

Fictions of Power: “My Movie is Not a Movie”

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IN 1991, DIRECTOR FAX BAHR AND WRITERS BAHR AND GEORGE Hickenlooper completed the film version of Eleanor Coppola’s documentary footage of her husband’s professional and personal trials during the making of *Apocalypse Now*. The resulting documentary, *Hearts of Darkness: A Filmmaker’s Apocalypse*, charts Francis Ford Coppola’s attempts to adapt Joseph Conrad’s *Heart of Darkness* to the context of American responses to the Vietnam War. In 1993, HBO presented a mockumentary called *Hearts of Hot Shots! Part Deux: A Filmmaker’s Apology*, written, produced, and directed by Thomas Grane and Victor Davis. The parody, which functioned as marketing for the cable network’s viewings of *Hot Shots! Part Deux* begins with a caption introducing the context of the film:

In February 1989, Director Jim Abrahams traveled to the remote jungles of Los Angeles to shoot *Hot Shots! Part Deux*. Based loosely on Bram Stoker’s short story “Part Deux,” the film is set during a hostage crisis in the Middle East.

“Making of *Hot Shots! Part Deux*” is a clever and provocative parody of *Hearts of Darkness: A Filmmaker’s Apocalypse*. Abrahams’ crew sends up Coppola’s tortured process of “making art,” as it is ardently represented in *Hearts of Darkness*. For example, just after the introductory caption cited above (where we notice the reference to Stoker, a.k.a. “Stroker,” a sardonic allusion to Coppola’s *Bram Stoker’s Dracula*, which had come out the year before Abrahams’ parody was made), we hear the voiceover sung to the tune of the Doors’ “The End”: “This is the start.

We're making art. This is the start. Brando didn't get the part. And our director has no heart." The mockumentary immediately establishes the purpose of the parody: to deflate not only the auteurist pretensions of Coppola's grand gestures in the making of *Apocalypse Now* but also Eleanor Coppola's paradoxically self-protecting and codependent gesture in the filming of the filming of *Apocalypse Now*. In *Hearts of Darkness*, Eleanor Coppola takes on the role of Conrad, observing Marlow and documenting Coppola's "metaphor for a journey into self." In the mockumentary, Abrahams' young child Jamie types her story out: "The film Daddy is making is a metaphor for the journey into self. It's scary to watch someone confront their [sic] fears . . . Daddy is not the first to tackle his fears." With the help of montage footage, Jamie catalogues the grand failures of D. W. Griffith and David O. Selznick, who are said to have failed magnificently when they took on the *Part Deux* project (just as Orson Welles famously failed to bring Conrad's novella to life when he, Welles, first came to Hollywood in the late 1930s): "Daddy wanted Brando, and he sulks over news reports. For the first time he feels the pressure of a project that has defeated many a film director."

I want to illuminate the auteurist project of *Hearts of Darkness: A Filmmaker's Apocalypse* by focusing attention on its solipsism and its tapping into a set of attitudes about the grand failure narrative that translate complex representation into glorified romanticism. I also want to suggest the particular virtues of a mockumentary that, as a result of its very status as ephemeral marketing material, is in a perfect position to deflate the romantic, if fascinating, self-indulgence of the documentary that is its springboard. All mockumentaries mean to deflate, but *A Filmmaker's Apology*, because of its role as advertising, its position as fringe or marginalized commentary, is in a better position to puncture the high romanticism of Coppola's documentary. My point is not to elevate the Abrahams' mockumentary but to use it as an instrument for critiquing the masculine auteurism exemplified in *Hearts of Darkness*, an ideology about the power of the film director that works in concert with culturally inscribed notions of romantic individualism to cloud readings of the documentary. Jim Abrahams' mockumentary lays bare, in very immediate ways, the parameters and limits of Francis Ford Coppola's deeply auteurist project: its endorsement of the idea of grand failure; its low priority on community and affiliation; and its proliferation of stereotypes about, and construction

of truth as, masculine heroism. Further, Abrahams' mockumentary invites a critique of attitudes toward art and filmmaking rampant in contemporary culture that blur in potentially problematic ways the lines that divide fiction from reality. However little academic attention is paid to the mockumentary genre, *A Filmmaker's Apology* solicits an understanding of the power of auteurism, suggesting the potential of even such fringe popular culture as Abrahams' mockumentary to bring elements of critique to a level of self-conscious analysis.

Jedediah Leland on Charles Foster Kane: "He was always trying to prove something."

When Orson Welles referred to *Citizen Kane* as a "failure story" (Mulvey 81), he articulated what would become the frame for all auteur films: the grand failure; great men whose thirst for personal or political power causes them to fail. This notion of the grand failure is a familiar trope in literary modernism (inherited from literary romanticism's obsessions with incompleteness in relation to artistic creation and the acute awareness of mortality), from Conrad to Faulkner. And certainly because of its cultural pervasiveness as an image of greatness, the grand failure has defined film legends from Orson Welles to James Dean, as well as the characters these film lions played. In *Citizen Kane*, Leland's insight into Charlie Kane's motives—"He was always trying to prove something"—provides an effective gloss on Coppola's desperate drive to realize a vision in *Apocalypse Now*: "My greatest fear is to make [an] . . . embarrassing pompous film on an important subject. And I am doing it" (*Hearts of Darkness*). Feeling like an artistic failure, Coppola despairs,

And I'm feeling like an idiot at having set in motion stuff that doesn't make any sense, that doesn't match. And yet I'm doing it and the reason I'm doing it is out of desperation because I have no rational way to do it. What I have to admit is that I don't know what I'm doing . . . {Others} see the magic of what has happened before. I'm saying, hey, it's not gonna happen. I don't have any performances. The script doesn't make sense. I have no ending. I'm like a voice, crying out, saying, please, it's not working. Somebody get me off this. And nobody listens to me. Everyone says, "yes, well, Francis works best in a crisis." I'm saying, this is one crisis I'm not gonna pull myself out of. I'm making a bad movie. So why should I go ahead? . . . I'm going to be bankrupt anyway. Why can't I just have the courage to say, "It's no good." . . . There's almost anything

I'd do to get out of it. I'm already thinking about what kind of sickness I can get.

Fearing failure at the same time as he romantically invests in the possibility of the grand failure, Coppola's self-flagellating comments appear in the context of *Hearts of Darkness's* representation of the director as an anguished crusader destined to realize his vision at all costs. *Hearts of Darkness* defines art in terms of self-destructive energy, as Coppola bucks authority in its various guises of rationality, Hollywood, and the demands of friendship and family.

Indeed, *Hearts of Darkness* shows community values overwhelmed by the grandness of the radical individual embodied in Kurtz, and, in the documentary, by Coppola himself. His wife Eleanor endorses the radical selfhood claimed by Coppola, which is quite striking, particularly since her lionizing (as Kim Worthy says, Coppola is "regarded as a deity" in the film [1]) depends on the analogy the film draws between Coppola and the megalomaniacal, corrupt, and racist Kurtz. Eleanor endorses Coppola's "choice of nightmares," just as Marlow engages Kurtz's "choice of nightmares" as a viable, possibly ennobled, choice (Conrad 2004). "I affirm," says Marlow, "that Kurtz was a remarkable man. He had something to say" (2011). Eleanor's documenting of Coppola may be her way of sublimating her frustration with him by "directing" her own sublime narrative about Coppola during the filming of *Apocalypse Now*; such a reading is supported by Biskind's *Easy Riders, Raging Bulls* about the era of self-indulgent, drug-obsessed and sex-obsessed self-proclaimed auteurs of the 1970s, in which Coppola is presented as philandering and self-absorbed and is reported to have provoked Eleanor, through a series of affairs, to a family crisis—"Coppola didn't much bother to conceal his dalliances from [Eleanor], nor did he treat her with much consideration" (Biskind 357). Eleanor's aggravation with Coppola's "dalliances" is not registered at all in the documentary; instead, Eleanor relies on Conrad's metaphors to interpret her husband: "You have to fail a little, die a little, go insane a little to come out the other side." And later: "He can't go back down the river because the journey has changed him. I can't go back to the way it was. I was on the journey too. Neither could Francis. Neither could Willard." Strangely, from a critical vantage point, the movie provides an example of Marlow's feeling about women in *Heart of Darkness*—"It is queer how out of touch with truth women are" (1965)—since Eleanor

seems unconcerned with the familial and financial consequences of Coppola's pursuing his vision at all cost. The mockumentary's substitution of Jamie Abrahams, Jim Abrahams' daughter, in Eleanor's role deflates Eleanor's lionizing of Coppola, and rebounds back on Eleanor's submerged story in *Hearts of Darkness* as one of spousal enabling.

In *Hearts of Darkness*, Coppola's uncontrollable drive, as he takes on the role of Kurtz, leads to a climactic moment in the documentary when, following Martin Sheen's near-fatal heart attack, Coppola desperately tries to appease the studio that all is on track. In a stunningly narcissistic moment, Coppola says to the studio executives, "If Marty dies I want to hear that everything is okay until I say Marty is dead." Perhaps more surprising than Coppola's extreme solipsism here is the documentary's use of such solipsism in the service of a message about the cost of making art: The representation of Coppola's harrowing "journey" is presented as part of the grand narrative about great men failing—or great men fearing to fail.

It is thus in keeping with the film's encomium to romantic egotism that *Hearts of Darkness* begins with the voice of Orson Welles, a metaphorical father figure to so many 1970s "raging-bull" American filmmakers. Welles haunts *Hearts of Darkness* as the misunderstood genius artist figure Coppola aspires to be. As Biskind says, "Welles' was venerated by the New Hollywood, and the wreckage of his career was regarded with horror and indignation as the most egregious example of how the town destroyed the auteur" (57). That Coppola is preoccupied with Welles is made clear at the beginning of the documentary, when Welles's voice is invoked to frame the narrative of the documentary with his reading of Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*, which Welles Mercury Theater had radio broadcast in the 1930s before he came to Hollywood and which he had hoped to adapt to the screen as his first Hollywood project in 1939. Interestingly, Welles overreached at that early point in his film career, as his plan to tell Conrad's story using the camera as the first-person narrator proved impossible to accomplish. Welles then turned to Herman Mankiewicz's script for *Citizen Kane* (first titled "American") and embarked on the project that many years later secured his role as the quintessential auteur. Defining the auteur figure in the very terms of overreaching, fear of failure, will to power, and disdain for authority, Welles told the story of William Randolph Hearst (transposed into Charles Foster Kane) and exposed the media magnate's obsessive narcissism and the failure of the country's American Dream.

Welles risked sabotaging his own career in the service of telling what he saw as the truth, a “choice of nightmares” invoked by Charles Kane himself when he insists to Thatcher in youthful if confused idealism that he will sacrifice all of his money for the sake of protecting “the little people.” Welles took Hearst on, taking aim in particular at Hearst’s manipulation of Marion Davies’s career in the portrait of Susan Alexander. Hearst fought back by marshaling his media forces and destroying the film’s chances to succeed: Hearst “did serious damage to the film financially and its lack of box-office success probably hammered the first nail into the coffin of financial catastrophe that increasingly soured Welles’s relations with Hollywood” (Mulvey 29).

As the 1970s American filmmakers saw Welles as “a vast damaged vessel adrift in a hostile sea, perennially in search of a safe harbor” (Biskind 57), *Hearts of Darkness* represents Coppola as similarly “at sea.” One wonders, for example, why, given Coppola’s understanding of Marlon Brando’s peculiarities as an actor and collaborator, the director is surprised that Brando, playing Kurtz, makes filming difficult by showing up in the Philippines extremely overweight (resulting in Coppola rewriting the script to make Brando’s bloated body relevant to the story) and unprepared (he had apparently never read Conrad’s novel). Brando, like Welles, is an American film icon whom Coppola defined himself in relation to, and, just as Kane and possibly Welles became unstable in part because of an unconscious need to define the self in relation to the father/capitalist figure (in Thatcher, in Hearst—indeed, Laura Mulvey reads Kane’s problems in *Citizen Kane* in psychoanalytic terms of fighting authority [58]), Coppola becomes unstable in relation to his cast, crew, production company, and family.

In his mockumentary, Abrahams takes particular aim at Coppola’s solipsism, mocking Coppola’s comments about Martin Sheen’s heart attack in his own reaction to Valeria Golina falling sick in the supposed filming of *Part Deux*: “She’s not dead unless I say she’s dead. Just get another Italian girl; they’re all the same.” The mockumentary shows up the isolation and insensitivity of Coppola, but instead of demonstrating the artist’s mad genius, as the documentary does, it exemplifies the craziness of romantic egotism. Says Richard Crenna in the mockumentary, “Every scene we do seventeen, eighteen, twenty-seven different ways . . . I don’t know what to do next.” Says lead actor Charlie Sheen “I understand the method approach . . . getting an actor to do

[pause] things for the sake of the production, but that cost us an extra 26 million.” Referencing method acting here, Sheen presents a veiled reference to his father’s experience playing Willard, the Marlow figure, since Martin Sheen’s method acting in *Apocalypse Now* was coached by Coppola to produce the memorable scene of Willard in the hotel room, drunken and emotional, before he sets out to find and assassinate Kurtz (Brando). In another instance of blurring the line dividing fiction and reality (Dennis Hopper comes to mind, as Hopper’s star text informs his wacky performance as “The Russian”/“The Photographer,” who babbles quotes from T. S. Eliot’s “The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock”), the hotel-room scene also documents Martin Sheen’s own drunken emotional breakdown preceding his heart attack. Interestingly Martin Sheen appears in the mockumentary as “The Assassin” sent by the studio to terminate Abrahams after *Hot Shots! Part Deux* has surpassed two hundred days of shooting and gone forty-five million dollars over budget. Sheen peruses photographs of the players, his voiceover commenting as he looks at a portrait of Charlie Sheen, for example, “Who is this kid? Looks Hispanic. Probably won’t amount to much.” The elder Sheen’s appearance trumps Coppola’s romantic egotism: instead of protecting the seriousness of his own relation to *Apocalypse Now*, Martin Sheen appears on behalf of, in support of, Charlie’s parody, implying a preference for family ethics over the romantic legacy of emotionally costly filmmaking. Just as Coppola loses his grip on reality as the filming of *Apocalypse Now* spins out of his control, in the mockumentary, Abrahams loses all touch with the cast and crew: Says Jamie, “The actors grow confused, as Dad begins to speak in tongues.” Toward the end of the mockumentary, says Abrahams himself, in a hilarious parody of Coppola’s role as alienated genius director, “There was no support, no help. It was me and my vision versus the entire cast, the entire crew.” The mockumentary invites a critique and analysis of romantic isolationism; the piece offers, in its humor and joy of satire and deflation, a corrective to romantic egotism.

“My Movie is Not a Movie”

There are many pleasures associated with recognizing the connections among the numerous characters—some real, some fictional—invoked by consideration of these texts together. Thus, it seems to me important to cultivate more self-consciousness about the lure of dismissing the differences between reality and fiction, which becomes increasingly

difficult in our “wag-the-dog” media culture that exploits such pleasures and desires. Finally, the truth the documentary *Hearts of Darkness* means to “document” is revealed by the mockumentary to be a deeply ideological gesture. “My movie is not a movie,” says Coppola at the beginning of *Hearts of Darkness*. “My movie is not about Vietnam. My movie is Vietnam. It’s what it was really like.” Such a claim—the belief in the power of art not just to faithfully render an historical reality (not to mention a pre-existing literary text in *Heart of Darkness*), but to supercede it as a new reality—relies both on the idea of a representable prior reality (textual or historical) and, certainly, on the belief in the artist’s power to transform realities, which can not only lead viewers astray but also become destructive (“if Marty dies, I want to hear that everything is okay until I say Marty is dead”), as it is the role of many documentaries and all mockumentaries to suggest.

Sarah Vowell has written about the documentarian’s felt power to shape reality into art. Vowell praises *The Blair Witch Project* for its self-consciousness about the potential hubris in documenting real life for the sake of representation. Vowell contrasts the self-awareness about the potential for exploitation in documentaries with “The Making of . . .” genre. These mini-documentaries, popularized by HBO and Showtime and mainly intended to market Hollywood films about to be released, elevate Hollywood directors according to (yet seemingly unaware of) auteurist ideals. The mini-docs, says Vowell, are “more about the filmmakers than the film. And since the making of [the films marketed in the mini-docs] gets them lost in the woods and stalked by a mysterious something, it requires them to endure hunger, apathy, exhaustion, despair and, most of all, fear.” While nonfiction artists for Vowell generally have some awareness of reality’s muck and mire and the extent to which those presenting true stories are “attracted to the power and control that is the byproduct of shaping something as out-of-control as life,” the invocation of Vietnam as metaphor for Coppola suggests his purpose as not so much “standing in the mud” and “describing [reality’s] squishiness” but exercising an authorial power that keeps him from recognizing the implications of such gestures. Coppola’s attention is not on the muck and mire of war and its heart of darkness, or on the muck and mire of the landscape of Vietnam—or on the stormy landscape of the Philippines, for that matter, which was fighting its own civil war during the filming of *Apocalypse Now*.

Kim Worthy has done rich analyses of Coppola's role as a stand-in for America. For Worthy, Coppola's desperation, as it is charted in *Hearts of Darkness*, parallels America's own, in fighting the Vietnam War through a haze of masculine authoritarianism. But Worthy recognizes the problems with the analogy; her insight on the paradox of the filmmaker's attraction to the grand failure narrative is useful: Western narrative and certainly Hollywood films, says Worthy, offer a "successful white romantic hero at its center, on the other hand, that same narrative tradition despises the superior technology, sense of authority, mission and brute force that is America's heritage" (3; sic). Still, Worthy sees more critical force in *Hearts of Darkness* because of its exposure of such instability:

... in *Hearts of Darkness*, intimations of a recognition of elements previously hardly visible in U.S. culture leak through the cracks: women (Eleanor Coppola is the film's narrator, its Marlow), children (the Coppola's are seen, if not heard, in the film's beginning, middle, and ending), insurrection (the Philippine guerillas), labor (the revelation of how much money is paid is a perceptible pattern, as in Godard's 1972 *Tout va Bien*), and the environment (the history of the scenes in *Apocalypse Now* involving the water buffalo's destruction, and the tiger's performance, are at least deemed worthy of attention). Taken together in *Hearts of Darkness*, these usually peripheral elements recover a considerable bit of territory from the hegemonic *darkness* of white male capitalistic culture. (5)

Worthy tries to politicize and historicize a reading of the great male authority figure but perhaps overstates Coppola's self-awareness in *Hearts of Darkness*. The representation of Coppola's mad genius, I would counter, swamps the critical stance Worthy is interested in. Further, because popular audiences and film critics are so enamored of the auteur's grand narrative, this makes critical engagement with *Hearts of Darkness* more difficult. Roger Ebert, for example, canonizes Coppola by describing his venture in making *Apocalypse Now* (as it is recorded in the documentary) as "fascinating, harrowing film history" and Hal Hinson of the *Washington Post* calls the documentary a "portrait of an artist in crisis," and further says that *Hearts of Darkness* is "the most engrossing, most revealing film about the making of a movie ever produced." High praise, indeed, although Hinson does note that the filmmakers "[place] Coppola in the company of angels." Still, Hinson

buys into the mythifying narrative by ending his article, “Perhaps Coppola is right to think that the gods have their eye on him. To have his youthful dream realized not only with ‘Apocalypse Now’ but with this engrossing new film as well seems close to miraculous.” The lionizing here is echoed throughout critical responses to the film, as in Janet Maslin’s comment that Coppola “tested the limits of his capacity for courting disaster,” or Roger Ebert’s claim that *Hearts of Darkness* “strips Coppola of all defenses and yet reveals him as a great and brave filmmaker.”

Such endorsement carries over to an uncomfortable extreme when critics and viewers imitate Coppola’s error in mistaking representation for reality, the making of art for waging *real* battle, as is exemplified in the following remarks by Robert Rothenberg writing for *USA Today* about *Apocalypse Now Redux*, the “director’s cut” of *Apocalypse Now*, released in 2001:

At the peak of his reputation, lionized for his two Oscar-winning “Godfather” epics, Coppola set out to fulfill his dream to convert Joseph Conrad’s *Heart of Darkness* into a film, setting it in the middle of the Vietnam War. The idea turned out to be as much a mistake as the war itself.

The troubling overstatement in the last sentence bespeaks more (even) than the writer’s confusion of reality and representation, his confusion of war and films *about* war; the critic’s repetition of Coppola’s own gesture in his famous remarks at Cannes (“My movie is not a movie”) suggests the powerful influence of Coppola’s “star text” and of auteurist ideology that places the grand master at the helm of a threatened ship. In the following comments by Brian Johnson, the very cadences of Coppola’s speech at Cannes are imitated: “In the process, [Coppola] ended up creating his own Vietnam in the Philippines. He did not know why he was there. He could not withdraw. He became a victim of his own escalating imagination.” Johnson not only adopts Coppola’s self-congratulatory representation of his tortured-artist experiences and repeats the confusion between reality and fiction but does so imitating Coppola’s speech patterns in his Cannes remarks: “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’s self-presentation has apparently permeated viewers’ consciousness in such a way as to cloud a critical stance on the romantic egotism

Coppola demonstrates in the making of *Apocalypse Now*. Such confusion surrounding the nature of representation suggests the dramatic persistence of auteurism.

On the one hand the influence of auteurism, the director's signature as the source of filmmaking, has been undercut by feminist critiques of the canon of male titans that have traditionally defined film history. On the other hand, however, the culture is increasingly inclined to enjoy the frisson of confusing image and reality ("My movie is not a movie"), and the filmmaker's persona as the lead character, possibly the tragic hero, in a grand narrative is certainly enhanced. And that buoying up of the obsessive artist-figure seems in this instance to curtail critical thinking about filmmaking that is nuanced, interrogative, and analytic. *Hearts of Darkness* functions in conjunction with popular interest in overstating the role of the Hollywood director, as he is modeled by Welles and Coppola, who are threatened at points in their career, not, as one critic would have it, by the fact that "Hollywood cares little for auteurs," Hollywood's "visionaries" (*Economist* 97), but by their own myopia, narrow vision mistaken for "visionary." While the *Economist's* reviewer of *Hearts* goes on to discuss the "mythic proportions" of Hollywood's battles with "visionaries," the account serves mainly to reinforce the grand auteur narrative that, I am suggesting, can determine viewer responses. *Hearts of Darkness*, because of its employment of the auteurist grand narrative, does not acknowledge its most compelling story, which is about failures of collaboration and the potential for exploitation in an appropriation of the "grand metaphor" of the "heart of darkness," the Vietnam War, and the monsoons and civil war taking place in the Philippines during the filming of *Apocalypse Now*. *Hearts of Darkness* is a fascinating film, but its fascination lies not in the lionizing of Coppola but in the intriguing relationships that are revealed between the psychological dimensions of the fear of failure and the dominant power structures that govern Hollywood and contemporary attitudes toward art.

The exclusion in *Hearts of Darkness* of a more critical stance on its subject—its devotion to making a metaphor of the Vietnam War's landscape, repeating, as Worthy argues, America's own self-serving macho aggression (says Thomas Doherty in reviewing *Apocalypse Now Redux*, "In American foreign policy, Vietnam remains our moist frontier, not theirs" [3])—restages an appropriation of social and literary

history the year before the documentary came out, in Coppola's release of (the strangely titled) *Bram Stoker's Dracula*. As *Hearts of Darkness* misses an opportunity to address a critical vantage point on the documentary's "hero-centered narrative form" (Worthy 2), a vantage point that would provide an additional context for understanding the psychological complexity of Coppola's endeavors to bring *Apocalypse Now* to the screen, Coppola lifts the story of Dracula from its historical context. Analogously to the way we gain pleasure in watching *Hearts of Darkness's* collapse of distinctions between fact and fiction, we gain pleasure from Coppola's transposing of Victorian narrative into a postmodern film that comes, as some critics say about *Apocalypse Now*, "at the cost of historical understanding" (Worthy 1). Coppola renders a Victorian narrative as peculiarly postmodern play, transposing Dracula, the Victorian "other," into a deeply romantic genius/artist figure, embodied by the magnetic Gary Oldman in the (now) "lead" role. Coppola appropriates Dracula, and unstably commits to romanticizing the story and postmodernizing the narrative style. Late-Victorian anxieties surrounding waning imperialism and east versus west; gender roles and the New Woman; and the increased role of technology become, in Richard Dyer's terms, "post-modern allusionism." Such a revisioning of Stoker's novel is certainly interesting, even compelling, but the gap between the film and Coppola's marketing of it as "*Bram Stoker's Dracula*" is noteworthy and seems to me to signal again the filmmaker's attempt to change reality and to control viewers' perceptions. Coppola tries to reinforce the meaning of his title by saying that "no one had ever done the book. . . . In our movie, the characters resemble Stoker's in their personalities and function, including many characters that are often cut out" (qtd. in Coppola and Hart 3), like for example Quincey Morris, the brash Texan in love with Lucy. Coppola adds, "Aside from the one innovative take that comes from history—the love story between Mina and the Prince—we were scrupulously true to the book." The claim is weirdly off-base, since, as I have suggested, the movie dramatically romanticizes Dracula and presents the story through a postmodern lens. Coppola's statement about the film's closeness to the novel certainly has something to do with carving out a market niche for his film, but it also repeats the pattern of reality-bending that defines the story in *Hearts of Darkness*. Moreover, in the context of Coppola's continued obsession with spectacle and the grand failure narrative, the director's use of the Dracula story is revealed to be a

projection of a portrait of a magic artist figure (Oldman as Dracula), an extravagant self-image of the anguished creative energy and genius that are so privileged in *Hearts of Darkness*.

Abraham's mockumentary restages such energy in the service of artistic and working communities. *A Filmmaker's Apology* satirizes not only the auteurist pretensions of *Hearts of Darkness*, but also the disingenuous yoking together of such pretensions with the commercial aims of the "Making of . . ." series of television mini-documentaries, which offer cable television the opportunity to market to audiences the grand narrative of the filmmaker's journey, a sale of ideology that skews our understanding of the role of the filmmaker and the tension between commercial demands and artistic aims and integrity. Even though awareness of the problems accruing to the grand narrative may hover around the edges of the Coppola documentary, the truth of *Hearts of Darkness* is a construction of views of art profoundly informed by romantic ideology, and such ideology seems to me empowered further by the persistent trouble we have, in a celebrity and image-obsessed culture, in distinguishing fact from fiction. The mockumentary makes fun of the documentary's pretension to visionary truth (says Abrahams and producer Pat Proft, "We lied about everything—about the budget, the location, who's directing"). Coppola's documentary prefers solitude to affiliation, the one to the many, the field of war (if not the war itself) to the domestic (says Abrahams, "It's about scope! It's about scale!"), and the serious to the humorous. Certainly with its references to *No Way Out*, *Lady and the Tramp*, and countless allusions to notorious political episodes, *Hot Shots! Part Deux*, like other works of Jim Abrahams, prefers pastiche to romanticism. And certainly, *Hearts of Hot Shots! Part Deux: A Filmmaker's Apology* opts for abundance rather than renunciation. Despite the position of Abrahams' mockumentary at the margins of popular culture, however, the parody not only emphasizes the problems with auteurism that are not sufficiently addressed or foregrounded in the culture, but also gives credence to the possibility of reading films and the process of filmmaking with greater critical awareness, since the popular audience addressed by the mockumentary surely participates in Abrahams' savvy critique. The mockumentary redefines the "truth" of documentary as, at least in this case, utterly reliant on a community of observers who share a sense of the value of satire and the social norms on which satire depends.

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