Name: Mgr Michał Zgorzałek

Title: "The Monster Revisited: A Comparative Study of Post Literary Adaptations of Mary Shelley's Frankenstein by Universal and Hammer Studios."

Summary

The focus of this dissertation is to perform a comparative study of two series of film adaptations produced in two different periods of time by juxtaposing them in the light of contemporary film theory. One of the reasons for such a comparison is to contrast the role cinema played in these two distinctive periods and the way it reflected these times. The films belonging to the two Frankenstein series span several decades (beginning in 1931 and ending in 1974) and thus provide measurable samples of the horror genre of this particular period of time.

In this dissertation I undertake a scholarly analysis and comparison of two cinematic adaptation series of Mary Shelley's novel *Frankenstein; or, The Modern Prometheus* from 1818, produced by Universal Studios in the years 1931–1948 and Hammer Film Productions in the years 1957–1974. In order to do so, Chapters 1 and 2 consist of an analysis which results in a combination of several critical approaches to film studies (with addition of several other elements) and subsequently in an analytical tool (referred to as "the matrix"), which is applied to a comprehensive study of the films in the analytical chapters. The films studied in this dissertation at times diverge considerably from their source material (i.e. the novel). As a result, it is difficult to call most of these films adaptations; this is where the notion of post-literary adaptation is helpful. This means that all the films shall be approached from this perspective in order to determine the possible interrelations between them and illustrate the implicit meanings behind them. However, it is not the only methodological tool utilized in the dissertation; other elements include, among others, auteurism, meaning generation and horror-specific approaches.

The first chapter of the dissertation is divided into seven subchapters and begins with post-literary adaptations in the milieu of Hollywood Studio System and several models of adaptation (by Geoffrey Wagner, Kamilla Elliot and Dudley Andrew, among others) and settles with the most fitting model, developed and described by Thomas Leitch in his *Film Adaptation and Its Discontents*. It is then followed by a short summary of the beginnings of film criticism and early trials at (auto-)censorship and the influence the latter had on the American film industry. Most attention is paid to the period that encompasses the 1930s and 1940s, since these were the decades when Universal Studios' most recognizable horror films were produced. Next, the discussion moves on to

the auteur school of film criticism, which was initiated by Alexandre Astruc in 1948. It is then followed by semiotic approach to structural (and post-structural) auterism, advocated and discussed by Christian Metz, Peter Wollen, Warren Buckland and Jeffrey A. Bell. In addition, the discussion is augmented with David Bordwell's method of criticism, based on four different kinds of meaning, described in his *Making Meaning: Inference and Rhetoric in the Interpretation of Cinema*.

Subsequently, in the next chapter the methodology is enriched by genre (i.e. horror) specific film criticism. The reason for using genre-specific approach is because Frankenstein films and Shelley's novel utilize numerous features and themes characteristic to horror. The starting point is Noël Carroll's set of horror film concepts presented in *The Philosophy of Horror: Or, Paradoxes of the Heart*. It is then supplemented by a discussion and clarification of the definition of the monster in horror films which shall prove helpful in the comparison and analysis of certain films. Finally, all theoretical perspectives from both chapters are assembled into one concise model (the matrix) presented and the end of this chapter. It shall be helpful in evaluating who is the real monster in the films of both series, what may have been the reasons for such presentations and, finally, what may have been further implications of demonstrating the Monster or the Baron as the film's main villain.

The following chapter is devoted to a scrupulous analysis of seven Frankenstein films produced at Universal Studios in the years 1931–1948. In order for the analysis to be accurate, Leitch's, Bordwell's and Carroll's (among others) approaches are taken into account. Combined with historical, social, auteristic and industry-specific contexts, it shall allow for a concise and comprehensive evaluation of the series.

In the last chapter of the dissertation attention is paid to six Frankenstein films produced at Hammer Film Studios in the years 1957–1974. Again, the methodology utilizes the approaches mentioned above, together with varying historical, social, auteristic and studio-specific contexts. Also, since it is a follow-up to the previous chapter, more interrelations and differences between the two series are brought to light which also includes two subchapters for determining the real monster in the films of the Universal and Hammer series and what may have been the reasons for such presentations.

Michał Zgnatek