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Chapter 3 Assignment Part 2 – Werner Herzog

*Burden of Dreams*

After viewing the documentary *Burden of Dreams*, it is utterly obvious that Werner Herzog is a filmmaker who has devoted his life to his work and will stop at nothing to realize his filmmaking goals. Herzog’s filmmaking philosophy directly relates to the subject of chapter 3, *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*. The subject of course is “creative discipline,” or the ability to devote yourself wholly to your craft and art as Herzog did with the film of the documentary, *Fitzcarraldo*. Speaking on dreams and goals, Herzog states that he “cannot abandon [his] project,” because he is “a man with dreams!” This statement is the vocalization of creative discipline as we further see the extreme difficulties of filming *Fitzcarraldo* and Herzog’s unrelenting passion for completing it despite the difficulties. At the end of the documentary, Herzog further articulates his philosophy stating, “It’s not only my dreams but yours as well,” speaking on the art of filmmaking. “The only difference is I can articulate them, that is what literature and filmmaking is all about.” Here Herzog blurs the line between the man and the artist and almost combines them into one. He concludes saying, “It is my duty to create films…because it is our inner chronicle that we have to articulate, otherwise we are just cows in the field.” Overall, Herzog essentially claims all stories and films come from the same place: the mind of every individual, adding he is simply one of the few who is able to put the idea into fruition.

The filming of *Fitzcarraldo* itself, through all its difficulties, was indeed the epitome of guerilla filmmaking. Time after time, investors and actors pulled out of the film, yet Herzog pushed on, filming on dangerous locations in the heart of the Amazon. And despite the technical difficulties and low morale, Herzog insisted on continuously creating perfect scenes and shots using the actual, local natives as characters in the film. This style of guerilla filmmaking is what sets Herzog apart from other filmmakers. His attitude of pushing through painstakingly real and demanding scenes, most astonishingly pulling the 300-ton boat over the mountain, creates an atmosphere unique to Herzog himself. Herzog even states in the documentary that he would most likely be the last filmmaker the film the real Amazon natives on location. This style of filmmaking chosen by Herzog is one that while being controversial creates a work of art by an auteur unable to be duplicated, only emulated.