

## Chapter I: Introduction

Throughout history, there have been sporadic pockets or concentrations of intense intellectual activity around the globe. From Athens to Vienna, cities have often been associated with the historical eras in which they excelled. For example, the 5<sup>th</sup> century BC dramatists in Greece such as Aeschylus, Sophocles and Euripides helped to make Athens a leader in artistic creation during its prime. Vienna, the European capital of the music world during the 18<sup>th</sup> century, was a center of artistic creativity that included composers such as Mozart and Haydn. During the 1920s, the Weimar Republic held the distinction of being the epicenter of human thought and art, with Berlin firmly at the heart of this activity. A few of the familiar names connected to this era in German history are Thomas Mann, Albert Einstein, Theodor Adorno, Wassily Kandinsky, Lyonel Feininger, Fritz Lang, and F.W. Murnau. In addition to these individuals, many artistic and intellectual schools such as German Expressionism, the Frankfurt School, the Bauhaus, and “Der Sturm” are associated with the Weimar Republic.

Socially, the period represents an equally intense atmosphere. The Weimar Republic thrived on entertainment, clubs, and night-life in general. Berlin was at the forefront of urban entertainment in Germany, rivaling the other major cities of the Western world. The nightscape of Berlin was marked by lighted signs advertising small cabaret clubs and lavish musicals. However, the streets were also lined with disabled war veterans, prostitutes, and businessmen alike, reflecting an increase of prostitution, debauchery and crime of which all are in some way connected to the unbelievable inflation that permeated all layers of social, cultural and political life in Weimar Germany during the Republic’s first few years.

As social critics, the artists of the period commented upon the social and political conditions of Weimar Germany. Even in artistic style, the Weimar Republic witnessed a transformation of art in terms of content and technique. Connected to the social and political changes of the era, this transition is marked by Gustave Friedrich Hartlaub's 1925 Mannheim art exhibit labeled ‘Die neue Sachlichkeit,’ or ‘The New Objectivity.’ This exhibit gave definition to an artistic shift away from the predominant Expressionism of the previous years, thus dividing

the Weimar years between the early Expressionism and the later New Objectivity. Rejecting the boldly subjective idealism found within Expressionism, this new movement reflected a sobering perspective on post-war society. Radical, revolutionary tendencies gave way to a calm, reserved perspective on grim reality. During the height of the Weimar Republic, some of the most sobering perspectives on society's ills emerged.

Particularly in the realm of film, Weimar culture established itself and set itself apart from the foreign films that, prior to World War I, dominated the German theaters. From *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari* (1919) to *The Blue Angel* (1930), Weimar film is still regarded as one of the most important contributions to the industry. As in the art world, the film industry mirrored the shift away from Expressionism, and G.W. Pabst was the leading director of this new, emerging realism. Like his fellow artists who used the more traditional medium of paint on canvas, Pabst was socially critical and very aware of the issues confronting Weimar society. Having directed his first feature in 1923, Pabst began his career at the wane of Expressionism, and his films reflect the new sobriety emerging from German culture during the mid-twenties. For this reason, his films are particularly important for their poignant view of Weimar culture. However, as one of the Weimar Republic's most important directors, he has received little scholarly attention. The reason for this can be explained by examining Pabst's later career.

G.W. Pabst's silent films reflected the sober perspectives, characteristic of the New Objectivity artists, on gender and class representations within the urban metropolis of Weimar Germany, particularly its nightlife. Despite the controversial subject matter, during the latter half of the Weimar Republic Pabst enjoyed equal fame with such directors as Fritz Lang, F.W. Murnau, and Ernst Lubitsch. However, unlike these directors, Pabst could not make the transition to the Hollywood system of filmmaking. His best films remained the ones made in Germany prior to Hitler's rise. In fact his later works marred his reputation. Between his failures to work within Hollywood's studio-system and his films produced under the Nazi regime in the 1940s, Pabst's popularity quickly faded after his emigration from Germany in the early 1930s. Through 33 years of filmmaking, the outstanding films of his first 10 years have been overshadowed by the 23 years that followed. As such, his name is relatively unknown to many, unlike his contemporaries. Therefore, an analysis of Pabst's films within the context of

Weimar culture is needed to shed light on a director overshadowed by his later failures as well as successes of his colleagues.

This thesis analyzes Pabst's early films within the context of both Weimar culture and the artistic movements and transitions that were happening at that time. Pabst's early career as a filmmaker exemplified the realist trend that occurred during the latter half of the Weimar Republic, and as such, it is not only important for its contribution to the history of film, it is also important for its criticisms of that society. His early films focused on the urban environment, particularly the corruption and danger present within Weimar street-life. Central to this depiction are the presence of the night formerly so alien to the bourgeois and the portrayals of gender and class within this world. Therefore, this study is both a textual analysis as well as a historical analysis of those. The focus is on how Pabst portrayed subjects and issues in relation to the society from which he ultimately took them.

The research problem that this thesis engages has been for the most part glossed over by existing literature in the area of film. Although there have been numerous works that confront both art and politics, such as John Willett's Art and Politics in the Weimar Period (1978), most scholarly works have not focused specifically upon film within the context of both art and politics. Even fewer have singled out Pabst. In the area of Weimar cinema, this dynamic is critical. Just as art reflected the events of the period, film reflected both politics and the artistic changes that occurred, especially those films of Pabst. This social and artistic context of Weimar cinema has been overlooked in film analysis. Therefore, this study is largely interdisciplinary in its approach by examining Pabst's portrayals by looking first at the society, art and politics of the period. In taking such a multi-angled approach to film analysis, film is no longer seen as a separate phenomenon of Weimar culture or one that points toward a particular theory. Instead, it is a manifestation of various aspects of that culture, one that is rooted in that society yet unique in its direction.

There have only been two major works in English dedicated to G.W. Pabst's films. The first of these is Lee Atwell's book, G.W. Pabst (1977). As a piece in the Twayne Theatrical Arts Series it is largely a historical account of Pabst's career. Its scope is somewhat limited, and analytical insight into the Pabst's films within the larger context of Weimar cinema is

lacking. However, as the sole book on Pabst by a single author, it has opened the door for future film scholars. In fact, Atwell begins his introduction with “In our current age of director-as-superstar, the cinematic achievement of G.W. Pabst is long overdue for proper recognition” (Atwell, 1977, Preface). Atwell’s book confronts the reasons why Pabst has been overlooked, and it sheds light on the reasons why an outstanding director produced such mediocre works in his later life. For that reason, it is invaluable.

The second work on Pabst is a collection of scholarly essays. With an introduction by Eric Rentschler, the book’s editor, it analyzes many of Pabst’s films from a single vantage point (Rentschler, 1990). Each essay focuses on one particular film. Most interesting, however, is Rentschler’s thesis that Pabst is an auteur, although not in the normal sense of the term. His directorial style is not so much a product of technique, although Pabst made several advances in cinema technique. Instead, he is a director that has been shaped by history. His films reflect the external pressures upon their director, and therefore, Rentschler has defined Pabst’s films as “extraterritorial.” A 1964 article titled, "G.W. Pabst: His Films and His Life Mirror the Tumult of 20<sup>th</sup> Century Europe," alluded to this notion of the extraterritorial director (Luft, 1964). Therefore, Rentschler’s idea is incorporated into this analysis that contextualizes Pabst’s work within the grander setting of Weimar culture, politics, and art.

Among the many works dedicated to explaining Weimar cinema, one must single out Siegfried Kracauer’s From Caligari to Hitler (1959) and Lotte Eisner’s The Haunted Screen (1969). Both works are somewhat outdated; however, they have set the precedent for scholarly work in this area. Their analyses are discussed and criticized in almost every work that follows them. This work will engage their discussions on Pabst in particular but will leave their larger theoretical approaches alone for sake of spatial limitations.

Lastly, the films incorporated into this analysis are representative of the films that survive today. However, with a cinema output numbering in the thousands, no study will be comprehensive. Most of the works no longer survive today, and many never even made it to the screen. Of Pabst’s silent films, two are regrettably unavailable. The remaining seven silent features, along with five of his early sound films, are available for this study. Aside from Pabst's

films, additional existing films from Weimar Germany have been included in order to gain a perspective into the trends among Pabst's contemporaries in the film industry.

The thesis is organized much like concentric circles. The first section gives a broad yet brief overview of the political unrest during the Weimar years. The Weimar populace lived in the midst of political factions vying for power in the German Reichstag. Politics was visible in everything happening at the time. Politics separated people into groups, divided by class, special interests, or opinions of government. The political left and the political right grasped extremely different ideologies, and these differences caused the members of each to resort to violent demonstrations in the cities and towns of Germany. Nothing could exist totally separate from the political tide. Therefore, the first section of this thesis aims to provide a background history of the conflicts between various political factions in Germany. Its purpose is to establish a context from which the artists and filmmakers would work.

The following section focuses on the artistic movements of the early part of the 20th century. Expressionism began years before World War I, however it survived the war, blossoming in the spirit of revolution following the demise of Imperial Germany. As the idealism quickly faded, the cold realism of the New Objectivity took hold in Germany, critically examining social and political conditions. The New Objectivity was strongly connected to the political movements of the left through its two main artists, Otto Dix and George Grosz. The transition from Expressionism to the New Objectivity is important because Pabst, ultimately belonging to the succeeding movement, began to make films while this transition was occurring.

In film, a similar change was taking place. The early Expressionist cinema was giving way to more realist portrayals. Therefore, the third section of this thesis examines some of the surviving films from this period in the context of the artistic movements and political events. The film industry in Germany changed dramatically during the 14 years of the Republic. This section describes the changes that took place in film, as well as some of the economic changes that impacted the film industry.

The fourth section focuses on Pabst and his films specifically. It will serve as an introduction to Pabst's career, as well as a description of each of his films that will be analyzed

in the succeeding chapter. Because this thesis is concerned with his films made in the Weimar Republic, his later films have not been included in this description.

The analysis, the last chapter of this thesis, is broken into several key issues. The first of these to be examined is gender. Pabst's films explore this issue by placing female characters in lead roles within a male-dominated setting. The relationships and interaction between these characters is key to understanding the themes of these films in terms of gender. Secondly, class representations, a very important component of the New Objectivity, will be analyzed according to political messages and class mobility within the films. Pabst's films deal largely with the middle class and its decline during the Republic. In doing so, they emphasize the attempts of this class to remain apart from the working class society, yet they also show the victimization of the middle-class by the capitalist profiteers. Lastly, a phenomenon that incorporates issues from the axes of both class and gender is the nightlife of Weimar culture. This includes the cabaret, brothel, bar and everything else that enticed many to nightly debaucheries. Nighttime entertainment thrived during the few years of the Republic, and Berlin quickly became the center of this world of prostitution, crime, alcohol, and cabaret. Films such as Karl Grune's *The Street* (1923) and even Walther Ruttmann's documentary-style feature *Berlin, Symphony of a Great City* (1927) portray the two 'worlds' of night and day as though they comprise a cycle of daytime civilization defined by the regimented work-day and its antithetical counterpart, the dangerous, lawless city at night. This less than virtuous side of the metropolis is a key setting in Pabst's silent features, and this final section briefly examines the world of the city at night.

The Weimar Republic is an interesting topic for analysis if only for the fact that its brief existence, which cultivated so many of the intellectual ideas and important works of art of the 20th century, is juxtaposed to both the imperial government that preceded it and the fascist regime that eventually ended its democratic state. This thesis contributes to the body of knowledge that ultimately attempts to understand a key component of this period in Germany's history.

## Chapter II: Weimar Political History

The early artistic movements of twentieth century Germany, namely Expressionism and the New Objectivity, are not easily defined in specific terms. Expressionism and the New Objectivity, or New Realism, are both vaguely defined classifications for various art movements originating in multiple cities at the same time (Gordon, 1987, p. xv). Although both movements are revolutionary in their political aims and both are firmly situated on the political Left, their respective means of rebelling and pervading attitudes contained in their works could not be more different. These differences, however, will be discussed at a later point. Gordon wrote, "What linked German art and politics was not necessarily a folkish ideology - this remains to be examined - but rather a repeated recourse to rebellion" (Gordon, 1987, p. xvii). As one movement dies, the next rebels against the former by employing some sort of technique dialectically opposed to that of the former movement. This does not necessarily mean the two are politically opposed, and in this case they are not. The political ideology has remained the same throughout the works while the artists' perceptions of this political ideology have changed dramatically. By contrasting the two movements, one can arrive at a working definition for each. In a 1925 article, Franz Roh wrote, "Humanity seems destined to oscillate forever between devotion to the world of dreams and adherence to the world of reality" (Zamora & Faris (eds.), 1995, p. 17). This thesis examines one "oscillation" from dreams to reality, and within this examination, Germany's cultural, political, and social situations guide the transition.

Gordon also claims that the two movements cannot be defined merely by form; they must be classified according to content and the different attitudes of artists evident in the works from each movement (Gordon, 1987, p. 121). Therefore, perhaps the most important aspects that differentiate the two movements are the contemporary events happening during each of their existences and the reactions to those events by each of the movements. This section describes those events so that shifting political contexts may be later used to analyze both Expressionism and the New Objectivity. As a brief history of the Weimar Republic, it establishes the context

in which the artists lived and worked, and therefore, when speaking of art so influenced by the conditions surrounding it, this context is absolutely necessary.

The First World War put the Germans through some devastating winters of starvation. For the last three years of the war, Germany's coast had been closed to trade by a British blockade. By the spring of 1917, workers organized a one-day strike in Berlin to protest the diminishing bread ration. That same month, April 1917, was extremely important on the front, as well. The United States had joined the war effort on the Allied side, and a year later, the addition of American troops turned the stalemate into what looked to be an Allied victory. After two years as the Supreme Command, Field Marshal Paul von Hindenburg and General Ludendorff were forced to recognize the likely prospect of defeat. The last year of the war had only caused increased anti-war sentiment, despite the effort by the Supreme Command to report only good news to the public. When Admiral Reinhold Scheer ordered his navy in Kiel to engage the British navy, a desperate attack that would have surely resulted in heavy casualties, the sailors mutinied. Within a month, the mutiny spread along Germany's coast (Sapinsley, 1968, pp. 4-8).

The day after the mutiny began, the Kaiser, acting on General Ludendorff's advisement to make the government more representative, put Prince Max of Baden, the Kaiser's cousin, in the position of Chancellor. United States President Woodrow Wilson, however, refused to negotiate with a monarchy. Events were pointing to the Kaiser's abdication as the only means to make peace with the Allies. On November 9, 1918, less than two weeks after the Kaiser's meeting with General Ludendorff, the Kaiser abdicated his throne, and Prince Max resigned as Chancellor. Germany's largest political party at the time was the Social Democratic Party (SPD), and as head of that party, Friedrich Ebert became Germany's leader (Sapinsley, 1968, pp. 10-11).

That same day, the Spartacists were designing a new government based upon the Soviet example. The Spartacists were an extreme left-wing branch of the Independent Socialist Party (USPD), a party that had separated from the SPD in 1916 because the latter had chosen to support the war effort. The USPD had proclaimed a 'People's Government' in Bavaria two days before, as the royal families of each of the German provinces were being forced to

abdicate in the midst of such public outcry. When news of the Spartacist plans reached Phillip Schiedemann, another SPD member of the Reichstag, and Ebert, Schiedemann ran to the windows and pronounced a new German Republic to the crowds outside the Reichstag. Although this may have prevented a Bolshevik takeover, Ebert was furious over Schiedemann's maverick action (Sapinsley, 1968, pp. 11-17). The Spartacists criticized the announcement as well, because, as Gay (1968) points out, the Republic's "proclamation, after all, was an act directed not merely against the monarchy but against the Spartacists" (p. 12). The major weakness of the left-wing as a whole was that the individual parties were pitted against each other at an early stage. Gay further writes, "the Spartacists denounced the governing Socialists as pliant, socially ambitious butchers; the government accused the Spartacists of being Russian agents" (p. 13). With such animosity, physical conflict was an obvious result.

Recognizing the strength of the Independents, and perhaps wanting cooperation between the parties, Ebert formed his cabinet from members of both the SPD as well as those belonging to the USPD. Ebert also made a deal with the Reichswehr, the German army. They agreed to help suppress any Bolshevik uprisings in exchange for the privileges and powers they possessed as the Kaiser's army (Sapinsley, 1968, pp. 34-35). The officers of the army, most of them very much belonging to what Eyck refers to as the 'old army,' were right-wing conservatives. Ebert's government had very little control over them (Eyck, 1962-1963, pp. 3-4). Soon after this agreement, the Spartacists, with 3000 sailors loyal to the party, took over the royal palace and barricaded themselves inside. Ebert used the army to storm the palace, and after the uprising was put down, Ebert replaced the USPD members from his cabinet with Social Democrats, thus removing the extreme left-wing voice (Sapinsley, 1968, pp. 37-38). The worst of the conflict, however, was soon to come in the early months of 1919.

On January 5, 1919, a Spartacist demonstration in Berlin led Social Democrats to demonstrate, as well. Within a week, the two groups were fighting in the streets of the city. Ebert's Minister of War, Gustav Noske, called in both the Reichswehr and the Freikorps, a police organization of volunteer nationalists, to end the hostilities. Spartacists were hunted down throughout the city and either arrested or executed. Both military forces under the control of the government were right-wing. Many, having served in the war, thought that they had been

cheated out of winning the war by the left-wing parties. Peter Gay (1968) wrote, "the Social Democrat Noske, the 'bloodhound' of the Republic, gave the right-wing troops wide latitude for action - that is to say, for organized assassination" (p. 19). By January 15, the Spartacists were defeated, and the group's leaders, Karl Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg, were arrested. They were both murdered en route to a civilian prison (Sapinsley, 1968, p. 38).

These early events spawned a hostile attitude among the Leftist parties, and connected to these parties were the artists who depicted this violence. An immediate opposition was created between the government, with a right-wing army, and the left-wing artists sympathetic to the needs of the proletariat. In addition to attitudes in the army, the sheer number of assassinations aimed at the left and their respective prison terms point to a similar right-wing sympathy in the courts. Of the 22 assassinations by the political left, 10 were punished by death. In contrast, among the 354 assassinations directed at the left, not one resulted in a death sentence (Gay, 1968, p. 20).

On January 19, 1919, Germany's first democratic elections for the Reichstag were held. The Social Democrats and Catholic Center party gained the majority of seats. To draft a constitution, the convention was held in Weimar, the home of Goethe and Schiller, in order to disassociate the Republic with Prussian militarism and the old empire. Ebert was elected President, and he chose Scheidemann to be Chancellor (Sapinsley, 1968, pp. 39-41).

During the same months, a Communist government was established in Munich with Kurt Eisner, a journalist, as its leader. As he was about to step down in the face of opposition, Eisner was assassinated, an act that triggered a revolution throughout Bavaria, and civil war ensued. Shortly after a Soviet Republic was declared in Bavaria, Noske marched through the region, and once again, leftist sympathizers were ruthlessly killed. The right-wing sentiments attached themselves to Munich, and it would later become the site of Hitler's first attempt to seize power (Sapinsley, 1968, pp. 41-42). After the bloody revolution, Munich was no longer the city for artists. They had to travel to Berlin (Schrader and Schebera, 1988, pp. 20-23).

Added into this chaos of political opposition, the Versailles Treaty was a devastating blow, as well. Despite the Kaiser's abdication, the British continued their blockade until negotiations on the Versailles Treaty were settled. When the Treaty was handed to the

Germans on May 7, 1919, it was not offered with the intention of further negotiation. In fact, the German delegates did not have contact with the foreign powers until the document was put in front of them. Its conditions were harsh, and much of the social and political unrest during the Weimar years can be attributed to it. Much worse than the demands to reduce the military drastically, give up approximately one-eighth of German territory, and allow the Allies to occupy the Rhineland was Article 231, termed the 'war guilt' clause. It read:

The Allied and Associated Governments affirm and Germany accepts the responsibility of Germany and her allies for causing all the loss and damage to which the Allied and Associated Governments and their nationals have been subjected as a consequence of the war imposed upon them by the aggression of Germany and her allies.

Not only were the Germans to accept the guilt, the inclusion of this article meant that the Allies could demand reparation payments. Under threat of a resumption of war from the Allies, the German Reichstag was forced to approve the Treaty on June 23, 1919. "Because Wilson and the Allies had refused to deal directly with the warmakers - the Kaiser and his generals - it was the new democratic government that had to accept the peace treaty, sign away German territory, German people, German pride and German prestige, and appear to agree that Germany was responsible for the war" (Sapinsley, 1968, p. 46). Sapinsley goes on to say, "By forcing strong punitive terms on the defeated nation, as if it were still the wartime Imperial government, the Allies gave propaganda weapons to both the extreme Right and the extreme Left with which they could attack the new and shaky Weimar Republic" (p. 48). The artworks from the early Weimar years attest to this statement, expressing rage aimed towards those in command. The majority of these works that criticized the SPD government were by artists firmly situated on the left. On the right, figures such as Adolf Hitler, a corporal returning from the war, expressed similar outrage, feeling slighted by the politicians for giving up so easily. Those returning from the front held on to the 'stab-in-the-back' theory, blaming the left-wing government for giving up the war and conspiring against the monarchy, as well as the men on the front (Sapinsley, pp. 44-48).

The first years of the Republic did not get any more peaceful. Lewis (1971) writes, "From 1919 to the end of 1923 the republic existed precariously between uprising and strikes from the left and coups and putsches from the right" (p. 125). The devaluation of the mark further agitated the domestic hostilities. Germany was forced to deal with several attempts to overthrow the government while inflation drove the value of the mark to incredible depths. During the war, Germany had begun printing money rapidly, causing the mark gradually to lose value internationally. With Germany's loss of credit after the war, this drop turned severe. At 4 marks to the US dollar in 1914, it had depreciated a hundred-fold by 1922. By the end of 1923, it would take 4 billion marks to equal one US dollar (Sapinsley, 1968, pp. 54-55). Industrialists such as Hugo Stinnes took advantage of the situation by purchasing companies with the worthless money, amassing an empire of nearly 2000 companies during this period (Crockett, 1999, p. 26). The capitalist as exploiter was a frequent subject in art, and even after stability had resumed, this stereotype continued to be used. G.W. Pabst's characterizations in *The Joyless Street* (1925) are examples of this and will be discussed in detail in chapter 6.

In March 1920, Wolfgang Kapp with General Ludendorff's support marched into Berlin and gained control of the government offices. Ebert's government was forced to flee. The Reichswehr refused to suppress the rebellion because the rebels were members of the army. However, the Social Democrats had close ties with the labor forces, and Ebert called for a general strike in Berlin. Kapp fled the city after five days of no water or electricity, thus ending the worst putsch of the period (Sapinsley, 1968, pp. 52-53).

A second noteworthy putsch occurred three years later in Munich, amidst the residual right-wing sympathies. Adolf Hitler, by then leader of the emerging National Socialist party, proclaimed a revolution in one of the beer halls of the city. He promised seats in government to those who followed him. However, unable to challenge the army of Berlin, Hitler's storm troopers marched into Munich. They met resistance from the police, and the insurrection was put down. Hitler was arrested and tried for treason. However, the court hearing served to make his voice known as he preached his ideology in his defense. Serving nine months of a five-year sentence, Hitler was released and oddly enough not expelled to his native Austria,

despite the publication of Mein Kampf, a written record of Hitler's ideological preachings (Sapinsley, 1968, pp. 60-64).

In August of 1923, Gustav Stresemann became Chancellor of the Weimar Republic. At the time, inflation was nearing its peak, and the French had occupied the Ruhr when a delivery of telephone poles was not delivered in agreement with the reparations payments (de Jonge, 1978, p. 85). The situation merely provided the French an excuse to march into the Ruhr. This action set off a chain of events in the Ruhr, such as strikes and violent uprisings. The Ruhr contained Germany's primary source of coal and steel, and as a valuable natural resource, both France and Germany wanted control over it. The German army encouraged guerilla warfare which was met with harsh retaliatory actions by the French, such as executions and arrests. Stresemann stated that the government would no longer condone resistance in the Ruhr. Instead, he had plans to turn around the country's economy so that reparations could be paid (Sapinsley, 1968, p. 58-59). The 'Rentenmark' was introduced as a temporary currency, and it was backed by a nearly nationwide mortgage (Sapinsley, p. 81). By December, the economy enjoyed stability with the new currency (de Jonge, p. 105).

In April 1924, the Dawes Committee, headed by the American economist Charles Dawes, published its recommendations for Germany's economy. It contained a plan for scaled payments of reparations according to Germany's ability to pay. It also depended upon foreign loans to Germany (Peukert, 1992, p. 60). After approval by the Reichstag, the loan was made in October 1924. A month later the French troops left the Ruhr. Over the next few years, loans poured into Germany, financing industry, agriculture, and residential developments. However, a cycle of payments was begun in which the United States loaned money to Germany, Germany made reparations to France and Britain, and those payments then were used to pay off debts to the United States (Sapinsley, 1968, pp. 83-86). This constant exchange would later break down with the stock market crash in 1929.

In 1925, President Ebert died, and the veteran Field Marshall von Hindenburg was persuaded to run for office. Winning the election against the Communists, Hindenburg won by a narrow margin, thus placing a Monarchist at the head of the democratic state. Despite his nostalgia for the empire, Hindenburg attempted to allow the country to maintain its course, and

the next few years saw an increased stabilization resulting from the halt to inflation. During the same year, the Locarno Treaties were approved, which began a peace agreement between the European countries, including France, Germany, and Belgium, further increasing stabilization (Sapinsley, 1968, p. 88).

The late twenties were marked by a radical shift to both extremes of the political spectrum. The National Socialists, as well as the Communist party, began to gain power and seats in the Reichstag. Although both parties suffered during the immediate stabilization, many flocked to either extremity as unemployment figures began to rise with the dwindling amount of incoming loans. The stock market crash of 1929 and Stresemann's death the previous month sealed Germany's fate (Sapinsley, 1968, pp. 96-106).

The last few years of the Weimar Republic witnessed a barrage of elections as the National Socialists attempted to gain seats in the Reichstag as well as the Presidency. The power of the Social Democrats was on its wane, as election results indicate. The Nazis won 107 seats in the 1930 election, in which the Social Democrats remained in power with 143 (Sapinsley, 1968, p. 111). The elections less than two years later resulted in the Nazis possessing 230 seats (Sapinsley, p. 129). This figure marks an astounding rise over the 12 seats gained in the 1928 election (Sapinsley, p. 103). The increasing popularity is indicative of a growing dissatisfaction with the Social Democratic government through the years of depression. In fact, Sapinsley states of the Nazi party's condition in 1924, "It was obvious that they needed disasters on which to feed" (p. 102).

On January 30, 1933, Hitler was appointed Chancellor of Germany by the aging Hindenburg (de Jonge, 1978, p. 230). For the next year, the Nazi party raided headquarters and arrested members of the left-wing parties, notably the Communist party. With the death of Hindenburg on August 2, 1934, Hitler assumed full power in Germany, thus ending Germany's first attempt at democracy (Sapinsley, 1968, p. 142-148). Soon after, the artworks from the previous decade were labeled 'degenerate' and promptly banned, ending an era of astounding intellectual activity in art, philosophy, literature and film.

### Chapter III: Weimar Art

Art in Germany was affected enormously by the politics and social unrest of the first decades of the twentieth century. In fact, the political events are mirrored in the art of the period. Early Expressionist works used peaceful subjects to promote a new way of looking at the world. Many of these works portray a utopian setting that promoted this inherent idealism of Expressionism. However, despite the peaceful nature of the early Expressionist subjects, the art was barbaric in form, emphasizing primitive influences. When the war began, these artists were affected by the shocking horror of modern warfare. These horrors began to play into some works painted during the war as well as in the earliest works of the Republic. As the war came to a close and thoughts of revolution provided an idealist hope that a new world of brotherhood and peace would be established, paintings boldly represented this ideal while attacking the class system that still existed at the time. Within a few years, however, it was evident the revolution had resulted in a parliamentary system that still benefited the capitalist and the aristocrat. The zeal evident in the early paintings deteriorated as reality struck art. At that point, in the mid-twenties, art shifted into realistic representation in order to portray real events and issues. The resulting sobriety lasted until the Nazis' rise to power, mirroring the stability of late Weimar culture, yet depicting its decay and immorality. Therefore, with the established frame of Weimar political events, this section examines the artistic shift from Expressionism to the New Objectivity, and with this artistic context firmly rooted within the era's political history, specific films mirroring both art and politics will be discussed, leading into an analysis of Pabst's films in particular.

The concept of Expressionism is very unclear precisely because there was no unified expressionist voice with a universal dogma that set the rules for Expressionism. As a movement, it was fragmented among various cities within Germany. Although John Barlow (1982) points out that the term expressionism is very vague, sometimes even used to denote anything that moves away from realism, he further describes the term in its historical context as a "general revolt against representation, aestheticism, and tradition" (p. 18). Its goal was to "bring out the

true spirit of things and the world” (Barlow, p. 19). However vague the term may be, its foundational features can be noted so that a clear contrast between it and its succeeding movement can be distinguished. As will be plain to see, the transition from one movement to the next mirrors its historical context.

The origins of Expressionism date back to the first decade of the twentieth century. Franz Roh cites Emil Nolde as the "founder of German Expressionism" (Roh, 1968, p. 49). Nolde joined Die Brücke, literally translated as The Bridge, shortly after its formation in June 1905. The aims of this group, formed by Ernst Ludwig Kirchner, Fritz Bleyl, Erich Heckel, and Karl Schmidt-Rottluff, were to "free themselves of Realism, Jugendstil, and Impressionism" (Roh, pp. 52-54). Jugendstil, translating to 'youth style,' was a late nineteenth century movement that was "nature-derived, antimechanical, antimerchantile" and "a primarily decorative arts expression" (Myers, 1963, p. 27). According to Roh, Die Brücke "found a source of strength in the barbaric figures of primitive art" (p. 54). The desire to move away from a clearly exterior, objective way of conceptualizing the world, such as Impressionism's use of light, to a more interior, subjective view of the inherent spirit within objects was the foundation for Die Brücke's philosophy. Gordon (1987) states "the very word 'Expressionism' came into common use as a counterweight to the label 'Impressionism;' it signified subjective not scientific qualities, inner rather than outer values" (p. 69). Delicate strokes were no longer used to grace the image. The new art was barbaric in form. Loud colors and bold brushstrokes were used to show the primitive influences of the artists (Gordon, p. 52). By 1911, Die Brücke artists, as well as those from another group, Der Blaue Reiter, were beginning to be described by critics as Expressionists (Long (ed.), 1995, p. 3).

However, German Expressionism was not popular among many artists during its early years. The Cubists rejected it for its simplicity. The Cubists, also influenced by primitive art, attempted to incorporate a multi-faceted view of reality into the exotic forms and colors of this primitive art. German Expressionism, on the other hand, "drawing a fresh feeling for nature from the same source, remained rooted in a reality which it wanted only to simplify expressively" (Roh, 1968, p. 55). However, despite this critique, Expressionism went further than simply expressing reality. Myers (1963) wrote, "Expressionist art destroys the appearance of things to

arrive at nonrational and spiritual values" (p.11). Therefore, Expressionism tried to transcend reality, depicting an interior world that is deeply rooted in primitive spiritualism.

In 1911, Expressionism was attacked on very different grounds, this time by a German. Because Expressionism was so greatly influenced by non-Germans such as Cezanne and Van Gogh, Carl Vinnen criticized the movement as an un-German art. In a famous publication titled, A Protest of German Artists, Vinnen asked the question, "What constitutes the great danger of introducing foreign art, when speculation takes hold of it?" He proceeds to answer by writing, "Well, mostly in the overestimation of foreign nature so that our own, original character doesn't measure up" (Long (ed.), 1995, p. 7). The National Socialists would use this same argument decades later (Long (ed.), p. 6). A reply to Vinnen's paper was published later that same year. In The Struggle for Art: The Answer to the "Protest of German Artists", Wilhelm Worringer defends the French influence:

He who really knows about being German, who knows above all the history of German art, he knows that it is not given to us, with our innate ambiguity and with our inborn, sensual, instinctive uncertainty, to find the direct route to a form, he knows that we always take our cue first from outside Germany, that we have always had to give up and lose ourselves first, in order to find our real selves. That has been the tragedy and the grandeur of German art from Durer to Mares, and he who would cut our art from interaction with other art worlds is betraying our real national tradition. (Long (ed.), p.12)

Kandinsky also wrote a piece for this publication that described the interaction between the internal and external components within art. Less a rebuttal, and more an explanation, Kandinsky stressed the "subordination of the external element (that of form) to the internal (that of content)," a contrast to the conventional stress inherited from the previous century upon form (Long (ed.), p. 40).

In addition to those who opposed Expressionism were those who commented on its ability "to convey the cosmic, the eternal, the heroic, and described the art's revolutionary forcefulness" (Long (ed.), 1995, p. 3). By 1912, Expressionism was beginning to be regarded by several critics as superior to Cubism (Long (ed.), p. 3).

'Die Brücke' existed until 1920, although by 1913, the strength of the Dresden-based group was deteriorating because of individual styles among the artists (Roh, 1968, p. 54). Gordon (1987) considers the earliest period, that between 1905 and 1910, a period of optimism and a "promise of renewal" (p.xvii). Expressionism's middle period, 1910-1914, was marked by a tension between optimism and pessimism. In Munich, the New Artists Federation was formed by such names as Wassily Kandinsky and Alexei von Jawlensky. However, disagreements soon broke the federation into two halves, with Kandinsky, Marc and Kubin branching off into what was to be called Der Blaue Reiter, or The Blue Rider. Exhibitions included works from Die Brücke and the Berlin New Secession (Roh, p. 70-71). Roh describes the works of Der Blaue Reiter as tamer than that of Die Brücke. He writes, "In the Blaue Reiter group there was a great thirst for beauty and the romantic" (p.72). Der Blaue Reiter group included writers, sculptors and composers, as well as artists. The philosophy was that the new revolution of spiritual influence would manifest itself in all branches of art. In the Blaue Reiter almanac, Kandinsky wrote, "Our first and most important goal is to reflect artistic events directly concerned with this change and the facts needed to shed light on these events, even in other fields of the spiritual life" (Long (ed.), 1995, p. 46). Harkening back to the Struggle for Art, he ends with, "The whole work, called art, knows no borders or nations, only humanity" (Long (ed.), p. 47). The group was forced to break up in 1914 because of the war. The war claimed the lives of two of its artists, and the Russian members, such as Kandinsky, were forced to leave the country (Roh, p. 71).

In the immediate pre-war years, two publications began to gain notoriety. Although very different, 'Der Sturm' and 'Die Aktion' both attracted artists into a defined school of ideology. Herwarth Walden started 'Der Sturm' in 1910 as a Berlin journal dedicated to Expressionist art and opposed to everything the Wilhelmine empire embodied. However, "it was also a gallery, a publishing company, and an art school" (Long (ed.), 1995, p. 55). 'Der Sturm' existed until 1932. Its only rival in popularity and life span was 'Die Aktion.' 'Die Aktion,' the most popular anti-war journal, was started a year after 'Der Sturm' by Franz Pfemfert (Schrader and Schebera, 1988, p. 32). It too lasted until 1932, and the two Berlin journals competed with each other throughout those years (Crockett, 1999, p. 8).

The war years in Germany witnessed a repression of revolutionary material. Government censorship resulted in artists and writers abandoning rebellious stances for a more nationalist, conservative ideology (Willett, 1978, p. 18). However, with the crumbling of the monarchy in late 1918, groups of artists began to organize again along revolutionary lines. The November Group, formed around the time Ebert took over the government, sparked the formation of similar groups in the major art centers of Germany such as Dresden's Group 1919. These groups of artists published appeals to other artists, looking towards the Soviet Union as a model state possessing a national art coexisting with their people's government (Crockett, 1999, p. 9).

Although this period directly following the war is frequently cited as Expressionism's apex, the initial burst of optimism over the revolution dissipated rapidly. As quickly as the Expressionists unified, they fell apart. Myers (1963) wrote, "By 1923 it had become sufficiently clear to the idealistic Expressionists that there was no longer much to hope for" (p. 224). The war was not only a significant loss, any hope for peace was also lost once the Versailles Treaty's demands plunged Germany into economic disaster. In addition, the promise of revolution ended with the re-establishment of the former landed aristocracy and the Kaiser's military under governmental control, as well as severe inflation and unemployment. The hope of a new German state and social transformation was all but dead by 1920, following both the murders of Spartacist leaders Karl Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg, as well as the violent crushing of rebellions in Berlin and Munich by the Freikorps and Reichswehr. In 1920, the art critic, Wilhelm Hausenstein wrote, "Expressionismus ist tot," or "Expressionism is dead" (Barton, 1981, p. 4). As Crockett (1999) writes, Hausenstein reported "it had fulfilled its purpose...and was now trivial, commercial, and institutional" (p. 12).

The New Objectivity rose from this despair, not with hopes for the future but with a sober respect for reality. According to Myers (1963), this had both a positive and a negative side. The positive meant that artists became more practical, realistic, and less naive. The negative, of course, meant that this movement was ultimately attached to the disillusionment and nihilism of the period (p. 225). Crockett (1999) writes, "During the chaos of 1918-24, artists - or, perhaps more accurately, art critics - had developed a new art movement. Although this

movement remains vague as a cohesive whole, it cannot be denied the Expressionist movement - the movement of spiritual and cultural rejuvenation - had the wind taken from its sails during those years" (p. 32).

International art, such a major influence in Expressionism's early years, had little influence on German Expressionism during the war and immediately following. However, the European artistic trends mirrored Germany's move to a realist style of art. Cubism was declared dead in France in 1916, and following the war, a classicist style took hold in France, labeled Purism. During the war years in Germany the French painter Henri Rousseau, whom in 1912 Kandinsky had labeled "the father of the 'great realism,'" was very popular among the artists. According to Crockett (1999), he was the most "accessible" French artist to the Germans. Having died in 1910, his works had found their way into publications such as the 'Blaue Reiter Almanac.' Until 1922, though, "very little was known in Germany of Contemporary French Art" (Crockett, pp. 14-15). For this reason, Rousseau ended up being New Objectivity's leading French influence.

However, in Italy, a new form of art was gaining international popularity during this time, as well. 'Valori Plastici,' a Roman art journal, was "the most widely discussed foreign source in Germany around 1920" (Crockett, 1999, pp. 16-17). Its major contributors were Carlo Carra and Giorgio de Chirico. These artists embraced a style that rejected Futurism in favor of a more classical approach. An exhibition was organized in 1921 in response to the popularity of the new Italian style among the Germans. "As did Rousseau, the 'Valori Plastici' artists offered the Germans a fully developed alternative to Expressionism" (Crockett, p. 19). Like Rousseau the new Italian classicism was to have a great impact upon the emergence of the New Objectivity in Germany.

"Where the Expressionist was dynamic, the New Objectivist is deliberately static, cold, and even dry in quality" (Myers, 1963, p. 230). The Expressionists clung to the spiritual world, using religious, erotic and fantastic themes. The New Objectivists took in the society that surrounded them, and used that as material for social criticism. "Instead of the ecstasy and subjectivism of Expressionism's symbolic-type form, we now find a straightforward objectivity and a seeking out of individual character" (Myers, p. 228). In 1925 Franz Roh commented on

this transition from Expressionism to what he labeled 'Magic Realism.' He wrote, "religious and transcendental themes have largely disappeared in recent painting. In contrast, we are offered a new style that is thoroughly of this world, that celebrates the mundane" (Zamora and Faris (eds.), 1995, p. 17).

Two dominant styles emerged early in the Weimar Republic: Realism and Geometric Abstraction (Barton, 1981, p. 4). Both of these styles "reacted against Expressionism's fervor and idealism in favor of a more sober concern for contemporary realities" (Barton, p. 61). Barton goes on to say, "Another aspect of the art of both geometric abstraction and realism which is related to the more objective mood of the period is the concern for concrete problems dealt with in a methodical and careful manner" (p. 62).

Based on constructivism and functionalism the Bauhaus, founded by the architect Walter Gropius in 1919, was of the geometric abstraction style (Sapinsley, 1968, p. 74). This constructivism branched into all aspects of artistic creation, but architecture dominated partly due to the housing problem facing Germany at the time. The Bauhaus philosophy was not a movement such as Expressionism; it was a method that linked art to craftsmanship (Schrader & Schebera, 1988, p. 152). Even the school's teachers were as varied as its encompassing philosophy. Such well-known artists as Lyonel Feininger, Paul Klee, Laszlo Moholy-Nagy and Kandinsky taught there at some point during its 14-year existence. Franz Roh (1968) concludes "No other country had ever succeeded in uniting so many highly individualistic masters under one roof" (p. 85). The school, employing a workshop curriculum, embraced industrialization, and this was seen in emerging trends of graphic art. Although the Bauhaus employed the techniques of Constructivism, many of the 'masters' who taught there were connected to 'Der Sturm,' and for this reason, the Bauhaus is loosely linked to Expressionism. Rose Carol-Washton Long (1995) wrote, "Many of the faculty came to disassociate themselves from Expressionism, but the commitment to essentially Expressionist concepts - the belief in art's transcendental and metaphysical nature and in the universalism of basic color and form - remained as one of the legacies of the Bauhaus" (p. 246).

Despite its contributions to architecture and art, the school and its Bohemian atmosphere were not highly regarded by right-wing parties (Gay, 1968, p. 100). Mies van der

Rohe, one of Gropius's successors as head of the school, was forced to close when the Nazis came to power. By that point, the school had already relocated twice, its final move having been to Berlin (Sapinsley, 1968, pp. 76-77).

When the New Objectivity gained popularity, the inflation of the early 1920s had subsided. For the artists, inflation had proved to be a profitable condition. During the inflationary period, artworks were snatched up as stable investments. Also, taxes were not applied to pieces of art when bought directly from the artist. George Grosz and Otto Dix both gained notoriety from this situation, selling works as quickly as they could be finished. Grosz's drawings on paper were best suited for quick production and sale. "Between 1920 and 1924 no young German artist received as much national attention as Grosz" (Crockett, 1999, p. 29). Dix's watercolors were quick productions and sales, as well. By the summer of 1923, however, the market began to slow down. Freight rates became too expensive for artists to ship works to prospective buyers or galleries. In fact, Gustav Hartlaub's first attempt to exhibit New Objectivity art in 1923 was cancelled because of rising freight costs. By the end of the year, the prosperity enjoyed by artists disappeared, and the market resumed a slow yet normal pace mirroring the stability of the nation's economy (Crockett, pp. 31-32).

In 1925, G.F. Hartlaub successfully organized an exhibition of works by artists he thought reacted against Expressionism. He is credited for giving the term 'Die neue Sachlichkeit,' roughly translating to the New Objectivity, to this group of rising artists in Germany (Long (ed.),1995, p. 290). The New Objectivity, like Expressionism, was stylistically and geographically split. Within the movement were several variants originating in several different cities. Hartlaub breaks the movement into two variants: Verism and Neoclassicism. However, Hartlaub defines the Neo-classicists based upon their conservative style, but contrasts this with the leftist subject matter of the Verists. Barton (1981) criticizes Hartlaub because not only is he contrasting the style of one group with the content of another, he implies that these groups represent opposite ends of the spectrum. However, within this differentiation, Hartlaub pointed out a major difference between the two variants. Verists stressed content while the Neo-classicists stressed form. A clearer definition of the variants within the New Objectivity, as Barton points out, is based upon Wieland Schmied's breakdown of this

movement. He classifies the variants largely according to cities. In Berlin and Dresden were the Verists, a socially critical and political branch of the realists. The artists in Cologne used a constructivist style stressing formal technique rather than political ideology, once again pointing to Hartlaub's differentiation. The artists of Munich were neo-classicist while those in Hannover were heavily influenced by the art of Rousseau (Barton, pp. 65-66).

Among the variants of the New Objectivity, the Verists are perhaps the most important of these because not only is it the largest group, it is also the most socially critical. For the purposes of this study, the latter characterization is extremely important. Therefore, a quick study of two of New Objectivity's most well known Verists is necessary. In fact, Otto Dix and George Grosz are arguably the two most well known artists associated with the New Objectivity.

Dix began publishing his works while still in Dresden. He was a member of the Dresden 'Gruppe 1919,' a radical group of Expressionists formed in the spirit of the Novembergruppe who encouraged artistic experimentation (Barton, 1981, pp. 15-16). Dix had served in the trenches during the war, and his works reflect this in addition to the social conditions existing in postwar Germany. Much of the subject matter deals with the grotesque, both the sexually grotesque and the violently grotesque. Characters who have suffered from some form of bodily abuse constantly appear in his paintings and drawings during this period. These characters range from maimed war veterans to aged prostitutes. However, his works remained politically neutral. Although he was critical of society, Dix was never affiliated with politics as many of the artists were. In 1922, Dix moved to Dusseldorf, and he was married the next year. It was during the years in Dusseldorf that Dix participated in Hartlaub's 1925 exhibition at the Mannheim Kunsthalle. That same year, Dix once again moved, this time to Berlin. The earlier themes of sexuality and violence had disappeared by this point in his career. However, Dix was established among leftist and liberal circles. Dix moved on to portraiture during the last years of the Republic, and stayed in Germany throughout the Nazi period. In 1934, the Nazis forbade exhibitions of his work, and many works were confiscated and destroyed during the Nazi era (Barton, pp. 17-29). Dix died in 1969 (Barton, p. xv).

The themes that preoccupied Dix's works, as mentioned earlier, were sexual and violent. Brigid Barton (1981) analyzes these themes, categorizing Dix's art by content. The first of these are the characters on the 'fringe' of society, as Barton describes it (p. 36). A specific character-type that appears, perhaps influenced by the naval mutiny in 1918, is the sailor. "For Dix, the sailor is seen as one who acts out desires which the rest of humanity represses" (Barton, p. 37). These paintings always include the presence of women, and usually denote the sexual exploits of the sailor. As such, the works are more humorous and not nearly as morbid as his other works. Like the sailor, the circus-performer exists on society's border, as well. Dix incorporates these performers in several paintings ranging from depictions along the same lines as the light-hearted sailor works to humorless morbidity. One last subject Dix captures from society's 'fringe,' although by no means the least important, is prostitution. He uses prostitutes to symbolize a diseased and decadent society. For models, Dix chose older women with bodies that have seen many years of sexual abuse. In his art, he contrasts their delusions of beauty with their grotesque physical traits. He also presents them in the context of society, displaying them in front of storefronts as though they were merchandise. "These figures became instead symbols for the state of society as a whole in its diseased condition" (Barton, p. 46).

The intersection of sex and death is an obsession in many of the works from this period, as well. "For artists such as Grosz and Dix the subject of murder, both related to politics and sex, would have been seen as an example of what they considered to be life in a corrupt society" (Barton, 1981, p. 48). Dix painted several pieces containing the sex-murder theme, including a self-portrait. This theme will figure into some of Pabst's films, most notably *Pandora's Box* (1928). These violent portrayals will be examined in the final section of chapter 6.

Other themes taken from his surroundings included war cripples and street-fighting, as well as gruesome pictorials of war. These works were realist to the point of grotesque. They focused on the details of war injury, emphasizing both the violence of war and the apathy of the public toward the wounded. However, the revolutionary themes changed to portraiture in the latter half of the century. Barton (1981) remarks, "Dix's most successful period was between

1921 and 1924, when he managed to merge themes of major import with a stark, realist mode in order to create works of enduring strength and value" (p. 60).

George Grosz, although grouped with Dix as a Verist, followed a different, more political path throughout his career. Like Dix, Grosz started in Dresden. He attended the art academy there and moved to Berlin in 1912. "It was at this time that the night life of Berlin began to captivate Grosz's attention. He has written that he was attracted to the night life like a moth to fire, fearing it, romantically fascinated by it, and unable to stay away" (Lewis, 1971, p. 16). Grosz was also obsessed with America, especially the Wild West. During the war, Grosz met the brothers Wieland Herzefelde and John Heartfield, and soon after, they began to publish a journal containing their leftist political views. When the Spartacists demonstrated in 1918, Grosz was caught in the city and was forced to hide from the vicious attacks of the right. He remained attached to the Communist party during the Republic's years of inflation. However, his refusal to submit to a party that had become merely a branch of the Soviet Bolsheviks as well as his own experiences while traveling in Russia caused his convictions to wane (Lewis, pp. 28, 41-42, 68-69). After 1930, "The satirical political activist became increasingly romantic in his work and pessimistic in his outlook" (Lewis, p. 205). He left Germany in 1932 (Lewis, p. 210).

Grosz's early work was influenced by the Expressionists, having had formal training in the city that gave birth to some of the earliest Expressionists. "Concentrating upon the urban scene, the cafe, the street, and the brothel - all expressionist themes - Grosz portrayed disturbed people who were involved in emotional crises which their environments reflected and enhanced" (Lewis, 1971, p. 17). Among his earliest themes are, like Dix, the sex-murder, as well as couples engaged in disputes (Lewis, p. 21). "His drawings continued to dwell upon the militarism, prostitution, passion, crime, the Wild West; stylistically they were deeply disturbed, chaotic, sinister" (Lewis, p. 32). Grosz also wrote poetry in the style of Expressionism, utilizing the same themes of "cabaret and circus artists; drunken nights and prostitution; the noise and throb of the city with its despair, filth, and crime; the debauchery of cafe scenes" (Lewis, p. 34). He even had his own cabaret act containing dance and song (Lewis, p. 38).

After the war, Grosz became a member of the November Group, but disputes soon broke the group apart. As a Marxist, Grosz believed that all art was political. In fact, "Within the Marxist framework there could be no art that was not intimately tied to its contemporary context" (Lewis, 1971, p. 93). Grosz sided with Alex Keil, of the Communist party, in the belief that until the proletariat controls the means of production, a proletarian art cannot exist. During these years, Grosz's work is characterized by biting caricatures of militarism and middle class profiteers. Grosz invited all artists to join the political struggle and denounced those who continued upholding a bourgeois mentality by detaching themselves from the plight of the working class. His portfolios during this time reflect a strong desire to reach the working class (Lewis, pp. 79, 95-97). "Grosz explained that these new works were an attempt to give an absolutely realistic world picture which would be comprehensible to every person and which would avoid all of the old sentimentality and romanticism surrounding art" (Lewis, p. 98).

However, Grosz's disillusionment with the Communist party led him to pessimistically portray all of society's ills. Portfolios such as 'Ecce Homo' reveal Grosz's disdain for society as a whole. "The 'Ecce Homo' drawings were a logical outcome of the Marxist view of the decadence and alienation of man which occurs in a capitalist society" (Lewis, 1971, p. 167).

The latter half of Grosz's Weimar art continued with this focus upon the social life in Germany. "Most of the drawings dealt with street and cafe scenes, with courting couples and married couples, with drinking and eating" (Lewis, 1971, p. 176). By 1925, Grosz's view of proletarian art had changed. He began to regard "art as a journalistic tool, not art as a weapon for the proletariat" (Lewis, p. 192). The drawings lost a clear ideology and started to depict society, with all its ills, objectively, yet it continued to dwell upon the ugliest aspects. His hatred of the ruling classes turned into a hatred of society in general (Lewis, p. 206).

The social criticism that grew in Grosz's work is typical of the transition from Expressionism to New Objectivity. Perhaps the biting criticism even resulted in his popularity. Dix and Grosz both had works confiscated by the government on the grounds that they were obscene. However, this censorship only served to heighten their fame; these governmental sanctions merely served to advertise their art to the public (Crockett, 1999, p. 29). External conditions shaped the direction that art took, and as will be seen in the next chapter, Weimar

film, deeply affected by the social and political conditions of the time, witnessed a similar transition.

## Chapter IV: Weimar Film

A brief description of Weimar film will serve to establish a complete context, rounding out that which has been established by the previous two chapters. G.W. Pabst's films are intentionally excluded so that they may be discussed separately and in depth in the succeeding chapter. What follows is a historical examination of the Weimar film industry with special emphasis upon those films that survive today. As such, they are generally the more artistic films of Weimar's cinematic output, and within this thesis in which the artistic movements of Weimar Germany form the foundation for the film analysis this characteristic is especially useful in illustrating a connection between Weimar art and Weimar film.

German film prior to World War I could not compete with foreign products. French, Italian, English, American, and later Scandinavian filmmakers dominated the film industry in Germany. Because of Germany's population, it was a desirable market for foreign producers. However, once the war broke out, Germany was restricted to more domestic films. New studios were built and mass production methods began to be implemented by Germany. These first films during the war exalted patriotism and largely dealt with war-time subjects. By 1915, the tide in film changed to more peaceful subjects, as the masses grew tired of the long, bloody war. The public began to look to the movies as a way to escape (Wollenberg, 1972).

During the war, the ruling classes noticed film's potential strengths (Wollenberg, 1972). Film viewing was growing in popularity as a favorite leisure activity, and films had not only educational potential but also propagandist characteristics. Viewers could be inundated with messages while being entertained, and the audience did not have to be restricted to the domestic public. Film exports could serve propagandist functions in foreign countries as well. In response to the visible effects that film had on foreign audiences, the main film companies merged to form Ufa in 1917, a film studio one-third owned by the state and created upon order of General Ludendorff (Furhammer and Isaksson, 1971, p. 30), and "was Germany's first fully integrated cinema corporation" (Silberman (ed.), 1995, p. 3). As Silberman also points out, the Ufa Palast, built in all its grandiosity in 1919, was created at a time when Germany was

economically pressed to its limits, and the country was still very cognizant of its recent defeat in war. This indicates that Ufa's aim was to "move the cinema in Germany from its subproletarian and suburban grounding to the urban centers of Bourgeois culture" (Silberman (ed.), p. 4). Its predecessors were the government-founded Deulig, formed to make documentaries in 1916, and Bufa, an organization that supplied troops with theaters. In 1918, Bufa dissolved, and Ufa became a private company (Kracauer, 1959, pp. 35-9).

Ernst Lubitsch played an important role in laying out a foundation for German cinema. His historical costume-films, such as *Passion* (1919), were fabricated stories depicting a nihilistic view of historical events (Kracauer, 1959, p. 53). An Ufa production, *Passion* premiered on the opening night of the Ufa-Palast am Zoo (Kreimeier, 1996, p. 56). A film about the French Revolution, *Passion* was particularly relevant to the social situation of the Weimar Republic, released immediately following Germany's own revolution. Lubitsch's costume films were also the first German films since the war to be shown abroad. Although his films were praised in America for their elegant sets and wardrobe, the French considered the films to be mere propaganda (Kracauer, p. 51). Oddly enough, another Lubitsch film from the same year, *The Oyster Princess* (1919), was a satire of the stereotypical, rich, American capitalist (Manvell & Fraenkel, 1971, p. 20). Ufa did claim, however, that its goal was not to ridicule national histories of other countries. Rather, its aim was to appeal to foreign markets (Kreimeier, p. 54).

During the inflation period that directly followed the war, roughly the years 1919-1923, Expressionist film became an extremely popular style of cinema. These films used stylized sets and acting to construct a narrative, usually either set in a fantasy world or a parallel reality. Expressionist cinema owes much to the theater. Barlow (1982) states:

The most important vehicle of literary expressionism, in considering expressionism in the cinema, is the theater. In the first place, the development of theatrical technology in lighting and scenery nurtured and was nurtured by the same developments in the cinema, and these took place in an expressionistic environment. Second many expressionist dramatists, in their eagerness to break away from traditional art forms, were especially interested in the potential of

film. Finally most of the actors and directors who came to the movies from 1913 on into the 1920s came from the theater. (pp. 21-22)

G.W. Pabst was one of these directors who began in the theater and later moved to cinema feeling that the new medium had more potential than did the theater.

Lotte Eisner's study on Weimar film focuses specifically on Max Reinhardt's influence on Expressionist film. Eisner (1969) explains of Reinhardt "He had become so important that in solid middle-class families everybody skipped the headlines to read Alfred Kerr's article on the previous night's performance. Berliners often went to Reinhardt's theatre several times a week, for the programme changed daily" (p. 47). Much of cinema's early talent came directly from Max Reinhardt's theater, such as Paul Wegener, Werner Krauss, Emil Jannings, and Conrad Veidt (Eisner, p. 44). The ties between cinema and theater during these years further include techniques such as chiaroscuro lighting. In fact, films such as *Backstairs* (1921), *Shattered* (1921), *New Year's Eve* (1923), and *The Last Laugh* (1924) were called Kammerspielfilmes, a term taken from Reinhardt's idea of small chamber plays that are intimately staged in front of a small audience (Barlow, 1982, pp. 136-137). As a medium, cinema adapts to the techniques used in a fully developed theater such as that existing in Germany at the time, and the Expressionist techniques taken from this theater helped to define Expressionist film. With techniques adapted from the theater against a backdrop of Expressionism, it was only natural that the film industry turned towards Expressionism as well.

The most popular of the Expressionist films is Robert Wiene's *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari* (1919), a film that used Expressionist techniques in both the style of acting and the set designs. Eisner (1969) attributes Wiene's success to the German preference for chiaroscuro lighting and shadows (Eisner, p. 17). The sets contain houses with rhomboid windows and on the inside, painted shadows appear on irregularly angled walls. The film also uses furniture such as extremely tall stools to denote the status of the character. To complement these fantastic sets, the actors expressed themselves using similarly unrealistic techniques. Exaggerated gestures define the characters' emotions, intentions, and other qualities that transcend the characters' appearances. Also of note is the idea of the dream narrative that comprises a large portion of the film. This device is a common trend among the early Expressionist films.

Paul Wegener's *The Golem* (1920) used sets designed to give the film an unreal, fantasy element, as well. However, unlike the sharp angles from Wiene's cityscapes, Wegener's film used amorphous walls and interiors, making the sets seem organic rather than a product of industrialization. Similar sets were used in parts of Paul Leni's *Waxworks* (1923), a film divided into three dream scenarios about various historical tyrants. Like *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari*, the plot of *Waxworks* is set entirely within the protagonist's dreams. The stories were magical and every bit as fantastic as the settings. The film's narrative, an ancient Jewish legend about a statue imbued with life by a sorcerer, characterizes the type of film content the Expressionist directors used.

Unlike Wegener, who began making and starring in films before the war, Fritz Lang began his career as a director immediately after the war. Among his first films are *The Spiders* (1919), *Destiny* (1921), and *Dr. Mabuse, The Gambler* (1922). *Destiny*, like Leni's *Waxworks*, is divided into three sections, each containing a separate, dream-like episode that takes place in a different fantasy locale. Although the sets are clearly a part of the fantasy world Expressionism obsessed itself with, the supernatural story is also representative of Expressionism. When her lover dies, a woman must make a deal with death to bring him back. As part of the deal, the woman must attempt to save the life of her lover in three separate scenarios. The premise for the story itself transcends the firmly rooted reality that was to appear in films in the latter half of the decade. Lang's more popular film from these early years is *Dr. Mabuse, The Gambler*. Its story, about a manipulative crime lord who uses hypnosis to bend others to his will, delves into the supernatural world, too.

Among these films of the fantastic, the first Dracula film was directed, although the rights were never secured to use Bram Stoker's novel. For this reason, the vampire was renamed Count Orlock by its director, F.W. Murnau. *Nosferatu, a Symphony of Horror* (1922) starred Max Schreck as the vampire. It used stylized, Expressionist techniques like the previously mentioned films, however the film was not nearly as unworldly as Wiene's earlier film. The sets are much less stylized than films such as *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari*, but the chiaroscuro lighting and Expressionist acting still categorize this film among the popular Expressionist films during this period. Schreck portrayed the vampire in an eerie fashion, and

the addition of scenes in which his grotesque shadow appears on the background further transforms the actor into a deformed creature of the dark.

*Warning Shadows* (1923) is another film from this period that incorporates a dream-like episode into its plot. Dinner party guests are mystically transported to a parallel reality in which emotions dictate actions. The characters learn, as they return to reality at the end of the film, not to let emotions control their lives. The film is Expressionist in its use of shadow, parallel reality and stylistic acting. Viewed in the last year of inflation and years after Expressionism's loss of optimistic energy, the film serves as a type of 'warning' for the primitive emotionalism found in Expressionism.

During the last year of this period of inflation, Karl Grune's *The Street* (1923) appeared, creating its own genre for later films to follow. This genre was appropriately labeled the 'street-film' genre. In *The Street*, a middle class man is fascinated by the life he sees from his window overlooking the streets at night. Bored with his own life, he ventures into the world of the street only to find that he doesn't belong. Everything is alien to him, and he finds himself lost in a world that is not his own. He winds up in jail, framed for a murder he didn't commit. The next morning, freed of the charges against him from the previous night and recovered from his suicidal episode caused by his alienation, he returns to his dreary existence reluctantly yet content with the comfort of a familiar environment. Throughout this plot, the 'street' takes on a life of its own. The city is frequently shown through the character's eyes, giving the film a subjective point of view that uses special effects in order to supplant the viewer into the role of the lead character. Personification and subjectivity allow the viewer to see the city as a foreign environment but one that has a definite persona, much as the character sees his surroundings.

As a whole, these films exhibit qualities that serve to link the films together. In addition to the stylized acting, sets, and lighting, the presence of supernatural elements is one of these qualities that can be contrasted with later films of the Republic. In each of these films, some sort of supernatural element defined the film's plot, whether it is the hypnotizing eyes of Dr. Mabuse, the eerie spirit of the street at night, or the vampiric creature Nosferatu. The supernatural was a primitive force or spirit behind the objects of reality. It was an important motif of Expressionist art, which attempted to draw out those spiritual properties of what it depicted.

The latter half of the Weimar era saw a stabilization of the German economy. This had an undesirable effect upon the film industry. During the inflation years, the masses readily spent the worthless money to see films, and banks continued to back film production because foreign markets were still open to film (Kracauer, 1959, p. 132). Once the mark stabilized exports ceased and companies went bankrupt. At this time, American companies saw a potential market, and American films began to flood Germany. The import films increased so much that the German government required that a German film be made for every foreign film imported. The loophole around this regulation was the production of films used purely to meet the quota. These films rarely made it to theaters. Hollywood soon began buying up the German film companies by acquiring the quota certificates that accompanied a German film in order to finance or buy the companies. By 1925, Ufa was in a situation requiring the financial help of the American studios (Kracauer, p. 133). After 17 million marks were supplied to Ufa by the American companies, Ufa was obligated to show an American movie for every German movie in its cinemas (Furhammer and Isaksson, 1971, pp. 31-2). Hollywood then began buying up the talents in Germany, and by 1926, the directors Ernst Lubitsch, Lupu Pick, Paul Leni, and F.W. Murnau had left for Hollywood along with actors such as Conrad Veidt and Emil Jannings. Kracauer cites both this departure of film artists, as well as attempts to internationalize German cinema, thereby "Americanizing" it, as German cinema's downfall (p. 135). By this time, the German Expressionist film had died. In 1927, Alfred Hugenberg, leader of the German National Party and of the newspaper industry, bought part of Ufa, once again saving Ufa from financial ruin. His conservative ideals prevented Ufa from liberal undertakings, although Ufa was not used as a propaganda instrument of the right either (Kracauer, p. 133-134). Hugenberg would later become a financial supporter of Hitler. Because of these economical changes in the German film industry, the popular expressionist film faded away as a new realism took hold in German cinema (Furhammer and Isaksson, pp. 31-2). This transition mirrors that of art, and no doubt the same cynicism and disillusionment entering onto the art scene during the inflation period soon moved into the film industry.

Films directed between 1923 and 1929 used less supernatural narratives in favor of more realistic settings and plots. This shift away from the supernatural mirrored the artistic

transition to the New Objectivity. Also, specific genres began to arise. The most notable of these was the 'street-film.' These stylized films, influenced by Grune's, *The Street*, usually had some aspect of the word 'street' in their titles. However, the portrayal of the street changed considerably in those few years. Grune's film focused on the street's alienation of the bourgeois. In the genre films of the late twenties, this focus was affixed on the bourgeois struggling not with the street but within the world of the street. Inflation had decimated the middle-class, and the films following that inflation showed the struggle of the bourgeois to survive on the street while maintaining their class status. These films were also more sympathetic to the lower-classes. Contrasting with Grune's film, these films present the street as hidden virtue, using clichés such as the virtuous prostitute. The street is not merely a home for the proletariat; it is also a haven for outcasts.

One of the later films to emerge in this genre was Joe May's *Asphalt* (1929). Its story revolves around a policeman's seduction by an arrested jewelry thief. It contained all of the elements of the genre: street scenes, crime, lust, and all the immorality associated with night-life. Also, the street is not alien to the main character as in Grune's film. As a night policeman, the main character is very comfortable in that realm.

Another genre was epitomized in Dr. Arnold Fanck's 'mountain-films.' Beginning as simple films of skiers with no plot, they gradually attained narrative form, as well as popularity. These films were the antithesis to the large studio productions in Berlin. They were shot on location in the mountains by an adept mountain climbing production team. Fanck was a renegade filmmaker for his rejection of the contemporary style and techniques of the studio directors, though Fanck's successful *The Holy Mountain* (1926) secured his place in the industry, thus creating a genre of his own. Leni Riefenstahl, who would later direct the notorious *Triumph of the Will* (1934), starred with Luis Trenker as the mountain climbing couple. Fanck would also co-direct a film with Pabst in 1929 in which the drama on the icy ledge, a typical location in Fanck's films, would be directed by the more dramatic of the two directors and Fanck would shoot all of the scenes of climbing, as well as Ernst Udet's stunt-flying scenes.

However, a few directors clung to the earlier style of fantastic sets and unreal plots, perhaps not ready to give in to realism. Fritz Lang was one of these directors. In 1924, Lang

directed a screen version in two parts of the Die Nibelungen legend. The first part portrayed Siegfried's rise to fame, gaining the hand of Kriemhilde in marriage. The second part picks up the story at Siegfried's murder and continues to relay Kriemhilde's vengeful acts following Siegfried's murder. The film is noted for its elaborate sets and costumes, as well as Lang's use of crowd manipulation, which would further be seen in his most expensive production.

*Metropolis* (1926) was set in the future in a fictitious city in which workers live underground while the wealthy remain in control on the surface. As of its release in January 1927, *Metropolis* cost more to make than any other German film. The sets used by Lang for the film were created in the grandeur style of the director, and over 37,000 actors and actresses took part in its filming, unlike the realist films typical of the period (Ott, 1986, p. 79). Kracauer (1959) concludes his analysis of the film's components by stating they "illustrate Lang's penchant for pompous ornamentation" (p. 149). Another contrast to the New Objectivity films is the acting. The acting in *Metropolis* is very Expressionistic in its depiction of the opposing classes. The working class is shown with their heads dropped, shuffling throughout the underground lair.

F. W. Murnau directed a few more films before leaving for America in the mass exodus of film talent leaving Germany during the late twenties. In 1924, he directed *The Last Laugh* (1924), a story about a doorman who gains respect for and takes such pride in his uniform that his demotion to a restroom attendant crushes his perception of his self-worth. Although the film takes place among real-world settings, Murnau uses Expressionist devices throughout the film. The acting is exaggerated rather than tame, and like an episode from *The Street* when the main character walks into the night-club, Murnau uses dizzying effects and superimposed images to denote the main character's drunkenness. Murnau returned to fantastic themes with his last production in Germany.

Projecting Goethe's story to the screen, Murnau's *Faust* (1926) used special effects to portray the legendary tale. The film is a testament to the technique of chiaroscuro lighting, using shadow and smoke to create dimly lit scenes. Model landscapes were used to show bird's eye views of the town. However, films such as these were the exception to the emerging realistic settings and narratives.

If Pabst's films represented the Verists of the New Objectivity, their counterparts were the documentary-style films, more in tune with the neo-classicists than with the social criticism of the Verists. These films represented, as Kracauer (1959) remarked, "the purest example of New Objectivity on the screen" (p. 181). They veered away from the semblance of a unified narrative by "presenting a cross section of some sphere of reality" (Kracauer, p. 181). The most notable of these films was *Berlin, the Symphony of a Great City* (1927). Originally released as a quota film, it sets to music a typical day in Berlin. Although the film was conceived by Carl Mayer, Walter Ruttmann's directorial style veered away from that of Mayer's conception, and Mayer left the film project (Ott, 1986, p. 84). The film begins by showing the deserted streets of early morning Berlin littered with trash in a similar style as the ending of Grune's *The Street*. The camera then captures the events that happen throughout a normal business day. This includes scenes such as the animals in the zoo eating lunch, a woman attempting to drown herself, and a fight in the street between two men. Towards the end of the film, Berlin at night is caught on camera. The legs of showgirls, the lights in the street, and an anonymous couple getting a hotel room are spliced together to further show, as Kracauer says, the "cross section" of life (p.181). Montage is the main method used by Ruttmann in this film to capture the essence of a Berlin day. Sequences abound which show two events juxtaposed such as a man sleeping on a bench and an elephant sleeping.

The last four years of the Republic are commonly regarded as the 'Pre-Hitler years.' By this point, fantastic sets and plots had all but disappeared in Weimar cinema, 'talkies' had pushed the silent feature into the past, and the social criticism of the stabilized period had subsided, as well. What rose to the forefront was a series of escapist films.

The advent of sound made possible the musical, and in a period of political clashes, the musical offered escape. Two of the more popular musicals of this period were *Three Good Friends* (1930) and *The Congress Dances* (1931). Both present a rags-to-riches story with political or social criticism non-existent. In fact, the former film endorses capitalism and the idea that hard work and luck will result in financial success. The latter film, a period piece, differs in its "romantic nostalgia" of nineteenth century Vienna (Kracauer, 1959, p. 208). Both films offer a pleasant story with happy endings, ensuring an escape from the reality of pre-Hitler Germany.

Fritz Lang shifted away from his previous fantasy worlds to settle upon realistic settings. *M* (1931) was about a child murderer who is hunted down by both the police and the underground crime network. In *The Testament of Dr. Mabuse* (1932), the hypnotic crime-lord from the first film, who had gone mad by its end, makes such an impression upon his psychiatrist that the psychiatrist, Baum, attempts to imitate Mabuse. The supernatural element has disappeared while retaining a continuing plot from the story's prequel. Both of these films represent a change from social commentary and cinematic experimentation to suspense driven entertainment with messages too ambiguous to detect.

These last years also mark the production of two different but very well-known films. Josef von Sternberg directed *The Blue Angel* (1930), a story, adapted from a Heinrich Mann novel, about a professor who lusts after a cabaret singer played by Marlene Dietrich. Dietrich's character, Lola, twists the infatuation around to take advantage of the professor by humiliating him. Kracauer (1959) points out two reasons for the film's success. The first reason is Marlene Dietrich's cool yet candid presence on the screen, as well as her explicit sexuality that she emanates while on stage. It is justifiable to say that Dietrich's incredible screen presence attracted viewers, however Kracauer says that the public enjoys viewing humiliation, as well. Therefore, Kracauer's second reason for the film's success is the viewer's own sadistic nature. According to him, the viewer desires to see the professor tortured by his own predicament and slowly being pushed to the edge of total humility. He also compares the professor to the philistine in Grune's *The Street*. He is alien to the lifestyle of Lola Lola just as the bourgeois man from Grune's film was alien to the street life. Unlike Grune's film, however, the professor does not return to his old life humbly. The professor's downfall, if nothing else, invokes pity and sympathy in the viewer. Dietrich's character, as well as the show's manager, are depicted as villains who take advantage of the professor's naive, bourgeois outlook. The only sadistic glee from the professor's situation belongs to the boys who were formerly the professor's students, and Kracauer's comparison between these students and the Hitler youth may contain substance.

*The Blue Light* (1932), noted in retrospect for its director, was Leni Riefenstahl's first attempt to direct a film. Influenced by Fanck's mountain-films, the story revolves around a mysterious light emanating from the peak of a mountain, and only the town outcast, a mountain

girl, can reach it. Kracauer (1959) states, “This mountain girl conforms to a political regime which relies on intuition, worships nature, and cultivates myth” (p. 259). However, David Hinton (1978) responds, “To conclude that the mountain films were fascist in nature is to overlook the historical antecedents of the films, namely, the German Romantic movement, which revered mountains as symbols of beauty and purity that were free from the corruptions of man” (p. 22). Whether Riefenstahl's film contained a latent Nazi message or not, she would soon direct the regime's most notorious propaganda film, *Triumph of the Will* (1934).

Weimar film, as noted, went through a series of changes that reflect both the artistic tides and the cultural events of the time. The films of G.W. Pabst also reflect this change, and with a context grounded in politics, art, and film, the next chapter explores Pabst's film career during the Weimar years, particularly the silent era.

## Chapter V: G.W. Pabst's Films

As mentioned previously, a new realism was emerging in the films of directors such as G.W. Pabst, although G.W. Pabst is the director most closely associated with this trend. This movement was called the New Objectivity, and its roots were in the disillusionment and cynicism that occurred following the artistic vigor of the previous years. According to Siegfried Kracauer (1959), its objective was to portray real life without committing to one set of ideals. Symbolism and interpretations were left for the viewer to make, although the events depicted were to be as real as possible, as if one were merely looking out the window as a voyeur. Therefore, instead of attributing an ideology to the situations occurring in the films, the viewer sees them as mere chance or coincidence. As such, Kracauer describes it as indicative of a state of paralysis in Germany (p. 165). However, the New Objectivity was not a paralyzed movement lacking an ideology or commitment to that ideology, as the previous chapters have illustrated. Certain artists of the New Objectivity were incredibly critical of society and politics, and just as Grosz and Dix used sketches and paintings to comment upon the state of affairs, filmmakers were commenting upon society through their own respective medium.

Pabst was the leading New Objectivist in the film industry. His films are highly critical of society, and because of this, many were banned or censored both in Germany, as well as in countries where they were exported. His films dominate the latter half of the 1920s with successes such as *The Joyless Street* (1925), *Pandora's Box* (1929), and his 1931 adaptation of Berthold Brecht's The Threepenny Opera. Of Pabst's films after *The Joyless Street*, Atwell (1977) states "Championed by the intelligentsia and leftist sympathizers, annoyed by censors, and enjoying a certain amount of commercial success, Pabst's succeeding films proved him a significant, controversial artist" (preface). His later career destroyed his reputation, however. Upon moving to America in the 1930s, he could not conform to the Hollywood style of filmmaking. "Pabst had to agree with the reviewers that *A Modern Hero* (1934) was a flop, and later asked that it not be included in his filmography" (Atwell, p. 116). Atwell further explains "Pabst lacked the arrogant, hard-nosed tenacity and ruthlessness to survive in the

Hollywood studio" (pp. 116-117). His later workings in Nazi Germany further injured his career so that even his anti-Nazi films made after the war provided no redemption.

Atwell (1977) writes "Like a brilliant and rebellious child who later fails to fulfill the promise of his youth, Pabst has for some time been viewed as a special, puzzling case, a fallen angel not to be accorded the stature of a Fritz Lang or F.W. Murnau, both his contemporaries" (preface). In the preface to *G.W. Pabst* (1977), Atwell goes on to explain that with a commercial medium such as film, socio-political views are subdued, and perhaps this is one reason Pabst has not enjoyed the same fame as directors less political or socially critical. In 1928, Pabst, Erwin Piscator, and Heinrich Mann helped to form the Association for Film Art, and its purpose was to promote progressive film while denouncing those films portraying a false reality (Furhammer and Isaksson, 1971, pp. 32-33). The formation of such an association attests to the importance Pabst placed upon depicting a true, social reality while remaining critical towards that society. As one of the leading directors to come out of Weimar Germany, Pabst deserves critical attention, not solely because of his popularity at the time. Pabst's films portray a realist view of society while committed to commenting upon that society. With little or no attention afforded him, he and his films must receive their due attention. In fact, it would be impossible to speak of New Objectivity films without running into its foremost talent, and without engaging the New Objectivity, also a subject that usually receives attention only in Expressionism's shadow, a major component of Weimar culture is overlooked.

Pabst directed nine silent films during this period in addition to his work along side Dr. Arnold Fanck on *The White Hell of Pitz Palu* (1929). His first two films did not share the same individual style present in Pabst's realist films, though. His first film, a borderline expressionist piece titled *The Treasure* (1923), was a commercial failure, despite the popularity of this genre. It reflects an influence from Wegener, making use of cavernous chambers with undefined spaces. Because of its ambiguous design, many film critics, including Kracauer (1959) and Luft (1964), have mistakenly placed the story in the medieval period (p. 167, p. 94). However, the film's plot takes place in a bellfounder's house during the 17<sup>th</sup> century. It involves a bell-founder who lives with his wife, daughter, and his oafish assistant outside of town. Two events occur to initiate the plot. Firstly, the bell-founder tells a legend of how the

house was burned down when the Turks were forced out of the country. When it was rebuilt, a treasure was hidden within its walls. This immediately sparks interest with the assistant who begins to search for the treasure at night with the use of a diving rod. At the same time, a young artist arrives in town. He becomes an apprentice at the foundry, earning the respect of the bell-founder with his artistic ability while making enemies with the founder's assistant. The founder's assistant harbors a desire to marry the founder's daughter, Beatte. However, she has taken an interest in the young apprentice. She confides in the young artist the legend of the treasure, and drawing an architectural plan of the house, the apprentice is able to deduce the location of the treasure. Before they can get to it, the bell-founder and his apprentice find out, and after a failed attempt to murder the apprentice, they send him off with Beatte. The following scenes contrast the love scenes outside between the apprentice and Beatte with the debauchery scenes of the bell-founder, his wife and his assistant within the formless interiors of the house. The assistant gives up his share of the treasure in return for Beatte's hand in marriage. When the two lovers return, the bell-founder and the artist confront each other over both the gold and Beatte. Finally, as Beatte makes it known that she wants nothing to do with the gold, the artist backs out of the fight that would have surely ensued. He and Beatte leave the house, walking into a 'happily ever after' ending. Meanwhile, the assistant finds out that he has lost both the gold and Beatte. He then commences to tear at the hole in the wall that used to house the hidden treasure. The house eventually crumbles and is consumed in flames.

The film uses many Expressionist techniques such as chiaroscuro lighting and Expressionist acting. The personality of the characters are not developed through plot; they are instead made apparent by the character's appearance and demeanor much like the theater of the Expressionists. Along with the ambiguous setting, the film's characteristics point more to Expressionism than realism. Later, Pabst's directorial style would change drastically with *The Joyless Street* (1925).

His second film, *Countess Donelli* (1924), was a success, although it was directed quickly and cheaply by Pabst in order to save his directorial career, as well as that of its star, Henny Porten (Atwell, 1977, pp. 19-26). No prints of this film are known to exist today, and scholars rarely comment upon the film.

The next year, Pabst directed *The Joyless Street*, featuring the debut of Greta Garbo, in the style that would inevitably define German film in the latter half of the decade. *The Joyless Street*'s story involves two intertwining plots. One concerns a middle-class family on the verge of starvation, an effect of the postwar inflation. The parallel story involves the daughter of another family living on the same street and her loss of romantic notions. The mood of the film is immediately set with the introductory scenes that show a weary crowd gathered outside the butcher's shop, waiting for whatever food he might sell that night. The butcher is then introduced as the tyrant of Melchior Street. Played by Werner Krauss, he is abusive and is fully aware of his position over the disadvantaged. He even trades meat for sexual favors with some of the women, but this abuse eventually leads to his murder at the hands of the women he terrorizes.

Greta Garbo, in her first film appearance, plays Grete Rumfort, the daughter who must find work in order to support her bourgeois father. When things look desperate, her father gives up his pension for a lump sum of money. Investing in a promising stock that is supposed to make him money, he encourages his daughter to replace her worn out coat. At the shop, a front for a brothel, she ends up trying on a fur coat, and Madame Greifer, played by Valeska Gert, persuades her that she can afford it. At work her haggard look and new fur coat convince her boss that she is a prostitute, and when he takes advantage of his authority, she refuses and is promptly fired. To add to the blow, her father's stock drops as a result of greedy profiteers devising a scheme to make money, and the attempt to rent out a room falls through because of Grete's proud father. She eventually sinks low enough to dance in the local brothel, goaded by Greifer. This is only prevented when her father, discovering that she has paid off his debts with the little rent they were able to collect, prevents her from going on stage.

Asta Nielsen, as Marie Lechner, stars in the film's parallel story about a woman driven to murder over her lover's betrayal, a result of her lover's greed. Egon Stirner is Marie's lover who is in on the spreading of strike rumors in order to make stock drop. He desires to be rich, and places this desire in front of any love he may harbor for the working class Marie. Marie realizes this, and even sells herself in order to make Egon the money needed to profit from the

scheme. In the process, she catches Egon with another woman. In a somnambulistic trance, she kills the girl, and Egon is accused.

*The Joyless Street*, a story depicting the inflation of the time, premiered the same year as that of D.W. Griffith's film, *Isn't Life Wonderful?* (1925). Because both films center on the effects of inflation among the poor, critics such as Kracauer (1959) and Eisner (1969) discuss them as a singular phenomenon. However, Eisner makes it clear that Griffith's film is the better of the two. Eisner says of Pabst's film, "The picturesque triumphs over the tragic, and this is why many passages in this film are now disappointing" (p. 256). Nevertheless, the film, according to Kracauer, was an extremely important one. He says, "Pabst's film of the inflation elaborates upon the interrelationship between the enforced economic decay of the middle class and the selling-out of its moral values" (p. 168). Another interesting comparison between the analyses of Eisner and Kracauer is their respective interpretations of one particular segment in the film in relation to Pabst's own style. Greta Garbo's character hangs a new fur coat on a hook next to her old, extremely worn coat. Kracauer states, "In any of Carl Mayer's postwar films, this shot would have had to symbolize the change of Garbo's condition; in the Pabst film, it just shows the two coats in a chance combination which may, or may not, convey a symbolic meaning" (p. 168). Again, Kracauer implies the New Objectivity has no message, thus the scene must not contain symbolism. Eisner has attributed a far greater presence of Expressionism to the film. Eisner says, "Pabst still uses the rather threadbare techniques of Expressionist symbolism," and as an example, Eisner cites the same scene of the two coats hanging on pegs beside each other (p. 259). However, both scholars have misread the scene in the context of the New Objectivity. Symbolism was an incredibly important element in Verism, as can be noted in the caricatures of George Grosz or Otto Dix's carefully constructed scenes. Both scholars have limited the scope of New Objectivity to its neo-classical variant, but Kracauer has defined the scene in line with his concept of the New Objectivity while Eisner has labeled the film Expressionist according to the presence of symbolism in this scene. The scene actually displays a typical scene by Pabst, symbolizing the clash of two worlds, that of the former, well-to-do middle-class and that of the middle-class family during the inflation years who barely gets by on boiled cabbage and worn clothing. This juxtaposition is a common

feature of the New Objectivity. The artists often situated government officials or capitalists beside the wounded, war veterans and prostitutes to show two worlds symbolically. Pabst's use of objects satisfies the same function.

The film contains many episodes filmed in the realist style that depict contrasts between the corrupt profiteers and the downtrodden lower and middle-classes. These juxtapositions abound. The Expressionist techniques of his first film are almost totally absent as he tries to portray society realistically however melodramatic the result might be. He still uses close-ups to link a character's appearance to that character's personality, but unlike *The Treasure*, he does this to show what the character is thinking. In this fashion, the camera focuses on the mental anguish of the characters through physical manifestations. This is a large step away from the one-dimensional expressions that defined the characters in his previous film. Pabst's later films are thematically similar in the way they psychoanalytically focus on their subjects, though *The Love of Jeanne Ney* (1927) went beyond the characters to comment upon the entire postwar society (Kracauer, 1959, p. 172).

G.W. Pabst's next film, *Secrets of a Soul* (1925), was the first film to feature an in-depth psychoanalysis of dreams. Werner Kraus plays Martin Fellman, a chemist who, upon having a dream, develops a fear that he will stab his wife. Several events in the plot contribute to his fear of knives, so the context of this dream is especially important. The day before the dream, Martin accidentally cuts his wife while shaving her neck. As this happens, "murder!" is shouted from outside. He learns that his neighbor has killed his wife with a razor. Later that evening, he learns that his wife's cousin, Erich, who has been in India, will be visiting. He has sent a small statue of an Indian fertility god with a sword as a gift. Martin's fear first surfaces when he throws down the sword in terror. That night, while a storm begins to rage outside, he begins to dream. In his dream, he is walking around an enormous version of the fertility statue. He steps outside onto his patio and sees Erich seated in a tree. Martin tries to run back in, but the door is locked. He jumps up high into the air as Erich takes aim with a rifle. He fires, and Martin falls to the ground. He then is seen walking towards an Italian city that is springing from the ground. A large tower with a spiral staircase is the most prominent building. Suddenly the bells at the top begin chiming, and soon after, they are replaced by the faces of the women in

Martin's life, such as his female co-worker and her friend. Martin rushes up the staircase and sees Erich's silhouette embracing what must be his wife. Martin is panicked, and soon, a cage surrounds him as he is transplanted into an eerie court where Erich accuses him of murder. In the next episode, he is at work piling books onto the floor so that he can look out the tall, barred window. Beneath, a doll is floating in the water. Martin's wife and her cousin drift by on a boat, and the doll jumps into her arms. They drift out of the scene. When Martin turns around, his wife's apparition has appeared, and he frantically begins stabbing her ghost with a knife. At this point, Martin wakes up screaming.

Once the physical manifestations of his neurosis become unbearable, Martin meets with a psychotherapist in order to discover the origins of the illness. The cool-headed psychotherapist listens to Martin's story, prodding him further and further into Martin's past until the origin of Martin's jealousy towards his wife's cousin is found. The obvious connection is that between Martin's knife phobia and the events surrounding the cut on his wife's neck. The remainder of the dream is interpreted bringing elements of Martin's past to light. Martin and his wife have tried for a child unsuccessfully, contributing to feelings of inadequacy on his part. The dream began with the large fertility god, representing Martin's desire for children. The viewer learns that the Italian town resembled Martin's honeymoon destination. The tower is extremely phallic, and the women laughing at the top further this idea that Martin is pre-occupied with his sexual inadequacy. The episode where he is accused of murder is interpreted by the film's psychoanalyst as merely a connection to Martin's own guilt associated with cutting his wife's neck in the context of the murder next door. When he sees his wife give the doll to her cousin in the boat, Martin is expressing his jealousy towards her cousin, and in fact, the psychoanalyst prods Martin to further reach back into his memory. When Martin was a child, a similar incident happened where his future wife gave a doll to her cousin rather than to him. According to the psychoanalyst, Martin repressed this original feeling of jealousy at an early age, leading to the present unconscious jealousy. With this revelation, Martin picks up a knife to demonstrate the final part of the dream. The doctor points out that he must not fear knives any longer, and the film ends with Martin and his wife in the country, finally blessed with a child.

The film scholar Ira Konigsberg (1995) suggests another interpretation. The cousin stands for the missing father figure in Martin's life. Martin, instead of just harboring jealous thoughts towards Erich's relationship with Martin's wife, also displays an Oedipal fear/jealousy towards Erich as a father figure. In the final episode of the dream, Martin is stabbing the apparition of his wife, but he is doing so while brandishing the knife as a penis. He is thrusting upwards, using his pelvis so that it appears that the knife is merely an extension of Martin's phallic power. Konigsberg also comments upon Martin's regression in the scenes in which his mother cuts up his food for him, giving him only a spoon to eat with. This sort of maternal attachment, according to Konigsberg, may explain a homosexual attachment to his wife's cousin (pp. 531-535). This interpretation delves deeper into the roots of Martin's repressed impulses. By relating the unconscious jealousy to Martin's primal castration anxiety and homosexual feelings, Konigsberg has uncovered a level of latent content beneath the film's interpretation. However, the contention that Martin's disgust of women, love for his wife's cousin and attachment to his mother is an indication of latent homosexuality is faulty at best. Martin's disgust of women is restricted to his chiding co-worker and her friend. He remarks about his deep love for his wife on numerous occasions. His love for his wife's cousin dates back to their childhood friendship. If he indeed harbored homosexual desires for Erich, his unconscious jealousy would be towards his wife rather than her cousin. To infer this would be to disregard the entire psychoanalysis of the film's doctor, thus rewriting the film's script. Finally, Martin's attachment to his mother is a result of his regression to childhood, not because of homosexual impulses. Therefore Konigsberg's analysis cannot fit within the film's plot. In fact any analysis of Martin's dream besides that of the doctor's theory tears apart the woven plots of the film.

In the film, Pabst continued to employ the techniques he first used in *The Joyless Street*. The characters are psychologically developed and as Eberwien (1984) points out, throughout the dream sequence, the director allows the viewer to both see the events of the dream and to sympathize with the dreamer by continually showing Martin's frustration (p. 63). This film further shows Pabst's preoccupation with showing mental anguish and examining the roots of that anguish.

In 1926, Pabst directed *One Does Not Play With Love* (1926); however, like *Countess Donelli*, no prints are known to survive. A year later, his next film, *The Love of Jeanne Ney*, was produced which combined elements of the international intrigue with the melodrama. The story takes place in the Crimean during the Bolshevik revolution. Edith Jehanne stars as Jeanne Ney, daughter of a political activist. She is in love with an active Bolshevik, although she does not know of his political affiliations. When her father is assassinated by Jeanne's lover during a Bolshevik takeover, Jeanne flees to Paris to stay with her uncle Raymond, who runs a detective agency. The assassination itself was in self-defense; however, Andreas's motivations for holding Jeanne's father at gun-point are political. Jeanne's father sympathized with the White Russians. With Raymond is his blind daughter, Gabrielle. The plot develops when an informant of her late father, as well as an admirer of Jeanne, tracks her to Paris. His advances result in nothing, so Khalibiev, the informant, ventures after the hand of Gabrielle, his intentions based upon monetary gain rather than affection. Pabst shows this by viewing Gabrielle through Khalibiev's eyes and having the camera pan to the open safe to her side. The camera then shows Khalibiev's smile as he turns his head back to Gabrielle. The two are eventually engaged once Khalibiev brings her flowers. However, his intentions are further betrayed to the viewer when he is shown at a bar kissing another woman. He later tells her that he intends to kill Gabrielle in order to run off with the money. The frightened girl at the bar rushes out to tell Gabrielle. Meanwhile, Andreas, Jeanne's Bolshevik lover, finally arrives in Paris and arranges to meet with Jeanne, resulting in a scene of melodramatic proportions as the two lovers rush to each other's arms.

Raymond Ney's latest case has to do with a missing gem. The owner, Mr. Frank, is willing to pay a large reward for its recovery. When Raymond is able to recover it from the parrot that swallowed it, he phones the owner in order to collect the reward. Soon afterwards, Khalibiev, calling himself Mr. Frank, calls to arrange an earlier meeting. When Raymond answers the door, he is strangled to death, and the diamond is stolen. Gabrielle walks in on the killer, and when the light turns on, the viewer sees that Khalibiev is the murderer.

During Raymond's murder, Andreas and Jeanne are staying in a small hotel until morning when Andreas is supposed to leave with Bolshevik funds. When morning dawns,

Andreas is the suspect printed in the newspaper, and he is arrested while trying to leave the city. Jeanne rushes to find Khalibiev because he can serve as witness to Andreas staying at the hotel with Jeanne. He saw them leave the hotel that morning. When she catches up with him on the train, he attempts to force himself upon her. He tries to muffle her screams with a handkerchief, and Jeanne finds the stolen gem wrapped in the handkerchief. As the train is stopped, Khalibiev is arrested for murder. The film ends as Jeanne looks into the gem to see Andreas's release.

Several techniques contribute to Pabst's social criticism of political violence and greed. The first of these is his use of mirrors throughout the film. In several scenes, he has constructed the shot to include reflections of characters. One such shot occurs when Jeanne is in the Bolshevik headquarters before leaving for Paris. She is sitting in front of a large, bullet-ridden mirror while Andreas's friend is trying to feed her. Several shots show only her and the Bolshevik's reflection covered with the bullet holes in the mirror. Another scene shows Khalibiev seated at a bar in front of a huge mirror. The scene is edited so that some shots, taken from the mirror's reflection, are intermingled with shots of the real characters. These techniques illustrate the dual roles certain characters are playing. It is also a technique that can show the false reality of a scene, and in Khalibiev's case, this is certainly true. His scheme is unfolded while seated before the mirror, perhaps symbolizing a split between the real Khalibiev and the false one.

Pabst's use of hands, which began in *The Joyless Street*, is used extensively in *The Love of Jeanne Ney*. Hands are used to show a character's true being despite disguises and false personalities. When Khalibiev first reaches for Gabrielle's hand, he removes his glove and she jerks her hand behind her back, refusing to touch his as though she sensed his greed. When Khalibiev is speaking to the woman at the bar, he reaches out his hands while explaining his murderous scheme, and she withdraws, frightened and shocked. The woman later demonstrates Khalibiev's intention to Gabrielle by placing her hands around Gabrielle's neck. The scene is very similar to a scene in *The Joyless Street* in which Marie is about to strangle Lia. In an earlier scene Gabrielle used her hands to feel Jeanne's face in order to find out who she is, thus divining the benevolence in Jeanne with her hands. Also, when Jeanne spots

Khalibiev, he attempts to hide behind his own hand. However, Jeanne still recognizes him, perhaps indicating that one's hands will always give one away.

The element in this film that most closely associates it with the New Objectivity is its first few scenes when the Bolsheviks storm the town. Many of the shots are reminiscent of Dix and Grosz. The barroom orgy of drunkenness at the beginning of the film presents a caricature of the military in the fat officer riding the keg while flanked with dancing women. Even the last scene of this segment, as Jeanne is about to leave the Crimea, contains similarities to Dix's early trench-warfare works. In one shot, Jeanne is walking through the rain, smoke, debris, and destroyed buildings. Stakes of wood stick up toward the sky, and after viewing Dix's art, one might expect to find soldiers impaled upon them. Even though mutilated soldiers do not appear, the scene contains a somewhat diminished lifelessness and grotesqueness that serves the same function as Dix's works.

In 1927, Pabst directed a second film with Brigitte Helm titled *Crisis* or *The Devious Path*. With this film, Pabst returned to the scenes of debauchery and night activity. Helm stars as Irene, the unhappily married wife of Thomas. The film begins with her socializing at home with two of her close friends. Walter Frank is an artist and is sketching her profile while she and Liane are smoking, pretending not to stare at Walter too much. Irene's husband returns home and his business-like manner contrasts with the attitudes of Irene and her friends. When the friends leave, the viewer is shown the neglect that Thomas displays toward his wife. Irene finally leaves to visit Walter at his home, and her husband follows. His apartment is adorned with many sketches of Irene, and the two flirt with each other. The flirtation leads to a plan in which Irene will run away with Walter. When she leaves, Thomas confronts the artist. Discovering the plan, Thomas meets Irene at the train depot and escorts her back home. That night, Irene decides to venture out into the night scene to rebel against her husband's neglect. She visits a club in which her friends are both present. To contrast the scenes, Thomas is pictured in the dark waiting up for her in front of open windows. At the club, Irene is confronted with everything she has not been exposed to before. Walter is drunk at the bar with women draped over his arms. Liane is dancing on the floor, and Irene pushes through the waves of dancing people to reach her. A girl is seen begging for money from the richly men around the club, and

with her hard-earned charity, the girl buys drugs. As Irene's mood sinks with Walter's continual drunkenness, she is taken behind a curtain by the girl and emerges with a drugged look of confidence. She begins to dance and revel in the atmosphere until her chemical crash occurs. Upon returning home, she tries to be affectionate to Thomas, but her actions have increased the chasm between them. When Irene wakes up the next morning, the previous night's revelers burst in to Irene's bedroom, transforming it into a club scene with cigarettes, alcohol, and singing. Her husband shortly enters, chasing the drunken debauchery out of the room with his harsh glances, but Irene still rebels. In the next scene, she is pictured at a boxing match. She winds up going to Walter's house with one of the boxers. Walter is not there, so the two decide to wait in his apartment for his return. Meanwhile, Liane tells Thomas of Irene's actions. When the film returns to Walter's apt., the boxer is admiring Walter's works as well as admiring Irene. Irene coyly flirts, but her actions only incite the boxer to a crazed state. He begins chasing her, but is stopped when Walter finally returns home. Walter is furious as he rips pictures of Irene off the wall. The bell rings and Thomas announces himself at the door. Immediately Irene disrobes, telling Walter to open the door. When Thomas sees Irene half dressed, he leaves with the look of dejection on his face. Thomas and Irene then go to court for a divorce, but during the proceedings, they realize that they do not want to be separated. Although the decision has been made, the film ends with them kissing and discussing plans to be rejoined.

Whereas *The Joyless Street* marked Pabst's stylistic change, his emerging style was made concrete with *Crisis*. He continued to make his edits fluid so that the action of the scene was not broken by the change in view. He also dealt with scenes in which a phone rang or a doorbell sounded. Many previous films would add a title card with the sound such as 'ring!' or 'knock!' to display the audible action, thus breaking up the scene. However, Pabst used editing to show the sound. In one scene the actors both look at the telephone on the desk. The next shot displays the object they are looking at, and the shot is then succeeded by the character picking up the telephone. Another scene shows a finger pressing a doorbell cutting to a shot where the apartment's occupant glances up at the door denoting the fact that he heard the bell. Scenes such as these show that Pabst was always trying to convey meaning through a fluid

editing style that continued to exhibit a realistic effect. Often, his scenes display an action that occurs through several edited shots, but unlike Sergei Eisenstein's montages, Pabst made the action continuous so that scene edits are not abrupt.

In addition to solidifying his style, *Crisis* also firmly situated Pabst within the subject matter of nighttime activity: sex, alcohol, and clubs. His next film made him famous for this controversial content. *Pandora's Box*, regarded by many critics as Pabst's best film, was met with harsh reactions on its premiere. Starring Louise Brooks as Lulu, the film adapts a blend of two earlier works of drama by Wedekind to the screen (Ott, 1986, pp. 88-91). Lulu is an amoral girl who, although she radiates innocence, also radiates a primal sexuality that seems to attract evil. As she plunges further into the engulfing world of amorality, she gradually sinks into more and more trouble. She is eventually killed by Jack-the-Ripper, whom she had sought comfort from the London winter.

The film begins by setting up an opposition between two worlds. The first is in the character of Schigolch. He visits Lulu and is depicted as both a dirty old man chasing after the young Lulu as well as a pathetic beggar who loves money and alcohol. Lulu hides the old man when Dr. Schön enters. He is the rational businessman who is enraptured by Lulu's radiance and vitality. The conflict arises out of the clash between these two worlds. Schön despises Lulu's lowly acquaintances, and tries to disassociate himself with her. However, she begins to visit his son, and when Schön finds out that Lulu will be doing a trapeze act, he expresses his disgust for the circus act by arranging for her to star in a large, lavish production written by his son. His son is also infatuated with Lulu, and he is crushed when his father succumbs to Lulu's charms. Schön and Lulu are married, but the attempt to bring Lulu into a different society is thwarted when Schön discovers her drunken friends throwing flowers on the wedding bed. Schön then tries to convince Lulu that the only way out is for her to commit suicide. In the struggle that follows, Dr. Schön is killed, and Lulu goes to court to defend herself against the murder charges. Convinced that the court will find her guilty, Schön's son, as well as Schigolch and Rodrigo, the trapeze artist, set up a diversion to allow Lulu to escape the courtroom. The three accessories and Lulu flee to Paris where they lay low in a docked ship, a home to others hiding from the law. The ship's interior is like a club with gambling, alcohol, and the typical

smoke-filled air found in all Pabst's club settings. Eventually, the ship is raided by the police, and the four refugees travel to London where they live in a drafty attic. Tired of the icy drafts and frozen bread, Lulu leaves to roam the streets at night. In a last desperate act, she invites a man, played by Gustav Diessl, to her room. As they embrace in the candlelight, his eyes focus upon a knife on the table. Displaying mental anguish, he grabs the knife involuntarily and stabs Lulu.

Kracauer (1959) criticizes Pabst decision to make a film from a play "that belonged to the fantastic postwar era rather than to the realist stabilized period" (p. 179). However, the film displays characteristics that are more from the New Objectivity than Expressionism. Lulu is not merely a sexual force leaving a path of destroyed men, she is a real person caught in real situations. She is used by almost everyone in the film, and although those around her get caught up in her burgeoning troubles, the theme of the film suggests that childlike naiveté leads to certain destruction in this cold world. Therefore, the film is appropriately made during the era of opposition between artistic sobriety and social debauchery.

Pabst also continued his use of fluid montage and psychological examinations throughout the film. The film's realism and socially unacceptable subject matter fits within the stylistic and content characteristics of the New Objectivity. However, his next film, co-directed with Fanck veered away from this trend. Dr. Arnold Fanck's mountain film genre characterizes an idealist, yet fatal desire to conquer nature. *The White Hell of Pitz Palu* (1929), a collaborative effort between Fanck and G.W. Pabst, starred Riefenstahl in a role that brought to light her abilities as an actress rather than an athlete. Although it had a shallow plot, the direction ensured that there was plenty of both action and sentimentality (Hinton, 1978, p. 12). However, Pabst's true style is not present within the melodramatic scenes that show Riefenstahl and Diessl trapped on an icy ledge. His stylistic content and editing are absent.

Pabst's follow up to *Pandora's Box*, *Diary of a Lost Girl* (1929), again stars Louise Brooks in a role in which her sexuality dominates the film. Like its predecessor, the film suffered criticism for its licentious content. In fact, Kracauer (1959) maintains that the success of this film was a result of its pornographic qualities in scenes such as the one showing a house

of prostitution or the sadistic portrayal of a reform school headmaster who makes the girls exercise in synchronization with her drumming (pp. 179-180).

Thymiane, the character Brooks portrays, is less naive than Lulu. However, the event that jump-starts the plot of the film is her unexpected pregnancy. She refuses to tell the family that the downstairs pharmacist, Mr. Meinert, is the father. Meinert had seduced Thymiane in an earlier scene of the film. When the baby arrives, it is put into someone else's care, and Thymiane is sent off to a reform school. There, she befriends a girl named Erika, and with her help, they escape. Thymiane's one contact on the outside of the school, Nicholas, had informed her that she was not wanted at home. The family's new governess had become involved with Thymiane's father, and so she had told Nicholas that Thymiane is not welcome at home. Without anywhere to go, Thymiane meets with Nicholas, and they visit the brothel where Erika is hiding out. In the brothel, Thymiane is involuntarily nudged into the profession through the persuasiveness of the motherly Madame and the other prostitutes. Although at first she feels shame, the film skips ahead to a scene in which Thymiane is dancing in a nightclub surrounded by men. Her previous shame all but disappeared, she decides to hold a raffle to sell herself. However, her father is also present, and when confronted by Thymiane, he leaves in shame. The film then skips forward three years. Thymiane's father has died, and she attends the reading of the will where she is given her inheritance. Meta, the second governess and implied mistress of Thymiane's father is also in attendance. Nicholas is expecting the inheritance to change their lives for the better. However, seeing Meta's poor condition, with her ill-dressed children, Thymiane hands her inheritance to Meta, an act that causes Nicholas to throw himself from the window. The last scene of the film shows Thymiane visiting the reform school where she had suffered under so much torture and discipline, but this time she is visiting as one of its benefactors, recently married to a wealthy, older man. She sees Erika there, and the film ends with Thymiane walking out with her.

Pabst's films from the pre-Hitler period were all categorized within the group of anti-authoritative films by Kracauer. In 1930, *Westfront 1918* was released. It was a conglomeration of episodes surrounding the trench warfare of World War I. The effects of war are seen even while the soldiers are on leave. One soldier, Karl, finds his wife exchanging

sexual favors for food with a butcher boy. There are lines of people waiting for rationed goods. On the front, the fighting continues with slight breaks from the noise. The film ends with a French tank assault, leaving Karl in a hospital converted from a church. A scene towards the end of the film shows the German and a Frenchman lying side by side as they share a moment of disgust towards the effects of war. This theme of international brotherhood and a shared disgust of violence is a common theme in Pabst's films from this era of economic depression and the growing strength of the National Socialists.

Kracauer (1959) criticized the pacifist message of the film by pointing out that Pabst never alludes to the origins of conflict; he merely displays scenes of horror in order to remark upon the stupidity of war (p. 234-235). However, Pabst's film, in not portraying the escalating war, is able to look unabashedly at the surface of war without attributing a cause or reason behind it. In the film, War exists as a separate phenomenon, never chained down with slogans or politics. If it had included a long prelude that portrayed the many events that ultimately led to the war, the movie would have become an epic story too grandiose and lofty to communicate war's actual facade. The Nazis were quick to release *Shock Troop 1917*, as a rebuttal to Pabst's pacifist message (Kracauer, p. 235).

Pabst's next two films in what Lee Atwell (1977) calls his "Social trilogy" were *The Beggar's Opera* or *The Threepenny Opera* (1931) and *Comradeship* (1931). The first of these takes place in an imaginary London and involves three city factions: the beggars, the thieves, and the police. Much of the film centers upon the head thief, Mackie the Knife and his hasty marriage to the head beggar's daughter. The jealous beggar, Peachum, threatens Tiger Brown, the police chief, by saying that the beggars will show up during the queen's coronation procession unless Brown arrests Mackie the Knife. As Mackie goes into hiding, his wife runs the gang of thieves and begins a legitimate business. The beggars crash the processional ceremony, and both Brown and Peachum seem to be ruined. In the end, Mackie allows the other two into his new bank business. The social commentary contained within the film occurs while the beggars storm the processional. There is a showdown between the spectacle of the dirt-stained mass of beggars and the Queen's ability to gaze upon them. Finally the Queen must

look away, and the beggars wander off somewhat victorious in their ability to avert the Queen's eyes.

The last film of the trilogy, *Comradeship* 1931, was about a mine on the border of Germany and France. A fire rages within the French side of the mine, and walls are constantly being built to keep the fire contained. However, due to gas, the fire breaks through the most recently built wall and quickly spreads through the mine, trapping hundreds of helpless miners. Despite their cultural differences, the German miners cross the border to help rescue the trapped, French miners. The film follows the efforts of both the rescue party and a trio of German miners who decide to cross the national boundary underground, as well as the effects of the tragedy upon the miner's wives and families. The film is largely anti-nationalistic, stressing the commonalities among miners in terms of class rather than cultural ties. Kracauer (1959) criticizes Pabst's ability to communicate these Marxist concepts, though. He compares the film to the condition of the Social Democrats during the Republic. They expressed apathy towards the growing popularity of Nazism, another allusion to Kracauer's earlier argument about the existence of a state of paralysis. Because Pabst did not engage the idea of a rightward shifting middle-class or the rise of the Nazi youth, Kracauer has labeled the film a failure as a piece of socialist commentary (p. 242). Although its inability to depict socialist ideas and challenge traditional ideas is criticized by Kracauer, considering the hatred that existed between France and Germany at the time, Ott (1986) states that the film "must be considered a courageous statement on the theme of Franco-German *rapprochement*" (p. 120). In response to views such as Kracauer's criticism of the film's inadequacies in defining an ideology, Atwell (1977) says, "*Kameradschaft* is the work of an artist ultimately more involved with people and human feelings than with ideas or class struggle, marking the limitation and strength of his art" (p.102).

## Chapter VI: Issues in G.W. Pabst's Films

Two central issues in Pabst's early films are gender and class, and related to these issues are violence, sex, and the nighttime entertainment Berlin was noted for during these years. Pabst was socially critical much like the Verists. His realist representations did not merely portray objective reality, as the neo-classicists did. His films took certain issues and depicted them in a critical light. Like Grosz and Dix, Pabst was interested in exposing the ills of society. This is evident in the films he made during the Weimar period. Therefore, this thesis now turns analytically to Pabst's films.

Pabst was known for how he was able to direct actresses. Women play lead roles in many of his silent films. Among the list of actresses appearing in lead parts in his films are Greta Garbo, Brigitte Helm, Leni Riefenstahl, Louise Brooks, Henny Porten, and Valeska Gert. In fact, of the seven silent films used in this study, only two lack a female in the lead role. These two films are his first film, *The Treasure*, and his film on psychoanalysis, *Secrets of a Soul*. The former film has no definite lead role. The five characters are reduced in importance next to the idea of hidden treasure. Greed's effect upon the characters is perhaps the most important aspect of the film. In the latter film, Werner Krauss's character is definitely the lead part; however, the film is not so much about him as it is an exploration of psychoanalysis. Like *The Treasure*, the film is more concerned with an idea rather than its characters.

In the five remaining films, women play the lead characters. Their characters are developed much more than any of the male roles. The first section of this chapter analyzes gender issues with this in mind and relates these issues to the already established context of Weimar culture and film. From the selfless Grete Rumfort to the destructive innocence of Lulu, these characters, as well as their situations in society, will be examined. Not least of these situations is their relationship to men, an important dynamic in Pabst's films.

Along a different axis lie the class differences as portrayed in these silent features. During a period of such political unrest over class issues, Pabst's films offer a critical perspective. Films such as *The Joyless Street* show the effects of the inflation on the middle

class and the struggle to remain bourgeois in the face of starvation. It also characterizes the corrupt profiteers who prosper on the misfortunes of others. *The Love of Jeanne Ney* plants the main character in the midst of a class revolution, and both sides are contrasted through various means. *Diary of a Lost Girl* shows the loss of class as a result of sex and its eventual gain through the same means. Therefore, class issues and mobility will be the focus of the second section of this chapter.

The final part of this analysis will briefly examine the nightlife of the Weimar metropolis with gender and class issues in mind. Night is the setting for everything from sex to murder in Pabst's films, and these nighttime activities can be compared with the works of Dix and Grosz. Of most importance to this analysis are the myriad representations of cabarets, brothels, and bars in the urban landscape. Many of Pabst's films incorporate these establishments into the narrative and not surprisingly so. Berlin was known throughout the Western world as the center of nightlife during the Weimar years. As such, the city at night took on its own personality in many of the films of this period, such as Grune's *The Street*. However, in Pabst's films, night is not so much an alien world; it is the main arena of action. Many of his films are obsessed with what goes on at night.

Murray Melbin (1987) has theorized that night is very much like a spatial frontier, such as the old West. It is lawless and dangerous, and those who inhabit the night are like pioneers. Crime, violence, and sex are all a part of the cityscape at night. Melbin's theory comments upon the phenomenon that Pabst has focused upon, and therefore it will be incorporated into this examination.

These three issues, issues that were a major component of Weimar culture, are the foundation of Pabst's social criticism. Linked to these issues were key subjects of the New Objectivity artists, such as the sex-murder, profiteering, prostitution, and the cabaret, brothel and cafe settings that had such an important presence in Grosz's caricatures. These issues show Pabst's inclinations toward the objective yet critical style of this artistic movement, and within the context of Weimar Germany, Pabst's criticisms clearly characterize him as a key director of the New Objectivity.

## A. Gender

The “New Woman,” a liberated female who wore fashionably short hair, smoked, and remained single, emerged in postwar Germany. Atina Grossman (1986) states, “This New Woman was not merely a media myth or a demographer’s paranoid fantasy, but a social reality that can be researched and documented. She existed in office and factory, bedroom and kitchen, just as surely as in cafe, cabaret, and film” (p. 64). The Constitution of the Republic granted women the right to vote among other freedoms, a very progressive step in its contemporary context. Many women had already joined the workforce during the war, contributing to the war economy, and afterwards, widows and single women were either forced to support themselves through employment or else relied on charity. Inflation made what Dora Apel (1995) calls an “inadequate” pension “negligible” for war widows (p. 380). Although the employment figures for women did not rise dramatically, the number of white-collar female workers drastically increased (Widdig, 2001, p. 200). Women began in factory jobs to help the war effort, but after the war these jobs were given to returning soldiers. Women then became increasingly more present in the office as clerical assistants.

This “New Woman,” split between duties at home and the duties in the office, caused many to question their position in a modernized world. There were fears that the woman was no longer forming the maternal pillar of family life. Grossman (1986) argued, “observers were concerned that women sought sexual adventures and urban diversions that would make marriage and family seem virtually as boring and unattractive as work in the office and factory” (p. 68). In fact, Grossman points out the inherent contradiction between the reactions against the New Woman and the changes necessary for women to continue their duties in an age of modernity. In the new era, women had to adapt to continue their familial functions, and this transformation mirrored a changing culture from traditional, bourgeois, patriarchal values to the age of industrialization and machines (Grossman, p. 75). With the decreasing birth rate, many feared that the preference to remain single among women harmed Germany’s ability to produce a strong labor force and military. Even the sex reformists attacked the “New Women” for their androgynous appearances. “Sex Reform aimed to redomesticate a putative New Woman -

independent and sexy - back to an identity that would accommodate marriage and family as well as wage labor and active sexuality” (Grossman, p. 63).

Widdig (2001) claims, “The extent to which women begin to deviate from traditional gender norms becomes an indicator that measures the loosening of society’s moral fabric” (p. 201). Thus the changing role of women in Weimar society was at the forefront of gender-related issues, and the portrayals of this transition are evident in the art of the New Objectivity, as well as in Pabst’s films.

Pabst is largely an exception among the Weimar films that depict women in such roles in which they are the conniving, scheming enemy bent on castrating the male. Many scholars have focused on two of Weimar’s most popular films, Lang’s *Metropolis* and Sternberg’s *The Blue Angel*, to show the typical characterization of the female in Weimar cinema and to show the male fear of castration as well as the male fantasy as portrayed in the sexually liberal, robotic Maria and Lola Lola (Zagula, 1991, McCormick, 1993, Lungstrum, 1997). The Weimar street-films also typically portray the corrupting power of the women on the street over the bourgeois male, and their representations have also been analyzed by academics (Murray, 1993, Wager, 1999). However, Pabst turns the dynamic of power around to present the male as society’s corruptor and the female as corrupted by that power. As such, he differs from almost every director of the period, and therefore a critical analysis of his films is necessary to compare his social criticisms with those of Weimar culture.

As mentioned previously, women often play the lead roles in Pabst’s early films, but more importantly, the films are very conscious of this fact. “In five out of seven of the films Pabst had directed by 1928, the dominant protagonist was a woman” (Card, 1956, p. 151), and Card states earlier in his article, “Each one alone could carry a picture on the strength of her unique and curiously photogenic quality” (p. 149). In addition to merely staging actresses in lead roles, the characters’ gender defines their actions, motives and relationships with others, and the interaction between males and females likewise comments upon their gender. “If there was any pattern at all to Pabst’s interests in his choice of stories, it was obvious (or should have been obvious had his admirers looked at *all* his films) that his field was psychology rather than sociology, his concern more with the battle of the sexes than the struggle of the classes” (Card,

p. 151). However, as the next section will illustrate, Pabst was also aware of class issues, although to a lesser extent than gender.

Myers (1993) writes of women during this period, “They were simultaneously seen as guardians of morality and as chief agents of a ‘culture of decadence’” (p. 57). Although describing them as “chief agents” is perhaps too harsh, these female representations from the New Objectivity do point to corrupted women as symbols of decadence and the plague-like symptoms that point to a society fallen ill. This section explores the notion of the corrupted female and the male society that embraces this corruption.

*The Joyless Street* has continued to be Pabst’s most commented on film, and as such, this analysis will begin with the film that pushed Pabst into the echelons of great German directors. Because Pabst’s colleagues have produced films that equate the female with all that is corrupt in society, Pabst falls prey to the same critiques. However, this thesis will show that Pabst did not react against the changing role of women in society; he portrays that changing role in the midst of a male-dominated world.

It is interesting to note that the two power mongers in the Vienna setting of *The Joyless Street* are the butcher and Frau Greifer, the woman who owns the brothel. The butcher is sadistic in his love of power, offering meat for sexual favors and constantly wielding his power over the women lined up outside his shop. He feeds his dog steak in one scene, yet withholds it from a hungry baby in another. Frau Greifer, on the other hand, wields power differently. Her clientele is male, and as such, she treats her female employees much like the butcher treats his customers. Greifer’s customers are treated with respect, and her establishment depends upon the happiness of her customers. For example, when Canez visits, Greifer does everything possible to make sure he is satisfied. These two portrayals clearly show the difference between males and females in power. The male wields power as if it was his manhood, and the female must bow to the innate power of males in order to exhibit a diminished yet similar power over females. Within Pabst’s social world, this male power is something imbued at birth. The female is only corrupted by the male desires of lust and/or greed.

Grete Rumfort represents the virtuous woman in *The Joyless Street*. She is the provider of the family. She is also a compromise between traditional values and those of the New Woman. Grossman (1986) states:

Social scientists and sex reformers intervened to regulate precisely that conflict: to construct a New Woman who could efficiently and lovingly manage the tasks of housework, mothering, sexuality, and wage-earning. She would be thoroughly rationalized and thoroughly womanly, the sought-after synthesis of housewife, mother, and working woman. (p. 76)

Grete is a representation of this synthesis. Her father has not accepted the fact that the middle-class has been all but destroyed, so he lives in relative ignorance and stubbornness while those in power take advantage of Grete. Her boss attempts to buy sexual favors, and eventually she finds herself unemployed and in Frau Greifer's brothel trying to save the family from financial ruin. She is constantly a victim in a male-dominated world. The only male not taking advantage of her is the American, Lt. Davis, the characteristically young male in Pabst's films who has not realized his potential power over the other gender. Although he has no qualms with being a patron of Greifer's house of ill repute, he is angry with Grete when he sees her on stage there. He sees Grete as an embodiment of innocence, and is frustrated when he sees her corruption. The other dancers and prostitutes are beyond innocence, and so he sees them as they are, females to entertain him. He delights at those already corrupted but cannot handle the act of corruption, and that makes him both hypocritical but lacking the power held by those who corrupt. In this sense, he is more like the typical female than the butcher or perhaps even Frau Greifer.

The film's parallel story further illustrates the male desire for power. Marie Lechner's love for Egon is rooted in female innocence. Unlike Davis, Egon has already crossed into the sphere of male greed. The power-hungry schemers he works for have drawn him in so that not even Marie's love can save him from the male drive. As Marie is drawn into this world, she rebels. Whereas Grete allows herself to be corrupted, Marie fights back. Her actions are not driven by greed; she is driven by both love and hatred for Egon and what he represents, namely the male desires. She does not resort to violence to gain power; her violence is a reaction to the

power that males display. It is her frustration over the male-dominated society that drives her to rebel.

This analysis differs from that of Tracy Myers (1993). She states, “Analysis of *The Joyless Street*’s characters and the relations between them suggests the film’s position on women to be that generally, they are the instigators of dubious moral pursuits and the vehicles of moral, emotional, psychological, and physical distress, whether permanent or temporary” (p. 51). Myers excludes Grete as an exception, but the rest of the female cast she places much closer to vice than virtue. She also acknowledges the corruption of males, but she states this is overshadowed by the female vices. As examples, she uses Egon’s greed in relation to Marie’s murder of Lia, as well as Canez’s stock scheme offset by Marie’s prostitution of her body to Canez. This argument does not take into account the motivations behind the action of the film. Marie’s actions are the result of male corruption. Male corruption is not a result of Marie’s actions. Each of the female characters exhibiting vice is on some level influenced by the male power-drive. Greifer merely capitalizes on the existing male lust, and therefore, her power is a result of male vice. Marie’s acts of violence and sex are a result of the same power-drive. Her love for Egon is brushed aside when he tells her that he wants money more than her love. She only prostitutes herself to satisfy Egon’s desire, and therefore, she is corrupted only by male greed. Her act of murder is her rebellion against the corruption that has befallen her.

Myers (1993) also states that the film’s message indicates women should remain nurturers (Grete) rather than rebel against the traditional family role (Marie). This conclusion also contains inherent problems. Grete is unquestionably the provider of the family, but this does not necessarily mean that she only has a domestic, traditional role as nurturer. In contrast to Marie’s family, Grete is not submissive to a dominating father-figure. She is more independent than Marie in many ways. Marie comes back from the butcher shop empty handed and is chastised by her father. Grete, on the other hand, arrives empty handed to a family aware of her sacrifices to provide a meal. She is in many ways the head of the family, and as such, her status as provider is not an indication of her submission to familial functions. It indicates the importance of the virtuous, self-sacrificing woman working to keep the family together when the father-figure is too weak to support the family.

However, Widdig (2001) is correct in stating:

To be sure, Pabst does not break gender stereotypes: on the contrary, whenever it comes to big business, to back-room deals and stock market manipulations, the film displays an exclusively male universe. 'Joyless Street' is primarily concerned with the consequences of these deals; it shows us how clever, seemingly coldly calculated (male) business strategies during the inflation result in an avalanche of both excess and misery that sometimes engulfs these men themselves.... (p. 218)

What is important to note is that Widdig acknowledges the fact that the vices surrounding the men are not seen as anything resulting from the decadent female. Instead, the males are "engulfed" by their own vices.

The novel on which the film was based was drastically changed by Pabst to include these social issues. "It shifts from a male-centered murder story to a female-oriented social drama of inflation" (Widdig, 2001, p. 216). Pabst was able to incorporate his social criticisms into the story despite the fact that the original story, which lacked gender specific issues, presented an extremely different interrelationship of characters. Therefore, Pabst was totally aware of the gender representations within his narrative.

Male characters in Pabst's silent films serve many functions, yet only a few of these characters are portrayed in a favorable manner. This was evident in *The Joyless Street* in which Lt. Davis was the exception to the generalized male corruption portrayed so harshly. These few portrayals always target the younger, more innocent male. With this exception, males are often driven by greed and/or lust. Even Pabst's first feature depicted all male characters as greed-driven animals, ready to kill each other for money. Arno, the typical young male in Pabst's films, is at first after the treasure. Even in the final scene, he is willing to kill so that he and Beatrice can have a share of the loot. However, Beatrice is Arno's conscience, bringing him back to what is important, their mutual love. Beatrice leads Arno away from the male lust for power, and therefore draws him closer to the innocence of female youth. With the fire that consumes the treasure as well as those who loved it more than human life, Pabst's film

equates greed to destruction and love to redemption. The two lovers walk away in the clichéd 'happily ever after' ending.

The bell founder's wife, Anna, was likewise driven by greed, but her greed is seen as a male corruption. Typically the lead female in these films is young and innocent. Corrupt males often manipulate them, but their innocence maintains the separation. The older females are usually already corrupted by male desires, as evidenced in the character of the bell founder's wife. This first representation in *The Treasure* shows the older woman drinking and celebrating as though she were no different from the two greedy males. The older woman is both depicted as subordinate wife and corrupted woman within Pabst's first film, pointing towards a victimization of male greed rather than a possessor of typically male dominance or power. *The Joyless Street* showed both of these dynamics, the male as wielder of power, as well as corruptor and the corrupted female, in the two characters of the butcher and Frau Greifer.

Jeanne Ney is another character who must survive within an environment full of greedy males. Throughout *The Love of Jeanne Ney*, Khalibiev attempts to force himself upon Jeanne with hopes of gaining access to the family's wealth. Jeanne must also deal with her uncle, whose greed over the reward for the lost diamond leads to his death at the hands of the equally greedy Khalibiev. In fact, Jeanne's uncle, driven by lust, attacks Jeanne in one scene. Contrary to Khalibiev's greed is Andreas's revolutionary zeal. Like Arno and Lt. Davis, Andreas is young and lacks the corrupting nature of the older characters. He is the sole male worthy of respect, and Jeanne Ney remains innocently in love with Andreas.

Gabrielle is the vision of female purity, sheltered because of her blindness. Lacking Jeanne's wiser, worldlier view of male corruption, Gabrielle represents the extreme of female innocence. Unable to seduce Jeanne, Khalibiev succeeds at convincing the blind Gabrielle of his benevolent intentions. Gabrielle is the weakest of the female characters, although her innocence is the strongest. She is the unknowing woman taken in by the corrupt, greedy male, and Jeanne, her only fellow woman, is her sole protection. However, even Jeanne cannot save her from the corrupting hands of Khalibiev during their first few meetings. Of course, Gabrielle's father is no help either because as a man, he sees only a fellow man. Gabrielle's

innocence is only spared when the wiser Jeanne finally catches Khalibiev with the evidence that he has killed her uncle. David Bathrick writes:

In both the Crimea and Paris, Khalibiev symbolizes the evil machinations and moral depravity which prevail in moments of instability and social chaos. And what will finally defeat him in such a situation are the only antagonists worthy of such a task in a world defined in terms of melodrama - namely women.

Women in this constellation of events become the quintessence, not only of love, but of transcendent good, of superior knowledge, of motivations absolutely devoid of self-interest, of a solidarity of purpose which obviates the domain of political struggle and even the institutional structures of a helpless civil society. (Rentschler (ed.), 1990, p. 59)

Despite qualifying the remark on women in light of the film's melodramatic characteristics, Bathrick supports the contention that males exhibit corruption and females serve to oppose characters such as Khalibiev.

Perhaps one of the most interesting dynamics in gender relationships occurs in *Crisis*. Irene's role at the beginning of the film is strictly as wife, although her friends represent a world much more exciting. Irene is innocent because she is kept in the confines of the house. Her husband is very dominant and intends to keep her there despite his neglectful nature. He is so totally preoccupied in business that he doesn't realize his wife's limited existence. However, when Irene rebels, she does not rebel against male domination; she rebels against imprisonment and neglect. Her adventures in the club attest to her relative naiveté in most matters concerning corruption. She displays the expression of a lost girl when she is wading through the dancers trying to reach her one contact in the alien atmosphere. From the man who continues to throw streamers across the room to the boxer who laughs maniacally at her, she is confronted with a multitude of strange characters. The club scene is shown as any other New Objectivist would portray it; it is full of drinking, dancing, smoking, and revelry.

Her relationship with men exists on two levels, much like Lulu's acquaintances represent different strata within society. Her husband and Walter want to possess Irene as if she was an object. This desire eventually leads to her rebellion; however, Walter's desire to possess her is

disguised in his artwork. His art attempts to capture her, but as their plan to run away from her marriage illustrates, Walter's art is merely a reflection of his own desire to possess her. On the other hand, Irene is the object of affection for many of the other characters in the film. One character in particular is the boxer who lusts after her. His desire is not for possession; it is for immediate gratification. Within this atmosphere of male lust, her attempts to be coy or flirtatious lead to disaster as the males take the false advances to be invitations. She ends up with her husband with the false hope that he will no longer neglect her.

*Pandora's Box* presents another interesting example of the male/female relationship. As the young female lead, Lulu is innocent, yet her innocence causes a wake of destruction to follow her. She is the embodiment of the 'New Woman.' She is sexually carefree, and her trademark hair-style separates her from the traditional view of the nurturer. Her youthful disposition, evident in her carefree manner, is both what excites males in the film and what leads them to ultimate destruction. She makes the life of the sexual adventuress more attractive than the life of the housewife. "Sexuality alone in her remains vital and, beside that, only what is connected with it. Everything else seems lifeless, worthless, exchangeable, to be gambled away, lost, virtually not to be regretted - a trifle" (Kraszna-Krausz, 1929, p. 26). She is not corrupted, but neither is she a picture of bourgeois values. She is uncorrupted sexually because her sexuality exists beyond the grasp of the male realm of power. The destruction that follows her is not a result of Lulu's actions; rather it is a result of the myriad male characters trying to control her or change her. "Thus the 'new woman' captured the imagination of progressives who celebrated her, even as they sought to discipline and regulate her, and the conservatives who blamed her for everything from the decline of the birth rate and the laxity of morals to the unemployment of male workers" (Bridenthal, Grossman, and Kaplan (eds.), p. 13).

In the first scene of the film, the viewer is introduced to two of the males trying to either tame her or take advantage of her, both of which could result in her loss of youthful innocence. Shigolch is a lecherous man attached to Lulu like a parasite. He exploits Lulu, stealing her money while acting as a father figure. The film implies a sexual relationship when he is described as Lulu's "first friend." Their relationship changes in different situations. Lulu may look at Shigolch as a father-figure in one scene, but in another, he is treated as though he were Lulu's

pet, an object for Lulu's sympathy. For this reason, Dr. Schön despises him as well as the trapeze artist Rodrigo, who later blackmails Lulu for money. Dr. Schön is the other character introduced at the beginning of the film. He is a rational, down-to-earth character and does not understand Lulu's carefree nature nor her acquaintances. When Shigolch and Rodrigo are found in Schön's bedroom on his wedding night, he chases them out with a firearm. At that time he realizes that Lulu will never really be his. Unlike Irene in *Crisis*, Lulu is too carefree to settle into marriage. She is a visitor of Schön's world just as Irene was a visitor of the bawd world of her friends. His male desire to possess Lulu's youthful beauty can never be satisfied, and so he asks Lulu to kill herself to save them both. His tragic end is no fault of Lulu's.

The one youthful male in the story is Alva, Schön's son. He is naive, and although he loves Lulu, he does not recognize, as his father did, that Lulu will destroy him. Lulu cannot fully give herself to one man, and this challenges the male-dominated world in which the female must be submissive and loyal. Therefore, Lulu does not belong, and her destruction is imminent throughout much of the film. Lulu's "New Woman" lifestyle is an affront to those who would rather keep her in the confines of the household as a loving wife and a nurturing mother. Therefore, she must eventually pay the price for her rebellion against the traditional male concept of the female. Lulu's demise happens at the hands of Jack the Ripper, an icon of male domination over the corrupted female. He murders her, driven by a violent, primal urge, much like the depictions of the sex-murderer in the works of both Dix and Grosz, and Lulu becomes a martyr of the "New Woman."

In Pabst's next film with Louise Brooks, the lead character is very different from Lulu, although the world of the dominant, corrupted male is unchanged. Thymiane, the lead female in *Diary of a Lost Girl*, is corrupted through a series of events. The film's beginning shows her seduction by Meinert, resulting in an unwanted pregnancy. Her father, the dominant male who has already been characterized by the implication that he has seduced and impregnated the former governess of the household, sends her to a reformatory. Although the action can be attributed to his disappointment over her loss of innocence, it is also a result of his realization that his daughter is corruptible just like the young girls he corrupts. Her father sends Thymiane

away in the same manner he sends away the governess. Both fell from innocence, and the corrupting father cannot bear to be around those already infected by that corruption.

The dynamics of power within the reformatory are similar to those within the brothel of Frau Greifer. Valeska Gert, who incidentally played Greifer, is the wife of the reform school director. As such, she uses her power over the young girls sadistically. She is not in charge of the school, but she has been granted power by the Director. They both use harsh discipline to dominate the girls, leading the girls to rebellion rather than reform. This is interesting because it shows the intention to reform girls from the male corruption suffered previously by placing them in a setting that promotes male domination. When Thymiane and Erika escape, they take refuge in a brothel, into which both are eventually engulfed. The brothel becomes, not a safe-house, but an environment in which Thymiane is drawn into the male dominated universe. The brothel itself is the epitome of male domination, and a further examination of the brothel will follow in the third section of this analysis. This series of events gradually leads Thymiane down the path to ultimate corruption.

Osdorff plays the part of the male who has not grown into the role of corruptor. He is in fact characterized as an idiot. For this reason, he is less male than his overbearing father, and he is cut off from his family. This is an act of castration in the way that his power in wealth has been stripped, and this exemplifies the Freudian notion of castration at the hands of the father. Therefore, in a male-dominated world, he must establish himself. He planned to do this through the money Thymiane inherited from her father, but when he learns that the money has been given away, he throws himself out the window. That money represented an investiture of power, and without it, he remained the castrated male, a prospect that was too much for him to live with. This analysis therefore presents the castrated male as a knowingly weaker character and one that is not corrupted like the older, established males in his world.

The film ends with the line “If there were only a little more love, no one would ever be lost.” This line serves a two-fold function. It points to the female idea that love can save lives while it also points out the naiveté of such an idea in a patriarchal society, and within that opposition is the irony. However, Thymiane’s power to say these words to the two heads of the reform school stems solely from her relationship with Dr. Vitalis. She is merely wielding his

power when she confronts the school Director and his wife. Erika is not really freed from the school through Thymiane's love; she is freed through the male power Thymiane now wields. Ultimately, the film ends without any change in the gendered power structure. Thymiane's words will be forgotten just as they are spoken by a naive, youthful girl, who has already descended into the depths of corruption.

The depictions of gender in Pabst's films are not unlike those found in the works of Dix and Grosz. Particularly, Grosz's portfolio Ecce Homo (1966) exemplifies the same gender types found in Pabst's films. In these drawings, females are often unclothed and exposed to the male gaze. The males, on the other hand, are usually clothed and harboring lustful desire. The drawing "Youth Remembered" shows an older man sitting with a nude female over top of his head, signifying a memory. The man remembers his youth in the form of a sexual conquest. The stern-faced man is visualizing his former power over women. "Athlete" is constructed similarly, except the woman is not a vision, she is instead lounging upon a bed behind the man. The man, unlike the older businessman, is a young athlete with arms crossed in satisfaction at the deed just performed. He is relishing the power previously exerted over the corrupted woman. Many of Grosz's drawings also show aged females, or females with used bodies, showing their decrepit, corrupted physique to mirror their loss of innocence.

Grosz's "Spring Awakening" is one of his few portrayals of youth. A young, naked girl is sitting at a table with an older, bald man who, with a cigar in his hand, inspects her with a grin hidden beneath his bushy moustache. Youth here is being depicted in the face of impending corruption. The man is exerting his power over the innocent child. Balthus's "Bildnis Andre Derain" (1936), although slightly more recent, bears a similar message. A robed man, the subject of the portraiture, stands eying the viewer of the painting, and a young girl sits in the background with her breasts partially exposed. Like the Grosz painting, the man is seen as domineering, while the young girl is viewed as fragile innocence.

By creating portrayals of corruption within the male-dominated world of his films, Pabst is commenting upon Weimar society's ills, and within the New Objectivity, specifically the Verists, society's corrupt behavior was by far the most important topic for artistic rendering. This set Pabst apart from many of his contemporaries in the film industry. Pabst's films do not

contain much youthful optimism; instead, they paint society in objective reality. They point out the ills of that society through caricaturist portrayals of corruption, and they lack the idealism found in the films of the early Weimar Republic. Pabst was socially conscious of gender issues, and his films reflect his awareness.

## B. Class

The class-system in Weimar Germany was constantly being criticized and portrayed by the artists of the New Objectivity, and Pabst was no exception. Although his later sound films, such as *The Three-Penny Opera* and *Comradeship*, display a greater awareness of class than his silent features, his earlier works still contain an element of class criticism. However, Pabst's films do not divide the classes into separate spheres, as Lang and Grune have done. Lang's *Metropolis* situates the working class beneath the city and creates a barrier between them and the bourgeois who live above them. The two classes are conscious of each other, but that is the extent to which their two worlds co-mingle. In Grune's *The Street*, this spatial barrier is transformed into one of time. (The transformation from space to time will be examined in the third section of this chapter.) In this film, classes are separated by the hours of the day. The bourgeois world is the business day, and the lower classes inhabit the city by night. The two do not mix, as the plot indicates through example. However, Pabst's world contains both classes juxtaposed and existing amongst each other. There is no invisible barrier, each affects and is affected by the other.

Pabst was also associated with the Communists by 1927, and his leftist sympathies are evident within the work. However, his characterizations also betray a slightly smaller sympathy for the struggling middle-class during the immediate, post-inflationary years. "Though deeply moved by his early experiences with the working class in America and a period of confinement in a prisoner-of-war camp in France to take up a revolutionary cause, Pabst was never able to fully liberate himself totally from his Austrian middle-class background and cultural conditioning" (Atwell, 1977, p. 146). Therefore, instead of pitting the working-class against the fading bourgeois, Pabst characterizes the greedy capitalists as the true enemy of the working-class. Bourgeois characters are often victims of this greed as much as the lower-classes, and this idea of the struggling bourgeois is extremely evident in *The Joyless Street*.

This struggle to maintain class, although often transformed and captured on camera as a psychological struggle, is also one of virtue versus vice. The characters in Pabst's films struggle to keep from sinking into the pits of prostitution and vagrancy. Therefore, the class struggle is

not something these characters are battling within in order to maintain luxury. They are faced, like Grete and Thymiane, with the prospect of sinking into vice, thereby becoming victims of the society Pabst is so often trying to criticize.

“The middle classes, for all their grievances, had properly regarded themselves as the bulwark of the monarchy before 1918. The upheavals of 1914 and 1924 and the new social and political order established by Weimar hit them hard” (Peukert, 1992, p. 156). The inflation of the early 1920s decimated the middle-classes, especially the petty-bourgeois. Their values were being compromised as their class status disappeared. Modernity brought with it big businesses and trade unions which stood as an affront to the middle-class ideas of estate and social identity. The old middle-class deteriorated leaving behind the white-collar worker. These workers were not self-employed; they held office jobs. Although they were not much different from the working class, they enjoyed both a higher salary and a higher social position. These workers represent the middle-class Pabst is sympathetic towards. Peukert writes, “Broadly speaking, in 1918 white-collar workers were reasonably well disposed towards the Republic and towards the principle of trade union representation, but this stance was soon followed by a retreat into non-political disenchantment, while some became radicalized and threw in their lot with the far right” (p. 157). Therefore, in place of a strong, self-employed middle-class, there existed a small, diverse class of workers in between the old middle-class and the working class, thus increasing the chasm between them and the wealthy capitalists. This, of course, made upward mobility very difficult. By the time Pabst’s later pictures were filmed, the economy had stabilized, and the deteriorating middle-class became less of a subject as the new wealth of the profiteers took center stage. However, as mentioned before, *The Joyless Street* was filmed just as stability was dawning, and for this reason, middle-class sympathies are stronger in this film while they fade from his later films. Therefore, the wealthy capitalist became the subject of attacks from the leftist New Objectivity artists. They caricatured the capitalist to accentuate his gluttony and greed. He is almost always very fat and smoking a cigar with the look of cruelty and anger on his face. Pabst also borrowed this character-type to show the greedy nature of the capitalist. These were the characters scheming ways of profiting at the expense of the less fortunate. These were the fictional portrayals of Hugo Stinnes and other well-known profiteers.

Frequently, Pabst creates a bipolar dynamic, in which a character is caught between the lower-class and the upper-class. This polarity often creates the conflict and tension of the plot. Such characters as Jeanne Ney, Grete Rumfort, Lulu, and Egon Stimer all co-exist in two different classes. Therefore, social mobility becomes an important issue within the films, as well. This issue will be examined alongside class portrayals.

As the first of Pabst's socially critical films and perhaps his most popular social drama, *The Joyless Street* illustrates many of the class issues at the forefront of Weimar culture and New Objectivity art. The film constantly makes the viewer aware of the differences between the decadent society that exists in the Dionysian atmosphere of numerous clubs and the greater part of society standing in lines for bread and meat. Widdig (2001) states, "Most scenes take place either in lavishly decorated clubs or in the shabby, dimly lit environment of Melchior Street, indicating strikingly the disappearance of the middle class" (p.217). Also the contrasts between the butcher's treatment of his patrons juxtaposed to Griefner's attitude towards her clients show the differences between the classes. The poor must beg and even sell their bodies for food while the rich are pampered and given anything they request. Even the film's first scene portrays the class differences between the Lechners and the Rumforts by showing Grete's return to her fading bourgeois home full of the values inherited from that class juxtaposed to Marie's return to a proletarian home and an abusive, crippled father. The film uses these contrasts to depict class difference along several axes such as setting, physical appearance, and familial treatment.

The power elites of the film are typically shown within the exciting atmosphere of brothels and clubs where they concoct schemes from which they will profit in the inflationary economy. These shady characters are not necessarily bourgeois, they are capitalist profiteers, and as such, Pabst is not merely portraying a socialist belief in the abuse of the proletariat, he is criticizing the corruption of those gaining monetary power at the expense of both the bourgeois Rumforts and the proletarian Lechners. Pabst is equally sympathetic in his portrayals of the Rumforts and the Lechners. Both Grete and Marie are victims of upper-class greed, although Marie is also a victim of her class status.

Opposed to the profiteers are the lower-class citizens trying to get by with what food and money they possess. As Widdig (2001) says, these characters are shown within the tiny houses on Melchior Street. Unlike the lively atmosphere of the club, the scenes within the houses of the Rumforts and Lechners are drab and emotionless. Pabst tries to elicit sympathy for these characters by contrasting their sacrifices with the decadence of those who stand to profit by their misery. When Grete returns with no food, the family must eat boiled cabbage once again. This is the price she pays for remaining virtuous.

The physical traits of the characters are especially important when characterizing their class status. Grete wears a constant haggard expression, and in one scene, she even faints outside the butcher shop. This worn-out look also conveys a different message to her boss, who tries to entice her with a cash advance. Marie on the other hand maintains a look of fear. This fear is mostly aimed towards Canez's attempts to buy her things and dress her in glamorous outfits to disguise her class status. Those in power do not see the suffering; instead, they see a distorted reality of objects at their disposal either to abuse or to adorn in jewelry.

Canez and the other profiteers wear very different expressions. They have sly smiles when they speak of how they will reap the rewards from their plot. They are dressed formally. Even the butcher is dressed up when he visits Greifer's establishment. Like the example of Grete's two coats hanging side-by-side, one in ruins and the other looking too expensive to hang on the apartment's dreary wall, the garb of the profiteers contrasts with the plain, drab clothing of the lower-classes.

Caught in the middle of the two classes is the character of Egon. Although by class standards, he is not a part of Melchior Street's upper-class, his ambitions are far higher than those of Marie. He exists in between Marie's lower-class love and the upper-class greed of Canez, pointing out an important opposition. Pabst associates the lower-classes in his films with virtue, and this virtue is often in conflict with upper-class vice, such as the case of Egon. He is able to break into the higher society through his affair with Lia Leid, an action of both lust and greed. She offers him the inlet he desires, thus severing the ties with Marie, the lower-class, and virtue.

In *The Love of Jeanne Ney*, Pabst is able to blend several genres together. He has combined the mystery, the international intrigue, and the romance into a socially critical film which displays key issues of the New Objectivity. However, perhaps most notable is the issue of class. Within a setting of Bolshevik uprisings and revolution, issues of class remain a constant throughout the film. When Jeanne is about to leave, her father's butler tells Andreas, "Don't trust her. She's not one of us." Because Jeanne's background is from a wealthier class, she cannot be a part of the revolution against that class. Jeanne's father is obviously wealthy, making Jeanne's affair with the Bolshevik both a betrayal of her class, as well as a betrayal of her father. Her father's death causes her to live in the lesser bourgeois home of her uncle, yet the vices attached to the middle-class remain. In opposition to this fact is her love, which crosses these class boundaries. Like Egon, Jeanne is caught between two societies as the film begins; however, unlike Egon, she is drawn to the love embodied in Andreas rather than the greed of her uncle. Once again, love is associated with the lower-class while greed is associated with the upper-class. At the engagement announcement, she halts Khalibiev's advances and immediately pulls from her purse the picture of Andreas. As a symbol of both the lower-class and virtue, he is her savior. With the ending of the film, the viewer can only assume that Andreas and Jeanne will end up together, and Jeanne's transition to a lower-class existence will be complete. By showing this heroic, downward mobility in class, Pabst is sympathizing with the revolutionary spirit of the working-class while at the same time contrasting the virtues of the lower-class with the vices of the upper-classes. These vices are extremely evident in both Jeanne's father, and her uncle.

Both Jeanne's father and uncle are murdered, a vice in itself, but both are depicted as having typical bourgeois vices thereby absolving the actions. Both of their deaths happen just after their nature is revealed, implying they got what they deserved. Her father uses shady informants to uncover information that could jeopardize the revolution of the lower-class. When confronted by the Bolsheviks, he foolishly tries to kill them rather than give up his information. He is killed because of his desire to maintain control over the working-class. The murder is actually political in nature. Jeanne's uncle on the other hand possesses more of the animalistic vices, such as those found in Grosz's sketches. At one point, he tries to rape Jeanne, and when

she pulls away, he tells her never to come back. In addition to his lustful drives, the scene showing him counting the imaginary reward he is about to collect for returning the gem portrays his greediness and love of money. David Bathrick writes:

In Paris we find in the depiction of the jeweler Raymond Ney a similarly careful configuration of individual and context, the construction of persona from a plethora of cross-identifications in which the splicing of objects and gestures and habits and *mise en scene* are elevated from personal idiosyncrasy to representations of a type, of a class, and even of an epoch: in this case, the paradigm of a horribly degenerating postwar bourgeois world. Ney's constantly obsessive eating of escargot; or his grotesque little dance of joy, arms wrapped around his money safe; or the wanton avarice in his mimed counting of fifty-thousand francs in anticipation of a pay-off; or his fat, puffy, leering, and lecherous body; or even his crowded, dingy office are all emblematic of a larger system of capitalist greed and enclosure. (Rentschler (ed.), 1990, p. 56)

In the end, both of these characters died as a direct result of their vices, vices not found in any of the young Bolsheviks, pointing to a sympathy on the part of the filmmaker to the Communists and a disdain for capitalism. These sympathies mirror the sympathies of many New Objectivists, including George Grosz.

One particular scene which reveals these revolutionary sympathies occurs at the very beginning of the film. A group of 'white' Russian soldiers are drinking with girls dancing on the tables. An article in *Close Up* (1927) said, "For this scene one hundred and twenty Russian officers, including seven generals, came in their own uniforms, working for twelve marks a day. Pabst supplied the vodka and women, waited, and then calmly photographed" (p. 21). The carousing, counter-revolutionary officers are immediately associated with decadence. Andreas is also present, but his character is calm, sober, and depicted as an outsider looking in on the orgy. This scene also places the two main, male characters together to contrast Khalibiev's vice with Andreas's virtue.

Like Jeanne, Lulu is also caught in between two different worlds divided by class. Schigolch and Rodrigo represent the lower-class side of Lulu's personality, which includes her

blatant sexuality, her lack of high society manners, and her love of lowbrow entertainment. On the opposite end of the spectrum are Dr. Schön and his son, who want to bring Lulu into their high society despite her unwillingness to become the proper lady. Pabst's sympathies, however, do not seem to be on one side or the other in this film. Like George Grosz, Pabst began to picture all of society in an unfavorable light. Dr. Schön asks Lulu to kill herself, an act that will satisfy his own greed. If she were to kill herself as his bride, he would finally be able to feel as though he possessed her. His own death is merely an effect of his greed. Schön's son, on the other hand, believes he loves Lulu, and he will do just about anything for her. He is the only other character willing to exist in Lulu's classless world. The moment he follows Lulu out of the country, his wealth and status disappear, and thus, he is one character in the story who elicits sympathy.

Schigolch and Rodrigo are part of the lower-class milieu. Schigolch is like a parasite, feeding upon Lulu. As he is introduced to the viewer, the viewer immediately sees his greedy and pathetic nature when he looks through Lulu's purse to extract money for himself. Lulu looks at him for a moment, and he merely smiles like a child caught in the act of taking a cookie from the forbidden jar. Lulu cannot harbor anything but sympathy for the pathetic, old man. By the time he teaches Alva how to cheat at cards, his character is firmly established as a scoundrel. Rodrigo, on the other hand, is introduced as a good-natured man lacking the intelligence to be more than a trapeze artist. He is associated with the circus, indicating a lower-class background as well. The viewer finally sees his greed when he threatens to turn Lulu in to the authorities if she does not pay him enough to finance his next act. Like Dr. Schön, Schigolch and Rodrigo are portrayed as greedy and a part of society's ills, pointing towards Pabst's loss of revolutionary ideals.

In Louise Brooke's next film, she is once again the victim of a class system in which she does not firmly belong to one extreme or the other. The daughter of an upper-class family, she falls victim to the advances of her father's employee, played by the same actor who played Khalibiev. Within this moderately wealthy home, the father is characterized by his affairs with the household help, and just as he dismisses the first governess, he sends Thymiane away to

reform school when her pregnancy is discovered. This is Thymiane's first change of class in what ends up to be a series of losses and gains.

Within the reform school, Thymiane is treated no better than any of the other girls. Their class statuses have been stripped, leaving them no more than prisoners for the reform school directors to punish and discipline. However, the girls are presented as virtuous next to the lustful eyes of the director and his wife. Thymiane's escape which lands her in the brothel allows her once more to mix with upper-class vices as she is drawn further into the occupation of prostitute. As prostitute, she no longer belongs to the bourgeois world, yet she is the vessel for the lustful desire of that class. Thymiane is then able to climb the social ladder by becoming Dr. Vitalis's mistress. With this change in class she is able to once again visit the reform school but this time without the fear of its director exhibiting power over her.

Several art works from the New Objectivity display a similar sympathy for the lower-classes while maintaining disdain for capitalists and profiteers. George Grosz's "I want to exterminate everything around me which confines me, which I cannot dominate" (1922) is an excellent example of the caricatured capitalist. He is fat, smug, dressed nicely, and holds a cigar. He is pictured in front of a factory where workers are busy. The background enforces the association between capitalism and industrialization. In this particular drawing the man holds his cigar as though it were his phallus, thus symbolizing the capitalist's power over his environment. His portfolio Im Schatten (In the Shade) (1921) is especially class-conscious with portrayals of both the capitalists and the workers (Jentsch, 1997). His drawing "Five O'Clock in the Morning!" is divided on the page to show the fat capitalists drinking, vomiting, and fondling women while the upper half of the picture shows a group of slender workers walking to work with shovels laid across their shoulders. Others from this portfolio, such as "Outside the Factories" and "War Invalids and Workers" portray the workers amidst a background of factories and smoke stacks. These drawings display sympathy for the working-class struggle. However, his later portfolios published after his split with the Communist Party, such as Ecce Homo (1966), lack what little optimism he may have shown before. In depicting a society with no chance of redemption, his later sketches contain the capitalist caricature among all of society's ills, such as prostitution and drunkenness.

Instead of painting the capitalists harshly, many of the artists of the New Objectivity attempted to exalt the working-class ideals through art. Grethe Jurgens painted several works such as “Stoffhandler” (1932) that depicted the worker as the unsung hero. Otto Griebel’s “Die Internationale” (1928-1930) shows with strength and honesty a united workers front. Erich Wegner was another artist who, with works such as “Auf der Strasse” (1926), depicted the strength of worker solidarity by capturing this essence in the faces of his working-class subjects. The New Objectivity was clearly sympathetic to the working-class plight, and Pabst’s characterizations of the heroic proletariat in such figures as Andreas bear a similar sympathy. However, like Grosz and the Verists, Pabst was more interested in showing the corruption of the upper-classes than the heroism of the lower-classes, and for this, he can be classified along with Grosz as both a Communist and a social critic.

### C. Nightlife

Like the New Objectivity artists, many of Pabst's films prior to 1930 portray the atmosphere of the city at night. As mentioned in the Introduction to this thesis, Berlin was home to many bars, cabarets, and brothels. To single out the social ills of the era, the artists focused upon these establishments, as well as other night-time activities. From Dix's scenes of prostitution on the dark streets of the city to Grosz's barroom scenes featuring the two most common elements of the bar, smoke and alcohol, the artists illustrated the immorality of the nightly scenes. Pabst was no exception. His early films often use the club, bar, or brothel as their settings, creating a similar atmosphere of depravity. *Close Up* (1927) printed in an article on *The Love of Jeanne Ney*, "It is noteworthy how realism in the settings cemented the realism of the characterisation" (p. 23). This observation holds true throughout all of Pabst's silent features, and it characterizes Pabst as a Realist. Therefore, a short examination of the urban nightscape is crucial to firmly situate Pabst within the New Objectivity not only in contemporary issues but also in the environment of those issues.

Murray Melbin (1987) has written a book comparing night to a spatial frontier such as the Old West. He begins with "Time is a container, and we are filling it in a new way" (p. 1). By this he means that the day cycle no longer is split universally between the working day and sleeping night. Many have flocked to the night to escape aspects of the day such as crowds or the law. He goes on to say, "Nighttime activity, since it stems from the same forces that promoted geographic expansion in the past, should look like a land outpost, behave like one, and follow the same course of development" (Melbin, p. 29). With this, he theorizes that night is a frontier that is home to social outcasts; it is more lawless than day. Just as those seeking to escape social, religious or any other form of persecution fled to spatial frontiers in the past, night is now the frontier to which these outcasts flee. This theory can easily be applied to the city nightlife in Weimar Germany. It was the home of prostitutes, gamblers, thieves, and shady dealings among profiteers. The works of Dix and Grosz both portray the night as a lawless realm. Paintings such as Grosz's "Metropolis (View of the Metropolis)" (1916-1917) depict crowds of diseased prostitutes, crippled veterans, and drunks.

Even the literature of the period reflects the disreputable activities that happen nightly on the streets of the city. In 1932, Erich Kästner wrote Fabian: The Story of a Moralist. Within the novel's pages, he described the seediness of Berlin at night. He described secret bars, lesbian dance-clubs, and cabarets featuring psychopaths as the entertainment (Kästner, pp. 5, 94-5, 66-67). In one particularly unfavorable description, Fabian, the main character, says:

'The moonlight, the scent of flowers, the stillness, the rustic kiss in the doorway, are all illusions. There's a cafe over yonder on the square, where Chinamen sit with Berlin girls, none but Chinamen. Straight ahead is an establishment where perfumed young men dance with over-dressed actors and smart foreigners; they make known their accomplishments and their price, and to finish up a hennaed old woman pays the bill in return for the privilege of their company. On the right, at the corner, is an hotel entirely occupied by Japanese; next door is a restaurant where Russian and Hungarian Jews practice on each other the varied arts of cadging and swindling. In one of the side streets is a *pension* where high-school girls of tender years sell themselves in the afternoon to add to their pin-money. About six months ago there was a scandal that was never properly hushed up: a middle-aged man went to one of the rooms on pleasure bent and there, as he had expected, found a girl of sixteen waiting for him; but unfortunately it was his daughter, and that he had not expected...So far as this vast city consists of bricks and mortar, it is practically the same as of old. But so far as its inhabitants are concerned, it has long since resembled a mad-house. In the east resides crime, in the centre roguery, poverty in the north and vice in the west, and ruin dwells at every point of the compass.' (pp. 100-101)

This is the same city that is found within the drawings of Grosz and Dix, as well as in the films of Pabst. These descriptions present an image of debauchery, crime, and socially unacceptable behavior existing in opposition to the normal business day.

As mentioned previously, Pabst's first film contained more Expressionistic traits than those of the New Objectivity. It lacked an urban setting, as well as the characteristic social criticism found in the New Objectivity. However, with *The Joyless Street*, Pabst ventured into

the city at night to characterize that which had already been such an important topic for the artists of the New Objectivity. Most of the action in *The Joyless Street* takes place at night, specifically in bars and brothels. Canez's scheme is plotted in a club at night; Lia's murder is committed at night; Marie offers herself up for money at night; the butcher is murdered at night; Grete is forced to perform for Greifer's clients at night. Likewise, *The Love of Jeanne Ney* begins with a scene consisting of drunken officers and women dancing on tables during a nightly orgy of alcohol and cigarettes. Pabst's next film *Crisis* is a story specifically about a woman venturing into the debased world of nighttime activity with dire consequences. Both of Louise Brooke's films contain a multitude of episodes happening within the confines of clubs or brothels, nightly activities for those with enough money. In fact, Thymiane auctions herself off at one of these gatherings. Pabst's films are very conscious of their setting, and indeed criticize the activities that happen within those settings. Night is an important aspect of both the New Objectivity and Pabst's films.

Of the nighttime establishments generally featured in Pabst's films, the first is the scene of the club. A typical example of the club is found in *The Joyless Street*. The greedy plot to drive stock prices down takes place in the first scene of the nightclub. There is music, dancing, and an overwhelming presence of smoke. Most of the patrons are dressed nicely, some wearing fur coats. The club is generally a place for the bourgeois to display drunkenness and sexuality, traits they cannot display during the day. Therefore, the club is an escape from the social pressures of the daytime. Brigitte Helm's character in *Crisis* visits the club and finds a woman buying and using drugs, men acting obnoxiously drunk, and women overtly flirting with whomever has money. These establishments were where the 'New Women' could enjoy being single, and the single man could enjoy leering at the sexually active 'New Women.' Kästner describes one of the clubs or dance-halls in a passage from *Fabian* (1932):

That evening there was, as usual, a "seaside carnival" at Haupt's dance-hall. At ten o'clock sharp, two dozen street-girls did the goose-step as they marched down from the gallery. They were dressed in bright-coloured bathing-suits, stockings rolled below their knees and high-heeled shoes. All who came thus undressed were given free admission and a glass of schnaps into the bargain.

Such privileges were not to be despised in view of the scarcity of clients. The girls danced together at first, so that the men should have something to look at. This panorama of feminine profusion, presented to the accompaniment of music, stimulated the clerks, book-keepers and canvassers who jostled each other along the barrier. The M.C. called upon them to “go for” the ladies, which they thereupon did. The plumpest and boldest women received the preference. The alcoves, where wine was served, were quickly occupied. The bar-maids manipulated their lip-sticks. The orgy was ready to begin. (p. 46)

The other establishment clearly associated with nighttime activity is the brothel. Scenes of the brothel take place in both *The Joyless Street* and *Diary of a Lost Girl*. The brothel, like the club, is also largely bourgeois. Both films contain a madame in charge of the brothel. In the former film, the brothel is run by Madame Greifer. Those with the most money are catered to by the madame, as she arranges female escorts by enticing young ladies to attend her parties for monetary gain. As part of her brothel, the women dance in revealing outfits on a stage in front of the wealthy, male audience. Contrasted with Greifer’s establishment is that of Aunt Frieda’s. Her brothel looks more like an unfurnished apartment with plenty of room for the patrons to dance with the girls. She lacks Greifer’s conniving eyes and crooked smile. Instead, she becomes a mother-figure for the girls. Thymiane, lacking a home where she can have parental love, is drawn into her graces, as well as the profession, fairly easily. Towards the end of the film, Thymiane even treats Aunt Frieda and the other girls as family.

Scenes such as Aunt Frieda’s brothel and the interiors of Madame Greifer’s brothel can be compared to similar scenes painted by Dix and Grosz. As mentioned previously, Dix especially was fond of painting older, veteran prostitutes within their ‘natural’ settings. Paintings such as “Der Salon” (1922) and “Trois Femmes” (1926) portray these figures as a societal disease. Their abused bodies mirror the state of society. Their surroundings, however glamorously decorated, only serve to contrast with the unglamorous prostitutes. The majority of drawings in *Ecce Homo* (1966) either feature prostitutes in the brothel or prostitutes walking the streets. Like Dix, Grosz used the prostitute to show the disintegration of society.

In addition to the establishments of the brothel and club, other aspects of the night equally intrigued both the New Objectivity artists and Pabst. Both Dix and Grosz produced works depicting the lustmord, or sex-murder. The idea of the sex-murderer was a popular one in Weimar Germany. Grosz acted out the part in photographs of him and his wife, and Dix even painted a self-portrait which he titled "Lustmord" (1920). The gruesome scenes created by the New Objectivity artists can be compared to the murder of Pabst's most famous character, Lulu. At the end of the film, she is killed by Jack-the-Ripper, perhaps the epitome of the sex murderer, while they are in a sexual embrace. As evident in the art of Grosz and Dix, the sex-murderer favored knives, and Pabst's portrayal of Jack-the-Ripper shows his homicidal impulse when he glimpses a knife. He is driven by something irrational, primal, and beyond his control.

All of these characterizations of the night were common within the works of the New Objectivity. Kästner, Dix, Grosz, and Pabst all showed the establishments of the night to be the origin of society's ills. These places were the homes of prostitutes, scheming capitalists, drunkards and those attracted to money and all its debasements. By pointing out the evils of the lustful, greedy debauchery happening on the streets and in the establishments at night, the New Objectivists were able to condemn that which stood to silence the common, working-classes and keep them from rising above the misery of their poverty and exploitation.

## Chapter VII: Conclusion

Eric Rentschler (1990) begins his introduction to The Films of G.W. Pabst: An Extraterritorial Cinema with the sentence, “G.W. Pabst is film history’s ultimate nowhere man” (p. 1). With such a long and varied career, it is almost impossible to sum up his many films into some auteur style that defines him as a director. However, despite these obstacles, Rentschler has tried to define Pabst’s films as extraterritorial, placing emphasis on change rather than one constant trait that remains static in his films. This thesis, rather than attempting to define the director’s oeuvre, has specifically analyzed a segment of Pabst’s career to find a cohesiveness among a smaller group of films, thereby allowing the study to be more in depth. In this examination, a very specific style has become evident. It is the same style that was already in use by such New Objectivist artists as George Grosz and Otto Dix. This style of critical realism is the tie that brings together Pabst’s silent films into a single group, and among these films, Pabst’s auteur style is exactly that of the New Objectivity.

The style of the New Objectivity has thus been defined with an inclination towards content rather than form. As the name implies, these artists veered towards realism rather than subjectively portraying reality through distortion. However, this is not to say that the artists lacked bias, or that these biases did not affect the portrayals within the art. The main difference between these artists and those who preceded them is the visual depiction of real problems. Whereas the Expressionists strove to go beyond the physical world in order to capture the spirit within the object, the New Objectivists bluntly portrayed everything they saw around them and amplified it. The New Objectivists chose real-life subjects rather than painting mythical creatures, and for this reason, the New Objectivists have been defined according to content rather than style. The inherent problem with the label New Objectivity is that it presupposes that all art under that heading should be both photo-realistic and unbiased, and likewise, those who find Pabst’s films within a category such as the New Realism, are often misled. This thesis has sought to uncover the stylistic facets of the New Objectivity in order finally to associate Pabst with those artists who exhibited similar styles and content.

Yet no study has analyzed Pabst's films along this seemingly obvious set of characteristics. Many critics have fleetingly mentioned Pabst's affiliation with a realistic style of filmmaking, but none have examined in depth the basis for this realism in the context of the New Objectivity. So therefore, despite the pains to incorporate a full context for Pabst and his films within this analysis, new directions for research abound. One of the more obvious directions concerns Pabst's use of actresses. Louise Brooks has written several articles plus an autobiography in which she describes her experiences in the German film industry, as well as her relationship with Pabst. However, with such names as Greta Garbo, Leni Riefenstahl, and Brigitte Helm, Pabst was obviously both fond of directing actresses and adept at working with female characters. An examination of this dynamic will no doubt shed light on Pabst's directorial style, especially in contrast with other directors and other films.

Lee Atwell ends his study of Pabst's films with the words, "His best work reflects the constantly shifting currents of the psychological, political, and aesthetic thought of his era, and if he failed to inscribe in it a classical *Weltanschauung*, his films reflect a vibrant *Zeitgeist* and a diverse humanistic perspective that deserve recognition" (Atwell, 1977, p. 150). Within this particular study of G.W. Pabst, these words are extremely relevant. For although Pabst's films lack 'Weltanschauung,' or a philosophy of life, there is present an incredibly strong 'Zeitgeist,' or spirit of the times, which this thesis has deemed important enough for critical and analytical study. Pabst has captured the era of Weimar's later years, as well as captured the spirit of the New Objectivity. His films have commented on Weimar society like few before him have done, and they serve as a social criticism to what he and the New Objectivity artists deemed wrong in their society. To Pabst, cinema was not an art form which existed above the ordinary, routine day; it was instead a mechanism for drawing out the important issues of that time. For rejecting both the idealism of the earlier generation and steering clear of the mindless escapism found in Weimar's later films as well as for his unwavering goal of capturing the spirit of Weimar on film, Pabst deserves formal recognition among film historians.