

Practicing Passage  
& Scene Analysis to  
Compare and Contrast  
*Heart of Darkness* and  
*Apocalypse Now*  
(15 points)

Due: Tuesday or Wednesday  
(as soon as you have it done)

1. **Identify** the mood created in the first four minutes of the film (**use** strong adjectives): \_\_\_\_\_

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2. **List** the images, sounds, camera angles, lighting and other cinematic devices used in the first four minutes **and explain** how each helps create the mood identified above: \_\_\_\_\_

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3. When Willard says, "Saigon, shit. I'm still only in Saigon," his use of the word "still" gives us a hint about his feelings toward military duty in Vietnam. **Identify** two possible reasons he might use the word "still." **Write a question** you would need answered in order to understand which of these two reasons is the correct one. \_\_\_\_\_

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**Consider** these lines of Willard's: "Every time I think I'm gonna wake up back 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."

4. Why does he say "Every time"? Every time *what*? **Speculate** about what he's referring to with the words "Every time." \_\_\_\_\_

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5. **Consider** the remainder of the passage above and what Willard says about his wife and about "Charlie." **Think** of how his state of mind is affecting his priorities. Then **answer** this question: What's the likely reason that being home after his *first* tour of duty was *worse* than what he's experiencing *now*? \_\_\_\_\_

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6. **List** specific movements, facial expressions, gestures and sounds you see or hear Willard make **and explain** what each suggests about his state of mind: \_\_\_\_\_

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Now read the attached passage from *Heart of Darkness* and answer the following questions:

7. **Consider** the underlined portion starting with "I have wrestled with death." **Identify** the mood created in this passage (**use** strong adjectives): \_\_\_\_\_

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**List** the words or phrases in the passage that help to create this mood: \_\_\_\_\_

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**Explain** how this mood is either similar to or different from that of the opening scene of *Apocalypse Now*: \_\_\_\_\_

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8. **Read** the bracketed portion of the passage and **paraphrase** what Marlow discovered about himself: \_\_\_\_\_

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9. At this point you don't know much about Willard's experiences or his character, so you don't know if what he's experiencing is the same as the "wrestling with death" that Marlow experienced. So, **list questions** you will need answered in order to be able to figure out whether the two characters' experiences are similar: \_\_\_\_\_

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10. **Read** the circled portion of the passage. **List** words and phrases that indicate how Marlow felt about the people back in Europe. Then **sum up** his feeling in your own word or phrase: \_\_\_\_\_

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11. **Explain** how Willard's attitude toward people back home is similar to Marlow's. **List** words and phrases from the film that provide evidence of this similarity: \_\_\_\_\_

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And then they very nearly buried me.

However, as you see, I did not go to join Kurtz there and then. I did not. I remained to dream the nightmare out to the end and to show my loyalty to Kurtz once more. Destiny. My destiny! Droll thing life is—that mysterious arrangement of merciless logic for a futile purpose. The most you can hope from it is some knowledge of yourself—that comes too late—a crop of unextinguishable regrets. I have wrestled with death. It is the most unexciting contest you can imagine. It takes place in an impalpable greyness with nothing underfoot, with nothing around, without spectators, without clamour, without glory, without the great desire of victory, without the great fear of defeat, in a sickly atmosphere of tepid scepticism, without much belief in your own right, and still less in that of your adversary. If such is the form of ultimate wisdom then life is a greater riddle than some of us think it to be. I was within a hair's-breadth of the last opportunity for pronouncement, and I found with humiliation that probably I would have nothing to say. This is the reason why I affirm that Kurtz was a remarkable man. He had something to say. He said it. Since I had peeped over the edge myself, I understand better the meaning of his stare that could not see the flame of the candle but was wide enough to embrace the whole universe, piercing enough to penetrate all the hearts that beat in the darkness. He had summed up—he had judged. 'The horror!' He was a remarkable man. After all, this was the expression of some sort of belief; it had candour, it had conviction, it had a vibrating note of revolt in its whisper, it had the appalling face of a glimpsed truth—the strange commingling of desire and hate. And it is not my own extremity I remember best—a vision of greyness without form filled with physical pain and a careless contempt for the evanescence of all things—even of this pain itself. No. It is his extremity that I seem to have lived through. True, he had made that last stride, he had stepped over the edge, while I had been permitted to draw back my hesitating foot. And perhaps in this is the whole difference; perhaps all the wisdom, and all truth,

and all sincerity, are just compressed into that inappreciable moment of time in which we step over the threshold of the invisible. Perhaps. I like to think my summing-up would not have been a word of careless contempt. Better his cry—much better. It was an affirmation, a moral victory paid for by innumerable defeats, by abominable terrors, by abominable satisfactions. But it was a victory. That is why I have remained loyal to Kurtz to the last, and even beyond, when a long time after I heard once more not his own voice but the echo of his magnificent eloquence thrown to me from a soul as translucently pure as a cliff of crystal.

"No, they did not bury me, though there is a period of time which I remember mistily, with a shuddering wonder, like a passage through some inconceivable world that had no hope in it and no desire. I found myself back in the sepulchral city resenting the sight of people hurrying through the streets to filch a little money from each other, to devour their infamous cookery, to gulp their unwholesome beer, to dream their insignificant and silly dreams. They trespassed upon my thoughts. They were intruders whose knowledge of life was to me an irritating pretence because I felt so sure they could not possibly know the things I knew. Their bearing, which was simply the bearing of commonplace individuals going about their business in the assurance of perfect safety, was offensive to me like the outrageous flauntings of folly in the face of a danger it is unable to comprehend. I had no particular desire to enlighten them, but I had some difficulty in restraining myself from laughing in their faces so full of stupid importance. I daresay I was not very well at that time. I tottered about the streets—there were various affairs to settle—grinning bitterly at perfectly respectable persons. I admit my behaviour was inexcusable, but then my temperature was seldom normal in these days. My dear aunt's endeavours to nurse up my strength' seemed altogether beside the mark. It was not my strength that wanted nursing, it was my imagination that wanted soothing.