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Chapter 3 Assignment 2

Werner Herzog was definitely a man that didn’t care obstacles came in his way. It’s evident in *Burden of Dreams*. Through key dialogue and his actions in this documentary, I will explain what I think to be his philosophy on film and how it ties into guerilla filmmaking and it’s difference between conventional filmmaking.

Investors were wary of Herzog’s *Fitzcarraldo* and questioned whether he would even want to keep making it since he lost Jason Robards (being sick) and Mick Jagger (tour commitments) which he says that to abandon the project would making him a man without dreams and that he will live and die by this project. This response makes up what I think is his film philosophy and that is if you aren’t willing to do whatever it takes to make a film, then you aren’t a filmmaker nor do you have the ambition and vision to be one. He risked the lives of filmmakers and natives both that worked construction and as extras for this movie trying to pull a 300 ton ship over a 45 degree hill. Even though he did what he could to alleviate this, Herzog pretty much employed methods that he felt would let him finish his film no matter how dangerous and on some locations not scripted to be in. Filming in an area where there was a border dispute was definitely a risk especially since he didn’t exactly ask for permission when he arrived. This is something that falls under Guerilla Filmmaking since it has someone film on location without notice and without a permit as well. It also consists of low budgets, skeleton crews and using anything available in terms of props; independent movies can employ this filmmaking. Herzog had only money he had and whatever investors had put up and it was apparent he only had so much because of the limited decisions during the production. He also made the natives look and use weapons like the bow and arrow using their resources and even tried finding another area for a ship by utilizing himself, the actors and natives to cut paths in the jungle. These are not methods utilized by your average filmmaker especially one employed by a studio since they don’t want any legal implications on them regarding permits and such; studios also have money for a budget enough for a film to get made without any difficulties; sets can also be built in-house specifically for the film instead of going to real location avoiding the hassles of permits and using up more money.

I’ve described Herzog’s film philosophy as this: if you aren’t willing to do whatever it takes in order to get your film done, you aren’t a filmmaker nor do you have the vision and ambition for it. It’s a powerful statement that can also be applied to various other crafts people dedicate themselves to. Werner is definitely an inspiring figure and gives a strong meaning to the saying “where there’s a will, there’s a way.”