



Representation Of Friedrich Nietzsche's Übermensch In Matt Reeves' The Batman

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Abstract: Friedrich Nietzsche's concept of the Übermensch, an individual transcending conventional human limitations to achieve an elevated state of being, finds compelling contemporary resonance in an era characterized by rampant crime and societal anarchy. This term paper investigates how Matt Reeves' 2022 film, *The Batman*, a cinematic adaptation of Detective Comics characters encapsulate and reinterpret the characteristics of the Übermensch within the superhero genre. Specifically, it addresses the research question: How does Reeves' portrayal of Batman embody and redefine the Nietzschean Übermensch in the context of a chaotic, post-“God is dead” world, transitioning from a symbol of vengeance to one of hope? The film's intricate technicality contributes significantly to its enigmatic framework, yet its narrative profoundly reflects a world grappling with pervasive disorder and a yearning for new beginnings. Reeves' Batman is presented as a paradox: quiet yet capable of violence, calm yet seething with rage, a formidable emblem of strength yet profoundly broken. This humanised depiction, relentlessly pushing the boundaries of his own being, mirrors the Übermensch's journey. The correspondence between Nietzsche's Übermensch and Reeves' Batman is further elucidated through the latter's progression through Nietzsche's three metamorphoses: the burden-bearing “camel”, the freedom-seeking “lion”, and the new beginning offered by the “child”. Drawing upon Heidegger's interpretation in “Who Is Nietzsche's Zarathustra”, which posits the Übermensch as an unbound individual who transcends human activity to forge future contemplation, this paper argues that Robert Pattinson's Batman in *The Batman* (2022) embodies the very figure Nietzsche's Zarathustra was envisioned as a “Moses” for a desolate world. By transcending his initial identity as a symbol of vengeance to become a beacon of hope, as exemplified by his declaration, “People need hope. To know someone's out there for them”, Batman emerges as a potent contemporary reflection of the Übermensch.

Index Terms - Nietzsche, Übermensch, Batman, Matt Reeves, Superhero, Existentialism, Hope, Vengeance, Chaos, Human Transcendence.

INTRODUCTION

This term paper examines how Matt Reeves's 2022 film *The Batman*, a cinematic adaptation of Detective Comics characters, encapsulates and reinterprets Friedrich Nietzsche's concept of Übermensch within the superhero genre. Specifically, it addresses the research question: How does Reeves, through Robert Pattinson, portray Batman to redefine Nietzschean Übermensch in the context of a chaotic, post-godless world? Thus Spoke Zarathustra is the book where Nietzsche mentions key features of the overman, and these characteristics are all present in the Batman character. The physical, mental, and intellectual superiority helps a man to overcome himself, and Bruce Wayne, the film's protagonist, has to overcome himself for Gotham City, to scatter hope amongst people. By this, *The Batman* represents Nietzsche's Übermensch in today's

context. Technicality contributes significantly to its enigmatic framework, yet narrative reflects a world grappling with disorder, therefore it a yearning for a new beginning. We get a Batman, with the same qualities of overman, who is quiet but murderous, calm, still full of rage, and an emblem of strength yet broken; this humanized depiction, pushing the boundaries of his being, mirrors the Übermensch's journey. Nietzsche's Übermensch and Matt Reeves' Batman, this correspondence is further located through the metamorphoses of souls, more broadly, these are the stages of suffering of the soul: first, a camel with too much burden, second, freedom and strong like a lion to defeat dragons, and lastly, free will of a child for a new beginning. Hope is the only key to a better future. When fear, violence, intelligence, and even the state fail, there comes the Übermensch with hope, to become someone who will protect people in a crime-ridden world. Heidegger, in his essay "Who Is Nietzsche's Zarathustra?" emphasizes that someone who surpasses the sphere of human activity becomes unbound, and only she or he will appear as Übermensch. This paper argues that Pattinson's Batman in *The Batman* (2022) embodies "Moses"; this may be a vision of Nietzsche's Zarathustra. Batman emerges as a potent symbol of hope for life, because "It is true: we love life, not because we are used to living but because we are used to loving. There is always a certain madness in love. But also, there is always a certain method in madness." (Nietzsche 68).

DIRECTOR'S INTRODUCTION

Matt Reeves is one of the finest directors of contemporary cinema, due to his presentation and cinematic technicality. Cary Darling says that Reeves has proved himself through the Apes movies, and by *Let Me In*, further, "he has a canny ability to take pre-existing material and make it his own." (Darling). This experimentation with old stories, though his technicality is noteworthy, he's a passionate director also concerned about the audience. When Jonathan Nayman asks to "Think of the excellent first half of *Cloverfield*, with its anxious first-person perspective on an impending apocalypse. Or the terrifying car-crash scene in his remake of *Let Me In*," (Nayman), as an audience, one can feel the dedication.

Matt Reeves's cinemas encapsulate deep human psychology with spectacular characters with familiar emotions in a familiar world. Sara Mitchell Fetters marks that Reeves has "a spectacular string of success that began with 2008's *Cloverfield*, continued with 2010's *Let Me In*, and culminated with ... *Dawn of the Planet of the Apes* in 2014 and *War of the Planet of the Apes* in 2017" (Fetters). The themes of horror, thrillers, and impending apocalypse are inevitable in his films. Like Kiber Myers, who says "The director [Reeves] made two solid horror films... over a decade ago, and *The Batman* is of a piece with those genre films" (Myers), stay within these genre films, though he somehow transcends them.

His recent instalment is the enigmatic hero of Detective Comics. With Peter Craig, Reeves wrote a story on the characters of Gotham City, their story is inspired by *Batman: One Year*, once created by Bob Kane, Bill Finger, and illustrated by David Mazzucchelli. Kimber Myers's post says, "The *Batman* reinforces Reeves' position as one of the best directors making big studio movies. He consistently turns in films with equal parts brain and brawn, as likely to please critics as audiences" (Myers).

Ty Burr mentions about director of *The Batman*, "... Reeves does something unusual for a superhero movie." (Burr). His completely different take on superhero films sets a new path for the future. The emotional side of a superhero, with a traumatic past and anxiety, has been on the silver screen for the first time. Director crafts his work through his crew, while art director Grant Armstrong, Gravity make "The footage's very dark look sets an ominous mood. Elaborate sets—from Bruce Wayne's mansion to Oz's glamorous club scene—draw you into a netherworld" to touch the zenith of world building. "Batman's armour, Catwoman's skintight outfits, and The Penguin's suits fit like a glove" by costume designers David Crossman, Glyn Dillon, and Jacqueline Durran make characters real, mundane, and achievable. Characters are captured by cinematographer Greig Fraser with their justified "Props, clothes, locations, and people" and "well-lit and lensed" in all frames. "And, if the visuals won't astound viewers, the eerie audio track will", because Michael Giacchino's musical score enhances the gloomy, soul-searching, and fearful atmosphere throughout the film. With editor Bobbi Banks and "This is the kind of tech team directors/producers gleefully take into battle" for a new superhero movie, this world shall ever see (Brown).

Reeves, as his contemporaries, get a range of film makers, like Martin Scorsese, Todd Phillips, James Cameron, Tim Burton, David Koepp, Robert Eggers, Denis Villeneuve, David Fincher, Zack Snyder, Christopher Nolan and several more, who enrich us with thriller and horror genre, science fiction films, psychological dramas, and superhero films with special effects. According to T.S. Eliot, every individual

possesses talents that stem from tradition; here, Reeves faces contemporary directors as both competitors and inspirations. In thrillers and horror, David Fincher, Tim Burton, and Robert Eggers, with accordingly *Se7en*, *Zodiac*, *Sleepy Hollow*, *Nosferatu*, spread an enormous sphere where Reeves by *Cloverfield* and *Let Me In* let himself into. As a psychological film, Scorsese's *Taxi Driver* impacts Reeves, and metamorphosed into *The Batman* as Pattinson's diary notes through his voice. In the science fiction genre, James Cameron with *Avatar*, Denis Villeneuve, through *Blade Runner*, *Dune Part 1* and *Part 2*, and Christopher Nolan's *Tenet*, *Inception*, and *Interstellar*, sets a cornerstone which scarcely possible to break through, but Reeves has the potent to reach there. Denis Villeneuve's *Enemy* and David Koepp's *Secret Window* emphasize split personality with interior of human mind. Reeves grabs the loneliness of an orphan, suffers from a traumatic past, and determines to clean the city by violence. This suits *Batman* and *Riddler*, but the difference is former has hope and the latter doesn't. Yet the psychic portion becomes the source of motives for both characters' actions. Again, Nolan's *Dark Knight Trilogy* with Burton's *Batman* is a great barrier for Reeves's *The Batman* to come out as another superhero film in front of Zack Snyder's *Man of Steel* and Todd Phillips's *Joker*. The *Batman*, due to its way of portrayal of "World's Greatest Detective" in a dirty crime world, becomes a beacon despite Christian Bale's glamorous success. The above are the reasons I chose Matt Reeves and his film *The Batman* for my paper. Myers mentions, "...the sense of novelty comes from Reeves' filmmaking, which is so markedly different from his predecessors" (Myers).

The father of the concept from which all superheroes of our fictional world arise was Friedrich Nietzsche. Born in 1844, near Leipzig, he studied philosophy and Schopenhauer at the University at Bonn. In 1872, he published *The Birth of Tragedy* and the first part of *Human, All Too Human* in 1878. He divorced himself from everyday life and lived mainly in France, Italy, and Switzerland. During this period, *The Dawn* appeared in 1881 and was followed by *The Gay Science* in 1882. Thus *Spoke Zarathustra* was written between 1883 and 1885, and with his last completed books *Ecce Homo* and autobiography, *Nietzsche contra Wagner* led to his period of insanity and his death in 1900.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The Batman (2022) by Matt Reeves sets the cornerstone for emotional storytelling in superhero films. From Friedrich Nietzsche's *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, I get the clear idea of *Übermensch* and his features; this book is a precursor to understanding overman and similarities with *Batman* of Matt Reeves. Another important essay is Martin Heidegger's "Who is Nietzsche's Zarathustra?" emphasizing the pathfinder of the Superman.

There are more than fifty-four reviews of top critics on Rotten Tomatoes, where they often analyse the film from various perspectives, and some get into *mise-en-scène* analysis of it. On YouTube, more than eighteen videos are analysing properly the story, characters, leitmotifs, cinematography, camera angles and shots, and some stuff of the editing. By studying fifteen reviews of critics and watching ten or twelve videos, I get a wide range of perspectives on *The Batman* film.

First of all, Christina Newland's review's the title is "In *The Batman*, Robert Pattinson cuts an impressive figure as a terse and anguished Bruce Wayne", where she highlights Bruce's lonesome attitude is close to *Taxi Driver*'s Travis Bickle, and it also recognizes Selina Kyle's tiny but mighty presence. In *Dwight Brown Ink*, Brown writes that the Caped Crusader jumps into crime-stricken Gotham City, he writes how vital characters are well developed, how Reeves' directorial style emphasizes pageantry over motion, and how tech team directors/producers get Oscar nominations by their mastery. Pattinson's prepping for this iconic role reveals his enigma, while Turturro's sociopathic villain reminds us of Marlon Brando. Cary Darling's review title, "The *Batman* with Robert Pattinson takes flight," where *Batman* is an avenging angel of crime-ridden Gotham. Reeves sets this film in *Batman*'s early fighting career, where he copes with the *Riddler*'s unmasking City's truth, blurring lines between good and evil. With Peter Craig, Reeves creates a fascinating detective story, also with his canny ability to make his pre-existing material. "The *Batman* Is the *Batman* Movie We Deserve" is a review by Jonathan Nayman, discussing Reeves' directorial mastery and moves towards *The Batman*'s beauty. Pattinson's incarnation with a nocturnal alter ego is enigmatic, the voice-over similar to Alan Moore's *Watchmen*, Gotham City as a psychic protagonist encapsulates Miller-derived idea of the city, and in the end, the transformation of vengeance into a humanitarian activist. Kimber Myers, comparing Reeves' *Batman* to other films on *Batman*, reveals Reeves's mastery. The portrayals of moral murkiness in *Batman*, the serious *Riddler*, and the ambitious *Penguin* are different from any other we have. In a *chiaroscuro* atmosphere, *Batman*'s shadowy existence breaks the chains of corruption and crime. Charlotte O' Sullivan

says that Riddler tempts Batman to save victims, but through this, he leads him to reveal the truth. Selina, as Catwoman, plays a major part in the film and supports him emotionally. Though Sullivan mentions Scorsese admitted defeat regarding his statement on superhero films, perhaps after *The Batman*. Chris Hewitt emphasises Catwoman's excellent performance, though reveals Gotham's name has roots in gothic, and thus the film is a soul searching for Batman. Sara Michelle's *Fetters* begins with Reeves' success and later delves into Batman's journey in Gotham towards hope. Emily Zemler's review says it is a superhero's coming-of-age story in a modern interpretation. Ty Burr is the only one to mark that Reeves has a metaphor of climate change. There are other critics to acknowledge, several YouTube videos from which I get all the concept clearly about *The Batman* and about *Übermensch*. Now I have located that no article or any written document ever mentions that Matt Reeves' Batman has all the features of an *Übermensch*, only a video named "Why Superheroes FAIL: Philosophy of Nietzsche vs. Batman" by Dr. Nathan CJ Hood, is the only video on this comparison. Otherwise, for an article, the representation of Nietzschean overman in *The Batman* is still unattended and unsullied.

OBJECTIVES

This paper is divided into four objectives to describe how *The Batman* reinforces the features of *Übermensch* in Batman. Friedrich Nietzsche in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* states through Zarathustra, "God is Dead", it's true not only for his contemporary world but also for the world of today. *The Batman* is set in today, an empty world full of dystopic elements. With elements of darkness, the film's protagonist Bruce Wayne, has to fight to save the city. Crime is too random in Gotham, just as Nietzsche prescribed in his book. Gotham turns into a gothic place with the crime syndicate, corruption, and loss of faith and hope among people. In this turbulence, people need a deliverer, a being full of physical, mental, and intellectual superiority; it is Batman. When there is hardly anyone to look upon you, then it's time to overcome yourself and become an *Übermensch*. And Reeves' work provides us a hero, so identical to Zarathustra's imaginary superman. Does Reeves successfully create Godless Gotham?

But in the book *Zarathustra* mentions that humans must overcome themselves to become overman or *Übermensch*. In the film, Bruce struggles from the beginning due to his physical and emotional wounds. He is experimenting with a nocturnal alter ego, which sometimes becomes an escape but also pins him in the Gotham crime pit. Though Zarathustra alerts people that only humans can become superman, not a divine one. Therefore, Bruce's mistakes, injuries, and personal dimensions make him a natural human. The beauty of Superman comes to Zarathustra as a shadow; Batman calls himself a shadow. Like overman, evil is his strength; the same is applicable for Batman, violent investigation. Where the state ends, Batman begins from there; it's only the overcoming of himself that leads him to the exact nature of *Übermensch*. Does the nature of Batman fit into Overman?

Nietzsche specifies three stages for a spirit: the first is a camel that bears a burden in a desert, then a lion to capture freedom as lord of the desert. As a lion, he struggles for victory against a dragon to win. At last, the child comes, whose innocence and forgetfulness mark a new beginning with hope. Batman in Reeves' film has the same journey where, from the beginning, he bears his traumatic past along with Gotham's crime investigation. And in the middle, he also has to become a fearless lion to retain his freedom as a lord; therefore, he encounters several obstacles, and the ultimate duo is Carmine Falcone, the leader of a crime syndicate, and the Riddler. Here, they are dragons by fighting with them anyhow by physically and intellectually, Batman has to win. With the end of the film, Batman realizes the symbol of fear isn't enough; he has to become a beacon of hope. That's similar to the child where hope dwells. Can the three metamorphoses be chronologically located in film?

Transformation of spirit, as Zarathustra mentions, begins with self-destruction. In *The Batman* Bruce has to overcome himself to see and be beyond his apparent knowledge. Nietzsche asks to burn in his fire to become new; fire is a metaphor of sufferings and personal struggles that Bruce has to go through. A superman is a friend of people before an overman; Batman follows this feature; on one hand, he exterminates lawbreakers and on the other hand saves people. His activism and passion for a real change highlight his faith in hope, as an *Übermensch*, Bruce successfully engulfs Nietzsche's existentialism among the people of Gotham. Nietzsche often alerts us about the misleading religious authorities; he often emphasizes this life rather than an imaginary afterlife, like Batman is also concerned about people's present condition. He knows he will never change the past of himself or any other, but he can change the future. There is an ecological

concern in Nietzsche's book and Reeves's film implicitly. The question is, can Batman provide any hope amongst us in the contemporary world?

The story begins, and Riddler kills Gotham's Mayor. That night, Batman visits the crime scene of the murder. There is a letter for Batman with a riddle and weird symbols. Gordon and Batman get to know about a mysterious girl at the Iceberg Lounge. Batman asks Penguin about the girl, and there he sees Selena Kyle, with the same boots. Batman follows her and finds that the girl in the photo is Annika, Selena's friend. Selena, as Catwoman, reaches the mayor's house to recover Annika's passport. Batman follows her; meanwhile, someone has kidnapped Annika. Riddler tortures the Commissioner, claiming to unmask the truth about Gotham. Batman sends Selena to the Iceberg Lounge to gain more information, but she gets into a quarrel with him. District Attorney, Gil Colson is abducted by the Riddler. In Mitchell's funeral, Colson exits the car that crashed there, with a letter addressed to Batman taped to his chest and a time collar bomb around his neck. Riddler gives Colson three riddles to answer correctly within ninety seconds; otherwise, the bomb will detonate. With Batman's help, Colson answers the first two but refuses the third because the answer is the name of the informant. The bomb blasts leave Batman unconscious, and when he wakes up, he's surrounded by policemen, but with Gordon's help, he escapes. Gordon and Batman try to catch Penguin during a drug deal, but Selena peers into the scene, Batman confronts her, and finds Annika's body. Penguin elopes with a car, Batman chases him with a Batmobile, and Penguin is captured. While Gordon and Batman realize that he's hardly the informant. Batman gets access to an online chat with the Riddler, reveals his next victim is an orphan, and he is Bruce Wayne. Bruce tries to contact Alfred, but he is injured by the Riddler's bomb. Selena reveals that Falcone is her father and seeks help to capture the killer of Annika. In Riddler's leaked video, he alleges that Thomas Wayne had hired Falcone to kill a journalist to reveal embarrassing details about Martha Wayne's history of mental illness. Anxious Bruce visits Falcone, then confronts Alfred and learned the whole truth. Selena, from a recorded phone call, reveals that Annika was strangled by Falcone because she knew that Falcone was the informant. Enraged, Selena heads out to kill Falcone, but Batman infiltrates the nightclub in time and stops her from killing him. Riddler shoots and kills Falcone from a nearby building, and the police arrest the Riddler. While searching, find a third letter about confession. At Arkham Asylum, Riddler says that Batman inspired him to unmask the corruption. Police discover a dark web chat where followers orchestrate an attack to assassinate Bella Real (the new mayor). Batman finds a map beneath the Riddler's apartment carpet, with locations of several car bombs to destroy the breakwaters to flood the city. In the indoor arena, The Riddler's followers start their attack to kill Bella at the arena, but Batman, with the help of Selena, and after a rough fight, he stops them. Batman realises his actions are inspiring in the wrong way when one attacker mentions himself as "vengeance". He decides to help the authorities and learns that what the city needs is a beacon of hope. At the end of the movie, Selena asks Batman to leave with her, but Batman refuses. Both of them get away on their motorcycles. Batman looks at Selena until she disappears into the sunrise.

CRITICAL ANALYSIS

A World Where "God is Dead"

Zarathustra descends from the mountain to the people and declares in this world "God is dead" (Nietzsche 41). Friedrich Nietzsche, in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, heralds an anthropocentric earth where the present foreshadows the afterlife. Zarathustra, as the author's counterpart, alerts people about their godless situation. Matt Reeves, through his 2022 film *The Batman*, builds Gotham City as godless as Zarathustra narrates, where "Murder, robberies, assault... they are all up", and in the protagonist Bruce Wayne realises "The city's eating itself" (Reeves). Chris Hewitt echoes in a review, "Speaking of Gotham, ... the name has the same root as 'Gothic'" (Hewitt), highlighting the deliberate connection of these two words for creating a haunted sphere.

Batman, in this film, struggles for two years with the criminals to create a safe place to dwell, but the crime-ridden world entangles Gotham, pulling it deep into corruption. It is like how Zarathustra once says, "The more it [City] wants to rise into the heights", the more it goes "downwards, into the darkness, into the depths – into evil" (Nietzsche, 69). And as we know, Bruce is determined to eliminate criminals; he says, "What I'm doing is my family's legacy" (Reeves). Jonathan Nayman's review clarifies the city's condition and how people in a godless world pursue "nuclear proliferation, inner-city crime, encroaching spiritual malaise" (Nayman).

Where state is the authority there Zarathustra says, “The state is the coldest of all cold monsters. Coldly it lies, too; and this lie creeps from its mouth:” (Nietzsche 75). The crime syndicate head, Carmine Falcone, exploits the city. Where Batman navigates a flood of red herrings, protests of people, and the Riddler with the line “No More Lies” (Reeves). Brown’s review says, “Crime is rampant in Gotham City. Murders. Manslaughter. Blood soaks the streets. Citizens live in terror, and police are stumped.” (Brown)

Nietzsche dreams of an overman beyond all limits of physical, intellectual, and mental superiority, so for him “All Gods are dead: now we want the Superman to live” (Nietzsche 104). Nobody can ever reach the qualities of *Übermensch*, but Reeves’ Batman can; he is stuffed with the same effects. But Reeves’s ability to draw a limitation for every single element is noteworthy, and Mark Feeney once says, “True, things never cross over the line” (Fenney). It sets the film in a mundane, dirty Gotham where god has died. The Batman successfully portrays a world full of evil; it presents the helpless city “as psychic protagonist,” (Nayman), nobody is there to protect, it prepares the exact soil for Batman’s rise as an *Übermensch*.

Nature of *Übermensch* and Batman

Martin Heidegger’s essay “Who is Nietzsche’s Zarathustra?” remarks, “‘Superman’ is the name of the human being who corresponds to this Being” (Heidegger 429). The word “being” becomes a burden for Bruce, where he says, “But I have to try. Push myself”. His struggles stem from criminals, corrupted people, and from the twenty-year-old incident where his parents were killed. Reeves paints him “as the orphan... as if he’s Heathcliff’s long-lost brother”. But Pattinson expresses the “physical and emotional wounds... “better than many actors who preceded him.” (Myers)

Zarathustra asks people what they have done to overcome. Because he teaches people to be Superman, because “Man is something that should be overcome” (Nietzsche 41). Bruce can go beyond, but he also knows his limitations when he says, “It’s a big city, I can’t be everywhere”. This film shows his earlier career, “experimenting with his nocturnal alter ego.” (Nayman) struggles to find something by overcoming himself.

Zarathustra “want[s] to teach men the meaning of their existence: which is the Superman, the lightning from the dark cloud man” (Nietzsche 49), like the Bat-signal in a dark cloud. But more precisely, Batman retains the meaning of existence by his actions. His phrase “I’m vengeance” is a violent escapement from existential dread. Emily Zembler notes “As a superhero, he’s not particularly super” because, like others, he fears jumping from a tall building, “he misses his mark and gets injured. ...he injects himself with adrenaline to keep fighting” (Zemler).

How Nietzsche’s imagination reflects on the screen, where Zarathustra says “The beauty of the Superman came to me as a shadow.” (Nietzsche 112) and Pattinson’s Batman utters “But I am the shadows”. Bruce’s character is written in a way that mystifies the audience, where “Greig Fraser’s gorgeous use of chiaroscuro underscores Batman’s shadowy existence” (Myers). What else does an actor need to become a dark knight? But this darkness envelops “The most evil”, which is predominantly “necessary for the Superman’s best” (Nietzsche 299). Therefore, Matt Reeves’ Batman rules among violence with evil, though his “moral murkiness of this vengeance-seeking vigilante” (Myers) pushes him further into the cycle of violence forever.

“There, where the state ceases – look there, my brothers. Do you not see it: the rainbow and the bridges to the Superman?” (Nietzsche 78). This line fits as the film’s core, where the decline of the state has happened with the fall of law and justice. The audience only sees “...lonesome and disgust” (Newland). Every aspect of the overman is in him, and Peter Craig, with Reeves, creates “... the enigmatic Batman” (Brown) that perfectly forms an *Übermensch* in Gotham.

Three Metamorphoses of the Spirit

In Thus Spoke Zarathustra, Nietzsche mentions “three metamorphoses of the spirit” and how the spirit shall “become a camel, and the camel a lion, and the lion at last a child” (Nietzsche 54). The camel bears the burden, he transforms into a lion to capture freedom as a lord of the desert, here he has to struggle with a dragon and win. And in the last stage, he becomes a child whose innocence and forgetfulness mark a new beginning. But according to Heidegger, to say this, the speaker “Zarathustra must first of all become who he is” (Heidegger 414). This journey and transformation of spirit, in The Batman is “Batman’s soul-searching” (Hewitt).

“Man is a rope, fastened between animal and Superman”, this line enlightens the natural position of humans in this world and the “great in man is that he is a bridge and not a goal;” Albert Camus’ “Myth of Sisyphus” has remarkable similarities with “man is that he is a going-across and a down-going” (Nietzsche 43, 44), and this universal pattern is also in Bruce of The Batman. As Myers says, “The character remains true to ‘have to try,’ but it’s the ‘beyond saving part’” (Fenney) highlights Pattinson’s character is a camel pay hid to them and sometimes procrastinates (in Selina’s case). Therefore, he must decide “who he is going to be” through his journey and be concerned about “the people of Gotham to think about him” (Fetters). This care for others brings suffering for him, and Heidegger says for Nietzsche, “All that suffers, will to live” (Heidegger 412). But from here, Batman becomes a camel with a burden to clean the city, Myers states, “...despite all of Batman’s best efforts, Gotham will still be a city full of rot and corruption.” (Myers).

A lion will come one day, as Zarathustra mentions, “it wants to capture freedom and be lord in its desert”. The physical strength is primary and inevitable here to become “Hungered, violent, solitary, godless” (Nietzsche 54). Bruce, despite his physical and mental wounds, chases criminals as the “lion will wants to be” (Nietzsche 127). Mark Feeney mentions “this is a superhero who seems to enjoy violence a bit too much” (Fenney) as a lion, who is dangerous and evil enough to fight and defeat the dragon. When Nietzsche says that the great dragon cries “‘Thou shalt’. But the spirit of the lion says ‘I will’” (Nietzsche 55), the former voice reminds the Riddler who believes Batman will never save the city, but the latter voice is of Batman, who alone heads to save Bella Real and the city also. In Riddler’s case, he is an ordinary orphan, but the corruption channels him to “become an impudent one, a derider, a destroyer.” (Nietzsche 71). It happens to him because of his penury, and also “For many a man, life is a failure” (Nietzsche 98), maybe life for the Riddler is nothing but a comedy. Oedipus also has to answer the riddle, so there is a universal tendency to attach a riddle with a sphinx or dragon, and in The Batman, Bruce has to fight because “The film is set early in Batman’s crime-fighting career” (Darling)

Readers must ask Nietzsche, “what can the child do that even the lion cannot? Why must the preying lion still become a child?” In the film, Penguin corrects world’s greatest detectives the right Spanish. From Selina, Bruce learns how his rich upbringing pushes him away from mundane truths, and from Riddler he gets to know the hidden family secrets, these all happens because he feels as helpless as a child and it’s “innocence and forgetfulness, a new beginning, a sport, a self-propelling wheel, a first motion, a sacred Yes” (Nietzsche, 55) erupts new ways and new hope. Cary Darling focuses on how Reeves and Craig tap into today’s anxieties about social disorder while taking Batman “beyond being a vehicle for vengeance into something more engagingly complex and ultimately hopeful.” (Darling) to prove The Batman justifies three metamorphoses chronologically.

“Hope” for the Contemporary World

Let’s begin with intertextual references, the voice-over of Bruce is comparable with “Taxi Driver’s Travis Bickle or the Rorschach of Alan Moore’s 1986 graphic novel Watchmen.” (Nayman), and this voice-over throughout the film is not only a homage but establishes a sense of record keeper who is omniscient, omnipotent, and probably omnipresent. Film begins, Bella Real’s urges for real change in Gotham, this change costs something, Nietzsche proclaims, “You must be ready to burn yourself in your own flame: how could you become new, if you had not first become ashes?” (Nietzsche 90). This line measures Bruce from every aspect and puts him into hard challenges to overcome himself again. When Selina asks, “Are you just... hideously scarred?” then Caped Crusader’s answer is from Bruce, and this fear must be surpassed. Übermensch means to overcome, but for Bruce, “the weaknesses of the mystery surrounding him are just too great for the hero to overcome” (Fetters) because he is human, still tries, that’s his win.

Like many of Nietzsche’s lines, this “... the senseless, meaningless, has still ruled over mankind.” (Nietzsche 102) is still relevant for today. This post-apocalyptic world, Reeves deliberately portrays a place “... where democracy seems to be an endangered species.” (Myers) by corrupted politicians like Mayor Mitchell, outlaws like Riddler, and criminals like Falcone. Zarathustra alerts people and forbids them to “believe those who speak to you of superterrestrial hopes!” He marks them as “poisoners... despisers of life” (Nietzsche 42) because for him, this life on earth matters more than anything; existence matters. Batman, “a nice Gen Z spin on the archetype”, that exterminates criminals for “Two years of nights” (Nayman). Try to protect the city, and on the Bat signal, he says, “It’s not just a call... It’s a warning” for those who are corrupted, criminals, and law-breakers.

According to Zarathustra, “The Superman is the meaning of the earth... The Superman shall be the meaning of the earth!” (Nietzsche 42). Apart from philosophy, these lines are also filled with ecological dimensions, where the earth has been prioritised by finding its meaning through Übermensch. TY Burr mentions “Reeves visualises a city’s spiritual collapse by way of a climate change metaphor” (Burr). This is enough for the contemporary world, which is running towards drastic climate change. Saving Gotham is parallel to saving Earth, and for that, people need the Übermensch or the Batman. Now Bruce Wayne can prove that The Batman can plant hope in the world, including Gotham, because Batman realises “Vengeance won’t change the past...mine or anyone else’s. I have to become more... People need hope. To know someone’s out there for them.” (Reeves).

CONCLUSION

Charlotte O’Sullivan, in a review, once mentions “Though Scorsese famously believes that superhero movies ‘aren’t cinema’ ... One of these days, Scorsese is going to admit defeat and allow that the best superhero movies are as good as any other immersive drama. Perhaps The Batman will be the straw that breaks” (Sullivan). These lines are enough to understand The Batman, which has made Scorsese alter his words. This article discusses the representation of Übermensch in The Batman film. Matt Reeves is one of the finest directors and has already been praised for his works, and his intervention in superhero films enkindles this genre to redefine itself. The concept of the overman is popularised by Friedrich Nietzsche in Thus Spoke Zarathustra. There are articles to interpret the characters, criticising some aspects, and wondering about the editing, cinematography, and leitmotifs of this film. This paper is going to assert how successful the representation of the overman in Reeves’ Caped Crusader is, how it is manifested, and how Pattinson, through his performance, reaches the audience. But there are also similarities between Übermensch and Batman. Zarathustra wants people to become human in a godless world where Reeves’ Gotham city is also godless before crime. Zarathustra’s prescribed overman’s quality and the features of Batman are similar, and it suggests the immense possibility of becoming the spirit who, by transforming, overcomes oneself. First, Batman has to carry a burden like a camel, then he becomes a lion with the strength to rule the desert and fight against dragons, and at last, he becomes a child for a new beginning with hope. Not only these this paper focus on the vision of Nietzsche about the world and its decay, but the importance of an ecologically conscious being is most important for the planet. Übermensch and Batman both try to save humanity to save Earth. These all prove that Reeves’ Batman encapsulates all characteristics of the overman. When Nietzsche declares through Zarathustra that scarcely anyone in the past was a superman, then Reeves’ film provides us with an imaginary overman for contemporary society. This paper will make people see what hope can do, how hope is the only way to deal with the realities of today’s destructive world. Films like The Batman are a masterpiece of Reeves but also a literature that sows the seeds of thinking about something better for the future.

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