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## Metaphors of Health and Disease in Nazi Film Propaganda

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## Metaphors of Health and Disease in Nazi Film Propaganda

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# **Metaphors of Health and Disease in Nazi Film Propaganda**

By

**Melanie Wright**

A thesis submitted to the University of Plymouth in partial fulfilment for the  
degree of

**DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY**

School of Social Sciences and Social Work,  
Faculty of Health, Education & Society

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## **Abstract**

This study examines how propaganda imagery was used to reveal metaphors of health and disease in Nazi Germany from 1933 to 1945. Specifically, it explores how German medical and political authorities of this period entrenched biological explanations for social ills through medico-political discourses of disease, criminality and deviancy, in their efforts to exterminate particular populations. This propaganda was conversed with the idealised and beautified German Volk who, in turn, were graphically elevated to the realms of a supreme master race.

I use a methodology composed of compositional and discourse analysis, and a theoretical framework that develops the work of Erving Goffman. These frameworks were applied to a range of images from a sample of propagandist movies, published within the time-frame, in order to illuminate how the German medical establishment sought to realise the juxtaposition of both promoting life and administering death.

Findings suggest that the biological categorising and subjective measuring of individuals was a modernistic philosophy. Extensive use of metaphors resulted in a widening range of stigmas which needed medical intervention to maintain normality and social order whilst purifying and cleansing the body politic.

The study advances the understanding of the relationship between the discourses of health and disease with an in-depth sociopolitical study of imagery, asking why it was used to legitimate and nationalise social inequality in the context of Nazi Germany. It further offers a new socio-filmic model for future use when analysing moving imagery in the sociohistorical field. These two advances therefore provide novel contributions to the sociology of public health and social methods.

## List of Contents

	Page
Title Page	2
Abstract	3
List of Frames and Tables	6
Acknowledgements	8
Authors Declaration	9
<b>Introduction</b>	<b>12</b>
Central Argument	14
Chapter Synopsis	17
<b>Chapter One: <i>The Directors Cut</i></b>	<b>22</b>
Introduction	22
Earning the Right to Live	24
From Sterilisation to Euthanasia	31
Propaganda and the Control of Influence	35
Directions of Expression	41
Conclusion	54
<b>Chapter Two: <i>Theoretical Framework</i></b>	<b>56</b>
Research Problem	56
Research Questions	57
Summary	72
<b>Chapter Three: <i>The Graveyard of Values</i></b>	<b>77</b>
Introduction	77
Empathetic Participation	78
Compositional Analysis	80
Discourse Analysis	81
Methods	85
Sampling Criteria	86
Socio-Filmic Model	87
Film Inclusion, Categorisation and Situation	91
Group One Films	91
Group Two Films	91
Advantages and Limitations	92
Image Reproduction	95
Language	95
Summary	96
<b>Chapter Four: <i>Black Boots and White Coats</i></b>	<b>97</b>
Introduction	97
Overview	100
Erbkrank 1936	106
The Eternal/Wandering Jew	133
I Accuse 1941	146
Triumph of the Will 1935	172
Olympia 1936	181
Film Analysis	193

<b>Chapter Five: <i>Conclusions: Traversing the Frontiers of Social Inquiry</i></b>	<b>214</b>
Introduction	214
Contributions of the Thesis	215
Major Themes	215
Question One	220
Question Two	221
Question Three	223
Conclusions	225
Limitations of the study	228
Future Research and recommendations	230
 Appendices:	 232
#1: Security Services (SD), 'Reports from the Reich'	233
#2: Film Copies (attached)	
Bibliography	237
Publications	245



## List of Frames and Tables

				Page
Frame 1:	<i>'Erbkrank'</i>	-	02:25	107
Frame 2:	<i>'Erbkrank'</i>	-	03:14	109
Frame 3:	<i>'Erbkrank'</i>	-	03:55	110
Frame 4:	<i>'Erbkrank'</i>	-	04:19	111
Frame 5:	<i>'Erbkrank'</i>	-	07:15	112
Frame 6:	<i>'Erbkrank'</i>	-	08:43	113
Frame 7:	<i>'Erbkrank'</i>	-	09:24	114
Frame 8:	<i>'Erbkrank'</i>	-	11:11	116
Frame 9:	<i>'Erbkrank'</i>	-	13:25	117
Frame 10:	<i>'Erbkrank'</i>	-	15:50	120
Frame 11:	<i>'Erbkrank'</i>	-	16:48	121
Frame 12:	<i>'Erbkrank'</i>	-	18:39	124
Frame 13:	<i>'Erbkrank'</i>	-	19:15	125
Frame 14:	<i>'Erbkrank'</i>	-	19:55	127
Frame 15:	<i>'Erbkrank'</i>	-	21:03	128
Frame 16:	<i>'Erbkrank'</i>	-	22:20	129
Frame 17:	<i>'Erbkrank'</i>	-	23:08	131
Frame 18:	<i>'Erbkrank'</i>	-	24:15	132
Frame 1:	<i>'The Eternal/Wandering Jew'</i>	-	01:36	134
Frame 2:	<i>'The Eternal/Wandering Jew'</i>	-	06:21	135
Frame 3:	<i>'The Eternal/Wandering Jew'</i>	-	14:05	137
Frame 4:	<i>'The Eternal/Wandering Jew'</i>	-	20:00	138
Frame 5:	<i>'The Eternal/Wandering Jew'</i>	-	29:47	140
Frame 6:	<i>'The Eternal/Wandering Jew'</i>	-	31:22	141
Frame 7:	<i>'The Eternal/Wandering Jew'</i>	-	35:58	142
Frame 8:	<i>'The Eternal/Wandering Jew'</i>	-	49:37	144
Frame 9:	<i>'The Eternal/Wandering Jew'</i>	-	53:45	145
Frame 1:	<i>'Ich Klage An'</i>	-	2:03	147
Frame 2:	<i>'Ich Klage An'</i>	-	2:44	148
Frame 3:	<i>'Ich Klage An'</i>	-	3:18	149
Frame 4:	<i>'Ich Klage An'</i>	-	5:26	151
Frame 5:	<i>'Ich Klage An'</i>	-	7:05	152
Frame 6:	<i>'Ich Klage An'</i>	-	7:49	153
Frame 7:	<i>'Ich Klage An'</i>	-	18:12	156
Frame 8:	<i>'Ich Klage An'</i>	-	26:26	158
Frame 9:	<i>'Ich Klage An'</i>	-	48:36	159
Frame 10:	<i>'Ich Klage An'</i>	-	50:08	160
Frame 11:	<i>'Ich Klage An'</i>	-	1:08:34	162
Frame 12:	<i>'Ich Klage An'</i>	-	1:16:49	164
Frame 13:	<i>'Ich Klage An'</i>	-	1:32:15	165
Frame 14:	<i>'Ich Klage An'</i>	-	1:35:05	167
Frame 15:	<i>'Ich Klage An'</i>	-	1:41:39	169
Frame 16:	<i>'Ich Klage An'</i>	-	1:48:59	170

Frame 1:	<i>'Triumph of the Will'</i> -	03:18	173
Frame 2:	<i>'Triumph of the Will'</i> -	05:19	174
Frame 3:	<i>'Triumph of the Will'</i> -	12:36	175
Frame 4:	<i>'Triumph of the Will'</i> -	36:28	177
Frame 5:	<i>'Triumph of the Will'</i> -	1:01:19	179
Frame 6:	<i>'Triumph of the Will'</i> -	1:11:52	180
Frame 1:	<i>'Olympia (1)'</i> -	06:43	182
Frame 2:	<i>'Olympia (1)'</i> -	12:08	183
Frame 3:	<i>'Olympia (1)'</i> -	15:06	184
Frame 4:	<i>'Olympia (1)'</i> -	19:48	185
Frame 5:	<i>'Olympia (1)'</i> -	1:51:41	186
Frame 6:	<i>'Olympia (2)'</i> -	01:07	187
Frame 7:	<i>'Olympia (2)'</i> -	02:45	188
Frame 8:	<i>'Olympia (2)'</i> -	10:20	189
Frame 9:	<i>'Olympia (2)'</i> -	15:26	190
Frame 10:	<i>'Olympia (2)'</i> -	33:20	191
Frame 11:	<i>'Olympia (2)'</i> -	1:26:03	192

Table One: Plot Planner – The typical 'Hollywood' style of film plot development.

105

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## **AUTHOR'S DECLARATION**

At no time during the registration for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy has the author been registered for any other University award without prior agreement of the Graduate Committee.

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Wright, M. (2007) *Race and the Third Reich*, Book Review, Sociology, Volume 4(3): 579-592.

Wright, M. (2007) *Life Unworthy of Life*, Book Review, Sociology, Volume 4(6): 1216-1228.

Wright, M. (2006) *The Sage handbook of Sociology*, Book Review, Sociology, Volume 4(5): 887-896.

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19/05/06 – *Health, Eugenics and the Third Reich – An initial exploration*, Postgraduate Forum for Research Presentations on Social Aspects of Health, Illness & Medicine, University of Warwick.

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Postgraduate Symposium, Faculty of Social Science and Business, University of Plymouth.

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## **INTRODUCTION**

Given that in an old school report, when I was aged about 10 years old, it was said that I tended to make up my own history it comes as somewhat a surprise that now I find myself with an avid interest in all things historical! What seems to have changed my interests from the fictional to the factual can only be attributed to the time when I visited the local cinema, two decades later, to watch a movie which was being heralded as the movie of the year. This film, directed by Steven Spielberg (1993), was called *Schindler's List*, which dramatises the Holocaust in a powerful and sometimes disturbing way. Such was the impact that it had upon me I came away with a *thirst* for enhancing my knowledge from a lay person's interest to an informed understanding to comprehend the full implications of what had taken place and how such historical situations arose in the first place.

It was at this time that I was working as a psychiatric nurse in a mental institution termed by many as the bin. This bin housed some five hundred in-patients who had short-term or long-term mental health issues of psychotic or neurotic pathology. The life stories which I heard from these individuals further moved me as they recounted, on many occasions, the social injustices and stigmas which they had encountered and continued to be subjected to whilst struggling with their sometimes debilitating conditions. Similar life stories were again heard from patients with physical disabilities as I moved from mental health nursing to general adult nursing. These people who suffered short-term or long-term illnesses, which evidenced itself in a variety of forms, again and again told of their social plight of trying to live in a society which devalues them as worthless, useless citizens, or of experiences of being labelled, by the medical fraternity, as the disease incarnate (i.e. the breast cancer; the sclerotic liver; the MRSA)

instead of their given, personal name. It was these experiences, together with what appeared to be an unquestioning authority of medicine and the doctor, which led to my interest in sociology; particularly social citizenship and the invisible, subjective scale of societal worth and the power/elitism of those in a position to *heal* and do no harm.

It began then, as a personal interest but slowly moved to something which eventually became the most important concept which over time changed and stirred me as I continued to learn more on the subject. From learning of the Jewish experiences, particularly during my visits to Auschwitz/Birkenau in 2007 and the National Archives in Berlin, Germany in 2008, I noted on several occasions how little voice had been heard regarding the many thousands of people who were tortured, humiliated, castrated and killed under the guise of eugenics. This term which arose in the late 1800s had a significant impact on the social situatedness of hundreds of thousands of people all over the world who were marginalised, stigmatised, persecuted and killed, all because they were deemed unhealthy. People with various forms of mental and/or physical disability were clumped together with criminals and Jews and deemed deviants. Once labelled as deviant various Westernised philosophies based on Social Darwinism sought to remove these diseased burdens from society proper. This ethos of social ballast and the removal thereof continued for several decades in many countries including: Germany, United Kingdom, United States, Russia, France, Italy, Norway, China, Netherlands, Sweden, Switzerland, Denmark, Mexico, Australia, New Zealand, Colombia, Venezuela, Czechoslovakia, Cuba and Argentina.



Despite these worldwide acts of social exclusion, little research has focused on vulnerable groups' experiences and injustices which, for example, prevailed throughout the industrialised nations mentioned above. This study seeks to address this imbalance, in part by highlighting the plight of such peoples during the 1930s and 1940s and uses Germany as a case study. Germany was selected for the case study because it was felt that the behaviours and social actions which took place there against their vulnerable peoples may have been used as an experiment or test to evaluate the methods and effectiveness for what was to come in the Holocaust proper. In selecting Germany as an example of eugenic social exclusion, one can witness such policies, laws and behaviours played out *in extremis*.

This broad-ranging and cross disciplinary thesis takes the form of an investigation into the use of metaphors of health and disease in Nazi propaganda imagery. It explores how eugenic and thanatopolitical governance informed and justified social policy directed at marginalised groups from 1933 to 1945. The major geographical locus is on Germany where it is argued the National Socialist German Workers Party (NSDAP, or Nazi Party) used politics and ideology to subvert medicine, and how scientific theories of the day led to a society which eschewed and perhaps feared *difference* whilst conversely applauding the supremacy of the idealised Germanic peoples. The novelty of utilising Nazi propaganda imagery fills a gap in sociological research by exploring the social representations of difference whilst offering a new socio-filmic model for utilisation of future sociological film studies. Visual analysis is one area which has received relatively little focus in medical/sociological research until of late. Emphasis has tended to be on analysing the language rather than the visual

metaphors at work in such forms (Hansen, A. et.al. 2009: 189). This resulted in the formation of three observable findings to the research questions as stated below:

1. To what extent, and how, did the metaphors of health and illness and public health (e.g. appeals to *cleansing* the social body) inform propaganda films produced between 1933 and 1945?

Metaphors were both varied and extensive in both the German and wider context. Such pronouncements had an identifiably modern effect on the character and standing of eugenic and thanatopolitical practices.

2. Why were Jews and the hereditarily diseased populations, as opposed to others, selected for eugenic and thanatopolitical actions?

Impairment and disability were interpreted to include an ever widening range of human conditions and behaviours and medical interventions were increasingly thought appropriate to maintain normality and social order.

3. How were biological categories used to justify policies that discriminated against particular groups?

The biological categorisation of peoples in Germany was essentially a modernistic philosophy which allowed for the identification and subjective measurement of worth of the individual and their contribution to the superiority of the body politic.

The gradual decline of the German medical profession into a highly politicised unit designed to achieve Nazi racial and biological ideologies occurred as the profession was indoctrinated and centralised under Nazism from the beginning of 1933. Evidence suggests however that the replacement of humanitarian ethics

with those governed by biology began before the Nazis took office and not as is customarily advanced, because of political change. Regardless of the Nazis potential belief in scientific theories, the manipulation of an entire profession in order to act upon theories of racial and biological inferiority predetermined the absolute rejection of any scientific foundations.

Biological policies were directed at those considered inferior such as the physically/mentally disabled who were deemed as *useless eaters*. Policies against these stigmatised victims were strengthened and radicalised as the medical profession was increasingly incorporated into the heart of Nazi ideology. Arguably, the profession was consistently politicised from 1933 to 1939 to ensure that from 1939 to 1941 methods of collective, economic extermination could be rehearsed to achieve the most effective method of eliminating superfluous individuals after 1941.

The role of the medical profession in Nazi Germany perceptibly transforms from one of healing to actively destroying entire groups of society. Gisela Bock (1997:172) suggests that National Socialism should be perceived as a 'regime where the hubris of medical utopianism and racial purity put an end to humane ethics'. The politicisation of the medical profession throughout the 1930's effectively authorised the development of methods that would achieve the Nazis racial and biological utopia, no matter how inhumane.

Whilst this eugenic policy was being implemented it was felt appropriate to use methods of propaganda to legitimise and nationalise the Nazi ideation of removing those deemed stigmatised whilst elevating the worth of 'pure-bred' Germans. In doing this the state sought a binary of ugliness or beauty. The ugly, worthless stigmatised groups were filmically illustrated to exorcise them

from the beautified and positively reinforced valued segments of society (the *Volk*). Essentially, the thesis demonstrates that the collaboration of the Nazi doctors in implementing preventative forms of medicine which led to thanatopolitics is evident. Additionally, with the benefits and methodological insights of my new socio-filmic model, it has been shown that forms of propaganda imagery used predominately repetitive narratives to trap stigmatised individuals and groups into a negative illusionary loop where their situation or behaviour was used as evidence for the need to radically change society's status quo. The effortless politicisation of the medical profession that transformed it into an agent of mass murder and the use and methods of propaganda imagery are indicative of the persuasive, ubiquitous nature of Nazism. A characteristic that was utilised to ensure the swift elimination of racial and social degenerates behind a medical façade whilst enhancing and elevating the value of the German master race.

The thesis is divided up into five chapters as follows ...

#### Chapter One: *The Directors Cut*

The chapter begins by broadly contextualising the study by introducing evidence of the spread of eugenics showing that Germany was not the only country which instigated a programme of eugenics and as such was not exceptional in either its actions or philosophies of eugenics or the social progress which supposedly ensued. Instead it illustrates how any society can, given the right circumstances, be led into a *mood* which results in policies and behaviours which seem perfectly natural, normal and rational but that can result in vulnerable people's civil and moral rights and liberties being negated. Hence, it explores aspects relating to

the German intersection of medicine and politics where subjects, considered antisocial, were medicalised and dehumanised in a state-wide regulatory ethos aimed at normalising its public health agendas. Evidence begins to emerge that the medical fraternity draws from a number of contemporary scientific theories which would support and justify the interventions needed to resolve the social problem of the feeble-minded.

The chapter identifies how disabled people became more socially visible because of the closure of care institutions, and how the empowered medical establishment, crucial to the success of Nazi policy, sought to rid this social visibility and burden, by segregating, then compulsory sterilising, and finally euthanising *life unworthy of life*.

The chapter continues by discussing the use of the Nazi propaganda machine and establishes the potential motivations for using film productions to spread Nazi ideology. In doing so, we find filmic typifications or themes regularly utilised for public manipulation. The chapter ends by investigating the producers of the sampled films to establish if their allegiance to the Nazi Party may have impacted on their artistic contributions to German cinema.

## Chapter Two: Theoretical Framework

The chapter begins by identifying the research problem and the research questions.

To investigate the use of propagandist media representations in Germany it was necessary to identify social theorists who would have a theoretical bearing on stigma, knowledge construction, purity and danger and an approach for investigating a sociohistorical epoch. After much searching, the approach felt

most suitable for probing into history was Karl Mannheim's (1952) empathetic participation which required me to gain substantial knowledge of the era under scrutiny and then consider the variables impacting on the German social gamut from both the stigmatised and the beautified groups' perspectives. This is discussed before the identification and exploration of the key assumptions derived from Erving Goffman and Mary Douglas. Together these formed the theoretical framework which guided the development of my socio-filmic model and consequential thesis to its conclusion. The chapter finishes with some early tentative conclusions to the research questions by drawing on the work of the above theorists and applying these to the findings of Chapter One.

### Chapter Three: *The Graveyard of Values*

Chapter Three begins by illustrating the rationale for using moving imagery for this study before a more detailed conceptualisation of empathetic participation (Mannheim, 1952) and the position of my role as researcher in relation to the material is established. The research design is identified where the use of compositional and discourse analysis are examined to explore their organisation and approach. A clear strategy and structure for the analysis of the five sampled films is developed with a new socio-filmic model which provides an additional contribution to the field of sociology before the methodological framework of description; juxtaposition and interpretation of the imagery is employed. The chapter ends with an examination of various advantages and limitations to the above chosen methods.

#### Chapter Four: *Black Boots and White Coats*

This chapter illustrates how propaganda can manifest in cinematic film production and what impact these representations may have upon society. As such, five German documentary based films were purposively selected and analysed in two primary groups which were published/released from 1933 to 1945:

##### Group One:

*Erbkrank (The Hereditary Defective)* (1936)

*Ich Klage An (I Accuse)* (1941)

*Der Ewige Jude (The Eternal/Wandering Jew)* (1940)

##### Group Two:

*Triumph of the Will (Triumph Des Willens)* (1935)

*Olympia* (1936)

Together, these groups of films provide a visual media representation of images of defectives in the first category and images of idealised healthy individuals in the second. Thus, facilitating the potential for a critical comparative analysis of the genre, using the theoretical and analytical frameworks previously established in Chapters Two and Three.

The chapter concludes with a discussion of the findings. These highlight how medicine became politicised in both its actions and its moral standings as gatekeepers of the *Volks*, the lengths and extremes which they employed to validate their methods of healing the body politic to support and validate the ideological agenda, and how propaganda imagery was, in many ways, effectively used to legitimise and nationalise Nazi ideology.

### Chapter Five: *Conclusions: Traversing the Frontiers of Social Inquiry*

The thesis ends with a summary of how metaphors of health and illness were used in Nazi propaganda imagery and how the medical fraternity became the biopolitical gate-keepers of Nazi German society, using and manipulating popular scientific theories to validate their medical interventions in an aesthetically acceptable format whilst meeting the ideologically set goals of thanatopolitical governance of the state. A review is then undertaken to evaluate the effects of using propaganda imagery to reaffirm the biopolitical ideology of the *Volkish* ideal. In doing so, the thesis offers a novel contribution to the analysis and explanation of the relationship between the discourses of health and the dynamics of thanatopolitics.

It concludes by reflecting upon the background and focal theories and evaluating the research methodology thereby demonstrating how the thesis has contributed to sociohistorical theory. Finally, it identifies a number of areas for future research.



# CHAPTER ONE

## **The Directors Cut**

### **Introduction**

This chapter aims to delineate the scope of the study and sheds light on how biopolitics became such an important factor in the governance and health of the German population between 1933 and 1945. It is initially concerned with sketching out the social context of Nazi (National Socialist German Workers' Party) Germany in a bid to understand how the political stance on the beautification of the Volk conversed with its positive and negative eugenic policies of selective breeding. The chapter then moves on to focus on the Nazi propaganda machine to establish the motivations of using film productions to spread Nazi ideology to both the local population and those living further afield. Here, the concept of the socio-filmic model will be introduced, that is, a systematic framework to analyse propaganda imagery for the consideration and identification of potential meanings and interpretations, that are implicitly and explicitly represented in the films. This model will be further developed in Chapters Two and Three. By understanding the genre of propaganda, together with Hitler's and Goebbels' rationale for using it, we can begin to identify certain typifications used to distribute National Socialist philosophy. Five propaganda films are identified which correspond with these typifications. The producers of these films are then discussed to determine how their artistic stance and allegiance to the Nazi Party may have had an impact on their resulting

contributions to German cinema. The chapter ends with a conclusion of the findings.

There is a plethora of evidence regarding the Holocaust but the same cannot be said about the eugenic and thanatopolitical actions and reactions involving physically and mentally ill peoples in Germany between 1933 and 1945. To date, no sociological research could be found which focuses entirely on the social impact of the Nazi propaganda machine which was put into effect, arguably, to provide the scientific and political rationale for its *Rassenhygiene* (race hygiene) programme or to maintain and expand backing of National Socialist ideology.

This study then, critically examines how the German medical and political authorities of this period attempted to idealise the German race whilst entrenching biological explanations for social ills through medico-political discourses of disease, criminality and deviancy, in their efforts to exterminate particular populations such as mentally and physically disabled individuals. The 1933 to 1945 timeframe is investigated here as it was in 1933 that the first biopolitical strategy was applied as state sanction, the 1933 Sterilisation Law. This enforced all targeted individuals with schizophrenia, congenital malformations, epilepsy, hereditary deafness/blindness, alcoholism, sexual ambiguity and senility, to undergo compulsory sterilisation (this target group was expanded in 1941 to further include: psychopaths, antisocials, political malcontents, Communists, beggars, pimps, prostitutes, indignant and lazy people of inferior appearance, delinquents, thieves, vagrants and Jews). The timeframe continues until 1945, the year which saw the fall of the Nazi regime. It is not a study of the Holocaust of the Jewish peoples, nor does it aim to examine

the administration and logistics of euthanasia in the Third Reich. Instead, it focuses entirely on the biological life of the *Volks* and how this society was fragmented by notions of stigma.

German propaganda is in many ways a near-perfect focus for a case study of the juxtaposition of modernity, a well-defined sense of national identity, politico-economic volatility and the operationalisation of eugenic philosophy. For much the same reasons, Nazi Germany is also a topic which should be approached with caution. As Fein (1993) observes:

Positivism and professional status claims – indeed, even the claim to dispassionate understanding – sometimes provoke a backlash from genocide survivors. Most emotionally and intellectually sophisticated researchers in this area understand that empathy and passion – indeed, a passion to understand – are compatible and complementary to more dispassionate modes of logic and method but this disjuncture is not always understood or respected by some members of their audience. But fear of affronting survivors can be exaggerated as a deterrent: the primary deterrent is our own inhibitions and lack of boldness (pp 6-7).

### **Earning the Right to Live**

The First World War (WWI) of 1914-1918, had a profound impact on Germany: politically, economically and socially, and as a consequence, German leaders found it necessary to increase their interest of looking at the health of the nation. Many service recruits were found to be suffering from illnesses and medical conditions that made them unfit for duty and the serious disruption of orderly civilian life brought increases in the diseases associated with social chaos i.e. infant mortality, sexually transmitted diseases, and starvation, especially in mental hospitals. By the end of the war, allegedly one half of all patients in mental institutions died (Burleigh, 1994). The need for corrective measures to

alleviate these issues led to the development of the new speciality called *Social Medicine* (Weindling, 1989).

As a further consequence of Nazi ideology some years later in Germany all chronically physically and mentally ill, blind, homosexual, criminal, and later Jewish people were systematically stigmatised as categories of persons who victimised others, who were morally unworthy of sympathy, who were a drain on the economy, and whose continued presence constituted a problem that needed a eugenic solution. The *useless eater* as one who consumes but does not contribute to production for the good of society was not merely an unsympathetic character, but a dehumanised being who remained outside of society's universe of moral obligation, or as Fein (1979:13) suggests 'outside of that circle of people with reciprocal obligations to protect each other'. As this analysis will show, a stigmatised group like the *useless eaters* can be created, isolated and exterminated through social processes that are, in themselves, quite ordinary (Bauman, 1989). It is the very ordinariness of this historical episode that reframes the commonly held belief that the Holocaust and its perpetrators were exceptional. The only significant difference being the number of scapegoats involved in such *crimes against humanity*.

Eugenics was the new ethos for many intellectuals. Eugenic ideas were 'taken up and developed by sexual reformers, pacifists, and socialists as keenly as by right-wing intellectuals and politicians' (Weindling, 1989:482). There was a tension that the socialist desire to raise up humanity through modern social and political reforms would set loose the destructive forces of the inferior and the vulgar (Weindling, 1989). On the right, belief in the basic tenets of political eugenics went together with pessimism concerning fundamental trends in

Western society. The modern biological understanding of sexual reproduction as involving the entire hereditary history of both male and the female parent led to increasing anxiety about the quality of the human breeding stock. This was in part a consequence of urbanisation/industrialisation and the existence of slum dwellings (Hall, 2002). The distinctive feature of eugenic debates was that traditional social forms as well as modern society were subjected to bio-utilitarian analysis, with a view of their contribution to the biological improvement of humankind. In modernity there was a sense that life was speeding up and that old, more traditional boundaries were disappearing. The essences of the past were rapidly being erased beyond retrieval. The consequence of this perceived vulnerability of advanced *Volkish* stock to the social and political institutions of modernity was a widespread pessimistic mood and a consequent willingness to embrace radical political solutions.

National Socialism was not, in essence, a reactionary or nostalgic political formation (Elias, 1996). Nazism reflected the anti-bourgeois sentiments of a whole range of radical ideologies of left and right. An ideology grounded in socialism of the *Volk* suggested an organic or holistic modernity rather than a return to its feudal past. Nevertheless, there was a hankering for a return to a more rural past, clearly exemplified in Himmler's views of lebensraum and the settling of Germans in the newly acquired Eastern territories. This tension between modernity and pre-modernity is surely a conundrum of Nazi ideology and philosophy. Evolutionary theory was the engine or interface between eugenics and Nazism. It was central to political-ideological development in Germany, and to Nazism, as an intellectual phenomenon, for social Darwinism seemed to offer a scientific framework for understanding the rise and fall of

individuals, *races*, and species, and hence salvation, from the doom to which the German *Volk* seemed condemned. Social Darwinist theory captured the paradoxical position of human beings as animals, subject to natural laws, and yet able to understand those laws and manipulate their responses to them. Science could offer a path to the salvation of the *Volk* and the white *races* in general. One effect of this social Darwinian shift in the understanding of the relationship between human beings and animals was to clarify the status of humankind as a domesticated species. Humanity had paradoxically been domesticated by itself, since humankind's socio-biological environment, and its mating practices, were regulated by culture and politics. The determination that humankind was part of nature and governed by natural laws was accompanied by the realisation that humankind was, like domesticated animals, sheltered from the pure operation of those laws. In Darwinian terms, in the case of domesticated animals, where particular variants were bred for and others selected against, variation was not random but a product of human intervention (Weikart, 2004).

Darwin's insights had begun with the observation of artificial selection and this had led him to the theory of natural selection. The dramatic effects of the human breeding of animals and plants contributed to the discrediting of Lamarckianism since no one had yet observed that environmental influences alone could lead to changes in inherited characteristics and to an improvement of the *races*.

A further paradox was that the purpose of political intervention within self-domestication was to mimic the effects of true natural selection, understood as the 'survival of the fittest' (Spencer, 1917:444). The 'objective' scientific approach was here essential, as this required potentially harsh biopolitical and legal interventions. In this way, radical human intervention in the individual and

cultural mating practices of human beings was justified as restoring a pre-civilisations' natural order, as revealed by science. This involved the political and ideological control of human sexuality of both men and women. Culture would have to mimic nature and since in the domesticated species this did not happen naturally, it had to be imposed by a determined application of the will, expressed as an absolute political force of National Socialism, to carry through a programme to its logical conclusion and in so doing save Germany and the German *Volk* from destruction. As Earnest A. Hooton, Professor of Physical Anthropology at Harvard University stated 'We need a biological new deal which will segregate and sterilize the antisocial and the mentally unfit. Intelligent artificial selection must replace natural selection' (1935:29).

Nazism then, drew upon its German nationalism and modern biological ethos to articulate a powerful image of the *useless eater* whilst enhancing the purity and supremacy of the Volk. This collective representation defined the said minority groups and the Germans in complementary opposition, as groups whose motives, interests and worth were diametrically opposed to each other (Douglas, 1966; Miller and Holstein, 1989). The naming of the *useless eater* demarcated or placed them outside normality and, in doing so, reaffirmed what it meant to be normal. Thus the binary of disability and non-disability served to reinforce normality within the Volk. The general features of an oppositional collective representation of the *useless eater* did not originate in Nazi Germany and the idea of societies disposing of people with disabilities was hardly new at the dawn of the twentieth century. These historical attitudes gathered momentum however, in the late nineteenth and first half of the twentieth centuries.

As in the United States and the United Kingdom, late nineteenth century German efforts to meet the needs of this population consisted largely of custodial care either privately by family members and church institutions or in state asylums. These efforts were reflected in a significant increase in the number of publicly sustained German asylums, which increased from 93 in 1877 to 226 in 1913 (Burleigh, 1994). There was also a concomitant increase in the number of private institutions providing various levels of residential care to those with a wide spectrum of disabilities (Caplan, 1992a). This state of affairs remained relatively stable until the outbreak of World War One.

The outbreak of war in 1914 precipitated significant changes for people with disabilities across Germany. The logistics and material requirements of fighting a major conflict soon had social and economic repercussions among all sectors of the population. For asylum inmates, the most debilitating outcome was the wartime rationing of food. Caregivers, despite their best efforts, were unable to compensate for their patients' nutritional needs. At the Berlin-Buch asylum, for example, the average daily calorific intake for inmates decreased from 2,695 in 1914 to 1,987 by January 1918 (Burleigh, 1994:176). Unable to supplement their meagre rations via hoarding or purchases on the black markets, inmates soon deteriorated. Additionally, most asylums strictly adhered to cost-cutting measures of less heating and clothing. Medicine, a critical resource for the war effort, was relatively scarce for those in custodial care. These high levels of deprivation and neglect, along with over-crowding and poor sanitary conditions, soon led to marked increases in communicable diseases and elevated mortality rates. The relatively stable pre-WWI annual institutional mortality rate of approximately 5.5% escalated to 30% by the end of the war. In real terms, by



1918, more than 140,000 people had died in psychiatric institutions across Germany (Burleigh, 1994:225).

The privations of the war had a marked effect on perceptions of disability among institutional caregivers and the public. Caregivers generally acknowledged the deplorable state of affairs in asylums but also understood the necessity of shifting resources to those able to conduct the war effort. Among society, the war efforts reallocation of resources also highlighted the divide between those who were healthy and able to contribute and survive unaided, and those with disabilities, who could not. Thus, by the end of WW1, an implicit public perception of higher economic worth was attached to people without disabilities and lesser worth attributed to people with disabilities and/or criminal tendencies.

By 1918, a trend toward institutional contraction emerged. Many private and public asylums had closed. Others were transformed into convalescent homes for injured soldiers or hostels for refugees. Still others stood empty as supporting funds were redirected to convalescing patients with a good prognosis who would again enter the workforce to help the country recover economically. Further, asylum populations remained low due to the now exorbitant costs of admitting and caring for new patients. The circumstances soon generated various models of cheaper outpatient treatment that controlled expenses and bolstered progressive social reforms attempting to soften the image of asylums as nothing more than prison warehouses (Jones et al. 1984).

Societal tensions generated by deprivation, war and notions of peoples' social worth based on work and their ability to contribute to society continued to affect people with disabilities in institutions across Germany until the late 1920s. This precipitated rapid and radical attitudinal changes even as the medical and

psychiatric communities continued to struggle with custodial issues related to asylum inmates. It was clear, however, that expensive care could not be expended on people who could not immediately aid Germany's economic recovery. In practice, this meant that among asylum inmates attempts were made to distinguish those who could be rehabilitated from those who could not. By this time, two perceptions were firmly fixed among German medics and laypeople alike. First, even the much lowered number of asylum inmates had to be further reduced in the medium to long term, given the country's restricted economic outlook. Second, because many of those with disabilities were now more visible due to outpatient care, their infirmities and inappropriate behaviours were likely considered a threat to civilised society and its social order (Jones et.al. 1984). Accordingly, inappropriate or undesirable behaviour by people with disabilities was often dealt with through the criminal justice system as deviants, thus melding disability and criminality in the public arena. Professional and public debate had raised the imperative of social control to prevent the proliferation of deviants, including those with disabilities, whose characteristic behaviours were now perceived to be undesirable, criminal stigmas and therefore a social problem. The image of the disabled person was not in keeping with the ethos of National Socialism with its fixation of the ideal type (Mannheim, 1936) being blonde hair, blue eyes, fit and healthy.

### **From Sterilisation to Euthanasia**

The identification of many more people with disabilities in outpatient care and the consequential necessity that at least some proportion of these persons needed inpatient care led to a renewed expansion of institutionalisation. By 1929, the

number of psychiatric patients had almost doubled from the years immediately following WW1 (Burleigh & Wippermann, 1991). Economic considerations were exacerbated by the Depression beginning in 1929, and inpatient populations grew rapidly as many families of previously deinstitutionalised persons, no longer able to support them, returned them to private and state run facilities, rendering them invisible and in most cases without a *voice*. It was at this point that the seeds of genocide were sown among professionals and German societies alike, as a mood of incongruence grew with the evolution of social progress. The juxtaposition of severe economic constraints, crowded psychiatric facilities, the attachment of levels of economic viability to human worth and the sense that people with disabilities formed a burdensome and often a criminal element in society all likely added fuel to the debates concerning sterilisation and euthanasia.

Discussions of eugenic sterilisation in Germany became more prominent in the early 1920s and were bolstered by contemporary debates about the worth of human life, although sterilisation was illegal in Germany until Hitler became chancellor. One of the first official acts undertaken by National Socialists was the enactment of a sterilisation law in 1933. Entitled the *Law for the Prevention of Genetically Diseased Offspring*, it decreed compulsory sterilisation for persons stigmatised by a variety of disabilities. The law also established a mechanism for deciding who should be sterilised, which consisted of regional Hereditary Health Courts, each made up of a judge and two physicians. Approximately 35% of those sterilised between 1934 and 1936 were asylum inpatients from across Germany (Burleigh, 1994). This legislation affected many categories of hereditarily sick, including persons with mental retardation (200,000),

schizophrenia (80,000), blindness (4,000), hereditary deafness (16,000), physical malformation (20,000) alcoholism (10,000) and other unspecified groups (Lifton, 1986:107). Further, in 1933 the Nazis enacted the *Law against Dangerous Habitual Criminals*, a law that further blurred the distinction between bona fide criminal behaviour and inappropriate social behaviour that characterised many people with disabilities. The law stipulated that these non-conforming antisocials could be committed to state asylums, held in indeterminate protective custody, and castrated (Friedlander, 1995). These, and other laws, were the precursors of the Nuremberg Laws of 1935, which, while directed primarily at Jewish peoples, also regulated marriage among people with disabilities.

In 1920 the concept of living beings not worthy of the life they embodied gained strength with a thesis published by two esteemed university professors, Karl Binding and Alfred Hoche. *Permission for the Destruction of Life Unworthy of Life* articulated key implications for stigmatised groups. Binding and Hoche called for the killing of people with disabilities, whom they viewed as incurable idiots having no will or sense of living. Killing them therefore was hardly involuntary euthanasia, which is the imposition of others' will upon them. This shifted the burden of human existence from simply being alive to requiring an explicit justification for living. For Binding and Hoche, therefore, the right to live was to be earned, not assumed. One earned the right to live by being a useful economic contributor to society. Moreover, they drove home the economic argument by calculating the total cost expended in caring for such people. They concluded that this cost was 'a massive capital in the form of foodstuffs, clothing, and heating, which is being subtracted from the national product for entirely

unproductive purposes' (Karl Binding & Alfred Hoche: Cited in Burleigh, 1994:212).

By the late 1930s there was an open discussion among many asylum administrators about the disposal of its inmates with its *T4 Programme* (notoriously named after Tiergartenstrasse 4, where the killings initially began) and thus the elimination of the social problem. The T4 Programme systematically earmarked between 65,000 to 70,000 institutional residents for disposal based on the following criteria:

- 5 years or more in institution.
- No rehabilitation possible.
- Incapable of working (even in institution).
- All *idiots* and *imbeciles* without exception (Burleigh, 1994)

This programme, it has been suggested, was the precursor to the final solution to the Jewish question resulting in the euthanising of some six million people.

Historically, euthanasia has meant a voluntary request for death without suffering by the patient. However, in the seventeenth century its meaning and consequential discourses was modified to grant the right to alleviate suffering exclusively to physicians. While the meaning and implications of euthanasia changed over time, it was universally accepted that the act of euthanasia was always voluntary. That is, when individuals exercised their right to voluntarily choose the timing and manner of their death as a means of ending their suffering, it was a physicians' responsibility to assist them (Proctor, 1988). However, in the 1890s the meaning of euthanasia in Europe, and especially in Germany, came to include two other aspects. Firstly, the notion of a voluntary right to die was extended to mean that in some instances the request for

euthanasia could be made by persons other than the suffering individual (as illustrated in Chapter Four). Secondly, the levels of care accorded the terminally ill, asylum inmates and criminals (of which homosexuals were included) raised the issue of negative human worth and underlined the possibility and plausibility of involuntary euthanasia. In one sense therefore, the debate surrounding this social problem quickly shifted from the idea of a gentle death which was self oriented to one where the medic prescribed death as a social solution with the patients' demise (as was the case identified in Chapter Four). Subsequent debates took up the notion of suffering among humans as comparable to that of animals and the implication that in certain circumstances humans could be disposed of in the same way – quickly and painlessly. The dehumanising distinction between voluntary euthanasia and involuntary killing was thus effectively erased, and an ominous discourse therein began; the term *life unworthy of life* was coined for the first time in 1920 (Lifton, 1986).

### **Propaganda and the Control of Influence**

To facilitate the legitimising and nationalising of social inequality policies Hitler and Goebbels used propaganda imagery, via state controlled media such as newspapers, cinema, and radio, as part of a state wide regulatory framework to illustrate, formulate and manipulate the discourses of representations of difference. The word 'propaganda' itself was coined by the Catholic Church to describe its efforts to counter Protestant teachings in the 1600s. Several contemporary resources offer definitions of propaganda. The Oxford Dictionary defines it as 'Information, especially of a biased or misleading nature, used to promote a political cause or point of view' but this fails to establish the

instruments used for such purposes (<http://oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/propaganda>, viewed 2012). The Cambridge Dictionary suggests that propaganda is 'information, ideas, opinions or images, often only giving one part of an argument, which are broadcast, published or in some other way spread with the intention of influencing people's opinions' (<http://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/british/propaganda>, viewed 2012). Whilst this does include forms of media to perpetuate messages it fails to consider the systematic potentiality. Hence, for the purposes of this investigation and the development of the socio-filmic model I have defined propaganda as:

*The deliberate, systematic attempt by some individual(s) or group(s) to form, control, or alter the attitudes of other individuals or groups by the use of instruments of communication, with the intention that in any given situation the reaction of those so influenced will be that desired by the propagandist(s).*

This definition reflects on individual as well as organised, large scale attempts of influence. It includes the possibility of various forms of communication whilst establishing intentional propagandist manipulation of both small and large scale indoctrination. This, therefore, is how propaganda will be defined in this study. Over the years, almost every nation has used propaganda to unite its people in wartime. Hitler and Goebbels employed it in similar ways. They too, wanted to counter the teachings of their opponents, both domestically and internationally, in a bid to shape public opinion and build loyalty. Hitler once wrote of the role of propaganda as:

The chief function [of propaganda] is to convince the masses, whose slowness of understanding needs to be given time in order that they may absorb information; and only constant repetition will finally succeed in imprinting an idea on their mind. Every digression in a propagandist message must always emphasise the same conclusions. The slogan must of course be illustrated in many ways and from several angles, but in the end one must always return to the assertion of the same formula. Then one will be rewarded by the surprising and almost incredible results that such a persistent policy secures. The success of any advertisement, whether of a business or a political nature, depends on the consistency and perseverance with which it is employed (cited by Fest, 1999:16).

To operationalise and control National Socialist instruments of influence it was necessary for the Nazi Propaganda Ministry, (otherwise known as The Ministry of Popular Enlightenment and Propaganda) to centralise control of all aspects of German cultural and intellectual life, particularly the press, radio and the visual and performing arts. This began in 1932 with all film activities being transferred to Berlin and in 1933 Dr Joseph Goebbels being appointed as Reich Minister for Popular Enlightenment and Propaganda (RMVP).

One of the first steps of securing what the German people viewed was Goebbels' creation of the Reich Cinema Law which came into force in 1934. This decree attempted to create a new censorship criteria which encouraged 'good' films instead of just discouraging 'bad' ones (Welch, 2001:11) whilst at the same time evicting any Jewish involvement in the film industry. Films were only allowed to be released for public viewing if they attained one of a possible nine distinction marks. Failure to gain such distinctions resulted in the film not being allowed to be exhibited at all. Hence, films needed to follow the Nazi philosophy to have any chance of being released. Whilst Hitler preferred a more direct objective reality being portrayed and repeated (see '*Erbkrank*' (*The Hereditary Defective*); '*The Eternal/Wandering Jew*' (*Der Ewige Jude*); '*Triumph of the Will*' (*Triumph*



*Des Willens*) and '*Olympia*' in Chapter Four) Goebbels was more inclined to a subtler approach of conveying propaganda through drama (see '*I Accuse*' [*Ich Klage an*] in Chapter Four), fearing that cinema-goers would tire of seeing the same old political dictum being repeatedly regurgitated. Although this may have caused some friction at times between Hitler and Goebbels they both shared the same National Socialist viewpoint, they just differed in how such visions were to be conveyed on the screen.

Further governmental control was instigated between 1936 and 1938 when cinema owners were compelled to show any film which carried a distinction mark. They no longer had a choice of what or what not to show. Additionally, Goebbels proclaimed the banning of critical reviews. German films could be described and praised but no negative critique would be tolerated. This did not apply to foreign productions, however, as by this time most film imports were kept to an absolute minimum and those that were shown were discussed in the press very derogatively or simply ignored. As Welch (2001:18) tells us:

By exhibiting only National Socialist films, Goebbels was able to maintain conformity and prevent an increasingly isolated German film audience from making comparisons with other political and social systems.

One section of the German film audience which was given special attention to the positive effects of propaganda was the young. It was the Hitler Youth (Hitler-Jugend) who would perpetuate the New Order in Europe so it was they who needed political indoctrination that would prepare them for their pioneering role. Goebbels was aware that children found the trip to the cinema exciting so the ministry exploited this as the perfect medium for combining entertainment with propaganda and introduced it into schools as an additional teaching method. As explained by Rust, the Minister for Education:

The leadership of Germany increasingly comes to the conclusion that schools have to be more receptive to the dissemination of our ideology. To undertake this task we know of no better medium than film. The film is necessary, above all, for the youngest of our citizens – the school children. The film must clarify political problems of today, knowledge about Germany's heroic past, and a profound understanding of the future development of the Third Reich (Rust, cited by Welch, 2001:19).

Many of the films shown in schools were silent and therefore teaching notes accompanied the media. As teachers at this time were valued for their political reliability to the Nazi party it may be assumed that they conveyed commentary which was in keeping with National Socialist ideology.

Education was not confined to schools however. The Hitler Youth organisation with its mandatory membership for children aged 10 to 18 years served as an additional organisation ripe for further indoctrination. By 1936 some five million children were required to attend the *Film Hour for the Young* which took place every Sunday. Typically, cultural or propaganda films were screened and a report made by the Secret Police suggested the method to be highly successful as film attendances rose steadily from 1934/5 to the end of the Second World War (WWII) (Sander, cited by Welch, 2001:21).

Not content with the status-quo levels of propaganda dissemination the RMVP expanded performances to include military barracks (compulsory viewing) and factories. Additionally, in order to supply even rural and remote areas, the Party Propaganda Department (*Reichspropagandaleitung*) operated 1,500 film trucks and two film trains that carried all of the necessary equipment for showing films in, for example, village inns.

This comprehensive system of indoctrination of the entire population carefully perpetuated those ideological themes which the Party wished to promote by

following, in part, Goebbels' reasoning of appealing to the emotions rather than to Hitler's objective reality, as Welch (2001: 22) suggests:

The medium of film was unexcelled in its ability to play upon such emotions, for it could be manipulated to combine entertainment with indoctrination according to the wishes of the regime. By disguising its intent, such film propaganda was able to ensure complete interdependence between the propagandizers and propagandized, so that consequently a uniformity of opinion and action developed with few opportunities for resistance.

The final move towards completely nationalising the film industry came with the appointment of Dr Fritz Hippler in 1942, who headed the Film Section of the RMVP and the purchasing of all film theatres in Germany. Now, every aspect of film production, distribution, and exhibition was centrally controlled by the National Socialist government.

Typifications of Nazi propaganda tended to followed key themes that exhibited strong National Socialist tendencies. They advocated various principles identifiable with Nazism which the RMVP wished to disseminate during Hitler's reign. These can be identifiable as those focusing on: nationalism and the glorification of Germany; the sacredness of German people and soil; the cult of the leader; German militarism and modern warfare; and, hatred of the enemy (Welch, 2001). Of special interest to this investigation are the themes which:

- Endeavoured to establish the stigmatised and stereotyped enemy *within* whilst providing the state with a scapegoat for diverting social problems away from the idealised German peoples.
- Attempted to propel notions of the master race and the perfection of the Volk.

Several German propaganda films were produced within the timeframe of 1933 to 1945 which could be allocated into these two focus themes, however the

majority of them are either no longer available or have been banned from public viewing.

Five films which could be illuminating and which are still available for the purposes of this research are identified as:

1. *Erbkrank (The Hereditary Defective)* (February, 1936) Directed by Dr. Herbert Gerdes
2. *Der Ewige Jude (The Eternal/Wandering Jew)* (November, 1940) Directed by Dr. Fritz Hippler
3. *Ich Klage An (I Accuse)* (August, 1941) Directed by Wolfgang Liebeneiner
4. *Triumph des Willens (Triumph of the Will)* (March, 1935) Directed by Leni Riefenstahl
5. *Olympia* (April, 1938) Directed by Leni Riefenstahl

We now move on to consider the above film directors' artistic stance and allegiance to National Socialism in an attempt to contextualise any bearing on their respective film productions. It should be remembered though that the RMVP may have stifled any attempts at individual artistic expression.

### **Directions of Expression**

Despite much searching of databases and archives there appears to be a gap in the historical record regarding Dr. Herbert Gerdes. Other than being able to establish that he directed *Erbkrank* and a more polished version of the subject material in *Victims of the Past (Opfer der Vergangenheit)* (1937) nothing else could be determined.

Dr. Fritz Hippler was born in Berlin in 1909. His father, a petty official, died in WWI when Fritz was only nine years old. In the years that followed he joined the Nazi Party at the age of seventeen and later became a PhD law student in Berlin. Taking part in many National Socialist activities, including the burning of un-German literature, he became an activist for Nazi ideology with a publication in 1934 entitled *Youth Demands*. This book passionately discussed the role of the youth in the new National Socialist era, lashing out at the 'Jewish symptoms of decadence' (Hippler, 1934:70). Up to his death in 2002 Hippler never recanted his words despite reports that his great-grandmother was Jewish herself.

Upon graduating in 1935 he was appointed to the German Film News Office. Reporting to the RMVP he was responsible for ensuring that filmic news reports conformed to Nazi ideology in that they made sufficient mention of state and party events. It was here that he learned the production of documentaries and their usefulness as propaganda tools. In a paper he wrote in 1937 entitled *Film as a Weapon* (Hippler, 1937:21-23) stated that:

If one compares the directness and intensity of the effect that the various means of propaganda have on the great masses, film is without question the most powerful. The written and spoken word depend entirely on the content or on the emotional appeal of the speaker, but film uses pictures, pictures that for almost a decade have been accompanied by sound. We know that the impact of a message is greater if it is less abstract, more visual. That makes it clear why film, with its series of continually moving images, must have a particular persuasive force ... German citizens have been increasingly drawn to film in recent years. We surpassed England, the previous European leader, in film theatres last year... Leaving aside the cultural and historic differences between Germany and ... other nations, it is clear that increasing German film attendance is among the most important tasks of German film policy, and that doing so would increase the effectiveness of film in propaganda and popular enlightenment (Translated by Leinenkusei, 1999).

Hippler was anti-Semitic and now saw a means of communicating this message through moving imagery. He was not in a position to facilitate this method of

indoctrination until 1938/9 when he was promoted to head of the film department at the RVMP. Now he had both the opportunity and the means to orchestrate his methodology of legitimising National Socialist ideology.

In 1940 Hippler directed his first full-length documentary. *Campaign in Poland*, a film which Joseph Goebbels was also involved with, highlighted Germany's military successes in Poland with the use of newsreel footage (Winkel, 2003: 92). That same year another feature-length documentary that credited Hippler as its director was premiered: *The Eternal/Wandering Jew*. Professing to offer 'documentary proof of the Jewish threat', the film remains today 'the purest visual representation of National Socialist anti-Semitism' (Clinefelter, 2005: 133-154). Hippler, who explained how he made the film in several articles published in 1940, would repeatedly minimise his contribution to the film stating that 'without my collaboration the film would have been made 100% exactly, cut after cut, word after word, as you see it today' (Hornshoj-Moller, 1998:314). Whilst evidence does suggest that Joseph Goebbels and Hitler did play a prominent role in the films' editing (Welch, 2001: 245-257) it was Hippler who was the executive producer who went to the Polish ghetto of Lodz to film orthodox Jews in their *natural* surroundings. There he filmed life in the ghetto, services in the synagogue, as well as ritual slaughter with the possible intent of showing Jewry in its 'reality'. Two versions of the film were finally complete. The first, made for women, children, and other persons with a *weak disposition* showed the film without the slaughter scene at the end of the documentary. The other version showed the film in its entirety but which came with a programme warning viewers of the severity of some scenes.

In order that the full extent of this vehemence should be made clear, I have quoted the review of Hipplers' 'Jew Film' (Hornshoj-Moller, 1998), published in the Nazi Party's monthly for propagandists entitled 'The Film of a 2000-Year Rat Migration' (Unser Wille und Weg, 1940:54-55, cited by Bytwerk, 1998) the review states that:

The *Eternal Jew* is the first film that not only gives a full picture of Jewry, but provides a broad treatment of the life ... of this parasitic race using ... material taken from real life. It also shows why healthy peoples...have responded to the Jews with disgust and loathing, often enough expressing their feelings through deeds.

Just like rats, the Jews ... moved from the Middle East to Egypt ... Even then they had all the criminal traits they display today ... In large hordes they migrated from there to the Promised Land, flooded the entire Mediterranean ... Along the way they remained eternal parasites, haggling and cheating ...

The self-portrait Jewry offered the world was disgusting from the beginning. All is overshadowed by the powerful examples in this...most valuable film, *The Eternal Jew*. This film with its persuasive power must be shown everywhere where anti-Semitism is still questioned ...

The most revolting scenes show Jews slaughtering methods. These customs are so terrible that it is hard to watch the film as the grinning Jewish butchers carry out their work ...Rarely will people feel more horror than ... watching the desperate and horrible death struggle of the slaughtered animals. National Socialist representatives in parliament repeatedly introduced legislation to abolish this form of animal torture through a ban on Jewish slaughter. Such proposals were always rejected, since the entire Jewish ... press ran ... articles against them and the so-called German parties refused to support National Socialism in its battle against this evil.

Not only in this regard, but in other areas too we are reminded ... of ... the power of the Jews in the economy, finance, culture, theatre, film, publishing, press, radio, education and politics. All these Jewish leaders of the Weimar era had their home or their origin in the filthy ghettos of the East.

One has a deep sense of salvation after seeing this film. We have broken their power over us. We are the initiators of the fight against world Jewry, which now directs its hate, its brutal greed and destructive will toward us. We must win this battle for ourselves, for Europe, for the world. This film will be a valuable tool in that struggle.

As a reward for his contribution to Nazi propaganda, Hippler received from Hitler a secret special endowment of 60,000 Reichsmarks in recognition of his services

to the Reich. Additionally, he was promoted to Reichsfilmintendant, a newly-created post, making him Goebbels' deputy in 1940 (Winkel, 2003:93). This role facilitated him with great powers: supervising productions, deciding which actors, writers or other collaborators could or could not work on a film project, and directing the overall artistic and intellectual approach to film propaganda. It was during this role that in 1943 he wrote *Thoughts about Filmmaking*, a book which expounded on Goebbels' speeches together with discussion on his (Hippler's) role of producer, director, and ministerial deputy as a theoretician of National-Socialist filmmaking (Winkel, 2003:93). Hippler's career suddenly came to an abrupt end after the above book was published. Various reasons for his dismissal have been suggested, including the discovery of his Jewish great-grandmother, but whatever the reason it resulted in him being sent to the front as a simple soldier.

After the war Hippler was taken prisoner and re-educated in an Allied internment camp between 1945 and 1948 (Winkel, 2003:94). Sentenced to two years imprisonment, Hippler was released in 1952 upon which he continued to write. Under the pretext of confronting his past he seized every opportunity to revise and embellish history as well as distancing himself from the production of *The Eternal/Wandering Jew (Der Ewige Jude)*. He died on the 22<sup>nd</sup> May, 2002.

There appears to be another gap in the historical record regarding Wolfgang Georg Louis Liebeneiner. What can be established is that he was born in Liebau, Germany (now known as Lubomierz, Poland) in 1905 to a father employed as a textile manufacturer. After his schooling in Berlin he studied philosophy and international history in Innsbruck, Berlin and Munich (Mubi,



2008). During these studies he became the head of an academic stage group which lead, in 1928, to him studying acting and directing with Otto Falckenberg, who was decorated with 'Director of State' for his production of an anti-Semitic film entitled *Rothschild*. In 1931 Liebeneiner made his debut as a theatre director and took several roles in romantic dramas. In 1936 he became a member of the Prussian State Theatre of Berlin which led, in 1937, to the production of several films (IMDb, 2011). Liebeneiners' career appears to have thrived in Nazi Germany with his highly successful biographical film of Otto von Bismarck, the Prime Minister of Prussia, which focuses on how he and his aggressive war policies helped to unite Germany. As a consequence of this film he was appointed as director of the German Film Academy and a year later head of the Fachschaft Film of the Reichsfilmkammer (Stastny, 1997). This was a department of the chamber of film, to which all actors, directors and other film makers had to accede to further pursue their professional activities in Nazi Germany. Here, he banned about 3000 film workers under the premise of Berufsverbote (an order of professional disqualification under German law).

In 1941 Liebeneiner was approached by high ranking Nazi officials to make a film about euthanasia. The T-4 Euthanasia Programme necessitating the killing of *incurables* had met with some resistance from the Catholic Church and some sections of the community. It was therefore recommended that a film be made to quieten such cries and re-educate the public through the medium of film (Welch, 2001:102). This resulted in Liebeneiner, in cooperation with the RVMP, directing the film *I Accuse (Ich Klage an)* (1941) which was about the voluntary euthanising of a woman suffering from an incurable disease. According to a

Secret Police Report (SD Report: see Appendix 1, p 233) on the reception of *I Accuse (Ich Klage an)*, two issues were raised in the film:

Its main theme is the discussion of the problem of voluntary euthanasia for people suffering from incurable diseases. A secondary theme deals with the question of the elimination of life which is no longer worth living (BA, R58/168, 1942, cited by Welch, 2001: 103).

This 'very difficult problem film' (Reitlinger, cited by Welch, 2001) was classified as an ordinary entertainment film due in part because of Liebeneiners' preferred romantic/empathetic approach to the storyline and also because the term euthanasia was not to be voiced in the script. Hence, Liebeneiner tended to follow Goebbels' stance on propaganda, that it should be subjectively entertaining whilst educating Germany to the Nazi ideal.

The RVMP was acutely aware of the controversial nature of the production therefore the press were instructed not to print anything about the film. Such precautions were put into place to ensure the public and the Catholic Church were unaware that such a film existed. The release of *I Accuse (Ich Klage an)* in August, 1941 only came after vigorous testing to ascertain possible public reactions to a change in the law which would legalise euthanasia (Welch, 2001:103). By depicting euthanasia as a merciful release it was hoped that support for the T-4 programme could go ahead unhindered. This appears to have been successful, as Welch (2001:106) suggests:

The working classes were more favourably disposed to the change in the law suggested by the film than the more intellectual circles. The explanation for this was that the poorer social classes were more conscious of their financial burdens. Thus, they were swayed not by religious or moral arguments, but by the purely materialistic consideration of whether they could afford to care for sick people. Beliefs such as these are the result of a fully integrated propaganda machine that depended for its effectiveness on oversimplification and irrationality.

*I Accuse (Ich Klage an)* was a commercial success with over eighteen million people seeing the film (Welch, 2001:106). Hitler rewarded Liebeneiner for his contribution to Nazi propaganda by bestowing upon him the new title of professor in 1943. With this, he continued to direct various romantic dramas until the end of WWII whence he moved into television productions before his death in 1987. Clearly then, propaganda appeared to be successful if Hitler's direct, objective approach was contrasted with Goebbels' advocacy for a more subtle approach, in other words, using a discourse which could possibly expand on previously held mindsets of the individual whilst entertaining the audience with empathetic romanticism appeared to lead to successful outcomes for propaganda dramas. Just as National Socialism needed its scapegoats (the physically and mentally ill and the Jews) it also needed its heroes. This form of leadership propaganda required a different approach to those examples identified above. Its mission moved to one which documented the order, unity and determination of the Volk and in so doing illustrating in the most powerful terms the aesthetic beauty and glorification of the Fatherland. The task for this type of representation in cinematic imagery befell to Leni Riefenstahl after Hitler specifically requested that she fulfil this role.

Leni Riefenstahl was born Helene Bertha Amalie in Berlin, Germany on 22nd August 1902. Following in her mothers' footsteps her childhood passion of dance, writing and painting grew from the age of about four. At the age of twelve she joined a gymnastic and swimming club and it was here that Leni's mother noticed that she had an artistic ability to paint with a natural understanding of

composition and balance, which were two of the profound qualities in the later films of Leni Riefenstahl (USHMM, 2012).

At the age of about 20 years she began her career as a ballet dancer appearing on stage in many European cities. During one such performance a film director named Arnold Fanck was so taken by her recital that he asked her to take a role in one of his mountain films which typically presented images of the almost mythical struggle of humans against the strength of nature. After acting in a number of Fanck's films in 1931 she formed her own film company, Leni Riefenstahl-Produktion, where she co-authored, directed, produced and played a leading role in *The Blue Light (Das Blaue Licht)* (1932). This film was her attempt to work within the mountain genre, but with a woman as the central character with a more romantic presentation (USHMM, 2012). Winning her a gold medal at the Venice Biennale, it set her up with what was to be her hallmark of editing and technical expertise which evidenced itself later on in the decade when Hitler asked her to direct a short film *The Victory of the Faith (Der Sieg des Glaubens)* (1933). The film extolled the values of physical beauty and Aryan superiority and became the template for her biggest venture yet: the production of *Triumph of the Will (Triumph des Willens)* (1935).

Hitler had asked another film-maker to direct a documentary about the Nuremberg Reichstag Party Rally of September 1934 but he was entirely unhappy with the result. Hence, he asked Riefenstahl if she would do it. Initially she declined but was later persuaded when Hitler promised her complete artistic control for this film and future works and agreed that the production would be put under her company (Leni Riefenstahl Studio Film) and not the RVMP (USHMM, 2012). This was especially unusual at this time given that Goebbels had full and

complete control over all things relating to film and propaganda. There are some reports suggesting that Riefenstahl and Goebbels had a very troubled working relationship, others state that this had nothing to do with Leni's autonomy but rather because Goebbels had tried to persuade her into a physical relationship (Loiperdinger & Culbert, 1988). Whatever their relationship was, it is probable that Hitler's attitude and trust for this woman may have posed a considerable irritation for Goebbels, as he had absolutely no control over her or her artistic expression.

Riefenstahl used various experimental techniques that would give a more aesthetic and dynamic look to an otherwise static film. Additionally, she also cloaked her eighteen cameramen and their assistants in SA (Sturm Abteilung, otherwise known as storm troopers or brownshirts) uniforms so that they could acquire shots without looking out of place. To achieve shots that would have otherwise been unattainable she used dollies and tracks which provided active movement for her shots and a huge elevator platform in order to capture the grandeur and magnitude of the event (Riefenstahl, 1934). Interestingly, at the zenith of the rally Hitler gave a speech which decreed that Jews were no longer considered German citizens, that marriage between Jews and Germans was now outlawed and sexual relations between Jews and Germans was forbidden. These new laws resulted in a three minute standing ovation from over fifty-two thousand people. At the end of filming Riefenstahl had over sixty-one hours of film which she then set about editing down to two hours. During the editing process she was asked by General von Reichenau, the army commander, to view a preview of the Wehrmacht military exercises. She apparently told him that the footage was useless because of weather conditions so could not be

used. Outraged, the General spoke to Hitler and convinced him to force Riefenstahl to add more to the film or to create a small supplementary addition to *Triumph of the Will (Triumph des Willens)*. Initially, she declined to do this but changed her mind after Hitler struck fear into her, demanding that she make the changes (Riefenstahl, 1934). This resulted in a fifteen minute film entitled *The Day of Freedom (Tag der Freiheit)* (1935).

What is interesting here is that she was assured that she had total control over the production of *Triumph of the Will (Triumph des Willens)* and she made the film based on that assumption, yet Hitler, at the very last stage of editing, contravenes that agreement by his insistence that changes had to be made.

On 28<sup>th</sup> March, 1935 the premier of *Triumph of the Will (Triumph des Willens)* was shown. Hitler was apparently so pleased with the work that he presented her with a bouquet of flowers and on 1<sup>st</sup> May that year Goebbels awarded the National Film Prize to Riefenstahl for her film with the following accolade:

The film marks a very great achievement amongst the total film production for the year. It is topical, in that it shows the present: it conveys in monumental and hitherto unseen images the stirring events of our political life. It is a magnificent cinematic vision of the Führer, seen here for the first time with a power that has not been revealed before. The film has successfully avoided the danger of merely a politically slanted film. It has translated the powerful rhythm of this great epoch into something outstandingly artistic; it is an epic, forging the tempo of marching formations, steel-like in its conviction and fired by a passionate artistry (Völkischer Beobachter, cited by Welch, 2001:134).

Riefenstahl's next large production was *Olympia* (1938). There appears to be some debate regarding who and when she was approached to undertake this commission. Some suggest that she was asked by Otto Meyer, the chancellor of the International Olympic Committee, others say that she was approached by Professor Carl Diem, secretary general of the organising committee of the

Eleventh Olympic Games, still others state that the request came directly from Hitler after being so impressed with her previous work on *Triumph of the Will* (*Triumph des Willens*). Whoever it was, one thing is clear, she was again given full autonomy and freedom of artistic expression. This further antagonised Goebbels who attempted to sabotage her efforts at any given opportunity (Lewis, 2003).

The advent of the Olympic Games in Germany had required the state to live with a temporary falsehood. For the first time in three years foreign newspapers were made available, signs prohibiting Jews from public parks and benches had been removed, hoteliers, bar and restaurant owners had been instructed to treat foreigners with extreme tolerance and tourism films were made to encourage visitors to come to a country expounding on its virtues of hospitality. This resulted in the New York Times (1936) stating that:

This is a nation happy and prosperous beyond belief. Their Hitler is one of the greatest political leaders of the world today. Germans are a peaceful people who deserve the best the world can give them.

After the games ended the Jewish signs were returned and international newspapers were no longer made available.

Steadfastly then, Leni Riefenstahl completed her mission resulting in a two part documentary. The first part: *The Festival of Nations (Fest der Volker)* focused on the strength and power of the body at its peak of performance whilst enhancing the achievements of the new Germany by winning eighty-nine Olympic medals (more than any other nation) in an international context (Welch, 2001: 93). The second part: *The Festival of Beauty (Fest der Schonheit)* was more a classic aesthetic and mystical genre founded on Greek Gods as masters

of power, purity and rectitude. Cleverly, the film imprints such forms of perfection as assimilation from the Gods to the German people.

The film was premiered for Hitler's forty-ninth birthday in April, 1938. Again, Riefenstahl won accolades and awards including Best Foreign Film honours at the Venice Film Festival, a special award from the International Olympic Committee for depicting the joy of sport, and several German awards consisting of 'politically valuable', 'artistically valuable', 'culturally valuable', 'valuable for national education' and 'instructional'.

The last time Riefenstahl was to meet with Hitler was in 1944 when she got married. From 1945 to 1948 Riefenstahl was detained in both American and French camps and prisons. Although she was tried four times by various post-war authorities she was never convicted for her alleged role as a propagandist or a Nazi. However, she was found to be a sympathiser to National Socialism. The remainder of her life revolved around film production, photography and writing. Leni Riefenstahl died in her sleep from cancer aged one hundred and one on 8<sup>th</sup> September 2003 at her home in Pocking, Germany (Lewis, 2003).

The question now is how can we approach such propaganda imagery today? In the following chapters I will develop what I term the socio-filmic model, mentioned above, which is a systematic framework for the consideration and identification of potential meanings and interpretations implicitly and explicitly represented in the films identified above. In the next chapter I will outline the conceptual background of my approach.



## Conclusion

Little sociological evidence has been found which explores the use of propaganda film to legitimise and nationalise Nazi philosophy between 1933 and 1945. Moreover, propaganda imagery became a useful media for juxtaposing German society into a binary fragmentation of the beautification of the Volk on the one hand, whilst scapegoating groups which were said to infect the purity of its society on the other. By understanding the genre of the propaganda machine we can begin to establish how it may have become so successful in its drive for the complete indoctrination of the National Socialist state, gaining more and more support for Hitler's determined application of eugenic necessities and policies to result in a superior and supreme German state.

We have seen that as early as pre-WWI, Germany started taking eugenic steps to reduce the burden from *useless eaters*. This continued, as in other Western states, until the approach of human intervention was expanded by formulating a plan for euthanising *life unworthy of life*. Throughout the Nazi rule, propaganda films were used to rationalise such interventions by re-educating and persuading the population for the necessity of extreme measures.

Various typifications were used to strengthen National Socialist ideology where different approaches were utilised to enhance the narratives of health and beauty whilst dehumanising those identified as stigmatised by a system fully controlled by the RVMP. Directors of propaganda films were carefully selected from the inner circles of rank and power thereby ensuring the proliferation of social influence by trusted Nazi sympathisers or Party members.

Whilst this study is interested in the application of propaganda imagery it should be considered that the establishment of what makes a film a piece of

propaganda or not is troubling and very difficult to quantify. Clearly, this conundrum can be illustrated with the trials of Leni Riefenstahl. Although her two most famous films (*Triumph of the Will* [*Triumph des Willens*] and *Olympia*) are included in this study which are both works of propaganda as well as being recognised as technical 'milestones' in the history of documentary filmmaking, the post-war authorities found it impossible to attribute guilt for this alleged propagandist role (Lewis, 2003).

For us to be able to understand how such messages and images of representation supported the juxtaposition of health and illness it is necessary to find and apply sociological assumptions which may help to guide this investigation and the development of the socio-filmic model, to its conclusion. This is now discussed in the following chapter which examines the contributions of Mannheim's Sociology of Knowledge, Goffman's theses on Stigma, and Douglas' thoughts on purity and danger.

## CHAPTER TWO

### Theoretical Framework

Chapter One set the scene of the social, political and filmic situatedness of selected propaganda imagery, and its use thereof, during the reign of the Third Reich (1933 to 1945). Further, it was established that moving imagery became a useful resource for juxtaposing German society. During their efforts to *cleanse* Germany of its social ills it became necessary to affirm the biopolitical ideology to the Germanic peoples and in so doing discriminate against particular deviations from the *Volkish* ideal. How then did this play out in propagandist media representations when advanced by the relationship between discourses of health and perfection of the *Volk* and the dynamics of stigma with its resulting thanatopolitical governance?

In a bid to answering the above research problem and the research questions noted below it was necessary to search the literature to ascertain potentially useful theses. This chapter argues that the work of Mannheim, Goffman, and Douglas were usefully be applied to the study of film propaganda in Nazi Germany by providing new insights into the dynamics of discourse and control as well as assisting in the development of the socio-filmic model, previously discussed.

Implicit within this is the application of Karl Mannheim's *Sociology of Knowledge* (1952). Following this, the theses of Erving Goffman which focus upon stigma and Douglas' (1966) pollution, contamination and human sacrifice are viewed to

see how these contribute towards a theoretical framework and the development of the socio-filmic model. These will now be discussed in a bid to frame the following research questions:

To what extent, and how, did the metaphors of health and illness and public health (e.g. appeals to *cleansing* the social body) inform propaganda films produced between 1933 and 1945?

Why were Jews and the hereditarily diseased populations, as opposed to others, selected for eugenic and thanatopolitical actions?

How were biological categories used to justify policies that discriminated against particular groups?

One way to approach these questions is by using Mannheim's *Sociology of Knowledge*. This is based on the premise of the synthetic method, where the academic needs to divest him/herself of all preconceived notions, concepts, philosophies and value standards and replace them with the corresponding constructs under investigation. As such, he illustrates that philosophical viewpoints change and that no standards or concepts have a timeless validity (Kecskemeti, 1952). Thus, to understand how such metaphors of health and illness and public health informed the discourses of the Holocaust period, it is necessary for the researcher to view such practices within the historical framework, thereby, in transient terms, attempt to become immersed in that time frame and recreate the historic works, or what was termed *historicism* by Mannheim. In essence, he claimed that no product of human culture could be analysed and understood in a timeless fashion, instead, interpretation had to begin by ascribing to each product a temporal index, by relating it to a period-bound style.

I therefore need to employ empathetic participation (further explored in Chapter Three as the socio-filmic model), rather than the questionable reliability of 'objective' detachment, to fully understand the dynamic of the structure(s) being explained. This follows a long tradition of hermeneutic analysis of the 'impossibility' of explanation without context as voiced by Weber (1948). This may therefore result in this thesis appearing to take a pro-Nazi philosophy at times, however what I am attempting to convey is an explanation, an understanding of a belief to what are sometimes difficult and controversial issues. To explain something is not to condone it. By placing myself within the historical reality of the given time frame it allows for a 'greater affinity between the analyst [me] and the object' (Mannheim, 1936:9). As Kecskemeti states:

By being immersed in the historic-social process, by utilizing the chances it affords for insight, the observer achieves a kind of 'truth' [emphasis in original] that cannot otherwise be attained (1952:5).

By understanding, comprehending and entering into this historical epoch I can begin to appreciate the social and biopolitical diversity of the groups under investigation hence, the polemical situation of both the *fit* and the *unfit*, or the *in-group* and the *out-group* undergoes sociological exploration at each end of the extremes to come to an understanding of the central catalyst before a reasoned ontology can be determined. This is further discussed in the next chapter.

Such fit and unfit labelling frequently takes the form of stigmata, hence of particular relevance to this study is the work of Erving Goffman. Goffman's 'The Presentation of Self' (1959) uses and applies the dramaturgical model of social life, the study of social interaction in terms of theatrical performance such as status and role. This is of particular relevance when we analyse propaganda films which illustrate the lives of the mentally or physically ill living in long-term

institutions or Jews, placed in concentration camps, as it can illustrate the behaviour and possible exploitation of stigmata for the benefit of propagating biopolitical messages of alienation (as exemplified in Chapter 4). Goffman (1959) determined that in life there are actors, scripts, stages and props in that we are all actors who have both front stage behaviour and back stage behaviour. From early childhood we become skilled actors and move in and out of roles with precision dependant on the social situation to which we find ourselves. We follow the formal societal rules when we are on the front stage reciting a 'script' and playing a 'role', presenting ourselves as the person we should uphold to take part in society. On the other side, Goffman says, our back stage behaviour is informal, as we would act when amongst family or friends (Lemert & Branaman, 1997). Propaganda can expedite the presentation of self by manipulating, by careful editing, that which is presented on screen to support its biopolitical agenda. This potentiality is highlighted with the use of the socio-filmic model which assists in the identification of such exploitations and exaggerations (see Chapters Three and Four).

While we switch from role to role, and script to script, we move in and out of stages or settings which involve props used in everyday life. The setting involves the environment or physical layout where the actor lives and props like a uniform, a stethoscope or something we carry takes you from scene to scene. Our performances involve the ways our actions impact others. Termed 'Sign-vehicles' (Goffman, 1959) such sources of information are accessible to the viewer about the individual. Observers can get clues from the individual by conduct, appearance and similarities of other past individuals expressing similar performances. Such 'sign-vehicles', where evident in the films analysed in

Chapter Four, may indicate useful data for further scrutiny because if these set up the character for potential exploitation of the status quo then this could lead to interesting findings relating to societal value and worth. Ideally, we create performances (impressions) for other people as we try to convince others and ourselves that we reflect cultural standards and socially accepted norms. This, however, can be difficult to attain if the subject is constrained physically or emotionally such as the out-groups exemplified in this case study. They are unable to express themselves as they may want to; rather the producers of the films control all aspects of verbal/non-verbal communication to the audience, resulting in a possible skewed, biased appraisal by the audience.

Goffman focused on the interactional aspects of social life in terms of how people do things together and to each other. He stated in reference to interaction as, 'two or more individuals are physically in one's response space' (cited by Lemert and Branaman, 1997). Goffman concluded that our daily lives are spent in the immediate presence of others and the best way of observing these moments, he suggested, is by microanalysis, by observing our actions and responses to gestures, eye contact, body movements, and conversation, etc in a close environment. This study, however, will not follow his microanalytical approach, rather it will apply his observations to the macroenvironment of propagandist imagery in a bid to understand, for example, what happens when people from one culture attempt to converse with someone from another, or how a mentally ill person is perceived given his/her possible inability to say the right thing, dress the right way or act in accordance with cultural norms? How then do these acts, scripts, stages and props work when such individuals are communicated to others in cinematography? Communication still exists although

not via person to person in the conventional sense. But one where the viewer reads the images set before him/her to arrive at some sense of who or what that person represents. This potential alienation was approached in Goffman's books *Asylums* (1961) and *Stigma* (1963).

In *Asylums*, Goffman (1961) is primarily occupied with the details of a hospitalised patient in a psychiatric hospital and the features and effects of what he defines as 'institutionalisation' (p71). He describes how the institutionalisation process moulds people into the role of conformist, someone 'dull, harmless and inconspicuous', which in turn reinforces notions of unceasing and persistent severe mental illness. This process appears to have been exploited in the films analysed in Chapter Four, although 'harmless' was not a discursive construct to be encouraged (aside from any infants chosen to focus upon; see pp 117, 120, 121, and 124). A basic process of Goffman's asylums is the mortification of self. A patient's notions of self are lost due to the incapacitating aura in institutional settings, regardless of how cathartic a hospital is inpatients learn how to behave from their peers. While people come from a social context in which they have some sense of a identity, roles, and status these aspects of their lives are effectively stripped from them as their sense of themselves are mortified, medicalised and annulled, leading to what Goffman defines as 'disculturation' (p174). Such examples of institutionalisation are ripe for propaganda purposes as such messages could validate arguments of idleness, worthlessness and a burden on society (See socio-filmic model, p87). Rather than reducing the severity of illness, this process leads to demoralisation, skill deterioration and role dispossession and renders people less capable of managing life in the outward world as their 'moral career' continues (p181). Illustrations of these



negativities are frequently exaggerated for the use of entertainment or propaganda (see pp 110, 111, 112, 113, and 137). It illustrates the lack of potential of these individuals to recover and rejoin the workforce. They contribute nothing to the economy only take as their care costs the state monies which could be better resourced elsewhere. In addition to disculturation from their previous identity, institutionalisation only burdens them more for what lies ahead once discharged from the safety on the psychiatric ward, rather it prepares them only for remaining within the setting to such a point that many institutionalised patients have overwhelming fears of the outside world and what a discharge might mean to them (p202). If the patients themselves fear life outside the protection of the institution then what message would this give to those watching films illustrating this? I would suggest that this discourse could enhance public fears of danger and contamination as suggested by Douglas (1966), again, feeding into negative propagandist messages. Goffman concludes from his investigation that taking a mentally ill person out of his or her life context, hospitalising him or her to a psychiatric hospital and then returning the person to the same life context is similar to taking a drowning man out of a lake, teaching him how to ride a bicycle and putting him back into the lake (p210).

Interest for this study does not focus so much on the moral career of mentally ill patients but rather how media representations of these individuals, while institutionalised, contributes to assumptions of deviancy or difference within society proper. Such deviations were further explored in Goffman's popular work on 'Stigma: Notes on the Management of Spoiled Identity' (1963), and it is this that I especially want to look at.

Stigma was originally to be found with early Greek use to mean a marking of the body, intentionally applied to an individual to indicate unacceptable behavioural or moral traits when compared to prevailing standards. Later, Christian usage imputed two other meanings to the word and interpretations of bodily physical features as indicators of holy grace and/or physical disorder. These approaches involve concepts of imputing meaning onto something which on its own may not at all possess this meaning and secondly, dealing with variations to a norm. Goffman (1963) expanded these meanings of difference with his three types of stigma. First there are abominations of the body - the various physical deformities. Next there are the personal blemishes of individual character such as mental illness, imprisonment, alcoholism, homosexuality, unemployment, addictions and radical political behaviours. Then there are the social stigmas of race, nation, and religion which can be transmitted genetically to contaminate all members of a family (Goffman: 1963 *passim*). Such attributes often vary depending on the geopolitical and sociopolitical contexts into which they arise, but wherever or whenever they arise it is conditional upon a gap or disappointment occurring between *normal's* and those so afflicted. Although we may not always be psychologically aware of projecting or anticipating conformity to positive or negative stereotypes, when it does reach a point of our cognition (through direct contact or via imagery in a film for example) we are almost innately bound to deal with this expectation. When this expectation is not achieved when measured by our own egoistic identity, stigmatising and negative stereotyping reactively follows. Establishing and/or exaggerating the presence of such stigmata in moving imagery serve to isolate those who we see from ourselves. Such observations feed into biopolitical estrangements which bolster

the need to put up boundaries between in-groups and out-groups and thereby safeguard the purity of dominant groups.

For a stigma to exist, four specific components need to converge. First, individuals differentiate and label human variations; second, prevailing cultural beliefs tie those labelled to adverse attributes; third, the labelled individual(s) is placed in distinguished, stereotyped groups that serve to establish a disconnection between *us* and *them*; finally, the labelled individual experiences status loss and discrimination that leads to unequal outcomes (Link & Phelan, 2001). Distinguishing which differences are worthy of labelling is a social process where two factors should be considered to establish the extent and course of differentiation. The first is the need to make generalised, sweeping statements to facilitate the creation of groups (e.g. black and white; strong and weak; wealthy and poor). Then, the social acceptance of difference, determined as appropriate, can be seen differently from place to place and time to time. As such, what one historical epoch may deem *normal* another may consider as *abnormal*. This process is seen as a natural, general feature of society allowing for negative attributes to be linked to groups and therefore separating society into *in* group and *out* group formations. The socio-filmic model was able to identify these differences (see Chapters Three and Four) and therefore facilitated the analysis of juxtaposed groups' social standing and biopolitical value.

Power, both political and social, may have a considerable impact on group formations, such that *in* groups may be manipulated into establishing and validating fears and social panic over *out* group demographics and thereby encouraging sometimes extreme actions to counter the threat to boundary (Douglas, 1966) compositions. This was discussed by Goffman (1963) when he

established his two types of stigma: discredited and discreditable, and further developed by Jones et al. (1984) with their *Six Dimensions of Stigma*.

Discredited stigma relates to an individual whose stigma is recognised both by self and others which in turn can impact on his/her behaviour and the behaviour of others. Discreditable stigma is slightly different in that the stigma is not immediately evident but which may become evident, intentionally by him/her or unintentionally by some factor outside his/her control. The six dimensions suggested by Jones et al. (1984) expand on these two forms of stigma:

1. Concealable – extent to which others can see the stigma.
2. Course of the mark – whether the stigma becomes more prominent over time.
3. Disruptiveness – the degree to which the stigma gets in the way of social interactions.
4. Aesthetics – other's reactions to the stigma.
5. Origin – whether others think the stigma is present at birth, accidental or deliberate.
6. Peril – the apparent danger of the stigma to others.

These stigmatised individuals may experience discrimination, and the attitudes and behavioural reactions may vary in each case. Interestingly, research has shown (Kurzban & Leary, 2001; Goldacre, 2010) that stigma associated with a hereditary factor such as some mental health issue results in society increasing their social distance from those so afflicted and that such individuals possess greater danger and risk to *normal* society than those marked with a non-hereditary stigma or one which could be explained as a consequence of environmental factors.

We have seen above how stigmas and consequential stereotyping can arise in society. Now, we move to explore how those individuals and groups may use defence mechanisms and identity beliefs once such labelling has been applied,

and how such defences may, in themselves, cause a recursive negative loop or self-fulfilling prophecy for the justification of scapegoating of out-group members. Identity beliefs have an effect on how an individual deals with stigma. As Goffman (1963) explains, one can bear a stigma and be relatively untouched, insulated and protected by identity beliefs of his/her own. Some may have a construct that acts as a frame of reference for themselves, while others may only have a sense of social identity and define themselves primarily by that construct. Such people see themselves as unquestioningly fitting into a selected social category. They understand the generally accepted social expectations for that category to which they belong. If there is an attribute gap, an individual agrees that he/she falls short of what is expected and experiences shame. I use shame, in this usage therefore, as the individual's perception of one of his/her own attributes being a defiling thing to possess. Such an individual virtually expects others to hold him/her accountable to this gap. Stigmatised persons may try to avoid direct confrontations with *normal's* given the uncertainty of status in the mind sets of *in-group*. Such direct confrontations require conscious calculations of impressions made, leading to a state of anxiety. The central feature of a stigmatised individual's situation in life is acceptance or the lack of it. It is here that we see the juxtaposition between virtual identity based on stereotypes and imputed attributes and the actual identity of the self. Where a negative gap arises, stigma exists.

I suggest that there are some exceptions to this however. Take for example individuals suffering from forms of dementia or certain types of schizophrenia where in both instances the individual has no insight into their own identity let alone any stigma or scapegoating that may exist. Moreover, where a person has

his/her own constructs to insulate him/herself from these dynamics the issue of stigma is not a concern. However, when the stigmatised individual defines him/herself as not different from any other human being, while at the same time others around him/her define him/her as someone set apart, then 'given this basic self-contradiction of the stigmatised individual it is understandable that he will make some effort to find a way out of his dilemma, if only to find a doctrine which makes consistent sense of his situation' (Goffman, 1963). The person will attempt to assert his/her own construct of self whilst seeking out professionals to validate his/her stance of worth (for two good examples of this see pp 126 and 143).

Essentially, then, Goffman (1963) illustrates the stigmatised individual as one who projects information about the self and the possible reactions of *normal's*. The strategy in managing this projection, and expectations, and dealing with the dynamics is in the scope of his term 'Management of Spoiled Identity'. The gap between virtual and actual identity leaves a 'disappointment' of expectations between the perceived attributes and those anticipated for the social category the person was assumed to belong to, and in the negative sense this dynamic 'spoils the identity'.

As stigma has the capacity to reflect and also to create social meanings the socio-filmic model additionally investigates how such language, both verbal and non-verbal, were used to propagate prejudicial constructions and ideologies which may have validated institutionalised violence (See Chapter Four). Such non-verbal cues and pictorial power relations were explored in Goffman's *Gender Advertisements* (1979).

Although Goffman never actually examined the effects of moving imagery (televisual or cinematic) in his works he did explore the captured images of (predominately) women to establish how the role of visual messages can lead to a robust visual interpretation of reality. Although this study is not proposing to focus on the empowerment or disempowerment of women it is interested in how far propaganda imagery *makes* reality into iconically reflexive features of the social structure into which it is presented. For example, this may involve identifying content, colour, spatial organisation, light and expressive content of power, authority, rank, and group membership. In applying his theory to a compositional analytical methodology it may extend Goffman's framework on gender display to one moving beyond the non-verbal ambit (See socio-filmic model, p 87).

In summary then, Goffman's collection of works offer us a vigorous and thought provoking theoretical framework with which to investigate the various metaphors of health and disease in Nazi film propaganda. By establishing how the individual conducts themselves and appears in cinematography we can begin to establish how the in-group may measure the abnormality of the out-group or how producers of artistic expression frame those selected to advance and support ideological normality. This is particularly relevant when images of the mentally or physically disabled and Jews are viewed as stigmata when conversed with metaphors of purity and perfection of the in-group. Such constructions of social reality were theorised by Douglas (1966). Different discursive formations and apparatuses divide, classify and inscribe the body differently in their respective regimes of power and truth (Hall, 1997). It thinks of the body as 'totally imprinted by history and the processes of history's deconstruction of the body' (Foucault,

1977:83) which was similarly discussed by Goffman's theory of stigma (1963). Classifying and inscribing the body has further been explored by Mary Douglas in her theories of pollution, contamination and human sacrifice (1966).

In her landmark book *Purity and Danger* (1966), Douglas addresses the issue of external boundaries and their relation to stigma. In this regard, her primary thesis is that the body is a biopolitical metaphor which can stand for any bounded system. Its boundaries can represent any boundaries which are threatened or precarious. Margins (as found in the images in Chapter Four) are dangerous. If they are pulled this way or that way the shape of fundamental experience is altered. Any structure of ideas is vulnerable at its margins.

Biopolitics was built on a contradiction of scientific positivism and myths. By separating, sterilising and later exterminating the impure elements of society it would somehow reaffirm the superiority of the *Volks*. Sex, its pollution and the progeny which ensued from such actions, were at war with each other, they were a threat to the social order of Germany and as such were regarded as objectionable and vigorously brushed away (Douglas, 1966); isolated from the body politic as dirt out of place where identity is lost and contamination is consolidated as a compost heap. Dirt then, is essentially disorder. This disorder, when illustrated in moving imagery, sets up possible connotations of diseased carriers, disease potential and defilement as it feeds into social expectations of cleanliness and purity. By eliminating the offending matter, society positively organises their environment, making it conform to the universally held ideology of the state. This matter out of place then can be defined as the enemy within, as dangerous and sacrilegious (Weisbrod, 2002), a source of defilement polluting the pure bred Aryan people. Such discourses are highlighted in Chapter Four,



using the socio-filmic model. Douglas states 'society does not exist in a neutral vacuum. It is subject to external pressures; that which is not with it, part of it and subject to its laws, is potentially against it' (1966:25). This within and without narrative was emphasised with the Nazis approach to sexual relations and serves as a good example of enhancing the positive eugenic principality whilst oppressing the out-group with negative reproductive controls. Such narratives are identified in the propaganda films analysed on p 193 where connotations of health and illness served to separate society into two opposing units of healthy and diseased. The socio-filmic model, previously discussed, enabled the establishment of such contentions to be highlighted, discussed and synthesised to explain the possible social effects of group inclusion and exclusion.

Sexual relations with the inferior groups were deemed taboo and therefore enforced by various legislations, for example the 1933 Law for the Prevention of Progeny with Hereditary Diseases. This, together with other racial hygiene measures ensured a social structure which appeared both well organised and inscriptive. Clearly defined rules were applied and for those who threatened to deviate from these rules of reproduction prompt punishment with physical force or segregated with the *Other* undesirables was instigated.

Aryan women, however, were treated somewhat differently to men. In a speech on September 8, 1934, Hitler proclaimed: 'In my state, the mother is the most important citizen'. Here, Douglas (1966) suggests:

The purity of women is protected as the gate of entry to the castes. The mother is the decisive parent for establishing caste membership. Through women the blood and purity of the caste is perpetuated. Therefore their sexual purity is all-important, and every whisper of threat to it is anticipated and barred against (p 61).

During this time of Nazi masculinity and machismo ideology, women found that they were politically silenced (Theweleit, 1989), and explicitly barred from top positions in the Nazi ranks as early as January 1921 (Proctor, 1988). One Bavarian Nazi in 1930 declared:

We National Socialists take the position that politics is the business of men. The German woman is for us too holy to be dirtied with the same filth of parliament politics (cited in Harris, 1968:5).

Joseph Goebbels, in a novel called *Michael*, described a similar vision of the place of the woman:

The woman has the task of being pretty, and of bringing children into the world. That is not such a crude and old-fashioned idea as it sounds. The female bird cleans herself for her husband, and cares for the eggs. And in exchange, the male bird takes care of bringing home dinner. He also stands watch and fights away all enemies (Die Gewerkschaftliche Frauenzeitung, 1931:43).

Hence, positive eugenics was encouraged by biopolitics in that women were given medals or extra government funding for having as many children as possible and men were urged to be promiscuous with unmarried pure blood Aryan women. This, it could be argued is another form of modernisation: the mechanics of reproduction and the positive reinforcement for success. By symbolising the Aryan woman as the saviour of the race, as clean and pure so she is drawn into a common fund of human experience where wide reception and acceptance prevails.

Such signs, can be used for ritual indoctrination by calling to attention the required levels of existence and where that existence can be physically controlled (Douglas, 1966). While idealising the pure bred German population, the stigmatised groups were segregated into mass camps or the common rubbish tip as dirt. Within these institutions, all identity was eventually lost (Goffman, 1961:174) as the amalgam of bits and pieces prejudiced any form of

humanity or character, and as long as this identity remains absent then there is no danger or risk to the prominent group (Douglas, 1966). However, when the dirt is sacrificed and burnt in the crematorium what remains is ash, which is dug into the soil. The soil therefore is no longer impoverished, it is regenerated by compost. Society returns what has been taken out. But how can a universal discourse be applied to dirt out of place? Douglas' idea was that all humans have the same negative reaction to dirt; we should expect rational beings to experience the same internal pressures to prefer regularity and to reject disorder. However, Basil Bernstein (1971) protested vigorously against universalism. Any theory of dirt and pollution, he said, must allow for different reactions. 'The theory should account for the undoubted variation in reactions to contact with snails, slime, faeces, vomit, and entrails. Some people relish eating the very things which fill others with disgust. If we feel revolted by the idea of eating human flesh, we have to admit that cannibals like it' (p: 26). This argument leads us back to the theory of knowledge construction and how Nazi Germany was able to conform its Aryan population and use transference to propagate discourses of pollution and danger onto stigmatised and non-conformist groups whilst idealising and beautifying members of the *Volks*. Such constructions are clearly identified and analysed using the socio-filmic model (see Chapter Four).

## **Summary**

In this chapter I have examined some key theorists who have investigated the formation and sustainability of stigmata and the biopolitical governance of human pollution, contamination and sacrifice which presents the theoretical framework that underpins this thesis. Whilst there has been some noted sociohistorical

hypotheses proposed to explain the National Socialist ethos it is apparent that there is a lack of contemporary, sociologically focused research in this area, particularly regarding thanatopolitical actions and reactions to the *out*-group by the politicised German medical elite. Moreover, no evidence could be found which attempts to explore Germany's media propaganda machine and its capacity to affirm or reaffirm the German ideology to the body politic from 1933 to 1945. This thesis then will fill this gap and draw on its originality by its investigation of and applications to moving propaganda imagery in a bid to answer the research questions posed above.

Further, this chapter represents the beginnings of a case study of thanatopolitically-inspired social policy within a modern state. Important lessons may be drawn from the German experience, and some light is already cast on the research questions posed on page 57. For this reason, it is convenient to provide a brief summary of tentative conclusions which may be drawn from this case study thus far:

*Question 1: To what extent, and how, did the metaphors of health and illness and public health (e.g. appeals to cleansing the social body) inform propaganda films produced between 1933 and 1945?*

The discursive formations of stigma and non-compliance with the *Volkish* ideal can be traced back to pre-Nazi times when, in the mid to late eighteen hundreds, notable and established scientists published papers which highlighted the need for radical human interventions to prevent the dysgenic stock from becoming an army of unfit and unproductive enemies of the state. *Unfit* was a term regularly used to dehumanise and further stigmatise targeted individuals and groups which, aside from its denotative meaning of to be unsuitable or inappropriate for something, it connotatively expresses their biological inferiority and their non-

conformity with the *Volkish* ideal attributed with genetic and social purity. Such discourses expressing these peoples as the enemy further deviates them and connotes them with danger or someone who seeks to do harm to others. Thus, such metaphors, especially when validated by scientific and/or medical data establishing truths can, and did, fragment German society into two primary but disparate groups: the in-group: comprising of those deemed the superior, beautified and pure members of the *Volk*, and the out-group: those stigmatised individuals and groups termed as *life unworthy of life*.

Such metaphors of health and disease could be readily disseminated through the use of propaganda imagery. As attendance levels to German cinemas rose steadily from 1934/5 to the end of the Second World War (Welch, 2001) it is suggested that an extensive indoctrination programme was effectively orchestrated to ensure all vestiges of the Aryan nation were confronted with a discourse of impending doom if the status quo continued. Moreover, with the RMVP controlling all aspects of film production and encouraging/awarding films of particular ideological themes (see Chapter One) this consequently led to an Aryan uniformity of opinion as any film, be it foreign or German, which did not follow the Nazi philosophy, did not even reach the big screen for public viewing. By blending this propaganda with exaggerated factual and fictional narratives it potentially encourages public opinion to become overexcited and ready to accept the most absurd rumours (Girard, 1989), and 'It is only by exaggerating the difference between these groups that a semblance of order is created' (Douglas, 1966:5). Such exaggerations are further evidenced in Chapter Four.

It is interesting to note though how no value was attributed to the out-group whilst they lived yet, in death their worth elevated as their corpses were pillaged

for their brains, skeletons, and gold teeth. Making them what they should have been in life, an appreciation in death.

*Question 2: Why were Jews and the hereditarily diseased populations, as opposed to others, selected for eugenic and thanatopolitical actions?*

Subjective competitive processes sought to identify and remove targeted peoples from the body politic based on the premise that inclusion and the right to live had to be earned rather than assumed. Hence, those living with physical differences such as the physically and mentally ill and disabled; social differences such as the poor, the criminal, thieves, vagrants, delinquents, alcoholics and Jews; and sexual differences such as prostitutes, pimps, and homosexuals, were all selected because they were different and not complying with socially expected norms. So subjective was this process that selective non-compliance could be attested to any who did not obey, or act in accordance with, National Socialist ideology.

By capturing moving images of these stigmatised groups it not only animated them by bringing them to life, through movement, to their audience, but it also offered great opportunities for the producers to manipulate scenes and shots whilst blending fact with fiction in their bid to enhance documentary reality and therefore justify Nazi eugenic policy.

*Question 3: How were biological categories used to justify policies that discriminated against particular groups?*

Such differences, as noted previously, facilitated and justified the need to embrace an evolutionary ethic which, when aligned with the unfit paradigm, sought to articulate a moral high ground for the *Volks* in which those classed as stigmatised were justifiably isolated, then sterilised, and finally eradicated as the state moved from the scientifically established eugenic principality of containing

the defect to thanatopolitical policies aligned with cleansing the state by legalised and state sanctioned murder. This narrative was conversed with the need to articulate and display the beauty and fitness of the Volk by visually eclipsing the in-group in almost iconic forms of biological mastery and fitness.

The thesis now moves on to Chapter Three which discusses the research methods employed in this study.

## CHAPTER THREE

### **The Graveyard of Values**

#### **Introduction**

This chapter outlines the methodological approach employed in this study and discusses how the chosen method was most appropriate for addressing the research questions. It begins by illustrating the rationale for using moving imagery for this study. Next, the thesis explores the use of empathetic participation as advanced in 1952 by Mannheim. A discussion on the application of the methodology of compositional and discourse analysis follows showing how it facilitates a greater holistic approach whereby both methods allow us to look at the material in a different way. Such advantages and limitations are highlighted before the chapter closes with a summary of the findings.

Terms identified from the research questions and the theoretical frameworks were conceptualised and operationalised. To investigate the operationalised terms within the context of the research questions and the literature review, it was decided to use graphical representations such as films which were produced in Germany between 1933 and 1945. Images are ubiquitous in society, and because of this it is contended that consideration of visual representations may be useful for this investigation. As Pink states:

No matter how tight or narrow the project is, at some level all social research says something about society in general and given the ubiquity of images, their consideration must at some level form part of the analysis. The same can be said about music, clothes etc, yet while many valuable studies of these phenomena exist, none seems to have assumed the sensory prominence within social research that images have (2001:88).



Indeed, a study of images might be able to reveal some sociological insight that is not accessible by any other means (Stanczak 2007). To date, no sociological research has been found which has undertaken this method to investigate both this time-frame and this subject matter in Germany. The novelty of this undertaking is both exciting and innovative in that a critical methodology, is put to work in a bid to understand how such images defined what it was to be super-human, sub-human, stigmatised, or deviant (Rose, 2001) and to identify the social relations which were encapsulated by these forms of visuality.

Analysing propaganda imagery of this sort will advance sociological knowledge in regards to stigma and further create a new methodology which provides a framework for the advancement of analysing such data.

The framework herein employed can be considered on three levels. These are:

- Description of the film(s)
- Juxtaposition of images
- Sociological interpretation of disease and health in the Third Reich, i.e. metaphors of stigma, scapegoating, eugenic improvement, and racial perfection embedded in the film imagery.

### **Empathetic Participation:**

Empathetic participation is an approach frequently used by those following the hermeneutic school of thought where attention is devoted to the interpretation of the meanings of social actions (Grondin: 1994 pp 21-22). It is a synthetic method of studying or recreating history which may hold some important philosophical implications. For this approach to be successful the empathetic

participant needs to establish a genuine communion with the works under investigation and in order to achieve this, Mannheim (1952: 5-6) suggests that:

He has to divest himself of the concepts, value standards, and categories characteristic of his own age, and to learn to substitute for them the corresponding concepts, value standards, and categories of the period under investigation. This whole procedure presupposes, if one analyses it from a philosophical viewpoint, that no standards and concepts have timeless validity. Each age has its own system of values; each yield up its inmost essence only to those who approach it in such a way as to leave their own contemporary standards behind.

Its success or failure therefore depend largely on the investigators' ability to bracket out their own mind-set and become immersed in what they seek to explore. As difficult as this may initially appear, it is possible to divest oneself into a historical epoch given perseverance and discipline to seek out the necessary background information to establish the possibility of an empathetic stance. In the case of this study, by penetrating and absorbing as much relevant material produced at the time and since, it facilitated an 'in-truth' attachment (Mannheim, 1952: 53-55) to the groups under scrutiny.

To clarify this, I take the approach of attempting to link into the social psychology of this time-frame, not necessarily on an individual level but more inclined to the group level where the interpretation of the meanings of social actions may be found. This is not to say that I needed to become a sympathiser or advocate of Nazism. What it did require was a balanced understanding of their reality to enable me to gain an in depth interpretation of the significance of the subjects examined. To use a metaphor, uncovering this past is to lie in their historical coffin for a while then bring forth the graveyard of their values.

### **Compositional Analysis:**

The analysis is initiated by using a critical descriptive approach; that is, a detailed vocabulary for expressing the appearance of images. This method is contingent upon what Rogoff (1998:17) terms 'the good eye', being a form of visual connoisseurship which looks at the site of the image itself in order to comprehend its significance and its compositional modality (Rose, 2007). It proposes ways of expressing the content, colour, spatial organisation, light and expressive content of the images with the *mise-en-scène*, montage, sound and narrative structure of the films (Monaco, 2000) and in doing so can illustrate how propaganda imagery *makes* reality into sometimes iconically reflexive features mirrored or admired in its audience.

Looking at the nuts and bolts of images may be a descriptively useful way (when triangulated with other methods) of looking very carefully at the content and form of images but it neglects the ways in which they are produced or interpreted in social situations.

One of the most abundant and influential ideological forums in Nazi Germany between 1933 and 1945 was their cinema. Cinema was in vogue at this time as audience attendance levels rose sharply with the advent and continuance of war such that it could be contended that any ideological propaganda depicted in these moving images became so taken for granted, as these images repeatedly demonstrated, that deep rooted social assumptions tended to be unchallenged, automotive knowledge constructs (see Chapter One).

Hitler reportedly said that for propaganda to be effective it had to be repeated and repeated and repeated again. The analysis then, will 'lay bare the prejudices beneath the smooth surface of the beautiful' (Iversen, 1986:84) by

considering how different modes of signification worked to deliver the new Nazified social order. Such deconstructions are further evaluated when using and applying discourse analysis.

### **Discourse Analysis:**

Discourse analysis is part of the linguistic turn in the social sciences. One explanation of this turn in the social sciences is the increased awareness of language as central in creating reality. The increased interest in language is also a result of the increased awareness that language, through its constitutive role in creating reality, also has material effects. In the words of Latour (1993:10):

Ordinary people imagine that the power of gods, the objectivity of money, the attraction of fashion, the beauty of art, come from some objective properties intrinsic to the nature of thing.

Sociologists however, show that the arrow goes in both directions, from society to objects and from objects to society as a dialectical, relational formation. Foucault stresses that discursive processes have material effects because the participants in the discourse succeed in presenting their view as objective or true. The purpose of discourse analysis is to deconstruct the connections between text, social processes and institutions that we no longer see because they have been presented as the only possible 'truth'. In other words, the aim of discourse analysis is to describe processes where some actors' presentations of reality achieve an authoritative status and become dominating. Foucault uses the term *discursive formations* on such dominating representations. When someone succeeds in presenting something as the only right and possible perspective, this is an act of power. Therefore, by focusing on processes where discourse participants present their version of reality as the only reasonable articulation at

the same time they question the representations and legitimacy of other actors, the discourse analyst is able to acquire knowledge on how power is established and consolidated.

Foucault focuses just as much on transformations as he does on formations. There are always actors that will contest the representations that have accomplished a (temporary) hegemonic position in discourse. Agreement is not characteristic of discourse, neither is it a static representation of reality. On the contrary, discourse is characterised by debate and contest between representatives of different interpretations of reality. The identification of such points of resistance, the alternative values, positions and institutions in discourse are an important task in discourse analysis. The performance of analysis includes, as a result of this, the study of change.

Discourse analysis implies that the demarcation of the field of study is carried out through the following of networks of statements, institutions, actors, texts and concepts. It does not imply a strict territorial demarcation of the field of study and it does not, as a result of this, stop at community or national borders. Nor does it aim at studying reality or truths. Instead it focuses on the ways language is used to present reality and relations in specific ways and how truth-effects are generated in the processes where some discourse participants win the struggle between different representations of reality. The aim of this method then, is to reveal patterns in social life through studying the processes where such patterns are temporarily and historically fixed.

Discourse analysis is not plain text-analysis or analysis of language-systems (Mills, 1997); a central point for Foucault is that discourses are not closed entities

but that different discourses are in constant conflict in ways of perceiving and defining reality. He states:

...we must not imagine a world of discourse divided between accepted discourse and excluded discourse, or between the dominant discourse and the dominated one; but as a multiplicity of discursive elements that can come into play in various strategies (Foucault 1990:64).

Foucault points to the existence of different discursive practices as well as to the existence of a regularity in rules and statements that makes it possible to communicate in spite of such different discursive practises. Moreover, Foucault states that it is the identification of regularity that discourse analysis is all about (Foucault, 1990). The field of different discursive practice can be said to constitute an *order of discourse*. Fairclough (2002:22) defines *order of discourse* as:

a social structuring of semiotic difference, a particular social ordering of relationships amongst different ways of making meaning, that is different discourse, genres and styles.

One aspect of this ordering is dominance. Some ways of making meaning are dominant or mainstream in a particular order of discourse; others are marginal, in opposition, or alternative. Fairclough goes on to state that:

...a particular social structuring of semiotic difference may become hegemonic, become part of the legitimizing common sense which sustains relations of domination... (2002:41).

When applying discursive research approaches the question of how to identify discursive practises and orders of discourse is a central question. Foucault is sceptical to the notion that a discourse can be limited to one specific theme or object as some theorists suggest. He argues that objects and themes change with time and space and that the objective of discourse analysis is to study those processes where themes or objects are created. Further, he states that the

boarders of discourse have to be demarcated as the discourse analysis goes along (Andersen 1999).

Discourse analysis then, is not a linear process but a circular, recursive one where the discourse appears as more and more defined as the study moves along. The amount of information in such a process can seem endless and it may seem difficult to know where to stop the investigations. But as Neumann (2001) has emphasised, the discourse analyst will, as she or he progresses, end up with a limited number of texts and representations that will constitute the main references of the study.

It is a common understanding in causal thinking that a phenomenon must be explained in relation to something else. This contrasts with discourse analysis where the point is that the discourse must be studied from inside (Neumann 2001). A discourse is a system for the formation of statements and discourse analysis implies the study of such networks of statements. The demarcation of the discourse can be performed by following statements and the situations where some statements are presented as meaningful and others as meaningless. We must grasp the statements in the exact specificity of its occurrence; determine its conditions of existence, fix at least its limits, establish its correlation with other statements that can be connected with it and show what other forms of statements it excludes (Foucault 2003). Foucault states that an utterance (oral or written) can be looked upon as a statement in a discourse if it relates to a field of other statements, that is, to a network of statements. Andersen (1999:122) formulates this Foucauldian perspective as follows:

The statement establishes a field of association made out of all those statements that the statements refers to implicitly or explicitly,

either by repeating them, modify them, adjust them, contradict them or comment upon them.

Foucault stresses that what characterises a statement is that it touches upon other statements:

There is no statement in general, no free, neutral, independent statement: but a statement always belongs to a series or a whole, always plays a role among other statements, deriving support from them and distinguishing itself from them: it is always part of a network of statements, in which it has a role, however minimal it may be, to play (1972:104).

Schaanning, (1996:94) also discusses the characteristics of a statement and points to the relations to practices and institutions 'What gives an utterance the character of statement is the staging of a surrounding field of other statements, practice and institutions'. Discourse then, is a system for the formation of statements and because of this the researcher has to look to the discourse to be able to separate statements from utterances. By reading and looking at images the investigation should result in a rich source of discourse and a positive contribution to the sociological understanding of both the relationship between the discourses of health, the dynamics of thanatopolitics and the benefits of using imagery in social academic enquiries.

## **Methods**

Having familiarised myself with German film and newspaper propaganda published within the time-frame I was able to identify key themes and recurring visual tropes. Once this was established attempts were made to identify specific themes which explicitly or implicitly were represented within the media and it was these themes which guided the investigations' sampling criteria, as noted below:



Sampling Criteria:

Depicts images of persons with disabilities and/or illness.

Depicts attitude of 'us and/or them'.

Depicts images of healthy looking German adults and/or children.

Uses language which stresses second person perspective.

Describes the disability or person with disability and/or illness as subhuman/not human or stigmatised.

Must have been produced between 1933 and 1945.

Must have been produced for general public viewing.

Must be based on evidence or factual material, or defined and operationalised by the term propaganda (see p: 36).

In keeping with the approach, the images selected were not intended to be objectively symbolic rather they created a comprehensive in-depth case study which consisted of a moderately small number of samples. As Rose tells us, analysis

takes the form of detailed case studies of relatively few images, and the case study stands or falls on its analytical integrity and interest rather than on its applicability to a wider range of material (2001:79).

The strategy for analysing film imagery required a systematic and considered approach to uncover both explicitly exposed discourses and camera techniques as well as the more implicit messages conveyed in the media. To this end I used a structured methodological approach which focused on the two key themes of (1) the stigmatised and scapegoated; and (2) the idealised and beautified German race (as outlined in Chapter One). Each theme was separately considered when viewing the films as outlined below.

Having established the social milieu into which the film(s) were released and the political stance(s) of the director(s) which may impact on the resulting imagery (see Chapter One), I applied my new socio-filmic model as below:

- Watch the film once without interruption
- View again to establish general composition of the film (see below)
- Watch again critically while placing myself in an empathetic stance to those stigmatised or idealised and consider the narrative used
- Review again and write down some initial responses to the research questions. Which frames will I select? What metaphors are being embedded in the film? Identify any ideological undercurrents.
- Watch the film again using pause button frequently to allow for close notes to be taken regarding research questions and potential argument development.
- Write a draft of the film critique
- Apply sociohistorical background data and revise draft

This analytical framework was used and applied to each of the five films under investigation resulting in a detailed critique ready for further analysis where the findings were sociologically interpreted then synthesised with the theoretical framework (see Chapter Two).

Considerable research was undertaken in an attempt to find a suitable analytical framework which could be utilised to advance the research problem and questions established in Chapter Two. Various disciplines including the arts, psychology, history, law and philosophical approaches were searched to try and identify previously developed methods in film analysis. After much searching it

became apparent that no framework, model or tool had been advanced which could be usefully applied to this thesis. As such, work began to develop a new model which would facilitate a systematic and critical undertaking in keeping with a sociohistorical approach.

Previous models had been utilised within filmic studies, but these always tended to focus upon the *mise en scene*. That is, advancement in productive and/or commercial focuses. Such foci were counter to what I wanted to explore, however, this approach did prove to be informative as it alerted me to the need for inclusion and consideration of metafunctions. That is, how objects are represented in such forms. Hence, the work of Kress and van Leeuwen (1996) showed to be a valuable resource, as outlined below.

To develop and enhance my socio-filmic model Kress & van Leeuwens' (1996) methods of *Reading Images* was applied. This draws on the work of Michael Halliday and attempts to apply his theoretical notion of metafunction to their visual semiotics structure. According to Kress and van Leeuwen, the three metafunctions are the *ideational*, which refers to how objects are represented in an image and how they interact with one another; the *interpersonal*, which refers to the relationship among the producer, the receiver, and the image; and the *textual*, which refers to the composition of the image (Kress & van Leeuwen, 1996:24). Taken together, these three metafunctions create the visual meanings for the viewer. Kress and van Leeuwen offer a detailed tool kit for visual analysis that functions within the framework of the three metafunctions outlined above. They claim that visual representation can be a narrative or conceptual process. The narrative represents things in terms of *doing* or *happening* and requires an agent, an object, and an action, reaction, or process of change. In

addition, the participants in the narrative structure are connected by an implicit or explicit vector that denotes the direction of the action. The conceptual represents participants in a generalised or timeless state and consists of 'classificational, analytical, and symbolic processes' (Kress and van Leeuwen 1996:29). This also involves the interaction between the producer and viewer of the image. Images represent these social interactions and relations through the use of the gaze; size of the frame (i.e., close-up, medium shot, and long shot); perspective; and vertical and horizontal angles. Kress and van Leeuwen also include the category of modality, which refers to 'the truth value or credibility of ... statements about the world' (1996: 212).

Modality is represented by a complex combination of visual cues or markers that include the use of colour saturation, colour differentiation, detail, representation, depth, illumination, and brightness. The final part of their model that was used in the analysis relates to the compositional makeup of the entire image, which brings together the way the representational and the interactive elements relate to each other and the way they are integrated to create the whole image. Additionally, the salience and framing, which take into account the placement of the elements in the foreground or background, relative size, and differences in detailing and contrast, also serve as an *indication* of the information value in an image or layout. According to Kress and van Leeuwen (and various others), visual communications and language are both socially constructed and culturally determined, as Kress and van Leeuwen argues:

Societies tend to develop ways for talking about codes only with respect to codes that are highly valued, that play a significant role in controlling the common understandings that society needs to function (1996:33).

I would tend to agree with this but consideration of the historical should also be contemplated as codes tend to move and change over time. Additionally, differing presentations, with the advancement of new technologies, may alter or generate new understandings. As Kress and van Leeuwen acknowledge throughout their book that their readings and analysis are based on the visual semiotics of Western cultures and that cultural specificities may require different models for analysis.

Having established a method for analysing the compositional aspects of film propaganda I needed to ascertain how I could incorporate this with description, juxtapositions and sociological interpretations of the media.

Describing the films was straight-forward and posed no difficulty. The juxtapositions however needed a more structured approach to highlight various and numerous dichotomies. It was decided to use binary oppositions as a means to establish where they occurred and how these messages may be interpreted. This was undertaken by viewing the imagery and noting simple or complex positions which may suggest a link or a contrast between them. By incorporating an empathetic stance to each dichotomy it offered a balanced and critical analysis of various metaphors of health and disease in filmic forms. Sociological interpretation was developed last and in keeping with the theoretical assumptions previously discussed in Chapter Two.

Having established the above socio-filmic model I now move on to consider the film sampling technique and grouping of the films into two main themes of firstly, the stigmatised and scapegoated, and secondly, the idealised and beautified German race.

### Film Inclusion, Categorisation and Situation

A thorough search was undertaken to identify possible samples for inclusion. It quickly became apparent that this resource was scarce due, in part, to the destruction of incriminating evidence towards the end of WW2 and the banning of sensitive material in Germany. Because of the limited availability of films which were required to comply with the above criteria, it was decided to use a convenience sampling technique.

Five films were identified which met with the above criteria. These are sub-categorised into Group One: Negative stigmatising and scapegoating to encourage Nazi eugenic principles, and Group Two: Positive ideation and beautification of the Volk to visually represent the in-group as iconically belonging to the German master race:

#### Group One:

- *Erbkrank (The Hereditary Defective)* (Parts One and Two) (1936): Directed by Dr. Herbert Gerdes.
- *Der Ewige Jude (The Eternal/Wandering Jew)* (1940): Directed by Dr. Fritz Hippler
- *Ich Klage An (I Accuse)* (1941): Directed by Wolfgang Liebeneiner

#### Group Two:

- *Triumph des Willens (Triumph of the Will)* (1935): Directed by Leni Riefenstahl
- *Olympia* (1938): Directed by Leni Riefenstahl – Part 1 – *Fest der Völker (Festival of Nations)*; Part 2 – *Fest der Schönheit (Festival of Beauty)*

The films were situated (Deacon et al, 1998) where details of when and where production occurred, who funded and backed the production, who it was made for (audience), where and when it was viewed. Further, examination of the following elements was noted, namely, the usual credit and descriptive information about the film, a brief description of the main theme, the setting, and any form of foreshadowing – that is, the pre-credit or during-credit presentation of any motif, music, quotation or symbol, such as a foreboding entrance to an asylum, that sets the tone or mood of the film, and a detailed narrative of the plot (Lopez-Levers, 2001).

### **Advantages and Limitations:**

As with all methods, there are both advantages and limitations of utilising preferred perspectives. Empathetic participation, compositional, semiotic and discourse analysis are no different, therefore these features can be summarised as follows:

I consider empathetic participation as more of an approach rather than a method and therefore if used in isolation would result in an unsystematic and unreliable epistemology. It is therefore, I suggest, essential to use this as part of a researcher's methodological arsenal, incorporating other methods to establish a thorough interpretative analysis.

As stated above, for empathetic participation to be effective the researcher has to:

Put himself into the antiquarian mood in which he looks at cultural products, not with his own eyes but with the eyes of denizens of bygone cultures resulting in an assured ethereal immortality for the subjects, after their bodily reality was gone (Mannheim, 1952: 6).

This issue has been thoroughly deliberated in the Habermas/Gadamer debate (Negru, 2007), where Habermas claimed, similar to Mannheim, that the researcher must become free from his/her own tradition and prejudices, while Gadamer objected that this is not possible and that prejudices should be embraced and accepted (Gadamer, 1989). Ricoeur (1969) attempted to formulate a third way where the interpreter accepts his/her own tradition, but must be actively critical towards his/her prejudices. Merleau-Ponty (p54) sums up such an approach as follows:

Reflection can never make me stop seeing the sun two hundred yards away on a misty day, or seeing it 'rise' and 'set', or thinking with the cultural apparatus with which my education, my previous efforts, my personal history, have provided me (Merleau-Ponty, 1962).

I would suggest that as much as we could try to bracket out our own prejudices and mind sets, this is not always possible.

Consider, some of our individual belief systems are so deeply, psychologically ingrained to such a point that we no longer recognise or identify them, yet, we still have them. We cannot necessarily identify where our preferences come from, or whether they will ever change, we just know that we have some preferences which we favour over others. Such preferences and prejudices were theorised in Mannheim's work, relative to the hermeneutic circle (1952) of familiarity and strangeness.

One of the most well known components of hermeneutics which sits readily with Mannheim's theory on the Sociology of Knowledge (1952) is the hermeneutic circle (Piercey, 2004). Gadamer claims that 'Hermeneutic work is based on a polarity of familiarity and strangeness ...' (1989: 295) and that 'we must understand the whole in terms of the detail, and the detail in terms of the whole'



(ibid.). This is suggesting two circular movements of thought in the work of interpretation. The first, I think of as a switching on and off of prejudices (pinpointing the strange experiences of others actions and turning them into something natural and familiar), and second, pinpointing the familiar and turning it into the strange. All human actions have an element of familiarity and strangeness. We humans are similar but no two are identical. As Alvesson (1999) suggests, the hermeneutic interpretation of this idea is a circular, perpetual movement between 'breaking in' and 'breaking out', or as Pierce states:

We turn our recollection of observed facts; we endeavour so to rearrange them, to view them in such new perspective that the unexpected experience shall no longer appear surprising (1974:36).

Compositional analysis does not require that I empathise with the subject but instead offers ways of looking critically at the content and form of images. Other than its technological or compositional modalities, it neglects the ways in which images are produced, understood or interpreted by various viewers. This neglected area is picked up by using the socio-filmic model as this offers a broad vocabulary for the interpretation and understanding of imagery and its cultural meanings. Moreover, it is centrally concerned with the construction of social differences through signs which primarily focus upon ideological complexes and dominant codes. This model is particularly effective at looking critically at images but it cannot demonstrate their effects. However, it does offer a very rich, in-depth way of analysing representations. It addresses questions of power as they are articulated through visual images themselves. A limitation however is that it is less focused on thinking about institutional practices through which discourses are produced, disseminated and experienced (Rose, 2001).

The socio-filmic model offers a holistic approach to the interpretation and analysis of the data. By using this four pronged approach it enhances the validity of the findings, additionally, the findings of this research cannot be said to be generalisable or applicable to other situations other than that which has herein been tested. That said, the socio-filmic model which has been developed here has the potential to be used in various forms of social, political or historical investigations, so in that sense, this aspect has generalisable value and broad application.

### Image Reproduction

Attempts were made to reproduce the stills from the films as close to the original as possible. Frames from *I Accuse (Ich Klage an)* posed no significant problem due to the high quality of the original format. That said, certain scenes such as Hanna's death, appeared very dark and almost impossible to capture. This was unfortunate. Had this been possible it may well have added further interesting findings to the investigation. The same problem arose fairly frequently with *Erbkrank (The Hereditary Defective)*, particularly in part one, but this was due to the overall poor production of the film. Frequently missed opportunities resulted in lost data directly resulting from hazy under-focused frames. That said the style of the film with its repetitive and persistent tropes leads me to be assured that no significant loss of data has resulted from their exclusion.

### Language

A significant problem arose almost immediately upon starting this research: my incapacity to speak or read the German language. Attempts were consistently

made to find translations from different sources to compare their English equivalent. Professional translators were employed to translate the films transcripts. However, it was decided to focus on the imagery only and exclude any German text (other than the intertext in *Erbkrank (The Hereditary Defective)* or those with subtitles included in the recording) associated with the productions.

## **Summary**

The socio-filmic model outlined here offers a new development which aids in the conceptualisation and analysis of moving imagery by introducing a framework which is simple to use whilst propounding on its broad potential application.

It incorporates a qualitative approach drawing on compositional and discourse analysis which provides for a useful strategy for widening the empirical focus of this research project and as such will allow for a richly detailed picture of the images significance when related to the research problem and research questions stated on pages 56 and 57.

Images, being ubiquitous in society, are a valid and rich media for sociological investigation yet little research has been found which uses this type of resource. Moreover, there was no indication of any study previously undertaken which incorporated this methodology to investigate the social dynamics formed by these visualisations during the time-frame of 1933 to 1945 in Nazi Germany. By addressing this gap in sociohistorical research, and offering a new framework for socio-filmic analysis, they together offer novel contributions to the interpretation and analysis of visual representation. The following Chapter incorporates the above methodological framework where samples taken from the selected propaganda films are viewed and later analysed.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### Black Boots and White Coats

#### Introduction

This chapter touches on, and expands on the findings in Chapter One, of how the Nazis controlled all forms of media including film, radio and the press, in a bid to monitor the effects and reactions of propagandist messages. It was partly because of this emphasis of control which led to the production of *Ich Klage An (I Accuse)* (1941), as health experts raised concerns over their legal status when practicing euthanasia (as evidenced in Appendix 1). After the introduction of the above film, together with *Erbkrank (The Hereditary Defective)* (1936); *Der Ewige Jude (The Eternal Jew)* (1940); *Triumph des Willens (Triumph of the Will)* (1935) and *Olympia* (1938) the thesis examines how these films were circulated both in Germany and in other Western states.

The analysis of the films follows the analytical framework that is, the socio-filmic model, identified in Chapter Three. Thus, each film was viewed and analysed individually and according to the theme which I wanted to focus on. As there are two binary themes, each film was viewed at least twice to establish empathetic participation for each opposing subject. Once this was achieved, the films underwent the triangulated methodology explained in Chapter Three. Finally, the three tiered framework, discussed on page 78 was utilised to describe the film, evaluate the juxtapositions of the images and offer a sociological interpretation of disease and health in the Third Reich. The first three examples offer insight into negative scapegoating, whilst the last two provide visual representations of the idealised German race, its beautification and eugenic future.

We begin then with a short piece, further contextualising Nazi propaganda imagery (from Chapter One), with its endeavour to polarise the nation into *unfit* and *fit* elements. Less than six weeks after taking power on 31<sup>st</sup> January 1933, Germany's National Socialist government established a Ministry for Popular Enlightenment and Propaganda. Hitler placed the ministry under Dr. Joseph Goebbels, who steadily nationalised the entire German film and press industry, completing the acquisition by mid 1942 (see Chapter One). Even before it was nationalised, the industries were controlled by sub-ministries such as the Department of Film. Every film had to be licensed by the department before production could begin, and completed productions had to be approved by the department before they could be released for distribution. No negative images would be tolerated and film criticism was prohibited. The department gave grants and tax concessions to films on themes the government considered important. Two such themes, as previously identified (in Chapter One), were (1) the stigmatised and stereotyped enemy *within*, providing the state with a scapegoat for diverting social problems away from the idealised German peoples, and (2) attempts to propel notions of the master race and the perfection of the Volk to all considered members of the Aryan nation. These were seen by some people, including many National Socialist leaders, as a means to reduce human suffering, rid German society of unproductive members, purify the state into a strong, virile nation, and qualify philosophical statements of mastery and purity of the Volk. The head of the National Socialist Medical Association, Dr Gerhard Wagner, advocated euthanasia for the above negative purposes at the 1935 Nuremberg Party Rally – the same rally which saw the proclamation of the anti-Jewish Nuremberg Laws. One year later, in 1936, a film entitled *Erbkrank* (*The*

*Hereditary Defective*) was shown in many cinemas in Germany (as well as the United States of America). An accompanying commentary argued that monies spent keeping mentally and physically inferior people alive, was not only a waste of German national wealth but also a waste of soul and spirit (Leiser, 1974).

Euthanasia was still prohibited by law, but in August, 1939, only days before the invasion of Poland, Hitler signed a secret decree establishing a euthanasia programme for the incurably ill. This, despite being in total contradiction of Section 216 of the German Criminal Code which stated that:

(1) If someone is induced to homicide by the express and earnest request of the person killed, then imprisonment from six months to five years shall be imposed.

(2) An attempt shall be punishable.

Doctors who participated in the programme began putting mental patients and the infirm to death, often against their will – this assumes then that such measures were thanatopolitical rather than assisted suicides. Some were the victims of early fatal experiments while others were killed by vehicle exhaust gases, starvation or lethal injections. Zyclon B (a rat pesticide) was eventually found to be more effective. Two of the euthanasia programmes leading officials complained that secrecy interfered with their work and they approached Goebbels' ministry with the suggestion that a film be made to shift public opinion in favour of legalising euthanasia.

The thesis now continues with an application of the socio-filmic model (see Chapter Three) to the films *Erbkrank* (*The Hereditary Defective*), *I Accuse* (*Ich Klage An*), *The Eternal/Wandering Jew* (*Der Ewige Jude*), *Triumph of the Will* (*Triumph des Willens*) and *Olympia*. Films which arguably were intentionally

made for the sole purpose of shifting public opinion in favour of legalising and legitimising euthanasia, or celebrating the purity and fitness of the *Volk*, as previously discussed in Chapter One.

## **Overview**

### *Erbkrank (The Hereditary Defective) 1936*

*Erbkrank (The Hereditary Defective)* is a 16mm, silent, black and white film. Directed by Herbert Gerdes, it is a 23 minute (Part One: 12 minutes; Part Two: 11 minutes) educational documentary movie produced by the NSDAP's Office of Racial Policy or Office of Racial Politics (Rassenpolitisches Amt). Various dates are given as 1936 (Bundesarchiv, Koblenz) or 1934 (U.S. National Archives), the film composes of two parts. By Hitler's order, the film was shown in all German cinemas (British Film Institute, ND) with the intention of dispelling the mad/bad disparity between disability and criminality and to stigmatise, degrade and dehumanise them all to one concept of *useless eater*.

### *Ich Klage An (I Accuse) 1941*

*Ich Klage An (I Accuse)* was one of the most profitable films made in the Third Reich. *I Accuse* grossed over 5.3 million RM at the commercial box office following its release in 1941. Additionally, although it did not gain a film rating of 'politically especially worthwhile', it did succeed in being awarded that of 'artistically especially worthwhile' (Drexler, 2001:13). Whilst it has been previously suggested that *I Accuse* was made to appease outcries of the euthanasia programme from the church (Welch, 2001), evidence also indicates (see

Appendix 1) that it was also produced to plead on compassionate grounds for the legalisation of euthanasia. *I Accuse* attacked the cruelty of:

A legal system which withheld from doctors the right to make a life or death decision, protected those weaklings who were 'unfit to live' [emphasis in original], and granted the right to live to others besides those whom Hitler called the 'vigorous majority' [emphasis in original] (Leiser, 1974:15).

The substance of the film was described in the *Illustrierte Filmkurier* (circa 1942):

Professor Heit and his young wife Hanna lead a happily married life. The Professor has worked his way up from humble origins to the position of a scientist, which has permitted him to have a more comfortable lifestyle. A party held to mark the Professor's appointment as head of a world-famous research institute further reinforces the couple's happiness. During a musical recital, Hanna is suddenly forced to stop playing the piano because her left hand stops functioning. As the paralysis continues during the following days, Professor Heit calls in their friend Dr Lang to examine Hanna. With the aid of an ophthalmoscope, Dr Lang diagnoses multiple sclerosis, an illness which results ineluctably in decline and death. The condition of the young woman visibly deteriorates. Professor Heit regards finding the cause of the disease as his greatest challenge. His work results in other, important scientific discoveries, but he does not find a means of saving Hanna. It seems to be the end for the young woman. She suffers indescribable pain and is beyond help. The Professor resorts to desperate measures. The soothing drink which he gives her results in her death. 'Oh Thomas, if only that was death!' she says, and he answers in a voice which encompasses all his love, but also total responsibility: 'Yes, Hanna, it is death!' Profound gratitude radiates from her eyes as she passes away. Serious accusations are made against the Professor; these result in a trial on charges of death on demand. His friend Dr Lang, who initially condemns his deed and is hostile towards him, becomes Professor Heit's supporter because of scenes of indescribable misery he has to witness in a mental institution. The court and the jurors endeavour to engineer an acquittal. Up to then Professor Heit had remained silent. But now he accuses, as he sees that the charges against him are about to be dropped. Following his fiery speech, Professor Heit asks for the verdict (Translation provided by Sagi, 1993)

### *Der Ewige Jude (The Eternal/Wandering Jew) (1940)*

This is a 54.32 minute, black and white film with sound which was produced between October 4<sup>th</sup>, 1939 and September 3<sup>rd</sup>, 1940 by Fritz Hippler.



Friedlander (2009) suggests that the film was intentionally made, at the behest of Goebbels, to counter a 1934 British film of the same title which portrayed the Jews in a favourable light. Its release was timed to follow an art exhibition, also titled *Der Ewige Jude* and a book consisting of 265 photographs, each with a derogatory caption asserting the degeneracy of the Jews (Huener & Nicosia, 2006). It was a so-called documentary and had its first public screening on November 28<sup>th</sup> 1940. However, evidence has emerged that this film, supposedly based on the real life of Jews living in Polish ghettos, has fabricated elements. Friedlander (2009) observed a scene in the film which illustrates a reading from the Torah. A sign was apparently given, in Hebrew language, from the reader that 'Today is Tuesday'. On closer examination it has been suggested that this signified that the scene was coerced since it was not customary to read from the Torah on Tuesdays. This, despite Hippler stating in the Nazi press (date undisclosed), that:

No Jew was forced into any kind of action or position during the shooting. Moreover, we let the filmed Jews be on their own and tried to shoot in moments when they were unaware of the camera's presence. Consequently, we have rendered the Ghetto Jews in an unprejudiced manner, real to life as they live and as they react in their own surroundings. All who see this film will be convinced that there is never a forced or scared expression in the faces of the Jews who are filmed passing by, trading or attending ritual services (Quoted in Reimer, 2002).

The film was supported by state-controlled media, but rather few paid to see it. However, school youths and soldiers saw the film in compulsory settings – this included members of the SS and others who were charged with implementing and conducting the Final Solution (Hornshoj-Moller, 1998). Later a Dutch, French and an international version (which is appended here) were produced which together continued and encouraged the discourse of Jewish world domination

(as noted in the notorious forgery of the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion*). Today, the film is seen as a 'cult film' among Neo-Nazis and Anti-Semites throughout the world and is acclaimed by these groups to be the best documentary on Jews ever made (Hornshoj-Moller, 1998).

### *Triumph des Willens (Triumph of the Will) (1935)*

Leni Riefenstahl's documentary of the Nuremberg Rally of 1934 is, arguably, one of the most famous films made during the Third Reich. Lasting 104 minutes, it captures the grandeur and enormity of the Rally and the Volk who took part in it. The premiere took place on 28<sup>th</sup> March 1935 in Berlin's biggest cinema, the Ufa-Palast am Zoo, in the presence of Hitler and other Nazi officials of the Diplomatic Corps. A massive publicity campaign preceded the gala opening, while an official ban on the screening of any other images of the 1934 Rally removed the risk of the impact of the Party film being diminished. Riefenstahl's film pioneered many dramatic techniques of film direction and editing which attempted to translate to the screen all the paganistic joy, the unrestrained emotion, and the awesome power which characterised the Nazi rallies. In the opinion of the (official) film newspaper Film-Kurier (12/4/1935) 'the aim of the work, to screen to as many citizens as possible, the Nuremberg Rally in word and picture, has been achieved' (Frankfurter Zeitung, 1935).

### *Olympia (1938)*

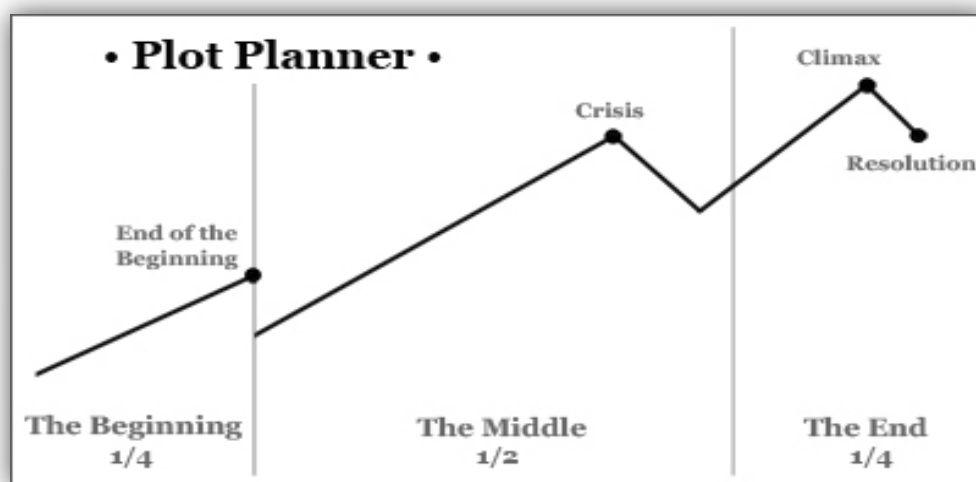
Leni Riefenstahl's two part documentary film about the 1936 summer Olympics, held in Berlin, Germany personifies the ideological and aesthetics in the shaping

of the Aryan athletic body. The film was released in two parts: *Olympia one – Festival of the Nations*, depicts the history of the Olympic games' ancient traditions before continuing with many of the field sports of the event; and *Olympia two – Festival of Beauty*, featuring various track and field events of the Games. It was the first documentary feature film of the Olympic Games ever made and was made in three versions: German, French and English. Winning several cinematic awards including the National Film Prize (1937-1938), it had an immensely strong reaction in Germany and was received with acclaim and accolades around the world.

On the surface, the film appears to be a very well made sports film, depicting dazzling athletic accomplishments by many individuals and teams from throughout the world. However, as Germany's intentions became more apparent in the period before World War II, critics became more and more suspicious that the actual motive for producing *Olympia* was political marketing: Nazi propaganda (see Chapter one for my definition of propaganda). Kracauer (1947) stated, 'To be sure, all Nazi films were more or less propaganda films - even the mere entertainment pictures which seem to be remote from politics' (p. 275). To date, no one has been able to reveal substantive evidence to establish that the sole intention of producing *Olympia* was to create propaganda. There are, however, many inferences that at least part of the German government's purpose in supporting *Olympia* was to promote the positive (as perceived by the Nazis) notions of National Socialism to the world.

In order to boost the propaganda effect, the Nazis supported the showing of many propaganda films in sizeable cinemas with large audiences where the feeling of being part of the crowd was so overwhelming for the individual

spectator that critical film perception had little impact. Film shows took place in approximately 5,500 German cinemas as well as military barracks, schools and factories (see Chapter One). They were effective films in many ways and their message spread far beyond Germany's borders. Advocates of eugenics in several other countries showed them as well prior to the outbreak of WWII, including the United States and Great Britain. This research however, could not establish the locations of the showings that said it is more likely that the first three films would have been viewed in *little cinemas* and the other two, more significant films on Broadway. Typically, films were (and are) produced following the Hollywood style of narrative (see Table One below). They begin with the 'set-up' or exposition in which characters and their situations are introduced. This is then followed with 'rising action' which poses and intensifies the complications and builds towards a climax.



**Table One: Plot Planner - The Typical 'Hollywood' style of plot development**

The 'climax' or 'catharsis' is the moment of maximum tension, the point after which the circumstances must change, which leads to a 'resolution' or 'falling-action' where the consequences are shown. Finally, and not frequently utilised, comes the 'dénouement' meaning unravelling, where meaning and implications

for the viewer are used. All of the films follow this Hollywood style of narrative to some extent. There is no dénouement in any of the films.

Having briefly introduced each film, the remainder of this chapter will subject each one to a more detailed analysis (see socio-filmic model, discussed in Chapter Three), beginning with Group One films.

#### Group One Films:

##### ***Erbkrank* (1936) (Part One)**

The film begins by the use of a symbolic sign of the Racial and Political Office's emblem, two horses heads, facing outwards signifying fitness, fine breeding and purity, above which the typeset appear as white brush-strokes against a black background. In typical early 1920s/1930s style, it uses a newsreel method of delivering the typeset as though to validate the content of the film as authoritative, factual and reliable. A very quick glimpse via a rapid cut is then taken of a criminal looking man, enticing the viewer of what is to follow, more men, sitting on the ground in the sunshine doing nothing productive. They are represented as the stereotype of the mentally and physically disabled: dirty, unkempt, and idle, with exaggerated grotesque facial expressions, facilitated by camera angle and shadow.

Provocative use of montage relates this image of sunbathed individuals to that of dark, shady streets where the viewer is informed of the typical housing situation of German society. Dull, damp accommodation joined together by numerous washing lines full of wet clothes craving and competing for the sun to dry them.

Below walks an SA man, grinning, as though his presence offers some kind of salvation to the status-quo.

Children play in dirty, narrow alleys with rubbish containers, shoe-scrappers and drains, propped as toys and akin to the living conditions of animals such as the cat which is seen strolling around the area. This scene suggests a displacement of healthy German families living in dirty places whilst as in the next scene wide shots are taken of beautiful, palatial looking institutions set in well kept grounds, bathed in the summer sunshine.



Frame 1: 02:25

Trees wavering in the gentle breeze with manicured lawns, tranquil rivers; this is the place where degenerates live, in wonderful open spaces (Frame 1). We know it is an institution to house these people because we see the occasional nurse or doctor, in pristine white medical uniformed props, walking through the

grounds. It begs the question, why are these unproductive people living in such circumstances whilst the productive elements of society live in relative squalor? Is dirt in its rightful place? Such propaganda imagery serves to illustrate this disparity by explicitly denoting signs of inappropriation and anomaly. Such anomalies are here seen as being confronted in an attempt to create a new pattern of reality by representing dirt as disorder, a concept which is both objectionable and 'vigorously brushed away' (Douglas, 1966:48, 197).

Grotesque images of many patients, again, sitting outside in the sunshine are forcibly posed for the cameraman who uses high angle shots to give the illusion of sinister appearance with shadows under the eyes, nose and chin. Conversely, the next scene (Frame 2) takes the viewer on a connotative ride of the ideal *Volk*. Germans, tending to the Fatherland by horse drawn plough and fertilising the earth with seeds, children feeding the livestock or men, working as a team, to meet the goal of building a sustainable object worthy of long-term use of the thousand year Reich.

What this scene signifies is that work is good, working people are productive, they give back to the Fatherland and get their hands dirty in the process. The following shot takes the viewer into a broad shot of mature barley crops in a sunbathed field being brushed by mother-natures giving winds. Perhaps a metaphor for those who give to the earth shall reap from the earth. They are earning their right to life. It is socially acceptable to get your hands dirty if you do it for the right cause. Dirt has its uses but it has to be in the right place. Dirt out of place has to be discouraged.



Frame 2: 03:14

The next intertitle then asks the viewer:

What would be destroyed if left to the natural laws, was  
cared for and supported?

Using neo-Darwinist theories, it illustrates many young inmates with distorted facial expressions, incontinent of urine with heads shaven, being held by medics in sometimes clearly uncomfortable positions of posture. Another shot is taken of a woman who is obviously highly agitated, mocked by on-looker staff that push her away and laugh. Indeed, it is questionable if these individuals would survive if not for being institutionalised, yet, the care that is brandished in front of



the camera lens asks additional questions other than the one posed at the beginning of the scene.

Questions such as how, whilst watching this film, can the audience not feel disgust not at the individuals having to ordeal this unusual situation of having a film crew come into the institution but rather a sense of disgust of the filmmakers who highlight these people in monochromatic, distorted, unfamiliar forms at the behest of the biopolitical climate in which they found themselves? The film's authority comes from the so called capturing of the reality of daily life of the mentally and physically ill yet clearly, they are posed for the camera to exaggerate various stigmas to the upmost negative connotation. This, it is suggested, was a dominant theme in Nazi propaganda.



Frame 3: 03:55

The next two scenes (Frame 3) continue with this mise-en-scène with the introduction of highly distressed, perplexed or curious mature patients displaying

profound exhibits of human social behaviour. Images of physically distorted limbs, children with blindness and hydrocephalus banded together as if in a *freak show*.

These codes suggest that all that are institutionalised are useless, all are as worthless as each other and whether they are physically, mentally or criminally deviant, they all take up valuable time from well trained staff.

Imaginative use of rapid cutting with the introduction of criminal looking individuals placed within the same frame as the physically and mentally ill results in a *smelting* of differentiation, thereby bridging any disparity between physical/mental health status and criminal behaviour, one of the more extreme claims of eugenics.



Frame 4: 04:19

Close shots of doctors and nurses, emphasising their clinical props of clean, starched white uniforms may impress on the audience a sense of difference from

the inmates (Frame 4). Staff are frequently shot in the sunshine whilst their charges stand in tree-shaded environments, perhaps offering the staff some sort of redemption from the heavens for the need of having to restrain patients in straight-jackets, hand restraints, plastered arms and helmets.

The next intertitle states that:

Many idiots are well below animals, can't make themselves understood and are usually unclean.

To validate this statement the cameraman takes a close shot of a man who walks on all fours, presumably due to some form of spinal injury or curvature, and by analogy, places his status equal to, or below, that of an animal (Frame 5).



Frame 5: 07:15

To further incriminate these *degenerates*, images of patients lying on the floor in stupor like conditions are coded to discriminate. Eating bowls of what looks like

porridge or scrambled eggs as though an animal further sets the convention (Frame 6).



Frame 6: 08:43

The next scene, the crisis of the film, shows several fit and healthy looking members of staff restraining a small, frail patient who is lying in bed. The patient is to be force fed via a nasogastric tube, which the viewer is led to understand is for the patients' own good. The tube appears much too large for its purpose, none-the-less with arms legs and head held in place the medic introduced the tube via the patients' nose, down the back of his throat, down his oesophagus and into his stomach (Frame 7).

No litmus paper test is performed to ensure the tube is in his stomach rather than his lungs, a test frequently undertaken at this time. Despite the obvious distress

which this is exerting on the patient, the procedure continues until the necessary dietary intake has been observed, then, just as quickly as the medical experts pounced on the patient, they release him, and leave him to cry. This pitiful scene is highly emotive, and clearly used to show a syntagmatic relation to the previous shots of patients eating like animals, and begs the question 'Why are these people being force fed, why not just let them die'? Such narratives give justification for eugenic policy.



Frame 7: 09:24

Building up to the climax of the film various other disturbing examples are shown where elderly inmates exhibit extra pyramidal effects from extended tranquiliser use such as swaying, hyper-salivation and catatonic like states.

The climax of the film now starts to introduce the economical impact of keeping these degenerates in culturally valued institutions. Intertitles which carry the information are illustrated in large bold fonts to aid dramatic effect and enhance symbolic fortitude. Further validated by a spidergram showing a genographical chart of a family inflicted with mental/physical issues, it attempts to quantifiably show how from one guilty couple a multitude of progeny carrying the same abnormal gene line not only populate a struggling nation but also bastardise the *Volks* blood-line by inflicting their pathology into the pure blood of Aryanism, and in doing so attempts to construct truths thereby validating and justifying the National Socialist argument that these particular populations need to be removed.

Using this type of argument can have great impact on its audience as its associative relationship to those who see it can in some instances serve to reinforce commonly held beliefs about the *Volks*, about the social construction of the supremacy fallacy which built up after 1933 and about the need for a pure breed *race*.

*Erbkrank* continues with this type of contention suggesting various quantifiable evidence (Frame 8) to ascertain a clear ontological argument needed to justify the sterilisation of these degenerates and their removal from German society.

The final scene returns the viewer to previous shots of people working with the Fatherland and a close up shot of an idealised type German man, being health, muscular, and blonde, looking up at the sky suggesting perhaps that he belongs

to a supreme *race*, and therefore iconic, and is a servant of the greater good, the thousand year Reich.



Frame 8: 11:11

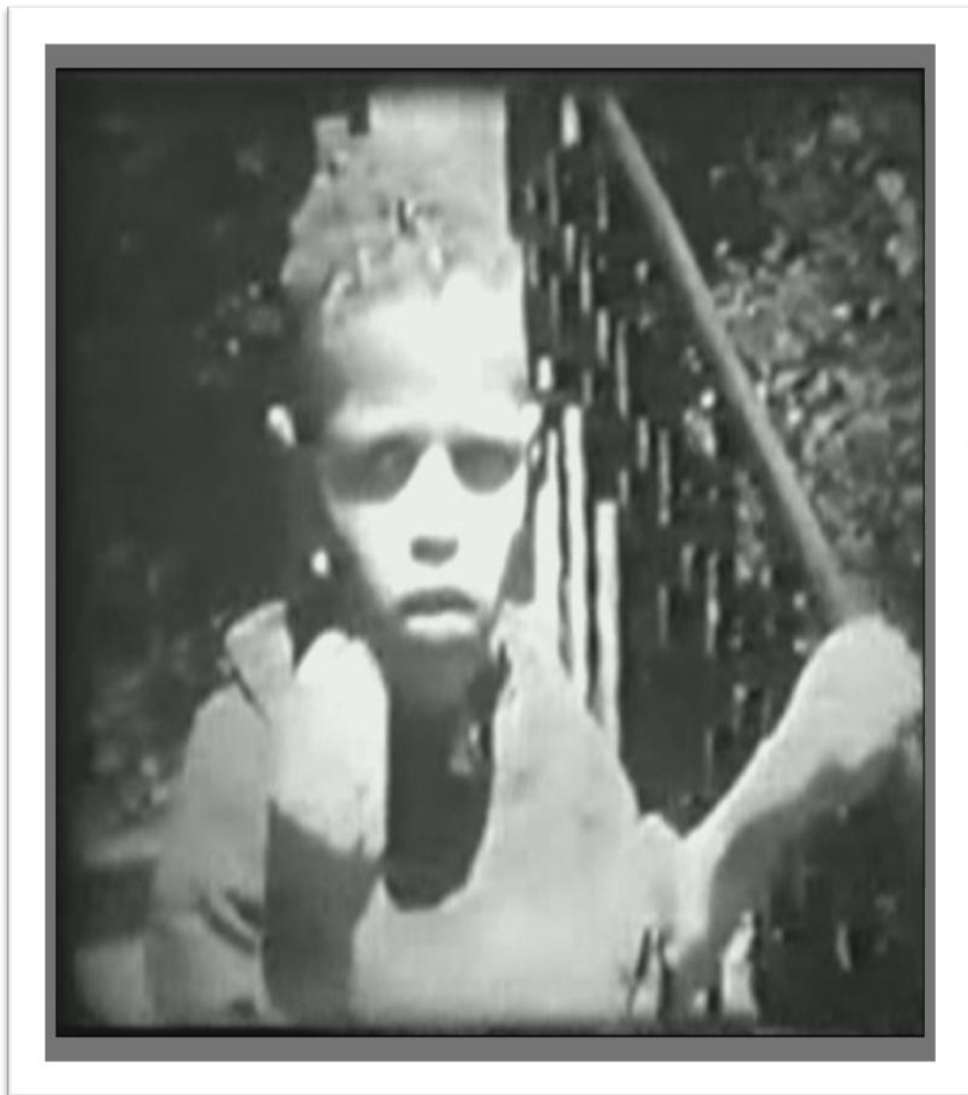
### ***Erbkrank* (1936) (Part Two)**

Part Two, similar to Part One, begins with the use of the symbolic sign of the Racial and Political Office's emblem of two horse heads, facing outwards, signifying fitness, fine breeding and purity. Above, the typeset appear as white brush strokes against a black background. In typical style of impending doom, the viewer is psychologically inducted to what is to follow.

Several scenes are introduced with an intertitle. The first scene states:

Idiot nigger bastard from the Rhineland. Mental characteristics are inherited just like physical ones. What is inherited from ancestors is passed on to children.

The image of a child with Negroid appearance is seen in a close camera shot, angled upwards to enhance shadow under his eyes, nose and chin (Frame 9). He is unkempt and gestures with his hand as if begging for something. Followed by the camera his agitated movements, similar to those seen in excited apes, are exacerbated by his obvious anxious state, jumping around on all fours.



Frame 9: 13:25



He swings around on the steps showing clear signs of agility and physical ability. Yet, it is this agility which means to condemn him and which we are told will be passed on to his children should he procreate. This situation would be unlikely to happen though due to the instigation of the 1933 Sterilisation Law which sought to remove the risk of offspring born to parents of this and other similar physical and/or mental conditions.

The next scene, as if used as a comparison to the previous, shows images of mature men exhibiting no obvious signs of any type of mental or physical disability. This suggests that people do not have to outwardly display *typical* signs and symptoms of worthlessness to be labelled as such. Various charts are shown throughout the film somehow attempting to offer the viewer truths to what they see, such as one which illustrates quantifiable evidence to support such negative hypotheses.

The film now moves on to a cameo of a mother and her daughter, both appear uncomfortable in this unusual situation of been forced to pose for the camera. The daughter seeks her mothers' reassurance; in turn the mother tries to give it whilst giving the cameraman a resounding facial expression. Further typographical images intercede the visuals by frequently used bold fonts to highlight specific words. Here the figure:

**RM 62,300**

is highlighted trying to shock the audience with the amount of money spent on various patients/inmates given certain situations, in this instance the cost to date of keeping a girl, her mother and grandparents institutionalised. There does not appear to be a qualifying conceptualisation regarding time in most instances, rather, emphasis is drawn to situational housing as opposed to length of

institutionalisation. Immediately after such intertitles, the applicable images are shown, taking lengths to illustrate them in the most heinous physical contortions possible. Grotesque images, mostly of men are lined up next, showing their agitated states and animal-like behaviours. This clearly illustrates the inability of the mentally ill to 'act' or behave according to socially expected norms and therefore serves to stigmatise them and validates the contention for the need to boundary them away from the in-group. Some are seen sitting about in the sunshine doing nothing as if to emphasise their inability or unwillingness to become productive and useful citizens. Following this, the next scene is a broad shot of the beautiful grounds and socially valued historical institutions in which these useless individuals are kept. With manicured lawns and trimmed hedges the camera then moves swiftly onto a shot of a *shady* looking character inside this wonderful institution. Again, appearing agitated, not knowing quite how to behave for the intruding camera, he sits next to a small child who gestures for the camera and crew to go away. Below his feet lays another child who clearly has some issues with his posture, possibly Spina Bifida, who struggles to get up for the camera (Frame 10). Despite several attempts he is unable to do so, so instead he struggles around on the floor, using his upper body strength to project himself forward and smile up to the camera lens which now takes a close focus shot of him alone. Not alone in the physical sense, as a doctors, propped in their white coats and black boots are seen to the corner of the shot, behind the boy, but socially and psychologically alone, as this medic does nothing to help the child from this tormented situation. The scene finishes with the child giving a last ditch attempt to sit up for the camera and smile, this again, he fails to do, unaided.



Frame 10: 15:50

Presenting as a happy child could be construed as him feeling pleased that he is still able to mobilise, but to the audience it may again suggest a sign of incapacity and ugliness. Clearly, this, and other scenes are not shot to instigate some sense of sentimentality of the audience rather, it is an orchestrated and carefully manipulated mise-en-scène where all the characters displayed as a *freak-show* are catalogued in a way to further validate the socially accepted ethos of wasted economic resources which, after WW1, could be better spent on improved housing for the productive workforce of Germany. In some symbolic sense perhaps leading society to question why such people, such biological

categories of human existence, are, or were, allowed to go on and produce progeny with the same infected gene-line.

Scenes continue as before, cataloguing people with varying degrees of physical disability or displays of mental anguish, such as the next one which focuses on two sisters (Frame 11).



Frame 11: 16:48

One, seated to the rear of her weaker, more fragile looking sister, beckons her weaker sibling to perform for the camera urging her to hold her head up. Instead the sister nearest the lens sits with a tightly closed body posture refusing to look up and make eye contact with anyone. She has internalised her spoiled identity and knows she cannot represent herself as *normal*. As if frustrated at the girls'

inability or unwillingness to perform the scene is swiftly moves on to two brothers who appear willing to comply with the producer. Although one looks anxious they willingly pose for the lens offering a frontal and side shot of what the intertitle states as:

**Twin brothers who, to date, have cost the  
state RM 10,200.**

Interestingly, there appears very little family resemblance between them. One is tall and slim whilst the other is short and obese. However, the film continues with its quest of attempting to show how mental and physical illness is passed on genetically from one generation to the other. Again this is illustrated in the next scene where three small children are seen sitting on a dirty floor. Two of the children sit in close proximity to each other attempting to reassure each other from this invasive intrusion. The third child sits a short distance away and sways from left to right whilst sucking her thumb. She appears totally socially isolated despite being in close distance to her peers. Other images of several children in contorted physical positions lay on sheets placed on the grass in the grounds of the institution. A nurse holds one child and instructs him to stand. This child is obviously blind and unsteady on his feet. As he falls to the ground, no-one attempts to break his fall, instead he lands hard and assumes his previous foetal position on the grassy verge. By not assisting this child the nurse is represented as the in-group member and as such this exemplified reaction or inaction can be deemed appropriate to all in her bounded social system.

The next scene shows a nurse in a long white uniform, holding a patient in a chair, ensuring that she will not fall out - not in the sense of safety of the patient but rather to ensure that the cameraman will get a clear shot of the *abnormality*.

The patient sits like a board, not bending at the waist looking like she will slide onto the floor at any moment. The camera then swings over to the right where we see an image of a small, frail child in the arms of another nurse. Shadow is used to enhance the poor health status of this infant rather than an attempt to introduce any form of wrong-doing. This discourse, to some extent, follows the words of Hitler when he stated that the child was the innocent victim of disability, rather, it is the adult who is to blame for passing on his or her impurity to the child. The camera continues its gaze whilst emphasising the child's contorted and crippled arms and legs which lay paralysed and fixed in the nurses' arms.

Scene twenty-three focuses on a child of about twelve years old who sits alone in his cot which in turn is surrounded by other empty cots cluttered about the room. He sways sometimes violently, from left to right, and is not aware of his surroundings due to obvious blindness. Other images of several children, all displaying varying degrees of unusual facial expression or body posture and incontinence are then shown. All of these children appear to be blind and have little or no understanding of their social circumstance. Shadow is again used to accentuate their depressed situation and the negative health status of these young people.

The narrative now turns to other children, lying in their cots, with no pillows to support their heads and filthy sheets to cover parts of their nakedness. Images of an incontinent child, more akin to a skeleton than a living human being, are paraded for all to see, sparing no dignity for this poor defenceless youngster (Frame 12). Her distorted limbs twisted not out of choice to hinder the camera's ability to invade her femininity rather, a fixed uncontrolled stasis not helping her but hindering her as she involuntarily loses control of her bladder.



Frame 12: 18:39

The discourse changes significantly now from the plight of the physically and mentally disabled to that of the criminal. In attempting to abridge this difference, the camera just continues its punishing style of intrusion, as before, but with a different agenda, that being to nullify the comparative difference between those seen before and those images to follow. In other words, the mentally and physically disabled and the criminal are all equally socially castrated from themselves as well as the body politic.

As the intertitle now shows:

Due to a misunderstanding of natural law and a wrong attitude to Christianity even dangerous criminals are not punished but 'kept' in an institution if mental deficiencies cannot be diagnosed.



Frame 13: 19:15

So, the mad-bad disparity is contorted into one biological category (Frame 13) and as the following scenes endeavoured to illustrate, these individuals, as well as physically and mentally disabled people, were used as discursive metaphors to gain societal support, whether actively or passively, for biopolitical strategies



and policies which would cleanse the state of undesirables regarded as deviating from, and outside of, the supremacy of the *Volk*.

A typical mafia-style man is now paraded in front of the lens, with his dark, unshaven appearance and trouser braces. With the aid of transference, it attempts to seat this image with that of 1930s American style Pathe newsreel, using conventional tropes to convey discourses of organised crime and gangster activity. In so doing, it sets this individual up as some form of leading character of what is to follow; a catalogue of *others* like him, all deviating from the norms of a supreme civilised state. This man then is filmed, shaded from the sun, and alone. He looks at the camera with an expression of ambivalence and says something, but the viewer is unable to distinguish this utterance from the silence of the film.

Next, a man in a highly agitated and angry state is seen confronting the camera crew as they keep the lens focused upon him. Clearly, this man is attempting to show his assertiveness, yet this man's behaviour is used as justification for institutionalising such dangerous people away from society proper. Further images of what appear very ordinary men are shown walking around and around a yard (Frame 14). One after the other, in typical prison exercise yard fashion, they walk on a concreted path set into a grassy verge, not daring to stray from the cold, hardness beneath their feet for the comfort of the inviting texture of the green carpet of grass, they continue their social activity in social isolation from everyone and everything within it. This scene is intentionally denoted as a prison yard cliché leaving the viewers little doubt that its inhabitants are possibly dangerous and therefore need to be contained in a boundary and unable to escape.



Frame 14: 19:55

An image of yet another rather ordinary man is now seen (Frame 15). No contorted images or shadows under the eyes, instead an image of a man in a white shirt and tidy hairstyle, sitting uncomfortably with having to pose for the camera. Again and again the viewer sees a variety of men with the same commonplace features which do nothing to visually separate them out from those audiences deemed within the social order. It is their very ordinariness which may have instilled a sense of impending fear in German society. If a man who looks as mundane as this can be stigmatised and categorised in this way, then anyone else can be at risk of being ostracised, with the consequences that



Frame 15: 21:03

this removal can bring. The only graphical *evidence* to the cause was the intertitle which intercede these images. Frequently, the text uses enlarged fonts to further enhance their fatalistic message of degeneracy:

...Committed murder and attempted murder...

As is seen next, another man, elderly, well dressed and frail, smiles at the camera in a way which somehow questions what all the fuss is about. He sits near another man who stands with his hands behind his back. Use of camera

angle enhances a negative shadow under his eyes, nose and chin. His scalp appears to have been shaved near the left frontal lobe – why? Did he receive electro-convulsive treatment (ECT) or some form of brain surgery? This is left unanswered but the intention to separate this individual from society is achieved by this sign of a patch of baldness - nobody walks around with a head like that, unless there is something wrong with them – hence, another visual method is used to socially isolate this individual from the body politic.



Frame 16: 22:20

The next scene is shot outside focusing on two men who sit at a table, playing draughts, whilst being observed by another man (Frame 16). Clearly, they are all able to participate in a social activity, showing comprehension of game rules, turn taking and communication; nothing unusual here, until the camera pans out into an establishing shot to include their surroundings of mentally ill patients, swaying to their left and right, in so doing, smelting them all into a none distinct group of uselessness or worthless eaters previously labelled physically degenerate, mentally insane or criminal.

Another long shot is now used to revisit the conditions of the physically and mentally disabled. Here, a physically disabled boy with limbs fixated and a naked young woman who is thin and frail are overlooked by a nurse and doctor who stand behind them, incongruent to the deplorable situation and condition of their charges.

## **Madhouse**

The intertitle reads as the camera now focuses on several images of disturbed men in the lustrous grounds of the institution mixing with children who attempt to shield their selves from the intruding lens.

## **Prison**

With typographical emphasis, leads the next scene on to one of numerous inmates exercising in the yard.

**RM 24,200**

Again with intensity, the film informs the audience of the economics of their care, followed by images of an ape-like human being, rocking from side to side, hunched up shoulders and sinister appearance, spits food out of his mouth onto

the floor. The spitting out of food here is symbolic of the wasted financial input for caring for these people; as the food is wasted, so too is the money.

The discourse now changes to one which explores the housing status of the proletarian population. Small, but clean looking houses mirror each other in wave upon wave of sameness as the camera travels down the road looking for disparity. Then, with aid of intertitles, the viewer is informed that the majority of working people live in squalor whilst people who are not fit for work live in paradise. Now, images of dirty, ramshackled houses, shaded and damp, intermingled with dilapidated cottages are shown. With windows left open and holes in the roof the viewer is left comparing the housing situatedness of those within and those without the protection and sanctity of the beautifully maintained institutions.



Frame 17: 23:08

Scenes change rapidly towards the end of the film, running through a comparative narrative of the prestigious institutions with its ugly occupiers and the ugly housing with prestigious occupants (Frame 17).

The final two scenes follow an image of two *ideal* looking German men, blonde, muscular, tidy, and clean, wearing a vest whilst harvesting their crop by hand in the sunshine. Both this scene and the previous Frame 2, use tropes to establish the worth of work and the proletariats.

The intertitle tells the audience that:

...The farmer who prevents the spread of weeds promotes what is valuable...



Frame 18: 24:15

To conclude, the camera takes an eye-line shot which allows the viewer to feel as if she/he is part of the scene of weed-free crops blowing gently in the breeze on a beautiful sunny day tended by a husband and wife with eight children who pose happily for the camera (Frame 18). In Darwinist style where purity is essentially worthy, there are no weeds in this family just pure-blood, honest, hard working members of the *Volk*.

### Section Conclusion

*Erbkrank's (The Hereditary Defective's)* producer, Dr Herbert Gerdes, used differing camera angles and use of shadow to enhance connotations of wrongdoing or illness onto those selected for capture. Additionally, every opportunity was effectively used to set up a comparative between the in-group and out-group by emotively enhancing housing and financial injustices.

Following the contention of 'survival of the fittest' (Spencer, 1917) it seeks to challenge the status quo of the unfairness of a social system caring for those who are unfit whilst contributors to the German economy struggle to survive. It calls into question are the right people being cared for/assisted by the state and the need to exclude such illustrations of inhumanness from the dominance of the *Volk*.

### ***The Eternal/Wandering Jew (Der Ewige Jude) (1940)***

After the introductory titles the film begins with shots of Jews in the streets of a Polish ghetto accompanied with sinister sounding music which may introduce a sense of foreboding to the viewer. The Ghetto appears overcrowded with its inhabitants as the camera moves from street to street showing Jews going about their daily lives. Such overcrowding may illustrate the need to reduce their



numbers rather than recalling that these people were placed in these cramped conditions against their will.

The camera stops periodically to take a closer shot of the individual Jew (Frame 1). Effective use of shadow under the eyes and nose of these individuals may introduce a negative connotation of unhealthiness or wrong-doing.



Frame 1: 01:36

The camera then moves to a Jewish family in their accommodation. Great emphasis is taken to shoot close up shots of masses of flies on the walls and windows whilst the family sit at the table to eat. Such images may suggest a dirty and squalid situation, and therefore enhancing and legitimising the need for social exclusion.

The next scene shows a Rabbi conducting prayers with other men around a table. Emphasis is placed on their bodies 'bobbing' motion during this gathering which can be explained as part of the scripture ritual. Such connotations are used to potentially illustrate a differential between 'them and us' as their props are used against them to validate the need to alienate and stigmatise them. In the next two scenes as we see Jews being ordered to clear up rubble on the sidewalk or bartering with goods in a typical marketplace (although this was the only available form of currency in the ghetto). The marketplace focus continues with the apparent cruel methods of livestock exchange as chickens and geese are dragged by their necks from their holding pens (Frame 2). Again, this could potential disturb the viewer as an unnecessary, inhumane action.



Frame 2: 06:21

A comparative scene is now introduced showing Aryan men undertaking creative and precision based engineering skills or working together to gather the harvest of the Fatherland. The accompanying music also changes from a negative to a more positive, triumphant type score. This is immediately followed with the sinister looking Jew portrayed as lazy and indignant whilst he counts his money in the street. Greed appears to be the main foci of the next few scenes as the images move from the individual Jew selling goods on the pavement, to selling goods from a stall, to selling from a small shop and then to a bigger shop to running a large corporate bank, allowing for Jews to purchase large, expensive mansions in which to live as they strive for greater wealth both in the country in which they reside as well as other countries to which the emigrate.

Now we return to the crowded streets of the ghetto illustrating the Jew who buys and sells yet produces nothing. It may suggest to the viewer that the ghetto is the rightful place for the Jewish community. Production is seen to be undertaken by the Aryan people as depicted in the next scene as we see farm workers tending their fields or engineers making items of worth. Again, such comparative scenes serve to separate and differentiate between 'us and them'.

The discourse changes now as the viewer sees the Jew at the Wailing Wall with large flags bearing the Star of David upon them. Close camera shots appear to emphasise their traditional costume and their Pa'ot (the Hebrew word for sidelocks or sidecurls). For them this is a proud display of their religious affiliation but for the viewer it may further cause potential cultural separation.

Maps graphically illustrate how the Jews have colonised various countries, initially in the Far East then further afield (Europe and the rest of the world) during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries (Frame 3). This is sharply followed

on with images of hordes of rats as they plagued various countries as they moved from Asia to the West. This sets up a similarity from Jew to rat connotating that the Jewish population are dirty, infective parasites searching for places to colonise and contaminate as rats did with the Black Death, one of the most devastating pandemics in human history, peaking in Europe between 1348 and 1350. Such imagery may pose retaliative questions to curb the threat of disease and infection from these parasitic organisms, be they rat or Jew and in so doing justify discriminatory policies.



Frame 3: 14:05

The following comparative scene shows us Jewish men in both traditional costume and in Western clothing followed with Jews, living in Berlin, dressed in

formal wear. The discourse here appears to attempt to show how the Jew can be mistaken for an Aryan when dressed in Western attire and that we can only identify a Jew upon close examination. Such concealments and assimilations may endanger the purity of the Volk as the Jews attempt to permeate the Fatherland, as depicted in the next scene where we see Jewish men, dressed in morning suits, dancing and eating with Aryan women in what appears as a high status restaurant.



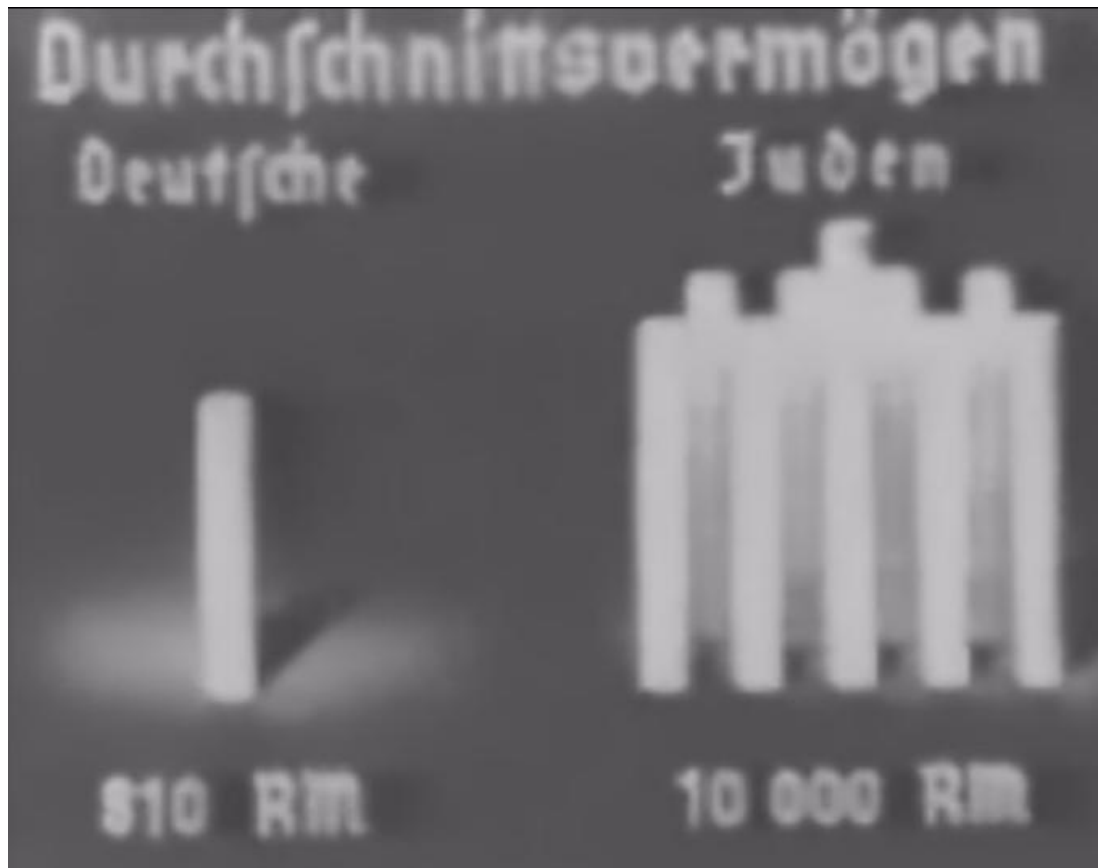
Frame 4: 20:00

Now, lists of several successful Jewish businessmen are illustrated with particular emphasis on Baron Maurice de Rothschild and his family as they attempted to avoid paying taxes by portraying themselves as a poor family. In

the following scene we see again the Rothschild family, led by Baron Maurice de Rothschild, instructing his five sons to start banking businesses in different European cities (Paris, Vienna, London, Frankfurt and Naples) in a bid, we are told, to gain financial influence over the working man. Clearly, this scene is fictional but presented as historically accurate thereby attempting to fabricate truths where none may actually exist. The Warburg family is another successful banking family to which the film now focuses on. Again the viewer is shown how international monetary power ensued following the thriving family business enabling them to infiltrate world politics.

Next, the narrative moves from the European context to that of New York. Here we are shown the New York stock exchange which we are told is governed by a long list of successful Jewish bankers who, aside from their business dealings, have close links to high political office. Despite these successes we are told that Jewry still remains a parasite to the host nation, thereby justifying the need for corrective measures to return such successful opportunities to the host nation. Following on, the next scene moves historically to the First World War where images show German society struggling with war and poverty. Jews, we are told, held key political positions in Germany at this time. It attempts to validate this contention by illustrating various graphs and statistics to show firstly, the number of professionals taking up high ranking positions in various states, secondly, the migration levels of Jews and thirdly, the comparative salary of Jews versus Germans (Frame 5).

These vignettes are likely used to gain an emotional response from the viewer in the hope of establishing the injustice of such situations.



Frame 5: 29:47

These scenes are then effectively followed on with images of Germans living in poverty followed with images of Jews living a lavish lifestyle followed on swiftly to the 'meddling' of Jews in German culture, religion and art. Such 'meddling' is illustrated with images of German heritage and religious iconography and then compared to Jewish abstract art focusing on 'vulgarity'. German cultural life, we are told, was bastardised by this social adaptation (Frame 6).

To further validate this contention various movie clips of Jewish productions are shown which feature violence, sexual exploitation or crime. Again and again these messages are attempting to distance the audience from the Jewish communities from those within to those without.



Frame 6: 31:22

Individual exemplars are now shown again to alienate those so identified: Albert Einstein and his 'pseudoscience'; Rosa Valetti with her portrayal of a prostitute; Kurt Voiles and his portrayal of a transvestite; Peter Lorre in his role as a child murderer (Frame 7). Such examples again illustrate an ontological conundrum by mixing reality with fiction. It may to some be deemed as entertainment but here they are labelled as indecent, abnormal and depraved seeking to change a viewers' healthy judgement. In this example they are intentionally stigmatised and stereotyped by their character portrayal rather than who or what they actually are.





Frame 7: 35:58

The next scene moves from entertainment to religion where images of Hebrew iconography are challenged for their accuracy. It asks the audience to correct their historical belief systems to that of the Jew as the real 'vermin', as shown in a short scene from a culture film made by Warsaw Jews in which Jews are seen celebrating the slaughter of seventy-five thousand anti-Semitic Persians by biblical ancestors of 'murderous Jews'. We are told that to understand such murderous acts we need to understand some Torah scriptures. Thus the next two scenes show images of a rabbi teaching Jewish children cultural law and readings from the Torah. Close up shots focus on nose protrusions, and props such as pa'ot and traditional clothing which the bearer probably holds with pride,

yet the audience may comprehend this entirely differently - as negative and synonymous features of Jewry.

Part of the Hebrew faith includes that of kosher food (food prepared in accordance with Jewish Dietary Laws). This form of food preparation and slaughter is depicted in great and indeed disturbing detail over the next few scenes. Before the next scene begins a 'health warning' is given to sensitive citizens advising them not to watch. It begins with the image of a cow about to be slaughtered. Jews are seen to be smiling, whilst some hold large knives, others tie the feet of the animal together. A group of men push the cow to the floor and we see the slaughterer cut the throat of the cow whilst conscious, opening a huge gash as blood explodes out of the cut (Frame 8). The cow lies there slowly bleeding to death whilst being observed by elated onlookers. The same practice is illustrated on a calf. This is followed by an image of a newspaper article stating that German traditional methods of animal slaughter are disgraceful. Here we see, with clarity, the application of Goffman's theory of stigma (1963). These Jews frame themselves in the religious sense, undertaking a traditional action which they deem right and proper. As they are filmed undertaking this approach they are likely to be aware of a fundamental cultural disparity between themselves and the audience. Hence they make efforts to justify their actions by way of a newspaper article validating their methods. This is countered with images of cows grazing happily together on a farm in Germany and sheep seen cared for by German farmers. The next shot returns us to Jews as they kosher kill a lamb then shortly followed with images of an unbound cow staggering about after the fatal cut to her neck. Clearly these images are entirely made to shock, disturb and upset the viewer which it is

argued here they do unequivocally, such that the next image shows the introduction of the 1933 law banning this type of slaughter. It stated that all animals must be sedated before slaughter, a view upheld in several other European countries at this time. This then can be considered as a rebuke to the previous Jewish attempts to defend their kosher killing by highlighting the National Socialist philosophy to such practices with the introduction of preventative measures to protect animals and enforce their slaughter under humane conditions.



Frame 8: 49:37

The final scenes now move onto 'positive' images of the Reichstag in 1939 showing Hitler and the Swastika as he states 'the flag has been raised in war against all Jewry'. Cheering German people are seen saluting, screaming and smiling at Hitler's pronouncements. An image of a young German soldier looking fit, health and proud is seen in close up followed by medium shots of young German women – beautiful, gracious, healthy, and smiling (Frame 9). Both of these images are shown in stark contrast to the emotive shots of the slaughters to reinforce the acceptable from the unacceptable.



Frame 9: 53:45

Finally a typeset image stating 'The eternal law of nature, keeping ones race pure – a unified German nation march on into the future' is faded out gradually to be replaced with tens of thousands of marching soldiers as they walk through

Berlin. The film ends with a clip taken from the film *Triumph of the Will* (1935) with close up shots of flags and standards carrying the Nazi insignia.

### Section Conclusion

Similar to *Erbkrank* (*The Hereditary Defective*, discussed above), *The Eternal Jew* (*Der Ewige Jude*) attempts to undertake a comparative between the *Volk* and the Jew and tends to focus more on socially accepted customs and culture to validate its argument that Jews are dirty, pathogenic, power and money hungry parasites. With little or no consideration for their host nation or the values which are upheld and dear to the in-group, the Jews, if left unabated, will control and dominate the world.

Various vignettes are used as evidence of disparity between the dominant and the out-group, possibly encouraging the mentality of the viewer that *oil and water don't mix* and that Jewish power needs to be removed and returned to the rightful host nation(s).

### ***Ich Klage An (I Accuse) (1941)***

The film begins with the:

Tobis

Trademark above which stands the symbolic sign of the Racial and Political Office's emblem of two horses facing outward. Between these horses is set another symbol that of the Third Reich eagle. Immediately then, the viewer senses that the film has an authoritative *voice* as it is endorsed by government officialdom.

The title:

**ICH KLAGEN AN**

(I ACCUSE), is set in bold, white capitals highlighted against a black background with added dramatic effect from the score by Norbert Schultze, one of the leading composers of the day. All of the actors who played a part in the film were well known to cinemagoers: Paul Hartmann, Matthias Wiemann, Heidemarie Hatheyer, Charlotte Theile and Albert Florath (Burleigh, 1994).

The film begins with an establishing shot that helps to set the scene. Hanna, full of energy and excitement is seen running to greet the postman who is delivering an important letter regarding her husband, Professor Thomas Heit (Frame 1).



Frame 1: 2:03

She and her husband live an idyllic bourgeois lifestyle, with a splendid looking home full of images signifying life and living. She is a beautiful, slim blonde German woman in the prime of her life who is entirely devoted to her husband, who has worked his way up from humble beginnings to the position of scientist, which has permitted the couple to have an idyllic lifestyle.

Hanna shouts excitedly to the maid that *the* letter had come then immediately attempts to phone her husband to convey the news. Clearly, at this point she is healthy as a significant number of frames focus unobtrusively on Hanna's left hand, later, unbeknown to the audience at this time, this would be the hand to initially foretell that something is wrong.



Frame 2: 2:44

A close up of the letter that Hanna holds excitedly, reveals it is from the University of Munich (Frame 2). Further, the envelope has the sign of the Third Reich insignia of the eagle and swastika stamped boldly upon it. This further signifies to the audience that he and his wife are worthy people and ones which they can aspire to, trust and later empathise with.

The maid appears as a member of the family where good news and bad are shared as though she is Hanna's mother figure. She is not undervalued as a manual labourer, rather a valued member of the household. Later, the audience learns that this maid also brought up Hanna when she was a child.

The next scene is placed in a lecture theatre where Professor Heit speaks to his students (Frame 3). Around him props are situated on the walls are maps of the world, while specimen bottles with human organs preserved in formaldehyde strewn his desk and a human spinal column stands upright for all to see, illuminated by the sun which shines through the window.



Frame 3: 3:18



These signifiers positively reinforce the social status of medics in that they attribute the doctor with superior expertise and knowledge. The discourse validates this by suggesting to the viewer that this is a knowledgeable man who understands the fundamental underpinnings of gross anatomy and physiology and is admired by both his students and peers. Later, this becomes an important element of the story-line. So valued is he that when the lecture finishes and he leaves the room his students applaud as he exits.

As Hanna opens the letter to read to her husband over the phone the viewer sees Hanna's left hand agility; as she opens the letter with her left hand while her right hand holds the phone. This and other scenes are setting the plot for what is to come. They are illustrating Hanna's health status, in the here and now, as good, only to be followed with a spiralling down to disability and infirmity, later on.

The viewer now learns that Professor Heit has been offered the post at Munich University and everyone is excited about it, so excited that they are to have a party to celebrate.

Other than Hanna's husband, Thomas, the next man the audience sees is the Heit's best friend, Doctor Bernhard Lang, who has just delivered a new baby to a proletariat couple. The story of this child becomes a subsidiary to the main storyline of the film as the child becomes seriously ill and acts as a parallel to Hanna's situation.

The next chapter begins with Hanna and the maid preparing the vegetables for the party (Frame 4). Again, emphasis is placed on Hanna's left hand and its ability to do whatever Hanna asks it to do. She prepares the food at a very fast,

but capable pace, standing, whilst the maid slowly performs her task sitting comfortably in a chair next to the kitchen table.



Frame 4: 5:26

This imbalance is striking, and intentionally so, it sets up additional connotations of health and well-being in Hanna and compares to that of an older woman, the maid, who expectedly needs to sit rather than stand. Additionally, it further decodes the meanings of the oppositions within the scene of mother-daughter, older-younger, thereby feeding into the audiences preconceived notions of age related activity and inactivity and the associated social expectations which come from that.

The following scene takes the viewer to Hanna's brother, Edward Stretter, as he dictates a business letter to his secretary in his office. Again, this sets up the connotation of a successful man which the audience can relay feelings of trust and worth. Hanna and Edward talk to each other over the telephone where Hanna informs him that she and Thomas are moving to Munich. Edward, the audience learns, has never liked Thomas and there remains a certain amount of animosity between them. Despite this, at Hanna's request, Edward is willing to make amends with Thomas before they move away. He is portrayed as being fond of his sister and willing to protect her feelings.

The viewer is now sees Bernhard Lang examining the newborn baby delivered in an earlier scene (Frame 5).



Frame 5: 7:05

Together with the newborns parents, concern is visible on everyone's faces as they learn that all is not well with the infant. Doctor Lang diagnoses that the child has meningitis and that it is a life threatening condition. The mother asks that she be *allowed* to care for her child at home, to this, Doctor Lang agrees. Again, this discourse illustrates the medic as the expert: that medics' have unquestioning authority over all things relating to health.

Moving from a sad scene, the film now moves onto a happy scene where Hanna and the maid make final preparations for the party. As Hanna almost manically runs from one task to the next it becomes more likely that Hanna is left handed than right handed so the connotation and emphasis on her left hand becomes more critical than before. Being more reliant on her left hand sets up the plot for greater inability and therefore greater loss of self as she gradually loses sensation in that hand.



Frame 6: 7:49

As Hanna runs upstairs to attend to something, the viewer hears a crash. The maid runs to Hanna's aid to find her sitting at the bottom of the stairs rubbing her left leg (Frame 6).

This is a code for the audience which signifies that something is wrong with Hanna. The audience will have to wait to find out. But this use of code is not only used as a sign it also enhances visual and psychological climax, encouraging the viewer to follow this indexical pointing of what is to come.

Hanna is shown blaming clutter at the bottom of the stairs for her fall rather than any form of intrinsic pathology. The scene finishes with Hanna limping away. Now, with the party in full swing, the audience is given a short reprieve from the sadness of the previous scene. The scene begins with Professor Schlueter, a guest, giving a speech to his fellow guests. He says:

The dinner was very good. One might even say 'excellent'. We must thank Hanna for it. Our friend Thomas is a great man. And now he leaves us, in order to become even greater. But what would Thomas be without his wife? He is a great scholar and a serious researcher. And she is laughing happiness and flourishing life. And so it is – one compliments the other, because each is quite different from the other.

This dialogue does three things. Firstly, it gives the viewer a narrative of the Heit's relationship with its emphasis of togetherness. Secondly, it begins to separate them as healthy and unhealthy when placed within the discourse of looming tragedy and thirdly, it questions Thomas's life without Hanna. As the scene continues, further questions begin to surface regarding Thomas' motivations with his marriage, as Berta, the maid states 'Those were hard times, before Hanna inherited her fortune'. Now suspense is introduced as the audience is drawn into the plot which questions the foundations of the Heits' marriage. Is Professor Heit to be trusted, are his deeds honourable?

The next scene is set in the kitchen where Edward, Berta and Bernhard sit and talk about Bernhard's love for Hanna. How Hanna would have married Bernhard if she had not met Thomas. This sets up a convention that if Bernhard loves Hanna then he will do anything to protect or save her. Conventions typically relay social norms. By feeding into this social norm of man cares for woman, so the audience may relate to this type of scenario which leads to the assumption that Bernhard would not do any harm to Hanna, he loves her.

Hanna now enters the kitchen where Bernhard notices for the first time that she is limping. Hanna laughs it off in an attempt to reassure him that she is alright. Meanwhile, in the living room Professor Schlueter is conversing with a pastor. The pastor states that:

Pain comes from God, no doubt. He ordained that women should feel pain at birth, otherwise He would have created them differently.

To which Professor Schlueter replies:

But you don't know your Bible, Pastor. When God made Eve out of Adam's rib, He put him into a deep sleep first, showing that He was in favour of anaesthesia!

This dialogue between the church and science debates the sufferance of woman. The pastor subscribing to the knowledge that God wanted a woman to feel pain in childbirth. The scientist suggesting that to anaesthetise a woman does not go against God's wishes. Woman then, do not need to feel pain, they can be put to sleep and feel nothing.

The next scene sees the Heit's guests dancing to the piano. A close-up shot is taken of one of the guests when she contends to Hanna that:

Every person should have his health examined every six months. This should be law.

This comment is interesting given that only a few months before, in July of 1940, the guidelines for the evaluation of genetic health had been made into policy. These guidelines sought to segregate the German population into four groups: group 1 – antisocials, group 2 – acceptable, group 3 – average citizens, and group 4 – persons of particular genetic worth. Hence, most people at the Heit party would probably have fallen into groups 3 or 4. A terminally ill person would immediately drop into group 1, so for Hanna this would have been a significant or deciding factor had she of known that she was about to be diagnosed with an incurable disease. Indeed given such a prognosis would God ordain that under such circumstances Hanna be put out of her pain and anaesthetised, permanently? Certainly, many people watching this movie may have been led to the same question however, this study cannot answer this, rather, it can only highlight its plausibility.



Frame 7: 18:12

The next scene is an important one for the story-line as it now becomes apparent that something is definitely wrong with Hanna. As she plays the piano her left hand becomes unresponsive (Frame 7). All of her friends know her as a talented pianist but now her illness exhibits itself in front of all of her guests as she struggles to get her fingers to press the right keys. She becomes frustrated at her inability whilst her guests whisper amongst each other questioning that all of these doctors are under one roof yet nobody knows what to do.

As the guests leave, Hanna and Thomas go outside and sit on the porch and talk about how wonderful life is and how much they love each other.

The next scene is set in the kitchen, the following morning, when Hanna finds it near impossible to butter her own bun. She asks Thomas to cut and butter it for her, which he does. The audience is reassured that he will help her and do what she asks of him, setting the scene for what is to come. Thomas suggests that she goes to see Doctor Bernhard Lang, a friend who attended the party the previous evening, she agrees to do so.

With Thomas now at work the viewer sees Hanna and the maid wondering if she may be pregnant. Hanna believes that pregnancy is the cause of her physical symptoms. This possibility changes the discourse slightly. If she is pregnant and not ill then all is well, if however she is ill and not pregnant then this questions her very existence. If however she is ill and pregnant, what then, what will happen to her and her child? These are all questions that the audience may have pondered; certainly they were introduced to create this conundrum, to make the audience think these issues through. Most of the remaining scenes are set to enhance this dilemma, as in the next scene in Doctor Lang's surgery.



Whilst Hanna is being examined by her doctor and friend Hanna notices a number of small bottles of medicine (Frame 8). The audience may have been led to believe that these bottles contained medicine for euthanasia purposes. This was not explicit, rather implied, as the camera focuses intently upon them.



Frame 8: 26:26

The next scene sees Bernhard Lang speaking with Thomas conveying his diagnosis of Multiple sclerosis (MS). Bernhard confirms that this diagnosis means probable death for Hanna upon which Thomas starts searching for a specialist and bids to search for a cure. They decide between them not to tell

Hanna about the contents of their discussion. After discussing Hanna with a specialist Thomas now knows definitively that Hanna has a *death sentence*.

Several scenes now follow Thomas's plight, attempting to find a cure for Hanna's illness. In one scene where his team are undertaking tests they are seen attempting to replicate Hanna's pathology into a mouse. They succeed only to be pitied by Burkhard, a female scientific colleague of Thomas' who later euthanises it with ether (Frame 9). This is deemed the right thing to do, to put the rodent out of its misery.



Frame 9: 48:36

The next scene sees Hanna being attended at home by Doctor Lang. She informs him that her condition is getting worse by the spreading immobilisation to

both arms and legs. Doctor Lang still does not tell her what is wrong, instead he administers her some medicine (Frame 10). Hanna states:

You're experimenting with me. I'm just a guinea pig or something.  
What sort of disease do I have, anyway? Don't you know?



Frame 10: 50:08

Clearly, the previous scene of the mouse is intended to relate to this passage of dialogue. It was an indexical sign. Should Hanna, the guinea pig, also be gassed or anaesthetised as was mentioned by her friend at the party? The mouse had no voice, could not ask to be killed, Hanna does have a voice, she can ask. These questions further the debate and ethical dilemma both in the film but in reality as well.

They serve as a small window on the world, enabling the viewer(s), through realism or generic verisimilitude, to confront difficult situations in a safe but convincing way.

Another scene sees Hanna again being attended by her friend and doctor, Doctor Lang. This time Hanna starts to ask Bernhard to leave his medicine behind so that she can kill herself. The narrative continues:

Hanna: Why don't you leave the bottle here? I want to ask you for something else, while I still can. I don't believe it will happen, but if things get worse – I can see ahead – the legs are paralysed, my left arm too. Now the right arm is starting to feel funny. I don't fear death, but I don't want to lie here all the time, not human any more, just a lump of flesh. And a torture to Thomas, when I am decaying like this. And when he does think of me, when I'm dead, then he will be glad. I don't want that. – You are my best friend'.

Bernhard: Now, listen. You know that I'm your best friend. But I'm also a doctor. A doctor is a servant of life. He must preserve life at any price...

Hanna: Is he allowed to hold off death if he can?

Bernhard: Naturally.

Hanna: But he is not allowed to shorten the agony of death?

Bernhard: No.

Hanna: Why not?

Bernhard: Because we don't know what death is. We don't know what life is either. Life creates for itself the body. And the body creates for itself the spirit and the soul. So long as the body lives, everything can turn out all right.

Hanna is requesting help to kill herself, a form of euthanasia known as assisted suicide. At the time of the films' release the legislation 'Homicide upon Request': Section 216 of the German Criminal Code stated clearly that euthanasia was both illegal and punishable. Therefore, as stated by Bernhard, he is not in any position to help her to die; not on emotional grounds because he doesn't want to

lose her; on medical grounds because he doesn't feel that she is that sick, and on legal grounds as he could be prosecuted if he did what she said. This piece of legislation is crucial to the remainder of the film as it is on these statutes that the case against Hanna's husband rests. As Hanna is unable to persuade her doctor to help so she asks her husband Thomas to give her poison which would result in her death.

This discourse reaches into the depths of biopolitical and bioethical dilemmas which still continue today. Should the incurably ill be assisted to take their own life when requested to do so by that person, and as a consequence should the parties involved in this process be free of any wrong-doing? Should suicide and assisted suicide be legalised?

The narrative continues with the establishment of Hanna's motivation for death and her repeated requests to her husband to assist in her demise.



Frame 11: 1:08:34

In the final scene before Hanna dies Thomas (Hanna's husband) and Bernhard (Hanna's doctor) are seen fraught with anguish as they both realise that her battle with the pathology is lost (Frame 11). Physically, she is not the same person that she was only a few weeks ago, to Thomas, she is not the same woman that he married. Bernhard suggests giving Hanna Morphine to sedate her *unspeakable torture*. When Thomas leaves the room to join his wife in the bedroom the mise-en-scène changes to a gloomy, sad environment. With Hanna barely breathing and surrounded by many artefacts and figurines of life propped around her bedside, Thomas cradles her with a bottle of poison in his pocket. Figurines of life are used as a comparative of what Hanna used to be and what she is now: a woman, deviating from normal, healthy wellbeing. The camera takes a long-shot to establish the impending scene followed by a close-up shot of the couple, allowing the spectators to feel as though they are part of this tragedy.

With piano music in the background to add further romanticism to the narrative, Thomas kisses his wife then administers the poison to Hanna. Hanna then states weakly:

It tastes bitter. Now I am so calm, so happy. Do you remember when I ran away from home to be with you? We sat like this then, too. I feel so relieved, so much happier than ever before. I hope this is death.

The scene, although dark and solemn, does not show Hanna negatively as she slips into unconsciousness and then death. There is no blood, no screaming, and no anguish. Instead, she gently goes to sleep whilst being surrounded by affection. Typically, this discourse is used to somehow condone the actions of Thomas and the motivations of Hanna. Moreover, it attempts to allay social and individual fears of death and dying as nothing more than an aspect of life, an act

of deliverance. Thomas' role in this suicide now results in criminal proceedings being taken against him where Section 216 of the Criminal Code is tested to see if it can be legally, if not morally, applied to this case.



Frame 12: 1:16:49

Now the viewer is placed in the courtroom, full of defence and prosecutor teams willing to play their role in this ethical dilemma (Frame 12). The courtroom is bland with little use of Nazi insignia or other signs which may implicitly validate the courts' final decision. Various witnesses are brought forth who, on the whole, support Thomas. They support him personally and professionally calling on his social status of Professor, and a person of particular genetic worth as evidence

of his profound narcissistic actions of killing his wife. That was what she wanted; she wanted an *out*. He is now without, he is nothing without Hanna.

Key to Thomas' defence is the testimony of his friend Bernhard, but he cannot be found in the court building. Instead, a cut scene is used to see the sudden change of Bernhard's attitude to mercy killing when he visits the newborn baby which he delivered in the beginning of the film.



Frame 13: 1:32:15

Now this child is a long-term patient institutionalised with significant pathological states:

Bernhard: Where is she now?



Father: Where? In an institution. She is blind, can't hear, is quite idiotic. That's how wonderfully you healed her – instead of letting the poor creature die.

Bernhard: Who am I, to decide over life and death?

Mother: The poor child, Doctor. If you had seen her. We always believed you would come and – 'help' her (Frame 13).

Bernhard: Tomorrow I'll go and look at her.

Used as a reinforcement tool, it begins to question the social stance on euthanasia.

Now, in another scene the viewer sees various other experts giving testimony, suggesting that Hanna did not die from the poison, rather she died from the sclerotic foci which were already so diseased that they could have fatally paralysed Hanna's breathing centre. Clearly, this changes the narrative by looking for loop-holes in the law or finding other causes of her death to relieve Thomas of his illegal actions. As the prosecutor states:

You mean we must face the possibility that Mrs Heit's death could have been caused, not by the action of the accused, but by the progress of the disease?

To which the president of the proceedings applies Part 2 of Section 216 of the Criminal Code, and states:

I must inform the accused of the possibility he may be convicted on grounds of 'attempted murder'. I give him the opportunity to conduct his defence accordingly.

The next scene revisits Bernhard as he prepares to see the newborn baby seen earlier at the beginning of the film. The narrative continues:

Bernhard: It was a serious case, an only child. I gave everything to save her life. The mother donated blood twice for her. And when the little creature wanted to give up, I forced her heart to go on beating with injections. You know what I'm talking about. And now the same mother tells me she had hoped I would come back to 'help'

the child. You know what she meant by that? [Doctor acknowledges]...

The scene goes on to show Bernhard leaving the ward where the child is housed. He appears distressed and visibly shaken from the image of the child, furthering the inference that he has changed his personal and professional stance on euthanasia (Frame 14).



Frame 14: 1:35:05

Indeed, it is clearly suggested in the narrative that this practice of mercy killing goes on, all be it, surreptitiously, behind closed doors.

It is interesting that the discourse changes from that of the child to that of the *creature*, somehow identifying her as an animal to be put out of her misery rather

than an individual with all that resembles humanity. Does this removal from society make it's killing more socially acceptable, making the failure not to act in this way the questionable foci? According to Kelman (1973:29-61) any moral inhibitions regarding thanatopolitical acts are less likely to occur if the victim is dehumanised by ideological definitions and indoctrinations.

So, the discourse changes to one where Thomas is not on trial for euthanising his wife, rather, the bodypolitic is on trial by challenging the status quo. Who, in a modern society, would allow such creatures to live on in a stasis of immobility, unproductively and worthlessness? The script further emphasises this approach with the dialogue of the family friend and fellow Professor Schlueter as he takes the stand:

Her life had become, physically and mentally, an intolerable torture. I saw it myself. You have to add to this her great worry for her beloved husband, seeing him suffer because of her illness. On her own, she couldn't deliver herself from her pain because she was paralysed. Otherwise she would have done it herself. She was an extremely vital, strong-willed, intelligent woman, of whom one could expect such a deed, for the love of her husband... He, in turn, sacrificed what was most dear to him in order to help her. As a doctor, according to the law, he went too far. But, let me freely express my opinion. A law that requires an incurable patient to endure senselessly, without the hope of a benevolent deliverance – such a law is unnatural and inhumane. Nature herself weeds out the unfit quickly. Medical science, with its medications, can delay the grace of a natural death again and again, although a cure is impossible. That is the reversal of professional ethics. It's what makes being a doctor such a burden at times... As the great German physician, Paracelsus, said 'medicine is love'. I know that Professor Heit acted only out of love (Translated by Sagi, 1993).

Using the then established ethos of Social Darwinism, the narrative attempts to support the weeding out of the unfit with a sense of deliverance, but deliverance by who? There is no God in Hitler's National Socialists, only servants to the Nazi ideal: the politicised medical fraternity. Biding to rid society of worthlessness, the

narrative deems medicine as beyond reproach and unquestioningly authoritative in thanatopolitics.



Frame 15: 1:41:39

As the jury and presidents take a break whilst waiting for Bernhard to arrive in court, the dialogue moves into a bioethical narrative, with one juror after the other challenging the status quo of current statutes of the law pertaining to this type of situation (Frame 15). For example:

Juror 1: The case has stirred up too much dust. Many a doctor will see Heit as a model.

Juror 6: If you ask me, Professor Heit has to be acquitted because he 'is' a model to all doctors.

President: If the teacher (previous juror) is right – if the right to give assistance is not to be the individual doctor's but the states, as is commonly the case in matters of life and death – then we will have to make laws for the medical courts.

Juror 2: But then, we should do it as soon as possible. I'm an old soldier, gentlemen. As a soldier, I accept the fact that the state can demand my life. But then the state would also have to give us a right to die... Yes, as a juror, I will judge according to the law. But laws shouldn't keep people from acting decently and with dignity. When laws do this, then they have to be changed.



Frame 16: 1:48:59

In the final scene again we see the narrative challenging the status quo when Thomas, until now silent, stands to address his accusers (Frame 16):

I can no longer remain silent. At stake is not just myself, but every man. I am not afraid. He who wants followers must lead the way... I no longer feel that I am the 'accused', because after all, I have suffered the biggest loss. No, 'I accuse' now... I accuse a Paragraph in the law that hinders doctors and judges from serving the people. That's why I don't want my case to remain undecided. I want a judgement. Because however it turns out, it will be a signal, an awakening... Therefore, I confess. At her request, I delivered my wife, who was incurably ill, of her suffering. On your judgement rests my life and that of all who may in future share the fate of my wife... And now go and make your judgement.

Using an iconic stance this final dialogue uses Thomas figuratively, to represent all doctors and judges and others deemed highly worthy to the state, which makes decisions impacting on the image of the *Volk*. It informs the viewer of the current legality of mercy killing and further questions the ethical framework on which these statutes rest. It is a reactionary discourse which highlights the need to legislate in favour of assisted suicide to rid the burden of guilt in the medical fraternity. In so doing it protects medics, giving them, as opposed to the state, huge control over who lives and who dies. Further, it enhances, elevates and gives social acceptability to the philosophy of killing disabled peoples and other useless and unproductive individuals, right at the time when Operation 14F13 came into operation. This programme sought to extend the criteria for extermination by targeting those identified as incapable of working. Additionally, only a few months after release of this film the killings were further expanded to include the elderly, the young, and people residing in Tubercular asylums, workhouses, detoxification centres and all psychiatric institutions.

### Section Conclusion

*I Accuse (Ich Klage An)* is different from the other films here analysed as it takes more of a dramatic, subjective approach to addressing the eugenic problem rather than a documentary based repetitive dialogue which *Erbkrank (The Hereditary Defective)*, *The Eternal Jew (Der Ewige Jude)*, *Triumph of the Will (Triumph des Willens)* and *Olympia* employ. Here, in *I accuse (Ich Klage An)* the director, Wolfgang Liebeneiner attempts to get the audience to empathise with the main characters and in so doing so may understand the actions and motivations played out in the film. This clever propagandist tool leads the viewer to feel the dilemma of Thomas and possibly support his actions of euthanizing his wife but in a romantic, non-threatening way. Hanna's role is depicted to show here altruism and love of the fatherland. By encouraging the audience to relate to her, they accordingly may follow here example of putting her country's health before that of her own.

### Group Two Films:

#### ***Triumph of the Will (Triumph des Willens) (1935)***

The film begins with the national emblem of the golden eagle placed above the titles of the film. As with the previous film introductions (see above) this gives the film content the stamp of authority and truth. After the usual credits and introductory sign postings we see an aeroplane flying high above the clouds. As the clouds disperse we see that the plane is over Nuremburg (Frame 1). The aircraft, adorned with a swastika on its wings, is seen to cast a shadow of itself

over the houses and church steeples below, suggesting perhaps a form of superiority from above as it flies ever lower over the city.



Frame 1: 03:18

As the plane loses more altitude we see the beginnings of the Nuremberg rally with thousands of troops marching through the streets. Again, the aircraft casts a shadow over these soldiers. Frequent high shots are used to view the city from the sky suggesting a power from above. As the aircraft comes in to land the camera takes several medium shots of the awaiting crowds: smiling, waving and screaming. As the plane lands and opens its door the crowds are seen to use the Nazi salute and shout 'Heil' as Hitler emerges.

Hitler, now seen to be travelling by car to the stadium stands and salutes the cheering crowds (Frame 2). Various camera shots are used to encapsulate the



huge numbers of people waiting to see their Führer, whilst a close up shot from behind Hitler focuses on his hand as he salutes. This symbolic shot may suggest 'the hand of God' as the sun reflects upon it. Further, it allows an audience closeness and proximity to the Führer as the camera's lens focus intently upon him.



Frame 2: 05:19

As the car continues on its route the camera spans out to show medium shots of the streets strewn with various props such as Nazi flags, garlands and standards, followed by close ups of happy children as Hitler comes into their view (Frame 3). Emphasis appears to be made to the many church steeples

adorned with Nazi insignias, suggestive of religious collaboration with National Socialist policy or perhaps Nazism's superiority over the church.



Frame 3: 12:36

As Hitler arrives at the stadium the camera takes medium shots of the crowds, again saluting their Führer. As he enters the hotel where he is staying the camera takes a long shot of the many uniformed soldiers of the SS who are there to protect him. The camera slowly moves past these men paying particular attention to the Nazi insignias on their helmets, sleeves, lapels and belts. The camera now swings back to the hotel and rests on the window above the streets where we are led to believe Hitler now resides. Again, the camera pans out to a

wide shot of the crowds as they shout for Hitler to appear from the window. Their cheers are rewarded as the Führer greets his audience with smiles and salutes before the camera dims to the night-time scene of hundreds of torches held by the jubilant crowds standing outside Hitler's hotel.

The film now moves on to the morning after the night-time celebrations with broad shots of a city quietly waking up. Several long shots show the beauty of Nuremburg through a fine layer of mist before the sun comes out. This signification may represent Hitler as he wakes and greets his people as Head of State and the grandeur to which he appears to be held.

Images of the Hitler Youth and soldiers as they wash and shave in readiness for the day are taken together with close up shots of the food preparation which is being undertaken for the 'feast'. Such acts of cleanliness reinforce narratives of purity and superiority of the Volk. The camera now returns to the Hitler Youth where they are seen play-fighting and laughing. Men and women are additionally focused upon with their traditional Germanic costumes which, in the next scene, we see Hitler greeting. Such use of props reinforces the traditional, pre-modernistic approach frequently positively voiced by Hitler and hence celebrates Volkish togetherness and a metaphor for greatness and a continuation of the Nazi ideal.

The narrative changes to a more formal setting now as we see shots of the start of the sixth Party Congress with a large image of the insignia of the eagle. Various speakers address the congress voicing superiority and the greatness of Germany to a packed audience. For example, Julius Streicher (founder and publisher of *Der Stürmer* newspaper, which became a central element of the Nazi propaganda machine) states 'A people which does not hold with the purity

of its race will perish'; and Joseph Goebbels (Reich Minister of Propaganda) announces

May the bright flame of our enthusiasm never be extinguished. It alone gives the creative art of modern political propaganda its light and warmth. From the depths of the people it rose aloft. And into the depths of the people it must descend to find its strength there. It may be good to have power based on arms but it is better and more joyful to win and to keep the hearts of the people.

The next scene is a wide shot showing various forms of Nazi insignia as Hitler stands to address 52,000 uniformed workmen for the 'roll-call'. The workmen are seen to sing in harmony a patriotic song of working together for a greater Germany – they stand united for Hitler (Frame 4).



Frame 4: 36:28

Such visualisations convey the strength, order and magnitude of those displayed as representative of the in-group where metaphors of grandeur, enormity and

structure are illustrated in an attempt to empower and reinforce the superiority of the Germanic *race*.

Hitler now addresses these men by saying 'You represent a great ideal. Work will no longer be a dividing concept but one that unites us all. And in particular no one will live in Germany without working for our country. There is no other work. The whole nation will be educated by you. The time will come when no German may enter the community of our people without having first worked as one of the people.'

The next scene now returns to the Hitler Youth seen previously as Hitler tells them 'You are the flesh of our flesh and the blood of our blood.' The children respond with cheers, shouts and salutes. Wide camera shots show the excitement of the crowd and the pleasure presented on Hitler's face. As Hitler is driven off from the event close up shots of several children hands as they salute their passing Führer are emphasised.

Narratives, such as these, enhance the importance of the young to Hitler's 1000 year Reich. By focusing on the Hitler Youth it possibly speaks to the young as being an integral part of National Socialism and the pride implicit within this role.

Now we see a wide shot of hundreds of thousands of troops in a stadium with Hitler walking down the aisle to the cenotaph in complete silence (Frame 5). The only sound comes from the multitude of Nazi flags and standards as they flap in the wind. Such a scene is respectful of the slain soldiers of WW1. The camera zooms into a medium shot above a wave of flags held by soldiers – so many flags that the viewer can see nothing else but a wall of swastikas. The camera fades after which a military parade is seen to march with military precision and

synchronised formation, overlooked by Hitler and other top Nazi officials. Such imagery may connote power and stoic strength of the masses.



Frame 5: 1:01:19

The next scene sees a close up shot of Hitler as he shakes the hands of his troops with his right hand whilst holding the Nazi flag with his left hand (Frame 6). This very powerful image potentially connotes togetherness or loyalty to the Movement and Hitler as Head of State. However, this symbolic move of holding the swastika (otherwise known as the Hakenkreuz) is a form of consecration as it represents the blood stains from the fallen revolution. Hitler refers to the swastika as the flag of martyrs (Baird, 1990)). The scene fades out then opens with a medium shot of huge Nazi standards as the camera moves underneath them. Such is the enormity of these standards that the viewer may sense the

grandeur of the Nazi Movement as depicted in the size and number of insignias as these symbols appear to reach high into the sky.



Frame 6: 1:11:52

The film moves on now to see Hitler riding through fairly narrow streets with jubilant, cheering crowds surrounding him. The camera takes a long shot to show that Hitler's

car is followed by a number of other vehicles carrying other Nazi officials. Then the camera takes a broad shot to show military marching from air, land and sea forces as they file past the Führer in formation. Again, this may signify to the viewer the power and enormity behind National Socialism and that Nazism is

supported and celebrated by the majority of the population. By exaggerating and quantitatively signifying the number of followers and supporters of National Socialism it discourages any views to the contrary and therefore encourages the stray minority to join the mainstream as one cohesive collective.

The film ends with a long speech given by Hitler to his forces. They respond by singing the national anthem. The final shot shows the closure of the sixth Party Congress with an abundance of flags, standards, garlands and salutes.

### Section Conclusion

The narrative of *Triumph of the Will* (*Triumph des Willens*) appears firmly fixed on connotations of power and grandeur as the director (Leni Riefenstahl) makes full use of environmental, societal and militaristic framing to enhance a discourse of majesty of the fatherland and Hitler as the God-like saviour of the *Volk*.

Novel filmic methods were used effectively to encourage the viewer to feel a closeness to Hitler and to have a sense of belonging and a part of the awesome power to which they are presented. Belonging and being part of this historical epoch was the fundamental message of this film. Standing and fighting together, as one supreme master race.

### ***Olympia* (1938)**

(Disc 1: Festival of the Nations) - The film begins with the title: The 11<sup>th</sup> Olympic Games, Berlin, 1936, then a full screen image of the five Olympic rings as the Festival of the Nations is faded in. This is then faded out to be replaced with a visual of large rolling clouds as they move toward the viewer. The scene then



fades in images of Greek looking temples and other grandiose ruins and statues depicting ancient Gods (Frame 1).



Frame 1: 06:43

Such representations and metaphors may signify the sustainability of such structures and Gods as eternal, strong and enduring, a similar allegory used to symbolise the pure bred Aryan nationals. Towards the end of this scene we see Atlas (the mythical God who supported the heavens) being faded out and replaced with a German man holding what appears to be a celestial sphere (as Atlas apparently did). As he moves we see that it is not a sphere in his hand rather a discus. Rapid shots follow with a muscular javelin thrower running and

throwing his javelin as he goes. Other examples of male physical perfection are exemplified before the lens fades in with the agility and beauty of the female athlete. Groups of naked women are seen to dance in synchronicity before being faded out by a large flame. This flame begins the journey to the stadium holding the Olympic Games (Frame 2).



Frame 2: 12:08

The torch-bearers run through various historical scenes and times from ancient ruins, gradually running through modern towns and cities from across the world until it reaches Berlin. An image of a map fades into the visual as though travelling through the clouds. The clouds then gradually clear to a broad shot of

the Fatherland. Travel ends with a broad sky view of the Olympic stadium packed with thousands of excited onlookers. History is the primary narrative here emphasising the continuation of greatness, beauty and strength from one historical epoch to the one which is now being portrayed.

The next scene begins with subliminal bells which toll above the Olympic insignia of the five rings. The bells ring out loudly, gradually being replaced with the sound of cheering crowds below (Frame 3).



Frame 3: 15:06

Now we see the competitors as they enter the arena carrying their respective national flags. They are watched by the crowds who greet them with the Nazi

salute. As the German team enters there are huge cheers, and a close up shot of Hitler sees him smile with their arrival.

A close up shot now sees Hitler officially opening the eleventh Olympic Games. At the end of his proclamation the viewer sees a huge flag with the Olympic insignia raised and hundreds of white doves are released as a possible gesture of peace (Frame 4).



Frame 4: 19:48

Next the viewer is taken to the outside of the stadium to witness the arrival of the flame-bearer as he runs through the streets of Berlin amongst cheering crowds, church bells ringing and Nazi insignias bathing almost every available block of concrete. As he runs into the stadium the spectators stand and use the Nazi

salute to welcome him. Silence prevails as he lights the Olympic cauldron whereupon the spectators begin to sing the German National Anthem.

Opening with medium shots, the viewer now sees a variety of speakers as they address the crowds on the second day of this sports event. This is then followed with the initiation of the games: the male discus followed by scores of different sporting features. Unsurprisingly, more focus and film time is given to the German competitors than from other countries and especially loud cheers are heard when a German wins an event as is the response from Hitler, shown as close-up shots, as he is clearly seen to be enjoying their successes. A repetitive mise-en-scène continues.



Frame 5: 01: 51:41

The final event, the marathon, ends the Olympic Games with close up images of several competitors collapsing at the finishing line (Frame 5). Likely, this

narrative was used to illustrate the need to push oneself to the extreme to be successful and further validates the social Darwinism and Spenserian ethos of 'survival of the fittest'.

A broad shot of the whole stadium sees all of the athletes holding their respective flags and swinging them. This scene is then faded out to be replaced with the same bells tolling that we saw at the beginning of the film under the banner of the five Olympic rings. Fade out to end.

(Disc 2: Festival of Beauty) – Begins with the Olympic flags flying high in the wind, overwritten with the introductory title: 'The Festival of Beauty'.



Frame 6: 01:07

The first scene takes a medium shot of some small housing which sits next to a small stream, overgrown with acorn trees. The moon glistens on the ripples of



the water. Spider webs are seen to be covered with dew and beetles scurry through the damp grass (Frame 6). Light struggles to find a path through some dense trees as we see some male runners jogging along the waterway to a greater expanse of water where we see them nakedly running and splashing as they go (Frame 7). They enter a hut and shower before sitting in a steam bath. They leave the hut to jump into the river for a swim as the sun shines down on them. Such peaceful, environmental foci may serve as metaphors of intrinsic beauty, biological tranquillity and serenity represented by forms of natural and organic greatness.



Frame 7: 02:45

In the next scene we see other male competitors doing warm-up exercises and stretches in a yard. Emphasis is paid to their agility, fitness and musculature.

Now we see all the flags of the competing countries flying high above the stadium as the camera moves to a wide shot of the packed arena. The females from all the different nations now enter the scene. One after the other they march in, carrying their respective flags above their head. They are then followed by the male athletes. A medium shot follows, focusing on what appears to be a gymnast emphasising his ability to balance and stride. Other examples of male fitness follow with close and medium shots used to emphasise their muscle tone, strength and endurance (Frame 8).



Frame 8: 10:20



Frequently, shots are taken from ground level looking up to elevate the physical status of the sport men and women. Potentially, the higher the lens angle the higher the value of that person so personified.

Now we move to the yachting feature where we see the splendour of streamline yachts as they lie in readiness for the race. Flags abound the boats while the sun reflection bounces off the water onto the bows (Frame 9).



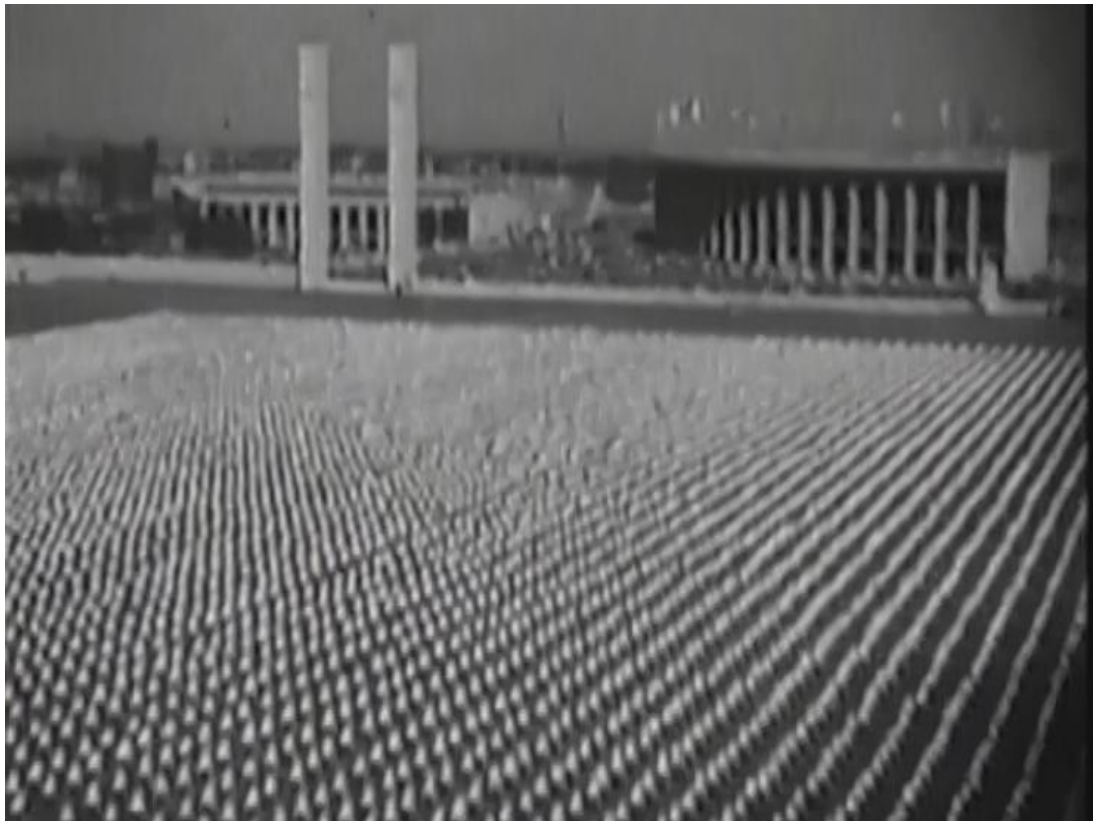
Frame 9: 15:26

As the camera pans out, a glimpse of a battle ship is seen in all her naval glory as though she stands and guards the smaller vessels. But she is not there to

protect, rather she is there to sound the start of the yachting race. First off is the one-man steered boats next, the two-manned boats, then finally the six-metre class. All are seen to do battle with the waves as man or women work in partisan with the natural environment.

The next scene follows a five kilometre pentathlon as athletes need to excel at a variety of sports beginning with horse riding and jumping. Here great emphasis is placed on the strength, fitness and musculature of the horses. Throughout this event greater reel time and emphasis is placed on Germany's representatives. Moreover, the camera angle comes from below to face upwards again to possibly attempt to elevate their individual worth. Other competitors are viewed at head level putting them at a lower physical status perhaps.

The following scene takes us to watch thousands of females as they fill the stadium whilst undertaking choreographed dancing (Frame 10).



Frame 10: 33:20

It is a very short scene, which could almost be viewed as considerably less newsworthy as watching the male athletes who take up noticeably more film time. The scene moves swiftly on to view a variety of events, all of which are male dominated.

The next scene sees a women's event in springboard diving. The music changes to a lighter, more feminine score. Again, this scene is kept short and followed on with a number of men's events.

The subsequent scene begins with the camera travelling through thick clouds until it reaches the Olympic stadium. Again, we see the large bells tolling which fades out to be replaced by a light show coming from the circumference of the arena. Several beams of light shine up to the skies and then the camera takes a sharp cut back to the bell. This in turn fades to be replaced with the Olympic cauldron. The camera moves closer and closer to the cauldron then fades to a multitude of international flags and biblical singing as backing.



Frame 11: 01:26:03

The flags are gradually bowed and the Olympic flag is lowered. The Olympic flame in the cauldron goes out and black smoke is seen to rise through the light show previously viewed (Frame 11). Fade to end.

### Section conclusion

*Olympia* is highly artistically and classically expressed and uses filmic methods never before used to orchestrate a discourse of the biographical history of the Gods and their direct relation to the *Volk*. In so doing validating the 'survival of the fittest' (Spencer, 1917) thesis previously discussed in Chapter One. Its whole ethos imprints physical superiority and the need to compete and win. This self-evolving dialogue serves as evidence of Germany as the master race (as they were the outright winners of the 11<sup>th</sup> Olympic Games) and their supposed genetic blood-line to the ancestral and eternal Gods.

### **Summary**

*Erbkrank (The Hereditary Defective)*, *The Eternal/Wandering Jew (Der Ewige Jude)* and *I Accuse (Ich Klage an)* use different techniques to illustrate their messages of cleansing the German social body. Their narratives use biological categories to simulate an apparent documentary reality with what seems to be a straightforward reproduction of social ontology. Yet, they offer no legitimate evidence of constructing what actually happens. Rather, by cataloguing the many *faces* of mental and physical disability and criminality in *Erbkrank (The Hereditary Defective)*, reminiscent of Todd Browning's 1932 horror film *Freaks*, and misrepresenting or ignoring other valid arguments such as palliative care and the use of emotion to overrule reason in *I Accuse (Ich Klage an)*, they bid to

persuade their audiences, either by renewed emphasis of socially accepted norms or by reinforcing the metaphors of rhetorical strategies. They enhance and encourage a fragmented society by removing and isolating that which is worthless (the out-group) whilst elevating and idealising those of particular genetic worth (the in-group), resulting in homogeneity, a normative state filled with the same uniformity of *Volkish* social values and ideals.

Evidence from the Security Services Report on Audience Reactions to *I Accuse* (*Ich Klage an*) (See Appendix 1) clearly identifies a positive and encouraging response as stated below:

All the reports to hand indicate that the film 'I Accuse' [emphasis in original] has aroused great interest in all areas of the Reich. In general it can be stated that with the help of extensive word-of-mouth publicity the film has been favourably received and discussed. Characteristic of the interest this film has provoked among the population is the fact that in many towns which had not yet seen it the film was being described - even by unsophisticated people - as one which simply had to be seen. The performances were generally enthusiastically received, and the film's content has actively stimulated people to think about it and has provoked lively discussion. As regards medical circles, a mostly positive response is reported to the questions raised by the film. Younger doctors in particular, apart from a few bound by religious beliefs, are completely in favour. Doubts are expressed among older doctors particularly, despite their agreement in principle. In many cases doctors see it as a mistake to publicise the issues openly. Many doctors consider that the decision to intervene and help a patient could be left entirely to the German doctor's sense of responsibility. In practice, this kind of mercy killing already exists. Many doctors are taking it upon themselves, in cases where there is no prospect at all of recovery and the patient is suffering severe pain, to increase the dosage of the appropriate drug and so affect a painless death.

Support from younger doctors comes as no great surprise given that they probably began their medical training at about the same time as National Socialists came into power. Medical students were required to stipulate their political affiliations prior to commencement of training and were a precondition of their suitability for the profession. Hence, only those holding with Nazi ideology were considered suitable.

Taking the average six years to complete training, they would have qualified at about the same time as the film's release. Further, it supports the ethos of the clinical gaze; giving greater power of clinicians ability to see the patient as an anatomical deterministic organism.

On the whole, then, if this document is deemed reliable the film served its propagandist purpose and resulted in a society supporting the mercy killing or assisted suicide of those deemed worthless:

The general approval finds its best expression in the words of the Major in the film: The state, which imposes a duty to die on us, must also concede us the right to die (Security Service (SD) 'Reports from the Reich', ND)

Hitler used medical discipline and population management, operating at the intersection of sexuality and biological determinism, to negatively express and instigate a eugenic policy. Such a policy allows for the identification of enemies as being outside of the population, whether they are to be found inside or outside the boundaries of the state, and thus licenses the killing of these people, or simply letting them die. If German social belief systems agreed with this construct, then many may have lived in constant fear of their own safety, their own social worth. Possibly, the safest course of action was to be seen to be active supporters of National Socialist policy. To be passive and/or silent may have bode a risky strategy given the weight of the sociopolitical collective.

The film *The Eternal/Wandering Jew (Der Ewige Jude)*, filmed a Jewish community housed in ghettos and thereby renders them, by default, as the out-group, as being psychologically and physiologically invisible so facilitating an eviction from forms of individual or collective consciousness or what Bauman terms 'moral sleeping pills' (1989:26) of abandonment. In abandoning individuals, the state does not merely put them in a sphere of indifference, but

rather leaves them 'exposed and threatened on the threshold in which life and law, outside and inside, become indistinguishable' (Agamben, 1998:7). To be banned is to be placed outside the juridical-political order that defines normalcy and thus puts a boundary between the ugly and the beautiful. Such boundaries serve to protect the Volk by cordoning off the vermin and entrapping them where they can do no harm.

*Erbkrank (The Hereditary Defective)* and *The Eternal/Wandering Jew (Der Ewige Jude)* use similar propaganda approaches, mirroring the thoughts and methodology of Hitler (see Chapter One), in that they both use explicit terms and metaphors in the narratives of the films. Little or no implicit is rendered valuable when voicing representative messages of stigma in the physically ill, mentally ill, criminals or Jews. Such constructs of stereotyped behaviours are simply shown and exaggerated to their full potential. Although some editing and mixing of reality with fiction is evidentially present when closely examined, the narrative attempts to demonstrate, in candid terms, the true nature and ugliness of the out-group with meanings of risk, contamination, impurity and biological inferiority.

Conversely, and probably because of the sensitivity of the subject matter, '*I Accuse*' (*Ich Klage an*) uses a different propagandist method, following Joseph Goebbels' approach of using implicit with drama (see Chapter One). The film instructs the audience into the moral dilemma associated with euthanasia but never is this term explicitly used. Instead, viewers hear 'deliverance' branded, clearly meaning the same thing but which is relative to, and commonly associated with religious doctrine. Thus, by utilising a closely associated expression of Christianity (in this case), it may give the audience a sense of

altruism when faced with the rights or wrongs of 'a gentle death' (see Chapter One), rather than narrating an egocentric tactic of murder with all the immoral and inhumane connotations which go with this. Further, propagandist messages conveyed to the audience relate to the victim (Hanna). By careful use of implied terms such as unselfish deeds and duty the viewer is instructed in the actions of a philanthropist, where killing oneself when faced with chronic illness is a benevolent and brave act for the betterment of the body politic, rather than a final selfish, immoral and illegal act used for escape and termination of self.

Group Two films herein reviewed: *Triumph of the Will* (*Triumph des Willens*) and *Olympia* conversely focus on the positivity of strength, power and purity of the individual and collective. They, in stark contrast to the previously negative samples in Group One (where testament propagates the need to rid such burdens) applaud such examples of greatness and positive eugenic principality as the way forward for world human civilisation and the New Germany.

*Triumph of the Will* (*Triumph des Willens*) focused on the strength and power of National Socialist militarisms by narrating and emphasising quantitative demonstrations of huge gatherings, shown supporting their Führer with pride and enthusiasm. Such visions may boycott any notions of inferiority, minority or displaced loyalty to Hitler and the Fatherland from the audience, and in so doing aligning and gathering all in-group members into the idealised bands of the Third Reich. The narrative is highly suggestive of portraying Hitler as God-like with the use of camera angles viewing him from below and upwards figuratively connecting him with *the heavens*, and the mise-en-scène which I suggest, intentionally depicts him as the saviour as he flies over Nuremberg, through the



clouds as his people below wait for his *coming*. Such iconically framed imagery, when presented to an audience, may reinforce notions of pride in their leader as their redeemer and rescuer from troubled times and a dignity in themselves as the narrative advances an ambience of togetherness, honour and conquest whilst prevailing with an aura of victorious jubilation.

*Olympia* cleverly and artistically converge biological purity and perfection with competitive ambition and success. It draws on antiquity to narrate messages of greatness and transfers this to those it captures on film. By doing so there is an implicit genetic line of superiority from one regime of truth to those we explicitly see as Olympians. Such connotated manifestations may seek to extol the virtues of health, fitness, and the beautification of the body whilst encouraging the need to succeed and the necessity to compete to survive.

Such organic approaches, whilst basic and fundamental exhibit the discernible yet probable instinctual prerequisites to Nazi cultural ideation. Moreover, by supplanting magnificent environmental scenes of nature with those of superior biological specimens of sportspeople, it likely unites humanity, and more specifically, the audience, into an ecosystem of conservationism and natural homeostasis.

All of the films discussed above tend towards Hitler's approach when using propaganda imagery in that the narrative should be simple, direct, unambiguous and repetitive. The only exception to this was the film *I Accuse (Ich Klage an)*. Here, a different style, more in keeping with Goebbels' views of the necessity to entertain or use subtleties to legitimise the subject it seeks to address, is applied.

This was likely because of a need to gain support for the euthanasia programme whilst narrating the theme with alternative terms of reference and thereby softening the focus to more socially acceptable mode of altruistic benevolence. But how effective were these instruments of propaganda with their agenda to biologically categorise, stigmatise and discriminate against particular populations whilst enhancing the beauty and purity of others? Many theorists contend that film was the most influential among the mass media in the Third Reich (for example Welch, 2001; Hoffman et al, 1996). It was also a means of artistic communication that Hitler used to greatest effect when bringing his political ideas to the mass audience. Compared to the emotional persuasiveness of moving pictures, radio and the press were arguably less successful in conveying and spreading the message of the new ideology. Within the context of Goebbels' and Hitler's propaganda strategy (see quote below) however, they were indispensable in any concerted and universal campaign of indoctrination, particularly in light of the fact that film lacked the up-to-datedness of radio and the daily newspaper (Hoffman et. al. 1996). Some of the most effective propaganda techniques work by misdirecting or distracting the public's finite attention away from important issues. It is important to read between the lines of these images and see what *isn't* being reported. In an era of Germany's enhanced and evolving information networks, distraction techniques could have been as effective as active propaganda. As is an awareness of deliberately placed misinformation that is repeated, as Hitler instructed, with the hope that people will believe it if it is repeated often enough:

The receptive powers of the masses are very restricted, and their understanding is feeble. On the one hand, they quickly forget. Such being the case, all effective propaganda must be confined to a few bare essentials and those must be expressed as far as possible in

stereotyped formulae. These slogans should be persistently repeated until the very last individual has come to grasp the idea that has been put forward (Hitler, 1969:159).

Before moving on to the final chapter, a brief review of the research questions raised in Chapter Two is in order to see how the findings of this chapter can be applied:

*Question 1: To what extent, and how, did the metaphors of health and illness and public health (e.g. appeals to cleansing the social body) inform propaganda films produced between 1933 and 1945?*

The immediacy of the use of the Racial and Political Office's emblem of two horses' heads, signifying fine breeding and purity, in *Erbkrank (The Hereditary Defective)*, *The Eternal/Wandering Jew (Der Ewige Jude)* and *I Accuse (Ich Klage an)*, or the eagle in both *Triumph of the Will (Triumph des Willens)* and *Olympia* instantly directs the audiences comprehension of what is to follow. Lewin et. al. (1939:22) tells us that such official codes can have a marked effect on 'the atmosphere in the group, the members' satisfaction and their output'. Placing this emblem at the beginning of the films then corresponds with the typical autocratic treatment experienced in other pertinent groups such as the family, at this time. Autocracy essentially involves the issuing of orders as opposed to democratic or laissez-faire leadership which tend to debate and give voice on an individual basis. Autocratic officialdom leaves no room for individual debate. It focuses more on the collective and drives the in-group to conform towards the established and uncontested goals of social evolution and progress. Essentially, then, the motives and attributions implicit in the storyline are purposively there to lead the audience into making the *correct* choices. But of course, there are no real choices under an authoritarian leadership. Audiences are therefore respected sufficiently to allow them to share the objectivity of the

biopolitical messages implied but only as much as these messages *direct* them to the guided assumptions and philosophies on which they base their ethos. It is a form of what Milgram termed 'obedience to authority':

There is a difference between obedience and conformity although both involve the abdication of personal responsibility... Conformity is the going along with one's peer group whilst obedience is accorded to a person in authority in a hierarchal situation (1974:184).

Immediately, then, the audience may have sensed a need to *go along with* or conform to the in-group discourse. This would allow, to some extent, a moral detachment from ethical dilemmas and thereby alibiing, or psychologically defending themselves against difficult or emotive positions which were to be viewed throughout Group One films, but more particularly towards the end of the films *The Eternal/Wandering Jew (Der Ewige Jude)* and *I Accuse (Ich Klage an)*. *Erbkrank (The Hereditary Defective)* focuses on metaphors illustrating the innocence of the child as victims and receivers of the infected germ line by introducing some sense of pity. It does this by parading a catalogue of specimens typically displaying overtly animal-like behaviours and unfamiliar facial and bodily expression whilst at the same time regularly supervised by their carers: the doctors and nurses. By ensuring that a medic is frequently in the same frame as the disabled child it denotes to the viewer that these youngsters are cared for by professionals yet connotes these professionals as distant, somehow abstracted from their charges. This then feeds into the biopolitical assumption of within yet without, as medics are screened as observers of the institutionalised impurity rather than hands-on caring for those so afflicted.

Further denotative messages of *madhouse* and *prison* challenge the mad-bad disparity by attempting to categorise them all as one non-conformist group which is further endorsed by the symbolic signs of prison yard type exercise routines.

By biologically determining the criminal it sets antisocial actions on a par with somatic illness and genetic transference, in so doing framing all forms of antisocially condemned conditions as contaminated and taboo. By enhancing the differential between the in-group and the out-group, using such measures, it further clarifies and frames the boundaries into which the *Volk* place their valued stereotypifications of self and Other. The clearer the social construction of the boundary becomes, the less chance of undesirables finding a way into the *Volk*, putting at risk the genetic *superiority* of those within from those without. Discourses such as these serve to repeatedly annex *defective* people from the ideals of *Volkish* purity, health and productivity and conversely gain support for ridding the State of its feeble-minded sector, as clearly displayed in the imagery of *Erbkrank (The Hereditary Defective)* and *The Eternal/Wandering Jew (Der Ewige Jude)*.

Diverging from the prison yard to the metaphors of the barley fields of the Fatherland, iconic images of idealised Germans further enhance their worth and purity as they weed the fields of the lands. Weeds here are clearly connotated to the previous institutionalised scenes, directing the audience away from any polysemic potentiality. Instead, the sign of the weeds are metaphorically used to the ideologically preferred meaning of impurity, ballast and feeding off the Fatherland.

*I Accuse (Ich Klage an)* follows an entirely different public health message. Instead of focusing on the status of the institutionalised group as discussed above, here the significance is drawn to individual health preventative strategies as illustrated by Hanna's disabling and progressive pathology. The nexus of this

propaganda rests on the legality or illegality of euthanasia and the implicit power of the medical fraternity with such an undertaking.

The careful use of a quixotic discourse feeds the viewer with regular messages of affection, tenderness and devotion and thereby sets the mise-en-scène as sentimental and maudlin. It does this in an attempt to guide the audience into the preferred meanings of compassionate and altruistic interventions.

The relational links between the characters and the audience may have enabled the viewer both individually and collectively to compare themselves with those who they saw. They were able to measure themselves socially, emotionally and intellectually and thereby boost a sense of in-group mutuality whilst establishing the motivational need to exclude those stigmatised with a variety of differing marks.

Moreover, with *I Accuse (Ich Klage an)* the facilitation for mutual understanding which enables the audience to *feel* what the characters feel injects the audience into the cinematic frame of reference. This frame of reference in turn influences the viewer as they adjust their sense of identity, their thoughts and behaviours to match the collectively defined attributes of their social group (Goffman, 1963). Wherever there is a high degree of collective conscience, then there will be less behavioural deviance and as such, social disorder. This order is synonymous with cohesion, consensus, reciprocity, stability, harmony and persistence (Eitzen et al, 1993). These groups then are regarded as social systems composed of interdependent parts, which are linked in a boundary maintaining whole. There emerged an empathic bond, an intersubjectivity, which enabled viewers to experience the character(s) as oneself. Not only may this have protected against harming in-group members – after all, the in-group *is* the self - but it may also

have allowed the audience to vicariously experience characters thoughts and feelings in constructing a sense of who one is (Goffman, 1963).

After the establishment and positive association of Hanna to the relating viewers, then, various physiological and pathological constructs are correlated to Hanna's husband as connotative signs of *medical-man*; *scientist*; and *disease*. When signified with Thomas' title of *professor* it further denotes him as a professional who is proclaimed to be self versed in, a teacher and practitioner of, and an authority in, the biomedical sciences. Such decoding may facilitate the viewer with an esteemed and empathetic reading when later on he euthanises his wife. It sets up a normative convention which specifically directs the audience to support, in this case, patient-assisted suicide.

Subsidiary to the main storyline is the story of a baby who Dr Lang delivers to a proletariat family which is diagnosed as having meningitis. The story of this child is used as a counter-argument to assist the audience to come to the right decision later on in the film. Images of sadness, despair, disappointment and sacrifice are all shown with effect to justify the curtailing of *life unworthy of life*, as this infant is nursed and medicated to maintain its burdensome hold on the parents and wider society. Frequent innuendo is used to implicitly invoke the need to end the suffering of this defenceless newborn. Metaphors, changing the status of this individual from child to *idiot* and *creature* serve to further polarise and enhance the division from the in-group to the out-group by dehumanising her where no form of comparison can take place. Further, the introduction of the experimental rat used in attempting to replicate Multiple Sclerosis and find a cure for Hanna advances the discourse with pity ('poor animal'). Hanna, akin to the experiences of the mouse and the disabled child, need not live life in a body

contorted and burdened with disease and suffering. Instead, the merciful deed of deliverance advances not only the physical and psychological removal of pain but peaceful death in an honourable and dignified aura of beneficence to the state. Hanna is clearly afraid of losing her social status of a person of average citizenship or someone of particular genetic worth. Therefore she is enacting a woman who, facing a future of physical and mental disability is willing and prepared to pre-empt the social stigma of antisocial with a preventative strategy of abnegating her life and not becoming a burden to her husband and the body politic. She detaches herself from life because, seeing no goal to which she may attach herself, she feels useless and purposeless. In so doing the film may inspire its viewers to follow the same altruistic actions should similar pathological situations arise: both Hanna and the audience have been trained in renunciation and an unquestioning abnegation for the good of the state, with the philanthropic actions and reactions of the gate keepers of the *Volk*.

Metaphors of health used in Group Two films differed dramatically to those in Group One in that they focused on the beautification and quantification of the in-group. Typically, the metaphors illustrated in the imagery of *Triumph of the Will* (*Triumph des Willens*) and *Olympia* signified the idealised Germanic which viewers can easily relate to, and comprehend the preferred meanings implicit in all of the images herein analysed. Care is taken to portray positivity in this media where no negative connotations should be availed. By silencing all forms of negativity it reduces the psychological and sociological associations implicit with such formations.

Purity is frequently encoded in pure bred horses as is the Fatherland which is regularly framed with significance to its beauty and magnificence. This is



especially apparent in *Triumph of the Will* (*Triumph des Willens*) and *Olympia: Festival of Beauty*. Such magnificence is further reproduced in human forms of perfection conveying codes to the homeostasis of sacred health. Such was this expression of environmental as well as human cleanliness that several images show unspoiled, unpolluted landscapes of rolling hills and waterways as a means of illustrating the unadulterated greatness of the Fatherland. In keeping with Hitler's preferred tactic of using propaganda, a repetitive mise-en-scène was used to orchestrate a vision of sameness, a vision which entirely focused on the genesis of, and continuation to greatness, metaphorically enacted with images of stoic masses of military combatants (in *Triumph of the Will*), or transference of god-like virtues of Olympic competitors (in *Olympia*). In doing so, the propaganda narrative speaks of the need to proactively seek out challenges of the self to gain and establish the beautified and stalwart principality of eugenic perfection and *Volkish* idealism. Examples of public health initiatives, instigated for the in-group, such as the anti-smoking campaigns, sexual health programmes and healthy eating, all serve to further exemplify attempts to enhance the biopolitical and societal standing of continued health improvement.

*Question 2: Why were Jews and the hereditarily diseased populations, as opposed to others, selected for eugenic and thanatopolitical actions?*

*Erbkrank (The Hereditary Defective)*, and to a lesser extent *I Accuse (Ich Klage an)*, focus on forms of physically and mentally disabled peoples as *useless eaters* whilst *The Eternal/Wandering Jew (Der Ewige Jude)* concentrates on stigmatised criminals and, together, attempts to stereotypify them as one group of non-conformists who, due to genetic heritability, carry and suffer from feeble-mindedness. By bridging the gap between the physically/mentally ill and the criminal so reducing them all to one construct of *useless eater*, facilitates the

formation of a clearer and more distinguishable label. This biopolitical strategy enhances the genetic standpoint of *like father, like son* mentality where defective genes whether contaminated by physical, mental or criminal tendency can be passed on in the germ line. This is illustrated in many image frames of *Erbkrank* (*The Hereditary Defective*) and *The Eternal/Wandering Jew* (*Der Ewige Jude*). Some frames show, quite clearly, an individual suffering from chronic forms of disability, some show the intensity of an individuals' bizarre behaviour when suffering from a delusional state, others typify the stereotyped figure of a criminal with his sinister Jew-like characteristics. Yet interestingly the frame inclusion of individuals appearing entirely normal confuses the viewer and begs the question *what ails this person?* It is this very questioning which is pertinent here. It conveys messages to the viewer that *I too could be so stigmatised*. Thus, the films serve not just to clarify and reduce the amalgam of pathologies to one distinct genetic condition; it further suggests a national on the edge of paranoia, willing and able to take whatever steps are necessary to secure the health of the *Volk*.

As the audience viewed these films so they may both have individually and collectively weighed up their social identity and worth. They would have understood their world by referring individual objects and people in the films in their heads to the general classificatory schemes into which, according to their culture, they fit. In other words, they would have used typifications which produce meaning to what is seen in a society driven by stigmatising processes, or as Dyer further suggests 'we assign him/her to the membership of different groups, according to class, gender, age group, nationality, race, sexual preference and so on' (Dyer, 1977:14). After which the audience would *split*

themselves from the abhorrent images in the films, particularly so in the slaughtering images in *The Eternal/Wandering Jew*. Essentially, they may have divided themselves, as normal and acceptable, from the abnormal and unacceptable (e.g. the criminal) in a bid to facilitate a form of boundary between the in-group (the audience) and the out-group (the feeble-minded). Boundaries, according to Douglas 'must be clearly delineated and so stereotypes, one of the mechanisms of boundary maintenance, are characteristically fixed, clear-cut and unalterable' (1966 p: 141).

*Erbkrank (The Hereditary Defective)* speaks to the audience through the lens of biomedical science. It legitimates the cataloguing of what could be considered almost pornographic imagery set not solely to inform but also to disguise voyeuristic tendency of the repetitive visualising of naked, vulnerable people in a situation where there is no escape. For the victims trapped in this situation there is only compliance or submission. For the viewer they watch under the guise of biopolitical apathy, shrouded and bathed in the discourses of stigma, deviancy, defilement and taboo (Douglas, 1966). The spectacle of the other resonates with ambiguous pleasure where the subjects within the film are overtly used as *proof* of genetic and heritable risk and thus the objects of the medical gaze and the authentic manifestations of feeble-mindedness and risk. The preoccupation with marking difference and the pathologised representations of otherness reduced these filmed individuals to nature where the signifier was their body. Read like a text, their bodies spoke of living evidence of an irreversible difference between them and us. Further, they are represented and observed through a series of binary oppositions such as primitive, not civilised and therefore compared to wild beasts like the ape (as in scene one) as signifiers of their place in the universal

scheme of things. Through the lens of the camera, focus was drawn to a fragmented element of the individual which served to dismantle the subject and therefore disassemble him or her into *fetishised* parts of the biological atlas. Frequently the viewers' gaze is displaced from images of nakedness and total inability to defend one's self, such as the scene where a patient is forcibly tube fed, to the disturbed and physically contorted body parts of the physically and mentally disabled. Bhabha explains this process by observing that:

It is a non-repressive form of knowledge that allows for the possibility of simultaneously embracing two contradictory beliefs, one official and one secret, one archaic and one progressive, one that allows the myth of origins, the other that articulates difference and division (1986:14).

It is suggested, then, that a form of fetishism was observed whereby viewers were able to watch this catalogue of 'pornographic' imagery under the gaze of scientific positivism. It facilitated forms of pleasure to view such material as dangerous or forbidden and provided the audience with an *alibi* which allowed the observers to go on looking while disavowing the sexual nature of their gaze. It fulfilled an ambivalent desire to be satisfied whilst at the same time conditioning the in-group against all that is biopolitically and genetically dangerous. What was declared to be different, hideous, primitive, and deformed was at the same time being enjoyed and lingered over because it was strange. Such genetic heritability is narrated throughout the films *Erbkrank* (*The Hereditary Defective*) and *The Eternal/Wandering Jew* (*Der Ewige Jude*) where children were deemed as either blameless or under their parental influence, but adults were castigated as immoral, worthless and dangerous animals or vermin. Such discourses serve to separate the non-conformists from the *Volk* by further

validating their contention by frequent use of monetary signs or rats to connote the infective status of Jews.

The narrative was careful not to adopt any one particular form of medical intervention to eliminate these vectors of disease. Rather, by contending that these individuals were the carriers of impurity, it remained an unanswered medical burden to rid society of its *useless eaters* by either the removal of the uterus or the cauterisation of a vas deferens (following eugenic principles), or the killing of the host itself (following thanatopolitical principles) with the Final Solution to the Jewish Question.

Similar but additional paradoxes were raised in *I Accuse (Ich Klage an)* where focus was predominantly on a woman carrying a progressive illness and a newborn baby diagnosed with meningitis, congenital blindness and deafness. Both of these characters were used as exemplars to typify all forms of degeneracy which required removal, either voluntarily or by medical deliverance, from the body politic.

Conversely, *Triumph of the Will (Triumph des Willens)* and *Olympia* focus on all that is positive of the individual and collective body. They do this by attempting to validate the films messages by grounding them in ancient history as a means for progression and sustainability of all that is worthy and good in human form.

*Question 3: How were biological categories used to justify policies that discriminated against particular groups?*

Biological categories were used in four main ways to justify discriminatory policies. These can be identified as:

Productivity – *Erbkrank (The Hereditary Defective)* and *The Eternal/Wandering Jew (Der Ewige Jude)* explicitly coded non-conformists as unable or unwilling to

work for the state. They were portrayed as indignant or lazy animals, sitting or sleeping on the grass, doing nothing to contribute to society. Moreover, in *Erbkrank* they were causing work for doctors and nurses who had to rush about caring for these inmates, resulting in a narrative of wasted time and effort, where medics' time could be more productively used elsewhere on more deserving cases.

Social Housing – Great emphasis and contrast was made in *Erbkrank* (*The Hereditary Defective*) and *The Eternal/Wandering Jew* (*Der Ewige Jude*) on the housing situatedness of those institutionalised, those housed in ghettos and those of the *Volk*. Effective use of montage enhanced the differential so that the viewer arrived at the preferred meaning of injustice and inappropriate housing or the preferred squalor of the Jews. Children of proletariat families were seen to be playing in filth whilst disabled children lay in the sunshine in a safe, clean environment. Such narratives are used to invoke an emotional response and in so doing give justification and support for radical biopolitical change.

Costs – This was a poignant rationale to justify change of the status quo. Focusing on the financial burden of these *useless eaters* clearly sent dominant signs to a society struggling from national financial crises. Additionally, by introducing the concept of Jew as infiltrating both banking and political centres of the world, sent messages of anti-Semitism validated with a need to change social order in these quarters. This was probably the easiest and most dramatic of foci to introduce social imbalances between those within and those without. It could not possibly fail to find receptivity within the *Volk* who were striving and yearning for a better Germany at this time.

Ideology – This played a pivotal role in the films previously identified. Repetition (as suggested by Hitler in 1936) was used to good effect in all the films, with the exception of *I Accuse (Ich Klage an)*, to enhance and legitimate unequal social power relations. Yet, the consumption of particular goods, (in this case food, shelter, clothing, warmth etc.) by the non-conformists leads to potential audience confusion. How is it, they may have asked, that *useless eaters* consume such valuable goods or, how can the Jews acquire so much wealth and power when the *Volk* is unable to do so? I would suggest that this dichotomy was deliberately paradigmatically signed to enhance social stratification into an ‘us’ and ‘them’ ethos, where antagonisms grew as those within experienced a challenge to their social status. It is almost as though this opposing convention was intentionally set up to aggravate members of the *Volk* into hegemonically aligning themselves with justifiable eugenic and thanatopolitical policies and thereby redistributing the out-groups’ power over consumption to that of the in-group.

*I Accuse (Ich Klage an)* uses a different approach to reinforce Nazi ideology. It should be remembered that the production of this film was, in part, due to the request of medics to gain societal support for the euthanasia programme (as evidenced in Appendix 1) and once established gave them absolute power of those who lived and those who died. Instead of using antagonisms to gain the preferred reading it uses biological categories in an empathetic stance. In so doing, the audience is able to relate to the narrative and the social identities depicted within it as they move from health to illness, to death. The medical interventions portrayed in this film question the ethical dilemma facing doctors (both then and now) when treating individuals who are experiencing progressive illnesses: should euthanasia be legalised? The film sets out to challenge the

status quo of Section 216 of the German Criminal Code which at the time of this films' release makes it a punishable offence to assist another person to kill themselves or to euthanise another.

Throughout the film signs and metaphors, such as deliverance, are used to help the audience to create a new social acceptance of homicide and suicide and to conclude that this piece of legislation needs to be changed. Further, at every given opportunity, it attempts to enhance the social status of the medical fraternity as 'people of noticeable worth' and encourages an unquestioning authority and power of the doctor as they endeavour to justify thanatopolitical actions when faced with patients who are experiencing terminal or chronic illnesses. As Williamson (1978:22) suggests when she discusses the role of the audience when asked to create meaning, she states 'the receiver is only a creator of meaning because he/she *has been called upon to be so* [emphasis in original]'.

Finally, the images from *Triumph of the Will* (*Triumph des Willens*) and *Olympia* use positive reinforcement of the in-group, to biologically categorise the *Volk* as supreme. Conversely, by silencing the out-group as though nothing of them exists, no social comparisons can take place, no social referents are established. Silencing the out-group, then, does not necessarily stop self-affirmation, nor arguably should it. What it does achieve is the acceptance and sense of *Volkish* social congruity within the majority, whilst the minority, the out-group, is biologically and socially castrated from the mind-set of the body politic.

We now turn to Chapter Five where the conclusions of this study are advanced.



## CHAPTER FIVE

### **Conclusions: Traversing the Frontiers of Social Inquiry**

#### **Introduction**

The aim of this final chapter is to reflect on the contributions of the study and the efficacy of the new socio-filmic model, bring together the arguments advanced, discuss the implications and suggest future avenues for research.

This enquiry has drawn on National Socialist propaganda imagery to investigate the governance of eugenic and thanatopolitical ideas and ideology in the modern era, using Nazi Germany as a case study. By developing and applying my new socio-filmic model (see Chapter Three) to this investigation it has assisted in highlighting various themes and tropes frequently expressed in the media, and therefore has been a valuable methodological tool for exploring meanings and metaphors used in propaganda imagery. This has resulted in the formation of three identifiable issues: The subversion of medicine, the manipulation of scientific theories to meet political ends, and the effective submersion of metaphors of health and disease in Nazi propaganda imagery.

To provide direction to the enquiry three research questions were proposed in Chapter Two. These questions will be considered here in the light of the finished investigation. For ease of reference, they are:

**Question One:** *To what extent, and how, did the metaphors of health and illness and public health (e.g. appeals to cleansing the social body) inform propaganda films produced between 1933 and 1945?*

**Question Two:** *Why were Jews and the hereditarily diseased populations, as opposed to others, selected for eugenic and thanatopolitical actions?*

**Question Three:** *How were biological categories used to justify policies that discriminated against particular groups?*

Before moving on to the specifics, we begin by looking at the contributions of the thesis which incorporates brief summaries of the major themes encountered in the investigation. This is then followed with a final more general conclusion. The chapter ends with a reflection, highlighting any limitations of the research and suggests other recommendations for further studies.

### The Politicisation of Medicine

The first theory suggests that medicine did not become politicised after National Socialism took office in Germany in 1933, as has previously been assumed. Rather, it moved from a humanitarian ethic of individual care to care of the State as early as the 1890s (pp 24-35). This is an interesting find as it may suggest that some historians and others, in a position to academically inform, either drew the wrong conclusions or attempted to villainise an already infamous political entity. But what benefit could this possibly have on those who accept that it was National Socialism responsible for politicising medical experts? I tentatively suggest that this may have been formulated during a period of backlash when the world was learning of Nazi wartime atrocities. Such findings were predominately voiced in the early years following the end of the WWII conflict. Discourses at this time tended to follow a similar negative narrative of demonising any and all connections to this political epoch. To otherwise suggest that the politicisation of medicine occurred before Hitler took power is tantamount to implying that this had nothing to do with National Socialism, instead something else was occurring which facilitated the need to change the doctors' focus of care from the

individual to care of the state. It should be remembered that Germany was not alone in following the eugenic principal. Several industrial nations followed this science of human manipulation of the gene pool, yet still today, we tend to focus our attention on Germany for instigating such biopolitical policies and actions, whilst ignoring the part we also played in such stigmatising and unethical deeds of vulnerable groups. Just as the Nazi tended to scapegoat and stigmatise their vulnerable groups and undervaluing their potential contributions to society, so has some post-WWII authorities inflicted the same mentality onto Nazi Germany. As stated by Justice Jackson's assistant during the Nuremberg War Crimes Trials, was it not just a matter of the winners of the war enacting vengeance on the losers? On what ethical or justifiable grounds did we (the British, French, Russians and Americans) have for criminalising the biopolitical actions of some German medical experts (in the Nuremberg Medical War Crimes Trials) when those same countries who were condemning such behaviour chose to follow the same eugenic pathway themselves?

Here is found a sanctioned body of medical expertise empowered to make authoritative judgements on behalf of society (pp 24-35). In particular, within modernity the medical profession was viewed, both by Western societies, and by itself, as the protector of the health and vigour of the collective (pp 24-35). Eugenics, having allied itself with the science of genes (pp 24-35) acquired the respect accorded to the scientific by modernity. Eugenic pronouncement moved, under the influence of modernity and Nazi ideology from the subjective: *this person does not seem to have the required potential to become useful to society* to the scientific and expertly objective: *this person will not make the grade and therefore is expendable*. Such a move then

highlights a repositioning of the medical fraternity as it moved to act upon theories of racial and biological inferiority to the central ideological premise of the normalisation of the superiority of the *Volk*. Eugenic science was subverted for ideological and political advancement of the state and therein began a manipulation not just of the medical profession itself but further, the manipulation of eugenic foundations into the development of thanatopolitical interventions as medical and political elites formed a symbiotic relationship aimed at cleansing the Fatherland (pp 28 and 32). This then draws us to the second feature of the overall argument that: theories of racial and biological inferiority predetermined the absolute rejection of any scientific foundation.

#### Scientific Theory Manipulation

Alongside this concern for normalisation of *Volkish* ideals and the symbiotic relationship between these two elite groups has led to what Bauman (1989:79) has described as a 'garden culture'. In such a culture, the impetus is towards maintaining order and normality by a process of *weeding-out* the unwanted and disvalued. It is perhaps worth reconsidering the time frame of science at this time. Both before and during Hitler's reign of Germany science was in the grasp of a new post-enlightenment philosophy. This eugenic philosophy (Galton, 1883) had an enormous impact throughout the industrial world as a way of manipulating and thereby improving those countries willing to take up such an approach to excise those vulnerable (and unwanted) groups from society. It was seen as a fashionable and exciting idea which could result in a fast, effective way of purifying the body politic and improving the quality of those left to breed. Such social evolutionary theories expounded on the

effectiveness of riding society of its useless eaters throughout the world and it remained a popular tool for several countries for years after the end of WWII.

To continue with Bauman's (1989:79) horticultural metaphor, the force of the evidence is that eugenic thinking in Nazi Germany has equated to that of a head gardener: an *expert* whose function was to tend the societal *garden*. To this end, German eugenicists consistently sought to identify the *weeds* and to devise mechanisms for their quarantine and/or removal, not just eugenically but importantly, thanatopolitically as well (pp 32-35).

Whilst material issues such as cost and utility remained of concern, there was also a non-materialist aesthetic concern for normality. This led to non-conformists being euthanised simply on the basis of some detected or inferred stigmatic difference, even if nothing was known about the bodily or behavioural portents of the observed deviation from the norm. In Bauman's garden, if one is not demonstrably a flower then the supposition is that one must be a weed. And just as weeds can be eugenically and systematically excluded from the Fatherland, their extermination is scientifically warranted given the bio-risk of potential genetic contamination. Such a thanatopolitical philosophy was without any strands of scientific foundation. If concern for the purity of the *race* was the prerequisite for eugenic interventions then euthanising those deemed *useless eaters* including the young and the old (who presented as no genetic risk) was unnecessary. Instead it was compassionately enacted in Germany as a benevolent racial hygiene intervention to clear the garden and make room for the aesthetically and culturally superior *Volk* (pp 31-35). Such aesthetics leads us to the final

argument, that of the effectiveness of using representations and metaphors in Nazi propaganda imagery.

### Metaphors of Health and Disease in Propaganda Imagery

Evidence has clearly shown how both Hitler and Goebbels advocated toward this form of indoctrination of the in-group. And, as previously stated in Chapter One, although they differed in their approaches, Hitler with his objective and direct style and Goebbels favouring a subtler, more entertaining tactic - they both contended that moving imagery was the edifice for constructing and legitimising National Socialist ideology and that the image of the Nazi movement was absolutely crucial to establishing *truths* both domestically and further afield. Such importance I now share, given the completion of this study in so far as imagery is indeed a powerful and malleable resource which can be manipulated in any way which the propagandist seeks to address. Although this research has not focused on audience reception of the films, it has shown how such metaphors and representations can be designed to send strong ideological propositions to the viewers. By assimilating fiction with fact, the propagandists sought to orchestrate the dissemination of bold assumptions and exaggerations to aggravate negativity towards the out-group whilst magnifying all that was deemed worthy of the in-group. This was a very persuasive method and one which is frequently seen to occur in propaganda material.

Imagery, as argued above, is a powerful yet under-used resource in sociological inquiry. This research has highlighted the benefits of utilising such media and how this has resulted in the richness of its findings as

discussed above with the politisation of medicine and the manipulation of scientific theory. Both of these areas support previous findings but do so after developing them with a new resource, namely moving imagery. By developing my new socio-filmic model which assists in the identification of metaphors, tropes and meanings it may ameliorate methodological advancement in sociohistorical examinations of the future. Moreover, the socio-filmic model has a broad application not just for the benefit of social sciences but also a commercial value as well.

We now turn to the research questions to establish, how propagandist media representations and metaphors fed into this system of racial and thanatopolitical governance in the German State.

**Question One:** *To what extent, and how, did the metaphors of health and illness and public health (e.g. appeals to cleansing the social body) inform propaganda films produced between 1933 and 1945?*

Discursive formations regularly focused upon labels which, for example, connotated financial burden, *weeds*, murderer, idiocy or contagion. Any, it would seem, that would heighten the potential of moral panic within society and in so doing elevating public outcries for action. Such socially constructed groupings constitute a crucial part of human identity, as they provide a sense of meaning, solidarity, and belonging to the in-group (Mannheim, 1952) and in doing so therefore elevate the worth of those so idealised (Goffman, 1963)

Such actions appear to be based on the premise that those so stigmatised were morally detrimental to the fabric of society, where social order was threatened by diseased groups as they polluted the very essence of human worth with their seeds of *warped* and diseased progeny. Such immorality

became medicalised where all forms of genetic or behavioural traits fell under the biopolitical scope of dirty dysgenic classes. Just as dirt is 'matter out of place' (Douglas 1966:41), so too are marginal beings portrayed as a chaotic and dangerous source of contamination that threatens the purity of the social order. Group solidarity and cohesion, in turn, are affirmed through symbolic and physical acts of eliminating these contaminants (Goffman, 1963) whilst at the same time denoting prime examples of beauty, fitness and health as the normalised status quo of the in-group.

Actions then called for the removal of marginal beings into 'boundary systems' (Douglas, 1966) where the elimination of these contaminants could take place. Such forms of biological life can be expunged legally when they are moved away from the main body of society into camps or other institutionalised settings. Essentially, this results in a place where no laws govern the behaviour which takes place in such institutions. Medical experts and carers then, have no legal obligations to follow and can therefore practice their own form of benevolence for the good of the in-group (Mannheim, 1952). As Agamben illustrates by suggesting that such heterotopias:

Allowed for the physical elimination not only of political adversaries but of entire categories of citizens who for some reason could not be integrated into the political system (2005:3).

These observations lead to the first finding that metaphors were both varied and extensive in both the German and wider context. Such pronouncements had an identifiably modern effect on the character and standing of eugenic and thanatopolitical practices.

**Question 2:** *Why were Jews and the hereditarily diseased populations, as opposed to others, selected for eugenic and thanatopolitical actions?*



Stigmatised groups deemed subnormal were regularly stereotyped with the label *feeble-minded* so as to ensure all forms of deviance had no escape and to reduce any distinctions between genetic and behavioural abnormality (pp 31-35).

Rationales for eugenic and thanatopolitical governance characteristically followed negative messages of genetic transmission of faulty genes, largely responsible for degeneracy, low moral character and a lack of robustness. This it was argued brought about *herds* of defectives, all without the ability to be productive citizens whilst at the same time mating like animals and infecting the purity of the *Volk*. The feeble-minded then, were regarded by the middle classes as a *race* apart, a *race* who by their own acts and omissions led to their own eradication. By taking this heritability stance of such reproductive traits, it deflected any attention away from social factors and kept the discourse firmly fixed on Darwinian and Spencerian ideas, whilst within the sanctity of the medical clinic such restrictive scientific doctrines were augmented to include an *anything goes* mentality with murderous, thanatopolitical outcomes (pp 31-35).

Such stereotyped labelling personifies deviancy in its many forms (Goffman, 1963). Moreover, it symbolically fixes boundaries and excludes everything which does not belong. It sets up a frontier between the normal and the deviant and facilitates the binding together of the in-group into one subjective community whilst exiling the out-group as the *Other*. As Douglas argues:

Whatever is out of place is considered as polluted, dangerous, taboo. Negative feelings cluster around it. It must be symbolically excluded if the purity of the culture is to be restored (1966:55).

To further enhance the social differential I suggest the film '*Erbkrank*' (*The Hereditary Defective*, 1936) and '*The Eternal/Wandering Jew*' (*Der Ewige Jude*, 1940), sampled in Chapter Four illustrates this propagandist effect to its full potential.

By exaggerating the differential between the two groups, frames within the film which intended to show the assertiveness and discomfort of some inmates serves to *trap* the stereotype by unconsciously confirming it by the very terms in which those displayed attempt to oppose and resist it. It is this unconscious construction of what it means to be feeble-minded which may posit silences and unsaid discourses – these deeper meanings lay in what is not being said, but being fantasised, what is implied but cannot be shown.

'*Erbkrank*' (*The Hereditary Defective*) and '*The Eternal/Wandering Jew*' (*Der Ewige Jude*) used images and narratives facilitating extreme divergence and exaggeration to further the gap between those within and those without. Divergence played a key role in the meanings and messages evident in the films and it was partly this which promoted compliance with Nazi state laws relating to the regulating of hereditarily ill offspring. It is hypothesised that this was attained by a form of fetishism. Hence, the second finding here is that interpretations of what it meant to be Jewish, criminal, having an impairment or disability were broadened to include an ever wider range of human conditions and behaviours and medical interventions were increasingly thought appropriate to maintain normality and social order.

**Question Three:** *How were biological categories used to justify policies that discriminated against particular groups?*

Abridging the differential between criminal and physically or mentally *defective, and Jew* reduced, indeed negated any form of social impact on these labels, instead all forms of deviancy were strictly biological or racial and therefore easily remedied by the remove of defective genes either through sterilisation or elimination of the vector.

The rise for this assimilated catch-all categorisation was arguably responsible for several related and widely held beliefs:

- That humane care for people with disabilities would enfeeble the *race* because they would survive to pass their disabilities on to their children.
- That not just mental and physical diseases and so-called defects, but also poverty, criminality, alcoholism, prostitution, and other social problems were based on biology and inherited.
- That genetically and racially inferior people were reproducing faster than superior people and would eventually displace them.
- That science and medicine could resolve social issues by the reduction of unfit progeny.
- Quantifiably measuring individual worth leads to justification for policies to diminish both number and burden of the feebleminded, resulting in productive and preventative outcomes.
- That the suspension of human rights is admissible, given the significant social threat from the Jews and feeblemindedness, as to warrant compulsory eugenic sterilisation or euthanasia, and
- The *Volks* are superior to others.

By contending that all forms of deviancy from physical disability to homosexuality, alcoholism to Jewishness were to be found in genetic faults

which needed to be eradicated, gave justification to sterilise such individuals to prevent the proliferation of infected progeny (pp 27-32, 117, 137). Various forms of statistical data were illustrated in the media portending to a disastrous future if the status quo remained (pp 116, 118, 122, 130, 140). Images foretelling the decline of the superiority of the *Volk* were replaced with metaphors of weakness, disgrace, dishonour and dirt should the defective elements of Germany society be allowed to continue to replicate their infected genes from one generation to the next. As the defective groups grew taking greater and greater shares of the resources needed to sustain life, so the fitter, worthy elements, the superior elements of the *Volk* would become encumbered and die out, leaving the Fatherland a shadow of its former glory and a ghost to its potential might.

The third and final finding here is that the biological categorisation of peoples in Germany was essentially a modernistic philosophy which allowed for the identification and subjective measurement of worth of the individual and their contribution to the superiority of the body politic.

### **Concluding Remarks**

This study has built on Goffman's microanalytical approach by applying his interpretations to the macroenvironment of propagandist imagery. This has worked well as it has identified how various acts, scripts and props were used in the imagery to either negatively enhance messages of worthlessness or enhance the beautified Volk. Film producers clearly manipulated the above to facilitate truths even though these truths were restructured to incorporate fictional exaggerations (See Chapters Two and Four). Such exaggerations

appear intentionally placed so that communication between the viewed and the viewer had little chance of polysemic misinterpretation. This is frequently seen as an effective tool in the application of propaganda material. Hence, Goffman's approach continued to prove fruitful when applied to the macroenvironmental setting.

Moreover, clear evidential examples have surfaced relating to Goffman's thesis on the stigmatised individuals defence when faced with such negative constructions of self. This research has found many examples of this taking place where individuals use mechanisms to escape such stigmas, whether it is through assertive behaviours or using other professional bodies to validate their behaviours, in each example, Goffman's theory shows credibility.

Metaphors associated with disease, contagion, criminality and sexuality produced an identification of the *useless eater* as both a biological and social threat to the body politic. These metaphors were both disseminated broadly and practiced widely throughout Germany and other industrialised nations (see Chapters One, Two, and Four). This ostensibly incurable threat harboured the potential to infect and contaminate the entire German population eradicating the purity of the *Volks* (as evidenced in Chapter Four). Whilst Mary Douglas' thesis goes some way to supporting this line of argument, I am not entirely convinced with her universal reasoning. Whilst I agree that the majority of the medical elite and society appear to have complied with the Nazi ideological framework there is evidence that this was not always the case (see Chapter One). Such examples, although appearing rarely, do counter Douglas' universalism.

The semi-mystical entity of the *Volks* clearly had significant cultural and political consequences at the turn of the twentieth century. For it was this ethos which fed into the biopolitical systems of superiority and heroism both before and during the Nazi reign which resulted in German society being fragmented into those with a valued existence (the in-group) and those without (the out-group). Evidence suggests that this collective opposition resulted in stigmatised groups housed in 'boundary systems' (Douglas, 1966) where the medical elite were able to apply eugenic and thanatopolitical interventions to meet political goals, such that all forms of benevolent acts or omissions were considered a legal and moral necessity to uphold the health of the body politic. Evidence suggests that criminals were filmed (in *Erbkrank*, see Chapter Four) in mental institutions with the intent of smelting them into the metaphor of feeble-mindedness.

Bauman (1989:130) contends that 'there is absolutely no reason to think that this ... was linked to economic considerations or that it was a unique episode of social history'. The evidence in Chapter Four clearly illustrates that emphasis was indeed paid to financial issues which in part is supported by Bauman (1989:83-116) and Foucault (2004:260) when they discuss the uniqueness versus normality of this historical epoch. Bauman (1989) insists that eugenics and thanatopolitics always remain latent within the management and regulation of life processes that constitute modern biopolitics. Thus, to dismiss the actions of Nazi doctors as an aberration are to view these events as a singular anomaly, rather than a potential inherent within modernity itself. While Nazism perhaps represents the most grotesque manifestation of

thanatopolitics latent within the regulatory and disciplinary techniques of modern biopower, it should be remembered that:

They used and extended mechanisms already present in other societies. More than that: in spite of their own internal madness, they used to a large extent the ideas and devices of our political rationality (Foucault, 2003:276).

Such rationality is evidenced in the need to label and stigmatise vulnerable populations. Evidence suggests that the policy of structured selectivity was widespread throughout the industrialised nations from the late 1880's (p25, 28-32). The discourse of useless eaters was increasingly incorporated into the discourses of criminality and sexuality in an effort to implicate feeble-mindedness as the cause of a host of social ills (see Chapters One and Four). Such discourses spoke of inherent genetic faults which allowed medicine to claim a need for a generalised social defence, for the biological protection of the species against individuals, who, as carriers of a condition, a stigma, or any other defect, may transmit to their heirs the unpredictable consequences of the non-normal that they carry within them. It is through this convergence of medical discourse and biopolitics and the subsequent policies therein applied, that I believe the transition from biopolitics to thanatopolitics is rendered decipherable.

### **Limitations of the Study**

As stated in Chapter Three (pp: 92 to 95), there were some limitations which needed to be considered. Empathetic participation, being the main approach with which to view the imagery, posed some difficulty initially, until I had established considerable immersion from broad readings and images pertinent to the research topic. It was only at this point that I felt able to genuinely

engage in both the subject and its consequential discourses of both disempowerment of the stigmatised groups leading to messages of the need to eradicate such forms, and elevation of the beautified master race of the *Volk*. Such captivation with the subject may sometimes result in a questioning of the researchers' values and belief systems after repeatedly viewing discriminatory propaganda. The researcher, I feel, cannot be immune to the effects of such indoctrination and therefore needs to guard against such psychological impacts. Moreover, whilst I made great efforts to bracket my own traditions and prejudices whilst employing empathetic participation, I cannot escape the likelihood that some of my mental constructs and preferences did potentially impact on the findings. This bias is unfortunate but inevitable given the placement of the self when using such approaches. That said, empathetic participation showed to be a highly effective approach with which to understand the messages and silences of historical media representations. However, as with all sociohistorical investigations, this research should be considered as a work in progress. As more evidence on the topic is made available in the future, so my findings may move or change with additional insights and further explanations.

Compositional analysis was useful as the initiating analytical tool in that it highlighted areas of potential interest for additional scrutiny. By establishing filmic techniques used in the *mise-en-scène* such as tone or camera angle, for example, it further illustrated the potential impacts such approaches can have on implied meanings and guided assumptions. However, it was only usefully applied once the snapshots of the films had been identified, then, this tool could be put to work. Attempting to use this method continuously as the



film ran on from scene to scene would be entirely ineffective as no frame of reference would be established.

Using moving imagery for this investigation has been both illuminating and liberating in that it has enabled me to formulate themes and arguments that may not have otherwise been possible had alternative resources been elected. It has been liberating in the sense that I have been able to delve into a realm seldom used by sociologists and by doing so has resulted in the need to develop a new method for analysing films. The socio-filmic model (previously discussed) required significant time and motivation, as well as extended exploration into areas outside the remit of this research, to arrive at the point of formulating what I feel, is a simple, yet valid tool. It facilitates opportunities to examine moving imagery in the sociohistorical context but could be used for various other applications of social research. Indeed it could be a valuable and insightful method to pre-determine the potential impact(s) of advertising, political broadcastings, and documentary/film development, hence the model has broad commercial applications as well. In this way then, by introducing the plausibility and validity of an innovative visual analytical tool it has advanced and 'unshackled' academics' epistemological interests in areas which I suggest remain under-explored.

### **Future Research and Recommendations**

Throughout the work, continued literature reviews were undertaken to identify any new sociological research pertaining to stigma and deviancy in Germany during the timeframe previously established. Just as at the commencement of studies as well as at the end, no other evidence could be drawn upon to shed

additional light on this fascinating yet under scrutinised topic, especially the impacts of propagandist imagery.

Propaganda imagery of other industrialised nations practicing eugenics could be worthy of further exploration to establish what differences with Germany were portrayed in media representations to rally public support for such biopolitical policies.

The three key conclusions developed from the evidence found in this work, the politicisation of medicine, the manipulation of scientific theories to meet political ends, and especially the use of moving imagery and its associated methodological implications - needs further exploration. At a time of rapid social change regarding medical power, authority and accountability, it may prove beneficial if studies could explore how such elitism is practiced and challenged in the light of recent murderous acts of professionals whilst in the privileged position to *laissez mourir* (letting die) and *faire vivre* (letting live). Whilst establishing the value and potential power of interpretative socio-filmic investigations may lead to findings which, by any other means, would be near impossible to advance.

## Appendices

Appendix 1: Security Services (SD), 'Reports from the Reich' on the Public Reaction to Films', Public Response to the Film 'I Accuse'

Appendix 2: DVD – Copy of 'Erbkrank' 1936 (Attached)

DVD – Copy of 'The Eternal/Wandering Jew 1940 (Attached)

DVD – Copy of 'I Accuse' 1941 (Attached)

DVD – Copy of 'Triumph of the Will 1935 (Attached)

\*\* Note: Despite several attempts I have been unable to copy 'Olympia' 1936. This was most likely due to copyright protection mechanisms. They can however be viewed by following these links:

Olympia Part One: Festival of the Nations -

<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0030522/>

Olympia Part Two: Festival of Beauty - <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0030523/>

(Live links as of 15/07/2013)

## **Appendix 1: Security Service (SD) 'Reports from the Reich' on the public reaction to films Public response to the film *I Accuse*.**

*All the reports to hand indicate that the film 'I Accuse' has aroused great interest in all areas of the Reich. In general it can be stated that with the help of extensive word-of-mouth publicity the film has been favourably received and discussed. Characteristic of the interest this film has provoked among the population is the fact that in many towns which had not yet seen it the film was being described - even by unsophisticated people - as one which simply had to be seen. The performances were generally enthusiastically received, and the film's content has actively stimulated people to think about it and has provoked lively discussion.*

*The film 'I Accuse' raises two issues. Its main theme is the problem of death on demand in cases of incurable illness. A secondary theme deals with the question of putting an end to a life which is no longer worth living.*

*Judging by the reports received from all parts of the Reich, the majority of the German population accepts the film's proposition in principle, though with some reservations - that is, that people suffering from serious diseases for which there is no cure should be allowed a quick death sanctioned by law. This conclusion can also be applied to a number of religiously minded people.*

*The attitude of the Church, both Catholic and Protestant, is one of almost total rejection. There are reports that Catholic priests have used house visits to try to stop individual members of the population from going to see the film on the grounds that it is an inflammatory film directed against the Catholic Church or a state propaganda film designed to justify the killing of people suffering from hereditary illness.*

*In a number of cases the Catholic clergy has made only an indirect attack on the film, and according to reports has described it as being so good that it could be dangerous and 'as tempting as sin'. Despite this clear rejection of the film in Catholic circles, it has also been frequently reported that the film has in fact occasioned a conflict of opinion in the Catholic camp, with one faction supporting the principle that a person may be deprived of life if in particularly serious cases a panel of doctors has diagnosed an incurable illness and the administering of death could be considered a blessing for both parties. The other faction, however, still uses the word 'murder' in connection with the film.*

*All reports, even those coming from predominantly Catholic regions of the Reich, refer to the fact that the celebrated statements by Bishop Clemens August of Minster have in many cases been taken as a starting-point in discussions of the film, to the extent that there have been several comments about the film referring to it as an attempt to justify the state's measures now that the Bishop had attacked them.*

*For instance, the following comments have been heard:*

*'The film is quite interesting, but the story's just like the lunatic asylums where they're killing off all the crazy people now.'*

*'You can think what you like about all this, but who is going to guarantee that there won't be any abuses. As soon as laws like this are introduced it will be easy for the government to have anyone they consider undesirable declared incurable by a commission for any reason at all and then eliminate them. And moreover people with enough influence or money to criticise others will soon have somebody declared insane.'*

*In Protestant circles the open rejection of the film is not as strongly expressed. Yet here too people often say that life, which is God-given, can and should only be taken by God.*

*But we have also heard of positive opinions in Church circles. The Superintendent of Bautzen, for instance, said the following:*

*It will be the state's concern to prevent abuse, to take the responsibility and to ensure that loving kindness is extended to those incurables who are suffering. All this will be easier than the actual act of deliverance. As a Christian I must approve of this film.*

*As regards medical circles, a mostly positive response is reported to the questions raised by the film. Younger doctors in particular, apart from a few bound by religious beliefs, are completely in favour.*

*Doubts are expressed among older doctors particularly, despite their agreement in principle. In many cases doctors see it as a mistake to publicise the issues openly.*

*Here and there the question has been raised as to whether medical diagnosis in borderline cases can really be sufficiently accurate to declare a patient incurable.*

*For example, there are frequent cases of seriously ill patients who have been given up by all doctors and have then improved and lived on for years. Such cases are known to every doctor and every hospital. Other doctors mention that in their experience people, especially if they are seriously ill or old, talk only of their wish to die when they have temporarily succumbed to deep despair because of severe pain. However, in the moments when they have been free of pain these patients have shown remarkable spirit and have gone on hoping for recovery until the end.*

*Doubts have also been expressed about the film's suggestion of medical committees: each of the doctors serving on a committee would have to examine the patient independently. This would put an unnecessary emotional*

*strain on the patient who, because of the repeated examinations, would become aware of what was intended.*

*Many doctors consider that the decision to intervene and help a patient could be left entirely to the German doctor's sense of responsibility. In practice, this kind of mercy killing already exists. Many doctors are taking it upon themselves, in cases where there is no prospect at all of recovery and the patient is suffering severe pain, to increase the dosage of the appropriate drug and so affect a painless death.*

*Indeed, the legal profession considers it a matter of urgency to provide medical practices of this kind with a basis in law. The legal difficulties which this would involve are considered to be great, since it would scarcely be possible to subject every relevant case of illness to legal examination, while on the other hand medical progress is such that an illness considered incurable today may be designated as curable tomorrow.*

*The majority of the German people have almost without exception reacted favourably to the issues raised, the following points, according to our reports, emerging as significant:*

- 1. An essential precondition of the decision to declare a patient incurable is considered to be the convening of a medical committee in the presence of the family doctor.*
- 2. Here and there the question has been raised as to whether mercy killing should be applied in all cases, since even patients with only a limited time to live are often still capable of doing productive work.*
- 3. It is considered similarly essential where euthanasia is to be applied to obtain the consent of the patient himself or in the case of a feeble-minded mental patient the permission of his relatives.*
- 4. In every case strict standards must be applied to prevent abuse; in no case should the decision be left to an individual.*
- 5. In most people's opinion, only the doctor should be given the right, at his own discretion, to administer euthanasia.*

*On the whole the working classes are more favourably disposed to the change in the law suggested by the film than people from intellectual circles. The reason for this, according to our information, is that the socially less privileged classes are by nature more concerned about their own financial obligations. Most people respond to the film's immediate story, with the result that the theme of a long-suffering person being released from his misery is relegated to the background. Only doctors interpret the film in terms of this issue.*

*The negative attitudes towards the questions raised in the film are by far the minority opinion, and apart from the Church's point of view they can hardly be described as fundamentally contrary opinions.*

*To sum up, from the wealth of material to hand it emerges that in general the practice of euthanasia is approved, when decided by a committee of several doctors with the agreement of the incurable patient and his relatives.*

*The general approval finds its best expression in the words of the Major in the film:*

*'The state, which imposes a duty to die on us, must also concede us the right to die.'*

Source: Federal Archive, Koblenz R 58/168, pp. 27-31, dated 15.1.1942.  
(Translated by Sagi, 2009)

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## Book Reviews

Christopher M. Hutton

**Race and the Third Reich**

Oxford: Polity Press, 2005, £55.00 hbk, £16.99 pbk (ISBN: 0-7456-3177-0), 272 pp.

■ Reviewed by Mel Wright, *University of Plymouth*

Christopher Hutton's most recent publication critically addresses major questions relating to 'race' in Nazi Germany and places it 'within evolving intellectual and ideological landscapes'. He attempts to analyse various tensions, controversies, and uncertainties held by academic scientists by focusing on the central concept of *Volk* and synthesizing this with competing theories of German Identity. His intention is not to summarize the corpus of literature expounding on the institutional basis and implementation of the 'Final Solution' and crimes against humanity committed by the Nazi regime; instead, he focuses on continuities and discontinuities of what he calls the 'popular misleading views' of dynamic and contentious Nazi ideological systems of power.

Hutton's thesis begins by exploring the development of the modern science of race which arose out of the Enlightenment, and how anthropology sought to measure the morphological and biological anatomy of the human body, with its particular emphasis on paleoanthropology (human origin and evolution). Two key 'time-placed' theorists are reviewed here: Carl von Linné who first placed *Homo sapiens* 'within a zoological order', and Johann Friedrich Blumenbach, the founder of physical anthropology, who classified humanity into five distinct races: Caucasian, Mongolian, Ethiopian, American and Malay.

Using the French philosopher Michel Foucault's theory of 'power', Hutton suggests that racial disparity was figuratively organized as a product of modernity, and as such scientific and technocratic mastery were seen as 'involving the control and ultimate elimination of difference' as a flawed racist universalism. In modernity there was a sense of haste where old, traditional boundaries were disappearing. Traditional ecologies or natural orders, in which different racial and cultural variants of humanity had their own place, were breaking down. The 'essence of the past was being lost and a bastardized, mongrel and degraded humanity was emerging' in the modern Germanic civilization.

During the Third Reich era, racial anthropology was marginalized in favour of the rising science of human genetics. Darwinism and neo-Darwinism provided a



framework for placing human beings in the dynamic nature of the animal kingdom where scientific laws sought to root out the maladapted/undomesticated forms of humanity. Eugenics was well suited and applied to facilitate such racist visions.

Eugenics, founded on the pure sciences, gave insight and rationale into improving the 'breeding stock' by contending that social reforms and education were insufficient strategies unless harsh measures of population control were also instigated, namely positive reinforcement for elite sectors of the *volk* to reproduce, and negative practices of sterilization and elimination of the asocial groups deemed unsuitable for the salvation of the state. As Hutton states:

One branch of racial thinking accepted the basic lessons of the new sciences of race and genetics, and rejected the notion that the engineering of the physical, social and cultural environment, for example through education, could eradicate inherited, biological inequalities. These inequalities existed between individuals, as well as between human races, and were part of the natural ordering of the human species. Only a political programme of action based on the appreciation of this fundamental scientific truth, and led by a leadership with the will to carry through that programme to its logical conclusion, could save Germany and the German *Volk* from destruction.

Racial anthropologists played a key role in the development of National Socialist ideology by defining Jews and others as racial outsiders to be excluded at all costs from the body politic. However, the science was relegated to a secondary role, after 'modern eugenics', and served only to produce certificates of racial identity, needed for implementing various Nazi legislation after 1933.

Hutton concludes with a juxtaposition, with eugenics on one side and anthropologists at the other. The pro-eugenic movement were unable to conceptualize any scientific explanation for racial specificity, and in some instances even suggested that mixing of distant lines of inheritance might be beneficial to the state. This proposition went at odds with accepted political, intellectual and ideological groundings that saw racial mixing as a recipe for disaster. Anthropologists were better positioned to rationalize and conceptualize such doctrines and did so by using aesthetics and metaphors such as contagion, corruption and degeneration, etc. However, they were unable to define the nature of the European races or provide a clear understanding of the composition of the German *Volk*. Was Germany made up by a hybrid of European bloodlines? To answer this, Hutton identifies the use of linguistics as a historical composition of 'otherness'; that linguistics offered an unproblematic account of the inheritance of acquired characteristics and in so doing allowed for the merging of two separate sciences. It allowed for a means of reconciling 'directionless evolution' as Darwin stated, with 'vitalistic metaphors of dynamism, teleological metaphors of destiny and mission, and organic metaphors of holism and unity, without compromising the scientific integrity of the enterprise'.

Christopher Hutton has produced a book which sets out the key concepts, debates and controversies of race in Nazi Germany. It looks in particular at the discipline of racial anthropology and its relationship to linguistics and human biology. Throughout, the text is written clearly with little use of academic jargon and anyone studying race theory will find this a fascinating, informative and accessible read.



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## Book Reviews

C. Calhoun, C. Rojek and B. Turner

### **The Sage Handbook of Sociology**

London: SAGE Publications, 2005, £85.00 hbk, no price stated pbk (ISBN: 608-0-7619-6821-0).

DOI: 10.1177/0038038506069859

■ Reviewed by Mel Wright, *University of Plymouth*

Calhoun, Rojek and Turner break new ground by bringing together European and American sociologists in their new book *The SAGE Handbook of Sociology*. They attempt to discuss globalization and shifting gender relations, reveal continuities amid a greatly evolving academic discipline, explore methodological innovations and highlight the internal diversity within contemporary multi-paradigmatic complexities of sociological theories and concepts.

The Handbook is split into three parts.

Part one entitled 'Theory and Method' illustrates five chapters which discuss various aspects of qualitative and quantitative research traditions. Chapter one: 'Qualitative Research Methods' (A.E. Raftery) clearly illustrates various methodologies used in today's climate of sociological diversity, offering a user-friendly approach to facilitate understanding at undergraduate and postgraduate levels. This chapter is then followed by a critique of 'Sociology and Philosophy' by Collins. Exploring theorists such as Mead, Durkheim and Kant, the text, argues succinctly how philosophy and sociology go hand-in-hand allowing for a greater 'connectedness' to the discipline. Chapter four highlights the diversity of sociological traditions, arguing that scientific investigations continue to follow traditional lines of methodology. Some discussion focuses on new contemporary diversity, but the chapter does tend towards pre-structured influences in the research design process. The final chapter in Part one is entitled 'Comparative Sociology: Some Paradigms and their Moments' (D.E. Apter). Here, an interesting and thoroughly thought through text draws the reader to the importance of various historical influences and paradigms and how they work, comparatively speaking. Several theoretical

concepts and their respective authors are identified and explored, giving a good grounding into comparatives in contemporary sociology thinking.

Part two, 'The Axial Processes of Society' uses several well-known and established sociologists to explore various critical and topical debates such as work, the family, consumption, communication, health and illness, class, gender relations and population and society. These respective chapters, and others not mentioned here, would give students in higher education a general and sometimes candid view of important, fundamental thinking, using up-to-date primary sources as evidence to validate their debates. Refreshingly simple text facilitates easy to understand terms with chapters which can be dipped into and out of for reference to interesting, useful and topical subjects.

The last part of the book focuses on 'Primary Debates'. Here, 10 chapters focus on subjects which are 'hotly' debated in today's sociological discourses. Offering critical but sometimes difficult to follow text, various authors, both European and American, attempt to introduce the reader to differing aspects of micro and macro analysis, global inequality, sociology of the body, social theory, deviance, globalization, sex and power, science and technology, university sociology and citizenship, ethnicity and nation-states. These sub-discipline chapters describe new developments as an authoritative guide, ambitiously contributing towards the make up of modern sociology.

The result is an eclectic, essential resource for undergraduate and postgraduate students and those with an avid interest in the contemporary, greatly evolving, science of sociology, who need instruction and enlightenment in the cutting edge of theoretical discourses of society as a whole. Recommended.