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DESCENT INTO INFERNO: FROM DANTE'S *DIVINE COMEDY*, TO CONRAD'S *HEART OF DARKNESS* AND COPPOLA'S *APOCALYPSE NOW*

An intertextual and intermedial analysis

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Ik verklaar plechtig dat ik de thesis, "Descent into *Inferno*: From Dante's *Divine Comedy*, to Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* and Coppola's *Apocalypse Now*", zelf heb geschreven.

Ik ben op de hoogte van de regels i.v.m. plagiaat en heb erop toegezien om deze toe te passen in deze thesis.

25/05/2018 Erkut Gultekin

Table of contents:

Abstract

This is an interdisciplinary study concerning Dante's *Divine Comedy*, Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* and Coppola's *Apocalypse Now*. After an introduction to these works and their production contexts, structural and narratological aspects are analysed. Comparative thematic aspects and motifs are then introduced and investigated. Relevant themes such as the descent into darkness, political views and existential journeys are examined. This research is exemplary of how the high and popular cultures are intertwined in contemporary arts.

I. Objectives, contexts and introduction to the artistic works

1.1 Objectives

Narratives have become a multi-discipline notion. A story can be mediated through diversified ways. With these different ways come various forms of expression. These can be explained as the artistic choice of the author. However, it is also possible that, for instance in a modern-day adaptation, the changes have rather to do with the spatiotemporal setting. For decades, critics have sought possible reasons for these changes. There are outstanding theories such as the Swede Lars Elleström's, who offers an innovative viewpoint. The fusion of semiotic and intermedial aspects, is what makes this critic's theory combinable with Marie-Laure Ryan's. These methodological specifics will be elaborated in: *2.1 Methodology*.

Film analysts such as Robert Stam agree that "*film […] is a form of writing that borrows from other forms of writing*" (Stam 2004, 1). An exploration and investigation of comparative elements in the *Divine Comedy* and *Heart of Darkness* will be presented. After this intertextual analysis, two intermedial analyses will follow. At first, analogous facets in Joseph Conrad's novella and the film *Apocalypse Now* by Francis Ford Coppola (dir.) will be introduced. Afterwards, this film will be compared to Dante's *Divine Comedy*. Regarding the liaison between these two disciplines, Casetti says:

> "Both literature and cinema have been regarded essentially as modes of expression, […], as sites in which an individual's perceptions are combined with the person's will/necessity to offer an image of him or herself and of his or her own world." (Casetti 2004, 81)

The model that will be used for the intertextual (read comparative thematic) analysis of the *Divine Comedy* and *Heart of Darkness*, is the theory of "hypo- and hypertext" by Gérard Genette. According to the French theorist, a "hypertext" (in this case *Heart of Darkness*) is derived from a "hypotext" (the *Divine Comedy* in this study*)* "*without necessarily mentioning it directly*" (Genette 1997). With the introduction of *Apocalypse Now*, the focus of the research will be shifted from "high" to "popular" culture. This will eventually reveal how the high and popular cultures affect one another. Since the *Divine Comedy, Heart of Darkness* and *Apocalypse Now* have been written and produced in different time periods, it is necessary to present these eras. Therefore, in *1.2*, the socio-political contexts will be the main focus.

1.2 Socio-political contexts

Dante Alighieri, born in 1265, Florence, began to engage himself philosophically in the last decade of the 13th century. During this period, he was also politically active. There were two opposing sides in the 13th and 14th centuries northern cities of Italy: Guelphs and Ghibellines. While the first were supportive of the papacy, the latter were sympathetic to the Roman emperors. Globally speaking, Guelphs were born into wealthy mercantile families. The theological and political aspects in Dante's epic poem can be explained through Dante's personal interest in the Guelph ideology, as will be explained in *4. Analysis of thematic aspects and motifs*.

However, by the year of 1260, the Guelphs had been exiled twice from Florence. The Ghibelline domination came to an end in 1266, with the invasion of Charles I of Anjou. An important turning point in the history of Florence was when the Guelphs, around 1300, had split into the Black and White Guelphs. While the Black Guelphs would continue their support of Pope Boniface VIII, the White Guelphs were opposed to his influence. The Black Guelphs succeeded in gaining control of Florence in 1301. Dante being a White Guelph, was exiled from the Florentine city one year later. During his exile, he was believed to have started writing *Inferno*, the first part of his *Divine Comedy*.

Joseph Conrad, the English author of Polish descent, was born in 1857. According to his biography, in November 1889, Joseph Conrad had travelled to Brussels, Belgium. There, he met with Albert Thys, the deputy director of the *Société Anonyme Belge pour le Commerce du Haut-Congo*. A Danish man by the name of "Johannes Freiesleben", had been murdered by Congo tribesmen on 29 January 1890. Thys had appointed Conrad to take his place. On June 28, Conrad had begun his overseas journey to Kinshasa. The author boarded the river streamer *Roi des Belges* upon his arrival on the 3rd of August.

The six villages that Conrad had visited during this journey, were illustrative of the disastrous consequences of Congo's colonization by the Belgian king Leopold II. The latter figure had achieved recognition for a personal colony, the Congo Free State, in 1885. Although Leopold II was involved in humanitarian work, his "Free State" would soon extract ivory, rubber, and minerals. According to historicists, Leopold II's reign grew to be a public embarrassment because of the death rate, slavery and torture. These inhuman circumstances inspired Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*.

The Vietnam-war, which not only took place in Vietnam, but in Laos and Cambodia as well, began in 1955 and ended with the fall of Saigon in 1975. This twenty-year-old war was a clash

between the communist and anti-communist sides. In total, four military organizations were involved: The People's Army of Vietnam (PAV) and The National Liberation Front (NLF) on the communist side; and the Army of the Republic of Vietnam (ARVN) and the United States on the anti-communist side. The involvement of the US is explained by their concern of a communist government spreading throughout Asia.

Francis Ford Coppola's *Apocalypse Now* is illustrative of the anti-war movement, that had gained strength in the US. Americans had gradually become critical of the media and their unreliable reports on the Vietnam-war. The scene where Willard is held captive and Kurtz reads newspaper articles out loud, for instance, is an appropriate example of this matter. This scene will be discussed in *4.2 Political views*. The war had been *Americanized*: the US soldiers were depicted as national heroes, while in reality these often had no idea of the army's decisions and were merely following orders. Various sources claimed to have evidence of the fact that the war could have ended a long time ago, if the United States government had acted righteously. Instead, the Vietnam-war had been "commercialized". This exact idea is embraced in John Milius's screenplay of *Apocalypse Now*.

1.3 Introduction to the literary and cinematic works

1.3.1 The Divine Comedy by Dante Alighieri

This epic poem is considered one of the greatest of all European literature. Literary critics such as Prue Shaw for instance, referred to the *Divine Comedy* as the greatest poem of the Middle Ages. The literary techniques in *Inferno*, *Purgatory* and *Paradise* respectively, have inspired Geoffrey Chaucer and other masters of English Literature. Also, the rhyme scheme that Dante invented for his *Divine Comedy*, the "terza rima", has been repeatedly used by several other authors in the poem's aftermath. In this three-part masterwork, Dante not only holds on to the 14th century theological ideology but also criticizes this philosophy.

His metaphysical journey begins in *Inferno*, where he comes across sinners of different kinds. The severity of the committed sins is presented in an allegorical way. The wrongdoers can be found in one of the "circles" of *Inferno*. Together with his guide Virgil, the ancient Latin poet, Dante has to reach the utmost level of the hell to be able to enter *Purgatory*. Once he loses his first guide Virgil, Beatrice becomes Dante's guide[1]. However, there are several obstacles such as the cruel creatures which Dante has to face. The devil, stuck with his lower body parts in *Purgatory* and with his upper body parts still in *Inferno*, awaits Dante. Satan is depicted picking and eating human souls in the utmost layer:

Gustave Doré, 1861, engraving, Dante Alighieri's Inferno from the Original by Dante Alighieri and Illustrated with the Designs of Gustave Doré (New York: Cassell Publishing Company, 1890)

[1] From the last four cantos in *Purgatory* until the end of *Paradise*.

In present time, the *Divine Comedy* is highly associated with the illustrations of Gustave Doré. Beside the English translation of Dante's epic poem by Dorothy L. Slayers, these visual works are relevant for this research. Dante Alighieri has written this work during his exile in his mid-thirties[2]. As introduced in *1.2 Contexts*, during the fourteenth century, the people of Firenze were divided into two political "camps": the Ghibellines and the Guelphs. Dante, considering himself a member of the latter party, criticises Ghibellines in his poem by placing some of their publicly known figures in one of the circles of *Inferno*. In the following passage for instance, Dante comes across Farinata-the Ghibelline leader of Florentine descent, in the sixth circle of the *Inferno*, reserved for the Heretics:

> "Come, come, what art thou doing? Turn round," he said;
> That's **Farinata**-look! He's risen to sight,
> And thou canst view him all, from waist to head."
>
> Already my eyes were fixed on his; upright
> He had lifted him, strong-breasted, stony-fronted,
> Seeming to hold all Hell in deep despite;
>
> And my good guide, with ready hands undaunted
> Thrusting me toward him through the tombs apace,
> Said: "In thy speech precision is what's wanted."
>
> I reached the vault's foot, and he scanned my face
> A little while, and then said, with an air
> Almost contemptuous: "What's thy name and race?"[3]
>
> (Canto X, 31-42)

Shortly after their encounter, Farinata "*prophesies Dante's exile*" (Dante, 128). Thus, Dante, while writing his *Divine Comedy*, was inspired by his own life. This will be elaborated in *4.2*

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[2] So he says in the beginning of the *Divine Comedy*.

[3] Ed el mi disse: "Volgiti! Che fai? / Vedi là Farinata che s'è dritto: / de la cintola in sù tutto 'l vedrai". // Io avea già il mio viso nel suo fitto; / ed el s'ergea col petto e con la fronte / com' avesse l'inferno a gran dispitto. // E l'animose man del duca e pronte / mi pinser tra le sepulture a lui, / dicendo: "Le parole tue sien conte". // Com' io al piè de la sua tomba fui, / guardommi un poco, e poi, quasi sdegnoso, mi dimandò: "Chi fuor li maggior tui?".

Political views. An important detail is that the author deliberately used a vernacular for his work in a time where nearly all poetry was still written in Latin. The dialect of Tuscany which he used in this epic poem eventually evolved into the current Italian language. This makes Dante not only the "father" of all Italian literature but also that of the Italian language. In contemporary popular culture, Dante's *Divine Comedy* is constantly being remediated through modern adaptations. It is an ambiguous work since there are multiple possible interpretations. The structure of the *Inferno* will be analysed thoroughly in *4.1 Descent into darkness*:

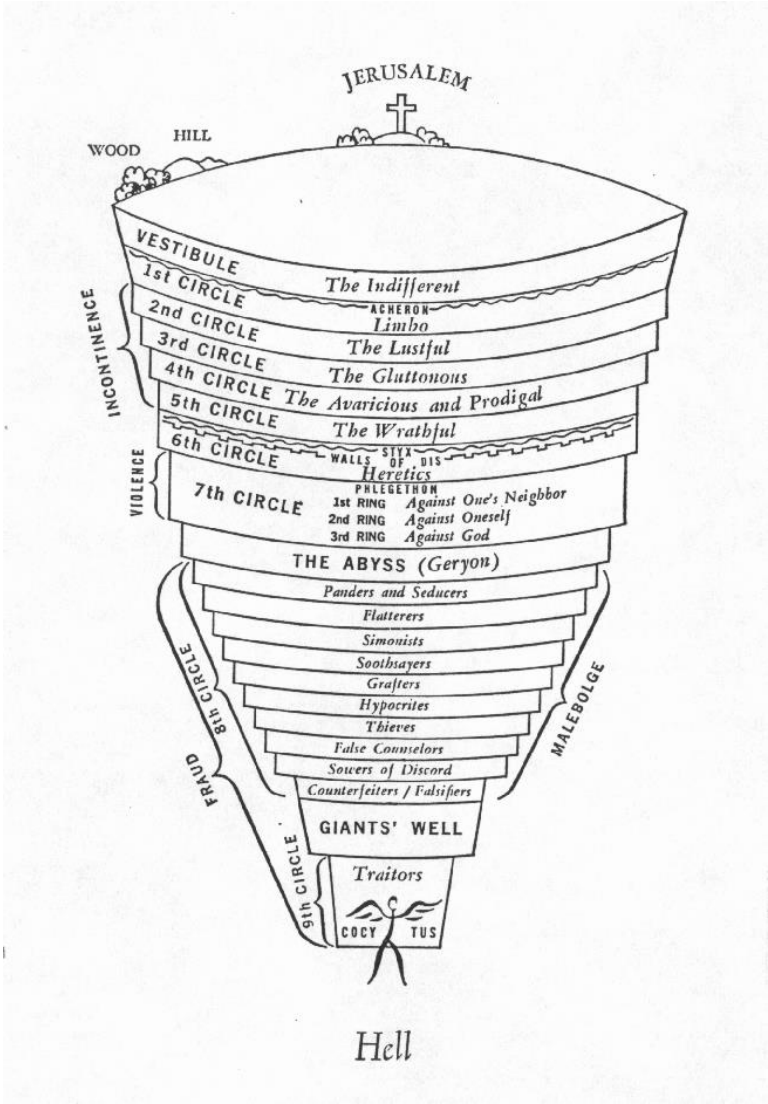


Figure 1: The structure of *Inferno*

1.3.2 Heart of Darkness by Joseph Conrad

Not only is this novella by Joseph Conrad, originally published in *Blackwood's* in 1899, one of the most important works of the author. Its influence on popular culture is undeniably great. To understand the context of this literary work one has to go back to its roots: to Joseph Conrad's first travel to Africa in May 1890 to be more specific. The English author of Polish descent has served in Congo from the months June until December as the second-in-command and temporarily captain of the *Roi des Belges*. Five years before this event occurred, the control of the Congo Free State was handed over to the Belgian King Leopold as one of the results of the Berlin Conference. This makes *Heart of Darkness* a semi-autobiographical novel.

The horrors that Conrad has experienced during this function, have influenced his way of thinking. In such manner even, that he criticizes the imperialistic ideology of the 19th century and the "sepulchral" city of Brussels in this novella. However, the author chooses to do so in a less obvious (and so implicit) way. A remarkable consequence of this choice[4], is that the events described in this novella serve as a more generalized view of the colonial practices. This novella therefore not only influenced popular culture (as will be investigated in this study), but also created a whole new direction in literary studies. Therefore, its post-colonial interpretation by the literary critic Edward Said will be consulted for this research.

The structure of the novella can best be described as a "frame narrative". The story can thus be divided in two. The superficial layer of the story serves as an introduction of the main character, Charlie Marlow. The second layer however, is the story that this protagonist shares with his fellow sailors about his experiences in the Congo Free State. He explains how he had heard of an ivory company in Africa that had lost its captain and needed a replacement. Once Marlow reaches the company's chief accountant with the help of a French ship, he first hears about the mysterious Mr. Kurtz. The chief accountant talks about this figure with praise. When Marlow reaches the Central station, his mission, which (in short) is to escort Kurtz back home, is explained to him.

The reader later learns that this will not be as evident as it seemed on the first sight however, because of the horrific circumstances. It feels as if the deeper the protagonist proceeds into the river, the narrower this river becomes. Also, the harder the obstacles that Marlow and his fellow sailors have to face, develop into. On top of that, they experience an attack of arrows by the

[4] Neither the Belgian King Leopold nor Belgium and/or Brussels are explicitly mentioned in *Heart of Darkness*.

natives, killing several of their crew members. When Marlow finally reaches his destination, he is told that Kurtz is still alive. Apparently, he is extremely ill and regarded as a god by the natives.

1.3.3 Apocalypse Now by Francis Ford Coppola

After having finished directing *The Godfather* series, Coppola moves on to *Apocalypse Now*. In the documentary titled *Hearts of Darkness – A Filmmaker's Apocalypse* (1991), he explains his motivation to choose the cinematic realization of John Milius's screenplay as his next film. He knew it was risky since, having received a lot of positive response to *The Godfather*, he would now try to mediate a lot more sensitive topic. Coppola, in this documentary, explains his intention to film *Apocalypse Now* during the Vietnam-war:

> "[This] film is not *about* [the] Vietnam[-war]. It *is* the Vietnam-war. It is what it was really like. It was crazy. And the way we made it was very much like the way Americans were in Vietnam. We were in the jungle. There were too many of us. We had access to too much money, too much equipment, and little by little, we went insane. (Coppola)

With *Apocalypse Now*, Coppola wishes to criticize how America turned the Vietnam-war into a "commercial" war. Hence his own cameo in this cinematic work: as captain Willard and the rest of the crew are running by a filming crew in the middle of a war scene, Coppola (playing the role of another director) tells them to "*not look into the camera*" and that it is "*for television*" (*Apocalypse Now*):

Francis Ford Coppola, 1978, film, *Apocalypse Now Redux*
(Santa Monica: Miramax Films, 2001)

A comparable critique of the commercialization of the Vietnam-war is present in other films such as *Hamburger Hill* and *Platoon*. Together, the three motion pictures prove that with the aid of

popular culture, the Vietnam-war has been converted into an almost "kitsch" thematic. A complex situation is depicted as simple and to some extremes even banal. The director distances himself from the display of the U.S. soldiers as heroes and so portrays the unpleasant reality-a different angle to the same story.

The filming process of *Apocalypse Now* took more than two hundred days, which was not as planned. Even though Coppola had been able to collect an impressive capital as the result of the financial success of *The Godfather* series, he went over his budget for *Apocalypse Now*. Since the American government did not approve of filming in Vietnam during the war, the director decided to record his visual material in the neighbouring isle-country of the Philippines. The crew even succeeded in hiring dozens of helicopters actually belonging to the Philippine government:

Francis Ford Coppola, 1978, film, *Apocalypse Now Redux*
(Santa Monica: Miramax Films, 2001)

This eventually resulted in one of the most impressive bombardment-scenes in the history of cinema. According to Eleanor Coppola[5], there was tension between the actors and the director. One of such suspenseful moments was when the crew filmed the last part of the film's opening scene, where the protagonist captain Willard (played by Martin Sheen) strikes into a mirror with his fist. He then injures himself by cutting his right hand and thus bleeds:

[5] Francis F. Coppola's partner

Francis Ford Coppola, 1978, film, *Apocalypse Now Redux*
(Santa Monica: Miramax Films, 2001)

Although this scene has been alluded to as one of the best in the film, it was not acted. The scene was filmed when Martin Sheen, playing Willard, had actually been consuming alcohol on the day of his birthday celebration. Eleanor Coppola, frightened, described this moment as "eerie" since she believed Martin Sheen's health condition was in danger. She even believed that, if Francis did not stop filming, the actor's frustration could have resulted in him attacking Francis Ford Coppola.

Apocalypse Now tells the story of captain Willard's classified mission. In his video interview with the film's director, the screenwriter John Milius admits that this character is "*the embodiment of the post-traumatic stress syndrome*". (Milius) Following monologue of Willard illustrates this:

> "Saigon. […] I'm still only in Saigon. Every time, I think I'm going to wake back up in the jungle. When I was home after my first tour, it was worse. I'd wake up, and there'd be nothing. I hardly said a word to my wife until I said yes to a divorce. When I was here, I wanted to be there. When I was there, all I could think of was getting back into the jungle. I'm here a week now. Waiting for a mission. Getting softer. Every minute I stay in this room, I get weaker. And every minute Charlie squats in the bush, he gets stronger. Each time I looked around, the walls moved in a little tighter." (*Apocalypse Now*)

However, the protagonist's agony as a result of considering himself as useless for the American army comes to an end when he first hears about his mission. Willard is told about colonel Kurtz, a once respected man with military success, who has apparently "gone mad". His objective is to "*terminate*" the colonel's command "*with extreme prejudice*". (*Apocalypse Now*) He first has to travel to the utmost point of the Nung River to find the colonel. He learns that he will be doing so in a PBR-boat among other crew members[6]. During their journey they have to overcome several obstacles. These will be discussed in detail, in *3. Analysis of structural and narratological aspects*.

Although a short summary of the events in a chronological order will be provided: the PBR-crew will first have to get past Kilgore, then a tiger, after which they find themselves in a commercial show of the "Playmates of the Year". Just as in *Heart of Darkness*, the crew experiences an arrow attack by the natives. In the *Redux* version of *Apocalypse Now*, this event is followed by an encounter with French colonizers. Eventually the crew loses Chief and Clean. Once they reach the mouth of the Nung River where they finally meet colonel Kurtz, Chef dies as well. captain Willard himself and Lance are the only two members of the original PBR-crew who survive in the end. An important feature of this study is that *Apocalypse Now* is not considered a classical "adaptation" (as described by Hutcheon and Rajewsky) of *Heart of Darkness*. The director (Francis Ford Coppola) and screenwriter (John Milius) both consider Joseph Conrad's novella as rather an inspiration than a source[7].

[6] Chief, Clean, Chef and Lance

[7] In: Coppola, Francis Ford, and John Milius. "Apocalypse Now - John Milius Interviewed by Francis Ford Coppola." *YouTube*, 16 Nov. 2011, www.youtube.com/watch?v=JZswrVALi2M. Accessed 3 Oct. 2017.

II. Methodology, hypotheses and status quaestionis

2.1 Methodology

2.1.1 General approach

The literary terms "intertextuality" and "intermediality" serve as two pillars in this research. First of all, Julia Kristeva and Gérard Genette's perspectives of intertextuality will be applied to the comparative thematic analysis of *The Divine Comedy* and *Heart of Darkness*. Especially the latter's theory of the palimpsest serves as an apt method. The relation of hyper- and hypotextuality in these two literary works, will be dealt with thoroughly. The theories of the intermedial analyses are provided by Elleström and Ryan.

Structural and narratological aspects will be analysed. An investigation of thematic aspects and motifs will follow afterwards. In the epic poem and novella, the descent into darkness is noticeable from the author's choice of words and doom-like descriptions. While in the film this is clear from the director's visual interpretation of these. The further the protagonists proceed into their journeys, the "darker" the settings become.

All three of the protagonists find themselves in a quest which in the end results in them criticizing the political ideology of their time. Dante does so by placing political figures in one of the circles of *Inferno*, while Marlow and Willard do this by realizing (and eventually detesting) the hypocrisy behind the white supremacy.

The *Divine Comedy*, *Heart of Darkness* and *Apocalypse Now* show typical features of "travel" literature and film. The journeys of Dante, Marlow and Willard are of the existential kind. Dante, in his odyssey into the afterlife, is led by Virgil and Beatrice. As for Marlow and Willard, the role of their guides is rather symbolic: it lays in their curiosity for the mysteriousness of Kurtz.

All three heroes, in the ends of *Inferno*, *Heart of Darkness* and *Apocalypse Now*, find salvation: Dante does so by finally being able to enter *Purgatory*. In Conrad's novella, Marlow reaches this state of mind when he tells about the death of Kurtz to his now become widow. While in *Apocalypse Now*, Willard finds salvation when he eventually terminates the command of Kurtz and brings an end to the "*Montagnard army of his who worship* [him as] *a god*" (*Apocalypse Now*). Finally; in all three of the main characters of the *Divine Comedy*, *Heart of Darkness* and *Apocalypse Now*; the good and evil are presented as intertwined.

2.1.2 Previous narratological approaches

Literary theories of the New Criticism and New Historicism movements provide an interesting angle for this study. The "New Critics" developed the act of "close reading", which is highly relevant for the intertextual analysis. Although these analysts refuse any acknowledgments outside the text. This would eventually form a barricade for this research. The focus of "New Historicists" lays on the context and production conditions of a work. This movement is relevant for intermedial analyses since it is known for its apposite theory for adaptations.

The term "adaptation" should be used cautiously here. According to Hutcheon, adaptation is the "*extended, deliberate, announced revisitation of a particular work of art*" (Hutcheon 2006, 170). An alternative term is remediation, coined and developed by Jay David Bolter and Richard Grusin: "[Cinema and literature] *are continually commenting on, reproducing, and replacing each other*" (Bolter and Grusin 2000, 55). The third possible term is "*transmediality*". According to Straumann, this term literally means "*across media*". She adds to this that it "*is used to refer to textual elements such as plots and characters that appear in a variety of different media*" (Straumann 2015, 256). Think of the character Kurtz in *Heart of Darkness* and *Apocalypse Now* for instance.

These theories by Hutcheon, Bolter, Grusin and Straumann are actually based on Irina O. Rajewsky's. In her book *Intermedialität* (2002), she introduces following three notions:

> Transmedialität: phenomena that are not media specific, such as parody
> Medienwechsel: media transformations such as adaptation
> Intermediale Bezüge: e.g. narrativization of music or musicalization of fiction
> (Rajewsky, 46)

According to Elleström however, Rajewsky's theory is less transparent in practice:

> "[…] it is not always clear when a medium is actually a distinct transformation of another medium, exactly when some of the indistinct media borders have been transgressed, or which traits are to be considered as belonging to the one medium or the other. Intermedial transformations can only partly be described as a fixed set of media relations." (Elleström, 34)

2.1.3 Theory of semiotic mediatics by Lars Elleström

Elleström therefore proposes to not necessarily determine the transformational direction and specific relation between two specific media instances. Instead; "*traits, structures and forms of meaning*" should be compared (Elleström, 35). Thus, the literary critic introduces innovative transmedial notions and concepts. In Elleström's essay collection titled "*Media Borders, Multimodality and Intermediality"* (2010), Király describes the cultural impact of cinematic adaptations in contemporary arts as follows:

> "[…] along with a growing interest in cultural […] studies, film is also acquiring an increased socio-cultural responsibility. It is showing, unmasking, symbolically representing cultural, social, political reality." (Király, 201)

The political ideology which lays behind the production of *Apocalypse Now* confirms Király's perspective. More specifically, Coppola deals with the Vietnam-war and the ways in which the American army imposes its supremacy on the natives. A striking detail is that this oeuvre was created in the ongoing period of war. Conrad's novella, *Heart of Darkness*, is written during the imperialistic era and criticizes the colonialist philosophy. Király furthermore explains the revitalised function of the spectator:

> "[…] the changed role of the spectator consists of 'scanning' and interpreting the signs and symbols it contains. It is a more active form of spectatorship: a continuous effort of meaning-making instead of losing ourselves in a perfect diegesis. We become increasingly aware of the presence of the medium and our role as spectators." (Király, 201)

In short, a semiotic approach as presented by Elleström and Király introduces a renovating angle for the cultural aspects of this study. Therefore, a semiotic mediatics approach will be adopted. The definition of "media", as introduced by Elleström, "*consists of a mixture of modalities*" (Bruhn, 227). Elleström defines this as follows:

> "The modalities are the essential cornerstones of all media without which mediality cannot be comprehended and together they build a medial complex integrating materiality, perception and cognition." (Elleström, 15)

The disadvantage of past intermedial studies lays in their essentialism (e.g. Literature is X, cinema is Y). Every medium, according to Elleström, is bound to four necessary conditions:

1. Material modality: the material manifestation of the medium
2. Sensorial modality: the human sensory channels affected by the medium
3. Spatiotemporal modality: the time-space ratio of the medium
4. Semiotic modality: types of signification using Peirce's distinction between iconic, symbolic and indexical signification. (Elleström, 36)

These can "*be found on a scale ranging from the tangible to the perceptual and the conceptual*" (Elleström, 15). Following figure elaborates these four modalities:

Modality	*What the modality is*	*The most important modes of the modality*
Material modality	The latent corporeal interface of the medium;	human bodies
	Where the senses meet the material impact	other demarcated materiality
		not demarcated materiality
Sensorial modality	The physical and mental acts of perceiving the interface	seeing
	of the medium through the sense faculties	hearing
		feeling
		tasting
		smelling
Spatiotemporal modality	The structuring of the sensorial perception of the material interface	space manifested in the material interface
	into experiences and conceptions of space and time	cognitive space (always present)
		virtual space
		time manifested in the material interface
		perceptual time (always present)
		virtual time
Semiotic modality	The creation of meaning in the spatiotemporally conceived medium	convention (symbolic signs)
	by way of different sorts of thinking and sign interpretations	resemblance (iconic signs)
		contiguity (indexical signs)

Figure 2: The modalities and modes of media

A semiotic approach implies that a medium can only function as such once its multimodality is confirmed. According to Bruhn, "*multimodality is a fact of any conceivable text in any conceivable medium*" (Bruhn, 227). Furthermore, the critic argues:

> "Research […] should take as its starting point the fact that all arts are "composite" arts (both text and image); all media are mixed media, combining different codes, discursive conventions, channels, sensory and cognitive modes. Thus, the implications of a new, multimodal concept of medium is that interartial and intermedial models are transgressed and the meetings of media are no longer reserved for the privileged exceptions but become a condition of every text." (229)

However, Elleström argues, "*every medium is modally mixed in a way that is more or less unique*" (Elleström, 29). This allows for multiple sorts of "intermedial mixtures". Thus, a medium can be combined with "*other media consisting of dissimilar modal combinations*" (30). The significance of the opening song of *Apocalypse Now* (The Doors – This Is The End) can only be deducted from its iconicity. While *Heart of Darkness* (and literature in general) is rather symbolic:

> "[…] the combination and integration of words and music stimulates the interpreter to find iconic aspects in the text and to realize the conventional facets of the music." (29)

From a semiotic point of view, the consideration of literature and cinema as two separate forms of art becomes unnecessary. Both are merely mediators of a content, a message. Another addition that Elleström makes are the "*two qualifying aspects of media*" (24). More specifically, he makes a distinction between the "*contextual qualifying aspect*" and the "*operational qualifying aspect*". The first is the "*origin, delimitation and use of media in specific historical, cultural and social circumstances*" (Ibid.). While the latter term is used for the designation of "*aesthetic and communicative circumstances*" (25). The Swedish literary critic then makes following remark on cinema:

> "Cinema […] borrowed aesthetic and communicative characteristics belonging to old media, and although the first films also had distinct communicative and aesthetic characteristics, […], it took a while before the many qualifying characteristics of the mediated content developed into recognizable media forms. Eventually, there came to be two notions attached to the same term: cinema as a set of techniques and cinema as a multifaceted qualified medium developed within the frames of, but not determined by, the technical aspects." (Ibid.)

The final distinction presented in Elleström's theory is that between the "*basic*" and "*qualified*" media:

> "Basic media: media that are mainly identified by their modal appearances.
> Qualified media: art forms and other cultural media types which rely strongly on the two qualifying aspects." (27)

Qualified media are characterized by their "*origin, delimitation and use in specific historical, cultural and social circumstances*" (33). The Swedish literary critic defines this as "*the contextual*

qualifying aspects". Apart from those, there are also "*the operational qualifying aspects*" which together form "*the aesthetic and communicative characteristics of media*" (35). While "basic media" are defined by the four modalities only, "qualified media" are defined by the four modalities and these two qualifying aspects. Finally, the critic concludes:

> "Intermediality is […] about specific intermedial relations but it is also […] about *studying* all kinds of media with a high level of awareness of the modalities of media and the crucial modal differences and similarities of media." (38)

2.1.4 Theory of narratology by Marie-Laure Ryan

Ryan's *Narrative Across Media* (2004) will be consulted for the narratalogical backgrounds of this research. Instead of limiting herself to one discipline, she proposes to merge theories of multiple mediums (literature, theatre, film, etc.) in one book. This theory's relevance can be deducted from its applicability to both cinema and literature[8]. In the third part of her book, the critic discusses "Moving Pictures". Aspects such as "Filmic Storytelling" and the "Form/Content Dilemma" are discussed elaborately.

According to Bordwell, "*the characteristic principles of film narrative are best understood by identifying distinct narrative features and charting the internal relations among them*" (Bordwell, 203). Neo-structuralist narratologists focus on categorizing features as "*moments of overt narrational presence*" (204). In literary terms, this is "enunciation". Other points of focus are temporal manipulations (retrospective aspects) and focalization. An important addition that the critic makes is that "*narrative structure is better understood as systemic*" (205). Meaning that they are organized around "*strategic functional principles*" (Ibid.). So far, each individual film has been treated as "*an assemblage of devices*" (208). However, this had led to "*fairly pointillistic conceptions of intratextual dynamics*" (Ibid.).

Furthermore, the critic discusses what the French film theorist Christian Metz calls filmic enunciation: "*The process by which filmic discourse overtly addresses the spectator*" (Ibid.). According to Metz, this process is inherently reflexive. In his own words, enunciation is "*the semiological act by which certain parts of a text speak to us of this text as an act*" (Metz, 20). The context of a film plays an eminent role:

> "No neo-structuralist has suggested that moving into a space or out of it, or concentrating on a detail, necessarily constitutes a marker of enunciation. Theorists […] argue that it's all a matter of context. What [Bordwell is] arguing however, is that an appeal to context tacitly depends on functionality." (Bordwell, 210)

The context of a film and its functionality are important factors: "*only by assuming some sense of functionality can the spectator infer its meaning from context*" (Ibid.). Elleström, who dealt with the semiotic aspects of intermediality, also considers the context of a work as its main

[8] Poetry and prose

meaning-bearer. The role of the spectator, according to both Bordwell and Elleström, can impossibly be denied. Both theories therefore will be merged in this study. Additionally, Kamilla Elliott's theory will be consulted. In Ryan's essay collection, she discusses the literary film adaptation and the form/content dilemma. As Coppola admits himself, *Apocalypse Now* is only "loosely" based on *Heart of Darkness*. It cannot be called an "adaptation" in its literal sense. This is where Elliott's theory comes in. According to her, "*the perception that something passes between book and film in adaptation holds firmly in filmmaker, popular, and critical accounts*" (Elliott, 221). She strongly advices that terms such as "form" and "content" should be defined rather variably. In the end, adaptation theories differ strongly from one another:

> "Under some concepts of adaptation one medium is the content of the other; under others, both gesture to some outer signified with different forms; under some others, novel, film, and audience response merge to form a composite sign. The concepts overlap as frequently as they differ and are by no means presented as theoretically viable or empirically proven. Rather, they are indicators of how relations between novels and films have been constructed and of what purposes these constructions have served." (Ibid.)

Christopher Orr, academic critic, argues that a good adaptation "*must be faithful to the spirit of its literary source*" (Orr, 72). However, this citation can be interpreted in various ways. It carries a rather ambiguous meaning, since there is never only one interpretation to literature. For example, although *Apocalypse Now* is not an adaptation of *Heart of Darkness* in its literal sense, it can be interpreted as such. Coppola is faithful to the post-colonial readings of the novella, since in the *Redux* version of the film, there is a scene where imperialism is discussed and criticized explicitly. However, this scene has only later been added to the extended director's cut. This does not mean that the original version does not share a similar ideology. There are other (less obvious) signs in the film which show similarities with the anti-colonial mindset. Parallels must be drawn between the anti-war and anti-colonial ethos's. According to Hodge, a true "faithful" interpretation, an adaptation which is as literal as possible, is unthinkable: "[one] *can maybe have it in spirit, but it's going to change as it moves into a different medium*" (Hodge, 118). Elliott calls this the "psychic" concept of adaptation. She diagrams the processes as follows:

> "THE NOVEL'S SPIRIT → (THE NOVEL'S FORM) → (FILMMAKER RESPONSE) → (FILM) → VIEWER RESPONSE" (Elliott, 223)

The parentheses in this design indicate the "*dispensable and dropped forms that allow for psychic connection*" (Ibid.). This proves once again how remarkable it is, that both Elleström and Elliott's models rely so much on the spectator. Both the reader and the viewer play an undeniably great role in the process of adaptation. These theories could be influenced by Hegel's. In his writings, he stated long before Elleström and Elliott that "*the spirit needs an external vehicle of expression, ultimately, form is unessential and transient*" (Hegel, 525). Elliott, in Ryan Marie-Laure's essay collection, confirms that she was inspired by the German philosopher. She also explains the necessity of dropping a medium:

> "Although the various mediums are indispensable to the operation of the psychic model, the essential point is that they can and must be dropped. The form can change; the spirit remains constant. The spirit of the text thus maintains a life beyond form that is not constrained by or dependent on form." (Elliott, 223)

Orr emphasizes the spirit of a film or text as being a function of its "discourse" and "narrativity". These terms, he explains as "*the manner in which the narrator communicates to the* [spectator]" and "*the processes through which the* [spectator] *constructs the meaning of the text*" respectively (Orr, 73). According to Elliott however, "*the spirit of a text is most frequently equated with the spirit of the author rather than of the reader*" (Elliott, 223). Finally, she argues:

> "Fidelity to the spirit of a text is almost always accompanied by an insistence on the necessity of infidelity to its letter or form. The psychic concept of adaptation argues that to be true to the spirit of a text adaptation has to leave behind the literary corpse. A too-literal translation that dutifully substitutes novel signifier for film signifier, dead form for dead form, are less faithful than those that pursue the novel's spirit." (224)

Secondly, the "Ventriloquist Concept of Adaptation" is described. According to the critic, this concept "*empties out the novel's signs and fills them with filmic spirits*" (226). This matter is inspired by Roland Barthes's theory of meta-language:

> "That which is a sign (namely the associative total of a concept and an image) in the first system, becomes a mere signifier in the second... When the passing sign becomes pure form, the meaning leaves its contingency behind; it empties itself, it becomes impoverished, history evaporates, only the letter remains." (Barthes, 114)

Adopting Barthes's theory, Elliott proposes following two equations for the visualization of this second concept of adaptation:

> "The Novel's Signs – The Novel's Signifieds = The Novel's Signifiers THE NOVEL'S SIGNIFIERS + THE FILM'S SIGNIFIEDS = THE ADAPTATION'S SIGNS" (Elliott, 227)

The focus of these two calculations is their objective to distinguish: film is separated from its adaptation. An important detail however, is that the adaptation in this context signifies a "*composite of novel and film, rather than pure film*" (Ibid.). This eventually leads to unusual readings- avoiding the critic to focus "*on those places where the novel's significations have been emptied out*" (Ibid.). Instead, the focus lays on the significations that the film has added:

> "While film adaptations typically do cut and condense the novel, they also add the semiotic richness of moving images, music, props, architecture, costumes, audible dialogue, and much more. All of these signs are laden with cultural and symbolic resonances." (Ibid.)

Once again, Elliott relies on Barthes's account of meta-language. In accordance with the French critic, "*the meaning of the second system will be for the form of the first like an instantaneous reserve of history, a tamed richness*" (Barthes, 118). Whenever a film leaves out content from a novel, new elements are introduced. As is the case for various elements in *Heart of Darkness*, that are not reintroduced in Coppola's film.

The third concept of adaptation that Elliott, in Marie Laure Ryan's *Narrative Across Media*, introduces is the Genetic one. More specifically, this particular concept deals with the narratological approaches to adaptation: "*Narratologists figure what "transfers" between literature and film as an underlying "deep" narrative structure akin to genetic structure*" (Elliott, 230). For the theory of the genetic concept of adaptation, Elliott relies on Brian McFarlane's *Novel to Film: An Introduction to the Theory of Adaptation* (1996). The literary film critic defines "narrative" as:

> "A series of events, casually linked, involving a continuing set of characters which influence and are influenced by the course of events. The "cardinal functions" of narrative constitute its deep structure, and these elements can transfer directly from novel to film, although their specific manifestations require "adaptation proper": The discovery of filmic signs equivalent to those of the novel. Novel and film can share

> the same story, the same "raw materials" but are distinguished by means of different plot strategies." (McFarlane, 74)

Elliott concludes that this narratological approach "*thus attempts to circumvent the problem of form's separation from content*" (Elliott, 230).

In the fourth place, the "de(re)composing" concept of adaptation is explained. Under this concept, novel and film become "*a decomposed composite at underground levels of reading, often leading to confusion about which is novel and which is film*" (233). Thus, in this context, the adaptation is "*a (de)composite of textual and filmic signs merging in audience consciousness together with other cultural narratives*" (Ibid.). Both Dante's *Divine Comedy* and Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* belong to the European literary canon. This makes the de(re)composing concept of adaptation relevant. Being inspired by Umberto Eco's discussion of cult objects, Elliott argues:

> "Adaptations of canonical novels frequently truncate high culture into "cult" object by detaching parts of the novel and representing them as the whole in defiance of the novel's whole. A filmmaker-reader's response to one part of the novel may distort or override the adaptation of the whole." (Ibid.)

The filmmaker-reader's response can be illustrated as follows: John Milius, in his interview with Francis Coppola, explains why he did not want to rename colonel Kurtz. The line "*Mr. Kurtz – he dead*" (Conrad, 69) had such an impact on him that he decided not to change the name. His affection for this character's name has caused him to "*retain only certain aspects of that character in adaptation*" (Elliott, 234). Elliott adds that "*unfaithful adaptations are operating under a de(re)composing concept of adaptation*" (Ibid.). They are labelled as "unfaithful" because the critics read only from novel to film. This often results in the critic thinking that the director has made too many changes to the original. Therefore, she proposes to read "*in both directions*" (Ibid.). Only by doing so, one can find that "*supposed infidelities appear clearly in the text*" (Ibid.).

The last two concepts of adaptation that Elliott introduces in Ryan's *Narrative Across Media*, are the incarnational and trumping ones respectively. However, the incarnational concept of adaptation is not didactically identified in the rhetoric of adaptation. This concept makes "*adaptation a process of incarnation from more abstract to less abstract signs*" (235). Although it may seem similar to the first concept of adaptation that Elliott introduced, namely the psychic one, there are major differences:

> "[The incarnational concept of adaptation] posits the novel not as a transcendental signified to which the film must attach appropriate signifiers but, rather, as a transcendental signif*ier*. […] In the context of adaptation, the transcendental signifier seeks not a signified but another signifier that can incarnate it." (Ibid.)

This study, however, leans more towards the psychic concept of adaptation than to the incarnational one. Finally, Elliott introduces the trumping concept of adaptation. This concept is concerned with "*which medium represents better*" (237). Elliott explains the final concept as follows:

> "Under the trumping concept of adaptation, the novel's signs lose representational authority in the name of a signified that the novel "meant to" or "tried to" or "should have" represented when the adapting film is perceived to have represented it better. The trumping concept of adaptation splits the novel's form from its content to assert that the one has betrayed the other: that the novel's signifiers have been false to and have betrayed their own signifieds." (239)

However, this final concept is even less relevant, since Coppola admits that his film is only "loosely" based on *Heart of Darkness*.

2.1.5 Illustrations by Gustave Doré

Francis Ford Coppola, 1978, film, *Apocalypse Now Redux* (Santa Monica: Miramax Films, 2001)

Gustave Doré, 1861, engraving, *Inferno from the Original by Dante Alighieri and Illustrated with the Designs of Gustave Doré* (New York: Cassell Publishing Company, 1890)

As stated before in *1.3.1 The Divine Comedy by Dante Alighieri*, the engravings by Gustave Doré play an important role. Doré's drawings are illustrative of intertextual and -medial aspects. For example, in the scene where Willard and Chef are separated from the rest of the PBR-crew and seek mangos in the jungle, they are threatened by the presence of a tiger. This scene is comparable to that of Doré when Dante, in Canto I, is approached by a leopard:

> "Weary of limb I rested a brief hour,
> Then rose and onward through the desert hied,
> So that the fixed foot always was the lower;
>
> And see! Not far from where the mountain-side
> First rose, a Leopard, nimble and light and fleet,
> Clothed in a fine furred pelt all dapple-dyed,

Came gambolling out, and skipped before my feet,
Hindering me so, that from the forthright line
Time and again I turned to beat retreat."[9]

(Canto I, 28-36)

Both of these events occur in the beginning of the journeys of Willard and Dante respectively. To enlighten the reader, whenever these engravings by the French illustrator are relevant, they will be included in the analyses.

[9] Poi ch'ei posato un poco il corpo lasso, / ripresi via per la piaggia diserta, / sì che 'l piè fermo sempre era 'l più basso. // Ed ecco, quasi al cominciar de l'erta, / una lonza leggiera e presta molto, / che di pel macolato era coverta; // e non mi si partia dinanzi al volto, / anzi 'mpediva tanto il mio cammino, / ch'i' fui per ritornar più volte vòlto.

2.2 Hypotheses

Although the relation between *The Divine Comedy* and *Heart of Darkness* has not been investigated as thoroughly as that of *Heart of Darkness* and *Apocalypse Now*, there are two possible outcomes. The results will either confirm or deny whether Genette's concept of "hypertextuality" is applicable to these two works. Accordingly, the first research question is: Can *Heart of Darkness* be considered the hypertext of *The Divine Comedy?* Furthermore, a structural analysis will demonstrate the analogous structures in these works.

T.S. Eliot's poem *The Hollow Men* cites the line "*Mr. Kurtz – he dead*" (Conrad, 69) from *Heart of Darkness*. The screenplay of *Apocalypse Now* not only interprets Conrad's novella, it refers to Eliot's poem as well: colonel Kurtz recites the same poem in the scene of his first encounter with captain Willard. Coppola adds weight to the screenwriter's intermedial reference by filming the book covers of Frazer's *The Golden Bough* and Weston's *From Ritual to Romance*:

Francis Ford Coppola, 1978, film, *Apocalypse Now Redux*
(Santa Monica: Miramax Films, 2001)

Regarding its theme, *The Hollow Men* is the suitor of Eliot's similar poem *The Waste Land*. In *Notes on The Waste Land*, Eliot writes:

> "Not only the title, but the plan and a good deal of the incidental symbolism of the poem were suggested by Miss Jessie Weston's book on the Grail legend: *From Ritual to Romance*." (Eliot, 1)

Later he adds: "*To another work of anthropology I am indebted in general, one which has influenced our generation profoundly; I mean The Golden Bough*" (Ibid.). This series of references will be summarized in this study.

In the beginning of the *Divine Comedy*, Dante has to (literally) descend into the hell. The atmosphere which Dante and Virgil find themselves in, becomes more and more obscure and lugubrious as they continue their epic journey. *Inferno*, as will be explained in *4.1 Descent into darkness*, is structured in circles. These circles represent the weight of the committed sins. The more harmful the sin, the deeper the souls will be sent into the *Inferno* by Minos, the "*judge of Hell*" (Dante, 97). Marlow's journey, in *Heart of Darkness*, also gradually darkens. The deeper he penetrates "*into the heart of darkness*" (Conrad, 35), the more horrible the circumstances become. This, in combination with the theme of the jungle, has inspired Milius to write the screenplay of *Apocalypse Now*. Coppola's dim-lighted settings are representative of the gradually darkening aura. This theme will be analysed in the fourth chapter of this study.

As mentioned in *1.2 Socio-political contexts*, all three works are politically engaged. In Dante's *Divine Comedy*, the spatiotemporal setting is the 13th and 14th centuries Firenze. In that period, the Florentine city was divided into two political "camps": the Guelphs and Ghibellines. The Guelphs were supporters of the Papacy while the latter were rather fond of the emperor. It is widely known by now that the Alighieri's were Guelphs. However, after their victory over the Ghibellines, the Guelphs later split into the Black and White Guelphs. Eventually, only the Black Guelphs were helped by the Papacy. Dante was a White Guelph and therefore had been banished from Firenze. It was during this time of his exile that he had begun writing his three-part epic poem. Dante criticizes publicly known political figures in his *Divine Comedy*.

Joseph Conrad's novella can be interpreted in multiple ways. The post-colonial readings however, are the most relevant for this hypothesis. As written before in *1.3.2 Heart of Darkness by Joseph Conrad*, the author was inspired by his own journey to the Congo Free State during the process of writing. The character Kurtz is the embodiment of the imperial practices of the European states. As Conrad writes: "*all Europe contributed in the making of Kurtz*" (Conrad, 19). Literary criticism by post-colonial thinkers such as Edward Said will be consulted for the analysis of the political aspects in the novella. Francis Ford Coppola's *Apocalypse Now* is critical of the Vietnam-war, which had taken place from 1955 until 1975. The spatiotemporal setting and the

director's decision to film in the documentary-style[10], reveal his intention to display a realistic Vietnam-war. However, his own cameo serves as the underlying critique of the commercialisation of war.

Furthermore, the scene where captain Willard and his crew are invited over dinner by the French settlers, is relevant for the hypothesis concerning the political aspects. These imperialists believed that they were entitled to stay in "Indochina", even after its declaration of independence. This scene did not make it into the original film but was later added to the *Redux* version (2001). The political statement gains weight when Coppola decides to mediate a similar message as that of Conrad's through another medium than literature. Conclusively, these aspects will be investigated with the research questions: "How have the political messages been mediated in *The Divine Comedy, Heart of Darkness* and *Apocalypse Now* respectively?" and "Which literary and/or cinematic techniques are used?".

All three works in this study deal with a quest which alternates the protagonist's perception of truth. In the *Divine Comedy*, Dante is in the middle of his life and the journey into *Hell*, *Purgatory* and *Paradise* changes his ideas of the afterlife. According to Erdinast-Vulcan and Guerard, Marlow's journey in *Heart of Darkness* is of the "*metaphysical*" and even "*existential*" kind. Marlow eventually wonders whether the circumstances he encounters in the colonized Congo Free State are fair, which results in him criticizing the imperialistic ideology. In Coppola's *Apocalypse Now*, captain Willard's mission is to find and terminate the "madman" colonel Walter E. Kurtz. Through his quest however, Willard realizes that the horrific circumstances of the war and its underlying hypocrisy are the actual cause of Kurtz's "madness". The answer to the research question "How does the protagonist's perception of truth develop in *The Divine Comedy, Heart of Darkness* and *Apocalypse Now* respectively?" will illustrate this hypothesis.

Guidance and salvation are two important themes in the three works. Dante, in the *Divine Comedy*, has two guides: Virgil and Beatrice. Virgil, who was born in the year 70 BC, cannot enter *Paradise* since he could have impossibly been baptized. Therefore, Beatrice becomes Dante's "divine guide". When Dante finally reaches *Paradise*, he finds salvation. As for Marlow in *Heart of Darkness*, his curiosity to finally meet Kurtz and hear him talk guides him through the Congo Free State. Similarly, Willard, in *Apocalypse Now*, is curious to finally meet colonel Kurtz. All he learns about the man, are from dossiers and audio recordings. As for Marlow's case, he gains

[10] As confirmed in the interview of John Milius (screenwriter) by Francis Coppola (director).

his information from hear-say. However, there is a major difference in terms of their salvation. While Marlow finds salvation when he tells about Kurtz's death to his now become widow, Willard reaches this state of mind when he finally fulfils his orders and brings an end to colonel Kurtz. In chapter four, these thematic aspects will be dealt with thoroughly.

Dante, in the introduction to Canto I, admits that he has strayed from the righteous path. In other words, he has not been a good Christian. However, the third part of his journey, into *Paradise*, implies that there is good within this character. Marlow, in *Heart of Darkness*, is a complex character. Although this character is an eye-witness of the colonial practices, which influences his consciousness and sceptic state of mind, he is guilty of racial exclusion. Similarly, Marlow cannot be labelled as simply a "good" or "evil" character. In comparison with Willard in *Apocalypse Now*, Marlow is more sophisticated. Willard proves that his orders are more important than any obstacle when he relentlessly kills natives, only to arrive at his destination in time. Furthermore, when the PBR-crew arrives at the camp of French settlers who decided to stay in Indochina after its colonisation by the French government, the French widow tells him: "*There are two of you, can't you see? One that kills and one that loves*" (*Apocalypse Now*). This hypothesis will be investigated in *4.6 The intertwine between good and evil in the main characters*.

2.3 Status quaestionis

Theoretical backgrounds that set the *Divine Comedy* and *Heart of Darkness* in one context are rare. Both works belong to the literary canon however, making of each the body of an enormous variety of studies. Similarly, studies concerning the intermedial analysis of the *Divine Comedy* and *Apocalypse Now* are limited. Correspondingly, past studies regarding the comparison of either Dante's epic poem or Coppola's film (with another oeuvre) will be consulted. Fortunately, there are numerous sources concerning the intermedial relation of *Heart of Darkness* and *Apocalypse Now*.

In the documentary *Hearts of Darkness – A Filmmaker's Apocalypse* (1991), directed and shot by Eleanor Coppola and others, it is stated that *Apocalypse Now* is "loosely based on Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness"*. Even though there are several remarks on the link between the script and novella, this is not the documentary's only focus. The director fixates on her husband and colleague filmmaker as the creator (read director) of an artistic work. The documentary gives numerous insights. Not only the making of the movie is mediated, but also the long and exhausting journey of the director and actors. In this documentary, the directors have used audio- and video-records of Coppola that were actually meant for his director's diary. For him, adapting *Heart of Darkness* into film was not the main objective. It was rather the madness of war, the Vietnam-war to be more precise, that he tried to address.

The structure of the script is, according to the documentary, very similar to that of Conrad's novella. They both deal with a journey, an adventure. Coppola manages to transform this matter into a quest by sending Willard on a military mission. His goal is to navigate through the Nung river until he reaches the mouth of Cambodia. There he will find Kurtz, a once respected colonel turned delirious as a result of the insanities of war. Various scenes in the film experiment with the psychological influence of war on an individual. The character Kurtz is similar in *Heart of Darkness* and *Apocalypse Now*. In both works, he is the representation of the western man who finds himself in another environment. One that is different from what he is used to. Thus, making it hard to comprehend the circumstances that he finds himself in. Eventually, "*he gives in to the temptations of the jungle"* (Eleanor Coppola).

Although the philosophy behind the antagonists shows parallel thinking, the one behind the protagonists does less so. Marlow and Willard are both captains and sail on a river in a fleet, accompanied by other marines. The conditions which they find themselves in, are similar. An important difference nevertheless, is the impact of these events on the characters. Regardless of the sympathy they both develop in the course of events for their antagonist Kurtz, the metaphysical and

existential effects on Willard are missing. These are replaced with a critique of war which victimizes the "G.I. JOES" as a result of their war traumas. It shows the hypocrisy of war through a fleet of men who seem to have no clue of what they are doing. Men who are at a certain point driven so mad that they end up massacring innocent passengers on a fleet passing by. *Apocalypse Now* suddenly makes the "G.I. JOES" look less heroic and more vulnerable on the psychological level.

John Milius, the screenwriter of *Apocalypse Now*, explains how exactly he has done so in an interview provided by the director himself, Francis Ford Coppola. In this interview he first explains his first encounter with Joseph Conrad's novella *Heart of Darkness*. It was his writing teacher, Owen Black, who said that *Heart of Darkness,* being one of the great stories of all English literature, had been attempted to be filmed several times. John Milius adds to this that he was impressed by *Heart of Darkness* when he read it by the age of seventeen. It was the "*theme of the jungle being a force on itself*" that impressed him the most, "*a force that one has to give himself to*" (Milius). He then makes an analogy with being afraid of the dark: "*What one does in the jungle is the same as what he does when he's afraid in the dark. He subjects himself to this darkness*" (Milius). It was this exact feeling that he wanted to regenerate in his screenplay.

According to Milius, his screenplay is about "*giving yourself into the forest*" (Milius): Kurtz gives himself away to the forest, he has befriended it and has even become a part of it. Milius also explains why, although having rewritten the script various times, he never swore off the name "colonel Kurtz". The line "*Mr. Kurtz – He dead*" (Conrad, 69) in the novella has had such great impact on the screenwriter that he chose never to change the character's name. It was George Lucas apparently, who inspired Milius to write about *Heart of Darkness* in Vietnam. Rather than remediating it directly, Milius chose to use Joseph Conrad's novella as an allegory. *Heart of Darkness* was not the only literary work which influenced his screenplay however. Milius was inspired by Homer's *Odyssey* when he introduced the character "Kilgore": he is the "Cyclops" that Willard has to fool to advance his mission. He does so with the help of his travel companion Lance, who is a surfer. Another literary inspiration, more specifically for the scene with the "Playmates of the Year", are sirens[11].

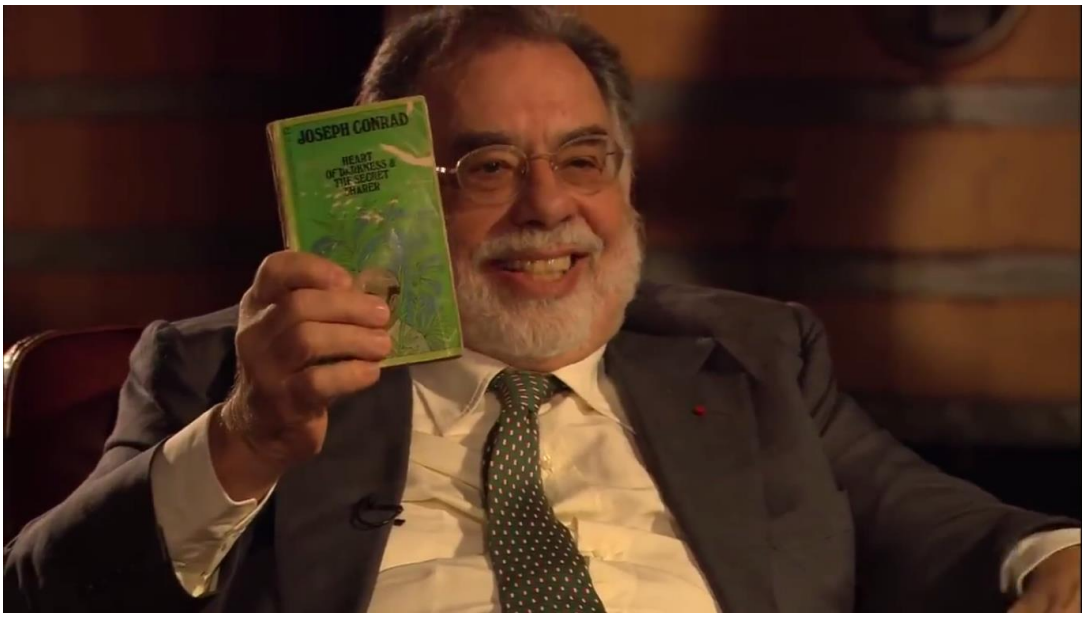
Furthermore, Milius explains, he wanted to create an atmosphere in which there was an opposition between a modern, or in his words "Californian", culture and an ancient setting that

[11] These mythical creatures also occur in the *Divine Comedy*.

resisted this culture. The coming of communism was supposed to be hidden underneath a kind of oriental mysticism that is comparable to that of Samuel Taylor Coleridge in his poem *Kubla Khan*.

> "I wrote that [Willard and the rest of the crew in the PBR] went under a tail of a B-52 and the river widens. There are these beautiful water fowls circling. At the end where it widens, it goes dark. As if entering a hole that is going to hell[12]." (Milius)

Towards the end of the interview, Francis Ford Coppola tells John Milius that he would always make sure to carry a copy of Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* during the actual making of the movie. He then adds that the novella was his bible during the filming process:



Coppola, Francis Ford, and John Milius. "Apocalypse Now - John Milius Interviewed by Francis Ford Coppola." *YouTube*, 16 Nov. 2011, www.youtube.com/watch?v=JZswrVALi2M. Accessed 3 Oct. 2017.

There are two versions of Francis Coppola's *Apocalypse Now*. The first one, which premiered in 1979, misses a total footage of forty-three minutes, later added to the *Redux* version which premiered in 2001. In her article titled "*Apocalypse Now Redux*: *Heart of Darkness* Moves into New Territory", Pamela Demory discusses the importance of the scenes that did not make it into the first version of the motion picture. These introduce various new aspects for the comparison with the script's hypotext *Heart of Darkness*.

[12] Cf. the *Divine Comedy*, when Dante enters the *Inferno*.

The book *Joseph Conrad's Heart of Darkness*, edited by Gene M. Moore, contains various relevant articles for this study. The ninth chapter, titled "Narratological Parallels in Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* and Francis Ford Coppola's *Apocalypse Now*" written by Linda Costanzo Cahir, is the most valuable. In this article the author first presents the contexts of production of both works and then moves on to greater detail.

Elisabeth Bronfen is one of the numerous literary critics that have worked on the comparison between *Heart of Darkness* and *Apocalypse Now*. It is her remarkable approach that makes her work more relevant than others. She specifically deals with the theme of violence, generalizing the works into "War Literature" and "War Film". In her article "*War Literature into War Film: The Aesthetics of Violence and the Violence of Aesthetics*" which can be found in the fifteenth chapter of the *Handbook of Intermediality*, edited by Gabriele Rippl, she gives an elaborate enumeration of the points of fusion in these works. Providing this summary with a rapid history of the contexts of these works, she succeeds to brighten her article with useful background information.

Another relevant article is Louis K. Greiff's essay titled "*Conrad's Ethics and the Margins of Apocalypse Now*", which can be found in the fourth Norton Critical edition of *Heart of Darkness*, edited by Paul B. Armstrong. Greiff offers renewing arguments. He considers the opening and closing soundtrack, provided by Jim Morrison[13], as intermedial references. According to Greiff, Coppola's choice of this song as the entrance and exit of his work signifies the following:

> "The beginning announces itself as the ending, just as in *Heart of Darkness* the initial scene on board the *Nellie* occurs, chronologically, long after the events recounted in Marlow's yard." (Greiff 2006, 485)

A consequence of Coppola's musical choice is that it "*creates an appropriate bridge between the bizarre tale about to unfold and the wider context of modern cultural experience*" (Ibid.).

Greiff then makes the comparison between the protagonists in both works. He labels them as "Soldier" (Marlow in *Heart of Darkness*) and "Errand Boy" (Willard in *Apocalypse Now*). The latter is actually a term used by Willard's antagonist Kurtz. In the film he tells Willard: "*you're an errand boy sent by grocery clerks to collect a bill*" (*Apocalypse Now*). Although Willard

[13] Lead singer of "The Doors"

considers himself as a soldier (He says so just before Kurtz's accusation). As the documentary by Eleanor Coppola already demonstrated, the main characters in these works are far from identical, contrary to their rivals. The moral development over the course of events is missing in *Apocalypse Now*.

The depth that is missing in captain Willard however, is complemented in two other characters which he travels with. Greiff alludes to "Chief" and "Chef" as a "*pair of characters* [that] *constitute the bright face of Conrad's Janus*" (Greiff 2006, 488):

> "Coppola has discovered, in Chief and Chef, an effective means to re-establish the Marlow persona in contemporary American terms – also to demonstrate, through these two men, the exact ingredients of Marlow's ethical craftsmanship: a combination of hard discipline, on one hand, and imaginative artistry on the other." (488)

The two other travel companions of Willard, "Clean" and "Lance" then, are the representations of "*every war's victimized infant*" and the "*Conradian hollowness*" respectively (489). The latter term is a direct reference to *Heart of Darkness* and T.S. Eliot's war poem *The Hollow Men*. Coppola pairs Lance with Kilgore, an army colonel. In accordance with Greiff once again, "*the first hint of this bond is given in the revelation that Lance and Kilgore are Southern Californians who share an identical passion for surfing*" (489). The "Western Man" might only be represented through the characters of Kurtz and Marlow in *Heart of Darkness*, in Coppola's cinematic work he is also mediated through Chief, Chef, Clean and Lance. These characters are as "American" as they can be.

In her article titled "Modernism and Vietnam", Margot Norris investigates for which reason(s) Coppola made a film about the Vietnam-war that eschews historical verisimilitude and reference in favour of what T.S. Eliot called the "mythical method". Her article can be divided in three parts: an explanation of Eliot's "mythical Method" (1), in which way it can be applied to *Apocalypse Now* (2) and Francis Ford Coppola's motivation to do so (3). She explains that:

> "Coppola's choice to construct his film upon Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*, Eliot's *The Waste Land* and other poetry […] seems especially eccentric for the treatment of the Vietnam-war." (Norris, 492)

Conclusively, the film's extended version (*Apocalypse Now Redux*, released in 2001), according to Pamela Demory, introduces a domain of renewal for this research. Besides, the video interview

by Francis Coppola (dir.) of John Milius (scriptwriter) offers an interesting contribution to the study. Connecting references of these two figures distinctively to T.S. Eliot's war poems *Waste Land* and *The Hollow Men* (resp.) will be a first. Even though Norris investigated the proximity of the film to what T.S. Eliot described as the "mythical method" in *The Waste Land*, she did not once mention the screenwriter's intentions and/or name. Finally, a semiotic mediatics approach has not been applied to the intermedial analysis of *Heart of Darkness* and *Apocalypse Now* before. Past studies do not consider both works of art as "equal". From Elleström's point of view, the message of an artistic work should be the main focus and the medium merely background information.

III. Analysis of structural and narratological aspects

3.1 The *Divine Comedy*

Dante's epic poem consists of three parts: *Inferno*, *Purgatory* and *Paradise*. While in the first part Dante is confronted with penance, in the last part he finds salvation. The number three is significant in this work since each part of the epic poem consists of 33 cantos and because of the "terza rima": the three-line rhyme scheme. Dante, the author, writes his epic poem in the first-person narrative. After Dante's introduction, in which he explains his motives to travel into the afterlife, the story starts "in medias res". Before each canto however, Dante recalls the third person narrative to describe the context. *The Divine Comedy* can thus be interpreted as a frame narrative. According to William Franke, Dante:

> "Exploits all the resources of literature-the subtle suggestions of poetic language, the dramatic effect of graphic description, a savant design of narrative structure-in order to enact a religious revelation that occurs in the present tense of the reading of the poem." (Franke, 31)

Furthermore, the critic finds it striking that Dante addresses the reader explicitly multiple times. The first time that the poet does so is in Canto VIII, at the Gate of the City of Dis. This address "*comes in the form of a direct meta-narratological intervention that interrupts the narrative*" (Franke, 42). When Dante realizes that there is a possibility that he might in fact never return, he writes:

> "Reader, do but conceive of my dismay,
> Hearing these dreadful words! It seemed quiet plain
> I nevermore should see the light of day."[14]
>
> (Canto VIII, 94-96)

The professor of comparative literature and religious studies at the Vanderbilt University argues that "*this express involvement of the reader throws into focus a whole new field of reference for the realisation of the narrative's meaning*" (Franke, 42). A similar interruption occurs in Canto IX, when three infernal furies block the entrance of the Gate and threaten to show Gorgon's

[14] Pensa, lettor, se io mi sconfrontai / nel suon de le parole maladette, / ché non credetti ritornarci mai.

head[15]. This would've petrified Dante, causing him to remain in *Inferno* for eternity. Franke adds that:

> "These threats are made to figure the risk also to the reader of remaining fixated upon the literal level of the narrative and consequently failing to penetrate to its deeper doctrinal meaning" (Franke, 42).

Gustave Doré, 1861, engraving, Dante Alighieri's Inferno from the Original by Dante Alighieri and Illustrated with the Designs of Gustave Doré (New York: Cassell Publishing Company, 1890)

Dante, shortly after these threats, writes:

> "O you who have sound intellects,
> look at the doctrine which hides itself
> beneath the veil of the strange verses."[16]
> (Canto IX, 61-63)

[15] In Greek mythology, a "Gorgon" is a female creature who had hair of living, venomous snakes. Her horrifying visage would turn those who beheld her into stone. Medusa is the most common one.
[16] O voi ch'avete li 'ntelleti sani, / mirate la dottrina che s'asconde / sotto 'l velame de li versi strani."

The poet of Florentine descent once again addresses his readers. However, this time the message is rather underlying beneath Virgil's verbal mediation. Dante wants his reader to look beneath "*the veil of the strange verses*" (Ibid.) meaning:

> "The story […] has become particularly riveting and tends to arrest attention upon the visual surface of the narrative, where the furies are described in graphic detail with their blood-flecked female limbs and snaky hair. Only Virgil's naming of them with traditional mythological names […] exerts some measure of control over the hallucinatory visual intensity of this scene. Without Virgil's verbal mediation, Dante's (and the reader's) gaze would be liable to remain fixated, [causing them to be] petrified forever. By literally blocking the protagonist's further progress through Hell, [the furies] serve as figures for blockage of the hermeneutic process of interpretation on the part of the reader." (Franke, 43-44)

In other words, Dante wants his readers to pass beyond the epic poem's literal sense. The interpreter has to cover his eyes and look for a meaning beyond the literal. Because underneath, the allegorical meaning is hiding. Just as Virgil had covered Dante's eyes in the preceding three lines:

> "Thus cried the master; nor to my hands alone
> Would trust, but turned me himself, and urgently
> Pressed my palms close and covered them with his own."[17]
> (Canto IX, 58-60)

Virgil, in accordance with Franke, does this in a manner "*that concretely imitates the author's intrusive intervention into the text*" (Franke, 44). Dante's call for an allegorical interpretation of his text "*warns the reader not to be absorbed by what simply appears in its immediacy on the narrative's surface*" (Franke, 45). Virgil's action within the narrative is thus comparable with Dante's interpretive action upon the narrative. In literary terms, Dante uses two narrative techniques to realize his objective. The first being a "diegesis": the abruptly breaking off of a narration. The second literary technique that Dante implements here is "appellation": the suddenly

[17] Così disse 'l maestro; ed elli stessi / mi volse, e non si tenne a le mie mani / che con le sue ancor non mi chiudessi.

switching to the discourse of address. Combining these two techniques, "*the reader's involvement in the story on its literal level is interrupted*" (Franke, 45). Conclusively, Franke adds:

> "The address to the reader turns the reader away from the literal surface of the narrative and demands reflection searching rather for its allegorical meaning. The prompting of the readers to look beyond the letter of the text and to find a hidden, allegorical meaning becomes explicit." (Franke, 45)

3.2 *Heart of Darkness*

Just as Dante does in the *Divine Comedy*, Conrad chooses a first-person narrative for his novella. The novelist implements a frame narrative. Both the background story and Marlow's actual adventure begin "in medias res". In agreement with Watt, the structure of *Heart of Darkness* is:

> "Very largely based on naturally symbolic actions and objects: the plot-a journey, a death, and a return; the characters-Kurtz, or the helmsman; the incidents-Marlow's interview for the job, or the grove death; the material objects-the rivets, the staves of the pilgrims, the heads on the posts; the scene-the Thames and the Congo; the atmosphere-light and darkness. In all these elements the symbolic meaning of objects and events is established through the expansion of their inherent properties, and they have a structural, rather than a merely illustrative, function." (Watt, 364)

The novella is set during the colonial period. A narratological analysis of the setting reveals that instead of a topos, the Congo Free State should rather be considered a "topographical hotspot". From a semiotic point of view, a journey into the Congo River is metaphorical for the journey into Marlow's self: the curving of the river stands for the curving road of Marlow's journey. In literary terms, this would be an example of "analogue characterization". Conrad also deliberately uses the Congo River to make a comparison with the river of Thames. According to Guerard's interpretation of the novella, Conrad does so to be able to allude to the Romans. On account of this analogy, "*early Marlow establishes certain political values*" (Guerard, 334). For this reason, the river-motif in *Heart of Darkness* gains even more relevance. Another remarkable comment that Guerard makes, is that:

> "The narrative advances and withdraws as in a succession of long dark waves borne by an incoming tide. The waves encroach fairly evenly on the shore, and presently a few more feet of sand have been won. But an occasional wave thrusts up unexpectedly, much farther than the others: even as far, say, as Kurtz and his Inner Station. […] Thus, the movement of the story is sinuously progressive, with much incremental repetition." (Guerard, 333)

Joseph Conrad often implements a "bipolar axis", which is an important characteristic of modernist literature. The author plays with opposites such as "light" and "dark"; and "urban" and "rural":

> "Black shapes crouched, lay, sat between the trees, […] half coming out, half effaced within the dim light […]." (Conrad, 17)

As confirmed in Greiff's comparative analysis of the characters, Marlow is surrounded by rather "flat characters" who do not develop. The novella being structured as a frame narrative, there are two narrators. The first one is a friend of Marlow's. This unnamed narrator is extra- and hetero-diegetic. The second narrator is Marlow himself. As he exists in the storyworld, this narrator is considered intradiegetic. Marlow tells a story in which his own self is the protagonist, which makes him a homo- and autodiegetic narrator. Whenever the author informs the reader of Kurtz's thoughts, the role of the focaliser shifts from Marlow to Kurtz. In these cases, the narrator is still Marlow however.

Finally, Kurtz's metonymical characterization is an important narratological aspect as well. As Conrad describes himself, "*all Europe contributed in the making of Kurtz*" (Conrad, 19). Thus, this character is indirectly characterized by means of his ancestry. It is a metaphor for every colonizing European country. This aspect will be further explained in: *4. Analysis of thematic aspects and motifs*.

3.3 *Apocalypse Now*

The journey of Willard in Coppola's film is structured as an odyssey: the hero is first presented to the spectator(s). He then learns about a quest and its necessity. These first two phases, in *Apocalypse Now*, are when Willard is in the hotel room in Saigon and when he is escorted to the airport respectively. Together, they form an appropriate introduction to the adventure that is about to follow. Captain Willard's quest actually begins when he finds himself among the PBR-crew, on his way to Cambodia, where the Nung-river ends. From that moment on, the actual journey-part of the story begins. Willard, together with the members of the PBR-crew, will now have to overcome various obstacles: Kilgore's air cavalry, a confrontation with a wild tiger in the jungle and then the commercial show of the "Playmates of the Year". Afterwards, the cruel sides of the protagonists are depicted through a massacre-scene. The members pass by a boat and the suspicious Chief insists to perform a search. He then orders Chef to board the boat and examine the products. There are four natives on the boat. When a female reaches to a basket while Chef fulfils his order, Clean and Lance massacre all four of these citizens.

On the night that follows this event, the crew arrives at a war scene in search of diesel fuel. None of the soldiers seem to have an idea who their commanding officer is. The setting is darkened. Eventually they do not succeed in finding fuel and so the crew decides to pick up ammo and continue their journey. Shortly after, the crew is surprised by an attack by the natives. This causes the loss of Clean. In the *Redux* version of the film, this action is suited by the crew's encounter of the French settlers. These are remaining French officers and their families, who decided to stay in Vietnam after its declaration of independence. In this scene, Coppola's choice is illustrative of the postcolonial aspects in *Heart of Darkness*. After dinner with these imperialists, the crew decides to stay overnight. Once they continue their journey into "*the mouth of the Nung river*" (*Apocalypse Now*), the PBR-crew loses Chief as a result of another attack by the natives. Throughout these events, Willard's curiousness for Kurtz grows exponentially. This can be derived from his interior monologues:

> "Part of me was afraid of what I would find and what I would do when I got there. I knew the risks, or I imagined I knew. But the thing I felt the most, much stronger than fear, was the desire to confront him." (*Apocalypse Now*)

The third part of the film is when the crew, now only left with Chef, Lance and Willard, reach the camp of Kurtz:

Francis Ford Coppola, 1978, film, *Apocalypse Now Redux*
(Santa Monica: Miramax Films, 2001)

At their first visit, they do not succeed in finding Kurtz. However, they are shocked by the horrific circumstances. Willard's second visit to the camp causes him to be imprisoned and Chef to be decapitated. The latter's head is delivered to the captive Willard. Subsequently, the protagonist is held captive in a wooden cage and then a cave. When he is finally set free by Kurtz, Willard is being taken care of by the natives. During a ceremony of the natives, the now free Willard sneaks into Kurtz's room and strikes him with an axe. When he leaves, Willard is looked upon as the new leader of the camp. The natives bow for him and consider him as their new leader. However, Willard decides to not fall for the same temptations as Kurtz did and leaves the camp together with Lance.

As mentioned before, Marlow in *Heart of Darkness* was surrounded by flat characters. This is not the case for captain Willard's crew. In accordance with Greiff's comparative analysis of the characters, Chief and Chef embody an ethical craftsmanship. More specifically, these two characters are "*a combination of hard discipline, on one hand, and imaginative artistry on the other*" (Greiff, 488). The literary critic labels the other two members of the PBR-crew (Clean and Lance) as "*every war's victimized infant*" (489). All four of these crewmembers are developing throughout the story and are thus, narratologically speaking, round characters. The river-motif is present in Coppola's film as well: the curving of the Nung-river is metaphorical for Willard's inner journey. In the scenes which are lacking the presence of the protagonist, the focaliser is a character other than Willard. There are, in film, more frame changes than in literature (Herman & Vervaeck, 70). This could be a possible explanation for the difference in focalisation. One of the advantages of cinema is the audibility of the narrator's voice. In film, the narrator is more easily

recognized: captain Willard is an intra-, homo- and autodiegetic narrator. A retrospective effect can be created by voicing over a scene. In the opening scene for instance, the spectator listens to the voice-over of a future Willard as he comments on his past actions.

IV. Analysis of thematic aspects and motifs

4.1 Descent into darkness

Dante's journey into hell is one with various horrifying obstacles. The introduction to Canto I announces that Dante (the character) "*has strayed from the right road and is lost in a dark wood*" (Dante, 71). As he tries to escape, Dante is confronted by three obstacles: "*a gambolling Leopard,* […] *a fierce Lion and* […] *a ravenous She-Wolf*" (Dante, 71). The hell, as presented in Dante's epic poem, consists of nine circles. The second to fifth of these, together, are named "Incontinence". The weight of the sins committed in those levels is far from equal to that of the other levels, "Violence" (7th Circle) and "Fraud" (8th and 9th Circles). The "Vestibule", which can be interpreted as an entrance to the actual Circles of Hell, is assigned to "The Indifferent". This is where Dante, together with Virgil as his "*master, leader and lord*" (Dante, 71) finds himself in the first Canto.

According to Slayers, the "*dark wood*" can be interpreted as:

> "[…] the image of Sin or Error-not so much of any specific act of sin or intellectual perversion as of that spiritual condition called "hardness of heart", in which sinfulness has so taken possession of the soul as to render it capable of turning to God, or even knowing which way to turn." (Slayers, 75)

In Canto II, Dante and Virgil are still on their way to the "Vestibule". This place is referred to simultaneously as "Hell-gate" and "Upper Hell". The last verse of the second Canto is "*I entered on that savage path and forward*" (Dante, 82). Just as in *Heart of Darkness* and *Apocalypse Now,* the protagonist finds himself in an unknown forest. The further they advance in their journey, the darker and the more savage their path becomes.

Once the poets (Dante and Virgil) reach the Upper Hell in Canto III, the setting and the author's phrasing become more obscure and sinister:

> "This scum, who'd never lived, now fled about
> Naked and goaded, for a swarm of fierce
> Hornets and wasps stung all the wretched rout

Until their cheeks ran blood, whose slubbered smears,
Mingled with brine, around their footsteps fell,
Where loathy worms licked up their blood and tears."[18]

(Canto III, 64-69)

Subsequently, they find themselves "*on the edge of the actual Pit of Hell*" (Dante, 91). The first Circle is referred to as the "Limbo". This is where "*the Unbaptized*" and "*the Virtuous Pagans*" belong (Dante, 91). Dante, having entered the second Circle, is now in the first of the Circles of "Incontinence":

> "This and the next three circles are devoted to those who sinned less by deliberate choice of evil than by failure to make resolute choice of the good. Here are the sins of self-indulgence, weakness of will, and easy yielding to appetite-the Sins of the Leopard." (Slayers, 101)

The "*judge of Hell*" (Dante, 97), Minos, assigns "*the souls to their appropriate places of torment*". (Ibid.) In the Circles of "Incontinence", they can either join the "Lustful" (2nd Circle), the "Gluttonous" (3rd Circle), the "Avaricious and Prodigal" (4th Circle) or the "Wrathful" (5th Circle). The greater the sin, the darker the punishment. The sixth Circle is that of the "City of Dis". The gates of this city separate the Circles of "Incontinence" from that of "Violence" (7th Circle, where "Heretics" belong): "*The Poets enter the City and find themselves in a great plain covered with the burning tombs of the Heretics*" (Dante, 123). The seventh Circle is divided in three "Rings": the "Phlegethon" (the "fiery" third chief river of *Inferno)*, the "Wood of Suicides" and the "Abominable Sand". In comparison to the "dark wood", where Dante's journey began, the "Wood of Suicides" is more lugubrious. Consider, for example, the appearance of "bleeding trees":

> "The sin of Suicide is […] an insult to the body; so, here, the shades are deprived of even the semblance of the human form. As they refused life, they remain fixed in a

[18] Questi sciaurati, che mai non fur vivi, / erano ignudi e stimolati molto / da mosconi e da vespe ch'eran ivi. // Elle rigavan lor di sangue il volto, / che, mischiato di lagrime, a' lor piedi / da fastidiosi vermi era ricolto.

dead and withered sterility." (Slayers, 153)

The third Ring is set in "*a desert of burning sand, under a rain of perpetual fire*" (Dante, 156). The poets continue their journey until their arrival at "*the edge of a boiling, red stream*." (Ibid.) The river motif is abundantly present in *Inferno*[19]:

"Nothing we've seen deserves thy wonder more
Than this small stream which, flowing centreward,
Puts out all flames above its either shore."[20]

(Canto XIV, 88-90)

In Canto XVI, Dante and Virgil stand above the "*dark-dyed water*" (Dante, 171). Virgil signals Geryon[21]:

"I was wearing a rope girdle, the same wherein
I once, indeed, had nursed a fleeting hope
To catch the leopard with the painted skin;

Now, at my guide's command, I loosed the rope
And took it off, and held it out to him
All neatly wound together and coiled up.

He took it and leaning right-hand from the brim
Of the Pit, he tossed it over the precipice,
So that it dropped well out from the rocky rim.

"Surely some strange and novel thing will rise,"
Said I to myself, to answer with this strange sign
Which thus my master's following with his eyes."[22]

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[19] This motif has been previously dealt with in *3.2 Heart of Darkness* and *3.3 Apocalypse Now*.
[20] "cosa non fu da li tuoi occhi scorta / notabile com' è 'l presente rio, / che sovra sé tutte fiammelle ammorta."
[21] In Greek mythology, a monster who was killed by Hercules. Usually presented as having a human form with three heads. Dante gave him "*a shape compounded of three natures-human, bestial and reptile.*" (Slayers, 178)
[22] Io avea una corda intorno cinta, / e con essa pensai alcuna volta / prender la lonza a la pelle dipinta. // Poscia ch'io l'ebbi tutta da me sciolta, / sì come 'l duca m'avea comandato, / porsila a lui aggroppata e ravvolta. // Ond'ei si volse inver' lo destro lato, / e alquanto di lunge da la sponda / la

(Canto XVI, 106-117)

Geryon answers this call in Canto XVII: "*The Poets mount on Geryon's shoulders and are carried down over the Great Barrier to the Eighth Circle*" (Slayers, 174). As will be introduced in *4.2 Political views*, the latter is divided into ten trenches (bowges): Panders and seducers (I), Flatterers (II), Simoniacs (III), Sorcerers (IV), Barrators (V), Hypocrites (VI), Thieves (VII), Counsellors of Fraud (VIII), Sowers of discord (IX) and Falsifiers (X). Together with the ninth Circle, which is meant for Traitors, these form the Circles of Fraud. As Dante advances his expedition into hell's utmost altitude, the sanctions he encounters become more and more wicked. In Canto XIX, for instance, the poets are in the Third Bowge of Malbowges (Simoniacs). The sinners are described as "*plunged head-downwards in holes of rock, with flames playing upon their feet*" (Dante, 188). Once descended into the Tenth Bowge (Falsifiers), the poets have to reach the Well at the bottom of the abyss to enter the ninth Circle. The sinners, in this Circle, are divided into four groups: Traitors to their Kindred (I), Traitors to their Country (II), Traitors to their Guests (III) and Traitors to their Lords (IV). In Canto XXXIV, the final Canto in *Inferno*, the Poets are confronted by Dis (Satan). To get past him, Dante and Virgil climb downwards on his body into Mount Purgatory.

With "darkness" being one of the main motifs of Conrad's modernist novella, the author has used various literary techniques to create a gloomy atmosphere. Ian Watt, for example, describes Conrad's use of impressionism:

> "Mist or haze is a very persistent image in Conrad. […] In *Heart of Darkness* the fugitive nature and indefinite contours of haze are given a special significance by the primary narrator; he warns us that Marlow's tale will be not centred on, but surrounded by, its meaning; and this meaning will be only as fitfully and tenuously visible as a hitherto unnoticed presence of dust particles and water vapour in a space that normally looks dark and void." (Watt, 350)

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gittò giuso in quell' alto burrato. // "E' pur convien che novità risponda", / dicea fra me medesmo, al novo cenno / che 'l maestro con l'occhio sì seconda.

Marlow's journey begins at sea. There is a constant aura of mysteriousness. Once he reaches the forest, his impressions are rather pessimistic. In his interior monologues, there is a sense of "not belonging" to this unfamiliar, darkened environment:

> "Black shapes crouched, lay, sat between the trees, leaning against the trunks, clinging to the earth, half coming out, half effaced within the dim light, in all the attitudes of pain, abandonment, and despair. […] They were dying slowly-it was very clear" (Conrad, 17).

This sense of not being affiliated with a setting, according to Watt, is another meaningful element:

> "*Heart of Darkness* embodies more thoroughly than any previous fiction the posture of uncertainty and doubt; one of Marlow's functions is to represent how much a man cannot know; and he assumes that reality is essentially private and individual." (Watt, 355)

On top of these two narrative devices, Conrad's visual descriptions render the setting as even more obscure:

> "Paths, paths, everywhere; a stamped-in network of paths spreading over the empty land, through long grass, through burnt grass, through thickets, down and up chilly ravines, up and down stony hills ablaze with heat; and a solitude, nobody, not a hut." (Conrad, 19)

Death seems to constantly surround Marlow as if it were a character accompanying him on his journey. His own thoughts and emotions are vulnerable because Marlow is affected by his surroundings. Throughout the novella, a dark ambience is omnipresent and its proximity seems to be gradually growing:

> "There is a taint of death […]. It makes me miserable and sick like biting something rotten would do. Temperament, I suppose." (Conrad, 27)

Marlow is about to penetrate "*deeper and deeper into the heart of darkness*" (Conrad, 35). The reader is simultaneously experiencing the horrors, because of "*the protagonist's consciousness and the delay in his decoding of it*" (Watt, 357). Conclusively, the meaning of the descent into darkness in the novella is ambiguous. Not only does the setting get darker in its literal meaning, but figuratively too. As Marlow continues his journey, his inner-state darkens concurrently.

In the opening scene of *Apocalypse Now*, captain Willard is found in a dark hotel room in Saigon. There is a desperate air around him. Reflecting Willard's state of mind, the setting is chosen wisely. The protagonist seems to be "stuck" in the present and is not able to "escape" his deterministic fate. The call of a higher order is necessary for him to liberate himself. In the interview of John Milius by Francis Coppola, the screenwriter discusses the theme of jungle, which inspired him the most while reading *Heart of Darkness*-at the age of seventeen. He makes the following analogy in the interview:

> "One can compare the jungle to the dark. Both are "forces" that one has to give himself to. Being afraid of the jungle is as simple as being afraid of the dark. What an afraid person does in the jungle is similar to what he would do in the dark: he subjects himself." (Milius)

This is why, the deeper Willard and the PBR-crew proceed into the Nung-river, the more frightful the film setting becomes.

In *Heart of Darkness*, Conrad chooses a narrative frame for the retrospect-effect. Milius creates a similar effect by implementing interior monologues. This allows for captain Willard to give comments on the events after they have occurred. An example is the scene where Willard is escorted to the airport. Right before his arrival, he comments: "*I was going to the worst place in the world and I didn't know it yet*" (*Apocalypse Now*). This prepares the spectator for the terrifying road that the protagonist is about to go into. The jungle is darkness and vice versa. Just as in the novella, Willard and his crew have to penetrate *"deeper and deeper into the heart of darkness"* (Conrad, 35), because in the centre of the dark jungle is where Kurtz resides. The latter, in Milius's screenplay, has eventually submitted himself to the force of the jungle (and thus the darkness). He has "*become part of that*" force (Milius). Therefore, reaching colonel Walter E. Kurtz in the film is equal to reaching the ultimate darkness.

Coppola's scenery is illustrative of this progression. At the crew's arrival at the camp, the place is crowded with Kurtz's "Montagnard army". There are remainders of death all over the setting:

Francis Ford Coppola, 1978, film, *Apocalypse Now Redux*
(Santa Monica: Miramax Films, 2001)

At first, the remaining members of the crew (Willard, Chef and Lance) only get a glimpse of the camp. Willard's request to speak with colonel Walter E. Kurtz is denied as he is absent at that moment. Willard orders Chef to stay in the boat. He will now enter the camp together with Lance and try to find the colonel. Chef is ordered to call in the airstrike if Willard and Lance should not return in time. Shortly after however, Willard is captured by Kurtz's "children":

Francis Ford Coppola, 1978, film, *Apocalypse Now Redux*
(Santa Monica: Miramax Films, 2001)

Willard is then brought to Kurtz, which will be their first encounter. The characters meet in a dim-lighted surrounding, where Willard has finally reached the "heart" of the jungle: colonel

Walter E. Kurtz. Together with Coppola's choice of a darkened setting for metaphorical purposes, Milius's screenplay raises the spectator's awareness. In the scene where Willard is transported to Kurtz, another retrospective comment is made by Willard in his interior monologue: "*It smelled like slow death in there. Malaria, nightmares. This was the end of the river alright*" (*Apocalypse Now*).

Francis Ford Coppola, 1978, film, *Apocalypse Now Redux*
(Santa Monica: Miramax Films, 2001)

As mentioned in the 'methodology' section, Király's semiotic approach to intermediality expects more alertness from the spectator: "*The changed role of the spectator consists of 'scanning' and interpreting the signs and symbols it contains*" (Király, 201). The "signs and symbols" that can be derived from these chronological scenes constitute the director's means of gradually dimming the light of the settings. According to Milius, the underlying idea is to signal the protagonist's arrival in the "heart" of the jungle. The character Kurtz, in *Apocalypse Now*, is the representation of submission to the jungle and thus the darkness.

4.2 Political views

The second thematic aspect that will be discussed in this study, are the political views. There are various passages in the *Divine Comedy* in which members of the Guelph and Ghibelline parties are summoned in the *Inferno*. Dante was born into Guelph heritage. After the Guelphs were divided into two (Whites and Blacks), Dante became a member of the White Guelphs. The appearance of following characters illustrates the political insights of Dante's *Divine Comedy*:

Filippo Argenti is Dante's political counterpart. He tries to attack Dante in Canto VIII:

> "Have at **Filippo Argenti**!" they were bawling;
> "Loo! Loo!" The shade of the fierce Florentine
> Turned on himself, biting with his teeth and mauling.
>
> There left we him, as doth this tale of mine;
> For on my ears there smote a wailing cry,
> And I craned forward, eager to divine
>
> Its meaning. "See, my son! It now draws nigh,"
> Said my good lord, "the city named of Dis,
> With its sad citizens, its great company."[23]
>
> (Canto VIII, 61-69)

As introduced in *1.3.1 The Divine Comedy by Dante Alighieri*, Dante confronts Cavalcante dei Cavalcanti and Farinata, two acclaimed Guelph and Ghibelline figures (resp.), in Canto X:

> "Come, come, what art thou doing? Turn round," he said;
> "That's **Farinata**-look! He's risen to sight,
> And thou canst view him all, from waist to head."

[23] Tutti gridavano: "A Filippo Argenti!"; / e 'l fiorentino spirito bizarro / in sé medesmo si volvea co' denti. // Quivi il lasciammo, che più non ne narro; / ma ne l'orecchie mi percosse un duolo, / per ch'io avante l'occhio intento sbarro. // Lo buon maestro disse: Omai, figliuolo, / s'appressa la città c'ha nome Dite, / coi gravi cittadin col grande stuolo.

Already my eyes were fixed on his; upright
He had lifted him, strong-breasted, stony-fronted,
Seeming to hold all Hell in deep despite;

And my good guide, with ready hands undaunted
Thrusting me toward him through the tombs apace,
Said: “In thy speech precision is what’s wanted.”

I reached the vault’s foot, and he scanned my face
A little while, and then said, with an air
Almost contemptuous: “What’s thy name and race?”

Being anxious to obey, I did not care
To make a mystery, but told all out;
He raised his brows a trifle, saying: “They were

Foes to me always, stubborn, fierce to flout
Me and my house and party; I was quick
To chase them, twice I put them to the rout.”

“Quite true; and by that same arithmetic,”
Said I, “they rallied all round and came back twice;
Your side, it seems, have not yet learnt the trick.”

Just then, close by him, I saw slowly rice
Another shadow, visible down to the chin;
It had got to its knees, I think. It moved its eyes

Round about me, as though it sought to win
Sight of some person in my company;
At last, when all such hope lay quenched within,

It wept: “If thy grand art has made thee free
To walk at large in this blind prison of pain,
Where is my son? Why comes he not with thee?”[24]

---

[24] Ed el mi disse: “Volgiti! Che fai? / Vedi là Farinata che s’è dritto: / de la cintola in sù tutto ‘l vedrai”. // Io avea già il mio viso nel suo fitto; / ed el s’ergea col petto e con la fronte / com’ avesse

(Canto X, 31-60)

The "s*hadow*" Dante talks about is Cavalcante dei Cavalcanti (Ibid.). At least, this is what is implied by Dante's introduction to Canto X:

> "Dante is hailed by Farinata from one of the burning tombs and goes to speak to him. Their conversation is interrupted by Cavalcante dei Cavalcanti with a question about his son." (Dante, 128)

Dante does not hold back from judging members of his own party. Alessio Interminei was a White Guelph. In *Inferno*, Dante criticizes his "*slick manners*" (Davis, 3) in Canto XVIII. The Eighth Circle "*is divided into ten trenches (bowges) containing those who committed Malicious Frauds upon mankind in general*" (Dante, 181). Dante encounters the Guelph flatterer in the second bowge:

> "Searching its depths, I there made out a smeared
> Head-whether clerk or lay was hard to tell,
> It was so thickly plastered with the merd.
>
> "Why stand there gloating?" he began to yell,
> "Why stare at me more than the other scum?"
> "Because," said I, "if I remember well,
>
> I've seen thy face, dry-headed, up at home;
> Thou art **Alessio Interminei**, late
> Of Lucca-so, more eagerly than some,

---

l'inferno a gran dispitto. // E l'animose man del duca e pronte / mi pinser tra le sepulture a lui, / dicendo: "Le parole tue sien conte". // Com' io al piè de la sua tomba fui, / guardommi un poco, e poi, quasi sdegnoso, mi dimandò: "Chi fuor li maggior tui?". // Io ch'era d'ubidir disideroso, / non gliel celai, ma tutto gliel' apersi; / ond'ei levò le ciglia un poco in suso; // poi disse: "Fieramente furo avversi / a me e a miei primi e a mia parte, / sì che per due fïate li dispersi". // "S'ei fur cacciati, ei tornar d'ogne parte", / rispuos' io lui, "l'una e l'altra fïata; / ma i vostri non appreser ben quell' arte". // Allor surse a la vista scoperchiata / un'ombra, lungo questa, infino al mento: / credo che s'era in ginocchie levata. // Dintorno mi guardò, come talento / avesse di veder s'altri era meco; / e poi che 'l sospecciar fu tutto spento, // piangendo disse: "Se per questo cieco / carcere vai per altezza d'ingegno, / mio figlio ov' è? E perché non è teco?".

I look on thee." He beat his pumpkin pate,
And said: The flatteries I spewed out apace
With tireless tongue have sunk me to this state."[25]

(Canto XVIII, 115-126)

Another Guelph leader is Ugolino della Gherardesca. He was known and imprisoned for cannibalistic practices. This figure is mentioned in Canto XXXIII:

"First learn our names: I was **Count Ugolin**,
And he, Archbishop Roger; hearken well
Wherefore I use him thus, this neighbour of mine.

That once I trusted him, and that I fell
Into the snare that he contrived somehow.
And so was seized and slain, I need to tell.

What thou canst not have learned, I'll tell thee now:
How bitter cruel my death was; hear, and then,
If he has done me injury, judge thou.

A narrow loophole in the dreadful den
Called 'Famine' after me, and which, meseems,
Shall be a dungeon yet for many men,

Had filtered through to me the pallid gleams
Of many changing moons, before one night
Unveiled the future to my haunted dreams."[26]

---

[25] E mentre ch'io là giù con 'locchio cerco, / vidi un col capo sì di merda lordo, / che non parëa s'era laico o cherco. // Quei mi sgridò: "Perché se' tu sì gordo / di riguardar più me che li altri brutti?". / E io a lui: "Perché, se ben ricordo, // già t'ho veduto coi capelli asciutti, / e se' Alessio Interminei de Lucca: / però t'adocchio più che li altri turri". // Ed elli allor, battendosi la zucca: / "Qua giù m'hanno sommerso le lusinghe / ond' io non ebbi mai la lingua stucca".

[26] Tu dei saper ch'i' fui conte Ugolino, / e questi è l'arcivescovo Ruggieri: / or ti dirò perché i son tal vicino. // Che per l'effeto de' suo' mai pensieri, / fidandomi di lui, io fossi preso / e poscia morto, dir non è mestieri; // però quel che non puoi avere inteso, / cioè come la morte mia fu cruda, / udirai, e saprai s'e' m'ha offeso. // Breve pertugio dentro de la Muda, / la qual per me ha 'l titol de la fame, /

(Canto XXXIII, 13-27)

A postcolonial interpretation of Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* reveals the author's sceptic attitude towards the nineteenth century imperialism and colonialism. The reason why Conrad never explicitly talks about Brussels is because he wishes to be able to criticize imperialism in general. The choice of the Belgian king Leopold II's colonization of Congo as a general representation of the imperialism of that time could then be explained as follows:

> "Conrad scrupulously recorded the difference between the disgraces of Belgian and British attitudes, but he could only imagine the world carved up into one or another western sphere of dominion." (Said, 425)

However, if we were to take into account Guerard's autobiographical analysis, the author's choice could be explained by his own experiences of his personal trip to the Congo Free State.

The political impact of Francis Ford Coppola's film was enormous. As stated in *1.2. Introduction to the literary and cinematic works*, the scenes were filmed during the ongoing Vietnam-war. The director deals with the maddening psychological influence of war. While the main focus of comparable works in the Vietnam-context is the war, Coppola prefers a farce-like representation. By implementing a playful scenery, Coppola does away with the stereotypical "G.I. Joe" and chooses to focus on a rather vulnerable protagonist, i.e. an eye-witness to the Americanization of the Vietnam-war. The first obstacle that Willard and the PBR-crew have to overcome is breaking away from Kilgore–a man who is willing to strike an air force and contaminate an area with napalm, only for his own amusement. It is more important for him and his crew to surf properly, than any higher order. The second time Coppola utilizes such a satirical setting, is the show of the "Playmates of the Year". The PBR-crew coincidentally come across this show and are offered free entrance. In the *Redux* version of the film, the characters "Chef" and "Lance" succeed in spending time alone with these women. For both men it is a dream come true, which is rather ironic, given their circumstances.

Not only the Americans are criticized. In the *Redux*, the crew encounters a group of French settlers. Throughout Vietnam's colonization and declaration of independence, this group decides not to go back home and they still prefer the name "Indochina". After losing "Clean", the PBR-crew is invited for dinner by these Frenchmen. It is during this scene that Willard asks "Hubert

---

e che conviene ancor ch'altrui si chiuda, // m'avea mostrato per lo suo forame / più lune già, quand' io feci 'l mal sonno / che del futuro mi squarciò 'l velame.

de Marais" "*how long* [they] *can possibly stay* [there]" (*Apocalypse Now*), to which he, in an irritated way, answers:

> "We stay forever. […] I mean, this is our home, captain. […] You don't understand our mentality, the French Officer mentality. At first, we lose in WWII. I don't say that you Americans win, but we lose. […] In Dien Bien Phu, we lose. In Nigeria, we lose. […] But here, we don't lose. This piece of earth, we keep it! We will never lose it, never!" (*Apocalypse Now*)

The imperialistic mentality of white supremacists is presented through this conversation. Although Willard, as an American, does not seem to agree with this ideology, he is guilty of identical practices. His realisation only comes when he meets colonel Kurtz, however. After Willard is locked up by Kurtz for an attempt at assassination, the latter reads following newspaper articles out loud for him:

> Time magazine, The weekly news magazine, September 22nd, 1967, volume 90, number 12.
>
> "The war on the horizon. The American people might find it hard to believe that the US is winning the war in Vietnam. Nevertheless, one of the most exhaustive inquiries into the status of the conflict yet compiled offers considerable evidence that the weight of the US power, two and a half years after the big build-up began, is beginning to make itself felt."
>
> […]
>
> No date, Time magazine.
>
> "Sir Robert Thompson, who led the victory over communist guerrillas in Malaya, is now a Rand Corporation consultant, recently returned to Vietnam to sound out the situation to president Nixon. He told the president last week that things felt much better and smelled much better over there."
>
> (*Apocalypse Now*)

Not only does Kurtz convince Willard of the unjust goings-on in Vietnam in this scene – Coppola also confronts the spectator with the unreliability of journalism. These articles depict an inexistent optimistic Vietnam-war.

4.3 Existential journeys

The beginning and ending of Dante's adventure into the *Inferno*, suggest that Dante's journey is in fact of the existential kind. His work begins with:

> "Midway this way of life we're bound upon,
> I woke to find myself in a dark wood,
> Where the right road was wholly lost and gone."[27]
>
> (Canto I, 1-3)

Two noticeable elements of this epic poem are that Dante is in the middle of his life and so in his mid-thirties, and that the Italian poet's "*right road was wholly lost and gone*" (Ibid.). The "right path" that Dante writes about is most likely the one that is suggested by the bible. Furthermore, towards the end of his *Inferno*, Dante describes the devil as a "powerless and weak" being. Rather than an individual being tempted by an evil force (as is suggested by the bible), Dante puts the responsibility for committing a human sin on the individual himself.

During his visit to the Congo Free State, Marlow not only discovers the geographical area that is under the rule of the Belgian King Leopold, but also a "better part" of himself. His adventure constitutes a self-discovery and therefore Marlow is not only confronted with his new surroundings, which he alludes to as "dark", but also with his own blurred thoughts and feelings. His journey can thus be interpreted as a symbolic journey, which in the end helps him to comprehend his own consciousness better. Marlow is confronted with eye-opening life lessons as a result of the horrors that he is forced to encounter during his journey. There is thus a certain ambiguity attached to Marlow's journey, which is in fact typical of Modernist literature. The fact that the characters "*penetrated deeper and deeper into the heart of darkness*" (Conrad, 35), implies that they are not lost by accident, but are deliberately lost. Specifically, it is by losing his way that Marlow can eventually find his true self.

The opening scene of Coppola's cinematic work already suggests the desperate state in which captain Willard finds himself. He lays around in a hotel room in Saigon for an unspecified duration of time, waiting for a military mission. That Willard "*said hardly a word to* [his] w*ife until*

[27] Nel mezzo del cammin di nostra vita / mi ritrovai per una selva oscura, / ché la diritta via era smarrita.

[he] *said yes to a divorce*" implies that he does not want to be back at home because the war has become his life and a new home (*Apocalypse Now*). The following scene also confirms this:

> "Roxanne[28]: Will you go back after the war, to America?
> Cpt. Willard: No.
> Roxanne: Then you are like us. Your home is here.
> Do you know why you can never step into the same river twice?
> Cpt. Willard: Yes. Because it is always moving."

A scene of himself standing naked in his bedroom then fades in, where Willard breaks a mirror by hitting it with his fist. Just before he is woken up in the next morning by two of his fellow soldiers who will escort him to the airfield, Willard's interior monologue goes as follows: "*Everyone gets everything he wants. I wanted a mission. And for my sins, they gave me one*" (*Apocalypse Now*). Willard finds himself on a mission in which he has to find colonel Walter E. Kurtz, whose command he has to terminate. However, during his journey, he eventually understands this "mad" man's motives. After experiencing the frivolous ways in which the "G.I. Joes" at the end of the day "Americanize" the Vietnam-war, Willard too becomes sceptic of the war.

It is this scepticism that makes colonel Kurtz go mad in the first place, here exemplified one of his audio recordings that is presented to Willard during the briefing of his mission:

> "But we must kill them. We must incinerate them, pig after pig, cow after cow, village after village, army after army. And they call me an assassin. What do you call it when the assassins accuse the assassin? They lie. They lie and we have to be merciful for those who lie. Those nabobs, I hate them. I do hate them." (*Apocalypse Now)*

[28] A widow among a group of French settlers who decided to stay in "Indochina" after its colonisation by the French government

4.4 Quests

Another central motif in all three works are the quests. Carol Forman describes the quest motif of a mythical hero as follows:

> "The hero becomes separated from the people and/or the place of his birth, becomes aware of a need or problem, takes a dangerous journey to an unknown place to win either a prize or knowledge to help him resolve the problem, and returns to save the people." (Forman, 25)

This definition is applicable to all three works in this study since not only Dante is separated from "*the people and/or the place of his birth*" (Ibid.), but Marlow and Willard as well. All three of these protagonists take "*a dangerous journey to an unknown place*" (Ibid.); the afterlife, the Congo Free State and the Nung River between Vietnam and Cambodia respectively.

According to Forman, Dante is:

> "[…] a questing pilgrim, lost and eager to find the way to salvation and to Heaven. He becomes separated, lost in the dark wood, and journeys through the entire universe. […] he brings back the understanding and the inspiration that make it possible for him to be the author of the *Divine Comedy* and to show people the way to heaven." (Forman, 25)

Marlow clearly states the goal of his quest himself in the beginning of his frame narrative. There are rumours that Kurtz, the chief of the Inner station, has fallen ill. Marlow has to find the man, and if possible, replace him. According to Ian Watt, the plot of *Heart of Darkness*:

> "[…] contains some very untypical elements of adventure and melodrama, but it is nevertheless based on a simple symbolic quest, in which the various forms of "darkness" which Marlow encounters have as many possible meanings as the blue flower of Novalis." (Watt, 363)

Just as in Conrad's novella, Coppola chooses to introduce the quest of his protagonist, captain Willard, in the beginning of his story. After his stay in a hotel room in Saigon, Willard is visited by two fellow soldiers who escort him to the airfield. At first suspicious, Willard asks what the charges are. To Willard's surprise, one of the soldiers then answers that there are no charges. He then explains that Willard has orders to report to COMSEC Intelligence at Nha Trang. Shortly after Willard's arrival at the airport, his interior monologue follows:

> "I was going to the worst place in the world and I didn't even know it yet. Weeks away and hundreds of miles up a river that snaked through the war like a main circuit cable, plugged straight into Kurtz. It was no accident that I got to be the caretaker of colonel Walter E. Kurtz's memory any more than being back in Saigon was an accident." (*Apocalypse Now*)

Once Willard is seated at the dinner table for lunch, this interior monologue, which can be interpreted as a retrospect, becomes clearer. He is asked whether he has heard news of colonel Walter E. Kurtz, to which Willard answers: "*Yes, sir, I've heard the name*" (*Apocalypse Now*). Conclusively, Willard's quest is to:

> "proceed up the Nung River in a Navy patrol boat, pick up colonel Kurtz's path at Nu Mung Ba, follow it, learn what [he] can along the way. When [he] find[s] the colonel, [Willard has to] infiltrate his team by whatever means available and terminate the colonel's command." (*Apocalypse Now*)

4.5 Guidance and salvation

4.5.1 Guides

In the beginning of the epic poem, Dante finds himself lost in the "dark wood". He then encounters Virgil, who guides him through *Inferno*. Dante explicitly refers to Virgil as his "*master, leader and lord*" (Dante, 71). It is clear that without Virgil's guidance, he would have been lost. This matter is to be taken allegorically since Virgil was an ancient Roman poet and Dante is an admirer of his literary heritage. To such a degree that Dante would be a disoriented wanderer-poet without his acknowledgement of Virgil's lyricism. However, Virgil is not the only figure who guides Dante in the three-part epic poem. As introduced in *1.3.1 The Divine Comedy by Dante Alighieri*, from the last four cantos in *Purgatory* until the end of *Paradise*, Beatrice becomes Dante's guide. Dante, in the end of Canto XXVIII, writes:

> "Then to my poets standing in the rear
> I wheeled right round, and by their smiles saw plain
> That this last gloss had not escaped their ear,
>
> So turned to face that lady bright again."[29]
> (Canto XXVIII, 145-149)

Beatrice is another figure whom Dante admires as the symbol of "divine grace". Although Beatrice and Dante (the character) do not meet in the *Divine Comedy* until the end of *Purgatory*, the appearance of Beatrice is alluded to in the introduction of Canto I:

> "[…] but the only course at present left open to Dante is to trust himself to Virgil, who will guide him by a longer way, leading through Hell and Purgatory. From there, a worthier spirit will lead him on to see the blessed souls in Paradise." (Dante, 71)

The reason why Virgil cannot guide Dante into *Paradise*, is because he is in fact irreligious: Virgil was born in the year seventy B.C. Thus, it was impossible for him to be a Christian. Beatrice might be the guide into *Paradise* because she represents a "beatific vision", which, according to Rahner, is defined as follows:

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[29] Io mi rivolsi 'n dietro allora tutto / a' miei poeti, e vidi che con riso / udito avëan l'ultimo costrutto; // poi a la bella donna torna' il viso.

> "In theological language "beatific vision" […] means perfect salvation in its entirety, though verbally it particularly stresses the intellectual component in the single whole which constitutes salvation. This is the full and definitive experience of the direct self-communication of God himself to the individual human being when by free grace God's will has become absolute and attained full realization." (Rahner, 78)

Dante's selection of the second guide should once again be understood as an allegory for "beatific vision" because the name "Beatrice" is derived from this biblical term. Another possible reason for Dante's choice of guide is his personal affection for Beatrice Portinari, a Florentine woman whom Dante was believed to have fallen in love with (cf. la bella donna). In the beginning of the next Canto, Dante is now led by a woman:

> "As sings an amorous lady to elate her,
> The music of her voice went singing on:
> *Beati quorum tecta sunt peccata*!"[30]
> (Canto XXIX, 1-3)

Following verses in the same canto reveal that this woman is actually Beatrice:

> "The beauteous pageantry flamed forth on high
> Far brighter than the brightest moon could shine
> At her mid-month in a clear midnight sky."[31]
> (Canto XXIX, 52-54)

According to Slayers, this should be interpreted as follows:

> "Readers who have followed with interest Dante's use […] of *natural*, as opposed to *conventional*, symbols for the purpose of his allegory, now have an opportunity to see what he could, if he thought fit, do with the other method, and how he uses the one as a contrast and foil to the other. For the great focal point of the *Commedia* –

[30] Cantando come donna innamorata, / continüò col fin di sue parole: / Beati quorum tecta sunt peccata!
[31] Di sopra fiammeggiava il bello arnsese / più chiaro assai che luna per sereno / di mezza notte nel suo mezzo mese.

> the reunion of Dante with Beatrice – is deliberately set, as though upon a stage, between two great pageants or masques, in which the characters are not *symbolic personages* but *allegorical personifications* in the traditional manner, embodying abstract ideas." (Slayers, 302)

Marlow, in Conrad's novella, is not necessarily "guided" or led by another character. However, his curiousness and desire to eventually meet Kurtz make him eager to keep track of his goal. His objective is not only to find the man, who appears to be ill, but also to replace him. There is a constant atmosphere of mysticism around Kurtz. Marlow's limited information about the man is based on hear-say. Marlow is constantly confronted with this mysterious character by several conversations he has with strangers:

> "One day he remarked without lifting his head, "In the interior you will no doubt meet Mr. Kurtz". On my asking who Mr. Kurtz was, he said he was a first-class agent, and seeing my disappointment at this information he added slowly, laying down his pen, "He is a very remarkable person." Further questions elicited from him that Mr. Kurtz was at present in charge of a trading post, a very important one, in the true ivory-country, at the very bottom of there. Sends in as much ivory as all the others put together…" (Conrad, 19)

Marlow learns about Kurtz and his accomplishments by talking with others. The more he learns about him, the greater his desire becomes to actually meet this character in person. Conclusively, Marlow's curiosity can be considered as a guide in the story.

In the opening scene of Coppola's film, captain Willard is desperately waiting for a new briefing. Just as in *Heart of Darkness*, the protagonist is not necessarily "led" by another character. In the motion picture, Willard's mission is to find colonel Kurtz and "*terminate his command with extreme prejudice*" (*Apocalypse Now*). Although Willard, throughout his adventure, is accompanied by Chief, Chef, Clean and Lance, these characters have no knowledge of Willard's intentions. He is on his own. Within Willard, there is a growing curiosity and admiration for Kurtz. Eventually, these motives lead him to understand the insane circumstances of war underlying Kurtz's "madness".

These can thus be considered as Willard's guides in a journey to understand Kurtz's thoughts. At the end of the film, Willard is left with two choices: either he fulfils his mission and kills Kurtz, or he ignores his orders and joins Kurtz's "*Montagnard army*" (*Apocalypse Now*). Should Willard

have chosen to join Kurtz, his own curiosity and admiration could indeed be seen as his guiding factors. However, he chooses the first option instead and so his U.S. army orders are here considered as his one true guide. From this point of view, the scene at the dinner table, where Willard is briefed about his mission after being escorted to the airfield, gains significant value.

4.5.2 Salvation

As introduced in *4.3 Existential journeys*, Dante, who finds himself in the mid-thirties of his life, wanders in the "dark wood":

> "Midway this way of life we're bound upon,
> I woke to find myself in a dark wood,
> Where the right road was wholly lost and gone."
>
> (Canto I, 1-3)

He admits that his "straightforward path" had been lost (Ibid.). This implies that Dante has not been a good Christian. This interpretation is confirmed by following rhymes in the same Canto:

> "How I got into it I cannot say,
> Because I was so heavy and full of sleep
> When first I stumbled from the narrow way;"[32]
>
> (Canto I, 10-12)

Having abandoned the "true way" of God, Dante now seeks salvation. He cannot do so on his own however, thus his guide Virgil is introduced. Dante experiences the horrors of *Inferno* through his own consciousness, which, in literary terms, makes of him the focaliser. He eventually reaches the utmost level of the *Inferno* and enters *Purgatory*. When Dante is guided by Beatrice into *Paradise,* he gradually reaches the state of salvation. Indeed, his idea about the afterlife changes drastically because of his eye-opening travel experience.

In the novella, the theme of "salvation" is presented less explicitly. As mentioned before, Marlow's curiosity for his counterpart Kurtz grows throughout his journey. This journey is life-changing for him because the circumstances he encounters are far from ideal. He becomes critical of his surroundings, while Kurtz, through the mind of Marlow (being the focaliser in *Heart of Darkness*), is presented as follows:

> "The original Kurtz had been educated partly in England, and - as he was good enough to say himself — his sympathies were in the right place. His mother was half-

[32] Io non so ben ridir com' i' v'intrai, / tant' era pien di sonno a quel punto / che la verace via abbandonai.

> English, his father was half-French. All Europe contributed to the making of Kurtz […].” (Conrad, 19)

Note here that if “all Europe” is responsible for the making of Kurtz, then “all Europe” should also be held responsible for the horrendous and shocking circumstances in the Congo Free State. In following passage, Kurtz utters his last words:

> “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!” (Conrad, 69)

Kurtz’s words, from a post-colonial perspective, should be interpreted as the realization and self-condemnation of his inhumane deeds. At the moment of his death, Kurtz finds salvation by finally letting go of his guilt.

As for the protagonist of Coppola’s film, Willard’s path towards salvation is presented gradually. Every new piece of information the protagonist obtains about colonel Walter E. Kurtz gives new insights into the latter’s mindset. Willard collects this data from voice recordings and classified dossiers. While reading one of those, he admits in his interior monologue:

> “At first, I thought they handed me the wrong dossier. I couldn’t believe they wanted this man dead. Third-generation West Point, top of his class, Korea, Airborne, about one thousand decorations, et cetera, et cetera. I heard his voice on the tape and it really put the hook in me, but I couldn’t connect up that voice with this man. Like they said, he had an impressive career. Maybe too impressive. I mean, perfect. He was being groomed for one of the top slots in the corporation. General, Chief of Staff, anything. In 1964, he returned from a tour with advisory command in Vietnam and things started to slip. His report to the Joint Chiefs of Staff and Lyndon Johnson was restricted. Seems they didn’t dig what he had to tell them. During the next few months, he made three requests for transfer to Airborne training, Fort Benning, Georgia, and was finally accepted. Airborne? He was thirty-eight years old. Why […] would he do that? 1966, joins Special Forces, returns Vietnam.” (*Apocalypse Now*)

These inner thoughts clarify the fact that Willard admires Kurtz’s achievements. At this point, however, he does not yet completely understand the circumstances that drove colonel Kurtz to the state of “insanity”. Willard’s comprehension only comes after experiencing a similar consternation to Kurtz’s. Gradually, he realizes the commercialization of the Vietnam war and becomes aware of the fact that the war could have already ended if the American government had operated differently. For Willard, the moment of salvation comes, not only upon accomplishment of his

classified mission, but also when he finally brings an end to the "*Montagnard army*" of Kurtz and his inhuman practices (*Apocalypse Now*).

4.6 The intertwine between good and evil in the main characters

In Dante's *Divine* Comedy, the opposites good and evil are presented through the fourteenth century Christian context. Only the good can enter *Paradise*, whereas the evil souls are destined to be tortured in one of the circles of the *Inferno*. As stated in *4.1 Descent into darkness*, Dante the protagonist, admits that he has strayed from the righteous path in Canto I. However, the course of the epic poem proves that there is still "good" within this character. As is the case for the main characters in *Heart of Darkness* and *Apocalypse Now*. As introduced in *3. Analysis of structural and narratological aspects*, Joseph Conrad, the modernist author, often plays with bipolar axes. In *Heart of Darkness*, the contrast between good and evil is ever-present through Marlow's mindset. In the next passage, for instance, Marlow survives an attack by the natives and imagines a scenario, where Kurtz has died. Conrad, on Marlow's behalf, then writes:

> "I didn't say to myself, 'Now I will never see him,' or 'Now I will never shake him by the hand' but, 'Now I will never hear him.' The man presented himself as a voice. Not of course that I did not connect him with some sort of action. Hadn't I been told in all the tones of jealousy and admiration that he had collected, bartered, swindled, or stolen more ivory than all the other agents together. That was not the point. The point was in his being a gifted creature and that of all his gifts the one that stood out pre-eminently, 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." (Conrad, 47)

There is both curiosity and admiration in Marlow's view of Kurtz in this passage. After everything that Marlow has heard about this figure, he has developed a certain sense of interest in the man – not necessarily in seeing and meeting, but rather in hearing him talk. Marlow also admires Kurtz's "*ability to talk, his words-the gift of expression*" (Ibid.). It is remarkable how, in *Apocalypse Now*, Willard develops a similar curiosity and admiration for Kurtz.

A very significant fragment in *Apocalypse Now* is the introduction of Kurtz. Willard here first hears about his mission. The general, after playing a tape[33] in the room, tells him about Kurtz's

[33] The tape that is played in the room is a recording of Kurtz.

successful military past. Then he moves on to the actual reason of this mission's necessity. The general's explanation for Kurtz "going insane" is as follows:

> "Well, you see, Willard, in this war, things get confused out there. Power, ideals, the old morality, and practical military necessity. But out there with these natives, it must be a temptation to be God. Because there's a conflict in every human heart between the rational and the irrational, **between good and evil**. And good does not always triumph. Sometimes the dark side overcomes what Lincoln called, "The better angels of our nature." Every man has a breaking point. You and I have them. Walt Kurtz has reached his, and very obviously he has gone insane." (*Apocalypse Now*)

In Coppola's film, Roxanne, the French widow, in the scene where the two characters lay in bed and smoke opium, tells captain Willard: "*There are two of you, can't you see? One that kills and one that loves*" (*Apocalypse Now*). Willard's curiosity and admiration for colonel Kurtz, in *Apocalypse Now*, can be illustrated by following interior monologue:

> "Kurtz got off the boat. He split from the […] program. How did that happen? What did he see here that first tour? Thirty-eight […] years old. If you joined the Green Berets, there was no way you'd ever get above colonel. Kurtz knew what he was giving up. And the more I read and began to understand, the more I admired him. His family and friends couldn't understand it, and they couldn't talk him out of it." (*Apocalypse Now*)

His comprehension, then, can be illustrated by the next monologue that is presented to the spectator. Right after the show of the "Playmates of the Year", Willard is critical of how the American government has spent unnecessary time and money in a commercial show:

> "No wonder Kurtz [neglected his orders]. The war was being run by a bunch of four-star clowns who were going to end up giving the whole circus away." (*Apocalypse Now*)

The intertwine between good and evil is presented as a religious theme in Dante's *Divine Comedy*. In *Heart of Darkness* and *Apocalypse Now*, Conrad and Coppola choose for a rather complex representation of this theme. Both good and evil become rather ambiguous terms. In the end, neither Marlow or Willard consider their counterpart Kurtz as the embodiment of pure evil. They rather blame the circumstances and consequences; of imperialism and the supremacist war

mentality respectively. Additionally, these protagonists are not entirely "good" either. Marlow is guilty of racial exclusion and Willard, relentlessly, murders innocent natives. Conclusively; within the main characters of the *Divine Comedy*, *Heart of Darkness* and *Apocalypse Now*; evil resides in good and vice versa.

V. Conclusion

5.1 Synthesis

This study concerns the analogous aspects in Dante's *Divine Comedy*; Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*; and Coppola's *Apocalypse Now*. Theories of intertextuality and intermediality are introduced. In past studies, theories of critics such as Gérard Genette and Julia Kristeva have proven their relevance. However, these theories are, in the present day, considered as outdated. A semiotic approach to intermediality, as introduced by Lars Elleström, has proven to offer more. Just as in Ryan Marie-Laure's theory, the spectator becomes more valuable. Additionally, the production context of an artistic work becomes a primordial element.

Resemblances are found between the drawings of Gustave Doré in Dante's *Inferno* and Coppola's scenery in *Apocalypse Now*. This study is exemplary of how similar ideas can be mediated through literature and cinema (resp.). Aside from the structural details of the three works, their narratological features have been investigated. This comparison has confirmed that cinema, narratologically speaking, allows for more focalisation than in literature. Past studies have been consulted for the intertextual and -medial analyses.

An interview with John Milius, the screenwriter of *Apocalypse Now*, has introduced originalities. This thesis confirms that the *Divine Comedy*, *Heart of Darkness* and *Apocalypse Now* belong to the genre of an epic. The result of the first research question in *2.2 Hypotheses*, whether *Heart of Darkness* can be considered the "hypotext" of the *Divine Comedy*, is positive. Although more evidence is necessary. The series of the intermedial references by T.S. Eliot, John Milius and Francis Ford Coppola; have added weight to this study.

Thematic aspects and motifs have been discussed. A striking finding is how the descent into darkness is presented to the spectator. In Dante's case, the circles of *Inferno* are an important factor. Conrad's choice of words, which darkens gradually, demonstrate this theme in *Heart of Darkness*. As for Coppola, the dimmed settings and shadows symbolize the descent into darkness. Because of the three different spatiotemporal settings and socio-political contexts, it was interesting to compare the political messages that are mediated in the texts and film. The literary and cinematic techniques that have been used for the realisation of these two themes, have shed light on the hypotheses.

Furthermore, the quest-motif, which resulted in the existential journeys of Dante, Marlow and Willard, has proven that the perception of truth of these protagonists have alternated. The next step was to compare how the authors created these processes throughout the adventures of their

main characters. Additionally, it was interesting to compare the guidance of these characters and whether they reach an inner-state of salvation in the end. Dante, in the end of the *Divine Comedy*, now finds himself in *Paradise*. In Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*, this theme is presented rather implicitly. As for Willard, in *Apocalypse Now*, he reaches this state when he brings an end to Kurtz's life and thus fulfils his mission. In the final stage of this research, the intertwine between good and evil in these characters (and their counterparts) has been analysed.

5.2 Possible research in the future

There is room for more investigation. Several doors, for possible examination, have been opened. Research should take as its starting point to illuminate. Therefore, a study should be endless. A possible terrain could be the introduction of two other literary works: the epic poem *Odyssey* by Homer and the poem *Kubla Khan* by Samuel Taylor Coleridge. Milius, in his interview with Coppola, admits that he was inspired by these works. The epic journey in *Odyssey* and oriental mysticism in *Kubla Khan*, allow for a comparison with the *Divine Comedy*, *Heart of Darkness* and *Apocalypse Now*.

A second possible terrain of extension is the elaboration of the descent into darkness theme. The introduction of other works can reveal the literary and cinematic techniques for the creation of a doom-like effect, which is built gradually. Yet another possibility, is to include more politically engaged works. This study has proven that a socio-political context offers more than merely background information. A comparative analysis of these contexts and the mechanisms implemented by the authors, will lead to interesting findings. In brief, there are several yet undiscovered paths waiting to be explored.

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