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Die große ekstase des bildschnitzers Steiner (The great ecstasy of the sculptor Steiner), Herzog, Werner, 1974

Lebenszeichen (Signs of life), Herzog, Werner, 1968

Auch zwerge haben klein angefangen (Even dwarfs started small), Herzog, Werner, 1970

Wodaabe - die hirtinnen der sonne. Nomaden am Südrand (Herdsman of the sun), Herzog, Werner, 1989

Cobra Verde, Herzog, Werner, 1987

Glocken aus der tiefe - glaube und aberglaube in Rußland (Bells from the deep: faith and superstition in Russia), Herzog, Werner, 1995

La Soufrière - warten auf ein unausweichliche katastrophe, Herzog, Werner, 1977

Gasherbrum - der leuchtende berg (The dark glow of the mountains), Herzog, Werner, 1985

Jeder für sich und Gott gegen alle (Every man for himself and God against all), Herzog, Werner, 1974

Die verwandlung der welt in musik: Beyreuth vor der premiere (The transformation of the world into music), Herzog, Werner, 1996

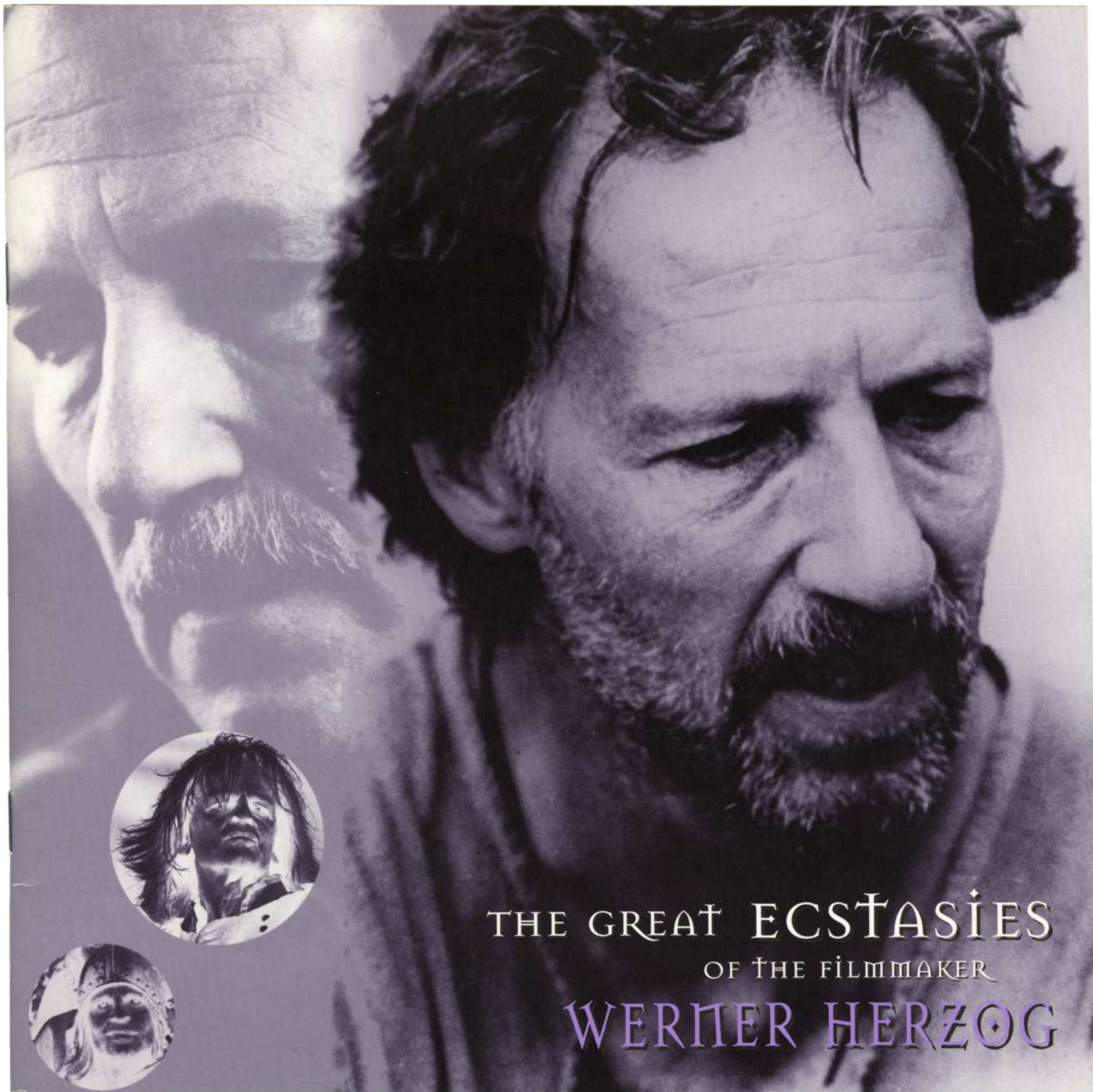
Land des schweigens und der dunkelheit (Land of silence and darkness), Herzog, Werner, 1971

Fata Morgana, Herzog, Werner, 1971

Ballade vom kleinen soldaten (Ballad of the little soldier), Herzog, Werner, 1984

Fitzcarraldo, Herzog, Werner, 1982

Woyzeck, Herzog, Werner, 1979



THE GREAT ECSTASIES
OF THE FILMMAKER
WERNER HERZOG



THE GREAT
ECSTASIES
OF THE FILMMAKER
WERNER HERZOG
A RETROSPECTIVE 1967 - 1995

WERNER HERZOG - A BIOGRAPHY 4

ON WALKING AND DREAMING -
THE MANY SIDES OF WERNER HERZOG 10

THE FILMS 1966 - 1994 20

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GOETHE-INSTITUT

Probably no other German filmmaker brings films of fiction and documentaries closer together than Werner Herzog. Indeed, for him, the distinction between the two genres has no more importance than a label that he rejects. While today full-length films use in part techniques characteristic of newsreels and documentaries, in order to emphasize their authenticity - Spielberg's *Schindler's List* was not only shot in black and white, but 40% of it with a hand-held camera - Werner Herzog's documentaries for their part look like imposing productions. Moreover, his films of fiction reveal the actors' experiences during filming as much as the fiction itself. In that, he has always remained true to himself, which is the source of his relevance: when shooting a film he does not give himself up to the relevance of a topic, but makes his way to the boundaries of space and time, without ceasing to survey reality. It is no accident that he characterizes walking and writing as two activities complementary to filming.

The fever that drives Werner Herzog to explore the most remote regions, to share, in extreme conditions, the lives of those he presents, and to sometimes discover soul mates in them, reveals the universalism characteristic of a great "solitary."

Werner Herzog's Ecstasies - such is the title given recently by the Filmmuseum of Munich and Goethe-Institut San Francisco to a series of his movies. But, besides the ecstatic, one finds also, in the works of this particular director, an element of meditation, meditation on the human condition in general. And it is ecstasy and meditation that together allow this "Quest for the Sublime" - a title the Goethe-Institut in Paris chose to give to a retrospective devoted to Werner Herzog.



Hilmar Hoffmann

President of the Goethe-Institut

WERNER HERZOG

A BIOGRAPHY

"In the deep darkness of the universe, wheels are blazing, a single wagon is blazing. Incredible collapses of stars take place, entire worlds fall in on themselves towards a single point. Light can no longer escape, even the deepest darkness would have to be light here, and the silence a roar. The universe is filled with nothingness, it is the blackest gaping void. Milky ways thicken into non-stars."

Werner Herzog - November 1974 - *Of Walking In Ice*

His biography is that of a filmmaker, his journey that of his films. His story is that of a unique artist. Werner Herzog is one of those beings whose creation is so powerful and personal that it becomes isolated. Director of operas, producer of cabaret shows, a writer to boot, and even a performer on several occasions (in Wenders, Urs Odermatt, Fleischmann...), he fortifies his career with multiple and contrasting images.

Unconventional because they are complex, his works bear the stamp of timelessness. Herzog is in the same vein as the Buñuels and Tarkovskys: he is one of those who give birth to myths. Herzog's cinema is full of solitude, impossibility or passion. It is peopled with creatures who are humble or torn apart, at whom he glances like a sensitive and exacerbad visionary. His universe is crossed by ecstasies, dreams, and landscapes that he takes pains to behold as if they were states of mind.

Recognized as early as 1967, he is one of the central figures of the "young German cinema." Whereas Kluge, Fassbinder or Schlöndorff seek to awaken the German consciousness, Herzog himself reveals a new dimension in movie-making, less realist but more spiritual: a spirituality so profound that it almost resembles a quest, sublime and nameless.

Werner Herzog was born in Munich on September 5, 1942. He grew up in a small mountain village of upper Bavaria, then returned to Munich in order to study literature. A scholarship brought him to Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, but he gave up after three days and ran away to Mexico, where he lived for a while on rodeo work and smuggling. His apprenticeship, henceforth, would consist of travels, sustained

by a burning desire to make movies. Self-taught in this regard, fiercely independent, he retreats into this singleminded dream and works day and night for two years in a steel factory.

The prelude to this outcome is *Heracles* (1962), his first short film, but especially important is the autonomous nature of its production, a rite of passage for all young filmmakers and auteurs of the young German cinema. "Werner Herzog Produktion" was born (1963) and with it several short films: *Spiel im Sand* (1964), *Die beispiellose Verteidigung der Festung Deutschkreutz* (1966). But the real Herzog, the creator, emerges with his first full-length film.

Signs of Life (1967), a solar and dreamlike work, marks his entry into German cinema and his recognition by the masters. Lotte Eisner sees in him a successor to Murnau, and a Silver Bear (Berlin 1968) crowns the beginning of his career. He is, in 1967, one of the great hopes of the young German cinema.

Last Words (1967), *Precautions Against Fanatics* (1968), *Die fliegenden Ärzte von Ost-Afrika* (1968-69) extend his repertory, but it is *Fata Morgana* (1969) that enriches it with a special coloration, that of the directed documentary.

Even Dwarfs Started Small (1970) is made at the same time. Controversial and scandalous, this film noir nevertheless unveils a new aspect of his set of themes, namely an attachment to simple or marginalized beings. This tendency is particularly confirmed in *Land of Silence and Darkness* (1970-71), an intimate and generous introspection into the solitary universe of deaf-mutes. We are far from *Aguirre* which, in 1972, lights up his work.

Aguirre, The Wrath of God (1972) establishes Herzog and reveals Klaus Kinski to the public at large. We discover in this grand epic the grace and the singular soul of a great filmmaker. A classic is born, and at the same time the Herzog-Kinski duo. We don't know who inspired whom. Either way, it became one of the rarest of dualisms and one of the most outrageous relationships between a director and his actor. Herzog pushed Kinski's sensitivity to a paroxysm. Kinski sublimated Herzog's immoderation with dementia and flesh.

The Great Ecstasy of the Sculptor Steiner (1972) is an interlude which allows him to rediscover a more personal dimension of his being; a film about ecstasy, the taste for deeds and man's absolute. His next work is already taking shape. *The Mystery of Kaspar Hauser* (1974) provokes, two years after Aguirre, the same fascination. Herzog enters another sphere, that of the visionaries and poets, and enriches his repertory with a masterly piece (Cannes Special Jury Prize in 1975). More intimate, more exclusive, it unveils his sensitive and mental universe, perhaps the one from *Of Walking In Ice*, a logbook of a six-week-long walk through the snow. In November 1974, on being informed of Lotte Eisner's illness, Herzog decides to go to her bedside, and undertakes a pilgrimage on foot to Paris. If Lotte Eisner influenced his career by supporting him on his boldest projects and especially in his moments of doubt, Bruno S. was one of his most beautiful encounters and one of his greatest interpreters. A documentary about "Bruno the Black" led him to discover this strange character. This former street musician from Berlin with a flayed past, dragged from asylums to homes, inspired in him Kaspar and then Stroszek. He is one of the most beautiful incarnations of Herzog's repertory. If Kinski was his interpreter of violence, Bruno S. touched upon softness and fragility: two extreme characters pushed to the edge of their humanity and their shattered lives.

Two documentaries were soon to follow. *How Much Wood Would a Woodchuck Chuck* (1975-76), *Nobody Wants to Play with Me* (1976), and then *Heart of Glass* (1976), a singular and esoteric work of fiction in which a great thematic exuberance and a rich predilection for landscapes are clearly manifested. The same year, he made *La Soufrière* (1976).

He completes *Kaspar Hauser* with *Stroszek* (1976-77), which seems to be its continuation: same actor, same theme.

Nosferatu (1978) and, simultaneously, *Woyzeck* (1978) break this trend and exteriorize another aspect of his language and his make-believe, namely, the adaptation of two works of historical reference. He is then labeled a romantic filmmaker or quite simply "Germanic." What we have here is in fact a sentimental

peregrination in a past and culture dear to him. The Herzogian imagery is still to be found, so close to that of Kaspar David Friedrich, Hercule Seghers, or simply Murnau.

In 1980, two documentaries about faith "made in USA", *Huie's Sermon* and *God's Angry Man*, complete this period. Then, Herzog shoots *Fitzcarraldo* (1981-82). A key film in his career, the shooting of which was relentlessly, if not monumentally, jinxed, *Fitzcarraldo* recalls Aguirre, and goes back to his earlier themes. However, the central subject is opera, and the fulfillment of a dream to the limit of what is challenging and humanly impossible. Herzog was the talk of the town and became forever a legend. He was honored in Cannes (Best Director Prize in 1982), but carved for himself an ambiguous reputation as a genius, a megalomaniac and a madman. The deontology of the profession in general, and of Herzog in particular, was called into question. Criticism, court actions: he was accused of being the cause of numerous deaths and of pushing his own style of madness and aesthetics to the point of contempt for human dignity.

As if tired of the excesses and agitation of this "exterior" work, he continued discreetly with *Ballad of the Little Soldier* (1984), *Where the Green Ants Dream* (1984) and *The Dark Glow of the Mountain* (1984), more personal and more intimate works. In 1987, *Cobra Verde* seems to bring to a close this phase of epics and great figures. It is also the end of the Herzog-Kinski binomial, a duo as rich as it was volcanic, a collaboration already exhausted by four films tinged with memories of violence and conflict.

After that, a series of documentaries seemed to mark the filmmaker's decline and his virtual disappearance. He makes the very beautiful *Wodaabe* (1989), then *Echoes from a Somber Empire* (1990).

Scream of Stone (1991) is his last work of fiction. It evokes the recurring mountain theme and his fascination for the sublime which, like nature, intrigues and eludes him. Here again, he hints at the inaccessible. Faithful to his principle of alternation, he continues with three documentaries: *Jag Mandir* (1991), *Lessons of Darkness* (1991) and *Bells from the Deep* (1993). Coming back to the directed documentary, he tackles more sensitive subjects, war and superstition, and touches again on the essence of his first works, namely, the passion for human beings and the search for their enlightenment.

Herzog's career is fabricated with a singular and relentless intuition. A few years of silence might nearly have caused Herzog to be forgotten, he who was talked about so much for his cinematographic "turbulence." He has withdrawn to Vienna, while still producing in Munich. And if fiction is now absent from his repertory, it is to give a privileged place to documentaries, sometimes even to cabaret shows (Hebbel Theater in Berlin in 1992, Paris Opéra Comique in 1993...), but mostly to opera, of which *Doctor Faustus* and *Joan of Arc* (Bologna, 1985) had given him a foretaste. From *Lohengrin* (Bayreuth, 1987 and 1991) to *The Magic Flute* (Catania, 1991), from *La Femme du lac* (La Scala, 1992) to *Le Vaisseau Fantôme* (Bastille Opera, 1993), Herzog continually surprises with the heterogeneousness of his rich, unrestrained productions. It is a set of themes nourished by paradoxes and reminiscences from his films, yet an open and varied body of work. Increasingly foreign, uprooted, geographically scattered, it gives Herzog the status of "filmmaker of the world." Always to be found in it are flights and dreams, and the anticipation of landscapes. Herzog found, through opera, his most harmonious incarnation. Auditory, visual, finally carnal, it enables him to "transform the world into music." His documentary on Bayreuth (1993) illustrates this new vocation. If with Herzog, time means flight or loss, his silence stands for creation, the immanent gestation of a coming work of fiction. Thus, he evokes, without having to spell things out, his plan for a conquest of Mexico as seen by the Indians, an achievement which will fulfill a long cinematographic expectation.

There are not three Herzogs, but the continuity of a creator whose work combines human and universal essences. Also, with Herzog, men are alone and abandoned, the landscapes dreamlike, staged or humanized. They let their light flow and take it beyond themselves like an intuition. Some may speak of mysticism. It is in fact a quest - for the "sublime."

"I wrote each of my movies while walking." Herzog speaks of his films as of a human itinerary. One recalls his long walk through the snow to rejoin Lotte Eisner (November-December 1974), or the one he undertook in Germany and recounted in *Talking about Germany* (1986). Herzog is also a writer; he relates his words as he relates his scenarios and his images, making them luminous and timeless.

Catherine Courel

Translated from French by Gisèle and Kenneth Cervisi



ON WALKING AND DREAMING: THE MANY SIDES OF WERNER HERZOG

AN INTERVIEW WITH WERNER HERZOG

February 17, 1994

One cannot say: "There is Werner Herzog the filmmaker, Werner Herzog the writer and Werner Herzog the director of opera." One should also talk about the athlete, the walker. All of these are inseparable. I have only one life, and all my endeavors are in a way footsteps that I leave behind me, and nothing more. But I don't have a real trade: filmmaking is not a trade. I don't in any way regard my work with music as real work. It represents rather a period, a moment in my life, where I regain my equilibrium. These are equilibrium exercises. And walking is in fact the most profound of them all, the one through which I live everything men live when they dream at night. I am one of those who cannot dream, and it's very difficult, because I really feel the lack of it. I could almost add that the fact that I don't dream is a shortcoming, a real deficiency. It's combined with other deficiencies, for example, my ever-increasing problem with communication. I mean, I don't understand irony. I understand jokes, of course, but not irony, because I take everything literally. And this is why I am not capable of real dialogue in France, since the French love to play with their words, and turn them every which way.

THE DOCUMENTARY AS DIRECTED REALITY

The term "documentary" should be handled with care, for it is only an attempt to categorize. We just haven't developed a more appropriate concept. But I think that a film such as *Lessons of Darkness* is definitely not a documentary. I believe that here we are trying to categorize again: it is rather a science fiction film, a musical requiem, or something else again. We don't have a word to describe it. But that in any case does not matter. Still, I prefer using the word "documentary" with caution, because we have in our daily language a very precise definition of it, which we carry around with us constantly. Now this concept of a documentary does not truly encompass what my last films really are. But that doesn't matter, since we should help one another. It's like someone who really can't walk, someone whose knee is broken, and who consequently has to use crutches. It's more of an injured man's crutch than a concept. Whatever it is, it helps us to move forward.



MY FILMS IN FRANCE AND ELSEWHERE

The strange thing is that the French were among the first to find an approach to my films. Long before Germans understood that there was a cinema, I am not only talking about my own films, but of many others, like those of the late sixties, of the early seventies, a cinema which is in fact our interior chronicle. Now the French discovered it much earlier and noticed there was once again a certain liveliness in German cinema. It is true that since the twenties, or the early thirties, very little had happened in cinema in Germany, when suddenly there emerged, anew, a German cinema.

I am good at riddles, but there is one to which I cannot find the answer. Brazil is a country where they read very little. There are one hundred ten million inhabitants, and maybe thirty or forty bookstores in the entire country. There are fewer bookstores than in the fifth arrondissement in Paris, for example. Out of one hundred million inhabitants ten million are illiterate. Most of them watch television, or if they do read, they read comic strips. And yet the Brazilians, who

are perhaps among the most calm and quiet of people, are those who have received my film *Kaspar Hauser* with the most attention. In fact, it is the one film they prefer.

So you can't say that, just because of my failure with the language, the French didn't understand me. On the contrary, they actually understood more rapidly. I think that the French have also perceived very clearly what German romanticism is. I think that they have also found, in a way, some clear concepts for German expressionism. And it is in fact in the main areas that they have found contacts with German culture. Here, I am talking about a certain part, a certain "amount" of French people, if one may speak of "amount" when it comes to a people. Everything that can be found between, before, or after this period, is unknown territory to the French. It's the same with Germans, who know a great many things about the French. For example, we know the impressionists very well, we have a certain knowledge of the age of Molière and Descartes, or even of Voltaire, whereas the Middle Ages are relatively unknown to us. And I think that many other areas and periods are unknown territory to the Germans. Thus, Germans encounter similar limitations when they try to form an image of French literature or cinema.

A FATHERLESS GENERATION

Although I have often been placed in the context of expressionism, I belong to those who are not really open to it. For example, I am unfamiliar with expressionist painting, and even more so with expressionist literature. By contrast, the expressionist atmosphere is something I can say I am definitely connected with, especially regarding Murnau or specific personalities of that period. Murnau is probably my strongest contact.

But that simply stems from the fact that we are orphans, that we belong to a generation that did not have any support: I'm talking about my generation, and I mean physically and in a very precise way. It's true that I grew up without a father, just like Fassbinder, or like Schlöndorff whose father, even though he had one, did not play an important role. And that's the physical side I am talking about, the fact that many fathers were in captivity, that others died or abandoned their

families. And in a larger sense, we had no continuity with German cinema. There was no generation of fathers for us, and this is why we sought the framework of our culture in our grandfathers: Murnau, Fritz Lang, Pabst; and subsequently, isolated personalities such as Lotte Eisner, who served as a bridge between two generations.

ON ROMANTICISM...

What can be said about romanticism? There is definitely a context there, since Kaspar David Friedrich, for example, was probably the first to try resolutely to paint landscapes of the soul. He was not a true landscape artist, but rather someone who attempted to represent these interior landscapes. And I believe there is definitely something in my films that consciously, or unconsciously, follows this traditional path. Otherwise, outside of this aspect, I am not comfortable with romanticism, mostly because this movement has developed a great culture of irony.

ON PAINTING THE SOUL AND ON INNER LIGHT

They are not inevitably landscapes, these inner states where an internal light is present, where a glow, a luminosity comes from the inside. That may also be part of man, the fact that men have that state of illumination, so to speak, that warmth or that humanity that emanates from them like an aura. In this connection, I can say that there exists right now in Iran a great filmmaker: Kiarostami. Kiarostami has the very thing I have always searched for. And he is much more than a discovery for me, rather an absent brother, as it were, someone who is very close to me, even though he makes totally different films.

PROJECTS

Such is the situation right now that I can say, with more or less certainty, that I will do one or two more opera projects, because working with music is something very important to me, and because there too there is something that crosses the mind, something transparent that deals entirely with our inner selves. And with

regard to the near future, I can say for sure that I have a project coming up in Mexico. I would like to make a film on the conquest of Mexico, but from the Aztecs' point of view. And beyond that, I cannot on the whole see any farther.

ON TRANSFORMING THE WORLD INTO MUSIC

Opera is quite another world. That comes from something simple yet fundamental, and that's also the title of the new film I shot in Bayreuth, that is to say, the transformation of a whole world into music. Because that's how you achieve opera. With movies, it's altogether different: you have to transform a world into images. It's hard to say, since the processes are not totally different, but cinema and opera do not really go together. To those who ask me why I do not direct *Don Giovanni* for the cinema - and, I don't know, on what location - I always try to reply that this will never work, because cinema and opera are like cat and dog. It will never succeed completely. And if I do opera, it is precisely to do opera and not cinema. Therefore, attempting to put into it the experience I have in terms of films would be senseless, and conversely, attempting to bring to the cinema my experience with opera will never work.

ON WRITING

Writing is a very important aspect of my work. This applies also to screenplays, which are constructed like prose texts. I have always tried to develop my own literary genre. There are, moreover, things I can only articulate in writing, as for example in *Of Walking In Ice*, or through the story I wrote when I traveled all the way around Germany along the border. There are some passages there that can only be conceived as text and will never be conceived as film.

I still have about a hundred written pages left from when I shot *Fitzcarraldo*. At that time there was no longer anyone to back me up, no one to follow me or support me. In the end everybody deserted me. Nobody believed anymore that the boat could be moved over the mountains, and no one believed either that one day that film would be completed. I felt very lonely then, and my last anchor, my

support, the one thing I could firmly hold onto, was writing. These texts do not resemble a true diary: they are texts in which the writing tries, as if through a magical process, to prevent the next misfortune. And these texts have such a terrible beauty that I still don't dare read them today, even though they go back 12 years. And on top of that there is another problem, namely, that I wrote these texts in such a strange and overminiaturized manner, in a handwriting so tiny that they can practically only be read through a microscope. Generally, when I write a letter, I use normal-sized handwriting. But oddly enough, the handwriting on all these texts is microscopic. And in addition, it leans to the left, with the words almost running into one another. Nobody can decipher them. Even today, it's very hard for me to decipher them. They're like hieroglyphs that have been placed in certain spots and in certain locations, and that I alone can understand. It's definitely an important aspect of myself, and it will certainly play a greater role than I think in the future. And I'm convinced that the one inside me who writes, the writer, remains to be discovered.



ON THE ABILITY TO BEAR ONE'S DESTINY

I think I knew my destiny very early on, and even with greater certainty when I was about 14 years old, precisely when I took off on foot. I was also very intensely religious then, and I knew that I was going to make movies. Thus, I came to terms with that, since it had to be accepted.

Furthermore, this is what fascinates me so much about Hannibal, that is, the way he accepts his destiny. When I need to be comforted, I read the Old Testament, or some psalms, or still other things. I find myself often reading Livy's *Second Punic War* too. It has a very striking and important passage, the one where Hannibal, who had been leading campaigns in Italy for years, and who was fighting battles without ever being able to bring them to an end - so when Hannibal was nearing a decisive victory, he learns that his brother has been taken prisoner along with the supply ships off the coast of Sicily, and fatally defeated. Hannibal knew then that he was cut off from all resources. It is at that time, after a long moment of silence, that he uttered this unique phrase: "I know the destiny of Carthage." That was his only answer. He knew that Carthage was lost, that it would be destroyed and thus disappear into the void of History. And that was a grand vision that he had then. One who also knew his destiny, and who was moreover his own adversary, and who in my opinion was even greater, is Fabius Maximus. He accepted his destiny, namely, to be forever considered a coward in world history, the one who became famous for backing down and fleeing. The name is still his today, the irresolute, the cautious Cunctator. And even though he was one of the central figures of the period, he accepted his destiny because in doing so he was able to save Rome. That is why he is the greatest among the generals and commanders-in-chief of the times. Anyway, to me he is an important character, one of my idols. He is the one who withdraws, and thus will certainly never be recognized according to his true worth: a wonderful figure. It is in Fabius Maximus that I often find great solace.

ON THE SPIRITUAL

It's possible, yes... There is certainly a religious element in my films, even if it cannot be defined exactly like that or associated with catholicism or another form of religion. That's not possible. Perhaps it could be termed differently: a certain spirituality about which I cannot say much myself. I know it exists somewhere in my films, and I also know that it can be almost immediately identified. It is generally after completing a film that I notice it, yes, that I recognize these creatures in the depth of their souls. And it is this depth that is suddenly sensed by the audience. I think it is also this aspect of Russians that enables me to understand them.

ON THE PEOPLE WHO HAVE INFLUENCED ME

Most of them are people who have nothing to do with filmmaking. Of course, there are a few, like Lotte Eisner, for example, or Henri Langlois, and naturally also people I don't know at all, or very superficially, whom I met for ten seconds, or whom I greeted, like recently, for example, Kirostami. He is one of those people who, all of a sudden, matter to me. Otherwise, they are, for the most part, absent, departed, like Fabius Maximus or Philippe de Commynes, whose Memoirs are essential to me. Suddenly, towards the end of the Middle Ages, when this whole period was still being described by the chroniclers as tales of chivalry, when it no longer existed, when everything had changed, there was someone, the only one in his times, who saw things clearly.

All these people are figures I don't know, characters who disappeared centuries ago, but who mean a great deal to me. Other individuals may be added, such as athletes or a skier, which, from a physical standpoint, was my dream: to be a world-champion skier, to be able to fly or to be a soccer player, the greatest of them all. This last can be found in Argentina. It's true, everybody talks about Maradona, though in reality the greatest was Di Stefano in the fifties. I saw him play when he was in Madrid; he was quite impressive. Or better yet, Garrincha, a Brazilian. That was his pseudonym because in fact his name was different.

In addition to these people who were very important to me, a few painters may be mentioned, and first of all a Dutchman, Hercules Seghers, a painter of Rembrandt's day. Rembrandt was in fact the only one during his times to take him seriously. He even bought a painting from him, even though at the time he was considered insane and his paintings were used as bread wrappers. Moreover, he had so little money that he would tear his sheets and his bedding to make canvasses out of them. He painted things mostly on small canvasses, but here you have someone who recognized scenes in his own way, with an art and an expression never seen before. There are also composers like Gesualdo, especially his sixth madrigal, a piece of music dating from 1580. Now his equivalent was not to be found again until Stravinsky came along, which means that Gesualdo was several centuries ahead of his time. He was a man who heard sounds and knew how to articulate them, and as such he was in advance of his age.

Or else Akhenaton the pharaoh, half a millennium ahead of his era. He was the first to introduce monotheism, the first pharaoh to have a private life, and who left the stamp of his art like a strange missionary. He is a character about whom I would have liked to make a film. I even considered this possibility with Kassan, who unfortunately passed away, and whom I liked very much because he was a producer with uncommon creativity and vivacity. One of the greatest losses in terms of international production.

ON THE SUBLIME AS AESTHETICS

In this regard, we should quote a phrase by Schiller, which treats the sublime and which I find incomparable. Indeed, the question of the sublime has often been raised about my films. I can say one thing I am certain of in this regard, which is that never in my life have I planned anything to be sublime. I have never worried about aesthetics, even though I am aware there is an aesthetics in the final result. There is definitely an aesthetics, but there is in me no theoretical or aestheticizing preoccupation. And it exists nowhere, be it during my work, at the time of editing, while shooting or when writing the screenplay. The question of aesthetics plays no part in my life, is never even raised, even if the result contains a form of aesthetics

which I myself find difficult to define. But regarding the sublime, Schiller's phrase, which I am looking at, suddenly acquires a great presence for me. It is precisely this phrase of Schiller's that says that "we live the sublime through the feeling that comes from loss of consciousness." He should be quoted in full, because here Schiller writes it in a certain way, which can only apply to something concrete. But this notion does not generally play a role in my work. Nevertheless, he found a very beautiful definition for something which is, in any case, very difficult to grasp.

"This is how we live the Sublime: on one hand through our feeling of powerlessness to grasp matter; and on the other through our feeling of superiority, which does not shrink from any limitations and spiritually subjugates everything our sensory forces are subjected to."

Schiller

What is the sublime in Kurosawa's films, or in Hölderlin? It cannot be truly grasped, or maybe even understood. I believe that it hurts us human beings not to be able to use it in practice like a mathematical definition. In this regard, I have the feeling that Tarkovsky would have understood me.

Catherine Courel

Translated from French by Gisèle and Kenneth Cervisi



THE FILMS 1966 – 1994

DIE BEISPIELLOSE VERTEIDIGUNG DER FESTUNG DEUTSCHKREUTZ

1966, b/w, 14 min.

DIR/SCR Werner Herzog, CAM Jaime Pacheco, CAST Peter H. Brumm, Georg Eska, Karl-Heinz Steffel, Wolfgang von Ungern-Sternberg.

A prelude to *Signs of Life*, this is a satire on the state of war and peace and the absurdities it inspires. Four young men locked up in a garrison invent a war by fighting imaginary enemies and finally stage an assault of a corn field.

LEBENSZEICHEN / Signs of Life

1967, b/w, 90 min.

DIR/SCR Werner Herzog, CAM Thomas Mauch, MUS Stavros Xarchakos, CAST Peter Brogle, Wolfgang Reichmann, Athina Zacharopoulos, Wolfgang von Ungern-Sternberg.

PRINT SOURCE New Yorker Films, Inter Nationes.

PRIZE Silberner Bär, Berlin 1968.

Herzog's first feature, which marked a turning point in the renaissance of German cinema, is an original mixture of Quixote-madness and case history. The central character, Stroszek, is a wounded German soldier sent to sit out the war in an isolated garrison on a Greek island. Unhinged by the torpid circularity of island life he is driven mad and finally rebels by lashing out against an incredible vision of a valley filled with thousands of whirring windmills.

LETZTE WORTE / Last Words

1967/68, b/w, 13 min.

DIR/SCR Werner Herzog, CAM Thomas Mauch.

PRINT SOURCE New Yorker Films.

And old man refuses to speak since he had to leave a Greek island with a leper colony, which was closed down. He imagines himself to be the king, singing and playing in the taverns.

MABNAHMEN GEGEN FANATIKER / Precautions against Fanatics

1968, b/w, 11 min.

DIR/SCR Werner Herzog, CAM Dietrich Lohmann, Jörg Schmidt-Reitwein. PRINT
SOURCE New Yorker Films.

An outraged old man declares himself the protector of race horses and fights against the fanatic trainers.

DIE FLIEGENDEN ÄRZTE VON OST-AFRIKA

1968/69, b/w, 45 min.

DIR/SCR Werner Herzog, CAM Thomas Mauch CAST Dr. Rottcher, Dr. Michael Wood, Dr. Ann Spoery, Dr. Keisler, Betty Miller, James Kabale.

This film shows the difficulties of providing medical aid to Africa. Flying from Tanzania to Uganda and Kenya, the doctors' mission is constantly endangered by a wide variety of problems.

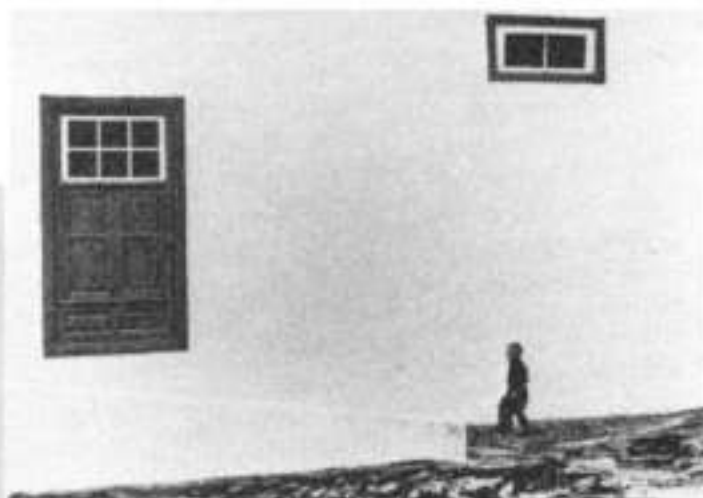
FATA MORGANA

1968/70, color, 79 min.

DIR/SCR Werner Herzog, CAM Jörg Schmidt-Reitwein, CAST Wolfgang von Ungern-Sternberg, James William Gledhill, Eugen des Montagnes, VOICE Lotte Eisner.
PRINT SOURCE Inter Nationes.



This film about the creation and transformation of things is between documentary and feature, between utopia and reality, beauty and decay. Hallucinatory images of the African deserts and dunes are combined with music by Johnny Cash and Leonhard Cohen. Lotte Eisner reads from the Guatemalan creation myth.



AUCH ZWERGE HABEN KLEIN ANGEFANGEN / Even Dwarfs started small

1969/70, b/w, 96 min.

DIR/SCR Werner Herzog, CAM Thomas Mauch, CAST Helmut Döring, Paul Glauer, Gisela Hertwig, Herta Minkner, Gertraud Piccini.

PRINT SOURCE New Line Cinema, Inter Nationes.

The similarities between animals and people assume mythological overtones in Herzog's second feature film. Set in a reformatory for criminal dwarfs, it is a nightmare of power reversals and imminent anarchy. Just as the dwarfs rebel against their jailors, so do the chickens running loose in the courtyard. The dwarfs, although residing in a criminal institution, are first and foremost human beings who have been denied basic rights. Herzog embraces their otherness, implicating himself (and the audience) by shooting much of the film at the low angles from which the dwarfs view the world.

LAND DER STILLE UND DER FINSTERNIS / Land of Silence and Darkness

1970/71, color, 85 min.

DIR/SCR Werner Herzog, CAM Jörg Schmidt-Reitwein, CAST Fini Straubinger, Heinrich Fleischmann, Vladimir Kokol, M. Baaske, Resi Mittermeier.

PRINT SOURCE New Yorker Films, Inter Nationes.

This astonishing documentary about the world of the deaf-blind focuses on Fini Straubinger, a 56 year old deaf-blind woman who joins the filmmaker on a complex journey into memories, images and experiences. We are introduced to an existence so intense that it is hard to escape.

AGUIRRE, DER ZORN GOTTES / Aguirre, the Wrath of God

1972, color, 93 min.

DIR/SCR Werner Herzog, CAM Thomas Mauch, MUS Popul Vuh, CAST Klaus Kinski, Helena Rojo, Ruy Guerra, Del Negro, Peter Berling.

PRINT SOURCE New Yorker Films, Inter Nationes.



In the mid-1500s a large Spanish expedition searching for the mythical lost city of El Dorado detached an advanced party to explore a tributary of the Amazon;

they never returned. Herzog extrapolated this obscure incident into **AGUIRRE, THE WRATH OF GOD**, a spectacular and horrifying chronicle of imperialism run amok. In Herzog's version, the conquistadors' expedition falls into the hands of one Don Lope de Aguirre, a power-driven lunatic who dreams of stealing an entire continent. Klaus Kinski delivers a magnificent performance as Aguirre, creating a character of menacing malevolence, part Richard III, part Attila, the Hun. "A splendid and haunting work." - Vincent Canby.



DIE GROBE EKSTASE DES HOLZSCHNITZERS STEINER / The Great Ecstasy of the Sculptor Steiner

1973/74, color, 45 min.

DIR/SCR Werner Herzog, CAM Jörg Schmidt-Reitwein, MUS Popul Vuh, Florian Fricke, CAST Walter Steiner.

PRINT SOURCE New Yorker Films, Inter Nationes.

This lyrical documentary is about Walter Steiner, a Swiss wood-carver who is also the world's greatest ski jumper. Amazing slow-motion photography captures the splendid, terrifying isolation of Steiner's passion.



JEDER FÜR SICH UND GOTT GEGEN ALLE / The Mystery of Kaspar Hauser

1974, color, 109 min.

DIR/SCR Werner Herzog, CAM Jörg Schmidt-Reitwein, Cast Bruno S., Walter Ladengast, Brigitte Mira, Hans Musäus, Willy Semmelrogge, Michael Kroecker, Henry van Lyck, Enno Patalas.

PRINT SOURCE New Yorker Films, Inter Nationes.

PRIZE Deutscher Filmpreis 1975, Special Jury Prize, Cannes 1975.

In 1828 a young man appeared in the town square of Nuremberg, his origins unknown, having apparently been kept in solitary confinement all his life. Five years later he was murdered by an unidentified assailant. Truffaut viewed his "enfant sauvage" through the eyes of French rationalism, Peter Sehr's Kaspar Hauser is the victim of aristocratic power plays and intrigues, Werner Herzog's version of the original "wild boy" (played brilliantly by Bruno S., a life-long



mental patient) is steeped in German romanticism. Herzog - at his most lyrical and most humane - cuts incisively through the bars of exploitation to release a prisoner to the fresh beauties of a world flawed only by Man, exchanging a physical prison for a spiritual one. Herzog and Bruno S. together maintain a profound respect for Kaspar's irreducible, unsanitized otherness which becomes a defiant and often droll challenge to scientists, bureaucrats, clergymen, realists, and rationalists. The film is considered one of the most acclaimed classics of the New German Cinema.

HOW MUCH WOOD WOULD A WOODCHUCK CHUCK

1975/76, color, 45 min. In English.

DIR/SCR Werner Herzog, CAM Thomas Mauch, CAST Ralph Eade, Alan Ball, Steve Liptay, Abe Diffenbach, PRINT SOURCE New Yorker Films.

An off-the beaten-track documentary on language at its craziest and most fascinating: the high-speed incantations of livestock auctioneers, filmed at the Pennsylvania World Championship.



HERZ AUS GLAS / Heart of Glass

1976, color, 93 min.

DIR Werner Herzog, SCR Herbert Achternbusch, Werner Herzog, CAM Jörg Schmidt-Reitwein, CAST Josef Bierbichler, Stefan Güttler, Clemens Scheitz, Volker Prechtel, Sepp Müller, Sonja Skiba, PRINT SOURCE New Yorker Films.

Based on a novel by Herbert Achternbusch, the story, a Bavarian folk tale, tells of a small German town that loses the secret of making its unique Ruby glass. The townspeople turn to madness, murder and magic in order to recover the ingredients and the recipe they have lost.

LA SOUFRIÈRE

1976, color, 30 min. English narration by Herzog.

DIR/SCR Werner Herzog, CAM Jörg Schmidt-Reitwein..

PRIZE Deutscher Filmpreis 1976.

In 1976, scientists predicted that the island of Guadeloupe would be destroyed by an imminent volcano eruption. One man refused to leave while all his neighbors evacuated the island. Sensing a kindred spirit, Herzog arrived with a small film crew to record this man's world as he waited for the end (which much to the expert's embarrassment, never came).



STROSZEK

1977, color, 107 min.

DIR/SCR Werner Herzog, CAM Thomas Mauch, CAST Bruno S. Eva Mattes, Clemens Scheitz, Wilhelm von Homburg, Burkhard Driest, Pitt Bedewitz..

PRINT SOURCE New Yorker Films, Inter Naciones.

PRIZE Deutscher Filmkritikerpreis, 1978.

Stroszek is a lyrical, bitterly funny tale of three oddly assorted Berlin misfits who follow the American Dream to Railroad Flats, Wisconsin. They find a bleak El Dorado of TV, football, CB radio, truck stops, and mobile homesteading. The title role is played by Bruno S., a streetsinger (who starred in *Kaspar Hauser*), joined by Eva Mattes as a soulful whore, and Clemens Scheitz as an eccentric old man, conducting a homemade search for the secrets of "animal magnetism."



NOSFERATU, PHANTOM DER NACHT / Nosferatu the Vampyre

1978, color, 107 min.

DIR/SCR Werner Herzog, CAM Jörg Schmidt-Reitwein, CAST Klaus Kinski, Isabelle Adjani, Bruno Ganz, Roland Topor, Jacques Dufilho, Walter Ladengast.

PRINT SOURCE Films Inc.

PRIZE Silberner Bär, Set Design, Berlin 1979; Deutscher Schauspielpreis for Klaus Kinski 1979.

This richly drawn version of the Dracula tale, inspired by Murnau's 1922 *Nosferatu*, is one of Herzog's most beautiful films. Wine reds, alabaster whites, grey eerie caverns and Klaus Kinski's translucent fingernails have a way of remaining in your mind long after you have seen this film.



WOYZECK

1979, color, 82 min.

DIR/SCR Werner Herzog, CAM Jörg Schmidt-Reitwein, CAST Klaus Kinski, Eva Mattes, Wolfgang Reichmann, Willy Semmelrogge, Josef Bierbichler, Irm Hermann.

PRINT SOURCE New Yorker Films, Inter Nationes.

PRIZE Best Actress Eva Mattes, Cannes 1979.

Georg Büchner's Woyzek inspired this very personal human document. Herzog has taken this caustic tragedy of an ordinary man's plunge into madness and murder and filmed it with a stunning clarity, sober and unpoetic. In the title role Kinski delivers a harrowing and unforgettable performance.

HUIE'S SERMON

1980, color, 40 min. In English.

DIR/SCR Werner Herzog, CAM Thomas Mauch, CAST Monseigneur Huie L. Rogers.

PRINT SOURCE New Yorker Films

In his continual quest for the edges of existence Herzog finds a black, Bible-shouting church in Brooklyn. The subject of the film is a spellbinding sermon whose theme is summed up in the film's postscript: "If man had anything to do with the sun, it wouldn't rise tomorrow."

GOD'S ANGRY MAN

1980, color, 46 min. In English.

DIR/SCR Werner Herzog, CAM Thomas Mauch, CAST Gene Scott.

PRINT SOURCE New Yorker Films

West German iconoclast meets California TV evangelist Dr. Eugene Scott in this curious thought-provoking portrait of media religion gone haywire. Combining footage from Scott's surreal daily broadcasts with revealing interviews, Herzog once again proves to be a man obsessed to record the edges of mankind.

FITZCARRALDO

1981, color, 158 min.

DIR/SCR Werner Herzog, CAM Thomas Mauch, CAST Klaus Kinski, Claudia Cardinale, Jose Lewgoy, Miguel Angel Fuentes, Paul Hittscher, Huerequeque Enrique Bohorquez, Grande Othelo, Peter Berling.

PRINT SOURCE Films Inc., Inter Naciones.

PRIZE Deutscher Filmpreis 1982. Best Directing Cannes 1982. San Sebastian 1982.

Fitzcarraldo's goal is to make enough money to build an opera house in the Amazonian jungle and then have Enrico Caruso sing in it. With a boat and a crew he sets out on the Amazon to realize his dream. Confronted with enormous obstacles and difficulties he finally had his boat carried over a mountain. The imagery is spectacular; lush, stark, and delicate. "From the first aerial views of fog lowering over the lush green jungles of Peru and rivers sneaking treacherously through the landscape, the film is stunning." - Judy Stone.



DIE BALLADE DES KLEINEN SOLDATEN / Ballad of the Little Soldier

1984, color, 45 min.

DIR/SCR Werner Herzog, Denis Reichle, CAM Jorge Vignati, Michael Edols.

PRINT SOURCE New Yorker Films

With photographer/journalist Denis Reichle, Herzog traveled to northeastern Nicaragua to record the resistance of the Miskito Indians against assimilation. Persecuted initially by the Somoza regime, the Miskitos then fought the Sandinistas with guerilla units composed largely of children.

WO DIE GRÜNEN AMEISEN TRÄUMEN / Where the Green Ants Dream

1983/84, color, 103 min.

DIR/SCR Werner Herzog, CAM Jörg Schmidt-Reitwein, CAST Bruce Spence, Wandjuk Marika, Roy Marika, Ray Barrett, Norman Keye.

PRINT SOURCE Orion Film

PRIZE Deutscher Filmpreis 1984.

In this visually stunning film Herzog explores the aborigines of Australia in

conflict with civilisation. It seems that uranium lies under land that a mammoth corporation is mining. The process is destroying the land, disrupting the lives of its simple, peaceful inhabitants, and disturbing their religious beliefs which proclaim the territory a sacred place "where the green ants dream." A young company geologist (Bruce Spence) tries to persuade and then accommodate the tribal elder, as he eventually becomes aware of the ultimate harm being perpetrated in the name of progress and profit.

GASHERBRUM-DER LEUCHTENDE BERG / The Dark Glow of the Mountain

1984, color, 45 min.

DIR/SCR Werner Herzog, CAM Rainer Klausmann, CAST Reinhold Messner, Hans Kammerlander.

PRINT SOURCE New Yorker Films

A portrait of the world's foremost mountain climber Reinhard Messner, climbing two of Pakistan's Gasherbrum peaks in an unprecedented seven days without oxygen or elaborate equipment. A thought-provoking rumination on the unique combination of fear and exhilaration that drives men like Messner to conquer new heights.



COBRA VERDE

1987, color, 111 min.

DIR/SCR Werner Herzog, CAM Viktor Ruzicka, CAST Klaus Kinski, King Ampaw, Jose Lewgoy, Peter Berling, S.A.S. Nana Agyefi Kwame II de Nsein.

PRINT SOURCE Cine International.

Based on Bruce Chatwin's novel *The Viceroy of Ouidah*, the film tells the story of Francisco Manoel da Silva in 19th century Brazil. Silva, a supervisor of a rich plantation, is sent to the kingdom of Ouidah to reinforce the black slave trade. Confronted with a hesitant, insane king and corrupt merchants, Manoel da Silva, or Cobra Verde, stages a putsch and is named viceroy of Ouidah.



LES GAULOIS

1988, color, 12 min.

DIR/SCR Werner Herzog, CAM Jörg Schmidt-Reitwein, CAST Claude Josse, Jean Clemente, the Rugby team of Stade Toulousain and the Sport Club of Graulheut.

Herzog's view of the French from wine experts to Rugby players with clippings on the same subject by David Lynch, Godard, Comencini and Wajda.

HIRTEN DER SONNE / Herdsmen of the Sun

1988, color, 52 min.

DIR/SCR Werner Herzog, CAM Jörg Schmidt-Reitwein.

PRINT SOURCE Interama

A fascinating often hilarious portrait of the Woodabe tribe of the Sahara who consider themselves the world's most beautiful people. The men have developed a contest of beauty and seduction to attract the women who, by reversing the traditional roles, can choose among the men. The next morning the man ask their seducer "Do you love me because of my beauty or my charms?"

ECHOS AUS EINEM DÜSTEREN REICH / Echoes from a Somber Empire

1990, color, 90 min. In French.

DIR/SCR Werner Herzog, CAM Jörg Schmidt-Reitwein, CAST Michael Goldsmith, François Gilbault, Augustine Assemet, Francis Szpiner, David Dacko, Marie-Reine Hassen.

PRINT SOURCE New Yorker Films

Herzog's nightmarish documentary traces the legacy of Jean Bedel Bokassa, a lesser known counterpart of such modern despots as Idi Amin or Saddam Hussein. Ruler of the Central African Republic from 1966 to 1979, Bokassa instituted a regime of murder and torture, drained the national economy in ludicrous extravagance, fathered 50 children, crowned himself emperor, and reputedly ate several of his enemies. Serving as a tourguide through this backwater of hell is Michael Goldsmith, a journalist who was imprisoned and tortured by Bokassa.



SCHREI AUS STEIN / Scream of Stone

1991, color, 109 min.

DIR Werner Herzog, SCR Hans-Ulrich Kanner, Walter Saxer, CAM Rainer Klausmann,
CAST Vittorio Mezzogiorno, Mathilda May, Stefan Glowacz, Donald Sutherland, Brad
Durif, Gunilla Karlzen, Al Waxman, Chevela Vargas, Georg Marischka.

PRINT SOURCE Cine International

PRIZE Special Jury Prize, Venice 1991.

The film tells about the fierce battle between two great mountain climbers who are trying to conquer the world's most difficult mountain, the Cerro Torre in Patagonia. Rivalry and pride are pushing the two men to the point where victory finally turns into an absurd parody of their dream.

LESSONS OF DARKNESS

1991/92, color, 52 min.

DIR/SCR Werner Herzog, CAM Paul Berriff.

PRINT SOURCE Export Union

An apocalyptic vision featuring the oil-well fires in Kuwait after the Golf-War. To the music of Mahler, Wagner and Verdi Herzog creates in 13 chapters an inferno of devastation, horror, silence, and powerful beauty.

BELLS FROM THE DEEP - Faith and Superstition in Russia

1993, color, 60 min.

DIR/SCR Werner Herzog, CAM Jörg Schmidt-Reitwein.

PRINT SOURCE Worldvision

Herzog's look into religious and superstitious people in Russia is both eye-opening and fascination. We meet exorcists, a Jesus look-a-like, fundamentalist preachers, a real "clochard", and the many who are seeking for the sunken city of Kitezh. The film is part of the 5-part series "Momentous Events: Russia in the 90's."

DIE UMWANDLUNG DER WELT IN MUSIK / The Transformation of the World into Music

1994, color, 90 min.

DIR/SCR Werner Herzog, CAM Jörg Schmidt-Reitwein, CAST Wolfgang Wagner, Heiner Müller, Yoshi Yamamoto.

A portrait of the Opera Festival in Bayreuth, that not only transforms Bayreuth into music but also into a more human and perhaps less Wagnerian place. Interviews with the "big stars" backstage and during rehearsals take away some of the myth and the intimidation that surround Bayreuth.

FILMS ABOUT WERNER HERZOG

WERNER HERZOG EATS HIS SHOE

1979/80, b/w, 26 min.

DIR/SCR Les Blank.

PRINT SOURCE Flower Films



BURDEN OF DREAMS

1981/82, 93 min.

DIR/SCR Les Blank

PRINT SOURCE Flower Films

"We knew we would run into difficulties, but that they would be so serious...we couldn't imagine. We tried to think the unthinkable, but our imaginations were not fertile enough. We have been walking on a brink between two abysses, and we have not fallen down, but it's getting very very narrow now. People have lost their lives...But I have no choice, I have to do this work. I live my life or I end my life with this project." Werner Herzog during the making of Fitzcarraldo. This film by Les Blank documents the filming.

I AM MY FILMS

1976, color, 96 min.

DIR Christian Weisenborn and Erwin Keusch.

PRINT SOURCE New Yorker Films

A portrait of Werner Herzog which encompasses his childhood, his early sense of mission and self-imposed ordeals, and the genesis and production of his films with clips from his major works.

