Commentary by Werner Herzog of his film *Aguirre, the Wrath of God* (1972).

Only 360,000, a crew of 8 people, no time to make it, no resources

What inspired you? The coincidence was a friend had a library, half a page on Loe de Aguirre, wrote the screenplay in 2 ½ days, on a soccer trip, Herzog made up the film, the famous letter, and he quotes from that letter in the film.

-Locations, rio Urubamba, bottom of Machupichu, rainy season, I swam across the river and it was difficult, we build a cable connection, I had to do it, I was 28 years old.

-Hold a shot, nature gains an independent life. How far are you from Machu Pichu, in 1971, there was a hotel with 8 rooms, 450 of us lived in hammocks, it is very physical film.

-Actors, native Indians from Highlands.

Peter Kinsky, was the only choice for the film

-Problems, no food, he had to sell his boots or watch, Lost a shoe in the swamp, his leg went into the mud, swamp.

-the amount of people with no tent, how to feed them

-Gonzalo Pizarro played by a priest from Cuzco.

-Hard to get animals there

Actual jungle, was cheaper and authentic, the story takes place in the Peruvian jungle.

-shot only with one camera a 25 mm camera, he took it from an institute, he made 8 more films with just one camera.

It adds to authenticity, no sophistication as in Hollywood. It is the power of this film

-Klaus Kinsky, when he finished the script he knew it would be Kinsky, he was 15 when he was picked up from the street and he would destroy everything and cause chaos and unbelievable scandals.

-Rio Uayaga? It is another river, not Urubamba anymore. The rapids.. The actors knew that the Indians are expert raft builders, there are 3 consecutive rapids. Beginning of the rainy season, we had injuries when they got into fights after drinking, no accidents because of the shooting of the film. One of the rafts started to disintegrate. The rapids is for real.

Elena Rojo, a Mexican actress…

2 minutes to go through the rapids.. The raft into the whirlpool. We had to pull these people on ropes from the hill , I almost fell into the water, the water takes you in immediately.

-Guerra, film maker from Brasil, cine nuovo in the 60’s and 70’s.

-Kinsky, he immediately loved the film. He screamed over the phone. He was a pest every day during the shoot. 100’s of fire aunt’s attacked Herzog.

-Cecilia Rivera, a school girl from Lima and never played in films before.

-Del negro, an American actor who never revealed his first name.

- They got sick turning in circles on the raft.

-Thomas Mouse? [cameraman] A physical relation, he understood how to shoot in the jungle. We never see the enemy, they are always anonymous, mysterious, he is bead because blood is going to drop. The extras were a wild bunch.

-It was only 5 weeks to film and 4 weeks editing.

Kinsky had a separate hut and the extras drunk and Kinsky fired three bullets to their hut and luckily he did not kill anyone and I immediately grabbed the rifle and I still have it, it was one of my souveniers

-Musician, Popol Vuh, the music. Froilan Friky, used to play soccer together and he has been important for me.

-Guerra, great knowledge of cinema.

-miniature slaugh, these animals sleep most of their lives, it is a wonderful concept, to sleep most of your life. He got it from an Indian.

-the river flooded and most of the rafts were gone, he included this event to the film.

-what happened he used for the advantage of the film, the actors adapted to it.

Our location was flooded.

-Peter Berling, (plays the Indian) was a producer, he writes novels and scientific books, works with Fasbinder.

-Edward Rolad, the black soldier, a great athelete, he found him on the street in Lima. He was very sweet.

-Women in such elegance while all the men are decaying, Herzog goes from stylization to events,

-Kinksky, talks about Cortes, he walks and keeps moving like a crab, he thought , bump as if he had a bump, move like a spider, something different about how he moves. You can tell when you look at the faces of the extras. Held together by leather straps, otherwise he would fall apart.

-Physician on location, the man with long curly hair.

-scene, stylish, almost frozen scene, does not contribute to the story of the film, but of the mood, it is becoming unreal, retarded beggar from the streets of Cuzco, afraid of things, I had to take care of him a lot, you just find this people and they become an important part of the shooting.

-the monk and Ines, another stylished scene, the monk very evil, and the woman innocent, that is how I see the role of the Church in Latin America.

-I was writing the dialogue during shooting. Tension from the looks of their faces.

-Kinsky’s daughter,

-Danny Odis, plays leading part, in another film, he would always do “la, la, la, la, “ would make it dangerous and not a melody.

-The letter, excerpts from the real and the rest invented by Herzog. “I like the style of the letter” I wrote this half page, and an hour later I wrote the screenplay. The choice of costume, from Spain, Kinsky’s was made in Munich, he had a great feeling and sensibility for costumes, he changed little things, like button, etc.

-Wilderness? It is a subject, it has to do with us in nature, with civilization, when are we standing, how do we behave under particular stress, human beings are put to the real test. It is as if we were there in 1561, while the document is read, actors freeze as if it were a picture, almost documentary style shooting.

-He came with a huge suitcase with spices… he loved eating, fish would be caught by villagers nearby.

They speak quechua now. Okello, role model for Aguirre, Okello, was a dictator, staged a rebellion in sunsibar, at the age of 28 mastermind he delivered incredible speeches. Took over the island, some of the taste of these speeches are like Aguirre. I got in trouble looking for him in Africa.

-Fever fantasies, fever dreams of the jungle take over the phantasies of this people. The rainforest takes an ere sense, you loose the sense, a huge movement that comes to a standstill, difficult to do that in the film. We build these huts, rio Ugayaga, we bought the buildings and were allowed to burned them. Kinsky hit him hard in the helmet and still hurt him, I realized that this man was bleeding, Kinsky was just going to far. It was a real mummy. He had a mummy sitting next to him in the airplane. His brother took it.

-Now rio Nanai, a thousand miles away, how do you transport a horse, no roads anywhere, the jungle flooded for miles, could only tie the rafts to some branches, the birds are precisely organized in the sound track, placed in moments of great tension. Very tense, ere, we had some anesthesia for the horse, so he will fall. The jungle reacts. Whenever there is silence, there is death, native Indians around.

-These are natives of lowland, yacuas, they speak a different language.

-the gunpowder, little arrow, silence means death. Fire!! Humor. Fire! Some guys special effects for the cannon. Kinsky spirals in front of the camera. Musician against the silence. Profound fear when it comes to silence. Boat on top of a tree does not look so abnormal anymore.

-the couple slowly come to the frame, of Indians, Actual costume, that they don’t wear anymore, sometime for tourists, Actually they speak two different languages, the film pretends they understand each other. They are killed for that, with the thinking of the time. Storyborded ? You loose spontaneity out of filmmaking.

-Slave dreams of gold too, freedom, the toilet, was actually used. We had one case of hepatitis and that is it.

-In the dialogue, land ownership, more people caught in fever dreams, the quality of the jungle, it is a part of the human landscape. Jungle are human qualities, it is never a scenic backdrop, it is always part of the soul of men in this jungle.

-fish, is how we would eat during the film, back counting corn. You sweat and you are in trouble if you don’t have salt. It is essential in the jungle. He is like an emperor but he eats like a pig. Kinsky wanted mineral water, but we drank river water. They actually had to put the horse on land, like part of the film, the horse did not want to leave.

1:09, mysterious shots, we staged, favorite shot, poetry you can put into films, horse in jungle.

-already dead, army of monkeys, married his daughter who is already dead.

-Choir, is not real singing, ere thing in between, get in the water, we read the emotions into her, we don’t see her face.

-wife, inside she keeps her dignity, she walks into the jungle, walk away from these men.

-Kinsky screamed until he was tired, so we shot only once, the scene, when the man decapitated. We put a dummy with an artificial head and it flies, and the real man was stuck into the ground.

Okello is speaking here, at the end of his strength. I had to trick him into a performance, I had to cheat him.

We liked each other, we plotted to kill each other, I threatened I would shoot him. I would have shot him, out-gutted him, I was more determined than he was, he would have left, he wouldn’t have care less to get out.

Mice, took seconds to shoot, it becomes more strange, butterfly, something about nature that is within these men, fortunate a butterfly sat on is shoulder, I liked this man so much that I held the shot (the zamponia player), how the roof comes off, along a wire, the guy, these extras and lost a tooth and swollen lips, were the next ones to be killed and lost a tooth, and sent home.

-Stylized Kinsky responding to illusion, a soliloquy like from a Shakespeare drama, stepping out of dialogue, a monologue, inner, building into a kind of madness, fever dreams,

We built a boat partially in a tree top and it was heavy, 2 dozen men, natives working on it for 12 days. At this point, it is imagination, the arrow, they lost their sense of reality, ‘ don’t forget to pray lest gods be unkindly”

-His daughter is dying, unusual for cinema, no pain, not dead yet, tender moment, stylized death in a movie.

-400 monkeys, I had them organized in Iquitos, half of the money, and they were sold again to Miami, I shouted, where are the vaccination certificates, put them on the boat and took them back again,

-I grabbed into the monkeys, I got bitten 50 times, swim away, about 50 made it to freedom. Just followed the monkeys, he throws the monkey, the sun, without that, the end, I did the speed boat, how do you slow down, that the wake is diminished, we are circling, a if the draft was going in circles, motif in other films, the monkeys are taken over, circling.. end of Aguirre.