

MEET

The

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Anyone writing about a "classic" is indebted to the generations that have made it so. My debt to the film, in other words, no critic of Lang, von Hartou and *Metropolis* is recorded in the bibliography. But there are also other kinds of gratitude to record to Rick and Conda who asked me to review the Warner version for the *Monthly Film Bulletin*, to Gerhard Schenk who invited me to a symposium on the "Jungle of the Cities," and to Maite Haguer for being on that occasion an excellent article of translating my text. Incomparable Germanic Tracts to record here the work of Ann Durrmond and Lexa Hunt on *Metropolis*, and above all, Heide Schönermann's uniquely valuable and still, under-appreciated comparative study of the sources of Lang's 1920s technoscience.

With pleasure I recall our memorable conversation with Tony Kacz on the ramparts of Mexico, the patient assistance by Tanya Linn, especially with the pirates, and Allison McMahon's very useful translation of Leonardo Quirigua's article from the Spanish, after Leonardo has been kind enough to send it to me. Sally Sando sent me material from Paris, Walter Rother from Berlin, and Kay Huffman was as indefatigable as he was ingenious in turning out the most accurate terms he could find to prove that *Metropolis* was indeed alive and well.

To put the right on the different versions, I benefited from long discussions with Martin Koster who also showed me his chapters, while Enzo Caruso graciously lent me the annotated chronology of his restoration. Hans Holzer, Prindler made sure that the Library of the Stiftung Deutsche Kinemathek was open to me, where the staff and Walter Thies accommodated my requests. Michael Wenzel read the manuscript, and Bob White, hawk-eyed and acutely experienced, showed the book through the inevitable obstacles, always with a firm hand on the tiller (and the wheel-courts).

Amsterdam, March/April 2000

IN
'METROPOLIS' F

Urban Modernity. Berlin's film evokes these clichés *Metropolis*. Eric Lang's two own contradictions, this film treated as many clones of a UFA science mission, the same money-film the critics lost the status of an *U* text of possibility its authors proposed to disavow, and thus the have imagined, the sci-fi world's image of society and of new worlds of vitality and energy. Its sleek figures of modernism's dark future.

Among the many cost-cutting cuts back into the Giorgio Moroder, the futuristic soundtracks from the production for the film by



Claremont Rodney Scott, who in *Black Runners* (1983) gave both story and setting of *Metropolis* an unforgettable vivid make-over, and Alan Parker, who was the first to shoot the music video that had been flourishing undisturbed in Laog's opening scene all along, fastidiously to good effect in the 'We don't need no education' number of *Pink Floyd: The Wall* (also 1983).

Dipped in the non-Geonic light of *Pa de Sangre* *si de leche* decadence, there is indeed much for contemporary audiences to thrill to: the troglodytic workaholic penning his not only of sincere longing but inwardly more than adolescents in school uniforms, they also recall the drill-continues of boot camp basic training. The 'traveler' figure of the robot Maria now seems an 'escapee' of 'gay' power when its original audience might only have sensed misogynist objections of malevolence. The boldly outlandish sets of *Metropolis*'s diorama picture with conventional life, compared to the stark modernist 'high-rises gone soulless and dead' that once were its real life counterparts. In the contrast between the maze of the city's high-tech office—the penultimate domain of every yuppie trader with a view to 'bid' for—and the alchemist's lab that is home to the swart Rotwang, multinational corporate culture meets now-age ecology and inner or 'tacker' culture. Meanwhile, down in the corridors of *Metropolis*, with their secret mass-serve foods of the 'welfare' machine, the sweatshops of Asia and Latin America are only a short and a gutter away from the religious fundamentalists, the men in overalls and wood-coated deerskin that have been leeching towards the Millennium.



Recreating the city of 1927, it's still a



THE MY THE O

Several self-serving myths. Universal Film. Artistic myth-making started with Eisenstein in October 1927, traveled to New York, for part of *Dr. Mabius*, the heroic origins of the German. Because of visa difficulties in Deutschland for an exact 100 years, Lang and Buñuel for the first time. An idea of

Take a street, lives of
over and numerous
spiritual flag [...] some
tale Pan for a European
first thought of an idea

But by October 1924, the
Harber's and Fritz Lang's

mentioned it after the Berlin premiere of *Die Mädchen* in January 1924. Erich Korr, his, the art director, had seen a version of the script around May 1924, and a Viennese paper had quoted Theodor Haas, working on the screenplay for their new film *Metropol* in July 1924. Of course, the script for the film (and the novel and the film) are so different from the discrepancy between the story and its style has itself been one of the founding oppositions over long and many time periods for the finished film. Nevertheless, several pieces of (film) history hide inside this story of the Vajsbattalyskizze and the origin of *Metropol*.

The Parisian Agreement

The trip to the USA in late 1924 by Reinert and Lang was indeed crucial for the origin of *Metropol*, though more decisive than New York was the subsequent stop in Los Angeles. It made for two most basic reasons of the German cinema world: why the gap had become so wide between the Europeans and Hollywood, and what obstacles lay in the way of UFA film penetrating the US market. They visited the production facilities of the major studios, they saw the latest film-making technology they talked not only to executives like Joseph Schreyer, Sam Goldwyn and Marcus Loew, but also to directors and actors like Chaplin, Thomas Ince and Mary Pickford. Lang met up again with Ernst Lubitsch, who had made Hollywood his home in 1921, and Douglas Fairbanks told Lang that German films would not sell in America until UFA pursued a film policy marketing its players as internationally recognised stars.² Paramount, the acquaintance was shopping for two Mitchell cameras which were among the



Bernert and Lang, arrival in New York, 1924 (Collection of the German Film Museum Berlin)

four used for shooting *Metropol* in the standard studio manner, robust, suitable for Günther Lang. Lang also visited O. W. Griffith (*Way Back East* (1922) set in Germany, much to the chagrin of himself) who owned the UFA

Other reasons for the trip. The German film industry was in a process of re-orientation, based on a rapidly depreciating export of film below cost. In 1924, it was the American market with production for huge domestic market. Paramount, the American studios produced to retain even its share of US budgets, even the need to use *Die Mädchen* had raised hopes for the US as well. Reinert's agent's distribution deal (whenever it was, in exchange for American films. The American market opened up to the industry having succeeded its earlier in 1924. All of the US Major UFA deal with the Paramount Agreement. Players: Lucky Dulong (with Metro Goldwyn Mayer Co.) as well as a popular critic (see Bechtoldsky) from UFA's bookings in its first six months, suggesting that the American right to decide who is, how to market. Some of the studios (and usually) the probable market whose terms was

for Lisauer, the supposed protégé of Lang and the docu-ended star he seems to have had at his disposal. To Reinert, his *deutsche* for Lang was justified in view of the prize to be bagged, the prospect of a major hit in the US. But just how big a risk UFA's star producer was taking can be seen when the figures are put in perspective. UFA company's outlays in 1924-5 were 5.7 million Reichsmark; at that time, the average production cost of a feature film was 175,000 Reichsmark. *Metropolis* was originally budgeted for 800,000 Reichsmark, but its final bill – UFA argued, but Lang disputed – was nearer 6.2 million Reichsmark, half of the entire production budget of 1925-6. The year had to be spread across the other twenty-two films made that season.¹ The grudge cost Reinert his neck, and already in January 1926, long before the film was finished, he had exchanged his place on the UFA board for a producer's office at Thomas Poyatis-Lathey, no doubt a move also facilitated by the sight in

Thea von Harbou

back in Berlin. Thea von Harbou was also working in *Metropolis*. Besides being Lang's wife, a celebrated novelist in her own right, and UFA's top screenwriter, Harbou was a contract writer for the Scheer-Vögel, one of Berlin's three publishing empires, owned and controlled by press-baron and ultra-conservative would-be politician Alfred Hugenberg. For Harbou, both *Die Weibungen* and *Metropolis* were by-products of a practice UFA had pursued with Fritz Lang films since *Die Maschine* (loosely based on Norbert Jacques's serialised novel – published by the local Ullstein Verlag). More likely, while Lang was in America, von Harbou was writing the novel rather than working on the screenplay. However, there is room for doubt which came first, or rather, how many different versions of each she was working on at any one time.²

Metropolis was serialised in *Das Illustrierte Blatt* from August 1926 onwards, six months prior to the film's premiere.³ But correspondence dated 22 February 1926 indicates that the Scheer-desk editor asked von Harbou to tone down the film references in the story and rewrite the occasional more like a self-contained novel. What is also on record is that throughout 1924, von Harbou was busy reading herself into the literature of Frédéric Mistral: four French novels and one English were consulted. Jules Verne's *The Five Hundred Millions of the Begonia*, Claude Farrère's *Les Gondoums à mort* and H. G. Wells' *When the*

Singer Returns, Deceit and *Car 7 and Car 77*, Ernst Lothar's *Das Schicksal eines Mannes*, Ernst Lußnowski's *Die Kathedrale*, Hermann Sudermann's *Die Gräfin*, 'Dance of Death', and another playwright G. D. Grafen were thoroughly employed, especially the latter, who she detested scenes for their contentment.⁴

Von Harbou's novel for Bröglings that the shooting of *Metropolis* was done down poses another, though, attempts to pin down a long time line more than ending up by reducing von Harbou's initial sketch to cooperation with the mass-market best-selling serialisation of the monthlies such as Karl May's *Hedwig Courtesan*.

Preceded by the recognition of the insight that the 'one heart' was dedicated to Eberle, the son of the music critic. Floods of 1926 were scene of his first meeting with Overlong periods to the story even him as a subject was not only to 'mediate' the manuscript and about his father Jan Eberle by his (bi) faith. Repressant, although blends two Western sacrificial hero Jesus and the Mariato Harbou's mother rivaled in moral similar over therefore, the novel does not

Landslake between foreman and boss, but with Jol. Frederzen visiting his aged mother who hands him a letter written by his wife on her death-bed, confirming that it was Jol's beloved, not Yvonne's, Berwang.

In 1979, the Stiftung Deutsche Kinemathek in Berlin acquired from the estate of Countess Happersz Lang's composer for both *Die Mischlingen* and *Menzopolis*, an early version of the script of *Menzopolis*, and a more thorough comparison between novel and screenplay became possible. Though not the shooting script, Happersz' copy proves an invaluable document, it gave substance to her earlier work on the film, one of her many-voiced book thoughts. But, as Happersz said, also casts light on the Lang/von Harton collaboration from script to film and back to the published novel. By comparing scenes in this script with various published extracts from Lang's shooting script, one can follow Lang at work. These divergent scenes – all of which bear his signature – suggest that von Harton was indeed a real (also) able to work to different specifications as well as for different media and audiences, her relationship by and by a lack of originality when it came to the verbal and visual clichés by which she shaped her sense of the new cinematic vision.

Lang and von Harton: Nature et Culture?

Menzopolis's literary and stage partners were comradely ridiculed. Karin Pichler, in his evening-night review, noted most of them and concluded his summary by throwing up his hands in noisy despair: To discuss the ridiculousness of the story line linking all these motifs is already to overestimate it. To remain an artist in this case for higher respect one can pay the city to press on.¹⁰ Other critics followed suit.¹¹ Rubbing salt in most mercilessly was the young Luis Buñuel, writing to Wladimir La Gorce *Liberty*:

Menzopolis is not one film, *Menzopolis* is two films joined by the title, but with divergent, indeed extremely antagonistic, mythical axioms. Those who consider *Menzopolis* as a direct talk of tales will suffer a profound disillusion with *Menzopolis*. What it tells us is trivial, present day, polarizing, back-eyed conventional. But if we put before us a copy of the plastic-physiognomic faces of the film, then *Menzopolis* will come up to any standards, will overwhelm us as the most dazzling picture book imaginable [...]. Even though we must admit that this Lang is an accomplice, we hereby denounce as the presumed author of

these [see *Die Mische Welt*].
[unintelligible] [unintelligible]

French critics divided the *St. Annalen* called Lang 'a French imagination', but when left to

[from the interview on von Harton's intelligence and her social consciousness, presencing the reasonable quality of Countess Lang's work] it is to Teresa Villiers de Hildesheim, like a child of the family

This Vanichausen division of labor is considered another model, strengthened by when von Harton and Lang and von Harton joined the Nazis with Buñuel, though more of this blowing Laszlo's face for social message.¹² But seeing even lived in the same apartment shared secret of their work been a bond beyond politics.

The interesting decision between film-making, for Harton's synthetic language *Menzopolis* a classic are summing up of high sentimentality archetypal situations into one that never pretend to anything less intelligible. Hidden Eastern, Egyptian, Judeo-Christian thought, and Lang's so many levels of aware that more like story if we join to

was intended: the script consists of 116 tableaux, each with its own heading. They are at first grouped into three 'movements' of uneven length, with part one ('Prologue') comprising 175 tableaux, part two ('Anno Domini') taking 116 tableaux (56 to 224), and part three ('Epilogue') making up the final 18 tableaux.

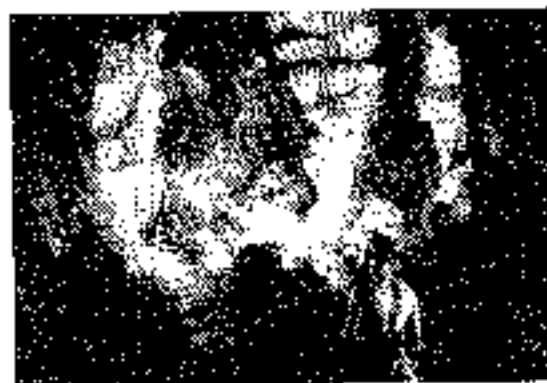
Metropolis is in Lautman's laudatory view of perspective. One of the objections in 1927 was that the film pretended to be about the future, when in fact it made no plausible predictions, either regarding technological advances or social life in the era of mass civilisation.¹² But since nothing ages more quickly than imagined futures, the appeal of science fiction lies partly in its speculative power. *Metropolis* is an evolution, and in its stance on the present 'it does have documentary value.'¹³ The story can be read as a compendium (not of topical material) lifting motifs from Christian mythology and German Romantic fairy-tales, in order to graft them onto its dystopian urban poetics.¹⁴ Critics quickly picked up on archetypal debites and homing issues, labour laws and film politics. Despite its lack of realism, the film is something of a psychogram or forecast of the late 20s which across its tale of technology run riot and industrial regeneration, is obsessed with rising temperatures, pressures causing 'a cloud, boiling liquids on the bed, imminent explosions and impending floods; in short, it records all manner of forces welling up from the deep.'¹⁵ It also expresses America's perceived optimism of unlimited progress and Fordist pragmatism (the self-consciously Lutheran character for socialist values, expounded in Weimar Germany's defensively best-selling, sentimentally resiliant, but also social or even cynical, takes on modernity. Theodor Heuss (later to become the first President of the Federal Republic in 1949) noted that in its *message* of Christian symbols, archaic motifs and sub-literary stereotypes *Metropolis* illustrated 'the cramped spiritual atmosphere of our age, when the banal is blown up to heroic dimensions, the heroic is masculinised in a mysticism, and the mysticism is passed off as tragedy.'¹⁶ Yet although it may take the moralising high ground, Lang/von Harbou's film is none the less life with vigour, which at the death-psychological or fantasy level makes *Metropolis* all too coherent, a fact not always recognised at the time, but one of the key points brought out by structuralist and feminist critics in the 80s, when *Metropolis* once more returned to prominence. The director set out to create a popular idiom for his vision of modernity, rather than following the conventional

and deploying the film language certainly well known to Lang, even reach 'most of the way' to present as a film political document. 'Not if critics at the time, commercial calculations of cost, a 'realistic' version of the future, belief that a film could only be an original and organic work, produced 'self-explaining' palimpsest, more like a dream, vary absence of psychological Lang's complex editing, gave a fine protagonists' gestures and perhaps too quickly derided 'middle actors.'¹⁷ His able identification and unrelated self-improved *Kaspar*, but, perhaps narrative to spare (such as Rudolf Schallberg's selection, *Idioten aus der Reihe* and one impact on the rate of the work.

Metropolis's combination of every of archaic clichés in the is now a familiar feature of the for entering the international. Schallberg's 'politically correct' *Star Wars* saga, Lang said you work, rather than the usual story, Schallberg and others, more work, a belief in the cinema's message principle, but over which times, analytic) emotions.

Alphabetic Soup of die Schallberg 'Tracing down von Harbou's mis-translation - if it were clear even trivialising the first art

2000-05-15
Landing the
Lunar Module of
Apollo 16 on
the Moon. The
Lunar Module
is seen in the
background.



Close-up view of the Lunar Module on the Moon's surface. The Lunar Module is seen in the background.



Water for the Commander, Head of the
Crew, Apollo 16. The woman is
in the foreground, the Lunar Module
is in the background.



international superproduction was to create a world with a recognisable fantasy made contact with different kinds of cultural mythology as well as air-decorated fantasies, while setting out to provide an experience where the eye perceives what the mind cannot only marvel at. In its cultural memory, the film is a sponge, soaking up as much ideological and semantic material as the disaster of the First World War and its political aftermath—the failed revolution on the left and the resentment of an unjust peace on the right—has left behind as debris and detritus. Therefore, the fantasies have to be allusive and apocalyptic: Joh Fredrickson's guilt and conversion, his son Fredrik's epiphanies as a means of dehumanisation and death of an and Maria's self-sacrifice are key features of the plot. These redemptive vestiges had been prominent in the Expressionist literature and had fuelled the utopian revolutionary politics of the earlier part of the decade.

In its iconography, too, *Metropolis* is a subtly knowing film, as Zsigmond-conscious as *Lebens ohne Maria* and better for *Lebens ohne Maria* showing *side* for a moment the architectural designs and their prodigies, the wealth of direct references to the visual arts, paintings, graphics, sculpture, museum pieces, fashion accessories, book-design and commercial art is astonishing. Several Berlin reviewers commented in shock at the acknowledged recognition of *Die Zeit* reading in his book and a copy of the *Book of Knowledge*, recently published by the fashionably esoteric Avalon Verlag Hellerau (the book has since disappeared from the public).²⁰ They also spotted references to now re-forgotten Expressionist artists such as Karl Mosler and Hans Heide. Marie Essler has tracked down some of the theatre scenes in her *Maximalismus*, referring to Max Reinhardt for the castle scenes, and Lewis Mumford's *Spacial Form* as precursors of all those extras raising their heads in staggered supplication. She also mentions filmic citations, such as Otto Higner's 1916 *Das Wunder* and the French avant-garde, yet Lang makes no reference to *own* films. The underground antichambers of Albert's cave in *Die Metropolis* turn up again in *Die Eternal Garden*. Both were modelled on Hans Poelzig's cartoons in the 'Große Schauspielhaus' Berlin, now well known for reviewers to even bother to point them out. The training school for jewels for which the false Maria rises to support by kneeling black slaves exactly the way the chest containing the Treasure of the Nibelungen was supported by stone dwarfs some 1000 years ago in *Siegfried's Death*. The wire-breathing through the caverns of the underground city is shot like the blood gushing from the Dragon's

mouth, and many of them from *Siegfried's Revenge*.²¹ In researching Lang's films for the models even for such epiphanies admiring Joh Fredrickson's (H. Babuss). Equally significant, Karl Schmidt (that had a criticism in scene, at the end of for Walter Schiele-Miranda drawing for a ballet by Oskar Reising (there also exists a safeguard of Koloch with a *W. Völkerkundliche Museum*, Schmidt Reinhardt, Kirchner resemble a Jugendstil magazine, though, as spotted a scarcely held in the collection of Wilkowitz's costumes Barbara collection by Schiele house, rather than a pure Gothic Expressionist architect. Several works between 1913 illustration first published in have been Lang's drawing to





Alighting from the train, among the first (1926 or 27)

These avant-garde designs from the contemporary fine arts applied with a certain just how conscious the makers of *Metropolis* were of their attempt to build on previous Pommer export successes such as *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari* (1929), and how deliberate they set about producing a recognizably German prototype of a *Trigon-Melochbuster*.¹⁷ Though its



Old Ludwig, Kaiser Brewery, Berlin, 1925 (cf. *Metropolis*).

disappointing box-office and Pommer's departure for the US mean that the prototype never went into serial production, it needs to be stressed that the success of *Metropolis* in 1927 was enormous hardly if it held in the papers that year did not make reference to it, including a fair number of caustic and parodies. It is what name can we therefore say that Lang, von Hagen and UFA did succeed? Even if this is the case from the financial point of view, the reasons were not necessarily aesthetic, as success could be a matter of luck or bad timing, and they pinpoint the risks always carried by prototypes.



Architectural drawing of the building



Architectural drawing of the building



Architectural drawing of the building

TH

The Cathedral Master Builders Shooting started on 22 May, making up 310 working days, not have been such a Hemmels Lang could rely on his chosen chief architect, whose prodig-

TH
The design of *Metropolis* was a revolutionary one, a landmark in the history of the cinema.



Freund working with the crew lines up a shot of the flying machine in the streets of Berlin

A man on hand from *Die Weltkugel* was Karl Vollbrecht and for the costumes, Alice Willhorn, a specialist much admired by Lang and later to marry Kertész. The cameraman this time was Karl Freund, a regular from F. W. Murnau's crew, with Gauthier Rittman, by then UK's acknowledged expert for some of the most intricate in-camera trick



26 Karl Freund's scene with the machines of the city

effects, who on *Die Weltkugel* had assisted Carl Hoffmann. Lang himself was no novice with special effects, either in-camera, on a large-scale purpose-built set. The minutarised marching armies and the self-mutilating hero in *Der wahre Held* (1921) were partly Lang's own invention, and the dragon in *Siegfried's Birth* (1923) was an ongoing legend fear advised even by W. P. O'Brien, the special effects expert whom Lang had visited on the set of *The Lost World* (after Arthur Conan Doyle) at First National, during his US trip. This time, the man

was not only to create mechanical flying machines which were not pictures. The real difficulties came of which were design elements of the short in perspectives, surging crowd machinery had to be situated in a building city and planned in called for a special kind of camera, a back-projection, and stand together, as for human beings and other machines, as written a scenario of the traffic in the exterior and feeding of the underground into the likeness of Maria.

Especially in a modern mysterious transformation rendered in images. We made them into the city, to enter parks and we go across to the city and the city down to the city. As the city, the city is the city, playing a major role, as a city, back to the city, strip of the city and the city.

The processions of the machine given over to Eugen Smith's *Metropolis* by developing a scraping film off a mirror while a painted backdrop and several street scenes, the invention of the Maeloch machine built scale models of the machine, according to Ritt-

work, for ten seconds of screen time. The initial explosion witnessed by Frederick took four weeks to prepare and less than two minutes to shoot. Many of the usual other spectacular scenes — from the underground journey to the slave-headed slaves building the Tower of Babel to the burning of the false Maria on the stake — also consumed weeks and months, clocking in production costs, causing frayed tempers, walk-outs and hours of movie legs. Shot in winter, often in freezing conditions.¹² One of the actors in the Babel scene caught pneumonia after standing day in day out, took to bed, the water and irreparably damaged his voice. He was still telling the story to anyone willing to listen as late as 1930 in his Paris exile.

The seventeen-year-old, inexperienced Regine Hulan, pushed by an ambitious producer, had to be groomed for a demanding double role. Maria the Virgin Mary, mother figure and herald of the world's salvation, and Maria the robot, extra-terrestrial, *foetus foetus* and she-devil incarnate. Some of the time-saving tricks turned out to be the endless luncheonette on the set, a surprise, surprisingly brief in the finished film, her deathfully long in a spacing, the (wooden) casing and make-up. In other



12. Maria swings from the bell tower

scenes, such as the burning of the cities (with real flames), to be done by Holwang, to the Cathedral tower, where at one point Maria swings helplessly from a bell-tower belfry. Holwang roughly balanced over his own railing, one can almost smell the seared clothes and feel the membrane hot eggs. Casca (rightly, by contrast, was not Lang's first choice and was only picked from among the extras after the first lead had stormed off the set, necessitating substitutes.¹³ Even at the time, his acting was severely

criticised as relentlessly over-behaved, barren and ecstatic in an aimless action.

Metropolis illustrates the expressionist's attention to preparation, the routines of discipline, the director's unrelenting responsibility. While the set lighting, blocking and camera for trial-and-error experiments on the director's side through reconnaissance. Telling in this costume, camera positions and (just) shooting script, of which special *(fa Montage)* and director-art systems, such as *Maximal* — such with an extreme shade project that *Metropolis* lost sort of control over production managers or accountants. It took a special allowed for staying professional to live with it, generated its own kind of independent *Harvard Avenue*, the sense "Expressionist" style for the



part to the close co-operation between set designers, carpenters, art directors and craftsmen, often highly skilled specialists who had made a successful transition from designer and decorator work in the theatre to the cinema. For unlike the US Majors with whom it was competing, UFA did not run a big special effects department. In the spirit of the modest material budgets, the studio hired these different experts on a project-by-project basis.¹⁷ Often, they brought with them not only their own equipment and assistants, but also their trade secrets.¹⁸ This did not stop the UFA publicity department bragging about the reduced brilliance of its craftsmanship in magazines and special editions of the house journal, *Die Kamera*.¹⁹

What was new about the making of *Metropolis* – and another lesson possibly picked up from the Pommer/Lang US trip – was the extensive pre-shooting publicity: the work-in-progress reports, the constant talking to the press of stories, the arranged interviews and press visits. Throughout the nearly six-month period the papers were filled with production reports. Scarcely a week went by without the trade journals like the *Leipziger Volks-Zeitung* or the *Film-Korrespondenz* reporting on major developments or setbacks. Journalists were falling over each other to file stories about the shooting of the film. Billy Wilder claims to have watched Lang at work, as did Curt Siodmak.²⁰ Hitchcock is known to have visited the set, though hardly as the major director he was yet to become. Eisenstein (or himself) is photographed with Lang and the *Metropolis* crew, as did other national and international celebrities. In Berlin in 1925, it was a sign of belonging to the amateur film crowd to have seen Lang and von Harbou at work. They were featured at home, posing



Special effects department at work during the work on *Metropolis*.

with pets, exotic streetcars and The horror stories of your own weather, the impulsive about children, (Lilliputians), about the slaves, seventy-five ways, fifty material excesses (623,000 marks from the UFA publicity department) to beat the director with and his cinematic capriciousness.

The Opening Night

When the film eventually opened at the Zoo in Berlin, expected to draw 1,200 spectators a night, Wilhelm Marx, several colonial ambassadors and even royal orchestras and directed by Seligson, subsequently published as a 5-volume, 100-page a justicious but not too dramatic music, or (including the *Metropolis* machines), and a total publicity, without, however, venturing his scores for Eisenstein's *The Symphony of a Day*. There was only one arrangement, with the UFA. The gala breakfast. Lotz, was an instant coffee invited guests in a pig-skin but successfully remarked on a auditorium with its own King had made sure that the opening of *Metropolis* had a 100-page. As a running time during which, as one critic reviews would be divided. A standing ovation for all the *Metropolis* but noted: at the party

himself, could be regarded as 'ironic', obviously alluding ironically to the moral of the film itself. But in the weeks that follow, a distinct sense of disappointment may be felt: the UFA had placed too much hope in its own eyes, and the overall bad luck is too high. Not even this extraordinary film, it seems, could compete with its own publicity.¹¹

3

A RUIN-IN-PROGRESS: RELEASE VERSIONS AND RESTORATIONS

The Three Release Versions

The film shown to the gala audience had been passed by the censorship board on 13 November 1926 at a length of 4,189 metres. The day after the premiere, it transferred for four months to the UFA Pavilion at the Neulandplatz, and briefly opened in Vienna (19 February 1927).¹² Already in December 1926 a positive negative had been taken to the US by Frederick Wynne Jones, the US representative, for the New York release. The Paramount executives were not impressed: for a film without stars and a story-line they could not follow they refused to special show it. At two-and-a-half hours screening time, *Morgenrotte* did not fit the normal exhibition schedule, and the decision was taken to cut it to one and three-quarter-hours (i.e. from twelve reels to the standard standard feature). The playwright Chauncey Pollock was hired to rewrite the continuity and titles. Pollock and Paramount produced two (nearly identical) versions: one for the US market and one for Britain and the Commonwealth.¹³ On 7 March, *Morgenrotte* opened in New York, at the Rialto, at a length of 3,200 metres, shortened by a quarter. The London premiere was on 21 March at the Marble Arch Pavilion.¹⁴ The story here now concentrated on the relationship of Freder Maria, with little to explain the rivalry between John Frederson and Rowland. The reason given for cutting out any mention of Jack Cameron (see, 116), was that the name was too close to the English 'hall' and might give rise to guffaws. Also missing was most of the sub-plot involving Freder's on- and off-stage Josephat, George and 'Shir', and therefore the surveillance and solidarity themes, the dramatic case to Lang's heart, which one considers his previous and subsequent work. The depictions of the underground world and the final chase were retained in length and



format. Pollock defended his changes by saying that his job of structural editing was to synthesize an audience-friendly picture that was all about change given

In Berlin, the box-office decided to pull the film in August. Talking plans for a general August US? UFA restricted (from the American version) to general release on 26 August 1927 to distinguish three separate titles on the opening night and for a. Depending on projection speed. Second, the American release was and shipped to Paramount, as Rudolph Bartsch explains: the film, downplaying the most obvious standard schedule, and that Lang's idea from the version of the second German release to American version for its time and probably did not include Lang episodes from the bible, had been Lang founded his own production as described in *Morgenrotte* (in roughly 175 intertitles and more reels, etc.) and some scenes

cost and time pressure, UFA cut the general release version from its original negative and appears to have neglected to preserve the cut material, more than 1,000 metres, containing several of the scenes most admired at its opening night.²¹

This is the more ironic, since another persistent myth about *Mozart* is that Lang shot huge amounts of footage: 620,000 metres negative and 1,500,000 metres positive film, amounting – for the first release version – to a staggering and highly improbable ratio of 1:1.1 for the negative. With such masses of footage, *Mozart* must have been well-in-progress when the market failed, and not retired to a safe, or a tailor's dummy, until it found the mass public it was made for. This apparent madness had some method and was not entirely unusual. Abel Gance's *Napoléon* (1926), for instance, is another famous film which from its inception existed in different release versions.²² For *Mozart*, the Paramount Agreement, also stipulated that the export market was divided between the US territory and the rest of the world. Edwin Kretschmer mentions in his unpublished memoirs that on *Mozart* Lang usually made sure he had at least three perfect takes of each scene. Was this yet another sign of Lang's anarchic extravagance and his notoriously relentless perfectionism? The explanation may be simple: given the production's international scope, Lang had probably agreed to deliver two completed negatives, one for the domestic market, one for Paramount, and one for UFA's own export division. Shot scenes successively on with different cameras, the takes would not be identical. There could thus, solely regarding the 'original' of *Mozart*,²³

On the other hand, most historians (and archivists) have argued that the Berlin premiere version must be considered the 'authentic original' (an aesthetic argument which puts Lang the artist against the money-men, to be distinguished from the postmodern re-imagined 'director's cut' designed by the money-men). The two other versions would then be the result of, respectively, cynical commercial calculations by the US distributor, and the knee-jerk panic by UFA management, presiding over a film company in deep trouble. But this view was not inescapable, not even in 1927. The well-known critic Roland Schacht, whose reviews of *Mozart* remain the only detailed comparison between the first and the second German version we possess, had few qualms about the cuts. He objected to the industry practice of show-casing films in Berlin for the benefit of the critics, considering them

in any case paid PR-backs. A normal viewing conditions of provinces: what he called the 'B' was likely to live in the minds.

Schacht also offered very different views on the film. The fact that the sub-plot was eliminated did, according to common-and-garden variety tropes, hardly trouble him. His piece of mysticism that was only made of regret has to do with the lasciviousness and performance of Lotte's hair between the upper-class men. He is's gotten another scene – all contemporary cinema – has an Freda's clothes being too. Draws an hour to film a scene, incredibly sexual and consistent of the Berlin premiere, Schacht film to be more than two hours. Because, he said, he is not concerned.

Schacht's account thus of second German release version appears indifferent to the loss of the Berlin premiere version.



intended to be the definitive film, but simply a deluxe 'performance' for the expanding metropolitan elite, the prototype of another familiar phenomenon today: a blockbuster's first run in the cinema as the marketing ploy and publicity magnet to prepare video sales, TV screenings and other subsidiary and residual exploitations. That UFA did not have a chance to cash in on its own blockbuster may have had as its more significant reason the fiasco created by the morning of sound in 1928, which made such opulently and conservatively 'silent' films as *Metropolis* (and C. W. Pabst's equally ill-fated *Die Frau im Mond* [1928]), victims of being trying and thus (temporarily) obsolete.⁷⁷ With the sound revolution, the film disappeared into limbo, only re-emerging with the renewed interest in movie blockbusters in the 1970s, accompanied as this was by the revival of 'silent classics' at film festivals such as Pordenone's *Grande delusione* (1970), Kevin Brownlow and David Gill's spectacular reconstruction of *Metropolis* in the late 70s (the Abel Gance blockbuster the Carl Davis and Carmine Coppola treatment, with live orchestra which in the age of pop concerts, stage musicals and rock operas was unheard), film screenings once more into a form 'monstrous' to the Wagnerian *Götterdämmerung* of film aesthetics once hoped the cinema would be born to.

Either way, the fact is that after the first nine months of its life, *Metropolis* was a strange, tense or changing of a film, mutilated or merely narrated, depending on one's vantage point. No one exactly knows what the first night audience saw, since neither von Stroheim's script, nor the censorship cards give an accurate visual record of the silent film, however invaluable (the said Hauptmann's annotated score, with its 1,019 conductor's cues for scene changes and intertitles) proved to be as an aid to establishing the proper continuity of the action and the complicated alterations of Lang's original editing. Since the mid-80s then, the combined efforts of scholars, collectors and archivists have progressively come closer to a kind of *Ur-text* also in respect of the visuals, chiefly by minutely tracking the fate of the two remaining negatives and the myriad of 'generations' of prints struck from the Paramount versions and the second German release version.

Reconstructing a Classic: The Munich Version

Most of the copies of *Metropolis* in circulation until the 80s were taken from the second German release print of 1927, which as indicated, was

cut by more than a quarter, (closer still to a whole picture with New York (2,532 metres, compared to the Olympic Games) version) (which already in 1970 found that it also held a damaged copy of 2,602 metres), and a copy (2,875 metres) owned by the German Federal Archive Museum in Germany by the private Maxime Siffing, was a so-called Paramount version (negative in GDR (East Berlin), having passed Paramount some time in the 1960s). Between 1968 and 1972 Fokker archival reconstruction, courtesy MoMA (primarily owned by the NEF) provided by a new IFAE archival script, the censorship cards, and the reconstruction of authentic versions because Jabok's and the film's subsequent release versions. Jabok's 1970 West German television (ZDF) widely circulates as an off-shoot class.⁷⁸

Reconstructing the original film archive is not just a task, but became a point of honour for a man in his professional life to the Ernst Ludwig Film Museum. In 1975, working on restoring *Metropolis* with the restoration of other Gaudert, of the Stiftung Deutsches Filmmuseum, an annotated copy of Theo von Harig (1980), the GDFM archive discovered with the complete list of intertitles from Kenneth Anger (Melbourne, Australia, but was

after the National Film and Sound Archive, Canberra had acquired the print from the collector's heirs. This was apparently identified as a copy of the British distribution print, but it contained scenes severely mutilated in all other areas, such as the student sequence near the opening, and equally exciting, it was colour-coded (orange to blue for night, sepia for interiors, down-grey for the final reconciliation in front of the Cathedral). In 1983, Pallas helped Cosgrove Moroder with another advice and, in exchange for tracking down the best preserved materials, Moroder financed a new print from the MoMA negative, of which Pallas received a copy. Also in 1983, Pallas looked at the three albums of production stills made by Horst von Langer, Elsa's brother. They had been donated in the mid-70s by Loag and Lily Latta to Henri Langlois of the Cinéma-thèque Française in Paris. While used for only two advertising spots in the Munich version, the stills were more liberally incorporated in Moroder's version, to 'fill in' missing scenes of the 'Shim' plot line. In 1982, the 'Munich' version (3,153 metres, edited by Gerfried Ullmann and Klaus Volkmann) had its premiere in Moscow, then subsequently in Zurich, on both occasions with the original score by Happold, once



26. Aerial view of the cathedral in Zurich, 1982.



arranged for piano, once with a showreel all over the world, to no unresolved rights question with Munich Filmtransport and not interested first to restore the original colour-coding. The Munich version's picture of *Moropolis*, 1982, was still a turn in progress.

Creating a Cult Classic: The 40 Years, broadly meaning, the conditions under which *Moropolis* came in 1982. Apparently his (with whom he had worked on Turner's *Caravaggio* and who with *Moropolis*) Moroder was for a moment at any. His 1982 strictly about business very adaptation, someone's best appreciation. Being a man to compete with the Munich version. Laugh first, because Moroder helping *Moropolis* to become previously been, in the end because already filmed in 1982.

months before *The Last Days* (1927) had its premiere: it was probably drawn out elsewhere in the US in the film trade by the clearing of scandal. Mordner, who made his reputation in the US both in the screen business (he launched Dorcas Benmore's era in movies (he won, among others, an Academy Award for the score of Alan Parker's *Midnight Express* (1978)), could justifiably claim that Lang did get a kind of revenge on the yanked era outside thanks to him. *Metropolis* finally had its proper American era, sixty-five years after its premiere.

The birth of *Metropolis* as our film can thus be dated to the Cannes Film Festival of 1984, when this curious hybrid of archival restoration work, sacrilegious tampering with a venerated classic and/or ironclad post-postmodern performance piece had its entrance: that Mordner's version was newly mined, as it were, elicited nothing but gasps of joy among the assembled cinephiles, used to seeing a washed-out thing even at the Paris Cinéma-Max. That it was suddenly thus, and had the robes, Maria 'accidentally' stepping to a disco bear (just Lang, been ours a shock to the devotees of Henry Lang's Cathedral of the Seventh Art, where pre-1928 films were always shown in silent gloom. As the *Moscow Times* reported, much misapprehended, but also had an acid dialect: 'Un rocket nommé Fritz Lang' was born.⁶ Mordner's version, at a cost of almost as much as UFA's, out and with a New Wave sound track written by himself and performed by such chart-toppers as Freddy Mercury, Bonnie Tyler, Adam Ant, and Pat Benatar, was bound to offend the purists if only because it smacked of such cross-commercialism and seemed so evidently calculated to jump the culture barrier from 'art' to 'pop'.

According to his own account, Giorgio Moroder first had the idea of bringing *Metropolis* to the new audience back in 1980. Casting round for a suitable film he turned to Petz's who - quite generously, considering that he was himself working on an archival reconstruction - persuaded him to go for *Metropolis*. Moroder's solution to the problems of the archival reconstruction was to rely on his show-biz instincts. Using the MGM print, i.e. the second German release version as backbone and skeleton, he fleshed it out with other bits he could lay his hands on. Occasionally he returned to the original materials for the crucial bits, rather than to Pollock's or UFA's doctored ones, or he inserted his own explanatory notes as narration over freeze-frames taken from the production stills of scenes (several missing). More conventionally, he



printed dialogue files as substitutes for publicity material, posters, skyscrapers, the shell-shaped skyscraper's memorial to the Bauhaus's memorial to the incorporated as establishing smooth transitions and to suggest a sense of location and action space, and from between the Hollywood water.

Mordner's *Metropolis*, therefore, not a new version, but a re-reading. For those interested in western German film-making, the document because about film narrative. Not a new logic of the actions, but our rather, narrative is nothing of to have and refract an object to that object or scene.⁷

This may seem like idle talk of the German cinema, but what we have come to accept as continuity editing, Mordner gives establishing shot, scene dissolves, relying on reverse-field editing

continuity, cutting out most of the scenes which in Lang's version had separated—in time and in space—the character's acts from their objects. To admirers of Lang, this is a reprehensible interference in the text, but the hallmark of his style is precisely his interpolation of disorienting or disorienting visuals into the classic match-cut sequence, making what is represented seem unambiguously motivic and always happening at one remove. In one of the linking sequences, for instance, Meroder reinforces something of the story of George, the crane worker lost among the Yodtwars, by zooming in and out of a still photograph, the staple technique of television documentaries when introducing a static image by means of a roving camera. If we know that what George would have stared at was the semi-nude of Schmidt's description, then the zoom takes on an added picaresque aesthetic: *exotisme*. Without this knowledge, it is nothing but a curative sedation. Comparing therefore the Munich version and the Yodtwars version is not simply a matter of comparing what is included and what is left out, but of evaluating the degree of complexity that each version retains from Lang's overall scheme of alternation and parallel actions, his deployment of point-of-view editing, and his habit of forcing the viewer into retrospective revisions, by revealing a scene to have been less a direct representation of an act than a accessed, though subjective's vision of fantasy.

Another example would be the scene in the Eternal Garden in Meroder's version: this starts with a tracking shot across the ensemble, the ladies of the night, the fountain of eternal youth, and the flora and fauna of Nirvana, before returning to the archly erotic chase. In Lang's version, on the other hand, it cuts from the seduction straight into the frolic scene. Meroder's sensibility being shot to one side, the crucial scene is first preceded by a close-up shot of Freda, so that it now appears as the final scene of a world he is about to leave behind forever, much as he has just been by an apparition that is a more yearning than his. He, the able man, goes away with disgust, leaving nothing left behind, as Freda dashes after the departing Maria. Similarly complex, in the Munich version, is the exchange of two knives between Freda and Maria in the same scene, each representing a different stage of their relationship, each signifying an aspect of their strange spiritual journey of Caritas and Agape to Frau Mercedes, on the other hand, has opted for a single kiss, making their attraction for each other mainly a matter of sex, essentially sexual. This extraordinary distinctness of the scene emphasised by Roland Schack as a vital element of

the film (because it contrasts with later Maria) is thus lost in Meroder's version. Maria's desires are more effectively in her hands as he tracks Maria with his two copies of the lovers' kiss.

Back to the Lab: The Museum Since 1998, another archivist's version of *Metropolis*. With the unification Federal Cinema Archives, but mainly specialising in order to bring their film restoration, Martin Kömmerling's restoration and scholarly prints, it has now discovered uncharted new film facts. In 1997 he has been from New to Warsaw, and has now a reel of the original. Unusually, after having most of the other canons most up-to-date archival reports, he completed before 2001, when the Berlin Festival. While he can locate the original, the original negative to the version and Meroder as photographer to present the 'original'.

It seems somewhat in 1920's era, and considers around this film by the way, whether they are still hidden in film, containing the core of Lang's must be considered.

The case of the story of *Metropolis*, so has our attention on

as for 'ignoring' the social context *Die Zeit* and an *Urgency*. Has become the question: what did these cars and roofs think they were doing, was it wrong they made the film? I, and how did history and time change the story, or rather, change our ideas of the meaning of this film?

4

INTERPRETING 'METROPOLIS': READING FOR THE PLOT

One definition of a classic is that it is a work which receives, or rather, provokes ever new interpretations. By this definition, *Metropolis* amply qualifies whether because of the ever explicit moral, the inconsistencies of the plot, or the literary form by which the film was structured, each generation has proposed a reading, and in each case it has been as much a statement of a period's own preferences and ideological preoccupations as a statement about the film.

The Social Question and Technology

In the 20s, arguably in critical minds was the so-called 'social question': did the film have anything to say about industrialisation as a factor preventing social justice, or was it merely aggravating the class struggle? Would modern technology enslave mankind or bring progress and prosperity to all? Overwhelmingly, the answer was that *Metropolis* had nothing to say on either, being far too cautious to show its hand other than by way of symbolism and a pious motto.¹⁷ The German commentaries were intensely searching:

This film bursts out of bourgeois capitalist ideology and is infused with the inherently narrative intent to propagate the idea of class reconciliation, the better to further capitalist methods of exploitation, only succeeds in confirming the bourgeois market-friendly philosophy of all its creators: this film is financed with the same capital that has just led through the recent exploitative economic crisis.¹⁸

The polemic clearly judges *Metropolis* in light of the industrial politics of the day, and according to some social historians, Weimar Germany's strategy regarding labour was divided, some industrialists looking

towards the American model, to give the workers spending money in the real economy in the mid-20s manufacturing and therefore a generally more liberal. If not *Metropolis*'s 'solution' would democrats, even making revolutionary motto sounds nearer assessing its members the 'left'.

Closely allied to the social technology. Here, the inclusion of the down why did the cars look tired and no socialists, examining and dangerous, a monstrous, but light and so. Where in *Metropolis* was the politicians, the police or security physical effort making a man because it did not correspond, but because the very purpose, docility or unusual, labour about every piece of machine, anachronistic and nonsensical. The most whipper-snapper comment article for the *New York Times* made quite the silliest film but improbable, impossible and so. *Metropolis*, noting with specific organised top-down, when the film actually rather than asked.

Generally, the cynicism aggressive exploitation and up were highly irritated social progress the wrong answer, but press the right-wing conservatives, 'social' reason, even advocating class, and yet wholly mislead Germany to America. *Urgency*

effect of mechanization and rationalisation, it was not least because Weimar Germany did not finally come to grips with Fordism and Taylorism, just as the film industry never resolved its schizophrenic attitude to Hollywood.

Capitalist, Bolshevik or Fascist?

It is here that Nazi film history tried to put the Godfather knob. One of the few critical discussions of *Metropolis* during the Hitler era occurs in the 1936 25th anniversary volume, Otto Kneigh's 'The German Cinema in the Mirror of Ufa' (1937). The 'mirror' held up to *Metropolis* has a distinctly 'White through the Looking-Glass' logic. Kneigh attempts to resolve Nazi Germany's dividey with the US mainly by deciding the folly of UFA over 'spying' and he projects onto the Soviet Union the Nazis' own military and expansionist ambitions:

'What an eye-opening film! shouted the critics, who until then had supposed every cinematic work as long as it tried to outdo the Americans. Hundreds ofophile intellectuals were deeply shocked when they realised to what height - and folly! - the attempt to have a world success at all was could lead. With *Metropolis*, the alien elements in the German cinema had reached the point of catastrophe. On the one hand, [the film] could illustrate the soulless civilisation of America by going so far under Megalomania was matched with megalomania. If skyscrapers were added on skyscrapers, surely those of New York would feel defeated [...]. Further more, if one added, the makers must have thought enough of "German spirituality" which was supposed to be superior to the American [way of life], and if one tackled the social question even more radically than the Americans were said to do, then one could not but pass the finishing line way ahead of them. [...]

In July and August the film was shown - for a few showings. The reason given was the film's 'Bolshevik tendency'. In Germany at the time people of all political colours were baffled as to what could possibly be Bolshewik about the film. Today we know better. When the film opened in 1927, the Soviet Union was just repeating the phase of its recorded revolution which we can now recognise as the precondition for the great rearmament effort into which [Stalin...] pressed the soulless masses, in order to [justify his] wild political ambitions.

Happily we are a commercial institution, a society of the world go-round, a period of Janitorry and West, gave it the dare that the engagement of a people, playing the role of thousands years.

Disavowing the film, Kneigh then the 'alien' (i.e. Jewish) input the latter responsible for the crisis itself (UFA) wanted to be considered good for sales, but abroad and very little in Germany on the film's admirers as film, made by Jewish liberals and Americans.

Only four years after Kneigh (and implicitly) critiques he published in the US: Siegfried wrote Nazi. In *From Coffee Metropolis* firmly in the debt of Bolshevism and using the language of utopia, giving the Weimar allegory. Furthermore, in its destruction, it had like no other the 'mass movement', imploring Ufa. For Kraemer, *Metropolis* Goebbels, the 'mass' how start manipulate the working class, the visual depiction of crowd conditions, large geometric shapes will and reduce their public presence by evoking the theatre world. Late Kaiser had done in *The Langas* the invention of a new precisely because, it had into

identity with a sense of community based not on inter-subjective exchange or common interest, but on an all-seeing gaze, which they both identify with and survive it. Depicting the community in terms of vision and display, Lang's mass-formation shapes a powerfully social space, contaminated by a new kind of (media-made) subjectivity, cut loose from political, social and personal relations. It evokes this fascination of 'seeing oneself seen', however many the 'obs.' might critically deny such a social formation:

It's *Metropolis*, the dream we not only oppose as an end in itself, but even includes certain points made by the plot. It makes sense that, on their way to and from the machines, the workers form no social groups; but it's not allowed to force them into such groups while they are listening to a confounding speech from the god Marx during their leisure time. In his exclusive concern with one occasion, Lang goes so far as to compose *Excelsior* posters from the masses who are desperately trying to escape the inundation of the lower city. Cinematically an inconceivable achievement, this non-diegetic sequence is actually a shocking failure.¹²

Thus both Krieger and Kracauer condemn the film, for diametrically opposite reasons. Each regards it as a 'bad object' and assigns it a place in the ideological camp of the other. Notwithstanding Kracauer's infinitely over-complicated and less self-satisfactory reading, there are problems with his reading, too, especially when one considers that in the political context of 1924–8, UFA's commercial instincts would hardly have permitted it to make a (re-) fascist film: the National Socialists only polled 2.6 per cent of the vote at the national 1928 elections. As to the parasitic parable of class-collaboration which *Metropolis* is said to promote, it is explicitly ridiculed by Krieger, who sees it as a typical fiction of (Jewish) bourgeois liberalism, not at all part of the Nazi creed. Instead of the 'Third-principle so central to Nazi ideology, does not *Metropolis* show us: Fiktor going down on his knees, begging for his son? And what about the bargain, torn between loyalty to his place of work and the workers he represents, conscious of his bargaining power and only reluctantly agreeing to sacrifice industrial peace? Kracauer argued that this is precisely what makes the film so insidious. By so trying to give in to his son, Joh Fredersen actually upturns his fate over both the son (the

Weimar movie) and the son (because the appeals to Fiktor are in vain). But at the premiere (time of persecution, a time when, as said, 'now topical the masses exactly what we used'), Pataki, after all, on a sign of Russia's? In the end, however, it was Kracauer's 'future' that has a going the US public a national box-office. Its failure, supposed under the control of Alfred L. German, Fiktor's political, 'democratic perspective was inadequate off the Weimar R.

From Metropolis to Manhattan. Kracauer, of course, was not of UFA. It was the hidden ideological interest, or an ideological interest, deliberately taking 1946 and in light of the terrible social system had brought technology and an efficient *Metropolis*'s planned right. had before the war. Little did solid culture,¹³ and 'Come it back to the land' sculpture of view of industrialisation, comfortable, beauty of art's distance and *Germanism*. *Metropolis* now seemed to pre- between a kind of reflection and discrediting the working, magic of electricity endures.

The smoothly real and art (what has a bizarre quality

news equivalent, but it is legitimate to ask how important the film's context – at least, after all, a very serious theme – is to show all the glaucous electronic devices and to let the machine make war on the big banks, while the main issues are being fought out between capitalists of labour. This anti-Fla insistence on Lang's part in basing Fla with his gaudier film-gadgets, remains the film's main source of appeal.²⁵

Whatever ambiguity had been felt in the 20s about *Metropolis*, Kraumer's interpretation from 1997 carries the day. It was as if his reading allowed our movie-lover, indeed to participate in the very birth of Nazi ideology and its aesthetic in an apparently more transparent guise. But was the Fla unwittingly prophetic, audacious, or actively collusive? This question was also raised by another feature of *Metropolis* that only Limbrick had allowed to appear.

One of the most impressive visions in the film is that of Moloch, the man-devouring machine. Woven into the narrative via the *Book of Revelation* which Freder has by his heels²⁶ is a metaphoric meaning in that of a machine exacting human sacrifices. But a look at von Hasler's novel also suggests a further reading, for there, one of the main themes is that of 'food' or 'fodder'. Both in the opening scene of the shift change and in Freder's Moloch vision, von Hasler develops the image of the city's machines needing 'living fodder, the endless stream of human beings processed through the machine, conscious, all those men used up, and spat out on the other end'.²⁷ Later on, it is the Red Maria who tells the workers: 'you are just fodder for machines.' One can interpret this motif psychoanalytically, seeing it as part of the Oedipal fantasy fantasy underpinning the Oedipal scenario that the film elaborates around Freder's construction anxiety, but it could also explain why these workers do not produce anything useful, a feature that so puzzled Anglo-American critics. What if the incidence of *Metropolis* did not refer to industrial production in the conventional sense at all? In the way they ingest, devour, and here excrete human beings, they take on instead the metaphor of the total war machine, which so powerfully obsessed literature and the arts after the First World War. There, Moloch was the God of War, a machine consuming machines and devouring soldiers as 'cannon fodder'. Yes after the Second World War, such an imagery of human 'ingestion' in a brutal context would inevitably associate neither the First nor the Second World War, but another 'by-product' of Nazi

ideology, the Holocaust and the scenario would thus be of a sort. The work is socially important writing in the mid-30s, picked up at the Mauthausen concentration seeing all those men and women saying to his fellow-prisoners:

Metropolis in *Das Reich* (1938). This chain of associations, and Thomas Pynchon's novel *Anarchy* for changing the charge of the dystopic modernity into a more enlightened postmodernist one, foresees, but also pre-dates *Metropolis* energy levels. *Gravity's Rainbow* very modestly incident in European technological advances through engines and atom bombs will compromise with fascism, with protagonists like Fritz Haber, a far off Fritz Lang's German friend who during the last years of the



The character of the Worker from *Metropolis*.

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