

Pumping Up Masculinity: The Initial Intervention and Lasting Legacy of Hans and Franz

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IN 1988, WHEN ARNOLD SCHWARZENEGGER STEPPED ONTO THE STAGE of *Saturday Night Live*, appearing with the characters of Hans and Franz, he brought a sense of reality and significance to the set. The normally absent butt of Kevin Nealon and Dana Carvey's ongoing joke of ranting Teutonic bodybuilders was present and the work of mocking became especially potent. How Arnold was able to serve as the catalyst for such a series of skits had everything do with his imposing embodiment of several cultural images. As he brought a history of conceptions concerning Germanic masculinity together with a new admiration for bodybuilding, his iconic image in Hollywood films manufactured an international model for men to emulate. Nealon and Carvey were then able to mock the emerging chauvinistic ideal of big man masculinity through ironic performance in their sketch comedy.

Hans and Franz first appeared on the night of October 17, 1987. This was the Season 13 premiere of *SNL* and Hans and Franz debuted by introducing themselves as fitness trainers and explicitly stating their association with "their cousin Arnold." Between outrageous insults (directed at the audience's physical inferiority) and gratuitous muscle flexing, Hans and Franz made it clear that their task was to "Arnoldize" the world and to "pump [us] up!" While Arnold is obviously the root of "Pumping Up with Hans and Franz," closer analysis uncovers a layered comic effect in these skits produced within a significant cultural moment. By recognizing a constellation of the

history of bodybuilding and masculinity from Europe to America and situating Hans and Franz as response and outgrowth from these several factors the comic intervention they posed into dominant ideals of men and bodies becomes much more meaningful.

In order to outline the significance of the pumping-up effect, the Hans and Franz skits will be illuminated by maintaining Henri Bergson's theory of comedy as "social gesture." Indeed, this article argues that Hans and Franz are a neglected, yet revealing moment of comedic work that intervened in the dominant ideal of masculinity at the time by exposing the ridiculous foundation of such "big man masculinity." The hollow foundations of *mythologization* and *visual appeal* were effectively subverted through comic intervention, which packaged the critique for a wide audience and anticipated a significant shift in conceptions of masculinity. In order to delineate the comedy of Hans and Franz this article commences with a cursory and highly selective history of visual culture and bodybuilding from Eugene Sandow to Arnold Schwarzenegger, paying special attention to visual appeal and mythologization, which culminated in the late 1980s and provided the comic fodder for Hans and Franz. This historicization coupled with a close reading of several of the Hans and Franz skits will seek to answer the following questions: How did Hans and Franz function as popular comedy? Who or what was the intended butt of the joke? Lastly, it is important to question the current validity of this Hans and Franz moment of comedy that might seem to be merely disconnected pop history. To tease out answers to these questions and an understanding of the comedic work in Hans and Franz's padded outfits and ridiculous statements in thick Germanic accents we must first indulge in a historical gaze at the growth of big bodies and evolving images of tough men.

History: Image, Race and Spectacle

Eugene Sandow represents an important starting point and the beginning of bodybuilding in the modern sense. Sandow embodied the genesis of displaying the body and flexing for audience pleasure rather than performing any feats of strength or daredevil spectacles. Without this development neither Arnold Schwarzenegger nor Hans and Franz might ever have appeared as they did. Eugene Sandow was born

in Königsberg in 1867 and throughout the course of his stardom he, like Arnold, conquered the English speaking world as well as his native German realm with his sheer physicality. While Sandow himself traveled much in an effort to support his international fitness empire, it was quite literally the proliferating images of Sandow in magazines, newspapers, film, and posters that allowed for his success as an aesthetic body. The image(s) of bodybuilding has been the lifeblood of its perpetuation and international growth since the beginning and Sandow best represents this element. Americans saw Sandow's physical superiority in illustrated ads for products like malt extract in *Munsey's Magazine* (Chapman 134). Eventually, photography would lend an important veracity to this proliferation of images and bolster claims that Sandow had the most perfect body. These images of Sandow as the perfect model of masculinity were often tied to a mythological physique exhibited in Greek statues and aesthetics. Sandow was at once historic and modern. While the German-speaking public was reading about Sandow's perfect physique in *Sport und Kulturpflege* magazines, they were also made aware of his Teutonic origins and uncanny ability to make a fortune in the Anglophone world. Sandow managed substantial success in America and England by virtue of his "racial" roots and his ability to impose his "perfect" genetics on the world through visual culture.

Sandow himself stressed the perceived superiority of the German physical stock when he stated, "The best race, physically—and I speak now altogether apart from any bias in favor of my own country—is the German" (Chapman 208). Sandow's statements and idealization signal the beginning of the world of bodybuilding and a more physically constructed masculinity as display that was already tied to nationality. He provided the foundation for a conception of perfect masculinity that was a built body, which all other men should strive to emulate. Although Sandow's superior model of masculinity started small the sentiment remains today as the winner of the largest bodybuilding event, "Mr. Olympia," receives the "Sandow," a golden statuette trophy of the original perfect man himself.

While Sandow's life foreshadowed the eventual ubiquity of Arnold Schwarzenegger, the ideal male body was not always inherently perceived as a larger body. In Germany, for instance, *Körperkultur* stressed fitness and natural development of the body for aesthetic appeal that included function and regular application of strength.

Beyond mere appearance it was because of the mythic narratives attached to their names that statues of Hercules and Apollo embodied the turn-of-the-century German idealization of masculinity. However, their preserved and imagined proportions helped concretize conceptions of harmony and perfection according to gender (Hau 33). This evaluation of the male image was then cinematically refocused in the National Socialist era and superbly framed by Leni Riefenstahl. Riefenstahl's images of Greek statues coming to life in moving German bodies at the beginning of *Olympia I* (1938) formally integrated the fusion of temporalities in a common, and therefore universal, standard of masculinity. The perfect man was physically *fit* and therefore superior. His superiority came from discipline and exercise but also from his (constructed) Aryan roots. This "genetic" bond with the past tied the Germanic masculinity to a mythic history concerning manhood, from Greek mythology to the *Nibelungen* legends to modern Olympic display.

It is for this very reason that Zische Breitbart, a Jewish strongman from a Polish Shtetl was an inspiring and allegorical figure for Werner Herzog to treat. In *Invincible* (2001), Herzog provides his version of the true story of Zische Breitbart, who was taken to Berlin to perform as a strongman on the popular vaudeville stages. In the film, Zische must first be "Aryanized" by his employers and (re)named "Siegfried" (the hero of the *Nibelungenlied*) before he can make his appearance and delight the crowds with his physical superiority. Eventually Zische as Siegfried feels compelled to shed his costume and moniker. To the excited audience chanting his Aryan pseudonym, Zische declares, "I'm not Aryan. I am not a Germanic hero." He then relieves himself of the blond wig and Teutonic helmet of horns. After de-costuming himself and revealing his Jewish identity the predominantly Nazi crowd yells out in protest. The next night Zische returns to the stage and attempts to break the world record of weight lifted. Following such comments from the attendees as: "it is unthinkable that a Jew has such strength," Zische is hit with a projectile flung from the hostile crowd, causing him to drop the weighted bar. After successfully stymieing Zische's effort to become the world's *de facto* strongest man, a fistfight ensues between the Nazis and Jews in the audience.

This struggle is a Herzogian choreography that encapsulates an important tradition of masculinity. Here we see bodies fighting over

who and what is ideally masculine and linking this conception to strength and “race.” This scene might serve to stage the discursive practice of hegemonic notions of masculinity and the “fight” over the control of its interpretation and image. While, for the past 100 years, much of bodybuilding and masculinity has been extremely wrapped up in visual culture, upon which this article focuses, it is important to acknowledge the writing that contributed to the categorization and construction of what it means and meant to be a man. This corpus of discursive work accompanies every attempt at stating what the male body should be and was not initially concerned with bodybuilding. In Germany, the work of Ernst Jünger, Artur Dinter, and Hans Blüher, to name but a few, presented early twentieth-century writing that attributed an idealized conception of man to race, nationalism, and militarism; acts rather than mere bodily image. Sander Gilman appropriately revealed Franz Kafka’s own ambiguity concerning not only his Jewish body but his masculinity in relation to Hans Blüher’s theses of men, homoeroticism, and societal structures. It was Kafka’s confidant Max Brod, however, who wrote to Kafka that he had found in Blüher’s work the “description of the *German* man as the essential man” (Gilman 179). Others have treated a vast array of sources for the construction of such an essentialist masculinity in Germany, which has been read as the breeding ground for an aggressive and proto-fascist worldview (Theweleit). For Germany, masculinity reached an apogee of celebration and articulation with the Nazi era, where it was most explicitly tied to racial myth. Immediately following the collapse of the Third Reich both a reevaluation and crisis imposed themselves upon the consensus of Germanic masculinity. Notions of hard/soft masculinity were necessarily renegotiated when hardened soldiers returned as taboo models (Jeffords, *Remasculinization* 168). Despite a great deal of fear and criticism concerning their potentially negative effect, American cinematic models of masculinity were disseminated throughout West Germany after the downfall of Nazi control over the media. The result was an increasingly similar social navigation of masculinity with that of Americans, which Uta Poiger has linked with intensifying notions of a capitalist male who was “aggressive but not too aggressive” (162). The influx of international images demanded attention and offered examples of what it meant to be male for German audiences, who were dealing with a recent past and searching for a possible future.

Many of these images from across the Atlantic presented American visions of male bodies and their physical prowess. Bodybuilding, however, remained a small subculture that offered provocative images of larger-than-life men who could control their bodies and others' around them with brute force. Throughout the mid-twentieth-century, for example, advertisements for Charles Atlas' fitness routine were found on the back of pulp novels and comic books (Krannenberg). These ads combined the form of comic books to appeal to young males with the business model of Sandow. The ads were short cartoon strips that exhibited a big built body as masculine and powerful. After being picked on or nearly losing his girlfriend the protagonist would quickly order Atlas's fitness routine package and in no time at all he would revisit the same scene, approach the same bully, and literally punch him out to the delight of his female escort and all the beautiful witnesses. This aggressive presentation of bodybuilding as the masculinity that every young man should desire was cleverly rendered as an obtainable fantasy through the mixture of image and text. The sequential-art form reflected the comic book the reader had just finished, usually of unbelievable superheroes who became such through birth or freak accidents. The Atlas comic on the back of the book offered the hope of attaining the ideal of power and size through a body that could be *built* by making a real life order that was "proven" to work. The male fantasy was tied to a constructed reality that masked the *construction* of masculinity at the entire core of Atlas's marketing success.

Images of Charles Atlas in pulp novels and comic books spread throughout America but it wasn't until the screening of international films with Steve Reeves and Reg Park that corporeal construction and the bodybuilding image would popularly invite emulation of new sizable bodies on an unprecedented scale. Even young boys, with the proper mythic genetic make-up, like Arnold Schwarzenegger in Austria, would have the chance to feast their eyes on the constructed bodies of a Hollywood version of Hercules in Steve Reeves and an Italian version in Reg Park, inflated and enlarged on the silver screen (Andrews 20). These new and international portrayals of Hercules in the late 1950s and early 1960s began to combine American and European bodybuilding. The films' wide reception and influence were likely part of the spark that led Herzog to direct his first film in 1962, which he titled *Hercules*.

Ironizing the Modern Hercules

In this short film Herzog examines masculinity in the modern era by focusing on the weight room. Here the treatment of a visually spectacular brand of masculinity is rendered with fantastic irony and telling intercuts. This text is an important example of mocking masculinity that pre-dates Hans and Franz and accomplishes its work from Germany and in quite a different style. In his directorial debut Herzog deconstructs the anachronistic notion of coupling the modern bodybuilder with the mythological figure of Hercules. The modern Hercules is referenced through subtitles that appear on screen and ask the viewer questions concerning Hercules's efficacy and manhood in the modern era. While playing with the visual images of bodybuilding and myths of masculinity Herzog essentially disassembles Riefenstahl's former fusion.

The first question that appears on screen and brings the mythological tone to the fore (aside from the apparent staging of Narcissus as the man watches himself weightlifting in the mirror) is "wird er den Augiasstall säubern?" Whether he will clean the Augean stable as textual overlay is followed by a cut to footage of an immense trash heap. This juxtaposition ironically reveals a muscular man in the modern age, who is impotent in his efforts to clean up disasters and also implicated in *producing* such monstrous piles of garbage and excess. The modern Hercules is further dismantled through questions and intercuts that display more than just trash. A scene of race cars that have gone out of control and slaughtered several spectators brings the irony to a climax and the catastrophic footage seems out of place next to the calm, rhythmic, and mechanical movements of the man working out to smooth jazz in a gym surrounded by posters and mirrors. These mirrors reflect the bodybuilder's image and cast it against the backdrop of the enlarged poster behind him. However, the mirrors do not seem to reflect meaning as well as Herzog's strategically placed intercuts. The intercuts are composed of real documentary footage that subverts the constructed reality in the gym and makes the superficial enterprise seem exceedingly trite. The film shifts back and forth between realities, a rhythmic idealized one of bodybuilding heroes and another of real-life catastrophes.

Herzog, who himself is drawn to larger-than-life heroes, mocked the masculinity found in the subculture of bodybuilding by coupling it explicitly with the reverence and awe awarded the mythological figure of Hercules. This filmic rendition of the modern day bodybuilder treats both essential aspects of masculinity by deflating the visual appeal of bodybuilding and mocking the mythologization of masculinity itself by harking back to Greek mythology. The bodies Herzog has literally singled out on screen are wholesale constructions for visual pleasure and useless in everyday reality. The ever-present aspect of bodybuilding that links image with pleasure is important precisely because the notion of being a man is intertwined with viewing, comparing, and admiring other men's bodies. Herzog's last and perhaps most unusual shot is a close-up of a bodybuilder's buttocks as he walks offstage, ending the short film with a telling homoerotic gaze.

Mainstreaming Arnold

The homoerotic element in bodybuilding was one of the many obstacles that Arnold Schwarzenegger faced as he made his entrance into the culture of bodybuilding in Venice Beach, California. From here Arnold would become the most important figure for bringing bodybuilding to the mainstream and expelling any "homo" ambiguity associated with his life's focus. His success in ridding bodybuilding of its "queer" elements and formulating it as a practice that produced ideal masculine bodies was largely due to Arnold's presence in American film. It was the documentary, *Pumping Iron* (1977), which spread the "Austrian Oak's" physical perfection like wildfire and foreshadowed Arnold's entrance into the mainstream consciousness of America. Although Arnold had been in a couple prior films, like *Hercules in New York* (1970), where his voice was dubbed over, it was only after the reception of *Pumping Iron* that Arnold would be invited to the iconic status of Alpha male in the action films of the 1980s. For Arnold to negotiate this transition he had to carefully unpack the history outlined above. He had to represent his body, Austrian roots, and bodybuilding in general as ideal.

Arnold's body, as a much larger model of masculinity, had to become accepted and desired by audiences. The constructed body

would need to be idealized and many of Arnold's filmic roles served to do just this. Like the protagonist in Atlas cartoons, his power was linked to the imposition of his body on any number of opponents. It seemed that only a true man, with a body like Arnold, could overcome such cinematic obstacles. But was the entire world really expected to become like Arnold—as big, as muscular? This question brings Arnold's otherworldliness into play. Being Austrian, Arnold was able to navigate between his Germanic origin and American dominance. He transcended mere assimilation by using his otherness to his advantage. Unlike Zische Breitbart, he was truly a Siegfried character with Germanic roots. His accent became the perfect accomplice to his body, flaunting, performing, and shaping conceptions of Germanic masculinity to the world. It was as if his perfection was possible through his genetics, yet bolstered by American super-sizing.

Along with his “perfect body,” Arnold's personal charismatic decisions and professional performance enabled him to become “the man” of the 1980s. He had to clean up bodybuilding and present its image as healthy, masculine, and positive. Arnold's marketing of bodybuilding resembled his more recent marketing, as Governor of California, of environmentally friendly cars. When discussing his approach to green cars the former Governor explained how hydrogen BMWs had been offered to celebrities and people with “high visibility” so that, “when those people drive around it again sells the idea that it is cool to drive a hydrogen car. But that doesn't mean that you should take this big car and make it smaller. Instead we should be saying: Keep the luxury car!” (*Spiegel* March 12, 2007). Arnold was just as strategic and careful as ambassador of bodybuilding. He, along with others, participated in presenting bodybuilding to the public through an exhibition at the New York Whitney Museum of Modern Art. This exhibit, along with appearances from Arnold, Charles Gaines (writer), and George Butler (director) in a televised interview with Barbara Walters in 1974, helped to signify the collective acceptance of bodybuilding and its popular arrival through the sanitization and distribution of its image (Andrews 64).

A necessary aspect of bodybuilding's successful arrival was the heterosexual image that Arnold was able to convey. One publisher had refused to publish George Butler's book *Arnold Schwarzenegger: A Portrait*, referring to it as a book of “half-un clothed men of dubious

sexual pursuits,” which echoed others who saw it solely as “fag bait” (Blitz and Krasniewicz 146). Yet the film *Pumping Iron* worked against this social stigma. *Pumping Iron* highlighted comments made by Arnold about his girlfriend, shots of girls hanging all over his body at a photo-shoot, and Arnold’s unequivocal physical superiority over all other contenders to underscore “bodybuilding as an activity that builds real men” (Blitz and Krasniewicz 146). It is, however, this very effort of naturalizing bodybuilding’s appeal as heterosexual that invites its own inversion. As Mark Simpson put it, “While the efforts of Arnold and Co. have done much to convince the world that bodybuilding is impeccably heterosexual it cannot erase the fact that its use as a way of socializing young males into heterosexuality is *utterly predicated upon its homoerotic appeal*” (Simpson 29). The images of bodybuilding had to be translated into acceptable masculinizing instruction. They had to explicitly continue Atlas’s comics and teach males how to be heterosexual and “real men.” Yet even in 1977, the homoerotic elements of bodybuilding seem “like a spectre haunting the [entire] proceedings” of *Pumping Iron* and its pumped-up masculine rigidity (Simpson 29). In order to treat the appeal of bodybuilding the visual aspect of admiration and comparison must be foregrounded, which will always carry traces of such an inverted reading.

Recognizing and observing this tension in *Pumping Iron* would direct our gaze to several specific scenes. A telling sequence involves footage of posters and cut-outs of Arnold Schwarzenegger with a voiceover from a devoted fan explaining his fascination with viewing these images and how Arnold’s appearance motivated his own presence in the weight room. The following shot is no longer of mere photographs of the “Austrian Oak” but of Arnold himself as he delicately places his arms around a much smaller man, who seeks to emulate Arnold’s poses. Schwarzenegger instructs the man and makes small adjustments to his posing. After the man has provided commentary on the images of Arnold we see and hear Arnold’s commentary on the man’s posing. This scene invites an almost father/son or teacher/pupil connotation but it also contains an admired/admirer dynamic that is explicitly based on images and visual appeal. Another scene that captures the homoerotic element in *Pumping Iron* seems almost deliberately catered to this attraction in its viewers. A shower scene commences with a close-up of Arnold as the water runs off his face. We also see Arnold lathering his arms and then stopping to flex

for his shower partner who acknowledges the post-workout pump of Arnold's biceps. The admiration of the body is present as well as a fantasy-ridden view of "real men" in the shower together. As if to exclaim, "it is OK for men to shower together, love their bodies, and admire others' bodies without being gay," this scene harks back to Leni Riefenstahl's framing of men's bodies in *Olympia*. The opening scene of part II of *Olympia* shows nude men running, then swimming and showering together. The men wash, massage, and tease each other, although the viewer is quite aware that the teasing is, like in *Pumping Iron*, directed toward the audience. The spectacle of "clean, pure" manhood is framed on screen but is only made desirable through its homoerotic fetishization.

Arnold's body is clearly fetishized to a crowd of prisoners in *Pumping Iron* when a female inmate removes his shirt and Arnold kisses her then prepares to flex for the attentive convicts. Just before he can begin his posing routine a male attendee calls for a kiss from Arnold, which brings a halt to Arnold's flexing. Realizing this came from a man Arnold must resort to humor to deal with the now palpable homoerotic element of his "display." "I have heard about those guys in here . . . come over here and I will give you your kiss," says Arnold. While maintaining a light comical tone to the disruption, the homoerotic exposure of bodybuilding and Arnold's presentation do not vanish after the remark. Immediately following the laughter caused by this quick banter Arnold "gets serious" and resumes his flexing. He throws up his chiseled biceps to separate his masculine body from "those guys" he has "heard about." The scene ends with two African-American inmates vocally admiring Arnold's body, "He got a beautiful body, man . . . first time I ever seen somebody's arms 23 inches . . ." The other man responds, "He's a big dude, all the way big." This is the spectacle bodybuilding offers: a fetishization of the body through visual appeal and comparison. When this spectacle is proposed and pushed as an ideal masculinity or at least "more" masculine than a smaller body these measurements and comparisons become even more essential.

The admiring gaze returns us to Herzog's close-up of the bodybuilder's buttocks. Here, where further mocking and comic intervention into the discourse of big man masculinity will be treated, the butt will be foregrounded as an object of admiration and ironically as the developed, "built" muscle that is an index of homoeroticism and

an inversion of “manly masculinity.” Additionally, the question must continually be posed in these comic interventions: “*who* is the butt of the joke?” I will use Freud’s triangular model of joking with its butt, teller, and observer in an effort to elucidate the mocking (Freud 139). However, relying on Bergson’s articulation of laughter and the role of comedy in society as it pertains to the *Saturday Night Live* skits of “Pumping Up With Hans and Franz” is especially enlightening in an effort to describe Hans and Franz as a comic intervention into the history and contemporary era of big man masculinity.

“We Are Here to Pump You Up!”

The Hans and Franz skits began in 1987 to the delight of studio and home audiences, who immediately responded to the “in your face” muscular superiority that Kevin Nealon and Dana Carvey mocked through their ridiculous characters. The signs working on the stage of these skits enabled the audience’s understanding of the butt of the joke. While Hans and Franz are not Arnold Schwarzenegger directly, they did claim to be his cousins and to hail from Austria. This performed ethnic bond allowed them to mimic a distinct accent that coincided with the Austrian yodeling that would begin each segment of “Pumping Up With Hans and Franz.” If the focus of bodybuilding instruction and Austrian ethnicity weren’t enough, the life-sized cardboard cutouts of Arnold in the background signaled to the viewer what was being spoofed. The characters both sported a space between their front teeth and short dark hair with sweat suits full of muscle pads. They always wore their gloves, weightlifting belts, and combat boots to maintain and mock the bodybuilding focus.

For Kevin Nealon and Dana Carvey performing these characters and reciting repetitious lines about “girly-men” and fitness was the most comical act they were involved in at the time (Shales 323). This was the same *Saturday Night Live* period when Dana Carvey was also mocking staunch and prude conservatism with his character of “Church Lady,” and often performing impressions of George H. W. Bush. Kevin Nealon was playing (among other occasional characters) “Mr. Subliminal,” who was a salesman capable of slipping words in between his sentences to subliminally lead or manipulate his interlocutors. *SNL* provided the perfect stage for such comedy and diverse

characters. Since its debut season in 1975, *SNL* was a late night world of subversive humor that came live to its viewers and was often full of ethnic, cultural, and political bite. The fact that it was the launch pad for so many careers and that it is always performed live speaks to its vitality as a living stage of cultural critique and witty, even if lowbrow, entertainment. The skit of Hans and Franz came over a decade after the show's inception and continued the focus of the *SNL* in providing hilarious entertainment that was topical, relevant, and even edgy.

This one hilarious "act" of Nealon and Carvey worked for more than the performers. As Hans and Franz spread throughout pop culture it was apparent that the characters were striking a chord in society, which functioned on more than one level. A basic level of comedy in the skits built off the stardom of Arnold Schwarzenegger at the end of the 1980s. This suggested that a comic intervention into the masculinity that was associated with Arnold's body was necessary and timely. Especially since Arnold represented a body-built masculinity that was readily accepted and applauded in America as superior, he was an obvious target. Arnold embodied ideas and images like those already mentioned. Historic images like Eugene Sandow as visual display, Zische Breitbart as a genetic link to masculinity, comic book heroes, and footage from *Olympia* infused Arnold's reception. The accent seemed to recall (in a surprisingly benign way) the fascist hypermasculinity and the fetishization of the male body, which was so publicly idealized in Germany (Klein 254–255). The Germanness of fascism linked with the spectacle of hard soldiers and authoritarianism informed the parody of Arnold. Somehow an amorphous American conception of "Germanic masculinity" that was tied to Nazism, technology, sports, the Olympics, and fitness congealed into human form in Arnold Schwarzenegger, an embodiment ripe for mocking.

If any American today were asked who the two most famous Germans are they would likely respond with Hitler and Arnold Schwarzenegger. Despite their Austrian origins these figures like many others (Mozart, Freud, etc.) are simply linked with German in a sort of American mental *Anschluss* that is inevitably the result of proverbial ignorance and an amorphous and shifting national history. The perhaps distinctly Austrian part of Arnold was often psychologically annexed to a greater conception of Germanic that brought

together a vague history of echoes from Germany about masculinity, superiority, and mythology. It was not solely echoes of *Nibelungenlied* or *The World's Strongest Man* competitions on ESPN of Germanic barbarians and Scandinavian Vikings or newsreels of Hitler yelling about the ethnic superiority of the Aryan race. It was more than historically competing nationalisms or a rising country after the economic miracle. Like the title of professional bodybuilder Markus Rühl's fitness and documentary DVD, *Rühl: Made in Germany* (2003), the idea of being "made" in Germany connotes a certain superiority, durability, and strength. Arnold seemed to be undeniably genetically superior and somehow it just made sense that he was "Germanic." Instead of shunning the otherness of Arnold in his superior Germanic frame audiences revered, admired, and emulated it. It was as if he brought a Teutonic masculinity to America where it could develop even larger dimensions and visibility. This aspect of his Austro-Germanness in America is one level of attack in the comedic work of Hans and Franz.

On yet another level of comedy, the fitness culture of the 1980s was mocked along with instructional videos that taught viewers how to become bigger, better, and stronger. The VHS proliferation of fitness accompanied by TV programs and magazines spread the visual work of constructed ideals. Fitness had to offer profitable roadmaps to achieve these ideals. Perhaps most important, however, is the comic intervention posed by Hans and Franz into the rising idealization of the large bodybuilder body as somehow "most masculine" and most heterosexual. This rigid model was only new in that its size had grown and hardened (Bordo 57). There had always been hegemonic models of masculinity, but somehow in the 1980s a larger-than-life model based largely on Arnold's unobtainable "superiority" became acceptable and marketed as "perfect."

It seems obvious then, that the primary butt of the joking was Arnold and the masculinity he came to represent, a masculinity that had reached mainstream admiration. For this reason it is extremely significant that Arnold Schwarzenegger himself would step on stage with his "cousin" imitators in 1988. This presented the audience with a complicated comic conundrum. The imitated (Arnold) was now present and actually recited lines, like, "listen to me now, believe me later" and berated his imitators exactly like they treated their audiences. Arnold appeared to imitate himself or indulge in a

caricature of Arnold that had been pumped up by Nealon and Carvey. The Freudian model of a tripartite joke with the tellers (Hans and Franz), observer (audience), and butt (Arnold/hypermasculinity) was now seemingly rearranged.

It would appear that the audience, together with Arnold, now began to laugh at Hans and Franz and their “wannabe” status cast against the reality of Arnold there on screen. In this particular skit the audience was brought to a climax of applause when Arnold offered what the audience expected and began to flex, showing Hans and Franz “how it is done.” The laughter and applause of the audience speaks to the aforementioned realigning of the butt of the joke, where Hans and Franz are the newly-positioned butts, yet Hans and Franz might also be read as maintaining Arnold and hypermasculinity in their initial position of mocked and actually escalating this mockery to another degree. This reading would point to the ironic on-stage actions of Hans and Franz vis-à-vis Arnold. After being warned by Danny Devito that Arnold might show up, the muscle-bound Austrians begin to worry about not being “properly pumped up” to receive their idol. They overemphasize their devotion to Arnold and concede his superiority repeatedly. They re-enact America’s fascination and reverence of Arnold and big/hard masculinity. “You are the embodiment of perfect pumpitude,” exclaims Franz to Arnold. They pay obeisance to Arnold and admit that they can never attain such a level of manliness, “It is no use Arnold. Compared to you we are losers. Not even the grown-up kind, but little baby ones,” continues Franz. Arnold, as epitome of man, is exposed as ridiculous and unobtainable. His superiority is stretched or pumped up to the point of absurdity. It is as if Arnold doesn’t see himself as the butt here, but continues reciting lines that supposedly mock Hans and Franz, although they themselves are only hollow emulations of Arnold himself.

After saying he hates the way they “talk,” in other words, how they vocalize and make obvious the hard/big masculinity and ideology, Arnold spews out a litany of references to his movies that serve as springboards for comparative statements about Hans and Franz confirming their inferiority to Arnold. “I sent you over here from Austria to become real hardcore terminators, and look what you are, little termites.” He continues that they should be real “running men” but are mere “girly-men.” Then, not only is the butt of the joke in

play but as Arnold grabs both men's buttocks and comments on their softness, the homoerotic motif of the butt reenters center stage. The intentions and outcome of constructed binaries in admiring/mocking and hypermasculine/homoerotic are decentered and deliberately played with, which allows for multivalent decodings of the skit.

The layering of comedy was important considering the iconic status of Arnold at this point in time. By the end of the 1980s Arnold was one of the highest paid actors in Hollywood and an international symbol of masculinity. He had conquered the stage in bodybuilding and then the silver screen, which somehow made his body a credible candidate for idealization. The *Conan*, *Hercules*, and *Terminator* roles, which equaled the *Rambo*, *Rocky*, and *Bloodsport* roles of Sylvester Stallone and Jean-Claude Van Damme, formed this big muscular presence of a hypermale who could save the world, overcome all odds, and embody the perfect masculinity. The crystallization of big masculinity was in part a reactionary hardness in response to the "Women's Liberation and Gay Liberation movements in the 1980s [through which] the public perception of male and female identity decisively change[d]" (Brandt 77). The mixture of action spectacles on film and steroid use in sports and bodybuilding supported a literally growing image of tough men that eventually demanded reevaluation. These models of masculinity were only later recognized as "self-destructive" and countered through a "softer" depiction of men in the early 1990s (Jeffords, *Big Switch* 197). Hans and Franz used comedy as a social gesture in the Bergsonian sense to intervene, to point to and mock this unhealthy and impossible masculinity with its "Germanic" element of hard and superior. The laughter evoked by this sketch comedy served to quell the effects of the proliferation of big man masculinity by exposing its own deconstruction.

The New Softer Man

If Arnold's appearance on Hans and Franz captured the tensions of the big man masculinity of the 1980s, then Patrick Swayze's visit to the same pair of Teutonic bodybuilders of *SNL* in 1990, on the heels of the release of *Ghost* (1990), captured a shift in this dominant cinematic image of masculinity that should worry characters like Hans and Franz. As Stefan Brandt wrote, "the superhero of the 1980s, it

seems, has stepped back to make way for a more sensitive, realistic and vulnerable figure in the 1990s. To put it in a brief formula: Conan the Barbarian has cleared the way for Private Ryan" (Brandt 77). This shift in representation to a softer masculinity should not only challenge Hans and Franz but simultaneously provide the logical and desired consequence of the comic and didactic work of Nealon and Carvey through such skits. This new shift and the notion of rigid masculinities were cleverly captured in the episode of "Pumping up with Hans and Franz" with Patrick Swayze as their guest.

In this episode Swayze comments on his role in the film *Ghost*, which Hans describes as a movie about the "eternal struggle between good and evil: the pumped-up versus the flabby." Both Hans and Franz welcome and compliment Swayze but only as a second rate body of masculinity in comparison to Arnold. "We think you are one of the greatest non-Arnold actors working today," says Hans. Franz continues with "we understand your film was the highest grossing film of the year, even though it lacked a Schwarzeneggerian element." After thanking them, Swayze mentions that, "they [the makers of *Ghost*] meant no disrespect to Mr. Schwarzenegger." Hans responds: "I am sure Arnold was not threatened, Patrick." This conversation highlights what is at stake. If the big man masculinity of Arnold is beginning to be displaced by alternative models like Swayze then the underlying project of Nealon and Carvey's skit is witnessing positive cultural shifts, however this also means a crisis for the characters of Hans and Franz who can only envision Arnold as the true man. This persistent hanging on to Arnold-style masculinity of the 1980s, that was already diminishing, begins to historicize Hans and Franz and their role as a cultural moment of comedy that played with rigidity in defining and performing masculinity.

Hans and Franz seize the opportunity to mock their own rigid ideal of manly men with Swayze on the set as an incarnation of a newer, softer masculinity. In *Ghost*, Swayze was already framed as a different spectacle, not of a big hard body creating destruction, but of a softer, sensitive man. This can be typified in the scene where Swayze inhabits Whoopi Goldberg's body to caress Demi Moore's character. Swayze literally becomes a female body. Although Arnold would eventually play a pregnant man in *Junior* (1994), this is something Arnold's typecast rigid roles in the 1980s would never have

permitted. This tension plays out in a sequence where Patrick Swayze mentions the importance of “flexibility.” Hans and Franz agree and display their “flex-ability” by striking their oft-repeated pose of flexing their muscles. Swayze corrects them and clarifies his notion of flexibility by dropping into leg-splits. After being invited to join Swayze, Hans and Franz muscle a few failed attempts at matching Swayze’s incredible “flexibility.” It is more than onstage bodies that are referenced here. The rigidity versus flexibility in defining and allowing masculinity and hopefully *masculinities*, is performed and mocked. This is precisely the type of unsociable “rigidity” that Bergson identified society as “eyeing with suspicion” (Bergson 150). This particular skit juxtaposed with the episode 2 years earlier of Arnold’s visit exposes the function of Hans and Franz’s comedy as a “kind of social ragging” that evokes laughter intended to “humiliate, and consequently to correct our neighbor, if not in his will, at least in his deed” (Bergson 148). The mocking is of the inflexibility and ridiculous ideal of a “body-built,” Schwarzeneggerian masculinity. Arnold is not necessarily the culprit but is the most readily available and generally recognized icon of this rigidity. Hans and Franz cannot be flexible enough to allow for alternative masculinities. They can only see pumped-up manly men or flabby girly men.

Such narrow views of masculinity are additionally mocked through reintroducing the homoerotic element of bodybuilding and rigid imposition of big bodies. After meeting with Swayze, Franz begins to fantasize about Swayze’s body and questions his feelings and attraction to this new male body. Hans continues to talk about how “for a non-Arnold actor he was very, ya know, pumped up” and asks Franz what he thought of Swayze’s butt: “the angle of his buttock crease and how well proportioned it stood.” Franz pretends to have not really noticed but his feelings continue to overcome him and he fantasizes about riding a white horse with Swayze. Here the homoeroticism conquers Franz and he realizes an element of hypermasculinity, which is apparently new to him and uncomfortable. He is not only returning to the motif of the butt as symbol of the ever-present homoerotic, but is similarly being pulled into the new masculinity and is attracted to Swayze as its representative. The uncomfortable shift from all Franz stands for to a seductive fantasy of being with the new softer man of the 1990s signals the masculine shift which is to one a crisis and to another a liberation.

Susan Jeffords has also traced the American hard masculinity in the 1980s during Ronald Reagan's presidency and the shift to the softer "family man" of the early 1990s with the ascendancy of George Bush, Sr. by reading the political into representations of masculinity in many contemporary Hollywood films (Jeffords, *Hard Bodies* 13). Jeffords shows how the "transition from law enforcer to family man" was cinematically "sketched out" in *Kindergarten Cop* (1990) by Schwarzenegger himself and how the early films of the 1990s served to invert the previous hard bodies into caring, feeling father figures (141). These shifts in masculinity coincided with political shifts of "wars" on drugs, AIDS, and crime that urged men to protect themselves and their families rather than the world or nation.

Although politics and masculinity in Germany were different from the American experience, it is significant that both countries were viewing many of the same influential images of such since the 1950s. The masculine shift referenced previously, loosely demarcated by the decades of the 1980s to the 1990s, has also been observed in Germany. A recent article in *Spiegel* recounted the death of the (1980s) macho figure in Germany. The author situated this hard violent masculinity in Götz George, who began to play the character of tough and streetwise cop Horst Schimanski in 1981 on German TV's crime series *Tatort*. After diegetically quitting his service in 1991, Schimanski was no longer needed until he staged a comeback at the end of the 1990s. This comeback was an anticipated revival of the hard violent masculinity Germany had known earlier. Instead, an aged, softer, social worker was all Horst Schimanski had become, confirming the cinematic death of the macho in Germany (Mrozek). The hard macho man had given way to the softer, more sensitive male, who might be described as the feeling man of the 1990s or the "metrosexual" of the early twenty-first century.

Where Are They Now?

If Hans and Franz are seen as players in the Bergsonian quelling of destructive hard masculinity at the time through comedy and if this very masculinity is largely regarded as obsolete and harmful in America and Germany then Hans and Franz would seem to be on the one hand, successful in their comedic efforts and on the other, obsolete

themselves. With American men redirected to their families, and German men largely softened and metrosexualized, and with Arnold, as American politician, more focused on marketing the environment than bodybuilding, we have truly landed in a completely different realm than the milieu which Hans and Franz so deftly mocked. So one might ask, “where are they now?” This is precisely the title of a mockumentary short that staged the return of the muscle-bound couple after several years of absence. During the 25th anniversary of *SNL* a sketch was prepared in a style parodying the VH1 biopics of one hit wonders, teen-stars, and other miscellaneous has-beens. In this short Hans and Franz are shown as being over the hill, graying, and separated. Hans has turned his attention to “reading” people’s buttocks to discern their future and psychological health. The two have tried several attempts at remaining successful through aiding exercise equipment infomercials and even performing in a musical stage production titled, “Pumela, Pumela.” The unfortunate fact is that they are no longer famous, no longer shown on *SNL*, and no longer needed. The two lament their fall from fame, yet the happy ending is found in their reconciliation and reunion. This occurs when Hans coincidentally reads Franz’s buttocks at his street booth in California. Their joyous reunion serves to happily end the legacy of Hans and Franz with a comic finale of the two on the street “doing what they do best.” They accept donations while flexing for uninterested pedestrians. Where they are now is a pathetic ending that underscores their obsolescence. If this is true then why write about them now? Not out of fear that America or Germany might simply return to a hard body model of rigid masculinity (although the recent reboots of *Terminator 3* (2003), *Rocky Balboa* (2006), *Rambo* (2008) along with the release of *The Expendables* (2010 and 2012) franchise might hint at such a cinematic attempt). The reason why a reminiscence of Hans and Franz and their humor is important is because they mocked the entire notion of a single masculinity by mocking the then prevalent and absurdly idealized model. Although they singled out Arnold as metonym for the hard body masculinity of Hollywood, Venice Beach, and the American fitness craze, they mocked the idea of rigidly defining an ideal masculinity, of saying that one model is Schwarzeneggerian and another is “girly-man.” They showed their audience, who were inevitably laughing at less, that defining and defending a single masculinity is the ridiculous endeavor. They could not be flexible enough

to allow competing and alternative performances of being a man. They remind us not just that hard can also be soft, but that man can be diverse, fragmented, and much more fluid than traditionally rigid modes of thinking would prefer. As Judith Butler hoped in an early article regarding gendering through performance, “we need to think a world in which acts, gestures, the visual body, the clothed body, the various physical attributes usually associated with gender, *express nothing*” (Butler, *Performative Acts* 909). While Hans and Franz do not seem to forward quite so radical a perspective they do caution our admiration for rigidly defined masculinity through the only means that are measurable and obvious: performance.

Hans and Franz functioned like most great comedy. They were able to locate and represent a social trend that was absurd, despite its popularity. They humorously captured a discourse of condensation and through clever mocking conveyed a critical view of Americans’ conception of Germanness, the fitness industry, bodybuilding, and the big hard masculinity that was increasingly portrayed as the ideal. The comic effect continues to bear important fruit not just because Arnold has only increased in influence despite his shrinking physical body, but because the underlying comic statement of the act should be read as a wariness of any totalizing and essentializing model of masculinity whether big or small. The result must be critical decoding of popular film and media and flexibility in performance and assignment of signification. In the end, the power of the Hans and Franz skits were certainly of their time and place, yet their traces, left on DVD, the Internet, and TV reruns might continue to bear consequences—consequences that make their absence present. Unlike supermodel Heidi Klum naming her (German made) breasts Hans and Franz (Adams), or the naming of two US crawler-transporters Hans and Franz (Atkins), or even Arnold as politician calling critics of the US economy “economic girly-men” at the 2004 Republican National Convention, traces of the Hans and Franz comedy, should be reminders rather than hollow references. They comically intervened and invited viewers to more critically negotiate totalizing discourses that tell audiences how to be and think through image and mythologization. That there could be *a masculinity*, ideal for all “manly-men,” is a notion that our two Teutonic fitness instructors effectively “pumped-up” to the point of complete deflation.

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Pumping Up Masculinity: The Initial Invention and Lasting Legacy of Hans and Franz. Save to Library. Download. Through the analysis of Ash Brannon and Chris Buck's feature film, *Surf's Up* (2007), and of *The Simpsons* episodes "Behind the Laughter" (Mark Kirkland, 2000) and "Springfield Up" (Chuck Sheetz, 2007), in this article I argue that the mockumentary style does not consist solely in the adoption of documentary aesthetics and structures, but also in the deployment. Hans and Franz are characters in a recurring sketch called "Pumping Up with Hans & Franz" on the television sketch comedy show *Saturday Night Live*, played by Dana Carvey and Kevin Nealon, respectively. In the sketch, Carvey and Nealon play a pair of muscle-bound Austrian jocks in the mold of Arnold Schwarzenegger, using padding for fake muscles, drab gray sweatsuits, weight belts, and speaking with Austrian accents. The background of the set includes several life-sized cutouts of Schwarzenegger during Masculinity and femininity in the broadest sense are a set of attitudes, roles, norms of behavior, hierarchy of values typical of the male and female sex in each specific society. A more detailed interpretation of masculinity and femininity can be given in terms of the gender theory. The concepts of masculinity and femininity are multiple like other gender categories. For example, R. Connell, an Australian sociologist, one of researchers of masculinity, made a conclusion on the differentiation between various types of masculinity that occur in reality and on the identification of a hegemonic masculinity stereotype among them [5]. I. S. Kon considers hegemonic masculinity not a property of a certain male, but a specified sociocultural normative canon, to which men and boys. Hans. Dana Carvey Franz. Kevin Nealon Himself. Steven Seagal. Announcer: Good evening, and welcome again to "Pumping Up With Hans & Franz", the informative training program for the serious weightlifter. Together: Welcome! We're back! Hans: Alright. Once again, I am Hans. Franz: And I am Franz. And we just want to. Together: pump. [They clap] you up! Hans: Alright. Franz: Alright, first of all, let's clear something up. You know, many people have accused us of being involved with steroids. Hans: Ja.