



the cinema of **STEVEN SODERBERGH**
indie sex, corporate lies, and digital videotape

Andrew deWaard & R. Colin Tait
preface by Thomas Schatz

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CHAPTER SIX

The (Bl)end of History: The Good German and the Intertextual Detective

The true picture of the past flits by. The past can be seized only as an image which flashes up at the instant when it can be recognized and is never seen again... For every image of the past that is not recognized by the present as one of its own concerns threatens to disappear irretrievably.

Walter Benjamin¹

In an interview given a few years before beginning production on *The Good German*, Soderbergh relates his formal and stylistic promiscuity to his desire to make an innovative 'leap' within the medium of film. Soderbergh is searching for 'another level,' and one idea he has is to tell a story spanning the entire twentieth century, and then

...cut it up into ten ten-minute sections. You pick a year from each of those decades. In each year, let's say the 1903 decade, you shoot in the aesthetic of *The Great Train Robbery*. In the teens, you shoot in the style of D. W. Griffith. In the twenties, you shoot in the style of the silent films. Each section is done in the aesthetic of that period.²

Four years later, the trans-historical spirit of just such a formal undertaking would be realised with *The Good German*. If Soderbergh were to have continued that train of thought for his dream project, listing styles according to decade, surely he would have chosen the sultry film noirs of the 1940s.³ *The Good German* certainly focuses its brazen pastiche on 1940s-era film noirs such as *Casablanca* (Michael Curtiz, 1942) and *The Third Man*, but like the noirs themselves, the cinematic lineage goes back further, and continues down the line as well. Film noir is intimately tied to German Expressionism, so perhaps we can assume Soderbergh would have chosen this style for the 1920s and 1930s, before returning stateside for the noirs. From there, *The Good German* skips over to the 1970s for a neo-noir, *Chinatown*, which is itself nostalgically set in the 1930s. The penultimate stop on Soderbergh's history travelogue is the

1990s, in which *Schindler's List* (Steven Spielberg, 1993) would reinvigorate the use of black-and-white cinematography within Hollywood and begin a minor resurgence in Holocaust memorial, affixing it (some would say appropriating it) as a key site for American trauma and rebirth. Spielberg himself would use a multitude of forms, styles, and genres in his self-described 'authentic'⁴ portrayal of the 1940s, so perhaps we can imagine that when Soderbergh arrived at his tenth decade and tenth style, the first of the new century, he chose *neo-meta*. This decade would be *The Good German*.

Midway through the film, there is a brief exchange between Jake (George Clooney) and Levi (Dominic Comperatore), a disabled Jewish Holocaust survivor and shop owner. 'What happened to you?' asks Jake, to which Levi responds: 'An experiment, to see if you can transplant a bone from one man into another. It turns out you can't... How about a camera? Rolleiflex. The old ones used to turn the image upside down in the viewfinder. Little mirror sets it right.' This offhand comment is of little relevance in the film's plot, but is an explicit, literal embodiment of the central intertextual tension in the director's work: Soderbergh's philosophy of history is predicated on polyphonic mediation. Levi's suggestion to 'turn the image upside-down' in order to '[set] it right' operates on two levels. Formally, Soderbergh emulates and simulates myriad cinematic styles and forms, the 1940s' film noir of Michael Curtiz in particular, 'transplanting' these cinematic methodologies from one era into another. Thematically, Soderbergh performs a deft intertextual and intermedial negotiation of mediated history. Levi's innocent sales pitch – 'How about a camera?' – has been the prolific American filmmaker's continual refrain for nearly thirty films over the past twenty years. Soderbergh, occupying the role of director of photography, as well as director and editor, presents the 'POV of a DOP'⁵ in a distinctly intertextual assemblage of style, theme, and philosophy. *The Good German*, a morality play about historical guilt, is experienced as a multiplicity of mediation; Soderbergh is not just shining a light into the abyss of American war crime complicity, but taking his camera with him and editing the footage together into a non-linear, intertextual blend of history itself.

Francis Fukuyama's unfortunate declaration of 'The End of History' (1992) was premature, to say the least; rather than a 'triumph' of liberal democracy at the end of the twentieth century, might we instead ponder the 'triumph' of information communication technology, digital networks, and vast cultural industrial production? Ours is an era of unparalleled access to the documents and artifacts of history, as well as the means to interact with them in art and culture. Surely the end of history is yet to be written, but the writing of history itself has morphed, taking on the form of polyphonic dispersion: The Blend of History. Benjamin's famed angel of history – for whom a storm 'irresistibly propels him into the future to which his back is turned, while the pile of debris before him grows skyward'⁶ – is now thrust forward by the last century's gramophone records, magnetic tapes, magazines, videotapes, and film reels. The new century brings digital debris, and the angel of history is awash in a sea of ones and zeroes. Nevertheless, the angel of history as a metaphor is limited by its linearity. Time itself may be a physical, linear constant, but history certainly is not; it is a variable, a battleground, a montage. Rather, Benjamin's lasting insight comes in an earlier thesis, quoted in the epigraph, in which he proclaims the true picture of history to be a



Midway through *The Good German*, Levi (Dominic Comperatore), a disabled Jewish Holocaust survivor offers Jake (George Clooney) a camera, noting its defect, 'The old ones used to turn the image upside-down in the viewfinder. Little mirror sets it right.' This exchange acts as a metaphor for the film itself, an attempt to reverse historical perception using cinematographic means.

momentary flicker, evoking the apparatus of cinema. But how can it 'threaten to disappear irretrievably' if it only ever appears but for a brief moment? Perhaps Benjamin had it backwards and we should 'turn the image upside-down in the viewfinder' to rewrite his maxim: every image of the present that is not recognised by the past as one of its own concerns threatens to reappear *ad infinitum*.

A Cinema of Cinema: Steven Soderbergh as Intertextual Auteur

Not since the self-righteously self-reflexive days of the French New Wave has there been a provocateur of *ciné-écriture* quite like Steven Soderbergh. While Quentin Tarantino

may hold the crown as postmodern poster boy and master of *playing* homage, his collage-by-numbers approach remains fixed on the surface, content to merely steal and remix with an unmatched panache. Soderbergh, on the contrary, plunges into the depths of technologically mediated subjectivity, projecting his stories from behind the camera and *through* the camera. Quite literally, as the cinematographer on many of his films, Soderbergh's visions are textbook examples of 'form = function.' Often explicitly embodied in a diegetic camera, the recurring motif of mediation and cinematic subjectivity is seen throughout the entirety of this camera man's oeuvre. Crime themes are prominent through Soderbergh's body of work, as is a preoccupation with history and memory across his films; intertextual reflexivity is another through line.

In *sex, lies, and videotape*, Soderbergh's preoccupation with the camera is channelled through the character of Graham, a traumatised Gen-Xer who convinces women to confess their sexual histories on videotape. Utilising a cross-medium flashback structure, the film juxtaposes grainy videotape with polished film, accompanied by a frenzied soundtrack overlaying dialogue with disjunctive aplomb. *Full Frontal*, billed as the 'spiritual sequel' to *sex, lies, and videotape*, would rekindle this dichotomy while pushing the meta to its limit: converging stories set in Hollywood reveal the film-within-a-film structure to be contained within yet another film. Pairing together two of his later outings, we get *sex, lies, and digital videotape* in the form of *The Girlfriend Experience*, a cerebral yet intimate experimental film featuring adult film star Sasha Grey, and *Che*, a 258-minute bio-epic shot on the 'revolutionary' RED One digital camera. Other formalist provocations of mediation include remakes that are more akin to remixes – *The Underneath*, *Solaris*, *Ocean's Eleven* – and adaptations that bear little resemblance to their source material – *Kafka*, *King of the Hill*, and *Traffic*. Trans-textually, Soderbergh will borrow a character, such as Ray Nicolette (Michael Keaton) from *Jackie Brown* (Quentin Tarantino, 1997) who reappears in *Out of Sight*, or borrow footage from another film, such as the aforementioned use of a young Terence Stamp in *Poor Cow* for *The Limey*. Stamp then reprises his role from *The Limey* briefly (and bizarrely) in *Full Frontal*. The star text of his celebrity actors are fair game for satire, most visible in the *Ocean's* trilogy. And Soderbergh can even be seen to experiment with the medium outside of the text itself, considering *Bubble's* unique distribution strategy which saw it released in three different formats simultaneously. In a multitude of ways, Soderbergh is pushing at the boundaries and malleability of the text.

For this reason, in our final exploration of the detective figure caught up in issues of history and trauma, we have isolated the intertextual detective, whose case to solve inevitably encounters the power of mediation on the process of history and memory. Our two previous detectives, Wilson and Kelvin, already contain elements of this character and form, as we discovered through tracing the influences of their cinematic nostalgia. Needless to say, one of the central ongoing preoccupations throughout Soderbergh's work is the unique power of temporal and subjective mediation, particularly as it pertains to historical trauma rendered through cinema. What would the result be, then, when this time-travelling 'Man with a Movie Camera' set his sights and fixed focal-length lenses on the twentieth century's most pivotal trauma, the Holocaust?

Adapted from the 2006 novel by Joseph Kanon, *The Good German* is set in Berlin during the Potsdam negotiations immediately following the Allied victory in the European theatre of World War II. Jake, a war correspondent previously stationed in Berlin, returns to Germany to cover the conference and seek out his lost love, the German Jew Lena (Cate Blanchett), who is currently being prostituted by Tully (Tobey Maguire), an American racketeer soon found murdered. The titular ‘Good German,’ Lena’s husband Emil (Christian Oliver), holds the proof that a German scientist being granted amnesty by America is a war criminal, having employed slave labour at Camp Dora in order to produce the V-2 rocket. Jake is drawn into the American cover-up, as they race to capture the German scientists for Operation Overcast/Paperclip before the Russians can. The plot appears to refer to the lives of Arthur Rudolph and Wernher von Braun, German scientists who were successfully expatriated to America to work for NASA, but who never stood trial for their complicity in the Mittelbau-Dora/Mittelwerk concentration camps. Guilt is a thematic motif both on an individual level, as revealed in Lena’s personal tale of survival and betrayal, as well as collectively, as the American whitewashing of war criminals is rendered bare.

Before considering how *The Good German* blends so many forms, styles, and genres, we might first analyse the peculiar production manner Soderbergh used to create the film. Not content to merely set the film in the 1940s, Soderbergh sought to produce the film as if he were actually in the 1940s, using only the equipment that would have been available to him on a studio backlot at the time: fixed focal-length lenses, boom mics, rear projection, and incandescent lighting. The luxuries available to contemporary filmmakers – zoom lenses, wireless mics, computer-generated imagery, complex lighting rigs – were forbidden on set, and as a result, Soderbergh forced himself to explore the constraints of the Classical Hollywood style. The lack of wireless mics, for example, meant that actors had to clearly enunciate and crisply deliver their lines, resulting in very direct, presentational performances unlike the intimate, Method-influenced acting popular in current American cinema. Limiting himself to camera techniques of the time, Soderbergh shot with a single camera, often eschewing close-ups and reverse shots for master shots that create a different dynamic for staging and character interaction. Shorter lenses, which mean a wider field of vision, emphasise this more theatrical space, as does the stiff, disciplined camera movement. The opening credit sequence of the film uses archival footage, mugging for the camera, film production clapboards, and a visible projector gate to *frame* this film as an exercise in formalism.

Add soft-edged wipe cuts and a 1.85:1 ratio (1.33:1 on DVD, representing Soderbergh’s original vision) to this list of archaic production techniques and *The Good German* is a curious beast in a contemporary multiplex; the initial intent for the film was even more bizarre. According to Kenn Rabin, archivist for the production, the ‘original plan for the film was that every shot would be digitally placed over archival footage. So that literally, the film would be “shot” in 1945 Berlin; the actors would be green-screened over archival [footage].’⁷ Budgetary constraints prevented



The film's title sequence blends archival footage and scenes from other films, including footage Billy Wilder shot for *A Foreign Affair*, into its recreation of postwar Berlin.

such a (potentially disastrous) undertaking, relegating archival use to rear-projection scenes, but the 'millions of feet of archival footage' Rabin found were assembled into a computer database, virtually constructing a version of Berlin-in-ruins that Soderbergh and his crew, particularly the art department, could study and emulate. The advantages of modern day technology were not completely renounced,⁸ but rather *blended* together in a technical hybrid of past/present and fact/fiction. A testament to this unique blend, what little archival footage was actually utilised for rear-projection scenes in *The Good German* included unused location film shot by Billy Wilder for *A Foreign Affair* (1949), a film noir about a *femme fatale* (played by Marlene Dietrich, a clear source of inspiration for Cate Blanchett's sultry, deep-voiced Lena) suspected to have ties to Nazi war criminals in postwar Berlin.

Which brings us to the key intertexts of *The Good German*: the film noir classics *Casablanca* and *The Third Man*. Soderbergh is not so much slyly nodding to *Casablanca* as he is wildly waving his arms in homage. The promotional poster for *The Good German* is a direct recreation of the poster for *Casablanca*, replacing Humphrey Bogart and Ingrid Bergman with George Clooney and Cate Blanchett, just as the film does. Beyond this mere paratextual homage, however, lies a far deeper engagement with the Michael Curtiz classic. One of, if not *the* most iconic scene in Hollywood history, the conclusion to *Casablanca* is lifted by Soderbergh for his own finale, complete with rainy runway setting and identically framed getaway plane: 'Blanchett is wearing an Ingrid Bergman cloche hat and Clooney is desperately trying to think for the both of them.'⁹ But whereas *Casablanca* ends on a timeless romantic note of



The final scene of the film brashly invites comparison to *Casablanca*; whereas that film ends on a timeless romantic note of patriotic sacrifice, *The Good German* ends on Jake's (George Clooney) horrified response to Lena's (Cate Blanchett) revelation that she turned in twelve Jewish people to the Gestapo in order to survive.

patriotic sacrifice, *The Good German* ends on Lena's sombre confession: she identified twelve Jewish people to the Gestapo in order to survive. Tully foolishly contributes to the burgeoning criminal underworld, Jake inadvertently participates in the American whitewashing of suspected war criminals, and Lena cooperates with the Nazis; the problems of three little people do amount to a hill of beans in this uncensored world of postwar moral relativism.

While the film does share numerous formal similarities with Hollywood studio productions of the 1940s, *The Good German* also deviates from this style in certain ways we can attribute to the influence of another key intertext: the 1949 British noir *The Third Man*. Unlike the softer three-point lighting of *Casablanca*, *The Third Man* is

rendered in heavy chiaroscuro, with high contrast between its rich blacks and blasted whites, with cast shadows the size of buildings. We can trace this influence back to a longer lineage of other urban-based black-and-white films: the *Kammerspiel* movement classic *The Last Laugh* (F. W. Murnau, 1924), the late German Expressionist grit of *M* (Fritz Lang, 1931), and the war-ravaged Italian Neo-Realism of *Rome, Open City* (Roberto Rossellini, 1945), to name but a few of the seminal texts. The extreme canted angles of *The Third Man* (and German Expressionism before it) are seen in *The Good German* as well; a particularly poignant composition has Lena at a low, canted angle with the camera tracking back and framing her against an enormous poster of Stalin.

But the influence of *The Third Man* is felt in more than just cinematography. There is the setting, a postwar Vienna divided into four districts, one for each occupying power, just as Berlin is in *The Good German*. A key location – the dramatically-lit labyrinthine sewer system – is borrowed for Emil's hideout. But most significantly, we have the character of Holly Martins (Joseph Cotten), the writer of pulp western novels, who arrives in Vienna and is enmeshed in a convoluted mystery when attempting to seek out an old friend, just as Jake, a journalist, arrives in Berlin and is led astray searching for Lena. A diverse range of media is encountered by each media practitioner: Holly attends a play, listens to a lecture, sneaks into a cinema, watches a slideshow, listens to a jukebox, and is the special invited guest to a book club, while Jake listens to a radio broadcast of the peace conference, learns about Hiroshima through a newspaper, is offered a camera, and watches a newsreel of Stalin, Truman, and Churchill. There is even a rendezvous at the 'kino' (cinema). Careful attention is paid in each film to point out the constant mediation that is at play; Holly renders this self-reflexive motif explicit when he proclaims that he is writing a new book, a murder mystery called 'The Third Man,' which will 'mix fact and fiction.'

A third man of a different sort is also detectable within Soderbergh's trans-historical mash-up. While few reviews of *The Good German* fail to make the connection to *Casablanca* and *The Third Man*, another key intertext has, to our knowledge (and Google's), been completely missed: *The Devil Makes Three* (Andrew Marton, 1952).¹⁰ Consider this familiar plot: American soldier returns to bombed-out German city after the war to seek out woman who has become jaded barmaid at sleazy nightclub selling her 'company' in order to survive. In this case, the woman, Wilhelmina (Pier Angeli), is the only survivor of a family of 'good Germans' who saved Capt. Jeff Eliot (Gene Kelly) when his plane was shot down over Munich. A hint of moral relativity and the complexity of war are glimpsed when Wilhelmina expresses hatred towards the Americans, who were the perpetrators of the air raid that killed her family. The film is then pushed into action mode when a gang of Nazis on motorcycles attempt to revive the Third Reich by retrieving 'Nazi Booty,' and Gene Kelly must save the day and win the girl, with nary an opportunity to sing or dance. Still, *The Devil Makes Three* is an intriguing postwar film, not least because its climactic chase scene is filmed inside the ruins of The Berghof, Hitler's house in the Alps.¹¹ Without knowing if the strangely similar plot set-up was a conscious theft or not, one wonders if Soderbergh perhaps sought to pay tribute to this odd, forgotten film and historical document.

We catalogue this multitude of references and homages in *The Good German* not to engage in some parlour game of intertextual source finding, but in an effort to map the multi-meta-generic structure of the film which is at the root of Soderbergh's philosophy of history. How appropriate then, that the final key intertext at play is *Chinatown*, a film seen by both John G. Cawelti and Fredric Jameson as the marker of a new breed of genre film. For Cawelti, it is the exemplary case of 'generic transformation' and 'generic exhaustion,'¹² while for Jameson it represents a debilitating 'metageneric production.'¹³ It is fitting that noir is used as the site for this generic discussion, for noir remains a contested term, its constitution as style, genre, or mode never finalised, its formulation already at a distance, its discovery a retroactive act by French critics. For Richard Gilmore, in his exploration of *Chinatown*, this means that 'American film noir was always neo-noir.'¹⁴ *The Good German*, then, in also naming its protagonist Jake, and also marring him with a symbolic facial wound, can only be seen as a reflection of a reflection of a reflection – 'neo' three times removed. Forget it Jake, it's Chinatown in postwar Berlin too. And as Lena's *femme fatale* informs us, for our purposes referring to the meta-generic abyss the film finds itself in: 'You can never really get out of Berlin.'

Beyond Pastiche: Broken Mirrors and Montage History

In a promotional interview for *The Good German*, Soderbergh wonders what films of the 1940s would have looked like if filmmakers in Hollywood had not been constrained by the Hays Code. If they were granted the creative freedom to explore sexuality and violence, how different would their depiction of the war have been? This is the central pivot point of *The Good German*, which recasts this Classical Hollywood 1940s' visual style with contemporary permissiveness: Tully aggressively engages in graphic, rear-entry sex with Lena, Jake is savagely beaten on numerous occasions, and crude language is used throughout the film. 'It will be interesting,' Soderbergh ponders, 'to see if people can wrap their minds around the *blending* of these two ideas.'¹⁵ If box office and critical reception is any indication, the answer is a resounding no, but the historical intervention remains. *Casablanca* was received as blatant propaganda immediately upon its release, seen as a way to bolster support for America's entry into the war less than a year previously; *Variety* dubbed it 'splendid anti-Axis propaganda.'¹⁶ A simplistic tale at such a time is understandable, but what about that *other* contemporary black-and-white Hollywood Holocaust film that pastiches film noir?

A veritable academic cottage industry has arisen since the release of *Schindler's List* to decry and condemn the social and historical irresponsibility of Spielberg's opus. We need not rehearse such criticisms here, save the simple fact that Spielberg is unable to present the Holocaust as anything but spectacle. Because Spielberg is so enchanted with the power of his own cinema, he renders the Holocaust as a struggle between two powerful German men, shot in beautiful chiaroscuro, relegating the Jewish people to the role of extras in this Manichean battle between good and evil. This is history devoid of any nuance, perpetuating the reductive myth of the Good War, but because Spielberg is a master of emotional manipulation, *Schindler's List* is the recipient of

countless awards and is used as teaching material in classrooms. *The Good German*, on the other hand, is a cold, methodical lesson in mediated history, and lacking any emotional chemistry between its characters, it is unsurprising that the film failed to attract an audience.

In addition to its confusing formal structure and alienating performances, *The Good German* is also unsettling in the way it pokes and prods at some sacred objects in American history. Not only does the film suggest that American interests in the postwar setting resulted in the active support of morally reprehensible figures, it uses one of the most cherished scenes in one of the most beloved American films to do so. As opposed to *Casablanca's* timeless conclusion, *The Good German* actually allows the character of Lena to get away with her shocking complicity in the Holocaust, fleeing the scene of the crime. And unlike *Chinatown*, in which Noah Cross (John Huston) simply aims to control the water supply of California, in postwar Berlin, the Americans seek to control the supply of weapons-producing scientists by any means necessary. Undermining the central mythology of triumphant post-World War II Americana and contesting the legacy of the 'Greatest Generation' is not exactly feel-good multiplex fare. As it implicates the American spectator with this ugly truth, *The Good German* leaves a bad taste in the viewer's mouth. Rather than caressing the scar of World War II, as Spielberg does, Soderbergh pours salt in the wound.

The popularity of *Schindler's List* lies not only in its innocuous, fairy tale method of storytelling, but its meta-cinematic method of filmmaking as well. Conflicting elements of film noir, Italian neo-realism, and newsreel documentary constitute its style, but generically, recent critics have reinterpreted it as everything from a 'historical epic'¹⁷ to a 'repurpos[ing] of the biographical film as a modernist form'¹⁸ – even a horror film.¹⁹ If we pair *Schindler's List* along with the other hugely popular historical film of the 1990s – Oliver Stone's *JFK* (1991), a conflation of fact and fiction and media representation at breakneck speed – then we witness the ascendancy of the 'postmodern history film'²⁰ to the mainstream. In coining this term, Robert Rosenstone accounts for how film perceives 'history as vision,'²¹ an audio-visual rendering not comparable to that of the written word. This postmodern form of delivery 'changes the rules of the historical game,'²² but those rules have now been set for at least a decade, if not considerably more. If our conception of history is heavily shaped by cinematic representation, especially popular postmodern incarnations such as *Schindler's List*, then *The Good German* remains a sober reminder that there is a heavy price for such unquestioned mediation.

To be clear: Soderbergh does not reside in some trivial, self-reflexive, postmodern hall of mirrors; he operates in the long, labyrinthine, endless maze of history, which after a century of increasingly rampant audio-visual production, is now littered with the refuse of countless broken mirrors. Soderbergh is less interested in telling a postmodern historical story than he is curating its multiple refractory transmissions. By conflating elements of the cinematic 1930s, 1940s, 1950s, and 1970s, and contrasting it with the historical *uber-text* of the 1990s, *The Good German* does not present different times in history, or history's progression, but history *as* time: a temporal simultaneity and collapse. Unfortunately, the critical reception of the film has for the

most part inaccurately reduced *The Good German* to mere pastiche and empty style, rather than the neo-meta utilisation of pastiche and style to channel the multiplicity of cinematically mediated representation. Perhaps, *in time*, this historical injustice will be ‘set right.’

Après nous, le deluge.

These are the final foreboding words of ‘*Casablanca: Cult Movies and Intertextual Collage*,’ Umberto Eco’s tongue-in-cheek lament for the innocence of unbridled, unconscious archetypal thievery.²³ *Casablanca*, according to Eco, is not content with employing a select few archetypes, it uses them all: ‘it is not *one* movie. It is ‘movies.’²⁴ In the wake of *Casablanca* and its intertextual ilk, cinema is bound to an extreme awareness in which both filmmaker and audience are conscious of such intertextual reworking. Soderbergh is no doubt a sterling example of the ‘semiotically nourished authors working for a culture of instinctive semioticians.’²⁵ *The Good German* would perhaps be more appropriately titled *Casablanca 2.0*, updated with more explicitly graphic software and deprogrammed of its Hays Code. Along with the rest of Soderbergh’s body of intertextual work, it shows that Michael Curtiz’s iconic classic (and the type of meta-film it represents) is not just all movies, but all *future* movies as well. We need not mourn this loss of originality; rather, we should consider it as historical instruction. Let us revisit our rewritten Benjaminian aphorism and consider Soderbergh’s proposition: every image of the present that is not recognised by the past as one of its own concerns threatens to reappear *ad infinitum*. How about a camera?

Notes

- 1 Walter Benjamin, ‘Theses on the Philosophy of History,’ in *Illuminations* (New York: Schocken Books, 1968), 255.
- 2 Richardson, ‘Life of Steven Soderbergh.’
- 3 *The Good German* would be Soderbergh’s sixth (neo) noir, following *Kafka*, *The Underneath*, *Fallen Angels* (television), *Out of Sight*, and *The Limey*, or seventh if you also count the debut film of his apprentice George Clooney, on whom he no doubt had considerable influence, *Confessions of a Dangerous Mind*.
- 4 Quoted in James Russell, *The Historical Epic and Contemporary Hollywood: From Dances with Wolves to Gladiator* (New York: Continuum, 2007), 78.
- 5 Point of View of a Director of Photography.
- 6 Benjamin, ‘Philosophy of History,’ 258.
- 7 Quoted in Sheila Curran Bernard, *Documentary Storytelling: Making Stronger and More Dramatic Nonfiction Films* (Burlington, MA: Elsevier, 2007), 325.
- 8 The film was not actually shot on black-and-white film stock either. Photographed on colour stock, the footage was digitally altered to match the grainy black-and-white archival footage.
- 9 J. Hoberman, ‘Nostalgia Trip.’
- 10 Our thanks to Keir Keightley for this insight.

- 11 Frank Miller, 'The Devil Makes Three,' Turner Classic Movies Website, accessed January 14, 2009, <http://www.tcm.com/thismonth/article.jsp?cid=154952&mainArticleId=154931>.
- 12 John G. Cawelti, 'Chinatown and Generic Transformation in Recent American Films,' in *Mystery, Violence, and Popular Culture* (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press/Popular Press, 2004), 198.
- 13 Jameson, *Signatures*, 84.
- 14 Richard Gilmore, 'The Dark Sublimity of *Chinatown*,' in *The Philosophy of Neo-Noir*, ed. Mark T. Conard (Lexington, KY: University Press of Kentucky, 2006), 119.
- 15 'Interview with Steven Soderbergh about "The Good German,"' The Good German Website, last modified October, 2006, <http://thegoodgerman.warnerbros.com>.
- 16 'Casablanca,' *Variety*, December 2, 1942, <http://www.variety.com/review/VE1117487980.html?c=31>.
- 17 Russell, *The Historical Epic*.
- 18 Robert Burgoyne, *The Hollywood Historical Film* (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2008), 103.
- 19 Caroline Joan Picart and David A. Frank, *Frames of Evil: The Holocaust as Horror in American Film* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 2006).
- 20 Robert A. Rosenstone, *Visions of the Past: The Challenge of Film to Our Idea of History* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1995), 12.
- 21 *Ibid.*, 15.
- 22 *Ibid.*
- 23 Umberto Eco, 'Casablanca: Cult Movies and Intertextual Collage,' in *Travels in Hyperreality* (San Diego: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1986), 197–212.
- 24 *Ibid.*, 208.
- 25 *Ibid.*, 210.