

Metropolis, California

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In 1933 Karl Kraus composed *Third Walpurgis Night*, the third strike of a match with Goethe's two Walpurgis Nights in *Faust I* and *II*, and he was out of satire. His practice, which peaked around the First World War, was to slip the bloody reference that the journalistic phrase openly hid and bracketed out back into circulation between or behind the lines of satire, which, as lines given in art or fiction, were automatically granted a more open and less defended span of attention. Once swallowed and its provenance revealed, this one bit of coverage stuck there, a catch in the throat, the catch to the insurance policy the press takes out against the shock of the news. Now you don't see it, now you gag on it. Hitler's rise to power raised mediated language to the power of murder machine. There was no longer any gap or overlap into which Kraus could insert his surprise interventions. But he writes just the same, picks apart the Nazi screed in newspapers, if only to demonstrate that he is not pleased with his predictive powers nor convinced that one can arrest history on the laurels of proven prophecy.

In *The Case of California* I argued that the West Coast was the toast of all reunions of the legacies of "Germany," California's other coast, the other "Back East." Much of this argument concerned the era of German exiles on Main Street, California, their psychoanalytic and sociological influence, in particular on what the critical record could show with regard to California's own "culture industry." Bringing this discursive coupling into the present – and staging it as forced marriage – I even suggested that there was a symptomatic relationship of displacement between the fall of the Berlin wall and

the rising up of a “wall” from the collapsed bridge of the San Francisco earthquake. On stretches such as these academics cited me for contempt of history. Where are they now that my discourse has flexed powers of prophecy? Around the time of Arnold Schwarzenegger’s triumph (of my will or testament), I was invited to introduce a screening at UC Santa Barbara of the recently restored version of Fritz Lang’s *Metropolis*. The case of Lang, to which I have revisitation rights,¹ turned out to be the setting in which something could cross my mind about Schwarzenegger.

Metropolis, which first screened in 1927, has already gone down in history, now as the first serious science fiction film, now as the greatest silent ever made. But first it did time in Hollywood horror movies of the 1930s (which employed many of the same people who worked in the German film industry the decade before, even, like Karl Freund, on *Metropolis*). The monstrous scenes of animation or reanimation in Whale’s *Frankenstein* films, for example, get their spark from the lab procedure in *Metropolis* whereby a woman’s doubled image is imprinted onto a robot that comes in her life size. (Whale got the monster’s body from another German film, *The Golem: How He Came Into The World*, 1920.) *Metropolis* returned from this underworld sojourn in the 1980s and ‘90s, replicating itself in countless music videos and sci-fi and superhero films as an identifiable look of the future hovering between the recent past and “today.” At some point in this span of the film’s renewed popularity, Disneyland rebuilt Tomorrowland to look like a *Metropolis* set.

What has become in the world revealed by Hollywood the most iconic film by far was originally commissioned to launch a German blockbuster that could compete with the Hollywood products that were already monopolizing the international screen. But by

the time Lang finished the most expensive film the German industry had ever before made, the company that got Lang started (UFA) had in the meantime entered into relations of codependency with Hollywood's Paramount and MGM. Between affiliations, historical moments, and audiences, the film, shot straight from the hype, fell way short of expectations.

Since 1984 the irretrievably lost original has been flickering in our faces in supplemented versions of the American cut to which the original was sacrificed shortly after its premiere in Berlin. Often only stills had to fill in for all that didn't survive the sweep of the cutting room floor. The 2002 version covers the original story and loses the supplementary status of the inserts. Consider two stills of a commemorative monument or grave standing in for the otherwise missing melancholic trajectory of the film that lowers the doom in the prehistory of the story we watch on screen. In the restored version this monument is placed in a niche behind curtains and, displayed and glimpsed in the time it takes to open and close them, the images lose their status as stills and become moments of stillness in a motion picture. The monument holds the missing place of Hel, the woman wooed by two men, mad scientist Rotwang and Fredersen, ruler of Metropolis, whom she married. She died giving birth to Freder (and granting Metropolis heir-time). Rotwang constructs a robot woman to be the vehicle for Hel's return (if not to life then at least into his life).

Now, a version or cut can be just another original. The American version prompts us to interpret Fritz Lang's *Metropolis* via an exclusion, which is also just another form of implication and emphasis.ⁱⁱ The total removal of Hel, in image as in name, was the work of American playwright Channing Pollock, who, hired to rewrite the film's titles, of

course influenced, even guided the editing process. Pollock decided that, in English, the proximity of the name Hel to Hell would divert Americans at attention span away from the movie, either in shocked disapproval or onto the laugh track. But if Pollock proclaimed that his revision of the film gave it, for the first time, meaning, then I can concur, but only to the extent that he in effect created an after-the-fact momentum of questions and excavations that redoubled *Metropolis* back onto the missing place of Hel.

The removal of Hel from the original that at the same time reprogrammed her as the return of the repressed is not, however, extraneous to the film. Hel's exile or return cannot, in other words, be confined to one man's phobic intervention in what's in a name. For, what remains ambiguous even in the 2002 version is how the figure Maria is made to fit or shift the Hel position that the robot was built to assume. Even with reference to Hel up and running, we are pulled in two directions regarding Maria's introduction into the funereal techno-fantasy plot of replication and reanimation. The standard rendition of this plot twist is that Fredersen discovers that the workers are rallying behind somebody called Maria at the same time that Rotwang reveals to him the invention of the cyborg. Fredersen convinces Rotwang to drop whatever plans he had in store for the techno-body that does not yet resemble a woman, dead or alive. He should instead, temporarily, give it the image of Maria, so that with this body double Fredersen can undermine the real Maria's message and mission. But why does Maria enter Freder's life early in the film as mother figure surrounded by workers' children she refers to as his brothers? It is the establishing shot for Freder's mother complex, to be sure. If Freder is to make it to the future of substitution in coupling, then the body of Maria must be doubled and divided, divided and conquered. The extreme representation of her sexual threat, which includes

the castrative edge she assumes for Freder when he sees her lascivious robot version in his father's embrace, must be destroyed. At the same time, the real Maria must suffer, too, so that Freder can rescue her from the humiliation and torment. The pedestal of the complex that raised Maria into Freder's line of sight, his love at first sight – but also fortified the distance of idealization or demonization into which his love must fall short of the off-limits object – thus gets knocked out of the running of Freder's stunted love life.

It is to turn up the contrast, then, that the story of Hel (or rather that of Rotwang's techno-substitution for this missing person) is offered. It is the cautionary tale of one mad scientist's inability to find a living substitute for an absence that death only doubles: just like a mother she chose another suitor, the third person who thus interrupted Rotwang's duo dynamic. But it is also possible that we have two stories here that cannot be reconciled; in all likelihood the Oedipal story of Freder's working his way out of the complex that repressed incest fantasies build serves as a diversion away from the entrance to the crypt or the tech-no-future in which the mother's missing body remains hidden and preserved. Why else would Rotwang, apparently, even if at seeming odds with the story line, hallucinate Hel in place of Maria, whom he guards while the robot double is out in the underworld on her anarchic mission. But there is also a third story or plot breaking through here at this intersection of irreconcilable and non-superimposable complexes. Freder's psychosis-compatible castration at the sight of "Maria" sexualized in his father's arms also marks the introduction of the robot, which Freder is Oedipally bound not to recognize. The full hallucination releases the cathedral sculptures of the Seven Deadly Sins that are animated now to march forward, following a skeletal figure of

Death as their leader, presumably marching toward Freder with the swinging scythe at the front of their line dance. The leader of the mortal sins is, of course, the Devil on his own volition relating to us via the very sins through which we metabolize the world of our creation. While the castrative threat performs the unrepresentability of death (that is, one's own death), the overall allegorical momentum assigns certainty and finitude to the Devil's sway over the deadline. The Devil's offer of a deadline cannot be separated from the smear tactics whereby dad certainty is first introduced.

Up to a point (the turning point of his psychotic break at the end of the film), Rotwang would be content with his Hel replacement. The robot as substitution without complications, as new and improved outcome of a loss that can be written off as deduction with benefits, belongs to the province of the pre-Oedipal or primal father, whose initial monopolization of sexual difference whereby he alone can plug into the interchangeable backsides of mother and children, circumscribes our relationship to the Devil that takes off from and returns to this anal underworld. In striking contrast to the reality of reproduction (that would require of little one, certainly in the early years of sexual research, a major leap of faith), the anal theory of birth is always the first inside view of creation because it makes evident sense. And we continue, at some level, to make anal babies simply because we can keep on making more and more of them.

The sexualization of the robot woman derives from her anal-phase significance as receptacle to empty or fill at your disposal.ⁱⁱⁱ In Ira Levin's *The Stepford Wives*, the men in town form a coven for the necromantic replacement of their wives with enhanced robot doubles. When Walter, after spending his first late night at the men's club, joins his wife Joanna in bed, he wakes her up with his frantic masturbation. When they next make love

she registers his passion at an all time high. “What did they do, ... show you dirty movies or something?”^{iv} No, not quite. Instead we can assume that the men explored with Walter the benefits of replacing the wife with a fuck dolly.^v

A refrain in *Metropolis* that then places its refraining order on the conclusion of the film is that there’s a blank between the brain and the hands that must be filled as mediation, with heart, if *Metropolis*, for example, is not to succumb to self-destruction. Freder ends up in the foreground as the mediating heart everyone was looking for. But what is also missing between brains and hands is Hel, not as heart but as the womb, the maternal body or the body as mother. Lang later disowned the ending, benefiting from his co-authorship of the screenplay to lay the blame on his better half, Thea von Harbou, his wife back then. But when Lang left Germany he found he hadn’t only separated from Germany under Hitler: von Harbou remained behind in a new partnership with the Nazi German future she cosigned. Lang thus later reflected regarding the conclusion of *Metropolis*: “One cannot make a socially conscious film in which one says the mediator between hand and brain is the heart – I mean, that is a fairytale, really. But I was interested in machines.”^{vi}

But a concluding frame of reference that is essentially Christian does not get in the way of – nor is it contradicted by – an overriding interest in machines. Hitler was a big fan of Lang’s *Metropolis*. He, for one, saw no problem in the situation of machines running life’s transmission – or live transmission – within a Christian field of representation that had also already, there’s no way around it, admitted Demonic aspirations and powers. Lang came to think of himself, as film director, as working like

or as a psychoanalyst. But just the same he found out that he could be constructed as Hitler's representative.

In *The Testament of Dr. Mabuse* (1933), Lang thought he was implicating the Nazis through his depiction of an underworld organized around a phantom with tele-hypnotic powers who, pretending to be alive, communicates with his minions through or as media only, from typewritten orders to audiences with the "Dr." in person in a basement where only his shadow shape is discernible through the curtain or screen while the phonograph plays his commands. The film was banned in Nazi Germany – but only because it failed to include representation of the Nazi takeover as rescue party that must follow the anarchy of crime. At the same time Joseph Goebbels invited Lang to occupy the chief directorial post for a new era of German filmmaking. By this time Lang must have been so freaked by his equal access to the same wavelengths from which he otherwise sought to keep his distance, he just had to split the scene.

Lang had all along been a medium who sleepwalked and sleeptalked with the same assurance that Hitler boasted of when it came to forecasting trends. World War I shellshock inspired both Lang and Hitler to become mediums or media. (In both cases partial and/or hysterical blindness held interchangeable places with projection.) While before the war Lang was pushing painted postcards to support his pursuit – against his father's wish that he become an architect – of the art of painting, Hitler sold hand-painted postcards to finance his own artistic vocation. While Lang's turn to film would achieve a displaced following or negative representation of the paternal order, Hitler's eventual career did the same to his own father, who was on the Austrian border patrol.^{vii}

Lang couldn't sustain a double legacy, that of the two most famous Austrians of the 20th century, Freud and Hitler. Instead he split for California.^{viii} But the Lang and the short of it is that the doubling that shadowed or guided him as an uncanny synchronization between his moves or movies and political events could not of course be taken interpersonally, was not restricted to his person, and indeed continues to come full circle. The experiment is on, only in California, no other place, concept, or field of representation could sustain it, to combine, incorporate, synthesize, or overcome the extremities named Freud and Hitler in an assembly line of intermediaries. Currently at the front of this line, Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger is the third famous Austrian – and we're out of the running of extremes that are at the same time up and running in one corpus.^{ix} Even at first sight Schwarzenegger's career movies could be summarized as the construction – on his own person or cinematic corpus – of an ambivalent maternal introject capable of hosting the cohabitation or juxtaposition of “opposites.” The first two *Terminator* films book the ends of the tension that Schwarzenegger's techno-fantastic body can contain.

What I prefer to refer to as the bosom body is that built body that is all bosom or, if you prefer, buttocks. This body thus derives both from first contact with the breast tumescent with milk and, turned around to the primal father's penetrating monopolization of distinction or certainty, from the anal outlet storage of sexual difference. *Junior* takes it literally, up the forward displacement of the anal theory into an heir pocket in Schwarzenegger's abdomen where baby – all gastrointestinal systems are go – has room to grow. But he cut this wide birth from developments with which he was ever keeping

abreast. In 1974 Schwarzenegger noted that he was not stuck on or in his exhibition body. In fact, unflexed, the built body remained hidden, internalized:

My body doesn't look massive when I'm standing relaxed. ... I never tried to tense it up, to get muscle bound. However, when I posed my ... body would open up ... and my muscles would appear. ... I could make my chest expand so dramatically it shocked people; they didn't know where it came from.^x

The appeal of the enhanced body is double: the fuck dolly of the anal theory of birth wraps around the Oedipal or Christian body. But this double whammy, too, is a wrap: what can be found on the inside is the mother's body, which, because it can only be found missing, cannot be deemed superseded or redeemed by the twofold body.

According to Klaus Theweleit's interpretation (in *Male Fantasies*, 1977) of the upward mobilization of the German psyche between the world wars, training of the focus on militarization began with boy bodies that father, school, and state rewired and rebuilt as killer machines that took one pleasure, the only one that was left to live or die for: cutting into despised amorphous swamp things with the phallic steel that sent them to (and at) the front. Under cover of jumping the gun, these built bodies could also steal the pleasure of suicidal merger with the maternal body. The lawn sprinkler to which their heterosexuality was reduced for low maintenance watered the sister, both as nurse and sibling. The sister thus doubled as the other boy body either at one remove from the brother in arms or in denial of her own proximity to the maternal blob. *Male Fantasies* fixes us up with its focus on its German materials. However, the polymorphous visuals give a more sweeping diagnosis. Thus we find Captain Marvel on one of the pages of Theweleit's study. Certainly there is a tendency in cultural studies (one that Theweleit

does not cosign in his own writing) to line up the Nazi German bodies as on one “armored” continuum with, say, the American superheroes. The problem with loud and clear interpretations of the fascist psyche is that they run the risk of universalization. Certain readings of fascism can thus, upon wide-ranging application, become fascist in turn. This also holds true of those readings that follow Elias Canetti in viewing Daniel Paul Schreber – Freud’s favorite psycho whose fantasy destiny was becoming woman at the same time as s/he would also become robot – as Nazi *avant la lettre*.

Novelist Michael Chabon popularized the historical setting of American superheroics that pits, for example, two American Jewish teenagers, the creators of *Superman* in the 1930s, against the Nazi German interpretations and appropriations of Nietzsche’s “Overman.”^{xi} (Chabon’s further alignment of American superheroes with the Golem legend is interesting or even true – but only to the extent that Superman must sit then on the same shelf next to the Barbie doll, who also embodies a minority’s ambivalent relations with assimilation.) Superman, Batman, Wonderwoman, Tarzan (specifically the films starring Johnny Weismuller), and even James Bond are addressed by Theweleit’s reading of the fascist metabolization of post-natural embodiment but only in one of their aspects, the side they struggle (all “American” superheroes are defined by conflict tracking back to a traumatic past) to overcome in its oneness.^{xii}

Freud’s reading of the impossibility of “superhuman” perfectibility does not, then, contradict the American side – the inside of Nietzsche’s reading – but offers a cautionary tally to Germanic readings of superhumanity that err on the side of self-identity.^{xiii} Thus Faustian striving for the highest satisfaction (Goethe’s Faust is the first *Übermensch* in German letters) refers to what was primally repressed.^{xiv} Since Freud postulates primal

repression (of the mother's body) as the one repression not even the superman nor the most accomplished psychopath could ever get around, it is the building block or blockage that guarantees self-difference as the bottom line of selfhood (that throws self for a loop through the other).

Walter Benjamin concluded (in *Origin of the German Mourning Play*, 1928) that allegory is always Christian in frame. Christianity certainly cathected allegorization not only in order to recontextualize certain pagan symbols (like the unicorn) and demonize the rest but also, and more importantly, as the mode of appropriating the Old Testament. The cross is just another sign, to be sure. But thanks to Christianity (conceived as the saturation-interpretation of all words and worlds out there in terms of its "other story") every sign in the meantime bears association with the Christian cross. But the allegories that Benjamin contemplates are typically in ruins; the "modern" allegorist, according to Benjamin, maintains all the metaphysical frames of reference as defunct or dead but rescued (not redeemed). Thus Christianity in Benjamin's reading, too, becomes nihilism, the busy interchange to which, however, the melancholic sensibility Benjamin also summons to his interpretation of allegory cannot be relegated.

In 1919 Freud wrote both the essay "On the 'Uncanny,'" his exploration of doubling and nothing, and the study titled *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, in which he fixed his focus on the repetition compulsion (as evidenced, for example, in the serial dreaming about or flashing back to the scene of traumatic impact that shell-shocked soldiers during World War I). In the latter work, Freud also formulated his new theory of the drives in a setting as modern as the technologization advanced to the fronts of the Great War and as ancient as Christianity. While addressing the "demonic" aspect of the

repetition compulsion, Freud formulated as “Devil’s advocate” a series of scenarios in which the relationship between life and death is reconceived as the drive to defer the end, on one side, and – on the other side – the drive to rush to the end ASAP. *Metropolis* also shows a stricken world of the future ruled or driven by doubling or repetition. It is hyper-modern in its setting but also seeks its definition or conclusion home on the Christian range of meaning.

In *On the Nightmare*, his psychoanalytic study of occult figures, Ernest Jones drops a reference to a goddess of death named Hel who, according to certain legends, was the Devil’s mother.^{xv} (A Country-and-Western ballad provides the Freud-compatible connection: “When love dies it goes to Hell.”) The technologization of our relationship to the end (in a word, drive theory) belongs in *Metropolis* to the mad scientist Rotwang, whose mix of gadget-loving science and black magic is the secret source of the technomodernity of *Metropolis*. Rotwang is at home with the mix: his laboratory, which is his home, is the only ancient building in the upper city other than the cathedral. Inside it offers a rapid-fire shortcut down into the underworld to which it at the same time belongs. Fredersen turns to Rotwang to solve a problem he is having as ruler with the political unrest of the workers or “hands.” The robot is ready and waiting to be turned on to turn the ruler’s wish into command. But the city, too, with its central machine called Heart Machine, its upper world of conscious thought, and its underworld of repressed hands, is itself a built body, an artificial life form, ready and waiting to be pressed into service, a service that proves, however, hard to contain or maintain. This is Rotwang’s legacy, and it, too, lives on at or as the end, and not according to the plan that serves as the official ending: the father-and-son reconciliation over the woman’s cleansed or

uncanny-proofed body, an at once Christian and Oedipal legacy of substitution. The robot was attached to Rotwang, who took a robot hand to replace his own, lost in the course of constructing the replica android. The robot reconstitutes this dead woman, and the bond between techno woman and her robot builder is the hand he had offered her in marriage, which could not be accepted alive, only live. Even when the heart joins hand and brain at the close of the film in a marriage ceremony that reconciles all citizens of Metropolis, there's a secret handshake along for the union. The closing gesture of reconciliation is but the repetition of the exchange of hands between the robot and its creator, a bond of incorporation that joins the tower city and its underworld, where workers appear to labor solely to generate the electricity which illumines and animates *Metropolis*, both the city and the film.

Christian Oedipality and the Devil's Pre-Oedipality differ only in the links and limits of their media. When it comes to the dead woman Hel, the ability to ditch the missing woman and live on is co-signed by Freder and Rotwang. But Rotwang's madness is the exception to what rules at the end. His madness also takes exception to the ends Rotwang initially sought for himself and the robot. Thus when he enters the hallucinatory space in which Maria and the robot are not so much interchangeable as equally beside the point of the sudden continuity of Hel's existence, Rotwang also again touches the film medium but this time in such a way that we don't have to hand it to him. Lang intended to accompany or extend Rotwang's leap off the deep end with the animation of "ghosts and ghouls and beasties"^{xvi} that would stream out of the cathedral at the moment the total destruction of the city must double as the beginning of its redemption. While the scene puts Christianity and demonic "ghouls and beasties" in their (same) place, the "ghosts"

mark and make an exception. In contrast to both Christian immediation (the medium as message, the word made flesh) and the Devil's dad certainty, "ghosts" are resolutely mediatic, mediational, medium-dependent. They are not, then, the so-called ghosts of unfinished business or those holographic messages or messengers from the Christian afterlife, but the ghosts that rebound from, resound within our dead-ication to the other, both in primal time and in the uncontrollable time to come.

In *End of Days* (1999) the Schwarzenegger protagonist ends up reunited with the heavenly shadows of his wife and child. Their loss, which haunted him via his melancholic fixation on security, designates him a young woman's best defender against the Devil. When the Devil possesses Schwarzenegger as last resort, there is enough conflict still within him to make the leap of suicide. What he gets at the end, the redemption value of every loss, even melancholically deposited losses, is, when it comes to the dead, on the same page as the Devil's dynamic of certitude. But Schwarzenegger's Devil's advocacy is the exception that turns the high beam on what otherwise rules in or as his images. When Schwarzenegger played Conan the Barbarian as blond beast struggling against monstrous figures of Christianity or nihilism he explicitly entered Nietzsche's texts right where the philosopher presented us with the new stakes of misreading – and this was his ultimate test of or for our superhumanity – which are precisely life or death. In *Terminator 2* (1991) and *Last Action Hero* (1993) the Schwarzenegger protagonists put themselves to this test until, by the end of the projection, they also put themselves to rest. Both through the contact and the subsequent withdrawal, the protagonists upgrade formerly non-nurturing mothers in the estimation of their sons. But as terminator, because he has left behind a part of his android hand

crunched in the machine and can at any time be replicated, he is also the missing link (the link with the missing) that loops future through past ad infinitum. Thus the “good enough” Oedipal mother meets match and maker in the internalized – eternalized – good breast of pre-Oedipal, pre-Christian provenance. As *End of Days* and *The Terminator* (1984) showed, evil marks the damn spot this breast is in, that won’t come out in the course of Christian reversals of good and bad.

The experiment is on in California. Its parameters appear futural or interminable. As projection, however, it can also be interpreted in reverse: as referring to its past achievement, realization, or result to which we now relate in the mode of recovery. Perhaps this is what Freud meant when he argued that (the Germanic interpretation of) Nietzsche’s Superman was always an already past event, primally or traumatically past. To recycle Karl Kraus’s verdict on psychoanalysis, Governor Schwarzenegger is the embodiment of an illness for which he is also the anti-bodiment or cure. He always wanted to be really, really big.^{xvii}

ⁱ In *Aberrations of Mourning* (1988) and *The Case of California* (1991) I deposited this reading of Lang’s case or corpus in various subsections readily overlooked by German film scholars who in the meantime have no doubt dribbled something of their own in the vicinity of my unreading.

ⁱⁱ The mission of the American cut was to shorten the Lang version. If we keep this economy in mind, the cut of the subplot involving *der Schmale* or “Slim,” a detective plot of surveillance and intrigue, even though it showcased Lang’s stylistic mastery of this genre, was one large chunk of reel changes that could go if the film had to lose almost half its wait in the old version. Such logic overdetermines, by contrast, the exclusion of Hel’s unburial plot.

ⁱⁱⁱ According to Melanie Klein, early relations with the breast are right away extended to include preoccupation with the mother’s insides, in particular with the feces and father’s penis incorporated therein.

^{iv} Ira Levin, *The Stepford Wives* (New York 2002 [1972]): 14-16.

^v In Brian Forbes’s 1975 movie version, by contrast, the experience or delusion of doubling is grounded in the abyssal bottom the heroine hits in the transference during her first session with the female psychiatrist, and which sparks outside session when she overhears one of the perfect wives moaning too much with a

pleasure she deems unimaginable given what could only be the meager efforts of the pathetic husband. We thus leave behind the Devil fiction and enter science fiction, thereby exchanging uninhibited fun for psychosis-compatible inside views of replication.

^{vi} In Peter Bogdanovich, *Who the Devil Made It. Conversations With Legendary Film Directors* (New York 1997): 178.

^{vii} It would, moreover, not be far off the mark to see Hitler as also having entered the film medium as director or leader, not only via Leni Riefenstahl, whose occasions, sets, and extras he provided, but through his own editorial supervision of the dailies that came in for his nightly viewing from the many fronts of his total war.

^{viii} In *You Only Live Once* (1937) “what Americans call a ‘three-time loser’” “is untested and ... fights all alone against the power that menaces society, but he must fight.” In *Fritz Lang Interviews*, ed. Barry Keith Grant (Jackson, Mississippi 2003): 29.

^{ix} “He put on the music from *Exodus*. At first, I was embarrassed. I had to laugh. I couldn’t pose to that. He urged me to try. He showed me how to hit the best, most dramatic poses during the high points of the music and how to do the less dramatic, more subtle poses during the quieter parts. He taught me to move and turn with rhythm and flow. ... After two days I ended up with an entirely different posing routine.” Arnold Schwarzenegger and Douglas Kent Hall, *Arnold: The Education of a Bodybuilder* (New York 1993 [1974]): 58.

^x Arnold Schwarzenegger and Douglas Kent Hall, 70-71.

^{xi} Michael Chabon, *The Amazing Adventures of Kavalier and Clay* (New York, 2000).

^{xii} In Tim Burton’s and Joel Schumacher’s foursome of Batman films, we witness Batman’s origin as “bad” boy, but bad only in the pre-Christian sense of being ill-equipped, not well-made to face the trauma of attending the murder of his parents. In Schumacher’s *Batman Forever* (1995), Bruce Wayne, as boy suddenly bereft of parents, turns his back on Christian consolation while doubling the closure of the “red book,” the book in which his father had taken notes of the boy’s life. Dropping the red book – the father’s book that kept his son’s already “read” life under surveillance – bad boy falls into a bat cave, the mother load that models or begins the splitting off of his identity as the Batman who must battle evil doubles in a field of mutual creation and destruction. When Bruce enters the cavity of the stiff body suit he does not so much assume cover as reanimate the body he becomes. As Nietzsche counseled, the tension and transition between the value scales good/bad and evil/good must be conceived as the ongoing force field each individual psyche keeps on crossing (and being crossed with). At the conclusion of Burton’s *Batman Returns* (1992) Bruce Wayne/Batman drops the mask of doubling and proposes to Serena/Catwoman that two unmasked doubles could make a whole happy ending. She admits she is tempted, but – and thus she returns them both to their trans-human track – if she went along with his plan of re-pair, she just couldn’t live with herself.

^{xiii} After *The Nibelungen* (1924), Lang’s Wagner-compatible contribution to Germanic superheroism, the director entered, beginning with *Metropolis*, an underworld that subtended what remained of the German period he set to a sentence handed down to murderers passing (into us) as mothers.

^{xiv} In the penultimate paragraph of section V of *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, Freud writes: “It may be difficult, too, for many of us, to abandon the belief that there is an instinct towards perfection at work in human beings, which has brought them to their present high level of intellectual achievement and ethical sublimation and which may be expected to watch over their development into supermen. ... What appears in a minority of human individuals as an untiring impulsion towards further perfection can easily be understood as a result of the instinctual repression upon which is based all that is most precious in human

civilization. The repressed instinct never ceases to strive for complete satisfaction, which would consist in the repetition of a primary experience of satisfaction. No substitutive or reactive formations and no sublimations will suffice to remove the repressed instinct's persisting tension; and it is the difference in amount between the pleasure of satisfaction which is *demanded* and that which is actually *achieved* that provides the driving factor which will permit of no halting at any position attained.... The backward path that leads to complete satisfaction is as a rule obstructed by the resistances which maintain the repressions. So there is no alternative but to advance in the direction in which growth is still free – though with no prospect of bringing the process to a conclusion or of being able to reach the goal.”

^{xv} The portion of Jones's study that contains the reference to Hel, namely Part 2, was first published in 1912 in German as a monograph in a recognized psychoanalytic series. It is conceivable that Lang and von Harbou would have known this work.

^{xvi} In Bogdanovich, 178.

^{xvii} “I dreamed of big deltoids, big pecs, big thighs, big calves; I wanted every muscle to explode and be huge. I dreamed about being gigantic.” Schwarzenegger and Hall, 17. Then he discovers that he was all along sharing a fantasy: “Even though I was a newcomer, they wanted Arnold. It had to do with having a big body, being spectacular. People could identify more closely with a huge body than with a perfect body” (59).