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"The Horror, The Horror!": An Intertextual Cross-Media Exploration of
the Hero's Journey and Irony in Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* and
Francis Ford Coppola's *Apocalypse Now*.

Abstract

The archetypal genre of romance and the notion of the quest have been repeated, deconstructed and re-imagined in various contexts across time, forms of art and mediums. The purpose of this study is to complete a cross-media comparative analysis of Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* and Francis Ford Coppola's *Apocalypse Now*, in order to examine the interconnection between these works, their relation to these underlying archetypal structures, and further illustrate how these intertextual "systems of culture in general" (Allen 1) are applied in order to construct and convey meaning. Particularly, this involves a discussion of how the heroic quest, manifested through Marlow and Willard's journeys up the River Congo and Nung, is structured in both works in terms of plot. By adopting the framework of Gerard Genette's taxonomy of intertextuality, this study applies the notion of the "architext" as a method of perceiving and comparing the journey of Marlow and Willard. "Architexturally", then, this framework manifests itself through the structures of plot as seen in Joseph Campbell's Monomyth and Northrop Frye's notion of the romance quest. Here, the inherently modernist context of production of *Heart of Darkness* is shown to reflect itself through the conflict manifested within the quest-structure, where Marlow's final meeting with Kurtz is ultimately deflated through irony, and at the level of narration, as the frame narrator's masked commentary once more exposes the ironic nature associated with the protagonist's romantic glorification of British imperialist adventures in Africa. Contrastingly, the post-modern application of these archetypal structures in *Apocalypse Now* presents a more "complete" version of the heroic journey. Through a comparative analysis centered around Genette's notion of the "hypertext", however, this study also illustrates how Francis Ford Coppola's *Apocalypse Now* utilizes the art of cinematography, mise-en-scène and audio to draw upon the thematic aspects of *Heart of Darkness*. Willard, unlike the ignorant hero Marlow, is not able to fully leave the grasps of his traumatic experiences; ultimately making him, as many returning veterans of war, doomed to repeat and relive the quest of war. This intertextual, cross-media study emphasizes how the audience of *Apocalypse Now* is invited to function as an equivalent to the judging, reflective frame narrator of *Heart of Darkness* through the perspective of the camera, and is thus exposed to the cyclical and universal "horrors" of man; where further literary and metaphorical allusions to hell in Conrad's novel become transferred into a 1970's Vietnam war context, ultimately signifying how both works are shown to reflect the terrors of imperialism, war and the "heart of darkness" within everyone.

Keywords: Intertextuality, Archetypal Criticism, The Monomyth, The Architext, The Hypertext, Irony.

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Introduction

Over the years, the notion of intertextuality, and the subsequent “process of moving between texts” (Allen 1) in the production and reception of art, has become a common practice both within the academic world and through every day “[acts] of reading” (Allen 1). This textual interconnectivity stretches from allusions or direct references to previous works or texts, to more generic, archetypal systems of order, from which elements of plot and narrative are structured – all with the purpose of constructing and conveying meaning. Joseph Conrad's tale of a man's exposure to the darker sides behind British imperialist adventures in *Heart of Darkness* is one such text which has been read, studied and referenced thoroughly since its publication in 1899. Here, Marlow's physical and psychological journey up the river Congo to meet Kurtz has been paralleled, contrasted and re-imagined in various different contexts. One work which has been recognized as drawing intertextual connections to *Heart of Darkness* is Francis Ford Coppola's film *Apocalypse Now* from 1979. Produced within a post-war, Hollywood-dominated era of film in America, *Apocalypse Now* depicts the traumatizing and thrilling experiences of the Vietnam war through the eyes of Captain Willard (Martin Sheen), who journeys up the river Nung in his own quest to confront and terminate Colonel Walter E. Kurtz (Marlon Brando). By examining the concept of intertextuality as a method of constructing meaning through textual references, structures of plot and use of narration, this paper adopts a cross-media analysis of the aforementioned works by echoing how “The eighty years between the publication of Conrad's novella and the release of Coppola's film have witnessed a profound reversal in the relationship between author and text as it structures the institution of literature, which has moved from a central position in culture to the status of simply one media industry among others” (Elsaesser & Wedel 152) – something which includes an understanding of how Marlow's journey, as an archetypal allusion to the romance quest,

is structured and de-constructed in a modernist reflection of plot and narration in *Heart of Darkness*, and how these same underlying structures and discussions combine with intertextual referencing in order to manifest Willard's experience as the ironic American hero in a post-modern, cinematographic context of *Apocalypse Now*.

Reception History

Heart of Darkness: Modernism, Irony and Plot

Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* has been the subject of study for many literary critics, serving as one of the most popular works of literature since its original publishing date – both in terms of its intriguing style and structure of narration, but also regarding the various symbolic interpretations that spring from the telling and re-telling of Marlow's journey in Africa. Conrad stands as one of the most complex figures of the early modernist literary movement. His style of narration, ironic representation of the notion of plot, and the subsequent thematic and philosophical allusions within *Heart of Darkness* stand as clear examples of the revolutionary tendencies of modernism to its predecessors of romance and traditional styles and conventions of literature. Here, narration and plot are the key aspects of analysis both in the framework of this paper and of previous scholars – stretching from the focus on double-voice in Tom Henthorne's argument of a discursive “trojan-horse” within the narrative of *Heart of Darkness*, to the more intertextual approaches of Yarrison and Rangarajan, where Marlow's journey is examined through its relations to previous texts and literary patterns of plot; essentially connecting it to underlying symbolic and metaphorical archetypes of mythology.

One perspective, from which thematic and narratological discussions of *Heart of Darkness* are key, is that of Michael Mack in “Modernity's Promise and Its Disavowed Disappointment: Hanna Arendt's Analysis of Totalitarianism out of the Sources of Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*”. Mack perceives Conrad's work as containing a “destructive deflation of lofty ideas and romantic promises” (89), signified through “an ironic style of writing” (89). This involves a setting in which “the sea hauntingly transfers destruction from nonhuman nature into the core of humanity's civilization” (89) – the sea in this case manifested through Marlow's narration of the river. From this perspective, the initially “romantic vision” (89) of Kurtz becomes inherently ironic, as Marlow encounters him, ultimately resulting in an element of deflation or “disappointment”; a key element of modernism. By manifesting this “destruction of myths of idealism, imperialism and progress” (90), Mack argues that the use of irony contains a “constructive” (90) function by proclaiming “[...] nothing while promulgating a plethora of possible meanings ranging from imperialism's pride and its “ruthless power” to the “craven terror” it inflicts on its subjects” (90). Mack continues to note how this ironic element facilitates an interpretation of the narrative where “idealism mutates into colonial exploitation as well as unlimited selfishness and the progress (of rationalism and ideas)

appears to be a radical regression” (91). This idea of progress is something which Mack heavily comments upon in relation to his discussion of modernism and the ironic use of romance within *Heart of Darkness*. Here, Mack argues that progress and idealism become “a form of regression [...], and the irrationalism of myth persists in what has been assumed to be a demythologized modernity” (92). By emphasizing how “the idealism of ideology” (107) and “progress” become associated with themes of discrimination, racism and “its murderous consequences” (107), Mack draws upon the ironic narrative style as a key element of interpretation in *Heart of Darkness*. This is facilitated through a “demythologization” (92) and “irrationalism in myth” (92), which is an important perspective in relation to the analytical discussions of this paper; in terms of how both *Heart of Darkness* and *Apocalypse Now* are examined through the theoretical framework concerned with archetypal structures of the quest.

Another study which discusses the use of irony in *Heart of Darkness* is that of Srila Nayak in *Two Narratives of Modernism in Heart of Darkness*. Nayak discusses how *Heart of Darkness* contains an “implicit critique of modernist style” (31), which constructs an ironic representation of “impressionism as a mode that can only offer a curtailed understanding of the world” (31) – once again focusing on how narration is a key element of interpretation in this work. Nayak further argues that the notion of “consciousness” (31) and self-reflection is an important part within the narrative, as Marlow’s retelling of his meeting with the tribes of Congo “[highlights] its perception of a profound evil that is distinct from Gothic and realist stereotypes of evil and horror that merely reflect emotions attached to visible objects” (35). Thus, the “narrative method” (38) of Marlow, which is inherently impressionistic, is able to “capture the hidden reality behind appearances [and] is bounded by the imperial discourse on the difference between the Self and the Other” (38) – facilitating the discussion of important themes, much like that of imperialism which Mack connects to Marlow’s ironic style of narrative.

Apocalypse Now: The Crisis of the American War Hero and Post-Modernist Intertextuality

Francis Ford Coppola’s *Apocalypse Now* stands as one of the most influential Hollywood representations of the American conflict in Vietnam. With clear intertextual references (Demory, Norris, Vargas) and a conscious use of earlier conventions of mythology and plot (Fertel, Deltcheva, Cahir) Willard’s adventure in Vietnam echoes and draws parallels to the journey of Marlow in *Heart of Darkness*. Whilst associating a “crisis about the hero” (254) with the dream-like

cinematography and narrative of *Apocalypse Now*, Comber argues that Coppola's rendition of Marlow's journey through Willard is perhaps a reflection of the general public's "most memorable impression of the Vietnam War" (251): inherently "[...] a world that could be wondrously beautiful, but also terrifying" (251). Thus, capturing both visions of romance and its ironic deflation. Much like previous perspectives on irony in *Heart of Darkness*, Vietnam War films of Hollywood such as *Apocalypse Now* also contain an aspect of narrative in which both the audience and characters experience an element of absurd meaninglessness or lack of sense-making; "the intense epic of a pointless combat" (Lyotard 58). With this in mind, Jean-Francois Lyotard discusses the notion of "seduction", being "implicitly given prescriptions to act" (59), which ultimately signifies the underlying political or ideologically infused narratives within film in general. In relation to *Apocalypse Now*, Lyotard identifies elements of "seduction" within a "positive saga of the hero, negative saga of the sought-after officer, [and] impossible saga of the war" (59) – reflecting both the underlying archetypal structures of plot within *Apocalypse Now*, and also the postmodernist application of these traditional literary conventions. However, in "Two Metamorphoses of the Seductive", Lyotard also notes how certain scenes of Coppola's Vietnam Film break with the overall narrative pattern;

But the block of images of the attack of the village does not belong to the saga, that is, to the narration, at all. [...]. The panic is that no narrative can take charge of this chaos of data and suggest an obligation to the addressee (69)

Here, Lyotard argues that the scene in which the Vietnamese village is bombarded by Kilgore's American army in fact reflects how the pure "chaos" of cinematography can overrule narrative structures and elements of "seduction" within *Apocalypse Now* through distorted sound, quick editing and flashing images: "panic" (69). This argument is particularly interesting in relation to how aspects of cinematography, such as those previously mentioned by Comber and Lyotard, may influence the underlying structures of plot and narrative; perhaps even to the point where they negate them. As Ashley Woodward adds in "Dispositif, Matter, Affect and the Real; Four Fundamental Concepts of Lyotard's Film-Philosophy", the infamous attack on the Vietnamese village in *Apocalypse Now* "breaks with the regular organization through which the narrative is constructed" (1) in the sense that "meaning is lost, swept away in the title of intense visual and sonorous effects" (1). Nevertheless, both Woodward and Lyotard recognize the underlying politically "seductive" interpretation manifested within Coppola's *Apocalypse Now* – similar to

what Comber and Fertel associate with the presence of absurdity, “crisis about the hero” (Comber 254), and the American veteran.

In “Destination Classified: On the Transformation of Spatial Forms in Applying the Narrative Text to Film”, Roumiana Deltcheva explores the interconnection between *Heart of Darkness* and *Apocalypse Now* from the perspective of narrative structures and their underlying transformation of literary chronotopes. By maintaining a focus on the “spatio-temporal” (753) significance within the narrative of both works, Deltcheva examines the intertextual relationship between Conrad’s two narrators’ telling and re-telling the stories of the river Congo, in comparison with the story of Coppola’s Willard, where cinematography “[...] [transforms] the formal parameters of literary narrative” (754) – ultimately viewing *Apocalypse Now* as a “version of Joseph Conrad’s *Heart of Darkness*” (754). Regarding the spatial and temporal aspects of these respective works, and their interconnection, Deltcheva draws upon their symbolic uses of the river as having a key role in both narrative structures. By “analyzing the composition” (758) of both *Heart of Darkness* and *Apocalypse Now*, Deltcheva finds narrative patterns which parallel that of “Bakhtin’s chronotope of the road” (758): a literary phenomenon which both “stands as an infallible metaphor of life in its evolution” (758) and also functions as “an effective framework for linear development of the plot” (758). Essentially, this chronotope involves a linear path of progression for the protagonist, manifested within the plot and narrative structure, where the physical ending point is considered “subordinated to the achievement of goal” (759) – the journey itself is centered here. However, Deltcheva argues that both Conrad and Coppola’s works differ from this traditional literary chronotope by using the river as their primary spatial and temporal epicenter of the narrative;

The chronotope of the river hence is perpendicular to the horizontal chronotope of the road. While horizontal structuring of the chronotope of the road determines either the geographical/topographical shifts or the temporal progression, the vertical nature of the chronotope of the river ensures the movement in space but discloses its characteristic achronic essence (759).

Thus, the narratives of *Heart of Darkness* and *Apocalypse Now* differ from Bakhtin’s chronotope of the road in the sense that the rivers, and their physical destinations, are essential to the narration of Marlow and Willard’s journeys – both spatially and temporally. Furthermore, Deltcheva also emphasizes how these works differ from texts in which “characters move along the road with no definitive objectives to pursue” (759). Arguably, this is done by applying the chronotope of the

river, in which the goals of the journey are centered around the river Congo and the river Nung: “The direction of the movement on the river is overtly emphasized to be taking place either upwards – to the source, or downwards – to the estuary” (759). In summary, Deltcheva draws a connection between *Heart of Darkness* and *Apocalypse Now* in which their similar use of spatial and temporal factors is crucial to the narrative development and overall structure. Thus, thematic elements which might formerly be placed within a more universal, vertical axis in relation to Bakhtin's horizontal chronotope of the road are now dependent on the physical journey of Marlow and Willard's along the river: “the universality of war/death and sex/lust transposed onto the horizontal plane automatically becomes time-dependent” (762). This notion of the chronotope is of particular interest when considering the analytical framework of this paper, which is based upon the archetypal structures of Campbell's Monomyth and Frye's notion of the romance quest – both of which are concerned with heroic journeys, commonly situated within a timeless world where adventures have occurred long before and after the primary tale in question.

As the previous discussions have illustrated, *Heart of Darkness*, with its inherently ironic style of narration and deconstruction of plot, has become a field of analysis for many scholars; even being read as a reflection of the “irrationality” (Mack 92) conventional literary structures of mythology and the hero's journey. In particular, the use of two narrators has been an important factor in the reading of this work, where authors such as Henthorne have argued for a “trojan-horse”-esque, double-voiced retelling of Marlow's journey up the river of Congo. Here previously mentioned scholars such as Mack and Nayak have dived into the thematic elements of a stylistic and contextual nature, with both the narrators in Conrad's work showing their own opinions on elements of colonialism and the darker, psychological sides of man – all realized through Marlow's quest for finding Kurtz. The notion of the quest is an essential element of the analytical framework of this project, as it both signifies the importance of the journey itself for Marlow and Willard, where the hero encounters various steps in his journey towards the ultimate resolution of meeting Kurtz, whilst also highlighting a key theoretical framework from which *Apocalypse Now* can be compared and paralleled to Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*.

Interestingly, Willard undergoes a similar journey towards his quest of assassinating Colonel Walter E. Kurtz – a mission which essentially means killing or assassinating a part of himself. Previous discussions regarding the underlying archetypal framework of the heroic journey (Fertel, Deltcheva, Cahir) will illustrate how important elements of “agon” or conflict within the quest are manifested in this journey itself – with the notion of Northrop Frye's romance and “fictional

modes” providing an essential analytical perspective to this paper’s reading of the hero’s journey within both *Heart of Darkness* and *Apocalypse Now*. Naturally, as Asbjørn Grønstad points out, it may be “a rather hazardous and even methodologically unsound approach” (131) to analyze an individual film only from the perspective of “mythological registers” (131) or structures – i.e., much like the previous studies drawing upon the hero’s journey. However, as the previously mentioned studies of *Heart of Darkness* and *Apocalypse Now*, as well as many comparative readings, have shown, these underlying structures and patterns are crucial in establishing a framework from which otherwise contextual, individual or philosophical factors of both works may be understood. With the comments of Grønstad in mind, it is also crucial to consider the field of intertextuality and context; *what, how* and *why*, have elements of *Heart of Darkness* been transferred into the 1970’s postmodernist context of *Apocalypse Now*. Furthermore, it is crucial to consider not only which aspects are of similarity between the texts, but also how they differ; because every choice made by the author, should be regarded as one of significance.

Linguistic Signs: Cross-Media Architextuality and Hypertextuality

The reading of texts in both an interpretive and comparative manner requires an understanding of how language, literature and discourse are intertwined. As Graham Allen states in *Intertextuality*, works of literature are not only “built from systems, codes, and traditions established by previous works of literature” (1), but likewise, “systems of culture in general” (1) may also prove crucial their inherent “meaning” (1). This focus on the interconnection between literary works, something which has consequently become a key part of modern literary criticism, is commonly known as the term ‘intertextuality’. From the perspective of Allen, the “act of reading” (1) thus becomes a gateway to “a network of textual relations” (1); a notion which manifests itself in the attempts of academics to systematize and categorize both fiction, non-fiction and acts of communication in general; stretching from elements such as genre, themes and stylistics, to narratology and discourse. A key part of this “network” of textual relations is therefore the “process of moving between texts” (1). Essentially, this is where a work of literature becomes interdependent piece of a larger “meaning” – an “intertext”, as Allen writes. Amongst others, Allen attributes the origins of intertextuality to mid twentieth-century linguist Ferdinand de Saussure, whose work within the field of semiotics was concerned with the perception of language as an interdependent combination of “signs”: “Signs are not ‘positive terms’; they are not referential, they only possess what meaning they do possess because of their combinatory and associative relation to other signs”

(10). According to Allen, Saussure's notion of the linguistic "sign", and his subsequent vision of "language generally" (10), has achieved great influence on human sciences since its introduction to the academic field of linguistics. Particularly, the systematic nature of Saussure's semiotics paved the way for the "critical, philosophical and cultural movement" of structuralism in the 1950's, which "[...] sought [...] to produce a revolutionary redescription of human culture in terms of sign-systems" (10). Following Saussure's influence on the understanding of texts as inherently being intertextual, and language as interconnected "signs" of unified meaning, many literary critics have adopted the framework of structuralism in which likewise "linguistic signs" and ordering systems have become essential for the perception of fiction:

Authors of literary works do not just select words from a language system, they select plots, generic features, aspects of character, images, way of narrating, even phrases and sentences from previous literary texts and from literary tradition (Allen 11)

From this standpoint, literature only becomes meaningful when viewed in relation to its underlying ordering systems and structures – much like how Saussure's semiotic "signs" can only be read in relation to and in unification of each other. This perspective on the intertextual nature of elements such as narrative, plot, imagery and characterization as being "generic" and "selected" from previous works has furthermore undergone criticism from the post-structuralist scholars. Here Allen states, that the crucial aspect of this post-structuralist critique lies precisely within the structuralists' reconsideration of the nature of literary works in relation to meaning. The main concern being that "the literary work is viewed not as the container of meaning but as a space in which a potentially vast number of relations coalesce" (12) – ultimately arguing the fact that the "author's original thoughts" (12) are disregarded within Saussurean structuralism. This, however, would not prove to discourage a framework of systematized "linguistic signs" within the field of intertextuality.

In providing an overview of the academic evolution of the term intertextuality, Allen touches upon French literary critic Gérard Genette. Genette attempts to maintain an inherently structuralist framework of analysis by adopting a more pragmatic approach to literary ordering systems, and in particular, their relation to the individual text. Genette's perception of intertextuality draws influence from both Saussure's semiotics as well as the previously described approach to literature within the structuralist movement; with the essential focus being the "desire to study the life of cultural sign-systems" (92). This perspective is of particular interest when considering how the archetypal structures of the Monomyth and romance quest are applied and represented within a modern and post-modern context of *Heart of Darkness* and *Apocalypse Now*. Allen emphasizes that

this approach by Genette does not consider literary works as “unique, unitary wholes” (93), much like his structuralist background suggests, but rather as combinations of “an enclosed system” (93) – systems which draw parallels to the previously described semiotic notion of the “linguistic sign”. This approach to intertextuality involves also a view on the literary work itself in relation to both its author and critical reader. Here, the author constructs a text within this framework of “enclosed” literary systems, albeit unconsciously to some degree, from which the critics are able to “display its relation to the system” (94) through readings. In other words, the critical reader “takes the work and returns it to the system” (94), which suggests that the element of reception is also a crucial feature in constructing meaning within the text. Returning to the critiques of post-structuralist scholars, Allen notes that the main point of concern was with the inability of Genette’s approach to intertextually “rearrange a text’s elements into their full signifying relations” (94). However, the essential counterargument of structuralist scholars such as Genette is that the act itself of “placing a text back into its presumed system produces a form of knowledge” (94) – something which stems from the construction of a “stable” (94) framework or system of perception, from which these literary works and their intertextual features can be understood.

In practice, Genette’s taxonomy of intertextuality studies the traditional literary ordering systems such as Aristotle’s *Poetics*, where he reconsiders its intertextual framework through the three essay’s “The Architext”, “Palimpsests” and “Paratexts”; “unless we distinguish between modes and genres, poetics will forever find itself unable to stabilize its presentation of the system of literary conventions” (Allen 96). This desire to establish a stable and clear systematization of literary conventions is manifested in its most ideal form through his notion of “architextural building blocks” (Allen 96). The “Architext” as a systematized template for studying literature and intertextuality through stable, generic perceptions of narration, plot, imagery as the “linguistic sign” has, however, taken a more pragmatic use in practice;

A poetics which gives up on the idea of establishing a stable, ahistorical, irrefutable map or division of literary elements, but which instead studies the relationships (sometimes fluid, never unchanging) which link the text with the architextural network out of which it produces meaning (Genette 83-84)

From this reflective standpoint of Genette in *the Architext*, it is clear that his structuralist approach has taken more “open” (Allen 97) or pragmatic form, in the sense that the focus now lies within the relationship between the individual text and its underlying “architextural” connections. Thus, an enhanced focus on “the relationships” between text and “architextural networks” includes also the

awareness of a reader or an audience – a reception of the text which, as Allen notes, is “sometimes fluid, never unchanging”, and so too is the perception of the link between the text with the “architextural network out of which it produces meaning”. The key point here is, that the notion of “architextural” templates constructs a system of order from which we can construct meaning within the text, thus creating a systematic point of reference between author and critic. These “architextural” networks manifest themselves within all forms of art, as Margarete Landwehr also notes in *Literature and the Visual Arts: Questions of influence and intertextuality*, stating that Genette’s taxonomy of intertextuality reaches far beyond the boundaries of written literature. Landwehr draws upon the closing conclusions of Genette in “Palimpsests” in relation to the fact that these concepts of intertextuality may be applied also within “practices of art” (Landwehr 8) such as those which have “moved [literature] from a central position in culture to the status of simply one media industry among others” (Elsaesser & Wedel 152). This connection to the visual, in essence, is also a crucial part of the comparative connections of intertextuality between works of literature and film, as these underlying “architexts” construct a systematized framework of order, from which parallels and differences can be drawn. Here it is of course crucial to consider the many ways in which the traditional notion of the “linguistic sign” becomes intertextuality connected to cinematographic and auditory factors of film, much like other “practices of art” manifest the “intertext” through alternative “signs”.

Furthermore, Allen turns to another intertextual concept of Genette from the essay “Palimpsests”, commonly known as “Hypertextuality” (Allen 104). Genette’s notion of the “hypertext” takes distance from the previous framework of perceiving texts in relation to fixed, universal structures of the “architext”. Rather, “hypertextuality” focuses on the interrelation between one specific work literature to another: “[...] any relationship uniting a text B (which I shall call a hypertext) to an earlier text A [...] upon which it is grafted in a manner that is not that of commentary” (Genette 5). Drawing upon examples such as Homer’s *Odyssey* and James Joyce’s *Ulysses*, “Hypertextuality” is concerned with this clear-cut connection between the “hypertext” and its original referent. In many ways, this form of intertextuality is what will drive the comparative analysis of *Heart of Darkness* and *Apocalypse Now* in this paper, where the key concern is the “intended and self-conscious relation between texts” (Allen 105). Whilst the notion of Genette’s “hypertextuality” might seem similar to the concept of “Architextuality”, in the sense that it attempts to seek out meaning through similarities of a “closed literary system” – be it for example that of “pastiche, parody, travesty and caricature” (Allen 104) – Allen stresses that these relations

between “Text A and text B” are “intentionally hypertextual”, whilst elements of the “architext” such as generic genres and narratological structures are rather more fixed and universally applicable in their construction and conveying of meaning. Nonetheless, this paper shall also dive into a more structuralist approach in terms of “architextuality”, where precisely these elements of narrative, characterization and plot as the “linguistic signs” of both *Heart of Darkness* and *Apocalypse Now* will construct the “building blocks” (Allen 96) or systematized framework of perception from which a “hypertextual” relation between the two works can be examined. In order to do so, these “architextural” literary ordering systems must be established.

Establishing Framework: Modes, Romance and the Hero's Journey

One attempt to construct a taxonomical framework or ordering system of literary criticism is Northrop Frye's *Anatomy of Criticism: Four Essays*. With the ultimate goal of presenting a “synoptic view of the scope, theory, principles and techniques of literary criticism” (1), Frye also examines Aristotle's *Poetics*. Here Frye establishes a mythological and symbolic framework of criticism for the four genres of fiction; Comedy, Tragedy, Romance, and Satire and Irony. Much like Genette's practical use of “architexts”, Frye also takes a pragmatic approach to his own writings, where he calls for them to be understood as “an interconnected group of suggestions” (1). The term “suggestions” also indicates a distancing from what Frye considers as Aristotle's approach to literature in *Poetics*:

Aristotle seems to me to approach poetry as a biologist would approach a system of organisms, picking out its genera and species, formulating the broad laws of literary experience, and in short writing as though he believed that there is a totally intelligible structure of knowledge attainable about poetry (14)

Frye thus acknowledges that his own perception of literary criticism, and its subsequent systems of order, naturally should be applied in combination with a framework of analysis which places the text within both its own, unique realm of meaning, in addition to its greater underlying structural relations. Nevertheless, Frye continues to present an overview of literary fiction, and the way in which its works can be categorized and perceived in relation to the writings within *Poetics*.

Based upon Aristotle's second paragraph of *Poetics*, Frye touches upon how “differences in works of fiction [...] are caused by the different elevations of characters in them” (32). In his first essay titled *Theory of Modes*, Frye constructs a framework of perceiving these “differences” in

character based upon their function as “somebody doing something” (32) within the plot. In other words, their “power of action” (32). Frye’s five “fictional modes” (33) of representation are thus ordered in relation to the hero’s “power of action” which may be “greater than ours, less or roughly the same” (32) – “ours” meaning both the reader of the work, but also the characters and environment which surround the protagonist within the fictional world. The five modes of representation range from the lowest “power of action”, the “ironic mode” (33), where the hero is “inferior in power or intelligence to ourselves, so that we have the sense of looking down on a scene of bondage, frustration and absurdity” (33) to the highest level of “myth” (33), where the “divine” hero is “superior in *kind* both to other men and to the environment of other men” (32). Thus, these “fictional modes” are also ranked in relation to their degree of mimesis or realism, where modes such as “myth” are deeply rooted within the realm of fantasy and the supernatural – allowing the hero be of a different “kind” to other men. Regarding both *Heart of Darkness* and *Apocalypse Now*, where the setting and characters are not of a supernatural quality, Frye’s fictional modes of “high-“ and “low-mimesis” are of great relevancy. Perceiving the hero’s “power of action” as respectively “superior in degree to other men but not his environment” (33) and “superior neither in degree to men nor his environment” (33), the fictional modes of “high-“ and “low-mimesis” provide an insight as to how both Marlow and Willard fare in their journeys and interactions with characters and environments. Thus, the benefit of perceiving the psychological and physical status of both protagonists throughout the plot serves as a method of examining the way in which the notion of the hero is presented and represented within these works; with the ‘fictional mode’ of irony perhaps challenging if they are even in control of their respective quests.

In his essay *Theory of Mythos*, Frye constructs his definition of mythos or plot from the perception that the “art of painting”, in a literary sense, “lies within a combination of pictorial “form” or structure and pictorial “content” or subject” (130). As previously mentioned, Frye’s *Anatomy of Criticism* encompasses an overview of the four genres Comedy, Tragedy, Romance, and Satire and Irony. Returning to structural studies such as that of Deltcheva, where Marlow and Willard’s journeys are connected to the narratological “chronotope of the river” (759), it becomes apparent that this perception of the plot in *Heart of Darkness and Apocalypse Now* as travelling down a specific path, in order to obtain a goal, is similar to what Frye deems as the “the complete form of the romance” (186); the romance quest. Thus, Frye’s insight into the structure and subject of romance must be entertained; ultimately contributing to an “architextural” perception of *Heart of Darkness and Apocalypse Now*. As Frye notes, the “internal fiction” (51) of genres such as novels

and plays are “usually of primary interest” (51). This includes a focus on “mythos or plot, ethos, which contains both characters and setting, and dianoia or “thought” (51). Here, the characters exist “primarily as functions of the plot” (51), which includes a “general distinction between fictions in which the hero becomes isolated from his society, and fictions in which he is incorporated into it” (34); a tragic or comic plot. Regarding the quests within *Heart of Darkness* and *Apocalypse Now*, then, this also means a story of either isolation or integration of the protagonists.

For romance, according to Frye, adventure is considered as “the essential element of plot” (185). Adventure in this sense manifest itself as a “sequential and processional form” (185), centered around a journey building up to “a major or climacteric adventure, usually announced from the beginning” (186); commonly known as the quest (186). In its most “radical” (192) form, Frye’s romance is then defined as a “sequence of marvelous adventures” (192), where the main archetypal theme is conflict or “agon” (192). Thus, the quest of the protagonist is driven by an underlying conflict which, in the case of *Heart of Darkness* and *Apocalypse Now*, may prove to be both of a physical and psychological nature. Frye adds that these quests of conflict always “assume two main characters” (186), which includes “a protagonist or hero, and an antagonist or enemy” (186). This enemy, then, commonly human within the fictional modes of “high-“ and “low-mimesis”, will manifest “demonic mythical qualities” (186), where the protagonist oppositely draws upon symbolism of “divinity” (186):

Hence the hero of romance is analogous to the mythical Messiah or deliverer who comes from an upper world, and his enemy is analogous to the demonic power of a lower world” (186).

In many ways this ties a moral connection between the reader and protagonist, who confronts what Robert Denham defines as the “displaced archetype of Satan” (Denham 72) within the antagonist of romance – this is particularly interesting in relation to the briefly mentioned archetypal and mythological studies of both Yarrison and Rangarajan, regarding Marlow’s metaphorical descent into “hell”. In his critical readings of Frye’s *Anatomy of Criticism*, Denham adds that the romantic antagonist is a clear symbol of “[...] social sterility, the fallen order of nature, death” (72). Once again, in the case of this paper, these qualities of morality against “a fallen order of nature” – Christ versus Satan – may prove to be both an interesting and challenging differentiation to make between hero and villain, as both Marlow and Willard journey deeper into the dark forests of their own minds in search for their Kurtz.

Similar to the legendary stories of St George and Perseus, Frye notes that the central form of the romance quest is the “dragon-killing theme” (188). This revolves around an underlying “agon” or conflict in which the hero attempts to confront a “dragon” – one which symbolizes “a sterility of the land” or society, much like Denham’s perception of the romantic antagonist. Naturally, this confrontation may also manifest itself metaphorically, where protagonists such as Marlow or Willard are faced with more metaphorical representations of a troubled society and its “dragons”. This “agon” within the quest also signifies a search for redemption or rebirth, which often is connected to the transformation of the protagonist, and may manifest itself through “ritual analogies” (Frye 188) such as that of slaying a “dragon”. This quest, with its goals and conflicts, is divided into three main stages of plot by Frye. The “complete form” of the quest contains the following stages:

“[...] the stage of the perilous journey and the preliminary minor adventures; the crucial death struggle, usually some kind of battle in which either the hero or his foe, or both, must die; and the exaltation of the hero” (186).

Essentially, the crucial point of these stages of the quest is to facilitate a transformation of the hero - to the point where “he has proved himself to be a hero if he does not survive the conflict” (186). Regarding Frye’s definition of the romance quest and its stages, Denham also draws parallels to further perspectives on the archetypal quest by commenting that “it is not insignificant that Frye’s own version of the Monomyth is presented in connection with his theory of romance” (Denham 76). This familiar notion of the Monomyth originates from the literary theorist Joseph Campbell, who attempts to construct a central, unified structure of the heroic journey, or quest, in *The Hero With a Thousand Faces*.

In “The Hero’s Journey”, Lily Alexander provides insight to Campbell’s theoretical framework by pointing out how the Monomyth is concerned with how “cultures unknown to each other, have similar story patterns and include the same set of necessary places” (11) – particularly regarding “adventure stories and journey tales of world mythologies” (11). In comparison to the notion of romance, which is in itself distant from the other of realism and tragedy within *Anatomy of Criticism*, there are many similarities between Frye’s perception of the quest and Campbell’s stages of the Monomyth – both in terms of “[...]”form” or structure and “content” or subject” (Frye 130). Campbell presents the Monomyth as the “standard path of the mythological adventure of the hero” (28), consisting of the three main stages “separation – initiation – return” (28):

A hero ventures forth from the world of common day into a region of supernatural wonder: fabulous forces are there encountered and a decisive victory is won: the hero comes back from this adventure with the power to bestow boons on his fellow man (28).

Drawing upon the famous adventures of Prometheus, Jason, and Aeneas as examples, Campbell's Monomyth is similar to Frye's romance quest in the sense that both the journey itself and the goal is crucial to the structure of the plot or "mythos". In the stage of "separation" or "departure" (Campbell 45), the hero receives a "call to adventure" (34) – an introduction to the quest and its purpose. Importantly, the stage of "departure" involves a "crossing of the first threshold" (34), which essentially signifies a passing of the hero into the secondary world – a world far away from safety, order and the known; much like to Congo River is to Marlow's Thames or the Nung River to Willard's Ohio. Having crossed this threshold, the hero will find himself within "the belly of the whale" (34), in which he is engulfed by his surrounding, unknown environment and its inhabitants. Within the stage of "initiation", the protagonist then begins his journey within this new world. Here, the hero will encounter a series of characters and trials, all leading up to what Frye would consider as the "crucial struggle" (186) of the quest – a "struggle" or confrontation with the "dragon" which will lead to an "ultimate boon" (34); if the hero succeeds, that is. The stage of "return", then, signifies a rebirth of the protagonist, as well as a restoration of a "sterile" society. This final stage and completion of the quest or Monomyth will also be an interesting point of analysis in relation to both *Heart of Darkness* and *Apocalypse Now*: can the underlying "agon" be overcome? Nevertheless, a successful completion of the trials of the Monomyth marks the "life-enhancing return" (Campbell 33) of the hero. As Campbell adds, this threefold structure of the journey, parallel to Frye's romance quest, "varies little in essential plan" no matter if the protagonist is "ridiculous or sublime" (33). However, Frye's notion of the fictional modes, and the subsequent hero's "power of action", may still prove to be of value when attempting to establish the extent to which the hero struggles, and the subsequent meaning behind this narrative.

Drawing upon the semiotic thoughts of Saussure and pragmatic structuralism, this paper adopts the intertextual framework of Gerard Genette. This approach to literary works and their underlying "architextual" ordering systems, as well as their intertextual relations through the notion of the "hypertext", will form the comparative analysis of *Heart of Darkness* and *Apocalypse Now*. Here, the previously discussed taxonomical overview of romance in Frye's *Anatomy of Criticism* and the approach to the hero's journey in Campbell's *The Hero with a Thousand Faces* become the key analytical framework from which the "architextual" similarities and differences of

Conrad and Coppola are discussed – with the notion of the romance quest and the Monomyth constructing the systematic lens through which “[...]”form” or structure and “content” or subject” (Frye 130) are viewed. Furthermore, Genette’s theoretical approach of the “hypertext”, involving an insight into how “[...] text B [is united] to an earlier text A” (Genette 5), will be of crucial significance when examining the interconnection between *Heart of Darkness* and *Apocalypse Now*. The key focus lies here within understanding the choice to draw inspiration from Conrad within Coppola’s work, where both similarities, deviations and alterations are important to consider – both on an “architextural” and “hypertextual” level. Naturally, historical context will be entertained as an impactful factor on these choices, where the previously mentioned works such as those of Henthorne and Comber, amongst others, provide important insight into these discussions.

Heart of Darkness: Tale-Telling, Double Narration and the Ironic Hero

The analytical framework of this reading of Conrad’s *Heart of Darkness* is first and foremost realized through an inherently “architextural” approach – viewing both Frye and Campbell’s taxonomical perception of the quest as reference points from which the “linguistic signs” of *Heart of Darkness* can be understood and combine to construct meaning. Thus, the structure of this reading is centered around the three main stages of Joseph Campbell’s Monomyth; “Departure”, “Initiation” and “Return”. By perceiving *Heart of Darkness* through the structure of Campbell’s quest-journey, and the subsequent elements of plot contained within the three stages of the Monomyth, it is possible to understand the “linguistic signs”, and the construction of meaning through their relations, within the “architextural” domain of Conrad’s work. In addition to a focus on plot, this reading of *Heart of Darkness* is also concerned with the notion of “agon”, or conflict of the quest, at the level of narration. Here, it is important to consider how the previously discussed “trojan-horse” rooted within the double-voice of the narrators is crucial to the manifestation of irony within this text. Regarding this notion of irony, as a key element of both narration and plot structure within *Heart of Darkness*, it is also important to consider the notion of intertextuality; both in terms of establishing an understanding of Conrad’s work from which *Apocalypse Now* can later be viewed in parallel or contrast to, but also in terms of understanding which literary allusions and previous archetypal stories are referenced and reflected upon within Marlow’s journey in *Heart of Darkness*.

Heart of Darkness begins with the frame narrator and Marlow waiting for the “the turn of the tide” (1) along with their fellow crew-mates of the Nellie; “a cruising yawl, swung to her anchor

without a flutter of the sails" (1). Initially, these members of the ship are presented by the narrator as being connected through their "bond of the sea" (3), effectively making them "tolerant of each other's yarns – and even convictions"(3). As Cahir notes in "Narratological Parallels in Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* and Francis Ford Coppola's *Apocalypse Now*", the narrative within *Heart of Darkness* maintains a "pattern of taletelling" (182). Arguably, this "pattern of taletelling" is also reflected upon by the frame narrator through the initial allusion to stories and legends of London as "one of the dark places of the earth" (Conrad 5), as well as the subsequently named historical figures who later sought heroic glory through imperialist adventures abroad – whose mentioning will later prove to have significant importance in terms of viewing the frame narrator's perception of Marlow as an ironic hero. Interestingly, the use of the word "conviction" also suggests a certain degree of foreshadowing on behalf of the frame narrator, as it indicates that Marlow's following narration of his time in Africa should be viewed critically – particularly, in terms of understanding how Marlow ignorantly chooses to perceive his adventures from a romanticized perspective of British imperialism. Likewise, it also suggests a contrast of opinions on the following "yarn" or tale between Marlow and the frame narrator, manifested within their double-narration of it. As Cahir notes, the frame narrator maintains a function of "[interposing himself] between the teller and the listener" (182), which means that he is able to "control what we hear and what we see" (182) regarding Marlow's story.

One of the ways in which the discourse is controlled by the frame narrator, is through Henthorne's previously described notion of the discursive "trojan horse" within the narration of Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*. In addition to the previously discussed notion of "taletelling" (Cahir 182) in the narrative, which subsequently indicates the telling of a forthcoming "yarn" by Marlow, Henthorne also notes how the initial introduction of the frame narrator and Marlow inherently manifests an ironic connection between heroism and British imperialism – and thus, the following adventures of Marlow. In the opening sequence upon the *Nellie*, the protagonist Marlow is described as a "wanderer" (5); the only one on the boat who "still 'followed the sea'" (5). Whilst presenting Marlow as a being an adventurous dreamer, perhaps driven by certain romantic "convictions" of imperialism, the frame narrator associates the protagonist with previous historic figures who also are connected with the notion of having "followed the sea" (5): "It had known and served all the men of whom the nation is proud, from Sir Francis Drake to Sir John Franklin, knights all, titled and untitled – the great knights-errant of the sea" (Conrad 4).

As Henthorne argues, this particular “choice of heroes” (117) by the frame narrator is of great importance, as he “could hardly have chosen more controversial figures” (117) in the form of Sir Francis Drake and Sir John Franklin. Henthorne identifies a degree of irony within the mentioning of these historical “heroes” to which Marlow is likened – Drake being “a privateer who obtained a large part of his “treasure” through piracy and murderous raids on Spanish settlements” (Henthorne 117) whilst likewise the somewhat disastrous arctic adventures of Franklin also “must have reminded at least some of Conrad’s readers that those who claimed to represent civilization were not always so far removed from acts like cannibalism as they would like to believe” (118). This inherently ironic “celebration of British imperialist history” (Henthorne 119) is arguably also connected to the previously mentioned notion of “taletelling” within *Heart of Darkness*, as the frame narrator foreshadows the ironic celebration of heroism and the quest structure manifested within Marlow’s story. Therefore, through a “trojan-horse”-esque element argued by Henthorne, the narrator masks and hints at the crushing, darker reality of romanticized adventures, heroes and their journeys – represented through Marlow’s tale: “We knew we were fated, before the ebb began to run, to hear about one of Marlow’s inconclusive experiences” (Conrad 9). And thus, Marlow begins the narration of his story; be it a “yarn”, “conviction” or “inconclusive experience”, as the frame narrator suggests. Much like the heroic structures of Campbell and Frye, the narration of Marlow’s journey begins at the “monomythic” stage of “Departure”, where the hero is called upon.

Departure: Marlow’s Call to Adventure, Literary Allusions, and the Descent Into “Hell”

Campbell’s stage of “Departure” marks the beginning of the “monomythic” journey of the hero, and contains a series of previously mentioned features within the plot; altogether presenting a build up to what Frye would consider as “the stage of the perilous journey and the preliminary minor adventures” (186) before the ultimate confrontation with the underlying conflict or “agon” within the “crucial death struggle” (186). In other words, it is an introduction to the romance quest of Marlow. Regarding the notion of “agon” within Marlow’s journey in *Heart of Darkness*, it becomes clear that conflict, as a phenomenon which structures and fuels his quest, manifests itself on two levels. This will later prove to be apparent at the level of the plot, in which Marlow physically journeys up the river in search for Kurtz; and at the level of the narrative, where this underlying heroic “yarn” or romance quest in itself becomes an element of question, critique and perhaps even “deconstruction” (Henthorne 123) through the double-voiced irony of the frame narrator. These two levels of “agon” or conflict thus form the structure from which Marlow and the

frame narrator perceive and recollect the protagonist's adventures in Africa – both of which contributing to the manifestation of Marlow's physical and psychological confrontation with the “dragon-killing theme” (Frye 188) of his journey.

The Call to Adventure

Initially, the stage of “departure” or “separation” involves a “call to adventure” (Campbell 33), in which the protagonist is drawn upon from his everyday life by a force which presents to him the inviting adventures of another world; the quest: “destiny has summoned the hero and transferred his spiritual center of gravity from the pale of his society to a zone unknown” (Campbell 53) – this distinction between society and a place of the unknown being a key factor in later examining Marlow's perception and experience of Africa. As Campbell notes, the hero is often called upon by a foreign being or manifestation of “the carrier of the power of destiny” (47); a “carrier” which guides the protagonist through his journey towards the completion of the quest. However, as previously alluded to by the frame narrator, Marlow is not “called upon” by a foreign, supernatural entity, but rather, through his own qualities as being a “wanderer” (Conrad 5) and as one who “still ‘followed the sea’”(5). Both Marlow's own mentality, and his subsequent romantic perception of the imperialist adventures outside of the Thames, can thus be considered as his “carrier of the power of destiny” (Campbell 47). Marlow seeks out his own quest, perhaps naively, as elusively argued by the frame narrator through his mentioning of Drake and Franklin as previous ironic examples of seamen with this “conviction”. From the perspective of Marlow, his adventure is initiated through his “passion for maps” (Conrad 9): “I would look for hours at South America, or Africa, or Australia, and lose myself in all the glories of exploration” (9). This notion of the “glories of exploration” (9) once again previously echoed through the frame narrator's initial ironic “celebration of British imperialist history” (Henthorne 119). Fascinated with the “one river especially, a mighty big river, that you could see on the map, resembling an immense snake uncoiled” (10), Marlow continues to explain how he decided to journey into the unknown world in search for the last place which perhaps had not yet “become a place of darkness” (10) upon the map. Marlow's quest for “a blank space of delightful mystery” (Conrad 10) within the unknown world, perhaps later personified through his obsession with finding Kurtz, can arguably be considered as his own romanticized participation of British imperialism – his quest. This childhood fascination of Marlow, as a key factor in terms of initiating his journey toward Africa, can also be likened to Frye's perception of the romantic hero as having “perennially child-like qualities” (Frye 186) of fascination and wonder – often directly connected to the function of romance within society,

where the ideals of “the ruling social or intellectual class” (Frye 185) would commonly be projected onto the protagonist or hero. In this case, these romantic ideals of imperialism have become ironically projected onto Marlow by the frame narrator through his initial “Trojan-horse”-esque dismissal of historical figures who were previously known to have “followed the sea” (Conrad 4). Because of the previously discussed childhood fascination of Marlow, inherently signifying his own perception of the world as the driving factor behind his journey towards Africa, and later Kurtz, there is also no clear “refusal” (33) of this “call to adventure”, as Campbell otherwise would expect. Rather, this element of refusal occurs in the retrospective hindsight of Marlow’s narration, as he recognizes his own naivety: “And as I looked at the map of it in a shop-window, it fascinated me as a snake would a bird – a silly little bird. [...] The snake had charmed me” (10). Thus, Marlow’s romantic vision of imperialism and the freshwater adventures beyond the “pale of his society” (Campbell 53) drives him toward the initiation of his quest.

The Crossing of the First Threshold

Once having begun his quest, Campbell notes that the hero must undergo a “crossing of the first threshold” (71); “Beyond them is a dark less, the unknown, and danger; [...] beyond the protection of his society” (Campbell 71). This passage through the “threshold” into the world of the quest manifests itself in Marlow’s narration of his journey towards the “Central Station” of “the Company”, where he is later ordered to begin his search for Kurtz. On his way, Marlow stops past “the sepulchral city” (38), in which he encounters two old women – hastily knitting away much like ‘the Fates’ of Greek Mythology, whose thread and spinning predict the destiny of adventurers: “Often far away there I thought of these two, guarding the door of Darkness, knitting black wool as for a warm pall, one introducing, introducing continuously to the unknown, the other scrutinizing the cheery and foolish faces with unconcerned old eyes” (Conrad 15). In addition to further presenting Marlow’s narration of his experiences as a tale of romance and destiny, the confrontation with these old knitters also illustrates his crossing into the world of adventure. In order to further identify the existence of this threshold, and the subsequent crossing of it, it is crucial to understand the contrastive use of symbolism and association within Marlow’s narration of his tale. As Tom Henthorne points out, Marlow’s contrastive symbolism of light and darkness is one of importance in terms of identifying the key difference between his perception of European civilization and the unknown zones of Africa through which he travels:

Looking toward London, which the narrator describes as a “monstrous town” marked by a lurid glare”, Marlow begins by asserting that it, too, “has been one of the dark places of the

earth" (48). As the change in tense suggests, Marlow sees London very differently than the disparaging frame narrator: to Marlow, London is no longer a place of Darkness but a source of light (119)

Thus, Marlow forms a symbolic contrast between the light, civilized London and the dark, unknown world of Africa – something which then, in turn, constructs a clear barrier or “threshold” which is crossed as he begins his journey. Whilst noting that these “regions of the unknown” (72) are “free fields for the projection of unconscious content” (Campbell 72), it is also important to consider how the protagonists’ formerly mentioned “convictions” are present within this contrastive perception of London and Africa. Much like the previously mentioned notion of “agon” at both the level of the plot and at the level of the narrative, this contrast formed through the “double-voiced” narration also constructs a duality of meanings – this being both the physical “threshold”, through which Marlow ventures, and also a more thematic, discursive discussion of inherently imperialist perceptions of natives, as well as its subsequently ironic connection to romance constructed through the frame narrator: “Accordingly, Marlow calls Europeans “whites” in his narrative and refers to Africans as “black shapes,” “black figures,” “black shadows,” and “black fellows”” (Henthorne 122). This connection with darkness, both within the inhabitants and the environment itself, is also a common theme of the hero’s journey according to Campbell. As previously mentioned, the hero ventures into “a dark less, the unknown, and danger” (Campbell 71) once he has crossed the “threshold” – much like what Marlow does as he decides to accept his role as a skipper at “the Company” (11), and thus continue his journey into the jungles of Africa.

The Belly of the Whale

When the barrier or “threshold” into the unknown has been crossed, Campbell notes, the hero will find himself to be overwhelmed, overpowered and engulfed – he is now within “the belly of the whale” (Campbell 83). In this final moment of the stage of “departure”, the hero is now affected by this previously described new world of darkness, to the point where he “would appear to have died” (Campbell 83) as opposed to having “conquered or conciliating the power of the threshold” (83). In the case of Marlow, this is apparent through the clear psychological effects of his journey toward the ‘Central Station’ of “the Company” – something which Marlow clearly reflects upon through his retrospective comments on the situation:

Odd thing that I, who used to clear out for any part of the world at twenty-four hours’ notice, with less thought than most men give to the crossing of a street, had a moment – I won’t say

of hesitation, but startled pause, before this commonplace affair. The best way I can explain it to you is by saying that, for a second or two, I felt as though, instead of going to the centre of a continent, I were about to set off for the centre of the earth (18)

From Marlow's retrospective insight it can be illustrated how his normal mindset as a fearless "wanderer" (Conrad 5) is interrupted or affected by a moment of "hesitation" or a "startled pause". In relation to Northrup Frye's taxonomical framework of "fictional modes", Marlow, in this momentary confrontation with the future prospects and dangers which lie ahead of the quest, experiences a decline in his "power of action" – to the point where he goes from being "superior in degree to other men", being "used to clear out any for any part of the world at twenty-four hours' notice" (Conrad 18), to one who feels "superior neither in degree to men nor his environment" (33); the self-proclaimed romantic hero of Marlow has been reduced to a common protagonist of the "low-mimetic mode" (33), be it only for a short moment at first, as he ventures deeper into the "belly of the whale". Interestingly, Marlow's perception of his destination as being a journey toward "the centre of the earth" (18) is similarly significant in terms of illustrating the hero's sense of engulfment or being "swallowed" by his environment. Through the symbolic allusion of having "stepped into the gloomy circle of some Inferno" (Conrad 20), whilst also likening the wounded natives to "nothing earthly now" (25), it becomes clear how Marlow's presence within "the belly of the whale" bears resemblance to archetypal literary depictions of the descent into hell: "They were dying slowly – it was very clear. They were not enemies, they were not criminals, they were nothing earthly now – nothing but black shadows of disease and starvation, lying confusedly in the greenish gloom" (25). Regarding these symbolic similarities to literary representations of "hell", many studies of Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* have examined the work through its relations to previous texts and literary patterns – essentially connecting it to underlying narrative structures through intertextual references. In "The Symbolism of Literary Allusion in *Heart of Darkness*", Betsy Yarrison provides both mythological and symbolic insight into how Conrad draws upon previous works of fiction as reference points to Marlow's story:

It is not unlikely that Conrad sought to stress the fact that the Aeneid, the Inferno, and the Arthurian legends all tell the same tale that he is about to retell – the tale of a heroic pilgrimage and its effect on the man who undertakes it (155)

Yarrison argues that Conrad deliberately places Marlow's journey up the river Congo within "literary hells envisioned by poets since origins of literature" (158). This is shown through the use

of an intertextual framework of Yarrison, who draws connections to well-known previous works of fiction and Conrad's literary "allusions" of them. Naturally, this includes a perception of plot structure which draws upon similarities and patterns of these previous works. Marlow "undertakes a journey to the depths of his own soul and back" (Yarrison 156), where the river and its various stations manifest "a morally-structured labyrinth which resembles the classical Hades or the densely populated hell of Dante" (156). Thus, Marlow now finds himself within the dark environment of a symbolic hell or "inferno" (Conrad 25). Similar to many archetypal stories of journey, or quest, Yarrison notes how Marlow's search for Kurtz involves a "series of trials of his own selfhood" (156); something which manifests itself as a crucial analytical element of the stage of "Initiation".

Initiation: Trials, Ironic Deflation and the Crucial Struggle with Kurtz

Having passed the "threshold" into the dark, "unknown world" of Africa, Marlow now finds himself within Campbell's stage of "Initiation". As touched upon previously, Marlow's quest is driven by two underlying themes of "agon" or conflict, which can be identified at the level of the plot and at the level of narration. Marlow's physical confrontation with "agon" is manifested through the mission presented to him by the manager of "the Company"; to retrieve the presumed ill Mr. Kurtz (34) – a man who was initially but a name or rumor to Marlow. Kurtz is an important character nevertheless, who eventually will come to affect both the physical and mental journey of Marlow, and also the inherently ironic nature of this quest: "He was just a word for me. I did not see the man in the name any more than you do. Do you see him? Do you see the story? Do you see anything?" (42). In addition to reflecting the ironic, "destructive" (Mack 90) perception of plot in modernist literature, Marlow's lacking ability to "see the story" here represents his psychological struggles in searching for Kurtz, where his previous "tale-telling" vision of romance is challenged. As Cahir notes, Marlow's "river excursion" (183) is structured by "three scheduled stops; the third and last stop for each is the soul-altering confrontation with the mysterious Kurtz" (183). Ultimately, this final "confrontation" with Kurtz will prove to illustrate the "Crucial Struggle" (Frye 186) of Marlow's romance quest; each preliminary stop, and the subsequent journey between them, manifesting what Campbell would consider as the "succession of trials" (89) of the hero. Throughout these "scheduled stops" (Cahir 183) or "trials", it becomes apparent through Marlow's physical "power of action", allusions to the previously discussed literary manifestations of the hero's descent into "hell", as well as the symbolic themes of darkness and light, how this hero becomes further engulfed both physically and emotionally in his search for the name, the myth, the "universal genius" (Conrad 44): Kurtz. The final confrontation eventually signifies how the two

underlying themes of “agon” fuse together and combine, as Marlow’s romantically structured journey of the plot is ended with the final meeting with Kurtz. Manifesting the pinnacle form of “myth-adventure” (Campbell 89), Marlow thus begins his journey towards Kurtz at the “Inner Station” (Conrad 39) once he has repaired the sunken steamboat in which he has been appointed skipper of.

The First Trial

The first curious obstacle which Marlow and his crew come across is the abandoned “hut of reeds” (60), located “some fifty miles below the Inner Station” (60). In this hut, amongst other things such as “a neatly stacked wood-pile” (60) and an old book ironically titled “AN INQUIRY INTO SOME POINTS OF SEAMANSHIP” (60), Marlow stumbles across an important message of foreshadowing: “When deciphered it said: ‘Wood for you. Hurry up. Approach cautiously’” (60). As Marlow reflects upon their journey up to this point regarding the advice to “Approach cautiously”, it quickly becomes clear how the following descent into the jungle via the river will be one of action and danger: “We had not done so” (60). Regarding Marlow’s heroic “power of action”, it can be illustrated how he is not “superior in degree to his environment” much like the romantic hero is, but rather, the protagonist and his now “crawling” (62) steamer are pulled further into the unknown by nature itself:

‘The current was more rapid now, the steamer seemed at her last grasp, the stern-wheel flopped languidly, and I caught myself listening on tiptoe for the next beat of the boat, for in sober truth I expected the wretched thing to give up every moment’. (62)

In emphasizing the inherent submission to the powerful nature of the “rapid” stream, it also becomes apparent how the river itself is a “carrier of the power of destiny” (Campbell 47) – even overpowering the more cautiously minded Marlow following the worrying message at the abandoned hut. Nature and the environment of the dark, “unknown” world has thus taken control of Marlow’s journey: “The broadening waters flowed through a mob of wooded islands; you lost your way on that river as you would in a desert” (Conrad 54). Once Marlow and his crew leave the abandoned hut, now at the forcing hands of the powerful river, it also becomes clear how he is psychologically affected by the journey itself – even through the retrospective re-telling of it.

Regarding the previously illustrated contrasts of light and darkness between London and Africa, as well as its inhabitants, as Henthorne notes, it is as if Marlow becomes colorblind along his journey: “Sunlight, for instance, is described repeatedly as “blinding”, as is the “white fog” on

the river. A dying African worker's eyes, too, are described as both "blind" and white", again suggesting that light and darkness are inseparable" (Henthorne 124). Whilst naturally illustrating how Marlow's own narration is ironic in essence, particularly regarding the discursive imperialist symbolism of black and white here argued as being "inseparable" by Henthorne, this element of confusion or "colorblindness" by Marlow can also be used to signify a growing element of insanity – as his own perceptions of the world or "convictions" become blurry. Particularly, the "white fog" (64) described by Marlow is of great importance to the physical and psychological journey of the protagonist as they leave the hut. Being described by Marlow as "very warm and clammy, and more blinding than the night" (64), this thick fog becomes a manifestation of the "spiritual labyrinth" (Campbell 92) which every hero must conquer within the "perilous journey into the darkness" (92). Here, Campbell notes that the hero comes across a "landscape of symbolical figures (any one of which may swallow him)" (92) – something that arguably manifests itself within this dense fog and the subsequent impenetrable darkness of the unknown natives beyond the river banks in *Heart of Darkness*.

The Second Trial

Marlow and his crew are deeply affected by the fear of the unknown; resulting in the protagonist "listening on tiptoe for the next beat of the boat" (62) and his fellow companions having "scared glances, with Winchesters at 'ready' in their hands" (Conrad 65). Thus, the reader looks upon the protagonist with "a sense of looking down on a scene of bondage, frustration and absurdity" (Frye 33), as Marlow's "power of action" becomes one likened to the 'fictional mode' of irony – he is no longer in control of other men nor his environment, with the fog psychologically and physically disconnecting him from society: "The rest of the world was nowhere, as far as our eyes and ears were concerned. Just nowhere. Gone, disappeared; swept off without leaving a whisper or shadow behind" (65). As the steamboat comes closer to reaching its second "trial" of the journey, Marlow's ironic "power of action" becomes clearer through his misjudgment of the river's "western passage" (71): "No sooner had we fairly entered it than I became aware it was much narrower than I had supposed" (71). Being just "a mile and a half below Kurtz' station" (71), after the thick fog had lifted, Marlow and his crew are surprised by an array of arrows fired from behind the dense river banks. This is emphasized through Marlow's suspenseful description of the chilling calmness of the environment, and the sudden switch to first person narration of the attack:

All this time the river, the shore, the woods, were very quiet – perfectly quiet. I could only hear the heavy splashing thump of the stern-wheel and the patter of these things. We cleared the snag clumsily. Arrows, by Jove! We were being shot at! (73)

Whilst describing the natives' wooden artillery by looking "as though they wouldn't kill a cat" (74), Marlow's "power of action" suddenly appears to be more "superior in degree" to his crewmembers; particularly, the "fool-helmsman" (73) who at first panics during the episode. Just as the steamboat clears away from the "thin smoke" (75), being only "another hundred yards or so" (75) away from escaping the banks from which the natives were shooting at them, Marlow realizes that the poor helmsman has been struck by a spear: "It was the shaft of a spear that, either thrown or lunged through the opening, had caught him on the side, just below the ribs" (75). Although more concerned with his own feet being drenched in "a pool of blood" (75), Marlow's narration of the attack depicts a representation of himself as having a "power of action" which is more similar to the cunning, intelligent attributes of the romantic hero, as he saves his crew-members from the ongoing attack:

With one hand I felt above my head for the line of the steam whistle, and jerked out screech after screech hurriedly. The tumult of angry and warlike yells was checked instantly, and then from the depths of the woods went out a tremulous and prolonged wail of mournful fear and utter despair [...] There was a great commotion in the bush; the shower of arrows stopped (76)

Through Marlow's own narration, his actions made him savior of the onslaught – be it all too late for the helmsman. In addition to reflecting the underlying "agon" of Marlow's physical journey in search of Kurtz, this "trial" also manifests itself as a key element of conflict at the level of narration. Particularly, Marlow's narration of his now dead crewmember, in which he is more focused on disposing of his shoes by throwing them overboard (77), much like he does with the deceased helmsman later (84), is of great importance. Not because of his choice to include the narration of the helmsman's death, but rather, as he very quickly interrupts this part of the narrative to further elaborate upon his thoughts on Kurtz:

There was a sense of extreme disappointment, as though I had found out I had been striving after something altogether without substance. I couldn't have been more disgusted if I had travelled all this way for the sole purpose of talking with Mr. Kurtz. Talking with... I flung

one shoe overboard, and became aware that that was exactly what I had been looking forward to – a talk with Kurtz (77)

As Rangarajan argues in “Conrad’s *Heart of Darkness*”, Marlow’s interruption of the helmsman’s death in order to narrate his inner thoughts on Kurtz also signifies how he has a “dark side” (139) which stands in opposition to his previously discussed heroic deeds – similarly to the frame narrator’s initial mentioning of both Drake and Franklin, who also have a more controversial side to their status as “knights” (Conrad 4). Regarding the previously argued connection to literary representations of “hell” across time, this switch of focus within Marlow’s narration also signifies how his journey down the river is significantly comparable to that of the Aeneid, according to Rangarajan:

Throughout the story, Marlow displays a dual personality. His principal role as a hero in search of a higher truth sharply contrasts with his dark side at the mundane level. This fusion is achieved by condensing the two mythical figures of Aeneas and Charon in Marlow’s character (140)

By arguing that Marlow contains characteristics similar to that of Charon, the underworld “ferryman” who transports Aeneas through hell in search for his father, Rangarajan notes how the protagonist’s “dark side” is apparent through the lacking “fraternal feelings for his comrade, [where] Marlow unceremoniously throws the dead body just as he flings his own shoes “unto the devil-god of that river”” (Rangarajan 140). Much like how Marlow’s perception of light and darkness becomes fused through the previously argued notion of colorblindness within the protagonist’s symbolic narrative, Rangarajan argues that Marlow’s heroic and “dark side” manifest themselves through his resemblance to the character Charon in the Aeneid. This is important as it illustrates how the frame narrator’s descriptions of Marlow as a “wanderer” (5) who “still ‘followed the sea’” (4) should once again be viewed with irony – like Marlow’s own romantic perception of imperialism, and the darker reality behind it. From Marlow’s retrospective narration of the episode, it becomes clear how he is obsessed with the thought of meeting, speaking, and more importantly; listening to a man with “the gift of expression” (77) - Kurtz. Furthermore, Marlow goes on in detail to explain how Kurtz had been given the duty to write a “report” (81) on the natives of the area and how to deal with them; for “future guidance” (81). Marlow interestingly foreshadows the final confrontation with Kurtz, by alluding to the point that the chief of the “Inner Station” himself had perhaps also revealed his own heart of darkness within the “postscripture” (82) of his report:

“Exterminate all the brutes!” (82). Through this retrospective insight of Marlow, and its subsequent revealing of himself as having a “dark side” (Rangarajan 140) through narration, it becomes clear that his confrontation or “Crucial Struggle” with Kurtz is one in which challenges the perception of both himself and Kurtz’ “conventions” (Conrad 5) as romanticized, heroic British imperialist searching for ivory amongst savages.

The Crucial Struggle

As Marlow saves his crew members from the natives’ attack, they are now close to reaching their final destination, and thus, the “major or climacteric adventure, usually announced from the beginning (Frye 186) of the quest; the meeting with Kurtz. Regarding the “Crucial Struggle” (Frye 186) of the romantic plot, Frye notes that the conflict of the quest assumes “two main characters” (186). As previously mentioned, the “protagonist or hero” within Frye’s romantic quest is commonly associated with symbolism of “divinity” in opposition to “antagonist or enemy” and its “demonic mythological qualities” (Frye 186). With Marlow being previously discussed as manifesting both heroic attributes and those of a darker nature, as reflected through his close resemblance to both Charon and Aeneas (Ranagarajan 140), so too does Kurtz possess aspects of both sides. Thus, in addition to manifesting the goal or “holy grail” of Marlow’s quest, Kurtz is also a character which provokes an aspect of confrontation within the plot – He is thus another representation of Marlow’s antagonist, much like the powerful river which also functions as a destructive counterpart to the machinery and crew members of Marlow’s journey. Throughout Marlow’s narration of the journey, it becomes clear how everyone, including the protagonist himself, are fascinated with Kurtz – or the idea of him, at least. To Marlow, Kurtz is a manifestation of the romantic imperialist hero; an idealistic personification of the “wanderer” (Conrad 5) Marlow himself tries to be, stemming from his child-hood fascinations of exploration. Thus, the “Crucial Struggle” of the quest is centered around Marlow’s search for Kurtz; a chance to finally converse with a man who possesses “the gift of expression” (77). As Marlow and his crew reach the “Inner Station”, they come across a Russian disciple of Kurtz. When talking with this man, Marlow is once more introduced to the wonderful aspects of Kurtz; most notably being his qualities of speech and his god-like status amongst the natives of the area: “‘You don’t talk with that man – you listen to him,’ he exclaimed with severe exaltation” (Conrad 88). Among an array of descriptions of Kurtz heard throughout Marlow’s journey, which includes elements such as him being “made” by the civilized Europe (82), this antagonist also represents what Frye would consider as qualities of the high-mimetic hero; “He has authority, passions, and powers of expression far greater than ours”

(Frye 33). Further illustrating the charismatic presence of Kurtz, the Russian encountered by Marlow at the "Inner Station" alludes to the god-like worshipping of Kurtz by the natives:

'Why did they attack us? I pursued. He hesitated, then said shamefacedly. 'They don't want him to go'. Don't they? I said curiously. He nodded a nod full of mystery and wisdom. 'I tell you,' he cried, 'this man has enlarged my mind'. (90)

In addition to this apparent enlightenment of the Russian, it is manifested through religious symbolism how Kurtz' presence at the "Inner Station" also had contributed to his status amongst the natives: 'he came to them with thunder and lightning, you know – and they had never seen anything like it' (93). Thus, Kurtz manifests symbolic attributes of "divinity", much like Frye's romantic protagonist, as Marlow likewise has darker aspects. Having reached the final destination at the end of the river, Kurtz must be confronted. The "dragon" of this romantic quest must be "killed", in the sense that the protagonist can finally personify his dream-like perception of Kurtz; who is essentially the manifestation of everything idealistic about Marlow's perception of British imperialism – In essence, he is the Drake or Franklin of ivory. As Marlow comes close to meeting Kurtz, however, it becomes clear that this man is not the ideal hero which Marlow expects. Like Marlow, Kurtz also possesses a dark side; one which has driven him to tyranny and madness. In addition to later learning that it was in fact Kurtz himself who "ordered the attack to be made on the steamer" (105), and not the "worshipping" natives, Marlow comes closer to understanding the reality behind the "postscripture" (82) of Kurtz' previously mentioned report found in the hut. A reality which contains symbolic attributes similar to the "displaced archetype of Satan", and ultimately builds Kurtz up as the perfect antagonist for Marlow's "Crucial Struggle" within the stage of "initiation". Firstly, it becomes clear how Kurtz has been driven to "madness" (94) through his obsession with ivory:

He hated all this, and somehow he couldn't get away. When I had a chance I begged him to try and leave while there was time; I offered to go back with him. And he would say yes, and then he would remain; go off on another ivory hunt; disappear for weeks; forget himself amongst these people— forget himself—you know.' 'Why! he's mad,' I said. (94).

From this example it can be illustrated how Kurtz has become lost amongst the natives, and the jungles of Africa, through his obsession with ivory – now ruling over the "Inner Station" with fear and tyranny: "They would have been even more impressive, those heads on the stakes, if their faces had not been turned to the house" (95). Once Marlow comes closer to realizing the darker truth

behind Kurtz, the driving force of nature once again contributes to the construction of suspense and action, much like the “white fog” (Conrad 64) right before their previous attack: “Not a living soul was seen on the shore. The bushes did not rustle. ‘Suddenly, round the corner of the house a group of men appeared, as though they had come up from the ground’ (98). Continuously alluding to the “hell”-like symbolism of Kurtz and his followers who “had come up from the ground” (98), Marlow now stands forth in front of his long anticipated and sought-after antagonist. This confrontation, however, is as previously discussed by Mack and Nayak, one of ironic deflation; both at the level of the plot, and at the level of the narrative. Essentially, Marlow’s first meeting with Kurtz is of crucial importance: “I saw the man on the stretcher sit up, lank and with an uplifted arm, above the shoulders of the bearers. [...] His covering had fallen off, and his body emerged from it pitiful and appalling as from a winding-sheet” (99). Here, Marlow’s initial impression of Kurtz is one of pity – he is not the heroic counterpart to himself, nor is he the ideal antagonist for Marlow’s romantic quest; he is dying. Further deflating the once glorified perception of Kurtz, Marlow continues to describe the ill man through allusions of being undead or “nothing earthly now” (Conrad 25), similar to the “slowly dying” (Conrad 25) savages whom he had previously encountered: “It was as though an animated image of death carved out of old ivory had been shaking his hand with menaces at a motionless crowd of men made of dark and glittering bronze” (Conrad 100).

Through these descriptions, it is shown how Kurtz now takes Marlow’s place in manifesting the hero of the ironic fictional mode, where the reader, and the protagonist in this case, now look upon him with “a sense of looking down on a scene of bondage, frustration and absurdity” (Frye 33). Thus, Marlow’s “Crucial Struggle” of the quest, the sole purpose of his journey, is ultimately deflated through an element of irony. Marlow does not encounter a worthy opponent or “dragon” which he has been chasing so obsessively throughout his journey as a “wanderer” (Conrad 5), but rather, the romantic plot or quest itself has become the “dragon” – slayed through irony and disappointment, much like the legends of Franklin and Drake initially mentioned by the frame narrator. As the manager of “the Company” notes, Kurtz is no longer a “universal genius” and the pinnacle symbol of one who is “made” in Europe, but rather he has “done more harm than good for the Company” (103). Kurtz is no longer the order-threatening “Dragon”, but instead, an inconvenience or a manifestation of “sterility” (Denham 72) not for society, but for “the Company”: “‘Because the method is unsound’. ‘Do you,’ I said, looking at the shore, ‘call it ‘unsound method?’ ‘Without doubt.’ He exclaimed hotly. ‘Don’t you?’ ... ‘No method at all.’ I murmured after a while. ‘Exactly,’ he exulted’” (103). Although Marlow’s confrontation with Kurtz presents himself as the

“superior” hero, it can also be argued that the protagonist still bears resemblance to the metaphorical duality of light and darkness manifested in literary characters such as the previously mentioned Charon and Aeneas of *the Aeneid*. Like Kurtz, Marlow is also affected by his journey through the “threshold” of jungles and savagery; to the point where he still perceives Kurtz as “a remarkable man” (104): “I had turned to the wilderness really, not to Mr. Kurtz, who, I was ready to admit, was a good as buried” (104). Marlow also finds himself drawn to the “wilderness”, signifying his empathy for Kurtz. The “Crucial Struggle” within Marlow’s quest is thus one of retrospective insight and reflection of the protagonist – who comes to terms with the fact that the man he so obsessively was trying to find was but a name or myth in reality; an idealized perception of himself, and a way of ignoring the darker sides which he, Kurtz, and perhaps all men of these imperialist adventures undergo. Thus, having “completed” the stage of “Initiation”, through an inherently disappointing, but nevertheless “soul-altering confrontation” (Cahir 183), Marlow must now journey back to society as the “conquering” hero; the stage of “Return”.

Return: Romantic Ignorance and the Ultimate Boon

Following a ritualistic drumming from within the jungle, provoking emotions of “sheer blank fright, pure abstract terror, unconnected with any distinct shape of physical terror” (107), Marlow decides that now is the time to retrieve the ill Kurtz from his residence in the “Inner Station” and bring him back to London – the stage of “Return”. Affirming that Kurtz’s “success in Europe is assured in any case” (110), Marlow ignores the hesitant Kurtz’s pleas to remain within the darkness of the jungle to die, and thus chooses to take control of the situation through his enhanced “power of action”: “‘I had immense plans,’ he muttered irresolutely. ‘Yes’, said I: ‘but if you try to shout I’ll smash your head with – ‘There was not a stick or a stone near. ‘I will throttle you for good’” (110). Having accomplished the sought after “hero-quest” (Campbell 179), Marlow now seeks to journey home – with the weakened Kurtz in custody. In the stage of “Return”, upon completion of the quest, the hero now “still must return with his life-transmuting trophy” (179). In this case, the “trophy” manifests itself within Marlow himself who, upon realizing Kurtz darker side, understands that they must return to civilization before he is also consumed by his own “heart of darkness” within the jungle. Upon reaching to the steamboat, Marlow recognizes that he and the rest of his men may in fact be in wrong, in terms of perceiving who is in control of the wilderness, jungle and river. Thus, he describes their own vessel as being a “splashing, thumping, fierce river-demon” (Conrad 112) from the perspective of the natives – in essence, Marlow realizes that they might be the “dragon” in this conflict.

During their trip down the river, the ill Kurtz becomes even weaker. Campbell notes how the hero's return to society may be "supported by all the powers of his supernatural patron" (182), much like how Marlow describes that "the brown current ran swiftly out of the heart of darkness, bearing us down towards the sea with twice the speed of our upwards progress" (Conrad 113). However, as the journey of the steamboat and Marlow becomes easier through help of the river as "the carrier of the power of destiny" (Campbell 47), Kurtz's life is likewise "running swiftly, too, ebbing, ebbing out of his heart into the sea of inexorable time" (Conrad 114). Whilst Marlow and his crew manage to cross back over the "threshold", Kurtz does not; His final exclamation before death manifesting the pure feelings of "sombre pride, of ruthless power, of craven terror" (Conrad 116): "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!'*" (116). Ultimately, Kurtz's final words reflect the underlying desires behind the physical and psychological journey into "heart of darkness" of his imperialist conquest for ivory – something which Marlow is able to return from, through his re-integration into society. Having returned to London, however, Marlow narrates that he is still affected by his adventures and Kurtz' final words: "It was not my strength that wanted nursing, it was my imagination that wanted soothing" (120). Marlow had been exposed to the true darkness of man; having his initial romantic visions of Kurtz deflated, and thus he is heavily affected psychologically – almost as if he has not fully left the wilderness of Africa: "I had a vision of him on the stretcher, opening his mouth voraciously, as if to devour all the earth with all its mankind" (123).

Marlow has received the "Ultimate Boon" (Campbell 159) of enlightenment, as he is able to realize that "the two kingdoms" (Campbell 201) of London, the Thames and Africa, the River Congo, are "actually one" (Campbell 201). The protagonist has accepted that the darker sides of man, which he was exposed to through Kurtz and his own psychological development throughout his heroic journey, are evermore present within his initial safe haven of London; the city of British glory and civilization. As previously mentioned by Mack, the narrative within *Heart of Darkness* illustrates how "the sea hauntingly transfers destruction through nonhuman nature into the core of humanity's civilization" (89) – the sea in this case being manifested through the river. Here, Campbell notes that "the values and distinctions that in normal life seem important disappear with the terrifying assimilation of the self into what formerly was only otherness" (201) – much like how Marlow narrates that he did not need nurturing physically after his return, but rather, he needed to "soothe" his "imagination". This element of apparent enlightenment within Marlow is presented

through the frame narrator, who notes that our protagonist has been sat cross-legged “in the pose of a meditating Buddha” (Conrad 130) throughout his telling of the story. As previously mentioned, the heroic journey, if completed, is one of transformation or “rebirth” within the hero. Campbell emphasizes that the Buddha-figure itself symbolizes a “pattern of the divine state to which the human hero attains who has gone beyond the last terrors of ignorance” (139). This notion of going beyond the “terrors of ignorance”, though, is perhaps not something which is present within the frame narrator’s ironic perception of Marlow and his “yarn” upon the *Nellie*. Once again, the representation of Marlow as a posing, meditating and enlightened Buddha is one of irony, reflecting the underlying “agon” of ironic deflation across the level of the plot and narrative of *Heart of Darkness*. Crucially, this can be illustrated through Marlow’s final actions after returning to London. Although Marlow has physically conquered his confrontation with Kurtz, he is not able to win psychologically, where the hauntingly demonic aspects of the antagonist, and his true “heart of darkness”, still manifests itself as thoughts and visions within the “imagination” of the returned hero. In one final attempt to rid himself of these visions, Marlow narrates how he chooses to visit Kurtz’s “Intended” (Conrad 120) – his lover. Kurtz’s “Intended” remains unexposed to the darker sides of his time in Africa, and thus, she still maintains a romantic vision of Kurtz - as our initial hero had before the “crucial struggle” of the quest. To Marlow, she is now the only aspect of “light” he associates with the thoughts of Kurtz: “But with every word spoken the room was growing darker, and only her forehead, smooth and white, remained illuminated by the extinguishable light of belief and love” (Conrad 126). Kurtz’s “Intended” seeks the truth; she wishes to know the final words of her lover. Having been exposed to the darker reality behind his romantic visions of imperialism, and subsequently, the horrific thoughts and inner desires within man, Marlow attempts to maintain his own sanity by keeping the dream alive: “The last word he pronounced was – your name” (129). Thus, Marlow chooses to remain ignorant and to “soothe” his “imagination” by constructing a false image of Kurtz; one of heroism, love and passion – much like Drake and Franklin ironically celebrated by the frame narrator.

In many ways, the underlying “agon” of the plot and narrative reflect what Mack identifies as an ironic deflation or “disappointment” (90), which in turn, facilitates the “destruction of myths of idealism, imperialism and progress” (90). Marlow’s heroic journey, ultimately deflated by his confrontation with the powerless antagonist Kurtz at the “Crucial Struggle” of the quest thus manifest the modernist perception of literary romance, its dependance on plot, and the subsequent “destruction” of it; the notion of being a “wanderer” (Conrad 5) who “still ‘followed the sea’”

(Conrad 4) is presented as outdated or ignorant in contrast to the ironic frame narrator who invites the reader to judge Marlow's "yarn" as another "inconclusive experience" (9) – much like the structure of plot within the quest is presented as meaningless. Marlow's experience and subsequent re-telling of his adventures in Africa represent an inherently ironic manifestation of "impressionism as a mode that can only offer a curtailed understanding of the world" (Nayak 31), reflected through his romantic perception of British imperialism and its heroes such as Drake and Franklin.

As Marlow's final words to Kurtz's intended also suggests, *Heart of Darkness* also facilitates a discussion of how "the irrationalism of myth persists in what has been assumed to be a demythologized modernity" (92) – the ignorant Marlow, like others who "followed the sea" (Conrad 4) choose to perceive the world through myth and romance; something which does not capture the reality behind man and his "heart of darkness". Much like the frame narrator notes before Marlow begins his narration, one must consider how the protagonists' "yarn" is not of the same "direct simplicity" (Conrad 6) as typical stories. Rather, the listener is invited to consider how this story is "not inside like a kernel but outside, enveloping the tale which brought it out only as a glow brings out a haze" (6). As Henthorne argues, in order to "comprehend such a tale [...], we have to consider the form as well as the content" (123). From the "architexural" discussion of the previously identified literary allusions to archetypal descents into "hell" within *Heart of Darkness*, and the subsequent romantic and "monomythic" structures of Marlow's quest, it becomes clear how the "form" in which the reader is invited to consider within this tale is one of the ideal heroic journey – and how it is ironically deflated in relation to British Imperialism as seen through Kurtz and Marlow. Returning to Henthorne's notion of the "trojan-horse" (110) within the double-narrative of *Heart of Darkness*, this focus on both form and content, inherently manifesting itself as the ironic deflation of the romantic quest, illustrates masked intentions behind the narrative: "Rather than simply see Africa "through" Marlow's eyes, the frame narrator hopes that we will "see through" Marlow's effort to justify the colonization effort" (Henthorne 123). The frame narrator thus represents Conrad's own, hidden, perception of imperialism and the brutal nature behind it; something which is clearly apparent within his choice to draw parallels between Marlow and Kurtz and the previously mentioned ironic, controversial heroes of Franklin and Drake. Arguably, however, *Heart of Darkness* is not just a masked critique of Marlow's "effort to justify the colonization effort" (Henthorne 123) – it is inherently also a modernist critique or "deconstruction" of structure both at the level of plot and at the level of the narrative:

Like a spin doctor in a political campaign, the narrator puts a spin on Marlow's narrative that discredits Marlow and the ideology he serves: [...] ultimately deconstructing it, or at least suggesting to the reader that it deconstructs itself (Henthorne 122 – 123).

Much like the underlying "agon" of Marlow's journey, the ironic deflation of Kurtz as the "dragon" or antagonist likewise projects a "destructive deflation of lofty ideas and romantic promises" (Mack 89) – something which ultimately could be illustrated through an "architextural" and taxonomical framework of analysis, where Marlow's adventures as the hero is slowly deflated from being one of "superiority" within romance to one of "bondage, frustration and absurdity" (Frye 33) as the protagonist seals his ironic fate by lying to Kurtz's "intended".

Apocalypse Now: Intertextuality and the "Crisis About the Hero"

Having examined Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* primarily from what Genette would define as an "architextural" perspective, in terms of viewing the underlying patterns of narrative and plot in relation to the theoretical framework of both Frye and Campbell, the next work of analysis is that of Francis Ford Coppola's film titled *Apocalypse Now*. Continuing with a likewise framework of analysis, it is also significant to consider the intertextual connection to *Heart of Darkness*. Thus, this viewing of *Apocalypse Now* contains also a comparative perspective and discussion, as Willard's journey in Vietnam is perceived in contrast and parallel to that of the previously examined adventures of Marlow. As outlined earlier, this involves a perception of "the relationship uniting text B" (Genette 5), that being the "hypertext" *Apocalypse Now*, with "an earlier text A"; Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*. This includes clear references in the manuscript, such as the name Kurtz given to the antagonist, which bears with it an array of symbolism tied to this antagonist, such as those points touched upon in the previous analysis of Conrad's novel, including how the "heart of darkness" within man is transferred to the American soldiers of the Vietnam war – and thus, considering what this does to the overall literary features of plot and narration in *Apocalypse Now*. In addition to viewing this work in relation to a different historical context of production and reception than that of *Heart of Darkness*, it is also crucial to consider *Apocalypse Now* within the medium of cinematography and sound.

As previously noted by Landwehr, Genette's taxonomy of intertextuality stretches past the boundaries of the written text. Thus, it is important to consider how the notion of the "linguistic sign" manifests itself within other "practices of art" (Landwehr 8); which in this case is the art of film-making and cinematography. A key way in which this analysis approaches the notion of a

“linguistic sign” from the medium of film, being a single unit of analysis through which interconnections and relationships construct meaning, is both that of the single frame shot; where elements such as camera angles, lighting, fading and composition are also crucial to understand; as well the concept of the “scene”, from which a series of frame shots combine with audio, movement and narrative in order to create meaning. In *An Introduction to Film Analysis: Technique and meaning in Narrative Film*, Michael Ryan and Melissa Lenos define the notion of the scene as being “organized as a whole movie with its own beginning, middle, and end. Individual scenes often are organized around a single point or “beat” where characters interact in a way that leads to disagreement or resolution, enlightenment or bafflement. The scene is shaped by that one emotional or intellectual moment or beat” (Ryan & Lenos). Thus, it is paramount to the discussion of both *Apocalypse Now*, and its intertextual relation to *Heart of Darkness*, that the notion of the scene, as well as individual frame shots, construct the framework from which Coppola’s work is viewed and approached analytically. Regarding the notion of the scene as often being organized around a specific point of interest or “beat”, it is also important to consider how these visual, auditory and cinematographic aspects contribute to the overall narrative. In “What is Spectacle?” Simon Lewis examines the use of the cinematic “spectacle” in relation to the construction of narrative in film; and how it either contributes to “a shaping or manipulation of narrational and nonnarrational transmission” (218). Thus, Coppola’s *Apocalypse Now* contains scenes of “[displaying] the visibility of the visible” (Lewis 214)” which contribute to the underlying narrative structure: “event spectacles” (218). Being deeply connected to “the film’s narrative architecture” (218), the “event spectacle” attempts to “increase the emotional impact of the film” (217) by utilizing visual and auditory elements in scenes which are focused on “the characters, often putting them at risk of death or serious injury” (217) – a familiar practice amongst heroes such as that of both Marlow and, as *Apocalypse Now* will show, Willard.

Apocalypse Now opens with an eye level panorama shot of the Vietnamese jungle – misty and dense; hiding the unknown world behind the outer foliage (Appendix A). Colored smoke, commonly recognized by a post-war American audience of 1979 as the infamous chemical weaponry ‘Agent Orange’, rises from below as the non-diegetic sound of the song “The End” by the Doors increases in volume (00:00:25-00:01:10). Whilst emphasizing that the overall theme and context of *Apocalypse Now* is one of war, this mysterious construction of mise-en-scène, accompanied by the gloomy melody by the Doors, initially frames the journey of Willard, and the American war adventures in Vietnam in general, as one which is similar to the previously

mentioned literary representations of the descent into hell. As the title suggests, the protagonist, like many other American war veterans, finds himself in an apocalyptic world of danger, where the mysterious and unknown dangers of the jungle are contrasted to the visible, ever-present use of advanced weaponry and war technology along the coastline of Vietnam. As the non-diegetic sound of music in the opening scene increases, the initially surrealistic representation of the Vietnamese jungle is interrupted, whilst the diegetic thundering of helicopters overshadows the song; thus, bringing the audience back to reality, and almost placing them within the physical space of war. Suddenly, the jungle explodes into a blazing inferno, as the camera pans across the foliage (Appendix B) – ultimately signifying the truly “hell”-ish experience of Vietnam, as well as illustrating the explosive duality between American political and cultural presence in Vietnam in contrast to the natural, dark and unknown world of the natives: an inherently imperialistic representation of war, much like how Kurtz, Marlow, and his crew of “The Company” assert themselves within the African continent in *Heart of Darkness*.

In addition to a foreshadowing message of the “hell”-ish experiences of the Vietnam War in the introductory mise-en-scène and auditory elements of diegetic and non-diegetic sound, the initial retrospective insight of Willard’s voice over narration also illustrates how *Apocalypse Now* is a tale of his own self-reflection, and perhaps, self-confession of the events to come: “[...] If his story is really a confession [...] then so is mine” (00:09:59 – 00:10:03). As German E. Vargas notes in “Narrative Mode, Mixed Images, and Adaptation in Francis Ford Coppola’s *Apocalypse Now*”, Willard bears clear intertextual reference to “the role of Marlow in terms of the adaptation of the character” (92), as he becomes “the caretaker of Colonel Walter E. Kurtz’s memory” (00:09:41-00:09:46) much like how Marlow does near the ending of *Heart of Darkness*. In contrast to *Heart of Darkness*, however, the narration of *Apocalypse Now* is not constructed through a double-narrator, but rather, through Willard’s retrospective re-telling of the story. Instead, the camera itself functions as a parallel to the frame narrator of *Heart of Darkness*, mediating between Willard’s narration of his adventures and his actual experiences. As Margot Norris points out in “Modernism and Vietnam”, the omission of a second narrator in Coppola’s *Apocalypse Now* constructs the effect of anagnorisis in Willard’s self-reflective narration of his journey. Here, Willard’s own previously discussed “sins” become not just elements of a “rhetorical evocation” (757), but also a “product, effect, and confession of the American corporate violence that was Vietnam” (757). The viewer of *Apocalypse Now* is thus invited to function as an equivalent to Conrad’s “unnamed narrator”, in the sense that Willard openly provokes or encourages a process of anagnorisis and reflection within the

narrative experience – it is clear from the beginning that the hero of *Apocalypse Now* has experienced many journeys and adventures; all which require thought and “discovery” (Frye 186) once the protagonist reaches his goal of the quest.

Much like in *Heart of Darkness*, Cahir also identifies a “pattern of taletelling” (182) within *Apocalypse Now*, in the sense that the overall structure of plot is very much concerned with obtaining the goal for Willard of reaching Kurtz. Here, several “scheduled stops” (Cahir 183) form his adventures up the River Nung. These “stops”, which manifest the “trials” of Willard’s quest, become further foreshadowed as both physically and psychologically challenging experiences of Willard’s journey, through the initial use of editing within the opening scene of *Apocalypse Now*. As the previously described shots of the burning Vietnamese jungle is shown, distressed visions of Willard’s face (Appendix C) gradually fade in and out (00:01:40 – 00:03:29); tying a strong connection between the traumatic experiences of the unknown jungle, warfare and “trails” ahead with the protagonist. He is clearly affected by his adventures in Vietnam and, much like Marlow in *Heart of Darkness*, this use of editing foreshadows an insight into the darker sides of Willard himself. By framing both Willard and Kurtz’s stories in *Apocalypse Now* as “confessions” (00:09:59 – 00:10:03), it becomes clear to the reflective audience that both characters contain aspects of immorality, just as Marlow and his antagonist in *Heart of Darkness* do.

In combination with Willard’s initial scene in the hotel room (00:03:28 – 00:07:31), in which he moves around, dances, and punches a mirror just as the non-diegetic music of the Doors reaches its climax (00:06:54 – 00:06:56), it can be alluded from Willard’s use of retrospective narration how the hero of *Apocalypse Now* intends to present his journey in a serious manner: “Saigon, shit. I’m still only in Saigon. Every time I think I’m going to wake up back in the jungle” (00:04:16 – 00:04:37). In contrast to the initial narration of the frame narrator in *Heart of Darkness*, there is no clear presence of irony from the beginning of the tale in relation to Willard’s introductory description of his war experience and the upcoming quest. Rather, it is clear through the previously described behavior of him, and the contrasting parallels between the jungle and American technology and destruction, that the war is affecting him mentally – something the contemporary American audience of 1979 would have identified with a feeling of post-traumatic stress within the returned war veterans of Vietnam. Irony, however, will come to manifest itself in *Apocalypse Now*, as the traumatized psyche of our American war hero Willard, as shown through the perception of the camera, contrasts with his inherently romantic perception of himself and his mission; starting with Campbell’s stage of “Departure”.

Departure: Willard's Mission, Kurtz as the Antagonist, and Entering the River Nung

As previously illustrated in *Heart of Darkness*, Campbell's stage of "Departure" forms the initial introduction to the hero and his quest, as well as his descent into the world of adventure and danger. Subsequently, the notion of "agon" or conflict fuels the quest of the hero, in the sense that he must conquer or slay a metaphorical "dragon" in order to conclude his "Crucial Struggle". In *Heart of Darkness*, the underlying "agon" of the Marlow's journey manifested itself on both the levels of the plot and narrative, where the ultimately ironic deflation of the protagonist's confrontation with Kurtz contrasted with the duality of his own and the frame narrator's perception of this experience. As the "architextural" framework of Frye and Campbell will prove to show, the inherently more complete or straight-forward heroic journey of Willard, as well as the telling and cinematographic representation of it, is key to understanding the importance behind an intertextual and "hypertextural" connection between *Heart of Darkness* and *Apocalypse Now* – where irony is crucially present in both works. The previously noted manifestation of conflict within both plot and narration is also key to understanding the underlying "agon" of *Apocalypse Now*, where the eventual completion of the quest, in combination with the narration of the journey as experienced through Willard as well as the camera, ultimately culminates into what Lyotard would consider as "the intense epic of a pointless combat" (58). The critical meaning of this phrase by Lyotard is situated in the oxymoronic contrast between the traditional sense of the epic, as a genre, which is concerned with meaningful, crucial moments of battle and conflict such as those of Odysseus and Achilles, and the "pointless" or meaning-deprived vision associated with the American defeat in Vietnam; both in terms of casualties and economic cost, but also regarding the attempt to understand the purpose behind a war which did not have a desired outcome. This valuable quote by Lyotard is something which reflects critical themes of discussion within Coppola's work: both in terms of its historical and political context, being the psychological effects upon the returned American war hero and the overall meaninglessness of war, but also in terms of how these themes are conveyed through the application of previous literary conventions and archetypal structures, such as those examined by Frye and Campbell within this post-modern re-telling of the Vietnam War.

The Call to Adventure

Following the initial, almost psychedelic introduction to the distressed and drunk Willard in his hotel room, the protagonist receives his "call to adventure" (Campbell 33) in the following scene

(00:07:31 – 00:09:19). As the camera cuts to two officers walking up the stairs, Willard's voice-over narration describes how he himself sought after a new mission, and how "for my sins they gave me one" (00:07:33 -07:33:44). The two officers have been sent to bring Willard to his briefing of the mission or quest. As Willard narrates, he has within him a desire to take part in a new adventure within Vietnam: "every minute I stay in this room I get weaker" (00:05:39 – 00:05:42). However, in contrast to the romantic narration of Willard himself, which draws parallels to Marlow's self-described "perennially child-like qualities" (Frye 186) of fascination with unexplored territory and maps in *Heart of Darkness*, a clear presence of irony is revealed to the audience through the perception of the camera. Much like how the frame narrator in *Heart of Darkness* links Marlow's mentality as a "wanderer" (Conrad 5) with the inherently ironic figures of Sir Francis Drake and Sir John Franklin, it can be illustrated how Willard's perception of himself as the hero in need for a mission is contrastingly presented with what Campbell would consider as a "refusal of the call to adventure" (Campbell 33). As the two impatient soldiers are let into Willard's room, it is clear that the both traumatized and hungover protagonist of *Apocalypse Now* is not ready to accept his quest immediately, signifying the psychological burden of the Vietnam war and the subsequent post-traumatic stress experienced by many soldiers. Initially, Willard is confused by the presence of these officers, to point where he asks "What are the charges – what did I do?" (00:08:40 – 00:08:43); further signifying and foreshadowing a possibility of darker sides and aspects to Willard as the American war hero. As Willard is told that he is to report for another mission, he lies down in his bed exclaiming "I'm not feeling too good" (00:08:57 – 00:08:59), illustrating his initial refusal to embark on another painful and long journey. In response, the two soldiers, inherently manifesting "the carrier of the power of destiny" (Campbell 47), drag him out of bed and throw him in the shower: "We got a dead one" (00:09:02-00:09:05). Whilst showing that the refusal of adventure and missions during the Vietnam war was a common practice amongst American soldiers, being exhausted or "dead" from previous embarkments, this scene of Willard being metaphorically dragged into his quest signifies a presence of irony in contrast to his own narration of a desire for a new mission – something which also draws parallels to Marlow's romantic perception of himself in contrast to the frame narrator's introduction of his "inconclusive experience" (Conrad 9) re-told on the *Nellie*. Further emphasizing this inherent presence of irony, Willard continues to draw upon the notion of destiny in his voice-over narration on the way to his mission briefing, just as Marlow comes across the two old women were knitting away in the "sepulchral city" (Conrad 38) on his way to the "Central Station" of "The Company": "it was no accident that I got to be the caretaker of

Colonel Walter E. Kurtz' s memory" (00:09:44 – 00:09:50). As Willard suggests, this journey or quest is one which only he can fulfill – and thus, he is the chosen hero; one who must undergo his own psychological and physical journey.

Willard's mission is further explained to him in the scene where he is introduced to General Corman (G. D. Spradlin) (00:09:22 – 00:18:51). In contrast to *Heart of Darkness*, where Marlow's romantic perception of Kurtz initially presents him as a European man of heroic stature which is later ruined by the ironic deflation of their confrontation, Willard is immediately presented by General Corman with a Kurtz who is described as having been changed during his time as a colonel in the war:

Well, you see Willard... In this war, things get confused out there; power, ideals, the old morality and practical military necessity [...] Every man has got a breaking point. You and I have. Walter Kurtz has reached his. And very obviously, he has gone insane (00:15:54 – 00:17:07)

In addition to giving the antagonist of *Apocalypse Now* the same name as in *Heart of Darkness*, immediately associating the Colonel with themes of insanity and tyranny such as those previously illustrated in this paper's reading of Conrad's novel, Coppola's character further continues to signify a resemblance and parallels to Marlow's Kurtz. Whilst bearing clear intertextual reference to the madness previously illustrated to have been experienced by Kurtz in *Heart of Darkness* regarding his hunt for ivory, General Corman's description of Walter E. Kurtz in *Apocalypse Now* draws upon Conrad's novel as what Allen and Genette would identify as a "hypertext": "intended and self-conscious relation between texts" (Allen 105). This can be illustrated through Corman's description of Kurtz's "methods" as having become "unsound" (00:14:59), just as Marlow and the manager of "the Company" discuss in *Heart of Darkness* regarding Kurtz (Conrad 103). Willard is thus from the beginning of the quest presented with a vision of Colonel Walter E. Kurtz which constructs him as the antagonist or "dragon" (Frye 188) which he must slay; Kurtz is a man who, through clear intertextual and "hypertextual" references to Conrad's novel, has been corrupted by his own heart of darkness and represents societal sterility – he must not be retrieved; however, he must be terminated. Willard's quest, therefore, is to journey up the River Nung in search for his antagonist, who is located in the jungles of Cambodia; reeking terror and running riot through the help of his status where "Out there with these natives it must be a temptation to be God" (00:16:11 – 00:16:21).

Once he has accepted his “call to adventure”, Willard begins his journey as the hero, which involves “a crossing of the first threshold” (Campbell 34) into the world of action and adventure; the Vietnamese jungle and the River Nung. As Campbell notes, the hero may be guided by a “supernatural aid” (65), which manifests itself as a force of help within the plot of the quest:

Having responded to his own call, and continuing to follow courageously as the consequences unfold, the hero finds all the forces of the unconscious at his side. [...] And in so far as the hero's act coincides with that for which his society itself is ready, he seems to ride on the great rhythm of the historical process” (Campbell 67).

In *Apocalypse Now*, the function of the “supernatural aid” manifests itself through American war technology and cultural presence in Vietnam. However, there is a clear distinction between Willard and his crew members, in terms how they are aided on their journey. Following the briefing of Willard's mission, he and his crew on the American swift boat journey towards the 1st Cavalry Commander known as Lieutenant Colonel Kilgore (Robert Duvall) (00:18:51 – 00:27:05). Here, it is shown how the crew of Willard's journey indulge in acts of American pop-culture such as listening to the Rolling Stones on the radio and surfing (00:22:58 – 00:24:05). In contrast, Willard is seen as looking confused, perhaps even disgusted (Appendix D), as his crew members continue to maintain an ignorant perception of their journey in Vietnam. Thus, it is clear how the protagonist is very much focused on his mission of finding Kurtz, which is further emphasized through his mission folder which he repeatedly looks at along the entirety of his journey in order to keep focus. Particularly, transportation as a form of “supernatural aid” is key for Willard's journey in *Apocalypse Now*, where the American helicopter's carry him, his crewmates, and their boat to their starting destination of the River Nung.

The Crossing of the First Threshold

The strong presence of American culture and technology in the initial scenes of *Apocalypse Now*, being set outside the dark, unknown territory of the Vietnamese jungles, also contribute to the construction of a threshold – much like how Marlow's applies symbolism of light and darkness to create contrast between the civilized London and the world of natives in Africa. Even though *Apocalypse Now* is set in Vietnam from the beginning of the movie, with Willard's initial scene being in a hotel room in the city of Saigon, it is clear how the protagonist is yet to cross a threshold into the unknown world of the quest. Before Willard begins his journey up the River Nung, the audience is exposed to a Vietnam which has become contained, controlled and explored in its areas of American military control; illustrated through the sequences of clear cultural convictions

manifested within the surfing and rock-music of the American soldiers, as well as the ever-present dominance of American war technology exemplified amongst the fearless Kilgore and his men. Here, Lieutenant Colonel Kilgore is the ultimate manifestation of American dominance and romantic ignorance in the Vietnam war – he, like Marlow in *Heart of Darkness*, turns a blind eye to the negative aspects of his existence; something which both Willard and the audience, functioning as the frame narrator, are able to see through. As Fertel argues, Kilgore “represents one of Willard’s guides into the heart of darkness. [...] He knows nothing of the world beyond the pale that Kurtz represents and it is inevitable that he be killed before Willard and the swift boat cross the final threshold into Kurtz’s realm of darkness and ashes (289). Thus, Kilgore and his men remain within the known world of the “threshold” in Vietnam – one which represents an ignorant, romantic perception of war, where surfing and music are consumed commodities used to pass time as agent orange burns the coastal banks like a blazing entrance into the dark, reality that is hell; a “hell” which Willard, as Marlow, must descend into in order to begin his quest. Willard’s actual “crossing of the first threshold” into the dark, unknown world of this particular mission is, in turn, facilitated through precisely this exhibition of American military dominance, technology and western culture, as the protagonist and his men are transported with helicopters during a staged attack on the Vietnamese village.

In order to begin his mission, Willard and his crew must be guided to the entrance of the River Nung; and thus, cross the threshold into the unknown world. Returning to the previous notion of contrast, it can be illustrated how the dominant technology of Kilgore and his soldiers later contrasts to the isolated Swift boat which Willard and his men travel up the river with – surrounded by danger and darkness. Initially, Kilgore is reluctant to bring the men to their destination. His mindset, however, changes as he learns that their desired location has “a fantastic peak” (00:33:39 – 00:33:41) in terms of surfing – once again alluding to how these American soldiers romantically perceive the otherwise traumatic and dangerous world of Vietnam. Kilgore appears to be in control outside of the jungle: “We’ll pick your boat up and put it down like a baby, right where you want it. This is First of the Ninth, Air Cav, son. Airmobile. I can take that point and hold it as long as I like, and you can get anywhere you want up that river that suits you, young captain. Hell, a six-foot peak” (00:34:33 – 00:34:35). As Kilgore and his men transport Willard and his crew towards “Charlie’s point” (00:34:49), the importance of the helicopter, as a method of “supernatural aid” (Campbell 65) and a symbol of American technological dominance in Vietnam becomes clearer. As previously discussed in the opening scene of *Apocalypse Now*, the thumping diegetic sound of the

helicopters once again dominate the auditory elements of the shots in which the soldiers fly towards their destination. Once again, as previously argued regarding Willard's post-traumatic experiences in the opening scene of the hotel room in Saigon, it can be seen how the loud sound of the helicopters leave both protagonist and audience in deep of suspense of what is to come – something which, again, is signified through the use of fade in and out cuts of Willard's face as they fly (Appendix E, F). As Comber argues, the helicopter is significant in the demonstration of a darker side of the American presence in Vietnam, as they “take on the appearance of monstrous whirring insects” (252) through the use of “Lurid colour; shimmering light; lowering sky” (252). This foreshadowing of American ferocity, darkness and violence in relation to both war in general and the upcoming attack on the Vietnamese village is further emphasized through sound and suspense.

The previously described diegetic sound of helicopters, is gently paired with music, as Kilgore chooses to play an example of pinnacle western classical music and culture being Wagner's “Ride of The Valkyries”: “Yeah, I use Wagner. Scares the hell out of the slopes! My boys love it!” (00:37:32 – 00:37:38). Thus, Willard's “crossing of the first threshold” is initiated through the use of sound, as the non-diegetic music of Wagner and thunder of the helicopters increases in volume as they close in on the Vietnamese coast. As Elsaesser and Wedel argue in “The hollow heart of Hollywood: *Apocalypse Now* and the new sound space”, Coppola's use of sound in this particular scene is used to “intensify the viewer's sense of their incongruity at every level” (169). Here, the fear-inducing use of Wagner's Ride of the Valkyrie stands in great contrast to the “aural pun” (169) associated with this piece of classical music: “the Valkyries are riding to collect dead heroes from the field of battle” (169). Instead, as the attack on the Vietnamese village illustrates, the American soldiers are the ones who kill, induce fear and evaporate their enemies through dominant technology and chemical warfare as Kilgore exemplifies: “Don't worry, we'll have this place cleaned up and ready for us in a jiffy, don't you worry.” (00:48:36 – 00:48:41).

The scene of the attack on the Vietnamese village (00:37:10 – 00:50:10) is crucial to the understanding of Willard's “crossing of the first threshold”. As previously discussed, Lyotard notes how certain scenes of *Apocalypse Now* break with the overall narrative pattern. This, according to Lyotard, includes how “the block of images of the attack of the village does not belong to the saga, that is, to the narration, at all” (69), where he suggests that the strong feeling of “panic” (69) constructed through the fast paced editing and energetic sound of Wagner, accompanied by the diegetic noise of gun-shots and explosions, erupt the sense of narrative to the point where no “seduction” can be detected: “The panic is that no narrative can take charge of this chaos of data

and suggest an obligation to the addressee" (69). Returning to Lewis' discussions in "What is Spectacle?", it can be illustrated that what Lyotard here considers as a scene of non-seduction – a non-narrational sequence of sheer panic in this case – can in fact be viewed as a spectacle in itself: "[displaying] the visibility of the visible" (Lewis 214). Contrastingly, then, when considering the significance of this scene in terms of illustrating Willard's "crossing of the first threshold" (Campbell 47), in which he enters the world of action and adventure of his quest, it can be concluded how the scene of the attack on the Vietnamese village is actually a vital part of the overall narrative, and thus an element of "seduction" within *Apocalypse Now* – particularly, when considering the previously mentioned thematic aspects of American violence in Vietnam and the subsequent meaninglessness of war in general; manifested at its pinnacle through the ignorant Kilgore who bombs the entire Village, not for the sake of helping Willard, but rather, so they are able to surf freely on the beach. Thus, the entirety of this scene, both mise-en-scène, fast paced editing and auditory elements considered, construct a "shaping or manipulation of narrational and nonnarrational transmission" (218); an "event spectacle" (217). The use of this "event spectacle" signifies Willard's "crossing of the first threshold" (Campbell 47). And now, he and his crew find themselves floating at the mouth of the River Nung; unaware of the "belly of the whale" (Campbell 34) they are about to enter.

The Belly of the Whale

Similar to how Marlow begins his journey up the river with the steamboat, the previously illustrated known world of dominant, glorified western culture can be contrasted to the dark, unknown jungles, banks and villages of the natives which boarder the River Nung, as the characters initiate their journey towards Colonel Kurtz in *Apocalypse Now*. Immediately, as the Swift boat begins its journey up the river, the style of editing, lighting and sound changes – further signifying that Willard, like Marlow in *Heart of Darkness*, is faced with isolation, darkness and a suspenseful somberness of the unknowing world behind the river banks of the black jungle. Elsaesser and Wedel argue that the "horror of Vietnam" (158) expressed in contemporary Hollywood movies of the late 1970's, such as *Apocalypse Now*, contained an actual level of inspiration from the Hollywood horror-movie genre regarding its ability to "disrupt the cause-and-effect patterns of such classical devices as shot/countershot, continuity and reverse field editing, creating instead a sense of mystery and surprise and misleading the viewer" (158). According to Elsaesser and Wedel, this effect of constructing suspense can be done by "withholding information or by keeping the causal agent, the monster, off-screen for as long as possible" (158). In *Apocalypse Now*, this technique of

keeping the “monster” off-screen is key to the construction of suspense and danger; both regarding the apparent enemy lurking behind the seemingly impenetrable river banks of the jungle or the long-awaited reveal of Colonel Kurtz.

Regarding the protagonist's sense of engulfment or being “swallowed” by his environment in *Apocalypse Now*, it can be illustrated how this suspenseful technique of the ““monster in the swamp” – nowhere to be seen” (159) is applied almost immediately as Willard and his crew journey up the dimly lit river at dawn in the first scene upon the river Nung (00:50:17 – 00:56:33). Much like how Marlow finds himself as experiencing a “power of action” (Frye 32) similar to that of the ironic hero as he begins his journey with the steamboat in *Heart of Darkness*, Willard, too, is exposed to a sense of being “inferior in power or intelligence to ourselves” (Frye 33) as he and the character “Chef” walk on shore to forage some mangoes despite his own foreshadowing words: “Never get out of the boat” (00:56:22 – 00:56:25). Here, the two characters become surrounded by the dark, unknowing dangers of the jungle as they venture further and further away from the swift boat. In contrast to the previously noted fast-paced editing of the attack on the Vietnamese village, suspense is created in this scene through shots of long duration in combination with low, diegetic sounds of the jungle. Willard remains mostly silent in this scene, only answering the questions brought forth by the highly talkative “Chef”; signaling that the protagonist is once again more focused and engaged with the seriousness of the mission in contrast to his crew-mates. Slow panning shots follow the the walking characters who push through the plants of the jungle (00:52:07 – 00:52:45), emphasizing that every step they take, they are walking further into the dimly lit jungle of the unknown world. Suddenly, Willard senses a danger and creeps forward towards it – suspense continuously rising as the audience nor protagonist is able to visualize or hear the danger. As the two characters come closer, a diegetic ringing sound of a bird intensifies in volume and duration, ultimately indicating that danger is close – Suspense is then released as a third person, over-the-shoulder-shot of Willard reveals what they are looking at, as a huge tiger emerges from the bushes (Appendix G). A large roar from the tiger can be heard as the two characters vividly start shooting and run back to the boat, “Chef” shouting; ““A fucking tiger, fucking tiger. I don't wanna take this goddamn shit man. I didn't come here for this, I don't fucking need this” (00:55:34 – 00:55:52). In addition to illustrating both the psychological stress which the characters of the swift boat already have and will undergo on this journey, and how the unknown presence of danger continuously lurks from within the jungles beyond the river banks, this scene further signifies how Willard and his crew find themselves within Campbell's notion of “the belly of the whale” (34), ultimately shown

by the sheer panic of the character “Clean” on the swift boat, who shoots aimlessly into the dense jungle with a machine gun – much like how Marlow is witness to “a touch of insanity” (Conrad 20) as he spots some of “the French” firing into the jungles of Africa upon his arrival in *Apocalypse Now*. The key element in the stage of “Departure” within *Apocalypse Now* is thus the notion of contrast; both in terms of how Willard now finds himself situated within the “belly of the whale” of the dark, unknown powers of the jungle surrounding the river – distanced from the Americanized stretches of Vietnam beyond the threshold of danger – but also in terms of how Willard, as the hero, is inherently contrasted to his ignorant, romantically perceiving crew-mates and fellow soldiers such as Lieutenant Colonel Kilgore, who embodies the ultimate symbol of technological terror and cultural presence associated with the Vietnam war. Thus, the protagonist is shown as being focused and ready to engage in a series of awaiting trials on his way to Colonel Walter E. Kurtz.

Initiation: Psychological Pressure, the Darkness of Kurtz and Willard Reborn

Following Willard's meeting with the River Nung, manifesting the path which leads to his ultimate goal of assassinating Colonel Kurtz, the protagonist and his crew find themselves within Campbell's stage of “initiation”. As Cahir notes both in relation to Marlow's journey in *Heart of Darkness* and Willard's adventure in *Apocalypse Now*, the goal of reaching the soul-altering confrontation with the mysterious Kurtz” (183) is structured through three “scheduled stops” (183) of the plot. In contrast to *Heart of Darkness*, where the river itself functioned as an opposing antagonist to Marlow's journey, it becomes clear how themes of war in Willard's quest of *Apocalypse Now* relays its emphasis on the unknown threat upon the enemy within the jungle: the Vietnamese people, the suspenseful wait for the insane Colonel Walter E. Kurtz, and the psychological burden of war upon the American soldier itself. Thus, Willard's “trials” along the journey function as allusions to the physical and psychological descent into “hell”, as previously experienced by Marlow in *Heart of Darkness*, where the perspective of the audience, as the frame narrator in *Apocalypse Now*, are able to experience the effects of this adventure within the hero and his American crew. Through the perspective of the camera, the audience is thus able to gain insight into the previously discussed underlying notions of “agon” or conflict within *Apocalypse Now*. This includes both how Willard completes his quest, at the level of the plot, and how the notion of irony manifests itself through the inherent experience of Vietnam as “a pointless combat” (Lyotard 58) contrasted with its archetypal quest structure. Here, the lust for American pop-culture, to the point of insanity, and the “crisis about the hero” (Comber 252) within Willard become apparent once the protagonist and his crew journey further up the dark and gloomy River Nung.

The First Trial

Whilst travelling towards his first “trial” of the quest, Willard and his crew-mates dock at an American base supply depot in order to stock up on fuel and cigarettes. In this scene (00:59:30 – 01:02:07), a glimpse of Willard’s darker, traumatized side is shown, as he violently grabs an American soldier by the collar because he initially refuses to give “Clean” the supplies he needs (01:01:20-01:01:29) for their boat. In addition to foreshadowing the violent nature of Willard, seemingly deeply rooted within the psychological pressure of his journey, the swift boat’s minor stop at this supply depot also signifies how a displaced celebration of American culture within the Vietnamese jungles reflects, in turn, the growing insanity within the soldiers during the war. At this supply depot an amphitheater has been temporally built for the pleasure of the American army (Appendix H), whose soldiers are scheduled to receive an appearance from three Playboy showgirls. In this scene, centered around the showgirls’ acts of seduction, consisting of flirtatious dancing and subsequent appropriate music, it can be shown how the huge crowd of sex-deprived American soldiers go slightly mad from lust and desire (01:02:07 – 01:07:18). In contrast to the many men jumping up on stage, even clinging on to the helicopter set to fly the fleeing playboy girls away, Willard is seen, once again, staring at his fellow army brothers with judgement and confusedness (Appendix I) – facilitated through continuous cuts between shots of the protagonist, and subsequent eyeline matches as the audience experiences what Willard sees as the storming of the amphitheater unfolds (Appendix J). This emphasizes the previously discussed contrast between the ignorant behavior of his crew-members indulging in surfing and rock-music, and Willard who continuously remains focused on his fascination with Kurtz. Thus, Willard’s “power of action” remains within the ‘fictional mode’ of high-mimesis, as he appears “superior in degree to other men but not his environment” (33). The hero of *Apocalypse Now*, however, also clearly affected by the psychological burden and stress of the Vietnam war and his quest. Although Willard does not crave the same cultural commodities as his fellow crew-mates and American soldiers at the supply depot, it can once again be shown through the eyeline match cut (Appendix K, L) how he is drawn to the disappearing helicopter which, as a symbol of “supernatural aid”, disappears into the thick fog of the jungle - back through the “threshold” and into the world of safety.

As the swift boat journeys further up the River Nung, Willard stumbles across his first “trial” – one heavily testing his psychological strength and commitment to his quest. During this scene, the character named “Chief” insists on carrying a routine check on a small Vietnamese boat passing by the protagonist and his crewmates (01:15:26 – 01:20:35). As they perform the search,

guns ready to fire much like the passengers of Marlow's steamboat with "Winchesters at 'ready' in their hands" (Conrad 65), a Vietnamese woman on the small boat makes a sudden movement out of fear and all the civilians are immediately shot by the tense and scared "Clean" (01:17:58 – 01:18:22). The woman, being the only survivor left on the small boat, leaves Willard and his crew conflicted on what to do next; Willard wants to continue the mission up the river, and the rest of the crew believe that they should follow protocol and take the injured woman to a nearby hospital for emergency care (01:19:39 – 01:19:48). Although the psychological burden, to the point of a "power of action" similar to that of Frye's fictional mode of irony, is shown to be present within characters such as "Clean" who is at unease before shooting the civilians, the protagonist also exemplifies a "scene of bondage, frustration and absurdity" (Frye 33) as he cold-heartedly shoots the remaining woman in the chest 01:19:48 - 01:19:50) – killing her: "I told you not to stop now let's go" (01:20:05-01:20:10). Thus, it can be illustrated how Willard, like Marlow, has a darker side to himself: his obsession with reaching Kurtz, to the point of immoral insanity, leads him to commit horrendous actions such as killing the innocent woman, just as Marlow shows lacking sympathy for the dying Helmsman in *Heart of Darkness*. Furthermore, the exhibition of violence from Willard also emphasizes the function of *Apocalypse Now* as questioning the, perhaps, lacking justification behind the actions of not only the protagonist in his own "intense epic" (Lyotard 58), but likewise, many other American soldiers of Vietnam as well. Thus, the American presence within *Apocalypse Now* manifests "a pointless combat" (Lyotard 58) – just as Marlow's depiction of the natives affected by the wrath of imperialism in *Heart of Darkness*: "They were dying slowly – it was very clear. They were not enemies, they were not criminals, they were nothing earthly now" (Conrad 25). This scene, along with the previously illustrated insanity of the American soldiers at the supply depot as well as Lieutenant Colonel Kilgore's dominant exhibition of military force, would have resonated with the contemporary American audience – drawing clear parallels of reference not only to those familiar with the intertextual resemblance to Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*, but also to the themes of meaningless war and violence associated with the defeat at Vietnam only years before the release of Coppola's work.

The Second Trial

Once the crew decide to follow Willard's orders and move on, the screen fades to black (01:20:36 – 01:20:50) – further symbolizing the physical and psychological descent into darkness and metaphorical hell. This is emphasized as the screen fades back into wide tracking shots of the moving swift boat; contrasting the slowly panning camera to the speeding boat of Willard and his

crew, thus ultimately showing that the path to their destination is long (01:20:50 – 01:21:26). During this sequence of the journey, Willard returns to his self-reflective, retrospective narration concerned with his previous killing of the Vietnamese woman: “Those boys were never going to look at me the same way again” (01:21:26 – 01:21:28). Once again, as the initial narration of Willard in the hotel room emphasized, Willard is aware that he has sinned, and subsequently that his narration of the quest is a “confession” (00:10:01). Willard, however, justifies his actions by concluding that “I felt I knew one or two things about Kurtz that weren't in the dossier” (01:21:29 – 01:21:34) – thus arguing that he made an immoral decision in killing the woman for the greater good; that Kurtz has to be eliminated quickly. This retrospective narration also signifies how it is a vital part of Willard's own psychological journey that Kurtz is killed - so he can justify his actions in this war, and ultimately become “reborn” as he completes his quest.

On their way to the second trial of the mission, Willard and his men on the swift boat come across a bridge: "Do Lung bridge was last army outpost on the Nung River. Beyond that there was only Kurtz." (01:21:38 – 01:21:50). Shots from the boat looking down on the dark river reveal how desperate American soldiers swim towards the boat, begging Willard and his crew to “take me home!” (01:22:22-01:22:24). As argued by Rangarajan regarding Marlow's darker sides in *Heart of Darkness*, it can be illustrated how Willard also symbolizes the ferryman known as “Charon” in the Aeneid, who transports people across the underworld – something which is strengthened by his previous actions of injustice, and something which also foreshadows his violent confrontation with Kurtz. Willard and his boat now manifest the only “supernatural aid” which can save these men from eternal war in this metaphorical hell. Upon reaching the Do Lung bridge, it becomes apparent how the meaninglessness of war has reached its pinnacle: "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?" (01:29:25 – 01:29:37). Comber draws upon the “tenets of liberalism and the values of the new American youth culture of the 60's” (251) as important factors in explaining this dream-like representation of the war as “the quest with its resonant mythological associations” (252) – ultimately arguing that Coppola's “hallucinatory” (252) narrative is “an effect enhanced by the mise-en-scène” – something clearly illustrated in the scene at the Do Lung bridge where the dark, gloomy scenery of the bridge is contrasted to sparking machine guns and flares lighting up the night sky in a “beautiful” manner:

Lance: “It's beautiful.”

Chef: "What's the matter with you? You're acting kinda weird."

Lance: "Hey you know that last tab of acid I was saving. I dropped it." (01:21:55 – 01:22:9)

Returning to Comber's notion of the "crisis about the hero" (254) in American war movies of the post-Vietnam era, this scene at the Do Lung bridge symbolizes how "in the absurd, shifting chaos of Vietnam where there are no obvious rules or values, the hero is disaffected, dislocated without clearly defined goals or the ability to control his own actions" (254). Willard, however, contrasts to the mindset of his fellow soldiers of both the swift boat and by the Do Lung bridge, as he still feels a sense of purpose within his journey; to complete the quest by eliminating Kurtz. This is ultimately shown through the letter which Willard receives: "Months ago, a man was ordered on a mission which was identical to yours. We have reason to believe that he is now operating with Kurtz" (01:31:36 – 01:31:43). Whilst further echoing General Corman's words of "every man has got a breaking point" (00:15:54 – 00:17:07), as the previous "hero" to undergo this particular quest is shown to have failed, it is also clear how Willard intends to see his mission through – he is not affected by this letter, and thus, the crew of the swift boat journey on to the second trial.

As the crew pass the Do Lung bridge, venturing further up the river Nung, the audience witnesses a momentary glimpse of happiness as the various characters of Willard's crew open their mail from home – contrasting the deadly confrontation of the second trial they are about to face in this scene (01:30:40 – 01:35:22). From sheer contentment, Lance lights up a smokey flare which quickly covers up the entirety of the swift boat, masking their overview of the surrounding banks; "Purple haze! look" (01:32:19 – 01:32:21). As Marlow and his crew in *Heart of Darkness* experience, Willard and his men are also soon completely blinded, as the purple haze of smoke transforms into a dense, white fog – and much like in *Heart of Darkness*, suspense starts to form as the audience anticipates an ambushed attack. Suddenly, an array of flares and bullets light up from the jungle and thunder towards the swift boat (01:33:03 – 01:33:43). A tape received in the mail by "Clean", containing a voice recording of this talking mother, slowly plays as the attack commences. As the crew finally emerge from the dense fog, "Chief" realizes that the young "Clean" has been shot; just as the non-diegetic sound of the cassette recording increases in volume – leaving the audience to hear the final, calming voice of his mother: "Stay out of the way of the bullets. And bring your hiney home all in one piece. Because we love you. Love, Mama." (01:34:49 – 01:34:59). As Margot Norris notes, this display of affection towards "Clean" from his homebound mother, and the consequent heartbreaking death of the character illustrates how "unlike Conrad, who

concentrates on colonialism's violence to the home country onto the single, majestically deluded figure of Kurtz's Intended, Coppola disperses the Vietnam War's domestic devastations among a wide and diverse array of people" (742). In many ways, then, this scene of the attack may be considered as Lewis' notion of the "event spectacle" and as an element of Lyotard's political "seduction" within *Apocalypse Now*: it contributes both to the overall narrative of the film, in terms of conveying the enormous contrast between the (lacking) effectiveness of American technology before and after having crossed the "threshold" into the unknown world and its challenging trials of the quest, whilst simultaneously discussing the overall "agon" of the meaninglessness of war and its many tragic tales – which is then reflected upon by the audience, facilitating a process of anagnorisis.

Similar to the previously discussed death of the helmsman in *Heart of Darkness*, the character "Chief" is also killed much like "Clean" – the scene once again set in a dense, white fog, just as Marlow experiences in Africa (Appendix M) (01:36:05 – 01:40:10). Oppositely, however, the second ambushed attack is rather different to the one which kills "Clean", as the "Vietcong"-army are shelling the swift boat with mere sticks: "Chief, tell them to hold fire. It's just little sticks. They're just trying to scare us" (01:38:38 – 01:38:42). As "Chief" breaks out in anger, proclaiming that the protagonist Willard "got us into this mess and you can't get us out 'cos you don't know where the hell you're going ya? do" (01:38:45 – 01:38:49), he is suddenly hit with a spear in the chest – much like the helmsman in *Heart of Darkness* (Appendix N). The sudden effectiveness of the apparent harmless weaponry of the natives stands in great contrast to the machineguns used by Willard and his crew, who fire aimlessly into the jungle; they are powerless here. As Pamela Demory Notes in "'Apocalypse Now Redux: Heart of Darkness' Moves into New Territory'", the two ambushed attacks on the swift boat in *Apocalypse Now* draws upon intertextual references to Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* regarding the death of the helmsman aboard the steamboat: "in this short section of the upriver trip, the same plot elements occur in both stories, arranged in slightly different ways" (346). As previously argued, Marlow's choice to interrupt his narration of the death of the helmsman in order to focus on his thoughts about Kurtz, his report and Europe, signifies how the protagonist of *Heart of Darkness* contains a darker side of immorality following his strong obsession with reaching his goal of the quest. Furthermore, Demory notes how in *Apocalypse Now*, "there are two different deaths but they frame the long digression in a similar way" (346), signified through Willard's lacking emotions shown in contrast to the characters Lance and Chef who cry and hold a short funeral (01:40:31 – 01:41:19).

The Crucial Struggle

As the remaining crew, being Lance and Chef, learn about Willard's mission to terminate Kurtz, they convince the hero to let them join him on his final part of the quest: "No, no wait. We go together. On the boat, we'll go with you. On the boat. OK?" (01:41:19 – 01:41:27). Willard's acceptance of this offer suggests a mutual benefit in this agreement, in the sense that both the protagonist and the others seek comfort in the company of each other and in the swift boat as the final manifestation of a "supernatural aid" (Campbell 65). Thus, the swift boat continues up the river, closer than ever to reaching its destination; the "crucial struggle" (Campbell 33). Loud, non-diegetic tones ring as the boat journeys through pure darkness up the river (01:41:55 – 01:42:26), only lit up by burning structures spotted along the river banks (Appendix O); the center of hell is near, and so is Kurtz. Returning to the intertextual relationship between *Heart of Darkness* and *Apocalypse Now*, it can be seen how Coppola's suspenseful representation of the final stretches before reaching the home of Kurtz is similar to what Marlow experiences on his journey, in the sense that an array of severed heads on sticks can be spotted along the river banks (Appendix P). As Willard retrospectively narrates, his desire to meet Kurtz – to fulfill his expectations of him – has reached its pinnacle just like Marlow reaches his before the ultimate ironic deflation in *Heart of Darkness*; "But the thing I felt the most, much stronger than fear, was the desire to confront him" (01:42:49 – 01:42:57). Once Willard's narration is complete, the non-diegetic ringing intensifies again, whilst a third person back shot of the character Lance reveals him dancing at the front of the boat; constructing a composition in the frame which contrasts the dancing soldier to the blinding, sun-lit passage of the river ahead. Lance is doing the same combat-esque dance as Willard performs in the hotel room of his initial introductory scene (Appendix Q), signifying that all the characters are now fully affected by the psychological burden of their journey.

An army of natives, standing completely still on land and in water, can be spotted in front of the boat as Willard and his crew arrive to their destination (Appendix R) – illustrating how Colonel Walter E. Kurtz, much like Marlow's Kurtz in *Heart of Darkness*, has control over the people of his environment. Thus, Willard and the audience's perception of Kurtz in *Apocalypse Now* still remains one of fear and danger; the perfect antagonist. As the crew of the swift boat come closer to the shore, revealing a sea of people and temples amongst the foliage of the misty jungle, everything turns silent apart from a non-diegetic bass beat; simulating to beat of a heart. Whilst this beat draws references to Conrad, suggesting that Willard has reached the psychical and psychological place where the "hearts of darkness" exist, the lack of sound contributes to the sense of anticipation

and suspense which both audience and the gazing protagonist experience; where is Kurtz? Where is the “monster in the swamp” – nowhere to be seen”? (Elsaesser and Wedel 159). Suspense is released as a yelling voice can be heard from within the jungle of people; "It's all right, it's all right. You're all being approved." (01:45:41 – 01:45:44). The voice is revealed to be an American photojournalist, who is happy to greet Willard and his men: “Hi yanks. American, American civilian. It's all right. And you got the cigarettes, that's what I've been dreaming of." (01:46:13 – 01:46:25). This meeting with the photojournalist, drawing clear “hypertextual” parallels to the “Russian” follower of Kurtz which Marlow meets in *Heart of Darkness*, signifies how the arrival of the swift boat is anticipated by Colonel Kurtz and his people. Much like the “Russian” in *Heart of Darkness*, who acts as a guide in explaining the situation of Kurtz as a god amongst the natives in Africa, the photojournalist also attributes symbols of “divinity” (Frye 186) to Colonel Kurtz in likening him to a creator god:

Photojournalist: "Yeah, well... They think you have come to take him away. I hope that isn't true."

Willard: "Take who away?"

Photojournalist: "Him. Colonel Kurtz. These are all his children, as far as you can see."
(01:46:53 – 01:47:09)

Once again drawing upon “hypertextual” references to *Heart of Darkness*, Coppola’s photojournalist continues to portray Colonel Walter E. Kurtz as a manifestation of both light and dark; good and evil – just like the “Russian” does to Marlow: “He can be terrible, he can be mean, he can be right. He's fighting the war. He's a great man. I mean. I wish I had words. I can tell you the other day he wanted to kill me" (01:48:09 – 01:48:29). Walter E. Kurtz is described to Willard as the perfect antagonist to his romantic quest; he is the “dragon” – representing “[...] social sterility, the fallen order of nature, death” (Campbell 72). In contrast to the god-like representation of colonel Kurtz, the photojournalist remains self-reflective and grounded in his perception of himself – concluding that he is nothing but a mere rat compared to the man with the ability to enlighten:

Hey, man, you don't talk to the Colonel. You listen to him. The man's enlarged my mind. I mean I'm no, I can't - I'm a little man, I'm a little man, he's, he's a great man. I should have been a pair of ragged claws scuttling across floors of silent seas (01:47:18 – 01:48:00).

Through this quote by the American photojournalist, an intertextual reference to T.S Eliot can be spotted in the final sentence. The final line of this quote by the character, taken from the famous poem *The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock*, foreshadows both Colonel Walter E. Kurtz's own reciting of Eliot later on, whilst also containing a degree of symbolism and parallels between the themes of the poem itself and that of *Apocalypse Now*. In addition to referencing Dante's *Inferno* in its epigraph, alluding to the hell-ish experience which might also be similar to that of Willard in *Apocalypse Now*, the modernist poem of T.S. Eliot describes the disjointed, fragmented and self-reflective thoughts of the character J. Alfred Prufrock; who, much like Willard and the audience of Coppola's work, undergoes a journey of psychological trials as he attempts to make meaning of himself and life – an oxymoron presented in the contrast between the “love song”, as the title suggests, and the depressing reality of his inner thoughts, much like the reality of Vietnam in *Apocalypse Now* reflects “[...] a world that could be wondrously beautiful, but also terrifying” (Comber 251). Just as the “Russian” relays to Marlow that Kurtz has “enlarged” his mind (Conrad 90), this is also the case in *Apocalypse Now* through “hypertextual” referencing, as Genette would define it. In turn, this leaves both Willard and the audience with the impression that the photojournalist, Colonel Kurtz, and the remaining army of natives, have all gone insane in their own mind and “heart of darkness”. Still, Willard chooses to continue his stage of “Initiation” towards the “Crucial Struggle” (Frye 186) of the quest: "Here, take the radio. If I don't get back by 2200 hours, you call in the airstrike."(01:52:22 – 01:52:33). Through this quote by Willard, it can be shown how he, as the true romantic hero, is willing to risk his own life for the sake of completing the quest, thus freeing his society from the “dragon” Kurtz – Therefore, the protagonist is now ready for his “Crucial Struggle” of the romance quest, which metaphorically involves “some kind of battle in which either the hero or his foe, or both, must die” (Frye 186).

As Willard leaves the safety of the “Supernatural Aid”, the swift boat, and walks through the crowd of people in the search for a confrontation with Kurtz, he is immediately taken hold of and taken to meet Kurtz (01:52:50 – 01:58:48). As Willard notes through narration, Kurtz is the one in control in this environment – something which is signified as the non-diegetic ringing sound once again intensifies as the surrounding people come closer to Willard, almost swallowing him as they grab him in the rain (01:53:22 – 01:53:42):"Everything I saw told me that Kurtz has gone insane. The place was full of bodies: North-Vietnamese, Vietcong, Cambodians. If I was still alive, it was because he wanted me that way."(01:52:57 – 01:53:22). In contrast to Marlow's first impression of Kurtz, which consequently forms the “destructive deflation of lofty ideas and romantic promises”

(89) as Mack argues, the first impression of Colonel Walter E. Kurtz by Willard and the audience is oppositely not one of pity, but rather, of fear and awe. Something which further contrasts to the ironic deflation of Marlow's confrontation with Kurtz, is the fact that Willard is imprisoned and subsequently held captive by the antagonist – a scene where the insides of Kurtz's chamber within the Cambodian temple is only dimly lit up by flaming torches (01:53:55 – 01:58:58). During this period of isolation with Kurtz, Willard and the audience are witness to the true sides of this mad Colonel. In this scene, it becomes clear how Kurtz contains a "heart of darkness", and thus, a darker side within him, as the composition of several shots reveal. Half of Kurtz's face is continuously darkened by shade (Appendix S), symbolizing a contrast between his former self and the man he has become during the war – bearing clear metaphorical resemblance to Marlow's previously discussed use of light as contrastive symbolism; to manifest a distinction between civilized Europe and barbaric Africa, as argued by Henthorne.

Having been confronted with his antagonist, Willard is placed on his knees in the temple room; quietly listening to the voice of his long-anticipated enemy. Kurtz has a long monologue with Willard only answering briefly to his questions. Eventually, the conversation comes to an end as Kurtz concludes that Willard is nothing but "an errand boy, sent by grocery clerks to collect a bill" (01:58:36 – 01:58:47). The colonel asks Willard why he was sent to terminate him; the answer, once again bearing "hypertextual" reference to the conversation between Marlow and the manager of "the Company", is clear (Conrad 103):

Willard: "They told me that you had gone totally insane and that your methods were unsound."

Kurtz: "Are my methods unsound?"

Willard: "I don't see any method at all, sir." (01:57:24 – 01:57:58)

Once again manifesting the underlying "agon" of the "pointless combat" (Lyotard 58) and meaninglessness of war, Colonel Kurtz has Willard thrown into a primitive wooden cage after this conclusion by the protagonist – now, Kurtz will show him his methods. As Willard lies starving and thirsty in this prison, the photojournalist returns with a message. He concludes that it would be insane of Willard to try to kill Kurtz, and that the protagonist, in turn, is the only one who can save the reputation of the colonel – much like how Marlow chooses to ignorantly mediate a romantic representation of Kurtz to his "intended" back in Europe upon his return: "What are they going to say about him? What, are they going to say, he was a kind man, he was a wise man, he had plans,

he had wisdom? Bullshit, man! Am I going to be the one, that's going to set them straight? Look at me: wrong! You!" (02:01:17 – 02:01:45). The photojournalist, however, is not aware of Colonel Walter E. Kurtz's own plans with Willard. Following a small cut back to the swift boat, where "Chef" has just made contact with the American army through their radio, non-diegetic music of drum beats and intensifying ringing can be heard; indicating that something is about to happen (02:01:46 – 02:02:34). Then, tracking shots of what is later revealed to be Kurtz's feet can be seen walking in the rain towards the chained Willard, who is exhausted and does not know what is to come (02:02:35 – 02:02:41). Finally, as the non-diegetic music reaches its climax, Willard looks up and, through an eye-line match, the audience witnesses a stare-off between him and the now face-painted Kurtz. Kurtz indulges in the rain for a brief moment, before walking off. Just as he leaves the screen, the severed head of "Chef" is placed on Willard's lap – causing him to scream in sheer fear (02:03:40 – 02:04:10): it is now clear to both the audience and to Willard that he is alone. No air-strike can be made, and Kurtz is in control. The severed head, however, foreshadows the fate of the "Crucial Struggle" between Willard and Kurtz.

Willard is carried from his wooden prison by the natives into the temple once more, where a non-diegetic choir of chanting begins, as he is bathed and given water to drink (02:40:30 – 02:05:42). Kurtz, here with the stronger "power of action" (Frye 32), has decided to spare the life of Willard, and in turn, attempt to enlighten him before his own eventual death – this is attempted through Kurtz's resemblance to Frye's romantic hero having "authority, passions, and powers of expression far greater than ours" (Frye 33). Much like Marlow's Kurtz, who is described as having "the gift of expression" (Conrad 77), Colonel Walter E. Kurtz demonstrates his "powers of expression" (Frye 33) through the sermon-esque recitation of T. S. Eliot's poem "the Hollow Men". Ultimately, this poem signifies how Kurtz has accepted the true reality of the world, where war has driven them to become "hollow" and likewise show aspects of darkness; Kurtz wants to die, so Willard can complete his "dragon-killing" (Frye 188) quest and restore society. In *Apocalypse Now*, the final battle between Willard and his antagonist manifests itself in a scene containing two ritualistic sacrifices (02:14:45 – 02:20:35). Colonel Walter E. Kurtz, much like a Cambodian caribou, is to be beheaded – freed from the pain, suffering and heart of darkness caused by this war, and killed as an offering to the greater gods. As the deer is slaughtered, Kurtz meets the same fate, ultimately exclaiming the famous words of Conrad's Kurtz: "the horror, the horror" (02:20:04 – 02:20:12). In contrast to *Heart of Darkness*, Willard is thus able to complete his "Crucial Struggle" (Frye 33) versus Kurtz, and thus complete the goal of his quest of eliminating him.

Following his victory, Willard steps out onto the open plane in front of the temple. As he emerges, the crowd of natives stand silent, gazing upon him as their new leader and savior (02:22:38 – 02:24:02). In this scene, it is clear that he has been reborn in this ritualistic “soul-altering confrontation” (Cahir 183); freed from his past burdens of this particular romance quest. One study which examines *Apocalypse Now* in relation to a mythological element within “Vietnam combat narratives” (268) is that of J. R Fertel in *Vietnam War Narratives and the Myth of the Hero*. Once again alluding to a connection between Hollywood’s Vietnam and “the hero’s quest” (268), Fertel comments on the “fictional soldiers [longing] for rebirth” (268) is a key feature of Vietnam war movies such as *Apocalypse Now* – a narrative element which reflects the post-Vietnam American public’s confrontation with identity, being the illusion of heroic competence: “an illusion to which Americans with their can-do spirit seem especially prone” (268). Here, only a true hero, arguably such as Willard, is able to “abandon” (289) this inherently naïve sense of “heroic competence” (268) and become reborn as an enlightened man – something which Marlow was never able to do in *Heart of Darkness*. This is also something which Fertel argues is represented through Willard’s contrast with other figures encountered on his mission in Vietnam, such as the previously mentioned Kilgore. Whilst once again alluding to the heavily mythological symbolism of hell within the analyzed works of this paper, Fertel argues that Willard’s confrontation with characters who are unable to escape the “realm” of Vietnam due to their inability to “give up” (289) their “heroic competence” is also a reflection upon the psychological struggles of the American war veteran. These characters, then, manifest the various outcomes and difficulties for returning soldiers, who have perhaps undergone similar mental and physical challenges during the Vietnam War. With this in mind, Fertel argues that the heroic journey of Willard, in which a metaphorical rebirth is present, is inherently a representation of the veteran’s ideal experience of war: “[...]to be reborn to a truer heroism based not on competence but on the empathy that springs from accepting one’s wound” (289). Now, in order to manifest the “complete form” of Frye’s romance quest, the hero must be reunited with his society; Campbell’s stage of “Return”.

Return: The Crisis of the Hero, Intertextuality and the Cyclical Irony of War

Having been “reborn”, Willard continues the scene by walking through the sea of people, who drop their weapons as they acknowledge him to be their new leader. The protagonist grabs “Lance”, the last remaining member of his crew, and they walk down to the boat (02:24:02 – 02:25:19). Finally, a wide shot of the swift boat, centered in the screen, reveals to the audience how Willard and “Lance” turn the boat around; initiating their return. Willard’s now painted face, as

well as various other imagery of his journey in *Apocalypse Now*, fade in and out as the swift boat sails off screen - showing how the hero is reflecting upon his quest, and perhaps the war itself, as Kurtz's final words echo repeatedly: "The horror! The horror!" (02:26:24 – 02:26:32). In contrast to Conrad's Marlow, who is depicted as returning to Europe and, albeit ignorantly, continuing to live his life through the perception of romance, the journey of Willard in *Apocalypse Now* ends as the swift boat sails out of the screen in the final scene. Thus, the audience never experiences the actual "Return" of the hero in *Apocalypse Now*. As the initial non-diegetic song of the Doors' "The End" suggests, there is no actual "return" from war. Even if Willard manages to cross the threshold back into the world of the known and safety, he will always be craving more adventures, and likewise, continuously expose himself to the "heart of darkness" within him.

Unlike Marlow, who attempts to hide his inner "Ultimate Boon" of enlightenment, through an ignorant perception of romance, Willard is clearly more accepting of his fate. As Fertel argues, Willard's rebirth is one of the mind, where he reaches "a truer heroism based not on competence but on the empathy that springs from accepting one's wound" (289). In contrast to Marlow, then, the hero of *Apocalypse Now* is more "accepting" of his experiences. Therefore, Willard does not get to fully complete the stage of "return", as Marlow does by being what the American photojournalist of *Apocalypse Now* requires of its protagonist: "the one, that's going to set them straight" (02:01:17 – 02:01:45) regarding the reputation of Kurtz. Willard's "Ultimate Boon" (Campbell 159) is also, much like Marlow, one of enlightenment. Whilst Marlow chooses to ignore the reality that is his own "heart of darkness", Willard's framing of the quest in *Apocalypse Now* as a "confession" reveals how he is accepting of his fate. Returning to Frye's perception of "mythos or plot" (51) in *Anatomy of Criticism*, it can thus be illustrated how Marlow's ignorant perception of the world allows him to become "incorporated into" (34) his society upon returning from Africa; a comic plot – whereas Willard's inability to fully release himself from the grasps of his mind means that he, as the hero, "becomes isolated from his society" (34); a tragic plot. This, however, also means that Willard can never escape his darker sides – even when he is back home in America: "When I was here, I wanted to be there. When I was there, all I could think of was getting back into the jungle" (00:05:14 – 00:05:22). Willard's use of the adverb "here", when referring to his placement in Saigon in the opening scene of the hotel room, indicates that he is still in Vietnam at the point of narration – something which further emphasizes that even though he has completed his mission, having crossed the "threshold" back into the safety of American control in Saigon, he still remains within an environment in which he can, once again, partake in another quest after that of *Apocalypse Now*.

However, this retrospective narration by the protagonist also suggests that he will never be able to fully ignore his experience in Vietnam, thus showing how he is aware that “the two kingdoms” (Campbell 201) of America and Vietnam; the Ohio river and the Nung; are “actually one” (201) – something which, once again, reflects the “crisis about the hero” (Comber 254); and would resonate amongst contemporary American viewers of *Apocalypse Now* regarding their returned veterans – who can never truly escape the dark past.

As Willard's opening narration of *Apocalypse Now* suggests; he has been on many adventures before this quest – emphasizing a cyclical experience of war, where the American hero is doomed to repeatedly relive the terrors of Vietnam. Returning to the briefly discussed “spatio-temporal” (753) focus of Deltcheva, regarding the notion of the chronotope, it can be shown from the analysis of both works how the respective quests of Marlow and Willard are centered around their physical journeys up the Congo River and the river Nung; “The chronotope of the river” (759). However, metaphorically, the comparative readings of *Apocalypse Now* and *Heart of Darkness* from the “architextural” framework of Frye and Campbell in this paper suggests that these works differ in the sense that Marlow, through ignorance, is able to return to society and leave the “chronotope of the river” (759) – in contrast to the cyclical re-living of adventures within Willard's experience of Vietnam. Marlow is thus able to free himself from, or at least justify through a romantic perception of imperialism, the “the universality of war/death” (762) as he returns from his physical journey upon the river, because these philosophical conundrums have been “transposed onto the horizontal plane [and] automatically [become] time-dependent” (762). For the case of Willard, however, these themes of “agon” remain “universal” (762) as long as the war continues – which is something that is emphasized when intertextually viewed in contrast to the seemingly ignorant but enlightened “buddha”-figure that is Marlow in *Heart of Darkness*; who has been freed from these issues. Thus, the audience, as well as the hero, does not get to fully experience the stage of “Return” in *Apocalypse Now*. This is interesting when viewed in relation to the archetypal structures of the hero's quest, as seen in Campbell and Frye, as they seem to exist in a world free of time – a world where there is no end or beginning. When considering this in relation to *Apocalypse Now*, it becomes even more emphasized how Willard, as many veterans, feels stuck in a time-less perception of his quest – he can never really escape this “chronotope”, even when he is not on the river Nung.

This cyclical experience of war in *Apocalypse Now* not only contributes to the oxymoronic representation of Willard's quest as “the intense epic of a pointless combat” (Lyotard 58), but it also

draws intertextual parallels to the frame narrator's depiction of Marlow's story as a "yarn" or an "inconclusive experience" (Conrad 9). Coppola's rendition of the Vietnam war, through *Apocalypse Now*, with its thrilling "event spectacles" and "hallucinatory" (Comber 252) dream-like representation of "the quest with its resonant mythological associations" (Comber 252) becomes the Hollywood-equivalent of a "yarn"; a narrative of adventures told for the sake of being told. The irony, then, which would manifest itself in *Heart of Darkness* through its deflated confrontation between Marlow and his antagonist, is instead present within Coppola's *Apocalypse Now* through the very fact that Willard is able to complete his quest and slay the "dragon" that is Colonel Walter E. Kurtz. Although Willard initially states that "It was a real choice mission, and when it was over, I'd never want another." (00:07:54 – 08:02), it becomes clear from the narrative of *Apocalypse Now*, that the protagonist cannot escape his inner craving for a new quest. Much like the seemingly endless war itself, the desire for adventure within the romance hero, manifested in the twisted, PTSD-induced mind of the American war hero, is doomed to repeat itself; just as it has done for Willard who requires this adventure to remain sane and justify his actions: "every minute I stay in this room I get weaker" (00:05:39 – 00:05:42).

The notion of trauma, much like Comber's description of *Apocalypse Now* as containing a "hallucinatory" (252) narrative "enhanced by the mise-en-scène" (252), is connected to the self-reflective action of dreaming; where the victim often returns back to the scene of the trauma in an attempt to make sense of, justify, and even prevent the damaging episode from occurring – the latter naturally being something which can never be done, echoing the previously touched upon oxymoronic nature of Willard's "confession" (00:09:59 – 00:10:03) as a meaning-deprived "epic" or myth. This is signified ultimately through the very use of "the quest with its resonant mythological associations" (Comber 252), where Campbell's Monomyth and Frye's romance quest represent an archetypal story which has been experienced, told and retold since the dawn of man – once more reflecting the underlying "agon" of *Apocalypse Now*, where the "crisis about the hero" manifests itself within the American experience of war in Vietnam. Much like how the frame narrator of *Heart of Darkness* invites the reader to interpret Marlow's journey as an "inconclusive experience" (9), so too is Willard's quest in *Apocalypse Now* reflective of a "yarn": Willard, like Marlow, is a "wanderer" (Conrad 5) – the difference between the two characters being that Marlow's mentality is one of chosen ignorance, and Willard's, as many soldiers of war, is a fate he cannot escape.

Having identified these “architextural” and “hypertextual” connections, in the form of parallels and contrasts between *Heart of Darkness* and *Apocalypse Now*, it is also important to consider the contemporary reception of Coppola’s film - particularly in terms of understanding how these “linguistic signs”, and their subsequent relationships, would have been perceived in order to construct meaning. In addition to the literary stature of Joseph Conrad, whose story of the underlying troubles behind the imperialist adventures in Africa would have been a commonplace work of study at the level of high-school and college in the American population around the release of *Apocalypse Now* in 1979, it can also be argued that other intertextual elements of Coppola’s film, such as Wagner’s *Ride of the Valkyrie*, the modernist poetry of T.S Eliot, and the inclusion of the popular song of the Doors would all have resonated with the contemporary American viewer; and thus, contributed to the previously argued allusions and elements of symbolism enhanced by their presence. Ultimately, Coppola’s film, then, reflects the contemporary post-war focus on the “thousands of ex-soldiers seeking to cure their wounds” (3) as Llorca argues in “Coping Strategies: Three Decades of Vietnam War in Hollywood”: “what is clearly defined as the most characteristic feature of this decade is that filmmakers tended to depict, more than the war itself, the psychologically troubled characters back at home” (5). This is manifest through Willard in *Apocalypse Now* who, through his intertextual resemblance and contrast to the journey and return of Marlow in *Heart of Darkness*, is shown to never fully be able to escape his past adventures.

Likewise, the jump from written literature to cinematography in the production of *Apocalypse Now* has been shown to contribute to the heightening of particular metaphorical aspects, for example drawing parallels to Marlow’s contrasts between light, being civilization, and dark, being barbarianism and insanity – as seen in the frame shots of Colonel Walter E. Kurtz (Appendix S). Furthermore, the audience of Coppola’s work would have recognized *Apocalypse Now*’s representation of Willard within the “belly of the whale” (Campbell 33) as being a reflection of the contemporary Hollywood horror-trope of the ““monster in the swamp” – nowhere to be seen” (Elsaesser and Wedel 159), which would have enhanced the sense of suspense, danger and isolation – something which Willard, as many other veterans, would have experienced both in Vietnam but also upon their return to the American society. In terms of “architextuality”, the underlying structures of Campbell’s Monomyth and Frye’s notion of the romance quest, through their function as archetypal structures of plot, additionally would have resonated amongst the contemporary reception of both *Heart of Darkness* and *Apocalypse Now*. Here, the ultimate goal and “Crucial Struggle” (Campbell 33) within the quests of both protagonists, and their subsequent modernist

deflation, deconstruction or, in the case of Coppola's work, intertextual re-construction within a post-modernist representation of the cyclical nature of war, contribute to the overall construction of meaning – thus illustrating how the notion of the “linguistic sign”, now transferred to a cross-media context of *Apocalypse Now*, only “possess what meaning they do possess because of their combinatory and associative relation to other signs” (10); both “architexturally” and “hypertextually”.

Conclusion

Intertextuality has existed since the dawn of literature and other “practices of art” (Landwehr 8). In this paper, the “network of textual relations” (Allen 1) is shown to stretch from the literary allusions to hell, whilst also facilitating a de-construction of plot in a modernist context, to the subsequent referencing and re-construction of the hero’s journey in a post-modern representation of war in Hollywood. By drawing inspiration from mid twentieth-century linguist Ferdinand de Saussure’s notion of the “linguistic sign”, as a method of constructing meaning in the “act of reading” (Allen 1), the comparative, cross-media examination of Conrad’s *Heart of Darkness* and Coppola’s *Apocalypse Now* illustrated the intertextual connection between these two works. Here, the double-voiced re-telling of Marlow’s imperialist adventures manifested itself within a 1970’s Vietnam war context through the use of cinematography, mise-en-scène and audio. Gerard Genette’s notion of the “architext”, as a systematized template for studying literature and intertextuality through stable, generic perceptions of narration and plot, proved to be a useful framework of comparative analysis between *Heart of Darkness* and *Apocalypse Now*. From this perspective, Marlow and Willard’s quests were ultimately shown to contain a degree of irony, manifested through the Frye’s notion of “agon” at the level of plot and narrative. As argued, Coppola’s *Apocalypse Now* functions as a “hypertext” of *Heart of Darkness*, which further enhances the universality of Conrad’s underlying “trojan-horse”-esque themes of western imperialism and the darkness within man – something which would have resonated within the contemporary American audience of *Apocalypse Now*. The “architextural” and “hypertextual” references in *Apocalypse Now* are thus used to engage the audience with a discussion surrounding the “crisis about the hero” (Comber 254) within returning American veterans, exemplified through Willard’s cyclical and traumatic quest as “the intense epic of a pointless combat” (Lyotard 58). Thus, Conrad and Coppola’s paralleled and contrastive representations of the hero’s metaphorical and psychological descent into “hell”, emphasized by the dark, suspenseful and isolating experiences of the river Congo and the Nung, ultimately reach beyond the boundaries of historical and geographical context, as the contemporary reception of both works are subjected to not only the both “soul-altering confrontations” (Campbell 183) with Kurtz, encapsulated by their archetypal journeys of the Monomyth, but also, how these same structures of plot can be reflected upon, de-constructed and “reborn” in both a modernist and postmodernist fashion.

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