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# Aguirre, Der Zorn Gottes

(Aguirre, The Wrath of God)  
(WEST GERMAN-COLOR)

*Variety* → 30-73  
Cannes, May 22.

Werner Herzog Film Production release and production. Stars Klaus Kinski; features Helena Rojo, Ruy Guerra, Del Negro. Written and directed by Werner Herzog. Camera (Eastmancolor), Thomas Mauch. Reviewed in Cannes Director Fortnight, May 16, '73. Running Time: 90 MINS.

Aguirre .....	Klaus Kinski
Daughter .....	Helena Rojo
Lieutenant .....	Ruy Guerra
Slave .....	Del Negro
Emperor .....	Peter Herling

Werner Herzog is an independent West German filmmaker known more by film fest buffs than the general public. But with more demanding firstruns springing up everywhere, and more lucid audiences, his pix should begin to find their way with proper handling and placement.

Herzog has explored military psychology, the irony of revolt, colonialism and the lack of scientific reliability in some of his previous films. Here he has trekked down a river in Peru to resurrect the ancient conquistadores of Spain in what is now Latin America in a sort of parable on human need for power and warping of the best intentions when they are by the sword or by fanatics.

But what Herzog has done is the evolving of an epic feeling of exploration and the still potent theme of civilized man self-indulgently trying to spread his word to imagined lesser peoples. No preaching here but a rivetingly shot odyssey as a group of the conqueror Pizarro's men are sent to find the fabled city of gold, El Dorado.

The head of the expedition feels he is the violent hand of God and he tags himself "The Wrath of God." He sets up his own Emperor and pushes on to win power and glory for himself in the name of God. Their trek turns out a voyage to extinction as they are set upon by Indians, fever and hazards of a trip that ends in disaster but has sowed its future colonization and population of these worlds with a near extinction of the indigenous people or their conversion.

Probably many will carp at it being shot and partly synched into a sort of literary-cum-ordinary English. But it does not matter much and may make this curiously dramatic opus more accessible on its sheer visual beauty and poetic re-creation of the times, not to forget its adventure qualities.

The acting is properly larger than life, especially via Klaus Kinski as the title character, a lean, driven but imposing man who has heads lopped off when in any way interfered with in his task of destruction and exploration.

It must have been a difficult film to shoot, with much on a half-submerged raft, but visuals are exciting without distracting from its harsh theme of early conquests in a probing, epic and starkly driving way than usually seen.

*Mosk.*