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Kerry Wallach
Gettysburg College

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Keywords

Der träumende Mund, German cinema, film, Elisabeth Bergner, German Jews, suicide

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Escape Artistry: Elisabeth Bergner and Jewish Disappearance

in *Der träumende Mund* (Czinner, 1932)

Kerry Wallach

ABSTRACT
The late Weimar film *Der träumende Mund* culminates in the apparent but unconfirmed suicide of its female protagonist, played by Elisabeth Bergner. Bergner, whose background contributed to the film's Jewish reception, and who later claimed to have written the film's screenplay, left Germany and went into exile with director Paul Czinner in 1932. This film and the circumstances of its production and premiere link tragic modes of self-erasure, including the suicides of both many women and many German Jews, to notions of escape, emigration, and reemergence. Its success among Jewish spectators points to its enduring and international appeal.

"I shall follow soon. I shall follow soon, you'll see." With these words, Gaby, the protagonist of *Der träumende Mund* (Dreaming Lips, Paul Czinner, 1932) bids her lover a tearful farewell prior to his departure for a concert tour.[1] Soon after, she goes missing. At the end of the film, there is no visual evidence as to Gaby's whereabouts; clues hint that she drowned herself. Gaby disappears in this Weimar film, and the actress who played her, Elisabeth Bergner (1897–1986), was similarly shrouded by absence, first from her own premiere, and then from Germany entirely. Like Gaby, Bergner misled filmgoers by failing to make good on her supposed promise to attend the premiere of *Der träumende Mund* on 13 September 1932, at Berlin's Capitol am Zoo, leaving only her costar Rudolf Forster, who played Gaby's lover, to receive the generous applause.[2] In Berlin, an audience consisting of both non-Jewish and Jewish viewers saw and heard this collaborative sound film by director Paul Czinner and Elisabeth Bergner, a Jewish filmmaking pair that fled Germany for London that same year and remained in exile.[3] Though Bergner was not present at the premiere, ostensibly due to an ear operation—an excuse that critic

Lotte Eisner found especially odd given its similarity to the operation in the film—, an exhibition in the foyer of the Capitol distracted viewers from Bergner's absence with photographs and paintings of the actress in her various Berlin roles.[4]

The film is set in 1932, possibly in Berlin, and is closely intertwined with the traumatic political events of the time.[5] The filming of *Der träumende Mund* in Paris in summer 1932 was colored by reports of the expanding SA brown shirt army.[6] Its filmic subtexts and subsequent reception point to the limited options for German Jewry at such a precarious moment in history, yet it comes as no surprise that the film contains no explicit references to Jewishness. Instead, the *Kammerspiel*-like melodrama presents the tragic story of a woman faced with a choice between two lovers. Gaby, a mildly hysterical wife, faces the ethical dilemma of loyalty to one of two musicians: her concertmaster husband, Peter, or his childhood friend, violin virtuoso Michael Marsden. She struggles emotionally until suicide seems to bring a final resolution. Bergner, a tragedienne who regularly enacted suffering on both stage and screen, meets her death off screen in this film. Her character disappears quietly, leaving the spectator with a sense of ambiguity as to what has transpired.

I read Bergner's performance in *Der träumende Mund* as a cinematic expression of the self-erasure of Jewish women on two levels. Although Jewishness is not made explicit in this film, its content and reception subtly hint in that direction and offer a critique of the historical and political circumstances that resulted in contemporary suicides. *Der träumende Mund* fuses a classic, but one-sided Wagnerian *Liebestod* with a wrenching depiction of Jewish suffering. In contrast to clearly visualized deaths of other characters played by Bergner, including the dramatic suicide of the eponymous protagonist in the 1929 film based on Arthur Schnitzler's novella, *Fräulein Else*, Gaby's off-camera drowning is corroborated only by reports from

witnesses and her suicide note. The absence of her body from the frame leaves room for speculation as to whether she has taken her life or simply has vanished. Even before the official Nazi rise to power, Jewish women sometimes had the need to become invisible, and on occasion they chose to remove themselves from sight.[7] I contend that Gaby's disappearance, similar to Bergner's departure from Germany in 1932, productively renders a Jewish woman invisible at a crucial moment and thereby figures not only as a literal death, but also as a means of misdirection and flight. With this film, which was screened all over the world in the 1930s and 1940s, the tropes of suicide, death, disappearance, invisibility, and absence—especially with respect to women—are all coded Jewish. But disappearance is further linked to escape, emigration, and reemergence. Bergner's ability to reappear, both as a new immigrant and on the screens of other nations, contributed to her overall mystique and reception as a great Jewish actress well beyond Germany.

Weimar Cinema, Elisabeth Bergner, and Jewish Spectators

Visual images of women that were coded Jewish (or "Jewish-enough") abounded in the visual culture of the Weimar Republic.[8] Yet overt references to Jewishness were made infrequently in public cultural settings, and only a handful of German films dealt extensively with topics related to Jewish life. These, along with films that contained problematic or antisemitic portrayals of Jewish characters, were of particular interest to many Jewish filmgoers, who longed to see "authentic" depictions of Jews on screen. Reviews of both kinds of films were published in periodicals aimed at Jewish readers, which gave rise to an inner-Jewish discourse on film. Many Jewish-identified avid film spectators sought out anything related to Jewishness in the movies, even when it was not particularly tangible. Among the films that received attention in the

Weimar Jewish press were such historical works as *Das alte Gesetz* (*The Ancient Law*, dir. Ewald André Dupont, 1923), in which women play supporting roles (daughters, mothers, loved ones) to Jewish male protagonists; films about antisemitism including *Die Stadt ohne Juden* (*The City Without Jews*, dir. Hans Karl Breslauer, 1924) and *Dreyfus* (dir. Richard Oswald, 1930), in which Jewish women are barely present; such American films as *Potash and Perlmutter* (dir. Clarence D. Badger, 1923) and *The Jazz Singer* (dir. Alan Crosland, 1927); and a wide range of films starring famous Jewish actors and actresses. Czinner-Bergner productions fell into the last category; in critical platforms intended for Jewish audiences, their films were referenced only in articles about Bergner.

Bergner's biography is fairly typical for the interwar Jewish film stars she exemplifies: born Elisabeth Ettel in Drohobycz, Galicia (now Ukraine), she was raised in Vienna in an acculturated Jewish household and began her acting career at age fifteen. Early in her career, she performed in theatrical productions in Innsbruck, Zurich, Vienna, and Munich. From 1921 through 1932, she acted in theater and film productions in Berlin, where she often performed in Max Reinhardt's Deutsches Theater. Bergner made her screen debut in the film *Der Evangelimann* (The Evangelist, 1923/24). Her first film directed by Paul Czinner, *Nju* (*Husbands or Lovers*), which includes another love triangle and off-screen suicide, was released in 1924. Paul Czinner (1890–1972) grew up in Budapest and Vienna; he moved to Berlin in 1920.[9] Of the twelve films made by Paul Czinner with Elisabeth Bergner, *Der träumende Mund* was only their second German-language sound film. After seven German films together, the pair moved to England, where they married in January 1933 and went on to make five more films together in English, including a 1937 remake of *Der träumende Mund*, titled *Dreaming Lips*, which was also screened in Austria under the title *Mélo* in 1938.

Although none of Bergner's cinematic roles could be described as explicitly Jewish, many spectators nevertheless received her as a great Jewish actress, and she was among the most beloved performers of the Weimar period for Jewish theater and cinemagoers. Insofar as Jewishness was constructed as a category distinct from Germanness, audiences placed Bergner into both categories. Jewish difference was ascribed to her upbringing, her physicality, and her performance style. The Jewish press hailed her as "our Bergner"; journalist Doris Wittner described her as "a delicate creature with the body of a child, the deathly sad eyes of a deadly wounded wild deer, and a grandiose upward curving forehead upon which the thousand-year-old wisdom and thousand-year-old pain of her people appear to dwell."[10] In a similar vein, Joseph Roth and Ernst Blass highlighted Bergner's eastern European background; Blass pronounced her "a stranger among people."[11]

German-speaking publics simultaneously marked the highly versatile Bergner as German and Other, at once *femme fatale, Kindfrau*, and androgynous New Woman, changeable qualities linked to Jewishness especially during the Weimar period, when Jewish acculturation was common. Bergner's versatility even extended into the realm of gender bending, and she was known for her cross-dressing trouser roles in *Der Geiger von Florenz* (*Impetuous Youth*, 1925/26), *Doña Juana* (1927), and *As You Like It* (1935/36).[12] Still, not all of Bergner's German fans associated her with Jewishness. She was hailed as a great German actress and successfully passed for a non-Jew; reports in various media, from fashion magazines to right-leaning newspapers, claimed her as German.[13] One extreme example: Bergner's last theatrical role in Germany in 1932, as Hanna Elias in Gerhart Hauptmann's *Gabriel Schillings Flucht* (*Gabriel Schilling's Flight*), was mistakenly received as an antisemitic interpretation of the character by a critic writing for the *Israelitisches Familienblatt*.[14] Paradoxically, it was this role—and perhaps

also responses to such allegations—that increased public awareness of her Jewishness among those with Nazi sympathies. Bergner later recalled that before the play closed, she was told she could no longer perform in the Staatstheater but might still have the option of performing in the Jewish-owned Herrnfeld Theater.[15]

Bergner's own perception of her Jewishness prior to leaving Central Europe in 1932 was ambivalent at best, though she seems to have considered herself Jewish in what we might term an ethnic or cultural sense. For example, despite the fact that Bergner spent the evening of Yom Kippur 1915 in Vienna's Café Central with the poet Albert Ehrenstein rather than in a synagogue, she indicated that the Jewish holiday nevertheless meant something to her by referencing it in a letter describing the meeting with Ehrenstein.[16] Further, there is evidence that she knew some Yiddish and could read Hebrew script, which suggests that she maintained ties to Jewish languages.[17] According to her autobiography, she supposedly refused offers to efface her Jewish identity by way of baptism or false "Aryan" papers in the 1930s.[18] Thanks to recent research by Anat Feinberg, we know that Bergner also made three visits to Palestine/Israel in 1934, 1937, and 1949. Her third visit was three months long and included seventy public readings. Much later Bergner wrote that she had become a more enthusiastic Jew, though surprisingly it was her reintroduction to scripture through Christian Science that led to this comment.[19]

A key player in both the theater and cinema of Weimar Germany through 1932, Elisabeth Bergner and her work became well known to viewers the world over in the 1930s and 1940s. Among the spectators who had access to *Der träumende Mund* were a great number of German-speaking Jews, both in Germany and in many locations abroad. Records of income from licensing fees suggest that the film was screened with regularity in Germany from September

1932 through May 1934.[20] Additional income was received from licensing contracts to show the German-language film elsewhere; these were signed in 1932 and 1933 with distribution companies in Austria, Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Holland, Hungary, Japan, Lithuania, Norway, Palestine, Romania, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, and Yugoslavia. In 1935, contracts were signed for the German version to be shown in England, Spain, and several South American countries. The German version was released in the United States in 1934.[21] And perhaps most significantly with respect to Jewish spectators, the film was screened in Tel Aviv and Jerusalem at frequent intervals from April 1933 through September 1943, as Ulrike Heikaus has shown.[22]

In part because of the timing of its multiple release dates, *Der träumende Mund* was unusual in that it reached cinemagoers at various stages of their encounters with National Socialism. The film found different resonance with its audiences; meanings of cultural texts shifted in response to new forms of censorship, political instability, and attempts to perpetuate and later commemorate bygone Jewish worlds. During its initial run in Germany, Gaby's complicated circumstances operated in conversation with acute economic hardship and uncertainty; the transition from the late Weimar period to the Nazi regime; and exceptionally high suicide rates. Screened outside of Germany in the 1930s and 1940s, the film carried the resonance of a banned work containing significant, surviving evidence of a culture that had once flourished. Film scholars today read *Der träumende Mund* as the artistic project of numerous significant contributors to Weimar cinema, several of whose careers in Germany ended soon after the making of this film.

Arguably one of the last German-Jewish films of Weimar cinema, *Der träumende Mund* functioned as a linguistic bridge between Germany and European émigrés with memories of

Jewish life in the German language. For Jewish spectators who viewed the film in exile, it may have inspired a dreamy sense of nostalgia for an era in which Jews were free to produce German art and culture without restriction. Viewing experiences were inscribed with a sense of displacement from this Germany, a longing for its visual appearance, language, locales, and material objects. Indeed, Jewish filmgoers in the 1930s were becoming increasingly aware of the urgent need to export anyone and anything that could be rescued. Film scholar Anne Jespersen has suggested that *Der träumende Mund* can be read as a catalogue of the aesthetic norms of Weimar Germany, from such objects as furniture, cups, and cigarette holders to androgynous fashion.[23] Bergner served as an example of an artist who, in light of worsening circumstances, had opted to extricate herself already in 1932 to pursue acting abroad. Both Bergner and Czinner provided spectators with a model for the relatively successful transplant of Jewish talent from Nazi-occupied Europe to sites of refuge in the UK and USA, where they briefly attempted a career in Hollywood.

All of Czinner and Bergner's joint film projects served as star vehicles for Bergner, who, in the theater world, was best known for tragic roles as such non-Jewish characters as Joan of Arc.[24] At this time, many of the most successful Jewish actors on German stages hailed from eastern Europe. They did particularly well in the age of Expressionism (1910s and 1920s), when Jews and non-Jews alike embraced exaggerated movements often associated "with the perceived 'expressiveness' of the Jewish body."[25] For many German-Jewish theater and film critics writing in the mid-1920s, performances by Jewish actresses from Austria and eastern Europe could be read as especially tragic because of the additional level of "inner pain" and alienation they supposedly experienced as Jews, purportedly on a biological level.[26] Journalist Julius Bab argued that there were common blood ties between successful actresses of Jewish descent including

Bergner, Maria Orska, and Fritzi Massary, whom he viewed as representative of the mastery of acting in general.[27] Arnold Zweig and Doris Wittner further maintained that these actors may have expressed Jewishness publicly by employing gestures or by staging their inner affect, which was not itself indicative of Jewish identity, but rather the product of a "Mediterranean" or ethnic experience transmitted over centuries and generations.[28] The pursuit of such "authenticity" in Jewish culture—especially as it related to Eastern expressivity and spirituality—was one way that German and Austrian Jews remained associated with Jewishness. Thus even before Bergner appeared on stage or on screen, audiences awaited an authentically tragic performance.

Delusions/Illusions: Water, Sleep, and Suicide

In a significant number of her theatrical and cinematic works, Bergner offered convincing, heartrending performances of female characters possibly plagued with madness, hysteria, or other mental illnesses. Of these, only Fräulein Else was known as Jewish due to a brief reference in Schnitzler's novella, though the film contains no overt references to Jewishness.[29] However, Jewish women were often conflated with hysterical women in general. Further, Jewish women were regularly eroticized or perceived as sexually promiscuous in popular culture. In many literary works and films, suicide figured as a common albeit alarming "cure" for sexual difference or deviance, and for mental illness. Suicide as a motif recurred in cultural texts about and created by Jewish women, which, as historian Darcy Buerkle has shown, may serve as a reflection of the often disregarded disproportionately high suicide rates among German-Jewish women. As a phenomenon, suicide was further pathologized within the context of "Jewish nervousness" and "Jewish suffering."[30] Operating within this broader milieu, many of Bergner's characters took their own lives or died under questionable circumstances.

From her early starring theatrical role as Ophelia, Bergner was cast as a suicidal *femme fragile* time and again. Already as Ophelia in 1919, Bergner had the ability to trick the eye: she famously forgot to bring a prop bouquet of flowers onto the stage, yet created the illusion of flowers for the audience to see.[31] It is noteworthy that Ophelia meets her death by drowning, though whether she does so intentionally is unclear. Historically, drowning was common among women precisely because it provided families with a way of concealing suicides that were perceived as shameful: there was often no evidence as to how the body came to be in the water, and, according to some legal codes, sudden death was presumed accidental unless proven otherwise.[32] Christian Goeschel has suggested that drowning was a preferred method of suicide for women because it left a slight chance of survival.[33] It also preserved the body and face intact; bodies of drowned women sometimes became objects of obsession and aesthetic admiration, as in the case of L'inconnue de la Seine (the unknown woman of the Seine). A death mask made from the face of this mysterious woman fished out of the Seine River in the 1880s inspired many, from literary authors to photographers and actresses.[34] It has been argued that a whole generation of German women, and especially Elisabeth Bergner, modeled their looks on this drowned unknown woman.[35]

Bergner's characters commit suicide in three films made with Paul Czinner prior to *Der träumende Mund*: *Nju* (1924), *Liebe* (Love, 1926/27), and *Fräulein Else* (1929), the last of which was inspired in part by Bergner's theatrical reading of Schnitzler's novella.[36] In *Liebe*, Bergner plays a lovesick duchess who becomes a nun and is found dead in her cell by her beloved Marquis. This character was perceived as strikingly petite and fragile.[37] The plotline of *Nju* has more in common with *Der träumende Mund*; like Gaby, Nju is exiled to the margins of society. Historian Ofer Ashkenazi convincingly argues that Nju, like other female protagonists of Jewish

filmmakers, is assigned to a marginalized "'Jewish'-like position of the 'other from within.'"[38] In other words, Jewish and gender difference are constructed in similar ways, as Lisa Silverman has suggested.[39] And within a nominally Jewish milieu, such as the plot of a film made by Jewish filmmakers, women sometimes occupy a position normally assigned to Jewish "Others." Nju's unconfirmed death is often categorized as drowning, despite the fact that Nju jumps from a city wall and there are no shots of water below to suggest this possibility.[40] What is clear is that Nju is driven to despair in part by unbearable torrents of rain that prevent her from finding peace on the city streets. But in *Nju*, as in *Der träumende Mund*, the spectator notably never sees the protagonist's waterlogged corpse.

This omission stands in direct opposition to Nazi-era German films in which suicidal women who drowned themselves were presented to the viewer as a visual accusation of failure to comply with the values of the Third Reich. In Nazi cinema, the dead female body was politicized and used as an agent of propaganda; spectators were encouraged to transform guilty viewing pleasure into anger and disgust for enemies of the Reich. Self-sacrifice served a larger purpose of imperialist fantasy.[41] Strangely, though perhaps not coincidentally due to Bergner's ability to pass as non-Jewish, Bergner served as a major source of inspiration for Nazi-era actress Kristina Söderbaum. Known as the *Reichswasserleiche* (drowned corpse of the Reich), Söderbaum married director Veit Harlan in 1939. The blond, Swedish-born actress's limp body was displayed in such Harlan films as *Jugend* (Youth, 1938), the notoriously antisemitic *Jud Süss* (1940), and *Die goldene Stadt* (The Golden City, 1942). In *Jud Süss*, Söderbaum's body figures as the horrific evidence used to convict the Court Jew Joseph Süss Oppenheimer. Söderbaum writes in her memoirs that she imitated and was fascinated by Bergner, in particular by her tone

of voice and overall performance in *Der träumende Mund*. The two women met in person in 1970, thereby fulfilling Söderbaum's longtime dream of meeting her idol.[42]

In Weimar cinema, (Jewish) women's dead bodies were not always visible on screen. In different ways, both *Nju* and *Fräulein Else* omit visual details about the suicide acts. Whereas Nju quickly runs and jumps from the high city wall, disappearing from both the frame and her bourgeois existence with no indication or evidence of suicide plans aside from oblique references to her love as a matter of life and death, Fräulein Else's suicide is dramatized vividly on screen. Bergner's Else overdoses on Veronal sleeping medicine and then removes her white fur coat in front of Herr von Dorsday and other hotel guests, whereupon she dramatically falls to the ground naked and nearly dead. Here the filmmakers took liberties in rewriting the story to apply a somewhat formulaic and sensational ending; Else's inner monologue in the novella references a more private and prolonged act of entering a state of eternal sleep.[43]

In Czinner's *Fräulein Else*, Jewish women's suicide is portrayed as virtuous and defiant, yet simultaneously provocative and shameful. Faced with the decadence and decline of Viennese high society, but unwilling to submit uncompromisingly to the demands of voyeuristic male desire, Else chooses suicide as a way of removing herself from a situation of financial shame and instrumentalization. In its portrayal of her death, the film draws on motifs that prompted Bergner to describe the film as "somewhat kitschified."[44] Schnitzler himself was not entirely happy with the silent film, and he later indicated that he preferred Bergner's performance in her first German sound film, *Ariane* (1931), and would be pleased to see Bergner play Else in a sound film version of *Fräulein Else*.[45] In the 1929 film, young Else appears swathed in a white fur coat that recalls the sexual fetishes established in Leopold von Sacher-Masoch's novella *Venus im Pelz* (*Venus in Furs*, 1870). With languid camera movements that reflect the pinnacle of silent film

aesthetics, the camera follows Else's final steps through the hotel halls toward Dorsday. Heads turn to observe the spectacle of the drugged, naked girl, though only her unclothed back is revealed to the viewer. Feminist film criticism would interpret this scene as part of a larger scopophilic act on the part of both hotel guests and film spectators.

Yet *Fräulein Else* does not leave the "male gaze" entirely unchallenged; Else's off-camera fall tempers fetishistic desire and poses questions as to whether she has empowered herself through self-avowed resignation. The absence of Else's naked body protects and sanctifies her image. The final shots alternate between Else's pale white face and the snow-covered mountains of St. Moritz, nearly superimposing them; her fur coat disappears from view. These images evoke the displayed body of Snow White, which Elisabeth Bronfen has argued is a fetish object that defies temporality by remaining intact.[46] Although the cinematic rendering of the moments preceding Else's suicide may not have appealed to contemporary critics, *Fräulein Else*'s dramatic climax both responds to suicide as an increasingly common phenomenon among Jewish women, and simultaneously inscribes two Elses—Bergner and her character—into a narrative of Jewish trauma and, I argue, defiant escapism.[47]

Sleight of Hand in *Der träumende Mund*

Der träumende Mund captivates the spectator by delivering something other than what is expected or promised, primarily visually but also via creative uses of sound. As its mysterious title would suggest, the action of *Der träumende Mund* turns around Gaby's sleep, dreams, and childlike whims.[48] The film opens as she reluctantly awakens, builds up to a pivotal dream sequence in which she imagines poisoning Peter, and concludes with her quest to escape tormented dreams for a more peaceful sleep. The character of Gaby is consistent with Bergner's

public image as a *Kindfrau* type, an eroticized young girl who transcends stable categories. In fact, Siegfried Kracauer unfavorably described Bergner's performance of Gaby as "childish" and unnecessarily "infantile."[49] Bergner's whimsically sympathetic delivery makes it possible for the viewer to suspend disbelief regarding her character's seemingly capricious decision to disappear.[50]

In both private and professional dealings, Elisabeth Bergner earned a reputation as an undependable diva: she allegedly broke promises and contracts, ran up debts, and told tales that were far from accurate. One acquaintance described her letters as "entangled with lies," and "*Dichtung und Wahrheit*."[51] Bergner's character Gaby, too, establishes a sense of endearing unreliability that provides alibis and enables her to exit unnoticed; she defies orders and expectations, and even lies blatantly. The film's central dream sequence further enables the viewer to speculate whether the dream showcases Gaby's fantasies or her worst nightmares. She simultaneously appears as a homicidal, vengeful wife and a tearful, hysterical creature. According to Lotte Eisner, the fact that both Peter and Michael offer their handkerchiefs to dry Gaby's tears serves to underscore her hysteria.[52] Gaby has no handkerchief of her own; by the end of the film, she appears helpless to the point that she can only turn somersaults and cry. But then she disappears.

What makes *Der träumende Mund* unique among Czinner-Bergner films are Bergner's claims to greater authorship than in her other cinematic collaborations. Plans for a film based on Henri Bernstein's play *Mélo* (1929), which was performed in Berlin theaters, began already in 1930. Bergner wrote to Schnitzler that she had turned down Bernstein's offer to perform the role on stage, but that she had worked independently to create a convincing character for the film version.[53] Beyond her acting role, Bergner later made the improbable assertion that she

singlehandedly wrote the German-language script for *Der träumende Mund* when Czinner and (sometimes uncredited) coscreenwriter Carl Mayer both became sick.[54] Supposedly, it was her script that was translated for the French version of the film, *Mélo*, starring Gaby Morlay, which was filmed immediately after the German version.[55] It is unclear what Bergner stood to gain by claiming the screenplay of *Der träumende Mund* as her own; although this claim casts doubt on her honesty, it reinforces the possibility of female (co)authorship and Bergner's influence.

At the time *Der träumende Mund* was made, critics were split as to whether it represented exemplary work for Carl Mayer, suggesting that this film diverged from some of his other works. Kurt Pinthus argued that it was nearly impossible to see Mayer's usual touch in certain scenes, such as the suicide note (penned in Bergner's handwriting) displayed for several minutes during the final scene in a manner reminiscent of earlier silent films.[56] On the other hand, Fritz Olimsky praised Carl Mayer's sensitive work and decision to end with the suicide note.[57] It is highly unlikely that Carl Mayer wrote none of the screenplay; he was paid RM 11,000 for his work on the film's *Dramaturgie*, third only to Bergner (who was paid RM 40,000) and Forster.[58] Indeed, film scholar Jürgen Kasten has argued that Bergner would have been incapable of producing a screenplay as sophisticated as the one used in the making of *Der träumende Mund*, and that Mayer should be credited with coauthorship for both the 1932 film and its 1937 remake. Kasten locates further parallels between the use of camera movement in *Der träumende Mund* and other films for which Mayer wrote the scripts.[59] Despite the film's innovative use of sound, its reliance on the display of written texts including a concert program and suicide note, as well as its references to the *Kammerspiel* genre and early Expressionist films, at the same time serve to reactivate the silent film aesthetics that Carl Mayer helped popularize in the early 1920s.

The film's clever use of synchronized and diegetic sound, including selections by such preeminent German and Austrian composers as Beethoven, Mozart, and Wagner, contributed nonetheless to its enduring achievement and its ability to entrance viewers. Czinner received extensive praise for his innovative use of sound in what was only his second sound film.[60] Filmgoers also heard what film scholar S.S. Prawer has termed Elisabeth Bergner's "exotic" or "Eastern" Austro-Hungarian intonation, which, on a more implicit level, contributed to making it one of the last Jewish films of Weimar Cinema.[61] In many cases, this translated into a highly critical—and potentially even antisemitic—reception of Bergner's spoken performance. One reviewer described Bergner's disturbing "all-too-familiar accent and the danger of mania"; another commented that her "peculiar way of speaking" in this film is nearly incomprehensible. In fact, Herbert Ihering devoted several paragraphs to a critique of Bergner's pronunciation, particularly her vowels and the letter "s," a thinly veiled jab at Eastern or Yiddish accents.[62]

Sound is critical to the film's plot, and the inclusion and omission of certain musical selections underscore the growing political tensions and dangers for Jews in Germany. Close-up shots of the concert program (which the film backdates to 31 March 1932) visually establish expectations that the viewer will hear violin concertos by Mozart, Mendelssohn, and Beethoven. Yet while the camera lingers over the title of Mendelssohn's concerto, the soundtrack omits it entirely, thereby redacting the Jewish background of Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy, grandson of philosopher Moses Mendelssohn.[63] This presents one of many confusing disconnects between what the viewer sees—or doesn't see—and what the viewer hears. In a reversal of the concert scene in *Ariane*, in which Rudolf Forster's character enters late and first meets the Russian student Ariane because he is seated next to her, it is Gaby who enters late during Peter and Michael's concert, already deceiving the viewer because she appears wearing a different dress

than the one chosen by Peter. In *Der träumende Mund*, as in other works in which concerts stoke erotic passion, such as Thomas Mann's *Wälsungenblut* (*The Blood of the Volsungs*, 1905/1921), which in its depiction of incestuous Jewish fraternal twins parodies a Wagnerian piece, Michael's renditions of Beethoven and Tchaikovsky (an encore piece) are enough to capture Gaby's heart. In another key scene, Gaby plugs in the radio and she and Peter listen entranced to the second act of Wagner's famous love triangle, *Tristan und Isolde*. Its ominous melancholic undertones signify both the potential tragedy of illicit love and the threat of suicide. The audible libretto lyrics and Gaby's melancholic expression hint that Gaby will share the fate of Isolde, yet the metaphor does not hold completely unless Michael Marsden joins Gaby in death.

Reminiscent of the spectral apparitions in such Expressionist masterpieces as *Das Cabinet des Dr. Caligari* (1920), Gaby appears to operate under the spell of Michael's hypnotic musical ability. Michael's attraction to her grows from what he perceives as her otherworldly, foreign nature. He describes their first encounter backstage in his chambers: "Suddenly she was in the middle of my chambers like an apparition. Like a somnambulist. Eyes like a Hindu girl. When I wanted to follow her, she was gone! Disappeared like a deer." Gaby is exoticized and compared to a series of marginalized creatures; as in Wittner's descriptions of Bergner, Gaby's eyes figure prominently, and she is read as the personification of a deer. This reference to a sleepwalker recalls Carl Mayer's role as cowriter of *Caligari*, which opens with a similarly mysterious, white-clad, dark-haired woman gliding through the frame in a somnambular trance. Shortly after this scene, Peter compares Gaby to a Polish woman whom Michael previously wooed and who also slipped through Peter's fingers. In addition to the "Eastern" intonation emanating from Gaby's lips, her dark, prominent eyes evoke the far reaches of the Orient, and the term "Hindu" implies ethnic or religious otherness.

Indeed, close-up shots of Bergner's face confront the viewer with shadowy, ethereal forms. Careful use of lighting and profile shots leave Gaby only partially illuminated in many instances, suggesting that there is more to her intentions and allegiances than can be observed. The spectator does not fully trust Gaby because she cannot be seen or tracked down with reliability, yet her mysterious flightiness only sparks the desire to pursue her. Copious amounts of makeup further call attention to a "masked" version of Bergner's/Gaby's mouth as seductive, whether smiling or troubled, and her often downcast eyes as darkened windows to inner turmoil.[64] This shadowing or veiling of the face is in keeping with film theorist Mary Ann Doane's suggestion that partially obscured close-up shots simultaneously conceal and reveal, both blocking and inviting the spectator's gaze.[65] Such contradictions both fetter Gaby to her conflicted situation and equip her to break free of it.

Regardless of how the screenplay for *Der träumende Mund* came into existence, it contains noteworthy departures from the play on which it was based. Not long after the increasingly delirious Gaby and Peter take turns telling each other to get some sleep, the film features a dream sequence in which Gaby dreams of poisoning her husband in order to free herself from marriage. Kurt Pinthus noted that one of the most significant improvements from Bernstein's *Mélo* is that in the film, Gaby is absolved of murderous guilt: instead of actually poisoning her husband, she only dreams it. For Pinthus, Gaby ceases to be of her body during this scene: "Now she wavers helplessly back and forth, in a dream, wholly incorporeal, between the bed and telephone. She vanishes noticeably (*vergeht sichtlich*) before our eyes."[66] As Pinthus suggests, Gaby's disappearing act begins with this dream, which removes any sense of cinematic certainty. Alfred Polgar, too, observed Bergner's magical powers to enthrall viewers, with his comment, "she is a magician, even when she conjures indistinctly or affectedly."[67]

Gaby's escape plan culminates in the composition of a suicide note in a loud café. Her dark coat nearly blends into the background of this shot; here she further vanishes from sight. The manner in which Gaby exits the café and the frame is also telling. Her silhouette walks into an all-black screen, a transition that itself is an important shot: the black screen is displayed for nearly 15 seconds while pleasant music, possibly from an accordion, plays quietly. This transition figures as a space of the unknown, a diversion during which Gaby goes missing. In the next scene, witnesses talking to a policeman—who are shown looking downward, but may or may not be looking at Gaby's body—soon describe that they saw a girl run into the river. (The viewer never sees Gaby or anyone else enter the water.) A coat, hat, and purse remain on the riverbank, abandoned objects that can be found on dry land even after Gaby is gone. Close-ups of Gaby's letter to Peter, part of which is also read aloud, reveal that Gaby only euphemistically alludes to her death using language more commonly associated with suicide by means of Veronal: she hasn't been able to sleep for many nights, and she is now extremely tired and bids Peter goodnight. With this note, she writes herself out of existence: "And then, you may not think of me badly. You should only think: Gaby was nothing and less than nothing."[68]

The mysterious manner of Gaby's disappearance, and her suggestion that Peter act as if she had never existed, again hint at the possibility of deception: her death is not certain beyond a doubt. In fact, she argues that her whole life should be conflated with absence; the erasure of her being negates nothing and thus is rendered insignificant to anyone who might still be searching for her. It seems likely that Gaby drowned herself in the river, but it is also conceivable that, through a feat of misdirection, she has only led Peter and the viewer to believe that she perished. Whether Gaby's suicide is interpreted literally or as symbolic of a greater quest for calm and restfulness, its depiction in this film attests to the complex and potentially productive nature of

such a disappearance. Her act of self-erasure serves to deceive her adversaries as she negotiates her escape.

In its timely and subtle commentary on the condition of Europe, and insofar as it prefigured Bergner's disappearance from Germany and the German screen in 1932, *Der träumende Mund* suggests that for German Jews, years of aesthetic and professional harmony already had come to an end. What remained was the desire to return to a peaceful state, either through suicide or other means such as emigration. The removal of oneself from Germany was on some level analogous to artistic suicide; emigration figured as a kind of self-erasure from a given cultural landscape, both tragic and releasing in its implications. In an article in the *Jüdisch-liberale Zeitung* on 15 February 1933, Doris Wittner again described Bergner's virtuosic performance—here exemplified by her "sad-loving-passionate 'dreaming mouth'"—as representative of the Jewish people's thousand-year-old pain. The film's symbolism proved significant not only for those witnessing the demise of the Weimar Republic, but also for German-speaking Jews in exile. In fact, *Der träumende Mund* provided German-Jewish refugees with a means of connecting to their cultural heritage while living in Tel Aviv and Jerusalem, where it was screened for over a decade; the performances of Bergner and Forster made a lasting impression on the memories of Jewish spectators.[69]

Throughout the years of Nazi rule, German Jews in exile turned to Elisabeth Bergner for comfort and solidarity; her final film in German brought the familiar sounds of the German language to Jewish refugees abroad. Like her screen characters, Bergner evaded the pressures of living as a Jewish woman in Central Europe. Gaby's dilemma of choosing between two lovers parallels the pain German Jews may have felt in their existence between the opposite worlds of Germany and the Jewish homeland. Further, Bergner's performance of Gaby's suicide likely

carried a deeply personal meaning for many filmgoers in the 1930s and early 1940s, when roughly one percent of Jews still living in Germany after 1933 made the decision to take their own lives.[70]

If we trace Czinner and Bergner's cinematic representations of self-erasure from *Nju* to *Fräulein Else* to *Der träumende Mund*, suicide moves from an unseen leap from city walls, to a public hotel spectacle witnessed by many, to a private vanishing act in the water seen by only a few. In *Der träumende Mund*—and also in its 1937 English-language remake, *Dreaming Lips*—the Jewish female subject strategically removes, even rescues herself from view. She narrates the story of her own disappearance, gets the last word with her farewell letter, and thereby conveys an unsettling sense of artistry in the performance of Jewish (in)visibility. Her absence in Germany becomes presence overseas; in the face of persecution, she traverses a body of water and reemerges, if only as a cinematic apparition, on the other side.

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Notes

[1] I am grateful to Frank Stern for sharing Filmarchiv Austria's version of *Der träumende Mund*. When first screened in the USA, the film was listed under several names: *Der träumende Mund*, *Dreaming Lips*, and *The Dreamy Mouth*. See H[arry] T. S[mith], "*Dreaming Lips* (1932): An Elisabeth Bergner Film," *New York Times*, 5 February 1934. Translations from the 1932 film were done in consultation with the screenplay for the 1937 version. Margaret Kennedy, "*Dreaming Lips* Revised Scenario and Dialogue," 23 July 1936. Berlin Akademie der Künste, Elisabeth Bergner Archive, Folder 82.

[2] Fritz Olimsky describes the premiere in detail, particularly the "absolute certainty" that Bergner would make an appearance. Fritz Olimsky, "Elisabeth Bergners 'Träumender Mund,'" *Berliner Börsenzeitung*, 15 September 1932. This review, along with most others cited below, can be found in what is presumably Elisabeth Bergner's own scrapbook of clippings about the film, labeled 14 September 1932. Berlin Akademie der Künste, Elisabeth Bergner Archive, Folder 96. Hereinafter cited as "EB Scrapbook."

[3] Czinner and Bergner initially left Germany with plans to make a film in London in fall 1932. Whereas Czinner left for London in late August, Bergner recalls that she went directly from France to Switzerland after filming *Der träumende Mund*, which can be confirmed to some extent by letters. It is unlikely that she planned to be in Berlin for the film's premiere. She returned to Germany in October 1932 to make a final stage appearance in a Gerhart Hauptmann play; thereafter she went into exile in London. Elisabeth Bergner, *Bewundert viel und viel gescholten. Unordentliche Erinnerungen* (Munich: C. Bertelsmann, 1984), 100–106. Even the title of Bergner's autobiography calls into question the accuracy and reliability of the recollections she put to paper at an advanced age; whenever available, this article also draws on other sources.

[4] Lotte H. Eisner, "*Der träumende Mund*. Capitol," *Film-Kurier* 218, 15 September 1932. Forster explained that Bergner was unable to attend because of a minor operation for an ear infection two days prior to the premiere. Hermann Sinsheimer, "Der neue Bergner-Film: 'Der träumende Mund,'" *Berliner Tageblatt*, 15 September 1932, Abend-Ausgabe. Bergner's letters to Albert Ehrenstein suggest her operation took place in Zurich already in August 1932, and that she was recovering at Bad Reichenhall in October. Klaus Völker, *Elisabeth Bergner*, *Das Leben einer Schauspielerin. Ganz und doch immer unvollendet* (Berlin: Edition Hentrich, 1990), 249–250.

[5] The German-language version includes Berlin dialect, particularly in the café scene, during which a sign for the Berlin brewery Schultheiss-Patzenhofer is also visible.

[6] Bergner describes hearing about the "braune Pest" while filming. Bergner, *Bewundert*, 100.

[7] On the ways in which images of Jewish women were made invisible or were effaced by others in the 1920s and 1930s, see Darcy Buerkle, "Gendered Spectatorship, Jewish Women and Psychological Advertising in Weimar Germany," *Women's History Review* 15, no. 4 (September 2006); and Lisa Silverman, *Becoming Austrians: Jews and Culture between the World Wars* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 66–93.

[8] I borrow the term "Jewish-enough" from Darcy Buerkle, "Gendered Spectatorship," 631.

[9] Relatively little information is available about Paul Czinner. One recent booklet attempts to fill this gap: Brigitte Mayr and Michael Omasta, *Paul Czinner. Der Mann hinter Elisabeth Bergner* (Vienna: Synema, 2013).

[10] Doris Wittner, "Jüdische Bannerträger deutscher Bühnenkunst—Elisabeth Bergner," *Jüdisch-liberale Zeitung*, 18 March 1927, 2–3. See also Doris Wittner, "Fritzi Massary—Elisabeth Bergner," *Jüdisch-liberale Zeitung*, 15 February 1933, 3.

[11] Ernst Blass, "Elisabeth Bergner," *Das jüdische Magazin*, no. 4 (November 1929): 22. Roth's comment appeared in the *Prager Tagblatt* on 17 October 1924. Joseph Roth, "Die Heilige Johanna," *Werke 2. Das journalistische Werk 1924–1928*, ed. Klaus Westermann (Cologne: Kiepenheuer & Witsch, 1989), 269.

[12] On Bergner's cinematic acts of cross-dressing, see Silke Arnold-de Simine and Christine Mielke, *Charleys Tanten und Astas Enkel. 100 Jahre Crossdressing in der deutschen Filmkomödie* (Trier: WVT, 2012), 53–56; and Alice A. Kuzniar, *The Queer German Cinema* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2000), 33–39.

[13] Historian Marline Otte has suggested Bergner saw herself as a German who happened to be Jewish. Otte further points out that in 1924, the *Deutsche Zeitung* argued that Bergner, Orska, and others functioned primarily as German artists, and in doing so actually betrayed their Jewishness. Marline Otte, *Jewish Identities in German Popular Entertainment, 1890–1933* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 146, 174.

[14] W. V. [probably Walther Victor], "Antisemitische Kunst," *Israelitisches Familienblatt*, 17 November 1932, 3.

[15] Bergner, *Bewundert*, 106.

[16] Writer Albert Ehrenstein (1886–1950) was a lifelong friend and admirer who wrote many poems about his love for Bergner. Letter from Elisabeth Bergner to Thomas Schramek, 18 September 1915, cited in typed manuscript sent from Charlotte Beradt to Karl and Ellen Otten, 23 March 1962, Deutsches Literaturarchiv Marbach.

[17] Anat Feinberg hypothesizes that Zalman Shazar gave Bergner his Yiddish translations of poems by the Hebrew writer Rachel (located among Bergner's papers in the Akademie der Künste) in case Bergner wished to do a reading of the poems. Anat Feinberg, "'Von Gott begnadete Schauspielerin': Elisabeth Bergner in Israel," *Aschkenas* 21, no. 1–2 (March 2013): 242.

[18] Bergner writes that she declined a 1933 offer by a Nazi attorney to accept false papers and continue on as a German film star; she also writes of turning down a proposal from an Austrian consulate representative, who offered her the chance to perform in Vienna's Burgtheater if she agreed to baptism. Bergner, *Bewundert,* 126–127.

[19] Feinberg, "Von Gott," 230–231, 236; Bergner, *Bewundert*, 237–238, 242–249.

[20] "Lizenz-Eingänge 'Träumender Mund,'" Berlin Akademie der Künste, Elisabeth Bergner Archive, Folder 710.

[21] A list of licensing contracts likely compiled in 1935 can be found in the Berlin Akademie der Künste, Elisabeth Bergner Archive, Folder 400. The Internet Movie Database lists several international release dates for *Der träumende Mund*, including Denmark (22 October 1932); Finland (15 January 1933); USA (4 February 1934); and Portugal (26 January 1936).

[22] Ulrike Heikaus, *Deutschsprachige Filme als Kulturinsel. Zur kulturellen Integration der deutschsprachigen Juden in Palästina von 1933–1945* (Potsdam: Universitätsverlag Potsdam, 2009), 77–79, 141.

[23] Anne Jespersen, "Tödliche Wahrheit oder raffinierte Täuschung. Die Frauen in den Filmen Elisabeth Bergners," in *Carl Mayer, Scenar(t)ist. Ein Script von ihm war schon ein Film*, eds. Michael Omasta and Brigitte Mayr (Vienna: Synema, 2003), 194–195.

[24] Lisa Silverman has observed that in Bergner's only explicitly Jewish stage role, Bergner appeared as a man. Silverman, *Becoming Austrians*, 223 n.12.

[25] Jeanette R. Malkin, "Transforming in Public: Jewish Actors on the German Expressionist Stage," in *Jews and the Making of Modern German Theatre*, eds. Jeanette R. Malkin and Freddie Rokem (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 2010), 162.

[26] For example, because Bergner was raised near Vienna's Leopoldstadt, critic Arthur Eloesser perceived her as eternally subject to the influence of the pain experienced by the Jewish people. Arthur Eloesser, *Elisabeth Bergner* (Berlin: Williams, 1927).

[27] Julius Bab, *Schauspieler und Schaukunst* (Berlin: Oesterheld, 1926), 121.

[28] On Wittner, see Kerry Wallach, "Front-Page Jews: Doris Wittner's (1880–1937) Berlin Feuilletons," in *Discovering Women's History: German-speaking Journalists 1900–1950*, ed. Christa Spreizer (Oxford: Lang, 2014). On Zweig, see Arnold Zweig, *Juden auf der deutschen Bühne* (Berlin: Welt-Verlag, 1928), 138–139; Peter W. Marx, "Arnold Zweig and the Critics: Reconsidering the Jewish 'Contribution' to German Theatre," in Malkin and Rokem, *Jews*, 116–131; Galili Shahar, "The Jewish Actor and the Theatre of Modernism in Germany," *Theatre Research International*, 29, no. 3 (2004); and Galili Shahar, *theatrum judaicum. Denkspiele im deutsch-jüdischen Diskurs der Moderne* (Bielefeld: Aisthesis, 2007).

[29] Arthur Schnitzler, *Fräulein Else*, ed. Johannes Pankau (Stuttgart: Reclam, 2002), 16–17. *Fräulein Else*, directed by Paul Czinner (1929; Rome, Italy: Raro Video, 2004), DVD.

[30] Darcy Buerkle, *Nothing Happened: Charlotte Salomon and an Archive of Suicide* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2013), 163–172. See also Darcy Buerkle, "Historical Effacements: Facing Charlotte Salomon," in *Reading Charlotte Salomon*, eds. Michael P. Steinberg and Monica Bohm-Duchen (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2006), 73–87.

[31] Actor Alexander Granach recalls his experience of Bergner's Ophelia. Alexander Granach, *Da geht ein Mensch. Roman eines Lebens* (Augsburg: Ölbaum, 2003), 370–371.

[32] Olive Anderson, *Suicide in Victorian and Edwardian England* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987), 44.

[33] Christian Goeschel, *Suicide in Nazi Germany* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 19.

[34] Elisabeth Bronfen, *Over Her Dead Body: Death, Femininity and the Aesthetic* (Manchester, UK: Manchester University Press, 1992), 206. Alfred Döblin notably devotes several pages to the impact of this mask in his introduction to August Sander, *Antlitz der Zeit. Sechzig Aufnahmen deutscher Menschen des 20. Jahrhunderts* (Munich: Schirmer/Mosel, 1929), 7–8.

[35] Alfred Alvarez, *The Savage God: A Study of Suicide* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1971), 156. As his source for this assertion, Alvarez cites Hans Hesse of the University of Sussex.

[36] Barbara Zeman points out that Bergner's characters survive in only half (6.5) of the 12 Czinner-Bergner films. Barbara Zeman, *Elisabeth Bergners Wiener Zeit* (master's thesis, University of Vienna, 2007), 96.

[37] On *Liebe*, see Beate Hochholdinger-Reiterer, *Vom Erschaffen der Kindfrau. Elisabeth Bergner—ein Image* (Vienna: Braumüller, 1999), 127–135.

[38] Ofer Ashkenazi, *Weimar Film and Modern Jewish Identity* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 60.

[39] Silverman, *Becoming Austrians*, 6–7.

[40] Siegfried Kracauer is among those who assessed Nju's death as drowning. Siegfried Kracauer, *From Caligari to Hitler: A Psychological History of the German Film* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1947), 125. I am grateful to the Bundesarchiv-Filmarchiv (Berlin) for permitting me to view *Nju*.

[41] Jana F. Bruns, *Nazi Cinema's New Women* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 210.

[42] Kristina Söderbaum, *Nichts bleibt immer so. Rückblenden auf ein Leben vor und hinter der Kamera* (Bayreuth: Hestia, 1983), 40–42.

[43] In contexts in which Veronal was taken for the purpose of committing suicide, it often was referenced in euphemistic language about going to sleep. See Goeschel, *Suicide*, 102; and Konrad Kwiet, "The Ultimate Refuge: Suicide in the Jewish Community under the Nazis," *Leo Baeck Institute Yearbook* 29 (1984): 167. On *Fräulein Else*, see Klaus Kanzog, "Arthur Schnitzler *Fräulein Else*. Der innere Monolog in der Novelle und in der filmischen Transformation," in *Arthur Schnitzler. Zeitgenossenschaften/Contemporaneities*, eds. Ian Foster and Florian Krobb (Bern: Peter Lang, 2002).

[44] Bergner, *Bewundert*, 109.

[45] Bergner never made a sound film version of *Fräulein Else*; Schnitzler died in 1931 and thus did not live to see *Der träumende Mund*. Letter from Arthur Schnitzler to Elisabeth Bergner, 9 April 1931. Deutsches Literaturarchiv Marbach. See also Schnitzler's letter to Clara Katharina Pollaczek, 15 March 1931. Cited in Völker, *Elisabeth Bergner,* 228–229.

[46] Bronfen, *Over Her Dead Body*, 103.

[47] On suicide in Schnitzler's *Fräulein Else*, see Melanie Adley, "Shattering Fragility: Illness, Suicide, and Refusal in fin-de-siècle Viennese Literature" (PhD diss., University of Pennsylvania, 2013).

[48] Alfred Polgar commented, "No one knows what the title means, and that is the beauty of it." Alfred Polgar, "Bergner-Film." EB Scrapbook.

[49] Kracauer, *Caligari*, 255; and Siegfried Kracauer, "Der träumende Mund," *Frankfurter Zeitung*, 20 September 1932; cited in Völker, *Elisabeth Bergner*, 238. See also Siegfried Kracauer, *Kleine Schriften zum Film*, vol. 6.3, 1932–1961, ed. Inka Mülder-Bach (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 2004), 101–102.

[50] Bergner writes that she could not escape the word "whimsical" as a descriptor of her performances after she arrived in England. Bergner, *Bewundert*, 163.

[51] See letters from Charlotte Beradt to Karl Otten, 22 May 1961 and 9 May 1962. Deutsches Literaturarchiv Marbach, A: Otten 2000.4./531.

[52] Eisner, "Der träumende Mund."

[53] Letter from Elisabeth Bergner to Arthur Schnitzler, 21 March 1930. Deutsches Literaturarchiv Marbach.

[54] On Czinner and Bergner's collaborations with Carl Mayer, see Brigitte Mayr, "Carl Mayer: Years of Exile in London," in *Destination London: German-speaking Emigrés and British Cinema, 1925–1950*, eds. Tim Bergfelder and Christian Cargnelli (New York: Berghahn, 2008), 195–198.

[55] Bergner, *Bewundert*, 98–100. Bergner claimed that she alone wrote the screenplay in her autobiography and in a 1982 interview with Eva Orbanz. Interview cited in Hochholdinger-Reiterer, *Kindfrau*, 199 n.545, and Jürgen Kasten, *Carl Mayer, Filmpoet. Ein Drehbuchautor schreibt Filmgeschichte* (Berlin: VISTAS, 1994), 241.

[56] Kurt Pinthus, "Das Erlebnis Elisabeth Bergner. 'Der träumende Mund' im Capitol," *Acht-Uhr-Abendblatt*. EB Scrapbook.

[57] Olimsky, "Elisabeth Bergner."

[58] "Aufstellung von den Ausgaben zu dem Bergner-Film *Der träumende Mund*," Berlin Akademie der Künste, Elisabeth Bergner Archive, Folder 401.

[59] Kasten includes a detailed excerpt from the 1932 screenplay. Kasten, *Carl Meyer*, 241–245.

[60] "Der träumende Mund," *Berliner Volkszeitung*. EB Scrapbook.

[61] S. S. Prawer, *Between Two Worlds: The Jewish Presence in German and Austrian Film, 1910–1933* (New York: Berghahn, 2005), 186–188.

[62] G. F. Salmony, "Elisabeth Bergner's 'Träumender Mund' im Capitol," *Berliner Lokal-Anzeiger*; "Elisabeth Bergner wieder auf der Leinwand. 'Der träumende Mund' im Capitol," *Vossische Zeitung*; Herbert Ihering, "Capitol. Der neue Bergnerfilm," *Börsen-Courier*, 15 September 1932. EB Scrapbook. Richard Wagner notoriously accused Jews of speaking an inferior form of German, particularly with respect to the sibilant "s." See Paul Reitter, *The Anti-Journalist: Karl Kraus and Jewish Self-Fashioning in Fin-de-Siècle Europe* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008), 60. Ihering also criticized Bergner's spoken performance in *Ariane*, noting that her manner of speaking affected the film's overall clarity. Herbert Ihering, "Der neue Bergner-Film: 'Ariane,'" *Von Reinhardt bis Brecht. Eine Auswahl der Theaterkritiken von 1909–1932*, ed. Rolf Badenhausen (Reinbek bei Hamurg: Rowohlt, 1967), 399.

[63] The music playing while Gaby enters the theater is also not the exact Mozart concerto listed in the concert program.

[64] Margret Heymann points out that the English-language adaptation *Dreaming Lips* (1937) was promoted in conjunction with makeup advertising campaigns: magazine readers were asked to identify Bergner's lips, and winners received a free lipstick or ticket to see the film. Margret Heymann, *Elisabeth Bergner—mehr als eine Schauspielerin* (Berlin: Vorwerk 8, 2008), 61–62; see also Hochholdinger-Reiterer, *Kindfrau*, 146–147.

[65] Mary Ann Doane, *Femmes Fatales: Feminism, Film Theory, Psychoanalysis* (New York: Routledge, 1991), 44–49.

[66] Pinthus, "Das Erlebnis."

[67] Polgar, "Bergner-Film."

[68] It is possible that this line plays on the phrase, "Das Weib ist ein Nichts," which was also the title of a 1929 novel by Austrian-Jewish author Mela Hartwig. See Silverman, *Becoming Austrians*, 241 n.116.

[69] Heikaus, *Deutschsprachige Filme*, 77–79, 141. On Bergner's reception in Israel, see Feinberg, "Von Gott," and Anat Feinberg, "The German-Jewish actress who charmed—and angered—the Israeli public," *Haaretz*, 27 April 2012, http://www.haaretz.com/weekend/week-s-end/the-german-jewish-actress-who-charmed-and-angered-the-israeli-public-1.426849.

[70] Marion Kaplan estimates that at least 5,000, or one percent of the 525,000 Jews in Germany in 1933, took their own lives, with a dramatically increased rate in 1932–1934. Marion A. Kaplan, *Between Dignity and Despair: Jewish Life in Nazi Germany* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 180. See also Buerkle, *Nothing Happened*; Goeschel, *Suicide*, 96–118; and Kwiet, "Ultimate Refuge."