I believe that Werner Herzog philosophy towards filmmaking is that of extreme dedication and determination. He consciously decides that the making of his film is the most important thing, not just in his life, but anybody he employs and has working on the set of his films. This can lead to extremely troublesome scenarios when attempting to film in less that ideal conditions, like which was the norm while film Fitzcarraldo. The production of this film was marred by setback and difficulties. He ran into interference from locals who did not want them shooting in their indigenous land, and he found ways to work things out with their local governments. He ran into several difficulties by having actors become disparaged and leave after filming had already began. He even had many crewmembers get badly injured or even die by performing stunts that were unsafe. All these were conditions that would cause most people to throw in the towel. Herzog made it his mission to see this project through, however, and showed a never-ending determination to get the project completed. The documentary Burden of Dreams details the many obstacles and often creative solutions that had to be employed in order to continue the production of this film against the increasingly insurmountable odds. By the end of the film, the whole crew is physically and mentally exhausted and no longer cares about the production of the film, but it stands as a great testament of Herzog and the filmmakers to get the production finished.

I believe Herzog would think of guerilla filmmaking as a means to and end. I believe Herzong would consider guerilla filmmaking techniques as another weapon in his holster to getting the desired results. I don’t believe Herzog would tell you this is his preferred method of filmmaking. Certainly many scenes would be made easier by not having to employ risky guerilla filmmaking techniques. But Herzog would also acknowledge that these techniques are sometime necessary, especially when filming scenes in non-traditional or often-time’s dangerous environments. Sometime guerilla filmmaking is the only option to avoid complete failure. There are many scenes in Burden of Dreams that showcase the less than ideal living and working conditions surrounding the filming of Fitzcarraldo. These decisions can sometimes come at a cost, risking the good will and safety of the cast and crew in order to achieve the desired results. But for filmmakers that are determined to get results, like Herzong, it’s a risk worth taking.