

Kimmo Ahonen

## Lost Body, Damned Soul – Dehumanization in *Invaders from Mars*

American Science fiction film emerged as a genre at the beginning of the 1950s, in the years of Korean War and McCarthyism. The fundamental themes of the Cold War culture – discussion on the nature of totalitarianism and mass culture, fear of conspiracy, invasion and atom bomb – can be found in the science fiction films of the era. Internal invasion of the human mind by aliens, in other words dehumanization, was a very common plot device in the 1950s science fiction film. Dehumanization plot was usually located on a small town, in which aliens took over man's body and mind, turning him into a soulless machine with no will of his own. *Invaders from Mars*, directed by a renowned art director William Cameron Menzies, was a typical B-budget invasion film, where aliens – “dying race” of Martians – are using dehumanized victims as puppets in order to sabotage the American space programme. I discuss the various interpretations of the film by contextualizing it to the topics that were widely discussed in the United States in the 1950s.

In *Invaders from Mars* aliens invade the haven of a middle-class home. The film is seen through child's eyes, and the juxtaposition, in which every authority figure is taken over by aliens, emphasizes the hidden conflicts in the nuclear family. Alien form of life is portrayed as cold, emotionless, asexual and totalitarian. *Invaders from Mars* constructs “Them vs. Us” confrontation, and thus defines the difference

between two competitive systems, the alien and the American way of life. In respect of American values, the aliens represent an almost complete otherness. The metaphors that this film used in depicting the enemy were in a way close to the anticommunist rhetoric, in which Communism was described as a disease, a germ, or a form of mind control. Dehumanized victims resembled the brainwashed soldiers of the Korean War. Thus, the film can be read as metaphor for communist infiltration. However, the alternative claim is that it can be read as an implicit critique of military-industrial complex, which, just like aliens, has invaded to American suburbia and controlled its inhabitants. Consequently, it would be an exaggeration to claim that *Invaders from Mars*, any more than the 1950s science fiction films in general, unequivocally reflected Cold War attitudes. Rather, it effectively exploited common fears and hopes of the era. In a confused way, *Invaders from Mars* expressed and explored the ambivalent, complex feelings and anxieties of the period.

Pia Tikka

## Metaphors of Sergei Eisenstein from the point of view of an Embodied Mind

Sergei Eisenstein's (1898-1948) organic-dynamic film theory as a multidimensional and ambiguous collection of writings and artistic productions allows a divergent approach by the cognitive film theory. Following an ecological point of view according to which all understanding, including cinematic adumbration, is based on em-

bodied orientation and interaction with environment, this article makes an attempt to sketch Eisenstein's mental landscape and his ways of structuring the world through metaphoric extensions.

George Lakoff and Mark Johnson's philosophy of embodied mind as presented in their books *Metaphors we live by* (1980) and *Philosophy in the Flesh* (1999), supplies the guidelines. Lakoff and Johnson base their experimental realism and their description of emergence of meaning on the mutual co-operation of perception, preconceptual sensorimotor functions and imagination. The capability of imagining brings metaphor into a key position: not as a marginal linguistic phenomenon but as an essential actor in constructing meaningful structures of being in the world.

Eisenstein's theory of montage is driven by search for the universal laws to synthesise arts and sciences. He seemed to believe in a kind of conceptual model of understanding similar to that of Lakoff and Johnson. In this article Eisenstein's theory of montage is interpreted as suggesting that cinematic systems are based on embodied organic-dynamic structures, spatial relations and image schemata, which allow through the metaphoric projection an emotional and intellectual understanding of complex abstract theories. Eisenstein's cinematic and literal expressions are studied in terms of Lakoff and Johnson's theory of metaphors, paying special attention to Eisenstein's claim on importance of the sensuous and visual thought. Eisenstein's theory of montage is a theory of cinematic expression but it can also be seen as

a theory of human cognition.

Janne Rovio

## The Muscular Monster – Jean-Claude Van Damme in *Death Warrant*

Although the bodybuilding hero of Hollywood action films claims to aspire to the aesthetics of Hellenic ideals, there also exists a dark undercurrent, a fear of surpassing human limitations altogether and entering the realm of the monstrous. Jean-Claude Van Damme, the Belgian-born bodybuilder and martial artist tackles the issue of monstrosity in his fourth leading role in *Death Warrant* (1990), a hybrid of action and “slasher” horror film traditions. Van Damme figures as the Final Boy, assuming the positions of the female victims of the slasher psychopath, as well as the role of the Final Girl – the victim-hero who, as described by Carol Clover, fights and defeats the male villain. Van Damme is linked to female slasher victims by a common complicity in monstrosity. It has been claimed that both the cinematic female and the monster of classic horror film conceal their castrated lack under visual excesses through an emphasis on erotic body parts and special effects, respectively. Likewise, the cinematic bodybuilder attempts to deflect suspicions of a lack of masculine essence through his excessive musculature. Whereas classic horror films view the link between the monster and the woman with an amount of sympathy, allowing, as suggested by Linda Williams, the woman to look – the slasher visually establishes the woman

as the monster, a mutilated site of horror. Both the women in traditional slashers and the builder-hero in Death Warrant face the threat of castration in the pivotal slashing scenes, in which the sadistic-voyeuristic look of the camera reveals their lack, punishing them for flaunting their feared difference in scenes of sexual spectacle. Van Damme, however, endures the tortures and turns the slasher killer himself into a repulsive spectacle corpse. In the process, the normality and naturalness of his own built body is restored, reinstating an essential masculinity and reclaiming built muscles from the realm of monstrous lack. By the end of Death Warrant, masculinity has proven itself to be more than mere trugace and special effects which the horror monster employs to "make believe".

**Hannu Eerikäinen**

**Life in the Laboratory: From Science Fiction to Theory-Fictions. A Metamorphosis of the Body, Machine and Desire in Post-Theory**

Arching between the ideas of the "superman" (Nietzsche) and the human being as a part of the machine (Wiener), the article traces changes in the experience and understanding of embodiment in terms of technology. Taking as its starting point the pronounced role of the body in postmodern culture (from fitness and wellness to genetics and biotechnology) the author suggests that instead of traditional utopias of an ideal social form, the body can be seen nowadays to constitute a new utopia. While in the everyday cultural practices this kind of body utopia is a dream

world of the postmodern subject, in cultural theory it has its equivalent in the mode of theorization which the author refers to as post-theory, a way of writing that produces its own objects understood as theory-fictions.

In this sense, the body in terms of the postmodern can be seen as a "laboratory", as a site of experimentation whether in the life-world of the subject or in academia as a theory object in cultural theory. Drawing on the "ironic political myth" of the cyborg created by Donna Haraway, the author plays with the idea that the contemporary fascination of human/machine hybrids, cyborgs and prosthetics has constituted a para-world of theory-fictions that have parallels in the machine dreams of futurists and the high hopes of prosthetics exemplified by Ferdinand Sauerbruch, the

German master surgeon. Finally, referring to Stelarc, the techno-artist, and various cyber-theorists juggling with the Stelarcian ideas of the body modification, the author elaborates with ironic understatement on a critical stance called the posthuman.

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