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History in the Making: Weimar Cinema and National Identity

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Like the culture of which it was part, Weimar cinema enjoys a self-sustaining heritage. Whether read as a late offshoot of Expressionism, the product of a constellation of specific social and intellectual forces, or reflection of the German psyche, it remains a distinct moment in motion picture evolution. Since 1933 traditionally serves as the great caesura in twentieth-century German culture, temporal closure is usually taken for granted. Thematic and stylistic cohesion derives from focus on a select group of motion pictures. Expressionism and *Neue Sachlichkeit* provide the broad categories within which to isolate several dozen art films that testify to Weimar's idiosyncratic character and offer the raw material with which to investigate its roots and nature. Set against classical Hollywood models, Expressionist stylization, exploration of psychic interiors, reversion to Romantic motifs of magic, myth, and legend, and later experiments in social realism rivet historical interest. [1]

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Historical preoccupation with Weimar's peculiarities rests more than is often acknowledged on aspirations and arguments of the 1920s. The Great War initiated an era of national cinemas, attempts to create and sustain uniquely accented national film styles. [2] Inseparable though these efforts were from the nationalism of the age, they should be interpreted less in light of popular chauvinism or xenophobia than as a drive among filmmakers to stake their claims in newly discovered territory. Like the scramble for Africa in the 1880s, occupation of identifiable filmic space guaranteed recognition both domestically and internationally. The national cinema also served as an umbrella under which to synthesize the conflicting commercial, technical, and artistic impulses of the medium. The concept admittedly remained as much rhetorical device as practical program. However, because contemporaries could not identify the features of German film without simultaneously prescribing its direction, the pursuit of a national cinema among screenwriters, critics, and filmmakers contributed to the position Weimar cinema was to assume vis-à-vis German history and international competition.

Weimar cinema emerged from the matrix of social, political, and cultural changes that constituted Germany's breakthrough to modernity. [3] It is remembered, on one hand, for experiments in modernism and, on the other hand, for highly regressive tendencies, principally the preference for historical as opposed to contemporary subjects and problems. Treatment of a Germany or Prussia that--had it ever been actual-- was irrevocably gone by 1918 meant projection of national virtues or peculiarities that could locate Germany in the postwar world. [4] The search for a national cinema served a parallel function in the context of international motion picture developments after the Great War. It comprised one part of the much larger problematic of cultural identity in an era in which Germany became the intersection point of foreign cultures, principally the roaring twenties of the United States--from jazz to Charlie Chaplin--and the socialist experiments of Soviet Russia. Berlin, the heart of the world's second largest motion picture industry and the center of European culture, became a refuge to artists and intellectuals and a meeting place of cultural currents from East and West. In the second half of the 1920s it became the subject of a cultural invasion not experienced since the Napoleonic era. German cinema sought to differentiate

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itself in the highly competitive world of international motion picture exchange by the position it adopted toward German history.

Although Germany's exposure to foreign motion pictures proved quantitatively less intense after than before the war, it was still crucial to postwar cinematic development. Prior to 1914, Germany--though an industrial and urban giant and a major player in world trade--had a modest role on the domestic film market and a minimal one abroad. French movies dominated the international market and in company with Danish productions, Italian historical spectacles, and American westerns and slapsticks supplied German theatres. [5] However, the decade after 1910 witnessed two dramatic changes in the pattern of German cinema culture. First, production took a quantum leap forward, primarily because the war, by stimulating demand while isolating the country from most previous suppliers, yielded hothouse conditions for growth. By 1918 native output covered the bulk of domestic demand, and exporters were beginning to move into foreign markets. Second, fundamental shifts in international exchange altered the context for reception of foreign films in Germany. On one hand, serious production setbacks in other European countries left Germany for the first time the center of continental production and a potential global film power. [6] On the other hand, Germany found its place challenged at home and abroad by dual non- European revolutions.

The most frequently commemorated of these, Russia's Bolshevik revolution, gave birth to a cinematic style that for a brief period in the mid-1920s mesmerized German experts and audiences and spurred reflection on domestic production trends. The other less violent and memorable--but for the motion picture more significant--revolution was the emergence of Hollywood's global hegemony. During and immediately following the war, a seismic international shift occurred as America became the center of world motion picture production and trade. [7] Due to this preeminence, Hollywood was able in the 1920s to lure many of Germany's leading film artists across the Atlantic, invest in branch production in Germany, and threaten to Americanize German production. It thereby presented the first and most sustained challenge to Weimar cinema, and the primary impetus behind efforts to establish a distinct national product.

The foreign challenge from the ideological antipodes of Soviet Russia and the United States impinged upon artistic and commercial ambitions rooted in the previous decade. Before the war the motion picture spawned a general *Kinodebatte* that exposed the various paths which German cinema could pursue. While cinema was still primarily cheap amusement for the working classes, a young generation of authors, stage performers, and directors (many of Expressionist leanings) began to take interest in the medium and explore its relationship with art, literature, and theater. At the same time, guardians of established cultural pursuits, an assortment of aesthetes, pedagogues, pastors, doctors, and government authorities, fumed about film's cultural, moral, social, or physical dangers and campaigned to censor, tax, and/or socialize film production and exhibition. In short, middle-class Germany divided and fought for, against, and over the motion picture. [8]

The Great War, apart from laying the economic foundations of Weimar cinema, conditioned domestic parameters of its growth by affecting this *Kinodebatte* in two broad respects. First, war fostered general appreciation for the value of film in education, propaganda, entertainment, and pacification of the population, substantially reducing its cultural stigma. The prewar *Kinodebatte* acquired a new forum and emphasis. Not only did it become internalized within a substantial, articulate community of critics and filmmakers, but it also revolved around prospects for realizing film's commercial and propagandistic as well as artistic potential. [9] Second, the war figured prominently in cementing cultural, commercial, and national interests. In all belligerent nations, but perhaps most blatantly in Germany, the armed struggle was transmogrified into a contest of world views and cultural types. Statesmen couched national interests in the language of cultural superiority. Intellectuals fed this circumlocution by portraying the conflict in cultural- historical terms--a showdown between German Kultur on one hand and Western "civilization" and Eastern "barbarism" on the other. The result was a mode of reasoning that set Germany against the world at the level of fundamental values. [10]

For cinema interests, cultural typecasting and defense of German peculiarities dovetailed with efforts to elevate film from notoriety to respectability. The trade press attempted to consolidate the motion

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picture's sociocultural position by portraying it as a national institution. [11] Behind this lay obvious commercial motivation, international as well as domestic. Just as the nation's search for a place in the sun combined prestige and profit, *Kultur* and power, so its cinematic counterpart sought artistic opportunity to establish German film internationally. War justified expansion abroad in the interest of propaganda, but the impulse for expansion ran deeper. The creation of Ufa (Universum Film AG) in late 1917, in part with government funds, signified at least as much ambition to capture foreign markets as to make propaganda. General Ludendorff allegedly raged at the first production program of Ufa because it emphasized entertainment at the expense of propaganda, but the company made no secret of its objectives: its initial press statement introduced Ufa as the advance guard of German cinema in *postwar* international competition. [12]

In sum, as the republic emerged from war and defeat, German cinema assumed an increasingly self-conscious stance on the major economic, artistic, and social challenges of film development. General commercial desiderata provoked little conflict. Producers needed to attract investment and fortify a domestic position against *Kinofeinde*, tax authorities, and censors by broadening the movie-going audience. They also needed to expand their horizons beyond central Europe. What remained debatable was the strategy for achieving these goals. The ongoing *Kinodebatte* symptomized uncertainty about what constituted film and whom it was to serve. In conjunction with Germany's continued isolation from the international market--import was not officially restored until 1921-- this initially left much room for speculation and experimentation. [13] Commercial and artistic impulses both coincided and clashed. Fortification of a domestic position meant overcoming middle-class antipathy toward motion pictures. The impetus thus provided for artistic experiments overlapped with the ambitions of the young filmmakers--Fritz Lang, F. W. Murnau, Paul Leni, Robert Wiene--to discover new cinematic terrain. [14] Yet how smoothly these objectives could be combined with the need to overcome foreign antipathy to Germany and to find a formula for a mass international audience remained to be seen.

Reconciliation of these artistic, cultural, and commercial objectives would have been a source of controversy even had there been no

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interference from without. In the event, America's presence loomed on the horizon from very early in the Weimar era, encouraging formulation of filmic objectives and identity in terms of national comparisons. Until 1921 Germany remained legally cut off from world film developments by terms of an import ban imposed in 1916. [15] But even before German experts were acquainted with American films they began to use Hollywood as a reference point. By reputation alone the American cinema presented the obvious and inescapable challenge to domestic producers. [16] Since the latter confessed their desire to make history, they faced growing pressure to create a unique cinematic product rooted in German culture. Although strictly speaking that rootedness was unavoidable, it also became a conscious, deliberate enterprise. [17]

Hollywood presented the first and most sustained invitation to self-definition, but ironically, and fatefully, Weimar was to make a dent in the American market before the reverse occurred. Late in 1920 Ernst Lubitsch's epic of revolutionary France, *Madame Dubarry* (*Passion*, 1919), created a stir in New York, and shortly thereafter *Anna Boleyn* (*Deception*, 1920) and the prototype of a peculiarly German cinema, *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari* (1920), duplicated the feat. However fortuitous the choice and timing of their release, these films became representatives of what German filmmakers believed they could offer America and the world. Foreign acclaim fed domestic confidence that in the realm of historical spectacle and Expressionist fantasy Germany possessed unique cinematic gifts. One cornerstone was thus laid in the self-perception upon which German filmmakers were to build. [18]

Reinforcement of this self-perception came from a two-pronged American offensive in Germany. One prong was a grandiose design by Famous Players for cooperative production in Berlin. In the spring of 1921 Famous Players founded the European Film Alliance (EFA), a holding company that employed a long list of outstanding German talent, including Paul Davidson, Ernst Lubitsch, Pola Negri, Joe May, Emil Jannings, and Max Reinhardt. The American investors hoped to exploit German abilities and the German inflation to produce world-class pictures at moderate cost. EFA therefore demonstrated American respect for the expertise displayed by the first German releases in the United States. [19] However, when EFA proved a short-lived enterprise--it gener-

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ated only a handful of pictures, none of which lived up to the expectations raised by *Passion*, before being dismantled as a production company in 1922--experts felt confirmed in their assumption of irreconcilable differences between the two national cinemas. They blamed the fiasco on American largesse. Fabulous salaries in dollars and the most up-to- date studios in Berlin proved more debilitating than productive. German artists could not work to American dictates. The moral of the story--at once consolation and self-fulfilling prophecy--was that American and German cinemas presented fundamentally different species. [20]

The second development of 1921 that fed perceptions of Germany's distinctive qualities was the return of American film to German theaters. Early imports consisted mainly of serialized westerns, spiced with several social dramas and slapstick shorts. Many of these were dated, dumped in Germany thanks to their novelty after the long import embargo and because the mark had already weakened to the point of prohibiting large profits. German experts remained unimpressed and, though aware that these pictures were not necessarily representative, used them to define contrasts between Hollywood and Germany. American creation of tempo, sensationalism, and comedy in westerns and slapsticks persuaded experts that Germany could not compete in these categories. By contrast, American social and historical dramas convinced critics that Hollywood could not dramatize effectively, especially in tragic situations, and that its screenplays foundered on moral or cultural conventions, like the insistence on happy endings, which undermined their credibility. [21] A rating scheme was thus developed which highlighted what were seen as essential differences between the two cinemas.

Emphasis on contrasts in reception of the first wave of American imports clearly aimed to transform the deeply rooted assumption that German and American cinema were different species into a practical program. The strategic intent was to discover effective means of competition against Hollywood. This, of course, was the thrust of Erich Pommer's later explanation for production policies of the early 1920s. Pommer, a central figure in Weimar cinema as production chief with Decla and Ufa, claimed decades after the fact that it would have been pointless to try to compete with Hollywood: artistic experimentation provided the road less traveled. [22] Although Pommer's statement rationalizes a policy which by

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mid-decade suffered painful eclipse and cannot by itself explain German policy, it accurately reflects contemporary desire to distinguish German cinema from Hollywood cinema. [23] Critics, screen authors, and filmmakers did generally concur on the wisdom of capitalizing on domestic peculiarities. [24] Pommer's opinion also implies, paradoxically, that Hollywood practice had already become normative, at least in a negative sense. Hollywood became the measure of what German filmmakers should not undertake and thus played a formative role in Weimar production, encouraging alternatives to its own style even when still a relatively unknown commodity. Together EFA and the early American releases in Germany therefore solidified the conviction that Germany had unique strengths on which it should continue to build. Historical authenticity, psychological consistency, the ability to breath life into myth and legend, and an eye for the uncanny and bizarre: these were gifts Hollywood lacked, gifts that could be exploited to challenge Hollywood.

To give Hollywood credit for stimulating the creation of what are today seen as Weimar's representative films is neither to argue for the primacy of foreign policy nor to deny the indigenous factors in their production. Nor is it to suggest the existence of an industry-wide policy of deviation rather than imitation: the German cinema did not represent a monolithic block, united in nature and purpose. [25] The problem of Germany's filmic identity vis-à-vis Hollywood is considerably more complex and refractory than either generalization will allow. The cry for self- cultivation arose in part to counter what contemporaries perceived as German eagerness to imitate Hollywood, for everyone recognized the United States as a tantalizing market. Moreover, woven into presumed differences of national cinema cultures were unresolved questions in the domestic *Kinodebatte*. The technical, artistic, and commercial boundaries of the medium remained in considerable flux. What constituted a motion picture and whom it was to serve could not yet be stated definitively. That these questions remained open encouraged on one hand, differentiation and experimentation. A specifically German film language could conceivably establish itself as a viable option to Hollywood. That Hollywood had already established a hegemonic position on the world market encouraged, on the other hand, the process of borrowing and assimilation. America had already demonstrated a successful route to

domestic and international success; an alternate path might become a dead end.

Seen in this light, the dilemma faced by Weimar cinema was whether, as Edward Buscombe recently formulated it, "a revolt against Hollywood is indeed a revolt against the cinema." [26] In other words, did there exist or could there be fashioned a workable alternative to Hollywood? According to Buscombe, filmmakers may respond to this query in one of three ways: by imitating to try to compete on equal terms, by cultivating national traditions and peculiarities, or by exploring alternative film discourses. [27] But in practice these three options are not neatly separable. In the case of Weimar cinema, films about Prussia and prewar student life presented one possibility. But they never enjoyed uncontested dominance. To imitate or preserve distinctiveness, a problem applicable to any culture under siege from powerful neighbors, permitted no categorical answer. The bulk of what today passes as Weimar cinema blended the options just outlined, drawing on native cultural traditions, borrowing techniques from Hollywood but experimenting with modes of filmic discourse that deviated from Hollywood trends. This combination seemed to promise uniqueness and perhaps also competitive strength against Hollywood and effective use of film as an artistic and public medium. Thus the challenge posed by Hollywood--whether to borrow or to strike out in novel directions--called less for an either/ or than a new synthesis.

Central to this synthesis, and therefore to national orientation, was definition of cinema's inherent properties. Understanding of the medium was still sufficiently fluid in the early 1920s to permit conflicting claims on its nature and purpose. Cinema became a battlefield of competing artistic and economic ambitions. On this battlefield the position adopted toward American motion pictures had enormous significance. As American movies began to appear in German theaters in 1921, *Die Weltbühne* featured a debate that pitted champions of Hollywood against defenders of German film. At stake was the relative value of what were identified as the strengths of American and German movies respectively. American simplicity, naturalness, sensationalism, contemporaneity, and tempo rivaled German fantasy, stylization, logic, historical sense, and profundity. The disputants agreed on the qualities assigned the respec-

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tive national cinemas but disagreed on which corresponded to the inherent character of film. Each side justified its national choice by claiming correspondence between that choice and the unwritten laws of the medium. Thus the argument over national orientation became wrapped up in a struggle to stamp the motion picture with a natural, artistic pedigree. [28]

In 1921 the link between defining a national cinema and grasping the nature of the medium had a somewhat unrealistic air. American movies were just starting to see release in German theaters. But the cold hard fact of Hollywood's international monopoly had already begun to make itself felt. Indeed the threat behind the pro-American argument in the *Weltbühne* debate was the potential of Hollywood to extend that monopoly in Germany. For a brief period in which German exports reverberated powerfully in the United States and Hollywood's exports to Germany failed to impress, Germany's prospects for shaking that monopoly appeared favorable. But optimism proved short-lived. Even before America released its representative films in Germany, there came reports that the sensational breakthrough of German film in the United States had quickly lost momentum. [29] Just as runaway inflation intensified dependence on foreign earnings, the American market began to close to German pictures. [30]

Once a new currency was introduced in late 1923, a painful stabilization crisis ensued, dramatizing an already enormous drop in overall production. Simultaneously, American companies, attracted by a currency with a firm value in dollars, began to flood the German market with their films. The most ominous aspect of the American flood was the possibility, now dawning in Germany, that Hollywood embodied more than just one nation's way of understanding and exploiting the medium. American film appeared poised not only to dominate Germany financially but also to eradicate the promise of distinctiveness that domestic cinema had already shown. At this juncture the somewhat theoretical issue of 1921 and 1922 seemed a matter of life and death, and the question of national direction acquired fresh relevance.

Whether Hollywood would extinguish domestic filmmaking or force its conformity to American models depended in the final analysis on what type of films audiences in Germany and abroad could be per-

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suaded to consume. If America succeeded in winning German audiences with its filmic formula, questions of an independent German cinema would become academic. American inroads on the German market therefore sharpened awareness of the relationship between cinematic properties and public attitudes or preferences. Initially, many German experts were at a loss to pinpoint why American films captured audiences abroad and skeptical that they could do the same in Germany. When the early imports generated unmistakable audience enjoyment, critics pleaded extenuating circumstances. Disappointed by the banality and repetition of the subject matter, they credited popular interest to the sheer novelty of American films, the breakneck tempos they boasted, and the prosperity and happiness they portrayed at a time when inflation was ruining the German economy. [31] Few expected Hollywood to wear well in Germany. However, by 1922 and 1923 they began to identify more at work in these pictures than gloss, furious action, and happy endings. American filmmakers possessed an uncanny knack for seducing the audience whether or not they had profound statements to make. Brisk tempos, natural acting, superior lighting, and polished visual dialogue characterized that knack. At its heart lay an instinctive grasp of film as image, motion, and rhythm, that is, as the child of an urban, industrial age marked by the pullulation of visual Stimuli. [32]

Although strictly speaking not novel, this recognition had hortative implications for domestic producers. Since German cinema had already established an identity rooted in the pre-industrial--exotic, historical or mythical settings, exaggerated acting and ponderous tempos-- it implied that American, not German, film corresponded to the natural laws of the medium. No sooner, however, had experts begun to ponder the lesson from Hollywood than evidence started to multiply that German, indeed European, audiences were tiring of the American formula. The American challenge therefore generated contradictory impulses. Hollywood's medium-specific qualities implied the need to revise domestic strategies, while public disenchantment indicated that the American formula alone would not suffice. Here then was motivation to persist in quest of a new synthesis. In fact, in the crucial period of 1923 to 1925 the search for a national cinema became a favored strategy by which to

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revive domestic production. Ironically, the rationale for it came mainly from the American example.

In addition to a basic course in filmic instinct and adroitness, Hollywood provided an object lesson in cultural self-confidence. Even after 1924, when critics increasingly bewailed American dramaturgic and moral idiosyncracies, they still insisted that Hollywood's success abroad rested on the unique national culture which found expression in its product. In their opinion American moviemakers created not for some hypothetical global audience but for their compatriots. They did not deny Hollywood's global ambitions or strategic cleverness in gauging and satisfying international tastes, but they insisted on the uniqueness of the American product. Whether westerns, comedies, social dramas, or even historical epics set in the Old World, Hollywood's films were unmistakably American. In treatments of European or classical history the inability to step outside American space and time created amusement or disgust among European viewers. But according to German critics, when presenting their own history or current domestic circumstances, American filmmakers achieved unrivaled authenticity and impact. They thereby demonstrated repeatedly that the national film did best on the international market. [33]

The lesson then was to borrow expertise but otherwise to cultivate one's own garden. Where to draw the line between borrowing and cultivating admittedly created some difficulties. At mid-decade a number of prominent critics argued that domestic production had failed to maintain separation because it had drawn false conclusions from American success. Misreading the American achievement as a case for gearing production to the international market, German producers had tried to create films to please a public whose tastes they could only infer from American movies. This contravened three principles allegedly taught by American achievements. First, Hollywood produced for its own market, not for Europe or any other part of the globe. Second, neither America nor any other country had any use for poor copies of American films made in Germany to an artificial notion of international taste. Third, although film was an international medium, it of necessity drew upon and reflected distinct national cultures. No filmmaker could erase national

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peculiarities without emasculating his work. German attempts to do so invariably flopped. [34]

Given what some contemporaries judged domestic entrapment by a false internationalism, even at mid-decade, at the close of what has been dubbed the golden age of German silent cinema, national film identity remained confused. To be sure, when experts named pictures they considered representative, a pattern of sorts emerged. Generally speaking, their choices corresponded to the consensus reigning in current scholarship. Titles vary somewhat but essentially trace the path from Passion (1919) and The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari (1920) through *Der Golem, wie er in die Welt kam* (*The Golem, How He Came into the World*, 1920), "*Der müde Tod*" (*Destiny*, 1921), and "*Scherben*" (*Shattered*, 1921) to *Die Nibelungen* (1924) and "*Der letzte Mann*" (*The Last Laugh*, 1924), thereby following the careers of prominent directors or authors-- principally Robert Wiene, Ernst Lubitsch, F. W. Murnau, Fritz Lang, Carl Mayer, and Paul Wegener. How these added up to a national cinema is a question that historians continue to debate. Contemporaries chose to unify this assortment of historical epics, Expressionist dramas, and chamber plays by traits as much or more psychological as filmic. For them, German films valued Romanticism as a means of self-exploration, displayed motivational depth in their dramaturgy, focused on "depth of feeling," "the innerwardness of emotional life," and essence rather than appearance. [35] Yet even if relevant to the early 1920s, by mid-decade these cliché-ridden self-appraisals offered little encouragement to the quest for national film identity. At issue was not just what could be judged nationally and filmically representative but what could serve as a signpost to future development.

The classic films, however distinctive, provided extremely dubious foundations for further production, especially under the circumstances of American inroads because they had very uneven commercial records, at home as well as abroad. Expressionist features had never been box office favorites, Lubitsch had emigrated to the United States in 1922 (the historical spectacle had in any case worn somewhat thin), and chamber dramas appealed by definition to limited audiences. The German industry did have popular alternatives. Sentimental dramas-- Rhine (or Danube), wine, and song--farcical treatments of prewar mili-

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tary life, and dramatizations of the lives of great Germans of the past were very much staples on the domestic market at mid-decade. [36] These pictures shared a preference for historical and local rather than contemporary or international settings. In this regard they met the requirements of national orientation. Nonetheless, the champions of national cinema could not, generally speaking, endorse them. Disqualified artistically by kitschy plots and in part undistinguished filmic properties, these pictures also infrequently met the export test. Even when devoid of chauvinism, they offered an image that could expect little resonance abroad, especially in the United States. Military films, for example, however harmless, would scarcely endear Germany to foreign audiences. [37] Thus both as film and as subject, the movies that generated domestic enthusiasm appeared inadequate to Germany's motion picture identity.

Contemporary sensitivity to the historical bent of Germany's popular movies was enhanced at mid-decade by a new artistic paradigm--*Neue Sachlichkeit*--and a new filmic model--the Soviet cinema. *Neue Sachlichkeit* represented Germany's coming to terms with the social, technological, and political realities of the world created by the war. Its sources were multiple and multinational. Its chief foreign inspiration was the United States, the land of Fordism, Taylorism, pragmatism, and unlimited possibilities. America was at once a novel force on the global stage, thus an enormous cultural threat, and a model offering rational, technocratic, and non-Communist solutions to pressing social, economic, and cultural problems. [38] Soviet cinema, with its dynamically charged recreations of the masses in revolt, would appear the polar opposite of such matter-of-factness. Yet the passionate artistic vision of Soviet film was likewise driven by confrontation with a world in transformation. However stylized and unhistorical early Soviet pictures appear today, for contemporaries they displayed breathtaking realism. Soviet cinema thereby reinforced concern to give filmic form to current, concrete issues, [39] The result, as carefully documented by Rainer Berg, was growing commitment to realistic filmmaking and the concomitant politicization of Weimar cinema. [40] Exposure to Soviet motion pictures and the adoption of contemporaneity and *Sachlichkeit* as guiding principles for Weimar filmmakers/critics also shifted the focus of the pursuit of national film identity.

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Hollywood's revival on the German market in 1921 had been leisurely and somewhat disappointing. Soviet Russia's film debut came with the force of a bombshell. Although Willi Münzenberg's International Workers' Aid organization had previously imported several films from Russia, the Berlin premiere of Sergei Eisenstein Battleship Potemkin (1925) in April 1926 constituted a cultural watershed. The bitter struggle it unleashed between left and right, involving censors, state governments, and the Reichswehr, marked a crucial stage in the politicization of the Weimar cinema. But with or without the political uproar, this film was recognized immediately for what scholars continue to designate it, a milestone in film history. Contemporaries of all political persuasions but the extreme right paid tribute to its unprecedented mass scenes, compelling images, and irresistible cutting rhythms.

Eisenstein's cinematic bombshell and the political passions it inflamed have been the most visible and regularly remarked facet of Germany's early encounter with Soviet film. [41] But this picture, and many of the Soviet releases that followed, also forced the champions of national cinema to rethink their strategies. In retrospect it is clear that Russia's revolutionary cinema proved, like German Expressionism, more impressive than popular, and a short-lived, unrepeatable phenomenon. But for German experts, disillusioned by the inability of domestic producers to withstand American inroads, the cinematic force of the Soviet alternative prompted soul-searching and some recrimination. Why had first Hollywood and then Russia given birth to distinctive filmic styles that shook the world, while German peculiarities found occasionally brilliant but inconsistent cinematic expression?

To answer this question and thereby offer a key to domestic revival, contemporaries sought to fathom the Soviet achievement. As in critical commentary on Hollywood, their attention focused on the relationship between cinema and society in national context. Responses to the classic Soviet films (Potemkin [1925], Mother [1926], The End of St. Petersburg [1927], Ten Days That Shook the World [1927]) reveal-- amidst praise for shot composition, acting, technical innovation, and departure from standardized plot structures--deep enthusiasm for realism, objectivity, and honesty. Moreover, they infused *Sachlichkeit* with specific meaning. Russian filmic power and success resulted, so they

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claimed, from rootedness in a national culture, from the connectedness between the filmmaker and the socio-cultural context within which he worked. Herein too lay the authenticity and impact of Russian acting. Even opponents of the political messages delivered by Soviet films admired their ability to bring to life what they took to be the current spirit and will of the Russian population--Soviet filmmakers captured in images the revolutionary ideal and dynamism of the Russia created in 1917. [42] In the words of Axel Eggebrecht, Potemkin emerged "organically from the spiritual orientation of the new Russia." [43]

Battleship Potemkin was of course a historical film. However, German experts argued that its potency derived from its tie to the present. Certainly the otherness of Soviet motion pictures, partly presupposed and partly perceived, played a crucial role in formulation of this argument linking history, artistic creation, and society. It drew attention to the political and social values embedded in cinema and to the connection between social context and the creative process, ideology, and cinematography. Otherness did not (no more than with American movies) necessarily preclude German appreciation. As long as the themes treated proved generally accessible, viewers did not need to endorse the ideological message therein. Charlie Chaplin, for instance, could be seen as everyman precisely because he simultaneously epitomized and was a product of American culture. [44] Similarly, experts lauded Sergei Eisenstein as a brilliant technical innovator who created with the camera a powerful universal language but also believed that his technique was inseparable from the aspirations and promise of the early socialist state. At stake then was not merely the genius of a director or performer but the coherence of the world view within which the performance was set. By the second half of the decade several of Germany's most acute critics decided that domestic cinema failed to establish a firm profile opposite Hollywood and Moscow because of deep flaws in recent German history and the absence of a coherent social framework. [45]

There were, of course, numerous and conflicting ways to account for German setbacks. If some observers blamed Erich Pommer and the highbrow art films, others cited Hollywood's financial or historical advantages and refusal to import German films or blamed the great inflation and German attempts to capitalize on it by imitating Hollywood.

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But exposure first to Hollywood and then to Soviet cinema encouraged conceptualization on national lines, shifting attention to the social and historical prerequisites of characteristic motion picture styles. From this perspective it followed that forces nationally determined but exogenous to the cinema posed the central dilemma for domestic production and reception. Reformation of German cinema necessitated a different national history and fundamental social change. The more pressing the need for a national film identity, the less favorable appeared its prospects of realization.

The primary symptom of the German dilemma was the reluctance of domestic filmmakers to deal with current issues. Historians have seen in the flight from the present to myth, romanticized depictions of prewar university or military life and moments of national greatness either political motivation, escapism doubly potent because fed by unpleasant postwar realities, or evidence of thwarted social ambitions. [46] Contemporaries recognized at least the first two of these but also interpreted the refusal to treat current circumstances as a sign of uncertainty on the part of native producers vis-à-vis their audience. That reflected in turn the absence of unspoken assumptions bonding moviegoers to each other and to the filmmaker. As one observer argued, because Germany lacked stable and generally held social and moral conventions, thus a meaningful present, cinema either had to retreat into the past or fabricate something entirely new. In the absence of a consistent, representative world view, highbrow art films and popular historical films presented detours to creation of a national cinema. [47]

Although some commentators emphasized the political component of Germany's troubled present, the contrasts drawn with the United States and Soviet Russia suggested more far-reaching problems. [48] The eminent theater critic, Herbert Ihering, established a national cinema spectrum that placed Hollywood and Russia, The Gold Rush (1925) and Battleship Potemkin, at opposite poles. American filmmakers produced Volksfilme because they addressed what he called a unified *Amerikanertum*. The Soviets did likewise thanks to a dominant sociopolitical world view. In both cases cinema belonged organically to the national milieu from which it came. Germany, by contrast, had created individual pictures of outstanding quality but had no Volksfilm because the country was torn apart politically, intellectually, and artistically. [49] Film reflected,

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in other words, the ideological and social confusion of the nation. Wolfgang Petzet, a determined advocate of realism as the key to effective cinema, likewise assigned confused ideological underpinnings the primary role in German failings vis-à-vis Hollywood and Russia. Even realism--he took Walter Ruttmann "Berlin, *Symphonie einer Großstadt*" (*Berlin, Symphony of a Metropolis*, 1927) as illustration--needed to be informed by some larger purpose. The specific ideological content mattered less than the fact of ideological commitment. Petzet saw Soviet cinema as confirmation of the principle that all art required relationship to some overarching value system. The key then to Soviet impact was neither montage nor direction of masses nor technical mastery but *Gesinnung*, a quality of almost religious character not amenable to industrial manufacture. German production lacked this ideological conviction and therefore continued to present an amorphous face. [50]

These general sociocultural theories of the German film problem found striking empirical confirmation in the one domestic picture of the second half of the decade with unmistakable claims to international stature. Metropolis (1926) illustrated to the point of caricature, according to champions of national identity, the ideological confusion that permeated German production. With the advantage of hindsight, Fritz Lang and Thea von Harbou's vision of the future may be dismissed as a late flower of Expressionism, unrepresentative of Weimar production in the era of *Neue Sachlichkeit*; its narrational vagaries can be overlooked in favor of its visual encoding of sexual/technological anxieties; its financial dimensions, requiring production decisions related as much to the American as the domestic market, demand that it be read as a heavily Americanized motion picture. [51] But for contemporary zealots of realism, Metropolis was an answer to Hollywood and Russia that epitomized Weimar's cinematic dilemma. In cost, dimensions, makeup, and message it offered embarrassing testimony to Germany's social and cultural confusion. Ostensibly set in the future, it regressed not only to the alchemist's den of the middle ages but also to the catacombs of the early Christian era. Superficially about the triumph of the human intelligence, it presented human beings who incited workers to attack machinery like the Luddites and who were too stupid to foresee the consequences. Taking up the burning issue of the present, the social question, it proved incapable of providing a serious answer to it. [52]

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What most appalled critics was that Ufa and Fritz Lang drew all the wrong lessons from Germany's position between East and West. Metropolis stole from every possible world view and artistic current to offer something for everyone. The blend of German Romanticism and stylization, Soviet mass scenes and revolutionary fervor, American technology, piety, and happy ending created what Herbert Ihering called a "*Weltanschauungsfilm ohne Weltanschauung*." [53] In short, the film's lack of temporal sense--past, present, or future--its inability to present believable characters, and its utter helplessness in the face of the social question reflected the frantic search of German production for coherence and direction. And all of this was highlighted rather than masked by the fact that the film was staged with a cinematic brilliance that gave nothing to Hollywood or Russia. [54]

In the face of this grand smorgasbord the call for realism intersected with the search for a distinctive national cinema. Realism offered a prophylactic against filmic and ideological eclecticism that sabotaged German cinema identity. Furthermore, treatment of real-life issues in their natural settings promised to tap the artistic energy exuded by American and Soviet cinema and make possible the emergence of German film art as opposed to an international potpourri. While *Sachlichkeit* was modelled by both America and Russia, once adopted in a German setting it could distinguish domestic from foreign production. Realism therefore provided the formula with which to permit borrowing from Hollywood without Americanization, i.e., loss of identity, and by which to learn from Soviet revolutionary films without compulsion to adopt their ideological vision.

If the symptom of German inability to face the present and cope with the strains of modernization was production of films set in the prewar world, realism presented a rational cure. Realism appeared, moreover, to promise to restore the popular as well as artistic potential of the Weimar cinema. [55] But it could by no means function as a cure-all. Béla Balázs noted that the "realist dogmatists" tended to create a substitute religion, ignoring the fact that *Sachlichkeit* could present a flight from disturbing realities to self-seeking aestheticism. [56] Much more problematic was the ability of realism to function as a bridge to unite a fractured society and with it filmmaker and audience. If cinematic realism, properly understood, depended on a coherent world view, which

Germany seemed to lack, transformation of the sociocultural base was the logical prerequisite to overhauling the cinematic superstructure. Contemporary diagnoses of social and ideological fragmentation offered little hope that filmic strategies alone could yield a national cinema.

Weimar cinema did, of course, spawn impressive explorations of current themes and issues. From the proletarian pictures of Gerhard Lamprecht --"*Die Verrufenen*" (*The Discredited*, 1925) and "*Die Unehelichen*" (*The Illegitimate*, 1926)--to Walter Ruttmann Berlin, Symphony of a Metropolis, G. W. Pabst "*Die freudlose Gasse*" (*The Joyless Street*, 1925), and "*Die Liebe der Jeanne Ney*" (*The Love of Jeanne Ney*, 1927) to the more explicitly political "*Mutter Krausens Fahrt ins Glück*" (*Mother Krausens Journey to Happiness*, 1929) and *Kuhle Wampe* (1932), general if somewhat erratic progress was made to the goal of realistic motion picture production. But growing focus on matters of current relevance exposed rather than solved the problem of national film identity, surfacing the latent political tensions in Weimar cinema and polarizing production and reception. [57] In short, realistic motion pictures drove home the artificiality of consensus in postwar German society. They did so, moreover, without matching the outstanding Soviet films in artistic consistency and impact or seriously jeopardizing Hollywood's international hegemony. Like the earlier Expressionist experiments, too highbrow for the most part to be widely popular in Germany, they also failed to create commercial breakthroughs abroad. [58]

The concept of a German national cinema provided an important intellectual nexus between the economic and cultural demands of the postwar years but foundered on internal contradictions. Immediately following the war, extension of the import ban and runaway inflation granted German filmmakers considerable freedom to explore alternate film paths. As pressure mounted to challenge Hollywood and succeed on foreign markets, as it became increasingly clear that the artistic films were dubious or disastrous box office material, and as American films flooded the domestic market, room to maneuver narrowed. Nonetheless, the rationale for creating a distinctive product remained intact. What did change was the leitmotif of the search. Whereas historical or fantastic motifs characterized the representative films of the early years of the Republic, the catchword from mid-decade was realism. Soviet imports drove home the lesson about national distinctiveness even as they proved

that the motion picture belonged essentially to the contemporary world. Thus first Hollywood and then Russia challenged German cinema to find a consistent form at once filmic, popular, and distinct.

The ambition to establish a national film identity incorporated both an artistic vision and the desire to shake the world. For a younger generation of artists and intellectuals it justified experimentation. [59] Had the box office favorites in Germany succeeded abroad and only disappointed the aesthetes, the character of German national film identity would have been readily solved. However, the logic of international market forces, the struggle to compete abroad, made the search for national identity more than a self-serving slogan. Incorporated within it were ambitions to find for Germany a formula comparable to Hollywood's for gripping audiences around the globe. America's hegemony and Russia's brief invasion fostered endeavors to develop a countercinema.

The search for a program with which to make cinema history exposed the historical and social obstacles to translation of an artistic vision into a coherent national film identity. National identity remained rooted in prewar values and aspirations because the simplest way to avoid the social and ideological divisions, which historians have ever since associated with the Weimar Republic, was to bring the past to the present as social and political cement. At the same time, the plea for realistic filmmaking enlisted film in the Herculean task of reforging Germany's fragmented social and historical consciousness. There was then no consensus on the German national film. What began as experimentation aiming to widen the horizons of the cinema, commercially and artistically, assumed conflicting and in part utopian features. The national cinema was a significant device for conceptualizing cinematic goals. It did not effect the synthesis of art, technology, commerce, and society that for domestic and international reasons was its aim.

Notes

1. Cf. Siegfried Kracauer, *From Caligari to Hitler* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1947); Paul Monaco, *Cinema and Society* (New York: Elsevier, 1976); Lotte Eisner , *The Haunted Screen*, trans. Roger Greaves (London: Thames &

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Hudson, 1969); George Huaco, *The Sociology of Film Art* (New York: Basic Books, 1965); Thomas Elsaesser, "Social Mobility and the Fantastic," *Wide Angle 5* (1982): 14-25 and the same author's Film History and Visual Pleasure: Weimar Cinema, Cinema Histories. *Cinema Practices*, ed. Patricia Mellencamp and Philip Rosen (Frederick, M.D.: University Publications of America, 1984) 47-84; Andrew Tudor, *Image and Influence* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1974) 152-79; John Barlow, *German Expressionist Film* (Boston: Twayne, 1982).

2. Monaco 68, 74. On the concept see Edward Buscombe, "Film History and the Idea of a National Cinema," *Australian Journal of Screen Theory 9/* 10 (1981): 141-53; Philip Rosen, "History, Textuality, Nation: Kracauer, Burch, and Some Problems in the Study of National Cinemas," *Iris 2* (1984): 69-84.

3. On Weimar see the standard works of Peter Gay, *Weimar Culture* (New York: Harper & Row, 1968); Walter Laqueur, *Weimar* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1974); Jost Hermand and Frank Trommler, *Die Kultur der Weimarer Republik* (Munich: Nymphenburger, 1978).

4. For more on the themes and typologies see the contribution in this volume by Jan-Christopher Horak.

5. See the summary by Bruce Murray, An Introduction to the Commercial Film Industry in Germany from 1895 to 1933, *Film und Politics in the Weimar Republic*, ed. Thomas Plummer et al. (New York: Holmes & Meier, 1982) 23-33; Roger Manvell and Heinrich Fraenkel, *The German Cinema* (London: Dent, 1971) 3-7.

6. See Alexander Jason, *Handbuch der Filmwirtschaft* (Berlin: Verlag für Presse, Wirtschaft und Politik, 1930), I, 61; and in general on expansion Jürgen Spiker , *Film und Kapital* (Berlin: Volker Spiess, 1975) 18ff.

7. On Hollywood's new role see Peter Bächlin, *Der Film als Ware* (Frankfurt a. M.: Fischer, 1975) and Kristin Thompson, *Exporting Entertainment* (London: BFI Publishing, 1985).

8. On the film debate see the collection of original material edited by Anton Kaes , *Kino-Debatte* (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1978), and two recent full-length analyses: H. -B. Heller, *Literarische Intelligenz und Film* (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1985); Manuel Lichtwitz, "*Die Auseinandersetzung um den Stummfilm in der Publizistik und Literatur* 1907-1914," diss., Göttingen, 1986. Also useful is Gary Stark, Cinema, Society and the State: Policing the Film Industry in Imperial Germany, *Essays on Culture and Society in Modern Germany*, ed. Gary Stark & Bruce Lackner (Arlington: Texas A&M UP, 1982)122-66.

9. The enthusiasm for film as the solution to artistic and human conundrums can scarcely be overestimated. Cf. Thomas Elsaesser, "Two Decades in Another Country: Hollywood and the Cinéphiles," *Superculture*, ed. C. W. E. Bigsby (Bowling Green: Bowling Green UP, 1975) 200-201.

10. The classic summary is Hermann Lübbe, *Politische Philosophie in Deutschland* (Basel: B. Schwabe, 1963) 173-238.

11.

See for instance W. Friedmann, *Die deutsche Kinematographie im Weltkriege*, *Der Film* 11 March 1916; M. Jacobi, *Der Triumph des Films*, Der Film 6 October 1917; *Die Kriegsdienstleistung des Films*, *Kinematograph* 24 March 1915.

12. The press statement is quoted in the dissertation by Annemarie Schweins, "*Die Entwicklung der deutschen Filmwirtschaft*" (Nürnberg, 1958) 34-35.

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Cf. Jan-Christopher Horak, "Ernst Lubitsch and the Rise of UFA, 1917- 1922," thesis, Boston, 1975, x-xi.

13. Elsaesser, "Film History"69-70.

14. Self-realization on the part of creative persons was central to this development. See Elsaesser, "Film History"75.

15. The ban never operated hermetically. An estimated 250 foreign films entered Germany in 1919 and 1920. Hans Traub, ed., *Die UFA* (Berlin: UFA- Buchverlag, 1943) 45.

16. On this see my unpublished dissertation "Weimar, Hollywood, and the Americanization of German Culture, 1917-1933," (University of Toronto, 1985) 39-40.

17. Elsaesser, "Film History"68, stresses the self-conscious attempt to import middle-class cultural values into an uncultured medium. One might add that Peter Gay's description of Weimar culture--the outsider as insider--fits the circumstances of this self-conscious artistic elite.

18. A summary of the American response is found in Graham Petrie, *Hollywood Destinies* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1985) 7-10.

19. On EFA see Jan-Christopher Horak, "Ernst Lubitsch"106-8.

20. For instance Fritz Olimsky, "Tendenzen der Filmwirtschaft und deren Auswirkung auf die Filmpresse," diss., Berlin, 1931, 43; Leopold Schwarzschild quoted in Ilona Brennicke & Joe Hembus, *Klassiker des deutschen Stummfilms* (Munich: Goldmann, 1983) 246-47; Der Untergang der EFA, *Film-Kurier* 23 November 1922.

21. Saunders69-71.

22. Huaco35-36.

23. Cf. Pommer's contemporary statement, "*Internationale Film-Verständigung*," *Das Tagebuch 3* (1922): 993-95.

24. See, for instance, the observations of the director Joe May, "*Wir und ihr Film*," *Das Tagebuch 3* (1922): 1217.

25. German production was characterized by the existence of multiple smaller firms alongside the larger corporations, permitting both diversity and specialization. Monaco29-30.

26. Buscombe141.

27. Buscombe143-49.

28. The debate, initiated by Hans Siemsen, can be followed through numbers 4,6,9,11,13,15,17 of *Die Weltbiihne* (1921). A summary is in Saunders59- 67.

29. Q. Fixlein, "*Filmwirtschaft: Auslese des Schlechtesten*," *Das Tagebuch 2* (1921): 1026-27; H. Siemsen, *Deutsch-amerikanischer Filmkrieg*, *Die Weltbühne* 1 September 1921: 219-22.

30. Cf. the American impressions of the distributor Rudolf Berg, *Amerika und der deutsche Film*, *B. Z. am Mittag* 11 June 1922; the director of National Film, Hermann Rosenfeld, *Amerika und die Amerikaner*, *Kinematograph* 29 July 1923; and the director of Phoebus, E. H. Correll, *Das amerikanische Problem*, *Kinematograph* 19 August 1923.

31. The well-known Danish director Urban Gad claimed the secret was optimism. See "*Warum siegt der amerikanische Film*?" *Lichtbildbühne* 20 August 1921.

32. See the review by Max Prels of the Fox feature, *The Queen of Sheba in Kinenwtograph* 6 August 1922; Wolfgang Martini, "*Vom Wesen des amerikanischen Films. Vom Wesen des Films überhaupt,*"

kanischen Films. Vom Wesen des Films überhaupt," *Süddeutsche Filmzeitung* 14 September 1923; A. K. Rosen-Lohr, *Der amerikanische Film in Deutschland*,, *Film-Kurier* 14 January 1922.

33. Heinz Michaelis, *Was wir von Amerika lernen können*, *Film-Kurier* 28 November 1923; Herbert Ihering, *Der letzte Mann*, in his *Von Reinhardt bis Brecht* (Berlin: Aufbau, 1961), II, 487-88; A. Hollermann, *Welche Filme kommen zur Weltgeltung*, *Germania* 28 June 1925; Richard Muckermann, *Nationaler oder internationaler Film*? *Film-Rundschau* 3 & 10 July 1928.

34. According to the well-known literary critic and screen writer Willy Haas German filmmakers had surrendered their individuality to try to please America, had coaxed performers to sit, walk, talk, and eat like Americans, and then discovered that American audiences had little interest in their films. See his *Die Amerikaner beleidigen uns . .* !? *Film-Kurier* 5 November 1924; "*Mehr Selbstbewußtsein*," *Film-Kurier* 22 October 1925. Cf. Herbert Ihering , *Zwei Waisen im Sturm der Zeit*, *Von Reinhardt bis Brecht, I*, 448-51; cf., *Der internationale Film*, *Film-Kurier* 23 November 1923; Heinz Michaelis, *Wahrer und falseher Internationalismus im deutschen Film*, *Film-Kurier* 5 January 1923. None of these mentioned names or titles, but Haas claimed that authors had been hobbled for years by producers who insisted that their work had to succeed in America.

35. See Film-Kurier: Herbert Lewandowski, *Die Seele des deutschen Films,* 16 July 1923; Heinz Michaelis, "*Was wir von Amerika lernen können*," 28 November 1923 and "*Der Weg des deutschen Films*," 1 January 1924; Paul Ickes , "*Die'allzu penible'Dramaturgie*," 9 May 1923. Against this backdrop Kracauer's emphases appear very much those of the 1920s.

36. Although no nationwide box office statistics were published, a *Film-Kurier* poll instituted in 1925 gave contemporaries a rough guide to the types of German films that pleased domestic audiences. Cf. *Film-Kurier* 6 February 1926, 9 April 1927, 16 May 1928, 1 June 1929.

37. Willy Haas, "*Der deutsche Film*," *Film-Kurier* 24 February 1925, called military films a silent confession by German producers of inability to speak to a foreign audience.

38. Helmut Lethen, *Neue Sachlichkeit, 1924-1932* (Stuttgart: Metzler, 1970) 19-56.

39. John Willett, *Art and Politics in the Weimar Period: The New Sobriety* (New York: Pantheon, 1978) 97-102.

40. Rainer Berg, "*Zur Geschichte der realistischen Stummfilmkunst in Deutschland--1919 bis 1929*," diss., Freie U Berlin, 1982. French, British, and Swedish motion pictures appeared in German cinemas but played a role subordinate to American and Soviet imports.

41. See the material collected in Gertraude Kühn et al., eds., *Film und revolutionäre Arbeiterbewegung in Deutschland 1918-1932* (Berlin: Henschel, 1975), I, 323-69; Willett142-45; Berg159-66.

42. See, for instance, the unsigned review of *Potemkin* in *Die Räder 7* (1926): 229, and the review by Roland Schacht in *Der Kunstwart* June 1926: 191- 92; Rudolf Arnheim, Pudowkins 'Mutter', *Kritiken und*

Aufsätze zum Film (Frankfurt a. M.: Fischer, 1979) 188-89; A. Rosen, *Drei andere russische Filme*, *Die literatische Welt* 11 March 1927: 7.

43. Axel Eggebrecht, Film im April, *Die Weltbiihne* 11 May 1926: 737--my translation. Siegfried Kracauer called October a powerful testimony to the

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substance of the Russian people and the living revolutionary consciousness of its leaders. See his *Kino* (Frankfurt a. M.: Suhrkamp, 1974) 78.

44. See my "Comedy as Redemption: American Slapstick in Weimar Culture," *Journal of European Studies 17* (1987): 253-77.

45. Effective translation of social reality into film presented then only the second half of the equation. Cf. Buscombe150-51.

46. Eisner75; Kracauer52-53; Elsaesser, "Social Mobility."

47. Otto Kaus, *Guter und schlechter Kitsch*, *Film-Kurier* 28 July 1924. Cf. E. G. M. , Russische Filme, *Hamburger Echo* 16 May 1926, who took *Caligari* as a symptom of German remoteness from reality.

48. Cf. Axel Eggebrecht, *Filmdämmerung*? *Die Weltbiihne* 9 February 1926: 227-30; Hans Georg Brenner, "*Die Filmkrisis'--und kein Ende*," *Neue Bücherschau 6* (1928): 308-10: "The German cinema has no world view, not even a clearly reactionary one. Therefore it has no face, no class and--no audience" (my translation).

49. Cf. Herbert Ihering, "*Filmwende*?" *Von Reinhardt bis Brecht, II*, 512-13; and *Panzerkreuzer Potemkin*, *Von Reinhardt bis Brecht*, 517-19. In the first of these Ihering distinguished between the American Publikumsfilm and the Russian Volksfilm. For more on this distinction see his review, *Die Mutter*, *Von Reinhardt bis Brecht*526-28.

50. See Wolfgang Petzet, "*Drei Filme*," *Der Kunstwart 41* (1928): 202-3; and "*Der Stand des Weltfilms*," *Der Kunstwart 42* (1928): 116-21. Cf. Hans Georg Brenner , "*Von Chaplin bis Pudowkin*," *Neue Bücherschau 6* (1928): 202-5; Felix Seherret, *Die Russen*, *Westfälischer Allgemeine Volkszeitung* 22 September 1927; Lothar Holland, Film in Not, *Hamburger Echo* 13 July 1929; and the debate between Walter Benjamin and Oscar Schmitz, *Eine Diskussion über russische Filmkunst und kollektivistische Kunst überhaupt*, *Die literarische Welt* 11 March 1927: 7-8.

51. The latter receives partial treatment in Enno Patalas, Metropolis, Bild 103, *Der Stummfilm. Konstruktion und Rekonstruktion*, ed. Elfriede Ledig (Munich: Schaudig, Bauer, Ledig, 1988) 153-62. On the former cf. John Tulloch , "Genetic Structuralism and the Cinema," *Australian Journal of Screen Theory 1* (1977): 3-50; Andreas Huyssen, "The Vamp and the Machine: Technology and Sexuality in Fritz Lang's Metropolis," *New German Critique 24/ 25* (1981/82): 221-37; Patricia Mellencamp, "Oedipus and the Robot in Metropolis," *Enclitic 5* (1981): 20-42.

52. Cf. two blasts from the left: Axel Eggebrecht, Metropolis, *Die Weltbiihne* 18 January 1927: 115-16; Hans Siemsen, *Eine Filmkritik, wie sie sein soil*, *Die Weltbiihne* 14 June 1927: 947-50. Also see Willy Haas, *Zwei grosse Filmpremieren*, *Die literarische Welt* 21 January 1927: 7; Roland Schacht, "*Der Metropolisfilm der Ufa*," *Der Kunstwart 40* (1927): 341-43; *Die Räder 8* (1927): 98; F. Wald, Film-Silvester, *Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung* 31 December 1927, who in looking back over the year selected Metropolis as the embodiment of a mistaken attempt to create the universal film.

53. Herbert Ihering, "*Der Metropolis-Film*," *Von Reinhardt bis Brecht, II*, 523-24.

54. Cf. Fritz Lang views in *Wege des großen Spielfilms in Deutschland*, *Die literarische Welt* 1 October 1926: 5-6; Eugen Gürster, "*'Metropolis' oder der Weltanschauungsfilm*," *Der Kunstwart 41* (1927): 43-46.

55. Roland Schacht emphasized the weakness of German filmmakers in this department. See for instance "*Buster Keaton und der Prinz Achmed*," *Der Kunstwart 39* (1926): 315-17; "*Das Problem der deutschen Filmproduktion*," *Der Kunstwart 40* (1927): 416-19. Cf. Rudolf Arnheim, *Das Ende von St. Petersburg, nebst Randbemerkungen und Seitenblicken*, *Kritiken und Aufsätze*197-202.

56. See his contribution to the debate initiated by Kurt Pinthus: "*Die Film- Krisis*," *Das Tagebuch 9* (1928): 759-61.

57. See Rainer Berg cited in note 40.

58. *Die Verrufenen* did prove a popular hit in Germany. See *Film-Kurier* 6 February 1926.

59. H. -B. Heller50-53.

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