THE "GERMAN" AND "NAZI" IN 
CHAPLIN'S THE GREAT DICTATOR, CAPRA'S 
THE NAZIS STRIKE AND HITCHCOCK'S LIFEBOAT

Erin Ellis

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Committee:

Geoffrey C. Howes, Advisor

Kristie A. Foell
ABSTRACT

Geoffrey C. Howes, Advisor

The purpose of this study was to examine the portrayal of the World War Two “Nazi” figure and the World War Two “German” figure as portrayed in Chaplin’s The Great Dictator, Capra’s The Nazis Strike, and Hitchcock’s Lifeboat. Research of each figure’s portrayal in media through the late nineteenth and early twentieth century revealed that “Germans” possess strength, are portrayed as the non-enemy, are focused, and are able to solve problems. In contrast the “Nazi” is barbaric, militaristic, villainous, the enemy, and uses vile brutality to fulfill the mission of the war.

By examining the three films I determined that although each film is of a different genre and year, each director similarly portrays the “German” characteristics and “Nazi” characteristics through different aspects of propaganda including the polarization of the enemy, a call for action and the American victory. In addition to the portrayal of the “German” and “Nazi” figures through propaganda techniques, I illustrated how each director uses interactions of other figures with these characters to show the differences between the “German” and “Nazi.” Finally I offered suggestions for additional research on images of the enemy that would further extend the concepts analyzed in this thesis.
To my siblings, Tabitha, Kristen, and Bryan, whose support never faltered and encouragement never waned. Thank you for your belief in my abilities and support in my endeavors. To Frau (Linda) and Dr. Bob Zimmerman. Without your support and guidance, each of my accomplishments would not have been possible.
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CHAPTER I. INTRODUCTION

There is a clear distinction between the portrayal of the “Nazi” and the portrayal of the “German.” In this thesis I will make the distinction between the World War Two “Nazi” figure and the World War Two “German” figure as portrayed in Chaplin’s *The Great Dictator*, Hitchcock’s *Lifeboat*, and Capra’s *The Nazis Strike*. The World War Two films *The Great Dictator* (1940), *The Nazis Strike* (1943), and *Lifeboat* (1944) all offer something to investigate in film from this era. Firstly each is directed by a famous director who was a master of his genre at the time. Second, each film shows a specific attitude toward the Second World War which reflect the director and third, each film offers a unique portrayal of the wartime “German” and the “wartime Nazi” through propaganda and the views of the non-Germans and non-Nazis in film.

The origins of the difference between the “German” and the “Nazi” lie at the end of the nineteenth century and transform during the First World War, the interwar period and the Second World War. By World War One, the “German” had developed into the hated “Hun” and by World War Two had changed even more into the “Nazi” figure. I will show that the “Nazi” figure in these films is characterized by negative stereotypes of militarism, barbarism, and lust, and is portrayed as murderous, animalistic and inhumane. In contrast I will show that the “German” is still regarded as human with positive qualities such as being focused and being able to solve problems, and is considerate and empathetic. By analyzing these selected films I will illustrate this difference in the “Nazi” and “German” through the use of propaganda in each film and other characters’ interactions with the “German” and the “Nazi.”
Another reason to explore the portrayal of the wartime “German” and “Nazi” in film is the influence that the film industry in Hollywood had on America at the time. Film’s nature also allowed it to be easily used during the war as a propaganda tool. With America’s entry into World War Two an alliance between Hollywood and the Roosevelt administration also developed. This alliance offers an interesting relationship to explore and gives an explanation for the difference between the portrayal of “Nazi” and “German.” During the war soldiers would be fighting against the “demonic enemy,” not the German people as a nation. The officers and the regime were held responsible for the actions of Germany, not the people. This difference was then portrayed by filmmakers under directions from different propaganda agencies in films. Chaplin, Hitchcock and Capra all received some form of assistance from the state at the time, whether it was through spoken encouragement or the Office of War Information. This will be discussed in further detail later in the thesis.

These films, as mentioned above, include characteristics interesting for exploration and which are justifications for why I chose these films. Firstly, each film is directed by a top director of his genre during the Second World War era. Charles “Charlie” Chaplin mastered the silent film and believed that if he did make a talking picture “no matter how good [he] was [he] could never surpass the artistry of [his] pantomime” and that “[he] would become like any other comedian” (Chaplin 387). In *The Great Dictator*, Chaplin transforms his tramp into the Barber and completely departs “from the character that for a quarter-century had made him the best-loved figure in the world” (Mehran 33) when he takes on the role of Adenoid Hynkel. Chaplin’s worries, however, were unfounded and “Dictator proved to be his most financially profitable effort up to that time” (Mehran 33).
Alfred Hitchcock was also another great during this time known for his mastery of suspense, and was “universally acknowledged to be the world’s foremost technician” (Truffaut 10), and he chose “to express everything by purely visual means” (Truffaut 11). According to Truffaut,¹ what Hitchcock “does, in effect, is to hinge the plot around a striking coincidence, which provides him with the master situation” (10). Hitchcock uses this technique in Lifeboat, hinging the plot around the survivors of the two sunken ships and the events that ensue while they are on the lifeboat.

Frank Capra, a power in Hollywood, who had gained fame during the 1930s, continued that growth of fame throughout the 1940s and 1950s. Capra was a “director noted for his commitment to American ideals as expressed in his feature films of the 1930s, Mr. Deeds Goes to Town (1936), and Mr. Smith Goes to Washington (1939)” (Combs, 69).

Politically, Capra films [were known] to have something for everybody. His villains are stock characters from the demonology of the Left—an interlocking directorate of industry/press/government that is militarist and incipiently fascist (Meet John Doe)—while his heroes counter with 110 percent Americanism: voluntary association, self reliance, Lincoln, the Boy Scouts. (Handzo 161)

It was because of his commitment to American ideals that the Office of War Information chose him for the task of completing a documentary series that would both motivate the troops and give a meaning to the war but would not sound preachy or talk down to the troops (Combs 69).

Secondly, each film shows a certain attitude towards the war. In Chaplin’s case it was “the first film in which he openly shared his political views with his audiences” (Mehran 33).

¹ François Truffaut, a reporter and a film maker, interviewed Hitchcock in Hollywood in 1962. She asked more than 500 questions concerning his career; the interview lasted 50 hours and chronologically covered his career.
David Bathrick in his article “Cinematic Remaskings of Hitler: From Riefenstahl to Chaplin” states that “Chaplin’s decision to make a Hitler film resulted from a long standing concern, some called [it] an obsession, with what he later described as that ‘hideous grotesque Adolf Hitler’” (157). Chaplin received post cards displaying photos of Hitler during a speech and Chaplin described Hitler, saying “his face was in an obscene way comical, a bad copy of me, with that absurd mustache, the unruly hair and that disgusting little mouth” (qtd. in Bathrick 157). He wanted to show the world the difference between himself and Hitler.

One must not only consider the director’s views when analyzing the film, one must also consider the political support it received from outside the film industry. Because the film was released in 1940 it received conflicting views upon its release. Isolationists rebuked the film “while many left-wing intellectuals welcomed The Great Dictator” (Scheide 23). Even “Chaplin had second thoughts about finishing The Great Dictator given the degree of opposition” (Scheide 23) it received during production. Scheide states in his article "The Great Dictator and Chaplin's Tramp as an Awakened 'Rip Van Winkle'" that “one of the most remarkable revelations that Dan James2 made in his taped interview with David Robinson3 . . . was that Franklin Delano Roosevelt got word to Chaplin that he wanted to see this motion picture completed” (23). Although never explicitly backed by the state, the film was supported by the president.

Hitchcock’s film Lifeboat also offered its audience Hitchcock’s view of the war at the time he began filming it in 1940-41. Hitchcock, in his interview with Truffaut, shares his concept of the film:

2 Dan James worked as an assistant director on The Great Dictator
3 David Robinson wrote a book in 1985 titled Chaplin: His Life and His Art and interviewed Dan James as part of his research
We wanted to show that at that moment there were two world forces confronting each other, the democracies and the Nazis, and while the democracies were completely disorganized, all of the Germans were clearly headed in the same direction. So here was a statement telling the democracies to put their differences aside temporarily and to gather their forces to concentrate on the common enemy, whose strength was precisely derived from a spirit of unity and of determination.

(113)

The film received a lot of criticism for portraying the German as being superior to the other characters, but Hitchcock argued that “at that time, 1940-41, the French had been defeated, and the Allies were not doing too well” (Truffaut 113).

Capra’s documentary, *The Nazis Strike*, part of a seven part series, clearly had the most government influence as he closely worked with the Chief of Staff, General George C. Marshall, and the Office of War Relations. Capra was “challenged to both inspire and instruct the new American soldier who needed to know ‘why we fight’” (Combs 69). The series also received huge success. Lewis Jacobs describes the success of the series at a screening in 1943 conducted for producers, directors, writers and the press in his article “World War II and the American Film”, stating “individually and as a series these military films were sharp and quick in impact, penetrating in persuasiveness. They were imbued with a clarity of meaning seldom approached by Hollywood, and set a challenging standard for studio-made products” (357). Many military leaders also liked the film, feeling that “now they had a weapon to win the hearts and minds of their troops. They had no qualms about special pleading; in total war, here was total success” (Culburt 178). The film also represents:
Capra’s personal values and beliefs. There is humour and plenty of patriotic emotion; the world divides neatly into places where the little guy (‘John Q. Public’) has a chance against the regimented world of Fascism. The people, we are told in all seven films in the series, will surely triumph over the tyranny of Fascism (Culburt 174).

The Development of the “Hun” In American Culture

The figure of the German portrayed in World War Two American war films is a compilation of stereotypes that originate by 1890 and develop through the early twentieth century, the First World War, the German Revolution of 1918, the interwar period and the Second World War. Prior to World War One, Americans for the most part received the German immigrant group with a fluctuation of opinions, viewing such establishments of business and education neither completely positively or completely negatively (Nagler 156-57). Americans’ ambiguous views, though, soon turned extremely negative and by the end of the first decade of the twentieth century the portrayal of Germans in popular culture succumbed to “a series of stereotypes and damning stereotypes at that” (qtd. in Leab 184). The reasons for this extreme change in opinion remain unclear, (at least before the First World War); at times in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century Germans and many German Americans were not only respected by the American public as well as the world but extolled for their habits employed during daily life. “Wilhelmine Germany was regarded highly by Americans” (Leab 184), and in 1913 Roosevelt declared it “impossible” to feel that “Germans were really foreigners” (Roosevelt 26). Americans revered Wilhelmine Germany for its scientific, industrial, and cultural
achievements, achievements that stemmed from such qualities as thrift, honesty, industriousness, and perseverance. These qualities reflected many held in esteem by the American system, qualities that resulted in success and fruition of one’s hard work (Highman 196).

Of course one would expect that a negative image would develop when the United States entered World War I, but interestingly, it had earlier origins. Richard A. Oehling, in his article “The German Americans, Germany, and the American Media” gave one example of the negative image stating, “Germany and its Volk were not well liked” (52) referring to the years before World War One. In the generation before World War one, Germans’ overly serious traits soon became the fodder for stereotypes and caricatures in American popular culture. “The stage, burlesque, and vaudeville abounded with stereotypical Germans” (Leab 187).

The beginning of the First World War and America’s consequent mobilization for war not only extends the negative image of the German but offers one possible reason for the extreme reversal of public opinion of Germans. Daniel Leab in his article “Movie Stereotypes, 1890-1918 Some German and American National Perceptions” states that with wartime mobilization came a “virulent discoloring of the German in the average citizen’s consciousness. Some of the very characteristics that had resulted in a positive view of the Germans now underlay a negative reaction that [later] found its most forceful response in 1917-1918” (185). This deterioration of the stereotype has direct parallels with the upsurge of Marxism in America in the years of 1917-1918. Germans became the largest group of supporters of Marxism and “German was the language of Marxist radicalism” (Leab 185).

Great Britain initiated its “Hate the Hun” campaign during World War One as well. This “highly effective British propaganda campaign made ‘Hun’ a common derogatory synonym for German” (Leab 192), and American popular culture in turn adopted not only the term but the
image. With America’s entry into the First World War in 1917 German figures were transformed into “heartless Hun officers” and “the German manner of conducting war [became] synonymous with barbarism” (Leab 192-93). Walter Hölbling, in his article “The Long Shadow of the Hun, Continuing German Stereotypes in U.S. Literature and Film” from 2007 discusses the “Hun” and writes that it was with the development of these campaigns that the “Hun” came to be seen as militaristic, sadistic, morally flawed, often somewhat deranged or obsessed and power hungry (213).

The “Hate the Hun” campaign grew in influence in Great Britain and the United States so much that it became a main theme in media outlets and popular culture. The “Hun” was easily adopted by American film productions, in which many German figures were no longer portrayed as such, but rather as “Huns.” The figures included soldiers and German leaders. In a 1917 film, *America’s Sweetheart*, the female heroine witnesses German soldiers drowning women and children, sees them execute civilian hostages, and narrowly escapes being raped by a “heartless Hun officer.” Kaiser Wilhelm II was no exception in film; “he fit perfectly the stereotype of the ‘hated Hun,’ with his arrogant stare, upturned mustache, and arched eyebrows . . . and in movie after movie the Hun in the form of the Kaiser was vilified” (Leab 193).

The Birth and Development of the Film Industry and Its Use of the “Hun”

Since the 1890s the film industry in the United States grew in size and power. “[Movies] were the first of the modern mass media, and they rose to the surface of cultural consciousness from the bottom up, receiving their principal support from the lowest and most invisible classes in American society” (Sklar 3). At the dawn of the movie era short motion pictures, mostly
Ellis 9

developed by W. K. L. Dickson and Thomas Edison, were shown to large and willing audiences at vaudeville theatres. The vaudeville theaters, while having patrons, reached only a small portion of the population and travelling motion picture companies sought different areas where they could make a bigger profit (Sklar 13-14). Companies sent travelling projectionists to areas where they could receive more patrons, to cities where workers could not afford the travelling costs and time it would take to get to a vaudeville theater. Here the projectionists placed movies in arcades and charged a nickel for viewing.

The movies proved popular. Nickels made more profits than pennies. So the same enterprising businessmen made over empty stores into movie theatres. Nicolets they were called in one city, nickeldromes in another, nickelodeons more frequently elsewhere. And a vast new audience for movies was born (Sklar 14).

The new audience sprang up all over the country. In cities such as Pittsburgh, Chicago, Los Angeles and New York “electric theatres” had opened and “there were dozens of working-class neighborhood theaters” (Sklar 14). “The growth was nothing short of phenomenal” and “as a business, and as a social phenomenon, the motion pictures came to life in the United States when they made contact with working-class needs and desires” (Sklar 16). By going to “nickelodeons” spectators satisfied their need for pleasure and allowed themselves a break from their work. Through the movies they received “vicarious power” and “turned, by their nickels, an instrument of science and amusement into the first mass entertainment medium” (Sklar 17).

After the initial growth of the film industry, events worldwide also led to a growth of the film industry in America. Both Great Britain and France lost access to Germany as a market when they declared their opposition to Germany in 1914. Similarly, Italy lost Germany’s market when they joined the Allied side in 1915. Nearly 80 percent of films shown in Germany prior to
the war were foreign made, most of which were produced by French companies. French
companies, films and capital until the outbreak of World War One had controlled the European
market, but now the film industry in Europe as a whole took a nosedive. Only film industries of
neutral countries like Scandinavia continued to prosper (Parkinson 54).

The lack of production in Europe provided the film industry of the United States with a
unique opportunity. The United States exported 36,000,000 feet of film in 1915 but exported
nearly three and a half times that in 1916, reaching 158,000,000 feet of film exports. “By 1918
the United States was said to produce some 85 percent of the films shown throughout the world”
(Sklar 47). The film industry’s presence in the world had grown so much that “by 1919 the
movies, to use critic Gilbert Seldes’s phrase, ‘came from America’” (qtd. in Leab 183).

The period between the First World War and the Second World War saw the American
film industry continue to prosper and film come to dominate mass media. But where the industry
grew, the image of the “Hun” and the negative portrayal of the German dwindled to near
nothingness. The film industry, wary of losing such a profitable market, one that by 1940
included not only Germany but Austria, Poland and former Czechoslovakia, did not explicitly
bash the “Nazi” or “German” in its films. Some critical films slipped through the cracks, though,
and were released before America’s involvement in the War, including Confessions of a Nazi
Spy in 1939 and The Great Dictator in 1940. Confessions of a Nazi Spy identified a spy ring
within the pro-Nazi German-American Bund⁴ and The Great Dictator caricatured Hitler. The
Mortal Storm and Four Sons, also released in 1940, used a European setting to deliver an anti-
Nazi message.

⁴ The purpose of the German-American Bund or federation was to promote a favorable view of the Nazis during the
1930s in America.
America’s Involvement in World War Two and Changes in the “Hun”

The attack on Pearl Harbor and America’s subsequent declaration of war initiated a revival in the negative stereotype of German. The film industry, along with the American public, did not hesitate to start reusing the idea of the “Hun” in a slightly different way. Höbling states “that nothing poisons the wells of peaceful social coexistence more permanently than armed conflicts; they bring to the fore negative images of the enemy that linger on for generations, and the image of Germans in U.S. literature and film is no exception” (206).

With America’s involvement in a new armed conflict, the “Hun” acquired new elements. The American film industry no longer portrayed the “Hun” as simply militaristic, sadistic, morally flawed, often somewhat deranged or obsessed and power hungry, but also “began to stereotype German soldiers and agents as efficient, even ruthless men, who were also suave and decadently self-indulgent in their taste for luxury, good food and wine, and culture” (Willett 59). German soldiers and leaders in film were portrayed as cunning, efficient and goal-oriented men who had a liking for science.

America’s entry into World War Two also brought changes in film industry regulations by the U.S. government. On December 18 1941, The Office of War Information, which was responsible for coordinating propaganda, now allowed the industry to “take part in the intellectual mobilization by making films on such themes as the nature of the enemy, his ideology, aims and methods, the Allies, the forces in struggle, the battlefront and the home front, ‘what are we fighting for?’ and ‘the American way of life’” (Palmier 599). Hollywood fulfilled this task successfully, producing over 100 films on the proposed themes between 1942 and 1945,

5 This “different way” will be explored more later in this essay, but means that the government did not want to use “hate” campaigns the same way they had been used during WWI.
and 375 with a patriotic character (Palmier 599). The Bureau of Motion Pictures, part of the Office of War Information, also played its part, becoming more aggressive through the years and exercised its influence on scripts and films, especially after 1943, when the censorial Ulric Bell took over the Hollywood office (Willet 60).

Hollywood’s key figures also wasted no time in obeying the Office of War Information. Actors, scriptwriters, directors and producers united as never before during the Second World War era, when they shared the goal of contributing to the common cause. Many producers, actors and cameramen shot films on fascism, the war and documentaries and adventure films designed to win the country over to the war cause. Many volunteered for the armed forces, including Frank Capra, who was commissioned into the army and made propaganda films. The ease with which the war served as a commercial theme made it a tool used to move the public, one that was utilized in the propaganda film (Palmier 591, 597).

Robert MacDougall, in his article “Red, Brown and Yellow Perils: Images of the American Enemy in the 1940s and 1950s,” written in 1999, makes arguments concerning the difference between the ways America’s enemies are portrayed. He states “America’s white enemies were rarely described in racial or even ethnic terms. The press reported not on ‘German’ but ‘Nazi’ crimes” (65) and “the German people were considered separate from the government” (68). Ernie Pyle, an American war correspondent, believed that “the root of all German evil was widely held to be Hitler and his regime (qtd. in MacDougall 65).

I will explore these differences in *The Great Dictator*, *Lifeboat*, and *The Nazi’s Strike*. Through characteristics of propaganda including polarization of the enemy, the call for action of Americans and an American victory in the war the difference between the portrayal of the “German” and “Nazi” will be made. By analyzing interactions of figures in the films with the
“German and “Nazi” I will also make the distinction between the characteristics of the “Nazi” and “German.” These characteristics include barbarism, militarism, villainy, vile brutality, and authoritarianism in their endeavors to carry out the mission of the war. In contrast, the “German” is able to solve problems, is portrayed as the non-enemy, is focused and will possess strength.
CHAPTER II. FILM PROPAGANDA AND ITS DEPICTION OF GERMAN AND NAZI

Propaganda Development in Film

The development of the nickel theaters in the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century introduced the world to its first form of mass media; the motion picture later became a phenomenon. For the first time film offered the chance for people to learn through play, suspend their disbelief and take what they saw in film at face value. Because of this willing suspension of disbelief, “the power of media is nowhere more apparent than in the history of the movies” (Combs, 6), and it is in this history of movies that we can see the development of film propaganda.

To see the development of film propaganda we begin by exploring its use in film during war. After exploring propaganda in film history, I will be able to give a definition of propaganda used throughout my thesis. Film propaganda has many characteristics that cannot be portrayed in other forms of media, including newspaper, radio and magazines. I will begin my exploration of film propaganda with its use in a war that coincided with the beginning of the film era in the late nineteenth century, the Spanish-American War.

The Spanish-American War took place at the threshold of the twentieth century. At this time, governments began to use the new medium of film to help sway public opinion in favor of their war efforts. “Film, a highly popular and portable medium, became important for virtually every viewpoint and government involved in such struggles” James and Sara Combs state in their book *Film Propaganda and American Politics, an Analysis and Filmography* (15).
The Spanish-American War gave filmmakers their first opportunity to visualize a war. War had been written about, painted, sketched, and photographed but never put on the motion picture screen. This war also provided the American people with their first chance to see a war, at least the image of war portrayed by the filmmakers: “with the Spanish American war, the movies pioneered ‘invented actuality,’ the creation on film of a symbolic reality that represented the movement of warfare” (Combs, 20). The “invented actualities” in film had a potential for propaganda because of their nature. The filmmakers framed the war on film for audiences based on what the filmmakers wished. The “invented actuality took the direction the filmmaker wished” (Combs 21).

At first the potential for propaganda was not explored. During the early film era, entrepreneurs of the motion picture simply used the audience’s wish for more information pertaining to the war as a way to make money. The filmmakers gave the audience what they desired and in turn the filmmakers received what they desired. As America’s first imperial war progressed, the audience wanted to vicariously experience the war more and more. Filmmakers quickly appeased this desire by making more movies. In their book the Comb states that “the earliest film propaganda was apparently characterized by little more intent than the desire to make a fast buck. But it was propaganda, no less advocative messages, which delighted and instructed audiences eager to participate vicariously in America’s first imperial war” (20). She also states that “advocative messages” were a part of early film, even if not intentional.

The examples of military action in early film abound. They include ships being sunk, such as the battleship Maine in Havana Harbor, cavalry riding at Fort Meyers and staged battle footage. Actual footage of the war was impossible, so filmmakers often faked action at different forts in the United States. Filmmakers staged warfare, including the action on water, where they
used smaller ships in a tank on set (Combs 21). These examples of action in early film and the staged warfare “contributed to people’s sense that a military action was the only possible one, framing in the screen the existence of a military force showing muscle and suggesting the potential of martial heroics and nationalistic revenge and triumph” (Combs 21). And the audience took the image portrayed by filmmakers as the only actual solution to the “splendid little war” (Combs 21).

At this stage in the development of the motion picture only scant glimmers of propaganda could be seen in the film. These few instances, however, “demonstrated that people sought them out for information about war as well as for emotional catharsis” (Combs 22), believing they were learning about the war and seeing events happening but were in no danger from the war. Those in the motion picture industry saw that they could bring a movie “home” to audiences who then happily participated in the film (Combs 22).

By the beginning of the First World War in 1914 the motion picture had grown into a film that could sustain a story over a long period of time. As a result the industry had skyrocketed in its size, ability and popularity. But the movie industry now located in Hollywood had to compete with other forms of mass media. To ensure the audience’s return, the industry learned the skills needed to read the public’s opinion. Leaders in the movie industry became experts at promoting films and the stars that would increase the numbers in the audience.

World War One also brought cooperation between the state and Hollywood. During World War One the state monitored much that happened; it used surveillance, and police activity grew. Moreover, the state began to actively use the methods and techniques of propaganda. The alliance between the film industry and the state proved convenient when the state needed to propagate an argument for non-involvement in the war. It also later became convenient when the
state needed to propagate the opposite, America’s entry into the war. The film industry had the skill needed to disseminate information that the state wanted to pass onto the American audience and therefore an alliance was born. As the war became a crisis, the alliance between the two organizations strengthened (Combs 22-3).

With this alliance came the formation of the Committee on Public Information (CPI) directed by George Creel, whose purpose was to sell the war, particularly America’s entry into the war. Under the direction of the CPI, themes that had become typical in propaganda film were portrayed in World War One film propaganda. “The CPI sought to maintain the official view as the dominant one, demonize the enemy, exalt the inevitability of victory and the sanctity of war aims, uplift public morale and contributions, and interpret in a favorable light all immediate war news” (Combs 28). The new medium of film, still in its early stages, used this as a chance to prove the filmmakers’ patriotism by working with and incorporating the goals of the CPI. Newsreels and films often used footage provided by the Creel Committee. Characteristics of World War One propaganda films with the help of the CPI became apparent during this time and it is here where we see the use of the term “Hun” and portrayal of the “Hun” for the first time.

Propaganda films of World War I linked individual bellicosity against German villainy with democratic virtue . . . Fighting a “war to end wars” underscored the theme that national virtue, as embodied in the heroic soldier, leads to victory, while national corruption, as embodied in German character and military conduct, leads to defeat. (Combs 30)

The military conduct of Germans and officers was visually dramatized in the films of World War One and the German officers were portrayed as the “Demonized Other,” a trait of the “Nazi.” Officers were often lustful, murderous and barbaric. Films from this era that dramatized the
“German” and “Nazi” include *The Little American* (1917), *The Heart of Humanity*, (1918), *The Kaiser, Beast of Berlin* (1918), and *The Kaiser’s Finish* (1918). As stated in my introduction, it is the distinction between the “Nazi” and the “German” that will be explored in the World War Two films, *Lifeboat*, *The Great Dictator*, and the second installment of the Why We Fight Series, *The Nazis Strike*.

The end of the First World War brought realizations about the possibility and influence of film to both the film industry and the government. The technology of this medium and its success offered propagandists an opportunity to shape reality. They also used film to advocate messages. The Combs state that “the Great War was the major twentieth-century event that occasioned the advent of film propaganda as subsequent times were to know it. The motion picture gave the artists of propaganda a whole new medium to master” (33). These traits of the propaganda film also carried over into those seen in World War Two.

Film offered change not only to the industry but audiences also. For the first time the American audience could vicariously experience a war in which they became emotional participants and believed that what they were seeing was in some way true. It was the job of the film industry to maintain the myth that “seeing is believing,” ensuring that the audience would watch an image of war that appeared true. By maintaining the myth that “seeing is believing,” the film industry kept and expanded its audiences. Audiences also more easily accepted the messages propagated in the films. The “truths” conveyed by the industry were the portrayal of America’s involvement in the war and the war message portrayed on the screen. The film industry and the audience’s reactions to it showed that movies had become a significant vehicle for propaganda.
The Interwar Period and Film

In the period between the two World Wars, America saw a shift in the films produced by the film industry. The industry, much like most other things in the United States, avoided war themes and war conflict; it instead reflected the ideas of the “roaring” twenties. Hollywood produced “flapper” films and films that reflected the wish for fun in Americans’ lives. These included westerns, adventures and romances (Combs 35).

After this brief interim, war movies were again produced but illustrated no themes of the previous propaganda war film. In contrast, war was portrayed as a wasteful experience, where men of all nationalities died for the futile war. The films included female roles but did not romanticize war. Movies that portray these characteristics include The Big Parade produced in 1925 and directed by King Vidor, What Price Glory? produced in 1926 and directed by Raoul Walsh, and All Quiet on the Western Front produced in 1930 and directed by Lewis Milestone.

Most films included an anti-political theme, one that continued into the sound era (Combs 36-7). Films from the 1920s and 1930s are in some form a propaganda film, an idea that the Combs refer to as “propaganda status” (37). They describe “propaganda status” with the statement that “a movie may be made for explicit propaganda purposes and then taken, or not taken by audiences as such. Or a movie may be made without propaganda motives but may be taken by audiences as such” (Combs 37). They continue: “so the war films of the interwar period may well have been propaganda films in [the] sense [that the] film ‘participates’ in a political time not in how it was intended but how it was utilized by those who saw it” (37). So the films during this time may not have purposely propagated a political message.
As the Second World War drew closer in the late 1930s and Americans’ interests in the war increased, so did the production of films from Hollywood that dealt with the impending war. American involvement in the war was limited by the Roosevelt administration and the isolationist policy and so was the production of films dealing with the subject of the Second World War. As Americans’ views then became more pro-allied and pro-war so did the movies. Characters in the films began to fight against political evils (Combs 38, 39, 41) and “movies in the prewar period began to depict the Nazis in power” (Combs 42). By 1940 Nazis appeared as villains in films as a shift in the depiction of criminals appeared. In the 1930s domestic criminals had been the villains in film but as the 1930s ended the “‘looking outward’ forced upon Americans by the crisis in Europe made them demonize the perceived aggressors [Nazi] and portray them as a threat” (Combs 43). By 1940 many films portrayed Nazis as clear villains, such as Hitchcock’s *Foreign Correspondent* (1940) and Lewis Seiler’s *Murder in the Air* (1940) (Combs 44).

As the years approached America’s entry into the war and Americans gradually became less isolationist the films again reflected the American public and began to discuss the crisis in Europe and America’s role in it. The Combs state that the “movies of a given era often ‘pick up’ on what interests audiences at the moment or what had worked in box office terms for other films and thus become a vehicle of advocacy with so intending” (53). An example includes Henry King’s *A Yank in the R.A.F.* (1941). Mobilization of troops also became a theme in the time directly before America’s entry into the war and after Germany’s act of aggression with its invasion of Russia on June 22 1941. Movies with this theme include Arthur Lubin’s *Buck Privates* (1941) and Monty Banks’ *Great Guns* (1941) (Combs 53).
Films during the interwar period reflected the attitudes of the public in the United States during that time. They began with an anti-war, anti-political theme, then changed into a pro-allied opinion, and then into one of conversion and mobilization. This happened as America’s entry into the war grew imminent.

The State and Hollywood: World War Two

By 1939 the film industry in Hollywood had grown into a powerful force. It had the power to influence the American audience with propaganda messages that were changed and developed during the interwar period and as a result of the climaxing events in Europe. This attracted the interest of the government, which began to try to influence Hollywood so that it would support official attitudes and policies. There also arose the threat of censorship. Significant concern about government interference in Hollywood began in the 1930s when major players worried that the progressively daring pictures would cause the government to begin censoring movies. To curb this anticipated action, Hollywood set up the Hays Office in 1934, named after the vigilant William Harrison (Will) Hays, who led a strict office, ensuring little government influence. The Hays Office is also known as the Motion Picture Producers and Distributors of America, Hollywood’s key industry trade group. Hays’s and many others’ tried to avoid censorship by the government and therefore Hays preached that Hollywood should offer “pure entertainment.” Thus, films produced in Hollywood would avoid social and political issues and propaganda.

Hays ensured “pure entertainment” by following a production code written by Daniel Lord, S.J., in consultation with Martin Quigley in 1930. He set up a Production Code
Administration (PCA) and appointed Joseph Ignatius Breen as its head. Breen, being a conservative Catholic, would influence and restrict the subject material that Hollywood might undertake until the 1950s. Each film would receive the PCA seal only after Breen gave his confirmation. Then each company would begin production of the film. Receiving the PCA seal was so important that “without that seal none of the Big Eight companies would handle a picture, effectively killing its market” (Koppes 14). The PCA and especially Breen and Hays were sensitive about films whose settings or characters dealt with the events in other countries, especially those in the European conflict. Breen and Hays would often use “industry policy” to prohibit films with this material from being made. As World War Two began in the late 1930s Breen’s and Hays’s “industry policy” often proved a hurdle to Hollywood as more and more directors wanted to deal with the European situation in their films. Unlike newspaper, radio, and magazine, film became the only mode of mass media that did not discuss the European crisis.

The self-induced censorship in Hollywood would lead to great conflict between the Roosevelt administration, the Hays office and Hollywood later in the war, as the code would become threatened. Koppes states in his book *Hollywood Goes to War, How Politics, Profits and Propaganda Shaped World War II Movies*:

> The war was an irresistible subject for Hollywood, but it also threatened the comfortable and profitable assumptions of the code and the doctrine of ‘pure entertainment.’ This is ‘total war,’ as politicians and pundits endlessly intoned. As the nation geared for battle . . . the movies became a prime instrument for public persuasion. (16)

It is from this conflict and pressure from the administration that film again became the mode of choice for propaganda information and messages.
A turning point in Hollywood films dealing with political and social events of the European crisis occurred in 1939 with the Warner Brothers’ film *Confessions of a Nazi Spy*. *Confessions* was based on a true event; Nazi spies who had come to America were caught and later convicted by federal court in New York City. Milton Krims, a Warner Brothers writer, observed the trials with the intent of making the events into a movie. The film starred Edward G. Robinson and Paul Lukas, and was written by John Wexley and directed by Anatole Litvak. Although Jack Warner, president of Warner Brothers’ studio, received a warning letter from a German consul in Los Angeles stating its hopes that “difficulties” would not arise from Krims’ observations of the trial, Warner initiated production of the film in late 1938. It is in this film that the American audience first sees a blatant negative portrayal of Nazi Germany: “*Confessions of a Nazi Spy* pulled no punches in identifying Nazi Germany as a threat to American security. Germany aimed for world domination, the film proclaimed” (Koppes 28).

Breen decided not to take a direct stand on the film, since it technically was within code, but instead appealed to Warner Brother’s economic self-interests in the hope that the market would eliminate controversial subjects as it usually did. Public response was mixed in the United States and the film enjoyed modest financial success (qtd. in Koppes 30). The film did not play in Germany, Italy or Spain, nor in several neutral countries such as Ireland, Switzerland and several Latin American countries. Great Britain played it for a limited time with scenes cut out but played the full version in 1940. Many other companies followed Warners’ example and produced films of their own including Wagner’s *Foreign Correspondent* and Charlie Chaplin’s *The Great Dictator*. “By 1940 Hollywood had crossed an important threshold. Some studios had begun to make explicitly interventionist films . . . but the departure from a sole reliance on ‘the pleasant and profitable course of entertainment’ marked a significant shift in thinking” (Koppes
These events in 1940 showed a change in Hollywood and allowed for the alliance between the administration and Hollywood to develop further.

The United States was the only major power without a propaganda agency when the war broke out in Europe on September 1, 1939. The actions of the Hays Office and the PCA under leadership of Breen, the film *Confessions of a Nazi Spy* and the change in thinking in Hollywood all led to a business relationship between the Roosevelt administration and Hollywood similar to that between the state and the Creel Administration during WWI. In 1939 Roosevelt took his first steps in creating an official propaganda agency when he signed an executive order for the creation of the Office of Government Reports (OGR). The OGR mainly disseminated informational propaganda, a type of propaganda that spreads accurate, neutral information. Because of this the OGR withheld adverse news. “OGR’s implicit intent was to create an atmosphere of assurance that would bolster the president’s unfolding international policy. The office assumed that if such information were readily available, the private media could be counted on to use it—a strategy that worked well” (qtd. in Koppes 51). The office’s head was Lowell Mellet, former editor of the *Washington Daily News*, who “went on to play a key role in the evolution of propaganda strategy in the film industry” (qtd. in Koppes 51).

Roosevelt’s administration went on to create many more information offices in the early 1940s, including the Office of the Coordinator of Inter-American Affairs (CIAA) headed by Nelson D. Rockefeller. This office had a Motion Picture Division and film played a major part in the CIAA’s propaganda strategy. Roosevelt created another agency in March 1941 to deal with domestic affairs when he signed an executive order for the creation of a Division of Information within the Office of Emergency Management (OEM). This group wanted to employ more inspirational propaganda but was met with heavy resistance. In May 1941 the Office of Civilian
Defense was created by executive order and the Office of the Coordinator of Information (COI) was formed in July 1941. The COI used agitational propaganda or psychological warfare and was headed by William “Wild Bill” Donovan. Donovan convinced Roosevelt that the United States needed an intelligence agency for foreign missions. Under the direction of Donovan, the COI would engage in covert activities and gather information. The Office of Facts and Figures (OFF) was also created in the early 1940s. The “OFF, while ostensibly relying on information methods, represented a solid step into the realm of inspirational propaganda” (qtd. in Koppes 56).

With the attack on Pearl Harbor, Roosevelt no longer had to be cautious about the purposes of offices he created. On December 17th, 1941, he appointed Lowell Mellett Coordinator of Government Films. Mellett worked diplomatically with Hollywood until he had its companies agree on coordination between the groups. Mellett, assuring Hollywood that the government would not interfere with the box office and the interests of commercial theatres, received in return an agreement from Hollywood stating that all dealings between the studios and the government would go through his office. “Thus the propagandists and the movie makers embarked on an uneasy flirtation. The government needed Hollywood, but too much propaganda could wreck the movies’ entertainment appeal” (qtd. in Koppes 57). The new movie liaison office was part of the Office of War Information (OWI) after its creation in June 1942. The plethora of offices created by Roosevelt to deal with propaganda and information caused confusion and finally became unworkable. However, Roosevelt only combined the offices when his $41.7 million budget proposal was rejected. Two offices remained independent, the CIAA and Donovan’s office, which later became the OSS, the forerunner of the CIA.

The United States had finally created an office that dealt with propaganda and which had an inner office that dealt with the relationship between Hollywood and the propagandists. The
OWI, under the direction of Elmer Davis, a radio commentator, adopted a strategy to tell the truth and to provide accurate data. Davis would not repeat mistakes made by the Creel Committee during WWI. OWI officials also did not employ the hate propaganda that had proved unsuccessful during World War One. It was Davis’ and the officials’ belief that accuracy of facts and non-hate information would rally Americans to join the war efforts. The difference between truth and accuracy will be discussed in the next section of this essay.

**Types of Propaganda**

Jacques Ellul, in his article “The Characteristics of Propaganda,” after analyzing internal and external traits of propaganda, offers the following definition of propaganda: “propaganda is a set of methods employed by an organized group that wants to bring about the active or passive participation in its actions of a mass of individuals, psychologically unified through psychological manipulations and incorporated in an organization” (31). The organized groups in this instance are the United States government and the film industry, and the mass of individuals is the American public and American troops. The “active or passive participation” in question is support of and involvement in World War Two by the American citizen. The methods employed by the organization are the characteristics of propaganda used in film during this time.

Ellul also discusses different types of propaganda. According to Ellul political propaganda is what most people think of when the word “propaganda” is spoken. The methods employed in political propaganda are deliberate and calculated and the goals of the administration are precise and usually limited. This form of propaganda is used in each of the films that will be analyzed. Within political propaganda there may be multiple types, including
agitation and integration. Agitation propaganda will ignite excitement in the mass, most often creating an overexcitement that is manifest in overexcited activity. Agitational propaganda usually results in physical action and a change in a population’s behavior. Integration propaganda is propaganda of conformity; it aims at making the individual participate in his society in every way. It is a long-term propaganda (31-38).

Propaganda can also be classified in vertical and horizontal categories. Vertical propaganda is the more classic propaganda; it is made by a leader who acts on his superiority and aims to influence the crowd below. The propagandees in this case react passively to the propaganda and become an element of a mass. “He loses his individuality and becomes one element among others” (39). This technique is useful for agitation propaganda and is the easiest to make (39). Examples of vertical propaganda include Hitler’s or Stalin’s propaganda.

Horizontal propaganda, in contrast, is an integration propaganda and has no “leader;” each person inside the group is equal and the individual plays an active role in this type of propaganda (39-40). This propaganda is made within the group and seeks “conscious adherence” (40). Examples include group dynamics in human relations and Chinese propaganda.

War Film Propaganda

The films produced by the film industry during World War Two provided the United States government with an ample opportunity to propagate information to an American audience. James and Sarah Combs, discuss the propaganda power inherent in the common movie experience. They state that the “demonstrable ability of a medium to propagate messages that influence emotional responses, expressions of preference, and minded action invites its use as
propaganda, both by propagandists who seek to spread their message and propagandees seeking to learn messages helpful to them” (7). The ease of propagating a message is what the United States government took advantage of during World War Two. The propaganda film and its message exhibit many characteristics.

I will begin with an overview of the characteristics of propaganda war film. A propaganda war film will disseminate the message that action is the only solution to the war; one must act if one expects anything to change or if one wants the war to end. In addition to the call for action, Americans will end as the victor, surpassing the enemies’ ability in technology and warfare, because they are a humanistic people, fighting for the democratic rights of others (Combs 11, 18, 30). I will utilize the characteristic of Americans triumphing over the demonic enemy in my analysis to differentiate between the stereotypical “German” and the stereotypical “Nazi.” In addition to the American as a victor, the Combs discuss the difference of friend and foe as a polarization. They state that propaganda films will divide “friend and foe into categories of light and darkness, good and evil, heroics and demonics” (18). I will use the characteristic of, “the enemy [as] a demonic force” (Combs 8) to help me distinguish between the “German” and the “Nazi.” I will highlight the polarization of the “German” and the “Nazi” as portrayed in the two feature films and one documentary.

Documentary Film Propaganda

Documentary film propaganda includes all of the characteristics of film propaganda mentioned, but it differs in the importance of how it portrays truth, accuracy, fact and reality. It adheres to the same rules of propaganda and the wartime aims, but portrays a slanted truth, one
that is skewed to fit the needs of the producers and in this case the state. The Combs state that the propaganda documentary will put “things in a perspective that slants truth and reality in one way rather than another” (67). It also advocates and portrays one solution to the war, that being action. Because documentary aims at clarity and simplicity, the documentary makers will select facts to shape the reality they want the audience to see and to achieve a desired interpretation. Therefore what the audience views is a “factual” situation and as long as the audience “suspects disbelief” then what they see becomes fact because they believe it (Combs 67).
CHAPTER III. PROPAGANDA ELEMENTS IN THE GREAT DICTATOR, LIFEBOAT, AND THE NAZIS STRIKE

Film Summary

_The Great Dictator_ begins during World War One and we see the Barber played by Charles Chaplin as a soldier for Tomania (Germany). Tomania loses and the Barber suffers a loss of memory during which time the Hitler figure Hynkel takes power in Tomania. The Barber awakens to what he believes is the time directly after the war but whose barbershop is now in the ghetto. The Barber and other members of the ghetto including Hannah, the Barber’s future love interest, experience threats and violence from the storm troopers who regularly raid the ghetto. The Barber is caught and sent to a concentration camp with Schmidt, the officer he saved during World War One and former storm trooper. The storm troopers destroy property in the ghetto and force Hannah and her friends to flee Tomania. They move to Osterlich where they are only temporarily relieved from the actions of the storm troopers.

Charlie Chaplin also plays Adenoid Hynkel, the dictator of Tomania. His closest assistants Garbitsch and Herring aid him in building the army and persecuting the Jews in the ghetto. Garbitsch convinces Hynkel that he will dominate the world and orchestrates the meeting with Napaloni, the rival dictator of Bacteria. Hynkel signs an order saying he will not invade Osterlich only after Garbitsch informs him he can simply ignore the order. The Hynkel army invades Osterlich again terrorizing Hannah, her friends, and her family. At the end of the movie Hynkel is mistaken for the Barber when storm troopers catch him fishing in a ploy to make it seem that he is not involved in the invasion of Osterlich. He is taken to the concentration camp.
and the Barber who had escaped the camp with Schmidt is mistaken for Hynkel. The Barber must then give a speech as Hynkel to the masses. In the speech the Barber denounces dictatorship and instead convinces the masses to fight for democracy.

_The Nazis Strike_ is a film documentary that summarizes Hitler’s plan for world conquest. It begins with the history of the German Empire and states that Germans have passion for conquest. Hitler prepares his army in defiance of the Treaty of Versailles and convinces the German people that they have a mission to “rule the world.” He peacefully takes the Sudetenland, convincing some Germans there that they deserve to be part of the German Empire. This leaves the remaining part of Czechoslovakia unprotected and by using the “softening-up” process Hitler takes it in violation of the Munich Agreement reached between Germany, France and Great Britain. He then invades and overtakes Poland. France and Great Britain declare war on Germany, Germany signs a non-aggression pact with Russia, and it ends with Churchill’s voice predicting victory for America.

_Lifeboat_ shows the events of nine survivors aboard a lifeboat after an American freighter ship carrying passengers and a German U-boat sunk each other in battle. The first figure to reach the lifeboat is Connie, a journalist. Eventually Kovac, the ship’s engineer, Stanley Garrett, the radio operator, Alice, a nurse, Charles ‘Ritt’ Rittenhouse, a millionaire, Gus a seaman, Joe, a steward, and Mrs. Higgens, a hysterical Englishwoman clutching her dead baby all join her. Eventually they pick up Willy, who they later learn was the U-boat commander and who in the beginning only speaks German. Mrs. Higgens drowns herself when she realizes that her baby is dead. The others relinquish control of the boat to him and he steers them towards a boat in Bermuda. During a storm they get blown off course and he tells them that their only chance of survival is to reach a German supply ship, which they presume will take them to a concentration
camp. During the course of the film, Willy kills Gus because Gus caught him with water that he had been hiding. The democratic contingency on the boat also learn that he was hoarding food pills and a compass. In their rage over the murder of Gus and his hiding of food they push him overboard. The passengers join together to find food and later see the German supply ship Willy had talked about. But before it can reach them it is blown up by an American ship and another German tries to board the boat. He aims a gun at them when he believes that they are going to throw him overboard, Joe wrestles it away from him and Connie throws it overboard. The film ends with them questioning what to do with him.

Polarization and the Demonic Enemy

_The Great Dictator_ is Charlie Chaplin’s first “talkie,” the first time that he utilizes the recently developed sound technique. Until this point he had not used sound, for he had found much success in his silent character, “the Little Tramp.” But in _The Great Dictator_ he successfully uses sound in the speech of Adenoid Hynkel and the Barber, a character that shows similarities to “the Little Tramp.” These two characters’ spoken language is the first characteristic I will highlight that shows the polarization of the “German” and “Nazi.”

The Barber’s first words in the film are “yes sir,” spoken gently and timidly in a British accent in response to a command from a higher officer. The Barber, who in the first scenes of the film plays a soldier during the First World War, stumbles around going through a set of war gags. The Barber does not successfully complete any militaristic task; he blows up an outhouse when he is supposed to blow up the Notre Dame cathedral, flies a plane upside down without realizing it and crashes it, causing himself to slip into a twenty year coma.
In the Barber’s next scene, after having awakened from the coma, he returns to his barbershop in the ghetto where he removes the boards from the window where the word “Jew” is written and continues getting ready to open up his barber shop. He is astonished when he discovers cobwebs on his sink and dust on his stand. He turns and then realizes that another storm trooper has painted the word Jew across the windows. He begins to remove the word when a storm trooper asks him what he is doing and he responds simply with “I really don’t know,” again using a soft spoken voice (29.58). The rest of the scene plays out with him talking minimally and using props instead of words to fight off the storm troopers. After being hit on the head with a frying pan he does not speak at all, instead he spins around on the street stumbling back and forth and dancing with the storm troopers, who are also in a daze from being hit on the head with a frying pan (29.50-32.30). The Barber’s timid voice and gentle speech do not allow him to be cast in a dark light. His non-aggressive ways, even after being provoked, allow him to remain in the non-enemy category. The Barber is human and portrays not a single stereotype of the “Nazi,” he is a portrayal of the “German,” who is a non-enemy. Here the German identity as a non-enemy does not exclude the Jewish identity. Jewish Germans, in the early part of the twentieth century had assimilated into the culture and had served in the German army during World War Two. The Jewish German in the film also serves as a non-enemy, similarly to the German as non enemy.

During the Barber’s coma, events bring about a different world when he awakens. An armistice is reached, the Great Depression hits and the Hynkel party takes power in Tomania. It is here that the audience gets its first glimpse of Adenoid Hynkel, also played by Chaplin. We see him mid-speech, enraged, furious, with an obvious flair for the spoken language. His speech overflows with words and hysteria. He speaks with his hands while his German is utter gibberish,
Ellis 34

only sounding German (15.30-20.35). Kyp Harness in his book *The Art of Charlie Chaplin, a Film-by-Film Analysis* observes: “Chaplin’s performance as Hynkel here and throughout the film is a tour de force” (165). His fury paralyzes him and he must stop speaking (19.30-20.18). Hynkel’s manner of speech appears in great contrast to the Barber’s and portrays him as the “demonic other.” Most important to the portrayal of the “enemy as a demonic force” (Combs 8) is not what Hynkel says, but how he delivers his speech. His speeches in the film are “primal, biological, scatological, sexual” (Harness 165). These traits are seen when he begins to speak of “die Juden,” “his nostrils flare, his eyes bulge, and he snorts like a pig,” his manner becomes militaristic and barbaric” (Harness 165). The characteristics of his speech allow him to be portrayed as the “demonic other,” here displaying the stereotypes of the “Nazi” in film.

Another element used in *The Great Dictator* to show the polarization of the non-enemy and enemy is the setting. Just as Chaplin switches between the lives of the Barber and Hynkel, he contrasts the environment of the Jews in the ghetto with the palace of the “Führer.” The ghetto is bleak, ill defined and regularly subject to raids by the storm troopers. They harass the Jews, requiring the Barber to deface his own property and throwing tomatoes at Hannah, the main female figure. Peace temporarily occurs in the ghetto when, under direct order from the “Phooey” the storm troopers stop their raids. In hopes of funding his military conquests with a loan from a Jew, Hynkel demands a temporary relief from raids in the Ghetto. But when his attempts are unsuccessful the raids begin with renewed force. In the Ghetto, Hynkel’s voice erupts from the loudspeakers, his face fills the screen (1:01.29-1:02.55) and just as the Barber and Hannah begin their first date they must hide. The storm troopers bomb the Barbershop and it burns down. Hannah and the Barber then discuss future plans. Hannah proposes they go to

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6 Phooey is the term used by Chaplin to refer to the leader of the Nazi regime, another name for Hynkel. Like so many other names it sounds like the name but is changed for comedic and satirical purposes.
Austerlitz, which is still a free country, and Hannah states “it’ll be wonderful living in the
country, much better than a smoky old city” (1:06.59). The scene ends with Hannah crying. This
is an example of the “demonic enemy.” The Storm Troopers who here represent the larger
“Nazi” regime carry out the “Phooey’s” orders. They represent the militaristic, power hungry
desires of the “Nazi” Regime. They portray the negative stereotypes of the “Nazi.”

After this event the audience is directed to the palace where Hynkel is very peacefully
playing the piano (1:07.16-1:07.28). His peaceful life at the palace is contrasted with the
mayhem of the ghetto: there is no worry here. He sways to the music and this twelve-second
segment shows no hesitation in his decisions. While the “Nazi” powers are destroying the lives
of many, Hynkel remains calm in his palace; there is no denying the absolute power he has over
people. Hynkel will indeed go to any costs to get rid of “die Juden.” Hynkel’s characteristics of
militarism and barbarism again are an example of the portrayal of the negative stereotypes of the
Nazi.

The size of the palace is also important. Each part of the palace is gigantic, the doors are
tall, the windows large, and the fireplace is larger than the people inside the palace. The size of
the objects in the castle reflects the “Nazis’” self-indulgence, surrounding themselves and their
big ideas with even larger objects. Self indulgence is a characteristic of the “Nazi” officers as
stated in my introduction.

The contrast in setting similarly shows the polarization of the non-enemy and enemy in
*The Great Dictator*. Through comedy Chaplin makes the audience feel for the people in the
ghetto, and that the actions they are subjected to are unjust. We see the consequences of the
“Nazis’” actions when Hannah and the Barber consider moving, driven from their own land. In
the scene in the ghetto the audience again sees that the German Jews are “good Germans,” the non-enemy, and cannot be part of the “Nazi” regime.

In Hitchcock’s *Lifeboat* the same polarization between the portrayal of the demonic enemy the “Nazi” and the human “German” is also seen. Hitchcock shows this portrayal in one character, the U-boat operator Willy, whom the Americans decide to allow on the lifeboat even after learning that he was partly responsible for the sinking of their ship. Willy’s actions show a change from a “German” in the beginning of the film to a “Nazi” by the end of the film. Willy’s own actions cause the transformation to happen.

The figures on the lifeboat portray a microcosmic view of society with each figure representing a figure or stereotype during the time of the Second World War (Truffaut 113). The survivors of a sunken passenger-carrying freighter are Constance “Connie” Porter, a rich, cynical journalist played by Tallulah Bankhead. Alice is a nurse who is loving in her nature, Gus is a wounded seaman, Smith, once Schmidt, an anti-Nazi immigrant, Joe, the African American steward, and Ritt is an industrialist, who owns factories and is a millionaire must also survive on the lifeboat. The torpedoed ship’s radio operator, Stanley Garrett, and Mrs. Higgins, an Englishwoman whose baby is dead, also reach the lifeboat. Finally Kovac, a socialist engineer, and Willy, a German, also survive on the lifeboat.

At the beginning of the film Willy possesses the positive characteristics of a “German”: he is focused and energized. When Willy first climbs onto the boat he cannot speak English and Connie, a female journalist with international fame, must translate for him. Through Connie’s translations we learn that Willy has a clear idea of which way they should head. The survivors want to head to their original destination, Bermuda, where safety awaits, and Willy says he can get them there. The audience sees that the others cannot steer themselves to safety. Ina Rae Hark,
in her article “‘We Might Even Get in the Newsreels’: The Press and Democracy in Hitchcock’s World War II Anti-Fascist Films,” states, “the combined . . . contingent on the lifeboat can’t decide on a proper course to steer” (335). Here Willy epitomizes the stereotype of a focused German, one who has a plan and always thinks ahead. He himself says, “I had the foresight to see ahead, the importance of a plan” (1.22.14).

Another German stereotype that Willy fulfills is the “energized German.” When the lifeboat’s sail is destroyed in a storm, Willy is the only one with enough strength to keep rowing; he guarantees that he will be able to make it at least as far as a German supply ship. Connie’s reaction to his energy reinforces this stereotype; she says “We’re not like you! You’re made of iron, we’re just flesh and blood! Hungry and thirsty flesh and blood!”, thereby solidifying this stereotype in the other passengers’ eyes as well. Toward the end of the film, after Willy has been killed, Connie also states “we killed our motor.” Like a motor that never falters, Willy’s stamina never ceased. In her view they now have no way to continue moving and therefore no hopes of surviving or reaching their goal.

By the end of the film Willy transforms and fits the stereotype of the wartime Nazi figure that the Americans first associated with him. Gus, an American seaman, learns that Willy has been hiding water the entire time on the lifeboat and he surprises Willy at his trickery. Gus attempts to wake the other passengers on the lifeboat but is unsuccessful because he is hoarse from his thirst. Willy, wanting to keep the water for himself and not wanting to risk Gus waking the others up, tricks the delirious Gus into looking to the ocean. Willy says while pointing to the ocean, “There’s Rosie! She’s waiting for you!” Rosie is Gus’s wife and this statement distracts Gus enough to allow Willy to push him overboard. Here Willy fits the stereotype of the Nazi figure, willing to exercise vile brutality and kill a man to keep his secret.
Frank Capra’s series *Why We Fight*, used primarily as a tool for motivating the “civilian” army and shown in cinemas nationwide, had huge success during the 1940s with the first installment *Prelude to War* being shown to over nine million troops (qtd. MacCann 157) and “which became the most famous film achievement of the War Department” (qtd. in MacCann 156). Capra, made the series at the request of General George C. Marshall, Army Chief of Staff. General Marshall, who had put an orientation program into effect in November 1941, wanted a way to give new soldiers a reason for “why we fight” (MacCann 155) and so Capra did just that.

The *Why We Fight* Series also exhibits many characteristics common to the propaganda film of this era. Like *The Great Dictator* and *Lifeboat*, the second film of the *Why We Fight* Series, *The Nazis Strike*, also polarizes the enemy into a light and dark character and into the “demonized other.” Capra begins the film by introducing the audience to important German figures from its history. He uses quotes from Otto von Bismarck and Kaiser Willhelm II to show that the desire to conquer the world has long been a part of German history. Bismarck states in 1863 “we will dominate the whole world”; Willhelm II states in 1914 “God has made us for civilizing the world. Woe and death to all who resist my will.” The image then moves onto a picture of Adolf Hitler saluting with the words written over the image of the swastika “My motto is: ‘Destroy by all and any means. National Socialism will reshape the world” (52.57-53.31). The narrator continues with “the symbols and leaders change but Germany’s maniacal urge to impose its will on others continues from generation to generation” (53.33-53.45). The immediacy with which Capra introduces Germany’s leaders as those who only want to “impose its will on others” introduces the polarization of the enemy.

One of the characteristics of the series that Capra employs throughout *The Nazis Strike* is the use of the image of the mass. Kathleen M. German in her article “Frank Capra’s *Why We
“Fight Series and the American Audience” explores the use of the mass in Capra’s films and states, “since it is easier to hate the faceless horde than an individual human being, the enemy represented as masses receives the brunt of the film viewer’s enmity” (244). Capra uses the film technique deep focus to illustrate the mass in film. “Deep focus consists usually of a linear visual organization with the axis of interest running from foreground to background. Such camera shots allow the viewer to see the foreground, the background, and the resulting correlation” (Kindem, 165). Capra utilizes this technique many times in *The Nazis Strike*; he especially does it when showing clips of the Nazi armies at Nuremberg. The image of Hitler’s army assembled is reoccurring and sticks in the audience’s mind. The army is first shown in deep focus after the narrator states that “Germany’s maniacal urge to impose its will on others continues from generation to generation” (53.37-53.45). In many instances the deep focus shot of the mass assembled at Nuremberg slightly varies; it later appears with soldiers in the foreground and officials and the Nazi flag appearing in the background. Also shown is the stage on which Hitler stood while delivering his speeches (54.00). This scene then slightly changes to include the “Führer” and two officials beside him, while the masses surround them (54.08). Another scene that shows Hitler at Nuremberg and use of the deep focus comes after the narrator states “...and you dominate the world. That was the dream in Hitler’s mind, as he stood at Nuremberg” (59.01). Here there is again a slight variation: we see lines and lines of soldiers gathered to listen to Hitler. The footage of masses at Nuremburg that Capra used during the making of the documentary series *Why We Fight* came from Lenni Riefenstahl’s propaganda film used by the Nazi Regime in Germany during World War Two, *Triumph of the Will*. Capra who had no experience with documentaries when first asked to produce his viewed Riefenstahl’s documentary in hopes of learning techniques he could utilize. After viewing the film “he hit upon the brilliant idea of
using the Axis powers’ own material against them” (Combs 71) and edited the material with narration.

Capra not only focused on Nuremberg while using the deep shot but also utilized this technique to focus on soldiers. During the film we see lines of soldiers marching. This view, though allows the audience to see the surrounding area and the road the soldiers are marching on, and the angle makes the soldiers look small in comparison with all that surrounds them (1:03.40).

The way that Capra utilizes the deep shot allows the mass and those within the shot to be dehumanized. Comolli in his article “Machines of the Visible” states “when the shot is long so an extensive background is included, the effect is to shrink and dehumanize the characters (754). A film critic also states “the only time Capra normally makes extensive use of radical, deep-focus setups is when photographing a mob, where dehumanization is the very fact he wishes to convey” (Poague 115). The deep focus shot allows the audience to focus on everything within the shot, the foreground and the background, in this shot Capra distinguishes between nothing. Because the audience can view the background at the same time as the mass there is no humanizing feature in the shot. This dehumanization shows the polarization of the enemy, they have become simply part of a dehumanized mass, “hated and part of a faceless horde” that “receives the brunt of the viewer’s enmity (German 244).

Another element that Capra uses in his film is showing how the enemy divides the world, using animated maps provided by Walt Disney. The imagery of the maps is divided into light and darkness just like the enemy and non-enemy are divided into darkness and light, another characteristic of the polarization of the enemy. The maps help show the future actions of Hitler. First they are used to show the plans of him and his geopoliticians, the men who research different cities and make plans to turn them into raw material, (56.49) when they argue that in
order to conquer the world you must first control the land. The narrator illustrates the views of Hitler’s geopoliticians when he states “you control the land and you control the world” (57.40). At this point in the documentary the world map of Hitler’s plans, plans drawn up by the geopoliticians, is split to show the western and eastern hemisphere, where the eastern hemisphere is not only two-thirds of the land mass but also seven-eighths of the world’s population. As the narrator summarizes Hitler’s step by step plan, the land masses on the map that Hitler will eventually conquer turn from a light gray color to a black color; first beginning with eastern Europe, then the “world island” (the eastern hemisphere) and eventually “the world” (58.52). The Combs state that “the true villains were those who divided the world, as in the imagery of the film, into light and darkness” (70). Just as the world map is split into light and darkness based on Hitler’s conquered lands, the true villains are also shown in darkness. The plans of Hitler’s geopoliticians again show the enemy as bringing the dark light and show the polarization of the enemy as darkness in this documentary.

The maps that show the enemy in darkness also show the non-enemy in light. The countries that fight against the Nazi armies to the point of starvation and near extinction of their people are always shown in white. A small island opposite Danzig is one example. This area on the map in the documentary is outlined in white, while the land itself is a light gray. The narrator says “this small island of stubborn defiance, that stood up under the fire of German warships since the first day, its guns silenced, its forts shattered, still refused to surrender, even at point blank fire at 800 yards” (1:27.05-1:27.22). Those who fight against the Nazi Regime are non-enemies, they are portrayed in light. Again, this highlights the polarization of the enemy and non-enemy in the series Why We Fight.
The non-enemy is portrayed in a humanizing scene. It occurs when the audience sees young boys playing with toy airplanes, a humanizing feature (1:03.40), but this feature quickly turns to the demonized enemy when the same boys are grown and so are their planes. The narrator states, “but as the boys grew bigger so did the gliders, soon these same youths were trained pilots, flying the new planes the factories were producing” (1:04.31). The fleeting glimpse of boys as good Germans quickly turns into the demonized enemy trained only to use weapons to conquer.

Another trait that characterizes the enemy in *The Nazis Strike* is the use of aggression. The Nazi armies used needless aggression against peaceful neighbors countless times. In each of the countries that Hitler wanted to conquer he first began with a technique the narrator refers to as “the softening up process.” “For the softening up process he sent his agents all over the world disguised as tourists, students, and commercial travelers” (1:00.23). . . until the day when they would make easy Hitler’s actual invasion, these subversive fascist organizations provoked riots and rebellions, creating scenes like those in France, scenes like those in Belgium” (1:01.05). The scenes the narrator refers to include people trampling other people in the streets, flipping cars over and police assaulting citizens.

After using this tactic the Nazi armies could easily overtake their neighbors. Hitler used exactly this tactic to overtake the Sudetenland bordering Germany. Because there were people of German descent in this area, the “Sudetendeutsche,” Hitler wanted to bring them “Heim ins Reich” or bring them home to the German “Reich,” the empire. The narrator states “but in the Sudetenland he [Hitler] found some stooges who fell for this bunk . . . the Nazis smuggled over their standard softening up equipment, and when the Czechs were beaten up trying to combat, Hitler screamed the Germans were being persecuted, and threatened war unless he got the
Sudetenland” (1:11.28-1:12.07). Hitler then assured the world that once the problem of the Sudetenland was solved, he wanted no Czechs (1:12.25). However, Hitler and his army moved on to overtake the former Czechoslovakia within six months of this declaration, violating the Munich agreement signed by France, Great Britain and Germany on Sept 27, 1938. Without the Sudetenland, the former Czechoslovakia was left defenseless as its natural resources lay in this territory.

After the Sudetenland had been conquered by needless aggression, the geopoliticians chose Danzig, an independent city and Poland’s access to the sea as the next place to suffer under needless aggression of the enemy. Germany then moved on to conquer Poland, encircling thirty divisions of Polish armies with seventy of their own. The Polish army was far outnumbered in tanks, and “Luftwaffe,” (1:18.50-1:19.46), but Warsaw did not give in easily and the Nazi army was met with much resistance. Hitler had to send for more soldiers from the western border of Germany. After twenty days Warsaw fell and “now all Polish resistance was at an end except here,” on (1:27.09), an island opposite Danzig. As noted above, it refused to surrender and only after being fired at point blank range did so on October 11 1939 (1:27.36). And Germany once again broke a Non-Aggression Pact that had been signed between Germany and Poland on May 21, 1935. The Combs state that “the propaganda frame [of The Nazis Strike] was to show Nazi conquests as needless aggression against peaceful neighbors who were subjugated against their will by brutal Nazi power” (71). The ruthless aggression of Germany against peoples is one more trait to show them as the “demonic other” as well as a trait of the “Nazi” and not of the “German.”

In each film, The Great Dictator, Lifeboat, and The Nazis Strike, there is a polarization of the enemy, where the Nazi is portrayed as the “demonized other” and shown in darkness and the
non-enemy is portrayed in light. The methods used by each director show the non-enemy and the enemy which are based on the characteristics of the “German” and the “Nazi.”

Call for Action and the American Victory

Another characteristic common in World War Two film propaganda is the “war is worth fighting for and must be won at all costs,” as the Combs discusses in the Introduction of their book “The Political Importance of Film Propaganda in the Twentieth Century” (7-8), and that “a propaganda movie evokes an attitude that immediately or eventually leads to action” (11). Capra’s series here has the desired effect of producing the feeling that “war must be won at all costs” and that action is needed.

The first example seen in The Nazis Strike of the call for action is in many instances where scenes motivate the audience to take action. The Combs state in Chapter Three of their book “seeing fascists marching, training their children to fight, and paying obeisance to their leaders was designed to have a dual emotional effect: making the enemy seem a chilling and sinister foe and thus motivating Americans to work up the courage and conviction to go to war against them” (70). While those who saw the films saw fascists express complete obedience to Hitler and his regime they in turn became motivated to fight. The most recognizable of this complete obedience in the film is each case where armies and people support his actions with their own words of “Sieg Heil.” In the film the narrator states “this passion for conquest reached its pivotal climax when Adolf Hitler throned himself as God and German Führer (55.09) and the audience then sees throngs of people and his army at Nuremberg where they lift their arms and exclaim “Sieg Heil” (55.12).
Another example of the people’s complete obeisance to their leader can be seen in the film when district leaders swear their allegiance to him. “With pagan pageantry the district leaders from all over Germany swore personal allegiance to him, hypnotized with the belief that they were members of the master race” as Hitler shook each of their hands personally (59.23).

In one instance in the documentary Capra uses another voice to highlight the actions of Hitler and his regime. The voice talks about the deceit that is occurring, so that many will not think that Hitler is indeed preparing an army. The voice states:

> tell the world we have no raw materials and never let them see what goes on, day after day, night after night, month after month, year after year, we must have the world’s most powerful club, forget hours, forget working conditions, forget how to think, forge the club of blood and iron, let the democracy talk about freedom, no freedom here, no labor unions, no overtime, the Führer tells you where to work, how long to work, how much your work is worth, hoards the club of blood and iron, we have a sacred mission, today we rule Germany, tomorrow the world.

(1:02.15-1:03.08)

These words strike fear in the audience because of the intended deceit of Hitler and his regime. These words also serve a second purpose, the voice directly states they will “forget freedom” to “let democracy talk about freedom” but that is only a matter of time until they rule “the world” and things such as democracy and freedom will be completely forgotten. This falls in line with what Combs describes in Chapter Three, Wartime Documentary Films, of her book; “they had given Americans no choice: now they had to fight to preserve what the Axis would take away and to destroy the evil force.” The motivation to act would lead to a triumph over the “demonic enemy,” keeping democracy in America. Also in the armies that Hitler is building,
there is a clear distinction between the actions of Hitler and his regime and the “German” people. The “Nazi” is the enemy. They are militaristic in their goals and barbaric in working. They will “forget hours, forget working conditions” and will “forge the club of blood and iron.” Here the enemy is again the “Nazi,” the people of Germany will be made to work until they fulfill the goals of Hitler’s regime, to “take over the world.” It is here also where the audience sees the “German.” Combs also stated that “Americans will end as the victor . . . because they are a humanistic people, fighting for the democratic rights of others (11, 18, 30), here the others include the “German” separated from the “Nazi,” for whom Americans are fighting.

The Americans’ triumphing over the enemy is not only seen in Capra’s *The Nazi Strike* but also in Hitchcock’s *Lifeboat*. As previously discussed Willy transforms from a “German” who possesses the characteristics of planning ahead and having a continuous supply of energy to a “Nazi” who kills Gus to keep water for himself. The democratic contingency left on the lifeboat reacts with fury. They first ascertain Willy’s take on Gus’s going overboard when he says “I had no right to stop him [Gus], even if I wanted to, a poor cripple dying of hunger and thirst, what good could life be to a man like that” (1:20.35-1:20-45). Stan the British seaman played by Hume Cronyn then realizes what Gus had tried to warn them about before his death. The sweat that appeared on Willy’s forehead reminds him and he remembers Gus gasping “water, water.” After Stan’s realization he informs them that Willy has a bottle of water. Gus then takes the bottle and breaks it on the floor. While the Americans stand there in disbelief, Willy admits to having not only water, but food tablets and energy pills also (1:21.17-1:22.02). Willy reassures those on the lifeboat that they will soon enough reach food and supplies and “that it’s too bad that Schmidt hadn’t lasted” (1:22.09). For two seconds there is silence until Alice, the nurse, shrieks and bounds across the lifeboat and initializes their triumph over the “Nazi” and in this
microscopic view of society the Americans are the victors and the “Nazi” is defeated (1.22.12-1:22.53). “Hitchcock himself has referred to the film as a ‘microcosm of the war,’ and his comments suggest that this is the one picture that was conceived and developed primarily to dramatize a particular propaganda theme: ‘We wanted to show that at that moment there were two forces confronting each other, the democracies and the Nazis’” (Finler 59; Truffaut 113). Each person, except Joe, the African American, partakes and even struggles to get their hands on Willy, while pushing him over the side of the boat and into the ocean. The Americans could not destroy him while he was still “German” because they could not allow themselves to destroy something that is not the “Nazi.”

The motivation to fight and the American victory is another characteristic that helps show the distinction between the “German” and the “Nazi.” The army being built in The Nazis Strike characterizes the “demonic enemy” qualities of the “Nazi,” one that will be overtaken by America and its democracy. Seeing the armies trained and officers in the Nazi Regime pledging their complete obedience to Hitler also motivates Americans to action and to conquer the “Nazi,” only those in Hitler’s regime, but not the citizen in Germany. In Lifeboat the “Nazi” and not the “German” is overtaken and killed for his characteristics of the “Nazi” and not the “German.” Only after he was deceitful and barbaric in killing someone did the contingency on the lifeboat kill him.

The American victory in The Great Dictator is not as easily seen in this film, as Chaplin uses many subtleties as he ridicules the war and Hitler. As Chaplin plays Hynkel, the dictator of Tomania, his minister of propaganda Garbitsch convinces him that he can rule a world with only beautiful blonde Aryans who would worship him as their god. Garbitsch convinces him of this after brunette workers threatened going on strike in one of Hynkel’s arms factories and Hynkel
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responds simply with “have them shot.” The woman who is a spy for Garbitsch and who reported the action responds with “they were your Excellency.” Hynkel wants all 3,000 of the workers who threatened a strike killed but Garbitsch convinces him to wait for the workers to train others, to keep rhythm in production and then have them shot (49:49-50:29). Garbitsch also convinces Hynkel to begin with the “Jews” first when Hynkel wishes to begin with killing the brunettes because they were “troublemakers.” Hynkel states that Tomania will be a better place when it is “a nation of blue-eyed blonds” (50:55). But Garbitsch responds with “why stop there? Why not a blond Europe, a blond Asia, a blond America” (50:58)? Hynkel interjects with “a blond world!” Garbitsch responds with “a brunette dictator” (51.00) and Hynkel gets excited with this, Garbitsch convinces him that he will be dictator of the world, wiping out the Jews and the brunettes along the way and that the perfect Ayran race will worship him as a God. Hynkel becomes so ecstatic that he must tell Garbitsch to stop and he states “you make me afraid of myself” (51:27). Hynkel who at this point had already gotten up from his chair, leaps across the room and climbs a drapery where he remains for a few moments frozen by his own desires. He then dismisses Garbitsch with “leave me, I want to be alone” (51:48).

At this time he slides down the drapery and lovingly approaches a globe, removes it and throws it into the air where it floats around. Hynkel never completely lets it get away from him, always bringing it back to him so that he can envision his dream of being “emperor of the world” (52:29). He does all of this with a beatific smile on his face, laughing gleefully, listening to music, kicking the ball with his feet and bouncing it off of his head. He leaps to the desk, throws it into the air, catches it and jumps back to the floor. He dances with the world and treats it as a lover until he squeezes it too hard and it pops with a jarring sound (54:03). The popping of the globe symbolizes the defeat of Hynkel and his dream. Hitler will be defeated just as Hynkel
popped the globe. The democracies of the world will be victors over Hitler and the “Nazis.” The desires of Hitler and his regime will never come to fruition, instead the “German” and the world will be saved from a dictator. Hynkel is sadistic here in his want for power and lust, characterizing the “Nazi.”

Another instance in the film where the audience sees the American victory over the “Nazi” is at the end of the film, when through a series of misadventures the Barber delivers a speech that Hynkel was supposed to deliver. The Barber delivers a six minute speech where he urges the nations “in the name of democracy” to unite (1:57.12). The ease with which the Barber and Hynkel were mixed up in this film is a reflection of the fallacies of the Nazi Regime. The Barber delivers a message urging humanity to find their way they had lost, telling them they need “more than cleverness” they “need kindness and gentleness” (1:54.51). The Barber directly correlates these traits with humanity, and not “Nazi;” he instead urges those gathered to use these traits against such dictators. He shouts “let us fight to free the world, to do away with national barriers, to do away with greed, with hate and intolerance” (1:57.01). He states that these qualities, ones that Hynkel’s regime had portrayed in the film, the same as the “Nazi” can be beaten and here America and democracies will end the victor and triumph over the “enemy” and the “Nazi.”

The call for action by motivation and America triumphing as the victor is a characteristic of the propaganda film that is shown in each of the three films, *The Nazis Strike*, *Lifeboat*, and *The Great Dictator*. Through each of these films and the call for action and the American victory, the characteristics of the “Nazi” are portrayed in clear difference to that of the “German.” The “Nazis” are barbaric, lustful, and militaristic in their actions and the democracies will triumph over them, saving the “non-enemy” and the “German.”
Propaganda elements such as the polarization of the enemy and the American victory help distinguish between the traits of the stereotypical “Nazi” and the stereotypical “German.” In the polarization of the enemy there is clear separation of the “Nazi” and “Germany” into “light and darkness, good and evil, heroics and demonics” (Combs 18). In each film the American also finishes as the victor, surpassing the enemies’ ability in technology and warfare because they are a humanistic people, fighting for the democratic rights of others or themselves (Combs 11, 18, 30). Through this analysis stereotypical traits of the “Nazi” were seen, such as barbarism, militarism, and they were cunning in their actions and plans. The stereotypical characteristics of the “German” were also seen, as a separation from the Nazi Regime, and categorized in “light, good and heroics” (Combs 18).
CHAPTER IV. INTERACTIONS OF OTHER CHARACTERS WITH THE “GERMAN” AND THE “NAZI”

The figures in each of the films *The Great Dictator*, *Lifeboat*, and *The Nazis Strike* also offer interesting analysis for how the “German” and the “Nazi” are portrayed in each of the films. The main “German” and “Nazi” figures in each film are important by themselves but how they interact with other characters and the relationships they share sheds interesting information on the depiction of the “German” and the “Nazi.”

To demonstrate this, I will analyze and explore the relationship of key figures with Adenoid Hynkel in Chaplin’s *The Great Dictator*. In addition to key figures that interact with Adenoid on screen I will analyze the actions of those who work for him but do not interact with him, they simply obey his orders. I will then analyze the Germans in the film, showing how they portray characteristics of the wartime “German.” In *The Great Dictator*, the “German” possesses strength but does not turn that into barbarism or become villainous.

Chaplin brilliantly used satire and caricature to portray a figure similar to Hitler. But Hynkel is the dictator of a country named Tomania and his closest assistants are Garbitsch, an obvious reference to his Minister of Propaganda, Joseph Goebbels, and Herring, a reference to his Nazi Field Marshal Hermann Göring. Garbitsch is played by Henry Daniell and Herring is played by Billy Gilbert. Frank Scheide who in his article “The Great Dictator and Chaplin’s Tramp as an Awakened ‘Rip Van Winkle’” discusses critics’ thoughts towards a parodied Hitler and states that “conceivably, reducing such figures of evil to caricatures in a film could inadvertently lull audiences into failing to take the real people seriously” (25-26) but then follows that with “Chaplin probably had dramatic actor Henry Daniell portray Garbitsch as a
humourless villain to prevent any such misunderstanding” (26). I will begin by exploring the humorless villain of Garbitsch and show how he portrays the stereotypical “Nazi” in relation to Hynkel’s interaction with him.

When the audience is first introduced to Adenoid Hynkel he is delivering a speech, speaking utter gibberish and seething with hate for “die Juden.” After the speech Herring helps him with his jacket and accidentally pushes him down the stairs. Hynkel tells Herring to ride in the other car as a form of punishment for pushing him down the stairs. Here, when Hynkel rides with Garbitsch, Hynkel changes from the comic buffoon that we had just seen him as to a serious dictator. Garbitsch and Hynkel discuss future plans and Scheide states “shedding the appearance of a clown, Hynkel mirrors Garbitsch’s cold and calculating demeanour during their anti-Semitic discussion concerning how they will further suppress the people of Tomania” (26). This is one example where Garbitsch portrays the stereotypical characteristics of the “Nazi” from World War Two. He calculates and plans to the point of villainy and will do this until he reaches his (and Hynkel’s) goals (21.58-23.35). When Hynkel asks him how the speech went he responds with “I thought your reference to the Jews might have been a bit more violent” (23.24) and continues with “you’ve got to rouse the people’s anger [against the Jews]” (23.30). Garbitsch believes here, even in the early stages of the film, that Hynkel’s cries against the Jews should be “a bit more violent.” Garbitsch embodies the violence and villainy of the “Nazi.”

Another example where Garbitsch portrays the serious side of the Nazi Regime occurs when Napaloni, Hynkel’s rival dictator, comes to Tomania to discuss the invasion of Osterlich. Benzino Napaloni is the dictator of Bacteria, whose capital is Aroma. Napaloni is a clear caricature of the Italian dictator Benito Mussolini. Hynkel plans a grand reception for Napaloni and his wife with a banquet and a ball.
From the beginning when Napaloni first contacts Hynkel until the point where Hynkel signs a treaty agreeing not to invade Bacteria the audience clearly sees the authority of Garbitsch, the calculation that occurs in his actions, and the resulting actions of the Tomanian dictator Hynkel. Napaloni calls Hynkel asking to meet with him concerning the troops that Napaloni has mobilized along the Osterlich border. But Hynkel does not take the call, instead he directs Garbitsch to take it and Garbitsch agrees to a meeting with Napaloni at the palace. Garbitsch agrees to make arrangements for Napaloni’s stay (1:24.50-1:26.09). During Napaloni’s stay Garbitsch directs Hynkel’s actions, telling him how to make himself appear superior, and ensuring Napaloni’s agreement on the situation in Osterlich: Tomania will invade Osterlich and Bacteria will remove its troops from the border. During Napaloni’s and Hynkel’s first meeting the Osterlich situation will not be discussed, instead Garbitsch suggests that “this interview is simply to impress upon him the force of your personality. To make him feel your superiority.” Garbitsch also inform Hynkel of Napaloni’s strongest traits, telling Hynkel how to maneuver around them so that Napaloni will agree to Hynkel’s demand. He states “this Napaloni is aggressive and domineering, before we make our demands we must put him in his place.” Hynkel responds with “precisely but how?” Garbitsch continues with his calculated plans and states:

by means of applied psychology. In other words by making him feel inferior. This can be done in many subtle ways. For instance, at this interview I have so arranged that he will always be looking up at you. You looking down at him. At all times his position will be inferior. (1:30.08-1:30.52)

At no point in this preparation does Garbitsch appear relaxed; he is vigilantly preparing Hynkel for his meeting and will not rest until all his plans are told to Hynkel. Garbitsch has clearly
thought out all plans, plans that will easily achieve their goal and ensure their future invasion of Osterlich. Here again we see that “Garbitsch’s demeanour is a constant reminder of the inherent viciousness of the Nazi leaders, on whom the character was modeled” Scheide states in his article (26). The calculating plans and the viciousness of Garbitsch in this example also show the negative stereotypes of the wartime “Nazi.”

In contrast with Garbitsch, who is one of the closest people to Hynkel, we also see the stereotypes of the “Nazi” in those who followed Hynkel’s orders much lower on the chain of command in the regime. The storm troopers who invade the Jewish ghetto also portray the “Nazi” stereotypes of cold, villainous, barbaric and militaristic. They paint the word Jew on the Barber’s shop, threaten to hang him, burn his shop down, eventually catch him and take him to a concentration camp. They also terrorize the others in the ghetto, taking things from Hannah, throwing tomatoes at her (26:59), banging on the doors of those who live there and confiscating their property (1:49.27). A man is killed when he tries to defend a friend and the storm troopers fire a gun at him (1:49.45). The events in the ghetto carried out by the storm troopers eventually force Hannah and her friends to flee Tomania. They decide to travel to Osterlich, a country they believe is safe and where they hope to be left alone. However, in the final part of the film, Osterlich is invaded and Hannah shrieks “Mr. Jynkel, they’re coming” Mr. Jynkel is a family friend who also lives in the ghetto on whom she frequently relies.(1:49.58). A storm trooper slaps Hannah in the face when she tries to fight back (1:50.14) and she falls to the ground, knocked unconscious. The storm troopers also eat their grapes. The storm troopers aggressive militaristic actions in carrying out the demands of their “Phooey” show the negative stereotype of the “Nazi” portrayed in Chaplin’s The Great Dictator. Not only do Hynkel’s closest aides portray the characteristics of the wartime “Nazi” but those who serve him anywhere in his
country also carry out his plans to the point of brutality. They are barbaric, militaristic and villainous.

In contrast with the villainous, militaristic “Nazi” we see in this film we very briefly see non-Jewish Germans. These Germans typify the characteristics of the wartime “German.” Interestingly, the non-Jewish people we see in this film are women, children, and infants interacting with Hynkel. The women love their children, adore their “Phooey” and allow him to hold their infants. The daughters bow to him and give him flowers. The announcer states “his Excellency seems well pleased as he’s greeted by a committee of Tomanian children and their mothers. Now he pauses before a woman with a child, even the baby is thrilled and seems all smiles at his Excellency’s attention” (22:07-22.41). The women take care of the children, are giving and loving. These positive characteristics help portray the wartime “German” in The Great Dictator. The wartime “German” is shown in great contrast to the wartime “Nazi” in this film.

The other example of the wartime German in the film comes from the Jewish characters. The Jewish characters live in Tomania, the same country of Hynkel and those adored by him. But as mentioned above they are eventually driven from their country and move to Osterlich. They show a strength typical of the “German” portrayed in film during this time that does not lead to barbarism or make them act villainously. When the storm troopers raid the ghetto they do not cower in fear, rather they plan an assassination against Hynkel with the help of Schultz, an ex-storm trooper also trying to flee Hynkel because he denounced Hynkel’s behavior. They will attempt to blow up the palace. Schultz fled to the ghetto where the Barber, who had saved his life during the First World War, lives and then plans the attempt. Through a mix-up though, the attempt is never carried out. The group decided that they would draw “straws,” using instead a
ring. Whoever ended with the ring on their plate would attempt the assassination. Hannah thwarts their plans when she places a ring on each of their plates resulting in a very comedic scene where each person thinks they must perform the assassination and the Barber swallows and then hiccups each ring. In the end they decide it would be in their best interests to not attempt to blow up the castle and the leave, when Schultz returns, coming down the stairs (1:08.04-1:13.43).

In *The Great Dictator* Chaplin uses comedy to portray the difference between the wartime “German” and the wartime “Nazi.” The “Nazi” is portrayed by those close to the “Phooey” and to those who work for him but never interact with him. These figures include Garbitsch, Napaloni, and the storm troopers who all portray the characteristics of militarism, barbarism and villainess. The women, children, infants and finally the Jews portray the characteristics of the wartime “German,” loving, and containing a strength typical of both “Germans” and “Nazis” but one that does not reach a brutality, barbarism, or militarism that the “Nazi” does.

In Hitchcock’s *Lifeboat* the “German” and the “Nazi” are also portrayed. How figures in this setting react to and interact with Willy, the “German” and “Nazi” also show the stereotypes of each wartime figure. I will begin by analyzing the interactions of others to Willy and how they support the difference of the stereotypical wartime “German” and “Nazi.”

The authority that Willy receives distinguishes the Nazi character from the German character. An American ship engineer, Kovac, demands authority at first, taking charge of the lifeboat and rationing the minimal food supplies and water the characters must share during their stay on the boat. However, this authority is slowly taken away from him by Willy, when Kovac cannot perform to the other figures’ expectations. Connie once again reinforces this stereotype when she states towards the end of the movie “We weren’t a mob when we killed him [Willy],
we were a mob when we sat around . . . obeying him. . . We not only let the Nazi do our rowing for us, but our thinking!” By this point Kovac had clearly lost all authority, it had been given to Willy long before Kovac relinquished it to him.

Another clear marker for the distinction between Nazi and German lies in each character’s address to him and how they name him, whether it is German or Nazi. Some characters make clear distinctions, naming Willy “Nazi” for the majority of the movie, while others call him “German” for the duration of the movie, while others still go through extreme changes and address him as “German” first and then, through the course of events, change to “Nazi.”

The view of Willy as a Nazi is seen most clearly in the characters of Kovac and Stan, a mild-mannered radio operator. Throughout the film they only address him as Nazi, and upon his arrival on the ship Kovac demands that they “throw the Nazi-buzzard overboard” although it would be straight into the ocean. When Gus states that Willy cannot help where he was born, Kovac retorts with, “yeah, just like a rattle snake can’t help being a rattle snake, that doesn’t make him a nightingale.” Another example occurs when Mrs. Higgins realizes that her baby is dead. The baby had drowned in the ocean but she is hysterical and had not accepted this fact. She turns to Willy and says “you killed him didn’t you, didn’t you?” She screams this in hysteria, first assuming that the only one capable of this action on the boat is the Nazi. According to her his kind is always able to do this, to kill on demand. This inference is supported later in the film when Willy kills Gus because he feels it necessary.

Kovac in fact never trusts Willy, continually referring to him in derogatory terms, or not at all. In the course of the film his statements include “I don’t trust the Nazi,” and that the operations Willy performed while a surgeon “were probably illegal.” This statement contradicts
the good intentions associated with giving medical assistance. In Kovac’s eyes Willy only remains a Nazi, a person who characterizes their negative stereotypes. He also wishes that Willy would simply “go back where he belongs,” away from them and out of his head.

Kovac also recognizes how convenient it is that they are headed for the German supply ship, after the survivors on the lifeboat with the aid of Willy determine that they have drifted off course for Bermuda and must now change their route. Willy convinces those on the lifeboat that their next best opportunity to survive lies with the German supply ship because he knows where it will be located. Willy rows them there because he has not tired from rowing. Kovac sees the irony in the situation and states “our enemy, our prisoner of war, now we’re his prisoners . . . while he rows us to his supply ship and a concentration camp.”

Stan also views Willy negatively in the course of the film. He does not explicitly give his opinion, but his opinion is seen in his support of Kovac. Anything that Kovac says Stan will quickly concur with, reaffirming the already negative stereotype of “Nazi.” He quickly sides with Kovac when Kovac demands that he be commander of the ship and not Willy.

In contrast to the characters who only view Willy as a Nazi whose actions reflect the negative stereotypes of the “Nazi,” Connie and millionaire, Charles “Ritt” Rittenhouse, view Willy as a “German,” who possesses qualities that will aid those stranded and help bring them to safety. At the beginning of the film, while trying to decide which direction to head Connie states “we’ll listen to the German.” Ritt responds with “he’s the best qualified to run it [the lifeboat].” Here, qualifications and abilities outweigh negative stereotypes of Nazi. The German is portrayed with positive characteristics, an assured belief in his ability to achieve his desired destination. Ritt is also the last to agree with the majority when they decide on Kovac as the captain and not Willy; he reluctantly says “well, if the rest agree.”
In contrast to these characters, who view Willy as strictly a German or Nazi, some of the characters’ views of Willy change throughout the film. In the beginning the views held by the character’s fit the stereotypes of the German. They then progress to view the actions and characteristics of Willy as a stereotypical “Nazi.” The first character the audience sees this in is Gus. During a storm, Willy gives each of the survivors commands enabling all of them to survive. While receiving the commands Gus, who had always previously viewed Willy as a German, now states “What do you know, we got a Führer on our hands,” clearly referencing the Nazi leader of the time. He associates demanding with Nazis and not Germans; to him the association is clear.

Perhaps one of the most drastic changes in a character’s view of and behavior toward Willy as a Nazi occurs when Alice, the nurse, initiates the beating and eventual death of Willy. Alice learns Willy had not only allowed Gus to kill himself not hindering him at all, but he had also been hiding provisions and water all along. His actions of vile brutality cause her rage and disbelief and she attacks him with a shoe and the others follow her lead. This shift in character is important here because of her occupation of nurse. Throughout the entire film she had been loving and giving, taking care of others, and here she goes against her natural tendencies and kills the “Nazi.” The vile brutality Willy showed in encouraging Gus’ death allowed for Alice to change her actions and to initiate Willy’s murder.

In addition to Alice, two other characters show a change only after Willy’s death. Ritt shows a complete change with regard to the “German” and the “Nazi.” Normally one to side with the positive views, it is Ritt who in the end says “throw him back.” He says this not to Willy but another German, a young male, who wants to board the lifeboat at the end of the film. The young German was a survivor of the supply ship, the one to which those on the lifeboat had been headed, and had come to the lifeboat seeking refuge. Many of the women immediately
again respond to the young German, willing to forget, but Ritt does not forget so easily. Willy’s actions had influenced Ritt’s opinion of Nazis significantly. His change in view of Nazi’s influenced his next statement, “we can’t treat them as human beings, we got to exterminate them.” He wanted to ensure that something similar to the events that transpired while Willy was on the boat would not happen again, therefore he stops a threat before it even starts. He is willing to kill the “Nazi” in this case, because in his mind they are not even human beings. Ritt now only sees the “Nazi.”

Even Connie, the quintessential supporter of Willy as a “German” and advocate of the positive view of the “German,” changes her view as well: by partaking in the group effort to kill Willy she becomes what many of the others have been all along. She aids in advancing the belief that Nazis cannot be good and that they only epitomize the negative stereotypes of the “Nazi.”

In contrast to all of the above figures, Joe, an African-American steward, shows very little bias towards Willy. He did not lend himself to either side, either positive or negative. During the scene in which the group kills Willy and shoves him over the side of the boat Joe is the only figure who does not participate. He also never refers to Willy as either “German” or “Nazi;” it seems that he is indifferent to the idea. One may argue that Joe was simply a friend to Willy during their time on the lifeboat. Joe plays his instrument on the boat while Willy sings; they both enjoy themselves, exchanging songs to sing and laughing with each other. Their contagious positive view affects the others and for a time on the lifeboat nothing is said about “German” or “Nazi.”

\[7\] It is interesting to question whether Joe responds more to the outsider status he shares with Willy rather than to his character but for my purposes I will not further investigate that. I will focus on Willy’s character and Joe’s response to it.
The documentary nature of *The Nazis Strike* portrays figures differently and the therefore must be looked at differently. The figures in the film are groups of figures rather than specific individuals. I will begin by analyzing the differences of the wartime “Nazi” and the wartime “German” by analyzing the figures outside of his regime and those within his regime.

MacDougall in his article “Red, Brown and Yellow Perils: Images of the American Enemy in the 1940s and 1950s” discusses the portrayal of the enemy in media throughout both decades. In the article he writes “Frank Capra’s *Why We Fight* films described the German people as ‘a human herd’” and that “Hollywood allowed for the existence of ‘good Germans’ in films” (65). The German people are seen as “a human herd” in the image of them gathered when Hitler and his troops invade Austria on March 12, 1938. As the German armies march over the Austrian border those who are not in uniform stand gathered, supporting the actions of the soldiers but not participating in the actions. Here Capra portrays those gathered as a “human herd” separated from those in the Regime (1:08.30-1:08.37). The “human herd” gathered is outside of Hitler’s Regime.

The geopoliticians on the other hand work within his regime and carry out actions given to them by Hitler and his assistants. The narrator states:

set up at Munich was an institute devoted to the little known science of geopolitics, vaguely defined as the military control of space, Germany’s leading geopolitician, a former general, Kyle Haushoffer, was head man, here was gathered more about your hometown than you yourself know, to the German geopolitician the world is not made up of men, women and children who live and love and dream of better things, it is made up of only two elements, labor and raw
materials. The geopolitician’s job was to transform Hitler’s ambition to control these elements into cold hard reality. (55.58-56.46)

The geopoliticians who followed Hitler’s orders are militaristic and barbaric. They do not care about the “men, women and children” only that Hitler’s ambitions became realities. “Men, women and children” were only product, something necessary in reaching the geopolitician’s goals. Men, women, and children would then be controlled, and made into raw materials.

In addition to the geopoliticians employed by Hitler to fulfill his goal of conquering the eastern part of the world and eventually the entire world the documentary shows “agents” sent all over the world to fulfill Hitler’s tasks, his main objective being the softening-up process. As mentioned in my previous chapter, the softening up process helped invoke riots and rebellions in different countries, to keep them from uniting. The narrator states “for the softening up process he sent his agents all over the world disguised as tourists, students, and commercial travelers,” they came to “bribe, threaten, and to form local fascist parties” (1:00.23-1:00-39). He continues with “until the day when they would make easy Hitler’s actual invasion, these subversive fascist organizations provoked riots and rebellions” (1:01.05-1:01.26). The audience then sees mobs overturning cars in Belgium, trampling people in the streets in France, and police striking people in France. These agents portray brutality and are villains as well. They incite anger in crowds provoking them to riots, eventually leading to undue violence against citizens and are villains also, using a myriad of disguises to accomplish and set up their fascist groups all over the world.

Capra also uses individual figures within and outside of Hitler’s regime to portray the wartime “German” and the wartime “Nazi.” The “Germans” appear in “a human herd” simply gathered to watch an event. The wartime “Nazis” are barbaric, militaristic and brutal. Hitler’s geopoliticians will prepare Germany, using people as raw material to overtake land. Hitler’s
agents perform his actions in other countries, leading to brutal actions and them becoming villains, using disguises to carry out Hitler’s actions and inciting riots and rebellions wherever they go.
CHAPTER V. CONCLUSION

While each film is different in genre and directed by different directors known for different techniques, each film portrays the differences between the “German” and the “Nazi.” Chaplin uses comedy and satire in The Great Dictator to show differences in the polarization of the enemy as friend and foe in the speech of the Barber and Adenoid Hynkel and uses the setting of the palace and the ghetto to reinforce this idea. Hitchcock successfully shows the differences between the “German” and the “Nazi” in his dramatization Lifeboat. The polarization of the enemy as friend and foe in this film develops in one character, Willy, a survivor from the U-boat sunk at the same time as the American freighter ship. Capra’s film, The Nazis Strike, a documentary film, does not have individual characters, but rather Capra uses deep focus to highlight the masses and how they are divided into friend and foe. Capra also divides the enemy into light and dark by dividing areas on maps into light and dark portions, depending on their allegiance to or defense against Hitler and his regime.

Close analysis of the films and readings also reveals that, although different in their style and techniques, each film employs similar propaganda strategies and all show commonalities in their methods to motivate citizens against Hitler. The films give a call for action and show that the American democracy will triumph over the Hitler Regime. By portraying the enemy as sinister and chilling in The Nazi’s Strike, Capra motivates Americans into action. Capra portrays the enemy as chilling when they fully pledge their allegiance to Hitler and when the only voice that is not the narrator speaks, stating that all of democracy and freedom will be forgotten. The audience also sees the German people made to work, under directions to forget working hours and conditions. Here Americans end as victor because here they are humanistic and will save the
“Germans” from the “Nazis” by fighting for their democratic rights. Americans triumph over the enemy in *Lifeboat* when they push Willy, the “Nazi,” overboard in their rage and disbelief. Chaplin shows the triumph over the enemy in *The Great Dictator* in the character of Hynkel when he unsuccessfully balances the globe in his office and ends up popping it. Additionally, as the Barber gives his own speech at the end of the film instead of the speech originally intended to be given by Hynkel, he captivates the audience and states that the Regime can be beaten, that America and democracies will end as victor. This call for action and motivation to win over the enemy also shows the differences between the “Nazi,” who is barbaric, villainous and militaristic, and the “German,” who is in the categories of friend and light.

Interactions of figures with the “German” and “Nazi” in each film also characterize the differences between the “German” and “Nazi.” The figure of Garbitsch and how he interacts with Hynkel shows the calculating means of the “Nazi” and the actions of the storm troopers in the Ghetto show the barbarism of the Nazi Regime. The non-Jewish Germans portrayed in the film portray characteristics of the “German;” they are kind and giving. The Jewish characters in the film possess a strength in the film typical of the “German,” but one that does not change into brute or militaristic strength as seen in the “Nazi” characters in the film. In Hitchcock’s *Lifeboat* the interactions of the non-German contingency with Willy also portray the differences of the “German” and “Nazi.” Different figures in the film react differently to Willy, some consider him “German” in the beginning and later conceive him as a “Nazi” while some consider him a “Nazi” the entire time he resides on the boat. Kovac and Stan see Willy as a “Nazi” for the duration of the film, Connie and Ritt view him as “German” for the majority of the film, allowing him to steer them to safety because they find that his “German” qualities outweigh his “Nazi” qualities. Alice, Gus, and eventually even Connie and Ritt, however, view him as a “Nazi” by the end of
the film. Only Joe remains indifferent to Willy, neither referring to him as “German” or “Nazi” nor participating in his death. The interactions of the geopoliticians and agents in Capra’s The Nazis Strike also show the characteristics of the “German” and the “Nazi.” The Geopoliticians only care about raw materials and fulfilling Hitler’s goals and will do this by turning men women and children into raw material. Agents in the documentary use the “softening-up” process to help begin Hitler’s invasions and invoke riots. Their brutal and villainous actions portray the characteristics of the “Nazi.” “Germans” appear in the documentary as a “human” herd gathered to watch an event.

The films The Great Dictator, The Nazi’s Strike, and Lifeboat make similar distinctions between the “German” and the “Nazi,” although they are different genres and were produced at different times in World War Two. Chaplin’s comedy, Capra’s propaganda documentary and Hitchcock’s dramatization all polarize the enemy, divide the enemy into light and dark and motivate Americans against Hitler. These characteristics, combined with the interactions of figures with the “German” and “Nazi,” show the differences between the “Nazi” and “German” in these films. The “Nazi” is barbaric, brutal, villainous, ruthless, militaristic, and authoritative in his mission to carry out the war; he is the enemy and is non-human. The “German” is focused, possesses strength, is rigorous, and is human.

Given the analysis in this thesis and the conclusions drawn from it, other questions arise concerning the portrayal of the American enemy in war film, especially in regard to the enemy both during World War Two and after its end in 1945. In this regard the question can be asked, how do America’s enemies in World War II compare to American’s enemies during the Cold War. Are their significant differences in the portrayal of Russians during World War Two and their portrayal after becoming an enemy during the Cold War, and if so, how and to what extent.
Also if there is a difference, how is it portrayed in film media and to what extent is it similar or different to the portrayal of the “Nazi”? This question then leads to the question of the portrayal of the Asian enemy in American film, is there a difference between the Japanese enemy in film during World War Two and the Cold War, the same can be asked for the Chinese and North Korean enemy portrayed in film and how these differ. One could then make comparisons of these portrayals with the portrayal of the “Nazi,” determine whether there are similarities and differences, and offer a possible explanation for why such similarities and differences may exist.

Another question to explore would be the differences between these enemies as they pertain to the countries’ government and its citizens. Is there a difference shown in film between Russia’s people and its government, between the Chinese government and its people, and between the Japanese government and its people? If so, we again ask how they are similar and different to the portrayal of the “Nazi” and of the “German” in American film. Do similarities and differences follow the same pattern as the “Nazi”-“German” pattern or do they depend on the war that takes place on the screen?

To further extend research one could compare the politics of the Cold War and its objectives with the politics and objectives of World War Two, looking at it both from the government’s view and Hollywood’s. One could consider changes that occurred domestically and internationally and why they are important in regard to the portrayal of American’s enemies in film. These kinds of questions encourage further research by scholars and investigation into the relationship between the portrayal of the “Nazi” and the portrayal of other enemies of the United States during World War Two and the Cold War.
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