



Aguirre, the Wrath of God

Eric Ames

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Aguirre, the Wrath of God (*Aguirre, der Zorn Gottes*) is and perhaps always will be Werner Herzog's most important film. Appearing in 1972, Aguirre put Herzog on the map of world cinema. But the film's importance also derives from the young German director's tense, behind-the-scenes relationship with actor Klaus Kinski. Did Herzog really direct him at gunpoint? Did they plot each other's murder? The legends begin here ...

In this groundbreaking book, Eric Ames reconstructs the film as an experiment in visualising the past from the viewpoint of the present. Aguirre is not a history film in the narrow sense, but it does engage a specific episode in the conquest of the New World, and it explores that history in terms of vision. Interweaving close analysis with extensive archival research, Ames explores Aguirre as a seminal film about the madness and hopelessness of Western striving. In addition, as an appendix, he offers for the first time a complete translation of an infamous, secretly recorded argument between Herzog and Kinski on the set.

Eric Ames is Professor of Comparative Literature, Cinema and Media at the University of Washington, USA. He is the editor of *Werner Herzog: Interviews* (2014) and the author of *Ferocious Reality: Documentary according to Werner Herzog* (2012).

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