SEX, POLITICS, AND COMEDY

The Transnational Cinema of ERNST LUBITSCH

Rick McCormick

SEX, POLITICS, AND COMEDY

GERMAN JEWISH CULTURES

Sponsored by the Leo Baeck Institute London

SEX, POLITICS, AND COMEDY

The Transnational Cinema of Ernst Lubitsch

Rick McCormick

INDIANA UNIVERSITY PRESS

This book is a publication of

Indiana University Press
Office of Scholarly Publishing
Herman B Wells Library 350
1320 East 10th Street
Bloomington, Indiana 47405 USA

iupress.indiana.edu

Supported by the Axel Springer Stiftung

This book is freely available in an open access edition thanks to TOME (Toward an Open Monograph Ecosystem)—a collaboration of the Association of American Universities, the Association of University Presses, and the Association of Research Libraries—and the generous support of the University of Minnesota. Learn more at the TOME website, which can be found at the following web address: openmonographs.org.

Manufactured in the United States of America

Cataloging information is available from the Library of Congress.

ISBN 978-0-253-04833-2 (hardback)
ISBN 978-0-253-04834-9 (paperback)
ISBN 978-0-253-04836-3 (ebook)

1 2 3 4 5 25 24 23 22 21 20

For Amaya, Killian, Macie, and Emilia

CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

In the long process of writing this book, many people and institutions provided important assistance, and I want to acknowledge and thank them. The following scholars provided important feedback and support at various points in the writing of this book: Leslie Morris, Jay Geller, Ofer Ashknenazi, Valerie Weinstein, Barbara Hales, Mihaela Petrescu, Christian Rogowski, Nancy Nenno, Susanne Baakmann, Alison Guenther-Pal, Ruth-Ellen Joeres, Monika Žagar, Christina Gerhardt, and Stefan Hoffmann at the *Enzyklopaedie jüdischer Geschichte und Kultur* (*Encyclopedia of Jewish History and Culture*). Rembert Hüser and Raysh Weiss shared their work on Lubitsch with me as well as DVDs and VHS tapes.

For her groundbreaking book on Lubitsch, I want to thank Sabine Hake; others whose work on Lubitsch, on exile and émigré cinema, and on German Jewish concerns in Weimar cinema and culture was of tremendous help include Valerie Weinstein, Gerd Gemünden, Ofer Ashkenazi, Kerry Wallach, Noah Isenberg, Darcy Buerkle, and Cynthia Walk. For his expertise on Weimar and German cinema, I thank Tony Kaes, who has been an intellectual example and a mentor not only to me but to generations of scholars working in German and film studies. I also want to thank Eric Rentschler and Johannes von Moltke as well as Tony Kaes for their organization of the German Film Institute on "Lost Weimar," where I was first able to see Lubitsch's *Sumurun*.

A number of film archives and libraries in Germany and the United States generously and frequently allowed me to do essential research for this book: I thank the Stiftung Deutsche Kinemathek in Berlin, especially Julia Riedel and Peter Latta in the photo archive, Regina Hoffmann and Lisa Roth in the Schriftgutarchiv (archive of written materials), Cordula Döhrer in the library, and Anke Hahn in the film archive. Thanks also to Hans Helmut Prinzler, the former director of the Kinemathek, who graciously allowed me to photocopy whatever I liked from his own file on Lubitsch. In Berlin I also worked and viewed films at the Bundesarchiv-Filmarchiv, where Carola Okrug was helpful. In Wiesbaden I watched films at the film archive of the Deutsches Filminstitut, and I thank Michael Schurig for his help there. I also watched films a number of times at the Film Museum in

Munich, and I thank Stefan Droessler for his permission to do that. The Murnau-Stiftung in Wiesbaden provided one of the images in the book, and I want to thank Marcel Steinlein there for his help with that.

In California I often worked at the Margaret Herrick Library in Beverly Hills; over the years, Jenny Romero, Louise Hilton, and Faye Thompson were very helpful. I also worked at the University of Southern California: I want to thank especially Michaela Ullmann for her help at the Feuchtwanger Memorial Library, Ned Comstock at the Cinematic Arts Library, and Jonathon Auxier at the Warner Brothers Archive; Paul Lerner also provided helpful information. I watched films a number of times at the Film and Television Archive of the University of California at Los Angeles, and I want to thank the director there, Jan-Christopher Horak, for meeting with me and generously providing me with a copy of his master's thesis on Lubitsch. In New York I worked at the Museum of Modern Art in the library and in the Film Study Center, where I also watched films; I am grateful to Ashley Swinnerton and Jennifer Tobias for their help there.

At the University of Minnesota, I am grateful to the Imagine Fund for a number of grants that have covered travel, research costs, and manuscript preparation and to the College of Liberal Arts for two administrative leaves and for its support of research assistants. I also want to thank the Center of Jewish Studies and its then director, Leslie Morris, for offering me some of the first venues where I could present my research on Lubitsch, and I thank Helga Thorson for the opportunity to present an early version of my research as a Landsdowne Lecture at the University of Victoria, Canada. I am grateful to my home department, the Department of German, Nordic, Slavic, and Dutch, and its chair, Charlotte Melin, for support of my research and teaching over the years. I thank also the Deutscher Akadamischer Austauschdienst (DAAD, or German Academic Exchange Service) for a Study Visit Research Grant that funded one of my trips to Germany.

I want to thank film director Robert Fischer both for his film *Ernst Lubitsch in Berlin* (2006) and for information he provided me. I am very grateful to my friend Tom Knoff for his assistance with the photographs used in this book. I want to thank Ann Klefstad for the copyediting she did for me in summer 2017. Three undergraduate research assistants provided significant help on this book: Braxton Haake, Maddy Folstein, and Coby Oertel. I had two graduate research assistants, Jana Gierden and Moritz Meutzner, both of whom provided important feedback. Moritz's work

editing the final manuscript and creating the index was invaluable. I also want to thank Leigh McLennon at Amnet for copyediting.

An earlier version of the section in chapter 2 on Lubitsch's *Madame Dubarry* was published as "Sex, History, and Upward Mobility: Ernst Lubitsch's *Madame Dubarry/Passion*, 1919" in *German Studies Review* 33, no. 3 (October 2010): 603–17. It appears in revised form with permission from Johns Hopkins University Press. An earlier version of the section in chapter 2 on *Sumurun* was published as "Desire vs. Despotism: The Politics of *Sumurun* (1920), Ernst Lubitsch's 'Oriental' Fantasy," in *The Many Faces of Weimar Cinema: Rediscovering Germany's Filmic Legacy*, edited by Christian Rogowski (Rochester, NY: Camden House, 2010), 67–83. I thank Camden House and Boydell and Brewer, Inc., for permission to use it.

An earlier version of the section on *Ninotchka* in chapter 6 was published as "Romantic Comedy and the Hitler-Stalin Pact: Billy Wilder and *Ninotchka* (USA 1939)" in Hebrew translation in *SLIL—Online Journal for History, Film, and Television*, no. 6 (Winter 2012): 21–40. I thank Ofer Ashkenazi, the editor of *SLIL*, for permission to use it. Parts of chapter 6 also appeared in earlier form in my article "Screwball" (with a focus on Lubitsch) in the *Enzyklopaedie jüdischer Geschichte und Kultur*, edited by Dan Diner, vol. 5 (Stuttgart, Germany: Metzler, 2014), 402–6. I thank J. B. Metzler for permission to use it.

A section in chapter 4 appeared in an earlier version as "Ernst Lubitsch and the Transnational Twenties: *The Student Prince in Old Heidelberg*" in *Transit: A Journal of Travel, Migration, and Multiculturalism in the German-Speaking World* 10, no. 2 (2016), http://escholarship.org/uc/item/6t02590p. I thank *Transit* for permission to use it. A section of chapter 5 appeared in an earlier version as "A Serious Man? Lubitsch's Anti-War Film *The Man I Killed (*a.k.a *Broken Lullaby*, USA 1932)" in *Continuity and Crisis in German Cinema, 1928–1936*, edited by Barbara Hales, Mihaela Petrescu, and Valerie Weinstein (Rochester, NY: Camden House, 2016), 291–305. I thank Camden House and Boydell and Brewer for permission to use it.

Parts of the introduction and other sections of this book appeared in an earlier version in the article "Transnational Jewish Comedy: Sex and Politics in the Films of Ernst Lubitsch—From Berlin to Hollywood," in *Three Way Street: Germans, Jews, and the Transnational*, edited by Jay Howard Geller and Leslie Morris (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2016), 169–96. I thank the University of Michigan Press for permission to use it.

I want to thank Nicola Lubitsch (her father's "greatest fan") for her correspondence with me and for helping me find her father's gravestone at the Forest Lawn Cemetery in Glendale on one of my pilgrimages to California.

A number of friends hosted me on my various research trips, and I want to thank them: in Germany, Anne Lalk and Uwe Breiden, Susanne Stoye and Volker Gross, Roland Ladage, Daniel Valencia, Peter Muehle, Rembert Hüser and Verena Mund, and Christiane Laehnemann; in California, Audrey Warfel, Annie Thiel and Loren Latker, and Brigid McBride and Johnny Slavin. The work on this book was often done in cafes in my neighborhood, Prospect Park, in Minneapolis, on the border with St. Paul. Unfortunately, none of those cafes exists any longer. I began the project at Cupcake, continued it at Overflow and Dunn Brothers, and much of the book was completed at T-Rex Cookies, the quirkiest and most fun of all the cafes. I was always made to feel welcome there by the owner, Tina Rexing, and her staff: Abi, Rachel, Sarah, Axel, and all the rest.

Finally, I want to thank Joan Clarkson for her patience, support, and love over so many years. I am also grateful for the love of my daughters, Isa and Susana, and for their children, my grandchildren, to whom this book is dedicated: Amaya, Killian, Macie, and Emilia.

SEX, POLITICS, AND COMEDY

INTRODUCTION

Transnational Jewish Comedy

Every good film is by nature international.

Ernst Lubitsch, 1924[1]

One hundred years ago, in 1920, a German film premiered in New York and became a surprise hit: *Madame Dubarry*, directed in Berlin by Ernst Lubitsch (1892–1947).[2] Within two years, Lubitsch was invited to Hollywood. *Madame Dubarry* was not a comedy, but Lubitsch would make comedies in America. Of all the film directors who came to the United States from Germany in the first half of the twentieth century, Lubitsch would be the most successful. Only Billy Wilder enjoyed comparable success, and he considered Lubitsch to be his mentor.[3] Lubitsch's influence on American film comedy was unparalleled.[4]

Lubitsch's career was clearly transnational. Like the cinema itself, his films were shaped by movements of people, stories, artists, technicians, and technologies across national boundaries. His own perspective was determined by transnational experience. His father migrated from Russia to Berlin in the late nineteenth century, and Lubitsch himself migrated from Berlin to Hollywood in 1922. Because he was a transnational filmmaker, it is crucial to focus on his work on both sides of the Atlantic—his German career (1913–22) and his American career (1923–47)—but few books in English have done this. Joseph McBride's *How Did Lubitsch Do It?* (2018) provides some coverage of both his German and American films: two of its nine chapters focus on Lubitsch in Germany. In contrast, this book gives equal weight to his German and American careers with in-depth analysis of key feature films from the 1910s to the 1940s.[5]

Lubitsch's career is easily divided chronologically into its German and American periods, but it can be argued that he was making American-style films before he left Germany.[6] Lubitsch had what is now called in Germany

a "migration background,"[7] and that background links him to an American sensibility—that is, an attitude more typical of America, a land so obviously shaped by immigration.

Lubitsch's gender politics were always more emancipatory than what became conventional in Hollywood (or Germany, for that matter); indeed, his daughter Nicola Lubitsch asserted recently that his films anticipated the #MeToo movement.[8] From 1914 until his death in 1947, Lubitsch's films—comedies or otherwise—lampooned sex, money, and power. Someone positioned as an outsider first in Germany and then in the United States could be expected to have a special sensitivity to the way social hierarchies and social norms around sex and gender could exclude certain social groups. Lubitsch began his life as a member of the Jewish minority, a group whose rights were restricted in Wilhelmine Germany (the German Empire under Wilhelm II). He was also to some extent an outsider within the German Jewish community because his father was an *Ostjude*, an Eastern European Jew. Lubitsch's migration background was a key factor in the success of the "milieu comedies," set in the (Jewish) garment industry in Berlin, with which his film career began. This background would help him in Hollywood, too.

Transnational patterns of migration helped shape Lubitsch's life and career and Hollywood as well; for example, the Jews fleeing the pogroms of Eastern Europe in the late nineteenth century headed west toward large cities like Berlin, Hamburg, New York—and Los Angeles. Ernst Lubitsch's father, Simon, arrived in Berlin around 1880; when Ernst arrived in Hollywood in 1922, he found a film industry run largely by men who (like Simon) had left Eastern Europe or who (like Ernst) had fathers who left Eastern Europe.[9]

Film scholar Miriam Hansen considered this connection to migration and to immigrants to be significant for the "vernacular modernism" of early American cinema. According to Hansen, early cinema was vernacular rather than high modernism—a dynamic, popular, and transnational phenomenon.[10]

Silent cinema was itself transnational: films could be exported cheaply, simply by translating the text on the title cards. More substantively, silent films communicated primarily through images, especially of faces and gestures. Silent films were easy to export if they had a visual and gestural language that could be understood across national boundaries.[11] Hansen's concept of vernacular modernism refers to this transnational address of

the cinema—above all, the American cinema. She explains the tremendous international appeal of the American cinema in the 1910s as being partly due to its dynamic physicality, especially its physical comedy, and its address of a multicultural urban audience that included masses of working-class immigrants who did not speak English well.[12] Its transnational character was enhanced by the role played by immigrants (many of them Eastern European Jews) in building the American film industry.[13] In many ways, the United States developed a cinema that was of, by, and for immigrants.

A Transnational Career: From Berlin to Hollywood

Lubitsch's German career began in 1913 with short, farcical comedies in which he himself played a comical Jewish character type active in the milieu of *Konfektion*, the retail garment industry in Berlin, and often from Germany's eastern provinces (now Poland). His family's migration to Berlin from Russia and his father's success in Konfektion were key to the grasp of the world that Lubitsch portrayed in those films. He played characters who strove aggressively for upward mobility in a parody of assimilation. By 1914 he was directing as well as starring in these films; *Schuhpalast Pinkus/Shoe Palace Pinkus* (1916) is the earliest surviving example. Soon he was making more expensive comedies with larger casts. These comedies starred Ossi Oswalda, who played a spoiled, rebellious "bad girl." As Thomas Brandlmeier observed, her character was an alter ego of the "bad boys," the aggressive Jewish male protagonists Lubitsch himself had played.[14]

In 1918 Lubitsch began to make expensive costume dramas with historical or "exotic" settings. *Carmen* (1918) was made just before the end of World War I and premiered just after the war ended. After the war he was given a large budget to make the historical costume film *Madame Dubarry* (1919). *Sumurun* (1920) and *Das Weib des Pharao/Loves of the Pharaoh* (1922) were among the other high-budget exotic costume epics he directed in the early Weimar Republic. The costume epics also tended to focus on "bad girl" protagonists. Although such heroines could triumph in the comedies, in the historical or exotic costume melodramas, they were punished—killed, usually—because of the sexist conventions of the genre (and the era).

Lubitsch was brought to Hollywood because of interest in these costume epics, not because of his migration background or his comedies. The artistic quality and commercial success of the epics caught Hollywood's attention. The American film industry was eager for the prestige associated

with European culture; companies were also looking for ways to increase their share of the European market. The result was a delicious irony: the industry in Hollywood was largely run by Eastern European Jews who had built fortunes with films that had appealed to the immigrant, working-class (Jewish and Catholic) audiences of the big cities but who now wanted to make prestige films that would be accepted by mainstream, middle-class, Protestant audiences.[15] The industry leaders thought that European artistry would give them prestige, and so they hired Lubitsch—who had the same Eastern European Jewish background they did.

After World War I, Hollywood emerged as the most powerful film industry in the world; in the 1920s, one of its main competitors would be the German film industry, which became known for its artistic quality and technical expertise. Hollywood became aware of the competitive threat from Germany when it discovered Lubitsch: his historical costume epic *Madame Dubarry* (1919) earned a lot of money in New York after it premiered there in 1920, opening up the US market to German films. It was the first foreign film to become a hit in the United States, and it initiated the postwar wave of historical costume films.[16]

Hollywood initially responded by trying to produce Lubitsch's films in Germany. The 1920s would become a very transnational decade for the cinema, with many coproductions involving German and American film companies. Such collaboration began with Ernst Lubitsch. After the success of *Madame Dubarry* in the United States in late 1920, interest in Lubitsch led to the founding of the Europäische Film-Allianz (European Film Alliance, or EFA) in 1921. This European film production company was financed by Adolph Zukor's Famous Players-Lasky (parent company of Paramount, which would become the studio's only name from 1927 onward). EFA hired Lubitsch (and his producer Paul Davidson) away from UFA (Universum-Film Aktiengesellschaft/Universe Films, Inc.), Germany's largest studio. Thus it happened that Lubitsch's last two German films, *Loves of the Pharaoh* (1922) and *Die Flamme/Montmartre* (1923), were financed by American money and filmed with American equipment (and to some extent with American technical personnel). The casts of the films were European; *Loves of the Pharaoh* employed thousands of cheap German extras.[17]

The EFA model of an American-financed production company in Europe failed. It was easier to invite Lubitsch to Hollywood, and he arrived there in December 1922. Lubitsch was the very first of many German film artists to make this journey in the 1920s. Among those who came after

him were Friedrich Murnau, Karl Freund, Erich Pommer, Emil Jannings, Conrad Veidt, Wilhelm Dieterle, and Marlene Dietrich.[18] Lubitsch himself would bring German film artists to Hollywood over the course of the decade: screenwriter Hanns Kräly; assistant editor Heinz (later Henry) Blanke; and designer Hans Dreier. Blanke came on the ship with Lubitsch in December 1922; Lubitsch sent for Kräly in summer 1923 and then for Dreier in 1924. He sent for costume designer Ali Hubert to join him in Hollywood in late 1926.[19]

Although Hollywood was interested in Lubitsch for the blockbuster epic costume dramas (or "spectacles") he had made in Germany, he did not end up making that kind of film in Hollywood. Instead he returned to his cinematic roots: comedy. His American comedies, however, would not be like his German comedies, which had been wild, anarchic ("grotesque") farces with lots of slapstick and broad humor. He was hired to bring European "prestige" to American cinema, and he did so by performing "European sophistication" for Hollywood. He made a number of what were called "sophisticated comedies" focused on adultery, similar to films made by Cecil B. DeMille in the late 1910s and early 1920s. Lubitsch's comedies in this style were more suggestive but set safely in an imaginary Vienna or Paris. Their discreet style (eventually called "the Lubitsch touch") made them acceptable to American audiences.[20]

His first such sophisticated comedy was *The Marriage Circle* (1924), followed by the other silent films he made at Warner Brothers in the mid-1920s. These films were very free adaptations of European plays and operettas, and he made them with help from German film artists and technicians. Meanwhile, Lubitsch published in the trade journals of the German film industry and followed the German cinema in terms of technical developments, especially as pioneered by F. W. Murnau, Karl Freund, and E. A. Dupont; this influence is clearly visible in the cinematography and montage of his last film for Warner, *So This Is Paris* (1926). At the same time, he paid attention to the popular genres being produced in Germany: he directed a "silent operetta" for MGM, *The Student Prince in Old Heidelberg* (1927), and he even made a *Bergfilm* (mountain film) for United Artists, *Eternal Love* (1929)—his final silent film.

Lubitsch managed the transition to sound with no problem. Instead of following what was becoming the dominant American model of the film musical, which justified singing in a naturalistic way by telling a story about performers (a "backstage" musical), Lubitsch used the more fantastic

model of the European operetta, in which characters sing their emotions as opposed to speaking about them (what would be called an "integrated" musical). He made a string of such musicals, starting in 1929 with *The Love Parade*. In the early 1930s he also made two very important sophisticated comedies that were not musicals: *Trouble in Paradise* (1932) and *Design for Living* (1933). These films pushed the boundaries of what was possible in those last years before the Motion Picture Production Code finally clamped down on American filmmaking in 1934.

Beginning with the strict imposition of the Production Code and the rise of much more populist films—above all, the screwball comedy—in New Deal America, Lubitsch's model of sophisticated comedy set among the European elite fell out of favor. This determined his later American period, in which Lubitsch adjusted to these developments. He tried to address the "common people" more, and he became more (overtly) political—but no less focused on Europe.[21]

After 1933, when Hitler came to power, Lubitsch helped find work in Hollywood for the second wave of émigrés: Jewish film artists fleeing Nazi Germany and those countries endangered and later annexed or conquered by that regime. As the 1930s progressed, Lubitsch was ever more concerned about the real Europe and its politics, as opposed to the imaginary Europe he had created for Americans in his sophisticated comedies and musicals. The Nazi threat and then the start of World War II in Europe influenced his work, as can be seen in *Ninotchka* (1939), *The Shop around the Corner* (1940), and *To Be or Not to Be* (1942).

From the rise of a Jewish antihero in Berlin's retail trade in *Shoe Palace Pinkus* (1916), to a queer story about a girl dressing as a man to overcome Wilhelmine gender barriers in *Ich möchte kein Mann sein/I Don't Want to Be a Man* (1918), to the second-rate Polish actors—among them an explicitly Jewish character—who outwit the Nazis in *To Be or Not to Be* (1942), Lubitsch's comedies made fun of the powerful, attacked bullies, and betrayed a sympathy with the underdog and with outsiders: Jews, women, and other rebellious types. Sex also deconstructs power in his films: sexual desire can make powerful characters look ridiculous. This too is political.

Lubitsch's films must be contextualized in terms of larger historical developments such as the end of the German Empire (with defeat in World War I) and the beginning of Germany's first democracy, the Weimar Republic (1918–33), with its rising antisemitism but also its groundbreaking tolerance of sexual minorities; the racism and xenophobia of America's

Roaring Twenties and the upheaval of the Great Depression; the phenomenon of the emancipated "New Woman" in both countries; and the rise of the Nazis in Germany and the world war they started.

His films also need to be analyzed as examples of the art of film. Above all the mode of comedy was crucial to his work. His career began with comedy in Berlin, and his greatest successes in Hollywood were comedies.[22] They involved a range of styles: from slapstick/anarchic to sophisticated comedy and from romantic comedy to what I call "antifascist screwball." The humor of even his most escapist comedies was always focused on sex, power, and money, and thus a keen understanding of social expectations and barriers based on class, ethnicity, and gender is always present beneath the humor. In fact, the humor depended on those social norms—which were ridiculed. This attention to social norms brings us back to (transnational) politics: an understanding of Lubitsch's films demands attention to the specific politics in both German and American societies with regard to class, ethnic and national identity, gender, and sexuality.

Jewish Comedy

There is a dark joke that Germany has no comedy because of the Nazis—that Germany without the Jews lost its sense of humor. Like all jokes, this is an oversimplification; Germany does and did have comedy, even after 1933. However, it cannot be denied that German culture was greatly impoverished by the loss of Jewish entertainers and comedians in the 1930s. At the same time, German comedy suffered through its mobilization by the Third Reich in the service of creating a "racially" defined national community or *Volksgemeinschaft*.[23] But even before 1933, German film comedy took a major blow: the departure of Ernst Lubitsch more than ten years earlier, at the end of 1922, when he was the most successful German director in Germany.[24]

Jewish humor is clearly related to its origins in a people with a long history of being oppressed and in exile, a people who often had no weapon against their oppressors other than wit, irony, and gallows humor. Sarah Blacher Cohen writes that Jewish humor "has helped the Jewish people to survive, to confront the indifferent, often hostile universe, to endure the painful ambiguities of life and to retain a sense of internal power despite their external impotence."[25] This type of humor is also related to the need of a relatively powerless people to become skillful at pretending, simulating,

imitating, "passing," performing—and acting. As Rebecca Solnit has written, "The powerless need to dissemble—that's how slaves, servants, and women got the reputation of being liars—and the powerful grow stupid on the lies they require from their subordinates."[26]

The plight of the Jewish people during centuries of diaspora can also be seen as a paradigmatic example of a condition we would now call "transnational," even if it is far older than the "national." Jewish humor, however, comes into its own with the Enlightenment, according to Ruth Wisse, who distinguishes between German Jewish and Yiddish humor.[27] That Eastern European variant must have spread west when Eastern European Jews migrated westward in the late nineteenth century. Oppression of the Jews in the Russian Empire, especially the pogroms beginning around 1880, was one of the causes of the migration of many Eastern European Jews to big cities like Berlin. When Ernst Lubitsch's father, Simon, arrived in Berlin, he got involved in Konfektion, the retail garment industry, which was dominated by Eastern European Jews. The German Jewish film critic Lotte Eisner, in her condescending description of Lubitsch, saw the "cynical humour of the *Konfektion*" in his work, and she explained that humor as "the comic fatalism peculiar to people used to enduring pogroms and persecutions."[28]

Until the outbreak of World War I, the German film industry was weak, and the German film market was dominated by Danish, Italian, French, and American films. During the war, the ban on foreign films helped the German film industry grow. The milieu comedies of Ernst Lubitsch, which often focused on Jews from the East who had migrated to Berlin, made a major contribution to that growth. After the war, Lubitsch's big-budget historical costume film *Madame Dubarry* was not a comedy, let alone a "Jewish" one, but like those comedies, it focused on the upward mobility of an outsider who rises to the top. Set in France in the late eighteenth century, it was called *Passion* in the United States, where its great critical and box-office success overcame strong anti-German sentiment.

Lubitsch's films, including his comedies, can be seen as political in ways that reflect Lubitsch's position in the social hierarchy. He was born to a Jewish family in Imperial Germany, a Christian society with many anti-semitic restrictions, and he had a father who was an Eastern European Jew, an *Ostjude*. The mainstream German Jewish community was characterized by pride in its acculturation (if not assimilation) to German values and culture and its mastery of the German language.[29] To these German Jews,

less acculturated, Yiddish-speaking Eastern European Jews were at best an embarrassment and at worst an incitement to German antisemitism.[30]

In an undemocratic, authoritarian, and hierarchical society, Lubitsch was doubly marginalized, despite his father's financial success and his own success in the arts.[31] As a German in the United States, he would be triply marginalized. His social position likely made him more sensitive to social distinctions around class, gender, and ethnicity—I would argue further that such a sensitivity informs his films, driving his sympathy for underdogs, outsiders, and marginalized people. In comedy, the mode in which he was most successful throughout his career, Lubitsch's humor usually turns on satirizing such social distinctions. These jokes allude to painful social and political discrimination. We often laugh hardest about things that are most painful. These jokes can be read as attempts to alleviate the pain created by unjust social structures; in any case, they depend on keen awareness of that pain. That awareness is what is political, even in Lubitsch's seemingly most escapist comedies.

Auteurism?

A book focused on the key films of one director may be charged with using an outdated "auteurist" approach—even though I would argue that such a charge is itself outdated. A focus on one director makes sense in many ways, and McBride's *How Did Lubitsch Do It?* demonstrates that an unapologetically auteurist approach can provide a great deal of insight into the work of a film director. His research on Lubitsch—especially the American Lubitsch—is extensive and impressive, as is his knowledge of Hollywood and other American auteurs. That said, he is not as interested as I am in analyzing Lubitsch's films politically. I attempt to contextualize both his German and American films in terms of not just film history but also political and social history. I want to examine them regarding class, race/ethnicity, gender, and sexuality.[32]

Although my book, like McBride's, also concentrates on one (great) director, it is more informed by German studies, German Jewish studies, film studies, and feminist and queer studies. This means that I am interested in Lubitsch for the ways in which his films can be analyzed politically, not only regarding the art of film or concerns about which great film directors are given their due. I would insist that the focus on one director can lend itself to the kind of political analysis attempted in this book.

Already in 1993, Kobena Mercer wrote, "We can all live without the return of notions of romantic genius, which always placed the author at the center of the text—resembling the godlike figure of the 'universal intellectual' who thought he had an answer for everything—but we need to revise the notion that the author is simply an empty, abstract function of cultural discourse through whom various ideologies speak." Mercer was writing about films directed by two Black gay men, Marlon Riggs and Isaac Julien; rejecting identity politics, Mercer asserts that their films are important "not because of who or what the filmmakers are, but because of what they do, and above all because of the freaky way they do it."[33] Other feminist film scholars have revised ideas about authorship and auteurism on behalf of a political project.[34] Lubitsch was not an independent filmmaker like the men Mercer describes, nor did his minority status in Germany and the United States in the first half of the twentieth century marginalize him in a way that compares with the much greater marginalization those men experienced in the United Kingdom and the United States in the early 1990s.

Nonetheless, my emphasis in this book will be primarily on Lubitsch's films and what they do; this book is not a biography, although I mention relevant details about his life at certain points. The focus on the films made by one director in Germany and the United States—and the focus on what they do—allows me to highlight a body of work that is uniquely transnational and inextricably linked to the work of other émigrés in Hollywood, especially the German-speaking Jewish émigrés from Central Europe. Lubitsch's migration background is paradigmatic for Hollywood, and it gave him a perspective that was sensitive to many forms of political marginalization. That background is crucial to understanding his films, what they do, and how they function aesthetically and politically.

In any case, I am not interested in arguments about the role of the individual genius in creating film art, and I would not assert that a film's meaning is determined only by its director and its place in the oeuvre of that single artist.[35] The director is not solely responsible for the artistic quality of a film, especially a studio film.

Filmmaking is clearly a collective art form, and studio films made in Germany in the 1910s and 1920s were industrial products, just like those made in Hollywood in the 1920s, 1930s, and 1940s. In addition to a film's director, for instance, its producer often played a decisive role in shaping that film. Consider what were arguably the most famous German "art films" of the 1920s: *Das Cabinet des Dr. Caligari/The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari*

(1920), *Der letzte Mann/The Last Laugh* (1924), *Metropolis* (1927), and *Der blaue Engel/The Blue Angel* (1930). Each film had a different director; what they had in common was their (German Jewish) producer, Erich Pommer. The studio was also important—all except *Caligari* were made by Germany's largest studio, UFA. *Caligari* was produced by Pommer at a smaller studio, Decla-Bioscop, before that studio merged with UFA in 1921, which was when Pommer moved to UFA.[36]

Lubitsch began his film career at Union Films under Paul Davidson (another German Jew), and when Davidson's company joined the new German mega-studio UFA in late 1917, Davidson and Lubitsch worked for UFA. In Hollywood, Paramount would be the studio for which Lubitsch worked the longest, but he also worked for United Artists (which produced his first American film, *Rosita*, in 1923), Warner Brothers, MGM, and Twentieth-Century Fox. He also worked with some independent producers like Sol Lesser (an American Jew) and Alexander Korda (a Hungarian Jew famous for his work in Vienna and London). The infrastructure, budgets, contract actors, and technicians at each of these studios varied, as did Lubitsch's contracts with each of them, and all these variables helped shape the films Lubitsch directed. Cinematographers and editors were of crucial importance in creating the films he directed, as were the screenplay writers, the most important being Hanns Kräly (from 1915 to 1930) and Samson Raphaelson (from 1930 to 1947), but he also made major films with other writers such as Ben Hecht, Walter Reisch, the team of Charles Brackett and Billy Wilder, and Edwin Justus Mayer.

Of course, actors were very important. Lubitsch had started his career as an actor, and he became famous as an "actor's director." He worked with many important German actors: Emil Jannings, Harry Liedtke, Paul Wegener, and Hermann Thimig. He became especially famous for his work with female actors: in Germany he made Ossi Oswalda a star, and he turned the Polish actor Pola Negri into an international star. The first major film stars in Germany were women: Henny Porten and Asta Nielsen (a Dane), both of whom acted for Lubitsch. Mary Pickford brought him to the United States in late 1922 so that he could direct her in a film. In Hollywood he would work with other American actors such as Norma Shearer, Jeanette MacDonald, Claudette Colbert, Miriam Hopkins, and Carole Lombard, as well as the German actor Marlene Dietrich (a Berliner, like Lubitsch), and the Swedish Greta Garbo. The male actors who worked with Lubitsch in Hollywood included the Mexican actor Ramón Novarro, the French actor

Maurice Chevalier, the British actor Herbert Marshall, and Americans such as John and Lionel Barrymore, Gary Cooper, Fredric March, Melvyn Douglas, Jimmy Stewart, and Jack Benny.

In my analysis of Lubitsch's films, I will often foreground the performance (and background) of the actors and the contributions of the screenplay writers as key elements in my argument about how a particular film should be understood. I will reference the politics of the industrial studio systems in both Germany and the United States.

In my quest to analyze Lubitsch's films and what they do, I have been guided by an interest in the material reality of his films, making a point of visiting film archives in Germany and the United States many times. I wanted to see the most complete versions of all his surviving films and to see as many primary written sources about them as possible. I pursued the latter strategy to better contextualize his films historically regarding production details and reception history.

Above all, the larger political issues at stake in Lubitsch's work interest me. These include its transnational nature, its relationship to German Jewish perspectives and experiences, and the relationship of Lubitsch's comedy—especially sexual comedy—to emancipatory (and less emancipatory) politics in modern culture generally and, in particular, to the turbulent politics of Europe and North America in the first half of the twentieth century.

That being said, it cannot be denied that, in some ways, Lubitsch fits the definition of an "auteur" better than many directors, above all because of how much control he was able to exert as a director from early in his career. He began directing to continue making the successful comedies in which he starred, eventually getting bigger budgets so he could hire other actors and ease himself out of acting. By the end of World War I, he was given huge budgets to make epic costume films, which in turn caught Hollywood's attention. By the time he got to the United States, he was granted a kind of autonomy that was rare for American directors. In Germany, he had done his own editing; in Hollywood, he continued to supervise the editing, even into the sound period.[37] He almost always had the right to the final cut.

The "Lubitsch Touch"

The first book-length study of Lubitsch appeared in 1968, the heyday of auteurism among American film critics and scholars, and was titled *The Lubitsch Touch*.[38] But author Herman Weinberg did not coin that term: by

the early 1920s, American critics were referring to special (or "continental") "touches" in Lubitsch's style, and by the early 1930s, in the sound era, one finds them talking about a singular "touch" in Lubitsch's work.[39] Weinberg's (somewhat superficial) treatment of the concept (and of Lubitsch's films) could be interpreted as a trivialization of Lubitsch's style. In the same vein, a number of critics have used terms like "frothy," "spicy," and "tasty" to describe his films, treating them as consumable, ephemeral delights.[40] This tendency aligns with the general trivialization of comedy—what Mladen Dolar laments as the "deprecation" of comedy.[41]

Nonetheless, also in 1968, François Truffaut used a particularly apt food metaphor to describe Lubitsch's unique style: "Lubitsch Swiss Cheese"—that is, a cheese with holes that audiences themselves must fill.[42] Omission and indirection are key elements, as is an aversion to conveying information too directly. As Aaron Schuster defines Lubitsch's basic principle: "Never say anything directly when a good metaphor will do."[43] At the core of this aversion is the art of a filmmaker of the silent era. Like many of the best directors of the 1920s, Lubitsch's goal was to "tell by showing," to tell a story visually with as few intertitles as possible.[44] Once he was making sound films, he did not fall into the trap of relying too heavily on dialogue but rather continued to focus on gestures and objects. Lubitsch had no trouble using sound, but he used it creatively, not subordinating it entirely to narration.

His films tell by showing, or by *not* showing: using omission and ellipses, his films leave some things to the imagination of the spectator. In part, this had to do with appeasing American censors, using "tasteful" indirection around implied sexual transgressions. In his German career, he often focused on people spying through keyholes, emphasizing their voyeurism, but soon into his American career, the focus on keyholes gave way to a focus on closed doors. Characters might listen at a door, but the camera would stop there—we are not usually allowed to see behind those doors.[45] In his sound films, we may be able to hear something behind them, but we are prevented from seeing anything—at least for a while. One might even interpret Lubitsch's use of doors in his American films as a sly, self-reflexive comment on censorship in the United States.[46]

Mischievously, Lubitsch himself said, "I let the audiences use their imagination. Can I help it if they misconstrue my suggestions?"[47] In fact, we can assume that many in the audience appreciated the kind of engagement that his ellipses enabled—they were invited to figure things out for

themselves. And it was not only about sex. Thomas Elsaesser, among other critics and scholars, compares this aspect of Lubitsch's style to a modernist, Brechtian aesthetic, which makes sense, although as Elsaesser also pointed out, for Lubitsch the intention was rarely political in the overt sense that Brecht advocated.[48] It was, however, always self-reflexive. This is true of all comedy to some extent, at least when the comic winks to the audience, breaking the fourth wall. Lubitsch's "touch" allows the audience to notice the director's hand, inviting them in on the joke. As Leo Braudy writes, "The Lubitsch touch embraces the audience as a co-conspirator of interpretation."[49] Dan Sallitt observes that Lubitsch "makes the actor aware of the joke while keeping the character in the dark," at the same time encouraging the actor to let the audience know things "of which the character is unconscious."[50] Such a distinction between the actor and the role that is made obvious to the audience is indeed Brechtian.

In Max Horkheimer and Theodor Adorno's *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, which they wrote in Southern California in the 1940s, one finds a reference to the "Lubitsch touch," using the concept as another example of a minor distinction meant to provide "individualization" to mass-produced products.[51] This negative trivialization of Lubitsch's style is the other side of the coin to Weinberg's positive trivialization of it. I disagree with Horkheimer and Adorno: close analysis will demonstrate that Lubitsch's "touch" often subverts (rather than making more palatable) the status quo, as defined in cinematic, sexual, economic, or political terms. Despite Lubitsch's seeming success in Hollywood,[52] his films are, for the most part, distinct from a purely "classical" Hollywood style; they are characterized by the self-reflexive (and co-conspiratorial) irony and distance mentioned earlier.

Braudy pointed out that Lubitsch was "doubly detached"—distanced twice from the status quo—as a German in the United States and as a Jew in Germany.[53] As I have mentioned, we might call his detachment triple because even within the German Jewish community, he was positioned somewhat as an outsider. As Gerd Gemünden formulated it, positionality more than biography is crucial for understanding Lubitsch.[54] As Mercer points out, rather than focusing on "'double' or 'triple' oppression," the critic can more productively focus on "spaces between," at the intersections of power relations. Such a focus can reveal a "hybridized form of cultural and political practice."[55]

It is precisely at this point that Lubitsch's hybridized style connects to the deeper politics of his films: We find in his work an ironic detachment from the status quo in Germany and the United States that is also at the core

of the Lubitsch touch. Lubitsch's position in European and then American society helped shape both his style and its political implications.

"Bad Boys" and "Bad Girls"

Lubitsch's films, and especially his comedies, are usually about sex, money, and power, and thus they are obviously political. Let us focus now on the part of that troika that sometimes is considered the "least political," namely, sex. As feminists long ago pointed out, sex does indeed have a politics.[56] Concepts of gender and sexuality are crucial to Lubitsch's comedy, and feminist and queer theories offer much for our reading of them. Even Lubitsch's genre choices had a relation to gender; his reluctance to continue making historical costume epics once he got to the United States was perceived by some American critics—most famously by Jim Tully in *Vanity Fair* in 1926—as an inexplicable catering to female audiences. Instead of blockbuster epics, he chose to make romantic comedies and operettas.[57]

Although his films often lend themselves to productive interpretation from feminist and queer perspectives, this does not mean that Lubitsch himself was feminist. He was a heterosexual man of his era, and at times one finds evidence in his films not just of what McBride calls the "double standard" but also of open sexism and homophobia.[58] His films dealt with topics of concern to German (and American) Jews such as assimilation and intermarriage in nuanced, complicated ways, but this does not mean that he was necessarily so enlightened in his personal life.[59] Sympathy for women and ethnic outsiders in his films is often clearly evident, but there is less evidence suggesting a progressive attitude toward race, at least with regard to people of African descent. There were some problematic depictions of them in his German films and almost no depiction of them in his American films—although the few depictions we find are arguably positive.[60]

Gender inversion is easy to find in Lubitsch's film from early on—for example, powerful, sexually aggressive female characters and timid, sexually passive male characters—but that might be explained simply by the need to be funny. Henri Bergson referred to the general comic technique of inversion as "topsyturvydom."[61] In societies with traditional, inequitable, misogynistic, and relatively rigid gender norms, it is humorous to turn such norms on their heads.

Yet as Mikhail Bakhtin would insist, this carnivalesque inversion can at times be emancipatory.[62] This is especially so in historical eras when gender

norms are being critiqued and eroded because of social change. In any case, and regardless of Lubitsch's intentions, his films do not celebrate normative, heterosexual masculinity or femininity. I would assert that only relatively boring and uninteresting characters in his films embody such norms. Lubitsch himself seemed to feel that because of his looks and his height (he was short), he was excluded from such norms. He stated that German audiences would not accept him as a straight leading man, as opposed to the kind of oversexed, overconfident, comic Jewish "bad boys" he became popular playing.[63]

I place a lot of emphasis on such "bad boys" but also on the "bad girls" who replaced them. One of my main arguments is that Lubitsch's bad boys in his earliest comedies became bad girls in later films. The types are related to each other; indeed, they seem to be alter egos, and they are almost always treated with sympathy.[64] The women are almost always more powerful, at least in sexual terms, than traditional norms would dictate, and the men are either less aggressive—timid and effeminate—or else more aggressive than normative masculinity. In the latter case, they tend to be ladies' men who are deviant because of their vain narcissism and because Lubitsch "objectifies" them—that is, he depicts them, humorously, as objects of desire for women.

A "bad girl," if she is indeed an alter ego of the kinds of "bad boys" Lubitsch himself had played, could be interpreted as the fantasy projection of a male director. The "authenticity" of such a character could be questioned, although authenticity is not so important in comedy—and even less so in a Lubitsch comedy, in which identities are unstable or mistaken, and imitation, impersonation, mimicry, simulation, and acting are often central themes. There is some queer, emancipatory potential to the "cross-dressing identification" of Lubitsch with his female characters. Related to this identification across gender barriers was his reputed facility at miming both male and female characters on the sets of his films. He would act out scenes for an actor (male or female) to demonstrate what he expected that actor to do in the scene. He would take both male and female parts, not only on the set for his actors but even during his sessions with the screenwriters before filming began.[65]

Lubitsch's bad girls are in some ways similar to the concept of "unruly women" that some feminist film theorists have championed, carnivalesque female bodies that resist patriarchal logic.[66] Ossi Oswalda's characters in Lubitsch comedies can be compared with such a concept. Oswalda has

sometimes been called the "Mary Pickford of Germany,"[67] and her characters in those films can certainly be sweet at times; however, they are more memorable for their rebellious, ungainly energy and willingness to act in unattractive, "grotesque" ways, sticking out their tongues, throwing vases and breaking mirrors, dancing wildly, cross-dressing, and getting drunk. In Lubitsch's American films, the bad girls are more likely to be simply "immoral"—that is, sexually aggressive or transgressive—but they differ from the typical "bad girl" in American films in terms of the power and, above all, the sympathy with which even the worst of them is depicted. Lubitsch always seems to sympathize (and identify) with his "rascals," regardless of gender. Such female and male characters are, again, united by their "deficiency" and deviance from socially normative ideals of femininity and masculinity. This deviance from, or "nonalignment" with, such norms is what makes them interesting from the perspective of potentially queer readings, whether through subtle transgression or campy flamboyance. "Being out of line" is queer, as Sara Ahmed instructs us.[68]

Lubitsch's subversion of normative gender roles was certainly related to his position as an outsider, his detachment as a German Jew with an Eastern European father who ends up in (a similarly antisemitic) America. Marginalized groups like the Jews were always seen as deficient in their ability to embody normative gender roles in bourgeois society in both Germany and America; they were always considered somehow "deviant" regarding such norms. This position helps explain the ironic representation of such norms in Lubitsch films, an irony that at times encompasses open ridicule for the gender status quo. In this deviance from normative masculinity, Jews tended to be perceived as insufficiently masculine, as effeminate, and thus queer in some ways. The overlap or intersection of groups considered outside dominant masculinity—women, Jews, queers—is politically significant. It is also of crucial importance for Lubitsch's comedies.[69]

Part I: Berlin

As Walter Benjamin wrote, "To articulate the past historically does not mean to recognize it 'the way it really was' (Ranke). It means to seize hold of a memory as it flashes up at a moment of danger."[70] My political agenda in approaching Lubitsch's cinema of the 1910s into the 1940s is anchored in this, the twenty-first century, and the dangers we face today, in a world in which demagogues manipulate economic fears and cultural prejudices about

religious, ethnic, racial, sexual, and class differences in the service of an illusory, nostalgic vision of a nationalist, traditionalist, and patriarchal past. The situation in the 1930s and 1940s was worse but, in some (scary) ways, similar.

The emphasis in my discussion of class, gender, sexual, and racial/ethnic politics has guided the selection of films discussed in this book. I do not claim to have made an "objective" selection, although the films I analyze in depth do, for the most part, fit into "canonical" consensus about Lubitsch's best films. Given my focus on comedy, I have privileged his films in that mode. I discuss only two of his costume epics, one of which is a historical costume film—*Madame Dubarry*, which earned him international fame—and the other of which, *Sumurun*, is an example of the "exotic" costume films he made. Both have clear thematic relevance to the comedies that would make up the overwhelming majority of his films. The comedies I have chosen are the most subversive of the status quo in terms of the political categories mentioned.

The first part of this book is devoted to Lubitsch's German career: "Berlin: Sex, Spectacle, and Anarchy." In 1911, at nineteen, Lubitsch began his career as an actor for the stage in the prestigious company run by Max Reinhardt at Berlin's Deutsches Theater (German Theater); however, he played only small roles. In 1913, to make more money, he began acting in the film industry. He gained fame in the milieu comedies, which were set in Berlin in the—very Jewish—milieu of Konfektion. Soon he was directing and starring in these Jewish comedies. Eventually their commercial success allowed him to ease himself out of acting.

In chapter 1, "From the Jewish 'Bad Boy' to the 'Bad Girl': Early Comedies, 1914–18," I examine this early period, analyzing *Der Stolz der Firma/ The Pride of the Firm* (1914), *Shoe Palace Pinkus* (1916), *Meyer aus Berlin/ Meyer from Berlin* (1918–19), and *I Don't Want to Be a Man* (1918). During these years, the transition described occurs from the Jewish "bad boy" protagonists Lubitsch himself played to their alter ego: the feisty, untamable "bad girl" played by Ossi Oswalda.[71] *The Pride of the Firm*, directed by Carl Wilhelm, is the earliest milieu comedy that survives and the first film in which Lubitsch had the starring role. In it we find elements typical of the milieu film: migration from the east to Berlin and upward mobility. Next I analyze the earliest milieu comedy directed by Lubitsch himself that survives: *Shoe Palace Pinkus* (1916), in which Lubitsch also stars. The section on this film is titled "Ruthless Assimilation," and it examines the debate about whether the milieu films should be considered antisemitic.

The chapter ends with a discussion of two films made toward the end of 1918, just before the end of World War I: *Meyer from Berlin*, Lubitsch's final milieu comedy, and *I Don't Want to Be a Man*. Lubitsch once again plays the lead in *Meyer from Berlin*, a "bad boy" businessman in Konfektion who pretends to be sick in order to get away from his wife in Berlin so he can "recuperate" in the Alps—and meet other women. On his trip he wears a traditional Bavarian climbing costume, an urban Jew seemingly trying to "pass" (but fooling no one).

Starring Ossi Oswalda, *I Don't Want to Be a Man* is another film about "passing," but here we have a rebellious "bad girl" cross-dressing to get around Wilhelmine gender restrictions. The film anticipates the many German films with bad girls that Lubitsch would make after World War I. It should also be seen in the context of the flourishing homosexual subculture in Wilhelmine Berlin—even before the much more tolerant Weimar Republic.[72] It can also be connected to Jewish "passing."

The end of 1918 was also when Lubitsch began making exotic costume melodramas with the Polish actor Pola Negri. The international success of *Carmen* determined much of Lubitsch's filmmaking in the Weimar Republic, when he was given massive budgets to make racy "historical" or exotic costume dramas of this sort. In chapter 2, "Bad Girls in the Costume Epics: 1919–22," I analyze two of them: *Madame Dubarry* (1919) and *Sumurun* (1920). The former was an epic historical costume film about a lowly French seamstress, played by Negri, who ends up being the mistress of Louis XV (and later is guillotined during the French Revolution). I argue that, like the Jewish bad boys, she is another outsider who rises to the top, but in a historical drama, she must be punished.

Sumurun, in contrast, was called an "Oriental fairy tale" (and released as *One Arabian Night* in the United States, a reference to the tales in *One Thousand and One Nights*). Set in a mythical Baghdad centuries ago, this story featured Negri again in the role of a "bad girl" vamp who ends up in the Sheik's harem as his favorite, with Lubitsch (in his very last acting role) playing a hunchback clown who loves her in vain. An exotic costume melodrama, it again ends tragically for Negri's vamp—but the other women of the harem triumph.

Lubitsch continued making popular comedies in the Weimar years, and the best of them were what I call "anarchic/fantastic" comedies—that is, broad, slapstick comedies that undermine bourgeois "order" and gendered social hierarchy, often combined with fantastic elements. They all

featured bad girls as protagonists who are not punished but instead prevail. In chapter 3, "Bad Girls Untamed: Anarchic/Fantastic Comedies, 1919–22," I look at three comedies. The first two are from 1919 and star Ossi Oswalda, who plays a spoiled American in *Die Austernprinzessin/The Oyster Princess* and a young woman who masquerades as a robot in *Die Puppe/The Doll*. The third film is Lubitsch's final German comedy, *Die Bergkatze/The Wildcat* (1921), which starred Pola Negri in a comic role as a bandit queen. The female protagonists in these fantastic comedies are more powerful than in the historical films (and in the more restrained, sophisticated comedies he would make in Hollywood).

Part II: Hollywood

The second part of the book shifts to Lubitsch's American career. He arrived in Hollywood in December 1922. Although his historical costume epics had attracted Hollywood's attention, he would hardly make any such films in the United States. In chapter 4, "Sex and Sophistication: Comedies and Operettas, 1923–34," I discuss three examples of the kinds of films Lubitsch made in Hollywood in the 1920s: a sophisticated comedy, *The Marriage Circle* (1924); a silent operetta, *The Student Prince in Old Heidelberg* (1927); and an operetta with sound, *The Love Parade* (1929).

Lubitsch's first sophisticated comedy for Warner Brothers, *The Marriage Circle* was a comedy about adultery set in distant Vienna, with the plot of a European bedroom farce but a restrained style. The film's "bad girl" does not triumph after threatening the status quo in this more conservative (and sexist) American comedy—but she isn't really punished, either.

Leaving Warner Brothers, Lubitsch moved to MGM, where Irving Thalberg wanted him to make a silent operetta of the type popular both in Germany and the United States in the mid-1920s. *The Student Prince in Old Heidelberg* was a romance starring the Mexican actor Ramón Novarro and Norma Shearer. Lubitsch sent for costumes from Germany, and then he returned to Germany for the first time since leaving in order to film location footage in Heidelberg. This film is a key example of the transnationalism of film in the 1920s. Lubitsch's migration background was, as always, relevant, but so was Novarro's.

After making one film at MGM, Lubitsch moved to Paramount, where he made the transition to sound film. He again used the model of the European operetta, this time for a musical with sound. *The Love Parade* starred

the French vaudeville performer Maurice Chevalier and American soprano Jeanette MacDonald, who sang in the style of light opera. Chevalier played a rakish officer, a bad boy reminiscent of Lubitsch's protagonists in his early Jewish comedies, which made for a more sexist plot. He triumphs over MacDonald's queen—but Lillian Roth's servant is a subversive, dark-haired "bad girl."

After *The Love Parade*, Lubitsch went on to make four more musicals in the operetta style, culminating with the lavish production of *The Merry Widow* for MGM in 1934. In chapter 5, however, I examine three films of the early 1930s that were not musicals, films that pushed the boundaries in pre-Code Hollywood—that is, before June 1934, when the Production Code began to be strictly enforced: *The Man I Killed* (1932), *Trouble in Paradise* (1932), and *Design for Living* (1933).

The Man I Killed was quite a departure for Lubitsch: it was a serious political film. It was an antiwar film clearly influenced by Lewis Milestone's *All Quiet on the Western Front* (1930), an American film based on the 1928 German antiwar novel *Im Westen nichts Neues* by Erich Maria Remarque. Set in the aftermath of World War I, Lubitsch's social melodrama featured a French veteran who felt so guilty about killing a German soldier in the trenches that he travels to the dead man's village in Germany to seek forgiveness from his family. Beyond the film's obvious pacifist stance, I argue that its melodramatic plot alludes in troubling ways to issues of concern to German Jews.

The other two films analyzed in chapter 5 are comedies without music: *Trouble in Paradise* (1932) and *Design for Living* (1933). *Trouble in Paradise* was a film Lubitsch later considered to be his best in terms of "pure style,"[73] and it was made in the depths of America's Great Depression. Perhaps the most sophisticated of Lubitsch's comedies, it is not a "marital comedy": no one contemplates getting married. The closest thing to a married couple are the two jewel thieves who simulate upper-class sophistication to steal from the rich—including the seductive capitalist widow who is the third part of the romantic triangle.

By late 1933, when *Design for Living* premiered, the New Deal had begun, and a new American populism was making it difficult for Lubitsch's comedies set among the European elites to succeed. This film was based on the witty, risqué play of the same name by the British playwright Noël Coward. Instead of the three continental sophisticates in Coward's play, Lubitsch's film featured three plain-spoken Americans, albeit ones who

were Bohemians living in Paris. This Lubitsch comedy is the most subversive of the sexual status quo, featuring a woman at the center of the triangle who is probably the most untamable heroine in all of Lubitsch's films. The American public was apparently not ready for the film's subversive sexual politics: *Design for Living* lost money. This happened months *before* the Production Code was strictly enforced.

The puritanical nature of the Code combined with American populism and the rise of the "screwball," populist style of American comedy created problems for Lubitsch in the mid-1930s. He was apparently too European—too cosmopolitan, too transnational. In early 1935, he was named production head at Paramount, spending a mostly thankless year in that role before he was fired. After that he made two more films at Paramount: *Angel* (1937), another sophisticated marital comedy, and *Bluebeard's Eighth Wife* (1938), his first attempt to make a screwball comedy. Both flopped, and Paramount fired him.

But other things were happening in the mid- to late 1930s: the Nazis, who hated Lubitsch, came to power in Germany in 1933, and Lubitsch started to get involved in Jewish and antifascist causes. In 1935 the Nazis stripped him of his German citizenship; in early 1936, he became an American citizen. Finally, at the very end of the 1930s, Lubitsch was again successful by experimenting with a new transnational hybrid: comedies that accommodated American populism but paid attention to European politics—that is, politics in the real Europe, no longer the imaginary Europe he had been fabricating for Americans. Chapters 6 and 7 deal with this phase of his career, focusing specifically on three (quite different) experiments in transnational hybridity: *Ninotchka* (1939) and *The Shop around the Corner* (1940) in chapter 6 and *To Be or Not to Be* (1942) in chapter 7.

Ninotchka was a sophisticated romantic comedy set in Paris but based in part on Lubitsch's visit to Moscow in 1936 to meet with German communists in exile, which had made him lose sympathy with communism. The film mixed elements of screwball comedy with political topics of concern to the European émigré and exile community in Hollywood, just as Hitler and Stalin were making the pact that would start World War II.

The Shop around the Corner moved closer to the type of film made by Frank Capra, whose populist screwball comedies had become more political over the course of the 1930s. Set in a Budapest shop, the film's reference to the United States in the Depression and the plight of the lower middle class cannot be missed. I categorize its style as "screwball naturalism,"

American screwball comedy combined with a more European naturalism or social realism. This romantic comedy features two characters who wittily and aggressively attack each other throughout the whole film until they realize they are in love with each other; however, the limited horizon of their romance is clearly determined by the economic hardship surrounding them.

In chapter 7, I analyze *To Be or Not to Be*, Lubitsch's most personal and most political film. An anti-Nazi comedy, it was based on an original idea by Lubitsch. Shooting began in November 1941, before Pearl Harbor, when making an anti-Nazi film in Hollywood—especially one that focused on the plight of the Jews—was still not so easy to do. Chaplin's *The Great Dictator* (1940) was the great exception, but Lubitsch made a much darker comedy than Chaplin's.

McBride sees *Trouble in Paradise* as Lubitsch's "greatest film."[74] I would agree that it is the pinnacle of his "sophisticated" phase and clearly a masterpiece, but for me, *To Be or Not to Be* is Lubitsch's best film, a much more outrageous—and political—comedy. It has little of the sophistication still evident in *Ninotchka*, and it has little of the naturalism noted in *The Shop around the Corner*. Its broad comedy was reminiscent of Lubitsch's German comedies but also influenced by the "low comedy" of American vaudeville, starring as it did the comedian Jack Benny and Carole Lombard, the star of screwball comedy in the 1930s. I call it "screwball antifascism," a fusion of marital comedy with wartime suspense and melodrama, anticipating film noir with its lighting style and its dark subject matter: the Nazi invasion of Poland. Important critics found that subject matter in bad taste for a comedy. Indeed, its darker style of comedy anticipates the "black comedy" of the post–World War II era.

Featuring a group of second-rate actors who manage to foil the Nazis by impersonating them—by "passing"—the film includes the first overtly Jewish character in Lubitsch's American career: Greenberg, played by Felix Bressart, a German Jewish exile. The film critiques the Nazis but also indicts Hollywood's cowardice in the face of antisemitism.

The epilogue of this book surveys the final years of Lubitsch's career, 1943–47. After the controversy of *To Be or Not to Be*, Lubitsch had his biggest American hit: *Heaven Can Wait* (1943), a Technicolor comedy. One of the few films of Lubitsch's career that was actually set in America, the wealthy New York family in the film was modeled on Lubitsch's family in Berlin. Right after this commercial triumph, however, Lubitsch had the first of a

number of heart attacks that would ultimately end his life in 1947 at the age of 55. He directed one last film, *Cluny Brown* (1946). Set in England just before the war, a young working-class woman who does plumbing (a "masculine" trade) meets a Czech professor who fled the Nazis. Neither can conform to the British class system, and by the end of the film, they leave England. Fittingly, Lubitsch's final film features outsiders and transnational migration.

Notes

1. Ernst Lubitsch, "Film Internationality" trans. Michael Cowan, in *The Promise of Cinema: German Film Theory 1907–1933*, ed. Anton Kaes, Nicholas Baer, and Michael Cowan (Oakland: University of California Press, 2016), 299. First published as "Film-Internationalität," in *Das deutsche Lichtbild-Buch: Filmprobleme von gestern und heute*, ed. Heinrich Pfeiffer (Berlin: August Scherl, 1924), 13–14. Lubitsch wrote this article in German while already in Hollywood.

2. Parts of this introduction (and other parts of the book) appeared in an earlier version: Richard W. McCormick, "Transnational Jewish Comedy: Sex and Politics in the Films of Ernst Lubitsch—From Berlin to Hollywood," in *Three Way Street: Germans, Jews, and the Transnational*, ed. Jay Howard Geller and Leslie Morris (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2016), 169–96.

3. For years Wilder had a sign over his desk asking, "How would Lubitsch do it?" It was designed by Saul Steinberg, the *New Yorker* cartoonist; see Joseph McBride, *How Did Lubitsch Do It?* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2018), 1. Another very successful émigré director mentored by Lubitsch was Otto Preminger.

4. See James Harvey, *Romantic Comedy in Hollywood: From Lubitsch to Sturges* (New York: Knopf, 1987). McBride cites French film director Jean Renoir's assertion that Lubitsch "converted the Hollywood industry to his own way of expression"; McBride, *How Did Lubitsch Do It?*, 133.

5. Before McBride's 2018 book, *How Did Lubitsch Do It?*, no scholarly book in English had covered Lubitsch's entire career in any depth. Scott Eyman's *Ernst Lubitsch: Laughter in Paradise* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1993) is an excellent bibliography. In 1978 Robert Carringer and Barry Sabath published *Ernst Lubitsch: A Guide to References and Resources* (Boston: Hall, 1978), a thorough reference work. In 1968 Herman G. Weinberg published *The Lubitsch Touch: A Critical Study*, 3rd ed. (New York: Dover, 1977). I cite the third revised and enlarged edition, which covers the entire career with an anecdotal approach (and some inaccuracies). Nonetheless, Weinberg had actually known Lubitsch since the 1920s, and the book includes important pieces by many people. The very first study of Lubitsch covered his entire career, but it is only 31 pages long; see Theodore Huff, *An Index to the Films of Ernst Lubitsch* (London: British Film Institute, 1947).

There are many other fine books in English on Lubitsch. William Paul's *Ernst Lubitsch's American Comedy* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1983) is a fine scholarly study, but it covers only the American career, as does Leland A. Poague's *The Cinema of Ernst Lubitsch* (London: A. S. Barnes, 1978). Sabine Hake's excellent *Passions and Deceptions: The Early Films*

of Ernst Lubitsch (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992) is informed by feminist film theory. It covers the entire German career but ends its discussion of his American career in 1932. Kristin Thompson's fine book, *Herr Lubitsch Goes to Hollywood: German and American Film after World War I* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2005), covers the late 1910s and the 1920s. More recently, Ivana Novak, Mladen Dolar, and Jela Krečič have edited a provocative volume on Lubitsch, *Lubitsch Can't Wait: A Collection of Ten Philosophical Discussions on Ernst Lubitsch's Film Comedy* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2014), offering many new, insightful readings of Lubitsch's comedies of the 1930s and 1940s.

There are German books that cover Lubitsch's entire career: the invaluable reference work and work of criticism edited by Hans Helmut Prinzler and Enno Patalas, *Lubitsch* (Munich: Bucher, 1984); Herta-Elisabeth Renk, *Ernst Lubitsch* (Hamburg: Rowohlt, 1992); and Herbert Spaich, *Ernst Lubitsch und seine Filme* (Munich: Heyne, 1992). Michaela Naumann's *Ernst Lubitsch: Aspekte des Begehrens* (Marburg: Tectum, 2008), discusses only Lubitsch's American films of the 1930s.

6. Thomas Elsaesser, *Weimar Cinema and After: Germany's Historical Imaginary* (London: Routledge, 2000), 216–17.

7. Germans use *Migrationshintergrund* (migration background) to describe people often still called *Ausländer* (foreigners), even though many are grandchildren of immigrants—and at this point German citizens.

8. Nicola Lubitsch, in an interview with Jela Krečič, "The Author of the Romantic Comedy Was the Avantgarde of the #MeToo Movement," *Delo*, October 20, 2018. Thanks to Monika Žagar for informing me of the article and for her translation from the Slovenian (email correspondence, October 22 and December 22, 2018).

9. See, e.g., Neal Gabler, *An Empire of Their Own: How the Jews Invented Hollywood* (New York: Random House, 1989).

10. Miriam Bratu Hansen, "The Mass Production of the Senses: Classical Cinema as Vernacular Modernism," *Modernism/Modernity* 6, no. 2 (1999): 59–77.

11. More than half of Lubitsch's films were silent: all the films he made in Germany—about forty from 1913 to 1922—and the ten films he made in the United States from *Rosita* in 1923 through *Eternal Love in* 1929.

12. Hansen, "Mass Production of the Senses," 61, 68–72.

13. See Gabler, *Empire of Their Own*.

14. See Thomas Brandlmeier, "Early German Film Comedy, 1895–1917," in *A Second Life: German Cinema's First Decades*, ed. Thomas Elsaesser and Michael Wedel (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 1996), 111.

15. See Lary May, *The Big Tomorrow: Hollywood and the Politics of the American Way* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 15.

16. David B. Pratt, "'O, Lubitsch, Where Wert Thou?' *Passion*, the German Invasion, and the Emergence of the Name 'Lubitsch,'" *Wide Angle* 13, no. 1 (1991), 50, 58–59.

17. EFA itself collapsed before either film was completed, but the financing came through for both films. See chap. 2, n. 18.

18. Some of them would return to Germany, like Jannings and Pommer, but Pommer (being Jewish) would go back to Hollywood again after the Nazis came to power in 1933.

19. "Krähly [*sic*] fährt zu Lubitsch," *Film-Kurier*, July 16, 1923. Kräly had written screenplays with Lubitsch since 1915 and would continue to do so in Hollywood until 1930. Blanke would work with Lubitsch at Warner Brothers, where Blanke later became a producer. See Eyman, *Ernst Lubitsch*, 87.

In 1924, while on loan at Paramount, Lubitsch sent for Dreier to work on *Forbidden Paradise*; Dreier would remain a designer at Paramount (Eyman, *Ernst Lubitsch*, 194). Lubitsch asked Hubert to bring costumes from Germany for *The Student Prince in Old Heidelberg*, and he arrived in Hollywood on November 14, 1926; see Eyman, *Ernst Lubitsch*, caption to plate 33. See also "Drei Atelier-Tage in Hollywood. Ernst Lubitsch an der Arbeit bei Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer." *Film-Kurier*, April 19, 1927, 2.

20. Lubitsch's American comedies were often called "sophisticated." In the first study of Lubitsch, Theodore Huff in 1947 called them "social comedies" and "comedies of manners" but defined them as "light, sophisticated stories"; see Huff, *Index to the Films*, 13–14. See also Paul, *Ernst Lubitsch's American Comedy*, 12; Harvey, *Romantic Comedy*, 6; and Hake, *Passions and Deceptions*, 64–65.

21. Populism is an ideology that advocates for the "common" people as opposed to wealthy, powerful elite groups. It can be democratic, even socialist (that is how I would define "left populism"); on the right, it can involve xenophobic and antisemitic demagoguery in support of autocratic, antidemocratic politics (this antidemocratic tendency also exists on the far left; e.g., the "dictatorship of the proletariat"). During the 1930s in America, it was both—with the antisemitic priest and radio personality Father Coughlin on the right and with Popular Front types on the left (in the mid-1930s, communist parties decided to make common cause in a "popular front" of all antifascist forces—including liberals and social democrats, whom the communists had previously opposed bitterly).

22. On comedy as a mode rather than a genre, see Geoff King, *Film Comedy* (London: Wallflower, 2002), 2–3.

23. See Valerie Weinstein, *Antisemitism in Film Comedy in Nazi Germany* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2019).

24. His place as the leading director was quickly taken by Friedrich Murnau and Fritz Lang, already prominent in 1921 and 1922, when Lubitsch left. These great film artists probably never surpassed Lubitsch's box office successes in Germany; they were also not particularly interested in or adept at comedy. Both would also end up in the United States soon enough.

25. Sarah Blacher Cohen, "Introduction: The Varieties of Jewish Humor," in *Jewish Wry: Essays on Jewish Humor*, ed. Sarah Blacher Cohen (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1987), 13. See also Ruth Wisse, *No Joke: Making Jewish Humor* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2013).

On Jewish humor in Germany, Ronny Loewy warns against essentializing: he discusses many Jewish comic actors in the German film industry but states that only two explicitly invoked their Jewishness: Ernst Lubitsch and Siegfried Arno. Loewy, "Ist ein jüdischer Komiker jüdisch-komisch oder, wie ein exzellenter jüdischer Geiger, schier ein exzellenter Komiker?" in *Spaß beiseite, Film ab. Jüdischer Humor und verdrängendes Lachen in der Filmkomödie bis 1945*, ed. Jan Distelmeyer (Hamburg: Edition Text + Kritik, 2006), 18.

26. Rebecca Solnit, "The Loneliness of Donald Trump: On the Corrosive Privilege of the Most Mocked Man in the World," *Literary Hub*, May 31, 2017, http://lithub.com/rebecca-solnit-the-loneliness-of-donald-trump/. For a masterful analysis of the complexity of German Jewish "passing," see Kerry Wallach's *Passing Illusions: Jewish Visibility in Weimar Germany* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2017). See also Ofer Ashkenazi's discussion of Lubitsch's German comedies in his *Weimar Film and Modern Jewish Identity* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2012), 21–32.

27. Wisse, *No Joke*, 20–24.

28. Lotte Eisner, *The Haunted Screen: Expressionism in the German Cinema and the Influence of Max Reinhardt*, trans. Roger Greaves (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1969), 79.

29. Marion Kaplan, *The Making of the Jewish Middle Class: Women, Family, and Identity in Imperial Germany* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), 11.

30. Simon Lubitsch never spoke Yiddish, according to Eyman, *Ernst Lubitsch*, 20.

31. Leo Spitzer calls this a "marginal situation": privileged in some ways but marginalized in others, with unstable boundaries between the two; Spitzer, *Lives in Between: Assimilation and Marginality in Austria, Brazil, West Africa* (Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 129–30.

32. McBride agrees that even Lubitsch's most escapist comedies have a politics, but McBride is less interested in politics than I am. He also defends Lubitsch from adherents of "political correctness"; McBride, *How Did Lubitsch Do It?*, 28–29. I believe that generally Lubitsch's films subvert conventional ideas about class, ethnicity, gender, and sexuality, but I will identify an aspect of any of his films as sexist, homophobic, or racist if it is warranted. Occasionally it is.

33. Kobena Mercer, "Dark and Lovely Too: Black Gay Men in Independent Film" (1993), in *Critical Visions in Film Theory: Classic and Contemporary Readings*, ed. Timothy Corrigan and Patricia White (Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2010), 753.

34. For a recent statement about authorship as "a crucial site of interrogation for feminism," see Hester Baer and Angelica Fenner's "Introduction: Revisiting Feminism and German Cinema," in "Women's Film Authorship in Neoliberal Times: Revisiting Feminism and German Cinema," ed. Hester Baer and Angelica Fenner, special issue, *Camera Obscura* 99 (December 2018): 7–8.

35. Auteurism was developed by French critics in *Cahiers du Cinema*, including Bazin, and popularized in the United States by Andrew Sarris, "Notes on the Auteur Theory in 1962," *Film Culture* (Winter 1962–63), 1–8; see also, Sarris, *The American Cinema: Directors and Directions 1929–1968* (New York: Dutton, 1968).

36. See, e.g., Klaus Kreimeier, *Die Ufa-Story. Geschichte eines Filmkonzerns* (Munich: Hanser, 1992), 85–88. Published in English as *The Ufa Story: A History of Germany's Greatest Film Company 1918–1945*, trans. Robert and Rita Kimber (New York: Hill and Wang, 1996), 71–74. See also Jan-Christopher Horak, "Ernst Lubitsch and the Rise of UFA, 1917–1922" (master's thesis, Boston University, 1975).

37. Thompson, *Herr Lubitsch*, 71–72. In the United States interference came from Hollywood's own censors.

38. See Weinberg, *Lubitsch Touch*.

39. Huff, in *Index of the Films*, 13, writes that critics started writing about Lubitsch "touches" in their response to his film *The Marriage Circle* (1924). But Pratt writes that American critics in 1920–21 already ascribed a "lightness of touch" to Lubitsch in *Madame Dubarry/Passion*, before Lubitsch even got to America; Pratt, "'O, Lubitsch, Where Wert Thou?,'" 55. The *New York Times* review of *Anna Boleyn/Deception* on April 18, 1921, called it a "Continental touch."

In 1933 Lubitsch referred to "those touches" in a short article, "Film Directing," in *The World Film Encyclopedia: A Universal Screen Guide*, ed. Clarence Winchester (London: Amalgamated, 1933), 442–44. By 1938, Rebecca Crewe wrote that reference to the "Lubitsch touch"' was "becoming trite"; Crewe, "Lubitsch Gives Better Show Than Stars," March 1938, Lubitsch files, Museum of Modern Art (MOMA) Film Archive, New York.

40. Hake, *Passions and Deceptions*, 4–5, summarizes a number of such metaphors.

41. Mladen Dolar, "To Be or Not to Be? No, Thank You," in Novak, Dolar, and Krečič, *Lubitsch Can't Wait*, 111.

42. See François Truffaut, "Lubitsch Was a Prince," *American Film* (May 1978), 56; first published as "Lubitsch était un prince," *Cahiers du Cinema* 198 (February 1968). Also in 1968, Eisner wrote of the "Jewish" fondness for suggestive "images with a double meaning"; see Eisner, *The Haunted Screen*, 79–80. For recent discussions of the "Lubitsch touch," see Novak, Dolar, and Krečič, *Lubitsch Can't Wait*, e.g., introduction, 1–17; Aaron Schuster, "Comedy in Times of Austerity," 19–38; McBride, *How Did Lubitsch Do It?*, e.g., 3–5, 141–42; and Kristin Thompson's "Epilogue: The Lubitsch Touch," in *Herr Lubitsch*, 127–31.

43. Schuster, "Comedy in Times of Austerity," 19–20.

44. See Lubitsch, "We Lack Film Poetry," in Kaes, Baer, and Cowan, *The Promise of Cinema*, 209. First published as "Uns fehlen Filmdichtungen," *Das Tage-Buch* 1, no. 35 (September 11, 1920), 1145–46. See also Hake, *Passions and Deceptions* 8, 62.

45. Mary Pickford famously complained about Lubitsch's interest in doors (probably long after her work on *Rosita*, because in 1923 she was happy with him and the film; only later did she change her mind). See Leo Braudy, "The Double Detachment of Ernst Lubitsch," *Comparative Literature* 98, no. 5 (December, 1983), 1079; Eyman, *Ernst Lubitsch*, 91, 95; and Thompson, *Herr Lubitsch*, 99–100.

46. I am grateful to Alison Guenther-Pal for this observation.

47. Cited in Huff, *Index of the Films*, 13.

48. Elsaesser, *Weimar Cinema and After*, 209–10, 218. See also Frieda Grafe's insightful comparison of Brecht and Lubitsch in "Was Lubitsch berührt," in Prinzler and Patalas, *Lubitsch*, 84.

49. Braudy, "Double Detachment," 1078–80.

50. Dan Sallitt, "Ernst Lubitsch: The Actor vs. the Character," *Film Comedy Reader* (February 2002), 2.

51. Max Horkheimer and Theodor W. Adorno, *Dialektik der Aufklärung* (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer, 1985), 139. Published in English as *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, trans. John Cumming (1944; New York: Herder and Herder, 1972), 154–55.

52. Lubitsch seemed to be very successful, but while his films were usually praised by critics, they rarely made a lot of money. See, e.g., Eyman, *Ernst Lubitsch* 212–14.

53. Braudy, "Double Detachment," 1078–80.

54. See Gerd Gemünden, *Continental Strangers: German Exile Cinema, 1933–1951* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2014), 96.

55. See Mercer, "Dark and Lovely Too," 741; cf. Spitzer, *Lives in Between*, which describes assimilation and oppression as experienced by displaced West African, Brazilian, and Austrian Jewish families in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

56. For a recent example, see Margarete Stokowski's *Untenrum frei* (Reinbek bei Hamburg: Rowohlt, 2016), 143: "Wir können nicht untenrum frei sein, wenn wir es obenrum nicht sind, und umgekehrt" (We can't be free "down there" if we aren't free up above, and vice versa)—that is, sexual freedom cannot exist without broader political and social freedom, and vice versa. I thank Jana Gierden for informing me about this book.

57. See Jim Tully, "Ernst Lubitsch," *Vanity Fair* (December 1926): 82. But even Lubitsch's costume epics featured female protagonists and were addressed to female audiences as much or more as male ones. McBride notes this shift in Lubitsch's career but misses its gendered implication (see *How Did Lubitsch Do It?*, 132–33). He does regard the coarsening of American

films since Lubitsch as relating to gender, citing Billy Wilder's lament in the 1970s that Lubitsch's style had lost out to machismo and "tough guys" (475–76).

58. McBride, *How Did Lubitsch Do It?*, 28. With regard to sexism in Lubitsch, see, e.g., "'Master Woman's Tricks and You Master Woman!' Says Lubitsch," an interview "by Ernst Lubitsch (As Told to Patricia Kelley)," March 27, 1932 (Lubitsch files, MOMA Film Archive). As for (catering to) homophobia, see the section on *Design for Living* in chap. 4 and the need to "Americanize" and "heterosexualize" the two male leads from Noël Coward's play.

59. Lubitsch was apparently attracted almost exclusively to blonde, gentile women, according to his niece Evy Bentley-Bettelheim. Eyman reports that, as a "typical man of his time," he told his first wife, the blond, gentile Helene (Leni) Sonnet Kraus that "he would never be able to marry a Jewish woman." See Eyman, *Ernst Lubitsch*, 67, 84. (Eyman refers to Lubitsch's niece as "Evie," but Herta-Elisabeth Renk, in "Ernst Lubitsch privat. Zum 100. Geburtstag des großen Filmregisseurs," *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, January 28, 1992, writes it as "Evy," as does McBride in *How Did Lubitsch Do It?*.)

60. In Lubitsch's German films, people of African descent appear usually as servants or slaves. In his film *Sumurun* (1920), there is a sympathetic treatment of all the slaves, including the Black ones, and in *The Oyster Princess*, the portrayal of the African American servants could be considered a critique of American race relations; but in *Loves of the Pharaoh* (1922), the portrayal of the Ethiopians is clearly racist. Important characters who are Black are played by white Germans in blackface: in *Madame Dubarry* (1919), Victor Janson portrays Dubarry's African servant Zamor, and in *Loves of the Pharaoh*, Paul Wegener plays the king of Ethiopia.

In his American films, in contrast, there are almost no Black characters. Lubitsch's American films were almost always set in Europe, thus African American parts would be less likely, but perhaps Lubitsch did not want to participate in the racist depictions of African Americans typical of the American cinema.

There are two main exceptions to the absence of Black characters, and those portrayals are mostly positive. The first would be the jazz musicians in *So This Is Paris* (1926); they are featured prominently at the "Artists' Ball"; perhaps a bit exoticized, they are crucial to that impressively carnivalesque spectacle, a veritable "Charleston Orgy," which takes place in Paris, not in America. The other exception would be *Heaven Can Wait* (1943), in which the nouveau riche Strabels in Kansas are so immature that their two Black servants are the only "adults" in the household; see also n. 6 in the epilogue of this volume.

61. Henri Bergson, *Laughter: An Essay on the Meaning of the Comic*, trans. Cloudesly Brereton and Fred Rothwell (1911; Copenhagen: Green Integer, 1999), 87–88.

62. See Mikhail Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1968), 9–11. See Laura Mulvey's use of Bakhtin in "Changes: Thoughts on Myth, Narrative and Historical Experience," in *Visual and Other Pleasures* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1989). See also Maggie Hennefeld's discussion of the feminist appropriation of Bakhtin's theories in her book *Specters of Slapstick and Silent Film Comediennes* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2018) 4–6, 12–17.

63. Lubitsch's letter to Herman G. Weinberg, July 10, 1947, in Weinberg, *Lubitsch Touch*, 284. According to Eyman (*Ernst Lubitsch*, 354), the letter was an addendum Lubitsch had sent to Huff for *Index on the Films*. Weinberg first published the letter in *Film Culture* (Summer 1962), 37–40, 45; later he published it in *Lubitsch Touch*; in the third edition of 1977, it appears on pp. 284–87.

64. Brandlmeier, "Early German Film Comedy," 111.

65. See, e.g., Thompson, *Herr Lubitsch*, 99–107, and "Lubitsch, Acting, and the Silent Romantic Comedy," *Film History* 13, no. 4 (2001): 390–408. See also chap. 5 for the anecdote from Miriam Hopkins about the screenwriter Ben Hecht.

66. Hennefeld has explained and evaluated the concept of "unruly women" as developed by such feminist theorists as Kathleen Rowe, Mary Russo, and Victoria Sturtevant; Hennefeld, *Specters of Slapstick*, 5–6, 11–13.

67. Hake, in *Passions and Deceptions*, 45, reports this common label for Oswalda but questions its accuracy.

68. Sara Ahmed, *Queer Phenomenology: Orientation, Objects, Others* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2006), 82–83. See also Ervin Malakaj, "Lubitsch's Queer Slapstick Aesthetics," in *An Interdisciplinary Companion to Slapstick Cultures*, ed. Alena Lyons and Ervin Malakaj (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, forthcoming).

69. See, e.g., Daniel Boyarin, Daniel Itzkovitz, and Ann Pellegrini, eds., *Queer Theory and the Jewish Question* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2003). Mercer's emphasis on "spaces between," at the intersections of power relations, is a good description of the overlap between marginalized groups—intersections that are productive for a "hybridized form of cultural and political practice"; see Mercer, "Dark and Lovely Too," 741.

70. Walter Benjamin, "Theses on the Philosophy of History," in *Illuminations*, ed. Hannah Arendt (New York: Schocken, 1969), 255. The "theses" were written in 1940, the year of his death and first published in 1942.

71. See Brandlmeier, "Early German Film Comedy," 111.

72. The historian Robert Beachy has demonstrated that the police in Wilhelmine Berlin largely tolerated the gay bar scene; see Beachy, *Gay Berlin: Birthplace of a Modern Identity* (2014; New York: Vintage, 2015). The first five chapters deal with Wilhelmine Germany; chap. 2, 42–84, focuses specifically on the relative tolerance of "Policing Homosexuality in Berlin."

73. See Lubitsch's letter to Weinberg, July 10, 1947, in Weinberg, *Lubitsch Touch*, 286.

74. McBride, *How Did Lubitsch Do It?*, 273.

I

BERLIN: SEX, SPECTACLE, AND ANARCHY

1

FROM THE JEWISH "BAD BOY" TO THE "BAD GIRL"

Early Comedies, 1914–18

Ernst Lubitsch began his film career as an actor and director in short comedies that can be connected to his father's migration background and success in Konfektion, Berlin's retail garment business.[1] In these films Lubitsch played Jewish "bad boys," somewhat sympathetic rascals whose aggressive upward mobility and sexual behavior have led to charges of antisemitism. These comedies tell us much about topics such as assimilation, which was important throughout Lubitsch's career.

Lubitsch transitioned from making these "bad boy" comedies as a director and star to making another kind of comedy after easing out of acting. The "bad boys" were replaced by a rebellious "bad girl," portrayed by Ossi Oswalda. Although class and ethnic and national identity would be important themes, this transition foregrounded gender in a new way.

Eastern European Jews and the Garment Industry in Imperial Berlin

Ernst's father, Simcha Lubitsch, was born in 1852 in Grodno, which was then in the Russian Empire (after World War I, Grodno would be in Poland; now it is in Belarus).[2] In the late 1870s or early 1880s, he arrived in Berlin, where he was called Simon. He first appeared in the Berlin city directory in 1887.[3] By then he had already been married to Anna Lindenstaedt for some years. Anna, born in 1850, was from a town about an hour outside Berlin; Anna and Simon's first child, Richard, was born in 1882; Marga was born in 1884 and Elsa in 1885. Ernst, the fourth child, was born in 1892.[4]

As noted in the introduction, Simon Lubitsch's migration to Berlin can be placed in the context of larger transnational patterns of migration, specifically the migration of Jews fleeing the pogroms of Eastern Europe in the late nineteenth century. Describing the growth of Berlin's Jewish population, including the influx of Eastern European Jews into Berlin beginning around 1880, historian Marion Kaplan writes, "Berlin attracted multitudes of Jews from all over Germany, but the growth of its Jewish population was also due to an influx of Eastern European Jewish refugees from pogroms of the 1880s and then from the Russian pogroms and Revolution of 1905. These immigrants lived in a variety of urban centers, but the largest contingent chose Berlin. About twenty-one thousand eastern Jews congregated in the lively, narrow, and crowded alleys of Berlin's Scheunenviertel, with its bustling food stands, peddlers, workers, and prostitutes."[5]

Simon Lubitsch was an Eastern European Jew, but his wife Anna was a German Jew. Simon was not a poor peddler; he spoke a heavily accented German but apparently did not speak Yiddish.[6] The family lived just north of the Scheunenviertel, the old Jewish district described by Kaplan. In 1896, when Ernst was four years old, they moved a block further north, to Schönhauser Allee 183. Their living quarters were above the family business, which was located on the first floor.[7] Simon started a business that produced and sold women's clothes, which was the basis of his success in Berlin Konfektion.[8] He did the buying; Anna actually managed the business. From a young age, Ernst was used to strong women.[9]

Young Ernst went to a classical *Gymnasium*, a prestigious boys' secondary school, but he left at sixteen without completing his education there. His father got him an apprenticeship at a textile firm, at which he was not particularly adept, and then he worked in his father's business, where he was equally unsatisfactory.[10] At this point Ernst was interested in little else but the theater; he later said that he had wanted to be an actor since he was six.[11] His father was skeptical of these ambitions, but his mother supported them. She introduced him to the actor Victor Arnold, who gave him lessons and arranged an audition for him for acceptance into the theatrical company of Max Reinhardt (an Austrian Jew whose original surname was Goldmann). Ernst Lubitsch joined the company in 1911, at age nineteen.[12]

Berlin's Deutsches Theater (German Theater) housed Reinhardt's famous company, which was one of the most innovative in Berlin. For Reinhardt, however, Lubitsch played only small roles. To make more money, he started acting in film, and it was there that he became famous. Lubitsch began his

career acting in film comedies in 1913, at age twenty-one. The producer who was most important to his film career was Paul Davidson, a German Jew from East Prussia who had worked in the textile industry before he opened what became a chain of cinemas across Germany and then moved into film production. His film production company was called PAGU (Projektions-Aktiengesellschaft-Union [Projections Inc.-Union]), more commonly known as Union Film.[13]

In early 1914 Lubitsch was very successful in his second film, *Die Firma heiratet* (The Firm Marries), and subsequently got a starring role in his fourth film, *The Pride of the Firm*, which opened in summer 1914. In the newer film he played a Jewish man from a small town in the German provinces, in what is now Poland,[14] who goes west to Berlin to make his fortune. *The Pride of the Firm* was a great success, but already in 1914, in order to continue making these popular comedies, he had to begin directing them himself in addition to starring in them. The earliest one directed by Lubitsch that survives is *Shoe Palace Pinkus* (1916).

These comedies were called "milieu" films because they were set in Berlin's garment business, a very Jewish milieu that Lubitsch knew well. Lotte Eisner, in her famous 1952 book on German art cinema of the 1910s and 1920s, *The Haunted Screen*, called Lubitsch's milieu films of the 1910s "rather coarse farces." She also wrote that one of the main ingredients of Lubitsch's style throughout his career, including the famous "Lubitsch touch" of the American years, was "the nonchalant, rather cynical humour of the *Konfektion*, the Jewish lower middle-class engaged in the ready-made-clothing trade."[15] Writing of the historical costume films he began directing in 1918, she wrote, "For Lubitsch, one-time shop assistant, History was never to be more than a pretext for telling love stories in sumptuous period costume."[16] She further claimed that even in Lubitsch's sophisticated American film comedies "there always remained a little of the vainglory of the *nouveau-riche*."[17]

Eisner, herself a German Jew, echoes (perhaps unwittingly) the stereotypical criticism of many Germans about Jewish "new money." Indeed, an anxious upward mobility and the need to compensate, or overcompensate, for one's origins to be accepted by "old money" are thematized in many Lubitsch films (but with conscious intent, I would argue). For Eisner, whose background was that of a much more acculturated German Jew, Lubitsch could never quite escape his (father's) background as an Eastern European Jew in Konfektion; her condescension is obvious.[18] Frieda Grafe suggested

that Lubitsch was "too Jewish" for Eisner, who criticized an early Lubitsch comedy as "too Jewish slapstick."[19] Calling them "slapstick," however, is accurate; this type of film, as Grafe reminds us, was called *Groteskfilm* in German during the 1910s.[20] Lubitsch's persona as an actor has been compared with that of Charlie Chaplin,[21] the English comic actor and director whose career in the American cinema began in 1914, soon after Lubitsch got his start in German film in 1913. Chaplin was also thought by many to be Jewish—although he wasn't. Both Chaplin and Lubitsch were what Miriam Hansen has called "vernacular modernists," both for their use of physical comedy and stereotype and because of their "migration backgrounds"—in Chaplin's case, his own migration to the United States from England, and in Lubitsch's case, his father's migration from Russia to Berlin.[22]

In his early comedies, Lubitsch put to use his knowledge of a certain Eastern European Jewish milieu in Berlin, but his relationship to that background was more complicated than Eisner seems to imply. The brash protagonists of these films were neither autobiographical in any direct sense nor entirely sympathetic: they were rascals, comic antiheroes. They were also clearly Jewish but never explicitly identified as such in the titles. As S. S. Prawer points out, all of them schmooze and bluff their way to the top of (various branches of) the garment trade—a realm Lubitsch abandoned as soon as he could for the theater and then for the cinema.[23]

Migration, Upward Mobility, and the Milieu Film: *The Pride of the Firm* (1914)

The Pride of the Firm is the oldest surviving film in which Lubitsch appears as an actor. The film premiered in Berlin on July 30, 1914, and was very successful. But only two days later, Germany declared war on Russia in support of Austria-Hungary, joining what we now call World War I. *The Pride of the Firm*, like all comedies, was censored as inappropriate to the war effort. Within a few months, however, as the war dragged on, it was allowed back in the cinemas, where it once again drew large audiences.[24]

The main character is Siegmund Lachmann, a clumsy sales clerk at a department store in a provincial town in what is now Poland. Lachmann breaks a large shop window while trying to flirt with a pretty young woman he sees on the street. Not wanting to pay for this expensive blunder, he sneaks away from his home, where his boss has come to find him. Hoping the family dog will not bark, he attempts to elude his father and his boss,

running to catch the train to Berlin, which he makes at the last minute. Once in the big city, he tries to persuade a large department store owner to hire him, and the owner, impressed both by Lachmann's naivete and chutzpah (Yiddish for impudent audacity), decides to give him a chance. But instead of the important job Lachmann expects, he is given lowly jobs such as delivery boy.

All the female employees take a liking to the bold but clueless young man from the provinces, including a woman in a supervisory role.[25] She develops a crush on the young man and then takes him under her wing, teaching him how to dress appropriately for an employee in a store that caters to a sophisticated urban clientele. He becomes one of her main assistants in organizing fashion shows for the customers, but eventually he dumps her in favor of the store owner's daughter. At first, Lachmann's boss is unwilling to entertain the idea of the young upstart from the provinces courting his daughter. However, when Lachmann threatens to quit, his boss decides to allow the courtship. At the end of the film, we see shots of Lachmann, his wife, and their baby boy, who is the new "pride of the firm" at which his father works and that his maternal grandfather owns.

The milieu films use this basic pattern: an unruly outsider pushes, charms, schmoozes, and bluffs his way to the top of one of the retail branches, often marrying the boss's daughter to secure that place at the top. At the very end of *The Pride of the Firm*, an intertitle proclaims "Einst und jetzt" (then and now), followed by a split screen: the left side features the uncouth, provincial Lachmann from the beginning of the film, and the right side shows the sophisticated, successful Lachmann of the end of the film. The uncouth Lachmann points in amusement at the sophisticated Lachmann, who tries to ignore his former self. In a humorous way, the film thematizes assimilation, upward mobility, and the kind of masquerade that conceals a mutable but still conflicted identity.

Most of Lubitsch's film comedies of this period had antecedents in the theater, and the popular theatrical farces of the Herrnfeld brothers were an important original source. These farces were set in a Jewish milieu and had been performed in theaters in Berlin owned by the Herrnfelds since the 1890s. They often featured characters from Eastern Europe, especially Galicia.[26] Like the Herrnfeld productions, Lubitsch's "Jewish" comedies have been accused of antisemitism.

One of the most famous formulations of this critique appeared in the French film journal *Cahiers du cinéma* in 1968: Jean-Louis Comolli,

Figure 1.1 Then and now: Ernst Lubitsch as Siegmund Lachmann in *The Pride of the Firm* (1914). Courtesy of the Murnau-Stiftung, Wiesbaden.

reviewing *The Pride of the Firm*, wrote that the "entire series" of Lubitsch's milieu films would be considered "the most antisemitic body of work ever to be produced, if . . . Ernst Lubitsch had not been Jewish himself!"[27] In a 1979 review of Lubitsch's films that is otherwise very positive, Andrew Sarris came to a similar verdict on the early comedies: "His performances are broad, abrasive, and, by today's standards, virtually antisemitic. The Jew is shown to be cunning, grasping, shrewd, and lecherous as he lumbers through life with maniacal ambitions. . . . There is an overbearing presumption in the eyes and an insinuating sensuality in the lips, combined with an overall lack of charm and grace."[28]

In light of the ambivalent attitude of German Jews toward Eastern European Jews, one might wonder if Lubitsch were perhaps mocking his own origins among the latter for the amusement of the former—and indeed for the amusement of non-Jews as well, reinforcing antisemitic stereotypes for that larger audience. In Lubitsch's defense, other critics point out that he did not simply reproduce such stereotypes uncritically but rather

exaggerated them with an ironic distance.[29] Prawer calls it the "tongue-in-cheek, self-mocking spirit familiar from Jewish jokes."[30] Jewish humor, after all, cannot be reduced to mere "self-hatred."

Peter Jelavich, emphasizing the split screen at the end of the film in which the old Lachmann confronts the new one, claims that Lubitsch's critique in this film is directed toward those who try to hide their origins, and it is thus the assimilated who are the butt of the joke.[31] Irene Stratenwerth qualifies Jelavich's reading by pointing out that Lubitsch was only an actor in *The Pride of the Firm*, which was directed by Carl Wilhelm.[32] But the end of the film confirms Jelavich's reading, regardless of how much credit Lubitsch deserves for it. The final images thematize assimilation in an ironic way, with the old Lachmann poking fun at the new one, who seems to want to pretend that the old one never existed.

Lubitsch himself began directing films soon after *The Pride of the Firm* was withdrawn from the cinemas in August 1914. The first one was made in late summer or fall of 1914: *Fräulein Seifenschaum* (Miss Soapsuds) told the story of a young woman doing "men's work" in a barbershop because the men have left for the war; Lubitsch himself plays a customer who falls in love with her. Because of the ban on comedies at the beginning of the war, however, the film did not premiere until summer 1915. It is interesting that even in this film there is some gender inversion, at least until Lubitsch's character marries the protagonist at the end.[33] We can only speculate, unfortunately, because like all of the films he directed before 1916, this film is lost.

Once Lubitsch began directing, he became more interested in directing than acting, but he had become popular as an actor and comedian, and it was primarily as such (and not as a director) that he was known during the war.[34] Besides the films that he directed and in which he starred, he continued to act in the films of other directors. Of those films, some have survived. One is *Fräulein Piccolo* (1915), directed by Franz Hofer and featuring a young female protagonist (in the title role) who helps her father by working in his hotel both as a female maid and (in drag) as a male clerk. Lubitsch makes a brief appearance in which he plays a lecherous salesman named Pinkeles who flirts with the main character in her role as a maid. Because the film also featured soldiers eager to flirt, the film was censored during the war and did not premiere until early 1919, when the German Empire and its censorship laws had ended.[35] In *Robert und Bertram* (1915), directed by Max Mack, Lubitsch played a banker who seems to be Jewish and who is foiled in his attempt to marry a gentile woman.[36] In *Doktor Satansohn*

(directed by Edmund Edel, 1916), he played a character whose name means "Satan's son" and whose powers seem to involve black magic. In the fantastic film *Hans Trutz im Schlaraffenland* (Hans Trutz in Never-Never Land; 1917), directed by and starring the famous actor Paul Wegener, Lubitsch actually played Satan.[37] Here too one gets the impression that Lubitsch's "Jewish" looks and his portrayal of Jewish characters in other films have something to do with why he might have been cast in this "evil" role—perhaps in accordance with unspoken stereotypes of how evil characters were supposed to look. Lubitsch, as always, played these parts very broadly; he clearly enjoyed hamming it up as a demon in Wegener's film. In so doing, he used the slapstick, grotesque, presentational acting style typical of his German comedies, which Kristin Thompson calls "pantomimic."[38]

Although these films seem problematic because of their amenability to potentially antisemitic readings, Lubitsch did not direct them. To confront in greater depth the charge of antisemitism (or "Jewish self-hatred") in Lubitsch's early career, it is important to look at a milieu film that he himself directed: *Shoe Palace Pinkus* (1916).

Ruthless Assimilation? *Shoe Palace Pinkus* (1916)

Shoe Palace Pinkus is the oldest surviving milieu film that Ernst Lubitsch directed.[39] It was produced by Paul Davidson's company, Union Films, and premiered June 9, 1916. It was Lubitsch's first big success as a director; as usual, he played the film's main character, Sally Pinkus. In this comedy of upward mobility, Sally is the son of a middle-class household in Berlin and a lazy pupil at a prestigious boy's secondary school (a classical *Gymnasium*, as Lubitsch himself had attended), where he is interested mainly in flirting with the girls in the school on the other side of the fence. He gets expelled for cheating on a test.

He then gets a job in a shoe store, where he is soon fired for flirting with a girl instead of working. Nonetheless, Sally schmoozes his way into a job at a more upscale shoe store (*schmusen* is the actual verb used in the intertitle).[40] From there he courts a wealthy woman client, a dancer, who loans him money for his own shoe store, which he names a "shoe palace," a grander term than the more common German designation, "shoe salon." The "palace" is large and elegant, and it has many employees, whom Sally now tries to discipline, just as his bosses had done with him. The reason his employees aren't working, however, as a title makes clear, is that there are

Figure 1.2 A temptation he can't resist: Ernst Lubitsch as Sally Pinkus in *Shoe Palace Pinkus* (1916). Courtesy of Deutsche Kinemathek, Berlin.

too few customers. Sally then attends the dancer's recital, and as the audience enthusiastically applauds her performance, Sally appears on a balcony near the stage and boldly announces that her shoes are from his store. He comes down to the lobby and passes out flyers announcing a sale. The shoe palace suddenly attracts lots of customers and money, but Sally, instead of paying off the debt that he owes his female partner, proposes marriage to her instead; that way "it all stays in the family"—the money, that is.

This brief summary leaves out an important element: the hero (or antihero) of the film is clearly Jewish, although no title labels him so. But Sally is short for Salomon, and Pinkus is a Jewish surname.[41] Another giveaway is the character's portrayal by Lubitsch, who had become famous playing such aggressive Jewish characters in similar comedies and who himself "looked" Jewish—a fact that was exaggerated in some of the caricatures drawn of him in the advertising for this and so many of his other films of this period.[42] In reviews of the film, the main character is called Jewish.[43] Sally and his parents must be Jewish, as is his second boss, Meiersohn; most of the other characters are not.[44] This background also adds an ethnic component to

this tale of upward mobility: after being expelled from school, he gets his first job because he is attracted to the non-Jewish daughter of the owner of a shoe store, and then he loses the job because he is more interested in her than in doing his job. Sally seems to embody the antisemitic stereotype of unbridled sexual aggression—in the second shoe store, he is nearly fired for not being able to resist temptation to tickle a female customer's foot, which has been considered fetishism on Sally's (or even Lubitsch's) part.[45]

But then he saves his job by charming another customer. He deceptively reduces the size marked on a shoebox, and the woman, a wealthy dancer, is flattered. Attracted to him, she soon lends him the money that finances his success. Instead of repaying her, he marries her, and all her wealth becomes his. Sally begins as a poor pupil and a lazy employee, and he ends up a successful businessman married to a wealthy shiksa (Yiddish for a non-Jewish woman).

Jewish Humor?

Let us examine this film in relation to concerns about antisemitism or Jewish self-hatred that critics like Comolli noted in Lubitsch's milieu films.[46] One could argue that it is instead self-deprecating Jewish humor, not Jewish self-hatred, as Prawer suggested,[47] or even an ironic appropriation of antisemitic stereotypes so as to undermine them—something comparable, as Valerie Weinstein has argued, to the strategies of "camp" as practiced in gay culture regarding stereotypes about gender roles and homosexuality.[48]

Lubitsch by no means "identifies" in any simple, uncritical way with the characters he portrays. The plot contains parallels with Lubitsch's own background: his middle-class family of origin in Berlin, his failure to complete his education in secondary school, his father's upward mobility, his father's womanizing (often with housemaids).[49] Lubitsch even had an uncle named Sally who supposedly resembled the ne'er-do-well character of Sally Pinkus—except that Uncle Sally was not at all financially successful.[50] Nonetheless, Lubitsch portrays Sally in an obviously ambivalent way.[51]

In some ways Sally is a positive figure with whom viewers can identify, as Karsten Witte argued: his rebellion against Prussian discipline and hard work is sympathetic, and in it we see a humorous critique of those values, as well as a celebration of sensuality that one might call carnivalesque.[52] But Sally is by no means an unambiguously positive figure. He is a rascal, a (somewhat) likeable one, whom Lubitsch plays in a farcical, unrealistic

manner, as is underscored at the beginning of the film when the twenty-four-year-old Lubitsch wears the sailor suit of a teenaged schoolboy.

In contrast to the main character in *The Pride of the Firm*, Sally Pinkus comes from a fairly acculturated family in Berlin; he does not come from the provinces in the east. The humor of this film results from Sally's ruthless pursuit of greater assimilation, marriage to a wealthy non-Jew being the final guarantee of his success. If we read the film as a critique of (an absurdly exaggerated) drive to assimilate, then it also implies a critique of the antisemitism that drove some Jews to try to erase or at any rate conceal their heritage as much as possible.

In a 1916 interview, the very year *Shoe Palace Pinkus* premiered, Lubitsch himself defended Jewish humor as a component that the cinema could not spare.[53] Weinstein argues that we should not read Lubitsch's comedies of the 1910s "only through the prism of the Holocaust."[54] Scott Eyman questions the accusations made against Lubitsch, "as if by inhabiting a stock character he had somehow called down the fires of heaven on German Jews."[55]

How did the film function in 1916? What was the contemporary reception of Lubitsch's Jewish films? The Jewish press did not accuse these films of encouraging antisemitic sentiments, whereas concerns had been raised about the Herrnfeld farces in the theater on precisely such grounds.[56] As Ofer Ashkenazi writes, we tend to sympathize with Lubitsch's Jewish characters because the stories are told in large part from their perspectives.[57] To the extent that we identify with these characters, we cannot "other" them, as in the more sadistic definition of comedy by Henri Bergson.[58] This also makes an antisemitic othering impossible.

The Politics of Comedy

All comedy makes use of stereotypes and caricature. A more simplistic form of comedy might use them crudely and affirmatively, but a less simplistic form would at least complicate them, if not also ironize and undermine them. Lubitsch's comedy belongs to the latter category. What is the political meaning of this comedy? What should we make of the stock figures and stereotypes we encounter?[59] How does comedy function in these films? Gerald Mast notes, "Inevitably the comic 'says' something about the relation of man to society. The comedy either a) upholds the values and assumptions of society, urging the comic character to reform his [*sic*] ways and conform to the societal expectations; or b) maintains that the antisocial

behavior of the comic character is superior to society's norms."[60] This formulation in *The Comic Mind* sets up a dichotomy that is perhaps a bit too neat. Applied to *Shoe Palace Pinkus*, it takes us right away to the ambivalent nature of the film's protagonist, Sally Pinkus. Is Sally an affirmative or a subversive character? The answer is that he is both.

On one hand, Sally's "antisocial behavior" seems sympathetic because of his rebellious defiance of the bourgeois virtues that are supposedly the basis of Wilhemine German society: studiousness, diligence, honesty, hard work, respectability. Sally's constant transgression of these values is funny, as is the fact that he is rewarded (for the most part) and not punished for it. At the same time, his deceptions and his unscrupulous self-promotion are not sympathetic. But mainstream society is not necessarily sympathetic either; for example, the self-righteous anger of his authoritarian teacher is also a target of the comedy.[61]

Sally's aggressive self-promotion can be read as an attempt to imitate the true values of Christian Germany under Kaiser Wilhelm II, who was famous for aggressive "performance" of German nationalism based to some extent on bluffing, bullying, and an empty, fatuous boosterism. Lubitsch's aggressive Jewish characters have been compared with dramatist Carl Sternheim's critical depiction of the aggressive, lustful, greedy, Prussian middle class in such plays as *Die Hose* (The Bloomers; 1911).[62] Whereas Sternheim depicts mainstream Prussian characters in ways that critique mainstream society, Lubitsch focuses on an outsider, a Jewish character, trying to succeed in that dominant society. Sally may be unscrupulous, but this seems to be rewarded by mainstream society.

It is not that the film argues that he should learn to conform better to social values; rather, it shows him conforming all too well to society's actual, aggressive values (as opposed to the ideal, "modest and dignified" ones it pretends to have). And for conforming to those actual values he is rewarded, socially and economically. Thus the film exposes the hypocrisy of social values in Wilhelmine Germany. Sally's behavior is an only slightly exaggerated representation of a dominant attitude of aggressive boosterism and bluff all too typical of Imperial Germany, starting at the top with Kaiser Wilhelm II. Sally subverts such attitudes by "affirming" them with so much gusto. The film reveals the contradiction between the traditional bourgeois values of modesty, honesty, and respectability and the aggressive values of capitalism.[63]

All such discussion of societal values is complicated by the fairly explicit acknowledgment that Sally is Jewish. Those who have critiqued the film for its "self-hating" antisemitism have assumed that many or most of Sally's "objectionable" behaviors fit antisemitic stereotypes. Sally seems to such critics to be the epitome of the pushy, aggressive, lecherous, deceptive, and corrupt Jew who makes money unscrupulously. The counterargument is that Lubitsch (as actor and director) appropriates these stereotypical features critically, with ironic distance through exaggeration.

Perhaps these features function not only as an ironic critique of antisemitism but also as an indictment of a society that hypocritically condemns such behavior while also rewarding it. Such behaviors are exhibited by a Jewish character in a desperate attempt to *conform* to society and advance in a society that restricted upward mobility for Jews in so many endeavors. The film can be seen to critique Wilhelmine society for its phony virtues and its vices—including antisemitism—while critiquing Jews like Sally for ruthlessly conforming to Wilhelmine values. As Prawer suggests, the film does not lampoon traditional Eastern European Jews but rather assimilated Jewish men trying to succeed through conformism so desperately that they leave Jewishness—and Jewish women—behind.[64]

Sensuality and Consumerism?

The implied social critique of assimilation and ruthless conformism that I am emphasizing would seem to contrast with Witte's more positive, "carnivalesque" reading of Sally's rebellion on behalf of sensuality: his interest in flirting and seduction and his lack of interest in hard work.[65] Yet a similar sensuality underlies the hypocritical veneer of Prussian discipline and propriety in Sternheim's *Die Hose* (The Bloomers). What is humorous is that Sally is so open about it, at least early in *Shoe Palace Pinkus*. As he becomes more successful, his skills in seduction and deception bring him the financial resources he needs to open his own store, and they help him in advertising and marketing as well. These skills would seem to be useful for running a department store in particular and for consumer capitalism in general.

The cinema itself is a branch of consumer capitalism, and this film about a "shoe palace" was produced by Paul Davidson, who brought the concept of a "cinema palace" to Berlin.[66] The film also includes a good deal of product placement, announced in the fourth intertitle of the film and at

the end of the credit sequence: "Die Schuhe und Stiefel sind von der Firma Emil Jacobi, Berlin, Friedrichstraße, Ecke Taubenstraße" (The shoes and boots are from the firm of Emil Jacobi, Berlin, Friedrich Street at the corner of Tauben Street).[67] Near the end of the film, the most impressive shot from a technical standpoint is a pan across the (exposed) ankles of a group of models wearing various stylish shoes.[68] Lifting dresses above the ankles was still a bit racy in 1916: women's feet and ankles as well as fashionable footwear are on display.[69] Whether or not Sally's inability to resist tickling a woman's foot is evidence of fetishism, his interest in women's feet certainly brings him commercial success in this story.[70]

Sensuality, consumerism, and the cinema—does the film celebrate this interconnection or critique it? *Critique* is perhaps too strong a term, but at any rate the film openly thematizes its involvement in this nexus. Evidence suggests a critique of Sally's conformism and his success, and that success is clearly connected to a sensuality that is at first rebellious but later seems instrumentalized in Sally's drive for success as the owner of a consumerist palace. The rebellion works to overturn respectable Wilhelmine values but then is made to serve a new consumer capitalism that is seductive but ruthless—like Sally himself.

The film's critical attitude toward Sally and consumer capitalism is perhaps best understood as a function of Lubitsch's own attitude toward both his father's line of business in particular and the nature of capitalism in general—a transnational phenomenon that Lubitsch was well-positioned to observe and to critique (or at any rate to satirize).

Shoe Palace Pinkus was Lubitsch's first big success as a director. In 1917, a year later, he began to ease himself out of acting, above all with the help of actor Ossi Oswalda.[71] Her film career had just begun in 1916 when she appeared in the relatively small part of a schoolgirl with whom Sally flirts early in *Shoe Palace Pinkus*. The first film Lubitsch directed in which he did not appear features Oswalda—indeed, she is named in the very title of the film: *Ossi's Tagebuch* (Ossi's Diary). Unfortunately, it has not survived. Another film featuring Oswalda from 1917 that has survived is the comedy *Wenn vier dasselbe tun/When Four Do the Same*, which also features Emil Jannings. Jannings also acts in *Das fidele Gefängnis/The Merry Jail*.[72] Both actors, Jannings and Oswalda, would be important for the directions that Lubitsch's career would take as he stopped acting and started making films that were no longer "Jewish" comedies. Jannings would be important in Lubitsch's costume melodramas, starting in late 1918. Oswalda would be

important for the comedies Lubitsch would make from this point on, functioning as his alter ego.[73]

I will discuss Lubitsch's final comedy with Oswalda before the end of World War I, *I Don't Want to Be a Man* (1918). But before that, I want to examine his final milieu comedy, *Meyer from Berlin*, which was also made in 1918. In it he plays a Jewish bad boy for the last time.[74]

(Not) Passing in the *Heimat: Meyer from Berlin* (1918–19)

Meyer from Berlin premiered on January 17, 1919. World War I had ended November 11, 1918, but the film was made before that: it was shot in Berlin and the Bavarian Alps in July 1918 and reviewed by the censors in September 1918.[75] Again Lubitsch directed and starred in the film; after this, he would appear as an actor only one more time, in *Sumurun*, a costume melodrama that he would direct in 1920. *Meyer from Berlin* tells the story of an older, married version of a character similar to the type Lubitsch had portrayed in the earlier films. In this film, the protagonist is again named Sally but with the surname Meyer, another recognizably Jewish name.[76]

Like Sally Pinkus, Sally Meyer too had been a clerk in a shoe store but now is very successful, no longer living anywhere near the Scheunenviertel or the Hausvogteiplatz, the square in the center of Berlin where Konfektion was headquartered. No, Sally lives to the west of Berlin's center, in the more fashionable Schöneberg (where Lubitsch himself would soon move).[77] He also has a devoted wife, Paula, to whom he has been married awhile.[78] Success does not seem to have tamed our bad boy, for Sally seems restless in his marriage. He pretends to be sick so that a doctor can prescribe a trip to the mountains for him. Once there, it is clear that he is seeking an erotic adventure, not an outdoor cure. How does this urban Jew fare in the Bavarian Alps, one of those natural landscapes so important to the "mystical" German concept of the *Heimat*, the homeland? Sally cuts a humorous figure in his traditional Alpine costume, a Jewish Berliner in Alpine drag, as it were. Is the humor here antisemitic? In any case, ethnic, national, class, and gender identities are significant in this comedy.

From Berlin to the Bavarian Alps

To escape the confinement of his bourgeois marriage, Sally summons his doctor and simulates illness to his devoted wife Paula, but as soon as Paula leaves the room, he flirts with the maid (as both the young Sally Pinkus and

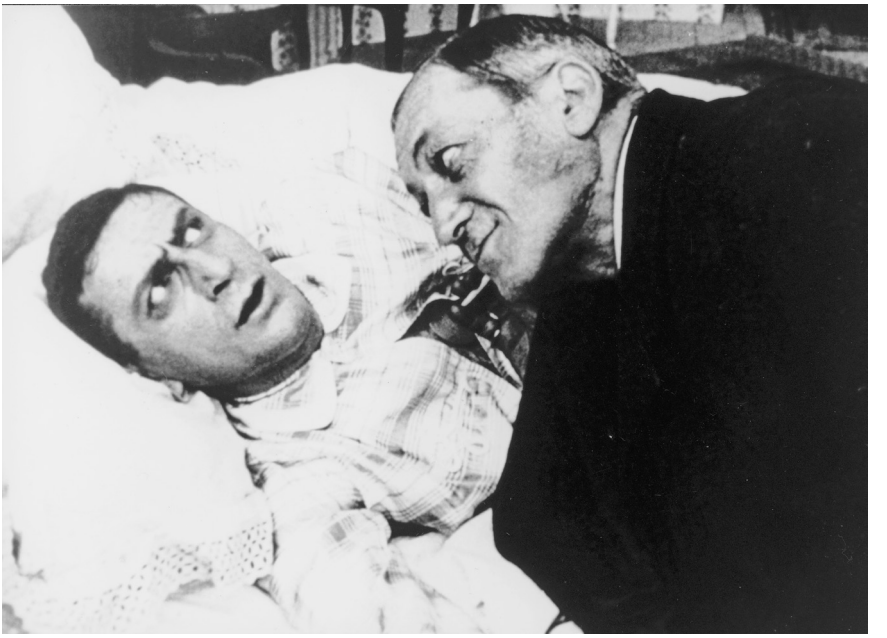

Figure 1.3 The doctor examines the "ailing" Sally Meyer (Ernst Lubitsch): *Meyer from Berlin* (1918). Courtesy of Deutsche Kinemathek, Berlin.

his father had done). The doctor arrives, and Paula brings him to Sally; the doctor examines him but goes along with the ruse, telling Paula that her husband needs to go to the mountains for a cure. As usual, Lubitsch uses an exaggerated, pantomimic, slapstick (or "grotesque"), presentational acting style.[79]

Sally then dons a traditional German costume (*Tracht*), in this case an Alpine mountain-climbing costume, even before he leaves Berlin. His attire draws a lot of attention on the streets of Berlin as he heads for his train; children laugh at him, and various adults assume that he is a performer or that he is going to a costume party. Once on the train, he sits in a car reserved for female passengers so that he can flirt. Although he had intended to travel to the Tirolean Alps, he never quite makes it to Austria, disembarking at Berchtesgaden, near the famous Bavarian peak the Watzmann. Sally has no clue about the Watzmann; when it is mentioned, he assumes it is the name of someone he knows in Berlin.[80]

But Sally is not really interested in the Germanic worship of nature or the rural life, nor in the manly sport of mountain climbing (at which he has

no skill). He is interested in an extramarital affair with a young woman, and he meets a likely candidate at a tourist hotel in the mountains. Kitty is alone and waiting for her fiancé, Harry, who will be joining her in a few days; she uses the aggressive Sally to ward off other suitors. He is very "pushy" and always in his Alpine costume, even at dinner, when all the other men are wearing tuxedos. Offended by being pushed aside by Sally, another man challenges him to a duel and tries to set a date for it. Sally agrees to the date but says that, should he be late, the man should start without him.

Kitty finds Sally amusing and harmless, as she writes to her fiancé Harry. She avoids his overtures as easily as she climbs the Watzmann, an ordeal Sally is compelled to share with her. The climb is difficult for him, but Kitty helps him along and, more than once, pulls him up. It is Kitty who first steps triumphantly onto the peak of the mountain.

Meanwhile, Sally's wife, Paula, has become concerned because of Sally's laconic postcards, and she heads to Bavaria. On the train, she happens to meet Harry, Kitty's fiancé, who can tell from Paula's account of Sally that he must be the man Kitty has described in her letter. Arriving at the tourist hotel, they learn that Kitty and Sally have climbed the Watzmann, and they follow suit. Tired, they enter a refuge hut for mountaineers and fall asleep, not realizing that the two people already asleep in the hut are Kitty and Sally. In the morning all four wake up together, much to their surprise. Paula quarrels with Sally and Harry with Kitty. Then Kitty tries to console the weeping Paula; after a while, Kitty expresses her bewildered surprise that Paula's love for Sally does indeed seem to be "undying." Sally comes up behind the two women, where, in a medium close-up with his head above the heads of the two women—at the apex of the triangle—he asks, smiling, "Can you blame her?"[81] This is the "happy ending."

The Jew in Alpine "Drag"

The film clearly makes fun of the urban Jew Sally, whose mountain-climbing prowess is less than fully "masculine" (which does not lessen his sexual drive). At the same time, the film also makes fun of the rural, Germanic *Heimat* and the hypermasculine cult of mountain climbing: Kitty ends up "on top." Much of the film's comedy comes from Sally's inability to notice that he fools no one in his Alpine costume and that his pushy, nouveau riche manners win over no adherents. Trying to cheat on his wife with a young woman who is probably gentile but who in any case easily resists his

advances, Sally is reunited with his wife in the end, just as Kitty is brought together with Harry. Let us examine this happy ending: for one thing, the bad boy never gets the affair he sought. What about the gap between an urban, German Jewish identity and the idealized German *Heimat*? Is it unbridgeable? In any case, both are lampooned.

Sally cannot "pass" in the *Heimat*, in part because he does not seem to understand the appropriate time and place for the traditional Germanic *Tracht* he wears. He wears it in the streets of Berlin, and he wears it to dinner at the tourist hotel, where all the other tourists are in formalwear. Kitty gently tries to point out the oddity of this choice, asking him if he really plans to wear his "charming" outfit to dinner. Sally responds incredulously with his own question: is he supposed to come to dinner naked? This humorous remark implies that Sally has brought only his Alpine costume with him.

The costume makes him stand out at dinner, but his loud, boorish manners make him stand out even more. The next morning at breakfast, Kitty wears a similar Alpine costume because she is going climbing; this does not seem inappropriate. In effect, all the wealthy urban tourists at the hotel who go climbing will similarly don Alpine "drag": they all will play at being rugged, traditional types in the *Heimat*—or at least dress that way. The historian Alon Confino, writing about the standardization and marketing of *Tracht* in the late nineteenth century, called it "pure historical invention." It was part of the invention of the *Heimat* cult itself in a recently unified German Empire that brought together so many distinct German states with different histories. Both *Tracht* and *Heimat* were also connected to a tourist industry that wanted to lure urbanites to rural villages and landscapes.[82]

Sally stands out as a tourist who does not know how to play the game correctly, typifying (Jewish) "new money." Out on the hiking trails with Kitty, Sally confronts at least one man who seems to be a local inhabitant, whose Alpine costume would thus be more "authentic." Sally asks him how to find the Watzmann, and this fellow gives him somewhat complicated instructions ending with the assertion that, at the end of the journey he has outlined, Sally will bump into the mountain "with his nose." This is the first of three "nose" jokes in the film. The second is made by another man on the trail, also in Alpine costume, that Sally calls a "Landsmann," a fellow countryman—whether because they are dressed similarly or because Sally recognizes him as a Berliner in *Tracht* is not entirely clear. In any case, he tells Sally to "follow his nose."

A viewer today might immediately suspect that these nose jokes could be understood as antisemitic, in spite of the fact that, as Comolli felt compelled to write in 1968, the director and the actor who portrays Sally was himself Jewish. Again we confront this important controversy about Lubitsch's milieu films. Sally Meyer exhibits traits of which antisemites accused Jews: lechery, sexual aggression, cowardice (with regard to the duel), lack of physical strength, attachment to the "decadent" metropolis, discomfort in rural settings and in "natural" landscapes.[83] But all of these, in Sally's case, are exaggerated to the point of being ridiculous, and that is the source of much of the film's humor. This film has another example, arguably, of sexual "deviance"—that is, the "foot fetishism" one might see in Sally Pinkus's tickling of a female customer's foot.[84] In the mountain hut, Sally insists on unlacing Kitty's tall boots, proclaiming his experience as an erstwhile clerk in a shoe store. At the beginning, his eagerness seems somewhat lecherous, but the actual ordeal of undoing those very long laces leaves Sally exhausted, not aroused. Slapstick triumphs over sex here.

In many ways viewers identify with Lubitsch's Jewish protagonists: they are by no means an "other" from whom we are completely distanced, who make us laugh only *at* them and never *with* them, in sympathy.[85] We do at times laugh with Sally, and we do share his perspective as we follow his journey far from his familiar Berlin environs. For all his foibles, we sympathize with him. He is a loveable rascal, much more so than Sally Pinkus.

Nevertheless, there is more to the film than sympathetic identification with Sally's perspective.[86] Key to the humor in this film is dramatic irony. As viewers, we are aware of things of which Sally is clearly not aware: that he is not the charmer he believes himself to be, that his behavior is socially inappropriate, that he does not know when it is appropriate to wear an Alpine costume, that he affects an aggressive confidence in himself that is not only funny but almost touching in its complete obliviousness to what is really going on around him. We see the limitations of his perspective, and we can also understand the anger of the men on whose feet he stomps and whom he elbows out of the way at dinner and breakfast. Conversely, we find their indignant righteousness to be amusing and the threat of a duel—an antiquated ritual of violence in defense of masculine "honor"—to be ridiculous. When this threat is made, most viewers will sympathize not with the would-be duelist but rather with the "cowardice" of Sally and his smart-aleck response about starting the duel without him.

The perspective that we most closely share is that of Kitty, who finds his behavior amusing but ultimately harmless (and useful for keeping unwanted suitors away). But we can see much more than Kitty—above all through the subplot of Paula and Harry on the train, which is intercut with the main plot. We know the fears of Paula, which are clear from her response to the letter Harry has received from Kitty reporting that Sally is harmless. Paula exclaims incredulously, "Sally Meyer—and harmless!" We also know that her fears are groundless—not about Sally's intentions but about Sally's chances of success with Kitty.

Paula's fears—and the intercutting of the plots—bring us to the third nose joke in the film, which is made by Paula. As she and Harry climb the Watzmann, Harry assures her that there is no need to worry that Sally and Kitty will evade them, but Paula responds that she isn't so sure because "Sally has a good nose." The film cuts to Sally in the mountain hut, unable to sleep because he smells something—but what he smells is the limburger cheese in his backpack, which he then removes from the hut. This third joke, initiated by someone who loves Sally, despite her fears, is hard to read as antisemitic, especially because the punchline is a very odorous but very German cheese.[87]

Types of Masculinity

"Citing the extensive use of familiar stereotypes," Ashkenazi writes, "Lubitsch scholars have contended that he was portraying the 'Jewish milieu,' either as a demonstration of 'self-hatred' or as an attempt to criticize and ridicule these stereotypes. But the 'Jewish' protagonist in his films is also depicted as an extreme case of a young middle-class urbanite, who has grown up in the post–World War I modernized urban reality and now seeks new behavioral codes, new beliefs, and a new identity."[88] Ashkenazi argues persuasively that Lubitsch's Jewish films of this period do not merely represent antisemitic stereotypes (critically or not) and that they should be read as more than simply a "Jewish" attempt to adapt to a new reality shaped by modernity, war, and revolution. All Germans were confronted with that reality and the need to adapt to it somehow.

One might quibble that these milieu comedies cannot be read strictly as responses to "post–World War I" realities, given that the last of them, *Meyer from Berlin*, was completed before the war ended. Nonetheless, Lubitsch's milieu comedies—many of which were popular and commercially successful

during the war—emerge from a sensibility that is aligned not with the authoritarianism and the militarism of the German Empire but instead with a less martial and more democratic future society—above all, with a less martial and more egalitarian masculinity. This type of masculinity seems to have been popular with German audiences of all faiths and backgrounds.

Let us revisit the relationship of the milieu comedy to World War I. As noted, the oldest film featuring Lubitsch that we still have, *The Pride of the Firm*, was released only two days before the start of the war in summer 1914. It was successful at the box office but then was removed from distribution once the war started. Comedies were deemed inappropriate to the war effort, at least for a few months, but soon were allowed again. Lubitsch's comedies in particular were very successful. They seem to have provided a needed and very popular distraction during the war.

As for Lubitsch himself, the fact that his father had come from Russia meant that he was considered by Prussian bureaucrats to be a "naturalized half-Russian."[89] Consequently, he was not drafted into the military during the war.[90] This benefit of his transnational migration background left him free to act in and direct popular comedies that were apolitical at best and certainly neither nationalistic nor especially patriotic. Nor did they advocate a type of masculinity that was particularly suited for military service. Sally Pinkus was not physically fit, although if the goal was flirting with the schoolgirls on the other side of the fence, he could easily climb up a pole so as to see and be seen by them. Sally Pinkus's interest in currying favor with women drove him and ultimately led to his success in fashion, advertising, and marketing.

We can see a self-reflexive parallel to the situation of the early cinema itself, in its appeal to and dependence on women spectators (especially during the war). As mentioned, *Shoe Palace Pinkus* shows similar reflexivity between the "shoe palace" and the "cinema palace,"[91] both connected to a need to appeal to the female consumer/spectator. In *Meyer from Berlin*, an instance of reflexivity is even more overt when Kitty, amused at the anxious way Sally climbs down the mountain, says "So müßten Sie jetzt mal gefilmt werden!" ("You should be filmed this way some time!"). And again there is a connection to gender, with the female character seeming much more competent.

As we have seen, Lubitsch's success with the Jewish comedies led to larger roles for Ossi Oswalda. In a comedy like *I Don't Want to Be a Man* (1918), released a few months before the war's end, Oswalda's character is

clearly rebelling against the traditional female role model of the Wilhelmine era. Meanwhile, Lubitsch had begun to direct the Polish actor Pola Negri in bad-girl roles, usually as a vamp in exotic costume melodramas with even bigger budgets: first *Die Augen der Mumie Mâ/The Eyes of the Mummy* (1918), with Emil Jannings, and then with Harry Liedtke in *Carmen* (US release title *Gypsy Blood*), which would open in late 1918, as revolution and political unrest overtook Berlin at the end of the war.

Even before the war ended, Lubitsch had come to center his films around female stars in lead roles—making films that, in many ways, addressed female spectators, as was typical of early cinema.[92] This aspect would become even more important in the films he made with much larger budgets after the war, in the early Weimar Republic (women enjoyed new rights, and political parties pursued these new voters). *Meyer*, made just before the war's end, was his final German comedy with a male protagonist; however, Sally Meyer is arguably "tamed" in ways that Sally Pinkus is not. Sally Meyer pursues Kitty, but she has no trouble controlling him, and at the end of the film, he is reunited with his wife, Paula. Incorrigible but clueless, Sally asks Kitty at the very end of the film how she could blame Paula for being so in love with him. But he certainly hasn't fooled Kitty. Her reunion with Harry and Sally's reunion with Paula are the result of *Paula's* agency in following him to the mountains.

Ashkenazi reads the film as a paradigmatic journey for the post–World War I bourgeois marriage as it would come to be depicted in Weimar cinema: it is the husband's straying from the bourgeois home on an urban adventure where he will learn a lesson that will return him to his wife, appreciating her and his marriage, which will become stronger.[93] In *Meyer from Berlin*, the adventure does not lead him into modern, urban mass culture but rather to a rural landscape (albeit one marketed to modern urban tourists).[94] He does not find a very traditional *Heimat* there but rather one in which an emancipated young woman drags him to the top of a mountain—where his wife catches him in time to prevent anything illicit from occurring. The bad boy gets the last word, but he has not won Kitty, and he is back with Paula.

In this comedy made just before the war's end, one can sense a kind of optimism about the coming of a post–World War I democratic order in which a Jewish wise guy from Berlin can outwit an older, feudal-aristocratic masculinity, and the women in the story outwit him, and a more equitable form of marriage emerges.[95] The Weimar Republic would never quite fulfill

such emancipatory hopes. The likelihood that such hopes were doomed was already clear, perhaps, from the violent revolutionary and counterrevolutionary violence of Berlin in January 1919, just as *Meyer From Berlin* was released.

Cross-Dressing Bad Girl: *I Don't Want to Be a Man* (1918)

The same emancipatory optimism about an imminent postwar Germany can be noted in Lubitsch's comedy *I Don't Want to Be a Man*, in which Ossi Oswalda plays a young woman (also named Ossi) who dresses as a man to get around Wilhelmine gender restrictions.

This is the first film I am discussing in which the Jewish bad boy has been replaced by a bad girl—played by Oswalda, whose characters represent the female alter ego of the characters Lubitsch had played in his milieu comedies. The male protagonists in those comedies were motivated primarily by discontent with the restrictions of their class and ethnic identities, but his films with female protagonists thematize social restrictions based on gender identity as well. In the costume melodramas that Lubitsch began making in late 1918, the female protagonists end up being punished for their transgressions against traditional gender norms. However, in Lubitsch's anarchic comedies starring women, they triumph—"domesticated" perhaps by a happy romantic ending, but such domestication seems ironically inflected if not outright subverted. His comic heroines remain (relatively) untamed, as is already evident in *I Don't Want to Be a Man*, which premiered October 1918, just before the end of World War I.

I Don't Want to Be a Man focuses not just on gender but also on sexual orientation. In this comedy, Ossi is a rebellious adolescent who dresses as a man and sneaks out to a nightclub. There she encounters the man her uncle has hired to serve as the strict guardian who is supposed to tame her of her rebellious ways. In drag, she gets drunk with her guardian, and soon they are kissing. Although Ossi's cross-dressing never places the heterosexuality of her character in doubt, that cannot be said for the guardian, who kisses her while believing she is a young man. The next day he wants their "adventure" kept secret. When he learns that the young man is actually his young female charge, he is embarrassed. Their romantic relationship will continue, but she will have the upper hand.

In 2012 Ashkenazi argued that, at least covertly, the film deals with issues of special concern to German Jews—namely, assimilation and passing. In

The Queer German Cinema (2000), Alice Kuzniar argued for a queer reading of the film.[96] Even earlier, in an essay written in 1993, the German film scholar Heide Schlüpmann asserted that the title is what Lubitsch himself is "saying" by making this film—that is, he's saying "Ich möchte kein Mann sein!" ("I don't want to be a man!"). By this she does not mean that there is any biographical reference to his own sexuality or gender orientation—Lubitsch was clearly a male heterosexual—but rather that the film title must be seen with regard to what was becoming the dominant masculine model of the German film *auteur*, creator of the serious German art film. She argues that Lubitsch rejected this model, opting for comedies and melodramas that addressed a female audience.[97]

All three perspectives are valid regarding this film and Lubitsch's career in general. The film provides evidence of politics around genre that is predictive of the direction Lubitsch's career would eventually take. The film also alludes to Jewish concerns about assimilation, passing, and difference but does so in a way that is queer. The film foregrounds gender and sexual "confusion" in its love story, but it also queers fixed notions of respectable bourgeois behavior in hopeful anticipation of a new, more egalitarian order that would also be more tolerant of difference. On the eve of the Weimar Republic, *I Don't Want to Be a Man* embodies emancipatory hopes about queering, troubling, and overturning class, ethnic, and gender hierarchies.

Cross-Dressing as Emancipation

The film opens with its star, Ossi Oswalda, in a medium close-up, laughing and eating currants with gusto. From the very first shot, an emphasis on orality connected to enjoyment and sensual pleasure continues throughout the film in scenes of eating, smoking, drinking, and kissing. The film will come down mostly on Ossi's side: for sensual pleasure and against those who discipline it.

The next shot is from a low angle up to a window in an upper middle-class home. We see Ossi's governess looking out and noticing something disturbing: the countershot, from a high angle, shows Ossi, presumably in her late teens, below in the garden playing cards and smoking with workmen. The governess summons Ossi's uncle, and they gesture disapprovingly. This disciplinary surveillance from above is followed by a confrontation between the governess and her young charge. The governess, who has joined Ossi in the garden (the workmen have fled), lectures her

charge about proper behavior for a respectable young lady; smoking is unacceptable. The argument over class and gender norms takes on a generational inflection when the governess starts to tell Ossi about how things were "when I was your age," and Ossi cuts her off: "Oh, but that was a long time ago!"[98] The conflict between traditional and more modern values is underscored in a humorous way.

As Ossi leaves in a huff, the governess begins smoking a cigarette herself, which she seems to enjoy. The older generation's hypocrisy is demonstrated again in the next scene: Ossi is sitting in the parlor of the house, attempting to deal with her frustration by pouring herself an aperitif. Her uncle comes in and asks her what she is doing; she replies that she is trying to drown her troubles. He sends her away and then pours himself a drink. From the door, Ossi tells him that he too must have troubles.

The next scene consists of another series of shots and countershots. Ossi is now seen from a low angle up above in a window of the house eating candy. Then, from what appears to be her perspective, we look down to the street below, where a group of young male students are vying for her attention. They sing a song for her, and they plead with her: "We would also like something sweet." Mouths open, they stand there trying to catch the pieces of candy that Ossi tosses them from the window. To make the suggestive nature of the orality here a bit more explicit—in what we might consider an early and not-so-subtle example of the Lubitsch touch—the film gives us a medium close-up of the midsections of the young men as their hands rub their stomachs in pleasure. They begin to serenade her again, but this stops when she is discovered by her uncle at the window. Once again reproached by him for behavior that is not appropriate for a respectable girl, Ossi replies that he has "antiquated views."[99]

The uncle gets a letter from associates abroad asking that he travel regarding a business undertaking. He leaves for the trip by sea, and we see him getting seasick in his cabin (the camera tilts up and down to simulate the rocking movement of the ship in heavy waves).[100] Meanwhile, a male guardian, Dr. Kersten, has been hired to help the governess keep Ossi in check while the uncle is away. Kersten immediately takes control, demanding that she stand when addressed and curtsy to him. He forbids Ossi to go out at night, and he tells her that he will bring her "into line." Gesturing low with his hands, almost to his knees, he says he will make her "this small." This new, stricter discipline makes Ossi wonder why she couldn't have been born a boy.

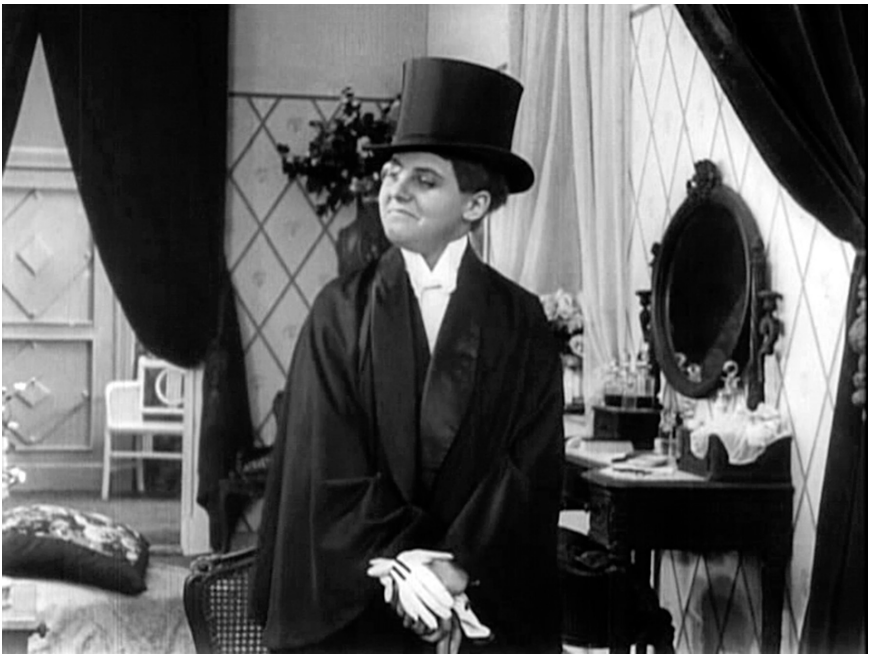

Figure 1.4 Ossi in drag: Ossi Oswalda in *I Don't Want to Be a Man* (1918). Screen capture.

Thus begins her quest to pass as a boy, or young man, so she can go out at night. She goes to a tailor's shop and asks to buy a man's suit; the lecherous young clerks argue among themselves as to who will have the right to measure her for the suit (they end up sharing the task by volunteering, suggestively, to measure specific body parts). Following the title "Ossi emanzipiert sich" (Ossi emancipates herself)[101]—a clear, humorous reference to the German women's movement—we see her struggling to put on the starched collar that goes with her new costume. Finally finishing her disguise as a man, she tests it out on her governess, flirting with the older woman, who is fooled—and flattered. Ossi "passes" that first test.

Taking a streetcar, she learns that being a man means that one is supposed to give up one's seat to a woman, and if one's foot is stepped on, one is not supposed to cry: "You're a man, after all!" says one gentleman. Ossi responds, "That's easy for you to say!"[102] Meanwhile, we have seen a close-up of her feet, which are not in male drag: she seems to be wearing silk stockings and women's shoes with a higher heel. Somehow none of the characters in the film notice this.

She goes to a ballroom—the original German intertitle refers to it as the *Mäusepalast* (Palace of Mice); it would seem to be a sort of nightclub or dance hall. She is put off by the aggressive elbowing of the other men as they all try to check their coats: "These menfolk are so rough!" She is also put off by the aggressive behavior of the women who are eager to dance with the young man Ossi pretends to be—they pull "him" to the dance floor, where "he" gets tossed from one woman to the next: "These womenfolk are so inconsiderate!"[103] That the women are so forward signals that the ballroom space is a carnivalesque realm where ordinary norms are overturned. It is also a site of what we might call modern, urban mass culture, a site of transgression against traditional values.[104]

The dancing crowds are interrupted more than once by a bevy of waiters carrying champagne, intercut with shots of an energetic band leader (played by Victor Janson); all of this will recur less than a year later in a much grander and more exaggerated fashion in the wedding scenes of Lubitsch's first comedy after World War I, *The Oyster Princess* (1919). The seemingly chaotic yet well-choreographed crowd scenes in the club are also an early example of Lubitsch's expertise with crowds, for which he would earn praise from critics reviewing the big-budget costume epics he would soon be making.

Ossi then runs into her guardian, Dr. Kersten, who seems fully at home in the nightclub, in complete contrast to the upright (and uptight) character he appeared to be as her guardian in her uncle's house. He is in hot pursuit of a young woman, and so Ossi decides to teach him a lesson by trying to "steal" her from him. Kersten then challenges Ossi to a fight, but while they speak, the young woman over whom they are supposedly fighting is seen drinking with yet another man. "So sind die Frauen!" ("That's women for you!") says Kersten, and he and Ossi "console" each other by drinking in male solidarity. Kersten lights a cigar and offers one to Ossi, which soon makes her sick. She heads to the lavatory but realizes that, in drag, she ought not to enter the women's room, but she can't bring herself to enter the men's room either.[105]

She returns to the table with Kersten. They drink more and toast to "brotherhood." Soon they are quite drunk, and their affectionate male friendship brings them close enough to kiss—and they do. At first it seems accidental, but it happens twice, and, as Kuzniar points out, they kiss in front of lilacs, which were coded as "gay flowers" at the time.[106] Kuzniar reads the kissing scene as queer. Certainly it would seem that way for Kersten, who believes he is kissing a young man. Ashkenazi argues that it is

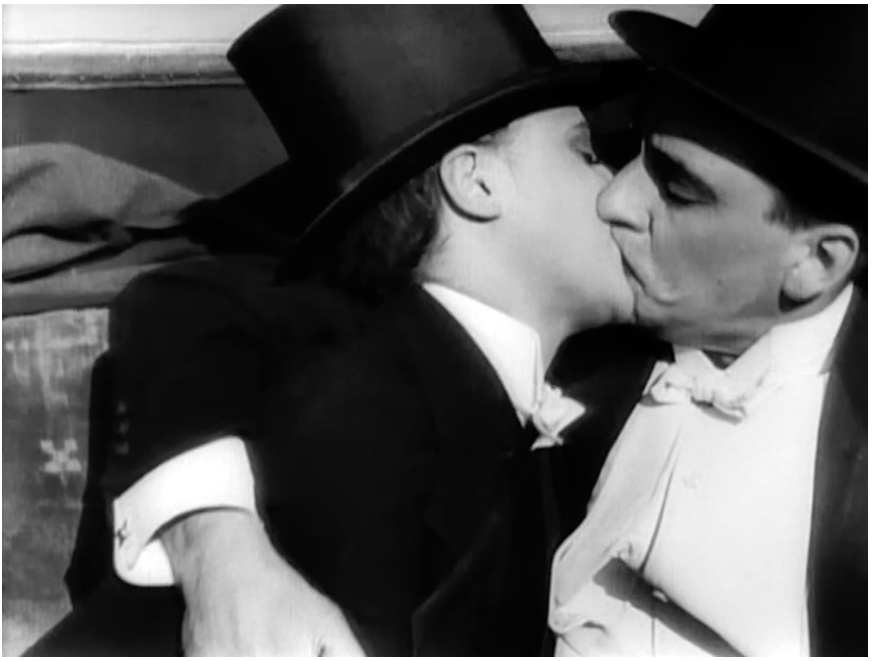

Figure 1.5 Kissing in the carriage: Ossi Oswalda (in drag) and Curt Goetz as Dr. Kersten in *I Don't Want to Be a Man* (1918). Screen capture.

not clear whether Kersten is attracted to Ossi because of latent homosexual inclinations or because he senses somehow that she really is a woman and that, in any case, this transgressive kiss happens only in the "closed realm" of the nightclub—a topsy-turvy, modern space where all is confused and nothing should be taken too seriously.[107] What happens in the nightclub stays in the nightclub, as it were. But in fact, our odd couple kisses again, twice, in the horse-drawn cab that takes them through the city after they have left the club.

They both pass out in the cab, and the driver can only figure out their addresses by checking their pockets. In their drunken stupor, however, the two have mistakenly put on each other's coats, so Ossi is delivered to Kersten's residence and Kersten to Ossi's. Mistaken identities add to a scenario that seems somewhat queer: each wakes up the next morning in someone else's bed, and neither understands how they got there. Kersten wakes up in Ossi's bed, and he needs to hide under the blanket when Ossi's governess tries to wake "her" up. The hungover Ossi is comforted by Kersten's butler and then makes her way home, where, still in drag, she meets Kersten, who

is very surprised to see "him" there. She tells him that she is Ossi's cousin. Kersten pleads with "him" to keep their "adventure" from Ossi.

Ossi goes to her room, takes off her wig, and undoes her hair, which falls below her shoulders. Kersten enters the room and finds Ossi with her long feminine locks but still in a tuxedo. He is stunned, suddenly realizing the trick she has played on him. She tells the mortified guardian that she will "bring him into line" and make him "this small," gesturing low to the ground—the same gesture he had made to her, accompanied by the same threat (with the same words), soon after they first met early in the film.[108] He turns away from her and pretends to cry; this trick arouses her sympathy, and she then comes to him and comforts him. As they hug and kiss, she seems to submit sweetly to him, declaring the words we see in the final title, "Ich möchte kein Mann sein" ("I don't want to be a man")—the title of the film.

Historicizing Queerness

Such an ending at the very last minute seems to "domesticate" Ossi somewhat, with her happy renunciation of any desires to transgress gender boundaries. This occurs, however, only moments after she has made it clear that she will have the upper hand in the relationship with Kersten. Even if one interprets the ending as an unambiguous "taming" of Ossi, it is not clear that this last minute or two can undo the transgressive moments of the film.

The film seems queer to us today. Nonetheless, in 1918, when it premiered, and in 1920, when it was shown again, there is no mention of anything "offensive" or transgressive about the film in any review that I have seen.[109] The censorship records from 1918 mention a few short scenes to be cut, but they do not seem to have anything very explicitly to do with homosexuality. The scenes in question are in the dance sequence at the nightclub, but it cannot be that Ossi is dancing with women because that is still in the version we have today. A bit later a scene is supposed to be cut (because of rowdy drinking?) that shows people in the club coming down a staircase and swinging their glasses, and no such footage is left today.[110]

In the course of her discussion of this film, Kuzniar provides some reasons why the film might not have struck viewers in 1918 as too far beyond what was acceptable. Ossi in her *Hosenrolle* (trouser role; i.e., a role in which she dresses as a man) represents the obvious "invert," but while dressed as a man, she does not try to seduce a woman but rather ends up kissing (and falling in love with) a man; thus, what is demonstrated is heterosexual

attraction. But what about Kersten? It would seem to us that his attraction to the young man Ossi pretends to be is evidence of homosexual feelings that have been closeted; however, the very fact of Kersten's being closeted, as opposed to appearing openly effeminate, would probably have defused any threat. Kuzniar writes, "By today's standards, Dr. Kersten . . . [is] easily recognizable" as gay, but at the time, despite his obvious attraction to a young man, he did "not look the part." Thus, he did "not pose to mainstream audiences the threat of homosexuality that one expects to have arisen, which is not to deny that gay audiences would have been attuned to the homoeroticism" of the film. Similarly, they would have known about the coding of the lilacs, while most of the mainstream audience probably would not.[111]

Although Kersten may not look the part of an effeminate, recognizably gay man in late Wilhelmine Germany, the film does seem to unmask Kersten's straight facade, if only briefly and in a humorous way. He is shown waking up in Ossi's bed, with a very feminine handkerchief looking like a lace doily on his head. In 1918, the film may not have been too threatening, but it seems to flirt with homosexuality. After all, the viewer sees images of what appear to be two men kissing, even if plenty of narrative and social cover explain it away. It is what Chris Straayer has called a "paradoxical bivalent kiss"—the narrative gives it cover, but the image looks transgressive.[112] Even more recent critics have had some trouble explaining it away: Eyman, in the 1990s, wrote that Lubitsch "would seem to have missed a few laughs by not having Kersten show more confusion at his slightly lingering kisses with what he believes to be a young man."[113]

The fact that Ossi as a young man is not a completely convincing boy—for instance, her feminine ankles and shoes remain visible—makes her an even queerer phenomenon, precisely because of the blurred boundaries. That no one seems to notice her footwear might also be read figuratively as a comment on a social situation in which people allow themselves to blindly disregard facts that complicate, trouble, or queer a simplified, binary understanding of sex and gender.

Jews and the Politics of Passing

Ashkenazi argues that specific German Jewish concerns about identity, difference, and passing are just under the surface of this comedy.[114] I agree that such concerns are clearly relevant to this film, especially if we consider the kind of comedy for which Lubitsch was famous—the milieu comedy, a

genre with which he was not quite finished. His last Jewish comedy, *Meyer from Berlin*, as indicated, was made almost at the same time as *I Don't Want to Be a Man*; the former was submitted to the censors in September 1918, a month before the latter premiered in October 1918.

According to Ashkenazi's argument, *I Don't Want to Be a Man* is not overtly about Jewish concerns but rather is "doubly encoded." Its overt thematization of changing bourgeois norms about gender in German society also addresses—covertly—changes (or hoped-for changes) that would make it possible for German Jews to move beyond traditional restrictions without having to give up their Jewish identity.[115] The film, made at the very end of the war, would thus embody hopes not just for rebellious young women like Ossi but also for German Jews. The overt critique of assimilation that we can find in Lubitsch's Jewish comedies—namely, the attempt to deny one's difference in order to be accepted is not a good idea—can be found more covertly in this film. Passing as a man or as a gentile can never succeed—and in a new, more modern (and more democratic) Germany, it should be unnecessary even to try.[116]

The desire of Ossi to pass as a young man is compared with the assimilationist desire to pass as non-Jewish, to disguise Jewish difference as much as possible. The desire to pass creates comedy precisely because it is usually impossible to create and maintain a perfect disguise or masquerade and to avoid the unwanted, unintended, and humorous consequences of such an attempt over time. Ossi must learn that she does not really need to give up her gender identity to enjoy more freedom—but first, Ashkenazi argues, she must experiment with transgression in the realm of carnivalesque modern mass culture. After doing so, she can return to bourgeois normalcy at the end of the film but in a way that fosters a new, more egalitarian romantic partnership between men and women as part of a new, more tolerant bourgeois order that respects difference as opposed to oppressing it.

The parallel to the situation of a minority community like the German Jews is fairly clear. In looking at Weimar films made by German Jewish directors, Ashkenazi demonstrates how one always can find such a longing for a new order. At the same time, to achieve it, protagonists are required to detour into transgressive, modern mass culture to return to a bourgeois private sphere that is modernized by this experiment but still promises the security of an intimate sphere. This modernized private sphere is usually embodied in a marriage that has been improved by the transgressive "adventure."

What makes Lubitsch's comedies with female protagonists somewhat different is precisely gender. The pattern that Ashkenazi finds in so many German Jewish comedies and melodramas of the Weimar era usually involves a husband who strays into urban mass culture; after his "adventure" is over, having "learned a lesson," he returns to the private sphere, embodied by the wife who forgives him (Karl Grune's *Die Straße/The Street* [1923] is probably the paradigmatic example). In the comedies, this experience makes the marriage stronger—less rigid than the traditional model but less chaotic than transgressive mass culture—a new, modern bourgeois marriage.[117]

In the films focusing on the husband, the wife is the foil of another woman, usually a "bad" one associated with urban culture; both realms are represented by women. However, in Lubitsch's comedies starring women, the female protagonist has the "adventure," and that changes things. The film *I Don't Want to Be a Man*, made just before the Weimar Republic, is perhaps better compared with the Jewish comedies that Lubitsch made during World War I. Let us compare the way things end for Ossi as *I Don't Want to Be a Man* with the ending of *Meyer from Berlin*, a film produced almost at the same time. Here, too, more equitable gender relations are achieved, although it is not clear that Sally Meyer realizes this. He seems oblivious both to how unsuccessful his attempt to "pass" in traditional mountain-climbing garb has been and to the failure of his goal of having an extramarital fling. Nonetheless, the film shows women (both Kitty and his wife) triumphing in a way that means Sally's marriage will be saved—and improved.[118]

Although gender can, in some ways, serve as an analogy for ethnic identity or class such that a doubly encoded message can be overtly about gender and covertly about Jewishness, obvious differences complicate or undermine the analogy. Norms around gender—and sexuality—are similar in some ways to the social norms that restricted Jews in the German Empire, but in some ways they are not.[119] Lubitsch's films are commenting on both. Regarding Jewishness, comments in *I Don't Want to Be a Man* are relatively covert, but regarding gender norms, they are overt: Ossi represents a new, more rebellious model of womanhood that strains against the old norms.

Queering the Norm

What Lubitsch does regarding homosexuality is less overt, but the willingness to suggest homosexuality, if only for comedic ends, is obvious. The film has to be seen in the context of the relative tolerance for homosexuality that

existed in Berlin already during the German Empire; as Robert Beachy has documented, the police tolerated the gay bar scene for the most part.[120] If we focus on the film's potential queerness, we note another significant difference between cross-dressing as a man and passing as a gentile: whereas the latter is a (flawed) strategy for dealing with something oppressive—antisemitism—the former can easily be a pleasurable transgression (albeit a dangerous one in a homophobic society).

Above all, the willingness to trouble or transgress traditional norms in a playful way is what makes this film queer, more than any clear representation of Kersten as a homosexual. Although it can be read as commenting on issues of concern to German Jews, it does so by depicting behavior that does not conform to traditional norms about gender and sexuality—norms that were also influenced and determined by the antisemitism of German society. German Jews were considered deviant with regard to those norms—that is, to deviate from proper male and female gender roles, to be insufficiently "masculine" or "feminine." This film is willing to transgress the clear boundaries of those traditional categories in anticipation of an emerging, more tolerant order.

In her discussion of *I Don't Want to Be a Man*, Heide Schlüpmann linked Lubitsch and the German women's movement, calling them both "*Kriegsgewinnler*," "war profiteers," those who benefited from the war (and its end).[121] Her assertion that Lubitsch himself did not want to be a man—that is, a male auteur—makes sense given the types of film he made.[122] In this film, he made a popular comedy with a female star as opposed to taking on the "male" position of an auteur making serious "art films," the strategy that would dominate the German cinema of the early Weimar Republic.[123]

This choice of genre by Lubitsch would become much more characteristic of his films in America than of the many films he would subsequently make in Germany. It would be the epic historical costume films he made in the early Weimar Republic—especially *Madame Dubarry* (1919)—that got him to Hollywood, not his comedies. Once in Hollywood at the end of 1922, however, he almost entirely avoided making such historical films, opting instead for romantic comedies and operettas.[124]

Regarding *I Don't Want to Be a Man*, both Ashkenazi and Kuzniar are correct: the film can easily be connected to Jewish concerns about assimilation, passing, and difference, but it does so in a way that is queer. The film foregrounds gender and sexual "confusion" in its love story, but it also queers fixed notions of respectable, bourgeois behavior, which is pleasurable—and

utopian. No last-minute moment of tenderness on Ossi's behalf undoes it, for at the end of the film, she is still in drag in an even more ambiguous—and androgynous—fashion. She is still wearing her tuxedo.

The end of early German cinema is usually considered to be the end of World War I. The period of Lubitsch's early comedies also came to an end then. Lubitsch had replaced the "bad boy" protagonists he had played in the milieu comedies with a "bad girl" played by Ossi Oswalda. The bad boys had been loveable, or at least likeable rascals; Oswalda's bad girl was spoiled, demanding, and rebellious—and loveable. Although the male characters were clearly Jewish, Oswalda played a character who was not necessarily Jewish but obviously female. Social class and upward mobility continued to be relevant issues in these comedies; ethnic otherness was not overtly emphasized, but gender difference was.

In the months leading up to November 1918, the defeat of Imperial Germany and its authoritarian hierarchy had been in sight. Lubitsch's comedies at this point were notable for their critique of assimilation and normative gender roles. They should be read as emancipatory signs of hope for a new, more egalitarian social order in which "passing" is not necessary.[125] But cross-dressing could be a pleasurable way to undo tradition.

After the war's end, Lubitsch would end up using bad girls not just in comedies but also in much more expensive costume dramas—historical and exotic melodramas with politics that were not so emancipatory.

Notes

1. Lubitsch's father migrated from the Russian Empire to Berlin and then got into Konfektion, the garment industry, which included many Eastern European Jews. This very Jewish milieu was the setting for Lubitsch's first comedies. On the meaning of "migration background" in Germany today, see n. 7 of the introduction. On Konfektion, see also n. 8 below.

2. See Eyman, *Ernst Lubitsch*, 19. While Prinzler writes the name as "Ssimcha" (Hans Helmut Prinzler, "Berlin, 29.1.1992–Hollywood, 30.11.1947. Bausteine zu einer Lubitsch-Bibliographie," in Prinzler and Patalas, *Lubitsch*, 8), "Simcha" is the normal spelling of this Hebrew name. As to the origins of Simcha Lubitsch, perhaps his family might be characterized as Lithuanian Jews, given the proximity of Grodno to the current Lithuanian border. Simcha had relatives in Vilna, including a cousin, Avrom Morewski, who became an actor in Germany and appeared in E. A. Dupont's *Das alte Gesetz/The Ancient Law* (1923). See Renk, "Ernst Lubitsch privat."

3. There is some uncertainty about exactly when Simon arrived in Berlin. Eyman (*Ernst Lubitsch*, 20) wrote that it was in the mid-1880s, but as Simon and Anna's first child was born in 1882 (as Eyman himself states, 22), this cannot be. Michael Hanisch wrote in his

book *Ernst Lubitsch: Von der Berliner Schönhauser Allee nach Hollywood* (Berlin: Hentrich and Hentrich/Centrum Judaicum Berlin, 2003) that Simon arrived in the early 1880s (9), but Hanisch dates it to the 1970s in Robert Fischer's film *Ernst Lubitsch in Berlin* (2006; included on Ernst Lubitsch, *The Doll*, New York: Kino International 2007, DVD). Because Richard, their oldest child, was born in 1882, and one assumes that Simon and Anna married before that birth, Simon had to have come to Berlin no later than 1881. According to family legend, Simon left Russia because of his unwillingness to serve in the czar's army, but this is probably incorrect. By the late 1870s, he was too old for the draft; see Eyman, *Ernst Lubitsch*, 19–20; Hanisch, *Ernst Lubitsch*, 9.

4. Eyman, *Ernst Lubitsch*, 19–20, 22.

5. Marion A. Kaplan, *Jewish Daily Life in Germany, 1618–1945* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 176–77.

6. Eyman, *Ernst Lubitsch*, 20.

7. Eyman (*Ernst Lubitsch*, 24) writes that the business was on the first floor, meaning what Germans call the ground floor. Some report that the Lubitsch family lived in the Scheunenviertel; see Hake, *Passions and Deceptions*, 32; S. S. Prawer, *Between Two Worlds: The Jewish Presence in German and Austrian Film, 1910–1933* (New York: Berghahn, 2005), 48; and McBride, *How Did Lubitsch Do It?*, 48–49. However, Hanisch (*Ernst Lubitsch: Von der Berliner*, 9–10) writes that they lived close to—but not in—a notorious (and impoverished) part of the Scheunenviertel that was torn down in 1906–7. The original Scheunenviertel was to the south of Lothringerstraße, the street now called the Torstraße; the first Lubitsch residence was on the north side of that street at the corner of the Schönhauser Allee. The second residence, at Schönhauser Allee 183, is one block north of the intersection of Torstraße and Schönhauser Allee.

8. On Konfektion, see Mila Ganeva, *Women in Weimar Fashion: Discourses and Displays in German Culture, 1918–1933* (Rochester, NY: Camden House, 2008), 4–5, 15n7.

9. See Eyman, *Ernst Lubitsch*, 23–24, and the remarks of Evy Bentley-Bettelheim quoted in Renk, "Ernst Lubitsch privat"; Evy called her aunt, Lubitsch's mother, a *Karrierefrau*, a career woman. According to what Nicola Lubitsch reports in Robert Fischer's 2006 film, *Ernst Lubitsch in Berlin*, Simon Lubitsch spent most of his time in cafes while his wife ran the business; he may have been illiterate. Nicola heard these stories about her grandfather from her cousin Evy, who lived for some years with her Uncle Ernst and her grandfather (Simon). Clips of Evy from her 1992 visit to Berlin with Nicola and Nicola's daughter Amanda (for the centennial of Ernst Lubitsch's birth) also appear in Fischer's film. During that visit, Evy Bentley-Bettelheim was interviewed by Gero Gandert (1992, Lubitsch_3-489, audiotape, Stiftung Deutsche Kinemathek, Berlin).

10. Eyman, *Ernst Lubitsch*, 27–28; Prinzler, "Berlin," 10.

11. Prinzler, "Berlin," 10.

12. Eyman, *Ernst Lubitsch*, 27, 30–32; Prinzler, "Berlin," 12; see also the statements of Bettelheim-Bentley (Renk, "Ernst Lubitsch privat") and in Fischer's film, *Ernst Lubitsch in Berlin* (19:30). She made similar statements in her interview with Gandert (see n. 9).

13. Evelyn Hampicke and Christian Dirks, "Die Erfindung des Generaldirektors," in *Pioniere in Celluloid: Juden in der frühen Filmwelt*, ed. Irene Stratenwerth and Hermann Simon (Berlin: Centrum Judaicum/Henschel, 2004), 49–50.

14. The film begins in "Rawitsch, eine Kleinstadt zwischen Posen und Breslau" ("Rawitsch [Rawicz], a small town between Posen [Poznan] and Breslau [Wroclaw]"), according to Jürgen Kasten, "Verweigerung der korrekten Assimilation: Jüdische Typen, Milieus und

Stereotype in Komödien Ernst Lubitschs und Reinhold Schünzels," in *Spaß beiseite, Film ab. Jüdischer Humor und verdrängendes Lachen in der Filmkomödie bis 1945*, ed. Jan Distelmeyer (Hamburg: Edition Text + Kritik, 2006), 37.

15. Eisner, *Haunted Screen*, 79.
16. Eisner, 82.
17. Eisner, 79.
18. Cf. Hake, *Passions and Deceptions*, 31.
19. Frieda Grafe, "Was Lubitsch berührt," in Prinzler and Patalas, *Lubitsch*, 82–83. The original remark about "too Jewish slapstick" by Eisner can be found in the section on "Re-evaluations" in Weinberg, *Lubitsch Touch*, 272. Eisner, who watched the films again in the 1960s for one of these reevaluations, was referring specifically to *The Pride of the Firm* and *Shoe Palace Pinkus*.
20. Grafe, "Was Lubitsch berührt," 83.
21. See, e.g., Hake, *Passions and Deceptions*, 26; Kurt Pinthus's 1948 commemoration, "In Memoriam Ernst Lubitsch," in *Der Zeitgenosse. Literarische Portraits und Kritiken von Kurt Pinthus. Ausgewählt zu seinem 85. Geburtstag am 29. April 1971*, ed. Bernhard Zeller and Reinhard Tgahrt (Marbach am Neckar: Deutsches Literaturarchiv, 1971), 87.
22. Hansen, "Mass Production of the Senses."
23. Prawer, *Between Two Worlds*, 45–46, 51–52.
24. Irene Stratenwerth, "Vorspiel auf dem Theater: vom Possenspiel der Brüder Herrnfeld zu den Lubitsch-Komödien im Kino," in Stratenwert and Simon, *Pioniere in Celluloid*, 149. The film was released again on January 9, 1915; see Wolfgang Jacobsen, "Filmografie," in *Lubitsch*, Prinzler and Patalas, 201.
25. Ganeva calls this employee "the chief *directrice*, (a former star mannequin)"—that is, a woman who was formerly a star model, one of the women who wore the clothes in a department store's fashion show; see *Women in Weimar Fashion*, 126.
26. Prawer, *Between Two Worlds*, 51; Stratenwerth, "Vorspiel auf dem Theater," 149, 152.
27. Cited in Hake, *Passions and Deceptions*, 31; in the original French: J.-L.C. [Jean-Louis Comolli], "*Der Stolz der Firma*," *Cahiers du cinéma* 198 (February 1968): 31.
28. Andrew Sarris, "More Than a Touch of Lubitsch," *Village Voice*, December 10, 1979, 59.
29. Hake, *Passions and Deceptions*, 31; Eyman, *Ernst Lubitsch*, 46–47.
30. Prawer, *Between Two Worlds*, xi.
31. Peter Jelavich, "Performing High and Low: Jews in Modern Theater, Cabaret, Revue, and Film," in *Berlin Metropolis: Jews in the New Culture, 1890–1918*, ed. Emily D. Bilsky (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), 234.
32. Stratenwerth, "Vorspiel auf dem Theater," 164.
33. Jacobsen, "Filmografie," in Prinzler and Patalas, *Lubitsch*, 202.
34. Prinzler points out that in Lubitsch's July 1947 letter to Weinberg, Lubitsch omitted the production company he cofounded in late 1914 or early 1915 with fellow actor Ernst Mátray. Lubitsch directed and acted in at least two films for "Malu-Film" in 1915: *Aufs Eis geführt* (A Trip on the Ice) and *Zucker und Zimt* (Sugar and Cinnamon). See Prinzler, "Berlin," 18–19.
35. Prinzler, "Berlin," 18. I saw this film in June 2010 both at the Deutsches Institut für Film and Fernsehen in Wiesbaden and at the Stiftung Deutsche Kinemathek in Berlin; in June 2016 I saw it again at the Filmmuseum München.
36. In 1939, during the Third Reich, this film was remade in an overtly antisemitic way: Hans Zerlett's musical comedy *Robert und Bertram* premiered in July, before World War II began in September.

37. I saw *Doktor Satansohn* in June 2010 at the Filmmuseum München and *Hans Trutz im Schlaraffenland* in June 2010 at the Stiftung Deutsche Kinemathek. On these films, see Jacobsen, "Filmografie," in Prinzler and Patalas, *Lubitsch*, 203–4. *Schlaraffenland*, sometimes translated as *never-never land*, is the German word for Cockaigne, the land of plenty in medieval myth.

38. Thompson, "Lubitsch, Acting, and the Silent Romantic Comedy," *Film History* 13, no. 4 (2001): 391–92. It is this over-the-top, presentational style that Sarris seems to be reading literally (and thus as antisemitic) in his 1979 review, "More than a Touch of Lubitsch." See n. 28.

39. A slightly older comedy directed by Lubitsch survives: *Als ich tot war/When I Was Dead* premiered in March 1916, three months before *Shoe Palace Pinkus*. See Jacobsen, "Filmografie," in Prinzler and Patalas, *Lubitsch*, 203. Once thought to be lost, the film was found in Slovenia in the 1990s. It is now also included on the *Madame Dubarry* DVD and Blu-Ray, Masters of Cinema Series, no. 93, Eureka Entertainment, 2014.

In his epilogue to the 1996 VHS version by the Slovenian Cinematheque, Enno Patalas wrote that *When I Was Dead* was not a milieu comedy because Lubitsch did not play an overtly Jewish character in Konfektion.

David Cairns writes that Lubitsch is "a respectable bourgeois gentleman," and the film audience did not accept Lubitsch in such a part; see his "Lubitsch's Brew" on *When I Was Dead* in the booklet for the *Madame Dubarry* DVD and Blu-Ray, Masters of Cinema Series, no. 93, (London: Eureka Entertainment, 2014), 7–8. Cairns is following Lubitsch's own verdict on the film; see Lubitsch's letter to Weinberg, July 10, 1947, in Weinberg, *Lubitsch Touch*, 284. See also Eyman, *Ernst Lubitsch*, 47–48.

40. For the German slang term *schmusen*, its sources in Hebrew and Yiddish, its meaning ("buttering up" through the use of "ingratiating talk"), and its importance for Sally's success, see Prawer, *Between Two Worlds*, 45–46.

41. Prawer, 45.

42. See, e.g., the advertisement for the film, "Ernst Lubitsch: Geben Sie dem Publikum was es wünscht—reichlich Lachen" (*Lichtbild-Bühne* 10.16 [April 21, 1917]: 3) in the Schriftgutarchiv of the Stiftung Deutsche Kinemathek, Berlin.

43. The main character is called Jewish in excerpts from reviews of the film in the *8-Uhr-Abendblatt* and the *Berliner Volkszeitung*. The excerpts are in an advertisement for *Shoe Palace Pinkus* by the Nordische Film-Co. (*Lichtbild-Bühne* 9, no. 32 [August 12, 1916]: 54) in the Schriftgutarchiv of the Stiftung Deutsche Kinemathek, Berlin.

44. Cf. Prawer, *Between Two Worlds*, 45.

45. Valerie Weinstein, citing Sander Gilman, discusses how this scene might fit the stereotype of Jews being sexually perverse; "Antisemitism or Jewish 'Camp'? Ernst Lubitsch's *Schuhpalast Pinkus* (1916) and *Meyer aus Berlin* (1918)," *German Life and Letters* 59, no. 1 (January 2006), 106–7n24. While such an interpretation is plausible, is there actually evidence of "foot fetishism" on Sally's (or Lubitsch's) part? Fischer's film *Ernst Lubitsch in Berlin* includes a montage of scenes from Lubitsch's German films in which feet are emphasized in erotic (but also humorous) ways. Consider that the foot and the ankle were two of the few parts of the female body that were allowed exposure in the early 1900s (in Europe and in North America at any rate) and thus might be erotically charged in ways that are hard to comprehend today. In any case, Lubitsch does not shy away from joking about any form of sexual desire.

46. J.-L.C. [Comolli], "*Der Stolz der Firma*."

47. Prawer, *Between Two Worlds*, xi.

48. See Weinstein, "Antisemitism or Jewish 'Camp'?"
49. Eyman, *Ernst Lubitsch*, 23.
50. Eyman, 47.
51. Weinstein ("Antisemitism or Jewish 'Camp'?" 117) argues that it would be simplistic to identify Lubitsch the director with the Jewish character he portrays so ambivalently and thus that this is not "self-hatred."
52. Karsten Witte's commentary on *Shoe Palace Pinkus* in Prinzler and Patalas, *Lubitsch*, 124–26.
53. See Lubitsch's interview by Julius Urgiß, "Ein frühes Interview," in Prinzler and Patalas, *Lubitsch*, 90 (originally published as "Künstlerprofil: Ernst Lubitsch," *Der Kinematograph*, August 30, 1916).
54. Weinstein, "Antisemitism or Jewish 'Camp'?" 121.
55. Weinstein, 46.
56. Stratenwerth, "Vorspiel auf dem Theater," 153, 162, 164. Weinstein ("Antisemitism or Jewish 'Camp'?" 117) makes the same point, citing the same passages in Stratenwerth. See also Jelavich, "Performing High and Low," 232–34.
57. Ashkenazi, *Weimar Film and Modern Jewish Identity*, 23.
58. See, e.g., Bergson, *Laughter*, 9–14; *laughter* is defined as the reaction of an indifferent group to an individual's pratfall, in which empathy and sympathy can have no place.
59. Writing of a character played by Ossi Oswalda in Lubitsch's *The Oyster Princess* (1919), Thomas Brandlmeier notes that a stock character in German comedy is the "anarchistic small child." See Brandlmeier, "Kaisers Kientopp. Tendenzen der (reichs)deutschen Lachkultur," in Distelmeyer, *Spaß beiseite*, 69; see also Elsaesser, *Weimar Cinema and After*, 67–68. The younger Sally in *Shoe Palace Pinkus* seems similar.
60. Gerald Mast, *The Comic Mind: Comedy and the Movies* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1979), 20. Mast's model allows for the possibility of rebellious nonconformist humor, whereas Bergson sees comedy as exclusively affirmative of society's values and opposed to the individual; see Bergson, *Laughter*, 9–13, 120–25, 152–53. In that last passage it becomes clear that he considers comedy a uniquely superficial (and inferior) art.
61. The teacher is played by Hanns Kräly, who was already writing Lubitsch's screenplays.
62. Kasten, "Verweigerung," 37–38.
63. Weinstein, "Antisemitism or Jewish 'Camp'?" 103.
64. Lubitsch's film seems more nuanced on this issue than Lubitsch himself was. See the introduction, n. 59.
65. Witte's commentary on *Shoe Palace Pinkus* in Prinzler and Patalas, *Lubitsch*, 124–26.
66. Prawer (*Between Two Worlds*, 2) states that Davidson had first created a "cinema palace" in Berlin on Alexanderplatz—in 1909, according to Hampicke and Dirks ("Die Erfindung des Generaldirektors," 50) and Jelavich ("Performing High and Low," 229). Prinzler states that a number of *Kinopaläste* (cinema palaces) opened in Berlin in 1913, including Davidson's "Union-Palast am Kurfürstendamm"; see Prinzler, "Berlin," 14–15.
67. See *Shoe Palace Pinkus* censorship records (*Zensurkarten*, or censorship cards, containing all the film's intertitles), "Zensur Nr. 39 289. Fabrik-Nr. 195," Bundesarchiv-Filmarchiv, Berlin.
68. This scene is also described by Ganeva, *Women in Weimar Fashion*, 127.
69. Cf. Jelavich, "Performing High and Low," 231.
70. On foot fetishism in Lubitsch, cf. n. 45.

71. Ossi Oswalda was born Oswalda Stäglich in Niederschönhausen (later part of Berlin) in 1897. Her film debut was in Lubitsch's *Shoe Palace Pinkus* in 1916. She made at least eleven comedies with Lubitsch between 1916 and 1920; see "Ossi Oswalda," filmportal.de, accessed September 16, 2019, https://www.filmportal.de/person/ossi-oswalda_6fde5c6893eb4f35a62d93a58bd389cd. Eyman (*Ernst Lubitsch*, 58) suggests she may have been in love with Lubitsch. After he left Germany, she founded her own production company and continued to make silent comedies. She was not successful in sound films. See also Prinzler, "Berlin," 20. She went to Prague in 1933 and stayed there through the war, dying in poverty in 1947 (in July; Lubitsch died in November). Loewy implies that she was Jewish; see "Ist ein jüdischer Komiker jüdisch-komisch," 2007. Rainer Dick writes that she had a Jewish husband; see Dick, "Flapper, Xanthippen und kleine Männer. Der Wandel im Typenarsenal des komischen Films nach dem Exodus seiner exponiertesten Darsteller," in Distelmeyer, *Spaß beiseite* 93.

72. Werner Sudendorf's commentary on *When Four Do the Same* in Prinzler and Patalas, *Lubitsch*, 126. I watched the film at the Filmmuseum München in May 2009 and at the Bundesarchiv-Filmarchiv in Berlin in June 2016. I watched *The Merry Jail* at the Stiftung Deutsche Kinemathek, Berlin, in April 2009 and at the Filmmuseum München in June 2016; it is included on the American DVD for Ernst Lubitsch's *Trouble in Paradise* (New York: Criterion Collection, 2003). *The Merry Jail* is an adaptation of Johann Strauss's operetta *Die Fledermaus* (The Bat). See Michael Esser's synopsis in Jacobsen, "Filmografie," in Prinzler and Patalas, *Lubitsch*, 205.

73. Brandlmeier, "Early German Film Comedy," 111.

74. *Shoe Palace Pinkus* is the earliest Jewish comedy directed by Lubitsch that survives, and *Meyer from Berlin* is the final Jewish comedy he directed; no other complete Jewish comedy directed by him survives. There is a twelve-and-a-half-minute fragment of *Der Blusenkönig* (The Blouse King) from 1917 at the Murnau-Stiftung in Wiesbaden. Lubitsch directed the film and he stars in it as Sally Katz. See Jacobsen, "Filmografie," in Prinzler and Patalas, *Lubitsch*, 204, for a contemporary review of the film in *Der Kinematograph*, November 7, 1916, which provides us with an idea of the full plot. Weinstein included an analysis of this excerpt in "Performing Jewishness. Ernst Lubitschs frühe Milieukomödien," December 15, 2016, Deutsches Filmmuseum, Frankfurt. See "Lecture and Film: Ernst Lubitsch—*Der Stolz der Firma* and *Schuhpalast Pinkus*," December 15, 2016, Deutsches Filmmuseum, Frankfurt, video, 1:14:00, https://www.filmportal.de/node/52353/video/1377175.

75. This is according to the entry for *Meyer from Berlin* on filmportal.de, accessed September 9, 2019, https://www.filmportal.de/film/meyer-aus-berlin_033790c7299a4a5b84c1c5b5c78db866.

76. Kasten, "Verweigerung," 41.

77. According to Eyman (*Ernst Lubitsch*, 67), Lubitsch moved to Schöneberg shortly after the production of *The Oyster Princess* because of "civil unrest" in the center of Berlin. With his father and his sister's family, he took residence at Kufsteinerstraße 13 in Schöneberg, near the Bayerischer Platz (Bavarian Square). *Meyer from Berlin* premiered in January 1919 and *The Oyster Princess* in June 1919. The move also made sense because he was no longer acting in the theater district of central Berlin, as Hanisch states in Fischer's film *Ernst Lubitsch in Berlin* (ca. 1:04). Schöneberg was a separate town until 1920, when it became a part of Berlin with the creation of Greater Berlin (Groß-Berlin).

78. Prawer (*Between Two Worlds*, 50) asserts that she is gentile. It makes sense if Sally Meyer is like Sally Pinkus, although there is no real evidence in the film itself.

79. Thompson, "Lubitsch, Acting, and the Silent Romantic Comedy," 391–92.

80. Prawer, *Between Two Worlds*, 50–51.

81. Kitty: "Sie sind wohl unsterblich in Ihren Sally verliebt!" Sally: "Können Sie ihr das verdenken?"

82. See Alon Confino, "The Nation as a Local Metaphor: Heimat, National Memory and the German Empire, 1971–1918," *History and Memory* 5, no. 1 (Spring-Summer 1993): 57–58, 65–66. Ofer Ashkenazi provides an excellent discussion of the concept of *Heimat* in nineteenth and twentieth century German culture and of how Lubitsch's *Meyer from Berlin* interacts with the early twentieth-century version of it in the first chapter of his book, *Anti-Heimat Cinema: The Jewish Invention of the German Landscape* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, forthcoming). Ashkenazi also points out that Lubitsch's film has a very similar plot to a German *Heimat* film starring Henny Porten and made in 1917 by Rudolf Bierbach, *Höhenluft* (Mountain Air).

83. This urbanite's aversion to nature also may remind us today of Woody Allen's persona as a comic actor. See Gerald Mast, "Woody Allen: The Neurotic Jew as American Clown," in *Jewish Wry: Essays on Jewish Humor*, ed. Sarah Blacher Cohen (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1987); and Mast, *Comic Mind*, 127–28, esp. his comments on Lubitsch; see also Ashkenazi, *Weimar Film and Modern Jewish Identity*, 41–42.

84. See n. 45.

85. See Ashkenazi, *Weimar Film and Modern Jewish Identity*, 23.

86. Weinstein writes that we view Sally "in a detached, ironic way"; "Antisemitism or Jewish Camp?" 117–18. Nonetheless, we also share his perspective, as Ashkenazi claims; *Weimar Film and Modern Jewish Identity*, 23.

87. Much later in his career, Lubitsch features another Jewish character who can smell something German: Greenberg in *To Be or Not to Be* (1942) claims that he can "smell" Hitler in the impersonation of another actor.

88. Ashkenazi, *Weimar Film and Modern Jewish Identity*, 32.

89. Kasten, "Verweigerung," 33.

90. Lubitsch seems to have been quite fortunate, for many Jews with Russian backgrounds were deported in 1914, just as in 1904–6; see Kaplan, *Making of the Jewish Middle Class*, 14.

91. On the "cinema palace," see n. 66.

92. Thompson, "Lubitsch, Acting, and the Silent Romantic Comedy," 392; Brandlmeier, "Kaisers Kientopp," 69; Elsaesser, *Weimar Cinema and After*, 204–6.

93. Ashkenazi, *Weimar Film and Modern Jewish Identity*, 29–32.

94. On the modernity of the mountain-climbing craze, in spite of its ultimate cooptation by reactionary forces, see Eric Rentschler, "Mountains and Modernity: Relocating the *Bergfilm*," *New German Critique* 51 (1990): 137–61. Let us not forget "reactionary modernism," the term coined by Jeffrey Herf, *Reactionary Modernism: Technology, Culture, and Politics in Weimar and the Third Reich* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984).

95. Cf. Brandlmeier, "Early German Comedy," 112. He calls the pre–World War I Lubitsch a "pre-revolutionary" artist who already represented the "new human type of the twenties."

96. See Alice A. Kuzniar, *The Queer German Cinema* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2000); Ashkenazi, *Weimar Film and Modern Jewish Identity*, 21–32.

97. See Heide Schlüpmann, "'Ich möchte kein Mann sein.' Ernst Lubitsch, Sigmund Freud und die frühe deutsche Komödie," *KINtop 1: Jahrbuch zur Erforschung des frühen Films* (1993): 76.

98. Unless otherwise noted, I am citing the intertitles from the American version of the DVD for this film: Ernst Lubitsch, *Oyster Princess and I Don't Want to Be a Man* (New York: Kino International, 2007). In the original German intertitles, the governess says, "Als ich so jung war wie Du—," and Ossi responds, "Ach, das ist ja schon so lange her." See *Ich möchte kein Mann sein* censorship records, "Prüf-Nr. 4477," October 17, 1921, Bundesarchiv-Filmarchiv, Berlin.

99. In the American version of the DVD for this film (see n. 98), these intertitles are not provided, but according to *Ich möchte kein Mann sein* censorship records, October 17, 1921, there was an intertitle that conveyed what the uncle says here: "Das schickt sich nicht für ein anständiges Mädchen." Ossi replies, "Du hast ja veraltete Ansichten!"

100. In *Ich möchte kein Mann sein* censorship records, October 17, 1921, the intertitle with the letter that the uncle receives supposedly comes from New York. But the original film premiered in October 1918, before the end of the war; the intertitle could not have specified that the letter came from an enemy nation.

101. On the American DVD (see n. 98), the intertitle says "Ossi gets emancipated," but my translation is the literal translation of the German: "Ossi emancipates herself." See *Ich möchte kein Mann sein* censorship records, October 17, 1921.

102. Original German titles: "Sie sind doch ein Mann," and "Das sagen Sie so." See *Ich möchte kein Mann sein* censorship records, October 17, 1921.

103. Original German titles: "Ein grobes Volk—diese Männer" and "Ein rücksichtsloses Volk—diese Frauen." See *Ich möchte kein Mann sein*: censorship records, October 17, 1921.

104. Ashkenazi, *Weimar Film and Modern Jewish Identity*, 30.

105. The taboo of entering the lavatory of the other sex is one with which Lubitsch continued to flirt in both *Ninotchka* (1939) and *To Be or Not to Be* (1942).

106. See Kuzniar, *Queer German Cinema*, 35; see also Eisner, *Haunted Screen*, 274.

107. Ashkenazi, *Weimar Film and Modern Jewish Identity*, 24; see also Wallach, *Passing Illusions*, 173. Wallach asks if the men in such films who are attracted to women cross-dressing as men "see through the acts of passing" or if they are indeed attracted to men. She writes, "Passing itself becomes a cover for queerness."

108. This idea of making someone "small" to humble them recurs again at the end of Lubitsch's American film *So This is Paris* (1926), but there this metaphor is visualized; cf. chap. 4.

109. See G——g, "Varieté und Kino," review of *Ich möchte kein Mann sein, B.Z. am Mittag*, October 5, 1918, 3; and the review of the film from a retrospective in 1920 by "Frank" in the *Film-Kurier*, May 8, 1920. I found the latter on the second page of "Liebe, Lust und Laster," a program for a 1993 film showing of Lubitsch's film and Richard Oswald's *Anders als die Andern/Different from the Others* (1919), Schriftgutarchiv of the Stiftung Deutsche Kinemathek in Berlin.

110. See "Ich möchte kein Mann sein: Was 1918 verboten war," an excerpt from the "Zensurenentscheid Berlin 10695/18" that is also found on the second page of "Liebe, Lust und Laster" (see n. 109). While the film was shown again in May 1920, from the date of the review by "Frank" (also on the second page of "Liebe, Lust and Laster"), it did not undergo a censorship review in the new Weimar Republic until October 17, 1921. See *Ich möchte kein Mann sein* censorship records, October 17, 1921. It could be that the scene with Ossi dancing with women was cut in 1918 but was restored when the film was shown again in 1920 (at a time when there was still no censorship in the Weimar Republic).

111. Kuzniar, *Queer German Cinema*, 39. Another important book is Laura Horak, *Girls Will Be Boys: Cross-Dressed Women, Lesbians, and American Cinema* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2016), which historicizes cross-dressing films in terms of how much—or how little—they may have originally been received as implying homosexuality. Horak focuses on American films and the American context and demonstrates that films with women cross-dressing as men were very popular in the 1900s and 1910s and were considered mostly very "wholesome" and not subversive sexually; more subversive films (and reception) came in the late 1920s, as a broader American awareness of lesbianism emerged. How similar was the situation in Germany? I have done no extensive research on this, but Robert Beachy's work makes it appear that there was more public awareness of homosexuality in Germany; see Beachy, *Gay Berlin*. The sexual "confusion" in *I Don't Want to Be a Man* is noteworthy, given that it includes two people kissing who look like men, which most Americans of the era would not have found "wholesome."

112. Chris Straayer, "Redressing the 'Natural': The Temporary Transvestite Film" (1996), in *Film Genre Reader III*, ed. Barry Keith Grant (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2003), 426–27. I am grateful to Alison Guenther-Pal for calling my attention to Straayer's article and this concept; see Guenther-Pal, "'Should Women Be Amazons?' Reallocating Masculinity in German Postwar History and Hosenrolle," *Seminar* 54, no. 3 (September 2018): 365–94.

113. Eyman, *Ernst Lubitsch*, 52.

114. Ashkenazi, *Weimar Film and Modern Jewish Identity*, 2–32.

115. Ashkenazi, 29.

116. Ashkenazi, 24, 29, 31.

117. Cf. Ashkenazi, 24 and 31—the latter is specifically a discussion of *The Oyster Princess* (1919), but similar arguments are being made for all three of the comedies he discusses in that chapter (including *Meyer From Berlin*; 17–42). His third chapter (43–75) focuses on the melodramas, the paradigmatic case being Karl Grune's *Die Straße/The Street* (1923); these films do not end happily, implicitly making a more pessimistic prediction about the hopes of Jews to gain the acceptance they had hoped for in Weimar society.

118. This is emphasized by Ashkenazi, *Weimar Film and Modern Jewish Identity*, 30–32.

119. See Janet R. Jakobsen, "Queers are Like Jews, Aren't They? Analogy and Alliance Politics," in *Queer Theory and the Jewish Question*, ed. Daniel Boyarin, Daniel Itzkovitz, and Ann Pellegrini (New York: Columbia University Press, 2003), 64–89; see also Wallach, *Passing Illusions*, 15–16.

120. See Beachy, *Gay Berlin*. Chap. 2 focuses specifically on the relative tolerance of "Policing Homosexuality in Berlin." Beachy mentions cross-dressing films (168); he briefly discusses *I Don't Want to Be a Man*, the only one before the end of World War I; the other two he mentions are *Der Geiger von Florenz* (The Violinist from Florence, 1925–26) and *Viktor und Viktoria* (1933; remade in 1982 as *Victor/Victoria*, but set in Paris, not Berlin).

121. Schlüpmann, "Ich möchte kein Mann sein," 75.

122. Schlüpmann, 76.

123. Schlüpmann, 76.

124. See Tully, "Ernst Lubitsch," 82.

125. Wallach (*Passing Illusions*, 6–7) writes, "In Weimar Germany it became less urgent to appear non-Jewish." But obviously antisemitism persisted and, in many ways, got worse with the greater visibility of Jews.

2

BAD GIRLS IN THE COSTUME EPICS, 1919–22

Lubitsch began to earn international attention just before the end of World War I with his exotic costume melodramas. The money these films made ensured that UFA, Germany's biggest film studio, wanted Lubitsch to make more of them, with even bigger budgets. Through such films even Hollywood began to pay attention to Lubitsch. These expensive costume epics were very different from his comedies but addressed similar issues—for example, the upward mobility of outsiders in hostile societies and disruptive class and gender politics. The costume films also featured bad girls. They were invariably punished in these films, given sexist genre—and social—conventions, but Lubitsch usually seems to sympathize (indeed, identify) with these characters. I would argue that he wants us to do so as well.

Lubitsch and the Costume Epics

Film archivists Hans Helmut Prinzler and Enno Patalas[1] were each interviewed in Robert Fischer's 2006 documentary, *Ernst Lubitsch in Berlin*. Commenting on the politics of the historical costume films directed by Lubitsch in the early years of the Weimar Republic, Prinzler asserted that Lubitsch simply did not pay attention to politics. Pola Negri was the most prominent female actor in Lubitsch's costume films of this period; she became famous in the first of them, *The Eyes of the Mummy*, which premiered in October 1918, just before the end of World War I. In her memoir, she attributed the success of this film to "its intensely romantic oriental fatalism," which was "precisely the kind of escapism that a war-weary people craved."[2]

After World War II, Kracauer and Eisner attacked Lubitsch's costume films for their distortion of history.[3] In Lubitsch's defense, arguments such as those of Prinzler and Negri have been made—namely, that these films are escapist fantasies made by a director who was relatively oblivious to politics (even the revolutionary turmoil on the streets of Berlin in the aftermath of World War I). No one would argue that Lubitsch's primary agenda as a filmmaker was political, but he did make some films he considered overtly political: his final German comedy, *The Wildcat* (1921); his American social melodrama, *The Man I Killed* (1932); and his anti-Nazi comedy, *To Be or Not to Be* (1942).

His costume films can be divided into two categories. The "historical" melodramas were *Madame Dubarry* (1919; American release title *Passion*) and *Anna Boleyn* (1920; American release title *Deception*). The exotic or "oriental" melodramas were *The Eyes of the Mummy* (1918), *Carmen* (1918; American release title *Gypsy Blood*), *Sumurun* (1920; American release title *One Arabian Night*), and *Das Weib des Pharao* (1922; American release title *The Loves of the Pharaoh*).[4] As we have seen, Lubitsch began his film career with comedies; the big-budget costume films came later. His comedies might seem to have little in common with the costume films—above all, *Madame Dubarry*—but both concern sex, money, and power, as well as the upward mobility that is so evident in the comedies. In addition, both emphasize disguises (including cross-dressing) and mistaken identities; this attention to the unreliability of appearances and the importance of what is seen (or not seen) demonstrates the reflexive aspect of Lubitsch's films and, in fact, the Lubitsch touch.

Paul Davidson, the owner of Union Film—which had produced almost all of Lubitsch's films—merged his company into the huge new conglomerate UFA, created in December 1917 with financing from the German imperial government, big German banks, and heavy industry.[5] Davidson remained the director of Union Film, now a separate division within UFA. In 1918 he suggested that Lubitsch set aside comedy for once to make an exotic, oriental melodrama starring a Polish actor he had discovered, Pola Negri.[6]

The Eyes of the Mummy starred Negri, Harry Liedtke, and Emil Jannings. Liedtke plays a modern German artist touring Egypt who rescues an Egyptian girl, Ma (Negri). She had been enslaved in an ancient tomb by an oppressive man called "the Arab" (Jannings, in dark makeup). The German artist brings her to Germany, but his efforts to westernize her are only

partially successful; she will not learn the waltz but instead wants to dance in a more exotic fashion to (what we assume to be) "oriental" music, which leads to popular performances in Berlin variety halls. Meanwhile, her former oppressor has also come to Berlin; she cannot escape his spell, and he slays her. Although the eyes of Ma are mentioned in the original German title, *Die Augen der Mumie Mâ,* it is the Arab's gaze that has fatal power.

Lubitsch was not eager to work with the tempestuous Negri again, but the success of the film left him no choice.[7] He directed a more lavish film, an adaptation of Prosper Mérimée's novella *Carmen*, the source for Georges Bizet's opera. In Lubitsch's *Carmen*, Negri stars as the "gypsy" woman of the title.[8] Liedtke plays the Spanish soldier who becomes a slave to his love for her, with Negri now playing a true vamp, the female "vampire" who seduces and destroys men. The soldier is the victim of her spell, and for victimizing a man this way, such a woman is invariably punished. At the end of the film, he kills her. *Carmen* opened in December 1918, just after the end of the war, in the midst of revolutionary unrest in Berlin. Its success brought international fame to Lubitsch and his cast. UFA, having lost government financing with the collapse of the monarchy at the end of the war, was eager to invest in more profitable costume films directed by Lubitsch. The result was *Madame Dubarry*, his first historical costume film, completed by autumn 1919.

Sex, History, and Upward Mobility: *Madame Dubarry* (1919)

The opening of the UFA Palast am Zoo, then the largest and grandest cinema palace in Berlin, coincided with the premiere of *Madame Dubarry* on September 18, 1919.[9] Lubitsch's film was an overwhelming success. At the end of the film, there was "rapturous, thundering applause."[10] In the audience was the great theatrical director/producer Max Reinhardt, who had directed and mentored many actors who would become famous in the German theater and cinema, including Lubitsch. Reinhardt was apparently so impressed that he is reported to have told Ernst's father, "Mr. Lubitsch, the student has surpassed the master."[11]

Released a year later in the United States as *Passion*, the film premiered at the Capitol Theater in New York on December 12, 1920.[12] In the review the next day in the *New York Times*, *Passion* was called "one of the preeminent motion pictures of the present cinematographic age." Lubitsch's historical epic was a "rousing success," and not just in New York "but all over

the U.S."[13] It was "one of the very few German films ever to make a profit in the American market."[14] The rights to distribute the film in America had been sold for $40,000, and two weeks after its New York premiere, the *New York Times* reported that the value of those rights had risen to $500,000.[15] The film's success ended the taboo against German films in post–World War I America.[16]

In February 1921, *Motion Picture Magazine* referred to Lubitsch as the "European Griffith," comparing him with D. W. Griffith, the great American director of the 1910s.[17] Although many of Lubitsch's costume films over the next few years would also achieve success in the United States in the early 1920s, it was primarily the overwhelming critical and commercial success of *Madame Dubarry* that led to Lubitsch being invited to Hollywood in 1922. In fact, the success of *Madame Dubarry* in New York at the end of 1920 led to the founding of the European Film Alliance in 1921, a production company in Berlin funded by the American studio Famous Players-Lasky/Paramount, which lured Lubitsch away from UFA even before he left Germany.[18]

Desire, "Gaze," and Agency

Madame Dubarry is set in France in the middle of the eighteenth century. It opens in Paris with a shot of Jeanne Vaubernier (portrayed by Pola Negri), a lowly if saucy and irreverent seamstress (in the English intertitles of the 1920 American version, she is identified as a "milliner's apprentice"). She works in the boutique of the imperious Madame Labille, and her impertinent laughter attracts Labille's supervisory gaze. As punishment, Jeanne is sent to deliver a hat to a noblewoman. As soon as Jeanne leaves the shop and enters the public eye, a gentleman makes a pass at her, and she allows him to carry the hatbox for her. Observed from a window by her lover, the student Armand de Foix (Harry Liedtke), she is beckoned to his lodgings, and she approaches eagerly; the gentleman on the street is quickly dismissed. Before Jeanne enters his room, Armand hides, inducing her to play "hide and seek" to find him; she looks for him with intensity and some frustration. Her gaze is active; it is obvious that Jeanne desires him as much as he does her. This is typical of Lubitsch's egalitarianism about desire: he lets women protagonists display active desire and act on it, even allowing them to be sexual aggressors.[19] At the same time, he depicts all too realistically the power imbalance that is anything but egalitarian and that limits

the agency (sexual and otherwise) of women characters in the oppressive societies in which they are trapped.

For this reason, Jeanne's agency in the film depends more on her exploitation of male desire for her—on her desirability as an object on which the "male gaze" falls—rather than on her own gaze and the direct expression of her own desires. Following her tryst with Armand—who is her one "true love" throughout the film, despite her other sexual adventures—she enters the public realm of the street again and encounters the desiring gaze of the Spanish ambassador, the nobleman Don Diego. He invites her to dinner on the coming Sunday, and Jeanne is so impressed by his wealth and power that she accepts his invitation, even though it means making up an excuse to put off Armand, who is also expecting her. At dinner, Don Diego's acquaintance, the Count Dubarry (Eduard von Winterstein), sees Jeanne, and she becomes an object of desire for him too. Dubarry's desire is inflamed when he discovers Jeanne's image in the mirror as she gazes with desire at Don Diego—once again demonstrating that it is not merely the men who gaze with desire in this film.[20]

Pursued both by Don Diego and Dubarry, Jeanne has not stopped loving Armand, and she writes a note inviting him to the opera ball to which Don Diego is planning to take her. At the ball, crowds of masked aristocrats dance about in a number of shots that are masterfully choreographed and filmed; the use of panning adds to the movement. Lubitsch became famous for humanizing the historical costume film.[21] He does so by alternating virtuoso long shots of choreographed masses (e.g., playful, decadent aristocrats in costumes) with intimate medium and close shots of individuals, especially the main characters.

At the opera ball, the long shots are interrupted with a medium close-up of Count Dubarry with some women. Suddenly he notices something, and in the countershot, we see Jeanne with Don Diego in a private box. Dubarry approaches their box, but then Jeanne sees Armand in the crowd below, and she runs to him. Following Jeanne, only to discover her embracing and kissing Armand, Don Diego pulls his sword and demands satisfaction. The cunning Dubarry gives Armand his sword, and in the ensuing duel, Armand kills Don Diego, which removes Dubarry's two rivals from the scene at once—Don Diego to the grave and Armand to prison. Dubarry carries off Jeanne to his apartment and then locks the door. She tries to resist, but he warns her that she could be arrested for her involvement in Don Diego's death. Then he persuades her to accept his "protection" by offering her jewels.

Figure 2.1 The king sits down and gazes in amazement: Emil Jannings as Louis XV and Pola Negri as Jeanne in *Madame Dubarry* (1919). Screen capture.

Dubarry, however, is not content merely to possess Jeanne; almost immediately, he tries to put her desirability to work for him. He sets in motion the events that cause Jeanne to become an object of the gaze of the king himself, Louis XV (Emil Jannings). Dubarry accepts compensation for giving her up, in effect becoming a procurer for the king. Jeanne becomes the king's mistress, but as a commoner, she cannot appear at court. Therefore, Dubarry arranges to have his brother, a drunkard, marry her. As the Countess Dubarry, the king's mistress can be presented at court.

Dubarry might be said to serve as Jeanne's pimp in an interaction in which she serves as the object of an exchange from which he benefits, but in fact it is Jeanne who takes the initiative when she actually meets the king. When the king haughtily presents the ring on his hand for her to kiss, she jumps up to give him a kiss on the cheek instead, a bold act that causes him to sit down, so that within the frame the much shorter Jeanne now stands above the much taller king, who looks up to her with amazement and desire. Soon he has given her a palatial residence—a *Lustschloss*, a small "pleasure palace." It is there that we see the king on his knees, kissing her

foot, as he helps her put on her shoe—again, she towers above him. Then he gives her a manicure. Thus does the king of France become a slave to his passion for the former seamstress, who in turn becomes the most powerful woman in France.

Jeanne's Fall from Power

Graham Petrie writes that "the clear assumption is that the French Revolution . . . is the direct consequence of Jeanne's baleful influence over the weak-willed Louis XV."[22] However, this interpretation misreads the sympathies of the film and its plot, for the protagonist of the film is not the king (despite Jannings's fine—i.e., relatively restrained—performance). This is the story not of the king's downfall but rather of the Countess Dubarry's rise and fall. She falls because, as a woman, her power depends on the affection of the king; once he is gone, there is no one to protect her.[23] Nor is she the only one who tries to exert her will upon the weak monarch. From her first encounter with the king, she has a powerful rival in Choiseul, the minister of state (Reinhold Schünzel). Once the king dies, Choiseul will banish her from Versailles and from Paris. An outsider once more, she soon will be betrayed to the Revolution (indeed, much too soon, from the perspective of the actual historical record).

That the revolutionary masses come to hate the Countess Dubarry so much that she ends up at the guillotine is, in large part (at least according to this film), due to the intrigues of Choiseul and his sister, the Countess Gramont. They are determined to make her ridiculed and hated, and this has nothing to do with any revolutionary politics of these two aristocrats. Rather it has to do with their frustrated desire to have the king marry the Countess Gramont. The latter has scurrilous songs printed about the king's Madame Dubarry, and copies are made available to the masses of Paris. This strategy is successful. In a dynamic that is clearly sexist, Jeanne becomes the scapegoat for the excesses of the decadent Louis XV.

But perhaps the main reason for Dubarry's fall is her love for Armand. If she were the cynical and heartless woman she appears to be, she probably would have survived. At her most powerful, she uses the influence she has gained almost exclusively on Armand's behalf. As soon as she has won the king's heart, her first act is to try to save Armand from execution for the murder of Don Diego. She begs the king to spare her "cousin," which he is happy to do (much to the consternation of Choiseul). Later, realizing how

much power she has, she demands that Armand be made a captain of the palace guard. Eventually she has him brought blindfolded to her chambers; once the blindfold is removed, Armand is horrified to discover that his former love Jeanne is the infamous Countess Dubarry. When she explains to him how she has saved his life and engineered his promotion, he is overcome again with passion for her, but he is too proud and jealous to share her with the king. He demands that she run away with him. While she clearly cares for Armand, she realizes that to submit to his demands would leave them both powerless and in danger of death. She has more autonomy in the palace than she would on the run with Armand.

Armand cannot stand any compromise and quits the guard, refusing to serve the king who has taken his beloved. He goes to live with the poor of Paris, taking lodging with the cobbler Paillet and his family, and he becomes an agitator against the king—and even more so against the king's mistress Jeanne. The king's taxes are a burden on the Paillet family and all of Paris; Armand agitates a crowd of the poor to riot so that Paillet's child may have bread. To inflame the crowd, he announces the identity of Countess Dubarry. Armand is arrested, but he is freed by Choiseul, who wants him to continue to plot against Dubarry. Learning of this, Jeanne disguises herself as a man to go to a tavern and listen, heartbroken, as Armand speaks against her to a large group of plotters. She reveals herself in private to Armand, asking him not to destroy her.

The next day Armand argues with the others that they should wait, but Paillet rejects this advice and leads the rebels to the palace to petition the king. Choiseul meets them but responds that the king has "more important things" to do than to meet with them. From a window in Choiseul's chambers, however, they can see the king playing blindman's bluff in the gardens with a group of happy nobles, including his beloved countess. No sooner is the king the (unaware) object of the angry rebels' gaze than he collapses, fatally ill. As Elsaesser puts it, we will soon see him on his deathbed "covered in smallpox, as if each gaze of his subjects had left on his body a black, deadly mark."[24]

These scenes emphasizing the importance of vision and agency in the film call to mind many insights of feminist film theory.[25] The power to see is clearly the prerogative of powerful men in the film; Jeanne's ability to usurp it and to interfere with it threatens the male power structure, and she will be punished. Blindfolding seems to imply a sort of "castration" when Jeanne has Armand blindfolded and later puts the blindfold on Louis

during blindman's bluff. This castration occurs right before he collapses, stricken with smallpox as he is subjected to the angry gaze of Paillet and his band of lower-class rebels—another inversion of hierarchy, this time not of gender but rather of class.

Immediately after the king's collapse, Paillet rejoices, and Jeanne has him arrested and sent to the Bastille. But the king soon dies, and Choiseul banishes Dubarry with a decree from the new king, Louis XVI. Fifteen years of history suddenly disappear within the course of one or two edits. Although Louis XV died in 1774, the masses in the film rise up in anger about their lot immediately after his death; Armand leads the angry mob in street battles, stringing up aristocrats, and soon they are on their way to free Paillet by storming the Bastille, which was not actually attacked until 1789.

From this point on, the mass scenes of chaos and unrest in Paris are impressively staged and filmed by Lubitsch. The masses successfully take the Bastille—in scenes which, in the restored version of the film that is now available, are tinted red.[26] Then they head for the palace, and we see for the first time (albeit quite briefly) King Louis XVI and Queen Marie Antoinette, who are arrested with their children by a group of revolutionaries headed by Paillet and Armand.

After another four years seem to disappear, Jeanne is captured by the revolutionaries; in fact, the actual Madame Dubarry was not captured, sentenced, and executed at the guillotine until 1793. In the film Madame Dubarry goes on trial, during which reference is made to a law passed in March 1792. The secret of the Countess Dubarry's whereabouts has been betrayed to the revolutionary court by Zamor, formerly her loyal African servant (portrayed by Victor Janson in blackface). Zamor, who had been a gift to her from a noble eager to curry favor with Louis XV, now wears a revolutionary cap as he reveals the secret of her location to the tribunal. Dragged in front of the revolutionary tribunal, Jeanne finds that the judge she faces is none other than her lover, Armand, who condemns her to death.

Armand immediately regrets his decision and, disguised as a monk, goes to her cell and embraces her, telling her that she should put on his monk's garb and escape (cross-dressing again) and that he will die in her place. Paillet and some other citizens of the revolution catch them embracing in her cell, and Armand is shot in the face while trying to shield Jeanne. The film ends with Dubarry being taken to the guillotine in an immense city square filled with a huge crowd (another scene for which Lubitsch earned praise for his masterful direction of masses of extras).[27] As she is

Figure 2.2 Bad girl goes to the guillotine: Pola Negri as Jeanne/Madame Dubarry in *Madame Dubarry* (1919). Courtesy of Deutsche Kinemathek, Berlin.

being dragged to the guillotine, she begs for more time. In the final English intertitle of the 1920 American version, she pleads, "Ah wait—one moment more! Life is so sweet!"[28]

The end of the film shows Jeanne being punished—but why? Is it for her sexual transgressions, for her upward mobility, or her complicity with the old aristocratic order? Perhaps her execution demonstrates instead her ultimate powerlessness compared to larger social forces (some old, some new) much mightier than she. Is her "tragic fall" sad, or is it what she deserves—or both?

Tossing Her Severed Head

Both Helma Sanders-Brahms and Weinberg reported that the original ending of the film, cut for the version shown in the United States, included a few shots after Jeanne is beheaded. Weinberg wrote that "the executioner and the populace played ball with her head."[29] In the restored version now

available, the executioner does indeed toss the severed head of Dubarry into the crowd, but we do not see the crowd "play ball" with it.[30]

This concluding scene makes the sympathies of the film even more obvious: revolutionary "justice" is portrayed as barbaric. The French Revolution's overuse of the guillotine was certainly one of its least favorable aspects—one does not need to be a monarchist to agree with that. But what is the political meaning of the film? Are we meant to sympathize with the old aristocratic order? No, for its corruption and injustice are clearly shown. An obvious example is the scene in which tax collectors force the cobbler Paillet to give up the small amount of money he has made after having sold a pair of shoes to provide his wife and child with bread. After watching *Madame Dubarry* again at a retrospective of Lubitsch's films in New York, American critic Matthew Josephson wrote in 1926, "So far as I know, we had never seen . . . scenes of such regal splendor and licentiousness *à la Louis Quinze*. . . . Against this [Lubitsch] would throw sudden, hideous contrasts of misery and poverty."[31]

In fact, the corrupt intrigues of the old order are what sets up Jeanne as a symbol of the extravagant and decadent luxuries provided to Louis XV and paid for by the taxes that are crushing the poor of France. Choiseul and Gramont's strategy of directing popular anger at the king's mistress is noteworthy because it demonstrates that a woman's sexual "immorality" can distract the masses from their anger at the real source of oppression—the absolutist monarchy. Lubitsch's film is aware of the sexist injustice of this. According to a title in the American version, Jeanne asks Armand after watching him incite the mob in anger at her, "Am I to blame for Louis's ways?"

The film's sympathies are always with Jeanne, flawed as she may be. As Eyman notes, her character is like so many "outsiders" in Lubitsch's early films who stand outside conventional norms and power structures and nonetheless succeed.[32] As discussed in chapter 1, the Jewish bad boys portrayed by Lubitsch in his early Jewish comedies were replaced by Ossi Oswalda, who became his alter ego.[33] The same is true of Pola Negri, the other actor so crucial to Lubitsch's German career. In the costume melodramas, she too functioned as Lubitsch's alter ego. In the comedies, a bad girl could triumph, but in the costume films, the bad girl—played by Negri—had to be punished.

The tragic end of Negri's character in *Madame Dubarry* demonstrates the heavy risk involved in the meteoric rise of an outsider within a

hierarchical society with little tolerance for the upward mobility of outsiders or anyone at the bottom of the hierarchy. Lubitsch would know this well, having grown up as a Jew with Eastern European roots in an autocratic Germany in which opportunities for all Jews were limited.

Lubitsch parodied his roots in his early Jewish comedies. He portrayed young men who are so aggressive about wanting to succeed that it is not hard to note an underlying insecurity about their social status. As we have seen, in his final Jewish comedy, *Meyer from Berlin*, the protagonist's attempts to fit in with wealthy German tourists in Bavaria fail humorously, underscoring his status as someone with "new money."[34] In the same way, we see Jeanne in *Madame Dubarry* trying to fit in but never succeeding in the aristocratic society under the king. As a commoner, she cannot appear at court, so she is married to Dubarry's brother, a nobleman. Although the nobles fawn over her at first, they also fear her power, afraid that they might anger the king's favorite. Jeanne is never really accepted by the court, and Choiseul and her sister do not hide their hatred for her or their interest in embarrassing her. They also turn the poor of Paris against her. Her rise in social status is a lonely one; she fits in nowhere, hated by the nobility and the poor. Her only protection is the king, and once he is gone, she is doomed. Even her loyal African servant Zamor will betray her; he will side with the revolutionary masses against her. As Elsaesser points out, Zamor turns against the monarchy in a film made just as the German Empire lost its African colonies.[35]

I argue that the film is a tragedy of upward mobility—or at least a tragic melodrama.[36] It represents the sensitivity of its director to the plight of its outsider protagonist, a woman in a hierarchical society who claws her way to the top but is by no means safe once there. She stands out all the more as a target of resentment for those whom her rise has eclipsed.

Lubitsch's film makes us aware of the flaws of its woman protagonist but also encourages us to identify with her. Although this identification with a woman might be seen in relation to stereotypes of the Jewish male as "feminized," it has little to do with Lubitsch's own masculinity; rather, it is about the relation to power. Jews (regardless of gender) and women (both Christian and Jewish) were relatively powerless, especially under the German Empire.[37] This identification can also be explained by Lubitsch's roots in early cinema, which thrived by allowing women spectators to gaze on the world in ways they had long been denied.[38] Lubitsch became famous for making films that appealed to women and that were unique for the frequent portrayal of women taking sexual initiative.

The large female and lower-class audiences on which the cinema had long depended would likely be able to identify with a poor woman who rose to the top but whose position there was neither safe nor stable. Lubitsch's films address such audiences, demonstrating sympathy for the oppressed and the underdog and encouraging identification with women characters like Jeanne in *Madame Dubarry*—despite her flaws.

As we have seen, *Madame Dubarry* is also very critical of the excesses of the French Revolution. If the film seems somewhat wary of the masses, this too is understandable for a director who belonged to an oppressed minority. At the beginning of Germany's first democracy in 1919, he was a tremendously successful film director, given budgets that would have been unimaginable a few years earlier. His rise had been as meteoric as that of his fictional heroine Jeanne. The new German republic had given new rights to both Jews and women, but how much security this unstable new regime would be able to provide was not yet clear. Given what would happen in Germany to Lubitsch's fellow Jews in the not-too-distant future—once Germany's democratic experiment collapsed in 1933 with the accession of Hitler to power—we can understand why wariness on the part of the minority about the majority was warranted. Indeed, it was a survival skill.

The Vamp, the Harem, and the Clown: *Sumurun* (1920)

After *Madame Dubarry*, Lubitsch's next ambitious costume epic was a more exotic melodrama, the costume film *Sumurun*.[39] The film is clearly a fantasy without any clear historical referent, so historical distortion is not an issue in the way it is for Lubitsch's history films, *Madame Dubarry* and *Anna Boleyn*.[40] This does not make Kracauer any kinder to *Sumurun*, which he accuses of "melodramatic sentimentality."[41] Nonetheless, the politics of even the most ahistorical and apolitical films by Lubitsch—be they comedies or costume films—always involve very frank portrayals of conflicts around sex, gender, class, and power.

Sumurun is an adaptation of Friedrich Freska's pantomime *Sumurun* (1910). The title page of Freska's script claims the play is based on "*orientalischen Märchenmotiven*" (oriental fairy-tale motifs).[42] Its first stage production was directed by Max Reinhardt in 1910. In 1911, a nineteen-year-old Ernst Lubitsch joined the Reinhardt troupe and played the garment merchant's second slave in *Sumurun* on tour in London. He would continue to play various roles in Reinhardt's many productions of the play

in subsequent years.[43] Lubitsch would remain a member of the Reinhardt ensemble until 1918.

In 1920, when he directed his film adaptation of *Sumurun*, Lubitsch was at the peak of his German career. That same year, Lubitsch was working on another big-budget costume film, *Anna Boleyn*, which premiered a few months later. He also directed successful comedies like *Romeo und Julia im Schnee/Romeo and Juliette in the Snow* and *Kohlhiesels Töchter/Kohlhiesel's Daughters*. The production team for *Sumurun* was filled with regular collaborators of Lubitsch: the screenplay was written by Lubitsch and his cowriter Hanns Kräly; Theodor Sparkuhl was the cinematographer; Kurt Richter designed the exotic sets, which impressed contemporaries; and Ali Hubert designed the all-important costumes.[44] The film had an impressive international cast, including Pola Negri (from Poland), Jenny Hasselquist (from Sweden), and Aud Egede Nissen (from Norway); the film also featured famous German actors like Paul Wegener, Harry Liedtke, and Lubitsch himself. Paul Davidson's Union Film produced the film. Shooting began in Berlin on March 13, 1920, and the film premiered September 1 of the same year.

The plot of the film is somewhat complicated but is best explained as two interwoven subplots focusing on two female roles: the dancer (played by Negri) and the harem favorite, Sumurun (Hasselquist). The narrative is driven in large part by female desire—the dancer's promiscuous desire for men but also for riches and upward mobility and Sumurun's desire for Nur Al-Din, the garment merchant (Liedtke, the male heartthrob of the film). Another important female role in the film is Haidee (Nissen), Sumurun's servant, who engineers secret meetings for her mistress with Nur Al-Din.[45]

The dancer is part of a ragged troupe of wandering entertainers that includes the old hunchback clown (Lubitsch), whose love for her is unrequited. She eagerly leaves the troupe after her first performance in Baghdad, the city ruled by the old sheik (Wegener), whom she enchants. A slave merchant buys her for the old sheik, much to the dancer's delight and the hunchback's despair.

Despondent, the hunchback ingests magic pills that induce a deathlike sleep. The old woman of the troupe (Margarete Kupfer) believes him to be dead until she finds the written instructions for the pills; she then hides his body in a sack, which is stolen by "Mutti" and "Putti," the comic slaves of the garment merchant. Through a series of comic ploys, the hunchback's body ends up at the palace of the sheik, where the old woman is able finally

to revive him. On waking, however, he witnesses the dancer arriving at the palace and enticing the old sheik to take her immediately to his chambers. Seeing this, the hunchback refuses to leave, waiting at the gate for a chance to enter the palace and find the dancer.

Meanwhile, the other subplot has unfolded in the sheik's harem. His favorite consort Sumurun has been obsessed with her love for Nur Al-Din and is cold to the old sheik, who orders that she be killed after having heard someone whistling at her window. He is sure that she is encouraging this man in the courtyard below. Only minutes earlier, Sumurun had thrown a flower down to Nur Al-Din; however, at the moment the old sheik hears the whistle, the man below is not Nur Al-Din but the young sheik, the old sheik's son. Sumurun's servant Haidee intervenes, with the help of the head eunuch (Jacob Tiedtke), to persuade the young sheik to take the blame on himself and thus absolve Sumurun. On hearing his son's claims that she is innocent, the old sheik decides to spare her.

But being spared does not make Sumurun warm up to the old sheik; rather, she is colder than ever to him. He wants to find a new favorite for his harem, and at the slave merchant's suggestion, he goes in disguise into the city to watch the dancer perform. Meanwhile, Sumurun and the harem women, accompanied by the palace eunuchs, leave the palace to buy fabrics at the shop of Nur Al-Din, where her servant Haidee distracts the eunuchs and arranges for Sumurun and her beloved to meet alone. Haidee also hatches the scheme to have Nur Al-Din carried secretly into the palace in a trunk full of garments. Under even more garments in the very same trunk, the body of the seemingly dead hunchback (Lubitsch) has already been hidden by the old woman. This is how both Nur Al-Din and the hunchback end up at the palace.

Sumurun's servant and the other harem women arrange for Nur Al-Din and Sumurun to be alone together in a chamber of the palace. Meanwhile, in the old sheik's bedchamber, the dancer makes the old man chase her for a while before she allows him to carry her to his bed. The next time we cut back to the two, the exhausted old man is asleep on the bed, and the dancer is wide awake. The young sheik whistles from the courtyard below, and the dancer, a true vamp of the sort Negri would so often play, goes to the window and beckons him to come up to her. The hunchback, still outside the gate, witnesses this; enraged, he climbs up to the window at which he had seen the dancer, only to peer inside to see her in the embrace of the young sheik, with the old sheik asleep on the bed. Seeing the hunchback in

the window, the dancer, who had believed him to be dead, starts to scream. This wakes the old sheik, who quickly rises to stab the dancer and then chases after his son, whom he slays with his sword. Unable to find the palace guards, he goes through the palace, only to find Sumurun in the arms of Nur Al-Din. The old sheik attacks the two lovers, but they are saved when the hunchback runs up from behind and stabs the sheik, thus avenging the murder of his beloved dancer.

The *Illustrierter Film-Kurier* (Illustrated Film-Courier), an illustrated program that accompanied the film's premiere in September 1920, contained a synopsis of the film by Hanns Kräly that ends as follows: "The tyrant has fallen. The oppressed women can now breathe free again—the Hunchback opens the gates of the Harem and leads them toward freedom. He himself, however, takes up his instrument and plays the strings. He must dance and gambol again—for the public wants to laugh."[46]

Germans, Jews, and Orientalism

Eisner asserted condescendingly that Lubitsch's historical costume films betrayed his background as a "one-time shop assistant" for whom history was only "a pretext for telling love stories in sumptuous period costumes."[47] Nonetheless, it makes sense in a discussion of the costume film *Sumurun* to consider the garment trade, given the importance of the garment merchant and the fabrics he sells for both the narrative and the spectacle in this "oriental" film. But the most direct connection to Lubitsch's biography is not to his work in his father's shop but rather to his work with Max Reinhardt's ensemble, and specifically his appearances in Reinhardt's theatrical productions of *Sumurun*. In the film adaptation that Lubitsch directed, he again took a role as an actor after not having acted in any of his films for about two years; it was also the last film in which Lubitsch would ever act. Kracauer, too, sees an autobiographical and (an unwittingly) self-reflexive aspect to Lubitsch's performance in the role of the hunchback juggler in *Sumurun*: "Through his identification with a juggler who drowns horror in jokes, Lubitsch involuntarily deepens the impression that the vogue he helped create originated in a blend of cynicism and melodramatic sentimentality."[48]

Fritz Göttler wrote that *Sumurun* is "more Jewish-Germanic than Arabian nights."[49] Nonetheless we cannot look at an oriental fantasy set in the Middle East without taking Edward Said's famous study *Orientalism*

into account. What did it mean for German Jews like Max Reinhardt or Ernst Lubitsch—or Else Lasker-Schüler, for that matter—to indulge in orientalism? I submit that it is not quite the same as it would be for German Christians. In fact, in the late Wilhelmine era or the early Weimar Republic, *orientalism* would refer just as much (or more) to negative depictions of Eastern European Jewry as to exotic depictions of the Middle East or Islam. In 1920, for example—the same year that he appeared as an evil oriental despot in *Sumurun*—Paul Wegener played an Eastern European Jewish monster, a golem, in the title role of the famous film that he also directed, *Der Golem*.[50]

We might see the same orientalist prejudice against *Ostjuden* in Eisner's attitude toward Lubitsch, typical of more acculturated German Jews who found the presence of less acculturated Eastern European Jews embarrassing. If it seems inappropriate to equate antisemitism in Germany with orientalism, allow me to cite Said himself: "I have found myself writing the history of a strange, secret sharer of Western antisemitism. That antisemitism and, as I have discussed it in its Islamic branch, Orientalism resemble each other very closely is a historical, cultural, and political truth."[51]

As discussed in chapter 1, Lubitsch has been accused of a kind of antisemitism for his milieu comedies; however, these films are better understood as reappropriating stereotypes in an ironic fashion, comparable to camp, a strategy associated with another oppressed minority—gay men.[52] This linkage between Jewish and gay strategies for dealing with oppressive stereotypes suggests a potential alliance among many groups considered less than fully human by the gender and racial politics of the dominant European culture in the early twentieth century. Such marginalized groups would include gay men, "feminized" Jewish men, "sexually aggressive" Jewish women, and ultimately all women.[53] These groups have much in common with the marginalized groups that triumph over a despotic patriarchy in *Sumurun*—the vagabond artists, the enslaved women of the harem, the eunuchs, and the Black slaves.

Orientalism, as Said has taught us, is a European projection onto the Middle Eastern *other*; it produces discourses that reveal much more about Europe than anything else. I argue, therefore, that the politics of Lubitsch's *Sumurun*—clearly a fantasy, a fairy tale—are to be found in what the film tells us about Europe and more specifically Germany, a new republic that had recently been an authoritarian monarchy.

Joel Rosenberg, in a long and persuasive essay on Lubitsch's *To Be or Not to Be*, wrote about "implicit Jews" in Lubitsch's films, arguing that the

hunchback juggler in *Sumurun* is such a character: "I find the Arabian hunchback in *Sumurun* (played by Lubitsch himself, in his final screen appearance) to be one such implicit Jew."[54] Prawer asserts that Lubitsch's character in *Sumurun* is closely related to the brash, arrogant, young male characters he had played in his early Jewish comedies: the tragic hunchback is just the other side of the coin. In the ugly, old entertainer who desperately tries and continually fails to win the heart of the woman he loves, we see exposed all the insecurities that lie beneath the overcompensating self-assertion of Sally Pinkus, Sally Meyer, and the other antiheroes of the farces.

None of those characters shared Lubitsch's own "striving away from the rag trade" to art, whereas in *Sumurun*, Lubitsch's final screen role is as an entertainer.[55] True, he plays an impoverished old hunchback clown who is rejected by the woman he loves and who then, as a "corpse," is dragged about, placed in a sack, and carried in a trunk—hidden again and again but always returning, like the repressed. Finally, on waking from the "dead," he finds his love in the arms of another man and then watches powerlessly as she is murdered.[56]

And yet this marginalized character slays the despot and frees everyone else. The rag merchant played by Harry Liedtke may get the girl (i.e., Sumurun, the sheik's favorite, not the dancer who ends up murdered), but the hunchback clown is the unlikely male hero of the narrative. By stabbing the old sheik, who has already killed his son, the hunchback eliminates the hierarchy, at least for the time being. Although his personal motivation is anger and despair at the loss of the dancer he loved in vain, he nonetheless takes action on behalf of all those the hierarchy has oppressed: the garment merchant, the ragged troupe of entertainers, the eunuchs and the slaves, and especially the enslaved women of the harem.

Female Desire: Rebellion of the Harem

The end of the film clearly celebrates the liberation of the harem's women—again, as Kräly's synopsis in the *Illustrierter Film-Kurier* puts it: "The oppressed women can now breathe free again—the Hunchback opens the gates of the Harem and leads them toward freedom."[57] Women triumph at the end of *Sumurun*; however, it is not the hunchback but rather a woman, Sumurun's servant Haidee, who, as the morning dawns, opens the gates and bids her mistress and Nur Al-Din farewell as they leave the palace,

Figure 2.3 Sumurun (Jenny Hasselquist) kisses the merchant (Harry Liedtke): *Sumurun* (1920). Screen capture.

heading toward the camera—and toward freedom, it would seem.[58] Above all, it is Sumurun who benefits most from the events at the end of the film. One way to interpret this ending would be that a woman's "pure" monogamous love for a middle-class merchant triumphs over a decadent feudal autocracy—alluding to an old trope in bourgeois ideology that dates back to the bourgeois tragedies of the late eighteenth century in Germany. Sumurun's pure love is contrasted with the dancer's promiscuity; at the film's end, the good girl is rewarded and the bad girl is punished.

This reading, however, overlooks how much agency Sumurun exerts in the film. She may be "good," but she is not passive or cowardly. Indeed, Sumurun often risks death over the course of the film by persisting in her stubborn love for the merchant and her cold rejection of the powerful, abusive old sheik. One never sees Sumurun react to the sheik with anything but coldness, anger, or fear. She is almost executed because she refuses to beg forgiveness from the sheik after he has heard a man whistle for her outside the harem; she is saved only when the young sheik begs his father on her behalf. Even after this close call, she rebuffs the old sheik's advances, and

indeed she will soon meet the merchant secretly in his shop. The agency and power of Sumurun's desire is clearly portrayed—when she is alone with the merchant in his shop, it is she who extends her leg to have him put on the anklet he shows her. In doing so, he is overcome with desire and bends down to kiss her ankle. Sumurun swoons, but nonetheless it is she who stands, pulling him up to her so that she can kiss him, her head positioned above his, her hands holding his face. *She* is the subject, and he the object, of desire.

The most transgressive female character of the film is surely the dancer, and the hunchback's love for her motivates the slaying of the sheik, which overturns the autocratic order at the end of the film. Pola Negri's dancer is similar to most of the other roles she played in Lubitsch's films but especially comparable to Jeanne, who becomes Madame Dubarry in the eponymous film. The dancer exploits her sexual attractiveness to rise to the top of the social hierarchy, ending in the bedchamber of the all-powerful sheik. As Lubitsch's alter ego, she is similar to the aggressive male characters in his Jewish comedies who use a sexual liaison to ensure economic and social success (usually by marrying the boss's daughter).

Lubitsch's films often had a strong address to women.[59] In the complexity of Lubitsch's representations of women and eroticism, Hake sees "the residues of an earlier 'cinema of attraction,'" citing the famous term coined by Tom Gunning in his work on early cinema.[60] The importance of female desire in this film is clear: Sumurun's single-minded desire for Nur Al-Din drives the plot, as does the even more transgressive desire of the dancer for a number of men, for clothes, and for power. We should not forget, however, that the dancer, too, desires Nur Al-Din, and she is quite devastated and disoriented by his rejection of her; he is the only man who rebuffs her advances.[61]

Nur Al-Din is the narrative's object of desire, and the acquisition of that object is accomplished not just by the intensity of Sumurun's desire for him but also by the clever agency of another woman, Haidee, Sumurun's servant. It is she, through her manipulation of the palace eunuchs, who manages to create time for Sumurun and Nur Al-Din to meet alone in his shop, then to smuggle him into the palace, and finally to allow them to be alone together in a chamber of the harem (a scene that is rose-tinted, as is the scene at dawn when the film ends happily). While Sumurun and Nur Al-Din are alone, the eunuchs sleep in a drunken stupor, having been induced to drink by the women of the harem, led by Haidee.

Eunuchs, Slaves, and Vagabond Entertainers

The dancer and all the women of the harem are slaves, and the palace eunuchs are their guards, but this does not make them appear powerful. Any power they hold in the palace of the sheik is the result of literal castration, and much of the film's comedy is at their expense. They are but one of the many groups of oppressed or marginalized figures in the film for whom the slaying of the despot would also be liberating. Like the eunuchs, these other marginalized figures are mostly comic characters: the two lookalike (twin?) slaves of Nur Al-Din, Mutti and Putti; the Black slaves, both male and female; and the professional comedians, the motley troupe of entertainers—the hunchback clown above all, but also the old woman who dances with the snakes.

Mutti and Putti (Paul Graetz and Max Kronert) are the two dark-haired slaves of Nur Al-Din who dress alike, cause mischief, and frolic about in ways that seem inappropriate for adult heterosexual men. Perhaps they are simply childish clowns, but they are not young. The very names they are given in the credits may lead viewers today to suspect something a bit queer about them: Mutti and Putti do not seem to be Arabic names, and in German they mean "mommy" and the plural form (from Italian) of "cherub"—again, not especially masculine designations. Their major plot function is to run off with the bag containing the hunchback's "corpse" from the entertainer's tent, where they have gone to steal things (we have already seen them as pickpockets during the performance). Mischievous petty thieves who hide their shenanigans from their virtuous but lovesick (and rather melancholic and passive) master, they mainly provide slapstick comic relief, as in their exaggerated fright at finding a body in the sack and their panicked, bumbling effort to hide the body in their master's shop, or when they fight over a coin tossed to them later by the young sheik. They might be twins, and their dark looks are such that they might be read as Jewish.[62] During the dancer's performance in the tent, a reaction shot shows them looking at her with desire—one of a few reaction shots of various men (including one of the entertainers, who is Black) that seem to imply that desire for the dancer unites men of all classes and races. Nonetheless, something about the "twins" seems sexually ambiguous.

There is no doubt that something is sexually "different" about the eunuchs. They are fat, bald, easily exhausted, and easily fooled, and they are the butt of many jokes. But the head eunuch is also endearing, and he has a

special bond with the harem women, especially with Sumurun and her servant Haidee. Compared with the violent and arbitrary despotism and the bullying masculinity of the old sheik and his son, the eunuchs are more like the harem women they "guard." Gender politics are clearly invoked when Haidee tries to persuade the head eunuch to save Sumurun from beheading. She wants him to appeal to the young sheik to assure his father that Sumurun is innocent. When the head eunuch seems fearful about intervening, she appeals to his masculine pride, and this persuades him to act. It is perhaps a cruel joke to invoke the masculinity of a eunuch, yet in the context of this narrative, it is also an appeal for humane solidarity among the oppressed. For them, courage is especially dangerous—and courage has nothing to do with the status of one's genitals.

Most of the Black characters in the film are slaves, although one is an entertainer. The actors who played these roles were of African heritage. In this respect, Weimar cinema was often guilty of egregiously racist stereotyping (and American cinema was much worse). Lubitsch's comedy of the previous year, *Oyster Princess*, opens with the American capitalist, Mr. Quaker, the "oyster king," being pampered by a number of Black servants.[63]

In any case, not many jokes are made at the expense of the Black slaves in *Sumurun*. Instead, their oppression by the old sheik and other authority figures—and their discontent with that oppression—is made clear through laughter. Early in the film, in a scene reminiscent of *Oyster Princess*, the sheik wakes in his bedchamber with a number of male Black slaves attending him. Still sleepy and grumpy, he kicks a slave who is trying to help him put on his shoes. The slave is knocked down and hurt, and the sheik then laughs sadistically. The other slaves join in the laughter, but they stop as soon as the sheik glares at them—his sadism is not for their enjoyment. Any of them could become his next victim.

Later in the film, the slave merchant represents the hierarchy; the dancer has just been brought to his house to be dressed and groomed to be taken to the palace and presented to the old sheik. Female Black slaves have been massaging and attending her. The slave merchant is shown in close-up giving the dancer advice about how to comport herself with the mighty sheik; in this silent film we do not hear his words, but his mouth keeps chattering on and on. In annoyance, the dancer finally slaps him so that he will shut up.[64] Immediately there is a cut to the Black women laughing with glee at their master's comeuppance, and then there is a cut back to the dancer, who also laughs. There is a bond between these slaves and the dancer, who is herself a slave—and the character whose transgressions will overturn the hierarchy.

As for the entertainers, the dancer's importance is clear, and the role of the hunchback in eliminating the despot is crucial. The old woman is a comic character whose drunkenness is emphasized along with her greed, especially when she takes delight in the money earned by the sale of the dancer to the sheik. Nonetheless, she earns sympathy through her true devotion to and concern for the comatose hunchback; she insists on keeping track of his "corpse," and eventually she is able to revive him.

This disheveled group of entertainers unleashes carnivalesque disruption from their first entrance into the city. News of their arrival causes the unruly masses to stream into the streets—adults, little children, even dogs. Whereas the (Jewish) urban masses seem threatening in *The Golem*, a film of the same year,[65] their representation in *Sumurun* is much more sympathetic, especially in contrast to the autocratic order that oppresses them. Taking to the streets in their eagerness for a bit of entertainment that relieves the monotony of their lives, they create a public obstacle to the social hierarchy represented by the young sheik on horseback. The sheik, wearing a spiked helmet oddly reminiscent of a *Pickelhaube* (a "pimpled helmet," the slang term for the distinctive Prussian helmet), orders his mounted guards to charge the mob and rid the city of the entertainers. He is confronted by the dancer, who seductively persuades him to allow the entertainers to stay.

Send in the Clown

In a 1985 article titled "Changes," feminist filmmaker and theorist Laura Mulvey rethought some of her positions in her famous essay, "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema" (1975). She explored the concept of the "carnival," especially as developed by Mikhail Bakhtin, whom she quotes: "As opposed to the official feast, one might say that the carnival celebrated a temporary liberation from the prevailing myth and from the established order; it marked the suspension of all hierarchical rank, privileges and norms of prohibitions."[66] Mulvey notes how carnival relates to the "tripartite narrative of ritual structure"—that is, the idea that narrative opens with the status quo, and then the status quo is overturned—as in the carnival—in the middle or "liminal" phase of the narrative, only to have the status quo restored in the third phase, the closure of the narrative.[67]

Sumurun's carnivalesque disruption of authority is initiated as the entertainers enter the city. Almost simultaneously, Sumurun's rebellious desires add to the disruption, which is advanced even more radically by the transgressive dancer. But this disruption is not overturned in the closure of

the film, the five shots that follow the stabbing of the despotic old sheik by the hunchback clown. The first four shots show us that, as a new day dawns, Sumurun's servant Haidee opens the gates of the palace to free the women of the harem and the lovers, who walk not toward the horizon but toward the camera, toward us, the viewers. The final shot is of the hunchback clown playing his stringed instrument again; he seems sad, for he is mourning the dancer's death. He is not, *pace* Kracauer, "drowning horror in jokes."[68] Nor is this final shot a restoration of the despotic status quo. Rather, it is a return of the hunchback to his role as an entertainer. Despotism is vanquished, love triumphs, and art endures—a naive ending, perhaps, but not cynical.

As does any orientalist fantasy, *Sumurun* tells us more about Europe than it does about any fantasized Orient. Therefore, its utopian portrayal of a despotic, autocratic order overturned by a revolt of women, slaves, and entertainers most likely reveals revolutionary fantasies, albeit naive, about imperial Germany. In postrevolutionary Germany, Lubitsch, who had often acted in Reinhardt's productions of *Sumurun*, decided to use it as the basis for an expensive costume film. A fantasy in which the favorite consort of the monarch ends up with a garment merchant is not revolutionary in the Marxist sense. However, it can be interpreted as a celebration of a new democratic order in which aristocratic—and Christian—origins were no longer supposed to be prerequisites for full participation in German society, now reincarnated as a republic in which citizens of all classes, religions, and genders had an equal vote. The importance of female desire in Lubitsch's film is consistent with the affinity in his films for the oppressed and the marginalized—the groups who are portrayed sympathetically in *Sumurun*. Consider too the transgressive upward mobility of the dancer, played by one of Lubitsch's alter egos, Pola Negri.

Finally, Lubitsch chose to make his final screen appearance in the role of the clown who avenges the death of the dancer. The idea that a band of second-rate entertainers could foil despotic oppression would emerge again many years later in his most political comedy: *To Be or Not to Be*.

After Sumurun: Anna Boleyn *(1920)*

In the wake of the success of his first historical costume film, *Madame Dubarry*, Lubitsch went on to make another in 1920: *Anna Boleyn*. It would be released three months after *Sumurun* in December 1920, and in 1921 it was released as *Deception* in the United States, by Adolph Zukor of Famous

Players-Lasky/Paramount. The film tells the story of Anne Boleyn, who became the second wife of England's King Henry VIII in 1533 after he divorced his first wife, Catherine of Aragon, in defiance of the Pope, leading to Henry's establishment of the Church of England, which he would head. In the title role was Germany's first film star, the most famous and beloved female actor in Germany, Henny Porten, who had been appearing in German films since 1906; Emil Jannings played Henry VIII. The importance of this film project was shown by the vast amount of money invested in it by UFA and by the visit of Weimar Republic President Friedrich Ebert to the film set at Tempelhof Studios on September 30, 1920.[69] In the aftermath of the war, Germany—already plagued by inflation—needed the hard foreign currency that another international hit on the scale of *Madame Dubarry* promised to earn.

An opulent spectacle, *Anna Boleyn* was not as racy as *Madame Dubarry*. Porten was used to playing mainly virtuous, long-suffering German women, and that is her role in this film. Essentially a traditional melodrama, an innocent female victim suffers because of evil, powerful men. Porten plays a young maiden of noble birth who is more or less forced to marry the king in spite of her love for another man. Soon this young wife becomes a mother, but she disappoints the king, for she—like Catherine before her—gives birth to a girl. In the end, Anna is beheaded at the order of her despotic, lecherous husband on trumped-up charges of infidelity so he can marry yet another woman—Jane ("Johanna") Seymour, his third wife—in his desperate search for a woman to give him a male heir.

Despite interesting stylistic developments, little of Lubitsch's mischievous playfulness is evident.[70] Henny Porten did not generally play bad girls.[71] This film has only a bad boy—a completely unlikeable one. Jannings effectively portrays an immature and impulsive tyrant with few qualms about having anyone who crosses him killed. Most viewers probably identify with Porten, clearly the underdog to Jannings's tyrannical bad boy. *Anna Boleyn* did well in the United States; the *New York Times* critic suggested that Porten might be too old for the part but was effective in her stoic nobility as she faces execution at the end of the film.[72]

The problem with this serious historical melodrama is simply that it has too little comedy. This same problem plagues Lubitsch's final big-budget costume epic, *The Loves of the Pharaoh* (1922), which had huge, impressive, "Egyptian" sets and massive crowd scenes and battles but was a ponderous epic, with little of the playfulness of *Madame Dubarry*. As in *Anna Boleyn*

(1920), the female protagonist, the Greek slave Theonis (played by Dagny Servaes) is too virtuous, too much the innocent victim of the grand melodrama.[73] Another problem is the egregious racism of its depiction of the Ethiopians.[74] By the time Lubitsch got to Hollywood at the end of 1922, he was tired of blockbuster costume epics.

The limitation of such films was their historical gravitas. Lubitsch films needed laughter. As Anca Parvulescu writes, "laughter is a revolt against seriousness. . . . against deep, heavy, oppressive seriousness."[75] The ponderous seriousness of the costume dramas, along with their melodramatic conventions, dictated that the unruly outsiders (with whom Lubitsch wants us to sympathize) must ultimately be punished for their transgressions. This was true of his first historical costume film, *Madame Dubarry*: in spite of all its playfulness, its bad girl goes to the guillotine. In contrast, *Sumurun*, a fantastic fairytale of a film, allowed the women of the harem to triumph. Women also triumph in Lubitsch's anarchic/fantastic comedies, as I will discuss in the next chapter.

Notes

1. Prinzler and Patalas edited the invaluable reference work *Lubitsch* (1984).
2. Pola Negri, *Memoirs of a Star* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1970), 140.
3. Siegfried Kracauer, *From Caligari to Hitler: A Psychological History of the German Film* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1947), 8; Eisner, *Haunted Screen*, 82.
4. Cf. Graham Petrie, *Hollywood Destinies: European Directors in America, 1922–1931* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1985), 63. McBride's *How Did Lubitsch Do It?* calls *Das Weib des Pharao* "The Wife of the Pharaoh," a more accurate translation than the American release title *The Loves of the Pharaoh*. But *Weib* does not necessarily mean "wife"; it is a somewhat coarse way of saying "woman." For historical accuracy, I will generally use American release titles, always making clear the meaning of the original German title. When they differ, it is not because the original was inaccurately translated but rather because another English title was thought to resonate better with American audiences.
5. Kreimeier, *Die Ufa-Story*, 39 (in English, *Ufa Story*, 29).
6. See Hampicke and Dirks, "Die Erfindung des Generaldirektors," 53; see also Lubitsch, "Wie mein erster Großfilm entstand," *Lichtbild-Bühne*: Luxusnummer "30 Jahre Filme," 1924). Jan-Christopher Horak talks about Davidson discovering Negri in Robert Fischer's film *Ernst Lubitsch in Berlin* (ca. 1:00:00).
7. See Weinberg, *Lubitsch Touch*, 20–21. Horak tells more or less the same story about Lubitsch having to be convinced by Kräly to watch a screen test with Negri before he would cast her in *Carmen*; see Fischer's film *Ernst Lubitsch in Berlin*, ca. 1:00:00; cf. also "Fraenkel," essay in the Carmen file, Carmen 1918 G R: Ernst Lubitsch 2806, F2806.1: Varia, Schriftgutarchiv, Stiftung Deutsche Kinemathek, Berlin.

8. "Gypsy" is an inaccurate and demeaning designation for the Sinti and Romani peoples in Europe. Carmen's ethnic identity is not specified in Lubitsch's film, but it is in the source materials and in the American release title: *Gypsy Blood*. In Lubitsch's film, the character's ethnic otherness can be read as covertly Jewish.

9. Kreimeier, *Die Ufa-Story*, 68 (in English, *Ufa Story*, 56); see also Jacobsen, "Filmografie," in Prinzler and Patalas, *Lubitsch*, 208. An earlier version of this discussion of *Madame Dubarry* is found in Richard W. McCormick, "Sex, History, and Upward Mobility: Ernst Lubitsch's *Madame Dubarry/Passion*, 1919," *German Studies Review* 33, no. 3 (October 2010): 603–17.

10. Eyman, *Ernst Lubitsch*, 60.

11. Eyman, 60.

12. Eyman, 379.

13. Weinberg, *Lubitsch Touch*, 32.

14. Elsaesser, *Weimar Cinema and After*, 197; cf. Petrie, *Hollywood Destinies*, 16.

15. Kreimeier, *Die Ufa-Story*, 70 (in English, *Ufa Story*, 58).

16. Lubitsch's film was distributed in America by First National, which initially did not specify its nationality; see Weinberg, *Lubitsch Touch*, 32. On October 3, 1920, two months before its American premiere, "Screen: People and Plays" in the *New York Times* speculated that *Passion* was "a motion picture imported from Italy." By October 10, however, the *New York Times* explained that it had assumed that Negri was Italian, but a report from Berlin indicated that she must be German. On October 24 the *Times* reported that although *Passion* was from Germany, Negri was Polish, and the film was set in France. That it was a German film was repeated in the *Times* on December 12, the day of the film's premiere. On December 13, the *Times* review called it a German film again, praising it and its director, "Ernst Lubitch [*sic*]." C. L. Yearsley of First National wrote about *Passion*: "Critics eulogized it. Pola Negri became a rage in a week. It lifted the ban on costume pictures and started the German invasion with a rush"; C. L. Yearsley, "Looking Back on the German Invasion," *Motion Picture News*, March 22, 1924, Lubitsch files, Museum of Modern Art Film Archive, New York. Pratt ("O Lubitsch, Where Wert Thou?" 50) describes the American distribution and reception history of *Passion*, which was the first European film imported to the United States after World War I.

17. Cited in Petrie, *Hollywood Destinies*, 19. The article in *Motion Picture Magazine* does not name *Madame Dubarry*'s director but compares him with Griffith. Griffith's own film about the French Revolution, *Orphans of the Storm* (1921), is arguably a response to Lubitsch's success with *Madame Dubarry* (1919); see Pratt, "O, Lubitsch, Where Wert Thou?" 60.

18. EFA convinced both Lubitsch and his producer Paul Davidson to leave UFA. Lubitsch's final two German films, *Loves of the Pharaoh* (1922) and *Die Flamme/Montmartre* (1923), were produced with American money, but EFA collapsed without producing a single film. See Thompson, *Herr Lubitsch*, 22–24; Kreimeier, *Die Ufa-Story*, 89 (in English, *Ufa Story*, 74–75); and Irene Stratenwerth and Hermann Simon, eds., *Pioniere in Celluloid. Juden in der frühen Filmwelt* (Berlin: Centrum Judaicum/Henschel, 2004), 262–72. See also Stefan Droessler, "Ernst Lubitsch and EFA," *Film History* 21.3 (2009): 208–28. Nonetheless, the connection between Lubitsch and Famous Players-Lasky, parent company of Paramount, dated back to 1921, before he left Germany.

19. Weinberg, *Lubitsch Touch*, 60–61.

20. Elsaesser, *Weimar Cinema and After*, 213.

21. Lubitsch had wanted to humanize the historical figures in his films in contrast to the operatic historical spectacles from Italy before World War I: *Quo Vadis* (1913) and *Cabiria* (1914). See Lubitsch's letter to Weinberg, July 10, 1947, in Weinberg, *Lubitsch Touch*, 285.

22. Petrie, *Hollywood Destinies*, 66.

23. Compare Jeanne's fall to that of another outsider, the Jewish Joseph Suess Oppenheimer in Veit Harlan's antisemitic film *Jud Süß/Jew Suess* (1940), made in Nazi Germany early in World War II. That character loses his protector when the weak duke he has manipulated finally dies. In that film, too, the outsider has a Black servant (but not one portrayed by an actor in blackface).

24. Elsaesser, *Weimar Cinema and After*, 215.

25. For example, as outlined in Laura Mulvey's seminal essay, "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema" (1975), in Mulvey, *Visual and Other Pleasures* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1989).

26. I first saw this restored version at the Deutsches Institut für Film and Fernsehen in Wiesbaden in 2009. In 2013 the Friedrich Murnau-Stiftung released it on DVD, and it is now available on DVD in the United Kingdom and Ireland: *Madame Dubarry* DVD and Blu-Ray, Masters of Cinema Series no. 93 (London: Eureka Entertainment, 2014).

27. In fact, the square looks very similar to the exterior set on the UFA lot in Tempelhof that had been used for Seville in *Carmen* a year earlier. This is verified by Lüthge in his report on his visit to the set of *Madame Dubarry* in June 1919. See B. E. [Bobby Emil] Lüthge, "Paris in Berlin. Die Lubitsch-Stadt," *Film-Kurier*, June 22, 1919, 1.

28. In the original German version, according to the censorship records, the final title is "Laßt mich nur noch einen Augenblick leben." This title does not appear in the restored version for some reason.

29. Helma Sanders-Brahms's commentary on *Madame Dubarry* in Prinzler and Patalas, *Lubitsch*, 134; Weinberg, *Lubitsch Touch*, 31.

30. This ending is corroborated in the synopsis printed in the program for the premiere of the film in 1919, which appeared first in serialized form in the *Illustrierte Film- Woche*, nos. 36, 37, and 38 (1919). But even the restored version seems to be missing footage, as David Cairns writes, pointing out that the final close-up of Madame Dubarry's severed head is a still; see Cairns, "Who Wants to Be a Milliner? Ernst Lubitsch, Pola Negri, and *Madame Dubarry*," booklet, *Madame Dubarry* DVD and Blu-Ray, Masters of Cinema Series no. 93 (London: Eureka Entertainment, 2014), 30.

31. Cited in Petrie, *Hollywood Destinies*, 215.

32. Eyman, *Ernst Lubitsch*, 64.

33. Brandlmeier, "Early German Film Comedy," 111.

34. Meyer's attempts to "fit in" are so comical that they can be read as a parody of fitting into the "Germanic *Heimat*." And he is less interested in "fitting in" than with having an affair with Kitty. See chap. 1.

35. See Elsaesser, *Weimar Cinema and After*, 216. He also argues that Zamor's betrayal is the result of Jeanne not taking seriously enough the racial Other. See also Marc Silberman's reading of Zamor: Silberman, "Specular Presence and Historical Revolution: Ernst Lubitsch's *Passion*," in *German Cinema: Texts in Context* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1995), 251n15. On the use of blackface here, see also the introduction to this volume, n. 60.

36. Kracauer charges Lubitsch with being "melodramatic" in *From Caligari to Hitler*, 52. Linda Williams defines one of the key features of melodrama as "*Manichaean conflicts between good and evil*" (emphasis in the original); see Williams, *Playing the Race Card: Melodramas of Black and White from Uncle Tom to O.J. Simpson* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2001), 40. This feature, however, is not typical of Lubitsch; as Mast writes,

"Good and evil are absent from the great Lubitsch films. There are no moral blacks and whites"; Mast, *Comic Mind*, 208.

37. Cf. Boyarin, Itzkovitz, and Pellegrini, *Queer Theory and the Jewish Question*; in particular, see Boyarin's own chapter in that volume, "Homophobia and the Postcoloniality of the 'Jewish Science,'" 166–198.

38. Elsaesser, *Weimar Cinema and After*, 204.

39. An earlier version of this discussion is found in Richard W. McCormick, "Desire vs. Despotism: The Politics of *Sumurun* (1920), Ernst Lubitsch's 'Oriental' Fantasy," in *The Many Faces of Weimar Cinema: Rediscovering Germany's Filmic Legacy*, ed. Christian Rogowski, Screen Cultures: German Film and the Visual (Rochester, NY: Camden House, 2010), 67–83.

40. *Sumurun* is set in Baghdad of the ninth century CE; see Jacobsen, "Filmografie," in Prinzler and Patalas, *Lubitsch*, 209. Thus its supposed basis in "oriental fairy-tale motifs" (in *One Thousand and One Nights*) makes historical accuracy not very relevant.

41. Kracauer, *From Caligari to Hitler*, 52.

42. See Friedrich Freska, *Sumurun. Eine Pantomime in 9 Bildern* (1910; Berlin: Erich Riess, 1911).

43. See Ernst Lubitsch, "Sumurun und ich," *B.Z. am Mittag*, August 26, 1920; Spaich, *Ernst Lubitsch und seine Filme*, 123. Weinberg (*Lubitsch Touch*, 7) claims that Lubitsch played the hunchback in *Sumurun* in 1911, the same role he would play in his 1920 film adaptation of *Sumurun*, but this is wrong. In 1911 Lubitsch joined the Reinhardt troupe, and according to Lubitsch himself, he played the second slave ("Sumurun und ich"). See Eyman, *Ernst Lubitsch* 69.

44. This is almost exactly the same team that worked on *Madame Dubarry*, although the first credit for the screenplay went to Fred Orbing (a pseudonym for Norbert Falk, who wrote the screenplay for Lubitsch's first American film, *Rosita*, in 1923), followed by Hanns Kräly. Regarding the exotic sets, Fritz Olimsky visited them in April 1920; see Olimsky, "Kurt Richter," *Berliner Börsen-Zeitung*, April 4, 1920.

45. In somewhat sexist remarks, Lubitsch commented in 1920 on the difficulties of directing three female stars in one film; see Lubitsch, "Sumurun und ich." Nonetheless, they are the protagonists of this film. Liedtke is the object of desire, and Wegener and Clever are the villains. If there is a male protagonist, it is the hunchback clown played by Lubitsch.

46. See *Illustrierter Film-Kurier*, no. 24 (1920), program material for *Sumurun*. Schriftgutarchiv, Stiftung Deutsche Kinemathek, Berlin.

47. Eisner, *Haunted Screen*, 82.

48. The "vogue" is the series of costume epics Lubitsch made at the beginning of the Weimar Republic. Kracauer, *From Caligari to Hitler*, 52.

49. Fritz Göttler's commentary on *Sumurun* in Prinzler and Patalas, *Lubitsch*, 140.

50. On *Der Golem*, see, e.g., Noah Isenberg's chapter on the film, "Weimar Cinema, the City, and the Jew: Paul Wegener's *Der Golem*," in *Between Redemption and Doom: The Strains of German Jewish Modernism* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1999), 77–104.

51. Edward W. Said, *Orientalism* (1978; New York: Vintage, 1979), 27–28. More disturbingly "orientalist" would be *The Eyes of the Mummy*, given that it juxtaposes a modern but backward, primitive, and superstitious Egypt with enlightened Europe. Negri's character cannot be sufficiently "educated"/westernized in Berlin, and she cannot escape the spell of Jannings's evil "Arab," who follows her to Europe, the ultimate "stalker." But even in this film, one could argue that the prejudices here refer as much or more to prejudices and fears

about Eastern European Jews (especially if the Jewish "bad boys" have become a "bad girl": Negri).

In comparing the situation of the Jews with that of Arabs (and Ottoman Turks), see Berna Gueneli's fascinating research on the "orientalist" costumes and accessories—and the photographs documenting them—collected by Baron Max von Oppenheim, a German Jew who served as an attaché at the German Embassy in Egypt around the turn of the twentieth century; see Gueneli, "Orientalist Fashion, Photography, and Fantasies: Baron Max von Oppenheim's *Arabian Nights*," *German Quarterly* 90, no. 4 (Fall 2017): 439–58. Gueneli suggests that Oppenheim created "an alternative Orientalism, which seems diverse, involved, collaborative, and tactile" (443).

52. See Weinstein, "Antisemitism or Jewish 'Camp?'"

53. See Boyarin, Itzkovitz, and Pellegrini, *Queer Theory and the Jewish Question*, esp. Boyarin's "Homophobia.'" See also Wallach, *Passing Illusions*, 15–16.

54. Joel Rosenberg, "Shylock's Revenge: The Doubly Vanished Jew in Ernst Lubitsch's *To Be or Not to Be*," *Prooftexts* 16 (1996), 212.

55. Prawer, *Between Two Worlds*, 52.

56. As an "implicit" Jew, the hunchback certainly defies the antisemitic stereotype of the "greedy" Jew. His love for the dancer is much stronger than any interest in money: he indignantly refuses the bag of money the slave merchant offers him for the dancer earlier in the film.

57. See *Illustrierter Film-Kurier*, no. 24 (1920), program material for *Sumurun*. Is the ending revolutionary? Lubitsch's films before the end of World War I are characterized as "corrosive, caustic, and pre-revolutionary" by Brandlmeier, "Early German Film Comedy," 112.

58. The *New York Times* review of *Sumurun*, October 3, 1921, criticizes Lubitsch for having the lovers come toward the camera at the end of the film. Lubitsch was not yet in compliance with (Hollywood's) "classical" rules of cinematography.

59. Early cinema was famous for such an address; see, e.g., Heide Schlüpmann, *Unheimlichkeit des Blicks. Das Drama des frühen deutschen Kinos* (Frankfurt: Stroemfeld/Roter Stern, 1990); Miriam Hansen, "Early Silent Cinema: Whose Public Sphere?" *New German Critique* 29 (Spring–Summer 1983), 147–84. Writing on Lubitsch, Elsaesser asserts that in early cinema, women "as cinema spectators had the right to a look that previously was denied to them, and films, knowing that they catered for women spectators, seemed ready to accommodate this different look"—an active look; see Elsaesser, *Weimar Cinema and After*, 204.

60. Hake, *Passions and Deceptions* 15, 20–21. She is referring to the concept developed by Tom Gunning, "The Cinema of Attraction: Early Film, Its Spectator and the Avant-Garde," *Wide Angle* 8, no. 3–4 (1986).

61. When Nur Al-Din rejects her advances in his shop, the hunchback, who is spying on them, puts down his dagger and then comes out to thank him. Thus does the hunchback give his blessing to Nur Al-Din, whom love will reward.

62. In fact, Paul Graetz was Jewish and would go into exile, where he would die. For Lubitsch's intercession in Hollywood on behalf of Graetz's widow in California, see chap. 6, n. 30.

63. See chap. 3 on *The Oyster Princess*; note the discussion of Zamor, blackface, and race in n. 35.

64. This character is played by the same actor, Paul Biensfeldt, who plays the courtier in *Madame Dubarry* who tries to groom Negri (in the role of Jeanne) for her first meeting with King Louis XV.

65. See Isenberg, *Between Redemption and Doom*, 95–99.
66. Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*, 10; cf. Mulvey, "Changes," 174.
67. Mulvey, "Changes," 174.
68. Kracauer, *From Caligari to Hitler*, 52.
69. See Lothar Fredrik, "Der Reichspräsident bei 'Anna Boleyn," *Film-Kurier*, October 1, 1920, cited in Prinzler and Patalas, *Lubitsch*, 28–29; cf. Hake, *Passions and Deceptions*, 114.
70. There is tinting, the use of irises, and even geometric masks, although not as excessive or self-consciously stylized as we will find in *Die Bergkatze/The Wildcat* (1921). There is extensive use of close-ups, cutting on movement, but the acting is still somewhat pre-"classical." The *New York Times* review of *Anna Boleyn/Deception*, April 18, 1921, considers the "methodical ponderosity" of the acting and photography inferior to American films. But for Lubitsch, the critic has only praise: there is no Germanic "heaviness," instead "a Continental touch."
71. One exception to this rule was Porten's previous role for Lubitsch, in the comedy *Kohlhiesels Töchter/Kohlhiesel's Daughters*, which premiered earlier in 1920. See chap. 3.
72. See the *New York Times* review of *Anna Boleyn/Deception*, April 18, 1921.
73. Her only agency is in her noble willingness to sacrifice herself for each of the two men who love her—and for the people of Egypt.
74. It is not "orientalism"; it is racism. The Egyptians are depicted as white and the Ethiopians as Black "barbarians." Paul Wegener's king of Ethiopia is portrayed as a barbarian (in blackface).
75. Anca Parvulescu, *Laughter: Notes on a Passion* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2010), 5.

3

BAD GIRLS UNTAMED

Anarchic/Fantastic Comedies, 1919–22

Lubitsch did more than make big-budget costume epics in the Weimar Republic. Those expensive films were made especially for the export market. The unemployment rate in Germany's weakened postwar economy made hiring extras easy and cheap. The films had big budgets, but they earned hard currency abroad that easily covered their costs and made a profit, since they had been funded with the weak inflated currency endemic to the early Weimar Republic. While he made such films for export, Lubitsch continued making popular comedies, and they succeeded primarily with the domestic market in Germany.

The best of those comedies were what I call anarchic/fantastic films featuring bad girls who were not punished but instead prevailed—precisely, perhaps, because these films were not at all realistic. In this chapter I discuss two 1919 films featuring the indomitable Ossi Oswalda—*The Oyster Princess* and *The Doll*—and Lubitsch's final Germany comedy, *The Wildcat*, made in 1921 and starring Pola Negri in a comic role.

"Marrying Up": Fantasies of America in Lubitsch's *The Oyster Princess* (1919)

Eisner characterized Lubitsch's early comedies as "rather coarse farces" that she ascribed to his origins in Konfektion and the "Jewish lower-middle class." She felt that, even in Hollywood, where he perfected the sophisticated comedy, Lubitsch never completely rid himself of "the vainglory of the *nouveau riche*."[1] The condescension with regard to class and taste in these remarks is obvious. Lubitsch's 1919 comedy *The Oyster Princess* thematizes—and parodies—the same assumptions about class and taste.

Whether Eisner considered *The Oyster Princess* to be one of those "coarse farces" is not clear. It was the first feature-length comedy Lubitsch directed after World War I, at the very beginning of the Weimar Republic, and for a comedy, it had a huge budget.[2] It was not set in the milieu of the Konfektion, as his earlier Jewish comedies had been, but there are similarities: Lubitsch's milieu comedies always involved a bad boy "marrying up," often to the boss's daughter. This occurred in the first film in which Lubitsch had a lead role as an actor, *The Pride of the Firm* (1914). Sometimes it meant marrying a wealthy shiksa, as in *Shoe Palace Pinkus* (1916).

Marrying up is also the theme of *The Oyster Princess*, in which the main character, Ossi (Ossi Oswalda), is a nouveau riche American who wants an aristocratic husband. Her father, Mr. Quaker, is an American millionaire, and he decides to "buy" her a prince. Quaker is known as the "Oyster King" for his control of the oyster market.[3] "Marrying up" here refers only to social status because the Oyster King is already fabulously wealthy. Prince Nucki, the prince he obtains for his daughter, has no money at all, only his aristocratic pedigree—and, one presumes, a European background. The basic premise of this film—that American new money wanted European aristocratic prestige and that European aristocrats needed the infusion of cash Americans could provide—is also the premise of the BBC serial *Downton Abbey*.[4]

Compared with Lubitsch's earlier comedies, *The Oyster Princess* is different in that the person who marries up is a woman. This is what we should expect if Ossi Oswalda's characters do indeed represent the female alter ego of the characters Lubitsch himself played in the earlier comedies.[5]

The representation of American nouveau riche excess is the main excuse for the film's spectacle, its most impressive visual effects. And although no one in *The Oyster Princess* except the matchmaker Seligsohn seems to be clearly Jewish, the absurd American excess of the Oyster King and his princess must be seen in relation to German stereotypes about Jewish new money, which would include extravagance, bad taste, and the drive to marry into old (aristocratic, Christian) money.[6]

The implementation—and critique—of the classical male gaze of American cinema that Elsaesser notes in *Madame Dubarry* is an example of gender politics that can also be seen in *The Oyster Princess*.[7] In the latter film we watch Ossi being made into a perfect commodity as she is bathed by a bevy of servants, and yet her gaze is powerful in the film, controlling the narrative to the end of the film.

In 1919, the contemporary German critic B. E. Lüthge criticized *The Oyster Princess* for its supposedly misguided attempt to compete with the American cinema through its huge cast and excessive spectacle.[8] But what is most American about *The Oyster Princess* is not just its excess but also its broad slapstick comedy, its dynamic choreography and physicality, and its allusions to a multiethnic society (by referencing racial politics in America directly and the situation of the Jews in Germany indirectly). Such characteristics were crucial elements of the vernacular modernism of early American cinema.[9]

Class, race, ethnicity, and national identity are crucial to this film about marrying up in America, as are gender and sexuality. This romantic comedy parodies but also celebrates a fantasy of America with its emancipated women, its excessive consumerism, its bad taste, its fanaticism (and hypocrisy) about alcohol, and its relentless drive for upward mobility. To the extent it celebrates America, it is a utopian fantasy based on a critique of European hierarchies around class and taste.

The Daughter of an American Millionaire

According to a contemporary synopsis in the German film press at its premiere in June 1919, *The Oyster Princess* is set in the "Land der unbegrenzten Möglichkeiten"—the land of unlimited opportunities, as Germans liked to call the United States.[10] In the credits, the film is called "Ein groteskes Lustspiel," a grotesque comedy, but, as Frieda Grafe informed us, in the 1910s *Groteskfilm* was the German translation of the English "slapstick film."[11] The credit sequence includes shots of Lubitsch and the four main actors; the intertitles in the American DVD introduce Victor Janson as "Mister Quaker, the American Oyster King," Ossi Oswalda as "Ossi, his daughter," Harry Liedtke as "Prince Nucki," and Julius Falkenstein as "Josef, Nucki's friend." They are all in costume except for Victor Janson.[12]

After the credits, the film itself begins with a close-up of Quaker the Oyster King, who is speaking, and after the first cut, we see that he is speaking to four rows of female typists and stenographers who seem to be transcribing what Quaker is dictating. Cutting back to a medium long shot, we can see that Quaker is surrounded by four Black servants in livery who hold his cigar, moving it to and from his mouth, and hold his coffee, offering it to him at Quaker's command. These first few shots already show examples

Figure 3.1 Ossi Oswalda in the credit sequence of *The Oyster Princess* (1919). Screen capture.

of absurd excess: fourteen clerical workers recording his words and four servants who pamper his infantile orality from the beginning of the film.[13]

The fact that these servants are Black is also significant: they are portrayed by actors who are of African heritage, not white Europeans in blackface. This choice was most likely made possible by Germany's colonial history in Africa, which had only just ended with its defeat in World War I. Having Black servants must have corresponded to a (correct) German perception of how the rich in America lived. The fact that *The Oyster Princess* opens with the American capitalist, Mr. Quaker, being pampered by a number of Black servants makes us uncomfortable today, but Lubitsch probably intended this as a critique of American race relations, which were notoriously bad.[14] In any case, the actual function of the Black servants is to make Mr. Quaker seem spoiled and infantile.

Why is the American millionaire named Quaker? Enno Patalas, in Robert Fischer's documentary *Ernst Lubitsch in Berlin* (2006), asserts that the reference to the Quakers is a reference to the aid sent by American Quakers to Germany to alleviate hunger after World War I. It has been suggested

that the reference may be more specific, namely, to Herbert Hoover, a man of Quaker faith who directed the Quaker aid campaign, using the American Friends Service Committee to distribute aid meant to alleviate hunger in Europe during the war, for example, in Belgium, and after the war in a number of countries including Germany.[15]

In any case, Lubitsch is interested not in an accurate portrayal of America but rather in an absurd parody of America—at the same time, I would assert, the film celebrates a fantasy of America as a place in which European class and ethnic barriers could be transcended. In reality, America in 1919 was very racist and antisemitic, although the social barriers for Jews were much more permeable than the barriers for Black Americans.

The dictation scene is interrupted by another servant who reports to Quaker that his daughter is having a tantrum. There is a cut to a drawing room in which Ossi, the Oyster Princess, is angrily smashing vases and even tossing heavy porcelain busts to the floor. Another cut gives us our first hint of the vast spaces in the Oyster mansion as we see Quaker trotting down a stairway into a large hall, with a platoon of servants trotting in formation behind him. Arriving finally at the drawing room that Ossi is destroying, Quaker peers into the room, only to have Ossi throw newspapers at him; when he asks why she does this, she responds that the vases are already broken. Ossi is upset, Quaker learns, because a girlfriend of hers, the daughter of the Shoe Cream King, is marrying a count. Quaker responds that he is not impressed, and he tells her that he will buy her a prince. Overcome with joy, Ossi then smashes a chair onto a desk and then jumps onto the desk herself, proclaiming gleefully that she is so happy that she could destroy the whole house.

Ossi represents yet another type of excess, a spoiled "American girl" who is vibrant, boisterous, and rebellious. Not just a parody of the emancipated American (or German) "New Woman," the character Oswalda portrays here is a stock character in German comedy, in the role of the "anarchistic small child."[16] She is the disruptive force that the narrative needs to try to tame and control, which is typical for the genre of the romantic comedy; however, this is no ordinary romantic comedy. The excesses of both its visual spectacle and its irrepressible female protagonist cannot easily be tamed by the generic narrative structure.

The Oyster King contacts Seligsohn the matchmaker.[17] Seligsohn has a wall of photographs of eligible men in his office—an idea that was apparently quite humorous in 1919, according to one contemporary critic.[18]

Perhaps this obvious commodification of *men* was the factor that struck viewers as humorous. In any case, Seligsohn finds on his wall of photographs the image of a suitable prince, Prince Nucki.[19] Nucki, according to the files, lives on Twenty-First Avenue on the forty-seventh floor of what must be a New York skyscraper.[20] How and why the penniless European aristocrat Nucki and his valet Josef have ended up in New York we do not know. We first see them washing their laundry by hand and hanging it to dry on a clothesline across their small, shabby apartment; when someone knocks at the door, they try to clean up the place by quickly taking the laundry down from the line and tossing it out of sight—that is, out of the frame—by throwing things straight toward the viewer, or rather the camera, in a self-reflexive moment that breaks the fourth wall.[21]

Seligsohn is at the door. After supposedly having climbed forty-seven flights of stairs, he enters the apartment and sees the "aristocratic spectacle" that Nucki and Josef have quickly created: Nucki is seated on a "throne," a chair set on a box, with Josef holding a broom as a ceremonial scepter. Seligsohn's reaction is to utter the Yiddish/Hebrew "Meshuga!"—to proclaim them crazy—but they are not crazy. They are merely very poor and, at the same time, trying to keep up aristocratic appearances while hiding from creditors who would take the last vestiges of Nucki's noble heritage: his rings, his watch, his tuxedo.

When Seligsohn tells Nucki that the nouveau riche "princess" who is interested in marrying him is very tall and has dark hair, the aristocratic Nucki replies disapprovingly that he likes blondes. In fact Ossi is not especially tall and has light-colored hair; she is called blonde in the synopsis in a contemporary film program.[22] It is unclear whether Seligsohn has ever seen her. Rather, it seems to be how Seligsohn lets Nucki know how rich she is, telling him that his preference for blondes is no problem: "Then she'll color it. With that kind of money, what difference does it make?" Although the Oyster Princess is not a brunette, this joke about hair color could be another way in which the film indirectly references the situation of wealthy Jews in Germany who wanted to marry up.[23] There is also commentary on aristocrats: Seligsohn appeals to Nucki's mercenary nature, and it works, demonstrating that aristocrats could be just as crass about money as the nouveau riche (if not more so). The penniless aristocrat was also a stereotype, but to the extent that the film can be construed as making covert commentary on the situation of Jews in Germany, it is worth noting that old (gentile) money comes in for as much ridicule as new (Jewish) money.

Persuaded by Seligsohn that the daughter of the Oyster King is wealthy enough to be worth at least a look, Nucki sends Josef to the Quaker mansion. Josef arrives at the mansion and is asked for his card by an army of servants. In preparation for the visit, Josef had put on Nucki's tuxedo jacket, and thus he finds Prince Nucki's card in a pocket and hands it over. As in *I Don't Want To Be a Man*, the card in someone else's jacket sets up a comic mix-up of identities. The card is delivered to Ossi, who then believes that the true prince has come calling; she retires to her chambers to prepare to meet him by taking a bath and getting a massage.

While Ossi is in the midst of her preparations, and while her father takes a nap, Josef is left to wait in a room where he becomes so bored that he begins pacing about, tracing the ornamental pattern on the parquet floor. The film continually cuts between these three scenes: the Oyster King snoring, Ossi being bathed by her servants, and Josef as he ever more desperately tries to pass the time. Josef's pacing along the outlines of the pattern on the floor, which eventually becomes more frenzied through the use of fast-motion photography, was considered clever by the critic Egon Jacobsohn in 1919. This inventive way of expressing Josef's impatience visually, without titles or dialogue, is a "touch" that Lubitsch himself mentioned proudly toward the end of his life.[24]

How does Ossi prepare to meet the supposed prince? She takes a bath and gets a massage, but this bit of narrative is an excuse for some spectacular visual excess, teasing the audience with a shot of Ossi disrobing but covered strategically by a bathrobe held up at the last moment by her many chambermaids. The maids massage, powder, and perfume her in the manner of a "Taylorized" assembly line with Ossi as the product. As Sabine Hake noted in her groundbreaking analysis of this film, this is an early version of the assembly line, in which the workers carry the product from station to station; in this case, the maids carry Ossi, covered in a towel, from the tub to the massage table.[25]

This sequence is not merely a surreal parody of American excess and American production methods; it is an amusing and sensual display, as dozens of hands massage the nude back of the Oyster Princess.[26] Hake focuses on Lubitsch's foregrounding of spectacle in this film at the expense of narrative.[27] In the bath scene, once Ossi has slipped into her bathrobe, two sliding doors open up behind her, like a curtain parting to reveal an even more impressive spectacle: a much larger room with even more servants lined up the stairs on both sides leading to the bathtub. Her bath is the "show."

Figure 3.2 Princess in the bath: Ossi Oswalda in *The Oyster Princess* (1919). Screen capture.

In her discussion of vernacular modernism, Hansen writes how Kracauer in 1926 noted in American slapstick films "a disjuncture within Fordist mass culture," "an anarchic supplement generated on the same principles," in which the discipline of a mechanized modern culture is subverted.[28] Lubitsch does something similar by using assembly line techniques to create a humorous yet sensual spectacle, but he also appears to be calling attention to this subversion of mechanization.[29] McCabe writes that the excessive pampering of Ossi in this sequence is meant to appeal to a female audience and create identification with the female star in the pleasurable process of being transformed into the beautiful and privileged customer of American consumerism.[30] Although this reading is plausible, what seems more interesting is that the film foregrounds this very process of transformation. Ossi's sensual pampering is depicted in a pleasurable and humorous way with clear ironic distance and reflexivity; as Hake put it, "The spectacle of *The Oyster Princess*, too, complies with the commodity fetishism of its time but also invites its quiet demolition in the spirit of irony."[31]

Hake also observed that although Ossi is the "product" of this parody of mass production, she immediately becomes the subject of an active gaze as soon as she meets Josef, who she thinks is the prince. She looks him over, declares that he looks "blöd," stupid, but decides that because he is a prince, it does not matter. They take a quick trip in a small cab pulled by eighteen horses (each horse is shown, one after the other until finally we see the cab—absurd excess, again). They arrive at a building where, from a window, a clergyman marries them in short order. Then they return home to the Oyster mansion, where soon there is a wedding banquet that provides for the most memorable scenes of visual spectacle in the whole film, far in excess of what the narrative might dictate.

The Banquet and the "Foxtrot Epidemic"

The wedding banquet was famous before the film even premiered, as journalists in Berlin were invited to watch its filming at the Union studios in Tempelhof. Masses of (real) waiters (three hundred, according to Lüthge) were used to serve course after course to the long table full of guests—again, according to the principle of a surreal Taylorism, as each line of "workers" brings yet another dish or fills one set of glasses with wine and then another set with champagne.[32] As in the bath and massage scene, we see an industrial or military precision in the masses of servants who are mobilized,[33] but the goal is, once again, to provide sensual pleasure. The banquet scene places obvious emphasis on orality, on the pleasure of eating and drinking.

An even more spectacular, more anarchic example of excess occurs after dinner, when the music of a jazz orchestra leads to an "epidemic" of the foxtrot, an American dance craze. The sensual (and "vulgar") physicality of this outbreak is embodied in the orchestra's conductor (played by a young Curt Bois), who wiggles his behind to the music, his posterior facing the camera—and us—while he faces the orchestra he leads. Meanwhile, masses of guests fill the huge ballroom in choreographed frenzy.[34]

This carnivalesque moment of physical abandon to American dance music crosses all social boundaries—the servants in the kitchen are doing the foxtrot, as are the wealthy guests in the ballroom—and both are shot from a high angle. The camera positions us above the spectacle so that we look down not only on the servants but also on the wealthy dancers. The crossing of class boundaries is epitomized best by Ossi and a butler, with whom she dances in wild abandon. The climax of the foxtrot scene comes

Figure 3.3 Split screen during the "Foxtrot Epidemic": *The Oyster Princess* (1919). Screen capture.

right after the conductor, still wiggling, shoots a gun (in this silent film, we only see the smoke it emits). Then, to emphasize the union of the classes in the dance, the film cuts to a split frame composed of three horizontal close-ups of dancing feet: those of the wealthy guests are shown in the top frame, those of the servants are shown in the bottom frame, and those of Ossi and the butler are shown in the middle frame. Thus, at the climactic moment of the "foxtrot epidemic," the dancing feet of Ossi and the butler are at the center of things. Consequently, this transgression of class boundaries is emphasized at the climax of the most impressive spectacle in the film.

Meanwhile, there have been a number of cuts to a medium shot of a seated, older man in the orchestra who keeps getting slapped by one musician standing above him, apparently as part of the orchestrated rhythm of the foxtrot music—the most literal example of "slapstick" in this film. Other bizarre orchestration includes shots of a saw cutting through wood and the gunshot fired by the conductor (who has continued to wiggle his behind). Just after the frame has split into the three images highlighting the

mixture of the classes, the old man finally slaps back at the man who has been slapping him—another carnivalesque overturning of hierarchy.

In this dance scene, all the physical frenzy is controlled by the movements of the dance and the mass choreography of the scenes that we watch; a visual regimentation controls and orders the excessive outburst of dancing. This is perhaps as much Kracauer's mechanized "mass ornament" as it is reminiscent of Bakthin's anarchic carnival.[35] Although these two kinds of excess, ornamental and carnivalesque, are in tension with each other, they both explode the bounds of the generic romantic comedy narrative, which is completely overwhelmed by the visual spectacle.

In fact, we have more or less forgotten the false groom, Josef—the man Ossi thinks is a prince. Throughout the foxtrot epidemic, there is an occasional cut to this man, who never gets up from the banquet table to go to the dance. He gluttonously devotes himself to the first decent meal he has had in ages while greedily drinking alcohol.[36]

Finally there is a cut back from the gluttonous, happily drunken Josef to the "true" prince, who is in his apartment eating a single herring and drinking a bottle of beer, complaining of his lot. Prince Nucki is then visited by his elegant friends, who want him to go out with them on a drinking spree; they have to loan him money so he can join them. Hopelessly drunk the next morning, Nucki is taken to the headquarters of what the English intertitles call the "League Against Dipsomania," that is, the League against Alcoholism; in the German synopsis from 1919, it is called the "Klub der Milliardärstöchter zur Bekämpfung der Trunksucht," that is, the club of the daughters of billionaires in the fight against alcoholism.[37] Led by Ossi, they all drink wine in a toast to their work together, a joke that ascribes hypocrisy to American temperance groups like the Women's Christian Temperance Union (groups that had succeeded in bringing about Prohibition, which was about to begin in January 1920).

Disinterested in the ordinary, older, decrepit alcoholics who need treatment, the young women get excited at the sight of Prince Nucki; once again, a male is the object of the gaze, and this time it is a desiring gaze. All of the women want a chance to "treat" Nucki, and so Ossi suggests a boxing match, a truly American method of deciding which young woman gets to have this privilege. This is clearly a joke both about American boxing and about the emancipated, athletic American girl. A long line of the women face off and box each other—and right in between each pair of boxing women stumbles the drunken Nucki, knocked about by the punches the women intend for

each other, a moment of anarchic slapstick (vernacular modernism) in the midst of another bit of ornamental choreography.

Ossi wins, of course, and she takes Nucki home for "private treatment."[38] Once in her bedroom, Nucki notices her wedding ring and becomes sad, realizing she is married and upset that he too is destined to marry someone he does not love. Both start crying and then console each other with kisses. At this point Josef enters the room and begins to laugh hysterically; he informs the two sad lovers that they are actually married to each other because Josef had married Ossi in Nucki's name. Now the real wedding celebration occurs, an intimate dinner with Ossi's father, and then, after playing footsie under the table, the two lovers sneak off to Ossi's bedroom. Alone in the room, they snuggle and turn out the light; outside, peering into the keyhole at them is Quaker the Oyster King, who winks, grinning and leering at the audience. He is finally impressed with something: the imminent consummation of Ossi's marriage with Nucki.

The Politics of Romance: Sex, Gender, and Class

This comedy ends in a typical way for a romance, with the consummation of a heterosexual relationship blessed by holy matrimony.[39] The rebellious young American girl has been domesticated by love and marriage, one might conclude. Yet it is hard to take this ending any more seriously than the rest of the film. For one thing, let us not forget how ridiculously the sacrament of "holy matrimony" has been represented: after driving up in the cab pulled by so many horses, Ossi knocks on a window, a reverend opens it, reads from a prayer book, makes the sign of the cross over the clasped hands of Ossi and the presumed prince, and then Ossi hands him some money. The wedding was called "echt amerikanisch," authentically American, by one German critic;[40] indeed it is amazingly close to what would later be called a "drive-through" wedding in the mid-twentieth century (e.g., in Reno or Las Vegas). Moreover, Ossi has married an impostor, Josef.

The film shows just as little respect for all the social conventions it depicts; why should it be any different for generic conventions, such as the happy ending of the romantic comedy? In the same way that the film's spectacle and humor exceed the dictates of the generic narrative in a disruptive fashion, so too does Lubitsch undermine the generically mandated romantic closure. Above all, Ossi's desire triumphs; Nucki remains the passive object of desire throughout the film—he is never the active one, except

perhaps at the very end of the film, when it is his hand that reaches up to turn out the light in the bedroom. Ossi's social ambition to marry up motivates the plot, but her sexual desire leads her to fight the other women in the temperance league to possess Nucki and bring him home—at a point when she believes she is married to someone else. Although her sexual desire for him, and his for her, is legitimated at the last moment by the revelation that they are already married to each other, one could easily interpret this as a playfully cynical concession to propriety and the demands of the genre. Or perhaps it is a utopian moment when reciprocal love and desire triumph unwittingly over the aggressive drive for upward mobility; once again, we note a covert version of Lubitsch's critique of assimilation.[41]

Throughout the film there is tension between excessively stylized visual spectacle and over-the-top anarchic, slapstick physical energy and between mass choreography and a delight in bodily pleasures like eating and dancing. Both types of excess—and the tension between them—distance us and keep us from taking the narrative very seriously in any sort of a realist fashion. The film's absurdist, farcical excess also creates distance and irony in a self-reflexive fashion, and that too makes it difficult to take the film's closure too seriously.

Thus I do not read the ending as a conservative affirmation of the status quo. The status quo of this society is depicted as absurd throughout the film: the hierarchy is so powerful that it fosters ridiculous excess on the part of "new money," including an absurdly aggressive drive to achieve acceptance—so much so that aristocratic spouses must be purchased. Although the society depicted is supposed to be America, it presents a very European social hierarchy, one that certainly reminds us of the situation of Jews in Germany. The film is no simple parody of America; it is just as much a parody of European projection about America as the place where tasteless new money reigns supreme. In Lubitsch's film, America also represents a utopia where the absurdities of social class are finally undone by the triumph of reciprocal love and desire. While this view has little to do with the reality of America (then or now), it reveals a hope that somewhere the need to compensate for or hide one's class and ethnic origins will be overcome.

But I must return to the film's central paradox: it celebrates while critiquing an excess of abundance and sensuality. It critiques excessive consumerism but also celebrates a pre-Oedipal, narcissistic desire for oral pleasures (eating, drinking, kissing), for the physicality of dance, and an embrace of the object world and a dream of abundance that must have

appealed to a German audience impoverished by the war. As Hake puts it, the film places more emphasis on the promise of desire than on its fulfillment,[42] which seems to be possible only at the last minute, precisely when the lights go out behind the keyhole (used to stimulate or frustrate desire up to this point).[43] This view can be linked to the consumerism the film seems also to critique, which is perhaps why Hake writes that the film oscillates between subversion and affirmation.[44]

Ashkenazi reads the end of the film as transcending both the old aristocratic values embodied by Nucki and the new, international, mass consumer culture embodied by Ossi, resolving them into a new, post–World War I bourgeois identity symbolized by a new private intimacy that neither partner enjoyed before.[45] Nucki has been overly concerned with his public aristocratic facade, and Ossi has been the object of her father's surveillance up until the moment when Nucki turns out the light and nothing is visible through the keyhole.

This new bourgeois identity does imply a critique of assimilation, namely, that it is no longer necessary to pretend to be anything other than what one is. But it is also an ending that valorizes intermarriage, by which I mean marrying across social boundaries.

The end of the film happens quickly and with a good deal of irony. But Ossi's desire triumphs: the desire of the spoiled princess, the demanding New (American) Woman.[46] Ossi is the social outsider who wants it all and gets it: her prince—and reciprocal love.

Subversive Robot: *The Doll* (1919)

Adapted from an operetta that was based loosely on E. T. A. Hoffmann's short story "Der Sandmann"/"The Sandman" (1816), Lubitsch's film *The Doll* premiered December 4, 1919. Three months after his costume epic *Madame Dubarry* and six months after his previous big-budget comedy with Ossi Oswalda, *The Oyster Princess*, *The Doll* was released nearly three months before the premiere of Robert Wiene's *Cabinet of Dr. Caligari* (on February 26, 1920). Like the latter, *The Doll* is a film with stylized, self-consciously artificial sets and a story based on motifs of romanticism, including a *Doppelgänger*—the mechanical doll of the title—and even some somnambulism.[47]

Hake states that the sets in both films show the influence of expressionist and futurist art, but the dominant inspiration for *The Doll* comes "from childhood drawings and folk art." The two "fantastic" films are quite

different: as Hake formulated it, "the male universe of horror and insanity" in *Caligari* contrasts with the "happy childhood paradise" in Lubitsch's comedy.[48] Indeed, the gender politics of *The Doll* make it unique. It features an irrepressible female "doll" (Oswalda) and her timid male "owner," with a subversive critique of gender roles that is lacking in *Caligari*.

In addition, this film—like many of Lubitsch's other comedies—is "doubly encoded," as Ashkenazi argues.[49] Many issues explicitly thematized in *The Doll* allude implicitly to issues of special relevance to German Jews: intermarriage across class boundaries, marrying up for money and title, aggressive women and less-than-masculine men. I noted these issues in *The Oyster Princess* and *I Don't Want to Be a Man*, as well as in Lubitsch's milieu comedies, which are more explicitly Jewish. *The Doll* also embodies emancipatory hopes for an end to traditional class, ethnic, and gender hierarchies at the beginning of Germany's Weimar Republic.

From Operetta to Fantastic Comedy

We see this sentence in the film's credits: "Vier lustige Akte aus einer Spielzeugschachtel von Wilner" (Four humorous reels from the toybox of Wilner"). Jacobsen's filmography in Prinzler and Patalas's *Lubitsch* lists A. E. Willner (with a double *l*) as the author of the original operetta *The Doll*, which was based loosely on Hoffmann's "The Sandman."[50] Barry Salt maintained that the film is based on the French operetta *La Poupée* (1896) by Edmond Audran, also based on the Hoffmann story. Perhaps the Willner operetta was based on the one by Audran.[51]

Salt also asserted that the main original contribution of Lubitsch to the operetta plot was the self-reflexive opening of the film.[52] After the credits, Lubitsch himself appears, taking elements from a large toybox to construct a small set with a cottage and trees, into which he sets two small dolls. Then there is a cut to a life-size version of the same set, with the two dolls now transformed into two adult actors portraying the male protagonist Lancelot and his overly protective governess. Critics in 1919—in the *Kinematograph* and in the *Freie Deutsche Bühne*—were impressed by this opening. "Balthasar" in the latter journal found it to be just one of the innovative cinematic ideas that made the film so much more than the well-known operetta plot. In the *Kinematograph* review, the unnamed critic proclaimed the film "truly delightful," a film with which the German film industry had again done itself honor.[53]

Figure 3.4 Lubitsch and his box of toys: *The Doll* (1919). Screen capture.

After the opening with Lubitsch and the toybox, the story continues with a cut to a paper-mache set depicting a quaint, Biedermeier-era village square in which a town crier reads a proclamation from Baron Chanterelle.[54] The crier announces to the villagers that the baron is seeking a bride for his nephew Lancelot. Unmarried himself, the baron wants to ensure that his fortune will be left to an heir with progeny. In December 1919, Germany had recently experienced revolutionary unrest, and a contemporary synopsis of *The Doll* states that the baron's proclamation leads to "Revolution—unter den Jungfrauen"[55]—revolution among the town's unmarried women, who each want to marry the baron's heir. When the baron tells Lancelot that he should get married, a close-up shows Lancelot (circled by an iris) crying in fear. Afraid of women and marriage, he flees, only to find himself being pursued about the town by a boisterous crowd of forty young women. The chase is depicted humorously in fast motion, with Lancelot eluding the women by hiding in a ditch outside town.

In flight from the middle-class women, the young aristocrat seeks refuge in a monastery. The gluttonous monks, feasting on pork but worried about their dwindling finances, are willing to share only dry bread with

Lancelot. Then they let him peel potatoes for them. Once they learn of the dowry he will receive if he marries—300,000 francs—they become much more solicitous of him. He declares he will not marry a woman, but one monk tells him that he can instead marry a doll, showing him an advertisement for Hilarius, a dollmaker who makes life-size, mechanical, female dolls especially "for bachelors, widowers, and misogynists."[56]

Agreeing to give his dowry to the monks if he can stay in the monastery, Lancelot goes to the shop of Hilarius and buys a very lifelike doll made in the likeness of Hilarius's daughter Ossi. Lancelot and Hilarius do not realize, however, that the "doll" Lancelot buys is actually Ossi pretending to be the doll, which has been broken accidentally by Hilarius's young apprentice (a rascal who always gets in trouble with his master and breaks the fourth wall to make comments directly to the viewers). Leaving Hilarius's shop, Lancelot and Ossi board a carriage with two horses who are clearly humans in costume. In it they travel to his uncle's palace for the wedding. The baron at this point is sickly and in bed, besieged by greedy relatives already fighting over the possessions they expect to inherit from him; the squabbling relatives are epitomized in a split frame as in *The Oyster Princess*, except instead of shots of dancing feet, we see twelve circular shots of angrily talking mouths. Once the baron learns that Lancelot has arrived with a bride, his health immediately improves, and he tells his relatives to get ready for a wedding. They transform from happily mourning his imminent death to gloomily congratulating him on the imminent marriage of the nephew who will inherit everything.

As in *The Oyster Princess*, a large wedding feast and dance ensues. Only when Lancelot turns away can the famished Ossi drink wine and gobble up the food on the plate he has set on her lap. When Lancelot leaves to collect the dowry, she begins dancing with his uncle and the other men. She dances the same way that she eats and drinks—with gusto, eager to transgress the restrictions she must pretend to follow in her masquerade as a mechanical doll. Once Lancelot returns, the exhausted Ossi resumes her role.

Now wed, the couple heads for the monastery, where Ossi, a cheerfully disruptive force, soon has all the monks dancing; even the disapproving abbot dances with her before ordering her to be locked up in a closet. But the monk who attempts to do this ends up being locked there himself by Ossi, who finds her way to Lancelot's cell. Lancelot, asleep and dreaming of Ossi, reveals his love for her. This love is visualized by a shot of the "real" Ossi on the left side of the frame and the "dream" Ossi on the right (a

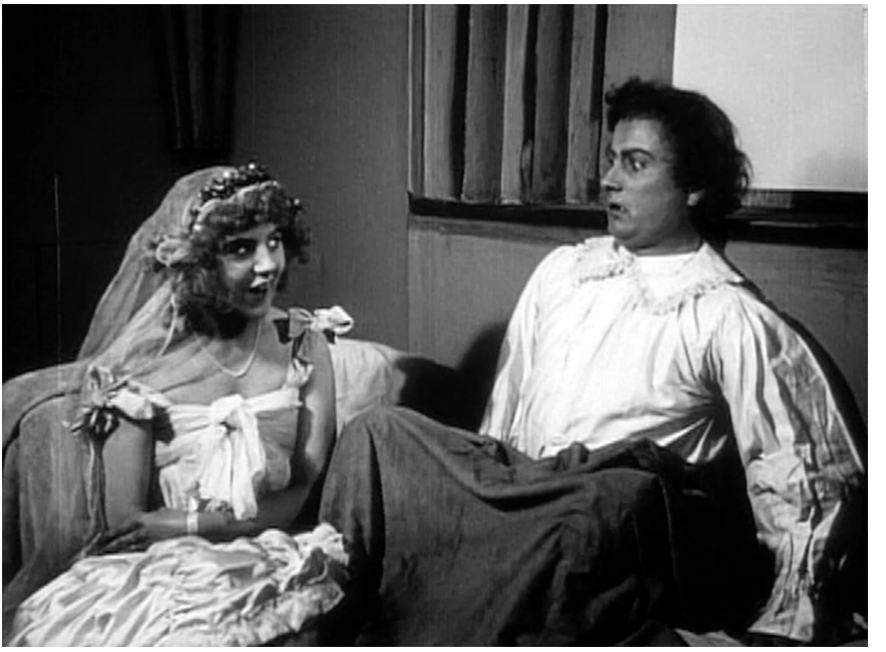

Figure 3.5 A "real woman" (Ossi Oswalda) scares Lancelot (Hermann Thimig): *The Doll* (1919). Screen capture.

dreamlike, transparent double-exposure of the same image), toward whom the sleeping Lancelot in the center looks in adoration. The real Ossi kisses him to wake him up. He is frightened to see that she might be real.

In fact, he tries to deny her realness even after touching her bare neck and arm; only after she jumps up onto the bed, afraid at having seen a mouse, is he convinced that she is a real woman. After this (sexist) "mouse test," they embrace.[57] An animated but very crude folk art image of a rooster crows, and the couple escapes the monastery together, heading into a very stylized forest, where they cuddle together on a bench in the moonlight.

Meanwhile, the apprentice has confessed the truth about the "doll" to Hilarius, who is so distraught that his hair turns white (through trick photography). He attacks the apprentice in a long, slapstick sequence, but the apprentice escapes. At night, still disturbed, Hilarius sleepwalks over the village roofs. Learning that Lancelot has taken Ossi to the monastery, he tries to engage the carriage, but the (obviously fake) horses refuse to move. Instead Hilarius buys balloons from a vendor, and somehow the balloons lift him into the air to fly off in search of Ossi. The apprentice, having been

slapped so often by Hilarius, gets a musket and shoots the balloons, one by one, until Hilarius falls from the heavens, landing in front of the bench on which Ossi and Lancelot sit and cuddle. He is upset, but the runaways show him the marriage certificate that proves that they are married. Hilarius is relieved, and his hair becomes black again.[58]

As in *The Oyster Princess*, the film ends with the father happy about his daughter's marriage. But this is hardly the victory of the still confused father, who has been clueless for most of the film, nor is it the triumph of the young aristocrat who feared marriage. It is Ossi who has won.

The Subversion of Class, Gender, and Ethnic Barriers

A fairy tale with a mise-en-scène reminiscent of folk art, *The Doll* offers us a "world of immediate gratification,"[59] with much more pre-Oedipal narcissism than the Oedipal paranoia of expressionism in *Caligari*. When the film begins, just after Lubitsch has placed the dolls into the toy cottage, Lancelot, now portrayed by the actor Hermann Thimig, falls into a pool of water at the bottom of the hill below the cottage. Shivering, he pleads with the sun to dry him off, and immediately we see animated clouds part, revealing a whimsical illustration of a smiling sun. Then we see steam coming from Lancelot's clothes.

Throughout the film, just as in *The Oyster Princess*, there is an emphasis on orality—eating, drinking, and kissing. Traditional, "adult" gender norms are ridiculed: the hero is timid, the women are aggressive, and the male fantasy of a perfectly submissive female is parodied by Ossi's masquerade as a robot. This irrepressible "automaton" falls over into his arms to tease him seductively, slaps him when he takes liberties, and reveals her identity as a real woman by taking sexual initiative. She kisses him throughout the film, from the first time he presses the "greeting" button on her back, to the carriage in the moonlight on the way to his uncle's palace (which makes an animated moon in the sky smile and wink), to the moment she wakes him from his dream near the end of the film.

Beyond the reflexivity of the stylized sets (the way their obvious artifice calls attention to the artifice of the whole film), Lubitsch foregrounds his own role by constructing the fairy-tale setting with two dolls at the beginning of the film. This is a parallel to the dollmaker Hilarius, who alludes in turn to filmmaking by cranking a wheel, causing a crowd of female mechanical dolls to move, dancing in a threatening chorus line toward the

anxious Lancelot. The wisecracking young apprentice is another stand-in for Lubitsch, constantly addressing the audience to ridicule Hilarius, the bourgeois father figure, and social convention.[60]

Reviewers in 1919 praised Gerhard Ritterband's performance as the apprentice as much as they did Oswalda's as the "doll." Ritterband was the same young actor who had played an equally irreverent employee in *The Oyster Princess*: the kitchen boy who samples the food to spite the kitchen maid who slapped him when he flirted with her.[61] Commenting on this much smaller role by Ritterband, Eyman noted how this character anticipated Pepi, the apprentice in Lubitsch's American comedy so many years later, *The Shop around the Corner* (1940). In the larger role Ritterband plays in *The Doll*, Eyman noticed parallels to Lubitsch's own biography, commenting also about the way the boy breaks the fourth wall, self-reflexively addressing the film's viewers.[62]

In fact the apprentice represents much of the carnivalesque humor—and resistance—in the film. He is the source of much comedy in *The Doll*, most of it of the physical, slapstick kind. As Hake writes, the film profits "from a slapstick tradition that thrives on the equation of the human and the mechanical," reminding us of Bergson's theory of comedy. There is also a Bakhtinian emphasis on the body in resistance to the mechanical and the rational.[63] The apprentice is slapped again and again, always by Hilarius, such as when he mimes the exaggerated gestures of Hilarius behind the latter's back. Soon he tries to commit suicide by drinking paint for having broken the doll, and later he does the same thing: he drinks paint after having noticed that Ossi, with whom he is infatuated, has kissed Lancelot. This time Hilarius sees him drink the paint, and he slaps the boy, rebuking him for wasting the expensive paint.

Even later in the film, after Hilarius becomes enraged to learn that Lancelot had taken away his daughter Ossi and not the mechanical doll, the apprentice attempts "suicide" a third time, but only after a frenzied, slapstick battle with Hilarius. The battle ends with the boy smashing nearly all the plates in the kitchen and then dumping a pot of water on Hilarius's head; the pot then seems to be stuck on his head, hiding his face, making Hilarius look quite ridiculous (mechanical, even). Only then does the apprentice proclaim that he will end it all by jumping out the window, which he does. There is a cut to the outside, where we see that the window is on the ground floor. The boy easily steps down to the street. Asking what life is worth, he steals an apple from a basket outside the shop and begins to

eat as he walks away, much more interested in food than in melodramatic gestures. This scene is similar to one early in *The Pride of the Firm* (1914) in which Lubitsch's character, after having broken the expensive shop window at the department store where he works, ponders whether he should throw himself into the lake. He decides instead to go home and have dinner first. The apprentice also opts for life, for sensual pleasure—for food. In this way too the apprentice is similar to characters Lubitsch had played.

The more important figure of carnivalesque resistance is portrayed by Ossi Oswalda. Hers is a sensual character who loves to eat, dance, and kiss and is hard-pressed to conceal her physical needs or desires—an irrepressible body pretending to be a machine, the obedient mechanical doll that represents the perfectly submissive female of male fantasy. Pretending to be the doll for her mother early in the film, she greets her by sticking out her tongue, to which her mother exclaims, "Just as naughty as Ossi!" In this film Ossi can again be seen as a stand-in for Lubitsch. Ossi's initiative is rewarded by marrying up; she is the middle-class girl who wins the baron's heir. The fantastic nature of the comedy makes possible class and gender transgressions that no social realism would allow, yet the reference to emancipatory hopes at the beginning of the Weimar Republic is clear. Even in Ossi's masquerade as a doll, she is less of an automaton than the characters in the film who accept the nineteenth-century authoritarian hierarchy epitomized by the baron, his greedy relatives, and the guests at the wedding celebration who flaunt their silly aristocratic titles.[64]

The self-reflexivity in the film also has a biographical component. As I have noted, both Hilarius and the young apprentice function as stand-ins for Lubitsch. Hilarius cranks the machinery that makes the inanimate dolls move, and the apprentice acts as a kind of narrator who comments in a comical way on the goings-on of the doll factory and retail store, breaking the fourth wall. The biographical parallels here are easy to observe. In chapter 1, I noted the connections between Konfektion and the early film industry in Berlin; as in New York, Jewish entrepreneurs moved from the garment trade into the film business. Lubitsch himself came out of this milieu. As we know, his father owned a business that manufactured not dolls but women's garments for sale in its own retail shop, and Lubitsch himself was once an irreverent (or at least not very enthusiastic) young employee in that shop where the garments were sold. He too moved from this milieu into acting, first in the theater and then in films—films that were themselves set in that milieu.

The more important parallels are related less to biography than to positionality—that is, to Lubitsch's position as a German Jew whose perspective and experiences are representative of many German Jews in the late Wilhelmine era and in the early years of the Weimar Republic.

Indeed, it is not the apprentice in *The Doll* but rather Ossi who moves from the middle-class realm of manufacture and retail into the aristocracy. That movement happens through an erotic alliance, an intermarriage across the social barrier of class. As Hake emphasizes, it is accomplished through masquerade—through passing, as it were. Nevertheless, by pretending to be the perfectly submissive woman of male fantasy, Ossi subverts that fantasy. As Hake puts it, the masquerade exposes "the artificiality inherent in all gender categories."[65] In addition, Ossi teaches Lancelot, who is afraid of women, to accept difference. If one focuses on Lancelot's conformity to gender norms, or rather his failure to conform, the film's gender politics are even more subversive: Ervin Malakaj reads it as "queer failure."[66]

Beyond the critique of gender roles, the film can be read as commenting on ethnic identity. There is arguably "double encoding," in which covert Jewish hopes and concerns are present.[67] If so, Ossi, the daughter of Hilarius, can be understood as a representative of ethnic, as well as class and gender, differences—that is, she can be read as a Jewish woman. Indeed, all the aggressive young women in the village who are so excited about the possibility of marrying a rich aristocrat could be seen to represent not just upwardly mobile middle-class women but Jews. Where does the aristocrat find refuge from these women? In the monastery. Therefore, in a manner that is historically accurate, the aristocracy and the church are aligned in the film—and spoofed.

The playfully "anticlerical" portrayal of the greedy monks, feasting on (nonkosher) *Eisbein*—pork knuckles—is the only aspect of the film that was the least bit controversial in 1919, at the beginning of the Weimar Republic. We know this from an article in the film press; the *Lichtbild-Bühne* reported accusations in the *Volksfreund*, a newspaper in (Catholic) Aachen, that the film was "anti-Catholic." The *Lichtbild-Bühne* dismissed this charge as without merit, arguing that the film was one of the most charming German films.[68]

Ossi and the other women of the village are portrayed as aggressive, and the shy and timid Lancelot, the aristocratic male protagonist, is portrayed as less than masculine (queer, even). As in *The Oyster Princess*, however, the male protagonist cannot be read as representing Jewish "new money."

Instead that protagonist is a gentile aristocrat (with "old money"), and he is more passive than aggressive, thus "less" than the masculine norm. This deviation from that norm is stereotypically associated with Jewish men, who are characterized as less masculine than gentile German men. The inversion of gender, class, and ethnic norms is precisely what is subversive and emancipatory about Lubitsch's playful fantasy in this 1919 comedy.

Comedies in the Snow: Romeo and Juliet in the Snow *and* Kohlhiesel's Daughters

As discussed in chapter 1, Lubitsch's last Jewish comedy, *Meyer from Berlin*, premiered in January 1919 but was completed by September 1918; it was filmed in large part in the Bavarian Alps in summer 1918. Soon after *The Doll* premiered in early December 1919, Lubitsch again went to southern Germany, shooting scenes for two comedies in the winter of 1919–20. In December 1919 he shot scenes with his cast in the Black Forest for *Romeo and Juliet in the Snow*.[69] Then he went to the Bavarian Alps, where he shot scenes with his cast for the film *Kohlhiesel's Daughters*, which would premiere March 9, 1920, three days before *Romeo and Juliet in the Snow*. In addition, both films included scenes shot at studios in Berlin.[70]

Both comedies are loose adaptations of Shakespeare, as is clear from the title of *Romeo and Juliet in the Snow*; *Kohlhiesel's Daughters* is an even looser adaptation of *The Taming of the Shrew*. Both films are set in rustic southern German villages in the winter. Eyman calls the style of *Romeo and Juliet in the Snow* "sprawling slapstick," a throwback to Lubitsch's earlier comedies.[71] The style has also been compared with that of a folk comedy, albeit one that makes fun of the rural *Heimat* from a cosmopolitan perspective; as Spaich writes, there is nothing idyllic about the provincial, petty, and clannish mind-set portrayed.[72] In the film there is a feud between two clans, the Montekugerls and the Capulethofers, that ends comically: Romeo and Juliet fail at suicide, and their families reconcile.

Kohlhiesel's Daughters has the more famous cast, including the beloved Henny Porten and Emil Jannings. In Germany it was the most popular film of Lubitsch's career there, even more successful than *Madame Dubarry* or *Anna Boleyn*.[73] Porten gave a virtuoso performance in a double role, playing both the pretty and docile sister Gretel, a character similar to Shakespeare's Bianca, and the ugly, unkempt, ill-tempered sister Liesel, who corresponds to Shakespeare's Kate.[74] Whereas Gretel was a character much closer to the

kind of virtuous women Porten had played for years, the character Liesel gave her a chance to show a different side of herself; indeed, she portrayed an almost parodic subversion of her usual persona. She was aided by Lubitsch's very successful (and unnoticeable) split-screen effect, which displays Porten a few times in both roles but on different sides of the same frame. I would argue that her performance is much more interesting and vivacious than the tragic, virtuous heroine she would play a few months later for Lubitsch in the historical costume epic *Anna Boleyn*.[75]

In this comedy Porten plays both the good girl and the bad girl, but of course the plot works to tame her, to transform unruly Liesel into a woman much more like her sister (and the stereotypical Porten role). And it is the bad boy, the strong and not too bright Xaver played by Emil Jannings, who tames her (rather quickly, with one violent tantrum).[76] Then he too is tamed, or seduced: to win him over, Liesel dresses and grooms herself more like her sister.[77] At the end of the film, however, they both remain somewhat untamed: she pulls his head down to kiss him and tousle his hair, which he seems to enjoy.[78]

Although this harmonious ending was very popular, the film is not an example of Lubitsch at his best, if we define that as being subversive of more conventional values.[79] Late in his life, Lubitsch himself characterized this film (in an implicitly disparaging way) as a "typical German" comedy.[80]

The Bandit Queen: *The Wildcat* (1921)

In contrast, there was nothing very typical or conventional about his final German comedy, which was also filmed in the snow. The title of Lubitsch's final German comedy, *Die Bergkatze*, means "the mountain cat" in English, but the title of the American DVD is *The Wildcat*.[81] This stylized film was a very expensive production filmed in the snows of the Bavarian Alps. In 1947 Lubitsch called it a satire of militarism, writing that it had "more inventiveness and satirical pictorial wit" than many of his other films but also that it was a "complete failure."[82] Indeed, it was his first commercial flop.[83] In his book *Expressionismus und Film* (Expressionism and Film, 1926), Rudolf Kurtz praised the film for its "consistently executed" stylization, with sets designed by Ernst Stern, Max Reinhardt's stage designer.[84] In 1947 Siegfried Kracauer suggested, however, that it was a parody of expressionism.[85] As she argues with regard to *The Doll*, Sabine Hake asserts that *The Wildcat* also has little to do with the castration anxiety of expressionism but

rather is a fantastic film that is also "transsexual," by which she means "a place for masquerades" where fixed gender roles are subverted.[86] Rembert Hüser connects the film to a postwar critique of Prussianism as well as the German art film, above all expressionist film.[87]

After looking at its excessive and self-conscious stylization in connection to the gender politics of expressionism and the fantastic film, we can then examine the film's critique of militarism and its relation to national and ethnic identity, including its take on intermarriage—a topic of concern to German Jews that is found in many of Lubitsch's German films.

"Grotesque" Satire in the Snow

Based on the French operetta *Les Brigands* (1869) by Jacques Offenbach,[88] the opening titles call *The Wildcat*, "A Grotesque in Four Acts." The film is set "not far from Piffkaneiro," in an imaginary Balkan kingdom.[89] We see the Baroque gingerbread Fort Tossenstein, which was constructed on location in the Bavarian Alps. Bright snowy landscapes contrast with fancifully stylized interiors. In particular, the exterior shots in "nature" are almost always framed (and partially obscured) by numerous masks in various shapes—circles, ovals, squares, diagonal stripes, even curlicues and kissing lips—self-consciously styled in ways that often echo the lines of the interior sets.

The film begins with an iris opening up on a shot of the arch-shaped gate of the fortress, framed in turn by an arch-shaped mask: circles within circles, frames within frames.[90] The gate opens to reveal a soldier inside the fortress playing the morning bugle, which he interrupts to take a bite of a sausage—as we expect in a Lubitsch comedy, oral fixation and the pleasures of eating supersede military discipline. The bugle call has little effect. A soldier inside the barracks jumps out of bed to close the window. He returns to bed and the other soldiers continue to sleep until the commander of the fortress (Victor Janson) appears in the barracks. The soldiers get up quickly and rush to the sinks to wash (in a slapstick fashion). As soon as the commander leaves, they return to bed. In the courtyard of the fortress, one soldier wears sunglasses, adding a contemporary touch to the fanciful settings.

The commander receives news from the capital city that an officer, Lieutenant Alex (Paul Heidemann), is being transferred to the fortress on the frontier for disciplinary reasons. The commander calls this officer a

swine, but his wife (Marga Köhler) and his daughter Lilli (Edith Meller) are overjoyed that a "smart"—that is, dashing—officer (the German titles call him "fesch") will be coming to their remote outpost.[91]

Cutting from the fortress to the capital city, the film shows groups of frenzied women, choreographed masses of them in white, black, or black-and-white servant costumes. Groups run from what seem to be many directions, framed by irises and oblong and diagonally shaped masks. Soon a large crowd of women has assembled in the center of a large square marked by curlicue-shaped ornaments. They are gathering to bid Lieutenant Alex farewell and to mourn his departure—an (absurdly excessive) visual display of female desire. Alex, a dandified "lady's man," acknowledges their tears and devotion. Police arrive to disperse the female crowd by dropping mice out of a sack, which does indeed scare them—another sexist joke using mice, as at the end of *The Doll*.[92] Next we see crowds of children all waving little white flags, bidding goodbye to "Daddy" (the German intertitle is "Adio! Pappi!").

We are then introduced to the bandits (*Räuber*) at their camp in the mountains. Claudius (Wilhelm Diegelmann), the chief, slaps Pepo (Hermann Thimig) for having gone to the movies (*Kientopp*) instead of plundering.[93] In response, the bandits rise up against Claudius. His daughter Rischka (Pola Negri) is the true leader of the gang, and she emerges from her tent with her whip and pistol to save Claudius. But the bandits like being disciplined by Rischka; Claudius warns her not to "spoil" them. When they see Alex en route to the fort, they attack him. He tries to seduce Rischka, who is puzzled when he kisses her hand. She orders him to surrender all his clothes, down to his long underwear, but she spares his life. As she is about to leave him behind in the snow, she turns back to him and kisses his hand: "What you do to me, I do to you." Back in her tent, she finds a photo of him in his trousers pocket; first she is frightened by it (as though this were the first photo she had ever seen), then she becomes enchanted by it. She makes an (erotic) shrine to Alex by pinning his photo to the wall of her tent and then pinning his pants so that the photo appears between his pant legs.

Having been abandoned by his driver with the horse-drawn sled when the bandits attacked, Alex must now make his way alone and on foot across the snowy plain to the fortress. At one point he stops at a cave and looks at himself in the mirror he carries; as always, he likes what he sees. When he finally meets the commander in the fort, he is in his underwear; from behind, the commander gazes approvingly.[94]

Figure 3.6 The commander (Victor Janson) admires the underwear of Alex (Paul Heidemann): *The Wildcat* (1921). Courtesy of Deutsche Kinemathek, Berlin.

Alex then leads some troops—and a marching band—on a mission to punish the bandits, but the troops are defeated. The commander celebrates their "victory" anyway and rewards the (reluctant) Alex with the hand of his melancholy, love-starved daughter Lilli. A fantastic banquet and ball are held in honor of the betrothed. The technical highlight of this sequence is the fireworks display; originally tinted, the display was praised by contemporary reviewers otherwise ambivalent about the film.[95]

During the festivities, Rischka and the bandits sneak into the fortress and begin to steal things; the wild "mountain cat" Rischka dons one of Lilli's gowns and douses herself with perfumes. The other robbers put on military uniforms in the wardrobe Rischka has found. In "civilized" masquerade, they all join the party, eating and drinking to excess. Rischka sits with the (drunken) commander, drinking coffee but pocketing the elegant spoon; next, she dances with him.

Then she sees Alex, and they both stop to stare at each other across the hall. They are very attracted to each other. Alex begins to chase her in a silly, slapstick romp up and down a stylized double staircase. Soon the

Figure 3.7 Rischka (Pola Negri) and Alex (Paul Heidemann) dance to the music of the snowmen: *The Wildcat* (1921). Screen capture.

logic of the chase is suspended as they each swing around a pole together in another choreographed bit of nonsense. He then chases her into a room and locks the door. He comes to her and kisses her on the mouth. While he makes "the first move," she quickly takes control: after a moment of shock, she picks him up and sets him on her lap, kissing him back passionately. This scares him a bit, and he tells her that he must arrest her. He leaves her locked in the room, but then Lilli, who has been spying on them through the keyhole (and thus has seen them kiss),[96] unlocks the door from the outside and rushes into the room to rebuke Rischka as an "impudent person." Rischka pushes past Lilli and locks her in the room. She runs to find her fellow robbers, letting them know that they must flee the fortress, which they do.

Back at the bandits' camp, asleep in her tent, Rischka dreams of Alex, who appears to her as a ghostly double exposure. She rises, a ghostly double exposure herself, and steps away from her sleeping body. He then tosses her his heart—that is, he takes a large gingerbread heart out of his coat and throws it to her. She takes a bite and rubs her abdomen in enjoyment. He

beckons her to come away with him, and we cut to what seems to be the interior of a cave populated by snowmen. The fanciful, surrealistic scene that follows is probably the most impressive sequence of the film to viewers today. The snowmen come alive and begin to play music while Rischka and Alex dance. Still double-exposed, they find themselves in a hall of mirrors where their images are multiplied. Finally we cut to a view of the two lovers in a fun-house mirror that distorts their images such that they appear wider (and thus fat).

Claudius enters Rischka's tent and notices his daughter's restless sleep; her violent tossing now makes the tent collapse. Claudius concludes that she needs to marry. Of all the bandits, only the shy Pepo has the courage to marry Rischka. The wedding ceremony is completed when Claudius handcuffs the two of them together. The wedding banquet is also surreal, taking place on a bright sunny day outside in the snow, with a circle of stoves on which each of the guests sits to keep warm. One of the bandits has a newspaper in which he notices a report that Alex has married Lilli. Rischka immediately becomes sad. Back in their tent, Pepo takes pity and unlocks the handcuffs.

Rischka runs back to the fortress and finds Alex, drunk in the snow, still reluctant about his marriage to Lilli. They run to each other and are then shown together in a close-up, each of their faces framed in one of two overlapping circles—that is, by a mask consisting of two interlinked circles. Alex invites Rischka to his chambers and leaves to change into something comfortable. But then Lilli appears, and her sadness makes Rischka promise to "cure" Alex of his love for her. Hugging Lilli to comfort her, Rischka simultaneously steals her string of pearls. Lilli hides as Alex appears again; Rischka then messes his neatly combed hair, spits champagne in his face, and pulls out her pistol to shoot up the place (see cover photo). This convinces Alex that Rischka is too uncouth; he sends her away, and then, still without much enthusiasm, he takes Lilli back. Rischka returns to the mountains and notices a small stream. She finds its source in her tent: a weeping Pepo, whose tears have created the stream. His sadness touches her. They kiss, and the film ends.

Expressionist versus Fantastic Comedy

Beginning with Kurtz in 1926, most critics have discussed this very stylized film in some connection with expressionism.[97] In 1921, the reviews were

mixed, and none that I have seen mentioned this modernist style; the only descriptions that allude to any brand of modernism are to be found in a review in the *Berliner Tageblatt* on April 14, 1921, where the sets by Ernst Stern are called "half-futuristic, half-cubistic."[98] Most critics complimented Stern's designs for the sets, props, and costumes as "unique," except "Aros," who not only disliked the film but found Stern's "übermoderne Architektur" (supermodernistic architecture) disquieting.[99]

Many reviews in 1921 did mention the film's relation to the well-known, perhaps even hackneyed operetta plot on which its story was based. Critics debated how well the film transcended this plot, which Willy Haas called "der ödeste Operettenkitsch" (the most odious operetta-kitsch).[100] The review in the *Lichtbild-Bühne* asserted that the unity of the film's plot was under pressure from the overstylized "vignettes" created by Lubitsch, experimental innovation (*Neuartigkeit*) that might leave an unprepared audience cold.[101] This verdict would be echoed in 1935 by Kalbus, who, like many critics, praised Lubitsch's "geniale Einfälle" (ingenious inventive ideas) but faulted the film for not being "einheitlich," a sufficiently unified work of art.[102] All of these objections reinforce our sense today that this comedy is a modernist one precisely through its self-conscious stylization, which subverts any "realist" notion of a unified plot.

Another topic of concern in 1921 was the issue of how "grotesque" a comedy this was. With remarks that remind us of Grafe's assertion that the term *Groteskfilm* was used in Germany to describe American slapstick,[103] the reviewer "l.b." faulted the film for its attempt to approximate this American style, which was "childish" and not really to German tastes.[104] "P—l," on the other hand, found that the film's content was not grotesque enough, nor was it unique or humorous.[105] Haas also connected the film's problems to America, speculating that its faults—the moments when it did not transcend "operetta-kitsch"—were due to Lubitsch trying to use the film as a sort of audition for Famous Players-Lasky/Paramount in Hollywood (at this point, Lubitsch was leaving UFA for EFA, the European production company financed by Famous Players).[106] "Aros," who had nothing good to say about the film, also blamed it on the American dollar.[107] In fact, as Patalas asserted, the film is an "inflation film"—that is, a big-budget production that would easily earn a lot of money abroad because it could be sold so cheaply based on how weak and inflated the German mark was at the time.[108]

The Wildcat, however, would not be exported to America, and it seems odd today to connect this comedy, which was an excessively, "grotesquely"

stylized fantasy, with American tastes. Berlin critic Fritz Olimsky had found the film disappointing in 1921 but appreciated it more in 1930 when he reviewed a retrospective showing of the film. He found it an innovative experiment that was nothing like what "Filmamerika" (Film-America) could produce and thought it unfortunate that no subsequent German film had continued experimenting along the lines of this "grotesque" comedy.[109]

Does a "grotesque" comedy mean an expressionist one? In his 1926 book on expressionist film, Kurtz argued that *The Wildcat* was one of the most consistently stylized German films.[110] The film is as self-reflexive as expressionist films are, but its excessive stylization is ironic, consistent with its overall comic irreverence. Kracauer, who may not have even seen the film, was nonetheless correct to call it a parody of anxious, melodramatic expressionism.[111] The film's sets and furniture are absurd, surreal versions of baroque design; the omnipresent masks are used excessively, a parody of the kind of masks and irises used in a film like *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari*.[112] The masks also create added ironic distance to the "natural," snow-covered exterior scenes they partially obscure. Thus the mountain realm of the "barbarian" robbers is ironized nearly as much the ridiculous sets and interiors of the overly "civilized" military fortress, with absurd martial motifs in its decadent interiors and the numerous, omnipresent cannons sticking out of its external walls—weapons of aggression that seem to be more like useless ornaments, symbols of impotence and castration in their absurd excess.[113]

The film clearly makes fun of the gender anxieties that expressionism thematizes (and that plagued Weimar society). Once again, one finds not the male, Oedipal paranoia and castration anxiety characteristic of expressionism but rather a much more pre-Oedipal, orally fixated narcissism, as Hake argues for both *The Wildcat* and *The Doll*. The film subverts traditional, rigid gender roles in favor of more fluid, "transsexual" conceptions of gender identity. Thus Hake finds the film to be more accurately characterized as a fantastic film as opposed to an expressionist one.[114]

The inversion of conventional gender roles is clear: the female protagonist Rischka is strong and rebellious and carries a gun—an anxious, right-wing "male fantasy" à la Theweleit.[115] In fact, even Lilli has a gun—of chocolate, which she eats; thus, what seems at first to be a morbid suicidal moment becomes erotic, but also another humorous "castration" of the masculine, military cult being burlesqued. The commander's wife calls the shots in the fortress, and her husband hides under the table at the first

mention of the bandits. His soldiers are incompetent, and Claudius's bandit gang is only slightly less so; Claudius also takes orders from a woman—his daughter Rischka, who commands him to make coffee while she leads the fight against the soldiers. The male protagonist, Alex, is vain and prissy, and the man whom Rischka chooses in the end is timid Pepo, a cinephile who likes being whipped by her.

But does this mean that the film "fails to pacify the woman and ends in a proud affirmation of her Otherness"?[116] A synopsis of the film's plot in a 1921 program in the *Illustrierte Film-Woche* states that at the end, "The wild mountain cat is tamed."[117] Rischka returns, somewhat resigned, to her separate realm, and Alex remains in his world. They both end up with their "legitimate" spouses. The anarchic bandits stay on the margins, and the silly authoritarian hierarchy of the status quo inside the fortress remains intact. The film posits no hybrid solution between the worlds in conflict that it depicts. There is no lasting transgression of boundaries as there is between the classes (and implicitly between ethnic groups) in Lubitsch's comedies of 1919, *The Oyster Princess* and *The Doll*.

Prussians versus Jews?

In addition to this discussion of the film's gender politics, the politics of class, ethnicity, and national identity also need to be considered. The conflict in the film between the military hierarchy of this imaginary Balkan kingdom and the "uncivilized" bandits on its margins is evocative of similar conflicts between groups in German society at the beginning of the Weimar Republic.

At the end of his life, Lubitsch wrote that the film's satire on the military was not received well by the German public.[118] When the film was released, however, few critics mentioned the military satire; an exception was the critic for the (moderately left-wing) Social Democratic Party's newspaper, *Vorwärts*, who mentioned it approvingly. Olimsky in the *Berliner Börsen-Zeitung* also noted that the film took aim at the military, but he found that it proved Lubitsch was not capable of doing such satire well.[119]

What did it mean to satirize the German military in the aftermath of its defeat in World War I? The German Empire, or *Kaiserreich*,[120] was a hierarchical society topped by a Prussian aristocracy that included the officer corps of the German army. Germany was ruled by this aristocratic-military caste, an elite that, under the leadership of Kaiser Wilhelm II, had

led Germany to defeat in World War I, albeit with the support of patriotic civilian parties in the (not very democratic) Reichstag or Parliament, including the majority wing of the Social Democrats, who represented the working class.

That aristocratic-military caste is the target of Lubitsch's satire, displaced to some imaginary realm in the Balkans and depicted with great ironic distance through the fantastic sets and the omnipresent masks overlaying the film's visuals. As Hüser has argued persuasively, the film deconstructs the military into its constituent elements at the beginning of the film.[121] Right after the opening bugle, we cut to a shot of soldiers asleep in their barracks, "shelved" in rows of bunk beds, with the important (Prussian) components of their identity as soldiers arranged neatly among them: helmets under the beds, boots in front of the beds, and uniform jackets hanging on poles between the beds.

The soldiers in this film are reluctant to wake up, even after being visited by their commander, and are capable of only the most ridiculous version of hygiene (almost as minimal as what we see Sally Pinkus doing early in *Shoe Palace Pinkus*). They demonstrate incompetence throughout the film and are easily defeated by the bandits; in fact, the military marching band seems much more proficient than the soldiers proper. Commander Alex, his wife, and his daughter represent the decadent impotence of the class that rules the military fortress, a baroque pastry of a citadel studded with seemingly useless cannons, with white interiors and grand staircases decorated with plaster statues of armed, supposedly martial figures that actually look quite whimsical (a drunken bandit, feeling challenged by one of them, easily "beheads" it by knocking it with a champagne bottle).

Lubitsch does not depict the bandits on the margins of this society with much more sympathy. The bandits are caricatures of primitive barbarism. They live in tents in the snowy mountains, they wear ragged clothes (albeit composed mostly of furs), and Rischka takes "baths" in the snow. Whereas the masks used in the film are otherwise geometrical shapes, the masks that frame the bandits' world are irregular, like the rugged edges of the mouth of a cave (or a grotto).[122] Despite their primitivism, they too are in some ways "decadent." Pepo likes to go to the movies and be whipped by Rischka. The military prowess of the bandits is due only to the inferiority of their civilized enemies. The military commander is subservient to his wife, and the bandits are led by a woman, although the rebellious Rischka is a much more vital and sympathetic character than the aristocratic women (and men) of

the fortress. As comical as she is, she certainly has our sympathies in a way that the vain womanizer Alex does not.[123]

The bandits are an outgroup that is easy to interpret as a caricature of those groups in German society that opposed the aristocratic-military elite—the very groups that gained equality and came into new prominence in Germany's first experiment with democracy: the lower classes, women, and the Jews. Portraying the female protagonist as a "woman with a gun" seems to allude to the revolutionary, proletarian unrest of the immediate postwar period in Germany. Spaich suggests that Rischka represents a caricature of the "New Woman."[124] This is true, but I would insist that for all the fun that the film has with Rischka, she is the bad girl (or less "civilized" one) with whom we sympathize, the character we want to succeed. She is also not the clichéd vamp of a melodrama, which was a first for Negri; in a comedy (at least a Lubitsch comedy), she did not have to die. But does she win?

To the extent she can be seen in relation to the New Woman, it is perhaps instructive to remember what the right wing in Germany thought of such emancipated women. The Nazis called them "Marxist, Jewish, cosmopolitan women's rights advocates."[125] This conflation of feminism, Marxism, and Judaism leads us to a consideration of the extent to which this film by Lubitsch might be double-encoded. A main issue of concern to German Jews would be intermarriage. The film dangles the possibility of an intermarriage across classes (and worlds) between the aristocratic Alex and the fiery, dark-haired Rischka,[126] but it does not work out. Today we might celebrate that Rischka is not "tamed" by Alex, as in a more conventional romantic comedy, but he is not "tamed" by her either. One can envision other endings: rather than Rischka facing the choice of whether to assimilate to his "civilized" world, Alex could have joined her in her world.

Intermarriage seems to be critiqued as a function of ruthless ambition in Lubitsch's earliest comedies, whereas in his later German comedies, it seems to be used as a way of indicating the potential to bridge social differences. But this optimism, so typical of his films toward the end of World War I and at the beginning of the Weimar Republic, is not to be found in *The Wildcat*. The worlds in conflict seem incapable of being bridged. Were the divisions in Weimar society irreparable by 1921? Perhaps that is what the darker side of this irreverent, satirical fantasy implies.

In any case, this comedy did not resonate with Weimar audiences. Indeed, if the film is interpreted in terms of the actual German politics of

the late 1910s that it seems to spoof, the sympathy with the bandit queen and the insurrectionary bandits she led would be a clear provocation to the reactionary forces that never accepted Weimar democracy. It might even be perceived as reinforcing their paranoid fantasy about Imperial Germany having lost the war because of a "stab in the back" by traitorous internal forces such as Jews, Social Democrats, and New Women.[127] Given ongoing political and economic turmoil, it was becoming clear that the new Weimar Republic might not fulfill the hopes that had been invested in it. In June 1922, an antisemitic German student (a member of a right-wing terrorist group) assassinated the most prominent German Jew, Walther Rathenau, an industrialist serving as the foreign minister for the Weimar Republic.[128]

Six months later, in December 1922, Lubitsch left Germany—for good, as it turned out. Lubitsch was seen off at the dock in Bremerhaven by prominent members of the film industry (who expected him to return after one film, as did Lubitsch himself). On the ship to America was Lubitsch's assistant, the film editor Heinz (soon Henry) Blanke. Lubitsch was also accompanied by his new wife, Leni. Her full name was Helene Sonnet Kraus, and she was a (blonde, gentile) German actor whom he had married in August 1922. This marriage was his first.

In America, his comedies would be less fantastic and much less anarchic than his German comedies in the early Weimar Republic. But even in those wild German comedies, there is a shift from the optimism of 1919 to a more pessimistic view in 1921 of what might be possible for those groups long considered outsiders in Germany. In America, the political climate was different, but there were similarities. America in the 1920s was not welcoming to outsiders, above all to foreigners, Jews, and racial minorities. Lubitsch would find his niche by making much more restrained comedies; they were indeed risqué by American standards, but at the same time they were safely set in Europe. And in those restrained, "sophisticated" American sex comedies, his female protagonists would rarely have the power of the bad girls in his anarchic German comedies.

Notes

1. Eisner, *Haunted Screen*, 79.

2. Jacobsen, "Filmografie," in Prinzler and Patalas, *Lubitsch*, 207; Egon Jacobsohn, "Festessen in Tempelhof. Besuch bei einer Pagu-Aufnahme," *Der Film*, March 29, 1919, 143–44; B. E. [Bobby Emil] Lüthge, review of *The Oyster Princess*, *Film-Kurier*, June 22, 1919, 1.

3. Rembert Hüser explains the reference to oysters in terms of the historical response of Germany to the oyster industry in the United States; see Hüser, "Kronleuchterboden. *Die Austernprinzessin* trifft *Mike's neuer Kronleuchter*," in *Geld und Kino*, ed. Margrit Frölich and Hüser (Marburg: Schüren, 2011). Most critics focus on the oyster as a symbol of the female genitals. The film after all is titled *The Oyster Princess*, not "The Oyster King." The focus is on her sexuality—both her father's patriarchal desire to tame it by marrying her off and her sexual desire, which is ultimately stronger than her desire to "marry up."

4. *Downton Abbey* is an aristocratic manor saved by Lord Grantham's marriage to a wealthy American woman—a Jewish woman from New York.

5. Brandlmeier, "Early German Film Comedy," 111.

6. Valerie Weinstein, "(Un)Fashioning Identities: Ernst Lubitsch's Early Comedies of Mistaken Identity," in *Visual Culture in Twentieth-Century Germany: Text as Spectacle*, Gail Finney (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2006), 130.

7. Elsaesser, *Weimar Cinema and After*, 216–17. However, while Lubitsch is arguably critiquing the gender politics of the "male gaze," he is not doing that in response to American films, as they, along with all foreign films, had been banned in Germany since the war began in 1914.

8. Lüthge's review of *The Oyster Princess* implies that the film tried to compete with Griffith's *Intolerance* (1916), but comparing Lubitsch's comedy to Griffith's historical epic is comparing "apples to oranges." For a comedy, the scale of *The Oyster Princess* is still impressive today.

9. Hansen, "The Mass Production of the Senses," 59–77.

10. *U.T.-Woche*, synopsis of *Die Austernprinzessin/The Oyster Princess*, June 20–26, 1919, 1.

11. Grafe, "Was Lubitsch berührt," in Prinzler and Patalas, *Lubitsch*, 83.

12. On American DVD, Ernst Lubitsch, *Oyster Princess and I Don't Want to Be a Man* (New York: Kino International, 2007).

13. Hüser in "Kronleuchterboden" emphasizes how the orality lends itself so easily to a Freudian interpretation.

14. But is it appropriate to turn it into a joke?

15. In a conversation with me at the annual conference of the German Studies Association in 2010 (in Oakland, CA), Anton Kaes suggested that the name "Mr. Quaker" might allude to Hoover. Hüser in "Kronleuchterboden" discusses what "Quaker" implies in German: someone who makes nonsensical noises.

16. "In der Rolle . . . des anarchistischen Kleinkinds"; Brandlmeier, "Kaisers Kientopp," 67–68.

17. The fact that the Oyster King would consult with a matchmaker might imply that the family was Jewish, but matchmakers in early twentieth-century Germany were a part of the courtship scene for Germans of all faiths, not just for Jewish Germans; see Tyler Carrington, *Love at Last Sight: Dating, Intimacy, and Risk in Turn-of-the-Century Berlin* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2019), 119–26. The synopsis of the film in the *U.T.-Woche*, June 20–26, 1919, states that Seligsohn has "auf Lager" (in stock) what all customers need, "vom König herab bis zum Kaminkehrer, von der Fürstin bis zur Küchenmamsell" (from the king down to the chimney sweep, from the princess to the kitchen maid). Thus he serves all social classes—and faiths.

18. Egon Jacobsohn, "Neuheiten auf dem Berliner Filmmarkte," review of *The Oyster Princess*, *Der Kinematograph*, June 25, 1919.

19. Hüser in "Kronleuchterboden" reminds us that the German word "Nucki" means a pacifier for an infant—orality once again.

20. A close-up shows a file card in German on Prince Nucki, giving his address as "27. Rue, 47. Stock." In the synopsis of the film in the *U.T.-Woche* (June 20–26, 1919, 1), the word

used instead of *Rue* is *Avenue* (more American, less French). Where in 1919 could there be a forty-seventh *Stock* (floor) on a building other than in Manhattan?

21. Compare this scene with the two bachelors in Lubitsch's *Design for Living* (1933) cleaning up their Paris apartment in preparation for Gilda's visit—a less self-reflexive yet similar portrait of single men living together (a stereotype in American beer commercials to this day).

22. See the synopsis in *U.T.-Woche*, June 20–26, 1919, 1.

23. Was Oswalda Jewish? At any rate her husband was. See chap. 1, n. 71.

24. Lubitsch commented that he still liked this scene in which Josef traced the pattern on the floor in his letter to Weinberg, July 10, 1947 (Weinberg, *Lubitsch Touch*, 285)—an early example of the Lubitsch touch? Hüser in "Kronleuchterboden" makes it the center of his discussion of *Oyster Princess*.

25. Hake, *Passions and Deceptions*, 87.

26. Cf. Weinstein, "(Un)Fashioning Identities," 129.

27. Hake, *Passions and Deceptions*, 87, 91–92.

28. Hansen, "Mass Production of the Senses," 70.

29. Kracauer did not see this in Lubitsch's comedies, but then again, he did not spend much time commenting on the comedies in his classic post–World War II book on Weimar cinema, *From Caligari to Hitler* (57). In fact, as Christian Rogowski suggests, it is not clear from what Kracauer wrote whether he had ever actually seen *The Oyster Princess* and *The Doll;* see Rogowski, "From Ernst Lubitsch to Joe May: Challenging Kracauer's Demonology with Weimar Popular Film," in *Light Motives: German Popular Film in Perspective*, ed. Randall Halle and Margaret McCarthy (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2003), 13.

30. Janet McCabe, "Regulating Hidden Pleasures and 'Modern' Identities: Imagined Female Spectators, Early German Popular Cinema, and *The Oyster Princess* (1919)," in *Light Motives: German Popular Film in Perspective*, ed. Randall Halle and Margaret McCarthy (Detroit: Wayne State UP, 2003) 31–32.

31. Hake, *Passions and Deceptions*, 92.

32. See Jacobsohn, "Festessen"; Lüthge's review of *The Oyster Princess*.

33. Elsaesser (*Weimar Cinema and After*, 209) sees this as an allusion to trench warfare; in 1919, Jacobsohn's article "Festessen" describes the choreography of the waiters as "streng militärisch" (with military precision) in his description of his viewing of a rehearsal of the banquet in Tempelhof.

34. According to McBride (*How Did Lubitsch Do It?*, 99–100), French critic Jean Douchet said that Lubitsch "invented the musical" with the "Foxtrot Epidemic."

35. The allusion is to Siegfried Kracauer's essay "Das Ornament der Masse" (1927), in *Das Ornament der Masse: Essays* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1963), 50–63. This point is made by Weinstein, "(Un)Fashioning Identities," 129.

36. Ashkenazi (*Weimar Film and Modern Jewish Identity*, 25) asserts that here Josef betrays his true class status: he is a servant and not a "true prince," earlier toasting only the abundant food and drink. The other servants have arguably known that Josef was an impostor all along, laughing heartily when Josef is announced as Ossi's husband. Presumably they are better attuned to class differences than their wealthy masters. At the end of the dance sequence, Josef is still drinking and eating; then there is a cut to the "true" prince in his shabby apartment, forlornly eating a single herring and drinking a bottle of beer. Even an aristocrat can be hungry.

37. *U.T.-Woche*, synopsis of the *Die Austernprinzessin/The Oyster Princess*, 2.

38. *Privat-Behandlung* is the term used by the reviewer in *Der Film*, review of *Die Austernprinzessin/The Oyster Princess*, June 28, 1919.
39. Cf. Weinstein, "(Un)Fashioning Identities," 131.
40. The critic in *Der Film*, June 28, 1919.
41. Ashkenazi, *Weimar Film and Modern Jewish Identity*, 29.
42. Hake, *Passions and Deceptions*, 89.
43. This is the fourth use of the keyhole, which each time is the shape of the mask that frames what we see. First Josef peers voyeuristically through it into Ossi's bedroom, viewing Ossi's lower leg as she removes her stocking, which gets him "in the mood," although at this point he is locked out of her room (and very drunk). Next Mr. Quaker peers through it to see Ossi sleeping alone with her teddy bear, which does not impress him. The third time, Josef peers through it to see a man asleep on her bed (Nucki, although Josef does not know that yet). Finally, Quaker spies Ossi and Nucki together; then the light goes out, and he is finally "impressed." Keyholes appear in some of Lubitsch's first American films, such as *Forbidden Paradise* (1924), but eventually we have only doors, an important example of the elliptical Lubitsch touch.
44. Hake, *Passions and Deceptions*, 94. Weinstein and McCabe stress more the affirmative side, Weinstein emphasizing the mobilization of pleasure in the service of creating female consumers, and McCabe stressing the taming of female rebellion. See Weinstein, "(Un)Fashioning Identities," 128–31; McCabe, "Regulating Hidden Pleasures," 31–32. Ashkenazi reads the end of the film more positively—that is, not as an affirmation of the status quo but as subversive of it; see Ashkenazi, *Weimar Film and Modern Jewish Identity* 30.
45. Ashkenazi, *Weimar Film and Modern Jewish Identity*, 30.
46. Cf. McCabe, "Regulating Hidden Pleasures," 34.
47. Barry Salt suggests that the use of artificial sets in *The Doll* may have influenced the sets designed for *Caligari*, which supposedly began production in early January 1920, a month after *The Doll*'s premiere; see Salt, "Die innere Welt von Ernst Lubitsch," in *Filmkultur zur Zeit der Weimarer Republik. Beiträge zu einer Internationalen Konferenz vom 15. Bis 18. Juni 1989 in Luxemburg*, ed. Uli Jung and Walter Schatzberg (Munich: KG Saur, 1992), 67–68. According to filmportal.de, however, the shooting of *Caligari* began already in December; see "Das Cabinet des Dr. Caligari," accessed September 16, 2019, https://www.filmportal.de/film/das-cabinet-des-dr-caligari_cb123ff9496d416c972e6cd8aaec08ca.
48. Hake, *Passions and Deceptions*, 101, 94.
49. Ashkenazi, *Weimar Film and Modern Jewish Identity*, 28–29.
50. Jacobsen, "Filmografie," in Prinzler and Patalas, *Lubitsch*, 208.
51. Salt, "Die innere Welt von Ernst Lubitsch," 67. Even earlier, there was a French ballet, *Coppelia* (1870), based on the Hoffmann story; a variation of the same story is told in Jacques Offenbach's opera *The Tales of Hoffmann* (1880).
52. Salt, "Die innere Welt von Ernst Lubitsch," 67.
53. See *Der Kinematograph*, review of *Die Puppe/The Doll*, December 10, 1919; Balthasar [Roland Schacht], review of *Die Puppe/The Doll*, *Freie Deutsche Bühne*, January 18, 1920. Even Oskar Kalbus, writing in 1935, during the Third Reich, praised the film; see Kalbus, *Vom Werden deutscher Filmkunst*, *1. Teil: Der stumme Film* (Altona-Bahrenfeld: Cigaretten-Bilderdienst, 1935), 86. Typically, Eisner (*Haunted Screen*) was less enthusiastic, writing in the 1955 German version of her book, *Dämonische Leinwand*, that *The Doll*, supposedly a graceful fantasy, was rather heavy and clumsy (32).
54. While the name "Chanterelle" implies a French setting (as does the currency in the film, francs), which may potentially have been better for the export market, in many ways

the film seems to evoke instead the Biedermeier era in Germany, the time between the final defeat of Napoleon in 1815 and the 1840s, in which Germany was still composed to a large extent of many small principalities and duchies. *Biedermeier* refers especially to the sleepy, conformist provincial life typical of this era, in which there was little resistance to the authoritarian order in Central Europe codified by Metternich at the Congress of Vienna.

55. *Die Puppe/The Doll, Programmheft* (program brochure), with synopsis (1919), on file in the Schriftgutarchiv, Stiftung Deutsche Kinemathek, Berlin.

56. Thanks to Coby Oertel for suggesting this particular citation of the (English translation of) the advertisement.

57. In 1919, the critic Olimsky called this test "banal"; see his review of *The Doll*, *Berliner Börsen-Zeitung*, December 3, 1919. It seems that Lubitsch himself was afraid of mice, according to an item published in *Ripley's Believe It or Not*, probably in 1934; see *Ripley's Believe It or Not*, drawing of Ernst Lubitsch and Joan Blondell (1934), vertical file collection /folder 296: caricatures and drawings, no. 4, Special Collections, Margaret Herrick Library, Beverly Hills, CA. The caricatures of Lubitsch and Blondell seem to date from 1934. Lubitsch's caricature is a close-up of him with a cigar next to a piece of Swiss cheese and a mouse, and the caption, "Ernst Lubitsch can't bear the sight of a mouse or the smell of cheese."

58. Later, in *Metropolis* (1927), Fritz Lang did something similar: the hair of the "Master of Metropolis" Jo Fredersen turns white after he watches the fight to the death between his son Freder and the villain Rotwang. But we do not see his hair turn white—only when he removes his hands from his head is the color change evident: realism. Lubitsch's trick is "fantastic."

59. Hake, *Passions and Deceptions*, 99.

60. Hake, 97.

61. Olimsky, review of *The Doll*, *Berliner Börsen-Zeitung*, December 3, 1919; Balthasar [Roland Schacht] in the *Freie Deutsche Bühne*; and the unnamed reviewer in the *Kinematograph*, December 10, 1919.

62. Eyman, *Ernst Lubitsch*, 59, 65.

63. See Hake, *Passions and Deceptions*, 97; Bergson, *Laughter*; and Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*.

64. Thanks to Michael Wambach for this insight.

65. Hake, *Passions and Deceptions*, 96.

66. Ervin Malakaj, "Lubitsch's Queer Slapstick Aesthetics."

67. Ashkenazi, *Weimar Film and Modern Jewish Identity*, 26–29.

68. See "*Der Volksfreund* und *Die Puppe*," *Lichtbild-Bühne*, February 14, 1920, 25.

69. Spaich, *Ernst Lubitsch und seine Filme*, 84.

70. Lubitsch would visit the Bavarian Alps one more time—once again to the region near Garmisch-Partenkirchen, the setting for *Kohlhiesel's Daughters*—in winter 1921 to shoot *Die Bergkatze/The Wildcat*. See Jacobsen, "Filmografie," in Prinzler and Patalas, *Lubitsch*, 208–9.

71. Eyman, *Ernst Lubitsch*, 68–69.

72. Spaich, *Ernst Lubitsch und seine Filme*, 88.

73. Weinberg, *Lubitsch Touch*, 209; Spaich, *Ernst Lubitsch und seine Filme*, 88.

74. Eyman, *Ernst Lubitsch*, 68.

75. Spaich (*Ernst Lubitsch und seine Filme*, 95) sees *Kohlhiesel's Daughters* as Porten's victory over Lubitsch, but perhaps *Anna Boleyn*, made a few months later, is his revenge on her. In any case, Lubitsch's comedy is better for Porten (and for Lubitsch) than the somber costume melodrama *Anna Boleyn*.

76. Henny Porten (1890–1960) spoke later in her life about how Jannings had lost control of himself during this tantrum. She was hurt during the scene, as she reported in an interview, excerpts from which are featured in Robert Fischer's film *Ernst Lubitsch in Berlin* (2006).

77. Liesel's successful strategy is not even her idea but rather the idea of a man, Seppl (Gustav von Wangenheim), the weaker but cleverer rival of Xaver. From the beginning, he has worked to bring together Liesel and Xaver so that he will end up with Gretel.

78. This ending is not as optimistic about intermarriage as *Romeo and Juliet in the Snow*. *Kohlhiesel's Daughters* ends with like happily married to like—the weaker but cleverer Seppl and the more docile, "civilized" Gretel end up together, as do the more physical, violent, and "primitive" Xaver and Liesel. The separation of types is even more pronounced in *The Wildcat*.

Kohlhiesel's Daughters opens with a medium shot of the goods of a peddler, and then there is a dissolve to a close-up of this man ("Wandermagazin Seidenstock"; wandering store Seidenstock) calling out, hawking his goods, clearly a Jewish peddler. The more "cosmopolitan" Gretel buys a broach from him.

79. Spaich writes that the film is one of Lubitsch's most conventional, covered in a haze of "Biederkeit," stuffy respectability; see Spaich, *Ernst Lubitsch und seine Filme*, 94–95.

80. Lubitsch in his letter of July 10, 1947, to Weinberg; Weinberg, *Lubitsch Touch*, 285. Interestingly, this was the one silent German comedy by Lubitsch that Eisner liked when she was watching his films again in the 1960s; see Weinberg, 273.

81. On American DVD, Ernst Lubitsch, *The Wildcat* (New York: Kino International, 2007). Hake refers to the film as *The Mountain Cat* in her discussion of it; see *Passions and Deceptions*, 103–13.

82. Lubitsch's letter of July 10, 1947, to Weinberg; Weinberg, *Lubitsch Touch*, 285–86.

83. Spaich, *Ernst Lubitsch und seine Filme*, 78.

84. Rudolf Kurtz, *Expressionismus und Film* (Berlin: Verlag der Lichtbildbühne, 1926), 82.

85. Kracauer, *From Caligari to Hitler*, 58.

86. Hake, *Passions and Deceptions*, 109–12.

87. Rembert Hüser, "Eating Caligari," conference paper at "Blending Media: Defining Film in the Modernist Period," an International Symposium of the Framing Media Research Group, University of Innsbruck, Austria, June 9–10, 2009.

88. Salt, "Die innere Welt von Ernst Lubitsch," 68–69.

89. "Piffkaneiro" is perhaps the capital of this kingdom. The English intertitles locate the action "Near Piffkaneiro," a document in German in the intertitles names the city—or the kingdom?—"Unweit Piffkaneiro." Hüser ("Eating Caligari," 5–6) speculates productively on the etymology of the word *Piffkaneiro*: "piff" is "the sound that a toy pistol makes" but also is close to the derogatory term *Piefke* (from the name of a nineteenth-century Prussian military musician, Johann Gottfried Piefke). *The Wildcat* is the first Lubitsch comedy set in an imaginary, Balkan kingdom—as his American musicals are from 1929 to 1934.

90. Hüser, "Eating Caligari."

91. The American DVD version (see n. 81) translates *fesch* as "smart," which is accurate only in the sense of *dashing*. It does not mean *intelligent*, which is how most American viewers would understand the word *smart*.

92. On Lubitsch's fear of mice, see n. 57.

93. The credits in the American DVD version (see n. 81) list the character as "Popo," an interesting "Freudian slip": the word *Popo* in German is slang for the human posterior. Soon

after we meet this character, he is rubbing his behind in pleasure after having been whipped by Rischka.

94. There is "carnivalesque" emphasis on the behinds of Pepo (see n. 94) and Alex, both rivals for Rischka's affection. Rischka and the commander see him in his underwear, as does Lilli—spying through a keyhole.

95. Many reviews of the film praise the fireworks; for example, *Lichtbild-Bühne*, review of *Die Bergkatze/The Wildcat*, April 16, 1921; W. H——s [Willy Haas], review of *The Wildcat*, *Film-Kurier*, April 14, 1921; and Fritz Olimsky, "Neue Filme," review of *Die Bergkatze/The Wildcat*, *Berliner Börsen-Zeitung*, April 15, 1921. Hüser interprets the fireworks as writing in the sky; see "Eating Caligari," 20, 23–24.

96. Lilli spies voyeuristically through a keyhole earlier, too; see n. 94.

97. See Kurtz, *Expressionismus und Film*, 82; Kalbus, *Vom Werden deutscher Filmkunst*, 86; Kracauer, *From Caligari to Hitler*, 58; Hake, *Passions and Deceptions*, 109–12; and Hüser, "Eating Caligari."

98. Olimsky, "Neue Filme."

99. Aros [Alfred Rosenthal], review of *Die Bergkatze/The Wildcat*, *Berliner Lokal-Anzeiger*, April 14, 1921.

100. W. H——s [Haas], review of *Die Bergkatze/The Wildcat*.

101. *Lichtbild-Bühne*, review of *Die Bergkatze/The* Wildcat, April 16, 1921. These "vignettes" are what Americans soon called touches.

102. Kalbus, *Vom Werden deutscher Filmkunst*, 86.

103. Grafe, "Was Lubitsch berührt," 83.

104. l.b. [Ludwig Brauner], "Berliner Filmneuheiten," review of *The Wildcat*, *Der Kinematograph*, April 24, 1921.

105. P——l [Fritz Podehl], review of *The Wildcat*, *Der Film* (1921): 60.

106. W. H——s [Haas], review of *Die Bergkatze/The Wildcat*.

107. Aros [Rosenthal], review of *Die Bergkatze/The Wildcat*.

108. Patalas, "Ernst Lubitsch: Inflationskino," in *Im Off: Filmartikel*, ed. Frieda Grafe and Enno Patalas (Munich: Hanser, 1974), cited in Hüser, "Eating Caligari," 2. Hüser makes the point that Patalas meant inflationary in terms of stylistic excess as well as budgetary excess. Hüser also discusses the etymology of the word *grotesque*, which has the same Latin root as *grotto*, a small cave or hollow (20). Note that some of the masks that frame the bandits outside have irregular borders somewhat like the mouth of a cave or grotto.

109. See Olimsky, "Neue Filme" and "Lubitsch-Reprisen," his review of a retrospective showing of *The Wildcat*, *Berliner Börsen-Zeitung*, July 11, 1930.

110. Kurtz, *Expressionismus und Film*, 82.

111. Kracauer, *From Caligari to Hitler*, 58. Hüser ("Eating Caligari," 12) asserts that Kracauer may not have ever seen *The Wildcat*.

112. Cf. Renk, *Ernst Lubitsch*, 35; and Hüser, "Eating Caligari," 12–16.

113. Hüser ("Eating Caligari," 19–20) reads the wife's detachable braid, which falls on the snow from above in the fortress early in the film, as a castration motif; of course, her husband, the commander, must pick it up for her and return it. Other such motifs in the film would include the sausage chomped on by the bugler and the chocolate gun that Lilli bites. Such motifs complement the impotence of the soldiers as well as the male barbarians.

114. Hake, *Passions and Deceptions*, 109–11.

115. Klaus Theweleit, *Männerphantasien*, 2 vols. (Frankfurt am Main: Roter Stern, 1977, 1978), 1:87.

116. Hake, *Passions and Deceptions*, 103.
117. *Illustrierte Film-Woche*, synopsis of *Die Bergkatze/The Wildcat*, November 9, 1921, 8.
118. Lubitsch's letter to Weinberg, July 10, 1947, in Weinberg, *Lubitsch Touch*, 285–86.
119. "Filmschau," review of *Die Bergkatze/The Wildcat*, *Beilage des Vorwärts*, April 14, 1921; Olimsky, "Neue Filme."
120. The *Kaiserreich* means the kaiser's empire, the *Reich* ruled by the *Kaiser*, the German word for emperor, derived from the Roman title "Caesar."
121. Hüser, "Eating Caligari," 5.
122. Note the discussion by Hüser ("Eating Caligari," 20) on "grotto" and "grotesque" cited in n. 108.
123. If we compare Alex to Lubitsch's "bad boys" in his earlier films, we see that Alex is just as arrogant but also vain and prissy, and an aristocrat. Cf. Lubitsch's later "bad boys" such as the womanizers played by Maurice Chevalier, who, in the role of Danilo, will also be cheered by a kingdom's women at the beginning of *The Merry Widow* (1935).
124. Spaich, *Ernst Lubitsch und seine Filme*, 84.
125. Renate Bridenthal, Atina Grossman, and Marion Kaplan, eds., *When Biology Became Destiny: Women in Weimar and Nazi Germany* (New York: Monthly Review, 1984), 11.
126. Malakaj in "Lubitsch's Queer Slapstick Aesthetics" asserts that the film marks Rischka as racially other.
127. Cf. Spaich, *Ernst Lubitsch und seine Filme*, 84, on the film's critique of post–World War I Germany.
128. As Wallach (*Passing Illusions*, 6–7) reminds us, Rathenau was famous for his advice to German Jews "to be more inconspicuous as Jews."

II

HOLLYWOOD: FROM EUROPEAN SOPHISTICATION TO ANTIFASCIST SCREWBALL

4

SEX AND SOPHISTICATION

Comedies and Operettas, 1923–34

In America, Lubitsch would not make historical costume epics, even though those were the German films that had interested Hollywood. He would make comedies—but not the anarchic/fantastic kind that he had made in Germany. He would perfect the "sophisticated" comedy, performing European sophistication for American audiences. Precisely this turn toward restraint and taste in a comedy meant that these films would be more conservative, despite their risqué thematization of adultery, and less emancipatory in terms of gender politics. Bad girls are still there, but not as protagonists.

The 1920s were a transnational decade for the cinema, and Lubitsch was paying attention to what was happening in Germany in terms of innovative stylistic technique and popular genres. Hollywood's outlook was also fairly transnational in spite of US political conservatism (including xenophobia, racism, and antisemitism). Hollywood was filled with talent from Europe and also Mexico. The migration backgrounds of Lubitsch and many of the people he hired contributed to the subversion of the complacent status quo regarding ethnic, gender, and sexual politics.

Lubitsch and the Transnational Twenties

Lubitsch's last two German films, *Loves of the Pharaoh* (1922) and *Die Flamme/Montmartre* (1923), were financed by American money and filmed with American equipment and personnel.[1] *Loves of the Pharaoh* was impressive in terms of its epic scale. The production was much more expensive than anything Lubitsch had yet attempted, with massive "Egyptian" sets, more (cheap German) extras than Lubitsch had choreographed

in his earlier epics, and lighting and cinematography finally up to "American standards," as American critics themselves observed.[2] But Lubitsch had tired of making these "arduous bread and circuses."[3] Henry Blanke, who had worked on *Loves of the Pharaoh*, said later in Hollywood, "How many more thousands of people could he direct?"[4]

His final German film, *Die Flamme* (The Flame), was released in America as *Montmartre*. It was a small film, no epic, and suggested what he would do in America with the "sophisticated comedy." Only fragments of the film have survived;[5] however, they reinforce the enthusiastic response of the German critic Herbert Ihering in 1923. He called it "ein Kammerspielfilm," a chamber-play film, and reported that it was received more enthusiastically than Lubitsch's *Monstre* (monster) films—that is, his epic blockbusters. He wrote that it was Lubitsch's best film ever because its "Übersetzung ins Optische," its translation of narrative and dialogue into the visual (without titles), was more complete than in any previous film.[6] Starring Pola Negri in "a more sympathetic role" than her usual vamp, the film was, as Huff wrote, the story of a "demondaine who married a man above her station and who, meaning well, is much wronged in her attempts to adjust herself to a new life." Although the film was made in mid-1922, its release was delayed in both countries until 1923, "until after the debut of Negri in her American Paramount films." Her performance was praised.[7]

Nevertheless, the EFA model of an American-financed production company in Europe had failed. Instead, Lubitsch was invited to Hollywood by Mary Pickford at United Artists, and he arrived there in December 1922.

This visit to America was not his first; a year earlier, in December 1921, he had been to New York. He had been invited by Adolph Zukor of Famous-Players-Lasky/Paramount, and he brought along a copy of *Loves of the Pharaoh*. A year before that, in December 1920, the great commercial success in New York of Lubitsch's *Passion* (*Madame Dubarry*) had piqued Hollywood's interest in the director (and his star Pola Negri), with Famous Players-Lasky/Paramount fighting with First National over the rights to distribute his films.[8]

While Lubitsch was in New York in December 1921, there was an outbreak of anti-German sentiment. For this reason, Lubitsch decided not to go on to Hollywood; he sailed from New York back to Germany, where he would make *Die Flamme/Montmartre*. The premiere of *Loves of the Pharaoh* took place without him in New York in February 1922—before the Berlin premiere in March.[9]

When Lubitsch returned to New York in December 1922, he did go on to Hollywood, where he made his first American film, *Rosita* (1923), starring Pickford. She had wanted to be directed in an "adult role" by the great German director famous for his films featuring female protagonists. He intended to cast Pickford as Gretchen in a film adaptation of Goethe's *Faust*, but Pickford's mother rejected that idea, not wanting her daughter to play an unwed mother who kills her own child. Thus it happened that back in Germany, it would be Murnau who directed the great silent film adaptation of *Faust* in 1925–26, soon before he himself left for Hollywood. Pickford wanted instead to star in a film to be called *Dorothy Vernon of Haddon Hall*, based on an 1898 novel set in Elizabethan England, but Lubitsch rejected this proposal. In the end Lubitsch chose a script based on a French play about a saucy Spanish street singer.[10]

The working title was *The Street Singer*, but it was renamed *Rosita*. Released on September 3, 1923, it had the costumes and large crowd scenes for which Lubitsch was famous, but it was not the kind of blockbuster epic film that had interested Hollywood. The film was more like his 1918 adaptation of *Carmen*, the racy melodrama with Pola Negri, but with a more virtuous female protagonist and a happy ending. *Rosita* was a success, and regardless of what Pickford said later in her life, in 1923 she was happy with the film.[11] The German film press noted that the production was dominated by Europeans: Lubitsch was at the helm, with the German theater critic Norbert Falk as the screenplay writer and Sven Gade, a Swedish director, as the set designer.[12]

By April 1923, the German film industry was concerned that Lubitsch might not return to Germany after making one film.[13] Once it was clear he was staying longer, the film press continued to report rumors that he would return to make films in Germany practically up until 1933.[14] Lubitsch considered returning to Germany after *Rosita*, and Paul Davidson tried to convince him to come back to UFA.[15] But Lubitsch was offered a very generous contract to make six films for Warner Brothers at $60,000 per film, which also granted him the kind of autonomy that was unusual for directors in Hollywood. Warner, primarily known at that time for its films with the heroic dog Rin-Tin-Tin, wanted the prestige of a European director.[16]

Sophisticated Comedy: *The Marriage Circle* (1924)

At Warner, Lubitsch developed the sophisticated comedy, for which he used European operettas and bedroom farces but toned them down and slowed

the pace, resulting in more refined drawing-room comedies. As Eyman put it, instead of the "brass band" style of his German films, these comedies would be "chamber music."[17] The first such film was *The Marriage Circle*. It was influenced in part by the somber social realism of Chaplin's *A Woman of Paris* (1923), but it also demonstrated the more restrained style that Lubitsch had already developed in 1922 making his final German film, *Die Flamme/Montmartre*.[18]

The Marriage Circle had little of the anarchy of his more fantastic German comedies, which is one reason why the gender politics are less emancipatory; a more "realistic" picture of gender relations would have to be so. Another reason was American sexual prudery (and hypocrisy). Nonetheless, Lubitsch's irony was still in evidence, and the film had an insouciant irreverence about the institution of marriage. It also had a dark-haired bad girl somewhat reminiscent of the most interesting female protagonists of his German films. She initiates the trouble that disturbs two bourgeois marriages (one of which is her own) and sets the plot in motion. The film has no simple romantic triangle; it is an adulterous quadrangle, even including a "fifth wheel."

The film is based on a 1909 German boulevard comedy, Lothar Schmidt's *Nur ein Traum* (Only a Dream).[19] Paul Davidson, Lubitsch's German producer, had acquired the rights to the play in Germany.[20] On behalf of Lubitsch, he sold them in June 1923 to Rudolph Kurtz, who sold them in turn to Warner Brothers in January 1924.[21] Schmidt's play was adapted by Lubitsch and Paul Bern (who got the credit). Henry Blanke was again Lubitsch's assistant, and Lubitsch worked with the American cinematographer Charles van Enger for the first time. Shooting took place in September and October 1923, and the film premiered in Los Angeles on January 16, 1924, at Grauman's Rialto Theatre and in New York on February 3, 1924, at the Mark Strand Theatre.[22]

The film was praised by the critics. The *New York Times* review on February 4, 1924, stated that watching it was "unalloyed bliss," compared it favorably with Chaplin's *A Woman of Paris*, and praised its "distinct European flavor." *Variety* declared that the film "marks an epoch." A February 10 article in the *New York Times* asserted that "this film is undoubtedly one of the finest productions ever filmed" and mentioned its sparing use of intertitles. Iris Barry, then the film critic for the British journal *The Spectator*, praised its "dry wit," its "minimum of subtitling," and the fact that the story is "shown, not told."[23] Later she called it "a brilliant comedy of manners."[24]

The German reception was equally positive. Béla Balázs called it a "diskretes Meisterwerk" (discreet masterpiece), and Herbert Ihering called it "der vollkommenste Film, der bis jetzt geschaffen wurde" (the most perfect film that has yet been made).[25] In the *Film-Kurier*, the critic marveled that the film needed so few intertitles.[26]

The Lubitsch Touch

As Huff wrote in 1947, *The Marriage Circle* "contained the witty and laconic 'touches' for which Lubitsch would become famous."[27] George Pratt wrote in 1949, "Most of the accounts I consulted agree that *The Marriage Circle* was the first film to exhibit 'the Lubitsch touch.'"[28] Critics in the 1920s tended to refer to clever touches in Lubitsch's work, but by the early 1930s, these were considered aspects of a singular "Lubitsch touch," which Huff defined as "swift innuendo or rapier-like 'comment' accomplished pictorially by a brief camera shot of telling action, to convey an idea or suggestion in a manner impossible in words."[29]

Around the time the film went into production, Chaplin showed Lubitsch a rough cut of *A Woman of Paris*.[30] Blanke later said that Chaplin's film influenced Lubitsch's filmmaking for the rest of his career, but Eyman considers that an overstatement. He argues that Cecil B. DeMille's marital comedies, directed at Paramount starting in 1919, were just as influential on Lubitsch's sophisticated comedies. Eileen Bowser reported that during Lubitsch's first visit to America, "he had expressed astonishment at the detail shown in DeMille's *Forbidden Fruit*."[31] In contrast to the "paternalism" of DeMille, however, Lubitsch's female characters tended to be much smarter.[32]

Hake argues that Lubitsch's sophisticated comedies are sexist—certainly more so than his German comedies. She writes that the former "end invariably with a reaffirmation of bourgeois marriage; hence their conservative outlook." However, she finds that Lubitsch's irony and touch open the films to a variety of readings, including feminist ones.[33] I will return to these claims later in this section.

The Marriage Circle begins with a title announcing, "A few days—and a few nights—in Vienna, still the city of laughter and light romance." This title is followed immediately by another: "The day starts late, but gloriously, in the home of Prof. Josef Stock." The ironic meaning of this title becomes clear with the first shot, a medium close-up of a man's lower leg, in pajamas,

and his bare foot next to a bed. We then see his hands pull a sock onto his foot, a sock that has a hole in it, so that his big toe sticks out of it (pointing to the camera). This shot of the hole in a sock is the first of many "touches" for which Lubitsch would become famous, and as early as 1924, the critic for the *New York Times* mentioned it.[34]

We cut to a medium shot of the husband (Adolphe Menjou) sitting on the bed, and then to a long shot of his wife, Mizzi (Marie Prevost), standing at a chair and seeming to complain as she picks up his clothes and tosses them on the bed. Only then do we get an establishing shot that orients us to the space in the bedroom (in contrast to the most common practice in "classical" American scene construction). Stock gets up and goes to a dresser and opens the drawer; we then get a close-up from his point of view showing a drawer completely empty of anything except a few dress collars. In a medium shot, he appears to ask Mizzi where his socks are; she shrugs, goes to the dresser, and opens the drawer beneath the one her husband had opened. A close-up from her perspective shows a drawer full of her own stockings in orderly rows, each pair neatly folded. She takes a pair and goes to her bed; finding his clothes there (where she had tossed them), she throws them back onto the chair.

Stock goes to a window, attaches a mirror to it, and lathers his face with the intention of shaving. Mizzi enters the frame and takes the mirror away for her own use. Peeved, Stock wipes his face and climbs back into bed. We cut to Mizzi, who says something, in apparent disapproval; Stock turns away and pulls up the covers. Mizzi leaves the room, and he gets up to do calisthenics. In the next room, a maid brings Mizzi a letter, which is from an old school friend, Charlotte Braun. A cut shows the letter: Charlotte has learned that Mizzi is in Vienna and wants her to visit. An excited Mizzi returns to the bedroom to find Stock exercising, but he displays no interest in Charlotte's letter. Finally, we see the first intertitle with dialogue, which presents us with Mizzi's angry response: "Keep on with your cruelty—and some day [*sic*] I'll leave you!" We cut to a medium shot of Stock, who turns around, smiles, opens his arms, and mouths the word, "Please!" Then there is a cut to a medium shot of Mizzi, who smiles just as maliciously. Her response is the second intertitle containing dialogue: "That's just what you want—but you'll not get rid of me so easily!" He turns his back to her and continues to exercise.

The opening scene provides us with all we need to know about the happiness of the marriage of Professor and Mizzi Stock, and it does so with

only two intertitles of dialogue. Our sympathy is directed almost entirely toward Stock and not to Mizzi, who seems selfish and peevish. She is also depicted as a bad housewife, or at any rate one who is not concerned about whether the servants keep her husband's drawers stocked with socks. But Stock himself does not seem to care much about Mizzi either, nor does he end up being an especially sympathetic character despite what the opening of the film might imply. His major motivation in the film is to find a way to get rid of Mizzi. Mizzi's excessive self-absorption in this scene makes her unsympathetic but also interesting; she will prove to be a fairly outrageous "bad girl" who can easily be read as one of Lubitsch's rascals. In the very next scene, she initiates the trouble that will motivate the plot and disturb the status quo.

Mizzi leaves her residence after the spat with her husband and gets into a taxi waiting for another client. This is how she meets Dr. Franz Braun (Monte Blue), the physician who will turn out to be married to her old friend Charlotte. Mizzi commandeers the taxi, and when Franz comes out of the florist shop with flowers for his wife and finds a woman he does not know in the cab, he is too polite to protest. But once Mizzi sees him, she is willing to share the cab with him (not knowing who he is). As he enters, there is a cross-cut to the window above, from which Stock sees a strange man on the street below entering the taxi in which his wife sits. This will motivate Stock to contact a detective to follow his wife. Lubitsch calls our attention—self-reflexively—to the importance of who happens to see what at which moment, and this is what sets the plot in motion.

Hake points out that Lubitsch's sophisticated comedies set up an "elaborate point-of-view structure" that leads to a "chain of misreadings."[35] Indeed, in *The Marriage Circle*, what a character sees will often be misleading. Looking out his window, Stock may be a bit hasty in becoming suspicious, but he is right. Inside the cab, we watch as Mizzi is soon flirting with Franz, and this flusters him, which she obviously enjoys. He asks to be dropped off early and leaves the flowers in the cab, so eager is he to get away from her.

Unbeknownst to both of them, they are headed to the same address. Mizzi is going to visit Charlotte, Franz's wife, and she arrives there first. Mizzi presents the flowers to Charlotte, who is overjoyed to see her, and they have a spirited conversation catching up and reminiscing—there are no titles, so the viewer does not know for sure.[36] Two titles then reveal that Charlotte thinks her husband is wonderful, and the jaded Mizzi responds,

"You'll get over it." When Franz finally arrives, he and Mizzi immediately realize that they have met already—in the taxi. Mizzi smirks and exchanges knowing glances with Franz, all of which Charlotte cannot see; meanwhile, Franz tries to hide his discomfort. The scene ends with Charlotte singing Franz's favorite song, Grieg's "I Love You" (we see "Ich liebe dich" as the title on the score, and the rest of the lyrics are also in German). In medium close-up, we see Charlotte singing the song, innocently and sweetly, and then the camera tilts down to show us Mizzi at the piano, turned toward the camera and smiling mischievously; a cut reveals the target of her gaze, Franz, who struggles to look at Charlotte with adoration and not at the flirtatious Mizzi.

An exchange of glances depicted through an economical use of camera movement and editing again emphasizes the question of who sees and who does not. This touch reveals the potentially adulterous triangle that, combined with what we have seen at the Stock household, makes clear how the quadrangle of the two featured marriages will be disturbed. Lubitsch has already portrayed the Stock marriage as dysfunctional, and now he shows us how idyllic the Braun marriage seems to be. The next morning, we see in close-up an egg in its holder and a cup of coffee; a male hand cracks the egg with a knife as a female hand stirs the coffee; the male hand disappears, and soon the female hand gently drops the spoon—we assume that the unseen couple have interrupted their breakfast to kiss.[37]

This idyllic status quo is established only to be threatened immediately, for soon Franz's partner Gustav (Creighton Hale) arrives with his car. Charlotte exchanges glances with him from the balcony, which Franz does not notice; it becomes clear that Gustav is infatuated with Charlotte. She discourages him, but she is flattered by his attention. Gustav is the "fifth wheel" who will also help destabilize the quadrangle.

Gustav and Franz drive to the offices they share as physicians, where Mizzi shows up, pretending to be ill and intent on seducing Franz. In his office, she musses Franz's hair,[38] and soon she is embracing the flustered and (somewhat) reluctant Franz. Just at this point Gustav enters Franz's office, but he sees only the arms of the woman embracing Franz from behind, and he assumes that it is Charlotte. The intertitle provides his response: "Lucky Devil—to be so loved by your own wife!" Again, what one sees and does not see is crucial to the plot of this film. Leaving them, Gustav goes to the waiting room, where he sees Charlotte, who has come to visit her husband. He does a double take, quickly realizing that Franz was being embraced by

another woman. When Charlotte then enters Franz's office, she finds his hair somewhat ruffled and a woman's glove left behind, just as Franz has assured her that the patient who had just left was a man. Now Charlotte is suspicious of Franz.

Dining, Dancing, and Danger

As happens so often in Lubitsch films, the climax of the plot—and the most serious threat to the status quo—is catalyzed by dinner and a dance. Charlotte's dinner party and the dancing that follows are much more restrained ("sophisticated") than in similar scenes in his German comedies. However, a similarly carnivalesque overturning of the status quo within the plot happens during the party and its aftermath. As in the rest of this film, the action happens largely because of misreadings based on what characters happen to see or not see. Hake argues that the film privileges the male perspective throughout, but the perspective of the suave and cynical Professor Stock is not dominant. Dr. Franz Braun's perspective is more so, but although he is more sympathetic, he is usually flustered and rarely in control of events.[39] Charlotte's perspective is clearly flawed—only at the end will she find out that the danger to her marriage comes from her "friend" Mizzi, but even she will know things that her husband never does. It is Mizzi who manipulates just about everyone over the course of the film, and she has the most knowledge—more than anyone but the viewers of the film, who are truly the most privileged, allowed to see more than any of the characters in the diegesis. Lubitsch uses dramatic irony in the film in a reflexive way that calls attention to the relation between seeing and knowing.

This relation can be noted at the dinner party even before the guests arrive. Charlotte is shown with place cards, deciding where to seat everyone at the long table in the dining room. Franz comes in and notices that she has seated him next to Mizzi. Not wanting to encourage Mizzi, he switches place cards so that he now will be seated next to Fräulein (Miss) Hofer, but a cut to Charlotte reveals that she sees him doing this. Immediately she asks him why he is so interested in sitting next to Miss Hofer; he protests, but Charlotte switches the place cards so that he will once again be sitting next to Mizzi. She also confides to Mizzi that Franz had switched the cards, and then we watch Mizzi deviously switch the place cards back again, unseen by Charlotte or Franz. When Miss Hofer, an attractive young blonde, sits down next to Franz, Charlotte stares furiously at Franz, thanks to the devious Mizzi.

"There is more danger in dancing than in dining," states the intertitle introducing the dance sequence. Charlotte and Mizzi see Franz dancing with Miss Hofer, and so Charlotte asks Mizzi to cut in and dance with him. Mizzi feigns reluctance but eventually agrees, out of "loyalty" to Charlotte. Only then does Charlotte relax enough to dance with her eager would-be suitor Gustav. Mizzi dances closely with Franz and gets him smiling, and then they walk out onto the terrace for air. Mizzi tricks him into going out into the garden with her, where she seduces him into kissing her soon after they sit down on a bench together.

Meanwhile, Charlotte and Gustav come outside to look for Franz. She finds Mizzi's shawl and calls to her. Mizzi comes to her and says that she does not know where Franz is. Suddenly she sees him and tells Charlotte where to look: Franz is back on the terrace, talking to Miss Hofer. Mizzi has again furthered her own ends by staging what Charlotte sees. Charlotte storms off to her room. The party ends, and Mizzi tells Franz she will wait for him for ten minutes in her taxi. Franz instead goes to Charlotte to comfort her, but she does not believe him. Angry that she does not trust him, he threatens to leave, and she calls his bluff, handing him his hat. He takes it and leaves. Around the corner, he enters Mizzi's taxi.

Concerned, Charlotte goes downstairs, notices someone in the garden, and thinks it is Franz. However, it is Gustav, who has just seen Franz get into the taxi with Mizzi. From the garden, we see Charlotte's shadow on the curtains of the French doors, beckoning to the man she thinks is her husband. While she sits in a chair to wait for him, with her eyes closed, Gustav enters, comes up to her, and kisses her. She kisses back until she opens her eyes and realizes that it is Gustav. She sends him away angrily, but as she closes the garden doors, she smiles (unbeknownst to him).

Mizzi and Franz arrive at her house, and Franz tells the driver to wait while he walks her to her door. He steps away from the taxi, but behind his back, Mizzi pays the driver and sends him away. She tells Franz to come up with her so that he can call for another taxi. Once upstairs, she throws herself at him, but he resists her. She threatens to kill herself, to which he responds with a smirk until she gets a gun in the other room. He runs and grabs the gun from her; opening the chamber, he sees that it has no bullets. Disgusted with her, he drops the gun to the floor and leaves the building, forgetting his hat.[40]

Stock comes home, and Mizzi embraces her surprised husband, but only to distract him from seeing what we are shown: there is a cut to a close-up of

her foot as it kicks the gun lying on the floor so that it slides under a drape. Then Stock's private detective arrives and hands Stock his report, which states that Franz entered the house with Mizzi at 1:10 a.m. and stayed for at least forty minutes. Stock laughs at this "good news," then notices a hat and offers it to the detective, who says it is not his. Stock goes to Mizzi, who is waiting seductively for him in bed, and he tells her to pack her things.

The dinner party and dance have thus set in motion events that have ended one marriage and seriously endangered another. The next morning, Stock brings Franz his hat (the same hat Charlotte had given him when he threatened to leave, and the same hat he had left at Stock's home after rebuffing Mizzi). Franz tries to deny that it is his hat, but then Stock shows him the detective's report. Franz insists that nothing happened. Stock smiles and tells him that he believes him but that no one else will. As Stock is about to leave, Charlotte enters, and he tells her that Mizzi has moved to the Bristol Hotel.

Franz receives a note from Mizzi, who writes about her anger at his rejection of her. She demands that he come to the Bristol Hotel by 10:00 a.m. or she will cause a public scandal. Before Franz gets there, Charlotte arrives, curious about Mizzi's sudden move to a hotel. Mizzi steps out, and then Franz enters the hotel room. Seeing him enter, Charlotte finally realizes that it is Mizzi who has threatened her marriage. Franz shows her Mizzi's note to prove his innocence, but Charlotte rips it in two without reading it. He leaves, dejected. Only then does Charlotte read the note. Mizzi returns and tells Charlotte that she can't be blamed if Franz fell in love with her, but Charlotte shows Mizzi the note she herself had written in response to Franz's rejection.

At home later, upstairs at her window, Charlotte sees Franz returning with Gustav. She decides to teach Franz a lesson. She tells him that she has too has kissed someone to whom she is not married, and she demands that Gustav admit it. Gustav is afraid to do so, but Franz, sure that Charlotte is making things up, gestures to Gustav to go along with Charlotte's story. Reluctantly, Gustav does as Franz directs: he "pretends" to agree with Charlotte, even though he knows that Charlotte is telling the truth. Cutting among the three characters, the editing once again creates a situation in which one character—Charlotte, again—misses an exchange of looks and thus does not know about the conspiracy between Franz and Gustav. Franz appears triumphant but only because he does not know that both Charlotte and Gustav are telling the truth.

The film does not end with Franz's apparent triumph, however. Instead, we watch a dejected Gustav walking down the street. A car passes him, and he waves; the car comes to a stop some distance up the street. We cut to a close-up of Mizzi in the car, smiling and waving. With a cut back to the street, we see Gustav run up and get in the car. The implication is that Mizzi and Gustav drive off together.[41]

"A Nasty, Carnal Little Creature"

Hake writes that in Lubitsch's sophisticated comedies, "the 'good woman' initiates the chain of misreadings," but I would argue that it is Mizzi, not Charlotte, who stages (and manipulates) most of the misreadings in *The Marriage Circle*. Hake also writes that "the 'bad woman' . . . is punished for having challenged male privileges."[42] But how much does this film punish Mizzi? Instead, she escapes relatively unscathed with a new male admirer.

Let us examine the film's gender politics and its treatment of our dark-haired "bad girl," Mizzi. First, let us consider her dark hair. Although it was typical enough in Hollywood (and in Germany) for a bad girl to have dark hair, for a Jewish director like Lubitsch, this choice has added meaning, bringing ethnic otherness into the mix.[43] In terms of the historical context, this is no stretch: America was very xenophobic—and antisemitic—at precisely this moment. Lubitsch had met with anti-German sentiment in 1921 and 1922, but even worse was the sentiment against Jews and other groups from Southern and Eastern Europe, all of which was codified in the National Origins Act of 1924, which restricted immigration based on ethnicity. As the *Saturday Evening Post* put it, "If America doesn't keep out the queer, alien, mongrelized people of Southern and Eastern Europe, her crop of citizens will eventually be dwarfed and mongrelized in turn."[44]

Critics have characterized Mizzi as an "irritating jazz baby" and a "pouting flapper."[45] Such descriptions make it clear that Mizzi is not just a vamp, but arguably conflated with the "flapper" and the "New Woman" of the 1920s.[46] This conflation of a modern woman with loose morals and the hint of the ethnic outsider might be read as a merely updated form of some very old misogyny. Mizzi is by no means depicted as a positive or good character, but Lubitsch's films are more nuanced—and less Manichean—with regard to character. It is precisely Mizzi's mischievous behavior that makes her somewhat sympathetic, for in a Lubitsch comedy, the bad characters are never simply bad, and the good ones are also depicted ambiguously. When

Lubitsch stated in a 1927 interview with *Film Daily* that *The Marriage Circle* was his favorite film, he explained that he had been "experimenting" when he made this film, creating characters who were "all flesh and blood people who were just a little bit bad and not too good."[47] This description fits with the more realistic style of his sophisticated comedies, but his more anarchic German comedies and most of his flamboyant costume melodramas also featured characters who were similarly morally ambiguous. And his earliest comedies had sympathetic rascals.

If we look at the film's reception, we can start with Iris Barry's otherwise very positive review: she has positive things to say about many of the actors, but she calls Mizzi a "nasty, carnal little creature," and she never mentions the actor Marie Prevost's name.[48] This might be interpreted as evidence of how well Prevost performed the role, so well that the critic—perhaps a slightly prudish one?—could not separate the role from the actor who played it. Barry's remarks are perhaps the exception that proves the rule, for most reviews were much more sympathetic, praising Prevost's performance as Mizzi. The first *New York Times* review stated that "Miss Prevost is just the girl for the part of the flirt."[49] In the *Times*' second piece on the film, we find the opinion that "nobody we know could have portrayed the part of Mizzie [*sic*] Stock as well as Marie Prevost."[50] *Variety* notes that the film "gives Miss Prevost the chance of her life, and she assuredly makes the most of it, walking away with all the honors."[51]

In Mizzi, Lubitsch has created another likeable rascal—a bad girl with whom we sympathize, at least to some extent. In the end, the somewhat doltish Franz and the somewhat boring Charlotte are happily together again. Charlotte feels that she has taught Franz a lesson, and Franz feels clever that he has placated Charlotte by pretending to believe she has kissed Gustav. Both, of course, are wrong. Moreover, the film does not end with their "happy ending" but rather with Mizzi leaving town. She is not punished: She does not get Franz, but she does escape an awful marriage. And she drives off into the distance with Franz's partner, Gustav. In 1924, this stood out to a German critic. According to Heinz Michaelis in the *Film-Kurier*, the film ended on a note alien to American Puritanism, precisely by not punishing Mizzi.[52]

Does the end of the film restore the status quo? Only for Charlotte and Franz. The film is hardly a credible reaffirmation of the institution of marriage. Hake writes that now we can read the sophisticated comedies in ways that bely their sexism; a feminist reading is possible because the Lubitsch

Figure 4.1 "A nasty, carnal little creature": Mizzi (Marie Prevost) seduces Franz (Monte Blue) in *The Marriage Circle* (1924). Screen capture.

touch contains the "plan of its own destruction."[53] I disagree. Reading the film as subversive of the bourgeois status quo is not a reading "against the grain." Perhaps it is against the grain of the story, but not against the playful, ironic way in which the story is told.

Lubitsch at Warner Brothers, 1924–26

After *The Marriage Circle*, Lubitsch made *Three Women* (1924), the first of only three American films he would make (out of twenty-seven) that were actually set in America. Considered the second of his series of sophisticated comedies at Warner, it is debatable whether this somewhat dark film about an adulterous quadrangle should be categorized as a comedy. It has a happy ending but only after the death of the film's dastardly villain. He is the man among the three women of the film's title: a wealthy widow of 40, with whom he has had an affair, and her daughter, whom he then marries, only to cheat on her with the third woman, a "scheming gold-digger," as Huff described her.[54]

Next, on loan to Paramount, Lubitsch directed *Forbidden Paradise*, which also premiered in 1924. This film was more fantastic than his two sophisticated comedies but subtler than his German comedies. Its purpose was to save the American career of his old protégé Pola Negri, who had been in some less-than-inspired American films since her arrival in the United States in 1922. The film was a success, relaunching Negri's career. Set in Russia and based on a stage play about Catherine the Great, it was about a czarina (played by Negri) who was constantly having affairs with young soldiers.[55]

After *Forbidden Paradise*, Lubitsch went back to Warner Brothers and made *Lady Windermere's Fan* (1925), an adaptation of the play by Oscar Wilde. Lubitsch prided himself on not using a single sentence from Wilde's witty drama, instead translating that verbal wit into his clever, sly, new visual style. Set in London, this film features a triangle: a spoiled young wife suspects her husband of adultery, but he is only providing financial help to an older woman "with a past" because he wants the latter to keep her identity secret. In fact, she is his wife's mother, and he is protecting his wife from scandal and disillusionment.[56]

Next came *Kiss Me Again* (1925). This comedy of divorce and remarriage, based on a French play by Victorien Sardou, is lost. Today it is known primarily from Lubitsch's much less successful remake of it in 1941 as a screwball comedy titled *That Uncertain Feeling*. The original version was set in Paris; Huff called it "the most scintillating, frothy and amusing picture of the series" of Lubitsch's silent, sophisticated comedies.[57]

Lubitsch's last comedy at Warner was *So This Is Paris* (1926). The plot for the film was similar to that of a comedy Lubitsch made in Germany a decade earlier, *The Merry Jail* (1917), which in turn was an adaptation of Johann Strauss's 1874 operetta *Die Fledermaus* (The Bat). While *The Merry Jail* was set in Berlin, the 1926 version was set in Paris. The plot is about two couples, one rather Bohemian and the other more middle class. In both, the partners are bored with each other. The middle-class doctor ends up at the masked "artist's ball" with the Bohemian woman (an old flame, as it turns out); his wife learns that her husband is there because of a radio broadcast—still quite a novelty in 1926—from the ball. She finds him at the ball and takes him home; the middle-class couple survives, but the husband is chastened and made to shrink in size via trick editing: he is literally "made small."[58]

This cinematic trick was not the only one in the film. *So This Is Paris* was the most spectacular (and technically impressive) of all the Warner

comedies, demonstrating technical innovations in cinematography and montage that match the German cinema of the mid-1920s. It clearly displays technical innovations pioneered by Murnau, E. A. Dupont, and Karl Freund, as well as other mid-1920s German developments in cinematography and montage. The central showpiece of the film is the carnivalesque artists' ball, which juxtaposes close shots of Black jazz musicians with long shots of huge crowds dancing the Charleston (a new African American dance craze sweeping the world in the mid-1920s), and it uses moving cameras, dissolves, multiple exposures, optical printing, and other new editing techniques. The technical virtuosity of the film was noted by an American critic in 1926, who compared it with Murnau's *The Last Laugh* (1924).[59]

So This Is Paris was technically innovative but by no means the kind of epic historical spectacle that Warner Brothers (and Hollywood) kept expecting Lubitsch to make. It was a critical success but expensive, making a smaller profit than any of the Warner films so far, which led to the parting of ways between Lubitsch and Warner Brothers.[60]

Impossible Love in *The Student Prince in Old Heidelberg* (1927)

Lubitsch epitomized the transnationalism of the 1920s.[61] As we have seen, once in Hollywood, he sent for other German artists and technicians over the course of the decade. He used European—mostly Central European—plays and operettas as the bases of his American films, as he had in Germany.[62] Meanwhile, he followed the German cinema closely, imitating popular genres, and he published articles in the trade journals in Germany.

All through the 1920s, critics and the film industry in America wondered if he would ever make another blockbuster historical epic like *Madame Dubarry*.[63] He did not make such a film at Warner. Then he went to MGM, where, instead of an epic, he made a silent operetta film: *The Student Prince in Old Heidelberg* (1927). This was his first American film with a story set in Germany.[64] He returned to Germany for the first time since 1922, supposedly to shoot some footage in Heidelberg for this operetta film meant to compete with similar films being made in Germany at the time.

But *The Student Prince* was made in Hollywood. Indeed, Lubitsch used a German genre to undercut any notion of an "authentic" German national identity. Instead the film provides evidence of a transnational—and queer—fluidity and hybridity. This is related not only to the transnational migrations of artists, technicians, ideas, styles, and genres back and

forth across the Atlantic but also to the ethnic, gender, and sexual politics of the film and the production itself. As with most Lubitsch films, the politics were determined in many ways by Lubitsch's migration background. But the migration of the film's male star, Ramón Novarro, from Mexico is also relevant, as are other aspects of his identity.

A Silent Operetta?

Making a silent operetta film set in Heidelberg at the turn of the century was clearly influenced by the romantic film operettas being made in Germany in the mid-1920s.[65] Another model was Erich von Stroheim's success with *The Merry Widow*, which he made in America for MGM in 1925 (also to compete with German operetta films). For Lubitsch, it was the first time he would use an operetta to make an operetta film, as opposed to using one as the basis for a sophisticated comedy. It was his only silent operetta film, but it led to the model he would soon adopt for the first sound films he would make beginning in 1929, which were musicals. Whereas Hollywood wanted him to make blockbuster epics, Lubitsch opted for operetta films.[66]

The Student Prince in Old Heidelberg is based on two sources: the 1901 German play *Alt Heidelberg* by Wilhelm Meyer-Förster and the 1924 American operetta *The Student Prince*, which was based on the same play with music composed by Sigmund Romberg, an Austro-Hungarian Jew who had come to America in 1909. The screenplay was written by Hanns Kräly, who had been working with Lubitsch since 1915.

What is a silent operetta film? It is a silent film based on an operetta and released with a musical score to accompany the film—most silent films were, but in this case the music was often the same or similar to what had been composed for the original theatrical version of the operetta. With regard to *The Student Prince in Old Heidelberg*, the American critic Underhill wrote that Romberg's music for the operetta was adapted well for the film score by David Mendoza and William Axt. In the German press, critics wrote that the music was composed by Schmidt-Gentner. This may also have been an adaptation of Romberg's music; in any case, both Kurtz and Jäger wrote that the score was impressive.[67]

The film had already gone into production as *Old Heidelberg* when Meyer-Förster, the author of the original German play, complained that Lubitsch and MGM had not asked his permission to adapt his play; this happened just as Lubitsch was arriving to great fanfare in Germany in

spring 1927.[68] The legal problems that ensued led to the film title changing to the somewhat cumbersome *The Student Prince in Old Heidelberg*.[69] Nonetheless, for brevity's sake, I will usually refer to the film henceforth as *The Student Prince*.

Lubitsch had not been to Germany since leaving in 1922.[70] He arrived in Berlin in late May 1927, and he stayed in Germany until mid-July.[71] Although location footage of Heidelberg was apparently shot, none appears in the final film; Heidelberg had been re-created on an outdoor set in Laurel Canyon and shot before the German trip, between December 1926 and May 1927. In the *New York Times* in September 1927, Lubitsch claimed that the footage shot in Heidelberg proved how accurate the sets constructed in California were, adding, "Had we used actual streets [in Heidelberg] we would have faced lighting problems."[72]

While in Germany, Lubitsch visited family and friends in Berlin and was celebrated by the German film industry. In the film press he was called a "Pionier des Deutschtums in Amerika"—a "pioneer of Germanness in America."[73]

The costumes did come from Germany. Lubitsch had hired Ali Hubert to find the costumes he needed and bring them to America.[74] Hubert had been the costume designer on many of Lubitsch's German films (e.g., *Madame Dubarry*, *Sumurun*, *Anna Boleyn*, *Loves of the Pharaoh*), and after getting to Hollywood, he would continue to work there. After *The Student Prince*, he designed costumes for Lubitsch's next film, *The Patriot* (1928). Hubert brought the costumes for *The Student Prince* to America long before Lubitsch's trip to Germany in May 1927. He arrived in December 1926, just as shooting on the film began in California.[75]

The Student Prince in Old Heidelberg premiered September 21, 1927. It starred Ramón Novarro, the Mexican actor who had succeeded Rudolph Valentino as America's favorite "Latin lover." Novarro plays Karl Heinrich, the young prince of Karlsburg, a tiny Central European, German-speaking principality at the turn of the twentieth century. Oppressed by his princely role since childhood, he goes to Heidelberg with his beloved tutor, Dr. Jüttner, to study, and there he can live as a normal young man. He joins a *Burschenschaft* (a German student fraternity), and he falls in love with a young woman, Kathi, who works in the beer garden of her uncle's guesthouse. Karl Heinrich has taken a room there, moved by Kathi's zeal to prove that the humble guesthouse would be a worthy place for him to stay. She is played by

Norma Shearer, supposedly cast at the whim of her fiancé, Irving Thalberg, the powerful production head at MGM.

Of course their love is doomed because Karl Heinrich's uncle, the king, falls ill, and the prince must return to his small country. Soon his uncle dies, and he becomes king. After some time, he is reminded of Kathi when a visitor from Heidelberg arrives at his palace.[76] This inspires Karl Heinrich to return to Heidelberg for just a few days of happiness. Once he arrives, however, he sees that everything has changed. Jüttner has died, and the beer garden no longer seems to attract students. When he meets his former fraternity brothers, they react to him with cold formality, as visiting royalty, not as an old friend. His reunion with Kathi is bittersweet; they embrace, but they know that they have no future. Karl Heinrich is being forced into an arranged marriage with a princess, and Kathi too will marry a man she does not love. Karl Heinrich returns to Karlsburg. There is a wedding at the end of the film, but it is that of Karl Heinrich and a princess he does not love (and whom we never see).[77] The film is a romance but not a romantic comedy, as it ends sadly for both lovers.

For most of Lubitsch's American career, his films were critical successes but did not make much money—and the ones that did well often did so because of the European box office. According to Weinberg, *The Student Prince* was both a critical success and a hit.[78] Reviews in the German film press praised the film for the most part but had reservations about Norma Shearer's Kathi; some American reviewers were also critical of her performance. Generally, they liked Ramón Novarro's prince but liked Jean Hersholt's portrayal of the prince's tutor, Dr. Jüttner, best of all.[79]

How should we interpret this silent operetta film of 1927? The Wilhelmine, feudal-aristocratic backdrop was clearly antiquated. In 1927, the German critic Rudolph Kurtz found the operetta plot quite dated, but he credited Lubitsch with making a fresh and poignant film devoid of cloying sentimentality.[80] Slavoj Žižek recently suggested that Lubitsch is the "poet of cynical reason,"[81] but this film is not at all cynical, certainly not in its treatment of the lovers. The film is poignant because it is about an impossible love that cannot be because of oppressive social barriers. For all his power, Karl Heinrich is portrayed as a small young man with dark eyes and dark hair who cannot marry the woman he loves (who has lighter hair and a lighter complexion). Besides the obvious class differences between the two lovers, gender, ethnic, and sexual politics are at play in this film.

Gender, Ethnicity, and Sexuality

In 1927, German critics found Norma Shearer's Kathi too "American," and some American critics found her too old, too sophisticated, or too "coy."[82] Writing much more recently, Kristin Thompson gets at the issue more forthrightly, noting that when Shearer's Kathi first meets the prince, her gaze is not naive but rather "conveys something like fascinated lust." Citing this scene, Thompson implies that this was not what Lubitsch wanted and that Shearer was "not up to her role."[83] At various points in the same article about Lubitsch and acting, however, she cites evidence that Lubitsch acted out all the parts (male or female) for actors in his films, and the actors were then supposed to try to imitate what he mimed for them. Many actors reported that this was indeed Lubitsch's practice.[84] For that very reason, it is hard to imagine that he did not want Shearer to perform as she did in this shot.[85]

Andrew Marton, Lubitsch's editor for this film, later said that Lubitsch did not feel that either Shearer or Novarro was right for the film.[86] Nonetheless, it is hard to believe that, given Lubitsch's directing style described above, either actor would have done anything without his approval. When one examines the scene in which Karl Heinrich and Kathi meet for the first time, one notes that, yes, perhaps Kathi's gaze is a bit lustful: she moves (quite boldly) around him twice, looking him over—but this is precisely what one should expect in a Lubitsch film. Above all, Kathi's gaze is powerful, even though she is clearly the prince's social inferior.[87] As in so many Lubitsch films, it is the woman who initiates the seduction.[88] Perhaps this is what the German critics found too "American" and the American critics too "sophisticated."

Ramón Novarro was faulted by some American critics for being "a little too Latin" for the role.[89] In Germany, one nationalistic (and racist) critic even disparaged Novarro's background, calling him an "Indio," that is, an Indian; in general, this critic found the film to be an insulting picture of Germany.[90] What to make of the casting and performance of this Mexican actor as a German, this dark-haired, dark-eyed young man who portrays a man who cannot overcome the social barriers that make it impossible for him to marry the one he loves?

I propose a transnational, German Jewish reading.[91] Perhaps there is "double encoding" here—a covert German Jewish perspective.[92] In this film we find an aging, authoritarian, hierarchical order in tension with a

Figure 4.2 The female gaze: Norma Shearer as Kathi and Ramón Novarro as Prince Karl Heinrich in *The Student Prince in Old Heidelberg* (1927). Screen capture.

youthful, egalitarian sensibility associated with emotional warmth and the bonds of love. The older order is gendered very much as masculine and embodied in a cold father figure, Karl Heinrich's uncle, the king. The newer sensibility is gendered as more feminine, and it is associated first with Karl Heinrich's nanny, to whom he clings as a child fearing the coldness and the military pomp of his uncle's kingdom.

The film's opening introduces us to the prince, still a little boy, as he arrives in Karlsburg to meet his uncle, the king. Immediately we are presented with an example of the famed Lubitsch touch: as the king arrives at the train station, a sea of top hats are doffed, a "mass ornament" effect that was correctly interpreted by a German critic as a joke about slavish German authoritarianism.[93] This mass choreography of hats is in honor of the king's presence, but then the train arrives, and who appears? A timid, small boy.[94]

When he first meets his uncle, Karl Heinrich runs away at the sound of celebratory cannon fire—away from the uncle and back into the arms of his nanny.[95] When the king later sends the nanny away and Karl Heinrich

cries, the uncle admonishes him sternly: "A prince never cries." The boy obediently wipes the tears from his eyes and then, before shaking his uncle's hand, wipes his hand on the back of his pants, which we view in an irreverent close-up of the boy's behind. This carnivalesque touch makes clear that the film is in favor of emotion and the body and opposes an authoritarian order that strives to discipline and "armor" the body.

The nanny is replaced by Dr. Jüttner, the masculine but rumpled, warm, affectionate, and lenient tutor. Next in Karl Heinrich's life comes Kathi, the bold, impetuous, passionate barmaid with whom he falls in love. And of course there is the youthful, exuberant, affectionate Karl Heinrich himself, who will be disciplined over the course of the film into losing his sweet smile and ending up in cold, repressed melancholy. Within that realm of the film represented by its youthful, egalitarian, affectionate, and more feminine characters, oppressive social barriers of class can be overturned by the power of human affection. In that realm, masculinity is softer and more emotional, represented by Jüttner and the prince. This softer masculinity could be read as Jewish; Joel Rosenberg has written that Jüttner is one of the implicitly Jewish characters in Lubitsch's films.[96] I would add that the dark-haired Mexican actor Novarro was probably most famous in America at the time for his portrayal of the Jewish title character in *Ben-Hur* (1925). In any case, the older, colder, hierarchical, and more masculine—and "German"—order prevails in the film.

The Lubitsch touch is always elliptical and metaphorical. We can expect no overt statement about Jews or gender or politics. Lubitsch is not a realist; there is no "realistic" portrayal of Heidelberg or of the archaic political order we find in Karlsburg. The film portrays a love that cannot be because of oppressive social barriers. It is also about a man who, because of his social position, is disempowered, castrated even. Much as he tries to find a way to marry the person he loves, he is overpowered by larger social forces. We are used to seeing aristocratic women in such a position: as Lil Dagover states as Jane in *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari* (1920), "We queens are not permitted to follow the dictates of our hearts." It is less common to focus on a man trapped in such a position.

Most critics liked Novarro's performance, but again, some reservations were raised about his being too "Latin." Was he perhaps too dark for the part? Makeup was reportedly applied to make him look lighter, but then he supposedly looked somewhat artificial, too much like an actor.[97] Perhaps it also made him look too effeminate. Schallert wrote that

Figure 4.3 A closeting if ever there was one: the prince (Ramón Novarro) at the end of *The Student Prince in Old Heidelberg* (1927). Screen capture.

he preferred Novarro in "less sentimental roles."[98] I would argue that, despite any makeup he wore, Ramón Novarro's performance is poignant as a youthful, affectionate, less than fully masculine prince who becomes very cold and melancholy as he is denied the love of his life.

Part of what might be poignant was Novarro's own situation as a closeted gay actor. While all gay actors were closeted at this time, the closet had to be locked even more tightly if you were marketed as a "Latin lover" adored by straight American women. Novarro knew a lot about "impossible love."[99]

During the mid-1920s, Lubitsch was being attacked for making "frothy films" for female audiences ("sophisticated chambermaids") instead of blockbuster historical epics.[100] While he was making *The Student Prince*, Lubitsch was asked how he could do anything original directing a film in the somewhat clichéd genre of the Heidelberg film. He replied, "Well, for one thing, there won't be any duels in it."[101] And in fact, the young men of the *Burschenschaft* do not fence; they drink beer, toast Kathi, and

dance.[102] Only later, after Karl Heinrich becomes king, do they behave in a cold, authoritarian, regimented way; each bows like a robot to their former comrade as Karl Heinrich slowly loses his smile and realizes what a dull, formal—robotic—ritual their interaction has become.[103]

Lubitsch apparently liked to mime all the parts in a film, regardless of gender. More important, his films often undermine normative notions around gender, sometimes in ways that can be read as queer. As many scholars have noted, Jews, homosexuals, and women have often been similarly positioned in Western culture, and thus antisemitism, homophobia, and misogyny have often worked in similar ways.[104] Lubitsch's generic preferences, especially for the operetta, which would become his model for the musical, also create an affinity with queer perspectives. As Stacy Wolf asserted, the American musical has often been considered a queer genre (with many queer performers and queer fans), and it is "a very Jewish genre as well."[105]

In any case, Lubitsch's films frequently demonstrate sympathy for outsiders and nonconformists. In his comedies, he often let them triumph, but in *The Student Prince*, we are especially moved because the lovers cannot overcome the social structures that conspire to make their love impossible.

Lubitsch's Final Silent Films: The Patriot *(1928) and* Eternal Love *(1929)*

In autumn 1927, just as *The Student Prince* was released, the German film press reported that Lubitsch might be moving back to UFA in Germany. Lubitsch had only recently sailed back from Germany in July 1927. Apparently Lubitsch was considered for the job of head of production at UFA.[106] Was the report true? In any case, Lubitsch did not move back to Germany.

Instead he went to Paramount.[107] His ties to that Hollywood studio went back to the EFA in Germany in 1921, and it was where he had made *Forbidden Paradise* (1924). At Paramount he finally succumbed to the pressure to make a big historical epic. *The Patriot* (1928) was a film about the mad Russian Czar Paul I, and it starred Emil Jannings, who came to Hollywood in 1927. *The Patriot* is lost (not much more than a trailer remains), but it was a big success; it was also the first and only time Lubitsch would make a historical epic of this sort in America. Jannings wrote in his memoirs that it was his best American film.[108] Jannings earned Hollywood's very first Oscar for best actor for *The Last Command* (in which he also played a

Russian), which he had made earlier in 1928 with director Josef von Sternberg. His English was not good, however, and he returned to Germany as sound films took over in the United States.[109]

Lubitsch's last silent film was *Eternal Love* (1929), based on a Swiss story. It was an example of a German genre, the *Bergfilm* (mountain film). Set in the Alps (but filmed in the Canadian Rockies), it starred John Barrymore and, newly arrived from Germany, Camilla Horn. Lubitsch had made "mountain films" in Germany, as discussed in chapter 1. Set in Switzerland during the Napoleonic Wars, *Eternal Love* is the story of an impetuous, rebellious mountaineer, an unlikeable "bad boy" (Barrymore) who is in love with a virginal young blonde girl (Horn). In a drunken stupor, he is seduced by a dark-haired woman ("bad girl") whom he is then forced to marry. The film is not a comedy, ending tragically for the two lovers. It was not successful at the box office.

Apparently its status as something of a hybrid between a silent and sound film, with music but no dialogue on its synchronized sound track, did not help. Audiences wanted to hear more dialogue—more "realism." But Lubitsch decided against realism, instead using the operetta to invent "a new kind of movie altogether: the musical."[110]

"Naughty Boy from Gay Paree": *The Love Parade* (1929)

The title of this section comes from a review of Lubitsch's first sound film by the Hollywood columnist Louella Parsons.[111] With these words Parsons refers to the character Maurice Chevalier plays in the film, fully in harmony with the image Chevalier would have in America. This phrase also demonstrates that Lubitsch's *The Love Parade* revived the "bad boy" character Lubitsch had played early in his film career. American audiences probably would not have accepted a Jewish bad boy from Berlin, but they did accept a bad boy from Paris. Indeed, Chevalier, the star of the French variety stage, was already famous in the United States, but his first American film, *Innocents of Paris*, was "dismal" according to Mordaunt Hall in the *New York Times*.[112] Chevalier would get rave reviews in *The Love Parade*.

The transition to the sound film began in Hollywood at Warner Brothers with a film that told a story about the tension between Jewish tradition and the desire to assimilate to American modernity: *The Jazz Singer* (1927). Lubitsch himself had considered making that film, but once he left Warner, he could not. Warner had bought the rights to the play by Samson

Raphaelson (who would later work as a screenwriter for Lubitsch). *The Jazz Singer* had a synchronized musical soundtrack, with six songs performed by the film's star, Al Jolson, ending with the film's finale, "My Mammy." The film also included Jolson's character performing songs in blackface in what is now considered a racist manifestation of mainstream American culture's appropriation of jazz.[113]

This first "talkie" had about two minutes of synchronized talking; otherwise, the dialogue was conveyed by intertitles, as in the typical silent film. Although the novelty of *The Jazz Singer* made it a huge hit, it would take a while to figure out how to combine sound with film in a way that made sense. Adding a synchronized instrumental track with an occasional bit of recorded dialogue and some sound effects quickly lost favor. A music track with some sound effects would be added to Lubitsch's *The Patriot* (1928), but the critics did not like it (although they liked the film). Likewise, Lubitsch's *Eternal Love* (1929) was not helped by this technique.[114]

Audiences wanted films in which they could hear all the dialogue, and that is what Hollywood began producing. Sound film seemed to demand a new kind of realism, but Lubitsch went in the opposite direction—toward the operetta film, a model he had already used for *The Student Prince in Old Heidelberg* (1927).[115] His first sound film, *The Love Parade*, was a musical in the operetta style that premiered November 19, 1929, in New York—a few weeks after the stock market crash of October 24, 1929. The crash soon led to the Great Depression, although no one yet realized how bad things would get.[116]

Paramount's marketing plans for *The Love Parade* included this announcement: "BEAR IN MIND that 'The Love Parade' will not be a stage operetta photographed, but will be an absolutely new type of show—first a motion picture, second a tuneful musical show."[117] It would not be a stage operetta that one simply filmed; it would also not be a "naturalistic" musical that justified singing by having the story focus on performers in vaudeville, nightclubs, or on the stage. It would be an operetta that was adapted for the screen, one that took full advantage of the medium of film. Lubitsch's film did that, and it was a critical and commercial success. The review in *Variety* proclaimed that it was "the first true screen musical."[118]

After a detailed analysis of this operetta film, I will focus on its class and gender politics. Having a bad boy as the hero of the film would indicate a more conventionally sexist plot, which is mostly true of *The Love Parade*. It features a "battle of the sexes" in which Chevalier's "naughty boy," Count

Alfred, appears to triumph over Jeannette MacDonald's Queen Louise. The queen is of higher status than the count, a rakish officer, but he seems to tame her. In the end, she is perhaps too much the fair-haired good girl to his bad boy. The same battle, however, is also waged by the main couple's two foils: Alfred's butler Jacques, played by Lupino Lane, and the queen's maid Lulu, played by Lillian Roth—a dark-haired bad girl if ever there was one.

An Operetta Film

In an interview in late 1929 with a reporter from the German trade journal the *Film-Kurier*, Lubitsch argued that musical films should not be naturalistic, with the singing justified by a plot about performers who sang onstage or in nightclubs. Except for Lubitsch and his followers in the early 1930s, the more naturalistic style would be the main American model for the musical—the backstage musical—at least until Rodgers and Hammerstein in the 1940s.[119] Lubitsch wrote that instead of any attempt at realism, the musical should be based on fantasy. Operetta was a genre with content that was "Märchenstoff," the stuff of fairy tales. The characters used songs instead of speeches to express their emotions. The songs were not an interruption of the story but rather integral to it (in contrast to "real life").[120] This same model would be adopted by Pommer back in Germany at UFA beginning with *Die Drei von der Tankstelle/Three Good Friends*, which premiered in autumn 1930.

The Love Parade was based on a 1919 French play, *Le Prince Consort*, by Leon Zanrof and Jules Chancel; it was adapted for the screen by Ernst Vajda and Guy Bolton. Victor Milner was the cinematographer, and the music was composed by Victor Schertzinger with lyrics by Clifford Grey. The "spacious, white rococco [*sic*] sets" (as Huff called them in 1947) were designed by Hans Dreier. Huff also praised Chevalier, "the French music-hall singer," and MacDonald, who came from Broadway, bringing "the best light opera voice yet heard on the screen."[121]

For the most part, the critics in late 1929 and early 1930 praised the film, above all for Chevalier and for Lubitsch's direction.[122] MacDonald received positive mention, too, as did the two performers who played the two main servants: Lane, the British music hall star, and Roth, whom McCarthy at Paramount described as an eighteen-year-old who had worked for Ziegfeld as a "hot-and-mean" blues singer.[123] *Variety* referred to Lane and Roth's "knockabout style that's a wow."[124]

In the *New York Sun*, Cohen called the film "a mixture of bedroom farce and a Balkan operetta."[125] The film came across as "sexy, racy, risqué" to Schallert in the *Los Angeles Times*, who added, "There are those who will object to *The Love Parade* on the grounds of its sexiness, but the objectors cannot deny the adroitness of the treatment of its situations."[126] In fact some censors around the country did find some things offensive, as is clear from the MPAA (Motion Picture Association of America) Production Code file for the film: "Pennsylvania ordered so many cuts as to completely ruin it."[127] A "Censorship Report" by F. Sell lists thirty-three objectionable items in the film, including the fact that "part of . . . [MacDonald's] breasts [were] exposed in bath," and the line, "I pronounce you wife and man," spoken by the clergyman in the wedding scene.[128]

The film begins inside an apartment. We see a butler (Lane) set the table for a lavish romantic dinner while he performs the first song, singing about each item he sets down and finishing with a bottle of champagne. He leaves the room. We cut to a closed door at one end of the room, and from behind it we hear an argument in French between a man and a woman. The door opens, and a smiling Count Alfred (Chevalier) enters and says (in English), "She's terribly jealous." The woman enters and presents a garter she has found; speaking French, Alfred says that it is hers. There is a cut to a close-up of her legs as she pulls up her dress to reveal that she is wearing both her garters.

The woman pulls out a small pistol to shoot Alfred; they struggle over the gun, and then there is a knock at the door. A man enters, and the woman cries, "Mon mari!" Alfred turns to the camera and translates for us: "Her husband." The woman then aims the small pistol at her heart, shoots, and collapses. Her husband shouts, "Paulette!" He rushes to his wife's side and kneels down. He takes the gun from her, stands, moves closer to Alfred and shoots. Alfred feels his chest and checks for blood, but he seems to be fine. He and the husband check the cartridge of the gun; Alfred smiles to indicate it is empty. We cut to a close-up of Paulette's face, and her closed eyes suddenly open. Overjoyed that she is alive, her husband rushes to her again and helps her up. She directs him to help fasten the back of her dress, which he cannot manage. Impatient, she goes to Alfred and has him do it; he is much more adept at this task. Paulette storms out of the apartment, still annoyed with her husband, who follows sheepishly.

Thus Lubitsch's first sound film begins: with a song by Lane and then some untranslated French, with very few bits of English, while Lubitsch

stages a scene for us in which almost all the information is conveyed visually (just as in his silent films). Through the garter, we realize that Alfred is cheating on Paulette, who is cheating on her husband with Alfred. Paulette stages a faux suicide, which is exposed.[129] Alfred then moves to a dresser; we cut to the inside of a drawer filled with guns, into which Alfred drops Paulette's gun. This is all the exposition we need to figure out what kind of a "naughty boy" Count Alfred is.

After this opening scene, a visitor enters who cannot be put off: it is the Sylvanian ambassador to France, to whom Alfred, as a Sylvanian military attaché in Paris, reports. The ambassador tells Alfred that he has been following him and thus knows all about the scandalous affairs he has been having with women in Paris. He says, "I know more about you than you think. My wife has told me everything." He announces that he has sent a report to the queen and that Alfred will be sent back to Sylvania to report to her. The ambassador leaves, and Alfred's butler, Jacques, a Frenchman (played by the Englishman Lane), pleads with Alfred to take him back with him to his home country, which he mistakenly calls "Pennsylvania." When Alfred agrees, Jacques says how happy he is and leaves. But Alfred is not happy to leave Paris, and he sings a song of farewell.

The scene then changes to Sylvania, a "Ruritanian" (or "Graustarkian") kingdom somewhere in Central Europe.[130] In the palace we are introduced to the queen (MacDonald), who wakes up from a lovely dream but is unwilling to tell her chambermaids about it; instead, she sings the song "Dream Lover." Then there is a bath scene remarkably like the one in Lubitsch's *The Oyster Princess* from 1919, except that the set is more opulent. As in *The Oyster Princess*, the film teases us as the female star disrobes but is hidden just enough by a bevy of maids. She enters the bath with a shot of a nude leg stepping into the water. After an older chambermaid says that everyone prays the queen will marry, the queen is annoyed that her unmarried status is such a popular topic. She expresses her annoyance by taking a sponge and covering her face with soap, which ends the erotic titillation of the bath scene on a funny, slapstick note (very similar to what happens to Ossi in her bath in *The Oyster Princess*).[131]

Later that day, she meets with her ministers, who are obsessed with the same topic: that the queen is unmarried and that there are so few eligible bachelors and even fewer willing ones. This is because her husband will not be a king but rather a prince consort with no power and, as one minister puts it, "with nothing to do." The other ministers whisper to him at this remark;

Figure 4.4 The queen in the bath: Jeanette MacDonald in *The Love Parade* (1929). Screen capture.

somewhat embarrassed, he admits that the husband will have "something" to do—the unspoken activity being sex—but that, in fact, there is nothing to "do" (implying that the man will be more or less a gigolo).

Annoyed, the queen dismisses the meeting, and then Count Alfred is announced to her. She is not very interested in speaking to him until she begins reading the report about his "scandalous affairs" in Paris, which she reads with ever greater zeal, turning the pages more and more rapidly. They begin to flirt; obviously attracted to him, she tells him that she needs to punish him. But she orders him to join her for dinner that evening.

That rendezvous is filmed cleverly in that we never see them having dinner; we only hear the eager reports of the various groups of her subjects, who are spying on them, watching the window of her chambers from outside. We cut from group to group—from Alfred's butler Jacques and his new acquaintance, the queen's maid, Lulu (Roth); to the ministers; and to the chambermaids. Each group reports what they see happening between the queen and Alfred. We never get the desired countershot of what they

are watching (and reporting to us about)—that is, we are never shown what they see: Count Alfred having dinner with the queen. This comic surveillance also has a sinister undertone common to the Lubitsch operettas: the social and political pressures brought to bear on a romance between two people because of their places in the hierarchy. We have already noted this in the silent operetta *The Student Prince*, and it will be found in most of Lubitsch's sound musicals, recurring with special force in his final musical, *The Merry Widow* (1934).

The film never shows us the two would-be lovers until they retreat to her bedchamber (which we hear reported by those spying on them). The door to that chamber is closed, so the people watching outside can no longer see the couple, but now we viewers are allowed to see inside the room and watch the two interact. Alfred sings the film's title song, "Love Parade," which asserts that all the "charms" of his many previous lovers are united in the queen and that in her all these charms are "paraded." The song becomes a duet and ends as they kiss. He sings about all his other lovers, and the (lonely) queen melts—an interesting example of the double standard.

They part for the evening, and suddenly there is a time lapse: they are to be married, and Alfred is dressing for the ceremony. The wedding is quite the spectacle, but above all it focuses on the importance of the queen, whose dress has a very ornate and long train (reminiscent of the one Madame Dubarry had in the 1919 film of the same name). She walks to majestic music through a huge hall, her path lined on both sides by soldiers with raised sabers. At the very end of the long procession, Alfred, the groom and prince consort to be, appears in a small side door and then walks a short distance to the queen's side. A clergyman marries them, first asking Alfred if he is willing to be "obedient and docile." This gives him pause, but after an embarrassing silence, he assents and the clergyman pronounces them "wife and man"—an inversion of the traditional word order that disturbs not only the (fictional) Afghan ambassador but also apparently disturbed censors in Pennsylvania.

Now married, the couple is soon unhappy because of the asymmetry in their relationship, which the wedding ceremony highlighted. Alfred has no power and little to do as prince consort except to wear nice uniforms and to take naps to keep up his strength for the evenings—advice given to him explicitly by the queen. As one reviewer put it, he "is only a toy of the queen."[132] Alfred has nothing to do in the mornings except dress and have breakfast (and even that meal cannot be served until the queen appears);

meanwhile, she reviews the troops in another stirring production number, "Grenadiers," that she sings with a huge group of soldiers. The gender inversion is evident in the contrast between the queen in her military uniform and Alfred, still in his pajamas.

As Alfred begins to chafe more and more at his impotence, we cut to the servants' take on the problems of the royal couple. As in a Shakespearean comedy, the two main servants are comic foils for the main characters. The butler Jacques (Lane) and the maid Lulu (Roth) are now romantically involved. Lulu grabs Jacques and proclaims that they too should get married (an "inverted" marriage "proposal"). They then declare that in their marriage they will have the advantage of being "common": they can fight with each other openly, whereas the queen and the prince are not allowed to do so. While singing "Let's Be Common," Roth and Lane do an acrobatic, slapstick dance in a mock battle, knocking and shoving each other, doing pratfalls in the kind of knockabout style for which Lane was famous. They sing how they will love each other and fight each other, and, as the refrain goes, "do it again!" At the end they go happily into a building, arm in arm, heading to Lulu's quarters, but then we see Lane being thrown out the attic window of her bedroom (another one of Lane's acrobatic feats). Roth then sticks out her head and admonishes him (as though he had gotten "too fresh") with the last line of the song, which varies the refrain: "*Don't* do it again!"

Frustrated by his situation, Alfred sings of his charms, "Nobody's using them now!" He ends the song with the claim that he still has "it" but that "nobody's using 'it' now." In the late 1920s, "it" referred to sex appeal—most famously in the designation of the star Clara Bow as "the 'it' girl," but the *Variety* review of *The Love Parade* referred to Chevalier as Paramount's "'it' man." Alfred tells the queen that he is tired of being her "plaything," and he refuses to appear at the opera with her—which he is supposed to do—and look happy. If the couple does not look happy, rumors might spread all the way to Wall Street, and the financial loan Sylvania needs would be endangered. This can be read as an allusion to the financial power of America over Europe—and especially over Germany—as Wall Street itself was about to collapse, a process that began just before the film's premiere.[133] The queen commands him to appear at the opera with her; he replies that he will only do so if handcuffed.[134]

Again the main action is interrupted to allow us to watch the servants comment on the battle of the sexes playing out between the queen and her

consort. In the number "Gossip," the maid Lulu leads the other maids, who serve as her chorus, in taking the side of the queen, and the butler Jacques leads the male servants as his chorus in taking the side of the prince. "The queen is right!" sing the women, followed immediately by the men: "The prince is right!" Roth and Lane end up dancing on the table, surrounded by the others, once again in a mock, choreographed fight that Roth wins (as Lane performs his virtuoso pratfalls).

Alfred turns up at the opera at the last minute, to the applause of the audience that had been ogling the empty chair next to the queen. Alfred uses his leverage to get the queen to beg him to stay—he demands her to say, "I beg you," requiring her also to sound sincere as she begs him. She submits.

Back home at the palace, the queen sits forlornly in her bed while Alfred, across a wide corridor in his own room, packs to leave her; he is returning to Paris. The queen runs out of her room and across the spacious corridor to knock on his door to tell him there is a mouse in her room.[135] This ploy fails. What works is to tell him that she will follow him to Paris—he won't be able to get rid of her. He replies that if so, it does not make sense to go to Paris. Instead, he tells her that she will have to be punished—an obvious parallel to their first meeting when she told him she would have to punish him. She suggests that he should demand that she stop giving him orders and that she be attached to him from morning to night—or rather, she corrects herself, from "night 'til morning." He will get to rule both at home and in public: she calls him "My King!" (no longer prince consort). We watch them next from outside his bedroom window as they happily sing a brief reprise of the song "Love Parade" as a duet. Then a smiling Alfred draws the curtains shut, and the film ends.

"Let's Be Common!"

Queen Louise seems to have been "tamed," having more or less renounced the power she held over her prince consort and restored the "natural order" of the sexes, the inversion of which so bothered the Afghan ambassador at their wedding. This would also seem to support William Paul's assertion that Lubitsch's musicals are characterized by a "conservative acquiescence in the dominant order."[136]

But who acquiesces, the queen or the "bad boy"? Most of Lubitsch's musicals with Chevalier involve his promiscuous bad boy being tamed into

accommodation with monogamy. That certainly happens here: tired of being the queen's plaything, Alfred threatens to move back to Paris, where, as he told the queen at their first meeting, he had been involved in a "scandalous affair" not just with one woman but "with several." The return to freedom (and promiscuity) in Paris is thwarted by the queen's ploy to persuade him to stay with her. She seduces him as he seduced her at their first meeting: he suggested to her that he should be punished for his scandalous behavior by being ordered never to leave her side, by being "attached" to her at all times, implying a kind of devotion to her that pleased her (even though she feigned anger: "And that is supposed to be a punishment?"). At the end of the film, she offers the same kind of devotion (and obedience) to him by offering to be "punished" by staying attached to him all the time—or at any rate, all through the night. The suggestiveness of such a proposal is made more explicit in their subsequent bedroom duet that ends with the curtains being closed.

A kind of symmetry is achieved with this ending, one might argue. His promise of slavish devotion to her, which leads to his seduction of her and then their marriage, is a promise that he cannot keep because it is out of balance, and the balance can be righted only by her promise to be similarly devoted to him. Does this mean that the "natural" hierarchy between the genders needs to be restored? Or is it rather a critique of any hierarchy? Leland Poague suggested that we have in *The Love Parade* a critique—indeed, a parody—of conventional gender norms: by having them reversed, the asymmetry of the conventional is exposed.[137] We have a scenario in which the woman has all the power, and the man is the "toy" or "plaything" with little to do but wear nice uniforms and keep up his strength for sex. In fact, as prince consort, he is little more than a gigolo, a kept man. The fact that this cannot work, that it is insufferable to the party with no power or autonomy, is conceivably an argument that such asymmetry is wrong no matter which gender is given this kind of power over the other—a rich, powerful woman over her gigolo or a man over his wife in a traditional marriage. At the very least, it seems to be an argument for what in the 1920s was called the "companionate marriage," a marriage between equal partners (or at least a more equitable arrangement than the traditional, hierarchical, authoritarian marriage).[138]

Perhaps this interpretation is not entirely persuasive: the queen seems to give up all her power, not just in the marriage but also in the state, to convince Alfred to stay. After all, she calls him "My King!" On one hand,

this is meant as an antidote to his complete lack of power as prince consort—not being allowed to make suggestions about any issue that concerns the state. On the other hand, the queen may only be calling him "King" to make him feel better—does she actually have the power to change the laws of the kingdom? The ending does not elaborate; all we know for sure is that she convinces him to let her spend the night with him.

Paul asserts that Lubitsch's musicals "clearly move their characters toward a not always willing acquiescence in the status quo," meaning that the endings do not resolve all ambivalence about the status quo. As Paul puts it, "the happy endings toward which the musicals always move seem both forced and facile."[139] I would formulate this somewhat differently: Lubitsch is always at the very least irreverent (if not completely cynical) about conventional generic norms, including the conventional happy ending of a romantic comedy or musical. He is just as irreverent about conventional social norms concerning sex and marriage.

Perhaps part of the problem is that Jeannette MacDonald is too much the fair-haired "good girl," and thus we cannot sympathize as much with her as we can with the bad boy, the rascal that Chevalier (always) plays, In the world of a Lubitsch comedy, it is usually hard to sympathize much with anyone but the bad boy or bad girl. In *The Love Parade*, the queen is not "bad," she is powerful (and somewhat rigid and haughty in her exercise of that power). That power is, in turn, the main problem of the couple's relationship and the one that will be resolved in the direction of a more equitable power relationship (if not the complete restoration of the conventional one in which the man has all the power).

Perhaps it is useful to raise the issue of class and social status. MacDonald's character is clearly of higher social status than Chevalier's: she is the queen, and he is "marrying up." He is a count, but when the queen's ministers discuss whether his lineage is sufficient to marry the queen, it would seem that he is descended from the nobility but only through "illegitimate" relationships. Also relevant is another interesting contrast between MacDonald and Chevalier: she is American and he is French, yet not only does she play the character of higher social status, she also represents "high culture" with her operatic singing voice, whereas Chevalier is a music hall singer, albeit from Europe.[140]

In the fairytale setting of an operetta, social power relations have at best an allegorical relationship to the power relations of the romantic couple. The lover of higher social status needs to be made more equal to the lover of

lower social status, which is what happens to the balance of power between the queen and her prince. But this musical comedy has clearer class differences—namely, those between the main characters, Queen Louise and Count Alfred, on one hand, and between the butler Jacques and the maid Lulu, on the other.

This comic subplot with Jacques and Lulu is where we return to the earlier comic style of Lubitsch, more reminiscent of vernacular modernism—slapstick as opposed to the sophistication Lubitsch had been producing for the American cinema in the 1920s. The broader, lower comedy of the subplot was noticed by critics in 1929, and some of them did not like it precisely for that reason.[141]

This more physical comedy, with characters who actually dance together[142] and who simulate physical fights ("knockabout"), produces commentary on the main romance; indeed, as foils for the main characters, that would be their conventional function. In the number "Let's Be Common," Jacques and Lulu praise their freedom from the social inhibitions that repress the main characters. In their second number, "Gossip," they more openly express what is at stake in the battle of the sexes, with Lulu triumphing over Jacques in a way that the queen will not be able to do over her male partner. At the end of the film, looking on from outside at the strife within the palace between the queen and her husband, Jacques and Lulu comment on how far apart the bedrooms of the royal couple are from each other. Lulu then suggests to Jacques that when they are married, they should only have one room between their bedrooms; Jacques is perplexed that she wants even that much space between them. Lulu insists on a "room of her own" and then some.

In Lulu's character, we have once again a rebellious bad girl who contrasts with MacDonald's good girl. Lillian Roth was indeed a dark-haired (Jewish) "bad girl," an eighteen-year-old young woman known for singing "hot blues," not for having a fine voice for light opera like MacDonald. Roth was also someone who could dance and do pratfalls on a par with Lupino Lane; as *Variety* put it, "for the laugh stuff Miss Roth is as much there as he is."[143] In the knockabout couple, her character Lulu certainly gives as well as she gets, or even better. When Lane's character arrives in Sylvania, we know that he is eager to tell his (apparently off-color) joke about the Frenchman and the farmer's daughter to Sylvania's provincial inhabitants, who supposedly will not know it, as all of Paris does already. He asks Lulu if she has heard the joke, and she tells him she has. To keep the

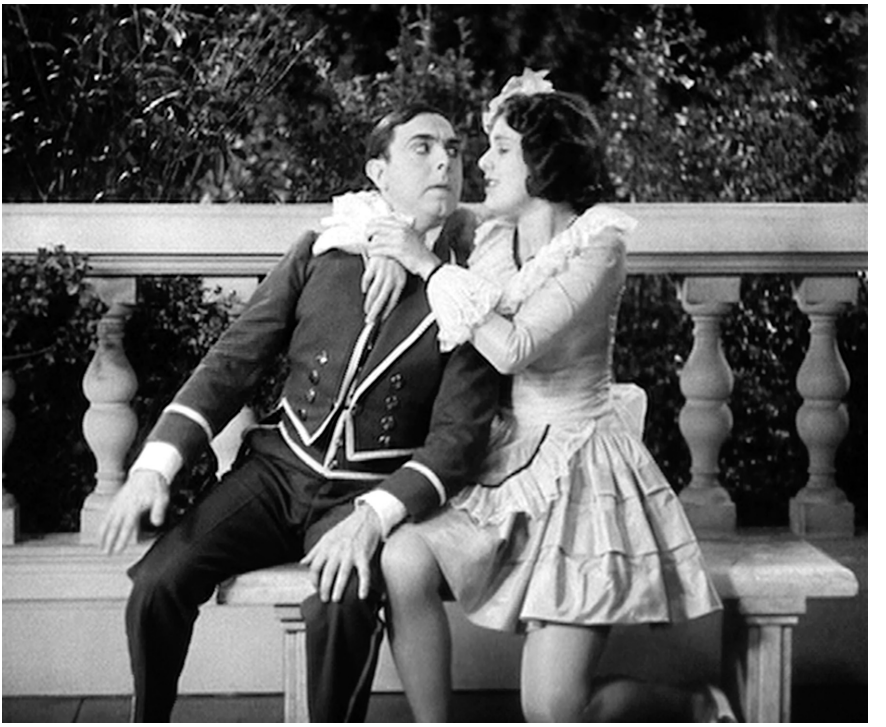

Figure 4.5 "Let's get married!" Lulu (Lillian Roth) proposes to Jacques (Lupino Lane) in *The Love Parade* (1929). Screen capture.

upper hand, he tells her that he is the Frenchman, but she responds that he is not. When he asks her how she knows this, she replies authoritatively, "I am the farmer's daughter." Whereas Freud explains obscene jokes as a form of sexual aggression and objectification of women between men, here the unspecified dirty joke about the farmer's daughter is appropriated by a female character.[144] She does so to establish her power over the man trying to seduce her—the man whom she will soon enough grab and proclaim, "Let's get married!"

While Roth's power in the comic subplot could be interpreted as an even clearer example of the "inversion" that the film must right, the vitality of her performances with Lane is too subversive to be undone by any conventional romantic closure, especially of the "forced and facile" sort.[145] Such characters in Lubitsch films always win our sympathy in ways that exceed the conventions of generic plots.

Musicals after The Love Parade*: 1930–34*

Lubitsch's second musical, *Monte Carlo* (1930), starred Jeannette MacDonald but not Chevalier.[146] Top billing went to Englishman Jack Buchanan, who "lacked the effervescent personality of Chevalier."[147] MacDonald plays Countess Helene, a runaway bride who leaves the very rich but not very bright Duke Otto of Liebenheim (Claude Allister) at the altar. As foolish as the Duke may be, he gets one of the best lines in the film, commenting on the staged operetta (*Monsieur Beaucaire*, 1901) within the operetta film: "It's a silly story, only possible with music," which may be Lubitsch's comment on all his musicals.[148]

Countess Helene buys a ticket to Monte Carlo, hoping to gamble her last bit of money in order to win much more. She sings the most famous song of the film, "Beyond the Blue Horizon," leaning out the window of the train speeding through the lovely countryside. However, this utopian moment of freedom and hope is quickly dashed in Monte Carlo, where she loses everything at the roulette table.

Buchanan plays a count who, in order to get close to Helene, impersonates a hairdresser willing to work for nothing for the now impoverished countess. They fall in love, but the class difference makes her uneasy. The hairdresser teaches her a lesson about snobbishness, but he also reveals that he is really a rich count, and the happy end ensues. The role of the hairdresser raises issues not just of class but also of gender norms—an arguably queer take on masculinity that the happy ending (mostly) undoes.[149]

Lubitsch's third musical, *The Smiling Lieutenant* (1931), was based on Ludwig Berger's silent operetta film *Ein Walzertraum/A Waltz Dream*, made in Germany in 1925. Berger's film was shot at UFA studios in Babelsberg in summer 1925 and premiered December 18, 1925.[150]

The 1931 sound version of the operetta directed by Lubitsch starred Chevalier in the lead male role, Niki, again a rakish officer, this time serving in the Austrian army and stationed in Vienna. In *The Smiling Lieutenant* we have Chevalier without MacDonald. The romantic triangle in this musical includes two female stars. Claudette Colbert plays Franzi, the dark-haired violin player who leads a female band that plays in the Viennese beer gardens. Miriam Hopkins plays the blonde but somewhat staid Princess Anna, whose father is King Adolf of Flausenthurm, a tiny Ruritanian kingdom—but he is also a cousin of Emperor Franz Josef of Austria-Hungary.

Just as happens in *The Wildcat* when Pola Negri's Rischka takes pity on her rival, the dark-haired Franzi takes pity on Princess Anna: she helps the staid Anna seduce her husband, "the smiling lieutenant." Anna is soon transformed, and when Niki comes home, he finds her playing jazz at the piano, smoking a cigarette, and wearing sexy, stylish lingerie. Modernity—and consumerism—are triumphant. But the end is bittersweet for the dark-haired, independent, single woman: she is talented, clever, sexy, and generous, but she does not "get the guy."[151]

The next musical Lubitsch directed was a production that Paramount had wanted him to supervise, not direct. In fall 1931, Lubitsch was finishing up his first (and only) "serious" sound film, an antiwar film, *The Man I Killed* (1932), which I discuss in chapter 5. At the same time, shooting for the musical *One Hour with You* (1932) was supposed to begin. It was a musical adaptation of his silent comedy from 1924, *The Marriage Circle*, but this time set in Paris, not Vienna. The film brought Chevalier and MacDonald back together, with Chevalier playing the doctor and MacDonald the innocent wife whose best friend will try to seduce her husband.[152]

George Cukor began directing this musical, but when Lubitsch visited the set, he quickly decided he needed to take over.[153] *One Hour with You* premiered March 25, 1932, as a stylish musical that takes place in contemporary Paris with art deco sets. There is no Ruritanian kingdom, only middle-class characters as in Lubitsch's original silent version. However, it is more risqué: it is clear that Chevalier's character actually sleeps with the bad girl (here named Mitzi).[154] The end of the remake does not focus on her but rather on the final reconciliation of the married couple. MacDonald, again too much the good girl, forgives Chevalier too easily.[155]

Lubitsch's final musical, *The Merry Widow*—the most elaborate of them all—was made for MGM over much of 1934. When filming began, it was still "pre-Code" Hollywood—that is, the period in the early 1930s before the Motion Picture Production Code (the so-called Hays Code) was first enforced strictly. It had been created by Will H. Hays on behalf of the film industry already in 1930, but it was not enforced strictly until July 1934, after Joseph Breen had taken charge of the new Production Code Administration under Hays.[156]

Production of *The Merry Widow* was not yet finished when the new rules were adopted, and its completion was hindered by them. At this point, Lubitsch was returning to the musical after a two-year hiatus. He left the

musical genre to make *The Man I Killed* in 1931, but he returned when he took over filming of *One Hour with You* at the end of 1931.

Lubitsch next made two "straight" (nonmusical) comedies that I discuss in chapter 5: *Trouble in Paradise*, released in late 1932, and *Design for Living*, released at the end of 1933. They represent the pinnacle of his work in the early 1930s. On loan from Paramount in 1934, Lubitsch returned to MGM, the studio where he had made *The Student Prince* in 1927 and where Erich von Stroheim had scored a hit with the first version of *The Merry Widow* in 1925.[157] Lubitsch's 1934 sound version is also based on the Lehar operetta, but it is set in 1885. The story takes place in the fictional Carpathian kingdom of Marshovia, which we find on a map at the end of the title sequence only with the help of a magnifying glass.[158] The film brings Chevalier and MacDonald together for the last time.[159] Chevalier plays Count Danilo, yet another rakish officer; he can have any woman in the kingdom, but for that reason he becomes obsessed with a mysterious woman veiled in black who rejects him. This is the widow Sonia, played by MacDonald, the richest woman in Marshovia. She goes to Paris, and he follows, under orders to wed her so that her money will not be lost to the tiny kingdom. They fall in love, but they fight constantly and only wed in the end because they are more or less forced to do so by the state. The wedding takes place in a prison cell—a very cynical depiction of marriage.[160]

Why so cynical? Perhaps because an upheaval occurred in Lubitsch's private life: his marriage fell apart in between the making of *The Love Parade* in late 1929 and *Monte Carlo*, which premiered in fall 1930. In late May 1930 he discovered that his wife Leni was having an affair with his old friend and collaborator Hanns Kräly, who had written screenplays with him since 1915. Within a year the divorce was final. Did his musicals become less reverent about marriage and more cynical in response? Is *The Love Parade* (made before the breakup) less cynical about marriage than *The Smiling Lieutenant* or *One Hour with You*?[161] Not really. But *The Merry Widow* is the most cynical of all the musicals.

It was a lavish production, and it lost money. It had been hindered by Will Hays's and Joseph Breen's interference on behalf of the newly enforced Production Code.[162] In the end, though, the problem was not censorship or cynicism as much as the fact that by 1934, American audiences were tired of operettas set in mythical European kingdoms. Indeed, they were tired of romantic comedies with or without music set among the elites of Europe.

The musicals had started out as hits, but *One Hour with You* lost money and so did *The Merry Widow*.[163]

Lubitsch's silent comedies and his Ruritanian musicals had spoofed American morals while being set in a mostly imaginary Europe. His "bad girls" were still there, but they were less prominent than in his German films. *The Student Prince* was unique in its portrayal of a different kind of masculinity—a gentler, even queer kind—in contrast to the (hetero)sexually aggressive bad boys Lubitsch had so often featured. The musicals with Chevalier brought the latter type back with a vengeance.

Those Ruritanian musicals lost favor with the American public by the mid-1930s, but as we have seen, they always had their limitations, mainly due to their accommodations to American conservatism about gender norms and sexuality. However, Lubitsch's most interesting sound films of the early 1930s provide evidence of his attempt to challenge American conservatism (political, sexual, and artistic), as I will demonstrate next.

Notes

1. EFA collapsed before either film was completed, but the financing came through for both of them. See chap. 2, n. 18.
2. See, e.g., the *New York Times* review of *Loves of the Pharaoh*, February 22, 1922. Huff wrote in 1947 that the film was "one of the most spectacular pictures ever produced, belonging in the same epic class with *Cabiria*, *Intolerance*, *Theodora*, *The Thief of Baghdad*, and *Ben Hur*. Although the picture cost only about $75,000, it would have cost a million or more in the U.S.A."; Huff, *Index of the Films*, 11.
3. Eyman, *Ernst Lubitsch*, 106.
4. Eyman, 106.
5. I was fortunate to see the remaining fragment of *Die Flamme/Montmartre* at the Deutsches Institut für Film and Fernsehen in Wiesbaden.
6. Herbert Ihering's review of *Die Flamme/Montmartre*, *Berliner Börsen-Courier*, September 12, 1923, appears in Prinzler and Patalas, *Lubitsch*, 145–46.
7. Huff (*Index of the Films*, 12) also writes, "Two endings were made—a logical, tragic one for Europe and a forced, happy and conventional for America."
8. See Pratt, "'O Lubitsch, Where Wert Thou?'" 57–58.
9. Eyman, *Ernst Lubitsch*, 80–81.
10. Eyman, 89–90. For an idea of the roles Pickford had played in her career, see, e.g., Stephen Sharot, "The 'New Woman,' Star Personas, and Cross-Class Romances in 1920s America," *Journal of Gender Studies* 19, no. 1 (2010): 77–79.
11. Later in her life Pickford asserted that it was a bad film. See Eyman, *Ernst Lubitsch*, 86–95; Thompson, "Lubitsch, Acting, and the Silent Romantic Comedy," 396–97.

12. W.H. [Willy Haas], review of *Rosita*, *Film-Kurier*, August 29, 1924. Norbert Falk had also worked on the screenplay for *The Loves of the Pharaoh* (1922) with Hans Kräly. In fact, under the pseudonym Fred Orbing, Falk had worked on the screenplay for *Madame Dubarry* (1919) and *Anna Boleyn* (1920), as well as *Sumurun* (1920), also with Kräly. See chap. 2, n. 44.

13. See "Kommt Lubitsch nicht zurück?" *Film-Kurier*, April 27, 1923.

14. See, e.g., "Verhandlungen Ufa-Lubitsch," *Film-Kurier*, August 22, 1927; "Dreht Ernst Lubitsch im nächsten Winter in Berlin?" *Film-Kurier*, July 24, 1930; "Ernst Lubitsch wird in Berlin drehen?" in the *Film-Kurier*, February 12, 1931.

15. See Eyman, *Ernst Lubitsch*, 93; Spaich, *Ernst Lubitsch und seine Filme*, 164.

16. See Eyman, *Ernst Lubitsch*, 93–98. Eyman reports that Lubitsch, in order to make the film with Pickford, had "technically" been "on loan-out from Famous Players-Lasky" (93–94). Eyman speculates that Jesse Lasky was unsure about how to use Lubitsch—or nervous about anti-German sentiment. In June 1923, Lasky settled with Lubitsch, releasing him from the contract. Negotiations with United Artists at the same time didn't go the way Lubitsch wanted. Only the offer from Warner Brothers kept him from leaving America; see Eyman, 97–98.

17. Eyman, 108. This comparison to musical forms can be found already in the review in Berlin by Heinz Michaelis in the *Film-Kurier*, September 2, 1924; he wrote that *The Marriage Circle* was "ein Stück distinguierteste Kammermusik," a piece of the most distinguished chamber music.

18. Another important influence on Lubitsch, according to Billy Wilder, was Swedish director Mauritz Stiller's *Erotikon* (1920). See Cameron Crowe, *Conversations with Billy Wilder* (New York: Knopf, 2001), 309, 311, 312–15, 328.

19. Spaich calls it a "Boulevardkomödie"; see *Ernst Lubitsch und seine Filme*, 164.

20. Davidson was the German producer who had supervised Lubitsch at Union from at least 1914, and who then brought Union—and Lubitsch—into UFA in late 1917. In 1921 he left UFA with Lubitsch for EFA. After EFA collapsed and Lubitsch left for America, he returned to UFA. See n. 106.

21. See *Marriage Circle* rights history, the card dated August 24, 1937, in the Warner Brothers file on *Marriage Circle*, box 2 of 2, folder no. 12719B, Warner Brothers Archive, University of Southern California (USC).

22. Eyman, *Ernst Lubitsch*, 101–2, 106, 382; Jacobsen, "Filmografie," in Prinzler and Patalas, *Lubitsch*, 210; and "Films 1924," compiled by Roxanne Glasberg for the Canadian Film Archives, May 1974, which I found in the Lubitsch files of the MOMA Film Archive.

23. See the *New York Times* review of *The Marriage Circle*, February 4, 1924; *Variety*, review of *The Marriage Circle*, February 7, 1924; "Lubitsch's New Comedy," *New York Times*, February 10, 1924; and Iris Barry's review of *The Marriage Circle*, *The Spectator*, May 17, 1924—the latter is cited in "Films 1924."

24. See Iris Barry's review of *Lady Windermere's Fan* in "No More Classics," *The Spectator*, February 6, 1926: 214. She did not like Lubitsch's adaptation of the Oscar Wilde play (nor did she like Wilde), but once again she praised *The Marriage Circle*.

In 1930, the British critic Barry went to America, where in 1932 she would establish the film study department at MOMA in New York. In 1935 she became the first curator of the department, which became the museum's film archive.

25. Cited in Spaich, *Ernst Lubitsch und seine Filme*, 168. See also Michaelis, review of *The Marriage Circle*.

26. Michaelis, review of *The Marriage Circle*.
27. Huff, *Index of the Films*, 13.
28. George Pratt, notes for the Roosevelt College Film Study Series, fall semester, 1949, program 3, November 4, 1949, Lubitsch files, MOMA Film Archive.
29. Huff, *Index of the Films*, 13.
30. Eyman, *Ernst Lubitsch*, 104.
31. Eileen Bowser, notes on *The Marriage Circle* for showing on June 8, 1976, as part of the series on "American Film Comedy" at MOMA, May 13, 1976–January 4, 1977, Lubitsch files, MOMA Film Archive.
32. Eyman, *Ernst Lubitsch*, 67–68, 101, 104–5.
33. Hake, *Passions and Deceptions*, 65, 154–57.
34. *New York Times*, review of *The Marriage Circle*, February 4, 1924.
35. Hake, *Passions and Deceptions*, 140–41.
36. The lack of intertitles here might be seen as sexist in its devaluation of women's conversations with each other.
37. Here Lubitsch's touch gives life to objects, making them erotic, as it were, an insight for which I am indebted Noa Merkin's paper at the 2016 conference of the Society for Cinema and Media Studies (SCMC) in Atlanta; the ensuing discussion of her paper led to speculation about the "power of objects" in Lubitsch.
38. Cf. Rischka in *The Wildcat* doing this to Lieutenant Alex; see chap. 3. Rischka and Mizzi are two "bad girls" who upset the status quo. Rischka is certainly more of an outsider than Mizzi.
39. Eyman (*Ernst Lubitsch*, 107) uses "flustered" to characterize Monte Blue's performance in general.
40. Franz remains virtuous in this version of the story. McBride (*How Did Lubitsch Do It?*, 177) calls that into question, but the behavior of Franz that we see in Mizzi's apartment would not make sense if they had actually slept together. However, in Lubitsch's sound-era remake of *The Marriage Circle* as a musical, *One Hour with You* (1932), the husband is clearly not virtuous.
41. Cf. the character "Mizi" in Lubitsch's *The Merry Jail* (1917); she is a maid, neither a vamp nor what Americans would call a "gold digger," but she does ride off with a middle-class suitor at the end of the film in a taxi that she has "stolen" from another suitor.
42. Hake, *Passions and Deceptions*, 141.
43. Cf. the way the issue of light versus dark hair comes up in *The Oyster Princess;* see chap. 3.
44. Cited in David Oshinsky, "No Justice for the Weak," *New York Times Review of Books*, March 20, 2016, p. 22. See also Mae M. Ngai, "Nationalism, Immigration Control, and the Ethnoracial Remapping of America in the 1920s," *OAH Magazine of History*, July 2007, 11–15.
45. Eyman, *Ernst Lubitsch*, 107; Huff in 1947 refers to Prevost herself as a "pouting flapper" not long removed from Max Sennett's "Bathing Beauties"; see Huff, *Index of the Films*, 14.
46. For a discussion of the terms *vamp*, *flapper*, and *New Woman* in early twentieth-century America and how the terms related to social class from the late nineteenth century into the 1920s, see Sharot, "New Woman."
47. Cited in Eyman, *Ernst Lubitsch*, 108.
48. See Barry's review of *The Marriage Circle* in *The Spectator*.
49. *New York Times*, review of *The Marriage Circle*.
50. "Lubitsch's New Comedy," *New York Times*.

51. *Variety*, review of *The Marriage Circle*.
52. Michaelis, review of *Marriage Circle*.
53. Hake, *Passions and Deceptions*, 156.
54. Huff, *Index of the Films*, 14. Marie Prevost plays the "gold digger"; Fritz Göttler's commentary on *Three Women* (Prinzler and Patalas, *Lubitsch*, 150) claims that Lubitsch was obsessed with her. Pauline Frederick plays the mother and May McAvoy the daughter. I saw this film in a version with French intertitles at the Film Museum in Munich in June 2016.
55. The palace featured sets of the palace by Hans Dreier, just arrived from Germany, in a somewhat surrealistic version of Rococo. Huff (*Index of the Films*, 15) writes that Paul Rotha "professed to see *Forbidden Paradise* as a satire on the false glamour of Hollywood itself." See Rotha's review in Weinberg, *Lubitsch Touch*, 261–63. I was fortunate enough to see two incomplete but complementary versions of the film at the MOMA Film Archive in October 2015, one with Czech and one with French titles, both of which have been used to create a restored version of the film.
56. Irene Rich plays the older woman as a sad but very sophisticated version of the "bad girl," and the film ends with her triumph. McBride (correctly) calls this film "a sterling example of Lubitsch's greatness"; *How Did Lubitsch Do It?*, 199.
57. Huff (*Index of the Films*, 15) also writes, "Monte Blue and Marie Prevost were delightful in the leading roles, and Clara Bow outstanding as the flapper-vamp."
58. This visualizes the threat in the dialogue at the end of *I Don't Want to Be a Man* (1918), when Ossi tells her male guardian that he will be kept "so small." See chap. 3.
59. Seymour Stern, *The Greenwich Village Quill*, September, 1926, cited in Weinberg, *Lubitsch Touch*, 266–67. Huff (*Index of the Films*, 16) in 1947 called the sequence "impressionistic," whereas Poague (*Cinema of Ernst Lubitsch*, 99) in 1978 called it "expressionistic." I was fortunate to see this film in a new, restored version from the Library of Congress in September 2015 at Northeastern Illinois University in Chicago. The film also shows the influence of Dupont's *Variety* (1925).
60. In 1923 Pickford thought Lubitsch would be valuable at United Artists "if he could do spectacles"; see Eyman, *Ernst Lubitsch*, 93; Thompson, "Lubitsch, Acting, and the Silent Romantic Comedy," 396.

According to Eyman (80–81), Lubitsch complained that Warner was not willing to spend the money to let him make a "spectacle." McBride writes that this was a ruse because Lubitsch did not really want to make such pictures; see *How Did Lubitsch Do It?*, 213. Warner let MGM and Paramount buy Lubitsch out of his contract; see Eyman, 123, 30. He would make one such epic for Paramount in 1928, *The Patriot*, which was successful. The only big spectacle he would make after that would be a musical, *The Merry Widow*, for MGM in 1934—nothing like his German historical epics.

61. An earlier version of this discussion is found in Richard W. McCormick, "Ernst Lubitsch and the Transnational Twenties: *The Student Prince in Old Heidelberg*," *Transit* 10, no. 2 (2016), http://escholarship.org/uc/item/6t02590p.
62. He had used operettas as the basis of his German comedies—and even for *Madame Dubarry*. See Elsaesser, *Weimar Cinema and After*, 198; Salt, "Die innere Welt von Ernst Lubitsch."
63. Tully, "Ernst Lubitsch," 82.
64. See Harry and Jack Warner's correspondence with Lubitsch, January–August 1926, Lubitsch files, folder 2729B, Warner Brothers Archive, USC. See also Eyman, *Ernst Lubitsch*, 115–18.

65. Kracauer, *From Caligari to Hitler*, 140–41.

66. German filmmakers who have gone to Hollywood since the 1980s like Wolfgang Petersen and Roland Emmerich have made blockbuster action films. I would much rather watch an operetta film by Lubitsch than an action film by either of them.

67. Kurtz, review of *The Student Prince in Old Heidelberg*, *Lichtbild-Bühne*, September 11, 1928; and Ernst Jäger, review of *The Student Prince in Old Heidelberg*, *Film-Kurier*, September 11, 1928.

68. See "Streit um 'Alt-Heidelberg,'" *Film-Kurier*, May 30, 1927.

69. See "'Alt-Heidelberg' wird umbenannt," *Film-Kurier*, June 20, 1927. In the 1923 German film adaptation of *Alt Heidelberg*, Werner Krauss had played the tutor of the "student prince." Rudolph Kurtz, in his (positive) *Lichtbild-Bühne* review of the Lubitsch version, writes that Jean Hersholt in the American film is not as good in the role as Krauss had been. But American critics loved Hersholt in the role.

70. Lubitsch was not able to return to Germany for his own father's funeral in 1924 because of his production schedule and because of the travel time; taking a train to New York and then a ship to Germany, he could not have made it to Berlin in time for the funeral; Eyman, *Ernst Lubitsch*, 109.

71. Eyman, 132–33.

72. See "Lauds Producing Here: Mr. Lubitsch Praises Finished Work on Settings—Films and Moral Tendencies," *New York Times*, September 18, 1927. See also Eyman, *Ernst Lubitsch*, 132–33.

73. See "Streit um 'Alt-Heidelberg,'" *Film-Kurier*, May 30, 1927.

74. See "Drei Atelier-Tage," *Film-Kurier*, April 19, 1927.

75. This is clear from the article "Drei Atelier-Tage," a report from Hollywood in the *Film-Kurier*, April 19, 1927. Spaich (*Ernst Lubitsch und seine Filme*, 184) reproduces the cable Lubitsch sent to Hubert in Berlin, which is an exhaustive list of every costume element he wanted Hubert to acquire.

76. At this point there is a clear allusion to Murnau's *The Last Laugh* (1924): Karl Heinrich, now king, greets the elderly commoner who had served him well when he was a student in Heidelberg. Overjoyed, Karl Heinrich serves him a fancy meal in his palace (in a role reversal).

77. Earlier in the film we see her in a photograph sent to Jüttner; we also see from afar that she is in the wedding carriage at the end of the film, but we never get a live close-up.

78. Weinberg, *Lubitsch Touch*, 103–4. However, Eyman (*Ernst Lubitsch*, 135) maintains that it was a very expensive production that ultimately lost money.

79. See Kurtz's review of *The Student Prince*, *Lichtbild-Bühne*, September 11, 1928; Jäger's review of *The Student Prince*, *Film-Kurier*, September 11, 1928. For the American reception, see, e.g., Weinberg, *Lubitsch Touch*, 103; Mordaunt Hall, "The Screen," reviews of *The Student Prince*, *New York Times*, September 22 and 25, 1927; Harriet Underhill, "On the Screen," review of *The Student Prince*, *New York Herald Tribune*, September 22, 1927.

80. Kurtz's review of *The Student Prince* in the *Lichtbild-Bühne*.

81. Slavoj Žižek, "Lubitsch, the Poet of Cynical Reason?" in Novak, Dolar, and Krečič, *Lubitsch Can't Wait*, 181–205.

82. See the German reviews by Kurtz in the *Lichtbild-Bühne* and Jäger in the *Film-Kurier* and the American reviews by Underhill ("On the Screen," *New York Herald Tribune*, September 22, 1927) and by Richard Watts Jr. (review of *The Student Prince in Old Heidelberg*, *New York Herald Tribune*, September 22, 1927; cited in Weinberg, *Lubitsch*

Touch, 103). Writing twenty years later, Huff (*Index of the Films*, 17) made a similar observation.

83. Thompson, "Lubitsch, Acting, and the Silent Romantic Comedy," 403.

84. Thompson, 397, 399. This behavior is mentioned again and again in interviews with actors who worked with him; for example, Adolphe Menjou (cited in Eyman, *Ernst Lubitsch*, 107; and Thompson, "Lubitsch, Acting, and the Silent Romantic Comedy," 399), Miriam Hopkins (cited by G. G. Patterson in notes on *Design for Living* for the Toronto Film Society, December 6, 1970, which I found in the Lubitsch files at the MOMA Film Archive), and Jack Benny (cited in Peter Barnes, *To Be or Not to Be* [London: British Film Institute, 2002], 7).

85. Peter Bogdanovich considered Shearer's performance in the film the best of her career; see his "Movie of the Week," *New York Observer*, September 20, 1999.

86. Eyman, *Ernst Lubitsch*, 134.

87. One might also read Shearer's performance—in which she followed Lubitsch's direction—as standing in for all the American women who were infatuated with Novarro during the late 1920s. And as for a powerful gaze, well, in "real life," of course, Norma Shearer *did* have more power than Ramón Novarro, given her connection to MGM management and his status as a foreign actor who was a closeted gay man.

88. Weinberg, *Lubitsch Touch*, 60–61.

89. See Hall's review in the *New York Times*, September 22 and 25, 1927, and Huff (*Index on the Films*), who echoes the same sentiment in 1947. In another review from 1927 (no author listed) found in the Audrey Chamberlin scrapbooks in the Margaret Herrick Library, it is stated that "you can't make a German out of a Latin."

90. The critic "E.B." excoriates Lubitsch for casting Novarro as Karl-Heinz, making racist comments about Novarro, Mexicans, Mexican and American Indians, and mestizo Mexicans (of mixed European and indigenous heritage). He also attacks the film for its negative depiction of the fraternity cadets, finding the film in general an insulting depiction of pre-War Germany. He opens his review with a remark that by making a film like this, Lubitsch was surely not planning to return to Germany. See E.B., review of *The Student Prince in Old Heidelberg*, *Der Bildwart: Blätter für Volksbildung* (January 1929), Schriftgutarchiv, Stiftung Deutsche Kinemathek, Berlin; 49–50.

91. In fact, Novarro's prince might even remind us of a somewhat more handsome version of none other than the young Ernst Lubitsch (as he looked ten years earlier, in the mid-1910s).

92. Ashkenazi, *Weimar Film and Modern Jewish Identity*, 29.

93. Jäger's review in the *Film-Kurier*.

94. This opening of the film anticipates the joke near the beginning of *To Be or Not to Be*, when the Gestapo men call harshly one after another for "Wilhelm Kunze," who then appears: a little boy (albeit in a Hitler Youth uniform).

95. Cf. Kracauer and the motif of "male retrogression," with a male putting his head in the lap of his wife or mother. See Kracauer, *From Caligari to Hitler*, 99, 122. Here in Lubitsch we have something similar—but with a positive meaning, I would argue.

96. Rosenberg, "Shylock's Revenge," 212.

97. See the *Variety* review of the film in 1927, which Huff echoes in 1947 (*Index of the Films*, 17).

98. Schallert's review (probably in the *Los Angeles Times*), Chamberlin scrapbooks.

99. On Ramón Novarro, see Ernesto Chávez, "'Ramon Is Not One of These': Race and Sexuality in the Construction of Silent Film Actor Ramón Novarro's Star Image," *Journal of*

the History of Sexuality 20, no. 3 (September 2011), 520–44; André Soares, *Beyond Paradise: The Life of Ramon Novarro* (New York: St. Martin's, 2002). On the ambiguous gender and sexual positioning of the first "Latin lover" in America, Rudolph Valentino, see Miriam Hansen, *Babel and Babylon*, 243–94.

100. Tully, "Ernst Lubitsch," 82.

101. Weinberg, *Lubitsch Touch*, 102.

102. While the film may make some jokes about German authoritarianism, as Jäger remarked in his review in the *Film-Kurier*, September 11, 1928, it also kids Prohibition-era America, with a number of scenes of happy beer-drinking in Heidelberg.

103. The robotic behavior arises from conformity to a masculine, authoritarian social hierarchy—in contrast to the rebellious behavior of a woman masquerading as a robot in *The Doll*.

104. See Boyarin, Itzkovitz, and Pellegrini, *Queer Theory and the Jewish Question*; and Boyarin's essay therein, "Homophobia and the Postcoloniality of the 'Jewish Science,'" 166–98. See also Wallach, *Passing Illusions*, 15–16.

105. Stacy Wolf, "Barbra's 'Funny Girl' Body," in Boyarin, Itzkovitz, and Pellegrini, *Queer Theory and the Jewish Question*, 249–50.

106. See "Verhandlungen Ufa-Lubitsch," August 22, 1927. Had Lubitsch taken the job, he would have been replacing his recently deceased former boss, Paul Davidson, who had succeeded Erich Pommer as production head at UFA. Pommer had more or less fled to America in 1926 as cost overruns on the production of Fritz Lang's *Metropolis* had continued to mount.

Evelyn Hampicke and Christian Dirks report that Paul Davidson took over for Pommer at UFA (a company Davidson had helped create) in 1926. Davidson was the producer at Union films in the 1910s, where Lubitsch got his start, the man who merged Union with UFA, and then later left UFA with Lubitsch to work for EFA. After Lubitsch left for America in 1922, Davidson went back to UFA but in a much lesser role. His career did not go well. And when he took over for Pommer, UFA was in bad financial straits, which only got worse in 1927 with the commercial failure of *Metropolis*. The film press soon wrote about the "Davidson crisis" with rumors that he would be forced to step down. Davidson took his life in July 1927, and then in August we find these rumors about Lubitsch taking over the same position at UFA.

Lubitsch had just been in Germany in connection with the making of *The Student Prince*; he had visited Davidson and had expressed concern about his health. It was soon after Lubitsch sailed back to America that Davidson committed suicide. He had long maintained that Lubitsch would return to Germany. Did he expect Lubitsch to remain in Germany? If so he was certainly disappointed by the meeting with Lubitsch in the summer of 1927. By that point, however, his health was already in bad shape; it is unclear whether Lubitsch's staying in Germany would have made a difference. See Hampicke and Dirks, "Die Erfindung des Generaldirektors," 49–55, esp. 54; see also Droessler, "Ernst Lubitsch and EFA."

Lubitsch did not take the job at UFA; returning to Germany, Pommer did.

107. See Eyman, *Ernst Lubitsch*, 123, 130, on the MGM-Paramount deal buying Lubitsch out from the contract at Warner, according to which he still owed them a film.

108. Eyman, 144.

109. The idea for Sternberg's *The Last Command* came from Lubitsch, according to Eyman (387); Jacobsen, "Filmografie," in Prinzler and Patalas, *Lubitsch*, 222; and Carringer and

Sabath (*Ernst Lubitsch*, 218). It should also be noted that some of the monumental scenes of soldiers and the masses in Moscow that we can see in Sternberg's *The Scarlet Empress* were actually taken from *The Patriot*, made in 1928 when Paramount had more money than it would have in 1934, some years into the Great Depression. See McBride, *How Did Lubitsch Do It?*, 193–94; 223.

110. Eyman, *Ernst Lubitsch*, 148–49.

111. Louella O. Parsons, "Chevalier Wins High Praise in 'Love Parade,'" *Los Angeles Examiner*, January 24, 1930.

112. Mordaunt Hall, "M. Chevalier's Brilliant Work," *New York Times*, November 24, 1929.

113. For a reassessment of blackface in *The Jazz Singer*, see Charles Musser, "Why Did Negroes Love Al Jolson and The Jazz Singer?: Melodrama, Blackface and Cosmopolitan Theatrical Culture," *Film History*, vol. 23, no. 2 (2011), 196–222. Musser also speculates about a screenplay started by Lubitsch that might have influenced Alan Crosland's film with Al Jolson (201–2). I thank Cynthia Walk for calling my attention to the Musser article.

114. Eyman, *Ernst Lubitsch*, 148–49; Huff, *Index of the Films*, 17–18.

115. Eyman, *Ernst Lubitsch*, 148–49.

116. On that very day, November 19, 1929, the *New York Times* had a story titled "Stock Market Quiet with Prices Lagging." According to this article, the situation had stabilized. This analysis was completely wrong: the bottom of the slump would not be reached until 1933, and it would not really end until economic mobilization after Pearl Harbor turned things around.

117. Charles McCarthy, undated document, "From Charles E. McCarthy/Paramount Building/New York City, N.Y.," 4: "Smart, Big, Tuneful, Funny, Spectacular, Brilliant, Romantic—'The Love Parade'/A Preview by Arch Reeve/As the Picture Goes Into Production," MPAA (Motion Picture Association of America) Production Code Files, Margaret Herrick Library, Beverly Hills, CA. The Motion Picture Association of America is the trade organization of the major film production studios in America.

118. *Variety*, review of *The Love Parade*, November 27, 1929. The premiere in Los Angeles seems to have been in January; Schallert's first review of the film in the *Los Angeles Times* is dated January 19, 1930.

119. Let me qualify these remarks a bit: the backstage musical did not necessarily stay "naturalistic"; under the direction of Busby Berkeley, for instance, it became a truly surrealistic spectacle.

120. Ernst Lubitsch, "Gespräch mit Ernst Lubitsch. Die Film-Operette—Ein schönes Märchen," *Film-Kurier*, January 1, 1930; the interview is dated December 15, 1929. See also Renk, *Ernst Lubitsch*, 79–80.

121. Huff, *Index of the Films*, 19.

122. See, e.g., Mordaunt Hall, "The Screen: Maurice Chevalier Again," *New York Times*, November 20, 1929; Richard Watts Jr., "On the Screen," *New York Herald*, November 20, 1929; Edwin Schallert, "Love Parade Gay and Clever," *Los Angeles Times*, January 24, 1930; Parsons, "Chevalier Wins High Praise"; John S. Cohen Jr., "The New Photoplay," *New York Sun*, November 20, 1929.

123. McCarthy, undated document, 2; see n. 117.

124. *Variety*'s review of *The Love Parade*.

125. Cohen, "New Photoplay."

126. Schallert, "Love Parade Gay and Clever," *Los Angeles Times*, January 24, 1930; and Schallert's earlier review in the *Los Angeles Times*, January 19, 1930.

127. Maurice McKenzie, note to Jason Joy, October 21, 1929. MPAA Production Code file on *The Love Parade*, Margaret Herrick Library, Beverly Hills, CA. See n. 117 on the MPAA.

128. F. Sell, "Censorship Report" (MPAA Production Code file on *The Love Parade*, Margaret Herrick Library), a three-page document dated only "November," but it has to be 1929. This may be a report for the Pennsylvania board; in any case, most if not all of these items seem not to have been cut from the film. Certainly the gender inversion of the wedding line is in the version of the film now available.

129. Compare this with Mizzi's feigned suicide (holding a gun with an empty cartridge) in *The Marriage Circle* and to Schultz's attempt to kill himself when he thinks he has interrupted a tryst between Maria and Hitler in *To Be or Not to Be*. The German films *The Pride of the Firm*, *The Doll*, *Romeo and Juliet in the Snow*, and *Sumurun* also contain foiled or half-hearted suicide attempts. But in *The Shop around the Corner*, there is a serious suicide attempt.

130. *Ruritanian* refers to a series of English novels set in a small, fictional Central European kingdom. Critics in the 1920s (e.g., Parsons) also used the adjective *Graustarkian* to describe the Sylvanian kingdom, Graustark having been the setting of a series of American novels set in a fictional Carpathian kingdom of that name. Those novels led to three American films, the first in 1915 and the other two in the 1920s.

131. Cf. figure 3.2.

132. Cohen, "New Photoplay."

133. The special plight of Germany was that its economy had only been saved from hyperinflation in 1924 by loans from American banks under the so-called Dawes Plan. This was also the reason Germany would be so vulnerable to the collapse of American banks in the wake of the stock market crash.

134. Handcuffs are used as part of the wedding ritual in *The Wildcat* (1921).

135. Here again we get a sexist allusion to the "typically feminine" fear of mice, as in *The Doll* and *The Wildcat*. This also occurs in *The Merry Widow*.

136. Paul, *Ernst Lubitsch's American Comedy*, 193.

137. Poague, *Cinema of Ernst Lubitsch*, 107–13.

138. This ideal was also a goal of sexual enlightenment during the 1920s, most famously in the enormously popular 1926 marriage manual written by the Dutch gynecologist Theodoor Hendrik van de Velde, *Ideal Marriage: Its Physiology and Technique* (London: Random House, 1926).

139. Paul, *Ernst Lubitsch's American Comedy*, 14.

140. While I argue here that MacDonald always remains a bit too much the "good girl" in the musicals with Lubitsch (and this was his fault), nonetheless she played the roles well, and they were a lot naughtier (and fun) than the "genteel" heroine of the MGM operettas she would make with Nelson Eddy after 1934. Her work with Lubitsch was the highlight of her career, and she remained devoted to him. She sang at his funeral.

141. Notably, Schallert's review in the *Los Angeles Times*, January 19, 1930.

142. Paul, *Ernst Lubitsch's American Comedy*, 97. He also points out that secondary characters "lose their physicality and vitality" in Lubitsch's subsequent musicals. Indeed, none of them have anything like this pair of "secondary" lovers.

143. *Variety*'s review of *The Love Parade*.

144. Note Sigmund Freud's remarks on obscene jokes in "Jokes and Their Relation to the Subconscious" (1905), *Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, trans. and ed. James Strachey, vol. 8 (London: Hogarth, 1953–66), 100. There he states that such jokes are usually between men but require a woman "who is taken as the object of the hostile or sexual aggressiveness." See Hake's discussion of this dynamic in relation to Lubitsch's comedies; *Passions and Deceptions*, 155. But there is a difference here, for Jacques tries to tell the joke to Lulu to seduce her, but she appropriates the joke herself, undermining his authority and making herself into the seductress.

145. Roth as Lulu crosses her eyes at one point, which scares Jacques, because it has already been established that cross-eyed characters mean bad luck for an impending marriage. This is another sign of a disruptive power that men feared. Some critics did not like Roth (e.g., Watts's review, "On the Screen"; and Schallert's review, "Love Parade Gay and Clever"), but these reviews provide more evidence of what a subversive female role she created.

Born Lillian Rutstein in Boston in 1910, Lillian Roth would continue her success on the New York stage and appear in a number of films through the mid-1930s, when her career declined, in large part because of her alcoholism. She joined Alcoholics Anonymous in 1946. In 1954 she published a memoir, *I'll Cry Tomorrow*, in which she spoke honestly of her alcoholism, which became the basis for the film of the same name in 1955, featuring Susan Hayward in the role based on Roth. Roth returned to the stage from the mid-1950s into the 1970s, even appearing in a few films in the 1970s. She died in 1980.

146. The film was based on a 1914 Hans Müller play, *Die blaue Küste* (The Blue Coast, or *Côte d'Azur*). Hake, *Passions and Deceptions*, 71.

147. Huff, *Index of the Films*, 20–21.

148. Harvey, *Romantic Comedy*, 3. Huff calls the Duke "foppish"; *Index of the Films*, 21.

149. In this film MacDonald starts out a "bad girl," running away in her underwear from a wedding to a rich Duke, but the whole film is about taming her. One of the most interesting aspects of the film is its play with masculinity: while apparently disempowered, even "castrated" in terms of money, class, and conventional virility, the count's (somewhat slavish) devotion to her does win her heart. Meanwhile his only rival, the Duke of Liebenheim is also no "he-man."

150. Hanns Winter reported from Hollywood ("Lubitsch's Zukunftspläne," *Film-Kurier*, April 18, 1925) that Lubitsch planned to make a (silent) film based on the same Viennese operetta Berger used for his film adaptation. Winter reports that Lubitsch had already wanted to do so with EFA in Germany in 1921–22. See also Christian Rogowski, "Ein Schuss Champagner im Blut. Ludwig Bergers musikalische Filmkomödie *Ein Walzertraum* (1925)," *Filmblatt* 18, no. 51 (2013): 7.

151. Once again Chevalier's character, a promiscuous lady's man, is seduced into accommodation with marriage (and monogamy, at least for the time being). He accepts marriage to a powerful woman through the seductive magic of jazz and modern fashion. A conspiracy of women determines how his story ends; indeed, after having transformed Anna, Franzi kisses her on the lips before departing.

152. Right after this film, Paramount used Rouben Mamoulian to bring MacDonald and Chevalier together again in a Lubitsch-style musical, *Love Me Tonight*, which premiered in August 1932. The songs by Rodgers and Hart in *Love Me Tonight*—above all, "Isn't It

Romantic?"—are more memorable than most of the songs in Lubitsch's musicals (except perhaps *The Merry Widow*, with its famous score by Franz Lehár), but the film does not match the style and intelligence of the Lubitsch model.

153. Cukor was more or less forced off the picture. He is listed in the credits only as having "assisted" Lubitsch. See Eyman, *Ernst Lubitsch*, 184–87.

154. What one could get away with before the Production Code was strictly enforced in 1934 (see n. 156 below): Chevalier's Dr. Bertier sleeps with Mitzi (as opposed to fending her off, as in *The Marriage Circle*)—but not on screen. The next morning he addresses the (men in the) audience, singing, "What Would You Do?" with a temptation like Mitzi, answering, "That's what I did, too!"

155. MacDonald's character, Colette, does insist to her husband that he is only a "naughty boy," and that "I'm the one who's bad" for having been kissed (twice) by Adolph. But given that we know her husband has actually slept with Mitzi, it is hard to see this as "fifty-fifty," as she insists. (Things were somewhat different in *The Marriage Circle*.)

156. Hays was the head of the Motion Picture Producers and Distributors of America (MPPDA) from 1922 to 1945; this organization later became known as the Motion Picture Association of America (MPAA). Breen was hired in 1934 to run the new Production Code Administration, the body that finally came down like a hammer (on July 1, 1934) on the film industry with regard to sexual—and political—"impropriety." See Thomas Doherty, *Hollywood's Censor: Joseph I. Breen and the Production Code Administration* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007).

157. Stroheim's version was based on the 1905 operetta by the Austro-Hungarian composer Franz Lehár. The 1925 film was a big hit, starring Mae Murray and John Gilbert. Set in a Ruritanian kingdom in the Balkans, "Monte Blanco" (an allusion to Montenegro?) but in contemporary times, the film shows an American dancer from the Ziegfeld Follies (Murray) arriving in a modern automobile; she becomes the "merry widow."

158. Audiences today might think that the Marx Brothers in *Duck Soup*, who set their film in "Fredonia," were spoofing Lubitsch's "Ruritanian" kingdoms: Sylvania in *The Love Parade*, Liebenheim in *Monte Carlo*, and Flausenthurm in *The Smiling Lieutenant*. But Lubitsch's musicals from 1929 to 1931 were already spoofs (and Marshovia in Lubitsch's *The Merry Widow* in 1934 would also be treated humorously). However, *Duck Soup* (1933) was a broader, more farcical comedy than the Lubitsch films.

159. Chevalier was dropped by Paramount due to his sinking box office appeal. Irving Thalberg at MGM hired him. Chevalier did not want to work with MacDonald and Lubitsch again, but Thalberg gave him no choice: he had to star in *The Merry Widow*, which then lost money. Chevalier returned to France. According to Eyman, he became "one of the few men Lubitsch didn't even pretend to like." During the German occupation, he continued performing in France. See Eyman, *Ernst Lubitsch*, 215–17.

160. In the prison cell, champagne and glasses appear in a window, soon perfume is sprayed in, and then rings appear. The two main characters submit to what Marshovia wants: the window opens again so that a clergyman can marry them; cf. the quasi-"drive-through" marriage in *The Oyster Princess*, at the window of the clergyman. This cynical depiction of marriage in a prison cell is even starker than the marital handcuffs used in *The Wildcat* and the handcuffs invoked (by Chevalier) in *The Love Parade*. The equation of being "hanged" with being "married" in Chevalier's two final speeches on the topic of marriage makes it all the clearer.

161. Eyman writes that the main effect the separation and divorce had on Lubitsch was that he threw himself into his work, making five films between summer 1930 and the end of 1932. On the breakup of Lubitsch's first marriage, see Eyman, *Ernst Lubitsch*, 160–65.

162. Breen was initially more lenient and had allowed the film to premiere in New York. Will Hays and Martin Quigley saw it there and were "outraged." Quigley, an archconservative Catholic, was especially outraged at the film. Breen, also a conservative Catholic (and often accused of antisemitism), would never be so accommodating again. Cuts were demanded from the already completed prints. See Eyman, *Ernst Lubitsch*, 221.

163. Eyman, 212, 222.

5

PUSHING THE BOUNDARIES IN PRE-CODE HOLLYWOOD, 1931–34

Even before finishing his third Ruritanian musical, *The Smiling Lieutenant*, in 1931, Lubitsch began to move in some new directions. First, he made a serious film: *The Man I Killed*.[1] Then he made two nonmusical comedies, *Trouble in Paradise* and *Design for Living*. These two comedies were arguably more political and much more subversive than his musicals—certainly about marriage and monogamy. They pushed the boundaries of what was possible in pre-Code Hollywood—that is, the period in the early 1930s before the (politically conservative and Puritanical) Motion Picture Production Code (the so-called Hays Code, first adopted in 1930) began to be enforced strictly in July 1934 by Joseph Breen, who had been appointed by Will Hays to lead the new Production Code Administration.

Once again tackling the topic of war, as he had ten years earlier with his last German comedy, *The Wildcat*, Lubitsch's *The Man I Killed* joined the wave of antiwar films, plays, and novels on both sides of the Atlantic. He set it in France and Germany in the period right after World War I, and besides overtly taking a pacifist stance, his film (less openly) addresses issues of importance to the Jewish communities in Europe and the United States. *Trouble in Paradise* is more sophisticated than any of Lubitsch's silent marital comedies: there is a sexual triangle, but marriage is barely mentioned in this film, in which the heroes are thieves who imitate—and steal from—the wealthy. *Design for Living* has the most radical sexual triangle of any Lubitsch film, along with a clear renunciation of the bourgeois status quo.

A Serious Man? The Antiwar Film *The Man I Killed* (1932)

Lubitsch's musicals, as operetta films, always had a strong European connection.[2] *The Smiling Lieutenant* in particular was an adaptation of Ludwig Berger's *A Waltz Dream*, a silent operetta film made in Germany in 1925. But one of Lubitsch's new projects in the early 1930s had a much different connection to Europe. *The Man I Killed* was not an operetta or a comedy.

During what I have termed the "transnational Twenties," Lubitsch's connections to Germany remained strong and would remain so until 1933. When he visited Germany in May 1927 and November 1932, he was celebrated by the film industry. Over the course of the 1920s, he brought film artists from Germany to America, and he followed the German cinema closely. He published articles in the German film press up until 1933. Throughout most of his career (even after 1933), the European box office usually made the difference when his films made money.

The Man I Killed can be seen as a response to what was happening in Germany. It demonstrates that Lubitsch's interest in Germany up until 1933 was not limited to stylistic developments there and his professional connections to the film industry, although the film (and its production history) provides evidence of such concerns. In fact, the film contains what can be considered an homage to Murnau, who died in an auto accident in California in March 1931, only six months before Lubitsch began shooting his film. The homage, which I will discuss in more detail later, is evident in how Lubitsch filmed the spread of gossip through a small German town, clearly imitating a sequence in Murnau's *The Last Laugh* (1924).

Beyond the allusion to the work of a German director, the film provides evidence of much deeper concerns about German politics. The film clearly critiques German nationalism and militarism and can be read as a response to the political crisis of late Weimar. Beneath the surface, one can also find evidence of concerns particular to the position of German Jews.

The German Connection

Lubitsch attempted to tackle serious political issues three times in his career. Each time the topic was war, and each time there was a critique of Germany. As discussed in chapter 3, his final German comedy (and first box office failure), *The Wildcat* (1921), satirized war and the military (as well as expressionism), even though the film was set in a fictional Ruritanian kingdom. The second film on a serious topic was *The Man I Killed*, another

box office failure, set mostly in Germany. The third film was *To Be or Not to Be* (1942), his dark anti-Nazi comedy, which made money but was not a big commercial success. It was controversial, with influential critics finding it in "bad taste."[3]

Of these three films, only *The Man I Killed* was not a comedy. It was based on a French play by Maurice Rostand with the same name, *L'homme que j'ai tué* (1925). Lubitsch and Samson Raphaelson worked on the screenplay between October and December 1930.[4] Filming began almost a year later in September 1931; the film premiered in New York on January 19, 1932.[5] It was Lubitsch's last attempt to do anything but comedy. Disappointing returns at the box office led to the film being renamed *Broken Lullaby*. An advertisement in the *New York Times* on February 9, 1932, proclaimed that the title was changed because "thousands . . . have insisted on a new title . . . more worthy of the greatness of its drama and magnificent love story!" The new title did not help.[6]

The Man I Killed is a social melodrama, a "problem film" with an antiwar message. It is set in France and Germany in the aftermath of World War I, and it addresses the trauma of war. Whether we call this trauma "male crisis" or "shell shock" or "PTSD," crucial psychic dimensions often considered to be characteristic of the culture of Weimar Germany are in this film, and they are on the surface, not repressed or hidden. Less overt is the way the film addresses issues of special concern to a German Jewish audience: antisemitism, assimilation, and intermarriage.

Lubitsch's film is in the spirit of German pacifist and antiwar films made in the early 1930s, such as G. W. Pabst's *Westfront 1918* (1930) and *Kameradschaft* (Comradeship, 1931), as well as Victor Trivas's *Niemandsland/Hell on Earth* (1931). Also significant was the very successful American film *All Quiet on the Western Front*, directed by Lewis Milestone and released in April 1930, six months before Raphaelson and Lubitsch began writing their screenplay.[7] Milestone's film was itself based on Erich Remarque's *Im Westen nichts Neues* (1928), the German novel so prominent amid the wave of antiwar novels and films in the late 1920s. In December 1930, just as Lubitsch and Raphaelson were finishing the screenplay of *The Man I Killed*, Hollywood learned how *All Quiet on the Western Front* was received in Berlin: on the second night of its run, a Nazi-instigated riot in the cinema ultimately led to the film being banned in Germany.[8] This was an obvious sign of the political crisis of late Weimar, and Lubitsch was surely paying attention.

For *The Man I Killed*, Lubitsch originally wanted to cast Emil Jannings in the role of Dr. Holderlin, the father of the German soldier killed by the main character, a French soldier, during World War I.[9] Lubitsch had made Jannings a film star in Germany through a number of his German films—for example, *The Merry Jail* (1917), *When Four Do the Same* (1917), *The Eyes of the Mummy* (1918), *Madame Dubarry* (1919), *Anna Boleyn* (1920), and *The Loves of the Pharaoh* (1922). In Hollywood, Lubitsch cast Jannings in a starring role in *The Patriot* in 1928. After Jannings returned to Germany in 1929 with the advent of sound, Erich Pommer (who had also been in Hollywood) wanted Lubitsch to direct Jannings's first sound film in Germany, but instead he hired Josef von Sternberg because he was cheaper; the resulting German film was (of course) *The Blue Angel*.[10]

Contradictory reports appeared in the *Film-Kurier* in early 1931: Lubitsch might film *The Man I Killed* in Germany in order to use Jannings; Jannings seriously considered coming back to America to work on the film with Lubitsch.[11] By June 1931, the *Los Angeles Times* reported that the film was "originally intended as a Jannings vehicle until contracts in Germany interfered," and the film "is to be made in Hollywood."[12] Lubitsch cast Lionel Barrymore instead.

Apparently motivated by political concerns, Lubitsch decided to make a serious film that took a stand against war and nationalism. In September 1932, nine months after its US premiere, *The Man I Killed* was shown (dubbed in German) at a special preview in Munich.[13] Lubitsch published an article on the film in *Die Filmwoche* in October 1932 focusing on the problem of adapting a drama for a sound film.[14] In November of the same year, Lubitsch visited Berlin for the last time to attend the Berlin premiere of *The Man I Killed*. It was shown in English on November 14 in the Marmorhaus cinema and in German at the Capitol on November 15.[15] At the end of 1932, the German premiere of a Lubitsch film was still something very special; even the English showing of the film filled every seat at the Marmorhaus. German critics were particularly interested in *The Man I Killed* because it was set for the most part in Germany. In the liberal newspaper *Vossische Zeitung*, the film was praised.[16]

Within a few months, at the end of January 1933, Hitler became chancellor of Germany and everything changed. Emil Jannings would continue his film career under the Nazis, but Lubitsch would not have had that option. By April 1933, all Jews in the German film industry would be fired. Lubitsch would never return to Germany.

Pacifism and the Lubitsch Touch

The Man I Killed opens in Paris during the celebration of the first anniversary of Armistice Day, November 11, 1919—a year after World War I ended. Bells ring, there is a parade, cannons fire (terrifying wounded veterans in a hospital), and then we see a pompous military mass in Notre Dame. Once the church empties, a lone man remains, a distraught young French veteran of the war. This man, Paul Renard (Phillips Holmes), confesses to a priest that he is a murderer. As he does so, there is a flashback to the trenches, where we see Walter Holderlin (Tom Douglas), a young German soldier dying from wounds inflicted by Paul. He dies while trying to sign a letter he has written to his fiancée. Paul reads the letter and learns that Walter too was a musician and had spent time as a student in Paris, where he had loved the French—whom he now was forced to kill.

At the end of the flashback, the priest tells Paul that the murder of a German soldier was not a sin because Paul was only doing his duty. The priest's words fail to alleviate Paul's guilt, and in distress, Paul asks if he should go to the village of the man he killed and beg forgiveness from his family. Moved, the priest encourages him to do so. Because of the letter, Paul knows Walter's German village: "Falsburg in Baden." The film then cuts to the set of this small town, where we see Paul put flowers on Walter's grave. He meets Walter's parents but does not have the courage to tell them how he knows Walter. The parents assume that Paul had been a friend of Walter's from his student days in Paris; they are overjoyed to meet him, as is Paul's fiancée, Elsa (Nancy Carroll), who had already noticed him in the cemetery at Walter's grave.

Soon Elsa and Paul fall in love, and many Germans in the town are scandalized that Walter's parents and Elsa have received the Frenchman so warmly. In response, Walter's father, Dr. Holderlin (Lionel Barrymore), makes a pacifistic speech in the village tavern denouncing the nationalistic fervor that made him and the other fathers of the town happily cheer as their sons were led off to war in 1914. Paul, however, cannot overcome his trauma and guilt about Walter, which leads Elsa to discover his secret: that he killed Walter, her fiancé. He wants to leave, but Elsa forces him to stay so as not to destroy the new happiness of Walter's parents, who have accepted him as a replacement for their son. At the end of the film, Dr. Holderlin gives Walter's violin to Paul and asks him to play it; Paul does so, and Elsa accompanies him on the piano, as the parents look on in blissful approval

at the young lovers. This somewhat morbid, melodramatic ending strains credibility—a problem that François Ozon's 2016 remake of the Lubitsch film, *Frantz*, solves by changing it.[17] But this problematic ending in the original is evocative, for the film implies the necessity of an intermarriage between a German and non-German as an (uneasy) solution to the war's trauma.

The opening of the film is a fine example of the so-called Lubitsch touch—that is, as discussed earlier, the ability to communicate efficiently and often with irony or sly innuendo, using no words, only visual means. After the shots of tolling bells that open the film, Lubitsch has the camera positioned to shoot the first view of the parade through the missing leg of an amputee soldier; then there is a cut to a traumatized, wounded soldier in a hospital bed, screaming in reaction to the triumphal firing of cannons.[18] Next a traveling shot down the aisle of the cathedral shows the shiny sabers of French officers, with a cut to a medium close-up of a row of gleaming spurs on the boots of kneeling soldiers. Finally, the camera tracks into a side chapel of the cathedral, moving into a close-up of the body of a suffering Christ on a crucifix. In this way, Lubitsch efficiently communicates far more than speeches could convey, depicting with bitter irony this militaristic celebration of the peace held in a cathedral a year after World War I ended.

As noted, the way that Lubitsch films the spread of gossip through the small German town is an obvious allusion to a similar scene in Murnau's *The Last Laugh* (1924), famous for the "unchained" moving camera pioneered by Karl Freund. In Murnau's silent film, the gossip spreads in a courtyard via camera movement and editing between women at their windows; in Lubitsch's film, the moving camera and fast continuity editing follow the gossip about the budding romance between the Frenchman Paul and the German woman Elsa as it moves down the town's main street. There is almost no dialogue; soon the only sound is the ringing of doorbells as individuals hurry into and out of shops to impart the news. The bells too are another Lubitsch touch, this time with sound.

The overt politics of the film are made clear during the show-stopping, pacifist speech that Walter's father delivers. When the father finally grasps that the men at his *Stammtisch* (regular table) in the village tavern are snubbing him because he has been friendly to a Frenchman, he launches into a tirade, proudly proclaiming that both Elsa and his wife like Paul and that he himself loves him like a son. He attacks all the German fathers, including

himself, and the French fathers as well, who cheered as their sons were marched off to be slaughtered in the war.

Although the speech is a blatant critique of militarism and war, it is also about rejecting a bigoted, warlike nationalism directed against the French. Lubitsch, in mobilizing our sympathy for a German who defends a non-German, addresses other types of national and ethnic identities and prejudices. Reminiscent of the nineteenth-century German Jewish poet Heinrich Heine, Lubitsch seems to sympathize with the French against a bigoted German nationalism, or at any rate he wants us to do so. Herr Schultz (Lucien Littlefield) is the prosperous man in the small German town who has continued to pursue Elsa in arrogant disregard of her mourning and of her expressed disinterest in him. He is also the character who is most upset that a Frenchman would be stealing one of "our" girls. Schultz is portrayed both as a pompous, oily character and as the instigator of the vicious bigotry depicted in the tavern.

Male Crisis and Intermarriage

An important element that this American film shares with much of Weimar art cinema is the discourse of male crisis, whether one wants to understand it as Kracauer did, as male "retrogression,"[19] or wants to view it in connection with the lingering trauma of the soldier caused by the horrors of World War I, as "shell shock," as Anton Kaes has argued.[20] Kaes locates this discourse in a number of important German films of the 1920s that do not thematize the war overtly, but in Lubitsch's American film, the war and its trauma are of central importance. Kracauer sees male retrogression as pervasive throughout Weimar cinema, and he describes a particular visual motif as emblematic of this discourse: the image of a man with his head in the lap of a woman, be it his wife, his mother, or his fiancée.[21] Precisely such an image occurs in *The Man I Killed*, with Paul placing his head in Elsa's lap.

At the point when this image occurs in the film, Paul is in despair about his guilt for the murder of Walter, no longer feeling able to keep up the fiction that he has allowed the family to believe. Elsa, believing Paul to be intimidated by the anti-French sentiment in the town, tells him defiantly that she loves him and that it does not matter what the townspeople think. It is noteworthy that it is Elsa, not Paul, who first utters the words, "I love you." In fact, Elsa's gaze first fell upon Paul, whom she saw in the cemetery as he placed flowers on Walter's grave, long before he would first see her in

Figure 5.1 Head in her lap: Nancy Carroll as Elsa and Phillips Holmes as Paul in *The Man I Killed* (1932). Screen capture.

the office of Dr. Holderlin. This is a reversal of the convention of the "look," in which the male's gaze is dominant and the female is primarily the object of his gaze.

Lubitsch was recognized as a filmmaker who depicted women willing to take sexual initiative in an era when this was very uncommon.[22] When other directors allowed women characters to "gaze" on men and take sexual initiative, the women were almost invariably "bad girls." This was sometimes the case with Lubitsch, too, but not in this film. Elsa is no bad girl; she is portrayed as virtuous. Elsa's agency is not limited to taking sexual initiative in *The Man I Killed*: she comes to dominate the narrative. Soon after Elsa holds Paul's head in her lap, she discovers his secret: Paul killed Walter. When he wants to leave the town, she forces him to stay in the Holderlin home so as to keep Walter's unknowing parents happy. And Paul submits to her demands, even looking somewhat happy at the very end of the film as he plays Walter's violin for them.

Elsa uses Paul to replace Walter, even though she has just learned that Paul had killed him. This makes for a unique variation on the romantic

triangles Lubitsch featured in so many diverse ways in his comedies, from the early Jewish comedies all the way to his final films in the 1940s.

Whereas Lubitsch's strong heroines are more acceptable in the carnivalesque realm of comedy, in a serious film, they are likely to be more disturbing to conventional expectations. Perhaps even more disturbing is the emphasis on a weak, traumatized man.[23] This may indeed have had something to do with the commercial failure of the film and the criticisms we find in the American press regarding the performance of Phillips Holmes.[24]

The gender dynamics of the film cannot be understood without some attention to issues of national and ethnic identity. Of obvious relevance would be the way the film represents romantic love between a Frenchman and a German woman and the possibility of intermarriage. Let me stress again that the somewhat disturbing end of the film has our French protagonist more or less giving up his own identity to replace the German son he killed in the war. Such a discourse obviously resonates with longstanding concerns of the German Jewish population in Germany about both intermarriage and assimilation.[25] If one reads Paul, the Frenchman, the non-German, as functioning to some extent as a (covert or assimilated) Jewish character, then the fact of his being emasculated or feminized also would resonate with certain stereotypes about Jewish men. More important would be the fact that he gives up his own identity to blend in with the German family.

The concept of "double encoding" is relevant—the overt thematization of broader political issues but with covert reference to specifically Jewish concerns. This strategy implies the need to "closet" Jewish identity, in keeping with the ideal of Jewish acculturation formulated by Judah Leib Gordon in 1862: one should "be a man in the street and a Jew at home."[26]

A number of films were made about the war in Germany—in fact, even before Remarque's 1928 novel *Im Westen nichts Neues* (and arguably in dialogue with earlier Hollywood war films like *The Big Parade* [1925] and *Wings* [1927]).[27] Many of these German films were made by Jewish filmmakers; for example, Leo Lasko made a two-part documentary on World War I called *Weltkrieg* (World War) in 1926–27, and Richard Oswald made the feature *Dr. Bessels Verwandlung* (The Transformation of Dr. Bessel) in 1927. According to Ashkenazi, both films valorize a transnational bourgeois identity and critique nationalism as a threat to that identity, most obviously because it led to war. In Oswald's film, a transnational identity overcomes (or at any rate conceals) the trauma of war: the main character, Dr. Bessel, escapes capture on the battlefield by donning the uniform of a French

soldier and then by getting rid of that uniform—and any national identity. He vanishes into the French population by marrying the man's fiancée in Marseilles, and he assumes a new transnational, cosmopolitan identity, working in transnational commerce with the help of his excellent language skills (which we cannot hear in this silent film). In Oswald's film, a German takes over a Frenchman's identity, whereas in Lubitsch's film, a Frenchman takes over the identity of the German man he killed. Beyond this uncanny resemblance, we are confronted in both films with the idea that peace can be achieved through what Ashkenazi calls a "new concept of transnational bourgeois identity whose members share a liberal worldview . . . in other words, a society whose members are, metaphorically, stereotypical assimilated Jews."[28]

But in *The Man I Killed*, to the extent the film might be read as suggesting an "assimilation" of the non-German protagonist to the German middle class, something darker seems to be implied that makes the supposed "happy end" for the two lovers even more disturbing than it is on the surface. If we read the Frenchman Paul as a Jew, the ending does not allow him to be "a man in the street and a Jew at home"; it is in the private realm that he must conceal his identity, a much more radical "closeting"—at least from his "adoptive" parents, if not from his wife-to-be.

Whether Lubitsch knew the Oswald film is unclear; as mentioned, he went to Germany in 1927. But the discursive convergence here does not require any such particular knowledge.[29] Lubitsch had thematized assimilation and intermarriage in his earliest comedies, such as *The Pride of the Firm* (1914), *Shoe Palace Pinkus* (1916), *The Doll* (1919), and *The Oyster Princess* (1919).[30]

Lubitsch was clearly aware of the dangers of nationalism and war; he was not oblivious to the crisis in Germany in the early 1930s. Quite soon after 1933 that crisis would evolve in such a way that an assimilationist solution would become impossible. I am arguing, in fact, that such a solution was already being critiqued, in effect, by the strange ending of *The Man I Killed*.

The next "serious" political film by Lubitsch would be his anti-Nazi comedy, *To Be or Not to Be* (1942). In that film, the crisis—now clearly identified as Nazism—can be overcome only by one heroic character, Greenberg, "coming out" as Jewish, not by concealing that identity.[31] And by 1942, pacifism was no longer an option.

Seduction, Theft, and Capitalism: *Trouble in Paradise (1932)*

Lubitsch's *Trouble in Paradise* was released November 8, 1932.[32] This was also the election day on which Democratic candidate Franklin Delano Roosevelt defeated the sitting Republican president, Herbert Hoover, in a landslide. The results of that election were determined in large part by the Great Depression, which had worsened to a point no one had imagined in late 1929, when the stock market crashed. In the depths of the Depression, then, Lubitsch directed a comedy that critics would deem sophisticated but trivial (and somewhat amoral). In the review the next day in the *New York Times*, which was titled "Ernst Lubitsch's Shimmering Picture about Well-Dressed Thieves and Pickpockets," Mordaunt Hall did indeed call the film "shimmering," but that was in spite of its story, which he found "scant," a "merry trifle"—and one with "no moral."[33]

Nonetheless, Lubitsch's film does include clear references to the Depression. Various characters refer to the economic difficulties of "times like these," and the male protagonist, the elegant European and "gentleman thief" Gaston Monescu (played by the British actor Herbert Marshall), quotes Herbert Hoover's insistence on patient optimism in the face of hard times with biting irony: "Prosperity is right around the corner." What is the relation of this "shimmering" film to its grim political and economic context? Dwight Macdonald famously wrote that this film was "as close to perfection as anything I have seen in the movies" in spite of its "banal" narrative.[34] Lubitsch himself wrote this about the film: "As for pure style, I think I have done nothing better or as good as *Trouble in Paradise*."[35] Sabine Hake writes of the film's "obsession with surfaces" and its affinity with the stylization of camp.[36] Surface elegance, suave and seductive performances by Marshall and Kay Francis, art deco sets and props designed by Hans Dreier—is all this merely amoral and apolitical aestheticism? Or is there something political here, even Marxist, as Gerald Mast proposed?[37] Perhaps there is even something political about notions like "aestheticism and androgyny" that are associated with camp and, according to Hake, with *Trouble in Paradise*.[38]

"A Merry Trifle"

Trouble in Paradise was Lubitsch's first comedy in the sound era that was not a musical, but it had an impressive musical score.[39] It was based—very

loosely, as almost always with Lubitsch—on a Hungarian play by Laszlo Aladar titled "The Honest Finder," which itself was based on the story of the Hungarian swindler Georges Manolescu, who becomes Gaston Monescu in the film.[40] The play was a bad one, as Lubitsch admitted to his screenwriter Samson Raphaelson.

From its very beginning the film is full of clever juxtapositions ("touches") that imply more than they make explicit. In the opening credits, the first two words of the title, "Trouble in" appear, and then the visual illustration of a double bed appears. Next the word "Paradise" appears. The bed is equated thus with "paradise," a typically "naughty" juxtaposition of pre-Code Lubitsch that is unsettled both by the title's other word—"trouble"—and by the lyrics of the song we hear. Sung by a "romantic tenor to the lascivious rhythms of a fandango," it ends with these lines: "While arms entwine and lips are kissing / But if there's something missing / That signifies trouble in paradise."[41] This juxtaposition of "kissing" and something "missing" implies the pervasive combination—and conflation and confusion—of sex and theft in the film and the more general problem of the inevitable (structural) gap between sexual desire and sexual fulfillment. This romantic comedy contains (like so many others) a triangle. One couple in the triangle, the thieves Gaston and Lily (Miriam Hopkins), finds sexual fulfillment early in the film; however, the other couple, Gaston and the rich widow Mariette (Kay Francis), never do. Viewers tend to identify with their unfulfilled desire, which also drives the plot ("scant" as it may be).[42]

Once the credits are done, the film begins with another, more ironic juxtaposition. It is night, and we see a man pick up a garbage can and empty its contents onto a larger pile of garbage, which we then realize is on a boat—indeed, a gondola—for the man is now singing "O Sole Mio!" as he poles his gondola down what must be a Venetian canal. And it is not that the singer sounds like Enrico Caruso, the famous Italian tenor; we are actually hearing a recording of Caruso dubbed over the scene of the garbage collector in his gondola.[43] What this means is not overt—the essence, again, of the Lubitsch touch is indirection, ellipsis, indeed, "omission," as Mast writes.[44] Yes, the romance of Venice is being undercut by gritty reality, but in fact we see the garbage first, and then it is "lovingly serenaded," as Schuster observes, adding that for Lubitsch, "comedy is not only about revealing the ugly muck behind idealized appearances, but also about showing that there is something sublime in the trash."[45] This is how Lubitsch introduces us to Venice.

As we hear the garbage collector's song continuing, we see the interior of a dark room in which a man is climbing out a window; then a cut shows two women speaking in Italian and ringing the doorbell, and then back inside the room we see a gentleman try to stand up but then collapse to the floor. Next, in an apparently continuous panning shot (which actually conceals two cuts—and a jump ahead in time),[46] we pan around (a model of) the building, which we now see is a hotel. We end up outside the window of another room in the hotel, and then the camera seems to enter it through the window. We meet a gentleman who is the same man we have seen escape the suite below after assaulting and robbing the other gentleman. We are looking into the room of Monescu, who is conferring with a waiter about a romantic dinner he is planning.

Soon a "Countess" enters, addressing him as "Baron," and these two apparent aristocrats begin to dine. Without interrupting the elegant facade of etiquette and impeccable table manners they both display, the countess exposes the baron as a crook, the one who robbed the gentleman in the suite below; then she asks him to please pass the salt. He locks the door and exposes her as a thief by making her stand and then shaking her until the wallet she stole from him falls to the floor. It is the same wallet he had stolen from the gentleman in the suite below. She sits back down without losing her composure, resumes eating, and then inquires with a smile what time it is. He looks for his watch, which she has stolen; she presents it to him, telling him that she has "regulated" it for him. He then tells her that he hopes she does not mind if he keeps her garter, which she, surprised, ascertains that he has stolen by checking her legs. With grace, he presents the garter, then quickly kisses it and puts it back in his pocket.

At this point, thrilled by his talents, she embraces him and sits in his lap, asking him who he really is. He identifies himself as Gaston Monescu (Herbert Marshall), who robbed the bank of Constantinople (Istanbul). She is actually Lily, the pickpocket (Miriam Hopkins). Before this revelation of their true identities, she told him that she had first thought that he was an American; this had piqued her interest, bored as she was with their own class—European aristocrats. Gaston reacted proudly to being called an American. We need to appreciate the ironies here: the British Herbert Marshall plays a character who seems to like being mistaken for an American, whereas Miriam Hopkins, the American actor who is putting on (sort of) a British accent, plays a character who pretends to be a bored European aristocrat. Earlier in the dinner, her "Countess" had taken a phone call from

someone she called the "Duchess of Chambro," a woman we then see in the next shot sitting in a dumpy room on the phone. She calls the countess "Lily" and speaks in a very common American accent.

Both Gaston and Lily are only pretending to be aristocrats so that they can prey on that class. But the self-reflexive play with simulation, pretense, and acting, while typical of a Lubitsch film, reaches new heights in this one. Each of the pretenders finds the other's skills at theft seductive: with one dissolve, they move from the dinner table to a (horizontal) embrace on the sofa; with another dissolve, they disappear from the sofa. Next we see a hand putting a "Do Not Disturb" sign on the door of the room. Lubitsch does not show us their assignation any more than he shows how either of them was able to steal the wallet, the watch, or the garter from the other, but it is clear enough how their evening together ends.

After another brief shot of the singing garbage collector, we cut not to the next morning in Venice but instead to Paris. In a clever montage of scenes, Lubitsch introduces us to Paris, first with what might have been a somewhat clichéd stock shot of the Eiffel Tower at night—except for the lightning bolts it emits in the style of the radio tower logo shown at the beginning of films by the RKO studios in the early 1930s. We cut to a radio broadcast reporting news about a certain thief, Gaston Monescu, who was captured in Geneva but then escaped, and then we hear an ad for Colet perfumes: "It's not what you say, it's not how you look, it's how you smell." The radio announcer reads this slogan, which once again stresses the unreliability of surface appearances. Aside from the final image of the Colet factory, which might evoke "social realism" (and the Depression), the other glamorous, deco images in the montage are a send-up of modern consumerism and advertising.[47]

Next we see a boardroom and a distinguished older gentleman, Monsieur Giron (C. Aubrey Smith), who appears to be the chairman of the board of Colet and Company. He demands that "in times like these," salaries must be cut. The wealthy widow who owns the company, Madame Mariette Colet, responds that she is bored by such affairs (and by this meeting), so, for the time being, salaries will stay as they are. She plays the remark as though she is merely a frivolous rich woman, but beneath that superficial impression she has exercised her authority and resisted the call to austerity so common around the world in response to the Depression.

Next we see her shopping for a purse in a fancy shop. She rejects one handbag as too expensive at 3,000 francs and then seems to fall in love with

another much more "beautiful" one; when told it costs 125,000 francs, she exclaims that she will take it. Here we see an arguably "aestheticist" gesture in her impulsive desire to acquire a beautiful object regardless of the cost (in the middle of "times like these"). The film seems to evince sympathy with her aestheticism and her extravagance (opting to waste money on a luxurious purse, just as she has opted to continue "wasting" money on her workers), but it will not let her keep this expensive consumer item, which will be stolen from her twice in the course of the film. The purse is stolen first at the opera: there we see someone in the audience with binoculars, or rather, opera glasses, and then a cut shows Mariette Colet sitting in her box with one of her silly suitors, the Major. We see her by means of a subjective shot through a double iris (by this point, a very dated technique), indicating that we see her through a pair of opera glasses. Actually what we see first is not Madame Colet but rather her handbag. Then the opera glasses tilt up to admire her beauty, pan right to observe her flustered suitor, and return to the true object of desire: her handbag.

Only later, after the scene at the opera where her handbag goes missing, do we finally cut to a very plain Parisian apartment where we find Lily and Gaston. We learn that it will soon be the anniversary of that romantic night in Venice. While still in love, the couple seems to be living in much reduced circumstances. Lily tells Gaston about an ad she sees in the newspaper announcing a reward of 20,000 francs for the return of a special handbag: this is how we learn that Gaston is the one who stole Madame Colet's bag. They decide that "in times like these," returning the bag for the reward is the surest (and safest) way to get money for it.

Next we see a crowd of impoverished people lined up in the waiting room of Madame Mariette Colet's residence with the (wrong) handbags, all hoping their finds will bring them the reward money. If this scene alone did not make it clear that for every fabulously wealthy, capitalist widow during the Depression, there are multitudes who desperately need money, then it becomes even more obvious once one of the "prospective finders" enters Mariette's office and turns out to be a Bolshevik quoting Trotsky (perhaps this is why he is in Paris and not in Stalin's Moscow). He reproaches her for buying such an expensive purse "in times like these": he tells her "phooey!" and then launches into a long harangue in Russian. At this point, Gaston enters the room and starts a rapid-fire retort in Russian to the Bolshevik, which quickly deflates the latter. Disgruntled, he departs. An argument on behalf of social justice and in opposition to social inequality has been

parodied and dispatched quickly, but the man who has defended our capitalist widow is the "honest finder" of the original Hungarian play's title—that is, the man who robbed her in the first place (and who will rob her again, distracted only temporarily by his desire for her).

Mariette is impressed by Gaston's Russian and his (apparent) chivalry. He identifies himself as Monsieur Laval, and he presents her with the purse she has "lost." He asks for his reward to be paid with a check made out to cash, referring to himself as one of the "nouveau poor." In no time, "Laval" is giving her advice on the color of her lipstick and reproving her for not keeping more cash in her safe "in times like these." He seduces her with his solicitous advice, meanwhile continually moving just out of her sight as he moves through her apartment, clearly casing the joint. He finds her safe, although before he does, his gaze lingers—the first hint of distraction—on the bed where her former assistant slept.[48] Clearly infatuated, Mariette hires him as her new assistant immediately after he has playfully threatened to "spank" her for her carelessness with her money.

Soon Gaston has taken control of her affairs and is afforded the same kind of meek consent we saw Mariette getting from all of her staff. He meets with the company's board of directors after having suggested that they cut not the workers' salaries but their own; Giron tells him that the board will resign in protest. Gaston responds that they should go ahead and do so, but Giron then says that they will have to think about it. Gaston also irritates Mariette's two foolish suitors, the Major (Charlie Ruggles) and Monsieur Filiba (Edward Everett Horton), who can see how infatuated Mariette is with this new man, not much more than a servant in their eyes. Filiba happens to be the same man whom Gaston had attacked and robbed in the hotel in Venice a year before; when Filiba opened the door to him, he had been expecting two Italian prostitutes.

Two important subplots follow the quests of two disgruntled men who are unhappy with the power Gaston seems to exert over Mariette. Filiba tries to remember where he met Gaston before, and Giron keeps asking about Monescu's background. When Filiba asks about Venice, Gaston distracts him with stories of exotic Constantinople, which interests Filiba because he wants to hear about harems. We hear nothing of this, other than exotic, nondiegetic "oriental" music, while we watch Gaston whispering into the ears of the fascinated Filiba. Eventually, however, the latter will finally remember the robbery in Venice and realize Gaston's true identity. The same will happen with Giron, who follows up on Gaston's stories

about coming from Marseilles with research that will finally expose Gaston's identity. At the same time, however, Gaston will uncover the fact that upper-class Giron is actually the much bigger crook, having embezzled from the Colet business for years.

But the main plot concerns the romantic triangle, for it is not just Gaston who exerts power over Mariette. She exerts power over him, for he falls in love with her too, much to the consternation of Lily, who has been hired by Gaston to work as Mariette's secretary. Playing a mousy secretary in glasses (no longer the aristocratic countess she played in Venice), Lily can see how obsessed Mariette is with Gaston ("Monsieur Laval"). Indeed, Mariette offers Lily a raise of fifty francs per week to leave the office at 5:00 p.m. every day so Mariette will have Laval to herself. Lily, the blonde hard-working thief, insists to Gaston that they must stick to their plan and rob Mariette soon. She can see that Gaston is falling for the seductive, elegant brunette Mariette. Lily tells him that she loves him as a thief and that he must not become a useless gigolo. She tells him that Mariette wants him and is willing to buy him—for fifty francs.

Initially having penetrated the white spaces of Mariette's stylish art deco mansion in order to case the joint, Gaston finds himself increasingly enchanted by her and less and less willing to leave this "paradise." Mariette tells him seductively that she can have him "any time." He responds that he can see through all her tricks, and she tells him he will still fall for all of them. Then she tells him to kiss her, and he does. This is arguably a reflexive allusion to Lubitsch's enchanting, seductive game with the elegant but deceptive surfaces in this film. Through irony and stylization, we are made aware of how his film seduces us, yet we "fall for" it anyway.

Lubitsch shows us how Mariette and Gaston court each other with more than his typical indirection; as Harvey put it, it is as if Lubitsch "had set out to test the expressive limits of indirection" in this film.[49] He shows us a series of clocks—all beautiful objects, many of them modern, stylized, deco clocks—to mark the passage of time on the first evening they are to dine together. First we see that it is after 5:00 p.m., when Lily must leave, and soon it is 9:00 p.m., then 11:00 p.m., then 2:00 a.m. In between the shots of the clocks, we see Gaston and Mariette only briefly; finally, we see them saying goodnight to each other and locking their doors. But the relationship seems never to be consummated. Even later in the film, when we finally see them kiss, we cut almost immediately to their embrace as depicted in a mirror framed on the wall, and then again to another mirror shot, and finally

Figure 5.2 "Shut up. Kiss me." Mariette (Kay Francis) to "Gaston" (Herbert Marshall) in *Trouble in Paradise* (1932). Screen capture.

we see only their shadows embracing, shadows that fall over the bed. This quick montage of images that distance us from the reality of their embrace occurs as we hear Mariette saying to him that their romance has "hours," "days," "years." But with each reference to time, we cut to ever more displaced representations of their love.

When Mariette says they have "years," she is also completely wrong: this will be their final night together because at the dinner party she leaves to attend, Filiba will tell her who Gaston actually is. Because Lily and Gaston knew Filiba would soon figure this out, they had already made plans to depart with the money from Mariette's safe on the midnight train to Munich. But Gaston cannot pull himself away and has told Lily on the phone that they will leave instead the next morning. He hesitates too long: Giron shows up to tell him he knows who he is, and Gaston can only scare him off because he threatens to expose Giron's embezzlement. Lily shows up to steal the money from the safe, not trusting Gaston anymore to resist

Mariette. Finally, Mariette herself shows up, now doubting her desired "Laval." Gaston tells her about Giron's embezzlement, but she does not want to believe it. He complains that a "self-made" thief like himself will always go to jail, whereas an upper-class thief like Giron will get away with his crimes. Mariette goes to her room and finds Lily there, who reproaches Mariette for trying to buy Gaston for 50 francs and tells her that she can have him for nothing, throwing the cash she has stolen from the safe, 100,000 francs, onto the bed. But then she thinks better of it. Ridiculing Mariette for paying 125,000 francs for a handbag, she says that if Mariette can pay that much for a purse, she can pay 100,000 for Gaston. Lily picks up the bills and leaves.

Then Gaston and Mariette say farewell, both talking of how "glorious," how "divine" it could have been, in a parody of renunciation. Gaston reveals the pearls he has just stolen from her and tells her it is another gift she is making to Lily. Mariette replies sadly, "With the compliments of Colet and Company." Gaston shuts the door, and there is a dissolve to Lily and Gaston in a taxi heading for the midnight train. Gaston wants to present her with the pearls, but he cannot find them; she presents them to him, having pickpocketed them. Then she pulls out the famous handbag, which she has also stolen from Mariette. Next she opens her own little purse to show the 100,000 francs she stole, but it is empty. Of course, Gaston has the cash, which he presents to her, stuffing it into the purse in her lap—an obviously Freudian touch.[50] They embrace and kiss passionately as the film ends.

Sophistication versus the "Others": Bad Girls, Queers, Jews, and Americans

Thus ends our romantic triangle, but is the status quo restored? Has the marriage-like relationship of Lily and Gaston survived the threat of the seductress Mariette? As Weinberg observed long ago, there is "not the slightest concern with marriage in the whole film."[51] In fact, marriage is almost never mentioned, and never in connection with Gaston, Mariette, or Lily; when Mariette talks of the "years" that she and Gaston have, Lily seems to be right in assuming that he will be a kept man. So who is the bad girl? Is it the blonde thief Lily or the rich brunette Mariette? Much debate about the politics of *Trouble in Paradise* has centered on whether we are supposed to sympathize with Lily or with Mariette. If we sympathize with Lily and the other "self-made" crook (Gaston) who reunite at the end of the film, does that mean the film is a critique of capitalism, as Mast argues?[52] If

Figure 5.3 Off into the night together: Lily (Miriam Hopkins) and Gaston (Herbert Marshall) in *Trouble in Paradise* (1932). Screen capture.

we sympathize more with the love between wealthy Mariette and Gaston—the love that never quite gets consummated—does that mean that the film's politics are compromised, or at any rate not clearly anticapitalist, as Paul argues?[53]

Perhaps it is not so easy to sympathize with any of the characters. Harvey argues that the film's ironic distance from the romantic love(s) it depicts make the film "curiously impersonal."[54] Hake argues that it is a mistake on the part of Paul and Mast to insist on "referentiality"—that is, to take any potential reference to "social reality" seriously.[55] If the references to the Depression are not to be taken seriously, then perhaps the film remains as distant, as isolated from that "reality," as Mariette seems to be, in her "shimmering," modern, art deco paradise. But then what is the "trouble in paradise," disturbing this idyll of elegant bliss isolated from harsh social reality?

The trouble would seem to be the thieves who have entered paradise and who represent an outside threat to capitalism or, at any rate, to Mariette's capital. But they too are threatened by "trouble" there: Gaston begins

to long to stay in this realm, which would mean forsaking Lily. For all the film's cleverness and irony, we too are seduced by Mariette, probably as much as Gaston is; precisely because the love between them is never consummated, the desire is all the greater. Compared with the seductive Mariette, who does not need to work, Lily becomes like a boring, hard-working wife who is trying to keep Gaston "honest"—that is, to keep him an honest, hard-working crook and not to let him become a gigolo, a kept man. This is all the more ironic given how the film's equation of seduction with theft is initially demonstrated by Lily and Gaston's seduction of each other in Venice.[56] Somehow they have become the "respectable" couple, and the threat now is the seductive socialite with dark hair.

Gaston's seduction of Mariette also depends on theft at first—his theft of her handbag leads to his entry into her world and into her heart (or at least her fancy). But as she in turn seduces him, she weakens his resolve to rob even more from her. Sex and theft have become opposing forces. While we long for their romance to be fulfilled, in the end we sympathize with Gaston's escape from her enchanted lair—and in the getaway cab, Lily and Gaston seduce each other again with the things they have stolen from her and from each other. As an aside, it is clear why this film would not be eligible for re-release once Joseph Breen began to enforce the Production Code seriously in summer 1934. Not only does the film imply sex outside of marriage (in the case of Lily and Gaston) and the chance of another sexual liaison with Mariette with no mention of marriage, but the two thieves ("our heroes") get away with money and jewels at the "happy end" of the film, with no punishment.

The film plays havoc with all sorts of conventional expectations for a romantic comedy. We have a dark-haired seductress and a blonde "good girl," yet the seductress is also an elegant, wealthy capitalist, and the blonde is a thief who poses deceptively as an aristocrat early in the film and later as a mousy secretary. There is also some queer energy with the other couple in the film, the two would-be suitors of Mariette, the Major and Filiba. Neither has any chance with Mariette, and that is clear to everyone except the two fussy, older gentlemen themselves.

They compete fiercely with each other, attempting to woo her in ways that are as futile as they are comical. Early in the film, we see Mariette and Filiba, who has apparently just asked her to marry him, which prompts her to respond, "Marriage is a beautiful mistake which two people make together. But with you, François, I think it would be a mistake." This is the only time marriage is mentioned at all in the film.

The Major takes Mariette to the opera the night her bag will be stolen. Filiba tries to enter their box, upset about Mariette's date with the Major, and the Major demands that he leave. When Mariette asks him why he is being so rude to Filiba, he spurts out, "Because I hate him! Because I love you!" This is then echoed in the opera itself, which we never see but do hear. A soprano sings, "I love you, I love you, I love you!" Then we watch the pages of a musical score flip magically forward to a much later page, and we hear the soprano singing, "I hate you, I hate you, I hate you!" This line is echoed by the chorus: "She hates him." Russell Grigg writes that the film "remains too close to a parody for it to qualify as a romantic comedy."[57]

Their rivalry evokes the only real passion the two men display, and soon enough they are united in solidarity in their jealous dislike of "Monsieur Laval," Mariette's assistant. This dynamic might remind us of that queer moment in *I Don't Want To Be a Man* (1918) when Ossi (in drag as a young man) and her tutor become quite affectionate with each other while drinking together in solidarity against the inconstancy of women.

Filiba and the Major both have military experience, but as Grigg points out, they are both "wealthy bachelors accustomed to paying for sex." According to his psychoanalytical reading of the two men, they form a couple that is "homogenized by the relationship to the phallus as lack in the Other"; this results in a "touch of perversion," which he explains in connection with their fetishistic attachment to objects associated with Mariette, above all the handbag, which "symbolizes, at least for these two, the woman's lack with which they each identify."[58] I would add that it is instructive to consider how Lubitsch uses the two actors who play these roles in two of his other films from the early 1930s. Charlie Ruggles, the Major, plays a comic, effeminate rival for the affections of the female protagonist in the musical comedy released earlier in 1932, *One Hour with You*. In a queer moment, he is shown in a Romeo costume wearing tights, a costume his butler had tricked him into wearing; the butler explains, "I did so want to see you in tights." Similarly, Edward Everett Horton (Filiba) will play a similarly effeminate and ineffectual role in Lubitsch's next comedy, *Design for Living* (1933).

This comic subplot provides some evidence of what Hake called the campy "androgyny" of the film.[59] With that remark, she meant above all the film's emphasis on stylization and theatricality. One of the most stylized, theatrical (and self-reflexive) performances in the film is that of Herbert Marshall playing Gaston Monescu playing Monsieur Laval as Mariette's oh-so-sophisticated assistant. There is also something just a touch campy

(or queer) about his simulation of debonair elegance, which includes giving a woman who owns a cosmetics company advice about the most suitable color for her lipstick (he insists that crimson is the right color, and at the end of the film, that is indeed the color she will be wearing). Of course, a con man, a master of simulation, will know exactly how to create an effective image of beauty or elegance, but precisely this deceptive theatricality is also what distinguishes camp. This androgynous aspect of Gaston could explain why it is Mariette who ends up becoming the more aggressive partner in their game of seduction.[60]

The association with acting, simulation, and theatricality is not just campy; it has also been ascribed to the Jews—indeed, it is yet another area in which stereotypes about Jews and homosexuals overlap.[61] It is at this point that we can expand the argument about the film's play with gender and sexuality to intersect with concerns of ethnicity and class. Gaston is probably the most suave and debonair character in all of Lubitsch's sophisticated comedies, but he is a fake—he simulates aristocratic elegance to rob elegant aristocrats. He tells Mariette he is one of the "nouveau poor," someone of taste and class who has lost his fortune in the Depression, but in truth he is a "self-made" crook; the only thing "old" about any money he has is that it was stolen from people with "old money." For him, it was new; he is nouveau riche, although clever (and theatrical) enough to hide it. But he seems proud when Lily mistakes him for an American and not one of the "boring" European aristocrats she claims herself (falsely) to be.[62]

In the introduction to his biography of Lubitsch, Eyman discusses the dream of romantic sophistication in Lubitsch films—"fantasies of blithe sexuality and emotional noninvolvement"—and contrasts such fantasies with the reality of Lubitsch's life. He was a not particularly debonair or good-looking man; he was short, with a heavy German accent, and his love life was nothing like what is presented in *Trouble in Paradise*.[63] Durgnat is even more blunt (perhaps even a touch antisemitic) in making it clear that Lubitsch himself was nothing close to the (simulated) aristocratic elegance of Gaston: "not that Lubitsch was aristocratic for one moment—on the contrary, he is bourgeois, Jewish, *nouveau-riche* to his fingertips, to the tip of his fat cigar."[64]

The subtitle of Eyman's book, *Laughter in Paradise*, alludes to *Trouble in Paradise*, for that film portrays the dream of romantic sophistication in its most perfect form—in terms of "pure style," as Lubitsch himself wrote. And in that film, Gaston best represents what Eyman defines as this fantasy

of suave, debonair perfection.[65] Gaston is on the cover of McBride's book, with Mariette and Lily to each side, vying for his attention; McBride considers *Trouble in Paradise* to be Lubitsch's most important film; for him, its sophistication represents the essential Lubitsch.[66]

But even in this most sophisticated comedy—this romantic dream of suave perfection—paradise is troubled: Gaston is a fake and so is the dream. Harvey argues that this seemingly perfect idyll is contrary to Lubitsch's own best sentiments.[67] But the film itself never lets us take the idyll too seriously. Eyman suggests that we are to read Gaston as an identifying figure for Lubitsch. As I have suggested, it may be just as easy to look at one or both of the bad girls in this film as his alter egos: the rich woman who must face the fact that someone she loves is interested not in her but in her money, or the scrappy, "common" woman who has to conceal her background to acquire any money.[68]

If we focus on Gaston, it is clear that he is only pretending to be the perfect lover for Mariette, and while he is surely tempted by her (and her world), he opts against it and for Lily.[69] The paradise of the idle rich—seductive though it may be—is abandoned, and its only function in the end is to provide capital for our "self-made" heroes.

November 1932 to January 1933

The critique of capitalism is perhaps a bit clearer in "The Clerk," the episode Lubitsch directed for Paramount's compilation film *If I Had a Million*, which premiered in December 1932. The eight episodes of the film, each by a different director, are stories about what happens to an ordinary person when a millionaire gives him or her a large sum of money. Lubitsch's episode—the shortest and the best—starred Charles Laughton as a clerk among hundreds of others in a huge, impersonal office. As Huff describes it, Lubitsch used Laughton, three words, and a sound effect, otherwise depending "almost wholly on pantomime and the camera." When Laughton's clerk opens the envelope with the check, he rises, "climbs up several flights of stairs—enters a series of doors" until he finally reaches the chief executive of the company, to whom he gives a loud "razzberry" and then departs.[70]

After *Trouble in Paradise*, Lubitsch would change direction, away from the shimmering, deco surfaces of "European sophistication" (untrustworthy as he had revealed them to be). The film had made money, but the box office was disappointing, which meant Lubitsch lost a fair amount of

money for Paramount over the course of 1932.[71] In *Variety* we find one of the reviews that faulted *Trouble in Paradise*: "Swell title, poor picture. Will have b.o. [box office] trouble. . . . The mugg fans are sticklers for realism and the Continental abadabba, with which 'Trouble' is flavored, doesn't quite click."[72] The mass audience of American "muggs" in the depths of the Depression had lost patience with continental sophistication and seemed to be more receptive to the "realism" of gangster films, films about "fallen women," and musicals about "gold-diggers."[73]

By November 15, 1932, the date of that review in *Variety*, Lubitsch was in Berlin. Eyman writes that Lubitsch went to Germany in late 1932 for the Berlin premiere of *Trouble in Paradise*, but that is a mistake.[74] He was in Berlin for the premiere of *The Man I Killed*. He was celebrated by the film industry, he spoke on the radio, he was even filmed. A short German review of *Trouble in Paradise* from Hollywood was very positive, praising Lubitsch for having moved away from a more theatrical orientation toward the truly cinematic, using a moving camera that "speaks" rather than depending on dialogue—in a sound film.[75]

Trouble in Paradise would not be shown in Germany until 1969, when it was shown on television in West Germany. On January 30, 1933—only a few weeks after Lubitsch's departure from Germany on January 6—Hitler was named chancellor of Germany by President von Hindenburg. By April, all Jews working in the German film industry had been fired.

In an interview in Berlin in December 1932, Lubitsch made it clear he would not be working in Germany again: "That's finished. . . . Nothing good is going to happen here for a long time."[76] He never returned to Germany. His German citizenship was revoked in 1935, and he became an American citizen in 1936. By then he was involved in antifascist and Jewish causes.[77] Lubitsch had led the first transnational wave of émigrés from Germany to Hollywood in the 1920s; the triumph of the Nazis in 1933 led to a second, much larger wave of émigrés from Germany to Hollywood, most of them Jewish refugees. Lubitsch, along with Paul Kohner, Salka Viertel, Marlene Dietrich, and others, would help to find them work in Hollywood.

The Polygamous Touch: *Design for Living* (1933)

In 2014 Robert Pfaller applied the word *polygamous* to the Lubitsch touch regarding this film.[78] In 1974, in one of the first feminist books on American film, Molly Haskell wrote about *Design for Living*, "The number of sacred

cows gaily demolished by the film—premarital virginity, fidelity, monogamy, marriage, and, finally, the one article of even bohemian faith, the exclusive, one-to-one lover relationship—is staggering."[79] Today we appreciate the iconoclasm of Lubitsch's *Design for Living*.[80] Such appreciation was not so evident in 1933, when the film was neither a critical nor commercial success.

By the early 1930s, Ernst Lubitsch had perfected a highly successful model for the musical film with his naughty Ruritanian operettas (*Love Parade*, 1929; *Monte Carlo*, 1930; *The Smiling Lieutenant*, 1931). As we have seen, he left the operetta world behind to make a serious antiwar film, *The Man I Killed* (1932), and then went on to adapt his sophisticated sex comedy from the silent era for the sound era, producing two comedies that were not musicals: *Trouble in Paradise* (1932) and *Design for Living* (1933). They were Lubitsch's masterpieces of the early sound era, and they differed from the silent sophisticated comedies by overt connection to the socioeconomic context of the Depression, with references to wage cuts, Bolsheviks, and disarmament conferences. Paul notes, "For the first time in his American films Lubitsch had submitted his characters to economic realities a contemporary audience could understand and identify with: they *have* to work for a living."[81]

As we have seen, however, *Trouble in Paradise* was not received that way: it was praised as a "shimmering" work of art but called "frivolous" and somewhat immoral, or amoral.[82] James Harvey suggests that this is because its characters—jewel thieves and a woman of fabulous wealth—were stock characters from old-fashioned boulevard theater.[83] Although *Trouble in Paradise* was not an operetta, its protagonists could have originated in one; however, this was not the reason it had problems at the box office. The film was much more sophisticated than an operetta and probably too sophisticated for the general public, and that hurt it at the box office.[84]

Depression-era American audiences were tiring of sophisticated comedies set among the elite in Europe. Lubitsch's next film, *Design for Living*, premiered December 2, 1933; Roosevelt had been in office since March, and the New Deal was just beginning. Harvey cites the *New York Post*, which called *Design for Living* "Lubitsch's first film dealing with contemporary morals"; Harvey himself adds that it was "a daring, up-to-date movie about daring, up-to-date people."[85]

Lubitsch's film was an adaptation of a play by the British writer Noël Coward with the same title. Coward's *Design for Living* had been a hit in

New York, having opened nine months before the film premiered, starring Coward himself with Lynn Fontanne and Alfred Lunt. The play—like Coward—was very sophisticated, but Lubitsch's film moved in a different direction. The film did not feature decadent "continental snobs" (as Eyman calls the characters in Coward's play)[86] but rather plainspoken Americans, albeit Americans living as bohemians in Europe. It had a wisecracking script by Ben Hecht that anticipated the screwball comedies that would dominate the mid- and late 1930s. And it was directed by Lubitsch, who had been subverting bourgeois norms—sometimes slyly, sometimes overtly—throughout his career. Like Coward's play, the film is about a ménage à trois, but to be a hit, it had to get around the censors and appeal to a broad American audience, not just the New York theater audience.

The film was not very successful with the broader public, and most critics considered it inferior to the Coward play.[87] It was probably too subversive for the American public in 1933—"too challenging, too 'kinky,'" as Ed Lowry speculated in the 1970s.[88] It would have been impossible to make after summer 1934, when censorship became much more severe as Joseph Breen (working for Will Hays) began strictly enforcing the Production Code. After 1934, neither *Design for Living* nor *Trouble in Paradise* could get approval from Breen's office for re-release. With this context in mind, let us examine *Design for Living* for what it tells us about sex, politics, and the Lubitsch comedy in the early and mid-1930s.

Americans in Paris

The film tells the story of three Americans who live in Paris: Gilda, Tom, and George. Gilda (Miriam Hopkins) is an illustrator who works in advertising. She meets two aspiring artists on a train in France: Tom (Fredric March) is a playwright, and George (Gary Cooper) is a painter. The two men live together in a shabby attic apartment, an artist's garret in Paris.[89] Gilda works for an American, Max Plunkett (Everett Edward Horton), who is the director of an advertising agency. Max is in love with Gilda, but he "never got to first base" with her, as Tom quickly surmises.[90] Tom and George both fall in love with Gilda, and she encourages each of them separately. When they confront her, she alludes to a double standard, explaining that "something happened to me that usually happens to men." It is fine for a man to fall in love with a number of women and then, "by a process of interesting elimination," to decide which one he prefers; however, "nice"

women are not allowed this freedom. Gilda confesses that she can't make up her mind: she wants them both.

Not wanting to drive the two friends apart, Gilda suggests that they should all live together but be bound by a "gentleman's agreement" of "no sex." She will not be a lover to either of them but rather a "mother of the arts," a muse who will serve as their fiercest critic in order to drive them to do their very best to succeed in their respective arts. This gentleman's agreement is, at its most basic level, a way for the film to get around censorship—no such attempt to create a platonic love triangle exists in Coward's play[91]—but it is a goal that drives the plot in important ways. Above all, it turns out to be an impossible goal (more than once).

Gilda convinces a theatrical producer from London to produce Tom's play, and then Tom leaves for London. As soon as he is gone, the sexual tension between Gilda and George is palpable. George embraces Gilda, and they kiss. Gilda decides to break their gentleman's agreement because, as she confesses to George, "I am no gentleman." They write to Tom in London letting him know that they have succumbed to desire; he is heartbroken. When Tom then comes to visit them in Paris, he does not find them in the old garret. George has become a successful painter, and Tom learns that his friend now lives in a fashionable, modern (art deco) apartment. When Tom arrives there in his tuxedo, George is away, so he finds only George's "secretary": Gilda, who is now wearing a slinky, expensive evening gown. Tom and Gilda succumb rather quickly to their desire for each other. The next morning, George comes home unexpectedly, and he is happy to see his old friend, but then he notices that Tom is still wearing his tuxedo and the breakfast table is set for two people—who have already eaten. George realizes that Tom has spent the night, and he becomes angry. He rejects Tom's (reflexive) advice to play the scene for "high comedy" and instead opts for what Tom will call "cheap melodrama": he socks Tom in the face.

Thus the film implies that Gilda and George have been sleeping together and that Tom now sleeps with her too, but it does not explicitly state or show this. This is Lubitsch's famous "indirection." While he may have been better (or subtler) at this than other filmmakers, indirection was, as Lea Jacobs has demonstrated, the preferred method in pre-Code Hollywood for handling illicit sex.[92]

Gilda is upset that the two men are fighting, and she decides to leave them both. This causes the men to get drunk together, saying that it is "for the good of our immortal souls" (the only line from Coward's play that

one can find in the film). Meanwhile, Gilda escapes the conflict between her lovers by leaving Paris for New York with Max, whom she now agrees to marry.

Bourgeois respectability with Max is, predictably, rather boring. Max seems to need Gilda primarily to entertain his advertising customers, people like Strump and Egelbauer, titans of the cement business. In the midst of a boring party that Gilda finds especially tedious, Tom and George show up at Max's mansion in tuxedos. They ask for Gilda but are told that she is busy playing "twenty questions." The butler allows them to wait, and they decide to go upstairs to inspect the couple's "boudoir." Gilda, trying to escape the party, finds them. Max then enters the room and finds the three of them sitting on the bed laughing. He is shocked but also insistent that Gilda return to the party downstairs so she can listen to Mr. Egelbauer, who is singing. Gilda refuses, and instead Tom and George go downstairs.

They start a brawl, but Lubitsch never shows that. As in so many of his films, the camera stops at a door that remains closed. We hear the beginning of the brawl, as George and Tom interrupt the singing. We then see Max go downstairs, only to be told by Tom and George that all of the guests, including the all-important Egelbauers, have left the party. Max is upset that Gilda's "hooligan" friends have ruined things for him. Gilda tells him that he can blame it all on her and that, for the sake of his business, she will leave him. The end of the film is similar to the final scene of *Trouble in Paradise*: in a medium shot, we see Gilda between Tom and George in the back seat of a taxi. Gilda says that they will return to Paris and resume their ascetic bohemian life, giving up luxury. Then, after kissing each of them, she elicits their pledge to renew their "gentleman's agreement." But this time she kisses each of them on the lips, not on the forehead as she did the first time they made the pledge of "no sex." Thus it is clear that the new agreement will meet the same fate as the one before.

The story is simple enough, but it is clearly the most radical solution to a romantic triangle that one can find in Lubitsch. *Trouble in Paradise* has a triangle, of course, with the elegant male thief Gaston (Herbert Marshall); his female partner in crime, Lily (also played by Miriam Hopkins); and the seductive rich woman they are planning to rob, Mariette (Kay Francis). But in that film it is a man who chooses between two women, and in the end we find him and the female thief in a taxi speeding off into the night, showing each other the spoils they have stolen from the female capitalist. The original couple thus survives the sexual threat to their relationship.

In contrast, *Design for Living* includes a marriage, but it is clearly rejected. And we have a triangle in which the woman chooses between two men—but she decides not to choose. She goes off into the night in a taxi with both of them.

The Female Gaze

But that is merely the plot; for Lubitsch, the art is in how the story is told. As we have seen, Lubitsch wanted to tell by showing, or not showing, rather than by using dialogue. He made this point specifically about *Design for Living* in a 1933 interview with Alastair Cook; he wanted to avoid the long, chatty exposition in Noël Coward's stage play, which he found dull.[93] The beginning of the film is a fine example of this strategy. Instead of being told how the three protagonists met, Lubitsch shows us, with very little dialogue at all.

Gilda enters a train compartment with two men sleeping next to each other—George and Tom, as she will learn later. She sits on the bench across from them, pulls out her sketch pad, and begins to draw them. We get the first point-of-view shot: a medium close-up of the two men. We cut back to Gilda, who stands up to look more closely at them, with her sketch pad in hand. We get a close-up of Tom and then an even closer shot of his mouth as he snores, also from Gilda's point of view. Next we see Gilda sketching, and then there is a close-up of George. After Gilda works hard on her sketch of George, she gets tired and puts her feet up on the bench, just as the two men have done, but her feet are on their bench between the two men. She dozes off.

Slowly George wakes up, noticing the comely legs sharing their bench, and he wakes Tom and points to the good-looking blonde across from them. The two men try to make themselves more presentable, but then they find her sketch pad and realize that the woman on whom they gaze with desire has already gazed upon them, and they are not happy with the caricature of the two of them snoring that she has drawn. Seeing that the woman is now awake, George sits next to her and argues with her in French about her drawing. She defends her sketch in fluent French, ending with a description of the difference between a portrait and a caricature; eventually, she tires of the debate in French, which she seems to be winning.[94] Then she uses the first English words we hear: "Oh, nuts!" The two men are overjoyed to hear this bit of American slang; they stand up, salute, and begin to hum "The Star-Spangled Banner."

The opening of the film thus uses almost no language. The first language we hear is untranslated French; only at the end of the scene do we get the kind of wisecrack in English we expect from a Ben Hecht script. Lubitsch instead shows us what is happening—that is, he lets us observe as Gilda observes the two men. The gaze belongs to the woman, and it is her agency that drives the plot. The triangle is implied by the way she places her legs between the two men. Even the sexual ambiguity of the triangle—its queer potential, which is at least implicit in Coward's play but almost completely repressed in Hecht's screenplay—is insinuated as we get the first point-of-view shot from the perspective of a male character, George, as he sees the legs next to him. He smiles with dreamy pleasure, but then this confusing sexual arousal seems to disturb him as he wakes up, realizing that his sleeping buddy has been leaning against him.

Queering Hecht?

Lubitsch's original idea was to make the film a vehicle for Miriam Hopkins. As Donna Ross wrote, "Lubitsch believed exposure opposite two polished leading men in an elegant role would give Hopkins star status." However, Lubitsch was unsuccessful in his attempt to get two British actors, Leslie Howard and Ronald Colman (who had acted for Lubitsch in the 1925 comedy *Lady Windermere's Fan*), to play the two male leads in *Design for Living*. Instead, Lubitsch cast two American actors, Fredric March and Gary Cooper, and Hecht was apparently hired by Lubitsch to "Americanize" the Coward play.[95] Samson Raphaelson, who had most recently worked on *Trouble in Paradise* with Lubitsch, turned down the project.[96]

Let us examine the "queer potential" of the triangle. Coward was gay, although this was not publicly acknowledged. More important, some critics had seen "implications of perversion" in the play, as Paul put it.[97] In a preproduction interview in the *New York World Telegram*, Lubitsch apparently indicated that the two "inseparably attached" male protagonists would be different in the film. As the interviewer phrased it, the two men, who were "crème de cocoa [*sic*] guzzlers" in the play, would be replaced by "a couple of muscle men," and Hecht, "who prefers bassos to tenors," would make sure that they were "perfectly normal."[98]

Lubitsch allowed Hecht, in adapting Coward, to write a story with what Eyman calls "virtually the only plot Hecht ever had: a platonic love affair between men."[99] For Hecht, apparently, it was always very important that

the affair remain platonic. Miriam Hopkins later reported an anecdote that Hecht had related to her: as he and Lubitsch had worked together on the script, Lubitsch had continually grabbed Hecht in his attempt to explain his ideas for some scenes. Hecht told Hopkins, "If he grabs me once more . . . to show me how Freddie March is supposed to embrace you, I'll turn pansy."[100]

Along with the anecdote about Hecht, Hopkins provided evidence of what many other actors reported: Lubitsch's long-standing and well-documented practice of acting out all the parts for his actors, both male and female. In this case, he was acting out the parts even for the screenwriter. Again, Lubitsch was clearly heterosexual—he was infatuated with Hopkins in the early 1930s and may have been having an affair with her at the time he was directing this film.[101] But returning to the politics of genre, Lubitsch had for the most part rejected the chance to make ("manly") epic, blockbuster films in Hollywood—the type of film that had gotten him invited to Hollywood in the first place (although his epic films in Germany were popular as much for their racy melodrama as for their epic spectacle). In Hollywood he made romantic comedies and operettas almost exclusively. By the mid-1920s he had been criticized by Jim Tully in *Vanity Fair* for making films that appealed to women instead of more "serious" films.[102]

This background adds complexity to the one moment in the film where homosexuality seems to be addressed, if a bit obliquely. Gilda piques the interest of the London critic Mr. Douglas in Tom's play by telling him, "You'll adore it, it's a woman's play." Douglas, who does a double take, is played by the actor Eyman calls "the eternally limp-wristed Franklin Pangborn."[103] Eyman's somewhat homophobic remark reveals the homophobic implications of this scene, which seem to have been in the original script. In the Production Code files on the film, Paramount is warned that "care will be needed in the portrayal of Douglas as an effeminate man."[104] The homophobic humor was thus intentional and in keeping with what seems to have been Hecht's defensiveness on this score—or at least with the need to make Tom and George seem as heterosexual as possible by playing them off against others of more ambiguous sexuality. Given Lubitsch's history in Hollywood, however, we can intuit a deeper meaning that is less negative about the appeal to women viewers—and that links Lubitsch's sophistication to that of Coward.[105]

The other place where repressed queer energies might be seen to emerge is in the somewhat prissy character of Max Plunkett, played by the superb character actor Edward Everett Horton, whom Eyman calls "Lubitsch's

favorite eunuch."[106] Max's impotence is most clearly indicated in a classic example of the Lubitsch touch: for Max and Gilda's wedding, Tom and George send two rather phallic tulips in a pot. Gilda is upset at this gift at first and kicks it over. But just before she enters the bedroom on her wedding night, she restores the two tulips to the pot and scoops up the soil on the floor to help the two flowers stand up. We never see what happens behind the closed door to the bedroom; instead, we see a frustrated Max come out of the room the next morning, and this time he kicks over the pot with the two tulips. Clearly a comment about Max's impotence, there is also something a bit queer here: the fact that the two phallic tulips, which represent the more potent Tom and George, are together in one pot.

A "New Deal" for Women?

After the wedding night—which we witness only from outside the bedroom, where we remain with the all the flowers, including the two tulips in the pot—Gilda will soon enough reject her marriage to impotent Max and run off with her two lovers, Tom and George. She is another of Lubitsch's "untamable heroines"—one of his "bad girls," the characters who had starred in the comedies and costume dramas he had made in Germany in the late 1910s and early 1920s, before he came to Hollywood.

One reason that Lubitsch often made films with strong female characters who were willing to take sexual initiative may be that he identified with these figures. He had played male versions of them early in his film career. Although strong women characters would be common in the screwball comedies beginning in 1934 with Frank Capra's *It Happened One Night*, these characters will almost always be "tamed" by marriage (or remarriage) by the end of the film. Lubitsch himself made a number of romantic comedies that ended with happy marriages, even though his happy endings were usually at least somewhat ironic. But neither *Trouble in Paradise* nor *Design for Living* ends with marriage, and Gilda in *Design for Living* is never tamed.[107]

Most American critics who wrote about *Design for Living* in 1933 found the film lacking in comparison to the Coward play that had so recently been a hit in New York. The actors in the film were simply not as elegant as Noël Coward, Alfred Lunt, and Lynn Fontanne. March, Cooper, and Hopkins were not British, nor did they try to simulate the pseudo-British accent of the American stage. Having the characters act like "regular Americans"

(and not "continental snobs") makes the film's proposed "design for living" all the more radical.

As Paul points out, Lubitsch's adaptations were rarely faithful: they were irreverent and involved extensive changes. This would not get him in trouble when he was adapting silly Central European operettas. When he adapted Oscar Wilde's *Lady Windermere's Fan* in 1925, there were some objections, but not many, for the play was written in the 1890s, and Wilde had been dead for years.[108] Coward was very much alive, and his play had only recently been a hit in New York. Treating it as irreverently as Lubitsch and his screenwriters would treat an obscure Hungarian play (e.g., the source for *Trouble in Paradise*) was bound to cause trouble.

Some critics admitted that the play had to be altered because of the censors.[109] At least one critic expressed some astonishment about the gender politics of the film—that is, about the strength of the female character in contrast to the two male characters (this is much less the case with Coward's Gilda). Alma Whitaker, writing about Lubitsch's film in the *Los Angeles Times*, calls herself "a reasonably good feminist," although it is hard to know exactly what she meant by that in 1933 and how seriously she meant it, for much of her review seems tongue-in-cheek. In any case, Whitaker warns that the film is "dangerous, insidious" and "apt to give . . . [women] ideas." She writes that Hopkins plays a "female Don Juan!" She adds, "Never was masculinity so shamefully belittled. And we are invited to sympathize with Miriam's attitude. . . . And the boys are as acquiescent as a couple of wives in a sultan's harem." The film proposes a "new deal" for women, she writes, then she (playfully?) warns Will Hays, Hollywood's chief censor, that the film contains "dangerous doctrines."[110] In 1933, Hays and Hollywood were getting a lot of pressure to clamp down on "dangerous" and "immoral" ideas.

The film was passed by the National Board of Review, but what was permissible in November 1933 would not be possible by summer 1934, when Joseph Breen began strictly enforcing the Production Code. We tend to think of Lubitsch as being too clever and subtle for the censors, but in fact he ran into problems from 1934 on. Even before then, his films (like many others) had problems with some of the censorship boards in the various states. One thing that Breen and the Code accomplished for the film industry (for whom he and Hays worked) was to create a national standard that almost eliminated the need for state censorship boards (by preempting them). Thus Hollywood would be spared the need to cut different versions

Figure 5.4 Off into the night together: Tom (Fredric March), Gilda (Miriam Hopkins), and George (Gary Cooper) in *Design for Living* (1933). Screen capture.

of a film for different states. This national standard, however, was created by adopting the lowest common denominator: the most repressive kind of censorship with regard to sex (and politics), very much in line with the National Legion of Decency, a Catholic group to which Breen had ties.[111]

The Man I Killed, *Trouble in Paradise*, and *Design for Living* demonstrated the emergence of a different Lubitsch from the maker of the apolitical, even conservative silent sophisticated comedies and the Ruritanian musicals. Once again, a more subversive Lubitsch was on display, similar to some of his German films, but with a more overtly political side than was in evidence in Germany. He made a serious, explicitly antiwar film that covertly addressed Jewish concerns again, and the two comedies implicitly critiqued capitalism and explicitly subverted "respectable," bourgeois norms around sex and marriage.

This subversive trend was stymied in the mid-1930s. Lubitsch's films did not mesh so well with New Deal populism. Because of censorship and commercial concerns, 1934 signaled the end of the kind of romantic comedy

that Lubitsch had developed. Screwball comedy would dominate the rest of the 1930s and early 1940s and was a much more populist and "American" genre. It succeeded largely because of its accommodation of the Production Code. As Andrew Sarris observed, screwball's aggressive verbal wit and slapstick energy derived precisely from its repression of sexuality.[112]

Notes

1. Lubitsch and Raphaelson wrote the screenplay for *The Man I Killed* in fall 1930, even before the shooting of *The Smiling Lieutenant* in February and March 1931. *The Man I Killed* would not be shot until fall 1931. See Eyman, *Ernst Lubitsch*, 178; Jacobsen, "Filmografie," in Prinzler and Patalas, *Lubitsch*, 213–14.

2. An earlier version of this discussion is found in Richard W. McCormick, "A Serious Man? Lubitsch's Anti-War Film *The Man I Killed* (a.k.a. *Broken Lullaby*, USA 1932)," in *Continuity and Crisis in German Cinema, 1928–1936*, ed. Barbara Hales, Mihaela Petrescu, and Valerie Weinstein (Rochester, NY: Camden House, 2016), 291–305.

3. On the reception of *To Be or Not to Be*, see chap. 6; see also Eyman, *Ernst Lubitsch*, 300–301.

4. The credits list Ernest Vajda first and then Raphaelson for the screenplay. According to Raphaelson, Vajda contributed little to the screenplay. Lubitsch got no credit, as usual, but the script emerged from Lubitsch and Raphaelson talking together, the latter dictating the results to the stenographer. Eyman, *Ernst Lubitsch*, 179–80.

5. See Eyman, 177–84, 384; Harvey, *Romantic Comedy*, 35–45; *The Man I Killed*, Paramount shooting schedule, 1931 ("Opens 9-2-31; Close 10-7-31"), Box 29 F. 1, Margaret Herrick Library.

6. Eyman, *Ernst Lubitsch*, 183.

7. Of note is that the main character in each film—a German soldier in Milestone's film and a French soldier in Lubitsch's—is named Paul. Both films have a scene in a trench where the main character mortally wounds and then grieves for a dying enemy soldier. Both films have a *Stammtisch* scene in a tavern where the fathers of soldiers are depicted in a negative light for their treatment of their sons who are fighting.

8. Thomas Doherty, *Hollywood and Hitler, 1933–1939* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2013), 2–4, 8.

9. Eyman, *Ernst Lubitsch*, 181–82.

10. Lubitsch wanted $60,000; Sternberg got $40,000. See Steven Bach, *Marlene Dietrich: Life and Legend* (1992; Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2011), 5, 104–5.

11. See "Ernst Lubitsch wird in Berlin drehen?," *Film-Kurier*, February 12, 1931; and "Emil Jannings fährt nicht nach Amerika," *Film-Kurier*, March 24, 1931. Negotiations went on for some time in early 1931, but eventually Jannings declined to return to America; see Eyman, *Ernst Lubitsch*, 181–82.

12. See "West Reclaims Lubitsch," *Los Angeles Times*, June 7, 1931.

13. "Paramount-Vorschau," *Film-Kurier*, September 13, 1932.

14. Ernst Lubitsch, "Gedanken zu einem Filmstoff," *Die Filmwoche*, October 5, 1932.

15. On Lubitsch's arrival in Berlin to great fanfare on November 11, see "Ernst Lubitsch kommt im Flugzeug. Stürmischer Empfang in Tempelhof," *Vossische Zeitung*, November 12,

1932, 6. On the press conference he gave at the Hotel Adlon on November 14, see "Lubitsch empfängt," *Vossische Zeitung*, November 15, 1932, 5. On the two showings of the film, in English on November 14 and in German on November 15, see "The Man I Killed," *Film-Kurier*, November 15, 1932; and "Lubitsch-Film in Originalfassung," *Vossische Zeitung*, November 15, 1932. I am grateful to John Nordstrom for finding these items (and the review mentioned in n. 16) in the *Vossische Zeitung*.

16. See, e.g., "Lubitsch-Film im Capitol," *Vossische Zeitung*, November 16, 1932, 6.

17. Ozon uses a contemporary European neorealism, totally alien to Lubitsch's melodramatic studio film, filming on location in Europe and filming in French and German. This makes for a more subtle film, but a beautiful and nonetheless political one: antiwar and antinationalistic.

18. As noted, celebratory cannon fire (as annoying or scary) is used as a joke in both *The Love Parade* and *The Student Prince*. See chap. 4.

19. Kracauer, *From Caligari to Hitler*, 99, 122.

20. Anton Kaes, *Shell Shock Cinema: Weimar Culture and the Wounds of War* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2009).

21. Kracauer, *From Caligari to Hitler*, 99.

22. Weinberg, *Lubitsch Touch*, 60–61.

23. In the German context this uneasiness around the depiction of male weakness may also explain why Weimar art films riddled with male crisis tended to be critical but less often commercial successes.

24. See, e.g., the review by John S. Cohen Jr., "The New Talkie," *New York Sun*, January 20, 1932; *New York Herald Tribune*'s review of *The Man I Killed*, January 21, 1932; and the review by Sid [Sid Silverman?], "The Man I Killed," *Variety*, January 26, 1932, 2. Cohen concedes that Phillips Holmes may not be entirely to blame because "the tortures of conscience are difficult to project." McBride reminds us that in spite of the box office failure, the film was successful with most critics; see *How Did Lubitsch Do It?*, 313–14.

25. Of course, these issues were also of concern to Jews elsewhere, including American Jews.

26. Ashkenazi, *Weimar Film and Modern Jewish Identity*, 6–27, 47–48. See also Kaplan, *Making of the Jewish Middle Class*, 11. Kaplan, also citing Leib Gordon, points out that women as well as men were supposed to be Jews only at home.

27. Ashkenazi, *Weimar Film and Modern Jewish Identity*, 132–47.

28. Ashkenazi, 147.

29. Lubitsch may also have known Joe May's *Heimkehr* (Homecoming, 1928), which has a somewhat similar plot.

30. Lubitsch's films thematize intermarriage in complex ways (never simply condemning nor recommending it), but in "real life," both of his failed marriages were with blonde gentile women. See the introduction to this volume, n. 59. His first marriage to Leni had just broken up a few months before he began working on this film. Perhaps this personal crisis can be related to the film's treatment of such issues.

31. On *To Be or Not to Be*, see chap. 7.

32. Eyman, *Ernst Lubitsch*, 384.

33. Mordaunt Hall, "Ernst Lubitsch's Shimmering Picture about Well-Dressed Thieves and Pickpockets—A German Drama," *New York Times*, November 9, 1932. (No one in the film is German, although the thieves do escape to Germany at the end of the film.)

34. Originally in 1933; see Dwight Macdonald, *Dwight Macdonald on Movies* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1969), 83–85.

35. Lubitsch's letter to Weinberg of July 10, 1947, in Weinberg, *Lubitsch Touch*, 286.
36. Hake, *Passions and Deceptions*, 184, 187.
37. Mast (*Comic Mind*, 219) also suggests that Lubitsch does not take this Marxism "very seriously."
38. Hake, *Passions and Deceptions*, 184.
39. McBride considers the film to be "a direct outgrowth" of his work with the musicals; *How Did Lubitsch Do It?*, 276–77.
40. Eyman, *Ernst Lubitsch*, 189.
41. Hake, *Passions and Deceptions*, 176. This high tenor—also used by the singer of the title song in *One Hour with You*—might seem a bit queer today, although this style was common in the early 1930s, fitting an effete, upper-class, "European" style of masculinity in the early 1930s. This was being eclipsed by a much more rugged, working-class, "American" style—e.g., in gangster films.
42. It is interesting that Miriam Hopkins gets top billing, next comes Kay Francis, and only then comes Herbert Marshall, who at this point had appeared in only one other American film, Josef von Sternberg's *Blonde Venus* (1932), in which he plays Marlene Dietrich's somewhat stuffy (and not particularly suave) husband.
43. Hake, *Passions and Deceptions*, 184; Renk, *Ernst Lubitsch*, 118; Braudy, "Double Detachment of Ernst Lubitsch," 1084n6. Braudy cites Samson Raphaelson on the Caruso recording, adding that Caruso had died in 1921.
44. Mast, *Comic Mind*, 207; see also Schuster, "Comedy in Times of Austerity," 19–20, on "indirection."
45. Schuster, "Comedy in Times of Austerity," 19–20, 22.
46. Rudolf Thome's commentary on *Trouble in Paradise* in Prinzler and Patalas, *Lubitsch*, 168.
47. On this juxtaposition of social realism with art deco, see Paul, *Ernst Lubitsch's American Comedy*, 47–48, 55–56; and Mast, *Comic Mind*, 219.
48. This is a sequence in which—from Mariette's perspective—the film continually cuts to Gaston's absence in the space where she expects him to be, and then to his presence in a different space, then back to Mariette, then again to his absence where he had just been. Continuity is constantly being disrupted and then reestablished. Lubitsch's "touch" here involves "omission": we keep being denied the countershot we expect. Thome stated that Lubitsch uses "syncopated narrative rhythm" (Prinzler and Patalas, *Lubitsch*, 167): the explanation for an event we see is delayed, never immediately provided.
49. Harvey, *Romantic Comedy*, 49.
50. See Russell Grigg, "The Joyful Art of Ernst Lubitsch: *Trouble in Paradise*," in Novak, Dolar, and Krečič, *Lubitsch Can't Wait*, 64; McBride (*How Did Lubitsch Do It?*, 304) calls it "the film's raunchiest Lubitsch Touch."
51. Weinberg, *Lubitsch Touch*, 143.
52. Mast, *Comic Mind*, 219.
53. Paul, *Ernst Lubitsch's American Comedy*, 47–48, 55–56.
54. Harvey, *Romantic Comedy*, 52.
55. Hake, *Passions and Deceptions*, 184, 198.
56. Grigg's "Joyful Art of Ernst Lubitsch" demonstrates very nicely how this film conflates sex with theft. See also Michaela Naumann, *Ernst Lubitsch: Aspekte des Begehrens* (Marburg: Tectum, 2008), 56–57.
57. Grigg, "Joyful Art of Ernst Lubitsch," 42.

58. Grigg, 53.
59. Hake, *Passions and Deceptions*, 184.
60. Herbert Marshall in "real life" was clearly heterosexual. A married man, he had affairs with both Hopkins and Francis, according to Eyman, *Ernst Lubitsch*, 190.
61. Ashkenazi, *Weimar Film and Modern Jewish Identity*, 19–21; see also Boyarin, Itzkovitz, and Pellegrini, *Queer Theory and the Jewish Question*; Wallach, *Passing Illusions*, 15–16.
62. Hake (*Passions and Deceptions*, 177n4) categorizes Lily's remark as an "anti-Americanism," but Lubitsch clearly sides here with the two characters who only pretend to be European old money, the two who are actually self-made "new money," the upstarts whom Europe looks down upon: Americans and Jews.
63. Eyman, *Ernst Lubitsch*, 18.
64. Raymond Durgnat, *The Crazy Mirror: Hollywood Comedy and the American Image* (London: Faber and Faber, 1969), 113.
65. Eyman, *Ernst Lubitsch*, 17–18.
66. See the jacket cover photo of McBride, *How Did Lubitsch Do It?*. On p. 273, McBride reports his first reaction to (and current verdict on) the film: "Nothing could ever be more perfect."
67. Harvey, *Romantic Comedy*, 53–54.
68. Both of these female figures could conceivably represent situations that might have had some resonance for Lubitsch, the scrappy "nouveau riche" Jew who ended up marrying two women who were more interested in his money than they were in him (according to Eyman, *Ernst Lubitsch*, 18).
69. Lubitsch was in love with Miriam Hopkins (among other women) in the early 1930s, after his separation and divorce from Leni.
70. Huff, *Index of the Films*, 23. The shot of all the clerks at their desks in the huge, impersonal office alludes to King Vidor's *The Crowd* (1928); Billy Wilder will create a similar shot in his film *The Apartment* (1960). I was able to see "The Clerk" at the UCLA Film Archive in February 2009. It can now be found on the Blu-Ray special edition of *Design for Living* from the Criterion Collection (2011).
71. Eyman, *Ernst Lubitsch*, 212–14.
72. Abel [Abel Green], review of *Trouble in Paradise*, *Variety*, November 15, 1932.
73. Of these three types of films, the first two would be hit hard by Breen's strict enforcement of the Code starting in summer 1934; only the "gold digger" musicals would survive.
74. See Eyman, *Ernst Lubitsch*, 204. *Trouble in Paradise* was not shown in Germany until 1969, according to Jacobsen, "Filmografie," in Prinzler and Patalas, *Lubitsch*, 214.
75. Chaparral, "Lubitschs neuer Stil hat Erfolg: 'Trouble in Paradise' gefällt," *Film-Kurier*, November 24, 1932.
76. Eyman (*Ernst Lubitsch*, 205) writes that the interview was in the *Vossische Zeitung*. I could not find it there, but McBride learned that it was an interview with the Jewish journalist Bella Fromm in December 1932, who cited it in her book *Blood and Banquets: A Berlin Social Diary* (London: Geoffrey Bles, 1943). See McBride, *How Did Lubitsch Do It?*, 135, 515.
77. See Eyman, *Ernst Lubitsch*, 232, 237, 247–49.
78. Robert Pfaller, "What Is So Funny about Multiple Love? The Polygamous Lubitsch Touch," in Novak, Dolar, and Krečič, *Lubitsch Can't Wait*, 65–82.

79. Molly Haskell, *From Reverence to Rape: The Treatment of Women in the Movies* (New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1974), 101. Cited in Paul, *Ernst Lubitsch's American Comedy*, 68.

80. Much more recently (in 2008), Naumann (*Ernst Lubitsch*, 74) describes how the atmosphere of the film is sexually loaded, even though Lubitsch never shows us more than a kiss or an embrace.

81. Paul, *Ernst Lubitsch's American Comedy*, 35.

82. Weinberg (*Lubitsch Touch*, 146) cites Mordaunt Hall's review in the *New York Times* on November 9, 1932, and the review on the same date in the *New York Herald* by Richard Watts Jr.; "Abel's" review of *Trouble in Paradise* described the film as "predicated on a completely meretricious premise."

83. Harvey, *Romantic Comedy*, 56.

84. On the box office returns of Lubitsch's films in 1932, see Eyman, *Ernst Lubitsch*, 212; *Trouble in Paradise* lost $135,000 (but Eyman adds that it probably made that up in Europe).

85. Harvey, *Romantic Comedy*, 56.

86. Eyman, *Ernst Lubitsch*, 209.

87. Harvey (*Romantic Comedy*, 58) writes that it "flopped at the box office."

88. Ed Lowry, "Cinema Texas: Program Notes 11.1," notes on *Design for Living* (September 15, 1976), 57; Lubitsch files, MOMA Film Archive. Lowry suggests that the film might be "the earliest and most iconoclastic example of the genre which was to become known as screwball comedy" (52).

89. The slipshod way the two bachelors attempt to clean up their messy, low-rent apartment when Gilda comes to visit is reminiscent of Nucki and Josef in *The Oyster Princess* (1919).

90. This line was indicated as problematic by James Wingate in his letter of June 19, 1933, to A. M. Botsford at Paramount. Wingate suggested that the line be deleted—but it wasn't. See MPAA Production Code file on *Design for Living*, Margaret Herrick Library.

91. See James Wingate to Will Hays, June 26, 1933; MPAA Production Code file on *Design for Living*, Margaret Herrick Library. Wingate writes that the "story has been pretty completely re-written from the play" and that it "seems to be admissible under the Code," because the threesome lives together "on a basis of no sex." He states that the script is "treated on the whole in excellent taste, as is usually the case with Lubitsch" and that "whatever loose living is indicated, is not justified, but is shown as inimical to their happy relationship." This last statement seems a bit naive. See also Wingate's letters of June 19, October 25, and November 13, 1933 in the MPAA Production Code file on *Design for Living*.

Breen later disagreed. On August 3, 1935, in his letter to John Hammell at Paramount (MPAA Production Code file on *Design for Living*, Margaret Herrick Library), he described *Design for Living* and *Trouble in Paradise* as "unacceptable under the provisions of the Production Code and the regulations appertaining thereto as now interpreted"; neither film could be re-released.

92. See, e.g., Leah Jacobs, *The Wages of Sin: Censorship and the Fallen Woman Film, 1928–1942* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), 39, 43–44. Wingate, in his letter to Botsford of June 19, 1933 (see n. 90), registers concern about the scene in which Tom returns to Paris and finds Gilda living in George's luxurious apartment. He writes that "the dialogue here indicates a little too specifically that the girl has been having an affair with both men." He suggests that this be made less clear.

93. Cited in Weinberg, *Lubitsch Touch*, 148.

94. Paul (*Ernst Lubitsch's American Comedy*, 69) calls their French "execrably American-accented." But while their American accents are unmistakable, they do speak rather fluently.

95. Donna Ross, program notes for *Design for Living*, UCLA Film Festival, June 28, 1996; MOMA Film Archive. See also Eyman, *Ernst Lubitsch*, 208–9.

96. Raphaelson later said that he did not want to do "another goddam sophisticated triangle"; see Harvey, *Romantic Comedy*, 57–58; Eyman, *Ernst Lubitsch*, 206.

97. Paul, *Ernst Lubitsch's American Comedy*, 72.

98. May 1, 1933. Cited in Paul, *Ernst Lubitsch's American Comedy*, 72.

99. Eyman, *Ernst Lubitsch*, 211.

100. Hopkins, cited by G. G. Patterson in notes on *Design for Living* for the Toronto Film Society, December 6, 1970; MOMA Film Archive. Eyman also cites this anecdote; *Ernst Lubitsch*, 208.

101. See Eyman, *Ernst Lubitsch*, 208. He reports that when the film was being made, Hopkins's affair with King Vidor had ended, and that on the set she would interrupt Lubitsch while he was talking to others and say, "Leave them alone and amuse me, Ernst."

102. Tully, "Ernst Lubitsch," 82.

103. Eyman, *Ernst Lubitsch*, 211.

104. Wingate's letter to Botsford of June 19, 1933; MPAA Production Code files on *Design for Living*, Margaret Herrick Library. McBride (*How Did Lubitsch Do It?*, 326) asserts that Lubitsch's response was to cast Pangborn "as if to thumb his nose" at the censors. That may be true, but then why was it so important to portray the critic as "effeminate"?

105. Most if not all of his German films were also addressed to female audiences, as I have argued in Pt. I of this book.

106. Eyman, *Ernst Lubitsch*, 211.

107. McBride sees her willingness to abandon her work to help Tom and George as a "dispiriting concession to the gender limitations of her times"; *How Did Lubitsch Do It?*, 322. But Gilda is much stronger in Lubitsch's film than in Coward's play. The way she dominates both men throughout the film is certainly contrary to "the gender limitations of her time."

108. See Paul on the way Lubitsch freely adapted this and other plays; *Ernst Lubitsch's American Comedy*, 69–70.

109. They were referring to the openness of the sex in Coward's play: in the first act Gilda, while living with Otto, the painter, in Paris, sleeps with Leo, the playwright. In the second act, living with Leo in London, she ends up sleeping with Otto. In the third act she is living with Ernest, an art dealer, in New York, where she is active as an interior decorator, and at the end of the act she leaves him to join Otto and Leo in what would seem to be a ménage à trois. The play also implies that between the two men there is also what Paul calls "perversion"; *Ernst Lubitsch's American Comedy*, 72.

110. Alma Whitaker, "'Emancipation' for Women Achieved by Films—and How!," *Los Angeles Times*, December 3, 1933, A1.

111. The National Legion of Decency was also known as the Catholic Legion of Decency. See Doherty, *Hollywood's Censor*; and Jacobs's *Wages of Sin*.

112. Andrew Sarris, "The Sex Comedy without Sex," *American Film* 3, no. 5 (March 1978): 8–15.

6

SCREWBALL POLITICS

American Populism and European Politics, 1935–41

Screwball was a comic subgenre that Lubitsch would have difficulty mastering. He would spend the rest of the 1930s trying to adapt to the new social climate in America, and only by the end of the decade would he have a hit, with *Ninotchka* (1939).[1] This film was both more populist and political. It was just as focused on Europe as his earlier comedies had been, only this time not the imaginary one he had been creating for Americans since the 1920s. *Ninotchka* was the first successful fusion of American populism and European politics in a romantic comedy that had Lubitsch's European sophistication and some American screwball elements. Refugees from Europe played important roles in the film, which anticipated the war that was about to break out.

Even closer to Lubitsch's heart was another experiment in hybridity that was meant to adjust to the new populism. *The Shop around the Corner* (1940) was a romantic comedy that was more populist and less sophisticated than *Ninotchka*, more screwball in the antagonism between the two lovers, and more naturalist, even social realist, in style. Set in Central Europe, it clearly references the Depression, which severely circumscribes the kind of romance possible.

Wandering in the Wilderness: Lubitsch, 1935–39

To begin to understand the significance of Lubitsch's three comic masterpieces of the late 1930s and early 1940s—that is, *Ninotchka*, his critical and commercial success of late 1939; his beloved romantic comedy *The Shop around the Corner* (1940); and his dark, political comedy *To Be or Not to*

Be (1942)—one needs to understand how poorly his career had fared since the early 1930s. Lubitsch's model from the mid-1920s, comprising silent, sophisticated comedies and then naughty operettas in the early sound era, all set in Europe, worked well until about 1932. In that year he lost money for Paramount, and even the sophisticated comedy he considered his best in terms of "pure style," *Trouble in Paradise*, had trouble at the box office. As the Depression worsened, the American market turned against such films. Although *Design for Living* was more "American," its sexual politics were apparently too sophisticated for the American public in 1933. Returning to the European operetta with a big budget at MGM had also not worked: *The Merry Widow* in 1934 lost money too. More "American," populist films came to dominate the market: gold-digger musicals and comedies that were soon called "screwball."

Meanwhile, politics in Europe caused Lubitsch great concern. With Hitler's triumph in 1933, Lubitsch began to get involved in Jewish and anti-fascist causes.[2] He would never see his homeland again: Lubitsch was one of Hitler's "pet hates." The Nazis "had Lubitsch's face plastered on posters at railway stations as an example of a truly degenerate non-Aryan."[3] In 1938 he joined with the agent Paul Kohner (a German-speaking Jew from Bohemia who had begun working for Hollywood in the early 1920s) to head the European Film Fund, which helped refugees from Europe. Lubitsch's seemingly apolitical comedies always focused on power and sympathized with underdogs, but politics become more overt in his films over the course of the 1930s.

By the end of the decade, after making a number of films that lost money, Lubitsch again had a successful film. Both populist and political, its focus was still Europe—indeed, European politics. *Ninotchka* (1939) not only rejuvenated his career but began a new, more political phase of film-making. It was a romantic comedy that was a hybrid of screwball, American populism, and European politics.

American comedy (and politics) had moved in a (mostly left-wing) populist direction over the course of the 1930s.[4] Frank Capra's surprise hit of 1934, *It Happened One Night*, inspired a very American style, screwball comedy, mixing elements of sophisticated and romantic comedy with slapstick.[5] Lubitsch took time to adjust to these changes, stymied as well by the strict enforcement of the Motion Picture Production Code beginning in July 1934. His references to sex had always been subtle; the famous Lubitsch touch created sexual innuendo that eluded American censors in the 1920s

and early 1930s (even when they got it, his "tasteful" indirection appeased them). The new, stricter regime of the Production Code was implemented in response to protests by groups like the Catholic National Legion of Decency (founded in 1934), which rated—and condemned—films.[6] The laissez-faire Protestant Will Hays now supervised a zealous enforcer of the Code, Irish Catholic Joseph Breen, who was in charge of the new Production Code Administration from 1934 on.[7]

Strict enforcement of the Production Code made it difficult for Lubitsch to finish his expensive musical, *The Merry Widow*, for MGM. By fall 1934, Hays and Breen demanded cuts in the picture, even though the prints of the film had already been sent to cinemas.[8] It is interesting that the new American censorship (which was actually self-censorship by the film industry itself) often aligned with decisions by censors in the Nazi regime in Germany. In more explicit terms than Breen would use in 1935, Goebbels's Ministry for Propaganda and Enlightenment condemned *Design for Living* in 1934 "because of the irony with which the establishment of marriage is treated." With *The Merry Widow*, the Nazis were blunter: they rejected it "on racial grounds"—because Lubitsch had directed it.[9]

The Merry Widow lost money for MGM but not primarily because of the new censorship. The American public did not seem interested anymore in an operetta set in Paris and Ruritanian "Marshovia."

After this disappointment, the new year brought many changes for Lubitsch. On January 28, 1935, Nazi Germany took away his citizenship. Back at Paramount, only a few days later, on February 4, 1935, he was made head of production.[10] That a filmmaker like Lubitsch became an executive at a major Hollywood studio was just as unheard of in the 1930s as it would be today. This appointment is sometimes cited as proof of Lubitsch's great success (or his coziness with the studio bosses), but it was a mostly thankless job that he would be forced to leave within a year. It happened at a time when all the studios were hurting because of the ongoing Depression; Paramount in particular had only just emerged from bankruptcy.[11]

A major accomplishment of Lubitsch as studio production head was the film *Desire*, a production he personally supervised. The film was directed by Frank Borzage in fall 1935 and starred Marlene Dietrich and Gary Cooper. It was Dietrich's first comedy, and when it appeared in 1936, it helped restart her career after a decline as von Sternberg's (ever more eccentric) films with her had become commercially unsuccessful. *Desire*'s success had much to do with Lubitsch's coaching of Dietrich and Borzage.[12] Paramount,

however, was not satisfied with Lubitsch's performance as production head. On February 7, 1936—only two weeks after becoming an American citizen on January 24, 1936—Lubitsch was fired, even though, as Eyman points out, his year in that job left Paramount with a positive balance.[13]

After losing the executive position, Lubitsch decided to take an extended honeymoon to Europe with his new wife, Vivian Gaye, an agent and script consultant. He had married Vivian in summer 1935. By 1938, they had a child together, Nicola, to whom Lubitsch became completely devoted.[14]

On their honeymoon in 1936, Vivian and Ernst spent two months in Europe. While there they visited Vienna, where Lubitsch met with Walter Reisch, a director and screenwriter with whom he would soon work in Hollywood. Lubitsch and his wife also went to the Soviet Union, to Leningrad and then Moscow, where they met with German communists in exile, most notably Gustav and Inge von Wangenheim. After that visit to the Soviet Union in the midst of Stalin's brutal purges, Lubitsch lost any sympathy he might have had with communism; by 1938, he would withdraw from the Hollywood Anti-Nazi League because he considered it to be a communist front group.[15] His political work after that concentrated on helping émigrés from Europe, efforts by him and others that culminated in the European Film Fund, which he led with Kohner. The visit to the Soviet Union, and especially the time spent with the Wangenheims in Moscow, would influence *Ninotchka*.[16]

After the European trip, he returned to Paramount and resumed his work as a director. In spring 1937 he began shooting *Angel* with Marlene Dietrich. Released October 9, 1937, the film was a sophisticated marital comedy that flopped.[17] If the sophistication of *Trouble in Paradise* had not worked well at the box office in 1932, then this much less "shimmering," much more muted film could hardly have succeeded in 1937, when raucous screwball comedy was approaching its peak years. One might argue that the film's accommodation to the much stricter Production Code demanded a level of subtlety that was suffocating.[18]

Lubitsch shifted gears and finally tried his hand at screwball comedy with *Bluebeard's Eighth Wife* (1938), starring Claudette Colbert and Gary Cooper. He hired the (new) screenwriting team of Charles Brackett and Billy Wilder. For the Austrian Jewish émigré Wilder, being paired with Brackett and working for Lubitsch finally solidified his career in Hollywood, where success had eluded him since arriving from France in 1934. Wilder had fled to Paris in March 1933 from Berlin, where he had been a successful screenwriter.[19]

All through his career, Lubitsch's comedies had been characterized by the inversion of traditional gender roles, and they had this in common with screwball comedies. In the topsy-turvy world of screwball, the female characters were strong; they usually conquered the men they loved and stayed strong—at least until the end of the film, when a more conventional marriage (or remarriage) would occur. But Lubitsch's *Bluebeard* ended with the taming of a husband. Set in Europe, it featured an American millionaire (Cooper) who was constantly marrying and then divorcing wives and the impoverished European aristocrat (Colbert) who would make him change his ways.[20]

In this film, Lubitsch seems to be trying to imitate screwball's way of accommodating the Production Code—that is, as Andrew Sarris explained, by using the compulsory repression of sex to provide the energy for screwball's rapid-fire, witty, sarcastic dialogue and for its outbursts of slapstick physicality.[21] *Bluebeard*, like *It Happened One Night*, is a film structured on what Harvey calls "the delayed fuck."[22] Cooper and Colbert play characters who get married early in the film, but they never have sex because Colbert's character learns only at the last moment before the wedding that she is marrying a man who has already married and divorced seven other women. Angry that he has kept this from her, Colbert refuses to have sex with him. By the end of the film, he is in a straitjacket; tamed, the marriage can finally be consummated.

Although sadistic humiliation of the male protagonist was common in screwball (e.g., Cary Grant in *Bringing Up Baby*, also in 1938), *Bluebeard* probably went too far in this direction, at least as far as audiences were concerned.[23] The film premiered in March 1938, and it was yet another box office failure. Paramount fired Lubitsch.[24] He had to leave the studio where he had worked since 1928 and to which he had had a connection since 1921 (back in Germany).

Lubitsch had not quite mastered the American-style populism of the screwball genre. A review of *Bluebeard* questioned whether American audiences in 1938 had any tolerance for leading characters who did not need to work (e.g., Cooper's millionaire).[25] Lubitsch also was not adept at the kind of overt thematization of American politics found in Frank Capra's films of the late 1930s.

Nonetheless, over the course of the 1930s Lubitsch developed his own left-wing populist politics based on his concerns about what was happening in Europe. He became more engaged as the political situation became

urgent, with the Nazis annexing Austria in 1938 and then, by early 1939, occupying and dismantling Czechoslovakia.

Lubitsch was no deep political thinker, but he was neither apolitical nor reactionary. *Ninotchka* can certainly be read as anticommunist, but its politics are more complex than that. As the émigré writer and producer Gottfried Reinhardt (son of Max Reinhardt) formulated it, Lubitsch was "liberal, but naïve."[26] Another source regarding Lubitsch and his politics in the 1930s is the screenwriter Salka Viertel, who had known Lubitsch since they were both young actors in Max Reinhardt's theatrical troupe in Berlin. Although she disagreed with Lubitsch about the Hollywood Anti-Nazi League, she maintained that this did not hurt their friendship. She wrote that Lubitsch never refused to donate money to political causes when she asked him and reported that he was even willing to donate money for Trotsky in Mexico in 1939.[27]

According to Eyman, two refugee writers who were friends of Lubitsch from the old days in Berlin came to visit him while he was still production head at Paramount. They pitched a proposal to Lubitsch for a film about Emile Zola and his stand against the antisemitism in France revealed by the Dreyfus affair (1894–1906). Lubitsch liked their proposal and sent them to Warner Brothers to see his old friend, the producer Henry Blanke. That is how *The Life of Emile Zola* originated, which would be directed by the émigré William (Wilhelm) Dieterle in 1937.[28] Herta Renk writes that Lubitsch's guesthouse in Bel Air was always filled with émigré guests—the families of "Zweig, Mahler, Wassermann, Bruno Walter," as well as Thomas Mann—but that Lubitsch never spoke about this or took credit for it.[29] Lubitsch's concern with the political situation in Europe and with the plight of refugees fleeing Hitler cannot be doubted.

The Soviet Agent and the French Gigolo: *Ninotchka* (1939)

The most concrete evidence of Lubitsch's politics in the late 1930s was his role, along with Kohner, codirecting the European Film Fund. The fund had been the idea of Charlotte Dieterle and Liesl Frank, institutionalizing the informal network of support for refugees from Europe that had emerged in Hollywood in the mid-1930s and that they, along with Salka Viertel, Marlene Dietrich, Kohner, Lubitsch, and Carl Laemmle at Universal, had helped to build.[30] The fund collected money from successful people in Hollywood (mostly the European émigré community) to help bring over writers and

film artists (mostly Jews) trying to escape Europe, which necessitated finding them jobs in the film industry once they got to America.

The romantic comedy *Ninotchka* was a film on which many émigrés worked.[31] The screenplay was cowritten by Billy Wilder and his American partner Charles Brackett (their second project for Lubitsch), assisted by Walter Reisch, an Austrian Jewish exile who had just arrived from Europe in 1938 and whom Lubitsch had met in Vienna in 1936.[32] Reisch had worked with Wilder in Berlin on the 1932 musical comedy *Ein blonder Traum/A Blonde Dream* (1932), with music by Werner Richard Heymann, whom Lubitsch also hired for *Ninotchka*.[33]

Many other European émigrés were involved in the production of *Ninotchka*, the most famous being Swedish Greta Garbo in the title role. This film reinvented her career by giving her a role in a comedy. The ad campaign proclaimed, "Garbo laughs!" This slogan alluded to the ad campaign for Garbo's first talkie, *Anna Christie*, in 1930, which proclaimed "Garbo speaks!"[34]

In addition to Garbo, the cast included German-speaking émigré actors Felix Bressart, Sig Rumann, and Alexander Granach. They played, respectively, Buljanoff, Iranoff, and Kopalski, three Soviet trade representatives in Paris whom Ninotchka is sent to discipline and who then become her comic sidekicks. Rumann was from Hamburg; like Garbo and Lubitsch, he was among the privileged European film artists to come to Hollywood in the 1920s, before the Nazis. In the early 1930s, he acted in famous comedies with the Marx Brothers. Felix Bressart was a German Jew from East Prussia who had been a successful film comedian in Berlin. In 1933, he fled from Germany to Austria; however, even before the Anschluss, the annexation of Austria by Nazi Germany in 1938, it became increasingly difficult for Jews to get film work there. Bressart, like so many others, went to America.[35] *Ninotchka* was one of his first American films.

Alexander Granach, like Wilder and Reisch, was a German-speaking Jew from Austria-Hungary. He had a distinguished acting career in German silent and sound cinema, and then, being a leftist, he fled to the Soviet Union in 1933. Like many such exiles, he was soon endangered by the Stalinist purges of the mid-1930s; he was very fortunate to be able to leave the Soviet Union and make his way to America. *Ninotchka* was his first American film. For him, the political critique of the Soviet Union in *Ninotchka* had very personal resonance.

The Hitler-Stalin Joke

In *Ninotchka*, Buljanoff, Iranoff, and Kopalski have been sent from Moscow to Paris on official business: to get hard Western currency, they are supposed to sell crown jewels confiscated from czarist aristocrats after the Russian Revolution. However, the three men soon become corrupted by the luxurious life they are able to lead in the "City of Light." Garbo plays a somber special envoy who comes to France from the Soviet Union to discipline the three wayward Soviets, but she too will be seduced by Paris.

The arrival in Paris of the Soviet envoy portrayed by Garbo is the occasion of a joke that seems to anticipate the Nazi-Soviet cooperation that would start World War II. What we now call the Hitler-Stalin pact was officially called the German-Soviet Treaty of Nonaggression.[36] It was announced August 23, 1939, and on September 1, Germany attacked Poland from the west, which started World War II. On September 17, the Soviet Union attacked Poland from the east, dividing it with the Nazis.[37]

Shooting for *Ninotchka* had started May 31, 1939 and was completed in July—before the Hitler-Stalin Pact was announced. By the time the film was released on October 6, 1939, World War II had been under way for more than a month. Stalin and Hitler had already divided Poland, and France and England were at war with Germany. These events necessitated adding superimposed text as a prologue to the film explaining that the story was set in Paris before the war: "This picture takes place in Paris in those wonderful days when a siren was a brunette and not an alarm . . . and if a Frenchman turned out the light it was not on account of an air raid."[38]

At the beginning of the film, the three Soviet trade representatives move into a luxurious Parisian hotel where they soon allow themselves to be seduced by "capitalist decadence." The French aristocrat Count Leon D'Algout (Melvyn Douglas) facilitates this seduction, plying them with champagne, food, and the pretty, young cigarette girls who can be summoned in the luxurious Clarence Hotel.[39] The jewels that the three Soviets are trying to sell in Paris once belonged to the family of White Russian Grand Duchess Swana. She lives in exile in Paris, and Leon is working on her behalf; he tells the Soviets that Swana will take them to court and likely prevail, so they should agree to split the money from the sale of the jewels in Paris "fifty-fifty." The happy, drunk Soviets agree to these terms, which will get them in trouble with Moscow once they send a telegram about the deal.

Their seduction by Leon and Paris is symbolized visually with an obvious Lubitsch touch: on a hat rack, the three simple Russian hats of the Soviets dissolve into elegant, upper-class hats (two bowlers and a top hat). Immediately after this dissolve, however, the three men receive a telegram from Moscow announcing the imminent arrival of a special envoy to supervise them in their dealings. They hurry to the train station to await the arrival of the Soviet special envoy, unaware that she is a woman. They begin to follow a man who looks as though he might be the official they are expecting.

The first truly political joke in this sequence is also visual. Following this man at the train station, the three Soviets are then shocked when he greets a woman, presumably his wife, with the Hitler salute. They remark that this man cannot be a "comrade," a Soviet. Nonetheless, the film makes the point that a Soviet bureaucrat and a Nazi could seem interchangeable.

Soon after that point comes a much darker "joke," a reference to the Stalinist show trials in Moscow. Once the three Soviet representatives have realized that a woman, Ninotchka, is the superior for whom they have waited, they ask her how things are in Moscow. Ninotchka states that the latest mass trials have been a big success: "There are going to be fewer, but better Russians." This line functions to create dark humor, but it did not originate with Wilder, Brackett, or Reisch. As Tatjana Jukić points out, this was actually a Stalinist slogan of the time.[40]

This sequence of the film begins with men's hats and ends with a woman's hat that introduces another, more significant Lubitsch touch.[41] After the "joke" about the mass trials, Ninotchka notices a silly, fashionable hat on display in a shop window and states with full confidence that the hat demonstrates how a civilization based on consumer capitalism must surely be doomed: "It won't be long, comrades." Later in the film, however, as Ninotchka too gets seduced by Paris—falling in love with Leon, the French aristocrat—she will secretly buy this very hat and eventually wear it. According to Wilder, by coming up with the idea of this hat, Lubitsch spared Brackett and Wilder pages of dialogue they had been trying to develop to explain Ninotchka's political transition from a sober, no-nonsense Soviet official to a woman less convinced of Soviet dogma and much more open to a frivolous, fashionable hat.[42]

Paris versus Moscow

Many of the film's conflicts are symbolized in the contrast between Paris and Moscow; it is important to remember that, beyond the fictional world of Lubitsch's film, these places were the two favorite destinations for Germans

Figure 6.1 Somber Soviet envoy: Greta Garbo in the title role of *Ninotchka* (1939). Screen capture.

who fled Hitler for most of the 1930s (with the onset of the war, Paris would be replaced by Britain and America). The critique of the Soviet Union that emerges in the film had its origins in Lubitsch's own visit to Moscow in 1936, when he met with German communists in exile there, particularly Gustav von Wangenheim (who had acted in two of Lubitsch's German comedies in 1920, *Romeo and Juliet in the Snow* and *Kohlhiesel's Daughters*) and his wife, Inge von Wangenheim. Thomas Doherty writes that Gustav was "half-Jewish and all Communist."[43] However, it was not Gustav but Inge who made the lasting impression on Lubitsch at this meeting. Her strident defense of the Soviet Union and her condescension toward the Hollywood "dream factory" where Lubitsch worked became a model for the character of Ninotchka at her sternest early in the film.[44]

Paris in the film is shown to be a city of light, luxury, and love. Like most screwball comedies, *Ninotchka* brings together an odd couple, two unlikely lovers who are seemingly opposite types: the somber Soviet special envoy Ninotchka and the frivolous but romantic French aristocrat Leon, who embodies Paris. Although she is attracted to him, Ninotchka at

first resists Leon's advances, especially after she learns that he is working against the Soviets and for the counterrevolutionary, White Russian Grand Duchess Swana, who claims the jewels that the Soviets are trying to sell in Paris. But Ninotchka's resistance to Leon then dissolves in a working-class Parisian restaurant when she finally starts laughing, indeed, laughing hysterically, as though she cannot stop. This outbreak occurs not because she finds any of Leon's jokes funny but rather because the sophisticated Leon takes a (slapstick, screwball) pratfall.[45] This is the scene that justified the promotional advertisement that "Garbo Laughs!"

Soon after this fit of laughter, she will buy the silly hat and let herself fall in love with Leon. She goes to a fancy nightclub with him, tastes champagne for the first time, and gets drunk. Intoxicated, the two return to Ninotchka's hotel suite and proclaim a new politics of love. Ninotchka opens the safe, and Leon takes out a bejeweled crown and puts it on her head, crowning her "Ninotchka the Great . . . Grand Duchess of the People." Leon then puts Ninotchka to bed and leaves (thanks to the Production Code). But the two tipsy lovers have left the safe open and the crown jewels exposed. A hotel employee who is a White Russian steals the jewels and brings them to Swana.

Unsettled that Leon has fallen in love with Ninotchka, Swana appears the next day at the hotel suite. She wakes up the hungover Ninotchka, informing her that the jewels are now in her custody but promising to give them back to Ninotchka if she will leave France. Ninotchka is too loyal a Soviet citizen to refuse Swana's offer, and so she sacrifices her new lover Leon. But it is more than just a sacrifice for socialism—as Jukić suggests, she is also succumbing to the logic of commodification in capitalism that is embodied by Swana. In effect, Ninotchka trades Leon back to Swana for the jewels.[46] She then returns to Moscow with her three comic sidekicks.

After all the luxury and romance in Paris, the scenes back in Moscow show scarcity, censorship, surveillance, and oppression. They are surely inspired by Lubitsch's visit there and provide the film's most blatant critique of the Soviet Union: the huge May Day parade in which Ninotchka is lost in the masses, and the crowded apartment she shares with too many people, including a neighbor who constantly walks through to use the common bathroom and who cannot be trusted because he is a known informer.[47]

Ninotchka: A "New Woman" Tamed?

Given what we know about Stalin's rule in the Soviet Union during the 1930s, it is hard to fault the film for its critique, which is relatively mild. It is also

tempered by the film's portrayal of the "capitalist" world we see in Paris, a depiction that is not uncritical. More troubling for us today would be the film's gender politics. As a romantic comedy, it ends with the two lovers, Ninotchka and Leon, reunited and presumably ready for "happily ever after." The plot is somewhat reminiscent of *The Taming of the Shrew*: is it the taming of Ninotchka? She starts the film as a strong woman in a position of authority, loyal to her country, and ends as a woman who decides never to return to her country so that she can be with the man she loves. Her strength early in the film is portrayed humorously—she is almost a caricature of a masculinized "New Woman" who has no sense of humor (modeled in part on the German communist Inge von Wangenheim). Ninotchka becomes less "robotic" and more "human" as she falls in love, and then she is softer and less independent.[48]

However, the film is more complicated than this schematic analysis of its plot in terms of genre and gender stereotypes. Ninotchka does change over the course of the film, becoming less rigid and serious and more playful, but even early in the film, before her transition, her matter-of-fact attitude toward gender and sex is not portrayed as negative. Her bluntness contrasts favorably—and amusingly—with Leon's flowery (and wordy) romanticism: as Ninotchka says to him in his stylish, deco apartment, "You are very talkative," which motivates him finally to kiss her—and then she kisses him more passionately.[49] At the end of the film, she never renounces her loyalty to the Soviet Union; she only agrees with Leon's argument that she needs to stay in Constantinople (Istanbul) to stop him from corrupting other Soviet representatives outside of Russia. She stays with him for the sake of her country—or so she says, perhaps in a resigned rationalization meant to justify her decision on behalf of personal happiness.

As in any story about reciprocal love, both characters change. They become more like each other. The frivolous, vain, narcissistic Leon becomes more serious about love and politics and less dismissive of Ninotchka's earnest concern for social justice; meanwhile, Ninotchka becomes more playful and less dogmatic.[50] In fact, they can only embark on their "happily ever after" in a third country—not in France or in the Soviet Union, the two worlds that have been contrasted in the film, but rather in Turkey. Neither Leon's world nor Ninotchka's is triumphant.

New Deal Populism: Swana versus Ninotchka

The idea that the film proposes a "third way" as a solution to its binary conflicts also applies to its primary ideological conflict between supposedly

"capitalist" Paris and "communist" Moscow. *Ninotchka*'s politics are not simply anticommunist, as many critics have long noted.[51] The film's sympathies are much more with Soviet Ninotchka than with the aristocratic White Russians in exile in Paris whom she meets. Ninotchka begins the film as a stern, ascetic Soviet official. She lets herself gradually be seduced by Paris, but when she falls in love it is not with a "capitalist" but rather an aristocratic gigolo—for that is what our French Count Leon is: the kept man of Swana, the White Russian Grand Duchess, who fled to Paris after the Russian Revolution. Ninotchka is clearly the film's protagonist (much more than Leon), and Swana is surely the antagonist.

This relationship is best illustrated by the sequence that shows the first meeting of Ninotchka and Swana. Just before this confrontation, Ninotchka has allowed herself to wear a glamorous gown and accompany Leon to a nightclub. After she and Leon start to drink champagne and become tipsy, she is confronted by her rival, Swana, who sits down at their table. When Ninotchka mentions the lashes that the Cossack whips had inflicted on the Russian people before the Revolution, Swana agrees that it was a mistake to let the Cossacks use their whips. After all, she says, "They had such reliable guns." This is another dark political joke in the Brackett-Wilder screenplay. The film clearly does not sympathize with Swana and czarist Russia.

The film's concern with events in Europe aligns with American populism of the late 1930s. Capitalism in *Ninotchka* is not actually represented by capitalists—the only genuine capitalist we see in the film is a jeweler who wants to buy the royal jewels the Soviets are trying to sell in Paris. The "capitalist side" in the film is represented by Swana and Leon. Swana is a Russian aristocrat in Parisian exile, and Leon is a French count who admits that he has no job and who is, in fact, a gigolo kept by Swana. This word is never uttered—another touch of "tasteful" indirection on Lubitsch's part, out of concern for the Production Code.[52] To the extent Leon does any work at all, he helps Swana make money, advising her to "raffle off her past" by writing her memoirs and then helping her capitalize on her claims to the crown jewels. He undertakes these activities, apparently, so she can afford to give him presents (he mentions an expensive watch; at the nightclub, she mentions that she gave him the suit he is wearing).[53]

To make a film that ostensibly contrasts communism with capitalism by representing capitalism with idle, scheming aristocrats certainly puts capitalism in almost as negative a light as that in which communism is depicted. Communism is portrayed by mention of purges and mass trials

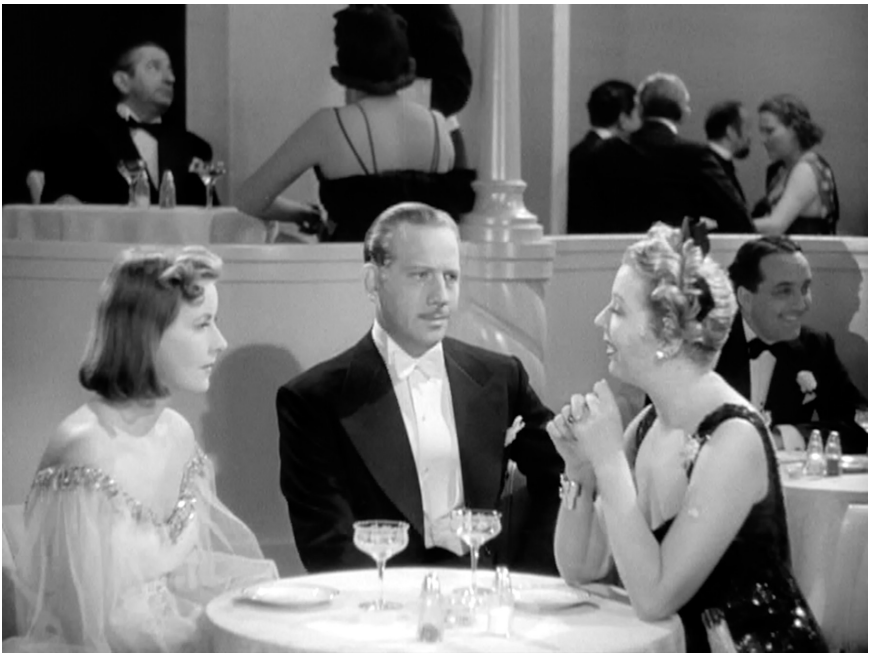

Figure 6.2 "They had such reliable guns": Ninotchka (Greta Garbo), Leon (Melvyn Douglas), and Grand Duchess Swana (Ina Claire) in *Ninotchka* (1939). Screen capture.

and then by the scenes of Moscow toward the end of the film that depict impoverished and oppressive conditions in Stalinist Russia. Nonetheless, the most sympathetic character in the film is Ninotchka—not Leon, and certainly not Swana. Leon becomes more sympathetic over the course of the film but only because he becomes more serious, just as Ninotchka becomes more playful; it is only in becoming more like Ninotchka that Leon becomes truly sympathetic.

Representing capitalism with aristocrats is resonant for late 1930s American politics, for President Franklin Roosevelt in 1936 had called the rich enemies of the New Deal "economic royalists."[54] This interpretation is underscored by the casting of the film. Ina Claire as Swana is the only Russian in the film who is *not* portrayed by an émigré who speaks English with a foreign accent. Instead, Claire, an American, speaks English with the affected, British-sounding accent of the American upper class, associated with a type of character that was typically ridiculed in populist films of the New Deal era.[55]

The film *Ninotchka* attacks Stalinism but also argues against a social system that is typified by idle aristocrats who pine for a return of the czar. It does not embrace the simplistic political dichotomy of its Cold War remake as a musical in the 1950s, *Silk Stockings* (1957). Lubitsch's film of 1939 argues for a capitalism tempered by Ninotchka's earnest concern for social justice, which she never renounces. As Harvey writes, she does not "sell out," as one would expect a communist to do in a Hollywood film.[56]

In the conflict between oppressive Stalinism and a capitalism represented by an exploitative, decadent, and cruel aristocracy, the film suggests a third way—capitalism restrained by democratic socialism, much like the New Deal. *Ninotchka* is no apology for Stalin, but it is also not on the side of the "1 percent."

Screwball "Naturalism": *The Shop around the Corner* (1940)

In an interview in the *New York Sun* on November 7, 1939, Lubitsch stated, "We must show people living in the real world." Supposedly this was his response to a review of *Bluebeard's Eighth Wife* (1938) that had questioned whether American audiences could still tolerate leading characters who did not need to work.[57] Lubitsch, however, made these remarks more than a year after *Bluebeard*, while making a new film meant to "show people living in the real world": *The Shop around the Corner*, which was released January 12, 1940, with its New York premiere on January 25.[58] Lubitsch had started working on this project with Samson Raphaelson before *Ninotchka*. When MGM tried to hire him in early 1939 to direct the latter film (because he was the director Garbo wanted), he agreed only on condition that MGM would then allow him to make the other film when he finished *Ninotchka*.[59] This plan was fortuitous, for Lubitsch had no studio behind him, having been fired by Paramount.

Lubitsch and Raphaelson adapted a Hungarian play by Nikolaus Laszlo about a drugstore. They kept the Hungarian setting but changed the store into a leather goods shop. The resulting film was seen as another attempt by Lubitsch to enter the American comedy mainstream "by moving . . . into Capra-esque territory."[60] The casting of James Stewart in the role of the male protagonist, Kralik, fits with such an interpretation: Stewart had just starred in two of Capra's populist American comedies, *You Can't Take It with You* (1938) and *Mr. Smith Goes to Washington* (1939). But Lubitsch's film has also been connected to his own biography, with his father's shop

in Berlin and his early German "shop comedies," as Paul calls them (the "milieu comedies").[61] Lubitsch's niece Ruth Hall said that this film was the "most like" her uncle—and very European.[62] It has also been called "more Jewish" than Lubitsch's American films up to this point.[63]

Lubitsch himself said, "Never did I make a picture in which the atmosphere and the characters were truer than in this picture."[64] Paul writes that "truer" meant "a naturalism that deals in everyday reality," in contrast to the stylization of most his previous films (in America and Germany).[65] This change resulted in a film more similar in style to most American films of the late 1930s and early 1940s and more appropriate for a film not about the adventures of naughty princes or elegant jewel thieves but rather about "easily understandable situations and problems of middle-class folks," as the review in *Variety* approvingly put it.[66]

The film was political, but not in the way *Ninotchka* was: it showed people who really did need to work for a living and were quite anxious about losing their jobs, workers subject to the despotic whims of their boss, and men who might have longed for romantic love but could not think about getting married unless they got a raise. Klara, the female protagonist (portrayed by Margaret Sullavan, who got top billing in this film), is introduced in a shabby dress; she is desperate for a job. The intersection of idealized romantic love with harsh economic reality is what the film is about. Klara is a new kind of "bad girl" in a Lubitsch film. No bandit queen, wealthy widow, or Soviet envoy, she is an ordinary shop girl; her unrealistic dreams of an idealized love offer her hope of escape from the materialistic rat race but blind her to the appreciation of a man with whom she actually works. Kralik, her supervisor in the shop, is similarly blinded. They are cruel to each other without realizing that they are actually in love. They have each fallen in love with someone with whom they exchange anonymous letters, but their beloved, "ideal" lovers are in fact their respective antagonists in the shop: each other.

Klara is portrayed as scrappier, meaner, financially more desperate, and a bit more devious than the plain-speaking Kralik—qualities that contrast with the high ideals she professes in her correspondence with her unknown "dear friend." In true screwball fashion, Klara and Kralik attack each other with witty and cutting remarks throughout the film until first one and then the other realizes that they are in love with each other.

This film has no illicit sex other than an off-screen adultery, which is not at all playful; this is the first Lubitsch comedy in which adultery

actually hurts.[67] The adultery also has nothing to do with the two unlikely lovers—except that Kralik is falsely assumed by his boss, the shop owner Mr. Matuschek (Frank Morgan), to be the man with whom his wife is cheating. Romantic love, not sex, is the focus of this film. It is possible that the lack of sex may have hurt the film at the box office, where it was only a modest success.[68]

Nonetheless, it is one of Lubitsch's most beloved comedies, perhaps because it is one of the few truly romantic comedies he made. Whereas *Ninotchka* (1939) and *To Be or Not to Be* (1942) were each remade once, *The Shop around the Corner* (1940) was remade twice as a film: once as a musical, *In the Good Old Summertime* (1949), with Judy Garland and Van Johnson, and then as a romantic comedy produced in the early years of email, *You've Got Mail* (1998), with Meg Ryan and Tom Hanks. In 1963, it was adapted for Broadway as a musical, *She Loves Me*, which was revived recently.[69]

In *The Shop around the Corner*, economic reality limits the horizons of the main characters, including the kind of romantic love available to them. Class and gender (explicitly) as well as ethnicity (at least implicitly) are elements that indicate a darker, colder reality below the warm, romantic surface of this beloved comedy.

Politics and the Everyday

Lubitsch's attempt to approximate Capra's American populism in this film meant a move toward naturalism, or even social realism. Renk writes that at this point, Lubitsch wanted to make films "ganz ohne 'touch'"—that is, completely without the (Lubitsch) touch.[70] Paul insists, however, that Lubitsch's style is still discernible, just less obvious. He writes that the "increasing fluidity of Lubitsch's camera style shows a striving toward *the illusion of a continuous reality*," but at the same time, there is not merely a narrative and spatial logic but also a political logic to this new style. Paul's analysis of the film's opening makes it clear that Lubitsch's goal is not merely to shoot scenes for the conventional purpose of making the dialogue and action clear and making the actors look good.[71]

The film opens with a title: "This is the story of Matuschek and Company—of Mr. Matuschek and the people who work for him. It is just around the corner from Andrussy Street—on Balta Street, in Budapest, Hungary."[72] We see a busy street corner, and then the camera pans to follow Pepi (William Tracy) on his bicycle, who comes to a stop in front of the

leather goods shop owned by Mr. Matuschek. Pepi, the errand boy, meets another man already waiting at the door to the shop, Mr. Pirovitch (Felix Bressart). Paul notes an emphasis on "placing the shop within the framework of its neighborhood," demonstrating that "context had become an important concern for Lubitsch."[73] Whereas the director had "once seemed to avoid master shots at all costs," now he "suddenly thinks it necessary to have an establishing shot!"[74]

New characters are introduced, each an employee of the shop, as they join the group in front of the shop waiting for the boss's arrival. Paul explains that each introduction is "handled by a cutaway and a camera movement that returns to the front door of the shop."[75] In other words, an edit "cuts away" from the front door of the shop to show each new arrival, but then, without any cutting, the camera pans back to the front door, following the new person as he or she joins the growing group.[76] Thus each individual is introduced separately but then placed in the larger context of the group, the "family" of Mr. Matuschek's employees. These characters, along with the boss, will be the only characters on whom the film will focus—indeed, even Mrs. Matuschek, whose adultery with one of the employees is so crucial to the plot, is never shown. The editing and camera movement is reinforced by the dialogue and gestures of the characters, for only through the group's reaction to a new character do we get any sense of that individual. From the way the others react to him, for example, it is immediately clear that no one likes Mr. Vadas (Joseph Schildkraut), a flashy dresser who is more or less the villain of the film.[77] Finally, the boss himself arrives, by car, with Pepi rushing to open the door for him, followed by Vadas hurrying to help him as he unlocks the gate to the front door. It is already clear that Matuschek is moody and that the employees anxiously try to please him.

In the same way that the film will focus entirely on the people who work in the shop, almost the entire film will take place in its interior, and thus Lubitsch orients us fairly soon to how the shop is configured—the showroom where the goods are on display and are sold, the stockroom, Mr. Matuschek's office, the employee locker room. To do this, Lubitsch conforms more or less to the rules of continuity editing followed in Hollywood—rules he had often seemed to enjoy flouting.

Kralik and Pirovitch are seen together in conversation in the stockroom, with Kralik reading from the anonymous letter he received from a woman. This is how we learn of the anonymous correspondence between Kralik and "Dear Friend" that has emerged since he responded to a newspaper ad from

a "modern girl [who] wishes to correspond on cultural subjects." Besides the important narrative information conveyed in this dialogue, Lubitsch cuts to show us how Pirovitch looks at Kralik, bemused but also with affection, a benevolent father figure (in contrast to the erratic, despotic, patriarchal father figure, Matuschek).

Lubitsch still wants to convey information visually beyond the dialogue. In this sense, there are "touches," especially in the service of comedy, which is always less naturalistic and more distanced than any social realist treatise about workers in a shop. The visual focus again is on Pirovitch, as he reacts each time his boss, Matuschek, asks an employee for an "honest opinion" of an item he might order for the shop; he is considering whether he should order cigarette boxes in artificial leather that play the romantic Russian song "Ochi Tchornya" when opened. The first time, we cut to Pirovitch entering from the stockroom; upon hearing the boss's question, Pirovitch immediately turns around and walks back into the stockroom, shutting the door behind him. The next time the boss asks for someone's "honest opinion," we cut again to Pirovitch, this time carrying boxes through the showroom; having heard the boss's question, he quickly runs up a spiral staircase into a room upstairs, disappearing from sight. The third time the boss utters the same words, we again cut to the spiral staircase, and this time we only see Pirovitch's legs coming down the stairs, but then they immediately retreat back upstairs. This is standard comic practice: one repeats a gag the third time only with a "topper" that makes it funnier, but it is also completely visual, without any words by Pirovitch. It communicates clearly and efficiently—with Lubitsch showing us less each time—both how risky it must be to provide the boss with the "honesty" he demands and how fearful Pirovitch is of losing his job.

Pirovitch avoids the risk by running away, but the other characters try to equivocate—except for Vadas, the "yes man," who eagerly agrees that the cigarette boxes are a great idea. The other exception is Kralik, who is not only the most senior employee but also the most honest. Matuschek's reaction to Kralik's honest (and correct) assessment that the cigarette boxes are not a good idea demonstrates how dangerous it is to be honest with the boss: Matuschek becomes angry with Kralik, who responds self-righteously by asking if he should say yes regardless of what the boss asks (as the sycophantic "yes man" Vadas does).

It is at this point that Klara Novak (Margaret Sullavan) enters the shop. The dress she is wearing was famous in the promotional material for the

film (more evidence of "naturalism"): apparently Sullavan found a $1.98 sundress, but Lubitsch reportedly said, "Too smart for a clerk looking for a job"—the dress was altered to fit less well and allowed to fade in the sun.[78] This was not the kind of costume that female leads had worn over the years in so many glamorous and sophisticated Lubitsch films. But Lubitsch was now trying to create a milieu with which a broad American audience could identify after ten years of the Great Depression.

Kralik immediately descends on this woman, whom he reads as a potential customer. When he realizes she is not a customer but rather a woman looking for a job, he expresses annoyance that she let him go on so long giving her a sales pitch. Thus the two people who will create the unlikely couple of this (naturalistic) screwball comedy have met, not realizing that they are already corresponding with each other anonymously as "Dear Friends." Kralik does not behave sympathetically to this fellow retail clerk who is out of a job, but his attitude can be explained, at least in part, by the situation in the shop: "Look around," he tells her, pointing out how many people are working without a single customer on the floor. She pleads with him to see Mr. Matuschek, but he tells her that he knows all too well how his boss will react and that there is no point asking him.

Just at this moment, Matuschek, still annoyed with Kralik, comes out of his office only to hear Kralik going on about how he can anticipate his boss's reaction. Smiling graciously, Matuschek comes up to Klara, and, thinking she is a customer, tells her that the word *impossible* is not in his vocabulary. Almost immediately Klara tells him that she is looking for a job, and he reacts in horror, exclaiming "Impossible!" He more or less runs away from her, clearly unwilling to deal with an unemployed person himself. Next he expresses anger at Kralik "for having put me in a situation like that." Meanwhile, Klara has picked up one of the musical cigarette boxes, and Matuschek rushes over to ask her what she thinks of the item. Eager to please, she tells him that it reminds her of "moonlight and cigarettes and music" and also that it is underpriced, a great bargain. Klara then tries to sell it to a female customer who thinks it is a candy box, but when she realizes it plays "Ochi Tchornya," the customer says she would never want to hear that tune each time she reached for a piece of candy. Klara tells her this is precisely the benefit of the "candy box": it makes one think twice each time one wants candy—it is a dieting aid. Klara sells it to her for considerably more than Matuschek was planning to ask for it—and so he hires her. Klara has demonstrated how clever, devious—and desperate—she is.

After a fade to black, the next scene fades up on the exterior of the shop. We notice immediately that it is colder, no longer summer weather, and then the camera pans right to show us a shop window filled with unsold cigarette boxes, with the price marked down more than half (indeed, to below their wholesale cost). This visual joke has its darker side, if we keep in mind the precarious economic situation of the shop and its employees: the boxes have not sold, either as cigarette or candy boxes.

Despite being hired for selling one of the boxes, Klara is still working at the shop. She and Kralik, her supervisor, are always fighting. She chafes at working "under him," but she is happy because she has a date that night. When Matuschek arrives in a bad mood and decides that everyone must stay late after the shop closes to redo the display window, she needs to try to leave early to make her date. She tries to flatter Kralik in order to persuade him to let her leave.

To win Kralik's favor, Klara critiques her own gender: "We hate to admit we're wrong—that's why we're so feminine." This devious ploy (playing at being submissive to a superior to gain something—common enough in the working world) works until he realizes what she is after: a favor he does not want to grant. He too has a date that night—with his "Dear Friend"—and he himself needs to leave early. He will not help her, and he expresses anger about her phony attempt to be nice to him.

Klara gets angry at him, calling him a "dictator"—no idle epithet in 1940. As a woman who needs a job and must submit to male authority to keep it, she is being bold. But the politics of employee relations in the shop are not limited to interactions between Kralik and Klara; Kralik's interactions with Matuschek are also reaching a crisis. Because of his upcoming date, Kralik, as he explains to Pirovitch, feels he needs to ask for a raise, for he wants to marry this woman who writes such poetic, "high-minded" letters of love. Her letters advocate an idealistic disregard of vulgar, materialistic concerns like physical appearance, occupation, and salary, but he confesses to Pirovitch that he has nonetheless implied in his letters that he is more successful than he is.

The problem is that Matuschek has been unhappy of late with everything Kralik has done. In Matuschek's office, Kralik tries to bring up the topic of a raise, but Matuschek does not let him get that far; he indicates only annoyance with Kralik. When Kralik challenges him about this, Matuschek does not reassure him. An angry Kralik replies that perhaps it is time "to call it a day." Matuschek says nothing, but later in the day, he tells

Kralik that he should indeed quit. Matuschek gives him a month's salary and a letter of reference.

Kralik emerges from Matuschek's office looking stunned. The rest of the staff ask him what happened, and he opens and reads the letter of reference out loud to them; it is full of praise, but it is obvious that he has been fired. Kralik looks completely crestfallen, as do all the other employees. Even Klara tries to be sympathetic, saying, "Losing a job at a time like this is something you wouldn't wish . . . "; Kralik finishes her thought, "On your own worst enemy."

Paul writes that with the phrase "at a time like this," Lubitsch emphasizes "the precariousness of middle-class life" in 1940. He contrasts Lubitsch's film with other films of the era: "There is an underlying dark view to the social order that strongly contrasts with the comforting middle-class conformism of popular films like the Andy Hardy cycle."[79]

Matuschek suddenly gets a phone call and then tells everyone they can go home. Thus both Kralik and Klara can leave to make their dates, and Klara rushes quickly to her locker and runs out the door. But Kralik has been fired, and he tells Pirovitch he cannot imagine meeting his "Dear Friend" without a job. Before we cut to the café where he is supposed to meet that secret friend, we see Matuschek alone in the shop after all the employees have left. There is a knock on the door, and Matuschek lets in a man who, it soon becomes clear, is a private detective.

The private detective tells Matuschek that his suspicions have been confirmed: his wife is carrying on an affair with one of his employees.[80] But the detective tells him that the guilty one is Vadas, and Matuschek looks stunned. He had thought Kralik was carrying on with his wife. When the detective leaves, Matuschek goes into his office; however, the camera remains in the main room of the shop, where we see Pepi, the errand boy, arrive. When he finds the shop empty, he goes to Mr. Matuschek's office, opens the door, sees something, and runs in. Again the camera leaves us outside the office, but we hear a shot and see a hanging lamp get hit by something. Pepi rushes back out of the office, and we see him set down a pistol that he must have taken from Matuschek, and then he heads back into the office. Only at this point do we cut to the inside of the office, where we see Pepi next to a shaken Mr. Matuschek. Of all the attempted suicides in Lubitsch's films, from *The Pride of the Firm* (1914) to *The Marriage Circle* (1924) and all the way to *To Be or Not to Be* (1942), only this one is serious—and it is because of the first adultery that is no playful, naughty joke.[81]

At this point we cut to the outside of the Café Nizza, where we see Kralik and Pirovitch. Kralik wants Pirovitch to go into the café, find the young woman with *Anna Karenina* on her table with a red carnation, and give her his note of apology. Pirovitch looks into the window, finds the woman, and says she reminds him of Miss Novak (Klara). Kralik angrily tells him not to bring her up, and Pirovitch replies, "Well, if you don't like Miss Novak you won't like this woman, because it *is* Miss Novak." Here we learn definitively—at the same time as Kralik—that Klara is his "Dear Friend."

All of this happens as the two stand outside the café—we never see what Pirovitch sees as he reports it to Kralik, who, taken aback, sends Pirovitch away. Kralik decides to enter the café himself, and only at this point is there a cut to the inside. He pretends to be surprised to see Klara there, and he asks her if she has seen Pirovitch. Klara is annoyed to see him and tells him to leave. He stands next to her table and acts surprised to see her reading Tolstoy. She tells him that there is a lot he does not know about her. He replies that there is a lot that she does not know about him. She tells him that she has no interest in finding out more, but that if she did "look inside" him, she knows what she would find: "Instead of a heart, a handbag." He compliments her on the impressive mixture of "poetry and meanness" in her remarks.

He also informs her that he is not bow-legged, despite what she has told the other workers about him; she responds that Vadas told her that he (Kralik) has specially tailored pants because of his legs. Angered, he accuses her of acting "cold and snippy like an old maid." She responds furiously, "I, an old maid?" She mentions the poetic love letters from her admirer, and then she cuts him to the quick: "You little, insignificant clerk!" Deflated, he leaves.

The dramatic irony is great because Klara cites the love letters that we know Kralik himself has written. Earlier at the shop, both were oblivious about the identity of their respective "Dear Friends." Now Kralik and the audience are in on the central "joke" of the narrative, but Klara is not. Only at the end of the film will she learn what he and we know.

Money, Romance, and the Happy End

We cut to Pepi at the hospital talking to the doctor about Matuschek, who has had a nervous breakdown. Kralik appears, and Matuschek apologizes to him for having thought him to be the culprit with his wife. He also needs

Figure 6.3 "Poetry and meanness": Margaret Sullavan as Klara and Jimmy Stewart as Kralik in *The Shop around the Corner* (1940). Screen capture.

to "take it easy" while recovering, and he asks Kralik to become the manager of the store. He also tells him to give himself a raise. Then Pepi pushes him for a promotion to a clerk, which Matuschek, flustered at being pressured in the hospital, grants him.

Pepi is the likeable bad boy in this film; much less likeable is Vadas. Always the flatterer, Vadas comes into the shop and congratulates Kralik on becoming the manager while showing off a diamond ring he says he got from his "grandma" (for being a "good boy"). We know that Mrs. Matuschek has been asking her husband for large sums of money, and we have seen Vadas with a wad of bills. Thus he is not merely an adulterer, he is the kept man of his boss's wife. Kralik begins to fire him, but Vadas, true to type, tries to agree with everything he says. Ultimately, Kralik pushes him into a pile of the famed cigarette boxes that play "Ochi Tchornya," and once knocked over, we hear that annoying tune. Kralik fires him and then calls him a "stool pigeon, a troublemaker, and a rat" in the reference letter that he dictates in front of the whole staff, who happily watch as Vadas leaves the shop for good.

Next there is a true Lubitsch touch, one shot without words: the camera places us behind a wall of post office boxes and then tracks into a close-up of one box—number 237. The box is opened from the other side and a gloved hand reaches inside but finds nothing there. Then we see Klara's sad face as she looks in to verify that there is no letter from her "Dear Friend."

Having been "stood up" in the café and now finding no letter of explanation in the post office box, Klara gets sick. Kralik comes to visit her at her rented room, where she is in bed convalescing. While she is pleased that he has come, what truly cheers her up is that while he is there, someone brings her a letter from her "Dear Friend." Klara reads the letter, excited about the new date proposed by her "Dear Friend"; Kralik is shown with a knowing look.

The film ends on Christmas Eve, when the shop does impressive business. Kralik encourages the staff to work hard for Mr. Matuschek—"Let's give him the best Christmas Eve ever"—and soon enough, as snow falls outside, the cash register keeps ringing inside the shop. The scene is somewhat reminiscent of the ringing of bells on shop doors in *The Man I Killed*. In a way, it anticipates another film starring Jimmy Stewart, Capra's *It's a Wonderful Life* (1946), in which the hero is saved by lots of money being raised at the end of the film. But in that film, when a bell rings, it means an angel has earned his wings. Nothing quite so heavenly is happening at the end of *The Shop around the Corner*: the cash register is ringing because the shop is taking in cold, hard cash. The money will provide the happy end, in which love and the "American dream" (in Budapest) are reconciled. As Karsten Witte observed, in a world where money moves people more than love, the shop's cash register becomes a central character in this film.[82]

Matuschek, who has been spying from outside the shop, is overjoyed. He comes in just before closing, apparently for the first time since he was in the hospital. He watches eagerly as the receipts for the day are added. When the day's total is announced, he exclaims, "That's the biggest day since '28!" Obviously, the Depression (which began in late 1929) provides the historical context for this film. Matuschek gives out bonuses, even to the new errand boy, Rudy. The incorrigible Pepi, the new clerk who is Rudy's supervisor, counts the money Rudy has received and remarks, "Too much!" No longer at the bottom of the hierarchy, he likes to lord it over Rudy.

Meanwhile, back in the shop, the final scene ensues, rather darkly lit for a romantic happy ending (especially in an MGM film, known for its high-key lighting). Klara is ready to leave for her date, but Kralik's continued friendly behavior to her leads her to confess that when she started working

at the shop, she had actually found herself "falling for" Kralik. However, she decided to treat him "like a dog" because she was reading a novel about an actress at the Comédie-Française who treated men in that way, and it made them "crazy" about her. But it did not work that way for Klara, who explains, "My mistake was I didn't realize the difference between this glamorous lady and me was that she was with the Comédie-Française, and I was with Matuschek and Company." Exalted ideas from literature have misled this shop girl about what the real world is like for everyday folks like herself.

At this point Kralik pretends he has already met her "Dear Friend," a certain Mr. Popkin, who, he says, is overweight, bald, and unemployed but satisfied that he can live very nicely on Klara's salary. Only then, after this rather mean trick, does Kralik reveal (by alluding to post office box 237) that he is her "Dear Friend." Klara is confused at first but rather quickly admits she feels fine about this revelation.

Before Lubitsch can allow viewers to enjoy the happy end in which the two quarrelsome clerks finally kiss, he adds one more joke: Klara apologizes for being so rude to Kralik at the café, especially for accusing him of having bowed legs. When he indicates that he bears no grudge, she asks if he would not mind showing her his legs. In close up, we watch the bottom of Jimmy Stewart's legs as he pulls up his trousers to reveal socks and garters.[83] Satisfied, Klara finally embraces and kisses Kralik, and the film ends.

One Modern Girl, Two Bad Boys, and Three (Covert) Jews

Paul writes that Klara's insistence on seeing Kralik's legs at the end of the film is the "final confirmation of ordinariness," the renunciation of the longing for something special by these "little people" and the acceptance of the "safe and the average."[84] The "modern girl who wishes to correspond on cultural subjects" gives up her exalted, romantic ideas and "settles."[85] But this final scene contains a bit more mischievous fun than that. It is about Klara satisfying her own particular desires—as Witte writes, it is "sinnliche Neugier," sensual curiosity on Klara's part.[86]

Witte is right. Klara is related to Lubitsch's bad girls who are in turn related to his (Jewish) bad boys—characters who are not very sentimental and somewhat ruthless about love and sex. Klara does suffer from the limitations of her class and economic status, as she herself admits with her anecdote about the Comédie-Française; she also suffers for her gender. Being called an "old maid" hurts so much because for a woman of her class in

the society depicted in the film, marriage to a middle-class man is almost the only escape from a dead-end job as a shop clerk. It is her only chance of upward mobility, and that is quite different from the situation of Lubitsch's bad boys in his milieu films, in which an improbable, farcical upward mobility always provided the happy end.

It is here that the social realism of *The Shop around the Corner* creates a different world from Lubitsch's more playful, stylized, and fantastic films, in which the bad girls tend to have money or power (and thus generally do not need upward mobility). Rischka in *The Wildcat* is a bandit queen; Ossi in *The Oyster Princess* may not be an aristocrat, but she is absurdly wealthy; and Ossi in *The Doll* achieves upward mobility by marrying the timid, wealthy nobleman. In the costume films, bad girls can achieve upward mobility—as in *Madame Dubarry* and *Sumurun*—but they are punished for it. In the American sophisticated comedies, all the characters are at least comfortably upper middle class, and in the Ruritanian operettas, the characters are all aristocrats or, in the case of Sonia, the title character of *The Merry Widow*, a millionaire.

In the real world of the Depression, in America and elsewhere, most women of middle- and lower-class backgrounds were hindered by a very real—and very low—"glass ceiling." Klara is indeed a modern girl who not only initiates the romance with the correspondence on "cultural subjects" but also displays feisty resistance to Kralik's authority. She also knows how to cut him down to size with her scathing remarks. In the end, however, she has few options other than to fall in love with him—not just with his letters, which steal from Victor Hugo (as he admits), but with a man to whom she always has felt attraction. At least she can make sure his legs do not spoil his attractiveness to her. Much of the film has been a joke at her expense, but the last joke is hers.

Besides this new, more realistic version of a rebellious bad girl, the film has two bad boys reminiscent of characters in Lubitsch's German comedies: Pepi and Vadas. William Tracy's errand boy Pepi is linked to the characters played by Gerhard Ritterband, who played the mischievous young kitchen boy in *The Oyster Princess* and the larger role of the rebellious apprentice to the toymaker Hilarius in *The Doll*.[87] An errand boy on a bicycle, Pepi also reminds us of Siegmund Lachmann, the main character that Lubitsch played in the film *The Pride of the Firm*. Pepi's ruthless willingness to extort a promotion from Matuschek (after saving his life) and then his rough treatment of Rudy, the new errand boy, is also reminiscent of Lubitsch's role as

Sally Pinkus in *Shoe Palace Pinkus*, another ruthless (if likeable) rascal who begins as a lowly employee in a shop who is always getting in trouble with his bosses and who, once a boss himself, treats his employees as imperiously as he was treated.

Joseph Schildkraut's Vadas is also reminiscent of such early Lubitsch roles, especially as "ladies' men," bad boys who wooed women to advance in the store. Vadas is also related to characters like Alex, the vain officer in *The Wildcat*, and the naughty officers that Chevalier played in the American operettas beginning with *The Love Parade*, in which he marries the queen and becomes a prince consort, not much better than a kept man. There is also similarity to Leon, a gigolo, in *Ninotchka*. Vadas is closer to the early Lubitsch characters than these later ones in that he has a job. But all of these characters, whether or not they work, are more or less sympathetic, whereas the yes man and stool pigeon Vadas is not at all sympathetic (even before we realize he is sleeping with the wife of the boss to whom he is so sycophantic).

Another aspect of these characters links them to Vadas: there is something deviant about their masculinity. They are vain ladies' men who profit from the fact that women desire them. As Laura Mulvey pointed out long ago, active male heroes are not supposed to be passive objects of desire.[88] This is why Count Alfred, Chevalier's character in *The Love Parade*, needs to assert his masculinity by fighting for some kind of autonomy in his relationship to the queen. Vadas is a flashy dresser who is even more vain than Lieutenant Alex in *The Wildcat*. And his kept-man role is much more overt than Leon's—Vadas shows off the many bills he has and the diamond ring he got from his "grandma" for being a "good boy." He is also the most effeminate of the bad boys of this ilk.

This characteristic arguably makes him implicitly Jewish, at least in terms of antisemitic stereotypes about the deviant sexuality of Jewish men, who are supposedly less than traditionally masculine either because of effeminacy or excessive sexuality. Joseph Schildkraut was an Austrian Jewish actor who, like Lubitsch, had already come to America long before 1933. Although his character could be read as a "covert Jew," he had appeared, and would continue to appear, in famous roles that were clearly Jewish. He played Judas Iscariot in *The King of Kings* (Cecil B. DeMille, 1927); Joseph's father, Rudolph Schildkraut, a famous Austrian actor, also appeared in a Jewish role in the same film. Joseph also played Alfred Dreyfus in *The Life of Emile Zola* (William Dieterle, 1937), and he would play Otto Frank in *The*

Diary of Anne Frank both on Broadway and in the 1959 film directed by George Stevens.

Eyman wrote that Lubitsch's work by this point was becoming "more Jewish." What other characters in this film might be considered (covertly) Jewish?[89] Pepi can be read as Jewish in that he can be linked to the charming young rascals working in shops that Lubitsch himself had played at the beginning of film his career, in the "Jewish comedies." But Felix Bressart's Pirovitch is perhaps the most recognizably Jewish character in the film. No bad boy, he is what Paul calls an "ironist,"[90] and in that way a stand-in for Lubitsch. He comments ironically on the power relations in the shop and looks on the others with bemused affection, but he avoids conflict and evades the moody, despotic boss, fleeing the room when he hears the boss asking for an "honest opinion."

Pirovitch is a gentle character who is kind to everyone but whose ironic quips about the economic and political status quo engender much of the humor in the film. He knows that at times he must submit to the whims of the boss, and he advises Kralik to do the same, telling him not to be too upset when Matuschek treats him badly: "He picks on me, too. The other day he called me an idiot. What could I do? So I said, 'Yes, Mr. Matuschek, I'm an idiot'—I'm no fool!"

He has a clear understanding of power relations but does not counsel resistance. He advises Kralik not to quit if he does not get a raise, reminding him of how hard it is to find a job these days. He is frugal and has no illusions about the economic reality of their lives. He will pay for an expensive doctor when his wife gets sick, but when she gets better and he remembers that the doctor is coming again to visit her, he runs frantically to stop the doctor from visiting (and charging for another visit). When Kralik asks how two married people can get by on one salary, he says it can be done, describing the small apartment he has, with a bedroom and a kitchen. When Kralik says he would need a dining room so that he can entertain, Pirovitch responds, "What do you need to entertain for? Are you an ambassador?" Then he says, "If someone is really your friend, he comes after dinner."

This is arguably Jewish humor, the humor of people who have little power, who try to survive without angering despotic authorities who can take what little they have, and who try to accept this kind of submission by leavening it with irony. Yet Pirovitch is willing to drop his ironic detachment and risk his job to plead for Kralik. After the latter has been fired, Pirovitch confronts Matuschek and asks him to reconsider, reminding

Matuschek that Kralik has been like a son to him. The boss responds in short order with a blunt threat: "Do you want to keep your job?" Then Pirovitch backs down, but his unusual heroism up to this point has been interpreted to imply that Lubitsch was questioning his own ironic detachment, which had kept him apart from political struggle.[91]

In this film Lubitsch attempts a naturalistic (or social-realistic) depiction of the life of "everyday people." How close does he come to a political indictment of their plight? When Pirovitch asks why Matuschek has fired him, Kralik replies, "The boss doesn't have to give you a reason. That's the wonderful thing about being a boss." The boss will become more benevolent by the end of the film, and his prosperity (which is the result of the employees working hard, if happily, on his behalf while he convalesces) will make a romantic, happy ending possible for Kralik and Klara. He finds some upward mobility and, we can assume, she can escape from the shop to the domestic realm. This is a very constrained version of happiness, as Lubitsch indicates by lighting the happy ending in the back room dimly (in a way that anticipates "film noir"). But at least Kralik's legs don't spoil the deal for Klara.

After The Shop around the Corner

In his next film for Lubitsch, Bressart would play another gentle character, this time an obviously Jewish one: Greenberg. By the end of the film, he overcomes any timidity about standing up courageously to bullies, and his political courage will save the day. That film, of course, is *To Be or Not to Be* (1942).

Before undertaking this film, Lubitsch made another attempt at creating an American screwball comedy, *That Uncertain Feeling* (1941), which was a remake of one of his earlier silent comedies, *Kiss Me Again* (1925), based on a French play. The 1920s version of this marital comedy was very successful (the film is now lost). The 1941 version made some money but not enough for producer Sol Lesser, nor was the film reviewed favorably. Only the second American film by Lubitsch to be set in America, it features a (boring) wealthy, upper-middle-class couple in Manhattan whose marriage is threatened by a (not very likeable) eccentric musician.[92]

That Uncertain Feeling was apolitical screwball: it made little reference to the international politics of *Ninotchka* or to the class politics of *The Shop around the Corner*. The latter two films were important experiments

in hybridizing screwball comedy with other important aesthetic and political concerns that had long engaged Lubitsch. He was becoming much more political because of the Depression and the New Deal in America but even more so because of the Nazi threat—and the massive numbers of refugees it created.

Lubitsch's next comedy was linked to these concerns and to the new directions represented by *Ninotchka* and *The Shop around the Corner* (different as they were). *To Be or Not to Be* was Lubitsch's most radical fusion of politics with sex and comedy. It was also his first American film with an overtly Jewish character.

Notes

1. Cf. Harvey, *Romantic Comedy*, 59.
2. He started raising money for the United Jewish Appeal already in 1933 (Eyman, *Ernst Lubitsch*, 249). In the Feuchtwanger Memorial Library at University of Southern California, one finds Lubitsch's correspondence in 1944 on behalf of the "United Jewish Welfare Fund." He wrote German Jewish exile author Lion Feuchtwanger on August 5, 1944, soliciting a contribution. Feuchtwanger sent a check on August 8; Lubitsch sent him a thank you note on August 10.
3. Barnes, *To Be or Not to Be*, 7–8. Lubitsch also appears—indeed, in footage filmed during his last visit to Berlin in 1932—as an example of a degenerate "race" in the antisemitic propaganda film *Der ewige Jude/The Eternal Jew* (1940); see Eyman, *Ernst Lubitsch*, 233.
4. On populism, see the introduction to this volume, n. 21.
5. On "screwball comedy," see, e.g., Haskell, *From Reverence to Rape*; Sarris, "Sex Comedy without Sex"; Stanley Cavell, *Pursuits of Happiness: The Hollywood Comedy of Remarriage* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1981); Wes D. Gehring, *Screwball Comedy: A Genre of Madcap Romance* (New York: Greenwood, 1986); Harvey, *Romantic Comedy*; Diane Carson, "To Be Seen but Not Heard. *The Awful Truth*," in *Multiple Voices in Feminist Film Criticism*, ed. Diane Carson, Linda Dittmar, and Janice R. Welsch (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1994), 213–25; Kathrina Glitre, *Hollywood Romantic Comedy: States of the Union, 1934–65* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2006). On Lubitsch and screwball, see Rick (Richard W.) McCormick, "Screwball," in *Enzyklopaedie jüdischer Geschichte und Kultur*, ed. Dan Diner, vol. 5 (Stuttgart: J. B. Metzler, 2014), 402–6.
6. See Doherty, *Hollywood and Hitler*, 154.
7. See Doherty, *Hollywood's Censor*.
8. On censoring *The Merry Widow*, see chap. 4, n. 162.
9. Doherty cites a *Variety* article (April 3, 1934) on *Design for Living* and a *Variety* article (June 3, 1936) on *The Merry Widow*; see *Hollywood and Hitler*, 381n35, 381n38. On the Nazi decision about the latter film, see also Ben Urwand, *The Collaboration: Hollywood's Pact with Hitler* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2013), 142.
10. See Eyman, *Ernst Lubitsch*, 225, 232.

11. See Eyman (237–42) for his overview of Lubitsch's problems as head of production at Paramount but also what he was able to accomplish. Lubitsch's problems involved von Sternberg and Mae West. See Eyman, 228–31; Harvey, *Romantic Comedy* 370–72.

12. See Eyman, *Ernst Lubitsch*, 240–42. *Desire* was based on *Die schönen Tage von Aranjuez*, a German play by Hans Szekely and R. A. Stemmle (Prinzler, "Berlin," 50) that was made into a German film in 1933. *Desire* had sets designed by Hans Dreier and music by Frederick Hollander (a.k.a. Friedrich Holländer, who composed the music for *The Blue Angel* in 1930). The screenplay was by Edwin Justus Mayer, a core activist in the Hollywood Anti-Nazi League who helped Lubitsch with the script for *To Be or Not to Be* (1942).

13. Eyman, *Ernst Lubitsch*, 237, 239–40.

14. Lubitsch met Vivian Gaye during script negotiations for *Desire*; she was working as a script consultant (Prinzler, "Berlin," 50). Her original name was Sania Bezencenet, and she was born in England. She was the second blonde gentile whom Lubitsch married. Renk ("Ernst Lubitsch privat") writes that Vivian's father was an English diplomat and her mother was Russian.

Vivian was not liked much by Lubitsch's friends and was called "a snob" by Lupita Tovar Kohner (the Mexican actor who married Paul Kohner) and an "ice queen" by Inge von Wangenheim, who met her in Moscow. See Eyman, *Ernst Lubitsch*, 235–37; Prinzler, "Berlin," 50–51; Renk, "Ernst Lubitsch privat." The latter is based on interviews with Vivian and Evy Bentley-Bettelheim (Lubitsch's niece). See also Samson Raphaelson's piece on Lubitsch; "Freundschaft," *New Yorker*, May 11, 1981, 40–41.

On October 27, 1938, Vivian gave birth to Nicola; thus at 46, Lubitsch became a father. Fond of Leni's two sons from her first marriage, he lost contact with them after the divorce. He adored Nicola. See Eyman, *Ernst Lubitsch*, 264, 361.

15. Eyman, *Ernst Lubitsch*, 243–47. See also Salka Viertel, *The Kindness of Strangers* (New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1969), 211.

Lubitsch was right about the Hollywood Anti-Nazi League. Once Stalin made his pact with Hitler on August 23, 1939, the league joined American isolationists in opposing war with Nazi Germany, now at "peace" with the Soviet Union. Thus most Hollywood liberals (and some communists) quit this "Popular Front" organization. Only true believers like Donald Ogden Stewart and Dalton Trumbo stayed in the organization, which then changed its name to the Hollywood League for Democratic Action (Doherty, *Hollywood and Hitler*, 351–53).

16. Eyman, *Ernst Lubitsch*, 243–45; Prinzler, "Berlin," 50–52.

17. Dietrich was at the apex of the triangle, with Herbert Marshall as her busy and somewhat neglectful British husband and Melvyn Douglas as another man who falls in love with her in Paris.

18. On *Angel*, see Harvey, *Romantic Comedy*, 375, 380; Eyman, *Ernst Lubitsch*, 253–55; and Prinzler, "Berlin," 52. The film is better than I indicate here. Dietrich's performance has an enigmatic, subtle quality that subverts conventional notions of female behavior despite the (muted) happy ending. McBride's discussion of *Angel* (*How Did Lubitsch Do It?* 328–29) links its more "invisible" style to Lubitsch's style in *Ninotchka* and *The Shop around the Corner*.

19. Wilder was born in 1906 near Krakow, a part of Poland controlled by Austria-Hungary; he went to school in Vienna. As a young journalist he followed Paul Whiteman's American jazz band to Berlin in the mid-1920s, where he worked first as a writer and eventually as a screenwriter. In March 1933 he fled Berlin for Paris and within a year was in California learning English. Mentored by Lubitsch, he was living in Lubitsch's house in Bel Air when Lubitsch died. See Renk, *Ernst Lubitsch*, 135.

20. The basic plot has something in common with Lubitsch's 1919 comedy *The Oyster Princess*—with the genders reversed. See chap. 3.

21. Sarris, "Sex Comedy without Sex."

22. Harvey, *Romantic Comedy*, 381.

23. Cooper's character tries to use some physical violence to tame Colbert's character, which bothers us today, but what bothered audiences in 1938 was more likely how successful the wife is reducing her husband (Gary Cooper!) to a basket case.

Bringing Up Baby was a box office failure, too—not only did Hepburn get fired by RKO, so did director Howard Hawks; too much male humiliation here, too? Hepburn's zany power in the film was indeed "box office poison"; she decided she needed to be "knocked down a peg" or two in George Cukor's *The Philadelphia Story* for MGM (1940). See Harvey, *Romantic Comedy*, 306, 406–9.

Tatjana Jukić ("Garbo Laughs: Revolution and Melancholia in Lubitsch's *Ninotchka*," in Novak, Dolar, and Krečič, *Lubitsch Can't Wait*, 110) suggests that the powerful woman in screwball films (or "remarriage films," following Stanley Cavell) can be read in Deleuzian terms as the "oral mother," a "Venus in furs" to the masochistic male in those films. She suggests that this reading can be applied to Ninotchka as well (103–4).

24. Prinzler ("Berlin," 52–53) writes that Paramount let him go on March 19, 1938, a week before *Bluebeard's Eighth Wife*'s premiered—that is, before its box office failure.

25. See Eyman, *Ernst Lubitsch*, 260.

26. Reinhardt had to explain to Lubitsch that he should not attend an event on behalf of Vittorio Mussolini (the son of the fascist dictator, who was involved in the Italian film industry). See Eyman, *Ernst Lubitsch*, 251–52. But Lubitsch was not the only one in Hollywood in the mid-1930s who was confused about the Mussolini family. On Hal Roach's involvement with Vittorio Mussolini and how Hollywood reacted, see Doherty, *Hollywood and Hitler*, 122–36.

27. Viertel, *Kindness of Strangers*, 211, 243.

28. Eyman, *Ernst Lubitsch*, 242.

29. Renk, "Ernst Lubitsch privat." As Doherty reports (*Hollywood and Hitler*, 203), Lubitsch also arranged a screen test for the daughter of German exile director Reinhold Schünzel for a small role in his 1940 film *The Shop around the Corner*.

30. One piece of evidence of the informal efforts that the fund would formalize would be the letters Lubitsch wrote on behalf of refugees before the fund was established. On February 24, 1937, e.g., Lubitsch wrote to Hal Wallis at Warner Brothers on behalf of the widow of the actor Paul Graetz, a fellow Berliner and an actor in Lubitsch's *Sumurun* (he played Mutti). Calling Graetz a "victim of Hitlerism," Lubitsch described how his widow was "now left penniless and in dire want"; he asked Wallis to contribute to help her. See Ernst Lubitsch, letter to Hal Wallis, February 24, 1937, Hal Wallis files, Margaret Herrick Library.

Kohner and Lubitsch codirected the European Film Fund, but it was founded by Charlotte Dieterle and Liesl Frank. At Salka Viertel's house in Santa Monica, Kohner convinced Lubitsch to head the organization, which they would lead together. On the fund, see Gemünden, *Continental Strangers*, 78; Doherty, *Hollywood and Hitler*, 202; Eyman, *Ernst Lubitsch*, 247–49; and Viertel, *Kindness of Strangers*, 217. Charlotte Dieterle was the wife of director William (Wilhelm) Dieterle and Liesl Frank was the wife of the German Jewish author Bruno Frank.

31. An earlier version of this discussion is found in Richard W. McCormick, "Romantic Comedy and the Hitler-Stalin Pact: Billy Wilder and *Ninotchka* (USA 1939)," published in Hebrew translation in *SLIL—Online Journal for History, Film, and Television* 6 (Winter 2012): 21–40, http://www.slil.huji.ac.il/?psl=issuesandssl=winter-2012.

32. According to Wilder, as told to Cameron Crowe (*Conversations with Billy Wilder*), this was relatively unusual for Lubitsch. He had hired Wilder and Brackett to work as writers on his previous film, the *Bluebeard's Eighth Wife* (1938), but Wilder insisted that Lubitsch really wanted Brackett: "He never wanted to work with a German, because he did not want to get the reputation that he only works with Germans" (112). According to Eyman (*Ernst Lubitsch*, 256–57), Manny Wolf at Paramount brought Brackett and Wilder together and then suggested them to Lubitsch.

Despite Wilder's statement, however, Lubitsch had hired Werner Richard Heymann to compose the music for *Bluebeard* and Frederick Hollander (Friedrich Holländer) to compose music for both *Angel* and *Desire*. Lubitsch tended to conceal his private efforts; see Eyman, *Ernst Lubitsch*, 248; Renk, "Ernst Lubitsch privat." But note his public role in the European Film Fund in 1938.

33. Heymann, a German Jew from Königsberg, had composed the music for the most famous German (operetta-style) musicals of the early 1930s, including *Drei von der Tankstelle/Three Friends* (1930) and *Der Kongress tanzt* (The Congress Dances, 1931).

34. Harvey (*Romantic Comedy*, 384) reports, "According to some accounts, the whole project *began* with 'Garbo laughs!'" This would mean that the film originated with a campaign to save Garbo's career by casting her in a comedy.

35. Jews who had fled to Austria from Germany (many of whom, like Walter Reisch, were originally from Austria) could not work for the major studios of the Austrian film industry, which wanted to export films to the large market of Nazi Germany, where films that included "non-Aryan" film artists were forbidden. Jews, however, could work in the independent film sector that developed, making films that could be exported elsewhere. See Robert Dassanowsky, *Screening Transcendence: Film under Austrofascism and the Hollywood Hope, 1933–38* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2018), 17–21.

36. It was also called the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact, after the two diplomats who negotiated it.

37. Just after the war began on September 1, 1939, the steamship *Athena*, sailing from England to America, was sunk by a German submarine off of Ireland. Lubitsch's daughter Nicola, not yet a year old, was on the ship. She had been with her mother, Vivian, in England, and Vivian had sent her back to America with a nurse. Thanks to the quick thinking and bravery of that nurse, both she and the baby quickly boarded a lifeboat; many other children on board were not so fortunate. After ten hours on the lifeboat, it was sighted by a yacht, and everyone on it was saved.

At first, Lubitsch learned only that the ship had been sunk; he was devastated. Hours later, he got a call informing him that Nicola and her nurse were safe. Nicola got home safely on September 18, 1939. See Eyman, *Ernst Lubitsch*, 275–76.

38. As Paul points out, the film was thus "partly out of date" by the time it appeared; *Ernst Lubitsch's American Comedy*, 194. The same "bad timing" would affect Lubitsch's *To Be or Not to Be* (1942), which was begun before Pearl Harbor but completed afterward. And its premiere was delayed even longer (until March 1942) because of the untimely death of its female star, Carole Lombard (in a plane crash in January 1942); see Eyman, *Ernst Lubitsch*, 299;

chap. 7, n. 70. Breen's staff at first did not want to approve *Ninotchka*'s prologue: the potentially offensive implication in the title had to do with "turning off the light"; see Joseph Breen and Al Block, notes of correspondence at MGM, September 8, 20, and 25, 1939, MPAA Production Code file on *Ninotchka*, Margaret Herrick Library.

39. Nora Henry (*Ethics and Social Criticism in the Hollywood Films of Erich von Stroheim, Ernst Lubitsch, and Billy Wilder* [Westport, CT: Praeger, 2001], 89) makes the point that the cigarette girls are more or less "for sale," as everyone seems to be in "capitalist" Paris. Certainly Leon is for sale, as a kept man whose interest in Swana seems mainly to be about making sure she has enough money to buy him presents. And eventually Ninotchka will "sell" Leon back to Swana for the same crown jewels.

40. Jukić, "Garbo Laughs," 101.

41. Hats are an important motif in other Lubitsch films too, e.g., *Design for Living*, *The Student Prince*, and *The Marriage Circle*.

42. Crowe, *Conversations with Billy Wilder*, 33. Wilder's comments reinforce what Ben Hecht and Samson Raphaelson reported about the way Lubitsch worked with writers; see Eyman, *Ernst Lubitsch*, 207–9; Harvey, *Romantic Comedy*, 368–69.

43. Doherty, *Hollywood and Hitler*, 188.

44. See Eyman, *Ernst Lubitsch*, 243–45; Prinzler, "Berlin," 50–52.

45. Melvyn Douglas wrote that Garbo actually mimed the hysterical laughter in the scene without making a sound—the sound was dubbed in later, he asserted. This is cited both by Harvey (*Romantic Comedy*, 308) and Jukić ("Garbo Laughs," 95–96).

46. Jukić, "Garbo Laughs," 97. Compare Ninotchka's exchange of a man for jewels with Lily's taking Madame Colet's money in exchange for Gaston at the end of *Trouble in Paradise*.

47. On the other hand, one might argue that the crowded tenements in Moscow were actually closer to the reality of many urban Americans in the Depression than the luxurious hotel in which Ninotchka stayed in Paris.

48. In fact, what happens to Ninotchka is similar to what happens to Phoebe Frost in Billy Wilder's *A Foreign Affair* (1948), a powerful American Congresswoman (a conservative Republican) who becomes more human—losing her rigidity and Puritanism—only by falling in love and giving up her political mission; cf. Gerd Gemünden, *A Foreign Affair: Billy Wilder's American Films* (New York: Berghahn, 2008), 68.

49. McBride accurately describes this as "a reversal of stereotypical gender roles"; *How Did Lubitsch Do It?*, 378.

50. Paul, *Ernst Lubitsch's American Comedy*, 210, 213, 218–21. It is interesting also to look at Leon's frivolous, narcissistic masculinity in comparison to similar "lady's men"—and kept men—in Lubitsch's films. The films with Chevalier come to mind but also the vain male protagonist in *The Wildcat* and, in fact, some of the roles Lubitsch himself played, such as the title role in his final "Jewish comedy," *Meyer from Berlin*. Eyman (*Ernst Lubitsch*, 273–74) writes that Melvyn Douglas in the role of Leon "lacks sexuality." But Lubitsch never presents "ideal" masculinity; it is always ironized or subverted.

As mentioned in n. 23, Jukić ("Garbo Laughs," 103–4) suggests that Leon in *Ninotchka* can be read as a "masochistic" male in Deleuzian terms, subordinated to the "oral mother," Ninotchka.

51. Paul (*Ernst Lubitsch's American Comedy*, 206–7), Harvey (*Romantic Comedy*, 389), and Henry (*Ethics and Social Criticism*, 85) all make this point about the film's critique of both "sides." But not many reviewers saw the film this way in 1939. One exception is cited by Paul (207): a contemporary review by Otis Ferguson observes that the film is one of the first

"to discover that Communists are people." In the reviews I have seen, I have found another that is an exception to the rule; it suggests that Swana's "privileged life" is also a target of satire; *Preview*, review of *Ninotchka*, October 7, 1939, 3, 5. Otherwise, the joke seems only to be on Stalin and communism, from Frank S. Nugent in the *New York Times* ("'Ninotchka,' an Impious Soviet Satire Directed by Lubitsch, Opens at the Music Hall—New Films Are Shown at Capitol and Palace," *New York Times*, November 10, 1939) to Edwin Schallert in the *Los Angeles Times* ("Lubitsch and Garbo Victorious," *Los Angeles Times*, October 7, 1939) to Louella Parsons in the *Los Angeles Examiner* ("Garbo and Douglas Do Fine Work in 'Ninotchka,'" *Los Angeles Examiner*, October 7, 1939) to *Variety* (October 11, 1939).

In 1938–39 the Congressional hearings of the Dies Committee occurred. Led by Texas Congressman Martin Dies Jr. and precursor to the post-1945 House Committee on Un-American Activities, the Dies Committee investigated communists and (with less enthusiasm) fascist groups like the German American Bund; see Doherty, *Hollywood and Hitler*, 226–36. But Lubitsch was clearly not accommodating such politicians with his "anticommunist" film: in 1939 he was willing to give Salka Viertel money for Trotsky (see n. 27), Melvyn Douglas was active in the Hollywood Anti-Nazi League, and Wilder would never have cooperated with the Dies Committee. See Doherty, *Hollywood and Hitler*, 114, 119, 228.

52. In Lubitsch, the gigolo motif is found in *Design for Living* but also, without using the word, in *The Love Parade* (and in *The Smiling Lieutenant* and *The Merry Widow*, also with Chevalier). In Billy Wilder's career, the gigolo motif also goes back to the late 1920s, which is when an Austrian song about a gigolo became popular (in English, "Just a Gigolo") and when Wilder was working on the screenplay for *Menschen am Sonntag/People on Sunday* (1930), which includes an *Eintänzer*, the male equivalent of a female "taxi dancer." Two years earlier, as a reporter in Berlin, he had written about his own experiences as an *Eintänzer*. In Wilder, the gigolo motif turns up again in his screenplay for *Hold Back the Dawn* (1941) and, of course, in his film *Sunset Boulevard* (1950).

53. Henry (*Ethics and Social Criticism*, 90) addresses the question of how Swana gets her money, writing that the film does not give much information on this topic. But a White Russian aristocrat living as she does so long after coming to France (presumably in 1917, during the Russian Revolution) must be living off the wealth with which her family escaped. That this fortune may have diminished somewhat by this point would explain the necessity of Leon helping her augment her finances.

54. See Franklin D. Roosevelt, "Acceptance Speech for the Renomination for the Presidency," American Presidency Project, Philadelphia, June 27, 1936, https://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/node/208917.

55. Ina Claire was born Ina Fagan in Boston and began her career in the Ziegfeld Follies. Probably not part of the American upper class, she could, like most American actors, imitate its affected accent. Eyman (*Ernst Lubitsch*, 273) misses the point in praising her "perfect diction"; he also finds her too old for the part, but how young could a czarist grand duchess be in the late 1930s? Swana, in her dismay about the beauty of Ninotchka, is not completely unsympathetic; she obviously loves Leon. And she too is a refugee, a crucial aspect of this film produced by so many émigrés that concentrates on the experiences of Russians living in France and then at the end on the re-creation of Russia in Constantinople as a Russian restaurant by Ninotchka's three Soviet sidekicks. This would certainly resonate with German and Austrian refugees and émigrés in Hollywood.

56. Harvey, *Romantic Comedy*, 389.

57. See Paul, *Ernst Lubitsch's American Comedy* 163; Eyman, *Ernst Lubitsch*, 260.

58. See Eyman, *Ernst Lubitsch*, 385; Prinzler and Patalas, *Lubitsch*, 319.
59. Eyman, *Ernst Lubitsch*, 266–67.
60. Paul, *Ernst Lubitsch's American Comedy*, 165.
61. Paul, 166; Eyman, *Ernst Lubitsch*, 278.
62. Eyman, *Ernst Lubitsch*, 281.
63. Paul, *Ernst Lubitsch's American Comedy*, 161; Eyman, *Ernst Lubitsch*, 280–81.
64. Ernst Lubitsch's letter to Weinberg, July 10, 1947, in Weinberg, *Lubitsch Touch*, 287.
65. Paul, *Ernst Lubitsch's American Comedy*, 168–69.
66. *Variety*, review of *The Shop around the Corner*, January 12, 1940.
67. Huff, *Index of the Films*, 28; Harvey, *Romantic Comedy*, 396. The lack of illicit sex was considered positive in some reviews in early 1940; see, e.g., *Motion Picture Herald*, review of *The Shop around the Corner*, January 6, 1940; Hedda Hopper's review of *The Shop around the Corner*, *Washington Post*, January 15, 1940.
68. Cf. Harvey, *Romantic Comedy*, 401; Weinberg, *Lubitsch Touch*, 174; Huff, *Index of the Films*, 28; Lubitsch's letter to Weinberg of July 10, 1947, in Weinberg, 287; but cf. Eyman, *Ernst Lubitsch*, 279–80.
69. *Ninotchka* was made into a Broadway musical, *Silk Stockings*, in the early 1950s (starring Hildegard Knef) and then into a 1957 film of the same name (directed by Rouben Mamoulian, starring Cyd Charisse and Fred Astaire). *To Be or Not to Be* was remade in 1983, starring Mel Brooks and Anne Bancroft.
70. Renk, *Ernst Lubitsch*, 119.
71. Paul, *Ernst Lubitsch's American Comedy*, 170–72.
72. Cf. Paul, 172.
73. Paul, 172.
74. Paul, 174.
75. Paul, 172.
76. The only exception proves the rule, as it were. As Paul observes (*Ernst Lubitsch's American Comedy*, 173), Jimmy Stewart as Alfred Kralik simply walks into a group shot, but he is an actor almost any audience member would recognize, obviously the male lead. Later, the boss arrives, played by Frank Morgan, also well known (today he is known only for his portrayal of the title role in *The Wizard of Oz*, 1939).
77. Paul, *Ernst Lubitsch's American Comedy*, 172–73, 175.
78. Eyman, *Ernst Lubitsch*, 277; Paul, *Ernst Lubitsch's American Comedy*, 169.
79. Paul, *Ernst Lubitsch's American Comedy*, 177–78. The latter films, also made at MGM, starred the young Mickey Rooney and Judy Garland and made a lot of money. Lubitsch's new focus on the middle class was quite different, even for comedy—and his films cost more. For this reason, Louis B. Mayer of MGM compared the more profitable *Ninotchka* unfavorably to an Andy Hardy film; Eyman, *Ernst Lubitsch*, 274.
80. Once again we have a private detective who follows a straying wife, as in *The Marriage Circle* (1924) and its remake as *One Hour with You* (1932). But here it is not at all funny.
81. On suicide, see chap. 4, n. 129.
82. Witte's commentary on *The Shop around the Corner* in Prinzler and Patalas, *Lubitsch*, 188.
83. See David Niven's anecdote about Lubitsch making *him* show his legs while making *Bluebeard*. He asked Niven to drop his trousers to see if his legs would work in a bathing suit scene; they were fine. (Niven also writes that Lubitsch was a great director.) See Niven, *Bring on the Empty Horses* (New York: Putnam, 1975), 300–304.

84. Paul, *Ernst Lubitsch's American Comedy*, 187.

85. According to Harvey (*Romantic Comedy*, 398), Lubitsch likes to combine the crass with the ideal side of love and life: juxtaposing "pettiness and generosity" and featuring "people becoming more wonderful and remaining incorrigibly themselves."

86. Witte's commentary on *The Shop around the Corner* in Prinzler and Patalas, *Lubitsch*, 188.

87. Ritterband may have been Jewish: his film career ended abruptly in 1933. He did survive the war, and he died in West Germany. See "Gerhard Ritterband," filmportal.de, accessed September 16, 2019, https://www.filmportal.de/person/gerhard-ritterband_69acc0387ce24ba8b9bf82dc917068d1.

88. Mulvey, "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema," 20.

89. Eyman, *Ernst Lubitsch*, 280–81.

90. Paul, *Ernst Lubitsch's American Comedy*, 181.

91. Paul, 181–82.

92. *That Uncertain Feeling* featured Merle Oberon as the bored, unhappy wife of the boring businessman Melvyn Douglas; they live in an expensive apartment in Manhattan, and their marriage becomes threatened when Oberon's character falls for the eccentric musician played by Burgess Meredith.

7

COMING OUT AS JEWISH

To Be or Not to Be, *1942*

McBride sees *Trouble in Paradise* as the pinnacle of Lubitsch's career.[1] For him, the sophisticated Lubitsch is the essential one, but I prefer the more outrageous and political Lubitsch whose work leads to *To Be or Not to Be*, a film that is not at all sophisticated but rather a much broader, more farcical—and darker—comedy.

With this anti-Nazi comedy, Lubitsch's screwball experiments of the late 1930s and early 1940s culminated in a new fusion that I call "screwball antifascism." Part marital comedy, part suspenseful wartime melodrama, screwball and noir at the same time, it was a generic hybrid more controversial with the critics than anything he had tried before. Many thought it was in aesthetic and political bad taste, but it gave expression to Lubitsch's own political concerns and anxieties as Nazi Germany conquered ever more of Europe. It was also a film in which the situation of the Jews—in Nazi-occupied Europe and in Hollywood—would be central to the film's politics.

Screwball Antifascism

To Be or Not to Be was Lubitsch's most personal and most political film. It was not an adaptation of an already existing play or operetta, as almost every other Lubitsch film had been; rather, it was an original story based on an idea by Lubitsch. Melchior Lengyel helped him write it, and then Edwin Justus Mayer was hired to write the screenplay.[2] When filming began in November 1941, before Pearl Harbor, it was still not easy to make an anti-Nazi film in Hollywood, especially one that addressed the specific threat that Nazism posed to the Jews. Chaplin's *The Great Dictator* (1940) was the obvious exception and clearly influenced Lubitsch. By the time *To Be or*

Not to Be premiered in March 1942, America was at war, and it had become patriotic (and good business) to make anti-Nazi films. But even then, films that thematized the plight of the Jews would be rare. This film is in fact the only film from Lubitsch's American career to contain an explicitly Jewish character, Greenberg. While the word *Jew* is never uttered in the film, that too is telling for a film that Joel Rosenberg praised for its "bold and profound use of a Jewish character as a pivotal figure in the story."[3]

While the film was moderately successful at the box office, it was controversial with some important critics.[4] This was not because of its depiction of a Jewish character but rather because it was a comedy—indeed, a darker comedy than Chaplin's film, which operated "in a purely comic universe, one in which storm troopers can be repelled by a few well-aimed whacks of a frying pan."[5] Many critics liked Lubitsch's film—outside New York, a majority of the reviews were positive[6]—but some influential critics did not. In two articles (dated March 7 and March 22, 1942), Bosley Crowther of the *New York Times* wrote that the film was in bad taste both for mixing genres—farcical comedy and wartime melodrama—and for being a comedy about the Nazi invasion of Poland.[7] The review in the *National Board of Review Magazine* of March 1942 found the film "delightfully entertaining" but "an incongruous mixture" that reflected "a lapse of taste"; the editorial in that issue observed that "laughing at the enemy is not bad propaganda" but that what America really needed was the sort of film that provided "facts" about the enemy.[8] The brilliantly reflexive opening of Lubitsch's film anticipated the very controversy that plagued the film by staging a debate about the appropriateness of comedy for antifascist art, as opposed to "realistic" documentary. The opening scene also called into question the very appearance of reality with its emphasis on acting and simulation, a key preoccupation of the entire film.

In some ways, the critical devaluation of Lubitsch's comedy still exists; Mladen Dolar writes that this is because of the "general deprecation of comedy." He calls *To Be or Not to Be* "one of the greatest movies ever made" precisely because it is a comedy, all the more so because Lubitsch made it at "the moment of the great triumph of fascism." Dolar insists, "Comedy is the best answer to the hour of greatest despair."[9] I agree: Lubitsch's comedy is the best anti-Nazi film of the 1940s. In addition to the film's brilliant opening, the entire film works to deconstruct—with humor—the cult of power that Nazism embodies, revealing it to be a movement of insecure bullies, sycophants, and hypocritical functionaries who simulate fanatical loyalty,

are insecure in their performances, and are blind in the most banal and bureaucratic way to the evil they facilitate.

A key aspect of the film is the way in which, both as production and cinematic text, it addressed the concerns of Jewish artists: antisemitism and the strategic question of how openly Jewish identity should be acknowledged. Such concerns were particularly vexing in Hollywood during the 1930s. To keep the German market in Europe after 1933, most studios tried to de-emphasize overtly Jewish characters and stories. In fact, even during World War II, American anti-Nazi films rarely made overt references to the plight of the Jews, as the studios tried both to align with Allied policy and not to attract the attention of American antisemitism (in the government and throughout the land).

German Jews had experienced similar concerns during the Weimar Republic and earlier. How "out" should one be about one's identity as a Jew in Germany, even in its new democratic Republic? As Kerry Wallach has demonstrated, this question was very complicated: to whom was it safe to reveal one's Jewish identity? To what extent did one even have control about whether or not one was recognized as Jewish?[10]

Besides the controversy around comedy that the film engendered (and thematized), and besides the issue of antisemitism—in Europe but also in America, and even in Hollywood, as Gerd Gemünden and Joel Rosenberg have so persuasively argued[11]—one cannot ignore the film's gender politics. In addition to being a political farce that deconstructs Nazism, it is also a marital comedy featuring yet another triangle with a woman at the apex. Maria Tura, played by Carole Lombard (the exemplary screwball heroine of the 1930s, who got top billing for this film), is a Polish actor married to the male protagonist, the vain Polish actor Joseph Tura, played by Jack Benny; the other leg of the triangle is Lieutenant Sobinski, the young Polish pilot played by Robert Stack. Maria is another one of Lubitsch's untamable bad girls, a married woman who is willing to stick her neck out for the "good fight" against the Nazis but who is not willing to give up her interest in other men.[12]

Hitler in Warsaw

François Truffaut famously stated, "I could challenge you, for example, to recount the plot of *To Be or Not to Be* an hour after having seen it—even if it were for the sixth time. Impossible."[13] Nonetheless, to do justice to this film, it is necessary to try to follow that plot through many of its ingenious twists

and many of its best jokes—but with a focus on its politics. With Adolf Hitler making an appearance on the streets of Warsaw, the political crisis in Europe is emphasized from the first scene. More important, the opening scene self-reflexively poses the political and aesthetic question at the heart of the film's project: Is comedy an appropriate genre for an anti-Nazi film?

After the credits, accompanied by the music of Chopin's triumphal "Military Polonaise,"[14] the first images of the film are a montage, cutting between various signs on shops with Polish names, with a narrator reading them in voice-over: "Lubiński, Kubiński, Lomiński, Roznański and Poznański." The narrator then announces, "We are in Warsaw," and there is a cut to an establishing shot of a busy urban intersection. Suddenly the narrator's voice is urgent, asking, "What are those Poles staring at?" as the film cuts between medium and close shots of concerned Polish citizens on the street who are staring at something we do not see. Finally, there is a swift pan to Adolph Hitler, who is the object of all the reaction shots of Poles we have been watching. The narrator asks what Hitler is doing here in the summer of 1939, with Germany and Poland still at peace: "How did he get here?"

"Well, it all started in Gestapo headquarters in Berlin," he answers, as the film cuts to an office inside those headquarters. We see Jack Benny as a Nazi functionary and his adjutant (George Lynn) as they prepare to interrogate someone named Wilhelm Kunze. "Will he talk?" the adjutant asks. Benny replies with a somewhat sinister "He better." Outside the office, the guards announce the arrival of Wilhelm Kunze, shouting the name ominously, as it echoes down the hallway. Wilhelm Kunze finally appears in the doorway—and he is only a small boy, albeit one wearing a Hitler Youth uniform.[15] The two Nazis question him about his father's loyalty to Hitler, and the boy starts to tell an anti-Hitler joke his father has told, but before he gets to the punchline, Benny's adjutant says it for him. Benny's character is scandalized that a fellow Nazi would know such a joke, so the flustered adjutant attempts to prove his loyalty by shouting, "Heil Hitler!"—to which Benny and the boy must respond by shouting the same thing.

Suddenly soldiers in the hall outside seem to echo the shouts of the boy and the two men inside the office: they too proclaim loudly, "Heil Hitler!" There is a cut to the doorway, and a uniformed official steps in to announce the arrival of the Führer. Hitler himself then appears in a medium shot in the door. Immediately, Benny, his adjutant, and the small boy shout, "Heil Hitler!" again. There is a cut back to the doorway, and Hitler raises his hand in response and says, "Heil, myself!"

This is the film's first big laugh, but immediately we cut to a man shouting, "That's not in the script!" It becomes clear that we have been watching the rehearsal of a play about the Nazis, not "real" Nazis themselves, in a theater in Warsaw in August 1939. The play is called *Gestapo*. After "Hitler's" ad lib, the cast and the director, Dobosh (Charles Halton), argue about what kind of acting is appropriate for a play about the Nazis. The cast is in favor of jokes and improvisation, such as has been attempted by Bronski (Tom Dugan), the actor playing Hitler, who is defended by another actor, Greenberg (Felix Bressart): "It will get a terrific laugh." The director, however, insists that he does not want laughs because the play is a "realistic drama," a "document" of Nazi Germany in which comedy has no place.

Lubitsch begins his dark and not very realistic comedy about the Nazi invasion of Poland by mixing comedy with action, suspense, and melodrama—screwball elements with what we would now call noir elements—combined with this self-reflexive investigation of the debate about what artistic form to employ against the Nazis. His film depicts a company of second-rate Polish actors who will eventually fool the Nazi occupiers of Warsaw with their own impersonation of the Nazis, portraying them to be blowhard bullies who must constantly perform fanatical loyalty to Hitler. As Gemünden puts it, Lubitsch shows us that Nazism *is* performance, that it is "real only to the extent it is performed."[16] Even bad actors can perform it well enough to fool party bureaucrats who are constantly insecure that they are not performing their loyalty convincingly enough for it to seem real.

Dolar, echoing Harvey, states that the message of the film is "empowerment": "Nazis can be defeated," for they are just like the actors—and us, "stupid and conceited."[17] The actors do differ from the Nazis in the film in their understanding of duplicity and doubling. Phony Nazis and a phony Hitler will fool the real Nazis with the costumes, and even the lines, from the play *Gestapo*. Crowther attacked Lubitsch for seeing "the world through theatrical eyes," but Harvey values the fact that "theater always precedes reality" in this film: "We always see the fake, 'ham' version first"; the "real version" is then always more theatrical than theater. As Dolar puts it, "the first time preempts the second time . . . undermining the necessity and the historic fatality of the second time." This is the political value of the film: "To create the comic double and the replica of the bloodiest, most serious, the most fateful event in European history is to make a political statement of the most far-reaching proportions."[18]

The debate about comedy versus "realistic drama" begins with Bronski's "Heil, myself!" and then continues onstage at the rehearsal of *Gestapo*. Maria Tura comes out in a "gorgeous dress," a stunning strapless evening gown that she wants to wear in the concentration camp scene, saying that it will create a "tremendous contrast." Greenberg adds that it will get a "terrific laugh," defending her in the same way he defended Bronski's ad lib. Dobosh blows up at her, finding her idea "inartistic." Her husband, Joseph Tura, defends her to Dobosh but then tells her as they both walk away together that "the dress stinks." Maria then accuses Tura of being concerned that she might steal the scene from him. It becomes clear that he is a ham, vain but insecure about his acting, and that she resents his getting top billing (in contrast to "real life," in which Lombard got top billing over Benny). We also learn that he is insecure about her fidelity.

Next Dobosh decides that Bronski does not make a convincing Hitler, that he only looks like "a man with a little mustache"—a clear reference to Chaplin and his dual role as a Jew and a Hitler-like character in *The Great Dictator*. Dobosh points to a picture of Hitler onstage as proof of what Hitler "should" look like, and Bronski points out that the picture was taken of him, which makes Dobosh doubt the picture. Bronski then leaves the theater for the streets, where he hopes to prove that he makes a convincing Hitler. The narrator then informs us, "And that's how Adolf Hitler came to be in the streets of Warsaw" in the summer of 1939, ending the opening sequence with its provocative questions about the differences between appearance and reality, about acting and doubles, and about the correct strategy for making art in the struggle against Hitler.

Besides *Gestapo*, the Polish actors of the Theatre Polski will perform two other plays, both by Shakespeare.[19] From the tragedy *Hamlet* we see the scene with Hamlet's most famous soliloquy, which begins with the question that gives the film its name, "To be or not to be?" From *The Merchant of Venice* (often accused of being antisemitic), we will see the Rialto scene.[20] The Hamlet soliloquy, performed by Jack Benny as Joseph Tura, will be burlesqued on the stage three times over the course of the film. Felix Bressart as Greenberg will perform Shylock's Rialto monologue three times, each time differently but never onstage.

Soon after the debate about whether it is appropriate to get laughs during the performance of *Gestapo*, two government officials arrive at the theater to tell the actors they are forbidden to perform their anti-Nazi play: the Polish government does not want to anger Germany. This act of censorship

is yet another self-reflexive moment in this film that so often blurs the lines between performance and reality. United Artists did not like Lubitsch using the Shakespeare line as the title for the film, so Lubitsch suggested provocatively that he would call the film *The Censor Forbids*. As Gemünden and Rosenberg have argued, the film is not just about what the Nazis are doing in Europe; it is a comment on Hollywood's self-censorship due to its fear of angering Nazi Germany, almost up until Pearl Harbor.[21]

Because they cannot perform *Gestapo*, the troupe must switch to *Hamlet*, the other play they are performing. But before we get to Jack Benny's first performance of the famous soliloquy, we see the actors backstage. There is Rawitch (Lionel Atwill), who plays Claudius; as he strolls down the hall, his crown hits the hanging lamp above in a brief slapstick moment that deconstructs the self-important actor. Rawitch's condescension to Greenberg and Bronski in the opening scene occasions Greenberg "outing" himself as Jewish, saying, "Mr. Rawitch, what you are, I wouldn't eat." Rawitch replies, "How dare you call me a ham!" The joke, of course, is about keeping kosher and not eating pork. Greenberg is a recognizably Jewish name; he is the only Pole who does not have a name ending in *-ski*. He is also the only Pole in the film who speaks English with a "foreign," that is, non-American accent (Bressart's accent is German).[22]

After Rawitch walks by, Greenberg and Bronski come out wearing helmets and carrying spears, complaining of their bit parts as "spear carriers." Even more clearly outing himself, Greenberg states that Shakespeare must have been thinking of him when he created the Jewish character Shylock in *The Merchant of Venice*. For the first time, he begins reciting the Rialto monologue, getting as far as the line, "If you prick us, do we not bleed?" Bronski says that it will move the audience "to tears," but this first performance of these lines by the bit player Greenberg in a Viking helmet seems comical, even "ridiculous."[23]

We then witness another off-stage quarrel between Tura and Maria. The two vain actors are constant rivals; Maria, who plays Ophelia, encourages her husband's insecurity about his performance as Hamlet until he begs for her reassurance, which she finally grants him. In her dressing room, she and her maid discuss the flowers she has received from an admirer, a young pilot, who keeps coming to see the play. She sends a message to him requesting (maliciously) that he interrupt her husband when he starts Hamlet's most famous soliloquy: "To be or not to be." When the young man

hears those words, he should leave the theater and come backstage to visit her in her dressing room.[24]

Next we see Tura walk onto the stage, ready to begin that famous speech. He pauses, and then we cut to the prompter below, who whispers those first six words of that most famous speech in all of Shakespeare (and the title of the film), as though Tura has forgotten how to begin it. This act alone undermines the speech, "ruining its aura," as Dolar aptly observes.[25] As soon as Tura himself says the whole phrase, a man in the audience stands up, disturbing his fellow audience members as he walks past them to leave the theater, while Tura cannot hide his astonished bewilderment as he delivers the next lines of the speech. Neither this time nor the two other times later in the film will we hear Tura get beyond the first few lines of the famous speech; he will be interrupted all three times.

Back in Maria's dressing room, Maria and her maid meet Lieutenant Sobinski, the young Polish pilot. Sobinski makes a date with Maria to take her on her first ride in an airplane. This is where the adulterous triangle of the marital comedy emerges.[26] Some days later, after more than one flight together, Sobinski once again walks out on Tura's soliloquy and meets Maria in her dressing room. The cocky young man now assumes that Maria will leave her husband—and also her career on the stage—for him, an idea that does not interest her in the least. At this point, Maria's maid runs in with a newspaper, declaring in anguish, "It's war!" Sobinski rushes out, and a self-absorbed Tura comes into Maria's dressing room. He assumes that people are upset because, for the second time, someone has walked out on his monologue. Maria informs him that everyone else is upset because war has broken out.

Cutting to the auditorium of the theater, we see the lights flicker, we hear explosions, and the audience flees the theater, screaming. The actors seek shelter in the basement as bombs fall. Rawitch remarks that now the Nazis are putting on the show; Maria responds that there is no censor to stop them—a reflexive allusion to Nazism as a "show," as a performance that rivals the theater.

Performing Nazism

Having switched from the marital comedy of adultery back to the anti-Nazi plot, we see shots of Warsaw in rubble after the bombing, including

the destroyed signs of the shop names ("Lubiński, Kubiński, Lomiński, Roznański and Poznański") we had seen at the beginning of the film, with sad music and a sad voice-over from the narrator. We see German troops marching through the streets. In his rebuttal to Crowther, who had attacked the film for making light of the German invasion of Poland, Lubitsch wrote, "I went out of my way to remind . . . [viewers] of the destruction of the Nazi conquest."[27] After another cut, we see that time has passed: snow is falling on the city, and we watch Bronski and Greenberg shoveling snow, wishing they could still be carrying spears instead of shovels. Greenberg, for the second time, recites some of Shylock's Rialto speech, this time much more sadly, as a comment on the conquest of Poland; while the speech is played for comedy the first time, the second time it is for pathos.

We cut to London, where we see Sobinski celebrating with a group of Polish pilots in exile now flying as the Polish Squadron of the British Royal Air Force in the fight against Germany. Among the pilots is a certain Professor Siletsky (Stanley Ridges), supposedly a Polish patriot, but Sobinski suspects something when Siletsky does not recognize the name of Maria Tura, a star of the Warsaw stage. He reports his suspicions to officials in British Intelligence, who realize that Siletsky must be a Nazi spy; thus, he must be stopped before he can give the Nazis in Poland information that would betray the Polish underground resistance. Sobinski volunteers to fly back to occupied Poland to warn the underground so that Siletsky can be killed before he can do harm. To get this message to the underground, he is given a small photo of Siletsky and told to go to a particular bookstore in Warsaw, ask for a copy of Tolstoy's *Anna Karenina*, and then place the photo of Siletsky on page 105.

On a dark night, Sobinski parachutes into wintry Poland and manages to escape the German army, but he cannot make it to the bookstore in Warsaw and finds refuge in Maria Tura's apartment. Maria goes to the bookstore to carry out the important errand for him. As in *The Shop around the Corner*, the Tolstoy novel (about adultery) is used as a secret code.[28]

Returning to her apartment, Maria is stopped by German soldiers who tell her she has been summoned to the Gestapo. She is taken to Warsaw's Hotel Europe, now occupied by the Gestapo (like Europe itself by 1941–42). There she learns she has been summoned by Professor Siletsky, who tells her he has a code message for her from a young Polish pilot: "To be or not to be." Knowing Maria is a married woman with a younger admirer, Siletsky himself is immediately attracted to Maria. He tries both to recruit her as a spy

and to seduce her using the promise of luxuries she has lost since the conquest of Poland, luxuries that the "right side"—the "winning side"—could now provide her. Maria plays along with him but puts him off, manipulating him the way she has done with both Sobinski and her husband. She tells him she needs to go home to dress more elegantly for the romantic dinner he plans for her.

Meanwhile Tura, Maria's husband, has come home to their apartment to find a strange man sleeping in his bed: Sobinski. Tura is understandably suspicious; looking him over, he seems to recognize the young man, so he decides to recite the line, "To be or not to be." The sleeping man automatically gets out of bed and starts walking out. Jack Benny's outraged, flustered cuckold adds a lot to the comedy and reminds us that before he became a radio comedian, Benny got his start in vaudeville. Eyman writes that Lubitsch became less German and more Jewish in his late career.[29] He was also becoming more American, as the use of American comedians like (Jewish American) Benny and (Irish American) Tom Dugan demonstrates. American vaudeville had a "tradition of lowbrow comedy that's impressed by nothing or no one"—especially appropriate for deflating vain, arrogant types and for attacking bullies (like the Nazis).[30]

Maria returns to her apartment to find her angry, suspicious husband confronting Sobinski. Maria distracts Tura by impressing on him the danger now faced by the underground: she has learned of the threat Siletsky poses, and she declares that she may have to kill him. The vain Tura insists that he should do this deed. Returning to the Hotel Europe, Maria dresses in the slinky evening dress she had worn at the rehearsal of *Gestapo* and that Dobosh had criticized. Now it is entirely appropriate: what better costume to wear back to Gestapo headquarters to seduce Siletsky? The latter had promised her that he would have her saying "Heil Hitler" in no time, and now, drinking champagne together, he kisses her. She then raises her hand and says weakly, "Heil Hitler," pretending to be overwhelmed. This is yet another "Heil Hitler" joke: she is clearly mocking him, but he responds automatically with his own "Heil Hitler!" Just then, Tura and two other actors arrive, disguised in Gestapo uniforms from the Theatre Polski. Tura tells Siletsky that he is Colonel Ehrhardt of the Gestapo and that Siletsky needs to come to his office to share information about the underground.

They take Siletsky to the (abandoned) Theatre Polski, entering the building through an entrance with a phony sign that says "Gestapo Headquarters." Tura (as Ehrhardt) and Siletsky exchange pleasantries. Siletsky

gives him the information from London about the underground, also telling "Colonel Ehrhardt" of his reputation in London: "They call you Concentration Camp Ehrhardt." Rather quickly running out of dialogue, Tura begins laughing and saying, "So they call me Concentration Camp Ehrhardt!" whenever he cannot think of anything else to say. Siletsky becomes suspicious, pulls a gun on Tura, and then runs into the auditorium of the theater, where he is pursued by the other actors (in Gestapo costumes). Siletsky is shot on the stage (by Sobinski), but in true Lubitsch style, we do not see this—we hear it. The curtain is raised in time to show the wounded Siletsky onstage, raising his hand and trying to say, "Heil Hitler!" but collapsing and dying before he can utter the words.

Elisabeth Bronfen writes that "the Real of War" in *To Be or Not to Be* "is bookended by theater,"[31] with the film opening at the rehearsal of *Gestapo* and ending in London with Tura performing *Hamlet*. But the film constantly alternates between the theater and "real life," with the actors performing (often as Nazis) in both realms, as the (literal) "staging" of Siletsky's death demonstrates. Harvey writes, "It seems impossible in this movie to escape the theater—even if you are dying."[32]

Now in disguise as Professor Siletsky, Tura goes to see the real Colonel Ehrhardt, whom he flatters with the information he gleaned from the real (and now deceased) Siletsky. Ehrhardt laughs, exclaiming, "So they call me Concentration Camp Ehrhardt!" Tura responds, "I thought you would react that way." Here again one must admire the reflexivity of the comedy, and the film's blurring of the boundary between acting and "life." This is topped by another joke, the most controversial of the film, at least in 1942. The vain Tura (in disguise as Ehrhardt), had fished for a compliment first from Siletsky and then later (in disguise as Siletsky) from Ehrhardt's assistant Schultz by asking each if he had ever heard of that "great Polish actor, Joseph Tura," only to be told no by each man. Now he tries this for the third time, asking Ehrhardt the same question. But Ehrhardt has heard of Tura; indeed, he saw him perform Shakespeare in Warsaw before the war. He adds, "What he did to Shakespeare, we are doing now to Poland."

This equation of a bad performance of Shakespeare with the destruction of Poland shocked Lubitsch's wife Vivian and some of his friends at the film's preview—Billy Wilder and Walter Reisch, among others.[33] But the joke is intrinsically related to the film's project. The problem is that it makes us laugh at Tura (whose vanity always invites a put-down) with a joke told by a Nazi. It is no surprise that a Nazi might joke about atrocities in Poland,

but if you expect Nazis to be two-dimensional monsters, then a Nazi with any sense of humor is disturbing.

Nazis can have a sense of humor; indeed, Dolar writes, they are just "as stupid and conceited" as we are, as all people are. That monstrosity can exist within normal, three-dimensional people—even people with a sense of humor—is upsetting.[34] The Nazis are just as stupid as the actors; therefore, the actors can figure out how to trick them. The villains in Lubitsch's dark comedy are complicated. No simplistic Manichean dichotomy safely places evil on the "other side," as in most anti-Nazi films—including Chaplin's.

Ehrhardt is brilliantly portrayed by the comedian Sig Rumann, a German Jew who had performed in American comedies with the Marx brothers as well as in *Ninotchka*. In his first scene with Tura as Siletsky, Gestapo chief Ehrhardt gets flustered, complaining that he signs so many execution orders he cannot be expected to remember them all. Here we have Hannah Arendt's "banality of evil": a mediocre bureaucrat who facilitates evil without even realizing anymore what he does.[35] Ehrhardt is insecure in his performance of loyalty to Hitler, which Tura manipulates just as in the scene from *Gestapo* that opens the film. Indeed, Ehrhardt tells exactly the same anti-Hitler joke that Hitler Youth Wilhelm Kunze told in that scene, and Tura's shocked reaction provokes Ehrhardt to resort to the same fanatical performance of loyalty: not knowing what else to say, he shouts, "Heil Hitler!"

As Siletsky, Tura promises to come again the next day, but by then Nazis have found Siletsky's corpse in the Theatre Polski, which they have opened for a reception for Hitler, who is visiting Warsaw. The Nazis are getting suspicious. Dobosh proposes that if the actors can create a distraction at the reception for Hitler, they may be able to escape Poland with the false Hitler (Bronski). Maria, confident in her ability to distract men, offers to create the confusion, but Dobosh tells her "there will be no ladies" at the reception. He suggests instead that Greenberg should create the distraction: he will out himself as a Jew in front of the Nazis by finally getting the chance to play Shylock. Thus, while the "real" Hitler is inside the theater (we only see him from behind, looking down on an auditorium full of soldiers),[36] Tura and his actors in Nazi costumes gather in the corridor outside the auditorium. Greenberg, also in Nazi disguise, slips into the women's lavatory (the "Ladies Lounge"), where he takes off his fake Nazi uniform. He emerges, a Jewish man in civilian clothing, and is rushed by (real) Nazi guards. Then Tura in a Nazi officer's uniform pushes forward with his (phony) Nazi

entourage, including the phony Hitler, Bronski. They confront Greenberg, who, for the third time in the film, begins reciting Shylock's Rialto speech, ending with a line we have not yet heard: "And if you wrong us, will we not revenge?"[37] At this, he lunges at "Hitler": this time the speech evokes courageous resistance. Tura and his fellow "Nazis" immediately arrest Greenberg. Two of them take him away, while Tura and the others escort "Hitler" to safety—that is, to the airport.

Bronski's "Hitler," Tura, and the other actors in Nazi disguise board an airplane—but not Greenberg, whom we never see again. After takeoff, the two ("real") Nazi soldiers piloting the plane are told they should leave the cockpit to speak with the Führer. Sobinski takes over at the steering wheel. Standing at the plane's open hatch, Bronski as Hitler orders the two to jump out of the plane, and, without parachutes, they comply, shouting loyally, "Heil Hitler!" as they jump. Bronski comments, "Two very obliging fellows!" This is the final, most farcical, and funniest "Heil Hitler" joke of the film.

The plane flies to Scotland. At a press conference there, Tura vainly takes credit for all that his colleagues have accomplished, and when asked what he would like to do in Great Britain, Maria answers (with a hint of sarcasm) before he can: "He wants to play Hamlet." The film ends with a return to *Hamlet* and to the marital comedy. But before focusing on the very end of the film, I want to examine Greenberg's role and its relation to the historical situation of the Jews in 1941–42.

Jews in Europe, Jews in Hollywood

To Be or Not to Be was produced by a team that included many émigré artists—mostly Jews—who had worked in the German film industry in the Weimar Republic. The most prominent was Lubitsch himself, the very first German émigré to Hollywood in 1922. By the late 1930s he was employing newer émigrés from Europe—refugees from Hitler: Billy Wilder, Walter Reisch, Werner Heymann, Felix Bressart, Alexander Granach, and Rudolph Maté, among others. Many of them worked on *To Be or Not to Be*.

The film was produced by Alexander Korda, a Hungarian Jew who had produced and directed films in Budapest, Vienna, Berlin, Hollywood, and London; he was back in Hollywood because of the war in Europe. At the very beginning of the film we see an image of London's Big Ben, which served as the logo for Korda's production company (and, as Gemünden points out,

anticipates the importance of England—and Shakespeare—to the plot of the film).[38] Rudolph Maté was the cinematographer, whose use of light and shadow in the film anticipated the style of film noir, adding darkness to the comedy and what Spaich calls an important "disharmony."[39] Heymann had composed the music for the most famous German film musicals of the early 1930s, and *To Be or Not to Be* was his sixth Lubitsch film in Hollywood.[40] Lubitsch also gave important parts to émigré actors, two of whom he had employed in *Ninotchka*: Sig Rumann, as Colonel Erhardt, and Felix Bressart, as Greenberg.

This was Bressart's third role in a Lubitsch film; as I have discussed, his first role was in *Ninotchka* (1939), soon after arriving in Hollywood after fleeing Germany and then Austria; his second role for Lubitsch was in *The Shop around the Corner* (1940). In *To Be or Not to Be*, Bressart's character, Greenberg, is often considered Lubitsch's mouthpiece. He plays a spear carrier in *Hamlet*, the kind of minor role Lubitsch himself had played in the theater thirty years earlier in Berlin for Max Reinhardt.[41] Greenberg recites Shylock's Rialto speech from *The Merchant of Venice* three times, a speech Lubitsch himself had performed at his audition for Victor Arnold in 1911, which gained him entrance into Reinhardt's troupe at the age of nineteen.[42]

Why did it take Lubitsch eighteen years in America to "come out" as Jewish—that is, to finally make a film with an overtly Jewish character? After all, he was an actor and filmmaker who had begun in Germany during the 1910s making "milieu films" with Jewish protagonists. Why were there no Jewish characters in his Hollywood films, in an industry dominated to a large extent by Jews? In the mid-1920s Lubitsch had considered directing *The Jazz Singer* but lost the chance when he left Warner Brothers in 1926. In the 1920s, Hollywood studios had not shied away from telling stories about Jews, but that had changed in the 1930s. Hollywood did not want to lose the German market after 1933, so most studios began changing plots and character names to avoid topics and stories with obvious Jewish connections.[43] Only Warner Brothers bucked the trend, beginning in the late 1930s to make anti-Nazi films, but even then the presence of Jews in such films was not emphasized. Chaplin's *The Great Dictator* (1940) was the great exception, but as Urwand has demonstrated, even Chaplin toned down the original idea for his film, which was much less sentimental and much darker, without a happy ending and the final, didactic address to the public.[44]

Even after the United States joined World War II in December 1941, there was still a reticence in Hollywood to focus on Jewish characters. This

was in harmony with the Allied strategy, which focused on depicting the fight as one against Nazi barbarism in general without "complicating" the picture by emphasizing what was considered a subsidiary issue—namely, the plight of the Jews in Nazi-dominated Europe—even as the news about genocide began to emerge. On November 25, 1942, eight months after Lubitsch's comedy premiered in March, an article in the *New York Times* reported the murder of two million Jews in Europe. Nonetheless, the US State Department urged Dr. Stephen Wise of the World Jewish Congress "to say nothing."[45] In January 1943, a Movietone newsreel film included footage of Count Raczynski, the Polish ambassador to Great Britain, reporting details about the Nazi extermination of the Jews in Poland, but the Allies never allowed the film to be shown (an excerpt can be watched today at Yad Vashem, the Israeli museum of the Holocaust).[46]

Another reason for reticence about focusing too much attention on the Jews was the simple but brutal fact of pervasive antisemitism in Europe and in the United States (beginning with the State Department). In September 1941, two months before Pearl Harbor, the isolationist Charles Lindbergh of the "America First" movement argued that pressure for America to get involved in the war in Europe came from three groups of "war agitators": "the British, the Jewish, and the Roosevelt administration," insinuating that American Jews were an untrustworthy domestic minority.[47] Hollywood's concern about the loss of its European market during the 1930s was cowardly, but as a commercial film industry, it had always been cautious about anything that might incite such mainstream prejudices in America. Many in the American Jewish community were just as cautious, even during the war.

They were right that American antisemitism was a force to be feared. Its presence in the State Department and in Congress was so dominant that American refugee policy remained insensitive to the plight of European Jews as late as 1944. But silent, resigned submission to that antisemitism was not helpful; only public resistance made a difference on the refugee issue. In large part because of the pressure created by provocative ads taken out in the *New York Times* by the screenwriter Ben Hecht and the Emergency Committee to Save the Jewish People of Europe over the course of 1943, Roosevelt finally created the War Refugee Board in January 1944. For one of the ads, Hecht wrote a poem called "Ballad of the Doomed Jews of Europe," which appeared in the *Times* on September 14, 1943.[48]

But German Jews had already known antisemitism in Germany, which was much older than the rise of the Nazis. Its ugly presence was not

something many German Jews had wanted to confront directly.[49] As discussed, Jewish intellectuals and artists in the Weimar film industry tended to use double encoding, featuring an overt message of tolerance for many forms of supposed "otherness" while the specifically Jewish relevance of a film's story was covert.[50]

It is perhaps instructive to look at Lubitsch's own career. His early comedies contained overtly Jewish characters, although they were never explicitly called Jewish in any title.[51] As Lubitsch became more successful, the overtly Jewish protagonists he had played disappeared as he eased himself out of acting. After World War I, only one overtly Jewish comedy by Lubitsch appeared, *Meyer from Berlin*, which was produced before the war ended but premiered afterward, in January 1919. After *Meyer from Berlin*, Lubitsch did not make any more Jewish comedies.[52]

The cautious strategy of double encoding mirrored another cautious maxim of German Jewish life before 1933: that one should "be a man in the street and a Jew at home."[53] This strategy rejects complete assimilation—one could be different in private, with a different faith and different traditions—but it also requires closeting an important part of one's identity.

In *To Be or Not to Be*, there is one "uncloseted" Jew, Greenberg, played by the German Jewish refugee Bressart. There are also many "implicit" or "closeted" Jews—above all, Jack Benny, whose real name was Benny Kubelsky and who plays Tura, the main male star of the Theatre Polski in Warsaw. Rosenberg calls Benny "the classic schlemiel," and yet to the mainstream audience, he was "reassuringly American."[54] He is "covertly" Jewish, which Rosenberg sees as emblematic for this film: "If the Polski Theater is literally crawling with hidden and not so hidden Jews, then Lubitsch has shaped himself, among other things, quite an adequate metaphor for the situation of Jews in American films."[55] The fact that almost all of America's Jewish entertainers felt the need to change their names is another testament to American antisemitism, which existed long before the Nazis came to power in Germany. Hollywood's concern with the German market after 1933 only exacerbated a much older trend.[56]

Jack Benny remained somewhat closeted with regard to his Jewish identity, which allowed him to represent an "American" figure of identification, with an American accent that is associated with the Poles in this film. There is some speculation that Benny remained closeted regarding his sexual identity as well. Perhaps it is more accurate to say, following Alexander Doty, that Benny developed a comic persona that came as close as possible

Figure 7.1 Jack Benny as Joseph Tura as Hamlet: *To Be or Not to Be* (1942). Screen capture.

to *not* being closeted—indeed, less closeted than was his identity as a Jew. Benny had a persona that consisted of being "cheap," a bad violin player, and what Rosenberg calls "the classic schlemiel." However, he was a man with what Doty calls "mannerisms traditionally coded as feminine," reading Benny's persona as queer.[57] Other critics imply something similar in their discussions of Benny but perhaps in a homophobic manner: Paul calls Benny's persona "too prissy to permit romance," and Harvey characterizes Benny's Hamlet as one "with limp wrists," with "pursed-lips suffering" and "snits and fits of pique."[58] In *To Be or Not to Be*, such characteristics arguably suit Benny's role as Tura, a vain cuckold who clearly cannot control the sexuality of his beautiful blonde wife, played by Carole Lombard, the "queen of screwball comedy."

The uncloseted Jew Greenberg represents the most radical figure in the film. Never called Jewish, he has a Jewish surname, and one of his first jokes is to criticize the "ham" actor played by Lionel Atwill: "Mr. Rawitch, what you are, I couldn't eat." Greenberg's dream is to play Shylock, which he eventually does at the climax of the plot, saving the Polish resistance and endangering himself—and vanishing from the film thereafter, as both

Figure 7.2 "Will we not revenge?" Felix Bressart as Greenberg as Shylock in *To Be or Not to Be* (1942). Screen capture.

Rosenberg and Gerd Gemünden have noted.[59] Greenberg transforms a role in *The Merchant of Venice* that is often considered an antisemitic caricature into one that involves the heroic act of "coming out" as a Jew in front of Nazi soldiers guarding Hitler.

But again, the word *Jew* is never even mentioned, not even in the Shylock speech we hear Greenberg recite three times, as Gemünden has demonstrated.[60] In the original Shakespeare play, the speech contains the line, "Hath not a Jew eyes?" But Greenberg says, "Have *we* not eyes?" (my emphasis). This allows him to let Jewish suffering stand in for the suffering of all the Poles, fully in line with Allied and Hollywood strategies of not emphasizing the Jews. At the same time, the only reason Greenberg is asked to take on this role in front of the Nazis is clearly because he is Jewish—and because he "looks" Jewish; Rosenberg writes of Bressart's "gloriously Semitic nose."[61]

This approach has continuity with Weimar and Hollywood practice about (not openly) representing Jewishness, but the political—and existential—threat of the Nazis pushes Lubitsch into new territory. He

thematizes that long-standing reticence at the same time that he finally breaks the taboo by having a character come out as Jewish in front of the Nazis. Of course, Greenberg is not coming out in any naively "authentic" way but rather in a theatrical way, by performing a Shakespeare monologue—by acting. In any case, his act saves his comrades and the Polish resistance, enabling the customary happy closure for a comedy—but one in which Greenberg does not take part. We do not see him on the plane to England. Perhaps his sacrifice does not mean his death: in the car to the airport, about to escape from Warsaw, Tura says that next time, Greenberg will play Shylock not in the corridor but on the stage of the Theatre Polski.[62] What is clear, however, is that he disappears from the film.

Gemünden describes Greenberg's role as the "disappearance of the European Jews, as enacted by Greenberg."[63] Rosenberg notes that the very same month in which the film entered postproduction, January 1942, was the month when, at the Wannsee Conference in Berlin, the Nazis would formulate the "final solution" for the Jews of Europe.[64] As Dolar writes, Lubitsch made this film at "arguably the blackest moment in the whole of European history," praising the film for its "sweeping cheek in the face of the greatest calamity."[65]

Maria's Triumph

The film does not end with Greenberg's disappearance, but his absence continues to "resound with immense force," writes Bronfen, even as the film shifts back to comedy and farce, both political and marital.[66] Political farce returns when Bronski orders the Nazi pilots to jump out of the plane carrying the actors who are escaping Poland.

Once the Polish actors have arrived in Great Britain, we return to the marital comedy. To the reporters, Tura takes all the credit for the successful escape from Poland, thanking his colleagues for what they have done, "as little as that may have been." The reporters then ask Tura what he wants to do, and before he can say anything, Maria says, "He wants to play Hamlet." As he begins a speech about being "in the land of Shakespeare," Maria interrupts him again, more insistently, with even more sarcasm: "He wants to play Hamlet!"

We do not see Maria again, but as Bronfen argues, she gets the "last word." The final images of the film focus on Tura, on a British stage performing Hamlet, but he is left speechless after beginning to recite "To

be or not to be."[67] Once again a man has stood up after this line to leave theater—and it is someone new, not Sobinski, who turns in his seat to stare in disbelief at this new rival, just as Tura does from the stage. And that is how we leave Tura, shown onstage in a medium shot, silent and perplexed, looking in the direction, we assume, of this unknown man who has walked out on his performance. Then we hear the triumphal chords of the Chopin polonaise with which the film opened, and "The End" appears.

Tura, the ham actor who gets top billing, has twice failed to get very far in the famous soliloquy—thanks to Maria's clever trick—but this time, the third time in the film, he is silenced after the first six words, which once again repeat the film's title. The marital comedy in Lubitsch's film remains unresolved at the end; the triangle instead becomes a rectangle. Maria once again gets revenge for Tura's unwillingness to share top billing, and she remains untamed, with both Tura and now Sobinski cuckolded.

From the beginning, Tura has been portrayed as unable to control Maria: in their very first quarrel, after he criticizes her decision to wear the "gorgeous dress" onstage, she angrily complains about his overbearing attempts to suppress her. Arguing that if they should ever have a child, she is not sure that she would be the mother, he replies that he would be happy to be the father. This exchange cleverly calls attention to Tura's insecurities about sexual inadequacy and Maria's fidelity, but it also resonates with deeper, generalized male anxieties about the difficulty of being sure of paternity (especially before DNA tests).

Maria is another one of Lubitsch's untamable "bad girls." As I have stressed, they are related to the Jewish "bad boys" of his early comedies, ambivalent characters treated with sympathy.[68] Discussing Carole Lombard's portrayal of Maria, Rosenberg writes that her "cunning and duplicity (invisible to Sobinski) are indeed that of an occupied country," adding, "That we can never be sure of her genuineness is part of the magic of her character." Sobinski has told her that it is his job to tell her husband of their love: "Don't you worry, it's a situation between men." But Maria is not the innocent, submissive woman Sobinski expects to give up the stage for domesticity and life on a farm: "She is cunning, activist, and cosmopolitan."[69] Harvey reports that when Lombard read the script for *To Be or Not to Be*, she loved it; he also argues that essential to Lombard's performance is "the ironic distance on male potency" that we see in her treatment of Tura, Sobinski, and Siletsky.[70] This characteristic makes her an invaluable agent in the struggle to undermine that cult of hypermasculine bullies that was Nazism.

Figure 7.3 "That's a terrific laugh": Maria Tura (Carole Lombard) and Greenberg (Felix Bressart) against Dobosh, the director (Charles Halton) in *To Be or Not to Be* (1942). Screen capture.

There has often been alignment—or intersection—in Western culture between different groups perceived as "other," and that has frequently been the case between the Jew and the feminine—indeed, all that is not considered masculine. In *To Be or Not to Be*, we can discern a certain alignment between Maria and the gentle but courageous Greenberg in the film. Greenberg defends her choice to wear the stunning gown in *Gestapo*, saying that it will get a laugh, just as he defended Bronski against Dobosh, the authoritarian defender of the "realistic drama."

Maria and Greenberg are each given one of the most important (self-reflexive) lines in the film: as Nazi bombs fall on Warsaw while the actors hide in the cellar, Rawitch's comments about the Nazis' big "show" evoke Maria's response: "There is no censor to stop them." This line is repeated by Greenberg as he watches the Nazis march into Warsaw.

Later, Maria offers to create the distraction in the Theatre Polski when Hitler visits, but Dobosh tells her that "ladies" will not be at this gathering of armed Nazi men in uniform; instead, he selects Greenberg for the

task. Greenberg will enter the "Ladies Lounge," take off his Nazi uniform, and emerge, outing himself as a Jew.[71] (Meanwhile, Bronski has gone into the "Gentlemens [*sic*] Lounge" to put on his Hitler mustache.) Bronfen also notes that in addition to the significant and powerful absence of Greenberg at the end of the film, Maria does not appear at the very end either: instead, we see Tura and Sobinski in the theater, realizing that they both have been tricked by her.[72] Both absences—those of Greenberg and of Maria—structure the end of the film and thus are especially significant examples of that variant of the Lubitsch touch that does not show us something—or someone.

As I have argued, in Lubitsch's films we often find a sympathetic alignment of rebels and outsiders, aggressive women and Jews, and other characters who might be considered "deviant" with regard to bourgeois norms regarding class, gender, and sexuality. *To Be or Not to Be* is the most radical example. Maria triumphs over Tura's insecure masculinity and Sobinski's cocky and "heroic" but not particularly bright version of masculinity. This comic twist is closely related to the struggle against the Nazis, who represent the ultimate form of bullying, brutal, overconfident yet deeply insecure masculinity. Not only does Maria cuckold Tura, she undermines his vain posture of heroism, his attempt to take all credit for the "happy ending"—an attempt that completely ignores the absence of the one who really made it possible—the film's true hero, Greenberg.

Notes

1. McBride, *How Did Lubitsch Do It?*, 273.

2. Mayer had been a New York playwright whose plays "were praised for their mordant humor." Considered an intellectual in Hollywood, he was active in the Hollywood Anti-Nazi League. See Eyman, *Ernst Lubitsch*, 290–92. See also Barnes, *To Be or Not to Be*, 19–22.

3. Rosenberg, "Shylock's Revenge," 212, 214.

4. While many write that the film failed commercially, Eyman reports that it did make money (probably a profit of around $300,000)—not a big hit, but not a loss; *Ernst Lubitsch*, 299–301. See also McBride, *How Did Lubitsch Do It?*, 403–4.

5. Paul, *Ernst Lubitsch's American Comedy*, 227. Harvey reports that Chaplin's film was "the fourth-highest-grossing movie of 1940"; *Romantic Comedy*, 489.

6. Paul, *Ernst Lubitsch's American Comedy*, 231.

7. See Bosley Crowther, "The Screen," review of *To Be or Not to Be*, *New York Times*, March 7, 1942, 13; and "Against a Sea of Troubles: In 'To Be or Not to Be,' Ernst Lubitsch Has Opposed Real Tragedy with an Incongruous Comedy Plot—Other New Films," *New York Times*, March 22, 1942, X3. After Crowther's first review, Lubitsch had asked to write a

rebuttal, but it was not ready by March 22; instead, it appeared a week later: "Mr. Lubitsch Takes the Floor for Rebuttal," *New York Times*, March 29, 1942, X3.

8. Review of *To Be or Not to Be* and "Editorially Speaking" in *The New Movies: The National Board of Review Magazine*, March 1942, 5–6, 3.

9. Dolar, "To Be or Not to Be?," 111, 113–14. Rosenberg ("Shylock's Revenge," 238) argued similarly, praising the comedy for its prescience "precisely at a time when both laughter and Jewishness were undergoing their greatest trial."

10. Wallach stresses, "It was not always the case that Jews could control their level of visibility"; *Passing Illusions*, 6–7.

11. See Rosenberg, "Shylock's Revenge," 209–44; Gemünden, *Continental Strangers*, chap. 3. An earlier version of Gemünden's chapter appeared as "Space Out of Joint: Ernst Lubitsch's *To Be or Not to Be*," *New German Critique* 89 (Spring-Summer 2003): 59–80.

12. This chapter is indebted to the groundbreaking work on this film by Rosenberg and Gemünden mentioned in n. 11 but also to Ashkenazi's *Weimar Film and Modern Jewish Identity* and Wallach's *Passing Illusions*, as well insightful chapters on *To Be or Not to Be* written in the 1980s by Paul (*Ernst Lubitsch's American Comedy*, 225–56) and Harvey (*Romantic Comedy*, 477–93). See also Barnes's British Film Institute booklet *To Be or Not to Be* (2002). Also important are Dolar's "To Be or Not to Be?" and Elisabeth Bronfen's "Lubitsch's War: Comedy as Political Ploy in *To Be or Not to Be*," both chapters in the 2014 anthology by Novak, Dolar, and Krečič, *Lubitsch Can't Wait*.

13. Truffaut, "Lubitsch Was a Prince," 57.

14. Also known as the Polonaise in A Major, op. 40, no. 1. I thank Hui Liu for identifying this music.

15. Cf. the arrival of the main character in *The Student Prince*: a huge crowd doffs top hats at the arrival of the royal train at the station, there is a cut to the door of a train wagon, and what do we see? A small boy.

16. Gemünden, *Continental Strangers*, 85, 89.

17. Dolar, "To Be or Not to Be?," 111, 116; cf. Harvey, *Romantic Comedy*, 492–93.

18. Dolar, "To Be or Not to Be?," 127, 129.

19. In the chapter on *To Be or Not to Be* in his book *Continental Strangers* (chap. 3), Gemünden uses the term *Teatr Polski*, the correct Polish name. In the film, however, we see signs for the "Theatre Polski."

20. Rosenberg disputes that Shakespeare's play is antisemitic, arguing that it displays "Jew-hatred without participating in it"; "Shylock's Revenge," 215–16. See also Stephen Greenblatt, "If You Prick Us: What Shakespeare Taught Me about Fear, Loathing, and the Literary Imagination," *New Yorker*, July 10 and 17, 2017, 34–39.

21. See Dolar, "To Be or Not to Be?," 121; Eyman, *Ernst Lubitsch*, 297–98. Lubitsch's proposal was tongue in cheek. Because of protest letters from Lombard and Benny, United Artists backed down and approved the title *To Be or Not to Be*. Urwand comments that with the censorship of the play *Gestapo*, "Lubitsch was probably alluding to Hollywood's dealings with Georg Gyssling throughout the 1930s"; *Collaboration*, 309. Gyssling was the German Consul in Los Angeles who continually put pressure on Breen and the studios to eliminate any criticism of Nazi Germany in American films.

22. Barnes (*To Be or Not to Be*, 14) writes that the Polish actors are "mostly Jewish," but this is debatable. Perhaps "covertly" they are (like Jack Benny), but this is not obvious to the audience. The only overtly Jewish character is Greenberg, and in fact some audiences to this

day do not realize that Greenberg is Jewish. The word *Jew* is never spoken in the film—even in Shylock's monologue; see Gemünden, *Continental Strangers*, 92–94.

23. Rosenberg, "Shylock's Revenge," 232.

24. As Henry writes, Maria says she loves her husband but "has no scruples about cheating on him or destroying his performance"; *Ethics and Social Criticism*, 101.

25. Dolar, "To Be or Not to Be?," 127.

26. An adulterous affair between Maria and Sobinski is only implied. They do take a plane ride together. But in the original script, Anna, Maria's maid, said, "She might hit an air pocket lying down"—one of the lines listed as objectionable on a handwritten document on yellow paper in the MPAA Production Code files on *To Be or Not to Be* at the Herrick Library. It is the only line on the list that was cut from the film.

27. Lubitsch's rebuttal, "Mr. Lubitsch Takes the Floor," *New York Times*, March 29, 1942. Lubitsch learned important details about the invasion of Poland by employing Richard Ordynski as a research expert. He worked in Polish theater and film and had experienced the invasion of Poland but escaped to Paris and then to the United States. Ordynski "knew the very theatre building that Lubitsch wanted re-created" and also used his contacts to "Polish fliers stationed somewhere in Canada" to get uniform details. See Robert Joseph, "The Research Experts Take a Back Seat," *New York Times*, March 1, 1942, X4; see also Gemünden, *Continental Strangers*, 89.

28. McBride (*How Did Lubitsch Do It?*, 395) argues that in *The Shop around the Corner*, *Anna Karenina* alludes to the adultery subplot—so too in *To Be or Not to Be*.

29. Eyman, *Ernst Lubitsch*, 280–81.

30. Harvey, *Romantic Comedy*, 488.

31. Bronfen, "Lubitsch's War," 136.

32. Harvey, *Romantic Comedy*, 484.

33. See Eyman, *Ernst Lubitsch*, 301–2; Harvey, *Romantic Comedy*, 491. Vivian asked Lubitsch to cut the line, and the others agreed, but Lubitsch refused to do so.

34. Dolar, "To Be or Not to Be?," 118–19.

35. Rosenberg makes the same point; "Shylock's Revenge," 224–25. The concept derives of course from Hannah Arendt, *Eichmann in Jerusalem: A Report on the Banality of Evil* (1963; London: Penguin, 2006).

36. An allusion to Leni Riefenstahl's *Triumph of the Will* (1935); see Gemünden, *Continental Strangers*, 87.

37. Gemünden (*Continental Strangers*, 93) reports that the use of the "revenge" line from Shylock's speech is a post-Pearl Harbor addition to the script. On other changes to the script after Pearl Harbor, see Gemünden, 212n46; and Paul, *Ernst Lubitsch's American Comedy*, 226.

38. Gemünden, *Continental Strangers*.

39. Spaich, *Ernst Lubitsch und seine Filme*, 364.

40. Heymann had also composed the music for *Angel*, *Bluebeard's Eighth Wife*, *Ninotchka*, *The Shop around the Corner*, and *That Uncertain Feeling*. *To Be or Not to Be* was his last film for Lubitsch, who was not happy with Heymann's use of "mickey-mousing" in a serious scene—that is, using background music comically to mimic the actions of the actors. Lubitsch persuaded another émigré composer, Miklos Rozsa, to change the music accompanying one scene. See Eyman, *Ernst Lubitsch*, 295, 298–99; Renk, *Ernst Lubitsch*, 127.

41. Cf. Eyman, *Ernst Lubitsch*, 303; and Gemünden, *Continental Strangers*, 96.

42. Eyman, *Ernst Lubitsch*, 31.

43. See Doherty, *Hollywood and Hitler*; Urwand, *Collaboration*. See also Lester D. Friedman, *The Jewish Image in American Film* (Secaucus, NJ: Citadel, 1987).

44. Chaplin decided to make the film in response to the *Kristallnacht* pogroms in Germany on November 9, 1938. He copyrighted the original script already the next day, November 10, 1938. According to that script, the film would have ended with the revelation that all the victorious resistance of the story was actually only the dream of a Jewish concentration inmate, who gets wakened by an abusive Nazi guard. See Urwand, *Collaboration*, 219, 307n71.

45. See Urwand, 235–36.

46. The details were probably based on the reports of Jan Karski from the Polish resistance. The clip shown at Yad Vashem was identified for me by Mimi Ash, the acquisitions coordinator of the Visual Center at Yad Vashem, as follows: "Movietone: Count Raczynski, January 1943; 43268/7108"; the footage consists of "what are apparently outtakes of a Movietone newsreel never screened," discovered by the British documentary filmmaker and scholar, James Barker. Email from Mimi Ash, October 4, 2012. I thank her and Ofer Ashkenazi, who helped me contact her.

47. Cited by Steve Hunegs, "Atlantic Charter Still Reflects U.S. at its Best," *Star Tribune*, August 12, 2016, A9. Lindbergh made these claims in a national radio broadcast on September 11, 1941—less than two months before Lubitsch would start filming *To Be or Not to Be*, and less than three months before Pearl Harbor.

48. Urwand, *Collaboration*, 237–43; the poem is reproduced on 241.

49. Again, see Wallach, *Passing Illusions*.

50. Ashkenazi, *Weimar Film and Modern Jewish Identity*, 97–98.

51. On Lubitsch and Jewish humor, note again his 1916 interview with Urgiß, "Künstlerprofil" in Prinzler and Patalas, *Lubitsch*, 90.

52. There would also be only one more film in which Lubitsch acted: *Sumurun*, 1920; see chap. 2.

53. Judah Leib Gordon, cited in Ashkenazi, *Weimar Film and Modern Jewish Identity*, 48.

54. Rosenberg, "Shylock's Revenge," 229.

55. Rosenberg, 214.

56. Changing their names would be held against the Jewish entertainers called up before HUAC in the late 1940s and early 1950s, during the Red Scare; for example, Danny Kaye would be challenged by an American congressman to admit that his "real" name was Kaminsky.

Jack Benny changed his name because an established star already had a name very similar to his. Still, in Benny's case, as with so many other Jewish entertainers, the new name would never be explicitly Jewish—for example, Benny's wife, born Sadie Marcowitz, changed her name to the (very WASP-y) Mary Livingstone.

57. See Rosenberg, "Shylock's Revenge," 229; Alexander Doty, *Making Things Perfectly Queer: Interpreting Mass Culture* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993), 63. See also the discussion of Jack Benny in Barnes, *To Be or Not to Be*, 22–25.

58. Paul, *Ernst Lubitsch's American Comedy*, 234; Harvey, *Romantic Comedy*, 487.

59. Rosenberg, "Shylock's Revenge," 235; Gemünden, *Continental Strangers*, 91–92.

60. Gemünden, *Continental Strangers*, 92–94. See the three scenes in the film when Greenberg recites lines from the Rialto speech: first, 8:06–9:10; second, 23:38–24:03; and third, 1:28:55–1:30:13.

61. See Rosenberg, "Shylock's Revenge," 232–33, 219.

62. Rosenberg writes that the tone of Bronski and Tura's lines about Greenberg on the ride to the Warsaw airport "makes it sound like an epitaph" (235).

63. Gemünden, *Continental Strangers*, 92; cf. the horrible reality of what would happen in the actual Warsaw ghetto in the spring and summer of 1942, as depicted (through a critical interrogation of Nazi film footage) in *A Film Unfinished* (2010), an Israeli-German documentary.

64. Rosenberg, "Shylock's Revenge," 237. Barnes (*To Be or Not to Be*, 7) and Dolar ("To Be or Not to Be?," 113) make the same point. The Wannsee Conference took place January 20, 1942.

65. Dolar, "To Be or Not to Be?," 113–14.

66. Bronfen, "Lubitsch's War," 150.

67. Bronfen, 149–50.

68. Comparing Shylock with Lubitsch's "fallen women," Rosenberg notes that Shakespeare gives Shylock a "mixture of both decent and ignoble motives" and that Lubitsch treats the title character in *Madame Dubarry* similarly; "Shylock's Revenge," 216.

69. Rosenberg, 227–28.

70. Harvey, *Romantic Comedy*, 479, 491. See also Barnes (*To Be or Not to Be*, 26), who reports that Lombard "told her biographer that the film was the happiest of her career: 'The one time when everything began right, stayed right and ended right.'"

Harvey (479) claims that Lombard's tragic death in a plane crash January 16, 1941, three weeks after filming ended, contributed to the film's "failure." It did delay the film's release until March, but the film made money, and contemporary reviews considered it one of Lombard's best performances; see, e.g., Louella Parsons, "Carole Gay, Glamorous," *Los Angeles Examiner*, February 20, 1942; Nelson B. Bell, "To Be or Not to Be," *Washington Post*, March 20, 1942. Even the most critical reviews—e.g., Crowther ("The Screen,") and Mildred Martin ("Last Lombard Picture Opens on Stanley Screen," *Philadelphia Inquirer*, March 12, 1942)—praised Lombard's performance. The crash occurred in Nevada as Lombard was returning from a war bond tour. See Eyman, *Ernst Lubitsch*, 299–300. McBride (*How Did Lubitsch Do It?*, 403) reports Orson Welles's (unsubstantiated) claim that the plane was shot down by Nazi agents.

71. Lubitsch had played with the taboo about entering the lavatory of the "opposite" sex before (see chap. 1, n. 105); in *To Be or Not to Be*, the taboo is finally broken.

72. Bronfen, "Lubitsch's War," 150. She writes that Maria's "intervention . . . uses the force of off-screen space."

EPILOGUE

Twilight of a Cosmopolitan, 1943–47

The End of Lubitsch's Career

Just before March 1942, when *To Be or Not to Be* was so controversially received, Lubitsch had gone to work for a new studio, Twentieth Century Fox. There he made a comedy that was not at all controversial. It was his first Technicolor film, and it was his most successful American film at the box office: *Heaven Can Wait*. It was the third of only three American films he made that were set in the United States (of the twenty-seven films he made here).[1] In keeping with the nostalgic trend of many 1940s films, especially at Twentieth Century Fox,[2] the film was set around the turn of the twentieth century (the music for the title credits is "By the Light of the Silvery Moon"). The story begins in the 1870s with the birth of the American protagonist in New York and follows his life through a number of episodes leading up to his peaceful death at age seventy.

Just before he began working on the screenplay for this film with Samson Raphaelson, his second marriage fell apart. Vivian and Ernst separated in April 1942, when their daughter Nicola was not even four years old. Vivian filed for divorce in May 1943, declaring that Ernst had "offered her no companionship." Vivian moved to New York with Nicola. The divorce came through in August 1944. Lubitsch remained intensely devoted to Nicola, who would visit him regularly in California.[3]

After he had finished the script of *Heaven Can Wait* with Raphaelson but before this apolitical film went into production, Lubitsch tried his hand at an obviously political film: a propaganda film for the "Why We Fight" unit run by Lieutenant Colonel Frank Capra. Shot in October 1942, it was titled *Know Your Enemy: Germany*. The US Army, however, rejected the film.[4]

In February 1943, shooting for *Heaven Can Wait* began and would last two months. A sophisticated marital comedy, the film was set in New York for the most part, but it was based on a Hungarian play about a philandering husband. The film was to some extent autobiographical, depicting a wealthy

family similar in many ways to Lubitsch's family in Berlin: above all, the protagonist's "naughty" grandfather was based on Lubitsch's father, Simon. Don Ameche plays the protagonist, Henry Van Cleve (a Dutch name fitting for an old New York family). Henry is not like his straitlaced father but instead follows in his grandfather's footsteps. He is actually called a "bad boy" early in the film. Once grown, he steals away Martha Strabel (Gene Tierney), the fiancée of his straitlaced cousin, but he is not faithful in his marriage to her (thanks to the Production Code, this is not explicit).

The film begins not with Henry's birth but rather after his death, with Henry meeting the devil at his desk in the (imposingly deco) reception area to hell. Henry expects to be let into the devil's realm. The devil asks him to explain why he belongs there, so Henry tells the story of his life. The main story unfolds as a flashback. At the end, the devil informs him that Martha is waiting for him in the place above. Thus our bad boy is redeemed by his wife's love for him in spite of his infidelities.

The critics liked the film well enough. Although *Heaven Can Wait* was Lubitsch's biggest commercial hit in America, I do not consider it one of his best films. Films like this one with "bad boy" protagonists tend to be more sexist and conservative. In his early Jewish comedies, the class and ethnic politics made the films subversive; in the musicals, Chevalier always plays a character of somewhat lower class than the women he marries, and in the end he accepts monogamy. Henry Van Cleve does not, although his wife's love saves his soul.[5]

Lubitsch's most successful German film, *Kohlhiesel's Daughters* (1920), was not one of his best either, but at least in that film, Henny Porten gets to do a virtuoso turn in a double role, including a bad girl. Gene Tierney does not get to be a bad girl in *Heaven Can Wait*, only a long-suffering and ultimately forgiving wife. She has some power in the end but apparently uses it to plead for her husband in heaven.

Compared to most nostalgic films of the 1940s, however, *Heaven Can Wait* is different. Whereas most such films glorified the "innocence" of small-town, Midwestern life when looking back on turn-of-the-century America (e.g., the 1944 musical *Meet Me in St. Louis*), *Heaven Can Wait* instead celebrates an urbane, cosmopolitan New York City. The episode in Kansas makes Martha's family look completely dysfunctional.[6]

In the midst of the box-office success of *Heaven Can Wait*, Lubitsch suffered a heart attack on September 1, 1943. He was hospitalized the next day, remained unconscious for three days, and was confined to bed rest

for three months.[7] It was the first of a number of heart attacks that would eventually end his life in November 1947. By early 1944 he had recovered enough to renegotiate his contract with Twentieth Century Fox, but given his health, he did not direct for a while. Instead he worked as the producer on two films. The first was *A Royal Scandal*, a remake of his 1924 film *Forbidden Paradise*, directed by Otto Preminger and starring Tallulah Bankhead in the role of the promiscuous czarina of Russia that Pola Negri had played so successfully in the original film. The 1945 version was not as successful; Preminger's "touch" was heavier than Lubitsch's. The second film that Lubitsch wanted to produce was *Dragonwyck* (1946), a gothic drama directed by Joseph L. Mankiewicz. Because of differences with Mankiewicz, however, Lubitsch withdrew his name from the production.

In December 1945, Lubitsch began directing the last film he would complete, *Cluny Brown*. Shooting finished in February 1946, and the film premiered in New York on June 1 that year. Based on a popular novel and set in England just before World War II, the film starred Jennifer Jones in the title role, a young working-class woman who will not accept her "place" in the English class system. Her problems have to do with gender expectations: she loves to do plumbing, like her father. Replacing her father on one of his jobs, she impresses a foreigner portrayed by the French actor Charles Boyer, a professor in exile from Nazi-occupied Czechoslovakia. Cluny's father insists that she go into "service" as a maid for an aristocratic family. She has difficulty "knowing her place," but by chance she encounters Boyer's character again, a guest in the aristocratic household. He too has difficulty fitting in there.

The only escape for our two outsiders—Cluny and her professor—is to leave England. At the end of the film, we see them in New York, where he has become a successful author and she is pregnant. It is not clear whether this is during or after the war. Cluny's rebellion with regard to gender expectations would seem to have been domesticated in a way that fits postwar politics (the same year that the baby boom begins).[8] In any case, Lubitsch's final film, a modest success, was yet another film about outsiders to class and gender norms—and a film about transnational migration.

Soon after the shooting of *Cluny Brown* ended, however, Lubitsch was in the hospital again. It took him a year to recover. Then he went to work again with Samson Raphaelson to produce a script for a musical set in Italy in the 1860s, *That Lady in Ermine*.[9] While working on the script, Lubitsch was awarded an honorary Academy Award on March 13, 1947, for his achievements.[10] As Eyman reports, he had a minor heart attack that

night onstage, just as he accepted the Oscar. He recovered, but he would not survive the year.[11]

After getting the Oscar, he gave some interviews. He told Philip Scheuer of the *Los Angeles Times* that *The Shop around the Corner* was the "best picture I ever made in my life," claiming that his talent involved "taking a lesser theme and then treating it without compromise." This was a defense against the (gendered) critique of "triviality" dating back to the Jim Tully interview in 1926.[12] He did not mention *To Be or Not to Be*—perhaps the controversy still stung too much.[13]

In summer 1947, Lubitsch wrote a summary of his career for Theodore Huff, who was publishing a short book on his films. On July 10, Lubitsch sent a copy of that summary in a letter to Herman Weinberg. In it he gave his opinion on a number of his films, including his German ones; it is a letter I have cited often in this book. Against the critique that had been made (e.g., by Lewis Jacobs) that his career had been in decline since the early 1930s,[14] he praises *Trouble in Paradise*, *Ninotchka*, and *The Shop around the Corner* as the three best pictures of his career, and he defends *Heaven Can Wait*—precisely "because it had no message and made no point whatsoever." Nonetheless, he ends with yet another defense of the recent film that did have a message:

> *To Be or Not to Be* has caused a lot of controversy and in my opinion has been unjustly attacked. This picture never made fun of Poles, it only satirized actors and the Nazi spirit and the foul Nazi humor. Despite being farcical, it was a truer picture of Naziism [*sic*] than what was shown in most novels, magazines, and pictures which dealt with the same subject. In those stories the Germans were pictured as a people who were beleaguered by the Nazi gang and tried to fight this menace through the underground whenever they could. I never believed in that and it is now definitely proven that this so-called underground spirit among the German people never existed.[15]

This statement is of interest for a number of reasons. However bitter he still was at American critics for their treatment of his anti-Nazi comedy, more noteworthy is the much greater bitterness Lubitsch felt toward Germany in the aftermath of the war, after the full knowledge of the extent of the Holocaust was known. McBride reports that Lubitsch vowed never to return to Germany and had long banned the speaking of German in his home.[16]

The letter to Weinberg ends with the hope that now, after "long and repeated illnesses," he would be able to start filming *That Lady in Ermine*, his "first musical picture in fifteen years."[17] Shooting began October 20,

1947. Starring Betty Grable and Douglas Fairbanks, Jr., the Technicolor musical had Lubitsch's largest budget ever. But he would never finish it. On November 30, 1947, he died of a heart attack. Otto Preminger then took over, once again demonstrating that he was not really suited to making a Lubitsch comedy, let alone one with music.[18]

Lubitsch succumbed to his final heart attack soon after having sex. According to Eyman, the woman with him was not a prostitute but rather "his latest casual amour," a woman much younger than he was—and a blonde.[19] His funeral was attended by many prominent industry people, and many of them spoke. Billy Wilder was a pallbearer, and Jeanette MacDonald sang "Beyond the Blue Horizon."[20]

On his gravestone in Forest Lawn Cemetery in Glendale, he is remembered as a devoted father to Nicola. Besides his name and the dates of his life, there is only this inscription: "Beloved Daddy."

Lubitsch at the Intersection of Politics and Aesthetics

Lubitsch came from a very secular family, and his personal relation to Judaism and Jewishness has been debated.[21] Nevertheless, clear evidence shows his strong interest in issues of concern to the Jewish community in Germany, Europe, and America throughout his career. His films thematized assimilation and intermarriage with considerable nuance and sophistication, from *Shoe Palace Pinkus* (1916) and *The Oyster Princess* (1919) to *The Man I Killed* (1932). He also worked on behalf of Jewish charities in the 1930s and 1940s and on behalf of refugee film artists for the European Film Fund. His most political film was his anti-Nazi comedy *To Be or Not to Be* (1942); note again the anger in his remarks about German "resistance" to the Nazis in his 1947 letter to Weinberg, soon before his death.

Lubitsch's comedies, even the most escapist ones, are political; films about sex, money, and power are inevitably so. The politics of class are obvious in the German comedies, with the upward mobility of his Jewish rascals in the early Jewish comedies and the burlesquing of American "new money" in *The Oyster Princess* (in ironic allusion to German attitudes about Jewish "new money"). They are also present in the sophistication of his American comedies in which the sexual "morality" of the upper middle class is always in danger, as in *The Marriage Circle*, and in which a bad boy and bad girl simulate upper-class sophistication so as to rob the rich, as in *Trouble in Paradise*. Closely related is gender inversion, in which women hold power; examples are the Ruritanian musical *The Love Parade*, in which

the queen must give up power to keep her husband, a rakish bad boy who is then himself reconciled to monogamy, and the risqué *Design for Living*, in which the female protagonist flees a boring marriage not with one but rather two men who submit to her rules. There is constant subversion of conventional gender roles and the marital status quo.

Just as there was an aesthetic shift from the anarchic German comedies of the 1910s and early 1920s to the sophisticated American ones of the 1920s and early 1930s, so there is an arguably even larger shift—aesthetically and politically—from Lubitsch's relatively apolitical early sound films in America to the final phase of his career, when his films became overtly political. Some critics saw this late period as a decline. Sometimes the decline is said to come after the silent period, sometimes after the stylish perfection of *Trouble in Paradise*, after which Lubitsch supposedly becomes less of a modernist and more realistic.[22]

I disagree with such arguments. In the first place, one cannot argue that Lubitsch becomes political only in the late 1930s. He expressed an overt interest in politics, especially with regard to war, at least as early as his (very stylized, self-reflexive) comedy *The Wildcat* (1922), and then again in his social-realist melodrama *The Man I Killed* (1932). There are important political subtexts in both his romantic comedies *Ninotchka* (1939) and *The Shop around the Corner* (1940), as stylistically different as those two films were. *Ninotchka*, still quite sophisticated, demonstrates serious concerns about European politics and a political earnestness about social justice, embodied by its title character. *The Shop around the Corner*, set in central Europe, is nonetheless about the American middle class and the Depression; Lubitsch's most "classical" film stylistically, its "naturalist" style is inflected by a more European, leftist social realism suited to the darker social reality that circumscribes the famous romance plot. The power of its sharp-tongued bad girl is clearly diminished by a social-economic context that limits her possibilities—in clear contrast to the power of Lubitsch's untamed heroines in his more fantastic comedies and operettas.

McBride laments the loss of Lubitsch's style of sophistication in contemporary cinema, in part because he views the sophisticated American Lubitsch as the essential one.[23] Lamentable as that loss may be, I would argue that the legacy of Lubitsch's less sophisticated and more outrageous films lives on: the anarchy of his German comedies and especially his most outrageous and political film, *To Be or Not to Be*. The latter film clearly leads to Mel Brooks's *The Producers* (1967) and arguably to Quentin Tarantino's *Inglourious Basterds* (2009).

As for *To Be or Not to Be*, there is nothing realistic or sophisticated about it. It is farcical and absurdist, and it is darker and more self-reflexive than any other film Lubitsch made. With an untamable bad girl who triumphs over her husband at the end, it also features Greenberg, the feminized Jew, who emerges from the ladies lounge to "come out" as Jewish—and save the day.[24] Belonging to a troupe of second-rate Polish actors who resist by impersonating Nazis, he comes out not by revealing an authentic self but by performing a monologue by Shakespeare.

This emphasis on acting, on simulation, on "passing" and masquerade links *To Be or Not to Be* to so many other films of Lubitsch's career, from the protagonist of *The Pride of the Firm*, who leaves the provincial East and learns the sophistication necessary to succeed at a fashionable Berlin department store (and yet in the end is taunted by his less assimilated self); to the cross-dressing protagonist of *I Don't Want to Be a Man*; to the protagonist of *The Doll*, who impersonates a robot; to the bad girl in *The Marriage Circle*, who pretends to be the best friend of the woman whose husband she tries to steal; to the French veteran who pretends to be the friend of the German he killed in *The Man I Killed*; and to those thieves simulating upper-class sophistication in *Trouble in Paradise*.

Simulation is constantly thematized, but it is never completely successful. It is always a game of which the audience is aware, even if the characters in a film are not. Some protagonists, especially the more earnest ones, are unaware of the roles they play; only when they become aware do they arrive at a less rigid, more fluid sense of identity. Ninotchka must learn to laugh, and Kralik and Klara in *The Shop around the Corner* must realize the gap between their idealized (but rigid and self-deluding) dreams of love and their actual treatment of the people around them. This more fluid sense of identity often seems feminine—or even queer. In *The Student Prince*, it is clearly associated with a newer, more feminine, democratic order in contrast to an older, more masculine, authoritarian one. The poignancy of that film is that in the end, the main character must submit to the cold, empty, hierarchical role that the old social order has ordained for him—a closeting if ever there was one.

Characters in a film who act or simulate always represent a self-reflexive wink to the spectator, who is in on the joke; again, as Braudy wrote, "The Lubitsch touch embraces the audience as a co-conspirator of interpretation."[25] The Lubitsch touch connects both to modernism and to the political—indeed, to the transnational fluidity that is at the heart of Lubitsch's work. There is no fixed or stable identity; there is only insecurity

and simulation, neither of which are concealed from the spectator. There is hovering between social positions, between the character and the society she tries to fool, and between the character and the spectators who share her knowledge of the ruse. This approach is grounded in social insecurity, but it also means a queer subversion of fixed identity categories and a fluidity between them: male and female, straight and not so straight, "old" and "new" money, American and German, German and Jewish, German Jewish and Eastern European Jewish. Such hybridity is only fitting for characters who are excluded from power and insecure in their performance of normative behavior, displaced from any homeland or secure national (or gendered) identity.

Lubitsch was a product of the Jewish diaspora, an international cosmopolitan who could simulate sophistication and make fun of it at the same time. A product of and a participant in transnational migration, he was never completely at home in Germany or in America. His origins, his career, and his films were indelibly marked by migration: his father's migration to Germany, his own migration to America, his early portrayal of Jews who migrated from the provinces to Berlin, his cinematic representation (and performance) of European sophistication for American audiences, and his concern with European politics of the 1930s and 1940s and all the refugees to America whom he tried to help. In spite of his bitterness about Germany at the end of his life, his sense of humor was characterized by a gentle, humane irony. He remained a tolerant cosmopolitan to the end. He made fun of social pretensions and individual foibles (including his own) but with sympathy for his characters and respect for the intelligence of his audience, which was always let in on the joke.[26]

Lubitsch sympathized with outsiders and underdogs, attacked social and political bullies, and created a cinema that lampooned fixed, normative identities and encouraged toleration of differences. His cinema remains relevant today in a world where demagogues still scapegoat the marginalized and refugees are treated as badly as when Lubitsch began to advocate for them in the 1930s.

Notes

1. The three American films he made set in America were *Three Women* (1924), *That Uncertain Feeling* (1941), and *Heaven Can Wait* (1943).

2. See Bosley Crowther, "'Heaven Can Wait,' an Amusing Comedy of Manners, With Don Ameche, Gene Tierey and Charles Coburn, Opens at Roxy," *New York Times*, August 12, 1943.

3. Lubitsch promised Nicola that he would never remarry, but he "returned to his bachelor ways," dating many women; see Eyman, *Ernst Lubitsch*, 305, 308–12; Renk, *Ernst Lubitsch*, 133.

4. Eyman, *Ernst Lubitsch*, 310.

5. McBride acknowledges the film's "double standard" but reminds us that its "cosmopolitan attitude toward adultery" was an affront to American Puritanism; *How Did Lubitsch Do It?*, 430.

6. Indeed, Martha's parents and their garish home in Kansas are somewhat reminiscent of the spoiled, nouveau riche American family in Lubitsch's 1919 German comedy *The Oyster Princess*. The Strabel family in *Heaven Can Wait* even has Black servants—and as in *The Oyster Princess*, the rich white people are infantile. Their marriage is so amusingly dysfunctional that they refuse to speak to each other, and their lives are managed by their Black servants, who are the only real adults in the household. See also the introduction to this volume, n. 60.

7. Renk, *Ernst Lubitsch*, 133.

8. Ending a film with the (impending) birth of a child had not occurred since *The Pride of the Firm* in 1914. Perhaps it had something to do with Lubitsch's happiness as a father.

9. Renk, *Ernst Lubitsch*, 133.

10. As McBride reports, Lubitsch was nominated for best director three times: for *The Patriot*, *Love Parade*, and *Heaven Can Wait*. All he ever received, however, was the honorary Oscar for "his distinguished contributions to the art of the motion picture"; *How Did Lubitsch Do It?*, 27.

11. See Eyman, *Ernst Lubitsch*, 13–14, and plate 69, a photo of Lubitsch holding the Oscar on the night of March 13, 1947, having a heart attack (according to Eyman).

12. Tully, "Ernst Lubitsch," 82.

13. Eyman, *Ernst Lubitsch*, 353. The interview with Scheuer in the *Los Angeles Times* appeared April 6, 1947, and it is cited both by Eyman (*Ernst Lubitsch*, 353) and Renk (*Ernst Lubitsch*, 133).

14. Lubitsch's letter to Weinberg of July 10, 1947, in Weinberg, *Lubitsch Touch*, 286. He seems to refer here to the verdict of Huff in January 1947 (see *Index of the Films*, 25) and in Lewis Jacobs's book, *The Rise of American Film* (1939; repr., New York: Columbia University Teachers College Press, 1968), 360–61. Both writers imply that Lubitsch's career declined after the early 1930s.

15. Lubitsch's letter to Weinberg of July 10, 1947, in Weinberg, *Lubitsch Touch*, 286–87.

16. McBride, *How Did Lubitsch Do It?*, 408.

17. Lubitsch's letter to Weinberg of July 10, 1947, in Weinberg, *Lubitsch Touch*, 287.

18. Eyman, *Ernst Lubitsch*, 355, 364–66. Preminger did make a musical, *Carmen Jones* (1954), an adaptation of *Carmen* with Black actors—politically significant, but no musical comedy.

19. Legend has had it that this woman was a prostitute (see McBride, *How Did Lubitsch Do It?*, 449), but Eyman writes that she was not. At the time Lubitsch was seeing a woman only eight years younger than he was. An actor known for her wit, she impressed his friends "as a good solid match for him," but she was out of town, and so Lubitsch was with a more "casual amour." See Eyman, *Ernst Lubitsch*, 356–57.

20. Eyman, *Ernst Lubitsch*, 359–61.

21. Renk, in her interview with Evy, asked about a statement by Billy Wilder that Lubitsch was *fromm* (pious), but Evy scoffed, insisting that the family was completely secular. See

Renk, "Ernst Lubitsch privat"; see also Eyman *Ernst Lubitsch*, 24. But McBride cites reports by both Hanns Kräly and Charles van Enger (cinematographer for Lubitsch in the 1920s) that Lubitsch prayed on the set; *How Did Lubitsch Do It?*, 49.

22. A related critique faults Lubitsch, once so detached, self-reflexive, and modernist, for becoming more of a humanist and a realist in his late career. See Hake, *Passions and Deceptions*, 11–17; her (excellent) book includes no in-depth analysis of any film of Lubitsch's after 1932. Mast writes that Lubitsch's style got "heavier" after the early 1930s; *Comic Mind*, 223–24.

23. McBride, *How Did Lubitsch Do It?*, 470–79.

24. Thematizing longstanding cultural prejudices that conflate Jewishness with femininity and relegate Jewish men to a status that is other, less than masculine, the scene then depicts Greenberg courageously saving his fellow Poles, bringing courage together with Jewishness and "femininity," in defiance of stereotypes.

25. Braudy, "Double Detachment of Ernst Lubitsch," 1078.

26. Žižek, in "Lubitsch, the Poet of Cynical Reason?," argues that Lubitsch is cynical; I disagree.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Archival Sources

Bettelheim-Bentley, Evy. Interview by Gero Gandert (audiotape), 1992. Lubitsch_3-489. Stiftung Deutsche Kinemathek, Berlin.

Bowser, Eileen. Notes on *The Marriage Circle* for the film showing on June 8, 1976, as part of the "American Film Comedy" series at the Museum of Modern Art, May 13, 1976–January 4, 1977. Lubitsch files. Museum of Modern Art Film Archive, New York.

Breen, Joseph. Correspondence to John Hammell, August 3, 1935. MPAA (Motion Picture Association of America) Production Code file on *Design for Living*. Margaret Herrick Library, Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences, Beverly Hills, CA.

Breen, Joseph, and Al Block. Notes of correspondence at MGM, September 8, 20, and 25, 1939. MPAA Production Code file on *Ninotchka*. Margaret Herrick Library, Beverly Hills, CA.

Chamberlin, Audrey. Clippings on Lubitsch's *The Student Prince in Old Heidelberg*. Audrey Chamberlin scrapbooks. Margaret Herrick Library, Beverly Hills, CA.

Crewe, Rebecca. "Lubitsch Gives Better Show Than Stars." Newspaper review of Lubitsch's *Bluebeard's Eighth Wife*, March 1938. Lubitsch files. Museum of Modern Art Film Archive, New York.

Die Puppe/The Doll. Programmheft with synopsis. 1919. Schriftgutarchiv. Stiftung Deutsche Kinemathek, Berlin.

E.B. [pseud.]. Review of *The Student Prince in Old Heidelberg. Der Bildwart: Blätter für Volksbildung*, January 1929. Schriftgutarchiv. Stiftung Deutsche Kinemathek, Berlin.

"Ernst Lubitsch: Geben Sie dem Publikum was es wünscht—reichlich Lachen." Advertisement for *Shoe Palace Pinkus*, *Lichtbild-Bühne* 10, no. 16 (April 1917): 3. Schriftgutarchiv. Stiftung Deutsche Kinemathek, Berlin.

"Films 1924." File compiled by Roxanne Glasberg for the Canadian Film Archives. May 1974. Lubitsch files. Museum of Modern Art Film Archive, New York.

Fraenkel [pseud.]. Essay on *Carmen*. Carmen file: Carmen 1918, GR: Ernst Lubitsch 2806, F2806.1: Varia. Schriftgutarchiv. Stiftung Deutsche Kinemathek, Berlin.

F.W.K. [pseud.]. Synopsis of *Madame Dubarry/Passion*. *Illustrierte Film-Woche*, serialized in nos. 36, 37, and 38 (1919). Schriftgutarchiv. Stiftung Deutsche Kinemathek, Berlin.

Ich möchte kein Mann sein censorship records. "Prüf-Nr. 4477." October 17, 1921. Bundesarchiv-Filmarchiv, Berlin.

"Ich möchte kein Mann sein: Was 1918 verboten war." Excerpt from the "Zensurenentscheid Berlin 10695/18." Cited in "Liebe, Lust und Laster," program for a film showing of Lubitsch's *Ich möchte kein Mann sein/I Don't Want to Be a Man* and Richard Oswald's *Anders als die Andern/Different from the Others*. 1993. Schriftgutarchiv. Stiftung Deutsche Kinemathek, Berlin.

Illustrierter Film-Kurier. Program material for *Sumurun*. No. 24 (1920). Schriftgutarchiv, Stiftung Deutsche Kinemathek, Berlin.

"Liebe, Lust und Laster," program for 1993 film showing of Lubitsch's I*ch möchte kein Mann sein/I Don't Want to Be a Man* and Richard Oswald's *Anders als die Andern/Different from the Others*. 1993. Schriftgutarchiv. Stiftung Deutsche Kinemathek, Berlin.

Lowry, Ed. "Cinema Texas: Program Notes 11.1." Notes on *Design for Living*, 51–57. September 15, 1976. Museum of Modern Art Film Archive, New York.

Lubitsch, Ernst. Correspondence with Lion Feuchtwanger on behalf of the United Jewish Welfare Fund. August 5, 8, and 10, 1944. Feuchtwanger Memorial Library, University of Southern California, Los Angeles, CA.

———. Ernst Lubitsch to Hal Wallis, February 24, 1937. Hal Wallis files. Margaret Herrick Library, Beverly Hills.

———. "'Master Woman's Tricks and You Master Woman!' Says Lubitsch." Ernst Lubitsch interviewed by Patricia Kelley. March 27, 1932. Lubitsch files. Museum of Modern Art Film Archive, New York.

The Man I Killed, Paramount shooting schedule. September 2, 1931–October 7, 1931. Box 29 F. 1. Margaret Herrick Library, Beverly Hills.

Marriage Circle, rights history. August 1937. *Marriage Circle* Box 2/2, folder 12719B, Warner Brothers Archives, University of Southern California, Los Angeles.

McCarthy, Charles. "From Charles E. McCarthy/Paramount Building/New York City, N.Y.: Smart, Big, Tuneful, Funny, Spectacular, Brilliant, Romantic—'The Love Parade'/ A Preview by Arch Reeve/As the Picture Goes Into Production." Undated 4pp. document. MPAA Production Code file on *The Love Parade*. Margaret Herrick Library, Beverly Hills, CA.

McKenzie, Maurice. Note to Jason Joy. October 21, 1929. MPAA Production Code file on *The Love Parade*, Margaret Herrick Library, Beverly Hills, CA.

Patterson, G. G. Notes for film showing of *Design for Living* at the Toronto Film Society. December 6, 1970. Lubitsch files. Museum of Modern Art Film Archive, New York.

Pratt, George. Notes for the Roosevelt College Film Study Series. Fall Semester, 1949. Program 3, November 4, 1949. Lubitsch files. Museum of Modern Art Film Archive, New York.

Ripley's Believe It or Not. Drawing of Ernst Lubitsch and Joan Blondell. 1934. Vertical File Collection/Folder 296: Caricatures and Drawings no. 4. Special Collections. Margaret Herrick Library, Beverly Hills.

Ross, Donna. Program notes for *Design for Living*, UCLA Film Festival. June 28, 1996. Museum of Modern Art Film Archive, New York.

Schallert, Edwin. Review of *The Student Prince in Old Heidelberg*. Undated clipping (probably September 1927). Chamberlin Scrapbooks. Margaret Herrick Library, Beverly Hills, CA.

Sell, F. "Censorship Report." 3pp. document. Dated "November" (probably 1929). MPAA Production Code file on *The Love Parade*. Margaret Herrick Library, Beverly Hills, CA.

Shoe Palace Pinkus advertisement. Placed by the Nordische Film-Co. *Lichtbildbühne*, 12 August 1916, p. 54. Schriftgutarchiv. Stiftung Deutsche Kinemathek, Berlin.

Shoe Palace Pinkus censorship cards, containing all the film's intertitles. "Zensur Nr. 39 289. Fabrik-Nr. 195." Bundesarchiv-Filmarchiv, Berlin.

Warner, Harry, and Jack Warner. Correspondence with Ernst Lubitsch. January-August 1926. Lubitsch files, Folder 2729B. Warner Brothers Archive, University of Southern California, Los Angeles.

Wingate, James. James Wingate to A. M. Botsford, June 19, 1933. MPAA Production Code file on *Design for Living*. Margaret Herrick Library, Beverly Hills, CA.

———. James Wingate to Will Hays, June 26, 1933. MPAA Production Code file on *Design for Living*. Margaret Herrick Library, Beverly Hills, CA.

Yearsley, C. L. "Looking Back on the German Invasion." *Motion Picture News*, March 22, 1924. Lubitsch files. Museum of Modern Art Film Archive, New York.

Main Bibliography

Abel [Abel Green]. Review of *Trouble in Paradise*. *Variety*, November 15, 1932.

Ahmed, Sara. *Queer Phenomenology: Orientation, Objects, Others*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2006.

"'Alt-Heidelberg' wird umbenannt." *Film-Kurier*, June 20, 1927.

Arendt, Hannah. *Eichmann in Jerusalem: A Report on the Banality of Evil*. London: Penguin Books, 2006. First published in 1963.

Aros [Alfred Rosenthal]. Review of *Die Bergkatze/The Wildcat*. *Berliner Lokal-Anzeiger* (*Morgen-Ausgabe, 1. Beiblatt*), April 14, 1921.

Ashkenazi, Ofer. *Anti-Heimat Cinema: The Jewish Invention of the German Landscape*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, forthcoming.

———. *Weimar Film and Modern Jewish Identity*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012.

Bach, Steven. *Marlene Dietrich: Life and Legend*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2011. First published in 1992.

Baer, Hester, and Angelica Fenner. "Introduction: Revisiting Feminism and German Cinema." In "Women's Film Authorship in Neoliberal Times: Revisiting Feminism and German Cinema," edited by Hester Baer and Angelica Fenner, special issue, 1–19. *Camera Obscura* 99 (December 2018).

Bakhtin, Mikhail. *Rabelais and His World*. Translated by Helene Iswolsky. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1968. First published in Russian in 1965.

Balthasar [Roland Schacht]. Review of *Die Puppe/The Doll*. *Freie Deutsche Bühne*, January 18, 1920.

Barnes, Peter. *To Be or Not to Be*. London: British Film Institute, 2002.

Barry, Iris. Review of *Marriage Circle*. *The Spectator*, May 17, 1924.

———. "No More Classics." Review of *Lady Windermere's Fan*. *The Spectator*, February 6, 1926.

Beachy, Robert. *Gay Berlin: Birthplace of a Modern Identity*. New York: Vintage, 2015. First published in 2014.

Bell, Nelson B. "'To Be or Not to Be' Is Given Lusty Affirmative." *Washington Post*, March 20, 1942.

Benjamin, Walter. "Theses on the Philosophy of History." In *Illuminations*, translated by Harry Zohn, edited by Hannah Arendt, 253–64. New York: Schocken, 1969. First published in 1942.

Bergson, Henri. *Laughter: An Essay on the Meaning of the Comic*. Translated by Cloudesly Brereton and Fred Rothwell. Copenhagen: Green Integer, 1999. First published in French in 1911.

Bogdanovich, Peter. "Movie of the Week." Review of *The Student Prince in Old Heidelberg*. *New York Observer*, September 20, 1999.

Boyarin, Daniel. "Homophobia and the Postcoloniality of the 'Jewish Science.'" In *Queer Theory and the Jewish Question*, edited by Daniel Boyarin, Daniel Itzkovitz, and Ann Pellegrini, 166–98. New York: Columbia University Press, 2003.

Boyarin, Daniel, Daniel Itzkovitz, and Ann Pellegrini, eds. *Queer Theory and the Jewish Question*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2003.

Brandlmeier, Thomas. "Early German Film Comedy, 1895–1917." In *A Second Life: German Cinema's First Decades*, edited by Thomas Elsaesser and Michael Wedel, 103–13. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2016.

———. "Kaisers Kientopp. Tendenzen der (reichs)deutschen Lachkultur." In *Spaß beiseite, Film ab. Jüdischer Humor und verdrängendes Lachen in der Filmkomödie bis 1945*, edited by Jan Distelmeyer, 61–71. Hamburg: Edition Text + Kritik, 2006.

Braudy, Leo. "The Double Detachment of Ernst Lubitsch." *Comparative Literature* 98, no. 5 (December 1983): 1071–84.

Bridenthal, Renate, Atina Grossman, and Marion Kaplan, eds. *When Biology Became Destiny: Women in Weimar and Nazi Germany*. New York: Monthly Review, 1984.

Bronfen, Elisabeth. "Lubitsch's War: Comedy as Political Ploy in *To Be or Not to Be*." In *Lubitsch Can't Wait: A Collection of Ten Philosophical Discussions on Ernst Lubitsch's Film Comedy*, edited by Ivana Novak, Mladen Dolar, and Jela Krečič, 131–50. New York: Columbia University Press, 2014.

Cairns, David. "Lubitsch's Brew." Booklet, *Madame Dubarry* DVD and Blu-Ray, Masters of Cinema Series no. 93, 4–19. Eureka Entertainment, 2014.

———. "Who Wants to Be a Milliner? Ernst Lubitsch, Pola Negri, and *Madame Dubarry*." Booklet, *Madame Dubarry* DVD and Blu-Ray, Masters of Cinema Series no. 93, 20–33. Eureka Entertainment, 2014.

Carringer, Robert, and Barry Sabath. *Ernst Lubitsch: A Guide to References and Resources*. Boston: Hall, 1978.

Carrington, Tyler. *Love at Last Sight: Dating, Intimacy, and Risk in Turn-of-the-Century Berlin*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2019.

Carson, Diane. "To Be Seen but Not Heard. The Awful Truth." In *Multiple Voices in Feminist Film Criticism*, edited by Diane Carson, Linda Dittmar, and Janice R. Welsch, 123–25. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1994.

Cavell, Stanley. *Pursuits of Happiness: The Hollywood Comedy of Remarriage*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1981.

Chaparral, Ernst. "Lubitschs neuer Stil hat Erfolg: 'Trouble in Paradise' gefällt." Review of *Trouble in Paradise*. *Film-Kurier*, November 24, 1932.

Chávez, Ernesto. "'Ramon Is Not One of These': Race and Sexuality in the Construction of Silent Film Actor Ramón Novarro's Star Image." *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 20, no. 3 (September 2011): 520–44.

Cohen, John S., Jr. "The New Photoplay." Review of *The Love Parade*. *New York Sun*, November 20, 1929.

———. "The New Talkie." Review of *The Man I Killed*. *New York Sun*, January 20, 1932.

Cohen, Sarah Blacher. "Introduction: The Varieties of Jewish Humor." In *Jewish Wry: Essays on Jewish Humor*, edited by Sarah Blacher Cohen, 1–15. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1987.

Confino, Alon. "The Nation as a Local Metaphor: Heimat, National Memory and the German Empire, 1971–1918." *History and Memory* 5, no. 1 (Spring-Summer 1993): 42–86.

Crowe, Cameron. *Conversations with Billy Wilder*. New York: Knopf, 2001.

Crowther, Bosley. "Against a Sea of Troubles: In 'To Be or Not to Be,' Ernst Lubitsch Has Opposed Real Tragedy with an Incongruous Comedy Plot—Other New Films." Review of *To Be Or Not to Be*. *New York Times*, March 22, 1942.

———. "'Heaven Can Wait,' an Amusing Comedy of Manners, with Don Ameche, Gene Tierey and Charles Coburn, Opens at Roxy." Review of *Heaven Can Wait*. *New York Times*, August 12, 1943.

———. "The Screen." Review of *To Be or Not to Be*. *New York Times*, March 7, 1942.

Dassanowsky, Robert. *Screening Transcendence: Film under Austrofascism and the Hollywood Hope, 1933–38*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2018.

Der Film. Review of *Die Austernprinzessin/The Oyster Princess*. June 28, 1919.

Der Kinematograph. Synopsis/review of *Der Blusenkönig/The Blouse King*. November 7, 1916. In Jacobsen, Wolfgang. "Filmografie." In *Lubitsch*, edited by Hans Helmut Prinzler and Enno Patalas, 204. Munich: C. J. Bucher, 1984.

———. Review of *Die Puppe/The Doll*. December 10, 1919.

"*Der Volksfreund* und *Die Puppe*." *Lichtbild-Bühne*, February 14, 1920.

Dick, Rainer. "Flapper, Xanthippen und kleine Männer. Der Wandel im Typenarsenal des komischen Films nach dem Exodus seiner exponiertesten Darsteller." In *Spaß beiseite, Film ab. Jüdischer Humor und verdrängendes Lachen in der Filmkomödie bis 1945*, edited by Jan Distelmeyer, 85–105. Hamburg: Edition Text + Kritik, 2006.

Doherty, Thomas. *Hollywood and Hitler, 1933–1939*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2013.

———. *Hollywood's Censor: Joseph I. Breen and the Production Code Administration*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2007.

Dolar, Mladen. "To Be or Not to Be? No, Thank You." In *Lubitsch Can't Wait: A Collection of Ten Philosophical Discussions on Ernst Lubitsch's Film Comedy*, edited by Ivana Novak, Mladen Dolar, and Jela Krečič, 111–29. New York: Columbia University Press, 2014.

Doty, Alexander. *Making Things Perfectly Queer: Interpreting Mass Culture*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993.

"Dreht Ernst Lubitsch im nächsten Winter in Berlin?" *Film-Kurier*, 24 July, 1930.

"Drei Atelier-Tage in Hollywood: Ernst Lubitsch an der Arbeit bei Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer." *Film-Kurier*, April 19, 1927.

Droessler, Stefan. "Ernst Lubitsch and EFA." *Film History* 21, no. 3 (2009): 208–28.

Durgnat, Raymond. *The Crazy Mirror: Hollywood Comedy and the American Image*. London: Faber and Faber, 1969.

"Editorially Speaking." *The New Movies: The National Board of Review Magazine*, March 1942.

Eisner, Lotte. *The Haunted Screen: Expressionism in the German Cinema and the Influence of Max Reinhardt*. Translated by Roger Greaves. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1969. First published in French in 1952; published in German in 1955.

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

Elsaesser, Thomas, and Michael Wedel, eds. *A Second Life: German Cinema's First Decades*. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 1996.

"Emil Jannings fährt nicht nach Amerika." *Film-Kurier*, March 24, 1931.

"Ernst Lubitsch kommt im Flugzeug. Stürmischer Empfang in Tempelhof." *Vossische Zeitung*, November 12, 1932.

"Ernst Lubitsch wird in Berlin drehen?" *Film-Kurier*, February 12, 1931.

Esser, Michael. Synopsis of *The Merry Jail*. In Wolfgang Jacobsen. "Filmografie." In *Lubitsch*, edited by Hans Helmut Prinzler and Enno Patalas, 205. Munich: C. J. Bucher, 1984.

Eyman, Scott. *Ernst Lubitsch: Laughter in Paradise*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1993.

Film-Kurier. Review of *The Man I Killed*. November 15, 1932.
"Filmschau." Review of *Die Bergkatze/The Wildcat*. *Vorwärts* (*Beilage*), April 14, 1921.
Frank [pseud.]. Review of *Ich möchte kein Mann sein/I Don't Want to Be a Man*. *Film-Kurier*, May 8, 1920.
Fredrik, Lothar Knud. "Der Reichspräsident bei 'Anna Boleyn.'" *Film-Kurier*, October 1, 1920.
Freska, Friedrich. *Sumurun. Eine Pantomime in 9 Bildern*. Berlin: Erich Riess, 1911. First published in 1910.
Freud, Sigmund. "Jokes and Their Relation to the Subconscious." In *The Standard Edition*, translated and edited by James Strachey in collaboration with Anna Freud, vol. 8, 1–236. London, Hogarth, 1960. Entire edition (24 vols.) published between 1953 and 1966. First published in 1905.
Friedman, Lester D. *The Jewish Image in American Film*. Secaucus, NJ: Citadel, 1987.
Fromm, Bella. *Blood and Banquets: A Berlin Social Diary*. London: Geoffrey Bles, 1943.
G——g [pseud.]. "Varieté und Kino." Review of *Ich möchte kein Mann sein/I Don't Want to Be a Man*. *B.Z. am Mittag*, October 5, 1918.
Gabler, Neal. *An Empire of Their Own: How the Jews Invented Hollywood*. New York: Random House, 1989.
Ganeva, Mila. *Women in Weimar Fashion: Discourses and Displays in German Culture, 1918–1933*. Rochester, NY: Camden House, 2008.
Gehring, Wes D. *Screwball Comedy: A Genre of Madcap Romance*. New York: Greenwood, 1986.
Gemünden, Gerd. *Continental Strangers: German Exile Cinema, 1933–1951*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2014.
———. *A Foreign Affair: Billy Wilder's American Films*. New York: Berghahn, 2008.
———. "Space Out of Joint: Ernst Lubitsch's *To Be or Not to Be*." *New German Critique* 89 (Spring-Summer 2003): 59–80.
Glitre, Kathrina. *Hollywood Romantic Comedy: States of the Union, 1934–65*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2006.
Göttler, Fritz. Commentary on *Sumurun*. In *Lubitsch*, edited by Hans Helmut Prinzler and Enno Patalas, 139–40. Munich: C. J. Bucher, 1984.
———. Commentary on *Three Women*. In *Lubitsch*, edited by Hans Helmut Prinzler and Enno Patalas, 150. Munich: C. J. Bucher, 1984.
Grafe, Frieda. "Was Lubitsch berührt." In *Lubitsch*, edited by Hans Helmut Prinzler and Enno Patalas, 81–87. Munich: C. J. Bucher, 1984.
Greenblatt, Stephen. "If You Prick Us: What Shakespeare Taught Me about Fear, Loathing, and the Literary Imagination." *New Yorker*, July 10 and 17, 2017.
Grigg, Russell. "The Joyful Art of Ernst Lubitsch: *Trouble in Paradise*." In *Lubitsch Can't Wait: A Collection of Ten Philosophical Discussions on Ernst Lubitsch's Film Comedy*, edited by Ivana Novak, Mladen Dolar, and Jela Krečič, 39–64. New York: Columbia University Press, 2014.
Gueneli, Berna. "Orientalist Fashion, Photography, and Fantasies: Baron Max von Oppenheim's *Arabian Nights*." *German Quarterly* 90, no. 4 (Fall 2017): 439–58.
Guenther-Pal, Alison. "'Should Women Be Amazons?' Reallocating Masculinity in German Postwar History and *Hosenrolle*." *Seminar* 54, no. 3 (September 2018): 365–94.
Gunning, Tom. "The Cinema of Attraction: Early Film, Its Spectator and the Avant-Garde." *Wide Angle* 8, no. 3–4 (1986): 63–70.

Hake, Sabine. *Passions and Deceptions: The Early Films of Ernst Lubitsch*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1992.

Hall, Mordaunt. "Ernst Lubitsch's Shimmering Picture about Well-Dressed Thieves and Pickpockets—A German Drama." Review of *Trouble in Paradise*. *New York Times*, November 9, 1932.

———. "M. Chevalier's Brilliant Work: Parisian Entertainer's Current Film, The Love Parade, is Deftly Directed by Ernst Lubitsch." Review of *The Love Parade*. *New York Times*, November 24, 1929.

———. "The Screen." Reviews of *The Student Prince in Old Heidelberg*. *New York Times*, September 22 and 25, 1927.

———. "The Screen: Maurice Chevalier Again." Review of *The Love Parade*. *New York Times*, November 20, 1929.

Hampicke, Evelyn, and Christian Dirks. "Die Erfindung des Generaldirektors." In *Pioniere in Celluloid: Juden in der frühen Filmwelt*, edited by Irene Stratenwerth and Hermann Simon, 49–55. Berlin: Centrum Judaicum/Henschel, 2004.

Hanisch, Michael. *Ernst Lubitsch. Von der Berliner Schönhauser Allee nach Hollywood*. Berlin: Hentrich and Hentrich/Centrum Judaicum Berlin, 2003.

Hansen, Miriam. *Babel and Babylon: Spectatorship in American Silent Film*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1991.

———. "Early Silent Cinema: Whose Public Sphere?" *New German Critique* 29 (Spring–Summer 1983): 147–84.

———. "The Mass Production of the Senses: Classical Cinema as Vernacular Modernism." *Modernism/Modernity* 6, no. 2 (1999): 59–77.

Harrison's. Review of *The Love Parade*. November 30, 1929.

Harvey, James. *Romantic Comedy in Hollywood: From Lubitsch to Sturges*. New York: Knopf, 1987.

Haskell, Molly. *From Reverence to Rape: The Treatment of Women in the Movies*. New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1974.

Hecht, Ben. "Ballad of the Doomed Jews of Europe." *New York Times*, September 14, 1943.

Hennefeld, Maggie. *Specters of Slapstick and Silent Film Comediennes*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2018.

Henry, Nora. *Ethics and Social Criticism in the Hollywood Films of Erich von Stroheim, Ernst Lubitsch, and Billy Wilder*. Westport, CT: Praeger, 2001.

Herf, Jeffrey. *Reactionary Modernism: Technology, Culture, and Politics in Weimar and the Third Reich*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984.

Hopper, Hedda. Review of *The Shop around the Corner*. *Washington Post*, January 15, 1940.

Horak, Jan-Christopher. "Ernst Lubitsch and the Rise of UFA, 1917–1922." Master's thesis, Boston University, 1975.

Horak, Laura. *Girls Will Be Boys: Cross-Dressed Women, Lesbians, and American Cinema*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2016.

Horkheimer, Max, and Theodor W. Adorno. *Dialektik der Aufklärung: Philosophische Fragmente*. Frankfurt am Main: Fischer, 1985. Published in English as *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, translated by John Cumming. New York: Herder and Herder, 1972. First published in 1944.

Huff, Theodore. *An Index to the Films of Ernst Lubitsch* (special supplement to *Sight and Sound*, index series no. 9). London: British Film Institute, January, 1947.

Hunegs, Steve. "Atlantic Charter Still Reflects US at its Best." *Star Tribune*, August 12, 2016.
Hüser, Rembert. "Eating Caligari." Paper presented at Blending Media: Defining Film in the Modernist Period, an International Symposium of the Framing Media Research Group, University of Innsbruck, June 9–10, 2009.
———. "Kronleuchterboden. *Die Austernprinzessin* trifft *Mike's neuer Kronleuchter*." In *Geld und Kino*, edited by Margrit Frölich and Rembert Hüser, 55–68. Marburg: Schüren, 2011.
Ihering, Herbert. Review of *Die Flamme/Montmartre*. *Berliner Börsen-Courier*, September 12, 1923.
Illustrierte Film-Woche. Synopsis of *Die Bergkatze/The Wildcat*. November 9, 1921.
Isenberg, Noah. *Between Redemption and Doom: The Strains of German-Jewish Modernism*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1999.
Jacobs, Leah. *The Wages of Sin: Censorship and the Fallen Woman Film, 1928–1942*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997.
Jacobs, Lewis. *The Rise of American Film*. New York: Columbia University Teachers College Press, 1968. First published in 1939.
Jacobsen, Wolfgang. "Filmografie." In *Lubitsch*, edited by Hans Helmut Prinzler and Enno Patalas, 200–223. Munich: C. J. Bucher, 1984.
Jacobsohn, Egon. "Festessen in Tempelhof. Besuch bei einer Pagu-Aufnahme." *Der Film*, March 29, 1919.
———. "Neuheiten auf dem Berliner Filmmarkte." Review of *Die Austernprinzessin/The Oyster Princess*). *Der Kinematograph*, June 25, 1919.
Jäger, Ernst. Review of *The Student Prince in Old Heidelberg*. *Film-Kurier*, September 11, 1928.
Jakobsen, Janet R. "Queers Are Like Jews, Aren't They? Analogy and Alliance Politics." In *Queer Theory and the Jewish Question*, edited by Daniel Boyarin, Daniel Itzkovitz, and Ann Pellegrini, 64–89. New York: Columbia University Press, 2003.
Jelavich, Peter. "Performing High and Low: Jews in Modern Theater, Cabaret, Revue, and Film." In *Berlin Metropolis: Jews in the New Culture, 1890–1918*, edited by Emily D. Bilsky, 208–35. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999.
J.-L.C. [Jean-Louis Comolli]. "*Der Stolz der Firma*." *Cahiers du cinéma* 198 (February 1968): 31.
Joseph, Robert. "The Research Experts Take a Back Seat." *New York Times*, March 1, 1942.
Josephson, Matthew. "Masters of the Motion Picture." *Motion Picture Classic* 23, no. 6 (August 1926): 24–25.
Jukić, Tatjana. "Garbo Laughs: Revolution and Melancholia in Lubitsch's Ninotchka." In *Lubitsch Can't Wait: A Collection of Ten Philosophical Discussions on Ernst Lubitsch's Film Comedy*, edited by Ivana Novak, Mladen Dolar, and Jela Krečič, 83–110. New York: Columbia University Press, 2014.
Kaes, Anton. *Shell Shock Cinema: Weimar Culture and the Wounds of War*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2009.
Kaes, Anton, Nicholas Baer, and Michael Cowan, eds. *The Promise of Cinema: German Film Theory, 1907–1933*. Oakland: University of California Press, 2016.
Kalbus, Oskar. *Vom Werden deutscher Filmkunst. 1. Teil: Der stumme Film*. Altona-Bahrenfeld: Cigaretten-Bilderdienst, 1935.
Kaplan, Marion A. *Jewish Daily Life in Germany, 1618–1945*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005.
———. *The Making of the Jewish Middle Class: Women, Family, and Identity in Imperial Germany*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1991.

Kasten, Jürgen. "Verweigerung der korrekten Assimilation. Jüdische Typen, Milieus und Stereotype in Komödien Ernst Lubitschs und Reinhold Schünzels." In *Spaß beiseite, Film ab. Jüdischer Humor und verdrängendes Lachen in der Filmkomödie bis 1945*, edited by Jan Distelmeyer, 33–47. Hamburg: Edition Text + Kritik, 2006.

King, Geoff. *Film Comedy*. London: Wallflower, 2002.

"Kommt Lubitsch nicht zurück?" *Film-Kurier*, April 27, 1923.

Kracauer, Siegfried. *From Caligari to Hitler: A Psychological History of the German Film*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1947.

———. "Das Ornament der Masse." In *Das Ornament der Masse: Essays*, 50–63. Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1963. First published in 1927.

"Krähly [*sic*] fährt zu Lubitsch." *Film-Kurier*, July 16, 1923.

Krečič, Jela. "The Author of the Romantic Comedy Was the Avantgarde of the #MeToo Movement." Interview with Nicola Lubitsch, translated from the Slovenian by Monika Žagar. *Delo*, October 20, 2018.

Kreimeier, Klaus. *Die Ufa-Story. Geschichte eines Filmkonzerns*. Munich: Hanser, 1992. Published in English as *The Ufa Story: A History of Germany's Greatest Film Company, 1918–1945*, translated by Robert and Rita Kimber. New York: Hill and Wang, 1996.

Kurtz, Rudolf. *Expressionismus und Film*. Berlin: Verlag der Lichtbildbühne, 1926.

———. Review of *The Student Prince in Old Heidelberg*. *Lichtbild-Bühne*, September 11, 1928.

Kuzniar, Alice A. *The Queer German Cinema*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2000.

"Lauds Producing Here: Mr. Lubitsch Praises Finished Work on Settings—Films and Moral Tendencies." *New York Times*, September 18, 1927.

l.b. [Ludwig Brauner]. "Berliner Filmneuheiten." Review of *Die Bergkatze/The Wildcat*. *Der Kinematograph*, April 24, 1921.

Lichtbild-Bühne. Review of *Die Bergkatze/The Wildcat*. April 16, 1921.

Loewy, Ronny. "Ist ein jüdischer Komiker jüdisch-komisch oder, wie ein exzellenter jüdischer Geiger, schier ein exzellenter Komiker?" In *Spaß beiseite, Film ab. Jüdischer Humor und verdrängendes Lachen in der Filmkomödie bis 1945*, edited by Jan Distelmeyer, 13–20. Hamburg: Edition Text + Kritik, 2006.

"Lubitsch empfängt." *Vossische Zeitung*, November 15, 1932.

Lubitsch, Ernst. "Film Directing." In *The World Film Encyclopedia: A Universal Screen Guide*, edited by Clarence Winchester, 442–44. London: Amalgamated, 1933.

———. "Film Internationality." In *The Promise of Cinema: German Film Theory, 1907–1933*, edited by Anton Kaes, Nicholas Baer, and Michael Cowan, translated by Michael Cowan, 298–300. Oakland: University of California Press, 2016. First published in German as "Film-Internationalität." In *Das deutsche Lichtbild-Buch: Filmprobleme von gestern und heute*, edited by Heinrich Pfeiffer, 13–14. Berlin: August Scherl, 1924.

———. "Gedanken zu einem Filmstoff." *Die Filmwoche*, October 5, 1932.

———. "Gespräch mit Ernst Lubitsch. Die Film-Operette—Ein schönes Märchen." Ernst Lubitsch interviewed by anonymous. *Film-Kurier* (*1. Beiblatt*), January 1, 1930. Interview dated: December 15, 1929.

———. "Lubitsch Looks at His 'Oscar.'" Ernst Lubitsch interviewed by Philip K. Scheuer. *Los Angeles Times*, April 6, 1947.

———. "Mr. Lubitsch Takes the Floor for Rebuttal." *New York Times*, March 29, 1942.

———. "Sumurun und ich." *B.Z. am Mittag*, August 26, 1920.

———. "We Lack Film Poetry." Translated by Alex H. Bush. In *The Promise of Cinema: German Film Theory, 1907–1933*, edited by Anton Kaes, Nicholas Baer, and Michael

Cowan, 208–10. Oakland: University of California Press, 2016. First published in German as "Uns fehlen Filmdichtungen." *Das Tage-Buch* 1, no. 35 (September 1920): 1145–46.

———. "Wie mein erster Großfilm entstand." *Lichtbild-Bühne*, Luxusnummer "30 Jahre Filme," 1924.

"Lubitsch-Film im Capitol." Review of *The Man I Killed*. *Vossische Zeitung*, November 16, 1932.

"Lubitsch-Film in Originalfassung." *Vossische Zeitung*, November 15, 1932.

"Lubitsch's New Comedy." Review of *The Marriage Circle*. *New York Times*, February 10, 1924.

Lüthge, B. E. [Bobby Emil]. "Paris in Berlin. Die Lubitsch-Stadt." *Film-Kurier*, June 22, 1919.

———. Review of *The Oyster Princess*. *Film-Kurier*, June 22, 1919.

Macdonald, Dwight. *Dwight Macdonald on Movies*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1969.

Malakaj, Ervin. "Lubitsch's Queer Slapstick Aesthetics." In *An Interdisciplinary Companion to Slapstick Cultures*, edited by Alena Lyons and Ervin Malakaj. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, forthcoming.

Martin, Mildred. "Last Lombard Picture Opens on Stanley Screen." Review of *To Be or Not to Be*. *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, March 12, 1942.

Mast, Gerald. *The Comic Mind: Comedy and the Movies*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1979. First published in 1973.

———. "Woody Allen: The Neurotic Jew as American Clown." In *Jewish Wry: Essays on Jewish Humor*, edited by Sarah Blacher Cohen, 125–40. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1987.

May, Lary. *The Big Tomorrow: Hollywood and the Politics of the American Way*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000.

Mayne, Judith. *Woman at the Keyhole: Feminism and Women's Cinema*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1990.

McBride, Joseph. *How Did Lubitsch Do It?* New York: Columbia University Press, 2018.

McCabe, Janet. "Regulating Hidden Pleasures and 'Modern' Identities: Imagined Female Spectators, Early German Popular Cinema, and *The Oyster Princess* (1919)." In *Light Motives: German Popular Film in Perspective*, edited by Randall Halle and Margaret McCarthy, 24–40. Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2003.

McCormick, Rick (Richard W.). "Desire vs. Despotism: The Politics of *Sumurun* (1920), Ernst Lubitsch's 'Oriental' Fantasy." In *The Many Faces of Weimar Cinema: Rediscovering Germany's Filmic Legacy*, edited by Christian Rogowski, 67–83. Screen Cultures: German Film and the Visual. Rochester, NY: Camden House, 2010.

———. "Ernst Lubitsch and the Transnational Twenties: *The Student Prince in Old Heidelberg*." *Transit* 10, no. 2 (2016). http://escholarship.org/uc/item/6t02590p.

———. "Romantic Comedy and the Hitler-Stalin Pact: Billy Wilder and *Ninotchka* (USA 1939)." Published in Hebrew translation in *SLIL—Online Journal for History, Film, and Television* 6 (Winter 2012): 21–40. http://www.slil.huji.ac.il/?psl=issuesandssl=winter-2012.

———. "Screwball." In *Enzyklopaedie jüdischer Geschichte und Kultur*, edited by Dan Diner, vol. 5, 402–6. Stuttgart: J. B. Metzler, 2014.

———. "A Serious Man? Lubitsch's Anti-War Film *The Man I Killed* (a.k.a. *Broken Lullaby*, USA 1932)." In *Continuity and Crisis in German Cinema, 1928–1936*, edited by Barbara

Hales, Mihaela Petrescu, and Valerie Weinstein. Rochester, 291–305. NY: Camden House, 2016.
———. "Sex, History, and Upward Mobility: Ernst Lubitsch's *Madame Dubarry/Passion*, 1919." *German Studies Review* 33, no. 3 (October 2010): 603–17.
———. "Transnational Jewish Comedy: Sex and Politics in the Films of Ernst Lubitsch—From Berlin to Hollywood." In *Three Way Street: Germans, Jews, and the Transnational*, edited by Jay Howard Geller and Leslie Morris, 169–96. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2016.
Mercer, Kobena. "Dark and Lovely, Too: Black Gay Men in Independent Film." In *Critical Visions in Film Theory: Classic and Contemporary Readings*, edited by Timothy Corrigan and Patricia White, 740–53. Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2010. First published in 1993.
Merkin, Noa. "Lubitsch and the Objects of Love." Paper presented at the Society for Cinema and Media Studies conference, Atlanta, March 30–April 3, 2016.
Michaelis, Heinz. Review of *The Marriage Circle*. *Film Kurier*, September 2, 1924.
Motion Picture Herald. Review of *The Shop around the Corner*. January 6, 1940.
Mulvey, Laura. "Changes: Thoughts on Myth, Narrative and Historical Experience." In *Visual and Other Pleasures*, 159–76. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1989. First published in 1985.
———. *Visual and Other Pleasures*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1989.
———. "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema." In *Visual and Other Pleasures*, 14–26. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1989. First published in 1975.
Musser, Charles. "Why Did Negroes Love Al Jolson and 'The Jazz Singer'? Melodrama, Blackface and Cosmopolitan Theatrical Culture." *Film History* 23, no. 2 (2011): 196–222.
Naumann, Michaela. *Ernst Lubitsch: Aspekte des Begehrens*. Marburg: Tectum, 2008.
Negri, Pola. *Memoirs of a Star*. Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1970.
"Neue Filme." Review of *Die Bergkatze/The Wildcat*. *Berliner Tageblatt* (*Morgen-Ausgabe, 2. Beiblatt*), April 14, 1921.
The New Movies: The National Board of Review Magazine. Review of *To Be or Not to Be*. March 1942.
New York Herald Tribune. Review of *The Man I Killed*. January 21, 1932.
New York Times. Review of *Anna Boleyn/Deception*. April 18, 1921.
———. Review of *The Loves of the Pharaoh*. February 22, 1922.
———. Review of *Madame Dubarry/Passion*. December 13, 1920.
———. Review of *The Marriage Circle*. February 4, 1924.
———. Review of *Sumurun*. October 3, 1921.
———. "Screen: People and Plays": Report on *Madame Dubarry/Passion*. October 3, 1920.
———. "Screen: People and Plays": Report on *Madame Dubarry/Passion*. October 10, 1920.
———. "Screen: People and Plays": Report on *Madame Dubarry/Passion*. October 24, 1920.
Ngai, Mae M. "Nationalism, Immigration Control, and the Ethnoracial Remapping of America in the 1920s." *OAH Magazine of History* 21, no. 3 (July 2007): 11–15.
Niven, David. *Bring on the Empty Horses*. New York: Putnam, 1975.
Novak, Ivana, Mladen Dolar, and Jela Krečič. *Lubitsch Can't Wait: A Collection of Ten Philosophical Discussions on Ernst Lubitsch's Film Comedy*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2014.
Nugent, Frank S. "'Ninotchka,' an Impious Soviet Satire Directed by Lubitsch, Opens at the Music Hall—New Films Are Shown at Capitol and Palace." Review of *Ninotchka*. *New York Times*, November 10, 1939.

Olimsky, Fritz. "Kurt Richter." *Berliner Börsen-Zeitung*, April 4, 1920. Article reprinted in "Sumurun: Stummfilmkonzerte zu Gast in babylon berlin:mitte," program by *babylon berlin:mitte*, April 18, 2006.

———. "Lubitsch-Reprisen." Review of a retrospective showing of *Die Bergkatze/The Wildcat*. *Berliner Börsen-Zeitung*, July 11, 1930.

———. "Neue Filme." Review of *Die Bergkatze/The Wildcat*. *Berliner Börsen-Zeitung*, April 15, 1921.

———. Review of *Die Puppe/The Doll*. *Berliner Börsen-Zeitung*, December 3, 1919.

Oshinsky, David. "No Justice for the Weak." Review of *Imbeciles: The Supreme Court, American Eugenics and the Sterilization of Carrie Buck*, by Adam Cohen, and *Illiberal Reformers: Race, Eugenics and American Economics in the Progressive Era*, by Thomas C. Leonard. *New York Times Review of Books*, March 20, 2016.

"Paramount-Vorschau." *Film-Kurier*, September 13, 1932.

Parsons, Louella O. "Carole Gay, Glamorous in Lubitsch Film." Review of *To Be or Not to Be*. *The Los Angeles Examiner*, February 20, 1942.

———. "Chevalier Wins High Praise in 'Love Parade.'" Review of *The Love Parade*. *Los Angeles Examiner*, January 24, 1930.

———. "Garbo and Douglas Do Fine Work in 'Ninotchka.'" Review of *Ninotchka*. *The Los Angeles Examiner*, October 7, 1939.

Parvulescu, Anca. *Laughter: Notes on a Passion*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2010.

Patalas, Enno. "Ernst Lubitsch: Inflationskino." In *Im Off: Filmartikel*, edited by Frieda Grafe and Enno Patalas, 268–72, Munich: Hanser, 1974.

Paul, William. *Ernst Lubitsch's American Comedy*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1983.

Petrie, Graham. *Hollywood Destinies: European Directors in America, 1922–1931*. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1985.

Pfaller, Robert. "What Is So Funny about Multiple Love? The Polygamous Lubitsch Touch." In *Lubitsch Can't Wait: A Collection of Ten Philosophical Discussions on Ernst Lubitsch's Film Comedy*, edited by Ivana Novak, Mladen Dolar, and Jela Krečič, 65–82. New York: Columbia University Press, 2014.

Pinthus, Kurt. "In Memoriam Ernst Lubitsch." In *Der Zeitgenosse. Literarische Portraits und Kritiken von Kurt Pinthus. Ausgewählt zu seinem 85. Geburtstag am 29. April 1971*, edited by Bernhard Zeller and Reinhard Tgahrt, 86–90. Marbach am Neckar: Deutsches Literaturarchiv Marbach, 1971. First published in 1948.

P——l [Fritz Podehl]. Review of *Die Bergkatze/The Wildcat*. *Der Film*, April 16, 1921.

Poague, Leland A. *The Cinema of Ernst Lubitsch*. South Brunswick, NJ: A. S. Barnes, 1978.

Pratt, David B. "'O, Lubitsch, Where Wert Thou?' *Passion*, the German Invasion, and the Emergence of the Name 'Lubitsch.'" *Wide Angle* 13, no. 1 (1991): 34–70.

Prawer, S. S. [Siegbert Salomon]. *Between Two Worlds: The Jewish Presence in German and Austrian Film, 1910–1933*. New York: Berghahn, 2005.

Preview. Review of *Ninotchka*. October 7, 1939.

Prinzler, Hans Helmut. "Berlin, 29.1.1892–Hollywood, 30.11.1947. Bausteine zu einer Lubitsch-Bibliographie." In *Lubitsch*, edited by Hans Helmut Prinzler and Enno Patalas, 8–59. Munich: C. J. Bucher, 1984.

Prinzler, Hans Helmut, and Enno Patalas, eds. *Lubitsch*. Munich: C. J. Bucher, 1984.

Raphaelson, Samson. "Freundschaft." *New Yorker*, May 11, 1981.

Renk, Herta-Elisabeth. *Ernst Lubitsch*. Hamburg: Rowohlt, 1992.

———. "Ernst Lubitsch privat. Zum 100. Geburtstag des großen Regisseurs." *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, January 28, 1992.

Rentschler, Eric. "Mountains and Modernity: Relocating the *Bergfilm*." *New German Critique* 51 (1990): 137–61.

Rogowski, Christian. "Ein Schuss Champagner im Blut. Ludwig Bergers musikalische Filmkomödie *Ein Walzertraum* (1925)." *Filmblatt* 18, no. 51 (2013): 2–12.

———. "From Ernst Lubitsch to Joe May: Challenging Kracauer's Demonology with Weimar Popular Film." In *Light Motives: German Popular Film in Perspective*, edited by Randall Halle and Margaret McCarthy, 1–23. Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2003.

Roosevelt, Franklin D. "Acceptance Speech for the Renomination for the Presidency." Philadelphia, PA, June 27, 1936. American Presidency Project. Accessed December 27, 2018. https://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/node/208917.

Rosenberg, Joel. "Shylock's Revenge: The Doubly Vanished Jew in Ernst Lubitsch's *To Be or Not to Be*." *Prooftexts* 16 (1996): 209–44.

Said, Edward. *Orientalism*. New York: Vintage, 1979. First published in 1978.

Sallitt, Dan. "Ernst Lubitsch: The Actor vs. the Character." *Film Comedy Reader*, February 2002. Accessed July 11, 2016. http://www.panix.com/~sallitt/lubitsch.html.

Salt, Barry. "Die innere Welt von Ernst Lubitsch." In *Filmkultur zur Zeit der Weimarer Republik. Beiträge zu einer Internationalen Konferenz vom 15. Bis 18. Juni 1989 in Luxemburg*, edited by Uli Jung and Walter Schatzberg, 65–70. Munich: K. G. Saur, 1992.

Sanders-Brahms, Helma. Commentary on *Madame Dubarry*. In *Lubitsch*, edited by Hans Helmut Prinzler and Enno Patalas, 132–36. Munich: C. J. Bucher, 1984.

Sarris, Andrew. *The American Cinema: Directors and Directions, 1929–1968*. New York: Dutton, 1968.

———. "More Than a Touch of Lubitsch." *Village Voice*, December 10, 1979.

———. "Notes on the Auteur Theory in 1962." *Film Culture* 27, no. 27 (Winter 1962/63): 1–8.

———. "The Sex Comedy without Sex." *American Film* 3, no. 5 (March 1978): 8–15.

Saunders, Thomas J. *Hollywood in Berlin: American Cinema and Weimar Germany*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994.

Schallert, Edwin. "Love Parade Gay and Clever." Review of *The Love Parade*. *Los Angeles Times*, January 24, 1930.

———. "Lubitsch and Garbo Victorious." *Los Angeles Times*, October 7, 1939.

———. Review of *Love Parade*. *Los Angeles Times*. January 19, 1930.

Schlüpmann, Heide. "'Ich möchte kein Mann sein.' Ernst Lubitsch, Sigmund Freud und die frühe deutsche Komödie." In *KINtop 1: Jahrbuch zur Erforschung des frühen Films*, edited by Frank Kessler, Sabine Lenk, and Martin Loiperdinger, 75–92. Frankfurt am Main: Stroemfeld, 1993.

———. *Unheimlichkeit des Blicks. Das Drama des frühen deutschen Kinos*. Frankfurt am Main: Stroemfeld/Roter Stern, 1990.

Schuster, Aaron. "Comedy in Times of Austerity." In *Lubitsch Can't Wait: A Collection of Ten Philosophical Discussions on Ernst Lubitsch's Film Comedy*, edited by Ivana Novak, Mladen Dolar, and Jela Krečič, 19–38. New York: Columbia University Press, 2014.

Sharot, Stephen, "The 'New Woman,' Star Personas, and Cross-Class Romances in 1920s America." *Journal of Gender Studies* 19, no. 1 (March 2010): 73–86.

Sid [Sid Silverman?]. "The Man I Killed." Review of *The Man I Killed*. *Variety*, January 26, 1932: 21.

Silberman, Marc. "Specular Presence and Historical Revolution: Ernst Lubitsch's *Passion*." In *German Cinema: Texts in Context*, 3–18. Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1995.

Soares, André. *Beyond Paradise: The Life of Ramon Novarro*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 2002.

Solnit, Rebecca. "The Loneliness of Donald Trump: On the Corrosive Privilege of the Most Mocked Man in the World." *Literary Hub*, May 31, 2017. Accessed December 30, 2018. http://lithub.com/rebecca-solnit-the-loneliness-of-donald-trump/.

Spaich, Herbert. *Ernst Lubitsch und seine Filme*. Munich: Wilhelm Heyne, 1992.

Spitzer, Leo. *Lives in Between: Assimilation and Marginality in Austria, Brazil, West Africa*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989.

Sternheim, Carl. *Die Hose* (The Bloomers/The Trousers). In *Die Hose; Der Snob: zwei Stücke*, by Carl Sternheim. Frankfurt am Main: Fischer, 1975. First staged in 1911.

"Stock Market Quiet with Prices Lagging." *New York Times*, November 19, 1929.

Stokowski, Margarete. *Untenrum frei*. Reinbek bei Hamburg: Rowohlt, 2016.

Stratenwerth, Irene. "Vorspiel auf dem Theater: vom Possenspiel der Brüder Herrnfeld zu den Lubitsch-Komödien im Kino." In *Pioniere in Celluloid. Juden in der frühen Filmwelt*, edited by Irene Stratenwerth and Hermann Simon, 147–65. Berlin: Centrum Judaicum/Henschel, 2004.

Stratenwerth, Irene, and Hermann Simon, eds. *Pioniere in Celluloid. Juden in der frühen Filmwelt*. Berlin: Centrum Judaicum/Henschel, 2004.

Straayer, Chris. "Redressing the 'Natural': The Temporary Transvestite Film." In *Film Genre Reader III*, edited by Barry Keith Grant, 417–42. Austin: University of Texas Press, 2003. First published in 1996.

"Streit um 'Alt-Heidelberg.'" *Film-Kurier*, May 30, 1927.

Sudendorf, Werner. Commentary on *When Four Do the Same*. In *Lubitsch*, edited by Hans Helmut Prinzler and Enno Patalas, 126. Munich: C. J. Bucher, 1984.

"*Sumurun*. Stummfilmkonzerte zu Gast in babylon berlin:mitte." Program by *babylon berlin:mitte*, April 18, 2006.

Theweleit, Klaus. *Männerphantasien*, vols. 1 and 2. Frankfurt am Main: Roter Stern, 1977, 1978. In English: *Male Fantasies*, vols. 1 and 2. Translated by Stephen Conway. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987, 1989.

Thome, Rudolf. Commentary on *Trouble in Paradise*. In *Lubitsch*, edited by Hans Helmut Prinzler and Enno Patalas, 166–70. Munich: C. J. Bucher, 1984.

Thompson, Kristin. *Herr Lubitsch Goes to Hollywood: German and American Film after World War I*. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2005.

———."Lubitsch, Acting, and the Silent Romantic Comedy." *Film History* 13, no. 4 (2001): 390–408.

Truffaut, François. "Lubitsch Was a Prince." Translated by Annette Insdorf. *American Film* (May 1978): 55–57. First published in French as "Lubitsch était un prince." *Cahiers du Cinema* 198 (February 1968): 13.

Tully, Jim. "Ernst Lubitsch." *Vanity Fair* 27, no. 4 (December, 1926): 82.

Underhill, Harriet. "On the Screen." Review of the *The Student Prince in Old Heidelberg. New York Herald Tribune*, September 22, 1927.

Urgiß, Julius. "Künstlerprofil: Ernst Lubitsch," *Der Kinematograph*, August 30, 1916. Reprinted as "Ein frühes Interview." In *Lubitsch*, edited by Hans Helmut Prinzler and Enno Patalas, 88–90. Munich: C. J. Bucher, 1984.

Urwand, Ben. *The Collaboration: Hollywood's Pact with Hitler*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2013.

U.T.-Woche. Synopsis of the *Die Austernprinzessin/The Oyster Princess*. June 20–26, 1919.
Variety. Review of *The Love Parade*. November 27, 1929.
———. Review of *The Marriage Circle*. February 7, 1924.
———. Review of *Ninotchka*. October 11, 1939.
———. Review of *The Shop around the Corner*. January 12, 1940.
———. Review of *The Student Prince in Old Heidelberg*. September 28, 1927.
Velde, Theodoor Hendrik van de. *Ideal Marriage: Its Physiology and Technique*. London: Random House, 1926.
"Verhandlungen Ufa-Lubitsch." *Film-Kurier*, August 22, 1927.
Viertel, Salka. *The Kindness of Strangers*. New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1969.
Wallach, Kerry. *Passing Illusions: Jewish Visibility in Weimar Germany*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2017.
Watts, Richard, Jr. "On the Screen." Review of *The Love Parade*. *New York Herald*, November 20, 1929.
———. Review of the *The Student Prince in Old Heidelberg*. *New York Herald Tribune*, September 22, 1927.
———. Review of *Trouble in Paradise*. *New York Herald*, November 9, 1932.
"West Reclaims Lubitsch." *Los Angeles Times*, June 7, 1931.
Weinberg, Herman G. *The Lubitsch Touch: A Critical Study*. New York: Dover, 1977. First published in 1968.
Weinstein, Valerie. *Antisemitism in Film Comedy in Nazi Germany*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2019.
———. "Antisemitism or Jewish 'Camp'? Ernst Lubitsch's *Schuhpalast Pinkus* (1916) and *Meyer aus Berlin* (1918)." *German Life and Letters* 59, no. 1 (January 2006): 101–21.
———. "Performing Jewishness. Ernst Lubitschs frühe Milieukomödien." Lecture on Ernst Lubitsch's *Der Stolz der Film* and *Schuhpalast Pinkus*. December 15, 2016. Deutsches Filmmuseum, Frankfurt.
———. "(Un)Fashioning Identities: Ernst Lubitsch's Early Comedies of Mistaken Identity." In *Visual Culture in Twentieth-Century Germany: Text as Spectacle*, edited by Gail Finney, 120–33. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2006.
Whitaker, Alma. "'Emancipation' for Women Achieved by Films––and How!" Review of *Design for Living*. *Los Angeles Times*, December 3, 1933.
W.H. [Willy Haas]. Review of *Rosita*. *Film-Kurier*, August 29, 1924.
W. H——s [Willy Haas]. Review of *Die Bergkatze/The Wildcat*. *Film-Kurier*, April 14, 1921.
Williams, Linda. *Playing the Race Card: Melodramas of Black and White from Uncle Tom to O. J. Simpson*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2001.
Winter, Hanns. "Lubitsch's Zukunftspläne." *Film-Kurier*, April 18, 1925.
Wisse, Ruth. *No Joke: Making Jewish Humor*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2013.
Witte, Karsten. Commentary on *Schuhpalast Pinkus*. In *Lubitsch*, edited by Hans Helmut Prinzler and Enno Patalas, 124–26. Munich: C. J. Bucher, 1984.
———. Commentary on *The Shop around the Corner*. In *Lubitsch*, edited by Hans Helmut Prinzler and Enno Patalas, 188. Munich: C. J. Bucher, 1984.
Wolf, Stacy. "Barbra's 'Funny Girl' Body." In *Queer Theory and the Jewish Question*, edited by Daniel Boyarin, Daniel Itzkovitz, and Ann Pellegrini, 246–65. New York: Columbia University Press, 2003.
Žižek, Slavoj. "Lubitsch, the Poet of Cynical Reason?" In *Lubitsch Can't Wait: A Collection of Ten Philosophical Discussions on Ernst Lubitsch's Film Comedy*, edited by Ivana Novak, Mladen Dolar, and Jela Krečič, 181–205. New York: Columbia University Press, 2014.

FILMOGRAPHY

Films with Ernst Lubitsch (As Actor, Director, or Screenplay Writer)

Entries are listed chronologically.

Sources: Wolfgang Jacobsen, "Filmografie," in *Lubitsch*, ed. Hans Helmut Prinzler and Enno Patalas (Munich: C. J. Bucher, 1984), 200–23; and filmportal.de, https://www.filmportal.de/.

Key: * directed by Lubitsch; Dir., director; Scr., screenplay; Prod., producer.

Die ideale Gattin (The Ideal Wife), 1913. Dir.: Unknown; Scr.: Hanns Heinz Ewers, Marc Henry; Cast: Lyda Salmonova, Ernst Lubitsch, Paul Biensfeldt; Studio: Deutsche Bioscop. Premiere: July 7.

Die Firma heiratet (The Firm Marries), 1914. Dir.: Carl Wilhelm; Scr.: Walter Turszinsky, Jacques Burg; Cast: Ernst Lubitsch, Victor Arnold, Resl Orla; Studio: Union Film. Premiere: January 23. Film is believed lost.

Bedingung—kein Anhang! (Condition: No Dependents!), 1914. Dir.: Stellan Rye; Scr.: Luise Heilborn-Körbitz; Cast: Hanns Waßmann, Albert Paulig, Ernst Lubitsch; Studio: Deutsche Bioscop. Film is believed lost.

Der Stolz der Firma/The Pride of the Firm, 1914. Dir.: Carl Wilhelm; Scr.: Walter Turszinsky, Jacques Burg; Cast: Ernst Lubitsch, Martha Kriwitz, Victor Arnold; Studio: Union Film. Premiere: January 23.

**Fräulein Seifenschaum* (Miss Soapsuds), 1914/15. Dir. Ernst Lubitsch; Cast: Ernst Lubitsch; Studio: Union Film. Produced: Summer 1914. Premiere: June 25, 1915. Film is believed lost.

Fräulein Piccolo (Miss Piccolo), 1914/15. Dir.: Franz Hofer; Scr.: Franz Hofer; Cast: Dorrit Weixler, Ernst Lubitsch; Studio: Luna-Film. Produced: August 1914; Forbidden, 1915. Premiere: February 1919.

Arme Maria/Arme Marie (Poor Maria/Poor Marie), 1915. Dir.: Willy Zeyn and Max Mack; Scr.: Robert Wiene, Walter Turszinsky; Cast: Hanni Weiße, Ernst Lubitsch, Friedrich Zelnik; Studio: Union Film. Premiere: May 7. Film is believed lost.

**Aufs Eis geführt* (A Trip on the Ice), 1915. Dir.: Ernst Lubitsch; Scr.: Hanns Kräly; Cast: Albert Paulig, Ernst Lubitsch; Studio: Malu-Film. Premiere: May 21. Film is believed lost.

Blindekuh (Blind Man's Bluff), 1915. Dir.: Ernst Lubitsch; Cast: Ernst Lubitsch, Resl Orla; Studio: Union Film. Premiere: May 28. Film is believed lost.

**Zucker und Zimt* (Sugar and Cinnamon), 1915. Dir.: Ernst Mátray, Ernst Lubitsch; Scr.: Ernst Mátray, Ernst Lubitsch, Greta Schröder-Mátray; Cast: Ernst Mátray, Ernst Lubitsch; Studio: Malu-Film, Berlin. Premiere: May 28. Film is believed lost.

Der schwarze Moritz (Black Moritz), 1915. Dir.: Georg Jacoby; Scr.: Louis Taufstein; Cast: Ernst Lubitsch, Margarete Kupfer; Studio: Union Film. Premiere: June 2. Film is believed lost.

Robert und Bertram oder: Die lustigen Vagabunden (Robert and Bertram or: The Funny Vagabonds), 1915. Dir.: Max Mack; Cast: Ferdinand Bonn, Eugen Burg, Wilhelm Diegelmann, Ernst Lubitsch; Studio: Union Film. Premiere: August 12.

**Sein einziger Patient/Der erste Patient* (His Only Patient/The First Patient), 1915. Dir.: Ernst Lubitsch; Cast: Ernst Lubitsch, Johanna Ewald; Studio: Union Film. Film is believed lost.

**Der Kraftmeyer* (The Muscleman/The Bully), 1915. Dir.: Ernst Lubitsch; Scr.: Ernst Lubitsch; Cast: Ernst Lubitsch; Studio: Union Film. Film is believed lost.

**Der letzte Anzug/Sein letzter Anzug* (The Last Suit/His Last Suit), 1915. Dir.: Ernst Lubitsch; Cast: Ernst Lubitsch. Studio: Union Film. Film is believed lost.

**Als ich tot war* (When I Was Dead), 1916; after censorship: *Wo Ist Mein Schatz?* (Where is My Treasure?). Dir.: Ernst Lubitsch; Scr.: Ernst Lubitsch; Cast: Ernst Lubitsch, Luise Scheurich, Julius Falkenstein; Studio: Union Film. Premiere: February 25.

Doktor Satansohn (Doctor Satanson), 1916. Dir.: Edmund Edel; Scr.: Edmund Edel; Cast: Ernst Lubitsch, Marga Köhler, Erich Schönfelder; Studio: Union Film. Premiere: March 17.

**Schuhpalast Pinkus/Shoe Palace Pinkus*, 1916. Dir.: Ernst Lubitsch, Scr.: Hanns Kräly, Erich Schönfelder; Cast: Else Kenter, Ernst Lubitsch, Hans Kräly, Ossi Oswalda; Studio: Union Film. Premiere: June 9.

**Der gemischte Frauenchor* (The Mixed Ladies' Chorus), 1916. Dir.: Ernst Lubitsch; Scr.: Unknown; Cast: Ernst Lubitsch; Studio: Union Film. Premiere: July 14. Film is believed lost.

Leutnant auf Befehl (Lieutenant by Command), 1916. Dir.: Danny Kaden; Scr.: Theodor Sparkuhl; Cast: Ernst Lubitsch; Studio: Union Film. Censorship: August 1916. Film is believed lost.

**Keiner von beiden* (Neither of the Two). Dir. Ernst Lubitsch. Studio: Union Film. Censorship: November 1916. Film is believed lost.

**Das schönste Geschenk* (The Most Beautiful Gift), 1916. Dir.: Ernst Lubitsch; Cast: Ernst Lubitsch; Studio: Union Film. Premiere: November 24. Film is believed lost.

**Der G.m.b.h. Tenor* (The Tenor, Inc.), 1916. Dir.: Ernst Lubitsch; Cast: Ernst Lubitsch, Ossi Oswalda, Victor Janson; Studio: Union Film. Premiere: December 22. Film is believed lost.

**Die neue Nase/Seine neue Nase* (The New Nose/His New Nose), 1916. Dir.: Ernst Lubitsch; Scr.: Unknown; Cast: Ernst Lubitsch; Studio: Union Film. Film is believed lost.

**Ossi's Tagebuch* (Ossi's Diary), 1917. Dir.: Ernst Lubitsch; Scr.: Ernst Lubitsch, Erich Schönfelder; Cast: Ossi Oswalda, Hermann Thimig; Studio: Union Film. Premiere: October 5. Film is believed lost.

**Der Blusenkönig* (The Blouse King), 1917. Dir.: Ernst Lubitsch; Scr.: Ernst Lubitsch, Erich Schönfelder; Cast: Ernst Lubitsch, Käthe Dorsch, Guido Herzfeld; Studio: Union Film. Premiere: November 2. Film is believed lost.

Hans Trutz im Schlaraffenland (Hans Trutz in Never-Neverland), 1917. Dir.: Paul Wegener; Scr.: Paul Wegener; Cast: Paul Wegener, Lyda Salmonova, Ernst Lubitsch; Studio: Union Film. Premiere: November 4.

**Wenn vier dasselbe tun* (When Four Do the Same), 1917. Dir.: Ernst Lubitsch; Scr.: Ernst Lubitsch, Erich Schönfelder; Cast: Emil Jannings, Ossi Oswalda, Margarete Kupfer; Studio: Union Film. Premiere: November 16.

**Das fidele Gefängnis/Ein fideles Gefängnis* (The Merry Jail/A Merry Jail), 1917. Dir.: Ernst Lubitsch; Scr.: Ernst Lubitsch, Hans Kräly; Cast: Harry Liedtke, Kitty Dewall, Erich Schönfelder, Emil Jannings; Studio: Union Film. Premiere: November 30.

**Prinz Sami* (Prince Sami), 1917. Dir.: Ernst Lubitsch; Scr.: Ernst Lubitsch, Danny Kaden; Cast: Ernst Lubitsch, Ossi Oswalda, Margarete Kupfer; Studio: Union Film. Premiere: January 1918. Film is believed lost.

**Käsekönig Holländer* (Cheese King Hollander), 1917. Dir. Ernst Lubitsch; Scr.: Ernst Lubitsch, Erich Schönfelder; Cast: Ernst Lubitsch; Studio: Union Film. Premiere: probably March 1919. Film is believed lost.

**Der Rodelkavalier* (The Toboggan Cavalier), 1918. Dir.: Ernst Lubitsch; Scr.: Ernst Lubitsch, Erich Schönfelder; Cast: Ernst Lubitsch, Ossi Oswalda, Julius Falkenstein; Studio: Union Film.

**Der Fall Rosentopf* (The Rosentopf Case), 1918. Dir.: Ernst Lubitsch; Scr.: Ernst Lubitsch, Hanns Kräly; Cast: Ferry Sikla, Margarete Kupfer, Ernst Lubitsch; Studio: Union Film. Premiere: September 20. Film is believed lost.

**Die Augen der Mumie Mâ/The Eyes of the Mummy*, 1918. Dir.: Ernst Lubitsch; Scr.: Hanns Kräly, Emil Rameau; Cast: Pola Negri, Emil Jannings, Harry Liedtke; Studio: Union Film. Premiere: October 3.

**Ich möchte kein Mann sein/I Don't Want to Be a Man*, 1918. Dir. Ernst Lubitsch; Scr.: Ernst Lubitsch, Hanns Kräly; Cast: Ossi Oswalda, Margarete Kupfer, Kurt Götz; Studio: Union Film. Premiere: October 1918.

**Meyer aus Berlin/Meyer from Berlin*, 1918. Dir.: Ernst Lubitsch; Scr.: Hanns Kräly, Erich Schönfelder; Cast: Ernst Lubitsch, Ethel Orff, Trude Troll; Studio: Union Film. Premiere: January 17, 1919.

**Das Mädel vom Ballett* (The Ballet Girl), 1918. Dir.: Ernst Lubitsch; Scr.: Hanns Kräly; Cast: Ossi Oswalda, Margarete Kupfer, Harry Liedtke; Studio: Union Film. Premiere: December 6. Film is believed lost.

**Carmen/Gypsy Blood*, 1918. Dir.: Ernst Lubitsch; Scr.: Hanns Kräly; Cast: Pola Negri, Harry Liedtke; Studio: Union Film. Premiere: December 20.

**Meine Frau, die Filmschauspielerin* (My Wife, the Film Actress), 1919. Dir.: Ernst Lubitsch; Scr.: Ernst Lubitsch, Hanns Kräly; Cast: Victor Janson, Ossi Oswalda, Hanns Kräly; Studio: Union Film. Premiere: January 24. Film is believed lost.

**Die Austernprinzessin/The Oyster Princess*, 1919. Dir.: Ernst Lubitsch; Scr.: Ernst Lubitsch, Hanns Kräly; Cast: Victor Janson, Ossi Oswalda, Harry Liedtke, Julius Falkenstein; Studio: Union Film. Premiere: June 20.

**Rausch* (Intoxication), 1919. Dir.: Ernst Lubitsch; Scr. Hanns Kräly, based on the play *Brott och Brott* by August Strindberg; Cast: Asta Nielsen, Alfred Abel, Carl Meinhard; Studio: Argus Film. Premiere: August 1. Film is believed lost.

**Madame Dubarry/Passion*, 1919. Dir.: Ernst Lubitsch; Scr.: Fred Orbing (i.e. Norbert Falk), Hanns Kräly; Cast: Pola Negri, Harry Liedtke, Emil Jannings, Reinhold Schünzel, Eduard von Winterstein; Studio: Union Film. Premiere: September 18.

Der lustige Ehemann (The Merry Husband), 1919. Dir.: Leo Lasko; Scr.: Ernst Lubitsch; Cast: Victor Janson, Marga Köhler, Heddy Jendry; Studio: Union Film. Premiere: October 1919. Film is believed lost.

**Die Puppe* (The Doll), 1919. Dir.: Ernst Lubitsch; Scr.: Hanns Kräly, Ernst Lubitsch; Cast: Ossi Oswalda, Hermann Thimig, Victor Janson, Jacob Tiedtke, Gerhard Ritterband; Studio: Union Film. Premiere: December 4.

**Die Wohnungsnot* (The Housing Shortage), 1920. Dir.: Ernst Lubitsch. Scr.: Hanns Kräly, Ernst Lubitsch; Cast: Ossi Oswalda, Marga Köhler, Victor Janson; Studio: Union Film. Premiere: January 30. Film is believed lost.

**Kohlhiesels Töchter* (Kohlhiesel's Daughters), 1920. Dir.: Ernst Lubitsch; Scr.: Hanns Kräly, Ernst Lubitsch; Cast: Henny Porten, Emil Jannings, Gustav von Wangenheim; Studio: Ufa-Messter. Premiere: March 9.

**Mephistophela*, 1920. Dir. Ernst Lubitsch. Cast: Ossi Oswalda. Studio: Union Film. Film is believed lost.

**Romeo und Julia im Schnee* (Romeo and Juliet in the Snow), 1920. Dir.: Ernst Lubitsch; Scr.: Hanns Kräly, Ernst Lubitsch; Cast: Gustav von Wangenheim, Marga Köhler, Jakob Tiedtke, Lotte Neumann; Studio: Maxim Film. Premiere: March 12.

**Sumurun/One Arabian Night*, 1920. Dir.: Ernst Lubitsch; Scr.: Hanns Kräly, Ernst Lubitsch; Cast: Pola Negri, Jenny Hasselquist, Aud Egede Nissen, Margarete Kupfer, Paul Wegener, Ernst Lubitsch; Studio: Union Film. Premiere: September 1.

**Anna Boleyn/Deception*, 1920. Dir.: Ernst Lubitsch; Scr.: Fred Orbing (i.e., Norbert Falk), Hanns Kräly; Cast: Emil Jannings, Henny Porten; Studio: Union Film. Premiere: December 3.

**Die Bergkatze/The Wildcat*, 1921. Dir.: Ernst Lubitsch; Scr.: Hanns Kräly, Ernst Lubitsch; Cast: Pola Negri, Victor Janson, Edith Meller, Paul Heidemann, Hermann Thimig, Wilhelm Diegelmann; Studio: Union Film. Premiere: April 12.

**Das Weib des Pharao/The Loves of the Pharaoh*, 1922. Dir.: Ernst Lubitsch; Scr.: Norbert Falk, Hanns Kräly; Cast: Dagny Servaes, Harry Liedtke, Emil Jannings, Paul Wegener; Studio: EFA. Premiere: February 21 (New York); March 14 (Berlin).

**Die Flamme* (The Flame)/*Montmartre*, 1922. Dir.: Ernst Lubitsch; Scr.: Hanns Kräly; Cast: Pola Negri, Alfred Abel, Hermann Thimig; Studio: Ernst Lubitsch Film. Premiere: September 11, 1923.

**Rosita*, 1923. Dir.: Ernst Lubitsch; Scr.: Edward Knoblock; Cast: Mary Pickford, Holbrook Blinn, Irene Rich; Studio: United Artists; Premiere: September 3.

**The Marriage Circle*, 1924. Dir.: Ernst Lubitsch; Scr.: Paul Bern; Cast: Adolphe Menjou, Marie Prevost, Monte Blue, Florence Vidor; Studio: Warner Brothers. Premiere: February 3.

**Three Women*, 1924. Dir.: Ernst Lubitsch; Scr.: Hanns Kräly; Cast: May McAvoy, Pauline Frederick, Marie Prevost, Lew Cody; Studio: Warner Brothers. Premiere: October 5.

**Forbidden Paradise*, 1924. Dir.: Ernst Lubitsch; Scr.: Hanns Kräly, Agnes Christine Johnston; Cast: Pola Negri, Rod La Rocque, Adolphe Menjou; Studio: Famous Players-Lasky/Paramount. Premiere: October 27.

**Kiss Me Again*, 1925. Dir.: Ernst Lubitsch; Scr.: Hanns Kräly; Cast: Marie Prevost, Monte Blue, Clara Bow; Studio: Warner Brothers. Premiere: August 1. Film is believed lost.

**Lady Windermere's Fan*, 1925. Dir.: Ernst Lubitsch; Scr.: Julien Josephson; Cast: Ronald Colman, Irene Rich, May McAvoy; Studio: Warner Brothers. Premiere: December 1.

**So This Is Paris*, 1926. Dir.: Ernst Lubitsch; Scr.: Hanns Kräly; Cast: Monte Blue, Patsy Ruth Miller, André Beranger, Lilyan Tashman; Studio: Warner Brothers. Premiere: July 31.

**The Student Prince in Old Heidelberg*, 1927. Dir.: Ernst Lubitsch; Scr.: Hanns Kräly; Cast: Ramón Novarro, Norma Shearer, Jean Hersholt; Studio: MGM. Premiere: September 21.

**The Patriot*, 1928. Dir.: Ernst Lubitsch; Scr.: Hanns Kräly; Cast: Emil Jannings, Lewis Stone, Florence Vidor; Studio: Paramount. Premiere: August 17. Film is believed lost.

**Eternal Love*, 1929. Dir.: Ernst Lubitsch; Scr.: Hanns Kräly; Cast: John Barrymore, Camilla Horn; Studio: Universal. Premiere: May 11.

**The Love Parade*, 1929. Dir.: Ernst Lubitsch; Scr.: Ernest Vajda; Cast: Maurice Chevalier, Jeanette MacDonald, Lupino Lane, Lillian Roth; Studio: Paramount. Premiere: November 19.

Paramount on Parade, 1930. Dir.: Ernst Lubitsch, Dorothy Arzner, Edmund Goulding, Victor Schertzinger, Frank Tuttle, Rowland V. Lee, A. Edward Sutherland, et al. Episodes directed by Lubitsch: "The Origin of the Apache Dance," "A Park in Paris," "Sweeping the Clouds Away." Cast: Maurice Chevalier, Evelyn Brent, Clara Bow, Gary Cooper, Lillian Roth; Studio: Paramount. Premiere: April 19.

**Monte Carlo*, 1930. Dir.: Ernst Lubitsch; Scr. Ernest Vajda; Cast: Jack Buchanan, Jeanette MacDonald; Studio: Paramount. Premiere: August 27.

**The Smiling Lieutenant*, 1932. Dir.: Ernst Lubitsch; Scr.: Ernest Vajda, Samson Raphaelson; Cast: Maurice Chevalier, Claudette Colbert, Miriam Hopkins; Studio: Paramount. Premiere: May 22.

**The Man I Killed/Broken Lullaby*, 1932. Dir.: Ernst Lubitsch; Scr. Samson Raphaelson, Ernest Vajda; Cast: Lionel Barrymore, Nancy Carroll, Phillips Holmes; Studio: Paramount. Premiere: January 19.

**One Hour with You*, 1932. Dir.: Ernst Lubitsch; Scr.: Samson Raphaelson; Cast: Maurice Chevalier, Jeanette MacDonald, Charlie Ruggles; Studio: Paramount. Premiere: March 25.

**Trouble in Paradise*, 1932. Dir.: Ernst Lubitsch; Scr.: Samson Raphaelson; Cast: Miriam Hopkins, Kay Francis, Herbert Marshall, Charlie Ruggles, Edward Everett Horton; Studio: Paramount. Premiere: November 8.

**The Clerk*, 1932. Dir. Ernst Lubitsch; Scr. Ernst Lubitsch; Cast: Charles Laughton. Episode in *If I Had a Million*, 1932. Studio: Paramount. Premiere: December 2.

**Design for Living*, 1933. Dir.: Ernst Lubitsch; Scr.: Ben Hecht; Cast: Fredric March, Gary Cooper, Miriam Hopkins, Edward Everett Horton, Franklin Pangborn; Studio: Paramount. Premiere: November 22.

**The Merry Widow*, 1934. Dir.: Ernst Lubitsch; Scr.: Ernest Vajda, Samson Raphaelson; Cast: Maurice Chevalier, Jeanette MacDonald, Edward Everett Horton; Studio: MGM. Premiere: October 11.

Desire, 1936. Prod.: Ernst Lubitsch; Dir.: Frank Borzage; Scr.: Edwin Justus Mayer, Waldemar Young, Samuel Hoffenstein; Cast: Marlene Dietrich, Gary Cooper; Studio: Paramount. Premiere: April 11.

**Angel*, 1937. Dir.: Ernst Lubitsch; Scr.: Samson Raphaelson; Cast: Marlene Dietrich, Herbert Marshall, Melvyn Douglas; Studio: Paramount. Premiere: October 29.

**Bluebeard's Eighth Wife*, 1938. Dir.: Ernst Lubitsch; Scr.: Charles Brackett, Billy Wilder; Cast: Claudette Colbert, Gary Cooper, Edward Everett Horton, David Niven; Studio: Paramount. Premiere: March 23.

**Ninotchka*, 1939. Dir.: Ernst Lubitsch; Scr.: Charles Brackett, Billy Wilder, Walter Reisch; Cast: Greta Garbo, Melvyn Douglas, Ina Claire, Felix Bressart, Sig Rumann, Alexander Granach; Studio: MGM. Premiere: October 6.

**The Shop around the Corner*, 1940. Dir.: Ernst Lubitsch; Scr.: Samson Raphaelson; Cast: Margaret Sullavan, James Stewart, Frank Morgan, Joseph Schildkraut; Studio: MGM. Premiere: January 12.

**That Uncertain Feeling*, 1941. Dir.: Ernst Lubitsch; Scr.: Donald Ogden Stewart; Cast: Merle Oberon, Melvyn Douglas, Burgess Meredith; Studio: United Artists. Premiere: April 20.

**To Be or Not to Be*, 1942. Dir.: Ernst Lubitsch; Scr.: Edwin Justus Mayer; Cast: Carole Lombard, Jack Benny, Robert Stack, Felix Bressart, Sig Rumann; Studio: United Artists. Premiere: March 6.

**Know Your Enemy: Germany*, 1942. Dir.: Ernst Lubitsch; Scr.: Bruno Frank. Documentary for Frank Capra's *Know Your Enemy* series but rejected by the US Army.
**Heaven Can Wait*, 1943. Dir.: Ernst Lubitsch; Scr: Samson Raphaelson; Cast: Gene Tierney, Don Ameche, Charles Coburn, Marjorie Main; Studio: Twentieth Century Fox. Premiere: August 11.
A Royal Scandal, 1945. Prod.: Ernst Lubitsch; Dir.: Otto Preminger; Scr.: Edwin Justus Mayer; Cast: Tallulah Bankhead, Vincent Price; Studio: Twentieth Century Fox. Premiere: April 11.
Dragonwyck, 1946. Prod.: Ernst Lubitsch; Dir.: Joseph L. Mankiewicz; Scr.: Joseph L. Mankiewicz; Cast: Gene Tierney, Vincent Price; Studio: Twentieth Century Fox. Premiere: April 10.
**Cluny Brown*, 1946. Dir.: Ernst Lubitsch; Scr.: Samuel Hoffenstein, Elizabeth Reinhardt; Cast: Charles Boyer, Jennifer Jones, Peter Lawford; Studio: Twentieth Century Fox. Premiere: June 1.
**That Lady in Ermine*, 1948. Dir.: Ernst Lubitsch, Otto Preminger; Scr.: Samson Raphaelson; Cast: Betty Grable, Douglas Fairbanks, Jr., Cesar Romero; Studio: Twentieth Century Fox. Premiere: August 24.

Films by Other Directors

All Quiet on the Western Front, Lewis Milestone, USA, 1930.
Das alte Gesetz/The Ancient Law, E. A. (Ewald André) Dupont, Germany, 1923.
The Apartment, Billy Wilder, USA, 1960.
Ben-Hur, Fred Niblo, USA, 1925.
The Big Parade, King Vidor, USA, 1925.
Der blaue Engel/The Blue Angel, Josef von Sternberg, Germany, 1930.
Blonde Venus, Josef von Sternberg, USA, 1932.
Ein blonder Traum/A Blonde Dream, Paul Martin, Scr.: Billy Wilder, Germany, 1932.
Bringing Up Baby, Howard Hawks, USA, 1938.
Das Cabinet des Dr. Caligari/The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari, Robert Wiene, Germany, 1920.
Cabiria, Giovanni Pastrone, Italy, 1914.
Carmen Jones, Otto Preminger, USA, 1954.
Cinema's Exiles: From Hitler to Hollywood, Karen Thomas, PBS, USA, 2009.
The Diary of Anne Frank, George Stevens, USA, 1959.
Dorothy Vernon of Haddon Hall, Marshall Neilan, USA, 1924.
Dr. Bessels Verwandlung/The Transformation of Dr. Bessel, Richard Oswald, Germany, 1927.
Die Drei von der Tankstelle/Three Good Friends, Wilhelm Thiele, Germany, 1930.
Duck Soup, Leo McCarey, USA, 1933.
Ernst Lubitsch in Berlin, Robert Fischer, Germany, 2006.
Erotikon, Mauritz Stiller, Sweden, 1920.
Der Ewige Jude/The Eternal Jew, Fritz Hippler, Germany, 1940.
Faust, F. W. (Friedrich Wilhelm) Murnau, Germany, 1926.
A Film Unfinished/Shtikat Haarchion, Yael Hersonski, Israel/Germany, 2010.
Forbidden Fruit, Cecil B. DeMille, USA, 1921.
Frantz, François Ozon, Germany/France, 2016.
A Foreign Affair, Billy Wilder, USA, 1948.
The Great Dictator, Charles Chaplin, USA, 1940.
Der Golem, Carl Boese, Paul Wegener, Germany, 1920.

Hold Back the Dawn, Mitchell Leisen, USA, 1941.
I'll Cry Tomorrow, Daniel Mann, USA, 1955. With Susan Hayward as Lillian Roth.
Das Indische Grabmal/The Indian Tomb, Joe May, Germany, 1921.
In the Good Old Summertime, Robert Z. Leonard, Buster Keaton, USA, 1949.
Inglourious Basterds, Quentin Tarantino, USA 2009.
Intolerance, D. W. (David Wark) Griffith, USA, 1916.
It Happened One Night, Frank Capra, USA, 1934.
It's a Wonderful Life, Frank Capra, USA, 1946.
The Jazz Singer, Alan Crosland, USA, 1927.
Kameradschaft/Comradeship, Georg Wilhelm Pabst, Germany, 1931.
The King of Kings, Cecil B. DeMille, USA, 1927.
Der Kongress tanzt/The Congress Dances, Erik Charell, Germany, 1931.
The Last Command, Josef von Sternberg, USA, 1928.
Der letzte Mann/The Last Laugh, F. W. (Friedrich Wilhelm) Murnau, Germany, 1924.
The Life of Emile Zola, William Dieterle, USA, 1937.
Love Me Tonight, Rouben Mamoulian, USA, 1932.
Meet Me in St. Louis, Vincente Minnelli, USA, 1944.
Menschen am Sonntag/People on Sunday, Robert Siodmak, Edgar G. Ulmer, Scr.: Billy Wilder, Germany, 1930.
Metropolis, Fritz Lang, Germany, 1927.
Mr. Smith Goes to Washington, Frank Capra, USA, 1939.
Niemandsland/Hell on Earth, Victor Trivas, George Shdanoff, Germany, 1931.
Nosferatu, F. W. (Friedrich Wilhelm) Murnau, Germany, 1922.
Orphans of the Storm, D. W. (David Wark) Griffith, USA, 1921.
The Philadelphia Story, George Cukor, USA, 1940.
The Producers, Mel Brooks, USA, 1967.
Quo Vadis, Enrico Guazzoni, Italy, 1913.
Robert und Bertram, Hans Zerlett, Germany, 1939.
The Scarlet Empress, Josef von Sternberg, USA, 1934.
Silk Stockings, Rouben Mamoulian, USA, 1957.
Die Spinnen/Spiders, Fritz Lang, Germany, 1919.
Die Straße/The Street, Karl Grune, Germany, 1923.
Sunrise, F. W. (Friedrich Wilhelm) Murnau, USA, 1927.
Sunset Boulevard, Billy Wilder, USA, 1950.
Theodora, Leopoldo Carlucci, Italy, 1921.
The Thief of Baghdad, Raoul Walsh, USA 1924.
To Be or Not to Be, Alan Johnson, USA, 1983. With Mel Brooks and Anne Bancroft.
Der Triumph des Willens/Triumph of the Will, Leni Riefenstahl, Germany, 1935.
Varieté/Variety, E. A. (Ewald André) Dupont, Germany, 1925.
Ein Walzertraum/A Waltz Dream, Ludwig Berger, Germany, 1925.
Weltkrieg (World War), Leo Lasko, Germany, 1926–27.
Westfront 1918, Georg Wilhelm Pabst, Germany, 1930.
Wings, William A. Wellman, USA, 1927.
The Wizard of Oz, Victor Fleming, USA, 1939.
A Woman of Paris, Charles Chaplin, USA, 1923.
You Can't Take It with You, Frank Capra, USA, 1938.
You've Got Mail, Nora Ephron, USA, 1998.

INDEX

Numbers in italics refer to illustrations.

RICK McCORMICK is a Professor of German at the University of Minnesota. He is author of *Gender and Sexuality in Weimar Modernity: Film, Literature, and "New Objectivity"* (Palgrave, 2001) and *Politics of the Self: Feminism and the Postmodern in West German Literature and Film* (Princeton University Press, 1991). He is coeditor of *Legacies of Modernism: Art and Politics in Northern Europe, 1890–1950* (Palgrave, 2007); *German Essays on the Cinema*, (Continuum, 2004); and *Gender and German Cinema: Feminist Interventions* (Berg, 1993).