OSCAR WINNER 1979:

Best Cinematography
Best Sound

TEACHERS' NOTES

This study guide is aimed at students of GCSE English and Media Studies, A'Level Film Studies and GNVO Media: Communication and Production (Intermediate and Advanced).

The guide looks at the Film in relation to Conrad's Heart of Darkness and the poetry of T.S. Eliot, narrative structure, ideology and the language of film.

Apocalypse Now: Certificate 18. Running Time 153 minutes.

MAJOR CREDITS FOR APOCALYPSE Now

Apocalypse Now 1979 (United Artists)

Producer:	Francis Coppola
Director:	Francis Coppola
Screenplay:	John Milius, Francis Coppola
Director of Photography:	Vittorio Storaro
Editor:	Barry Malkin
Music:	Carmine Coppola
Art Directors:	Dean Tavoularis, Angelo Graham
Cast:	Marion Brando
	Martin Sheen
	Robert Duvall
	Frederick Forrest
	Dennis Hopper Harrison Ford
Oscars 1979:	Best Cinematography
	Best Sound
Oscar Nominations 1979:	Best Picture
	Best Director
	Best Supporting Actor (Robert Duvall)
	Best Screenplay
	Best Art Direction
	Best Editing

APOCALYPSE NOW

This hasn't got much to do with Conrad's Heart of Darkness, which certainly inspired its last sequences with a mumbling Brando, nor with the Vietnam War, painted as a kind of bloody, highly-coloured game. But the film remains an epic about war itself with many unforgettable sequences and a hallucinatory dramatic power that is almost palpable. The 35mm version has a different ending from the 70mm one, but no matter, each has its advantages. The experience nearly killed Coppola, caused Martin Sheen to have a major heart attack and spawned a fascinating account, in both written and film form, of its intensely precarious making in the Philippines. Despite every disaster, the film proved successful, both commercially and artistically - an object lesson in stubborn persistence, imagination and technical brilliance. It says a lot about America and Americans too, though very little about the Vietnamese.
Derek Malcolm

INTRODUCTION

Apocalypse Now was directed by Francis Ford Coppola. The original idea for the film was conceived in 1969. Coppola had just formed his own production company, American Zoetrope. He worked with screenwriter John Milius to produce the script for a movie about the Vietnam war, based loosely on Joseph Conrad's short novel Heart of Darkness. Initial interest from Warner Bros. came to nothing and despite approaches to a number of other studios, no financial backing for the project could be found:

> **'People were so bitter about the war just then. We were living in the time when there really were riots on the streets. People were spitting on soldiers. Studio executives are the last people who are going to get in the middle of that thing, you know. Studio executives are not noted for their social courage."**

John Milius

Coppola shelved the script and went on to win eight Academy Awards and break all box-office records with The Godfather (1971) and its sequel The Godfather, Part 11(1975). He revived the idea of making Apocalypse Now in 1975 and, with the sort of reputation be now had, he was able to raise the $13 million dollar budget he estimated would be necessary to complete the venture.

MarIon Brando, who had worked with Coppola on The Godfather, was engaged to play the key role of Kurtz, the Green Beret Colonel. He was at the height of his popularity and Coppola agreed a fee of $3 million dollars for three weeks work on the film, $1 million of which was paid in advance. Robert Duvall, who bad been in both Godfather films, was also brought in to take the part of the Air Cavalry Colonel Kilgore. Harvey Keitel was given the main role of Captain Willard who is assigned the mission to kill Kurtz.

The original conception had been to make the movie on location in Vietnam, presumably with the war raging around actors and crew. But by the time shooting began in 1976 the Americans had withdrawn from Vietnam and an alternative location had to he found. Coppola selected the Philippines. He negotiated with Ferdinand Marcos, then the President of the Philippines, to hire Philippino Air Force helicopters and pilots, and construction began of the main set, Kurtz's compound, deep in the jungle.

From the beginning the project was beset with problems After the first week of filming there was a crisis over the casting. Coppola and his editors looked at the footage and decided that Harvey Keitel was wrong for the part be had been hired to play.

"We bit the bullet and did what is a very. very unpleasant thing that is replace an actor in mid shooting. Not only unpleasant but expensive since we had to throw out several weeks of work and
start over.   Fred Roos: Co-producer

Keitel was replaced by Martin Sheen and filming started again. Unfortunately the Philippino government was engaged in fighting terrorists in the south of the country and the helicopters and pilots who were crucial to the shooting of many scenes were frequently called off the set to take part in real combat. The attack by Kilgore on the Vietnamese village was technically difficult enough in the first place hut was constantly delayed by the disappearance of the helicopters to fight the rebels. Halfway through shooting, a typhoon hit the Philippines and destroyed the main set. Filming had to be suspended for two months while a new one was built. At a later stage Martin Sheen suffered a major heart attack and was away from the set for two months recovering.

In addition to events like these which were beyond Coppola's control, there were also artistic alterations which pushed the movie further and further over budget. For example, one scene was to be set in an old French Plantation. French actors were engaged and expensive costumes and props flown out to recreate exactly an authentic

look for the scene. Once it was finished Coppola decided it did not work and all the footage was thrown out. Another difficulty emerged when Marlon Brando finally came on set. Coppola had already re-written the ending and he and Brando spent hours discussing how it should be played - an expensive business at $1 million dollars a week.

Coppola appeared stoical about the mounting budget crisis. As speculation in the media centred on the project collapsing and bankrupting him, Coppola likened making movies to constructing bridges and buildings:

"They're huge projects. They always go over budget."

But as he grappled with financial and artistic difficulty it was apparent to his wife, Eleanor, that the film was putting immense stress on Coppola. She wrote in her diary:

"Francis is making a film which is a metaphor for a journey into self He has made that journey and is still making it. It's scary to watch someone you love go into the centre of himself and confront his fears: fear of failure, fear of death, fear of going insane. You have to fail a little; die a little; go insane a little."

It is tempting to draw parallels between Coppola's own crisis and the fictional journeys towards confrontation with profound moral questions made by Marlow, the narrator of' Conrad's novel, and Willard, his counterpart in Apocalypse Now. Coppola survived the experience of financing and directing the project and Apocalypse Now was eventually released in 1979, winning the Palme D'Or award at the Cannes Film Festival and Oscars for Best Cinematography and Best Sound.

HEART OF DARKNESS

In his introduction to this guide Derek Malcolm says that Apocalypse Now "hasn't got much to do with Conrad's Heart of Darkness". In one sense this is true; it is certainly not the conventional 'film of the book'. Nevertheless there are some interesting similarities between the two texts and Francis Ford Coppola was intent on making his film a contemporary rendition of the novel. Although it is obviously not necessary to have read the Conrad book to make sense of the movie, (to Coppola's infuriation, Marion Brando bad not read it when he arrived on set to play the part of Kurtz), it may add to our enjoyment if we compare the way the two texts operate.

Joseph Conrad wrote Heart of Darkness in three instalments for Blackwood's magazine in 1899. It was published in book form, along with two other stories, Youth

and End of the Tether, in 1902. It drew directly on Conrad's own experience of sailing up the Congo river in 1890. At that time the Congo was part of the Belgian empire. Conrad was deeply disturbed by what he saw during his voyage. As an imperial power, Belgium had annexed the Congo, a large territory in central Africa, in the name of Christianity and Progress. In reality the annexation had more to do with plundering the raw materials which the African country possessed. In an essay called Geography and Some Explorers Conrad described the colonial exploitation that he saw as:

"the vilest scramble for loot that ever disfigured the history of human conscience and geographical exploration."

Heart of Darkness tells of the voyage up a great African river by a sailor Conrad calls Marlow. At one level it works as an action adventure set in an exotic location. However, Conrad's purpose in writing it was to expose the moral corruption of colonialism in Africa. In his journey towards the Inner Station to confront its chief, Kurtz, an ivory trader who has begun to act in an unacceptable way in his dealings with the natives, Marlow encounters various examples of incompetence and barbaric cruelty on the part of the whites and appalling deprivation among the blacks. In a letter to his publisher Conrad expressed the view that "the subject is distinctly of' our time", yet the description of starving Africans at the first Company Station Marlow visits could well be a report from a newspaper of the l[98]O's or 9O's:

"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 greenish gloom...I began to distinguish the gleam of eyes under trees. Then, glancing down, I saw aface near my hand. The black bones reclined at full length with one shoulder against the tree and slowly the eyelids rose and the sunken eyes looked up at me, enormous and vacant, a kind of blind, white flicker in the depths of the orbs which died out slowly."

The Africans Conrad describes here had been brought from other parts of the region to work at the trading post. The description, however, is hauntingly similar to those of' Africans who are now herded into feeding stations to receive aid from the countries who were plundering their natural resources a hundred years ago.

The Vietnam war is commonly seen as an example of American imperialism. The US intervened to prevent the spread of communism in South East Asia and thus retain their own influence in the region, with devastating effect on both the people of Vietnam and the United States itself. For those like Coppola and John Milius, who

saw the war as senseless and corrupt, Heart of Darkness seemed to have a contemporary relevance. The B-52 bombers which unloaded tons of high explosives on Vietnam from miles up in the air resembled the French man-of-war ship described by Marlow as "shelling the bush":

"the muzzles of the six-inch guns stuck out all over the low hull...In the empty immensity of earth, sky and water, there she was, incomprehensible, firing into a continent... There was a touch of insanity in the proceedings."

So both novel and film express views about imperialism. They also, centrally, deal with the "journey into self" that Eleanor Coppola spoke of in her diary. It is here that we can see the greatest similarities. For Marlow, the experience of confronting Kurtz makes him reconsider his own system of values and beliefs. Captain Willard goes through the same process as he, too, travels ever nearer his twentieth century Kurtz. And, of course, it is no coincidence that Coppola chose to retain the same name for the brooding character who embodies human savagery and despair in both texts. Marlon Brando utters the words written by Conrad for Kurtz as he dies, having recognised the awful darkness at the centre of his own heart:

"The horror! The horror!"

Task

Whatever our final decision on whether Apocalypse Now has "much to do with Conrad's 'Heart of Darkness' it is clear that it influenced Coppola in some of his thinking and structuring of the film. Read the novel and as you do so explore the equivalences between the journey Marlow takes and the voyage of Willard. Remember, a fim director may take ideas from a book and use them at chronologically different times in the film. You should also consider any characters who appear in specific parts of Willard's journey and see if they have counterparts in the characters encountered by Marlow. You may find the chart on page five useful when making your notes.

WILLARD'S JOURNEY	**MARLOW'S JOURNEY**

1.   Begins in Saigon, the capital of South Vietnam.

2.   Joins the crew of the PBR to start off up the river.

3.   Encounters the Air Cavalry unit of Colonel Kilgore.

4.   The encounter Chef and Willard have with the tiger.

5.   The troop entertainment show featuring the Bunny Girls.

6.   The attack made by the PBR crew on the San Pan.

7.   The arrival at the final bridge before Cambodia.

8.   The two attacks from the banks of the river on the PBR.

9. The arrival at Kurtz's compound.

Task

From your comparison of the two texts, how far would you agree with Derek Malcolm that the film has very little to do with the Conrad novel?

Heart of Darkness is often seen as the 'first twentieth century novel' emphasising the fate of the individual in a world where moral certainties have been replaced by vagueness and doubt. Despite this, it has never been filmed. Orson Welles had planned to make a movie of the book in the late 1930's. He got some way into scripting and set design before abandoning the project as being too difficult to film.

When filmmakers decide to produce 'the film of the book' - in the way that Merchant Ivory have adapted the novels of EM. Forster or, in an earlier era, David Lean adapted the novels of Charles Dickens - they are faced with a number of decisions. They are not simply translating the words of the author; they are transforming a text from one medium to another. Their task is to keep the spirit of the original work but make **it** effective as a film. To do this they may need to change the order in which events happen, alter some settings and edit or re-write dialogue. They will certainly need to consider what effects they can create through lighting and soundtrack music.

Task

Re-read the beginning of the book and then design an opening for a film version which sticks closely to Conrad's Heart of Darkness. Use the storyboard below.

Visual Sketch	Type of Shot (underline)	Duration of Shot	Dialogue/Music/FX
	Close-up (CU) Mid shut (MS) Mid/long shot (MLS) Long shot (LS) Angle: Eye level/High /Low		
	Close-up (CU) Mid shot (MS) Mid/long shot (MLS) Long shot (LS) Angle: Eye level/High /Low		
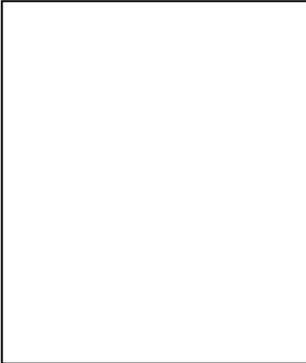
Visual Sketch	**Type of Shot (underline)**	**Duration of Shot**	**Dialogue/Music/FX**
	Close-up (CU) Mid shut (MS) Mid/long shot (MLS) Long shot (LS) Angle: Eye level/High /Low		
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	Close-up (CU) Mid shut (MS) Mid/long shot (MLS) Long shot (LS) Angle: Eye level/High /Low		
	Close-up (CU) Mid shot (MS) Mid/long shot (MLS) Long shot (LS) Angle: Eye level/High /Low		

APOCALYPSE NOW AND T.S. ELIOT

An additional literary element which Coppola includes in the film is Kurtz's reading of poetry, and particularly the poetry of T.S. Eliot. The photographer, played by Dennis Hopper, whom Marlow, Chef and Lance encounter as they first sail into Kurtz's compound, tells them that Kurtz often walks around quoting poetry. He gives the example:

"I should have been a pair of ragged claws

Scuttling across the floors of silent seas

This comes from Eliot's poem The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock, about a timid man who fails to confront an "overwhelming question". Kurtz seems to have aimed the quote at the photographer, who readily admits to Willard that he is a "little man" whereas l{urtz is a "great man . Unlike Prufrock, both Kurtz and Willard are men who are forced to confront themselves and ask "overwhelming questions".

At the end of the film, when Willard is incarcerated with Kurtz in the gloom of his inner sanctum, Kurtz reads extracts from another T.S. Eliot poem, The Hollow Men. This poem is a series of images of frustration, lack of purpose and contradiction. People are hollow, with nothing at their core. For the epigraph of his poem Eliot took a direct quote from Conrad's Heart of Darkness, the words spoken by the manager's boy when he discovers Kurtz's body:

"Mistah Kurtz - he dead"

So Eliot borrowed from Conrad -invoking the "lost/Violent soul" of Kurtz in contrast to the "hollow men" of the twentieth century. In turn, Coppola completes a circle by borrowing from Eliot and gives Marlon Brando's Kurtz the words from a poem which had derived from his counterpart in the novel.

We might also suggest that Coppola tries to create a filmic equivalent of another device which Eliot called the "objective correlative". The term refers to using an external equivalent to suggest an tnner emotional reality Thus a scene, action, image or other artistic device may be understood by the audience as relating to its objective correlative. In Apocalypse Now, an example might be the inter-cutting between the killing of the cow by hacking **it** to death and Willard's assassination of Kurtz.

Task

To ~'hat extent do you think the idea of the "objective correlative" iv appropriate as a device used in film? Are there e.vamp/es from Apocalypse Now which exemnp/ify the technique?

Task

Read The Ho/low Men. Why do you think Flat used the reference to Heart of Darkness at the beqinniag of hiv *poem?*

FILM LANGUAGE

By 'film language' we mean the ways in which camera movements and positioning, lighting, soundtrack and arrangements of elements within the frame influence our understanding.

The director will have made a series of deliberate choices about each shot. He/she needs to have made decisions about:

TYPE OF SHOT: Big Close-Up
                     Close- Up
                     Mid Shot
                     Medium Long Shot
                     Long Shot
                     Extreme Long Shot

FRAMING WITHIN SHOT

 CAMERA ANGLE: High Angle
                    Eye Level
                    Low Angle

CAMERA MOVEMENT: Pan
                      Tilt
                      Track
                      Crane
                      No movement

CAMERA POSITION

LENS MOVEMENT: Zoom In
                                  Zoom Out
                                  No movement

FOCUS: Wide depth of field
                                  Narrow depth of field
                                  Soft focus
                                  Focus "pulled" (move from one subject being in focus to another)
LIGHTING: Natural light
                                  Artificial light
                                  Coloured filters
                                  Use of light and shade

LENGTH OF SHOT IN SECONDS

Shots are then edited together to produce sequences.

CREATING A SEQUENCE

A film is made up of individual shots which have been put together in a fixed sequence. The art of the filmmaker is to take shots filmed at different times, from different angles and sometimes different places and put them together to create a coherent sequence which the viewer will interpret as a coherent narrative. Our minds are so geared towards narrative that unless the filmmaker makes it clear, for example, that what is being seen is a flashback or a dream, the audience will be misled into thinking that the first shot appeared chronologically before the second, the second before the third, and so on. If two quite unrelated images are edited together, an audience will tend to create a link which makes sense of them.

Task

Look carefully at the opening three and a half minutes of the film, from the very first fade up from b/tick on the jungle to the shot of the fan on the ceiling just after the camera has panned across the pistol. We see both a character and a setting but presented in an unconventional way.

LIGHTING

There are two main objectives in lighting a film.

The first is to create realism. If it is successful then the viewer will not notice it at all, the figures and sets acquiring a 'natural' look. The standard set up for lighting film sets is called three point high-key lighting. This produces a brightly lit scene with few areas of shadow. As the title suggests, It uses light from three positions:

*   The KEY LIGHT is set just to the left or right of the camera and pointed towards the figure to be lit.

*   The FILL LIGHT is placed on the other side of the camera to the key lights, also pointed towards figure to be lit. It is slightly less powerful, its purpose being to remove the shadows created by the key light and add detail.

*   The BACK LIGHT is placed behind the figure and faces towards the camera. It defines the outline of the figure and separates it from the background, supporting the illusion of a three dimensional image.

A second objective of lighting is to do with creating a mood or emphasising aspects of a character or their motivation. This is to do with the expressive quality of the film rather than the realist aspect. Much expressive lighting illuminates only a part of the screen and makes use of areas of deep shadow. Referred to as low-key lighting, the key light will sometimes be moved from its usual position and set to one side of the figure, throwing half of their face into darkness, or creating a distorted effect by lowering the light to shine up at the figure from below. The fill lighting is also greatly reduced to create sharper, darker shadows. Filmmakers of the German Expressionist school of the 1920's like Fritz Lang frequently used low-key lighting in their films. Later, in the 1940's, the cycle of crime thrillers which came to be known as 'film noir' (from the French, literally meaning "Black Film"), also made constant use of expressive lighting to suggest hidden, dark motives at work in the characters.

Task

Look at the final sequences of the film where Willard first encounters Kurtz in his gloomy temple. How does the lighting affect our understanding of what is happening as the film moves to its close? What other sequences from the film use lighting for expressive effect?

FILM NARRATIVE

When we refer to the narrative of a film we are concerned with the way the filmmaker has organised the material so that viewers will take meaning from it. Narrative does not have to be fictional; documentary makers use narrative as a way of structuring factual material.

Various writers have proposed ways of exploring narrative by focusing on the similarities which all narratives share. The Russian writer, Vladimir Propp, worked on the written narratives of Russian folk-tales. He claimed to have identified certain types of character who always appeared and also a set of actions or events. Other writers have found his ideas can be applied to film narrative quite accurately.

Propp's basic characters were:

* The hero - who is seeking something

* The villain - who is in opposition to the hero

* The donor - who provides an object with magic power

* The helper - who assists the hero

* The princess - who acts a reward for the hero

* The dispatcher - who sends the hero on his way

* The false hero - who disrupts the hero's hope of reward
  Graeme Turner, in his book Film As Social Practice, applies this list to the film Star Wars*:

*An alternative interpretation is given by the author of the Ten Films That Shook The World study guide on 200 I: A Space Odyssey (page 1).

*   The hero - Luke Skywalker

*   The villain - Darth Vader

*   The donor - Ben (Obi-Wan) Kenobi

*   The helper - Han Solo

*   The princess - Princess Leia

*   The dispatcher - R2-D2

*   The false hero - Darth Vader

In Channels of Discourse, Robert Allen tries the same thing with the television programmes Batman and Miami Vice and manages to fit most of the categories:

FILM:	BATMAN	MIAMI VICE
THE HERO:	Batman	Crockett / Tubbs
THE HELPER:	Robin	Vice detectives
THE DISPATCHER:	Police Commissioner Gordon	Lt. Castillo
THE VILLAIN:	The Penguin / The Riddler / etc.	Guest star
THE PRINCESS:	—	Guest star

Some other writers have suggested that, while Propp's ideas can be easily fitted to simple texts, like the television programmes quoted above or popular Hollywood movies, more complex 'art' films do not fit the model very well.

Task

To what extent is it possible to fit the characters in Apocalypse Now into Propp's character types?

Just as Propp claimed that the same characters recurred in narratives, there was also a distinct structure which could be identified. Reworking Propp's ideas, Edward Branigan describes the following as a typical narrative structure:

*   introduction of settings and characters

*   explanation of a state of affairs

*   initiating event

*   emotional response or statement of a goal by the protagonist

*   complicating actions

*   outcome

*   reactions to the outcome.

Task

How accurately does Branigan's narrative model fit the structure of Apocalypse Now?

Although most narratives build up to an ending which in some way resolves the developments of the plot, Coppola struggled with the way he should end Apocalypse Now right through until he was actually shooting the scenes with Marlon Brando.

George Lucas, who was to have directed the movie when it was conceived in 1969, describes the way that he and John Milius had originally scripted the end:

'At that point we had an ending with a very large battle. Willard and the Kurtz character are fighting off the Viet Cong. When they finally bring in a helicopter to take him out, he (Kurtz) says 'No, I have fought too hard for this land" and shoots down the helicopter."

Coppola says that he was never convinced by the way that version of the narrative was closed:

"I never cared for that ending so much. I always felt it was weak... It didn't answer any of the moral issues, it got into a real gung-ho kind of macho comic book ending. My choice was to take it much more back to Heart of Darkness."

Although there was a fixed point to be reached - Willard kills Kurtz - the build up to that climax was eventually worked out on set. In business terms, this was hardly a sensible way to operate, as co-producer Fred Roos makes plain.

"The clock was ticking. We had to finish in three weeks or we went into a very expensive overage. So the whole company was sitting up on set around the camera waiting to shoot and Francis and Marlon would be talking about the character. Whole days would go by. This is at Marlon's urging - but he's getting paid for it!"

For Coppola, business had given way to his desire to get the film artistically right. He eventually worked with Martin Sheen and Marlon Brando on improvisations which would capture an ending to reflect Kurtz and Willard's struggle with themselves rather than write a script which they simply acted out. Even beyond shooting and initial post production, uncertainty remained about the end, with the [3]Smm version finishing in a different way from the widescreen print. Given the sweat and toil which went into this part of the movie we might detect a hint of irony in the choice of music which opens the film; The Doors track called "The End".

Task

Which ending do you think would most effectively round off the narrative of the film, the original idea of Lucas and Milius or the one Coppola eventually chose to include in the version that you see? What are the "moral issues "which Coppola felt his ending must address? Do you think the chosen ending actually does answer these issues?

FILM IDEOLOGY

In talking about the ideology of a film we are concerned with the values and beliefs that the narrative presents.

Another contention in Derek Malcolm's introduction is that Apocalypse Now doesn't have much to do with the Vietnam war. Though it is certainly arguable whether the main concern of the film is about that conflict, the fact that the narrative is set during the Vietnam war means that inevitably certain things concerning that experience will be represented to us. Certainly both George Lucas and John Milius considered that Apocalypse Now was a film about the Vietnam war when they originally scripted it:

"The war was taking on an interesting character then (1969). It was becoming a psychedelic war. The culture was seeping into South East Asia; this strange US culture that was going on, where you really get the feel that it is a rock 'n roll war. Things had gone a little further than anyone had realised."

John Milius

"At the time that we were developing this no-one knew about all the drugs that were over there, no-one knew about all the craziness that was going on, a lot was being kept back. So it was a chance to make a movie that could reveal a lot of things. If/hat we'd done was to string together a lot of John's anecdotes and things he'd got from his friends who'd served out there. It was like a quest or a trek or something that would take us through the various aspects of the Vietnam war and we would see it for the insanity that it was.

George Lucas

Apocalypse Now was one of the first movies made in Hollywood about the Vietnam war. As the war is now seen as a defining moment in 20th century American history it has spawned numerous other films: The Green Berets, The Deerhunter, Full Metal Jacket, Platoon, Hamburger Hill, the Rambo movies, Born on the Fourth of July, Casualties of War. These films constitute a distinctive sub-genre within the 'war film' category.

Just as American public opinion was deeply divided over the war, so conflicting ideologies can be traced in the messages of the films listed. Different inflections will be apparent in each one. Some glorify the violence of war. Others present it as a necessary and justifiable cause. Another group see it as a tragedy, an "insanity" as George Lucas described it. What all of them have in common is a concern for the effects on Americans, usually the individual Americans who are focused on in the narrative. The viewpoint of the people of Vietnam, from either the north or the south, is not represented in anything other than a cursory way by any of these movies.

Finally, you need to realise that 'ideology spotting' is not a simple process. You are unlikely to be able to sum up in one cogent sentence the ideology of any film. There are likely to be conflicts and contradictions as well as some more easily identifiable points of view.

The more complicated ideological message of' the film concerns the "moral issues" that Coppola talked about. Why is it that Willard has been sent to "terminate" Kurtz? What code of accepted behaviour has he strayed from? Is his "crime" so serious that it requires such drastic action? What is Kurtz referring to when he utters his final words "The horror! The horror!"?

Do the journey that Willard takes and the action he commits at the end alter his views or beliefs?

ASSIGNMENTS

ENGLISH:

• To what extent can we see Apocalypse Now as a contemporary version of Joseph Conrad's Heart of Darkness?

MEDIA STUDtES:

• What influence do the lighting and the music soundtrack have on our understanding of Apocalypse Now?

• Look at the first 5 minutes of' the film, up to the lines "When I was here I wanted to be there. When I was there, all I could think of was getting back into the jungle." What expectations do you think Coppola was trying to set up in the minds of the audience? How has he achieved this?

• Compare Apocalypse Now with another Vietnam war movie. What similarities do you notice? What are the main differences?

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