

**“Of the Creatures who are doomed to perish, to fall”: Mythology  
and Time in Herzog’s Apocalyptic, Science Fiction Films**

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This essay analyses German filmmaker Werner Herzog’s (b. 1942- ) films *Fata Morgana* (1970), *Lessons of Darkness* (*Lektionen in Finsternis*) (1992) and *The Wild Blue Yonder* (2005). Each of these films shares formal characteristics, such as being divided by chapter inter-titles and using voice over narration. However, they also have different iconographic features. *Fata Morgana* is set in the natural, desert landscapes of Africa. It shows quiet, other-worldly beauty among the ruins of civilisation. The landscapes in this film contain disintegrating relics of human culture, such as wrecked automobiles, aeroplanes and other machine parts. It is not until the twenty-minute mark of the film that the first human figure is seen. They are sublimely dwarfed on the horizon line of an immense desert terrain. *Lessons of Darkness* is set in Kuwait at the end of the first Gulf War during the period when the last of the burning oil wells were being extinguished. The film presents Kuwait as an unnamed planet that exists somewhere in our solar system. On the one hand, the audience knows that this planet is Earth and that it has been devastated by human action. On the other hand, the film also presents it as a mutilated planet on fire that reflects Herzog’s private, apocalyptic imagination. *The Wild Blue Yonder* is largely comprised of different found-footage. This includes images shot under an ice sheet in Antarctica by Henry Kaiser and images shot in 1991 by astronauts from inside

the space shuttle Atlantis while in orbit around the Earth. These images are contextualised by a narrative that involves alien space missions and human time travel. In fact, in its opening title sequence the film describes itself as "A Science Fiction Fantasy." The narrative ends with a number of human astronauts returning home after travelling to the outer regions of Andromeda only to find that the Earth has been radically reborn into a planet with no traces or signs of human civilisation.

While there are these differences in visual imagery between the films critics have described them as poetic 'documentaries' that draw on the apocalyptic and science fiction genres. Adam Bingham, for example, has observed that these three films constitute a trilogy. They are united, he claims, by the way they use an apocalyptic, science fiction mode to "depict our world burned and scarred beyond recognition, raped and pillaged by the hand of man and left to rot and burn."<sup>1</sup> Such strong language is applicable to *Lessons of Darkness* and, to a lesser extent, *Fata Morgana* which has desolate landscapes of rubble and wreckage, but not to *The Wild Blue Yonder*. Although some scenes in the film are set in the relics of an abandoned town somewhere in North America, *The Wild Blue Yonder* does not have the equivalent imagery to *Lessons of Darkness* which shows a planet engulfed in an inferno and, unlike *Fata Morgana*, it does not spend inordinate amounts of time filming the remnants of a machine age decomposing in impersonal, primeval landscapes. Nonetheless, Bingham is right to say that these three films are united by their apocalyptic themes and imagery and by the way they try to show the Earth as something unrecognisable – something alien – which constitutes a key aspect of Herzog's brand of poetics. As Brad Prager has said, science fiction elements are employed in these three films not so much "as a means to imagine a future than as a means of imagining some standpoint other than our own, or seeing our world from a vantage point from which we would be led to question our present day habits of vision."<sup>2</sup> Prager's point is that these works are science fiction films for Herzog because they show the Earth through alien eyes, and this ideally creates an aesthetic experience for the spectator that transports them to a position beyond familiar and conventional ways of experiencing the world.

Drawing on the work of Elizabeth K. Rosen<sup>3</sup> and her analysis of how traditional, apocalyptic myths resurface in the work of postmodern artists, I will argue that the science fiction elements in these three films are bound up with mytho-apocalyptic structures of time. I will contend that while Herzog explores through the medium of cinema the possibility of imagining our planet from another perspective, such exploration is framed by a deep pessimism and tragedy. In different ways the mytho-apocalyptic structures

of time in these three films convey the notion that degeneration is built into the evolution of the human species, that finality is the condition of being, and that there is a course toward environmental catastrophe that cannot be avoided. Moreover, I will suggest that these films do so through circular time rather than in terms of linear progression. Time in these films is presented as being in a paradoxical stasis where the end is inscribed in the beginning and vice versa. This has important implications for thinking about the different ways pessimistic and tragic views of the relationship between human beings and nature can be articulated.

### **“Of the Creatures who are Doomed to Perish, to Fall”**

A plot-less film *Fata Morgana* has been described as an epic, desert “documentary.”<sup>4</sup> To say that *Fata Morgana* is epic is to imply that it is grand in scale and scope, particularly in terms of how it treats the human subject. For example, in the “Creation” chapter Lotte H. Eisner’s<sup>5</sup> voice over narration reads out passages from the Mayan creation-text “Popul Vuh” (Herzog has said that he slightly re-worked some of these passages so they are all not exact quotes).<sup>6</sup> This narration establishes that at two different stages of the Earth’s creation “the creatress” and “the creator” formed and then destroyed human kind.

In the first ten minutes of the ‘Creation’ chapter Eisner speaks of a silent earth “lonely and void,” of a time before there was any botanical life, animals or human beings; “nothing was there to take form...there was only the nothingness.” She then goes on to talk about the “creatress” and the “creator” and “the dawning of light and the conception of man.” The fowl, fish and beasts of the land were created and then man and woman. However, these last:

creatures were without sense and they spake not before the face of their creatress and their creator... and so they were destroyed, drowned. For their sakes the face of the earth was darkened...Small beasts and big beasts flocked together, trees and rocks cried shame upon them...They determined to climb the trees but they were cast off by the trees. They determined to hide in the caves but the caves closed before them. In this manner the second destruction of the beings formed or created like man took place, of the beings which are doomed to perish, to fall.

This idea that human beings “are doomed to perish, to fall” re-occurs throughout Herzog’s work. For example, the story line in *The Wild Blue Yonder* involves the inevitable end of civilisation. This story is relayed

through on-and-off screen narration by Brad Dourif who plays an alien in the film (his character title is simply "The Alien"). The film is divided into ten chapters and in the third chapter: "The Roswell UFO Mystery Re-examined," "The Alien" explains that in the late 1990s the CIA decided to re-examine the crashed object found near Roswell, New Mexico in 1947. He says that the object turned out to be a probe sent from his alien planet. There was widespread panic around the globe once it was realised that after investigating the probe scientists had unintentionally disseminated a mysterious microbe into the world. A group of astronauts were sent out on a space mission to find a hospitable place in the universe for human beings to colonise.

Later in the film, "The Alien" says that one of the astronauts discovered the existence of "chaotic tunnels." This allowed he and his crew to travel to "The Alien's" home planet – somewhere beyond the outer regions of Andromeda. On this planet they discovered a portal or "tunnel of time" which they used to travel back to the planet Earth. However, they moved through this portal so quickly "that it had actually become a different, parallel voyage and on Earth 820 years had passed. They began to see their planet in a different light, with different possibilities."

The last chapter of the film: "The true story of their return," begins with a slow moving aerial shot of a gigantic, elevated plateau. Its sides are comprised of a combination of bare, rugged rock and a dense network of trees. It is surrounded in the distance by other plateaus and mountains. These are bathed in an overcast, blue light and shrouded in clouds. In voice over "The Alien" says:

And when they made it back, 820 years later, this Earth had no people left. It was waiting there as a national park. This plateau was the landing site as there were no more airfields, no towns, no bridges, no dams, no money, no banks, no time and no breath. It had returned to its pristine beauty. It was prehistoric again. And this is what it looks like.

What the human astronauts paradoxically discover is a "new" Earth restored to its "original," pre-human state, in other words, an Earth that is both old and new. The end of *The Wild Blue Yonder* envisions a "new" world that is a reflection of a time that existed before the creation of the human species. The Earth has reverted back to its timeless, pre-historic beginnings and in the course of this circular return the human race has been vanquished.

Unlike either *Fata Morgana* or *The Wild Blue Yonder*, *Lessons in Darkness* does not have a narration that develops over a number of sequences the idea that human beings are certain to be destroyed. Nonetheless, at certain moments the voice over in the film does draw on a pre-

modern, apocalyptic myth – namely, the New Testament text “Revelation” – which concerns the predetermined intervention of God in human history in order to disrupt and displace the corrupt world of the present. In this respect the film particularly resonates with *Fata Morgana* and the use it makes of the “Popul Vuh” – a text that like “Revelation” is pre-modern and mytho-poetic. In the Western world, “Revelation” is the most famous Judeo-Christian biblical narrative concerning the-end-of-times. One of the fundamental perspectives of the book is that there is no way human beings can intervene to change the course of events which lead to the destruction of the human species. This is because the fate of humankind rests with the sovereignty and transcendental reality of God who eventually exercises his ultimate judgement upon the world.

At different points in *Lessons of Darkness* Herzog quotes lines from “Revelation 9: The Plague of the Locusts” and “Revelation 16: The Vials of God’s Wrath.” These lines are spoken in voice over in combination with different aerial footage of the burning oil fields of Kuwait and its lunar like surfaces (which are the result of aerial bombing). The fact such biblical imagery is evoked in combination with a camera that descends from the sky is significant. As Adam Bingham has suggested, these long held, omniscient aerial shots of the raped natural world function as a detached God’s-Eye view of hell on Earth.<sup>7</sup> They help to convey a distant, dream-like impression of an apocalypse for the spectator who soars and lingers over the disfigured and destroyed land masses below. Indeed, as Brad Prager has pointed out, one of the central aims of *Lessons of Darkness* is to hold the spectators’ gaze in one place so that they can survey a planet in the throes of destruction. For the most part, what the audience sees and hears only has to do with images of a planet dying. In the film, no historical or political context is provided to do with why the Gulf War happened and no signs of re-structuring or re-building are presented. As Prager puts it, this is a world where “total destruction overwhelms any promise of redemption.”<sup>8</sup> In other words, the mise-en-scène design and editing, which gives a God’s-Eye view of hell on Earth, not only helps to give expression to the eschatological vision evoked by the voice over, it also suggests that in Herzog’s world this vision does not hold out the promise of a New World to come (which means, as will be discussed shortly, that Herzog has altered one of the vital features of the traditional, apocalyptic myth).

### **Spaceman Views: Interior Transformation in Herzog’s Apocalyptic, Science Fiction Films**

Elizabeth K. Rosen argues that there are a number of contemporary artists

who in their work have adapted different traditional apocalyptic concepts. In the process of adaptation these concepts have been refigured, translated into secular terms that have affected their original meanings. She says that a number of postmodern artists – Rosen has in mind people such as the American filmmaker Terry Gilliam, the American writer Kurt Vonnegut and the American graphic novel writer Alan Moore – have all been influenced by biblical, apocalyptic narratives. However, she suggests that at the same time they have also reworked these narratives, reinterpreting key features of them and, in some cases, critiquing elements central to the particular mythic structures that these narratives have. She does not mean to suggest that such artists have always *consciously* drawn on the paradigm of traditional eschatological literature in order to give its ideas a secular form. Rather their art as much reflects the fact that apocalyptic myths and stories are deeply embedded in our social consciousness and, as such, can be shaping the creative expression of artists' without them being aware of it.

One of the original, apocalyptic concepts that Rosen argues has re-emerged in the work of postmodern artists is particularly applicable to Herzog's work. This is the idea of New Jerusalem. In the traditional apocalyptic myth, epitomised by works such as "Revelation," New Jerusalem connotes a *literal place* where the faithful can live for eternity. New Jerusalem is God's reward for the faithful. Despite the catastrophic and devastating events that occur during the end-of-times, God's intervening hand makes things right for the chosen people, restoring order to a chaotic world by bringing a New Heaven to the Earth. Rosen suggests that in the work of certain postmodern artists this New Jerusalem myth is transposed into contemporary, secular terms. It becomes re-imagined as something that occurs internally within the minds of individuals and which affects how they experience their given surroundings. In other words, the postmodern apocalypse is about the inner creation of a new perception and/or a new conception of the actual existing world.

In postmodern apocalyptic narratives, New Jerusalem is less a place than a new way of seeing: a new vision. Characters do not inherit a new world. Often, they inherit a new way of understanding the old world. And this new way of understanding allows them to see the old world anew.<sup>9</sup>

*Fata Morgana*, *Lessons of Darkness* and *The Wild Blue Yonder* can be situated in respect of this postmodern adaptation of the New Jerusalem idea. As already touched on earlier, scholars have suggested that the apocalyptic, science fiction mode in these three films is employed by Herzog as a means to not only invite audiences to see natural entities and

other objects of the world as though they are alien but also to imagine the Earth from a consciousness beyond their normal perception. Herzog aims, as Prager puts it, to attain “a view of the world as a spaceman would see it.”<sup>10</sup>

Herzog’s own views on his films concur with those of scholars such as Prager and provide more insight into the complex ways that this spaceman view of the Earth is articulated and how it relates to postmodern interpretations of the New Jerusalem idea. While Herzog sees his films as experimental works rather than “documentaries” he too uses the terms poetic and science fiction to describe and link them. For example, he has said of *Lessons of Darkness* that it

plays out as if the entire planet is burning away, and because there is music throughout the film, I call it ‘a requiem for an uninhabitable planet’....*Lessons of Darkness* is a requiem for a planet that we ourselves have destroyed. The film progresses as if aliens have landed on an unnamed planet where the landscape has lost every single trace of its dignity, and – just like in *Fata Morgana* with the debris-strewn desert landscapes – these aliens see human beings for the first time.<sup>11</sup>

In order to appreciate Herzog’s reference to “aliens” in this quote it is necessary to back track to the late 1960s. Herzog has said that his plan initially for *Fata Morgana* was to make a science-fiction film based on the idea that images shot on location in places like the Southern Sahara would appear to be images of another planet, one ‘where the people live waiting for some imminent catastrophe, that of a collision with the sun in exactly sixteen years’. In a further twist these images would be originally shot by aliens from a planet in the Andromeda galaxy but then later discovered and re-edited by “human filmmakers...into a kind of investigative film akin to a very first awakening.”<sup>12</sup> The point would be to present these terrestrial locations as though there were extraterrestrial spaces. While this story was later abandoned by Herzog he still believes that science fiction elements are in *Fata Morgana* due to the fact it shows an imaginary, fictionalized world of “beauty, harmony and horror,” a desolate world of ruins and mysterious landscapes.<sup>13</sup>

Moreover, it can be added that the film still reflects one of the ideas that Herzog wanted to explore in the original story; namely, presenting the Earth as an alien planet. This is because many of the images in *Fata Morgana* can either be construed as showing the Earth from an alien perspective (as though aliens have landed on our planet and are encountering some of its geographical land masses and inhabitants for the first time) or

from the point-of-view of human filmmakers who are seeing the planet Earth with new and fresh eyes. This of course means that in respect of the fictional world being depicted onscreen it is not always entirely clear whether the fictional gaze behind the camera belongs to human or alien life-forms. Whatever the case, the film is committed to presenting the Earth as un-recognisable. For example, the way Herzog constructs images showing the detritus of a machine age –abandoned factory plants, military supplies and other technological hardware –decaying in the flat, sandy deserts of Africa, creates a sense of other-worldliness. *Fata Morgana* exhibits a world of inhuman and insufferable landscapes where pre-historic nature has been morphed and despoiled in its contact with the archaeological remains of civilisation.

*Lessons of Darkness* takes the indeterminacy in *Fata Morgana* regarding camera point-of-view to another level. In the opening sequence of the film, Herzog's voice over narration is used to set-up the idea that what is being recorded are images of an unnamed planet that, as he puts it in the film, exists somewhere "in our solar system." The last image of this opening sequence shows in an extreme long shot an image of a fire fighter standing behind a portable protection shield beyond which there is a chaotic visual scene of rugged surface rocks, smoke, fire and water. Facing the direction of the camera, the fire fighter indicates through a number of physical gestures that the water flow to one of the water canons' needs to be turned-off. In voice over Herzog says: "The first creature we encountered tried to communicate something to us."

In terms of the fictional world onscreen, if Herzog's voice over is read as representative of a human voice, presumably a human astronaut's, then the use of the pronoun 'our' suggests that the solar system being referred to is one that exists within the Milky Way galaxy. However, there are other possible ways of reading Herzog's voice over. Does it, for example, represent the perspective of an alien investigating the Earth or another planet within a solar system? Is Herzog trying to imagine the point-of-view of another consciousness? Given the possibility of these other readings it cannot be established whose point of view the camera is reflecting in *Lessons of Darkness*. While this heightens the potential uncertainty that was in *Fata Morgana* regarding who or what perspective the camera reflects, it can still be said that *Lessons of Darkness* manifests one of the ideas that Herzog wanted to originally play around with in the story for *Fata Morgana* – revealing the Earth as an alien planet.

*The Wild Blue Yonder* also gives expression to the story that Herzog planned to turn into *Fata Morgana* but scrapped after the first day of shooting. In the film, "The Alien's" home planet is in the outer regions of Andro-

meda, although unlike the original story of *Fata Morgana* it is not an imminent catastrophe that is the problem for the planet, rather the fact that it has a dying star. In the fictional world of the film, human astronauts visit this planet and record its alien environment and life-forms (Herzog uses the underwater imagery shot by Kaiser in Antarctica to represent this alien world). Unlike in the other two films, it is made clear through 'The Alien's' on-and-off screen narration when images of Earth are being shown as opposed to images of his home planet. Moreover, it is made known by 'The Alien' that the fictional gaze behind the camera which records images of his home planet belongs to human astronauts.

It is clear that in all three films Herzog is interested in using elements from both the apocalyptic and science fiction genres in order to defamiliarise the world and try to present it in a way that it has not been perceived before. In this respect, Herzog's work can be situated in terms of the postmodern interpretations of the New Jerusalem myth discussed by Rosen – the inheritance of a new vision and new way of understanding the given, existing world. In Herzog's case, this transfiguration of human perception and cognition of the present world is something that he explores through the medium of cinema. Put another way, the ideas and imagery that Herzog draws out of the science fiction and apocalyptic genres have primarily an aesthetic function for him and are means by which he attempts to represent original, cinematic perspectives of the Earth that break with normal, routine practices of perceiving and understanding the world.

Yet unlike with some of the works of postmodern artists that Rosen analyses, Herzog's apocalyptic vision does not evidence a strain of optimism or hope. For example, Rosen suggests that new levels of awareness can come about for characters who acquire a new perception and/or conception of the world. This awareness may not only lead to a more nuanced and deeper understanding of human beings and their place in the universe but also the recognition that renewal in this world rather than the next is possible. Rosen argues that this strain of optimism can be traced back to the function of New Jerusalem in traditional biblical literature. While the idea of apocalypse is concerned with the unavoidable end of the present age it is also equally interested in what form the age to follow will take. Apocalyptic theology envisions the emergence of a new and better world out of the ruins of the old; it prophecies the beginning of a new age that is the antithesis to the tribulations and sufferings that occurred within human history. Rosen suggests that in a modified form this concept of New Jerusalem has been incorporated into some postmodern interpretations of apocalyptic literature.

In contrast, Herzog's work offers no symbol of hope. Rather than the

present the possibility, for example, that human imagination and intelligence can still be harnessed to help rescue humanity from its own self-manufactured demise, Herzog's images reveal that the world is destroyed or in the process of being destroyed, that it is either in an apocalyptic or post-apocalyptic state that contains no sense of redemption, and that this situation is part of a circular pattern of time which cannot be altered. The mytho-apocalyptic vision in these three films asserts that humanity is subject to a specific, temporal condition, one characterised by a mood of inevitable catastrophe, where human agency all but fades away against the backdrop of an inexorable fate. Herzog draws on the New Jerusalem myth only to change it into something that reflects his belief that the universe is indifferent to human kind and that no form of secular or divine intervention is going to make things right or better.

### **Circular Time**

In order to demonstrate how this notion of human fate in Herzog's work is given a circular, temporal form, I will start with what on the face of it might appear to be one of Herzog's more optimistic moments – the ending of *The Wild Blue Yonder*. On the one hand, it would seem that presenting the Earth "in a different light, with different possibilities" symbolically expresses for Herzog a sense of hope. This is in terms of either literally that some human beings will outlive the end of human civilisation and inherit a New Earth (which reflects the traditional idea of New Jerusalem) or that there is the possibility for interior transformation, for human beings to acquire a new perception of the existing Earth (which reflects the postmodern interpretation of New Jerusalem and which is an example of Herzog's poetics). In respect of the latter, it seems that one possibility Herzog is exploring at the end of *The Wild Blue Yonder* is that by inheriting through cinema a new and fresh perspective of the Earth it is possible to see a new form of beauty (a new form that is also paradoxically old).

However, the return of the Earth to its "pristine beauty" in *The Wild Blue Yonder* is premised upon the evacuation of the human species from the planet. Even though in the fictional world of the film there are a few humans who survive the destruction of the human race – the human astronauts who have travelled forward through time – there is no indication that what they have inherited is a New Jerusalem. That is to say, there are no signs that what they have returned to is a new or better world. In the New Jerusalem myth, the New Heaven on Earth is the realisation of a divine purpose which has been the specified goal of human history. The New Heaven is a place which reveals a sacred, ideal essence that inheres within

humankind. However, the world depicted on screen at the end of *The Wild Blue Yonder* has not metaphorically usurped the original, golden age of Eden which is what the concept of New Heaven is meant to do. It has rather recaptured that lost paradise that existed before the creation of human existence and human history, a world defined by its absence of human life and human culture. In the course of time the earth has returned to where it began, it has come full circle, and in the process human beings have disappeared from the face of the earth. The world, in other words, has *not* been radically renewed for human beings and time has not travelled in a linear direction toward a greater state of completion. Herzog's camera not only reveals that the natural world is indifferent to human existence but that human civilisation is subject to the conditions of universal, circular time. Within this temporal state, extinction of the human race is part of the Earth's course.

I would argue that the ending of *The Wild Blue Yonder* is an example of what scholars such as Brad Prager and Thomas Elsaesser have referred to as Herzog's circle motif.<sup>14</sup> This motif involves the different ways Herzog composes his images so that they have circular patterns. This is in terms of the camera movement and/or actions of characters or objects in individual shots as well as in terms of the structure of the editing. This motif is one of the key ways Herzog gives the notion that the human species is destined to perish and fall a circular, temporal form.

Thomas Elsaesser has said that not only is the circle motif a basic condition of many of Herzog's narratives but that it also functions to express a paradoxical stasis. He argues that these narratives are not based on principles of continuity and conflict resolution (which underlies classic realist cinema) but rather on a different sense of history and time. In Herzog's films, shots tend to be assembled on the basis of accumulating isolated moments and allowing them to run their course or on the basis of moving from one "situational block" to another, never with any sense of dramatic progression. Moreover, Elsaesser says that the first shot of a sequence often says everything about what is going to happen in that sequence as a whole, leaving very little room for conflict, tension or suspense. In Elsaesser's words, an event "has its end inscribed in its beginning... (Herzog's) narratives grind themselves into a situation which is itself sustained only by circularity."<sup>15</sup>

Elsaesser's observations are applicable to all three films under discussion in this paper. For example, in each of them there are a number of long-takes of the surrounding world which are self-contained, independent moments that do not seek to provide closure or explanation. Such autonomous audio-visual spectacles do not function to dramatically develop an

event but rather allow the action on screen to effectively wind down. Whether it is the static, panning or tracking shots of the inhuman and despoiled desert world in *Fata Morgana*,<sup>16</sup> the aerial tracking shots of the destroyed land masses cloaked in oil, smoke and fire in *Lessons of Darkness*, or the handheld underwater tracking shots of aquatic space in *The Wild Blue Yonder* (which the narration presents as "The Alien's" home planet), they all function in the manner described by Elsaesser. That is to say, they function as images with their own self-contained reality, a reality which does not participate in the process of narrative development or in the continuous flow of time through successive shots. As a result, the events on screen captured in these isolated moments diminish gradually in energy and intensity sustained by no other momentum than the fact of their own existence in recorded time. Put another way, a negative, downward movement of degeneration is built into the beginning of individual shots and/or sequences, so that the events on screen effectively go nowhere.

### Conclusion

The obtainment of a new vision and a new understanding of the world through the medium of cinema is framed in Herzog's work by mytho-apocalyptic structures of time that not only propose that the human race is doomed to perish and fall but also that such finality is conditioned by a circular, paradoxical stasis where the end is inscribed in the beginning and vice versa. The apocalyptic vision in these three films is one that effectively says that the historical journey of the human race is one that leads from nowhere at the outset. Herzog's desire to show through the medium of cinema new perceptions and cognitions of the world marches hand in hand with his pessimistic and tragic view of human life and endeavour and, in this sense, his work comes close to resembling a form of disillusioned, ecological-apocalyptic art. In Herzog's worldview, the human species is ultimately subject to the forces of cosmological time and the history of the Earth. Set before these forces, human beings are tiny, fragile, powerless and transitory.

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## NOTES

- <sup>1</sup> Adam Bingham, "Images from the End of the World: Notes on Werner Herzog's *La Soufrière*" in *Senses of Cinema* 41 (2006) accessed April, 3, 2007 <http://www.sensesofcinema.com/contents/cteq/06/41/soufriere.html>.
- <sup>2</sup> Brad Prager, *The Cinema of Werner Herzog: Aesthetic Ecstasy and Truth* (London: Wall Flower Press, 2007), 175.
- <sup>3</sup> Elizabeth K. Rosen, *Apocalyptic Transformation: Apocalypse and the Postmodern Imagination* (United Kingdom: Lexington Books, 2008).
- <sup>4</sup> See for example Tom Cheesman, "Apocalypse Nein Danke: Werner Herzog" in *Green Thought in German Culture: Historical and Contemporary Perspectives*, ed Colin Riordan (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1997).
- <sup>5</sup> Lotte H. Eisner (1896-1983) was a German film historian and film critic most famous for her work *The Haunted Screen: Expressionism in the German Cinema and the Influence of Max Reinhardt*, first published in 1952. Eisner and Herzog not only collaborated on a number of projects together during the 1970s and 80s she also functioned for him as a spiritual symbol of Classic Weimar Cinema which gave an historical pedigree to his own films. See for example Jan-Christopher Horak, "W. H. or the Mysteries of Walking In Ice," in *The Films of Werner Herzog: Between Mirage and History*, ed Timothy Corrigan (New York: Methuen, 1986).
- <sup>6</sup> Werner Herzog, *Herzog on Herzog* ed Paul Cronin (England: Faber & Faber, 2002).
- <sup>7</sup> Adam Bingham, "Apocalypse then: Lessons of Darkness re-visited" in *Cine Action* 62 (Summer 2003) accessed March, 12, 2008 <http://0-find.galegroup.com.alpha2.latrobe.edu.au/gtx/infomark.do?&contentSet=IAC-Docu-ments&type=retrieve&tabID=T002&prodId=EAIM&docId=A112720634&source=gale&srcprod=EAIM&userGroupName=latrobe&version=1.0>
- <sup>8</sup> Prager, *The Cinema of Werner Herzog*, 182.
- <sup>9</sup> Elizabeth K. Rosen, *Apocalyptic Transformation: Apocalypse and the Postmodern Imagination* (United Kingdom: Lexington Books, 2008), xxiii.
- <sup>10</sup> Prager, *The Cinema of Werner Herzog*, 118.
- <sup>11</sup> Herzog, *Herzog on Herzog*, 249.
- <sup>12</sup> Herzog, *Herzog on Herzog*, 47.
- <sup>13</sup> Herzog, *Herzog on Herzog*, 47.
- <sup>14</sup> Prager, *The Cinema of Werner Herzog*; Thomas Elsaesser, "An Anthropologist's Eye: *Where the Green Ants Dream*" in *The Films of Werner Herzog: Between Mirage and History*, ed Timothy Corrigan (New York: Meuthen, 1986).
- <sup>15</sup> Elsaesser, *An Anthropologist's Eye*, 141-142.

<sup>16</sup> It should be pointed out that in *Fata Morgana* some of these long-takes are 360 degree pan shots which is another way the circle motif is expressed in Herzog's work.