

When Texts Travel: Edward Dmytryk's *The Blue Angel* (1959) Remake

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INTRODUCTION

Sitting atop a barrel in a provocative pose on the stage of the *Blue Angel* nightclub in the original 1930 German production, Marlene Dietrich as Lola Lola sings “Ich bin von Kopf bis Fuss auf Liebe eingestellt”—a song that became Dietrich’s signature song and the image her trademark. Produced as a transitional film in a time in which sound technology was still in its infancy, *The Blue Angel*, was released as a multiple language film in German and English.¹ Yet, in the interest of marketing Paramount’s new star to American audiences, the English version was not released until after Dietrich’s debut in Josef von Sternberg’s 1930 Hollywood film *Morocco*.

FAST FORWARD

The intention to remake *The Blue Angel*, a hallmark of cinematic history, loomed large after von Sternberg’s successful and loose adaptation of Heinrich Mann’s 1905 novel *Professor Unrat*. In 1940, producer Erich Pommer bought the rights to *The Blue Angel* from Heinrich Mann for one dollar, but as misfortune would have it, the financial backing within the stipulated time frame fell through and with it the remake project. A decade later and similarly unsuccessful, film producer and Fox studio executive Darryl Zanuck planned a remake of *The Blue Angel* with Pommer that was to be set in 1946 southern France and depict a love affair between a French soldier and an American singer (Jacobsen 140). When Twentieth Century Fox obtained the film rights in 1955, several remake scenarios were suggested—including an “all-black production with Dorothy Dandridge in the role of Lola” (“The Bootleg Files: The Blue Angel”). Audiences would have to wait until September 1959 for the release of *The Blue Angel* remake. Marilyn Monroe was said to have been invited to play Lola, and Spencer Tracy was asked to play Professor Rath but both turned down the offers (Baxter 259). In the end, German actor Curd Jürgens accepted the role of the Professor and Swedish actress May Britt, the tawdry Lola Lola. In many ways, both English and German language productions of von Sternberg’s *The Blue Angel* anticipated its remake. After all, in each language version the seductive Lola Lola assures her audience, “they all come back to me.”

¹ cf. Petro.

As did Edward Dmytryk when he agreed to direct Hollywood's 1959 remake of *The Blue Angel*, Dmytryk was known for many successful Hollywood feature films including *Murder, My Sweet* (1944), *The Caine Mutiny* (1954), *The Young Lions* (1958), and more infamously as one of the Hollywood Ten who first refused to testify before the House Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC) in 1947, which resulted in his blacklisting and a jail sentence for being in contempt of Congress. After a change of heart in 1951, he provided HUAC with 26 names and was thus able to resume his career (Dmytryk 1-2 and 99). Much like the Professor Rath in his remake of *The Blue Angel*, Dmytryk too was "rehabilitated" (a point I will return to later).²

In the following, I am interested in exploring the remake of *The Blue Angel* as both an industrial practice and a cultural artifact, and in considering, more specifically, what happens when the original is repurposed for another historical time period and cultural and national setting. What strategies does Dmytryk employ to reimagine von Sternberg's classical Weimar film in the context of 1950s Hollywood during the Cold War, and to what end does the film's representation of postwar Germany contribute to discourses that necessarily sought to revision Germany in a time of redefining critical alliances between Germany and the US in the face of mounting tensions between the Soviet Union and the United States?³ Dmytryk's *The Blue Angel* raises interesting questions about what happens when the original European product is translated into the US cultural (national) context and into another temporality and history, while working within the constraints of Hollywood's studio system.

To explore these questions, Thomas Leitch offers fertile understanding of the internal workings of a "true remake," which, he contends, operates according to a process of "disavowal" or "the combination of acknowledgement and repudiation in a single ambivalent gesture, which remakes manifest in their attempt to be just like their model, only better" (53).⁴ In this context disavowal is understood to mean "the action of disavowing or refusing to acknowledge; repudiation, denial" of its other incarnation in an effort to make the remake better or much improved ("Disavowal"). Leitch provocatively continues that "true remakes" attempt "not only to accommodate the original story to a new discourse and a new audience but to annihilate the model they are honouring – to eliminate any need to see the film they seek to replace" (50).

This understanding of a remake helps to cast a new light on the relationship of von Sternberg's film that was made at the twilight of the Weimar Republic and its postwar US reincarnation. It begs the question of what is "made better," improved, or even "annihilated" in Dmytryk's 1959 remake of the original *Blue Angel*, especially if we consider Kracauer's retrospective assessment that von Sternberg's "screen figures anticipate what will happen in real life a few years later" (218). According to Kracauer, von Sternberg's *Blue Angel* foreshadows the rise of fascism especially in the representation of the young male students and in Rath who is sadistically humiliated, emasculated, and cinematically disposed of as *Unrat*. Andrea Slane draws a parallel

² "Dmytryk spent 6 months in a West Virginia prison and upon his release said that he was 'rehabilitated.'" ("Movies").

³ cf. Nolan.

⁴ Leitch goes on: "The majority of case studies about remakes take the relation between two films, an original and its remake, as the primary unit of analysis. In this respect, film remakes evade or efface their greater transtextual relations, whether by design or by accident" (53).

between Dietrich's performance of Lola and of the more experienced and complicit nightclub singer Erika von Schlütow in Billy Wilder's 1948 film *A Foreign Affair* and notes the slippage between Lola's commanding performance as femme fatale and the alleged seductive power of Nazism. Slane writes that "the iconography of the "Nazi" nightclub singer ... traced rather directly to Lola Lola" in Wilder's film represents "an iconic/spectacular metaphor for the lure of Nazism and its hypothesized psychosexual underpinnings" (224). Lola's (Dietrich's) powerful iconic presence and the fascination she exudes demand surrender (Slane 218-219). Given the connections that both Kracauer and Slane rhetorically establish to fascism in their reading of *The Blue Angel*, and considering more closely Slane's argument of the threat to democracy that the sexualized postwar cabaret singer poses in Wilder's rubble film, Lola's reemergence in Dmytryk's 1959 remake, I argue, intervenes in the haunted fascist past that potentially lies at the borders of *The Blue Angel* and its subsequent incarnations. In order to "denazify" the narrative and ally the film with US Cold War aspirations, Lola's seductive power is diminished and the image of masculinity restored. In other words, the vamp is defanged and male authority, albeit, a new model of masculinity, instated. In Dmytryk's retelling of *The Blue Angel*, Rath, Lola's casualty, will presumably return to his "proper job" and regain his social standing.⁵

Dmytryk's film, in other words, remediates the original and the complex relationship of the Weimar Republic to its fascist legacy. He repurposes the original German film about the demise of an unsuspecting local high school teacher, Professor Immanuel Rath, who falls in love with Lola Lola, the seductive nightclub singer, for America's postwar audience. Dmytryk makes liberal use of the semantic and syntactic structure of the original with notable variations. He copies the visual structure and sequences from von Sternberg's film but clearly reformulates the narrative to claim "authenticity" and dislodges the storyline and its aesthetic delivery from its predecessor. Asserting his directorial autonomy through producing a significant reinterpretation of the filmic original, he participates in "acknowledging and repudiating in the same gesture the "original" film (Leitch 53)."⁶ As with any remake that owes its life to its original, Dmytryk's *The Blue Angel* remains caught in "a triangular relationship between the original (literary) text, the original film, which it borrows from but disavows, and itself (Leitch 39)." Dmytryk's 1959 remake, for instance, deliberately dissociates itself from its cinematic original through the omission of attribution, meaning that von Sternberg's name appears nowhere in the credits. Instead, British writer Nigel Balchin is credited with the screenplay based on Karl Zuckmayer's (sic), Karl Vollmoeller's, and Robert Liebmann's screenplay "from the novel by Heinrich Mann."

Threatening to sue to assert his proprietary rights to the storyline and visuals, von Sternberg, who saw himself as the essential artist and author of *The Blue Angel*, "accused 20th Century Fox for making the film without his consent" and "of unfair competition and misappropriation of his work." Von Sternberg "alleged the 1959 version was an inferior motion picture and subject to constant unfavorable criticism by the public and press" ("Dietrich Goes to Aid of Her Discoverer"). Not surprisingly, Marlene Dietrich

⁵ All quotes are taken from Dmytryk's *The Blue Angel*.

⁶ In Dmytryk's version, the principal receives an anonymous call from a woman who snitches on Rath's liaison with Lola. The conversation between the principal and Rath expresses his swelling feeling of love that leads to his termination. He calls it an awakening not a seduction.

publically backed his claim after seeing the film with her friend Leon Lerman from the back of the Paramount movie theater to avoid recognition. Lerman reports that she left the theater early since “It was agony for Marlene” (Baxter 259). Critics in 1959 for the most part supported von Sternberg’s notion of the inferiority of this “ponderous” remake and remakes in general as cheap knock-offs that only reflect the voracity of a capitalist Hollywood industry that has run out of stories to tell.⁷

In von Sternberg’s film, Professor Rath is a humanities teacher in an all-boys college preparatory school who drills boys in Shakespeare, English, and history. In Dmytryk’s film, Rath teaches botany and provides lessons on cross-pollination and the reproductive system of the flower.⁸ Besides foreshadowing the nature of his own late, sexual awakening, displacing sexual tensions and desires, and framing them within the context of scientific inquiry, the subtext of reproduction bursts with sexual innuendo that his students exploit. Unlike the boys in von Sternberg’s *The Blue Angel* who Kracauer claimed anticipate the Hitler Youth movement, the students in Rath’s 1956 classroom, similarly enraptured with Lola, are excused for their transgressions in part by Rath’s magnanimous insight that “boys will be boys.” Furthermore, he acknowledges after discovering the illicit postcards of Lola “but boys of 17 do vulgar and silly things,” and advises his primus “not to be too righteous about it,” because he will arouse the impression that “you are too good for this world.” The metaphor of nature, reinforced through the lessons in botany, “normalizes” and depoliticizes behavior so that adolescent development is represented as a benign expression of the natural cycle of pubescent life. The couched sexual discourse also suggests a rescripting of the libertine image of the Weimar Republic with all of its political and social frailties and cultural uncertainties that framed von Sternberg’s film. In the American context, desire is cast as boyish folly rather than rebellion against social norms. The theme of reproduction and transplanting or grafting, moreover, placed within the context of the remake of a film that traveled from Berlin to Hollywood, self-referentially acknowledges the industry’s own ritual of reproduction and cross-pollination.

In Dmytryk’s 1959 remake, which is shot often on location, in contrast to von Sternberg’s Ufa studio production, the setting is a clean, quaint, picturesque German town whose cobblestone streets, half-timbered houses (Fachwerkhäuser), shuttered windows, and goose down blankets—slung over window sills to air—evoke and reinforce romantic notions of an “old,” yet updated Germany in the American imagination. The establishing shot features an aerial view of Flensburg with “Germany 1956” emblazoned on the screen followed by postcard-like shots of various idyllic images of a town nestled in rolling, forested hills along a river and the open space of the schoolyard, rather than the claustrophobic spaces of Rath’s apartment and classroom and the seedy harbor neighborhood of von Sternberg’s film. Dmytryk’s remake produces a fairytale-like, sanitized Germany by virtue of its spatial representation and mise-en-scène and the palette of clichéd images and stereotypes that open the film, among them Rath’s Prussian

⁷ Hollywood remakes of European films is in fact a common practice with scholars paying particular attention to the plethora of French, Japanese, and Hong Kong Chinese remakes. Little has been written about Hollywood remakes of German films—a field that has rich potential for German transcultural studies.

⁸ The flower Rath brings to class is the *Mädelsüss* (German), maid of the meadow, which is superstitiously viewed as an omen of death (Eland).

punctuality. A shopkeeper sets the clock outside of his business according to Rath's reliable passage on the way to school, evoking the anecdotal punctual routine of philosopher Immanuel Kant, by which the citizens of Königsberg were said to set their clocks. Similar to von Sternberg's film, *Lola Lola* is introduced through a poster advertisement, which is displayed when a saleswoman opens the shutter of the *Schokoladenhaus* shop window. Lola is cast as delicious morsel and commodity as well as femme fatale, a figure, as Andrea Slane reminds us, that "is pervasive in post-World War II film and literature, drawing of course on the longer history of images of feminine evil and the moral and sexual ambiguity she embodies" (215).

The mise-en-scène at the film's start indexes Germany as much as do the authentic foreign accents of the stars, Swedish May Britt and German Curd Jürgens. Their accent, whether Swedish or German, asserts the film's German origin and reinforces its foreign location. The accented voice is not incidental as Thomas Elsaesser points out: "The plasticity of the human voice is quite consciously employed by directors for what are often thematic ends" (51). Dialog becomes a scene element in Dmytryk's film and the accent a significant marker of the acoustic landscape that reinforces the location of the mise-en-scène and acknowledges the film's original production history. The accent simultaneously inflects Germany as a space of compromised morals through misplaced desires, and more significantly, of redemption. What von Sternberg infers through the mise-en-scène, costuming and acting with little dialog, basically through his *art*, Dmytryk explains. *The Blue Angel* remake relies heavily on dialog and exposition. Considering that Dmytryk directed the 1943 Hollywood blockbuster war drama *Hitler's Children*, which features German youth's indoctrination into the blood and soil ideology of the Third Reich, and *The Young Lions* (1958), in which a German ski instructor/carpenter becomes a Nazi officer, the German-accented English in *The Blue Angel* reframes Germanness, removes it from the realm of fascism, and embarks on the cultural work of expanding the repertoire associated with Germanness in the American popular imagination. The German accent here is demilitarized and settles into a post-fascist, middle-class, and democratized educational setting so that this narrative conceivably performs a remediation of the German accent and of Germany's youth for American audiences.

One of the most striking variations to the original 1930 film and arguably central to the project of "making better" von Sternberg's film, which aligns it with the ethos of the "true remake," according to Leitch, is that Rath does not die in the classroom clutching his desk in the end as he does in von Sternberg's *The Blue Angel*. Instead, the school's principal, with whom Rath was seen walking in step to school every morning when their paths routinely met, rescues Rath from his utter demise. He guides Rath back into the fold of respectable society by taking him to a sanatorium or "holiday house for teachers" to recover from his foray into the world of the sexualized cabaret. Witnessing Rath's psychic disintegration during his humiliating clown performance at the hands of the master of ceremonies Kiepert (Theodor Bikel) while on tour in his hometown, the school principal, Harter, compassionately leads Rath out of the Blue Angel nightclub. Interestingly, Harter is played by John Banner (Johann Banner), an Austrian Jew who immigrated to the United States in 1938. He was cast, as were many German-accented émigrés in Hollywood films, as a Nazi and is most famous in the US for his role as the rotund Luftwaffe prison-camp guard Sergeant Schultz in the 1965 TV series [Hogan's](#)

[*Heroes*](#). As the school principal and Rath's friend, Harter steps in as the benevolent patriarch in Dmytryk's film and directs Rath toward rehabilitation, concluding, "a man does not have to suffer all his life for one mistake." The principal's empathetic intervention softens the moralizing blow of von Sternberg's film that warns the bourgeois against falling prey to the sexualized woman, against abandoning his calling, betraying his social standing, and inadequately performing the conventions of masculinity.

Diverging from von Sternberg's tragic ending, Dmytryk subscribes to a revised, less authoritative and more compassionate, fraternal masculinity in a liberal democracy. He provides a safety net for the frail Rath who fell for Lola's song and the romance of a conjugal union. It is after all a fictive 1956, a time in which Germany had joined NATO, had banned the Communist party, had embarked on rearmament, and was to become one of the strongest allies of the United States. The crisis of masculinity in von Sternberg's film that ends fatally is averted in the 1959 remake. Rescued and rehabilitated, Rath's recovery presumes that he will return to the classroom, not to perish, but to teach. The happy ending, the mainstay of Hollywood cinema, saves him from his transgressive union with a female nightclub performer and vamp and restores his masculinity.

Compared to the ending of the original *Blue Angel*, Dmytryk's happy end is somewhat reminiscent of the tongue-in-cheek happy end in Friedrich Murnau's 1924 film *Der letzte Mann* (*The Last Laugh*), in which the demoted doorman indulges in the excesses that wealth affords him when he finds a winning lotto ticket. But rather than a parody of Hollywood's institutionalized feel good resolution, the ending of the Hollywood remake of *The Blue Angel* invests in the ideological rescue of manhood and defuses the power of the vamp, Lola. A threatened or vulnerable masculinity and middle-class respectability is restored (rehabilitated) and with it the social order of a postwar Germany, stabilized and safe again, after years of fascism. This resolution conforms to the principles of melodrama that demand the restoration of order after Rath strays. The school principal had tried once before to bring the prodigal son back from ruin when he finds Rath, a shadow of his former self, gazing over the wall of his former schoolyard at the schoolboys leaving for their botany excursion, and invites Rath to his office. Rath relates the encounter to Lola: "This morning I was offered my last chance. A chance to get back to a decent sort of life. I had to throw it away." In an earlier scene, a tattered Rath engages a schoolboy in the park in a lesson on the parts of the flower. These scenes return Rath to the memory of a purposeful life and are melodramatic reminders of loss that Lola sets in motion.

May Britt's performance of Lola's flirtatious and charming invitation to surrender to the illusion of what she can offer imitates her predecessor. She steps into the role of a coquette siren, displays her legs, blows powder into Rath's face and provocatively straddles a chair. Yet as many critics agree, Britt's Lola lacks the powerful erotic, phantasmatic tug of Marlene Dietrich's Lola. In contrast to her cool, detached androgynous 1930 counterpart who remains untouchable and who draws her power from surface allure without depth, May Britt, a product of realism, plays a flirtatious, unambiguous femininity and attempts to slip into Dietrich's role. Furthermore, Britt's Lola commands the stage through movement more than presence. A 1959 *New York Times* review submits: "Britt looks and behaves like a normal ballet dancer in a Broadway musical show not like a slinky sex-pot in a smoky night club in Berlin. And she might as well sing, 'Who'll buy my violets?'" as the sketchy "Falling in Love Again"

(Crowther). Like in von Sternberg's film, Lola continues her song about serial love affairs but fails to command the stage like her predecessor.

Britt's overall performance lives largely as an imitation, as a replica, even though the 1959 Technicolor remake produces an even more visually lush, chromatically seductive version of Lola (interesting that both of these films were products of new technological capabilities). Britt's performance of the song "Lola Lola," an original composition for the remake by Jay Livingston and Ray Evans, becomes a direct invitation to indulge in the delights of her lesson.⁹ "I am here to teach you, what only Lola knows. Who will be my lover, who will my searching discover." In Dmytryk's version, the spotlight lands on the vulnerable schoolteacher Rath like in von Sternberg's tour de force scene when Lola seizes and fixes the unsuspecting teacher, the "real man," in her limelight. That is to say, Dmytryk fleetingly acknowledges the semantics of the original but repudiates it when the spotlight alights on Rath but canvasses the audience to capture and reveal one of Rath's students, Kieselsack.

Toward the end of the song "Who will be my lover," May Britt as Lola turns her back to the audience. The word, *Lola*, is strikingly stamped on her undergarment like a label or advertisement (a candy wrapping?)¹⁰ It is the same undergarment that Rath mistakenly carried home only to return the next day, and that later hangs on a hook in Lola's dressing room in another scene as a constant reminder of the intertextual reference to its primary owner. The signage asserts the remake's relationship to the original and its difference. It functions as a certification of Lola's authenticity but simultaneously marks her as a reproduction or quotation, much different than the signage of the myriad posters of Lola in the nightclub in von Sternberg's film that multiply her visual presence and ironically suggest her reproducibility. The name Lola on the undergarment unmistakably establishes a relationship to her namesake and emphasizes the performative aspect of the copy. The inscription of Lola on the undergarment even suggests a hyper-performativity that the brash color schemes underscore. Produced in Cinemascope and Technicolor and featuring the new technological capabilities of the cinematic apparatus, Dmytryk's Lola has a Barbie doll-like glow.

Indeed, the pervasive blue tones and red coloring lends more than color to the image; it heightens the notion of Dmytryk's Lola as artifice and intensifies melodramatically the space that defines her. The blue tones associated with the Blue Angel nightclub assert a chromatic divide between Lola's and Rath's spheres. Rath moves through spaces featured in earth tones in contrast to the garish, expressionistic blue tones of the Blue Angel nightclub and the outfits that Lola wears. Britt's dramatically overdone blue/green eye shadow accentuates her mask, her yellow dress, and the flower in her hair that links her to Rath's "botanical interests" are neon-like to attract and arouse. The excess associated with von Sternberg's mise-en-scène, the dream world or "heterocosm" he creates with Dietrich as a vehicle, as Peter Wollen points out, in order to exploit the "iconic aspect of the sign," instead of holding to the "indexical to conjure up a world, comprehensible by virtue of resemblances to the natural world, yet other than it, a kind of dream world" that ignites the realm of erotic imagination, is abandoned in the remake (140). Dmytryk's surplus make-up and coloring lends an artificial quality to Lola's performance as though

⁹ 18 minutes of music is different than von Sternberg's film—The composer for the 1959 remake is Otto Friedlander.

¹⁰ See <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Nyd8ug7ss8>

foregrounding her existence as a facsimile or replica of the original, a duplication or citation. A 1959 *New York Times* review takes into consideration the intended allure of Technicolor and concludes: “it is no wonder that Cinemascope and color make the whole thing look too bizarre” (Crowther).

Dmytryk’s Lola longs for the “home” that Rath promises to provide for her. “It would be wonderful to have a home,” she says as she passionately kisses Rath to consummate the phantasm of domesticity. At the wedding, Kiepert announces that Rath and Lola must each understand the gendered roles that convention assigns them. In response, Lola coos and Rath crows, as though affirming their place in the pecking order. In the next scene in their new domestic sphere, Lola stands behind a curtain, modestly covering her body because, as she explains, Rath no longer belongs to an anonymous audience. Rath has promised her a home and no more traveling, and indeed, Lola leaves her singing career until Kiepert reappears and asks her to rejoin the troupe as its star. Pressed by financial need, Rath, in Dmytryk’s remake, leaves the decision to Lola to return to the stage after he has pawned his last possession. A disheveled Rath is seen leaving a pawnshop whose signage reads for “Germans and G.I.s” and “U.S. Servicemen. Do you need money” with a list of objects for sale. This image secures the historical context and temporally anchors the narrative in a postwar Allied occupied Germany and more specifically in the American sector.

Like in von Sternberg’s *Blue Angel*, Lola financially supports her husband for years. The foray into the role of wife and the unsustainability of the liaison between Rath and Lola is a repeat performance that lies at the heart of both versions of *The Blue Angel* that mix sexual seduction and female labor at a time in which women are being forced discursively and legally back into the domestic sphere. Both films exhibit a vulnerable masculinity whose expulsion from the social order is caused by an uninhibited attraction to the female performer. What blinds Rath is Lola. Like von Sternberg’s Rath, the disavowal of the dire consequence of his actions seals the downward trajectory—fatal for von Sternberg’s Rath at the twilight of the Weimar Republic, but not for Dmytryk’s Rath. Dmytryk’s narrative of seduction and redemption tames the vamp and by extension the fascist legacy of the Weimar Republic, rehabilitating the image of a new Germany for American consumption. The instability of the Weimar Republic and the implicit dangers of a vulnerable masculinity—occasioned by the destabilizing erotic power of Dietrich’s Lola is redefined in Dmytryk’s more “genteel” “restrained” representation of sexuality and gender, as a 1959 film review puts it (Crowther). The happy end that concludes in the rescue of Rath, rather than in his abandonment, is the last and lasting image at the end of the film. When the camera in an aerial view leaves him and the principal walking across the schoolyard, the scene allows for reimagining Germany and excising the image of both a fascist and a libertine Weimar past. Viewed within the context of Dmytryk’s earlier Hollywood productions up until 1959, *The Blue Angel* remakes the German space and presents images of a vulnerable, benign, and nurturing masculinity, as opposed to the abundant images of Nazis on American screens. The film suggests hope for future generations if they are guided by insightful and benevolent educators in contrast to the fascist education featured in *Hitler’s Children*.

Dmytryk’s remake of *The Blue Angel* has remained overshadowed by the original, which continues to captivate audiences. In the 1980s, director Alan Parker with Diane Keaton as producer entertained remaking *The Blue Angel* with Madonna in the lead

role.¹¹ Madonna would most probably play Lola as Dietrich did, and not as May Britt whose performance made little headline. As with any remake, measuring up to or surpassing its original poses questions about the “life” of the narrative in other temporal and spatial contexts. As part of another history, the remake embodies and moves beyond its original as a cultural/historical product that comments on the times in which it lives. For many critics, Dymtryk's film did not measure up to its original. It lacked the potency, artfulness and allure that von Sternberg was able to create in Berlin's *Ufa* studio. Von Sternberg might attribute his success to the difference between art cinema and Hollywood's assembly line of B movies. Dmytryk's remake launders the aura of von Sternberg's film in that he domesticates the vamp and the storyline. He defuses the moral and sexual ambiguity associated with the Weimar Republic and its historical legacy and returns Germany to a version of a demilitarized Prussian past of discipline and virtue.

¹¹ “Who's that girl? Having assayed Marilyn Monroe and Judy Holliday, [Madonna] now says she is ready to be the new ‘Blue Angel.’ Actually, that is not her idea. It is from actress-turned-producer/director Diane Keaton. A Keaton representative said his star originated the idea of a re-make and bought rights to the original Josef von Sternberg film that launched Marlene Dietrich's career in 1930. He said Keaton will co-produce with Joe Kelly, and the film will be directed by Alan Parker (“Fame,” “Angel Heart”) from a script by Neil Jimenez (“River's Edge”)” (“Keaton wants Madonna”).

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