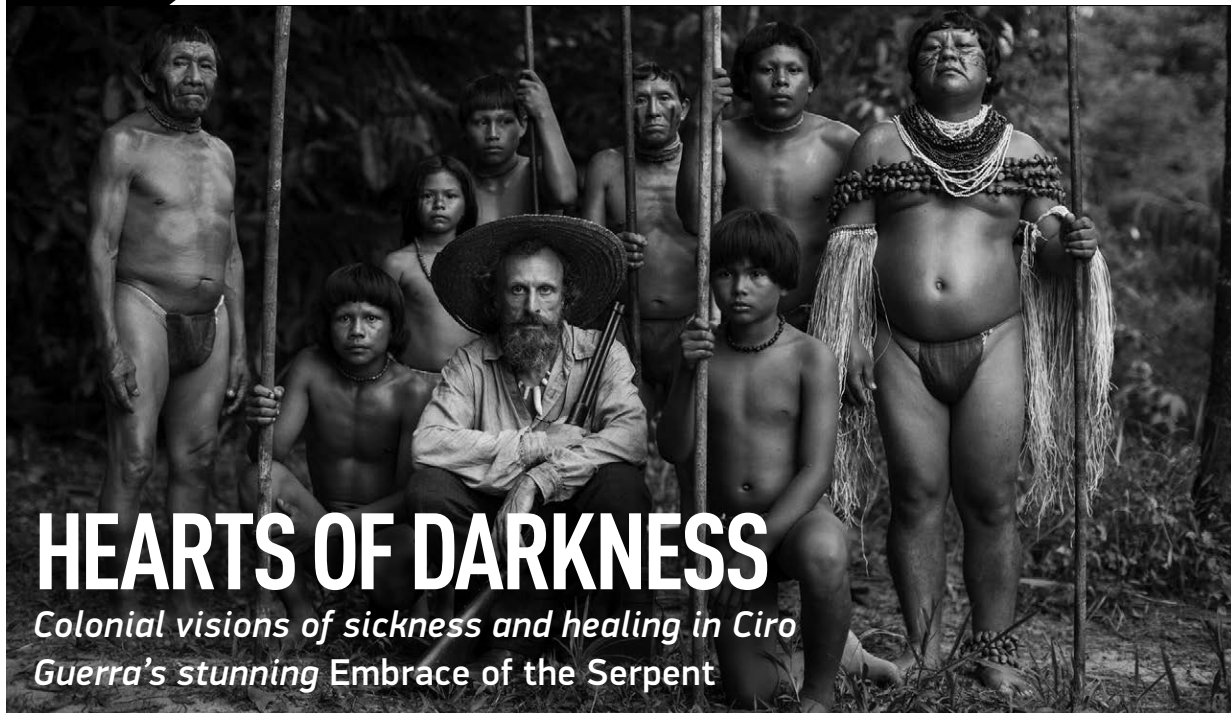




HEARTS OF DARKNESS

Colonial visions of sickness and healing in *Ciro Guerra's* stunning *Embrace of the Serpent*

Shot in lavish black-and-white, *Embrace of the Serpent* drops you immediately into the humid nightmare of colonial devastation. A lone shaman, Karamakate (Nilbio Torres), squats silently on the banks of the Amazon River in the Colombian jungle. A canoe approaches, carrying a Colombian guide, Manduca (Yauenkü Migüee), and Theo (Jan Bijvoet), a German anthropologist dying of an unspecified disease.

The year is 1911. The Colombian countryside and its inhabitants have been ravaged by the international rubber trade. Karamakate is the last remaining member of his tribe. Manduca, who the shaman considers a *caboclo* — a derogatory term for natives who work for invading white men — begs Karamakate to heal Theo with yakruna, a

hallucinogenic vine that grows, ironically enough, near the rubber tree.

Karamakate reluctantly agrees, commencing a journey that is not only a physical trek up the Amazon but a spiritual odyssey as well, investigating, with unwavering humanity, the complex consequences of colonialism.

Directed by Colombian-born *Ciro Guerra*, *Embrace of the Serpent* borrows heavily from past works on colonialism, most notably Werner Herzog's feverish film *Fitzcarraldo* and especially Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*, where the end game of conquest is chillingly expressed in the dying breath of the fictional monster Colonel Kurtz: "The horror, the horror."

What makes this film so extraordinary is that — unlike Conrad's complicit tales of colonial madness, where the

indigenous inhabitants remain cloaked in racist incomprehension — this film humanizes everyone involved, giving a full, three-dimensional portrait not only of the whites but of the natives as well, whose perspective of a world being drained of its dreams fuels the narrative. Karamakate, ever suspicious of the colonialists, nonetheless realizes that, unless he can help them heal (in the profoundest sense of the word), we are all doomed.

At the heart of the movie is the native concept of the *chullachaqui* — a hollow copy of a human who roams the Amazon as a trickster. As the film jumps back and forth in time, we meet the aged Karamakate (Antonio Bolívar Salvador), who fears he himself has become a *chullachaqui*. Robbed of his dreams and his memories, Karamakate attempts to help an American anthropologist, Evan (Brionne Davis), find the sacred yakruna plant.

In this way, the message of the film is complicated, and made universal. Whatever the causes and effects of colonialism, the healing must be across the board. The time of condemnation and hand-wringing is over, Karamakate comes to understand; to wage war against the whites is to lose every time. Instead, as the old shaman seeks to recapture his own sense of being, he realizes the inner ignition of the dream must be everyone's journey, including those well-intentioned anthropologists with their burdensome luggage (both figurative and literal) and the fancy stories they will bring home.

Yes, Kurtz's "horror" is on full display in *Embrace of the Serpent*, including an almost unbearable passage of torture and cannibalism at a Christian mission deep in the Colombian jungle. But the answer to that horror is not, as Kurtz apocalyptically suggested, to "exterminate the brutes." Instead, this film locates the sickness as something inside us all, and provides an antidote that is no less revolutionary for being utterly timeless: Stop being a *chullachaqui*, and awaken the dream. (*Broadway Metro*)

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KNIGHT OF CUPS	11:45a 2:20 4:55 7:30 10:05
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Michael Moore's WHERE TO INVADE NEXT	12:45 3:20 6:00
MUSTANG	11:40a 2:40 5:00 7:20
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BATMAN V SUPERMAN: DAWN OF JUSTICE 3D [CC,DV] (PG-13) ★ Fri. - Sat. (10:00 11:30 1:30 2:30) 4:00 5:00 6:00 7:30 8:30 9:30 11:00 12:00

MY BIG FAT GREEK WEDDING 2 [CC,DV] (PG-13) Fri. - Sat. (11:40 2:10) 4:40 7:10 9:35

THE DIVERGENT SERIES: ALLEGIANT [CC,DV] (PG-13) ★ Fri. - Sat. (12:15 3:10) 6:45 9:45

MIRACLES FROM HEAVEN [CC,DV] (PG) Fri. - Sat. (11:20 2:00) 4:50 7:35 10:20

10 CLOVERFIELD LANE [CC,DV] (PG-13) Fri. - Sat. (11:25 2:05) 4:45 7:20 10:10

THE YOUNG MESSIAH [CC,DV] (PG-13) Fri. - Sat. (12:10 PM)

LONDON HAS FALLEN [CC,DV] (R) Fri. - Sat. (3:15 PM) 6:20 PM 9:40 PM

WHISKEY TANGO FOXTROT [CC,DV] (R) Fri. - Sat. (11:50 AM)

ZOOPTOIA [CC,DV] (PG) Fri. - Sat. (11:15 1:55) 4:35 7:15 9:55

ZOOPTOIA 3D [CC,DV] (PG) ★ Fri. - Sat. (11:45 2:25) 5:05 7:45 10:25

THE WITCH [CC] (R) Fri. - Sat. (12:05 PM)

DEADPOOL [CC,DV] (R) Fri. - Sat. (11:35 2:15) 4:55 7:40 10:35

THE REVENANT [CC,DV] (R) Fri. - Sat. (11:05 2:45) 6:15 10:15

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LONDON HAS FALLEN [CC,DV] (R) Fri. - Sat. (1:30) 4:20 7:10 9:55

RISEN [CC,DV] (PG-13) Fri. - Sat. (10:35 3:55) 6:45 9:30

KUNG FU PANDA 3 [CC,DV] (PG) Fri. - Sat. (11:15 PM 3:45 PM)

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BATMAN V SUPERMAN: DAWN OF JUSTICE (3D) (PG-13)
9:35, 10:55, 12:35, 2:40, 4:25, 4:55, 5:40, 8:45, 10:55, 11:25

BATMAN V SUPERMAN: DAWN OF JUSTICE (DIG) (PG-13)
10:15, 11:40, 1:10, 1:55, 3:15, 6:25, 7:00, 8:00, 9:25, 10:10

THE BRONZE (DIG) (R)
7:45, 10:30

DEADPOOL (DIG) (R)
10:40, 1:20, 4:30, 7:30, 10:15

THE DIVERGENT SERIES: ALLEGIANT (DIG) (PG-13)
10:25, 11:35, 1:15, 2:45, 4:20, 6:10, 7:25, 9:05, 10:25

KUNG FU PANDA 3 (DIG) (PG)
10:30, 1:30, 4:10

LONDON HAS FALLEN (DIG) (R)
1:35, 4:35, 7:35, 10:40

MIRACLES FROM HEAVEN (DIG) (PG)
10:50, 1:40, 4:40, 7:40, 10:20

MY BIG FAT GREEK WEDDING 2 (DIG) (PG-13)
9:50, 11:30, 2:05, 4:50, 7:15, 9:45

THE REVENANT (DIG) (R)
2:00, 6:20

RISEN (DIG) (PG-13)
10:20, 10:00

WHISKEY TANGO FOXTROT (DIG) (R)
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