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### Neue Filmliteratur

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vorrangig die Archive auseinandersetzen; die Filmwissenschaft dagegen hat in die Diskussion um Ethik und Ästhetik von Filmrestaurierungen einzugreifen. Der digital restaurierte, „optisch völlig neue *Metropolis* Film“ bietet hierzu den idealen Ansatz. Nach der Präsentation bei den diesjährigen Berliner Filmfestspielen waren viele Beobachter der Meinung, dass hier, wenn nicht eine Grenze überschritten, so doch eine Wendemarke erreicht wurde. Staunen paarte sich mit Unbehagen, Bewunderung mit Skepsis: niemand wußte nach der Vorführung so recht, was er denn nun gesehen hatte: sicher eine optisch sich fast perfekt präsentierende Kopie – aber eine Annäherung an die nicht überlieferte Uraufführungskopie: wer kann das beurteilen? Die digitalen Restaurierungsmethoden werden zusehends billiger, ihnen gehört zweifelsohne die Zukunft – die mit der Herstellung von „optisch völlig neuen“ alten Filmen verbundenen Fragen müssen wir uns aber schon heute stellen und beantworten.

## vorgestellt von... David Culbert

■ Rainer Rother: *Leni Riefenstahl. Die Verführung des Talents*. Berlin: Henschel 2000, 288 Seiten, Ill.  
ISBN 3-89487-360-4, DM 39,90

Rainer Rother has written a readable, compact, significant contribution to the serious study of what must be one of the most venerable of all who played a role in Nazi Germany. Riefenstahl will be 99 on August 8; in America only South Carolina's Senator Strom Thurmond, 98 and still in Congress, seems to enjoy a similar longevity. Rother has a great deal to say about Riefenstahl's most significant films, *Sieg des Glaubens*, *Triumph des Willens*, *Tag der Freiheit*, and *Olympia*. He also devotes much of his book to the ways Riefenstahl has turned to litigation since 1945, hoping to document what seems to her the obvious fact that she was never a member of the Nazi party and therefore never deserving of having her entire career (dancer, actress, and still photographer) subsumed under the heading „Mitläufer“.

Rother documents his book carefully. The endnotes are worth reading carefully, often providing the documentation from archival sources for aspects of Riefenstahl's career she herself has been keen to re-visit (or sanitize). Rother succeeds in moving his text beyond matters of correcting Riefenstahl's versions of controversial matters, but certainly among the most important new material in his book is the two-page architectural plan (1940) for an entire film studio to have been built for Riefenstahl's exclusive use just on the other side of the intersection of Waltraudstraße and Argentinische Allee, the very location of housing built for American soldiers in the 1950s, a few blocks down the street from the Berlin Document Center. Riefenstahl herself has never mentioned this costly, never-built, monument to her privileged position within the Nazi hierarchy as of 1939, but it certainly demonstrates what Rother terms Riefenstahl's unique status as filmmaker and ambassador for official German film abroad.

Rother makes an important contribution in his chapter about Riefenstahl's efforts to assert copyright to her notorious films for the Nazi Party. He does not mention one thing that nobody counted on – Riefenstahl's having lived on and on, ever ready to turn to the German courts for vindication. Rother clearly indicates that the original contracts, as they can be constructed from archival documents, clearly show that the

Nazi Party was the official producer of *Sieg des Glaubens*, *Triumph des Willens*, and *Tag der Freiheit*, and that Riefenstahl has no clear title to the rights for these films. She has been able to assert a right where none is to be found, thanks to the inability of the German government, particularly the Government of Bavaria, to respond to clear rulings, to say nothing of murky rulings. Rother does not conclude by throwing up his hands about the matter of rights, but he is frustrated by the cloud of uncertainty surrounding matters which should have been settled long ago by clear judicial rulings.

Rother has many important points to make. He is particularly effective in juxtaposing the premiere of *S.O.S. Eisberg* on August 30, 1933, at the Ufa Palast am Zoo; Riefenstahl, the film's heroine, present in the audience, after directing the filming of the Party Rally in Nuremberg the very same day. Both were possible only because Hitler let Riefenstahl use his personal plane to fly to Berlin for the premiere and then back to Nuremberg the same evening. Such significant detail makes it clear that Riefenstahl enjoyed a most privileged position, no matter what denazification courts said after 1945 about her being or not being a fellow-traveller.

Another important contribution of Rother is what he says about the ideas Riefenstahl must have gotten from Carl Junghans' *Jugend der Welt*, the documentary about the Winter Olympics of 1936, which ends with Hans Ertl's filming of the ski jump. The same Ertl filmed the high diving sequence in Olympia, correctly described by Rother as the most beautiful scene in Riefenstahl's film of the 1936 summer Olympic games. Rother recognizes that discussion of Riefenstahl focuses on two questions: the moral and political meaning of her work for National Socialism versus the aesthetic quality of her work. He tries to do justice to both questions, and not simply by agreeing with the many scholars whom he is careful to credit fully. Rother feels that Riefenstahl, in August 1939, was arguably the most famous woman film director in the world. He notes that she was denied a return to filmmaking in Germany after 1945, when there was space for a Veit Harlan, director of *Jud Süß*, to take up directing again. Some of the unfairness, Rother argues, is explained by Riefenstahl's being a woman. But at least as important, he argues, is her public unwillingness to come to terms with the meaning of her creation of what one might term Nazi aesthetics, at least in documentary/propaganda film making. No serious scholar believes Riefenstahl when, with or without tears, she insists that no documentary film can possibly be a propaganda film. What is left then, is her brilliant pro-Nazi films of 1933-1938, and a lifetime of unsuccessful effort to re-invent herself.

Rother has clearly written a major addition to the Riefenstahl literature. One hopes his book will soon be translated into English. At such time, or in a future printing in German, he will want to correct each and every reference to Riefenstahl's brilliant cameraman, Walter Frentz, who somehow ends up „Frenz“.

## vorgestellt von... Ralf Forster

■ Dirk Jachomowski: **Findbuch des Bestandes Abt. 2002: Landesarchiv.** (= Veröffentlichungen des Schleswig-Holsteinischen Landesarchivs, Bd. 68), 258 Seiten, Ill. ISBN 3-931292-59-2, DM 29,80

Eine Filmgeschichte, die sich nicht nur an den Höhepunkten ihres Wissenschaftsbereiches orientiert, sollte sich auch ganz besonders für kleinere, im lokalen Rahmen wir-