Gr. 11 Communications Technology Course Reading

"Playing Tarzan: Arnold and the Jungle"

extracted from "Arnold Schwarenegger and the Movies" by David Saunders

Student Name:_____

Mark: /12 Thinking

In the space provide answer the following questions on the course reading provided.

1. How are "terror" and the "other" connected in regards to the film? What does it represent?

2. How is Vietnam iconography brought to life in the film?

3. How is the film rooted to the notion of "getting it right"?

4. Why is the opening helicopter scene important?

5. What does the film warn of? Why is this important and how can it be connected to world issues today?

6. What does the character of Dutch (played by Arnold Schwarenegger) represent?

Playing Tarzan: Arnold of the Jungle

> [T]he connection between imperial politics and culture is astonishingly direct. American attitudes to American 'greatness,' to hierarchies of race . . . have remained constant, have dictated, have obscured, the realities of empire.[170]

> Muscle heroes are not indigenous. Tarzan, although he lives in the jungle, is not of the jungle . . . In all cases, the hero is up against foreignness, its treacherous terrain and inhabitants, animal and human . . . The colonialist structure of the heroes' relation to the native is aid as much as antagonism: he sorts out the problems of people who cannot sort things out for themselves.[171]

Although it is possessed of obvious universal (and elemental) pleasures, *Predator* (1987) – John McTiernan's science-fiction-meets-guerrilla-war conflation of *Beowulf*, The Epic of Gilgamesh[172] and the much-filmed *Most Dangerous Game* – deserves to be judged a culturally resonant, relatively

sober-minded and accomplished entity amongst its action/adventure peers. Indeed, not only is this technically impressive film 'a strikingly literal manifestation of Cold War anxieties . . . charged with political metaphor,' as Stephen Prince notes,[173] it also tenders Schwarzenegger's most nuanced and assuredly convincing performance to date, indicating a productive affinity with director, cast, location, character and subject. 'Acting is like bodybuilding,' said Arnold in 1987, again equating artistic achievement with muscular hypertrophy: 'The more you do it, the better you get – and each time I see myself getting closer to the perfect delivery of a scene.'[174] Schwarzenegger, in *Predator*, is evidently taking his part entirely seriously; roused by the challenges of the sweltering setting, and of his almost equally brawny and spirited co-stars, he exhibits especial dedication to making McTiernan's vehicle work on a dramaturgical basis. Though verism (and self-deprecation) is not Arnold's domain, he visibly *believes* throughout in *Predator*'s value as a fiction warranting total dedication.

The story is that of a group of elite Special Forces men, led by Schwarzenegger's Major 'Dutch' Schaefer,[175] who are sent by deceitful CIA operative Dillon (Carl Weathers: Apollo Creed in the *Rocky* films) into the Central American jungle ostensibly to rescue hostages. In actuality, the team has been recruited to execute a revolutionary group funded by the KGB in order to pre-empt its planned attack on sympathisers.

8. Dillon and Dutch at odds in Predator

Dutch decides that he wants no part of this mission, but is drawn relu tantly into destroying the enemy camp; the fracas, however, is notice by a visiting extra-terrestrial trophy-hunter – an apt adversary, give Schwarzenegger's aura of near-invulnerability at this time – who begir to pick off Dutch's men one by one. 'I suppose it had reached a poir with these action films where one of the heroes would have to fight creature from another world,' remarked Joel Silver. 'What other possibl terror could Schwarzenegger take on in an action-adventure film?'[176]

Literally, the 'terror' is the age-old monster-as-Other, but figuratively the terrain is America's hearts and minds, groping for a means t comprehend Vietnam (the conflict that is most obviously signified b the use of 'a widely recognised "Vietnam" iconography (lush, glistening dense jungle, camouflage gear, hi-tech hand weaponry, napalm-styl fire)')[177] via Nicaragua and the correlated disavowal or abnegation o 'imperialist' motives without mandate. McTiernan commented that *Predator* is 'in essence a battle of Titans . . . a classic hero story and a horror story, like the Norse Myths';[178] in addition, it makes a case, through modern myth-making and well-orchestrated revisionism, for the justness of efficacious occupation, and for the nobility of warfare in which adept assimilation proves crucial to victory over an 'alien subversive presence' with which Central America is shown to be infected.[179] Arnold (our Aryan, 'heroic' ideal) must thus learn the dark arts of guerrilla war so that the hard lessons of defeat in Vietnam can be deeply inculcated without resort to *Rambo*-esque, divisive particulars. The phrase 'No more Vietnams,' writes Keith Beattie:

> is encoded with the implicit message that 'this time we'll get it right.' Far from the end of innocence and soldiery, the war in Vietnam is rewritten as a negative correlative against which future military action is measured. 'Getting it right' – which not only underwrote but in some sense legitimated the invasion of Grenada and support for the Contra rebels in Nicaragua – also resulted in an upsurge of Allied rhetoric . . . To the victorious, then, go the rights to assert innocence.[180]

Arnold, notes J. Hoberman, 'is not haunted by the failure of Vietnam'; he does not 'dramatise old grievances or wallow in self-pity,' unlike Stallone.[181] 'Whatever [Stallone] does,' said Arnold, talking about

of the films of 'The Italian Stallion,' 'it always comes out wrong.'[182] Political commitment, recognised Schwarzenegger, could be a double-edged sword (as it had been for his rival). Aware that 'ideology works better when we cannot see it working,'[183] Arnold intuited that his most important roles had great discursive power, but that this power lay less in rhetoric than more basic insidiousness playing on public misgivings. To obviate the need for explicit commentary and to avoid anything 'coming out wrong,' Arnold inhabited a pro-filmic world of primal and old colonial fears re-worked in the light of present-day national crises; at one critical remove, he palliated the tenderness of America's psychic denial, and slew the dragons of Otherness:

> How was a country steeped in its own mythologies of national and cultural supremacy to come to terms with losing to an undeveloped nation of what some Americans thought of stereotypically as little yellow people? What kind of stories could it tell about the war? . . . Like primitive people without a history we had a gap to fill and we turned to myth.[184]

Predator opens with a shot of the alien's spaceship falling to earth, seeding the planet with insurrectionary, exotic evil; in the film's first clear evocation of Vietnam, a helicopter likewise descends, its landing on a dusky tropical beach constituting a semiotic aide-memoire: in effect the spectator is witnessing a retelling of the conflict most associated – especially via the cinema – with such aircraft. We are then introduced to the imperturbably cigar-smoking Dutch, as he is given his mission by the 'General' (an aged R.G. Armstrong), who disparages 'this charming little country' to which Arnold's dutiful hero has lent his presence. 'What do you need us for?' asks Dutch; 'Because some damn fool accused you of being the best,' responds a voice off-screen. It is Weathers's Dillon, a hard-bitten 'shadow' archetype similar in quintessence to Apollo Creed's crude caricature of Muhammad Ali.[185] The two old comrades perform a spontaneous, homo-erotically eye-to-eye, arm wrestle, McTiernan lingering on their tensed biceps and distended veins; Dillon, of course, loses – Dutch, a man not of problematic words but of pragmatic deeds, remarks that his opponent has been 'pushing too many pencils' due to CIA bureaucracy (the insinuation is that that Weathers's body has atrophied, as the body politic might atrophy under the stricture of

officialdom). Asserting his decency, autonomy, and ostensible aloo from aggressive policy, Dutch says he did not go to Libya becau was not his 'style': 'We're a rescue team, not assassins.' Distanced Reagan's 'all the way to the hangar'[186] rhetoric concerning Qaddafi those would-be killers allegedly sent to the United States by the Lib Dutch's morality and professionalism are hence reconciled, a uneasily, and the character simultaneously defended from accusat of compromise and deference to the kind of Machiavellian fec authority represented by Dillon. Schwarzenegger and company, t are principled aggressors under the leadership of a masterfully resc warrior, come to 'this charming little country' to perform a 'one- operation' and go home with honour.

As their gunship crosses the border into 'Indian country,'[187] McTier presents his incongruent yet adeptly coherent squad: Blain (for wrestler and Vietnam veteran Jesse Ventura) is a tobacco-chew gung-ho cowboy with a predilection for comedically macho ripos Billy (Sonny Landham) is a Native-American tracker, proud anc touch with nature; Mac (Bill Duke), a shaven-headed African Ameri is cogitative (if borderline psychotic); Poncho (Richard Chaves) is enthusiastic Mexican; and Hawkins (Shane Black) embodies the na young rookie. Whilst this disproportionately multi-ethnic band stereotypes approaches its destination, we hear Little Richard's 'Lo Tall Sally,' a tape of which Blain has put in his portable stereo. Aga previous literary and filmic interpretations of the Vietnam War intimated, the Indochinese campaign and rock and roll, according David E. James, being:

> intertwined so thoroughly that their inter-dependence is an exemplary instance of the operationality of modern culture . . . The movies have no authority in neither the experience of Vietnam nor representations of it, neither practically nor textually. In both they have been replaced by rock and roll, which will solve the awkwardness of Vietnam.[188]

An additional way to address this discomfiture is to imagine, as do *Predator*, a cohort whose diversity reflects a certain nostalgic revisionis rather than fact: the number of blacks who fought in Vietnam, often wit resentment at fighting a 'white man's war,' was highly inconsistent wit the racial demography of their homeland.[189] The team, as Little Richar

sings, is going to 'have some fun'; this lyric's sentiment imparts obvious irony, yet also permits a distinct, simultaneous displacement of the spectatorial destrudo (our perhaps innate urge to destroy, as outlined by Freud) onto the libido, and an abjuration, by dint of rock and roll's creative associations, of the brutal realities of recent warfare upon which *Predator* is essentially based. Schwarzenegger, though, unlike his boyish charges, does not partake in the fraternal banter onboard the helicopter (or, like Mac/Duke, exhibit nervous tics): this is, after all, a re-fighting of a lost war, staged for our vicarious enjoyment;[190] its viability as a populist artefact depends equally on it constituting 'fun,' and on the continuance of audience alignment with Arnold's transcendently superior conscience: he understands the painful nature of war.

Dutch takes the team deep into the jungle, which, due to McTiernan's vertiginous camerawork, in itself appears to teem with endemic, foreign menace. 'Remember Afghanistan?' asks Poncho, recalling a not obviously similar terrain; 'I'm trying to forget it,' replies Dutch, in the first of many references to authentic conflicts that never cite Vietnam by name. ('Same kind of moon, same kind of jungle,' says Mac; 'Makes Cambodia look like Kansas,' reiterates Blain: clearly, these men are 'trying to forget' something, while concurrently hinting at that same unmentionable defeat.) Billy, as a Native-American type endowed with earthy yet spiritual acuity, senses trouble, and comes across the skinned corpses of American soldiers of whose mission Dutch's is a repeat. We are reminded of the 'savage' brutalities attributed to the Viet Cong – atrocities no less civilised than the 'ear-bagging' proclivities of US GIs, alien trophy-seekers of another hue – and a parallel is drawn between the as-yet-unidentified perpetrator/s of the flaying and the mysterious, 'inhuman' 'Gooks' who ran tunnels and ambushed unseen. Poncho, as if to emphasise our heroes' righteousness in contrast to the heretical, atavistic or atheistic ways of the locals, crosses himself: 'Holy Mother of God,' he declaims, before Dutch, putting battlefield dignity before expediency, orders the men cut down. As Mac laments, 'Ain't no way for no soldier to die.'

Blain declares it 'payback time,' and reveals an implausible, hand-held Gatling gun ('Old Painless'), with which he plays his part in decimating the guerrillas' camp. This scene is one of gratuitous devastation, though it is also expertly constructed and lends a thematically crucial dimension. The spectator's – and the film's protagonists' – faith in high-technology

firepower to obliterate *known* adversaries is bolstered, though only t porarily. Narratively, those who do not know how best to use the e ronment to outwit their enemies are quickly dispatched and not wo adversaries for either the Predator (incredibly, or so it is suggested, creature now lurking in the trees has ignored them because they are e prey) or Arnold et al. Thus begins what Stephen Prince appositely c *Predator*'s 'discourse on the waging of counterinsurgency warfare [a the rhetoric of the Reagan administration about outside intervention alien powers.'[191] Though the film cursorily appears to be a fable stron opposed to positive intervention, *Predator*, it becomes increasingly cl warns only against over-confidence and ignorance of one's foe. As war since time immemorial, but above all in the jungles of Vietnam (a by extension those of South America), notes Jonathan Shay, 'the ene struck not only at the body but at the most basic functions of the s dier's mind, attacking his perceptions by concealment; his cognitic by camouflage and deception; his intentions by surprise, anticipatic and ambush.'[192] Ambivalent less about interventional war per se th about shock-and-awe militarism, McTiernan depicts the United Stat Big Stick at work and subsequently highlights its failings in an untri setting: like Operation Rolling Thunder, remote execution is cursor impressive, but ultimate victory over the bestial, ethnic forces of antag nism will demand insight, adaptability and perception, coupled wi Schwarzenegger's strength of both body and resolve.

After Dutch confronts Dillon about his subterfuge ('So you cooked u a story and dropped the six of us in the meat-grinder,' a contrived li delivered by Schwarzenegger with persuasive earnestness), the cohor now with a young woman (Anna: Elpidia Carrillo) reluctantly in to retreat to the dark jungle to wait for an airlift. However, they cann be picked up in 'this hole' and must go to the border, unaware that t near-invisible, Grendel-like monster is stalking them. In an inverte echo of *The Terminator*, subjective shots represent the alien's therma imaging vision, picking the humans out from the backdrop whilst remains camouflaged, immersed in the usually suppressed foramina c untamed nature that terrified urbanite soldiers in Vietnam:

> Forget the Cong, the *trees* would kill you, the elephant grass grew up homicidal, the ground you were walking over possessed malignant intelligence, your whole environment was a bath . . . The Puritan

> belief that Satan dwelt in nature could have been born here, where even on the coldest, freshest mountaintops you could smell jungle and that tension between rot and genesis that all jungles give off. It is ghost-story country, and for Americans it had been the scene of some of the war's vilest surprises.[193]

To the accompaniment of Alan Silvestri's taut score, Dutch and company, wary of ambush, push through the greenery – the 'bad-ass bush,' as Mac calls it, to which Blain responds, 'You lose it here, you're in a world of hurt.' Through it all, Arnold/Dutch remains composed and aloof, without recourse either to complaint or to protective pendants like Billy's; his angular face-paint, unlike the others', complements his features, making his already prominent cheekbones appear harder. 'There's something in those trees,' warns Billy, the noble 'Redskin' now on his conquerors' side. As with Matrix in *Commando*, super-sensory perception is needed, but the nationally microcosmic team is here allowed to hold a share of such attributes, good and bad: to Blain goes the posturing and misguided assurance; to Poncho the primal wrath; to Mac the stalwartness; to Hawkins the childish humour; and to Anna the conflated feminine role of Schwarzenegger's damsel in distress/Campbellian goddess of this 'world of hurt.'

Only the neo-colonial hero Dutch can properly understand Anna, and only he can guide her to safety, simultaneously guided by her local knowledge of legend and acuity to age-old recurrence – or to the strange mystique of regenerative nature, as Campbell asserts:

> Woman, in the picture language of mythology represents the totality of what can become known. The hero is the one who comes to know . . . She lures, she guides, she bids him burst his fetters . . . By deficient eyes [in *Predator*, the untrusting Dillon's, and the edgy Poncho's] she is reduced to inferior states . . . The hero who can take her as she is, without undue commotion but with the kindness and assurance she requires, is potentially the king, the incarnate god, of her created world.[194]

Anna's bid for freedom spurs the monster into murderous action; she is splashed by the symbolically menstrual blood of its first victim (the semi-adolescent Hawkins, whose crude jokes about 'pussy'

have rendered him unable to connect with the mythically feminis
demonised jungle [Satan dwelling in nature] in which the non-attun
overly sexual masculine ego becomes threatened).[195] She then reve
what she knows to the white man from across the sea – Schwarzenegg
cum-Quetzalcoatl – who would sever her from bondage, educe from l
the truth, and who would hence, via his hard-won dominion over t
natural world, be god: Anna has all along known of 'The Demon w
makes Trophies of Men.'

At the end of a creeping, vertical crane shot, we see Hawkins's disei
bowelled corpse, hanging like game from the treetops. Blain is evisc
ated alive by the monster's laser-gun, and Mac catches a glimpse of t
hunter, now plainly using some kind of high-tech camouflage devi
Panicked by the eerie distortion of the jungle, he opens fire, precipit
ing a full forty-five seconds of ballistic pandemonium during which
surviving Americans unload their every round of ammunition in tl
supposed direction of the enemy's flight. The smoke finally clears; tl
Gatling gun whirs on empty. 'Not a trace – no blood, no bodies,' assess
Poncho, dripping with sweat (as are all the cohorts except Dutch): 'W
hit *nothing*.' For all its might, their big, loud, fiery weaponry has prove
useless. ('He boasted of no triumphs then, the gold-friend of the Geats, f
his good old sword bared in the battle, his blade, had failed him, as suc
iron should not do.')[196] It transpires, however, that the elusive creatu
has bled: its green, non-ferrous sap, along with Hawkins's human stai
is now on the doubly stigmatised Anna. 'If it bleeds,' reasons Dutch, 'w
can kill it,' although he alone will possess the requisite ability to stay th
course and kill the beast. Dillon, Poncho and Mac (after psychoticall
muttering the lyrics to 'Long Tall Sally') are slaughtered; Billy in effec
commits suicide by divesting himself of firearms and challenging th
monster, whom he wrongly sees as a kindred aboriginal spirit, to a knif
duel; and Anna flees, instructed by Dutch to 'Run! Get to the chopper!
Act Three will be about Schwarzenegger/Dutch, his mettle and his per
formance alone and under pressure.

Arnold pushes fast through the undergrowth, with the Predator ir
pursuit; coming unexpectedly to a cliff-top, he falls, arms flailing, into a
deep river far below. This is a ritual purgation, as Mircea Eliade explains,
before battle proper can commence: '[I]n whatever complex we find them,
the waters invariably retain their function: they disintegrate, abolish
forms, "wash away sins"; they are at once purifying and regenerating.'[197]

Susan Jeffords claims that 'because this imagery has its own tradition outside these films, its force suggests a continuity and presence larger than these individual events . . . as with Rambo, there is a new soldier, a "new man," who is not so easily defeated or humiliated':

> Reaganology would have us see this rebirth as a sign of a 'new America,' one that, as Casper Weinberger stated in November 1984, would engage in another conflict like Vietnam only 'with the clear intention of winning.' But operating in close conjunction with a return to school prayer, a hard-line anti-abortionism, and an outdated reconstruction of the nuclear family, it becomes clear that such a position is grounded, not upon a 'new' America at all but on a surviving patriarchy . . . the reinstallation of the authority of the white male.[198]

Both Arnold's lone warrior-hero, an archetype 'envisioned most often as a white man,'[199] and his nemesis, who follows him down in a show of inter-species (and inter-masculine) respect, are cleansed by the waters. Subsequent to Dutch's purgation, is his moment of epiphany; accidentally smearing his whole body in the cold mud of the riverbank, he becomes invisible to – and akin to – his ethnicised, dreadlocked pursuer: 'He couldn't see me . . .' Arnold, 'purified,' 'regenerated,' the 'sins' of Vietnam washed away, must henceforth fight the creature by adopting its own methods, or by temporarily becoming one with the exotic heart of darkness in which he is immersed.

Night and miasma descend on the tropical forest. Dutch, gone superficially native by virtue of his carapace of mud, machinates; he will use the jungle to ensnare the Predator, whom we concomitantly see tearing out Billy's spine and heat-blasting his skull to add to a collection. Having laid a series of elaborate traps, improvised from vines, leaves and trunks, Dutch slathers on some war-paint, lights a torch, climbs up to a high perch, and emits a bestial roar: the fight to the death is on. Swinging from branch to branch, Dutch manoeuvres into a position of lofty advantage, and succeeds in disabling the creature's invisibility device by launching an explosive-tipped arrow; he is, though, badly shaken by the resulting display of pyrotechnics from his opponent, which fails, as had the Americans' earlier, to inflict any serious damage. Nonetheless, there is a palpable and exciting sense that Schwarzenegger, just possibly, may not come away from this encounter entirely unscathed.

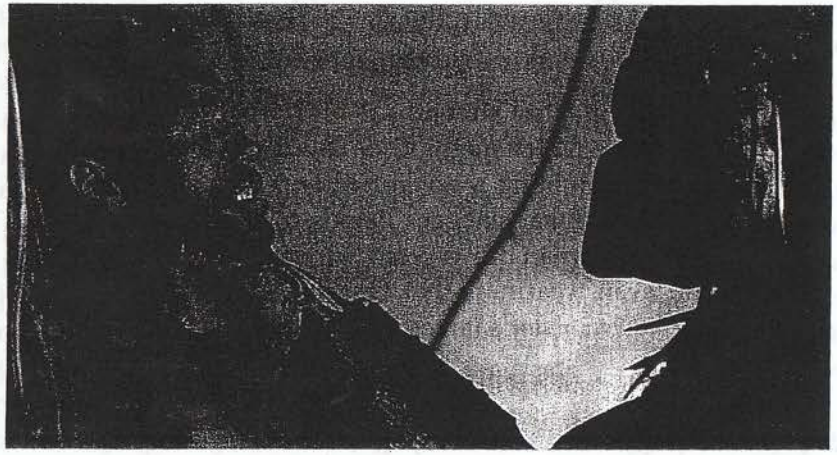
As Eric Lichtenfeld dilates regarding Arnold's newfound dimension humanness:

> [O]ne of the film's greatest strengths is McTiernan's ability to make the audience believe Dutch might lose. This is not merely a function of Schwarzenegger fighting a seven-foot-two-inch alien. *Predator* is the film in which Schwarzenegger begins to loosen up in front of the camera . . . McTiernan draws from Schwarzenegger the exertion, suffering, and even weariness that *Commando*'s Mark Lester could not and that *The Terminator*'s James Cameron sidestepped.'[200]

This therapeutic rematch will of course be won, but not without proper intellectual account, prompted by McTiernan, for the hero's emotion investment: to wage a propitious campaign, one must prepare for t inevitable distress. Certainly we feel Dutch recognises, unlike John Mat or the T-101, that, rather than death being granted instantly and clean by a filmic bullet's magical gift of immediate oblivion, '[i]n reality, to d of war wounds is to usually to die in lingering agony and madness.'[201]

As usual, though, it is the supposed toughness and specialness of Ar old's body that ultimately arouses the most thematic attention. The hunt seems to think, however wily Dutch may be, that Schwarzenegger's Arya physicality is his chief asset. The alien pins Arnold to a tree with its hug hands and carefully examines his cranial structure, deciding that Dut is a prime specimen, his racial superiority (for a human) 'written in th skull,' as it has always been for advocates of the Caucasian race's 'gre mission of civilising the earth.'[202] (McTiernan's Rastafarian-styled villai is here in curious agreement with Emile Durkheim, who approvingl cited the phrase 'one who has seen an aboriginal American has seen a aboriginal Americans.')[203] Keen to the kudos and significance of obtainin Schwarzenegger's head in a 'fair' fight, the monster, in a reversal of th ubiquitous arming scene, takes off his high-tech weapons and helme to reveal a yellow, mottled face with a mandible jaw.[204] 'You're one ugl motherfucker,' says Dutch, providing another level of justification for ou vilification of the Predator. 'Just as physical beauty is believed to symbolis inner moral or spiritual beauty or goodness,' notes Anthony Synnott, 's too physical ugliness is believed to symbolise an inner ugliness or evil':

> [T]hose who are perceived as evil – i.e. enemies of one sort or another: military, ethnic, racial, political, etc. – are 'uglified' – portrayed as



9. The alien hunter admires Arnold's skull (Predator)

> ugly: *propaganda* includes 'uglification.' In Germany, for instance, Hitler presented the Jews as both physically and morally ugly in *Mein Kampf* (1924); the Aryans, on the other hand, were physically and morally beautiful, and biologically and spiritually superior.[205]

Though Schwarzenegger is his enemy, the 'ugly' Predator seconds these beliefs via his cherishing of Arnold and what he represents – even, quite improbably, to an extra-terrestrial visitor presumably not familiar with the human discourses of eugenics and good looks.

After a prolonged fistfight that bloodies Dutch extensively yet must not damage his skull, Dutch manages to crush his foe by releasing a pre-set trap, which swings a log into the monster. Noble to the end, Dutch raises a rock over his head in order that he might administer a *coup de grâce* to the dying alien, but finds himself hesitating to ask, 'What the hell *are* you?' This reluctance to finish is almost costs Arnold dearly, for it would have been a pre-emptive measure – through humanitarian dithering at the battle's closing moments, he risks his life: the alien has a mini-nuclear bomb, counting down to detonation. Realising his mistake, Schwarzenegger runs for cover, diving into a ditch with no time to spare, as the blast radiates behind him. We cut to the evacuation helicopter, and R.G. Armstrong's general, who exclaims, 'My God!' at seeing the burgeoning mushroom cloud below. A wide shot, held while an aubade parodying 'Fanfare for the Common Man' heralds a new day

dawning, depicts the devastation, amid which Arnold stands, tired b remarkably – alive. The locale is immolated beyond recognition, thc Dutch and Anna have survived. Indeed, as Steven Prince concludes film, in its final moments, apparently resonates with the:

> darkest impulses of the Cold War. At the end, the forests have bee levelled and burned, the environment and the local region destroye in the struggle. They are a fiery wasteland, but the enemy is defeate and the surviving American is airlifted to safety. The Centr American threat is eradicated. The land has been destroyed in ord to save it.[206]

Prince also, perspicaciously, writes of *Predator* that the 'anxietie the film seem to have been mobilised by a general cultural fear in first half of the decade that an American invasion of Central Amer particularly of Nicaragua, might be a real possibility.'[207] McTierna film is certainly a timely, cautionary tale. Nonetheless, it does not c demn conflict but rather asserts the need for specialised approaches a instinctual perception. At its climax, it stresses the value of pragmat over kindness when faced with a belligerent enemy who might unle terrible forces; moreover, it is crucial to the film's moral stance tha is the alien – ultimately shown to be a cowardly suicide bomber – w is willing, even happy, to go nuclear for the sake of pride. But it is t American icon of subjectively interpreted misadventure and/or tacti error – the Vietnam War and its commonly perceived mistakes of milit judgement – that are most consistently evoked. From the alien's devic use of the jungle setting, to McTiernan's shorthand inclusion of rock a roll music, sweat-drenched paranoia, and enervation of the troops signify the Indochinese experience, this is clearly about redressing ''Nam' situation as a template for future endeavours. Only by und standing the opposition's precise nature, and by taking on a 'prim enemy at close-quarters and in sympathy with his dangerous, outlar ish terrain, might the First World restore order to the Third, or wipe t slate clean of insidious manifestations. *Predator* employs Arnold, sobe and efficiently, to head up its trope: like numerous other cultural expr sions of post-Vietnam trauma, it constitutes a 'symbolic effort to bri back home again what we hope can be recuperated in imagination if r in fact: a not ignoble part of as all squandered in an ignoble war.'[208]