**Werner Herzog Response Paper**

Les Blank’s dual documentaries covering a German new-wave filmmaker offer valuable insights into the peculiar creative processes of Werner Herzog. Werner Herzog leans closer to a guerrilla filmmaker than to a studio director by taking what would appear to be risks of questionable benefit to the films production. Nonetheless, these would appear to have an overall positive effect on his movies, even if they wind up delaying the production. For example, his choice of hauling a full-size boat up a hillside, as opposed to using a smaller model, which would have also eased the efforts of the film’s production crew.

Herzog treats visual creativity as something best accomplished improvisationally, when the set design has already been finalized. As a result of this, his movies lack storyboards in pre-production. Despite this, he does strive for some measure of efficiency, as he also detests shooting extra footage and thus his films most likely have shorter and less costly post-production phases than some of his contemporaries. He is a guerrilla filmmaker, but not what one would initially expect as a guerrilla filmmaker. Most people would consider a guerrilla filmmaker to be more problematic on set, but Herzog is more methodical than most.

Perhaps the largest issues with the production of *Fitzcarraldo* that can be directly attributed to Herzog are the complications that arose out of his relationship with the local populaces of the filming sites and the resulting destruction of the film site. This was done in retaliation for what they considered to be unfair treatment and exploitation on Herzog’s part. Notably, this delay added 13 months to the production schedule, a long delay considering Herzog’s appreciation for efficiency in his shoots.

Issues encountered during the production not caused by Herzog included bad weather, declining health of members of the cast, and the behavior of replacement actor Klaus Kinski. Kinski was hired after the original lead actor became too sick to continue filming, although Herzog feared that Kinski would cause even more problems. Herzog turned out to be right, although by his own admission Kinski was not as unmanageable as previous productions. Herzog’s films may not be produced in the way one would want, but his methods deserve appreciation nonetheless.