

The testament of Dr. Goebbels

Eric Rentschler

Big brother or brave new world?

Siegfried Kracauer's *From Caligari to Hitler* presented the films of the Weimar Republic as previews of coming Nazi attractions. About National Socialist features themselves, however, Kracauer had very little to say.¹ If German films prefigured Hitler, how they actually figured once Hitler rose to power is a contested matter. The Third Reich's productions, administered by Joseph Goebbels' Ministry of Public Enlightenment and Propaganda, remain today at once widely reviled and yet undeniably resonant.² 'Never before and in no other country', Wim Wenders wrote in 1977, 'have images and language been abused so unscrupulously as here, never before and nowhere else have they been debased so deeply as vehicles to transmit lies'.³ In many minds, Nazi cinema is an infamous and abject entity: its most memorable achievement is the systematic abuse of film's formative powers in the name of mass manipulation, state terror and world-wide destruction.

Despite its adversaries, Nazi cinema has had and continues to have many apologists and admirers. Outraged voices may have demonised this corpus of film in the hopes of exorcising Goebbels' legacy, but their interventions have in decisive ways gone unheeded.⁴ Nazi features are anything but universally proscribed or detested; they are still shown today in many places. Most of the era's films exist and remain in circulation. Films of the Third Reich have played an integral role on German television, for example, on the Second Channel (ZDF) and particularly on the Bavarian regional station (BR). In 1980, Nazi films comprised 8.7 per cent of all features aired on West German stations, a total of 113 titles. By 1989 the number had risen to 169.⁵ Invariably, these selections are

cheerfully introduced as fond memories or old standards; announcers rarely say anything about these films' historical provenance.

Film sociologist Gerd Albrecht's positivistic compendium, *Nationalsozialistische Politik*, documents just how prominently generic productions figured in the Third Reich; they constituted 941 of its 1094 feature films, including 295 melodramas and biopics, 123 detective films and adventure epics.⁶ Almost half of all features – to be precise: 523 – were comedies and musicals (what the Nazis termed 'heitere', i.e. 'cheerful' films), light fare directed by ever-active industry pros like Erich Waschneck, E. W. Emo, Carl Boese, Hans Deppe, Georg Jacoby and Hans H. Zerlett, peopled with widely revered stars like Hans Albers, Marika Rökk, Heinz Rühmann and Ilse Werner, as well as character actors such as Paul Kemp, Fita Benkhoff, Theo Lingen, Grete Weiser, Paul Hörbiger and Hans Moser. Such works seem to demonstrate that the Nazi regime created space for innocent diversions; they reflect, claim revisionist historians, a public sphere not completely subjugated by state institutions. Many of these films receive recognition as noteworthy achievements, as grand hallmarks of German cinema, in some cases even as bearers of oppositional energies. Were these illusions indeed harmless or were they malevolent or were they perhaps both at the same time? Were they sometimes subversive or as ideological critics insist, always affirmative?

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Seeking answers to these questions, one turns to sweeping panoramas and comprehensive surveys, all of which leave much territory uncharted. The standard accounts of the subject range in tone from dismissive to indulgent and in any case, they seem more concerned with thematic structures than with formal shapes.⁷ Previous books on cinema in the Third Reich have little to say about Nazi film aesthetics, about the look and texture of these features, about the properties which made some of them so resonant and well-regarded.⁸ Oddly, historians typically concentrate on the making and partaking of films during the Third Reich, acting as if its productions no longer existed. Crucial questions receive only partial answers or go unasked altogether. In what ways did the German dream factory of the 1930s and 1940s appropriate and consciously recycle Hollywood fantasies? What is the place of Nazi cinema in German film history as well as film history at large? What lessons does film under Goebbels impart regarding the use and abuse of the mass media, and are those lessons perhaps timely?

Until recently, it has been customary to describe cinema in the Third Reich as a function of a '1984' rather than a 'Brave New World'. This was particularly easy to do as long as commentators could equate the Ministry of Propaganda with a Ministry of Fear. Goebbels, it was claimed, relied on 'doublethink' and institutionalised cynical reason, manipulating the flow of information, lording over all sectors of the public sphere and infiltrating the private realm. Nazi Germany, in this understanding, resembled Orwell's dystopia: a regime in which there was no free space, a society where ultimately even one's dreams were monitored, an order that allowed no alterity. Big Brother represented a collective projection, the political construction of a party that demanded total and unquestioned allegiance.

Examining the era's mass culture more carefully, however, one does not encounter only the duty-bound, no-nonsense and angst-ridden society of lore. Photographs from the period (both official images and private snapshots) often displayed the cheerful faces and animated physiques of an invigorated German populace. This buoyant condition was, to be sure, not enjoyed by everyone. Contingencies of birth, political convictions or sexual

preferences resulted in many people being denied membership in the Aryan nation. For those marginalised by National Socialism, life and being were an altogether different experience. These individuals were ostracised and persecuted; they were forced to leave Germany or to lead a shadow existence; many of them were incarcerated, tortured and executed. This racial state disciplined bodies in a variety of ways; under its auspices, euthanasia, sterilisation and genocide coexisted with a vast array of creature comforts and material compensations. Fear and loathing were crucial parts of the system, but National Socialism could not – and did not – rule by terror alone.

Hitler's Germany, similar to Huxley's *Brave New World*, was also an exercise in emotional engineering, a political order that openly professed tourism, consumerism and recreation as dialectical complements to law order and restriction. Fascism had a sinister visage, but it also had a pleasing countenance – and cinema embodied the agreeable facade in its most scintillating incarnation. Very few Nazi features simply rant and rave; most of them appear to have nothing to do with politics. The distinction between political and unpolitical films is in fact one that the Nazi administrators implemented and which postwar commentators have continued to employ. The Nazi film industry wanted its cinema to appear both national and international, open and regulated, modern and eternal. Film under Goebbels was to become a *Volkskunst* that would foster an imagined community, a *Volksgemeinschaft*. A popular medium and a vehicle of mass culture, film preserved old forms of identity while offering a new (and powerful) vehicle of consensus-building.

As we scrutinise Nazi films more than fifty years since the end of World War II, we need to take pause and re-evaluate conventional wisdom. We cannot reduce all Nazi films to hate pamphlets, party hagiography or mindless escapism. This cinema, in fact, is neither singular nor aberrant; its conscious reliance on classical Hollywood conventions has virtually gone unnoticed as has the recourse of so many productions and so much of Nazi mass culture to American techniques and popular genres.⁹ Much of its fatal appeal derived from a modern populace's desires for a better life. The utopian energies tapped by the feature films



Fig. 1. The hero receives his Nazi uniform in Hans Steinhoff's *Hitlerjunge Quex* (UFA, 1933). 'Fascism had a sinister visage, but it also had a pleasing countenance ...'

of the Third Reich in a crucial manner resembled, indeed consciously emulated, American dreams. In this endeavour, I would like to offer some propositions about Nazi Germany's society of spectacle and ponder its relationship to the media-driven culture which surrounds us and the world of mass-produced images in which we live.¹⁰

The dream of a dominant cinema

Feature films in the Third Reich were principally the function of a genre cinema, which in turn was part of an elaborate mass culture. This cinema sported titles, figures and materials well-known to Weimar film which would persist in the postwar era.¹¹ Indeed, until the early 1960s and the revolt of the Oberhausen activists, most West German films did not take leave of yesterday; they continued as the endeavours of directors, scriptwriters and casts who had worked under Goebbels.¹² Films in the

Nazi epoch employed well-known stars, ready-made formats, standardised productions and studio economies. Goebbels sought to create a popular domestic cinema which would be not only profitable and entertaining, but also ideologically effective and politically useful, both a stabilising force and an animating energy. The Minister of Propaganda announced his grand designs forthrightly: he wanted German cinema to be *the* dominant cinema. Speaking in 1940, he declared: 'We must give film a task and a mission in order that we may use it to conquer the world. Only then will we also overcome American film. It will not be easily overcome. But it can be overcome'.¹³

After the beginning of World War II, Nazi film became an extremely popular and lucrative entity, enjoying large audiences and enthusiastic followings. 'The financial success of our films is altogether amazing', Goebbels noted soon after German troops invaded Poland. 'We are becom-

ing real war profiteers'.¹⁴ In October 1940, he wrote, 'I shall not relax until the entire European film industry belongs to us'.¹⁵ Goebbels and the Ministry of Propaganda waged an all-out war against Hollywood, seeking to win over domestic viewers, overwhelm foreign competitors and conquer international markets. In his diary entry of 19 May 1942, Goebbels reiterated his resolve: 'We must take a similar course in our film policy as pursued by the Americans on the North American and South American continents. We must become the dominant film power in Europe. Films produced by other states should be allowed to have only local and limited character'.¹⁶

Under Goebbels' administration, cinema became centralised and consolidated; by 1942, four state-owned studios (Bavaria, UFA, Terra, Tobis) dominated the scene. In an attempt to control the articulation of fictional worlds, only a small proportion of films was shot outdoors or on location. Directors functioned above all as facilitators, not as distinctive auteurs. Film was to be artful and accessible, not intellectual or esoteric. Features of the Third Reich favoured carefully crafted artificial realms and showed a predilection for studio spaces, costume design and script logic. Films made under the Nazi regime amounted to an other-directed cinema, administered by a state apparatus which determined every aspect of production from a script treatment to a film's final shape, from its release and exhibition to its circulation in the public sphere.

In contrast to its Weimar counterpart, Nazi cinema denigrated the film of the fantastic as well as filmic realism. The one remained too open to irrational forces; the rightful place of the fantastic was to be an everyday of bright uniforms, hypnotic rituals and dazzling spectacles. The Weimar legacy of workers' films was likewise forsaken and left behind. Nazi cinema shunned the extremes of Weimar's 'haunted screen' (*Das Cabinet des Dr. Caligari/The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari* [1920], *Nosferatu* [1922], *Metropolis* [1927]) and its socialist realism (*Mutter Krausens Fahrt ins Glück/Mother Krause's Trip to Happiness* [1929] and *Kuhle Wampe* [1932]), assuming a middle ground of historical period pieces, costume dramas, musical revues, light comedies, melodramas and petty bourgeois fantasies. The film culture of the Third

Reich allowed at best a limited space for experiments. Trade papers and film journals spoke only rarely about avant-garde initiatives. Modernism persisted in Nazi cinema, to be sure, not in features, but rather in short subjects and non-fiction films (for instance, in the documentaries of Leni Riefenstahl, Willy Zielke and Walter Ruttmann).

Film narratives of the Nazi era generally privileged space over time, composition over editing, design over movement, sets over human shapes. Compared to Hollywood movies, most features of the Third Reich appeared slow and static. They were more prone to panoramas and tableaux than to close-ups, decidedly sparing in their physical displays (very little nudity, few stunts and action scenes). Nazi film theorists stressed the importance of kinetic images as well as galvanising soundtracks.¹⁷ Music worked together with visuals to make the spectator lose touch with conceptual logic and discursive frameworks, pulling 'listener and viewer from act to act, from impression to impression ever more overwhelmingly'.¹⁸ The ideal film would spirit people away from the real world and grant viewers access to a pleasant, compelling and convincing alternative space.

Only a minority of Nazi features displayed what one might speak of as overt propaganda. There were two waves of films with manifestly strident overtones: the 'movement films' of 1933 and the anti-Semitic, anti-British and anti-Soviet productions of 1939–42. But to grasp how Nazi films captivated spectators and promulgated political meanings, one must comprehend the way in which films interacted with and resonated within larger social constellations. Ideology more often than not came sugar-coated, in gripping, engaging and pleasant packages of entertainment which coexisted with other emanations of everyday culture. Films were not isolated experiences in the dark; they circulated within a vast complex of orchestrated and high-tech efforts to control thought and meaning. The Third Reich constituted the first full-blown media dictatorship, a political order that sought to occupy and administer all sectors of perceptual possibility, to dominate the human subject's every waking and sleeping moment.

From its quality features to its run-of-the-mill



Fig. 2. Hans Zerlett's *Es Leuchten die Sterne* (Tobis, 1938) on the cover of *Illustrierter Film-Kurier* no. 2777.

products, Nazi film reflected the workings of the classical cinema with its deference to character motivation, the codes of realism, the strictures of dramatic development and closure. It was a cinema dedicated to illusionism. 'The task that I

have posed for myself as a director', claimed Veit Harlan, 'consists to a great part in making spectators forget that they are sitting in cinemas'.¹⁹ Goebbels saw himself as a German David O. Selznick and sought to create a film world every

bit as alluring as Hollywood. Nazi films to a great degree seemed unexceptional and resembled Anglo-European features of the era. They were steeped in Old World values and fond of traditional formulas; their favourite sites were urban localities, bourgeois interiors and lower middle-class settings. Government film administrators as well as studio executives eschewed films that put National Socialism directly on display. In so doing, they carefully fostered the impression that cinema was a world apart from party agendas and state priorities.

Films of the Third Reich often allowed viewers vacations from the present in fanciful spheres so that they could forget politics and civic responsibilities. With its utopian spaces sponsored by Goebbels's Ministry of Propaganda, Nazi cinema not only created illusions but often showed illusionists at work and, on occasion, self-reflected about the power of illusions (*Capriccio* (1938), *Der Florentiner Hut/The Florentine Hat* (1939), *Münchenhausen* (1943)). Many films thematised the fascination of aesthetic illusion (Viktor Tourjansky's 1941 film, *Illusion*, offers a programmatic title), concentrating on mesmerisers and performers as well as offering glimpses behind the scenes at film studios (*Es leuchten die Sterne/The Stars Are Shining* (1938), *Die gute Sieben/The Good Seventh Wife* (1940)) or revealing tricks of magic (*Truxa*, 1937). Nazi film illusions coexisted with government oppression, political terror and after 1939, a world war and the Holocaust. Screen illusions cushioned people against grim realities, offering the solace of worlds which were in order and seemed to allow unencumbered movement, safe havens and playgrounds where one could dream freely. Nazi escapism, however, offered only the illusion of escape from the Nazi status quo.

Despite the postwar claims of filmmakers and revisionist critics, one finds very few examples of open resistance to the party and state in this era's productions. Such films either did not find their way into production or were banned after initial showings. Nonetheless, not all meaning could be controlled and various films lent themselves to alternative appropriations.²⁰ To a large degree, such responses did not really run counter to official designs. Goebbels and his coworkers allowed films on occasion to transgress borders, exploring

seemingly resistant potential and apparent exceptions to the rule, even subversive contents and oppositional positions, all the better to discipline distraction.

Postmodernity's secret sharers

Nazi illusions continue to exercise a decided hold on postwar imaginations, both in how people view Nazi images and in what they make of National Socialism. The fantasy productions of the epoch are still very much with us today – in matinee screenings, television showings, festival programs, video catalogues and university curricula. They offer testimony from the Third Reich which would seem to suggest a less oppressive everyday. Many of them abide as classics and evergreens, objects of revery and nostalgia; they circulate widely and remain problematic. Goebbels's tools of political affirmation have undergone transformation to become national monuments and vehicles of subversion. Nazi films such as *Glückskinder* (*Lucky Kids*, 1936), *La Habanera* (1937) and *Münchenhausen* as well as memories of UFA's grandeur fuel fond German dreams; they energise reassuring fantasies of how, even in a cinema watched over by Hitler and his minions, the better part of the nation resisted the Third Reich. Many critics and observers persist today in holding on to National Socialism's prime illusions, namely that the imaginary worlds and fantasy scenarios created under a state-administered film industry had little to do with that state's operations.

Young German Film and its extension, New German Cinema, once turned against the Nazi legacy and 'its demagogic treatment of images'.²¹ The New German directors declared war on their elders, seeking to liberate German film history from a fatal heritage of abuse. Over the years, though, as the history of the Third Reich was integrated into a larger German history, a *rapprochement* between New German Cinema and Nazi cinema became increasingly apparent. Hans Jürgen Syberberg recycled UFA stars, Werner Herzog sought to revive Arnold Fanck's mountain films, Helma Sanders-Brahms celebrated Leni Riefenstahl's *Tiefeland* (*Lowlands*, 1954), Edgar Reitz affectionately cited Carl Froelich's *Heimat* of

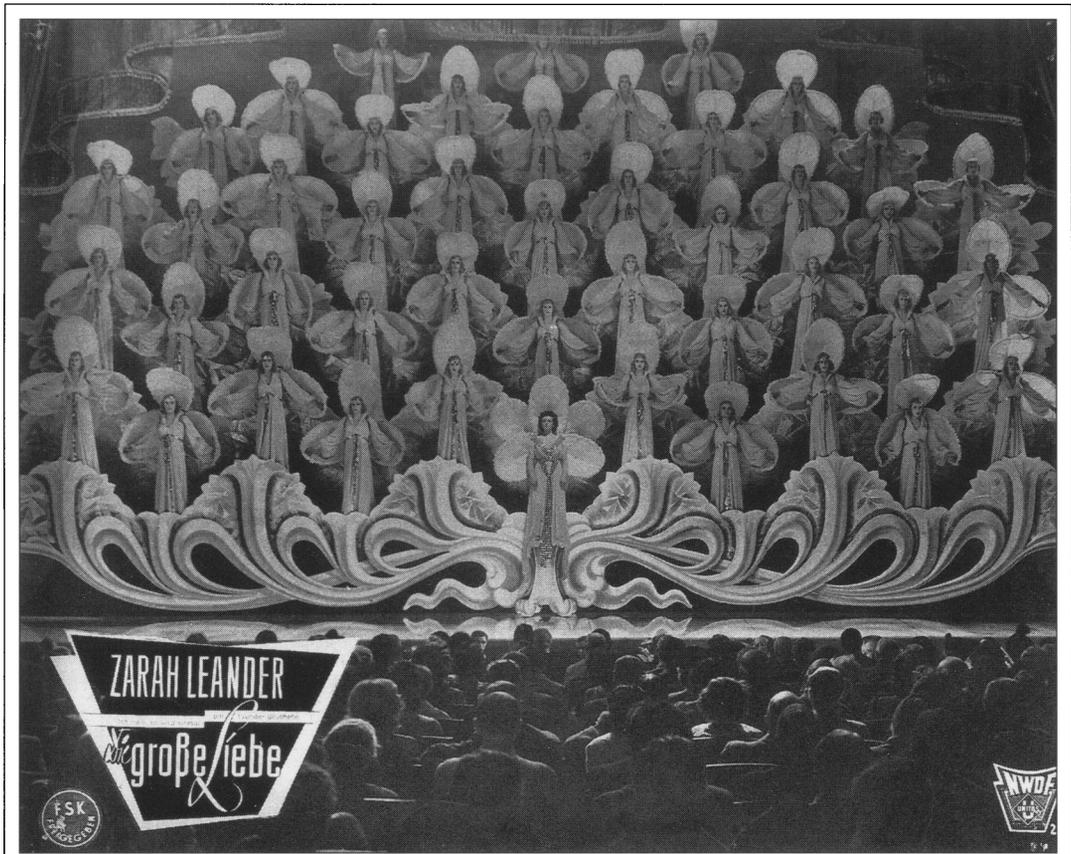


Fig. 3. Zarah Leander centre stage in *Die Grosse Liebe* (UFA, 1942). World War II as a movie of the week.

1938 in his own *Heimat* of 1984 and a recent Wim Wenders feature (*In weiter Ferne, so nah!*/*Far Away and Yet So Close*, 1993) poignantly exonerated the Nazi collaborator Heinz Rühmann. Niklaus Schilling insisted on maintaining a sense of German tradition which incorporated films made during the Third Reich. 'Without them', Schilling asserted, 'we ignore an important part of our film tradition'.²² In Reitz's *Die Nacht der Regisseure* (*The Night of the Directors*, 1995), Leni Riefenstahl takes her place amidst contemporary Germany's most prominent directors. Even filmmakers – and critics – whose look back in anger spawned a New German Cinema have increasingly come to gaze on the sights and sounds of the Third Reich with a kinder and gentler regard.

Watching *Jud Süß* (*Jew Süss*, 1940) today is

unlikely to turn anyone into an anti-Semite, people often claim, so why should it be banned along with several dozen other feature films from the Third Reich? No official list of these proscribed titles (*Vorbehaltsfilme*) exists; such a list could only demonstrate that the German government considers the populace of its democracy in crucial ways politically immature.²³ Right-wing radicals and neo-fascist groups still partake of Nazi films and there is a substantial German black market for banned war movies, newsreels and Hitler documentaries.²⁴ One wonders how these films now resonate in a climate of violence towards foreigners, in a nation casting about for a new collective self-understanding.

Surely the continuing and largely unquestioned presence of entertainment films from the Nazi era in the German public sphere shapes

popular feelings about that past. Comedies with Heinz Rühmann and Hans Moser hardly threaten to undermine civic values, but they do influence how people look back at the Third Reich. Films of the Nazi era are easy to enlist in campaigns to normalise and neutralise the Nazi legacy. 'We are what we remember', says the narrator of Don DeLillo's *Americana*. 'The past is here, inside this black clock, more devious than night or fog, determining how we see and what we touch at this irreplaceable instant in time'.²⁵ Films can preserve memory and function as vehicles of history. They can also serve as a means of forgetting, a medium to stylise, distort or erase the past.

Cinema under the aegis of Goebbels blended sensory plenitude and sensual deprivation.²⁶ Film images defined the good and the beautiful while vitiating the capacity for spontaneity and the desire for experience. Perhaps the most striking thing about life in National Socialism was its vicarious quality. A vanguard site, Nazi mass culture reformed the living in the shape of the mediated; the everyday was defined by mechanically reproduced sights and sounds, by simulations and special effects meant to generate strong emotions while systematically militating against the capacity to think in terms of continuities. Nazi cinema exploited the limitations of human imagination, seeking to obliterate first-person consciousness and to replace it with a universal third person.²⁷ Even as a leisure being, this other-directed creature was to remain a loyal state servant, a modern golem cast in the shape of mass-produced images. The Nazis used the cinema as the fictional Cagliostro of *Münchhausen* employed magic; they granted Germans their dreams, but at a usurious interest.

The Nazis recognised well that political effects could never derive from political expressions alone. Entertainment, spectacle and diversion lent themselves remarkably to instrumental endeavours. Hitler and Goebbels were consummate narcissists enamoured of their media images, the Third Reich a grand production, the world war a continuing movie of the week. Standardised mass culture, Goebbels realised, was the secret formula for successful mass manipulation. Mass culture also became a crucial precondition for mass murder. The media enabled Germans to withstand awful

truths and ignore hideous presentiments, serving as a shield and a blindfold, audio-visual instruments that ensured uplifting fictions no matter how bitter the realities. Nazi feature films – both as entities that circulated in German cinemas during the Third Reich and as entities that still enjoy much public attention today – teach us above all one thing: entertainment can be far more than innocent pleasure.

Nazi media culture demonstrated just how potent and destructive the powers of fascination and fantasy can be, especially when systematically appropriated by a modern state and strategically implemented by advanced technology. A nation faced with material hardship and a spiritual void hailed Hitler's promises of a better life while shunning enlightened rhetoric. The Führer's order propped up spirits with artificial means and strived to hyperstylise the subjects of a new Germany. Simulations supplanted direct experience and illusions superseded reality. In this endeavour, the Third Reich granted a preview of postmodern attractions. Abusing the utopian possibilities of mass-produced representations, the Ministry of Propaganda also exhibited their dystopic potential. The National Socialist state's production of death and devastation would not have been possible without Goebbels's dream machinery.

The unprecedented historical example of the Nazi media dictatorship lingers as a very disturbing prospect, especially now, as sophisticated and pervasive technologies for the transmission and manipulation of audio-visual materials increasingly define who we are and how we exist. We refer to Hitler and Goebbels as madmen and demons, consigning them to the shadows. No matter how studiously we cloak these figures in darkness, however, they are clearly more than just ghouls or phantoms. Indeed, one might speak of Nazi Germany's irrepressible image-makers as postmodernity's secret sharers, as grasping entrepreneurs who profited from the industrialised means of enchantment, as master showmen who staged extravagant spectacles as the ultimate political manifestations. These real-life Mabuses have enacted the worst nightmares of any community whose social viability and collective identity depend on the media and mass culture. More than fifty years since the demise of National So-

cialism, the testament of Dr. Goebbels continues to haunt us.^o

Notes

1. Siegfried Kracauer, *From Caligari to Hitler: A Psychological History of the German Film* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1947). The volume does contain a supplement on 'Propaganda and the Nazi War Film', a study of newsreels and documentaries (273–331).
2. Between 30 January 1933 and 7 May 1945, 1086 German feature films passed the censors and premiered in the Reich's cinemas. (Three of these represented films made prior to 1933 which were re-released between 1933 and 1935.) A further eight films were submitted to the censors prior to 30 January 1933, but were not released until after that date. The total of 1,094 features encompasses a few films which would be banned after their first public screenings. This figure does not include 26 films which were banned and never premiered; nor does it take in 67 international co-productions, films made in Austria before the *Anschluß*, nor the films which were banned in Germany but premiered abroad.
3. Wim Wenders, 'That's Entertainment: Hitler (1977)', in *West German Filmmakers on Film: Visions and Voices*, ed. Eric Rentschler (New York/London: Holmes & Meier, 1988), 128.
4. An impassioned recent example is Rebecca Lieb's 'Nazi Hate Movies Continue to Ignite Fierce Passions', *New York Times*, 4 August 1991. Do Nazi propaganda films, asks Lieb, still possess the power to stir up hate? 'Are they dangerous or should they be shown? If they are to be shown, who will show them and under what circumstances? Is there anything to be learned from them or are they too horrifying even to contemplate?' More than two decades ago, Amos Vogel posed similarly impassioned questions regarding the reception and exhibition of Leni Riefenstahl's films in his essay, 'Can We Now Forget the Evil That She Did?' *New York Times*, 13 May 1973. For a German contribution which articulates similar concerns, see Hilmar Hoffmann, *Es ist noch nicht zu Ende: Sollen Nazikunst und Nazifilme wieder öffentlich gezeigt werden?* (Badenweiler: Oase, 1988).
5. Alfons Arns, 'Die halbe Wahrheit: Zum Umgang mit NS-Spielfilmen in Fernsehen und Kritik', *Medium* 21.4 (1991): 35. See also Friedrich Knilli, "'Perlen" der Leinwand. Zur Rezeption von NS-Filmen in der Bundesrepublik', *Film und Fernsehen* 8.8 (1980): 20–22.
6. Gerd Albrecht, *Nationalsozialistische Filmpolitik* (Stuttgart: Enke, 1969), 96–97. In generating these figures, Albrecht chiefly relies on the generic descriptions of the Nazi *Reichsfilmarchiv*. He distinguishes between films with manifest (intended and recognised) and latent (neither intended nor recognised) propaganda, that is, between political films and non-political films. In crucial and problematic ways, Albrecht's statistics reflect Nazi categories and conceptions.
7. The most-often used synoptic works, besides Albrecht's *Nationalsozialistische Filmpolitik* (see note 6), include David Stewart Hull, *Film in the Third Reich* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1969); Francis Courtade and Pierre Cadars, *Histoire du Cinéma Nazi* (Paris: Losfeld, 1972); Erwin Leiser, *Nazi Cinema*, trans. Gertrud Mander and David Wilson (New York: Collier, 1975); David Welch, *Propaganda and the German Cinema 1933–45* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1983); and Boguslaw Drewniak, *Der deutsche Film 1938–45. Ein Gesamtüberblick* (Düsseldorf: Droste, 1987). See historian David Weinberg's comments regarding crucial gaps in Nazi film studies: 'There have been few attempts at in-depth analysis of film content ... There is a need to go beyond the manifest messages of films produced under nazism to explore their subtle impact upon the psychology of the individual viewer. Such an exploration necessitates not only interpretation of the film dialogue but also an awareness of the various visual techniques employed by filmmakers to create specific audience responses' ('Approaches to the Study of Film in the Third Reich: A Critical Appraisal', *Journal of Contemporary History* 19.1 (January 1984): 117).
9. The German notion of the *Gesamtkunstwerk* was even extended to describe the totalising effect of Hollywood movies. See, for instance, H. Ch. M., 'Amerikanische Filme', *Die Tat* 28.2 (May 1936): 'Whereas German features only manage to present a few good dramatic performances with cinematic allure, good American films are total works of art. The spiritual quality, the richness of sensibility and emotion in a single role of a German film, is larger and deeper than an entire American film. But because American films are total works of art, even if very primitive ones, they have a significance that deserves future consideration' (151). The author concludes with a discussion of the overwhelming effect of Leni Riefenstahl's short, *Tag der Freiheit! – Unsere Wehrmacht* (*Day of Freedom*, 1935). Its high drama and artistic pyrotechnics achieve the same ends as its Hollywood counterparts, but remain decidedly less subtle. 'As a means of ex-

- pression, film surely comes much more easily to the American' (153).
10. These reflections derive from the conclusion of my study, *The Ministry of Illusion: Nazi Cinema and Its Afterlife* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1996).
 11. Various Weimar films were remade during the Third Reich, including *Die Finanzen des Großherzogs* (*The Grand Duke's Finances*, 1934), *Der Student von Prag* (*The Student of Prague*, 1935), *Schloß Vogelöd* (*The Haunted Castle*, 1936), *Das indische Grabmal* (*The Indian Tomb*, 1938), *Die Geierwally* (*Vulture Wally*, 1940) and *Kohlhiesels Töchter* (*Kohlhiesel's Daughters*, 1943). Willi Forst and Viktor Tourjansky provided ersatz Lubitsch fare and passages of Karl Ritter's *Verräter* (*Traitors*, 1936) resembled Lang's *Das Testament des Dr. Mabuse* (*The Testament of Dr. Mabuse*, 1933). Numerous Weimar generic legacies continued without a break in the Third Reich: Prussia films (especially military dramas featuring Frederick the Great and starring Otto Gebühr), Heimat – and mountain films, costume films with historical settings, musicals with matinee idols like Lilian Harvey and Willy Fritsch, action films with Harry Piel, UFA-Kulturfilme and big city symphonies by Walter Ruttmann.
 12. See Hans-Peter Kochenrath, 'Kontinuität im deutschen Film', in *Film und Gesellschaft in Deutschland: Dokumente und Materialien*, ed. Wilfried von Bredow and Rolf Zurek (Hamburg: Hoffmann und Campe, 1975), 286–292. Remakes of Nazi films during the 1950s, for instance, included Wolfgang Liebeneiner's ... und ewig bleibt die Liebe (*Love is Forever*, 1954, based on *Johannisfeuer*/*Midsummer Night's Fire*), *Urlaub auf Ehrenwort* (*Leave on Word of Honour*, 1955, a recast of Karl Ritter's 1938 production), *Waldwinter* (*Forest Winter*, 1956), *Franziska* (1957, based on Helmut Käutner's film of 1941, *Auf Wiedersehen, Franziska!*/*Goodbye, Francisca!*). Hans Deppe redid *Heideschulmeister Uwe Karsten* (*Country Schoolmaster Uwe Karsten*, 1933) in 1954 with Claus Holm, Barbara Rütting and Katharina Mayberg. Carl Froelich's blockbuster of 1934 *Krach um Jolanthe* (*Trouble with Jolanthe*) became Rudolf Schündler's *Das fröhliche Dorf* (*The Happy Village*) of 1955. Some other retreats were *Bel ami* (1955, based on Willy Forst's hit of 1939), *Dunja* (1955, Josef von Baky's variation on Gustav Ucicky's *Der Postmeister*/*The Postmaster*, 1940), *Das Bad auf den Tenne* (*The Bath in the Barn*, Paul Martin, 1956, derived from Volker von Collande's colour film of 1943), *Kitty und die große Welt* (*Kitty and the Big World*, 1956, based on *Kitty und die Weltkonferenz*/*Kitty and the International Peace Conference*, 1939), *Wenn wir alle Engel wären* (*If We All Were Angels*, 1956, a spinoff of Helmut Weiss's *Die Feuerzangenbowle*/*The Punch Bowl*, 1944, which itself had been drawn on *So ein Flegel*/*Such a Lout* from 1934), *Der Maulkorb* (*The Muzzle*, 1958, after the political comedy of 1938) and *Robert und Bertram* (1961, a remake of the anti-Semitic farce of 1939).
 13. Joseph Goebbels, 'Rede vor den Filmschaffenden am 28.2.1942 in Berlin', quoted in Gerd Albrecht, *Nationalsozialistische Filmpolitik* (Stuttgart: Enke, 1969), 500.
 14. *The Goebbels Diaries: 1939–41*, trans. and ed. Fred Taylor (Harmondsworth/New York: Penguin, 1984), 26.
 15. *The Goebbels Diaries: 1939–41*, 149.
 16. *The Goebbels Diaries 1942–43*, ed. and trans. Louis P. Lochner (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1948), 221.
 17. See Hermann Wanderscheck's lead article, 'Die Macht der Musik im Film', *Film-Kurier*, 19 January 1942. Many scenes in popular films prove, claim the author, 'that music often can be more essential than dialogues, actors or visuals. It can compete with the soul of the image – the image remains silent, but music resounds, roars, paints, rings out in major and minor keys, spreading itself out like a rug over the image or flickering upward like a flame to provide the most powerful expression of redemption and liberation'.
 18. Leni Riefenstahl, *Hinter den Kulissen des Reichsparteitag-Films* (Munich: Eher, 1935), 28.
 19. Veit Harlan, 'Der Farbfilm marschiert', *Der Deutsche Film 1943/44: Kleines Handbuch für die deutsche Presse*, ed. Karl Klär (Berlin: Deutsche Filmvertriebs-Gesellschaft, 1943), 77.
 20. Among the films made during the Third Reich, there were, however, a few notable exceptions: films from the transition era between the end of the Weimar and Hitler's rise to power, Austrian films before the *Anschluß* (especially the work of Werner Hochbaum), banned and proscribed films (from *The Last Testament of Dr. Mabuse* [1933] and *Liebelei* [1933] to *Titanic* [1943] and *Große Freiheit Nr. 7*/*Great Freedom No. 7* [1944]), isolated instances of aesthetic resistance after 1942 (Helmut Käutner's *Romanze in Moll*/*Romance in a Minor Key* [1943], Wolfgang Staudte's *Akrobat schön-ö-ö-n* [1943], Peter Pewas's *Der verzauberte Tag*/*The Enchanted Day* [1944]) and films produced during the confused last months of World War II (*Unter den Brücken*/*Under the Bridges* [1946] and *Via Mala* [1948]).

21. Wim Wenders, 'That's Entertainment: Hitler (1977)', in *West German Filmmakers on Film*, 128.
22. Tradition im Kino, 15.10.78', *Filmforum* (Düsseldorf), December 1978, 61.
23. The Allies initially banned 700 German films in 1945. (This figure includes documentaries, short subjects and some productions made before 1933 as well as Nazi features.) During the postwar years, German self-censorship authorities (the *Freiwillige Selbstkontrolle*, founded in July 1949) assumed responsibility for the removal of individual films from the proscribed list and their commercial re-release, responding to the requests of petitioners. Some titles would be taken off without conditions, others only if offensive or questionable passages were deleted. In June 1953, 340 German films from 1930–45 appeared on an updated inventory. By January 1954, 275 films remained on the list; by August 1977 there were 176. As of late 1995, between thirty and thirty-five feature films from the Third Reich are still barred to the German public, available only for special screenings and closed seminars. This figure is misleading insofar as some titles stay on the list only because rightholders, for whatever reasons, have not petitioned for the re-release of films.
24. See André Gerely's survey, 'Rechter Geschmack am NS-Film', *Medium* 13.10 (October 1983): 35–37.
25. Don DeLillo, *Americana* (1971; reprint, New York: Penguin, 1989), 299.
26. See, for instance, Walter Berten, 'Musik durch Film, Funk und Schallplatte', *Der Deutsche Film* 1.7 (January 1937): 'Without question the majority of the populace finds its desire for entertainment and its hunger for music to a great degree satisfied by radio, films and records'. The possibilities of mass reproduction, though, would not be fully realised until the popular media succeeded in 'freeing people from time and space so as to free up more time for spiritual and intellectual life' (200).
27. See the discussion about modern media advertising in *Americana*, 270–271.