

Homo Cinematicus: Science, Motion Pictures, and the Making of Modern Germany.

By *Andreas Killen*. Intellectual History of the Modern Age. Edited by *Angus Burgin* et al.

Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2017. Pp. viii+268. \$65.00.

In this study, published in the series *Intellectual History of the Modern Age*, Andreas Killen combines history of human sciences with intellectual, cultural, and media history. The book's thesis is already implied in its title. Killen argues that the concept of "Homo cinematicus," coined by conservative publicist Wilhelm Stapel in 1919, and the associated claim that movies—more precisely, the interaction of films and their audiences—created a new type of human being, played a significant role in Weimar-era cultural debates located on the boundary of science and cultural policy. Killen shows, for example, how psychiatrists and other human scientists took highly varied, at times self-contradictory positions in the debate on film censorship from its abolition early in the Republic and following its reintroduction a few years later, as well as the—predictably unsuccessful—campaign against "trash" (*Schund*) in films. As Killen shows, opponents pushed back against self-styled experts' efforts to limit freedom of artistic self-expression. How scientists' positions oscillated between supposedly objective expertise and moral advocacy comes out most clearly in the campaign against Magnus Hirschfeld's film *Different from the Others* (1919). While Hirschfeld presented himself as both a scientific expert on homosexuality and an advocate of homosexual rights, the films' opponents mobilized their own expertise to condemn both the film and the lifestyle it treated.

Killen brings discourse analysis skillfully into play in his discussion of hypnosis as a film subject and as a metaphor for the workings of film itself as a kind of mass hypnosis. He follows this with a clear account of the checkered career of so-called enlightenment films. Some of these, such as G. W. Pabst's *Secrets of a Soul* (1925), one of the first filmic treatments of Freudian psychoanalysis, were apparently produced for mass audiences and employed powerful dramatic techniques; but in other cases such films deliberately avoided artistry and strove to achieve their impact by appearing to be clinically objective. In his penultimate chapter, Killen recounts the enforced resolution of these complex issues under Nazism in a manner that might be surprising to some readers, though it is no longer news to informed scholars—by enlisting the genre of "enlightenment" film in the service of eugenical public health programs. An interesting example of this that Killen discusses is a film entitled *Superstition* (1939) by former avant-garde filmmaker Walter Ruttmann, which attacked clairvoyants as frauds and thus helped prepare the ground for the crackdown on such practitioners carried out by Goebbels's propaganda ministry in 1941. This policy culminated in the infamous film *I accuse* (1941), which employed a mix of avant-garde artistry and conventional sentimental storytelling to make the case for so-called mercy killing.

Killen's study is a useful example of how self-styled scientific experts insinuated themselves into policy debates during this period, advancing what Lutz Raphael called the "scientification of the social" twenty years ago. With this book he succeeds in opening up a new topic area in a crowded field of Weimar cultural studies, fully illuminating the complications and ambivalences involved. The topic continues to be relevant, as shown by lively current debates about the impact of graphic depictions of violence and sex in visual media and about whether to impose limits on artistic expression in such cases.

Unfortunately, the book is not entirely free of problems. Killen nowhere specifies clearly what he means by "human sciences." The list of disciplines or specialties included under this heading differs in different locations of the study. Since some of the disciplines involved are medical (such as psychiatry and neurology) and others are not (psychology and sociology), it is not always clear what Killen means by "scientification." Psychiatrists focused under-

standably on dangers of cultural deviation and favored medical-sounding vocabulary, not incidentally advancing their own claims to expertise. In this respect Killen's study exemplifies the pathologization of cultural phenomena in Germany, which has been well studied for some time. However, early in the book Killen also gives prominent place to applied psychologist Hugo Münsterberg's early study of film, *The Photoplay* (1916), and to Philipp Lersch's later studies of facial expression as a basis for personality diagnostics, neither of which appears to have employed the pathologization discourse used by the psychiatrists. Whether either man was deeply involved in the cultural policy debates named above is unclear. The profound impact of cinematography on the experimental study of perception, exemplified in studies by Karl Marbe, Max Wertheimer, and others beginning as early as 1905, is entirely ignored. Missing as well are important contributions by psychologists such as Rudolf Arnheim to the theory of film itself as an artistic medium.

Also unclear is just how popular the films on which Killen focuses most intensively actually were. *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari* and Fritz Lang's *Dr. Mabuse* dominate the stage here yet again, as they have since Siegfried Kracauer's classic yet much-disputed study *From Caligari to Hitler* (1947). Killen suggests, but does not prove, that these avant-garde films had a powerful impact on the imaginations of his human scientists and does not say whether they had anything like the mass viewership enjoyed by conventional historical dramas, for example. In this respect, Killen's otherwise well-argued study exemplifies the tendency among intellectual historians of the Weimar period to focus narrowly and repetitively on an avant-garde canon of their own creation, taking these undoubtedly interesting parts for the whole.

MITCHELL G. ASH

University of Vienna

Hitlers adliger Diplomat: Der Herzog von Coburg und das Dritte Reich. By Hubertus Büschel. *Die Zeit des Nationalsozialismus*. Edited by Walter H. Pehle. Frankfurt am Main: S. Fischer Verlag, 2016. Pp. 336. €24.99 (cloth); €24.99 (e-book).

Die Narzisstische Volksgemeinschaft: Theodor Habichts Kampf, 1914 bis 1944. By Felix Römer. *Die Zeit des Nationalsozialismus*. Edited by Walter H. Pehle. Frankfurt am Main: S. Fischer Verlag, 2017. Pp. 398. €26.00 (cloth); €22.99 (e-book).

Consistent with the direction of recent scholarship, Hubertus Büschel and Felix Römer examine the careers of lesser-known Nazis. Büschel focuses on Carl Eduard, the Duke of Saxony-Coburg and Gotha (or the "Duke of Coburg" as the Nazis abbreviated it), while Römer attends to the career of the Nazi functionary, Theodor Habicht. In so doing, each addresses a long-standing issue, the fluid interactions between German conservatism and National Socialism and a more recent one, the tension between Nazism's promised "people's community" (*Volksgemeinschaft*) and its cultivation of an elitist avant-garde consisting of outstanding individuals, who were born to rule the masses. Büschel explores the consequences of Carl Eduard's aristocratic cultural capital, especially his deep connections to European aristocracies that helped to dampen foreign criticism of the Third Reich. Römer historicizes the psychology of narcissism to explore the hyper-individualism of his subject and the embourgeoisment (*Verbürgerlichung*) (298) of Nazism.

A grandson of Queen Victoria, Carl Eduard assumed the ducal throne of Saxe-Coburg and Gotha in 1905 after his uncle, one of Victoria's sons, died without an heir. To assuage