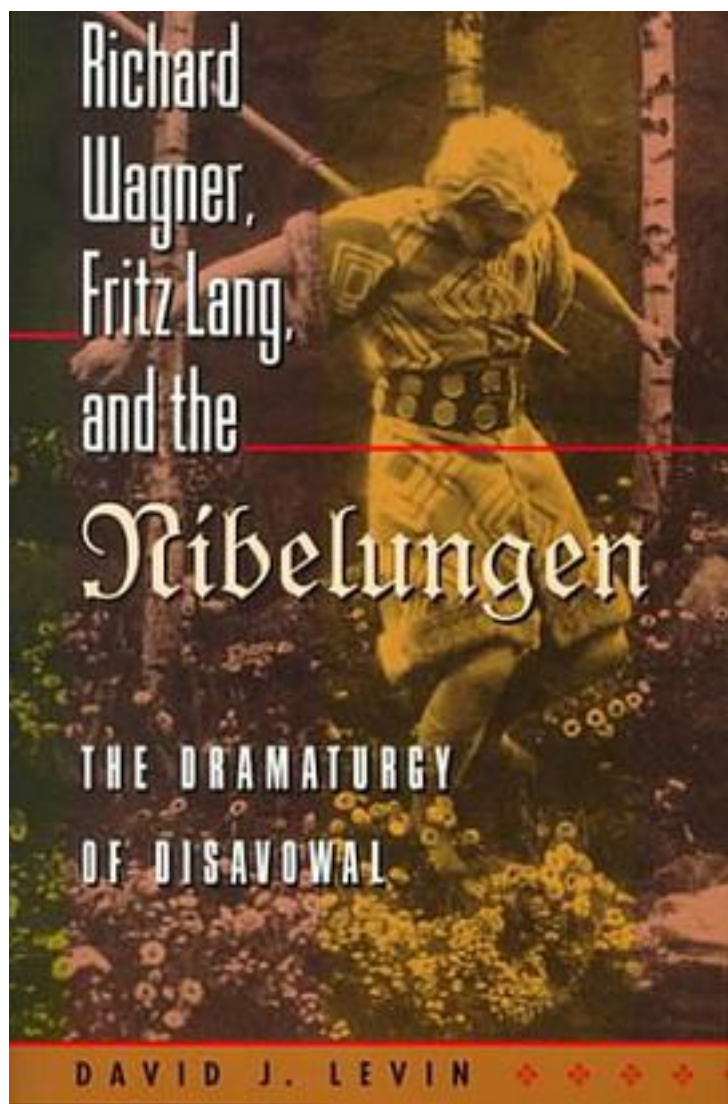


# Richard Wagner, Fritz Lang, and the Nibelungen



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出版者:Princeton University Press

出版时间:1999-11-29

装帧:Paperback

isbn:9780691049717

This highly original book draws on narrative and film theory, psychoanalysis, and musicology to explore the relationship between aesthetics and anti-Semitism in two controversial landmarks in German culture. David Levin argues that Richard Wagner's opera cycle "Der Ring des Nibelungen" and Fritz Lang's 1920s film "Die Nibelungen" creatively exploit contrasts between good and bad aesthetics to address the question of what is German and what is not. He shows that each work associates a villainous character, portrayed as non-Germanic and Jewish, with the sometimes dramatically awkward act of narration. For both Wagner and Lang, narration - or, in cinematic terms, visual presentation - possesses a typically Jewish potential for manipulation and control. Consistent with this view, Levin shows, the Germanic hero Siegfried is killed in each work by virtue of his unwitting adoption of a narrative role. Levin begins with an explanation of the book's theoretical foundations and then applies these theories to close readings of, in turn, Wagner's cycle and Lang's film. He concludes by tracing how Germans have dealt with the Nibelungen myths in the wake of the Second World War, paying special attention to Michael Verhoeven's 1989 film "The Nasty Girl". His fresh and interdisciplinary approach sheds new light not only on Wagner's "Ring" and Lang's "Die Nibelungen", but also on the ways in which aesthetics can be put to the service of aggression and hatred. The book is an important contribution to scholarship in film and music and also to the broader study of German culture and national identity.

作者介绍:

目录:

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