

AN ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS

Tamara Dawn Goesch for the degree of Master of Arts in Interdisciplinary Studies in Foreign Languages and Literatures (German), Business, and History presented on August 12, 1981

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Only when all aspects of the German film industry of the 1920's have been fully analyzed and understood will "Weimar film" be truly comprehensible. Once this has been achieved the study of this phenomenon will fulfill its potential and provide accurate insights into the Weimar era.

Ambitious psychoanalytic studies of Weimar film as well as general filmographies are useful sources on Weimar film, but the accessible works are also incomplete and even misleading. Theories about Weimar culture, about the group mind of Weimar, have been expounded, for example, which are based on limited rather than exhaustive studies of Weimar film. Yet these have nonetheless dominated the literature because no counter theories have been put forth.

Both the deficiencies of the secondary literature and the nature of the topic under study--the film media--necessitate that attention be focused on the films themselves if the mysteries of the Weimar screen are to be untangled and accurately analyzed. Unfortunately the remnants of Weimar film available today are not perfect sources of information and not even firsthand accounts in other sources on content and quality are reliable. However, these sources--the films and firsthand accounts of them--remain to be fully explored. They must be fully explored if the study of Weimar film is ever to advance.

Any further studies of Weimar film will have to be grounded in fact if they are to arrive at significant and meaningful conclusions. A thorough examination of the industry is a prerequisite to any further interpretive studies. To understand the films, one has to first understand their genesis. All aspects of the industry must be thoroughly researched: the production companies, the studios, production volume, cinemas, costs and salaries, organizations and institutions, protectionism, censorship, and taxation. Some information is available on these topics, but it is incomplete and sometimes inaccurate. Even the most extensive studies written to date which are accessible raise more questions than they answer. Sources do exist

which could shed light on these concerns, but they have not been fully utilized. However, they must be utilized and the many unanswered questions on the Weimar film industry resolved. A thorough knowledge of Weimar films must at last be integrated with a thorough knowledge of the Weimar film industry per se.

A Critique of the Secondary Literature on Weimar Film;
The Importance of the Weimar Film Industry

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STUDIES ON WEIMAR FILM: A REVIEW OF THE SECONDARY
LITERATURE, WITH EMPHASIS ON THE WEIMAR FILM INDUSTRY

I. I N T R O D U C T I O N

A great many writers of film histories, both specific and general in focus, have addressed the nature of the German film of the 1920's. The approach is usually from an aesthetic, or pseudo-aesthetic, standpoint. Often the aesthetic approach is combined with a psychological approach which presumes that " 'fiction' films portray something accurate and meaningful about the society in which they are produced." ¹ For the sake of seeming coherency, these writers on film aesthetics and film psychology usually sprinkle their pages with dubious information on the commercial-industrial aspects of the early German film and provide a sketchy historical setting for their discussions. Only a small fraction of the writers on film address themselves primarily to the basic commercial-industrial aspects. Because of this heavy emphasis on aesthetics and interpretation, without benefit of a firm basis in fact, the literature on early German film is characterized by rampant subjectivity and filled with compounded distortions and mistakes, as will be shown in this study.

It has been recognized that "the industrial and commercial aspects of film making are basic to understanding

what finished films are all about." ² Thus, a knowledge of the structure of the industry, of market conditions, of marketing practices, of the mechanics of producing a film, of censorship practices, and other such matters are really fundamental to any meaningful study of German film of the 1920's. Paul Monaco's study, Cinema and Society in France and Germany 1919-1929, is as well grounded in fact as any. H.H. Wollenberg's classic survey, 50 Years of German Film, plainly states that there are three main factors to be considered in the history of the development of the German film and then goes on to chronicle these factors: ³

1. commercial-industrial tendencies
2. artistic and spiritual trends
3. political influences

The subtitle of the English version of Peter Bächlin's monograph, The Film; its economic, social, and artistic problems, attests to the concern of that work with all aspects of film. Unfortunately, none of the few accessible studies on the realities of the early German film industry is adequate, for reasons which will be discussed in this study. When the available factual information is summarized, the gaps will be all too readily apparent.

Generally, the studies of early German film give a brief survey of prewar and World War One developments and

then concentrate on the 1920's. Many studies refer to the 1920's as the "Golden Age" of German cinema. Not only is this term most ambiguous--does it refer to content, style, technique, quantity?--but it is not even applied uniformly chronologically. One writer applies it to the period 1919 to 1933, from the appearance of the well-known Das Kabinett des Dr. Caligari to Hitler's coming to power in 1933. ⁴

Another author fails to mark the beginning of the "Golden Age" but notes that it came to an end with the advent of sound, that is, in 1929. ⁵ Kracauer's pioneer work, From Caligari to Hitler, begins essentially with the Caligari film of 1919 and proceeds through 1933, stressing however that the German cinema underwent a decline from 1924 on. ⁶

The present study, based on the assumption that "the film cannot be isolated from the history of society," ⁷ will focus on the German film industry of the Weimar Republic. The Republic was proclaimed November 9, 1918, and survived until January 30, 1933, the day Hitler became Chancellor. ⁸ It was just before the Weimar era that the German film industry began to flourish and, despite the ups and downs it experienced along with the rest of the economy during those years, it retained the same essential structure until Goebbels began to supervise it in 1933. ⁹ I, therefore, will be referring to "Weimar film" rather than

to an ambiguous "Golden Age."

The student of Weimar film must know something about the milieu the films were produced in. For this there are any number of useful studies available.¹⁰ A thorough study of Weimar film can then ultimately contribute to that body of knowledge on the Weimar era. In this paper I will present the accessible theories and information on Weimar film with the goal of determining how well they have contributed to that knowledge so far and how much remains to be learned. For, as noted above, " 'fiction films portray something accurate and meaningful about the society in which they are produced." Although "fiction," they are not divorced from reality, and they can be keys to a moment of history if they and their genesis are thoroughly understood.

N O T E S

- 1 Paul Monaco, "Cinema and Society in France and Germany 1919-1929," Diss. Brandeis University, Waltham, Massachusetts, 1973, p. 18.
- 2 Monaco, "Cinema," p. 2.
- 3 Hans H. Wollenberg, Fifty Years of German Film (London : The Falcon Press Limited, 1948), p. 7.
- 4 Gerald Mast, A Short History of the Movies (Indianapolis : The Bobbs-Merrill Co., 1976), p. 160.
- 5 Thorold Dickinson, A Discovery of Cinema (London : Oxford University Press, 1971), p. 29.
- 6 Siegfried Kracauer, From Caligari to Hitler: A Psychological History of the German Film (Princeton : Princeton University Press, 1947), p. 134-135.
- 7 Peter Bächlin, The Film: Its Economic, Social, and Artistic Problems (Basel : Holbein, 1947), p. vii.
- 8 Alex de Jonge, The Weimar Chronicle: Prelude to Hitler (New York and London : Paddington Press, 1978), p. 25-27, 242.
- 9 Erwin Leiser, Nazi Cinema (New York : MacMillan, 1974) p. 14-15. A comprehensive Department of Film, comprised of ten divisions, was established July, 14, 1933, and incorporated as a unit in the Chamber of Culture on September 22, 1933. The "Gleichschaltung" of the film industry was low-key, but nonetheless firmly under Goebbel's control.
- 10 I recommend the following: Jonge, Weimar Chronicle; Peter Gay, Weimar Culture: The Insider as Outsider (New York : Harper & Row, 1968); Walter Laqueur, Weimar: A Cultural History (New York : Putnam, 1974).

II. INTERPRETIVE WORKS AND
GENERAL HISTORIES ON
WEIMAR FILM

It is only natural to begin a study of Weimar film by looking at the work of others in this field. Here one finds both interpretive works and general histories, and I will look at both. They are useful to a certain extent because they provide helpful frameworks for the study of German cinema. No matter what their other faults--and I will be pointing these out--their classificatory schemata are valuable in that they at least make a large volume of films produced in the Weimar era manageable. After all, more than 3,000 films were produced during those years.¹

It will be seen that these studies simplify and distort. They ignore the exceptions and neglect the banal and trivial. What is considered banal and trivial differs, of course, from author to author and is ultimately a subjective judgement. A truly complete account, if only it existed, would take into consideration even the banal and the trivial. However, as said, these histories and analyses of Weimar film help to make the topic manageable; one must merely remember that they are neither complete nor definitive, and anything but the gospel.

Having issued these caveats, I would now like to review a selection of secondary literature which includes all the major publications in English as well as representative samples of lesser works. I will be focusing on the scope of these works and the manner in which they organize the films of Weimar for study. I believe these are fundamental considerations, because if it is found that the approach of any study is unsatisfactory and flawed, then its conclusions and implications can only be adopted with qualifications and restrictions.

A. Kracauer's Pioneer Work

I would like to begin with what is perhaps the most elaborate study of Weimar film yet written; Siegfried Kracauer's controversial book published in 1947, From Caligari to Hitler.² Kracauer himself does not provide his reader with an outline of his plan of Weimar film, but one can easily be constructed upon a careful reading of his book. This plan, which I believe is what essentially any reader of Kracauer's work would derive, is as follows:

Kracauer's Schema of German Film (1918 - 1933)

I. The Postwar Period (1918 - 1924)

a. Immediate Postwar

sex films [Aufklärungsfilme]³
 historical pageants

comedies (minor genre)
adventure films (minor genre)

b. Das Kabinett des Dr. Caligari (1919)

c. Tyrants

Nosferatu (1922)
Vainina Vanini (1922)
Dr. Mabuse, der Spieler (1922)
Wachsfigurenkabinett (1924)

d. Destiny (fate)

Der müde Tod (1921)
Die Nibelungen (1924)

e. Mute chaos (instinct films)

Hintertreppe (1921)
Scherben (1921)
Sylvester (1922)
Der letzte Mann (1924)

f. "Modus vivendi" (tenable pattern of inner existence)

romanticism: Ein Glas Wasser (1923)
Der Verlorene Schuh (1923)
christlike love: I.N.R.I. (1923)
Der Henker von St. Marien (1920)
mountain films: Wunder des Schneeschuhs (1920)
Im Kampf mit den Bergen (1921)
Fuchsjagd im Engadin (1923)
Berg des Schicksals (1924)
rational thinking: Golem (1920)
Schatten (1922)

g. From rebellion to submission

Fridericus Rex (1922)
Die Strasse (1923)
Von Morgens bis Mitternacht (1920)
Phantom (1922)
Die Flamme (1923)
Nju (1924)
Variété (1925)

II. The Stabilized Period (1924 - 1929)

a. State of paralysis

escapist needs: comedy
 drama
 Kulturfilme: Wege zu Kraft und Schönheit (1925)
 "Zille" genre
 grand style: Tartuffe (1925)
 Faust (1926)
 Metropolis (1927)
 Spione (1928)
 Die Frau im Mond (1929)

b. Psychological contents in state of paralysis

fantastic horror
 films: Der Student von Prag (1926)
 reason subordinate to nature: Alraune (1928)
 mountain films: Die weisse Hölle von Piz Palù (1929)
 national films: Der Weltkrieg (1927)
 street films: Dirnentragödie (1927)
 Asphalt (1929)
 youth films: Die Räuberbande (1928)
 Frühlings Erwachen (1929)

c. Workings of the paralyzed collective soul (neue Sachlichkeit) ⁴

Die freudlose Gasse (1925)
Geheimnisse einer Seele (1926)
Die Liebe der Jeanne Ney (1927)
Die Büchse der Pandora (1929)
Tagebuch einer Verlorenen (1929)

d. Montage (neutral cross section of some sphere of reality)

Die Abenteuer eines Zehnmarkscheines (1926)
Berlin, die Symphonie einer Großstadt (1927)

e. Brief reveille

leftist films
 social criticism

III. The Pre-Hitler Period (1930 - 1933)

a. Songs and Illusions

"Kulturfilme"
operettas
cross-section films (optimistic)
success films

b. Conflicting inner tensions

Der blaue Engel (1930)
M (1931)

c. Timid heresies

Berlin Alexanderplatz (1931)
Emil und die Detektive (1931)
Mädchen in Uniform (1931)
Der Hauptmann von Köpenick
Liebelei (1933)

d. Social criticism

Westfront (1918 - 1930)
Niemandsland (1931)
Die Dreigroschenoper (1931)
Kameradschaft (1931)
Kühle Wampe (1932)
Das Testament des Dr. Mabuse (1933)

e. National epic (outlet for existing authoritarian tendencies, concerned solely with the individual)

Danton (1931)
Der Mörder Dimitri Karamasoff (1931)
Acht Mädels im Boot (1932)
Mountain films: Stürme über dem Montblanc (1930)
Das blaue Licht (1932)
Berge in Flammen (1931)
Trenck (1932)
Der Rebell (1933)
York (1931)
Three Fridericus films

The three main divisions--postwar period, stabilized period, and pre-Hitler period--are Kracauer's. The sub-

headings denoted by upper-case letters within each main division are taken either directly from his chapter headings (e.g., "Destiny," "Mute Chaos'), or from the opening paragraphs of various chapters in cases where the chapter headings were too abstract or ambiguous to be useful (e.g., "state of paralysis," "workings of the paralyzed collective mind"). It will be noted that genres are listed under some subheadings--with or without examples--while in other cases only illustrative film titles are included. This is consistent with the plan of Kracauer's book; genres are not specified for every subheading. I have, of course, not included all films cited by Kracauer. Generally, I have tried to include those films which he summarized or analyzed and have omitted those which he only mentioned in passing.

It is interesting that Kracauer cites the fewest number of films in the first period (the postwar), for according to him the German film industry was in its heyday at this time. Also, his categories are much more concise and limited under "The Postwar Period" than under later headings, where they become rather vague and generalized. It is this lack of consistency which first led me to question Kracauer's entire thesis that "German films of the twenties were filled with premonitions of the German totalitarianism of the thirties."⁵ Certainly he finds some superb examples of film to illustrate his thesis in the beginning years of the

Weimar Republic.⁶ But in concentrating upon these few he ignores literally hundreds of other films.

In examining the output after 1924 Kracauer turns to a wider range of films, but in doing so also effectively disproves the book's premise that "the films of a nation irresistibly disclose its dominant psychological dispositions."⁷ When he scans the whole of Weimar cinema, he faces such a wide range of genres that they can hardly be categorized except by genre or director, and yet he will group them more esoterically.⁸ The second half of his book, covering the period 1924 to 1933, is thus much more confusing than the first half because he tries so desperately but so unsuccessfully to psychoanalyze the contents of a large number of films and fit the findings into a small number of categories which substantiate his theory. Kracauer, and consequently his reader inevitably flounder incoherently in the 300 odd films he cites. Just the sheer variety of themes and plots and characters in the films he refers to belie his generalizations.⁹

I felt instinctively as I read that Kracauer's approach became more futile with each additional film he cited. The unique details of each film--for every film is unique, none is exactly like another--necessitated expanding the definitions of his neat categories until soon each neat category had dissolved. (With each additional film he brought into

the discussion I thought too of the dozens, hundreds, he was inevitably neglecting.)

With all this in mind, do his categorizations really have any meaning in a study presuming to analyze the psychological dispositions of a nation? In conclusion, I myself cannot help suspecting that Kracauer selected for analysis certain films which, individually, illustrated preselected psychological dispositions rather than attempted to determine dominant psychological dispositions from a random sample of films or even those films known to be most popular during the Weimar Republic. ¹⁰

In short, Krakauer's work suffers from a gross case of unabashed hindsight. First published in 1947, it made a timely analysis of the National Socialist-Hitler phenomenon, using as a tool what was then a fascinating and little understood media, the film. ¹¹ His pioneer work set a dangerous precedent by interpreting German film of the twenties in light of the events of the thirties; that is, by making an unfounded causal connection.

However, if Krakauer's logic is fallacious and thus his conclusions suspect, his work is nonetheless valuable for the information it contains on what films Weimar produced. Even if his descriptions are subjectively tinged, the bare bone contents of many films are outlined. For the typical student of Weimar film with no access to the vast

majority of films from that era, Kracauer's synopses are invaluable. There is a wealth of detailed and anecdotal information on both films and "Filmwelt" personalities. The book is of course limited here too, though, and in chapter two I will discuss further sources of such information.

B. Limited and General Histories

Siegfried Kracauer's efforts are to be appreciated to be sure, despite their faults, when compared with some other histories of Weimar film.

One of the best known books on German cinema of this era is Lotte Eisner's The Haunted Screen. David Hull, author of the book Film in the Third Reich, regards Eisner's book "as the definitive work on the period."¹² Certainly the book provides a wealth of information on a great many films, giving details on their creation and analyzing sets and lighting and camera work and special effects. But, Mrs. Eisner's book is a book for "Kenner," or connoisseurs. She mentions plots and themes only as asides. The implicit assumption is that her reader has seen all the films she discusses. I fear that those who haven't will be forever prejudiced by her interpretations. There is no denying that her insights are knowledgeable and well elucidated, but therein lies their danger. Rather than learning to make his own aesthetic analyses and judgement, the new student of

Weimar film might all too easily and unconsciously adopt Eisner's attitudes and opinions across the board. Her approach is to analyze the films as one might analyze paintings, stressing the effect of lights and shadows. I find this approach narrow and limiting because it restricts one to analyzing limited aspects of a limited number of films which lend themselves to such an approach. Eisner's focus precludes other interpretations and ignores many other aspects of film.

One of the few other books specifically addressing German film is The German Cinema, by Roger Manvell and Heinrich Fraenkél. It ambitiously attempts to cover the subject of its title from its origins through the 1960's in about 150 pages. A scant 40 pages are devoted to the films of the nineteen-twenties. Needless to say, that particular chapter is more confusing than enlightening. It is a hodge-podge of titles, dates, names, anecdotes, synopses, extended quotations, and gross generalizations. The following broad categories are presented haphazardly:

- romantic-historical films/costume films
- thrillers
- legend and fantasy
- sex films
- sentimental musicals and light operas
- macabre
- "Kammerspielfilme" (intimate films)
- melodramas with psychological emphases
- "Kulturfilme" (documentaries and educational films)

As far as aesthetics of the period are concerned, the authors simply reiterate the oft repeated observation that expressionism died out by the mid-twenties and was replaced by a stylized realism,¹³ and report that an avant-garde film movement began in the late twenties which recognized film for its social-political value rather than just aesthetics.¹⁴ Nothing new or striking is to be found in these pages, and certainly nothing definitive, as authors Kracauer and Eisner at least attempt to achieve.

Manvell and Fraenkel's summary of Weimar film may be dull and unoriginal, but at least it doesn't distort. It is incomplete but not reductionistic. It doesn't really presume to do more than scratch the surface of its subject. A much more dangerous type of summary is the one to be found in general film histories, sandwiched between "French" and "Scandinavian" or "Soviet" and "Hollywood." Jack Ellis' A History of Film provides a classic example of this. In less than 20 pages it chronicles the era of "Great German Silents, 1919 - 1925." Ellis states that "as a body, film historians have identified three prominent types and themes that make evident most of the major German contributions." These are as follows: 15

1. the historical/mythological films
2. the sinister, fantastic, macabre films
3. the street films

The ultimate in summarization comes in Gerald Mast's film book, A Short History of the Movies. He bluntly states that "the German films of this great era (the "Golden Age," 1919 - 1933) are of two types: either fantastic and mystical or realistic and psychological." ¹⁶

Simplifications such as Ellis' and Mast's are so general as to be practically useless and the serious student of film would do best to avoid them. They are also so slick as to be deceiving to the uninitiated. If one were to take them seriously, one would close oneself to the richness of content and technique embodied in the vast output of the Weimar film machine.

C. Monaco's Pathbreaking Work

The only other major work which attempts to categorize and summarize the contents of Weimar films is Paul Monaco's study, Cinema and Society in France and Germany, 1919 - 1929. Monaco is somewhat more systematic in his approach than Kra-cauer. Rather than analyzing films which conveniently fit a preconceived thesis, as Kracauer does, Monaco selects for analysis the 63 films which he has determined to be the most popular in the period 1919 - 1929 in Germany. He provides in an appendix the synopses of those films which he found documented to have "achieved exceptional, nationwide box-

office success." 17

Although Monaco's study is very limited in scope, focusing on just 63 films, it is better grounded in fact than Kracauer's or anyone else's. Kracauer sketches the historical setting for each of his three main periods and provides limited information on political and economic developments which almost by accident incorporates some pertinent information on the film industry itself. Monaco, on the other hand, provides a fairly detailed presentation on various aspects of the film industry. He recognizes that the films of Weimar are not just reflections of the population's collective unconscious, but also products of an established industry governed by rules and regulations and economic considerations.

Like Kracauer's, however, Monaco's study is fundamentally psychoanalytic. It emphasizes "the notion of the film as a reflection of group collective wishes" 18 and is based on the contention that "if explainable in no other way, then the patterns of development which the most popular films reveal must be treated as being explainable in terms of collective psychology." 19 After making the case for dream/film parallels, 20 Monaco then utilizes a Freudian analytical framework similar to that used in analyzing dreams to psychoanalyze the popular films "collectively created and collectively responded to." 21

One of the conclusions of Monaco's psychoanalytic study is that "the Weimar cinema tapped levels of filmic expressions which were generally left untouched by national cinemas in other countries." ²² More specifically, Monaco, in reviewing the 63 most popular films, finds the following themes and trends to be dominant:

Theme of betrayal, typically leading to tragedy or disaster:

refers to the loss of the war of 1914-18

The foreigner as a harbinger of catastrophe:

refers to the betrayal theme, and specifically to Jews

Clock motif as a symbol of impending disaster:

refers to the lost war, as the German strategy was to "win time"

Bloodless violence and death:

represent German blood drained in the war, but on foreign soil rather than within own borders

The evil street and the dangerous city:

refer to the revolutions of 1918-19

Guilt theme (various forms) and the criminal or outcast as real hero:

refer to collective obsession with accusation of guilt

Suicides and self-destruction:

refer to adventurous pre-war politics and the war itself

Lack of resolution of plot:

reflects a national trauma of such collective psychological complexity that it does not permit of cinematographic resolution through wish fantasies

In this list I have paraphrased Monaco and cited his interpretation of each theme as it relates to the collective psyche of Weimar.

It is interesting that the thrust of Monaco's psychoanalytic study is to relate the contents of Weimar cinema to the immediate past--i.e., the war of 1914-1918 and Germany's defeat--while that of Kracauer's is to relate it to the immediate future, i.e., the rise of the National Socialists and the tyranny of Hitler.²³ Both their causal connections are in my opinion rather bold and farfetched.

It has been seen that Kracauer's approach is unsatisfactory because it fails to plausibly incorporate all the films it cites into a coherent schema. Monaco's approach is sounder in that all the films he refers to fit his thesis rather well. It is fundamentally a more agreeable analysis because it is based on a smaller number of much more well-defined categories. Where Kracauer takes broad categories and attempts to assign entire films to them, Monaco categorizes theme by theme and thus bit by bit, rather than movie by movie. I think that Monaco's approach is basically less complex than Kracauer's and thus easier to understand and to adapt to one's own study of Weimar film. Whether one agrees with either of their conclusions about the meaning of the contents of Weimar film and prefers one theory over the other is totally subjective. After all, as I have pointed

out, both studies are flawed; neither is definitive.

I admire the thoroughness of Monaco's study and have no quarrels with the dream/film parallels he bases his analysis on. Certainly his synopses, the details of various films cited in the discussions of themes, and especially his lengthy discussion of the Weimar film industry provide the student of German cinema with a wealth of perhaps otherwise unobtainable material.²⁴ However, in addition to my above mentioned dissatisfaction with Monaco's logic I also have two fundamental objections to the material he bases his thesis on.

First, I believe that his synopses are highly subjective. Being synopses, they naturally do not include every last little detail. They do include those little details which conveniently fit into one of his categories of themes which supposedly reveal something about the collective unconscious of Weimar. For example, he is careful to note when clocks are shown, as in his synopsis of the film Der Katzensteg: "As the French enter a German village there are shots of clocks on towers and buildings of the town."²⁵ Also, he carefully notes bloodless deaths, as in Die Frau im Mond: "Windegger has gotten loose and guns down Turner instead. There is a close-up of Turner dying without a trace of blood."²⁶ Such selective specificity makes the objectivity of these synopses highly suspect. After all, there are

arguments for including every detail. The case for this is made in Kracauer's introduction:

Inner life manifests itself in various elements and conglomerations of external life, especially in those almost imperceptible surface data, which form an essential part of screen treatment. In recording the visible world--whether current reality or an imaginary universe--films therefore provide clues to hidden mental processes. Surveying the era of silent films, Horace M. Kallan points to the revealing function of close-ups. . . . Films are particularly inclusive because their "visible hieroglyphs" supplement the testimony of their stories proper. And permeating both the stories and the visuals, the "unseen dynamics of human relations" are more or less characteristic of the inner life of the nation from which the films emerge. 27

Thus perhaps the clocks and the bloodless deaths must be highlighted--although I have seen a lot of clocks and a lot of bloodless deaths in American cinema and on American television, and cannot be persuaded that these motifs are unique to Weimar film--but if they are included in the synopses, then dishes on tables, doorways, steps, silverware, and dirty boots must also be included.

Discrepancies between Monaco's plot synopses and others I have read also lead me to question his objectivity and hence the validity of his conclusions about the meaning of the films. For example, Monaco states that Franz Sommer commits suicide in Geschlecht in Fesseln after his release from prison because it looks to him "as if she [his wife]

has been betraying him with another man." ²⁸ However, the synopsis of the film published in a contemporary magazine, Close-up, gives the story a different twist. The husband becomes involved in an intimate friendship with a young fellow male prisoner. When he is finally released his wife confesses to him her affair with another man. Then the prisoner friend comes in with flowers to visit the husband. Husband and wife subsequently both commit suicide. ²⁹

I also question Monaco's synopsis of Metropolis, in which he states that "the curiosity of the ruler of the futuristic city Metropolis, Federson, is aroused when he catches a glimpse of a young woman and children from the worker's half of the city." ³⁰ In the version of the film which I saw, the young woman and a large group of children enter his pleasure garden and there is a confrontation of sorts. I would hardly characterize that confrontation as "a glimpse." Discrepancies such as these do little for Monaco's credibility, serving only to highlight the subjective nature of his synopses.

Also, Monaco actually only viewed 45 of the 63 films listed. Apparently no copies were to be had of 18 of them, or nearly one-third. This means that Monaco adopted someone else's descriptions of the film contents, which certainly does not guarantee objectivity.

My second major objection to the material Monaco bases his thesis on stems from the fact that he only analyzes the 63 most popular films of the period. A caveat issued by Kracauer in the introduction to his book sums up the flaws in Monaco's limited approach quite well:

That films particularly suggestive of mass desires coincide with outstanding box-office successes would seem a matter of course. But a hit may cater only to one of many coexisting demands, and not even to a very specific one. In her paper on the methods of selection of films to be preserved by the Library of Congress, Barbara Deming elaborates upon this point: 'Even if one could figure out . . . which were the most popular films, it might turn out that in saving those at the top, one would be saving the same dream over and over again . . . and losing other dreams which did not happen to appear in the most popular individual pictures but did appear over and over again in a great number of cheaper, less popular pictures.' What counts is not so much the statistically measurable popularity of their pictorial and narrative motifs. Persistent reiteration of these motifs marks them as outward projections of inner urges. And they obviously carry most symptomatic weight when they occur in both popular and unpopular films, in grade B picture as well as in superproductions. ³¹

How representative are these 63 films really, and how valid are conclusions based on them? Monaco's study is interesting and provocative, but far from complete. Ideally, one needs to determine all the themes of every Weimar film before making categories and forming theories about meanings and content. After all, one might find a theme recurring in 100 fairly unpopular films which combined had a greater

audience than 20 more popular films which also shared a common theme. Conceivably, the common theme of the 100 could be of greater significance than that of the 20.

In conclusion, Monaco's study is a landmark because it points out the way subsequent studies will have to follow if they are to achieve anything. His descriptions of the Weimar film industry which provide the background to his analysis of the 63 most popular films are very enlightening and absolutely necessary. I will pursue the various aspects of the industry he touches upon in greater detail in chapter three because in my opinion no meaningful studies of Weimar film can be made until this industry is adequately explored.

However, despite his ambitious groundwork on the Weimar film industry, it has been seen that Monaco's study suffers from the same problems which plague all studies of Weimar film. It is not surprising that his synopses are flawed or that he had difficulty getting ahold of all the films he wished to screen; it is only disappointing that Monaco did not admit to these problems and difficulties but instead sought to give the impression that he was presenting totally accurate and objective information.

The limited scope and rampant subjectivity of virtually all studies of Weimar film stem from the sad fact that the vast majority of those films have been ignored and neglected.

This was due in part to subjective decisions made by various writers. It was also due to the limited accessibility of the films. The problems involved in the study of the actual films are problems which all researchers on Weimar film have faced and will continue to face. I will discuss these problems in greater detail in the next chapter and will also make suggestions as to how a more extensive and revealing study of the entire body of Weimar films might be pursued.

N O T E S

1 More detailed figures will be presented in chapter three. In some years, the volume was greater than the combined output of the rest of the European nations. Cf. Peter Cowie, 80 Years of Cinema (Cranbury : A.S. Barnes & Co., 1977), p. 71

2 Kracauer's book is cited extensively in other works on German film and is often recommended. However, the verdicts on his work are not always favorable. For example, Roger Manvell and Heinrich Fraenkel write in the preface of their book, The German Cinema (New York : Praeger, 1971), p. xiii: "We do not want to under-estimate the dedicated work of Siegfried Kracauer. . .but we believe his book From Caligari to Hitler greatly exaggerates the significance of many of the films about which he writes, and so distorts through over-emphasis what is no doubt a partial truth in his arguments." David Hull writes in the prologue of his book, Film in the Third Reich (Berkeley & Los Angeles : University of California Press, 1969), p. 3, ". . .although I admire the research, I find the second of Dr. Kracauer's premises [that the study of the course followed by the German film from 1919 to 1933 reveals deep-seated reasons for Hitler's ascendancy] preposterous and much of the evidence used in its support factually questionable. . ."

3 Kracauer does not use the term "Aufklärungsfilme" but many others do, as it is a convenient tongue-in-cheek descriptive term for these pseudo-scientific sex films.

4 "Neue Sachlichkeit" is variously translated as the "new reality," or "new objectivity" and is usually associated with the fields of painting and architecture.

5 Quotation from back cover of Kracauer, Caligari.

6 Kracauer writes in his final paragraph: "Since Germany thus carried out what had been anticipated by her cinema from its very beginning, conspicuous screen characters now came true in life itself. Personified daydreams of minds to whom freedom meant fatal shock, and adolescence a permanent temptation, these figures filled the arena of Nazi Germany. Homunculus walked about in the flesh. Self-appointed Caligaris hypnotized innumerable Cesares into murder. Raving Mabuses committed fantastic crimes with impunity, and mad Ivans devised unheard-of tortures." Kracauer, Caligari, p. 272.

7 Quotation from back cover of Kracauer, Caligari.

8 For example, the meaning of Kracauer's category "working of the paralyzed collective mind" remains a mystery to me. He states that the spirit of "Neue Sachlichkeit" animated the most important films of this group, claiming that the sources of "Neue Sachlichkeit" were cynicism, resignation, disillusionment, and "the desire to take things entirely objectively on a material basis without immediately investing them with ideal implications." Kracauer, Caligari, p. 165. John Willett, author of Art and Politics in the Weimar Period (New York : Pantheon, 1978), p. characterized a large group of the "Neue Sachlichkeit" artists (referring to painters whose works were distributed in the 1925 Mannheim Exhibition which was the origin of the term) as "uncomplimentary social commentators." Kracauer throws in filmmakers with painters (ignoring Willett's warning that "like all such -istic expressions it [Neue Sachlichkeit] has to be treated historically, not as a handy descriptive label") and accuses them of suffering from a "reformist illusion" which "reflected the state of inner paralysis inasmuch as it completely overlooked the part passions and decisions play in any social evolution." (p. 167) He claims the German screen adopted the "equivocal realism" of "Neue Sachlichkeit." After this fumbling introduction (the sense of which eludes me, as I said, even after repeated readings and research elsewhere on "Neue Sachlichkeit"), Kracauer then discourses at length on a series of films directed in Germany by the Austrian G.W. Pabst. That they reflect in some respects the concerns of the "Neue Sachlichkeit" movement is plausible; that they reveal the workings of the paralyzed collective soul of Weimar is a meaningless contention as expounded by Kracauer.

9 To cite just one example, how can a spate of operettas be construed to represent totalitarian tendencies? That they are an escapist form of entertainment is a plausible generalization (remembering that on another level they simply attest to the spirited utilization of the then recently available sound techniques). However, a taste for musicals is not limited to peoples about to fall inevitably under the sway of a tyrannical demagogue. Think of the MGM musicals that flooded U.S. screens in the 1930's.

10 Paul Monaco's analysis of Weimar film is based on the latter approach and will be discussed later in this chapter.

11 Film is still a fascinating and little understood media, thus this study.

12 David Hull, Film, p. 3.

13 This is Kracauer's "Neue Sachlichkeit."

14 Some of the organizations formed in the avant-garde movement will be discussed along with other organizations of the German film industry in chapter three.

15 Jack Ellis, A History of Film (Englewood Cliffs : Prentice-Hall, 1979), pp. 96-98.

16 Mast, History, p. 161.

17 Monaco, "Cinema," p. 369. Unfortunately, Monaco provides no information on what kind of figures qualify a film for a popular rating in that decade. Does he base his selection on attendance figures, playing times, gross or net income? Does he even have a "formula for success" or did he just evaluate the information he found for each movie individually without really measuring it against other films? It would give the reader a better understanding of the film world of Weimar if Monaco would provide facts and figures on popular films and perhaps even rate them. Especially as his study is examining the collective psyche of Weimar through films, it would be helpful if he would tell his reader how many people the films reached and where they lived. It makes a difference if a film played in dozens of small cinemas all over the Republic in towns of varying sizes, or if it played primarily in a 2,000 seat cinema on the Ku'damm in Berlin.

18 Monaco, "Cinema," p. 20.

19 Monaco, "Cinema," p. 46.

20 Monaco, "Cinema," chapter one.

21 Monaco, "Cinema," p. 44.

22 Monaco, "Cinema," p. 223. Monaco's study is, as the

title indicates, comparative. He compares and contrasts the German and French film industries of the nineteen-twenties and psychoanalyzes the output of each for revelations about the respective collective unconscious.

23 Like Kracauer, Monaco is prone to making the mistake of inferring cause from effect. An example is the following paragraph, the logic of which escapes me. Perhaps it is just because I am too reluctant to believe that Fritz Lang had the "Siegfried Line" in mind when he made the dragon bleed. Either Monaco is capable of above-average insight, or he likes to clutch at straws. Actually, this is one of the very least plausible of his examples, but still his whole study is suspect if it can incorporate analyses such as this: "In the sixty-some most popular German films of the 1920's there is but a single, and that a notable, exception to the bloodlessness. When in Part One of Nibelungen Siegfried slays the dragon, a veritable river of blood flows from the beast's side. This is the exception which proves the rule: the association to the German blood which flowed outside German borders on the front during the war holds. For already in 1914 the German front line was called the "Siegfried Line," whence "Siegfried associates to "a river of lost blood." Monaco, "Cinema," p. 257.

24 Naturally not everyone has the opportunities that Monaco had to view films from the Weimar era. This problem will be discussed later.

25 Monaco, "Cinema," p. 404.

26 Monaco, "Cinema," p. 388.

27 Kracauer, Caligari, p. 7.

28 Monaco, "Cinema," p. 393.

29 W.B., "Film Reviews," Close-Up, 3 (1928), no. 6, pp. 70-71.

30 Monaco, "Cinema," p. 418.

31 Kracauer, Caligari, p. 7.

III. S T U D Y O F T H E A C T U A L F I L M S O F W E I M A R

It is not an easy task to undertake a study of Weimar film, first and foremost because there are so many problems involved in just becoming familiar with the actual films, all questions of analysis and interpretation aside. Countless films have been lost or damaged and the quality of those prints in existence is usually poor. Even contemporary accounts of the films, which conceivably could substitute for first-hand viewing, are unreliable.

Few researchers have been motivated to cope with all these problems anyway because the major literature has drawn attention to only a small number of films and left the others in obscurity and disrepute.

There are, however, valuable sources of information which should be sought out. They provide specific data on the huge range of films produced in the Weimar era.

After becoming acquainted with these riches, one should then start screening as many actual films as possible. In the course of such an undertaking it will be realized that there are many problems attendant upon the viewing of Weimar

films. These problems make it impossible for the reviewer to come up with totally accurate synopses or to make authoritative analyses. This, however, is all the more justification for discovering the films for oneself; it is senseless to rely on someone else's inaccurate synopses and analyses because secondhand accounts only compound the distortions.

A. Availability of Films

Although the films this study is concerned with are not even 100 years old, many of them are lost forever. Certainly some have survived--those that have been particularly appealing to intellectual cinema enthusiasts (such as Das Kabinett des Dr. Caligari¹), or those that were particularly innovative (such as Der Letzte Mann²)--but many more have disappeared forever or are so badly damaged as to be of little value.

Lotte Eisner writes of these lost films in an article entitled "Some Notes on Lost German Films" in a 1970 issue of The Silent Picture devoted to the German cinema. Pointedly she asks, "how to write film history when we cannot evoke those 'lost' films and cannot quote anything but endless titles? How to fill in the missing links, without simply quoting the meagre content of a script?" A few "lost" films are discovered now and then, in Soviet archives, in

Japan, in East Germany, in private collections, "and sometimes one is only able to get some reels of one of the chef d'oeuvres, deteriorated in a terrible way. . ." Not even stills are always available and they are no substitute for the films themselves; they can only "show at least a vague echo of the film's lingering beauty." ³ I personally find stills more frustrating than enlightening, particularly because there is so little variety in the selection. With just a few exceptions, one comes across the same stills illustrating the same films in book after book. The redundancy and the wasted expense of the costly duplication is simply pointless.

Even contemporary writers mourned the situation and were acutely aware that little attempt was being made to provide high quality prints or to preserve such prints. In a 1927 issue of Close-Up the lament is made that films ceased to be available after just a few years. Even then it was asked, what should, what can the student of film do? ⁴ In a 1928 issue of Close-Up Oswald Blakeston commented on the sad state of affairs in an article entitled "Murder in the Darkroom." The trade show prints--those shown to exhibitors buying for distribution--were printed by hand, and thus were of relatively high quality. However, the general release prints were done mechanically and inevitably the public found itself viewing atrocious prints. The quality

of these was subsequently further reduced by careless handling at the cinemas which caused scratches and other damage.⁵

Blakeston elaborated in an article later that same year facetiously entitled "Progress,"

Film, when it is kept for any length of time, becomes brittle and unfit for the projector. . . . Every promising film that is made today is doomed from the hour that it is released, and the classics of the past will soon be lost to us forever.⁶

The number of copies to be made from a negative was limited by the state of the art to about 180, because beyond that number the negative was too badly scratched to be of any use. Further negatives could be made from positives--and usually were for foreign markets--by a process called "duping." These dupes, however, were distinctly inferior because "duping" resulted in the loss of half-tones.⁶ Eisner reports that the acetate dupes of the old nitrate films, which are what are usually circulated today, are "inequitable grey and dreary copies."⁷

Aside from the question of the sheer availability of films, ambitious works such as Kracauer's and Eisner's have virtually determined which films will capture the attention of all would-be students of Weimar cinema. They are the only readily available sources on the contents of a representative number of films. Of course, one can always wade through the old journals and newspapers and trade magazines

of that era for contemporary synopses and reviews. Also, major production companies published their own magazines and programs which contained information on their releases (Ufa-Blätter, Decla-Bioscop Verleih Programme). One can make these searches, that is, if one has access to the journals and a good command of German (French comes in handy also). Needless to say, these are not the most convenient sources. More important than that, there is no guarantee that the information gleaned from such a search is reliable and objective. As Eisner writes in her article in The Silent Picture, "Seldom contemporary reviews in the papers prove the artistic value of a lost film; because these first reviews in trade papers were too commercial to even allow us to guess at what we have lost."⁸ As was noted in reference to Geschlecht in Fesseln, even the synopsis of a respected magazine such as Close-Up did not match Paul Monaco's description based on a firsthand viewing. It seems there are no reliable secondary sources.

Thus, the films Kracauer and Eisner have chosen to analyze or cite, for whatever reasons, good or bad, are the films which the vast majority of the literature have subsequently centered around. They were pioneering works, without a doubt, but they have prejudiced the focus of all studies of Weimar film by restricting them to the films they include. Certainly, Kracauer covers about 300 films, and

this is no small number. Eisner covers about 200, Monaco a scant 63. Other works cover anywhere from five to seventy-five. The overlap, however, is virtually 100 percent. This means that of the 3,000 plus films produced in Germany from 1919 to 1933, less than 10 percent are cited in film histories (and even fewer are actually described in any kind of meaningful detail) ⁹ Also, as has been pointed out in the discussion of Monaco's work, and will be discussed elsewhere, the available synopses are not necessarily reliable.

Even if one is frustrated by the relatively narrow range of films covered in the literature on Weimar, one must keep in mind that Kracauer and the others don't really presume to be complete. Kracauer's first statement is "this book is not concerned with German films merely for their own sake; rather, it aims at increasing our knowledge of pre-Hitler Germany in a specific way." ¹⁰ However, I must again stress that I believe that before one undertakes to analyze German films, whether from a psychoanalytic, aesthetic, or any other standpoint, one must be thoroughly familiar with the German film industry in all its aspects and the actual films themselves. Kracauer perhaps has this background, but most of his readers don't. So where does one begin? The rest of this chapter will discuss non-interpretative sources of information on the films and provide hints for their viewing. In chapter three I will finally turn to an

examination of the Weimar film industry itself.

B. Data on Films and Viewing Hints

The secondary literature that has been surveyed thus far in this study provides a starting place for information on the films of Weimar, but the deficiencies have been duly noted. The most fundamental gap is in the range of films surveyed. There are some sources of information which can plug this gap. The most important of these is Gerhard Lamprecht's catalog, Deutsche Stummfilme, in two volumes, covering the years 1923 to 1931. Included are feature films of 1,000 meters or more and a few shorter films of special importance. The films are arranged alphabetically year by year. There is also an index of titles. For each film, Lamprecht provides whatever of the following information is available:

year of production

production company

distributor

export distributor

censorship information (including applicant;
 censorship board; number of acts; length:
 before and after approval; rating: forbidden,
 adults only, youth allowed; classification:
 artistic value, national educational value)

premiere (date and cinema)

music (name of composer and/or conductor)

author of script
director
director's assistant
art director
producer
production manager
cameraman
still photography
sets
costumes
make-up
technical advisors
studio
location(s)
actors
remarks

Volume one, covering 1923 to 1926, has entries for about 900 films and volume two, covering 1927 to 1931, has entries for about 700. Unfortunately this valuable work is only available in German. However, the entries follow a uniform pattern and thus are a rich source even for non-German speakers. ¹¹

Another source of information on Weimar film productions supplementing the bits and pieces found in film histories is

The Film Directors Guide: Western Europe, by James Robert Parish. Directors are arranged alphabetically and each entry contains information on the individual's birth and death and also gives his original name if he went by a different name professionally. There is a chronological list of each director's films followed by the country where each was produced and the year. Some 56 directors who worked in Germany during the Weimar period are included. (Not all were German; some came from Austria, Romania, Czechoslovakia, and other central European countries.) The entries include all full-length films of over 40 minutes or four reels and only those films for which the director named was at least the principle director, if not the only. Thus while Kracauer cites only five Lupu Pick films and Eisner just three, 22 are listed in Parish's guide. This book is not complete but provides an idea of the wide variety on the Weimar screen and the lists of titles can indeed serve as valuable leads.

Obviously, as has been pointed out repeatedly, the standard film histories are misleading because limited in scope. One can of course find books dealing exclusively and in depth with the work of the best-known directors, such as Lang, Pabst, or Murnau. However, for a true understanding of the meaning and scope of the Weimar film output, one needs to explore the long lists of films that have so often been

ignored. If one is content to deal in convenient generalizations and propound neat little theories about the meaning of the content of Weimar film, or wax profound over aesthetics, then one is forced to ignore a lot of films. If one turns to Weimar films as a key to the pulse of Weimar--something Kracauer did not need to do, as he came out of Weimar, but something latter day students of Germany such as myself are inclined to do--then the more films examined and the less dogmatic the study of them, the more enlightening the results. Kracauer points the way in his introduction, but then gets bogged down in his all-consuming goal of subordinating the film of Weimar to his specific thesis about the rise of Hitler based on the theory that understanding the evolution of the film "is related to the actual psychological patterns of this nation." ¹² He states:

The films of a nation reflect its mentality in a more direct way than other artistic media for two reasons: First, films are never the product of an individual. . . . Second, films address themselves, and appeal, to the anonymous multitude. ¹³

Kracauer's first statement refers to the fact that German productions were collective projects, the result of "sympatisch" collaboration between writers, directors, cameramen, and technicians. I prefer to understand it in a wider sense; the films of Weimar were the result of a unique indus-

try rather than individuals, of conditions never repeated before or since because they came and went with Weimar. Thus, the rest of this study is based on the contention that to understand the film--and through it Weimar--one must understand the genesis of the films and their environment; one must understand the Weimar movie world, its movie industry.

As for Kracauer's second statement, concerning films and the anonymous multitude, I can only recommend becoming part of the multitude and seeing the films. Set aside Kracauer, set aside Eisner, set aside Monaco and all the rest, and then settle down in front of the screen to watch as many films as possible: art films, popular films, trashy films, comedy films, dramatic films, documentaries, "Americanized" films; "good" films and "bad" films. Each is a little piece of Weimar.

Recognizing that secondhand accounts are misleading and incomplete, how can one then secure films to see for oneself? Most feature film collections in the United States, whether at a university or commercial, include at least a few of the Weimar classics. Although it may cost a bit of money, it is possible to attain 25 or 30 different films without too much effort. This represents only a fraction of the output from the Weimar years, but it provides a rich starting point. In addition to the well-known titles,

there are even a few obscure ones available: Othello (1922) directed by Dimitri Buchowetzki; Mysteries of a Barber Shop (1926-27), directed by Erich Engel; Soap Bubbles (1929), directed by Slaton Dudow; The Man Who Laughs, directed by Paul Leni; and Gypsy Blood (1918), directed by Ernst Lubitsch.

The prospective viewer of all these films should keep in mind a few considerations. First, films today are almost always projected at sound speed, even if they are silent films. Sound projection speed is 24 frames per second. Silent pictures should be run at 16 to 22 frames per second. When they are projected at faster speeds on modern sound apparatus they are usually distorted.¹⁴ Because of the resulting jerkiness of the actors' movements and other action, many people do not enjoy watching silent films. They assume the films were projected like this originally and reject the products as fundamentally inferior and aesthetically displeasing. I believe, however, that if one is aware of the cause of the distortions and realizes that the original audiences didn't have to suffer them, then one can better appreciate the old films and fathom their impact on the audiences of yesteryear.

The second major consideration which must be kept in mind is that rarely will one see on the screen the original film as cut by the director.¹⁵ Final judgements on the

value, quality and contents of a particular film should therefore be reserved. Censors between here and Berlin, between 1919 and today, have hacked away at the films figuratively, and cutters have done the literal work with little discretion. Textual inserts have been freely translated, added, subtracted, and completely rewritten. Soundtracks have sometimes been tacked on by self-appointed experts. Since the originals are not available for comparison, there is no way of knowing how distorted the products are that flicker on the wall of the screening room today.

Evidence that strange transformations indeed have been worked on the film classics is provided by the playing times listed in the various catalogs. Looking through catalogs of films available in the United States I found a wide range of times for many of the Weimar films. Das Kabinett des Dr. Caligari, for example, is available in at least five versions: 51, 52, 53, 67, and 69 minutes. Metropolis comes in at least six: 83, 93, 94, 97, 120, and 139. Although the latter was of course a silent film, some clever fool has attached a musical sound track to one version. To my mind this is as serious a sacrilege as coloring in a Gutenberg Bible with fluorescent felt pens. Der blaue Engel comes in 93, 95, and 107 minute versions. M ranges from 95 to 99 minutes in length. Nosferatu can be had in a length of 52 minutes, or 95. The list could be continued, but I think

the point is clear by now.

Film catalogs don't generally account for the authenticity of the versions they offer. Unless a specific note is made that the film listed is an original version, one can best assume that it has been mutilated somehow. A mutilated version is better than none, however. It is at least as valuable an experience to view the remnants of Weimar film as it is to read a pile of subjective reviews, synopses, and aesthetic analyses, for in all likelihood they too are based on mutilated versions and therefore that much more removed from the original.

The American selection of Weimar film is admittedly small. Once the collection here, with all its faults, has been viewed, one can turn to Europe. Paul Monaco, for example, utilized the resources of such archives as the "Cinematheque française" in Paris, the "Deutsche Kinemathek" in West Berlin, the "Deutsche Institut für Filmkunde," and the "Staatliche Filmarchiv der DDR" in East Berlin. However, he did not make full use of the resources he had available. He viewed a preselected assortment of films and compiled synopses which highlight those points which support his specific theories on Weimar film. His, like so many others, is not a study of the actual films of Weimar, but only of selected bits which are touted as the real thing.

In conclusion, I can only state again that I feel that since the secondary literature is flawed, in large part because there are no guarantees as to the validity and accuracy of its information, let alone the theories, there is no substitute for firsthand viewing. Admittedly there are problems involved in the viewing of the actual films, but if a picture is worth 1,000 words, then one 57-minute film must be worth at least 10 books. The above mentioned archives in Europe must have an overabundance of film material available, more than enough to finally facilitate objective studies on Weimar film.

The serious student of Weimar film thus cannot rely on the secondary literature for accurate and comprehensive information and must turn to other sources and especially the films themselves. However, in order that such a pursuit might be as fruitful as possible, it should be based on a thorough knowledge of the industry, as I have repeatedly stressed. Unfortunately, no one has as yet compiled all the necessary information and addressed in detail all pertinent topics on the Weimar film industry. Therefore, I will turn to this subject in my next chapter and explore the information that is accessible and the questions which remain to be answered.

N O T E S

¹ Manvell and Fraenkel note that the macabre films were high in quality but very few in number. Kracauer is misleading and exaggerative on this. Das Kabinett des Dr. Caligari, for example, was never widely shown in Germany. Wollenberg wrote in his 1948 study the following disclaimer (probably in response to Kracauer's book, which came out in 1947): "There is a general contention abroad that German studios of the 'classic' period between 1920-30 preferred to use macabre themes and that this obviously had its psychological basis in the mentality of the Germans. I have tried to show here that this view is entirely wrong. The probable reason for it is that only a very few films out of the great mass of German productions are still being shown to students of the cinema today. To generalise about all German films, using these outstanding works as proof, is certainly a mistake. The vast majority of films never survived the one season for which they were intended." Wollenberg, Fifty Years, p. 19.

There is a standard selection of films which comprises the films everyone who writes about German films generally gives at least token mention to. Scanning R.A.E. Pickard's list in his book Dictionary of 1,000 Best Films, I came up with the following titles from the era under study. They are precisely all those titles prominent in all the film histories. There were no surprises. One cannot help but wonder if these are really the best films of that age, or if they have simply been over-exposed. Are they well-known because they are really good, or are they presumed to be good because they are well-known? One needs access to a wider selection of synopses and aesthetic treatments, and, best of all, a c t u a l films, to really answer this question.

Pickard's Selections

The Blue Angel (1930, Ufa); The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari (1919, Decla-Bioscop); Destiny (1922, Decla-Bioscop); Die Nibelungen (1924, Decla-Bioscop); Dr. Mabuse (1922, Ullstein-UCO Films/Ufa); Emil and the Detectives (1931, Ufa); Woman in the Moon (1929, Fritz Lang Films/Ufa); Variety (1925, Ufa); Joyless Street (1925, Sofar-Film-Produktion); Westfront 1918 (1930, Nero-Film); Kameradschaft (1931, Nero-Film); Waxworks (1924, Neptun-Film); The Last Laugh (1924, Ufa); The Last Will of Dr. Mabuse (1932, Nero-Film); The Love of Jeanne Ney (1927, Ufa); M (1931, Nero-Film); The Three-penny Opera (1931, Warner Bros./Tobias/Nero-Film); Madame Dubary (1919, Union Film-Ufa); Metropolis (1926, Ufa); Pandora's Box (1929, Nero-Film); Secrets of a Soul (1926,

Neumann-Film-Produktion); Spiders (1919, Decla-Bioscop); Spione (1920, Ufa). Cf. R.A.E. Pickard, Dictionary of 1,000 Best Films (New York : Association Press, 1971).

It might be noted that the contents of this list bring into question Kracauer's charge that a decline set in after 1924 in the Weimar film industry. Kracauer says "a change in aesthetic standards took place . . ." and "compared to the postwar films those of the stabilized period were aesthetically dubious." He clinches his argument with a quotation from the renowned Paul Rotha referring to the output after Variété: "The true German film dies quietly." (Kracauer, Caligari, p. 134.) Looking at Pickard's list I find that 9 of the 23 best German films were produced in the six years from 1919 through 1924. Fourteen of the 23 were produced in the eight years from 1925 through 1932. I don't think that these figures indicate a decline. Kracauer's judgement on the matter is blatantly subjective. He himself seems to be drawn to the macabre films and disinclined to appreciate other genres. This attitude is reflected in his entire study.

2 Der Letzte Mann is the product of the first extended use of the mobile camera. Cf. Lotte Eisner, The Haunted Screen (Berkeley & Los Angeles : University of California Press, 1973), pp. 191, 212-217.

3 Lotte Eisner, "Some Notes on Lost German Films," in The Silent Picture, 1 (1970), no. 8, pp. 20-21.

4 Kenneth MacPherson, ed., "Comment and Review," in: Close-Up, 1 (1927), no. 1, pp. 52-54.

5 Oswald Blakeston, "Murder in the Darkroom," in Close-Up, 2 (1928), no. 3, pp. 11-12.

6 Oswald Blakeston, "Progress," in Close-Up, 3 (1928), no. 3, pp. 30-32.

7 Eisner, "Some Notes," p. 21.

8 Eisner, "Some Notes," p. 21.

9 Kracauer devotes just one scant phrase to Der Schatz,

a Pabst film: "a legend of love and greed clumsily unfolding within medieval decors." (Kracauer, Caligari, p. 167.) Of another Pabst film, Man spielt nicht mit der Liebe, he writes simply, "an unimportant film." (Kracauer, Caligari, p. 170.) I can only ask, unimportant in what sense and by whose standards?

10 Kracauer, Caligari, v.

11 As might be guessed, due to the nature of the information compiled, Lamprecht's work contains a vast amount of material pertinent to a study of the industry as an industry. I will have occasion to refer to this valuable work again in the next chapter.

12 Kracauer, Caligari, p. 5.

13 Kracauer, Caligari, p. 5.

14 Cowie, 80 years, p. 81.

15 Unlike American directors, European directors cut their own films in the 1920's and in fact were often amazed when they got to Hollywood and found the task taken out of their able hands. Cutting is, after all, extremely creative work and the German directors felt that to let someone else do it would be like "leaving the compositor to decide what parts of your book he will and will not print." Cf. Kenneth MacPherson, "As Is," in Close-Up, 1 (1927), no. 6, pp. 15-16.

IV. A S Y S T E M A T I C E X A M I N A T I O N
O F T H E W E I M A R F I L M
I N D U S T R Y

The German film industry antedated Weimar. The beginnings are well-chronicled in many studies.¹ This study takes up the story briefly in the immediate pre-war period, for earlier conditions are too distantly related to the Weimar scene and too insignificant to be of much interest or importance. As one writer puts it: "as an industry, the German cinema was nothing before the First World War."²

In this chapter I will proceed with a systematic examination of the major aspects of the Weimar film industry, covering the production companies, the studios, production volume, cinemas, costs and salaries, organizations and institutions, protectionism, censorship, and taxation. Again I will be utilizing the major English works and other accessible material to show what has been presented on these subjects and to highlight important and crucial gaps in that information.

Prior to the war, the vast majority of films seen in Germany, or anywhere else for that matter, were made in France.³ By 1910 there were some German producers, distributors and cinemas, but nothing very significant.⁴ By 1913 there were

28 film companies, according to Kracauer. Manvell and Fraenkel say simply, less than 30. Monaco writes that there were only 11 small production companies.⁵ Obviously, for the most part, the German market was inundated by the French products, to use Kracauer's word. Then came the great war:

This embarrassing situation was reversed by the war, which abruptly freed the native industry from the burden of foreign competition. After the frontiers had been shut, Germany belonged to the German film producers, faced now with the task of satisfying on their own all internal demands.⁶

The war gave the German film industry that impetus that would make it a leader in output on the continent, even in the world, and a leader in quality rivaled--for a few golden years--by none. To really understand the resulting phenomenon--Weimar cinema--one must be well-acquainted with the industry responsible for it. A logical place to begin is with the production companies, the producers of the films.

A. Production Companies

Reading about Weimar cinema, one soon gets the impression that Ufa was the company and that the rest of the companies--a few large ones mentioned by name and a usually unspecified number of small ones whose existence is hinted at--were at best of trivial importance. Felix Bucher even goes

so far as to say that "the name of Ufa is really synonymous with German cinema at its best."⁷ This is simply not true. There were other companies and their contributions were crucial. Scanning through Lamprecht's catalog, one soon realizes that a multitude of companies were responsible for the richness on the Weimar screen. Another interesting source is Wid's Yearbook. The 1921-22 volume contains a list of German film firms several pages long which includes not only producers, but also distributors, representatives, importers and exporters.

Kracauer notes that by 1919 the number of film companies had increased to 248. These companies had emerged in response to the demands of both the military and the citizenry for entertainment.⁸ Although the government sponsored and supported organizations which were created during the war cannot be ignored--Deulig, Buфа, and Ufa--important roles were also played by dozens and dozens of other film companies.

According to most sources, "Deulig," ("Deutsche Lichtspiel Gesellschaft") was established by the government in cooperation with private interests in 1916 for civilian and overseas propaganda⁹ to be effected through documentary films.¹⁰ One author claims that "Deulig" was formed by the infamous Alfred Hugenberg as late as 1920,¹¹ but I think it is safe to assume that the author simply has got

his facts confused, as Hugenberg was involved with "Deulig," but certainly did not "found" it in 1920.

"Bufa" ("Bild- und Filmamt") was established as strictly a government agency responsible for supplying the German troops with cinemas and for producing documentary material on the war, or as Wollenberg puts it, "for the utilization of visual methods in encouraging the war effort." Supposedly, 800 theaters were established at the front. ¹²

Then, on December 18, 1917, "Ufa" was founded ("Universum Film Aktien Gesellschaft"). Ufa was a semi-national, semi-private organization charged with the task of advertising Germany, as it were, through direct propaganda films, through films for national education, and through films representative of German culture. ¹³ There is some confusion in the literature regarding the stakes in this new umbrella organization which was destined to become involved not only in film production, but also distribution and exhibition. Wollenberg states that it was founded with total capital of 20 million marks, 8 million of which came from the government. Manvell and Fraenkel state that the capital was 25 million marks, again 8 million of which were supplied by the government. Bucher reports that 25 million marks came from the government and two private banks supplied an additional 7 million. Ellis states simply that over a third of the total (unnamed) was supplied by the government. Monaco claims that the

government supplied 8 million of a total capital of 24 million. ¹⁴

The confusion over the government share of Ufa is not confined to the formation of the organization. Kracauer states that immediately after the war the government renounced its partnership in Ufa and the "Deutsche Bank" began to acquire most of the shares. ¹⁵ Manvell and Fraenkel echo this contention. ¹⁶ Monaco contests it, claiming Kracauer's statements are totally unfounded. He asserts that the Weimar government acknowledged it held one-third of Ufa's stock. Not until 1921 did it turn over its share to the Deutsche Bank. ¹⁷

As if the above confusion were not frustrating enough, many authors add to the distortion by giving the impression that Ufa was a monolithic, omnipotent combine in total dominance of the Weimar film industry. Certainly Ufa eventually absorbed many companies and it had several divisions. ¹⁸

Yet, as Wollenberg notes,

the remarkably large number of production units shows that at that time there was no such financial and industrial concentration in Germany as characterized the film industry in the U.S. In the medium-sized and small companies there was a chance for the development of individuality, many-sidedness, competition and experiment; these psychological factors were most useful to the evolution of the German film. ¹⁹

Monaco elaborates on this by demonstrating convincingly that Ufa did not actually monopolize the Weimar film industry. ²⁰

An author like Ellis, on the other hand, gives a nicely distorted picture of the industry which repeats the clichés that can be so carefully disputed with facts:

The German government organized their industry as a vehicle of state. . . . [Ufa's] affiliations with three other large production firms and control of the biggest chain of first-run theaters made it a near monopoly. ²¹

Another author also outdoes himself in distorting the picture. He calls Ufa a gigantic firm and neglects to mention any other firms, encouraging the belief that there were no others. ²²

Clearly the literature is dominated by references to Ufa and the picture is confused and inaccurate. Even those authors who admit that Ufa was not synonymous with the German film industry in the 1920's fail to provide substantial information on other companies which would balance the picture.

So little did Ufa in fact dominate that the number of producing companies continued to grow through most of the Weimar years. Even though many companies had to quit producing in the troubled years 1925-27, the numbers still remained large. Many competent actors and directors began their own production companies, for example. ²³ Figures for the total number of production companies are as follows: ²⁴

1911.....	11
1914.....	28
1918.....	131
1919.....	?
1920.....	230
1921.....	?
1922.....	360
1923.....	?
1929.....	424

It would be interesting to see the data for the missing years, but unfortunately the figures are not accessible. It would be interesting to chart the number of companies against other economic indicators and also to see how great the turnover was and what the average lifespan was of the many companies. Also, it would be worthwhile to compile for each year figures of the sort Lewis gives for just 1932; he states that of the 424 production companies that year, only about 30 produced pictures.²⁵ Obviously it is necessary to match production data with individual firms to get a true picture of activity in the industry.

Thus even if the literature on Weimar has created the myth that Ufa was t h e German film company in the 1920's, there were also other large concerns--such as "Decla-Bioscop," "Emelka," "Terra" and "Phoebus"--and many, many smaller

concerns. Collectively their contributions far outweigh those of Ufa. After all, between 1926 and 1929 Ufa's share of total output ranged between a mere six to seven percent.²⁶

As Manvell and Fraenkel put it, German production, apart from Ufa, was largely made up of independent producers.²⁷ This huge diversity makes it most inadvisable to generalize about the motives behind the production of Weimar films and the meaning of their contents. Admittedly Ufa was founded in part as a propaganda machine; but when Ufa is considered only in this function and at the same time regarded as the sole representative of the Weimar film industry, then gross distortions result.

The rashest example of this is to be found in a large history of film published in 1938 by two Frenchmen. While they devote a few paragraphs to the expressionist films and some others, they severely distort their presentation on German film with the following introductory statements referring to the immediate post-war period:

The German film, luckily, was in the hands of the bankers and the munitions makers: Krupp and Hugo Stinnes were in no danger and were not likely to abandon it. Ufa could go ahead calmly, under this double patronage.²⁸

The authors go on to charge that the early Weimar films were "strenuously nationalistic works of propaganda" whose directors "chose their subject matter from abroad in order

to throw a disobliging light on the past of their recent enemies, the Allied nations." They then cite a number of the historical pageants. ²⁹

I find it ridiculous to reduce a discussion of German film to caustic comments about the influence of Krupp. Yet if these authors refer only to Ufa and tie it in with Krupp, how are their readers to know about the activities, influences and motivations of the other 200 some film companies that existed right after the war? The authors imply that Ufa was the only film company, that Ufa thus produced all the films referred to, that the sponsors of Ufa wished to degrade the Allies, and that the directors of Ufa films also wished to degrade the Allies or were forced to degrade the Allies in their films. I find these ideas very hard to accept, particularly as no other authors lend them support. On the other hand, no other authors fully discredit these ideas either. This is one of the major problems with the literature on the Weimar film industry. Rash statements and inaccurate representations have been made over and over again, and no one has stepped forward to present a balanced, accurate picture of the production companies and their activities.

First and foremost it must be pointed out for students of Weimar film that as interesting and exotic as the story of Ufa may be painted or really was, it is not the story of

Weimar cinema. The other production companies--their financing, their output, their size, their productions, their goals, the personalities behind them--must all be explored in detail too. Also, other aspects of the Weimar film industry must be examined. As I have said, this is a multifaceted subject; it is not the story of just one firm.

B. Studios

A great deal of the literature also leads one to believe that Weimar film production took place in just a few major studios without exception: Ufa at Neubabelsberg (Berlin); Ufa at Tempelhof (Berlin); Geiseltal (Munich); and Staaken (Berlin).³⁰ Monaco's statement that Ufa earned much of its revenue by renting studio space and equipment encourages this mistaken view.³¹ Certainly Ufa had fine studios which were heavily used and there were a couple of other heavily used studios also. The only hint, however, that any studios besides these four even existed, is given by Manvell and Fraenkel. They casually mention that Das Kabinett des Dr. Caligari was shot in "the old, diminutive Weissensee Lixi Studio."³²

Turning to Lamprecht once again, a partial list can be compiled of other studio facilities available in Weimar Germany:

May-Film Atelier, Berlin Weissensee
 Efa Atelier am Zoo
 Phoebus Film Atelier
 Ifa Atelier
 Maxim Film Atelier
 National Film Atelier
 Grunewald Atelier
 Orbis Atelier, München
 Jofa
 Kristallpalast, Leipzig
 Eulag Atelier, Breslau
 Terra Glashaus
 Mutoscop Atelier, Lankwitz
 Rex Filmatelier
 Camenius Atelier, Potsdam
 Trianon Atelier

Locations are not given for the majority of the listings. Many of them shared their names with obscure film companies, as in the case of Camenius Film GmbH, and BB-Film GmbH. Doubtless they were not all elaborate studios. There were, however, at least 11 large studios in Berlin alone in 1920, according to another report, and 25 big ones total in Germany as a whole. ³³

With all the attention that has been focused on Ufa and its studios, the myth has grown up that German studios represented the peak of perfection by contemporary standards. An article in Close-Up from that era sets things straight in an aptly entitled article: "The Truth about the German Studios."

Because so many masterpieces of psychological photography and polished technique came from Germany I made the pardonable error that the

German studios offered every facility to the creative worker, and then I met someone who had been there. . . . He told me of the difficulties he had encountered, how he had to combat with three forms of lighting in the studios: daylight, direct current, and alternating current. Three forms of lighting, and they all had to blend. A herculean task! It is impossible for me to describe to the layman all that this implies. . . . Here have we for years in England been under the impression that Germany turned out such excellent films because she was so excellently equipped. All the time the truth was that we thought she was well equipped because she turned out such magnificent films. ³⁴

It may have been true that at Neubabelsberg "the facilities were unrivaled and the craftsmen working there were the finest known," ³⁵ but things were not that way elsewhere. It is known that nearly all German films of that period were produced in the studio and not on location, and Ufa certainly didn't handle all of them. ³⁶ Eisner, of course, presents much interesting information on sets, studio construction, and special effects, but only in the context of an aesthetic approach to a selected collection of films. A more specific study focusing on just the studios and the actual productions would add much to the understanding of Weimar film.

It would be interesting to know who owned all the lesser studios and just how well equipped the various facilities were. ³⁷ How did one find and rent a studio? Where were they? How large were they? In short, how did the huge volume of

films of the Weimar which I'll look at next come into being?

C. Production volume

Incomplete figures for production output are provided by Wollenberg: ³⁸

1921.....	646
1922.....	474
1923.....	347
1924.....	271
1925.....	228
1927.....	241

Allowing a very conservative figure of 150 films on average per year for the years from 1919 through 1932 not listed above, I came up with a total of 3,407 films. Monaco writes that about 2,000 films were produced from 1919 to 1929. ³⁹ This seems to be a highly suspect figure, considering that just for the six years Wollenberg provides figures for, the total is 2,207.

In any case, Monaco writes that German output on the whole was two to three times as high as French output during the 1920's, for purposes of comparison. ⁴⁰ Exact figures are available for 1927 only. In that year Germany's next closest European rival in production was France, which produced just 74 films. America produced 743 that year, Japan

407, and Russia 141. ⁴¹ Despite the lack of figures, Monaco nonetheless makes the general statement that during the 1920's Germany was the third most productive film nation in the world. ⁴² It is very dangerous, however, to generalize for an entire decade on the basis of figures for just one year. Whatever the exact numbers, Germany obviously played a leading role in world film production, and not just in the qualitative sense so many film historians restrict themselves to pointing out.

A natural question is why Germany's production volume was so high? There were a great many film companies and studios, as has been shown. One must also ask more specifically, why there were so many of them. The stock answers to these questions cite Germany's isolation during the First World War. ⁴³ This isolation allowed a domestic industry to flourish and meet the demands of a growing market which had begun to acquire a large appetite for cinematic entertainment even before the war. As many writers are quick to point out, film was the first truly mass entertainment which all classes responded to. ⁴⁴ Also of course, another consideration is Ufa's original mission of propagandizing on behalf of the fatherland. Supposedly the entire industry felt a similar call to some degree. ⁴⁵ For whatever reason, be it nationalist pride or, more likely, economic commonsense, the German film producers not only supplied their domestic market but

also set out to win foreign markets for their film products.⁴⁶ My contention that the foreign operations were motivated by economic considerations is supported by Cecchetti's observation that during the early years, because of the economic situation, films could be made very cheaply at home and then "a short exploitation abroad was enough to pay for them."⁴⁷ Kracauer mentions this also.⁴⁸

The above reasoning is rather simplistic, too simplistic. The fortuitous combination of factors which resulted in the spectacular growth and output of the Weimar film industry really has not been adequately explored. If it were, the myth of the "Golden Age" could finally be better defined and explained. However, the growth of the Weimar film industry did not mean only an increase in the number of production companies, studios, and a booming film output. It also affected the cinema business.

D. Cinemas

The vast number of films being produced both necessitated and resulted from the concurrent increase in the number of cinemas throughout the Weimar years. Which came first, the cinemas or the film supply, has never been explained. The supply and demand tangle has remained just that.

Again, Wollenberg is a key source of statistics. He

gives the following figures for the number of cinemas in Germany: ⁴⁹

1918.....	2,299
1920.....	3,371
1925.....	3,878
1927.....	4,462
1929.....	5,078

Like his other data, this set too exhibits many gaps. Manvell und Fraenkel simply repeat Wollenberg's figures, adding nothing except the information that there were roughly 2,000 cinemas before the war. ⁵⁰ Monaco provides a figure for 1919 of 2,836 and for 1929 of 5,267. Lewis reports that in 1931 the number was 5,057. ⁵¹ This indicates there may have been closures, perhaps due to the advent of sound and also the poor economic conditions.

The Ufa myth extends to the cinema branch of the industry. The translators of a history of Weimar add a note to a reference by the author to Ufa, which states that Ufa was "Germany's largest and most influential motion picture company. By the 1930's it controlled the distribution to some 120 theaters with a seating capacity of about 126,000." ⁵² Monaco gives a more balanced description of the situation. He demonstrates that actually the two largest movie theater

chains--those of "Emelka" and "Ufa"--together held less than three percent of the cinemas in Germany at the end of the 1920's. ⁵³ To be sure, Ufa owned lavish theaters which hosted many premiers, such as its pre-release cinema in Berlin, the "Ufa Palast." ⁵⁴ This put it in somewhat of an influential position. It would be interesting, however, to go through Lamprecht's catalog and see just where the various films premiered: how many in "Emelka" and "Ufa" theaters and how many in independent theaters. ⁵⁵ Generally, I think, one should keep in mind Monaco's conclusion that in Germany "the vast majority of movie theaters were independently owned and operated," and not ascribe too big a role in this area to Ufa. ⁵⁶

The growing number of cinemas was well attended. Monaco quotes the increases in "seats per thousand" as evidence of favorable attendance rates--the figure went from 12 in 1919 to 30 in 1929--but I think those figures can be misleading. ⁵⁶ The number of seats is not nearly as important as the number of seats filled; that is, the actual number of admissions. Monaco reports only that by the mid-twenties the number was over two million per day. ⁵⁷ A more enlightening picture could be gained if complete figures were available from the pre-war years through at least 1933. This would more accurately document the general and increasing popularity of film. That theater numbers were increasing and their size

was increasing too is symptomatic, but the most reliable statistics on growth would be attendance figures.

It would also be pertinent to ask what was happening to theater revenues in the 1920? Were total revenues increasing? Did the returns ultimately justify the building of all those cinemas?

Related to these last questions is the subject of pricing in the cinemas. Very little information on this topic is available in the literature. Manvell and Fraenkel relate that during the early stages of the inflation the admission price in Berlin cinemas climbed from 21 marks to 10,000.⁵⁸ Monaco, in discussing entertainment taxes, provides some information on prices. However, it is misleading, because while his source is a 1922 periodical, he generalizes for the entire 1920's. He apparently forgets that prices were anything but stable in Weimar Germany. Monaco indicates that there were several price categories under ten marks, and even prices under three marks.⁵⁹ A report on the German film industry written in 1928 indicates that the maximum price in small theaters seating 200 or less was 50 pfennigs that year, a rather isolated bit of information.⁶⁰ A report one year later indicates that the average admission price in Germany was about 85 pfennigs.⁶¹ Wid's Year Book provides some figures for 1920-21. The lowest price range was for admission to small, family-owned theaters in the

provinces and was between 550 [sic] pfennigs and 1.50 marks. The next range was for admission to "second-class" theaters and ranged from 1.50 to 8 marks. The highest category was the prices for the "high-class" theaters in Berlin and Leipzig and other large centers and ranged around 15 marks or higher. ⁶²

Of course, any figures on admission prices are meaningless unless they are related to earnings and the cost of living in those years. Was film "cheap" entertainment, or was it an enticing luxury that even those who could least afford it squandered their money on? These are interesting questions that relate to the unexplored role of the cinema in the average citizen's life, and which demand further investigation.

E. Costs and Salaries

Very little is written about costs in the Weimar film industry. The plethora of smaller production companies and larger number of studios would indicate that production costs were perhaps relatively low, thus allowing a lot of people to participate in the movie business.

Manvell and Fraenkel provide some data. It is tantalizing, but woefully incomplete, as usual with them. They relate, for example, that Das Kabinett des Dr. Caligari

cost just 1,000 pounds to produce (about \$18,000). Von Morgens bis Mitternacht cost only a few hundred pounds. Das Weib des Pharao, one of the big historical spectacles, cost \$75,000. It is estimated that it would have cost millions of dollars had it been produced in the U.S. ⁶³ Cecchettini relates that this last-named film was the most expensive film ever made in Europe up to that time (1921) and in fact was largely financed by American money. ⁶⁴

Monaco can only deal in generalizations when it comes to production costs. He states that many famous films made in the 1920's in Germany were extremely popular on the domestic market, but nonetheless lost money. He cites as examples Der Letzte Mann, Faust, and Metropolis. ⁶⁵ His remarks would be much more meaningful if he reported what it cost to produce those films and what their takes were. Did they lose a lot of money, and did they lose money because they were expensive productions?

This lack of information is perhaps not due only to the oversights or the laxity of latter-day Weimar film buffs. It may be that it would require an inordinate amount of "digging" to find the desired figures. In 1928 a Close-Up columnist lamented the lack of facts and figures published even in those days when the films were fresh. He noted that very little real information was available, such as directors' budgets and the like, because the trade journals were

filled with a lot of trivia on stars and commercial film promotions. ⁶⁶

Wid's Year Book provides some sample salaries in the industry with the comment that the salaries of the stars and well-known directors were quite small compared to those their American counterparts received (at least in 1920-21). The directors earned from 40,000 to 200,000 marks per year. Average performers who were regularly employed earned 40,000 to 60,000 marks per year. The highest-priced "stars" (though it should be remembered that Germany did not have a "star system" like the U.S. did) received 300,000 to 400,000 marks per year. Finally, according to a somewhat confusing quote, "the highest-priced camera men receive about 40 marks per day; 125 marks a day is about the average salary." ⁶⁷ (I assume the 125 mark figure cited is for workers in the industry in general, as it would not make sense if it referred to camera men.)

All these figures, intriguing as they may be, mean little by themselves. First, they need to be expanded. Data on average production costs and salaries should be assembled for each year under study, so that trends could be noted. These figures should be compared with similar sets of data for other film industries, such as those in England, France, and America, to find out where films could really be made most cheaply throughout the 1920's. Of course, all figures

would have to be converted and expressed in one standard currency in order to have any meaning. Then statements such as that in Close-Up claiming that the Germans could make their films quite cheaply, particularly compared to the Americans, could really be analyzed.⁶⁸ Was this simply due to the state of the economy in Germany, or were the Germans truly more "economical" in their productions?

It was pointed out earlier that the production costs of the cheap films could easily be recovered by exporting the films for short runs abroad. Yet Monaco relates that the financial difficulties of the producing firms were "acute" in the 1920's.

Obviously the whole financial aspect of the German motion picture industry is a confusing blur of conflicting generalizations and skimpy information. Facts and figures are desperately needed to give such discussions more meaning. The little bits available are meaningless in themselves, but at least they suggest further avenues of research.

F. Organizations and Institutions

Another field in which information on the German film industry of the 1920's is sadly lacking is on the subject of "organizations." It is commonly known that the Hays Organization formally oversaw the U.S. film industry in the 1920's.

The literature on Weimar, on the other hand, merely mentions a few organizations in passing and no one takes time out from his effusions over Dr. Caligari or exaggerated accounts of Ufa to describe them.

An extremely brief article on the German film industry and its relationship to its American counterpart, written in 1928, mentions the "Spitzenorganisation." It says it was the German version of the Hays Organization and was "regarded as the central representative of film industries in Germany." ⁶⁹ Another author, David Hull, simply refers to this producers' organization as "SPIO" and notes that it was very powerful in industry affairs; and furthermore completely controlled by Ufa. ⁷⁰

Hull also refers in passing to "DACHO," the official actors union. ⁷¹ Nowhere is it indicated what "DACHO" stood for or what the other unions were.

Wid's Year Book mentions that even the theater ushers belonged to a union. ⁷² One wonders just how many different unions there were, but nobody tells. Wollenberg lets slip that there was a "Society of Cine-Technicians," but that's all. ⁷³

The cinema owners and film distributors were also variously organized. Hull names the "Reichsverband Deutscher Lichtspieltheater," a kind of theater owners association or guild. ⁷⁴ Wollenberg writes that a group of important cinema

owners formed a distribution company called the "Deutsch-Lichtspiel-Syndikat" and agreed to show "DLS" films under "preferential conditions." ⁷⁵ Close-Up refers to the "German Cinema Proprietors Association," which may or may not correspond to one of the two organizations above and Monaco mentions yet another organization of distributors, the "Verein der Filmimporteure Deutschlands." ⁷⁶

The film industry in Germany, although in many respects still in its adolescence during the 1920's and despite the unstable nature and financial difficulties of various individual concerns, was nonetheless firmly established. Many of the big film companies for example, backed a film school in Munich. It was founded as early as 1921 to train young actors and directors (and perhaps technicians and cameramen?). This film school endeavored to "combat the pernicious system of bogus film schools." ⁷⁷ It would be interesting to know how many film schools, bogus or otherwise, there were in Weimar Germany, as well as what they cost and what their courses of study entailed. Bucher casually notes that Ufa even had its own actors school. ⁷⁸

Besides occupational and business organizations, the Weimar film scene also included some organizations of film enthusiasts. One of these, the "Volksverband für Unabhängige Filmkunst," was founded in the late twenties and brought together some rather prominent names from various branches

of the arts: Heinrich Mann (author and essayist), G.W. Pabst (director), Karl Freund (camera man), Erwin Piscator (theater producer), Käthe Kollwitz (painter), Leonard Frank (author), Alfred Kerr (critic), Bruno Walter (conductor), Arnold Zweig (author), and Carl Zuckmayer (playwright), among others. They planned to issue a magazine called "Film und Volk" and endeavored to "fight reactionary trash on the one hand and, on the other, to develop artistically progressive films." ⁷⁹

Manvell and Fraenkel write that another organization was also founded to encourage "avant-garde and liberal-leftist" interests in films. This was the "Deutsche Liga für Unabhängigen Film." ⁸⁰ Nobody reports on the success or failure of these ambitious associations or the scope of their efforts.

It would be very interesting if information were available on the size and activities and influence of each of the organizations and institutions noted above. One wonders why the actors founded a union and if it achieved anything. One wonders about the success of the "DLS" in promoting its films. Who controlled these various organizations? How many students went to film schools and then actually pursued careers in the film industry? Did the avant-garde movements have any real effects? Answers to these questions and others like them would enable students of Weimar film to have a much clearer conception of the industry and provide valuable

insights into the way it developed and functioned.

G. Protectionism

Another topic which needs to be explored for these same reasons is that of protectionism of the Weimar film industry. Writers lightly refer to the German "Kontingentgesetz" and claim the success of the early 1920's was due to protective legislation, but none takes the trouble to outline all of the chronological developments in the legislative protection of the domestic film industry in Weimar Germany.

It was noted earlier that after the war the Germans continued to keep the doors closed to all foreign films until May, 1920, under a law "passed at the instigation of the 200 or more film exchangers and producers of film in Germany." ⁸¹ I can find no report on this elsewhere in the literature. Monaco reports that although film producers wanted to ban imports in 1919, the government did not take the desired step. Cinema owners, distributors, rental agents, and importers--or what Monaco calls "film exploitation interests"--were opposed to such a ban. Free trade was in their best economic interests. ⁸² Monaco's account conflicts with the account in Wid's Year Book, but I can see no reason why the latter, a trade publication of the movie industry, would report in 1920 that no foreign films could be admitted to Germany if

that were really not the case. This point provides a classic example of the need for more research on the situation in the immediate postwar years.

Moving on, Manvell and Fraenkel write that the Reich Film Act of May 29, 1920, established the first quota regulation ever in the film business. It restricted imports of foreign films into Germany to 15 percent of the total films shown in German movie theaters. In January, 1920, it was amended to allow a maximum of approximately 540,000 feet, which they say was the equivalent of about 90 average-length films.⁸³ Wollenberg records the quota regulation was decided upon in September, not May, and in January was amended to 180,000 meters (which works out to a lot more feet and thus several more films than Manvell and Fraenkel figured).⁸⁴

According to Monaco, these first quota regulations had little effect: "foreign films continued to enter Germany unhindered." Apparently the producing interests kept pressing for more effective measures and the exploitation interests kept opposing them.⁸⁵ Finally, on January 1, 1925, the "Kontingentgesetz" went into effect. Under this law one German film had to be produced for every foreign film released. When a German producer made a film, (which likely as not was never released but nonetheless qualified for the coveted "Schein" by its mere existence), he received a quota certificate which was transferable. Film agents bartered and sold

these valuable certificates representing the rights to import foreign pictures. ⁸⁶

Lewis claims that this law definitely limited the number of imports and guaranteed German producers a share of the market, but he may be mistaken. ⁸⁷ This one-to-one arrangement was dropped at the beginning of 1928, supposedly because the system was so easily circumvented through forgery and blackmail that it became meaningless. ⁸⁸ Thus the famous "Kontingentgesetz" lasted just three years and was singularly unsuccessful in protecting the German film industry. Since nobody provides information to the contrary, I suppose it is safe to assume that certificates were issued for each of the over 200 films produced every year during that time and that they were all utilized by the importers. More concrete information is definitely needed to assess the effect of the law. For example, one needs to know if the production figures quoted by Wollenberg for those years represent films produced, or films actually released. How many "Scheine" were actually issued in those years? How many films were actually imported?

Although Monaco ends his account of protectionism in January, 1920, with the information that the "Kontingentgesetz" was abandoned, Lewis fortunately takes it a bit farther. A straight import permit arrangement replaced the previous provisions. Lewis gives no details on it except to

note that from July 1, 1930 to June 30, 1931, about 210 permits total for both sound and silent films were issued. The total for the succeeding year was around 175. When he wrote his book the number of German films distributed by a given company in the 18 months prior to July 1, 1932 was the basis for determining the number of permits to be issued. The number of the previous year had been based on the number of films distributed in the prior 24 months. ⁸⁹

Protectionism was clearly a dominant feature of the Weimar film industry. It affected film production--both quality and quantity--the variety of films available to Weimar audiences, and of course earnings. However, further information and study is necessary to accurately assess its impact. Exact figures are needed on production, releases, and imports.

H. Censorship

In chapter two, in my discussion of the availability of films, I mentioned that censorship activities had rather severely altered the contents of some films and that a viewer in America today can hardly be assured he is watching the directors' original products. U.S. censorship at all levels is responsible for this in part, as well as British and French. The German censors, however, were the first ones to get their hands, or rather scissors, on the films and

generally speaking what they cut has never seen the light of a projection room since.

Kracauer relates that the "Council of People's Representatives" abolished censorship right after the end of the war in 1918.⁹⁰ Wollenberg states simply that every form of censorship was abolished by the "young republic."⁹¹ Monaco does not mention such a specific action, but rather states that since censorship on a national level ended with the fall of the old government and since freedom of the press and of "expression" was guaranteed by the new constitution, many took these conditions to mean that there would be no censorship.⁹²

Whatever the cause, the film industry was glad to be free to produce what it wished. However, despite the success of some products with various segments of the population, other segments reacted so vehemently to the themes and contents of some films, that censorship was restored.

Generally it is alledged that it was the bold and pornographic "Aufklärungsfilme" which raised the righteous ire of the public and led to the new censorship law.⁹³ Monaco, who details the course some of that reaction took, shows that it was not just objections to sex films which motivated the "Kinogegner." At least one popular reformer objected mightily to the predominance of murders, suicides, kidnappings and thefts which he claimed graced the German screen.⁹⁴

In any case, in May, 1920, censorship was restored under the "Lichtspielgesetz." Wollenberg calls this the "Reich Film Act" and another author translates it literally as the "Law on Cinema Performance." This act precluded any movements toward state or local censorship by establishing two review boards. Each had national jurisdiction. One was located in Munich and one in Berlin. Their decisions could be appealed, and sometimes were--often with success. There was also a "Superior Board of Censorship," located in Berlin, but nowhere is it explained what its specific function was. ⁹⁵

Monaco reports some statistics on the censors' decisions: ⁹⁶

	no. of films reviewed	no. of films banned
1924.....	1,174.....	20
1925.....	2,748.....	30
1926.....	2,768.....	14
1927.....	3,173.....	5
1928.....	3,483.....	11
1929.....	3,327.....	10

Proportionately the numbers banned were quite small. It will be immediately remarked that the numbers of films reviewed by the boards in various years do not correspond at

all to the figures I quoted earlier for production. The earlier figures were for feature films produced in Germany. Monaco doesn't give any information on just exactly what his figures represent. He only notes that newsreels and landscapes were not subject to review.⁹⁷ I presume his numbers therefore represent not only feature films, but also documentaries, educational films, and perhaps even imports. As his is a study on feature films it would have been much more enlightening if he had given figures relating to the numbers of feature films reviewed and banned each year.

The rough guidelines for the censorship of films were provided by Paragraph Two, Article One of the "Lichtspielgesetz" as follows:

Permission to show films shall be refused if an inspection of the film shows that its exhibition would be liable to endanger public order or security, to outrage religious feeling, to have a degrading or demoralizing effect on the on-lookers, or to diminish Germany's prestige or compromise her relations with foreign states. Permission should not be refused on account of its political, social, religious, ethical or philosophical tendencies as such. Permission may not be refused on grounds unconnected with the contents of the film.⁹⁸

Wollenberg claims that in the wording of this censorship law "every hint of willful, biased or political censorship was carefully avoided."⁹⁹ Monaco relates that in practice the situation was somewhat different, due to pressures

exerted by the Foreign Ministry. He cites several cases as evidence that films which might annoy foreign governments were repressed without discretion, as well as blatantly political films submitted by right-wing groups. In addition to this, the Foreign Ministry actively supported Soviet-made films. ¹⁰⁰

Monaco's case histories deal with a very small number of films. It would be most helpful if a list could be compiled of the actual titles of all the feature films banned, including if possible some information on themes and content. Lamprecht could be a helpful source here because his catalog does contain entries for banned films, albeit sketchy ones.

Lamprecht's catalog also suggests another avenue of study relating to the censorship issue. Skimming through the entries one sees that many films were reduced in length before they made it past the censors. Sometimes a film was outright banned, resubmitted in an edited form, and ultimately approved. In other cases the censors themselves shortened the film and then approved it. For example, Der Mann aus dem Jenseits (1925), produced by Gloria-Film GmbH, was banned as it was first submitted in a 2,122 meter version. The producers resubmitted it in a 2,084 meter version and it was approved. The censors cut a film of 2,170

meters, called Halbseide (1925), to 2,112.35 meters before approving it. Rund um den Alexandersplatz (1925) was submitted three times and finally approved at 2,059.70 meters, a cut of 70.3 meters from the original. ¹⁰¹

Admittedly, most cuts were of less than five meters. It would nonetheless be interesting to know what kinds of scenes were cut. Monaco claims that German censorship in the 1920's was among the most liberal in the world. ¹⁰² What then was being cut?

According to Monaco, one article of the "Lichtspielgesetz" established that no children under age six were allowed to enter movie theaters. He alleges that in 1929 the limit was raised to age 10. Wollenberg claims that no children under age 12 were admitted to cinemas, but the discrepancy is resolved by a direct quote from the 1920 law, Article 3, Paragraph 4: "Children under six years may not be admitted to cinematographic performances." Both agree that youth between the lower age limit and age 18 were only allowed to see those films certified as suitable by one of the film boards. These were rated "Jugendfrei" ("für Jugendliche zugelassen"). Access to all other films was restricted to those over 18. They received the rating "Jugendverbot" ("Für Jugendliche verboten"). The result of this rating system was that viewers under age 18 were banned from 70 to 80 percent of all films shown in the early years. When

censorship standards were eased late in the 1920's youth were banned from 25 to 30 percent of all films on the average. 103

The same authors who presume to examine Weimar film as a way of understanding the Weimar mind (Kracauer and Monaco) ignore the issue of censorship standards. Although they apparently don't think it is important to discuss this topic, I feel such a discussion would be quite relevant. For example, in addition to the "Lichtspielgesetz" paragraph given above, I found the following paragraph from Article 3 which is also pertinent to this topic:

In addition to films excluded under Article 1, paragraph 2, no films may be shown before young persons if they are liable to have a detrimental effect on their moral, mental or physical development or unduly to excite their imagination. 104

Both these paragraphs are very general. I was able to find lists of extremely specific regulations governing the decisions of such bodies as the British Board of Film Censors, the New York Board, and the Ohio State Board and also guidelines and regulations issued by various governments, including the Japanese and Italian. The source for these unfortunately did not include any specific German regulations.¹⁰⁵ I am very curious about such regulations and cannot understand why Kracauer and Monaco did not choose to research

them.

Monaco indicates that religious groups and even the Social Democratic Party pushed for tough censorship standards. This fact provokes only one of many questions on censorship: What was allowed on the screen in the 1920's that offended such groups? How great was the influence of these groups? What things were specifically prohibited for the youth audience and for the adult audience? What kinds of scenes were cut? How representative of the tastes and sentiments of the general population were the men who sat on the censorship boards?

A few authors touch censorship, acknowledging thereby that it is a pertinent topic in the study of Weimar film. Yet, they address none of the specific questions I have outlined and simply fail to explore the finer points of Weimar censorship; they leave the five-meter bits expunged by the censors lying unexamined on the cutting room floors.

J. Taxation

In Germany, as in so many other countries, entertainment taxes were levied on cinema admissions. At the national level these were relatively light, ranging from 10 to 25 percent, based on the price range of the tickets being taxed. Local taxes were much more burdensome and a source

of great irritation to the film industry. They ranged from around 40 percent up to as high as 80. The economic chaos precipitated by the inflation of 1923 finally resulted in the reduction of the local cinema taxes. Municipalities recognized the terrible hardship suffered by cinema owners under the ruinous tax rates. ¹⁰⁶

The story of entertainment taxes levied on the Weimar film industry would not be terribly interesting or relevant to this study but for one consideration: the provision adopted June 9, 1921, which allowed tax reductions on the showings of certain films. An incentive was granted to the entire film industry to produce, distribute, and screen films of artistic and national educational value. Boards were formed which brought together "representatives of the schools, adult education, the arts and cultural organizations. . . . under a state-appointed chairman." These boards were the "Bildstelle des Zentralinstituts für Erziehung und Unterricht" in Berlin and the "Bayerische Lichtbildstelle" in Munich. Films did not have to be submitted for review by such boards, but all films were eligible. The boards judged the films and certified those they determined to be either "künstlerisch wertvoll" or "volksbildend." (These boards also approved films for use in the schools.)¹⁰⁷

Wollenberg writes that cinema owners received a reduction in the entertainment taxes they paid according to the

proportion of such films they showed. Monaco reports that the reductions were granted on the admissions to individual films. ¹⁰⁸ Whatever the method employed, obviously there was an inducement to screen such artistic and educational films. The questions posed for the investigation of Weimar film in light of this are: What were the political philosophies and religious orientations of the people who comprised the review boards? Were there common underlying themes--in addition to whatever qualified them for the artistic or educational rating--which characterized these films? How many films actually qualified for one of these ratings? Did the percentage of these films in the total number of yearly releases increase during the decade? This tax provision clearly constituted a manipulation. The question to be explored is whether it was a manipulation of the Weimar film industry or of the Weimar movie-going public. All these inquiries and more remain to be explored and promise to provide valuable insights.

In this chapter I have addressed the various aspects of the Weimar film industry which I feel must be fully explored before any definitive study of Weimar film can be made. I have found that the literature on these topics is very incomplete and leads to many more questions than it provides answers to. If answered, these questions would provide

evidence of economic and practical exigencies which help to explain the phenomenon of the Weimar film. Complete and clearly presented data on the industry could make possible objective analyses relating to the creation of the films, output, popularity, and even content.

If these concerns relating to the industry per se were thoroughly researched, the extensive work on film aesthetics and psychology which hitherto has constituted the major body of work on Weimar film could finally be supplemented and adequately balanced.

As a last note, I would like to add that I do not think these topics have suffered neglect due to a lack of material. Their importance simply has not been recognized or acknowledged. I have found numerous references to materials in German--documents, periodicals, and scholarly works--which were not accessible to me but which seem to be rich sources many authors have not fully utilized. In addition, there are film and other archives in Germany which must hold a huge amount of material that could be of immeasurable value to research on the questions I have raised in this study.

N O T E S

- 1 Cf. Kracauer, Caligari, pp. 15-39; Kurt Marek, Archaeology of the Cinema (New York : Harcourt, n.y.), pp. 245-252.
- 2 Peter Cowie, ed., A Concise History of the Cinema (New York : A. S. Barnes, 1971), vol. 1, p. 106.
- 3 Monaco, "Cinema," p. 63.
- 4 Cf. Felix Bucher, Germany (New York : A. S. Barnes, 1970); Kracauer, Caligari, chapter "Peace and War."
- 5 Kracauer, Caligari, p. 22; Manvell and Fraenkel, German Cinema, p. 7; Monaco, "Cinema," p. 64. Monaco cites Wollenberg as his source. Turning to Wollenberg I find that the figure 11 was for 1911 rather than 1914. Again and again discrepancies crop up in the statistics quoted in the secondary literature, as will be seen. It is not only the subjectivity of the analyses, pointed out in the first part of this study, which plague the study of Weimar cinema, but also the annoying inaccuracies in the reporting of simple facts.
- 6 Kracauer, Caligari, p. 22.
- 7 Bucher, Germany, p. 136.
- 8 Kracauer, Caligari, p. 22
- 9 Lest the reader overreact and cringe at the thought of the machination of a German propaganda system spewing forth films, it should be noted that the Allies were active propagandists who exploited the possibilities of film for such purposes before the Germans did. Cf. Kracauer, Caligari, p. 35.
- 10 Kracauer, Caligari, p. 35; Manvell and Fraenkel, German Cinema, p. 9.
- 11 Hermann Levy, Industrial Germany: A Study of its Monopoly Organisations and their Control by the State (London : Frank Cass, 1966), p. 173.

- 12 Maurice Bardèche and Robert Brasillach, The History of Motion Pictures (London : George Allen & Unwin, 1938) p. 135; Kracauer, Caligari, p. 35; Wollenberg, Fifty Years, p. 12.
- 13 Bucher, Germany, p. 186; Kracauer, Caligari, p. 36.
- 14 Bucher, Germany, p. 186; Ellis, A History, p. 102; Manvell and Fraenkel, German Cinema, p. 9; Monaco, "Cinema," p. 125; Wollenberg, Fifty Years, p. 12.
- 15 Kracauer, Caligari, p. 36.
- 16 Manvell and Fraenkel, German Cinema, p. 9.
- 17 Monaco, Caligari, pp. 125, 127.
- 18 Bucher, Germany, p. 186; Monaco, "Cinema," pp. 126-127, 132-133.
- 19 Wollenberg, Fifty Years, p. 17.
- 20 Monaco, Caligari, p. 130-133.
- 21 Ellis, A History, p. 102
- 22 Alan Cecchetti and Don Whittemore, Passport to Hollywood: Film Immigrants (New York : McGraw-Hill, 1976), p. 447
- 23 Bucher, Germany, p. 117. Examples of such companies to be found in Gerhard Lamprecht, Deutsche Stummfilme 1923 - 1931 (Berlin : Deutsche Kinematik e.V., n.y.), 2 vols.: Richard-Oswald-Film Produktion, GmbH; Conrad Veidt-Film GmbH; and Henny Porten-Froehlich-Film-Produktion, GmbH.
- 24 Wollenberg, Fifty Years, p. 15
- 25 Howard Lewis, The Motion Picture Industry (New York : D. Van Nostrand, 1933), p. 402.

- 26 John Fell, A History of Films (New York : Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1979), p. 131.
- 27 Manvell and Fraenkel, German Cinema, p. 12. Referring again to Pickard's list of the best German films one can see by noting the production companies listed in parantheses that only nine of the 23 were even in part Ufa products.
- 28 Bardèche, Motion Pictures, pp. 187-188.
- 29 Bardèche, Motion Pictures, p. 189.
- 30 Bucher, Germany, p. 186; Kracauer, Caligari, p. 136; Manvell and Fraenkel, German Cinema, pp. 9, 136.
- 31 Monaco, "Cinema," p. 132. Actually the famous Ufa studios at Neubabelsberg were not even founded by Ufa, but rather by a different film company. In 1911 Bioscop bought a large piece of land at Babelsberg, allowing a substantial expanse for exteriors. All that space became a valuable asset "when the studios became later one of the greatest in Europe." Cf. Manvell and Fraenkel, German Cinema, p. 136.
- 32 Manvell and Fraenkel, German Cinema, p. 138.
- 33 Joseph Dannenberg, ed., Wid's Year Book 1920-21 (New York : Arno Press, 1971), p. 267.
- 34 Kenneth MacPherson, ed., "The Truth about the German Studios," in Close-Up, 1 (1927), no. 4, pp. 32-34.
- 35 Ellis, A History, p. 102
- 36 Cecchettini, Passport, p. 390.
- 37 One wonders about the following report, for example, and whether the plan was carried out and, if so, who used the studio and what was it called. "According to recent press reports, Berlin will soon possess the largest film studio in the world. The Albatross Aircraft Works in Johannisthal are transforming their airship hangar into a moving-picture studio; this studio will be about 450 feet long and nearly 200 feet wide." Cf. Wid's Year Book, p. 269.

38 Wollenberg, Fifty Years, p. 16. Manvell and Fraenkel just repeat Wollenberg's figures in a footnote in their book. In the text itself they only bother to give the figure for one year, 1921. They misquote it as 246, rather than 646, giving the casual reader quite a distorted picture.

39 Monaco, "Cinema," p. 289.

40 Monaco, "Cinema," p. 139.

41 Wollenberg, Fifty Years, p. 16

42 Monaco, "Cinema," p. 18

43 Kracauer, Caligari, pp. 22-24, 35. Monaco reports that there was an international boycott of German films for some time after the war which various nations participated in voluntarily with varying degrees of enthusiasm. Cf. Monaco, "Cinema," p. 71. Wid's Year Book, 1920-21 reports that German film interests instigated a law in Germany forbidding the importation of foreign films. This law was in effect until at least May, 1920. Obviously the isolation of the German film industry extended beyond the war years. Cf. Wid's Year Book, p. 267.

44 Monaco, "Cinema," pp. 50-51, 61-62. B. Hampton, History of the American Film Industry from its Beginnings to 1931 (New York: Dover, 1970), p. 361, does not corroborate this, stating instead that the mistake of the European film industries was that they "looked for their support from the cultured classes." I only quote this because it illustrates the unfounded generalizations one runs into in the typical film history.

45 Monaco, Caligari, pp. 71-72.

46 Monaco, Caligari, pp. 69-70. Monaco alleges in these pages that the Germans conducted their struggles for foreign film markets with a highly militaristic attitude. He bases this claim on quotations from contemporary trade journals which employ military phraseology. Apparently Monaco is not aware that business journals in general are prone to using military phraseology, particularly in articles concerning struggles for market shares and the like. Here are some sample quotes from

non-German business journals of that era, with the "objectionable" language underlined for easy identification:

"European opponents," "commercial intelligence," "supremacy in foreign trade," in: Harvard Business Review, 1 (1922), No. 1, pp. 27, 29; "The Attack on Trade Barriers," "the fighting equipment of competition," in: The Nation's Business, 9 (1921), No. 6, p. 23 and No. 8, p. 38.

47 Cecchettini, Passport, p. 446.

48 Kracauer, Caligari, p. 132

49 Wollenberg, Fifty Years, pp. 15-16.

50 Manvell and Fraenkel, German Cinema, p. 137.

51 Lewis, Industry, p. 401; Monaco, "Cinema," pp. 53-54. Monaco's figure is at variance with Wollenberg's.

52 Erich Eyck, A History of the Weimar Republic, Vol. 2, (Cambridge : Harvard University Press, 1963), p. 211.

53 Monaco, "Cinema," p. 132.

54 Manvell and Fraenkel, German Cinema, p. 9.

55 One would need to know exactly which cinemas Ufa owned, of course, to do this. Also, Lamprecht's catalog doesn't provide information on the premiere of every film it lists, but perhaps it would still be worthwhile to attempt such a study.

56 Monaco, "Cinema," p. 132.

57 Monaco, "Cinema," p. 55.

58 Manvell and Fraenkel, German Cinema, p. 137.

59 Monaco, "Cinema," p. 83.

60 L. Klitzsch, "Problems of the German Film Industry," in: German Commerce Yearbook (New York : Westermann, 1928), p. 234.

- 61 Klitzsch, Yearbook (1929), p. 368
- 62 Wid's Year Book, p. 265.
- 63 Manvell and Fraenzel, German Cinema, pp. 19, 137, 138.
- 64 Cecchettini, Passport, p. 153.
- 65 Monaco, "Cinema," p. 140.
- 66 Robert Herring, "Publicity," in: Close-Up, 2 (1928),
No. 6, p. 36-44.
- 67 Wid's Year Book, pp. 265, 267.
- 68 Kenneth MacPherson, ed., "As is," in: Close-Up, 1
(1927), No. 6, p. 15.
- 69 Klitzsch, Yearbook (1928), p. 234.
- 70 Hull, Film, p. 21.
- 71 Hull, Film, p. 22.
- 72 Wid's Year Book, p. 267.
- 73 Wollenberg, Fifty Years, p. 23.
- 74 Hull, Film, p. 22.
- 75 Wollenberg, Fifty Years, p. 17.
- 76 Kenneth MacPherson, ed., "Comment and Review," in:
Close-Up, 1 (1927), No. 4, p. 74; Monaco, "Cinema," pp. 77,
78.
- 77 Kenneth MacPherson, ed., "Comment and Review," in:
Close-Up, 2 (1928), no. 1, p. 80.

78 Bucher, Germany, p. 135.

79 Rudolf Schwartzkopf, "Volksverband für Filmkunst,"
in: Close-Up, 2 (1928), no. 5, pp. 71-74.

80 Manvell and Fraenkel, German Cinema, p. 47.

81 Wid's Year Book, p. 367.

82 Monaco, "Cinema," pp. 76-77.

83 Manvell and Fraenkel, German Cinema, pp. 14-15.

84 Wollenberg, Fifty Years, p. 14.

An interesting and impressive 1929 report on "motion-picture problems" records that Germany led the way in the restriction of film imports, as of January 1, 1928. This report is extremely misleading and in conflict with others I have cited. I suppose one must simply attribute it to human fallability and discount it. Cf. William Seabury, Motion Picture Problems: The Cinema and the League of Nations (New York : Arno Press, 1978), p. 224.

85 Monaco, "Cinema," p. 78.

86 Kracauer, Caligari, p. 133

87 Lewis, Industry, p. 399.

88 Monaco, "Cinema," p. 79.

Incidentally, if the demand for foreign pictures, especially American, was so intense that it rendered the "Kontingentsgesetz" meaningless--and this is the implication--then Monaco's study analyzing the 63 most popular German films seems rather senseless, as does Kracauer's study. Maybe they should have looked at the themes and plots of the imports in closer detail.

89 Lewis, Industry, p. 404.

Although everyone writes that the popularity of American films contributed mightily to the decline of the German industry, Lewis notes here that in 1930-31 the American films were so unsuccessful in Germany that the American distributors did not even use all the permits issued them. This

- 90 Kracauer, Caligari, p. 44.
- 91 Wollenberg, Fifty Years, p. 13.
- 92 Monaco, "Cinema," p. 94.
- 93 Kracauer, Caligari, pp. 46047; Wollenberg, Fifty Years, pp. 13-14.
- 94 Monaco, "Cinema," pp. 95-97.
- 95 Monaco, "Cinema," pp. 97-98, 102; Seabury, Problems, p. 312; Wollenberg, Fifty Years, pp. 13-14.
- 96 Monaco, "Cinema," p. 103.
- 97 Monaco, "Cinema," p. 98.
- 98 Seabury, Problems, p.312.
- 99 Wollenberg, Fifty Years, p. 13.
- 100 Monaco, "Cinema," pp. 103-106.
- 101 Lamprecht's Catalog, Vol. 1.
- 102 Monaco, "Cinema," p. 108-109.
- 103 Lamprecht, Stummfilme, Vol. 1, p. IX; Monaco, "Cinema," p. 98; Seabury, Problems, p. 306; Wollenberg, Fifty Years, p. 14.
- 104 Seabury, Problems, p. 312
- 105 Seabury, Problems, pp. 383-406.
- 106 Monaco, "Cinema," pp. 83-86.
- 107 Lamprecht, Stummfilme, Vol. 1, p. IX; Wollenberg, Fifty Years, pp. 14-15.

106
p. 86. Monaco, "Cinema," p. 86; Wollenberg, Fifty Years,

V. C O N C L U S I O N

This study has examined the German film industry of the 1920's with a view to demonstrating that only when all aspects have been fully analyzed and understood will the Weimar cinema be truly comprehensible. Once this has been achieved the study of this phenomenon will fulfill its potential and provide accurate insights into the Weimar era.

It has been shown that the ambitious psychoanalytic studies, as well as the general filmographies of Weimar film are useful. They are, however, also woefully incomplete and even misleading. A small number of films has been written about ad nauseam, a larger number skimmed over and crudely categorized, and the huge remainder of Weimar productions simply ignored. A tiny exotic collection of films exhibiting characteristics of expressionism has been exhaustively examined while, for example, films representative of less fantastic genres have rotted in the vaults. There is no logical reason for these omissions.

Theories about Weimar culture, about the group mind, have been expounded which are based on limited rather than exhaustive studies of Weimar film. Yet these have nonetheless dominated the literature because no countertheories

have been put forth. The same clichés are repeated in book after book, illustrated by reference to a miserably small number of films which no one has adequately demonstrated to be representative.

Both the deficiencies of the secondary literature and the nature of the topic under study--the film media--necessitate that attention be focused on the films themselves if the mysteries of the Weimar screen are to be untangled and accurately analyzed. Hundreds and hundreds of films have been ignored. Only a small number of films are readily available for viewing. All the other films that were produced cannot have disappeared without a trace, however. Information is to be gleaned from contemporary journals and all film sources must be exhaustively exploited.

It must be admitted that the same problems will plague the persevering student who devotes himself to the "lesser" films of Weimar, as have conspired to mar previous studies. Films have been lost, films have been damaged, censored, mutilated, and reworked. The remnants of Weimar film are not perfect sources and not even firsthand accounts in other sources on content and quality are reliable. Due to all these considerations there is a finite limit to the knowledge that can be acquired on the actual films from the Weimar era. However, this limit has not been reached; the knowledge of Weimar film is still so limited that all efforts

to expand it must be fruitful.

It is now more than fifty years since the "Golden Age" of Weimar. There can be few people left with an intimate knowledge of that era. It is now up to a new generation to uncover and compile as complete a picture of the Weimar film industry as possible before it is forgotten forever that there were several thousand films turned out in those years besides Das Kabinett des Dr. Caligari and Der blaue Engel, and hundreds of companies besides Ufa.

Any further studies of Weimar film will have to be grounded in fact if they are to arrive at significant and meaningful conclusions. It is patently preposterous for anyone to examine Weimar film without a thorough knowledge of the industry. To understand the films, one has to first understand their genesis; if one has misconceptions about the industry, one will develop misconceptions about the films. All aspects must be thoroughly researched: the production companies, the studios, production volume, cinemas, costs and salaries, organizations and institutions, protectionism, censorship, and taxation. There are dozens of unanswered questions on these topics which I have taken the liberty of raising in this study and whose pertinence I have demonstrated. Sources do exist which could shed light on these concerns, but they have not been fully utilized. Even the most extensive studies written to date raise more

questions than they answer, while more limited works content themselves with repeating mistakes and compounding distortions. Obviously, if the study of Weimar film is to advance beyond Kracauer and be more conclusive than Monaco, then the many questions I have posed will have to be answered.

Film has become a legitimate focus of interdisciplinary psychoanalytic inquiries and is firmly established as an art form which has been explored in an extensive literature. However, Weimar film, despite attention from these two disciplines, has remained a perplexing and little understood phenomenon of a perplexing and little understood era. Further studies will only shed light on the real significance of Weimar film if they follow the suggestions of this study and integrate a thorough knowledge of the film industry *per se* with a thorough and firsthand knowledge of the films themselves.

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