

## Document Citation

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Author(s)	Aaron Schindler
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"APOCALYPSE NOW"

APOCALYPSE NOW: Francis Ford Coppola's trail-ails in getting this picture to the screen are well publicized and of no real concern to most moviegoers. The only question is, has he succeeded in his purpose, namely, to depict, in his own words, "the horror, the madness, the sensuousness, and the moral dilemma of the Vietnam war." Using Joseph Conrad's Heart of Darkness as its spiritual core, Apocalypse Now details the journey of Captain Ben Willard (Martin Sheen) down a perilous river from Saigon through the bleeding heart of Vietnam and into Cambodia. His mission: To kill a rebellious Green Beret colonel named Kurtz (Marlon Brando), who has apparently gone mad and set up a private kingdom in the Cambodian jungles. As Willard, accompanied by four others, gets closer and closer to Kurtz, he reads the colonel's dossier and tries to reach the soul of this man who, during the course of this torturous war, *turned, seemingly,* ~~seemed to turn~~ from a brilliant officer into a man possessed. On the journey, the horror and, especially, the madness of the war, are vividly depicted in scene after scene: In a brutal assault on a Vietnamese village, led by a war-loving, gung-ho commander

(brilliantly played by Robert Duvall); in the senseless slaughter of a family on the river; in a hellish night battle *being fought for* around a meaningless bridge. But because Coppola has chosen to make this film more than a simple depiction of the war's horrors <sup>he is looking</sup> to uncover the evil at the core of human beings that allows such horrors <sup>the success</sup> or failure of his work rests on the confrontation between Kurtz and Willard. Unfortunately, despite Brando's prodigious attempt to impart the mythic power of Kurtz, and Coppola's cinematic attempts <sup>by showing</sup> Kurtz only in shadows and other devices to lend a mystical aura to the meeting <sup>Kurtz's</sup> soul and <sup>his cosmic vision</sup> message are not fully revealed. ~~It~~ *Indeed, it* may have been an impossible <sup>task</sup> effort all along. In any event, Apocalypse Now, while a daring effort, is not a totally successful one. It is, however, a film that should be seen by every thinking adult. (R) @@@