

## *Francis Ford Coppola's Apocalypse Now, Heart of Darkness, and the Vietnam War Redux*

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### **Abstract**

This essay is a consideration of Francis Ford Coppola's *Apocalypse Now*—in its original as well as revised form—in light of Francis Ford Coppola's film career, the Vietnam War, and Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*.

**Keywords:** Francis Ford Coppola, *Apocalypse Now*, *Heart of Darkness*, Vietnam War.

### **Resumen**

Este ensayo reconsidera *Apocalypse Now* de Francis Ford Coppola en su forma original y revisada, a la luz de la carrera cinematográfica de Francis Ford Coppola, de la guerra del Vietnam y de *El corazón de las tinieblas* de Joseph Conrad.

**Palabras clave:** Francis Ford Coppola, *Apocalypse Now*, *El corazón de las tinieblas*, Guerra del Vietnam.

### **Considering Coppola**

Francis Ford Coppola has an artistic problem: he is not a thinker. Indeed, Coppola has always been short on thought; he stumbles when he thinks, when he thinks he's thinking. *The Godfather* (1972, 1974, 1990) was strongest in its execution—also its executions—not in its adolescent implications of analogy between the Mafia and corporate capitalism (an analogy that ignores, among other things, the Sicilian origins of the Mafia and its blood bonds of loyalty, which have nothing to do with capitalism). *The Conversation* (1974) itself faltered in its Orwellian idea-structure.

Oddly, the little-known *Rain People* (1969), a road picture about a young woman's journey toward self-discovery, may be Coppola's most fully realized if least spectacular film. It is more successful artistically than his films to follow because it is filled, not with thought or the attempt at thinking, not with gaps in an ideational framework, but with feeling. And, second, Coppola seems to have produced this movie out of felt or at least imagined experience, as opposed to the indirect kind: his *ideas* about the experience of the Mafia and the Vietnam War in America (seen on display again, after *The Godfather* [I, II] and *Apocalypse Now* [1979], in *The Cotton Club* [1984] and *Gardens of Stone* [1987]), as well as about the experience, chronicled in *The*

*Conversation*, of electronic-surveillance work in the post-Watergate era. With subject matter a few years ahead of its time, *The Rain People* was thus the work of a man who had looked at (or seen through), as well as lived in, the world, and who has since seemed content primarily to expound upon it.

Even Coppola's scripts for others have suffered from woolly thinking: his screenplay for Jack Clayton's *The Great Gatsby* (1974), for example, turned F. Scott Fitzgerald's supple suggestiveness into mindless blatancy; and his scenario for Franklin Schaffner's *Patton* (1970) presented the glaringly contradictory nature of this famous general as praiseworthy, even fathomless, complexity. That's the top of the heap. From there, we head down to Coppola's blotchy script for René Clément's *Is Paris Burning?* (1966), a rambling, pseudo-documentary re-creation of the liberation of Paris from Nazi occupation. Then we get to the adaptations of Tennessee Williams' *This Property Is Condemned* and Carson McCullers' *Reflections in a Golden Eye*, for Sydney Pollack (1966) and John Huston (1967) respectively, in which Coppola—who began his career in the early 1960s as a director of short sex films—manages to denude the world of Southern Gothicism of all but its trash, its kinkiness, and its pretense.

In *Apocalypse Now*, Coppola's attempts to dramatize private moral agony and general moral abyss during the Vietnam War were disjointed, assumptive, and weak, for all of Vittorio Storaro's aptly hallucinogenic color cinematography. When I read, three years before the making of this film, that Storaro had been chosen as the cinematographer, I have to say I was shocked. The lush *Vogue*-style photographer of Bernardo Bertolucci's *Last Tango in Paris* (1972) and *The Conformist* (1970), for a picture that was being billed as the definitive epic about Vietnam! But, as it turns out, the fine moments in *Apocalypse Now* depend heavily on what Storaro can do for them.

### ***Apocalypse Now* and Vietnam**

Because *Apocalypse Now*, despite its director's claims for its moral stature, despite its simplistic relation to Joseph Conrad's <sup>[11]</sup>novella *Heart of Darkness* (1899)—on which Coppola and John Milius's screenplay is overtly modeled (though it also has something in common with Werner Herzog's *Aguirre: The Wrath of God* [1972])—is at its best in delivering the texture of the first freaked-out, pill-popping, rock-accompanied war. For the American forces, Vietnam seems to have been divided pretty much between military virtuosi, grateful for any chance to exercise their skills, and most of the troops, who never believed in anything except the possibility of being killed, who were tormented by fear and pointlessness into rank barbarities and new pits of racism. Pinched between a growing anti-war movement at home and an unwinnable war in front of them, these soldiers suffered; and their suffering was often transmuted into gross slaughter, into heavy drugging, into hysterical hilarity set to music. It's this wild psychedelic war, much more a jungle discotheque with butchery than face-in-the-mud naturalism, that Coppola understands and renders well. And for this splashy fantasy on a war that was hideously fantastic, Storaro's boutique eye is perfect.

In London I was once interviewed for a BBC program about Vietnam films, and I was asked about the effect of TV coverage on the making of fictional movies about Vietnam. I forget what I answered, but I remembered the question during *Apocalypse Now*, which I didn't see until I came home. The film libraries are full of newsreel footage of this century's bloodshed, but Vietnam was the first living-room war (in Michael Arlen's phrase from 1969). I think that Coppola, together with his co-scenarist John

Milius, anticipated the BBC question and decided that the picture had to be something other in texture than representation, had to lift past what television had made familiar. This is a trip film, an acid war. Again, Storaro was the right choice to shoot it.

Everything in the picture that tends toward this aim is superb. A devastating helicopter attack on a Viet Cong village at a delta, in which the planes broadcast both “The Ride of the Valkyries” (from Richard Wagner’s *Die Walküre* [1870]) and napalm, after which some of the victors go surfing, after which one helicopter drops a river patrol boat into position for a journey upstream; a stop at a depot upcountry that is like a shopping mall misplaced; a sudden encounter up that river with a USO girlie revue (featuring *Playboy* bunnies) in a huge amphitheater surrounded by giant phallic missiles—a performance that ends in an attempt at mass rape; a lighted bridge that looks like a misplaced festival float; the boat crew’s nervous destruction of a family on a sampan; the arrival of the patrol boat at its destination, a temple deep in the jungle, gliding in between canoes filled with hundreds of silent, carefully observant, white-daubed natives in a scene that marries the archetypal jungle-princess movie to the Babylon sequence in D. W. Griffith’s *Intolerance* (1916)—these scenes, and more like them, show Coppola at his height. He likes size, and he can use it. Of course one can argue that other American directors, given tens of millions of dollars to burn, might also produce moments of sweep and flourish, and Coppola surely couldn’t have done it without money. But, in this regard at least, he uses the money well, to give himself the orchestrated crowds, the immense vistas, the stunning juxtapositions that lie aptly within his talent, his apparent sense, on display as never before (or since) in *Apocalypse Now*, that the world is seen most truthfully when it is seen as spectacle.



The very first sequence itself is discouraging, however. In Vietnam in 1968, the protagonist, an army intelligence captain named Benjamin L. Willard, is seen close-up and upside down, then bits and pieces of his dingy, sepia-toned Saigon hotel room are filtered in, like a record-album-cover montage. He’s sweat-bathed, drunk, and drinking; he smashes a mirror with his fist. There are panning shots of his dog tag, a pile of bills,

his wallet, a woman's picture, an opened letter and envelope, cigarettes, a glass and liquor bottle, and a gun lying next to his pillow. Willard then starts his voice-over narration, which was written by the former war correspondent Michael Herr (author of the admirable *Dispatches* [1977]) and is surprisingly flatulent. The symbols of disorder are stale. Any union in anguish between him and us is thus missed from the start; from that point on, Willard's moral pilgrimage is fabricated while his physical pilgrimage is vivid. (It must be said, though, that the opening dissolves and superimpositions of Willard's face over a rotating ceiling fan and a helicopter attack demonstrate one advantage of Coppola's video editing system, which enabled him to transfer footage to videotape, edit the tape, and then conform the 70mm print of the film to the edited tape. On the video editing machine of this period, the filmmaker could easily build up the visual image in layers, thereby avoiding use of the expensive, time-consuming optical printer and the film lab normally needed to achieve such superimpositions and dissolves.)

Willard is subsequently ordered, by two grim military superiors and a CIA operative, to make his way upriver to the station of a brilliant Green Beret colonel gone AWOL named Walter E. Kurtz, who has apparently become imperially insane, madly dangerous, egomaniacal and murderous. From inside neutral, neighboring Cambodia, he is waging his own ferocious, independent war against Vietnamese intelligence agents with a guerrilla Montagnard, or Hmong, army. Willard's top-secret mission—and he has had missions like this before—is to “terminate” Kurtz. A river patrol boat and crew of four are put at Willard's disposal. Journeying through hazards and strange encounters, he finds Kurtz ensconced in majesty in the ruins of an ancient Cambodian temple, a self-appointed god who rules his band of native warriors from a jungle outpost. After some time and some gnostic conversation between the two men, Willard completes his mission, which is in essence a journey into the heart of the Vietnam War, and starts home.

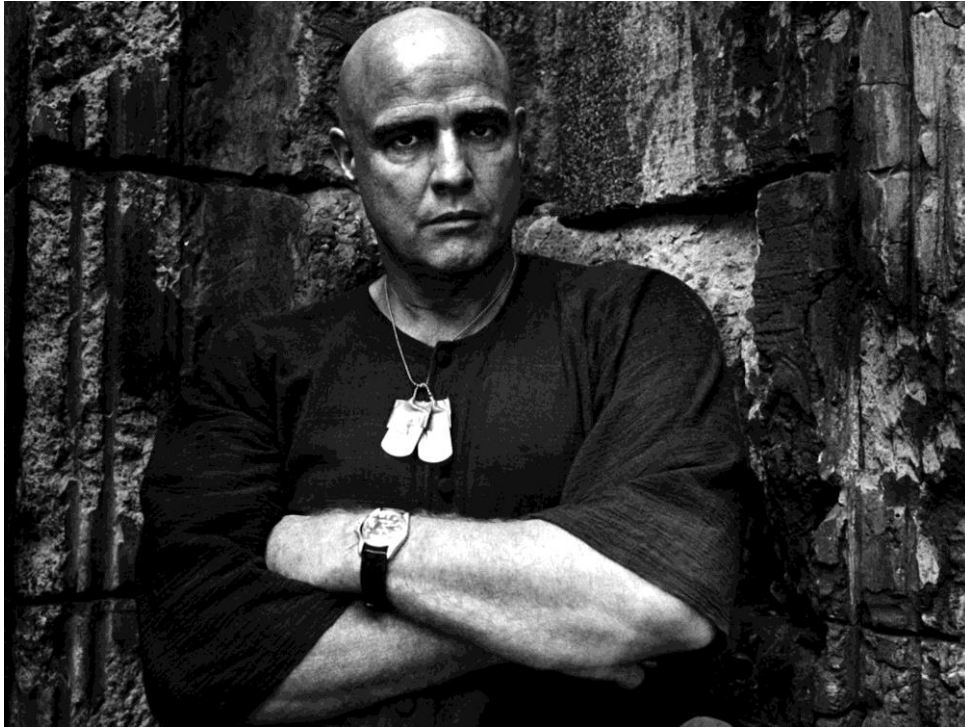
### *Apocalypse Now and Heart of Darkness*

One immediate difference from *Heart of Darkness*, other than the obvious ones of time and place, is that Conrad's protagonist, Charles Marlow, encounters African mysteries for the first time as he travels up a river into the Congo, but Coppola's Willard is a weathered veteran of this war. The opening sequence of *Apocalypse Now*, where he boozes it up in isolation in his hotel room, suggests that he is recovering from a recent, probably similar jungle experience (as well as from marital divorce). This difference from Marlow lessens the reactive power of the battle-fatigued Willard and makes him even more passive, more of an observer, than he was bound to be anyway through most of the film.

The screenplay otherwise suffers from its reliance on Conrad because it does not rely on him heavily enough. Milius and Coppola took an armature from Conrad, the journey into the interior to find the heart of darkness, the darkest reaches of the human psyche, but what they produced was a tour of a terrible war with a spurious finish. The war sequences here rank with those of Michael Cimino's *The Deer Hunter* (1978) and Oliver Stone's *Platoon* (1986) in their bitter fierceness, and nothing that scarifies the Vietnam debacle can be unworthy; but Conrad was grappling with immensity, not specifics. Several times in *Apocalypse Now* people say that human beings contain both good and evil, but this is mild stuff compared with what Conrad implies by “the horror.”

At the end of the film, after killing Kurtz, Willard departs, making his way through a host of natives who let him pass. There's a slight hint that he might himself take over this Doré kingdom, but it passes. (Apparently the meekness of these warriors who had been devoted to Kurtz is based on J. G. Frazer's thesis in *The Golden Bough* [1890]—a book that happens to be part of Kurtz's small library—that, in the eyes of the worshippers, he who kills the god becomes the god.) Slowly, as the riverboat departs, the screen goes to black, and we hear Kurtz repeating, "The horror. The horror." But the true horror *Apocalypse Now* is not what Kurtz mouths in imitation of Conrad: it is the war itself.

On Willard's journey upriver, the boat is attacked first by machine gun, then by arrows, then by spear. But the message—that we're burrowing down layer by layer—is too patent to affect us. Politically, too, the film is empty, but then it doesn't have much political ambition. What it wants is to be a moral allegory, like its Conradian model, and there it fizzles completely. Unlike the experiences in *Heart of Darkness*, those along the way in this picture do not knit toward a final episode of revelation, throwing retrospective light. No theme is developed. *Apocalypse Now* is finally a string of set-pieces, through which we are teased with advance data about a warring eccentric who turns out to be more or less what we expect.



Coppola's Kurtz is just a literature-lacquered version of the arch-villain in Richard Donner's *Superman* film (1978) or in the James Bond scripts: a mastermind who has seen through the spurious niceties of human behavior. Kurtz was a top officer with every chance to go higher, who at age thirty-eight opted to become a paratrooper, ostensibly because (like T. E. Lawrence) he wanted to take the difficult route, to test himself. Yet this lover of the knife-edge has only recently discovered that war is horrible. The turning point came for him after he led some men into a village to inoculate children against polio. The Viet Cong slithered in after he had left and cut off the inoculated arms of all the children. (Note: a number of Vietnam War authorities at the time objected to the Russian-roulette scene in *The Deer Hunter* because they knew no basis for it in fact.

Is there any basis for this inoculation story? If not, what was holding up the experts' objections? The fact that, in this film, we also see Americans murdering Vietnamese?) It seems a bit late in Kurtz's day for him to become, like Albert Camus's Caligula (from the 1945 play), a murderer as a defense against the horrors of murder everywhere.

Kurtz's quotations from Conrad and from T. S. Eliot's 1925 poem "The Hollow Men" (in which Eliot quoted Conrad) are glib attempts to enlarge him. His own dialogue is larded with what I'd call soundtrack profundities. "You have the right to kill me," he tells Willard, "you have no right to judge me." Try that on your piano. As with the quotations, Coppola tries to deepen the picture, literally, with deep sound. Over and over again, the score hits ultra-low notes—made electronically or with an organ?—that shake the theater like Sensurround, an aural caricature of the picture's frantic, failed ambition to delve.

### **Performances at War**

That *Apocalypse Now* ultimately falls short of what it might have been begins with the casting, particularly of Willard. The list of actors who turned down the role is saddening: Jack Nicholson, who was one of them, would by his very presence have enriched the picture. Martin Sheen, who got the role, was a much-delayed choice. Coppola actually started shooting with Harvey Keitel as Willard (after considering Steve McQueen for the part) but, after a few weeks, was dissatisfied and replaced him. Sheen, the supposed improvement, who has given good performances in the past, is utterly inadequate here. It's as if a gas-station attendant had been sent on this mission. Since Willard is only an observer through most of the story, the role needs innate force to keep it from being torpid. Sheen is limp and flat.

Marlon Brando, as Kurtz, is bald in several ways, shorn of hair and power, posturing and pompous. Brando seems to have put Coppola in a bind. The director got the powerful actor he wanted and then was stuck with him (though he thought of replacing Brando with Orson Welles). It's easy to see that Brando is merely teasing the director, providing a minimum of energy. We're told that Brando insisted on improvising some of his dialogue; this malfeasance was, apparently, another egotistical stunt that Coppola simply had to endure. Caught between an inadequate leading man and a capricious capital figure, the picture has to depend almost desperately on Storaro's camera, which is prodigal with several kinds of beauty, and on the rest of the actors, who are helpful with the exception of the otherwise redoubtable Robert Duvall. He is pallid here as the crazy, battle-hungry helicopter commander, Lt. Colonel Kilgore, and not always comprehensible; what's worse, in his old-style cavalry hat, Duvall looks like Truman Capote at a costume party.

*Apocalypse Now* ultimately reduces to the story of a special-services assassin sent to kill a grander assassin, with a décor of eye-filling adventures along the way; but with nothing at the end except that, just as predicted, the victim is an inflated lunatic. What moral experience is in it for Willard? None. What moral insight is given into the Vietnam War? None. Coppola and Milius simply clung to the framework of their great, Conradian model, hoping that it would aggrandize their film in the way they hoped that quotations would aggrandize Kurtz.



### The Return of *Apocalypse Now*

Then, in 2001, came *Apocalypse Now Redux*. Very near the end of the lengthy closing credits for the new version comes the line: “Portions of this film were released in 1979 under the title *Apocalypse Now*.” If the first version was incomplete, the word “redux” (“brought back,” “returned”) doesn’t apply. And the word “portion” doesn’t nearly reflect the sizes of the two versions: Version Two is 202 minutes long, but Version One was 153 minutes, hardly a mere “portion” of what is now released. Still, if this statement really is Coppola’s view, why did he snuggle it away so coyly, and for so long?

The chief restorations are two sequences that were deleted in 1979 for reasons of narrative pace, so clearly Coppola’s view of that pace has altered. Both sequences take place along the river. First, after the *Playboy* episode, the patrol boat encounters the *Playboy* helicopter downed upriver, in a remote base camp, for lack of fuel. The chopper’s occupants have sought refuge during a fierce and torrential rainstorm in a disorganized, muddy medical-evacuation center. A deal is made by Willard with the *Playboy* manager, and in exchange for some of the boat’s fuel, members of its crew are allowed to visit the bunnies in their helicopter as well as in some tents nearby (a kind of “frontier town” reminiscent of the one in Robert Altman’s *McCabe & Mrs. Miller* [1971]). The sequence is entirely gratuitous: it seems to have been contrived, and not very deftly, to get some sex into the picture. (Willard does not participate.)



The second big restoration is at least more germane. The boat reaches a French-owned plantation in Cambodia, replete with a luxurious house, a small private army, and a large French family in residence. (Possibly such anomalies existed—French plantations safe even though the Viet Minh had hated the French long before the Americans came.) The sequence has a double purpose. First, during the conversation at the dinner table at which Willard is a guest with the family, the French patriarch expounds the French claim that they had been here for more than a century and that in their own Vietnam war they had at least been fighting for what they believed was theirs. The Americans are fighting

for nothing, he says scornfully. Then, later, the patriarch's widowed daughter-in-law visits Willard's bedroom, where she delivers the following bit of simulated sagacity: "There are two of you. Don't you see? One that kills and one that loves."

This long sequence is a doubtful blessing. The patriarch's speech is a blatant insert. Possibly it would have had some impact in 1979, before the Vietnam War was so thoroughly exposed as an American governmental deception and blunder. Even then it would have seemed mechanical, but now it is also superfluous (like the subsequent, restored monologue in which Kurtz, surrounded by Cambodian children, quotes from a lie-riddled, flag-waving *Time* magazine article, from September 22, 1967, about the "progress" of the Vietnam War). The chief interest in the scene is purely cinematic, a Coppola touch. The family has seated Willard on the eastern side of the dinner table so that, through all the speechifying, he is bothered by the setting sun and has to shade his eyes. He has been put, so to speak, on the solar spot. As for the bedroom scene, it serves only to give Willard some sex without *Playboy* grossness.

About these restorations Coppola misjudged. *Apocalypse Now* is one of the few instances where inclusion of outtakes has not helped. (Another was Steven Spielberg's *Close Encounters of the Third Kind* [1977].) His film was better off as it was. Still, its re-issue, even as expanded, gave us the chance to confirm that it is, though ruptured, a major work. The very concept of the film is large-scale and daring, immediately absorbing. The sheer ozone of the enterprise clearly exalted Coppola throughout. He himself has used the term "operatic" about the picture—he confirms it with the use of "The Ride of the Valkyries" during the helicopter raid—and it has the breadth, artistic embrace, and floridity that the word "opera" suggests.

### **The Record of *Apocalypse Now***

A documentary about the film's chaotic making, shot in part by Coppola's wife, Eleanor, and including interviews with most of the cast and crew, appeared in 1991 with the title *Hearts of Darkness: A Filmmaker's Apocalypse*. Details of the difficulties during the two years of shooting are by now also well lodged in numerous articles and books—one book by Eleanor Coppola herself. (There was even an Off-Broadway play about the travails of making this film: all names were changed, of course.) Herewith a few of those difficulties. When Coppola began shooting *Apocalypse Now* in the Philippines in March 1976 (after pre-production work that began in mid-1975), the film's budget was \$12 million, and the picture was set for release in April of 1977. But a series of setbacks slowed down production and drove up costs: along with extra-marital affairs, a suicidal director, drug use, and other forms of madness, a typhoon named Olga halted the shooting schedule for seven weeks; Marlon Brando, whose character was originally a lean, physically fit Green Beret (Conrad's Kurtz himself was gaunt and even emaciated), showed up in the Philippines weighing 285 pounds (only to become even more bloated later in life) and had to embark on a crash diet; Martin Sheen had a near-fatal heart attack and could not work for several weeks; and throughout the scriptwriting and shooting phases of the production, Coppola had difficulty in choosing an ending for the film. By the time *Apocalypse Now* was released in August of 1979, its budget had climbed to over \$30 million, \$18 million of which came from Coppola's personal assets and loans.

Still, despite the recurrent obstacles, the picture glows with Francis Ford Coppola's eagerness, ambition, and talent. Nominated for eight Academy Awards (including Best Picture, Best Director, and Best Screenplay), the film won only two,



though they were well-deserved: Best Cinematography and Best Sound. It was also awarded the prestigious Palme d'Or (top prize, shared with Volker Schlöndorff's *Tin Drum* [1979]) at the Cannes Festival. Despite being plagued by numerous delays and cost overruns during its lengthy production period, then, *Apocalypse Now* may just be—for all its flaws—the definitive Vietnam War film. The journey upriver unrolls before us, synesthetically speaking, like a visible tone poem, one whose sometimes surreal images indelibly sear the memory.



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***Apocalypse Now* (1979):**

Director: Francis Ford Coppola. Screenplay: Francis Ford Coppola, John Milius, & Michael Herr, based on the 1899 novella *Heart of Darkness*, by Joseph Conrad. Cinematographer: Vittorio Storaro. Editors: Lisa Fruchtman, Gerald B. Greenberg, Walter Murch. Music: Carmine Coppola, Francis Ford Coppola; Jim Morrison & The Doors ("This Is the End"). Production Designers: Dean Tavoularis, Angelo Graham, Bob Nelson. Sound Designers: Walter Murch, Mark Berger, Richard Beggs, Nat Boxer.

Running time: 153 minutes; 202 min (Redux)

Format: 70mm (initial release; later released in 35mm), in color

Cast: Marlon Brando (Col. Walter E. Kurtz), Robert Duvall (Lt. Col. Bill Kilgore), Martin Sheen (Capt. Benjamin L. Willard), Frederic Forrest (Jay "Chef" Hicks), Albert Hall (Chief Phillips), Sam Bottoms (Lance B. Johnson), Larry Fishburne (Tyrone "Clean" Miller), Dennis Hopper (Photojournalist), Harrison Ford (Col. Lucas), G. D. Spradlin (Gen. Corman), Scott Glenn (Lt. Richard M. Colby), Cynthia Wood (Playmate of the Year), Glenn Walken (Lt. Carlsen), Herb Rice (Roach), Richard Marks (Narrator), Christian Marquand (Hubert de Marais, Redux version only), Aurore Clément (Roxanne Sarrault, Redux version only), Michel Patton (Philippe de Marais, Redux version only), Frank Villard (Gaston de Marais, Redux version only), David Olivier (Christian de Marais, Redux version only), Chrystel Le Pelletier (Claudine, Redux version only), Robert Julian (Tutor, Redux version only), Yvon LeSeaux (Sgt. Le Fevre, Redux version only), Roman Coppola (Francis de Marais, Redux version only), Gian-Carlo Coppola (Gilles de Marais, Redux version only)

***Francis Ford Coppola* (born 1939)**

*Dementia 13* (1963)

*You're a Big Boy Now* (1966)

*Finian's Rainbow* (1968)

*The Rain People* (1969)

*The Godfather* (1972)

*The Conversation* (1974)

*The Godfather Part II* (1974)

*Apocalypse Now* (1979)

*One From the Heart* (1982)

*The Outsiders* (1983)

*Rumble Fish* (1983)

*The Cotton Club* (1984)

*Peggy Sue Got Married* (1986)

*Gardens of Stone* (1987)

*Tucker: The Man and His Dream* (1988)

*The Godfather Part III* (1990)

*Bram Stoker's Dracula* (1992)

*Jack* (1996)

*The Rainmaker* (1997)

*Youth without Youth* (2007)

*Tetro* (2009)

*Twixt* (2011)

*Distant Vision* (2015)

**Filmography: Key Vietnam War Films**

*The Green Berets* (1968), directed by Ray Kellogg & John Wayne

*The Boys in Company C* (1977), directed by Sidney J. Furie

*Coming Home* (1978), directed by Hal Ashby

*The Deer Hunter* (1978), directed by Michael Cimino

*Go Tell the Spartans* (1978), directed by Ted Post

*Apocalypse Now* (1979), directed by Francis Ford Coppola

*Streamers* (1983), directed by Robert Altman

*Purple Hearts* (1984), directed by Sidney J. Furie

*The Killing Fields* (1984), directed by Roland Joffé

*Platoon* (1986), directed by Oliver Stone

*Full Metal Jacket* (1987), directed by Stanley Kubrick

*Good Morning, Vietnam* (1987), directed by Barry Levinson

*Hamburger Hill* (1987), directed by John Irvin

*The Hanoi Hilton* (1987), directed by Lionel Chetwynd

*84 Charlie MoPic* (1988), directed by Patrick Sheane Duncan

*Casualties of War* (1989), directed by Brian De Palma

*Born on the Fourth of July* (1989), directed by Oliver Stone

*In Country* (1989), directed by Norman Jewison

*Flight of the Intruder* (1991), directed by John Milius

*Heaven & Earth* (1993), directed by Oliver Stone

*A Bright Shining Lie* (1998), directed by Terry George

*Faith of My Fathers* (1999), directed by Peter Markle

*Tigerland* (2000), directed by Joel Schumacher

*Under Heavy Fire* (a.k.a. *Going Back*, 2001), directed by Sidney J. Furie

*Path to War* (2002), directed by John Frankenheimer

*We Were Soldiers* (2002), directed by Randall Wallace

*Rescue Dawn* (2006), directed by Werner Herzog

*Tunnel Rats* (2007), directed by Uwe Boll.

