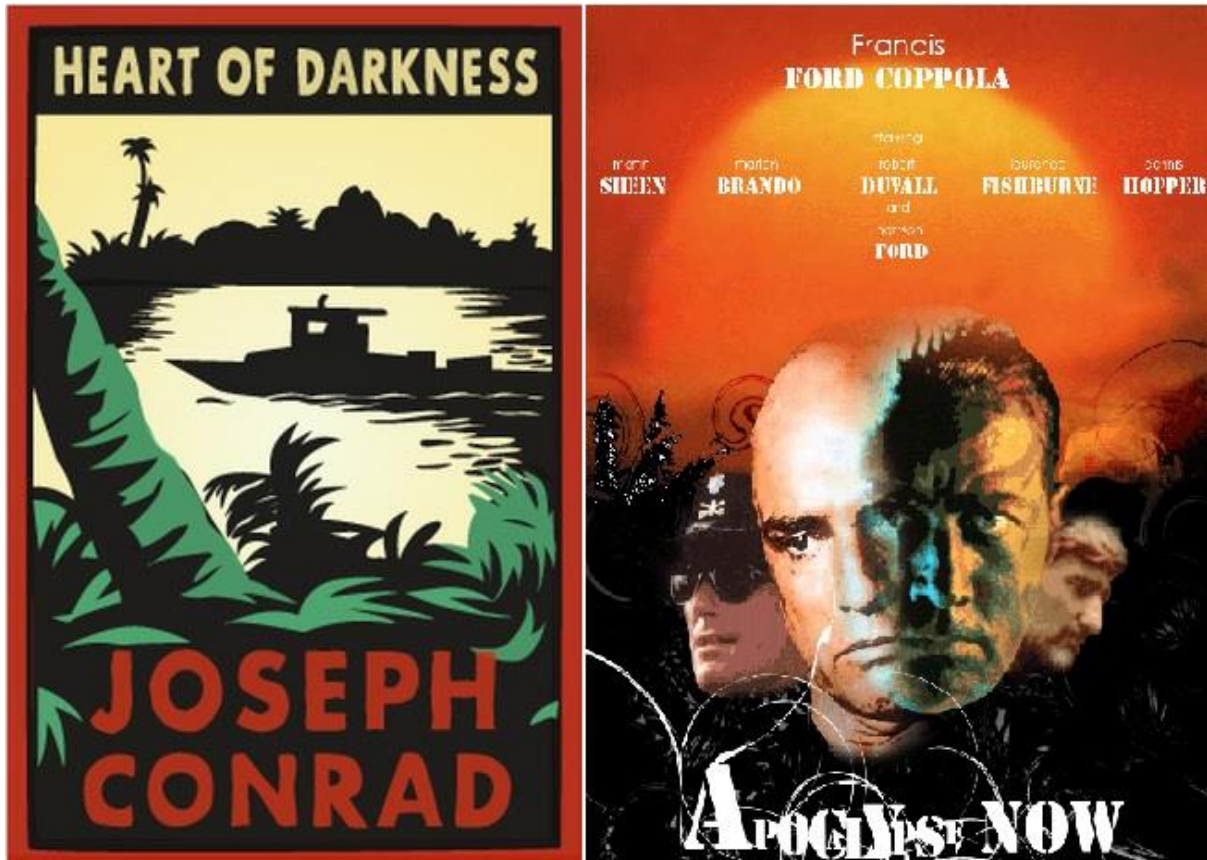


“Exterminate All The Brutes”:

A Study into the Shift of Colonialism between Joseph Conrad’s *Heart of Darkness* and Frances Ford Coppola’s *Apocalypse Now*



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Abstract

This study explores the shift in colonialism from Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* to Francis Ford Coppola's *Apocalypse Now*. The first chapter on Conrad consists of examples of the enforcement of colonialism by the Company in the Congo and is proven along with the dehumanisation of the natives and the role of ivory. The second chapter on Coppola consists of the role of colonialism executed by the U.S. army in Vietnam and the impact it had on the young American soldiers.

Keywords: *Belgian Genocide, The Vietnam War, Joseph Conrad, Francis Ford Coppola, Colonialism, Post-Colonialism.*

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Introduction

“Exterminate all the brutes!”
- *Heart of Darkness*, Joseph Conrad (84)

Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* (1899) is referred to as the *magnum opus* in the oeuvre of colonial writing. According to Goonetilleke *Heart of Darkness* became the central text in regard to Africa, with Conrad's view being the dominating image of Africa in the Western world (*Ironies* 75). In this respect, Conrad's portrayal of the colonisation of Africa can be seen as the concept on which the edifice of colonial writing was built. This is in part due to the fact that the novella is based on Conrad's own experiences in the Congo during the period of the Belgian Genocide. King Leopold II persuaded the Belgian government at the time to support colonial expansion around the Congo basin, which had then largely been unexplored yet (Hampson xx). The “Scramble for Africa” was still well underway, and it was Leopold's intention to increase his power by the form of being a sole ruler of a colony (Nzongola-Ntalaja 16). According to Hampson, “Marlow's narrative in *Heart of Darkness* begins by suggesting that “exploration has turned a blank space into a space of darkness and ends by suggesting that it has turned the unknown into the ‘unspeakable’. [...] Instead of bringing light into darkness [...] the ‘civilizing’ mission actually uncovers the ‘darkness’ at its own heart” (xi). Therefore, Marlow's journey becomes one into the darkness of his own soul and the atrocities he encounters while sailing down the Congo river. From 1885 to 1908 hundreds of Congolese men had been put to work until the point of death, Congolese women were enslaved and raped and many villages were exploited only to be burned to the ground afterwards (Ramazani & Stallworthy 1952). It was an imperialistic era in which suppression reigned. Correspondingly, what Conrad witnessed in 1890 in the Congo shocked him so profoundly that it drastically changed his view of “the moral basis of colonialism, of exploration and trade in newly discovered countries, indeed of civilization in general” (Ramazani & Stallworthy 1952).

However, facing up to the edifice that is Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* turned out to be a task not easily accomplished. According to Cowie, many screenplay writers had tried to adapt *Heart of Darkness* in the past, of which some were George Lucas, John Milius and Carroll Ballard (1-6). However, responses by for example Robin French, then the Vice President at Paramount, included: "Well, we think it's just a little too early for a Vietnam Picture" (Cowie 6). At this point, Coppola decided that it might be "about right now to do this film" (Cowie 6). He asked John Milius to write the screenplay, became director himself and hired Fred Roos and Gray Frederickson to co-produce (Cowie 6). In the synopsis Coppola wrote about the film he states that "*Apocalypse Now* is a retelling of Joseph Conrad's short classic *Heart of Darkness*. Set in Vietnam during war in 1968. It is the intention of the filmmaker to create a broad, spectacular film of epic action-adventure scale, that however is rich in theme and philosophic inquiry into the mythology of war; and the human condition" (Cowie 35). According to Kinder, *Apocalypse Now* "illuminates the powerful impact the war had on American consciousness rather than its effects on the Vietnamese [...], the sense of being immersed in warfare is so [...] vivid and compelling, that it's as if we were seeing a film dealing with this subject for the first time" (13). The journey the main character, captain Benjamin Willard, undertakes through the jungles of Vietnam solidifies the effect the war had on the minds of American soldiers. Where Conrad's novella was concerned with the effects of Belgium's actions on the Congolese, Coppola is more concerned with the effects the war had on the young American soldiers and the reason behind America's inhuman involvement, rather than the consequences of war for the Vietnamese. The line, "We stay here because it's ours [...]. We fight for that! While you Americans, you are fighting for the biggest nothing in history" (*Apocalypse Now* 2:12:35) strengthens this notion due to the fact that the American army was fighting in Vietnam to contain the expansion of power by the communistic reign (Wiest & McNab).

Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* and its relation to Coppola's *Apocalypse Now* have been a subject of interest for many researchers over the years. D.C.R.A. Goonetilleke is one of the most prominent researchers in regard to the subject. He is an established critic of post-colonial literature who published two books on Conrad's novella and several papers of which three were used in this study. The subjects of these works mainly contribute to the examination of imperialism and colonialism in Conrad's work, often in relation with Coppola's *Apocalypse Now*. Another critic worth mentioning is Chinua Achebe. He wrote one of the most well-known critical papers on *Heart of Darkness* called "An Image of Africa" (1977). Achebe's work mainly consists of the racial aspects in the novella and prejudiced statements towards Conrad from his own perspective. The corpus of literature on Conrad and Coppola commonly relates to the colonial imperative of *Heart of Darkness* versus the post-colonial subject matter of *Apocalypse Now*.

This study will examine the shift of colonialism through the following thesis statement: "The shift in colonialism in Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* and Frances Ford Coppola's *Apocalypse Now* is illustrated by transposing the perpetrator and the victim of colonialism". The colonisation of the Congolese with Belgium as the perpetrator is the main incentive of *Heart of Darkness*. The Company's presence in the Congo is merely to make a profit, with complete disregard for the natives and who through the inhumane treatment become the victims. However, Marlow disagrees with the brutal way in which the natives are treated and he is consequentially the only one who regards them as human beings. In *Apocalypse Now*, the colonisation is that of the young American soldiers who are being indoctrinated to fight a war that is not theirs to fight. The real perpetrator here is the American government, and Coppola's concern is with America's young who become the victims of colonisation. This will be demonstrated in *Heart of Darkness* through the evidence of colonialism in-text, the dehumanising of the Company, Marlow's humanisation of the

natives and finally, an analysis of Kurtz's death. In *Apocalypse Now* this will be substantiated through the indoctrination of the young American soldiers and Coppola's responses in-text, the political aspirations of the U.S. army and their role in the war and closes with an analysis of Kurtz's death scene.

Chapter one: Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*

Joseph Conrad started his career as seaman in France. By 1878 he had joined the British Merchant Service, however, it was not until 1890 that the events for Conrad's travel to Africa were set in motion. The Company that Marlow is under contract with is based on the Société Belge pour le Commerce du Haut-Congo that Conrad was under contract with himself (Najder 139). It was supposed to be a company for trade on the river and "they were going to make no end of coin by trade" (Conrad 24). He arrived in Brussels on the 5th of February in 1890 where he met Marguerite Poradowski, a distant cousin, whom he addressed as aunt (Najder 139). Poradowski would prove to be one of the most important people in his journey to the Congo, since she had good connections (Najder 139). In addition, it was her on whom he based the character of the aunt. In the novella when Marlow is trying to get a job he states that "it was a Continental concern, that Trading society; but I have a lot of relations living on the Continent" (Conrad 22). The relations he is referring to is his aunt who knows "the wife of a very high personage in the Administration, and also a man who has lots of influence with..." (Conrad 23). It was due to the efforts of his aunt that both Conrad and Marlow got the appointment. He returned to Brussels around the 29th of April after a short stay in London (Najder 143). This corresponds with the arrangements Marlow has to make as he "was crossing the Channel to show myself to my employers, and sign the contract" (Conrad 24). According to Najder "news has just reached Brussels of the murder by local tribesmen on 29 January of Johannes Freiesleben, the Danish master of the steamship *Florida*. Korzeniowski [Conrad] was appointed to take his place" (Najder 144). In the novella "the Company had received news that one of their captains had been killed in a scuffle with the natives [...]. Fresleven – that was the fellow's name, a Dane" (Conrad 23). The connection between Conrad and Marlow crystalizes under the fact that Fresleven is a homonym of Freiesleben. As Marlow arrives in Brussels he describes the edifice of the

Company's offices as "a narrow and deserted street deep in shadow, high houses, innumerable windows with venetian blinds, a dead silence, grass sprouting between the stones, imposing carriage archways right and left, immense double doors standing ponderously ajar" (Conrad 24). According to Parry it is the place "from where a rapacious colonialism is organised" (22). This statement is confirmed when Marlow steps in and sees "a vast amount of red" (Conrad 25), whereas "I was going into the yellow" (Conrad 25). Hampson states that "late nineteenth century maps of the world tended to use a colour code to indicate colonial possessions: red for British territories [...] and yellow for Belgian" (131). The grass sprouting between the stones at the Company's offices may be a direct reference to captain Freiesleben, who was found with "grass [...] growing through the skeleton" (Hampson 130). In addition, the city of Brussels always reminded Marlow "of a whited sepulchre" (Conrad 24). According to Goonetilleke "in biblical language, 'whited sepulchre' is employed [...] for someone or somewhere whose outward righteousness and pleasantness conceal an inner corruption; thus it suggests aspects of the character of colonial countries" (*Joseph Conrad* 71). When Marlow approaches the Company's offices he states that "everybody I met was full of it" (Conrad 24). This relates to the statement made by Goonetilleke and the outward righteousness of the people he meets while in the offices, for example the doctor he has to see. The doctor "glorified the Company's business" (Conrad 26), predicting a discrepancy between what Marlow is being told and what he eventually experiences. At this point the contracts have been signed, Marlow has bid farewell to his aunt and he sets off on a French steamer towards the Congo. As they sail by the coast they pass various trading places "with names like Gran' Bassam [and] Little Popo" (Conrad 30). This is interesting because according to Hampson the steamer on which Conrad left Bordeaux from in 1890 also passed stops at "Grand Bassam on the Ivory Coast [and] Grand Popo in Dahomey" (132). In addition, he spends about a month on the French steamer before he

reached his destination (Sherry 23), just as Marlow spends “upward of thirty days before I saw the mouth of the big river” (Conrad 31). Conrad’s own journey overseas corresponds accurately to Marlow’s experiences on the Congo river (Sherry 23). Sherry states that “Marlow is increasingly uneasy about the nature of the colonising activity of which he has become a part” (23). This becomes evident as he sees a boat from the shore that “was paddled by black fellows. [...] they had faces like grotesque masks – these chaps; but they had bone, muscle, a wild vitality, an intense energy of movement, that was as natural and true as the surf along their coast. They wanted no excuse for being there. They were a great comfort to look at” (Conrad 30). However, according to Chinua Achebe “Conrad was a bloody racist” (788). His extreme opinion is based on the notion that Conrad celebrates the dehumanization of Africans and depersonalizes the African constituent of the human race in his descriptions, by insinuating a profound innate hate towards them (Achebe 788). He then proceeds to claim that “Africa [was used] as setting and backdrop which eliminates the African as human factor” (788). This notion however, could not be farther from the truth. Hampson states that in the context of the colonial period Marlow’s perceptions may at times be racist, but this is only because the conventions of the time were racist (xxxi). Furthermore, the natives were mostly referred to as savages whereas “black” is a much kinder description since it draws on appearance and not behaviour. In addition, Marlow’s use of “fellows” and “chaps” implies that he considers them as he would himself, a human being. This claim is substantiated by the fact that he not only refers to himself but also to other characters in the novella as “chap”. For example, when he is telling a story about his youth: “Now when I was a little chap I had a passion for maps...” (Conrad 21). Moreover, in the following passage he is genuinely astonished by the referral to the natives from somebody on board who “called them enemies!” (Conrad 31).

When Marlow arrives at the Company's station he is confronted for the first time with the use of forced labour as he sees "six black men [advancing] in a file, toiling up the path. [...] I could see every rib, the joints of their limbs were like knots in a rope; each had an iron collar on his neck, and all were connected together with a chain whose bights swung between them" (Conrad 33). Nzongola-Ntalaja states that forced labour consisted of "the use of torture, murder and other inhumane methods to compel the Congolese to abandon their way of life to produce or do whatever the colonial state required of them" (20). According to Hampson, the civilization of the natives was reason enough for the white man to invade the Congo "and thus justified missions and settlements. [...] it also served to consolidate fixed categories, a perception of 'us' and 'them' (xxxiii-xxxiv). However, Marlow does not share the same perspective. He says that "these men could by no stretch of the imagination be called enemies. They were called criminals, and the outraged law [...] had come to them, an insoluble mystery from over the sea" (Conrad 33). The mere fact that he does not say that they were criminals substantiates the fact that he does not see them as such, especially when he states that "they were not enemies, they were not criminals, they were nothing earthly now" (Conrad 35). He takes in the sight of the natives crawling away into the shadows to die "while I stood horror-struck" (Conrad 36). He even offers one of them "one of my good Swede's ship's biscuits" (Conrad 35), an act of kindness for a fellow human.

While at the station Marlow meets the Company's chief accountant. It is this man from which he first learns about captain Walter E. Kurtz. The accountant informs him that Kurtz was in charge of a highly important trading-post "in the true ivory-country" (Conrad 37). He also tells him that he "sends in as much ivory as all the [other stations] put together" (Conrad 37). When Marlow first meets the general manager of the Company at the Central Station the manager says that "Mr Kurtz was the best agent he had, an exceptional man, of the greatest importance to the Company" (Conrad 43). However, these rewarding words were

only given to him because he brought in the ivory. Ross claims that “ivory itself is clearly the object of the materialist operation of the Company’s interests in the region, its real power” (71). Therefore, Kurtz’s “unsound methods are tolerated so long as he continues to ship ivory with the correct paperwork” (Ross 81). According to Beachey, no other product retained such a stable price as ivory during the nineteenth century (278). Up to the mid-eighties there was a barter system in place by which ivory traders could purchase the product, however “increasing competition for ivory resulted in its being forcibly taken from the Africans” (278). This becomes evident when Marlow is immersed in a conversation with a Russian “chap” that greets him at the shore of Kurtz’s station. The Russian tells him that Kurtz would disappear for days at a time to which Marlow surprised response is “what was he doing? exploring or what?” [...] “Oh yes, of course”; he had discovered a lot of villages, a lake too [...] but mostly his expeditions had been for ivory” (Conrad 92). When Marlow objects that Kurtz had no goods to trade with at that time, the Russian only says: “To speak plainly, he raided the country” (Conrad 92). In addition, Kurtz had been coming down to the river frequently with an army of the lake tribesmen with the intention of raiding the surrounding lands (Conrad 93). According the Russian “the appetite for more ivory had got the better of the [...] less material aspirations” (Conrad 93). Kurtz had created his own colony from which he had made a fortune, which corresponds directly to Leopold’s claim to power (Ramazani & Stallworthy 1952). Nevertheless, even though it was power he sought, that did not stop him from “purchasing” all the ivory there was to be found on the Congo (Hochschild 70). Marlow states that “you should have heard him say, “My ivory.” Oh yes, I heard him. “My Intended, my ivory, my station, my river, my-”” (Conrad 81). Furthermore, Leopold “used his cunning and great diplomatic skills in disguising his colonial enterprise” (Nzongola-Ntalaja 15). The same can be said for Kurtz, because when he is still sending in ivory to the Company they let him remain in charge of the Inner station. According to Ross it is “only when he withholds

ivory and repudiates the Company's monopoly on supplies [...] he is deemed to have gone too far" (81). Also, just as Leopold Kurtz used his diplomatic skills as "the International Society for the Suppression of Savage Customs had intrusted him with the making of a report, for its future guidance" (Conrad 83). According to Hampson Conrad based the society on the "Association pour l'Exploration et la Civilisation en Afrique, of which King Leopold was the president" (137). They were both eloquent men with a desire for power, and both did not care how they got it, as Kurtz's final words in his report for the Society of the Suppression of Savage Customs states: "Exterminate all the brutes!" (Conrad 84). Finally, Kurtz is returned to the steamer and laid to rest in a cabin. The manager goes into talk to him, and

"at this moment I heard Kurtz's deep voice behind the curtain, "Save me! Save the ivory, you mean. [...] The manager came out. [...] "We have done all we could for him – haven't we? [...] I don't deny there is a remarkable quantity of ivory – mostly fossil. We must save it, at all events" (Conrad 101).

Here the unmistakable fact is made clear, that ivory is worth more than any man's life. In Kurtz's final moments Marlow comes to visit him in the pilot-house where he is waiting for his death and "saw on that ivory face the expression of sombre pride, of ruthless power, of craven terror [...]. He cried in a whisper at some image, at some vision, - [...] a cry that was no more than a breath – "The horror! The horror!" (Conrad 112). According to Goonetilleke "the "horror" represents the gap between the ideals of civilisation [...] mouthed by Kurtz – and the realities (torture, domination, exploitation) as well as a recognition of their common source" (*Introduction* 38). The common source Goonetilleke refers to is the colonising of the Congo by the white man. In addition, "Kurtz is a [...] symbol of European civilization and of imperialism" (*Introduction* 39). "All of Europe contributed to the making of Kurtz" (Conrad 83), and it would also be the reason for his downfall. Marlow feels the presence of

“victorious corruption” (Conrad 101), which corresponds directly with a comment on the Company as the Nellie crawls up the river Congo. The Company consisted of “the dreams of men, the seed of commonwealths, the germs of empires” (Conrad 17).

Chapter two: Frances Ford Coppola's *Apocalypse Now*

The film starts with a view of palm trees swaying in the wind as a napalm bomb drops and everything is immersed in fire and smoke. The song "The End" by The Doors echoes serenely through the chaos. This is the image that is created in the opening scene of *Apocalypse Now*. According to Slocum the "the threat of violence posed by a narrative can often be more powerful than any graphic single image in provoking viewer responses" (4). This corresponds Coppola's aim to create a film that would show America what they had done, possibly triggering a change in American civilisation (Jahanshashi 2:02).

When captain Benjamin Willard arrives at the military compound in Nah Trang there is a shot of a platoon of young men in training in the background, chanting "I want to go to Vietnam, I want to kill a Vietcong" (*Apocalypse Now* 09:44). The Vietcong was an army of guerrilla war fighters, who according to Pike aimed "to increase American casualties so as to turn [their] disengagement into a rout" (7). Tanham states that "the overall, long-term objective of the Vietcong is, as we have seen, the acquisition of political power" (81). Therefore "the U.S. Government decided to participate directly in the insurgency by taking military action" (Tanham 97). This military action consisted mainly of assassinating the North Vietnamese, which was what the young men were training for. This is a stark contrast to when Marlow arrives at the station and sees the "criminals" – the natives - in chains (Conrad 33). Willard continues his walk over the fields as he is led into a trailer that appears to be a makeshift office to meet with the Colonel. The walls are covered with certificates and photos of Presidents Kennedy, Johnson and Nixon (*Screenplay*). The photo of President Lyndon B. Johnson is especially appropriate since he "continued to escalate the U.S. involvement in Vietnam and took the final step of effectively committing the U.S. to war" (Wiest & McNab). In the conversation between the colonel and Willard the only parallel that is drawn between Conrad and Coppola is that "Walter Kurtz was one of the most outstanding

officers this country's every produced. He was brilliant" (*Apocalypse Now* 14:24) which corresponds with the manager's remark that "Mr Kurtz was the best agent he had, an exceptional man, of the greatest importance to the Company" (Conrad 43). However, the difference is that in *Heart of Darkness* that is all Marlow gets to know about Kurtz's character before he sets off on his voyage. In *Apocalypse Now* the colonel plays a tape for Willard on which Kurtz talks about the Vietcong in a kind of trance: "But we must kill them [...]. Village after village. Army after army. And they call me an assassin. What do they call it? When the assassins accuse the assassin? They lie" (*Apocalypse Now* 14:00). According to Norris "Kurtz makes it clear that madness and irrationality are products of military logic" (747). This statement is confirmed in the latter of the film when Kurtz asks Willard "Are you an assassin?" (*Apocalypse Now* 2:41:51) and he responds with "I'm a soldier" (*Apocalypse Now* 2:41:56). As a response to Kurtz the colonel states that "in this war, things get confused out there. Power, ideals, the old morality, and practical military necessity" (*Apocalypse Now* 16:01). The practical military necessity that he requires from Willard is the termination of Kurtz's command. This is where Willard starts to wonder about his role in the American involvement: "How many people had I already killed? [...] But this time it was an American, an officer. That wasn't supposed to make any difference to me, but it did" (*Apocalypse Now* 19:21). This is where Willard crucially deviates from Marlow's point of view; Marlow humanises the natives and the brutalities of the colonialist power. Willard has killed before on tours in Vietnam, however when it is an American, someone he can relate to, it makes a difference to him. According to Norris "Willard's assassinations in the line of duty outnumber Kurtz's "official" assassinations by two. For Coppola, as for Conrad, it is the pious cant of institutions in the service of brutality that is the *bête noire* of Western civilization" (Norris 746). This proves that Willard is as indoctrinated by the American perspective on the war as Kurtz and all the young soldiers that were recruited for the cause.

These soldiers were “mostly just kids. Rock ‘n rollers with one foot in their graves” (*Apocalypse Now* 20:55) as Willard states when he first meets his crew. His crew consists of Clean, a seventeen-year-old kid from the South Bronx; Lance, a famous surfer from L.A. of whom “you wouldn’t believe he’s ever fired a weapon in his life” (*Apocalypse Now* 21:19); Chef, the machinist who is an actual chef from New Orleans, and Phillips, the Chief. According to Norris “Coppola intensifies [...] the cultural violence of interpolating surfing into war – by terrifying young Lance Johnson, the iconic image of youthful California innocence” (739).

As Willard proceeds up the Nung river towards Kurtz he makes the acquaintance of lieutenant colonel Kilgroe, who is Coppola’s version of the accountant in Conrad’s novella. In *Heart of Darkness*, the accountant is somewhat of an indifferent figure who first informs Marlow about Kurtz. However, in *Apocalypse Now* he is the personification of the Western brutality and the perversity of war. He wears a U.S. cavalry hat in combination with his uniform which according to Norris, “serves to underline the genocidal destructiveness that overlays the U.S. Army’s mythic role of chivalric rescue” (739). This becomes evident as Kilgroe lands in his chopper and yells “bomb that tree line back about a hundred yards. Give me some room to breathe!” (*Apocalypse Now* 27:01). The genocidal destructiveness solidifies as the napalm bombs drop on the tree line and a voice is heard in a public address: “This is an area that's controlled by the Vietcong and North Vietnamese! We are here to help you! We are here to extend a welcome hand to those of you who would like to return to the arms of the South Vietnamese government” (*Apocalypse Now* 28:25). According to Wiest & McNab, the Vietcong had gained control over Cambodian territory between 1969 and 1973, which the U.S. forces responded to by bombing the country. Later when Kilgroe is made aware that he is in the presence of famous surfer Lance Johnson he decides to go to Vin Din Drup peak because he wants to see Lance surf. When one of his soldiers informs him that “it’s pretty

hairy in there, sir. [...] That's Charlie's Point" (*Apocalypse Now* 33:17) Kilgore responds with "Charlie don't surf!" (*Apocalypse Now* 34:04). Norris claims that "Kilgore's passion for surfing [...] imports a key figure from American culture into a combat context that renders its aggressive and obsessive hedonism as perverse as the accountant's professional scrupulosity" (739). Kilgore's obsession with surfing can be compared with the kept up appearance of the accountant who appears to Marlow as a sort of vision with a "high starched collar, white cuffs, a light alpaca jacket, snowy trousers, a clear silk necktie, and varnished boots" (Conrad 36). Both are cultural elements of a world they hold on to in the midst of the chaos of war. The accountant and Kilgore have the necktie in common in the form of a yellow ascot on Kilgore's part (Cahir 185).

After the encounter with Kilgore the journey into the jungle continues. At last they land on the shore of Kurtz's compound. According to Cahir, "in mythic tradition the initiate is often given a guide [...] who never completes the spiritual journey himself. This mythic pattern is enacted in both Conrad's and Coppola's works" (186). In *Apocalypse Now* this guide takes the form of an eager photojournalist by the name of Yanks. Yanks is Coppola's equivalent of the Russian "chap" who greets Marlow on the shore of Kurtz's station in *Heart of Darkness*. This is confirmed when the photojournalist speaks the same words to Willard as the Russian does to Marlow: "this man has enlarged my mind" (Conrad 90 & *Apocalypse Now* 2:30:56). Coppola took many lines from the dialogue with the Russian to create the character of the photojournalist. However, a lot of his lines are interspersed with lines from poems by Rudyard Kipling and T.S. Eliot. Coppola's incorporation of poetry could quite possibly be tied to the fact that the Russian tells Marlow that "you ought to have heard him recite poetry – his own too it was, he told me. Poetry!" (Conrad 103). Yanks solidifies this notion when he tells Willard who has just stepped onto the shore "he's a poet-warrior in the classic sense" (*Apocalypse Now* 2:30:57).

The final scenes may be best described by the following quote from Slocum: “The 1970’s [were] the golden age of American film violence [...]. Filmmakers sought to join in a broader discussion about the nature of human aggression and the impact of violent images” (7). When Willard is taken prisoner by Kurtz’s men he is put in a tiger cage. Late in the night “Kurtz, painted like a Montagnard native, throws the bloody, open-eyed head of Chef into Willard’s lap in his cage – as Willard shrieks in morbid disgust and moral horror” (Norris 753). Willard’s anguish in this violent image is powerful and is set in contrast with the following frame wherein Kurtz opens the cage in the morning and reads aloud passages from Time magazine, September 22nd 1967, only deepening the impact of the horrors of the night before. Skin-crawlingly passive Kurtz reads aloud that,

“the American people may find it hard to believe that the U.S. is winning the war in Vietnam. [...] White House officials maintain [that] the impact of [...] strength may bring the enemy to the point where he could simply be unable to continue fighting. Because Lyndon Johnson fears that the U.S. public is in no mood to accept its optimistic conclusions, he may never permit the report to be released in full”
(*Apocalypse Now* 2:49:57).

By 1973 a large anti-Vietnam War movement had developed in response to the atrocities and mass murder of the war (Wiest & McNab). In addition, Norris claims that “many U.S. atrocities committed in Vietnam and Cambodia may have gone unreported” (759). However, the difference between the institutions and Coppola’s Kurtz and Conrad’s Kurtz is that the colonels are fully aware of their internal darkness, whereas the Company and the U.S. Army “refuse to look into theirs and acknowledge what Coppola’s Kurtz calls “their lying morality.”” (Norris 756). Cahir adds to this that “wars are not fought for timeless and eternal values, but for political [...] expediency” (184). The Army believes that Kurtz’s methods are “unsound” (*Apocalypse Now* 2:41:08) while in reality the only thing that is unsound is their

immoral practicality in the war. This argument is crystalized in the final scene, when Willard finally fulfils his mission. Kurtz is taping his final memo for the Army in which he states that “we train young men to drop fire on people, but their commanders won’t allow them to write fuck on their airplane because it’s obscene” (*Apocalypse Now* 3:07:23). According to Norris this “rearticulates the moral contradictions and absurdities of the enterprise” (747). At the end of the memo Willard walks up behind Kurtz and raises the machete that is the harbinger of Kurtz’s death. At that moment Kurtz whispers his final words which echo Conrad’s: “The horror.... the horror” (*Apocalypse Now* 3:08:56). However, moments before Kurtz was offering his rendition of T.S. Eliot’s “The Hollow Men”. According to Stape “This made a neat cultural irony, since “The Hollow Men” takes as its epigraph ‘Mistah Kurtz – he dead’ and develops the Conradian theme of the absurdity of secular existence” (52). Ultimately, the finale of the film is articulated perfectly by the final line from T.S. Eliot’s poem: “This is the way the world ends, not with a bang but a whimper”.

Conclusion

“The horror! The horror!”
- *Heart of Darkness*, Joseph Conrad (112)

In Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*, the perpetrator of the “rapacious” colonialism is the Company, which is operating in the service of the Belgian government. This is confirmed by the use of imagery in the start of the novella, namely the reference to the whited sepulchre when describing the city of Brussels and the use of the colour yellow, which was the colour used for Belgian colonies on colonial maps in the nineteenth century, in the offices of the Company. In addition, the Company obtains their fortune by enslaving the Congolese to produce ivory for them. As is demonstrated by the utilisation of slavery, the natives are dehumanised to the point of being treated like animals by the Company. However, Marlow humanises the slaves by means of referring to them as fondly as he would himself or others characters in the novella, for example the Russian “chap”. Furthermore, he treats the natives as actual human beings, which shows that Marlow is the agent Conrad uses to portray his shock on the cruelties of colonialism.

The character of Kurtz is also drawn to power. He creates his own colony by presenting himself as a God to the natives and surrounds himself with ivory that he withholds from the Company. His obsession with ivory is what eventually causes his downfall. As he lay dying he utters the word ivory as his possession over and over again. When Kurtz is retrieved by the Company, the manager states that they have done all they could for him, proving once more that ivory is worth more than any man's life.

In Coppola's *Apocalypse Now*, the perpetrator of colonialism is the U.S. army in service of their country and the American government. This is substantiated by the government's political affirmations in regards to communist North Vietnam through characters in the employment of the army. In addition, Kurtz reads an article from Time magazine aloud in which the government's enterprise of saving Vietnam from the

communists is reiterated as if the war was for the greater good of America. The indoctrination of the young soldiers is proven by the continuing referral to their youth: they were just kids who loved to listen to Rock 'n Roll music and ride the waves. The soldiers were enlisted to fight in a war that was not even theirs to begin with. This is solidified by the appropriation of the character of Kurtz, who offers his rendition of T.S. Eliot's "The Hollow Men" at the end of the film. Kurtz's final memo which he leaves on a tape for the army crystalizes it even further, when he ends with the fact that children are taught to drop fire on people and then are expected to behave like normal citizens.

To conclude, the shift in colonisation in Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* consists of the Company under Belgian control as the perpetrator for colonialism with the Congolese natives as their victims, whereas in Coppola's *Apocalypse Now* the indoctrination of the young American soldiers is the manner of execution of colonialism. The soldiers are herein the true victims.

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