

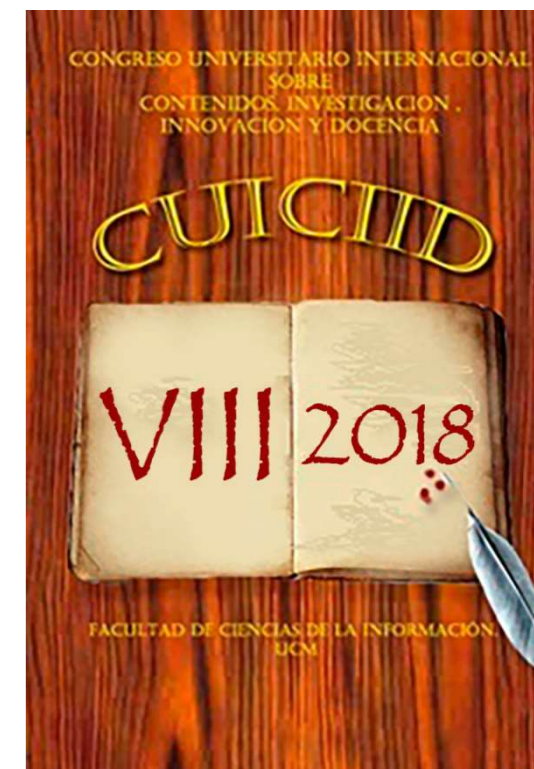


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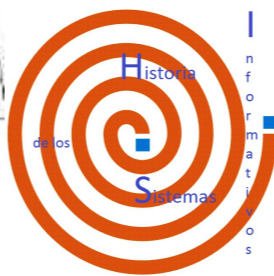


ISBN: 978-84-09-04679-9

www.seeci.net/cuiciid



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Ref. J-00065477-8



Revista de Ciencias
de la Información



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© 2018 Editorial: Historia de los Sistemas Informativos (HISIN)

CIF: G-88252101

C/ Cine 38. Bajo. 28024 Madrid (Reino de España)

Web: www.hisin.net

Tel: (00 34) 91 013 37 40

ISBN: 978-84-09-04679-9

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SCARLETT JOHANSSON AND HER IDENTITY AS A FILM-TEXT FRANKENSTEIN CREATURE

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This paper stems from the research project “El modo satírico, género y la constitución de identidades en los lenguajes visuales y literarios” (APPI17/06. Banco Santander and Universidad de La Rioja)

2018 has marked the 200th anniversary of the publication of Mary Shelley’s *Frankenstein*. The present paper derives from a talk I was invited to give at the I Curso de Literatura Romántica Angloamericana “It’s Alive! FRANKENSTEIN 200” at the University of La Rioja. The title of that presentation was “Frankenstein en el cine contemporáneo: Criatura Scarlett Johansson.” For the purposes of this text, I have decided to limit myself to exploring how Scarlet Johansson, through a number of appearances in films throughout her career, can be considered, to some extent, a kind of Frankenstein creature.

Johansson has had an early start in the show business. When she was only eight years old she was already off-Broadway playing a minor role in Jonathan Marc Sherman’s play *Sophistry*, where Ethan Hawke also starred. Her first appearance on a film happened when she was nine years old, in *North*, directed by Rob Reiner in 1994. She played the role of Laura, daughter to Ward Nelson, a character performed by John Ritter. In 1996 she was nominated for the Independent Spirit Award for Best Lead Female for her interpretation of the Amanda role in Lisa Krueger’s *Manny & Lo*. There Johansson stars as the eleven-year-old sister of a pregnant sixteen-year-old girl. After two films with less important roles, Johansson was hired to appear in Robert Redford’s *The Horse Whisperer* (1998), which meant world-wide recognition.

Research aims

The current paper aims at textually analysing four specific films of Scarlett Johansson’s career as an actress after that early start which *exploded* internationally with *The Horse Whisperer*, four films which span over a relatively short period of five years, and which, in our contention, typecast her as some kind of a Frankenstein creature during that period of time. Those four films are Jonathan Glazer’s *Under the Skin* (2013), Spike Jonze’s *Her* (2013), Luc Besson’s *Lucy* (2014), and Rupert Sander’s *Ghost in the Shell* (2017).

The departing theoretical approach for considering Johansson as a Frankenstein creature is Sarah Canfield Fuller’s article “Reading the Cyborg in Mary Shelley’s “Frankenstein”” (2003). The article is heavily influenced by at the same time that it criticises Donna Haraway’s “Manifesto for Cyborgs” (1985).

Key words: Scarlett Johansson – Frankenstein – Cyborg – Textual Analysis – Identity