

to expect of Israeli cinema, it delves deeper. In a way *Rabies* can be interpreted as an original statement about the violence inherent in Israeli society, without the usual didactic tone of most Israeli films. It's hard to miss the symbolism in an Israeli film about a killer who fails because his victims are constantly at each other's throats: and just in case you did miss it, the final shot of the film shows the killer failing to catch a ride and badmouthing Israel as 'a country of assholes'.

In a way the filmmakers point to the fact that when you are in a violent country in which death and destruction are constantly on the news, psycho killers are irrelevant and unnecessary. The victims are also the killers, and vice versa. The film offers a grim prophecy as well. Israel's preoccupation with outside threats (the killer) blinds it to the real threat – its own violent nature. When looking at the film from this perspective its title becomes clearer: the origin of the word rabies is madness. Actually the directors have a lot to say about Israeli society, and especially about what it's like to be a filmmaker in such a country. One might even say the killer's position in the film resembles that of a horror filmmaker. How can you make a horror film in a place in which life itself is, in a way, a horror film?

In trying to create the first Israeli horror film, Keshales and Papushado discovered that although they cannot ignore their surroundings and make a film unaffected by its Israeli origin, they can make a film that obliquely has something to say about this context and that is something unique in Israeli cinema – fun.



***Metropolis* (Fritz Lang Germany 1927) – multiple editions**

Metropolis – the 2001 restoration. Published on PAL region 2 DVD by Eureka Video (Europe, Jan 2003), £19.99, and NTSC region 1 by Kino Video (US, Feb 2003), US\$29.99, catalogue number K275. Both editions are now out of print, but at the time of writing remaindered stock of the Eureka version was available on www.amazon.co.uk.

Metropolis: DVD-Studienfassung. Published by the Universität der Künste, Berlin in 2005. In German only, and not for sale to the general public, but offered free to educational institutions. To order, see www.filmhistoriker.de/magazine/metropolis_study_dvd.htm.

Metropolis – the 2010 restoration. Published on BD region B and PAL region 2 DVD by Eureka Video (Europe, Sep 2010), £19.99 (DVD) and £29.99 (BD); and

BD region A and NTSC region 1 DVD by Kino Lorber Home Video (US, Nov 2010), US\$29.95 (DVD) and US\$39.95 (BD).

Giorgio Moroder Presents Metropolis. Published by Kino Lorber Home Video in 2011, publisher's catalogue number K833 (BD). US\$29.95 (DVD region 1) and US\$34.95 (BD region A).

Leo Enticknap

Metropolis is possibly the most heavily restored and studied narrative feature film in existence. Its canonical status derives from a convergence of a number of factors which, together, encapsulate and crystallise the themes, issues and approaches that developed as the formal study of cinema emerged in the late twentieth century. These are, in brief:

1. The film is probably the most widely known example of what has gone down in the history books as a cultural golden age of German cinema – the Weimar or ‘expressionist’ period in the 1920s – and one of the few to have been distributed widely outside Germany, including the United States. It has been seen both as an industrial and technological triumph (the Schüfftan effect and so on), and as a complex aesthetic symbol of the modernist age and all that follows. Siegfried Kracauer characterised *Metropolis* as a film in which ‘Souls were manipulated [both visually and in terms of a psychological metaphor] so as to create the impression that millions of feet were marching over city streets and along highways’ (272).
2. *Metropolis* is considered one of the defining statements of the personal vision of its director. Fritz Lang was one of the first filmmakers to have been promoted actively as a cultural icon in his own right. The consistency of the themes and issues explored in both his German and Hollywood films (fate, the motivation of criminals, the dehumanising influence of communications technologies and so on) was identified by the *Cahiers du Cinéma* critics in the 1950s and many that followed, resulting in the celebration of Lang as the classic example of an *auteur* – the creative genius who triumphs over the capitalist philistinism of the Western film industry.
3. *Metropolis* is considered one of the cornerstones of dystopian sf, and one of the pivotal bodies of twentieth-century fiction comprising a broad sweep from E.M. Forster’s *The Machine Stops* (1909) to *The Terminator* (Cameron US/UK 1984).
4. *Metropolis* has gone through multiple editions and restorations, culminating in the dramatic rediscovery of missing footage in a museum in Argentina in 2008. As is dramatically and lucidly discussed in

the excellent feature-length documentary *Die Reise nach Metropolis*, included as an extra on the BD of the most recent restoration (and which justifies the purchase price alone), this created a classic 'lost film' legend, encompassing cuts made almost immediately after the premiere, the camera negative being confiscated by the Soviets at the end of the Second World War and subsequently repatriated to Germany, the intensely controversial Giorgio Moroder restoration of 1984, the use of digital technology to facelift the movie for the first time in 2001, and finally the discovery in Buenos Aires. Combined with the cultural kudos of its director and the spin of restoring the personal vision of an individual genius deriving therefrom, the ongoing restoration saga has ensured that *Metropolis* has remained in the public eye.

The film's tortuous archival history presents scholars and students both with a big problem and an equally big opportunity. The problem is that the film's canonical status has conditioned the viewer to evaluate authenticity by the exclusive criterion of a given version's perceived accuracy in representing Lang's personal vision: in other words, how close is it to the version that premiered in Berlin on 10 January 1927? The elevation of Lang to the cultural pedestal he now occupies, through monographs such as those by Lotte H. Eisner, Patrick McGilligan and Tom Gunning to name but three, has tended to obscure the opportunity. This is that by attempting to cast off that cultural baggage and approaching what one might call the intermediate restorations (i.e. those done before the Argentina discovery, if we accept that this will probably be the last one and that there will be no further discoveries that cause *Metropolis* to be made over again) from an historical perspective we can potentially reveal some useful perspectives on a number of issues, such as how the film's cultural status has evolved over the 86 years of its existence and why it is that archives devote such a disproportionate amount of their time and money to restoring, repeatedly, the same small canon of iconic productions. As Leonard J. Leff noted in reviewing a restoration of *A Streetcar Named Desire*, 'multiple editions destabilise texts' (36). The restoration history of *Metropolis* demonstrates that not only do they destabilise them, they also tend to skew them in a specific direction, in this case one informed by authorial personal vision.

The existence of four home video versions of *Metropolis* produced during the first decade of the twenty-first century (although it should be noted that several other restoration projects took place, separate from Moroder's, during the second half of the twentieth century, which are discussed in *Die Reise nach Metropolis* and in Franziska Latell and Werner Sudendorf's book produced to mark the release of the 2010 restoration) provides us with a valuable

opportunity to put the destabilisation thesis to the test. The first is of the 2001 edition, created by Martin Koerber and Enno Patalas of the Münchener Filmmuseum, drawing heavily on work done by Patalas in the 1980s following the repatriation of the camera negatives from the Soviets.

This edition incorporates a mixture of the incomplete surviving camera negative and a variety of other elements to fill in as many gaps as possible, post-processed using digital image manipulation technology to give the end result a consistent aesthetic. In 2005, the Universität der Künste (University of the Arts) in Berlin published a *Studienfassung* (study edition) DVD, in which the timeline navigation features of the DVD format were used to create an interactive version based on the 2001 edition, substituting text and still images, based on surviving documentary evidence, to indicate where the shots that were still missing would have been.¹ In 2008 came the dramatic rediscovery of a 16mm dupe negative at the Museo del Cine in Buenos Aires (following a more minor footage discovery in New Zealand in 2005), containing approximately 30 minutes of shots that were not extant and which it is believed had not previously been screened since the Berlin Premiere.² This resulted in a new project undertaken by Koerber, Anke Wilkening and Frank Strobel, the results of which were first shown in 2010, and published on DVD and BD in 2011.

Before the 2001 and 2010 versions, the most widely known edition of *Metropolis* was the one produced by the pop impresario Giorgio Moroder in 1984. The Moroder *Metropolis* has become a cornerstone and highly controversial case study in the ethics of film restoration – specifically the defining example of how not to do it (see, for example, Cieutat). It has been almost universally condemned by archivists who have judged it to be an emphatic rejection of the principles articulated in the codes of ethics of the profession's two major representative bodies, the International Federation of Film Archives (FIAF) and the Association of Moving Image Archivists (AMIA), and in Ray Edmondson's *Audiovisual Archiving: Philosophy and Principles*, the only monograph-length work on archiving ethics: namely that the object of restoration should be to recreate the form of a film, the authenticity of which can be proven by objective evidence. The Moroder *Metropolis* fails this test on almost every imaginable criterion. The use of a soundtrack consisting of performances by 1980s rock stars clearly does not represent the film as it

1. Perhaps the most remarkable aspect of the *Studienfassung* is how accurate the research that went into it turned out to be following the discovery in Buenos Aires: the missing shots indicated in the *Studienfassung*'s interactive reconstruction correspond to the Argentine material almost precisely.

2. For a complete account of the rediscovery, see the special supplement magazine produced by *Die Zeit* (2 July 2008).

was initially produced and distributed. Furthermore, due to a combination of missing footage and the replacement of most of the original German intertitles with subtitles translated into idiomatic American English superimposed on the action itself, its running time is a little over half that of the Berlin premiere.

It is therefore pointless to judge the Moroder *Metropolis* purely as a case study in restoration ethics, not least because it was not carried out with that primary objective. As Moroder cryptically pointed out, alluding to the film's tortuous release and re-editing history, 'I didn't touch the original because there is no original' (qtd Insdorf 15). Rather, his aim was to re-imagine the film in a way that would appeal to a 1980s mainstream audience, or, in the words of Giorgio Bertellini, 'he discovered an object from the past and reshelved it into his own cultural library, according to personal visionary capabilities, yet toward a different understanding and appreciation of Lang's text(s)' (143).

Whether you take the line that Moroder's *Metropolis* is an act of archival vandalism, a valid cultural statement, comparable to, say, the adaptation of a Shakespeare play in contemporary setting, such as Baz Luhrmann's *Romeo + Juliet* (US 1996), or somewhere in-between, its availability on Kino's recently published BD is to be welcomed. The transfer and encoding on the disc is of the highest quality realistically possible from what is a significantly compromised source, relative to the 2001 and 2010 editions, which were based primarily on the camera negative. In Moroder's version, a lot of the source footage was multiple generation elements, including release prints, resulting in the significant loss of definition, gamma and contrast, especially in the mid-tones. In the iconic model shot of the city centre at 12'40", for example, much of the detail in the central building has been lost in successive generations of photochemical duplication (see left-hand cover illustration). Now compare this to the same shot (and as close as I can get to the same frame) in the Eureka BD of the 2010 restoration (right-hand cover illustration), particularly the grainier image in the Moroder version and the restored mid-tone detail that had been retrieved by going back to the camera negative in the 2010 restoration.

Nevertheless, the bitrate (of the Kino/Moroder version) remains consistently high throughout the running time of the main feature, rarely dropping below 25mbps, resulting in as faithful as is possible (through the BD medium) representation of what the 1984 audience would have seen. Moroder's soundtrack is offered both in the original 2.0 mix and in a DTS-HD 5.1 remix which, while fundamentally inauthentic to the 1984 presentation, is arguably in keeping with Moroder's vision for the project. The disc also includes a 20-minute promotional film, *The Fading Image*, made by Moroder in 1984 as a publicity vehicle, in which he seeks to justify some of the more controversial decisions

for which his version of *Metropolis* has become synonymous. That and the trailer are the only substantive extras.

The 2001, 2010 and *Studienfassung* editions take a more scholarly, and some would say conventional approach. Koerber's use of digital restoration tools was focused on recreating the aesthetic properties of surviving release prints wherever possible, while at the same time creating a consistent look (e.g. matching the contrast and density) across the footage deriving from disparate sources as a whole. The extras included on these discs are more generous than those offered by Kino, including *Die Reise nach Metropolis* in the 2010 DVD/BD, and a video in which Koerber demonstrates the digital restoration tools used in the 2001 edition. The original score by Gottfried Huppertz, commissioned for the premiere, is included in full orchestral versions on the 2002 and 2010 discs with both 2.0 and 5.1 options (including lossless DTS-HD in the case of the 2010 BD version), and as a piano arrangement on the *Studienfassung*. My only criticism of any of these discs would be that the 2002 Eureka disc (of the 2001 edition) has the intertitles translated into English, whereas the 2010 disc keeps the original German intertitles with a subtitle translation that can be switched on or off as desired. Viewers who can read German are thus denied access to the original text on the 2002 disc.

As the archetypal masterpiece of a megalomaniac filmmaker, a series of iconic images symbolising the drawbacks of science and the defining case study of lost film rediscovery mythology, *Metropolis* is likely to remain a heavily taught and studied film for the foreseeable future. The existence of four versions from pivotal moments in its archival history, all of them on high quality and thoughtfully produced home-video versions, collectively provide a valuable resource to explore, critically, these issues with students and with researchers. Taken together, they make a powerful addition to any private collection or institutional library.

Please note: the reviews of the 2010 and Moroder versions are based on a viewing of the BD editions, not the DVDs, and the frame grabs are also from the BD editions. There have been other DVD publications of the 2010 restoration in some European countries (e.g. Warner Bros in Germany), but the Eureka edition, being encoded for region 2/B, will play anywhere in Europe and is in the opinion of this author the highest-quality version in print.

Works cited

- Bertellini, Giorgio. 'Restoration, Genealogy and Palimpsests'. *Fritz Lang's Metropolis: Cinematic Visions of Technology and Fear*. Ed. Michael Minden and Holger Bachmann. Rochester: Camden House, 2000. 140–57.
- Cieutat, Brigitte. 'Fritz Lang Morodernisé'. *Positif* 285 (Nov 1984): 12–14.
- Edmondson, Ray. *Audiovisual Archiving: Philosophy and Principles*. Paris: UNESCO, 2004.
- Eisner, Lotte H. *Fritz Lang*. Trans. Gertrud Mander. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1977.
- Gunning, Tom. *The Films of Fritz Lang: Allegories of Vision and Modernity*. London: BFI, 2000.
- Insdorf, Annette. 'A Silent Classic Gets some '80s Music'. *The New York Times* (6 Aug 1984): section 2:15.
- Kracauer, Siegfried. *From Caligari to Hitler: A Psychological History of the German Film*. Princeton: Princeton UP, 1947.
- Latell, Franziska, and Werner Sudendorf (eds). *Fritz Langs Metropolis*. München: Belleville Verlag, 2010.
- Leff, Leonard J. 'And Transfer to Cemetery: The Streetcars Named Desire'. *Film Quarterly* 55.3 (Spring 2002): 29–37.
- McGilligan, Patrick. *Fritz Lang: The Nature of the Beast, A Biography*. New York: St Martin's, 1997.