

His gap-toothed grin is one of the most recognized in the United States and the world. Broad shoulders on top of an abnormally muscular torso with legs of steel are also trademarks of the man. For most people, the sight of his bulging biceps wielding ridiculously large arsenal of weapons is not an uncommon phenomenon. The strange, thick accent that escapes his lips does not seem ludicrous anymore. Labeled as king of mayhem and mass destruction, he proclaims to the world he has a sense of humor. He backs up his word with an image-shattering vehicle that automatically thrusts him to the top of the comedy A-list. Arnold Schwarzenegger is, arguably, the number one American Icon and movie box office draw not only in America, but in the entire world; although he represents different concepts to different people, the result is usually the same, staggering box office receipts. The violence of his films speak a universal language, ensuring that international markets are ripe prospects. His identification with young children, politics, bodybuilding/fitness enthusiasts, hollywood, and most importantly, an inseparable bond with the American Dream make a superstar of the man who is Arnold Schwarzenegger.

Born in the tiny village of Thal-By-Graz , Austria, young Arnold Schwarzenegger did not seem destined for grandeur. "In the beginning Arnold seemed an unlikely figure to become a cultural icon" (Flynn 10). Living in poor, medieval-like conditions, Schwarzenegger was raised alongside his older brother Meinhard in a strict, Catholic household. His father, a police chief, often put his two sons through rigorous physical tests, as well as mental. Schwarzenegger credits these tests and his father's strictness as a contribution to his strong self-discipline. As a child, Schwarzenegger often spent many hours in a movie theater watching Hercules films portrayed by various bodybuilders such as Reg Park and Steve Reeves. An encounter with former Olympic Swimmer and Hollywood star, Johnny Weissmuller left a deep impression on young Arnold. It would seem that years later, Arnold patterned his career path after Weissmuller's. During his youth, Schwarzenegger was active in soccer, but he soon abandoned the sport to pursue bodybuilding, due to a random run-in with a weight room. "When I saw those animals climbing around...doing 20 chin-ups...and squatting 200 kilos [440 pounds]...snatching up 315...it outweighed by far everything that I'd seen on the soccer field" (Shaw 142). Schwarzenegger's infatuation with America further cemented his resolve. "...it was a very American sport, and I thought, 'If I do well, it could take me to America'" (Hoberman 23). He has gone as far as to say that American was always his true country. "I always felt I had an American mentality. I was born in the wrong country" (Flynn 20). His family and friends urged him to give up a sport which they deemed perverted and narcissistic. Their opposition made no difference, however, as Schwarzenegger pursued the sport with a vengeance. After collecting an impressive stack of bodybuilding magazines, he soon littered his wall with images of bodybuilders he wanted to emulate. "Within a year, I had a very clear vision of where I wanted to go...I began to work out, and from that moment on, my goals were clear!" (Flynn 18). Bodybuilding became an obsession to Schwarzenegger. He worked out seven days a week, at least three hours per day. When his parents tried to restrict his workouts to three days per week, a rebellious Schwarzenegger made a crude gym in his basement and worked out there. The gym in which Schwarzenegger trained in was open only six days a week. One Sunday, the owner came by to check the gym and discovered that a window had been broken into. Inside, he found Arnold working out in a mad fury. Various sources state that at this time, when he was a young teenager, Schwarzenegger started to use anabolic steroids to supplement his intense training schedule (Walsh 63). He continued to use them throughout his professional bodybuilding career but claims that he suffers no side-effects because he was always under the supervision of a doctor.

At age eighteen, a 200 pound plus Schwarzenegger enlisted in the Austrian Army for his mandatory one-year service. Unfortunately, it was at this time that the Junior Mr. Europe Bodybuilding Contest took place. Schwarzenegger received an invitation

to compete and did so by going AWOL (Absent WithOut Leave). After winning the contest, he was caught sneaking back into base. Schwarzenegger was released after serving some time in the stockade, and, ironically, praised by his officers for winning the contest. In fact, the military had him work out all day for the rest of his service so that he could represent the military as a bodybuilder. With his time in the Army complete, Schwarzenegger went on to win a string of titles in Europe, including the Mr. Universe, and eventually settled in Munich, Germany. However, Schwarzenegger looked overseas and saw America and it's superior bodybuilders. "While I was battling for titles in Europe, I was very much aware of the competitions in the United States...In the 1960s there were two distinct worlds in bodybuilding: Europe and America. My Universe titles in '67 and '68 established me as the preeminent bodybuilder in Europe...but the question still remained as to how well I would do against the American champions" (Schwarzenegger 48). Schwarzenegger eventually immigrated and settled in Santa Monica, California, to pursue bodybuilding in America. From 1970 to 1975, Schwarzenegger reigned as the king of Bodybuilding, winning the Mr. Olympia titles an unprecedented six consecutive times, and once more in 1980. After "retiring" from bodybuilding in 1975, Schwarzenegger focused his energies in other endeavors, specifically, real estate investment, and a film career. Schwarzenegger's first film, Hercules In New York (a.k.a. Hercules Goes Bannanas) was a made-for -Italian-television spoof that eventually made its way to America. The low quality of the film did not help Schwarzenegger's movie career. However, Schwarzenegger's stock value skyrocketed with the documentary Pumping Iron, a film which follows various bodybuilders, including Schwarzenegger, on their quests for the Mr. Universe and Mr. Olympia titles. "The success...gave my career a big boost and helped bodybuilding find its way..." (Schwarzenegger 61). This led to a leading role in Stay Hungry, a film in which he portrays a Mr. Universe contender who is involved in a love triangle between himself, his girlfriend (Sally Field), and a investor (Jeff Bridges). Many critics were impressed with Schwarzenegger's performance and he received a Golden Globe award for Most Promising Male Newcomer. He went on to make several blockbusters such as Conan The Barbarian, The Terminator, Commando, Predator, The Running Man, Total Recall, and Terminator 2. "He [Schwarzenegger]...has both outlived and outgrown his image of a cult celebrity of the bodybuilding craze and has attained a level of respectability as Hollywood's biggest star" (Flynn 13). This accomplishment is made more remarkable by way of the fact that Schwarzenegger was born in a foreign country, he never changed his name, and he originated from an obscure professional background (Bodybuilding).

Although Schwarzenegger is a born Austrian, speaks with a German accent, has an almost unpronounceable last name, and is freakishly large, he is accepted as a part of American Culture, and looked upon as an American Icon. "While generations of would-be movie stars were compelled to Anglicise their names, this one sports the least pronounceable, most problematic moniker ever to emblazon an American movie marquee" (Hoberman 24). Despite Schwarzenegger's resolve to leave his name unchanged, he goes on to embody the American Spirit. "...Arnold has willed the return of the American Dream" (Hoberman 24). Arnold Schwarzenegger came to The United States with only a gym bag, and single-handedly worked his way to fame and fortune. Arnold is a perfect example of the American Dream realized. Perhaps his struggle is the reason that Schwarzenegger appeals to the world. The symbolic representation of the American Dream is a powerful force. "...Time's...Richard Corliss called him 'the most potent symbol of worldwide dominance of the US entertainment industry'" (Hoberman 24). People see Schwarzenegger as an American Icon because he achieved the American Dream, thus making him an American in both body and spirit. "Arnold has achieved what many fantasize but few often realize-the riches of the American dream" (Flynn 10). Only by paying the price in the gym and studying hard at schools such as UCLA and the University of Wisconsin, did he rise above the many obstacles in his path. "By embracing the traditional values of hard work, perseverance, and adaptability-the very cornerstones that America was built upon-Arnold has achieved a much deserved place in our popular culture" (Flynn 16). Interestingly, Schwarzenegger claims that he feels that he is a born

American. He says he "felt deep down inside of me that I was an American" (Shaw 142). Other countries look at America and see Schwarzenegger as the embodiment of the United States, making Schwarzenegger an internationally-appealing star. "He [Schwarzenegger] is the most bankable star in the US, Germany, and Japan" (Hoberman 22). Additionally, Schwarzenegger's films appeal over international waters because of their violent content. "...he has become such a huge box-office star abroad primarily because action is understandable everywhere...Everyone gets Arnold. If he hits somebody, they fall down. If he shoots them, they die" (Shaw 149). Even young children are familiar with Schwarzenegger's films, despite the usual 'R' ratings that are associated with his movies. While filming Kindergarten Cop, Schwarzenegger thought that the children would generally be ignorant of his status, but they proved otherwise. "I was in a state of shock. Ivan would ask the kids, 'Does anyone know who this is?' And they would all go, 'Yeah! Predator! Terminator! Twins! He's Danny DeVito's twin brother! What happened to your twin brother?'" (Flynn 176). Again, Schwarzenegger's appeal oversteps boundaries such as race and age.

Schwarzenegger is portrayed in several different manners during his career, he is shown as a freakish, dumb, muscle-head, a macho gun-wielding hero, a relentless killing machine, a good-hearted, naive Samaritan, and so on. As a bodybuilder, many people did not take Schwarzenegger seriously. "...many Hollywood producers had dismissed him as a muscle-bound freak..." (Flynn 22). George Butler, the maker of Pumping Iron, recalled that Schwarzenegger was often the subject of ridicule due to his unusual body composition. "It was particularly hard for Arnold because he was treated as a complete freak...he had a physique that people were repulsed by...if I was sitting opposite him at a restaurant, I could see people at the tables behind laughing at him. Of course he noticed it, but he was never impolite" (Flynn 34). Probably most recognized as a heroic figure, Schwarzenegger is the physical manifestation of the modern-day Hercules. "...Schwarzenegger has come to represent the image of a hero for the eighties and nineties" (Flynn 13). However, the most important portrayal of Schwarzenegger is his comedic personality. This portrayal is what sets him apart from other action stars (Stallone, Van Damme, Segal, etc.). "Even in his most brutal action films, it's his sense of humor that distinguishes him from Sylvester Stallone, Chuck Norris and other denizens of the death and destruction genre" (Shaw 146). The huge success of the comedy vehicles Twins, and Kindergarten Cop showed the world that Arnold was not a one-dimensional killer, but a misunderstood brute with a heart. In other words, they showed that he had a healthy sense of humor. The two comedies expanded his audience to include young children, and the family in general. Today, Schwarzenegger acknowledges that he has two particular audiences, the action-hungry audience, and the family audience. In turn, he now rotates his film schedule by alternating action films with lighter comedies (Shaw 146).

The many representations that are a part of Schwarzenegger an integral part of the reason why he is so extremely popular among the masses. To the common layman, he is the Hollywood movie star, an object of entertainment. To bodybuilders around the world, Schwarzenegger represents the ultimate bodybuilding ideal, a man who has conquered bodybuilding with an incredible physique and has advanced to other more prestigious areas. To a lesser degree, fitness enthusiasts see him as an figurehead, leading them to the promised land of washboard abs and firm buttocks. In 1990, Schwarzenegger was named Chairman of the President's Council On Physical Fitness and Sports (Stoddard 43). Strategically, this is a masterful move on Schwarzenegger's part in regards to increasing his appeal among the people. Physical fitness and sports are universal concepts that everyone can identify with and almost no one can oppose. Choosing such a non-controversial concept and associating his name with it is guarantees an increase in popularity. In terms of politics, Schwarzenegger is a unique individual, having ties to both the Republicans and Democrats. A staunch supporter of the Republican party and its causes, yet pledging loyalty to the Democrats via his relationship with his wife, Maria Shriver of the infamous Kennedy Clan. In addition, Republicans look to Schwarzenegger as a potential political candidate for office. "During...

1988...Schwarzenegger was nicknamed, 'Conan the Republican'...Both the New York Daily News and the Chicago Sun-Times have run articles suggesting that Arnold's destiny lies in politics, possibly as governor...of California" (Flynn 25). Schwarzenegger is also actively involved in real estate development. The most notable of his investments lies in the Planet Hollywood franchise which he co-owns with Sylvester Stallone and Bruce Willis. The franchise is world-wide, with locations in Paris, France and Tokyo, Japan, ensuring that Schwarzenegger's fans around the world will not be left out.

Arnold Schwarzenegger is recognized universally because he is an Icon that appeals to everyone through the various aspects of his personality and image. The proof of his appeal lies in the impressive numbers that follow his name. "Since the 1980s, his films have grossed more than \$1.5 billion world wide" (Shaw 149). Schwarzenegger has successfully conquered Hollywood and, in a sense, the world. The vast majority of the consumers do not seem to mind his faults any longer. "...most ticket buyers have simply accepted the worldwide stardom of Arnold Schwarzenegger as such an inevitable part of our popular culture..." (Flynn 10). Americans have accepted him into their culture as one of their own. Each viewer may see Schwarzenegger a different way, as a different representation, but they all see him as a star. In the end, the name Schwarzenegger sounds American.

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