of Life in its primitive form, to the point that she could be considered the “*Sophia*” of the dark god Kurtz has become. In the film, we shall notice, she is the only one who witnesses his death and to bow, in mournful silence, to the end of Kurtz’s kingdom. This female icon, in no way subdued to the patriarchal system of the Western culture, as she becomes the primitive Venus – draped in savage yet elegant and holy garments. Hers is the final image in the time warp descending into the past of mankind and its natural roots which are embedded with the universal circle of life.

As images of divinities in the form of icons and statues pass before our eyes, we are finally introduced to Kurtz who is beginning to read T.S. Eliot’s *Hollow Men*.(94). The title of the poem refers to a precise line in Conrad’s “*Heart of Darkness*”: “...*the wilderness found him out early, and had taken vengeance for the fantastic invasion. I think it had whispered to him things about himself which he did not know, things of which he had no conception till he took counsel with this great solitude--and the whisper had proved irresistibly fascinating. It echoed loudly within him because he was hollow at the core*”. (95).

The themes of dissatisfaction and passivity which the poet elaborated from the hollow Mr. Kurtz of Conrad are evocative of an era that Eliot himself defined as of “futility and anarchy”. Conrad explored the reaction of the psyche of men when encountering the emptiness within them and the impossibility to fulfill this hollow space. Kurtz in his genius, realizes the depth of this nothing within, by extending it to the entire meaning of his life and therefore by seeking to achieve power beyond any human limit.

In Eliot, instead, this emptiness is directly reflected to a vision of the present history and the tremendous abyss humanity is confronting itself with. Dante’s words echo again in the poem, as mankind is confined to a Limbo of existence without shape and form.

Despite this reference used by Eliot, the mythic method he adopts, as Allen Tate (96) notices, is left aside at this stage from the methodological point of view. Moving away from the ironic deflation of Eliot's earlier work, he leads the pathos of mental and spiritual exhaustion to deepen even beyond. This same mythical method is picked up again in "*Apocalypse Now*" and further elaborated. It becomes clear, by reading Eliot's own definition of the method, that the movie is exploring this modernist method in a new way: "*This method emphasizes the underlying commonality of ostensibly disparate times and locations by employing a comparative mythology to transcend the temporal narrative*" (97). It is enough to mention the fact that Kurtz in this scene is reading a poet that had actually been inspired by his own character. This is an example of what makes *Apocalypse Now* one of the greatest achievements from a modernist point of view as, as it unfolds its layers, we realize that the main target was the literary and academic society. One example could be the fact that Joyce's *Ulysses* exploration of the psychology of men and his anthropological study is developed throughout almost all of Willard's monologues (98). Furthermore, the methodology Jung used in order to understand archetypes is expressed in the choice of almost every mythic symbol in the movie. Coppola managed to create, by using the Vietnam war, a masterpiece that could truly reach the masses and spread messages, on various levels of culture/awareness to a wide and variegated public. In a way, therefore, the director has truly succeeded in bringing onto the big screen the original intention of "*Arnoldian*" philosophy in T.S. Eliot (99) and has gone even further.

The following scene harvests the ideas that are held within the poetic symbols summoned by Kurtz's voice. The voice, which was so important in Conrad, becomes however unclear and not so intelligible to everyone in the film. The Photo-Journalist/Harlequin, for example does not understand what the message is and turns totally around Eliot's significant words. The Harlequin interprets everything as a child would, juxtaposing Good and Evil, Love and Hate and calling in for the necessary Dialectic logic which simplifies the whole world as we perceive it. Kurtz, irritated calls him "*mutt*" and, significantly, throws a bunch of bananas at him as one would to a monkey. The fact is, that Kurtz is

actually searching for a way to abandon the very form of dialectics the Harlequin is praising. Duality, as it exists in our perception of things, is nothing but the rational separation of the one and only reality in which we live. This original mistake is what ultimately leads us to war. Extending the meaning, we could say that it is a call for humility in front of our attempt to understand globally the human mind, without ideologies and, as Kurtz says, “*without judgment*”.

Willard understands him and accepts him: he sees the true broken man that stands before him. However, now that he has abandoned his original mission, he needs to know what he has to do next. His path has reached the real conclusion and now he must wait for Kurtz to give him his final mission.

As for Willard, so for us as spectators, we are now ready to listen clearly to Kurtz’s message. Eliot’s quotes in the film are a sort of introduction which is necessary to break the spell of time and perception of reality: at the moment being all that is required by Kurtz is for Willard and us to follow and understand his “*Testament*”.

Kurtz’s monologue expands into three stages: *Introduction, Parable and Explanation*. It is probably one of the moments that mostly give the impression of watching the representation of an apocryphal gospel. In this case, “*Willard’s Gospel*”. The Parable is the introduction necessary to the understanding of what the “*Horror*” does mean.

1. Introduction.

Kurtz’s monologue begins by introducing to us the main themes of this parable-message: Horror and Judgment. He tells us that “*the Horror*” is something impossible to describe to those who do not know what it is. He wishes to explain it, but knows that no words can fill its void. At any rate, he gives us a guideline by telling us that Horror is real and so is its moral, the Moral Terror, that comes with it. Kurtz believes the judgment of others cannot be taken into consideration, firstly because they are probably not aware of this same Horror and secondly because, since they do not

possess his same deep level of humanity, they cannot comprehend him. Kurtz insists that Horror and Moral Terror must be accepted and must become our “friends” otherwise they will be our worst enemies: without reaching the full understanding of the human condition and the necessary tension for evolution, no judgment can be regarded as true and valid. It might seem that Kurtz is imposing himself above the common man, but, in truth, his level of consciousness, above the Harlequin’s “Love and Hate” dualism, makes him aware of his status. A status that comes with obligations that are a heavy burden to carry but that, nevertheless, he accepts. At the same time, however, in his God-like figure, we see how deeply human and equal to all other men he knows he is. Moreover, his mortal essence, we are told shortly after, has vowed devotion to a divinity that he worships above all: the Jungle, in other words, the essence of Universal Nature.

2. Parable.

Kurtz understands that his view of the world, of history, of men, politics and war cannot be explained with words. He chooses to tell a story in order to try to do so. This memory of an action at war and its consequences on him are both the *Parable* he uses to define his perception of the war and the story of the moment of his “Enlightenment”. The story he tells of the children vaccinated by him and his US soldiers followed by the amputation of their inoculated arms by the VC,(100). opens up a fragmented scenario rich in significance. The setting itself confronts the action of the US army bringing anti-polio vaccine to the people in Vietnam. This relates to the theme of unsound methods and the false moral propaganda, used by the US itself during the conduct of the war. To put it in Willard’s words:

“It was a way we had over here of living with ourselves. We'd cut them in half with a machine gun, and give them a Band-Aid. It was a lie”.

The reaction of the VC to the vaccination, although at first might seem brutal and meaningless, we are told by Kurtz it was the product of a genius. The VC cut off the children’s arms as they feared that American soldiers were inoculating them with viruses to spread disease and plague

among the Vietnamese people. This fact, actually, is not totally to be considered impossible or as an insane reasoning if we quote for example the use of the cancerogen pesticide “*Agent Orange*” on the land and forests by the Air Force. The only way the Vietnamese had to save those children and their people, in their interpretation, was to mutilate those very arms. This is an example of Horror, but not only from an obvious visible-moral point of view. From Kurtz’s perspective, it exemplifies the witnessing and understanding of what such a downward and apparently bottomless spiral of evil, the warmongering nature and instincts of mankind’s dark side have brought the world to. This action, the amputation, therefore becomes: “*Perfect, genuine, complete, crystalline, pure*”. It is the clear demonstration of what cruelty men are capable of and must be forced into accepting, in order to apply their most profound moral values.

This story, this example and lesson that Kurtz learns and wants to apply and teach *is* his moment of clarity. The pain resulted by the event and its effect on Kurtz’s mind, become the “*diamond*” that is shot like a bullet in his forehead: clearly this refers to the opening of his Third Eye, the eye of Awareness and Knowledge (101).

3. Explanation.

“You have to have men who are moral, and at the same time, who are able to utilize their primordial instincts to kill without feeling, without passion. Without judgment. Without Judgment. Because it's judgment that defeats us”.

In war, any war as we understand from Coppola, even in the struggle for survival and evolution, mankind is required, because of its dual nature, to stand against and by the side of its very own duality. Morality and Instinct must be used together. There is a sense of impossibility of escaping the atrocity of men’s desire for war: history seems to prove to us that conflict is intrinsically part of ourselves, in many different forms and degrees of violence. But this war, if it must be fought, to then reach victory and accomplishment, must be fought beyond any judgment and ideology. It is necessary to accept the equality of men and deny all hypocrisies: in Kurtz’s words: “*What do*

you call it, when the assassins accuse the assassin?”. At this stage, men are ready to face the Horror, within themselves and the enemy, and fight with it as a “friend”, reaching out to victory by the application of the Moral Terror.

This is Kurtz’s Enlightenment. We know he despises the war, “*he hates all this*”, says the Photo-reporter/Harlequin, he truly desires peace and a life of ambitious greatness he feels he deserves. However, he understands there is no way of accomplishing this. The reality of facts is another. In the face of his disillusionment and because of his soul’s sickness, his “*clear*” mind understands that his time has come.

The Testament.

Only after the Parable and the explanation, does Kurtz, fully acquiring the capacity to welcome Death as a human being, ask Willard to save at least his memory from destruction, lies and oblivion. By asking Willard to tell his son, not the wife as in Conrad’s work, what he “*tried to be*”, Kurtz shows his desire to keep communication alive with the future generation,. Moreover, Kurtz is admitting the destruction of his dreams and the unbearable dissatisfaction of seeing his ambitions fade into nothing. In a way, through the lines, we can read that Kurtz is also asking Willard to kill him. We wonder, at this stage, if Kurtz has also understood the Sacrificial significance that his death is about to incarnate.

Conclusion – The Man, the River and the Horror.

Originally the idea was to summarize briefly all the content of this thesis in a few last pages. However, after giving the issue a lot of thought, re-reading all the pages so far and watching over and over again the entire movie, suddenly something became clear: the epilogue of the movie, from the sacrifice scene until its conclusion up to the very last frame *is* essentially the summary of the film

itself. I will therefore try to analyze it accordingly. The simplest method of understanding the last ten minutes of “*Apocalypse Now*” is to divide it into three parts, each with its purpose and meaning.

Part 1: The Sacrifice: Preparation and act. Understanding what Willard symbolizes.

Part 2: The Horror and the Reborn Willard.

Part 3: Departure and Revelation.

Part 1: The Sacrifice: Preparation and act. Understanding what Willard symbolizes.

The deepest region of mankind’s heart and mind has been reached. Kurtz’s Parable and message, with its brutal reality, has been given to us. War is a necessary burden which originates from both the rational duel between ourselves and others and between ourselves with ourselves in the endless struggle to survive: War can only be either fought with a Moral and Killing Instinct or be fought against.

Mankind’s most negative side links with its predatory history of destruction: until the acceptance of our darker side is not complete, then no peace can be achieved.

However, Coppola does not allow us the time for thinking about Kurtz’s words, as the epilogue of the story comes to us straight afterwards. Coppola decides to abandon Milius’ glorious ending with Kurtz and Willard fighting side by side and the Colonel dying in a western-like shooting: he follows instead the path of literary and philosophic quotations he has begun, preferring intellectual Art to Mass Entertainment (something that critics actually hold against him as we learn for example from J. Chown) (102). The continuation of this line is necessary to maintain the Mythic Method above mentioned and serve it out to the masses in all of its shocking power. Coppola himself admits he had no idea of how to end his film as many possibilities were open. He even considered the possibility of actually “dropping” the famous Bomb on Kurtz’s village, which would definitely have produced a much inferior result in the final production and in the meaning of the film itself. That could not be

the right way to conclude, nor was extermination and nihilism the method and the message he wanted to communicate to the spectators.

The idea came to him sudden and brilliant, we learn from the documentary “*Heart of Darkness: a film maker’s Apocalypse*”: the movie had to end “*not with a bang, but with a whimper*”. A striking, musical scene which would have found its violence only in the supreme duel between Kurtz and Willard and its consequences on their worlds.

The sacrifice scene is divided in a preparation part and an actuation.

Kurtz is standing on the doorstep of his temple, a black figure on the doorway which irradiates light from behind. The darkness inside him, we learn, is the shadow of a holy light. It is, indeed the absence of this light that creates this “monster”. Mary Shelley’s “*Dr. Frankenstein or the Modern Prometheus*” (103) and much of the Gothic literature could be taken into account: in fact, we do learn from Conrad that “*all Europe contributed to his creation*”, referring to his Mythical and Romantic origins beholding the fire of his hate and disillusionment for the Western Civilization.

From the doorsteps, he whispers to Willard his desire for mankind to know who he really was, once more declaring his hatred for “lies”. In a way, it might seem that Kurtz is almost speaking to Coppola and to us too. It is Coppola’s way of telling us why he made this movie and the necessity for he who understands the importance of his message to spread it and share it with everyone.

Still from the doorsteps of the temple where Kurtz is standing, the animal sacrifice finally appears. It is the Cow, that same symbol that was lifted in the air at the beginning of the movie when we met Kilgore, that was embodied by the Erebus and that the PBR carried all the way to Kurtz. By encountering him, as the original scapegoat would do, it absorbed his sins and sickness, preparing both itself and the Colonel for sacrifice and redemption. The Cow, as universal archetypal symbol of Mother Earth, tells us how human nature and the nature of things must combine in order to ply for redemption. In almost all tribes and past and present cultures sacrificing a bull or a cow means to fill

it. the source of life, with all the darkness of men's and nature's evil (demons and spirits). This same obscurity will be destroyed and ostracized by the collective participation in the ritual of the community. What is left of it, might then, in its divine form and transformation through the passage of death, be eaten by the community and its organs used for divination and as protective fetishes.

We learn from Coppola in the documentary that, coincidentally, when the crew witnessed a real water buffalo sacrifice while filming the movie, that the heart was the most sacred part of the animal.

From here on the movie develops for the first time by juxtaposing two scenes: Willard's path with the killing of Kurtz and the sacrificial ritual. Following the movie's sequence, the symbols will be analyzed in order of appearance on the screen. Although maybe too schematic, it is the simplest way to present the order of icons and symbols and clearly explain their significance.

RITUAL OF SACRIFICE	WILLARD'S PATH
<p>1ST SEQUENCE: PREPARATION.</p> <p>The victim is introduced into the ritual space. This space stands for the community as a whole and, likewise, for the known universe around it. The dancing at the sound of tribal drums stimulates the ideal heart-beat and the reaction of the senses to the event occurring. We are presented with the following symbols in order:</p> <p>The Holy Totem/ Altar:</p> <p>It is the center of the ritual, therefore the heart of the community and its intelligible universe.</p> <p>Candles/Fire/Smoke/Dances:</p> <p>These symbols equally refer to the original understanding of the otherworld. A dimension of death strictly connected to ours and with which the participants can communicate by transcending reality. Hence, the dancing to syncopated rhythms,</p>	<p>1ST SEQUENCE: ACCEPTANCE.</p> <p>Willard has returned to the PBR. Similarly to the ritual scene, he has entered his space in the world. He has returned to this separate reality to reflect and take a final decision. The radio, in contrast with the sounds of the music in the village, is calling him: <i>“this is Almighty”</i>, we hear the soldiers at the other end of the line calling. But Willard does not answer. He is detached from his world of origin in a place where no <i>“Almighty”</i> any longer exists.</p> <p>Acceptance:</p> <p>Willard tells us he does not even consider himself as part of the army anymore: he has truly abandoned his mission as it was ordered to him. He has now accepted the will of Kurtz.</p> <p>“Everybody wanted me to do it. Him most of all”:</p> <p>To kill Kurtz is a choice Willard embraces, accepting the will of a supernatural entity that is both that of the military elite and of the Jungle. There is no real decision, it is not an act of violence but an unearthly inspiration. Probably not conscious yet of the icon he</p>

<p>smoking “sacred” drugs and lighting fires and candles to the gods.</p> <p>Priesthood/Soldiers and Chicken/Wheat:</p> <p>Everybody joins in the ritual. Priests and Holy Women are within the community circle. Men are called to pray and perform their art of war to exorcise the demons of their reality. Likewise, women offer (white) Chickens as scapegoats to the dark forces of the jungle. Soldiers too are invited to the celebration. Two men hold hands (one dressed in Cambodian uniform the other with the US camouflage uniform). They are offering wheat to the ritual, as a symbol of a fertile land and body.</p>	<p>represents, Willard takes the last step and dives into the River, thus connecting with the world beyond.</p> <p>Euthanasia from pain:</p> <p>For Kurtz this is also the only way to exit as a soldier. Similar in his military honor to a samurai who has failed to reach his final objective, he demands to be executed for the greatness of his memory and respect of tradition. This sacrifice will liberate the village, will bring back order and re-establish the power of men among their land. The necessary death is the only means to accomplish purification.</p>
<p>2nd SEQUENCE: BLESSING.</p> <p>Water:</p> <p>Water is poured onto the holy animal. As in baptism in Christian religions, Water, purifies and protects and, after the fire, it regenerates the land. The ritual, in its form of bringing new life to Earth, must be accomplished by killing the Cow and offering it to the divinities/spirits that govern this</p>	<p>2nd SEQUENCE: RESURRECTION.</p> <p>Willard surfacing:</p> <p>The scene is of extraordinary power. We see Willard emerging from the muddy water of the River which resembles a misty white fog embracing the Jungle. His face is covered by that same camouflage mask that gave Kurtz the appearance of a war god when he beheaded Chef. The identification of himself with</p>

<p>world. It is a system of giving for receiving. The victim offered, however, must first be blessed in order to endure its journey towards the gods. We</p> <p>will also see Lance doing the same. Lance, who at this stage, is covered with tribal markings and dressed like a native, has fully abandoned his old self in favour of this new world.</p> <p>Tying the Victim to the Totem:</p> <p>The preparations are finished, the animal has been blessed and now it is ready to be connected to the centre of the Universe and to the divinities.</p>	<p>Kurtz begins, as his previous self is truly abandoned. Rising from the waters, in fact, cannot mean anything but Resurrecting into a new life. Water, just as it is a means of purification, is also the gate between the real world and the world of dreams. Willard “died” in Vietnam and his soul, now that he knows what has to be done and his Dao-path (104) is clear, is about to be born a new man at the sound of thunder and rain approaching.</p> <p>Kurtz enters the temple:</p> <p>Meanwhile, Kurtz is watching the ritual still from the doorstep. We see his shadow entering the temple again, as if to get ready to face his death. He does not necessarily know that Willard is on his way but perhaps he “feels” the temple is the place where he, as a god, must be during the ritual and that that is the place where he must eventually die.</p>
<p>3rd SEQUENCE: DEATH’S ENTERING.</p> <p>Holy Woman:</p> <p>Again we witness the savage and holy woman. She is not directly participating in the ritual and we see</p>	<p>3rd SEQUENCE: ENTERING THE TEMPLE.</p> <p>Willard :</p> <p>Willard kneeling down, a black silhouette in front of the scenario of the temple and the ritual, is preparing</p>

<p>in her eyes that she senses something of a cosmic destructive power approaching. She leaves the ritual and goes to the temple. She seems to be noticing Willard moving through the shadows but does nothing to stop him. In a way, her sacred position and her connection with Kurtz allow her to understand that this is something no one can avoid and, moreover, something that <i>must</i> happen for the salvation of all. Here we are truly given the importance of her relation to Kurtz, as if she was his inspiring female counterpart. His “Sophia”, born in the Jungle.</p>	<p>himself. As the music of the “Doors” starts he stands, machete in his hand, and dashes into the shadows. With the clarity of the movements of an assassin, he kills one of the guards and enters the temple. The aura of death emanating from him is that of both an executioner and of a holy warrior like that of a Saint George against the dragon. He approaches Kurtz and, holding his weapon high, is about to proceed with his termination. Kurtz’s last radio message, again talking about hypocrisy and falsity, sending his voice out of the Jungle one last time, is heard.</p>
<p>4th SEQUENCE: SACRIFICE.</p> <p>Slaughtering:</p> <p>The natives, armed with machetes, hit the animals with violence,. The opening of large wounds and the falling of the cow to the ground shows us the clear and obvious connection between the Victim of the Ritual and the Victim of the War. Be it Kurtz or any of the men in Vietnam.</p>	<p>4th SEQUENCE: KURTZ’S DEATH.</p> <p>Killing:</p> <p>Willard, with his “machete/sword” slashes Kurtz, who, unarmed, does not defend himself but quietly accepts his death. Light shines from behind them, making them faceless silhouettes that incarnate all characters who have engaged in similar battles in history and mythology. Kurtz finally falls to the ground as Willard stands and only his eyes, staring at his victim, are visible.</p>

Part 2: The Horror and the Reborn Willard.

“*The Horror... the Horror*”. As Kurtz has told us previously, it is impossible for words to describe what the Horror truly means, both in its metaphysical way and in its concrete presence in reality. In the latter, it could simply be regarded as the evil practice of men against other men and nature, but it is not as simple as this. What one ideology judges as Evil, the opposite ideology could consider as Good or necessary. Hence, one of the reasons for Kurtz to deny the capacity of anyone to Judge him. Judgment and our vision of what Horror is in the practical sense, is based on our separation and qualification of individuals, by means of racist/intellectual/spiritual standards, and by our placing them above, at or below our level. Then, whatever is to be feared from the other, on the basis of our natural terror and survival instinct, is mutated into dangerous. The dangerous activity defines the opposite entity and his intentions or their results are to be considered Horror. On the other hand, the material Horror of the worst typology, is the one that comes when we are defeated.

A culture bases its history on Victory and, if won, defeat enters its system of evolution and marks its awareness forever. This is especially true when we take into consideration the American history. The conquest of the West, Independence, the Civil War, WWI and II are all examples that in American “mythology” is regarded as an example of the greatness of the country. Vietnam, instead, has always been treated as a mistake, a shadow to forget or worse as a betrayal perpetuated by traitors at home. The only other vision and critical review of the historic events that happened sees Vietnam either as a lesson learnt and a guilt to be conscious of, or, incredibly enough, as a real success that allowed the US to stop Communism and allowed the capitalist system to gradually enter the South-Asian basin (which, from a neutral point of view, cannot be denied).

From a deeper philosophical and anthropological point of view, psychology and the understanding of Nightmares as learnt from Jung (105) has come in useful to try to explain the Horror. If death and, therefore, fear of the great Unknown that lies beyond the inscrutable are at the basis of all our fears (darkness, illness, “the other”), then “the Horror” represents and *is* their embodiment: it is, as Kurtz

tells us, its face. Horror becomes the natural result, visible or not, of our incapacity to accept its origin. An origin that lies deep within the roots of our evolution. The effects on this have altered all of our understanding of time and space, life and death, taking roots in our subconscious. The primeval instinct of survival and maintenance of the species have been polluted with our rational evolution and reasoning about our fears. Especially in Western cultures, to which we are here referring, death is not something accepted in its natural form. This is the prime mistake, the story of the Apple Tree in the Garden of Eden. By understanding the difference between Light and Darkness, but not obtaining God's immortality, we were forced to live in the fear of death. The Horror is then the psychological reflection of the nothingness that lies beyond and the nothingness that life represents to us all. Memory, and honor as a means to reach it, become the only way in which we can save ourselves from oblivion. Whether we consider this theme in Greek mythology, Judeo-Christian literature or in modern "heroes" of our time, the main problem man is faced with is survival or, at least, the survival of his memory throughout posterity. This same necessity leads us to duel with the deepest part of ourselves, to struggle against fear, to fight our enemy and, ultimately, to die without accepting the natural process that this should represent. The Horror that Kurtz witnesses in the moment of his death, is all of this and more. It is delusion, terror of the Unknown at the moment of dying and concern for what may, or will, happen afterwards. It is understanding that his voice, his message, might never reach all mankind and that more "Kurtzes" and more sacrifices will be necessary before humanity understands the abyss it is digging itself into.

Willard, the confused and lost hero of our story, participates actively and passively in the awareness of the Enlightenment. In the moment the Horror reveals itself and he starts to realize the meaning and profound significance of what he has done, Willard falls to the ground too and, as Kurtz speaks his final famous words, he brings his hands to his ears. It is as if those words were too powerful for him to listen to and he was not ready yet to fully understand them. The identification with Kurtz begins at

this point. First, however, we shall take one last step back and, with the clarity of all indications so far received, understand who and what Willard represents.

There is a millennia long messianic tradition in cosmology and mythology that we can take inspiration from in order to outline the symbolic profile of Willard. First of all, Willard is not a common man, in the terms that he does not represent a divine figure but he stands out for his knowledge and understanding above the average. He is not perfect and he himself tells us that his mission was given to him because of his “*sins*”. Sins that continue to appear and are reconfirmed during the movie: the killing of the innocent woman on the sampan, his sometimes racist behaviour, the selling of the playmate girls as prostitutes to the men of the PBR and, in a way, his indirect guilt for the death of three out of five members of his team. All these sins communicate his imperfect nature. A condition that is not only practical, but moral too. Kurtz understands this during their very first meeting and forces him to a prison to start the purification path of his “*apprenticeship*”.

The journey Willard undertakes however, even his almost unconscious acceptance of the mission, forces us to wonder what prime origin the myth itself has. That is when we encounter the cosmological myths. Willard, whose name could easily be the acronym of *Will* and *Hard* indicating his profound link with Reason and Intelligence, is in many ways a character that carries on himself the weight not only of precursors like Gilgamesh, Ulysses, Dante, Robinson Crusoe or Gulliver, and, last in line, Marlow, but also of a more ancient tradition that these same characters just mentioned have. If we look back, to the time of Ancient Egypt, for example, we see Rah, the god of the Sun, who each night had to endure a journey identical to Willard’s. The divinity entered the River at night in the land of the Dead, sailed to its roots, faced the demons of the night and the darkest side of the known Universe, to then reappear, reborn, at dawn. The connection with Jesus is evident too. By dying, the Christ entered the realm of Death, defeated Death itself and three days later resurrected. What is to be taken into consideration here, is the possibility for Willard himself to be the icon of a modern messiah that reflects and incarnates the same original theme.

The confusion and the struggle with the internal demons lead him to be given a “divine” mission, by accepting and entering the boat, he dies. His funeral is held as the Cow and the boat are blessed and dropped into the River. This River, that symbolizes a journey towards the unknown that lies within ourselves, deeply rooted to our ancestral past, runs through the Infernal images of our consciousness. By reaching the origin and true incarnation of this Nature within us, Willard is forced to take a decision: he can obey to his mission, or sacrifice it to redeem himself. Contrarily to Dante, in fact, Willard does not deny the Animal Nature of our being. He refuses to consider it evil and, by opting for the re-union of his dual nature, he kills Kurtz and takes his wisdom with him. Wisdom and Horror, as we see in the report that Willard retrieves, where the famous line “*Drop the Bomb...*” is written, is the intrinsic sentence used to define the ultimate Horror, the point of no return where even memory is not possible: extermination of mankind. Eliot himself, in an interview, said that his “*Hollow Men*” could not be re-written after 1945, as the references to the H-Bomb would have been immediate. Coppola, instead is telling us that by following the path that Vietnam sets an example for, the only possible outcome is extinction. In a Cold War era such as in the 1970s, a subtle message of this kind has a direct effect and Willard becomes the example of the opposite and only solution.

When Willard exits the Temple, he has fully incarnated Kurtz’s divine powers. The natives gather and all of them kneel down before their new god. Masked with the paintings of war, holding his weapon in the right hand and Kurtz’s pages of wisdom in the left one, the new Willard appears to them in his divine dark glory.

Nevertheless, Willard, refuses his new status. A flickering light is visible in his eyes, showing that desire for power and command that condemned his predecessor, but Willard is deeply different from Kurtz. Willard is Resurrected, has witnessed his darker side, killed it and finally redeemed himself. Moreover, he has still a mission to accomplish, that of bringing back Kurtz’s memory and testament to mankind.

That is why, with a humble but deep gesture, he drops his “*sword*”. The natives, confused do the same, trying to approach their new idol but Willard must walk away. The weapon is no longer of any use: only knowledge is necessary and it is necessary to bring it back.

In Conrad’s version Mr. Kurtz dies as they sail away on the boat (106). The reason is probably that the hollow spirit of the man becomes the ultimate form of all Evil and insanity, it could not be redeemed and was chained to remain in the Darkness. The delta of the river, the sea and the ocean were no longer a place for him. Coppola gives us a new possibility instead, one that saves Kurtz from his Horror, thus lifting him from accusations of his incarnating the blind violence of the Western World. He then becomes a creature and an icon which appear different, diverse and linked to archetypes that are beyond even the commonly considered western culture’s origins. The Instinct of man, its pure form of Nature is no longer simply Evil. The Horror has become our friend.

What I believe is that the final message of this movie, is a clear indication of a new yet primordial path that humanity should embrace now.

A structurally new form of thinking that abolishes the judgment of what is Good and what is Evil on the basis of ideologies that can no longer represent a global system of awareness of our humanity.

To embrace the Horror, to become one with it, thus defeating the fear of Death and of the Unknown, including even the fear of ourselves, is the path and message that Willard holds with him as he sails back. Lance, in the PBR with him returns slowly to a state of clearness, but when the radio-”Almighty” keeps calling them, Willard switches it off: no need for blind belief, no need for salvation from above (or “*Death from Above*” against our enemies). The understanding of his position comes to Willard as a slow revelation as they are sailing back downstream to the Ocean. Indeed, the choice of the title itself is no coincidence. *Apocalypse*, originally meaning “*Revelation*”, the time is *Now*.

It has to be now before it is too late.

The Revelation, Kurtz’s message which could be even identified with a *Vangelium* from Hell, is brought and told to us by Willard as a gospel. However, the first interpretation as a Satanic message

is wrong. Revelation, on the contrary, comes by two of the purest means a human being has. By following that doctrine of the Gnostic and Taoist Schools of philosophy, we are presented with the dual nature of everything that exists. This duality, however, must be broken through Redemption, Salvation and Resurrection. Only by joining and re-uniting the two extremes of our being, Reason and Instinct, a new form of evolved Human being is possible.

The Sacrifice of Kurtz to redeem mankind and the understanding and sharing of his message is what the spirit of Willard, now truly merging its dual nature, must bring back to the World in order to preserve his memory and to save it and save, as a messiah, the future generations thus saving them from having to write this story again.

Flashes of his dream come back, as the sound of the rain and visions from the opening of the movie recall the final words of Kurtz. The statue, now only with one head, emerges from the waters: it is looking towards the direction Willard had come from, showing us the path to return to real Life.

Apocalypse Now – Apocalypse Now Redux: casting.

Directed by Francis Ford Coppola
Produced by Francis Ford Coppola

Written by

- John Milius
- Francis Ford Coppola
- Michael Herr (narration)

Based on Heart of Darkness by Joseph Conrad (un-credited)

Starring

- Marlon Brando as Colonel Walter E. Kurtz
- Robert Duvall as Colonel Bill Kilgore
- Martin Sheen as Captain Benjamin L. Willard
- Frederic Forrest as Jay "Chef" Hicks
- Harrison Ford as Colonel Lucas
- Albert Hall as George "Chief" Phillips
- Sam Bottoms as Lance Johnson
- Laurence Fishburne as Tyrone "Mr. Clean" Miller
- Dennis Hopper as Photojournalist

Music by

- Carmine Coppola
- Francis Ford Coppola

Cinematography Vittorio Storaro

Editing by

- Richard Marks
- Walter Murch
- Gerald B. Greenberg
- Lisa Fruchtman

Studio Zoetrope Studios

Distributed by United Artists

Release date(s): August 15, 1979 - Redux 2001

Running time: 183 minutes

Country: United States

Language: English

NOTES

- Francis Ford Coppola: (born April 7, 1939) is an Italian-American film director, producer and screenwriter. Widely acclaimed as one of Hollywood's most innovative and influential film directors, Coppola epitomized a group of filmmakers known as the "New Hollywood". Emerging in the early 1970s with unconventional ideas that challenged contemporary film-making, the group included Martin Scorsese, Terrence Malick, Robert Altman, Woody Allen, William Friedkin, Philip Kaufman and George Lucas. He directed 1979's *Apocalypse Now*. Notorious for its over-long and strenuous production, the film was nonetheless critically acclaimed for its vivid and stark depiction of the Vietnam War, winning the Palme d'Or at the 1979 Cannes Film Festival. Coppola is one of only eight filmmakers to win two Palme d'Or awards.
- John Frederick Milius (born April 11, 1944) is an American screenwriter, director, and producer of motion pictures. He co-wrote the first two *Dirty Harry* films and *Apocalypse Now* and wrote and directed *Conan the Barbarian* and *Red Dawn*.
- Joseph Conrad (born Józef Teodor Konrad Korzeniowski; born December 3 1857 – 3 August 1924) was a Polish author who wrote in English after settling in England. He was granted British nationality in 1886, but always considered himself a Pole. Conrad is regarded as one of the greatest novelists in English, though he did not speak the language fluently until he was in his twenties (and always with a marked accent). He wrote stories and novels, often with a nautical setting, that depict trials of the human spirit in the midst of an indifferent universe. He was a master prose stylist who brought a distinctly non-English tragic sensibility into English literature. Writing in the heyday of the British Empire, Conrad drew on his native Poland's national experiences and on his personal experiences in the French and British merchant navies, to create short stories and novels that reflect aspects of a European-dominated world, while plumbing the depths of the human soul. Appreciated early on by literary cognoscenti, his fiction and nonfiction have gained an almost prophetic cachet in the light of subsequent national and international disasters of the 20th and 21st centuries.
- *Heart of Darkness* (1899), by Joseph Conrad, is a short novel, presented as a frame narrative, about Charles Marlow's job as an ivory transporter down the Congo river in Africa. This river is described to be ... a mighty big river, that you could see on the map, resembling an immense snake uncoiled, with its head in the sea, its body at rest curving afar over a vast country, and its tail lost in the depths of the land. In the course of his commercial-agent work in Africa, the seaman Marlow becomes obsessed by Mr. Kurtz, an ivory-procurement agent, a man of established notoriety among the natives and the European colonials. The story is a thematic exploration of the savagery-versus-civilization relationship, and of the colonialism and the racism that make imperialism possible. Originally published as a three-part serial story, in 'Blackwood's Magazine', the novella *Heart of Darkness* has

been variously published and translated into many languages. In 1998, the Modern Library ranked *Heart of Darkness* as the sixty-seventh top-novel of the hundred-best-novels in English of the twentieth century; and is included to the Western canon.

1. Thomas Stearns Eliot: OM (September 26, 1888 – January 4, 1965) was a publisher, playwright, literary and social critic and "one of the twentieth century's major poets." Born in the United States, he moved to the United Kingdom in 1914 (at age 25) and was naturalized as a British subject in 1927 at age 39. He was awarded the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1948, "for his outstanding, pioneer contribution to present-day poetry".

The Hollow Men appeared in 1925. It is Eliot's major poem of the late 1920s. Similar to other work, its themes are overlapping and fragmentary. Post-war Europe under the Treaty of Versailles (which Eliot despised), the difficulty of hope and religious conversion, Eliot's failed marriage.

2. Michael Herr, born April 13, 1940) is an American writer and former war correspondent, best known as the author of *Dispatches* (1977), a memoir of his time as a correspondent for *Esquire* magazine (1967–1969) during the Vietnam War. The book was called the best "to have been written about the Vietnam War" by *The New York Times* Book Review; novelist John le Carré called it "the best book I have ever read on men and war in our time." Herr later was credited with pioneering the literary genre of the nonfiction novel, along with authors such as Truman Capote, Norman Mailer, and Tom Wolfe.

Dispatches is a New Journalism book by Michael Herr that describes the author's experiences in Vietnam as a war correspondent for *Esquire* magazine. First published in 1977, *Dispatches* was one of the first pieces of American literature that allowed Americans to understand the experiences of soldiers in the Vietnam War. At a time when many veterans would say little about their experiences during the war, *Dispatches* allowed for an experience and understanding of the war like no other source to date. The book is noted for a visceral, literary style which distinguishes it from more mundane and accurate historical accounts. Featured in the book are fellow war correspondents Sean Flynn and Dana Stone and Dale Dye and the photojournalist Tim Page. Only at the end does Herr mention that the first two were captured and presumed dead. *Dispatches* was reprinted in 2009 by Everyman's Library as a contemporary classic

3. Ibid. (page 8 and page 10)

4. F. Bahr, G. Hicenlooper, *Hearts of Darkness: a Filmmaker's Apocalypse* (1991)

5. The 4th wall: The fourth wall is the imaginary "wall" at the front of the stage in a traditional three-walled box set in a proscenium theatre, through which the audience sees the action in the world of the play. The idea of the fourth wall was made explicit by philosopher and critic Denis Diderot and spread in 19th-century theatre with the advent of theatrical realism, which extended the idea to the imaginary boundary between any fictional work and its audience.

6. Dante Alighieri Canto I, first tercet:

« Nel mezzo del cammin di nostra vita
mi ritrovai per una selva oscura,
ché la diritta via era smarrita. »

7. Joseph. Conrad, "Heart of Darkness", Penguin M.C. 1973 -- p 15.

8. Ibid. p.9

9. Ibid. p. 12

10. Edmund Wilson, (May 8, 1895 – June 12, 1972) was an American writer, literary and social critic, and noted man of letters . For quotation see: bricemichael.weebly.com/.../the_hollow_men_2.p and www.gradesaver.com › T.S. Eliot: Prose ›

11. J. Conrad "Heart of Darkness", p. 83; p. 98

12. Ibid. p.100

13. Jessie Laidlay Weston (1850–1928) was an independent scholar and folklorist, working mainly on mediaeval Arthurian texts.

Her best-known work is *From Ritual to Romance* (1920). In it she brought to bear an analysis harking back to James George Frazer on the Grail legend, arguing for origins earlier than the Christian or Celtic sources conventionally discussed at the time. It was cited by T. S. Eliot in his notes to *The Waste Land*. (He later claimed that the notes as a whole were ironic in intention, and the extent of Weston's actual influence on the poem is unclear. Eliot also indicated that the notes were requested by the publisher to bulk out the length of the poem in book form, calling them "bogus scholarship

"From Ritual to Romance" is a 1920 book written by Jessie L. Weston. The work is notable for being mentioned by T. S. Eliot in the notes to his poem, "The Waste Land":

Not only the title, but the plan and a good deal of the incidental symbolism of the poem were suggested by Miss Jessie L. Weston's book. Weston's book is an academic examination of the roots of the King Arthur legends and seeks to make connections between the early pagan elements and the later Christian influences. The book's main focus is on the Holy Grail tradition and its influence, particularly the Wasteland motif. The origins of Weston's book are in James George Frazer's seminal work on folklore, magic and religion, *The Golden Bough*, and in the works of Miss Jane Ellen Harrison. At the advanced age of 70, Jessie Weston, who had spent decades immersed in the Arthurian canon, wrote this relatively short book to attempt to explain the roots of the legend of the Holy Grail. She enumerates the seemingly inexplicable elements of the quest--The Fisher King, The Wasteland, the Chapel Perilous, and the Grail Cup itself--and ties them to the symbols and initiatory rites of the ancient mystery religions. She also attempts to identify the author and locality of the

tale. Her thesis still inspires heated controversy among academics. It is also claimed that T.S. Elliot's *The Wasteland* was based on this book, although this has been questioned. One thing is certain; although this book is one of the bullet-points of 20th century culture, probably very few have read and understood it in its entirety. *From Ritual to Romance* is written in a formal academic style, with extensive passages in a dozen different languages..

14. Sir James George Frazer OM (1 January 1854 – 7 May 1941), was a Scottish social anthropologist influential in the early stages of the modern studies of mythology and comparative religion. He is often considered one of the founding fathers of modern anthropology.

His most famous work, *The Golden Bough* (1890), documents and details the similarities among magical and religious beliefs across the globe. Frazer posited that human belief progressed through three stages: primitive magic, replaced by religion, in turn replaced by science.

He is buried at the Parish of the Ascension Burial Ground in Cambridge. His wife Lilly died the day after him on May 8, 1941, and they are buried next to each other.

“*The Golden Bough*” : *A Study in Magic and Religion* is a wide-ranging, comparative study of mythology and religion, written by the Scottish anthropologist Sir James George Frazer (1854–1941). It was first published in two volumes in 1890; in three volumes in 1900; and the third edition, published 1906–15, comprised twelve volumes. The work was aimed at a wide literate audience raised on tales as told in such publications as Thomas Bulfinch's *The Age of Fable*, or *Stories of Gods and Heroes* (1855).

Frazer offered a modernist approach to discussing religion, treating it dispassionately as a cultural phenomenon rather than from a theological perspective. The influence of *The Golden Bough* on contemporary European literature and thought was substantial.

15. T.S. Elliot, “*The Waste Land*” – 1922. In October, 1922, Eliot published *The Waste Land* in *The Criterion*. Eliot's dedication to *il miglior fabbro* (“the better craftsman”) refers to Ezra Pound's significant hand in editing and reshaping the poem from a longer Eliot manuscript to the shortened version that appears in publication. It was composed during a period of personal difficulty for Eliot—his marriage was failing, and both he and Vivienne were suffering from nervous disorders. The poem is often read as a representation of the disillusionment of the post-war generation.

16. “*The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock*”, commonly known as “*Prufrock*”, is a poem by American-British poet T. S. Eliot (1888–1965). Eliot began writing “*Prufrock*” in February 1910 and it was first published June 1915 issue of *Poetry: A Magazine of Verse* at the instigation of Ezra Pound (1885–1972). It was later printed as part of a twelve-poem pamphlet (or chapbook) titled *Prufrock and Other Observations* in 1917. At the time of its publication, *Prufrock* was considered shocking and offensive; heralding a paradigmatic cultural shift from the late 19th century Romantic verse and Georgian lyrics to Modernism. The poem is regarded as the beginning of Eliot's career as an influential poet.

The poem's structure was heavily influenced by Eliot's extensive reading of Dante Alighieri and makes several references to the Bible and other literary works—including William Shakespeare's plays *Henry IV Part II*, *Twelfth Night*, and *Hamlet*; to the poetry of seventeenth-century metaphysical poet John Donne, and the nineteenth-century French Symbolists. Eliot narrates the conscious experience of the character, Prufrock, using a stream of consciousness technique, a form developed by his fellow Modernist writers. The poem, described as a "drama of literary anguish" is a dramatic interior monologue of an urban man, stricken with feelings of isolation and an incapability for decisive action that is said "to epitomize frustration and impotence of the modern individual" and "represent thwarted desires and modern disillusionment." Prufrock laments his physical and intellectual inertia, the lost opportunities in his life and lack of spiritual progress

of J. Alfred Prufrock

17. J. Conrad "Heart of Darkness", Penguin, 1973 pp.99-100.

18. Ibid. ; p.15.

19. *The Doors* is the debut album by American rock band The Doors, recorded in August 1966 and released in January 1967. It was originally released in different stereo and mono mixes, and features the breakthrough single "Light My Fire", extended with an instrumental section mostly omitted on the single release, and the lengthy song "The End" with its Oedipal spoken word section. The Doors credit the success of the album to being able to work the songs out night after night at the Whisky a Go Go and the London Fog.

"The End" is a song by The Doors, written by Jim Morrison. Morrison originally wrote the song about breaking up with his girlfriend Mary Werbelow, but it evolved through months of performances at Los Angeles' Whisky a Go Go into a nearly 12-minute opus on their self-titled album. The band would perform the song to close their last set. It was first released in January 1967. The song was recorded live in the studio with no overdubbing. Two takes were done and the second take is the one that was issued.

"The End" was ranked at number 336 on Rolling Stone's list of The 500 Greatest Songs of All Time (2010).The song's guitar solo was ranked number 93 on Guitar World's "100 Greatest Guitar Solos of All Time".

20. Lizzie James :”Interview with Jim Morrison” Post n°2 published on 20th November 2009.

21. James Douglas "Jim" Morrison (December 8, 1943 – July 3, 1971) was an American singer-songwriter and poet, best remembered as the lead singer of Los Angeles rock band The Doors. From a young age, Morrison developed an alcohol dependency which led to his death at the age of 27 in Paris. He is alleged to have died of a heroin overdose, but as no autopsy was performed, the exact cause of his death is still disputed. Morrison was well known for often improvising spoken word poetry passages while the band played live. Due to his wild personality and performances, he is regarded by critics and fans as one of the most iconic, charismatic, and pioneering front men in rock music history.]Morrison was

ranked number 47 on Rolling Stone's list of the "100 Greatest Singers of All Time". Morrison was asked to explain the verse "The End" "My only friend / the end" he replied.(Morrison's Quotes).

22. Densmore's autobiography "Riders on the Storm Riders on the Storm: My Life with Jim Morrison and the Doors" by John Densmore. John Paul Densmore (born December 1, 1944) is an American musician and songwriter. He is best known as the drummer of the rock group The Doors

23. The Hollow Men (1925) is a poem by T. S. Eliot. Its themes are, like many of Eliot's poems, overlapping and fragmentary, but it is recognized to be concerned most with post-World War I Europe under the Treaty of Versailles, the difficulty of hope and religious conversion, and, as some critics argue, Eliot's own failed marriage. The poem is divided into five parts and consists of 98 lines.

24. Little Gidding is the fourth and final poem of T. S. Eliot's Four Quartets, a series of poems that discuss time, perspective, humanity, and salvation. It was first published in September 1942 after being delayed for over a year because of the air-raids on Great Britain during World War II and Eliot's declining health. The title refers to a small Anglican community in Huntingdonshire, established by Nicholas Ferrar in the 17th century and scattered during the English Civil War. The poem uses the combined image of fire and Pentecostal fire to emphasize the need for purification and purgation. According to the poet, humanity's flawed understanding of life and turning away from God leads to a cycle of warfare, but this can be overcome by recognizing the lessons of the past. Within the poem, the narrator meets a ghost that is a combination of various poets and literary figures. Little Gidding focuses on the unity of past, present, and future, and claims that understanding this unity is necessary for salvation.

25. The Hanged Man (XII) is the twelfth trump or Major Arcana card in most traditional Tarot decks. It is used in game playing as well as in divination. Modern versions of the tarot deck depict a man hanging upside-down by one foot. The figure is most often suspended from a wooden beam (as in a cross or gallows) or a tree. Ambiguity results from the fact that the card itself may be viewed inverted.

26. According to one Greek myth, Pisces represents the fish into which Aphrodite (also considered Venus) and her son Eros (also considered Cupid) transformed in order to escape the monster Typhon. Typhon, the "father of all monsters" had been sent by Gaia to attack the gods, which led Pan to warn the others before himself changing into a goat-fish and jumping into the Euphrates.

27. Boaz and Joachin were two copper, brass or bronze pillars which stood in the porch of Solomon's Temple, the first Temple in Jerusalem.

28. J. Conrad "Heart of Darkness", Ibid . p.10.

29. Michael Herr's Dispatches, p. 42.

30. Wilhelm Richard Wagner (22 May 1813 – 13 February 1883) was a German composer, theatre director, polemicist, and conductor who is primarily known for his operas (or, as some of his later works were later known, "music dramas"). Unlike most opera composers, Wagner wrote both the libretto and the music for each of his stage works. Initially establishing his reputation as a composer of works in the romantic vein of Weber and Meyerbeer, Wagner revolutionised opera through his concept of the Gesamtkunstwerk ("total work of art"), by which he sought to synthesise the poetic, visual, musical and dramatic arts, with music subsidiary to drama, and which was announced in a series of essays between 1849 and 1852. Wagner realized these ideas most fully in the first half of the four-opera cycle *Der Ring des Nibelungen* (The Ring of the Nibelung).

The "Ride of the Valkyries" (German: *Walkürenritt* or *Ritt der Walküren*) is the popular term for the beginning of Act III of *Die Walküre*, the second of the four operas by Richard Wagner that comprise *Der Ring des Nibelungen*. The main theme of the Ride, the leitmotif labelled *Walkürenritt*, was first written down by the composer on 23 July 1851. The preliminary draft for the Ride was composed in 1854 as part of the composition of the entire opera, which was fully orchestrated by the end of the first quarter of 1856. Together with the Bridal Chorus from *Lohengrin*, the Ride of the Valkyries is one of Wagner's best-known pieces.

31. "Let the Good Times Roll" is a song that was recorded by Shirley and Lee in 1956. This song was written by the duo, Shirley Goodman (later Shirley Pixley) and Leonard Lee, and by September 8, 1956 had climbed to #20 in the US charts.

32. The Beach Boys are an American rock band, formed in Hawthorne, California in 1961. The group's best known line-up consisted of Brian, Dennis and Carl Wilson, their cousin Mike Love, and friend Al Jardine. Initially managed by the Wilsons' father Murry, the Beach Boys signed to Capitol Records in 1962. The band's early music gained popularity across the United States for its close vocal harmonies and lyrics reflecting a Southern California youth culture of surfing, cars, and romance. By the mid-1960s, Brian Wilson's growing creative ambition and song writing ability would dominate the group's musical direction. The primarily Wilson-composed *Pet Sounds* album and "Good Vibrations" single (both released in 1966) featured a complex, intricate and multi-layered sound that represented a departure from the simple surf rock of the Beach Boys' early years.

"Surfin' Safari" is a song by American rock band The Beach Boys, written by Brian Wilson and Mike Love. Released as a single with "409" in June 1962, it peaked at number 14 on the Billboard Hot 100. The song also appeared on the 1962 album of the same name.

33. Creedence Clearwater Revival (sometimes shortened to Creedence or CCR) was an American rock band that gained popularity in the late 1960s and early 1970s.

"Susie Q" is a song by Louisiana-born singer and guitarist Dale Hawkins (1936–2010). He wrote the song himself, but when it was released, Stan Lewis, the owner of Jewel/Paula Records, and Eleanor Broadwater, the wife of Nashville DJ Gene Nobles, were also credited as co-writers to give them shares of the royalties.

Perhaps the most famous cover version is by Creedence Clearwater Revival on their debut album released in 1968. This song was one of their first big hits, and was the band's only Top 40 hit that was not written by John Fogerty, peaking at #11, but made the top ten on some charts.

34. "Let The Good Times Roll", see Note 31.

35. Milius himself, reveals in the documentary "Hearts of Darkness: a Filmmaker's Apocalypse"

36. The Rolling Stones are an English rock band formed in London in 1962. Their early mission was to share their enthusiasm for rhythm and blues, but they were received as symbols and leaders of rebellious youth. The first settled line-up had Brian Jones on guitar and harmonica, Ian Stewart on piano, Mick Jagger on lead vocals and harmonica, Keith Richards on guitar and backing vocals, Bill Wyman on bass and Charlie Watts on drums. Jones founded and led the band, but after teaming as co-writers Jagger and Richards assumed leadership of the band. Jones' increasing physical and mental troubles forced his departure from the band two weeks prior to his drowning death in 1969. Since Wyman left in 1993, the full band members have been Jagger, Richards, Watts and guitarist Ronnie Wood who joined in 1975, replacing Mick Taylor (who had followed Jones). The Rock and Roll Hall of Fame inducted the Rolling Stones in 1989. Rolling Stone magazine ranked them fourth on the "100 Greatest Artists of All Time" list and estimated album sales are above 200 million.

"(I Can't Get No) Satisfaction" is a song by the English rock band The Rolling Stones, released in 1965. It was written by Mick Jagger and Keith Richards and produced by Andrew Loog Oldham. Richards' throwaway three-note guitar riff – intended to be replaced by horns – opens and drives the song. The lyrics refer to sexual frustration and commercialism.

37. See Ch. 2 : the French.

38. American Zoetrope is a privately run film studio, centred in San Francisco and founded by Francis Ford Coppola and George Lucas. Opened on 12 December 1969, American Zoetrope was an early adopter of digital filmmaking, including some of the earliest uses of HDTV. The studio has produced not only the films of Coppola (including *Apocalypse Now*, *Bram Stoker's Dracula* and *Tetro*), but also George Lucas's pre-*Star Wars* films (*THX 1138* and *American Graffiti*), as well as many others by such cutting-edge directors as Jean-Luc Godard, Akira Kurosawa, Wim Wenders and Godfrey Reggio. Four films produced by American Zoetrope are included in the American Film Institute's Top 100 Films. American Zoetrope-produced films have received 15 Academy Awards and 68 nominations. *Lost in Translation*, written and directed by Sofia Coppola and also produced by Zoetrope, won the Academy Award for Best Original Screenplay in 2003.

39. See Note 6.

40. It was Martin Sheen's birthday when this footage was taken and Sheen was heavily drunk.

41. Carl Gustav Jung (26 July 1875 – 6 June 1961) was a Swiss psychotherapist and psychiatrist who founded analytical psychology. Jung proposed and developed the concepts of the extraverted and the introverted personality, archetypes, and the collective unconscious. His work has been influential in psychiatry and in the study of religion, literature, and related fields. The central concept of analytical psychology is individuation – the psychological process of integrating the opposites, including the conscious with the unconscious, while still maintaining their relative autonomy. Jung considered individuation to be the central process of human development.

Carl Gustav Jung developed an understanding of archetypes as being "ancient or archaic images that derive from the collective unconscious". These are different from instincts, as Jung understood instincts as being "an unconscious physical impulse toward actions and the archetype as the psychic counterpart". Archetypes are innate universal pre-conscious psychic dispositions that form the substrate from which the basic themes of human life emerge. Being universal and innate, their influence can be detected in the form of myths, symbols and psychic aptitudes of human beings the world over. The archetypes are components of the collective unconscious and serve to organize, direct and inform human thought and behaviour. Archetypes hold control of the human life cycle. As we mature the archetypal plan unfolds through a programmed sequence which Jung called the stages of life. Each stage of life is mediated through a new set of archetypal imperatives which seek fulfillment in action. These may include being parented, initiation, courtship, marriage and preparation for death.

"The archetype is a tendency to form such representations of a motif - representations that can vary a great deal in detail without losing their basic pattern ... They are indeed an instinctive trend". Thus, "the archetype of initiation is strongly activated to provide a meaningful transition ... with a 'rite of passage' from one stage of life to the next": such stages may include being parented, initiation, courtship, marriage and preparation for death.

42. Moire” or Roman “Parcae” : In ancient Roman religion and myth, the Parcae (singular, Parca) were the female personifications of destiny, often called the Fates in English. Their Greek equivalent were the Moirai. They controlled the metaphorical thread of life of every mortal and immortal from birth to death. Even the gods feared the Parcae. Jupiter also was subject to their power. The names of the three Parcae were:

- Nona (Greek equivalent Clotho), who spun the thread of life from her distaff onto her spindle;
- Decima (Greek Lachesis), who measured the thread of life with her rod;
- Morta (Greek Atropos), who cut the thread of life and chose the manner of a person's death.

The earliest extant documents referencing these deities are three small stelae (cippi) found near ancient Lavinium shortly after World War II.

43. Friedrich Wilhelm Nietzsche (15 October 1844 – 25 August 1900) was a German philosopher, poet, composer, cultural critic, and classical philologist. He wrote critical texts on religion, morality, contemporary culture, philosophy, and science, displaying a fondness for metaphor, irony, and aphorism. Nietzsche's key ideas include the "death of God," the Übermensch, the eternal recurrence, the Apollonian and Dionysian dichotomy, perspectivism, and the will to power. Central to his philosophy is the idea of "life-affirmation", which involves questioning of all doctrines that drain life's expansive energies, however socially prevalent those views might be. His influence remains substantial within philosophy, notably in existentialism, post-modernism, and post-structuralism, as well as outside it. His radical questioning of the value and objectivity of truth has been the focus of extensive commentary, especially in the continental tradition.

The Übermensch (German for "Overman, Overhuman, Above-Human, Superman, Super-human"; is a concept in the philosophy of Friedrich Nietzsche. Nietzsche posited the Übermensch as a goal for humanity to set for itself in his 1883 book *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* (German: *Also Sprach Zarathustra*). There is no overall consensus regarding the precise meaning of the Übermensch, nor on the importance of the concept in Nietzsche's thought. The first translation of *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* into English was by Alexander Tille published in 1896. Tille translated Übermensch as *Beyond-Man*. But in his translation, published in 1909, Thomas Common rendered Übermensch as "Superman"; Common was anticipated in this by George Bernard Shaw, who had done the same in his 1903 stage play *Man and Superman*. Walter Kaufmann lambasted this translation in the 1950s for two reasons: first, its near or total failure to capture the nuance of the German word *über*, and second, a rationale which Fredric Wertham railed against even more vehemently in *Seduction of the Innocent*, for promoting an eventual puerile identification with the comic-book character Superman. His preference was to translate Übermensch as "overman." Scholars continue to employ both terms, some simply opting to reproduce the German word. The German prefix *über* can have connotations of superiority, transcendence, excessiveness, or intensity, depending on the words to which it is prepended. *Mensch* refers to a member of the human species, rather than to a male specifically. The adjective *übermenschlich* means super-human, in the sense of beyond human strength or out of proportion to humanity.

44. Hubris: from ancient Greek ὕβρις, means extreme pride or arrogance. Hubris often indicates a loss of contact with reality and an overestimation of one's own competence or capabilities, especially when the person exhibiting it is in a position of power. In ancient Greek, hubris referred to actions that shamed and humiliated the victim for the pleasure or gratification of the abuser. The term had a strong sexual connotation, and the shame reflected on the perpetrator as well.

45. Nietzsche would put it: "hell is the absence of reason". At the beginning of the movie "Platoon", the character played by Charlie Sheen said: "Somebody once wrote: 'Hell is the impossibility of reason.' That's what this place feels

like. Hell." A related saying "hell is the absence of reason" is often attributed to Nietzsche, though it is unclear if he ever wrote those words.

46. Erebus. In Greek mythology, Erebus /'erəbəs/, also Erebus (Ancient Greek: Ἔρεβος, "deep darkness, shadow"), was often conceived as a primordial deity, representing the personification of darkness; for instance, Hesiod's *Theogony* places him as one of the first five beings to come into existence, born from Chaos. Erebus features little in Greek mythological tradition and literature, but is said to have fathered several other deities by Nyx; depending on the source of the mythology, this union includes Aether, Hemera, the Hesperides, Hypnos, the Moirai, Geras, Styx, and Thanatos.

47. Hesiod (Greek: Ἡσίοδος, Hēsíodos) was a Greek oral poet generally thought by scholars to have been active between 750 and 650 BC, around the same time as Homer. His is the first European poetry in which the poet regards himself as a topic, an individual with a distinctive role to play. Ancient authors credited him and Homer with establishing Greek religious customs. Modern scholars refer to him as a major source on Greek mythology, farming techniques, early economic thought (he is sometimes identified as the first economist), archaic Greek astronomy and ancient time-keeping. The *Theogony* (Greek: Θεογονία, Theogonía, pronounced, i.e. "the genealogy or birth of the gods" is a poem by Hesiod (8th – 7th century BC) describing the origins and genealogies of Greek polytheism, composed circa 700 BC. It is written in the Epic dialect of Homeric Greek.

48. Tartarus; see Note 46.

49. Dante Alighieri, *Inferno*, Canto XXVI.

50. Let Charlie know who did it: Letting the enemy know who was responsible for a massacre by leaving poker cards on the dead bodies, is a fictional detail included as it is a good example for the type of fear-propaganda the U.S. Army promoted during the war.

51. Publius Cornelius Tacitus (AD 56 – 117) was a senator and a historian of the Roman Empire. The surviving portions of his two major works—the *Annals* and the *Histories*—examine the reigns of the Roman Emperors Tiberius, Claudius, Nero, and those who reigned in the Year of the Four Emperors (AD 69). These two works span the history of the Roman Empire from the death of Augustus in AD 14 to the years of the First Jewish–Roman War in AD 70. There are substantial lacunae in the surviving texts, including a gap in the *Annals* that is four books long. The *Agricola* (Latin: *De vita et moribus Iulii Agricolae*, lit. *On the life and character of Julius Agricola*) is a book by the Roman historian Tacitus, written c. 98, which recounts the life of his father-in-law Gnaeus Julius Agricola, an eminent Roman general. It also covers, briefly, the geography and ethnography of ancient Britain. As in the *Germania*, Tacitus favorably contrasts the liberty of the native Britons to the corruption and tyranny of the Empire; the book also contains eloquent and vicious polemics against the rapacity and greed of Rome. "Ubi solitudinem faciunt pacem appellant" is a sentence from this work.

52. William Oliver Stone (born September 15, 1946) is an American film director, screenwriter, and producer. Stone came to public prominence between the mid-1980s and the early 1990s for writing and directing a series of films about the Vietnam War, in which he had participated as an infantry soldier. Many of Stone's films focus on contemporary and controversial American political and cultural issues, such as *JFK*, *Natural Born Killers*, and *Nixon*.

Platoon is a 1986 American war film written and directed by Oliver Stone and stars Tom Berenger, Willem Dafoe and Charlie Sheen. It is the first of Stone's Vietnam War trilogy, followed by 1989's *Born on the Fourth of July* and 1993's *Heaven & Earth*. Stone wrote the story based upon his experiences as a U.S. infantryman in Vietnam to counter the vision of the war portrayed in John Wayne's *The Green Berets*.

53. It seems that most of the movie's scenes reflects images or structures from Dante's mapping of Hell's Circles. Almost every scene shows these connection: also the themes and motifs appear in an order faithful to Dante systematic description.

54. The *Asphodel Meadows* is a section of the Ancient Greek underworld where ordinary souls were sent to live after death. Origin , The Oxford English Dictionary gives Homer as the source for the English poetic tradition of describing the meadows of the afterlife as being covered in *Asphodel*. In the translation by W. H. D. Rouse, the passage in question (from *The Odyssey*, Book 11) is rendered "the ghost of clean-heeled Achilles marched away with long steps over the meadow of *asphodel*." In Book 24 in the same translation, the souls of the dead "came to the Meadow of *Asphodel* where abide the souls and phantoms of those whose work is done."

55. Robert Lee Frost (March 26, 1874 – January 29, 1963) was an American poet. He is highly regarded for his realistic depictions of rural life and his command of American colloquial speech. His work frequently employed settings from rural life in New England in the early twentieth century, using them to examine complex social and philosophical themes. One of the most popular and critically respected American poets of his generation, Frost was honored frequently during his lifetime, receiving four Pulitzer Prizes for Poetry.

"*Good Hours*" (1915), is the last poem of the collection *North of Boston*.

56. Robert William Blake (28 November 1757 – 12 August 1827) was an English poet, painter, and printmaker. Largely unrecognised during his lifetime, Blake is now considered a seminal figure in the history of the poetry and visual arts of the Romantic Age. His prophetic poetry has been said to form "what is in proportion to its merits the least read body of poetry in the English language".^[1] His visual artistry led one contemporary art critic to proclaim him "far and away the greatest artist Britain has ever produced". In 2002, Blake was placed at number 38 in the BBC's poll of the 100 Greatest Britons. Although he lived in London his entire life except for three years spent in Felpham he produced a diverse and symbolically rich corpus, which embraced the imagination as "the body of God", or "Human existence itself".

"The Tyger" is a poem by the English poet William Blake. It was published as part of his collection *Songs of Experience* in 1794. It is one of Blake's best-known and most analyzed poems. *The Cambridge Companion to William Blake* (2003) calls it "the most anthologized poem in English." Much of the poem follows the metrical pattern of its first line and can be scanned as trochaic tetrameter catalectic. A number of lines, however—such as line four in the first stanza—fall into iambic tetrameter. Most modern anthologies have kept Blake's choice of the archaic spelling "tyger". It was a common spelling of the word at the time but was already "slightly archaic" when he wrote the poem; he spelled it as "tiger" elsewhere, and many of his poetic effects "depended on subtle differences of punctuation and of spelling." Thus, his choice of "tyger" has usually been interpreted as being for effect, perhaps to render an "exotic or alien quality of the beast", or because it's not really about a tiger at all, but a metaphor.

57. "Platoon" (see Note 52).

58. Sir David Lean, CBE (25 March 1908 – 16 April 1991) was an English film director, producer, screenwriter and editor, best remembered for big-screen epics *The Bridge on the River Kwai* (1957), *Lawrence of Arabia* (1962), *Doctor Zhivago* (1965), and *A Passage to India* (1984); for bringing Charles Dickens' novels to the silver screen with films such as *Great Expectations* (1946) and *Oliver Twist* (1948); and for the renowned romantic drama *Brief Encounter* (1945).

The Bridge on the River Kwai is a 1957 British-American World War II film directed by David Lean based on the 1952 French novel *The Bridge over the River Kwai* by Pierre Boulle. The film is a work of fiction but borrows the construction of the Burma Railway in 1942–43 for its historical setting. It stars William Holden, Jack Hawkins, Alec Guinness and Sessue Hayakawa. The film was filmed in Ceylon (now Sri Lanka). The bridge in the film was located near Kitulgala.

59. Dante Alighieri, *Inferno*, Canto IX. The City of Dis (in Italian, *la città ch'ha nome Dite*, "the city whose name is Dis") encompasses the sixth through the ninth circles of Hell. The most serious sins are punished here, in lower Hell. Dis is extremely hot, and contains areas more closely resembling the common modern conception of Hell than the upper levels.

60. PBR Patrol Boat, River or PBR, is the United States Navy designation for a small rigid-hulled patrol boat used in the Vietnam War from March 1966 until the end of 1971. They were deployed in a force that grew to 250 boats, the most common craft in the River Patrol Force, Task Force 116, and were used to stop and search river traffic in areas such as the Mekong Delta, the Rung Sat Special Zone, the Saigon River and in I Corps.

61. See note 5

62. The Do lung River is an invented setting, possibly it stands also for one of the very last sectors before entering the Cambodian territory.

63. Charles Milles Manson (born November 12, 1934) is an American criminal and musician who led what became known as the Manson Family, a quasi-commune that arose in California in the late 1960s. He was found guilty of

conspiracy to commit the murders of Sharon Tate and Leno and Rosemary LaBianca carried out by members of the group at his instruction. He was convicted of the murders through the joint-responsibility rule, which makes each member of a conspiracy guilty of crimes his fellow conspirators commit in furtherance of the conspiracy's objective. The murders perpetrated by members of Charles Manson's "Family" were inspired in part by Manson's prediction of Helter Skelter, an apocalyptic war he believed would arise from tension over racial relations between blacks and whites. This "chimerical vision"—as it was termed by the court that heard Manson's appeal from his conviction for the Tate/LaBianca killings, involved reference to music of The Beatles (particularly songs from the album *The Beatles*, also known as *The White Album*) and to the New Testament's Book of Revelation

64. James Marshall Hendrix (born Johnny Allen Hendrix; November 27, 1942 – September 18, 1970) was an American musician, singer and songwriter. Despite a limited mainstream exposure of four years, he is widely considered one of the most influential electric guitarists in the history of popular music and one of the most celebrated musicians of the 20th century.

"Purple Haze" is a song written and recorded by Jimi Hendrix in 1967, released as the second single by The Jimi Hendrix Experience in both the United Kingdom and the United States. It later appeared on the American version of the band's 1967 album *Are You Experienced*. "Purple Haze's" guitar virtuosic techniques would be emulated by many metal guitarists.

65. Harry Shapiro is editor of Druglink and head of publishing at Drugscope. He is an author, journalist and lecturer who has written very widely on the subject of drugs. He is the author of several books relating to drugs and popular musics.

66. James Rado (born James Radomski, January 23, 1932) is an American actor, writer and composer, best known as the co-author, along with Gerome Ragni, of 1967's groundbreaking American tribal love-rock musical *Hair*. He and Ragni were nominated for the 1969 Tony Award for best musical, and they won for best musical at the Grammy Awards in 1969. Gerome Bernard Ragni (September 11, 1935 – July 10, 1991) was an American actor, singer and songwriter, best known as the co-author of the groundbreaking 1960s *Hair: The American Tribal Love-Rock Musical*.

Galt MacDermot (born December 18, 1928) is a Canadian composer, pianist and writer of musical theatre. He won a Grammy Award for the song "African Waltz" in 1960. His most successful musicals have been *Hair* (1967; its cast album also won a Grammy) and *Two Gentlemen of Verona* (1971). MacDermot has also written music for film soundtracks, jazz and funk albums, and classical music, and his music has been sampled in hit hip-hop songs and albums.

Hair: The American Tribal Love-Rock Musical is a rock musical with a book and lyrics by James Rado and Gerome Ragni and music by Galt MacDermot. A product of the hippie counter-culture and sexual revolution of the 1960s, several of its songs became anthems of the anti-Vietnam War peace movement. The musical's profanity, its depiction of the use of

illegal drugs, its treatment of sexuality, its irreverence for the American flag, and its nude scene caused much comment and controversy.[1] The musical broke new ground in musical theatre by defining the genre of "rock musical", using a racially integrated cast, and inviting the audience onstage for a "Be-In" finale.

67. The "Black Freedom Movement", or The African-American Civil Rights Movement were social movements in the United States aimed at outlawing racial discrimination against black Americans and restoring voting rights to them. This article covers the phase of the movement between 1955 and 1968, particularly in the South. The wave of inner city riots from 1964 through 1970 undercut support from the white community. The emergence of the Black Power Movement, which lasted from about 1966 to 1975, challenged the established black leadership for its cooperative attitude and its nonviolence, and instead demanded political and economic self-sufficiency.

68. In Greek mythology, Tiresias (Greek: Τειρεσίας, also transliterated as Teiresias) was a blind prophet of Thebes, famous for clairvoyance and for being transformed into a woman for seven years. He was the son of the shepherd Everes and the nymph Chariclo. Tiresias participated fully in seven generations at Thebes, beginning as advisor to Cadmus himself. Tiresias was a prophet of Apollo

69. Christian Marquand (March 15, 1927 – November 22, 2000) was a French director, actor and screenwriter working in French cinema. A native of Marseille, he was born to a Spanish father and an Arabic mother , his sister was film director Nadine Trintignant, and he can be seen as a heartthrob in French movies of the 1950s.

70. *Les Fleurs du mal* (English: *The Flowers of Evil*) is a volume of French poetry by Charles Baudelaire. First published in 1857 (see 1857 in poetry), it was important in the symbolist and modernist movements. The subject matter of these poems deals with themes relating to decadence and eroticism. This poem represents the condition of the poet "mocked" in bourgeois society.

The poet is compared to the Albatros, which, with its large wings reigns in the blue skies. But when the bird falls to the ground, it is precisely its majestic wings that prevent him from walking and make it look awkward and comical. Intellectual ability, sensitivity and depth of feeling are the "wings" that allow the poet to fly and get to the world of poetry, but as the albatross is so also the poet once within reality and among people loses his beauty and becomes an object of derision by the bourgeois community.

The bourgeois world, dominated by the law of interest, productivity, practical sense and respectability, sees the artist as the other, the unproductive to keep at a distance and ridicule.

Moreover, the poet is acutely aware of his diversity but also of his being unfit for the common life but he manages to make of his feeling like an "exiled on earth" his strength, rejecting the bourgeois mediocrity and claiming proudly his intellectual prestige.

71. Samuel Taylor Coleridge (21 October 1772 – 25 July 1834) was an English poet, literary critic and philosopher who, with his friend William Wordsworth, was a founder of the Romantic Movement in England and a member of the Lake Poets. He wrote the poems *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner* and *Kubla Khan*, as well as the major prose work *Biographia Literaria*. His critical work, especially on Shakespeare, was highly influential, and he helped introduce German idealist philosophy to English-speaking culture. He coined many familiar words and phrases, including the celebrated suspension of disbelief. He was a major influence on Emerson, and American transcendentalism. Coleridge is probably best known for his long poems, *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner* and *Christabel*. Even those who have never read the *Rime* have come under its influence: its words have given the English language the metaphor of an albatross around one's neck, the quotation of "water, water everywhere, nor any drop to drink" (almost always rendered as "but not a drop to drink"), and the phrase "a sadder and a wiser man" (again, usually rendered as "sadder but wiser man"). The phrase "All creatures great and small" may have been inspired by *The Rime*: "He prayeth best, who loveth best;/ All things great and small;/ For the dear God who loveth us;/ He made and loveth all."

72. Điện Biên Phủ is a city in north-western Vietnam. It is the capital of Điện Biên Province. The city is best known for the events which occurred there during the First Indochina War, the Battle of Điện Biên Phủ, during which the region was a breadbasket for the Việt Minh. The city was formally called Thaeng.

73. The Battle of Khe Sanh was conducted in north-western Quang Tri Province, Republic of Vietnam (South Vietnam), between 21 January and 9 July 1968 during the Vietnam War. The belligerent parties were elements of the United States (U.S.) III Marine Amphibious Force (III MAF), 1st Cavalry Division (United States), the U.S. Seventh Air Force, minor elements of the South Vietnamese Army (ARVN) against two to three division-size elements of the North Vietnamese Army (NVA).

74. Việt Minh; abbreviated from Việt Nam Độc Lập Đồng Minh Hội, English "League for the Independence of Vietnam") was a communist national independence coalition formed at Pac Bo on May 19, 1941. The Việt Minh initially formed to seek independence for Vietnam from the French Empire. When the Japanese occupation began, the Việt Minh opposed Japan with support from the United States and the Republic of China. After World War II, the Việt Minh opposed the re-occupation of Vietnam by France and later opposed South Vietnam and the United States in the Vietnam War.

75. The Degar, also known as the Montagnard, are the indigenous peoples of the Central Highlands of Vietnam. The term Montagnard means "mountain people" in French and is a carryover from the French colonial period in Vietnam. In Vietnamese, they are known by the term thượng (highlanders) - this term can also be applied to other minority ethnic groups in Vietnam. Thượng is the Vietnamese adaptation of the Chinese "Shang" (上). The official term is now Người dân tộc thiểu số (literally, "minority people").

76. Purple is the colour of good judgment. It is the colour of people seeking spiritual fulfilment. It is said if one surrounds oneself with purple one will have peace of mind. Purple is a good colour to use in meditation. Purple has been used to symbolize magic and mystery, as well as royalty. Being the combination of red and blue, the warmest and coolest colours, purple is believed to be the ideal colour.

77. Angkor is one of the most important archaeological sites in South-East Asia. Stretching over some 400 km², including forested area, Angkor Archaeological Park contains the magnificent remains of the different capitals of the Khmer Empire, from the 9th to the 15th century. They include the famous Temple of Angkor Wat and, at Angkor Thom, the Bayon Temple with its countless sculptural decorations. UNESCO has set up a wide-ranging programme to safeguard this symbolic site and its surroundings. It has become a symbol of Cambodia, appearing on its national flag, and it is the country's prime attraction for visitors.

78. J. Conrad "Heart of Darkness", Penguin M.C. 1973 , p.75 . At the Inner Station, Marlow meets the harlequin. He is struck by the harlequin's singular appearance – the harlequin is a Russian man who helps Kurtz and is considered his "disciple." He dresses in colourful patched clothing. He worships Kurtz much like the native Africans do and finds himself listening more than speaking. In fact, exclusively listening and not speaking at all. Thus, he knows many of Kurtz's thoughts. Like many of the other characters, he has a tendency to babble. Marlow tolerates the harlequin because he knows so much about Kurtz. His catchphrase is that Kurtz has "enlarged my mind." This paints Kurtz as a guru possessing arcane and mystical knowledge.

79. "If . . ." (1910), by Rudyard Kipling (1865–1936), is a poem that was written in tribute to the British imperialist politician Leander Starr Jameson, and as paternal advice to John Kipling, son of the author. As poetry, "If . . ." is a literary example of Victorian-era stoicism. Joseph Rudyard Kipling ; 30 December 1865 – 18 January 1936) was an English short-story writer, poet, and novelist chiefly remembered for his tales and poems of British soldiers in India and his tales for children. He was born in Bombay, in the Bombay Presidency of British India, and was taken by his family to England when he was five years old. Kipling is best known for his works of fiction, including *The Jungle Book* (a collection of stories which includes "Rikki-Tikki-Tavi"), *Just So Stories* (1902), *Kim* (1901) (a tale of adventure), many short stories, including "The Man Who Would Be King" (1888), and his poems, including "Mandalay" (1890), "Gunga Din" (1890), "The White Man's Burden" (1899) and "If—" (1910). He is regarded as a major "innovator in the art of the short story" his children's books are enduring classics of children's literature; and his best works are said to exhibit "a versatile and luminous narrative gift".

80. See Note 16.

81. Dante Alighieri; *Inferno* ; Canto XXVII.

"S'io credesse che mia risposta fosse

*A persona che mai tornasse al mondo,
Questa fiamma staria senza piu scosse.
Ma perciocche giammai di questo fondo
Non torno vivo alcun, s'i'odo il vero,
Senza tema d'infamia ti rispondo”*

82. T.S. Elliot; “The Hollow Men”; see Note 1.
83. J. Conrad “Heart of Darkness”, Penguin M.C. 1973; p.72
84. Ibid.; p.99
85. Anthony Alexander Poshepny (September 18, 1924 – June 27, 2003), known as Tony Poe, was a CIA paramilitary officer in what is now called Special Activities Division. He is best remembered for training the United States Secret Army in Laos during the Vietnam War.
86. See Note 2.
87. Robert B. Rheault (born October 31, 1925) is a retired colonel in the U.S. Army Special Forces who served as commander of the First Special Forces Group in Okinawa, and the Fifth Special Forces Group in Vietnam from May to July 1969. Rheault was best known for his role as commander of the unit responsible for the 20 June 1969 execution of South Vietnam double agent, Thai Khac Chuyen, who compromised intelligence agents involved in Project GAMMA operating in Vietnam and Cambodia.
88. Lyndon Baines Johnson (August 27, 1908 – January 22, 1973), often referred to as LBJ, was the 36th President of the United States (1963–1969), a position he assumed after his service as the 37th Vice President of the United States (1961–1963). He is one of only four people who served in all four elected federal offices of the United States: Representative, Senator, Vice President, and President. Johnson, a Democrat from Texas, served as a United States Representative from 1937–1949 and as a Senator from 1949–1961, including six years as United States Senate Majority Leader, two as Senate Minority Leader and two as Senate Majority Whip. After campaigning unsuccessfully for the Democratic nomination in 1960, Johnson was asked by John F. Kennedy to be his running mate for the 1960 presidential election. Johnson succeeded to the presidency following the assassination of John F. Kennedy on November 22, 1963, completed Kennedy's term and was elected President in his own right, winning by a large margin over Barry Goldwater in the 1964 election.
89. The 5th Special Forces Group – airborne- is an active duty United States Army Special Forces (SF) Group that was activated on 21 September 1961, at the height of the Cold War. It is one of the most decorated special operations units in the United States military. The 5th SFG(A) saw extensive action in the Vietnam War. Nowadays, 5th Group is

primarily responsible for operations within the CENTCOM area of responsibility, as part of the Special Operations Command, Central (SOCCENT).

90. A-12 Archangel, a Cold War aircraft made by Lockheed . (Operation Archangel , though, was a part of the North Russia Campaign 1918–1919 during World War I; a British military operation).

91. U.S. Military Assistance Command, Vietnam (MACV) was a joint-service Command of the United States Department of Defense. MACV was created on 8 February 1962, in response to the increase in United States military assistance to South Vietnam. MACV was first implemented to assist the Military Assistance Advisory Group (MAAG) Vietnam, controlling every advisory and assistance effort in Vietnam, but was reorganized on 15 May 1964 and absorbed MAAG Vietnam to its command when combat unit deployment became too large for advisory group control. MACV was disestablished on 29 March 1973.

92. J. Conrad “Heart of Darkness”, Penguin M.C. 1973; p 87.

93. Ibid.; p.87

94. .See Note 1.

95. J. Conrad “Heart of Darkness”, Penguin M.C. 1973; p 83.

96. John Orley Allen Tate (November 19, 1899 – February 9, 1979) was an American poet, essayist, social commentator, and Poet Laureate Consultant in Poetry to the Library of Congress from 1943 to 1944.

97. Gerald Lucas , July 19, 2004 in Literature, Theory; “Elliot and the Mythic Method”. Dr. Gerald Lucas is an Associate Professor of English in the Department of Media, Culture & the Arts at Middle Georgia State. He teaches courses in new media theory, web site design, and humanities. His research and teaching interests include epic poetry, science fiction, techno-culture, writing for digital media, and modernism.

98. James Joyce (2 February 1882 – 13 January 1941) was an Irish novelist and poet, considered to be one of the most influential writers in the modernist avant-garde of the early 20th century. Joyce is best known for *Ulysses* (1922), a landmark work in which the episodes of Homer's *Odyssey* are paralleled in an array of contrasting literary styles, perhaps most prominent among these the stream of consciousness technique he perfected. Other major works are the short-story collection *Dubliners* (1914), and the novels *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* (1916) and *Finnegans Wake* (1939). His complete oeuvre also includes three books of poetry, a play, occasional journalism, and his published letters.

99. *Ulysses* was first serialized in parts in the American journal *The Little Review* from March 1918 to December 1920, and then published in its entirety by Sylvia Beach in February 1922, in Paris. Considered one of the most important works of Modernist literature.

100. Agent Orange is the combination of the code names for Herbicide Orange (HO) and Agent LNX, one of the herbicides and defoliants used by the U.S. military as part of its chemical warfare program, Operation Ranch Hand,

during the Vietnam War from 1961 to 1971. Vietnam estimates 400,000 people were killed or maimed, and 500,000 children born with birth defects as a result of its use. The Red Cross of Vietnam estimates that up to 1 million people are disabled or have health problems due to Agent Orange.

101. The third eye (also known as the inner eye) is a mystical and esoteric concept referring to a speculative invisible eye which provides perception beyond ordinary sight. In certain dharmic spiritual traditions such as Hinduism, the third eye refers to the ajna, or brow, chakra. In Theosophy it is related to the pineal gland. The third eye refers to the gate that leads to inner realms and spaces of higher consciousness. In New Age spirituality, the third eye often symbolizes a state of enlightenment or the evocation of mental images having deeply personal spiritual or psychological significance. The third eye is often associated with religious visions, clairvoyance, the ability to observe chakras and auras, precognition, and out-of-body experiences. People who are claimed to have the capacity to utilize their third eyes are sometimes known as seers.

102. Jeffrey Chown, *Hollywood Auteur: Francis Coppola* (New York: Praeger, 1988), 134

103. Mary Shelley's "Dr. Frankenstein or the Modern Prometheus" ; 11818. Mary Shelley (née Mary Wollstonecraft Godwin; 30 August 1797 – 1 February 1851) was an English novelist, short story writer, dramatist, essayist, biographer, and travel writer, best known for her Gothic novel *Frankenstein: or, The Modern Prometheus* (1818). She also edited and promoted the works of her husband, the Romantic poet and philosopher Percy Bysshe Shelley. Her father was the political philosopher William Godwin, and her mother was the philosopher and feminist Mary Wollstonecraft.

104. The concept of Tao was shared with Confucianism, Chán and Zen Buddhism and more broadly throughout East Asian philosophy and religion in general. Within these contexts Tao signifies the primordial essence or fundamental nature of the universe.

105. C. Jung; Excerpts from Jung, Carl G. *Dreams*, trans. R.F.C. Hull. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1974; "Jung on Dreams: Compendium of Horror, Fear, and the Grotesque"

"The symbols of the process of individuation that appear in dreams are images of an archetypal nature which depict the centralizing process or the production of a new centre of personality....I call this centre the 'self,' which should be understood as the totality of the psyche. The self is not only the centre, but also the whole circumference which embraces both conscious and unconscious; it is the centre of this totality, just as the ego is the centre of consciousness," p. 115.

Jung's studies of dreams led him to develop an approach to interpreting them. In much of his literature he draws on the work of Freud in this area and credits Freud with developing a scientific method for understanding the hidden meaning of dreams. Jung's understanding of dreams, and the symbols or archetypes present in dreams, is critical to getting at the unconscious messages presented to us in nightmares. True nightmares are replete with archetypal images that haunt us well into our post dreaming stages. The uncanny or horrifying feeling a nightmare elicits will sometimes stay with the

dreamer throughout his waking hours. Jung viewed dreams and nightmares as comprehensive "statements" made by the unconscious mind. These "statements" are not in the form of a language that the conscious mind readily understands. By nature, the language of the unconscious is diametric to that of the conscious. The unconscious mind uses symbols, metaphors, and archetypes to convey meaning. And Jung believed that the meaning of dreams and nightmares was inevitably a statement about the current condition or situation of the dreamer's psyche. Because the language of the unconscious is wholly different from that of the conscious, the challenge for the conscious mind is to try to decode or interpret what the unconscious is revealing. There is no "hidden agenda" or subterfuge on the part of the unconscious. It is simply communicating to the conscious mind the only way it can. Consequently, the conscious mind finds it difficult to interpret and understand the meaning of dreams and nightmares.

106. J. Conrad "Heart of Darkness", Penguin M.C. 1973; p.100.

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