INTRODUCTION

By the dualistic lens of cultural film studies, Harold Segel states that modernism characterizes itself by “anti-rationalism, anti-intellectualism, the primacy of spontaneity and intuition, the repudiation of the epistemological value of language, and the celebration of the physical, which was perceived as direct experience of the phenomenal world” (1). Accordingly, Fritz Lang’s film *Metropolis* sources industrial pragmatism as eugenic expression whilst experimenting artistically within cinematic representations of the subjective body-as-societal, imbuing bodies subsequently with latitudinal epistemology of meaning. Set in futuristic times under a ‘blockbuster’ budget (albeit harkening the obsolete coinage), a stunning breakthrough in cinema’s approach toward societal causality was underway. Indeed, the 1927 film *Metropolis* gives us the richest potential for cultural and historical interrogations of the human body as dramaturgic resource, as ingratiating dynamo, as *acted upon* by inceptive performances through & through. This film’s candor with gender roles, cordiality with bodily industrialization and caustic dystopia as well as its prescience with the posthuman circa feminist theoretician Rosi Braidotti necessitate a careful examination of this film through close, critical reading herein.
Yet the film’s contemporaneousness with Foucaultian modernity also substantiates by correlative similitude the possibility for exploring the utilitarian performances within the film in several varieties of orders, namely: feminism, psychoanalysis and performance studies. Rhetorical inquires arising: Where can we positively denote, or “queer,” feminine and masculine human bodies as unsound modus operandi in the film *Metropolis?* How can we translate, by one-to-one aura of meaning in the manner of Walter Benjamin translatability, the feminine and posthuman psychoanalytically within the film *Metropolis?* How can we as cinema appreciators rejoin gendered historicism and eugenic possibility by Modernisms enlightened by this film? This sample paper seeks to problematize such questions as well as how said silences vis-à-vis gender relations and eugenic stases shape in profoundest ways our human communication processes asynchronously *about, with* and *unto* bodies, using these foci to queer the human body’s making and changing of meaning in the film *Metropolis.*

I begin always grateful for “A Cyborg Manifesto” by Donna Haraway, beginning an impressive plethora of cyborg literature as well as my initial fascination with the robotic as a feminist concern. This sample essay would also not happen without the assistance of *Sonic Semantics: Performances of the Unsound Body* by Christof Migone, which serves, alongside performance theories by knowledgebase, as the primary locus of this sample essay. I owe gratitude moreover to ideas about the body and the mind as proposed by Foucaultian philosopher Judith Butler and Lacanian psychoanalyst Juliet Mitchell, both segmenting psychology theories by Sigmund Freud specifically from *On Creativity and the Unconscious,* whose literature generally speaking serves as import to the film *Metropolis.*

The Vintage Collection in entirety by Michel Foucault as edited by Paul Rabinow
complements my sample essay therewithal. By deconstructing the film with the assistance of these feminist, psychoanalysis, and performance rhetorics by the locus of sociolinguistic rhetoric, I will perform a close, critical reading of the film’s portrayals of feminine and masculine agencies as well as relevant questions of the body by one qualitative investigation of activating silence toward the quantitative reasoning of cultural and historical comprehension.

**ESSAY**

By performance implications insomuch silent film, the congruence of silent pauses, body linguistic excess and gender experimentation in the film *Metropolis* supplicate an astronomical uncertainty about the status of the body and, at an historical apex for silent film coupled with the height of Freudian psychoanalysis research alongside sexuality automata, deeply problematize the notion of one jurisprudential phenomenology as provable and even conceivable experience in our world. Moreover, the implicit cuing (read: silence) of words contra articulation betray systematic as societal concerns about the body, as *The History of Sexuality: An Introduction* by Michel Foucault differs the sexual toward the articulated, the recursively silenced (read: hypothetically repressed) articulations circa the bodily realized:

> There is no binary division to be made between what one says and what one does not say; we must try to determine the different ways of not saying such things. [...] There is not one but many silences, and they are integral part of the strategies that underlie and permeate discourses. (27)

The silence of each situational complex within the film *Metropolis*, as I will argue, permeates as exploration of phenomenology by way of silent negative capability in explicit societal constructions. Central to this sample paper’s discussion remains the overture of
silence functionality at all times as gendered, constituting, sexual and even violent factors in the film *Metropolis*.

At the film’s commencement, black and white motors, pulleys and hydraulics confront the viewer with industrial capacity to propel, worthwhile and inject whilst inferring object- and machine-based logos for the film, a striking commentary upon industrial progressiveness then storming the globe over. To articulate with Foucaultian causality of historicism, in what moviemaking criticism might conjecture as merely an artistically dramatic scenario of sorts, the motion picture begins with machines of mass capacity for Aristotlean faculty demonstrating a deliberatively metallic caliber. The machines in the film *Metropolis* portray by mechanical rush “not simply at the level of consciousness, of representations and in what one thinks one knows, but at the level at what makes possible the knowledge that is transformed into political investment” *(Discipline and Punish* 185). Humanity, as implicated by precedent of construction, surpasses audience expectance of underground city life by its ultimate power of legislative permissibility in a post-relational indoctrination of certifiably unmindful machinery. Much as the penitentiary system enlightened by Michel Foucault in *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, immediately afterwards, the machines wash over the innumerable men workers, finding themselves jammed together on all sides, with two lines entering and exiting a jailhouse-indicative working area, respectively, complete with bars and a universalized time clock.

The Modernist leaning toward the productivity of workers vis-à-vis machinery represents a cinematic breakthrough of both apparent and unprecedented nature for the
film *Metropolis*. Labor thinker Bruno Latour indicates how dystopian unionizing regulates production inasmuch inference of this scenario:

From tools in the hand of human workers, we shift to an assembly of machines where tools are related *to one another*, creating a massive array of labor and material relations in the new factories [of the film *Metropolis*] that Marx has forcefully described as so many circles of Dante’s *Inferno*. (799)

The workers’ consensus of performance proves quite striking if not startling when considering their lackluster attitudes, the weight of indentured servitude *unto* them, their codependent “walking” inasmuch jutting forwardly, propelled equally by themselves and the uneasy assurance of capital gain notwithstanding extreme job-related risks, moreover constructed by their deeply apparent exhaustion, the last focus manifested metaphorically as humanoid death finding robotic living by Maria later in the film.

This entire scene seeks to complicate the diachronic nature of Fordian productivity from an early cost and benefit perspective of general bodies-as-workers in motion, each entirely void of sensible purpose yet still full of negated meaning in their said silences as sustained. Christof Migone explains, “This disembodied, transcendental approach, operating securely in that trough which is *normative centrality*, is what the body begins to displace – once it starts moving (in all directions, and even within stillness as we shall see later), talking (back), and refusing to be *held*” (52, premiere emphasis mine). By constructivist reading herein, the men workers of the film *Metropolis* in the manner of the quantitative ontology of their bodies infer a cost of dystopian sacrifice of their humanness in the name of the benefit of the industry’s productive order. In this very way, the film makes explicit, notwithstanding any societal incredulity implicated, how in fact *quantitative* sacrifices for capitalistic gains, whole or in part, are due to the negotiable quality of
mechanized bodies in epistemological opposition to tangible ideas singular in
constructivist empirics, cementing the oxymora of “productive dystopia” fundamental to
this current underground universe of the film *Metropolis*.

Inferring this same transference of industrialized men, Sara Ahmed conforms the
body’s history cemented upon relational agreements with objects and abstraction likewise,
especially in terms of the machine, the body and their capabilities for an extraordinary
unity. As Ahmed confirms inasmuch sociologic positivism albeit differing from sociologic
constructivism quite markedly, “Consciousness is toward an object and so is always a
worldly situation and embodied. Phenomenology emphasizes the importance of lived
experience” (1), negotiating the machine-to-body references and transference of the film
*Metropolis*’s communicative ideas into the industry of metaphor enacting *unto* and *with*
bodies by primacy of corpus mechanics. Ahmed also reminds us about “[t]he significance
and what is ready at hand, and the role of repeated and habitual action in shaping bodies
and the worlds” (ibid)—worlds that are inferred by the Fordian assembly line of bodies
found in the beginning of the film *Metropolis*.

Migone would consider the silence of the film negotiated synchronously by the noise
of bodies and their uniformity in this previous sense, “[t]hat something other than the
norm, in short, that *noise* is what bodies produce even when idle, on their feet and so still
and silent that they clash with the crowd in their very immobility; standing noisy in their
very silence” (55). The proper spectrum of a cohesive methodology insofar explicating
bodies as objects exists as an active and even vibrant collectivity of bodily materiality, or
for parsing: “working matter inasmuch the worker.” Additionally, the film *Metropolis*
performs silence variously by cinematographic pauses wherein the noise of their jostling is
felt in these visual vibrations, heard, if not also somatically uttered, by way of their collective hypothesis of body rhetoric: bodies together purporting not only an oxymoronic power in their dystopia of themselves in dystopian syncopation but also the cultural and historical dynamics of real and ideal quality in the vibrancy of collective body matter by these aesthetic gesticulations, by bodies and by machines.

Immediately after the men workers scene, the film opens into a track and field spectacle, with approximately twenty-two young and conventionally attractive men without wearing shirts exhibiting homosocial behavior in a track race, which is not unlike short films of wartime propaganda would do historically by concurrence. With the scene’s introduction of mensch-ever-of-the-hour Freder, the main protagonist in the film Metropolis, as both the winner of the race and leader each amongst the “well-to-do” men, the scene’s actors do a remarkably judicious job at undertaking homosociality in surprisingly overt if also secondary (read: auxiliary) fashion in terms of issues concerning class difference and racial eugenics. Case in point, the scene’s focus upon male homosocial activity comes noticeably after “the gaping and unbridgeable rift in the male homosocial spectrum” at the end of the Nineteenth Century, thereafter which occurred as acted upon implicitly in the scene “a discussion of male homosexuality and homophobia as we know them” (Eve Sedgewick, Between Men 201, 202). However, this male athletics scene provides just an undercurrent of homosocial activity favoring the active pronouncement of silent male privilege, the complicity of class congeniality and the proof model of brute strength, understood solely between its male participants. As these bodies in one speculative language of gender congruence negotiates playfulness by accord, Roland Barthes would postulate in complementary fashion: “Discourse [between bodies] is not
communication, as is oft repeated, it is subjection” (11). In an intriguing implicit argument circa class difference, the existence of the “well-to-do” men as executive social beings bases its benevolent existence upon the factory workers said plight, an associative fundamentalism presiding over unbeknownst potentiality of Mankind (as introduced) unionized, a decided deception depicted by power and knowledge hierarchy in starkest cinematic subsequence.

Marius Turda informs the exclusive point of departure for this era of Modernist scholars of eugenics. Put strongly:

In many ways, the birth of eugenics expressed [...] concerns with the evolution of [...] society,” which “wanted to advance scientific, racial, and social biology, including racial and social hygiene and applied its precepts, first and foremost, to its members. (23)

The general idea here seems focused primarily on the performance of knowledge (one bodily marking, if you like) onto the identity of the Foucaultian community by “post-disciplinarity” in terms of class power and knowledge each. Yet silence still plays the most important role in the formation of eugenic possibility alongside the impossibility of the utterance to exist sonically in silent films beyond voiced gesticulations. However, the use of silence as modality in silent film is still quite utilitarian in nature:

[John] Cage taught us that silence is chimerical. Its purity is conceptual, it is an impossibility. As such, silence haunts all creative acts, its negation provides the constitutive ground for these acts. Silence is the empty vessel, the syncopal agent that rhythms the foreground which sound inhabits.” (Migone 18)

In this very way, it is duly astonishing that bodies demonstrate their coexistence under very little exertion physically, with silence presiding as gendered hope eugenically instilled.

As Early Modern contemporary scholars have attested as fundamentally knowledgeable within the field of study, this kind of happy male comradeship serves unbeknownst
precedent to the extremely dark undercurrent of “falsehood competiveness” microcosmic within ideologies of eroticism, the disordered constitution of gender awareness and inevitable discourses on homophobia entertaining drinking culture and sociability standardization from the Renaissance Era to our present day.

In terms of this deceptive character embodiment, “The effects of education and environment on the improvement of race were [...] negligible, while physical and social appearances of the individual are often deceiving” (Turda 17). As the movie scene suggests in terms of its benevolence, “In a space articulated by language, it reveals the profusion of bodies and their simple order” (Foucault, The Birth of the Clinic 197). The positivist eugenics in physical education and bodily (read: athletic) achievements, albeit falsely constructed and even construed as a mere apparatus of odd normality, ring present as apparently positive locus, seemingly if entirely apposite a knowable or unknowable status on the workers’ plight.

The race as maleness challenge of superiority by strength renders as it makes benign “the most private, psychologized form in which many twentieth-century Western men experience their vulnerability to the social pressure of homophobic blackmail [...] regulating the amorphous territory of ‘the sexual’” (Butler, Between Men 89). In this very way, the ‘race challenge,’ inasmuch matters of deconstruction, implicitly marks maleness as complicit amidst a challenge of earning compulsory heterosexuality, all the more theatrical when one considers the stark homosocial behavior empowering the scene’s duration. Even if secondary, the scene’s culmination trades ramifications for rarefactions inasmuch male bodies continually enacting eugenic demonstrations of male and homosocial possibility,
untowardly familiar with their self-ordained and *provisional* profusions of their bodies collectively.

As the audience of the film *Metropolis* infers class difference constructed by and with bodies, the lens of the male gaze by its actors “begins producing effects—though temporary ones—of mutual reinforcement: we have seen how the idea of class was correlative with a certain neutral observation [... involving] a reading of essences” (Foucault, *The Birth of the Clinic* 177). The male gaze throughout the film *Metropolis*, notwithstanding focus on its beginning so far, arguably suggests a homosocial exposure of the fusion of the social and the material dictated for the audience of the film. Inceptively, the Modernist lens of cinematic depiction herein fantastically materializes a collectivity of bodies with the ontological power of *making* and *changing* embodied symbolism, in the methodology of exploring wondrously the nature of gender empirics, class eugenics and vice versa. It is worth noting by token of implied achievement that the bodies perform gender most actively with their agential agreement of holistic camaraderie as the scene cuts upon the race’s conclusion, with scene duration tabulating less than one minute’s time.

During the subsequent scene of beautiful pomp and garden partying orchestrated by Freder, the aforementioned protagonist of the film *Metropolis*, the character of Maria, the soon-to-become *Maschinenmensch* of the film, enters the scene with an array of small children by which Freder’s mouth opens and freezes in captivated silence during the first of several instances. Herein, the sound property of the silent film’s body rhetoric relies on Freder’s silent mouth as a purely performative void. Put differently, Freder’s body, while enacting little motion measurably, instead speaks its communicative power via his unsound mouth in the apparent surprise, apprehension, of Maria in a doubled flowering of
unsoundness. In conjuring Jean-Paul Sartre’s being statuses: “To heretofore inaudible sound of inner speech is useful to consider as a reformulation of the itself-ness which does-not-know-itself [...]” (Migone 7). In fact, in terms of both gender dynamics and even sexual awareness, the frozen utterance gives itself over to the non-commutative power, arguably, of a realized sexual difference, as well, itself a precursor to the film’s small prophecy of poststructuralist theory, as it were.

Another successive reading of the film, poststructuralism as proposed by the work of feminist theoretician Rosi Braidotti seeks to ascertain the depth of humanist power and structural inequality form the subjective and anthropologic Otherness as well as communal selves of ideology. The self as proposed by and for itself constructs femininities, the material reality, the symbolic language beyond distinction, and sexual difference as well as sexuality for individualized discovery. Importantly, Rosi Braidotti’s notions of sexual difference, as Freder and Maria’s relationship would establish in their meeting, “underlie the construction of woman as the Other of the dominant view of subjectivity” proposed by masculine self-regulation, with “the feminine ‘Other’ as a site of devaluation” (96) implied by the activity of Freder’s unsound mouth. As Foucault states in Discipline and Punish, “We are entering an age of the infinite examination and of compulsory objectification” in “a [sexual] machinery that assures dissymmetry, disequilibrium, difference” (189, 202). The frozen utterance, in this very way, infers a sensibility for sexual differentiation and ontological sustainability by the “acting out” of unsoundness to construct Maria as inherently different in direct dis-regard of Freder. Not only or just different, Maria becomes the implied interface of the general unsoundness found in Freder’s mouth, a
disembodiment outright or, at the least, displacement outright enacted *unto* or, however amicably though it may be, even *against* Maria herself.

This unsound mouth, along with the unspoken utterance, situates the film’s locus of knowledge upon the ontological qualities of Maria, with assistance from epistemologies of the male silent mouth decoding her, heretofore becoming an actualized machine and posthuman assigned with profoundly gendered rarefactions. Bill Brown writes emphatically, “The story of objects asserting themselves as things, then, is the story of a changed relation to the human subject and thus the story of how the thing really names less an object than the particular subject object relation” (1). Director Fritz Lang relays Maria’s character by way of Freder through applying ontological meaning of unsoundness to Maria’s uneasily realized as temporary humanness. It is “[t]hrough this kind of body-mirror, or better, of [...] flesh-speech,” Migone writes, “where the body becomes reflector and vessel, the somatic utterance is radically exteriorized” (56). By way of theoretical explication, the subject object relationship denotes Freder assigning Maria gendered-as-machine power of subjugation, the unsoundness of Freder’s mouth connoting his *apprehensive* situation in-of-itself by remaining always already the Human ontologically, Maria negotiated through the consequent as questionable human epistemology by dualistic transformation being almost whilst not yet apparently Machine.

In the manner of Maria’s “becoming” a machine by way of her differentiated constitution from spousal ideology, Simone de Beauvoir posits the brief reminder, “one is not born, one becomes a woman” (1). Of course, Freder’s male gaze, coupled with the active void of his unsound mouth as voiding property itself, subjugates Maria from agential
woman into engendered differentiation, then empowering her robotic assimilation and, in recursive fashion inasmuch womanhood aesthetically, a culminated woman circa robotic manifestation. Migone puts timeframes of unsoundness quite clearly as previous that “[t]he paradigm of communication is replaced, or preceded, by the basic performative act of opening one’s mouth and apprehending (instead of comprehending)” (77). Put differently, the subsumed comprehension, washed out by the performance of the male gaze, and by perlocutionary fashion, marks apprehension upon the body of Maria to negotiate importantly the eventual resurrection of embodiment causality of womanhood without human recourse of becoming-as-process. These scenes have equally profound rarefactions, as well, as the deep structures of Maria’s identity from then onward orchestrate the stark vulnerability of sociolinguistic embodiment whereas her legacy remains “to be acted (upon)” to all degrees positively by male subjugators unified. Centered on deconstructing Maria’s unknowingness of her supposed unequal status, the meeting of Freder and Maria remains the first presumable constitution by unsoundness of Maria amongst several reconstitutions, her final embodiment in robotic form as the Maschinenmensch before culminating with the wildly risqué performance of Maria as metaphysical cyborg, much to the befuddled enrapture of white-tied men.

This negation of sexual difference for gender appropriation leads to one suggestion proposed by Rosi Braidotti: the inference of mimesis as self-referential utopia by way of disembodying sexual difference in favor of the posthumanist subjectivity realized. The updated power as realized by Maria in this moment negotiates the spaces of exited gender apparatus favoring an intriguing hypothesis of counter-appropriation with or against the subject system of Maria toward dismantling the phallocentric unsoundness of the
unfounded Freder outright. "In other words," according to Migone, "how the sign is a reduction of the sound, and, in turn, how sound, according to [Ferdinand de] Saussure would seem to be indissociable from thought, and vice versa" (13) makes the conjecture present that two gazes shared in said silence is not just interesting moviemaking, but also implied thought—societal, relational, and itself—as vibrant metaphor, gender power and eugenic knowledge, as previous, active onto its recipient. As such:

A language might also be compared to a sheet of paper. Thought is one side of the sheet and sound the reverse side. Just as it is impossible to take a pair of scissors and cut one side of paper without at the same time cutting the other, so it is impossible in a language to isolate sound from thought, or thought from sound. (Saussure 113)

The film *Metropolis* suggests this flux of knowledge about the body, and of one's discursive functionality in said film silence, depends as much on language to free itself from its own (read: language's) oppression of differentiation as it does the transference from the mouth of Freder to the body or bodies of Maria: from the ontology of gender and eugenic power to the epistemology of the male gaze and silence accompanying it.

Several scenes pass in the movie, including an explosion and resultant injuries and deaths of several factory workers and an attempted suicide by Grot, one of the factory henchmen for the factory business, which foils due to Jon Frederson, Freder's father, intervening at last moment's notice. These points in the film, while I spend cursory time on them, supplements again for us the notion of Modern thought as prophetic to the potential disaster of Late Capitalism, marked by the apparent ambivalence toward repercussions for the lackluster business leadership in the deteriorating community created by them systematically. Provocatively, the film *Metropolis* complicates its aforementioned milieu as Rotwang, a delirious inventor, creates the *Maschinenmensch*, or Machine-Human, in
memory of and perhaps reverence to his deceased wife. In a conceivably gold-plated embodiment, the *Maschinenmensch* is a true humanoid machine, increasingly worthy in contemporary scholarship of Rosi Braidotti’s theories on posthumanism. The scene culminates with the robot rising out of her seat to inhabit the male gazes of both Jon Frederson as well as Rotwang, their now Frankensteinian accomplice in all respects to each of them.

At the first point of realized conjecture psychoanalytically, Juliet Mitchell’s *Psychoanalysis and Feminism* suggests that psychoanalyzing facial expressions, such as this scene of robotic male gazing in the film *Metropolis*, are significant, if mentioning one more divergence by the film from antiquated ideas of comprehending the expressive empowerment of the human experience. The sexualized nature of the male gaze, inferring a robotic “sexuality” of a sort, is one landmark quality of the film given the precursory evidence of a robot being sexually attractive to these two men, if not receiving feminine agency or privilege hypothetically before or, by in turn, receiving the male gazes. The creation of sexuality into the *Maschinenmensch* becomes agential to her being, an arguably posthuman realization toward “[t]he disembodied, transcendental approach [and] extreme attenuation of matter” (Buchloh et al. 55). In this very way, the male gazes also provide these men with the recursive cycle of vital materialism seeking to conjecture the humanness of themselves by way of the object they have not just created duplicitously but also are continually creating serendipitously. As Jane Bennett would also argue, “Vibrant materialists [with Frederson and Rotwang as prototypical] will thus try to linger during which they find themselves fascinated by objects, taking them as clues to the material vitality they share with them. This sense of a strange and incomplete commonality” with
the humanoid yet posthuman qualities of the *Maschinenmensch* “may induce vital materialists to treat nonhumans [...] more carefully, more strategically, more economically” (Bennett 17-18). Accrued naiveté intact, Rotwang and Frederson in their more human concerns set out to improve purposefully the robotic functionality by making the *Maschinenmensch* itself, for parsing, “more human,” in addition to what can be deemed as workably accidental inasmuch sexuality accrual and feminine agency or privilege.

Case in point, Juliet Mitchell writes in supplementation that “it is from this point onwards that” a psychoanalytic view of the film *Metropolis* “really demonstrates how unimportant the notion of a ‘pure instinct’ is to man, how far psychoanalysis has separated itself from biology and – what is to some extent the same question – how far man has come from animals and what has been done to animal nature” (31). In this very way, the substantial substantiations of the male gazes in this scene enjoying the positivist results of the *Maschinenmensch* are implied to be coupled with, due to the end in mind for Rotwang’s creation, “sexual instincts to the ego- of self-preservative instincts (hunger, etc.); now [...] found that even the latter could be sexualized [...]” (ibid). The robot, then, is a psychoanalytic resurrection due to Rotwang having sexualized *self-preservative* instinct, if not coupled dualistically “new world order” with his wife as the newest linguistics of “Mankind.” In this respect, the *Maschinenmensch* does give, as it were, an implied *unsubstantial* substantiation for the sexualized logic of humanness whilst preserving this sexual nature by the *Maschinenmensch’s* femaleness by physicality, adding to the aforementioned response of male gazes upon her as now the more “queered bot.”
As the male privilege of Freder passes in the film *Metropolis*, the *Maschinenmensch* instead serves as a tool for not only hygienic purity, but also how humanoid robots are the pinnacle and ultimate outdoing of hygienic practice in the manner of gender and eugenic principality. Again, Marius Turda’s theories assume resistance of eugenics by Rotwang in favor of posthumanism negotiating the broader scope of Modernisms, alternating eugenics of human sterilization for negating the human altogether (37). Even if solely built as marriageable partner, in several senses of the word, the marriage livelihood resurrected as a robotic reminder of his spouse Hel, in deconstructive fashion, elucidates a prophecy toward the necessity for additional readings in creating future robots for eugenic purposes otherwise, as well, the marriageable *Maschinenmensch* as singular prototype. Moreover, Turdus points towards the hygienic nature of eugenic functionality as “inextricably tied to the health of ‘future generations, the nation and the state’ wherein “eugenic marriage certificates certified both the struggle against social denigration and social deviance, as well as the fusion of science and national progressivism” (ibid). The social and material vibrancies themselves as implied, leaving aside the sexual agency and even physical form of the *Maschinenmensch*, complements Creation narrations in the surpassing of societal constraints by principled idealism inasmuch Rotwang the Inventor makes an entirely new body from another. Insofar hypothetical positivity, an ideology such as marriage imbued into the *Maschinenmensch* means it could recuperate pseudo-humanism rationality into the posthumanism of sexual opportunity if not also procreation, creating a new eugenic principle for the posthuman body, the possibility for romantic, sexual or even conceptual involvement and a new rhetoric of humans it can form relationships with.
Furthermore, the *Maschinenmensch* displays bodily agency with allured silence, marking the causality of unsoundness by previous demarcations of Freder’s apprehensive albeit potentially comprehensive mouth. “Here, as opposed to [J.L.] Austin, the utterance does not trigger exclusionary reaction but constitutive action,” Migone states: “*I have nothing to say and I am saying it*” (8). As previous, the nothingness of conjecture by the robot toward the male gazes implies a constituting back onto the men held responsible for her recreating and continuing demarcation. I believe the nature of the *Maschinenmensch* provides more than just companionship here in the form of something, at the least, realized eugenically as well as sexually for Rotwang. The sexualized response of the *Maschinenmensch* as much as the physical form of femaleness imbued into the robot gives an aura of aesthetic reasoning, eugenic sensibility and gender sustainability as well as ultimate reality of embodied *propriety* in supplicating the idea of a male collectivity as robotically fashionable, with all the betterments for them equally conjecturable as subsequent.

The femaleness of the *Maschinenmensch* is apparent in the roundedness of sexual organs, which infer the female form of breasts and what might be the implied genital shaping on the robot. Since the *Maschinenmensch* has been the resurrected form of a female human, I contest that a sex organ reading on the surface of the robot would not be as farfetched for purposing the robot further in any variety of orders. However, the rhetorical inquiry: How does the robot have sexual functionality, and if so, in what ways can the *Maschinenmensch* establish onward the sexual propriety it so presumes? The answer might depend on not only the level of sexuality, but also to what extent the *Maschinenmensch* has
a human and subsequently sexual desire therein. It is worth noting that, circa female and intersex humans, one may not seem to contemplate the possibility

[...] the clitoris became automatically physiologically desensitized [by the creation of the robot]. [...] [I]f all sexual interest remained focused on it, then the vagina was likely to remain anesthetic and the ‘clitoridal’ [Maschinenmensch] would have no wish for penile penetration.” (Mitchell 106)

Sexual repression hypothetically, in this sense as sustained by both the Maschinenmensch as well as her creator, becomes agential by both parties and, astonishingly, the human and the machine then become metaphorically indistinguishable. To reiterate, “The age of media [itself],” as it truly dawned amidst the Civil War, “renders indistinguishable what is human and what is machine, who is mad and who is faking it” (Kittler 146), which proves central toward the previous constructions of this Maschinenmensch as sexually agential as well as the film Metropolis’s conceptual agreement with media as the precursor of posthumanist ideals.

Within the same tenor, Michel Foucault sets up his theory on sexual repression as active in heterosexual formation as well as theorems on changing ideas as to the nature of sexual function commodity as distant historically. The flux of sexuality gives the nature of ontology and epistemology as linked not just by thought and sexuality, respectively, but the agency of hypothetical sexual acts in futuristic terms in regards to the film Metropolis as scientifically forthcoming. In this very way, the film here sets forth sexuality, at least in terms of a “robotic gaze,” as one positive opportunity for futuristic society bent on preserving sexual agency for a host of indeterminable purposes. However, body of this robot has its ultimate agency in her ability to develop and control her sexual nature, even if sexual desire or acts never comes to pass, and especially by the inconclusive wish for penile
penetration, while perhaps a possibility, becomes a moot point in the development of the *Maschinenmensch* as an embodied “character” wherewithal.

In applying theory of the human body to the *Maschinenmensch*, Judith Butler describes how the body is an epistemological force worth reckoning with by its abilities for manifesting itself with powerful meaning and consequent significance (gender, race, class, age, etc.). Without the same human nature of sexuality yet still possessing the ability to accrue sexual agency, I argue the *Maschinenmensch* in the film *Metropolis*, while illustrating the needs of vibrant materialism, is still responsible for the creation of a sort of rigid “force field” of heterosexuality between the robot and its gazers during several instances and in various norms and forms. As Judith Butler famously argues, “Heterosexual genders form themselves through the renunciation of the possibility of homosexuality, as a foreclosure *which produces a field of heterosexual objects* at the same time as it produces a domain of those whom it would be impossible to love” (*Bodies That Matter*, emphasis mine). The social meaning of the constitutive gaze is accrued solely in this case by the robot, and the possibility for sexual interactions becomes indeterminable albeit astounding possibility for the *Maschinenmensch* manifesting within the compulsory heterosexuality it recapitulates.

After a theatrical performance for an audience of workers as well as a kiss shared between Freder and Maria during which Freder declares his love for her, it is then where Maria, free duplicitously after her powering of the *Maschinenmensch*, voyages into the catacombs, where Rotwang chases Maria throughout the mazelike underground arena and conceivably (though not materialized cinematically) kidnaps her for her steeped consolidation into robotic form. Aghast in horror and continually surprised in uncanny abjection, Maria lets out performative screams during her troubling as nonconsensual
pursuit by Rotwang. The abyss of Maria’s mouth, repeatedly left wide open amidst washes of flustered speech, results in perpetual fear-inducing gestures to the audience, conceivably surprised by the sudden, second violence in the film. As Freudian psychoanalysis and performance theory would have it uncannily, “No abyss is as familiar as one’s mouth; the unheimlich mouth” (Migone 67) in its agency to become the recursive agent of embodied fearfulness (in this scene, Maria’s mouth) decidedly equal with the fear induced by the ontological significance unto her perceived character thus far. The scream is the proper manifestation of something threefold theatrically, as well, “[a]rticulation, disarticulation and inarticulation” (ibid) within the duplicity of the bodily loss of agency by mouthed movements and the entirely diminished perceptibility of language communication by the scream purposefully in-for-itself.

The agency of unsoundness within the silence of the film generally speaking, however, comes to the forthright whereupon Maria’s impending captivity more so than her cyborg embodiment. Maria’s scream vis-à-vis silence agencies as productively transgressing, or counter-appropriative, if you like, complements Edouard Glissant’s intrepid acknowledgement: “From the steady localized scream, unfurls an arid, difficult speech. Tune your voice to a world time. Exit from the skin of your scream. Enter the world’s skin through pores” (Migone 119). As the film Metropolis sought to extrapolate the truest difficulty of speech, in this very way, it also elucidated its inherent voids, the said silences and the compelling apparatus of silence activity in conjunction with this scream of such porous vulnerability.
Even so, silence in the manner of harmfulness enacted does not imply a lack of procedural violence yet to occur but is in fact is one moment of violence itself since “the silence [in the film Metropolis] materializes as a silencing, which is to say there is no peace here, it performs a constant muzzling” (Migone 11). The tragedy of the scene means the scream functions, in large part, as the removal of the agency of silence accrued by Maria while at the same time leaving viewers recapitulating the silence of the scene as part of its inherent violence, purely if not merely. Alongside both Maria's voided scream and the implicitness of even more future violent action, respectively, the film determines much of the violence perceived by its audiences in ways not dreamed of before in cinema, which is its goal in Modernist empowerment. And after all:

>[f]or while the subject matter of literature may often fixate on 'idyllic' communication ‘which unites two partners sheltered from any ‘noise’ (in the cybernetic sense of the word),’ the [silence] itself must function ‘like a telephone network gone haywire, the lines are simultaneously twisted and routed according to a whole new system of splicings, of which the [film viewer] is the ultimate beneficiary.” (Goble 13)

As the film ends its “first Prelude” with both Rotwang and Maria gazing at one another, Maria’s bodily loss of function in addition to her loss of “speaking function” conceives a disturbing score of silence as violence at the scene’s end, where Maria’s “body is alternately sustained and threatened through modes of address” (Butler, Excitable Speech 5). To repeat my point differently by way of Foucaultian knowledge archaeology, Director Fritz Lang is “correct in framing noise” as well as Maria’s performative threefold of screaming, speaking and silence as overtly “transgressed upon” insofar language mechanistic wonder (Migone 6) as much as it is paradoxically a transgressive agent with, and even against, the silence of the film Metropolis inceptively. Silence, as mentioned, functions as a muzzling force in theatrical form; thus, the muzzling silence, in this very way, becomes part of the film’s
explicit characterization of Rotwang in which he performs a violence-coded “silence” as ideological perpetration against Maria’s past screams as then are extrapolated likewise.

The film Metropolis leaves viewers in the scenario’s ignorance to how factual Maria’s kidnapping becomes enacted, the scene ending with Maria’s frozen disposition to Rotwang’scornering of Maria, both in silence with and against one another, without the portrayal of the kidnapping itself. As Eve Sedgwick would have it, “[...] the fact that silence is rendered as pointed and performative as speech, in relations around the closet[ed film], depends on highlights more broadly the fact that ignorance is as potent and as multiple a thing there is as knowledge” (Epistemology of the Closet 4). Broadly speaking, the scream as repeatedly enacted consequent to the complicit ignorance by the audience of this situation becomes, in its corpus of knowledge, immensely productive for the film Metropolis as it questions audience accountability by signifying not just the violence of captivity but also the silence accrual and enactment of their own doing, respectively.

If we are to negotiate silence as spoken violence in-for-itself, we would then recall Judith Butler in saying “[t]o be injured by [silence] is to suffer a loss of context, that is, to not know where you are” (Excitable Speech 4). The fact silence implies violence by language of body and body rhetoric summons the notion of Maria’s unknowing foray through the catacombs, wholly unaware of where she is except in diametric coordination to Rotwang’s perusal of her. Butler asserts, “Indeed, it may be that what is unanticipated about the injurious [silence] is what constitutes its injury, the sense of putting its addressee out of control” (ibid). In addition to the fearfulness of Maria’s captivity unrealized cinematically, this notion may mean that the power of injurious silence comes from its ability to surprise
the addressee, thereby disrupting their (in this case, Maria's) sense of safety within the moment of these silences.

Unlike film depictions of hate speech, we do not have the specific language necessary at times for discussing linguistic injury, especially when considering the silence of linguistics generally in the film *Metropolis* and particularly the linguistic violence of silence comparable to speech acts. It is, however, in this threefold manner of silence, speech and the scream that Maria is now “engaged with the power grid, an agent in conflict” with, most notably, the screams’ and even the silences’ “abilit[ies] to make people Forget, make them Believe, Silence them” (Migone 6). The horror of the scene would be insubstantial if not merely incomplete (to make paraphrase of Sedgwick) without due regard to Fritz Lang's perception of audience realization of the transgression: the denotative power of a said silence negating the prescient performance of screaming. In many ways, the catacomb chase scene by Rotwang of Maria summons to mind Friedrich Nietzsche’s “[wo]man of *ressentiment*” whose (as in, Maria’s)

soul squints; [her] spirit loves hiding places, secret paths and back doors, everything covert entices [her] as [her] world, [her] security, [her] refreshment; [she] understands how to keep silent, how not to forget, how to wait, how to provisionally self-deprecating and humble. A race of [people] of *ressentiment* is bound to become eventually cleverer than any noble race. (38, emphasis mine)

**CONCLUSION**

Maria's eventual capture is also implied at the same time Maria’s scream vacates the scenario, the calmness of her realized capture in itself serves as a disturbing reminder of Maria’s understanding of how accrued, said silence betrays gender performance up to this point in cinema’s history. Rotwang's purpose in rebirthing Hel by way of Maria into robotic form remains a becoming “eventually cleverer than any noble race” in terms of posthuman
and gendered agency, both the marriageable posthuman and the eugenic engendering of the *Maschinenmensch* combined. The queering of the film *Metropolis* in assimilating the epistemology with body rhetoric gives disciplinary functioning for the closet of the robot, both in Michel Foucault's "corpus of knowledge" theories as proposed in The Vintage Collection of his primary works and the eugenic beautification of posthuman bodies by machinery, by humans.

Conclusively, the film *Metropolis* displays “[silence is] a solvent which destroys personality and gives us leave to be great and universal, [echoing] Barbara Browning’s description of an anonymous silence, one that also wishes to remain *unwritten* and *unrecorded*” (Migone 20). The unwritten and unrecorded dynamics of mediating film seem to point toward a greater epistemology left unspoken albeit understood moreover by the ontological manipulation of optics in technology (as Friedrich Kittler would posit), in a conveying of productive despair conjuring insurmountable performance caliber, implied whilst achieved in dystopian productivity. It can be determined that the film *Metropolis* as landmark science fiction and overall film serves as a fundamental use of modality in entirety, coordinating presumptive facets of humanness and its frailty in prophecy toward the ultimatum of posthuman qualities becoming always already the more poetically as rhetorically in vogue for moviemaking and what could ever possibly remain beyond it.
LIST OF REFERENCES


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