

FC76 Mass Culture and Nazi Germany - Reading Notes

From Caligari to Hitler (275-307)

Propaganda and the Nazi War Film

(3-11):

I. "These allegedly 'Americanized' films were true expressions of contemporaneous German life."

II. Film reflects mentality because

1. never the product of an individual
2. address themselves and appeal to the anonymous multitude

IV. film firmly rooted in the middle class mentality

Small shopkeepers, tradesman and artisans were so full of resentment that they shrank from adjusting themselves. Instead of realizing that it might be in their practical interest to side with democracy, they preferred, like the employees, to listen to Nazi promises.

(61-87) Caligari: the soul at work, wavering btw tyranny and chaos

"the dr. stands for an unlimited authority that idolizes power as such, and, to satisfy its lust for domination, ruthlessly violates all human rights and value."—an expression of resentment of war time German authoritarian.

"Down to the bulk of social democratic workers they refrained from revolutionary action."

The Fair: counter pole of tyranny

Czech Hans Janowitz, Carl Mayer: authors of **Das Cabinet des Dr. Caligari**

Erich Pommer: Chief executive of Declabioscop. 1923, chief of UFA. One of the most prominent filmmaker later fled out of Germany. He accepted Caligari.

Fritz Lang: Famous filmmaker

Dr. Robert Wiene: Director of Caligari

Expressionism

Film that expresses the same mentality:

Nosferatu: screen vampires. **F.W. Murnau** director

Bela Balazs: German film writer; half jewish; cameraman of **Triumph of the Will**

Fritz Arno Wagner: cameraman for Nosferatu

Vanina: endless escape.

Dr. Mabuse, der Spieler: by Fritz Lang. Shows how closely Tyranny and chaos are related.

Das Wachsfingurenkabinett: The last of the Tyranny period. The harassed mind retreated to a shell

(110-112) The Mountain Films: heroic idealism, blindness to more substantial ideals.

Dr. Arnold Fanck: Father of this genre, collaborate with Riefenstahl and Trenker

Wunder des Schneeschuhs

Im Kampf mit den Bergen

Fuchsjagd im Engadin

Berg des Schicksals

Der Heilige Berg: antirationalism

(251-272) national epic: glorify rebel, war hero and omnipotent leader

Der Morder Dimitri Karamasoff: By Fedor Ozep Dimitri left his wife to love a prostitute and it ended up with a rebellious murder

Danton (1931): Hans Behrendt revolution leaders in French Revolution.

Der Mann der den Murder Beging: Kurt Bernhardt Karl Mayer as supervisor

Acht Madels im Boot: Erich Waschneck a premarital pregnant girl who seeks refuge in the crew team, pre nazi SS spirit, Youth Movement

The increase and specific evolution of the Mountain film reflect the surge of pro-Nazi tendencies

Der Weisse Rausch: with Riefenstahl. Cloud display

Das Blaue Licht: “facial folklore:” faces resemble landscapes molded by nature itself the Soil

Junta: incarnation of elemental power. Conforms to a political regime which relies in intuition, worships nature and cultivates myths.

Luis Trenker :films that mark the junction of the mountain films and national films

Berge in Flammen: combat episode of WWI; glorify the ideal soldier; reflect the surge of passion bound to result in war. **Anti-chauvinism:** anti rationalism

Der Rebell: Tyrol’s revolt against the Napoleonic occupation army; nationalistic

Hitler Junge Quex: apotheosis of rebellious ardor

The epic is marked by Prussia vs Napoleon theme. Also Prussia’s humiliation with a view to her future redemption.

Die Letzte Kompagnie

Luise Konigin von Preussen

York: Gustav Ucicky’s UFA production: personal union of war hero and rebel.

Unfathomable surrender corroborates the meaning of York’s rebellion and...intimates that the other rebels of the pre-Hitler screen are also intrinsically authoritarian-minded

An elaborated image of the inspired leader supplemented that of the rebel, reflected by three Fridericus Films, preparing the mass for the furer:

Das Flotenkonzert von Sanssouci : Gustav Ucicky

Barberina, die Tanzerin von Sanssouci(the king’s dancer): Friedrich Zelnik

Der Choral von Leutmen: Carl Froelich

Dawn: by Gustav Ucicky: shown one day after Hilter became Chancellor. About a submarine during WWI

The rebellion group is loosly related while the leader group is closely related.

(275-307)

1. Nazi views and measures:
 - I. The weekly newsreels
 - II. Campaign films eg. Feuertaufe of polish campaign(Baptism of fire) and Sieg im Westen of French campaign.
 - How does German handle these two propaganda means
 1. True to reality; shots from the frontline; but it did not prevent a clever editor from composing their shots into films that blurred reality and set aside historical truth
 2. greater length
 3. quick speed
 4. thorough organization of distribution, domestic and internationally.
“official showings of these pictures werved as psychological holdups <in these countries>
2. Film Devices
 1. Numerous, Artistically subtle; excess use of newsreel shots
 2. It is to “surpass the faculty of understanding which might have undermined the basis of the whole system.; withhold information and merely propagandistic suggestion. To impress, not to instruct
 3. Use of commentary: noninformative, meant to impress, like commercial
 4. Use of visual: Maps: dynamic power, complete control of that field; potent emotional stimuli
 5. Use of sound
 6. Use of contrast. Insertion of leitmotifs
3. The Swastika World

All propaganda films were in emphasizing the dominance of the army over the party.

Baptism of Fire
Victory of the West

 - picture absolute leaders
 - filled w/ soldiers martial virtue, camping idyll, peace loving, political
 - contrast btw enemy soldiers and german soldiers
 - heighten enemy’s ability to heighten significance of german victory. Eg. Maginot Line
 - emphasize difficulty to enhance significance of victory
4. Screen dramaturgy

Not concerned of portraying reality, to dramatise the story
5. conflict with reality
pseudo-reality

Art of the Third Reich

Propaganda by Ellul

-Propaganda as a sociological phenomenon

- Truth out of context
- To intensify existing trend and lead to action
- Cannot live without education
- need of propaganda on the part of propagandee

I. Characteristics:

Agitation Propaganda: leads men from mere resentment to rebellion

Integration Propaganda make them adjust to desired pattern

The characteristics of Propaganda:

1. External characteristics

- The individual and Masses: P addresses to individual need and benefit from the mass where individual is sub-human and pretend to be super human
- **Total propaganda:** utilize all the technical means at his disposal and speak to all men, different forms of propaganda

Direct propaganda: aim at modifying opinion and attitudes, must be preceded by sociological propaganda(prepropaganda)

Pre-propagand/sub-propaganda (sociological propaganda): without direct or noticeable aggression, is limited to creating ambiguities, reducing prejudices and spreading images, apparently without purpose. Thru conditioned reflex and **myth:** an all encompassing, activating image.

Active Propaganda:

Covert propaganda/ Black propaganda: tend to hide its aims, identity, significance and source

Overt propaganda/ White propaganda: open and aboveboard

Direct incitement: by which the propagandist himself acts, becomes involved, demonstrates his conviction and belief. Eg. democratic propaganda

Indirect incitement: rests on a difference btw the statesman who takes action and the public which is limited to passive acceptance and compliance.

- Continuous and lasting: diff. from political campaign.
- Organization: administrative org. exerting physical influence; rooted in action; effective inside a group; manipulation of symbol; separate propagandist
- **Orthopraxy:** to make individual cling irrationally to action; an action that in itself, not judgment, that leads to a goal. As supposed to **Orthodoxy**

2. Internal characteristics:

Psychology

- propaganda cannot go contrary to what is in an individual
- never make a direct attack on an established, reasoned, durable opinion or an accepted cliché, but there is no continuity btw opinion and action and propaganda can alter opinion by placing them in an ambiguous context.
- Cannot create something from nothing
- Must concern himself above all with the needs of those whom he wishes to reach, the common feelings

Fundamental society current

- propaganda must reflect the collective **sociological presuppositions** and the **social myths**

Sociological presupposition: a collection of feelings, beliefs and images by which one unconsciously judges events and things without questioning them.

1. Happiness
2. that man is naturally good
3. that history develops in endless progress
4. everything is matter

Social Myth: deep inclination of a society, without which the masses would not cling to a certain civilization or its process of development and crisis. It's impulsive, irrational., contains religious elements: Science and History → myth of work, happiness, nation, youth, hero

Timeliness

Effect on the Undecided

- must place inside the limits of the foci of interest
- must understand that his propaganda is most effective when the collective life is intense
- collective life is most strong when the foci of interest is strong

2. Categories of Propaganda

Political propaganda: employed by government to change the view of the public

Sociological propaganda: the entire group, consciously or unconsciously, expresses itself in this fashion; and its influence aims much more at an entire style of life than at opinion or even one particular course of behavior.

Agitation propaganda: it seeks rebellion or war; try to stretch energies to the utmost, obtain substantial sacrifices and induce the individual to bear heavy ordeals.

Integration propaganda: of conformity stabilization and unification; to bring a total adherence to a society's truth and behavioral patterns.

Vertical propaganda: leader to general public

Horizontal propaganda: made inside the group. Seek "conscious adherence"

Rational propaganda: information is addressed to reason and experiences

Irrational propaganda: addressed to feeling and passions.

III. Conditions

1. sociologic

- it must be both individualistic and a mass society. Individuals but be of no strong local group for propaganda to get in; society must be massive.
- public opinion: propaganda can only exist when second-hand opinion definitely dominates primary opinion and the latter is reduced to a minority position.

- Mass media of communication

2. Objective conditions of Total propaganda

- Need of an average standard of living
- An average culture
- Information: it has to have reference to political or economic reality
- Ideologies: a set of ideas that ppl accept without knowing its source; an element of valuation (cherished); an element of actuality (related to the present); an element of belief (not proved)

IV. The Necessity for Propaganda

1. State's necessity:

- Politics cannot escape mass, yet public opinion cannot express itself in the democratic form of government.
- government cannot claim legitimacy unless resting on the sovereignty of ppl
- external competitions

2. individual's necessity

objective situation

need for explanation, value

feeling of participation, but laziness but inability; need justification for sacrifice
man is not adjusted to living conditions imposed by modern world.

Subjective situation:

The loneliness inside the mass

The society push man more in to passivity

Feel diminished b/c society and need importance

Feel tension to group and society

Feel anxiety

Feel guilty

p. permits man to cast off inhibition w/o being antimoral and anti-social.

IV. Psychological Effect

1. psychological Crystallization

a. latent drives that are vague w/o clear objective suddenly become powerful, clear and precise. Standardize current ideas, hardens stereotypes, furnish thought patterns;

→ occupy ppl's entire consciousness. Refuse any new ideas (all new ideas are p.)

b. self-justification for which man has great need; build monolithic individuals

→ reduce tension, give ppl a religious personality

2. Alienation thru P.

To be someone else than one's self; belong to someone else.

To reinforcing the individual's inclination to lose himself for something bigger.

To disappear everything critical and of personal judgment and never easy to retrieve

Lead to projection into/identify w/ a hero/leader/fusion w/ mass.

To submit to external impulses/irrational collective behavior

Alienation thru artificial satisfaction of real need/ real satisfaction of artificial needs

Creates artificial need

3. psychic dissociation Effect

dissociation btw thoughts and action

4. creation of the Need for propaganda

Mithridatization: under propaganda, individuals are eventually accustomed and insensitive to propaganda. But he continues to show reflex to symbols and msg.

Sensibilization: the more the individual's captured by propaganda the more sensitive to the impetus.

Ppl at this stage cannot live w/o p. b/c

a. anxiety cannot be relieved

b. self-importance cannot be realized

c. justification lost

5. the ambiguity of psych effect

- create tension and ease them at the same time. Agitation p.: create; integration p. :
easement.

- Create self justification and guilt feeling at the same time.

- Agent of attachment and disruption.

- **Politization:** get ppl into politics. Self fulfillment only in politics

Or Privatization: consider one's private affaires more important and produce
skepticism to state affaires

IV. Socio-political effects

1. propaganda & ideology

traditional relations:

to expand ideology; simply to transmit beliefs and ideas
to Hitler, ideology serves propaganda.

New relations

Propaganda becomes autonomous

Propagandist can not believe in the ideology

Ideology is just accessories, being stimulated and mythologized, and used for justification when useful.

2. on structure of public opinion

Modification of the constituent elements of public opinion

- crystallization
- simplification
- separate stereotyped opinions and profound attitudes, devalue the latter

from opinion to action

to dissociate personal opinion and action.

3. Grouping

-partition of group

-intensify the political group by creating the image of a omnipotent leader and omniscient

world of labor

create a psychological labor problem and give psychological solution.

4. Propaganda and democracy

Need:

Democracy depends on public opinion and competition btw political parties

Modern propaganda's from democracy: it 's obligatory in face of external relations

Its notion of a hidden truth (not history, not simple logic)

democratic propaganda

-although there's no state monopoly, there's private monopoly

-certain opinions r still censored

-subject to certain values, fettered

-circumstance driven, cannot be total

-**contrasted incitement:** authority induce an effect in the mass that he does not participate

positive incitement: power's real feeling and invite ppl to join

external propaganda:

cannot create democratic behavior by promulgation of a myth—which is the only way of making propaganda outside

internal propaganda:

must be comprehensible and all-embracing

cannot be democratic and religious

Ministry of Illusion

A legend for modern Times: The Blue Light

1. Itself the product of considerable recourse to tradition, of recasting and recycling, The Blue light offers legend that reflects and embodies a distinctly modern process of appropriation. The narrative dramatizes the plundering of nature and the undoing of a woman, stylizing the double violation in the form of a village chronicle. Riefenstahl's film sanctifies premodern landscapes and documents a village's entry into modernity. In so doing, it enacts a tension between the romantic worship of nature and an enlightened instrumental reason.

2. "Oskar Kalbus...praised the Alpine community's racial vitality"

"The film may well convey blood-and-soil sentiment, but it also shows a thriving nascent culture industry.

2. Bela Balazs: the camera men of Blue Light. Denied credit because being a Jew: "[beauty] represented a subjective experience of human consciousness and a function of different 'races, epochs and cultures.'"

Introduction: The power of Illusions:

1. in the context of a totalitarian state's concerted attempt to create a culture industry for mass deception
2. entertainment played a crucial political role
3. orchestra principle
4. we cannot speak about Nazi w/o speaking about aesthetics
5. ...

Ufa

Chpt 17

- Dr. Goebbels's debut in 1933 as the director of propaganda – boycott of Jewish colleagues in Ufa
- Ludwig Klitzsch produced the first anti-Semitic movie which developed into the purge of Ufa leadership and technicians
- 2 months after the Nazis seized power, Germany saw the exodus of its most talented film artists
- Gigantic rallies

Chpt 18

- Film Credit Bank established by Goebbels subsidized filmmaking in Germany.
- Ufa started to dominate the film producing industry in Germany

Chpt 19

- Reich film Guild

Chpt 20

- a lot of erotic pleasure seeking in German movies before 1939 and other kinds of private enjoyment as opposed to Nazi's mass ornament.
- Allow foreign movies, esp. American to be shown in German before 1939.
- Goebbels' affair with actress Baarova

Chpt 21

- Fascism aesthetics is about artificial grandeur.
- Details of re-staged studio production of scenes in Triumph of the Will

- Use of light to augment Hitler's heroic mysteriousness.

Chpt 22

- Removal of high officials in Ufa
- Rating system for all movies
- Ufa bankruptcy due to disappearing foreign trade and government running.
- 1937, Ufa leadership changed again and it became totally subordinate to the Nazi.
- Full stock ownership of the state
- Filmscripts pressed Nazi propaganda into pre-formed didactic dialogues, and the emotional climax of them all was the invocation of death and destruction.
- Great German Art Exhibition: 420,000 visitors
Degenerated Art (Expressionism, Cubism, New Objectivity): 2 million visitors.

The Nazi Myth Philippe Lacoue-Labarthe, Jean-Luc Nancy

- The Nazism has an explanation through the construction of a myth
- Myth inspired from the ancient Greek
- Identified Germany itself through the exclusion of myth/fiction
- Built upon racism, awakening of race (blood) and soil (homeland)
- A blend between art and politics
- "myth is the power to bring together the fundamental forces and directions of an individual or of a people" (305)
-

The dialectic of Enlightenment Max Horkheimer, Theodor Adorno

- Culture has become a kind of industry monopolized by a few managers
- The apparent spontaneity in choice of culture for an individual is a product of imposed interest from culture producers
- "The man with leisure has to accept what the culture manufacturers offer him"
- "The attitude of the public ...is a part of the system..."
- "The whole world is made to pass through the filter of the culture industry"
- "Real life is becoming indistinguishable from the movies. The sound film leaves no room for imagination or reflection on the part of the audience"
- Capitalist collective society allows dissidents, only to leave them poor and deprived of power – to survive well is to fit in the frame.
- In watching a modern movie, audience is not allowed to think independently but to react and response in a prefabricated way shown and recommended in the development of the movie plot.
- Amusement vs. Culture: former is the attacker of the latter but has ironically been absorbed into the latter.
- Actors replaces any man as a member of species, which makes individual expendable and insignificant.

Images of History Anton Kaes

- The epic film *Kolberg* coincides with the hardest days of the Third Reich before falling yet achieved the highest imaginary artistry.
- In Dr. Goebbels's eye: real life = film
- "The best propaganda is that which as it were works invisibly..." said Goebbels.
- "Hitler: A Career" uses footage from the Nazi films thus was unable to reflect the reality that was omitted in the original propaganda. It replicates fascist aesthetics and recycles the arsenal of deceptive and demagogic images.
- Movie industry was recovered but under close superintendence of allied powers. Many "educational" films appeared atoning the Nazi regime and looking forward to the future.
- It was the role of mass culture to make up for the resulting emotional deficits and spiritual deformations.
- Heimatfilme revival in the 1950s – traces from mountain films and the idealization of nature. "They also derived from the Nazi "blood and soil" productions which glorified the rural life as the mystical embodiment of German blood and German soil."
- The structures and relations of dependency shown in the war films in the 50s remained irrational and inexorable. "They succeed in valorizing and rehabilitating the old military virtues like "manly" courage and heroism, obedience and honor, martyrdom and unquestioned love of the fatherland".
- The German Autumn – a series of attacks on the Republic of Germany by terrorists from RAF (Red Army Faction) symbolized a traumatic experience left from the war and the 1945: the negligence of German sentiment by allies in their reconstruction of the country.
- The show of American TV series *Holocaust* received mixed feelings in German audience and a call for the representation of German's own past among German intellectuals – The suppressed past was not as foregone as people thought.

Film Nazis: The Great Escape Tony Barta

- By making films about the Nazis, the industry has trespass the representation of Nazism as a history to a screened story – this is the escapism associated with filmed Nazis.
- The Hollywood did not start revealing the menace of Nazis until after 1939 (*Confessions of a Nazi Spy*). The reasons for that:
 1. The business interest: Nazi Germany occupied a great portion of foreign market for Hollywood film export
 2. Jewish film producers in the States were worried that a provoking Nazi would jeopardize their fellow co-religionists' plight
 3. consolidation of the second view in the States
- Whatever feeds the imaginary of Nazism can hardly be expected to create clarity in historical focus.

- Narrative, featured film and television make it impossible to reflect the true nature of Nazism, nor does documentary for it heavily relies on the image produced by the Nazis themselves and in the way they intended.
- We are more like our enemies than we like to admit: imperialism, racism, narcissism, fragile masculinity...

Schindler's List is not Shoah Miriam Bratu Hansen

- Parallel characters between *The Birth of a Nation* and *Schindler's List*
-