



Kent Academic Repository

Janet McCabe (2001) *Addicted to distractions : imagined female spectator-participation and the early German popular cinema as discourse, 1910-1919*. Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) thesis, University of Kent.

Downloaded from

<https://kar.kent.ac.uk/86252/> The University of Kent's Academic Repository KAR

The version of record is available from

<https://doi.org/10.22024/UniKent/01.02.86252>

This document version

UNSPECIFIED

DOI for this version

Licence for this version

CC BY-NC-ND (Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives)

Additional information

This thesis has been digitised by EThOS, the British Library digitisation service, for purposes of preservation and dissemination. It was uploaded to KAR on 09 February 2021 in order to hold its content and record within University of Kent systems. It is available Open Access using a Creative Commons Attribution, Non-commercial, No Derivatives (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/>) licence so that the thesis and its author, can benefit from opportunities for increased readership and citation. This was done in line with University of Kent policies (<https://www.kent.ac.uk/is/strategy/docs/Kent%20Open%20Access%20policy.pdf>). If y...

Versions of research works

Versions of Record

If this version is the version of record, it is the same as the published version available on the publisher's web site. Cite as the published version.

Author Accepted Manuscripts

If this document is identified as the Author Accepted Manuscript it is the version after peer review but before type setting, copy editing or publisher branding. Cite as Surname, Initial. (Year) 'Title of article'. To be published in *Title of Journal*, Volume and issue numbers [peer-reviewed accepted version]. Available at: DOI or URL (Accessed: date).

Enquiries

If you have questions about this document contact ResearchSupport@kent.ac.uk. Please include the URL of the record in KAR. If you believe that your, or a third party's rights have been compromised through this document please see our [Take Down policy](https://www.kent.ac.uk/guides/kar-the-kent-academic-repository#policies) (available from <https://www.kent.ac.uk/guides/kar-the-kent-academic-repository#policies>).

Addicted to Distractions: Imagined Female Spectator-Participants and the Early German Popular Cinema as Discourse, 1910-1919.

Janet McCabe

Submitted in completion of the degree of doctor of philosophy (PhD)
University of Kent at Canterbury

June 2001

Acknowledgements. iii

List of Illustrations. iv

Feminist Intervention: Questions of Theory and the Construction of a Methodology. 1

- Feminist Intervention. Heide Schlüpmann: Industrial Strategies, Gendered Spectatorship and the Popular German Cinema. 2
- The Female Spectator-Participant as a Spatial Subject and Object of Interpretation and Intervention. 9

Chapter 1. Charting a Discourse: Orthodox Historiographical Writings on Early German Cinema. 16

- National Cinema/Identity and (Male) Cultural Address. 20
- National Industry and Institutional Practices. 28
- Hegemonic Critical Practice, Cultural Respectability and the Role of the Bourgeoisie. 32
- National Cinema/Prestige, Theories of Mass Culture and Intellectual Interventions. 38
- Feminist Resistance. Miriam Hansen: the Female Spectator, the Public Space and Early Cinema. 45
- Discourses on Popular German Cinema and Cultural Life of the Modern City. 51

Chapter 2. Geographical Debaucheries: Metropolitan Intersections and Female Bodyscapes. 55

- Mapping Out a Discourse: Official Ideology and ‘the’ Female Body. 57
- *Regulating Sex in the City: The Prostitute as Public Menace and the Civic Authorities.* 62
- Censoring Cinema’s Feminine Bodyscape: the Campaign against Cinema’s Sensational Attractions and the Actress as *Femme Fatale.* 67
- From Anatomical Bodies to Cinematic Spectacles: Male *Flâneurs*, Corporeal Female Bodies and The (Hidden) Melancholic Pleasures of the *Linden Arcade (or Kaisergalerie).* 72
- Re-evaluating the *Flâneur’s* Textual Journey: Prostitution as a Critique of Bourgeois Existence in Walter Benjamin’s *Das Passagen-Werk.* 82
- (Feminine) Journeys across the City: Friedrichstrasse, Women Caught on Film and the Panoramic Spectacle of Travelling. 96

Chapter 3. The Architecture of Modern Culture Experience: Spatial Pleasures, the Movie Palaces and the Female Spectator-Participant. 109

- From Dance Hall to the Implantation of Moving Pictures: Skladanowsky’s “Living Photography” Show and the Berlin *Wintergarten.* 111
- Spatial Pleasures and Berlin’s Picture Palaces: The Rise of the Berlin Movie Palace and The *Marmorhaus (The Marble House)* in Kurfürstendamm. 122

Chapter 4. The Census: Tracking the ‘Female’ Spectator-Participant. 140

- The Female Spectator and Corporeal Excess: The Cinema Reform Movement (*Kinoreformbewegung*). 142
- The Female Spectator and a Sociological Inquiry: Emilie Altenloh. 152

Chapter 5. Playing to the Ladies: The Popular Entertainment Programme and the Cultivation of an Imagined Female Constituency. 166

- The Dialectics of the Popular Entertainment Programme. 167
- For the Ladies: Refining the Popular Programme. 175

Chapter 6. Industrial Bodyscape of the Female Film Star: Movie Actresses as Feminine Template for the Imagined Female Spectator-Participant. 184

- Making the German Film Star. 186
- Asta Nielsen. 197
- Ossi Oswalda. 211

Chapter 7. Drama as Discourse: Popular Film Drama, Imagined Female Spectator-Participants and the Films of Asta Nielsen. 221

- *Regulating* Nielsen's Dramatic Performance: Structuring the Drama and Film Form. 222
- *Censoring* Female Sexual Freedom and Social Movement: The Abyss. 237
- *Censoring* the Socio-Sexual Ambitions of the Single Professional Woman: The StockBroker Queen. 247
- The Great Divide: Asta Nielsen as *femme fatale* or self-reflexive modern artist. 256

Chapter 8. Comedic Discourse: Popular Film Comedy, Imagined Female Spectator-Participants and the Films of Ossi Oswalda. 260

- Ossi Oswalda's Comic Routines and the Comedy Genre as a Discourse: A Theoretical Reevaluation. 262
- *Regulating* the (Feminine) Comic Gaze: Structuring the Comic Look for the Imagined Female Spectator-Participant. 267
- *Regulating* Modern Marriage and Suitable Spouses: The Oyster Princess. 275
- *Regulating* the Female Ghost in the Patriarchal Machine: The Doll. 281

Conclusion. 294

Appendices.

- Appendix 1. Prostitution in Berlin. 300
- Appendix 2. Berlin's Viennese Cafés and a Culture of Gentility. 303
- Appendix 3. Cinema Censorship in late-Wilhelmine Germany. 305

Bibliography. 307

Acknowledgements.

Thanks to The British Film Institute (especially Bryony Dixon, Simon Brown and Eugene Finn who went out of their way to find obscure German documentaries and features films for me) and the Nederlands Filmmuseum film archive in Amsterdam (especially Jasper Koedam and Marion de Graaf). Thanks also to Michael Wedel and Milena Gregor who provided books, videos and other source material. Elsewhere, Caroline Cooper, Laura Mulvey, Cornelia Usborne have provided valuable ideas and encouragement.

Thanks to The British Film Institute library, The British Library, Goethe-Institut library, University of North London library (and in particular Crispin Partridge, whose help in finding obscure references has been much appreciated), Templeman Library at the University of Kent at Canterbury and the library at the University of East Anglia. Further afield the Stiftung Deutsche-Kinemathek in Berlin, New York Public Library and the Billy Rose Theatre Collection, New York Public Library for the Performing Arts.

Special thanks go to Elizabeth Cowie. She has proved to be a constant source of intellectual motivation and academic inspiration, and has steadfastly guided this thesis from humble inception to final product. Her generosity of time in shaping the project has been very much appreciated. Michael Allen has helped me immeasurably at every stage, from the initial ideas to writing and final edit. Thanks go to him in particular for his apposite comments and eagle-eyed editing – and for everything else which I cannot adequately express here.

Illustrations.

- fig.2.1. Entrance to Linden Arcade, Friedrichstrasse.
- fig.2.2. Linden Arcade, interior.
- fig.2.3. the Panopticum moves in, Friedrichstrasse, c.1910.
- fig.3.1. View inside Central Hotel winter garden, Berlin, c.1880.
- fig.3.2. Ground-floor plan of Central Hotel winter garden.
- fig.6.1. *The Oyster Princess*. Oswalda as star.
- fig.6.2. Henny Porten.
- fig.6.3. *The Film Primadonna*. Asta Nielsen. Publicity still.
- fig.6.4. *The Oyster Princess*. Ossi Oswalda. Publicity still.
- fig.6.5. Ossi Oswalda. Publicity Still. A model young moviegoer.
- fig.6.6. *The Oyster Princess*. Ossi is cleaned.
- fig.6.7. *The Oyster Princess*. Ossi is massaged.
- fig.6.8. *The Oyster Princess*. A glimpse of bare flesh.
- fig.6.9. *The Oyster Princess*. Ossi disrobes.
- fig.6.10. *The Oyster Princess*. Ossi/Oswalda waits for the stage to be set.
- fig.7.1. *Das Mädchen ohne Vaterland*. The Asta pose.
- fig.7.2. *The Abyss*. Magda alone on the city street.
- fig.7.3. *The Abyss*. The unsolicited male gaze.
- fig.7.4. *The Abyss*. The unchaperoned moment.
- fig.7.5. *The Abyss*. Watching Madga.
- fig.7.6. *The Abyss*. Still watching the Madga
- fig.7.7. *The Abyss*. Asta's erotic tango
- fig.7.8. *Cinema*, Rudolf Schlichter (c.1925).
- fig.7.9. *Zapatas' Gang*. Nielsen as a bandit.
- fig. 7.10. Selling Nielsen in America. The Moving Picture World (5 October 1912).
- fig.8.1. *The Oyster Princess*. Ossi inspects the 'princely' goods.
- fig.8.2. *The Oyster Princess*. Ossi: "Good Heavens! You look silly."
- fig. 8.3. *The Oyster Princess*. Ossi takes advice
- fig.8.4. *The Oyster Princess*. "But that's really funny!"

fig.8.5. *The Oyster Princess*. Throwing the baby out with the patriarchal advice.

fig.8.6. *The Oyster Princess*. The feminine pie in the face gag.

fig.8.7. *The Oyster Princess*. The unchecked female gaze.

fig.8.8. *The Oyster Princess*. Seeing Nucki.

fig.8.9. *The Oyster Princess*. Caught in the female gaze.

Feminist Interventions: Questions of Theory and the Construction of a Methodology.

Addicted to Distractions is a Foucauldian enquiry into the writing of film history and the theorising of cinema in relation to the issues raised by feminist arguments through to gendered representation. The thesis focuses on the German popular cinema from 1910-1919. With its seemingly cluttered spatial arrangements, much adored female movie stars and avid women audiences, it offers a unique moment to look differently at a cinema usually considered by film historians as of little interest except as the precursor to the critically-acclaimed post-war Weimar cinema of the twenties.

In recovering this apparently obscure(d) cinema, I identify the German popular cinema from 1910-1919 as a discourse; that is, a discursive formation constituted from a series of statements within which, and by which, the German popular cinema of the teens came to be known. Foucault's notion of discourse as a circumscribed field of knowledge and power is central to my project. According to him, nothing 'exists' simply to be talked about. Rather, it is discourse by which something becomes known. By analysing the statements that constitute the discursive formation of a discourse, we can see how the speakers and listeners, writers and readers came to know who they were within the social world. Studying discourse requires an understanding of the social and cultural areas through which that discourse determines knowledge: both the institutions and its 'qualified' speakers with knowledge and authority to make the discourse known, and a comparative system which determines how experiences and identities are categorised.

The discourse of early German popular cinema is thus a field of statements about the institution of cinema and its audiences, about cultural authority and about the interaction between these different areas. The aim of the thesis is to understand how the female spectator – or what I shall call the female spectator-participant – was discursively constituted in discourse. Generated within the context of German modernity, and at a historical moment in which the bourgeoisie reacted against the

new by asserting cultural agency, it was in part through a discourse of the female spectator-participant within which the institution of popular cinema came to see itself. Studying the female spectator-participant as a discourse we may come to understand how the popular cinema came to *produce* knowledge about itself in terms of its industrial profile, the products it offered and the films it screened. Furthermore, by demonstrating awareness of this discourse, we may be able to rethink our ideas about the construction of female subjectivity, gender representation and spectatorship practices for, in knowing how the discourse was formed, we may also learn how women were positioned to think about themselves. I take the critical work of the leading feminist scholar in this area Heide Schlüpmann as the starting point for my own theoretical endeavour. My engagement with her will be used as a foundation to describe the chapter by chapter structure of the thesis.

Feminist Intervention. Heide Schlüpmann: Industrial Strategies, Gendered Spectatorship and the Popular German Cinema.

Schlüpmann has explicitly adopted a Foucauldian approach to the question of gendered spectatorship, female audiences and cinema as a new kind of institutional public space in Germany during the teens.¹ In her 1982 essay entitled '*Kinosucht*' (literally translated as 'Cinema Addiction'), she contests the prevailing wisdom, common to several accounts on film spectatorship in early German cinema,² that women were more susceptible to manipulation by mass cultural practices than men.³ Schlüpmann argues that cinema, as a medium based on 'distraction' (*Zerstreuung*), was in fact embedded in a cultural discourse about sexual difference which was both arranged along patriarchal lines and intrinsically linked with emergent debates that attempted to account for new forms of perception, representation and experience. Far from being 'distracted', Schlüpmann contends,

¹ Heide Schlüpmann (1982), *Kinosucht*, *Frauen und Film*, 33, 45-52; (1990), *Melodrama and Social Drama in the Early German Cinema*, *IN: Camera Obscura*, 22, 73-88; (1990), *Unheimlichkeit des Blicks: Das Drama des frühen deutschen Kinos*, Frankfurt-am-Main: Stroemfeld/Roter Stern; (1996), *Cinema as Anti-Theatre: Actresses and Female Audiences*, *IN: Richard Abel, ed. Silent Film*, New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 125-141.

² , Siegfried Kracauer, (1995), *The Little Shopgirls Go to the Movies, 1926*, *IN: The Mass Ornament: Weimar Essays*, trans. and ed., Thomas Y. Levin, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1995: 291-302.

³ Schlüpmann, 'Kinosucht,' 45-52.

the response of women viewers was bound to a gender-specific experience of modernity based on the attrition of modern life and an increased isolation within the domestic space. She thus concludes that women's so-called 'addiction' to the cinema reveals less about their alleged susceptibility to the inducements of mass cultural practices than it does about how cinema, as a new form of commercial leisure within the realm of industrial production, functioned to mediate women's experiences of modernity.⁴

Schlüpmann has in her most recent work on industrial strategies turned to reception conditions and female spectatorship. In this work, she contends that the early German film industry seized upon the opportunity to construct a cultural public arena as an anti-bourgeois public space.⁵ According to Schlüpmann, domestic film production and exhibition (inseparable at this time) emerged separately from the bourgeois intelligentsia sphere of cultural influence.⁶ Cinema soon gained new prominence as it shed its connections with low brow cultural forms and entered into direct competition with more traditional forms of middle-class entertainment like the theatre, a move which brought it to the attention of the bourgeoisie. Cinema's reputation was based on exposing the technology of mechanical reproduction together with the commercialisation of art and spectacle, visual pleasures and a mass produced public entertainment form; all of which were absent from 'official' bourgeois cultural production.⁷ In this respect, cinema asserted its institutional difference from, and resistance to, bourgeois conventions through exhibiting what made it different from traditional bourgeois cultural forms. Furthermore, cinema emancipated those, including women, who had been excluded from 'official' culture, both in producing representation for them and in seeking to interpolate these audiences as 'social and cultural beings.'⁸

⁴ *ibid.*, 51-2.

⁵ Schlüpmann, (1990), *Unheimlichkeit des Blicks*

⁶ Schlüpmann plots the appropriation of cinema into the bourgeois sphere of influence in the second half of her book; *ibid.*, 185-186.

⁷ Schlüpmann, (1996, *Cinema as Anti-Theatre: Actresses and Female Audiences*, 125-141.

⁸ Schlüpmann, (1990), *Unheimlichkeit des Blicks*, 77-113.

Late-Wilhelmine cinema, Schlüpmann contends, carved out a cultural niche for itself at a time when the bourgeois theatre was failing to capitalise on the changing relationship between the public sphere and the private space of family and domestic intimacy.⁹ It was better positioned to seize upon theatre's missed opportunity by building an alternative cultural arena for itself within which it could deal with themes of domestic arena, sexual difference and the entry of women into modern public life. Therefore German film production, from early on, took the needs of its female constituency extremely seriously, using the female movie star to offer new representation for them. Women audiences, claims Schlüpmann, became the impetus for the development of certain narrational styles, the popularity of particular genres, such as melodrama and social dramas, and the way in which films treated specific topics such as marriage, family life, romance and motherhood. Cinema came to offer its female patrons a new kind of visual pleasure based on a desire for self-definition.¹⁰

“The cinema was often the only source of pleasure that women could enjoy outside the home. It was more than mere entertainment; women spectators brought to cinema the right “to see themselves” – their wishes and opportunities, but also to see their everyday life and milieu – which was unrealised by theatre.”¹¹

Female audiences were thus encouraged to partake in an entrepreneurial-based public space which would “become a place of female self-determination,” in much the same way as the bourgeois theatre had been “a place for the ‘self-thematisation of the bourgeoisie’” some years earlier.¹²

Schlüpmann's work rescues a popular counter-cinema almost lost from view, eclipsed by Weimar's ‘golden’ years. But while her work provides a starting point for my own research, this thesis at the same time seeks to challenge a central precept of Schlüpmann's account. Her film analyses, for example, locate textual features as running ‘counter’ to ‘dominant’ film practice; her model allows her to conclude that

⁹ Schlüpmann, (1996), *Cinema as Anti-Theatre: Actresses and Female Audiences*, 130-132.

¹⁰ Schlüpmann, (1990), *Unheimlichkeit des Blicks*, 97.

¹¹ Schlüpmann, (1996), *Cinema as Anti-Theatre: Actresses and Female Audiences*, 135.

these elements must be read against bourgeois cultural norms. Schlüpmann's argument defines the popular cinema from 1910-1919 to be more or less subsumed by bourgeois opinions and cultural appropriation, a paradigm shift from cinema as an important cultural activity for nascent social groups, offering visual pleasure around self-representation, to its transformation into a respectable art form. Schlüpmann describes the relationship between a bourgeoisie in conflict with itself and an emergent film industry which was being shaped by historical transition; an encounter marked by a need to absorb the new entertainment formats into the structures of the classical public sphere. Yet, her methodology, in discovering a counter-culture which briefly opposes the hegemonic bourgeois culture, itself obscures the processes of discursive construction during this period of change. No doubt the bourgeois project is a significant one, fuelled as Schlüpmann notes by internal contradiction.¹³ That is, as the traditional cultural elite increasingly sided with the *Reich* by generating theories of (high) culture that excluded technology, consumerism, and nascent social classes associated with industrialisation and the new types of employment, the emergent film industry came to embody all that they so strongly opposed. As a result, the bourgeois self in crisis came to be ferociously played out in the debates on cinema. Yet this hotly contested debate within and about the bourgeois public sphere obscures, I would suggest, other historiographies that neither fit easily into the discussion nor conform to the processes of middle-class hegemonic appropriation. This thesis will seek to challenge the over-determinism of the bourgeoisie to set the cultural agenda. Instead I want to suggest that there were many other statements contributing to the development of the popular cinema as a discourse. The bourgeois texts were therefore only one, albeit a significant one, amongst several competing others.

Late-Wilhelmine cinema, as Schlüpmann understands it, stands apart from Weimar (classical) cinema, the latter being defined as patriarchal, preoccupied with psychological introspection and a troubled 'male' subjectivity. The popular cinema,

¹² Schlüpmann, (1996), *Asta Nielsen and Female Narration: The Early Films, IV*: Thomas Elsaesser, ed., *The Second Life: German Cinema's First Decades*, Amsterdam: University of Amsterdam Press, 118.

¹³ Schlüpmann, (1990), *Unheimlichkeit des Blicks*, 10-12.

by comparison, emerges as a counter-cinema. Defined as strange, aberrant and discontinuous, it comes to be forgotten as the industry consolidates and gains a greater cultural respectability. The material, cultural and historical specificities of the popular cinema therefore seem perpetually to be read against the norms governing its celebrated Weimar counterpart. Yet to recognise the popular as somehow resistant to dominant film practice seems to me to miss the point. It further suggests that female spectators watched films in ways that might not be considered the norm in relation to mainstream film practice as defined by the ‘classical’ Weimar cinema. In fact, Schlüpmann focuses too heavily on the bourgeoisie’s ability to define – and even *shape* – cinema as an emerging cultural institution. In so doing, she offers a teleological history of the popular cinema as a counter cinema defined by loss, transformation and appropriation.

Chapter one charts this problem as related to the state of the archive, a discourse about preservation and loss, remembering and forgetting. Chapter one focuses on a specific enquiry, investigating how the field of early German cinema is made *readable* through conceptualising discursive constructions and their encounter with other constructions. Offering a general overview of early German cinema as a discourse, I aim to investigate the monolithic construction of two German cinema histories – popular and art – in order to examine why these two histories have been kept so firmly apart. In understanding the formation of these discourses I intend to clear the critical ground, as it were, by revealing how bourgeois knowledge, by relentlessly constructing the popular as cultural other, was able to retain hegemonic control over it. Bourgeois, here, is not summative of dominant discourse but possesses its own specific form. Understanding conventions that came to define what can and cannot be said in a discourse will enable me to look at other types of knowledge and how they construct knowledge about the popular cinema and its female audience.

Another problem lies in Schlüpmann’s desire to locate a woman’s culture, a repressed ‘feminine’ narrational voice lying buried in the formal and institutional

strategies of the popular Wilhelmine cinema. The issue of female spectatorship is bound to a conceptual notion of a new feminine language based on a desire for social mobility and “a new self-confidence in gender relations.”¹⁴ Schlüpmann answers the question by suggesting that the feminine experience is repressed within a patriarchal cultural structure but is (re)activated by the transgressive and resistant processes of popular cinema. To identify the feminine with that which is repressed and/or that which subverts the classical (male) art cinema of Weimar can, despite efforts to locate a different viewing position for women within cultural modes of production that opposed bourgeois (patriarchal) control, simply replay patriarchal binarisms. It further places the woman outside the dominant, reinforcing her position as political ‘other’ as somehow representative of the repressed unconscious. Schlüpmann’s archaeological project to recover a lost feminine subject thus articulates the clash between high cultural theory and radical feminist politics.

Chapter two aims to take forward the question of the lost feminine subject in relation to the archive and early film actualities. Rather than think about reclaiming the female subject as a lost object, I want to explore why we speak about the feminine subject as lost. As a discourse, the female subject is ascribed the authority of those who spoke about her. Those who talked about the female subject included government officials, police authorities, cinema reformers and later an enlightened bourgeois intelligentsia. Such was their authority to speak about her that it elevated the discourse to such a level of significance and social standing that these female categorisations came to guarantee the ‘truth’ about the woman, her character and her body. By means of the discourse, social institutions, moral guardians and later cultural critics were responsible for the creation of the female subject, whose very difference from them helped set up binary oppositions by which their own socio-cultural importance could be defined. In so doing, they were allowed to draw up rigid demarcations in order to make sense of the cultural landscape around them. It is their geographical imaginings that interest me most, as the modern city with its fantastic

¹⁴ Schlüpmann, (1996), *Asta Nielsen and Female Narration: The Early Films*, 118.

spaces and unregulated (and later cinematic) pleasures became intimately interwoven with the female subject and her body flows.

The popular cinema as a discourse emerges as another field of discursive coherence, offering new statements about the female subject. The knowledge of the female spectator-participant created by, and embodied, within the discourse of popular cinema served to construct an institutional identity for her. Chapters three, four and five begin to explore the complex construction of this discourse. Many different factors, from how cultural institutions imagined their customers moving around their physical spaces, to official attempts to track the audience and the ways in which exhibitors went about putting together an entertainment programme with a female constituency in mind, constituted the discourse. Such strategies and industrial practices connected intimately with the construction of knowledge about the female spectator-participant. It occurs because knowing the character of the imagined audience made the management of it easier and more profitable. Yet, a representational identity for the female audience came into being by anticipating an imagined female spectator-participant circulating around these institutional spaces and consuming the products on offer.

The issue of representation is central to discerning discourses within which knowledge is constructed, because, as Edward Said has argued, it is doubtful whether a 'true' representation can ever be possible.¹⁵ In the final part of the thesis, chapters six, seven and eight, I aim to explore a series of female representational discourses such as those to be found in the texts produced by the popular cinema. One scholar who has investigated formal strategies and the principles of narrative construction during this period of cinema is Yuri Tsivian.¹⁶ His comparative style of pro-filmic space, compositional details and high precision blocking in films by Yevgenii Bauer and Franz Hofer offer some useful conclusions, notably that such techniques, often deriving their theatricality or pictorialism from high art, proved to be genuinely

¹⁵ Edward Said (1978), *Orientalism*, London: Penguin, 272.

¹⁶ Yuri Tsivian, (1996), Two 'Stylists' of the Teens: Franz Hofer and Yevgenii Bauer, *IN*: Elsaesser, ed., (1996), *A Second Life*, 264-76.

innovative, even experimental. Such originality, Tsivian contents, points to the emergence of a truly novel concept of cinematic space and narrative forms: "... what to the modern spectator may appear as a purely theatrical technique was in fact cinema's early claims to originality."¹⁷ In my final chapters, I identify the "truly novel concept of cinematic space and narrative forms" in the ways in which the texts set about *creating* and *describing* the imagined female spectator-participant. Rather than reading these texts as somehow redeeming a lost feminist history, or attempting to rediscover a primitive form running counter to classical norms, I aim to understand the formal, structural and aesthetic vocabulary of these texts grounded "within its space."¹⁸ Textual disruptions, formal tension and complicated staging arrangements belong to an internal logic that introduced knowledge about itself and justified its representational system. The task ahead, then, is to read the text against itself. In so doing, I will look at how the textual constructions – on and off screen space – functioned to conceive and manage representational discourse, in a sense *shaping* the identity of the female constituency, her institutional needs, cultural assumptions, values and habits, consuming these images.

The Female Spectator-Participant as a Spatial Subject and Object of Interpretation and Intervention.

The contested field I have thus far charted points to the need to investigate further what I am calling the category of the female spectator-participant as an object of intense empirical documentation and a loquacious 'expert' gaze. It is important to examine how she was subject(ed) to institutional geographies and acts of seeing that inscribed desire in various textual and industrial spatial practices during this transitional period in cinema history. I stress that it is my intention neither to explain away the different definitions of the female spectator-participant, nor to locate an essential core about real-life women moviegoers and their actual viewing experiences. My aim is to understand how 'she' came to be known within a dense corpus of knowledge about cinema participation, textual pleasures and spectatorship,

¹⁷ *ibid.*, 264.

¹⁸ Michel Foucault, (1991), *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences*, London: Routledge, 62.

and to require continual interpretation and institutional management. The thesis involves a return to Foucault in order to discover the construction of the female spectator-participant in a series of writings and industrial practices as contradictory and multi-determined, whereby bourgeois discourse becomes only one amongst several discursive determinations.

The theoretical quest that I am undertaking is based on the following assumptions. Foucault suggests that during the late eighteenth-century we entered into an “age of the infinite examination and of compulsory objectification.”¹⁹ Individuals became both the subjects and objects of certain fields of surveillance, be it legal, scientific, pedagogical or medical. These branches of knowledge sought to organise and define the individual through and within a whole series of disciplinary writings and procedures. From this documentation arose an array of statements that made it possible to transcribe and formalise the individual’s place within the hierarchy of the social order. The purpose of this apparatus of writing, to Foucault’s mind at least, disclosed two correlative projects: first, “the constitution of an individual as a describable, analysable object” – the subject who is to be controlled and managed by a corpus of knowledge; and second, “the constitution of a comparative system” – the mechanisms and techniques which seek to organise that knowledge.²⁰

Foucault develops this suggestion further to claim that the individual is only an effect of discourse, of power and knowledge.

“The individual is no doubt the fictitious atom of an ‘ideological’ representation of society; but he is also a reality fabricated by this specific technology of power.”²¹

He contends that the techniques in which human subjects become constituted as objects of observation were in the form of institutional control and/or scientific and behavioural studies. These processes and institutional demands, which defined the

¹⁹ Michel Foucault, (1977), *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, trans. Alan Sheridan, London: Penguin, 189.

²⁰ *ibid.*, 190.

²¹ *ibid.*, 194.

subject within rigidly codified systems of power and knowledge, thus normalised individual bodies. If this is the case, then consideration must be given to the epistemological and institutional conditions concerned with the shaping and monitoring of how the female spectator-participant came to be known. It is this approach which I will be adopting here.

What emerges from the contemporary evidence on women audiences presented in this thesis is how the female spectator-participant came to be mapped out as a contradictory figure, a slippery category embedded in a wide range of social practices and domains of knowledge, be they legislative, scientific, cultural or sociological. Conclusions for these writers are concomitant with medical data and scientific debates that promoted a ‘fictionalised’ woman’s body as frail and more delicate than a man’s, opinions made possible with the emergence of the new human sciences such as sexology, clinical and gynaecological medicine, psychoanalysis and psychiatry. Foucault comments on such a shift in the epistemological basis of man’s thinking.

“... clinical experience sees a new space opening up before it: the tangible space of the body, which at the same time is that opaque mass in which secrets, invisible lesions, and the very mystery of origins lie hidden. ...

... before a clinic wholly ordered in accordance with pathological anatomy.”²²

Independent of the different critical and institutional agendas, a space was established in which the female body was isolated and made known as an absolutely open space allowing for a lot of discussion to take place: “Classificatory thought gives itself an essential space, which it proceeds to efface at each moment.”²³ Of these various disciplines for constituting the individual as correlative of power and knowledge, competing discourses set out a wider context for how the female body in the public space was rendered *visible*; a gendered, anatomical territory that excited attention and required constant supervision and monitoring.

²² Michel Foucault, (1993), *The Birth of the Clinic: An Archaeology of Medical Perception*, trans. A.M. Sheridan, London: Routledge, 122.

²³ *ibid.*, 9.

It is at this point that we confront another key question about how a space, be it public, institutional or theoretical, opens up and is made knowable: “a structure that is at the same time visible and legible, spatial and verbal.”²⁴ Those who spoke about it more often than not determined how those spaces would be perceived, establishing sites of ‘truth’ about systems of representation: “The genesis of the manifestation of truth is also the genesis of the knowledge of truth.”²⁵ Just as cinema reformers and vice campaigners converted the cinema auditorium into a dangerous space requiring legislation, so too did the academic by recovering it as a pedagogical space in order to decode it as another kind of cultural experience. In the first major piece of local state legislation on cinema regulation passed in Württemberg in 1914, we can see at once how the unregulated cinema spaces acquired political, educational and ideological dimensions through legal judgement and a judicial document.

“Local authorities shall have the right to call in experts before whom films must be displayed before granting permission for their public exhibition. Such expert opinion is in every case to be sought when the person desiring to exhibit a film asks for expert judgement, or in the case of doubt as to whether a film is fit for exhibition before young people. If the local authorities refuse to approve a film, the person desiring to exhibit it shall be given opportunity to apply for expert testimony.

The experts will be selected by the department of the interior in co-operation with the departments of religion and public instruction.”²⁶

Paternalistic clauses such as those stated above demonstrate how the ‘expert’ – in this case, someone employed by the local state legislative – was appointed as a mediator, thus fore-grounding their credentials to speak as grounded in the law. Their task was to eliminate ambiguity and define controversy while remaining impartial and critically distant. Moreover, gendering the multiple bodies circulating within the cinema auditoria allowed all authors to rationalise the formless crowd into a legible hierarchy, for what could be described could be analysed and somehow mastered. The expert not only authorised experience, reducing its complexities into significant

²⁴ *ibid.*, 112.

²⁵ *ibid.*, 110.

meaning, but also justified the need for ‘professional’ interpretation through making manifest what only they were legally qualified to see. Seen another way, categorising the female spectator-participant was not just about identification and regulation but was also about justifying intervention and claiming the authority to do so.

The next issue concerns the “observing gaze,” or, more precisely, its importance within establishing meaning and organising experience.

“The observing gaze manifests its virtues only in a double silence: the relative silence of theories, imaginings, and whatever serves as an obstacle to the sensible immediate; and the absolute silence of all language that is anterior to that of the visible. Above the density of this double silence things seen can be heard at last and heard solely by virtue of the fact that they are seen.”²⁷

If, as Foucault suggests, “the clinical gaze has the paradoxical ability to hear a language as soon as it perceives a spectacle,” and this gaze requires a “silencing” of the body to listen, interpret and access the ‘truth’, then what is perceived?²⁸ In this case, what is seen can only be realised through observation and language, and conceived of solely in terms of law and taboo. As soon as something is observed, it is immediately integrated, via discourse, into a densely constituted field of knowledge, power and techniques. To this end, the female spectator-participant is no longer a real-life individual but a representational category around which new forms of procedures and apparatus begin to emerge. The female spectator-participant thus *only* comes into being as an object of surveillance and classification, excitement and regulation, and at the same time as a subject around which certain sorts of institutional knowledge are accumulated and amassed.

Competing with how the female spectator-participant came to be ‘officially’ defined and represented, popular cinema, as both a discursive and institutional space, had a crucial role to play in the process of making and normalising an identity for a

²⁶ Translation of the censorship act from Württemberg, provided by Frederic William Wile, Berlin correspondent of the *Chicago Tribune*; (23 May 1914), German Censorship, *The Moving Picture World*, 1249.

²⁷ Foucault, (1993), *The Birth of the Clinic*, 108.

²⁸ *ibid.*

modern female spectator-participant. By applying Foucauldian methodology, we can see how the institutional emergence of cinema as a discourse begins to be apparent. With it appears also a new distribution of corporal spatial arrangements (foyers, auditoriums, the screen) and a gathering together and reorganising of a corpus of techniques that enabled the making visible of the cinema experience (the pleasures inscribed in watching a film). Using the methodology enables us further to read the internal logic of a film text. Because the underlying argument of this thesis is that discourse is self-validating, the film text must be thought about and analysed in this self-reflexive way to illuminate its structure. Cinema thus excited possibilities for all while regulating access to these hoped for pleasures; it emerges as a space that Foucault has described as “enclosed upon the didactic totality of an ideal experience.”²⁹

Debates about the female spectator-participant were not merely an extension of the classical bourgeois public space that, through the mechanism of ‘appropriation,’ discursively reproduced cinema as an institution of the middle-class cultural sphere. They also provided strategies for discussing cinema as a different kind of public space and, as noted by Schlüpmann, for studying its institutional practices. Such audience profiling must not be viewed as a question of bourgeois appropriation but rather as a discourse of discursive coherence about excitation and monitoring, definition and readability. The construction of the female spectator-participant category made visible the institutionalisation of social practices and processes around the popular cinema, and its new representational systems. It also revealed who held the power to determine and shape such a model as well as its limitations. What we are witnessing through these critical and institutional confrontations is the problem of the entry of new categories into the field of knowledge.

These then are the theoretical principals I shall follow as I try to understand popular German cinema and its imagined female audiences differently. Certain processes and experiences more often than not came to be spatially mapped out

²⁹ *ibid.*, 59.

across certain female bodies, and were themselves the result of separate but overlapping competing discourses. All involved issues about the role of the cinema, for better or worse, as a new public institution within this rapidly modernising society and how this became reified around certain descriptions of the female spectator-participant: “[she] is only that through which the text can be read, in what is sometimes a complicated and confusing state.”³⁰ The conception of a discursively constructed female spectator-subject, officially defined as dangerous, vulnerable and unruly, coincided with the nascent categorisation of women as modern public beings, and tied to a particular historic moment.

Out of this knowledge evolved a spectator-participant, who was not only shaped by new modes of information, circulation and exchange, institutional and production requirements, but also was the site on which these issues can be said to have materialised. Put another way, the emergence of a new kind of spectator-participant and the need to appeal to this individual as a social and cultural being cannot be conceived of outside the context of new arrangements of knowledge and established institutions of power in late-Wilhelmine Germany. Knowledge about the female spectator-participant was less about real women than about the management of a new kind of spectator, one that was not only based on the accumulation of different types of knowledge, but was determined by the demands made from new modes of information, production and consumption. Only by studying the female spectator-participant as a new kind of category might we begin to make more sense of the popular cinema and its female audience during the teens.

³⁰ *ibid.*

Chapter 1. Charting a Discourse: Orthodox Historiographical Writings on Early German Cinema.

No other national cinema has been subjected to such strict periodisation, or been so stubbornly dominated by its political history than Germany's. Keeping German cinema compartmentalised has more often than not meant forgetting about certain aspects of the canon or confining other parts of it to a circumscribed time frame. Such pragmatic allocation has resulted in the privileging of the 'art' cinemas which critics have come to view as best representing the German nation at particular times; a move which has, in turn, obscured or relegated to the cultural margins other areas of the archive that do not easily fit the 'national' profile. This is, in fact, what has happened to the popular German cinema between 1910-1919, despite the fact that more Germans went to see the romantic comedy The Oyster Princess (Ernst Lubitsch, 1919) than the now internationally-acclaimed Weimar 'classic' The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari (Robert Wiene, 1919) on initial release. Having abruptly dismissed the German Empire in 1918 as a redundant political system, orthodox writers on German film history, such as Siegfried Kracauer and Lotte Eisner, have further considered the popular Wilhelmine cinema to be irrelevant and unworthy of serious critical attention.¹ "It was only after the First World War that the German cinema really came into being. Its history up to that time was pre-history, an archaic period insignificant in itself."²

This present chapter seeks to view early German cinema in Foucauldian terms as a discourse: a disclosure of power/knowledge. It aims, in particular, to understand how the discourses involved in the construction of two German cinema histories – popular and art – came into being within the context of German modernity, and why the agents of cultural dominance – namely, the bourgeoisie – managed to keep these histories firmly apart. My contention is that without investigating early German cinema as a discourse it would be impossible to comprehend how the bourgeoisie were able to engineer, and even produce, the cultural separation with authority and confidence. Moreover, so decisive a

¹ Siegfried Kracauer, (1977), *From Caligari to Hitler: a Psychological History of the German Film*, Princeton: Princeton University Press; Lotte Eisner, (1969), *The Haunted Screen: Expressionism in the German Film and the Influence of Max Reinhardt*, trans. Roger Greaves, Berkeley: University of California Press.

critical position did the bourgeoisie occupy that I consider anyone writing about early German cinema and film history cannot do so without taking into consideration the rigid divides and limits imposed by the ruling cultural elite.

The German Empire as a nation-state had existed only since 1871; a rather brief time span, given the longer history of federal states (*Länder*), shifting geographical frontiers, diverse ethnic territories and competing cultural identities. Such an enforced merger of some twenty-five German-speaking states, presided over by a dynastic power from the northern state, is an example of what Benedict Anderson has called ‘official nationalism.’³

“The key to situating ‘official nationalism’ willed merges of nation and dynastic Empire – is to remember that it developed *after* and *in reaction* to, the popular national movements proliferating in Europe since the 1920s.”⁴

Anderson’s concept of ‘official nationalism’ is a process determined less by indigenous national movements or populist sentiment than by an imperialistic impulse for political unification, expansion of geographical territories and consolidation of its cultural and economic empire.

Consider first how the Prussian-based Hohenzollern Dynasty legitimised an ‘official nationalism’ discourse about itself as German. The monarchy initiated a flourishing culture of architectural historicism for example. It guaranteed its identification as authentically German by constructing national monuments to itself, such as *Das Demkmal Kaiser Wilhelm I*, situated at an important intersection in Berlin, and developed as an imposing open space complete with grand classically baroque monuments harking back to antiquity. It also staged extravagant public pageants of imperial might in order to confirm its credibility in such matters; a rationalisation of empire and the social hierarchy in which their supremacy, and importance within German history and culture, would be imagined and become unquestioned. The project connoted a dense relationship between imperial aims and general national culture that

² Kracauer, (1977), *From Caligari to Hitler*, 15.

³ Benedict Anderson, (1991), *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. London: Verso, 86.

was hidden by the persistent and prevailing assertions about a ‘universal’ and continuous German culture.

Cinematography emerged just shortly after Kaiser Wilhelm II inherited the Empire in 1888, and the dynasty would take full advantage of the new medium to construct the cult of monarchy and strengthen its own identity within the German Reich in the process.⁵ Imagining the nation through film would thus allow the royal family to disseminate the master narrative about itself as embodying the new unified German nation-state.⁶ From lavish state visits and so-called ‘Emperor Days’ (domestic walkabouts) to intimate home-movies, the ‘Kaiser cult’ encoded itself as oscillating between the traditional and modern or, as Martin Loiperdinger puts it, “between the Grand Prussian Monarchic ideal, and the middle class/industrial nation-state.”⁷ Yet these moving pictures that confirmed the supreme status of the monarchy, along with the period itself, would soon fade from public memory after the First World War, belonging to an anachronistic imperialist political system and a lost war.

The belated conception of nationhood and Prussian-organised land grab coincided with an accelerated government-led modernisation programme and massive social upheaval. Technological innovations and a range of industrial activities were encouraged, ushering in an intensive period of dynamic progress for the nation-state: a period known as the *Gründerzeit* (a term related to the foundation of the German Empire). Urbanisation was rapid, with the expansion of suburbs and the growing concentration of people in the new industrial centres. Between 1880-1913, for example, the number of cities with populations of over 100,000 was to swell from fourteen to forty-eight. No other centre changed quite so dramatically as Berlin, transforming as it did from the provincial Prussian capital into a major industrial metropolis in a matter of

⁴ *ibid.*

⁵ Martin Loiperdinger, (1996), *The Kaiser’s Cinema: An Archaeology of Attitudes and Audiences*, IN: T. Elsaesser, ed., *The Second Life: German Cinema’s First Decades*, Amsterdam: University of Amsterdam Press, 45-50; in the essay, Loiperdinger explores how the cult of monarchy emerged early on as the main topic of the German actuality genre, thereby turning Kaiser Wilhelm II and his court into the first German film stars.

⁶ A catalogue cum commentary of the Kaiser films, Paul Klebinder, (1912), *Der deutsche Kaiser im Film*, Berlin: Verlag. P. Klebinder.

decades. Berlin's population jumped from 400,000 in 1848 to two million by 1905;⁸ sprawling suburbs encircling the new Imperial capital added another 1.5 million inhabitants to the ceaseless mutating modern city. Ernst Bloch declared in 1907 that Berlin was a "nowhere city ... always becoming and never is."⁹ The speed with which German society was transformed after the formation of the Empire in 1871, from a series of isolated federal states into a fully industrialised, empire-oriented and urban nation-state, meant that what was needed to ensure that modernisation succeeded – a work force of those previously ignored by 'official' groups, for example, the rationalisation of labour processes, electrification of cities, the rapid turnover of city residents and influx of thousands of internal immigrants (mostly from provincial towns or rural villages in Brandenburg, Silesia and East Prussia), and new patterns of consumerism and consumption – appeared at a time when German society was still coming to terms with its new political status as a nation-state.

Confronted with such a dynamic and contested landscape of socio-political change, one is immediately struck by how bourgeois forces set about constructing the 'official' nation-state as unified, whole and coherent, thereby demonstrating an absolute intolerance for incompleteness and ambiguity. I contend that the authority of the bourgeoisie was grounded in their 'knowing' the cultural landscape; a knowledge which, in turn, constituted a form of power but also an exercise in the use of it. Film, as yet another example of technological innovation and industrial progress, made its appearance during these years, emerging as the latest modern institution to escape easy classification. I thus propose to chart the ways, in which intellectual (bourgeois) practices produced knowledge about the German cinema, investigating the rules that operated for the establishment and maintenance of discourse. The project not only exposes the mechanisms involved in conferring identity on the German national cinema

⁷ Loiperdinger, 'The Kaiser's Cinema: An Archaeology of Attitudes and Audiences', 49.

⁸ Paul Goldschmidt, (1910), tracking the immigrant population of Berlin, calculated that 85% of those flowing into Berlin came from the small towns surrounding the city. By 1905, 60% of those living in Berlin had been born elsewhere. Of these, the majority were born in the eastern districts, across the Elbe River: 18% had come from Brandenburg, 6% from Pomerania, 7% in Silesia, and 19% had originated from the other eastern regions. Goldschmidt, (1910), *Berlin in Geschichte und Gegenwart*, Berlin, 383-384.

⁹ Ernst Bloch, (1988), quoted in Reinhard Rürup, 'Parvenu Polis' and 'Human Workshop': Reflections on the History of the City of Berlin, *German History*, 6, 234-235.

and its audience, but also reveals what is known is invariably determined by the manner in which it is made known. I seek to understand the rules of discourse involved in the production of power/knowledge about early German cinema, rules that created and policed the cultural boundaries between official histories and mass entertainment, international prestige and national pleasures, cultural respectability and popular distractions, critical male spectators and emotionally vulnerable female fans.

National Cinema/Identity and (Male) Cultural Address.

The area of early German film history that has received the most sustained critical attention is the Weimar art cinema, with movies like The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari (1919, Robert Wiene) continuing to generate a lot of academic interest.¹⁰ Most traditional readings, such as those written by Walter Lacquer, Paul Monaco and John Willett, tend to carry through the notion of how Weimar films reveal a post-war Germany uneasy with its socio-political identity.¹¹ It is a prevailing discourse that still in fact provides the master paradigm for understanding German nationhood, cinematic representation and film spectatorship.

Close studies of Weimar society and culture in 'crisis' have invariably been constructed around a socio-political framework, primarily focusing on questions of male subjectivity and the formation of unstable gendered (masculine) identities.¹² Pioneering film historian Siegfried Kracauer identified these dominant (male) principles as governing the thematic content and cultural address of those films that he saw as best

¹⁰ Mike Budd, (1979), *Retrospective Narration in Film: Re-reading The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari*, *Film Criticism*, 4 (1), Fall 35-43; Barry Salt, (1979), *From Caligari to Who? Sight and Sound*, 48 (2), Spring, 119-123; Mike Budd, ed., (1990), *The Cabinet of Dr Caligari: Texts, Contexts, Histories*, New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press; David Robinson, (1999), *The Cabinet of Dr Caligari*, London: BFI Publishing

¹¹ Walter Lacquer, (1974), *Weimar: A Cultural History, 1918-1933*, New York: G.P. Putman's Sons; Paul Monaco, (1976), *Cinema and Society: France and Germany during the Twenties*, Oxford: Elsevier; and John Willett, (1978), *The New Sobriety 1917-1933: Art and Politics in the Weimar Period*, London: Thames and Hudson.

¹² One of the most elaborate studies undertaken on the Weimar male subject has been Klaus Theweleit's *Männerphantasien*. Primarily a psychoanalytical account of volunteer soldiers who fought in the Freikorps, his complex yet speculative thesis presents a compelling portrait of masculinity in crisis; Theweleit (1977), *Männerphantasien 1: Frauen, Fluten, Körper, Geschichte*, Frankfurt: Verlag Roter Stern; reprinted in translation, (1987), *Male Fantasies 1: Women, Floods, Bodies, History*, trans. Stephen Conway, Cambridge: Polity Press; (1989), *Male Fantasies 2: Male Bodies: Psychoanalysing the White Terror*, trans. Chris Turner and Erica Carter, Cambridge: Polity Press.

representing what was interesting and vital about the Weimar cinema. The silent ‘classics,’ defined as key moments in the history of early cinema, were analysed as furthering these patriarchal concerns. Such films not only exposed the ‘historical trauma’ involved in the collapse of male subjectivity associated with a lost war and the post-1918 period, but worked through its reaffirmation and the reconstitution of male sovereignty within textual practices.

Advancing further Kracauer’s thesis, Peter Gay claimed that Weimar narratives enacted an unresolved oedipal drama of male social disenfranchisement and sexual impotency. These narratives, in turn, referred to German social history and a ‘crisis’ of male subjectivity: “The revenge of the father and the omnipotence of the mother were twin aspects of the Weimar scene, both equally destructive to youth.”¹³ It was a crisis of agency that turned damaged protagonists, either physically or mentally, into compelling images of dread and horror.¹⁴ Such a discourse has profoundly shaped and influenced subsequent studies, as film scholars continue to dismiss or qualify these arguments about the dilemma faced in relation to the trauma of male cultural authority and fantasies of self. A diverse range of film historians and theorists built upon these methodologies to offer their own versions of the Weimar national cinema. These include either a concern with class conflict translated into sexual mobility and the fantastic,¹⁵ androgynous men/women who challenge conventional sexual identities and/or articulate homoerotic desire,¹⁶ the collapse of male identity and its re-territorialisation,¹⁷ gendered visual pleasures and a search for the historical spectator,¹⁸ and/or as a self-conscious art cinema

¹³ Peter Gay, (1970), *Weimar Culture: The Outsider as Insider*, New York: Harper and Row, 149.

¹⁴ Maria Tatar extends such a thesis in her work about the obsession with the mutilated female form in Weimar art. For Tatar, the pervasive fascination with sexual murder (*Lustmord*) and the grotesque spectacle of the sexually violated female body offers an insight into the sexual politics of Weimar culture; Tatar, (1995), *Lustmord: Sexual Murder in Weimar Germany*, Princeton: Princeton University Press.

¹⁵ Elsaesser, (1982), Social Mobility and the Fantastic: German Silent Cinema, *Wide Angle*, 5 (2), 14-15.

¹⁶ Janet Bergstrom, (1986), Sexuality at a Loss: The Films of F.W. Murnau, IN: S. Rubin Sulieman, *The Female Body in Western Culture: Contemporary Perspectives*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 243-261.

¹⁷ Stephan Schindler, (1996), What Makes a Man a Man: The Construction of Masculinity in F.W. Murnau’s *The Last Laugh*, *Screen*, 37 (1), Spring, 30-40.

¹⁸ Thomas Elsaesser, (1983), Lulu and the Meter Man: Louise Brooks, Pabst and *Pandora’s Box*, *Screen*, 24 (4-5), July-October, 4-36; Mary Ann Doane’s critique of Elsaesser’s reading, Doane, (1990), The Erotic Barter: *Pandora’s Box*, IN: E. Rentschler, ed., *The Films of G.W. Pabst: An Extraterritorial Cinema*, New

appealing to a critical (male) spectator. Despite the complexity and variety of the readings, the investigation undertaken by scholars have all operated within certain parameters, such as the assumption that the Weimar art cinema was the pinnacle, 'the golden age', of German national cinema, with Thomas Elsaesser concluding that "[t]he Weimar cinema has never been a particularly popular cinema. It has always been something of a film-maker's or a film scholar's cinema."¹⁹

Germany's seemingly irredeemable historical legacy has proven decisive in shaping the dominant tradition in early German film criticism. The search back to the silent era to reveal hidden 'truths' about a German nation troubled by its sense of self would in fact become politically expedient. This assignment proved imperative after 1945 when the need to account for why National Socialism had exacted such a powerful hold over the German public imagination, and how the national cinema had functioned as a hegemonical instrument of Nazi propaganda to produce collective fantasies of Aryan nationalism, came to guide discussion. "[*From Caligari to Hitler*] 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."²⁰ Kracauer's *From Caligari to Hitler*, and Lotte Eisner's *The Haunted Screen*, both written some fifty years ago and by Jewish refugees in exile, set out the terms for this retrospective political project.²¹ Their voices, newly empowered in the wake of another lost war and the personal experience of exile and knowledge about the historical ordeal of Holocaust, demanded that their narratives be heard. The paradox of their own identities – German born Jewish intellectuals separated, both physically and metaphorically, from their own geographical homeland – positioned them as best able to penetrate the daunting complexities of recent historical events.

Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 62-79; and Patrice Petro, (1989), *Joyless Streets: Women and Melodramatic Representation in Weimar Germany*, Princeton: Princeton University Press.

¹⁹ Thomas Elsaesser, (1984), *Film History and Visual Pleasure: Weimar Cinema*, IN: P. Mellencamp and P. Rosen, eds., *Cinema Histories/Cinema Practices*, The American Film Institute Monographic Series, volume 4. Frederick: University Publications of America, 81.

²⁰ Kracauer, (1977), *From Caligari to Hitler*, v.

²¹ Gertrud Koch, (1991), Not Yet Accepted Anywhere: Exile, Memory and Image in Kracauer's Conception of History, *New German Critique*, 54, Fall, 95-109; Inka Mulder-Bach, (1991), History as Autobiography: The Last Things Before the Last, *New German Critique*, 54, Fall, 139-157.

Eisner, a film and art historian writing in Paris during the early-1950s, while working for Henri Langlois, director of the *Cinémathèque française*. Influenced by emergent post-war ‘art’ cinema debates, she focuses attention on how German Romanticism, literary Expressionism and innovations in theatrical production during the first two decades of the twentieth-century (particularly those techniques advanced by theatre director, Max Reinhardt) influenced the visual poetry of the ‘golden age’ of German cinema. She argued that the classic Expressionist art films of the twenties articulated “the tortured soul of contemporary Germany,” with its “overtones of death, horror and nightmare.”²²

“The years immediately following the First World War were strange ones in Germany. The German mind had difficulty in adjusting itself to the collapse of the imperial dream. ...

Mysticism and magic, the dark forces in which Germans have always been more than willing to commit themselves, had flourished in the face of death on the battlefields. The hecatombs of young men fallen in the flower of their youth seemed to nourish the grim nostalgia of the survivors. And the ghosts which had haunted the German Romantics revived, like the shades of Hades after draughts of blood.”²³

Eisner went further to say that the Weimar cinema’s obsession with chilling spectres, waning shadows and the *Doppelgänger* exposed a more sinister side of the German psyche, thus rationalising the nation’s morbid “Faustian soul.” “The weird pleasure that Germans take in evoking horror can perhaps be ascribed in the excessive and very Germanic desire to subject to discipline, together with a certain proneness to sadism.”²⁴

Symptomatic of the pervasive need to account for what had gone wrong were Kracauer’s 1947 compelling endeavours to psychologise the German nation through Weimar film. “The disclosure of [the inner dispositions of the German people] through the medium of the German screen may help in the understanding of Hitler’s ascent and ascendancy.”²⁵ The ‘classic’ masterpieces, such as The Cabinet of Dr Caligari, The Golem (Paul Wegener/Carl Boese, 1920), Nosferatu (F.W. Murnau, 1922), Dr Mabuse, The Gambler (Fritz Lang, 1922) and The Last Laugh (F.W. Murnau, 1924) were

²² Eisner, (1969), *The Haunted Screen*, 17.

²³ *ibid.*, 9.

²⁴ *ibid.*, 95.

reclaimed and repositioned within a post-1945 political context. Metropolis (Fritz Lang, 1925), for example, while ignored in its day because its release only months before The Jazz Singer (Alan Crosland, 1926) consigned it to temporary obscurity, was re-discovered as a right-wing utopian fantasy. Kracauer not only rescues but also re-frames the film, translating the Weimar body politics into a discourse on fascist aesthetics of mass ornament. Often cited as articulating the psycho-historical implications of Weimar cinema and its ghastly premonitions of what was to follow, films such as The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari and Metropolis were reconfigured as giving a post-war generation insight into a nation in political crisis through a shared subject matter: “the soul being faced with the seemingly unavoidable alternative of tyranny and chaos.”²⁶ Certain movies, mythologised as offering historical insight, came to provide the founding myths for Weimar nationhood, profoundly shaping the ways in which the German nation in the inter-war years would be subsequently imagined in terms of political deadlock and social crisis:

“The German soul, haunted by the alternative images of tyrannical rule and instinct-governed chaos, threatened by doom on either side, tossed about in gloomy space like the phantom ship of Nosferatu.”²⁷

Kracauer, like Eisner, identified the German national cinema of the twenties as a haunted screen defined by historical (male) trauma and foreshadowing what was to come. Such was the potency of the discourse generated by these influential thinkers that the link between cultural production and national crisis quickly assumed the status of received wisdom. So deep have these critical formations become embedded into the discourse on German cinema that the underlying assumptions often remain uncontested.

The central problem with the argument about official ideologies couched beneath the film grammar is of course its desire to rationalise history, to provide a complete and incontrovertible explanation as to what went wrong during the inter-war years. Certainly, cultural production has an intimate investment in the political character of its place of origin. Yet the continued emphasis placed on a crisis of the self, uncanny shadows and

²⁵ Kracauer, (1977), *From Caligari to Hitler*, 11.

²⁶ *ibid.*, 77.

²⁷ *ibid.*, 107.

assorted madmen reflects – certainly with hindsight – what critical orthodoxy has come to view as the official version of the German nation in ‘crisis.’ For decades afterwards, scholars, film critics and historians were to be obsessed with Weimar as a national cinema of crisis, because it seemed to locate the roots of German fascism and explain the processes that led eventually to the Holocaust.

The task of extracting essential ‘truths’ about German culture and society from the feature films has subsequently affected how the pre-1919 cinema has been perceived and understood. How German films from the teens have been preserved in the archive, talked about academically, scheduled within exhibition programmes, promoted by the nation’s cultural embassies, such as the Goethe-Institut, or polled within surveys seems to confirm the orthodox wisdom. Between February and September 1994, for example, the German film archives conducted a poll amongst leading film historians, journalists and filmmakers, to find the hundred most important German films. Of these, only three pre-1919 films made it into the pantheon: The Student of Prague (Stellan Rye, 1913) reached number twelve; Wintergartenprogramm (Max Skladanowsky, 1895) was the twenty-fourth choice;²⁸ and Madame DuBarry (Ernst Lubitsch, 1919) came in at number twenty-nine.

Even Kracauer grants space to only four pre-1919 films, recasting them within a genealogy determined by German historic destiny and reconfigured as prophetic works as a consequence: “From the junk heap of archaic films four call for special attention because they anticipate important post-war subjects.”²⁹ Of all the films from the earlier period, Kracauer acknowledged only four as having made any substantial contribution to

²⁸ Interestingly, Eisner disparaged Skladanowsky’s assorted collection of filmed acts in her account, saying “the dull little moving snapshots turned out by the pioneer Max Skladanowsky have nothing in common with the lively topicalities being produced by Louis Lumière at the same time.” Eisner, (1969), *The Haunted Screen*, 7.

²⁹ Kracauer, (1977), *From Caligari to Hitler*, 28. The four films singled out for praise by Kracauer are: The Student of Prague about the young student Baldwin who sells his mirror image to Satan in exchange for an advantageous marriage; The Golem tells the story of Rabbi Loew of Prague who uses alchemy to bring a statue made of clay to life; Homunculus (six-part thriller, Otto Rippert, 1916), starring the popular Danish star, Olaf Fønss, reworks the Frankenstein story into another about obsession and the lust for social power; and The Other (Max Mack, 1913), adapting the *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* motif, is about a respectable Berlin lawyer who, following an accident, suffers from a split personality.

the history of cinema based on the grounds that these movies supported the broader socio-psychological thesis of 'crisis.' Gothic horror films such as The Student of Prague and Paul Wegener's original 1915 version of The Golem, are considered beacons of artistic achievement, and as singular predecessors of Weimar Expressionist cinema, by Kracauer and Eisner, and later by other scholars.³⁰ Even the popular appeal of star diva, Asta Nielsen, was re-appraised by Kracauer, and talked about in relation to how her performance tapped into the psychological disposition of the nation: "[Danish films starring Asta Nielsen] appealed to German audiences by focusing upon psychological conflicts unfolded in natural settings."³¹

Thomas Elsaesser in particular contends that the trauma of personal exile and a need to bear witness to a nation's history mark the Eisner and Kracauer contributions:

"... the two books' interpretative sweep of Germany's national trauma, seen across its cinema, bears itself the marks of personal trauma for their authors. One only has to remind oneself of the fact that Eisner worked in Paris and Kracauer in New York, to realise that they addressed themselves (or had reason to believe they addressed themselves) to a doubting hostile and suspicious audience (of non-German readers, with whom they were trying to make (em)phatic contact, by accommodating distinct sensibilities). ... As exiles, both Kracauer and Eisner served their host countries well, mediating between the respective national predilections or prejudices, and a West Germany trying to face up to its responsibilities as the legal successor of the 'Third Reich.'"³²

Yet, as Elsaesser discusses their capacity to mediate a narrative about the German nation and its cinema during a post-war period of national melancholia and international indignation, he constructs another meta-critical discourse premised upon how personal (traumatic) memories, (re)invented cultural traditions and media representations negotiate national identities and produce cultural images within a globalised world. My own response to Elsaesser's work, as well as to Kracauer and Eisner's urgent political need to define a national cinema and explain its contradictions, is to ask how the

³⁰ Heide Schlüpmann, (1986), *The First German Art Film: Rye's The Student of Prague, 1913*, IN: E. Renschler, ed., *German Film and Literature: Adaptations and Transformation*, New York: Methuen, 1986): 9-24; Hunt, Leon, (1990), *The Student of Prague*, IN: T. Elsaesser, ed., *Early Cinema: Space, Frame, Narrative*, London: BFI Publishing, 389-401.

³¹ Kracauer, (1977), *From Caligari to Hitler*, 20.

³² Thomas Elsaesser, (2000), *Weimar Cinema and After. Germany's Historical Imaginary*, London: Routledge, 21.

paradoxes they all reveal say something about the constructed-ness and complex nature of a national cultural identity within the context of an increasingly migratory and transnational post-1945 global community. National identity thus emerges as a text that is continually elaborated upon and reconstituted, as each writer identifies particular cultural products that best convey the Weimar discourse – or as Elsaesser puts it, the German national cinema’s “*historical imaginary*.”³³

The certainty of these critical contentions is in part an indication of the self-confidence engendered around the distinctiveness of Weimar as a national cinema. Detailed and elaborate examinations of a nation in crisis and the historical *Doppelgänger* were carried out in a context in which the importance of the Weimar art cinema was being established. For instance, Eisner, after peremptorily dismissing the early period (“Any judgement on the period up to 1913-1914 can only be negative”), declares with confidence that,

“the German cinema was never to know another flowering like this one, stimulated, as it was, on the one hand by the theatre of Max Reinhardt and, on the other, by Expressionist art. ... I have attempted to throw light on some of the intellectual, artistic and technical developments which the German cinema underwent during these momentous years.”³⁴

We are left in no doubt about the nature of Eisner’s elitist cultural agenda and her own deep belief in the value of, and contribution made by, certain German art movements to European culture. But these beliefs, at a deeper level, are the product of unquestioned hegemonic assumptions regarding the supremacy of bourgeois cultural forms and the elevated status of intellectual concerns about film culture as political history. Her arguments hinge on the continual and uncritical inscriptions of these various assumptions and beliefs around the German national cinema. Embedded within Eisner’s rhetoric, and appeal to high cultural references and values, is the production of knowledge about Weimar art cinema and the best that was known and thought about representing the German nation on film. *The Haunted Screen*, then, is a discourse that pivots on arguments around national distinctiveness and carried out in a context in which the supremacy and importance of bourgeois critical values went unquestioned.

³³ *ibid.*, 4.

Cultural preferences, and indeed prejudices, that identified certain films as best representing the nation cannot be so easily dislodged. The idea of a haunted screen, struggling to find expression – in distorted, even fantastic forms –, mediating national preoccupations gained widespread authority. The canon has not only had an incalculable impact upon the study of German national cinema, but has also, through the conflation of political history and film, quickly contributed to generating theories on (male) spectatorship and cultural identity. The desire for a total and unambiguous answer can be read as an endeavour to counter the real socio-political instabilities encountered by the German state, as well as allowing the nation to talk about itself. The trouble with such a teleological approach is of course what gets omitted; namely, those films that neither easily fit into the ‘official’ national profile nor speaks enough about German historical crisis. Quite often the existence of an entire popular cinema, especially from the teens, possessing an entirely different logic, remains buried in the archive forgotten or minimised; if, that is, it survives at all.

National Industry and Institutional Practices.

Standard film readings of ‘crisis’ and historical trauma have further been framed by the Imperial German government’s military-style campaign to consolidate and nationalise the entire film industry in 1917; a patriotic impulse that resulted in the creation of Germany’s first major vertically-integrated film company Ufa (*Universum Film Aktiengesellschaft*). The newly created movie studio, which asserted political hegemony over the domestic market, meant that certain national myths could be fostered and controlled.³⁵ Nationalistic perspectives, such as Hans Traub’s 1943 nationalistic treaty on the rise of Ufa, further contributed to the dominant histories.³⁶ Klaus Kreimeier, in a more recent account, summarises the Ufa history by arguing that.

“Ufa’s history is German cultural history, a mix of politics and economics, science and technology, mass madness and mass dreams, kitsch,

³⁴ Eisner, (1969), *The Haunted Screen*, 7-8.

³⁵ A political narrative of Ufa is offered in Julian Petley, (1979), *Capital and Culture: German Cinema, 1933-1945*, London: BFI Publishing.

³⁶ Hans Traub, (1943), *Die Ufa: Ein Beitrag zur Entwicklungsgeschichte des deutschen Filmschaffens*, Berlin: Ufa Buchverlag.

commerce, and art all stirred together in a complex, self-contradictory, and explosive brew.

To tell Ufa's history is also to tell a history of war and big money and those who invested their money both in war and in the art of film. Ufa's victory march is bracketed between two of Germany's most disastrous defeats: Verdun and Stalingrad."³⁷

Kreimeier firmly situates Ufa within an institutional context dominated by ultra right-wing politics, nationalistic business interests and international trade. The Ufa media-empire as described by him becomes imagined as a kind of modernist colossus, consolidating itself as a powerful economic business enterprise. Drawing in the German masses and incorporating the latest technological developments, while haunted by ruthless take-over bids (Alfred Hugenberg) banking interests (Emil Georg von Stauß and the Deutsche Bank) and state interference (Erich Ludendorff) is the narrative that has shaped how Ufa was to be imagined. Throughout the twenties, and especially during the era of National Socialism, politics, the dominant discourse would have us believe, kept nationalisation and centralisation firmly in sight, taking-over or subjugating smaller enterprises in the process.

The Ufa master narrative, an allegorical tale about the economic decadence, technological modernity and grand aspirations of Weimar Germany, is vigorously and authoritatively supported by the way its massive building programme was perceived by contemporary writers such as Kracauer.³⁸ Commercial ambitions were primarily focused on the new capital, Berlin, where Ufa's expansion could quite literally be seen to be reshaping the modern city landscape, often at the cost of smaller cinema chains. Kracauer mentions the rapid spread of the Ufa movie palaces in one of his dispatches from 1926. In doing so, he participates in, and contributes further to the reinforcing of perceptions and attitudes around the Ufa/Weimar myth.

“The large picture houses in Berlin are palaces of distraction; to call them *movie theatres* (*kinos*) would be disrespectful. The latter are still

³⁷ Klaus Kreimeier, (1999), *The Ufa Story: a history of Germany's greatest film company, 1918-1945*, trans. Robert and Rita Kimbery, Berkeley: University of California Press, 3-4.

³⁸ Siegfried Kracauer (1995), *Cult of Distraction: On Berlin's Picture Palaces, 1926, The Mass Ornament: Weimar Essays*, trans. Thomas Y. Levin, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 323-328.

abundant only in Old Berlin and in the suburbs, where they serve neighbourhood audiences, and even there they are declining in number.”³⁹

Imposing structures, many designed by leading architects of the day, the Berlin premiere movie palaces facilitated a revitalisation of the modern urban space. Situated in prime real-estate city locations, these monumental cinemas incorporated ‘progressive’ building design with the latest construction materials. Inside, the interiors were ostentatious and included current ventilation and lighting systems.⁴⁰ The proliferation of movie palaces within the industrial centres – or more precisely, the documenting of these building going up and opening their doors to the public – suggests a general process of institutionalising a pervasive industrial narrative based on constructing coherence out of urban chaos.

In a similar vein, Kracauer’s exposition on the Ufa studios at Neubabelsberg and how its operational space set about creating illusionary fantasies contributes further to the meta-narrative:⁴¹ “We find ourselves in the film city of the Ufa studios in Neubabelsberg, whose 350,000 square meters house a world made of *papier mâché*. Everything guaranteed unnatural and everything exactly like nature.”⁴² In the autumn of 1924, Ufa set about augmenting its production facilities, and in 1926 completed work on a new film studio in Neubabelsberg, designed by Carl Stahl-Urach.⁴³ Reading his essay as discourse, two issues come to the fore. First, a discourse on the struggle for dominance, in terms of industrial operations, technical achievements and cultural values, is in the process of being established. Kracauer’s treaty first of all documents the struggle over the real; remodelling the actual landscape to produce collective modern fantasies: “The dismantling of the world’s contents is radical.”⁴⁴ Knowledge of the Ufa studio

³⁹ *ibid.*, 323.

⁴⁰ Kreimeier, (1999), *The Ufa Story*, 111-120.

⁴¹ Siegfried Kracauer, (1995), *Calico-World: The Ufa City in Neubabelsberg, 1926*, *The Mass Ornament: Weimar Essays*, 281-288.

⁴² *ibid.*, 281.

⁴³ Kreimeier, (1999), *The Ufa Story*, 97-110. “The new filming hall with its steel framework and massive walls measures 123.5 meters long by 56 wide and 14 high at the catwalks. With all auxiliary space included, the total floor area is about 8,000 square meters and the total enclosed space 20,000 cubic meters. The facility has all the necessary technical equipment and options. The large hall can be divided by moveable masonry walls so that several major films and a number of smaller films can be shot at the same time.”

⁴⁴ Kracauer, (1995), *Calico-World: The Ufa City in Neubabelsberg*, 281.

created by and embodied within the discourse shaped by Kracauer serves to construct representation for the company's production facilities and its functioning. Ufa is a modernist spectacle, with coherence produced through constructing fragments, (re)assembling temporality and fore-grounding a sense of becoming.

“The world's elements are produced on the spot in immense laboratories. The process is rapid: the pieces are prepared individually and delivered to their locations, where they remain patiently until they are torn down. They are not organisms that can develop on their own. Woodworking shops, glassmaking shops, and sculpture studios prove that is necessary.”⁴⁵

Furthermore, the Ufa narrative about spatial expansiveness/reconfiguration and institutional control is mirrored back in the tight writing structure of the *feuilleton* dispatch, a mass-produced, mass-circulated and disposable document that has survived in the archive. The journalistic article is marked by a need to bear witness to change as it happens, before it even begins to be over; an agenda that ultimately becomes embedded into the temporal, ephemeral and compositional form of the text itself.

Second, *Calico-World* was written at a specific time in history, a time when Germany was redefining its national profile as well as coming to terms with geographical changes, a mechanised mass culture and urban industrialisation. All the observations and ambivalence present within Kracauer's journalistic dispatch emerges from its assumptions about German modernity and a nation in transition.

“The masters of this world display a gratifying lack of any sense of history; their want of piety knows no restraint – they intervene everywhere. They build culture and then destroy them as they see fit. They sit in judgement over entire cities and let fire and brimstone rain down upon them if the film calls for it. For them, nothing is meant to last; the most grandiose creation is built with an eye to its demolition.”⁴⁶

For me, *Calico World* is neither a eulogy to a lost world nor a naively celebratory account of those trying to build the new. Instead it treats Ufa as an object that can be scrutinised and critically understood. Furthermore this objectification entails the assumption that Ufa's operational facilities and industrial practices bore witness to a 'truth' about German modernity as well as being able to shape that narrative: “Instead of

⁴⁵ *ibid.*, 286.

leaving the world in its fragmented state, one reconstitutes a world out of these pieces.”⁴⁷ Thus Ufa’s pre-eminence was elaborated and articulated by such accounts, in which the function of these writings did not question Ufa’s dominant status but kept it more or less firmly on the cultural agenda. Kracauer’s descriptions participate in, contribute to, and help to reinforce perceptions and attitudes about Ufa and its industrial practices.

The spatial configurations and new frontiers mapped out by Ufa have been imagined as part and parcel of Weimar and later Third Reich ideology, implicated in the struggle for political control and a unified national identity. Just as Ufa’s Berlin flagship movie palaces loomed large over the new modern city landscape, quite literally dwarfing the competition, and its studio lots sprawled across vast acres of land, the imagined history of Ufa from 1917-1945 spoke on behalf of a master institutional narrative for the German film industry. Since the Kracauer text renders Ufa’s significance knowable within the context of the Weimar political history, the texts themselves are given enormous privilege and accumulate greater importance than those without such an embedded agenda.

Orthodox histories tend to assume that Ufa’s empire building burst on to the Weimar scene with all the vigour, exhilaration, chaos and dread of the genuinely new. The timing of the building programme coincided with the formal ideological programme of reconstructing the German nation under the Weimar Republic. Yet neither government interest nor the film industry’s building programme were new, but were in fact a continuation of industrial expansion and urban planning already in progress before the outbreak of the 1914-1918 War. The relative obscurity of such an alternative industrial historical discourse has thus meant that the official one remains intact.

Hegemonic Critical Practice, Cultural Respectability and the Role of the Bourgeoisie.

Our limited awareness of certain aspects of the canon focuses on the role of the bourgeois establishment in defining cultural discourse. As mentioned earlier,

⁴⁶ *ibid.*, 283.

Kracauer made little reference to the cinema from the late-Wilhelmine period.⁴⁸ His omissions are illustrative of the more recent critical and academic narratives that tend to focus on documenting the early cinema's bid for cultural respectability and the emergence of various strategies, including film criticism and the development of theory, that provided a vocabulary for discussing cinema as a form worth talking about.⁴⁹ Detailing the bourgeois hegemonic appropriation of the new medium as well as industrial initiatives, such as the *Autorenkino* ('authors' cinema'), as a means of bringing in a socially respectable audience, has invariably confined the popular cinema even further to the critical margins.

Anton Kaes, in his introductory essay 'The Debate about Cinema: Charting a Controversy, 1909-1929,' examines the critical and often hostile contemporary critical writings on cinema, as the intelligentsia who wielded considerable political clout in such matters came to terms with the commercial expansion of cinema in Wilhelmine Germany.⁵⁰ Cinema initially received little attention from the bourgeois critics, installing itself at fairs (known as *Wanderkinos* – travelling cinema) and variety theatres with the technological apparatus as the main attraction. As it moved into more permanent locations, and its technical and projection facilities improved, the institution of cinema, argues Kaes, began to acquire cultural aspirations and compete alongside more traditional bourgeois art forms. Fierce debate soon broke out, with the most voracious opinions expressed by Germany's most prominent citizens. On the one hand, many argued that cinema seemed to pose a tangible threat to the future existence of printed literature. On the other, a few voiced the opinion that cinema met the cultural needs of the new urban masses. Kaes writes that:

⁴⁷ *ibid.*, 287.

⁴⁸ Kracauer, (1977), *From Caligari to Hitler*, 15-27.

⁴⁹ Texts charting the bourgeois hegemonic appropriation of cinema, include: Anton Kaes, ed., (1978), *Kino-Debatte: Texte zum Verhältnis von Literatur und Film 1909-1929*, Tübingen: Max Niemeyer Verlag; Ludwig Greve, Margot Pehle, Heidi Westhoff, ed., (1976) *Hätte ich das Kino! Die Schriftsteller und der Stummfilm*, Munich: Kösel Verlag; Fritz Güttinger, eds., (1984), *Kein Tag ohne Kino: Schriftsteller über dem Stummfilm*, Frankfurt: Filmmuseum; Heinz B. Heller, (1984), *Literarische Intelligenz und Film: Zur Veränderung der ästhetischen Theorie und Praxis unter dem Eindruck des Film, 1910-1930 in Deutschland*, Tübingen: Max Niemeyer Verlag; and Helmut Diederichs, (1986), *Anfänge deutscher Filmkritik*, Stuttgart: R. Rischer/Wiedleröther, 1986.

“Writers, journalists, theatre and cultural critics actively attempted to come to terms with the new phenomenon of cinema; they compared literature and film in order to reassess and re-map the boundaries separating the two mediums. This process resulted in a fundamental examination of the laws governing the structures and effects of both literature and film.”⁵¹

Bourgeois hegemonic cultural practices, such as the development of film criticism and theoretical interventions, emerge as a system of statements that can be made about cinema and the people who went to see the films, about bourgeois cultural powers and about the relationship between these two. Periodicals, such as *Bild und Film* (1912-1915) coming out of the Mönchen-Gladbach publishing house, the illustrated weekly *Filmkunst* (1912-1914), and the Berlin-based *Kunst im Kino* (1912-1913), began to define the importance of cinema. It is within the system of knowledge and belief about the cultural landscape in which acts of bourgeois appropriation occur. Although generated within a society dominated by the cultural authority of the bourgeoisie, it was through these discourses about the cinema and its audience that the cultural elite confronted and spoke about itself. At the very least it articulated a discord in the bourgeois consciousness based upon an antagonistic encounter with other new and competing knowledges about the cultural world.

Recent academic endeavours have sought to shed further light on the role played by the bourgeoisie. Both by dissecting methodologies and thinking through the underlying assumptions of the bourgeois discourse, scholars have begun to assess the function of these contemporary critical and theoretical writings about film and their relation to the institution of cinema. Sabine Hake, examining early German critical and theoretical writings on film from 1895-1933, suggests that these writings assumed a meta-discursive function: film criticism and theory were at one and the same time about appraising film and about its impact on critical discourse. It dealt concurrently with issues of representation and interpretation; while also addressing the institutionalisation

⁵⁰ Anton Kaes, (1987), *The Debate about Cinema: Charting a Controversy (1909-1929)*, trans. David J. Levin, *New German Critique*, 40, Winter, 7-33.

⁵¹ *ibid.*, 14.

of cinema and the institution of criticism.⁵² Sifting through documentation written by middle-class intellectuals, social thinkers, film critics and the custodians of good taste, Hake sees the first-hand evidence as documenting an historical shift. It is a critical shift from the Wilhelmine discourse on *Kino* (cinema as social experience, in which critical attentions were focused on reception profiles and the question of spectatorship and censorship) to the Weimar discourse on *Film* (film as an aesthetic experience, resulting in detailed formal and narrative analyses and reviews akin to art appreciation). What these prolonged debates reveal, Hake argues, is a field of contention, in which “writing about film meant writing about mass culture and class society, questions of national and sexual identity, and the experience of modernity.”⁵³ Hake’s collation of a broad spectrum of early critical and theoretical debates authored by moral guardians, social thinkers and intellectuals provides a framework for shaping the way in which the cultural elite imagined its dominion. It is one that gives further insight into the pressures under which old categories of interpretation were forced to account for and understand the nature and meaning of the new mass medium.⁵⁴

Hake also argues that the unease between dominant (literary and theatrical) and emergent (cinematic) forms, exacerbated by protracted debate, reveals a re-negotiation of the critic’s role. She proposes that early film criticism had a dual function in this respect. While it strengthened the critics’ credibility within the public realm, as these writers and social thinkers set about incorporating cinema into pre-existing critical bourgeois models, it would also change the parameters of film criticism in the process, participating in the formation of new social and cultural theories. Authors would thus use the practice of critical writing to explore other modern cultural practices as well as to reflect upon their own participation within such matters.

Three principal conclusions about the critical literature can be drawn from Hake’s work. The first is that, as the period wore on, the cultural categories laid out by the

⁵² Sabine Hake, (1993), *The Cinema’s Third Machine: Writing on Film in Germany, 1907-1933*, Lincoln: University of Nebraska.

⁵³ *ibid.*, x.

⁵⁴ *ibid.*, 89.

middle-class authors became more visibly defined and exclusive. Yet Hake does not follow through the implications of such a shift, leaving it instead as a structuring device for her book. As a discourse, these critical writings inscribed the cultural authority of the bourgeoisie. Such an assumption of power elevated their discourse on the development of cinema to a level of considerable importance that guaranteed its identification with the received 'truths' about the evolution of German cinema. The assumption has therefore been that intellectuals, cinema reformers and custodians of good taste single-handedly effected the shift toward cultural respectability, cajoling the industry and bringing cinema ever more in line with discriminating bourgeois tastes and social values. No doubt these bourgeois writings have profoundly shaped the way in which the cinematic landscape was traditionally imagined – the character of those who participated, its cultural aspirations and how the national film product anticipated the creative filmmaking era of Weimar, thereby deleting certain histories and breaking with the cinema's seemingly disreputable past.

The second conclusion relates to an unquestioned reliance on bourgeois critical writings to set the agenda. In so doing, it has only served to verify Wilhelmine cinema as a precursor to Weimar, for it assumes a teleology, a chronological narrative skewed by bourgeois bias based on rigid linearity, historical separation and rhetorical containment. Hake's collection, for example, charts a historical progression from the Wilhelmine socio-political writings, focused on cinema as a public entertainment venue for the masses with its immediate and seductive pleasures, toward Weimar film criticism, based on bourgeois aesthetic principles defined by critical distance, emotional control and political judgement. For Hake, the cultural transformation was predicated upon a terminological shift from the Wilhelmine discourse on *Kino* to the Weimar one on *Film*:

“The linguistic shift from *Kino* to *Film* sanctioned the transformation of the film business from a small cottage industry to a large industrial complex that included production facilities, motion picture theatre chains, publishing ventures and a large pool of skilled and unskilled labour.”⁵⁵

Wilhelmine cinema, as Hake understands it, stands apart from Weimar cinema, thus mirroring the theoretical shift and bourgeois critical evolution. Nowhere does Hake

tackle the complex historical constellation that precipitated such a transformation.⁵⁶ Nor does she explore the negotiations that were taking place within cultural practice beyond the bourgeois remit. Hake continues to assume these two national cinemas are distinct and isolated from each other, one a populist cinema associated with the uncritical mass (Wilhelmine), and the other governed by ‘classical’ bourgeois criteria and art appreciation (Weimar).

The third conclusion is that, on the whole, traditional assessment criteria for defining good art from bad were retained and even extended. Films that did not conform to bourgeois aesthetic standards or establish the appropriate critical distance were steadily pushed further to the cultural margins, especially after eminent writers entered the intellectual fray, or renowned theatre directors and famous stage performers began making films themselves. Note, for example, the high profile collaboration of Germany’s seminal theatre director, Max Reinhardt with PAGU, Paul Davidson’s pre-eminent ‘artistic’ production company in Berlin. Even though Reinhardt made few films, PAGU’s publicity machine made much of his involvement in film production, with his name and reputation used, as Bradford Smith contends, “as a means of adding legitimacy and a cache of respectability to the films and the company.”⁵⁷ Celebrating this discourse enabled the institution of bourgeois writing to position popular cinema as the cultural ‘other’ so that its difference from the respectable films of Reinhardt could be used to assert the importance of the middle-class trade and maintain bourgeois cultural authority. Establishing the popular cinema as cultural ‘other’ proved to be imperative for the bourgeoisie. It allowed them not only to define bourgeois cultural practice as better, but also enabled them to strengthen their own identity through invoking such a juxtaposition.

Underpinning the demarcation between the popular and classical cinemas is a line drawn by the bourgeoisie. Aspects that did not adhere to bourgeois standards of

⁵⁵ op.cit., 108.

⁵⁶ A similar point is made by Adam Daniel in his review; Daniel, (1996), Writing about the Movies: Bourgeois Öffentlichkeit and Early German Cinema, *New German Critique*, 67, Winter, 177-189.

⁵⁷ Bradford Smith, (1990), On the Opposite Shore: Max Reinhardt and Film, 1910-1924, *IN*: P. Cherchi Usai and L. Cordelli, eds., *Before Caligari: German Cinema, 1895-1920*, Pordenone: Edizioni Biblioteca dell’Immagine, 124.

appropriate taste or cultural value – aesthetic devices not derived from traditional bourgeois forms of entertainment, filmmakers who did not hail from respectable theatrical backgrounds, or spectators who were judged as nothing more than passive consumers of spectacle – became more or less associated with an earlier unrefined and primitive period before cinema evolved into a serious art form. Keeping the stories of the popular/counter and art/classical cinemas apart must be related in no small measure to the intervention of the bourgeoisie – the cultural elite – and a structure of attitude that finds concrete reference in the work itself. Either as intellectuals/theoreticians, or custodians of good taste/social morality, the bourgeoisie exercised significant political clout in such matters: and their role in policing the rigid divide between art and the popular cinema can neither be underestimated nor completely ignored. Nevertheless a more nuanced approach is needed to qualify and articulate difference within the field of bourgeois critical writings on German cinema.

National Cinema/Prestige, Theories of Mass Culture and Intellectual Interventions.

Another reason for the tendency to keep the two cinema histories separate relates to the intellectual fixation on the German art cinema and its authorial pantheon as appropriate entertainment for the masses; a position linked to the activities of leftist intellectuals beyond the institution of cinema. Cultural legitimacy gained both by the Weimar cinema, and the authored art films of the late-Wilhelmine era, must be read in relation to the new trend of essayists and intellectuals who trained their considerable critical attentions on to the cinema from the mid-teens onward.

“[Three films] mirrored fantastic worlds full of chimerical creatures; this was in harmony with the progressive German film theories of the time. Many a contemporary writer encouraged the filmmakers to substantiate the specific possibilities of their medium by rendering not as much existing objects as products of pure imagination. Hermann Häfker ... advised film poets to interweave real and unreal elements. The war enthusiast fond of fairy tales: it was a truly German phenomenon. Similarly, Georg Lukács, who was later to change from a bourgeois aesthete into a Marxist thinker, wrote in 1913 that he considered the film tantamount to the fairy-tale and the dream.”⁵⁸

⁵⁸ Kracauer, (1977), *From Caligari to Hitler*, 28.

The significance of an elite band of German-speaking intellectuals, such as Lukács, Kracauer, Béla Balázs, and Rudolf Arnheim, and their political theorisation of cinema, cannot be underestimated.⁵⁹ Esteemed critics and philosophers coming on board from respectable intellectual disciplines outside of the medium, doubtless legitimated film as an aesthetic art form and elevated the cultural status of both the cinematic experience and certain filmmakers in the process. Such a political and intellectual intervention into the discourse on early German cinema further differentiated between art films and the popular cinema, in which the balance came to be further weighted in favour of the former.

Theoretical attempts to formulate an idea of what constituted the poetics of film aesthetics preoccupied thinkers, especially during the twenties, and served to construct knowledge that would position the earlier popular cinema as subservient. Balázs, for instance, attempting a physiognomical inventory of the single shot and its aesthetic possibilities, reifies cinema's visual abstraction into an understandable vocabulary for explaining modern life as immediate and fragmentary. Textual analyses and deciphering shot compositions functioned within Balázs' theories to uncover the hieroglyphics of modern life.

“Like shy women, the objects shroud their faces with veils. The veil of our traditional and abstract view of all things. ... Artistic Expressionism takes away the veil. Undoubtedly film is the origin of Expressionism, perhaps the only proper home of Expressionism.”⁶⁰

Categorisation of the hidden language of modernity, and a desire to make visible the abstractness of modern experience through the feminine, perfectly represent how intellectuals like Balázs sought to create a language for scrutinising and understanding the formal materiality of film. An essential feature of the discourse was to objectify the single shot, and treat film as an intellectual object for serious study. Knowledge of film aesthetics, teased out by esteemed intellectuals like Balázs, in a sense *creates* an

⁵⁹ Hake, (1993), *The Cinema's Third Machine*, esp. chs.10. Béla Balázs, ch. 11. Siegfried Kracauer, and ch.12. Rudolf Arnheim.

⁶⁰ Béla Balázs, (1924), *Der sichtbare Mensch oder die Kultur des Films*, Vienna: Deutsch-österreichischer Verlag, 88.

appropriate language for understanding the semiotics of the shot. Through such language, film emerges as something one scrutinises, interprets, analyses and judges. Film semiotics is made readable and given a narrative, comprehended and represented by hegemonic cultural frameworks defined by critical thinkers and intellectuals.

The theoretical intervention also reflected a growing interest amongst the intellectual community in the relationship between politics, (political) spectatorship and film aesthetics. A number of influential socialist thinkers and theorists were increasingly preoccupied with the notion of cinema not only as an art form of the new urban masses but also as an appropriate means for allowing them to critically engage with their socio-political surroundings. Clara Zetkin, founding member of the Independent Social Democratic party and leader of the Social Democratic women's movement, wrote in 1924 on the revolutionary possibilities of film for the left.

“We must develop the great cultural potential of film. In a revolutionary sense – that does not mean that we should simply reverse the characteristic schemes of the bourgeois film and show the bourgeois as a devil, the proletarian as an angel. ... The film with a revolutionary content must provide information about the proletarian situation, must advance proletarian class-consciousness, and awaken and strengthen the determination and readiness for self-sacrifice in the revolutionary struggle.”⁶¹

Exponents of such thinking adhered to and promoted the orthodox bourgeois ideal of a critical spectator, a person able to distant themselves and critically engage with what they saw: “Thus in order to understand good films one must have certain theoretical and aesthetic abilities.”⁶² We must be left in no doubt about the cultural assumptions shared by the intellectual community and their attitudes toward ‘good’ and ‘bad’ films. As left-wing activist and critic, Willi Münzenberg, wrote in his pamphlet entitled *Erobert den Film!* (Conquer the Film!): “Film does not only stand in the service of entertainment – although it primarily services this end – but to an increasing degree it also educates.”⁶³

⁶¹ Clara Zetkin, (1924), quoted *IN: F. Hirschbach, et al, eds., (1980), Germany in the Twenties: The Artist as Social Critic*, New York: Holmes and Meier, 80.

⁶² Béla Balázs,(1982), *Schriften zum Film*, volume 1, Helmut H. Diederichs, Wolfgang Gersch and Magda Nagy, ed., Munich: Carl Hanser, 349.

⁶³ Willi Münzenberg, (1925) *Erobert den Film! Winke aus der Praxis für die Praxis proletarische Filmpropaganda*, Berlin: Neuer Deutscher Verlag, 88; cited in trans, Hake, *The Cinema's Third Machine*, 189-190.

Critical, self-confirming parameters were established in which the idea of the politically active/critically engaged versus exploited/passive spectator was circulated, and the role of the film critic to define these positions was enshrined.

Soon aesthetic preferences emerged as critics considered how best to galvanise the mass audience into active (political) participation. Note, for example, what Balázs had to say about how New Objectivity contributed little to politicising the mass:

“No, this New Objectivity has nothing to do with revolution, socialism, or the proletariat. On the contrary. It is the embodiment of a fully rationalised world held together by the power of corporate business. It is the aesthetics of the conveyor belt.”⁶⁴

Such a view was in keeping with traditional ideas about aesthetic preferences, a standard debate about critical judgement versus surface distractions and the politicalisation of the masses. The intellectual acceptance that cinema had to somehow actively engage the audience to think on a socio-political level and not merely provide fleeting distractions encouraged them to make certain choices from what was available at that time. Adherence to some general principles for the production of suitable art works to promote critical distance and shape political judgement thus began to emerge:

“Film could only become a work of art in that highest sense if it were photographed in a productive and not a reproductive way, if the ultimate and determining creative expression of spirit, soul and emotion would develop not through performance and *mise en scène* but only through the shooting of the filmic images themselves, if the cameraman, who in the final analysis creates the film, would be the spiritual creator, the writer of the work, the actual filmmaker.”⁶⁵

What proves intriguing about Balázs’ comments is that while he intellectually positioned himself as Marxist film critic, and did attempt to theoretically unite political activism with aesthetics and philosophy, he remained committed to traditional classical notions of the film artist-cum-director as centre of cultural production and creative meaning.

⁶⁴ Béla Balázs, (1984), *Schriften zum Film*, volume 2. Helmut H. Diederichs, Wolfgang Gersche and Magda Nagy, eds., Munich: Carl Hanser, 237; cited in trans, Hake (1993), *ibid.*, 238.

⁶⁵ *ibid.*, 210.

His formal analyses of how certain key directors rearranged the physiognomy of the shot into a coherently authored text more or less validated the codes and conventions that defined what was best about film as a modern art form *par excellence*. From the films of D.W.Griffith and Charlie Chaplin to works by Soviet filmmakers, Eisenstein and Pudovkin, and a “good German film” like Phantom (F.W. Murnau, 1922), Die Nibelungen (Fritz Lang, 1924) and Nosferatu, Balázs’ preferred choices were in tune with an entire generation of German film critics. He identified new formal principles and good aesthetic practice across a range of different cinemas, but all these devices were based on explicit appeals to classical criteria, such as spatial and temporal logic, narrative coherence and psychological realism. “Yes, we dream of a great synthesis; European art united with American technology.”⁶⁶ Even though Balázs disagreed with Eisenstein’s theories of montage editing, preferring instead a smooth transition between shots, international dialogue between intellectuals was established and general principles of good film-making practice installed. Moreover, those directors acknowledged as making the most substantial contribution to film art were those whose work confirmed what constituted the best in early film aesthetics.

Interested in the phenomenological experience that governed cinematic spectatorship, Kracauer implicitly disputes Balázs’ metaphysical approach to viewing disposition. Focusing on visual pleasure, mass entertainment and the culture of “distraction” (*Zerstreuung*),⁶⁷ his reviews characterise the cinematic experience as a social one, and attempted to understand how it reflected the processes of German society in motion through critical discourse. He increasingly concentrated his efforts on exploring cinema’s emancipatory potential for a new class of white-collar worker (*die Angestellten*), a petit-bourgeois social group who had only come into existence as a result of changing work patterns associated with industrial capitalism.⁶⁸ Kracauer viewed

⁶⁶ Balázs, (1982), *Schriften zum Film*, 155.

⁶⁷ Kracauer, (1995), *Cult of Distraction: On Berlin’s Picture Palaces, 1926*, 323-328, esp. 325-327.

⁶⁸ Kracauer became increasingly interested in this particular sociological grouping, published a seminar study entitled *Die Angestellten* in 1930 about their work habits, public behaviour, leisure activities and family structures. This new tradition-less mass of employees were to become an extremely important, if not volatile, political constituency within Germany. While they had aspirations to be bourgeois, they were, at the same time, deeply affected by the post-war years of hyper-inflation and fear of unemployment; Siegfried Kracauer, 1930, *Die Angestellten: Aus dem neuesten Deutschland*, Frankfurt: Frankfurter

distraction as a constant of modern life and the new mechanised working environment, an approximation to the working conditions and leisure habits of the white-collar culture [*Angestelltenkultur*] in which individuals had to process an ever-changing proliferation of stimuli. He suggested that cinema gave audiences a unique opportunity to perceive the conditions in which they lived, for it allowed the working masses to negotiate and reflect upon the new, mechanised, fragmented and unrelenting tension [*Anspannung*] of contemporary social existence to which they were subjected: “[movie theatres] must aim radically toward a kind of distraction that exposes disintegration instead of masking it.”⁶⁹

Kracauer’s interest in identifying a balance between social criticism and cinematic pleasures elevated internationally acclaimed star comedians such as Charlie Chaplin, Buster Keaton and Harold Lloyd at the expense of localised German generic forms like comedies and operettas. He felt, for example, that the physicality of Chaplin’s anarchic slapstick routines made visible the actual experience of modern alienation and the attrition of working life. Like Balázs before him, Kracauer looked beyond provincial national boundaries to an international film style in order to validate speaking about lowbrow cinematic forms. Overwhelmingly the intellectual elite claimed for Chaplin the status of modernist artist. Writers and critics such as Yvan Goll, Alfred Polgar and Hans Siemsen praised the virtuoso style of Chaplin’s performance that interwove respectable generic forms (e.g. melodrama) with low-cultural folk humour devices (e.g. physical burlesque).⁷⁰ Certain attitudes reveal a central ambivalence at the core of the intellectual project in relation to mass culture and popular entertainment. It embraced internationally-famed comedians rather than home-grown talent, believed spectators who failed to critically/politically engage with cinema’s liberating potential were reactionary and passive, and focused on the link between form and ideology rather than the formal system for its own sake. Kracauer’s reviews thus represent another repositioning of the

Societäts-Druckerei; reprinted in Kracauer, (1971), *Schriften*: volume 1, Karsten Witte, ed., Frankfurt: Suhrkamp Verlag, 205-304.

⁶⁹ Kracauer, (1995), *Cult of Distraction: On Berlin’s Picture Palaces*, 328.

⁷⁰ Yvan Goll defined Chaplin as a true film poet; Goll, (1920), *Die Chaplinade. Eine Kinodichtung*, Dresden: Kaemmerer. Other contemporaries who analysed Chaplin as a modernist included, Alfred Polgar, (1924), Chaplin, *Die Weltbühne*, 20: 28-29; Hans Siemsen, (1924), *Charlie Chaplin*, Leipzig: Feuer. In a more recent account, Sabine Hake discusses the enormous popularity of Chaplin a decade later, Hake, (1990), *Chaplin Reception in Weimar Germany*, *New German Cinema*, 51, 147-164;

popular comedian, a critical manoeuvre that re-negotiated aspects that did not fit comfortably within a socio-political perspective.

Even though Kracauer reviewed films representing mainstream tastes and values (particularly those from Hollywood), familiar names (e.g. G.W. Pabst) and films (e.g. Westfront 1918, 1930; and Kameradschaft, 1931; two social realist films directed by Pabst) still emerged as outstanding examples of a distinctly German national cinema. Despite shifting critical parameters, Kracauer continued to rehearse the dominant paradigm of Expressionist versus social-realist filmmaking. This encoding and comparison of the 'art' films and their 'great' directors ultimately ensured that the popular cinema with its distracting pleasures was viewed as an aberration, as an oddity, and thus accorded an inferior position.

The privileging of the German art film, lauded as Germany's most significant contribution to early cinema, must therefore be understood as a product of these various attempts to establish methodological frameworks and a critical standpoint by well-known theorists. For thinkers such as Kracauer and Balázs, the fantastic and social realist films would best realise the emancipatory potential of cinema, and illustrate what was innovative and exciting about silent cinema, in terms of the centrality of the author, adherence to classical (international) criteria and the promotion of an appropriate spectatorial position for the urban masses. In the encounter between theorist and the cinema via film theory, certain art films, international performers and authors would be enshrined at the expense and inevitable subordination of typical genres and domestic stars. This is precisely what occurs when the writings of well-known theorists are held to signify what was good about film form. The theoretical texts, defined by critical distance and intellectual objectivity, are themselves accorded enormous status because of their high profile authors and accrued greater significance within the film studies academy than the cinema they sought to analyse. Popular experience is rendered silent and its reality revealed by the theorist or political activist to be not worth serious consideration. Consequently, given that the masses were prohibited from speaking, it is the theorists

and intellectuals who help create and describe the reality of the cinematic experience. In so doing, these writers further regulate the discourse on German cinema.

Against the art/Weimar backdrop, discussions about the popular cinema between 1910-1919 have taken shape as an act of subversion, vis-à-vis the 'official' histories of 'crisis' and the nationalist impulse toward industrial centralisation, in critical terms, vis-à-vis the intellectual interventions, through cross-theorisation, and the privileging of certain forms of film-making practice defined as art, and, in cultural terms, vis-à-vis the intervention of the bourgeoisie and their authority to define and police appropriate cultural meaning. Perhaps most troubling about these arguments has been the tendency to elevate the status of Germany's educated elite and intellectuals to dictate the terms of these debates. Scholars still overwhelmingly privilege the role played by the bourgeoisie in assigning cultural meaning and fixing definitive truths, as questions of nationhood and national cinema continue to overlap, intersect and define the 'official' version.

Feminist Resistance. Miriam Hansen: The Female Spectator, the Public Space and Early Cinema.

Identifying discourses beyond the reach of the bourgeoisie and locating alternative knowledge allows us to question the claims made by the ruling elite to authentication. One scholar who has challenged the hegemonic dominance of the bourgeoisie to define an alternative public space is Miriam Hansen. 'Early Cinema: Whose Public Space?' by Hansen has profoundly altered our thinking about the construction of cinema as a public space in late-Wilhelmine Germany.⁷¹ Hansen outlines the character of early cinema as a new kind of proletarian sphere, an egalitarian space specially designed to appeal to all. Cinema emerged as a public sphere in its own right, she proposes, constituted by an audience largely excluded from official culture – or as she put it, "people who had never before been perceived as an audience in the proper sense of the German word '*Publikum*.'"⁷²

⁷¹ Miriam Hansen, (1983), Early Cinema: Whose Public Space, *New German Critique*, 29, Spring-Summer, 147-184.

⁷² *ibid.*, 177.

Hansen's theory of a new kind of public space is indebted to the Frankfurt School and in particular the theoretical work carried out by Oskar Negt and Alexander Kluge. Explicitly opposing the analysis of the bourgeois public sphere put forward by Jürgen Habermas, whose Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere was widely read by intellectuals at the time of socio-political unrest in West Germany during the late-60s,⁷³ Negt and Kluge's approach is concerned with a radical re-conceptualising of the public space in relation to the conditions of late-capitalism.⁷⁴

“According to Negt/Kluge, the possibility of an antithetical concept of the public sphere cannot be derived from a critical analysis of the classical public sphere (redemption of its ideals against its ideology) but has to be sought in the contradictory make-up of late-capitalist public spheres of production.”⁷⁵

Hansen contends that Negt and Kluge provide a useful conceptual framework for critically analysing an alternative public sphere, or what Negt and Kluge call a “proletarian public sphere,” that did not depend upon classical bourgeois classificatory terms for definition. Such a notion of ‘proletarian’ transcends its empirical definition (e.g. the working class) to refer instead to a “counter-concept” category that understands the arrangement of human experience within the public sphere, as both spontaneous and socially organised: a dialectic between immediate experience (self expression) and historical materialism. Informed by Marxist theory, and influenced by the Frankfurt School, Negt and Kluge suggest that this ‘proletarian’ public sphere refer to pre-existing ones based on inclusion and multiplicity (as opposed to the classical bourgeois model based on exclusivity and totality). However, it also establishes a fundamentally new structure in the public organisation of human experience and socialisation, enabling individuals to perceive social reality across public and private domains, and to “provide a foundation for the potential formation of class consciousness as a partisan consciousness of totality enriched by substantive vital interests.”⁷⁶ The Negt and Kluge concept of the

⁷³Jürgen Habermas, (1962), *Strukturwandel der Öffentlichkeit*, Neuwied and Berlin.

⁷⁴ Oskar Negt and Alexander Kluge, (1977), *Öffentlichkeit und Erfahrung: Zur Organisationsanalyse von bürgerlicher und proletarischer Öffentlichkeit*, Frankfurt-am-Main: Suhrkamp.

⁷⁵ Miriam Hansen, (1983), *Early Cinema: Whose Public Space?* 156.

⁷⁶ Eberhard Knödler-Bunte, (1975), *The Proletarian Public Sphere and Political Organisation: an analysis of Oskar Negt and Alexander Kluge's The Public Sphere and Experience*, trans. Sarah and Frank Lennox, *New German Critique*, 4, Winter, 56.

counter – proletarian – public sphere attempts to reconcile Marxist analysis about society with real subjective human day-to-day existence. “With this book it is our political interest to establish a framework for a discussion which expands the analytical concepts of political economy downwards, to the real experience of human beings.”⁷⁷

Adapting the Negt and Kluge concept of a proletarian public sphere, Hansen has identified early German cinema in this transitional period as a socio-cultural space that offered the potential for re-organising public experience, particularly for those social groups, such as women, whom official forces had previously ignored. That the empirical data from the era reveals “patterns of interaction between the film industry and its audience, both of [which were] determined by a capitalist mode of production,”⁷⁸ leads Hansen to conclude that women were attracted to the cinema precisely because it represented a radically new kind of public sphere for them. As a consequence, she goes on to “tentatively” suggest that the high percentage of women participating in this new arena might explain why cinema faced so much critical disdain and bourgeois resistance as it moved into the dominant public sphere. For Hansen, the cultural ambivalence expressed by contemporary commentators was sexual and gender rather than class related.

Evidence provided by Emilie Altenloh’s 1914 dissertation on cinema-going habits and female fascination with the movies enables Hansen to discuss how women negotiated cinema’s new public spaces in more detail.⁷⁹ “With all due skepticism to empirical studies, Altenloh’s close analysis of theatre statistics and 2,400 questionnaires has to be considered one of the most differentiated sources on spectator stratification.”⁸⁰ Hansen notes the marked preferences women had for certain genres. Romances and melodramas, especially those advertised as ‘social dramas,’ featuring film diva, Asta Nielsen, in the title role, proved to be extremely popular amongst women moviegoers. Hansen further contends that these choices were symptomatic of the growing assumption

⁷⁷ Negt and Kluge, (1977), *Öffentlichkeit und Erfahrung*, 16.

⁷⁸ Hansen, (1983), ‘Whose Public Space?’, 176.

⁷⁹ Emilie Altenloh, (1914), *Zur Soziologie des Kino: Die Kino-Unternehmung und die sozialen Schichten ihrer Besucher*, Medienladen: Hamburg, 1977.

of power by these nascent German citizens and their demand for the new cultural institutions to *produce* representation for them.

The self conscious *mise en scène* of sexual difference may have appealed to female spectators as strongly as it did because it dramatised their precarious social and economic status in terms of the patriarchal dilemma: woman's access to the world of power, action and wealth is gained either through a husband or transvestite clothes."⁸¹

But for Hansen, the films were not the only reason why women attended the cinema.

"Early cinema also provided a social space, a place apart from the domestic and work spheres, where people of similar background and status could find company (not necessarily of their own kin), where young working women would seek escape from the fate of their mothers."⁸²

What she takes from Altenloh's findings is the idea that cinema's appeal for women was based on a gender specific experience of the modern public sphere. Cinema bound together the public and private spheres, providing an escape from the increasing attrition of domestic labour, social isolation and/or financial inequalities of the modern work place. Going to the cinema also fulfilled an aspirational desire to be a public being, someone other than a *hausfrau* working within the confines of the private home. The institution of cinema made it possible for the female to be with other like-minded individuals who shared her social ambitions, constituting a crucial space that allowed for a social redefinition of female identity to take place. Cinema as a public sphere, therefore, not only actively courted the institutional patronage of those who had never before been addressed as public beings, but also came to align women's real experience with the dominant public sphere: "more than any other entertainment form, the cinema opened up a space – a social space as well as a perceptual, experimental horizon – in women's lives."⁸³

The enormous contribution of Hansen in shaping current thinking about the early silent cinema as a radically new kind of public space is undeniable. Defining a

⁸⁰ Hansen, (1983), *Whose Public Space?* 176.

⁸¹ *ibid.*, 184.

⁸² *ibid.*, 158.

⁸³ Miriam Hansen, (1991), *Babel and Babylon: Spectatorship and American Silent Cinema*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

'proletarian public space' in theoretical and feminist terms has enabled her to formulate new questions about female spectatorship. Her work, in particular, has refined ideas on how cinema during the teens attracted women in terms of culturally reshaping the public and private spheres for them. Film, as a new kind of collective spectacle, offered these female spectators a chance for social redefinition and a place to rethink a sense of public self. Despite its attractiveness, Hansen's feminist project does have its limitations. One concern is its historical reconstruction of the female audience. Negt and Kluge's post-1968 concept of the 'proletarian public sphere' is both a strength and weakness. It has provided a useful conceptual framework for shifting attention onto historical audiences who have been neglected or treated with critical disdain by more orthodox writers. At the same time, however, it has tended to politicise the female spectator as some kind of dissident public being agitating for representation. These cinema-goers are repositioned centre stage of an ideological struggle about public exclusion and the function of visual culture to produce representation for the politically disenfranchised. For this Frankfurt School-inspired feminist analysis, the female spectator becomes an important political emblem of that which must be recovered in order to "transform women from an object of knowledge into a subject capable of appropriating knowledge."⁸⁴ The argument, however, recoups the fact that cinema appealed to women and over-determines the idea as ideologically progressive. Examining in more detail the discourse of cinema reveals that many different factors contributed to the construction of the imagined female audience at this time in history, of which the emerging emancipatory idea was but one in a series of competing others.

Hansen's argument is further complicated when the 'ideal' political female spectator becomes subsequently supplanted to reclaim female spectatorship as a progressive – if not counter or subversive – socio-political act. Using Altenloh's statistical data on cinema attendance in Mannheim, Hansen claims to authoritatively describe what cinema really meant for real women in late-Imperial Germany, a social group perceived to be on the political margins of the dominant public sphere. Recouping

⁸⁴ Rosalind Delmar, (1986), *What is Feminism?* IN: J. Mitchell and A. Oakley, eds., *What is Feminism?* Oxford: Blackwell, 25.

female spectatorship as a 'positive' experience rationalises the actual historical subject – the real-life woman cinema-goer – as some kind of subversive cultural guerrilla. Drawing here on the Negt and Kluge Marxist-informed concept of an alternative 'proletarian public sphere,' Hansen's thesis, in suggesting how an authentic 'feminine voice' may be heard, has the effect of reclaiming a public sphere as progressive that was once thought of as negative. Restoring this political female spectator up to 1919 who then becomes lost to the Weimar cultural sphere supports the separation debates already outlined in this chapter. It further suggests that the viewing habits of these spectators did not conform to classical norms associated with the Weimar cinema. The 'counter-cinema' and its 'progressive' female spectators become a catch-all political justification, allowing historically-obscured popular texts to be re-read in opposition to dominant film practices and theories.

If we take a more Foucauldian approach, Hansen's theoretical appropriation of the Frankfurt School-inspired idea of counter public sphere as a means of making sense of Altenloh's empirical data on women and their cinema habits offers us another perspective on the public space. The socio-political model Hansen discusses, no less than other models I shall later talk about in this thesis, reveal the female spectator to be a contested sign within the field of cinema discourse, a fact that has often been neglected in the writings. My question, therefore, is not so much who are the authentic women amongst the early film audiences as why does one model seem more credible than another in providing a true and accurate account of the movie-going experience and of cinema as a new kind of public space at this time?

All too often, feminist re-constructions of the historical female audience proceed as if all women movie-goers, regardless of class, age, occupation or marital status, attended the cinema for the same reasons (e.g. a public sphere where women could establish an identity for themselves). I propose instead to suggest that it is necessary to consider why these similar models of behaviour, identity and attitude kept coming up in the contemporary documentation. It is important to interrogate the 'official' versions, and to think why certain experiences were made *visible* as a consequence of all this talk. Further contention arises between the choices made possible for women by the modern world

and ‘official’ attempts to *represent* and regulate them and in the convergence of new urban spaces and competing demands from those modern institutions like cinema to attract them as an audience. All these different statements offer insight into the relationship between women subjects, female bodies and power/knowledge. Given a Foucauldian understanding of discourse, there is no reason other than to suggest that the female spectator is made up of a series of multiple, unstable and complex categories. She is someone who is not only to be interpreted as a discursive construct within a field of discourse about cinema, but also to be seen as positioned by institutional and cultural practices through which her very identities and desires were formed and constituted. Understanding the mechanisms that brought forward such responses (for example, how did the institution of cinema make those identities possible) reveals a far more contested public “space” than has thus far been charted; one which challenges the politically-oriented “sphere” laid out by Hansen, via Negt and Kluge.

Discourses on Popular German Cinema and Cultural Life of the Modern City.

The popular cinema from 1910-1919 emerges from these diverse debates as a kind of counter-history, defined as strange, aberrant and discontinuous, only to be forgotten as the film industry consolidated and gained a greater social reputation. Material, cultural and historical specificities of the popular cinema and its mass female spectators are perpetually read against the norms governing its celebrated Weimar counterpart and its critical (male) audiences. It is an account that seems to confirm Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer’s influential arguments about the deceptive charms and standardised formats of mass culture.⁸⁵ Adorno and Horkheimer contend that popular culture is a mass-produced product, seducing and numbing its audience with easy pleasures while peddling them the ideology of consumer-capitalism. In such a pragmatic trajectory, popular cinema has been ignored, disclaimed or treated with disdain. Yet to recognise the popular as the art cinema’s cultural ‘other,’ when judged by standards running contrary to it, or merely as a form which dupes its gullible (female) audience, seems to me to leave little scope for understanding the intricacies of popular

⁸⁵ Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer, (1994), *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, London: Verso.

modes of representation and the complex workings of the German film industry in the teens.

Bourgeois attempts to completely 'know' both the cinema and its female audiences as a coherent unitary system of knowledge does not fully account for how the industry operated as a commercial enterprise, and thus imagined its audience profile in the process. The manner in which the institution of popular cinema should seem so new and so old-fashioned soon after speaks volumes about how it responded to market forces. Such institutional adaptability made earlier forms and certain programming formats appear like obsolete and unsophisticated relics with no role at all to play in moving pictures' latest incarnation all too quickly.

One issue that arises from the contemporary source material concerns the emergence of a brand new type of entertainment complex, appearing first after German Unification in 1871. Reports in the trade press stand as testimony to these popular entertainment venues which allowed for a number of heterogeneous cultural activities to take place under one roof. In addition, these establishments proved flexible enough to quickly switch from one sort of entertainment to another, if a certain production type was not making sufficient revenue; converting from modern drama theatres into vaudevilles and/or panopticons and, later, movie houses, in a matter of months. Especially in Berlin, theatres such as the *Tonhallen* (opened in 1870), the *Bellevue* (1872) and the *Neues America Reich* (1877) changed business tack almost immediately, abandoning unprofitable concert halls and serious dramatic plays in favour of variety programmes.⁸⁶ Hugo Oertel, manager of the *München Deutsch Theater* entertainment palace (specialising in theatrical productions, musicals and ballet), transformed the venue in to a vaudeville theatre in 1887, and later founded the *Blumensäle Variété* in 1892: "The stage where modern drama was to have been enthroned was given over to song, dance, skits

⁸⁶ With that said, modern plays, especially those which courted controversy such as Frank Wedekind's "Lulu" cycle, could still be booked in for a short run to satisfy public curiosity/interest. Peter Jelavich, (1985), *Munich and Theatrical Modernism: Politics, Playwriting and Performance, 1890-1914*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

and acrobatics and a novel form of entertainment, the film.”⁸⁷ How these venues of popular theatricality appealed to, as well as shaped the public participation of, women warrant investigation.

Few academic discussions of the ‘official’ histories take into account that access to the cinema was more often than not determined by popular choice, often by those who were unaware that they had become objects of intense bourgeois investigation and moral indignation. As a consequence, certain areas of investigation such as theatrical layouts and programming policies that welcomed women, and the selling of female stars – areas which might offer a different account of the popular cinema and its female audiences – have not yet received the attention that it might. It is important to contest the view, shared by several scholars including Hake, that the only function of the bourgeois intervention was to appropriate the cinema into its own cultural remit, to assign cultural meaning and isolate empirical truths about the cinema and its audience. Over-reliance on what the middle-class critics had to say about the incursion of cinema into the bourgeois public space, rather than recognition that these attempts to write an ‘official’ version were just one part of the puzzle, often obscures our understanding of popular German cinema between 1910-1919.

Debates often lose sight of how the popular cinema evolved independently of traditional bourgeois cultural forms, such as classical theatre and grand opera, to forge a rather different identity of its own. As early as 1911, for example, reports emerged from Imperial Germany that moving pictures had “never seriously threatened the stability and prosperity of the legitimate stage.”⁸⁸ Such a comment makes clear that a reconfiguration of popular cinema needs to take place. Recent academic research has proven that strong links with other popular types of entertainment, such as vaudeville, revue and musical theatre, did exist.⁸⁹ Trade papers and newspapers from the period make clear that such a dynamic relationship continued to thrive well into the teens, running parallel with the

⁸⁷ *ibid.*, 124.

⁸⁸ (16 September 1911), *Variety*, 772.

⁸⁹ Corinna Müller, (1994), *Frühe deutsche Kinematographie: Formale, wirtschaftliche und kulturelle Entwicklungen, 1907-1912*, Stuttgart/Weimar: Metzler.

'official' history as late as 1913: "Success of *Cine-Kino-Variété-Zoo* [Berlin entertainment venue] and the great applause for nearly every act proves once again that Germany is not through for vaudeville. No doubt in a short time other companies and picture house will adopt the cinema policy of vaudeville and pictures."⁹⁰ From this perspective, the means by which German cinema fostered a profile of its female audiences, in terms of programming policies and the products it offered them by way of stars and films, provide us with new statements on how the popular cinema could be known.

Yet one thing remains clear from the evidence: by the early teens, popular cinema had come to represent an alternative public attraction in its own right, existing *outside* of the bourgeois critical arena, *beyond* high brow cultural discourses and embedded with German modernity as a discourse. Anton Kaes observes that "[c]inema seemed to offer an unchecked, un-standardised, and un-mediated entertainment, which, unlike bourgeois art, did not have to legitimise its practical and pleasurable character with a claim to some everlasting, eternal value."⁹¹ While this chapter has primarily focused on how the bourgeois intellectuals and scholars constructed the German national cinema as a firmly bound discourse, I aim to extend my thesis to explore other discourses within which the German popular cinema came into being. My objective is not to expose a counter-history but rather to introduce a system of statements within which, and by which, the cinema and its female audiences can be known. To this end, I aim to locate a number of different discursive knowledges that sought to organise social existence and define cultural production in general, and to constitute how popular experience and modern identities came to be categorised for women in particular.

⁹⁰ (19 September 1911), *Variety*, 772.

⁹¹ Kaes, (1987), *The Debate about Cinema: Charting a Controversy (1909-1929)*, 14.

Chapter 2. Geographical Debaucheries: Metropolitan Intersections and Female Bodyscapes.

“Feminine fauna of the arcades: prostitutes, grisettes, old-hag shopkeepers, female street vendors, glovers, *desmoiselles*. – This last was the name, around 1830, for incendiaries disguised as women.”

Walter Benjamin, 1935.¹

“In the changing light of the arcades, a light ranging from the brightness of the tomb to the shadow of sensual pleasure, delicious girls can be seen serving both cults with provocative movement of the hips and the sharp upward curl of a smile.

... so many female strollers of all kinds ... varying ages and degrees of beauty, often vulgar, and in a sense already depreciated, but women, truly women, and palpably women, even at the expense of all the other qualities of their bodies and souls; so many women, in league with these arcades they stroll along.”

Louis Aragon, 1926.²

The above physiognomical analogies made a significant impact on thinking about the female subject-as-body and her relation to the modern public space that for the last three decades has continued to be the site of controversy, re-appropriation, celebration and criticism in relation to the archive. It came out of a bourgeois cultural intervention concerned with a way of knowing the modern city, and is a discourse marked by a mutually determining relation between bodies and cities: “the built environment provides the context and co-ordinates for contemporary forms of body.”³ Civic authorities further acted upon the assumptions embedded within gendered allegories; suppositions based on unregulated movements and the chaotic flow of urban bodies. Female prostitutes circulated through an unseen network of commercial exchange that functioned as part of the city while simultaneously representing how it would be imagined. The issues implanted in these representations are crucial to understanding discourses within which knowledge about ‘real’ female bodies moving across the modern urban landscape was constructed. Furthermore, the double work of film came to build on as well as contest these feminine bodyscapes to offer up new modes of representation.

¹ Walter Benjamin (1999), *The Arcades Project*, trans. Howard Eiland and Kevin McLaughlin Massachusetts: the Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 494.

² Louis Aragon, (1980), *Paris Peasant*, trans. Simon Watson Taylor, London: Picador, 48.

³ Elizabeth Grosz, (1995), *Space, Time and Perversion*, London: Routledge, 104.

Continuing my quest for the lost feminine subject in relation to the popular cinema archive, I focus on why we speak about the female subject-as-body as preserved and lost, remembered and forgotten. This chapter aims to investigate female bodies as discourse. It examines how these physiognomic imaginings were written onto the city bodyscape as film further visualised the spatial metropolis and those females who moved around it. The mutually defining relation between the city and female bodies participated in a discursive epistemological shift that established the body as a privileged object of knowledge, (erotic) pleasure and social power. Structured as a spatial journey, and informed by several discourses about femininity and a feminine bodyscape, the chapter explores the female body as a discursive series of fantastic spaces and as a new frontier or, as Michel Foucault argues, “a space in which analogies define essence.”⁴ I shall first examine ‘official’ ideologies that opened up the female body as a new conceptual interior space that was at once deep and seen, complete and enclosed, vital and accessible. Particularly interesting is the fact that this huge machine of representation would soon be available for discussing and managing the female subject within, and as allegory of, the modern city.

It is not my aim to locate a meta-discourse but to identify a number of different reading strategies that produced different knowledges within the archive about femininity and a feminine bodyscape in general, and the female subject in particular. Thus, how state ideology, civic authority and cinema reformers identified and appropriated ways of speaking about the female body points to the manner in which ‘official’ discourse operated. It proved to be a self-validating discourse that sought to represent the truth about the female body so it could be policed and regulated. Dissident voices – belonging to a more enlightened bourgeois discourse shaped by the male *flâneur* – produced another female subject, thus writing an allegorical narrative into the fabric of an ever-changing metropolis. Yet, in the process of making that feminine allegorical code visible, a new generation of intellectuals, writing almost a decade later, offer a counterpoint to the dominant bourgeois discourse from the teens, often disclosing subjected and concealed histories against which the master discourse had acted. Elaborating certain themes and developing

⁴ Michel Foucault, (1993), *The Birth of the Clinic: An Archaeology of Medical Perception*, trans. A.M. Sheridan, London: Routledge, 6

new writing styles and theories, these writers offered a counter-narrative – or what Edward Said has called a “contrapuntal reading”⁵ – that kept making itself heard below the surface of individual texts to elaborate on the bourgeois discourse itself. While the enlightened bourgeois intervention came much later, processes of intellectual observation and styles of thought used by them impacted significantly on how the archive came to ‘know’ and read the female subject-as-body.

Film would prove to be yet another discourse, inscribing the representation of the female subject right into the very form of the film text while evoking affiliations to another set of social aspirations and cultural values associated with the modern city and imagined feminine bodies. None are more valid than another but some because of their underlying structure of fantasised importance, impacted more significantly than other discourses. Yet all mapped out a dense and discursive field of discourse based on how the female became ‘known’ as the subject-as-body and who had the power to order, shape and organise such knowledge. The task ahead is to disrupt and make visible the mechanisms of a number of complex, interwoven and often ambivalent models, in order to explore how a discourse was rendered (il)legible and (in)visible not only through spatial configurations (both in the modern city and on the screens), but also in terms of how public female participation came to be imagined and managed as a consequence.

Mapping Out a Discourse: Official Ideology and ‘the’ Female Body.

“For us, the human body defines, by natural right, the space of origin and of distribution of disease: a space whose lines, volumes, surfaces, and routes are laid down, in accordance with a now familiar geometry, by the anatomical atlas. But this order of the solid, visible body is only one way – in all likelihood neither the first, nor the most fundamental – in which one spatialises disease.”

Michel Foucault.⁶

Rationalising arguments about the female subject drew upon official public debates already in wide circulation: namely, existing discussions about female corporeality, social separation and body politics. Heightened fears about the declining birth rate across the Imperial German Empire occupied a broad political spectrum from 1910 onwards. It was a key political issue, and one that had come to

⁵ Edward Said, (1993), *Culture and Imperialism*, London: Chatto and Windus, 59.

⁶ *ibid.*, 3.

be a barometer of military prowess, imperial expansion (based on racial superiority), and the German body politic (*Volkskörper*). Certain human bodies became highly politicised as a consequence. While this was not the first time that the body as a biological category had come under intense scrutiny, how these natural bodies were both imagined by official ideology and governed by state legislation ushered in a new historically specific stage in the history of sexuality in Germany. In response to the population crisis, sexual behaviour became both an object of analysis and an official target of government action: “The state can let no body outside of its regulations: its demand for identification and documentation relentlessly records and categorises [it].”⁷ One correspondence between the human body and the German body politic was the state sponsored *Prussian Medical Council* and its policing of sex and sexual conduct. The public health organisation was set up in 1910, charged with the task of looking in to how the declining birth rate could be reversed.⁸ Intense official preoccupation with urban degeneration, ‘radical hygiene’ (eugenics) and the treatment of sexual deviants imagined a depleted body. The state thus began to take an increased interest in the sex lives of its citizens and population management: “sex became a matter that required the social body as a whole and virtually all of its individuals to place themselves under surveillance.”⁹

Foucault identified an apparatus for generating ever-greater quantities of information on sex (or *scientia sexualis*), and for understanding bodies as related “to the production, transmission, reception and legitimisation of knowledge about sexuality and sex.”¹⁰ German discourses on sex and sexuality marked a radical shift from scientific investigation and medical obsession to that of political practice; issues that would come to determine state policy on citizenship and regulate population

⁷ Grosz, *Space*, (1995), *Time and Perversion*, 107.

⁸ Organisations sponsored by the German state to manage the population crisis also included the *Reich Health Council* (1917), who, along with the Prussian Medical Council, established guidelines, restricting doctors from performing abortions. The *Select Committee on Population* (1916) set up as a government sub-committee to consider and formulate a national population policy. The *Committee for Population Policy* (1916) established to recommend appropriate measures to boost birth rates and improve public health. Reference taken from Cornelia Osborne, (1992), *The Politics of the Body in Weimar Germany: Women's Reproductive Rights and Duties*, Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.

⁹ Michel Foucault, (1978), *The History of Sexuality. Volume One: an introduction*, trans. Robert Hurley, London: Penguin, 116.

¹⁰ M.E. Bailey, (1993), Foucauldian Feminism: Contesting Bodies, Sexuality and Identity, IN: C. Ramazanoglu, ed., *Up Against Foucault: Explorations of Some Tension between Foucault and Feminism*, London: Routledge, 203.

management, family planning initiatives and health education programmes. This argument about the administration of sex is key to Foucault's analysis of the policing of sex and its link with population management:

“It was essential that the state know what was happening with its citizens' sex, and the use they made of it, but also that each individual be capable of controlling the use he made of it.”¹¹

A new network of institutions and their surveillant systems were established to police as well as intensify emergent ideas of population. Mandatory insurance schemes, introduced in the 1880s for example, required German people from each social strata to submit to a compulsory medical examination.¹² Populations passed through these institutions in which new types of power, including 'normalisation' and 'discipline,' were “brought to bear on the body and on sex.”¹³ People's bodies were processed according to strict bio-medical and scientific classifications. New official institutions for family welfare, public hygiene and the treatment of social deviants would, in turn, use clinical data as well as the 'science' of social investigation to reify socio-political issues into knowable human bodies requiring constant monitoring and state management.¹⁴ Furthermore, evidence collated from the medicalisation of German subjects came to justify political intervention, as medical theories made visible 'real' social problems.

Pete Boss has convincingly argued how modern medicine “recast the unknown” within the anatomical parameters of the human body.¹⁵ According to Foucault, Marie-Francois-Xavier Bichat's institutionalisation of pathological anatomy – or the “technique of the corpse”¹⁶ – in the late-eighteenth and early-nineteenth century envisioned the interiority and 'vitalism' of the body: “Open up a few corpses; you will dissipate at once the darkness that observation alone could not

¹¹ Foucault, (1978), *The History of Sexuality*, 26.

¹² Osborne, (1992), *The Politics of the Body in Weimar Germany: Women's Reproductive Rights and Duties*, 10.

¹³ Foucault, (1978), *The History of Sexuality*, 47.

¹⁴ Institutions established to monitor and manage sexual behaviour included, *The National League of Large Families*, who lobbied government to support family welfare and social purity; and the *German Society to Combat Venereal Disease*, set up to counsel individuals on suitable forms of contraception and instruct on their use. Academic studies exploring the issues raised by these various organisations and reform societies include, Osborne, *The Politics of the Body in Weimar Germany*; and Paul Weindling, (1989), *Health, Race and German Politics Between National Unification and Nazism, 1870-1945*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

¹⁵ Pete Boss, (1986), Vile Bodies and Bad Medicine, *Screen*, 27 (1), 19.

¹⁶ Foucault, (1993), *The Birth of the Clinic*, 141.

dissipate.”¹⁷ Exactitude of the human body came to be less important than how it could and would be ‘read.’ The woman’s anatomical form became reduced to reproductive capabilities, and in particular her womb, breast and ovaries were increasingly subjected to scientific investigation and medical dissection: “the actual unveiling of women’s bodies to render visible the emblematic core of their sex in the organs of generation.”¹⁸ Certain accounts would emerge as central to official epistemological debates and made legible the link between body representations and socio-sexual roles.¹⁹ The woman’s body as a discourse of bio-power was discussed at great length; new medical treatments and pedagogical guidelines were organised around it.²⁰ How women lived appropriately for their sex thus never ceased to be a matter of socio-political concern: “assumptions about how the sexes were to inhabit the world ... were built into the representation of the human body.”²¹

Medical doctrine transformed the female body into a discourse of discursive coherence on sex. Physiological deficiencies caused by the uterus and the vicissitudes of the menstrual cycle were touted as scientific proof that the female body was innately predisposed to mental disorders, physical fragilities and neurasthenia.²² The female was subject(ed) through a thorough medicalisation and the scientific classification of her sex, in which her body was given over to, as

¹⁷ Marie-Francois-Xavier Bichat, quoted in *ibid.*, 146.

¹⁸ Ludmilla Jordanova, (1989), *Sexual Visions: Images of Gender in Science and Medicine between the Eighteenth and Twentieth Centuries*, Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin Press, 58.

¹⁹ *ibid.*, 54.

²⁰ The 1900 Civil Code: Section 218 is one example. Any woman found performing or assisting with an abortion could face a penal sentence (anything up to five-years). Such penalties resulted in 180,000 illegitimate births per year. Richard Evans comments on the change in the law thus: “Women were thus denied the physical freedom enjoyed by men to dispose over their bodies as they wished.” Evans, (1976), *The Feminist Movement in Germany, 1894-1933*, volume 6, London: Sage Studies in Twentieth-Century History, 16-7.

²¹ Jordanova, (1989), *Sexual Visions*, 51.

²² Neurasthenia, ‘discovered’ as a modern disease, caused great consternation amongst the medical profession from the early 1900s onwards. It was associated with ‘weak’ psychological constitutions, and viewed as contributing to a decline in fertility and depressing a ‘natural’ sexuality. The ‘new’ breed of German sexologists were convinced that contraceptive practice and mental disease were closely linked, thereby providing further justification for state interference in the most intimate areas of the German population’s lives. For example, Max Marcuse, doctor and sexologist, concluded in his study on birth control and the working class that *coitus interruptus*, the most popular method of birth control practised by the lower classes, caused sexual neurasthenia in women (and nervous exhaustion in men); Marcuse, (1910), *Die Gefahren der sexuellen Abstinenz für die Gesundheit*, Leipzig.

Foucault claimed, “infinitesimal surveillance, permanent control ... and indeterminate medical and psychological examination.”²³

Common to the understanding of this female body was the methodology of observation. From the late eighteenth-century onwards, scientific (geology, palaeontology, archaeology) and medical (anatomy, psychoanalysis²⁴) disciplines had become obsessed with looking in depth, uncovering different layers and carefully observing each one to establish its distinctiveness and uncover a pathological history. Ludmilla Jordanova claims that the “interest in depth” gave “expression to a model of knowledge based on looking deeply into and thereby intellectually mastering nature – a model infused with assumptions about gender.”²⁵ Complex layering requiring dissection, through statistics, data collation and ideas, marked by professional language, enabled qualified speakers to unveil an essential truth as well as establish an epistemological model based upon a professional (dissecting, probing, defining) gaze and intellectual mastery. Focusing on this “proliferation of discourses concerned with sex” allowed Foucault to elaborate on “the control over enunciations” as “an institutional incitement to speak about it; and to do so more and more; a determination on the part of the agencies of power to hear it spoken about, and to cause *it* to speak through explicit articulation and endlessly accumulated detail.”²⁶

In accordance with the widespread notion that the woman, both in mind and body, was a manifestation of her physiological sex, the fields of natural science and professional medicine – particularly the branches that dealt with women’s health such as obstetrics and gynaecology – established a scientific credibility for the female body. Much of the medical profession, despite contrary claims from the

²³ Michel Foucault, (1977), *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, trans. Alan Sheridan, London: Penguin, 194.

²⁴ Psychoanalysis was one of the new human sciences to employ the methodology of observation within the treatment of patients: “We can avoid doing the patient an injustice if we make it a quite general rule all through the analysis *to keep an eye on his facial expression as he lies quietly before us.*” [emphasis added]. From Sigmund Freud’s case notes, observation is a means of uncovering layers to find some core ‘truth.’ Such an interventionist approach (“I obtain complete insight into ...”; “I saw that I had come to the root of her constant fear”) made possible an ‘absence’ (the unconscious memory) and also a ‘presence’ (the hysterical body) visible, and thus recordable and interpretable; Sigmund Freud, (1974), *Studies of Hysteria*, trans. James and Alix Strachey, London: Penguin, 366.

²⁵ Jordanova, (1989), *Sexual Visions*, 58.

²⁶ Foucault, (1978), *The History of Sexuality*, 18.

burgeoning field of psychoanalysis, remained wedded to the belief that anatomical sexual difference intricately defined social role and psychological disorders were biologically predetermined. Such knowledge was further used to develop a new all-encompassing *Frauenkunde*, or science of woman, which allowed for a diverse spectrum of professional expertise and medical responsibility to watch over every aspect of the woman's physical and mental life.²⁷ Various interventions into the regulation of birth control, pregnancy and maternal duties, with particular reference to health and hygiene, were thus made possible as a consequence. Yet, despite the continued reordering and rethinking about these medical categories, including contributions from the early women's movement and sex reform associations,²⁸ the image of the woman's body as sex defined her 'true' – if somewhat abstract – character was to remain intact and go largely unchallenged.²⁹

Regulating Sex in the City: The Prostitute as Public Menace and the Civic Authorities.

“Sometimes the permitted joins the prohibited in curious combinations, as in a book about sexual perverts written by a police chief.”

Siegfried Kracauer.³⁰

The prostitute had long been identified – and imagined – as the most conspicuous female body circulating around Berlin's city streets during the latter part of the nineteenth-century. Unlike other European cities such as Paris or Hamburg, Berlin was not a brothel city. Bordellos (*Bordellierung*) had been legally closed down in April 1844 by order of the Ministry of the Interior;³¹ and, as civic authorities via the

²⁷ Max Hirsch, a leading Berlin gynecologist, established and edited the journal, *Archive für Frauenkunde und Eugenetik, Sexualbiologie und Konstitutionsforschung* (Archive for the Science of Women and Eugenics, Sexual Biology and Constitution Research).

²⁸ More liberal sex reform organisations included, the *Committee for Birth Control*, founded in 1911 by feminist and sex reformer, Helene Stöcker, established to disseminate information on methods of birth control; the *League for the Protection of Motherhood* campaigned for a new morality, celebrating erotic love and motherhood but not necessarily within marriage; and the *Society for Sexual Reform* (1913), established by Berlin doctor, Felix Theilhaber.

²⁹ Ludmilla Jordanova makes a case for claiming that waxwork models of recumbent women in the nineteenth-century invited interest into female reproduction. Issues raised by this unveiling of the woman reproductive capacities are threefold she suggests: “the evocation of an abstract femininity, the route to knowledge as a form of looking deep into the body and the material reproductive process associated with the woman. Not only were these three aspects bound together, as an ensemble, but they were also political in a quite direct way.” Jordanova, (1989), *Sexual Visions*, 50.

³⁰ Siegfried Kracauer, (1995), Farewell to the Linden Arcade, 1930, *The Mass Ornament: Weimar Essays*, trans. Thomas Y. Levin, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 339.

³¹ Giles MacDonogh, (1997), *Berlin: A Portrait of its History, Politics, Architecture, and Society*, New York: St Martin's Press, 227.

Morals Police (*Sittenpolizei*) so rigorously upheld the statute, prostitutes were forced onto the streets to solicit their trade. Gabriele Geiger, in her research, notes how the official decision to confront the issue of prostitution at the turn of the century was in part prompted by disturbing claims that respectable middle-class women were being sexually accosted by men as they wandered home.³² One contemporary newspaper editorial claimed with alarm: “Scared half to death, our wives and daughters return home in a state of great concern at having been mistaken for a prostitute. It is a plain and simple truth that our streets are dominated by vice.”³³

Long before women attended the cinema on a regular basis, unaccompanied females loitering in commercial leisure sites and public parks were often assumed to be of easy virtue, both in law and public attitude. So compelling were these prevailing associations that even into the teens the appearance of an un-chaperoned unmarried woman at such venues (especially if seen in the intimate company of a man) continued to lend strong connotations of solicitation. Walter Benjamin’s comment that “[p]rostitution opens a market in feminine types”³⁴ could be seen to confirm Foucault’s definition of ‘discourse’: a congruous and firmly circumscribed field of social knowledge; a series of assertions by which the social world is made legible. In an attempt to gain knowledge about the city (that is, “to grid and organise, to hierarchise and co-ordinate the activities of and for the city”³⁵), civic authorities and agencies of the law produced a series of statements about political sovereignty and commercial traffic. These statements revealed how precarious female public mobility/visibility would prove to be at the time when film exhibition was attempting to find a client base.

Prostitution as a subject of real public concern, ferocious civic debate and pervasive urban fantasies significantly contributed to how the woman moving around the city streets came to be officially imagined. Discreet measures to regulate the physical movement of prostitutes wandering city streets were to turn the female body into an absolute social problem: the fear of unbridled female sexuality and the social dangers of an unchecked fecund body. The prostitute’s body, endlessly written about

³² Gabriele Geiger (1986), *Frauen-Körper-Bauten*, Munich: Profil.

³³ *ibid.*, 136.

³⁴ Benjamin, (1999), *The Arcades Project*, 515.

and analysed in detail by civil authorities, came to be proleptically inscribed as an object of public menace and tolerance. As soon as this female body became knowable, measurable and predictable, it became subjected to isolation, stricter supervision and assimilation into a nexus of medical interpretations, social policies, administrative systems and federal institutions.³⁶

Law enforcement agencies across the German Empire were empowered to take any woman suspected of solicitation into custody.³⁷ Of this assault on the public liberty of single women, Felicitas Buchner responded by adding the following statement to a petition against the prostitution law in April 1909.

“On the basis of this regulation, the morals police can at any time arrest any woman, even on the most unfounded suspicion. For the woman erroneously taken into custody, however, arrested on suspicion of prostitution is always a detriment to her reputation, frequently also a detriment to her economic interest, not infrequently causing loss of employment (as a private tutor, for example). The regulation therefore constitutes a very serious danger to the entire world of working women, particularly young single women in cities.”³⁸

Leaving aside its political implications (only to be realised post-1918), the petition maps out a field of contention around definitions of female public mobility and visibility. Civil authorities instituted measures to monitor women circulating within crowded city spaces, and causing a great deal of confusion about the issue since dissenting voices increasingly began to question official action. Newspapers consistently reported on disagreeable sexual encounters involving men and lone females, many of who were unmarried working women mistakenly identified for prostitutes.³⁹ Thus, while federal ordinances and police interventions attempted to grid and regulate city streets in order to keep troublesome prostitute bodies at a safe and measured distance, newer models of public female visibility would increasingly come to contest official action. Even though the law proved hard to enforce and the Morals Police had to practise increasing caution for fear of causing public scandal

³⁵ Grosz, (1995), *Space, Time and Perversion*, 107.

³⁶ See, Appendix 1. Prostitution in Berlin.

³⁷ Elisabeth Meyer Renschhausen, (1984), 'The Bremen Morality Scandal,' *IN: R. Bridenthal, A. Grossman and M. Kaplan, eds., When Biology Becomes Destiny: Women in Weimar and Nazi Germany*, New York: Monthly Review Press.

³⁸ cited in *ibid.*, 97.

³⁹ Geiger, (1986), *Frauen-Körper-Bauten*.

over a wrongful arrest, a sense of criminality nevertheless remained attached to lone women moving around the cities and loitering around its cultural sites.

A lot of debate was initiated from various sources, either official or otherwise, about the prostitute's bodily appearance and physical movements. These discussions led to its inscription within a representational discourse about power, sexual transgression, public identification and female deception. Abraham Flexner, in his 1914 inquiry on prostitution in Europe, recorded what he judged to be the typical whore's physical attributes and circumspect behaviour.⁴⁰

“I have pointed out that the streetwalker seeks by preference the main channels of retail trade; there she is found in the late afternoons and evening hours; noticeable by reason of slow gait, furtive expression and more or less striking garb. If no response is made to the invitation conveyed in a glance, she passes on; doubtful or encouraged, she stops at a shop window or turns off into a cafe or street. Only in the late hours of night does she become more aggressively provocative.”⁴¹

Flexner, after interviewing numerous prostitutes and reviewing civic procedures, authoritatively contended that there were certain physical characteristics, which were typical, attributable and readable, and that these identifiable behavioural traits personified the prostitute. The American researcher, by identifying and categorising feminine deviancy, constructed an epistemology of the (ob)scene female body. Two issues emerge from his inquiry. The first is that his report delivers up a lexicon of the sexually perverse female form, “to give it an analytical, visible and permanent reality.”⁴² An exact and codified visual discourse implanted in the body of a woman prostituting herself for money was established whereby she could be looked at and instantly recognised by state authorities and populace alike. The second is that her restrained behaviour implies something that is hidden but once intelligible could, and would, be mastered. The prostitute's body, and by extension her “furtive” public demeanour, is constructed as if something on the inside is about to come forth at any moment. Yet, in rendering visible the inaccessible and dangerous, “a woman whose behaviour is suspicious” can somehow be knowable and thus better controlled.⁴³

⁴⁰ The Inquiry, commissioned by the American Bureau of Social Hygiene, was first published in 1914; reprinted, Abraham Flexner, (1919), *Prostitution in Europe*, London: Grant Richards Ltd.

⁴¹ *ibid.*, 125.

⁴² Foucault, (1978), *The History of Sexuality*, 44.

⁴³ Flexner, (1919), *Prostitution in Europe*, 125.

“The plain clothes Morals Police ... are charged with the duty of watching not only regulated women – to see that they respect the regulations – but also unregulated women whose actions arouse suspicion that they are seeking to practise prostitution for money.”⁴⁴

Flexner’s methodology therefore is embedded in what he terms “the scientific investigation of the problem of prostitution,” which allows him to envisage the prostitute as “obnoxious to German law.”⁴⁵ He is not interested in analysing the assumptions that lie behind the regulatory system but in showing how civic authorities across the German Empire described the prostitute, rendering her “furtive expression” plain for all to see. Documenting the perversions of the prostitute’s body allowed Flexner to elaborate on how the agencies of the law set about identifying, isolating and regulating it: “His judgement and discretion determined who shall be warned, who shall be arrested and thus, in the long run, who shall be forcibly inscribed.”⁴⁶ The discourse, constructed out of “the sources of recruitment, conditions, procedures, measures to control and combat and results,” reveal the police authorities as a site of power and their political function to distinctly demarcate the prostitute as deviant ‘other.’ It defined her as an object of knowledge (“a multiple implantation of ‘perversions.’”⁴⁷) and inevitable subordination.⁴⁸

Furthermore, this kind of reification, and rendering the profane visible, would, in turn, be inscribed in official opinions about inappropriate cinematic representation. For example, Asta Nielsen’s restrained acting style – or what Heide Schlüpmann calls her “double performance register”⁴⁹ – is concomitant with Flexner’s conceptualisation of the streetwalker’s measured behaviour, as both were seen to display a performative montage of self-control and thinly veiled sensual passions. In addition, such reification existed as cinema exhibition entered into the cultural mainstream of city life. Inappropriate forms of public comportment, identified by Flexner in his reports on prostitutes, were revised within the censorship documents and reformers’ dispatches about the enraptured behaviour of female audiences,

⁴⁴ *ibid.*, 99.

⁴⁵ *ibid.* 9, 99.

⁴⁶ *op.cit.*, 123.

⁴⁷ Foucault, (1978), *The History of Sexuality*, 37.

⁴⁸ Flexner, (1919), *Prostitution in Europe*, 9.

stimulated by what they saw on screen. In short, official preoccupations, in terms both of the legal and scientific statistical tracking of Berlin's prostitutes and of how the feminine public body came consequently to be imagined as sexually deviant, anticipated debates on female cinema attendance and appropriate film representation for the mass audience.

Censoring Cinema's Feminine Bodyscape: The Campaign against Cinema's Sensational Attractions and the Actress as *Femme Fatale*.

"... Asta Nielsen, who can *show* obscene nakedness, and she can smile a way that is liable to make police feel the film out to be seized on account of pornography."

Béla Balázs.⁵⁰

Illuminating city streets to make legible the problem of prostitution delivered up a contested urban landscape; one in which official forces, aiming to seek, search out and collect data on the phenomena of 'prostitution,' intersected with those who attempted to regulate other seemingly sensational urban attractions. Contention over the effects of such lasciviousness on public morality would in fact soon impact upon the cinema and its as yet unregulated public spaces, darkened or otherwise. Much later in 1929, Franz Hessel spoke about a prurient sight he witnessed in the Linden Arcade in Berlin: "I turned around and in doing so, almost stumbled over the peep shows, where one poor schoolboy stands, his school bag under his arm, wretched, immersed in the Scene in the Bedroom."⁵¹ Cinema reformers would wage an intense political campaign against the incursion of cinema into public life based around issues of public (dis)order and its corruptive influence on the nation's youth. Cultural guardians, evoking ideas about (erotic) bodies and their (sensual) pleasures which were embedded in the emergent languages of medicine, psychiatry, prostitution and pornography, incited a reactionary discourse about cinema as symptomatic of an underlying degeneration of contemporary life and the real hidden dangers of unregulated metropolitan pleasures.

⁴⁹ Heide Schlüpmann, (1996), Asta Nielsen and Female Narration: The Early Films, *IN*: T. Elsaesser, ed., *The Second Life: German Cinema's First Decades*, Amsterdam: University of Amsterdam Press, 121.

⁵⁰ Béla Balázs, (1984), Asta Nielsen 'Eroticism,' *Der Tag* (6 April 1923); reprinted *Hungarofilm Bulletin*, 3, 15.

Earliest efforts to monitor cinema as a new cultural institution turned attention on its piquant attractions. Police reports called for careful vigilance of the seemingly visual blight caused by colourful placards, lurid and provocative in style, which tantalisingly advertised forthcoming attractions, and which clamoured for public attention outside the movie houses.⁵² Garish posters, graphically depicting raw images of horror, violence and sexual vice, and accompanied by sensationalist headlines, were viewed as an affront to public decency. A letter from a Düsseldorf police commission in 1910 complained that, since fierce competition broke out between the city's nine rival movie houses, motion picture advertising had begun to step over the boundaries of common decency.⁵³ This letter suggested that, in their attempt to lure custom away from competitors, cinema proprietors had increasingly begun to display more and more lurid film posters with bold typefaces and attention-grabbing layouts outside their movie houses. Later on, in the Wuerttemberg film censorship act of 1914, a clause was included to prevent such risqué sights: "All advertising matter relating to films or film exhibitions is to be forbidden by the local police authorities if it is of a character likely to affect the public mind in the sense described in this act."⁵⁴ Such cinema advertisement hoardings mapped out metropolitan city streets as a place erotically charged with libidinal possibilities, sensual pleasures and sexual deception.

Horror stories abounded in the press of vulnerable city dwellers intoxicated by cinema's *femme fatale* imagery being lured into its darkened spaces, both inside and out. Few social commentators and educationalists missed the opportunity to claim that cinema's provocative spectacles could over-stimulate the emotions and jolt the senses, possibly tempting impressionable youngsters into a life of juvenile delinquency and sexual debauchery. A 1911 Düsseldorf police censor's report of Burning Blood [*Heisses Blut*] (Urban Gad) starring popular "screen siren," Asta Nielsen raised concerns about unrestrained eroticism and policing of the masses. According to the reports, the panel, fearing that her wanton excesses could easily

⁵¹ Franz Hessel, (1983), *Spazieren in Berlin*, 1929; quoted IN: J. F. Geist, *Arcades: The History of a Building Type*, Cambridge: MIT Press, 157.

⁵² (1916), *Vossische Zeitung*

⁵³ Hauptstaatsarchiv Dusseldorf (Kalkum) 9004; Kino: letter dated 24 January 1910.

⁵⁴ Translation of the censorship act from Wuerttemberg, provided by Frederic William Wile, Berlin correspondent of the *Chicago Tribune*; (23 May 1914), German Censorship, *The Moving Picture World*, 1249.

entrance vulnerable teenagers, felt that Nielsen's sordid antics in her portrayal of the 'vamp' warranted regulation.⁵⁵ What proves intriguing about the denouncements of Nielsen's vampiric performance, and the attempts to censor the visual overstimulation of the modern urban landscape, is how the transgressive elements were drawn out and a social problem inscribed as 'feminine' made visible. Through such official discourses, the spectacle of popular entertainment and its seemingly sensational representations came to be implanted in a perversely sexual female body as a category of forbidden acts and hidden sensual pleasures.

Attempts made by strident police forces and reform campaigners to censor cinema's sensual feminine bodyscape, while not always going according to plan, reveal the "complex mechanisms and devices of excitation and incitement" stimulated by the conservative crusade to license it.⁵⁶ In November 1912, for example, an exhibitor found himself facing police prosecution after he screened two films with the salacious titles, The Curse of Sin and Burning Love.⁵⁷ The police, according to reports, threatened to confiscate the films and arrest him if he did not make the appropriate title changes. The theatre owner refused to adhere to the request and promptly took the matter to a higher court. The appeals court ruled in his favour, handing down a lengthy judgement that stated: "the action of the police was entirely unwarranted and that they had no jurisdiction whatsoever to interfere with the selection of the titles of moving pictures."⁵⁸

Objections to risqué film advertisement also came from an unexpected direction. Complaints were soon began heard from inside the film industry itself, unhappy both about the action taken by certain exhibitors to bring in the crowds and the official calls for intervention.

"The attacks which one sees in increasing numbers in the German daily press originate, according to *Projection*, largely out of the more or less repulsive posters used to advertise certain films. Such attacks come from people who apparently have little or no knowledge of the superb work turned out by the leading film manufacturer and their agents. While artistic posters undoubtedly increase the number who visit bioscope

⁵⁵ Hauptstaatsarchiv Dusseldorf (Kalkum) 9004; Kino: letter dated 24 January 1910.

⁵⁶ Foucault, (1978), *The History of Sexuality*, 48.

⁵⁷ (16 November 1912), *The Moving Picture World*, 14/7, 664.

⁵⁸ *ibid.*

shows, sensational pictures ... draw down upon the profession and the anathemas of those who never attend a theatre of any sort.”⁵⁹

Despite the complexity of issues raised and varied nature of each concern, including a failed court hearing to ban prurient film titles and protest from film producers about unnecessary sensationalism, all the complaints operated within certain parameters. That is, cinema’s unregulated hidden pleasures – “precocious, active, and ever present – had to be searched out and watched over.”⁶⁰ Foucault has argued that “all the censoring of vocabulary might well have been only secondary devices compared to that greater subjugation: ways of rendering it morally acceptable and technically useful.”⁶¹ Thus, with each new report or legal proceeding, the campaign to censor cinema almost universally proceeded to confirm the ‘erotic’, ‘sensual’ and ‘feminising’ effects of cinema and, more often than not, served to assert who was best placed to control the institution of cinema itself. What underlies these discourses cannot be divorced from how the authors used representation to speak publicly not to *ban* cinema but rather to *regulate* the institution through codifying the illicit and licit and managing its diverse pleasures.

Reformers combated cinema’s *femme fatale* imagery like a social cancer that had to be rooted out and completely erased. But what this actually involved, through a campaign that conscripted bourgeois fears around sex and the sexual perversions of the city’s most vulnerable subjects (children, women and the working-class masses), was to bring to light a link between visual pleasure and moral corruption. In turn, such knowledge was ceaselessly reiterated and used to keep a constant vigil over what had been unmasked, with reformers “placed in a state of perpetual alert.”⁶² The campaign, for example, constituted the Nielsen’s performance or cinema’s sensational advertising as possessing something hidden through identifying perverse elements laid buried beneath so as to make known what had to be eradicated. Aspects uncovered as perverse within cinema’s modes of representation fed back to the official discourse that justified the need to take control and define the pleasures involved in enclosing the female forms it encircled. It is not so much the literalism of Nielsen’s acting (despite the obvious offence it caused officials), but how the

⁵⁹ (26 May 1910), *The Bioscope*, 62.

⁶⁰ Foucault, (1978), *The History of Sexuality*, 28.

⁶¹ *ibid.*, 21.

peculiarities of a latent sexual delinquency buried within modes of feminine representation were “isolated and animated by the attention they received” by the reformers’ intensely curious gaze.⁶³

Laura Mulvey’s influential arguments on cinema as a predominantly male psycho-symbolic system can be extended to argue that definitions of hidden visual pleasures were only made possible through a gaze, which actively sought them out.⁶⁴ In order to gain mastery over how cinema operated to attract its clients through selling the promise of (hidden) pleasures, it had first been necessary to identify and codify the precise character of cinema’s prurient pleasures: a meticulous inspection of that concealed language. Such an incitement of discourse, that is, a censored vocabulary with its “coded content and qualified speakers” for cinema, position cinema not only as an object of knowledge but also as the very reality that the reformers sought to prohibit.⁶⁵ Consequently another kind of pleasure can be discerned from this reading strategy, associated with the production of knowledge and the exercising of power over it. Cinema’s pleasures are thus reordered as a mechanism of bourgeois censorship, as a fixed, distanced and subjugating gaze policed the perversity it aimed to uncover; or as Foucault puts it: “The pleasure that comes of exercising a power that questions, monitors, watches, spies, searches out, palpates, brings to light.”⁶⁶

Just as civic authorities filled in a socio-political significance for the modern cityscape, campaigners who protested against the dangers inherent in allowing cinemas to continue operating unregulated reveal the mechanisms of power involved in transforming a discourse of the (erotic) female body and sensual pleasures into “an object of analysis and as a target of intervention.”⁶⁷ Soon the reading strategies became an anchorage point for the exercising of power itself. It was not enough to simply codify the features of representation or to know how the cinema audience made use of them but to identify who was capable of defining what those uses were.

⁶² *ibid.*, 28.

⁶³ *ibid.*, 45.

⁶⁴ Laura Mulvey, (1999), Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema, *IN*: S. Thornham, ed., *Feminist Film Theory: A Reader*, New York: New York University Press, 58-69.

⁶⁵ Foucault, (1978), *The History of Sexuality*, 29.

⁶⁶ *ibid.*, 45.

⁶⁷ *ibid.*, 26.

Yet in their attempt to gain knowledge about how cinema constructed its visual and other pleasures, via these proleptic representational models, agencies of the law defined new cinematic pleasures when they moved into cinemas to shut down screenings or prosecute over lewd publicity material. Through the actual unveiling process, and the mastery over what was discovered, the reading strategy reveals pleasures gained from exercising authority over that which it kept a watchful eye.

From Anatomical Bodies to Cinematic Spectacles: Male *Flâneurs*, Corporeal Female Bodies and the (Hidden) Melancholic Pleasures of the *Linden Arcade* (or *Kaisergalerie*).

“Among the exhibitions in the Linden Arcade that are dedicated to corporeality, the place of honour is occupied by the Anatomical Museum.

...

... Just what sort of revelations await the spectator inside are betrayed by the pictures in the display window which shows a doctor in a frock coat, accompanied by numerous gentlemen whose dress is just as old-fashioned as his, performing a stomach operation on a naked woman. This person was once a lady. Yes, the focus here is on the stomach, the intestines, everything having to do solely with the body.”

Siegfried Kracauer.⁶⁸

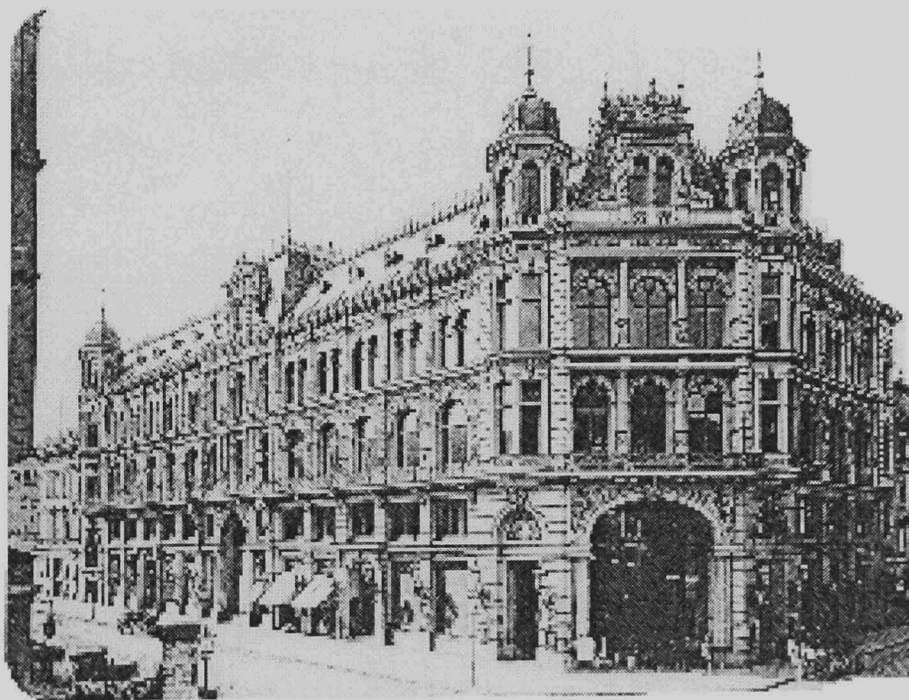


fig.2.1. Entrance to Linden Arcade, Friedrichstrasse.

Berlin's Linden Arcade (*Lindenpassage*), although in fact known as *Kaisergalerie*, was an enclosed passage that ran from Unter den Linden to

⁶⁸ Kracauer, (1995), Farewell to the Linden Arcade, 1930, *The Mass Ornament: Weimar Essays*, 338-339.

Behrenstrasse, at the corner of Friedrichstrasse (fig.2.1), and contained a movie house which had taken over the premises previously occupied by the *Welt-Panorma*. Siegfried Kracauer's decoding of the spatial topography of the arcade offers another account of female subject-as-body and the feminine bodyscape. His melancholic descriptions of the Berlin arcade as feminine emerge as an allegory of hidden pleasures, visual curios and fleeting (often long past) sensory impressions, a manifestation of what lies beneath the respectable bourgeois world. Inspired by the recent renovation of the arcade in 1928, Kracauer considers how the plasticity of the arcade's spatial interior mapped out a dream-like experience for visitors defined by transience and the ephemeral; or as he himself put it: "The disintegration of all illusory permanence."⁶⁹ Recognising the female body as allegory plunges deep into the bourgeois experience of modernity, to reveal how specific operations of the themes and structure embedded in the *flâneurs'* experiential writings emanated from, and reflected on, specific historical conditions. Furthermore, Kracauer's textual contributions and a bourgeois meta-narrative would have been unthinkable without each other: "What united the objects in the Linden Arcade and gave them all the same function was their withdrawal from the bourgeois façade. Desires, geographic debaucheries, and many images that caused sleepless nights were not allowed to be seen among the high goings-on in the cathedrals and universities, in ceremonial speeches and parades."⁷⁰

Just as the Linden Arcade is in decline, a melancholic sense of nostalgic yearnings for times past pervades the modernist literary project, establishing a counterpoint between pervasive bourgeois values and the *flâneurs'* need to bear witness to his encounter with the new as he walks aimlessly through city streets. Experiencing the urban ramble as a 'text' ("the authentic city stroller is like a reader who reads a book only to pass the time and for pleasure"⁷¹), the writer Franz Hessel records his own sense of discomfort as he strolled through the Linden Arcade in 1929:

"I cannot enter it without a damp chill coming over me, without that fear that I might never find an exit. I am hardly past the shoe-shiners

⁶⁹ *ibid.*

⁷⁰ *op.cit.*, 341.

⁷¹ Franz Hessel, (1981), *Ermunterung zum Genuß*. Kleine Prosa, eds., Karin Grund and Bernd Witte, Berlin: Brinkmann and Bose, 59.

and the newspaper stand under the lofty arches of the entrance, and I feel a mild confusion.”⁷²

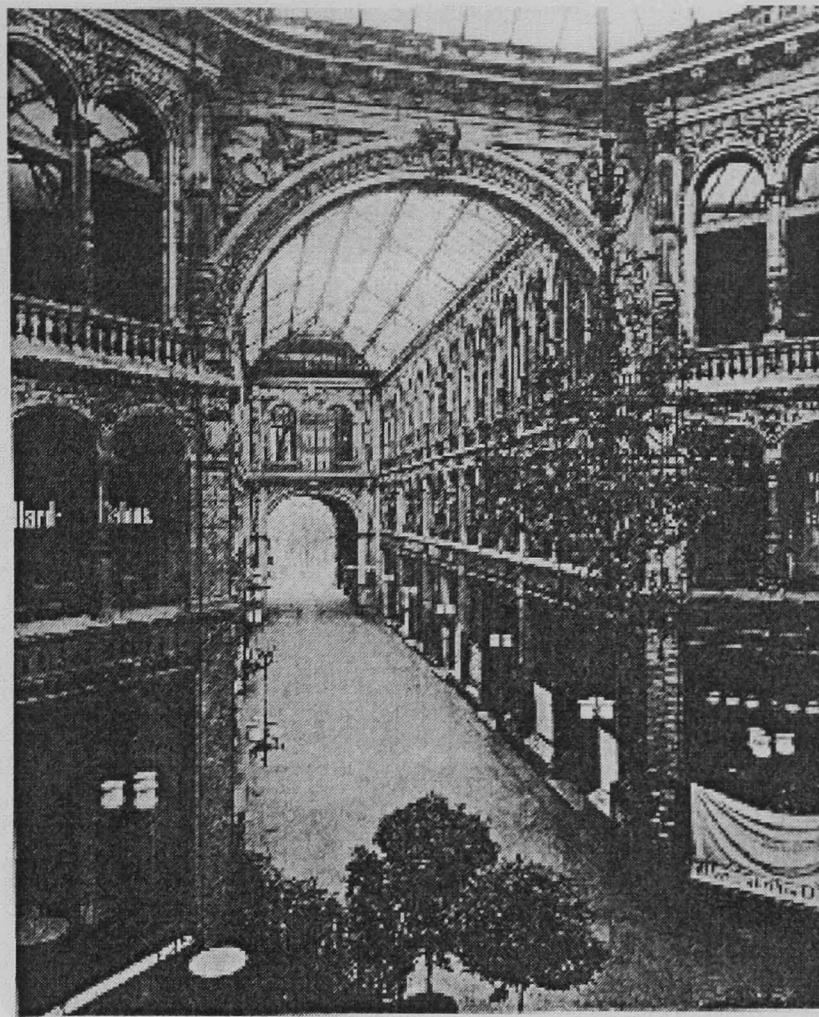


fig.2.2. Linden Arcade, interior.

Hessel, in encountering the arcade as a disquieting phantasmagorical space that ensnares anyone who dares enter, reveals both his fascination with the modern and a curiosity for retracing history through the experiencing of space and the scrutinising of city architecture:

“The whole centre of the arcade is empty. I rush quickly to the exit; I feel ghostly hidden crowds of people from days gone by, who hug the walls with lustful glances at the tawdry jewellery, the clothing, the pictures are tempting reading material of earlier bazaars. At the exit, at the windows of the great travel agency I breathe more easily, the street, freedom, the present!”⁷³

Similar to Hessel’s “mild confusion”, Kracauer recalls childhood memories of the arcade as a somehow strangely menacing, almost supernatural, place. Uneasiness, linked to dark social forces and reawakened childhood fantasies, evoke feelings of uncanniness in Kracauer; an imaginary Freudian encounter involving a desire to rationalise his own unexplained fascination for the arcade’s shadowy spaces:

⁷² Hessel, *Spazieren in Berlin*, 1929, quoted in Geist, (1983), *Arcades: The History of a Building Type*, 157.

⁷³ *ibid.*, 158.

“I still recall the shivers that the word “passageway” [*Durchgang*] aroused in me when I was a boy. In the books I was devouring at the time, the dark passageway was usually the site of murderous assaults, subsequently testified to by a pool of blood. At the very least it was the proper environment for the dubious characters who gathered there to discuss their shady plans. Even if such boyhood fantasies tended to be a bit excessive, something of the significance they attributed to the passageway clung to the former Linden Arcade. This was true not only of the Linden Arcade but of all authentically bourgeois arcades.”⁷⁴

Passages like the one in Kracauer’s *Farewell to the Linden Arcade*, in which he associates momentary “shivers” with the arcade’s arcane spaces, are not mere idle reflections. Mobilising his subjective memories into a reading strategy participates in, contributes to, and helps to reinforce perceptions and attitudes about a discursive bourgeois response to the modern world. “Dubious” inhabitants of the arcades only exist as uncanny shadows within the rational bourgeois mind. Yet documenting unease, and embedding it within a journalistic style of writing as he practised it, Kracauer gives those past spectres a presence. In doing so, he exposes the confusion and uncertainties involved within a bourgeois discourse faced with a culture beyond itself, and the series of negotiations taking place as a consequence: “Everything excluded from this bourgeois life because it was not presentable or even because it ran counter to the official world view settled in the arcades.”⁷⁵

Nowhere does the bourgeois response and cultural uncanniness find greater expression than with the haunting corporeal image of the female corpse.⁷⁶ At the entrance to the Linden Arcade was an anatomical museum; and displayed in the front window was a picture of a dissection lesson with a naked female form lying on the table, her torso cut open, surrounded by several male doctors peering inside. Hessel recalls this display of specular science during his stroll through the Linden Arcade in 1929:

“... but the anatomical beauty of the museum keeps on casting furtive glances over me. The skeleton shines through under her naked flesh like the corset of a martyr. Swimming in the emptiness inside are

⁷⁴ Kracauer, (1995), *Farewell to the Linden Arcade*, 337-8.

⁷⁵ *ibid.*, 338.

⁷⁶ Guiliiana Bruno makes a similar observation about the first movie theatres in Naples, noting how “the female body is revealed as the fantasmatic site for cinema (p.59).” Menotti Cattaneo, for example, who first started showing films in 1899, presented a spectacle in which for a few pennies people “could watch him take apart and reconstruct a wax model of a human body, including internal organs (p.59).” Bruno, (1993), *Streetwalking on a Ruined Map: Cultural Theory and the City Films of Elvira Notari*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, esp.59-62.

her painted organs, heart, liver, lungs. I turn away from her to the white-coated doctor who leans over the stomach cavity of an extraordinary sleeping blonde. Quickly, move on, before I have to experience the replacement of the nose with skin from the arm. I'd rather go onto the book and stationary stores, with their pamphlets on sensuality and the soul, on women's sexual rights, the little salon magicians and the complete card trickster, to learn about things which can make one popular on any occasion."⁷⁷

Kracauer also makes reference to the specular attraction in his journalistic dispatch, first remarking on its respectable bourgeois façade with a sign that read: "The Mankind Exhibition is devoted to the Improvement of Health." Despite the worthiness of the museum's scientific agenda to educate the public on healthy living and sexual restraint, it masked a general curiosity about sex, a desire to look upon the human body both as moribund and erotic:⁷⁸

"Inside the exhibit, tumours and monstrosities are scrupulously examined and for adults only there is also an extra display room seething with every possible venereal disease. These are the result of reckless sensuality, whose flames are fanned in a nearby bookshop."⁷⁹

Both commentators reveal how specular images of the dissected female body could be made to deliver up more than just knowledge about the internal workings of the human body.⁸⁰

Egon Kisch, writing on the continued success of the Anatomical Museum in 1925, reveals a similar visual-cum-sexual ambivalence around the female subject-as-body. He notes how the promise to reveal some hidden truth connected to female sexuality was used to pull in large crowds: "An advertisement board shows the effects of wearing a corset and calls, "Know Yourself – Protect Yourself."⁸¹ Of the hidden chamber containing images of sexual corporeality and its pathological

⁷⁷ Hessel, *Spazieren in Berlin*, 1929, quoted in Geist, (1983), *Arcades: The History of a Building Type*, 157.

⁷⁸ Erotica re-defined as educational material is an issue addressed by Gary Stark in his work on pornography and the law in Imperial Germany. He describes how "the rural folk of Baden could visit touring 'ethnographical and anatomical exhibits,' in the 1870s; until police suppressed them, these pseudo-medical exhibits displayed large plastic models graphically depicting the difference between healthy and syphilitic genitals." Stark, (1981), *Pornography, Society and the Law in Imperial Germany*, *Central European History*, 14, 206.

⁷⁹ Kracauer, (1995), *Farewell to the Linden Passage*, 339.

⁸⁰ Ludmilla Jordanova analyses the significance of the female body, focusing on how its dissection – or unveiling – provided a means to think about scientific and medical kinds of knowledge; Jordanova, *Sexual Visions*, esp. 87-110.

⁸¹ Egon Erwin Kisch, *Das Geheimkabinett des Anatomischen Museums*, 1925, quoted in Geist, (1983), *Arcades: The History of a Building Type*, 160.

processes, Kisch described how the museum laid out its instructional discourse across life-size wax anatomical models. Representations of the female reproductive organs in particular formed the centrepiece of the 'special' exhibition:

"The special room 'For Adults Only' has no special entrance fee. A curtain separates the holy of holies of the arcade for the profane part of the Anatomical Museum and is forbidden to visitors under 18. A board, turned over every quarter-hour, announces, "Now Women Only" and "Now Men Only." The sex which is excluded at any moment must loiter around in the meantime in the public rooms and study the plastic replicas of the digestion process, haemorrhoids, the effects of cholera, a tongue operation for cancer, the internal devastation caused by whiskey and the like, and a caesarean section in the picture automat. But then, the adults – men and women in their turn – are allowed to enter the inner sanctum ... where coloured plastic in life size shows all the things ... Everything is authentic or at least lifelike, a real foetus, female development from fertilisation through to normal, breech and forceps delivery, perforation and caesarean section. Organs and so on – everything exact down to the last detail and even more exact in the catalogue, under the heading 'Woman's Venereal Disease' the hymen, or vagina membrane, is correctly given as the first object, being easiest and most quickly cured of all diseases. But not too long; you are allowed a quarter-hour. Outside the other sex has already begun to gather."⁸²

Kisch is quoted at some length because his comments reveal how the institutional space of the museum (contemporary with the emergence of cinema) produced material knowledge of, and strictly regulated access to, the female body as sex. Care taken to render these female wax anatomical bodies as lifelike as possible points to an institutional desire to deliver up the truth of how the exposed internal reproductive organs functioned. Of course, the museum's principal goal was to inform the public in matters of hygiene and human reproduction, in keeping with the state's comprehensive programme for population management. Yet, the means by which the 'Secret Chamber' controlled access, and by policing an actual division between the sexes, focused the individual's gaze on the sexual 'excesses' of the female reproductive body, marking 'her' out "as being thoroughly saturated with sexuality."⁸³ In the process, of course, it guaranteed a steady flow of curious visitors to the museum.

The museum by discouraging the public from lingering over the sights avoided charges of indecency. Attendance was managed by directing people through the

⁸² *ibid.*

space within a specified time span. Explanatory plates clearly spelt out exactly what visitors should be looking at and thinking about. These procedures together ensured that visual consumption could, on the surface at least, be somehow licensed. Yet, moving the public so rapidly through the space resulted in what the male *flâneurs* saw as an obsession for some people who returned time and again. “Among these, there are some fanatic attachments to the Anatomical Museum, and of these, some absolute slaves to the Secret Chamber, enchanted by one or the other display.”⁸⁴ A public information service on human reproduction and healthy living was experienced as popular specular entertainment; and its alluring fascination and erotic forbidden pleasures went beyond the limits of rational (bourgeois) science. The museum, with its ceaseless flow of visitors, hierarchy of bodily attractions, spatial arrangements of permitted and restricted sights, and surveillance systems for policing the crowds, “delineated areas of extreme sexual saturation.”⁸⁵

For the *flâneur*, the dissected female body possessed shared territory with the arcade’s own secret pleasures and visual deceptions; or as Kracauer notes: “The World Panorama is enthroned in the arcade like the Anatomy Museum; indeed, it is only a tiny leap from the graspable body to the un-graspable distant.”⁸⁶ By the time the optical spectacles, dioramas and early motion pictures moved in at the end of the nineteenth- and beginning of the twentieth-centuries, the arcade had entered into a new phase. It came to be forgotten and reimagined by the male *flâneur* two decades later as a strange twilight world of (un)veiled female bodies and hidden pleasures to be made known: “I look at the face of a little old man with a thinning beard. He blinks at the window glass next door, where original sketches show half-naked girls, who busy themselves with their stockings and shoulder ribbons.”⁸⁷ Franz Hessel privileges the process of insistent observation and fixed curious gaze as central to generating knowledge about the sensual (erotic) delights concealed behind the arcade’s surfaces, while simultaneously presenting himself as the agent best able to bring such information to light.

⁸³ Foucault, (1978), *The History of Sexuality*, 104.

⁸⁴ Egon Erwin Kisch, quoted in Geist (1983), *Arcades: The History of a Building Type*, 160.

⁸⁵ Foucault, (1978), *The History of Sexuality*, 46.

⁸⁶ Kracauer, (1995), *Farewell to the Linden Passage*, 340.

Hessel's writing displays what Foucault notes as "an extension of the domain controlled; but also a sensualisation of power and a gain of pleasure."⁸⁸ One fascinating aspect of the Hessel text is the profound sense of ambiguity that pervades it. Hessel authoritatively identifies the arcade's arcane erotic attractions while somehow excusing his role as cultural historian in the retrieval process. Pleasures uncovered relate back to a more subtle interpretative process involving him observing another man looking at the titillating images. Hessel's observation fixes the 'half-naked' girls as a site of exotic contemplation at the very moment he obscures his own part in the visual economy through asserting the old man's presence instead. In doing so, he blurs the sexual politics from which his own interpretations draw sustenance. Pleasure is defined by identifying those characteristics over which the *flâneur* must keep constant watch while distancing him from any apparent immediate and erotic connection to the bodyscapes that he has created. As Foucault notes, "truth is drawn from pleasure itself, understood as a practice and accumulated as experience."⁸⁹

Architectural topographies and commercial functionality appear to the male *flâneur* to collapse together into profane yet distantly observed forbidden sights and sexual titillation. Egon Kisch writes:

"It is in fact an evening promenade. Here one goes for a stroll, yes a stroll in the atmosphere of fairground romance and passionate love; the bookshops do not display books that explain how to read the stock exchange lists ... Instead they display *The Sex Life of Homosexuals*, *When I Wore Men's Clothing*, *The Rebirth of Eros*, *Uranos*, *Cruelty with Special Reference to Sexual Factors*, *The Right of the Third Sex*, *Gynomastia*, *Feminism* and *Hermaphroditism*."⁹⁰

Kracauer, too, notes how the commerce of erotic literature was a product of the perversities implanted into the arcade's topography: "The bookstore in the Linden Arcade knows how indebted it is to its surroundings. Paperbacks whose titles arouse desires that their contents could hardly fulfil sprout in an intentionally harmless

⁸⁷ Hessel, *Spazieren in Berlin*, 1929, quoted in Geist, (1983), *Arcades: The History of a Building Type*, 158.

⁸⁸ Foucault, (1978), *The History of Sexuality*, 44.

⁸⁹ *ibid.*, 57.

⁹⁰ Egon Erwin Kisch, *Das Geheimkabinett des Anatomischen Museums*, 1925, quoted in Geist, (1983), *Arcades: The History of a Building Type*, 160-161.

undergrowth of books.”⁹¹ For this new type of bourgeois writer, sex remained a “formidable secret.”⁹² The prosaic formal use of language to simply document what is seen, ultimately has a distancing effect. Objects are rendered lifeless, uncertain and abstract by deadening prose. Yet attempts to merely record cumulative processes involved in the “system of rules defining the permitted and the forbidden” set these efforts apart from orthodox bourgeois writings, which tended to dwell on rooting out sexual perversion and the processes by which it explained the debasement of contemporary life.⁹³

The new bourgeois epistemology of the arcade and its secret pleasures emerged alongside older moral categories of debauchery and sexual excess. Kracauer wrote: “It is precisely as a passage that the passageway is also the place where, more than almost anywhere else, the voyage which is the journey from the near to the far and the linkage of body and image can manifest itself.”⁹⁴ *Flâneurs* codified the sensual feminine form as an allegorical anchorage point for understanding the rules of modernity and contemporary experience, and saturated the discourse with consuming desire(s), arcane pleasures and bodily sensations.

“Anyone who passes through might also try the lottery store to see whether Lady Luck, his companion, is well disposed toward him, or he might put her to a test in a card game. And if he wants to confront his glossy paper dreams in person, he can go to the postcard shop, where he will discover them realised in a variety of colourful versions. ... and the nakedness of rosy women’s bodies immerses him in desires. Next door, imitation bracelets nestle around the neck and arms of a shapely beauty almost on this own, and an outdated hit tune emanating from the music shop lends wings to the arcade wanderer amid the illusions he has discovered.”⁹⁵

1910 saw the first exhibition of ‘Stereoscopic Projection’ at Berlin’s Apollo Theatre, a location not far from the Linden Arcade. Otherwise known as the ‘Alabaster Stage’, the novelty projection system was developed by Messter’s *Messters Projektion Ltd.*, and represented one of the first attempts at three-dimensional projection. *The Bioscope* reported on the technological feat; an adaptation of the phantasmagoria with two projectors offset from one another:

⁹¹ Kracauer, (1995), *Farewell to the Linden Passage*, 339.

⁹² Foucault, (1978), *The History of Sexuality*, 118.

⁹³ *ibid.*, 106.

⁹⁴ Kracauer, (1995), *Farewell to the Linden Passage*, 338.

“The performance commenced with a dance by “The Three Graces,” the rhythmic movements of their lithe bodies being shown on a stage entirely free from any screen, in a brilliantly lit theatre. The plastic appearance is described as being simply amazing, the figures standing out as in Nature, with the back of the stage visible behind. Other films were shown, enabling one to realise the complete success of the invention. These include a scene from “Salome” another of flying pigeons and one in a “boudoir.””⁹⁶

Such “optical delusion,” as one newspaper called it, was embedded in a cultural trajectory of waxwork models and other visual attractions exhibited at Berlin’s Apollo Theatre. For the trick to work, the female subject-as-body is literally trapped in space. There is no room for negotiation since the stereoscopic projection system, with its exact set of spatial co-ordinates, must be precise in order for the image to appear at all. Unveiling the female form becomes a vehicle for demonstrating the latest optical invention. Detached from the screen and embodying the illusion, images of the female subject-as-body drew in particular upon themes from antiquity and classical ideals of the feminine (i.e. the Three Graces). Mastered by fixed co-ordinates and the material mechanisms of the projection’s operational system, the archaic aura of woman as eternal beauty becomes animated, and re-mythologised, by the wonders of new technology. Alabaster has further inferences of lasting permanence, of (perhaps, racial) purity and a civilised culture. Male authored technology (Oskar Messter’s projection system) projects an image of ideal woman, either as mythical beauty or salacious *femme fatale*, in much the same way as the male *flâneur* personified the prosaic pleasures of the modern city as feminine within his allegorical rhetoric.

All the ambivalences embedded with in the feminine spatial topographies stem from an unquestioning acceptance of the bourgeois value system as a meta-narrative. The processes involved in rendering the (feminine) ‘other’ silent demonstrates how the male *flâneur* operated through a compelling sense of his right to speak and an obligation to define the modern social world around him. Yet the *flâneur*’s woman-as-allegory is neither a simple bourgeois statement of the new nor a naïvely-biased account of the modern city. It is the realisation of a complex and discontinuous set of discourses about German modernity and the ever-changing cultural landscape: on the

⁹⁵ *ibid.*, 341.

⁹⁶ (21 July 1910), News From Germany, *The Bioscope*, 57.

one hand, brings to light, watching, interpreting and monitoring; on the other, excited and seduced by its every detail. But, and more importantly, the feminine allegorical narratives emerge as a bourgeois engagement with the city that the *flâneur* adored but could no longer quite understand:

“Now under a new glass roof and adorned in marble, the former arcade looks like the vestibule of a department store. The shops are still there, but its postcards are mass-produced commodities, its World Panorama has been superseded by a cinema, and its Anatomical Museum has long ceased to cause a sensation. All the objects have been struck dumb.”⁹⁷

Farewell to the Linden Arcade exists as both metaphor and metonymy of a bourgeois discourse in crisis with itself. An abiding belief in the values and assumptions of a bourgeois culture, coupled with a simultaneous detailed observation of the state of all contemporary things, thus became firmly embedded within the archive and its melancholic analogies.

Re-evaluating the *Flâneur's* Textual Journey: Prostitution as a Critique of Bourgeois Existence in Walter Benjamin's *Das Passagen-Werk*.

“Everything for me becomes allegory.”

Charles Baudelaire.⁹⁸

“With the rise of the great cities prostitution came into possession of new secrets. One of these is the labyrinthine character of the city itself. The labyrinth, whose image had passed into flesh and blood in the *flâneur*, is at the same time one colourfully framed by prostitution.”

Walter Benjamin.⁹⁹

State and police authorities delivered up the prostitute as a deviant social body requiring legislation and official intervention while the *flâneur* in the late twenties turned her into a melancholic analogy to render readable the hidden pleasures, visual sensations and discursive character of modern metropolis, only to reveal a discourse in crisis. Walter Benjamin is another writer whose work on the topographical landscape of the city has been co-opted so manifestly to extend a

⁹⁷ Kracauer, (1995), *Farewell to the Linden Passage*, 342.

⁹⁸ Charles Baudelaire, (1976), *The Swan, The Complete Verse*, trans. Francis Scarfe, London: Anvil Press, 176.

⁹⁹ Walter Benjamin, (1985), *Central Park*, trans. Lloyd Spencer, *New German Critique*, 34, Winter, 53.

discourse on new urban practices and immediate sensorial experiences of modern life.¹⁰⁰ Benjamin, however, opens out the problem of the bourgeois subject further to identify how the male *flâneur*, as collector and stroller, encountered himself mirrored in and refracted through the phantasmagoria of ‘prostitution.’ In the following extract, collected by Benjamin in *Passagen-Werk* (The Arcades Project), Baudelaire wrote on how he found himself to be in a state of ‘prostitution:’ “The man of genius wants to be *one* – that is, solitary./ The glorious thing ... is to remain *one* by practicing your prostitution in your own company.”¹⁰¹

Benjamin’s *Passagen-Werk*, on the subject of the Paris arcades – *les passages* – from the period 1830-1870, is a vast *bricolage* of literary citations, remarks, epigraphs and commentaries. It aims to comprehend the epoch of the Parisian arcades as a formative moment when the modern capitalist world took shape but was now as a building type in the process of decline.¹⁰² “The nineteenth century, a space time “*Zeitraum*” (a dreamtime) in which ... the collective consciousness sinks into an ever deeper sleep.”¹⁰³ Collecting items from the edges of a cultural landscape in the process of becoming modern at another moment of historical change, he retrieved discarded literary texts and prosaic experiences of a century passed. For him, past experiences can be re-read in the modern, remembered as an insightful yet sudden shock in the present: “Here at a distance from what is normally meant by ‘progress,’ is the *ur*-historical, collective redemption of lost time, of the times embedded in the spaces of things.”¹⁰⁴ Benjamin included, in a seemingly random fashion, everything he encountered on his textual perambulations, making every possible effort to search out abandoned texts and document all traces of a variegated daily existence in the Parisian arcades:

“Method of this project: literary montage. I needn’t say anything. Merely show. I shall purloin no valuables, appropriate no ingenious formulations. But the rags, the refuse – these I will not inventory but allow, in the only way possible, to come into their own: by making use of them.”¹⁰⁵

¹⁰⁰ Anke Gleber, (1999), *The Art of Taking A Walk: Flanerie, Literature and Film in Weimar Culture*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 47-60.

¹⁰¹ Charles Baudelaire, ‘Mon Coeur mis à nu,’; quoted in Benjamin, (1999), *The Arcades Project*, 291.

¹⁰² Johann Friedrich Geist (1983) notes the demise of the arcade as a building type during this period, *Arcades: The History of a Building Type*, 160-161.

¹⁰³ Benjamin, (1999), *The Arcades Project*, 389.

¹⁰⁴ Translators, in *ibid.*, xii.

¹⁰⁵ *op.cit.*, 14.

Benjamin's theory of experience, framed by a complex philosophical nexus of detachments, transience, transformations and intersections, reclaims past times "embedded in the spaces of things." Such phantasmagorical spaces, both real and imagined, form, he argued, a threshold between two worlds. One is the external world of trade and business, in which the arcades provided a concrete sociologically determined setting for the buying and selling of commodities. The other is a private interior dreamscape, a psychological one linked to collective unconscious desires: "Arcades are houses or passages having no outside – like a dream."¹⁰⁶ Benjamin identified the dialectics of the arcades' spatial phantasmagoria, shifting between the material and concrete (a modern social history) and fleeting apparitions and the estranged (a waking dream world of the unconscious and archaic symbols).

Benjamin describes how the commercial function and aesthetics of the arcades involve a discursive implantation of desires and the body within its spatial arrangements.

"The arcade is a street of lascivious commerce only; it is wholly adapted to rousing desires. Because of this street the juices slow to a standstill, the commodity proliferates along the margins and enters into fantastic combinations, like the tissue in tumours."¹⁰⁷

His link between corporeal bodies and uses of space is reminiscent of the accounts offered by Kracauer, Hessel and Kisch in relation to the dissected female corpse in the museum window, as well as the police discourse concerning the prostitute plying her trade along city streets. Yet Benjamin makes explicit that which was only implicit within the above discourses; namely, how bodies are linked to and part of a network of city flows. His work captures an ambiguity between the materiality of human body and the body-politics of the city, between external phenomena and the archaic. Several dialectical elements recur in his work as a consequence: spatial sensations and surface-display hiding something more elusive (possibly fearful) underneath; 'shock' as a moment of insight into the new; signs of loss that link signification with death and the role played by the 'intoxicated' *flâneur* in the mapping process.

¹⁰⁶ *ibid.*, 406.

¹⁰⁷ *ibid.*, 42.

Entering the arcades, Benjamin recognises certain social types that make visible the phantasmagoria of these modern urban spaces for the *flâneur*: “The phantasmagoria of the *flâneur*: to read from faces the profession, the ancestry, the character.”¹⁰⁸ Out of the crowd various figures emerge the gambler, the shopper and, of course, the prostitute – all of whom make manifest the threshold between modern materialism and archaic forces: “Mystification ... is an apotropaic magic, similar to the lie among prostitutes.”¹⁰⁹ The key to the *flâneur*'s interest in his knowing these modern inhabitants of the arcade as uncanny is that it effectively demonstrates the bourgeois encounter with the new, implying a range of knowledge and an intellectual mastery over that which he has named.

The prostitutes' identity is first inscribed within the exterior phenomena of their material surroundings, the social world of trade and commerce: “Certainly the whore's love is for sale.”¹¹⁰ In such a social landscape, the prostitute, displaying herself on city streets and in the arcades, is to be purchased and consumed: “money is what animates the marble maiden.”¹¹¹ Money instantly animates the inanimate woman, making the woman-as-commodity come to life. Streetwalkers embody material modes of capitalist production – divisions of labour – for Benjamin, as these women negotiate with clients to be paid for their time and bodies. He viewed the prostitute as the absolute expression of capitalist reification, a commodity that exists and circulates in the socio-economic world where absolutely everything can be bought and sold for commercial gain.¹¹² “Such an image is the prostitute – seller and sold in one.”¹¹³ What she sells is, argues Benjamin, not just the promise of sexual pleasure but the person who embodies the whole experience.

“The prostitute does not sell her labour power; her job, however, entails the fiction that she sells her powers of pleasures. Insofar as this represents the utmost extension attainable by the sphere of the

¹⁰⁸ *ibid.*, 429.

¹⁰⁹ *op.cit.*, 335.

¹¹⁰ *ibid.*, 492.

¹¹¹ *ibid.*, 514.

¹¹² Rosalyn Deutsche in her 1983 essay on Ernst Ludwig Kirchner's street paintings of prostitutes *Five Women on the Street* (1913) and *The Street* (1913) sets out the terms for this discourse within modernist German art, arguing that he depicted city prostitutes as objectified commodities. By choosing as his subject prostitutes who are bought and sold, and juxtapositioning these women with images of commercialism (shop window displaying consumer items or advertisements), he rendered visible the economic exchange inherent in all modern human relations. Rosalyn Deutsche, (January 1983), *Alienation in Berlin: Kirchner's Street Scenes*, *Art in America*.

¹¹³ Benjamin, (1999), *The Arcades Project*, 10.

commodity, the prostitute may be considered, from early on, a precursor of commodity capitalism.”¹¹⁴

Benjamin contended, therefore, that understanding the streetwalkers’ body as commodity revealed the logic of a Marxist political economy in the public sphere, a correlation between labour (exploitation) and its monetary value (profitability): “Prostitution can lay claim to being considered “work” the moment work becomes prostitution. ... She already arranges to be paid for her time; from there, it is only a short distance to those who demand “wages.””¹¹⁵

Naturalness in all forms had been eliminated. A seemingly abundant supply of prostitutes circulating across the metropolis rendered her a widely available commodity: “It was the existence of the masses that first enabled prostitution to overspread large areas of the city, whereas earlier it had been confined, if not to houses, at least to the streets.”¹¹⁶ Benjamin therefore concluded that the ‘massification’ of the streetwalker’s prostituted body further reified the loss of a ‘natural’ feminine ontology and the end of its poetic aura (a sublime beauty):

“And in fact: the sexual revolt against love not only springs from the fanatical, obsessional will to pleasure; it also aims to make nature adaptable and obedient to this will. The traits in question here appear more clearly still when prostitution ... is regarded less as the opposite than as the decline of love.”¹¹⁷

His argument relies on a fundamental opposition between nature and consumer culture, in which cultural productivity supersedes natural (female) reproduction. Benjamin explains such a loss in terms of what he perceives as ‘fetishism’ at work in the arcades and on the streets: “In fetishism, sex does away with the boundaries separating the organic world from the inorganic. Clothing and jewellery are its allies. It is as much at home with what is dead as it is with living flesh.”¹¹⁸ Provocative dresses thus become *de rigueur*, emerging as standard in the arcades. Fashion, and the multiple disguises it helps the streetwalkers, assume provided further evidence of spurious illusionism circulating around a man-made world of artifice:

“... Adding to this illusion is the fact that, on a single evening, the *fille publique* very often sports multiple disguises. With an eye just the

¹¹⁴ *ibid.*, 348.

¹¹⁵ *op.cit.*

¹¹⁶ *ibid.*, 339.

¹¹⁷ *ibid.*, 493.

¹¹⁸ *ibid.*, 69.

least bit practiced, it is easy to convince oneself that the woman who at eight o'clock is dressed in a rich and elegant outfit is the same who appears as a cheap grisette at nine, and who will show herself at ten in a peasant dress. It is this way at all points in the capital to which prostitutes are habitually drawn."¹¹⁹

Even pregnancy is reduced by the prostitute to a role she plays for a few months before aborting the child. The streetwalkers' flagrant disregard for natural procreation and love of artifice allowed Benjamin to claim that the modern feminine body had lost its poetic aura, no longer a symbol of celestial beauty (for example, how Beatrice's sublime image mediated between Truth and Beauty in Dante's *Divine Comedy*). Instead, the idealised feminine body is rendered desirous only as a petrified one: "In the inanimate body, which can, however, give itself pleasure, allegory unites with commodities."¹²⁰ Sexual pleasure and sexuality – to be sold and consumed without love – are reduced to a morbid exhibitionism: "On the dialectical function of money in prostitution. It buys pleasures and, at the same time, becomes the expression of shame."¹²¹ According to Benjamin, turning beauty itself into a product to be continually reproduced and consumed had destroyed the uniqueness of a natural feminine grace.

Central to Benjamin's theoretical endeavours regarding the prostitute-as-allegory is how it relates to the *flâneur*, idle wanderer and urban chronicler, and his interpretative strategies for dominating the cultural world around him. Benjamin's *flâneur* is a collector of multiple visual experiences: a man who sets out to retrieve the flotsam and jetsam of the everyday, scrutinises prosaic details and translates the hieroglyphics of modernity into a readable text. Anke Gleber describes Benjamin's *flâneur*:

"In his seemingly purposeless approach to seeing and collecting everything that he encounters in public space and culture, the *flâneur* prefigures the principle and structures of Benjamin's own seeing and collecting, of his own efforts to record the signifying moments and phenomena of capitalist modernity."¹²²

¹¹⁹ F.F.A. Béraud, *Les Filles publiques de Paris*, 1839, quoted in *ibid.*, 502.

¹²⁰ *op.cit.*

¹²¹ *ibid.*, 492.

¹²² Gleber, (1999), *The Art of Taking a Walk*, 48.

Academic scholarship has long focused on understanding the structural primacy of the *flâneur*, and particularly on how our urban stroller turns “unregulated existences” into written form.¹²³ Yet focusing principally on the *flâneur*, “a subjective yet peripatetic historian of the city,”¹²⁴ as a structuring device seems a less pressing issue than the complexities raised by the document for the archive. Within this context, the types of texts chosen and the encounter between Benjamin’s interpretative commentaries and the vast montage of assembled quotes and citations about different topics (fashion, advertising, boredom, modes of lighting, the automation, reproduction technology) prove interesting. The collected works offer ample detail about the formative processes involved in European modernity which began in 1830, continued during Benjamin’s lifetime, and finally projected into the selection and composition of the texts themselves. It is the correspondence between how Benjamin incorporates and understands his amassed materials, and the project’s overwhelmingly bourgeois infrastructure, that suggests his conception of the *flâneur* proves to be a far more ambiguous construct than previously suggested.

Just as the arcades as a building type had long past its heyday, we find Benjamin demonstrating an extraordinarily bourgeois sensibility for accumulating its cultural scraps and a deep belief in how the collection process can be used to reclaim a knowable past while structuring his own project at another moment of historical change.

“The true method of making things present is to represent them in our space (not to represent ourselves in their space). ... The same method applies ... to the consideration of great things from the past – the cathedral of Chartres, the temple of Paestum – when ... a favourable prospect presents itself: the method of receiving the things into our space. We don’t displace our being into theirs; they step into our life.”¹²⁵

Between 1927 and his death in 1940, Benjamin as collector was to be obsessed with gathering literary citations from other *flâneurs* (including Charles Baudelaire) and the exterior daily phenomena of the arcades which seemed to offer an explanation of

¹²³ Christine Buci-Gluckmann, (1986), *Catastrophic Utopia: The Feminine as Allegory of the Modern*, trans. Katharine Streip, *Representations*, 14, Spring, 220-229; Susan Buck-Morss, (1989), *The Dialectics of Seeing. Walter Benjamin and the Arcade Project*, Cambridge: MIT Press; and Rolf Tiedemann, (1991), *Dialectics at a Standstill. Approaches to the Passagen-Werk*, IN: G. Smith, ed., *On Walter Benjamin. Critical Essays and Reflections*, Cambridge: MIT Press, 260-291.

¹²⁴ Gleber, (1999), *The Art of Taking a Walk*, 49.

¹²⁵ Benjamin, (1999), *The Arcades Project*, 206.

the roots of modernity and its capitalist economy. Yet Benjamin gives us insight into the mind of the collector who “detaches the object from its functional relation.”¹²⁶

“It is the deepest enchantment of the collector to enclose the particular item within a magic circle, where, as a last shudder runs through it (the shudder of being acquired) it turns to stone. Everything remembered, everything thought, everything conscious becomes ... frame, pedestal, seal of his possession.”¹²⁷

With such a comment, we are left in no doubt about the nature of the cultural assumptions he possessed as he acquired and assembled his source material. By relentlessly constructing his theory from the collated data that he rendered still, he was able to retain control of the rules of his discourse. Furthermore, the comment reveals that for Benjamin there was no conflict between his interest in collecting these neglected items and random experiences and his belief in a rational bourgeois sensibility to help him interpret the materialist chaos.

“Perhaps the most deeply hidden motive of the person who collects can be described this way: he takes up the struggle against dispersion. Right from the start, the great collector is struck by the confusion, by the scatter, in which the things of the world are found. ... The collector ... brings together what belongs together; by keeping in mind their affinities and their succession in time, he can eventually furnish information about his objects.”¹²⁸

Benjamin here prefigures Foucault’s claims about power and how it “demanded constant, attentive and curious presences for its exercise.”¹²⁹ In the “struggle against dispersion” the collector – in this case, Benjamin – anchors that which he uncovers.

Such a position is elaborated upon in Benjamin’s remarks about the attitude of the *flâneur* – “epitome of the political attitude of the middle-classes during the Second Empire”¹³⁰ – toward the new building projects: “the *flâneur* feels drawn to these ‘despised, everyday structures.’”¹³¹ Implicit in his declaration is the suggestion that the *flâneur* is out of place wandering through arcades (“during his afternoon walk before the aperitif”) because of social position and cultural assumptions.¹³² Furthermore, it is evident from the statements that the *flâneur* is only able to make

¹²⁶ *ibid.*, 207

¹²⁷ *op.cit.*, 205

¹²⁸ *ibid.*, 211.

¹²⁹ Foucault, (1978), *The History of Sexuality*, 44.

¹³⁰ Benjamin, (1999), *The Arcades Project*, 420.

¹³¹ *ibid.*, 455.

visible the phenomena of the new through his own intellectual uncertainty about being modern: “The street conducts the *flâneur* into a vanished time. For him, every street is precipitous. It leads downward ... into a past that can be all the more spellbinding because it is not his own, not private.”¹³³ With such a comment, Benjamin makes clear that momentary insight about modernity only emerges at a point around cultural tension, an instantaneous yet shocking moment when the *flâneur* recognises his own difference in the new. “The impression of the old-fashioned can arise only where, in a certain way, reference is made to the most topical.”¹³⁴

The passing shudder experienced by Benjamin’s *flâneur* is revealed as a moment of uncanniness – the *unheimlich*. It is founded upon his inability to suppress uncomfortable feelings evoked by the shock of the new. Benjamin speaks further about how the *flâneur* – “the dreaming idler” – becomes intoxicated by the experience, seeking to expose himself as much as possible to further sensory encounters:¹³⁵ “this points to that association of wingedness with the feeling of indecision which is so characteristic of hashish intoxication.”¹³⁶ Even while accepting Benjamin’s ability to provide a generally rich and varied inventory of modernity and its repercussions in contemporary life, his definitions of the *flâneur*’s intoxicated state tend to reduce multiplicity and fleeting impressions to a dream-like state:

“The new, dialectical method of doing history presents itself as the art of experiencing the present as waking world, a world to which that dream we name the past refers in truth. To pass through and carry out *what has been* in remembering the dream! – Therefore: remembering and awaking are most intimately related. Awakening is ... the dialectical ... of remembrance.”¹³⁷

Benjamin’s *flâneur* – the distant observer seeking out the intoxicating experience of sensory shocks – reveals his addiction to an “aimless trance” as coming from the exercise of power that interrogates, observes, patrols, traces, tracks down, brings to light and incites a discourse about modernity.¹³⁸ Furthermore Benjamin himself

¹³² *ibid.*, 417.

¹³³ *ibid.*, 416.

¹³⁴ *op.cit.*, 69.

¹³⁵ *ibid.*, 417.

¹³⁶ *ibid.*, 425.

¹³⁷ *ibid.*, 389.

¹³⁸ Gleber, (1999), *The Art of Taking a Walk*, 50.

becomes intoxicated by his very experience of collecting, by the way in which he abandons himself to the processes of searching out materials and recording experience. Intoxicated pleasures somehow contained, concealed and even denying the rupture, the difference of modernity, contributes further to defining the feminine body as a representational ‘Other’.

The (feminine) body once again provides an imaginary staging site for perceiving the outcome of the “perpetual spirals of power and pleasure” embedded in Benjamin’s definition of intoxication.¹³⁹ This sense is considerably heightened by his observation about how the arcades’ prostitutes seemed to be implanted into the actual fabric of the building: “The windows in the upper story of the arcades are choir lofts in which the angels that men call ‘swallows’ are nesting.”¹⁴⁰ An experience of momentary bafflement is made real as the prostitutes’ provocative make-up and “showy jewellery” become conversely mirrored back in the *Jugendstil* – “female/flower/pubescence” – interiors (a decorative style that marked another “death knell,”¹⁴¹ the end of the Art Nouveau genre): “The corset as the torso’s arcade.”¹⁴² Inanimate architectural materials and interior design features are rendered uncanny through commercial artifice, sensual masks and a fleeting transitoriness of the animated prostitute. It is a moment of uncanniness, revealed as the inanimate archaic facade of the buildings appears to flicker into life.

“The dusty fata morgana of the winter garden, the dreary perspective of the train station, with the small altar of happiness at the intersection of the tracks – it all molders under spurious constructions. ... For the first third of the previous century, no one as yet understood how to build with glass and iron. That problem, however, has long since been solved by hangars and silos. Now, it is the same with the human material on the inside of the arcades as with the materials of their construction. Pimps are the iron bearings of this street, and *its glass breakables are the whores.*” [emphasis added]¹⁴³

These comments leads us to the idea that the streetwalker became inscribed as the material embodiment of a new but frail arcad(e)ian space as defined by the *flâneur*.

¹³⁹ Foucault, (1978), *The History of Sexuality*, 45.

¹⁴⁰ Benjamin, (1999), *The Arcades Project*, 492.

¹⁴¹ *ibid.*, 20.

¹⁴² *ibid.*, 492.

¹⁴³ *ibid.*, 155.

Another point arising from prostitution-as-allegory is how the *flâneur* over-identifies with what he perceives: “Love for the prostitute is the apotheosis of empathy with the commodity.”¹⁴⁴ Seeing himself as essentially a commodity that circulates city streets, Benjamin’s *flâneur* believes himself to share a similar fate with other prostituted individuals who exist on the margins: “As *flâneur*, the literary man ventures into the marketplace to sell himself.”¹⁴⁵ Recognising other forms of capitalist reification, Benjamin legitimises the seemingly aimless hours spent strolling around the metropolis as purposeful activity undertaken for commercial gain: “The idleness of the *flâneur* is a demonstration against the division of labour.”¹⁴⁶ His time has monetary value and what he sees can all be transformed into a saleable commodity, as idle wanderer turns into journalist. The *flâneur* forced to sell his leisure finds himself to be in a state of prostitution: “Moreover, he is no buyer. He is merchandise.”¹⁴⁷

One issue that emerges from Benjamin’s over-identification with the state of prostitution is a site of textual tension. Just as Benjamin maps out his own sense of prostitution across other prostituted bodies, there is an over-determination placed upon other bodies and the perspectives offered by different voices. Furthermore, there is a slippage between Benjamin as *flâneur* and his identification of the *flâneur* as social type. Such textual slides are reflected in how he accommodates other *flâneur* voices such as Friedrich Engels (“a man may wander for hours together without reaching the beginning of the end,” 1848) with his own (“The man who feels himself viewed by all and sundry as a true suspect and, on the other side, the man who is utterly undiscoverable, the hidden man.”)¹⁴⁸ One can discern within the overall project a dense network of interwoven and complex histories that critiques while confirming a modern bourgeois experience.

I read the textual struggles as embedded in what Benjamin defines as ‘trace’ and ‘aura’. For me, an understanding of how these terms operate within Benjamin’s overall project opens them out to reveal a discourse and its explicit mechanisms.

¹⁴⁴ *ibid.*, 511.

¹⁴⁵ *ibid.*, 446.

¹⁴⁶ *op.cit.*, 427.

¹⁴⁷ *ibid.*, 42.

¹⁴⁸ Friedrich Engels, 1848, quoted in *ibid.*, 427; and Benjamin, *ibid.*, 420.

“Trace and aura. The trace is appearance of a nearness, however far removed the thing that left it behind may be. The aura is appearance of a distance, however close the thing that calls it forth. In the trace, we gain possession of the thing; in the aura, it takes possession of us.”¹⁴⁹

Taking the issue of ‘aura’ first, Benjamin’s own remarks on how the ‘aura’ “takes possession of us” prove intriguing. His comment directs our attention toward how the *flâneur* can become, in the words of Anke Gleber, “intoxicated by his very experience of this process, by the ways in which he abandons himself to the topography of the city.”¹⁵⁰ Over-reliance on the notion of how the *flâneur* experiences the auratic moment, in part because of its privileging within the later canon of Benjamin’s work (especially ‘The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction’) has contributed to the pervasive idea about the modern city as a dream.¹⁵¹ Even while evoking its epistemology as a means of understanding the prosaic yet ultimately elusive allure of modernity, Benjamin recognises how the ‘aura’ as a mode of perception can easily ensnare the critic.

“Within the man who abandons himself to it, the crowd inspires a sort of drunkenness, one accompanied by very specific illusions: the man flatters himself that, on seeing a passer-by swept along by the crowd, he has accurately classified him, seen straight through to the innermost recesses of this soul – all on the basis on his external appearance.”¹⁵²

The experience of ‘aura’ asserts what can be called a bourgeois cultural value system based on intellectual distance, individual contemplation and the position of (male) observer as the *only* one able to articulate experience. “There is an effort to master the new experiences of the city within the framework of the old traditional experiences of nature.”¹⁵³ Yet, to a certain extent, it is a position that *only* the *flâneur* can occupy and express, as fleeting impressions become shaped by the *flâneur* moving about the city. The *flâneur* forced into the market place for commercial gain finds his own inherited social position devalued. Once spatially remote and socially privileged, he no longer appears untouched. His exclusiveness becomes familiar to the masses and his recorded experiences reproduced within the printed media. The auratic experience thus becomes one of irrevocable decline, and one that articulates

¹⁴⁹ *ibid.*, 447.

¹⁵⁰ Gleber, (1999), *The Art of Taking A Walk*, 50.

¹⁵¹ Walter Benjamin, (1968), *The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction*, trans. Harry Zohn, *Illuminations*, Hannah Arendt, ed., New York: Schocken, 217-251.

¹⁵² Benjamin, (1999), *The Arcades Project*, 21.

¹⁵³ *ibid.*, 447.

the loss of the *flâneur*'s own traditional "spatial-temporal presence" made visible at the moment when the new comes into view; and as Siegfried Kracauer recalls in his journalistic excursion for a piece destined for the *feuilleton* section of the *Frankfurter Zeitung*: "In [the Linden Arcade] we ourselves encounter ourselves as deceased."¹⁵⁴

The 'trace' that Benjamin perceives in the arcades and on the streets is, on the other hand, of quite a different order. If the auratic moment of loss is brought on by an inability to suppress uncomfortable – uncanny – feelings evoked by the new, then 'trace' made visible the prosaic-ness, the ordinariness of modernity. Unlike 'aura', interpreted as a melancholic sense of decline requiring an interpretator to define meaning, 'trace' is about process. It refers to how a series of undertakings, objects and institutions can subject an individual to certain procedures, and, during these processes of subject-ion, specific knowledge about that experience is *produced*: "In the process of administration, something analogous occurs with heightened organisation."¹⁵⁵ Furthermore, Benjamin's notion of 'trace' impacts upon the actual collection process involved in the Arcade Project itself. 'Trace' is thus made visible from the numerous texts being brought together, and through a project that remained unfinished at the time of Benjamin's death.

What proves important for Benjamin is how 'trace', both discursive and institutional, was epistemologically constructed and managed. Note, for example, what Benjamin had to say about how the topography of the city street and how, in the process of using it, a particular identity for the individual is given shape:

"It would be profitable to discover certain definite features leading toward the physiognomy of the city dweller. Example: the sidewalk, which is reserved for the pedestrian, runs along the roadway. Thus, the city dweller in the course of his most ordinary affairs, if he is on foot, has constantly before his eyes the image of the competitor who overtakes him in a vehicle."¹⁵⁶

Pavements, roads and intersections direct traffic and pedestrian movement and the street are spatially mapped out to meet competing commercial and civic needs. Processes subject the individual to pedestrian procedures – timetables, destinations, travelling speeds and duration, all proving a marked contrast to the *flâneurs*' aimless

¹⁵⁴ Kracauer, (1995), Farewell to the Linden Passage, 342.

¹⁵⁵ *ibid.*, 227.

walk and his retreat from time into spaces freed of such restrictions. These urban procedures generate knowledge about the individual in the process of moving around the city:

“Multiplication of traces through the modern administrative apparatus. Balzac draws attention to this: ‘Do your up-most, hapless Frenchwomen, to remain unknown, to weave the very least little romance in the midst of a civilisation which takes note, on public squares, of the hour when every hackney cab comes and goes; which counts every letter and stamps them twice, at the exact time they are posted and at the time they are delivered; which numbers the houses ...; which ere long will have every acre of land, down to the smallest holdings ..., laid down on the broad sheets of a survey.’”¹⁵⁷

Experience for Benjamin is not only determined by personal internal contemplation but also by how the physiognomy of the city enables individuals to move across and think about space. It is a process which, in turn, shapes a specific identity for individual bodies as urban inhabitants. With such comments, a rather different reading of Benjamin can be made; one based on a dense interrelationship between abstract processes (trace) and textual meanings (aura).

Benjamin provides us with yet another set of statements about individual (female) bodies, the (feminised) body politics of the city and the struggle over representation. *The Arcades Project*, in fact, realises these tensions within its very structure and organisation, its incomplete and spatial expansiveness contrasting markedly with the discursively formed and discontinuous commentaries that fill each page. The sheer weight and volume of material collected seems to confirm the strategies and styles of thought belonging to a bourgeois project, appropriating collating methods associated with the middle-classes and its own hegemonic myth-making processes. Benjamin selects and roots out literary fragments that allow him to confirm his own cultural mission. In fact, identifying with the prostituted streetwalkers appears at some level to reaffirm the official civic position, and sustaining these allegories within his discourse contributes to the further marginalisation of the female body as ‘other’. Yet, Benjamin recognises his society’s own deep belief in these values, and the bourgeois dominance of discourse. Opening out the problem to expose the mechanisms of discourse production in the process of

¹⁵⁶ *ibid.*, 443.

¹⁵⁷ *ibid.*, 225.

stabilising thus sets *The Arcades Project* apart from other writings of the same period. This is not to privilege Benjamin but merely to extend our knowledge about the workings of discourse and how critical writings operated to produce new subjects and representations for them within the archive:

“With the close-up, space expands; with slow motion, movement is extended. The enlargement of a snapshot does not render more precise what in any case was visible, though unclear: *it reveals entirely new formations of the subject.*”[emphasis added]¹⁵⁸

(Feminine) Journeys Across the City: Friedrichstrasse, Women Caught on Film and the Panoramic Spectacle of Travelling.

“It cannot be overlooked that there are *four million* people in Berlin. The sheer necessity of their circulation transforms the life of the street into the ineluctable street of life, giving rise to configurations that invade even the domestic space. ... The masses are no longer left to their own devices; rather, they prevail in their very abandonment.”

Siegfried Kracauer.¹⁵⁹



fig.2.3. the Panopticum moves in, Friedrichstrasse, c.1910.

A Journey Through Berlin [*Eine Fahrt durch Berlin*], a travelogue filmed in 1910, opens with a view of Friedrichstrasse from the front of a moving vehicle as it makes its way down one of Berlin’s best known thoroughfares. An automobile bus,

¹⁵⁸ Benjamin, (1968), *The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction*, 236.

¹⁵⁹ Kracauer, (1995), *Cult of Distraction: On Berlin’s Movie Palaces*, 325.

displaying an advert for 'Matrapas' cigarettes, comes towards the camera screen left, closely followed by a horse-drawn carriage driven by a man in livery and then an omnibus pulled by a horse. A car pulls out and tries to overtake it. On the opposite side a well-dressed woman carrying a child perambulates with her equally smart female companion along the street, soon disappearing past the camera. On screen left a lone woman in a straw bonnet appears from a gap in the traffic, before striding over the road in a cross-movement to the smooth forward motion of the camera. Behind her a bowler-hatted man darts straight across, quickening his pace as he passes in front of a horse-drawn carriage. Suddenly from behind a horse-drawn number 5 bus another man appears pushing a barrow across the road, temporarily having to stop the middle of the road to give way to a horse-drawn carriage passing in the opposite direction. Female pedestrians, either alone or in-groups, wander down the street on screen right. From behind a number 45 bus a car suddenly emerges and soon overtakes a horse-drawn carriage in front. Progressing through the midday traffic, the camera passes by an anarchic jumble of architectural styles, multi-storied buildings on either side, including a hotel, an 'amateur' photographic shop, street-corner cafes and several theatres such as the *Prince of Wales* and the *Passage*. Huge advertising hoardings for cabaret shows and consumer products break up building contours to grab the viewer's attention. The urban thoroughfare is further divided up and enclosed by an overhead electrical grid consisting of street lighting and cables supplying power to the trams below.

These selected shots from the first few moments of the on-location travelogue deliver up topographical images of a dynamic yet spatially compartmentalised urban space in transit(ion). Private cars jostle with public transportation systems; bus routines pass next to men pushing barrows across the road; traditional horse power competes along-side electrical power lines and the combustion engine; and female pedestrians, intersecting with each other, pass by one another as strangers. Furthermore, these early images contrast markedly with later ones set around Berlin's official historical sites and emerging tourist areas where the female experience proved limited, marginal and circumscribed. Consequently, the film offers a dense interrelationship between the daily-lived experiences of a modern metropolis and the imperial enterprise of representing the nation as coherent. In a sense, tension emerges out of the simultaneous awareness both of the official

histories and of those attempts to capture the contemporary movement of the city, a struggle over representation that was embedded in the textual and formal aspects of early filmmaking practice. Film proved to be yet another discourse producing subjects contemporary with the written sources cited above. As we begin to look closely at what is going on in the early actualities, we obtain a different sense of how moving pictures imagined the public (in)visibility of women, both as subject and object, as a spectator and participant, in the process of moving across the new geography inscribed by Berlin's expanding cinemascapes. Textual tensions begin to emerge between represented sites of historic significance and contemporary experience, differences in the gendered walk and within the representation of modernity itself.

Investigating *A Journey Through Berlin* further, it soon becomes apparent how the film text itself represents different public identities as the camera travels across the city. After moving through the hustle and bustle of the commercial and entertainment districts, the unpopulated areas around Berlin's imposing monument to past military glories or the Hohenzollern royal family provide a striking contrast. First stop is the *Denkmal Kaiser Wilhelm I*, a public square boasting an official monument dedicated to the Empire's first monarch. Here the camera is far less mobile than before. Rather than cutting through the space, it is fixed in one spot and pans across the square. What is revealed is a national monument shaped as much by timeless antiquity as it is by recent imperial conquest. Oversized, classically composed, male statues are draped across the steps and, along with sculptured lions, guard the podium which is topped with an image of the Empire's first Kaiser Wilhelm I. Two lone male *flâneurs* aimlessly wander around the official monument. It implies that Berlin's official history has a masculine viewer, someone anticipating gaining knowledge about imperial rule and the Empire's sense of historical self.

Personifications of nation and representational practices give further insight into the relationship between gender difference and official history. Later, the camera travels along Siegesallee, a quiet and tree-lined avenue, to Berlin's famous victory column. Another location celebrating imperial history halts the filmic journey. With the forested Tiergarten on either side, the site of national importance is landscaped with a smartly laid out lawn and bricked path. The area is relatively free of people,

except for a small group of visitors and a well-dressed couple out for a leisurely stroll. The camera again becomes fixed to one spot and begins to tilt up and down the imposing victory column. Just as the moving camera provided a dioramic experience of Friedrichstrasse, a slow pan across the sculpted relief adorning the base reveals a panoramic political spectacle of past military glories and codified images of nationhood. Known male figures such as Bismarck are contrasted with the personification of victory as beautiful young maidens holding laurel wreaths. As the camera moves in closer and pans across, it animates the symbolic yet static narrative – recent German heroes with classical feminine figures (including the winged figure of victory adorning the top). Such “political musemising” of the new Imperial Reich is completed with a static shot of a marble in-laid fountain, with water cascading down over several ornately decorated tiers, denoting a purified nation.¹⁶⁰ There are powerful signifiers of historical guardianship and nation building at work here, stemming from the presence of instantly recognisable male political figures and a number of distinct yet abstract ideals about nationhood embodied within the female form defined by myth. Attaching female antiquity to male conquest reveals how the Reich myth-making processes legitimised its historical self and right to rule.

The actuality gives the spectator representation of these spectacles of imperial might, reconstituting a quotidian historical space as a lived one for the male sightseer. Once again, it is the male *flâneur* who, away from the bustling crowds, comes alone to observe and take in the historical sights. Connoting these spectacular sites as of historical interest is in fact accomplished by aligning the camera with the subjective gaze of the male *flâneur*. Anne Friedberg, speaking about packaged travel and how the tourist industry turned the experience of travel into a marketable commodity, offers us a useful account of the tourist’s mobile gaze, and the way it forges a link between sightseeing with textual narratives (guidebooks) and the cinema.

“The subjective effects on the tourist are not unlike those of the cinema spectator. Tourism produces an escape from boundaries, it legitimates the transgression of one’s static, stable or fixed location. The tourist simultaneously embodies both a position of presence and absence,

¹⁶⁰ Benedict Anderson, (1991), *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, London: Verso, 183.

of here and elsewhere, of avowing one's curiosity and disavowing one's daily life."¹⁶¹

Reading Friedberg's account of the "subjective effects" of travelling ("an escape from boundaries") immediately recalls the male *flâneur* and his culturally privileged out-of-time urban meanderings defined by Benjamin. Each image reveals the male *flâneur* as contemporary witness, not only represented as a perambulatory tourist who has come to learn about past military glories and empire but also as someone who want to be seen as an observing subject of the nation's heritage as they stand and stare directly at the camera. In fact, each man seems more intent on being filmed, self-consciously making himself another kind of spectacle to be looked at. Photographic reproduction and actualities gave representation to the 'timeless' walk through German history, reconstituting it as normal and everyday. Importantly though, it is an experience essentially defined by the active male gaze and a masculine presence.

In direct contrast to the timeless spaces of the 'official' city and the male *flâneur* as idle tourist, women occupy an entirely different public context. First seen wandering along Friedrichstrasse, women essentially inhabit, traverse and access a contemporaneous public space. Whether out for a leisurely walk with friends, striding purposefully across the road while avoiding on-coming traffic or looking in to shop windows while still strolling past, women are consistently represented as being in transit. After travelling down Friedrichstrasse, the camera turns into Leipzigerstrasse, another busy retail district. Crowds of women pass in either direction down the street. A horse-drawn carriage comes into view, carrying three fashionably dressed women, all wearing expensive and ornately decorated hats. None appear interested in the camera behind and remain deep in conversation. To their right, Wertheim, the famed Berlin department store, looms large on the urban horizon.¹⁶² Soon the front of the building comes in to full view, made clearer as the sun shines on the façade. Outside Wertheim are a vast number of women, flowing in,

¹⁶¹ Anne Friedberg, (1994), *Window Shopping: Cinema and the Postmodern*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 59.

¹⁶² The Wertheim branch seen in the actuality opened in 1904. Wertheim's first big shop opened for business in the Rosenthaler Strasse of Kreuzberg in 1885, trading exclusively in fabrics. In 1890 another emporium opened in the Oranienstrasse, followed by the first proper department store in the Moritzplatz. At this point the architect Alfred Messel became involvement with the Wertheim

out, around and past the entrance to the department store. The doorway is flanked by colossal classically composed semi-nude female figures, similar to the male figures later seen draped across the steps of the Kaiser Wilhelm I monument. Huge single panes of glass, made possible by the application of cast-iron to building design, allow us not only to see the consumer goods displayed but also the female customers circulating around the retail space. Caught in the act of her urban experience, such images of a mobile public femininity create a textual contrast with her absence from official sites (unless on the arm of a male companion) or her static and metaphoric objectification on the side of official monuments to the German Reich. Moreover her constant movement, as she fleetingly passes by and out of shot, means she is gone before identification can be properly established.

Other early actualities, like Travelling Competition, Berlin [*Internationale Balloon – Weltfahrt, Berlin*] (1908) that documented an international balloon race taking place across the skies of Berlin between 10-12 October 1908, and Image of the Time [*Zeitbilder*] (1912) which captured people living, and events from the news, in the capital during 1912, including a motorised sports meeting at the newly opened Olympia-Rad-Rennbahn, delivered up a descriptive landscape of lived experiences, gendered participation and newsworthy events. Each filmed spectacle celebrated the here-and-now, the spirit of a new technologically advanced age, from automobiles fitted with combustion engines to aviation rallies and motorbike races. Contemporary actualities made visible the brand newness of the present, but, in attempting to capture the speed, movement and immediacy of the everyday, inscribed a representational aesthetic for the lived gendered experience of contemporary Berlin.

What is evident from these actualities is how each transitory spectacle and technological innovation/novelty attracted an orderly watching (female) and participating (male) public, something which traditional conservative and liberal discourses had considered impossible, and which does not reproduce the formality and military choreography of filmed imperial parades. In Travelling-Competition, for example, a special viewing stand had been erected for the event. Numerous women are shown sitting and enjoying the panoramic spectacle of the balloons taking off and

company. 1897 saw building start on the Leipziger branch, a department store complex designed by Messel. MacDonogh, (1997), *Berlin: A Portrait of its History, Politics, Architecture and Society*, 103.



floating across the Berlin skyline without the person in front impeding the view. Such seating arrangements not only afforded the female observer a multi-perspective and privileged position, from above and below the main event, but also enabled her to see other (mostly male) visitors wandering over to the take-off area to get a closer look. Later, as the camera pans around to record all the competitors and their support staff on the ground, another newsreel team is spotted capturing events on film. Other women situated on the ground, many standing behind the men encircling the balloons, are seen to share a similar voyeuristic position with the camera crew filming the tournament. Aligning the movie team caught in the process of capturing events on film with the female spectator in the process of watching not only reminds us of systems of representation (the unseen camera shaping the dramatic action, the news team filming the balloons) but also reveals how both women and the camera share a similar position as observers of the new.

Both of these sequences represent another tension involved in female participation within the public space, and the voyeuristic position she (and the camera) occupied. Women had only recently entered the new public spaces of sporting events and mass entertainment but their participation was yet to be fully negotiated. Film captures this transitory position, with women inscribed as caught in the actual process of spectating, while giving representation to that voyeuristic position. By effectively linking the camera team in action with the female spectators in the viewer's mind, the film constructs representational strategies for knowing the female subject in the process.

Each actuality records and encodes a prosaic social existence for contemporary women. From the women bustling around the crowded market stalls of Schöneberg-Berlin in Images of Time to the straw-bonneted females who walk along Friedrichstrasse with their heads lowered in Journey Through Berlin, these represented identities document the ordinary routines of women far from the fugitive city of official histories and twilight spaces defined by whores. Documentary images show how urban spaces, such as Friedrichstrasse, guided and mapped out daily experiences for them as observers through participation.

Different conceptions of the (gendered) public as spectacle are justified and enforced within these actualities. Image of the Time, for example, offers a contrast between female shoppers in a Berlin market and male dignities assembled for a state funeral. Groups of women are represented as milling around the bustling market in Schöneberg-Berlin, sifting through the produce or serving others. None of the women acknowledge the camera, focusing instead on negotiation and surveying what is on offer to buy. These images combine singular events and the mass in striking ways, revealing how the collective and the individual are mutually reinforcing. The market, with its prosaic detail and popular dimension, is rendered via the camera as integral to the lived experience; and in so doing is positioned as best able to create representation for the milling crowd and the ordinariness of the modern city. In contrast, the official funeral, with its obvious imperial significance (mirroring the opening sequence of a military parade), holds back the public to let important government figures pay their last respects and lay wreaths of condolence. The camera is reasserted as a detached and respectful observer, returning to its distanced position as it records the imperial army and Reich members. The state burial ceremony cements the division between the known and included German officials, who visibly display themselves in mourning for the camera, and the unknown and excluded populace held behind a roped fence, looking on from the (social) outside. While both are seen as newsworthy events for different reasons, bringing fragments of these disparate occasions and different conceptions of the multitude together for the actuality creates a distinctive aesthetic for the Imperial capital in 1912. Looking closely at the thematic and aesthetic features reveals a structural tension, as underlying formal structures echo social changes and a nation in transition. An interplay between the politics of the people and the spaces that they inhabit exists, a tension played out between a respectful distance for the older order and the new quotidian spaces aimed at democratising the populace. The attitudes and references which permeates these cultural activities and events articulates a dense web of statements about the traditional social order, the assertion of the new and the reassertion of the older (dying) order.

Revealed as just another face in the crowd, women are inscribed within and by the everyday; and indeed, the changing faces of these unknown females are made all the more visible for being juxtaposed next to the identifiable male dignitaries

immortalised on public monuments. Hans Ostwald, writer of numerous pamphlets and newspaper articles on metropolitan life in Berlin between 1904-1908, observed with some confusion the following female crowd in the increasingly fashionable western district.

“In the street between the Zoo railway station and Wittenbergplatz and along the Kurfürstendamm there is, at every time of day, a crowd of strollers in which women predominate. Young women, schoolgirls, youthful looking mothers with their grown daughters. Sometimes in a smart dress, sometimes in furs ... sometimes in a fluttering shawl or a modest raincoat. Sometimes with the serious face of a schoolteacher or a student, sometimes with longing lips and eyes, mouth blood red with lipstick and blackened eyelashes and eyebrows and a pallid powder-coated face. Or motherly with defensive glances. And yet an infinite number of sideward glances: “Make me yours!” Intermingling with them are old and young men, mostly trades-people, lawyers, engineers a few with an artistic look. And the glances of the woman divided between men and the gleaming display windows of the milliners, of the jewellers and the art galleries, of the delicatessens and the bookshops with the handsomely bound volumes, the furriers and the cinema posters. ... The women over there – she could perhaps be a famous film actress – that one a cabaret dancer. But here one often doesn’t know: perhaps she is the daughter or the wife of a man who walks beside her – for here the glittering colour of the *demimonde* is also the style of dress. And that plain women over there is perhaps soliciting.”¹⁶³

Despite his own obvious confusion and assertion of pervasive feminine stereotypes, Ostwald recognises the multiplicity of modern feminine identities within the crowds that wandered along Berlin’s famous thoroughfare. If these ordinary women have come over time to be considered missing (or turned into a series of statements about the ‘other’) within the tyranny of dominant bourgeois discourse, it is not because contemporary moving pictures did not offer representation. These representations are more often than not reclaimed as marginal, limited and dangerous *through* a system of statements that seek to explain and fix historical signification. An effort to reconstruct some historical norms around the types of texts available might allow us a clearer picture of what all this might mean in terms of how moving picture offered representation for women.

Firstly, by 1910 amateur filmmaking had become fashionable amongst wealthier Berliners, a leisure-pursuit commodity bought by an expanding urban

¹⁶³ Hans Ostwald, (1911), *Berlin und die Berlinerinnen: Ein Kulture- und Sittengeschichte*, Berlin, 640-1.

middle-class. Of this latest technological crazy, one might suspect that the Kaiser's own interest in home movies contributed to its success, as those eager to be seen as modern followed the royal example.¹⁶⁴

“From Berlin comes news of a new development in the trade. ... The latest fashion is to have one's domestic joys, such as marriage and christening, cinematographed, and the film presented for friends. This implies the possession of a projector, and they are being sold in enormous numbers. Cinemagraph parties are given in smart salons, and surprises are a prominent feature. A guest sees on the screen a recently taken record of himself walking in the park and intense amusement is caused by this moment”¹⁶⁵

The desire to see oneself on screen and share the visual experience of self with others proved popular. No fewer than two thousand societies and clubs existed for the exhibition of amateur films (before the ‘professional’ film industry took legal action against them and regulated their operations in 1909.)¹⁶⁶ Spying on friends going about their daily business offered great amusement to the privately assembled audiences. The phenomenon refers to film's own inscription in a cultural trajectory based on technological curios, optical toys and, of course, photography, but also to a re-territorialisation of the private into a public realm in terms of cultural surveillance and popular entertainment.

Of the family rituals, these one-off special occasions could immortalise personal histories, creating an animated familial album of private moments, which had already passed but could be reanimated and circulated beyond the borders of Berlin.

A wedding that took place last week was filmed from beginning to end, including the drive to church and back to the bride's home. Copies were sent to relations in China, Australia, India, Japan and elsewhere.¹⁶⁷

Home movies turned individual lives into a replicable series, as copies could be made and disseminated across the globe to be repeatedly watched by other members of the family. The phenomenon, reserved only for those with capital, is grounded in another kind of spatial-temporal mobility, namely: immigration and territorial expansion. The

¹⁶⁴ Martin Loiperdinger, (1996), *The Kaiser's Cinema: An Archaeology of Attitudes and Audiences*, IN: T. Elsaesser, ed., *The Second Life: German Cinema's First Decades*, Amsterdam: University of Amsterdam Press, 48-9

¹⁶⁵ (1 April 1910), *The Moving Picture World*, 18/3, 703.

¹⁶⁶ (30 September 1909), *The Bioscope*, 45.

¹⁶⁷ *ibid.*

family could be reanimated through absence and representation, an imaginary reunion across two geographically separated spaces; but one that could only really take place amongst those who knew one another. An industry was thus founded upon a desire to render one's personal life available for private consumption and infinite replication through the recovery of a lost familial space.

The following year, another report, this time from Wiesbaden, speaks about the public response to a series of motion picture events held in the city:

“At Wiesbaden the famous German spa, the health searching population witnessed and took part in a rare moving picture treat. The daily life of the guests at the spa with its whole routine and with many interesting incidents besides were reproduced in moving pictures. When the pictures were shown on a large screen, which had been drawn across the lake, everyone was there in the hope of seeing himself as others had seen him.”¹⁶⁸

Similar to the private Berlin citizens, what the semi-private guests at the Wiesbaden spa liked most was the chance to perceive themselves as representation. Pleasure came from seeing oneself as objectified, as a recognisable face in the crowd. Moreover the health spa, an institution where people stayed to improve their physical selves, had sponsored such an event that displayed spectacular bodies. As the report continues:

“There was an amusing entertainment in the Kurgarten Wiesbaden, last week, when *Wiesbaden Kurlife* was reproduced by the cinematograph, so that everyone wandered to the Kurgarten in the hope of seeing himself at some important gathering of social life. A large screen had been drawn across the lake, on which the pictures were thrown. First was seen life on the Wilhelmstrasse during promenade hour, scenes on the Kurshaus terrace during the afternoon concert being next exhibited. The departure of three coaches on their daily trips from the Kurshaus was also shown.

But the greatest interest was called forth by the pictures of the recent race meeting taken from different parts of the course, in front of the first, second and three stands, the pari-mutal and the paddock. Almost everyone of the 20,000 people present must have crossed the focus of the camera once, and the delight of the onlookers when they recognised themselves was most amusing. “Oh, there I am. Don't you see me? How I was hurrying to place my bet” were the usual remarks but one Miss Vanity had time to notice that her hat inclined to one side. “Dear me, my hat isn't on straight,” she remarked and laughed.”¹⁶⁹

¹⁶⁸ (15 August 1911), *The Moving Picture World*, 9/5, 300.

¹⁶⁹ *ibid.*

Various public displays – the walk in the park or a day at the races and the screening afterwards – (re)assemble the community, and in doing so indicates how such spectacles offered evanescent pleasures around dressing up and displaying oneself within a recognisable social world. Enjoyment is limited to a historically specific audience being able to pick themselves out from the milling crowd, an anticipated joy of watching oneself circulating amid the people with whom you now sat. While the camera objectifies her public presence, the excited woman takes intense pleasure from the recognition of herself as spectacle, however imperfect it may have turned out to be. Kathy Peiss makes a similar point about aspirational working women dressing up to attend leisure sites in turn of the century New York.¹⁷⁰ Berlin's movie palaces later adapted these strategies about fashionability and display with its large and open foyers, common areas that allowed patrons not only to mingle before the performance but display themselves as modern in the process.

The appearance of established cinemas around 1910 along the Friedrichstrasse occurred at precisely the moment it was in decline as a fashionable entertainment district. Familiar analogies and character types, such as the prostitute, already introduced by police statistics, media scare stories and official political rhetoric, began to resurface. Soon commentators were adapting these more dramatic feminine bodyscapes to describe the seediness of a Friedrichstrasse in decline. Hans Modrow, for example, deploys proverbial feminine metaphors to describe how the street's nocturnal façade was beginning to lose its allure and appear tawdry.

“Like a woman who sees her first wrinkles, Lady Friedrichstrasse put on more and more make-up, dolled herself up, trilled her little song, and became a night-time street. ... If her charms had faded by day, they still had all manner of effects in the artificial light by night”¹⁷¹

The *Berline Illustrirte Zeitung* concurs, reporting at the end of war in 1919: “Her glitter is gone.”¹⁷²

As with the official documents, media stories and later *flâneur* texts explored in this chapter, the thematic and formal structures of the moving pictures and their

¹⁷⁰ Kathy Peiss, (1990), *Cheap Amusements: Working Women and Leisure in Turn of the Century New York*, Philadelphia: Temple University Press.

¹⁷¹ Hans Modrow, (1936), *Berlin*, Berlin, 38-9.

¹⁷² (1919), *Berline Illustrirte Zeitung*, IN: Peter Fritzsche, *Reading Berlin, 1900*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

uses discussed here produced a series of statements about gendered travel, female bodies and the German nation defined as a modern city in transition. Early filmed actualities can be seen at some level to be concerned with the struggles over their own terms of reference, negotiating the material practice of filmmaking while producing a range of representations in the process of filming them. Feminine bodies and the female subject became inscribed *through* the filmic attempts to capture an unpredictable yet prosaic urban experience. But because the underlying textual practices and formal representational structures possessed no reality beyond the films themselves, these actualities must be read, like the other written forms already explored elsewhere in this chapter, in a specific way in order to elucidate that form. These practices and structures take the form of a series of binary oppositions created by the texts own formal tensions: official tourist sites and bustling retail districts, known male dignities and allegorical female figures, idle male tourist and busy female shoppers, private family images and a lost historic significance. Rather than judge women as a monolithic representational 'other', it maybe more useful to learn to read opposition as formal tension created by textual practices in a dynamic process of negotiation.

Chapter 3. The Architecture of Modern Cultural Experience: Spatial Pleasure, Movie Palaces and the Female Spectator-Participant.

“Berlin is a wonderful, modern machine hall, an immense electrical motor that accomplishes innumerable complicated mechanical tasks with incredible precision, speed and energy. Granted, this marching does not have a soul yet. The life of Berlin is the life of a cinematographic theatre.”

Egon Friedell.¹

“On Berlin’s boulevards, movie palaces with exotically styled facades welcomed their mass audiences.”

Klaus Kreimeier.²

Orthodox histories tend to assume that Ufa’s empire building burst on to the Weimar scene with all the vigour, exhilaration, chaos and dread of the genuinely new. However the German film industry’s building programme was nothing new, but rather, a continuation of industrial expansion and urban planning already in progress some years earlier, before the outbreak of the 1914-1918 War. *Bioscope* reported in 1910 on Berlin’s “remarkable prosperity,” announcing that the Imperial capital was to see the opening of various new entertainment venues that season.

“The proprietors of the Metropol Theatre have bought several houses in the Behrenstrasse, in the heart of Berlin, with the land on which they stand, to erect a larger pleasure establishment with many new features.”³

Of the larger movie palaces, the *Marmorhaus* (Marble House) opened its doors in the well-to-do Kurfürstendamm district of West Berlin in 1913. The mushrooming of these new entertainment complexes with their distinct architectural layouts and internal industrial practices designed to sell amusement, offered different forms of public leisure. They also required a different kind of spectator to make sense of such a process.

This chapter explores how the new cultural institutions exhibiting moving pictures constructed the female spectator-participant, expressed and organised by

¹ Egon Friedell, 1912, quoted in Klaus Kreimeier, (1999), *The Ufa Story: A History of Germany’s Greatest Film Company, 1918-1945*, trans. Robert and Rita Kimberly, Berkeley: University of California Press, 11.

² Kreimeier, (1999), *ibid.*, 18.

³ (6 January 1910), *The Bioscope*, 29.

architectural arrangements and the layout of auditoriums and foyers. Accompanying these spatial plans were statements rationalising the new spaces and their institutional function. These proved necessary for the entertainment establishments to further define themselves and strengthen their own commercial profile within the marketplace. I plan in particular to tease out further the “new regimes of discourses” produced about and, imposed upon, the female spectator-participant in order to interrogate how these new cultural venues excited institutional desires and managed public pleasures.

The *Wintergarten* is exemplary of the new institutions where moving pictures first became implanted in Berlin. Such a space existed prior to the cinema, and first imagined a spectator-participant for motion pictures. In mapping out how spatial configurations came to be imagined through the institutions’ first users, I intend to provide a setting for concerns about the female spectator-participant as a discourse that will be developed in relation to the purpose built motion picture theatres. Both the spacious and splendidly constructed new movie palaces that proliferated around 1910 and the smaller picture houses, bound up in the act of cinema going and how its spaces functioned, contributed further to spelling out, clarifying and justifying exhibition use for the female spectator-participant. Generated out of a commercial need to define these institutions as a culturally respectable activity for all, knowledge about the female spectator-participant in a sense *created* her public identity, participation and institutional needs. Yet, venturing into and moving around these new cultural establishments, the actual spectator-participant enacted additional (often-unanticipated) statements in the process of using the building.

It was in the formation of the discourse that the female spectator-participant came to understand herself, her relationship to these entertainment establishments and access to public pleasures, and how the motion picture houses constructed an access point to the modern social world for her. Investigating how these institutions produced knowledge about how exactly the female spectator-participant traversed and used its space highlights a complex, interwoven and often hesitant series of statements. Going to the cinema became organised and mapped out by a number of materialist statements about exhibition use. Using these statements as a strategy, I aim to make sense of how spatial topography ordered a discourse about the female

spectator-participant and her institutional participation but also determined how female experience and modern public feminine identities came to be imagined and managed as a consequence.

**From Dance Hall to the Implantation of Moving Pictures:
Skladanowsky's "Living Photography" Show and the Berlin
Wintergarten.**

Existing historical accounts on early film culture in late-nineteenth-century Imperial Germany have noted how moving pictures became implanted within existent popular entertainment programmes, tapping into an already established audience.⁴ Berlin's famous *Wintergarten*, for example, had an already proven reputation as an exhibition site along Friedrichstrasse prior to the moment when the first moving picture display took place on November 1 1895. Built in 1880-1 (fig.3.1.), and designed by the architects Hermann von der Hude and Julius Henicke, the venue enjoyed an international reputation as being Europe's most prestigious variety theatre, booking top acts such as Yvette Guilbert, La Belle Otero, Cleo de Mérode, the famed Brazilian dancer Saharet, Loie Fuller and The Five Sisters Barrison long before the Skladanowsky Brothers presented their patented *Bioskop* projection of "living photographs."⁵



fig.3.1. View inside Central Hotel winter garden, Berlin, c.1880.

⁴ Thomas Elsaesser, ed., (1996), *A Second Life: German Cinema's First Decades*, Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, esp. Introduction, 15-22; Kreimeier, (1999), *The Ufa Story*, 9.

⁵ *Wintergarten Commemorative Booklet*, (1938), *Festschrift 50 Jahre Wintergarten, 1888-1938*, Berlin.

The screening of moving pictures on this occasion was integrated into a pre-existing variety programme at the *Wintergarten*.⁶ Indeed, the history of the media intertextuality between early moving images and established entertainment models, particularly music and variety, in terms of subject matter and its appeal for pre-existing audiences in late-Wilhelmine Germany, has been discussed at some length by film scholars.⁷ In particular, Miriam Hansen has acknowledged that the Skladanowsky programme appealed to spectators because of an “interest in physical skills and disciplined body movement, extraordinary personality, exotic sights and folkloristic customs” which were “not unlike the circus and vaudeville programmes in the context of which they were to be programmed.”⁸ Efforts to reconstruct the historical norms applicable to early film have proved useful. Yet, little discussion exists on how the exhibition sites and internal institutional practices excited public pleasures, constructed participation and managed the leisure experience.

In contrast to Siegfried Kracauer’s melancholic recollections of the Linden Arcade’s past delights at the moment of its renovation, or Walter Benjamin’s search for lost traces of the prehistory of capitalism in the Parisian Arcades at the time of its commercial decline, the *Wintergarten* was unsentimental about its past incarnations. The building was in the process of shrewdly adapting its existing spaces to meet new commercial demands at the exact moment the Skladanowsky Brothers first exhibited the *Bioskop*. Originally used as a ballroom, the entertainment complex was soon converted into a performance hall in response to the growing demand for vaudeville and variety shows.⁹ In fact Julius Baron, director of the *Wintergarten*, did much to bring vaudevillian artistry to the more lucrative middle-class audience, further popularising variety forms in the process.¹⁰ What these institutional reorganisations demonstrate is that the *Wintergarten* proved to be a commercially viable space

⁶ Peter Jelavich, (1990), *Modernity, Civic Identity and Metropolitan Entertainment: Vaudeville, Cabaret and Revue in Berlin, 1900-1933*, IN: C. Haxthausen and H. Suhr, eds., *Berlin, Culture and Metropolis*, Minnesota: University of Minnesota Press, 97.

⁷ Thomas Elsaesser, (1996), Introduction, *A Second Life*, 18-22; Ennio Simeon, (1996), Giuseppe Becce and *Richard Wagner: Paradoxes of the First German Film*, *ibid.*, 219-224.

⁸ Miriam Hansen, (1983), *Early Cinema: Whose Public Space?* *New German Critique*, 29, Spring-Summer, 162.

⁹ A survey of vaudeville halls was carried out in Eberhard Buchner (1905), *Variété und Tingeltangel in Berlin*, Berlin; more recent studies on trends in variety theatres, Ernst Günther (1978), *Geschichte des Variété*, Berlin; and Peter Jelavich (1990), *Modernity, Civic Identity and Metropolitan Entertainment: Vaudeville, Cabaret and Revue in Berlin, 1900-1933*, IN: *Berlin, Culture and Metropolis*, 97.

precisely because it was able to adapt and reinvent itself to suit the market. While *flâneurs* viewed such transitory spaces as somehow traumatically intoxicating because they were on the verge of an irretrievable loss, the institutions were merely facing up to economic realities and changing popular tastes. The writer and critic, Conrad Alberti recorded the abandonment of theatre for variety in 1901 thus.

“The fact that vaudeville halls have increasingly supplanted and diminished interest in the theatre has been a concern for quite some time in circles which still take interest in the fate and the future of art in Germany. Perhaps this has never been so clear as this winter in Berlin, where theatre attendance dwindles by the day and has become limited almost exclusively to inferior farces, while the vaudeville halls can boast sold-out houses nearly every evening.”¹¹

The *Wintergarten* was somehow always under reconstruction, ready and able to adjust its interior spaces and reinvent itself in order to offer up-to-the-moment attractions and quality amusements to meet public hunger for the new. The organisation defined its newness by imagining a spectator-participant, defined by cosmopolitan tastes, cultural refinement and a sense of being modern, demanding the most up-to-date attractions in order to justify its regular commercial overhaul and make its institutional reinvention pay.

The key to my interest in how the *Wintergarten* came to know its clients is that it effectively demonstrates how the place made sense of itself and functioned as a new kind of commercial entertainment venue. When the complex first opened its doors to the public in the early 1880s, it boasted an enormous glass-roofed winter garden:

“The hall of the winter garden had the shape of a rectangle 247 feet long and 75 feet wide. Its surface areas of 18,700 square feet was covered with a glass roof 58 feet high at the ridge.”¹²

It proved expedient to construct the glass ceiling since buildings surrounded the site on all four sides; thus natural light could only be obtained from above. Although the glass “elongated arched ridge roof”¹³ provided an institutional unity (of sorts), the

¹⁰ (15 January 1902), Überbrettel und Varieté, *Modernes Brettel*, 49.

¹¹ Conrad Alberti, (2 June 1901), Die Chansonnière, *Münchener Salonblatt*, 3.

¹² Georg Kohlmaier and Barna von Sartory, (1986), *Houses of Glass: A Nineteenth-Century Building Type*, Cambridge: MIT Press, 184.

¹³ *ibid.*

way in which the atrium spaces came to be arranged and interwoven with each other would open up a transparent and dynamic field for social action and cultural activity:

“Under the glass canopy of the winter garden were concentrated all the amusement that had been strung separately along a street or a boulevard: a concert hall, a music hall, a theatre, a café, an art collection, billiards rooms, a restaurant, and dance and banquet halls. Embracing all this was a panorama of fountains, waterfalls, and galleries with cascades of plants.”¹⁴

Interior design maximised the available space for profitable use, allowing for a diverse range of distractions and experiences to take place at any one time. Such commercial diversification under one roof gave additional meaning to the seemingly unconnected activities and varied cultural performances, including the filmed acts from around the world like ‘The Boxing Kangaroo,’ ‘The Wrestling Match,’ ‘Serpentine Dance’ and ‘The Italian Peasant Dance,’ put together by the Skladanowsky Brothers. Just as the ‘exotic’ exposition hall gave the illusion of an open heterosocial space designed for all, assorted visual attractions provided value for money through their emphasis on strong contrast and difference that offered something for everyone. Architectural spacing quite literally brought together, into a coherent whole, diverse elements that made good fiscal sense.

Designing a public space to maximise profits was also made possible by the creation of an artificial all year round temperate climate for the *Wintergarten*.

“There was an intention to create a large concert and restaurant locale, satisfactorily heated, and open on every day of the year, like a garden decked out with greenery, well lit and ventilated, built to the style of the Parisian ‘cafe-concerts.’ Here visitors could enjoy musical and theatrical productions without being dependent on the uncertain weather In the Central Hotel this specification was carried out in an exemplary fashion.”¹⁵

While natural light came in through the glass roof, visitors were protected at the same time from inclement weather and extremes in temperature. Warm air was pumped in through cast-iron gratings in the floor, supplied by radiated pipes running underground. The process heated a ground surface of approximately 7,700 square feet, thus protecting plants and providing a temperate climate for visitors.¹⁶ The

¹⁴ *ibid.*, 2.

¹⁵ *ibid.*, 184.

¹⁶ *op.cit.*, 185.

ventilation system supplied fresh air, and extracted the stale, via air ducts in the roof to further create a pleasant climate. These installations made visible its own modernity through fore-grounding its innovations in much the same way as the Skladanowsky's camera displayed the mechanisms of its own operation.

Artificial lighting meant that the complex could stay open after dark, thus adding to the experience of the building. Originally installed with gas lighting, and fitted with five lanterns attached into the roof ridge, the site would have been transformed by the illuminations as night fell.¹⁷ Wolfgang Schivelbusch sees the development of lighting technology during the nineteenth-century as contributing to the reformulation of a modern consciousness: "It emancipated the working day from its dependence on natural daylight."¹⁸ Generating vast quantities of artificial light not only revealed commercial pressures ("Work processes were no longer regulated by the individual worker; they became integrated, comprehensive operations"¹⁹) and material achievements ("Gaslight ... reigned supreme as a symbol of human and industrial progress"²⁰). It also made a night life possible: "... business, pleasure and illumination. It derives its own, special atmosphere from the light that falls onto the pavements and streets from shops (especially those selling luxury goods), cafés and restaurants, light that is intended to attract passers-by and potential customers."²¹ The artificial lighting system – that is, the idea that "commercial light is fed by heterogeneous sources"²² – illuminated the heterogeneous function of the building, re-emphasising communal spaces and areas of social interaction anew. Furthermore, the lanterns attached to the roofing brackets no doubt gave the glass roof a new reality, a heightened brilliance from above after dark. Thus the *Wintergarten* could be kept open twenty-four hours a day, and throughout the year, to boost profits, but also provided a unique multi-sensory environment which sought to define the customers' gaze through a scopophilic spectacle of commercial power and imperial achievement. Thus on a dark night at the end of autumn in a comfortable, temperature controlled and artificially lit hall, and surrounded by lush tropical

¹⁷ *ibid.*

¹⁸ Wolfgang Schivelbusch, (1995) *Disenchanted Nights: The Industrialisation of Light in the Nineteenth-Century*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 8

¹⁹ *ibid.*

²⁰ *ibid.*, 152.

²¹ *ibid.*, 142.

²² *ibid.*, 143.

greenery, the institutional space once again delivered up another phantasmagoric experience to instant acclaim: the Skladanowsky Brother's 'living photographs.'

New construction materials (iron and glass), technological developments and architectural innovations made it possible to erect public buildings differently. The flow of people through these new public spaces soon produced 'traffic-habits' used to explain the building's function, thus giving social meaning to the new types of institutions. Anne Friedberg remarks on how progress made in building design during the nineteenth-century "changed the relation between sight and bodily movement":²³ "iron and glass architecture was a primary factor in the alteration of nineteenth-century public life."²⁴ The winter-garden was one such building type to emerge in the early nineteenth-century as a consequence of technical improvements in glass manufacturing and iron production: "... these structures had no precedent, but used iron girders to vault massive interior space with transparent glass roofs."²⁵ Designed at first to house personal collections of exotic tropical and rare botanical plants belonging to rich aristocrats, the privately run winter-garden was not only recognised as a sign of an exalted social position but also "embodied the romantic yearning for distant and unspoilt places."²⁶ Later entrepreneurs, made wealthy from the new industries and wishing to emulate the luxuriant lifestyle of their social betters, attached smaller winter-gardens to their newly built palatial residences. These functioned as private reception areas, often adjoining the ladies living rooms. So long before becoming centres for public recreation, the winter-garden carried connotations of social privilege and inherent luxury (linked to capitalism and the acquisition of German territories overseas), and a private interior (feminine) space to be shared with friends. In 1840, John Claudius Loudon wrote about the public life a Berlin winter-garden.

"After 3pm one sees ladies and gentlemen and people of all sorts sitting among the trees conversing, smoking, with punch, grog, coffee, beer or wine in front of them. ... In the evening when the theatre is letting out, there appear many well-dressed people of both sexes who visit these

²³ Anne Friedberg, (1994), *Window Shopping: Cinema and the Postmodern*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 3

²⁴ *ibid.*, 61.

²⁵ *op.cit.*, 62. Among the new structures constructed of glass and iron listed by Friedberg is the Crystal Palace, designed by Joseph Paxton in 1851: "The Crystal Palace, built to house the London Great Exhibition of 1851, was prophetic. Its iron frame, columns, beams, and bracing rods hold walls entirely of glass, a transparent case stretched over a high central vaulted space" (pp.62-3).

²⁶ Georg Kohlmaier and Barna von Sartory, (1986), *Houses of Glass*, 31.

gardens before their journey home, to enjoy the beauty of the plant kingdom splendidly illuminated with artificial lighting and to talk a little about the play and players.”²⁷

Taking its departure point from nineteenth-century preoccupations with travel, social mobility and technological innovation, the Berlin *Wintergarten* locates its commercial identity with this fundamentally bourgeois disposition toward modernity. Considering the gentrification of vaudeville theatres and popular variety formats, Peter Jelavich notes how “The *Wintergarten* played a key role in this transition, inasmuch as attendance there became fashionable for Berliners as well as tourists.”²⁸ As a new public institutional space, glass-covered indoor winter gardens increased the attractiveness of their business by shaping identities for visitors based on refined modes of social (bourgeois) behaviour, genteel (feminine) leisure habits and a sense of luxury defined by an exotic botanical guidebook to distant (and colonised) lands.²⁹

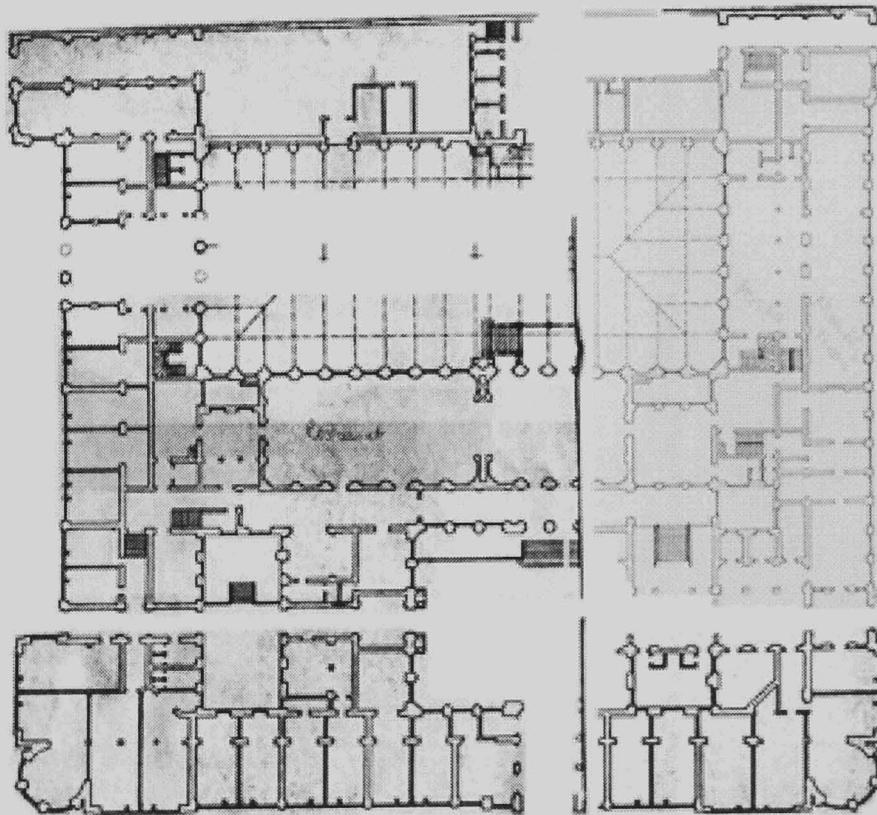


fig.3.2. Ground-floor plan of Central Hotel winter garden.

²⁷ John-Claudius Loudon, 1840, quoted in *ibid.*, 37.

²⁸ Peter Jelavich, (1990), *Modernity, Civic Identity and Metropolitan Entertainment: Vaudeville, Cabaret and Revue in Berlin, 1900-1933*, IN: *Berlin, Culture and Metropolis*, 98.

²⁹ Mary Louise Pratt, (1992), *Imperial Eyes. Travel Writing and Transculturation*, London: Routledge. Pratt investigates how early Hispanic and British scientists and anthropologists travelled the globe to map the flora and fauna from other lands. In doing so, these travellers looked through dominant western discourse to understand what they saw.

The way in which the *Wintergarten*, as a new type of recreational complex, steered people through its public spaces contributed further to imagining new identities for the spectator-participant. Experience was spatially constructed and closely managed by multi-storied buildings with passages and stairways leading to separate yet distinct spaces. All of these were clearly demarcated in terms of function, as the private restrooms were located next to the public atrium where people congregated (fig.3.2.)

“This hall was connected by cloakrooms and the north entrance to Dorotheenstrasse on the south and via the restaurant to Georgenstrasse. The concert and theatre stages occupied the centre of the long west side, while on the east side (Friedrichstrasse) there was a terrace leading via staircases to the assembly rooms.”³⁰

Just as Skladanowsky’s performers were arranged on a platform and isolated against a plain background in order to be easily visible, the *Wintergarten* carefully mapped out the function of its own geography for the spectator-participant. Individuals were gently guided through the spaces, via the entrances, foyers and stairways, and, following the axis of the building, directed into a massive vaulted atrium constructed of glass and iron:

“A very large banquet hall formed the focal point of the establishment. This led to the acceptance of the winter garden type of structure, the integration of which with catering and leisure facilities had already been accomplished in the Flora.”³¹

Such a fluid but ordered space simultaneously offered the spectator-participant “not only a ‘viridantia’ (pleasure garden) but also a ‘hortus’ (botanical garden).”³² In the process of moving around such a theatrical landscape of natural objects and sensorial pleasures, subject identities defined how the complex could be known. Unidentified circulating individuals were transformed into visitors interested in experiencing exotic tropical plants, customers taking tea with friends and/or spectators amused by new optical sensations and variety entertainment.

³⁰ Georg Kohlmaier and Barna von Sartory, (1986), *Houses of Glass: A Nineteenth-Century Building Type*, 184.

³¹ *ibid.* Funded by private investment, and incorporating the latest technical advancements, the Flora was a type of indoor public botanical garden that enjoyed great popularity in Germany during the 1860s; *ibid.*, 37.

³² *ibid.*, 38.

The *Wintergarten* auditorium formed part of a much larger leisure complex that included the newly built palatial Central Hotel. Together they thereby offered up additional associations with tourism as well as new forms of public mobility that emerged with modern transportation systems and the increased volume of traffic which were directed by these networks..

“The Central Hotel is representative of a new type of hotel, which was conceived not only to provide overnight accommodation but also as a place for entertainment and a regional meeting point for the upper class.”³³

The buildings kept in sharp focus the pleasures of travelling as well as the desire to travel, delivering up identities for individuals as temporary guests, either as tourists or leisure patrons.

Its position in the immediate vicinity of the mainline Friedrichstrasse Station, and its several entrances, reveals further how *Wintergarten*, as a new type of recreational centre, was specifically designed for a transitory mass:

“The first structures made of iron served transitory purposes: covered markets, railroad stations, exhibitions. Iron is thus immediately allied with functional moments in the life of the economy what was once functional and transitory ...”³⁴

Wolfgang Schivelbusch, in his general socio-cultural thesis on how new technologies profoundly contributed to the invention of a modern consciousness through condensing time and space, concerns himself with how rail travel altered both ways of thinking and visual experience.³⁵ Train journeys, he argues, offered “another kind of perception ... which did not try to fight the effects of the new technology of travel but, on the contrary, assimilated them entirely.”³⁶ As people became accustomed to train travel, and commodities were circulated at an accelerated rate, traditional perception was replaced by a ‘panoramic vision.’³⁷ Travel recast the gaze ordinarily trained on a stationary object onto a fleeting, forever-changing, constantly moving landscape in motion. The panoramic gaze of the traveller linked the rapid velocity and abruptness of movement with a multitude of details that pass by, leaving nothing

³³ *ibid.*, 184.

³⁴ Walter Benjamin, (1999), *The Arcades Project*, trans. Howard Eiland and Kevin McLaughlin. Massachusetts: the Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 154.

³⁵ Wolfgang Schivelbusch, (1986), *The Railway Journey: The Industrialisation of Time and Space in the Nineteenth-Century*, Berkeley: University of California Press.

³⁶ *ibid.*, 59.

but a trace in the observer's mind. Perceptual changes ("experienced as abstract, *pure* motion, dissociated from the space in which it occurred"), and similar to the "disorientated perceptual faculties" generated by glass-roof architecture, made sense of the institutions fluid spatial arrangement but also its new light-based specular attractions, such as Skladanowsky's living picture.³⁸ New perceptual thinking and experience, based in a panoramic gaze, produced a new kind of spectator, who was, in turn, anticipated by cultural institutions such as the *Wintergarten*.

In the Linden Arcade not far from the *Wintergarten* in Friederichstrasse, a precursor of the cinema opened its door to the paying public in 1883. As Egon Erwin Kisch described it: "There is also a panorama there – that ancient middle step between daguerreotype and the movies."³⁹ Originally named the *Kaiser-Panorma* (but renamed Imperial Panorama after the First World War), the *Welt-Panorma* (World Panorama), whose programme changed twice a week, was superseded by a cinema (and closed in 1939). The specular attraction consisted of a huge wooden cylinder around which twenty-five spectators sat. Each observer then peered through peepholes at polychrome glass stereoscopic images of distant places as well as current events. Kracauer recalls a past visit to the *Welt Panorma* on his return in 1928.

"As a child, whenever I visited the World Panorama – which in those days was likewise hidden in an arcade – I felt myself transported to a faraway place that was utterly unreal, just as I did when looking at picture books. It could hardly have been otherwise, for behind the peepholes, which are as close to window frames, cities and mountains glide by in the artificial light, more like faces than destinations: Mexico and the Tyrol, which itself turns into another Mexico in the Panorama."⁴⁰

For Kracauer, these specular journeys anticipated a spatio-temporal trajectory incorporating the arcade's two travel agencies and the souvenirs of Berlin on sale; a totally self-contained area that aimed to render geographical spaces into a modern public amusement. Opening up in competition with the *Welt-Panorma* on 7 December 1888 was *Castan's Panopticon*.

³⁷ op.cit..

³⁸ *ibid.*, 47.

³⁹ Egon Erwin Kisch, *Das Geheimkabinett des Anatomischen Museums*, 1925, quoted in Johann Friedrich Geist, (1983), *Arcades: The History of a Building Type*, Cambridge: MIT Press, 160.

⁴⁰ Siegfried Kracauer, (1995), *Farewell to the Linden Passage*, *The Mass Ornament: Weimar Essays*, trans. Thomas Y. Levin, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 340.

“This display, which spread out into the various stages of the arcade, was a hotch-potch of dioramas, panoramas, facsimiles, moulded replicas of scenery, patriotic souvenirs and all kinds of cinemagraphic attractions and apparatus. The catalogue of the *Panoptikon* has been preserved: a wonderful chaos, which captured the imagination of the people of Berlin.

... The *Panoptikon* tried to retain its clientele with films, stereoscopes and amusement park rides. For only 20 pfennings you could take a seat in a real express train compartment: under your feet you could feel the rush of the train, and pictures of the Riviera passed by.”⁴¹

Jonathan Crary makes the point that these new phenomena, such as dioramas, contributed to altering the status of the observer, an optical experience that incorporated “an *immobile* observer” into the viewing machine.⁴² Products of technological innovation and industrial manufacture reconstructed ways of seeing and, in so doing, altered not only what could be seen but also the spectators who experienced the new optical machines.

Later cinematographic lectures held at the *Wintergarten*, combining consumer pleasures with practical information, specifically reached out to the female trade. In doing so, these illustrated talks delivered another set of statements about visual perception, consumer pleasures and modern subjecthood for women. In particular, the lecture delivered up a discourse within which the female spectator-participant came to see her own modernity.

“Cinematograph lecture on Female Beauty: How to Obtain It and How to Preserve It have been recently given in the *Wintergarten* and have awakened the liveliest interest among the fairer sex in the German capital.”⁴³

The primary aim of the pseudo-scientific illustrated talk was to inform Berlin women on matters of health and feminine beauty, exciting their interest with practical advice on how to look good. In the process of turning pragmatic knowledge into feminine representation, the female spectator-participant would be initiated into appropriate modes of feminine public deportment and the new consumer habits. Knowledge of modern womanhood represented by, and embodied within, the instruction film served to construct an image of feminine beauty as something one studies, depicts,

⁴¹ Johann Friedrich Geist, (1983), *Arcades: The History of a Building Type*, 156

⁴² Jonathan Crary, (1994), *Techniques of the Observer: On Vision and Modernity in the Nineteenth-Century*, Cambridge: MIT Press, 112-3.

⁴³ (29 December 1910), *The Biograph*, 55.

talks at great length about, imitates, judges and approves. In a wider context, the knowledge presented in the film was used to represent how the institution rationalised female participation. Filmed lectures tutoring the female constituency proved necessary so that the *Wintergarten* could define itself and strengthen its own institutional reputation by invoking images of genteel behaviour and a fashionability ascribed to femininity.

It has not been my intention simply to locate and reconstruct the lost pleasures of the *Wintergarten* and other specular amusement sites located near-by (which is, after all, an impossible project) but rather to stress a number of statements about how entertainment complexes imagined a corporate identity through its users at the moment moving pictures became implanted into its exhibition space.

Spatial Pleasures and Berlin's Picture Palaces: The Rise of the Berlin Movie Palace and The *Marmorhaus* [The Marble House] in Kurfürstendamm.

“Much more than such movie houses or even the ordinary theatres, it is the picture palaces, those optical fairylands, that are shaping the face of Berlin. ... and whatever their names may be, enjoy sell-outs day after day.”

Siegfried Kracauer.⁴⁴

The movie palaces I discuss, no less than the *Wintergarten* entertainment complex, involved new spatial arrangements, regulating modes of social behaviour, and the shaping of its customers, which codified the spectator-participant within rigidly defined systems of visual perception and cultural activity. This section aims to examine how the larger movie palaces and smaller picture houses managed their growing female trade through a series of material statements about the exhibition space and instructions on how to use it. Constructed in relation to social standing, consumer habits and sense of style, while also generated out of the exhibitors' need to improve the reputation of cinema, the female spectator-participant was in a sense created within institutional practices. Further issues soon emerged around defining the female spectator-participant as the flow of women patrons through the buildings created 'traffic-habits,' which had not at first been anticipated. Concerns arising from

her actual presence gave real social life to some discomfiting realities about women's public participation. As we begin to read these diverse statements, with a simultaneous awareness both of the original institutional communications and of later amendments to that information, we see a complex discourse emerge around modern public feminine identities and a contestation about how these women were to be managed.

One of the first movie palaces to open for business in Berlin was the *Marmorhaus* (Marble House), an opulent cinema designed by the architect Hug Pal. Even before the outbreak of the 1914-18 war Friedrichstrasse as the fashionable entertainment district had begun to give way to the well-to-do section of West Berlin.⁴⁵ 1910 saw the building of a new opera house, and so, by the time construction began on the *Marmorhaus*, a burgeoning commercial leisure district already existed.⁴⁶ Klaus Kreimeier said of Pal's building: "Its solemn monumentality and the imperial geometry of its façade, divided as it is into large surfaces, still sets the tone of the Kurfürstendamm."⁴⁷ Architecturally the exterior combined classical elements taken from Greek and Egyptian design with weighty Teutonic dimensions. Traditional as the architectural motifs were, the building stood as testament to the popular quest for modern images. The eclectic exterior brought together miscellaneous yet classical formal elements from across the globe and synthesised them into a new visual display of permanence and contemporary surface order.

"Part royal palace and part cult temple, the *Marmorhaus* was in the same class as the museums and theatres of the Wilhelmine era, evoking the sublime and the scared, as if it contained images that would endure forever."⁴⁸

The unusual size and monumental exterior splendour of these elegant screening venues began to plot out a new kind of urban order. It is clear that the modernity of the building came with its own specific technological advancements, architectural innovations and ways of directing patrons through its spaces. Within this vast and increasingly elaborate aggregation of people, architectural styles and new spaces, we

⁴⁴ Kracauer, (1995), *Cult of Distraction: On Berlin's Movie Palaces*, 323.

⁴⁵ Peter Fritzsche, (1996), *Reading Berlin 1900*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 202.

⁴⁶ (6 January 1910), *The Bioscope*, 29.

⁴⁷ Kreimeier, (1999), *The Ufa Story*, 112.

⁴⁸ *ibid.*

can begin to see how the institution differentiated the mass – among them, an expanding female constituency.

Of the grander cinemas situated in the larger urban centres, many were conveniently located along prominent thoroughfares well served by public transport systems, and sited near department stores and other retail businesses. Identified from the research data gathered by contemporary sociologist Emilie Altenloh, the institution of cinema in Mannheim offered urban-based women a welcome refuge from bustling shopping emporiums and the hectic city streets, with visits to the local picture palaces soon becoming integrated into their public routines.⁴⁹ Anne Friedberg observes in her theoretical search for the first appearance of the female *flânerie*:

“The female *flâneur* was not possible until a woman could wander the city on her own, a freedom linked to the privilege of shopping alone. ... It was not until the closing decades of the century that the department store became a safe haven for unchaperoned women. ... The great stores may have been the *flâneur*'s last coup, but they were the *flâneuse*'s first.”⁵⁰

Research into the area of female spectatorship has generally focused on the desire to understand how women were appealed to as spectators.⁵¹ Consumer culture in particular has proven an important field for several writers. Authors like Friedberg and Lauren Rabinovitz contend that department stores and shop windows shaped a female-oriented viewing experience. Urban wanderings and public leisure were legitimised for the female shopper-spectator, as strolling through a phantasmagoric consumer space, packed with commodified images, intersected with an imaginary cinematic one.⁵² Consumer activities would prove to be an important precursor to cinema attendance and movie watching for women.

⁴⁹ Emilie Altenloh, (1977), *Zur Soziologie des Kino: Die Kino-Unternshmung und die sozialen Schichten ihrer Desucher*, Medienladen, Hamberg.

⁵⁰ Anne Friedberg, (May 1991), *Les Flâneurs du Mal(l)*: Cinema and the Postmodern Condition, *PMLA*, 106 (3), 421.

⁵¹ Heide Schlüpmann, (1990), *Unheimlichkeit des Blicks: Das Drama des frühen deutschen Kinos*, Frankfurt-am-Main: Stroemfeld/Roter Stern; and in the American context, Mary Ann Doane (1987) *The Desire to Desire: The Woman's Film of the 1940s*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press; Miriam Hansen, (1991), *Babel and Babylon: Spectatorship and American Silent Film*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

⁵² Friedberg, (1994), *Window Shopping*; and Lauren Rabinovitz,(1998), *For the Love of Pleasure: Women, Movies and Culture in Turn-of-the-Century Chicago*, New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press.

The leisure experience was, however, not entirely predicated upon visual consumption. Susan Porter Benson has contended that American department stores nurtured a steady growing female client-base through a series of “non-selling services.”⁵³ These non-retail services, including sumptuously decorated interior spaces, areas where customers could relax and/or purchase refreshments, and attendants to answer questions, cultivated an *experience* of shopping.⁵⁴ The newly constructed movie palaces, like the department store, emerged as another kind of modern establishment where an alternative design for public living was made possible for an imagined well-heeled female patron. The exhibition chain Allgemeine Kinematographentheater Gesellschaft, Union-Theater für Lebende und Tonbildern GmbH (AKTG), for example, opened picture palaces in Pforzheim and Mannheim (where Altenloh conducted her research), and in 1909 built several more upmarket movie theatres in Frankfurt and Berlin. The AKTG exhibition chain aimed to improve its corporate image without losing sight of the more popular aspects of its business practice. At the opening of the new Union Theatre in Berlin’s Alexanderplatz in September 1909, the trade press noted that its affordable ticket prices: “at 30 pfennigs and up, [makes] it accessible to all sectors of society.”⁵⁵ The business strategy was not only aimed to attract the broadest audience possible but also by including the latest in theatre design, sought to appeal to a more refined sector of the market. The *Frankfurter Adressbuch* praised the Union Theatre in the Kaiserstrasse as “the most exclusive and elegant theatre of its kind in Germany,” attaining the very highest level in both its technical equipment and its programming.”⁵⁶ The institution of the movie palaces adapted the very tactics used by other modern business organisations; a logic that sought to adopt existing tried and

⁵³ Susan Porter Benson, (1986), *Counter-Cultures: Saleswomen, Managers and Customers in American Department Stores, 1890-1940*, Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 75-101.

⁵⁴ Nothing characterises this idea better than Wertheim, the famed Berlin department store, with its multi-storied layout and incorporation of new construction materials. Alfred Messel, who revolutionised Berlin retail architecture, for example, designed the Leipzig branch: “if the detail was historical, for the first time glass exceeded stone and brick.” His design was to prove a fusion of social and aesthetic considerations. Either side of the entrance were huge glass-plated windows made possible by the application of cast-iron. These enormous single panes meant that not only could shoppers view consumer goods from the street but could also see themselves reflected back in the glass. Furthermore, the spatial arrangements made it possible to view other female customers circulating around the retail space, a spectacle documented in *A Journey Through Berlin*. Giles MacDonogh, (1997), *Berlin: A Portrait of its History, Politics, Architecture, and Society*, New York: St Martin’s Press, 103.

⁵⁵ Viktor Happrich, (1 September 1909), *Das Union-Theater, Der Kinematograph*.

⁵⁶ (1909), *Frankfurter Adressbuch*, 24.

tested strategies for attracting a respectable crowd, most strongly associated with the female consumer, while naturalising the *experience* of cinema in the process.

Early trade journal publications and newspapers carried regular columns that reveal a new professionalism towards film exhibition and customer care. Articles appeared on all aspects from recent technological innovations to news about local city ordinances on licenses and building codes, and federal legislation regarding admission policies and censorship rules. As early as 1896, a trade paper entitled *Der Komet* went on sale offering information and practical tips, especially for improving and upgrading film exhibition facilities. Advertisements for plush textured seating, for example, encouraged theatre proprietors to replace hard wooden chairs and benches with properly installed seating blocks. The new and improved seating was designed for patron comfort and would associate picture houses with permanence and a better, more refined atmosphere. Evidence on the practicalities of film exhibition reveals the emergence of an industrial discourse that promoted the image of cinema as a safe and commodious place to go. All these strategies – that is, fireproof projection booths, exhibition licenses and the civil enforcement of building codes – defined a dignified leisure environment far from the world of unsafe fairground tents and tacky converted shop-fronts with which the projection of moving pictures might otherwise have been associated.⁵⁷ Furthermore, by highlighting potential problems and selling solutions within the press, the discourse drew peoples' attention to public safety and personal comfort. Advertisement and local bulletins about practicalities participated in, contributed to and helped to re-enforce perceptions and attitudes about the dangers and discomforts associated with communal spaces and how the cinema sought to provide a secure and reliable haven from these other entertainment sites.

A journalist, reporting on the opening night of the *Marmorhaus* on 1 May 1913, described the fanciful almost quixotic interior of the new movie palace: “cubistically, futuristically, symbolically and sezessionistically in the most daring combinations. ... Pale-blue decor, tangles of lines, silver sculptures, painted monkeys. a bright red bar

⁵⁷ *Bioscope* reported on ‘panic in a travelling show,’ when ‘during a bioscope performance in a large ten at Ludwigscharent, a fire broke out and in a short time the whole circus fell victim to the flames. The audience was able to escape without accident.’ (9 October 1908), *The Bioscope*, 15.

– everything whirled before our eyes.”⁵⁸ It makes sense that this kind of interior was conceived and realised in Berlin, a modern city defined by technological advancement and “as an ample field of visual pleasure.”⁵⁹ While capturing the phantasmagoria of the modern age in surface textures, design motifs and lighting effects allowed the movie palaces to map out a new perceptual experience around creating illusions of spatial abundance while making a broad appeal to a self-conscious, cosmopolitan crowd to display themselves. Similar to the *Wintergarten* and Wertheim’s department store, cinema designers were obviously keen to create a self-contained interior space but “functioning circulatory system.”⁶⁰

Inside the *Marmorhaus* the interior design proved to be inventive, bringing together a hotch-potch of different styles and a riot of contrasting colours into a rich vein of specular fantasy. No doubt this multi-sensorial interior was designed to surprise and excite public imagination, providing a transitional space between the real outside world and the fantasy spaces and film glamour about to be shown on screen. Its lush interior designs and state-of-the-art décor facilitated the processes of escapism by offering a theatrical backdrop to the visitors’ own institutional participation.

Berlin movie palaces, like the city’s biggest department stores and other up-market entertainment venues like the *Wintergarten*, aimed to create a quality of service for all those that came through the door and purchased a ticket. Returning to the non-selling service procedures, Benson contends that these techniques were not so much directed at the bourgeois shopper but rather anyone who entered, thus initiating an urban culture of gentility around those (women in particular) who were eager to assimilate and aspire up the social ladder.⁶¹ Such a project can be extended to the Berlin movie palaces, and exhibition practices designed to flatter the customers. American correspondent Stephen Bush commented in 1913 on the first rate treatment he received on entering the *Mozart Hall* (or *Mozart Saal*), another one of Berlin’s more prestigious movie palaces converted from a more conventional theatre in 1910.

⁵⁸ (10 May 1913), *Lichtbild-Bühne*.

⁵⁹ Fritzsche, (1996), *Reading Berlin 1900*, 131.

⁶⁰ Schivelbusch, (1986), *The Railway Journey*, 195.

⁶¹ Porter Benson, (1986), *Counter-Cultures*, 82-3.

“When you enter one of these theatres, like *Mozart Hall* or the *Cines Palace* or the *Kammer Spiele*, you feel at once that you are a guest and the object of pleasing attention. The corps of ushers is well distributed and well trained. ... The interior of the *Mozart Hall* reminds one of an opera house ... in its comfort and luxury.”⁶²

Deluxe cinema houses courted an aspirational sense of social self through commodious service while shaping its visitors to its own commercial requirements.

Throughout the physical space, movie places offered luxurious sensuous pleasures that provided a contrast with the material conditions of domestic living in late-Wilhelmine Germany. The deluxe exhibition sites quite literally cultivated the faint aroma of refinement with perfumed deodorisers or ventilation systems that filtered perfumed air through the foyers and auditoriums. In dousing its spaces with the perfume *Marguerite Carre* from *Bourgeois Paris* for the opening night in May 1913, the *Marmorhaus* indicated that it was meant to be last word in luxury.⁶³ Klaus Kreimeier has contended that “a plush and gilded foyer with crystal chandeliers served an additional function of allowing the visitor symbolic entrée into ‘better circles’ (provided a worker could even afford the price of a ticket).”⁶⁴ Later, Kracauer described the luxuriant interior, sumptuous interior designs and expensive elegance of the Berlin movie palaces in a dispatch:

“Elegant surface splendour is the hallmark of these mass theatres ... the architecture of the film palaces evolved into a form that avoids stylistic excesses. Taste has presided over the dimensions and, in conjunction with a refined artisanal fantasy, has spawned the costly interior furnishings.”⁶⁵

These pleasures (scents and visually pleasing interiors) associated with the movie palace interiors were ones which had cultural associations with femininity. Perfumed air, comfortable surroundings, textured furnishings and the glittering chandeliers all contributed to what could be defined as a feminised atmosphere geared toward consumption. Contemporary writers describing the sensual pleasures of the physical spaces recognised these modern interiors as inviting a tactile experience and offering fragrant odours. Little wonder then that those women who spoke to Altenloh would

⁶² W. Stephen Bush, (31 May 1913), Conditions in Germany, *The Moving Picture World*, 16/9, 899.

⁶³ (10 May 1913), *Lichtbild-Bühne*.

⁶⁴ Kreimeier, (1999), *The Ufa Story*, 36.

⁶⁵ Kracauer, (1995), *Cult of Distraction: On Berlin's Movie Palaces*, 323.

come to speak about the material pleasures of cinema-going in remarkable similar ways.

Large, spacious foyers where customers could congregate and loiter before the programme commenced emerged as an important aspect of movie palace theatre design. Lobbies were a departure from earlier spatial arrangements of the travelling cinemas (*wanderkinos*) and first converted shop fronts (*ladenkinos*) when people just wandered into the space where the film was being projected: “Like hotel lobbies, they are shrines to the cultivation of pleasure; their glamour aims at edification.”⁶⁶ Rationalising public traffic moving in and out of the building proved to be another strategy introduced by the larger movie houses; and became an issue that was made visible by the numerous city ordinances on public safety and building codes that were strictly enforced.⁶⁷ In the process of disciplining the ebb and flow the mass audience, procedures were developed to direct the movement of the ‘unruly’ crowd through the space in a dignified and orderly fashion.

“At Cologne the picture theatres, extremely beautiful and artistic structures, many of them holding as many as 1,500 persons, are nightly packed to overflowing. The electric theatres are all constructed on the most up-to-date lines, and have separate entrances and exits which enable them to be filled and emptied in record time.”⁶⁸

Reducing mobility to a single stream, from the entrance to the exit, meant that waiting times could be kept to a minimum and profits maximised.

The need to move people through the arteries of the building, however, revealed a central ambivalence around encouraging visitors, and women in particular, to linger purposelessly in a public space. Concerns raised about the sexes mingling together outside cinemas, contentious debates already outlined in the previous chapter, linked to prostitution and to making an inappropriate spectacle of oneself are to some extent silenced by controlling customer flow. Keeping audiences circulating in one direction, as with the Anatomical Museum in the Linden Arcade, involved processing potentially dangerous female bodies while coaching the throng to adhere to bourgeois feminine standards of decorum and propriety. Public morality-cum-

⁶⁶ *ibid.*

⁶⁷ *Der Kinematograph* in particular carries numerous notices throughout the period informing exhibitors of the city ordinances.

(sexual) safety thus entered into a cause and effect relation with commercial interests and the economic circulation of customers.

Defining the movement of the patron and modes of appropriate cinema behaviour can be further witnessed by the presence of uniformed ushers: “The attendants are courteous to a fault.”⁶⁹ Patrons assembling in the foyers waited to be taken to their seats by attendants, and were sometimes taken through the programme:

“The corps of ushers is well distributed and well trained. The visitor gets the idea that he is receiving individual attention. He is guided to a spacious and comfortable chair or a box; he gets a programme for 2 cents and the usher either marks his program or tells him what picture is on the screen and how far it has run.”⁷⁰

Even within the smaller picture houses, attempts were increasingly made to introduce scaled down versions of the amenities and to replicate the attentive services offered by the movie palaces.

“It is not difficult to see that the [average German picture] theatre had once done service for a store of some sort, and may possibly, at the end of half a year or a year, again become an ordinary refuge for small retailers of wares. At the door one meets a uniformed official sporting a low tone of voice, drawing heavy plush curtains to one side as the patrons pass in. He is also the check-taker and programme distributor. The programmes are free, but if you are well acquainted with the needs of polite service rendered in Germany, it is a consolation to the gentleman in question that you give him a trifle for luck. On doing so he tears off the coupon of your ticket, and calls out the *platz* your ticket demands. Another official, probably the proprietor, carrying an electric torch, calls out at the entrance of another curtained doorway in reply. Before entering, you notice a regular bar, with cigars, cigarettes, sweets and substantial eatables on the counter and shelves.”⁷¹

Guiding visitors from one space to another provides evidence that the movie palaces did much to institute a cultural policy of social refinement based on customer care and consumer service. Not only did the movie palaces offer something extra through making individuals feel like a valued customer rather than just another face in the crowd, but their spaces also ensured that patrons were made aware of cinema protocol through gentle reassurance and physical guidance. Rather than allowing

⁶⁸ (14 April 1910), Picture Theatres in Germany, *The Bioscope*, 19.

⁶⁹ Bush, (1913), *Conditions in Germany*, 899.

⁷⁰ *ibid.*

⁷¹ J. Ojjiatekha Brant-Sero, (23 November 1911), A Visit to a German Picture Theatre, *The Bioscope*, 569.

people to mill around undirected, getting lost and entering after the performance had started; the presence of courtesy staff regulated the public areas and strictly monitored the movement of people as individuals.

Directing people straight to their seats had the added benefit of chaperoning more socially vulnerable patrons such as women through a public space. Implicit in this practice is the manner in which excursions into the city centre were, for better or worse, restricted and highly prescribed. Cinema, like department stores, restaurants and tramway systems, came to offer a new repertory of daily experience; and these activities, in turn, calibrated the 'modern' woman through modern itineraries, including programme schedules, seat reservations and ticket purchase, associated with the modern world.

Selling refreshments, often including waiter service, further cultivated a civilised ambience while boosting profits: "At all the picture halls licensed refreshments are sold, the profits upon which add materially to the dividend-earning capacity of the halls."⁷² Of the grander movie houses and newer picture houses, refreshment areas compartmentalised the spatial arrangements still further, thus continuing to cast patrons less as paying customers than as social visitors. These cafés or bars in part were adopted from strategies recently developed by the Viennese coffeehouses that proved to be all the rage in Berlin.⁷³ Offering an exotic selection of authentic Viennese coffees and pastries and with rich coffee aromas infusing the air, these cafés had a distinctly feminine topography of indulgence built on leisurely service and luxurious consumption. The popular Viennese café, and in particular the famous *Café Bauer* which was open twenty-four hours and seven days a week, made visible a bustling gentility, a new type of cultural behaviour that cinema exhibition soon adapted under its own institutional roof. The rationalisation of traditional café layouts and protocol, such as seating customers and waiter service along with reasonable prices, increased customer turnover and maximised profitability at the *Café Bauer*. Even the cafés' interiors were imitated as the movie palaces aimed to create an atmosphere of social refinement while offering affordable consumables for

⁷² (14 April 1910), Picture Theatres in Germany, *The Bioscope*, 19.

⁷³ See, Appendix 2. Berlin's Viennese Cafés and a Culture of Gentility.

all. At the *Mozart Hall*, recently converted into a movie palace in 1910, the presence of “a well-decorated cafe” was noted.⁷⁴

Catering services were even extended into the auditorium. In the grander movie palaces, staff attending to patrons’ needs closely replicated the quality service experienced at hotels, restaurants and certain retail outlets: “If he wishes any kind of refreshment special waiters bring it at once and the price is very reasonable. There is a receptacle for glass or cup convenient to every seat.”⁷⁵ Equipping seats with a place to hold drinks reveals how proprietors played up the comfort and convenient services for the visitor. In fact, this kind of waiter service was adapted and implemented in the more modest picture houses too:

“The waiter came rushing up the aisle with a tray full of orders, his moustache titled up at the ends, almost reaching his cheek bones. ... The waiter comes along, and, having forgotten who ordered the coffee, calls out, “*Ein kaffee!*” duly delivers it.”⁷⁶

The genteel café culture promoted by several movie palaces and picture houses within the actual auditorium did more than simply encourage patrons to spend more money. Providing such courtesies for visitors was a strategy designed to keep patrons in their seats and prevented them from wandering around the auditorium. Sitting in one’s seat with refreshment while waiting for the film to begin contributed further to building excitement and pleasurable anticipation for the programme.

Once inside the auditorium, the dynamic interior design proved another technique for managing the spectator-participant; for, while the gaze was meant to be constantly roaming, physical mobility was kept to a minimum.

“The walls are decorated with scenes showing considerable artistic skill and painting. In panels one may see a country scene in all its richness of outdoor life, or it may be your fortune to become acquainted with the mysteries of the Germanic sense of humour. A careful supply of couplets, proverbs of the people, find a place everywhere on the walls.”⁷⁷

Kracauer, in his journalistic dispatch for the *Frankfurter Zeitung* over ten years later, commenting on the function of the movie palace interiors he saw.

⁷⁴ (27 October 1910), *The Bioscope*, 85.

⁷⁵ Bush, (1913), *Conditions in Germany*, 899.

⁷⁶ Brant-Sero, (1911), *A Visit to a German Picture Theatre*, 569.

“The interior design of the movie theatres serves one sole purpose: to rivet the viewers’ attention to the peripheral, so that they will not sink into the abyss. The stimulation of the senses succeed one another with such rapidity that there is no room left between them for even the slightest contemplation.”⁷⁸

Modes of perception identified here ran parallel to what Schivelbusch observed about sensory impressions to be encountered and perceived during rail travel, or what Georg Simmel saw as the sensorial impact of modern traffic on the processes of seeing.⁷⁹ Subtle lighting effects and ornately designed interiors stressed a special sensory atmosphere: “Spotlights shower their beams into the auditorium, sprinkling across festive drapes or rippling through colourful, organic-looking glass fixtures.”⁸⁰ Lush interiors, both in the grand and more modest auditoriums, trained the eye to wander across extremely busy interior spaces; but it was an experience of visual consumption that came to be directed in a very specific manner. Privileging perception and the freedom of the gaze to roam is countered by the static position of the spectator-participant. Visual license is granted while physical mobility remains regulated through seat allocation and ticket prices.

Attempts to create the right environment not only for the patrons’ excitement but also for their safety can be found from an early date. Eduard Zechmann, for example, developed a screen that allowed moving pictures to be projected in well-lit space.

“A screen invented by Eduard Zechmann of Pankow allows a perfect performance to be given in a well-lit hall. This invention is of the greatest advantage to all cinematograph theatres, as the additional attraction of well-lighted halls would be given to the patrons of this class of entertainment, while the danger of fire and consequential panic would be reduced to a minimum. The extra cost of lighting would be greatly outweighed by the advantages of the new invention.”⁸¹

A screen that did not require a darkened auditorium recast the tenor of the exhibition space in terms of public safety and social propriety without compromising visual screen pleasures. It is important to stress that the desire to lighten the auditorium

⁷⁷ *ibid.*

⁷⁸ Kracauer, (1995), *Cult of Distraction: On Berlin’s Movie Palaces*, 326.

⁷⁹ Georg Simmel, (1971), *The Metropolis and Mental Life*, *On Individuality and Social Forms. Selected Writings*, Donald E. Levine, Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

⁸⁰ Kracauer, (1995), *Cult of Distraction: On Berlin’s Movie Palaces*, 324.

⁸¹ (9 October 1908), *The Bioscope*, 9.

responded to lingering concerns about hetero-social interaction, and to delimit inappropriate interplay between men and women in the cinema. The auditorium was effectively turned in to what Foucault called a “seeing machine” from which proprietors could observe public behaviour and police the assembled mass. Illuminating the auditorium visibly located bodies in the space, and made explicit their physical relation to each other.

Discourses on how the female patron was meant to conduct herself once inside the auditorium gave rise to another complex institutional paradigm. The issue of hat wearing, in particular, emerged as a site of industrial contestation.⁸²

“The point of the new thorn in the flesh of proprietors, one might say almost hat-pin, is to be found in the enormous hats now worn by the ladies of fashion in Berlin and other great cities.”⁸³

It proved to be a contentious debate between the need to conscript the fashionable, style-conscious lady about town as a tactical element for improving cinema’s cultural status, and the hindrance her wearing a hat caused to evolving viewing practices.

Firstly, the large, ornately decorated bonnets proved to be an essential fashion accessory for women at this time. Cinema, as an institution that courted a sense of being modern, encouraged women to dress accordingly in the latest fashions. Cultivating a fashionable sense of self was already a strategy well rehearsed by department stores and smaller boutiques, and was one that had been adapted by exhibitors to elevate cinema and the status of cinema-going. Berlin’s finest movie palaces, with their combined visible display of “artistic architecture and scientific management,” embodied the new kind of fashionability that it sought to establish for itself. Women dressed stylishly rather than in the more lavish styles associated with the opera and the wealthy middle-classes. Such a choice reveals how the institution of cinema sought to flatter women’s sense of being modern and up-to-date while serving its own agenda to carve a separate niche for itself in a competitive entertainment market place through fashion.

⁸² Public ordinances requiring women to remove their hats was not confined to Germany. Shelley Stamp explores at this issue within the American context, to suggest that “a slight in self-adornment which women were encouraged to bring to the cinema was actually at odds with evolving viewing practices that de-emphasized theatre space”(33); Stamp, (2000), *Movie Struck Girls: Women and Motion Picture Culture After the Nickelodeon*, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 33-35.

⁸³ (22 June 1911), Trial and Tribulations for Picture Theatre Industry, *The Bioscope*, 625.

In the process of encouraging women to display their fashionability, this kind of gendered parading proved a stumbling block, compromising other exhibition practices once inside the auditorium. The enormous hats worn by some ladies caused annoyance to those whose view of the screen had been effectively obstructed. Such blocking caused considerable consternation, and even in some cases, the subject of civic ordinances. Notices prominently displayed around the auditorium reminded women to remove hats and be mindful when putting down hatpins.

“Polite notices are displayed, reminding ladies with hats of large dimensions that they are required to remove their headgear for the comfort of others.

... There are also notices issued by the police for the safety of the public, in which are included warnings for ladies to be careful of the long, unprotected hat-pins.”⁸⁴

J. Ojijatekha Brant-Sero’s description of notices about exhibition etiquette reveal how bonneted females were advised on how to handle their fashionability once inside the auditorium. While ladies were encouraged to bring a sense of style to the cinema, as if to physically embody the institutional experience of “comfort and luxury” both in the cinema and on the screen, making a spectacle of oneself was meant to cease as soon as that other spectacle – the film programme – began.

Leading on from this issue, picture houses recognised the disruptive effect of hat wearing, and began to cash in on the problem. Movie palaces, in particular, made provision for the safe storage of personal belongings: “Your hat and coat are taken care of for a nominal sum.”⁸⁵ Courtesies such as the hat-check service would, in turn, translate exhibition etiquette into a small financial venture. Providing such amenities fostered an atmosphere based on personal safety and courteous service for women while making the problem of obstructive hat wearing profitable.

Removing items that could potentially disrupt the visual pleasure of others made visible a distinct gender divide. Fashion conscious female patrons who forgot to remove their headgear came to be viewed as a disruptive element within the auditorium. The audience members inconvenienced most by these hat-wearing

⁸⁴ Brant-Sero, (1911), *A Visit to a German Picture Theatre*, 569.

⁸⁵ Bush, (1913), *Conditions in Germany*, 899.

women were invariably men who found their exhibition experience severely compromised as a consequence. J. Ojiatekha Brant-Sero, for example, reveals the discomfort he had to endure sitting behind a lady sporting an extravagant bonnet.

“For a time you dodge about behind the solemn damsel, trying to see the passing pictures with some degree of enjoyment, regardless of your comfort.”⁸⁶

Even in the smaller picture houses, coat hooks were made available for visitors to hang up outdoor clothes and hats: “Along the walls of the *erste platz* [first-class] are several hooks for cloaks and hats.”⁸⁷ Ridding the auditorium of items that impaired the viewing process or obscured audience sight lines provides further evidence to confirm Miriam Hansen’s observation about evolving spectatorial practices which de-emphasised the theatre space in favour of the screen.⁸⁸ Gendering the problem around women’s hats made it possible for the institution to intervene more effectively. It also serves to construct an image of the woman as somehow disruptive and subject to control by cinema management.

The situation further indicates a struggle over securing the patronage of the respectable woman, encouraging her out of the home while discreetly steering her through the experience. Men, already regular film patrons, were co-opted as escorts for these women, often helping them to negotiate exhibition protocol and smooth over any transgression their naïve behaviour may have caused. J. Ojiatekha Brant-Sero reports on one consort he witnessed, who found himself apologising on behalf of his female companion for the offence caused by her hat.

“... If they should forget, they are asked to do so with painful politeness, either directly or through the medium of its officials, when it is usually done, the lady apologising through her cavalier escort for her.”⁸⁹

Women are cast as new to the cinema-going experience, in need of instruction about exhibition customs and visual practices. Male consorts seemed essential for respectable women; as someone able to negotiate the public realm on her behalf, and apologise for any affront her public behaviour may have inadvertently caused others.

⁸⁶ J Brant-Sero, (1911), *A Visit to a German Picture Theatre*, 569.

⁸⁷ *ibid.*

⁸⁸ Hansen, (1991), *Babel and Babylon*, 95.

There was one part of the auditorium, however, that proved to be an exception to the general rule. In the more expensive stalls, women were allowed to keep their fashionable headgear on.

“This is the *erste platz*, just behind a Continental hat worn by a fresh-looking giantess.... In some of the theatres a row or two is reserved in the *erste platz* at a slight advance in price ... and here, for some reason or other, the ladies are not required to remove their headgear at all.”⁹⁰

If a woman could afford to sit in the first class stalls (*erste platz*), then being allowed to retain her hat rewarded her patronage. Such practice points to institutional paradigms around social status and the privilege granted to the presentation of certain women's body during this period. To be seen still wearing a hat in the auditorium connoted an elevated social position; and it also signalled the retention of traditional ideas regarding appropriate feminine modesty and civil propriety associated with that social standing which could not so easily be disregarded.

No doubt these movie palaces proved popular with audiences: “the *Marmorhaus*, and whatever their names may be, enjoy sell outs day after day.”⁹¹ By reformulating orthodox feminist thinking on why *all* females were drawn to the cinema by a shared addiction, a “veritable passion for the cinema” which was based on an emotional rather than critical engagement, it might be more pertinent to suggest that such opulent yet diversified surroundings were specially designed to inspire intense institutional loyalty.⁹² It could be argued that these institutional tactics were at least partially attributable to the heightened competition cinema faced from other entertainment forms, a commercial rivalry that encouraged the industry to develop strategies that inspired devoted rather than casual visitors. “The community of worshippers, numbering in the thousands, can be content, for its gathering places are worthy abodes.”⁹³ Kracauer's language speaks of a trip to the movie palace as a ‘special event,’ that excited intense levels of participation, identification and pleasure bordering on religious veneration. In the context of the female cinema addicts mentioned earlier, it is possible to interpret the strong emotional involvement

⁸⁹ *ibid.*

⁹⁰ *op.cit.*

⁹¹ *ibid.*, 323.

⁹² Hansen, (1983), *Early Cinema: Whose Public Space?* 158; and Schlüpmann (1982), *Kinosucht, Frauen und Film*, 33, October, 51-2.

⁹³ Kracauer, (1995), *Cult of Distraction: On Berlin's Movie Palaces*, 323.

experienced by female cinema-goers as less about a reactive compensation for the tedium of the daily grind (as argued by Hansen and Schlüpmann) than a pro-active commercial campaign to win over and retain devoted customers.

The movie palace put stress on its special atmosphere, eager to foster a respectable reputation while regulating the socio-cultural experience. The institution of cinema, as it firmly established its reputation amongst other public amusement sites and commercial enterprises competing for paying clients, imagined a dignified (feminine) audience through commodious services, discriminating tastes and plush interior design. Amenities associated with self-indulgence, consumer pleasures, convenience, relaxation and comfort meant that movie houses emerged as prominent modern cultural centres for a socially refined, rather than an essentially middle-class, audience. Film exhibitors, keen to improve cinema's public profile while offering "an affordable luxury for all,"⁹⁴ were able to promote an idea of a female constituency with refined (social) manners and discerning (consumer) tastes as part of its corporate identity.

The female spectator-participant as a cinema patron emerges as discourse through an endless cycle of statements and counter-statements. The means by which the female spectator-participant came to be courted, discussed, represented and directed by institutional practices in a sense contributed to how she would herself come to be known – that is, by her institutional needs and public identity. It is clear that we are dealing with a number of interpretations regarding her institutional status: exciting pleasure while limiting access, inviting public participation but regulating it, promising comfort and safety yet keeping a forever watchful eye. It occurs because the knowledge of the ideal female patron made her management easier and presence profitable.

Statements about exhibition use laid out a protocol for the imagined woman and how 'she' should conduct herself, guiding and coding appropriate public behaviours for her as she ventured into, and through, a modern public space. Although these strategies did not offer a radical series of statements about feminine

⁹⁴ Corinna Müller, (1994), *Frühe deutsche Kinematographie: Formale, Wirtschaftliche und Kulturelle Entwicklungen, 1907-1912*, Stuttgart/Weimar: Metzler, 37.

identity, exhibition practice as a discourse demonstrates a simultaneous awareness both of dominant discourses and of those emergent social and cultural realities against which the dominant discourse acts. Despite what exhibitors would have hoped, the issue of public female visibility proved to be far from uncontested, as other voices beyond the limits of cinema demanded to be heard. Other contingent techniques of institutional power, such as calls for institutional censorship and industrial regulation, would thus shape the discourse of the female spectator-participant further.

Chapter 4. The Census: Tracking the ‘Female’ Spectator-Participant.

By 1914, roughly two million Germans were said to be attending the cinema each day. Attempts to police this genuinely new mass cultural phenomenon exposed how unsettling the cinema and its mass audience proved to be for law enforcement agencies, educationalists and the clergy. Anton Kaes describes the cultural unease thus: “From the bourgeois perspective, the cinema in its early years represented a plebeian counter-culture which, without invitation, had established itself beside the mainstream culture.”¹ In particular, the broadening of the audience to include groups, such as women, adolescents and the urban working class, previously ignored by public officials caused considerable consternation amongst the cultural elite: “Already in the 19th-century it became evident that an audience comprised of bourgeois private citizens yields to the audience comprised of metropolitan collectives of the working population.”² This chapter will investigate an extraordinary series of attempts to categorise the cinema audience, by examining various attempts to make sense of a specific part of it: namely, women and their cinema-going habits. The first-hand evidence used to support such an argument will include educational reports, reformist pamphlets, state legislation and journal/newspaper articles. These documents shed considerable light on how social watchdogs, often with state approval and/or support, set about classifying and shaping the unregulated “plebeian counter-culture” as well as investigating the nature of why women were so attracted to it. In the process of an intense and often contradictory struggle to find an appropriate representation for the cinema and its imagined female constituency, such endeavours would initiate considerable debate about the cultural life of the modern city – especially, female sexuality, social control, gender relations, public behaviours and new urban activities.

¹ Anton Kaes, (1987), *The Debate about Cinema: Charting a Controversy, 1909-1929*, trans. David J. Levin, *New German Cinema*, 40, Winter, 87.

² Jürgen Habermas, *Zwischen Kunst and Politik: Eine Auseinandersetzung mit Walter Benjamin*, *Merkur* 26 (9), 1972, 858; quoted trans in, (1987), *ibid.*, 11.

It is no coincidence that misgivings agreed upon by the bourgeois intelligentsia, the moral Right and cinema reformers (*Kino-reformers*) about the cinema as an unregulated site of popular amusement reflect how formless, spontaneous and ungovernable the movie-going public must have appeared to them. The sheer physical spectacle of such mass gatherings, huddled together to watch films in over-crowded darkened auditoria, prompted one observer in 1909 to write:

“Inside the pitch-black, low ceilinged space, a rectangular screen glares over a monstrous mass, a public mesmerised and glued to their seats, fixated by the white eye and its rigid gaze. Couples make out in the background, become carried away with what they see and withdraw their undisciplined fingers from each other’s bodies. Children wheeze with consumption, quietly shake with fever; badly smelling workers with bulging eyes, women in musty smelling clothes, heavily made-up prostitutes lean forward in their seats, oblivious to the fact that their scarves have slipped down.”³

In effect, the three female body types identified in this quote are those which cultural guardians consistently selected and spoke with a special intensity and moral authority: unruly (“couples making out”), unsanitary (“women in musty clothes”) and perilously eroticised (“heavily made-up prostitutes lean[ing] forward”). These female ‘identities’ reveal intolerance on the part of the police, vice crusaders and the cultural elite for the anonymous multitudes, and a real need to organise the urban chaos into clear and unambiguous representational categories. The identification of highly contentious, transgressive female bodies picked out from the bustling crowds, arousing appropriate moral outrage, made visible a social problem requiring ‘official’ action. Different sub-categories soon began to emerge, producing additional claims. In this context, Benedict Anderson’s model on how the nation-state made sense of its terrain in the nineteenth-century might be adapted: “the nature of the human beings its ruled, the geography of its domain, and the legitimacy of its ancestry.”⁴ I thus aim to expose the discourse in which cultural leaders and social commentators textually constructed the female spectator-participant. It is a series of statements and beliefs about her whose very difference from the bourgeoisie helped create a binary

³ Alfred Döblin, *Das Theatre der kleine Leute*, 1909, reprinted in Anton Kaes, (1978), *Kino-Debatte: Texte zum Verhältnis von Literatur und Film, 1909-1929*, Tübingen: Max Niemeyer, 38.

opposition by which the cultural elite's own identity could be established. Conservative anxieties about women circulating within cinema foyers and sitting in darkened auditoriums displaced more legitimate worries about the changing public space beyond their comprehension onto those moving around it. But the ultimate failure of authoritarian attempts to reduce the heterogeneous audience to a single schematic problem controlled by legislative measures points to the limits of traditional representational categories to explain what was happening within this new cultural institution.

The Female Spectator and Corporeal Excess: The Cinema Reform Movement (*Kinoreformbewegung*).

Concerns about the presence of women in cinema auditoria appear in numerous pamphlets, instructional booklets and monograph series, journals and essays from early in the teens. The controversy was described by the (often-fevered) classifying minds of the cinema reformers (*Kinoreformers*), whose members included clergymen, municipal bureaucrats, social commentators, urban professionals, attorneys, medical practitioners and educationalists. Conservative forces not only looked to science and medical evidence but also shared topographical metaphors (as charted in chapter 2) to resolve concerns about women who ventured into the public space. In so doing, they initiated a great deal of discussion about the female subject as an object of deep and disquieting suspicion. Gary D. Stark, writing about socio-political attitudes toward pornography in Imperial Germany at this time, traces a contentious discourse involving official attempts at control. By defining appropriate sexual norms while also discussing the sexual conduct of its citizens, Stark argues that the Imperial German state and its semi-official agents revealed how vulnerable they imagined these values to be, while at the same time exciting interest in repressed or hidden sexual excesses:

“Indeed, Foucault has spoken of a “pleasure-power spiral” in which sexual repression and clandestine evasion become mutually reinforcing. The exercise of power, he argues, involves a certain pleasure. The censor,

⁴ Benedict Anderson, (1991), *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, London: Verso, 164.

for example, finds it personally satisfying, perhaps even sexually exciting, to investigate, monitor, spy on, ferret out, control and punish illicit materials and unorthodox sexual activities.”⁵

Campaigners were to map out a complex and often unstable, intellectual discourse on the female spectator-participant as both sexual in her pathology while also being, both morally and socially, dangerous in her physical mobility. Although more myth than reality, these representations carried both an enormous political clout and a shared language, turning individual biologically-defined, female bodies (*Frauenkörper*) into political ones (*Volkskörper*), while helping to make personal socio-sexual behaviour a legitimate object for moral indignation, public intervention and social regulation.

Chief amongst the concerns expressed by the Cinema Reform Movement (*Kinoreformbewegung*) was the assault by cinema on the physical and moral well being of the lower classes, the disintegration of the family and the hidden threat that motion picture culture posed to the future of the German nation. The first local state law for the regulation of cinema in the German Empire came into effect on 1 July 1914. It was passed in Württemberg, charging the district police authorities and local branches of the departments of health, education and religion with the task of administering it. Strategies of this kind were used to protect the interests of both public health and morality, particularly with regard to young people:

“Permission to exhibit films shall be withheld when their public display, owing to the events depicted or the manner in which they are depicted is designed to danger the health or morals of spectators, to offend religious susceptibilities, to outrage or agitate the feelings or sentiments of the public, or in any way to lower respect for law, order and morality.

... No film intended for exhibition before young people shall be approved if it is not fit for persons under 17 years of age.”⁶

⁵ Gary D. Stark, (1981), Pornography, Society and the Law in Imperial Germany, *Central European History*, 14, 205; Steven Marcus, focusing on the sexuality in Victorian England, makes a similar point, arguing that the pornographic representation is an inverted mirror of officially sanctioned attitudes toward sex, Marcus, (1974), *The Other Victorians: A Study of Sexuality and Pornography in Mid-Nineteenth-Century England*, New York.

Protection of the mental and moral health of Germany's youth proved to be an all-important issue for the Imperial German Reich. This focus often reflected the large constituency of those involved in the education and moral welfare of young people sitting on review boards and/or compiling recommendations for local state legislators. Strict guidelines to police the admission of young people under the age of seventeen, laid out by the state of Württemberg, demonstrated that the morals of young Germans were a serious political matter for government, requiring state intervention and federal supervision.

“Proprietors of moving picture theatres must notify the local police authorities in good time of all films which it is intended to display. If it is desired to give exhibitions for young people, this must be explicitly stated, and the time when such exhibitions begin, as well as the pictures therein to be displayed, must be fully described.

Persons under seventeen years of age shall not be permitted to attend anything but so-called exhibitions for youths.

Such exhibitions shall be so described in all public advertisements and on plainly visible signs at the entrance of the place of exhibition, and may not last longer than 8 o'clock in the evening. Moving picture exhibitions in which other films than those sanctioned for exhibitions for youths may not be advertised as exhibitions for youths or in any other way so described

In exceptional cases, the hours after which pictures may not be displayed to young people may be altered by the police authorities. It shall also be permissible to issue further regulations for the protection of young persons against immoral and unhealthy film exhibition.”⁷

Profiling the younger audience within censorship documentation ultimately ensured that minors were viewed as vulnerable, and thus accorded them an inferior status requiring protection under the law.

The essential feature of the discourse on younger audiences was the objectification of these individuals as sexually unstable. They were considered as objects to be scrutinised and comprehended, and this objectification was used to sanction the need for state interference and restrictions on cinema attendance. For

⁶ Translation of the censorship act from Württemberg, provided by Frederic William Wile, Berlin correspondent of the *Chicago Tribune*, (23 May 1914), German Censorship, *The Moving Picture World*, 1249.

example, Konrad Lange, ardent cinema reformer, art historian and writer on film realism expressed his unease over the dubious effects cinema had on minors. Evident throughout his calls for regulating cinema admission for young people was his belief that cinema depressed the ontological destiny of the sexes: “One day our boys must become strong and resilient men, and our girls healthy and fertile women.”⁸ This observation discloses his belief that linking cinema attendance and the sexually vulnerable was not just a burden for the female sex but harmful to a broader moral order – a lesson that would be taken to heart by all the reformers. Embedded in his official recommendations for restricted cinema access for juveniles is the recurring idea that young females were in need of protection for the sake of their sexual development – but for their future careers as mothers of the next generation of German citizens.

The fears that cinema somehow endangered women’s procreatory destiny was entangled with the belief that the conditions of mass reception, such as watching flickering images, breathing in the communal air or sitting passively for hours, could potentially damage those with weaker constitutions. Attempts to license against unhealthy viewing conditions can be found in the Württemberg censorship act of 1914: “Permission to exhibit films is also to be withheld when their display is likely to have an especially disadvantageous effect upon the eyes of spectators.”⁹ Robert Gaupp, another campaigner, picks up on the issue of public health and cinema’s harmful effects on the more delicate members of society, including teenage girls. “From a position of public health, nothing is left to us but to demand that the state remove the poison that undermines the health of our growing youth.”¹⁰ Both reformers and social commentators argued that placing such unnecessary strain on frail bodies could lead to neurasthenia, irregularities in the female sex drive and other physical disorders and psychoses. Scientific reports were issued as a warning to

⁷ *ibid.*

⁸ Konrad Lange, (1918), *Nationale Kinoreform*, München-Gladbach: Volksvereines-Verlag, 18.

⁹ (1914), German Censorship, *The Moving Picture World*, 1249.

¹⁰ Robert Gaupp and Konrad Lange, (1912), *Der Kinematograph also Volksunterhaltungsmittel*, Munich: Dürerbund, 12; quoted in trans. *IN*: Sabine Hake, (1993), *The Cinema's Third Machine: Writing on Film in Germany, 1907-1933*, Lincoln: University of Nebraska, 50.

women against over-exciting fragile nervous systems and creating a dangerous escalation of internal psychic tension; a neurasthenic experience that could potentially harm their delicate constitutions for good. Rhetorical disciplines, speaking about health, family and nation were institutionalised within state departments for health and education, religious/moral associations, and academic establishments, contributed to the refinement of certain truths that defined the female body as infantile and, therefore, unable to cope with the rigors of the new sensory experience.

For social campaigners and reformers from all political parties, like Curt Moreck, Victor Noack and Lange, what was deemed as appropriate and inappropriate modes of feminine behaviour within the cinema were bound to a certain sexual pathology; one governed by excess and deficiency, instinct and control, innocence and corruption. Increasingly, the moral Right saw themselves as legitimate arbitrators and champions of biologically pre-ordained gender roles, a moral position that was maintained by raising the issues while keeping them firmly on the public agenda. Young mothers at the cinema became focus of much disdain, by being seen as abandoning the private domestic realm that had previously defined their socio-sexual role in terms of motherhood, familial duties and sexual propriety. Such a scandalous sight led one social-democratic reformer in 1913 to remark that:

“Housewives pop in as ‘neighbours,’ greeted by staff as if they were old friends. Their conversations suggest that they never miss a single release. One should prefer to see those mothers, among their children, around the family table at home.”¹¹

In a similar vein, Wolfgang Mühl-Benninghaus’ research into film censorship during the First World War reveals how local municipal authorities attempted to curb excessive film consumption by basing their calls for a change in the law on a traditional concept of womanhood. Wives of soldiers on active military service in particular became targets for restrictive legislation, as Mühl-Benninghaus notes:

¹¹ Victor Noack, (1913), *Der Kino. Etwas über sein Wesen und seine Bedeutung*, Gautzsch bei Leipzig: Felix Deutsch, 9.

“The municipal office of Angermünde determined that it was a criminal act for war-supported wives of servicemen to go to the movies. The Weida parish council in Saxony-Weimar threatened the same people with a withdrawal of support if they were found visiting the movies. Due to the intervention of a pastor, two wives of servicemen with six children each lost their weekly support of two loaves of bread.”¹²

While the 1914-18 war precipitated legal justification for restricting access, it is clear that many campaigners between 1910-1919 felt that respectable married women were meant to keep the home fires burning rather than venturing out in search of entertainment. Conservatives positioned these women as objects of pity, bordering on contempt, because such behaviour undermined social stability predicated on a secure and moral domestic existence. As cinema reformers led the way with fearful tales about the increased presence of wives and mothers within darkened auditoriums, abandoning hearth and husband in favour of trivial pleasures, it becomes apparent how cinema, as a new site of urban amusement, was blamed for contributing to the perceived decline in moral standards and sexual propriety.

It was not long before campaigners isolated another troublesome female body; one identified as a vindication of why exactly the cinema caused such moral degeneration and social in-discipline. Much discussion was generated about the prostitute touting for business in the dimly lit auditorium. As subject of heated public and political controversy, streetwalkers soon came to shape how vice crusaders and conservative forces tracked, analysed and classified the female spectator-participant. Carlo Mierendorff, writer and political activist, describes the dissolute audience he witnessed.

“Embraces. Whispers, Applause. Hello. Protest. Staring. Dirty jokes. Smirking. Lights flare up ... they look around: construction workers, soldiers, miners, prostitutes, coaches, dandies, apprentices, waitresses, tailors, sergeants, straw hats”¹³

¹² Wolfgang Mühl-Benninghaus, (1997), German Film Censorship during World War 1, *Film History*, 9, 79.

¹³ Carlo Mierendorff, (1993), *Hatte ich das Kino!*, 1920, quoted in trans., IN: Hake, *The Cinema's Third Machine*, 59.

Few writers failed to remark on the prostitute sitting in the auditorium, or the flirtatious looks and verbal exchanges traded between men and the women assumed to be of easy virtue. Tales of prostitutes lurking in cinema's darkened spaces continued to circulate in reformist literature and even the popular press throughout the period.

Such fiction, in part, came from the retention of a shared moral indignation and ambivalence about un-chaperoned physical mobility; an idea that further contributed to the representation of young female movie-goers as feckless, sexually emancipated and socially irresponsible in their quest for entertainment. Unease about women present within a partly lit public space would, in turn, become concomitant with that other much older model of ungovernable female public visibility: prostitution. Entangled within these rhetorical strategies about prostitutes were references to alleged changes in women's sexual attitudes and public deportment. Reformers further used this logic to demand that government intervene. Reformers argued that continuing to allow cinemas to operate unregulated would give license to urban sexual anarchy, ranging from moral improprieties to open solicitation, and lead virtuous women away from their occupational destinies as wives and mothers.

Calls to curb sexual delinquency and social in-discipline, believed to be ever present in the new sites of cheap public amusements, increasingly identified cinema as an issue of governance.¹⁴ Guided by medical expertise, psychological evidence and moral pedagogy and eager for signs of inappropriate sexual decorum or promiscuousness that could be policed, cinema reformers and other social commentators willingly embraced the sexualisation of the female spectator-participant. It was an image that contributed to a pervasive sense of social crisis. A new spate of research emerging in the teens raised concerns about how the suggestive effects of cinema might affect the nation's youth, further fuelling the controversy around female public participation and sexual vice. These studies,

¹⁴ Franz Förster considers the impact of cinema on the workers; Förster, (1914), *Das Kinoproblem und die Arbeiter*, *Die Neue Zeit*, 32, 486.

including a teachers' commission authorised by the Hamburg senate¹⁵ and selected reformist pamphlets such as Kirche und Kinematograph and Nationale Kinoreform,¹⁶ provided qualitative data to support a complex and inherently contradictory discourse characterising young women as both guileless victims and/or willing sexual participants.

Advocates of reform were worried that prolonged exposure to risqué material could foster sexual delinquency, particularly in teenage girls. Albert Hellwig, reform activist and attorney, based his proposal for a stricter admission policy for young people on an observed narrative about the mental impact of the viewing experience (*Wirkungszensur*) rather than the fictional content of the films.¹⁷

“One need only observe the enormous number of boys and girls as they flow out of the theatre's corrupting abyss into the asphalt and arc-lamp atmosphere of the street with shining eyes and heated blood.”¹⁸

He thus took to cataloguing what the cultural elite referred to as ‘trash’ (*Schund*) films, which were in reality generic fiction films enjoyed by the mass audience. His findings concluded that popular genres such as sentimentalised love stories and romantic melodramas, depicting extreme emotional states and amorous encounters, had an eroticising effect on the teenagers he surveyed. Nowhere does Hellwig conduct an in-depth investigation into why girls were more susceptible to sexual excitation than boys. Neither does he seek to recast these adolescent females as anything other than passive, sexually vulnerable and easily seduced. Instead, the author declares himself deeply shocked by the results, and calls for an immediate tightening up of cinema's unchecked attractions as a means of protecting sexually impressionable young females from themselves.

¹⁵ Warshadt, (1914), Aus dem Kampfe um die Kinoreform, *Die Grenzboten. Zeitschrift für Politik, Literatur und Kunst*, 3, 128.

¹⁶ Walther Conradt, (1910), *Kirche und Kinematograph*, Berlin: Hermann Walther; Konrad Lange, (1918), *Nationale Kinoreform*, Mädchen-Gladbach: Volksvereins-Verlag.

¹⁷ Albert Hellwig, (1911). *Schundfilme, Ihr Wesen, ihre Gefahren und ihre Bekämpfung*, Halle a.s.S: Verlag der Buchhandlung des Waisenhauses; (1913), Schundfilm und Filmzensur, *Die Grenzboten* 6, 142.

¹⁸ Albert Hellwig, (1914), *Kind und Kino*, Langensalza: Beyer,33.

Hellwig was certainly not alone in his beliefs. Reports continued to circulate about single, un-chaperoned teenage girls at the movies: “the sixteen-year-old girl who, sitting next to her companion in the darkness of a dubious movie theatre, taking in the sensuous content of a pornographic film.”¹⁹ Immediately apparent is how this female body is constituted as being associated with promiscuity and uninhibited eroticism, tempted to be alone with her date by the anonymity afforded by cinema’s darkened spaces. Beyond parental supervision, she is viewed as being in pursuit of sexual adventures, either vicariously watching pornography or engaging in sexual relations. Despite a pervasive discourse of sexual innocence that claimed virtuous young girls could easily be led astray by depraved men lurking in cinema’s darkened spaces, reformers had little trouble in believing these same young women were potential sexual libertines who would think nothing of using their physical charms to entrap men. It was believed that, if left to their own devices, adolescent females would be easily tempted away from the righteous path of feminine virtue and premarital chastity.²⁰

Knowledge about these potentially dangerous public participants was framed by strict mechanisms of power; and the ways in which that power could be exercised meant that the body of the female spectator became deconstructed, labelled, rearranged, disciplined and managed. The Cinema Reform Movement constructed categories for defining the female spectator-participant from existing arrangements of knowledge; a process through which she came to be read as, and through, a precise political sexual anatomy. Scientific knowledge about what was natural, normal and healthy came to attach social value to various female bodies. Moral indignation expressed by many towards the female audience became condensed into a problematic corporate social body; namely, an idle fecund body associated with circulation and exchange, sexual promiscuity and moral laxity. What is remarkable is how the representational spectacle of women, cast as brazen or somehow on the

¹⁹ Curt Moreck, (1926), *Sittengeschichte des Kino*, Dresden: Paul Aretz, 212.

²⁰ Shelley Stamp considers similar issues within the American context, arguing that such arguments about female public comportment came entangled in alarmist tales of white slavery and sexual

verge of losing control while being translated into various scenarios of seduction or unrestrained sexuality, became deeply embedded within the grammar used to categorise the female spectator-participant. In short, the fertile female body, bound to notions of sexual excess, improper physical contact and eroticism, came to stand for *the* official body of the female spectator-participant. It has not been my purpose to suggest that the Cinema Reform Movement was merely facing up to new challenges posed by rapid modernisation, or that a response to its newest manifestation – the cinema – could no longer be delayed. Instead, I am suggesting that the ways in which the female spectator, via the highly political sexualisation of her body, came to be invented as an official social problem and targeted as an object of constant surveillance, made possible a cultural life in need of regulation. Over time conservative forces came to know the cinema audience of its (often feverish) imagining through description and categorisation. Given the nature of the classificatory system, the multiplicity and formlessness of the crowd became knowledge, organised into representational categories. Guided by these identified images of the female spectator, conservative forces could thus organise education programmes, public awareness and censorship campaigns, and official police intervention.

In spite of all these concerted efforts, few campaigns had little impact on females who paid regular visits to the cinema without the slightest concern (or even awareness) that they were being tracked by conservative forces. Recreation surveys thus did little more than count and describe the female audience. Yet monitoring the flow and new public habits of the female traffic within bustling cinema auditoriums proved to confront many observers with disquieting modern realities, concerns that offer insights into the complex and fast changing pace of modern German life. These documents reveal deeper anxieties at work within the official categories, disputes linked to the less official area of the ‘sexual’ question and gender relations, and caused by changing sexual attitudes and work patterns. These concerns still awaited reification which the new German state institutions and administrative structures

abduction; Stamp, (2000), *Movie Struck Girls: Women and Motion Picture Culture After the Nickelodeon*, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, esp. 42-51.

would make possible after 1918, ushering in an era of increased liberalism under the Weimar Republic.²¹ Conservative rhetoric at this point, though, conveys much about the changing and conflicting attitudes regarding women and their socio-political representation both in the home and public life. More than anything else it contributed to a concept of the so-called New Woman, a powerful media image, more myth than reality, that emerged as the embodiment of the sexually liberated, economically independent and self-reliant modern woman.²² Conservative anxieties, in this respect, were symptomatic of the growing assumption of power by these nascent social beings and their demands for new institutions to *produce* representation for them.

The Female Spectator and a Sociological Inquiry: Emilie Altenloh.

Emilie Altenloh's social science doctoral thesis is a key example of a more systematic approach to the question of cinema spectatorship within late-Wilhelmine Germany.²³ A crucial question to be drawn from her sociologically based academic dissertation is: why did the 'scientific' investigation of the female spectator become necessary in 1912? In response to this question, this section will argue that Altenloh's thesis was an attempt to track new categories of female identity and public experience in a rapidly modernising Germany. But in the interpretative process, women are revealed to have a more complicated relation to motion picture culture than Altenloh's initial characterisation would suggest. It is important that social class and gender were used for the first time as key evaluative criteria in the

²¹ Richard Evans, (1976), *Feminism and Female Emancipation in Germany, 1870-1945: Sources, Methods and Problems of Research*, *Central European History*, 9 (4), December, 323-351; Tim Mason, (1976), *Women in Germany, 1925-1940: Family, Welfare and Work*, *History Workshop: A Journal of Socialist Historians* 1, Spring; Jean Quataert, (1979), *Reluctant Feminists in German Social Democracy, 1885-1917*, Princeton: Princeton University Press; Werner Thönnessen, (1976), *The Emancipation of Women: The Rise and Fall of the Women's Movements in German Social Democracy, 1863-1933*, trans. Joris de Bres, London: Pluto,

²² Atina Grossmann, (1983), *The New Woman and the Rationalisation of Sexuality in Weimar Germany*, IN: A. Snitow, C. Stansell and S. Thompson, eds. *Powers of Desire: The Politics of Sexuality*, New York: Monthly Review Press, 153-171; Atina Grossmann, (1986), *Girlkultur or Thoroughly Rationalised Female: A New Woman in Weimar Germany?* IN: J. Friedlander, et al, eds., *Women in Culture and Politics: A Century of Change*, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 62-80.

²³ Emilie Altenloh, (1977), *Zur Soziologie des Kino: Die Kino-Unternehmung und die sozialen Schichten ihrer Besucher*, Medienladen: Hamburg.

collation and classification of the research data on spectatorship, including groups previously been ignored by 'official' forces. However, the fact that conclusions were tainted with class bias shows just how striking, challenging and contradictory such a document would prove to be. The identification and management of new knowledge about the female spectator was dependent, above all, upon the accumulation of different types of knowledge, and determined by the demands made from new modes of information, commercial production and consumption. What I wish to argue is that such an academic document provided new representational categories for women as nascent public beings within specific discursive and institutional social practices, and tied them to a particular historic moment. She thus made visible those identities that were still in the process of being reified by both political organisations and the Imperial administration. Altenloh's dissertation was a new type of census, one that attempted to record new categories of female 'identities' and public experience but remained embedded in the language, assumptions, culture and institutions of the bourgeoisie.

In 1912, Altenloh began collating empirical data about contemporary cinema audiences, gathered from a series of questionnaires and interviews carried out in Mannheim, a large industrial centre 80km south of Frankfurt. Cataloguing responses and expectations of cinema patrons according to age, class and gender allowed Altenloh to create a census that included the broadest constituency possible. The aim, to understand the social composition, attendance patterns and aesthetic preferences of a diverse movie-going public, was combined with her own theoretical interests. Speculating on why cinema was becoming so popular, Altenloh remarks that.

“Both the cinema and its audience are typical products of our time in that both are characterised by constant activities and nervous restlessness. Locked into their jobs during the daytime, people cannot even shake off this haste when they want to relax. Passing by a movie theatre, they enter it to seek diversion and distraction for a short time, already worried about how to fill the next hours.”²⁴

²⁴ *ibid.*, 56.

These comments perfectly demonstrate Altenloh's interpretative approach to her material, a style similar in tone to Germany's cultural guardians who left the 'known' bourgeois space and ventured into the new 'unknown' public ones. Yet, her approach was to prove rather different from the one put forward by the bourgeois critics and social campaigners.

“Viewed from one side, the fascination with the cinematic image in German newspapers and newsreels is not so different from the interest in German dramas. Certainly one important cause is their reference to the now. Film drama speaks to people in relation of their everyday lives.”²⁵

Altenloh reads her empirical material in relation to changing cultural attitudes and modes of perception to support her supposition that the experience of modernity was realised in and through the immediate gratification and intense stimulation provided by the new cultural institution of cinema.

Her survey of contemporary cinema attendance is first and foremost an academic document. It was written under the supervision of pre-eminent economic and cultural social scientist Alfred Weber at Heidelberg University, and sought to account for the place of cinema going within the lives of those residing in and around the large industrial centre of Mannheim. Socio-cultural trends identified by Altenloh (informed by Weber's approach, combining systematic empirical research with socio-cultural theory) must therefore be understood within an academic framework. Hers was a project based on the collation and organisation of information, one that divided up statistical data into comparative fields and made it possible to classify and quantify in order to make visible an identifiable cinema spectator and her movie-going habits. Such an academic document marks the appearance of new techniques and a new body of knowledge, belonging to a very different field, which can be used to catalogue new identities for the female spectator-participant.

Altenloh offers evidence of a broad social and cultural group of women frequenting the movie theatres in Mannheim. Her work provides multiple descriptions of women, which offer a radically different profile from the ones

proffered by the custodians of social morality and good taste, with their impassioned accounts of prostitutes, young mothers and un-chaperoned teenager girls perilously circulating in cinema's darkened public spaces.²⁶ One group extracted by Altenloh from the heterogeneous female crowd was young, single, wage-earning women: the low-paid un-or semi-skilled factory worker, or those employed as clerks, sales assistants or secretaries in the new services industries that had provided increasing job opportunities since the turn-of-the-century.²⁷ Of those who laboured in the modern factories or tertiary sectors, the cinema quickly became incorporated into their daily routines and life-style habits; a pattern divided between less physically demanding labor and an increased leisure time with disposable income. Altenloh had good reason to presuppose that these audience members were those women whose lives had been irrevocably changed by the restructuring of the modern labour market. A significant strand of her research describes cinema as a public space that fulfilled the cultural needs of those who did not fit easily into traditional social, class and work categories in late-Wilhelmine Germany. Cinema, according to Altenloh, embraced those from a new socio-economic class, inviting their participation and defining social standing.

Altenloh put forward a strong case for suggesting that cinema was instrumental in shaping new public identities not only those from this new social grouping but also privileging alternative social behavioural patterns for a diverse range of women. Recording the preferences of young female cinema-goers in particular, she notes that the film programme was not the only reason why they attended the movies: "The first thought of the young women is to go straight for these [sentimental films] prompted less out of pure interest for them; rather, they enjoyed other amusements."²⁸ Of the younger women who attended, many answered Altenloh by

²⁵ op.cit., 57.

²⁶ Nearly ten years later Lydia Eger focused on a similar issue. Investigating the social composition of cinema audiences, she noted a diverse working class, none of whom belonged to traditional class structures, that considered movie-going part of their regular weekly activity; Lydia Eger, (1920), *Kinoreform und Gemeinden*, Dresden: von Zahn and Jaensch.

²⁷ The number of female office worker leapt from 55,100 in 1907 to 1.433,700 in 1925; statistics taken from Detlev Peukert, (1991), *The Weimar Republic*, London: Penguin, 101.

²⁸ Altenloh, (1977), *Zur Soziologie des Kino*, 62.

saying that cinema gave them an opportunity to venture into the public space alone. Cinema offered an occasion to socialise with friends and leave the house.²⁹ Despite incurring some parental disapproval, these younger women felt cinema provided an appropriate context for some kind of socio-cultural independence: a special place where they could spend their own money and enjoy a social climate, often in the company of female friends, and out of parental sight. Going to the movies triggered a feeling of social liberation for many younger females, an opportunity for them to participate in a public leisure site designed for pleasure and consumer choice. The institution of the cinema thus offered these young women a relatively self-determined life-style beyond familial constraints: a new terrain of inter-subjectivity which encouraged them not only to make consumer selections for themselves, but also to loiter and socialise with friends. Once again, this is another example of how Altenloh's document functions as a new kind of inventory, describing how new public amusements, such as the cinema, normalised specific models of modern female behaviour and public participation.

Altenloh's findings suggest that increased leisure time and expanded family budgets greatly broadened the public landscape for nascent social categories of German women, both in relation to the modern world and a blossoming consumer culture. From the evidence laid out by Altenloh, it would be fair to say that cinema did more than simply "naturalise the relationship between women and consumerism."³⁰ Cinema did more than that: Altenloh's observations describe how the cinema made visible new representations for women as careful and discerning consumers. Nowhere is this better articulated than in her description of a new kind of affluent female spectator as a full-time consumer (and here she is almost exclusively referring to the financially better off). Her audience research makes clear that the cinematic experience was an established and well-integrated part of "upper-class" woman's daily public excursion and consumer activity by 1912. Reasons for movie attendance by the financially better off were different for those living in small towns

²⁹ *ibid.*

³⁰ Sabine Hake, (1993), *The Cinema's Third Machine: Writing on Film in Germany, 1907-1933*, Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 48.

and those from the metropolis. For those women residing in smaller towns surrounding Mannheim, the cinema either provided a pleasurable release from the boredom of provincial life, or allowed them to catch-up with all the latest fashions from Paris and elsewhere: to find out “what everyone was wearing in Paris, [and] the hats they wore.”³¹ Pervasive consumerist fantasies and commodified versions of self dominate the accounts from provincial women collected by Altenloh. Her findings trace how the cinema came to institute a sense of glamour, producing both a lack and desire, in spatial terms. It excited a pleasure for consumable items, seen on screen such as haute couture and other beauty products, while also coaching women in the rules of a consumer culture by providing a public space that allowed them to display and define themselves as modern women.

Those women from the large urban metropolis felt that the cinema provided a restful distraction. An arduous morning, traipsing around the various shopping emporiums, could be rounded off by a relaxing afternoon’s entertainment at the movies, often with a female companion. Altenloh’s evidence shows that cinema offered these urban-based women a welcome refuge from bustling department stores, hectic city streets and the constant cacophony of urban traffic. Her research also shows how public excursions into the city centre were both restricted and highly prescribed. The ‘respectable’ woman’s experience of the public arena was split into two spaces, exterior (difficult and noisy) and interior (safe and comfortable). The interior of the cinema came to represent a secure location, charting and inviting unchaperoned women’s participation. Furthermore, Altenloh’s work points to how these women were both visiting Mannheim city-centre more regularly and circulated around its urban spaces much more efficiently.

Despite devising new categories of female public participation and recording emerging modern representational identities, Altenloh seems to ultimately fall in line with the bourgeois value system. Only a year earlier, she had written an article on how the cinema had won out over the theatre using the same polemic bourgeois

³¹ Altenloh, (1997), *Zur Soziologie des Kino*, 91-2.

rhetoric of art versus entertainment.³² This cultural bias becomes self-evident during her attempts to understand cinema's fascination for women. From whichever social class – bourgeois, aspiring working class – these women may have hailed, Altenloh sees all females drawn to the Mannheim's picture houses by a shared cinema addiction (*Kinosucht*). She concluded that this "veritable passion for the cinema" was based on an emotional rather than critical engagement with events on screen. So intense were their experiences that many female spectator-participants found it difficult to recall the title or even the narrative details of a particular film.³³ Over-identification and emotional involvement are analysed by Altenloh as a means for the female cinema-goers to compensate for the tedium of their daily grind: "During the screening, they live in another world – a world of luxury and extravagance – which make them forget about the monotony of the everyday."³⁴ Drawing upon a conservative rhetoric that spoke of the attrition of modern life, she is less concerned with explaining cinema addiction in terms of urban experience and personal excitement than in analysing how it compensated for social lack and a need for fantasy. For this reason, she surmised that cinema provided a temporary escape from household drudgery and monotonous routine into imaginary spaces, claiming cinema to be a necessary response to the humdrum-ness of modern day existence and a means of starving off boredom and exhaustion.

Couched beneath Altenloh's claims of empirical accuracy and use of statistical evidence is an interpretative structure laden with cultural values, class bias and social judgements, as, for example, in her comment about the film preferences of the young female cinema-goers: "The impassioned and sentimental pieces, liked by older girls, rarely offer nothing more than child-like thoughts."³⁵ This bias is confirmed in what she had to say about the appeal of 'social dramas' for female audiences.

"Social questions are of key interest. These dramas for the most part articulate a woman's struggle between her natural, feminine instincts and conflicting social conditions."³⁶

³² Emilie Altenloh, (1912-1913), *Theatre und Kino, Bild und Film*, 63-4.

³³ Altenloh, (1977), *Zur Soziologie des Kino*, 62.

³⁴ *ibid.*, 79.

³⁵ *ibid.*, 62.

³⁶ *ibid.*, 58.

The interests of the academic community were not arbitrary. Altenloh's comments about the woman's 'natural' sensibilities competing with social demands cannot be separated out from socio-political discourse and its typologies of female sexuality. Her ideal of the 'natural' woman had, in fact, assumed the status of a 'truth' by the time she was writing up her results. Therefore, her concept of woman's 'true' character was completely intertwined with other socio-political discourses (in keeping with the academic institution); discourses that had naturalised such claims and *produced* representation. Nowhere is this more striking than in her chapter on working-class women; namely, worker's wives (*Arbeiterfrauen*) and their addiction to the cinema.

“[T]he cinema plays an important role, especially for those women who don't have a job of their own. Once the housework is finished, they have very few options for filling their spare-time. More often they will go to the movies because they are bored than for any real interest in the programme. Gradually, however, this stop gap activity becomes an essential part of their daily lives. Before long, they are seized by a veritable passion for the cinema, and more than half of them try to gratify that passion at least once a week.”³⁷

Ignorance and class bias about working-class women appear to cloud her judgement in such matters. No doubt Altenloh's attitudes, like many of her middle-class contemporaries who were interviewing/observing working-class women for the first time, reflect a cultural gap and incomprehension as to how these women really lived their lives. Not too surprisingly then, Altenloh repeats the moral outrage already expressed by the moral Right about young working-class women and their seemingly pointless pursuit of entertainment.

It is clear from her condescending tone that, as a member of the educated middle-class, Altenloh was quick to distance herself from her own sex and an overly 'feminine' emotional response to the new visual medium. Instead, she sided with the cultural elite, concluding her thesis by writing that.

“The female sex, which supposedly responds to every impression with pure emotion, must be considered especially receptive to

³⁷ op.cit., 78-9.

cinematographic representation. On the one hand, *highly intellectual people find it almost impossible to imagine themselves in the fragmented and often arbitrarily connected scenes.*" [emphasis added]³⁸

Even though Altenloh avoids blatantly criticising these young women, her implied disapproval is nevertheless clear. Her findings suggest that all female spectator-participants, despite social background or marital status, shared a remarkably homogeneous attitude towards the cinema. Her thoughts confirm the bourgeois verdict. In fact, many of her conclusions about the disposition of the female spectator supported perceived conservative wisdom that women were inherently passive and highly suggestible spectators, vulnerable to the seductiveness of cinema because of their sex.

In failing to address the issue of women's intellectual abilities, and in assuming that women were inherently more passive and suggestible than their male counterparts, Altenloh's thesis serves to illustrate a central paradox. For while she categorises new female identities and representations of public experience, she fails to follow up the implications of her observation that working-class women would rather attend the movies than political meetings: "it is boredom rather than real interest that drives them to the cinema. While the men are at election meetings, the women go to the local theatre, and they meet up with their men after the show."³⁹ There is no consideration within this section of why women backed away from political activism, or withdrew their support from certain areas of the public domain, despite promises of an improved economic status and social standing. Boredom is not interpreted as political disaffection but still as a 'natural' weakness of the female sex. To this end, her evidence points less to the issue of political emancipation as a consequence of economic change, than to the emergence of ever more sophisticated attempts employing categories never before used to enumerate urban populations, including counting those women who travelled across, and crowded into city centres, for work and/or recreation.

³⁸ *ibid.*, 91.

The scrupulous documentation of procedures and findings organised the experience of cinema-going into a coherent corpus of knowledge, combining an interpretation of experience, a method of analysis and a vindication of professional intervention. Altenloh's empirical data on women and their cinema habits in Mannheim proves to be an important document in this respect, fully warranting its inclusion in practically every account on early German cinema and its female audiences.⁴⁰ Her questionnaire had both a coded content and a qualified speaker, namely: herself. Altenloh analysed women's behaviour; she prompted them to speak about why they had gone along to the cinema with friends and about their thoughts on what they had just seen. She also talked (and continues to 'talk') to the academic community about them. She has, in fact, enclosed these surveyed women in a web of discourse: a nexus that spoke about them, imposed bits of knowledge upon them or used them as a basis for constructing a social science that was beyond their power to dictate. Just as the authority of the government expert, supported by the federal government, justified the right to intervene so did the academic.

In spite of the fact that her rhetorical strategies were laden with cultural and social judgements, which represented some of the more reactionary tendencies within critical discourse, Altenloh's thesis marks what Foucault has understood as "an epistemological thaw."⁴¹ What marks it out as different from anything that had existed before is that it represented a new kind of document. This document – a university doctoral thesis – proved to be an innovation within the field of critical writing on cinema spectatorship in the second decade of the twentieth-century in Germany. Altenloh's social science dissertation – the conception of the questionnaire, the writing up of results and the interpretation of that statistical data – belongs to a strong, pre-existing pedagogical tradition. In this scholastic text, the accumulation of material based on statistical evidence, and the selection and

³⁹ *ibid.*, 78.

⁴⁰ Examples already discussed include, Miriam Hansen, (1983), *Early Cinema: Whose Public Space?* *New German Critique*, 29, Spring-Summer, 47-184; Heide Schlüpmann, (1982), *Kinosucht*, *Frauen und Film*, 33, October, 45-52; and Schlüpmann, (1990), *Unheimlichkeit des Blicks: Das Drama des frühen deutschen Kinos*, Frankfurt-am-Main: Stroemfeld/Roter Stern.

organisation of that information into comparative areas making it possible to classify, categorise and access empirical data, positioned the female spectator-participant within a loci of knowledge. Altenloh's scientific study, in this respect, inscribed the subject-ion of the female spectator not only into a field of academic surveillance, but situated 'her' within a network of pedagogical documentation and statistical information. As a problem to be identified and investigated, the female spectator-participant emerges as a discourse that was integrated into a cumulative field. This field arranged the information in such a way that the available data could be looked at, observed, reflected upon, interpreted and used in order that it might be fixed, determined and monitored. Altenloh's thesis with statistical data became a document that not only constituted the female spectator-participant as an effect and object of power (as something worthy of attention) but as an effect and object of knowledge (as something in need of scrutinising). If we understand that the female spectator is nothing more than a construct and that, as Foucault remarks, strategies of knowledge evolve particular models in which human beings "problematise what they are,"⁴² then the issue of female spectatorship is not why did women attend the cinema but, rather, why should it have become necessary to document the phenomena in these specific ways at this particular time.

The central importance of Altenloh's work as the first sociological account of the female spectator-participant has less to do with her empirical discoveries concerning female participation at the cinema than with identifying a site for the organisation of a new set of truths that depended on new systems of representation, procedures of power and domains of knowledge. Her work signalled how the female body – both dangerous and docile – was shaped to the requirements of new institutional discourses, and consequently integrated into new systems of surveillance and containment. Such a scholarly dissertation instituted a new form of language that open up a different domain of what Foucault has called, "a perceptual and

⁴¹ Michel Foucault, (1979), *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, trans. Alan Sheridan, London: Penguin, 191.

⁴² Michel Foucault, (1985), *The Use of Pleasure*, trans. Robert Hurley, London: Penguin, 10.

objectively based correlation of the visible and expressible.”⁴³ The academic text written at a particular moment in the twentieth-century would serve in many ways to confirm what Foucault describes as that which marked the rupture between the eighteenth- and nineteenth-centuries, in which the individual appears as a subject in whom the transcendent was mapped onto the empirical.⁴⁴

Theodor Adorno has written that: “From a certain point of view, the fissures and flaws in a philosophy are more essential to it than the continuity of meaning.”⁴⁵ In my effort to resolve the apparent paradox contained within the Altenloh dissertation, Adorno’s comments on critical writing have some import, for what he argues is that we must study ambiguity and disruption within the text. It is thus the apparent ambiguity within Altenloh’s particular project that proves to be the most compelling. These tensions are not only inscribed right into the very bourgeois grammar as she “inherited it” and “practised it,”⁴⁶ but also inherent in the formation of the new classification system. If one looks closely at those contradictions, it becomes noticeable that it is Altenloh’s interpretative approach that has contributed to the confusion, despite what Emil Perlmann wrote in response to the publication of the document in 1914: “While the tendency is not exactly pro-cinema, one must admit that the author used the available material without prejudice.”⁴⁷ Altenloh’s use of rhetorical strategies, already espoused by the bourgeoisie, result in an intellectual distancing and prejudicial account of social class and gender difference. This is not to say, of course, that Altenloh purposefully replicated a bourgeois view of what she saw. Rather, her own deep belief in the values of that culture in terms of how she approached her subject matter contributed to the tensions within the text. What this contemporary sociologist has chosen to ignore, stress and even obscure, must initiate further investigation and pose different questions for the scholar. For such choices

⁴³ *ibid.*, 196.

⁴⁴ Michel Foucault, (1971), *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of Human Sciences*, London: Routledge, 318-320.

⁴⁵ Theodor Adorno, (1991), *Der wunderliche Realist: Über Siegfried Kracauer, 1964*, reprinted in, ‘The Curious Realist: On Siegfried Kracauer, trans. Shierry Weber Nicholsen, *New German Critique*, 54, Fall, 160.

⁴⁶ Edward Said, (1993), *Culture and Imperialism*, London: Chatto and Windus, 82.

reveal some of the conditions and foci that shaped – and even determined – the very form of these different categories defining what a female spectator was at this time in Germany.

My central claim has been that the various debates instituted a number of types and ideas for determining the female spectator-participant as a discourse. These documents for defining what a female spectator-participant was are, I believe, inseparable from arrangements of existing knowledge about the woman's body and the constitutive relation of that knowledge to socio-political power, practices and institutions. They shared significant common ground in that they took the biologically defined woman and public behaviour to be inextricably linked. What I suggest, then, is that the female spectator-participant existed not as in reality but only as a representational discourse, even if no consensus on exactly how the female spectator could and should be interpreted ever existed. As a consequence, 'she' was often read as a difficult and contradictory category. Irrespective of the specific purposes of individual projects, the mechanism of critical writing brought forward particular kinds of knowledge about the female spectator-participant. It delivered up specific information, documenting, defining and shaping, if only in a pedagogical sense, a representational system for figuring the female spectator-participant as a new kind of subject making known new knowledges, new techniques and new procedures of power.

Yet, the typologies only maintained their authority as long as the categories they represented were widely acknowledged and corresponded to a recognisable set of principals. As long the campaigners, intellectuals and cinema reformers recognised similar social and occupational types, they could continue to fix ideas about female spectatorship in ways that appeared complete and intelligible. However, the more discussion was generated, the more the earlier models became undermined, even anachronistic. New statements about the female spectator-

⁴⁷ Emil Perlmann, *Der Kinematograph*, 25 March 1914; quoted in trans. in Hake, (1993), *The Cinema's Third Machine*, 45.

participant emerged as part of a densely constituted field about modern German subject-hood during the teens. The task ahead is to further deconstruct these new discursive and institutional knowledges in order to demonstrate the complex ways in which the female spectator-participant was made known in relation to modern social/sexual behaviour and new public institutions. Implicit in Altenloh's observations is the suggestion that the industry set about exciting and regulating female participation differently, ordering their viewing experience, offering points of emulation and information, as well as promoting specific patterns of consumer and other respectable social behaviours in new ways. Altenloh's work thus directs our attention towards new formal and institutional strategies used by the film industry to imagine its female constituency, and popularised modern identities for them as consumers, social beings and urban travellers in the process. How the film industry set about developing popular programme formats and film styles, contributed further to the construction of a new kind of discourse made known by the devoted female spectator-participant, will be discussed in the next chapters.

Chapter 5: Playing to the Ladies: The Popular Entertainment Programme and the Cultivation of an Imagined Female Constituency.

Emilie Altenloh identified the concept of scopophilia (*Schaulust*, the pleasure of looking) to explain the mass appeal of cinema. Her notion of cinema pleasures was based on visual excitement, rapt attention and a culture of evanescent sensationalism. Adopting the term allowed her to situate the popularity of the film programme within a broader tradition of popular entertainment formats (for example, panoramas, magic lantern shows) that privileged visual distraction over narrative demands. The idea further allowed her to connect the experience of cinema with the ephemerality that defined modern life. To this end, Altenloh understood scopophilia as describing a constantly shifting desire in which the imaginary spaces of cinema defined the spectator as a modern public being: “the cinema belongs above all to modern man, those who drift along and live according to the laws of the moment.”¹

What is of interest to me here is how the film industry between 1910-1919, with increasing speed and efficiency, excited and regulated knowledge about the popular entertainment programme around *producing*, and constantly circulating, assumptions about its imagined female customers. As the industry established public legitimacy for itself, and built up customer loyalty in the face of vociferous assaults from the cultural elite, it sought commercial respectability by selectively reaching out to particular audiences who were presumed to bring a certain social cachet with them to the new exhibition venues. In the process of this concerted effort to expand its client base, the film business differentiated the mass audience by interpolating them through discursive institutional practices involving the different branches of the film industry – production, distribution and exhibition. These different strategies articulated an institutional dialectic based on adapting existing popular formats while introducing new cinematic components, the interaction between an emergent bourgeois film criticism, the prosaic reviewing processes of the trade press and advertising discourses. This appeal to all while introducing an ‘exclusive’ product for

¹ Emilie Altenloh, (1977), *Zur Soziologie des Kino: Die Kino-Unternehmung und die sozialen Schichten ihrer Besucher*, Medienladen: Hamburg, 95.

a few represented a pragmatic sense of economic survival balanced against a need to implant the genuinely new within the marketplace.

Altenloh's thesis, as a contemporary account of early cinema audiences, cites one local campaign in Mannheim to win over the female patron by arousing her interest, fostering intense levels of visual and cognitive film viewing (or scopophilia) while retaining her customer loyalty based on a tailor-made entertainment programme suited to her tastes. Yet, as we 'read' the various tactics used to promote greater female patronage as well as the series of statements about them offered by the bourgeoisie, we obtain a very different sense of what was actually going on. Cultural tensions emerge out of the competing forces as different areas of the industry attempted to conscript a female audience while the bourgeoisie sought to claim those audiences for themselves and their type of filmmaking. Teasing out the dynamics of a contested institutional landscape reveals the making of a new kind of female spectator-participant as an important economic category. In this construction, not only were 'her' desires and identity as modern formed and constituted, but new protocols of film viewing were also made visible. In analysing these discursive statements, I sketch out how this knowledge became to be known through the female spectator-participant. In so doing, these findings will contribute further to reshaping the way we think about popular cinema as a discourse.

The Dialectics of the Popular Entertainment Programme.

The impact of variety theatre on early German film programmes has been analysed by leading German scholars, both in terms of its institutional links and organisational strategies;² and in relation to its aesthetic conventions and representational types.³ More specifically, Heide Schlüpmann's definition of the late-Wilhelmine cinema touches upon the work of Tom Gunning,⁴ above all by historicising what Gunning labels 'the cinema of attractions', and genderising the

² Corinna Müller, (1994), *Frühe deutsche Kinematographie: Formale, wirtschaftliche und kulturelle Entwicklungen, 1907-1912*, Stuttgart/Weimar: Metzler.

³ Heide Schlüpmann, (1990), *Unheimlichkeit des Blicks: Das Drama des frühen deutschen Kinos*, Frankfurt-am-Main: Stroemfeld/Roter Stern.

⁴ Tom Gunning, (1990), *The Cinema of Attractions: Early Film, Its Spectator and the Avant-Garde*, IN: T. Elsaesser, ed., *Early Cinema: Space, Frame, Narrative*, London: BFI Publishing, 56-62.

distinctions, first devised by him, between a cinema based on self-conscious spectacle (feminine) and the cinema of classical narrative integration (masculine).⁵

Gunning characterises the ways in which early film exhibition practice became implanted in pre-existing sites of variety entertainment. The aesthetic strategies of early cinema were at least partially, Gunning argues, a response to an institutional need to attract audiences already schooled in the conventions of live entertainment formats. He further contends that pre-classical cinema was defined by spectacle rather than narrative, emotional immediacy over narrative coherence: a heterogeneous programme of disparate elements borrowed from earlier popular forms such as the circus, together with an emphasis on a self-conscious performance style.

“The cinema of attractions directly solicits spectator attention, inciting visual curiosity, and supplying pleasure through an exciting spectacle. ... Theatrical display dominates over narrative absorption, emphasising the direct stimulation of shock or surprise at the expense of unfolding a story or creating a diegetic universe. The cinema of attractions expends little energy creating characters with psychological motivations or individual personality. Making use of both fictional and non-fictional attractions, its energy moves outward towards an acknowledged spectator rather than inward towards the character-based situations essential to classical narrative.”⁶

Orthodox opinion tends to assume that many of these aesthetic principles faded from view as the industry consolidated around a set of classical norms. Schlüpmann in particular uses Gunning’s distinctions to argue that the German film industry’s push toward bourgeois respectability meant a conscious rejection of vaudevillian aesthetic principles.⁷ I remain unconvinced, however, that these elements completely disappeared, but wish instead to argue that their continued presence articulated a site of competing industrial demands related to the popular cinema canon. Placed in a more Foucauldian context, Gunning’s notion of a ‘cinema of attractions’ proves useful for understanding the dialectical structure and laws governing how popular film programmes were designed to excite and rationalise institutional participation for the broadest audience possible. His description of early film formats thus emerges

⁵ Schlüpmann, (1990), *Unheimlichkeit des Blicks*, 30.

⁶ Gunning, (1990), *The Cinema of Attractions*, 58, 59.

⁷ Schlüpmann, (1990), *Unheimlichkeit des Blicks*, 10-12.

as inseparable from the ways in which institutional dialectics produced a popular entertainment format and delivered up new modes of subjectivity in the process.

By countering the vehement accounts, mostly written by bourgeois reviewers and intellectuals, concerning the seemingly haphazard and *ad hoc* approach to scheduling film (“As simple as the reflex of pleasure is the stimulus that provokes it”⁸), exhibitors from early on demonstrated a proven ability for incorporating moving pictures into a variegated yet coherent programme that attracted large audiences. Evidence collated from primary materials, ranging from scheduling policies to trade press reports, has allowed Corinna Müller, in particular, to contend that cinema showmen were perfectly able to compile a varied programme based on tried and tested strategies already in operation elsewhere in the entertainment industry.⁹ She uses the documentation to further suggest that the structures and organisational parameters of the early film business were not as haphazard as previously believed, but were, in fact, in line with certain principles practised by the variety theatre circuit.¹⁰ Crucial to this issue is the dialectical interplay between, on the one hand, attempts to introduce new strategies of film exhibition and, on the other, the retention of certain institutional procedures for attracting clients based around a popular theatricality first developed by the variety circuits. Far from leaving behind the world of vaudeville entertainment completely, the film industry kept, and even extended (albeit in a repackaged form) certain strategies to build public legitimacy and foster an institutional loyalty at the same time. These included the use of musical interludes, lavish productions with succinct plotlines (sometimes with lecturer) and stories geared toward contemporary interest.

Trade newspapers and bourgeois press journals added to the debate with statements concerning the nature of the film programme and how the cinematic

⁸ Alfred Döblin, *Das Theater der kleinen Leute*, quoted in trans. Anton Kaes, ed., (1978), *Kino-Debatte. Texte zum Verhältnis von Literatur und Film 1909-1929*, Tübingen: Max Niemeyer, 38.

⁹ Müller, *Frühe deutsche Kinematographie*.

¹⁰ Contemporary accounts of Germany’s variety culture, Eberhard Buchner, (1905), *Variété und Tingeltangel in Berlin*, Berlin; and Wintergarten Commemorative Booklet, (1938), *Festschrift 50 Jahre Wintergarten, 1888-1938*, Berlin; and for more recent scholarly discussions, Peter Jelavich (1990), *Modernity, Civic Identity and Metropolitan Entertainment: Vaudeville, Cabaret and Revue in Berlin, 1900-1933*, IN: C. Haxthausen and H Suhr, eds., *Berlin, Culture and Metropolis*, Minnesota: University of Minnesota Press, esp. 100-102; and Ernst Günther, (1978), *Geschichte des Variété*, Berlin.

experience was to be negotiated. The first reviews were little more than descriptive plot synopses. Mostly appearing in the industry press, these notices merely informed theatre proprietors of what was on offer to buy or rent. Around 1909, the appearance of bourgeois commentaries and the rise of film criticism generated more discussion about films and their scheduling.¹¹ As these publications increasingly turned middle-class attentions to the new medium, and encouraged the bourgeois to talk about films and go to the movies, the cultural elite came to develop a vocabulary with which they could speak about the cinematic experience and aesthetic principles of film. Much has been made, in particular by Schlüpmann, of the evolution of a critical style which functioned to raise public awareness of cinema amongst the bourgeoisie, and precipitated its appropriation into their sphere of cultural influence.¹²

“For example, Malwine Rennert wrote about Padre, as an exemplary *Kinodrama*, while Kurt Pinthus composed a number of pages about Quo Vadis? a film he saw as being at the dawn of the cinema’s future. A short time later, Pinthus edited a collection of film treatments, *Das Kinobuch*, after convincing a number of writers and novelists to contribute.”¹³

By contrast, evidence gathered from the trade press on campaigns designed to pull in a more localised audience has largely been overlooked. Unlike the lengthy critical essays on film that required the reader spend time perusing it, information on mixed programmes provided by and for exhibitors was founded upon a more prosaic style. Throughout 1913 (the same year Schlüpmann notes the first appearance of film criticism as we know it today) *Der Kinematograph* continued to inform its readers of the various steps taken by smaller cinema owners and exhibition chains to devise diverse programmes of specialised attractions aimed directly at localised markets.¹⁴ Trade papers, in fact, inscribed the discursively formed and discontinuous cinema programmes into its very textual structure and formal organisation, its perfunctory layout and matter-of-fact writing style contrasting markedly with the long essay and contemplatory prose to be found in the publications aimed at the bourgeoisie. The arrangement of information about the programmes structured public attitudes and referenced the actual cinematic experience. With practical rather than critical

¹¹ Heide Schlüpmann, (1994), Cinematographic Enlightenment versus “The Public Sphere.” A Year in Wilhelminian Cinema, *Griffithiana*, 5, May, 77; and Sabine Hake, (1993), *The Cinema’s Third Machine: Writing on Film in Germany 1907-1933*, Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 11.

¹² Schlüpmann, (1990), *Unheimlichkeit des Blicks*, 244-286.

¹³ Schlüpmann, (1994), Cinematographic Enlightenment versus “The Public Sphere,” 77.

¹⁴ (14 May 1913), *Der Kinematograph*.

information, cinema listings served the material demands of its readership rather than attempted to instruct them about film.¹⁵ These listings, presented as local and topical news, collected together all the entertainment information in one place. A series of titles and formats were positioned side by side on the page, jostling for reader attention, thus profiling those advertised events as brief, fleeting and discontinuous as its own format.

Advertisements and promotional strategies for these programmes made visible from the outset an intensive relation between the consuming subject and what was being consumed. As a public discourse producing knowledge, information on localised campaigns was founded upon the hyperbolic language of advertising rhetoric and promotional hype: “In a Barrel across Niagara Falls! Thrilling, highly-interesting sensation/ “The Thief in the Closet,’ Great comedy! Great comedy!/ ‘The Dark Spot! Great sensational drama in three acts! A touching life story!” read one 1911 advertising caption for a two-hour film programme.¹⁶ Poster advertising adopted the same direct approach. Short, perfunctory captions accompanied bold graphic styles. Emphasis was placed on emotional responses and pithy description concerned itself with the sensational effects on the body and the quality of pleasures expressed, however imperceptible these may have turned out to be.

In terms of the continued presence of these mixed programmes, a contested industrial site is revealed based on fierce internal competition, stricter and varied censorship practice and the general ways in which the market became regulated around new business strategies.¹⁷ Mismanagement reigned throughout all aspects of Germany’s exhibition-led industry, causing both a film surplus and fees to tumble drastically by 1909. Individual theatre proprietors, in particular, jostled for a place in an already overcrowded market. By under-cutting each other as noted by the numerous complaints from industry insiders appearing periodically in *Der Kinematograph* throughout 1909-1911, individual picture house owners entered into a vitriolic price war that rendered the exhibition sector almost unprofitable. A diverse

¹⁵ Peter Fritzsche makes a similar point in relation to Berlin newspapers, arguing that “newspapers calibrated city people to city rhythms by offering guides and introductions to metropolitan economies of scale,” Fritzsche, (1998), *Reading Berlin 1900*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 61.

¹⁶ Hake, (1993), *The Cinema’s Third Machine*, 9.

¹⁷ See, Appendix 3: Film Censorship.

schedule might be seen in the context of a volatile and inconstant marketplace in which these programmes were conceived and consumed.

The introduction of a new distribution concept, known as the ‘monopoly film’ (*Monopolfilm*),¹⁸ was one innovation in the marketing and exhibition sector aimed at stabilising an unsteady market. It became “the first system of distribution in Germany which enabled films to be systematically and intensively exploited for considerable profit.”¹⁹ Explaining how this unique industrial strategy for disseminating film as an exclusive product worked, Corinna Müller writes that,

“[t]he principle was basically very simple: a distributor acquired the sole rights from the producer to deal in the marketplace with a film, and a legal ‘monopoly’ was thus created on a particular production which gave him sole control over the use of all copies of the film. The distributor passed on these rights in turn to the cinema manager in the form of local exhibition rights, so the latter could be sure that a specific film was not playing at different cinemas in the same area at the same time. This exclusivity was a decisive factor, because the cinema manager’s local monopoly enabled him to charge more at the box office.”²⁰

The introduction of this new distribution policy would, in turn, give an internal boost to the financial fortunes of the production sector while rationalising strategies in what was, after all, a limited fiscal market:

“[The] monopoly based on the allocation of rights in a film made it possible for prices to rise from their previously low levels in all three areas of the business. Monopolised films firstly allowed a flexible economic evaluation of the ‘film product,’ and, last but not least, gave producers room to manoeuvre with more generous budgets. Thus the monopoly system could offer the German film industry an historic opportunity to recover and consolidate itself, without external assistance, entirely from within.”²¹

The ‘monopoly film’ can be seen as one of the major examples of product differentiation offered by the film business. By producing the ‘monopoly film,’ production companies had been able to identify and exploit particular market segments with a product defined by different sellable elements.

¹⁸ Edwin Weinwurm, (1931), *Der Filmverleih in Deutschland*, Würzburg, 8-18.

¹⁹ Corinna Müller, (1990), *Emergence of the Feature Film in Germany between 1910-1911*, IN: P Cherchi Usai and L. Codelli, eds., *Before Caligari: German Cinema, 1895-1920*, Pordeonone: Edizioni Biblioteca dell’Immagine, 100.

²⁰ *ibid.*

²¹ *ibid.*

Despite growing confidence within production trends, the material benefits of the ‘monopoly film’ for the exhibition market were not nearly so self-evident:

“Since, however, the theatre proprietor sees himself compelled by competition to show ‘monopoly film,’ this expense increased in an unhealthy manner, without his receipts being augmented, as expected”²²

While the trade papers asserted that the ‘monopoly film’ continued to be a growing presence in the market, there was considerable debate about how the industry could increase profits without suffering losses at the box office. In 1911, the editor of *Projektion*, summed up the contentious situation:

“With the ‘monopoly film’ the whole cinematograph industry is burdened anew with an enormous weight. Quite apart from the manufacturers, whose sales must diminish with the supply of the ‘monopoly film,’ from which in turn the sale of shorter films must suffer, the theatre proprietors are, on the other hand, compelled to pay more for the week’s programme, without their receipts being augmented very appreciably.”²³

During that time, few insiders envisioned the ‘monopoly film’ to be the sole film fare. The economics of the new distribution system meant that smaller theatres and regional exhibitors were slower than major city distributors, like Paul Davidson and his Frankfurt-based distribution company Allgemeine Kinematographen-Theater Gesellschaft (AKTG), to abandon their dependency upon the programme of mixed entertainment.

The ‘exclusive’ film product did not, however, always guarantee box office success. Despite claims from the production companies that the ‘monopoly film’ wooed a better class of patron willing to pay the higher prices at the box office, theatre owners in reality often faced considerable resistance from regular patrons over the introduction of the new kind of film product. Exhibitors in fact claimed that audiences remained strongly attached to the mixed media programmes.

“We have reports before us which show diminished daily takings, since the public, as a whole, prefers shorter pictures, for not every ‘monopoly film’ is a draw.”²⁴

²² Editor of *Projektion*, (23 November 1911), The Film Market in Germany, *The Bioscope*, 531.

²³ *ibid.*

²⁴ *ibid.*

The eventual success of the ‘monopoly film’ thus did not seem nearly as inevitable to industry insiders and audiences in the early teens as it has appeared to later writers and historians. Mixed reactions to the ‘monopoly film’ must be seen in relation to concurrent economic shifts within the film industry.

What proves most striking about scheduling strategies is the institutional enterprise to put together a “special event” at a time of increased social fragmentation within modern German society as a whole. Especially in the larger industrial cities, with their various types of racial, regional, generational, class and gender formations, such practices might be said to emerge as a phenomenon that both adheres to, as well as masks, the radical inequalities that existed. Specialised scheduling based on marked preferences and lifestyle difference is a manifestation of a further shift in the German mass entertainment market. Much more than a mere reflection of socio-economic conditions, such an exhibition policy emerges in making known the segmentation of contemporary urban audience. That is, these programmes created imagined communities, as reflections of the exhibitor’s own economic mission to respond to while generating knowledge about new social categories and different types of audience.

Theatre proprietors actively set about exciting an intense customer loyalty, advocating an inclusive philosophy about cinema as a unique leisure experience for all while simultaneously identifying specific groups. With the expanding range of cultural options available to choose from, it seems to me that tailoring the programme both to suit particular tastes and to inspire intense levels of identification and participation actually increased at a time of worsening fragmentation within Germany’s urban centres. Exhibitors customised programmes, for example, to encourage women to make special arrangements to interrupt daily routines in order to visit the cinema, possibly to meet friends and, of course, watch a film. Scheduling practices are at least partially attributable to the heightened competition for customers; that is, a sense of economical rivalry encouraged exhibitors to devise entertainment formats that inspired devoted patrons, rather than casual one-off visitors.

For the Ladies: Refining the Popular Programme.

Emilie Altenloh refers to the ways in which local theatre owners in Mannheim were customising cinema programmes in order both to meet institutional needs and attract new customers. Despite her own ambivalence to the whole commercial enterprise, she categorises the specialised programmes on offer in terms of the female audiences in particular.²⁵ To this end that which bourgeois critics at the time might have regarded as odd (or even treated with contempt), ordinary female patrons had no trouble in understanding; even going so far as to express a preference for the mixed media attractions.²⁶ Feminist scholars have in the past interpreted Altenloh's female audiences as a 'progressive' force who resisted the bourgeois push toward the adoption of classical narrative norms. Yet, as we can see, the retention of the varied entertainment programme proved to be less about audience resistance than industrial dictates around exciting and regulating institutional patronage to boost its own cultural profile and commercial profits. It would seem far more appropriate to think about the refinement of these programmes, designed with the ladies in mind, in terms of imagining a niche audience: an industrial re-conceptualisation of the imagined audience not as an undifferentiated mass but as an identifiable demographic with particular preferences. But, perhaps because their patronage had expanded so far and their choices have been so clearly fore-grounded by an industry eager to court this as yet untapped constituency, the female spectator-participant came to bear the burden of a disapproving bourgeois gaze. This scrutiny of the distracted female viewing conduct was further used to speak about all cinema spectators as well as spectatorship practices. At the very least the discourse about women watching movies reveals a site of conflict because it was discursively formed out of the clash of different types of knowledge about the subject. What these competing statements reveal is that, whatever theatre proprietors might have initially intended, the institutional agenda around devising programmes for an imagined female crowd proved to be a far more contested process.

According to Altenloh, musical interludes, combined with sentimental films, delivered up "a magical performance" for those women she interviewed.²⁷ She

²⁵ Altenloh, (1977), *Zur Soziologie des Kino*, 62.

²⁶ *ibid.*

²⁷ *ibid.*

explains to us how the “complete” and “stimulating” event precipitated intense reactions on the part of the women present. Several issues arise from her commentaries that help us think anew about how cinema excited participation and regulated female viewing habits. First of all, the noted visible effects of these programmes on the public behaviour of women increasingly became subjected to professional inquiries, giving rise to considerable consternation. Since middle-class observers found themselves watching or talking to women who had opposing life-style expectations and were from different social circles to themselves, bourgeois prejudice and genuine incongruity clouded how they interpreted what they saw. By being profiled as essentially apolitical, emotionally unstable and given over to a kind of movie madness, female audiences were increasingly subjected to a scrutinising gaze that did not quite understand what it observed. Even so, the reaction of these women precipitated a lengthier, and ever more intense, discussion on viewing practices that extended to all spectators.

Cultural watchdogs argued that an intense meta-experience promoted by cinema inspired new modes of response, such as over-excitement and over-chattiness, and new modes of film viewing, such as an unsolicited gaze which was not always in keeping with prevailing notions of what constituted appropriate feminine propriety and control. Custodians of public decency increasingly imagined the woman’s weekly trip to the local picture house as an occasion for nervous stimulation and bodily peril: “the psychology behind the success of cinematography is psychology of the metropolis because the metropolitan soul, this continually hurried soul, staggering to and fro between fleeting impressions that appear as unique as they are un-definable, embodies the soul of cinematography.”²⁸

Lurking beneath concerns about the overwrought female movie enthusiast was a distinct unease that even the most prohibitive censorship laws could not prevent these vulnerable spectators from being affected by the psychological mechanisms set in motion by the popular film programme. Leading physiologists and psychologists – including the pioneering researcher on sex, Iwan Bloch – made known that viewing salacious material could over-stimulate the nervous system and initiate a dangerous

²⁸ Hans Kienzl, (1911), Theater und Kinematograph, *Der Strom*, 1, 219.

escalation of internal psychic tension that could, in turn, lead to emotional disorders with dire social consequences.²⁹ Cinema reformers seized upon what had been scientifically ‘proven’, declaring that film exercised a strong suggestive power that might induce the mass spectator – especially the young, the uneducated and the emotional unstable – to imitate what they saw. Adolf Sellmann, for example, cautioned spectators about becoming too emotionally involved with what they saw on screen for fear of losing a sense of reality: “Sometimes films contain such adventurous romances and wild fantasies that the moviegoer begins to lose their calm vision of the world.”³⁰ Walter Serner, a Dadaist based in Zurich, went even further to characterise the spectator’s rapt visual attention as based on a type of sexual excitation. For him, spectator visual pleasure was defined as “a terrifying lust, and as powerful as the deepest desire – one that makes the blood rush and pound until that unfathomable lust common to all desire comes rushing through the flesh.”³¹ Physical mobility could at least be tempered through admonitions against incorrect behaviours. On the other hand, psychological processes – voyeuristic latitude and sensorial pleasures – set in motion by the cinematic experience could neither be restrained, controlled or even adequately explained. The perception of the spectatorial experience emerges as a uniquely gendered one, (almost) exclusively *written* about by male authors and *imagined* as a feminised state.

Reformists were in the habit of blaming both the simple pulp-fiction-style narratives (*Schundfilm*, or ‘trash film’) and crude spectacles for initiating obsessive modes of viewing behaviour. What Konrad Lange judged as most reprehensible, for example, were popular programmes that explicitly lacked moral seriousness, and did little else but promote uncritical consumption, emotional responses and disorientation caused by a sensory overload.³² Certain social groups, particularly women and teenagers of both sexes, were perceived as being at greater risk from the intense nervous stimulation that characterised the popular cinema’s immediate attractions, and placed them in obvious moral danger. Because it had such a powerful, if not hypnotic, effect on spectators, Lange contended that cinema was

²⁹ Iwan Bloch, (1907), *Das Sexualleben unserer Zeit in seinen Beziehungen zur modernen Kultur*, Berlin.

³⁰ Adolf Sellmann, (1912), *Der Kinematograph als Volkserzieher?* Langensalza: n.p., 27.

³¹ Walter Serner, quoted in trans Hake, (1993), *The Cinema's Third Machine*, 98.

³² Konrad Lange, (1918), *Nationale Kinoreform*, München-Gladbach: Volksvereins-Verlag.

burdened with the responsibility of protecting its most vulnerable audience members. The point of all this discussion made clear that visual distractions were in danger of jeopardising cinema's true mission, which was to educate and morally uplift the nation. Ernst Schultz, another reformer, made the point by declaring that film, "this wonderful product of technology of our culture," must be used wisely "because it has the potential of becoming a powerful tool for the nation."³³ Bourgeois intervention was justified by the making visible of inappropriate patterns of intense spectatorial engagement.

The cultural elite was confident that they could curb cinema's excesses, psychological and otherwise, not just with stricter censorship laws or restrictive access, but by creating alternative modes of film production and viewing protocols. Sellmann, for example, declared that since the modern world demanded so much more from the individual, the ability of cinema to reach out and inform large audiences must not be wasted on trivial distractions:

"In the modern cultural world, the individual has a lot more to learn; and knowledge has to be communicated to the general masses and to all social classes. Cinematography is an excellent way of democratising knowledge."³⁴

Specific projects, such as the theologically inspired films sponsored by the Catholic Church and People's League for Catholic Germany, were developed with the expressed aim of activating critical minds rather than stimulating intense emotions.

The Lichtbilderei in Mönchen-Gladbach, an organisation with connections to both the Catholic Church and the film industry, provides further insight into the attempts that were made to cultivate appropriate film aesthetics and viewing protocol. *Bild und Film*, a non-profit-making film journal sponsored by the Lichtbilderei organisation, first went into circulation in 1912 with Lorenz Pieper as editor, and appeared monthly until 1915 when it ceased publication. The journal played a central role in keeping questions of discerning aesthetic tastes and appropriate viewing behaviours firmly in the public eye, and it even lobbied federal parliaments for the cultural refinement of cinema. Concepts of good taste and correct

³³ Ernst Schultz, (1911), *Der Kinematograph als Bildungsmittel. Eine kulturepolitische Untersuchung*. Halle a.d.S: Verlag der Bunchhandlung des Waisenhauses, 8.

³⁴ Adolf Sellmann, (1914), *Kino und Schule*, Mönchen-Gladbach: Volksvereines-Verlag, 16.

viewing etiquette defined by aesthetic distance and emotional restraint, all absent from the popular programme, set the tone for the magazine's approach to film criticism. It advised readers on how to conduct themselves as dignified spectators. Couched beneath the hyperbole over the detrimental effects that the popular entertainment programme had upon the guileless spectator were calls for shifting film production over to a very different style of filmmaking: one based upon aesthetic distance over immediate pleasures and critical control over emotional intensity. These strategies were aimed less at protecting the emergent mass audience than reclaiming them for a bourgeois type of cinema.

An examination of how the industry set about exciting and regulating viewing protocol reveals how it was able to seize upon and adapt bourgeois strategies as well as introduce new ones to great effect. Altenloh notes that all live orchestral music became an integrated part of the evening's entertainment. The musical component proved extremely popular to the young females present in the audience: "Light music is also a main attraction for [the young women] at the cinema."³⁵ Offering modular units, such as music, reveals how acutely conscious theatre managers were to evoke a certain idea of the audience they were hoping to court. What Altenloh's research tells us is that enterprising picture house owners of Mannheim aimed to foster a genteel culture most closely associated with the refined tastes of the middle-class in general, and of bourgeois women in particular. Appropriating, and then repackaging, selectively raided forms and conventions defined by discriminating middle-class tastes, and then juxtaposing these with smart, comfortable and safe theatre interiors, represented a broader attempt to improve cinema's impoverished reputation. The reason why the popular film programme anticipated a 'respectable' female patron is, therefore, in part, because these women were imagined as bringing a certain social kudos to an industry long tarnished by the topography of urban immorality (especially prostitution).

Tailoring the cinematic experience around a particularly desirable segment of the audience – that is, one defined as dignified and socially respectable – made visible the patronage of a socially aspiring group of women. Altenloh's research

³⁵ *ibid.*

demonstrates, in passing, that considerable effort went into devising programmes that pulled in a ‘refined’ demographic, establishing a cultural ambience where women came to be flattered into *imagining* their own gentility and aspirational sense of social self.

Consideration must also be given to how exhibitors configured the woman subject as a regular-paying customer through tactics that targeted the institutional loyalty of the broadening female trade. Exhibitors constructed and imagined a distinctly female community based on a shared meta-experience that spanned and intersected throughout an entire programme including films. Fashioning a mixed media experience suitable for feminine tastes, with a programme of light music giving way to a film presentation, might be said to have generated an intense cumulative experience which was far more than its individual parts. Attention given to the scheduling and planning of the overall programme based around multiple components, multi-layered texts and diverse pleasures that precluded stability delivers up knowledge about a unique form of spectatorship for audiences. Mixed programmes offered the female fan base a viewing experience that ran counter to the idea of an absorbed spectatorship that was being increasingly normalised by the classical narrative system. Nearly twenty-years later, Kracauer reported on the continued presence of the orchestra, and how the infinite phantasmagoric pleasures created by the combination of music and flickering images still pulled in the crowds.

“The orchestra asserts itself as an independent power, its acoustic production buttressed by the responsory of the lighting. Every emotion is accorded its own acoustic expression and its colour value in the spectrum – a visual and acoustic kaleidoscope that provides the setting for the physical activity on stage: pantomime and ballet. Until finally the white surface descends and the events of the three-dimensional stage blend imperceptibly into two-dimensional illusion.”³⁶

Distracted forms of spectatorship talked about by reformers as generating nervous kinaesthetic sensationalism are commercially reconfigured in relation to putting on a ‘special event’ that would generate enthusiasm in an audience. While mixed media programmes seem to have been designed by the exhibitors precisely to attract women, they did so on terms that often clashed with more conservative expectations of how women should behave in public.

Far from producing boisterous, disruptive (women) audiences, exhibition strategies stressed new conceptions of film viewing habits around a rapt attention and ‘rule of silence.’ J. Ojijatekha Brant-Sero in 1910 describes how the accretional programme made visible a quasi-religious exhibition experience inside the auditorium.

“The music has ceased. All is very quiet. Suddenly the lights go out. An extremely comical situation is presented on the screen. ... The comical picture goes on, and the silent experiences of comedy on the screen are only equalled in stoical silence by the church-like silence of the audience. Earlier, the same picture would occasionally evoke a muffled snicker from a child in the front seat. However, it being past 9 o’clock, the children having all departed for home, according to police regulations, the grown ups have free scope. The star film is put on, dealing the eternal ‘human triangle’ in which the military element is present. This film is shown in three parts. A crowded audience gave not the slightest sign of pleasure or displeasure; their presence was sufficient to prove their love of the German Army, while perhaps sympathising with the woman as a secondary matter.”³⁷

Despite the obvious cultural prejudices embedded into his conclusions, the reporters descriptions about how the different segments built up a hushed tension for the main feature prove illuminating. Such remarks could at some level to confirm the concerns expressed by the cultural pessimists. For example, Franz Pfemfert, editor of the Expressionist journal *Die Aktion*, modifies the religious analogue to raise alarm over the effects cinema had on the audience’s mind: “Nick Carter, the cinema, and Berlin tenements, this profane trinity join together ... The cinema eradicates imagination.”³⁸ Rather than define the audience’s ‘silent’ receptivity as somehow unruly, as the result of some character flaw, it would seem more pertinent to suggest that the silence articulated an atmosphere of expectation cultivated by the exhibitors through building anticipations into the programme. Expectancy is generated by the actual experience of cinema: from the price of admission, through waiting for the programme to begin and delaying the film with other distractions, to how the film inscribes fantasy and desire into its very structure. Thus, an alternative perspective emerges that defines the hushed expectation as self-validating for audiences in the course of their cinema experience.

³⁶ Siegfried Kracauer, (1995), *Cult of Distraction: On Berlin’s Movie Palaces, The Mass Ornament: Weimar Essays*, trans. Thomas Y. Levin, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 324.

³⁷ J Ojijatekha Brant-Sero, (1911), A Visit to a German Picture Theatre, *The Bioscope*, 569.

³⁸ Franz Pfemfert, quoted in, Anton Kaes, ed., (1978), *Kino-Debatte. Texte zum Verhältnis von Literatur und Film, 1909-1929*, Tübingen: Max Niemeyer, 62.

What the evidence points to is an emergent philosophy that reshaped the popular in terms of a search for a 'quality' demographic – a step toward niche rather than mass audiences, as a “differentiated mass possessing identifiable demographic categories.”³⁹ As the market continued to negotiate difficulties in terms of cheap productions and un-profitability, commercial strategies by 1911 were being pursued to consolidate and reinvigorate the film business:

“Makers no longer manufacture wildly and without discrimination; ... further with long films, costs have increased, and the makers are compelled to lay out enormous sums on travelling and advertising, all to the advantage of the consumers.”⁴⁰

In its most general sense, industrial strategies to differentiate its products were achieved through targeting films and cinema programmes towards certain well-defined audience demographics. For example, mixed programmes, including light music and a film melodrama obviously had primary appeal to a female audience, and the manner in which the entertainment was put together by exhibitors and marketed was initially designed to entice this audience. The importance of the 'special event' is that the exhibitors constructed around the mixed programme an institutional apparatus for producing a loyal consumer subject. In so doing, consumer taste, values and attitudes were formed and used in order to talk about the female audience in a more specific and directed fashion. These industrial statements turned the female spectator-participant into economic categories that justified market segmentation and programme design. It was not enough for the industry to simply attract an audience for a one-off event. It became imperative to make sure that the spectator-participant was retained.

The varied entertainment programme tends to get left behind in discussions on German cinema, remaining one of the few areas where earlier exhibition practices and the vaudeville aesthetic enjoyed greater audience acceptability and tremendous commercial success. While the late-Wilhelmine cinema experienced, and finally capitulated to, the same commercial pressures that shaped the more classically-

³⁹ Jane Feuer, (1992), *Genre Study and Television*, IN: R. C. Allen, ed., *Channels of Discourse, Reassembled: Television and Contemporary Criticism*, Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 152.

⁴⁰ Editor of *Projektion*, (23 November 1911), *The Film Market in Germany*, *The Bioscope*, 531.

orientated Weimar cinema, the multiple features of the popular product remained enshrined within industrial policy and the textual practices of the popular cinema well into the twenties.

“The programmes, too, display a well-wrought grandiosity. Gone are the days when films were allowed to run one after another, each with a corresponding musical accompaniment. The major theatres, at least, have adopted the American style of a self-contained show, which integrates the film into a larger whole. Like the program sheets which have expanded into fan magazines, the shows have grown into a structured profusion of production numbers and presentations. A glittering, revue-like creature has crawled out of the movies: *the total artwork (Gesamtkunstwerk) of effects*.”⁴¹

Siegfried Kracauer’s description of an evening’s entertainment – including, short sketches, lavish stage productions, topical musical numbers with catchy tunes and light operetta presentations – reveal that the movie palaces in the late-twenties still retained (albeit in a more tailored form) earlier patterns linked to the popular variety culture. Moreover, according to Kracauer, these entertainment formats had become spatially mirrored within the luxuriant architecture of the grander picture palaces, thus underscoring how eager exhibitors were to nurture a complete experience for its clientele. The creation of the total experience proved necessary so that the exhibition sector could define itself and strengthen its own identity in the marketplace; and it justified the need to do so by invoking the imagined audience and its demand for such entertainment.

⁴¹ Kracauer, (1995), *Cult of Distraction: On Berlin’s Movie Palaces*, 324.

Chapter 6: Industrial Bodyscape of the Female Film Star. Movie Actresses as Feminine Template for the Imagined Female Spectator-Participant.

In the credit sequence of Ernst Lubitsch's 1919 romantic feature-length comedy *The Oyster Princess* [*Die Austernprinzessin*], the name of the female star, Ossi Oswalda, appears on a title card. This is immediately followed by a head-and-shoulders image, reminiscent of photographic studio portraits, of her dressed in fashionable apparel. Oswalda, framed in a mid-iris-shot, flirtatiously laughs for the camera (fig.6.1.).



fig.6.1. *The Oyster Princess*. Oswalda as star.

This vibrant representation of thoroughly modern womanhood appears to confirm conservative anxieties about the feckless, sexually moribund and economically independent young movie-struck women; an image that Oswalda as the star positively privileges and promotes. Furthermore, the image functions to open up the narrative trajectory, to inform and say something about the character she will play in the film. It also goes beyond the fictional world, to reveal the star as an industrial category of cinema practice. Competing industrial demands – that is, a blurring of boundaries between character integration and performance virtuosity, between star as spectacle and figure of identification, between fictional pleasures and an industrial commodity, and between conservative resistance and modern identities – become embedded in the body of the film star as a new kind of imagined spatial site and representational frontier.

This chapter intends to focus attention on the female movie star as a discourse. Such a strategy aims particularly to reveal the constitutive features of the female star as a readable text in relation to the female spectator-participant. The film actress emerges as a series of discursive tactical elements operating in the field of cinema – as an effect of industrial power and knowledge, and delivered up as a strategy, both on and off screen, to excite and regulate visual pleasures and commercial desire for audiences. Knowledge of the female movie star, because she was created and embodied by an industrial discourse, in a sense *shaped* the identities of the female fans that consumed her image. Star production is necessary so that the imagined female spectator-participant can be defined further, a process by which her institutional needs and desires are created and strengthened.

I aim to survey the dense series of processes involved in the making of the female film star discourse, focusing primarily on two stars: Asta Nielsen and Ossi Oswalda. As discursively constructed industrial categories, these movie actresses belonged to certain economic imperatives and modes of film-making practice associated with the German film business during the teens. These strategies sought to attract, shape and retain its imagined female constituency as consumers, cinema spectators and devoted patrons. Reaching out to these women, so film producers claimed, justified the tailoring of the movie star to meet the expectations of cinema's expanding female public. Crafting a particular film actress to appeal to certain aspects of the female audience with specific forms of appearance, attitude and behaviour flattered the customer's sense of self. The diverse character types which emerged – in this case, Nielsen as the intelligent self-assured career actress, and Oswalda as the young fashionable modern flapper – in a sense gave representation to the female spectator-participant, furnishing her with clues about the new identities for women. While these representational forms met business hopes to position cinema as a truly modern cultural institution and thereby pull in a lucrative female crowd, aspects of the new femininity, such as career-minded or fun-loving women, had to be negotiated by an industry wary of outside intervention and censorship debates. The task ahead, then, is to dissect the representational anatomy of the female movie star in order to read the structure of attitudes and culture references inscribed right into 'her' very construction, thus illuminating further the making of the female spectator-participant as a discourse.

Making the German Movie Star.

“It will only be possible to appraise the extent of the ‘vocabulary’ of Asta Nielsen’s gestures once the first encyclopaedia of features has been compiled with the aid of cinematography.”

Béla Balázs.¹

The lack of scene dissection, spatial depth and longer takes in early German film allowed for a far more sustained and continuous performance on screen. Ben Brewster and Lea Jacobs, in particular, have focused substantial academic attention on acting styles in early European cinema. Considering how formal composition impacted on performance technique, they argue that:

“Given their lengthy takes and tendency to employ deep staging long shot, European films of this period necessarily relied more upon the actor and the acting ensemble to provide dramatic emphasis. This mode of filmmaking also gave the actor the time to develop elaborate sequences of gestures and poses. European film actors were thus in a relatively better position than their American colleagues to adapt and refine the performance practices associated with pictorial styles in the theatre.”²

Of the acting methods of screen diva Asta Nielsen, Brewster and Jacobs contend that her distinctive facial expressions, use of dark make-up heavily applied around her eyes, and slow-paced gestural soliloquies represented “the adoption and transformation of the histrionic tradition of the diva.”³ Her rejection of “refined upper-class characters” in favour of less than glamorous types, such as morally wayward gypsies or impoverished working class girls trying to secure a better life, allowed for a more “spontaneous and physically unrestrained” performance that mixed “comic and tragic acting modes.”⁴ The noted realism of Nielsen’s performance, Brewster and Jacobs argue, derived from “Nielsen’s willingness to violate the expectations of grace and ladylike decorum which surrounded the diva, or at least to alternate the more typical gestural soliloquies ... with other sorts of expressive gesture.”⁵ Such pictorial cinematic techniques gave the actress an opportunity, through an elaborate system of facial expressions or pronounced (often

¹ Béla Balázs, (1984), Asta Nielsen, Eroticism, *Der Tag*, 6 April 1923; reprinted *IN, Hungarofilm Bulletin*, 3, 15.

² Ben Brewster and Lea Jacobs, (1997), *Theatre to Cinema*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 111.

³ *ibid.*, 119.

⁴ *ibid.*

⁵ *ibid.*

comically grotesque) bodily poses, to convey significant narrative moments to the audience. I wish to go beyond these aesthetic considerations to suggest that such complex staging practices were less an issue about screen pictorialism adapted from the nineteenth-century theatre techniques, as Brewster and Jacobs have argued, than they were about a star discourse based on a series of dense and competing industrial statements. These new interwoven but separate statements spoke about (consumer) fantasies, visual pleasures and new representational identities, and the need to sell a cinema product by spotlighting a star whose unique talent could not be equalled.

Almost from the beginning screen personalities were seen as key to the popular appeal and commercial success of the German cinema. Challenging traditional thinking about the lack of celebrities in early German cinema, Thomas Elsaesser argues that early moving picture presentations often recruited talent from the variety and revue circuits who were already well known to audiences.

“But what one finds in the German cinema, from the first Messter production onwards, are star performers. Admired for their special skills and extraordinary talents, proven in the performance arts of circus and variety, these were artists doing lightning sketches, strongmen like the Brothers Milton, operetta virtuosi Franz Porten, Tilly Bébé the Lion Tamer, magicians, gagmen and gymnasts.”⁶

Procurement of stars from vaudeville represented a self-conscious attempt to retain and even extend allegiances from variety entertainment. Galvanising the support of an established audience already familiar with the personalities and their ability to, quite literally, stop the show proved an important strategy, as exhibitors attempted to lure customers from other cultural sites. It was not long, however, before the recruited talent was soon being adapted to suit the tastes of cinema audiences. For, as the industry imagined its constituency differently, a popular film text evolved around interdependent but independent industrial processes. My contention is that, through analysing the representational anatomy of the movie star, knowledge of the female spectator-participator in a sense became generated, their (consumer) desires, cultural values and institutional needs.

⁶ Thomas Elsaesser, ed., (1996), *The Second Life: German Cinema's First Decades*, Amsterdam: University of Amsterdam Press, 25.

The making of the female movie star can first of all be seen as a specific example of how the industry sought to maximise profits from limited resources and target particular demographics with definite requirements. Rationalising industrial practices around originality reveal attempts to make the exclusive product popular from the end of the first decade of the twentieth-century. Certain film careers, such as those of Nielsen, Oswald, Lissi Nebuschka, Wanda Treumann, Hanni Weisse, Dorrit Wiexler and Henny Porten,⁷ were, in fact, almost entirely predicated upon the 'monopoly film' system that prided itself on making an exclusive film product commercially successful. Despite on-going market difficulties caused by over-consumption and price cutting, and the higher expenditure involved in the making and disseminating of the 'monopoly film' product, the distribution concept ushered in a new economics of the popular based on regulating an 'exclusive' product for a mass audience:

“It is almost impossible to imagine today that the breathtaking popularity of Henny Porten throughout the whole of the Imperial German Reich, was based, believe it or not, on 15 to 20 copies of each film, including five replacement copies for wear and tear. These copies circulated with great speed and absolute precision, so that every four to six weeks a new Porten film arrived at the next venue with perfect regularity, until she had graced every screen in the farthest corners of the land.”⁸

This early type of 'blockbuster' was designed to excite fierce public interest that allowed exhibitors to charge higher prices at the box office. But through the careful construction of its component parts, and by promoting product differentiation in the marketplace, the 'monopoly film' targeted certain demographic groups with distinct cultural needs. In so doing, this new type of film product emerged as a useful tool for the industry to think about and appeal to the mass film audience in a more specific and explicit way.

Inextricably bound up with the economy of the 'monopoly film' product was the film star. The movie celebrity was someone who was at once instantly recognisable to customers who paid the higher prices to see them while also being

⁷ Helga Belach, ed., (1986), *Henny Porten: Der erste deutsche Filmstar 1890-1960*, Berlin: Haude and Spener

⁸ Corinna Müller, (1990), Emergence of the Feature Film in Germany between 1910-1911, IN: P Cherchi Usai and L Cordelli, eds., *Before Caligari: German Cinema, 1895-1920*, Pordenone: Edizioni Biblioteca dell'Immagine, 102, 104.

able to court fan loyalty by delivering a unique performance style that gave them a creative edge over the competition. Asta Nielsen recalls in her memoirs, for example, how the script often circulated in a skeletal form with annotated notes such as “Asta’s big scene.” It was left up to Nielsen to decide on how best to play the role.⁹ Promoting the idea that the actress was the primary creative force behind each new role reveals an important marketing strategy around the exceptional talents of the star in the struggle for economic survival and customer allegiance. Corinna Müller details how the star was central to the new industry processes:

“The film star phenomenon was only possible because the system only allowed certain pictures to be shown in certain cinemas, thus making the showing of a ‘film star’ film a great event. With the introduction of the monopoly distribution, the creation of one of the most important ingredients in the film star phenomena was now possible: the ceremonious premiere of a film in one particular cinema. As long as films could be bought and sold, appearing here and there, in many cinemas at once, or in none at all, the film star phenomenon was fundamentally impossible; it was not possible to create the necessary aura of uniqueness and exclusivity.”¹⁰

It would therefore be fair to say that the idea of the star as a unique talent grew out of economic necessity and limited resources to ensure commercial success and generate intense public demand for the ‘monopoly film’ product.

Pre-1914 promotional campaigns advertised exemplary female stars like Nielsen and Porten as ‘cash register magnets’ (otherwise known as, *Kassenmagneten*). Much of the early press attention on Nielsen detailed her as a kind of cinematic siren, luring the weak-willed mass with her bewitchingly seductive charm along a morally corrupt path of sexual irresponsibility and lascivious pleasure.¹¹ Competing tactics, generated by industry insiders, soon began to rethink the rubric of the star’s influence over the audience. Challenging perceived wisdom, new press statements contended that Nielsen’s performances could actually put across a positive message for audiences willing to listen. Playing on the idea that the movie actress could pull in the crowds by sheer force of her personal charisma, industrial practices fore-grounded the exceptional personality of the film star as

⁹ Asta Nielsen, (1946), *Den tiende Muse*, Copenhagen: Guildenhal.

¹⁰ Corinna Müller, (1990), *Emergence of the Feature Film in Germany between 1910-1911*, *IN*, P. Cherchi Usai and L Cordelli, eds., *Before Caligari*, 102.

¹¹ Hauptstaatsarchiv Düsseldorf (Kalkum) 9004; kino: letter dated 24 January 1911; and (1912-1913). Rundschau: Protest gegen Asta Nielsen, *Bild und Film*, 11/3, 68-9.

integral to film promotion, audience engagement and the aesthetic organisation of diegetic screen space.

The prolonged presence on screen of the 'star' was often far more memorable for female audiences than any story told by the film.¹² Overly long and drawn-out takes could rupture narrative cohesiveness (and even disrupt character development) to allow for a protracted display of the star and her acting virtuosity. Actresses such as Asta Nielsen and Henny Porten often remained on camera long after the narrative required her presence, being displayed instead as a cinematic tableau at the edge of the frame. Groups of critics – and later scholars – have found these violations in 'classical' screen practice an obvious source of irritation and mark of technical incompetence.¹³ Long takes and slow cutting rates, lack of cross-cutting or shot/reverse-shot editing, tableau-like framing and frontal acting, combined with confused and overly complicated plots, offered a style that seemed enslaved to 19th-century theatrical traditions, and suggested to critics like Barry Salt that late-Wilhelmine cinema was unoriginal and rather mediocre.¹⁴ Such explanation seems to misinterpret what is happening here. The formal excess of the movie star and lack of editing actually function to differentiate the product in the marketplace. By promoting the actress' unique acting skills within the text, as well as building on her pre-sold image beyond it, the film represents the star as excess. This representation is, in turn, given meaning by evoking a spectator-participant who not only justifies the movie actress' existence but also makes commercial sense of her presence as a cinema commodity.

Several industrial demands contributed to why the movie star modulated her acting style within a dense visual, and complex diegetic, screen space. Effecting a performative change to the actress-as-star from the actress-as-character self-consciously recognised its imagined constituency, the people who had paid to come

¹² Emilie Altenloh, (1977), *Zur Soziologie des Kino: Die Kino-Unternehmung und die sozialen Schichten ihrer Besucher*, Hamburg: Medienladen, 62.

¹³ Barry Salt, (1996), Early German Film: The Stylistics of Comparative Context, *IN*: T. Elsaesser, ed., *A Second Life: German Cinema's First Decades*, Amsterdam: University of Amsterdam Press, 225-236.

¹⁴ Salt undertook a comparative study of American and European films during the teens to suggest that domestic audiences preferred the American product if offered a choice; the films proved to be more attractive than the German equivalents, with faster cutting rates more varied shots, better scripts, and more action-oriented films; *ibid.*

and see the actress 'star'. Yet, rather than assume that her mere presence was enough to attract and satisfy an all-embracing mass, the underlying industrial logic of these 'star' vehicles recognised the audience's different constituent parts. On one level these films acknowledged devotional fans by building on past knowledges and developing further intimacies with the star. Institutional loyalty was rewarded through these moments of star presence. On another industrial level, there was a need to reach out and appeal to new audiences. Offering first time customers the opportunity to see a unique virtuoso performance would, it was hoped, bring them back to the cinema. Ostentatious acting styles and the star tableau further depended heavily on spectator-participant identification with the movie star persona; an identification which, in turn, offered context to their actions and predicaments. The star as excess reflects not only the uniqueness of what the star brought to the film but also the cumulative effect of the different institutional strategies involved in making the movie actress.

Fierce competition for the 'monopoly film' spotlight pushed stars toward specialising in certain roles that displayed their acting skills to best effect. As the actress took on instantaneously recognisable stock character types, and as staging practices became more simplified around her, visual attention focused on the star in performative action. Indeed, the star won praise from critics and audiences alike not so much for her ability to assume a character but from her skill at turning in a unique performance that transcended the stereotypical role. Leonard Crocombe wrote: "By [Nielsen's] marvellous power of expression she can, I always think, succeed even in giving us a glimpse into her thoughts; one can almost tell what is in her mind whilst she is acting! At least, that is how Asta Nielsen of the screen appears to me."¹⁵

How Also We Forgive [*Wie Auch Wir Vergeben*] (Adolf Gartner, 1911), for example, is specifically designed to exploit and develop further Henny Porten's unique performance skills. Porten plays a devoted wife and mother who nurses her dying daughter while her lieutenant husband gallivants with a Japanese geisha overseas. The long-suffering heroine was the character type that she chose to best

¹⁵ Leonard Crocombe, (25 April 1914), *The Girl on the Film*. No.7: Miss Asta Nielsen, *Pictures and The Picturegoer*, 219.

display her skills, a stock character type already well known to audiences but which she made her own.

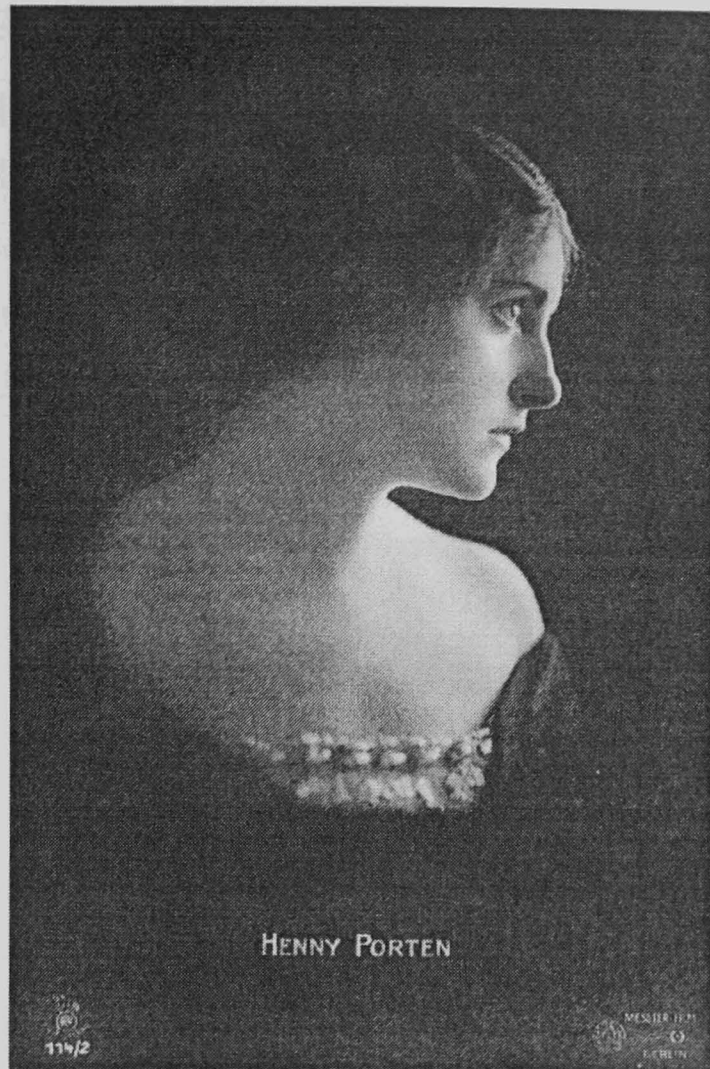


fig.6.2. Henny Porten.

Porten star vehicles catered to an imagined female fan base, offering visual delights around emotionally charged portraits of plucky, stay-at-home women, beset by personal tragedy and unfaithful husbands or fickle suitors but blessed with an unrivalled emotional strength and sense of personal honour.¹⁶

The star moment is further achieved through the dramatic retention of spectacle as defined by immediate and vital attractions; or, to be more precise, a filmic version of the variety programme format and other optical distractions that sought to build toward a climax of intensity and emotional excitement. In *How Also We Forgive*, the premise has been quickly established that Porten is alone at home working hard to care for her ailing child while her errant spouse idles away his time making love to a

¹⁶ Ramona Curry notes how Porten's wholesome image was appropriated for propaganda purposes during the First World War, and especially after 1916 when she became a war widow in real life, to speak to spectators as German citizens. Her star persona was repositioned to offer, 'at once a properly restrained female sexuality and German national identity as: the 'mother-land.' 145. Curry, (1995), *How Early German Film Stars Helped to Sell the War(es)*, IN: K. Dibbets and B. Hogenkamp, eds., *Film and the First World War*, Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 1995: 139-148.

woman whose profession it is to pleasure men. The adulterous affair is sketched out across an exotically imagined Japanese panorama that finds the couple frolicking through a visually dense landscape of cherry blossom trees, teahouses and lush gardens. This setting caught in illusory depth is reminiscent of the static panorama paintings and dioramas that first appeared in sites of optical experience. In fact the lieutenant seems seduced as much by his opulent surroundings as he is by the geisha. The couple's first amorous clinch is caught in a dissolve to Porten at home, slowly fading to leave just the star on screen (the child can just be seen laying down with a compress over her eyes). The contrast between the painterly illusion of the virtual Japanese landscape and the prosaic simplicity of the domestic space allows the cinema spectator to focus solely on Porten. It sets up a dramatic tension based on visual spectacle, emotional sensationalism and different sites of fantasy. Just as the idealised Japanese landscape is represented as nothing other than analogy, virtual space as substitute for travel as well as narrative site for seduction and illicit passions, the absence of detailed staging effects around Porten sharpens the focus upon the spectacle of star in the process of performing. Juxtaposing these two spectacles – one borrowed from proto-cinematic illusions of virtual travel and the other adopting staging techniques which describe a quotidian performance space that fore-grounded the cult of personality – enabled various sensationalised attractions to be staged. These ranged from narrative tensions (will the daughter die before her father returns?) to emotional over-determinism (grand passion, maternal love, painful betrayal and bereavement, and a desire for exotic far away places).

The sentimentally nuanced star performance given by Porten is explicitly played out through various staging arrangements and discursive visual practices, industrial discourses that fostered a high degree of emotional intensity between star and female fan/first-time patron. Unlike the lovers who are always filmed in long shot, Porten's performance is staged in tight mid-shot. Light falls directly onto Porten's face, thus minimising background detail that might otherwise distract attention away from her acting out of the personal (internal) drama. All her facial expressions of grief, betrayal and emotional pain are revealed: she looks up to the heavens, bows her head in prayer, looks out to the audience with eyes almost brimming with tears, places her hand on her forehead, closes her eyes, opens them and directly engages the imagined gaze of the spectator. Finally, she turns away

slightly and, shutting her eyes once more in grief and then putting her arm up to her brow, she falls prostrate onto the bed causing her child to rise. Taking off the compress, the child begins to comfort her weeping mother. Porten and the child embrace. The sequence, like other star moments in the film, is drawn out and long in narrative terms. But these extended scenes fed a desire to be impressed by Porten's acting talents, Germany's premiere melodramatic film actress, rather than be absorbed by textual integration and tight narrative structures. The star constructed an excessive intimacy through a unique performance style and direct audience appeal, physically moving very close to the camera to allow the spectator-participant to see her as much as possible. Long takes, direct appeal and a fresh interpretation of an already known character type proliferated as part of the general push toward intensifying the cinematic experience for devoted film fans and cinema customers. All these industrial practices, from acting techniques to spatial arrangements, might be seen as implicitly designed to keep the star in view as much as possible.

Attempts to understand the specific mechanisms of the screen performance can be found in the growth of criticism and instructional manuals devoted to the subject of film acting, thus bringing forth a discourse about the professionalisation of the film star.¹⁷ Trade journals in particular sponsored the establishment and dissemination of such a film acting discourse, fostering a model of further intimacy between fans and the star in numerous ways. From the *Lichtbild-Bühne* publishing house came The Road to Film (*Der Weg zum Film*, 1918) series that discussed the artistry and technological innovations of the film business.¹⁸ Richard Ott's first volume in the series focused in particular on all aspects of film acting, from practical advice on how make-up can enhance a performance to general-purpose information on acting trends. Central to Ott's book is the involvement of the reader at a number of levels. Readers were first of all coached in how to decipher film-acting techniques. Ott's publication instructed spectators on how to watch a screen performance and appreciate the skills involved in creating it. In his discussion of natural acting styles, the body is fore-grounded as central to creating a lexicon of the most subtle performative gestures and expressions. Decoding the cinematic performance, and

¹⁷ Hans Forsten, (1918), *Wie wird man Kinoschauspielerin und Kinoschauspieler?* Leipzig: Deutscher Theaterverlag.

¹⁸ Richard Ott, (1918), *Der Weg zum Film*, Berlin: Lichtbild-Bühne.

learning to read between the nuanced lines of the star turn if necessary, also tutored spectators in how to understand film as a multi-layered text. Although appropriating a form most closely associated with bourgeois critical appraisal, the strategy flattered its readership through an endlessly circulated narrative which reiterated visual pleasure defined by an appreciation of the actor's artistry while creating knowledge about the aesthetic categories and standards of evaluation specific to film. Through these discursive strategies, Ott's text reveals the ways in which industrial practice contributed to how the spectator-participant meant to receive and understand the star as discourse. In the process, the spectator-participant was instructed into becoming consummate movie watchers and avid 'star-gazers.'

Besides educating film audiences on the finer points of film acting that elevated the status of the screen performance, Ott's publication invited the reader to appreciate the difficulties involved in the film acting process – and even to imagine himself or herself as the film actor. Detailing facial exercises and performance techniques that had to be practised over and over again reveal film acting as a skilled profession. Oskar Diehl's 1922 guide Acting on Film (1922, *Mimik im Film*), as another example of this discourse, counselled its readership on how to become a film actor. Offering instruction to the would-be actor, Diehl advocated certain acting strategies for conveying a spectrum of emotional effects without recourse to costume and make-up.¹⁹ Other publications went further with practical tips on how to enter the film business, counselling young hopefuls to be sensible in their approach. Leo Beck's How Do I Become A Film Actor? (*Wie werde ich Filmschauspieler?*), for example, conveyed practical advice to aspiring film stars on how to put together a portfolio, what to say in a resumé, suggestions about publicity photographs and references, and how to go about soliciting the interest of film producers.²⁰ This instructional discourse, focusing on issues of hard work and skills based training, lent an air of professional respectability to film acting as a career. It surely helped in fact to promote the idea that film acting was a serious profession and cinema was a legitimate art form.

¹⁹ Oskar Diehl, (1922), *Mimik im Film*, Munich: G Müller.

²⁰ Leo Beck, (1919), *Wie werde ich Filmschauspieler?* Munich: Lender.

Instruction manuals on film acting further fuelled fantasies of movie stardom, bringing forth a discourse on how best to appreciate the considerable talents of great film stars like Porten and Nielsen. In focusing on the welcomed shift from a self-conscious theatricality to more naturalistic and understated methods of film acting, Ott privileged performance skills that were most closely aligned with the stars' own talents. Character development was nevertheless subordinated to the physiognomical laws of an acting thesaurus. Yet, it was how the star manipulated that acting lexicon which proved important. Manuals on film acting defined the successful screen presence as being able to imbue a character type with a certain authenticity necessary for inspiring strong emotions in the audience. Through an intense focus on the art of film acting, and by providing a detailed catalogue of facial expressions and physical gestures, the star is delivered up as a mistress of her craft.

The movie star is body knowledge in all senses: she is the female body as charismatic personality through fore-grounding her acting talent, representing the professionalisation of the industry and an 'exclusive' institutional strategy. Her performative body also delivers a performance based upon an emotional intensity that aims to draw in the devoted fan while offering an originality that would appeal to first-time viewers. The star body as representational type was designed to be widely discussed and consumed; and she also emerges as subject of various promotional discourses. The wide variety of information and advice available was necessary for the spectator-participant to see themselves as part of a cinema community. While the female film actress proved an important industrial strategy to attract the much-prized female audience, the popular movie star, and the representational identities she offered, made visible cinema's complicated cultural position at this particular historical moment. Whether as a commercial product increasingly made popular through the 'monopoly film' system or as a performer with special acting skills that appealed to an imagined female constituency, the two female star discourses that will be now discussed – Asta Nielsen and Ossi Oswalda – were the realisation of various cumulative processes within the popular cinema discourse. The fact that these stars were not so easily accommodated into the wider cultural economy, and nor were the roles they played so readily associated with refinement, reflects less an ideological progression, as argued by Schlüpmann, than a

structure of attitude and reference in relation to the cultural life of late-Wilhelmine Germany.²¹

Asta Nielsen.

“And for those interested in the representation of women in the cinema, there is much to be learned from Asta Nielsen’s example. Her sensuality is matched by the powerful impression of intelligence she conveys, and by her resourceful and physical agility.”

Janet Bergstrom.²²

“The variety of Asta Nielsen’s gestures, the wealth of her mimic expressions is fascinating.”

Béla Balázs.²³

She tore a piece of quivering human flesh out and held it toward the light for all to see. Her amazing face had toward the end a tragic power without equal.

Thomas Krag, 1910.²⁴

Of all the major early German movie stars, the first to be systematically built up was the Danish-born Asta Nielsen.²⁵ In fact, it was not entirely coincidental that Nielsen first enjoyed box office success in the same year as the ‘monopoly film’ distribution system came to revolutionise the German film market. Ludwig Gottschalk, a prominent Düsseldorf film distributor, acquired the exhibition rights in 1910 to *The Abyss* [*Afgrunden*] (Urban Gad, 1910),²⁶ a Danish venture especially written for and starring the one-time theatrical stage actress Nielsen. Urban Gad and Nielsen made no attempt to hide their ambitions for the film, hoping as they did that it would bring them recognition from the Copenhagen theatre community. Yet, the reaction was not as either one had hoped, for not only did the theatre establishment ignore the opening night but the Danish film industry also failed to pick up on the film’s success either. Despite these set backs in Denmark, the film proved to be both a popular and financial global hit, as Nielsen recalls in her autobiography.

²¹ Heide Schlüpmann, (1996), *Cinema as Anti-Theatre: Actresses and Female Audiences*, IN: R. Abel. ed., *Silent Film*, New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 125-141.

²² Janet Bergstrom, (1990), *Asta Nielsen’s Early German Films*, IN: P. Cherchi Usai and L Cordelli, eds., *Before Caligari: German Cinema, 1895-1920*, 162.

²³ Béla Balázs, (1984), *Asta Nielsen. Eroticism*, *Der Tag*, 6 April 1923; reprinted, *Hungarofilm Bulletin*, 3, 15.

²⁴ Thomas Krag, 1910 quoted in Robert C Allen, (1973), *Asta Nielsen: The Silent Muse*, trans. David Wright, *Sight and Sound*, 42 (4), 205.

²⁵ Born in Denmark in 1881, Nielsen moved with her family to Malmö in Sweden where she spent her early childhood before returning to Copenhagen at the age of 10.

²⁶ Corinna Müller, (1994), *Frühe deutsche Kinematographie: Formale, wirtschaftliche und kulturelle Entwicklungen, 1907-1912*, Stuttgart/Weimar: Metzler, 126-7.

“Soon the film was being shown all over the world, and everywhere everyone agreed that ... a turning point had been reached in the history of cinema. The papers, which had never reviewed films before now, praised this first proof of film’s claim to being an art form. In spite of the film being distributed without our names being mentioned on it, my name everywhere rose like a phoenix out of the ashes.”²⁷

Leaving aside Nielsen’s opinions on what the success of the film meant to her flagging theatre career, the film’s favourable reception in Germany was not entirely a fluke. With exclusive local exhibition rights going on sale in November 1910,²⁸ and the film appearing only in selected cinema around the country, The Abyss proved to be the movie sensation of 1911 based on a business strategy that marketed a popular must-see film product with a restricted release. Peter Lähn has written, for example, on how the Hohenzollern Theatre, positioned as ‘Frankfurt’s biggest cinematograph theatre’ which claimed to show all ‘the latest pictures,’ was the first picture house in the city to exclusively screen The Abyss.²⁹ Exclusive exhibition runs conferred esteem upon the little known Danish film about female infidelity, flattering patrons with the idea that they were seeing something special. The huge demand created for the picture thus might be said to be predicated on the new ‘monopoly film’ marketing and distribution concept, a system that turned its unknown female lead into an instant film star sensation across the German Empire.

Soon ambitious entrepreneurs saw Nielsen as a means of boosting flagging profits and making possible a viable film culture that operated under their corporate control. Initial success enjoyed by The Abyss led to a two-picture deal with Deutsche-Bioscop in 1911. Uniting Nielsen once again with the film’s director and soon-to-be husband, Gad, these movies Burning Blood [*Heisse Blut*] and The Moth [*Nachtfalter*] repeated the commercial success of the first. It is at this point that Paul Davidson, co-founder of the exhibition chain Allgemeine Kinematographen-Theater Gesellschaft, Union-Theater für Lebende und Tonbilder GmbH (AKTG) and senior partner of the first vertically integrated film company, Projektions AG ‘Union’

²⁷ Asta Nielsen, *Den Tiende Muse* quoted in Allen (1973), *Asta Nielsen: The Silent Muse*, 205-6.

²⁸ Sale of exhibition rights appears in 16 November 1910, *Der Kinematograph*.

²⁹ “The best confirmation of the quality of our presentations is the number of visitors to the Hohenzollen Theatre,” the management boasted. “From 8-17 July [1910] – a period of ten days – our theatre welcomed a total of 6523 visitors, if our records of ticket sales are anything to go by.” Peter Lähn, (1996). Paul Davidson, the Frankfurt Film Scene, and *Afgrunden* in Germany, *IN*: T. Elsaesser, ed., *The Second Life*, 83-4.

(PAGU), entered the frame.³⁰ Davidson had been distributing his own ‘monopoly film’, the much talked about American boxing title fight Johnson vs. Jeffries,³¹ before seizing on the business opportunity to exploit Nielsen’s popularity in Germany still further.

Internationale Film Vertriebs GmbH, the monopoly film distribution company registered by Davidson on 1 June 1911, was set up with the expressed aim of handling the exclusive rights and European-wide sales of Asta Nielsen pictures. Nielsen was placed under contract to appear in eight films per year, with one ‘Asta Nielsen Film’ to be released monthly for eight months. For the rest of the year, Nielsen and her director-husband Gad were to devote themselves to developing new scripts. Having time away from filming was meant to give Nielsen further opportunity to expand her repertoire and work on refining her unique acting talents. Off the back of this contract signed with Nielsen, Davidson spoke of how he saw his new ‘property’ transforming PAGU’s fortunes and its industrial profile.

“I was not planning on film production. But then I saw the first Asta Nielsen film. I recognised that the time of the short film was at an end. And I also recognised that this woman would be the first artist in the film medium. Asta Nielsen, I immediately thought, could be a global phenomena. International Film Vertriebs provided Union with eight Nielsen films per year. I am constructing a huge studio for her in Tempelhof. I am organising big productions for her. Everything rests with her. This is the first time any industry has been built around a woman. The costs of filming are irrelevant. I have used all avenues known to me, and created many more, to enable the world to see Asta Nielsen films. According to calculations made by my office, Asta Nielsen is watched every day by one and a half million people in 600 theatres around the world. Today Asta Nielsen is the most famous living woman.”³²

³⁰ Born in Loetzen, East Prussia in 1871, Paul Davidson worked first in the textile trade after completing a course in business studies. In 1906, he became managing director of an exhibition chain, Allgemeine Kinematographen-Theater Gesellschaft, Union-Theater für Lebende und Tonbilder GmbH (AKTG) that he jointly established with three other businessmen. The first of their cinemas opened in June 1906 in Mannheim, under the name Union Theatre (later U.T). Later Davidson moved in to other areas of the film business, setting up a joint stock company, Union (otherwise known as PAGU) on March 12 1910. Peter Lähn says of this latest commercial enterprise: “The PAGU expanded its activities from equipping and running cinemtographe theatres to the ‘manufacture and the sale of films and film apparatus.’ The PAGU therefore became not only the first German film company quoted on the stock exchange, but also the first to be involved in the four vital spheres of cinema exhibition, distribution, film production and equipment manufacture.” Lähn (1996), *ibid.*, 83.

³¹ The title fight was exclusively screened in Frankfurt at the city’s two premiere movie palaces, the Boulevard Theatre on the Kaiserstrasse and the Sound Picture Theatre on the Zeil.

³² Paul Davidson, quoted in Pablo Diaz, (1920), *Asta Nielsen, eine Biographie unserer populären Künstlerin*, Berlin: Lichtbild-Bühne.

The discourse of Nielsen as the star with towering acting talent was embedded in to the terms of her contract and inscribed into the very structures of the small industry set up to promote her. A production company geared to making movies that foregrounded her talents, and a distributor devoted to selling and disseminating knowledge about her, meant that the discourse of Nielsen as exceptional film star was constantly stated, defined and strengthened. Such business strategies – made visible through industrial practices and legal contract – fostered a notion of celebrity, tailoring a whole industry around one woman. In so doing, the Nielsen discourse put forward the sense of a high quality product designed precisely for particular patrons with discriminatory cultural tastes.

Nielsen's popularity based upon her interpretative portrayals of women ruled by deep passions – character types such as gypsies, vamps, girls dressed as boys, working women forced to give up their (possibly illegitimate) child or jilted/jealous lover – clashed with wider expectations governing women's public decorum and inspired calls for censorship. Despite attempts by the Internationale Film Vertriebs to tailor promotional material to guard against threats of censorship, individual theatre proprietors prepared their own publicity material to exhibit outside their picture houses. Nowhere is this intervention more apparent than in the sensationalist full-colour lithographic posters explicitly designed to excite as much interest as possible at the box office. Like the film advertisement campaigns surveyed in chapter 3, film posters displayed outside individual theatres more often than not sold the promise of imagined thrills which were quite often other than what patron would actually see on screen. In 1911, the Düsseldorf police censor's report of Burning Blood raised particular concerns about Nielsen's performance as the vamp. The document condemned her for exposing spectators to a shocking display of uninhibited eroticism.³³ Furthermore, the authors felt that this kind of cinematic representation exemplified a complete antithesis to the legitimate theatre. For them, it conjured up associations with another kind of enterprise (business rather than art), aimed for mass indiscriminate audiences (the lower, uneducated social classes), performed by a sexual 'other' who revelled in the display of the female body as a sexed and sensuous object. Nielsen's performances were thus never entirely immune from legal

prosecution precisely because access to her films was intended for the broadest audience possible.

From her debut performance in The Abyss, it is obvious to see what all the fuss was about. The film – a story about an unmarried piano teacher who leaves behind her respectable bourgeois existence in order to join the circus to continue a torrid affair with one of the performers – proved to be an instant smash hit founded in part upon the erotic sensualism of Nielsen’s performance. This doubtless posed the companies involved in the making and disseminating of the later Nielsen films with an enormous problem. For a film industry increasingly conscious of the calls for censorship and the very real threat from outside interference, striking the right tone over the promotion of Nielsen proved a difficult and complex business. The solution was a sophisticated promotional strategy that concertedly built Nielsen as a legitimate film artist: “Asta Nielsen is one of the few actresses who are helping the real progress of the cinema by genuine art.”³⁴

Gary Stark argues that Imperial German laws on pornography ruled on a doctrine of ‘relative obscenity.’³⁵ What it meant was that “a work was not defined as obscene as long as it was confined to an audience capable of appreciating it for its higher artistic or scholarly values as distinct from its purely sexual content.”³⁶ With an eye on the legal separation between ‘legitimate’ art for an elite audience and mass-produced, mass-consumed works destined for the lower social orders, the production and distribution companies involved in the promotion of Nielsen pictures increasingly turned to strategies that legitimised her artistry and exclusivity of her film. Controlling access to the film (e.g. limited runs) while exciting knowledge around the promise of seeing something extra special (e.g. Nielsen’s performance), made visible a respectable constituency, separated from a general indiscriminate movie-going mass. Industrial procedures, by positioning her unique performance talents as intending to uplift cinema, avoided charges of sleaze while imagining a respectable middle-class trade for the Nielsen pictures in the process.

³³ Hauptstaatsarchiv Düsseldorf (Kalkum): 9004; kino: letter dated 24 January 1911.

³⁴ Leonard Crocombe, (1914), *The Girl on the Film*. No.7: Miss Asta Nielsen, 219

³⁵ Gary D. Stark, (1981), *Pornography, Society and the Law in Imperial Germany*, *Central European History*, 14, 200-229.

³⁶ Reichsgericht decision of 10 December 1897; *ibid.*, 224.

Dubbed ‘The Fortune of Film Art’³⁷ and the ‘Duse of the Cinema’ within press campaigns, the goal of the companies involved in making and disseminating Nielsen films was to sell her exceptional talent as so vivid and unequalled that no one else could quite match what she did on screen. Leonard Crocombe concluded his interview with Nielsen by saying that she had almost single-handedly elevated cinema to an art form through her performance skills.

“Such players as this famous Danish woman will help kill the lurid drama that relies on nothing but sensation and so-called “thrills,” and will, by her real sense of comedy, oust the cheap and silly ‘comic’ from the screen.”³⁸

Various esteemed writers and intellectuals defended Nielsen from charges of obscenity, claiming that her ‘passion’ should not be mistaken for anything other than a manifestation of her considerable acting talents and a vociferous single-minded pursuit of perfection. The poet Guillaume Apollinaire proclaimed her a rare talent, arguing that her ability to portray powerful emotions with such subtlety meant her skills were beyond conventional explanation:

“She is all. She is the drunkard’s vision and the hermit’s dream. She laughs like a girl completely happy, and her eyes know of things so tender and shy that one dare not speak of them.”³⁹

Writing in 1923 following the release of *Earth-Spirit* [*Erdgeist*] (Leopold Jessner, 1923), a film which dealt with the potentially explosive issue of a woman given over to her sexual passions, Béla Balázs rallied to Nielsen’s defence:

“If anyone has doubts whether the motion picture is rightfully recognised as an art in its own right, one which deserves to be represented on the Olympus by a tenth muse; if you are inclined to believe that the motion picture is nothing but bastardised theatre, which it compares with as the photograph compares with the oil painting; if, in a word, you being to have doubts; the go and watch Asta Nielsen: she will give you back your faith and belief.”⁴⁰

Elevating Nielsen to the status of great artist, and evoking an intelligent audience capable of recognising and appreciating the true merits of her performance within the press, meant her films and their potentially problematic subject matter were given an

³⁷ (19 July 1911), *Der Kinematograph*.

³⁸ Leonard Crocombe, (1914), *The Girl on the Film*. No.7: Miss Asta Nielsen, 219.

³⁹ Guillaume Apollinaire, quoted in Allen, (1973), *Asta Nielsen: The Silent Muse*, 205, 206.

appropriate context. In attempting to explain why her acting style should not be considered obscene, and why it was not destined for a mass audience, Balázs showed himself able to appreciate the higher merits of what she was doing rather than merely seeing her as sexual titillation.

“The extraordinary artistic standard of Asta Nielsen’s eroticism stems from its absolute intellectual quality. It is the eyes, not the flesh, that are of most importance. As a matter of fact she has no flesh at all. In her abstract scragginess, she is all twitching nerves, curled lips and a pair of burning eyes.”⁴¹

She was not merely mimicking a woman of easy virtue but was a true exponent of her craft: “She isn’t a nymphomaniac, and her parting kiss (she kisses the man she has shot) is more moving than all the tears of an abandoned motion picture maiden. Yes, bow your heads in admiration before her, because she is incomparable and inimitable.”⁴² Thomas Krag, writer and poet, waxed lyrical about the uniqueness of her facial expressions. Seeing beyond its purely sexual dimensions, he judged the physical command she had over her facial performance as having higher artistic intent: “Her face has a tragic power without equal.”⁴³ As long as it could be claimed that her performance was unique and highly original, intended for a select audience capable of appreciating what they saw, then her films escaped legal prosecution and/or mutilation at the hands of the censors. Esteemed writers legitimising Nielsen’s artistry – making visible how her performance served higher artistic interests –, contributed to her elevation as an actress with unique talents requiring a sophisticated readership.

Nielsen’s own ‘intelligent’ voice was co-opted as an important strategy within the star discourse based on intimate confession and a conversational style: “Good naturedly Miss Nielsen submitted to my questioning, and I also found her a delightful conversationalist.”⁴⁴ Speaking about her passion for acting allowed her to chronicle her rise to fame while further collapsing the narrative of her ‘real’ life with those of the characters she played. Despite humble beginnings, and overcoming personal family tragedies, she depicts her, as an ordinary working class girl who

⁴⁰ Béla Balázs, (1984), Asta Nielsen, Eroticism, *Der Tag*, 6 April 1923; reprinted Hungarofilm Bulletin, 3, 14.

⁴¹ *ibid.*, 14-16.

⁴² *ibid.*, 16.

⁴³ Thomas Krag, quoted in Allen, (1973), Asta Nielsen: The Silent Muse, 206.

struggled out of poverty to become one of Germany's most beloved movie personalities.

“There were no silver spoons to spare in Copenhagen when I was born. My parents were very poor, and I spent my childhood in poverty.

My father died when I was quite a young girl, and, in order to help the family exchequer, I was sent to serve behind the counter of a small shop. Three days after the commencement of my business career I ran away!”⁴⁵

Nielsen's frank disclosures about her impoverished childhood and the adversities that she encountered on her way to the top were caught up in other pervasive cultural myth about the socially disadvantaged young woman and her struggle to find fame and fortune. Asserting her voice, communicating the real hardships and private sacrifices involved in becoming a star, deliberately fostered an intimate relationship between Nielsen and her audience. The intimate conversational writing style is central to generating knowledge about the hidden sorrows and personal renouncements concealed behind the surface of fame. Nielsen was the agent best able to bring such information to light, offering caution and advice to the so-called 'screen-struck' fan dreaming of fame.

“Will you give me a few words of advice to repeat to the screen-struck, Miss Nielsen?”

“What can I say? If I try to damp their ardour and endeavour to dissuade them from the idea of cinema-acting they will point to the mention you are going to make about my own early aspirations; so.”⁴⁶

The discourse generated around the German film star was directed less at discouraging starry-eyed wannabes to follow in her footsteps (“It is such a great mistake to imagine that acting is easy; yet so many people seem to cherish that delusion”⁴⁷) than to excite and regulate the identificatory process between Nielsen and her audience. A sense of profound ambiguity pervades the interview with Nielsen. In part, the discourse actively courts excitement both for Nielsen and around what she had achieved, by recycling pleasurable tales about feminine self-sacrifice and social mobility, public recognition and personal fame. However, the discourse makes it clear that not everyone can achieve her high level of success. Assertions about Nielsen as extraordinary and her skills as exceptional are thus reaffirmed in the

⁴⁴ Leonard Crocombe, (1914), *The Girl on the Film*. No.7: Miss Asta Nielsen, 218.

⁴⁵ *ibid.*

⁴⁶ *ibid.*

⁴⁷ *ibid.*

last line of the interview, celebrating and confirming why audiences are drawn to her. “After all, Asta Nielsen is such a perfect actress that, even to you who have seen only her image on the screen, she can appear to live and breathe more, perhaps, than any other screen-player.”⁴⁸

Identificatory processes and generated pleasures around the star are nothing without the techniques involved in maintaining that star discourse. There is an unceasing interaction between the star and the audience, and an industry keen to foster such a relationship in order to keep itself in business. It involves the selling of values, a commercial exchange in which the attempt to find an audience for the star and sell them what she represents is also the reason why the industry exists. Pre-selling the star as product invites readers/spectator-participants to make and build on connections across a number of different media – her personal history in print, the fate of her characters on screen and the performance given by Nielsen as the star. Often an abridged version of the film’s story line appeared in fan magazines and popular newspapers. Details that emerged in these stories about her character played a role both in enhancing knowledge about the actress’ personality and in strengthening bonds with her fans. With each new film, additional information is deployed to expand audience understanding about the forthcoming screen release. Enjoyment is enhanced by staging an imaginary conversation between star and her readership, stimulating excitement through tailoring knowledge about Nielsen as one text comes to inform another.

This reading process, requiring the reader-cum-spectator-participant to move between multiple texts and across different fictional formats, contributed to how the cinema reader/spectator-participant is constructed. Audience identification is contrived as both systematic (i.e. the reader is deliberately courted and flattered because they follow a certain star) and hidden (i.e. audience identities and reasons for liking a particular star are constructed in the process). Pleasures uncovered relate back to a more subtle interpretative process by which the reader-cum-spectator-participant built up knowledge. In so doing, specific experiences, cultural attitudes and a sense of self are delivered up for the individual through a number of reading

⁴⁸ op.cit.

strategies. The reader-cum-spectator-participant fixes the star as a site of cultural contemplation at the moment they see reflected back something to be desired, consumed and/or identified. Pleasure can thus be defined by explicitly identifying those characteristics belonging to the star over which the reader-cum-spectator-participant kept constant watch while implicitly learning about them in the process.

The Nielsen narrative about her rise to fame, however, posed another problem. Acknowledging a tenacity to succeed whatever the costs was distinctly at odds with conventional models of femininity defined by family loyalty, obedience and self-sacrifice. Confessing to have run away from the job where she earned money to support her family after the father's death sounded a lot like something one of the impetuous young women she had portrayed on screen would do. Furthermore, the death of the father and family's main breadwinner had provided the pretext for Nielsen's independence in much the same way as it had done for the characters she played on film. That she seemed to have escaped retribution for behaviour that would have invariably brought social ruin to her on-screen character reveals an attempt to sketch alternative contours of modern womanhood for readers. Interviews in the printed media, charged with the task of disseminating the 'truth' about Nielsen, determined that her bold actions were justified. The reader was positioned to temporarily align with the interviewer in admiration for Nielsen.

Far from condemning her actions, the interview circulated a narrative about how her 'natural' talent could not be denied. The intervention of two professionals – a schoolteacher and a famous actor – who recognised Nielsen's early promise further legitimised the discourse of Nielsen as the star with exceptional acting gifts.

“ One of my best friends was my school-mistress, and it was to her that I then went for aid and advice.

She had often been kind enough to say that the contralto voice with which Providence had endowed me was far above the ordinary. Soon she was able to prove her words for she went to considerable trouble to secure for me an engagement in the chorus at the Opera House in Copenhagen.

Thus did I gain my first taste of stage life, and from that time I determined to become an actress. I was very ambitious, and, even at that early age, I had sense enough to realise that a fortune cannot be made in the operatic chorus.

As soon as I had proved myself capable as a chorister and had studied acting as much as possible I went one day to the house of the great Danish actor Peter Zerndorff.

I shall never forget that day. I had no introduction to Zerndorff, and, although I was determined to see him, my knees trembled when I thought of my boldness in thus approaching such a great man.

However, he consented to see me, and as soon as I entered the room I told him, without preliminary parley that I wanted to work.”⁴⁹

The Nielsen’s narrative identified two ‘professionals’ who were instrumental in shaping her career, both recognising her precocious talents (“the contralto voice with which Providence had endowed me *was far above the ordinary*”) and making sure that she was given the opportunity to advance her skills (“she gained Peter Zerndorff’s sympathies, and he forthwith *interested himself in her career*”).⁵⁰ Even as the interview connects Nielsen’s uniquely modern feminine persona (“This woman with the piquante personality, eloquent black eyes and jet black hair”) with her desire to pursue an acting career and rejection of an orthodox home life, the readership, via Crocombe, are invited to concur with others who recognised her rare talent.⁵¹ The ethic of professionalism is further promoted: “Art can be trained, developed, nurtured but never taught.”⁵² Representing Nielsen as possessing a ferocious talent and natural charisma (“one cannot help but see that her face is the face of an artiste”) underscores her seemingly disreputable actions.⁵³ Reading the interview with a simultaneous textual awareness of Nielsen ‘telling’ her own story, and of the commentary offered by the interviewer to explain it, I gain a different sense of what is going on in the text. Following Nielsen’s account with a commentary on how to read her actions, provided by the interviewer as a substitute for the reader, is an excellent demonstration of how the star discourse, inscribed into the textual style of the star interview, operated to exalt her talents while guided readers on how to make sense of it all.

Interviews found Nielsen able to eruditely converse about the subject of film acting. Her serious attitude and selfless dedication bestowed respectability on her chosen career, further flattering the imagined readership who understood and

⁴⁹ Leonard Crocombe, (1914), *The Girl on the Film*. No.7: Miss Asta Nielsen, 218.

⁵⁰ *ibid.*

⁵¹ *ibid.*

⁵² *ibid.*

⁵³ *ibid.*

appreciated what she has to say. She spoke with intelligence about the mechanisms of her performance style and the art of screen acting from a position of great knowledge.

“It was clear to me that to be able to express properly a decisive scene in a dramatic film, one must possess the ability to detach oneself completely from one’s surroundings. The opportunity to develop gradually the personality and moods of a character, which the film actor lacks, can only be replaced by a sort of autosuggestion. No skills, no technique is of any help here; the only thing that counts is the absolute gift for immersion in fragments which have been put into place beforehand in the imagination and which demands truthful expression when faced with the all-important lens.”⁵⁴

Nielsen is constructed within her own narrative as first and foremost an actress. Furthermore, her single-minded devotion to her craft, almost to the exclusion of all else, resulted in an omission of personal details – for example, her home life or recent marriage to Gad – beyond the significance that such information might have upon her most recent work. Later, Nielsen recalled in her autobiography how meticulous preparation preceded any screen performance: “Months in advance, ... I lived myself into the persons I was to represent. I prepared all the externals from the lines of the costumes to the characterising props which, in an art where the word is silent, play a still part in the theatre.”⁵⁵

The Nielsen discourse offered up a new, even radical, representation of modern womanhood for the reader-cum-spectator-participant. Aspects of this image, however, were formed in opposition to other female types popular at that time. American serials, in particular, were often competing with Nielsen's German films for audiences, serials offering, as Shelley Stamp puts it, “engaging portraits of plucky young women beset by harrowing adventures and blessed with unrivalled strength and bravado.”⁵⁶ The Nielsen discourse sought to position the star as transcending these American images of modern femininity by disassociating her from such athletic serial heroines and their wild adventures beyond marriage. This strategy was based on the notion that Nielsen did not have to perform dare devil stunts to attract fans:

⁵⁴ Asta Nielsen, *Den Tiende Muse*; quoted in Bergstorm, (1990), *Asta Nielsen's Early German Films*, 164.

⁵⁵ Asta Nielsen, *Den Tiende Muse*, quoted in, Allen (1973), *Asta Nielsen: The Silent Muse*, trans. David Wright, 206.

⁵⁶ Shelley Stamp, (2000), *Movie Struck Girls: Women and Motion Picture Culture After the Nickelodeon*, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 125.

“Adventures? You want my adventures? Why ever do people imagine that cinema actresses are always having hair-raising experiences? *I am an actress, not an acrobat!* I could tell you of heaps of everyday-life adventures I have had for life is full of adventure, of romance; but up to the present I have never fallen out of a balloon, over a cliff, under a train, out of a motor-car or anything like that you. And, also, I’m not a little bit anxious to undergo any experience like those one reads about as having happened to some of the American players. I think our Yankee friends seem to make a speciality of having adventures, don’t you?”⁵⁷ [emphasis added].

In contrast to the American serial heroines and the spectacle of their sexual liberation through action, Nielsen’s attraction was firmly linked to self-awareness about the mechanisms of her performance. By generating both awareness about and excitement for her actual performance, industrial strategies produced a catalogue of screen representation around Nielsen. It encouraged a high degree of intimacy through making known to the spectator-participant why the star was so special and better than the competition.

In 1913 Nielsen starred in a behind-the-scenes exposé of movie stardom, The Film Primadonna, [*Die Filmprimadonna*] (Urban Gad, 1913). Nielsen took the lead in this film comedy playing the famed actress Ruth Breton who takes over control of her own star image.(fig.6.3.) The star-making process is laid wide open for the spectator, letting them in on the processes from selecting the script to inspecting the daily rushes while revealing that it is all carried out under Breton’s expert eye. Sabine Hake has explored the high degree of self-referentiality in early German cinema after 1910 with the emergence of the feature film, and suggests that:

“[The] primary purpose is to advertise the many goods this new mass entertainment has to offer. While the films create critical distance through the scenarios of duplication and display, they skilfully apply the rules of advertising, namely to make the product look appealing and to seduce prospective buyers into their realm of new sensations and new pleasures.”⁵⁸

Taking a cue from Hake’s argument, it seems fair to suggest that this self-referential process was instrumental in the industrial making of the movie star, to foster a fan culture through inviting audiences to appreciate what actually goes on.

⁵⁷ Asta Nielsen, (1914), quoted in, Leonard Crocombe, *The Girl on the Film*. No.7: Miss Asta Nielsen, 219.



fig.6.3. *The Film Primadonna*. Asta Nielsen. Publicity still.

Such self-referential films offered insight into the industrial processes involved in constructing a film star and the mechanisms of the star performance as well as the experience of cinema. By constructing an awareness of Nielsen and the exceptional abilities that had propelled the actress to stardom, the film lets the spectator-participant in on the artistry and technology of the star making process. In the process, it tutored the audience on screen beauty and (in)appropriate behaviours, as well as what was required of them as cinema spectators. Films like *The Film Primadonna* stressed a continuing and extra-textual engagement with a narrative about Nielsen that was already suspended across several other texts. Breton's authorial control – her inspection of the first rushes and advice to a cameraman on how best to capture her likeness – spills out from the screen, blurring the boundaries between texts in much the same way as the spectator-participant as structured as a reader of numerous cinema statements.

⁵⁸ Sabine Hake, (1996), Self-Referentiality in Early German Cinema, IN: T. Elsaesser, ed., *The Second Life*, 237.

Ossi Oswalda:

Born Oswalda Stäglich in Berlin 1897, Ossi Oswalda was first contracted to PAGU (Projektions AG 'Union'). She began her professional career as a chorus girl in Berlin, before debuting in Lieutenant by Command [*Leutnant auf Befehl*] (1916) before appearing briefly as a young flibbertigibbet who flirts outrageously with the eponymous hero in Pinkus' Shoepalace [*Schuhpalast Pinkus*] (Ernst Lubitsch, 1916). It was not long before she emerged as one of the most bankable screen comediennes in Germany in the late-teens. Of these comic roles, probably her best known performances are in The Doll [*Die Puppe*] (Lubitsch, 1919), where she plays a toy-maker's daughter masquerading as an automated doll, and as the spoilt progeny of an American oyster king in pursuit of a suitably aristocratic consort in The Oyster Princess [*Die Austernprinzessin*] (Lubitsch, 1919). Oswalda's rise to fame, although only six-years after Nielsen first appeared on German screens, was far less complicated. Lessons had been learnt from the Nielsen experience, and production companies proved more accomplished at tailoring the star to suit constituent tastes. However, while Oswalda, as the young fashionable flapper about town, was positively celebrated, certain aspects of that star image proved more difficult to negotiate.

The speed of Oswalda's ascendancy to star status attests to the efficiency of the 'monopoly film' system to commercially create, disseminate and exploit her star image as a popular product at the end of the teens. Soon labelled as Germany's answer to Mary Pickford because of her popularity (and suffering a similar fate, forever typecast as the child-woman), Oswalda's comic persona was perfected over a series of specially written short film comedies, collectively known as Ossi's Diary [*Ossi's Tagebuch*] (1917). The quick and regular release of the PAGU comic shorts made sure that she was kept firmly in the public eye. PAGU and later Union-Film/Ufa carefully nurtured the Oswalda image; and the film companies found various ways of marketing her as a star, working hard to build up that profile week after week. Production, distribution and exhibition strategies were thus geared to make sure Ossi Oswalda *looked* popular to a broad movie-going German public.

Oswalda's star persona relied heavily on combined elements of sexual libertinage, a sensual *joie de vivre* and physical burlesque. Publicity photographs –

postcards, cigarette cards etc. – made much of her fresh and sexy image. Promoting such a daffy impulsive off-screen image suggested her disruptive on-screen antics were all part of her natural comic charm, an un-scripted and spontaneous extension of a youthful and vivacious personality (fig.6.4).



fig.6.4. *The Oyster Princess*. Ossi Oswalda. Publicity still.

Bourgeois film critics nevertheless found her image rather coarse. Reviewing *The Oyster Princess* in 1923, Béla Balázs remained unimpressed by what he saw as the film's lewd female lead, "it is also an Ossi Oswalda picture – and that is discovered from a number of crude, 'bochesque' details in bad taste."⁵⁹ Her high-spirited pursuit of personal pleasure thus conveyed a tension between ideas about traditional (in)appropriate feminine behaviours and newer models of femininity, a site of unease that was to be negotiated in all her star vehicles. What gave her dynamic image its urgency were the limits and pressures placed upon how women came to be known and represented at this time. Furthermore, the terms of this debate were also being worked through in discussions about the young movie-struck women towards whom her films were aimed.

Independent of the pervasive moral outrage concerned with sexual anarchy already outlined in previous chapters, images of female frivolity and lasciviousness

⁵⁹ Béla Balázs, (1984), Self-mockery on the Screen, *Der Tag*, 10 August 1923; reprinted *Hungarofilm Bulletin*, 3, 16.

had only just been denounced as unpatriotic by the guardians of civic virtue during the war years.⁶⁰ A newspaper report from 1917 confirms the censorship of the young flapper and her playful antics on film:

“A film could be permitted in which a cadaver with smashed skull is clearly shown, whereas another film is banned because the funny heroine crossed her legs.”⁶¹

Oswalda's star persona – an impish young woman with a mischievous desire to break the rules and create comic mayhem – came to be embedded within a wide range of contemporary discourses about (in)appropriate ‘feminine’ conduct and official censorship. Her ability to make an outrageous spectacle of herself appears in fact to cast her in a similar mould to those feeble-minded young movie-goers and their quest for entertainment so endlessly spoken about in the press and reformers pamphlets (fig.6.5).



fig.6.5. Ossi Oswalda. Publicity Still. A model young moviegoer.

⁶⁰ Wolfgang Mühl-Benninghaus, (1997), German film Censorship during World War 1, *Film History*, 9, 81-85.

⁶¹ (1917), *Lichtbild-Bühne*.

Yet, her image/performance is absolutely made credible as a discourse through its creation and regulation by complex textual and industrial processes. Institutional strategies legitimated a vocabulary for speaking about Oswalda the star, a representational discourse peculiar to the understanding of modern femininity that became *the* way in which she was known.

The way in which Oswalda's star image/performance was formally and institutionally managed in *The Oyster Princess* offers us further insight into how the industry functioned to shape and popularise modern feminine identities. While Josef (Julius Falkenstein), posing as Prince Nucki (Harry Liedtke), waits to meet her and her father (Victor Janson) naps, the fictional Ossi takes a bath. Neither conveying little narrative information nor progressing the story, the sequence proves curiously long: "For example for suddenly, with no apparent reason, shedding her clothes and stepping into the bath or getting massaged."⁶² Beyond the patriarchal world, shut away in her private quarters, she gleefully prepares to meet her prospective husband. An army of housemaids, each performing a different service from cleaning to perfuming the feminine form, attends to their young mistress as she becomes processed along an ever-accelerating beautification conveyor belt (figs. 6.6, 6.7).



fig.6.6. *The Oyster Princess*. Ossi is cleaned.

⁶² Bela Balazs, (1984), Self-mockery on the Screen, *Der Tag*, August 10, 1923; reprinted *Hungarofilm Bulletin*, 3, 16.



fig.6.7. *The Oyster Princess*. Ossi is massaged

Similar to a 'time-motion' study, and aligned to the new possibilities of portraying speed and movement afforded by the technology of cinema, the ornamentation of Ossi literally suspends narrative flow to allow for a moment of pure spectacle – an exhibition of feminine cleanliness and star glamour. Fashion is represented as a highly technological process, requiring all the latest beauty products. The obvious joy Ossi takes from all the pampering offers the viewer a model of feminine consumerism based on the celebration of the body *made* beautiful. Josef later confirms the results to the audience in a brief moment of intimacy between himself and us. The male verdict, as he looks directly into camera, is expressed through the inter-title and a knowing smile: Ossi “smells good.”⁶³ Pervasive consumerist fantasies and commodified versions of the feminine self, already identified by the women interviewed by Emilie Altenloh as primary reasons for attending the movies, are reproduced and promoted here via Ossi and her ablutions.⁶⁴

Excessive pampering speaks not only of the fashionable feminine form emancipated from corsets but also about the construction and deconstruction of the female movie star, and through this, the consumer/spectator-participant. Already blurred, Ossi-the-fictional-American-princess as an image of urban fashionability and unrestrained American consumerism collapses into Ossi-the-German-film-star as

⁶³ Adding to this moment, there was the already mentioned practice within the larger movie palaces of spraying perfume through the ventilation systems into the auditorium, to add an aroma of opulence. No doubt such fragrant traces of *eau de Cologne* would have offered further sensory pleasures for the audiences at these selected exhibition venues. With that said, in other theatres, perfume was sprayed into auditorium to freshen the air and mask personal odours.

⁶⁴ Emilie Altenloh, (1977), *Zur Soziologie des Kino*.

template for modern femininity. She is playfully positioned as an instructor on feminine hygiene, cosmetic beauty and modern cleanliness, both flattering and amusing the consumer-cum-spectator-participant at the same time.

“Typists and apprentices, salesgirls and post-office clerks dreamed of nothing more than becoming film stars, while the stars themselves, on the screens of innumerable theaters and on millions of star postcards, become models for the fans who idolised them.”⁶⁵

Mocking the aesthetic conventions of the filmed lecture that drew peoples’ attention to important topics (a form privileged by the cultural elite to instruct) as well as parodying scenes of disrobing taken from both vaudeville acts and the movies, the spectacle draws our attention to its artifice.⁶⁶ It allows Ossi to let the audience in on her private beauty routines; selling the technology of glamour while conveying the mechanisms of image production. Her direct interaction, as she catches the audience’s eyes, invites the spectator to vicariously view various intimate secrets: the titillating sight of a half-naked woman and the pleasures, sensual or otherwise, involved in beauty preparation. Yet despite her constant winking and/or smiling to camera, a complete view of her naked body is denied. There is a ‘staginess’ to the whole sequence: heavy drapes marking off intimate spaces, the edge of the bath denies us the sexual display of her naked form and towels, parlour-maids and an oversized dressing gown allows us only tantalising glimpses of her bare flesh (figs. 6.8, 6.9.).



fig.6.8. *The Oyster Princess*. A glimpse of bare flesh. .

⁶⁵ Egon Jacobsohn, (15 January 1919), Neuheiten auf dem Berliner Filmmarkte, *Der Kinematograph*.
⁶⁶ Janet Staiger, (1995), *Bad Women: Regulating Sexuality in Early American Cinema*, Minnesota: University of Minnesota Press, 57-8; and Robert C. Allen, (1991), *Horrible Prettiness: Burlesque and American Culture*, Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 244.



fig.6.9. *The Oyster Princess*. Ossi disrobes.

Playing with our desire to see while parodying other disrobing acts, the scene invites the spectator to make sense of the feminine form as both constructed and deconstructed at the same time. It also encourages an imagined female spectator to scrutinise her own beauty regimes, as if the endless task of personal hygiene and self-improvement, cosmetic or otherwise, was one with which the modern woman must be constantly engaged.

Direct and personal appeal fosters a high degree of intimacy between the star and spectator-participant. Looking, and being looked at, are crucial here: the star builds fan loyalty with her 'natural' and 'spontaneous' look directed into camera. The female spectator-participant is positioned as a consumer of images, of feminine beauty, screen glamour and the movie stardom. As Ossi is cleaned and worked over by beauticians, pedicurists, manicurists and cosmeticians, the spectator-participant is literally invited to see how the movie star is constructed. Just before Ossi takes her bath, she waits in her robe for the stage to be set. As the doors from her boudoir to the bathroom slide apart to reveal more housemaids and a staircase leading up to the bath, a deep proscenium space opens up (fig.6.10.) A moment of presentation for the character gives way to a moment of performance for the film actress, as she glides, like the famous movie star she is, through this luxuriant and glamorous interior.

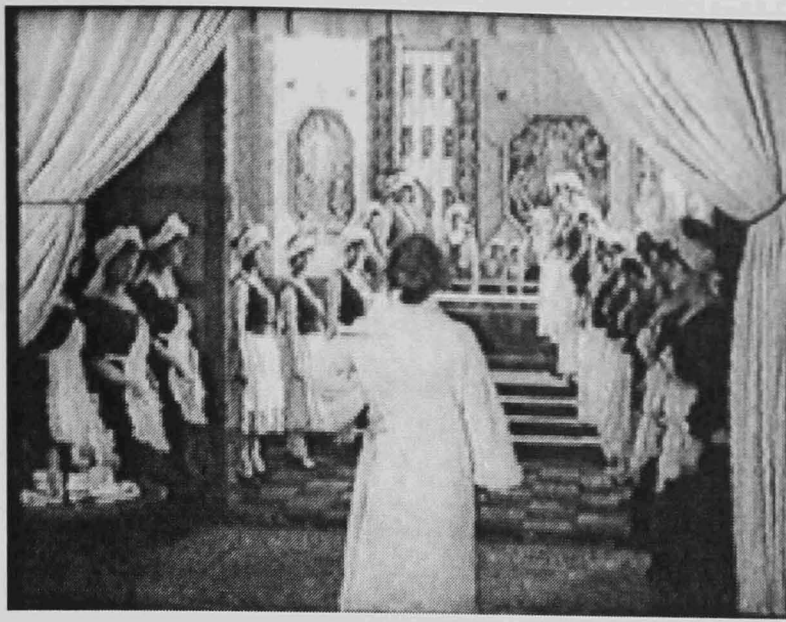


fig.6.10. *The Oyster Princess*. Ossi/Oswalda waits for the stage to be set.

A self-conscious nod is thereby made toward the industrial mechanism at work in the star making process, in the incessant, week by week build up, of her profile. It acknowledges other processes, including the selling and marketing of the star-vehicle, the dissemination of news through fan magazines and press releases, and the circulating and collecting of (sometimes autographed) pictures. Playfully exposing how the screen idol is made reveals how identities, star images and feminine beauty are packaged commodities for sale. Letting audiences in on the hard work that goes into constructing screen beauty offers insight into the very processes that the spectator-participants were being invited by the industry to actively engage: the consumption of images, commodities and identities.

The sequence reveals how self-aware the film was to convey the star as a multivalent sign, promoting a range of meanings from Ossi-as-character as source of information about beauty regimes. As a point of emulation for modern femininity in relation to the female spectator-participant, Oswaldas-as-star transforms into Oswaldas-as-screen-idol and luxury product. The spectacle/performance of the 'star' is industrially structured to make known these different representations. All features ensure that the star is always kept in full view for audiences who have come – and more importantly paid – to see her.

This final issue, then, returns us once again to those images of the female star inserted before the film narrative began. Such 'portraits' were a common institutional device employed by the German film industry at that time. As the star appeared on

screen, audiences would often acknowledge them with applause; and indeed the star would sometimes appear to reciprocate with a slight bow or smile. These shots foregrounded the star in excess: the star in excess of the character she will play, the star in excess of her co-stars, the star in excess of each of her scenes, and the star in excess of the film text. It is a strategy that immediately establishes textual identification as well as encouraging and extending fan loyalty. The Pastor's Daughter [*Des Pfarrers Töchterlein*] (Adolf Gärtner, 1912), in its day a huge commercial hit for Henny Porten but now almost forgotten within the popular canon, opens with such an insert shot of the star.⁶⁷ Set against a plain dark background, Porten in costume, comes bouncing in from off-screen left toward the camera. Instantly recognisable, and therefore needing no title card to explain who she is, the star appears to be more than the drama but yet enhances audience engagement with it. She coyly beams and blows kisses to an imagined audience, remaining for a while before bouncing off screen right. Porten exudes an air of wholesome innocence, signalled by the wearing a modest gingham dress with long sleeves, high neck and apron. Such an over-determined image of the star operates as a self-reflexive industrial strategy on several levels, generating audience bonding, identifications, and further consumer and other visual pleasures. On one level, the star is foregrounded, taking a minute out to meet with her loyal fans who have paid to see her. On another level, her breezy image provides a marked contrast to the tragedy she will soon act out: a good woman who endures humiliating heartbreak because of her fickle lover. It is a technique of theme and variation by which a counterpoint is established between the Porten star discourse and the audience knowledge and anticipated pleasures; a counterpoint that keeps penetrating beneath the surface of her performance as the audience marvels at her rendition of the jilted bride. These introductory shots thus lead us behind the star system, revealing the complex relationship between stars and spectator-participants.

An imagined audience makes sense of such a strategy: it evokes fan (as well as customer) loyalty in those who take pleasure in seeing and recognising the star. It also imagines the cinema patron who pays to consume film images and fictional

⁶⁷ According to contemporary records, over 150 copies of the film were sold. The film also did well in other film markets outside Germany, thus proving to be a rare export success. Georges Sadoul, (1973), *Histoire General du Cinéma*, Paris: Denoël, 368.

narrative worlds. The function of these shots might be said to stimulate the spectator-participant's curiosity all the more, in the desire to surrender oneself to the textual pleasures while knowing full well that these images are only made possible by cinema's (mechanical re)production. The convention indicates how for commercial ends 'monopoly film' culture instituted a viewing protocol, which was aimed not only at enticing cinema patrons back time and again, but also cultivating desire(s) through extra pleasures anticipated by the audience. Following this examination of how the star as discourse was created and used to regulate audience responses, identities and pleasures, the aim next will be to consider more fully the ways in which certain film genres imagined their female constituency and created further identifications, needs and desires.

Chapter 7. Drama as Discourse. Popular Film Drama, Imagined Female Spectator-Participants and the Films of Asta Nielsen.

“Those who have seen her work maintain that for mobility of expression the features of Miss Nielsen have never been excelled,” *Moving Picture World* wrote in March of 1912. Announcing the back-to-back release of six Nielsen motion pictures in America, the trade paper sought to explain why she had become a “household name” and had emerged as a star of great “magnitude” across Imperial Germany.¹ Since starring in the 1910 nation-wide box-office sensation *The Abyss* [*Afgrunden*] (Urban Gad, 1910), Nielsen-mania had swept the country, rapidly elevating the former Danish theatre actress to the lofty heights of movie superstardom. Her meteoric rise was grounded in a series of films that explicitly dealt with female socio-sexual ambitions, erotically coded desires, and depictions of women who paid a high price for making known their desires. These movies drew sizeable crowds, especially women who were apparently eager to glimpse Nielsen in “emotional” action. This phenomenon – young women congregating to watch these heightened dramatisations of sexual passions – created a circular reasoning which was used by cultural guardians to confirm their worst fears about the ‘true’ nature of female spectators and the dangerously seductive pleasures on offer at the cinema.² Just as the industry attempted to ditch its tawdry reputation, concerns surfaced about how Nielsen gave expression to libidinal sex drives and the interest young women had in seeing such ‘scandalous’ portrayals.

The ways in which the film industry came to excite a fascination about Nielsen’s “emotional” performance, by defining it as accomplished while regulating access to it through ‘monopoly film’ exhibition practices, can be identified with the formal and spatial practices of the actual films. This chapter aims to analyse the textual and industrial structures involved in the ‘extraordinary’ Nielsen performance. Revealing how the dramatic performance was made and delivered to a cinema audience gives us insight into the operations of popular film drama as a discourse. Reading as discourse three particular Nielsen texts, *The Abyss*, *The Traitoress* [*Die Verräterin*] (Urban Gad, 1911), and *The Stock-Broker Queen* [*Die Börsenkönigin*]

¹ H.R.H., (23 March 1912), The Asta Nielsen Pictures, *The Moving Picture World*, 11/12.1054.

² Albert Hellwig, (1911), *Schundfilme, Ihr Wesen, ihre Gefahren und ihre Bekämpfung*, Halle a.s.S: Verlag der Buchhandlung des Waisenhauses.

(Edmund Edel, 1916), will open up the dense interrelation between textural practices and industrial attempts to appeal and retain its imagined female spectator-participants. An analysis of the mechanics of the Nielsen performance will reveal how it made known the strategies involved, and limitations for, the film industry as it restructured. Following the success of The Abyss in Germany, moral guardians and cinema reformers were quick to point out that Nielsen and her 'erotic' acting style appealed to audiences for all the wrong reasons.³ The industry promptly responded to these outside criticisms by subtly remoulding her performance to give it more cultural kudos but without losing the erotic dimension. Reading 'monopoly film' tactics that strategically controlled the Nielsen star image offers us insight into how the industry set about *producing* textual engagement, visual pleasures and new representations for its female constituency while *regulating* the whole process within the self-confirming parameters of the cinematic discourse.

Regulating Nielsen's Dramatic Performance: Structuring the Drama and Film Form.

Film scholars have recently begun to investigate the formal strategies and principles of narrative construction at work in early German film drama during the teens. Kristin Thompson, for example, notes the emergence of an alternative film-making practice, an embryonic art form appearing in parallel with a more classical continuity system which was also in its formative stages.⁴ Focusing on the 1913 Paul von Worringen feature film drama Die Landstrasse, she argues that it is "an atmospheric film, lacking characters with focused goals ... [t]he result is a very simple plot that lingers over individual actions and psychological reactions."⁵ Michael Wedel's textual analysis of Heidenröslein (Franz Hofer, 1916) investigates how generic conventions of melodrama "concretise" female desires, moral codes and social restrictions in spatial terms;⁶ while Jürgen Kasten notes how formal strategies

³ Hauptstaatsarchiv Düsseldorf, (1910), (Kalkum) 9004; kino: letter (24 January).

⁴ Kristin Thompson, (1996), Stylistic Expressivity in *Die Landstrasse*, IN: T. Elsaesser, ed., *A Second Life: German Cinema's First Decades*, Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 256-263.

⁵ *ibid.*, 263.

⁶ Michael Wedel (1993), *Kino-Dramen: Narrative and Space in Early German Feature Films, 1912-1919*, Unpublished MA Dissertation, University of Amsterdam, 64-72; argument revised, (1996). *Melodrama and Narrative Space*, Franz Hofer's *Heidenröslein*, IN: *ibid.*, 123-131.

in *Zweimal Gelebt* (Max Mack, 1912) are borrowed from theatrical staging practices.⁷

Each scholar offers a radically different approach to the analysis of spatial screen practices in German dramas of the teens. All recognise dense staging configurations to be found in these films as having a dialogue with another kind of socio-cultural space. Either in relation to international filmmaking practices, historical and social processes, or bourgeois theatrical forms, each provide a context for understanding the complex spatial arrangements of early German film drama. Yet, whatever the explanation, all writers distinguish complex staging practices as a key element of early German film drama.

Heide Schlüpmann, in particular, connects dense staging practices with a cultural space. In so doing, she identifies Asta Nielsen with what she calls the social drama: “the term ‘social drama’ [borrowed from Emilie Altenloh’s sociological thesis] referred to a form that related particularly to the life contexts of women.”⁸ Social drama, as opposed to melodrama had a distinct form, rooted in the ‘cinema of attractions,’ that broke with conventional bourgeois dramatic practice to offer something different for cinema audiences. Schlüpmann argues that:

“In contrast to melodrama, the social drama responded solely to an external censorship, one that restricted a genuine female narrative perspective, but yet did not force it to recede in favour of a stereotypical representation of femininity within a dramatised story. The social drama appeared to the curiosity of female spectators, and it gave the subjectivity of the actress a spatial framework.”⁹

For Schlüpmann, the body of the actress proved central to the formal internal workings of the complex dramatic visual field associated with the social dramas. For, while her performance acted out emancipatory possibilities for the female spectator, her body exhibited other visual pleasures: “She cultivated erotic attraction for the male gaze; for the female audience, however, she placed herself on show in her

⁷ Jürgen Kasten, (1996), *From Peripetia to Point: Heinrich Lautensack and *Zweimal Gelebt**, *IN: ibid.*, 213-218.

⁸ Heide Schlüpmann, (1990), *Melodrama and Social Drama in the Early German Cinema*, *Camera Obscura*, 22, January, 78.

⁹ *ibid.*

social role.”¹⁰ Mixing several spectorial positions at once, the social drama appealed in particular to a female curiosity, offering them a powerful position of visual mastery. These films, contends Schlüpmann, gave female spectators voyeuristic license, granting an imagined visual mobility to those normally denied such latitude outside the cinema. Actresses, working within a “spatial framework,” acted as a guide by articulating the call for female emancipation in this new age while charting the redefinition of socio-sexual gender roles at a time when nineteenth-century ideals of appropriate feminine behaviour were under re-negotiation:

“Thus the new medium of film was reacting to social changes that were pressing for a liberalisation of rights within marriage, as was being demanded by progressive social movements at the time, especially the women’s movement.

... The patriarchal order appears not only as something that has been conquered, but is simultaneously present as something that has been internalised.”¹¹

The multiple register of her performance – a socio-erotic relation to the imagined viewer – also functioned as an on-screen form of editing, similar to older filmic traditions, like the mechanical “projection craft” of the Magic Lantern, as “both share[d] superimposition as their most prominent narrative device.”¹²

“Asta Nielsen derives her narrational perspective not from the camera, but from the cinematic apparatus as historically evolved visual *dispositif*. ...

... The internal montage of Asta Nielsen’s films ... is one which is produced by the actress and in which the actress’ work does not take montage out of the hands of the cutter at the editing table, but takes it over from the projectionist, who at just about the same time has to pass on his practice to the internal narrator. She, instead of the projectionist, becomes the ‘narrator’ of the film: a female narrator, who does not speak above the heads of the audiences, but speaks by establishing a relation with it.”¹³

While helpfully identifying a complex visual system and multiple narrative plotting structure inscribed into the very form of Nielsen’s acting, Schlüpmann’s interpretation of how this layered performance spoke on behalf of a politically disenfranchised female constituency is too limiting. Her analysis of performance

¹⁰ op.cit.

¹¹ *ibid.*, 86.

¹² Heide Schlüpmann, (1996), Asta Nielsen and Female Narration: The Early Films, *IN: A Second Life: German Cinema’s First Decades*, 121.

¹³ *ibid.*, 122.

features locates them as being associated with generic conventions defined as being outside dominant filmmaking practice. Her interpretation allows her to conclude that these “counter-cinema” elements made possible the “emancipatory drive” of the social drama.¹⁴ This account risks condensing the Nielsen performance to such an extent that we may lose sight of its value for making useful distinctions about complex staging practices and industrial strategies in the *process* of reaching out to the female spectator-participant. I will thus argue that structuring a Nielsen drama proved to be a more complex process than has previously been suggested for an industry in the process of finding its audience. The investigation into how formal strategies worked to *excite* spectatorial desire around seeing Nielsen portray a woman betrayed by love or succumbing to her own sexual passions, while *regulating* responses to these representations, reveals how the industry courted audiences by securing a loyal customer base for its exclusive products. By studying Nielsen as a textual creation, we can further discern knowledge about how the imagined female spectator-participant for these films came to be known.

Identifying the specificity of the formal system that defined a Nielsen picture begins with an exploration of long takes, slow cutting rates, deep frontal staging and cluttered spatial arrangements. Charles Affron remarks “[i]f the space is limited, it can be wholly known, much as fiction can be known. Limitation is a model of knowing; the enclosure is all there to be explored, it is neither menaced by extra-fictional space not measured against space intolerant of the fiction’s closure.”¹⁵ His observation seems to me useful for considering how formal staging and narrative practices were explicitly designed to keep the star – and, perhaps more importantly, the display of female desire and libidinal sex drives – in view as much as possible. The tableau-like framing of the scene is designed to include all the action as well as offer a constant movement played out across the body of the actor, a move which constructs a tension between the fictional character and the star in performance. In the process, an internal spatialisation of knowledge is built up.

¹⁴ Heide Schlüpmann, (1996), *Cinema as Anti-Theatre: Actresses and Female Audiences in Wilhelminian Germany*, IN: R. Abel, ed., *Silent Film*, New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 139.

¹⁵ Charles Affron, (1982), *Cinema and Sentiment*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 79.

Michael Allen has identified a complex interaction of aesthetic systems at work in the melodramas of D.W. Griffith, a schema that he terms the 'recognition plot.'

"The terms of the recognition plot, with its shift from ignorance to knowledge and its sudden shocking realisation of repressed truth, are figured in the terms of melodrama in general, and in a dual shift both from filmic frontality to analytical editing, incorporating explicit looks into camera as markers of significance, and, simultaneously, from verisimilar to histrionic acting style at the climatic moment."¹⁶

Retention of an excessive frontality and lack of analytical editing denies the possibility of such a formal system working within German context.

Yet, I wish to offer a modification to the Allen model, to suggest that another kind of suturing system is in operation which finds the body of the actress at its epicentre. This revised model involves the structuring of a layered performance by the actress, which constantly negotiates a position for the imagined spectator-participant within the drama through an on-screen suturing process. The actress visibly shifts acting gear from simply performing within the narrative diegesis to acting out of a deeper emotional truth. This movement reveals a moment of revelation about a repressed (sexual) desire or articulation of a current emotional state that pushes the narrative forward. In the process, the central presence of the actress as a mediator shapes an oscillating, multi-layered textual experience for the spectator-participant. On one level, the actress guides the spectator around a discursive field of dramatic action in progress, which can seek to surprise her character or to exclude her from the narrative's social world. On another, the social commentary that she provides, through a specific kind of emotional punctuation, invites the audience to share her position of insight, however disquieting this may be. Most scholars have focused their critical attentions on the contestation created by these two layers to offer a theory of feminist resistance. But I want to argue that there is a further, deeper level at which the actress, as film star, disrupts narrative verisimilitude by openly displaying her acting virtuosity. This exhibition both solicits audience admiration and cements the audience's emotional connection with her as a screen icon, rather than to her character's often immoral actions. So deeply embedded is this industrial suturing process that it remains invisible in discussions

¹⁶ Michael Allen, (1999), *Family Secrets: the Feature Films of D.W. Griffith*, London: BFI Publishing, 103.

about the Nielsen performance. I thus aim to examine how the different internal tensions, inscribed into her as the ‘star’, function as a discourse, and how the mechanism of this discourse becomes revealed in the *process* of the performance appealing to the imagined spectator.

One can begin to see this process in operation in The Traitoress, an early Nielsen star vehicle set during the Franco-Prussian conflict of 1871, “involving the depths of love, jealousy and revenge combined into a thrilling and human war story.”¹⁷ It concerns Yvonne (played by Nielsen), daughter of an ageing aristocrat and French patriot, Marquis de Bougeval (Max Opal), whose unrequited love for a German lieutenant, von Mallwitz (Robert von Valbourg) motivates her to betray him to his enemies. “Her scorned love engendered hate, fill[ed] her with an overwhelming desire for revenge” read one contemporary review.¹⁸ Yvonne determines to inform the local French garrison “of the status of the German occupation at her home” and give them information on where they can find von Mallwitz.¹⁹ Later that evening she sits down with her father and the man she has just betrayed, to eat dinner and await the arrival of the soldiers. The scene is divided into two sites of action: the first, located screen right, shows the marquis and lieutenant drinking wine and absorbed in deep conversation; the second, located screen left, is where Yvonne sits. With her back to the men, but facing toward the camera, and positioned as close to the audience as possible, she looks slightly off to the left. The camera refuses to present a shot/reverse shot pattern, or show Yvonne from the point of view of the men. Instead, the retention of a deep frontality reveals two spaces at the same time – the ‘live’ dramatic action within the diegesis and the ‘emotional’ drama that will further shape it. Nielsen’s refusal to look into camera offers the spectator-participant a privileged position of knowledge, an oscillation between knowing what has happened (but exciting desire to know what is to come), emotional investment (but exciting desire to see how sexual passions are expressed) and an appreciation of the star beyond the fiction (exciting desire to see Nielsen act while generating anticipated pleasures about future trips to the cinema). The imagined spectator is in part aligned with Yvonne in knowing what she has done (unlike the

¹⁷ H.R.H, (1912), *The Asta Nielsen Pictures*, 1054.

¹⁸ *ibid.*

¹⁹ *op.cit.*

men opposite her), while at the same time distanced from her because her actions are defined as morally suspect. Yet, this distancing occurs because the audience is being invited to watch and appreciate Nielsen in the process of acting.

At crucial moments in the narrative – at points where some hidden knowledge must be revealed – the awareness of Nielsen performing comes into full view. Picking up on “verisimilar” and “histrionic” in terms of acting styles, cited by Allen at the end of the quote just used, I want to rethink them in relation to the Nielsen performance as discourse. The terms come initially from Roberta Pearson’s theorising of the acting styles used in the Biograph shorts directed by D.W. Griffith.²⁰ Pearson contends that self-reflexivity and a limited lexicon of poses and gestural soliloquies known to audiences define the histrionic code.

“The actors remained always aware of the spectators, “playing to the gallery.” The stars stood at centre stage, facing front, as close to the footlights as possible. ...

... The actors moved in stylised fashion, selecting their gestures from a conventional, standardised repertoire passed on not only through an ‘oral’ tradition and stock-company training but through descriptions and illustrations in acting manuals and handbooks.”²¹

The histrionic code of acting was firmly rooted in the diegesis, a style often used at moments of narrative revelation, “at emotional high points in which the characters undergo emotional catharsis.”²² Pearson argues that the verisimilar code contrasts with the stylised gestural soliloquies associated with the histrionic codes by connecting to the real:

“Verisimilarly coded acting had no standard repertoire of gestures, no limited lexicon. The style defined itself by the very abandonment of the conventional gestures of the histrionic code. Actors no longer portrayed emotions and states of mind by selecting from a pre-established repertoire but by deciding what was appropriate for a particular character in particular circumstances.”²³

In opposition to the “deliberate theatricality” of the histrionic, the verisimilar is codified as representing a less “self-conscious” approach to the same gamut of emotional responses and modes of behaviour. Smaller, restrained gestures,

²⁰ Roberta Pearson, (1992), *Eloquent Gestures: The Transformation of Performance Style in the Griffith Biograph Films*, Berkeley: University of California Press.

²¹ *ibid.*, 21.

²² *ibid.*, 42.

²³ *ibid.*, 37.

particularly the expressive use of the eyes and face as “an approximation of reality,” defined a more ‘naturalist’ performance style, a nuanced lexicon that introduced ambiguity and uncertainty into the acting canon.²⁴

Adapting Pearson’s models, it seems to me that the histrionic and verisimilar codes are central to the Nielsen screen performance. It is my argument that Nielsen, shifting from fictional self to star as performer, incorporates these acting codes into her own distinctive style. In fact, Nielsen appears to almost invert these conventions, moving from a minimal verisimilitude style, a brief histrionic outburst before displaying a physically disciplined yet sentimentally expressive posture – or what Pearson would label as “unchecked histrionic” – to maximise the emotional impact of the moment. Janet Bergstorm describes the distinctive Nielsen pose as being one in which:

“She then adopts a pose that will become one of her signatures: she stands up straight, arms at her sides, facing the camera, eyes cast down emotionless, expressionless.”²⁵

At climatic moments of narrative or sexual revelation, Nielsen suddenly shifts from a verisimilar to a restrained histrionic style, via a brief yet highly marked melodramatic gesture. Her distinctive pose – the rigid body (her hour-glass figure often extenuated by a figure-hugging dress), arms akimbo and heavily-made up eyes emotionally cast down – more often than not disrupts narrative logic, offering a spatially crafted display of Nielsen’s performance virtuosity that lasts for several seconds (fig.7.1.).



fig.7.1. *Das Mädchen ohne Vaterland*. The Asta pose.

²⁴ *ibid.*, 36.

²⁵ Janet Bergstorm, (1990), *Asta Nielsen’s Early German Films*, IN: P. Cherchi Usai and L. Cordelli, ed., *Before Caligari: German Cinema, 1895-1920*, Pordenone: Edizioni Biblioteca dell’Immagine, 174.

Combining the different codes within a single performance reveals not only her acting talents but also confirms her status as a screen icon. The stillness of the Nielsen pose carries connotations of permanence, of enigmatic beauty, of appreciating value and of being a silent movie star. By regularly spacing out these star moments throughout the film, a cinematic rather than narrative tension is built up. Regulating the Nielsen performance in this way, desire is structured for the spectator-participant, not only in terms of seeing her character negotiate a complex emotional terrain defined by social responsibilities, sexual passions and repressed desires, but also in terms of artistic appreciation, fan loyalty and emotional engagement in relation to the screen star. Nielsen's performance becomes charged with multiple layers of desire, emotion and frustration, both in, and beyond, the text.

Retention of a deep frontal staging (one most closely associated with the histrionic acting style) and the continuous take contributed further to promoting the Nielsen performance. On-screen space is usually divided into different sites of dramatic action, with one space often threatening the stability or existence of another at significant narrative moments. Yet it is a space that contributes to an uninterrupted display of the star in action. In The Traitoress, for example, the arrest of the lieutenant reveals simultaneous sites of action opening up: narratives of personal betrayal and of public revelation find expression on the formal level of spatial arrangements. Spatial relations are first established when Yvonne/Nielsen enters the drawing room. With her father and von Mallwitz sitting talking and smoking cigars positioned screen right, Yvonne/Nielsen dominates the left side. She walks over to the fireplace and stands rigid, ignored by the men and excluded from their political machinations. The staging of the scene as a whole is divided into two areas: the external socio-political narrative space defined by male interaction that ostracises women, and the one of internal emotional turmoil defined by female isolation and social silence. The scene is also divided between narrative action and cinema spectacle with Nielsen, as glamorous silent film star, on constant display.

The dense spatial composition also means that Nielsen's performance emerges as distinctly cinematic in part because it is explicitly contrasted with the more theatrical styles performed by those who share the screen with her. Nielsen's restrained gestural filmic performance serves, in fact, to construct an institutional

tension with the histrionic theatrical ones given by those around her. One can find such acting contrasts in The Traitoress. As soldiers from the French garrison storm into the room to arrest von Mallwitz, and a struggle breaks out as the lieutenant is taken into custody, a split screen effect reveals Nielsen adopting her distinctive pose, rigid body, arms akimbo and down-cast eyes. Lighting effects, hinting at a restrained elegance and film glamour, sculpture her face and body. The more the violence escalates, the stiller and more refined she becomes. In contrast to the fierce struggles taking place (and contained) screen right as von Mallwitz is apprehended by the French, Yvonne/Nielsen stands defiantly passive while her eyes convey intense passion and the pulsating energy of the drama. At this point, spatial tension is created as the French captain tells von Mallwitz that it was Yvonne/Nielsen who betrayed him. He tries to step forward but is firmly held back by his captors. Yvonne/Nielsen stands defiantly while he stares directly at her with an over-blown histrionic glare. In opposition to these other melodramatically performances on display, the subtlety of Nielsen's acting style emerges as purely cinematic.

To break the dramatic tension, Yvonne/Nielsen affects a histrionic swoon, and collapses onto a sofa, as the full consequence of what she has done begin to overwhelm her character. Yvonne's betrayal brings the Nielsen performance ever closer to the camera, allowing audiences to see the mechanisms of the performance at work. It confirms Peter Brooks' contention about how the melodramatic tableau gives the "spectator the opportunity to see meanings represented, emotions and moral states rendered in clearly visible signs."²⁶ Nielsen's histrionic acting – exposing her character as a traitoress, both in narrative and emotion terms – makes visible the full horror of what she has done. In this way, the brief display of the histrionic code helps to deliver up a narrative revelation that affects a moment of narrative suspension and performative display, by representing how "she is torn with the bitterest anguish by the thought that the man she loves has been condemned to die as a result of her own action."²⁷

²⁶ Peter Brooks, (1985), *The Melodramatic Imagination: Balzac, Henry James, Melodrama as the Mode of Excess*, New York: Columbia University Press, 62.

²⁷ H.R.H, (1912), *The Asta Nielsen Pictures*, 1054.

The shift in acting style, from the verisimilitude of the fictional character to the unchecked histrionic performative body in histrionic outburst, allows the star performance to come into view. Fore-grounding the actress and “her great improvisational talents” in this way, I would suggest, relates to attempts to bolster its institutional identity while countering outside threats that sought to control cinematic representation.²⁸ Reformers’ concerns about film audiences (especially females) watching sensationalised depictions of women enjoying sexual adventures and inappropriate liaisons resonated with broader worries both regarding the general erosion of moral values and the specific contribution that cinema, as a ‘vice’ of modern life, made to such a decline. Indeed, the popularity of seeing Nielsen’s portrait of liberated womanhood – her embodiment of women given over to sensual passions and sexual indiscretions – presented the German film industry, already well aware of its precarious reputation in the early teens, with a real dilemma. My interest is in how the industry set about product differentiation while legitimising seemingly inappropriate images by *exciting* interest in and *regulating* through the modulation of Nielsen’s performance; that is, how Nielsen’s ‘star’ performance, conveying her character’s hidden/repressed emotional dilemmas, transcended the dubious morality of the characters she played. Evoking the idea of an audience capable of appreciating what they saw on screen further contributed to this process. In so doing, these strategies generated and regulated how Nielsen was to be seen on screen in much the same way as other industrial practices had managed the desire to see a Nielsen picture through selected exhibition runs and limited availability, as discussed in chapter 6.

Janet Staiger has made the point that “[o]nly after censorship defined the sanctioned limitations of representation does the illicit appear.”²⁹ Taking her argument one step further, I contend that displacing sexually miscreant female behaviour onto Nielsen’s glamorous filmic body while putting it on full display suggested that female sexual morality could somehow be visually licensed; rendered harmless, in fact, through regulating what was seen. In this context, mirrors come to play an important role in the internal monitoring process, offering visual access at key

²⁸ *ibid.*

²⁹ Janet Staiger, (1995), *Bad Women: Regulating Sexuality in Early American Cinema*, Minnesota: University of Minnesota Press, 16.

moments. For example, following an altercation between Yvonne and von Mallwitz in The Traitoress after he refuses to let her leave the chateau, she “suffer[s] all the agonies of a woman scorned,” and so returns to her room.³⁰ Pacing up and down, and often standing with her back to the camera, she remains visible at all times because of a mirror angled to keep track of her every move. While the surveillance device prevents the audience from identifying with her through disrupting the relay of looks, it produces representation for her scorned love and painful humiliation. Her reflection – the display of feminine bitterness that motivates revenge and betrayal – provides an insight into what she cannot and what morally must not be expressed directly to the audience. The use of mirrors functions as a narrative displacement, seeking to regulate representation while further revealing the star in dramatic action. Seen from all angles, the Nielsen performance is once again fore-grounded at a moment of dramatic climax.

The Nielsen performance is another way in which the film formally operates to regulate female sexuality. In particular, this form of internal regulation is achieved through the use of the explicit histrionic gesture and its use to mark a fore-grounded shift from one performance style to another. This brief unrestrained moment not only signals a change in performative gear, but allows Nielsen to move nearer the audience for maximum emotional effect, explicitly revealing to them her current state of mind and/or barely contained passions. Contrasted to her more restrained movements, this momentary explosion – an eruption of brooding passion – appears strangely ‘unnatural’, if not performatively uncanny, to create a jarring effect. Such an extreme demonstration is out of place from the rest of her measured acting style.

One example that illustrates this point occurs in The Traitoress after Yvonne starts to realise that von Mallwitz will not return her affections. After a meeting in the greenhouse where he has firmly but politely rejects her, Yvonne reveals the true depth of her feelings. This is conveyed in a momentary burst of physical excessiveness in the Nielsen performance. As von Mallwitz leaves the scene, she leans forward and drops the flower she is carrying. Her failed seduction is reified as a highly melodramatic gesture. Signalled not only as an admittance of active female sexual

³⁰ H.R.H, (1912), *The Asta Nielsen Pictures*, 1054.

desire but represented as a failure to gain mastery and control over those feelings at the very moment she attempts to express them. Giving representation to such a highly octane emotional state reveals ambiguity on her part, caught between private knowledge and public articulation, between romantic fantasies and a misguided attempt to make the sexual fantasy real. In this way, the assertion of the Nielsen performance makes us aware that this is *only* representation. It is a dramatic moment which offers another opportunity “for emotional work by Miss Nielsen (sic).”³¹ The scene relies heavily on an audience able to recognise that Nielsen is giving a performance; an awareness which, in turn, gives an appropriate context for her character’s behaviour and narrative action. In so doing, the scene self-censors itself. An ability to read Nielsen’s performance style renders harmless the potentially transgressive elements of showing a woman given over to passion. The shift in acting gear is less about a woman out of emotional control than it is about an actress in total command of her performance and acting skills.

Managing visual pleasures by directing audience attention proved to be another way of censoring inappropriate images whilst normalising cinematic representation. Supported by the fan culture, the Nielsen performance was positioned to be appreciated in terms of star quality, professional skills and artistic talents, defining exactly what spectators should be looking at and how her representations should be read. Nielsen acting out as her fictional self certain social and sexual taboos, held out the possibility for allowing the female spectator-participant to imagine prohibited sexual encounters and the release of built up internal psychic sexual tensions. Yet at the moment when the reformers’ worst fears seem to have been confirmed, the bringing of the performance to the fore, signalled by the histrionic gesture, reveals all to be artifice; that is, performance as a cinematic illusion. I contest that by promoting the mechanics of Nielsen’s artistry – how she was given complete freedom to shape her character – resolved the knotty problem of how to censor the material without inhibiting the popularity of Nielsen at the box office.

“The very naturalness with which she endows so many actions deemed unusual for women, her integrity, her depth of feeling, her active sense of intelligence, her particular kind of sensuality, mark her female roles

³¹ *ibid.* Nielsen’s name is spelt incorrectly throughout the article.

with an individuality that resists the reduction to types that will become common during the 1920s in Germany.”³²

The fact that her performance is defined as artistic obfuscates charges of obscenity, “a legitimate artistic or scholarly work intended for serious readers” that would provide “legal immunity.”³³

Another aspect of the Nielsen performance that contributed to this kind of internal censorship can be seen in the textual dynamics between her refusal to directly meet the spectator’s gaze, and an appeal to the audience for moral reassurance, emotional understanding and ultimate forgiveness. Here, Nielsen is positioned nearest the camera, so that her performance will have the maximum emotional impact on the audience. But her refusal to look directly at us breaks the flow. Instead of directly pleading for help from the spectator, the famous down cast look, extenuated by her heavily made-up eyes, marks this moment out as significant for the audience. It signals the depth of her despair and the ghastly implications of what she done (i.e. betraying a man because he did not return her affections). Yet this non-directed gaze structure positions her look within the drama as vulnerable, revealing the impossibility of an active female gaze within the diegetic social world. In The Traitoress, examples of this visual structure occur each time that Yvonne/Nielsen encounters von Mallwitz along the corridors or in the grounds of the chateau. Staging practices, first of all, compartmentalise the couple, almost squeezing them into tight spaces provided by doorways or wall panels, to denote – in her mind at least – awakening passions and a co-existing emotional (sexual) tension. During these meetings, von Mallwitz is positioned side-on, looking straight at Yvonne/Nielsen, while Yvonne/Nielsen faces front. With eyes lowered, Nielsen’s performance reveals the full extent of the character’s emotional confusion. While concealing Yvonne’s feelings from the lieutenant by physically turning her body away from his, Nielsen invites the audience to simultaneously witness a display of fictional feminine passion *and* movie star acting. Yvonne/Nielsen is often left alone on screen for several seconds after the lieutenant leaves the scene, thus underlining the shift from her character’s internal turmoil to the Nielsen performance of those

³² Bergstorm, (1990), *Asta Nielsen’s Early German Films*, 180.

³³ Gary D. Stark, (1981), *Pornography, Society and the Law in Imperial Germany*, *Central European History*, 14, 226.

intense feelings. The visual 'no-(wo)man's land' structure – unable to meet the gaze either of the audience or the (male) characters – not only reveals that female desire has no place within the diegetic fictional (male) space, but also produces an uneasy spectorial relationship between character and audience that must be mediated through the actress. It is Nielsen's portrayal of the heroine's dilemma, rather than the character, with which the audience is invited to 'feel' and experience. The spectator-participant thus becomes structured in a dual spectatorial movement; emotionally aligned to empathise with the on-screen heroine while simultaneously denied identification with her actions.

The formal strategies I have thus far identified reveal the Nielsen dramatic performance as a textual discourse. Lengthy continuous takes, deep tableau-like framing and frontal acting used to keep the star in view for as long as possible are all designed to allow an adequate sight of the movie-actress for those who have paid to see her on screen. This, then, offers another perspective on the structure of the non-directed gaze structure. The spatial 'distance' at moments of emotional recognition replicates the symbolic separation between the spectator and the film star. In these moments, the character's failed passions indicating the impossibility of female desire are positioned in the text in order to be recouped by the film star as an object of various other cinema desires for the audience. Spectatorship thereby emerges as an internal textual process by which the desire to see the movie star act out these representations pushes the spectator-participant not only to consume others texts about the star, but also buy another cinema ticket and watch another Nielsen picture. While the non-directed gaze structure establishes 'moral' and 'critical' distance, the desire created by the separation from the star continues to generate other pleasures that can then be fed back into the discourse. Focusing next on two other Nielsen vehicles, I aim to demonstrate how these textual mechanisms work within films that sought to regulate the socially transgressive aspects of Nielsen's characters – to offer moral tales of sin and redemption – while *producing* new representations of a modern womanhood around Nielsen the star.

Censoring Female Sexual Freedom and Social Movement: The Abyss

As already mentioned, The Abyss launched Nielsen's film career in Germany. The film follows the misadventures of a young piano teacher called Magda (played by Nielsen) who falls in love with a circus cowboy called Mr Rudolph. The film proved to be an instant box office smash, no doubt helped by 'monopoly film' practices that managed the film's 'exclusive' release. News soon circulated about Nielsen's extraordinary performance as the young woman in search of sexual adventure and subsequent fall from grace. "Letters from all corners of the world began to pour in to me, the adventure of the film had become my reality," Nielsen later wrote in her autobiography.³⁴ The aim, then, is to investigate the formal practices, looking at the dramatisation of female sexual indiscretion and moral downfall, to reveal how the Nielsen performance, as textual discourse, sketched a representational topography of newly gendered public spaces in the process of *producing* new institutional identities for its female constituency.

Charting the moral decline of a respectable woman in The Abyss outlined for the imagined spectator-participant the various pitfalls by which an innocent young female could meet such a fate in the modern world. The film opens with Magda, a single, un-chaperoned woman, standing alone in a mass transit zone waiting for a trolley bus. Such a striking first image portrays the recent appearance of women in the new urban spaces: a modern young woman commuting from home to her place of work. With her back to the camera, she is faced with three modes of transport steadily progressing toward her along the busy street: a horse-drawn cart, a man riding a bike and an electric trolley bus.

Images of the traditional and modern reveal the surface energies and rhythmic motions of the modern city just as A Journey Through Berlin, released in the same year, had shown. She is caught at a moment of transience. Indeed, the positioning (quite literally in the middle of the street) of the young woman, in fashionable dress and on the move, signifies her active participation in the flow of pedestrians, goods and urban traffic. The initial use of Copenhagen location shooting further

³⁴ Asta Nielsen, *Den Tiende Muse*, Copenhagen, Gyldenhal; quoted in Allen (1973), trans. David Wright, 205-6.

underscores a distinct city topography, and its kinetic movement, that enhances the film's verisimilitude, especially with the appearance of an anonymous cyclist who invades the fictional world. Catching sight of the camera, the man circles back on



fig.7.2. *The Abyss*. Magda alone on the city street.

himself to get a closer look: he stares directly into camera. Exterior views of Copenhagen's city streets situate the story within the 'real' world, evoking the documentaries of ordinary lives already familiar to audiences. By awakening connections with actuality filmmaking, *The Abyss* made certain that the tale of sexual indiscretion and perils of female mobility, both social and physical, had an element of plausibility.

Concerns about women circulating in the metropolis are suggested from the start as the cyclist goes out of his way to take a closer look. While he is more interested in the camera than Magda, his actions inadvertently seem predatory as he encircles Magda who seems blissfully unaware of his presence. This visual hemming in of the unsuspecting woman invites the spectator to notice the other visual whirlwind of traffic, movement and passing strangers that close in around her at the same time. The film seems to exploit genuine bourgeois worries about unchaperoned young women travelling alone across a large city at the same time as it cautions against the potential dangers and lurking sexual perils. Boarding the trolley bus (a symbol of mass transportation), she is greeted with civility by the conductor. Immediately she catches the attention of a male passenger. At first she is unaware of his gaze, focused, as she is, on fishing out change from her purse (fig.7.3.) In so doing, she drops her bag. The mystery man picks it up for her and she thanks him with a smile and a slight bow. Smoking a cigarette, he stares unabashedly at her. By

contrast, her glances are far less assured. He soon strikes up conversation despite her obvious unease and polite smiles.



fig.7.3. *The Abyss*. The unsolicited male gaze.

One might say that this sequence speaks about the sexual politics of the new urban spaces and the network of gazes to which all women were subjected. The film does not admonish women for venturing out into the public space: indeed, throughout the trolley bus sequence, the uniformed conductor is visually structured to be on hand, positioned behind Magda, to offer protection and censor inappropriate physical contact if necessary. Yet, the politics of the gendered look – the man's direct and uninterrupted stare as opposed to Magda's furtive looks – reveals how vulnerable the position of unaccompanied working women, newly arrived on European city streets, would prove to be (fig.7.4.)



fig.7.4. *The Abyss*. The un-chaperoned moment.

Other representations of women going about their daily business are scattered throughout these first few scenes of metropolitan life, offering images of how women

should handle themselves in the public space. A well-dressed woman, flanked by two female children; another smartly attired woman strides purposefully down the street; and a nanny pushes her young charge in a pram, are all seen circulating in the modern city. These workaday images reveal how film gave representation to women, inscribing their urban perambulations into the surface representation of the city. Yet the docu-drama feel of Magda's uncomfortable encounter on the trolley bus counsels women to be on their guard. Arriving at her stop, Magda steps off the trolley bus. However, the man continues to look at her while she walks away, physically leaning out to get a better look. Hesitating only briefly, he jumps off the trolley bus and begins to follow the unsuspecting Magda (fig.7.5, 7.6.) Within these two shots, the camera is positioned at some distance as to capture the whole incident.



fig.7.5. *The Abyss*. Watching Madga.



fig.7.6. *The Abyss*. Still watching the Madga.

The camera, therefore, structures the way in which the audience is meant to read the scene, thus inviting concern for Magda's welfare. He finally catches up with her at the entrance to a park, and she agrees to take tea with him. Afterwards, she offers

him her calling card and continues on her way. The sequence – a man chasing after a woman to whom he has not been formally introduced and her acceptance of his invitation to have tea in the park without a chaperone – takes on an instructional dimension as the formal spatial arrangements invite the audience to view her behaviour as inappropriate. The ambivalence of the public encounter, oscillating between female unease and enjoyment of male flattery, appears to confirm Mary Russo's assessment that "women and their bodies, certain bodies, in certain public framing, in certain public spaces, are always already transgressive – dangerous and in danger."³⁵

Magda's single status and economic independence are marked out from the very beginning, framing her story within a wider context that displays the perils facing single women alone in the city. First seen travelling alone through the metropolis, the next sequence finds Magda instructing a young girl on how to play the piano. The *mise en scene* marks out her lone domestic situation with no evidence of parental or other familial ties. A solitary picture of Magda/Nielsen on top of the piano further identifies her as alone, self-reliant and having to financially support herself. This representation of the single woman, read next to the previous sequences of her journey across town, invites audience concern for her welfare as it brings to the fore the precarious reality of the lone female cast adrift without appropriate familial protection. Contrasting her domestic situation with her recent urban experience, the text structures Madga as morally and sexually vulnerable without adequate guidance.

A spatial movement from the city to the country contributes further to this complex portrait of the modern single woman. It is not long before Magda becomes engaged to the mystery man, who, as it turns out, proves to be a respectable young engineer named Knud. He is keen to introduce her to his parents and invites her to accompany him on a visit to see them. Her public movements soon become restricted to the private grounds of the parental country home. Despite the kindness of her hosts, and her appreciation of their hospitality, she finds the bourgeois family home claustrophobic. Declining the daily chaperoned walk, Magda remains at home, alone

³⁵ Mary Russo, (1986), *Female Grotesques: Carnival and Theory*, IN: T. de Lauretis, ed., *Feminist Studies, Cultural Studies*, Bloomington: University of Indiana Press, 217.

and bored. While she does not want to perambulate with the family, she cannot venture out on her own either. Standing at the gate watching a circus parades pass the house, her attention is drawn to a dashing cowboy who rides over and raises his Stetson. Magda is immediately smitten, and inquiries about his identity from a boy distributing leaflets: a shot reveals an advertisement for the Circus Fortuna with a picture of Mr Rudolph. The next shot finds Magda standing outside the house awaiting the return of the family: she is beaming while tightly holding onto the flier. The contrast between this shot and an early one of her in the same position but slumped in a chair with a discarded book, articulates how stifling Magda finds both the traditional domestic space and, in particular, the bourgeois country home.

The travelling circus emerges as a temporary space of social freedom but also of dangerous temptations for impressionable young women; a construct which in fact mirrored what reformers had said about the cinema and its easy pleasures. After emerging from the circus tent, Magda persuades Knud to wander around the recreational site. Excited by the horses, and the romance of the circus, she strikes up a conversation with performers and begins to dance with them. Throughout, she remains under the protective eye of Knud, a spectatorial position that the audience is invited to take up. At this point, Mr Rudolph emerges from the tent in the background. As soon as Magda spies him, she becomes coy. Noticing her favourable reaction, Rudolph moves in, crossing the space and separating Magda from Knud's gaze by standing in-between them. Knud takes action and immediately escorts Magda away. Unperturbed, Rudolph follows the couple home, and a scuffle ensues outside the gate as Knud tries to extricate Magda from Rudolph's clutches and the family tries to pull her inside. Magda's obvious enjoyment of Rudolph's attentions is monitored throughout the sequence by Knud's presence. Despite Rudolph's predatory behaviour, to some extent paralleling Knud's earlier urban pursuit of Magda, Knud stands to protect her virtue from the cowboy's advances; and, on the evidence of her earlier behaviour, her own weakness for sexual adventure.

For Magda, Mr Rudolph, as the American cowboy, represents fantasies of liberation and an escape from the restrictive-ness of provincial life. Later that night, Magda is alone in her bedroom. Looking out of the window, she paces up and down the room, and lights a candle; a possible metaphor for her own burning passions and

fantasies of glamorous romantic liaisons. At that moment, as if to fulfil her deepest desires, Mr Rudolph dressed in his cowboy costume, climbs through her bedroom window. She tries to struggle but soon yields to his passionate and sexually charged embrace. Seduction fantasies are played out in her kiss with the cowboy, revealing her desire to escape from a stifling contemporary reality: the hero effecting a last minute rescue of the girl from hostile (bourgeois) forces.³⁶ Mr Rudolph, masquerading as the cowboy, makes visible a wild, untamed sexual power; a raw physical passion compared against her staid and asexual romance with Knud. Deniz Göktürk, in her work on the popularity of American westerns with German audiences, writes.

“The screen cowboy with their formalised gestures of power, control and self-assertion clearly appealed to compensatory fantasies. While in real life in modern industrial societies the power of the individual was increasingly limited, imagination found recourse in the archaic qualities of masculinity. The front or the frontier were the only places left where a man could prove his strength and manliness.”³⁷

Succumbing to the fantasies sold for the price of a ticket to the travelling circus, Magda is lured into social ruin, and later sexual humiliation, by her desire for adventure and escape from the traditional bourgeois home life that awaits after marriage to Knud. Taking flight with her new lover in the middle of the night, Magda is quite literally swept off her feet, and rides off into the sunset with her ready made fantasy. The film allows her to play out her fantasies of being rescued by a dark handsome exotic stranger but in so doing reveals her dreams to be nothing but artifice. Mr Rudolph is nothing more than an illusion: a circus entertainer masquerading as an idealised version of the American frontiers-man. Just as reformers had warned young women against hidden dangers of unscrupulous men lurking in cinema auditoriums, the film offers up a representation of another seduction fantasy associated with American movies and mass produced penny dreadfuls as well as a much older kind commercial leisure site, the circus.

³⁶ Emilie Altenloh describes the narrative formula of American westerns centering on a woman in need of rescuing from hostile Indians, often by her kind hearted boyfriend/hero; Emilie Altenloh, (1977), *Zur Soziologie des Kino: Die Kino-Unternehmung und die sozialen Schichten ihrer Besucher*, 11-12.

³⁷ Deniz Göktürk, (1996), *Moving Images of America in Early German Cinema*, IN: T. Elsaesser, ed., *The Second Life: German Cinema's First Decades*, Amsterdam: University of Amsterdam Press, 99.

Soon the reality of her situation sinks in, as the film text dismantles the fantasy to reveal it to be nothing more than artifice. Magda finds herself billeted in a pension for artistes. Gone are her fine clothes and corseted figure. She is now dressed in a loose kimono-style dressing gown and heavy skirt, confined to the house surrounded by circus performers but without Mr Rudolph. In the next scene, it is revealed that he has taken up with another woman. He has now shed his romantic cowboy persona for another one, changing out of cowboy garb and into an elegant evening suit to play the dashing Don Juan around town. Rudolph makes no attempt to hide his affair from Magda, returning from his date with the woman still in tow. This disclosure of how he transforms himself to suit the desires of his current female companion positions him as an arch manipulator of women. He is able to inflame passions and seduce women by playing upon fantasies of wild romance and the part of a passionately attentive lover. As he continues to canoodle with his new ladylove, who is now seated at the piano, Magda pulls them apart: she insists her and Rudolph must rehearse. Taking off her dressing gown to reveal her camisole offers further representation of her social and sexual downfall. Such an image carries associations with the prostitute and the brothel. Removing items of clothes and personas structures these sequences, suggesting the interconnectedness with Magda's fate and Rudolph's assumed guises. The scene ends with Magda, flopped on the sofa, affecting a histrionic swoon, thus fore-grounding an awareness of her own sexual humiliation.

Just when she thinks her life cannot get any worse, Knud appears. At first she is ashamed, but later agrees to return with him. Packed and ready to go, Magda prepares to leave Mr Rudolph. At that moment, he returns from his latest tryst. Noticing the packed bags, he starts to persuade her to stay with him. At first she stands resolute but then gives in to his caresses. The Nielsen performance marks out the different stages from resistance to resignation. As they embrace, Knud enters screen right. On seeing this turn of events, he knows that all is lost and leaves. Although not a point of view shot because of the frontal staging arrangements, the audience is nonetheless invited to consider the blunder that Magda is about to make from Knud's privileged position. Earlier it was he who saw Rudolph return from his night out drinking and carousing with another woman. The critical gaze belonging to Knud thus frames her further fall from grace as she once again surrenders to

Rudolph's seductive charm. This proves to be a significant narrative moment, for, up until this point, Magda can be redeemed despite her sexual transgression. Knud is prepared to forgive and take her back. Her decision to succumb to Rudolph's promise of love once more, while knowing the truth about him, makes her fully accountable for actions and her fate.

The film situates and stages her downfall within various performative contexts as the melodrama of Magda's fate intersects with Nielsen's diegetic role as a performer. Magda is first seen to be earning her living as a dancer: she and Rudolph perform a tango. Encircling one another as part of their erotically charged dance spectacle, passion is motivated through performance, and displaced onto exotically imagined spaces including Latin America, the vaudevillian stage and the cinema screen. Then, Magda remembers the lasso tied around her waist. Her hesitation breaks the verisimilitude of the dance but also – and more importantly – signals a shift in performance gear. She throws the lasso over Rudolph's body, and starts to wind the rope around him until he is completely bound. Next, dispensing with all pretence that the performance was about anything other than sexual arousal and a woman's frustrated desires she grinds her body up against an expressionless Rudolph (fig.7.7.)



fig.7.7. *The Abyss*. Asta's erotic tango.

This part of the dance sequence lasts for some time, and leaves the spectator in no doubt either as to the sexual nature of their relationship or Magda's willingness to surrender to it. Moreover, Nielsen as Magda stages an ambiguity, a representation caught between a passionate desperation and sexual humiliation. Dressed in a lustrous, tight-fitting black costume that emphasizes her cleavage, feminine curves and undulating hips, Magda's body in movement exhibits sexual indiscretion for all to

see. Screening femininity, diegetically censored by the performance context, signifies glamour, desire and sexuality in ways which rejected what was perceived as traditional models of feminine decorum. Yet her facial expressions – a trademark that Nielsen would make all her own – convey a deeper subtlety, offering a nuanced performance that emphasises an interplay between screen character and star-as-acting diva that was central to the evolving star system. Just as Magda crosses the border of pleasure between public amusement and personal sexual desire, so Nielsen switches from fictional self to accomplished actress through being able to perform an internalised state.

Off-screen space emerged as the area where copulation happened, unseen and unchecked according to Janet Staiger.³⁸ Putting Magda's seduction of Mr Rudolph on full display, within a space defined by performance and public amusement, somehow contains the transgressive-ness of such a lewd act. The presence of a fireman, positioned in the wings, for one thing acts too literally extinguish the flames of passion. Next, the spatial arrangements plainly visualise what the cinema audience is meant to be watching, as the camera shoots from the side of the stage rather than the front stalls where the vaudeville crowd are seated. Presenting the act in this way allows for a seamless continuation of the backstage drama, as the dance act flows into the on-stage brawl between Magda and Rudolph's latest girlfriend, a can-can dancer. Internal erotic tensions and sexual betrayal become played out in the same space defined by sensational display and public performance.

The repositioning of the camera reveals another kind of transition between vaudevillian performer and movie star. Just as the film formally appears to offer a mixed programme, moving from actualities to circus spectacles, staged melodramas, music hall and dance hall culture (Magda finally ends up playing piano for a cafe band), the movie actress moves from one space to another. In so doing, Magda/Nielsen displays her acting virtuosity, demonstrating her command over a complete range of acting styles. In the opening shots, Nielsen displays a minimal verisimilar style as she wanders through the city streets. Despite her furtive glances to reveal her character's unease, the general 'naturalism' of her movement offers up

³⁸ Staiger, *Bad Women: Regulating Sexuality in Early American Cinema*, 16

representation for the new woman on the modern city streets. The more she withdraws from the modern world, the more her performance becomes histrionic as she drifts into more traditional worlds, either in terms of the stage (the circus, the musical hall stage versus the cinema), or social position (the comfortable bourgeois home and her role as wife versus single woman). Also, the more her character fails to gain mastery over her emotions and narrative situation, the more Nielsen gains command over her performance. Her distinctive performance pose – the rigid body, arms akimbo, head lifted but heavily-made up eyes cast down – struck at key narratively taboo moments – that is, her seduction of Rudolph and when she stabs him to death – regulate the excess through revealing the artifice at work. Varying her performance, building up the different layers of desire, emotion and socio-sexual frustration, across the different formats, contributes to the Nielsen discourse as accomplished actress and unique movie star.

Censoring the Socio-Sexual Ambitions of the Single Professional Woman: The Stock-Broker Queen

The Stock-Broker Queen opens with a Nielsen portrait shot, acknowledging an interplay between film star and fictional heroine. Her face, framed by the ruffles and feathers from her hat and refined costume, is lit from a side light that moulds the contours of her, by now extremely famous, features. Looking straight down the lens of the camera, she acknowledges the audience with a slight smile and nod of the head. From the outset, Nielsen is a site of narrative tension. Not only must the film keep her considerable performative talents and star quality on screen for as long as possible, but, in structuring the drama around her, the narrative has to negotiate a complex representation of modern womanhood. Fantasies of socio-sexual ambition are both empowering and problematic for the heroine, a forceful and liberated woman who is able to traverse a number of terrains – public/private spaces, industrial urban/domestic rural landscapes, business/sexual relations – because of her personal wealth and elevated social standing. Spectatorial desire organised around seeing Nielsen portray a woman who lives out her socio-sexual ambitions was *regulated* not just by the character's financial independence but, and perhaps more importantly, by her status as Germany's premier film actress.

The film tells the story of Johanna (played by Nielsen), a successful young businesswoman who owes a mine. Like Madga in The Abyss, her character is cut adrift from conventional familial ties. Facing financial ruin, she has no one else to turn for help except her chief engineer. Together they manage the crisis and solve her business problems. In the meantime, Johanna falls in love with him. However his affections lie elsewhere, with Rosa, Johanna's niece. In an act of revenge, Johanna coops the help of the local mine inspector, Müller, who, more than willing to oblige, tampers with the equipment. Johanna changes her mind at the last minute. Her attempt to rescue her lover comes to nothing, and the engineer plunges to his death. As with The Abyss, female desire is made visible across a representational topography of domestic interiors and the new urban spaces, a spatial narrative that extends from Johanna's lavish home, to the money markets and an industrial landscape defined by the coal mines. Textual tensions in this context are created less by the woman's desire to escape domesticity and married life into the newly gendered public spaces than by her desire to reintegrate into the domestic space through a companionable marriage.

The film opens by setting the scene for feminine engagement in public and business affairs. Our first sight of Johanna follows several shots of the inside of the stock market. Fashionably dressed and well coiffured, she is seen sitting down at a table with a group of businessmen playing cards. Far from excluding her, the spatial composition places her centre stage of these commercial dealings with the men arranged around her. Next, Johanna is at her desk, surveying the newspapers and taking a telephone call. Another new space is opened up by her phone conversation, revealing the coal mine that she owns. Across the film, and within the first two acts in particular, Johanna is represented as central to the day-to-day running of her business empire. Despite news of falling shares, Johanna, along with her chief engineer, work together to find a solution to save her commercial interests and the mine. At no time does she acquiesce to him. Johanna and the chief engineer work as an efficient and effective team, each using their own unique professional skills – her financial acumen combined with his practical knowledge of mining – to bring about a resolution. Offering up such representation suggests that sexual equality involve recognising gender difference in terms of a business partnership and personal strengths.

Other images of women at work are represented in the film. At the beginning of Act Three, women are seen leaving the mine for home while another group is viewed pushing a cart full of coal along tracks across the site. Although women working in the coal industry were certainly nothing new, these representations function to show female integration into a modern industrial topography defined by mechanised labour, rationalised time-and-motion schedules and shift work. In fact, the iron track lines map out a vast industrial landscape that compartmentalises women at work, a plan that reveals the workaday experience of those whose participation had become inscribed into the surface of the new urban industrial spaces. Groups of female surface workers are also contrasted with, and separated from, their male counterpart, emphasising how gender difference contributed further to the compartmentalisation of the city. The women at work, and the workings of the modern industrial mining plant, represented in this sequence are similar to the earlier actualities as discussed in chapter 2, showing how women had become calibrated to the motions, energy and rhythms of the modern world. Not only does it reveal how film produced representation for those considered to be on the margins of public consciousness but also that such subjects had now become worthy of representation.

Despite her presence within a variety of different social worlds, the *mise en scène* often isolates Johanna from others within the pictorial frame. Nowhere is she completely integrated in the social spaces that she owns, or to which she has gained access by virtue of her status as a company director. Various framing and blocking devices are used to signal her difference while realising the newly compartmentalisation of modern private and public spaces. For example, in the main trading hall of the stock market, not only is Johanna the only woman present, but a balcony physically separates her from the other traders. The importance of both her sight-line and her newly acquired social position are stressed within a shot/reverse shot editing pattern. The first establishes her point of view with the spectator-participant sharing her spatial position on one side of the balcony. She dominates screen right while looking down on the trading activities taking place below on the other side of the balustrade. The next shot shows Johanna in the act of looking from the trading floor, before cutting back to the first shot to show her handing instructions to a male trader. It is an editing pattern that clearly fore-grounds her

surveillance of business practice while also regulating her participation within an exclusive male public space of commercial dealings. Her elevated position above the trading hall and privileged gaze denote her economic status, but her liberated status signals social isolation.

If Johanna finds herself positioned on the outside within male-orientated spaces, then neither does she fit comfortably into the world of female labour. In fact, she is visually separated from the other women working at the mine. In contrast to the impersonal and interchangeable appearance of the female miners, Johanna is instantly recognisable as she strides across the industrial landscape toward the site office. Her fine outfit and elegantly feminine shape mark her out from the faceless group of female workers uniformly dressed in a simple garb, a contrast that defines Johanna's social separation from these proletarian women. It further highlights her own exclusion from the rationalised work process involved in mass production, mass employment and the division of modern labour, practices in to which the female working at the mine are calibrated.³⁹ While the movements of the working female denizens are directed by a topographical landscape marked by rail lines and tracks leading out of the mine, Johanna physically cuts across these demarcations and property lines. She, quite literally, looks out of place within a landscape that she owns. Stark visual contrasts and compartmentalisation mark Johanna out as a solitary figure within a newly configured working space defined by class and gender division, mass employment and mechanisation.

There is an additional element being played out within these sequences related to the institutional revelation of Nielsen as a movie star. Through her journey from the trading room to the coal yard, Johanna/Nielsen is represented through discourses of difference, establishing her status as well as marking the distance between the spectator and the star. Not only is her difference structured in the diegesis through her privileged status as a wealthy businesswoman, but she is also positioned extra-diegetically as someone to-be-looked at with awe and fascination by those around

³⁹ John Czaplicka, writing on Heinrich Zille's representation of the working mass as anonymous in the 1900s, notes how "Zille's workers ... confirm the ebb and flow of the modern industry city and appear caught at a moment of transience between home and place of work." Czaplicka, (1990), *Pictures of a City at Work, Berlin c. 1890-1913: Visual Reflections on Social Structures and Technology in the*

her. Her striking and fashionable appearance, complete with fur-trimmed coat and ornate hat, sets up a circuit of spectatorial desire, in which feminine ideals are on display to be admired, consumed and aspired-to by spectators.

Although Johanna is successful both in trading stock, and proving herself to be an accomplished and financially astute businesswoman, her sexual ambitions prove to be an entirely different proposition. As her business and sexual ambitions begin to overlap, a site of narrative tension opens up around her relationship with the foreman. The couple are shown to have a cordial yet formal working relationship. However, in the course of trying to save the mine from closure, Johanna's affection for him grows. At the beginning of Act Two, after a meeting between Johanna and the foreman, he kisses her hand. As he does so, the verisimilitude of the Johanna characterisation briefly gives way to the Nielsen performance of emotional turmoil and unrequited passion.

A more conventional sphere of femininity – Johanna's country home in fact – emerges as the central location where the tensions created by her sexual ambitions are played out. In particular, the clash sets the liberated and professionally minded Johanna against a softer more conventional portrait of womanhood represented by her niece, Rosa. The two women are first seen embracing in Johanna's office but the following scene reveals Rosa to belong to a much more traditional space of domestic order and household chores. She oversees catering arrangements for a business luncheon, checking the seating plan, setting out glasses and adding the finishing touches to the table. Feminine representation is split in two here, across the bodies of two very different women; one modern and shaped by her experience in business, the other conventionally feminine and defined by a domestic *mise en scène*. The representation of Rosa as the traditional 'other' is necessary so that Johanna can be defined as a modern businesswoman.

In fact, it is in terms of Rosa that the audience is invited to assess the newer representational models of womanhood. Within the textual interplay established, Johanna's marriage ambitions emerge as aggressive and calculating when set against

Modern Urban Construct, *IN*: C. Haxthausen and H. Suhr, ed., *Berlin, Culture and Metropolis*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 18

her niece's more subdued attempts to win over the same man. Blocking techniques and on-screen split screen arrangements are thus used to map out the love triangle between Johanna, Rosa and the chief engineer. The dynamic is first established just after the engineer has arrived at Johanna's home for lunch. Inside the house Johanna is greeting her male guests while behind her, and through the sash window screen left, Rosa and the engineer can be seen talking for the first time. As the male guests move off, Johanna turns and spies the couple standing and chatting on the steps. The triangulated spatial composition involving different sites of action reveals several hierarchies. One involves a social hierarchy that associates Johanna above all with an elevated financial status in contrast to Rosa and the engineer who are both dependent upon her wealth and social patronage. It further recalls her position with the stock market, as someone who affects narrative events but ultimately finds herself isolated as a consequence. Another involves Johanna's act of looking onto the unsuspecting couple. The audience is invited to share her position of knowledge, an ambiguous one that recognises the compatibility of Rosa and the engineer while simultaneously siding with Johanna's feelings of exclusion. Johanna placed in the foreground, and dominating screen right, is viewed in the shadows while the couple, each framed by a pane of glass in the background, are flooded by light. Such staging further reveals Johanna's dark passions and revengeful nature as opposed to Rosa's more genteel and homely disposition.

Time and again, sequences stress how Johanna schemes to keep the couple apart, often physically coming in between them or sending Rosa away on the pretext that she must discuss mining affairs with the engineer. Johanna's recognition of the growing affection between the two is accompanied by a change in acting style, a shift that reveals Johanna as a manipulator through the mechanisms of Nielsen's performance. At moments when Johanna notices the furtive glances and small intimate gestures, Nielsen's acting style comes to the fore through her overly dramatic use of the gaze. While the other two look away or cast their eyes down, Nielsen faces the audience and uses her expressive, heavily made-up eyes to map out the sexual dynamics of the situation and Madga's plans for revenge. Again, as the luncheon party takes tea on the lawn, Rosa is serving while Johanna talks business to the men. Rosa accidentally drops a cup which is caught by the engineer: the couple briefly exchange glances as he hands it back. The audience is invited to read the

incident from Johanna's point of view; we know love has blossomed between them because Johanna's gaze confirms it. At the same time, disclosing the gaze as artifice counsels the spectator against identification with her jealousy and inappropriate actions to come.

It is not long before Rosa emerges as the ideal marriage partner for the engineer. While Johanna pursues him as voraciously as she would a lucrative take-over deal, Rosa conforms to a more genteel model of courtship and a companionable marriage. Events come to a head after Johanna has struggled to escape from the clutches of the local mine inspector, Müller. She seeks out the engineer who is playing croquet with Rosa, and leads him away. The next scene finds Johanna and the engineer walking in the grounds. Rosa appears in the background at the top of the steps just as the couple embraces in the fore-ground and then leave the shot. Believing all to be lost, she steadily walks down the steps with her arms out stretched in a grand histrionic gesture. She drops the ball and mallet from her hands and weeps uncontrollably.

Later in an act of self-denial and self-sacrifice, Rosa decides to leave her aunt's house. The departure scene is again played out from Johanna's point of view and ambiguous moral position, as she surveys Rosa's departure from her study window. Rosa is seen gazing up at the house but Johanna, sensing victory, stands in the shadows to watch the expulsion of her younger rival. At first it seems as if Rosa's departure signals that marriage can result from a pro-active feminine courtship. Yet at this precise moment the engineer comes racing up the drive to meet Rosa, and the couple embrace. Johanna decides to join them. Shaking Rosa's hand, she looks straight at the engineer and walks past him. The engineer is left waving farewell to Rosa's departing coach.

As with most Nielsen vehicles, The Stock-Broker Queen narrative fails to offer marriage as the conclusion to the heroine's quest for love. In each film discussed in this chapter – The Traitoress, The Abyss and The Stock-Broker Queen – the final sequences ultimately hold out the possibility of seeing Nielsen in full dramatic action for one last time. Each final scene offers a narrative opportunity for Nielsen to display her considerable performance skills, and brings the film full circle to end

with an image of the star. Each character – Yvonne, Magda and Johanna – commits one final act, either of grand passion or fatal revenge. At these ‘eleventh hour’ narrative moments – a chance for her character to redeem herself or to save a lover that she has betrayed – the Nielsen diva performance comes into its own. Shifting from a versimilar style, through a brief histrionic moment of realisation, to an unchecked histrionic style, she dissolves her character to reveal the real Asta Nielsen, the great dramatic actress and famous movie star. In The Traitoress, after trying to affect a last minute rescue attempt, Yvonne throws herself in front of the firing squad. Catching the bullet for von Mallwitz, Nielsen as Yvonne dies in the arms of her would-be-lover. In the fading moments of The Abyss, Nielsen as Magda stabs her errant lover in the back, before becoming rigid with despair: “instead of wild breast-beating she walks towards the camera in the last scene in an almost somnambulistic trance, her expression hardly changing through the sustained shot.”⁴⁰ In fact, Nielsen holds the restrained pose until the very last frame, as Magda is dramatically lead away by the police. The Stock-Broker Queen constructs an elaborate parallel editing pattern that reverses the sex roles as Johanna strives to save the man she loves from a fatal accident. The rescue sequence is bracketed by the Nielsen performance of resolve and revenge, and then regret and loss. While the engineer is ignorant of his fate, she rushes to prevent the disaster as the engineer plummets to his death down the mineshaft. Her failure results in the characteristic Nielsen pose, dramatically pushing back the crowds in order to stage her sorrow. The last scene finds Nielsen, as Johanna, alone in her office, the camera lingering on the emotional performance for several seconds before fading to black. By holding back the Nielsen performance until the last scene, the film (as with her vehicles) deliberately keeps the audience waiting, generating anticipation before offering a final visual pleasure.

Across the eight years between 1910, when Nielsen first became a star, and 1918, when The Stock-Broker Queen was first released in Berlin,⁴¹ marriage and personal ambition, sexual desire and true happiness are posed as irreconcilable in virtually all her films. In fact, the plot lines from her films soon came to resemble one another as these thinly disguised moral tales invited spectators into a world of

⁴⁰ Allen, (1973), *Asta Nielsen: The Silent Muse*, 206.

⁴¹ Although made in 1916, the film had to wait another two years for its German release.

socio-sexual adventure. Yet, the formulaic stories provided audiences with another chance to see Nielsen playing a stock character type that she performed so well: the great film diva elevates the predictable to the extraordinary. Although her characters consistently met with imprisonment, death and/or social isolation in the final reel, the virtuoso display of acting from Nielsen, viewed in long shot and definitely commanding audience attention, transcended the tragedy to enter a wider inter-textual field of cultural reference related to a vibrant movie culture, fan discourses and censorship practice. While the pre-eminence of the on-screen Nielsen performance allowed audiences to imagine alternative feminine representations, the quite extraordinary power of her performance was structured to deny easy audience identification with her characters. By using celebrity profiles to wax lyrical about her professional accomplishments, the film industry played upon her unique status as a great actress to circumvent charges of obscenity while enticing audiences into the cinemas with the promise of further sensational and other cinematic pleasures.

The Nielsen 'monopoly films' represented an industrial strategy to carve out a niche in the market. This sustained attempt to capture and cultivate a female audience for these films also reveals the impact of exterior discourses, as the production companies were wary of the calls for censorship. My approach to these films, however, is not to suggest that they must read against the censorship debate but that they create and define their own moral and commercial universe with Nielsen at their epicentre. Their textual intensity relates, in no small measure, to the pre-eminent position of Nielsen as star. Within the terms of the texts, and related to the marketing, promotion and dissemination of her image within other movie related medias, Nielsen is positioned as a highly regulated text. This textual structures cinematic desire around the seeing of a woman, who chart an emotional terrain defined by sexual passions and repressed desires, while rendering those taboo images harmless through artistic appreciation, fan loyalty and a transference of emotional engagement from the character to the star herself. In such a way, the Nielsen performance was over-determined, heterogeneous, and multidimensional, demanding a spectator capable of reading such a complex discursive textual construct.

The Great Divide: Asta Nielsen as *femme fatale* or self-reflexive modern artist.

I want to conclude with an analysis of a Rudolf Schlichter sketch entitled *Cinema* (fig.7.8.). The reason for its inclusion is because the representation of the central female figure brings us back to that polemic divide between the Weimar (classical) cinema and the popular (counter) cinema, and because it has something to tell us about the fate of Asta Nielsen. The unmistakable figure of Asta Nielsen is surrounded by a group of men. Dressed as a bandit, complete with high leather boots and guns, she stands outside the cinema seemingly handing-out fliers to the male passers-by, illuminated, not by the glamour of the movie spot-light but by the harsh glare from a street lamp overhead. For me, the image articulates the cultural divide of the Nielsen image as text.



fig. 7.8. *Cinema*, Rudolf Schlichter (c.1925).

The sketch is a direct reference to a self-reflexive comedy, Zapatas' Gang [*Zapatas Bande*] (Urban Gad, 1914) in which Nielsen plays herself (a famous Danish film star) playing the role of a female bandit (fig.7.9).



Nielsen as bandit in 'Zapatero Bandit'

fig.7.9. *Zapatas' Gang*. Nielsen as a bandit.

The plot centres on a group of actors who travel to shoot on-location in a region of Italy overrun with bandits in order to spice up their latest 'sensational' hit with authentic footage. Soon the actors become involved in daring highway robberies, and take great pleasure in their new roles. Sabine Hake describes the film:

"Announced as a 'film joke,' the film almost reverses the hierarchies between fiction and reality and offers a surprisingly modern perspective on the old problem of life imitating art. ... A motley group [of actors] dress up as wild robbers and initiate a series of dramatic reversals that jeopardise their shooting schedule and fundamentally put into question the very definition of role-playing."⁴²

Since the connection is so obvious, why the Nielsen image and film reference becomes deleted proved intriguing.

Unanchored from its original meaning, the image of Nielsen is assigned the place of cultural 'other' through its anonymity and alluring mystery. In fact, as pure representation, the enigmatic woman touting for business outside the cinema becomes embedded in the Weimar binary structure of class and gendered difference. Debates

⁴² Sabine Hake, (1996), *Self-Referentiality in Early German Cinema*, IN: T. Elsaesser, ed. *A Second Life: German Cinemas First Decades*, Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 244.

about surface distractions, about cinema as low brow culture form and the feminisation of mass culture, function in Schlichter's cartoon as a dialogue with the New Objectivity.

Nielsen was eventually reclaimed as a modern artist by bourgeois culture. Lotte Eisner reviewed her performance in the drama, Vanina (Arthur von Gerlach, 1921) thus:

“If this film is more astonishing for us today than many others, the reason is that Nielsen's acting is intensely modern – her eyes, her hands, the sweep of her figure betraying an immense sorrow, give a violent intensity and resonance to this *Kammerspiel* of souls.”⁴³

The release of Vanina coincides with Nielsen's redefinition as an actress. In 1920 she established her own production company, Art Films. The title offers an indication of the direction in which Nielsen was heading. Her first venture into production was a version of Hamlet, with herself in the lead role as a woman having to assuming the guise of a prince to negotiate the harsh political world. Another high profile role from this period was her portrayal of Frank Wedekind's Lulu, in a Leopold Jessner film entitled, Erdegeist. The calibre of these parts repositioned Nielsen in the marketplace, but also reveal the inevitable consequence of the exclusive, restricted release, high quality 'monopoly film' product within a far more diversified film market.

Interestingly, her newly defined art status was anticipated, nearly a decade earlier, with the release of her films in America. In March-April 1912, a small but intense campaign was launched to introduce the Nielsen films into the American market (fig.7.10).

⁴³ Lotte Eisner, quoted in Allen (1973), 208.



fig.7.10. Selling Nielsen in America. *The Moving Picture World* (5 October 1912).

Nielsen was heralded as the German Sarah Bernhardt, and the publicity spoke of her extraordinary talents. Within this American context, her 'extraordinariness' was redefined in terms of the European artistic tradition and repositioned her film next to other 'quality' products such as Max Reinhardt's *The Miracle*, Italian historical epics and sophisticated French comedies. It is little wonder that Nielsen was rediscovered when *Hamlet* reached New York, the film receiving rave reviews. Her popular context must be placed back on the critical agenda if we are to gain a fuller understanding of what she meant to the cultural economy of Germany in the teens. This is not to reclaim a lost feminist history but to reinstate an appropriate context within which to speak about her films.

Chapter 8. Comedic Discourse: Popular Film Comedy, Imagined Female Spectator-Participants and the Films of Ossi Oswalda.

Orthodox critical studies have invariably judged early German film comedies as unworthy of serious consideration. Bourgeois prejudice betrays an elitism that has long deemed popular German screen comedy to be thematically and artistically inferior to serious drama, a divide that demonstrates a fundamental binary opposition between high (intellectual) and popular (mass) culture. Popular generic films including comedies were thus greeted with critical indifference by the intelligentsia, who mostly viewed these movies – or what they called ‘trash’ (*Schundfilm*) – being as associated with the lower social orders, with the crass and trivial, and with mass-production and mass-consumption.

As an example of this critical devaluation, Lotte Eisner has dismissed Ernst Lubitsch’s German comedies as “coarse farces,” full of “oafish effects” and “a certain ‘Central European vulgarity’.” She pejoratively places his comedies in the tradition of the nonchalant, rather cynical, humour of the *Konfektion*, the Jewish lower-middle-class engaged in the ready made clothing trade.”¹ Contemporary film reviewers were equally as condescending in their tone, concluding that that comedic spectacles and frivolous heroines were not only somehow shabby but also contributed to sliding cultural standards. Béla Balázs disparagingly defined the plot of *The Oyster Princess* [*Die Austernprinzessin*] (Ernst Lubitsch, 1919) as slight (“This story is too primitive and meagre for a four-act piece”) and the supposedly comic disrobing sequences involving Ossi Oswalda as verging on the pornographic (“And the funny shots, seen through a keyhole, are downright obscene”).²

Scant attention has thus been given to understanding the legitimate pleasures associated with popular German film comedy during the teens, with middle-class critics seeking instead to keep intact the values and assumptions of a bourgeois culture. This neglect reveals an agenda that went far beyond a critical review of film – that is, to expose the gulf between two different cultural attitudes and the

¹ Lotte Eisner, (1969), *The Haunted Screen: Expressionism in the German Film and the Influence of Max Reinhardt*, trans. Roger Greaves, Berkeley: University of California, 79; similar arguments were earlier rehearsed in, (September 1948), les origines du style Lubitsch, *Revue du Cinéma*, 17, 3-15.

² Béla Balázs, (1984), Self-mockery on the Screen, *Der Tag*, 10 August 1923; reprinted, *Hungarofilm Bulletin*, 3, 16.

systematic enterprise to effectively and authoritatively sustain that gulf by the bourgeoisie. Employing Foucault's notion of discourse reveals the struggle for cultural leadership as an unceasing interaction between classes, values and institutions.³ Film reviews and critiques of the popular show how the bourgeois culture gained an identity, definition and strength by setting itself off against popular forms which it defined as somehow inferior, bad and degraded. The intelligentsia, through a reinforced notion of their own prestige and sense of cultural mission, reduced to a single fixed meaning, a complex cinematic discourse determined by a discursive multi-levelled textual system and series of competing industrial demands. The lack of detailed examinations of popular generic forms and their appeal to mass audiences must therefore be seen in a context in which the dominance and significance of bourgeois culture went unchallenged. Intellectual commentaries thus reveal more about bourgeois assumptions concerning popular entertainment, within which the bourgeoisie came to an understanding about themselves, than about the pleasures offered by generic film comedies to the imagined patron.

This chapter aims to analyse the various rules and mechanisms involved in making the Ossi Oswalda performance funny. Investigating the formal organisation of the gag, and spatial spectacles of humour, reveals how Oswalda generated laughter through letting her imagined audience in on the joke and the making of it. Oswalda's humorous *joie de vivre* both infects her co-stars and co-opts an imagined female spectator-participant to poke fun not only at drab old-world values and stifling social conventions but also the cynicism of the modern age. Her crazy antics defy both old and new social expectations, but never at the expense either of what constituted good taste, or the happy ending which finds her fictional self incorporated back into a patriarchal order that itself has been altered as a consequence of the encounter with her. Making known the rules of textual engagement and the mechanisms of the joke, through fore-grounding the performance in action, shows a simultaneous awareness both of how generic conventions produced by competing industrial demands created terms of reference, expectation and attitude, and how it consequently imagined the involvement of its female audience. Humour produced by Oswalda, visibly inscribed right into the very form of her comedy, in a sense *created*

³ Michel Foucault, (1972), *The Archaeology of Knowledge and the Discourse of Language*, trans. A.M. Sheridan Smith, New York: Pantheon Books.

and *shaped* the identities of the female fans that shared the laughter. By focusing on two popular film comedies starring Oswalda – The Oyster Princess and The Doll [*die Puppe*] (Ernst Lubitsch, 1919), I will argue how the comedy genre as a discourse, by foregrounding performance, both generated and managed textual engagement and visual pleasures for the imagined female spectator-participant. This knowledge, by relentlessly revealing itself in the process of being knowing about the Oswalda performance, was used to determine different kinds of attitude, values and cultural assumptions in relation to female spectator-participant, her institutional identity and visual pleasures.

Ossi Oswalda's Comic Routines and the Comedy Genre as a Discourse: A Theoretical Re-evaluation.

Sabine Hake, exploring the relationship between female visual pleasure, narrative and the woman's role in The Oyster Princess and The Doll, has sought to reclaim these Oswalda comic vehicles for feminist film scholarship.⁴ She contends that female spectacle defies patriarchal narrative, disrupting the narrational flow through a comic subversive display of uninhibited orality, movement and consumption. Feminine unruliness, argues Hake, combines a carnivalesque spectacle of the body, which she relates to Mikhail Bakhtin's discussion of 'grotesque realism,'⁵ with the spectacle of commodification identified by Guy Debord in *Society of the Spectacle*.⁶ These definitions of spectacle – that is, a socio-historical one about corporeal excess defined by subversive laughter, linked to the plebeian culture of mediæval Europe, and a post-1968 influenced idea based on rendering the world visually knowable through media representation – enable Hake to chart how humour becomes played out across the female body. Hake shifts her argument at this stage on to the level of content, pre-supposing as given a binary representational logic (classical continuity cinema as norm) which makes possible the transgressiveness of the comedy. For example, masculinity (the father) constructs meaning while

⁴ Sabine Hake, (1992), *Passions and Deceptions: The Early Films of Ernst Lubitsch*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 81-94; revised (1993) The Oyster Princess and The Doll: Wayward Women in the Early Silent Cinema, IN: S Frieden, R. W. McCormick, V.R Petersen and L. M. Vogelgang, eds., *Gender and German Cinema: Feminist Interventions, volume II. German Film History, German History on Film*, Oxford: Berg Publishers Ltd, 13-32.

⁵ Mikhail Bakhtin, (1968), *Rabelais and His World*, trans. Helene Iswolsky, Cambridge: MIT Press.

⁶ Guy Debord, (1977), *Society of the Spectacle*, Detroit: Black and Red.

femininity (Ossi) deconstructs it through comedic excess: “Oswalda’s body at rest is woman as spectacle; but her body in motion is efficiency gone crazy.”⁷

Both the strengths and limitations of Hake’s ideas on comic spectacle, narrative subversion and the unruly female body are methodologically grounded in post-1968 film criticism and genre theory, and the influence both had on feminist film theory as a strategy to reclaim female experience. She looks closely at Lubitsch’s comic text for signs of formal and ideological contestation, to clear a critical feminist space for talking positively about female bodies, desire and humour. She in fact searches for contradictory tendencies within dominant filmmaking practice, insisting on using inversion, transgression and subversion as tools for reclaiming the popular cinema as a progressive form for female spectatorship.

Other feminist writers have furthered such a project. Kathleen Rowe, in particular, contends that by studying humorous spectacles of female unruliness, we might learn about female resistance/pleasure and write “more emancipatory feminist theories.”⁸ The idea of rupture, ideological or otherwise, does provide a critical means for opening up film texts that have been looked upon with critical scorn by more classically oriented scholars and writers. Difficulties arise, however, from the tendency to interpret the generic form as ideologically ‘progressive’ because of its ability to fracture textual cohesion. Comic disruption is read as serious political challenge, assuming humour functions only to subvert dominant ideology and to celebrate unruly bodies as somehow reclaiming subjected and concealed (gendered) histories. Recovering transgression for feminist appropriation, using it to offer insight into a different – more politically radical – account of female pleasure, fails to adequately account for the complex mechanisms involved in the generic form within which subversive elements are but one component. Comedy as a generic system is a far more nuanced textual, formal and industrial discourse than has thus far been suggested.

⁷ Sabine Hake, (1992), *Passions and Deceptions*, 94.

⁸ Kathleen Rowe, (1995), *The Unruly Woman: Gender and the Genres of Laughter*, Austin: University of Texas Press, 19.

As a discourse, these ‘progressive’ genre arguments reduce difference, be it sexual or textual, to a fundamental binary formal system: spectacle/narrative, non-continuity (counter)/ continuity (classical), woman as spectacle (social)/ women as active agent (politically progressive), and so on. If the “deconstructive capabilities and a subversive effectivity” of difference is assumed, then it follows that a dominant discourse must exist.⁹ For example, academics and theorists have been responsible for the creation of critical tools for understanding classical film form, a basic vocabulary and formal style most closely associated with Hollywood.¹⁰ By using this dominant discourse, the academy has formulated alternative definitions, the counter-cinema, whose very opposition to classical film techniques has facilitated the setting up of binary difference by which norms have been established.¹¹ Reliance on the progressiveness of subversion, as an appropriate term for evaluating works from a film tradition that does not adhere to classical norms, is therefore misleading. It presupposes a general teleological push toward a classical narrational style based on linearity and causality, and takes for granted a standard against which all else must be judged, thus repeating the self-confirming parameters of the bourgeois discourse already cited at the beginning of this chapter.

It is, however, not enough to view generic strategies merely in textual terms. Social and cultural processes that determine how popular forms are given meaning and value need also to be considered. Stuart Hall contends:

“The important fact, then, is not a mere descriptive inventory – which may have the negative effect of freezing popular culture into some timeless descriptive mold – but the relations of power which are constantly punctuating and dividing the domain of culture into its preferred and its residual categories.”¹²

⁹ Barbara Klinger, (1986), *Cinema/Ideology/Criticism Revisited: The Progressive Genre*, IN: Barry Keith Grant, ed., *Film Genre Reader*, Austin: University of Texas Press, 86.

¹⁰ David Bordwell, Janet Staiger and Kristin Thompson, (1985), *The Classical Hollywood Cinema*, New York, Columbia: University Press, 1985; David Bordwell and Kristin Thompson, (1997), *Film Art*. 5th edition, New York: McGraw Hill.

¹¹ David Bordwell’s inventory of formal and aesthetic principles available to filmmakers allows him to identify how the classical Hollywood cinema as a system achieved lasting stability. He claims that the ability of the classical system to absorb innovation while maintaining its spatial and temporal coherence has contributed to its dominance over time. David Bordwell, ‘Historical Poetics of the Cinema’, IN R. Barton Palmer, ed., *The Cinematic Text: Methods and Approaches*, New York: AMS, 369-398.

¹² Stuart Hall, (1981), Notes on Deconstructing ‘the Popular,’ IN: R. Samuel, ed., *People’s History and Socialist Theory*, London: Routledge and Kegan Paul

Hall writes that popular formal and narrative conventions look to borrow from much older entertainment categories, often associated with ideological resistance, but become commercially reinvented in line with prevailing social discourses and dominant tastes.¹³ Popular formal structures thus emerge as “contradictory”, defined by a “double movement” of ideological “containment and resistance.”¹⁴ More specifically, Uta Berg-Ganschow in her interpretation of The Doll’s fairy tale atmosphere, contends that “folk-tale humour” (“Komik wie auf dem Bauerntheater”) and the “Christmas set decoration” (“Dekoration wie aus dem Weihnachtsmärchen”) are used as subversive strategies to interrogate the prevailing social order.¹⁵ What I take from the above reading, and Hall’s argument in particular, is the notion that all claims regarding generic strategies must be grounded in specific socio-historical knowledge and forms of cultural production. Rather than view the popular as always being about a broad cultural landscape and its competing forces, I want to claim that the strategies of genre represent a dynamic yet internal field of formal and institutional interaction. Generic conventions of comedy are not so much the outcome of cultural resistance and ideological transgression but are norms *produced* and regulated by cinema’s own discursive coherence determined at a particular historical moment. What is funny is created by, and embodied within, the frameworks established by the German popular cinema’s own discourse.

Occasions for laughter are clearly sanctioned within the film text while regulated by a highly complex cinematic discourse, a negotiation that centres on the actor/actress in the process of performing. Humour is a product of a dense, contentious and forever regenerating set of statements produced by industrial demands that seek to appeal to and retain the broadest audience possible. The point is that each comic moment is *contained* and *represented* by how the popular cinema discourse has formulated the genre. The star, in the process of performing, in fact emerges as central to the interplay of textual meaning and industrial pleasure, through making visible the rules and mechanisms of the comedy. This being the case, Oswalda is *only* defined as unruly because the internal logic treats her as someone to be controlled, a problem to be overcome in order to bring about narrative resolution

¹³ *ibid.*, 227-240.

¹⁴ *ibid.*,

and closure to the film. The creation of the absurd so necessary for humour to occur is defined and strengthened by how the film establishes its own terms of reference, invoked by a juxtaposition of other knowledges generated by the industry – among them, discourses about female mobility, consumer habits, cultural values and visual pleasures.

Humour comes from how the performance *constructs* the joke for the imagined audience.¹⁶ A hierarchy of performances acts as a cue for laughter within any given film, with the star at the apex and the other actors, actresses and extras organised around them. By exposing the techniques by which the joke is formed, the performing body becomes momentarily detached from its fictional counterpart to disclose the processes involved in *producing* representation. In so doing, revealing the mechanisms of what is funny brings a series of discourses on socio-gender roles, cultural attitudes, values and assumptions, and institutional identities to the fore. Performance speaks of fabrication, revealing how, at the moment of its (fictional) naturalisation, representation and visual pleasures are discursively constructed and maintained by cinema's own discourse.

A gradual sense of freedom and comic lawlessness results when Oswalda encounters convention of any kind, be it fictional or otherwise. Letting the imagined spectator-participant know that she is the main instigator of the joke positions her as best able to win over audiences and shape emotional responses to how a scene is viewed and a joke understood. What I hope to show is that her ability to control the joke-making process is correlated to her fictional self, yet when the joke is finally made at her expense, it reveals how the cinematic discourse brings other cultural values, assumptions and expectations related to women to the fore. Her appropriation of the role as joker also extends beyond the limits of the narrative, to deliver up visual and other pleasures associated with the promotion of a vibrant movie fan culture. By revealing the mechanisms of the star's unique performance skills, and setting in place desires to be activated by the imagined spectator-participant, the cinematic discourse regulates itself as a consumable product while in the process

¹⁵ Uta Berg-Ganschow, (1984), *Die Puppe*, IN: Hans Helmut Prinzler and Enno Patalas, eds., *Lubitsch*, Munich: Stiftung Deutsche Kinemathek, 187-88.

¹⁶ Sigmund Freud, (1991), *Jokes and their Relation to the Unconscious*, London: Penguin.

initiating audiences in the pleasures of consumerism, fan culture and cinema spectatorship in the process. All these different representations of Oswalda are *produced* and regulated in accordance with the requirements of the cinematic discourse.

The narrative logic of the two Oswalda films to be discussed, I will argue, ultimately functions to restrain her playful disorderliness and redirect her disruptive energies, before repositioning her as a companionable wife within the institution of marriage. The Oyster Princess, for example, flirts with adultery (or at least sexually adventuresome behaviour) as well as bigamy as Ossi enjoys a companionate courtship with one man (Nucki) while married to another (Josef). Yet, the comedy of errors eventually resolves around mistaken identities and the realisation that the fictional Ossi is technically married to a man named Prince Nucki (Harry Liedtke). Humour – in this context acted out by Ossi Oswalda the performer – allows for several humorous negotiations to take place, points around which traditional social discourses accommodated the new through exposing the mechanisms of screen acting at the moment of its integration into the cinematic vocabulary. Jokes gave voice to that which in another context would have been too unsettling, while enjoying public approval because no one was taking what was said too seriously. Humour both recognises the encounter between a discursive field of discourse while marking out its terms and limits in the process. More significantly though, by foregrounding the techniques by which the joke is made, through structuring the gaze, and bringing the artifice of performance to the fore, the film created identities for, and shaped the participation of, an imagined female constituency who were meant to share the joke. Moreover, it is comedy as an industry-regulated discourse that creates but also describes, what is meant to be funny. The task ahead, then, is to read the text in a particular way to illuminate these various processes.

Regulating the Comic (Feminine) Gaze: Structuring the Comic Look for the Imagined Female Spectator-Participant.

The imagined female audience for an Oswalda picture is a young, single cosmopolitan woman. If we take the opening of the Oswalda vehicle The Oyster Princess, for example, we can see how this imagined constituency of women is structured, both within the text and beyond it. A group of young female secretaries is

assembled facing toward the front (camera), in neat rows taking down dictation. As the iconography makes evident, both the labour and spatial location, Quaker's office represents a modern kind of factory floor: it is populated solely by females attending to their secretarial duties in a large open space, working alone, either at typewriters or with dictation pads, while congregated together in silence. The spatial arrangement is, in fact, reminiscent of that other open-planned seating space – namely, the cinema auditorium. An imagined female constituency sitting next to one another in blocks of seats facing the screen on one side are spatially mirrored by the rows of industrious secretaries on the other side. The opening sequence introduces various points of cultural reference that the comedy discourse will use throughout the film. Although the narrative never returns to the diligent secretaries busy taking dictation from their pampered child-like boss, the American oyster magnate (of course, a joke in itself), it does create representation that will structure the humorous negotiations about changing social roles for women, female identities and the (feminine) gaze.

In the image of the silent and industrious female office workers, the film sets up a joke. The social image of modern woman hard at work and defined by social restraint and physical decorum is used by the text to comically contrast the American heiress, Ossi (Ossi Oswald) who aspires to a more traditional role. Behind closed doors, the fictional Ossi, who does not work but desires an orthodox married life, comes to disrupt the domestic and working tranquillity of the household. The first time Ossi is mentioned is when a servant comes to tell Quaker (Victor Janson) that his daughter is having “another one of her tantrums,” suggesting that this kind of rancorous behaviour from her is nothing new. Ossi is first seen violently smashing up her bedroom in an apoplectic rage. On hearing the news that her girlfriend, the daughter of the ‘Shoe-Polish King,’ is to marry a count, she flies into an awful rage because she too wants to marry a European aristocratic. Throughout the film, Ossi is prone to creating havoc whenever she feels that the search for her titled consort is not going well. Her wilful destruction of household property will indeed prove to be a regular occurrence. By establishing the contrast with the restrained behaviour practised by Quaker's secretaries, Ossi, as the pampered daughter of the rich American Oyster King, is quite literally out of control.

The fictional Ossi emerges as spoilt not because she is resistant to being kept by her rich father, or rejects the ideals of ‘true womanhood,’ but rather because she wants to conform to these bourgeois values. Later, frustrated by her father’s seeming inability to find her suitable consort, Ossi violently berates him for his inactivity and lack of concern. As Quaker sits in silence behind his newspaper, she tears it from him in an effort to get his attention. Without acknowledging her, he takes another paper out of his pocket but again Ossi rips it out of his hands. Finally, fed up with losing his newspaper, Quaker puts down his last copy and hands her a vase instead. Jumping up, Ossi smashes it against a mirror. As the glass shatters, a diffused and fragmented image reveals how Ossi has once again disrupted the harmony of the Quaker household because of her wish to marry well. The fictional Ossi, motivated by a desire to acquire an aristocratic husband, a grand title and social elevation, and as somehow calculating and false, is marked out by the text as unruly in relation to her *nouveau riche* social ambitions. Humour is produced primarily through her extravagant performance, strongly dependent on burlesque and slapstick elements, and markedly contrasted with Janson’s restrained performance as her long-suffering father.

Audiences are invited to look upon, and laugh at, Oswalda as her performance actively sets about ridiculing her fictional character’s aspirations to conform to the traditional feminine ideals of a socially advantageous bourgeois marriage. The more the fictional Ossi tries to acquire those skills needed to be a real domestic goddess, the more Oswalda delights in revealing the absurdity of Ossi’s social aspirations. Oswalda pokes fun at her character’s belief system, co-opting the audience to share in the fun. Freud has written on how those who share a similar fate use humour to lampoon the system which seeks to censor their behaviour:

“A joke will allow us to exploit something ridiculous in our enemy which we could not, on account of obstacles in the way, bring forward openly or consciously; ... the joke *will evade restrictions and open sources of pleasures that have become inaccessible.*”¹⁷

Freud’s observation about the purpose of humour and joking relationships offer us a means for understanding the visual and textual strategies that are involved in creating the joke and joking relations. Just as the institution of cinema encouraged audiences

¹⁷ *ibid.*, 147.

to visit it with expectations of laughter, even before the star had made anyone laugh, viewing protocols are constructed to establish the joking relationship between the star, her audience and butt of the gag (either a social convention or single person). In the sequence that finds Josef (Julius Falkenstein) mistaken by Ossi for her prince, for example, the spectator is invited to inspect his suitability for marriage via Oswalda's gaze. As soon as Ossi walks into the room to meet Josef, believing him to be her aristocrat suitor, her gaze is privileged. In fact it proves the means by which the audience will judge him. Taking out her monocle in an extravagant gesture, she closely inspects Josef, the desired object of Ossi's social ambitions but the butt of Oswalda's visual joke (fig.8.1). A close-up iris shot of Josef's bald-head and quirky expression looking straight at camera, reveals what Ossi – and the audience – sees (fig.8.2). "Good heavens! You look silly," exclaims Ossi. Josef's strangely grotesque, if not androgynous appearance, displays an image of non-threatening male sexuality.



fig.8.1. *The Oyster Princess*. Ossi inspects the 'princely' goods.

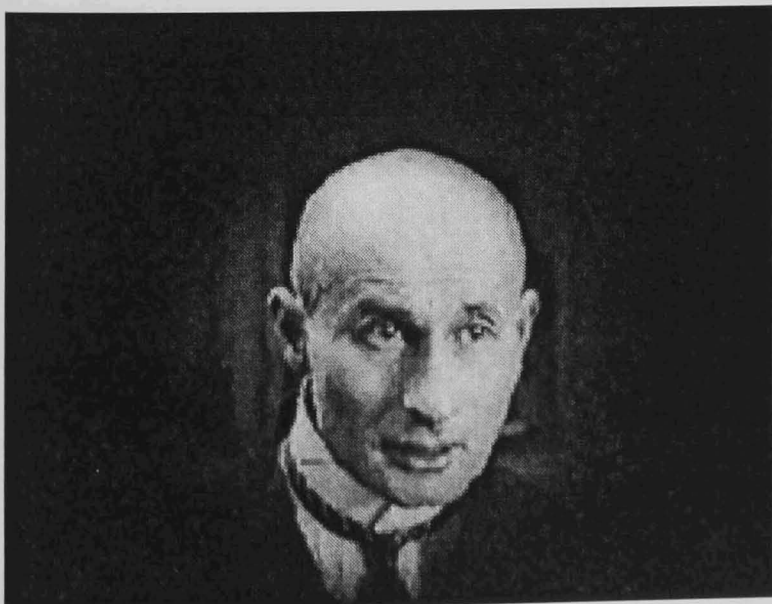


fig.8.2. *The Oyster Princess*. Ossi: "Good Heavens! You look silly."

Yet it is through her scrutinising gaze, and how she interprets what she sees that defines his looks as funny. The pay-off of the joke is the fact that Ossi is still prepared to go through with the marriage, despite her (and the audience's) unfavourable impression.

Structuring the humorous gaze in this way adopts a strategy that oscillates between objectification and direct camera address, reconfiguring the tripartite joke structure – female clown, fe(male) object and imagined female audience. Once the marriage broker has been assigned, the motherless Ossi takes instruction from a stern, ill-humoured housekeeper on how to wash a baby. Ossi practises her newly acquired childcare skills on a doll while the sullen housekeeper monitors her progress. Ossi first of all picks the doll out of the bath, and then begins to dry it by holding it upside down while violently shaking off the excess water. The austere older woman looks on in utter disgust. Dangling the upside down doll by one leg, Ossi informs the reproachful maid that “one must not spoil the first child,” an ironic statement from an only child who is herself utterly spoilt. Yet the failure of the fictional Ossi to master even the most basic skills provides an opportunity for comic pleasure, as the audience laughs at her ineptitude.

However, a textual shift occurs in the next scene, as Ossi the would-be mother gives way to Oswalda the comic clown. Ossi places the doll, wrapped in a towel, on a changing mat. While she starts to make a fuss over it, the housekeeper passes her a puff full of talcum powder. Ossi take it and slaps the talc straight into the doll's face. Laughter is inspired by the ingenuity of the comic who conjures up humour from playing on her character's ignorance of such matters. Whispering instructions, the housekeeper tells Ossi where the powder should have been administered. Ossi then turns the doll over and points to its bottom with a bemused expression. Nervously, the maid nods (fig.8.3.). Ossi looks straight to camera and laughs. An inter-title reads: “But that's really funny” (fig.8.4).



fig. 8.3. *The Oyster Princess*. Ossi takes advice.



fig.8.4. *The Oyster Princess*. "But that's really funny!"

Looking straight to camera disrupts the diegesis to reveal the illusionism of text, but also generates a high degree of intimacy between the actor and audience in the process, with the eye-to-eye contact allowing for maximum communication. Oswalda's recognition of the audience acts as a structural device to draw attention to the comic moment, cueing comic pleasure and laughter. Oswalda's remark "But that's really funny" is further positioned to have comic ambiguity: are we to assume Oswalda intended to make a joke or do we presume that Ossi made an honest mistake?

At this point of comic surprise and subsequent laughter, a cut brings us back into the diegetic world. Ossi becomes fed up with the lesson and hurls the doll across the room (fig. 8.5.) A quarrel breaks out between the two women, ending with Ossi violently planting a puff full of powder into the house-keeper's face (fig.8.6.) The

'punch-line' marks the close of the scene; the child-care instruction – and the comedy (temporarily) – comes to an end as Ossi storms off.

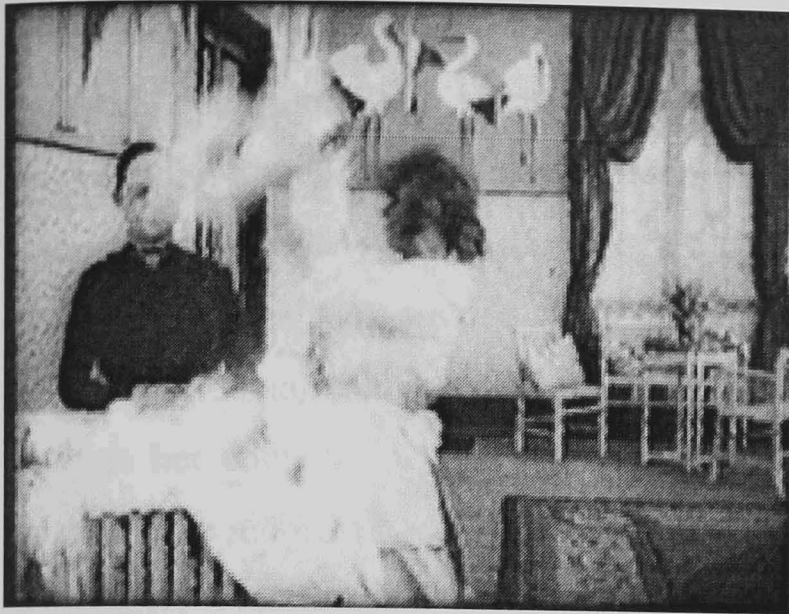


fig.8.5. *The Oyster Princess*. Throwing the baby out with the patriarchal advice.



fig.8.6. *The Oyster Princess*. The feminine pie in the face gag.

This sight gag acts to punctuate the scene, producing laughter through comic surprise. It also provides another opportunity for Oswalda to display her comic skills through parodying the old pie in the face joke. Just as she had earlier miscalculated where to put the powder on the baby, Ossi now appropriates its associations with feminine beauty as a comic weapon. Used as a cosmetic to smooth and scent the skin, talcum powder connotes ideas of cleanliness, purity and elegance. Thrusting the puff violently into the face of the austere older woman not only allows Ossi to vent her frustrations at not being able master basic maternal skills but Oswalda ridicules the processes involved in making the female glamorous. The joke being the old woman needs it more than her.

While the fictional Ossi emerges as unruly precisely because she is unable to conform to her own desires of being a dutiful mother, Oswalda's performance articulates a further scepticism about conforming to the norms of traditional feminine domestic behaviour. The whole sequence is spatially arranged to resemble an instructional film. Ossi and the housekeeper perform straight to camera as if to inform the audience beyond the screen on how to correctly bath a child. On one level, the fictional Ossi reveals, through the need for instruction, that motherhood is yet another social role for women to play. On another level, however, Oswalda, through her comedy, makes visible the constructed-ness of such a social role at precisely the moment her fictional self acts out the capitulation to an older model of femininity. Traditionalist values come into view as reactionary at the moment Oswalda acts funny, with her spontaneity and high-spiritedness made to seem all the more 'natural' when positioned next to the stiff and austere-looking maid.

Defined by high energy slapstick and a physical burlesque that disrupts narrative cohesion, Oswalda masters the screen space and visual attention as much as she does her own body. She paces about her private quarters, diagonally crossing these spaces with as many steps as her dress will allow. If she is not physically circulating around it, then she is hurling objects across it. In her first scene, she hurls a pile of newspapers across her bedroom; there is a cut to Quaker coming through the door, only to find himself on the receiving end of the papers flying through the air. Her gestures and movements visibly demonstrate the violence Ossi has to employ to get the husband she so desires so that she can be like her society friends.

Humour relies heavily on audience identification with the Oswalda star persona, which offers a context to her flagrantly appalling behaviour as Ossi the American Oyster Princess. While any number of actresses could enact this sort of unruly conduct, the associations between Oswalda's star image, the stock character type she was known to play so well, and her burlesque style of physical comedy rupture the narrative and character coherence. Reasserting the principals of 'monopoly film' culture, the star's bad behaviour was no doubt industrially motivated, driven by the already pre-sold elements associated with the Oswalda brand image. In so doing, ostentatious comic acting, often compared with the more restrained performances of her co-stars, had industrial implications in terms of

soliciting audience identification while retaining their customer loyalty through product differentiation. Precisely by exposing what is funny to the audience through Oswald's burlesque performance, the rules that operate within the cinematic discourse regarding formal vocabulary, textual conventions, audience expectation, values and assumptions can be seen functioning.

Regulating Modern Marriage and Suitable Spouses: The Oyster Princess.

Matrimony and the search for a suitable spouse is the subject of much mirth in The Oyster Princess. Freud writes on why marriage had long been a popular target for comedy.

“Among the institutions which cynical jokes are in the habit of attacking none is more important or more strictly guarded by moral regulations but at the same time more inviting to attack than the institution of marriage, at which, accordingly, the majority of cynical jokes are aimed.”¹⁸

Since the institution of marriage regulates sexual behaviour within an exclusive monogamous relationship, the joke, argues Freud, functions as a means of talking about desires which have to be repressed as a consequence. The (often smutty) joke makes known the return of the repressed sexual wish: “The strength of this joke lies in the fact that nevertheless – in all kinds of roundabout way – it has declared it.”¹⁹ Jokes about marriage in The Oyster Princess play out the sexual tensions and repressed desires identified by Freud. Yet, the humour goes further to create new knowledges about modern matrimony, mapping out this very reality through the ways in which the film pokes fun at modern relationships.

Seligson (Max Kronert), a marriage broker, is procured early on in The Oyster Princess to find a suitable consort for Ossi. Seligson's office is papered with hundreds of photographs of eligible partners in every price range. He is first seen in consultation with a female client: a tall gaunt woman whose features appear grotesquely elongated next to Seligson's diminutive stature. Coming across a likely candidate in his catalogue, Seligson escorts the woman over to the gallery for a closer inspection. She puts on her glasses and carefully scrutinises the picture. Visual latitude is granted to the spectator through her point-of-view shot: the man in the

¹⁸ *ibid.*, 155.

¹⁹ *ibid.*, 156.

picture has an awful squint (made to look even more ridiculous with Seligson's cane resting on the end of his nose). Furthermore, the odd image is reminiscent of those candid and instantaneous snapshots taken by ordinary people with their fixed-focus do-it-yourself cameras, a mass-produced item which could be operated anywhere. An argument breaks out: for the money, Seligson insists, the man only has a small defect. The woman, snatching her purse, exists in disgust.

Such a surprising moment is more than just a comic interlude. On the level of content, the sequence represents how the film pokes fun at 'official' attempts to monitor the modern marriage market in the face of changing social/sexual expectations, through allowing those with other ideas on the subject (particularly women) to resist pressures to conform. The purpose of the joke about purchasing a spouse from a mail-order catalogue exposes a discrepancy between pious ideas about marriage as a sacred institution and the cynical business practice of selecting a suitable partner to meet the buyer's requirements. Comic scenarios speak of modern life and of rebellion from stifling social convention that the cultural guardians had kept firmly in the public mind. But the film is not simply about transgressing accepted cultural norms. In looking at how the film erects its formal, narrative and generic strategies, we can see how humour functions to produce knowledge about its audience as modern social beings while popularising those identities in the process of making the audience laugh.

Knowledge about modern life is relentlessly constructed within the self-confirming parameters of the film's comedy discourse. Archival techniques, such as the photographic gallery and the card index system, are comically shown to be a necessary means for identifying and tracking down eligible suitors within the modern world of anonymous crowds. Just as the moral guardians sought to police the urban chaos by identifying certain troublesome bodies, Seligson devises a series of bureaucratic procedures to codify his clients, rationalise turnover and attract new custom. Bodies are categorised according to 'looks', 'wealth' and 'property,' a classification process that turns unattached anonymous circulating individuals into identifiable commodities seeking marriage. Eugenic considerations are humorously turned into monetary ones, with all bodies given a market value (including the cross-eyed gentlemen at a knocked down price). Comic attempts to locate and fix a price

for suitable spouses speaks of other forms of documentation, such as the passport and identity card, that sought to define a person-as-subject in the modern world.

Allusions to an earlier period of projected images (stereoscope, magic lanterns, trick films), performative styles (filmmaker as showman) and audience address are also indicated by the well-ordered photographic gallery and the unruly Seligson. Contrasted with the woman's stiff and haughty composure, Seligson has an anarchical physical relationship with his own body. His disorderly performance, reminiscent of earlier film impresarios like Georges Méliès, disrupts spatial coherence and self-consciously foregrounds both spectacle and the audience. Earlier film forms that "directly solicit spectator attention, inciting visual curiosity and supplying pleasure through an exciting spectacle," are absorbed and recycled.²⁰ While Méliès levitated, dismembered and spirited away human bodies through the phantasmagoria of the trick film, Seligson's 'magic' is more prosaic. Using bureaucratic means he is able to conjure up eligible partners from the anonymous city streets. Like Méliès' direct appeal to the audience, Seligson's sales techniques are directed to those 'customers' beyond the screen. The audience in the form of the female client thus appears to have crossed over into the diegesis to take issue with the selection made on her/their behalf, thus temporarily disrupting the tripartite joke structure – male clown, female object and male audience. Issues of audience address/interaction once more come to the fore, as a comic moment about an unsatisfied customer adapts earlier film forms, which blatantly acknowledge the spectator-participant and self-consciously let them in on the joke.

The active 'female' gaze is positioned as a source of comic excess while simultaneously being narratively sanctioned through social spaces that permit it to take place. Ossi first sees Nucki (Harry Liedtke) the day after her marriage to Josef, who she believes to be the aristocrat Prince Nucki sent by the agency. Nucki is brought in drunk to the intemperance society, a charitable organisation run by a group of millionaires' daughters. Charity work was known to be a socially respectable activity for bourgeois women in Imperial Germany as elsewhere. Participation in the 'female sphere' of charitable and religious activism gave middle-

²⁰ Tom Gunning, (1990), *The Cinema of Attractions: Early Film, Its Spectator and the Avant-Garde*. IN: T. Elsaesser, ed., *Early Cinema: Space, Frame, Narrative*, London: BFI Publishing, 59

class women access to a wider community where they could exercise considerable autonomy at a time when few opportunities existed for them to participate in the public space beyond hearth and home.²¹ Voluntary work effectively offered a training ground for these young bourgeois women. It encouraged feminine virtues of gentility and sexual propriety, and prepared them for marriage and child rearing. However all is not as it seems at this particular bastion of feminine restraint and decorum.

All the young ladies are assembled together in a panoptican hall, a space designed to keep the offending drunk in view at all times while giving the women visual licence to observe docile male bodies. Surveillance and repentance codify such a socially sanctioned gendered space. It is a disciplinary space in which men are answerable to women for their (pleasurable) moral transgressions. However the high-spirited young women are less interested in a tireless mission to reform wayward alcoholics than in looking for handsome young men amongst the inebriates brought before them. Ignoring an old dipsomaniac confessing to the errors of his dissolute ways by preferring to gossip instead, these bright young things respond very differently when the suave and elegantly dressed Prince Nucki stumbles into the auditorium. As he falls into a drunken heap, the women immediately jump to their feet in febrile excitement (fig.8.7.)



fig.8.7. *The Oyster Princess*. The unchecked female gaze.

²¹ Regina Schulte contends that the unmarried daughters of the upper- and middle-classes, working as unpaid volunteers, were recruited over professional nurses to administer to the sick at the front during the First World War. Schulte argues that the nurses' voluntary work "meant that it was unsullied by shabby materialism and professional ambition." [125] It fitted a propaganda model of the 'natural' woman as serving, caring and selfless: "These values were exaggerated in an image of ideal femininity and motherliness, which helped conceal the exploitative nature of nursing and deny the common assumption that it was a substitute for marriage and motherhood." [126] Schulte, (1996), *Sick Warrior Sisters: Nursing during the First World War*, IN: L. Abrams and E. Harvey, eds., *Gender*

Fighting is fierce as they clamber to the front for a better look; but then, as the comic premise has already set out, the modern marriage market is a tough place where only the fittest survive. They later reassemble in the courtyard, dressed in baggy jumpers and pantaloons, to settle matters once and for all with a series of highly spirited boxing matches.

Such spectacles of bodily desire over social propriety – the girls refuse to blush – would seem, on the surface at least, to play right into the hands of the reformists and their ‘official’ assessments about modern young women. However the spontaneous exhilaration of physical abandon and sexual anarchy is comically sanctioned within a social space defined by female ownership and its rules of exclusive membership. Sequences like this (as well as Ossi’s bathing scene and the destruction of her bedroom) offer a safe haven beyond patriarchal order and male interference. The confidence (rather than progressiveness) of these amusing scenes is an indication of how the comedy discourse sets up its own terms of reference and invites the audience to share in the joke. For example, the text encodes sexually liberated feminine behaviour as belonging to the American flapper and her modern sensibilities, thus displacing any possible offence her ostentatious excesses may cause. Yet, the mechanisms of humour make the image funny by converting it into a representation of playful disorder and self-mocking pleasures. The creation of the comical young women to laugh *at* and *with* allows the comedic discourse to define itself and strengthen its own identity for producing humour by invoking the juxtaposition of the two very different types of joking relationship.

How the spectator-participant is placed in relation to these joke-relationships, through the formal and textual strategies, offers both vicarious and other hidden pleasures. Like his portrait displayed on the marriage emporium wall, which invites the spectator/customer to share in the opinion that he is quite a catch, Nucki commands the imaginary visual field. He is positioned as a desired object rather than an active agent, and as the most appropriate bachelor, despite his inebriated state. Ultimately though, it is the status of Harry Liedtke as the debonair German film star that defines that suitability. Ossi, panting with sexual excitement at the sight of this

Relations in German History: Power, Agency and Experience from Sixteenth- to the Twentieth Century, London: UCL Press, 124-127.

man she has never met, is singled out from the other giddy females by an iris shot which offers a different point of entry for the spectator-participant, as the background momentarily disappears (fig.8.8.)



fig.8.8. *The Oyster Princess*. Seeing Nucki.



fig.8.9. *The Oyster Princess*. Caught in the female gaze.

In the following shot, constructed as belonging to Ossi's lustful point-of-view, Nucki stares straight into camera as his soppy expression gives way to hysterical laughter (fig.8.9.) Shifting point-of view editing and spatial disruptions thus implicate the audience both within the fiction as spectator-subject and outside it as fans of the stars and collectors/consumers of memorabilia. No sooner have spectator-participants witnessed Ossi's sexually charged reaction to Nucki than they are looking at him through her eyes.

The woman, in her shift from erotic spectacle to erotically lustful spectator, sets in motion a circuit of desirous possibilities which flows between character, spectator and star, inviting the audience to share in unlicensed visual pleasures. We

see here another example of the way in which the film continually repositions its spectator-participant, structurally playing out the terms of the tendentious joke in which, as Freud defined it, repressed desires are given expression through the telling of the joke.²² The changing status of the gaze means the spectator-participant is structured to intimately identify with Oswalda on several different levels. On a fictitious level, and in a bold move for a 1919 comedy, the spectator-participant shares a joke with the recently wed Ossi that marriage does not satisfy sensual desires or prohibit the woman from lustfully looking at another man. On a performative level, Oswalda co-ops the spectator-participant to share in the opinion that Liedtke is worthy of their institutional attentions, thus exciting further visits to the cinema.

Regulating the Female Ghost in the Patriarchal Machine: The Doll.

Sabine Hake has remarked that The Doll emerges as a feminine counterpoint to The Cabinet of Dr Caligari.

“Set in imaginary worlds, both films employ extreme stylisation and fantastic plots to achieve their peculiar dream-like effects. They play with the theme of mastery and the revolt of its creations (Caligari and the somnambulist Caesare, Hilarius and his mechanical dolls) ...

... Working with the tradition of Hoffman’s uncanny tales, Meliès’ cinematic trickeries and the attractions of vaudeville and the fairground, Caligari and The Doll function within the genre of the fantastic but, as finished products, conjure up very different worlds and almost diametrically opposed pleasures. Against The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari’s male universe of horror and madness, The Doll, oscillating between comedy and fantasy, represents a polymorphously perverse paradise: indeed Caligari’s alter ego.²³

Hake’s contention that The Doll represents “the feminine side of the [Caligari] project,” in which fantasy takes on an ideologically subversive role, provides a point of disagreement that frames this analysis.²⁴ Rather than view the fantastical settings and artificiality of The Doll merely in terms of industrial opposition, pre-Oedipal pleasures and ideological emancipation for women, I wish to suggest that making known the workings of the joke – and in particular the comic tensions created between the fictional Ossi playing a doll and the performance given by Oswalda – reveals artifice to be a far more ambiguous construct than has previously been suggested. Once again, through making mechanisms of humour and generic

²² Sigmund Freud, (1991), *Jokes and their Relation to the Unconscious*, 147.

²³ Sabine Hake, (1993), The Oyster Princess and The Doll: Wayward Women in the Early Silent Cinema, 25.

structures visible, the film excites pleasure around discursive knowledges about gender relations, marriage and sexual-social roles and female sexuality (of which an emancipatory model is but one) while giving representation to these issues within the narrative trajectory and spectacles of performance.

On the narrative surface at least, The Doll puts forward a rather chauvinistic worldview, a patriarchal saga of unruly women and long-suffering men. The film tells the story of young Lanzelot (Hermann Thimig), the nephew of the rich Baron von Chanterelle. Believing it high time his nephew settle down and take a wife, the Baron insists Lanzelot find a suitable bride as soon as possible. Refusing to acquiesce to his uncle's request ("I will not marry a woman!" he periodically declaims), and to escape the aggressive advances of the women who wish to be considered as his bride, Lanzelot seeks refuge in a cloister of greedy monks. The friars at first take pity on the sobbing Lanzelot and grant him temporary sanctuary. But it is not long before the monks stumble upon a solution to his plight which, as it turns out, is a ruse for getting hold of Lanzelot's considerable dowry without incurring further expense to themselves: they suggest Lanzelot marry a doll. Lanzelot is receptive to the idea and visits Hilarius (Victor Janson), a puppet-maker, to make the suitable purchase. Hilarius has just completed a life-style model of his own daughter Ossi (Ossi Oswald) when Lanzelot arrives. But as Hilarius negotiates with Lanzelot over the precise specifications his new 'bride,' the apprentice accidentally breaks the doll after a wild dance routine goes wrong. Ossi agrees to temporarily step in to save the situation. After several comic misadventures, Lanzelot discovers Ossi to be a real woman, and, with father and daughter finally reunited, the film concludes with Hilarius looking straight to camera: "Now I am rid of all worry." Yet further investigation into the discursive representations of sexual difference and generic strategies of humour reveal that there is far more at stake than the narrative restoration of patriarchal power.

Humour disrupts the verisimilitude of socio-cultural expectations, allowing for a negotiation to take place on the subject of marriage as a social institution. One early comic situation involves a group of young women fighting over an eligible

²⁴ *ibid.*

bachelor. Lancelot, defined as rather effete by his mother's constant mollycoddling ("What do you want from my baby?" his mother asks the assembled female crowd), appears to be an unlikely object for so much female attention. It is, however, his financial status and aristocratic connections that mark him out as the object of feminine desire and social aspiration. On hearing the news, made known by the town-crier, that the rich Baron wishes to see his nephew married off, forty eligible "virgins" begin a febrile pursuit of Lancelot through the Grimms-fairy-tale-inspired town and countryside. In a sequence reminiscent in both style and content of the popular 1905 American Vitagraph comic short, Personal, a hapless gentleman is doggedly pursued by a determined bunch of women. In so doing, Lancelot's objectification for the pleasure of the spectator-participant generates much humour in this particular film by revealing him as physically unable to deal with the persistent advances of 'real' women.

To some extent the disproportionate percentage of one male to forty females is easy to understand given the historical period, and the very 'real' socio-cultural loss of a generation of men who died in the Great War of 1914-1918. Yet, in making no reference to an outside reality, the artificially created landscape reveals another kind of false situation, as humour exposes the cultural and social expectations around marriage to be as much a textual construct as the surroundings in which these ideals operate. True romance loses out to the pursuit of wealth and a respectable social position for these young women. At the height of the comedy, naked social ambition and the artificiality of those values are made explicit to the imagined spectator-participant through Lancelot's excessive performance, defined by burlesque and slapstick routines. The association between comic spectacle and a critique of those social aspirations so blatantly on display emerges most obviously when Lancelot tries to escape the clutches of the women. His arms and legs appear to fly off in all directions, a virtuoso performance that draws audience attention both to the artifice of his social world and 'un-natural' state of the current marriage market within the terms of the film.

By upsetting the 'natural' order of courtship and sexual conquest, women quite literally take a far more active role in breaking taboos around sexual roles. It is, in fact, Lancelot who struggles like a bashful virgin to extricate himself from these

females. As demure young women turn from timid creatures into sexual predators, they do nothing less than confirm the worst fears of conservative and cultural guardians about the decline in appropriate feminine behaviours – and, of course, the female audiences that they imagined to be sitting in the cinema auditorium. But the purpose of this joke about the pursuit of men for financial gain and aristocratic titles (as with the humour produced around Seligson’s marriage bureau in The Oyster Princess) is directed against a social institution in which all women, both on screen and in the auditorium, are positioned to have a vested interest; as Freud contends: “The occurrence of self-criticism as a determinant may explain how it is that a number of the most apt jokes ... have grown up.”²⁵ Rather than view self-criticism as responding to external values, I see self-mockery as an internal mechanism. The way in which the film comes to ‘know’ the debates and controversies about feminine behaviour and sexual attitudes is played out through how the film form constructs the gag. Humour comes from the way the film constructs the transition between moral prudence and sexual aggression, displaying it as grotesque in terms of physical burlesque and stylised *mise en scène*, before revealing the punch-line: a cynical attitude toward what some young modern women are assumed to want from marriage.

Comic moments self-consciously appear, associated either with a pre-existing social world of male order or newer relations based on financial transactions, through the association of the technology of cinema with a humourous display related to the grotesque body. Making visible the materiality of cinema at the moment a joke is being told, and often at the expense of a person losing control of their restrained and cultivated body, polarises the sexes around uninhibited displays of greed and avarice. In the enclosed monastic world of the cloisters, the friars are first seen tucking into a huge feast: an iris shot displays an image of an overweight monk sharpening his knife and fork while licking his lips in eager anticipation of devouring the succulent roast set before him. Far from a chaste and austere monastic existence, religious seclusion allows the monks to enjoy earthly pleasures without secular responsibilities. Later, as the Baron starts to die of grief over his missing nephew, his relatives gather around the bedside to await his impending death. Far from

²⁵ Sigmund Freud, (1991), *Jokes and their Relation to the Unconscious*, 155.

comforting their ailing kin, family members start to squabble over his possessions. Paralleling the earlier sequence of the aggressive young women employing their considerable physical charms to extract an aristocratic title from a favourable marriage to Lancelot, the Baron's matronly female relatives find themselves at loggerheads over who will get the best china after his death: "To whom have you promised the base," asks one female relative to the Baron as she contests the ownership of a cup and saucer with another. At one point, two austere middle-aged women lose all restraint, and begin a fierce tug-of-war over a chamber pot. Pleasure is generated from seeing these two stern women lose all dignity and self-importance over a container for defecating in. A split screen cuts in with a long tableau revealing a close up of chattering women's mouths, encapsulating the meanness and emotional stagnancy of the existing bourgeois order and the respectable middle-class home established by the text. Exposing the technological materialism of film to the audience acts as a cue for laughter while letting them in on how the joke is made reveals the absurdity of the situation and the grotesque-ness of a bunch of respectable women who should know better. Formal devices are thus used to poke fun while revealing how representation of the grotesque is made in the process.

Patriarchy under siege remains a central theme, and humour is generated from the tensions created by the threat posed by feminine desire to men and the extraordinary lengths to which they go to disavow that imagined danger. Cynical jokes that poke fun at "the dogma of morality and religion," such as smutty jokes about monks and saucy women, have a long history.²⁶ Within the film, the monastery gag about how it has been necessary to completely eliminate the feminine in order for the all-male community to function is set up. Men are quite literally – and much to Lancelot's relief – out of reach from feminine temptation. It is a space beyond the control of women, purged, in fact, of all that which seems to complicate a man's life. Heterosexual relations between the two sexes are non-existent and human procreation is prohibited, replaced instead by a grotesque orgy of feasting and fiscal greed. Lancelot finds temporary bliss precisely by being locked away from the threat of an emasculating femininity; yet the virtues of the bourgeois household are retained by symbolic reconfiguring gender roles within the single sex environment. Soon

²⁶ *ibid.*, 153.

Lancelot is amusingly confined to peeling potatoes in the kitchen. His relegation to such a servile feminised position – the compromising of his masculine authority – within an all-male community is clearly a price he thinks worthy paying to be rid of troublesome females. Yet gendered compromises and displays of gluttony, all in comic excess of the plot development, reveal human needs and earthly sensual pleasures that cannot be so easily denied. Furthermore, the physical exclusion of women from the religious order creates a narrative stasis around Lancelot, a plot stagnation that need to be resolved: Lancelot must marry. The refuge offered by the monks remains a temporary narrative solution for Lancelot; the comedy also provides reassurance that the situation is only temporary and not irreversible.

A search for a compliant woman thus begins. Hilarius' household provides an answer of sorts. His workshop is populated with the most submissive of all women: beautiful waxwork dolls that have no other function than to arouse and please their (male) owners. Hilarius' lifeless dolls are the fullest expression of the deadening set of values that polarise men and women within the film: docile women over unruly modern ones, infantile fantasy preferable to a complicated adult reality and (male) control over (female) disorder. These inanimate figures in fact best represent what Laura Mulvey has described as an exhibitionist role for women in mainstream cinema, "with their appearance coded for strong visual and erotic impact so that they can be said to connote *to-be-looked-at-ness*."²⁷ The text does appear to play with this inter-textual representational idea of the silent screen goddess, a figure of manufactured glamour and quintessential feminine beauty. Within the narrative, such an exhibition of direct and silent female eroticism custom built to suit male requirements for the right price seems, on the surface at least, to solve all Lancelot's problems.

Humour is further produced by making visible an uncertain feeling that cannot be so easily suppressed – a momentary sense of pleasure and discomfort – that a lifeless doll has flickered in life: the inanimate doll has taken on a sexual life all of its own. Earlier, Hilarius' apprentice has been seen canoodling with the finished Ossi

²⁷ Laura Mulvey, (1991) Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema, IN: S. Thornton, ed., *Feminist Film Theory: A Reader*, New York: New York University Press, 62-3.

doll, kissing it and dancing with it in a direct and intimate fashion. The doll, in which any chance of a real woman articulating her own pleasures and desires has been eliminated, is controlled by the wish fulfilment of a boy on the verge of manhood; a fantasy which is actually rendered visible. Setting up this comic unease in a sense *creates* awareness of cinematic pleasures around looking at the female star in terms of both how she looks and how she is seen and desired by others. 'Ossi' refers both to the film star and the mannequin manufactured by Hilarius, the puppet maker. Letting audiences in on the joke, revealing the star as construction and the ways different spectators make use of these images, builds into the form an awareness of how it works.

While the stationary doll represents an unthreatening conception of feminine sexuality, the doll in movement proves to be quite a different matter. Nowhere does the release of male anxieties and the temporary loss of male control find greater comic expression than in Lanzelot's first encounter with a mechanical group of dancing dolls moving toward him in unison. Following the apprentice's cheeky waltz with the Ossi doll, Hilarius invites Lanzelot into the showroom for a sales presentation. Drawing back the curtain to reveal an inert group of dolls, Hilarius turns a large wheel to set them in motion. At this point, the dolls come to life, and edge ever closer to an initially enchanted Lanzelot. The animated chorus line then encircles him by performing a provocative can-can, a dance routine "linked to the sexual display of the female performer and scopical pleasures of the male patron."²⁸ Lanzelot cannot suppress the uncomfortable feelings evoked by the harmless illusion suddenly bursting into such dangerous sexual life, and he runs from the room saying: "I want a doll with a respectable character!" Similar to how the corporeal image of the waxwork female corpse provoked a moment of doubt in Franz Hessel and Siegfried Kracauer as they wandered through the Linden Arcade, the sense of pleasure giving way to discomfort defines Lanzelot's encounter with the automated mannequins. It is a feeling of dread that becomes spatially mapped out across the female body as material and knowable (the lifeless toy) while, and at the same time, spectral and estranged (the phantasmagoria of technology that brings the doll to life). Humour comes from an encounter that finds Lanzelot fleeing in terror from the

²⁸ Robert C Allen, (1991), *Horrible Prettiness: Burlesque and American Culture*, Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 231.

room. Reworking Mulvey's contention that the woman as visual spectacle "tends to work against the development of a story, to freeze the flow of the action in moments of erotic contemplation,"²⁹ the film makes a joke out of how the woman is constructed by and for the male gaze. The comic spectacle literally exposes the unconscious sexual dread beneath culturally constructed erotic pleasures designed for the male spectator. Making a spectacle out of the doll coming to life creates a psychic uncertainty – and even a narrative stasis – that produces laughter in the imagined audience at the expense of male confusion and our own spectatorial doubt.

A joking relation – the tripartite joke structure – between Ossi and the audience is established on the basis that the audience *knows* she is disguised as a doll. Humour is generated from the comic misadventures caused by her assumed identity. The imagined spectator-participant laughs with Ossi as she plays on Lancelot's doubts and fear of women and is allowed unrestricted visual access to certain (male) social spaces that have previously remained closed – a forbidden sight made possible by the comedy text. Returning to the cloisters after the wedding banquet, Lancelot elects to spend his first night as a married man in a monastic cell, thus reasserting his desire for celibacy and a life without real women. As Lancelot begins to undress, Ossi, much to his surprise, starts to giggle. Such an explosion allows the audience to take pleasure from Ossi's visual latitude. He in turn takes his hat and coat and places it over Ossi, a gesture that seeks to hide the uncomfortable feeling evoked by the doll's unexpected behaviour. She immediately throws it off, and he jumps back in horror. Not quite believing what has happened, he covers her up again, but once more she hurls the sheet onto the floor. Lancelot leaps into bed and hides quivering under the bed-covers. He finally emerges and gingerly moves across the room to inspect his doll. Repeating his actions once more, he moves back slightly but she remains still. Relieved, he quickly returns to kiss her before getting into bed and falling asleep. His kiss represents an intimate yet curious gesture for a man who thinks he is married to a doll, and one that suggests an awakening of desire he has earlier denied. The humour that structures the sequence is the asserted presence of Ossi as the woman behind the masquerade. The joke is kept going by making us aware at every possible opportunity that she is real, unlike Lancelot who thinks she is a doll.

²⁹ Laura Mulvey, (1991), *Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema*, 63

The film exploits the comic tensions between traditionalist ideals about ‘true womanhood’ and a performance style that makes visible the limitations of those ideals, a central theme running through all Oswalda’s star vehicles. Oswalda’s performance as the doll, in fact, calls into question the rigid constraints imposed upon the virtuous bourgeois wife. Mary Russo has contended that disorderly women “make spectacles out of themselves” in order to change how culture censors female behaviour.³⁰ In making visible that point around which two models meet and difference is revealed, Oswalda’s comic performance defines those limits by shedding light on how all modes of femininity and feminine behaviours are mere constructs. Rendered mute because of her assumed role as a doll, Ossi is reliant on making exaggerated facial expression to the audience instead. These ostentatious comic gestures invite the audience to laugh with her at both stifling codes associated with appropriate public behaviours for a married woman and at the unreasonableness of a bourgeois society that expects her to conform.

Ossi’s entry in her new home is greeted with a magnificent wedding feast, organised by the Baron von Chanterelle. The happy couple sits side by side with Lanzelot beaming at his new ‘bride’ while she simply stares straight ahead. A servant brings food for Lanzelot, but, as he goes to offer some to Ossi, Lanzelot sends him away saying that his bride “only has a small appetite.” Formality, sobriety and restraint define the behavioural norms of the complaint wife. Placing a plate of cake into her lap, Lanzelot turns away from his new ‘bride’ to talk instead to a rather attractive female guest; indeed, Lanzelot positively revels in the sexual freedom made possible by his new found status as a married man. Ossi’s silent acting out of feminine obedience reveals bourgeois expectations of marriage to be restrictive, a situation made visible not because Lanzelot treats his wife like a child but because no-one finds her quiet and stillness at all strange.

As the real woman becomes liberated from the machine, Oswalda’s comedic performance reveals what happens in the construction of representation during the formation of the joke. No longer able to keep up the pretence because of her real

³⁰ Mary Russo, (1986), *Female Grotesques: Carnival and Theory*, IN: T. de Lauretis, *Feminist Studies, Critical Studies*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 217.

human needs, she falls upon and devours the wine and cake as soon as noone is looking. Later, after Lancelot has temporarily left to collect his dowry and secure his financial future, Ossi starts to dance with the male guests. As Ossi takes centre stage, her dance routines are inter-cut with images of the guests looking on in horror, including an iris shot of a disgruntled aunt who glares with disapproval. Such spontaneity, as Ossi quite clearly makes a 'spectacle' of herself, questions the legitimacy of traditional patriarchal standards that define femininity in terms of restraint and a genteel modesty *precisely* at the point a different model comes into view. At the very moment she performs a new representational type defined by 'natural' charm and revealing an agile grace lying beneath stuffy conventions, the vitality expressed in Ossi's raucous dance reveals older models to be 'un-natural.'

The problem for the narrative is how to resolve Ossi's dilemma over her artificial status (e.g. how will Lancelot find out that she is not a doll but a real woman) and reconcile the competing models of femininity on display. In fact it is the phantasmagoria of cinema – the ability of film to create the fantastic – that produces the solution. Right from the start, the phantasmagoria of film has been foregrounded with the first shot of the director putting the final "Lubitsch touch" to a model of the fantastic make-believe world that his characters will occupy. Later on, after Lancelot purchases the Ossi doll ("I'll buy this dolly and take it with me") and she is wrapped and taken to the horse-drawn cab waiting outside Hilarius' shop, the unseen hand of cinema begins to work its magic. Stuffed into the carriage, she immediately falls stiffly into Lancelot's lap. He responds by sitting her up but she falls again, this time against his shoulder. He does nothing to correct the situation but kisses her instead. All this is intercut with an image of the moon, first sullen and then smiling. Not only does this short sequence map out joking relations – the audience laughs because we know what Lancelot does not – but the phantasmagoria of cinema – the painted moon that smiles – reconfigures the joking relationship. Consequently the text aligns itself with the spectator-participant as we see Ossi and Lancelot begin to fall in love. The film does not show the audience what lies hidden behind the smiling moon but it does render its magic plain for us to see. The hidden mechanics of the film text are offered as another pleasure for audiences, thus extending further their knowledge about product difference and fostering customer loyalty.

Ossi as the mechanised doll emerges as the embodiment of how the inanimate becomes animated through desire, stimulated by the unique possibilities afforded by the phantasmagoria of film. On his wedding night, Lancelot has a dream that his Ossi doll splits into two. As he fantasies that her soul comes to life, her spectre leaves her corporeal body behind, drifts across the bedroom and comes to rest on the window ledge where she blows him a kiss. A cut to mid-shot shows the ethereal Ossi standing next to his bed where she kisses him on the cheek. Such a manifestation reveals the uncanny hidden inside rational thought as defined by Freud.³¹ Lancelot's unconscious negotiates the hyper-reality of the Ossi doll with its natural colourings and real clothes. His unconscious, in its ability to imagine, through desire, such a physical impossibility – the transformation from inanimate to animate, the bringing of the corpse back to life – is a process that also refers to the phantasmagoria of film and the experience of cinema going. How the text assembles and juxtaposes different elements for comic effect is made manifest in how Lancelot plays out his desires for Ossi through the dream.

The splitting of Ossi – the moment when her flickering transparent image separates from the pure and immobile spectacle of the doll – reveals once more the iconicity of Oswald as film star. Oswald's ability to control the joke-making process is correlated to her artificial status as the doll. A joke is, however, made at her expense as she attempts to prove to Lancelot that she is real. He prods her: "I cannot believe that you are a girl," he says. At that moment a mouse scurries over her feet. She leaps onto the bed in a display of all too human terror: the reality of the mouse showing once and for all, that the artificial is sentient. Humour directed at her hysterical reaction to the mouse signals not only a narrative transformation in her fictional status – a shift from doll to woman – but also in her star status – revealing the woman behind the silent screen image – as the comedic discourse wrests the joke-making process away from her. Just as Ossi is brought to life by Lancelot's awakening desires, the star is only structured to have meaning through the audience's desire to see her perform on screen. Throughout the film, the audience is never allowed to forget for one moment that Oswald is *only playing a part*, whether as the doll or the fictitious Ossi. Performance techniques and spatial arrangements quite

³¹ Sigmund Freud, (1957), *The Uncanny*.

literally keep Oswalda in the picture. Earlier in the film for example, indeed the first time Lanzelot spies the Ossi doll, staging practices allow the audience to see his absolute delight with his new acquisition, while also enabling Ossi's sneezing fit to go unseen by him. Such a staging strategy not only aligns the audience with Oswalda over the joke at Lanzelot's expense but also maximises the star's presence on screen. This presence is effectively doubled in the dream sequence just analysed. The revelation that Ossi is pure fantasy reminds the audience that Oswalda is too, producing a further level of pleasure in the audience linked to fan culture and a repetition of the viewing experience.

Neither The Doll or The Oyster Princess have excited much academic interest beyond attempts to understand them as transitional films in the context of Ernst Lubitsch's career, an authorship reading that involves a teleological movement between two nations and styles of film-making – Germany (counter) and America (classical) cinema.³² In an attempt to understand the hidden pleasures and forgotten laughter of such films, it is imperative not to view the comic antics, star performances and outrageous spectacles as violating classical formal systems and resisting bourgeois cultural norms. It is important to judge these texts by different standards. My approach has been to read the film text as a discourse in a particular way in order to illuminate its structure and the way it *produces* representation for its assembled female audience. These textual analyses of The Oyster Princess and The Doll demonstrate how the comedy discourse constructs the rules that define what can and cannot be said within its own textual parameters. The rules of these film comedies operate within the self-defining limits of industrial conventions and the need to appeal to the expectations, values and assumptions of its imagined audience. What is funny is determined by the way in which the joke is structured within the text but also what it says about those who share the joke.

The Oswalda performance is positioned as key to this process. On one level, textual and formal strategies offer spectator-participant pleasure through narrative cohesion and objectification, as her fictional Ossi acts out a social role. On another level, the star in the process of being funny ruptures narrative integration and the

³² Sabine Hake, (1992), *Passions and Deceptions: The Early Films of Ernst Lubitsch*.

fictional verisimilitude to bring laughter to the fore by critiquing the social world and its values that define her character. But her performance also reveals other pleasures beyond the text linked to the centrality of the star within popular German film culture. In the process of delivering up these constructions, the status of visual and consumer pleasure, woman-as-spectacle and the representation of modern femininity is made known. The creation of the absurd – the setting up of the joke at the expense of another character or situation for the amusement of an imagined audience – proved necessary so that the cinematic discourse could define and strengthen its own institutional identity by evoking juxtapositions, further creating identities for its imagined constituency.

Conclusion.

The purpose of this thesis has been to offer a Foucauldian theoretical account of the female spectator-participant as a discourse within the context of early German popular cinema. My concern has been to investigate how she became an intense object of investigation and site of knowledge between 1910-1919. I have wanted, in particular, to identify how the early cinema *produced* knowledge about the female spectator-participant, and how this knowledge enabled the institution of cinema to define itself and strengthen its identity in terms of how its physical spaces (foyers, auditoriums) functioned, the types of product it sold (cinema tickets, movie stars) and the screen and other pleasures it offered. In the process of determining this knowledge about the female-spectator-participant, her institutional needs, desires and identity were *shaped*, and the status of visual pleasure and the cinema spectacle, and the representation of sexual difference *transformed*, as a result.

Chapters one and two provide the critical foundations, describing the various structural tensions embedded within the discourses concerned with the popular German cinema and the female subject. Reading the various academic arguments, bourgeois assumptions, official declarations, contemporary cultural interpretations and critical writings as discourse, the purpose was to map out what had or, perhaps more importantly, what had not been said about the female subject within the specific context of German modernity. Chapters three, four and five located further definitions, identifying new statements about the female subject as spectator-participant within the context of cinema as an emergent cultural form. Chapters six, seven and eight recognised another representational discourse in a series of close analyses of two German film stars and a few of their films.

This thesis has contested the view held by a number of film academics that the bourgeoisie appropriated cinema into its public sphere.¹ Investigation into the discursive

¹ Sabine Hake (1993), *The Cinema's Third Machine: Writing on Film in Germany 1907-1933*, Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press; Heide Schlüpmann (1990), *Unheimlichkeit des Blicks: Das Drama des frühen deutschen Kinos*, Frankfurt-am-Main: Stroemfeld/Roter Stern.

range of available source material, from films to publicity fliers, censors reports to newspaper criticism, shows that not one definitive position exists, despite the confidence exhibited by the bourgeois to define the debate. My intention instead has always been to locate a discourse and its speaker in order to look beneath what was said, to the assumptions and values inscribed right into the very vocabulary used to make what was said known. The German female subject at the turn of the twentieth-century described in the thesis, emerges as a dense, often incoherent and frequently contested discourse. This discourse of discursive coherence is organised around a series of textual struggles, cultural tensions and transformations: from lost archival object to subject of a new kind of public space; from official statistic to the subject of medical practice; from being tracked as a prostitute to the prostitutes' allegorical inscription into the *flâneur* text; from subjected to an anatomical examination to her technological objectification as a phantasmagoric illusion; from her urban walk written about to its filmic representation; from respectable patron to chatty and over-excited participant; from fashionable spectacle to distracted spectator; from consumed to consuming subject; from sexually desired to desiring woman; from butt of the joke to producer of the gag. I make no claim to push these categories beyond the limits of themselves, or to suggest that one model is more progressive than another, or more accurate and truthful than another. My strategy of feminist intervention is not simply to reject discourse, official or otherwise, because it seems irrelevant, inappropriate or out-dated, but to critically intervene to understand the conditions by which knowledge is decided, bounded and therefore – in principle at least – made known to us. In this sense, the thesis has constructed its own textual discourse around rupture and fissures, forgetting and remembrance, loss and recovery. Working against the surface of a number of different texts, it has considered the ways in which the institution of German popular cinema legitimised itself in terms of the type of female trade it wanted to attract, the layout of its exhibition sites to guide the experience for its paying clients, and the products it offered for consumption. Above all, it has explored how all this came to be imagined by others, including the bourgeoisie. Independent but inter-linked, then, the various statements illuminate the different ways of thinking, talking about and regulating the female spectator-participant as a discourse.

The thesis has been structured by three theoretical endeavours, independent yet interdependent with regard to the formation of discourse, and related to the writing of film history and feminist film theory. There is a need to understand the discourses that impact upon the reading process. For example, instead of taking it for granted that critical debates were simply about bourgeois cultural reactivity and resistance, we must interrogate the assumptions buried so deeply into the discourse that they were never truly acknowledged in the discussion. Despite its surface writing about cultural anxiety, the bourgeois edifice of culture in Germany of the teens and twenties was so hugely self-confident and authoritative that its capacity to define what it saw has gone unquestioned. My claim is we must look at the self-defining parameters of each discourse within its own terms rather than set competing discourses against one another. Reading discourse should be an internal process, investigating the rules and mechanisms at work. In so doing, we can better understand how a particular style of thinking imagines the cultural domain.

Within this context, there is a need to comprehend the popular cinema's imagining of itself as a totalising system to better understand how the cultural institution and its female audience appeared as a discourse. It was not merely enough to create a transparent space for cultural use, like the glass-built *Wintergarten*, the open planned foyers of the *Marmorhaus* or the cluttered spatial arrangements on screen, but to make sure that its purpose and function were made known to those who circulated around it and consumed the products on offer within it. This thesis has argued that it is imperative to understand the systems involved in making cultural spaces known to all. A complex set of strategies come into view that disseminated clues about the institution of cinema: trade papers, advertising, mixed media programmes, plush foyers, perfumed auditoriums, notices regarding hats, the presence of ushers and waiters serving coffee, cinema programmes, reserved seating, 'monopoly film' practices, the creation of a fan culture, all shaped the grammar which would make possible a definition of the cinema. It is through the outcome of these various tactics, to say nothing of the deep impact and socio-cultural change brought about by German modernity, that the institution of popular cinema came to imagine the female spectator-participant. The discourse defined

her fashionable respectability, her likes and dislikes with regard to humour and drama, her preferences for certain stars, and her institutional wants and needs for comfort, glamour and cultural pleasure. My definition of the popular as a corporate institution lies in the way in which it devised and used industrial practices and textual strategies to *shape* and *authorise* the female spectator-participant and her sense of self as modern. The thesis complicates the idea that the popular cinema provided a socially liberating experience for women in Imperial Germany. My point, then, is not that the *real* women came to the cinema as modern subjects but that the institution of cinema defined them as modern through constructing subjectivity for them.

My reasoning for selecting Asta Nielsen and Ossi Oswalda is because both stars best articulate issues around the popular cinema archive as a site of contested meaning, of loss and preservation, of forgetting and remembering. Nielsen came to public attention in 1910 with The Abyss, before the national film industry reconsolidated and regained profitability, only to be remembered as the accomplished actress who brought kudos to the culturally impoverished German cinema. Oswalda, situated at the other end of my chosen time period, is judged by the archive as a minor domestic star, little known outside Germany and then only in relation to the early career of Ernst Lubitsch before his departure to Hollywood. That both stars articulate tension in relation to domestic film production and international recognition, and a melancholic loss in terms of the popular German cinema, leads me to ask why does the archive position these figures in such a way? But rather than view the popular as about competing progressive/reactive forces within a broader historical continuum, the thesis claims that the strategies of the popular represent a dynamic yet *internal* field of formal and institutional interaction. Nielsen and Oswalda put pressure on internal categories, both institutional, cultural and gendered, in the process of representing femininity. Both star images were controlled by discursive knowledges but also exposed the mechanisms involved in organising that knowledge in the process of *producing* representation both on film and in the publicity material. Gendered positions, as a consequence, can only ever be imagined but never known.

Finally, then, there is a need to interrogate the academic discourse for dealing with the popular cinema and its female audience. Within the academic discipline of film studies, German popular cinema emerged as a field of scholarly debate relatively late, in the eighties. Soon it was established alongside the more culturally respectable Weimar cinema, and read as a counter-cinema through the juxtaposition. The academic canon of popular cinema has since constructed an archive of knowledge about itself that has served to perpetuate and reinforce, for better or worse, a representational 'otherness.' Indeed my initial interest in the subject came from questioning why the popular cinema was spoken about as marginal or lost and why the female spectator emerged either as distracted shop-girl or politically motivated New Woman. It has been argued in this thesis that scholars must investigate how a discourse is assembled and preserved, and to interrogate what makes that knowledge possible.

This thesis has a clear debt to Foucauldian thinking. Such a methodology has proved invaluable for understanding how the archive is constructed and maintained. For me, the power of the archive resides in its 'knowing' the popular cinema and its female audience, which in turn constitutes an exercise in the use of power to account for and make sense of the female subject. The Foucauldian methodology helps me see how the female subject is controlled by knowledge but also the mechanisms involved in organising knowledge about her. My strategy for dealing with each text is to describe what is present but also what gets left behind or rendered silent. Focusing on the integrity of a discourse rather than seeing it as competing with another allows me to contest ideas around resistance and progression, agency and object. Instead I claim that inconsistency and incoherence are embedded into the very structure of how a discourse is meant to be.

My contention, therefore, is that we must investigate how academic discourse regulates itself. Scholars must query the assumptions, values and thinking which is deeply embedded within their own discourses, in order to properly explore how the academy defines the archive. We must continue to agitate the debate, to ask why we say one thing about the popular cinema and not another; why we talk about one film and not

another; and why this thesis wants to talk about the female spectator-participant rather than the male. This thesis is offered as part of this on-going investigation.

Appendix 1. Prostitution in Berlin.

Systematic quantification of prostitution kept track of these troublesome females as they milled around city streets. For example, in 1897, the Berlin police regulated 3,000 prostitutes. By 1900, the number of registered streetwalkers tracked by Berlin's local constabularies rose to 100,000 (and 200,000 throughout Germany); and continued to increase, reaching 330,000 at the outbreak of war in 1914.¹ An American inquiry on prostitution in Europe published in 1914 delved into the question of medical procedures practised on apprehended women in Berlin.²

“Eight police physicians and four microscopists are occupied with medical inspection of whom four are on duty at one time; the work goes on daily, except Sunday ... The examination consists of a clinical inspection and the use of a speculum. For the detection of gonorrhoea, microscopic examination of the secretions are made fortnightly in the case of women under 34; monthly in the case of older women.

... clinical inspection is made of the mouth, hands, feet and other external surfaces: the genitals are invariably inspected with the speculum.”³

The research also made a note of how each doctor conducted between 1,500-2,000 clinical examinations per month; and, in August 1911, each of the four assistants carried out 2,646 microscopic investigation for gonococci, averaging ninety-eight checks per day.⁴ Each physical examination took about three minutes to perform. Infected women sent to hospital could only be discharged after three successive microscopic findings came back negative, and then this had to be followed up with a visit to police headquarters to confirm the results.⁵ Upward of 10,000 individuals were being treated for venereal disease in Berlin's public hospitals per year; and, quoting from earlier sources compiled by statisticians, the inquiry noted that the annual cost of prostitution for the German Empire, including expenses incurred due to lost earnings as well as for medical treatment, was estimated at between 300-500 million marks.⁶ Yet the real issue is not so much that a problem was identified but how the Berlin authorities had enumerated it in ever more sophisticated ways. Guided by these alarming statistics, civic authorities medically and legally processed the woman's body through police stations, law courts, hospital clinics and prisons, all of which, over time, gave real shape to the state's earlier fantasies/anxieties about dangerous female bodies moving across the urban landscape.

¹ Richard Evans, (1976), *Prostitution, State and Society in Imperial Germany, Past and Present*, 70, 106-109.

² The Inquiry was commissioned by the American Bureau of Social Hygiene, and sought to conduct a “a scientific investigation into the problem prostitution.” Results were first published in 1914: reprinted, Abraham Flexner, (1919), *Prostitution in Europe*, London: Grant Richards Ltd.

³ *ibid.*, 162, 167.

⁴ *ibid.*, 167.

⁵ *ibid.*, 167-8.

⁶ *ibid.*, 35.

Needless to say, monitoring the traffic habits of the prostitute justified tighter surveillance over all aspects of her life, both public and private. Although prostitution in Berlin was officially against federal law, the authorities through a process of compulsory and voluntary registration openly tolerated it. Inscripted prostitutes would be left alone provided they acted appropriately within the limits of strict police guidelines. Discretionary behaviour was essential, and the registered prostitute had to avoid causing public offense at all costs. Accordingly, she was prohibited from walking along Unter den Linden and Friedrichstrasse (to name but two streets) and in the Zoological Gardens. It was strictly forbidden for her to loiter (and reside) in the immediate vicinity of “schools, churches and royal buildings” and to attend “the theatre, circus, expositions, museums and concert halls.”⁷ Any registered streetwalker caught infringing these regulations ran the risk of arrest, and could even face a custodial sentence of up to six weeks. Inscription for the woman thus meant an act of confession, an open admission that her public life involved illegal business and criminality; but it also kept track of those on whom immediate expulsion from Berlin’s institutional and public spaces could effectively be imposed.

Responsibility for prostitution in Berlin fell to a specialised police division called the *Sittenpolizei*, or Morals Police. The unit was headed by an Inspector and five assistants, known as Commissioners, who, in turn, were responsible for a squad of two hundred men each. These regulars, dressed in plain clothes, vigilantly patrolled the city streets in pairs, keeping a watchful eye out for street soliciting. Working alongside the agents of the law were a team of doctors and medical technicians. This special unit was housed in premises that possessed an examination room (“a modern examining chair, hot and cold water and electric lights”), a microscopic room (with “the necessary equipment for clean and accurate work”) and a small hospital. Flexner reported thus.

“The division possess an excellent laboratory manned with trained assistants; and it is properly equipped with microscopes, culture ovens, animals for experimental purposes, etc. Patients are examined separately in a clean, well lighted room, containing all the necessary paraphernalia.”⁸

In such a multi-functioning building, as science and the law came together, an actual woman’s body could be possessed, and made to deliver up the secrets of prostitution as an issue of public health and physical degeneration. Each separate room generated knowledge about the social and moral condition of women. A broader narrative thus took shape from the medical evidence and scientific data collected from the female body; one that was less about

⁷ op.cit., 101.

⁸ ibid., 163.

prosecuting any individual woman than it was about identifying a pathology for her and coming to terms with what that meant.

Despite contrary claims, regulating prostitution proved notoriously difficult.

A little shrewdness enables them readily to avoid giving offence. Everywhere the police get hold of the dull and abandoned only. I recall the indignant rejoinder of a Berlin streetwalker, on my asking whether she was inscribed: “No, indeed, only the stupid are inscribed.”⁹

So good were professional prostitutes at evading police detection,¹⁰ and because so many unregulated – or ‘clandestine’ – streetwalkers (of which there were many more) operated outside inscription, suspicion soon fell on all female street traffic, especially those wandering alone in the retail and entertainment areas. The duty of the plain clothed morals police thus emerged less as an issue about looking for inscribed prostitutes contravening city ordinance and more about stopping any woman whose actions aroused suspicion. The morals police spied on all women moving around the new metropolitan spaces, placing them under similar surveillance to that which cinema reformers and vice crusaders were attempting with the female spectator.

⁹ op.cit., 124.

¹⁰ Charles Haxthausen, in his reading of Ernst Ludwig Kirchner’s expressionist paintings of prostitutes working along Berlin’s major thoroughfares, comments on how Kirchner became fascinated with the guises assumed by the streetwalkers to avoid police detection. Both *Potsdamer Platz* and *Two Women in the Street* depict prostitutes in widow’s veils which, during the war, were adopted by some Berlin prostitutes as a means of identification that needless to say retained a certain ambiguity. The mournful widow disguise also proved to be an excellent deterrent, as false apprehension of a genuine war widow by the already cautious Morals Police would have caused considerable embarrassment to the authorities. Haxthausen, (1990), ‘A New Beauty: Ernst Ludwig Kirchner’s Images of Berlin’ IN: C. Haxthausen and H. Suhr, eds., *Berlin, Culture and Metropolis*, Minnesota: University of Minnesota Press, 89.

Appendix 2. Berlin's Viennese Cafés and a Culture of Gentility.

Berlin's Viennese coffee-houses did much to institute a culture of gentility, creating a civilised ambience for visitors that would later be adopted by the movie palaces and more up-market picture houses. The Vienna Café [*Wiener Café*], one of Berlin's first Viennese coffee-house, was appointed under the octagonal cupola with its huge wrought iron chandelier in the centre of the Linden Arcade. Julius Faucher, a contemporary writing at the time of its opening, noted: "The first attempt to build a café in the Viennese style came with the new and elegant [Linden Arcade] ... The attempt was as successful as could have been expected."¹ With luxurious amenities designed for comfort, gentle amusements and rejuvenation, including a reading room and billiard parlour, newspapers and authentic Viennese coffees and pastries, it first open for business as a meeting place for the upper middle-classes who patronised the surrounding boutiques. Despite the loss of its aristocratic clientele at the end of the nineteenth-century, the café continued to cast its patrons less as paying customers than as social visitors, stressing the *experience* of sybaritic self-indulgence.

"The coffee was made in the Viennese way, but with the addition of so-called *Feigenkaffee* [Fig Coffee]; it was served in glasses instead of cups. The various combos of coffee and cream – following the Viennese example – were given special names according to the colour, such as *Mehr Weiss*, *Melange* and *Capuziner*, although no one in Berlin knew at that point what a Capuchin monk looked like. The cafe arranged to serve *Kipeel* and other Viennese coffee cakes, which an already considerable number of bakeries calling themselves Viennese had begun to produce ...

... All of the waiters were from Vienna; this gave the whole affair an air of authenticity. There were cashier-waiters, newspaper boys etc. Although the clientele could not entirely understand the new phenomenon immediately it soon began to acquire a taste for it."²

Authenticity over imitation, an exotic selection rather than familiar fare and rich coffee aromas infusing the air gave the café a distinctly feminine topography of indulgence built on leisurely service and luxurious consumption.

Soon, another Viennese coffee-house opened up across from the arcade, on the Unter den Linden, at the corner with Friedrichstrasse. Café Bauer represented a new kind of drinking establishment. Unlike its rivals, the café was open twenty-four hours, boasted numerous leisure facilities and catered for all tastes. Paul Lindau, writing in 1892, spoke of the café is instant popular success.

"Instead of the surly, leisurely service to which the patrons of the Conditorei [an older Viennese cafe located in Old Berlin] had accustomed themselves, were the nimble Vienna waiters with their excessive, sometimes even intrusive, promptness. Overseers and directors marched gravely across the

¹ Julius Faucher, *Vergleichende Culturbilder*; quoted in Johann Friedrich Geist, (1983), *Arcades: The History of a Building Type*, Cambridge: MIT Press, 153.

² *ibid.*

room to see that the waiters did their duty and that guests were shown comfortable seats when they came in. Behind the tall counter sat an attractive young lady, simply but tastefully dressed, who delivered to the waiters whatever the guest ordered to eat and drink, and who carefully entered every particular in the big register. In the upper story was the very best equipment for billiards, convenient card-tables, and a reading room of such ample variety as had never been dreamed of. In fact all the daily weekly and monthly periodicals of the older and new worlds were brought together there. The Café Bauer, in which one was better housed than was possible in any Conditorei, was better served, and could satisfy every desire more easily and at no greater expense, came at once into fashion. At first the Berliner were allured by curiosity to inspect what was to them a new species of public house and then it became the customary resort of all those who had formerly frequented the Conditorei; and of the great number of strangers and newcomers to the city who could get amusement from the visit.

The Café Bauer, therefore, is really always well filled, and in the afternoon, evening and far into the night, it is even crowded. ...

... the noisy surroundings, the constant coming and going and moving about, the rattling of cups and sugar bowls, the ceaseless striking of the call bell upon the buffet ... It was not suited for having your talk out leisurely. The Café Bauer has throughout an air of restlessness; it is a halting place for passers-by ...

... Guests are from all classes of society .. they must [however] be respectably dressed ...”³

This popular Viennese café thus made visible a bustling gentility, a new type of cultural behaviour that cinema exhibition would later exploit and encourage. Rationalising traditional café layouts and protocol, such as seating customers and a waiter service, but at reasonable prices, increased customer turn over and maximised profitability. The café, like the movie palaces later, aimed to create an atmosphere of social refinement, made manifest in the opulent building design and interior decoration (Anton von Werner, director of the Berlin Academy, for example, was commissioned to paint wall murals), while offering affordable consumables for all.

³ Paul Lindau, (1892), *Unter den Linden, The Great Streets of the World*, London: James R Osgood, McIlvaine and Co, 203-4.

Appendix 3. Cinema Censorship in Late Wilhelmine Germany

Responsibility for policing the cinema, like the registration of prostitutes, fell to district constabularies. Their right to intervene, as in the matter of streetwalkers, was based on the 1865 Prussian Penal Code, paragraph 10 that charged state law enforcement agencies with the civic duty of maintaining public order. Although a Reich law, it was left to individual states to interpret the law as they felt fit. Initially the task of monitoring moving pictures involved the actual inspection of premises such as travelling fairs [*Wanderkinos*], where films were being exhibited. However, policing was *ad hoc*, and practices varied from state to state. There were even internal differences within the same state as one city's procedures may have differed from that of another. May 1906 saw the introduction of a pre-censorship process in Berlin, following several police initiatives to ban a number of films about a known felon and his attempts to evade capture.¹ Cinema owners had to submit all films which they intended to screen to the local Police Commissioner, who would, in turn, return them marked: "Banned," "Banned for Children," and "Release." Similar measures introduced in Düsseldorf in 1910 meant that no exhibitor could screen a film unless it had been submitted to the police for at least a twenty-four hour inspection period.²

Official censorship in Berlin was first introduced in 1907. Tightening up regulatory protocol across the imperial capital was partially caused by local law enforcement agencies no longer being able to keep pace with the growing number of film venues opening for business. In part it was because fixed exhibition sites and converted shop-fronts [*Ladenkino*] were screening continuous movie programmes, and because inconsistencies within existing practice were making the system difficult to manage. Each film under the new public ordinance had to be accompanied by a censor's certificate. Information included: film title, production company, narrative synopsis, production number, the censor's official number, the date and adjudication. Cinema proprietors had, in turn, to be able to produce these permits for inspection at any time, suggesting that supervision was more than a mere piece of paper but was embedded within an ongoing process of surveillance.

¹ Herbert Birett recounts the story of Rudolf Henning (1874-1906). Henning in 1905 murdered a man, yet managed to evade police capture. After awhile he began to tout his memories around various publishers, before the *Berliner Lokalanzeiger* who offered him a cash sum of 17,000 marks finally took it up. Even though the editors informed the police as to his whereabouts, Henning once again managed to avoid arrest. Soon afterwards he was caught, sent trial, found guilty and sentence to death. So sensational was the homicide and the subsequent police chase that several film companies produced films about the Henning case, many ridiculing the police for their botched handling of the case. Such films could not be tolerated by the state. Herbert Birett, (1990), *Origins of Official Film Censorship in Germany*, IN: P. Cherchi Usai and L. Cordelli, eds., (1990), *Before Caligari: German Cinema, 1895-1920*, Pordenone: Edizioni Biblioteca dell'Immagine, 50-77.

² (26 May 1910), *The Bioscope*, 62.

Again the task of issuing and checking certificates fell to the local constabulary. Police authorities not only delivered up, under its jurisdiction, a visible landscape; the condition of visibility was dependent upon films possessing a certificate. Guided by pre-existing forms of surveillance and classificatory systems, and devising new methods for administering and monitoring this emerging cultural institution, official forces constructed an identification for cinema in terms of 'social disorder' (particularly for young people) to shore up its legitimacy in such matters and retain a strict hold over proceedings. As the German correspondent for *The Bioscope* wrote: "In Germany, the decision as to whether a film may be publicly shown is entirely in the hands of an irresponsible police censor. Most towns in the Empire follow the Berlin police censorship but Saxony and Bavaria have their own regulations. On the whole, the lot of those who make, hire and show films is much harder in Germany than in England."³

Most successful were those campaigns and reforms initiated by educationalists, as *The Bioscope* reported in 1912: "The schoolmasters of Germany are a highly organised body of men. They have a union, which is a model of what such an organisation should be, and which exercises a wide influence educationally."⁴ 1912 saw a committee formed by the Teachers' Union with the assistance of Rektor Lemke, educationalist and editor of *Die Lichtbildkunst* (a journal focusing on the educational and scientific sides of film), with the co-operation of The Society for Spreading Culture Among the People [*Die Gesellschaft für Verbreitung von Volksbildung*]. The aim of the committee was to investigate the educational benefits of cinema. Disseminating questionnaires to each member of the Teachers' Union, the committee's first task was find out the movie-going habits of children. The exercise revealed that many cinemas across the Empire were already regulating admission for children with special performances, as well as the general prohibition of young people after a certain hour.⁵ In May 1910, the Munich municipal council reviewed a proposal that forbid all schoolchildren from attending the cinema; and in the same month in Berlin, a cinema proprietor was fined for admitting unaccompanied young people under the age of sixteen, on the basis that the film being screened was not educational.⁶ Furthermore, in certain cities voluntary teachers' associations took responsibility for selecting suitable material for children. Hamburg, for example, had a group of teachers view all the films released and then communicate their selection to the police and local press: "The object is NOT censorship but the selection of films for educational value."⁷

³ (28 March 1912), *The Bioscope*, 919

⁴ (29 August 1912), The Cinematograph and Education in Germany, *The Bioscope*, 627.

⁵ *ibid.*

⁶ (26 May 1910), *The Bioscope*, 64.

⁷ (26 October 1912), *The Motion Picture World*, 14/4, 320.

Bibliography

Original Trade Papers.

German Language:

Berliner Morgenpost.

Bild und Film.

Erste Internationale Film-Zeitung, Berlin.

Der Film. Zeitschrift für die Gesamtinteressen der Kinematographie.

Die Filmkunst (Éclair). Illustrierte Wochenschrift für moderne Kinematographie
Film und Lichtbild.

Der Kinematograph. Organ für die gesamte Projektionskunst, Berlin

Der Komet.

Kunst im Kino. Zeitschrift für Lichtspielkunst, Berlin.

Lichtbild-Bühne.

Pathé-Woche.

Die Weltbühne.

Vossische Zeitung.

English Language:

The Bioscope.

The Motion Picture World.

Pictures and the Picturegoer.

Variety.

Primary Books and Articles:

Altenloh, Emilie, (1912-1913), Theater und Kino *IN: Bild und Film*, 11-12, 264-266.
_____, (1977), *Zur Soziologie des Kino: Die Kino-Unternehmung und die sozialen Schichten ihrer Besucher*, Jena: Eugen Diederichs, 1914, reprinted
Hamburg: Medienladen, 1977.

Bab, Julius, (1912), Die Kinematographenfrage, *Rheinlande*, 22, 311-314.

Balázs, Béla, (1924), *Der sichtbare Mensch oder die Kultur des Films*, Vienna:
Deutsch-österreichischer Verlag.

- _____, (1930), *Der Geist des Films*, Halle: Wilhelm Knapp.
- Beck, Leo, (1919), *Wie werde ich Filmschauspieler?* Munich: Lender.
- Conradt, Walter, (1910), *Kirche und Kinematograph*, Berlin: Hermann Walther.
- Crocombe, Leonard, (1914), The Girl on the Film. No.7: Miss Asta Nielsen, *Pictures and the Picturegoer*, 25 April, 218-219.
- Diaz, Pablo, (1920), *Asta Nielsen: eine Biographie unserer populären Künstlerin*, Verlag de Lichtbild-Bühne.
- Diehl, Oskar, (1922), *Mimik im Film*, Munich: G. Müller.
- Döblin, Alfred (1909), Das Theater der kleinen Leute, *IN: Das Theater* 1, 8 December; reprinted *IN: Anton Kaes, (1978), Kino-Debatte*, Tübingen: Max Niemeyer.
- Doering, August (1913), Dichter und Kino, *IN: Der Merkur*, 4, 299-301.
- Duenschmann, (1912), Kinematograph und Psychologie der Volksmenge. Eine sozialpolitische Studie, *IN: Konservative Monatsschrift*, 9.
- Eger, Lydia, (1920), *Kinoreform und Gemeinden*, Dresden: von Zahn and Jaensch.
- Elsner, Alexander, (1912-1913), Zur Frage einer Kinokritik, *IN: Bild und Film*, 2, 262.
- Finger, Willy, (1918), *Deutschkunde und Kinodrama. Eine deutschkundliche literarische Kampfschrift*, Berlin: Richters Druckerei.
- Förster, Franz, (1914), Das Kinoproblem und die Arbeiter, *Die Neue Zeit*, 32, 486.
- Forsten, Hans, (1918), *Wie wird man Kinoschauspielerin und Kinoschauspieler?* Leipzig: Deutscher Theaterverlag.
- Gad, Urban , (1921), *Der Film, seine Mittel – seine Ziele*, translated into German, Julia Koppel, Berlin: Schuster and Loeffler.
- Gaupp, Robert, and Konrad Lange, (1912), *Der Kinematograph als Volksunterhaltungsmittel*, Munich: Dürerbund.
- Goldschmidt, Paul, (1910), *Berlin in Geschichte und Gegenwart*, Berlin.
- Goll, Yvan, (1920), *Die Chaplinade. Eine Kinodichtung*, Dresden: Kaemmerer.
- Flexner, Abraham (1919), *Prostitution in Europe*, London: Grant Richards Ltd.
- Häfer, Hermann, (1913), *Kino und Kunst*, Mönchen-Gladbach: Volksvereins-Verlag.

- _____, (1914), *Kino und Erdkunde*, Mönchen-Gladbach: Volksvereins-Verlag.
- _____, (1915), *Der Kino und die Gebildeten*, Mönchen-Gladbach: Volksvereins-Verlag.
- Hauptstaatsarchiv Düsseldorf, (1910), (Kalkum) 9004; kino: letter (24 January).
- Hellwig, Albert, (1911), *Schundfilms: Ihr Wesen, ihre Gefahren und ihre Bekämpfung*, Halle a.s.S: Verlag der Buchhandlung des Waisenhauses.
- _____, (1913), Schundfilm und Filmzensur, *IN: Die Grenzboten*, 6.
- _____, ed. (1913), *Rechtsquelle des öffentlichen Kinematographenrechts*, Mönchen-Gladbach: Volksvereins-Verlag.
- _____, (1914), *Kind und Kino*, Langensalza: Beyer.
- Jacobsohn, Egon, (1919), Neuheiten auf dem Berliner Filmmarkte, *IN: Der Kinematograph*, 15 January.
- Klebinder, Paul, (1912), *Der deutsche Kaiser im Film*, Berlin: Verlag. P. Klebinder.
- Kracauer, Siegfried (1930), *Die Angestellten: Aus dem neuesten Deutschland*, Frankfurt: Frankfurter Societäts-Druckerei.
- Lange, Konrad, (1912), *Die Kunst des Kinematographen*, Korrespondenz des Dürer-Bundes.
- _____, (1918), *Nationale Kinoreform*, Mönchen-Gladbach: Volksvereins-Verlag.
- _____, (1920), *Das Kino in Gegenwart und Zukunft*, Stuttgart: Verlag von Ferdinand Enke, 1920.
- Liesegang, F. Paul, (1908), *Handbuch der praktischen Kinematographie*, Leipzig: Eger.
- Lindau, Paul, (1892), Unter den Linden, *IN: The Great Streets of the World*, London: James R Osgood, McIlvaine and Co, 175-210.
- Marcuse, Max, (1910), *Die Gefahren der sexuellen Abstinenz für die Gesundheit*, Leipzig.
- Messter, Oskar (1936), *Mein Weg mit dem Film*, Berlin: Verlag Max Hesse.
- Moreck, Curt (1926), *Sittengeschichte des Kino*, Dresden: Paul Aretz.
- Mungenast, E. M, (1928), *Asta Nielsen*, Stuttgart: Walter Hädecke.

- Noack, Victor, (1913), *Der Kino. Etwas über sein Wesen und seine Bedeutung*,
Gautzsch bei Leipzig: Felix Dietrich.
- Ostwald, Hans, (1905), *Dunkle Winkel in Berlin*, Berlin.
- _____, (1911), *Berlin und die Berlinerinnen: Eine Kultur- und Sittengeschichte*,
Berlin.
- Ott, Richard, (1918), *Der Weg zum Film*, Berlin: Lichtbild-Bühne.
- Pinthus, Kurt, (ed.), (1963), *Das Kinobuch, 1913*, Zurich: Arche.
- Pordes, Victor, (1919), *Das Lichtspiel. Wesen, Dramaturgie, Regie*, Vienna,
R. Lechner.
- _____, (1924), Chaplin, *IN: Die Weltbühne*, 20: 28-29.
- Porten, Henny, (1919), *Wie ich wurde*, Berlin: Volkskraft.
- Rennert, Malwine, (1914-1915), Nationale Filmkunst, *IN: Bild und Film*, 3, 53.
- _____, (1915), Film und neue deutsche Form, *IN: Der Kinemograph* (25
August).
- Schliepmann, Hans, (1914), *Lichtspieltheater: Eine Sammlung ausgeführter Kino-
Häuser in Groß-Berlin*, Berlin: Ernst Wasmuth.
- Schultz, Ernst, (1911), *Der Kinematograph als Bildungsmittel. Eine kulturpolitische
Untersuchung*, Halle a.d.S: Verlag der Buchhandlung des Waisenhauses.
- Sellmann, Adolf, (1912), *Der Kinematograph als Volkserzieher?* Langensalza, n.p.
- _____, (1914), *Kino und Schule*, Mönchen-Gladbach: Volksvereins-
Verlag.
- Siemens, Hans, (1924), *Charlie Chaplin*, Leipzig: Feuer.
- Warshadt, (1914), 'Aus dem Kampfe um die Kinoreform, *Die Grenzboten.
Zeitschrift für Politik, Literatur und Kunst*, 3.
- Weininger, Otto, (1903), *Geschlecht und Charakter: Eine prinzipielle Untersuchung*,
Vienna: Wilhelm Braumüller.
- Wintergarten Commemorative Booklet, (1938), *Festschrift 50 Jahre Wintergarten,
1888-1938*, Berlin.
- Zimmerschied, Karl, (1922), *Die deutsche Filmindustrie: Ihre Entwicklung,
Organisation und Stellung im deutschen Staats- und Wirtschaftsleben*,
Erlangen.

Secondary Books and Articles.

- Abrams, Lynn (1992), *Workers' Culture in Imperial Germany: Leisure and Recreation in the Rhineland and Westphalia*, London.
- _____ and Elizabeth Harvey, eds., (1996), *Gender Relations in German History: Power, Agency and Experience from Sixteenth- to the Twentieth Century*, London: UCL Press.
- Adorno, Theodor and Max Horkheimer, (1979), *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, trans. John Cumming, London: Verso.
- _____, (1991), 'Der wunderliche Realist: Über Siegfried Kracauer, (1964),' reprinted, 'The Curious Realist: On Siegfried Kracauer,' trans. Shierry Weber Nicholsen, *New German Critique*, 54, Fall, 159-177.
- Allen, Michael, (1999), *Family Secrets: The Feature Films of D.W. Griffith*, London: BFI Publishing.
- Allen, Richard, (1987), Aesthetic Experiences of Modernity: Benjamin, Adorno and Contemporary Film Theory, *New German Critique*, 40, Winter, 225-240.
- Allen, Robert C. (1973), Asta Nielsen: The Silent Muse, *Sight and Sound*, 42 (4), 203-209.
- _____, (1991), *Horrible Prettiness: Burlesque and American Culture*, Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press.
- Anderson, Benedict, (1991), *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, London: Verso.
- Ankum, Katharina von, ed., (1997), *Women and the Metropolis: Gender and Modernity in Weimar Culture*, Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Baacke, Rolf Peter (1982), *Lichtspielhausarchitektur in Deutschland: Von der Schaubude bis zum Kinopalast*, Berlin: Frölich und Kaufmann.
- Bailey, M, (1993), Foucauldian Feminism: Contesting Bodies, Sexuality and Identity, IN: C Ramazano, ed., *Up Against Foucault: Explorations of Some Tension between Foucault and Feminism*, London: Routledge.
- Balázs, Béla, (1982), Schriften zum Film, volume 1. eds. Helmut H. Diederichs, Wolfgang Gersch and Magda Nagy, Munich: Carl Hanser.

- _____, (1984), *Schriften zum Film*, volume 2. eds. Helmut H. Diederichs, Wolfgang Gersche and Magda Nagy, Munich: Carl Hanser.
- _____, (1984), Asta Nielsen's Eroticism, *Der Tag*, 6 April 1923; reprinted in *Hungarofilm Bulletin*, 3, 14-16.
- _____, (1984), Self-mockery on the Screen, *Der Tag*, 10 August 1923; reprinted in *Hungarofilm Bulletin*, 3, 16.
- Baxter, John, (1971), Some Lubitsch Silents, *Silent Pictures*, 11/12, Summer-Autumn, 14-17.
- Belach, Helga ed., (1986), *Henny Porten: Der erste deutsche Filmstar 1890-1960*, Berlin: Haude and Spener.
- _____, Gero Gandert, Eva Orbanz and Peter Schulz, eds., (1973), *Asta Nielsen, 1881-1972*, West Berlin: Stiftung Deutsche Kinemathek.
- Benjamin, Walter (1968), *Illuminations*, trans. Harry Zohn, Hannah Arendt, ed., New York: Schocken Books.
- _____, (1975), Eduard Fuchs: Collector and Historian, trans. Knut Tarnowski, *New German Critique*, 5, Spring, 32-55.
- _____, (1983) *Charles Baudelaire: A Lyric Poet in the Era of High Capitalism*, trans. Harry Zohn, London: Verso.
- _____, (1979), *One-Way Street and Other Writings*, trans. Edmund Jephcott and Kingsley Shorter, London.
- _____, (1985), Central Park, trans. Lloyd Spencer, *New German Critique*, 34, Winter, 32-58.
- _____, (1999), *The Arcades Project*, trans. Howard Eiland and Kevin McLaughlin: Massachusetts, the Belknap Press of Harvard University Press.
- Berg-Ganschow, Uta, and Wolfgang Jacobson, eds., (1987) ... *Film ... Stadt ... Kino ... Berlin ...*, Berlin: Argon.
- Bergstrom, Janet (1986), Sexuality at a Loss: The Films of F.W. Murnau, IN: S. Rubin Suleiman, ed., *The Female Body in Western Culture: Contemporary Perspectives*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 243-261.
- Birett, Herbert, ed., (1980), *Verzeichnis der in Deutschland gelaufenen Filme: Entscheidungen der Filmzensur*, Berlin: K.G. Saur.

- _____, (1994), *Lichtspiele: Der Kino in Deutschland bis 1914*, Munich: Q-Verlag.
- Boss, Pete (1986), Vile Bodies and Bad Medicine, *Screen*, 27 (1).
- Bredow, Wilfred von, and Rolf Zurek, eds., (1975), *Film und Gesellschaft in Deutschland: Dokumente und Materialien*, Hamburg: Hoffmann und Campe.
- Brennicke, Ilona and Joe Hembus, (1983), *Klassike des deutschen Stummfilms, 1910-1930*, Munich: Goldmann, 1983.
- Brewster, Ben and Lea Jacobs, (1997), *Theatre to Cinema*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Bridenthal, Renate, and Atina Grossman and Marion Kaplan, eds., (1984), *When Biology Becomes Destiny: Women in Weimar and Nazi Germany*, New York: Monthly Review Press.
- _____, and Claudia Koonz, (1973), Beyond Kinder, Küche, Kirche: Weimar Women at Work,' *Central European History*, 16 (2), June, 143-166.
- Bruno, Giuliana, (1993), *Streetwalking on a Ruined Map: cultural theory and the city films of Elvira Notari*, Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Buci-Gluckmann, Christine (1986), Catastrophic Utopia: The Feminine as Allegory of the Modern, trans. Katharine Streip, *Representations*, 14, Spring, 220-229.
- _____, (1994), *Baroque Reason: The Aesthetics of Modernity*, trans. Patrick Camiller, London: Sage Publications.
- Buck-Morss, Susan, (1983), Benjamin's *Passagen-Werk*: Redeeming Mass Culture for the Revolution, *New German Critique*, 29, Spring/Summer.
- _____, (1986), The Flaneur, the Sandwichman and the Whore: The Politics of Loitering, *New German Critique*, 39, Fall, 9-40.
- _____, (1989), *The Dialectics of Seeing. Walter Benjamin and the Arcade Project*, Cambridge: MIT Press.
- Budd, Mike, (1979), Retrospective Narration in Film: Re-reading *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari*, *Film Criticism*, 4 (1), Fall, 35-43.
- _____, ed., (1990), *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari: texts, contexts, histories*, New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press.
- Carr, William, (1991) *A History of Germany: 1815-1990*, London, Edward Arnold.

- Charney, Leo and Vanessa Schwartz, eds., (1995), *Cinema and the Invention of Modern Life*, Berkeley: University of California Press..
- Cherchi Usai, Paolo and Lorenzo Cordelli, eds., (1990), *Before Caligari: German Cinema, 1895-1920*, Pordenone: Edizioni Biblioteca dell'Immagine.
- Congdon, Lee, (1991), *Exile and Social Thought. Hungarian Intellectuals in Germany and Austria, 1919-1933*, Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Crary, Jonathan, (1994), *Techniques of the Observer: On Vision and Modernity in the Nineteenth-Century*, Cambridge: MIT Press.
- Curry, Ramona, (1995), How Early German Film Stars Helped to Sell the War(es), *IN: K. Dibbets and B. Hogenkamp, eds., Film and the First World War*, Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 1995: 139-148.
- Curtis, Scott, (1994), The Taste of a Nation: Training the Senses and Sensibility of Cinema Audiences in Imperial Germany, *Film History*, 6, 445-469.
- Daniel, Adam (1996), Writing about the Movies: Bourgeois Öffentlichkeit and Early German Cinema, *New German Critique*, 67, Winter, 177-189.
- Dibbets, Karel, and Bert Hogenkamp, eds., (1995), *Film and the First World War*, Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press.
- Diederichs, Helmut (1986), *Anfänge deutscher Filmkritik*, Stuttgart: R. Rischer/Wiedleröther.
- Döblin, Alfred, *Alexanderplatz, Berlin: The Story of Franz Biberkopf*
- Eisner, Lotte, (1969), *The Haunted Screen: Expressionism in the German Film and the Influence of Max Reinhardt*, trans. Roger Greaves, Berkeley: University of California Press,
- Elsaesser, Thomas, (1982), Social Mobility and the Fantastic: German Silent Cinema,' *Wide Angle*, 5 (2), 14-25.
- _____, (1983), Lulu and the Meter Man: Louise Brooks, Pabst and Pandora's Box, *Screen*, 24 (4-5), July-October, 4-36.
- _____, (1984), Film History and Visual Pleasure: Weimar Cinema, *IN: P. Mellencamp and P. Rosen, eds. Cinema Histories/Cinema Practices*, The American Film Institute Monographic Series, volume 4. Frederick: University Publications of America, 47-84.

- _____, (1992), Early German Cinema: Audiences, Style and Paradigms, *Screen*, 33 (2), Summer, 205-214.
- _____, ed., (1996), *The Second Life: German Cinema's First Decades*, Amsterdam, University of Amsterdam Press.
- _____, (2000), *Weimar Cinema and After: Germany's Historical Imaginary*, London: Routledge.
- Evans, Richard, (1976), *The Feminist Movement in Germany, 1894-1933*, London: Sage Studies in Twentieth-Century History.
- _____, (December 1976), Feminism and Female Emancipation in Germany, 1870-1945: Sources, Methods and Problems of Research, *Central European History*, 9 (4), 323-351.
- _____, (February 1979), Prostitution, State and Society in Imperial Germany, *Past and Present*, 70.
- _____, (1987), *Comrades and Sisters: Feminism, Socialism and Pacifism in Europe, 1870-1945*, New York: St Martin's Press.
- Eley, Geoff , ed., *Society, Culture and the State in Germany, 1870-1930*, Michigan: University of Michigan Press.
- Foucault, Michel, (1972), *The Archaeology of Knowledge and the Discourse of Language*, trans. A.M. Sheridan Smith, New York: Pantheon Books.
- _____, (1978), *The History of Sexuality. Volume One: an introduction*, trans. Robert Hurley, London, Penguin.
- _____, (1979), *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, trans. Alan Sheridan, London: Penguin.
- _____, (1991), *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences*, London: Routledge.
- _____, (1993), *The Birth of the Clinic: An Archaeology of Medical Perception*, trans. A.M. Sheridan, London: Routledge.
- _____, (1995). *Madness and Civilisation: A History of Insanity in the Age of Reason*, trans. Richard Howard, London: Routledge.
- Freud, Sigmund, and Josef Breuer, (1974), *Studies in Hysteria*, London: Penguin.

- _____, (1957), *The Uncanny* (1919), *Collected Papers*, volume 4. London: Hogarth Press.
- _____, *Jokes and Their Relation to the Unconscious*, London: Penguin.
- Frevert, Ute, (1989), *Women in German History: From Bourgeois Emancipation to Sexual Liberation*, trans. Stuart Mckinnon-Evans, Oxford: Berg.
- Frick, Heinz, (1986), *Mein Gloria Palast: Das Kino vom Kurfürstendamm*, Munich: Universitäts Verlag.
- Friedberg, Anne, (May 1991), *Les Flâneurs du Mal(l): Cinema and the Postmodern Condition*, *PMLA*, 106 (3)
- _____, (1994), *Window Shopping: Cinema and the Postmodern*, Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Frisby, David, (1986), *Fragments of Modernity: Theories of Modernity in the Work of Simmel, Kracauer and Benjamin*, Oxford: Basil Blackwell.
- Fritzsche, Peter (1996), *Reading Berlin 1900*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Gallagher, Catherine, and Thomas Laqueur, eds., (1987), *The Making of the Modern Body: Sexuality and Society in the Nineteenth Century*, Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Gay, Peter, (1970), *Weimar Culture: The Outsider as Insider*, New York: Harper and Row.
- Geiger, Gabriele, (1986), *Frauen-Körper-Bauten*, Munich: Profil.
- Geist, Johann Friedrich, (1983), *Arcades: The History of a Building Type*, Cambridge: MIT Press.
- Geyer-Ryan, Helga, (April 1992), Effects of Abjection in the Texts of Walter Benjamin, *Modern Language Notes*, 107 (3), 499-521.
- Gleber, Anke, (1999), *The Art of Taking A Walk: Flanerie, Literature and Film in Weimar Culture*, Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Göktürk, Deniz, (1994), 'How Modern is it? Moving Images of America in Early German Cinema, *IN: D. Ellwood and R. Kroes, Hollywood and Europe: Experiences of Cultural Hegemony*, Amsterdam: VU University Press: 44-67.
- Greve, Ludwig, Margot Pehle, Heidi Westhoff, ed., (1976) *Hätte ich das Kino! Die Schriftsteller und der Stummfilm*, Munich: Kösel Verlag

- Grossman, Atina, (1983), Satisfaction is Domestic Happiness: Mass Working-Class Sex Reform Organisations in the Weimar Republic, *IN: M. N. Dobkowski and I Walliman, eds., Towards the Holocaust: The Social and Economic Collapse of the Weimar Republic*, Westport: Conn, 263-93.
- _____, (1983), The New Woman and the Rationalisation of Sexuality in Weimar Germany, *IN: A. Snitow, C. Stansell and S Thompson, eds., Powers of Desire: The Politics of Sexuality*, New York: Monthly Review Press, 153-171.
- _____, (1986), *Girlkultur* or Thoroughly Rationalised Female: A New Woman in Weimar Germany? *IN: J. Friedlander et al, eds., Women in Culture and Politics: A Century of Change*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 62-80.
- _____, (1995), *Reforming Sex. The German Movement for Birth Control and Abortion Reform, 1920-1950*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Tom Gunning, (1990), The Cinema of Attractions: Early Film, its Spectator and the Avant-Garde, *IN: T. Elsaesser, ed., Early Cinema: Space, Frame, Narrative*, London: BFI Publishing, 56-62.
- Güttinger, Fritz ed., (1984), *Kein Tag ohne Kino: Schriftsteller über dem Stummfilm*, Frankfurt-am-Main: Deutsches Filmmuseum.
- _____, (1984), *Der Stummfilm im Zitat der Zeit*, Frankfurt-am-Main; Deutsches Filmmuseum.
- Hake, Sabine, (1987), Girls and Crisis: The Other Side of Diversion, *New German Critique*, 40, Winter, 147-164.
- _____, (1990), Chaplin Reception in Weimar Germany, *New German Cinema*, 51, 147-164.
- _____, (1992), Self-Referentiality in Early German Cinema, *Cinema Journal*, 31 (3) Spring, 37-55.
- _____, (1992), *Passions and Deceptions: The Early Films of Ernst Lubitsch*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- _____, (1993), *The Oyster Princess and The Doll: Wayward Women in the Early Silent Cinema*, *IN: S. Frieden, R.W. McCormick, V.R. Petersen and L.M. Vogelgang, eds., Gender and German Cinema: Feminist Interventions*.

- volume II. *German Film History, German History on Film*, Oxford: Berg Publishers Ltd, 13-32.
- _____, (1993), *The Cinema's Third Machine: Writing on Film in Germany 1907-1933*, Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press.
- Hall, Stuart, (1981), Notes on Deconstructing 'the Popular, *IN: R. Samuel, ed., People's History and Socialist Theory*, London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 227-240.
- Miriam Hansen, (1983), Early Cinema: Whose Public Space, *New German Critique*, 29, Spring-Summer, 147-184.
- _____, (1986), Pleasure, Ambivalence, Identification: Valentino and Female Spectatorship, *Cinema Journal*, 25/4, Summer, 6-32.
- _____, (1987), Benjamin, Cinema and Experience: "The Blue Flower in the Land of Technology", *New German Critique*, 40, Winter, 179-223.
- _____, (1991), Decentric Perspectives: Kracauer's Early Writings on Film and Mass Culture, *New German Critique*, 54, Fall, 47-76.
- _____, (1991), *Babel and Babylon: Spectatorship and American Silent Cinema*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- _____, (1992), Mass Culture as Hieroglyphic Writing: Adorno, Derrida, Kracauer, *New German Critique*, 56, Spring/Summer, 43-73.
- Haxthausen, Charles, and Heidrun Suhr, eds., (1990), *Berlin, Culture and Metropolis*, Minnesota: University of Minnesota Press.
- Hessel, Franz (1981), *Ermunterung zum Genuß*, 1933; reprinted abridged, edited Karin Grund and Bernd Witte, Berlin: Brinkmann and Bose.
- _____, (1983), *Spazieren in Berlin*, 1929; extract quoted in translation, Johann Friedrich Geist, *Arcades: The History of a Building Type*, Cambridge: MIT Press.
- Heller, Heinz, (1984), *Literarische Intelligenz und Film: Zur Veränderung der ästhetischen Theorie und Praxis unter dem Eindruck des Films, 1910-1930 in Deutschland*, Tübingen: Max Niemeyer.
- Franz Hessel, (1981), *Ermunterung zum Genuß*. Kliene Prosa, eds., Karin Grund and Bernd Witte, Berlin: Brinkmann and Bose.

- _____, (1984), *Ein Flâneur in Berlin. 1929 as Spazieren in Berlin*, Berlin: Das Arsenal.
- Horak, Jan-Christopher, (1995), Oskar Messter: Forgotten Pioneer of German Cinema, *Historical Journal of Film, Radio and Television*, 15 (4): 268-574.
- Huyssen, Andreas, (1986), *After the Great Divide: Modernism, Mass Culture, Postmodernism*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
- _____, (1986), Mass Culture as Woman: Modernism's Other, IN: T. Modleski, ed., *Studies in Entertainment: Critical Approaches to Mass Culture*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 188-207.
- _____, (1991), The Vamp and the Machine: technology and sexuality in Fritz Lang's *Metropolis*, IN: T. Elsaesser, ed., *Space, Frame, Narrative: Early Cinema*, Norwich: University of East Anglia Reader.
- Jacobsen, Wolfgang, Anton Kaes, Hans Helmut Prinzler, eds., (1993), *Geschichte des deutschen Films*, Stuttgart/Weimar: Metzler.
- Jardine, Alice, (1985), *Gynesis: Configurations of Woman and Modernity*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press.
- Jelavich, Peter, (1985), *Munich and Theatrical Modernism: Politics, Playwriting and Performance, 1890-1914*, Cambridge, Harvard University Press.
- Jenkins, Henry (1992), *What Made Pistachio Go Nuts? Early Sound Comedy and the Vaudeville Aesthetic*, New York: Columbia University Press.
- Jordanova, Ludmilla, (1989), *Sexual Visions: Images of Gender in Science and Medicine between the Eighteenth and Twentieth Centuries*, Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin Press.
- Kaes, Anton, ed. and intro., (1978), *Kino-Debatte. Texte zum Verhältnis von Literatur und Film 1909-1929*, Tübingen: Max Niemeyer.
- _____, (1985), Mass Culture and Modernity: Notes Toward a Social History of Early American and German Cinema, IN: F. Trommler and J. McVeigh, eds. *America and the Germans: An Assessment of a Three Hundred Year History*. volume 2. Philadelphia: Pennsylvania Press.
- _____, (1987), The Debate about Cinema: Charting a Controversy, 1909-1929, trans. David J. Levin, *New German Cinema*, 40, Winter, 7-33.

- Kemp, Cornelia, (1995), Oskar Messter and the Making of the German Film Industry, *IN: Celebrating 1895*, Bradford: National Film and Television Museum.
- Kenkel, Karen, (1995), The Nationalisation of the Mass Spectator in Early German Film, *IN: Celebrating 1895*, Bradford: National Film and Television Museum.
- Kern, Stephen, (1983), *The Culture of Time and Space, 1880-1918*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Kniesche, Thomas W, and Stephen Brockmann, eds., (1994), *Dancing on the Volcano: Essays on the Culture of the Weimar Republic*, Columbia, 1994.
- Knödler-Bunte, Eberhard, (1975), The Proletarian Public Sphere and Political Organisation: an analysis of Oskar Negt and Alexander Kluge's *The Public Sphere and Experience*, trans. Sarah and Frank Lennox, *New German Critique*, 4, Winter, 51-75.
- Koch, Gertrud, (1982), Why Women go to the Movies, trans. Marc Silberman, *Jump Cut*, 27, July, 51-53.
- _____, (1987), Béla Balázs: The Physiognomy of Things, trans. Miriam Hansen, *New German Critique*, 40, 167-178.
- _____, (1991), Not Yet Accepted Anywhere': Exile, Memory and Image in Kracauer's Conception of History, *New German Critique*, 54, Fall, 95-109.
- _____, (2000), *Siegfried Kracauer: an introduction*, trans. Jeremy Gaines, Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Kohlmaier, Georg, and Barna von Sartory, (1986), *Houses of Glass: A Nineteenth-Century Building Type*, Cambridge: MIT Press.
- Kracauer, Siegfried, (1977), *From Caligari to Hitler: a psychological history of the German film*, Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- _____, (1995), *The Mass Ornament: Weimar Essays*, trans. and ed., Thomas Y. Levin, Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- _____, (1971), *Schriften*, Karsten Witte, ed., Frankfurt: Suhrkamp Verlag.

- Kreimeier, Klaus, (1999), *The Ufa Story: a history of Germany's greatest film company, 1918-1945*, trans. Robert and Rita Kimbery, Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Lacqueur, Walter, (1974), *Weimar: A Cultural History, 1918-1933*, New York: G.P. Putman's Sons.
- Leab, Daniel J. (1997), Screen Images of the 'Other' in Wilhelmine Germany and the United States, 1890-1918, *Film History*, 9, 49-70.
- Linton, Derek, (1991), *Who Has the Youth Has the Future: Campaign to Save Young Workers in Imperial Germany*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- MacDonogh, Giles, (1997), *Berlin: A Portrait of its History, Politics, Architecture, and Society*, New York: St Martin's Press.
- Mason, Tim (1976), Women in Germany, 1925-1940: Family, Welfare and Work. *History Workshop: A Journal of Socialist Historians*, 1, Spring.
- Masson, Alain, (1994), Asta Nielsen: en pleine clarte, *Positif*, 404, October, 89.
- Monaco, Paul (1976), *Cinema and Society: France and Germany during the Twenties*, Oxford: Elsevier.
- Mühl-Benninghaus, Wolfgang, (1997), German film Censorship during World War 1, *Film History*, 9, 71-94.
- Mulder-Bach, Inka (1991), History as Autobiography: The Last Things Before the Last, *New German Critique*, 54, Fall, 139-157.
- Müller, Corinna, (1994), *Frühe deutsche Kinematographie: Formale, wirtschaftliche und kulturelle Entwicklungen, 1907-1912*, Stuttgart/Weimar, Metzler.
- _____, (1995), The Development of Film Length in German until 1918, *IN: Celebrating 1895*, Bradford: National Film and Television Museum.
- Mulvey, Laura, (1999), Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema, *IN: S. Thornton, ed., Feminist Film Theory: A Reader*, New York: New York University Press, 59-69.
- Negt, Oskar, and Alexander Kluge, (1977), *Öffentlichkeit und Erfahrung: Zur Organisationsanalyse von bürgerlicher und proletarischer Öffentlichkeit*, Frankfurt-am-Main: Suhrkamp.

- Nipperdey, Thomas, (1991), *Deutsche Geschichte 1916-1918, Arbeitswelt und Bürgergeist*, Munich.
- Roberta Pearson, (1992), *Eloquent Gestures: The Transformation of Performance Style in the Griffith Biograph Films*, Berkeley: University of California Press
- Peiss, Kathy, (1990), *Cheap Amusements: Working Women and Leisure in Turn of the Century New York*, Philadelphia: Temple University Press.
- Petley, Julian, (1979), *Capital and Culture: German Cinema, 1933-1945*, London: BFI Publishing.
- Petro, Patrice, (1983), From Lukács to Kracauer and Beyond: Social Film Histories and the German Cinema, *Cinema Journal*, 22 (3): 47-67.
- _____, (1987), Modernity and Mass Culture in Weimar: Contours of a Discourse on Sexuality in Early Theories of Perception and Representation, *New German Critique*, 40, Winter, 115-146.
- _____, (1989), *Joyless Streets: Women and Melodramatic Representation in Weimar Germany*, Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Peukert, Detlev, (1991), *The Weimar Republic*, London: Penguin.
- Pollock, Griselda, (1988), *Vision and Difference: Femininity, Feminism and the Histories of Art*, New York: Routledge.
- Pratt, Mary Louise, (1992), *Imperial Eyes. Travel Writing and Transculturation*, London: Routledge.
- Prinzler, Hans Helmut, and Enno Patalas, eds., (1984), *Lubitsch*, Munich: Stiftung Deutsche Kinemathek.
- _____, (1995), *Chronik des deutschen Films*, Stuttgart/Weimar: Metzler.
- Quaresima, Leonardo, (1990), 'Dichter heraus': The Autorenfilm and German Cinema of the 1910s, *Griffithiana*, 13:38/39, October: 101-126.
- Quataert, Jean, (1979), *Reluctant Feminists in German Social Democracy, 1885-1917*, Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Rabinovitz, Lauren (1998), *For the Love of Pleasure: Women, Movies and Culture in Turn-of-the-Century Chicago*, New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press.
- Rentschler, Eric, ed., (1990), *The Films of G.W. Pabst: An Extraterritorial Cinema*. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1990.

- Roseman, Mark, ed., (1995), *Generations in Conflict: Youth Revolt and Generation Formation in Germany*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Roters, Eberhard, (), *Berlin, 1910-1933*, Fribourg: Office du Livre SA.
- Rowe, Kathleen, (1995), *The Unruly Woman: Gender and the Genres of Laughter*. Texas: University of Texas Press.
- Russo, Mary, (1986), Female Grotesques: Carnival and Theory, *IN*: T. de Lauretis, ed., *Feminist Studies, Cultural Studies*, Bloomington: University of Indiana Press, 213-229.
- Sannwald, Daniela, (ed.) (1995), *Red for Danger, Fire and Love: Early German Silent Films*, Berlin: Henschel.
- Schindler, Stephan, (1996), What Makes a Man a Man: The Construction of Masculinity in F.W. Murnau's *The Last Laugh*, *Screen*, 37 (1), Spring, 30-40.
- Schivelbusch, Wolfgang, (1978), Railroad Space and Railroad Time, *New German Critique*, 14, Spring, 31-40.
- _____, (1986), *The Railway Journey: The Industrialisation of Time and Space in the Nineteenth-Century*, Berkeley: University of California Press.
- _____, (1995), *Disenchanted Nights: The Industrialisation of Light in the Nineteenth-Century*, Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Schlüpmann, Heide, (1982), Kinosucht, *Frauen und Film*, 33, October, 45-52.
- _____, (1986), The First German Art Film: Rye's *The Student of Prague*, 1913, *IN*: E. Rentschler, ed., *German Film and Literature: Adaptations and Transformation*, New York: Methuen, 9-24.
- _____, (1987), Phenomenology of Film: On Siegfried Kracauer's Writings of the 1920s, *New German Critique*, 40, Winter, 97-114.
- _____, (1990), *Unheimlichkeit des Blicks: Das Drama des frühen deutschen Kinos*, Frankfurt-am-Main: Stroemfeld/Roter Stern.
- _____, (1990), Melodrama and Social Drama in the Early German Cinema, *Camera Obscura*, 22, January, 73-88.
- _____, (1994), Cinematographic Enlightenment versus "The Public Sphere." A Year in Wilhelminian Cinema, *Griffithiana*, 5, May, 75-85.

- _____, (1996), Cinema as Anti-Theatre: Actresses and Female Audiences,' IN: R. Abel, ed., *Silent Film*, New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 125-141.
- Schulte-Sasse, Jochen, (1983), Toward a 'Culture' for the Masses: The Socio-Psychological Function of Popular Literature in Germany and the US, 1880-1920, *New German Critique*, 29, Spring/Summer, 85-105.
- Schweinitz, Jörg, ed. (1992), *Prolog vor dem Film: Nachdenken über ein neues Medium 1909-1914*, Leipzig: Reclam.
- Seydel, Renate, and Allan Hagedorff, (1981), *Asta Nielsen: Ihr Leben in Fotodokumenten, Selbstzeugnissen und zeitgenössischen Betrachtungen*, Munich: Universitäst Verlag.
- Showalter, Elaine, (1982), *Anarchy, Gender and Culture at the fin de siècle*, London.
- Simmel, Georg, (1971), The Metropolis and Mental Life, 1903, IN: D. Levine, ed., *On Individuality and Social Forms: Selected Writings*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 323-339.
- Staiger, Janet, (1995), *Bad Women: Regulating Sexuality in Early American Cinema*, Minnesota: University of Minnesota Press.
- Stamp, Shelley (2000), *Movie Struck Girls: Women and Motion Picture Culture After the Nickelodeon*, New Jersey: Princeton University Press.
- Stark, Gary D. (1981), Pornography, Society and the Law in Imperial Germany, *Central European History*, 14, 200-229.
- _____, (1982), Cinema, Society and the State: Policing the Film Industry in Imperial Germany, IN: *Essays on Culture and Society in Modern Germany*, Texas: Texas University Press.
- Tatar, Maria, (1995), *Lustmord: Sexual Murder in Weimar Germany*, Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Taylor Allen, Ann, (1988), *Satire and Society in Wilhelmine Germany: Kladderadatsch and Simplicissimus, 1890-1914*,
- Tebbe, Krista, and Harald Jähner, eds., (1987), *Alfred Döblin zum Beispiel: Stadt und Literatur*, Berlin.

- Theweleit, Klaus, (1987), *Male Fantasies 1: Women, Floods, Bodies, History*. trans. Stephen Conway, Cambridge: Polity Press.
- _____, (1989), *Male Fantasies 2: Male Bodies: Psychoanalysing the White Terror*, trans. Chris Turner and Erica Carter, Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Thönnessen, Werner, (1976), *The Emancipation of Women: The Rise and Fall of the Women's Movements in German Social Democracy, 1863-1933*, trans. Joris de Bres, London: Pluto.
- Tiedemann, Rolf, (1991), Dialectics at a Standstill. Approaches to the *Passagen-Werk*, IN: G. Smith, ed., *On Walter Benjamin. Critical Essays and Reflections*, Cambridge: MIT Press, 260-291.
- Toeplitz, Jerzy, (1987), *Geschichte des Films, 1895-1933*, Munich: Henschel, 1972.
- Traub, Hans, (1943), *Die Ufa: Ein Beitrag zur Entwicklungsgeschichte des deutschen Filmschaffens*, Berlin: Ufa Buchverlag.
- Trommler, Frank, (1983), Working-Class Culture and Modern Mass Culture Before World War 1, *New German Critique*, 29, Spring/Summer, 57-70.
- Usborne, Cornelia, (1992), *The Politics of the Body in Weimar Germany: Women's Reproductive Rights and Duties*, Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.
- Vidler, Anthony, (1991), Agoraphobia: Spatial Estrangement in Georg Simmel and Siegfried Kracauer, *New German Critique*, 54, Fall, 31-45.
- Wedel, Michael ed., (1999), *Kino der Kaiserzeit: Genres, Stars, formale Entwicklungen*.
- Weindling, Paul, (1989), *Health, Race and German Politics Between National Unification and Nazism, 1870-1945*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Werner, Paul, (1990), *Die Skandalchronik des deutschen Films 1: Von 1900 bis 1945*, Frankfurt: Fischer Taschenbuch Verlag.
- Willett, John, (1978), *The New Sobriety 1917-1933: Art and Politics in the Weimar Period*, London: Thames and Hudson.
- Zglinicki, Friedrich von, (1956), *Der Weg des Films: Die Geschichte der Kinematographie und ihrer Vorläufer*, Berlin: Rembrandt Verlag.