

Mark A. McCutcheon, CLL & CIS

Frankenstein as a figure of globalization in Canadian cinema

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Outline

- postcolonial pop culture in Canada
- *Frankenstein's* "technological" myth
- Filming Frankensteinian globalization
 - *Videodrome* (1982)
 - *Possible Worlds* (2000)
 - *The Corporation* (2003)

Postcolonial pop culture in Canada

- "triangulated" between US and UK
- ambivalent about US entertainment
- neo-colonial trade: a case for revisiting media imperialism?
- preoccupations with technology
 - Innis, Grant, McLuhan's "global village"

Frankenstein as "modern myth"

- The story's "technological reduction"
 - allegory of technological risk
 - based on reductive adaptations:
 - Doctor makes creature, creature runs amok
- Technological crises = global crises
- Globalization: emerging target for "modern myth"

Videodrome (1982)

- Cronenberg's early films:
 - *Frankenstein* stories of corporate research that breeds monsters
- *Videodrome*
 - Frankensteinian media imperialism
 - Corporate setting ("Spectacular Optical")
 - Parodies McLuhan and "global village"

Videodrome (1982)

- The "strange new world" of Brian O'Blivion
 - a parody of McLuhan
 - a cyberpunk twist on uncanny "brain-in-a-jar"



Marshall McLuhan

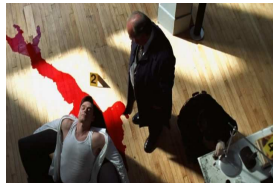


Brian O'Blivion

Possible Worlds (2000)



- George Barber as company man in search of identity

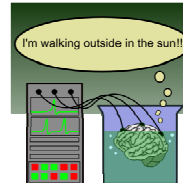


- George Barber as brain-robbed murder victim

Possible Worlds (2000)



- Dr. Kleber shows a detective his rat brain in a jar



- Brain-in-a-jar trope
 - Philosophical scenario
 - *Frankenstein* / science fiction figure

Talking heads, narrative paths, corporate worlds

Videodrome

- Corporate setting
- ↓
- O'Blivion's uncanny appearance
- ↓
- Hallucinatory worlds

Possible Worlds

- Hallucinatory worlds
- ↓
- Barber's anagnorisis
- ↓
- Corporate setting

Possible Worlds intertexts

- Gottfried Leibniz, 1710
 - “The best of all possible worlds”
- Metaphysical debates in philosophy
- World Social Forum
 - “Another world is possible”

The Corporation (2003)

- A primer on corporate globalization
- *Frankenstein* references recur as metaphor for corporation
 - “artificial ... monsters”
 - “amoral immortal” (Chomsky)
 - “monstrous obligations”

“The Frankenstein of globalization”

- These 3 films:
 - adapt *Frankenstein* to figure globalizing technologies & institutions
 - depict subjects of globalization as media-made monsters
- Frankenstein figures link Canadian ideas of the global to global ideas of Canada