Devin Johnson

February 3, 2016

Chapter 3 Essay

Werner attempts to keep his film “Fitzcarraldo” organic by keeping his camp and that of the native tribes separate. He doesn’t want to contaminate their culture with that of the white man. He believes the people have their own way of living so while he is filming he attempts to secure a land title for them. He even has prostitutes come to the village to keep the men at peace so they don’t rape the local women.

He takes a huge amount of risks as numerous tribes fight over territory during the filming of “Fitzcarraldo”. He has to change locations several times and even loses some of his ships while filming. Many of the native’s lives are at risk when hauling the ship up the mountain, but he urges them on to complete his film, eventually getting a new engineer and more funding for machinery to pull the ship up the hill. The irony is that he doesn’t want to destroy their culture but doesn’t seem to care much about the men losing their lives for the film.

He sees the Amazon as a “cruel, evil environment where, obscene, violent, and unfinished, yet is humbled before its fornication, lack of harmony, but stills love it”. Filming there is organic for him which is how he believes film should be made. Nothing is forced in that weary environment but natural. At one point he says, “you have to be insane to do what I’m doing” which shows his passion for filmmaking and his ability to articulate his own personal dream. He isn’t in Hollywood on a set made by a group of engineers, yet out in the real world capturing scenes as they come over years of work and toil. He is persistent in his endeavor to get the film completed no matter the cost or time frame. You can’t work that way now days with production companies.

In the film “Werner Herzog Eats His Shoe” Werner criticizes commercials, talk shows, and TV in general. He claims they are “destroying speech, our language, and ability to communicate as humans”. He continues to state that “we should declare war on these things”.

He believed “films will change our perspective of things in the future” and that “we lack adequate images in our lives”. He fulfilled his promises to others to get them to complete tasks like when he ate his shoe after his friend completed a movie or jumped into a cactus after the small man caught on fire. He talked about how filmmakers are clowns of society never being understood yet bearing the burden of silliness to make others laugh/act through their efforts.

I liked when he told his friend that “money doesn’t make films.” He went on to convince him to finally complete one of his stories. He had a deep passion to help others achieve their potential as well as pursuing his own creativity to affect change in the film industry/world in general. He had an understanding of himself and society around him that few connected with. He saw what lacked in life and aimed to make it better through the influence of filmmaking.