Myth and the Monster Cinema

David H. Stymeist *University of Manitoba*

Abstract: The project of critical anthropology may be furthered by the incorporation of the popular film into the anthropological study of myth. A structuralist analysis of *King Kong* (1933) reveals it to be exemplary of a body of contemporary myth. Made and explicitly set during the Depression, the Depression itself in the form of the monster is ultimately slain by the organized forces of industrial technology. Monster movies collectively represent various threats to the survival of industrial civilization, and in the vanquishing of the monster, the supremacy of the technological and ideological infrastructure of modern of life is reaffirmed and valorized.

Keywords: critical anthropology, myth, monsters, popular cinema, King Kong, monster films

Résumé : Il est possible de faire progresser le projet de l'anthropologie critique en incorporant les films populaires dans l'étude anthropologique du mythe. Une étude structuraliste de *King Kong* (1933) révèle que le film est exemplaire d'un corps contemporain de mythes. Réalisé et délibérément situé pendant la grande crise économique, c'est la crise elle-même qui s'incarne sous la forme d'un monstre qui est finalement terrassé par les forces organisées de la technologie industrielle. Les films de monstre représentent collectivement des menaces diverses pesant sur la survie de la civilisation industrielle, et dans la victoire contre ces monstres, la suprémacie de l'infrastructure technologique et idéologique de la vie moderne se trouvent réaffirmée et valorisée.

Mots-clés : anthropologie critique, mythe, monstres, cinéma populaire, King Kong, films de monstres

The anthropological study of myth might be properly opened up to include for serious consideration as true myth certain of the more prominent and influential narratives of the mass cinema. The diverse forms and enthusiasms of the commercial cinema constitute branches of an active, ever-proliferating and ramifying mythic realm of the present day. Like more traditional myth, the stories of the mass cinema are shared public discourses having the power to live all at once, but separately, in the minds of the members of a social collectivity. The genre film inscribes multitudinously key representations of an "envisioned cosmic order," generating models of and models for reality (Geertz 1973:4). Entailing important disciplinary and ideological dimensions and active in the construction of social consensus, cinematic works also oversee and proclaim cultural change, encoding revised charters of the self and new ideal standards of thought and action.[1] Not merely an "idle rhapsody," the popular film is, as Malinowski has declared of myth, a "hard working, extremely important cultural force" (1926:13). At first national and now suddenly global in scope, the commercial cinema constitutes a cultural practice far exceeding in its significance the attention anthropologists have seen fit to bestow. This is unfortunate because anthropological perspectives on myth can illuminate the genre cinema, and by that illumination contribute substantially to an anthropological critique of contemporary society and its cultural practices (see Lem and Leach 2002; MacClancy 2002; Marcus 1999; Marcus and Fisher 1986). Critical anthropology seeks to interrogate social reality from an anthropological perspective and, in this, the contextualization of the genre cinema as generative of a body of contemporary myth allows a more profound appreciation of the popular film as a significant ideological force in today's world.

The production of commercial films is costly and almost always undertaken in a business climate rewarding profit. Accordingly, a successful film will usually be

followed by a sequel or sequels and by any number of imitative versions. A remarkably few cinematic works thereby become the kernel narratives for an entire cycle of films, a film genre. As Schatz puts it, "movies are made by filmmakers, whereas genres are "made" by the collective response of the mass audience" (1981:264). As with the myths traditionally studied by anthropologists, a narrative's survival, in whole or in part, depends on its incorporation into the public sphere of enacted culture. An emergent image of this process is not unlike one that might be formed of evolution by natural selection. Studios and independent filmmakers produce a great number of different kinds of movies (variants). Of these, a few are selected by audience response for repetition. With each repetition the public's familiarity with the original work or with its stock features deepens (reproductive success), and at some point a cinematic genre emerges as a "species" in the unfolding taxonomy of a living, contemporary mythology. Most commercial films do not realize even a measure of this acceptance and are destined to the relative oblivion of cinephile interest. Nevertheless, a very few popular films do seem to be genuinely mythic in their proportions, having achieved a recognition and cultural prominence comparable to that garnered by those shared public narratives anthropologists have long termed *myth*.

Whatever else they may be, myths are first and foremost "just stories." Like other stories they display a cast of characters: beings, forces, sentient things. Given multitudinous attributes, these characters together participate in fashioned circumstances and events. Character and event reach, in time, a meaningful point of conclusion. From Malinowski (1926) we learn of these narratives that they can serve as a charter for an institution or social group. With Leach (1954) we realize that they may also act as charter(s) with the emphasis on the plural, each version targetted for a particular faction or social unit and differing appropriately from the next. Along with Kluckhohn (1942), we come to appreciate that myths are entertaining as well. Characteristically told in group gatherings at times of comparatively little activity, these stories are enjoyed and valued in themselves. The application of methods and perspectives of structural linguistics to myth has engendered, along with much metaphysical murkiness, a general feeling that like other cultural practices (food, body decoration) myth may contain a deep structure, an internal code. The decoding of myth involves, according to some, the unpacking of its narrative structure to reveal a skeleton of circumstance and event: inversions, repetitions, homologies, transformations, central binary oppositions. Progressively, it has come to be understood that structural analyses are in themselves insufficient and that a contextualization of myth is necessary to appreciate its hold on people's imaginations. With Willis, many anthropologists have come to see in myth, as with the Fipa central myth, "a sociological charter of a depth and comprehensiveness which might well have surprised Malinowski, and that the language of that charter is a sort of ultra-Levi-Straussian one" (1967:532). Myth, like culture itself, is something that is generated, revised, and regenerated in response to economic and political forces. Thus, as Aucoin (2000) has illustrated in her discussion of women's myths in Fiji as insubordinate discourses, myths can be active in contradicting and subverting dominant meanings as well as in upholding and reinforcing them.

It has been suggested by Willis (1967:532) that we reserve the name of myth for those narratives that exhibit the proper structural form. I do not necessarily agree with this point of view, but in a somewhat ludic mood I felt it might be interesting to regard the eminently popular and influential 1933 film, *King Kong*, as if it were a myth collected in the field and submit it to a kind of anthropological analysis. Does the film have the requisite structural form? With due irony and deliberate naiveté I turned back to Levi-Strauss' original article on myth in the *Journal of American Folklore* (1955) and set out to apply the methodological procedure therein described to *King Kong*. The results were illuminating and provocative. The structure of the film is strikingly reminiscent of the kinds of internal deep structures one characteristically finds in more traditional myths. Clear-cut binary oppositions are presented and juxtaposed; there is a playing with repetition, inversion, homology, mediation; and the narrative has something important to say to an audience situated in a historically particular set of circumstances. A broadly structuralist analysis of the film, a consideration of its socio-economic context, a recognition of the work's popularity and enduring place in the consciousness of our time, along with a survey of similar successive films (monster movies), reveals *King Kong* to be exemplary of modern myth. The film, its central character and the image of that character's action have endured and have together engendered a spiral of like cinematic works, popular films responsive to the changing vicissitudes and complexities of life in the contemporary world.

Released in 1933 and immediately and phenomenally successful, *King Kong* was explicitly set in then-contemporary times. A small group of modern Americans sails to a mysterious South Pacific island to shoot a commercial film but returns instead with a living monster who ravages the city until slain by military aircraft on top of the Empire State Building. A long offshore establishing shot of New York City opens the work and the camera takes us dock-

side to the ship, *Venture*. In a complex mix of action and dialogue, the audience is introduced to Carl Denham, producer of "outdoor pictures"; the ship's captain, Englehorn; first mate, Jack Driscoll; and Weston, a theatrical agent. The *Venture* has three times the crew needed and Denham has a crate of gas bombs, "each one strong enough to knock out a herd of elephants." Weston has been summoned by Denham to provide an actress for his film, but he refuses citing the mystery and danger. In the following sequence, unmistakable images of the Depression are presented in documentary-style footage of a line-up outside the Woman's Home Mission as Denham prowls the city streets seeking to recruit a female lead for his film. He eventually encounters a destitute Ann Darrow being apprehended for theft by a heavily accented and obviously foreign-born sidewalk vendor. Darrow had reached out and almost, but not quite, touched one apple of a display. Denham intervenes and after feeding the starving, unemployed actress, promptly persuades her to join the expedition. During the voyage out from New York, Darrow and Driscoll become romantically involved and Darrow undergoes a screen test prefiguring what is to come. Denham also reveals their destination, Skull Island, a place where the descendants of a formerly more complex civilization have "slipped back" and are now confined to a long peninsula separated from the mainland by an enormous wall.

Arriving at the island, the sound of drums is heard and a shore party including Denham, Darrow and Driscoll interrupt a native ritual as Denham attempts to film the event. The chief offers to trade six local women for the blonde Ann Darrow, "the woman of gold," but his offer is refused. That night, however, Darrow is kidnapped by the islanders. Led outside the village, she is tied to a stone altar. To the sound of drums and chants the villagers line the top of the wall as King Kong, an enormous, sentient gorilla, arrives. He picks up a screaming Ann Darrow and walks off with her into the surrounding jungle. Darrow's absence is soon noticed aboard the *Venture*, and Denham, Driscoll and a group of armed sailors go ashore. They pass through the village and proceed to follow Kong and his human prize. At first light, the men from the *Venture* encounter a stegosaurus. Stunned by one of Denham's gas bombs, the dinosaur is brutally shot to death. Proceeding along, they come upon a lake and after building a raft, attempt to cross it. The raft is overturned by a brontosaurus and guns and gas bombs are lost. Some sailors drown and others are chased and bitten to death by the (actually vegetarian) brontosaurus. With the exception of Denham, who has tripped and is left behind to later return to the village and discuss the day's events with Captain Englehorn, the survivors flee across a log bridge spanning a deep ravine. Having placed Darrow high in a tree in a clearing, Kong returns to the log bridge and shakes off all the sailors except for Driscoll who has jumped into a small cave just beneath the lip of the ravine. Kong repeatedly attempts to pluck him out of his place of refuge but is warded off again and again as Driscoll stabs at the monster's fingers with a long, steel knife. The blade of the knife glints in the sun as it is also used to sever a vine up which a large, predatory lizard crawls. Diverted by Ann Darrow's screams when a *Tyrannosaurus rex* enters the clearing, Kong returns and wrestles with the dinosaur, eventually killing it by unhinging its jaw. He beats his chest and roars in triumph and, picking up Darrow, walks on. Driscoll, who has emerged from hiding, observes all of this and follows along.

Proceeding to a cave in his mountain top lair, Kong places Ann Darrow in a niche on the cave's wall where she is immediately threatened by a serpentine, plesiosaurus-like dinosaur. Kong attacks the creature which wraps itself around his throat, choking the monster ape, until it too is vanquished and killed. Victorious, Kong beats his chest and roars once again. He takes Darrow out onto an open ledge and begins peeling off her clothing, but diverted by Driscoll's dislodging of a boulder in the back of the cave, he leaves her and goes to investigate. Ann Darrow attempts to crawl away but is soon picked up by a giant pterodactyl. Alerted by her screams, Kong hurries back and reaches up to grasp the flying dinosaur which has taken Darrow and is flying off with her in his claws. Breaking and crushing the pterodactyl, Kong throws it down off the mountainside and triumphantly beats his chest and roars.

While Kong is engaged in battling the pterosaur, Darrow and Driscoll escape by descending a large vine. Kong returns and reels them in until both lose their grip and fall into a pool below. Unharmed, they emerge and begin running back to the village. Their imminent arrival is noticed, but soon Kong appears as well. Sailors and Skull Island natives press together against the gate of the wall as Kong beats his fists against it and attempts to push his way in. The heavy wooden bolt of the gate eventually cracks and an enraged King Kong stands before the settlement. The monster ape proceeds to riot through human society. Throwing the roof of a hut on a group of fleeing villagers, plucking people from their homes and flinging them down, he bites and tramples the islanders to death. A group of warriors hurl spears at Kong to no avail as he proceeds through the village to the beach. There, he is met by Carl Denham who throws one of his gas bombs; it explodes in a flash, and Kong slowly falls unconscious to the sand. A

jubilant Denham orders ropes and anchor chains from the ship. "We're millionaires, boys," he proclaims, "I'll share it with all of you. Why, in a few months it'll be up in lights: Kong, The Eighth Wonder of the World!"

Instantaneously transported back to New York City, we join a Broadway theatre crowd. After some backstage conversation with the press, Denham introduces a chained and manacled King Kong to the assembled audience. Kong roars with increasing agitation when newspaper photographers ignite their flash bulbs. "He thinks they are harming the girl," exclaims Denham as the monster finally breaks free. Crashing through a wall, Kong proceeds to riot through New York City. Many of his actions are identical to his trampling of the Skull Islander's village. He throws a hotel canopy on a group of fleeing citizens; he picks up and bites a man to death; he snatches a sleeping woman out of her hotel room and drops her to the street below. Eventually locating Ann Darrow, Kong reaches into her room and abducts her once more. At large in the city, Darrow in hand, Kong derails and smashes an elevated train, repeatedly hammering it with his fists. The first light of dawn finds him climbing the Empire State Building. At the instigation of Denham and Driscoll, the forces of the United States military are mobilized, and in the work's final sequence, a squadron of fighter aircraft challenges the monster. Kong stands momentarily triumphant at the very top of the Empire State Building. Having placed Ann Darrow in place of safety, he once again beats his chest and roars. However, in pass after pass the airplanes relentlessly machine-gun the giant ape. Kong catches one airplane and sends it spinning down, but the others persevere. Clutching his throat and mortally wounded, Kong falls to his death below. A police captain remarks to Carl Denham that the airplanes got him. To this Denham replies, "Oh no, it wasn't the airplanes, it was beauty that killed the beast." But as Matthews (1979:78) has remarked, we all know that this is not so. It was the airplanes after all, and in the obvious truth of this final event there is to be found both a meaningful conclusion to the film's action and a glimpse of its deliberate but subtly encoded intimation.

King Kong establishes a fundamental dichotomy between two islands, one situated in the north (New York City) and the other in the south (Skull Island). The opening and closing sequences take place in the north, in Manhattan, and the film's movement in space is from north to south and back again to the north. Brought to the industrial north from the primitive south is the monster, King Kong, who will devastate the metropolis until slain by the organized forces of the American nation-state at the very pinnacle of a key symbol of its modernity and progress. The actual elapse of time in this journeying is telescoped, and this is especially so in the gap between Kong's defeat on Skull Island and his Broadway debut. A single, brief shot of the *Venture* at sea is metonymic of the entire return voyage. This compression of time serves to delineate a sharp contrast between the two islands, setting them off as separate, parallel worlds. There are no intervening places or peoples.

New York City, the North, is home to the film's leading characters, persons selected for audience identification. Denham, the hard-boiled entrepreneur; Driscoll and Darrow, respectively the male and female leads, are contemporary American urbanites. Their city and its region belong to civilization and the advanced technology of industrial capitalism. Tall steel and glass buildings, automobiles, and elevated, high speed trains serve as visible signs of progress and modernity. The north is a realm of *culture*. It is a prime site of the technologically sophisticated modern world as epitomized by the United States of America. Ruled by the sentient monster, King Kong, the South is, in contrast, exquisitely and archetypally natural. A mist-shrouded land of antediluvian jungle and sheer precipice, Skull Island remains a place of *nature*. Uncharted and unknown to the outside world, the island is inhabited by a swarm of combative prehistoric beasts and a gigantic, intelligent gorilla, nature's highest representative. A retrograde human population barely survives behind an enormous protective wall. Periodically they must appease the monster by offering up human sacrifices (women) to that non-human other. A people in decline, they hang on in a state of servitude and cultural devolution. Descendants of a higher civilization that built the wall, the islanders have "slipped back." Their primitive technology and weapons contrast markedly with the modern tools and weapons of the industrial world. South is opposed to North. Stone Age technology is set off against industrial technology, nature to culture, the size and brute force of dinosaurs paralleled by the machines and modern industrial weapons of war. Images of technological stagnation and decline are projected against those of progress and cultural evolution. To this land of dark-skinned nature come a group of white Americans. Ann Darrow's unique value to the native chief as "a gift for Kong" lies in her being "the woman of gold." Fay Wray, the actress who played Darrow, had naturally dark hair but was explicitly directed to wear a blond wig for *King Kong*. The multiracial nature of the American state is not depicted in this film, and the contrast between north and south is also one of race. Citizens of the north appear fully clothed (richly or poorly) in all circumstances. The people of the south go about partly clothed or "half-naked."

It is not surprising thus that when Kong has Darrow firmly in hand he strips off part of her clothing making her, now his possession, as "half-naked" as any native islander.

As noted by various film studies scholars (see particularly Carroll 1984), there are a great many parallel images and twinned relationships to be seen in *King Kong*. Denham and Englehorn are mirrored by the native chief and his "witchdoctor," the sailors of the *Venture* by the native warriors, and the Skull Island populace by the ordinary citizens of New York. Jack Driscoll and Kong are rivals for Darrow's person and are accordingly set off against each other. Kong and Denham are diametrically opposed in their purposes and are natural enemies. A number of central binary oppositions clearly emerge as the film unfolds:

North	*is opposed to*	South
Culture		Nature
New York City		Skull Island
White		Black
Denham/ Driscoll		Kong
Sailors		Native Warriors
Citizens of New York		Village Populace
Industrial Technology		Stone Age Technology
Modern Machines and Weapons		Dinosaurs
Elevated Train		Plesiosaur
Fighter Aircraft		Pterodactyl
Modernity/Progress		Primitive Life/Cultural Devolution

Essentially passive, Ann Darrow is passed from side to side, a mediator between north and south, culture and nature. The dramatic structure of King Kong involves one episode after another in which her possession is contested. She is taken against her will, rescued and taken yet again until the film reaches its point of resolution. A victim of the Depression, Ann Darrow is seized first by the sidewalk merchant in New York City (a thickly-accented, immigrant "other") but saved by Denham. She is then kidnapped by Skull Island natives and offered to Kong, who takes her away as well. Thereafter, she is threatened by the *Tyrannosaurus rex*, the plesiosaur and the pterodactyl, but Kong saves her in each instance. Driscoll and Denham help Darrow escape Kong in the south, but the monster ape has her again in the north. In the film's concluding sequence Ann Darrow is decisively liberated by the armed forces of the American state and Kong is killed. Darrow is pulled back from otherness and restored to her rightful place in the modern world. A remarkable symmetry is displayed in the course of all of this. Darrow is abducted and exhibited in the south. On Skull Island, her outstretched arms are tied to two ancient pillars. Kong is abducted in the south by Denham and exhibited in the north. On a Broadway theatre stage his outstretched arms are manacled to a heavy steel frame. Parallel themes of abduction, exhibition and escape play themselves out as the narrative unfolds, and these serve to propel Ann Darrow back and forth across the divide separating the film's two dichotomous worlds. As the action of being seized is initiated, Darrow screams and faints, marking the transition.

As is common in mythic discourse, there is a good deal of repetition in *King Kong*. The giant ape's battles with his fellow prehistoric monsters are lengthy and brutal. In succession, many blows, bites and kicks are given and received. These encounters are in themselves repetitious: first, the tyrannosaurus, and then the plesiosaur, and finally the pterodactyl challenge Kong for possession of Ann Darrow. One after the other, the monster ape shakes the sailors off the log bridge and their screams are heard in sequence as they fall. Kong repeatedly attempts to dig Jack Driscoll out of his hole and is repeatedly pricked on the fingers by his knife. Kong hammers the plesiosaur to death with his fists and likewise pounds and smashes the elongated and serpentine elevated train in New York. The monster ape's rampage through the modern industrial city is obviously and deliberately much the same in action as the carnage he inflicts on Skull Island. Kong riots through human society in both south and north. His destructive behaviour in each locale is virtually identical, although sometimes inverted. Thus Kong breaks into the Skull Island village and out of the Broadway theatre. On Skull Island, he bites a man to death, the screaming native facing to the right of the screen; in New York he similarly chews up an American citizen, the tuxedo-clad American facing the screen's left. Kong's rampage in New York is a mirror image of his trampling of the South Seas village and one that repeats itself in detail. He does to the citizens of the north more or less exactly what he had previously done to the primitive villagers of the south.

An interconnected series of agonistic encounters acts as the mainspring of the film's narrative. Violent struggle is central to the work and a calculation of relative superiority and inferiority is established in fury and mortal combat. It is in an assessment of these structures of victory and defeat that the film's ideological intent may be understood. Not shown but described after the fact, Captain Englehorn and the crew of the *Venture* use the weapons of a modern industrial society to frighten off and subdue the native Skull Islanders: the colonial encounter writ small. Led by Denham and heavily armed with rifles and gas grenades, the modern Americans of the north likewise stun and slay the charging stegosaurus. Neverthe-

less, disarmed and disorganized, the sailors are themselves destroyed by the brontosaurus and then by King Kong at the log bridge. Confronted in turn by the *Tyrannosaurus rex*, the plesiosaur and the pterodactyl, Kong destroys them all after fierce and brutal combat. Establishing himself supreme, it is shown, not stated, that Kong is king of all he surveys.

Kong is superior to all except the key representatives of the modern world (Denham, Driscoll) and their weapons of industrial civilization. Kong attempts to kill Jack Driscoll but is successfully warded off by Driscoll's steel knife. Sailors and Skull Island villagers alike are unable to stop the enraged beast at the village's gate and they flee as Kong riots through human society. The native warriors resist as best they can but are defeated and slaughtered. Only Denham stands firm and is able to subdue the monster and render it unconscious with one of his gas bombs. In New York City, Kong likewise destroys many ordinary American citizens. The unarmed and unprepared residents of the metropolis are as helpless as the technologically unsophisticated islanders against the monster's wrath as the giant ape crashes through the urban landscape. However the organized and technologically advanced military forces of the American nation-state prove effective in the end, and King Kong is finally defeated and destroyed.

Kong climbs high to face an aerial threat twice in the film. In the south he struggles with the pterodactyl and is victorious; the flying dinosaur is broken and thrown down. In the north he scales the Empire State Building to do battle with the military aircraft of the U.S. government, but this time Kong is defeated, and it is he who tumbles to the street below. Although both fly, the pterodactyl is a natural, living thing while the aircraft are intricate, lethal weapons of a modern industrial state. In the south Kong struggles with the plesiosaur who wraps itself around his throat almost choking the great ape to death, but Kong prevails. In the north the monster grasps his throat once again as he is there repeatedly and fatally shot. In this, as throughout, the armed and organized forces of modernity and industrial civilization show themselves superior to all else. *King Kong* establishes numerous contrasting relationships between north and south, culture and nature, advanced industrial and Stone Age technology and then illustrates, through incidents of violent conflict, the ultimate ascendancy of the modern American way of life.

The Depression begins the film; its images are initial and inescapable and the viewer is immediately immersed in a particular, then-current set of socio-economic circumstances. Like many monster films that were to follow, *King Kong* touches on an aspect of reality only to immediately careen off into fantasy so as to ultimately present a fantastic resolution to a very real state of affairs. By means of the established propositions and events of the film's narrative and through its visual imagery, Depression and Progress are ultimately presented as opposing polarities of human existence. The former is associated with the south, nature, "primitive" (retrograde), dark-skinned peoples and King Kong. Progress and prosperity are classed with the north and its Caucasian populace, Carl Denham (the very model of the American entrepreneur), culture, modernity and industrial and military technology. Ann Darrow passes from being held against her will in New York by the sidewalk vendor for a contemplated but unrealized theft occasioned by her desperate financial need, to being held by the Skull Island natives as a sacrifice to the gorilla god of the omnipresent and permanent underdevelopment of a degenerate people, a people who have "slipped back" from a former state of cultural and economic development. The monster, King Kong, rules these people and is presumably the cause of their decline. Metaphorically held in the grip of the Depression, the film's heroine is actually, we are shown, gripped by the monster's people and then by the monster himself. That selfsame monster eventually breaks out into the modern city and, as Kennedy notes, "smashes the very Third Avenue landscape in which Fay Wray (Ann Darrow) had wandered hungry" (1960:214).

In his rampage through New York, Kong seems to deliberately go after icons of modernity. He derails and then thoroughly smashes the elevated train, a widely publicized exemplar of industrial progress. Shortly thereafter, he climbs the Empire State Building, recently completed and a major icon of the modern American nation-state. In one of the most memorable and often repeated images of the film, metonymic of the movie itself, Kong stands momentarily triumphant at the very top of this ideologically potent building. He beats his chest and roars in victory as he had previously done after vanquishing each of his flesh-and-blood foes on Skull Island. The monster, King Kong, is then and there the Depression itself, ascendant over the metropolis below.

It is never directly stated that Kong is, or becomes in New York, the Depression incarnate, but this inference is subtly and repeatedly communicated in text, sound and image; in multiple references to money, the lack of money and the making of money; in contrasts between Darrow's circumstances before, during and after her acquaintance with Kong (see Mayne 1976); in the existential situation of the Skull Islanders as a people who have "slipped back" and their subservient relationship with the giant ape; and

in the destructive practice of the monster, its parallel behaviour in south and north, and how these actions are spatially and symbolically situated to generate meaningful statements. Myths (and films like *King Kong*) are perhaps the very antithesis of crude political propaganda. Rather than being directly and forcefully shouted out, messages are embedded in a narrative structure. Once witnessed, the narrative percolates through the consciousness of audience members who individually achieve recognition of a set of meaningful propositions that have been cleverly scattered and hidden in the dynamic interplay of character, event and time. This gives myth its unique power to persuade and, as well, its remarkable verisimilitude.

Myths are certainly among those discourses that might be termed hegemonic and films like *King Kong* might also properly be considered sites where hegemony is won. The dynamics of this process are bound up with the deep structuring of the narrative and the nature of its established oppositions. *King Kong* tells its audience that while we may suffer temporary setbacks, our system will triumph in the end. The industrial technology and military might of the modern nation-state will ultimately prevail. Monster gorillas (and states of affairs like Depressions) will yield in time to the technological sophistication of a determined and organized industrial society. The film presents in dramatic form the ascendancy of the modern American way of life. Personified and identified as a huge, sentient beast, the Depression itself is symbolically slain in the fiction that is *King Kong*.

Released during the worst year of the Depression, in 1933 when President Roosevelt declared a moratorium and closed the banks, *King Kong* was immediately and profoundly successful. Opening simultaneously in two major New York theatres, enormous crowds stood in line to see it. The work's strong positive reaction was no doubt occasioned in good measure by its sensationalism, and by the special effects that give to it a sense of awe if one is suitably willing to suspend disbelief. It is not without significance, however, in considering the phenomenal success of the film to note that *King Kong*, deeply structured, also provided a mythic response to the painful socio-economic circumstances of its time. The Depression challenged many of the central assumptions upon which the collective mazeway of the American public was built. The ideological underpinnings of industrial capitalism were shaken, along with the economic system itself, by the inarticulate and shapeless forces of collapse and disintegration. In *King Kong*, a fantastic resolution to an unwelcome contradiction between expectation and experience is worked out in a surreal narrative that takes as a point of departure the world of its present day. From what is *explicit* in the discourse of *King Kong*, there resounds a broad cultural affirmation, which could only have helped drive on the film's popularity and remarkable presence.

Meriam C. Cooper set out to make in *King Kong*, "the ultimate in adventure." The exceptionally enthusiastic audience response to the film and its enduring popularity are indications of his success in that regard, but it would be misleading and far too simplistic to equate the work with its entertainment value. Following the broad outlines of critical theory as first formulated by the Frankfurt School (see Bailey 1994), an anthropological critique situates films like *King Kong* as cultural productions intimately related to their social, economic and political contexts. They both reflect and are generative of understandings about the world, society and culture, and the "proper" dimensions that inform thought, belief, and action. In *King Kong*, culture and nature are presented as discrete, totalizing antimonies, and the realm of culture, although threatened by nature (Kong), is priorized and given the final victory. The separation and opposition of nature to culture is surely deeply rooted in Western thought, going all the way back to Genesis, but there is nothing necessary or universal about this distinction, contra Levi-Strauss, as Descola (1994), Sahlins (1976) and many others have taught us. In *King Kong*, nature is something to be controlled and used, or else destroyed and this is a particularly insidious commonplace of the Western cultural tradition. Denham, the aggressive capitalist entrepreneur, is valorized and his exploitative and often ruthless attitudes and actions are presented as being not only perfectly reasonable, but laudable. Driscoll, the first mate, is Labour, an exemplar of the loyal proletariat in capitalist society. Competent and hard working, he is unquestionably obedient and respectful of Denham, perfectly malleable and responsive to Denham's direction and control. Darrow exemplifies Woman in patriarchy. Beautiful but passive and highly emotional, she screams and faints when in distress, a valuable object to be possessed but not an active subject capable of independent thought and action. The Skull islanders are the "natives" of the non-Western world. Savage and technologically inferior, they are easily conquered and become thereafter properly submissive and supportive of the colonial regime. Modern technology in the employ of industrial capitalism is ultimately victorious.

All of these understandings and perspectives are inextricably interwoven in the narrative discourse of *King Kong* and they emerge subtly but imperatively as ideological axioms as one watches the film. A critical reading of the work frames it as a discourse of power, active in the construction of a normalized reality. The "truths" of its

portrayals of gender, class, nation and race are unquestioned and uncontested, and in accepting the flow of the film's narrative and in a sense getting lost in it, one comes under the domination of its representations. "Every established order," Bourdieu writes, "tends to produce the naturalization of its own arbitrariness" (1977:164). The fictions of popular films like *King Kong* and of myths in general are especially adept at doing this. In film, as in myth, a story's characters and events can be constructed so as to be exemplary. All of that which is culturally posited to be "the way things really are" can be easily made to be exactly that way on the screen. *King Kong* not only tells us that industrial technology will vanquish serious threats to the infrastructure of modernity, but also that its depictions of race, gender, class, and national and cultural identity are vertiginous. Bound up in the mainspring of its central narrative are both overt and subtle proclamations of multiple, valorized hierarchies of identity, power and "otherness."

Extraordinarily successful, and carrying with it all of its explicit and implicit ideological weight, *King Kong* came to be firmly planted in the collective imagination of our time. Kluckhohn's (1942) thesis that an individual dream can become a shared, public myth if the dreamer's fantasy strikes a sufficiently responsive chord is a close approximation of how Merian C. Cooper's fantastic story became a new American myth. Demand for the work has been sustained. Re-released in 1938, 1942 and 1946, the remarkable 1952 revival of *King Kong* proved pivotal. Earning two-and-one-half times the expected gross of a major new Hollywood film, the work was named Time magazine's Movie of the Year in a cover story (July 14, 1952). The following year saw the release of *The Beast from 20,000 Fathoms*. Deliberately intended to be an imitation of *King Kong*, this work propelled the monster film into the atomic age. A nuclear test explosion in the Artic awakens a long-dormant marine dinosaur, a "rheasaurus." The monster sinks a ship and proceeds to trample Wall Street in New York until slain by an isotope-tipped missile. The message is clear and ideologically powerful: nuclear weapons can awaken a monster, but only nuclear weapons can save us from it.

One of the most profitable films of 1953, the success of *The Beast from 20,000 Fathoms* was to spark the proliferation and adaptive radiation of monster films. Noting the strong public response to *The Beast from 20,000 Fathoms*, Warner Brothers released *Them!* in 1954. Atomic weapons tests in the desert result in huge mutant ants that invade the sewers of Los Angeles and threaten the survival of the human species. Other giant insect films (Tarantula 1955; The Deadly Mantis 1957) followed, and the genre expanded to feature a diverse lot of life forms. *It Came from Beneath the Sea* (1955) has a radioactive octopus attack San Francisco. An earthquake releases giant, radioactive, prehistoric snails in *The Monster that Challenged the World* (1957). A strong fear of nuclear contamination and anxieties about the unforeseen consequences of nuclear fission animate many of these early American monster films.

An American monster movie tradition was paralleled by the advent of the Japanese monster cinema. The first of this legendary body of films, *Godzilla* (1954), took direct inspiration from *The Beast from 20,000 Fathoms* (1953) and is thematically similar to that work. Nuclear test explosions awaken a marine dinosaur that proceeds to ravage human society. Actual footage of Hiroshima appears in *Godzilla* (1954). As in many descendant Japanese monster epics, the film presents in clear and unmistakable terms the dangers nuclear weapons pose to industrial civilization. A sequel, *Rodan* (1957), opens with shots of two nuclear test explosions—emphasis is placed on the blast's shock waves—and then introduces the two Rodans, giant pterodactyls, who destroy two Japanese cities (as in Hiroshima and Nagasaki) in much the same way, by creating blast-force winds with their wings. The monster is here, as elsewhere in the Japanese monster cinema, the once-realized and ever potential threat of nuclear holocaust (see Noriega 1987). Similar themes animated the monster films of other national cinemas during the 1950s and 1960s, and various other monstrous incarnations of our suppressed but not inconsiderable fears lived out their destructive lives in fantastic renditions of a real but far more intractable predicament.

New myths of the industrial age, monster films present a threat to the material infrastructure of modern urban life in the form of the monster. The monster's anger is directed toward civilization itself and not against the many anonymous persons destroyed in its passage. Larger than life, the monster is on the same scale as the city and it is the modern industrial city itself that is imperilled by the monster's existence. Monsters crash through oil refineries, electrical installations, docks, factories and office towers. In a primordial rage, they smash the buildings, wires, pipes and machines of the modern industrial world. The monster's eyes glint with malice and mass destruction is a certain consequence of its acquaintance. Discovered, created, awakened, arriving from outer space, the monster also takes keen delight in threatening, occupying or destroying the key symbols of the nation-states it visits. Radioactive, the Giant Behemoth (a brontosaurus) crushes Britain's Houses of Parliament (The Giant Behemoth 1957); Gorgo tears down and tramples London

Bridge, the Tower of Big Ben and Piccadilly Circus (Gorgo 1961). Yongary, an indigenous Korean monster from the north, threatens the Temple of the Moon (Yongary 1967); a drugged-out King Kong sits atop Japan's Diet building in *King Kong vs. Godzilla* (1963), and Godzilla himself wrecks many Manhattan landmarks, including the Brooklyn Bridge, in *Godzilla* (1998). In 2004, Godzilla and a host of angry, destructive monsters completely destroy New York, Shanghai, Tokyo, Sydney, and Paris, smashing in the process the iconic structures of these cities (Godzilla: Final Wars 2004). A distinct and well-delineated cinematic genre, the monster film is balanced on a central opposition between civilization and the monster. The monster is a challenge to industrial civilization writ large, embodied and personified. After chaos, ruin and difficulty the vanquishing of the monster is at hand, and the world, the human species, and the modern city is temporarily spared.

Various actual and potential threats to industrial civilization and the modern metropolis have found expression in monster films. Hedora, the smog monster, is pollution itself, animate and tenaciously combative in *Godzilla vs. The Smog Monster* (1971). A botched experiment with disastrous consequences, the Blob is inadvertently created by biological weapons research in outer space (The Blob 1988). In Dino Di Laurentis' 1976 remake of *King Kong*, it is not economic depression but the then-current oil crisis that finds shape in the person of the monster. Virtually identical to the 1933 classic, *King Kong* (1976) contains numerous, multivocal references to oil. The *Venture* becomes an oil supertanker and Denham is Wilson, an oil executive in search of new reserves. Transported to New York in the belly of the ship, Kong appears at his New York debut secreted behind a large curtain representing a gasoline pump advertising Petrolux, the conglomerate petroleum company that sponsored Wilson's expedition. Bursting forth literally from within the pump as the oil embargo and the oil crisis personified, King Kong again crashes through urban society until slain on top of the World Trade Center to the cheers of a jubilant crowd below. Godzilla returns in 2000 to attack a nuclear power station until challenged by a computer-hacking alien monster whose activities likewise threaten the survival of civilization (Godzilla 2000), and Kong is resurrected only to be killed again in Peter Jackson's 2005 remake of the 1933 original.

An international film genre, the monster film is of unquestioned mythic authenticity. The cinematic monster is a mythic being of modernity, but these giant monsters have colleagues in other places and times. The monsters of today's films are but the latest incarnations of the monster, a frequently recurring creature of the human imagination. Monsters are so exceeding common in cultural history that one might almost say that they are necessary so as to highlight, by means of their inversions, hybridizations and transgressions, all that is good, right, necessary and proper. Monsters give weight to the "normal" in contrast to the "abnormality" of their existence and behaviour. Brightman (1993) has thus detailed the inversions of the Witiko (Windigo) cannibal monster of the Rock Cree. With a heart of ice, the Witiko prefers the cold and survives the winter without fire or shelter; the Witiko eats raw meat (human flesh) and not boiled animal meat, the common food of socialized humans; it lives and travels alone and is mute or aphasic and has no concern about its appearance. The Witiko's behaviour is the, "obscene and antisocial extreme of reciprocity: instead of giving food, it steals life, murdering and converting its victims into food" (Brightman 1993:158). Like many other monsters, the Witiko exhibits the inverse of all that is regarded as culturally proper.

Monsters also blur established categories of existence or break through boundaries to impose themselves in inappropriate times and contexts. Hybridization and transgression as well as inversion are key characteristics of monsters. Many of the monsters of the ancient world and of the Middle Ages thus combined heterogeneous elements of different species, mixing and mingling these with the human form. Drawing on the theoretical work of Mary Douglas, Carroll (1990) considers the monsters of the horror film to be hybrid, anomalous creatures that are both polluting and dangerous: their existence violates and threatens the integrity of established cultural categories. The very being of a monster can constitute a contravention of the conceptual order, but monsters transgress boundaries in other ways. Creed writes that, "the concept of a border is central to the construction of the monstrous; that which crosses or threatens to cross the border is abject" (1993:10-11). Spatial marginality tends to be associated with monsters and, as in contemporary Greece (Stewart 1991), monsters are often said to exist on the margins of the physical or social world. Characteristically, they are somehow brought into the centre of human society and come thereby to be beings out of place. Monsters have power, extraordinary power, but their power is anti-social and destructive. The monster's violation of culturally cherished boundaries and categories is an important part of what gives them that power and is, perhaps, the reason for it. They are human, but not human, alive but not alive, intelligent but of animal form, and eventually, in places and times where they do not belong. In *King Kong*, the unfettered presence in New York of a hybrid being, a giant ape with human-like intel-

ligence and emotion, is a transgression that also constitutes an inversion of quotidian ideas about the proper relationship between nature and culture and the inevitability of progress.

King Kong is a complex, deeply layered film that has, as Rony has pointed out, a "highly polysemous quality" (1996:158). Various sectors of its audience are drawn to particular aspects of the work and accordingly, many different approaches to the film have been made. Quite a few commentators have explored the film's misogyny and overt sexism (Mathews 1979; Mayne 1976), the portrayal of woman as victim (Lenne 1979), and the blaming of woman for Kong's undoing and demise (Warner 1994). Others have interpreted *King Kong* as a discourse about race, seeing in it racist ideologies and fears of miscegenation (Rosen 1975), or fears of "Black predators" as a justification for lynching (Bellin 2005), and as a fantastic recapitulation of the trans-Atlantic slave trade (Snead (1991). To Berenstein (1996), Kong's monstrosity is a result of his transgression of boundaries of race as well as of species in his pursuit of a white woman. The work is understood by Carroll as a capitalist fable, "a popular illustration of social Darwinist metaphors...of the American Weltanschauung" (1984:216). Rony finds in it multiple Eurocentric discourses of class, race and gender, and a profound parallel between the film and ethnographic spectacle: "the exploitation of native peoples as freakish 'ethnographic' specimens"(1996:159). Erb's detailed reception study of the work argues that non-mainstream spectators have historically identified with Kong's position as a "tormented outsider" (1998:14).

These perspectives are all cogent and valuable, but even when a précis of the film is provided, which is usually not the case, they are taken without a detailed consideration of the entire narrative and an analysis of its internal structure. Themes of race and gender, class and nation, are frequently discussed but the pivotal significance of the film's historical context and its engagement with the Depression has not been fully realized. I believe that the analysis presented here complements existing readings and extends them. A structural approach can help us get at the mainspring of a narrative, the central parameters of its discourse. Structural analysis is still useful if, in following poststructuralist reservations about metanarratives (for example, Lyotard 1984), one does not take structuralism too seriously and especially if one does not accept everything Levi-Straus has said about myth (see Sperber 1985), particularly his ludicrous assertion that myth no longer exists, having been replaced by music (1978:46). Although structuralist approaches to the popular film have been undertaken by a few film studies scholars, mainly on the Western (Kitses 1970; Wright 1976) during the heyday of structuralism, these proved to be limited in influence (Grant 2007:32) and have been generally abandoned today.[2] What anthropology can do, I believe, is to integrate structuralist work with other anthropological perspectives on myth into a revitalized critical reading of the popular cinema.

Just as monsters were active in the construction of modernity in Japan and long used there in political discourse (see Figal 1999), so, too, is the monster film an ideological force today. A structural analysis of *King Kong* reveals in it a central opposition between industrial civilization and the monster, and this dichotomy informs virtually all monster epics, the monster representing various threats to the integrity of modern life. The emotion generated by a monster film is awe, not fear, for in the monster's destructive action we glimpse the fragility of industrial civilization as its infrastructure is rendered asunder. One crucial and very important message the monster cinema communicates over and over again is that the monster will succumb in time to a clever application of science and advanced technology. Godzilla (1954) was defeated and killed at the bottom of the ocean by Dr. Serizawa's newly invented oxygen destroyer; Yongary, the North Korean monster, succumbs to a helicopter-inflicted chemical weapons attack (Yongary 1967). These films may seem trivial and childish, but they provide a template for the expectation of a technological solution to all of our problems that has very real consequences for how we think and behave toward the challenges we now face. The very widespread belief current today, that technology will always find a way to solve world problems, may actually have been engendered, in part at least, in the narratives of the monster cinema. If "they," the scientists and engineers, will always find a way out, "we" need to do nothing. It is in this way that the monster film is perhaps as pernicious and sinister as the monster itself.

David H. Stymeist, Department of Anthropology, University of Manitoba, 435 Fletcher Argue Building, Winnipeg, Manitoba, R3T 5V5, Canada. Email: stymeist@cc.umanitoba.ca.

Notes

1 A good example of this is how Ann Darrow has gone from being a virtual nonentity in a patriarchial fantasy to becoming, increasingly, an active, self-realized subject, her transformation paralleling the rise of feminism in society. In the 2005 remake of *King Kong*, Darrow impresses the giant ape not by being "the woman of gold" but with her juggling, somersaults and dancing performance. They develop a close bond and a number of new scenes have been added to illustrate this: instead of being abducted by Kong in New York,

she runs across town to be with him, they slide together on a frozen pond in Central Park, and she climbs up to the very top of the Empire State Building to be by his side in his final moments where she attempts to protect him.

2 Arguing that the Western displays a central binary opposition between civilization and the wilderness, Jim Kitses' *Horizons West* (1970) was probably the most successful of these structural approaches, influencing, as Grant notes, almost all subsequent analyses of the genre (2007:32). Will Wright's structuralism in *Sixguns and Society* (1976) followed the thematic approach of Vladimir Propp, identifying four basic plot types in the Western (the classical, the vengeance plot, the transitional and the professional plot), but this approach proved to be less influential and has been abandoned in his latest work on the genre (Wright 2001).

References

Aucoin, Pauline McKenzie
2000 Blinding the Snake: Women's Myths as Insubordinate Discourse in Western Fiji. Anthropologica 42:11-17.

Bailey, Leon
1994 Critical Theory and the Sociology of Knowledge: A Comparative Study in the Theory of Ideology. New York: Peter Lang.

Bellin, Joshua David
2005 Framing Monsters: Fantasy Film and Social Alienation. Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press.

Berenstein, Rhonda
1996 Attack of the Leading Ladies: Gender, Sexuality, and Spectatorship in Classic Horror Cinema. New York: Columbia University Press.

Bourdieu, Pierre
1977 Outline of a Theory of Practice. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Brightman, Robert
1993 Grateful Prey: Rock Cree Human-Animal Relationships. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Carroll, Noel
1984 King Kong: Ape and Essence. *In* Planks of Reason: Essays on the Horror Film. Barry K. Grant, ed. Pp. 214-244. Metcuchen, NJ: Scarecrow Press.
1990 The Philosophy of Horror; Or Paradoxes of the Heart. New York and London: Routledge.

Creed, Barbara
1993 The Monstrous-Feminine: Film, Feminism, and Psychoanalysis. London: Routledge.

Descola, Philippe
1994 In the Society of Nature: A Native Ecology in Amazonia. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Erb, Cynthia
1998 Tracking King Kong: A Hollywood Icon in World Culture. Detroit: Wayne State University Press.

Figal, Gerald
1999 Civilization and Monsters: Spirits of Modernity in Meiji Japan. Durham and London: Duke University Press.

Geertz, Clifford
1973 Religion as a Cultural System. *In* Anthropological Approaches to the Study of Religion. Michael Banton, ed. Pp. 1-46. London: Tavistock.

Grant, Barry Keith
2007 Film Genre: From Iconography to Ideology. London and New York: Wallflower.

Kennedy, X. J.
1960 Who Killed King Kong. Dissent 7(Spring):213-215.

Kitses, Jim
1970 Horizons West. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press.

Kluckhohn, Clyde
1942 Myths and Rituals: A General Theory. Harvard Theological Review 25:45-79.

Leach, Edmund
1954 Political Systems of Highland Burma. London: G. Bell & Sons.

Lenne, Gerard
1979 Monster and Victim: Women in the Horror Film. *In* Sexual Stratagems: The World of Women in Film. Patricia Erens, ed. Pp. 31-40. New York: Horizon Press.

Lem, Winnie, and Belinda Leach
2002 Culture, Economy, Power: Anthropology as Critique, Anthropology as Praxis. Albany: State University of New York Press.

Levi-Strauss, Claude
1955 The Structural Study of Myth. Journal of American Folklore 67:428-444.
1978 Myth and Meaning. New York: Shocken Books.

Lyotard, Jean-Francois
1984 [1979] The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Malinowski, Bronislaw
1926 Myth in Primitive Psychology. New York: W. H. Horton.

MacClancy, Jeremy
2002 Exotic No More: Anthropology on the Front Lines. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Marcus, George
1999 Critical Anthropology Now: Unexpected Contexts, Shifting Constituencies, Changing Agendas. School of American Research Advanced Seminar Series. Santa Fe: School of American Research Press.

Marcus, George, and Michael M.J. Fischer
1986 Anthropology as Cultural Critique. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Matthews, J.H.
1979 Surrealism and American Feature Film. Boston: Twane.

Mayne, Judith
1976 King Kong and the Ideology of Spectacle. Quarterly Review of Film Studies 1(4):373-387.

Noriega, Chuck
1987 Godzilla and the Japanese Nightmare: When Them! Is U.S. Cinema Journal 27(1):63-77.

Rony, Fatimah Tobing
1996 The Third Eye: Race, Cinema, and Ethnographic Spectacle. Durham and London: Duke University Press.

Rosen, David N.
1975 Race, Sex, and Rebellion. Jump Cut 6:8-10.

Sahlins, Marshall
1976 Culture and Practical Reason. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Schatz, Thomas
1981 Hollywood Genres: Formulas, Filmmaking, and the Studio System. New York: Random House.
Snead, James
1991 Spectatorship and Capture in King Kong: The Guilty Look. Critical Quarterly 33(1):53-69.
Sperber, Dan
1985 On Anthropological Knowledge. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
Stewart, Charles
1991 Demons and the Devil: Moral Imagination in Modern Greek Culture. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
Warner, Marina
1994 Six Myths of Our Time. New York: Vintage Books.
Willis, R.G.
1967 The Head and the Loins: Levi-Strauss and Beyond. Man(n.s.)2:519-534.
Wright, Will
1976 Sixguns and Society: A Structural Study of the Western. Berkeley: University of California Press.
2001 The Wild West: The Mythical Cowboy and Social Theory. London: Sage.

Filmography

The Beast from Twenty Thousand Fathoms
1953 U.S. 80 min. Warner. Director: Eugene Lourie.
The Blob
1988 U.S. 90 min. Tri Star. Director: Chuck Russell.
The Deadly Mantis
1957 U.S. 78 min. Universal International. Director: Nathan Juran.
The Giant Behemoth
1959 G.B. 70 min. Artistes Alliance/ Stratford. Directors: Eugene Lourie, Douglas Hickox.
Godzilla
1953 Japan. 80 min. Toho. Director: Inoshiro Honda.
1998 U.S. 138 min. Columbia/ Tri Star. Director: Roland Emmerich.
Godzilla 2000
1999 Japan 99 min. Toho. Director: Takao Okawara.
Godzilla: Final Wars
2004 Japan 99 min. Toho. Director: Ryuhei Kitamura.
Godzilla vs. the Smog Monster
1971 Japan. 96 min. Toho. Director: Yoshimitsu Banno.
Gorgo
1960 G.B. 78 min. King Brothers. Director: Eugene Lourie.
It Came from Beneath the Sea
1955 U.S. 80 min. Columbia. Director: Robert Gordon.
King Kong
1933 U.S. 100 min. R.K.O. Directors: Merian C. Cooper, Ernest Schoedsack.
1976 U.S. 135 min. Panavision. Director: John Guillermin.
2005 U.S. 185 min. Universal. Director: Peter Jackson.
King Kong vs. Godzilla
1962 Japan. 91 min. Toho/ Universal. Directors; Inoshiro Honda, Thomas Montgomery.
The Monster That Challenged the World
1957 U.S. 83 min Levy-Gardner- Lavin/ United Artists. Director: Arnold Lavin.
Rodan
1957 Japan. 72 min. Toho/ DCA (Japan). Director: Inoshiro Honda.
Tarantula
1955 U.S. 80 min. Universal International. Director: Jack Arnold.
Them!
1954 U.S. 94 min. Warner. Director: Gordon Douglas.
Yongary, Monster from the Deep
1967 Korea/ Japan. 79 min. AIP-TV. Director: Kiduck Kim.