

On Screen

# APOCALYPSE NOW

*Directed by F. F. Coppola (1979)  
Starring Marlon Brando, Robert Duvall,  
Martin Sheen and Dennis Hopper.*

Nine Oscar nominations went to this American epic war film produced and directed by Francis Ford Coppola in 1979. Coppola took Conrad's novel *Heart of Darkness* and used it as a parody for the Vietnam War. The similarities are all too obvious; both works are set in the jungle, both principle characters (Marlowe in Conrad's work and Willard in Coppola's) must go into the very depths of the jungle to find a man called Kurtz and both works pose the same questions: What does it mean to be civilised? Who are the savages? How can power change people? And where does the real heart of darkness lie?

Apocalypse Now  
(1979) by  
F. F. Coppola -  
Scene 2



OVER TO YOU

## SCENE 2

*In scene 2 Willard is Kurtz's prisoner but Kurtz knows he has been sent to kill him.*

### 1 Now watch scene 2 with the subtitles.

1. What aspects of Kurtz's appearance make him appear powerful?
2. How is it made clear in the scene that Willard is in a vulnerable position? (Look at the camera position.)
3. In what way is the use of light and dark effective in the scene?
4. There is no music in this scene, only the sound of dripping water and insects. Does this add or detract anything from the scene in your opinion?
5. At the end of the scene Kurtz asks Willard: 'Are my methods unsound?' And Willard answers: 'I don't see any method at all, Sir.' What does he mean by this?

### 2 Can you think of any other actors who would have made a good Kurtz?

