

## Document Citation

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Monday September 9<sup>th</sup> 85

**Bargain Early Show**  
**William Nestrick Selects:**  
**The Offspring of Expressionism**

Professor William Nestrick is Head of Film Studies, and teaches in the English and Comparative Literature Departments at UC Berkeley. *William Nestrick Selects* will be presented each Monday at 5:30 through November.

"The films that comprise this month's series are the descendants of German Expressionism. They acknowledge their affiliation stylistically and variously—sometimes through chiaroscuro lighting (as in the stairway of *Frankenstein's* tower or in the white figure and white doves against the forest black, the image that concludes *Eyes Without a Face*), sometimes through the transformation of exterior realities to express interior ones (as in the hallucinatory sequence in *The Spirit of the Beehive*). Recent theoreticians (Jean-Louis Comolli, Christine Gledhill) have questioned the dominant aesthetics of realism, and the time seems ripe to relook at the alternative tradition. These films reduplicate in their narratives the issue of generation and regeneration, the monster in *Frankenstein*, and the daughters of the scientists in *Eyes Without a Face* and *The Spirit of the Beehive*, who must confront the ideological realities of their creators." —William Nestrick

**James Whale Directs:**

**Frankenstein 5:30**

**Admission: \$2.50**

"Whale's film, not simply the monster's face or walk, haunts audiences and filmmakers—the torchbearing mob tracking down the monster along the lake or against the wrinkled sky, the brief glimpses of the laboratory tower, the windmill in flames dissolving into a memory as the human figures put behind them the monster's agony. Parodied and plundered, the film makes us return in order to keep it under control and to restore and feed the fantasies it evokes. Reviewings allow us to dominate it, to sympathize with the monster, to see another narrative emerge.

"Karloff's monster becomes the way 'sound' Hollywood looks back at the 'primitive' silent product of Expressionist studio constructivism and claims for its new product the completeness, finality and endless inclusion that this film claims for its narrative 'surround' of domestic society. Panchromatic stock tran-

sposes the Expressionist world into a new visual world of subtle grays, but the sound track, supposedly a further filling-in of filmic reality, still evidences the hysteria—in Colin Clive's voice, in the shovel banging coldly on the grave, in the barking dogs echoing over-reverberently against the rocks—that sets the teeth on edge in a way that the visual image does not. The result is to make the romantic, supposedly 'natural' and 'real' conventions, seem tissues, insubstantial products of a shared madness. Who does not remember the closeup of Henry turning the key to lock his bride in? His gesture is only another version of the studio concept of closing off the world in order to control it, to separate into a divided consciousness the forces that threaten the seemingly rational stabil-

ity of society." —William Nestrick

• Directed by James Whale. Written by Garrett Fort, John L. Balderston, F. E. Faragoh and Robert Florey, after a play by Peggy Webling based on the novel by Mary Shelley. Photographed by Arthur Edeson. Make-up by Jack Pierce. Special Effects by John P. Fulton. With Boris Karloff, Mae Clarke, John Boles, Colin Clive. (1931, 75 mins, 35mm, Print from Swank Motion Pictures)