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ANDRZEJ WAJDA'S **A LOVE**
in Germany also uses a
doomed personal relation-
ship as a window on history. Taken
from a novel by Rolf Hochhuth, the
movie begins when an anonymous
man arrives in Brombach, a German
village on the Swiss border, to
investigate an incident from the Nazi
past of four decades ago. *Germany*
moves back and forth between this
present inquiry and the past tragedy.

Under the Nazis, sexual liaisons
between Germans and "non-Aryans"
were forbidden. While her husband
is at war, shopkeeper Paulina Kropp
has an affair with Stanislaw Zasada, a
Polish prisoner of war. She's found
out, and the movie is about the
events that lead up to and follow her
discovery.

The cast is generally excellent. As
Paulina, a woman in a happily
suicidal love-trance, Hanna Schygul-
la gives a passionately hypnotic
performance. Schygulla is especially
well supported by another of Rainer
Fassbinder's acting discoveries,
Elisabeth Trissenaar, who plays
Paulina's treacherous friend, Elsbeth
Schnittgens. And of the men, Daniel
Olbrychski (one of Wajda's regu-
lars), stands out as a second Polish
prisoner.

But Schygulla's work may be too
virtuoso—we focus on her delirium
more than on the political insanity
around her. The problem is com-
pounded by a plot full of crucial
coincidences that is also dependent
on both Paulina and her boyfriend
lacking the slightest instinct for self-
preservation. While Wajda has
always had a sense of tragic destiny,

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in this movie we can see the
director's heavy hand pulling Fate's
strings.

Movies about Nazism usually turn
modern history's greatest catastro-
phe into melodrama. Wajda has
some fresh touches, though not as
many as we'd like. Parts of the movie
neatly highlight the banality of evil:
selfishness and subservience wreak
more havoc than political fanaticism.
And Wajda gets in some tragicomic
digs at the absurdities of racism with
a grotesque exam to determine
Stanislaw's fitness for Germanization,
and a Nazi officer's desperate
attempt to find a Pole to perform the
non-Aryan task of hanging a fellow
Slav.

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