9. The Curious Humanist

> The thinking promoted by capitalism resists culminating in that reason which arises from the basis of man.
>
> SIEGFRIED KRACAUER, "The Mass Ornament"

First conceptualized in French exile at the beginning of the 1940s and finally published in 1960, *Theory of Film* ends, in a sense, where Kracauer's American career began: at MoMA. The book's final section is titled "The Family of Man" in explicit reference to Edward Steichen's blockbuster 1955 exhibit at the Museum of Modern Art. The closing nod to this photography show harks back to the opening chapters of the book, in which Kracauer had derived his theory of film from the history and "nature" of photography. In the book's final pages, he again links the "photographic nature" of film to the power of photographs "to authenticate the reality of the vision they feature."[1]

Film comes into its own as a realist medium that inherits and expands on photography's affinities with physical reality—its indeterminacy, its endlessness, its unstaged, fortuitous configurations. This, in a nutshell, is the central argument of *Theory of Film*. But more is at stake in the book's parting glance at *The Family of Man*, whose relevance to Kracauer's project is hardly exhausted by its turn to photography as a realist medium. For Steichen's exhibit was also an emblem of a particular politics of the image at the height of the Cold War. By appealing to its exemplary function as a purveyor of liberal humanist values, Kracauer in turn begs the question of how we might read the politics of his late film theory.

To explore this question, the present chapter first inquires into the place of *Family of Man* in *Theory of Film*, noting how Kracauer explicitly aligns himself, via Erich Auerbach's *Mimesis*, with the universal humanism that characterized Steichen's show. But Kracauer also complicates the ideological premises that he invokes—for in significant ways, his realist film theory appears to be premised on the very absence of humanism's core tenet: the individual human subject. Cinema's domain, according to Kracauer, is an

alienated, nonanthropocentric world of "camera reality" that radically decenters human subjectivity and at times seems to do away with it altogether. In this regard, I read *Theory of Film* as a critique of the more blandly universalizing gestures of Steichen's photographic humanism. Despite its patently antitotalitarian intentions, *Family of Man* papers over the unraveling of long-held humanist beliefs in the face of totalitarianism and the camps; Kracauer's *Theory of Film*, by contrast, registers this unraveling in the way its cinematic ontology and even its phenomenological claims marginalize the human subject.

And yet, I argue, Kracauer remains wedded—like the other members of the Frankfurt School—to the unfinished project of enlightenment that he, like the Institut für Sozialforschung, began to critique as early as the 1920s. Despite some theoretical motifs that he may share with more recent object-oriented ontologies and new realisms,[2] it would be entirely misleading to think of Kracauer as a (proto-)posthumanist thinker.[3] To adapt Adorno's influential description of his erstwhile mentor's "curious" *(wunderlich)* realism, I propose instead that we consider Kracauer a "curious humanist"—a film theorist who leads us through a nonanthropocentric and occasionally postapocalyptic universe of "camera reality" and "historical reality" back to the promise of a weak but renewed faith in human subjectivity and experience.

Kracauer critiques humanist assumptions from within, in the name of what his posthumous book on history calls "the humane." That book was intended explicitly as a sequel of sorts to *Theory of Film*. If we take this claim seriously and read Kracauer's historiography as film theory, I propose, we can trace the reconstruction of human subjectivity from its postwar ruins. Kracauer's central figure for this postwar subject, I will argue, is the spectator: a cinephilic subject that bears the marks of its prior decentering but holds out the promise of a renewed receptivity and openness to the world, the possibility of experience after the age of the crisis of man.[4]

MIDCENTURY MIDDLEBROW: *THE FAMILY OF MAN*

The Family of Man featured 503 photographs from around the globe, organized around putatively universal subjects such as love and marriage, children, work, birth and death. Visitors were invited to recognize the differences among cultures, to be sure; but they were also entreated to subsume those differences under the family resemblances implied by the title. The images of *The Family of Man*, in other words, were designed to reflect back both the viewing subject's own likeness and the shared bonds of humanity—including its shared fate. Famously, the show featured one

single color photograph: it depicted an atomic mushroom cloud and was accompanied by a quotation from Bertrand Russell linking nuclear bombs to the "end of the human race."

The universalism of the show's message echoed the curator's conviction that photography, the chosen medium for the exhibit, "gave visual communication its most simple, direct, universal language."[5] In an article published the same year *Theory of Film* appeared, Steichen noted that "the importance of the art of photography as mass communication [had] been amply demonstrated" by *The Family of Man*. The show's mass audiences, he claimed, "not only understand this visual presentation, they also participate in it, and identify themselves with the images, as if in corroboration of the words of a Japanese poet, 'When you look into a mirror, you do not see your reflection, your reflection sees you.' "[6] The experience afforded by the exhibit, Steichen's reference seems to imply, should lead to a recognition of the universal similarity between self and other.

The Family of Man ran for four months in New York in early 1955 and then traveled around the world for the following eight years under the auspices of MoMA's Rockefeller-funded International Program and the recently founded United States Information Agency.[7] Replicating the global reach of its subject matter in its marketing, the exhibit showed at over 150 museums in thirty-seven countries on six continents before it was permanently installed at Clervaux Castle in Steichen's native country of Luxemburg. *The Family of Man* is now estimated to have been viewed by over ten million visitors, not counting the further millions who encountered its images in the affordable, best-selling catalogue. Even prior to the recent restoration of the original photographs and a newly designed installation replete with tablet guides, the show was entered into the UNESCO Memory of the World register.[8]

The exhibit's broad, international reach has been accompanied almost since its opening by an equally robust critique. To the New York Intellectuals, *Family of Man* was the epitome of the middlebrow "culture-pattern." In his influential *Partisan Review* essay "Masscult and Midcult" (published, like *Theory of Film*, in 1960), Macdonald wrote:

> The Midcult mind aspires toward Universality above all. A good example was that "Family of Man" show of photographs Edward Steichen put on several years ago at the Museum of Modern Art to great applause. (The following summer it was the hit of the American exhibition in Moscow, showing that a touch of Midcult makes the whole world kin.) The title was typical—actually it should have been called Photorama. There were many excellent photographs, but they were

> arranged under the most pretentious and idiotic titles [. . .] and the whole effect was of a specially pompous issue of *Life*. [. . .] The editorializing was insistent—the Midcult audience always wants to be Told—and the photographs were marshaled to demonstrate that although there are real problems (death, for instance), it's a pretty good old world after all.[9]

Macdonald frequently voiced his disdain for the leveling effects of the *Life* aesthetic ("masscult," he averred with typical irony, "is very, very democratic; it refuses to discriminate against or between anything or anybody").[10] His comments on "that show" at MoMA amplify this contempt through his characteristically acerbic style, his sarcastic tone, right down to the clever capitalizations. But for all its idiosyncrasies, Macdonald's take on *The Family of Man* strikes a note that is common to many critiques of the show. The latter is widely recognized today as exhibit A for American postwar humanism at the height of the Cold War. Certainly by the time MoMA and the USIA sent it on its Coca-Cola–sponsored world tour—which began, significantly, in West Berlin and Guatemala—*Family of Man* had become the poster child of American "public diplomacy."[11] As such, this "cold war extravaganza," as Allan Sekula called it, has also become a flashpoint for the critique of midcentury middlebrow aesthetics and for the universalizing claims of a liberal humanist view that would enthrone an essentially abstract notion of (the family of) man at the center of the world.[12]

For this the show has been lambasted by critics such as Macdonald and, perhaps even more famously, Roland Barthes, who first saw it in Paris and wrote an incisive critique of the show's underlying ideology.[13] To Barthes, the exhibit (retitled "The Great Family of Man" in French) exemplified precisely those operations of culture that he aimed to unmask in *Mythologies*. As Steichen himself never tired of repeating, the show was designed to offer a "mirror of the universal elements and emotions in the everydayness of life— . . . a mirror of the essential oneness of mankind through the world."[14] Barthes countered that the emphasis on the supposedly universal constants, or "a human essence" undergirding human differences, elided the constitutive role of history and the social. In their place, the photos of birth, death, and human work appealed to the ostensibly timeless and unifying forces of religion, nature—and myth.

Other critics have fleshed out exactly what aspects of history and society the show's universalism mythologized. They have reconstructed its imbrication in the discourses and geopolitical practices of American cold war imperialism, queried the omission of the Holocaust, skewered its naive treatment of race and class, and unpacked its normative assumptions about

the nuclear family and the domestic ideal of the Eisenhower era.[15] Fundamentally, these critiques all agree that the exhibit's universalism manifests in sentimental strategies of decontextualization and naturalization; it marks "the epitome of American cold war liberalism," appears naive in its "familial humanism," and papers over the unequal distribution of political power by erasing particularity and difference.[16] These shortcomings appear endemic to the show's liberal humanist ethos; to undo them would have required what Barthes calls a "progressive humanism" that would "constantly scour nature, its 'laws' and its 'limits' in order to discover History there, and at last to establish Nature itself as historical."[17] For such critics, however, this would have involved an entirely different approach to the selection of photographs, to the editorializing comment, and to the very arrangement of the exhibit as it was displayed in New York and throughout the world.

THE FAMILY OF MAN IN *THEORY OF FILM*

When Kracauer references *The Family of Man* at the close of *Theory of Film,* he certainly appears to buy into the show's universal humanism and its ostensibly non- or postideological aspirations. Having outlined a "material aesthetics" of film and theorized its promise as an inherently realist, photographic medium, Kracauer concludes with a brief glance at the power of cinema to effect change. In a cold war gesture, he first dismisses claims that tie cinema to revolutionary causes. But he also refuses to limit the function of cinema to "promoting responsible citizenship" or to prioritize any other instrumentalization of the medium: the range of "equally legitimate propositions," he claims, "is inexhaustible."[18] And yet, drawing on Auerbach's now famous account of realism in Western literature in *Mimesis,* Kracauer does venture a thesis of his own. A scholar with deeply held humanist convictions and training, Auerbach had concluded his recently translated book with an outlook toward a near future when human differences would yield to a "common life of mankind on earth."[19] Of this future he found inklings in the modern realist novel's attention to the commonality of the everyday—to the "wealth of reality and depth of life in every moment to which one submits without intentionality."[20]

Kracauer adopts this argument and applies it to the photographic media. To him, cinema represents the apogee of this line of reasoning, whose premise dates back to Lessing's *Laocoön:* able to "record the material aspects of common daily life in many places," to reveal their meaningfulness and connect them through editing, films "authenticate the reality" of the

humanist vision in ways specific to the medium.[21] Kracauer exemplifies this claim by referring to documentaries such as Paul Rotha and Basil Wright's *World without End* (1953), commissioned by the same UNESCO that had only recently included Steichen's exhibit in its register. The two eminent British documentarians had teamed up to direct a poetic paean to international development by editing together material shot in Siam and Mexico. To Kracauer, the film's composite image of remote regions—what Rotha himself labeled its "humanism of internationalism"—represents the "one-world idea within the visual dimension."[22] In this regard, it is easy to see the parallels between Rotha and Wright's aesthetic choices and Steichen's selection and arrangement of photographs for the MoMA exhibit.

Similarly, when Kracauer quotes a letter writer enthusing about Satyajit Ray's *Aparajito* (1956) to the *New York Times,* he might as well be referring to the ideological message of *The Family of Man:* what seems remarkable about the film, writes the reader, "is that you see this story happening in a remote land and see these faces with their exotic beauty and still feel that the same thing is happening every day somewhere in Manhattan or Brooklyn or the Bronx."[23] Underlying social and cultural differences, we find a common human essence. Little wonder that a German reviewer of *Theory of Film* described its basic tenor as "a pedagogically minded humanism."[24]

"The key question posed by any humanism or universalism is point of view," remarks Marianne Hirsch in discussing Steichen's exhibit.[25] In this respect, the wording of the letter quoted by Kracauer is revealing: the parallels and mirrorings recall Steichen's emphasis on photography's ability to "mirror the essential oneness of mankind through the world"; but there is a profound asymmetry between the "exotic beauty" of a "remote" India and the perspective of a New Yorker looking from an American vantage point at the changing world (or at Ray's film). Shrinking worlds and the gradual leveling of differences among humans are perforce imagined differently from distinct geopolitical, historical, cultural, and social perspectives. Postwar liberal humanism, by contrast, has come under critique for eliding such differences and universalizing an American point of view that remains unmarked as such, even as it becomes instrumentalized in the geopolitics of the Cold War.

The key question is point of view, and we should ask it of Kracauer's film theory. Back in 1941, we recall, the American vantage point had been marked explicitly in the recollection of the immigrant's arrival in New York Harbor and in the first person plural of "Why France Liked Our Films." And even as Kracauer's enthusiasm for Hollywood waned over the course of his first American decade, articles on Preston Sturges, pseudo-liberal

trends in the movies, and Hollywood's "terror films" had taken up a reflexive subject position from which to critique the shortcomings of American mass culture. As numerous critics have pointed out, little of this reflexivity remains in the seemingly more detached tone of *Theory of Film*—let alone in its concluding vision of a common humanity and of films that "make the world our home."[26]

What, then, are the politics of film theory in Kracauer's late American writings? An implicit critical consensus becomes explicit in Eric Rentschler's claim that, given Cold War circumstances, the émigré author "made certain that all traces of his former political convictions vanished from his work."[27] Worse still, the turn to *Family of Man* might even suggest the adoption of a new set of political convictions, all the more insipid for remaining unmarked: are we to conclude that by 1960 Kracauer had adopted the imperialist, Cold War perspective that informed Steichen's exhibit and the USIA's "public diplomacy" for American democracy? Moreover, if *Theory of Film* really elides both Kracauer's own intellectual history and the historical dimension of film as a mass medium, as Miriam Hansen suggests, does it thereby espouse the ahistorical humanism that Barthes and others have critiqued as *Family of Man*'s governing ideology?[28]

The answer that I propose in this chapter and the next is a qualified no: Kracauer's engagement with humanism is far more nuanced and more deeply inscribed into the trajectory of his thinking from Weimar to New York than these questions imply. But before I explain why and how, let me state the qualifications up front: First, as is evident from his endorsement of Steichen's exhibit, Kracauer indisputably participated in the Cold War humanist discourse that the MoMA show championed, and it would be difficult (and wrong) to confuse his film theory with the kind of ideology critique championed by Barthes—or by some of the critical theorists with whom Kracauer was certainly in communication at the time, for that matter. *Theory of Film*'s realist aesthetic, as we shall see, exudes at certain points a postideological fatigue that is decidedly of a piece with the universalizing gestures in *Family of Man*. Second, the language of *Theory of Film* does place it at a great distance from the ironic engagement and dialectical nuance with which Kracauer had analyzed film and photography during the 1920s and in his native German. While Pauline Kael overreached in her scathing critique of Kracauer's occasionally ponderous language, she was arguably right to sense that "Kracauer's best stuff isn't in English."[29]

And yet, two aspects complicate this reading of *Theory of Film* as simply another midcentury middlebrow text. First, as I elaborate below, Kracauer's is a curious humanism: a humanism with a difference, one considerably less

certain of the human subject's essential sovereignty. The specific contours of this curious humanism emerge, secondly, if we historicize Kracauer's late works. Which is to say: we must again situate the culminating humanist vision of *Theory of Film* within the larger context of his American writings that I have been sketching in this book. In that sense, Kracauer still writes both his film aesthetics and his final book on historiography against the backdrop of totalitarian terror, which he and others had found to result in the erasure of experience, the liquidation of subjectivity, and the annihilation of difference in the name of racial antisemitism. As Hirsch points out in defense of Steichen's tendency to subsume difference under an ostensibly postideological notion of common humanity in *The Family of Man*, "we must remember the political context in which difference had so recently been used as a justification for genocide."[30] The same holds true for Kracauer's attempts to theorize film as a way out of atomization, abstraction, and a "creeping apathy."[31] In this regard, historicizing *Theory of Film* also means reading it as a response to the question raised by the previous book, *From Caligari to Hitler:* how to rekindle the promise of cinema after Hitler, the Holocaust, and Hiroshima, but also in the face of the illiberal tendencies Kracauer attributed to Hollywood in his essays of the 1940s.

DECENTERING THE SUBJECT: *THEORY OF FILM'S* NONANTHROPOCENTRIC UNIVERSE

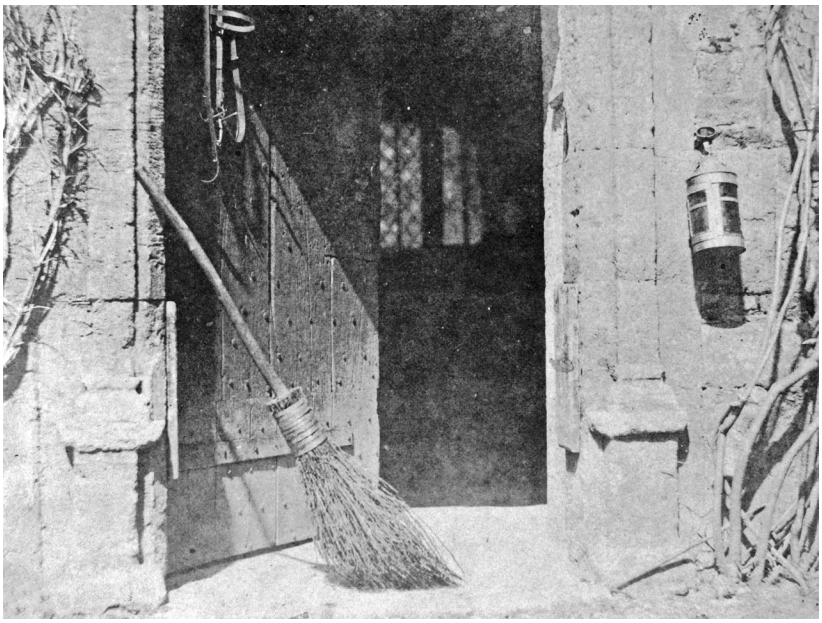
A close look at the central theoretical motifs of Kracauer's book reveals something counterintuitive about the humanist turn at its close. Here, too, the comparison with *Family of Man* is instructive. Steichen's exhibit assumes and celebrates the universal centrality of "man" as the measure of all things; the entire conception of the show, from its title to the selection and arrangement of photos in MoMA, centers on the commensurability of human experience and subjectivity: "man" is the subject of these images in both senses of the word, aesthetic and humanist. Steichen's exhibit admittedly includes a number of strategically placed images that do not display the human face or figure: enormous reproductions of landscape and nature photography featuring mountain ranges, tree formations, or the glistening drops of water formed by a cresting wave—not to mention the image of outer space at the entrance to the New York exhibit. However, with the exception of the latter (which serves more as an invitation to enter than as part of the show's curated "argument" about a human family), what is striking about the nonhuman subject matter in the show is how insistently it is "humanized": the belly and breasts of a pregnant woman are imposed

on an image featuring a round sun over a fertile landscape; images of loggers turn nature photography into a depiction of natural resources for human labor; waves become an object for the play of children featured on the surrounding photographs under the Shakespeare quote "O wonderful, wonderful, and most wonderful! And yet again wonderful . . ." Moreover, nature photography—including the opening shot of the universe—is consistently instrumentalized for syntactic purposes: it generally recurs as a way of transitioning among the various themes of the exhibit. The purview of *Family of Man* emphatically does not include any notion of nature as independent of the human subject.

Theory of Film, by contrast, conceptualizes film as a medium that profoundly decenters the human subject in favor of an object-oriented notion of "physical reality"—or what at one point Kracauer calls "crude existence."[32] "Camera reality," as Kracauer defines it here, is tied time and again to a world all but independent of human subjectivity. Instead, inanimate objects loom large and the medium provides access to those aspects that are inaccessible to perception and consciousness: objects and phenomena that exceed our grasp by virtue of their excessive or diminutive size; fleeting, transitory moments that lie in the "blind spots of the mind."[33] It is as if the physical reality favored and represented by photographic media came into being precisely by the subtraction of human agency, consciousness, and subjectivity.

Time and again, we find Kracauer constructing scenarios that diminish the human and increase the stature of the object world. Cinema, he argues, is a "garbage-minded" medium that gravitates to a lower world, a ragpicker among the "crude and unnegotiated presence of natural objects."[34] It is a medium endowed with an a-subjective gaze that fixes not on the party but on its aftermath, when the people are gone and only the crumpled tablecloth and half-empty glasses remain. In outlining the "photographic approach" from which he derives his film theory, Kracauer singles out images from Talbot to Atget that feature abandoned spaces: a broom in an open door, a granite canyon, the empty streets of Paris.

In contrast to Steichen's teeming photographs, then, Kracauer's cinematic world can appear strangely depopulated. The aesthetics of cinematic realism, in other words, consist in mechanically reproducing a reality from which the human dimension is always in some measure absent—what Miriam Hansen describes as a "strange, nonanthropocentric landscape."[35] In this world of "camera reality," any remainder of human interiority is derivative of materiality and the "thicket of material life," and wholeness is displaced by cinema's "tendency toward decomposing given wholes."[36] To the degree that cinema does provide a time-image of the "flow of life," it is



9. William Henry Fox Talbot (1800–1877), *The Open Door,* 1844. (Digital image courtesy of the Getty's Open Content Program)

"a kind of life which is still intimately connected, as if by an umbilical cord, with the material phenomena from which its emotional and intellectual contents emerge." The flow of life, Kracauer consequently insists, "is predominantly a material rather than a mental continuum."[37]

From this antihumanist impulse Kracauer derives the medium's defining powers of alienation. A favorite passage from Proust that Kracauer cites early on sets the stage for his theory of cinematic realism as a form of estrangement: Proust's narrator enters his grandmother's living room unnoticed by her and suddenly sees the scene as if through a camera. Instead of the close relative whose loving gaze is structured by memory and daily contact, the narrator becomes "identical with the camera lens"—a witness, an observer, a stranger, in every way "the opposite of the unseeing lover." As a consequence, the grandmother suddenly appears completely alien, "a dejected old woman whom I did not know."[38]

Nothing could be further from the subject Steichen and his collaborators imagined as the ideal viewer of *Family of Man.* In his prologue to the exhibition catalogue, the poet Carl Sandburg speaks directly of and to the viewer, addressing her in the second person but also anticipating and ven-

10. Eugène Atget, *Rue St. Rustique*, 1922. (The Metropolitan Museum of Art, David Hunter McAlpin Fund, 1956. www.metmuseum.org)

triloquizing an expected response. This imaginary visitor moves through the show as a tourist fully at home in the global village: "you travel and see what the camera saw. The wonder of human mind, heart, wit and instinct, is here. You might catch yourself saying 'I'm not a stranger here.'"[39]

As if in explicit opposition to the show's identificatory approach to photography and its universalist emphasis on human kinship, photographic media are to Kracauer "the product of complete alienation." Where Steichen

wants audiences to perceive common universals in even the most remote or exotic subjects, Kracauer holds that "the way leads toward the unfamiliar in the familiar."[40] Close-ups turn human bodies back onto their sheer materiality. Even human eyes offer no window into the soul; rather, "skin textures [become] reminiscent of aerial photographs, eyes turn into lakes or volcanic craters. Such images [. . .] blast the prison of conventional reality, opening up expanses which we have explored at best in dreams before."[41] Rather than bringing home the likeness of all human pursuits as in *The Family of Man*, *Theory of Film* prizes the photographic media's power to make "the most familiar . . . appear as the most alien."[42]

As both the tool and the product of alienation, cinema "protests its peculiar requirement to explore all of physical existence, human or nonhuman." In the process, the human is decentered. Of the actor, Kracauer remarks that he appears most effective and comes into his own as a cinematic presence precisely to the degree that he sheds his humanity and becomes "an object among objects," no more than "a detail, a fragment of the matter of the world."[43] Indeed, Kracauer goes so far as to call uncinematic any film "in which the inanimate merely serves as a background to self-contained dialogue and the closed circuit of human relationships."[44] Cinematic realism involves breaking open that circuit through the power of the medium and integrating it into a larger notion of physical existence, a world that is not cut to the measure of man, familial or otherwise, but rather rendered in its "virgin indeterminacy." What emerges here, as in Kracauer's writings on photography, is a peculiar form of natural history in which the world appears either independent of human intervention or abandoned by humans. It appears "inchoate, cocoon-like" as an "anonymous state of reality."[45]

While it would be wrong to call this world postapocalyptic, there is a strong sense in which Kracauer maps at least the possibility of a universe devoid of human subjectivity onto photographic media. Indeed, Kracauer had long anticipated such a posthumanist world in which reason had succumbed to the irrational forces of nature. Already in 1927, the "blizzard" of photography in the illustrated magazines had been the occasion to posit a stark alternative between enlightenment humanism and a posthumanist, capitalist mode of production in which society "has fallen prey to a mute nature which has no meaning." In his well-known photography essay, this had been precisely the all-out gamble with history: whether the world could come to its senses and restore human reason and "liberated consciousness" as the arbiter of human affairs—or whether "mute nature" would eradicate consciousness altogether and "sit down at the very table that consciousness had abandoned."[46]

As we have seen in previous chapters, by the time Kracauer writes *Theory of Film*, that gamble has in an important sense been lost—and the utopian hope he had invested in photographic media appears all but smothered under totalitarianism, war, and the illiberal turn of the twentieth century. Consciousness, reason, enlightenment, and indeed humanism itself appear to have failed; subjectivity has been eroded, authoritarianism has triumphed, and, in the words of Adorno and Horkheimer's *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, the "wholly enlightened world is radiant with triumphant calamity."[47]

At this historical juncture, the theoretical motif of nonanthropocentric, a-subjective ontology that one can trace all the way back to Kracauer's Weimar writings assumes far more sinister undertones. In 1927, there was still something Chaplinesque about Ginster, the reticent protagonist of Kracauer's eponymous novel, who dreams of dissolving into the furniture, hopes to trickle away or to be "gaseous."[48] After the experience of exile, World War II, and the camps, and faced with the threat of nuclear annihilation, the playful escape hatches for human subjectivity that *Ginster* still envisioned have become all too real. Humanism is compromised, and Kracauer does not share Steichen's almost naive faith in human universals. On the contrary, the photographic media register the evaporation of human subjectivity, intimating what W.G. Sebald would later describe as a "natural history of destruction."[49] In photography's ruin aesthetic, consciousness has all but abandoned the table at which the go-for-broke game of history was to play out.[50]

SPECTATORSHIP AND THE SUBJECT OF EXPERIENCE

And yet, from the ruins of subjectivity a tenuous, new subject emerges. Although the conception of "physical reality" that anchors *Theory of Film* is nonanthropocentric in the ways just described, it is not devoid of human subjectivity altogether. Kracauer's realist film theory implies a posttotalitarian critique of the universal, sovereign subject as humanism's grounding figure; but Kracauer ultimately reinstates a "weak" version of this figure, I now want to suggest, in the guise of a properly cinematic, if not cinephilic subject: the spectator.

Kracauer's writings are populated with characters and protagonists of various types who may be (and have been) seen as identificatory projections of the author—whether the little shopgirls of the essays from the 1920s, Offenbach in Paris, the humanist Erasmus in the preface to the posthumous *History*, or that book's figurations of the historian as "stranger" and "exile." This is not even to mention the (dis)avowedly autobiographical

protagonists of his novels.[51] Of equal significance in this set of identifications, however, is "the inveterate moviegoer" himself, a figure that has gone relatively unnoticed in Kracauer's oeuvre.[52] This figure assumes enormous theoretical weight once we recognize that it recurs in various guises throughout the final two books on film theory and history, respectively. Spectatorship, as we shall see, defines not only the moviegoer but also the historian; reappearing in Kracauer's late writings as the characteristic attribute of various crucial mythological figures (Ahasuerus, Orpheus, Perseus), a particular form of cinephilic spectatorship becomes the defining trait in the restoration of humanist subjectivity.

The figure of the spectator makes its appearance in the remarkable and pivotal chapter devoted to the topic in *Theory of Film*. Here Kracauer modulates insights borrowed from critics such as Balázs and Benjamin, takes up contemporary concerns with the "immediate experience" of film and mass culture, and also anticipates far more recent discussions in film theory. What binds together his wide-ranging insights in this chapter is the underlying attempt to draw out the characteristic subjectivity of the "inveterate moviegoer." It is a decentered subjectivity to match the decentered world, and while Kracauer at one point explicitly imagines this subject to be "as little humanistic or humanitarian as possible," this chapter begins to reintroduce spectatorship as a form of "the humane." This is a line of thinking on which Kracauer intended to follow through in *History*, had he lived to complete the book. But even in the version compiled posthumously from drafts and notes, he ties a notion of dispassionate spectatorship and the cinema's power to restore experience to the humanism of figures like Erasmus or Jakob Burckhardt. His film theory prepares the nonanthropocentric ground for this new humanism. It is, then, in both senses of the word a curious subject that emerges from Kracauer's theory of spectatorship. Let us briefly review the contours of that theory.

Drawing explicitly on work by the affiliates of the French *filmologie* movement, Kracauer first describes the spectator as a sensory being that responds physiologically to visual stimuli.[53] His emphasis on the role of movement and what he calls the spectator's "kinesthetic responses" continues a line of reasoning he had already explored in the Marseille Notebooks, according to which the cinema "undermines idealist and anthropocentric positions on the level of reception, in the ways it engages the material reality of the spectator—the human being 'with skin and hair.'"[54] Yet in his emphasis on involuntary sensory, somatic responses, Kracauer also anticipates far more recent theorizations of spectatorship, whether from the standpoint of cognitivism, evolutionary biology, or neophenomenology.[55]

Unlike the cognitivists, however, Kracauer makes a fairly sharp distinction between cognition and affect, reserving the former for processes of "reasoning" and locating the latter in "dimensions where sense impressions are all-important"—notably in the spectator's dreamlike state.[56] When Kracauer moves from his discussion of the sensory impact of cinema to the spectator's "lowered consciousness," he consequently shifts from the vocabulary of evolutionary biology and physiology to the language of psychoanalysis. The reflections that follow from here predate the turn to psychoanalysis in screen theory by over a decade, but they sound many of that approach's central motifs. Like the later Christian Metz, who considers cinema as "more perceptual, if the phrase is allowable, than many other means of expression," Kracauer begins with the perceptual qualities of the medium, and of the spectator's experience in particular.[57] From here, he takes the step into what Metz would define as the imaginary dimension of cinema and spectatorship. For Kracauer, as for the later French critics,[58] this dimension is linked to altered psychological states, whether of hypnosis, trance, or dreaming (all of which Kracauer mentions).

In these states, the subject both expands and contracts. In a section entitled "the two directions of dreaming," Kracauer distinguishes between an object-driven and a subject-driven form of spectatorship, both of which resonate again with subsequent conceptualizations of the spectator in screen theory. The latter notably drew attention to the ego-effect of cinema, the illusion of perceptual mastery that enthrones the subject as the imaginary origin and telos of the images onscreen.[59] Just as Jean-Louis Baudry would later emphasize the narcissistic and regressive aspects of this process, for example, Kracauer, too, speaks of the "child-like omnipotence" of the spectator and explicitly labels this omnipotence "imaginary" (though without reference to Lacan's understanding of the term).[60] But Kracauer adds a social dimension to this ontogenetic explanation that is missing in Baudry, even where Baudry explicitly critiques the ideological effects of the cinematic apparatus: for Kracauer, the regressive moment of spectatorship is a compensatory satisfaction, prompted by a world that "has grown so complex, politically and otherwise, that it can no longer be simplified." Deprived of "binding norms and beliefs and [confronted with] a loss of concreteness," the spectator comes home to the cinema where "the frustrated may turn into the kings of creation."[61] To Kracauer, the cinema promises to renew experience where it has become impoverished in the world.

Now, as apparatus theory would also insist, spectatorship entails a loss, a diminution of the self, a relinquishing of autonomy: after all, for critics writing in the wake of Lacan, the spectator's narcissistic aggrandizement is

unmasked as an illusion, a mis-recognition.[62] Kracauer speaks in this respect of the "shrinking self," of the spectator who responds to the lure of the image. The resulting effect amounts not merely to a diminution but to the virtual disappearance of the subject: "So he drifts toward and into the objects—much like the legendary Chinese painter who, longing for the peace of the landscape he had created, moved into it, walked toward the faraway mountains suggested by his brush strokes and disappeared in them never to be seen again."[63]

This account of the film experience records a sense of "losing oneself" at the movies, which at some level remains profoundly familiar to anyone who remembers "snapping out" of a particularly suspenseful scene, an engrossing emotional twist, or a captivating action sequence—as if returning to reality from that Chinese painter's faraway mountains. Film theory has devised numerous ways to interpret this experience. To Béla Balázs, who invoked the same orientalist legend, it encapsulated the cinema's romantic promise of overcoming the subject/object split;[64] to 1970s "screen theory," the same experience amounts to a dangerous, regressive illusion, a failure of reality testing akin to the narcissistic wish-fulfillment of a dream. Consequently, apparatus theory would sharply criticize the dual subject-effect of cinema, the double power of the *dispositif* to endow the transcendental subject with imaginary omnipotence and to reduce it to a mere ideological effect. In Kracauer, however, we find another reading of the spectator's characteristic film experience, which prizes this diminution of subjectivity in the face of a world of objects—that "physical reality" that he deems the proper domain of cinema.

This diminished subjectivity becomes explicit, finally, in the figure of the "film addict," whose peculiar cinephilia is of enormous consequence to Kracauer's thinking.[65] The film addict is a curious, emblematic figure, endowed with traits that Kracauer consistently valorized in writings from vastly different time periods. Like "those who wait" from his 1921 article by that title, and like the distracted, unfulfilled city dweller of the Weimar Republic whose "body takes root in the asphalt" while his spirit "roams ceaselessly out of the night and into the night," the film addict is at once active and passive—a paradoxical tension that returns, notably, in the final book on history.[66] Quoting a French critic from the 1920s to whom he attributes "all the earmarks of genuine first-hand experience," Kracauer describes the sensibility of the film addict as "passive, personal, as little humanistic or humanitarian as possible; diffuse, unorganized, and unself-conscious like an amoeba; deprived of an object or rather, attached to all of them like fog, and penetrant like rain; heavy to bear, easy to satisfy, impossible to restrain; displaying everywhere, like a roused dream, that contemplation . . . which incessantly hoards without rendering anything."[67]

Endowed with these traits, the film addict has an eye for detail, for the wind in the trees or the reflections of "the trembling upper world in the dirty puddle."[68] The cinephilic experience "hoards" what others overlook; like the camera that enables it, cinephilic viewing has the power to defamiliarize our habitual, ethnocentric gaze.[69] It owes this power precisely to the diminution of the subject who undergoes this experience: a subject that yields its autonomy and sovereignty and gains a new openness and receptivity in return. Wandering, in Kracauer's terms, through the film experience, the spectator happens upon the unexpected. "All his senses strained," he enters into a synaesthetic relation to the image, where "images begin to sound, and the sounds are again images."[70] The name that Kracauer gives to the content of this synaesthetic experience—which he calls the "confused" and "indeterminate . . . murmur of existence" and which he considers the supreme and unattainable telos of the film addict's active passivity—references precisely the nonanthropocentric universe from which subjectivity has withdrawn, except as a receptive surface. In this encounter, facilitated by cinema between a weak subjectivity and the "murmur" of the object world, alienation becomes productive.

This emphasis on defamiliarization is consequently as central to Kracauer's conception of the spectatorial experience as it is to the world of "camera reality" itself; in the discussion of spectatorship, however, it takes on subjective dimensions as a form of self-estrangement hovering, in his terms, "between self-absorption and self-abandonment."[71] Again we may note how Kracauer's argument could not be further removed from Steichen's familial humanism. *Family of Man* gave a perfunctory nod to difference, but its explicit goal was to foster the recognition of the self in the other and thereby to drive home its liberal message of a common humanity. Kracauer, by contrast, makes strange not only the world around us, but the viewing subject as well.[72] That subject's curious, nonanthropocentric humanism would continue to occupy Kracauer as he turned, at the end of his life, from film to history.

91. Martin Jay, "Experience without a Subject," in *Cultural Semantics: Keywords of Our Time* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1998), 47–61, 51.

92. Kracauer, *Theory of Film*, 172.

93. Letter to Barbara Deming, November 16, 1960, DLA.

94. On the role of Simmel and *Lebensphilosophie* for early Kracauer, see Gilloch, *Kracauer*, esp. 19–56.

95. Kracauer, *Theory of Film*, 298; emphasis added.

96. Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *Collected Works*, vol. 28 (New York: International Publishers, 1986), 36.

97. Kracauer, *Theory of Film*, 297, citing A.N. Whitehead.

98. Ibid.

99. Kracauer, *From Caligari to Hitler*, 188.

100. Kracauer, *Theory of Film*, 46, 48.

101. Kracauer, *History*, 4.

102. Kracauer, *Theory of Film*, 296.

103. *Theory of Film*'s term for ambiguity is "the indeterminate"; but he will elaborate this emphasis in defining the "intermediary area" of film, culture, and history in his final book, where "ambiguity is of the essence." Bazin famously opined that "depth of focus reintroduced ambiguity into the structure of the image." Like Kracauer and Warshow, he found this promise enacted most compellingly by the Italian Neorealist films, which were able, in his estimation, "to give back to the cinema a sense of the ambiguity of reality" (André Bazin, *What Is Cinema?* vol. 1, trans. Hugh Gray (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005), 28, 37.

CHAPTER 9

1. Kracauer, *Theory of Film*, 310.

2. See, for example, Steven Shaviro's recent *The Universe of Things* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2014), which usefully references some recent work on "object-oriented ontologies," but draws specifically on Alfred North Whitehead, whose work Kracauer cites prominently at the close of *Theory of Film*.

3. That said, there have been some productive explorations in this direction, notably by Drehli Robnik in "Among Other Things."

4. See Greif, *The Age of the Crisis of Man*.

5. Edward Steichen, "On Photography," *Daedalus* 89, no. 1 (January 1960): 136.

6. Ibid., 137.

7. USIA was established by the Eisenhower administration in 1955.

8. "Edward Steichen at *The Family of Man*, 1955," MoMA, *Archive Highlights*, available at www.moma.org/learn/resources/archives/archives_highlights_06_1955 (accessed January 25, 2016).

9. Dwight Macdonald, "Masscult and Midcult," in *Masscult and Midcult: Essays against the American Grain*, ed. John Summers (New York: New York Review Books, 2011), 42n.

10. Ibid., 11; Macdonald, "A Theory of Mass Culture," 62. *The Family of Man* drew heavily from the pool—and consequently, it has been claimed, from the aesthetic—of photographers working for *Life* magazine. At the same time, it enlisted some of the best-known names in photography and helped launch the career of others. Artists included Ansel Adams, Edward Weston, and Dorothy Lange as well as the up-and-coming Robert Frank, Diane Arbus, and Bill Brandt. Some of the images that hung in various sizes on the walls and from the ceilings of the carefully designed exhibition space at MoMA, where the show occupied an entire floor, have become iconic in the history of photography—among them Lange's *Migrant Mother* and August Sander's *Young Farmers*.

11. West Berlin was, of course, the "Frontstadt" of the Cold War; USIA figures indicate that a quarter of the 44,000 visitors came from the Eastern sector. Guatemala had recently seen the CIA-backed coup of the democratically elected, pro-Communist government. See Sarah E. James, "A Post-Fascist Family of Man? Cold War Humanism, Democracy, and Photography in Germany," *Oxford Art Journal* 35, no. 3 (December 2012): 315–36, on Germany; and Allan Sekula, "The Traffic in Photographs," *Art Journal* 41, no. 1 (1981): 15, on Guatemala. See also John O'Brian, "The Nuclear Family of Man," *Asia-Pacific Journal: Japan Focus*, July 11, 2008, available at http://japanfocus.org/-john-o_brian/2816/article.html (accessed January 25, 2016).

12. Sekula, "Traffic in Photographs"; see also Fred Turner, "*The Family of Man* and the Politics of Attention in Cold War America," *Public Culture* 24, no. 1 (January 2012): 55–84.

13. Roland Barthes, "The Great Family of Man," in *Mythologies*, trans. Annette Lavers (New York: Hill & Wang, 1972), 100–103.

14. Edward Steichen, quoted in Marianne Hirsch, *Family Frames: Photography, Narrative, and Postmemory* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1997), 49.

15. According to Allan Sekula in "Traffic in Photographs" (94), "The peaceful world envisioned by *The Family of Man* is merely a smoothly functioning international market economy, in which economic bonds have been translated into spurious sentimental ties, and in which the overt racism appropriate to earlier forms of colonial enterprise has been supplanted by the 'humanization of the other' so central to the discourse of neocolonialism." Viktoria Schmidt-Linsenhoff analyzes the repression of the Holocaust in "Denied Images: The Family of Man and the Shoa," in *The Family of Man 1955–2001. Humanismus und Postmoderne: Eine Revision von Edward Steichens Fotoausstellung*, ed. Jean Back and Viktoria Schmidt-Linsenhoff (Marburg: Jonas Verlag, 2004), 81–99. On race and class, see Christopher Phillips, "The Judgment Seat of Photography," *October* 22 (1982): 27; John Berger, *About Looking* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1980); and Abigail Solomon-Godeau, "Den Humanismus für ein postmodernes Zeitalter aufpolieren," in Back and Schmidt-Linsenhoff

(eds.), *The Family of Man 1955–2001*, 28–55. Marianne Hirsch critiques the "familial humanism" of *The Family of Man* in *Family Frames.*

16. Sekula, "Traffic in Photographs," 21, 19; Hirsch, *Family Frames*, 50.

17. Barthes, *Mythologies*, 101.

18. Kracauer, *Theory of Film*, 310.

19. On the specific location of Auerbach's humanism and its exilic contexts, see Konuk, *East West Mimesis*, chaps. 1 and 2.

20. Auerbach, *Mimesis*, 488.

21. Kracauer, *Theory of Film*, 210.

22. Paul Rotha, *The Film till Now: A Survey of World Cinema* (London: Spring Books, 1967), 735; Kracauer, *Theory of Film*, 205.

23. Kracauer, *Theory of Film*, 311.

24. Heidi Pataki, "Das Kino Und Die Wirklichkeit," *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, September 6, 1973.

25. Hirsch, *Family Frames*, 71.

26. Kracauer, *Theory of Film*, 304.

27. Rentschler, "Arnheim's Early Passage," 63.

28. "It could be argued that history disappears from *Theory of Film* in a double repression: both at the level of theory, inasmuch as the specifically modern and modernist moment of film and cinema is transmuted into a medium-specific affinity with visible, physical, or external reality; and, in the same move, at the level of intellectual biography, in that Kracauer seems to have cut himself off completely from his Weimar persona and the radical 'love of cinema' that inspired him then" (Hansen, *Cinema and Experience*, 256). It should be noted that Hansen proceeds from here to "restore [the] dimension of history in and to the book"—in part by looking "at the history *of* the book," its origins in the so-called Marseille Notebooks in particular (257).

29. Pauline Kael, "Is There a Cure for Film Criticism?" *Sight and Sound* 31, no. 2 (Spring 1962): 56.

30. Hirsch, *Family Frames*, 50.

31. Kracauer, *Theory of Film*, 294.

32. Ibid., 64.

33. Ibid., 53.

34. Ibid., 164.

35. Hansen, *Cinema and Experience*, 276.

36. Kracauer, *Theory of Film*, 48, 50.

37. Ibid., 71.

38. Quoted ibid., 14.

39. Museum of Modern Art (New York), *The Family of Man: The Greatest Photographic Exhibition of All Time—503 Pictures from 68 Countries* (New York: Published for the Museum of Modern Art by the Maco Magaine Corp., 1955), 2.

40. Kracauer, *Theory of Film*, 55.

41. Ibid., 48. Kracauer is referring explicitly to Benjamin, from whom he borrows the notion of "blasting the prison of reality."

42. Ibid., 57.
43. Ibid., 45.
44. Ibid., 46.
45. Ibid., 56, 69.
46. Kracauer, "Photography," 61.
47. Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, 1.
48. Kracauer, *Ginster: Von ihm selbst geschrieben*, in *Romane und Erzählungen*, ed. Inka Mülder-Bach and Sabine Biebl, Werke 7 (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 2004), 140. For more on the film theoretical implications of Kracauer's novel, see Johannes von Moltke, "Theory of the Novel: The Literary Imagination of Classical Film Theory," *October*, no. 144 (Spring 2013): 49–72.
49. W.G. Sebald, *On the Natural History of Destruction: With Essays on Alfred Andersch, Jean Améry, and Peter Weiss*, trans. Anthea Bell (New York: Modern Library, 2004).
50. Siegfried Kracauer, *The Past's Threshold: Essays on Photography*, ed. Philippe Despoix and Maria Zinfert (Zurich: Diaphanes, 2014), 16. See also *Ruins of Modernity*, ed. Julia Hell and Andreas Schönle (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 2010).
51. On the exile/stranger, see esp. Inka Mülder-Bach, "The Exile of Modernity: Kracauer's Figurations of the Stranger," in Gemünden and von Moltke (eds.), *Culture in the Anteroom*, 276–92. On the anonymity of the autobiographical characters, see Christian Rogowski, "'Written By Himself': Siegfried Kracauer's 'Auto-Biographical' Novels," ibid., 199–212.
52. Kracauer, *Theory of Film*, 169.
53. On Kracauer's relationship to *filmologie*, see Quaresima, "De faux amis." See also his letter of October 5, 1947, to Lotte Eisner, whom he thanks for attending the convention of "these 'filmologists'" in Paris. "I hope you were not too much bored. And I find it just wonderful that you took the floor to insist on cooperation between any new 'centres de documentation' and the existing film libraries in Paris, New York, and elsewhere. For the rest, I entirely agree to what you say about Cohen-Seat and his set. I read his pamphlet and skimmed through the material they sent. And all this gave me the impression that they are more interested in philosophy than in the cinema itself. I wrote to them in this sense, politely indicating that I expected them to become more concrete in the near future. You see we are of the same opinion. Do you think they will be able to get down to brass tacks? It would be good to try to keep them close to the real thing, for they are certainly willing to do something useful" (DLA).
54. Hansen, "Introduction,"' in Kracauer, *Theory of Film*, xvii.
55. Kracauer refers explicitly to "our biological heritage" to explain the penchant for responding to motion and moving images (ibid., 168).
56. Ibid., 159.
57. Christian Metz, *The Imaginary Signifier: Psychoanalysis and the Cinema* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1981), 43.
58. Ibid.; Jean-Louis Baudry, "The Apparatus: Metapsychological Approaches to the Impression of Reality in the Cinema," in *Film Theory and*

Criticism: Introductory Readings, ed. Leo Braudy and Marshall Cohen (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 760–77; Roland Barthes, "Leaving the Movie Theater," in *The Rustle of Language* (New York: Hill & Wang, 1986), 345–49.

59. See Baudry, "The Apparatus." This is what Metz calls "primary cinematic identification" (*Imaginary Signifier,* 56).

60. Kracauer, *Theory of Film,* 171.

61. Ibid.

62. This is spelled out most notably in Baudry's analogy between the cinema and Plato's cave: the apparatus takes hold of the subject; instead of its delusional sense of mastery, of being the origin and telos of the image, we discover that the subject is nothing but an ideological effect.

63. Kracauer, *Theory of Film,* 165.

64. See von Moltke, "Theory of the Novel," 56–60.

65. See Keathley, *Cinephilia and History.*

66. Siegfried Kracauer, "Boredom," in *The Mass Ornament,* 332. The notion of active passivity is formulated as a "hesitant openness" that Kracauer endorses in "Those Who Wait," 138; in *History* (84), it is likened to the patient attitude of the photographer and, by implication, to the chemical reaction of the passive film strip.

67. Kracauer, *Theory of Film,* 165. One is tempted here to recognize echoes of the "cinematic condition" of the spectator that Roland Barthes describes in his utterly cinephilic "Leaving the Movie Theater" (345): already before entering, he finds the spectator to bring "a feeling of emptiness, idleness, inactivity"; afterward, "he is stiff, a little numb, bundled up, chilly: he is sleepy . . . his body has turned into something soft, peaceful, sopitive; limp as a sleepy cat, he feels a little out of joint."

68. Keathley, *Cinephilia and History,* li.

69. Kracauer (*Theory of Film,* 53) references the power of the cinema to undo "cultural standards and traditions" through the example of a group of African spectators who detect a chicken in an ethnographic film that had escaped even the filmmaker's attention. The example is drawn from an article by Maddison in *Revue internationale de filmologie.* See also Helmut Lethen, "Sichtbarkeit: Kracauer's Liebeslehre," in *Siegfried Kracauer. Neue Interpretationen,* ed. Michael Kessler and Thomas Y. Levin (Tübingen: Stauffenburg, 1990), 195–228.

70. Kracauer, *Theory of Film,* 165.

71. Ibid., 166.

72. But perhaps we might now enlist Kracauer as a reader of the spectatorial address of Steichen's exhibit and inquire whether *The Family of Man* could not also permit other readings than those apparently favored by the curator himself—readings that would align more closely with the critical power of cinematic realism and weakened subjectivity that Kracauer held—to offer the Cold War audience. This appears to be the impetus of more recent, revisionist accounts of *The Family of Man* that situate the show in the same contexts in which, I have been suggesting, we must see *Theory of Film.* See in particular

the discussions by Turner, "*Family of Man* and the Politics of Attention"; and Blake Stimson, *The Pivot of the World: Photography and Its Nation* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2006).

CHAPTER 10

1. Kracauer, *History,* 209, 208.
2. Ibid., 15.
3. Ibid., 9.
4. Letter to Leo Löwenthal, quoted in Jay, *Permanent Exiles,* 184.
5. Kracauer, *History,* 4.
6. Other commentators have similarly picked up on some of the incongruities I go on to trace. See, in particular, Inka Mülder-Bach, "History as Autobiography: The Last Things before the Last," trans. Gail Finney, *New German Critique,* no. 54 (1991): 139–57; and Ingrid Belke, "Nachbemerkung und editorische Notiz," in Siegfried Kracauer, *Geschichte—Vor den letzten Dingen,* ed. Ingrid Belke with Sabine Biebl, Werke 4 (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 2009), 435–627.
7. Kracauer, "Photography," 51
8. Lethen, "Sichtbarkeit," 220.
9. Kracauer, *History,* chap. "Aesthetic Approach."
10. Kracauer, *Theory of Film,* 165.
11. Ibid., 28; Kracauer, *History,* 46, 58.
12. Kracauer, *History,* 45.
13. Ibid., 194. Consequently, this is not a matter of comparing history films with other forms of historical representation—the subject of much writing on the relation between film and history. Kracauer's analysis aims not at competing representations by film and historians, nor at the representation of history on film, but at the shared ground for representation.
14. Kracauer, *Theory of Film,* 14–16; idem, *History,* 5. Kracauer substantiates both of these claims by referring to the same example from Proust's *The Guermantes Way.*
15. Kracauer historicizes his own analogy by pointing to the proximity between the publication of Ranke's influential writings on historiography and the invention of photography—a connection for which he finds further evidence in Heinrich Heine's notion of a "daguerreotypic history book" that would contain the record of passing days in the form of pictures (*History,* 49).
16. Ingrid Belke discusses these and other analogies in "Nachbemerkung und editorische Notiz," 606. See also Jay, *Permanent Exiles,* 185.
17. Kracauer, *History,* 4.
18. Perhaps this isn't a matter of deciding consciously whether to bring up *Caligari* or not; referring to his recent rediscovery of his own 1927 essay on photography, in which he had "compared historicism with photography already . . . in the 'twenties," Kracauer asks himself: "Had I been struck with blindness up to this moment? Strange power of the subconscious which keeps hidden