

Tropical Tropes in Movies

Project Overview

Your assignment is to watch **three** films set in tropical rain forests and study how the rain forests are presented, how the rain forest setting influences character development, and how the rain forest and the situations encountered there by characters help advance the films' narrative. Your review should not be a summary of the film and its plot (i.e., it is not a *descriptive review*), nor a judgment regarding whether the film is "good" or "bad" (i.e., it is not an *evaluative review*). **Your assignment is to:**

1. Document the tropes about rain forests used in each film, and
2. Explain how each film's use of these tropes reinforces or subverts historical stereotypes about rain forests and the people that live in them.

You must support your claims with specific examples drawn from the major elements below. **As you screen each movie, record your observations and fill out the Movie Trope Checklist.**

- **Plot:** the narrative, setting, key events, action sequences, resolution, plausibility, themes, cultural context, etc.
- **Characters and their development:** professions, personality, motivation, interactions, response to rain forest setting, etc.
- **Visuals:** scenery, flora & fauna, props, wardrobe, shots, perspective, lighting, editing, effects, etc.
- **Sound:** background sounds, use and timing of sound vs silence, musical score, songs, etc.

Film Selection

Everyone will watch and review three movies:

1. *Apocalypse Now* (1979, Directed by Francis Ford Coppola)
2. *The Emerald Forest* (1985, Directed by John Boorman)
3. One movie of your choosing from the list below.

Please submit the name of 'Your Choice' via Canvas by 10 September. If it will help you decide you can watch the trailers by searching for the movie on [IMDB](#) or [YouTube](#).

How/Where to Watch: Most of the films are available via the UF Library access to Kanopy, other free streaming platforms, or as DVDs that can be checked out from the UF Library's Course Reserves. A few of them are only available on subscription-based streaming platforms such as Netflix or Amazon, but *there are plenty of movies that do not require subscriptions or paying for a rental.* **Do not spend any personal funds on this assignment.**

Many of the movies can be streamed for free at one of the following online channels:

- [Tubi](#)
- [Kanopy](#)
- [Plex](#)

- [YouTube](#)
- [Crackle](#)
- [Pluto TV](#)
- [YuppTV](#)
- [IMDB](#)
- [Film Detective](#)
- [Digitalia](#)

Important Content Warning: The some of the assigned films contain strong language, nudity, sexual situations, and violence, including sexual assault. There may be dialogue about or depictions of race, class, gender, sexuality, or other topics that are uncomfortable, disturbing, or offensive. Analyzing these depictions and their broader cultural implications is an important part of this assignment, so I encourage you to prepare yourself for this possibility. However, if you are concerned that you will find the content of the films you have been assigned to be difficult or even traumatic, please let me know so we can arrange an alternative film for you to review. You do *not* have to tell me why you want to switch, only that you would prefer to be assigned another film.

Language: Some of the films may be partially or entirely in languages other than English and require subtitles.

Extra Credit: Remember what I said about value judgments? Well... let's just put that aside for a moment to say there are some movies that are so ridiculously bad that I will award 10 points of extra credit simply for selecting one of them for your 3rd review.

Submission Requirements and Rubric

For each film you must submit the following:

1. A completed 'Tropical Trope Checklist'
2. Your analysis of how the use of these tropes reinforces or subverts our perception of rain forests and the people living in them (min. 500 words)

Assignment Submission: Files uploaded via Canvas. Your essays must be submitted as one MS Word document or PDF file (file extensions .doc, .docx, or .pdf). Your trope checklists must be uploaded as Microsoft Excel files (file extensions .xls or .xlsx file).

Assignment value: 100 points

Due Date: All reviews are due October 4th by 5 pm.

Required Content & Grading Rubric: The review & checklists will be evaluated using the point values and minimum standards in the rubric below.

Section	Max. Points	Exceeds Expectations	Meets Expectations	Below Expectations
Essay	70	Essay is of the required length. One or more historical narratives about rain forests are identified; well-reasoned arguments for how the film promotes or subverts these narratives are backed up by specific examples. An engaging conclusion summarizes the evidence and connects it back to the central thesis. The writing is clear, with few grammatical mistakes or spelling errors. Overall, the paper is well written. (70-63 pts)	Essay is somewhat shorter than the required length; a historical narrative is identified but the supporting argument is unclear or backed up by weak or limited supporting evidence. The paper is generally well written but there are some grammatical or spelling errors. (62-49 pts)	The paper is much shorter than the required length; no historical narrative is identified or if one is, the arguments in support are poorly articulated or the supporting examples are limited or poorly chosen. Multiple grammatical or spelling errors. (<48 pts)
Checklist	30	Each checklist records 10 or more examples with a time stamp for each event. (9-10 pts)	The checklist includes 5-10 examples and is mostly complete; some time stamps or other details missing. (7-8 pts)	Checklist incomplete, with <5 examples for each, or few / no time stamps. (<6 pts)

ID No.	Title	Year	Summary	Free	Paid	Extra Credit
1	The Most Dangerous Game	1932	An insane hunter arranges for a ship to be wrecked on an island where he can indulge in some sort of hunting and killing of the passengers.	Tubi		
2	Africa Screams	1949	Two city booksellers scheme their way into an African expedition by posing as seasoned safari hunters to get a piece of a hidden diamond mine.	Tubi		yes
3	African Queen	1951	In WWI Africa, a gin-swilling riverboat captain is persuaded by a strait-laced missionary to use his boat to attack an enemy warship.	Kanopy	Amazon	
4	Bride of the Gorilla	1951	The wife of a plantation owner is terrorized by a gorilla, who turns out to be her husband.	Tubi		yes
5	Creature from the Black Lagoon	1954	A strange prehistoric beast lurks in the depths of the Amazonian jungle. A group of scientists try to capture the animal and bring it back to civilization for study.	DVD		
6	The Naked Jungle / Leningen vs. the Ants	1954	The Leiningen South American cocoa plantation is threatened by a 2-mile-wide, 20-mile-long column of army ants.			
7	Congo Crossing	1956	Attractive Louise Whitman catalyzes action and adventure in an African country that offers haven to foreign fugitives.			
8	Curucu Beast of the Amazon	1956	Rock Dean and Dr. Andrea Romar travel up the Amazon River to find out why the plantation workers have left their work in panic, allegedly because of attacks from Curucu, a monster who is said to live up the river where no white man has ever been before			
9	Death in the Garden	1956	Chark, an adventurer, comes to a small village near a diamond miners' camp. He is arrested by the local police who accuse him of having committed a bank robbery in a neighboring town.	Kanopy		
10	Aguirre, Wrath of God	1972	In the 16th century, the ruthless and insane Don Lope de Aguirre leads a Spanish expedition in search of El Dorado.	Kanopy, Tubi		
11	The Blue Lagoon	1980	In the Victorian period, two children are shipwrecked on a tropical island in the South Pacific. With no adults to guide them, the two make a simple life together, unaware that sexual maturity will eventually intervene.			

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ID No.	Title	Year	Summary	Free	Paid	Extra Credit
12	Fitzcarraldo	1982	The story of Brian Sweeney Fitzgerald, an extremely determined man who intends to build an opera house in the middle of a jungle.	Kanopy, Tubi		
13	Greystoke, Legend of Tarzan	1984	A missing heir of respected Scottish family, raised in African jungles by animals, finally returns to his estate only to realize that difference between the two worlds is really significant.			
14	Romancing the Stone	1984	A mousy romance novelist sets off for Colombia to ransom her kidnapped sister, and soon finds herself in the middle of a dangerous adventure hunting for treasure with a mercenary rogue.	DVD		
15	Sheena	1984	Sheena grew up in the African wild, raised by a mystical witch woman. When her foster mother is framed for a murder Sheena is forced to flee, helped by her ability to talk to animals and her knowledge of the jungle.			
16	Mosquito Coast	1986	Allie Fox, an American inventor exhausted by the perceived danger and degradation of modern society, decides to escape with his wife and children to Belize. In the jungle, he tries with mad determination to create a utopian community with disastrous results.	DVD	Hulu	
17	Platoon	1986	Chris Taylor, a neophyte recruit in Vietnam, finds himself caught in a battle of wills between two sergeants, one good and the other evil. A shrewd examination of the brutality of war and the duality of man in conflict.	Pluto	Fubo	
18	The Mission	1986	Eighteenth-century Spanish Jesuits try to protect a remote South American tribe in danger of falling under the rule of pro-slavery Portugal.	DVD		
19	Cobra Verde	1987	During the 1800s, paroled Brazilian bandit Cobra Verde is sent to West Africa with a few troops to man an old Portuguese fort and to convince the local African ruler to resume the slave trade with Brazil.			
20	Predator	1987	A team of commandos on a mission in a Central American jungle find themselves hunted by an extraterrestrial warrior.	DVD	Amazon	

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21	Gorillas in the Mist	1988	The story of Dian Fossey, a scientist who came to Africa to study the vanishing mountain gorillas, and later fought to protect them.			
22	Robowar	1988	After a team of fearless commandos accept a jungle rescue mission, they discover they're being hunted by a murderous robotic creature.	Tubi		yes
23	Amazon	1990	Widowed and broke Finnish businessman Kari takes his two teenage daughters with him to Brazil. A bush pilot introduces him to the idea of gold mining in the jungle, but a beautiful and educated local woman warns him about the possible consequences to the rain forest.			
24	At Play in the Fields of the Lord	1991	Martin and Hazel Quarrier are small-town fundamentalist missionaries sent to the jungles of South America to convert the Indians. Their remote mission was previously run by the Catholics, before the natives murdered them all.			
25	Fern Gully: The Last Rainforest	1992	The magical inhabitants of a rainforest fight to save their home, which is threatened by logging and a polluting force of destruction called Hexxus.	DVD		
26	Medicine Man	1992	In the beautiful and dangerous Amazon rainforest, dissimilar people must make their choices between business, science, and love.	DVD		
27	Fire on the Amazon	1993	When a man is assassinated in the rainforest, a journalist and an activist team up to solve the case when they believe they've encountered a cover-up.	Tubi		
28	The Burning Season: The Chico Mendes Story	1994	Based on the true story of a Brazilian rubber tapper who leads his people in protest against government and developers, who want to cut down their part of the rainforest for a new road and ranch land. The rich and the powerful will stop at nothing, and frequently resort to murder.			
29	DNA	1996	When a mad scientist experiments with the bones of an extinct jungle creature, the voracious beast comes to life, and only two people can stop it.	Tubi		yes

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30	Anaconda	1997	A "National Geographic" film crew is taken hostage by an insane hunter, who forces them along on his quest to capture the world's largest - and deadliest - snake.	DVD, Roku		
31	Jungle 2 Jungle	1997	A man learns he has a thirteen-year-old son who was raised in the jungle and brings the boy to New York City, turning his life upside down in the process.		Disney Plus	
32	Six Days Seven Nights	1998	Robin Monroe, a New York magazine editor, and the gruff pilot Quinn Harris must put aside their mutual dislike if they are to survive after crash landing on a deserted South Seas island.	DVD	Cinemax	
33	Tarzan (animated)	1999	A man raised by gorillas must decide where he really belongs when he discovers he is a human		Disney Plus	
34	Snake Island	2001	When a group of vacationers arrive on Snake Island, they discover hoards of deadly snakes determined to eliminate the trespassers.	Tubi		yes
35	Tears of the Sun	2003	When the democratic government of Nigeria collapses and the country is taken over by a ruthless military dictator, Waters, a fiercely loyal and hardened veteran is dispatched on a routine mission to retrieve a Doctors Without Borders physician.		Starz	
36	The Rundown	2003	A tough aspiring chef is hired to bring home a mobster's son from the Amazon but becomes involved in the fight against an oppressive town operator and the search for a legendary treasure.	Peacock		
37	Anacondas: Hunt for the Blood Orchid	2004	A scientific expedition sets out for Borneo to seek a flower called the Blood Orchid, which could grant longer life. Meanwhile, they run afoul of snakes and each other.	DVD		
38	Apocalypto	2006	A Mayan warrior braves the treacherous jungle to fight off attacking members of an opposing tribe in order to save his family.	Kanopy, Tubi		
39	Turistas	2006	A group of young backpackers' vacation turns sour when a bus accident leaves them marooned in a remote Brazilian rural area that holds an ominous secret.	DVD		

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40	Blood Monkey	2007	A revered but mad professor leads a band of students into the African jungle to find a tribe of killer chimpanzees he believes to be the missing link.	Tubi, YouTube		yes
41	No Bad Days: Lost Treasure of the Maya	2007	A brash ex-military operative teams up with a woman searching for her sister and meet danger, mystery, and romance head on in the Yucatan jungle.	Tubi		
42	The Ruins	2008	A leisurely Mexican holiday takes a turn for the worse when a group of friends and a fellow tourist embark on a remote archaeological dig in the jungle, where something evil lives among the ruins.	DVD	Paramount, Amazon	
43	Tropic Thunder	2008	Through a series of freak occurrences, a group of actors shooting a big-budget war movie are forced to become the soldiers they are portraying.		Paramount, Amazon	
44	A Perfect Getaway	2009	A romantic Hawaiian vacation turns deadly for two pairs of lovers, when a duo of murderers begins targeting tourists who cannot escape the island.	Tubi		
45	Avatar	2009	A paraplegic Marine dispatched to the moon Pandora on a unique mission becomes torn between following his orders and protecting the world he feels is his home.	DVD	Disney Plus	
46	Predators	2010	A group of elite warriors parachute into an unfamiliar jungle and are hunted by members of a merciless alien race.		Hulu	
47	Uncle Boonmee Who Can Recall His Past Lives	2010	Suffering from acute kidney failure, Boonmee has chosen to spend his final days surrounded by his loved ones in the countryside. Surprisingly, the ghost of his deceased wife appears to care for him, and his long lost son returns home in a non-human form. Contemplating the reasons for his illness, Boonmee treks through the jungle with his family to a mysterious hilltop cave—the birthplace of his first life.			
48	Jungle Child	2011	The family of a German linguist lives with an indigenous tribe in Papua New Guinea.			
49	Dragon Wasps	2012	A scientist joins with the U.S. army in the jungles of Belize to find her father and has to deal with war crossfire and flame-shooting giant wasps.	Tubi		yes

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50	Inara, the Jungle Girl	2012	Inara a young girl in the military whose world comes crashing down when her father passes away after a failed mission to the island of N'iah. Inara curious of her father's death learns of a new opportunity to travel to the island and learns that the jungle and the women that inhabit it have more in common with her than she could ever know.	YouTube		
51	Lord of the Elves	2012	In an ancient age, the peace-loving Hobbits are enslaved by the Java Men, a race of flesh-eating dragon-riders. The young Hobbit Goben must join forces with their neighbor giants, the humans, to free his people and vanquish their enemies.	Tubi		yes
52	Piranhaconda	2012	Two piranha/anaconda hybrid creatures hunt down the scientist who stole their egg and a film crew; making a slasher film in the jungle.	Tubi		yes
53	Amazônia	2013	After a plane crash, Sai, a capuchin monkey born and raised in captivity, finds himself alone and lost in the wilderness of the Amazon jungle.			
54	Canopy	2013	An Australian fighter pilot becomes stranded in a Singapore jungle overrun by hostile forces as he journeys to survive war and nature.	Kanopy, Tubi		
55	Green Inferno	2013	A group of student activists travels to the Amazon to save the rain forest and soon discover that they are not alone, and that no good deed goes unpunished.		Netflix	
56	Tarzan	2013	Tarzan must protect the jungle, and his beloved Jane, from a greedy businessmen who wants to destroy his natural habitat for profit.	Tubi		
57	The Jungle	2013	A big cat conservationist and his filmmaker brother travel into the Indonesian jungle to find and document the rare and endangered Javan leopard. As they travel deeper and deeper into the jungle they come to the realisation that they are being stalked by a deadly predator.			

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58	Transmigration	2013	Curtis, an American looking for an escape to a foreign land, joins his estranged Brazilian biologist brother Francis on a spontaneous journey to find a rare jungle beetle in the Amazon. While hiking, Curtis is bitten by a snake. As he enters a venom induced hallucinogenic dream the two brothers are captured as slaves by a fantasy tribe of Amazonian women, and given to the tribal queen.	Tubi		
59	Welcome to the Jungle	2013	A company retreat on a tropical island goes terribly awry.	DVD		yes
60	Indigenous - Chupacabra	2014	A group of Americans traveling in Panama trek through the jungle in spite of being warned that the legendary Chupacabra may be on the hunt.	Tubi		yes
61	Rio 2	2014	It's a jungle out there for Blu, Jewel and their three kids after they're hurtled from Rio de Janeiro to the wilds of the Amazon. As Blu tries to fit in, he goes beak-to-beak with the vengeful Nigel, and meets his father-in-law.	DVD, IMDB		
62	Embrace of the Serpent	2015	The story of the relationship between Karamakate, an Amazonian shaman and last survivor of his people, and two scientists who work together over the course of forty years to search the Amazon for a sacred healing plant.	Kanopy		
63	A Midsummer's Hawaiian Dream	2016	Two married anthropologists and their students search for a legendary Tiki in the Hawaiian jungle in this reimagining of Shakespeare's magical comedy.	Tubi		
64	Gold	2016	A prospector out to strike gold gets a rare chance at his goal when he goes on an incredible trip to the Indonesian jungle with a gung-ho geologist.	Tubi		
65	Icaros: A vision	2016	A film shaped like a shamanic journey, steeped in a psychoactive brew, exploring fear and destiny in the jungle of the mind.	Kanopy		
66	Jungle Book	2016	After a threat from the tiger Shere Khan forces him to flee the jungle, a man-cub named Mowgli embarks on a journey of self discovery with the help of panther Bagheera and free-spirited bear Baloo.		Disney Plus	

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67	Lost City of Z	2016	A true-life drama, centering on British explorer Major Percival Fawcett, who disappeared whilst searching for a mysterious city in the Amazon in the 1920s.		Amazon	
68	Where the Road Runs Out	2016	A scientist in the Netherlands returns to Africa after the death of a dear friend, where his work in the jungle is interrupted by a cheerful orphan	Tubi		
69	Gauguin: Voyage to Tahiti	2017	Historical drama based on the French painter Paul Gauguin's self-exile in Tahiti where he befriended the Maoris and fell in love with an iconic muse.	Kanopy, Tubi		
70	Jumanji: Welcome to the Jungle	2017	Four teenagers are sucked into a magical video game, and the only way they can escape is to work together to finish the game.			
71	Jungle	2017	A group of friends join a guide for a trek into the Bolivian jungle, searching for an Indian village. The men soon realize that the jungle is a difficult place to be.		Amazon	
72	Dora and The Lost City of Gold	2019	Dora, a teenage explorer, leads her friends on an adventure to save her parents and solve the mystery behind a lost city of gold.		Paramount	
73	In Like Flynn	2019	The adventures of actor Errol Flynn before he became a star, as he searches for gold with a ragtag crew in the jungles of Papua New Guinea.	Tubi		
74	Monos	2019	On a faraway mountaintop, eight kids with guns watch over a hostage and a conscripted milk cow.	Kanopy	Hulu	
75	Primal	2019	Hunter and collector Frank Walsh expects a big payday after bagging a priceless white jaguar for a zoo. But the ship bearing Frank's precious cargo has another predator – a political assassin facing extradition to America.		Hulu, HBO	
76	Primal	2019	Frank's caught wildlife in the Brazilian jungle incl. a 400 lbs. white jaguar. He ships it on the same ship as an arrested assassin. The assassin breaks free and frees the animals. Two words for you: Nicholas. Cage.		Amazon, Apple	

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ID No.	Title	Year	Summary	Free	Paid	Extra Credit
77	Terrible Jungle	2020	Eliott, a naive young adventurer, goes to Guyana in search of the mysterious hidden Otopis. But he'll soon find out that Otopis are not "noble savages", they are jungle gangsters, led by the fierce Albertine.			
78	The Beach	2020	On vacation in Thailand, Richard sets out for an island rumored to be a solitary beach paradise.		Starz	
79	Amazon Queen	2021	A group of tourists joins the Amazon Forest riverboat "Queen" as it ventures upriver, to visit indigenous villages and explore jungle habitats. But a dark cloud of thievery and menace thunders aboard, threatening all with death.			yes
80	Jungle Cruise	2021	Based on Disneyland's theme park ride where a small riverboat takes a group of travelers through a jungle filled with dangerous animals and reptiles but with a supernatural element.			
81	Jungle Run	2021	Sibling adventurers come under attack from jungle animals while searching for their missing father. As they fight back against the relentless onslaught, they soon start to realize something much more sinister is happening.			
82	The Lost City	2022	A reclusive romance novelist on a book tour with her cover model gets swept up in a kidnapping attempt that lands them both in a cutthroat jungle adventure.			