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Herzog’s Philosophy

Werner Herzog is a famous filmmaker whose philosophy is inspiring and interesting. His philosophy is that we should make films and images that shows the raw emotion in scenes and characters, more characteristics, and more authentic scenes to make it more real to the audience. Herzog said, “I keep saying that we do have to develop an adequate language for our state of civilization, and we do have to create adequate pictures – images for our civilization. If we don’t, we die out like dinosaurs” to the late Roger Ebert in 2005. Herzog made a famous movie called “Fitzcarraldo,” where Herzog and his production crew filmed in the Amazon rain forest. One of the famous scenes in the movie was where Fitzcarraldo, a would-be rubber baron, is determined to transport a steamboat over a hill in order to access a rich rubber territory. Herzog had so many problems with filming this movie it almost didn’t become one. For example, he lost Jason Robards, the lead actor, due to illness, had problems with how slow filming was taking, had problems getting the steamboat over a hill, etc. He could have made a stage, made a prop of a steamboat, or film in an area that looks like the Amazon rain forest, but no. He was determined to make the film more realistic than just having a look-a-like stage or location. He was passionate about a realistic experience.

Hertzog’s filmmaking had a lot of components of guerilla filmmaking; a method of filmmaking where the creator chooses low budget option, a skeleton crew, and realistic action and themes. Some examples of the techniques of guerrilla filmmaking that Herzog uses during his production of “Fitzcarraldo” was that he filmed his movie in the Amazon rain forest and he had a small filming crew helping him. He believed that the movie should show reality which is why he choose to film in the Amazon instead of the easier way on a set. He also wants the audience to get more emotionally invested with the characters in his movie. It was very interesting to see Herzog’s philosophy on filmmaking and how he makes his movies. I do agree on somethings in his philosophy like filming in real locations to show more characteristics and raw emotion in a film. It was also cool to see the behind the scenes of how “Fitzcarraldo” was made, seeing the struggles Herzog had to go through to make his movie. It gave me a clear picture that movie making is not as easy as you might think.

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