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Apocalypse Now Redux : A Screenplay



Synopsis

The companion screenplay to the recently updated version of Coppola's groundbreaking masterpiece. The book features an introduction by Francis Ford Coppola, the entire screenplay, and 8 pages of color photos. *Apocalypse Now* is a retelling of Joseph Conrad's classic novella, *Heart of Darkness*--set in the Vietnam War. This is the definitive vision of madness and folly of war in our times.

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Customer Reviews

I was disappointed to see that this book doesn't contain the original version of the *Apocalypse Now* script, by John Milius. It could have at least contained one of the later Milius/Coppola rewrites, such as the final revised 1975 version, which is easily found online. The simple fact is, those scripts provide a better reading experience; you're better off just watching the movie than reading this one. And, if you're a fledgling screenwriter, you're certainly not going to learn anything about the craft of scriptwriting from this book. The reason being, as any viewer of the excellent documentary "Hearts of Darkness" knows, is that Coppola basically gave his actors free reign in expanding and ad-libbing their dialog on the set. Having read the earlier Milius/Coppola rewrites, I know that a lot of the lines in *Apocalypse Now* were in fact from the script. But many more of them (particularly Brando and Hopper's dialog) were in fact made up by the actors themselves. So to publish this book and say that it's a pure creation of Milius and Coppola is a bit misleading (something which Coppola himself vaguely asserts in his introduction). A straight-up publication of an earlier version would have been preferable, if for the simple fact that it would give amazing insight into the twisted path this film took,

from script to celluloid. For example, the '75 version mentioned above (the script Coppola started with on the set, but eventually rewrote day by day) not only opened with a psychedelic action scene, it also ended with one: a surreal, apocalyptic (of course) set-piece that involved untold VC, rampant destruction, and drugged-out GI's, with "Light My Fire" blaring over humongous stereos.

"Apocalypse Now! Redux" is celebrated as one of the most powerful anti-war manifestos. One of the reasons for its long-term success is, without a doubt, its precocious post-modernism. The Air Cavalry scene, in particular, conveys a message that will become part of the post-modern intellectual credo. Most core Western cultural symbols, old and new, are intrinsically violent, "barbaric." "Apocalypse Now!" is not only a harbinger of this vision, it takes it to the extreme. In it, even the counterculture, in other contexts celebrated as a "liberating force," is intertwined with the lethal vines of death. In the new release of the movie the Playboy culture and the untrammelled eroticism of the sixties become central driving forces of the Vietnam war. In Coppola's own words "This is an L.A. war." His synopsis of the movie sums it up: "The American War `to bring civilization to the ignorant millions' is merely the extension of mercantile colonialism[;] the horror and savagery lie not in the jungle, but in the American culture itself, with its powerless [sic] technology and pop culture."Although not very original-the idea goes all the way back to Marx-this vision, combined with a daring cinematography and paranoid atmosphere, made the movie into a landmark cinematic event. At the time (1979) it sent shivers down, for different reasons, obviously, many liberal and conservative spines. When I first saw "Apocalypse Now!, behind the Iron Curtain, I found it an exhilarating visual experience. It gave me a glimpse into, I thought, a new world of meanings. Particularly intriguing was the idea that one can talk about war, usually associated with the "shoot `em up" clichés of the "Dirty Dozen"-kind, without using grandiloquent musical scores and images. War can be "modern.

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