

IT'S ALIVE! / FILM SERIES "ARTIFICIAL LIFE" **VRÄÄTH ÖHNER, HOLGER REICHERT, FRANZ MARKSTEINER**

"Fiction, according to its etymology, produces figures. Fictic, and figura are originally related to the German word "Teig" (dough) and the Greek word for wall, as this teicos obviously still consisted of pliable clay" (F. Kittler).

The fact that the film, especially in its historic beginnings, used mythical material to create artificial life, is certainly not a matter of chance: in a certain manner this creation is realized by film technology itself. The film only unfolds its effective liveliness at the moment of projection when the beings and things in the individual cadres awaken to a new life, when the the unmoving, successively strung together, suddenly begins to move. This life, even in its basic concept, is automatic, fictitious — not organic. Nevertheless, it is more than the sum of its lifeless parts. The revival of dead matter (on celluloid) appears to re-awaken those unthinkable forces which were first taken up in the ancient myth of the universe.

The stories of Homunculus, Alraune, Golem and Frankenstein are amongst the first that were shown in the cinema. Even Georges Melies who, of course, took the cinema into the field of the fictitious, took up, in 1900, the theme of the robot and puppet from Hoffman's tales, in his 2 minute production "Coppelia ou la Poupée animée". And just as these figures can only awaken to visible life on the screen, they, on their part, stimulate the new medium with their tales.

How can man give life to the non-living? Golem, Alraune and Frankenstein are possible answers to this question. Whereas the figure of Golem made from clay is animated in a mythical way in one single act of creation, the monster of Frankenstein is a product of scientific experiments performed with parts of corpses. On the other hand, Alraune is the first successful gene experiment.

Artificial people, either as clay figures, androids, clones or cyborgs, move along a dividing line, the equivalent of which is owed to the picture of mankind; "not being able to feel like a person, but resembling one and, nevertheless, to be a person wanting to feel, to love and to suffer(...)"¹.

Artificial people only always return in the picture of "natural" people, ultimately acting as doubles and in doing so draw attention to the body of the person "as being a restricted product composed of organs that are organized around the divided framework of the skeleton"². And paradoxically, the ability to produce people by people proves its own imperfection and interchangeability. In other words, just as the machine can only be produced only by man — not delivered, this does not mean that the ability to manufacture a machine is the redemption of the dream of Creation: it is not the new man who leaves the scientific laboratory, but incomplete creatures despairing at their imperfection. "The fundamental mistake of the writer and the actor: to make Golem human, to put him in a fate, contrary to his nature, that is completely strange to him. For, as regards Golem and feeling; creating him with the desire to be human means: to belittle him, to humiliate him and dismiss him. The Golem of the legends is a bound and humble angel, a daemon, an active divine force imprisoned in clay. The mourning for him is the mourning for the banished, for the enslaved, for the ruler as a servant."³

This effort made by the machine to be man, runs like a silver thread throughout the horror and science fiction genre. The put-in-the-world feature of the figures is irreversible, with no

escape, final. Melodramatic constellations result from this which, behind the technical machine-like model of mankind, can now actually let man realize, and since Melies, continue to come back. Golem, the monster of Frankenstein and the replicants in Blade Runner had to fail because the "immanent paradox of the newly modelled body is, at the same time, a philosophical machine to represent the realization of a myth"⁴, leading to the conflict with their respective Makers.

MAX 404 from Aaron Lipstadt's film "Android", who, in his technological humanity, desires nothing more than to get to know the Chicago from old films, rebels against his Maker the moment he realizes that he is not being treated by him as a person, but as an exchangeable machine. Like his predecessors, he also recognizes him as being his persecutor, by whom he was created not for his own sake, but in order to satisfy the researcher's urge for science set loose.

The creatures are generally deprived of humanity as a humanistic value. In the case of the replicants — artificial slaves for working on colonized planets — humanization is only driven to the point where it serves its more efficient functionalization. Those who try to escape this fate in Ridley Scott's "Blade Runner", not only revenge themselves, but also their ancestors. If one observes the artificial creatures of the genres (with their ramifications) it becomes noticeable that they overcome their physical uselessness. Their real tragedy remains the same, however, as long as there are (still) people.

NOTES

1 Zweig, Arnold: Der Golem. In: Jörg Schweinitz (Publisher): Prolog vor dem Film. Leipzig 1992, p.422.

2 Tibon-Comillot, Michel: Die transfigurativen Körper. In: Dietmar Kamper, Christoph Wulf (Publisher): Die Wiederkehr des Körpers. Frankfurt/m. 1982, P. 157

3 Zweig, as above, P. 423

4 Tibon Comillot, as above, P. 153 f

SELECTION OF FILMS:

ALRAUNE

Deutschland 1927, R: Henrik Galeen, P: Ama, V: offen, L: ca. 98 min, D: Brigitte Helm, Paul Wegener, Ivan Petrovich, Mia Pankau u.a.

Alraune ist das Produkt der künstlichen Befruchtung einer Dirne mit dem Sperma eines Lustmörders, das diesem im Augenblick seiner Hinrichtung abgenommen wurde.

ANDROID / DER ANDROID

USA 1982, R: Aaron Lipstadt, P: New World Pictures / Android, V: Warner-Columbia, L: ca. 80 min, D: Klaus Kinski, Don Oppen, Norbert Weiser, Kendra Kirchner, Crofton Hardester, Brie Howard u.a.

Der Android Max 404 lebt zusammen mit dem Wissenschaftler Dr. Daniel auf einer verlassenen Raumstation und sehnt sich nach einem Leben auf der Erde, die er nur aus alten Filmen kennt.

BLADE RUNNER (DIRECTOR'S CUT)

USA 1982, R: Ridley Scott, P: Blade Runner Partnership, V: Warner-Columbia, D: Harrison Ford, Rutger Hauer, Sean Young, Daryl Hannah, Edward James Olmos u.a.

L.A. 2019. Die Geschichte eines Spezialdetektivs, eines Blade Runners, der vier künstliche Menschen ausfindig und unschädlich machen soll.

THE BRIDE OF FRANKENSTEIN / FRANKENSTEINS BRAUT

USA 1935, R: James Whale, P: Universal, V: offen, L: ca. 70 min, D: Boris Karloff, Colin Clive, Valery Hobson, Elsa Lanchester u.a.

Dr. Praetorius, der bereits künstliche Menschen in der Größe von Marmeladengläsern geschaffen hat, versucht Frankenstein davon zu überzeugen, daß nur ein entsprechendes weibliches Wesen sein Monstrum bändigen könne.

THE BRIDE OF RE-ANIMATOR

USA 1989, R: Brian Yuzna, V: New Vision, L: ca. 92 min, D: Jeffrey Combs, Ruth Abbott, Claude Earl Jones, u.a.

Mit seinem Kollegen Cain organisiert Herbert West Extremitäten aus dem Krankenhaus und belebt sie mit seinem Elixier. Ziel des Experiments ist die Wiederbelebung einer Frau.

EDWARD SCISSORHANDS / EDWARD MIT DEN SCHERENHÄNDEN

USA 1991, R: Tim Burton, D: Vincent Price, Johnny Depp, Wynona Ryder u.a. Moderne Märchenversion des Frankensteinthemas.

FRANKENSTEIN — THE MAN WHO MADE A MONSTER / FRANKENSTEIN

USA 1931, R: James Whale, PV: Universal, L: ca. 71 min, D: Boris Karloff, Colin Clive, Mae Clarke, John Boles u.a.

Der junge Wissenschaftler Herbert von Frankenstein ist besessen von der Idee, aus toter Materie ein lebendes Wesen zu schaffen.

DER GOLEM, WIE ER IN DIE WELT KAM

Deutschland 1920, R: Paul Wegener, Carl Boese, P: Ufa (Pagu), L: ca. 87 min, D: Paul Wegener, Albert Steinrück, Lyda Salmonova, Ernst Deutsch u.a.

16. Jahrhundert: Rabbi Loew, der geistliche Führer der jüdischen Gemeinschaft in Prag haucht einer Lehmstatue Leben ein.

HARDWARE / M.A.R.K. 13

England 1990, R: Richard Stanley, P: Wicked Films / Palace Pictures, V: Metropol, L: ca. 93 min, D: Dylan McDermott, Stacey Travis, John Lynch, William Hootkins u.a.

Ein in der "Zone" gefundener Kopf eines Cyborgs erwacht, mit anderen Teilen zusammenschweißt, zu neuem Killer-Leben. Postatomarer Kultfilm.

ISLAND OF LOST SOULS / INSEL DER VERLORENEN SEELEN

USA 1933, R: Erle C. Kenton, P: Paramount, L: ca. 70 min, D: Charles Laughton, Richard Arlen, Bela Lugosi, Leila Hyams u.a.

Ein schiffbrüchiger Seefahrer wird an den Strand einer geheimnisvollen Insel gespült und trifft dort auf den Wissenschaftler Moreau, der mit der Evolution spielt und aus Tieren Menschen machen will.

DIE NACKTE UND DER SATAN

BRD 1959, R: Victor Trivas, P: Rapid, V: Prisma, L: ca. 96 min, D: Horst Frank, Michel Simon, Paul Dahlke, Karin Kernke, Christiane Maybach

Der begnadete Wissenschaftler Abel kann einzelne menschliche Gliedmaßen isoliert voneinander am Leben erhalten.

"Von blutiger Leinwand herab trieft erstes deutsches Nachkriegsgrauen!"

(Jürgen Nowak, SOL)

PARTS: THE CLONUS HORROR / SAAT DES WAHNSINNS — THE CLONUS HORROR

USA 1979, R: Robert S. Fiveson, P: Group I, V: IMV, L: ca. 87 min, D: Timothy Donnelly, Dick Sargent, David Hooks, Keenan Wynn, Peter Graves u.a.

In einem geheimnisvollen Institut werden Clones von Politikern und Wissenschaftern hergestellt, die im Bedarfsfall als Organspender dienen.

RE—ANIMATOR / RE—ANIMATOR — DER TOD IST ERST DER ANFANG

USA 1985, R: Stuart Gordon, P: Empire Pic. / Re-Animated Prod. / Brian Yuzna Prod., V: Vestron (Video), L: ca. 95 min, D: Jeffrey Combs, Ruth Abbott, Barbara Crampton, David Gale u.a.

Medizinstudent Herbert West hat ein Serum entwickelt, das Tote wiederbelebt.

SECONDS / DER MANN, DER ZWEIMAL LEBTE

USA 1966, R: John Frankenheimer, P: Paramount, V: Paramount, L: ca. 106 min, D: Rock Hudson, Salome Jens, John Randolph, Will Geer, Jeff Corey u.a.

Eine Geheimorganisation stattet Menschen mit einer neuen Identität, einem neuen Aussehen und einer perfekten Vergangenheit aus.

THE STEPFORD WIVES / DIE FRAUEN VON STEPFORD

USA 1975, R: Bryan Forbes, P: Palomar Pictures / Columbia, V: offen, L: ca. 110 min, D: Catherine Ross, Paula Prentiss, Peter Masterson u. a.

Alle Männer von Stepford ersetzen ihre Frauen durch gleich aussehende Roboter, die sich ihren Wünschen bedingungslos unterordnen.

TETSUO II / THE BODY HAMMER

Japan 1991, R: Shinya Tsukamoto, P: Kajyu Theater/ Toshiba EMI, V: Tetsuo II Head Office, L: ca. 83 min, D: Tomoroh Taguchi, Nobo Nanaoka, Shinya Tsukamoto u.a.

Aus Zorn über die Entführung seines Sohnes mutiert Taniguchi Tomoo zu einer tödlichen Cyber-Waffe.