

Preface

Notes on This Edition

This edition presents Kracauer's shorter writings published in English during his years in the United States, as well as a number of unpublished materials from this period.

While we erred on the side of inclusiveness, this collection does not claim to be comprehensive. Selecting the published texts, we have made three minor exceptions: First, we have generally refrained from including published essays that subsequently appeared unchanged in Kracauer's major works, *From Caligari to Hitler: A Psychological History of the German Film*, *Theory of Film: The Redemption of Physical Reality*, and the posthumous *History: Last Things Before the Last*. Because of their significance within the long gestation period of his "book on film aesthetics," as he called it, we do, however, include a condensed version of the opening section of *Theory of Film* on photography, which appeared in the *Magazine of Art* almost a decade before the book was published, as well as a précis of passages from the *Theory of Film* chapter titled "The Found Story and the Episode," which, identified as "excerpts" from the "comprehensive syllabus of his book," was published in *Film Culture* in 1956. Second, we have omitted a few brief book reviews, particularly ones that basically summarize a book's contents rather than providing an evaluation indicative of Kracauer's own convictions; we have, however, retained all reviews, however brief, that express Kracauer's personal methodological assumptions or intellectual leanings. Third, we have omitted here a series of important texts on the subject of propaganda and communications research, since these will be appearing in a separate edition prepared by Graehme Gilloch and Jaeho Kang.¹ In consultation with the editors of that volume, we have striven to ensure that, together, the two anthologies will provide a comprehensive picture of Kracauer's research and publication

activities during his American years, above and beyond the better-known monographs on Weimar cinema, film theory, and historiography.

To the published body of work that (with the exception of some film notes for *Cinema 16* and a piece titled "The Mirror Up to Nature" from the British *Penguin Film Review*) appeared in American journals and newspapers between 1941 and 1958, we have made three kinds of additions: First, although Kracauer began writing exclusively in English only a few months after his arrival in the United States, he did publish three articles in the leading Swiss newspaper, *Neue Zürcher Zeitung*, in 1941. Because these reviews deal explicitly with Hollywood cinema and were written in the United States, we have translated them for inclusion in this collection. Second, we include a number of English-language type-scripts from the Kracauer archive (housed in the Deutsches Literaturarchiv, Marbach). Some of these appear to have been destined for publication but ultimately were not printed; others were evidently designed as proposals for further discussion.² These include writings on subjects as diverse as Jewish culture in America, the state of the humanities, and the role of "art today"; reviews of individual films—notably Rossellini's *Paisan*, clearly a cinematic milestone in the eyes of Kracauer, whose review is published here for the first time in the original English; and Kracauer's notes on a "Talk with Teddie," a record of an apparently heated conversation he had with Adorno in Switzerland in 1964. The significance of this text for the relationship between Kracauer's thinking, as honed during his New York years, and the Critical Theory of Adorno (now back in Frankfurt) has been well known since the publication of Martin Jay's insightful essay on the two thinkers' "troubled friendship."³ That significance has only increased now that the vagaries of this friendship have been fully documented with the publication of Adorno and Kracauer's lifelong correspondence.⁴