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“Gebraucht wurden 100 Neger, 25 Chinesen”:
Colonialist Fantasies in Fritz Lang’s *Metropolis* (1927)

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The phrase cited in the title of this paper appears as part of a statistical table in the trade journal *Ufa-Magazin* and celebrates the unprecedented quantities of film stock, props, and extras used in the making of Fritz Lang’s futuristic spectacle, *Metropolis* (1927).¹ Alongside the word ‘Neger’ one sees a small sketch of a black man, naked save for a grass skirt. No more than seven black men actually do appear in the film, the other ninety or so of their cohort remain unaccounted for. A corresponding image of a Chinese is absent from the table. Indeed, Lang depicts no *Chinese* as such in his film, though the advertised ethnic actors undoubtedly play the *Japanese* who run the nightclub Yoshiwara on the outskirts of New Babylon. Both groups, Asians and blacks, are to be found, framed and contained as it were, in the nightclub scenes, bearing either paper lanterns for the white man or the white man himself. Whatever technological benefits – and they are many; sophisticated, gravity-defying architecture and transportation systems, electronic communication devices, powerful generators – the future holds for the teeming white masses of New Babylon, none seems to accrue to the city’s racial minorities. This paper examines a short scene, perhaps the most inexplicable of the film, one in which the robot-Maria makes her erotic debut, Boticelli-style, writhing atop the glistening backs of the aforementioned black actors. What may have motivated Lang to construct such a tableau, one that Thea von Harbou’s novelistic treatment of the *Metropolis* story, which preceded the film, does not depict? A quick survey reveals that he reiterates the image in some of his previous films, among them *Dr. Mabuse, der Spieler* (1922) and *Die Nibelungen* (1924). In each of these, an object of desire lies just beyond the reach, peepshow fashion, of the spectator.

Expanding the investigation to include other synchronic cultural products, one sees that certain visual elements of the debut scene may be traced through the contemporaneous works of artists

such as Ernst Ludwig Kirchner, George Grosz, and Maria Uhden, among others, through the 1926 Berlin run of the so-called “*Revue Nègre*” starring Josephine Baker, and even through pedestrian advertisements in journals like *Der Querschnitt*.² Diachronically, the framing and nudity of the black men continue a German filmic tradition of ethnographic signification, one that served to thematize a presumed lack of evolutionary development among black Africans relative to white Europeans. Finally, projecting forward, *Metropolis* seems to offer a troubling answer to a question then debated in the Reichstag about the fate of Germany’s black population and “Rhineland Bastards.” The roles of subjugated Africans and Asians in the film may be seen to recreate a German colonialist fantasy whose political reality had been only recently brought to an end by the First World War and would shortly be taken up again by Hitler. This paper argues, then, that while the scene of the robot-Maria’s debut – shot through with the traces of several contemporaneous aesthetic, ethnographic, and political discourses – may border on kitsch, it is also the most representative of the Weimar era in the entire film.

Aesthetic

One seeks in vain among Lang’s vast and lifelong commentary on *Metropolis* for direct references to what may have inspired the debut scene, while decades of secondary literature likewise remain silent upon the matter. Thrust back upon his or her own devices, however, the close reader of Lang’s oeuvre soon finds thematic and visual suggestions among some of the director’s previous films, as though he returned again and again to the theme so as to embellish and perfect. Thus, in *Dr. Mabuse, der Spieler*, a semi-naked woman descends from the ceiling above a vast round gambling table in the Petit Casino, a visual distraction should the police break in upon the illegal gambling; her sexuality is underscored by nestling herself upon the presumed site of floral reproduction. Once the danger of arrest has passed, the woman ascends into the rafters, enveloped within the wooden petals of her blossom-like platform. In *Nibelungen I: Siegfrieds Tod*, the dwarf Alberich treats the eponymous hero to a tantalizing vision of vast wealth, an image that disappears

when Siegfried reaches out to touch it. Lang seems to suggest in these scenes, perhaps self-referentially, that power lies with the one who can control the vision of the spectator. Such narcissistic projections of directorial control are not unusual in Weimar cinema, another example being staged in Robert Wiene’s *Das Kabinett des Doktor Caligari* (1919), wherein Caligari drives members of the sideshow audience back when they try to touch the sleeping Cesare, thus denying them tactile privilege. (If read aloud, the boastful tenor of the *Ufa-Magazin Metropolis* advertisement also suggests the spectacular promises of the carnival barker, a part played by Caligari outside of the tent prior to his own show.)

The invitation to robot-Maria’s debut reads: “Mr. C.A. Rotwang requests the pleasure of Your company at dinner and to see a new Erotic Dancer.” Lang does indeed serve a visual feast to both diegetic and nondiegetic spectators, but on his own terms. He teases rather than satisfies through images of desired objects, be they gold or naked women. The peepshow-like, vanishing quality of the visuals defers spectator satisfaction, while quick cutting in *Metropolis* between images of the robot-Maria and the faces, then the eyes alone, of the gentlemen in the audience paradoxically objectifies the latter rather than the former (Fig. 1a).



Fig. 1a – Gentlemen rendered as objects in *Metropolis*



Fig. 1b – A possible visual antecedent to the unusual still in Fig. 1a.
Source: *Der Querschnitt*. 2-3 (1922/3): 119.

As if to underscore the inaccessibility of the desired object, the last shot of the debut sequence features the robot-Maria high above the reaching hands of the men below. Again, Lang objectifies the male spectators rather than the female dancer, representing them merely through their outreaching arms and hands (Fig. 2).

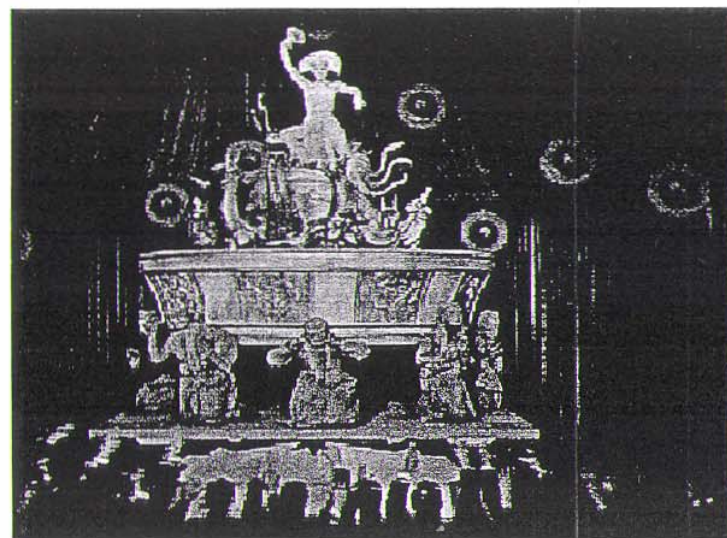
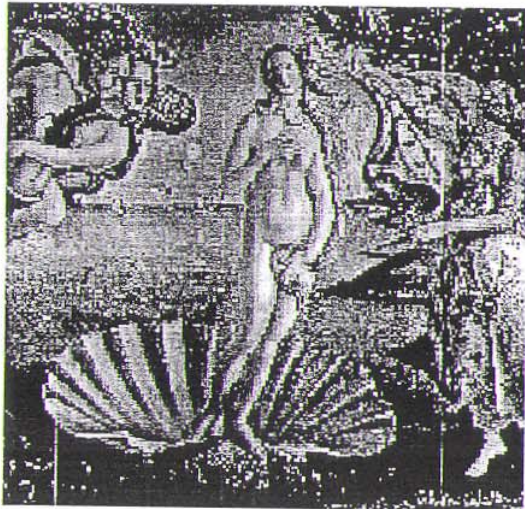


Fig. 2 – Objectified men, cut by the frame, their backs to the non-diegetic spectator, only their reaching hands discernible.

Besides visuals from Lang's own work, other possible traces of the shell-like apparatus in the debut scene may be located within the graphic arts, both historical and contemporaneous, both high and low. A number of paintings, engravings, lithographs, and photographs offer themselves for comparison and contemplation (Fig. 3), suggesting that whatever else may change by 2026, the supposed time in which the story of *Metropolis* takes place, certain aesthetic codes regarding the display of feminine beauty remain the same.



Fritz Lang, *Metropolis*, 1927



Boticelli, *Venus*, c. 1485

Fig. 3a – Robot-Maria atop her shell and similar visual thematic treatments.



Fig. 3b – Advertisement in *Der Querschnitt*. 4 (1924): 188.

Ethnographic

While not pretending to ethnographic authenticity, the brief depiction of the black men in *Metropolis* nevertheless recalls turn-of-the-century documentary films of Africans and New Guineans

by German photographer-anthropologists such as Rudolph Pöch and Hans Schomburgk. Shot before the First World War, when Germany still possessed African colonies, films by these and other ethnographers served several functions. First, they brought home to Germans in a way both inexpensive and accessible representations of colonial possessions, thus helping to secure a “unified German identity” (Oksiloff 5) amidst European powers that had already divided much of the non-Western world amongst themselves. After the psychological trauma and colonial losses incurred by the outcome of the war, such representations of the native body figured further “as a lost unity and provided a vanishing point for a fantasy of coherence and wholeness” (6).

Just as early films made for entertainment rather than edification had precursors in the theater, so too did these ethnographic films. Specifically, the practice of placing ethnographic showcases, or *Völkerschauen*, on tour had begun in 1876 when Hamburger Carl Hagenbeck, dealer to circuses and zoos of wild animals, began to import for exhibition natives of German colonies in Africa, along with their traditional clothing, implements, weapons, and other paraphernalia. (Hagenbeck had initiated the practice with arguably less exotic Laplanders and reindeer two years before.) His shows were runaway successes, tracking as they did German and European conquests in Africa, eventually including Zulus, Inuit, Dinka, Maasai, Ashanti, Indians, and even Native Americans. One of the earliest exhibits, that of Nubians in Breslau, attracted over thirty thousand visitors on the first day alone (Hagenbeck 84).³ And similarly, as with the treasured items and curiosities described in the examples of Weimar cinema above, distance between spectator and ethnographic subject was strictly enforced. Thus, the living native exhibits had to remain within their prescribed framework, both physically and behaviorally, the “boundary between this world and that of the citizens visiting and inspecting them, between wildness and civility, nature and culture, had to be respected unconditionally” (Corbey 344). In most exhibits, native subjects were prohibited from addressing the spectators and from behaving in a manner that would betray Western acculturation. Under such viewing conditions, the European spectator stood not only in physical opposition to the living ethnographic subject, but theoretically on the opposite end of

the evolutionary scale.⁴ Westerners were thus staged as victors in the “ascent to civilization, depicted as the inevitable triumph of higher races over lower ones and as progress through science and imperial conquest” (341). After Germany had lost its holdings in Africa, ethnographic films enabled its citizens to continue the fantasy of colonial and evolutionary mastery by sustaining a visual code that construed the colonized “as a population of degenerate types on the basis of racial origin, in order to justify conquest and to establish systems of administration and construction” (Bhabha 70).⁵

That the Germans could seriously entertain such a notion was fortuitously reinforced by archaeological accident. Since the discovery in 1857 of a complete human skeleton in the Neander valley near Düsseldorf, scholars had begun to propound the theory that Germany was the site of the origin of man, the fossil providing physical proof of what Leo Frobenius, prominent German evolutionist, “designated as the ‘last link’ between man and apes” (Oksiloff 6). One of the more famous early ethnographic film fragments, Rudolf Pöch’s *Bushman Speaking into the Phonograph* (1908), features a Kalahari Bushman relating a story into the cone of a phonograph. Oksiloff contends that the fragment depicts a “coupling of the first and last links of the evolutionary chain” (ibid. 57). That is, the Bushman, wearing only a loincloth, possessed of little more than a grass hut, a few animals, and wooden or stone implements, sits opposite to one of the most advanced products of modern technology, an electro-mechanical recording device. The image presumably legitimated ideas of Western superiority and justified the West’s continued colonial presence in third world countries. Regarding the black man’s capacity to function within a modern European society, one observer who had spent a good deal of time in Africa contends that it is “nicht daran zu zweifeln, daß der Neger auch komplizierte Maschinen bedienen kann, wohl aber daran, daß er je eine erfinden wird. Denn sein Genius ist nicht schöpferisch, weder politisch noch technisch noch künstlerisch, noch in religiöser Beziehung” (Heuser 839). These interrelated discourses of ethnographic filmmaking, ‘Völkerschauen,’ evolution, and colonialism may be connected to the debut scene of *Metropolis* in the following manner: Once robot-Maria has risen from her shell-like casing, she must stand above the silent, stationary black

men (Fig. 4). Because they neither speak nor move, they possess a sort of timelessness in contradistinction to the frenzied activity of the white actress. One recalls the number of scenes in *Metropolis* in which a clock- or watch-face appears, either to register the time or, in the case of Freder's assumption of worker 11811's duties, to torture, validating Simmel's observation that "the technique of metropolitan life is unimaginable without the most punctual integration of all activities and mutual relations into a stable and impersonal time schedule" (415). What Corbey observes of the living ethnographic exhibits in the 'Völkerschauen,' that "[w]hat is seen, the objectified Other, is looked on as coming [...] from a different, allochronic time" (361), applies equally well to the black men kneeling in the

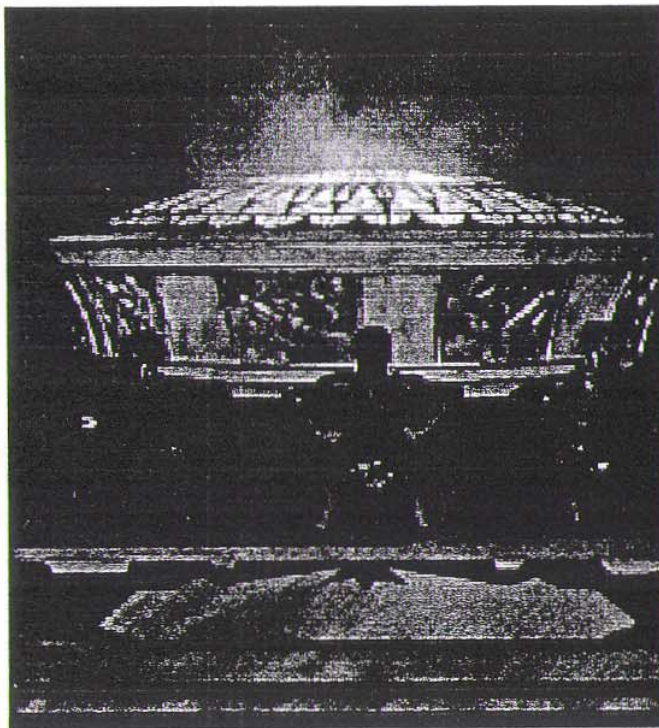


Fig. 4 – Black men holding up the case from which the robot-Maria will momentarily emerge.

debut scene. They are situated on the bottom of the evolutionary scale staged within the frame, beneath the white woman who moves in clockwork rhythm. Despite their own state of undress, their immobility quells any subconscious fears of miscegenation between themselves and their animated burden. A further irony arises when one considers that the robot-Maria is not completely human, that only her exterior layer, her skin, possesses at least the semblance of human life. Underneath this layer, however, lies a complex technological mechanism. What the tableau suggests, then, is that still higher on the evolutionary scale from black man to white woman stands the cyborg, a combination of man and machine. Certainly, the uneasy relationship between the latter two motivates much of the plebian rampage in *Metropolis*, just as that same tension was visually thematized by Xanti Schawinsky shortly before the initial screening of the film (Fig. 5)⁶:

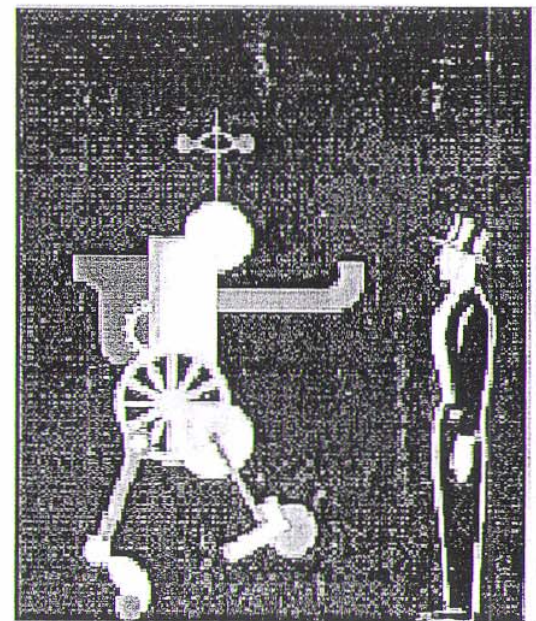


Fig. 5 – Xanti Schawinsky, *Tap Dancer versus Tapping Machine*, 1924.

If one returns to the notion that the director controls spectator vision, the visual of the black men holding up the white woman assumes a more disturbing dimension. Specifically, in early ethnographic films, the image “becomes a stand-in for an absent reality by isolating one segment of the object world” (Oksiloff 26). Lang not only metaphorically objectifies the black men by having them serve as supports to the robot-Maria, he also cinematically transforms them into objects through a subtle cross-cut, replacing them with statues of the seven deadly sins. Although this replacement occurs in a sequence of shots that seems to alternate between the reality of events at the Yoshiwara and the hallucinations of Freder’s fevered brain, Lang’s temporal near-juxtaposition of the pedestal supports suggests a visual equivalence.

The director performs a similar trick onscreen in *Die Nibelungen* when the dying Alberich commands the dwarf prisoners bearing the pot containing the Nibelungen treasure to magically become statues of themselves.⁷ The dwarf-king tells the prisoners that he is returning them to the dust from which they came. In this sense, he holds the power of God over them, just as Lang does visually over the black men of *Metropolis*. The ‘dust’ to which they return, however, is not some indifferent mineral substance, but is instead fashioned into representations of evil such as lust, gluttony, and sloth, a transformation that will be treated later

Dance

In attempting to unravel some of the many discourses running through the debut scene, one cannot overlook the robot-Maria’s sexualized dance. The cinematography used to record her choreography may have had antecedents in early ethnographic documentaries. As Fatimah Tobing Rony observes of such films, “[d]ances by indigenous peoples were projected as wild, ‘savage,’ frenzied movements by people lacking rationality” (65). Lang certainly stages the robot-Maria’s dance this way, as a hyperactive spectacle for observers who are kept at a distance. An ironic parallel between ethnographic dance sequences and the debut scene obtains when one recalls that natives captured in the former more often than not performed for the camera, rather than spontaneously, and

at the request of the cameraman/anthropologist. Nevertheless, when presented in European theaters, these documentary films were marketed as ‘authentic’ recordings of indigenous rituals and behavior. (Thus, in pre-Benjaminian fashion, the natives also acted for modern spectators whom they would never meet.) Likewise, instructed to fool the humans, the robot-Maria presumably does not believe in the authenticity of her sexually arousing choreography. Rotwang’s juxtaposition of enlightenment science and savage jazz through the vehicle of a robot body also points to a contemporaneous discourse of conflict about the nature of the new American musical and dance form.

Certainly, the robot-Maria may owe some of her erotic gyrations to early styles of Expressionist dance, photography, and graphic art (Fig. 6).



Rudolf Koppitz, *Dancer*, 1925



Fritz Lang, *Metropolis*, 1927

Fig. 6a – Contemporaneous dance and visual trends.



Ernst Ludwig Kirchner,
Nachträge, 1927-1931



George Grosz,
Baia tanzt, 1921

Fig. 6b – Contemporaneous visual trends. Observe the nudity of the dancers and the angularity of their movements, similar to those exhibited by the robot-Maria.

Yet in 1926, only a year prior to the initial screening of *Metropolis*, the black American dancer Josephine Baker had created a sensation in Berlin with the jazz entertainment troupe, the Revue Nègre. Introduced to Germany through minstrel shows even before the First World War, jazz had enjoyed a contradictory reception there, simultaneously signifying complex and conflicting meanings and ideologies.

Jazz style in music and dance connoted jungle eroticism and savagery, but also the incursion of American technology and Ford-style production methods. Jazz rhythms simulated those of industrial machines, even as they induced a loss of self-control by surrender to them on the nightclub dance floor. Black musicians, singers, and dancers themselves both fascinated and repelled, occupying that hybrid position of the stereotype whereby the “conflict of pleasure/unpleasure, mastery/defence, knowledge/disavowal, absence/presence, has a fundamental significance for colonial discourse” (Bhabha 75). Count Harry Kessler, who had seen Josephine Baker perform and had entertained her personally afterwards, captures this tension in his diary entry of February 17, 1926:

Abends wieder in die Negerrevue bei Nelson (Josephine Baker). Sie sind ein Mittelprodukt zwischen Urwald und Wolkenkratzer; ebenso ihre Musik, der Jazz, in Färbung und Rhythmus. Ultramodern und ultraprimitiv. Die Weite der Spannung erzeugt den zwingenden Stil; ebenso wie bei den Russen. (458)⁸

In *Metropolis*, Lang masterfully co-opts the frenzied style of jazz choreography, retaining its visual fascination while divesting it of any unpalatable racial overtones. Yet, comparison of posters for the Revue Nègre by Paul Colin to stills from the filmic dance sequence more than suggests that both choreographer and costume designer for the robot-Maria were well familiar with Josephine Baker (Fig. 7).⁹



Paul Colin,
Egyptian-like Dancers, 1927



Fritz Lang, *Metropolis*, 1927

Fig. 7a - Paul Colin posters and *Metropolis* stills.

Fritz Lang, *Metropolis*, 1927Paul Colin, *Untitled*, 1927Fig. 7b - Paul Colin posters and *Metropolis* stills.

Though Lang's apparent stylistic appropriation of a black cultural art form may seem audacious, the mentality behind the gesture does not seem to have been unique: "Aber da man in Europa den Neger hauptsächlich als den Jazzmusikanten kennt und einschätzt, obwohl der Jazz eine durchaus 'weiße' Sache ist, schadet es vielleicht nichts, das ursprüngliche Verhalten des Negers kennenzulernen, und wie er sich in die Nature einfügt" (Heuser 840).

Political

One final discursive thread woven through *Metropolis* must be followed. In doing so, the purpose is not to suggest that Fritz Lang was somehow a racist. Nevertheless, he clearly drew upon several aesthetic and ethnographic discourses then circulating, consciously

or not, to construct the robot-Maria debut scene. It would be remiss of any investigator to overlook certain parallels between the layout and subsequent transformation of that scene and contemporaneous political discussions about the fate of blacks and their mixed-race children in Germany.

Blacks entered German territory *en masse* for the first time during World War I. Most of them were members of French African colonies who remained in Germany after the end of the war, occupying the Rhineland.¹⁰ By virtue of the French victory, some of these black soldiers exercised positions of authority, while many procured German wives for themselves. Both of these conditions fostered resentment among Germans, whether liberal or conservative. In terms reminiscent of Nazi rhetoric, the German state "described black soldiers as rapists of German women and carriers of venereal and other diseases" (Kestling 87). The very existence of so-called "Rhineland Bastards," children of interracial couples, proved so disturbing to some Germans that by 1927, the same year in which *Metropolis* was released, the Bavarian Ministry of Interior recommended their forced sterilization, though "the suggestion was turned down at the Reich level, because of the demoralizing effects upon the children's mothers" (*ibid.*), almost exclusively white German women. Hitler continued this inflammatory discourse in *Mein Kampf*, also published in 1927, singling out blacks as agents of racial contamination: "It was and it is Jews who bring the Negroes into the Rhineland, always with the same secret thought and clear aim of ruining the hated white race by the necessarily resulting bastardization, throwing it down from its cultural and political height, and himself rising to be its master" (325). Even more tellingly for the present purpose, Hitler frames his racial argument in theological terms. Thus, it would be "positively a sin against all reason" to assume that through education and training blacks could attain equality with whites, a further "sin against the will of the Eternal Creator if His most gifted beings" degenerate while "Hottentots and Zulu Kaffirs are trained for intellectual professions" (430).

One recalls that Lang films two parallel versions of the debut scene. In the second, the semi-nude black men supporting the robot-Maria are replaced by animated statues of the seven deadly sins.

The substitution, while somewhat more faithful to the Scriptural source,¹¹ visually equates the blacks with the excesses of sin and degradation threatening to bring down the futuristic metropolis of New Babylon. Precisely here, where it intersects temporally and thematically with Hitler's rhetoric of imminent racial and national doom, does the debut scene acquire its most disturbing aspect.

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Notes

1 Henceforward all references to *Metropolis* will be to the 2002 digital restoration by Martin Koerber of the Friedrich-Wilhelm Murnau Stiftung, available in DVD format from Kino International.

2 Thomas Elsaesser also observes a number of contemporaneous visual parallels across media, noting that Lang's *Metropolis* was designed to have a "recognition factor that made contact with different kinds of cultural memory as well as stir deep-rooted fantasies" (20). He does not, however, pursue the thesis that one of these "deep-rooted fantasies" may very well have been colonialist. Elsaesser in turn draws upon visual connections made by Heide Schönemann in Fritz Lang: *Filmbilder Vorbilder*. Yet, Schönemann concentrates upon unearthing certain aesthetic and stylistic trends from which Lang drew, without placing her examples within a colonialist discourse.

3 Nor does such attendance seem to have been unusual: "Diese erste Nubierexpedition und eine noch größere des folgenden Sommers bilden eigentlich ein zusammenhängendes Ganzes. Jedesmal begann die Ausstellung in Hamburg und bereiste von hier aus verschiedene Städte, überall das gleiche Aufsehen erregend" (Hagenbeck 84).

4 Alexander Sokolowsky, assistant to Carl Hagenbeck, expresses this relationship explicitly when he writes: "Der Anblick und die Vertiefung in das Leben und Treiben primitiver Völker, die Erwerbung von Kenntnissen auf dem Gebiete der Völkerkunde steigern daher nicht nur unseren Schatz von Kenntnissen, sondern bewirken auch, daß wir in aufgeklärter und verständnisvollerer Weise den Vorgängen im Völkerleben auf unserer Erde gegenüberstehen" (157-8).

5 This tendency of early German ethnographic films (or of their reception) to project authenticity and colonialist control may also be seen in Lang's *Die Spinnen* (1919). As Patrick McGilligan observes: "The Incan sets were constructed on the grounds of Hamburg's well-known Hagenbeck Zoological Garden, a private zoo arranged partly in a Chinese style. The

arrangements were made by Heinrich Umlauff, curator of an ethnographic museum and an acquaintance of the director, who inaugurated the tradition of having an 'expert' brought in to consult on a Fritz Lang film" (58). Umlauff, in turn, was Carl Hagenbeck's brother-in-law.

6 This is also captured by Count Harry Kessler in his diary entry of February 24, 1926, describing the jazz dancer Josephine Baker: "Was bei [Oscar] Fried hilflos war, wurde bei ihr großer Stil, Ur-Groteske, Figur, die die Mitte hielt zwischen ägyptischen Reliefstreifen und mechanisierter Puppe von Georg Grosz" (461).

7 Thomas Elsaesser also notes this antecedent use of the pedestal support image (20), though without pursuing the colonialist implications.

8 Indeed, Count Kessler describes several encounters with Baker. His diary entry of February 13, 1926, contains almost all of the elements – female nudity, men in tuxedos, wild choreography, the highly-sought aroma of depravity – found in the robot-Maria's debut scene: "Um eins, nachdem gerade meine Gäste gegangen waren, rief Max Reinhardt an, er sei bei Vollmoeller, sie bäten mich beide, ob ich nicht noch hinkommen könne? Miß Baker sei da, und nun sollten noch fabelhafte Dinge gemacht werden. Ich fuhr also zu Vollmoeller in seinen Harem am Pariser Platz und fand dort außer Reinhardt und Huldshinsky zwischen einem halben Dutzend nackter Mädchen auch Miß Baker, ebenfalls bis auf einen rosa Mullschurz völlig nackt, und die kleine Landshoff (eine Nichte von Sammy Fischer) als Junge im Smoking. Die Baker tanzte mit äußerster Groteskkunst und Stilreinheit, wie eine ägyptische oder archaische Figur, die Akrobatik treibt, ohne je aus ihrem Stil herauszufallen. So müssen die Tänzerinnen Salomos und Tut-ench-Amuns getanzt haben. Sie tut das stundenlang scheinbar ohne Ermüdung, immer neue Figuren erfindend wie im Spiel, wie ein glückliches Kind. Sie wird dabei nicht einmal warm, sondern behält eine frische, kühle, trockene Haut. Ein bezauberndes Wesen, aber ganz unerotisch. Man denkt bei ihr an Erotik ebensowenig wie bei einem schönen Raubtier. Die nackten Mädchen lagen oder tänzelten zwischen den vier oder fünf Herren im Smoking herum, und die kleine Landshoff, die wirklich wie ein bildschöner Junge aussieht, tanzte mit der Baker moderne Jazztänze zum Grammophon. Vollmoeller wollte für die Baker ein Ballet schreiben, das er noch in dieser Nacht fertigzumachen und Reinhardt zu geben vorhatte. Eine Kokotten-geschichte. Zwischen Reinhardt, Vollmoeller und mir, die darum herum standen, lagen die Baker und die Landshoff wie ein junges, bildschönes Liebespaar umschlungen. Ich sagte: ich würde für sie eine Pantomime nach den Motiven des Hohen Liedes Salomonis schreiben, die Baker als Sulamith, die Landshoff im Köstüm (oder Nicht-Köstüm) orientalisches antik, Salomo im Smoking, eine ganz willkürliche modern-antike Phantasie nach halb Jazz-, halb orientalischer Musik, vielleicht von

Richard Strauss" (455-6).

Besides its historical value, the passage also possesses a certain psychological interest. Note Kessler's initial fascination with Baker's nudity and dancing, a feeling of arousal quickly denied by his assessment of her figure as "ganz unerotisch." As if to confine Baker, to impose upon her limits familiar to him, Kessler twice invokes the name of Solomon, thereby conjuring images of oriental(ist) lust.

9 Filming of *Metropolis* ended on October 30, 1926, at least eight months after Josephine Baker had performed in Berlin.

10 They were often sent first into battle to frighten the enemy by their skin-color and presumed fierceness, a practice reenacted in Werner Herzog's conquistador drama, *Aguirre, der Zorn Gottes* (1972).

11 Rev. 17:3-6: "There I saw a woman sitting on a scarlet beast that was covered with blasphemous names and had seven heads and ten horns. The woman was dressed in purple and scarlet, and was glittering with gold, precious stones and pearls. She held a golden cup in her hand, filled with abominable things and the filth of her adulteries. This title was written on her forehead: MYSTERY BABYLON THE GREAT THE MOTHER OF PROSTITUTES AND OF THE ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH. I saw that the woman was drunk with the blood of the saints, the blood of those who bore testimony to Jesus."

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