



Apocalypse Now

by Paul Clark

Although, in terms of men killed, the Vietnam war ranks below the First and Second World Wars, one would expect our modern war movies to be equal if not better than those previous efforts due to our improved cinematographical techniques. **Coming Home** was very good and **The Deerhunter** was damn good, but even before they opened in theatres rumors were circulating about a movie which would provide a kind of "final judgement" on the war.

The rumor was this movie also had pretenses to being a final judgement on life, that it would offer us a definitive vision of the meaning behind all our strivings. If you saw this movie it wouldn't matter anymore if you were hit by a car tomorrow or dying of lung cancer; you would have that insight into things which is all we really want.

Contrary to expectation, however, after seeing **Apocalypse Now** I still avoid cars on the street, and refuse to smoke.

The movie contains some great spectacles, some absorbing scenes which produce some preciously curious emotions and photography that is the best I have seen. Although I had glimpses of the Vietnam Coppola was trying to depict, I didn't really feel it.

Above all, Coppola was examining a moral story about two men experiencing enough moral horror to tear away the roots of their deepest ethical convictions. This makes for a

tremendous subject, and Coppola makes some headway in portraying it, but not enough.

His photography, viewed apart from the soundtrack, comes closer, Kurtz's passages from T.S. Eliot, come even closer.

Willard's final act appears to be some kind of reaffirmation of value in an apparently indifferent world, but it's confusing and unconvincing. It was an ambitious project but, like war—big, too big.