

### Comparison Essay Assignment - *Apocalypse Now* and *Heart of Darkness*

Francis Ford Coppola began filming *Apocalypse Now* in the 1970's in response to America's involvement in Vietnam. As filming progressed, Coppola became increasingly interested not only in producing an intense commentary on the war, but also in creating a distinct and powerful parallel between his film and *Heart of Darkness*. Eleanor Coppola describes her husband's film, *Apocalypse Now*, as being "loosely based" on Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*, yet the parallels run much deeper. NOTE: you are NOT watching this movie to look for the DIFFERENCES. There are SEVERAL differences (it's set in Vietnam in the 60's, not King Leopold's Congo; the protagonist is named Willard, not Marlow; they make many more stops along the way up the river; etc); it's the similarities in which we're interested. In essence, we want to look at the MEANING of the book and the MEANING of the movie, and investigate and analyze how Coppola designed his film to reflect the deeper understandings of humanity, madness, imperialism and civilization that Conrad explored in his book.

As you watch this film, pay close attention to how Francis Ford Coppola makes similar statements about US involvement in Southeast Asia during the 1960s as Joseph Conrad does in *Heart of Darkness* concerning Europe's intervention in Africa during the 1880s and 1890s. Both artists also create works of art that comment on the human condition and the psychology of man.

TASK: Write a comparative argument, in which you assert that Coppola or Conrad more effectively communicate his thesis with his audience(s).

- Regardless, you should base your analysis on three to five comparable scenes.
- Be careful to choose scenes from both works that you (the reader) and you (the viewer) can analyze with sufficient depth.
- Be cautious in choosing scenes that are either too brief or too long.
- Planning will be crucial for this assignment. As you watch the movie, take careful notes on a number of scenes that might serve as appropriate for this analysis. Look for the parallel scene in *Heart of Darkness*. One major problem with this assignment will be your inability to remember specifics from the particular movie scene as you write your paper, so get quotes and details as you watch.
- When you discuss language aspects of *Heart of Darkness*, you will refer to the many components of writing that an author uses to create tone, make a statement, develop a character, or imply his theme such as syntax, word choice or diction, figurative language, detail, symbol, imagery, etc.
- When viewing *Apocalypse Now*, you should consider such elements as light, space, and sound. Some of you know more about film techniques than others – use your expertise. Because you will not have the film to review and analyze when you begin writing your essay, **your discussion about the novel should be more completely developed**. There should still be insight into the film and some intelligent discussion of the film's approach.

**Essay Requirements/Due Dates:** The paper should follow MLA format.

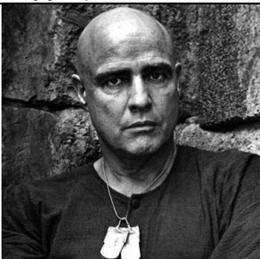
**Draft #1** is due both in class and online at turnitin.com \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_

**Final Draft** is due online at turnitin.com on \_\_\_\_\_

**\*\*ABSOLUTELY NO LATE PAPERS WILL BE ACCEPTED for EITHER DRAFT #1 nor FINAL DRAFT.\*\* so plan ahead.**

You are still responsible for getting it here/online if you are absent!

On the back of this page, you will find a list of characters (with pictures) to help you keep track of the people in the film. You may choose to use this space or not, but I do expect you to have a notebook or blank paper at the ready to jot notes on as we watch.

Character:	Description/Observations:	Parallel:
 <p>Willard (Martin Sheen)</p>		
 <p>Kilgore (Robert Duvall)</p>		
 <p>Chief (Albert Hall)</p>		
<p>The Boat Crew: Clean (Lawrence Fishburn), Chef (Frederic Forrest), and Lance (Sam Johnson)</p>		
 <p>Photographer (Dennis Hopper)</p>		
 <p>Kurtz (Marlon Brando)</p>		