

Teacher/Mentor: Richard Brandes

Student: Jaye Lowe

Triangle

Triangle feels like a tragedy. There are tragic characters. There is a tragic resolution and there is a dark, sad wistful tone to the film. However, as the narrative plays out it slowly becomes less of a tragedy and more of a study of ironic results.

A woman who is probably otherwise, a good woman has a terrible moment. We assume that the overwhelming stresses of raising an autistic child have caused her to momentarily lose her cool and react in an abusive manner, but the abuse is not revealed until the climax. When this information becomes available to the audience we see that the irony is that she is, in a way, reliving her worst and most regretful moment over and over again.

This film is based on the archetype where there is a debt that must be paid. We don't know this is the mythos going into the film, but we soon find out that fate is catching up to Jess and whether she knows it or not, or we know it or not, she is going to have to pay the debt for being abusive to her autistic child.

Initially, Jess comes off like the hero and as we near the climax of the film we realize that she was the false hero all along. She looked like a hero. She was placed in an impossible situation, seemingly by no fault of her own and she was forced to find a way to survive. She certainly is the protagonist, but when we see that it was her actions that possibly leads to the events of the story the audience has to reassess how they feel about her. Is she the hero? Is she a villain? Is she a woman who made a mistake who is now trapped in desperate situation because of one moment of weakness or is she a repeat offender who deserves every twisted thing she is enduring?

These themes play throughout the, leaving the audience to question who really is the hero in the film.

Greg turns out to be the only true hero in the film. In the traditional assessment of the monomyth, Greg goes on an adventure, and in a decisive crisis he helps to turn the tide, but then he tragically dies.

This is probably one of the more interesting elements of the film. In terms of tone and pacing I plan to borrow heavily from this for my own project. However, the part that most interests me is to introduce a protagonist and another heroic character and let the audience then decide who is the hero and who they relate to the most. In tragic turn, I would also like to have both characters meet a tragic and ironic fate to play against both archetypal narratives.

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Herzog

Werner Herzog was a man possessed. I watched a Burden of Dreams and saw a man overtaken by a vision. He heard a story. That simple act of hearing a story that someone told created an image in his mind. This image stretched, broadened and grew into the vision of Fitzcarraldo.

What immediately ensued could only be described as an obsessional pursuit. The obstacles that presented themselves were plenteous and varied. He endured civil wars, tribal disputes, the dangers of the forest and the unpredictable river. He also had to work his way through the loss of his star and his co-star. He was forced into long shooting pauses and financing scares. Throughout all of this he remained true to the vision in his head. It was his singular focus and determination that helped get his vision on screen.

I believe his filmmaking philosophy can be summed up in one sentence, "If I abandoned this project then I would be a man without dreams." Be true to your vision at all cost. I am truly inspired by the obsessive spirit of the filmmaker.

Herzog was one of the pioneers of guerrilla filmmaking, at least from the vantage point that he worked with small crews in unsecured locations. As production lagged on he also had to fight with dwindling studio and financial support. I always felt that with guerrilla filmmaking it was kind of a shoot at your own risk proposition and Burden of Dreams exemplified this concept. Out in the jungle with dwindling supplies, overpopulated camps and disappearing funds and a timeline they overshot by years. He was up against it every day. He forged ahead when people quit, when planes crashed and people died.

Herzog as a filmmaker would be completely distinguishable if compared to today's Hollywood filmmakers. He was a man of principle. A man who saw film as less of business and more of compulsion, this thing you have to do. That if you don't write it, create it, distribute it your unique and particular voice would never be heard. That the world would somehow be less of your artistic vision, your compulsions, your passion didn't make it into it.

Herzog was truly an icon and an inspiration.