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91473



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## Level 3 English, 2015

### 91473 Respond critically to specified aspect(s) of studied visual or oral text(s), supported by evidence

2.00 p.m. Thursday 12 November 2015  
Credits: Four

Achievement	Achievement with Merit	Achievement with Excellence
Respond critically to specified aspect(s) of studied visual or oral text(s), supported by evidence.	Respond critically and convincingly to specified aspect(s) of studied visual or oral text(s), supported by evidence.	Respond critically and perceptively to specified aspect(s) of studied visual or oral text(s), supported by evidence.

Check that the National Student Number (NSN) on your admission slip is the same as the number at the top of this page.

**Write ONE essay in this booklet.**

Check that this booklet has pages 2–12 in the correct order and that none of these pages is blank.

**YOU MUST HAND THIS BOOKLET TO THE SUPERVISOR AT THE END OF THE EXAMINATION.**

Excellence

TOTAL

E8

ASSESSOR'S USE ONLY

Your essay should be AT LEAST 400 words long, and show accurate use and control of writing conventions.

In your essay, discuss the extent to which you agree with your chosen statement. Respond critically to the statement by making a close analysis of the text(s).

Begin your visual or oral text(s) essay here:

P.M 4

Statement number:

9

A director is often successful when they take the audience away from comfort and security. In the film *Apocalypse Now* by Francis Coppola this is achieved effectively. By gutting any sense of security, and thrusting the audience into the chaotic environment that Coppola creates, he makes his ideas and messages all the more effective. This comfortless and chaotic environment is created by a variety of means including brutal, senseless violence, and clever use of film techniques.

Right from the opening scene of *Apocalypse Now* the viewer glimpses into the chaos of the war and its effects. Willard, the main character is filmed close-up and he is cross faded with a napalm strike while he calmly smokes a cigarette to rock music. He later thrashes about in drunken hysteria while the music intensifies showing how the war has affected him. In this scene Coppola forebodes what is to come as the viewer, through the course of the film, is subjected to many things that take the viewer far from their comfort-zone. Coppola conveys the madness and lawlessness through violence. Firstly, in a dramatic scene the Americans assault a beach in Vietnam, held by villagers. The village is bombarded with rocket fire from the helicopters and people - men, women and children alike - are cut down by the gun fire. This is a

crazy display of violence and there the first scene of violence that Coppola shows in the film. Violence continues and now this reveals to the viewer, the <sup>lawless</sup> nature of this environment and the most unsettling effect that this has. A particularly striking example is when Clean: the young member of Willard's PBR boat crew, guns down a boat of villagers when a girl reaches for a puppy. This impulsive act was senseless and really epitomises the madness of the setting. Willard in narration notes the hypocrisy of his task in consideration of this setting - being he says that charging some one with murder there was like "handing out a speeding ticket at the Indy 500," which is clear acknowledgement of how disorderly the war is being conducted. Scenery is also used by Coppola to take the viewer from their comfort zone and give background to the violence that is seen. Flames, downed helicopters and cargo planes and many corpses are shown throughout the journey upriver. These things all ~~not~~ truly reflect the title in depicting a war setting that is seemingly apocalyptic.

Another, and I would argue even more effective tool to take the viewer from comfort and security, is the use of film and cinematic techniques. Darkness permeates the film. This darkness is in a way, isolating and its use is ~~so~~ strongly exemplified in the scene when ~~the~~ the PBR boat approach a bridge outpost under assault by Vietnam guerrillas. As the boat approaches the pitch black night is crashing and not even once is an enemy ~~is~~ seen, only heard, <sup>with gunshots</sup> which ~~feels~~ creates a sense of immense discomfort in the viewer. This is also a strong example of Coppola's use of bright colours. Through the visuals of bright flames and flashes, combined with the darkness, this creates a hallucinogenic effect which further connects to what the characters are doing on screen, ~~and~~ placing the viewer in their shoes as they take

in response to the setting<sup>6</sup>  
drugs.<sup>7</sup> Colours are mostly saturated in the film which again is discomfiting. Another use of colours to convey the madness is coloured smoke in the form of ~~stool~~ purple yellow or orange type smoke grenades used by crew member Lance in his drugged out state. An especially important film technique that is linked in purpose with darkness is fog. Fog surrounds the boat throughout the journey and creates uncertainty. The viewer, placed in the boat with the crew cannot see what lies ahead or where the next attack could come from. This is clearly very discomfiting and is used very well to convey the danger and uncertainty by Coppola.

This also allows the viewer to understand what the characters are subjected to in film. Each member faces some sort of breakdown or withdrawal which shows what the lack of security does turning from fear to madness. The character chef upon seeing a tiger has a breakdown crying "never get out of the boat" - this is a poignant symbolic scene as it emphasises how staying on the boat is the only thing that reflects any semblance of security to the characters ~~even~~ even then, the boat provides little safety as Clean and the chef are killed by gunfire and spear volleys. To cope with the madness surrounding them both Lance and Chef who previously display fear to what happens around them withdraw into drugs to cope. Character Lance even paints his face which possibly symbolises this as a method of him facing the chaos around him. In narration Willard notes that "Kurtz left the boat, he split from the whole film programme;" and so from this in a way provides motivation and purpose for Willard who has had his fair experience of war and the effects

of this lack of security in seeing out the experience of Kurtz, who has in his mind descended completely into insanity and succumbed to the war which the viewer has been plunged into themselves.

Through Coppola's use of the aforementioned features, he makes his messages easily accessible to the viewer. As the film is ~~bas~~ inspired by Joseph Conrad's Heart of Darkness the main themes & resonate in a different setting - applied to the current Vietnam war that was relevant to the time that the movie was produced. In Heart of Darkness Conrad is critical of British colonialism in Africa - particularly to the exploited Africans. This same overall message of the damaging effects of imperialism and war is easily recognisable in Apocalypse Now by removing the sense of security and putting the viewer out of their comfort zone so they can recognise the serious issues which are timeless. It is not enough to provide a simple action flick like other Vietnam movies but to engage the viewer in his ~~anti-war~~ message by the chaotic environment so Coppola's message is forceful and compelling. Again this is achieved by placing the audience in the gun boat themselves so they can witness the brutal horrors, the lawlessness and the sense of uncertainty that is created in such a war-torn environment. Coppola is especially critical of how the war has in Vietnam has been carried out, and the cost this has to civilians and soldiers alike. Coppola criticises the hypocrisy of leaders and certain values which promote an image that <sup>the</sup> war is any way orderly. The cost of the war is revealed by the deaths ~~and~~ of civilians and the lack of a solid morality in the soldiers. Coppola through the character Kurtz makes a strange strong note of the American leaders hypocrisy saying that they are not allowed to "write f\*\*k on airplanes because it is obscene" when those same planes are used to drop bombs on enemy

territory, this contrasting the violence of war and hypocrisy. Coppola also criticises the war not only in the physical damage but the cost to morality in Walter Kurtz monologue. Kurtz praises the ruthlessness of the Viet Cong and their ability to commit cruel acts and that traditional morality applied to war is useless and it is this "judgement that defeats us" as clinging to these non-violent values are damaging to the soul. Here Coppola is likely trying to convey that having to do such things that are necessary in war are clearly bad for society and war altogether should be avoided at all costs, especially not for imperialistic ambitions.

To conclude, in *Apocalypse Now*, Francis Coppola through his techniques takes the audience out of their comfort zone in order to successfully communicate his over-arching theme of anti-war and anti-imperialism. By doing this his message is much more understandable by placing the viewer in the thick of the horror and madness.

Excellence exemplar for 91473 2015			Total score	E8
Q	Grade score	Annotation		
9	E8	Tight structure Generous use of techniques woven into the essay to support comments Shows engagement with the text - details and evidence provided Strong comments on themes/ideas		