

******Ecopsychology Film Discussion Part 1: *The Embrace of the Serpent*.**

When: Friday evening, November 9, 2018, 7 PM EST.

Where: Home of Judith Robert & T.J. Kapacinkas, 1739 Riverside Drive, South Bend, IN 46616.

RSVP: Please let us know if you are coming so that we can arrange seating. No need to respond if you are not. Thanks.

What to bring: Anything that you enjoy with a movie.

Embrace of the Serpent (Spanish: *El abrazo de la serpiente*) is a 2015 internationally co-produced adventure drama film directed by Ciro Guerra and written by Guerra and Jacques Toulemonde Vidal. It was shot in black-and-white. The film won the Art Cinema Award in the Directors' Fortnight section at the 2015 Cannes Film Festival.^{[3][4]} It won Best Picture at the 2017 Riviera International Film Festival, and it also won the Best Ibero-American Film at the 3rd Platino Awards and was nominated for the Best Foreign Language Film at the 88th Academy Awards.^[5] The film was inspired by the travel diaries of Theodor Koch-Grunberg and Richard Evans Schultes, and dedicated to lost Amazonian cultures.

The film tells two stories thirty years apart, both featuring Karamakate, an Amazonian shaman and last survivor of his tribe. He travels with two scientists, firstly with German Theo von Martius in 1909 and American named Evan in 1940, to look for the rare yakruna, a (fictional) sacred plant.^[6]

Theo, an ethnographer from Tübingen who has already resided in the Amazon for several years, is very sick and is travelling by canoe with his field notes and a westernised local he saved from enslavement on a rubber plantation named Manduca. Karamakate prolongs his life, blasting white powder called "the sun's semen" (possibly a hallucinogenic made from virola^[7]) up his nose, but is reluctant to become involved with a westerner and refuses his money. Theo is searching for yakruna as the only cure for his disease and the three set off in the canoe to search for it.

Many years later an American botanist, Evan (Brionne Davis), paddles up to a much older Karamakate (Antonio Bolívar) who has apparently forgotten the customs of his own people. Evan says he is hoping to complete Theo's quest and Karamakate does assist, again reluctantly, saying his knowledge is spent. Evan has a book of Theo's final trek, which his aide sent back to Europe, as he did not survive the jungle. The book includes an image of Karamakate, which he refers to as his chullachaqui, a native term for hollow spirit. Karamakate agrees to help him only when Evan describes himself as someone who has devoted himself to plants, although Evan's real purpose is actually to secure disease-free rubber trees, since the United States's supplies of rubber from South East Asia had dwindled due to the Japanese wartime advance.

Both expeditions feature a Spanish Catholic Mission by the side of an Amazon tributary, run in 1909 by a sadistic, lone Spanish priest who beats orphan boys for any "pagan" behaviour, and in 1940 by a delusional Brazilian figure who believes he is the Messiah. He only trusts the visitors

when he believes they are the Biblical Magi, but Karamakate wins his respect when he heals his wife. By now the children of 1909 have grown into disturbed and violent acolytes.

In 1909, we are left with Theo, sick and having fled the Mission, arriving at a frontier post just about to be invaded by Colombian soldiers during the Amazon rubber boom, where the sacred yakruna is being abused by drunken men, and cultivated, against local traditions. Karamakate is furious and destroys it. In 1940, Karamakate does show Evan the origin of the plant in striking denuded dome shaped mountains (Cerros de Mavecure), allegedly the home of yakruna. He reveals one yakruna flower that is on the last plant – he has destroyed all the others – and prepares it for Evan. The preparation being hallucinogenic, aids Evan in undergoing a superconscious experience. While most of the film is in black-and-white, a part of this experience is shown in colour to signify its intensity. The film ends with a transformed Evan remaining enamoured by a group of butterflies.

******Ecopychology Film Discussion Part Two: *The Shape of Water***

When: Friday evening, November 16, 2018, 7 PM EST.

Where: Home of Judith Robert & T.J. Kapacinkas, 1739 Riverside Drive, South Bend, IN 46616.

RSVP: Please let us know if you are coming so that we can arrange seating. No need to respond if you are not. Thanks.

What to bring: Anything that you enjoy with a movie.

The Shape of Water is a 2017 American romantic dark fantasy drama film directed by Guillermo del Toro and written by del Toro and Vanessa Taylor.^[4] It stars Sally Hawkins, Michael Shannon, Richard Jenkins, Doug Jones, Michael Stuhlbarg, and Octavia Spencer. Set in Baltimore, Maryland, in 1962, the story follows a mute custodian at a high-security government laboratory who falls in love with a captured humanoid amphibian creature. Filming took place in Ontario, Canada, between August and November 2016.

The Shape of Water received critical acclaim for its acting, screenplay, direction, visuals, production design, and musical score, with many critics calling the film del Toro's best work since *Pan's Labyrinth*.^[8] the American Film Institute selected it as one of the top 10 films of the year.^[9] *The Shape of Water* received a number of awards and nominations, including thirteen nominations at the 90th Academy Awards, where it won for Best Picture, Best Director, Best Production Design and Best Original Score.^{[10][11]} It was nominated for seven awards at the 75th Golden Globe Awards, winning for Best Director and Best Original Score,^[12] and 12 at the 71st British Academy Film Awards, winning three awards, including Best Director.^[13] A novelization by del Toro and Daniel Kraus was published on March 6, 2018.^[14]

For a full discussion of the film and its plot, please Google the Wikipedia entry for The Shape of Water.