

Stefano Oddi

Abstract

The Czech *Faust* by Švankmajer

*Faust* (1994) is the first feature film directed by Jan Švankmajer after the dissolution of Czechoslovakia and probably the most thorough summation of his 'realized' Surrealism, not based on the evocation of a dreamlike, nonsensical world but marked by "an evident political significance, a direct incisiveness of the individual on collectivity" (F. Pitassio).

Švankmajer's reinterpretation of Doctor Faust's myth, set in a present-day Prague, is a one-of-a-kind *melange* that blends different Faustian sources (Marlowe, Goethe, Gounod and the *Puppenspiel* tradition) in order to convey the director's concerns about globalized societies, primarily addressing the process of disintegration of individual identities, the disqualification of corporeality and the subjugating power of media on reality.

After introducing the main themes and motifs of Švankmajer's film aesthetics, the article focuses on the analysis of several sections of *Faust*, in an attempt to highlight its socio-political subtext.

Keywords: Faust, Jan Švankmajer, Czech Cinema, Modern Myths, Adaptation, Puppenspiel, Czechoslovakia, Czech Republic, Christopher Marlowe, Johann Wolfgang Goethe, Charles Gounod.