

## Film clip 1 -- similarities

*Heart of Darkness* by Joseph Conrad

-- Marlow is sent on a mission to find Kurtz

-- the Company refers to Kurtz as: “a first-class agent”, “a very remarkable person”, “an exceptional man, of greatest importance to the Company”, “he is a prodigy”, “He is an emissary of pity, and science, and progress.”

(Quotes are from Part I; you will need page numbers if you include them in the essay)

-- He leads an army of natives and they adore him

“He muttered something about villages round that lake. ‘Kurtz got the tribe to follow him, did he?’ I suggested. ... ‘They adored him,’ he said. ... ‘What can you expect?’ ... ‘he came to them with thunder and lightning, you know – and they had never seen anything like it – very terrible.’ ” (Part III)

“... [he would] preside at certain midnight dances ending with unspeakable rites... - which were offered up to him...” (Part II)

-- Kurtz writes a paper for the International Society for the Suppression of Savage Customs that there needs to be more humane treatment of the natives.

--At the end of the report, Kurtz adds a handwritten note: “Exterminate all the brutes!” (part II)

*Apocalypse Now* directed by Coppola

-- Willard is sent on a mission to find Kurtz-

-- The army refers to him as: “Kurtz was one of the most outstanding officers this country ever produced. He was brilliant, outstanding.”

-- he, also, leads an army that adores him:

“Now he’s in Cambodia with his army that worships the man like a god and follow every order.”

-- “Out there with these natives it must be a temptation to be a god.”

-- Kurtz is known as “a good man too, in every way a humanitarian man.”

-- Kurtz has sent a message that states: ”Must kill them. Must incinerate them. Pig after pig. Cow after cow. Village after village. Army after army.”

## **Film Clip 1—similarities cont.**

*Heart of Darkness* by Joseph Conrad

-- Kurtz struggles with the forces of good and evil.

“The thing was to know what he belonged to, how many powers of darkness claimed him for their own...He had taken a high seat amongst the devils of the land – I mean literally.” (part II)

“You can’t understand. How could you? – with solid pavement under your feet, surrounded by kind neighbors ready to cheer you or to fall on you, stepping delicately between the butcher and the policeman, in the holy terror of scandal and gallows and lunatic asylums – how can you imagine... utter silence, where no warning voice of a kind neighbor can be heard whispering of public opinion? These little things make all the great difference. When they are gone you fall back upon your own innate strength, upon your own capacity for faithfulness. Of course you may be too much of a fool to go wrong – too dull even to know you are being assaulted by the powers of darkness. I take it, no fool ever made a bargain for his soul with the devil...” (part II)

**Apocalypse Now** directed by Coppola

-- Kurtz struggles with good/evil

“There is a conflict in every human heart between the rational and irrational, between good and evil. Good does not always triumph. Sometimes the darkside overcomes what Lincoln called ‘the better angels of our nature’.

Kurtz talks about his dream/nightmare:

“I watched a snail crawling along the edge of a straight razor. That’s my dream, my nightmare.... crawling along the edge of the straight razor and surviving.”

## Film Clip 1 – differences

*Heart of Darkness* by Joseph Conrad

-- setting is the Congo river in Africa, the time is during imperialism (1876-1892)

-- the protagonist's name is Marlow

-- Kurtz works for the Belgian Trading Company and is in charge of the inner station

-- Marlow's mission is not a secret. He is to bring Kurtz back to 'civilization'. "There were rumours that a very important station was in jeopardy, and its chief, Mr. Kurtz, was ill. (part I)

-- Marlow does not believe that Kurtz is insane

"And I wasn't arguing with a lunatic either. Believe me or not, his intelligence was perfectly clear – concentrated.... But his soul was mad." (part III)

*Apocalypse Now* directed by Coppola

-- setting is a river in Vietnam during the Vietnam war (1969-1975)

-- the protagonist's name is Willard

--Kurtz is an officer in the US army; highly trained -- Green Beret/special forces

-- Willard is sent on a secret mission ( "this mission does not exist nor will it ever exist") to infiltrate Kurtz' troops and then "terminate the colonel's command".

-- Willard agrees that Kurtz has gone insane

## Film clip 2 similarities

*Heart of Darkness* by Joseph Conrad

Kurtz' voice is compelling. Voice is used to refer to not only the vocal quality but also the content of what he says.

“Talking with... that was exactly what I was looking forward to – a talk with Kurtz. I made the strange discovery that I had never imagined him as doing, you know, but as discoursing. I didn't say to myself, ‘Now I will never see him,’ or ‘Now I will never shake his hand,’ but, ‘now I will never hear him.’ The man presented himself as a voice.” (part II)

“The volume of tone he emitted without effort, almost without the trouble of moving his lips, amazed me. A voice! A voice! It was grave, profound, vibrating, while the man did not seem capable of a whisper.” (part III)

“Kurtz discoursed. A voice! a voice! It rang deep to the very last. It survived his strength to hide in the magnificent folds of eloquence the barren darkness of his heart.” (part III)

“‘Who was not his friend who had heard him speak once?’ (Kurtz' girlfriend, part III)

The Trading Company appears to have big plans for Kurtz' future:

--“Yes. To-day he is chief of the best station, next year he will be assistant- manager, two years more and ...” (part II)

*Apocalypse Now* directed by Coppola

Kurtz's voice is compelling:

“I heard his voice on the tape and it really put the hook in me.”

The army has big plans for Kurtz:

“Impressive career. Perfect. He was being groomed for one of the top slots in the corporation – General, Chief-of-Staff – anything.”

## Film Clip 2 – similarities cont.

*Heart of Darkness* by Joseph Conrad

The company manager and the pilgrims on the boat have little respect for or concern for the natives that are also employed on the boat.(part II)

the natives were used to push the boat when the water was too shallow, they were paid in wire rather money, no one would stop the boat so they could trade their wire for food, the whites threw the natives food, dead hippo, overboard because it smelled.

Kurtz wrote a report for the International Society for the Suppression of Savage customs to help guide them. (part II)

*Apocalypse Now* directed by Coppola

The crew of the patrol boat are disrespectful to the natives along the river. They deliberately splash people on the shore doing their laundry and then swamp a boat carrying people. The crew laugh and think this is funny

Following a mission, Kurtz wrote a report to the Joint Chief of Staff and Lyndon Johnson. They did not like what Kurtz had to say and the report was restricted.

## Film Clip 2 - differences

*Heart of Darkness* by Joseph Conrad

Marlow is the captain of a steamship

The voyage to reach Kurtz took 2 months and was difficult.

“Going up the river was like travelling back to the earliest beginnings of the world, when vegetation rioted on the earth and the big trees were kings. An empty stream, a great silence, an impenetrable forest.” Sometimes we came upon a station close by the bank...”

“I had to keep guessing at the channel; I had to discern, mostly by inspiration, the signs of hidden banks; I watched for sunken stones; ““There were either no villages, or the people were hostile...” (part II)

Marlow admires Kurtz for his belief that natives were people and should be treated with respect. The way he spoke.....

“Whatever he was, he was not common. He had the power to charm or frighten rudimentary souls into an aggravated witch-dance in his honor; he could also fill the small souls of the pilgrims with bitter misgivings: he had one devoted friend at least, and he had conquered one soul in the world that was neither rudimentary nor tainted with self-seeking. No; I can’t forget him.... (part II)

“[The report] made me tingle with enthusiasm. This was the unbounded power of eloquence – of words- of burning noble words.” (part II)

*Apocalypse Now* directed by Coppola

Willard is a passenger on a patrol boat

The journey took days. The boat was fast and the river was wide and deep

Willard admires Kurtz, but for different reasons:

“The more I read and began to understand, the more I admired him.”

Kurtz was third generation of his family to graduate from West Point, highly decorated and trained

at age 38 he applied to the Airborne program – one of the most challenging programs in the military. Most applicants are in their teens or early 20s.

-- he joined special forces; when he did this, Kurtz gave up the chance to become a general. He would never rank higher than a colonel.

“He could have gone for general, but went for himself instead.”

“The point was in his being a gifted creature, and that of all his gifts the one that stood out preeminently, that carried with it a sense of real presence, was his ability to talk, his words – the gift of expression, the bewildering, the illuminating, the most exalted and the most contemptible, the pulsating stream of light, or the deceitful flow from the heart of an impenetrable darkness.” (part II)

“Each station should be like a beacon on the road towards better things, a centre for trade of course, but also for humanizing, improving, instructing.”

Marlow has respect for the natives and their culture.

“We had enlisted some of these fine chaps on the way for a crew. Fine fellows – cannibals – in their place. They were men one could work with, and I am grateful to them.” (part II)

“Yes, I looked at them as you would on any human being, with a curiosity of their impulses, motives, capacities, weaknesses,…” (part II)

“I missed my late helmsman awfully, - I missed him even while his body was still lying in the pilot-house.” (part II)

In clip 2 Willard does not interact with the natives and does not seem to care how they are treated.