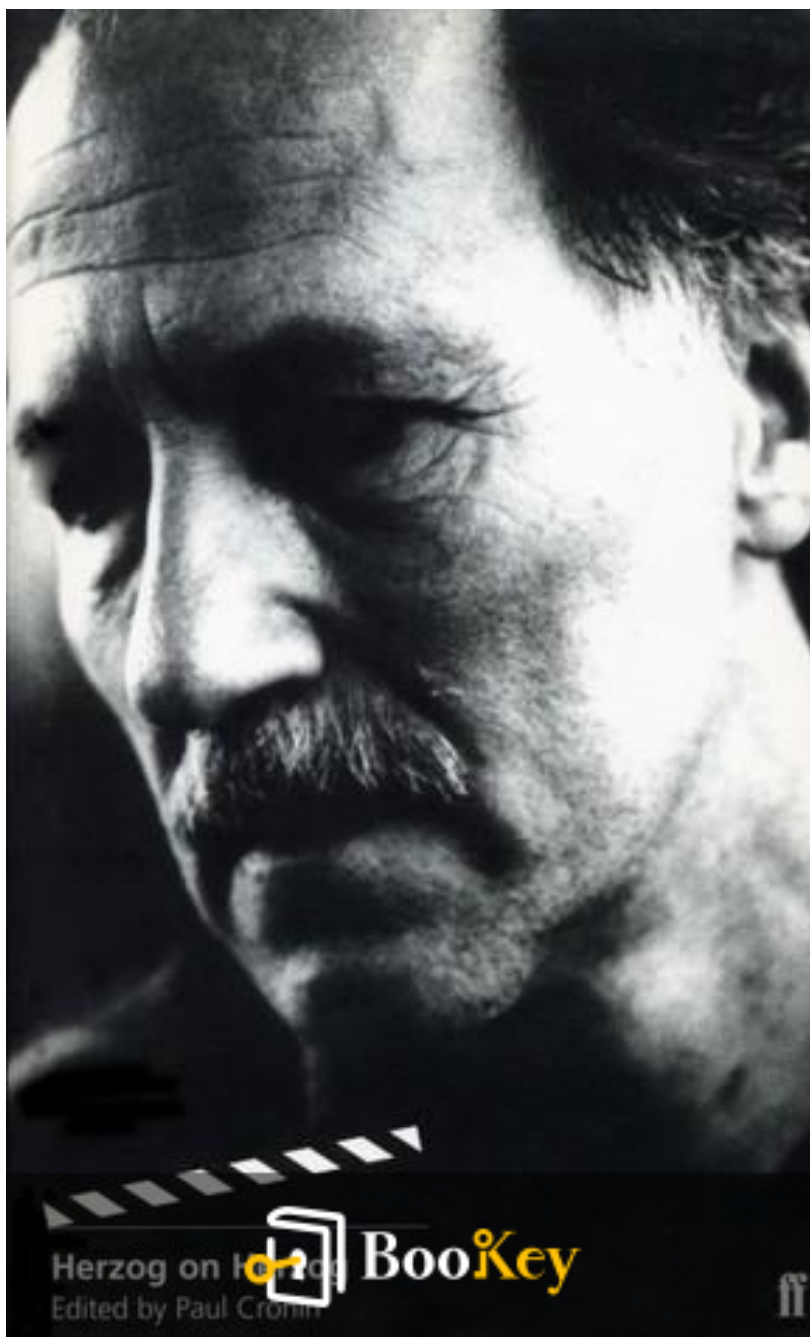


Herzog On Herzog PDF (Limited Copy)

Paul Cronin



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Herzog On Herzog Summary

Insights and Reflections from a Visionary Filmmaker

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About the book

In "Herzog on Herzog," Paul Cronin offers a fascinating journey into the mind of one of cinema's most visionary directors, Werner Herzog.

Combining reflections, interviews, and insights from Herzog himself, this compelling collection delves into the philosophical underpinnings of his iconic films, revealing the relentless quest for understanding that drives his art. As Herzog candidly shares his thoughts on creativity, humanity, and the often chaotic process of filmmaking, readers are invited to explore the intricate tapestry of imagination and reality that defines his work. This book not only illuminates the unique perspective of Herzog but also challenges readers to consider the deeper narratives of existence, making it an essential read for filmmakers, cinephiles, and anyone captivated by the complexities of life and art.

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About the author

Paul Cronin is an acclaimed author and filmmaker known for his insightful exploration of the creative processes behind some of cinema's most influential figures. With a deep passion for documentary filmmaking and a strong understanding of visual storytelling, Cronin has dedicated his career to examining the lives and works of filmmakers, artists, and writers. His notable works include interviews and biographies that offer rare glimpses into the minds of iconic creators. In "Herzog on Herzog," Cronin presents a compelling dialogue with legendary director Werner Herzog, illuminating the philosophical and artistic principles that have shaped Herzog's unique vision and enduring impact on the world of film.

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Chapter 1 Summary: The Shower Curtain

Chapter Summary: From the Shower Curtain to the Filmmaking Journey

In this chapter, renowned filmmaker Werner Herzog reflects on his life, providing insights into his personal history and the profound experiences that shaped his career. He opens with an unconventional piece of philosophical advice from hotel mogul Conrad Hilton about the importance of simple, practical wisdom — never leaving a shower curtain outside the tub. This metaphor serves as a humorous preamble to deeper reflections on his life choices.

Herzog recalls his early realization at fourteen that filmmaking would be his life's calling, a decision made during a transformative period marked by his conversion to Catholicism and a series of formative travels. These travels began in Manchester, where he lived in a dilapidated house with immigrants and honed his English before embarking on a journey that took him across Greece, Egypt, and the tumultuous landscape of post-colonial Africa, particularly the Congo, where he witnessed the chaos and violence that often accompany societal upheaval.

Returning to Germany, Herzog pursued filmmaking despite his mother, Elizabeth's, concerns about the precarious nature of a career in film, while

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his estranged father expressed outright skepticism. Yet, Herzog's fierce idealism and relentless spirit drove him to create films, although he struggled with his identity within the industry—often feeling like an outsider.

His childhood in a rural Bavarian village, steeped in post-war scarcity and anarchy, fostered an imaginative spirit. Herzog recounts thrilling adventures and innocent mischief, far removed from the structured life many of his contemporaries experienced. His fond memories of strongmen and local legends like Sturm Sepp and Siegel Hans influenced his view of strength, embodying a blend of physical prowess and moral fortitude.

Despite a rocky start in filmmaking—exemplified by his first, critically dismissed work **Herakles**—Herzog's determination led him to self-produce through **Werner Herzog Filmproduktion**, born of a necessity for independence in a hostile industry that often dismissed him. His thoughts on the flaws of film schools become apparent; he advocates for real-world experience over formal education, emphasizing that filmmakers must engage with life deeply to generate genuine art.

Herzog's philosophical musings continue as he relates personal anecdotes and reflections on his experiences, like the times he faced adversity during his travels and the intense challenges of producing films. He acknowledges the importance of collaboration, the unpredictable nature of filmmaking, and

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the existential struggle inherent to creative ventures.

The chapter concludes with Herzog's assertion that no matter where he films, the essence of his Bavarian roots remains intricately woven into his narratives, speaking to deep cultural and personal affiliations. While he has traversed various landscapes and engaged with diverse cultures, the core of his storytelling is grounded in his early life, reflective of the subtle yet profound influences that have shaped both his life philosophy and artistic sensibilities.

Overall, Herzog presents his journey not just as a filmmaker's evolution but as a testament to the interplay of personal experiences, broader historical contexts, and the inherent chaos of existence—all elements that feed into his artistic vision.

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Chapter 2 Summary: Blasphemy and Mirages

Chapter 32 Summary: Blasphemy and Mirages

In this chapter, director Werner Herzog reflects on his journey through the evolving landscape of German cinema, paralleling his experiences with the rise of the New German Cinema movement. Although filmmakers like Rainer Werner Fassbinder and Wim Wenders sought to redefine German cinema in the late 1960s, Herzog distinguishes himself as a filmmaker who started before the movement gained prominence, having made his first films prior to the release of the Oberhausen Manifesto in 1962—a pivotal document that called for a new, quality-driven cinematic approach in Germany.

Herzog emphasizes that despite being part of the same generational wave, he never identified with the New German Cinema or its key figures, as his work often took him beyond Germany. He notes that while some filmmakers found international acclaim, the broader context of German cinema remained insular, plagued by a lack of vision. Herzog expressed his concerns that contemporary filmmakers often chase Hollywood trends, sacrificing artistic integrity and originality.

Reflecting on his relationship with other filmmakers, Herzog recalls his

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occasional interactions with Fassbinder, whose prolific output left him ambivalent as he oscillated between brilliance and mediocrity. Despite this, Herzog maintains a genuine respect for his contemporaries, particularly Wim Wenders, whom he views as a kindred spirit.

Herzog discusses the role of television in revitalizing the German film industry, notably through the Film/Television Agreement that allowed for film/TV co-productions. He candidly shares his struggles with censorship and the tepid reception his films received in Germany compared to warmer responses in other countries. Herzog characterizes Germany as a nation more inclined toward television than cinema, suggesting a cultural blindness to the power of film.

Further, he reflects on his first feature, "Signs of Life," which was informed by a blend of influences, from German literature, specifically the story by Achim von Arnim, to his own youthful travels in Greece. He chose to set the film against the backdrop of World War II not to comment on the historical context but to explore the absurdity of human behavior amidst war.

The chapter showcases Herzog's formative experiences during the production of "Signs of Life," including a military coup in Greece that complicated filming logistics and an accident involving an actor that led to lengthy delays. These adversities shaped his understanding of filmmaking as a craft filled with unpredictability and chaos.

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Herzog then transitions to discuss "Last Words," a short film he created during the production of "Signs of Life," which operates outside traditional narrative structures. This film marks a pivotal step in Herzog's exploration of cinematic storytelling.

He describes "Precautions Against Fanatics," his first color film, as a humorous yet bizarre commentary set at a racecourse—a project that materialized unexpectedly. Herzog reflects on his unique creative processes and the challenges of filmmaking in a foreign context, especially in Africa, where he worked on multiple projects, including "Fata Morgana," showcasing a stark contrast to "Even Dwarfs Started Small."

Herzog shares the trials faced during the production of "Fata Morgana," such as navigating the treacherous Sahara desert and contending with dangerous political environments. He elucidates how the spirit of creativity often thrives amid adversity, leading to profound insights captured in his films' imagery.

Finally, Herzog discusses the evolution of "Even Dwarfs Started Small," which he describes as more radical than initially intended due to the bitterness experienced during its creation. This film incorporates dwarfs as protagonists, using their perspective to critique societal proportions, and suggests that each viewer carries an inner "dwarf" or suppressed essence.

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Throughout the chapter, Herzog emphasizes the interplay between his personal experiences, the historical context of German cinema, and the absurdity inherent in the human condition, reflecting his vision that art should resonate with universal truths, even when it challenges traditional expectations.

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Critical Thinking

Key Point: Embrace the unpredictability of creativity

Critical Interpretation: Herzog's journey through the chaos of filmmaking teaches us that life and creativity are rarely linear or predictable. By accepting and embracing the adversities and uncertainties we encounter, we can discover profound insights and deeper truths about ourselves and the world. Just as Herzog found inspiration and meaningful expression amidst the challenges of his work, we too can unlock our potential by allowing our experiences to shape our creative expression and personal growth.

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Chapter 3 Summary: Adequate Imagery

Chapter 65 Summary: Adequate Imagery

In this chapter, filmmaker Werner Herzog contemplates the essence of storytelling and the imagery that shapes cinema. He begins by discussing his unorthodox approach to scriptwriting, which revolves around a visceral and dreamlike inspiration rather than a structured ideology or abstract concepts. Herzog emphasizes the urgency and coherence he finds in writing quickly, often finishing scripts in just a few days. He expresses a disdain for the way people cling to the idea of needing a clear ideological underpinning in art, asserting instead that his films are their own ideology.

Herzog critiques the cultural imagery of his time, claiming that present-day visuals are worn out and lack the vitality necessary for true artistic expression. He laments the influences of media, particularly television, which he believes stifles imagination and contributes to a culture that fails to seek new, impactful images. He suggests that the decay of vivid imagery is as significant a danger as environmental destruction and nuclear power risks. Herzog calls for a revival of fresh, adequate imagery that reflects the complexities of contemporary life.

He expresses admiration for filmmakers who dare to explore new images

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and suggests that the search for authentic visuals is akin to archaeological work, often fraught with difficulty and requiring great tenacity. Herzog also touches on his desire to explore outer space for filming, implying that the unexplored realms offer a wealth of untapped imagery.

As he reflects on the themes that might connect his body of work, Herzog asserts that he does not consciously write with overarching themes in mind. The recurring elements in his films, he believes, stem from a shared familial connection among his characters, who often embody the struggles of isolation and failed communication in a mad world. He emphasizes that his protagonists—whether real or fictional—are rebels against societal norms.

Discussing his film "Land of Silence and Darkness," which centers on Fini Straubinger, a deaf-blind woman, Herzog reveals his deep empathy for such characters. He explains how the film was made with a small budget, emphasizing the importance of passion and dedication in filmmaking over financial constraints. Through Fini's narrative, Herzog explores profound themes of communication, dignity, and the nature of existence, effectively evoking the shared human experience of loneliness.

Herzog then reflects on the authenticity of his filmmaking process, often involving real-life interactions and relationships that transcend the mere making of a film. The chapter weaves together insights into his artistic philosophy, the significance of evocative imagery, and the emotional

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resonance that characterizes his body of work. Through his films, Herzog seeks to illuminate the human condition, ultimately advocating for a return to the vibrancy and depth that imagery can encapsulate.

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Chapter 4: Athletics and Aesthetics

Chapter Summary: 4. Athletics and Aesthetics

In this chapter, the renowned filmmaker reflects on the physicality of filmmaking, likening it to athletics rather than aesthetics. Drawing parallels to his past as a ski-jumper, he shares how every filmmaking endeavor is like a jump into the unknown, where once the project begins, there's no turning back. This athletic mindset is crucial, as cinema is born not from theoretical musings but from the physical effort and endurance of those involved. He emphasizes the importance of pre-production, including location scouting, to prepare for the unpredictability of a film set, where surprises can only be managed with prior knowledge.

The director shares his hands-on approach, moving furniture around sets to understand spaces intimately, which aids in seamless direction during shoots. He prefers the spontaneity of real locations over the lifelessness of studios, eschewing rigid storyboards in favor of an organic development of scenes, allowing the unexpected to shape the narrative. This philosophy extends to working with actors, where he sets up scenes based on a clear understanding of the action's core rather than being confined by preconceived technicalities.

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In casting, he places great value on actors' input, realizing that the freshness and authenticity of improvised performances can bring unexpected depth to the film. The director recounts specific instances in which significant actors, like Klaus Kinski, have been given creative space, resulting in powerful portrayals. The relationship between the filmmaker and the crew is essential, as he insists on having a close-knit team that thrives on shared experience rather than perfectionism.

Tackling aesthetic decisions, he asserts that his films arise from raw human expression rather than calculated beautification. His work often captures moments that resonate beyond technicalities, revealing deeper truths about human experience, akin to the life stories of ultimately misunderstood figures like Kaspar Hauser.

Hauser, a young man raised in incarceration, serves as a metaphor for the effects of societal intrusion on the purity of human nature. The director's exploration of Hauser's story raises philosophical questions about civilization and personal identity. He emphasizes that the portrayal is not historically accurate but instead seeks to engage with the broader themes of humanity and individual trauma. The use of various techniques, including long-held shots, grounds the viewer in Hauser's perspective and evokes empathy.

His approach fosters an exchange between the mundanity of reality and

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cinema's artistic possibilities, allowing for a more profound exploration of what it means to be human. Amidst all this, the filmmaker remains detached from critics' labels, focusing instead on audience responses and the intrinsic value of the filmic experience.

Ultimately, this chapter encapsulates the idea that filmmaking is an embodied art, rooted in the physical and emotional journey, where spontaneity and the willingness to embrace the unexpected yield the most authentic results. Each film serves not just as a narrative but also as a reflection on society, identity, and the perpetual struggle for understanding amid chaos.

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Chapter 5 Summary: Legitimacy

Chapter 135: Legitimacy

In this chapter, filmmaker Werner Herzog reflects on the influences shaping his work, emphasizing that he doesn't consider himself an artist but rather a craftsman. He draws parallels to medieval artisans who worked anonymously and had a profound connection with their materials. Herzog recounts his experiences with French critics who perceived echoes of German romanticism and expressionism in his films, even though he claims to have no intention of incorporating these elements consciously.

He speaks candidly about rare moments in life when a piece of art resonates deeply with an individual, revealing connections with various literary and musical figures, notably writers like Heinrich von Kleist, Friedrich Hölderlin, and Georg Büchner. Art, for Herzog, is not merely an aesthetic pursuit but a representation of inner landscapes—a reflection of the human condition, illustrated powerfully through his filmic depictions of nature and psychological states.

Musically, Herzog cites early composers like Monteverdi and Gesualdo as significant influences, suggesting that music offers more inspiration to him than literature does. He shares his admiration for filmmakers such as D.W.

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Griffith, F.W. Murnau, and Akira Kurosawa, finding commonality in their genius while dismissing the label of "art film" for his own works, which he sees as more akin to handcrafted artifacts than lofty artistic expressions.

Herzog's disdain for the concept of genius and artists stems from the outdated perception of individual creativity as something separate from collective efforts. For him, the true essence of filmmaking lies in craftsmanship and collaboration, akin to a medieval workshop rather than an elitist gallery.

The chapter also details Herzog's fascination with unique cultural expressions, leading to his project "How Much Wood Would a Woodchuck Chuck," which was filmed in Pennsylvania during a livestock auctioneering competition. He views the language of auctioneers as the "poetry of capitalism," reflecting both the beauty and absurdity embedded in human transactions.

Herzog's appreciation for America as an "exotic" land is rooted in its diversity and spirit of opportunity. He claims that the Midwest, with its history of remarkable artists, embodies the heart of American culture. This brings him to his film "Stroszek," where he collaborates with Bruno S., arguing that the movie illustrates universal themes of shattered dreams rather than a critique of capitalism. The film is deeply intertwined with Kinski's own struggles, mirroring his genuine suffering and the truths about his past.

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The chapter closes with Herzog discussing his intricate relationship with Bruno, emphasizing the authenticity captured in "Stroszek." It is not merely a commentary on American life but rather a reflection on humanity's aspirations, with characters representing real facets of Herzog's and Bruno's existence, reinforcing the idea that cinema can articulate deeper emotional truths, not just societal critiques.

This exploration of influences, coupled with personal experiences and reflections on the nature of filmmaking, provides a rich understanding of Herzog's artistic philosophy, rooted not in the conventional definitions of art but in the practical and emotional connections fostered through cinema.

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Chapter 6 Summary: Defying Gravity

Chapter 6 Summary: Defying Gravity

In this chapter, Werner Herzog shares the whimsical yet profound tale of his vow to eat his shoe, a promise rooted in his encouragement of fellow filmmaker Errol Morris. During their time in Berkeley, California, Herzog's proclamation that he would consume his shoe upon the completion of Morris's documentary, "Gates of Heaven," became a memorable and symbolic act of commitment to artistic endeavors. However, when the day arrived, cooking the shoe in duck fat transformed it into an inedible piece of leather, leading to a comically chaotic shoe-eating event, accompanied by much beer drinking and audience participation.

Moving from the humorous memory of shoe consumption, Herzog reflects on his documentary work with provocative figures such as televangelist Gene Scott in "God's Angry Man." He is drawn not just to Scott's brash public persona but also to the underlying sadness he perceives, offering a compassionate lens to the subject. Herzog also discusses "Huie's Sermon," a documentary focused on Bishop Huie Rogers, capturing the vibrancy and joy in communal faith.

The chapter then transitions to Herzog's cinematic landmark, "Fitzcarraldo,"

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drawing comparisons between the film and his previous works. The creation of "Fitzcarraldo," featuring the ambitious protagonist Brian Sweeney Fitzgerald, is rooted in Herzog's fascination with human determination against immense odds. The story revolves around Fitzgerald's dream to construct an opera house in the Peruvian jungle, symbolizing a defiance of nature itself. Herzog reflects on the arduous production process, which deviated into chaotic and tension-filled experiences, including near-accidents, the illness of lead actor Jason Robards, and significant planning dilemmas due to an impending military conflict in the region.

Herzog recounts that the concept arose from his inspiration from ancient menhirs and the life of a real rubber baron, Fitzcarraldo, who once transported a boat overland. Herzog's narrative blends myth with reality, emphasizing the folly and grandeur of undertaking such a visually and logistically impossible venture. Pre-production stretched over three years, highlighting challenges such as constructing the ships, managing large crews, and the political climate surrounding their filming locations in the Amazon.

Tensions and rumors escalated during filming, leading Herzog to navigate complex dynamics with local communities and external political pressures. The media mischaracterized their activities and intentions, often sensationalizing the venture. Despite the chaos and danger, Herzog expresses a philosophical view on dreams, creativity, and the human spirit's

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resilience.

Amidst the laughter over shoe-eating and the gravity of "Fitzcarraldo," Herzog concludes with an exploration of dreams versus reality. He suggests that even the most ambitious and seemingly absurd dreams carry the possibility of inspiration, urging all to aspire towards their visions irrespective of the obstacles at hand. Through this narrative, Herzog embodies the spirit of artistic pursuit, celebrating the weightlessness of imagination in a world filled with heavy realities.

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Chapter 7 Summary: The Work of Illusionists

Summary of Key Themes and Events in Herzog's Philosophy on Filmmaking

In this series of reflections, filmmaker Werner Herzog delves into the intricacies of his craft, addressing various aspects of filmmaking, independence, storytelling, and the human condition.

The Work of Illusionists

Herzog begins by reflecting on his statement from a past documentary about the deeply personal connection he feels towards his films. He articulates that the individuals featured in his works, particularly the real-life subjects, are integral to his artistic identity. Herzog views his films as extensions of himself, each one holding a significant, childlike love and attachment, reflecting imperfections akin to a parent's love for their children.

He contrasts his filmmaking approach with that of others in the industry, emphasizing that he does not treat filmmaking as merely a financial endeavor in pursuit of commercial success, but as an exploration of new "grammars of images." Herzog expresses his detachment from conventional notions of happiness and life goals, instead focusing on a broader existential purpose that transcends societal ambitions.

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Independence and the Struggle for Resources

When discussing independence in filmmaking, Herzog argues that true independence is a state of mind rather than a financial status. He recounts his persistent struggles to secure funding for his films, revealing a preference for diving into projects without guaranteed finances, driven by passion and the belief in the power of storytelling. Herzog operates on the conviction that successful filmmaking ignites communal passion, leading to financial support and success in a more organic manner.

While he shares challenges with securing resources, he underscores the importance of creativity and self-reliance over complaining about the logistics of production. His example of establishing a publishing house to release his screenplays illustrates his proactive approach in overcoming obstacles and asserting artistic control.

Cinematic Inspirations and Ethnographic Themes

Herzog offers insights into “Where the Green Ants Dream,” sharing his fascination with Australian Aboriginal culture. He stresses the importance of representing their struggles without claiming their narrative as his own. The concept of "dreaming" within Aboriginal culture is discussed with great respect, as Herzog endeavors to incorporate elements of their mythology while creating a fictional narrative that resonates with universal themes of conflict between tradition and modernity.

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His reflections on "Cobra Verde" reveal the chaotic production challenges faced while collaborating with actor Klaus Kinski. Herzog's relationship with Kinski is characterized as tumultuous; he expresses frustration with Kinski's unpredictability and the stylistic influences that altered the film's intended vision. Despite the struggles, Herzog acknowledges the compelling nature of the African settings that overshadow Kinski's performance.

Reflections on Historical Contexts and Human Nature

The conversation shifts to Herzog's documentary "Echoes from a Sombre Empire," which profiles Jean-Bedel Bokassa, the infamous dictator of the Central African Republic. Herzog is drawn to Bokassa as a representation of human darkness and tyranny. Through a lens of fascination mingled with horror, he captures the absurdity of Bokassa's reign, questioning the nature of power and its effects on humanity.

In discussing the Wodaabe tribe, Herzog emphasizes their unique cultural rituals, where beauty contests among men showcase notions of identity and attraction. His portrayal seeks authenticity, balancing a respectful representation of the tribe's practices with a cinematic lens that invites audiences to marvel at the complexities of human behavior.

Furthermore, Herzog's comments on the preservation of film and the evanescent nature of cinema reflect a deep concern for legacy and memory. He recognizes that while many films fade into obscurity, they serve as

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cultural artifacts that can provide insights into societies of the past.

Artistic Vision and the Future of Cinema

Herzog concludes by discussing the importance of magical elements within film and the ongoing evolution of cinematic storytelling. His reflections during the "Film Lesson" series highlight the necessity of understanding and challenging the conventions of film. By inviting magicians and artists into the discourse, Herzog reinforces the idea that cinema, like magic, provokes awe and challenges perceptions of reality.

He expresses a desire to explore new dimensions in cinematic expression, encouraging filmmakers to transcend technical constraints and societal expectations. Herzog's unique vision encapsulates a blend of realism and surrealism, exemplifying his belief that each film is not merely a representation of reality but an exploration of deeper truths that often elude conventional understanding.

In essence, Herzog's reflections outline a distinct approach to filmmaking that prioritizes authentic experience, self-expression, cultural respect, and an unwavering quest for artistic truth amidst the illusions of cinematic storytelling.

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Chapter 8: Fact and Truth

Chapter 238: Fact and Truth

In Hollywood, the focus often lies on rigid 'story structure,' defining how each act fits into a predetermined formula. However, director Werner Herzog rejects this notion, viewing himself as a storyteller driven by the urgency to narrate rather than conform to structured guidelines. He compares his role to that of a street storyteller in Marrakech, emphasizing his dedication to authentic and compelling storytelling.

Herzog introduces the concept of the *Minnesota Declaration*, a provocative manifesto born during a late-night bout of jet lag while he was in Italy. This declaration critiques documentary filmmaking, particularly *cinema vérité*, which Herzog describes as offering only superficial truths, likening it to the "accountant's truth." For him, cinema should delve deeper into emotional and existential dimensions, shedding its bureaucratic constraints. Herzog aims to transcend traditional documentary categories, asserting that the line between fiction and documentary blurs in his work; both mediums can play with facts and characters in creative ways.

He reflects on important films in his career, like *Land of Silence and Darkness*, where he began to explore the nuances of truth in filmmaking.

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Herzog reveals that much of what audiences perceive as 'documentary' is often stylized or even fictionalized, as seen in **Lessons of Darkness**, which captures the aftermath of the Gulf War's burning oil fields. He reflects on the initially harsh reception of **Lessons of Darkness** in Germany, stating that its aesthetic approach to horror drew ire from critics who felt it strayed into dangerous territory. He argues that the expressive potential of cinema lies in its ability to evoke deeper truths beyond mere objective fact.

Herzog discusses his collaboration with cinematographer Paul Berriff during the making of **Lessons of Darkness**, noting the extreme conditions under which they worked, such as the intense heat around the burning oil wells. This collaborative effort allowed Herzog to blend haunting visuals with profound commentary on environmental destruction and the human condition. He further explores the concept of stylized storytelling in documentary films, maintaining that it enriches the narrative by allowing filmmakers to express truths that may not surface through straightforward depictions.

In **Bells from the Deep**, Herzog continues this exploration by weaving the faith and superstition prevalent in Russian culture into his narrative. He cites various eccentric, self-proclaimed spiritual leaders in Siberia, underscoring the blurred lines between faith and superstition in the Russian psyche. The film contrasts this chaotic search for meaning with stylized portrayals of local characters, demonstrating how invention can evoke deeper truths. The

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legendary Lost City of Kitezh, a myth capturing the Russian spirit, serves as a focal point in Herzog's exploration, where he creatively stages scenes to capture the essence of national identity.

His foray into opera directing, particularly at the Bayreuth Wagner Festival,

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Alex Walk

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Chapter 9 Summary: The Song of Life

Chapter 9: The Song of Life - Summary

In this chapter, filmmaker Werner Herzog reminisces about his collaborative relationship with editor Beate Mainka-Jellinghaus, who has contributed significantly to several of Herzog's films, including **Signs of Life**, **Aguirre**, and **Fitzcarraldo**. Herzog describes his fast-paced editing style, characterized by urgency and decisiveness. He highlights Beate's intuitive ability to identify quality footage, recalling an instance during **Signs of Life** when she quickly discarded a rejected reel, demonstrating her sharp editorial instincts.

Herzog explains that he prefers to work quickly and discard unnecessary footage, facilitating clearer and more efficient editing sessions. He emphasizes the importance of establishing a film's rhythm during shooting, noting that errors made on set are seldom correctable in post-production. For example, during the filming of **Aguirre**, he shot only 50,000 feet of film, reflecting his disciplined approach to film production.

The discussion transitions into the psychology of editing, where Herzog reveals the emotional difficulty of cutting beloved scenes that disrupt narrative flow. He promotes a philosophy in which the editor must detach

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from preconceived notions originated in the script to allow the film's unique rhythm and timing to emerge. This lesson was evident during the editing process of **Kaspar Hauser**, where Herzog had to remove a beautifully shot but disruptive scene involving an impoverished farmer.

Herzog recalls his request for Beate to join him on the set of **Stroszek**, where her critical eye pushed him to aim higher. He acknowledges her integral role in shaping his films despite her frequent criticisms. He explains the strategic decision to keep editors away from shooting to preserve their objectivity regarding the footage.

The conversation then pivots to Herzog's views on technological advancements in filmmaking, particularly digital video. He expresses reluctance to substitute film with video, citing the potential dangers of instant feedback and the creative limitations it imposes. Herzog appreciates the depth and nuances that celluloid can provide over digital, although he acknowledges that video technology does have its place in specific contexts.

Herzog shares a deeply personal narrative about his walk around the borders of East and West Germany in 1984. This immersive experience, although not overtly political, reflected his yearning for reunification in a divided country. His observations about the disheartening political climate in Germany at the time further emphasized the cultural and emotional fabric of the nation.

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Traveling on foot is a recurring theme in Herzog's life and work, asserting a preference for this method as a means to connect deeply with the world. He highlights the importance of walking in uncovering personal and historical stories, avoiding the sterility of traditional tourism.

The chapter also touches on Herzog's profound friendship with Lotte Eisner and the lengths he went to ensure her survival during illness, culminating in his walk to Paris to visit her—a symbolic act of defiance against the finality of death.

Herzog concludes by reflecting on various creative influences in his life, including his writing aspirations, which juxtapose his filmmaking endeavors. He mentions Bruce Chatwin, a fellow traveler and writer, with whom he shared a deep connection over their shared experiences on foot.

Lastly, Herzog discusses Klaus Kinski, his recurring collaborator known for his intense performances and tumultuous personality. He reflects on their complex relationship—marked by mutual respect, strained encounters, and a blend of chaos that enriched their creative endeavors. Herzog ultimately sees their collaboration as a quintessential example of the artist's struggle and the unique alchemy of their artistic partnership.

Throughout this chapter, Herzog's insights emphasize his philosophy on editing, the nature of filmmaking, the existential importance of walking, and

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the relationships that shape an artist's journey, culminating in a profound meditation on creativity and the human experience.

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Chapter 10 Summary: The Minnesota Declaration

Overview of Chapters 301 - 327

301 - The Minnesota Declaration: Truth and Fact in Documentary Cinema

In this chapter, Werner Herzog critiques the principles of Cinema Verité, asserting that it is characterized by a superficial engagement with truth, likening it to a night watchman frustrated by complex law but only concerned with its simplest applications. He suggests that while fact creates norms, true illumination is derived from deeper understandings accessible through artistic fabrication. In contrast to the superficiality of some documentary practices, Herzog elevates the notion of "poetic truth," one that can be accessed through stylization and imagination, evoking a sense of deeper meaning that transcends mere facts. He comments on a recurring tragedy in Minnesota related to people drowning on snowmobiles in spring, reflecting on the limitations of legislative attempts to curtail human error, leading to a broader consideration of humanity's vulnerability against nature's vast indifference.

302 - Continuation of Themes

Herzog expands on the harsh realities of life in the natural world,

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particularly focusing on the dangers inherent in the oceans, suggesting that true safety is an illusion. The narrative finds itself enmeshed in the duality of man's attempts to conquer the chaotic elements of nature as potential dangers lurk even in the simplest human endeavors. This section is reminiscent of Herzog's existential inquiries into the human condition when confronted with the uncaring forces of the universe.

303 - Filmography

A comprehensive list of Herzog's works, providing details about his early short films, documentaries, and feature films from his career spanning several decades. Each entry is meticulous, outlining notable personnel involved in production, key artistic elements, locations, and production companies, showcasing Herzog's significant contribution to film as a unique artist.

304 - Critical Analysis of Engagement with Themes

In this section, there's a thematic coherence in the description of various Herzog films which often explore the intersection of human ambition against stark realities. His work with non-actors and real-life characters lends a profound authenticity to the narrative, inviting viewers to engage with the complex realities that underpin his cinematic storytelling. Herzog's filmography reflects an ongoing dialogue with existential themes, human

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folly, and the sublime forces of nature.

305 - Background and Cultural References

Herzog's perspective on cinema extends beyond the screen into broader cultural and philosophical territories, touching upon influences from literature, historical narratives, and contemporary media. His critique of fictional truths within cinema acts as a medium to explore larger, metaphysical questions about our existence.

306 - Legacy and Impact

The chapter wraps up with reflections on Herzog's indelible mark on film and culture, discussing how his stylistic choices and thematic concerns resonate deeply in the canon of global cinema. His approach challenges not only the conventions of documentary filmmaking but further elevates the expectation of what true films can represent in terms of authenticity and philosophical heft.

307 and Beyond - Bibliography and Index

A detailed bibliography of works associated with Herzog, offering insights into further readings on his films, including his own writings and significant critical analyses of his cinematic universe. The index provides easy

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navigation through the topics discussed in the preceding chapters, serving as a comprehensive guide for those wishing to delve deeper into Herzog's artistic legacy and thematic explorations.

Conclusion

Through these chapters, Werner Herzog articulates a profound examination of truth, fact, and poetic expression in both life and art. By contrasting commercial cinematic narratives with his distinct vision, Herzog not only immerses audiences in the visual world but also provokes contemplation on the complexities of existence itself, leaving an enduring legacy in both documentary and feature filmmaking.

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