



Mary Shelley Biopic (2017): A filmic discourse analysis

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Abstract

This work analyzes the discourses that compound *Mary Shelley* biopic (2017), concerning male domination and female resistance. To do so, the specific objectives are: to verify how this domination permeates the main character with a view to publish her work *Frankenstein*; identify the elements that cross the relation author-character in the biopic; describe these elements into categories within a filmic discourse analysis. The theoretical-methodology contribution is Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), within the dialectical-relational developed by Fairclough (1989; 2001) in conjunction with the filmic analysis. The corpus of the analysis is constituted by 02 long takes. It is used the Bakhtinian categories (1984), which are dialogism, polyphony and alterity, followed by the categories of Fairclough (2001), which are intertextuality and presupposition.

Keywords: *Mary Shelley* biopic; Filmic analysis; Critical Discourse Analysis; Male domination; Female resistance



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movie art >>> negative film

Mary Shelley Biopic (2017): A filmic discourse analysis

Thanya Araujo and Livia Fernanda Silva

Introduction

“Such a gifted woman, you are ready to get married!” “If you do not have kids, you are going to be alone!” “Does he give you a hand around the house?” “Men don’t cry!” By listening to such statements, an issue arises on reflecting about what determines the role of being a woman and the role of being a man in society. In addition, these popular sayings call into question the function of marriage between a man and a woman, since they suggest that the woman is a domestic helper and forced to bear children. On the other hand, the man only “helps”, because household chores belong to the “weaker sex”. He still must demonstrate that he is an unshakable man, because if he demonstrates weakness, he has his masculinity put to test.

For this reason, studying women who made history has become a constant search for identity and investigate them make a real difference. In this way, knowing *Mary Shelley* in her biopic, which was directed by Haifaa al-Mansour, has increasingly become stimulant. The issues arise by realizing the magnitude of her work which has caused such impact until today, to the point of standing out its creator. Knowing *Frankenstein’s* book is to realize that it is all about its author, once she is a woman who went through many changes which are reflected in her work and that

is why it is relevant to discuss the representation of women in the movie image that has been deserving attention due to the soft increase of female gaze on movies and the discursive meaning in this field.

On that basis, the research is prominent in terms of investigating the discourses about male domination and female resistance in Mary Shelley biopic, so it is attempted to answer the following question: *How do the discourses that compound Mary Shelley biopic (2017) occur, in relation to male domination and female resistance?*

Through debates on the gender social roles, which are about male domination and female resistance thematic that occurs in the movie, the theoretical and methodological context of this research focus on Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) supported by Fairclough (2001; 1989) and ground the discussion with authors who do not follow this methodology, but they enrich it, such as Bakhtin (1984), for selecting the categories of “dialogism”, “polyphony” and “alterity”. There is still the delimitation on filmic image with Aumont (1993) and Vanoye and Goliot-Lété (1994).

Feminist investigations start with the questions about the unheard female voice. The questions about women’s invisibility historically, lead to actions against this anonymousness. Among these actions, some movements occurred in the 19th century stand put, as “the first wave

of feminism”, whose actions were related to white and middle-class women, but when they achieved their goals, they became stagnant on activism (Louro, 2107).

In the late 1960s, “the second wave”, in which, according to Louro (2017, p. 15), “[...] beside the political and social issues, it will turn to properly theoretical constructions”¹. During this period, the word sex starts to be questioned and the gender concept becomes problematized. The word ‘sex’, which refers to biological constitution as female and male and the word ‘gender’, which refers to the culture programmed of male and female in which gender categories are socially constructed.

Problematizing gender is to deconstruct these male/ female, dominant/ dominated dichotomies. According to Louro (2017), the subjects who constitute this dichotomy are not only men and women with no background, but men and women from different classes, races, religions, ages and so on, that is, the gender constitutes the identity of the subjects.

Despite the shortage of biopics of women related to the men ones, both of them have different focus, being divided by areas. It is well known that they are strict areas for women, unlike men, because in biographical movies of women, the areas are summed up in three: royalty, entertainment and notoriety. According to Hollinger (2020), during the 1930’s and 1940’s,

biopics of women are strict to represent queens; in the 1950's, biographical movies in the entertainment area start to stand out, especially the musical ones and this strengthens the growth of the variety of biopics of women.

Bingham (1992) complements by saying that there is a shortage of filmic biography because, partly, a few women conquered something worthy of being under the media spotlight. As indicated by the author, the state of victimhood and suffering is what draws the attention.

However, Hollinger (2020) discusses that in spite of this state of victimhood and suffering have made a contribution towards popularity of biopics of women, these elements are not responsible to attract the spectators, but the possibility of the main character triumph over her suffering.

In agreement with the author, female biopics may have more autonomy whether they start to have a female point of view, so this victimhood approach of the main character can be subverted. Today, female filmmakers have taken the male gaze beneath the main character, identifying with her story, in search of telling it with respect in a manner which is inclusive of women.

The cinema has its own language, once narratives are conducted and ideas are transmitted by it and it also has its own writing which may be interpreted in different styles. Martin (2005), when talking about this particular writing of the cinema, notes that the cinema has become a mean of communication, of information, of advertising, which does not deny its quality of art". In this context of film language, the image is the central element.

Not only the movie image represents a movement, but also it is really on the move. It is also important to talk about the sound, which is a defining artifact that adds some real meaning. These factors together with others ones are what constitute film language.

In speaking of cinema and language, in the cinema of women context, it is reiterated the question asked by Gubernikoff (2016) when she wonders whether a female film language exists and her answer is that (2016, p. 36) the performance of women in cinema does not produce a new language related to it, but this action may turn heads for new ideologies which concern the image and she concludes that what should be done, therefore, is to plan an avant-garde cinema, which does not mean to break with the identification process proposed by the traditional cinema. However, through an artistic process, to provide an opportunity for speaking up on female concerns, unnoticed by society until then.

The authors are right when they claim that the woman does not produce a new film language, because she is able to react to language domination and contest it, whether playing a character or behind the scenes. Although there is no female film language, the mainstream cinema codes may be challenged just as the pleasure provided by it.

There are elements that contribute to the relation between the real and the movie image and only the ones which are part of the analysis are mentioned here and based on Nogueira (2010) and Vanoye and Goliot-Lété (1994):

- Screenplay;
- Narrator;
- Framing;
- Shot (Extreme Long Shot – the focus is in the surrounding area; Medium Shot – it generally shows the character from the waist to the top of the head; Medium Close Up – it frames the subject from the top of the head to a line just below the chest; Close Up – it captures the face of the character);
- Angles (Eye – Level Camera Angle – it is the front-facing camera; High Angle – the camera points down on the subject from above; Low Angle – the camera looks up at an object or subject above; Dutch Angle Shot and Rear Angle);
- Camera movements (zoom; tracking shot – the camera moves alongside what it is recording);
- Lighting;
- Color (from the psychological approach by Heller, 2013);
- Sound (soundtrack; sound effects; dialogues; and noise);
- Costume;
- Set.

It is assumed Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), once it is crucial to search the interdiscourses between the biographies of Mary Shelley, told through her letters and her filmic

construction, the meanings result of the relations among these discourses. From the perspective that discourse appreciate language as social practice, it is adopted Social Theory of Discourse in this research, a position of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) developed by Fairclough (2001), who considers language as intermingled with social life, and his dialectical-relational approach raises from that, because, for him, language is not a total individual act.

The theory developed by the author comes from a model that conceives the analysis in three dimensions of discourse, which are, text, discursive practice and social practice. The textual analysis with the descriptive stage, ordered in four items: ‘vocabulary’, ‘grammar’, ‘cohesion’ and ‘textual structure’.

Discursive practice comprehends the process of production, distribution and consumption of the texts. In this regard, intertextuality means dialogical relations between texts and other texts, that is, texts with parts of other texts. These parts may express contradictions, agreement, ironies and so on.

Regarding discourse as social practice, the aspects that compound it are about the concept of discourse related to ideology and power as hegemony. Thus, Fairclough (2001) states that when considering language as discourse and as social practice, it is not only about analyzing texts and even less considering analyzing only the process of production and interpretation, but its full conception in analyzing the relation among texts, interactions and contexts.

In this way, irony is a category present in the dialogues from the movie. According to Fairclough (2001), to describe irony is like saying something that means another thing, such as it is done in traditional studies, but this is a limited study. In agreement with him, it is necessary

to consider the category as an ironic utterance, that is, a conflict between its real meaning and a negative attitude towards it.

In certain situations, there is a need to say something without actually saying that, and to do that, it resorts to the implied information which is distinguished in two categories that are presupposition and presumption. Presupposition is a type of implied information emphasized by the linguist who perceives it as a proposition accepted by the text producer as something already determined. When speaking of it, Ducrot (1987) points out the difference between presupposition and presumption:

According to a familiar expression, presumption allows something “without saying it while it is said”. In spite of some analogies, the situation is quite different for presupposition. This one belongs to the literal meaning. (Ducrot, 1987, p. 19, emphasis of the author).¹

In this framework, Orlandi (1995) presents interesting contributions to distinguish presumptions, in agreement with the concept of Ducrot (1987) and silence. The first one is a scheme set up between the said and the unsaid, while silence does not concern to the said, because, for her, it protects itself and remains in silence and signifies, its meaning does not come from the meaning of words. Dialogism, together with polyphony and alterity are the categories which support the research and grant it an innovation to cinema.

In consonance with Bakhtin (1984), dialogism means an answer from an enunciation to another one, by the fact that utterances are messengers between the history of people and the history of language. This takes to Stam (1992), who seeks the relevance of this category for the cinema and culture in general, because the word dialogism has a wealth of philosophical and literary connotations. He adds that discursive practices arise in a culture opened and immeasurable possibilities and this characterizes dialogism.

And for this reason, this word does not only mention the relation between the text and its others, or only perceptible forms, as the controversy and the parody, but also it refers to more subtle forms which owns relation with connotative meaning: “the pauses, the implicit attitude, the words left unspoken, words that might be educated” (Stam, 1992, p. 74).²

Polyphony differs from dialogism as it is not only related to this discursive interrelation, but also to an orchestration of several voices in discourse. Bakhtin uses this concept to literary analysis in Dostoevsky’s, in which the two of them “dialogue”. About this orchestration of voices, He reinforces that “[...] the hero’s consciousness, his feeling, and his desire [...] are enclosed on all sides, as if within a band, by the author’s consummating consciousness of the hero and his world [...]” (Bakhtin, 1984, p. 11). As a result, a movie may be polyphonic since it is composed by several orchestrated voices in the work, in relation to the characters, the author (director) and the reader (spectator).

The combination of CDA with filmic analysis, by the categories of analysis that are intertextuality, presupposition, irony, dialogism, polyphony and alterity, allows comprehending how the symbolic elements produce meanings. It is important to unveil what is beyond the movie, since it is composed by so many voices and it is worth asking: What does this movie mean about Mary Shelley? Why did it say something that it was not said in other words? And why was it not said in these other words?

Therefore, a direct observation is carried out to watch the movie since the first moment it became familiar for the researcher, with the audio content in English and the subtitle in Portuguese. The next stage consists of a fluctuating reading to choose the sequence of parts of the movie and their transcription of the dialogues.

To conduct the descriptive stage, firstly the movie is divided into sequences. It is not, however, the movie montage entirely, but the selection of two specific sequences which follows a chronological order: sequence 01 – the relationship between Mary and her stepmother and sequence 02 – an argument between Mary and Percy about the publication of *Frankenstein*.

The categories are aligned with the elements of film language, namely, the character, the scenography (the elements which compound the scene – costume and set), framing, shot, lighting, movement and discourse (the production of meanings on imagery dialogical relations).

Subsequently, the dialogues are transcribed which are developed by the main character in the analyzed scenes. The descriptive process led to the creation of tables, which are presented further ahead, and allows a more didactic organization about the analyzed elements and probably provides a better understanding over them.

After this process, the last stage considers the data interpretation obtained through the categories and aesthetical elements presented in each table, which leads to an explanation on how male domination is viewed in the movie and how the imagery dialogues occur between the character and the director.

The biopic is produced by Amy Baer, from Gidden Media and Ruth Coady and Alan Monoley. Directed by Haifaa al-Mansour, who also contributes to the script whose writer is Emma Jensen. Filmed around six weeks, in Ireland and Luxembourg, during February and March 2016, it is about the story of Mary Wollstonecraft Godwin, author of one of the most gothic romance famous all over the world– *Frankenstein, or the Modern Prometheus* (1818) – although many people are unaware of the authorship. Born in August 30th, 1797, she is the daughter of William Godwin, an anarchist novelist philosopher and Mary Wollstonecraft, radical writer known by the revolutionary works *A Vindication for the Rights of Men* (1790) and *A Vindication for the Rights of Woman* (1792).

According to the biographies written about Mary, - it is used the ones written by Marshall (1889) and Sampson (2018) in this work – before meeting William Godwin, her mother had a quick relationship with an American adventurer Gilbert Imlay, which results in her first daughter, Fanny, but she is not represented in the movie. With radical ideas, Mary's relatives do not want to get married at first, because William understood marriage as one of the worst laws ever. However, with her wife pregnant, they decided to make their relationship official to legitimize the baby.

After a few days, the baby was born and Mary's mother dies due to a generalized infection during the childbirth.

Even not knowing her mother, Mary is, in fact, influenced by her and also by her father, by having an enlightened childhood by their revolutionary ideas. Sampson (2018) describes that many intellectual figures visited Sir Godwin and he allowed Mary to listen to their conversations, so she grows up amidst an intellectual and cultural atmosphere at that time.

Her father gets married once again, a widower who had a couple of kids, Charles and Jane, who later prefers to be called Claire, Mrs. Godwin does not maintain a friendly relationship with her stepdaughter Mary, which is made clear in the biopic. In opposition to the relation with her father's wife, Mary becomes close to Claire.

At the age of 16, Mary met the poet Percy Shelley and they both runaway together, because they declare that they are adapted to free love. In this elopement, they take Claire with them. The history becomes more stimulating due to the fact that Percy is married to Harriet and she is expecting their second child, but according to him, they are not together anymore.

Though Mary's father has an opinion against the institution of marriage, because he considers it an oppressive law, Godwin does not agree with his daughter's relationship, even more because of the elopement. Percy is the son of a wealth baron, but they do not have a good father-son relationship. Still, Percy lives upon borrowing parts of his testament that have high interest rates. Thus, the elopement scandal spreads, and the couple loses many friends and money. In the meantime, their first daughter is born prematurely, but she dies a few days later. The movie presents the pain of Mary clearly at this moment, once the character dreams about the baby time and time again, just as it is recorded in her diaries: "I am left alone to my own thoughts, and do

not read to diver them, they always come back to the same point – that I was a mother and am so no longer” (Marshall, 1889, p. 32).

As time went on, Mary, Percy and Claire stay for a few months at the house of the poet Lord Byron, where there is another guest, the Italian doctor Polidori. During this period, Byron had a quick relationship with Claire, and she became pregnant. Still in the host house, Mary begins to write *Frankenstein*, when Byron proposes a bet among them to write the best ghost story.

Some years later, Mary gives birth to a child, Percy Florence, and this son becomes her company until her old ages, because her husband had died in a shipwreck while sailing with his friends. After losing her babies, Mary still has to struggle to get her name recognized in the authorship of *Frankenstein*, a book first published on the condition of anonymity and to make things even worse, her husband signs the preface, which led many to think that the book’s authorship belonged to him.

For this reason, the movie focus on Mary’s life, over 16-18 years old, the period when she begins to write her masterpiece, with the intent to present the correlation between her life and the book’s issue. Once her authorship is brought into question, the movie proposes to give her credits back that she merits.

Haifaa al-Mansour is the first female director from Saudi Arabia, a place where the women do not own the same rights as the ones who live in the Western culture. She directed some works, such as *Women Without Shadows* (2005) documentary and *Wajda* (2012) movie and she always shed light on issues considered taboos for her works, especially, issues concerned to the condition of woman in society.

SEQUENCE 01 - SYNOPSIS: Mrs. Godwin, Mary and Claire are doing the household chores. Mrs. Godwin and Mary have an argument because she suspects that her stepdaughter has an affair with Percy and it makes Mary bad-tempered, once her stepmother compares her to her dead mother for fearing that the affair may bring the family's reputation down.

Figure 01 – Mary Shelley (00:35:05)



Figure 02 – Mary Shelley (00:35:21)



Figure 03 – Mary Shelley (00:35:25)

Figure 04 – Mary Shelley (00:35:34)

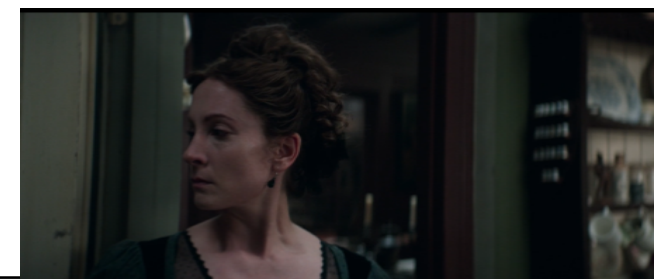
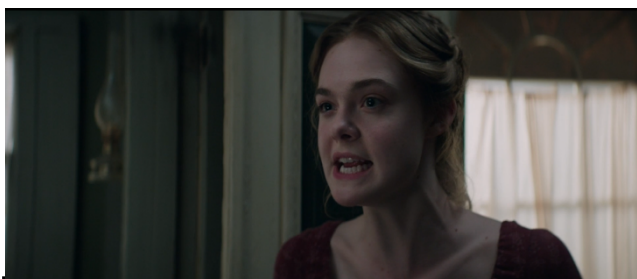
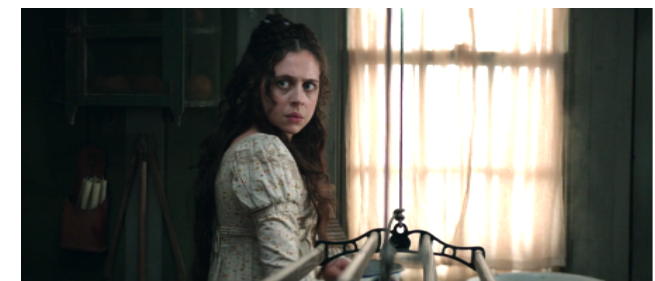


Figure 05 – Mary Shelley (00:35:52)

Figure 06 – Mary Shelley (00:35:54)

Figure 07 – Mary Shelley (00:36:10)

Figure 08 – Mary Shelley (00:36:15)

Table 01 – Sequence 01 with the analysis description

Mrs. Godwin: Mr. Shelley seems to be suffering from some sort of emotional anguish. Perhaps he was disappointed to find that you do not cultivate the same public feats of wantonness as your dear departed mother.

Mary: I would ask that you not speak ill of my mother.

Sra. Godwin: Oh, but of course! How dare anyone utter one word of turnabout a deceased person of such eminent merit? At least you have not inherited that strange deficit of hers. That foolish impulsiveness which mistook wretchedness with emancipation.

Mary: I have inherited nothing, but a fire in my soul. And I will no longer allow you, or anyone else, to contain it.

Sra. Godwin: Are you really involved with that whoremonger? I hope those rumors prove false. Just when we have found an avenue for our salvation, you go and turn our fortunes into yet another scandal

Mary: Do you believe I care at all for my reputation? Or yours? I fear nothing, but letting your meaningless words scare me away from my desires. (Mary leaves the kitchen). (MARY SHELLEY, 2017).

Framing/ Shot	Angle	Movement
Figures 1 and 5 – Extreme Long Shot	Figure 1 – Rear Angle	Figure 5 – Zoom-out
Figures 2, 3, 6, 7 and 8 – Medium Close Up	Figures 4 and 12 – Eye Level	
Figure 4 – Medium Shot	Figures 2 and 3 – The Dutch angle	
	Figure 6 – High Angle	
	Figure 7 – Low Angle	
Color	Sound	Lighting
The set colors are in harmony with the women’s dresses	Figures 1 to 7 – dialogue Figure 8 – Mary’s footsteps	Clear illumination with natural light

Set	Costume
The Godwin's house. Mrs. Godwin, Mary and Claire are in the kitchen, what is shown in the first figures: a kitchen cabinet with the dishes behind Mrs., Godwin. Mary and her stepmother are next to the table and Claire is next to the window.	Mary wears a red-purple dress, Claire wears a dress in the sand color and Mrs. Godwin wears a green and black dress.

Note. Table adapted from Silva and Araújo (2021, p. 2010)

The sequence begins with the presentation of the characters in the set. The three ladies are in the kitchen. Mary did not cultivate a good relationship with her stepmother. When they both talk, the camera goes from Extreme Long Shot to Medium Close Up, which demonstrate that the dialogue between them is what really matters. Mrs. Godwin's speech is full of irony when she says evil about Mary's mother and, at the same time, she calls her as "dear mother".

Initially putting it politely, Mary asks her not to talk about her mother, but Mrs. Godwin provokes more discussion using irony, when she says: "How dare anyone utter one word of turnabout a deceased person of such eminent merit?". It is noted that it is a type of dialogism, because it is about using the word of the other to be aggressive.

Her speech continues makes it clear that the Mrs. Godwin does not think that Mary's mother had an eminent merit. Although she says that, the continuation really is what the stepmother believes to be the real acknowledgment of Mary Wollstonecraft: "At least you have not inherited that strange deficit of hers. That foolish impulsiveness which mistook wretchedness with emancipation".

In this context, the costume has an important rule, once the garments are elegant and are in harmony with the set colors and also help constructing each character. Mrs. Godwin wears a green and black dress, which, according to Heller (2013), the green color is the color of the monsters

represented in literature, the color of venomous animals. So much so, that Frankenstein's monster, although it was never mentioned its color along the story, it is represented in this color in cinema and this corroborates the constructed image of the wicked stepmother.

Contradictorily, Mary wears a purple-red dress and her costume is consistent with her attitude towards this scene, since Heller (2013) affirms, red is the color of the fire, of the war, so it is a color that gives strength and this is noticed by the answer she gave to Mrs. Godwin: "I have inherited nothing, but a fire in my soul. And I will no longer allow you, or anyone else, to contain it".

Precisely, polyphony is characterized by her position to defend her mother, in which her voice and the filmmaker's voice become one in this attitude and this is reinforced by the High Angle in figure 9. Here the camera looks down at Mrs. Godwin from above, making her smaller, metaphorically speaking, towards the subjective camera represented by Mary. Furthermore, there is a Low Angle in figure 7, in which the camera points Mary upwards, creating a sense of superiority.

On the subject of the daughter's heritage, there are dialogical characteristics explained by Bakhtin (1984), when he realizes the human being's life does not start in an axiological form, since his judgment is based on life that has already been given and valued; and so, his acts do not start from him, the person only gives continuity to them. There is a union of the person with his ancestry. The author empowers his positioning by questioning who I am, that is, this question is surrounded by others, such as, who my parents are and what my genealogy is.

The sequence ends when Mary leaves the kitchen indignantly and it is also highlighted by her heavy footsteps. A riot characterized by alterity, in which the director complements the surplus

of vision of the character empathetically, that is, the movie's author puts herself in the character's shoes and takes her pain because of the negative stepmother's speech about Mary's mother.

SEQUENCE 02 - SYNOPSIS: Mrs. William Godwin appreciates the book *Frankenstein* significantly to the point of holding a party and he invites some intellectuals to discuss about the book. Percy is also at this celebration. Mary gets unnoticed there.



Table 02 – Sequence 02 with the analysis description



Figure 09 – Mary Shelley (01:46:59)

Figure 10 – Mary Shelley (01:47:11)



Figure 11 – Mary Shelley (01:47:14)



Figure 12 – Mary Shelley (01:47:16)



Figure 13 – Mary Shelley (01:47:35)



Figure 14 – Mary Shelley (01:47:36)



Figure 15 – Mary Shelley (01:48:41)



Figure 16 – Mary Shelley (01:48:48)



Figure 17 – Mary Shelley (01:48:59)



Figure 18 – Mary Shelley (01:50:09)

Figure 19 – Mary Shelley (01:51:35)

Figure 20 – Mary Shelley (01:51:47)

Dialogue
<p>William: Gentlemen, welcome. Thank you for coming! We're gathered here to celebrate the success of <i>Frankenstein or The Modern Prometheus</i>. It's a remarkable story, asserting, as it does... the absolute human necessity for connection. From the moment Dr. Frankenstein's creature opens its eyes, it seeks the touch of its creator. But he recoils in terror, leaving the creature to its first of many experiences of neglect and isolation. And if only Frankenstein had been able to bestow upon his creation a compassionate touch...a kind word...What a tragedy might have been avoided. But it is a credit to the writer that it is these very thoughts that continue to run through our minds long after we've turned the final page of this book, which I know you all agree is one of the most complete and ... certainly one of the most original publications of our age. [guests agreeing in unison] As...[Pause. Mr. Godwin sees Mary at the door. Guests applauding. Percy takes the word].</p>
<p>Percy: Thank you! I know many of you wonder who could have written this horrific tale and why it published anonymously. I see some of you suggest that the work belongs to me. Indeed, you could say that the work would not even exist without my contribution. But to my shame...the only claim I remotely have to this work is inspiring the desperate loneliness that defines Frankenstein's creature. The author of <i>Frankenstein or The Modern Prometheus</i>, is, of course, Mary Wollstonecraft Godwin. [guests murmur] It is a work of singular genius and she is indebted to no one in its creation. [Mary goes next close to Percy]</p>
<p>Mary: Percy.</p>
<p>Percy: Mary.</p>



beautiful! But something volatile seethed within us. [She touches his face]. Behold...the monster galvanized, [He holds her hand] but if I had not learned to fight through the anguish, I would not have found this voice again. My

choices made me who I am. And I regret nothing! [They kiss and hold each other. The song “Mary’s decision” starts to play]		
Shot	Framing /	Angle
	Movement	
Figures 1, 3, 12, 15, 23 e 24 – Extreme Long Shot	Figures 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 8, 9, 10, 11, 13, 15, 16, 17, 18, 20 – frontal	Tracking shot that follows Mary’s arrival
Figures 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 13, 14, 16, 18, 19 – Medium Shot	Figures 5, 7, 14, 19, 21, 22, 23 e 24 – Level Camera Angle	Subjective camera that focuses mainly on Mary while she tries to hide behind the door.
Figures 17, 20, 21, 22 – Medium Close Up	Figure 12 – Rear Angle	
Color	Sound	Lighting
Red is the most intensive color in the set, especially in the door behind Mary. Red is opposed to brown in the set and in the guests’ clothes, and the clothes combine with brown and green.	Dialogue	Contrast between lightness and darkness using the lamps
	Instrumental song “Mary’s decision”, part of the movie’s soundtrack	
Set		Costume
Mr. Godwin’s bookstore. There are many guests.		It is a meeting of intellectual figures and the clothes highlight this. They also match with the clothing’s characteristics of that age. The men wear clothes with sober colors harmonically in brown, khaki and green. Mary wears gray clothes

Note. Table extracted from Silva and Araújo (2021, p. 210)

The scene begins with a tracking shot that follows Mary’s arrival and corresponds to the direction of her look at her center of interest: her father’s bookstore (figure 1). The interesting thing about the scene is that Mary is the only woman present in space considered masculine,

although she is hiding. Mr. Godwin starts the speech by praising the book *Frankenstein* while Mary listens to the speech hidden at the door entrance. The subjective camera corresponds to her gaze on various occasions.

The main character wears a gray dress, which according to Heller (2013) it is the color of the dark feelings. This is a reflection of a woman who has lost the joy of living. The author adds that this is also a camouflage color among the animals and the attempt of remaining hidden brings to mind the popular jargon “All cats are gray in the dark”, which suggests the metaphor that at night, all things seem to have the same color, a reference to Mary’s hiding place.

Percy takes the floor (figures 15 and 17). He says that many of them may think that he is the author of the book and adds that it would even not exist without his contribution. Percy had some contribution on it for certain according to Mary’s diaries. However, the contribution to which he refers reveals how their relationship inspired the work, which is asserted when he keeps on speaking: “But, to my shame...the only claim I remotely have to this work is inspiring the desperate loneliness that defines Frankenstein’s creature”. Based on this statement, one may notice the polyphony in the book highlights by Mary and her husband’s voices and also, a latent dialogicity in which the events in the character’s life provoke a response that is the book. Therefore, the romance written by Mary is carried by metaphors of her own life that is configured in the monster created by Frankenstein.

Then, Percy reveals that the author of Frankenstein is Mary. She, who was trying to hide before, goes to meet him now and after this revelation, she says: “I thought you’d left for good”. She says so because this scene is a sequel of the one that was about a couple’s argument, but now they both have slowed down their feelings.

The conversation follows up as talking about their last meeting when they put the blame on each other by the misery that occurred in their lives, but now they talk carefully with each other. Percy asserts that he never promised her a life without misery, but he underestimated the depths of despair and the weight of regret they were to endure. At that point, she claims that she lost everything to be with him: “Always set out to create something wonderful ... something beautiful! But something volatile seethed within us. Behold ... the monster galvanized, [He holds her hand] but if I had not learned to fight through the anguish, I would not have found this voice again”.

By considering the CDA proposed by Fairclough along with Bakhtinian categories, we can conclude that the movie director identifies with the character and feels the need to give voice to Mary Shelley’s story. The dialogical relations between the director and the character are perceptible, along the movie, as well as the polyphony and the alterity. It is evident the identification of them, so when the director takes Mary’s pain, when the character speaks, her voice is not produced alone. There is a harmony with the director’s voice, in which the struggle on constructing the character is also a struggle with herself.

Although Mary Shelley was a famous writer, her name is little known and her work stands out. In view of this, the movie, as a mean of promoting reflections on her story, highlights more romance with Percy and all the pain she went through than her writing attributes, leaving her intellectual figure aside vaguely.

Thereby, with a wider approach around her relationship, the character is represented as a submissive one, though in various occasions she acted opposed to a young lady of the 19th century would act. Indeed, the director’s gaze sheds light on the character, by positioning her as an author

who struggled hard to be recognized and many people still do not know her nowadays, and only her book is famous.

However, as mentioned in the books about female biopics, the character is represented by putting the love for her husband above her plans, always setting out to make their marriage work. Hence, this might be the result of a dominant gaze on the movie. Despite it was directed by a woman, some counterpoints were noticed between the dominant gaze and the character's resistance.

Around that, it was possible to perceive that cinema of women is an indispensable tool for opening spaces so women were no longer seen by the male gaze as an object. If once cinema was thought to be constituted by the reproduction of reality, today it constructs its own reality. The research object comes precisely from this construction that of the protagonist, through the filmmaker, as a pretext to a greater touch with reality.

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ENDNOTES:

¹ In the original: De acordo com uma expressão familiar, o subentendido permite acrescentar alguma coisa “sem dizê-la, ao mesmo tempo em que ela é dita”. Apesar de algumas analogias, a situação é bastante diferente para o pressuposto. Este pertence plenamente ao sentido literal (DUCROT, 1987, p. 19, grifo do autor).

² In the original: “as pausas, a atitude implícita, o que se deixou de dizer, o que deve ser deduzido” (STAM, 1992, p. 74).

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