

FRANKENSTEIN

200 Years of Graphic Depiction

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ABSTRACT

Inspired by the bicentennial anniversary of *Frankenstein, or the Modern Prometheus* (1818), by Mary Shelley, this is a visual research that analyses the visual representation of characters of one of the most iconic stories in popular culture. This investigation approaches two recurring themes in the graphic representation of this classic story that are still relevant in modern days.

The first approach takes into consideration a speciesist interpretation of Shelley's novel and applies it to the graphic evolution of the infamous *monster*, in this dissertation referred to as the *creature*. With the support of an academic work analysing the speciesist thinking present in *Frankenstein* along with a combination of references and methodologies, this approach analyses visual data from the past two hundred years ranging from book cover designs, to theatre playbills, film posters, political cartoons and other media.

The second approach takes a look into the graphic evolution of the female representation in *Frankenstein*. Once again, supported by a combination of references and methodologies, this approach investigates the role women played in the history of *Frankenstein* adaptations in a diverse set of media.

Although there has been extensive investigative work about *Frankenstein* in literature as well as different celebratory events for the bicentennial anniversary, little has been done in terms of focusing on the visual aspect of this classic tale. This fact paved the way to explore the incredibly rich graphic legacy of *Frankenstein* as a celebratory piece of work.

KEYWORDS

Visual research, graphic design, popular culture, classic stories, visual legacy, Mary Shelley, *Frankenstein*, graphic evolution, feminism, bicentennial anniversary

RESUMO

Inspirado pelo bicentenário de *Frankenstein, ou o Prometeu Moderno* (1818), de autoria de Mary Shelley, esta dissertação é o fruto de uma pesquisa visual sobre a representação dos personagens de uma das histórias mais icônicas na cultura popular. A investigação aborda dois temas recorrentes na representação gráfica desta história clássica ainda relevante em dias modernos.

A primeira abordagem considera uma interpretação especista do romance de Shelley aplicado à evolução da representação gráfica do infame *monstro*, nesta dissertação referido como *criatura*. Com o suporte acadêmico que analisa o pensamento especista presente em *Frankenstein* juntamente com outras referências e metodologias, esta abordagem analisa materiais visuais dos últimos duzentos anos desde capas de livro, cartazes de teatro, cartazes de filme, desenhos animados políticos e outras mídias.

A segunda abordagem analisa a evolução gráfica da representação feminina em *Frankenstein*. Novamente com uma combinação de suportes de referências e metodologias, esta abordagem investiga o papel que as mulheres tiveram na história de *Frankenstein* em um conjunto diversificado de mídias.

Embora existam extensos trabalhos de investigação sobre *Frankenstein* na área de literatura, bem como diferentes eventos comemorativos para o bicentenário, pouco foi feito em termos de focar no aspecto visual deste conto clássico. Este fato proporcionou o caminho para explorar o legado gráfico incrivelmente rico de *Frankenstein* como uma obra comemorativa.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE

Pesquisa visual, design gráfico, cultura popular, contos clássicos, legado visual, Mary Shelley, *Frankenstein*, evolução gráfica, feminismo, bicentenário

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*“Was man, indeed, at once
so powerful, so virtuous and
magnificent, yet so vicious
and base?”*

- Mary Shelley's Frankenstein

I. Introduction

I.1 The Research Purpose

Published for the first time in 1818, anonymously, *Frankenstein, or the Modern Prometheus*, is a tale about an ambitious young scientist, Victor Frankenstein, who attempts to create life by intervening with the natural process for procreation. The consequences of his experiment result in a series of reckless and unfortunate events that take over the life of Frankenstein. The visual impact this iconic tale has in popular culture will be the focus of this dissertation. This visual research will analyse deeper into the graphic legacy this story offers on its bicentennial anniversary.

Contrary to what many believe, **Frankenstein** is actually not the name of the creature but its creator, Victor Frankenstein, the ruthless young scientist. Since *Frankenstein's* first edition, it has become a classic horror story in popular culture throughout the world and it is still relevant today. Furthermore, *Frankenstein's* visual identity has been a pivotal source of inspiration to countless other tales that have come hereinafter. Last but certainly not least, *Frankenstein* has recently accomplished two centuries of cultural relevance, and that alone serves as motivation for this visual research.

This dissertation will start by defining the aims and objectives in addition to key terms that will be essential in later discussions. Followed by the contextualisation phase of the research, certain personal events in Mary Shelley's life will be introduced in order to establish what led her to write *Frankenstein*, and consequently, the correlation to the visual analysis. The historical, theoretical and contemporary contexts of this research will discuss other external and internal factors that have contributed to the representation of *Frankenstein* as a classic in popular culture. The visual elements to this story will then be the focus of analysis, by applying the selected methodologies in order to investigate the research questions.

The journey that started as a pastime among friends in a June evening in 1816, has come to be one of the most influential pieces of literature and graphic icons in popular culture in the past two centuries. The two main research questions lead to the analysis of two different perspectives in the graphic representation of *Frankenstein*, along with the aid of three different methodologies applied to discuss the two research questions.

This document is the result of the aforementioned investigative visual research that takes a closer look into two different approaches of themes that were significant in the work of Mary Shelley and that still remain very relevant to this day. Furthermore, this dissertation is a visual celebration of one of the most iconic characters and stories that popular culture has yet seen.

I.2 The Research Questions

There are many different elements that have contributed to *Frankenstein* becoming a classic story. Many of those are naturally related to literature and factors of Mary Shelley's life that added value to her story. This, however, is the fruit of a Communication Design Master, and the focus will rely on the visual legacy of *Frankenstein*. The American writer, designer and educator Andrew Blauvelt, in his essay *Remarking Theory, Rethinking Practice*, defines what entails a research question:

Questions that cannot be answered with a simple yes or no are, in fact, research questions. And if the practice of graphic design is more than an unending series of solutions to never-ending problems, then we might begin to understand graphic design as a researchable activity, subject to both the limits of theory and the limitations of practice (as cited in Bestley and Noble, 2016, p. 172).

With that being said, during preliminary research and a workshop, a few elements were immediately connected when analysing the visual data, and two approaches were outlined. The first focuses on the representation of the creature who is often mistaken as *Frankenstein* and the treatment he receives. The second looks into the role female characters had in Shelley's novel and how the social-cultural relationship with women evolved in Western culture in the graphic aspect.

1.2.a The graphic evolution of the creature

Speciesism is a term that has not been used since the time of *Frankenstein*; rather it was defined by psychologist Richard Ryder (Milligan, 2011, p. 223) in 1970. He explains it as differentiating humans and nonhumans¹ in a moral capacity. In an extract from Alexandra Kallman she defines the term speciesism concisely:

In Ryder's view, all sentient beings have moral status because they have interests, such as the interest to avoid suffering, which can be wronged. To morally differentiate between humans and nonhumans, then, implies that nonhuman interests are considered inferior to human interests, or even nonexistent (2015, p. 4).

Applying this concept to Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*, Kallman goes on to say: Mary Shelley's classic Gothic novel *Frankenstein or the Modern Prometheus* (1818) is a novel that, at first glance, seems to focus on humanity. Accordingly, much literary criticism on the novel treats humanity as a major theme with sub-topics as gender, class, revolution, intellect, race, colonialism, to mention a few (2015, p. 1).

“By the glimmer of the half-extinguished light. I saw the dull, yellow eye of the creature open and it breathed hard and a convulsive motion agitated its limbs *** I rushed out of the room” (Shelley, 1993, p. 1).

A couple of these themes will be discussed in this research, to mention their importance in the overall effect it has had on the graphic representation of *Frankenstein* in the last two hundred years. Martin Willis writes that “recent critics ... accept a priori the humanity of the creature (at least as far as his anatomy and consciousness are concerned)” (1995, pp. 24-35). The focus will rely on the evolution with the creature represented in a speciesist perspective and upon the impact the evolution of technology, historical events and more had on the representation of the creature.

This concept is further analysed by Kallman, “Speciesism takes form in how we perceive nonhuman animals, and in how our actions affect, directly or indirectly, non-human animals. It is rooted in the belief that nonhuman animals are morally inferior to humans, and therefore exploitable” (2015, p. 1). This interpretation will become evident on a number of the visual material and, when applicable, discussed in depth.

The research question here focuses on analysing the representation of speciesist relations between humans and the creature from the original vision of Mary Shelley's creature and how in the course of the last two hundred years this vision has been respected at times and other times how popular culture turned it into a sensationalist *monster*. Specifically, this will be an analysis of the graphic evolution looking from the creature's point of view.

¹ The terms human and nonhuman are used throughout this dissertation instead of terms human and animal in order to avoid speciesist language since humans, by definition, are animals as well.

I.2.b The graphic female representation

Mary Shelley's mother, Mary Wollstonecraft, was a writer, philosopher and an advocate for women's rights in the late eighteenth century, having written the book *Vindication of the Rights of Woman* in 1792, a piece that is considered one of the first feminist works in philosophy. Wollstonecraft argues that, women ought to have an education commensurate with their position in society, claiming that women are essential to the nation because they educate its children and because they could be "companions" to their husbands, rather than mere wives (1792, p. 192). In short, feminism can be defined by the theory of the political, economic, and social equality of sexes.

Given the gender of the author and her personal experiences as well as her parentage, "It is puzzling that *Frankenstein* focuses almost solely on male experience, and does not allow the women of the story voices, instead most of them die" (Knudsen, 2012, p. 3). The repercussions of the lack of female voices in popular culture diverts from the elements in the original novel, making this observation a relevant point of discussion in the visual representation of women in *Frankenstein*.

One line of thinking that supports this deliberate decision from Shelley evaluates the concept of "anxiety of authorship", which will be discussed later in more depth. This idea is seen as an obstacle to overcome for women who wanted to become authors in a male dominated field and time period. As Louise Othello Knudsen puts it:

In Mary Shelley's case, the anxiety she experienced was related to her literary parentage, and, whether or not, she could live up to her name. But the surrounding society, as well, inspired anxiety in women writers because they tried to enter a world dominated and defined by men. The male discourse in literature offered stereotyped images of women, and in that way, limited the female writers in their depiction of female experience (2012, p. 3).

In analysing this line of discourse in *Frankenstein*, Othello Knudsen concludes: "Mary Shelley's marginalisation of female characters, and killing off the 'angelic' women, is seen as a counter reaction and as a refusal to portray women in those limiting descriptions" (2012, pp. 3-4). With this feminist interpretation of the novel, the second research question will focus on starting from the interpretation of the text, based on discourse analysis, into the lack of female graphic representations in the book covers. From there on, as the socio-cultural aspects of a woman's role in society has evolved in the last two centuries in which way was that translated visually in the cinematic sphere of the graphic depictions.

I.3 Academic and methodology support

On one hand, *Frankenstein* is undeniably a cultural icon in the western culture, and yet no academic work could be found in the field of visual communication. On the other hand, there have been quite a few academic papers and dissertations done in the field of literature, including the two papers used as a theoretical context for this dissertation:

- Othello Knudsen, Louise (2012). *Reading Between the Lines: An analysis of Mary Shelley's Frankenstein, or, the Modern Prometheus, using Horace Walpole's The Castle of Otranto as an example of male discourse about women* (Master thesis). Aalborg University, Denmark.
- Kallman, Alexandra (2015). *Speciesism in Mary Shelley's Frankenstein* (Short Master thesis). Lund University, Sweden.

Each masters dissertation analyses *Frankenstein* from a different point of view; however, each one is highly relevant for the chosen investigative questions of this thesis: namely, what is the graphic evolution of a woman's role in the story of *Frankenstein*; and secondly, what is the visual representation of Frankenstein's creature in the last two hundred years?

In order to support, analyse and investigate each of the research questions, a collection of the visual data, namely static data, through the film posters and book jackets will be presented in this dissertation supported by three methodologies used in later chapters and cross examined with the collected images.

Discourse analysis will be the first methodology used to better understand the visual material in relation to Mary Shelley's original text. While there are several definitions of *discourse*, it is defined as an interdisciplinary approach in linguistics and the social practice. Fairclough synthesises: " 'Critical discourse analysis' subsumes a variety of approaches towards the social analysis of discourse" (Fairclough & Wodak 1997, Pêcheux M 1982, Wodak & Meyer 2001, pp. 357-378). This will be used in order to establish Shelley's position or interpreted views in *Frankenstein*, and how those positions later visually translated to other sources of media.

The main analysis of the visual and graphic material in this research will be supported by **visual matrices**. The following definition of this methodology summarises it:

Visual matrix is a method for researching shared experience, stimulated by sensory material relevant to a research question. It is led by imagery, visualisation and affect, which the matrix take precedence over discourse. The method enables the symbolisation of imaginative and emotional material, which might not otherwise be articulated and allows the "unthought" dimensions of experience to emerge into consciousness in a participatory setting (Froggett, Manley, Roy, Prior & Doherty, 2015, para. 1).

Lastly, but by no means least, the methodology that will support and help demonstrate the results of the visual investigation is the **semiotics** analysis. Roland Barthes introduces this branch of linguistics: "Semiology ... aims to take in any system of signs, whatever their substance and limits; images, gestures, musical sounds, objects, and the complex associations of all these..." (1977, p. 9). A deeper more complete introduction to semiotics will be thoroughly discussed and applied in the *Methodologies* chapter.

I.4 Aims and Objectives

Frankenstein is a timeless novel, and its representation has remained highly relevant in popular culture in the past two hundred years through film, theatre, and a variety of print formats. Its print and structure have served as a source of inspiration to countless other art forms ranging from modern films and television series as well as other books. The underlying, more subtle themes reflecting Shelley's anti-patriarchal stance and a criticism to the superiority of the human species are still subjects of much discussion which makes this research all the more pertinent to discuss today.

Social, cultural, political and economical issues that our society faces today, two hundred years after the first publication of *Frankenstein*, highlight the timeless nature of Mary Shelley's work. Approaching these themes from a visual research and analysis perspective is yet another point of relevance to be discussed.

Although Shelley's *Frankenstein, or the Modern Prometheus*, is a work with its own merit, it cannot be ignored that behind the anonymously published first edition in 1818, the author's life serves as a pivotal motivation for this work.

Before defining the approach to *Frankenstein* as the main subject of this dissertation, the fascination with the personal life of Mary Shelley had not crossed paths with my journey. It was after preliminary research that curiosity and inspiration took over the motivation for this dissertation. The opportunity to broadcast Shelley's remarkable values to audiences that might not be acquainted with the name behind the famous *monster*² was indispensable.

The themes this dissertation approaches and analyses are intended for all the horror aficionados and to popular culture in general. Other designers who are interested in taking a look back at this classic story with a different perspective might not have thought of before. Furthermore, this thesis is intended for all the graphic designers that are interested in accompanying a synthesis of the evolution of such a culturally and visually iconic story/character. The contextual factors that contributed to shaping this character and author as we know them today will be discussed in the contextualisation chapter of this dissertation.

In this introduction, the theme of this dissertation has been delineated along with the research questions that will analyse the visual material that concern the chosen approaches, as well as the aims and objectives of this dissertation. In the next chapter, the story of *Frankenstein*, its conception and the name behind it will be further developed in order to establish a foundation to the visual research presented in a later stage. Thereafter, the contextualisation phase will provide a better understanding of the contributing factors for *Frankenstein* becoming a classic in popular culture. Lastly, the methodologies chapter will go deeper into Shelley's original discourse, and the collected visual material will be organised and displayed, in order to pave the way for the graphic analysis. In the appendix section, a visual celebration of the two hundred years of *Frankenstein* will bring the dissertation to a conclusion.

² Throughout this dissertation Frankenstein's creation is referred to as *creature* instead of the speciesist term *monster*. Because of the negative connotation attached to *monster*, the word is italicised when it is relevant to use this term over *creature*.



1. Elsa Lanchester and Boris Karloff in the film: *The Bride of Frankenstein*. 1935. Universal Studios.



2. Elsa Lanchester as the Mate's Monster in the film: *The Bride of Frankenstein*. 1935. Universal Studios.



3. Boris Karloff as the monster in: *The Bride of Frankenstein*. C. 1935. Universal Studios.



4. Elsa Lanchester and Colin Clive on set of: *The Bride of Frankenstein*. 1935. Universal Studios.

II. How *Frankenstein* Came to Be

II.1 Who was Mary Shelley?

This chapter has as the main objective to introduce the background of *Frankenstein, or the Modern Prometheus* and its the author, Mary Shelley, including the personal lives of her parents and her husband, in order to define her heritage and the possible origin of her values. This is relevant because *Frankenstein* is at times interpreted as a semi-biographical work, with many of Mary's experiences influencing her character choices and the plot of her novel, which in turn had an effect on how this story was represented graphically.

This background information will lay the foundation for the main references used throughout this research process as well as briefly introducing the methodologies that will be used to analyse the visual data collected and presented in this dissertation.

II.1.a Parentage

The significance of introducing the key characters in Mary Shelley's personal life is linked to the influence her experiences had in her literary work. This dissertation is outlined by the representation of *Frankenstein* in popular culture; Hence, exploring the background of Shelley's work impacts the outcome of the visual research.

Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley (née Godwin 30 August 1797 - 1 February 1851) was an English novelist, amongst other talents, and born to William Godwin, a well known political philosopher and to Mary Wollstonecraft Godwin, one of the first feminist philosophers. Through her brief career as a writer, Mary Wollstonecraft's personal life and unorthodox lifestyle had a major impact on her reputation, and it was not until a couple of centuries later that her philosophical work was truly appreciated. Wollstonecraft died eleven days after the birth of her second daughter, Mary Shelley, leaving a number of unfinished manuscripts behind.

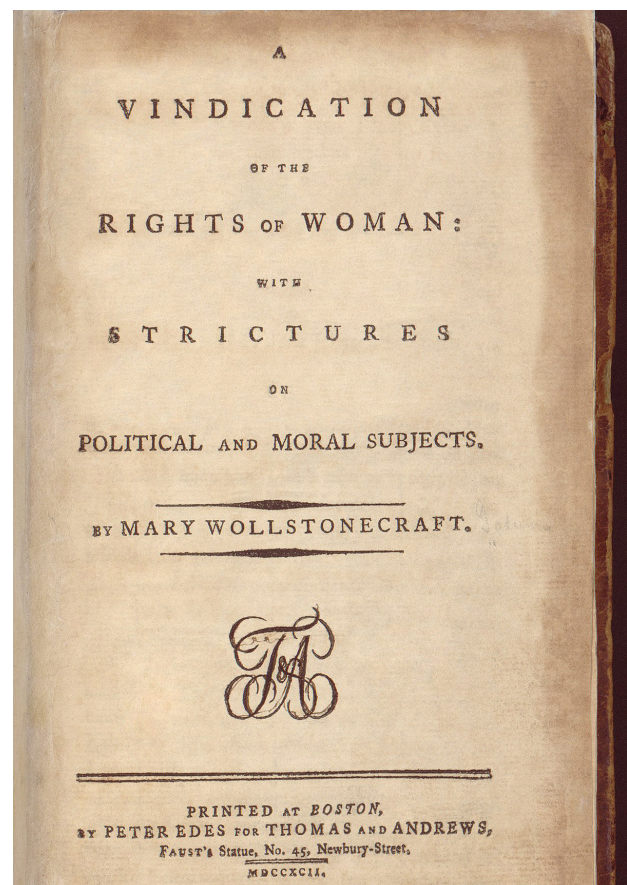
Overcoming a difficult youth Mary Wollstonecraft's endeavours as a young adult proved to be frustrating when it came to her work possibilities. She expressed her thoughts and opinions through writing until she eventually decided to make a living as an author. However, it was neither easy nor common for women to be able to support themselves in that field. Once she obtained a job as an assistant to the liberal publisher Joseph Johnson in London, she found a place to live and work in the field of her choice. Johnson's connec-



5. Mary Wollstonecraft: A portrait. C. 1797. Photograph: Getty Images/ The Bridgeman Art L. The Guardian.

tions led Wollstonecraft to meet her future husband, William Godwin, a political philosopher considered to be a forefather of anarchism, even though their first impressions of each other were less than enthusiastic.

After a failed romantic relationship with a married artist in London, Mary Wollstonecraft fled to France to escape personal humiliation and to engage herself in the recent activities related to the French Revolution. In her own words, the Revolution was "a glorious chance to obtain more virtue and happiness than hitherto blessed our globe" (Furniss, 1794, p. 61).



6. *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman*. 1792. Printed at Boston, by Peter Edes for Thomas and Andrews.

With the political turmoil brought by the developments of the French Revolution and subsequently the war between England and France, Wollstonecraft's life became increasingly unstable. By that time she was in a relationship with Gilbert Imlay, an American adventurer with whom she expected a child.

Eventually their relationship fell apart, and Mary Wollstonecraft returned to England where she slowly reconnected with her intellectual circle by working with Joseph Johnson and William Godwin. Wollstonecraft and Godwin's working relationship evolved into a passionate but brief romance, and she became pregnant with Mary Wollstonecraft Godwin.

On August 30th 1797 Mary Wollstonecraft Godwin was born and although the labour and delivery had initially gone well, Mary Wollstonecraft had complications related to the birth which ultimately led to her death eleven days postpartum.

Godwin was devastated by the tragic developments after the birth of his first daughter, dedicating his next work to the memories of his beloved wife. He published the *Memoirs of the Author of a Vindication of the Rights of Woman* in January 1798. Although Godwin felt he was portraying Wollstonecraft with love and admiration, many readers were shocked how he revealed intimate and controversial details of Mary's life for that time period.

In 1801 William Godwin married his neighbour Mary Jane Clairmont, who had two children of her own, and blended their families. Mary Shelley's relationship with her new stepmother was tense to say the least. She wrote about her: "As to Mrs. Godwin, something very analogous to disgust arises whenever I mention her, a woman I shudder to think of" (Jump, 1999, pp. 297-308).

Mary Shelley's relationship with her father was a complex one. Godwin was very rigorous with Mary's education, more than what was common at the time for young girls. He groomed Mary to become a writer, describing her as *very intelligent*. Mary's opinions and thoughts on how she was raised by William Godwin are a subtle recurring theme in her literary work, including *Frankenstein*, which will later be discussed more thoroughly. In the following transcription, Sir Frayling makes the connection between William Godwin and *Frankenstein*:



7. William Godwin. C. 1802. Portrait by: James Northcote.

The earliest reviews of *Frankenstein*, taking their cue from the book's *Dedication*, noted that the novel was clearly the work of a devoted Godwinian: the 'over-reaching' theme, and the pursuit, echoed William Godwin's novel *Caleb Williams*; the responsibility-of-the-scientist theme echoed *St. Leon*, the story of an alchemist searching for the secret of life; the Swiss setting of 'the glorious founders of liberty' echoed *Fleetwood* (2017, p. 30).

The education Mary Shelley received as a young girl and the legacy her feminist mother left behind are present themes in *Frankenstein*. In the graphic evolution of this story, the discussion will later analyse how Shelley's personal values influenced the visual representations of this novel.

11.1.b Percy Shelley

Percy Bysshe Shelley was a controversial English poet, one of the most prominent in the nineteenth century. While in University College at Oxford, Shelley alongside a friend Thomas Jefferson Hogg co-authored a pamphlet titled *The Necessity of Atheism*. The academic faculty was shocked. After neither one acknowledged nor denied the authorship, both young men were expelled. As Frayling describes, "Percy Shelley according to the *Table Talk* of essayist William Hazlitt, '... has fire in his eye, a fever in his blood, a maggot in his brain, a hectic flutter in his speech, which mark out the philosophic fanatic' (2017, p. 14).

Percy Shelley's parents Timothy Shelley, a squire and a member of the Parliament, and Elizabeth Pilfold were also shocked by their son's actions and demanded him to forsake his beliefs, which included vegetarianism, political radicalism and sexual freedom. However, only a year later, in 1811, Shelley eloped with a sixteen year old woman called Harriet Westbrook, even though his parents were strictly against this relationship.

Percy's infatuation with Harriet soon started to fade while he started writing political pamphlets beside his long-form poetry. His new line of work led him to meet his idol, the radical political philosopher, William Godwin. Notwithstanding the fact that he was still married to Harriet Westbrook, Shelley started pursuing a romantic relationship with his mentor's daughter, Mary Wollstonecraft Godwin, to which William Godwin was strongly against.

In 1816 Mary's step-sister Claire Clairmont invited Mary and Percy on a trip to Switzerland. Claire herself had become romantically involved with the poet Lord Byron, leading him and Percy Shelley to become good friends. Sir Christopher Frayling analyses the general atmosphere of the Geneva holiday:

There was much good-natured bawling and humming (bamboozling and humbugging), which would continue in a competitive way throughout June. The poets were proving good for each other's spirits. Byron, reminiscing about the Geneva summer, was to write:

[Percy Shelley] is a very good—very clever—but very singular man—he was a great comfort to me here by his intelligence and good nature (Byron, 1816-1817, as cited in Frayling, 2017, p. 34).

Upon returning to England Percy and Mary discovered that Mary's half-sister had committed suicide and only a couple of months later, Harriet Westbrook (Percy's wife) also committed suicide. That finally allowed Percy and Mary to get married, news that led Mary and her father William to reconnect and heal their family rift.

With Harriet's death, Percy's children with her had been assigned to live with foster families and from the four children Shelley had with Mary, only one survived into adulthood. These tragic losses in the couples life made it all too hard for them to have a happy and stable relationship. While Mary dealt with the depression and isolation triggered by the death of her children, Percy sought the affection of women outside his marriage.

Percy Shelley died in a boating accident in 1822, leaving Mary struggling to support herself and their child. Mary's father-in-law offered to help her, however, Timothy Shelley required her to leave the *Shelley* name out of her future publications.



8. A portrait of Percy Shelley. C. 1829. Portrait by Alfred Clint.



9. The Lover's Seat: Shelley and Mary Godwin in Old St. Pandras Churchyard. 1877. Painting by William Powell Frith.

II.1.c Mary Shelley and her modern values

Following her mother's legacy, Mary Shelley is considered to be an author that was ahead of her time. Sir Christopher Frayling does not fail to remark how Shelley's own personal history bears an unmistakable resemblance to the events present in *Frankenstein*:

Mary Godwin was very careful when drafting *Frankenstein*, about the chronology of her story: it had been calculated that it begins on December 11th 1796 ... the month she was conceived by Mary Wollstonecraft, and ends on September 12th 1797, thirteen days after her birth and just after her mother's death. Or maybe she was conceived on 'a dreary night of November' (2017, p. 31).

In a later stage of *Frankenstein* representations, Mary Shelley becomes a character in films that mix reality and fiction. Hence, the introduction to Shelley's appearance to this dissertation. The images on this page demonstrate such an occasion. Image ten is a portrait of Mary Shelley in 1831, and image eleven is a photograph of Elsa Lanchester playing the role of Mary Shelley on the set of *The Bride of Frankenstein* in 1935. On the subject of Mary's physical appearance and demeanour Frayling (2017) elaborates:

Mary Godwin was small, plainly dressed, with notably pale skin and a high forehead, a wavy cloud of light-brown hair ('of sunny and burnished brightness', wrote Claire), brilliant hazel eyes which often gave attentive sideways glances (she was called 'the nymph of sidelong looks'), sedate bearing, and was formidably well-read, not just for her age, mainly from her father's extensive library. She was quick on the uptake, serious, impressionable, occasionally depressive, or 'melancholic' as it was then called (pp. 13-14).

Between the intellectual legacy of her mother, the strict and uncommon upbringing her father provided as well as the influence of her controversial poet husband, Mary Shelley was surrounded by forward thinking and revolutionary minds that clearly inspired and transpired in her writing. As Frayling elaborates:

From an early age, she had been proudly shown off to visitors as a potential Mary Wollstonecraft. She had deep affection for her father William Godwin, who had stopped communicating with her since the end of July 1814 because he did not approve of her liaison and elopement with Shelley... Godwin had written of her, at an early age: 'She is singularly bold, somewhat imperious, and active of mind. Her desire of knowledge is great, and her perseverance in everything she undertakes almost invincible.' Mary Godwin tended to bury herself in hard work, and routine (2017, p. 14).



10. Unknown woman, formerly known as Mary Shelley. C. 1831. By Samuel John Stump.

Whether Shelley was a byproduct of her environment or criticising her personal relationships in *Frankenstein* or both, many can interpret this book as a reflection of Mary's opinions about her life, going as far as being a critic to the society/time she lived in.



11. Elsa Lanchester as Mary Shelley in *The Bride of Frankenstein*. C. 1935. Universal Studios.



12. The Villa Diodati. C. XIX Century. Bibliothèque de Genève.

Popular culture has long been fascinated with this novel not only because of the creature or the timeless theme of *Frankenstein*, but specially in the author herself. This concept and connection to the research questions will be further developed during the visual analysis of this dissertation.

II.2 *Frankenstein, or the Modern Prometheus*

Invited by her step-sister Claire Clairmont and her lover, Lord Byron; Mary Godwin together with her then lover Percy Shelley spent the summer of 1816 in Lake Geneva, Switzerland. Due to the eruption of a volcano in Indonesia, the whole northern hemisphere was affected by unusually cold weather and rain. A variety of sources cite Mary Shelley describing the Geneva holiday, and Frayling goes even further by including excerpts of her letters:

Mary Shelley later called the months of June and July 1816 a 'wet, ungenial summer'. On the first day of June, she had written in a letter, a rather formal letter which she had evidently revised for publication, from the lakeside house with little harbour the Shelleys had begun to rent:

Unfortunately we do not now enjoy those brilliant skies that hailed us on our first arrival to this country [on May 13th]. An almost perpetual rain confines us principally to the house; but when the sun bursts forth it is with a splendour and heat unknown in England. The thunderstorms that visit us are grander and more terrific than I have ever seen before. We watch them as they approach from the opposite side of the lake,

observing the lightning play among the clouds in various parts of the heavens, and dart in jagged figures upon the piny heights of Jura, dark with the shadow of the overhanging cloud while perhaps the sun is shining cheerily upwards. One night we enjoyed a finer storm than I had ever before beheld. The lake was lit up—the pines on Jura made visible, and all the scene illuminated for an instant, when a pitchy blackness succeeded, and the thunder came in frightful bursts over our heads amid the darkness (2017, p. 16).

Mary Shelley describes the weather in the above letter as “an almost perpetual rain” (Shelley, 1831, as cited in Frayling, 2017, p. 16) which brought the group of intellectuals to start a ghost story contest. Frayling continues on this subject:

Mary Godwin certainly succeeded in being 'aweful' that evening, as did Lord Byron before he became bored with the whole business, which was soon. It was the night before the first anniversary of the Battle of Waterloo—June 18th 1816—but, despite Byron's well-known and longstanding passion for most things Napoleonic, and despite his recent pilgrimage to the battlefield, they were not talking about Waterloo that night. Far from it (2017, p. 16).

The above described setting also served as inspiration to other popular culture visualisations. In *The Bride of Frankenstein* (1935), the eerie circumstances that led the young group to start a ghost story is represented on image 13. This image represents the prologue of the film in which Byron, Percy and Mary discuss the ghost story context.

There is a rumour that the night was fueled by wine and laudanum, thunderstorms and hallucinations, Byron, Clairmont and the Shelley's started to write their short ghost stories (Frayling, 2017, p. 37). In the end, Mary Shelley was the only one that completed her story, which became public a little over a year later. It was titled *Frankenstein*.

Nowadays the literary and cinematic genre of horror and science-fiction are extremely popular. In the beginning of the nineteenth century however, there had been only a few Gothic novels published, such as Horace Pole's 1765 *The Castle of Otranto*. In the subject of how Mary Shelley approaches science in her work, Frayling writes:

There was much talk about science, or natural philosophy as it was known, as the electric storms raged outside. Percy Shelley had been fascinated by chemistry ever since his student days at Oxford in 1810-11, where he had even tried on one occasion to re-animate [sic] a dead cat. His undergraduate friend Thomas Jefferson Hogg was to recall visiting Shelley's chaotic rooms: 'An electrical machine, an air-pump, the galvanic trough, the solar microscope and large glass jars and receivers'—which the young Percy proceeded to demonstrate while discoursing in double-quick time on 'the marvellous powers of electricity, of thunder and lightning, describing an electrical kite he had made at home...' Not to mention the piles of books strewn everywhere; philosophy, magic, poetry, German novels (2017, p. 20).

In that way, many consider Shelley's *Frankenstein* a pioneer novel that approaches themes such as the way men use science to control the natural order of life, the role women play in a patriarchal society and even vegetarianism. This is what makes this story all the more visually fascinating. The aforementioned themes are very relevant in current worldwide discussions relating to climate change and the political shift we have been witnessing the past few years. In fact, the literary structure and visual elements of *Frankenstein* have inspired numerous popular culture works of art, film and fiction including Marvel's *Avengers: Age of Ultron* from 2015, *Ex Machina* from 2014 and *Chappie* from 2014 to name a few.

Parts of Mary Shelley's life and what she discusses in *Frankenstein* still remain controversial subjects today. The issues and belief of human superiority, and the inequality of female roles during that time period were much more prominent in households and education. Today, however, this is still an issue that has been the subject of much discussion in both the political and social sectors. This is where the visual representation of *Frankenstein* becomes as timeless as the novel itself.



13. Percy, Mary and Byron in a scene from: *The Bride of Frankenstein*. 1935. Universal Studios.

III. Theoretical Context

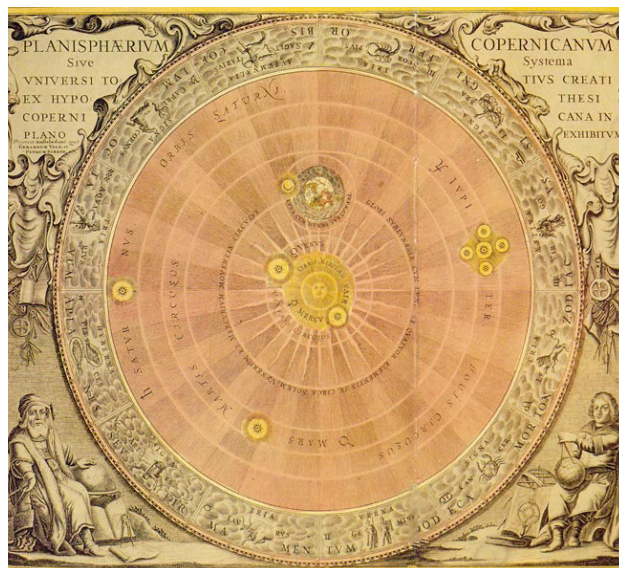
The aim of this chapter is to outline the key theories and concepts that are relevant to study not only *Frankenstein* as a piece of literature, but especially its visual representation as a popular culture icon. Hence, defining this key theoretical framework will help critically evaluate the research questions and support the choice of methodologies during the visual research.

Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* has been categorised as a Gothic Romance; however, there are inclinations to science-fiction and horror whose themes become more significant for this research when analysing the graphic material representing *Frankenstein* in popular culture for the past two hundred years. Furthermore, a brief introduction to the feminist ideology supports the research question in the analysis of the visual research.

III.1 Definition of a genre

III.1.a The birth of science-fiction

The earliest works that include science-fiction themes started to appear in the beginning of the seventeenth century, with the mathematician and astronomer Johannes Kepler. In his novel *Somnium* Kepler describes a voyage to the moon where he depicts Earth as seen from the lunar surface. Later in the same century others expressed similar ideas about attempting to travel in outer space and encountering extraterrestrial life. Roughly a hundred years later, the French philosopher Voltaire also wrote a short story about two aliens that came to visit Earth.



14. The Copernican Universe. C. 1543. Retrieved from: Bucknell University.

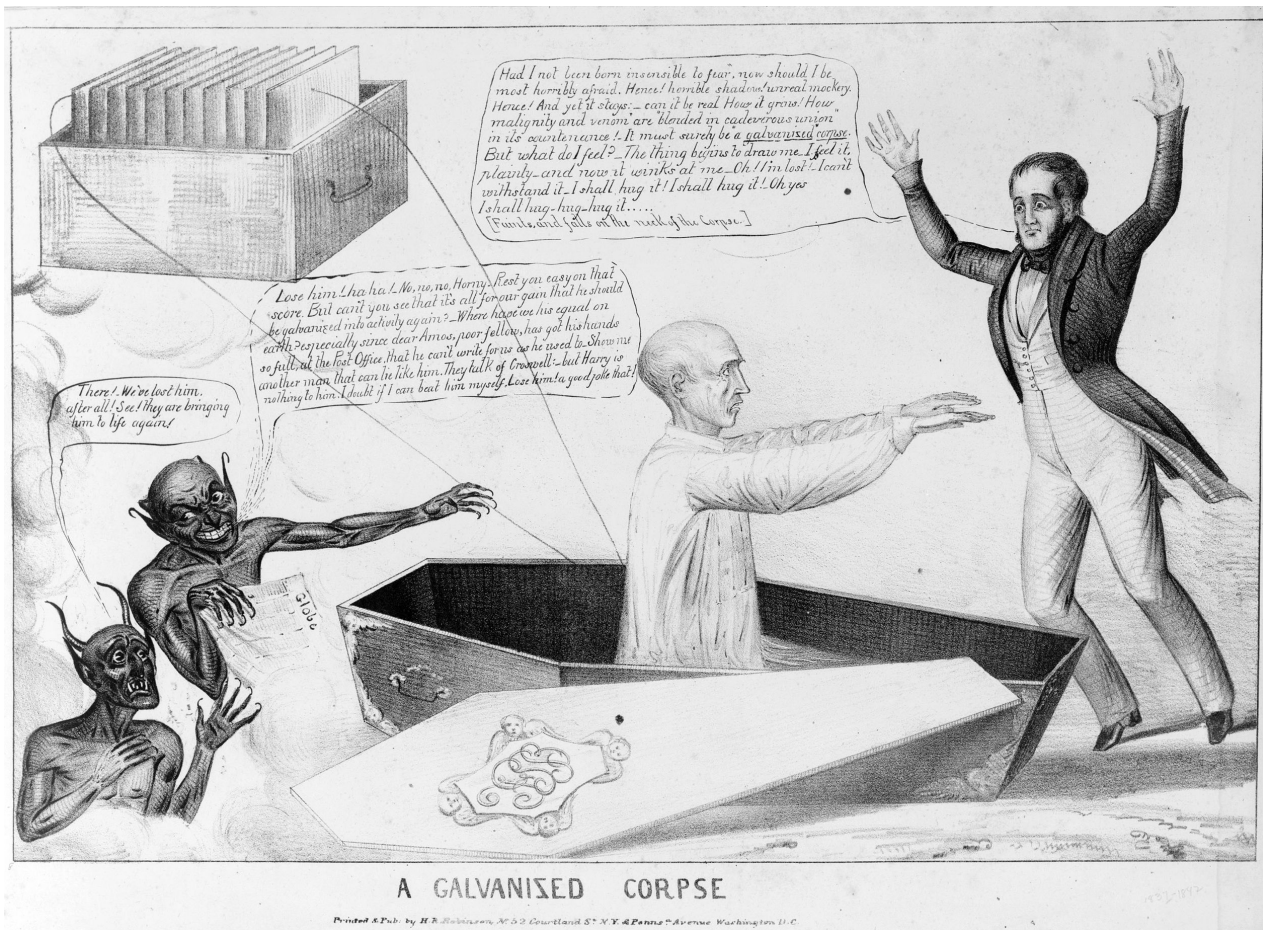
Looking back now, it could seem like a random movement; but upon a closer analysis, it was not coincidental at all. Michael G. Williams gives an explanation for this: "Around the 1500's, the church began to lose its dogmatic grasp on people's understanding of the natural world" (2017, para. 6). That fact, in combination with the rise of scientific developments and discoveries like Nicolaus Copernicus's heliocentric model as the earth revolving around the sun, provoked a change in culture and science. These contributions created new opportunities for literature and visual communication like never before.

From that moment onward and with the ever evolving discoveries in the scientific field with experiments in electricity, from scientists like Luigi Galvani and Alessandro Volta ultimately inspired Mary Shelley's work in *Frankenstein*. Soon followed by Jules Verne, author of *Twenty Thousand Leagues Under the Sea* (1870) and *Around the World in Eighty Days* (1873), Edgar Allen Poe and many others of the most famous names still admired today. On the topic of *Frankenstein's* possible origin, Frayling elaborates:



"Only one of its arms wriggled in the air, brandishing the victim like a feather." — Page 275.

15. "Only one of its arms wriggled in the air, brandishing the victim like a feather." — Page 275. C. 1870. Neuville.

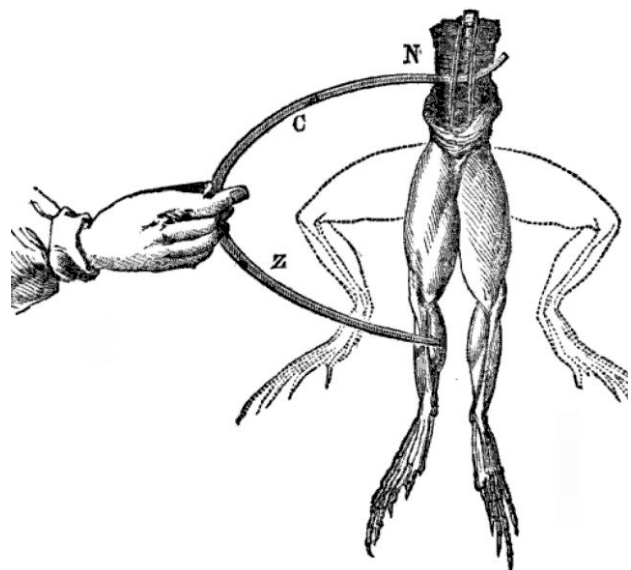


16. Cartoon of a Galvanised Corpse. 1836. Printed and published by H.R. Robinson.

Summarising this debate in his anonymous *Preface* to his wife's *Frankenstein*, written (as by the author) a year later, Percy Shelley was to recall:

The event on which this fiction is founded has been supposed, by Dr. Darwin, and some of the physiological writers of Germany, as not of impossible occurrence... The event on which the interest of the story depends is exempt from the disadvantages of a mere tale of spectres and enchantment... I have thus endeavoured to preserve the truth of the elementary principles of human nature, while I have not scrupled to innovate upon their combinations... It was commenced, partly as a source of amusement, and partly as an expedient for exercising any untried resources of mind.

In short, because *Frankenstein* was based on a real scientific debate—and explored the possibilities from this starting-point—it was of a different genre to ‘mere’ tales of the supernatural: a new kind of literary fiction, one which fused serious philosophical musings—‘moral tendencies’ within the characters—with an exciting story (2017, p. 22).



17. Galvanism: electrodes touch a frog, and the legs twitch into the upward position. 1859. Illustration on the book by David Ames Wells, *The science of common things: a familiar explanation of the first principles of physical science* (Page: 290). Publisher Ivson, Phinney, Blakeman.



18. Plate I, for *The Castle of Otranto*. 1794. Illustration by Johann Wilhelm Meil (1733-1805), engraved by Johann Friedrich Bolt (1769-1836). Printed in Berlin. Harvard University.

The repercussions of this scientific discussion in the representations of *Frankenstein* will be later resumed during the visual analysis of the graphic material.

III.1.b The birth of horror

Using elements of fear, horror and despair has long been a strategic tool in literature and in the visual arts. Kristin Masters recalls that “The vampire archetype, for example, can be traced all the way back to the ancient civilisations of Sum-er; the vampire-like being Emikku would inhabit the bodies of people who had died violently or who were buried improperly” (2013, para. 1).

However, the genre of horror as it is known today has its roots in the Inquisition period. In 1235, the Vatican tried to reestablish the orthodoxy of the faith, consequently bringing charges, almost immediately, of heresy that were linked to allegations of witchcraft. This obsession with witches endured centuries thereafter, and still today it is a heavily exploited theme in visual communication (Masters, 2013, para. 2).

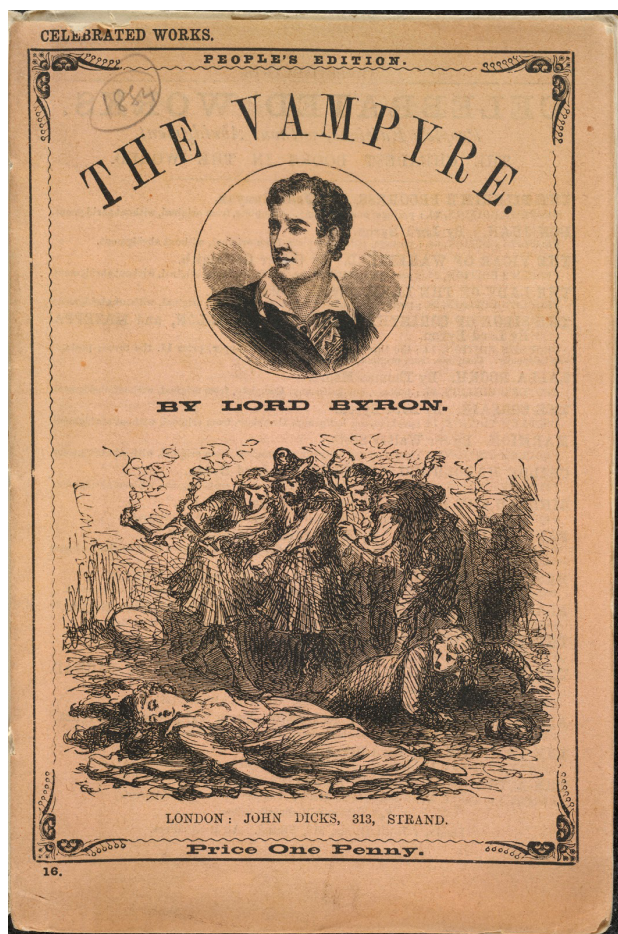
In that time, tales of horror were often strongly correlated to religion, with the works of Dante’s *Divine Comedy*, *Inferno* (1307) heavily influencing *Paradise Lost* (1667) by John Milton. Later in the 1580’s a new kind of horror had taken over the stages of London (Masters, 2013, para. 3). With Thomas Kyd’s *The Spanish Tragedy* (1585) followed some of

Shakespeare’s work *Titus Andronicus* (1594), *Hamlet* (1600) and *Macbeth* (1605) (list retrieved from Masters, 2013, para. 3-5). Some of these names were often also represented in popular culture’s graphic history.

In the beginning of the seventeenth century another movement, known as **The Graveyard Poets** started with the 1714 publication of *A Night-Piece on Death*, by Thomas Parnell. On one hand, for that time period it was outrageous that a group of poets seemed to be so preoccupied with mortality and death. On the other hand, “Their efforts did contribute to the evolution of the Gothic novel” (Masters, 2013, para. 6). This group included pre-Romantic poets like Oliver Goldsmith, William Cowper, James MacPherson, and Robert Blair (Masters, 2013, para. 6).

It was in 1765 that Horace Walpole published *The Castle of Otranto*, considered to be the first Gothic novel, that had a major impact in the emerging genre of horror. Following the same steps, Ann Radcliffe’s *Mysteries of Udolpho*, left Lord Byron, Sir Walter Scott and others quite impressed.

The events of the Geneva holiday of 1816, marked two important milestones for literature and subsequently for the representation of these iconic characters: Not only did it establish Mary Shelley as a household name in the Gothic genre, but it also introduced a new type of science-fiction. Meanwhile, another member of their party Dr. Polidori established



19. *The Vampyre* by Lord Byron. 1819. John Dicks.

the vampire sub-genre with the publication of *The Vampyre*, in 1819, on the *New Monthly Magazine*, a work that was originally attributed to Lord Byron. On a side note, attributes of the main character of *The Vampyre* strongly resembles Byron. Furthermore, the subject of *monstrous births* clearly was one that Mary was enamoured with, as Sir Christopher Frayling reflects on the words of the Shelleys:

As Mary Shelley later wrote, Rousseau's *Émile* was about how children ought to be treated like younger men, not as slaves or automata, which is also a fair summary of *Frankenstein*. It was a theme which Percy was to distil into the aphorism "Treat a person ill, and he will become wicked" (2017, p. 34).

Over the past five centuries both science fiction and horror genres have been heavily influenced by the advancement of science, technology, education and religion, all shaping much of the culture and art of modern life. Again, these classic stories have been a great source of inspiration to countless other stories we know and appreciate today. The impact of the genre's influence on the representation of *Frankenstein* will be further analysed.

III.2 Theoretical foundation of feminism

In order to analyse and understand the foundation of the feminist ideology and how Mary Wollstonecraft came to write her most famous work *A Vindication of the Right of Woman* (1792), it is important to take a look back about a century before that and the beginning of the Enlightenment period. This will help set the background of Mary Shelley's work and provide a better understanding of the second research question: what was the evolution of the female representation in *Frankenstein*?

After the execution of Charles I, in 1649, the British government was substituted from an absolute monarchy to a republican state, led by Oliver Cromwell. Subsequently in 1688, the Glorious Revolution citizens started to question the meaning of religion and their vision about humankind.

The period known as The Age of Reason, between the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, spread all over Europe and the new world questioned not only religion and politics, but the arts, philosophy and economy. It was a boom period for scientific developments, urban growth, and other economic principles that opened new paths to the Industrial Revolution.

Names like Newton, Voltaire, Mozart and Spinoza, are amongst many others who "would become the personification of the idea that *reason* was the path to *progress*, as reason was the gist of life" (García, 2017, para. 2).

Mary Wollstonecraft was one of the philosophers that was inspired by the changes in politics, economy and culture that had been taking place at that time. Furthermore, the effect of her upbringing in her hostility towards authoritative male figures, the events of the French Revolution and the works of Rousseau and Talleyrand-Périgord, led her to question the role of education of women in the traditional sense.

The pertinence of looking back at the history of feminism in relation to this visual research is as it follows:

The representation of women and female experience is scarce in Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*.... However, this was a time where female authors emerged and tried to make a stand against patriarchal society and its male dominated and oriented structure (Knudsen, 2012, p. 11).



20. American woman suffrage advocates speak before the U.S. House Judiciary Committee. 1871. Library of Congress, Washington D.C.

This is a key point of the narrative of *Frankenstein* that comes back in its graphic representation, either in the book jackets, or film posters, until a turning point when social-cultural events start to change female representation. That shift will be later discussed more thoroughly with the support of methodologies.

This theoretical framework introduced some critical concepts that serve as a foundation for the following analysis of the visual data through the application of methodologies to this research. The fact that *Frankenstein* is considered a work of Romantic Gothic as well as science-fiction and horror, created the space for an infinite universe of visual exploration. These two genres are key to investigate the first research question, regarding the graphic evolution of the creature's depiction. Additionally, defining the feminist ideology will prove to be useful in supporting the second research question, which will be applied to the visual analysis of the representation of women in *Frankenstein*.

In summary, the theoretical context is a necessary part of the investigative process to create a contextual foundation in order to analyse the visual material. The following section will discuss the historical context that is relevant to the research questions.

IV. Historical Context

This chapter of the contextualisation serves as part of the build up of the foundation for the socio-cultural events relevant to the research questions. In the visual material that will later be presented, certain elements and historical events are evidently present in the depictions of *Frankenstein*. While the theoretical framework defined key concepts pertinent to this research, the historical context will present key events in the course of the past two hundred years that have influenced the representation of *Frankenstein* in many shapes and forms.

IV.1 The Age of Enlightenment

The Enlightenment was a movement that represented the intellectual history of Europe in the eighteenth century. In fact, it went beyond that: it was also a state of mind characterised by the “combination of principle and pragmatism” (Champion, Aubin and Others, 2018, para. 1).

The exact origin of the Enlightenment movement is uncertain. What is clear, however, is that the events leading up to the French Revolution as well as the Industrial Revolution in Europe heavily influenced philosophers and the culture at that time.

Bernard de Fontenelle, a French author wrote in 1702 anticipating “a century which will become more enlightened day by day, so that all previous centuries will be lost in darkness by comparison” (1702, as cited in Champion, Aubin and Others, 2018, para. 1).

In Mary Shelley’s *Frankenstein* “Victor Frankenstein is portrayed as a representative figure of the Enlightenment, and its anthropocentric ideology” (Kallman,



21. The Age of Reason. C. XVIII century. Canvas Instructure



22. Aquatint “The Sleep of Reason Produces Monsters”. 1797-1798. By Francisco José de Goya y Lucientes. Retrieved from: Fastfission at Wikimedia Commons

2015, p. 12). So much so, that Lisa Catron and Edgar Newman (1993) describe him as “a figure of Enlightenment ideology chiefly because he resolutely applies himself to his science studies in his incessant pursuit for knowledge (205)” (Kallman, 2015, p. 12).

It is important to note as well that Victor Frankenstein’s reasoning behind his decisions are highly motivated to “seek glory through knowledge and science, an attitude which properly reflects Enlightenment aspirations” (Kallman, 2015, p. 12).

The relation between the views of the Enlightenment era and how they were portrayed in the original edition of *Frankenstein* and this specific dissertation goes back to that first research question: What was the graphic evolution of the creature looking at it from a speciesist point of view? Looking at how the creature of Frankenstein was initially conceived as a victim of the values prominent in the Enlightenment period directly reflects on the initial visual representation of this character. Later, that relation affects how the representation of the creature evolved into a ruthless *monster*. By applying the methodologies to the relevant images concerning this research question, the concept introduced in this historical context will be resumed.

IV.2 The rise of feminist movements

The purpose of this section is to provide an introduction to the historical context concerning feminism from the early nineteenth century, just before *Frankenstein* was first published until the last few decades. This establishes the social and cultural context that would impact the representation of women in the posters and book jackets as well as in the original novel of *Frankenstein*.

IV.2.a A brief look into feminism in the XIX century

Up until the beginning of the XIX century the expectation of a man's role in society was very different than a woman's. Men were expected to live a public life, whether in the work sphere, working in a factory or socialising with like-minded individuals in different public spaces. Women, on the other hand, were expected to run the household and all tasks involving the bearing and raising of children, cooking, cleaning, and other things related to maintaining the home life.

Because of the big disparity between women's roles and men's roles in society at that time, the approach of education for men and women was also very different. Women did not have the same opportunities for education as men did. They usually were shut out of the public sphere unless they served as companions for their husbands or fathers. Christopher Sailus elaborates further on the education of women: "Indeed, educating women was often seen as subversive, a possible perversion of the correct social order" (2018, para. 3).

Come the beginning of the XIX century, women start to question their position in the so called "social order" (Sailus, 2018, para. 3). The traditional values started to dissipate among several women who started protesting, attending political speeches, and engaging in other activities considered to be *unladylike* up until that point.

Although some intellectuals like Mary Wollstonecraft had already brought up the inequality when it came to women's and men's education in the eighteenth century, Wollstonecraft's and similar types of work were under-appreciated by the traditional society. However, the women's rights movements were gaining strength in the XIX century when "the first formal meeting organised toward addressing gender inequality was the 1848 Women's Rights Convention in Seneca Falls, New York" (Sailus, 2018, para. 5). That was thirty years after the anonymous publication of *Frankenstein*.

By the time the twentieth century came about, the women's rights movement kept getting stronger as time passed although there was still a long journey ahead. New Zealand legalised the women's right to vote first in 1893. It would take Europe a few more decades to affirm that women's votes were of equal worth as men's.



23. This wood engraving shows a session of the National Woman's Suffrage Association during a political convention in Chicago, Ill. 1880. (AP Photo), retrieved from The Huffington Post.



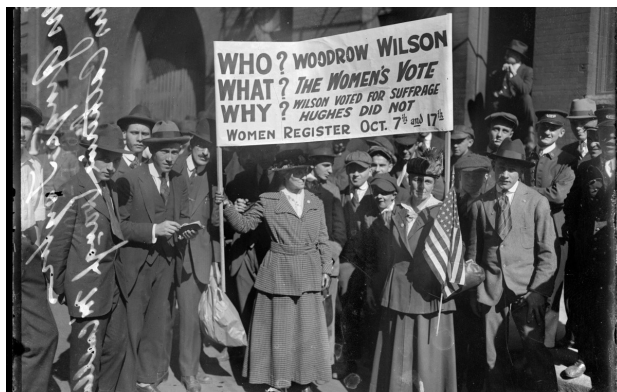
24. "No self respecting woman should wish or work for the success of a party that ignores her sex" - Susan B. Anthony. C. 1900. Wiki Commons.

IV.2.b Feminism and The Great War

With the outbreak of World War I across Europe, women's domestic role in society called for a change. On one hand, members of the Suffragettes (Women's rights activists) were actively campaigning, while the main outlook of society remained fairly the same. On the other hand, with the men away from home at war, women were required to take men's places at work, in the factories, and in shops and offices in order to maintain a somewhat productive society. Kate Adie explains the delicate dynamic between male and female roles in society during World War I:

To fill the gap left by a generation of fighting men, more than a million women took the chance to join the workforce between 1914 and 1918. They worked across the economy—from tram drivers and train cleaners, to postal workers and police patrols (2018, para. 2).

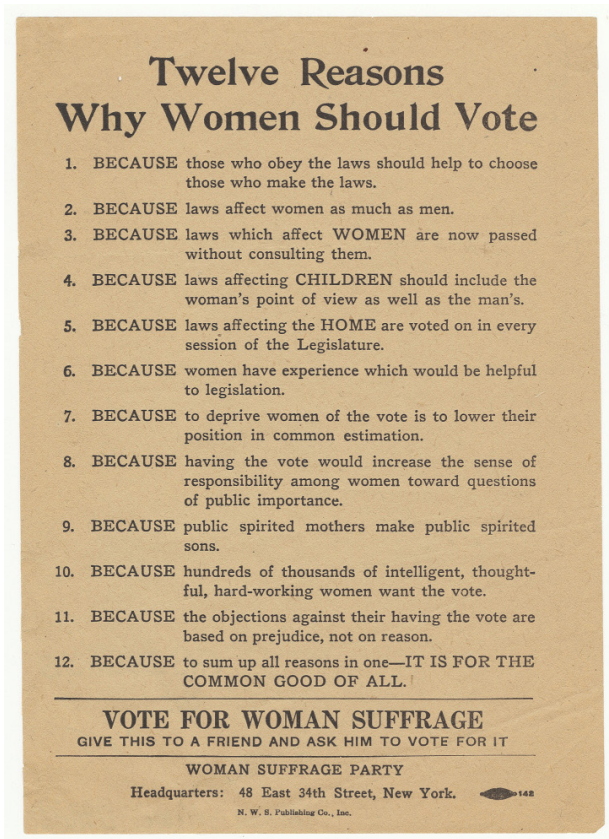
The economy of war in itself required a different demand from the non-fighting members of society, many of whom were women. Ammunition factories were in full steam and women were engaged in the production of said ammunition for the war. However, the new role of women did not come without its challenges, accidents, health problems caused by their new jobs and the gender gap for salaries were an immediate conflict (Adie, 2018, para. 5).



25. Mrs. George Taylor and Catherine Waugh McCulloch, holding a banner advocating for women's suffrage at a Chicago political parade. 1916. (DN-0067220). The Huffington Post.



26. Suffragists Katharine McCormick and Mrs. Charles Parker, holding a historical NWSA banner. April 22, 1913 Suffrage Association. 1920. Wiki Commons.



27. Suffragists worked to persuade male voters and lawmakers to extend voting rights to women. Voting, they argued, helped mothers protect their children and being denied the right to vote was discrimination. Chicago History Museum Collection (ICHI-25533). 1915. The Huffington Post.

With the end of the war the women's rights movement reached some important milestones. Although it became legal for women to vote in the United Kingdom in 1918, it was not permitted to all. The right to vote was granted only to women who were above the age of 30 and who met minimum property qualifications. As a result, in 1919 *The Sex Disqualification Act* made it illegal to exclude women from jobs because of their gender.

Regardless, the post war was not all about progress. With the men back in their respective jobs at the factories and other positions in society, many women were brought back into the domestic life caring for their families and their injured husbands. On this subject Adie explains: "Many women were dismissed from their jobs, particularly in engineering; those who objected to standing aside were met with public anger. And old ways reasserted themselves, as newly unemployed women war workers were pressured into becoming domestic servants" (2018, para. 5).



28. A government poster encouraging women's work during World War II propaganda. C. 1940-45. National Archives and Records Administration. Wikimedia Commons.

IV.2.c Feminism during and post World War II

After the Great Depression of 1929, feminist movements were scarce and men had been re-established as the "rightful breadwinners" during the 1930's (Shneiderman, 2018, para. 1). By the time World War II came around, a similar shift occurred to that of the First World War. Men were deployed to fight for their countries and women had to assume the main role in keeping the household running as well as several of the social and working positions that were previously occupied by men.

Women were not allowed to enlist for the armed forces except as nurses until shortly after the bombing of Pearl Harbour. In total it is estimated that 350,000 women served during the war for the American military. "Each branch of the United States military had its women's auxiliary: the Women's Army Corps (WACs), the Navy Women's Reserve (WAVES), the Coast Guard Women's Reserve (SPARS) etc." (Shneiderman, 2018, para. 1). With their unprecedented involvement in the military, women got a "taste of camaraderie, structure and pride in service experienced by their male counterparts" (Shneiderman,



29. Nurses at Turnberry during WWII. C. 1943. Wiki Commons.

2018, para. 1). Later on that feeling of empowerment would lead to a greater and more intensified effort in the women's rights movements. At that point women were active in military jobs and kept the work that had previously been that of men in the factories. Even though they were met with criticism and had lower pay grades in civilian jobs, three million women joined the unions during the war.

After the war, similar to the first time, men came back to reclaim their jobs, and many women were dismissed, frustrated, and indignant to return to their domestic lives, which only served as more empowerment to the women's rights organisations.

IV.2.d Feminism in the 1960's and beyond

During the 1960's important strides were made in the feminist activism front. With the Civil Rights Act of 1964 in the United States, many saw it as an opportunity to further press the women's rights to be accepted. The Gale Critical Companion explores another important activist movement of the sixties: "The student movement was also at its height in the 1960s, leading many younger citizens to question traditional social values and to protest against the American military involvement in Vietnam" (2005, para. 3).

With the founding of the National Organization for Women (NOW) in 1966 leaders such as Bella Abzug, Shirley Chisholm, and Gloria Steinem were putting pressure on "politicians to become more aware of women's concerns and to work on legislation that would improve the quality of women's lives" (Gale, 2005, para. 4).



30. N.O.W.: National Organization for Women. Founded by 28 women at the Third National Conference Commissions on the Status of Women. 1966. N.O.W.



31. Women holding signs *Vote baby Vote* and *Voting is People Power*. C. 1960s. *The Huffington Post*.

Those movements and actions were intensified during the 1970s with more and more laws being passed and women getting more rights. Hence, being more involved in all aspects of society as well as domestic life. These efforts suffered some backlash in the 1980s when the American government became increasingly conservative and the anti-feminist opinions were predominant in the political climate. However, this conservatism did not translate visually in the European representations of women in *Frankenstein*, as it will be later demonstrated during the methodologies application of the film posters.

In the past thirty years women continued to fight for equal rights with men and while movements come and go, they never disappear completely. As Jenni Murray puts it, “The revolution has not been without its casualties. Relationships between men and women have frequently been stretched on the rack of unmatched expectations” (2011, para. 14), and the debate has been increasingly becoming a point of contention again in the past few years.

Image thirty-two notes a march for sexual assault survivors and their supporters on Hollywood Boulevard in 2017. The indignation with misogyny, the salary disparity and the huge wave of sexual misconduct scandals that have brought women and feminist movements back into the daily headlines spread across the globe. Mary Shelley’s subtle criticism of patriarchy and her defiance in portraying women in passive roles in *Frankenstein*, when compared to the evolution women had in the visual representation of this story make this research ever so relevant as it was when the novel was first published two centuries ago, if not more. This issue will be discussed in more depth during the methodology chapter of the research.



32. People participate in a protest march for sexual assault survivors and their supporters on Hollywood Boulevard. 2017. Lucy Nicholson/Reuters.

IV.2.e Feminist shift in pop-culture

As this research has been analysing the view on women and their expected roles during the last two centuries, it is important to note that the lack of female representation in *Frankenstein* directly influenced the lack of female depiction in the first visualisations of this story. Mary Shelley's social context and upbringing are partly responsible for this conscious decision to exclude women from this story. Alongside the evolution of the social and cultural movements in regards to women's rights the representation of female characters in popular culture also accounted for a clear inclusion of female roles in the representation of *Frankenstein*. This issue will be exemplified with the collection of visual data during the methodologies chapter. Here it becomes applicable to recall the following statement from Louise Othello Knudsen, that has been previously used:

The representation of women and female experience is scarce in Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*, first published in 1818. However, this was a time where female authors emerged and tried to take a stand against patriarchal society and its male dominated and oriented structure. (2012, p. 11)

Indeed the amount of female characters and their lack of involvement in Shelley's novel could be interpreted in a couple of different ways. Judging solely by the fact that the first edition of *Frankenstein* was published anonymously could suggest that she was not ready yet to assume authorship and what that could potentially mean to a young female author in the beginning of the nineteenth century. In fact, in her 1831 introduction (note that was a third, heavily edited and signed edition) Mary Shelley "tried to excuse and explain how she, then a young girl, could imagine such a 'hideous' story. Furthermore, she disclaimed her own writing by saying that she imitated others before her" (Knudsen, 2012, p. 11). The lack of female representation in *Frankenstein* directly affected the visual depictions for over a century as it will be demonstrated with the visual research. In her introduction, Shelley (1993) goes as far as to claim:

"My dreams were at once more fantastic and agreeable than my writings. In the latter I was a close imitator—rather doing as others had done, than putting down the suggestion of my own mind" (p. 1)

Another important contributing factor to Shelley's apprehension about owning her work were the relationships she had in her personal life. Percy Shelley was a controlling partner with an agenda of his own. Mary described Percy as "very anxious that [she] should prove [herself] worthy of [her] parentage, and enroll [herself] on the page of fame" [sic] (Shelley, 1993, p. 2).

In several instances Mary Shelley minimises the importance of her role in her own work instead praising Percy's "far more cultivated mind" (Shelley, 1993, p. 2) and "promotes her husband's involvement in the creation of *Frankenstein*" (Knudsen, 2012, p. 12). Mary Shelley suggests that the development of the story was out of her hands:

"My imagination, unbidden, possessed and guided me, gifting the successive images that arose in my mind with a vividness far beyond the usual bounds of reverie" (Shelley, 1993, p. 4).

On one hand it can be argued that "in this context, it becomes problematic to advocate that *Frankenstein* has an underlying feministic [sic] message since Mary Shelley appears so apologetic and defensive" (Mellor, 1989, p. 55). On the other hand, not considering the 1818 edition that was believed to be heavily influenced by Percy Shelley, it can be argued that Mary Shelley in fact is criticising the patriarchal society, her unusual upbringing and complex relationship with her father William Godwin and her frustrations in relation to Percy Shelley. The complexities of the role women play in the representation of *Frankenstein* will be thoroughly discussed with the applications of methodologies in the visual research.

Before moving forward to the next chapter, here it becomes relevant to reiterate the definition of popular culture. Milestone and Meyer are quoted by Adrienne Trier-Bieniek to explain popular culture thus: Generally the images, narratives and ideas that circulate widely in contemporary culture. What makes something 'popular' is its general availability to the masses and, from a social science point of view, it is usually something that we can consume (Trier-Bieniek and Leavy, 2014). Additionally, the impact of pop culture is often subject to debate in academic communities. While some feel that the masses get a say in the production of culture and the direction of media, like Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer find that pop culture works to support the interests of those in power (2015, p. 14).

Looking into the feminist shifts in popular culture context, it is impossible not to mention one of the most iconic feminist characters of the twentieth century—Wonder Woman. Shneiderman elaborates:

In 1941, psychologist and feminist Dr. William Moulton Marston was hired by the creators of DC Comics to create a feminine superhero. Wonder Woman made her debut in late 1941 bringing a new vision of femininity that incorporated strength, intelligence, patriotism and beauty with a dash of Greek mythology. From the very beginning Wonder Woman played an influential role in feminism of the 1940s (2018, para. 1).

This milestone was a game changer in the representation of women in popular culture. From then on it became less acceptable to categorise women as mere *damsel-in-distress* figures. Although progress was made with characters such as Wonder Woman, there was still a long road ahead in the representation of women. During the last several decades the feminist theory has changed and developed around the world, becoming stronger and more recognised in all aspects of our western society. Adrienne Trier-Bieniek puts it simply, “Essentially, feminist theory is associated with women’s inequality and subordination.... As culture has developed and changed so has the feminist theory” (2015, p. 14).

Alice Vincent from the Telegraph expresses how the year, 2014, became a memorable one for feminist movements as well as popular-culture:

In 2014, culture became a feminist issue. On the red carpet, on stage, in our National Theatre and our Houses of Parliament, at the UN, on our bookshelves, Twitter feeds and on talk shows, prominent actresses, singers and writers proclaimed the importance of gender equality (2014, p. 1).

Since then with the widespread sexual misconduct scandals in Hollywood, in politics and in several different countries, this issue remains one of the most discussed topics.

This section has presented the historical context that is relevant to have a better understanding of the social and cultural factors that will help further investigate the research questions.

Introducing the Enlightenment era is relevant to frame the ideology most prominent in the time that *Frankenstein* was conceived and published, thereby influencing the initial visualisations of Shelley’s word. Based on the interpretation that *Frankenstein*

is a work that criticises the anthropological ideology through the character’s attributions of Victor Frankenstein this will be exemplified in a later chapter.

The other relevant historical context is applicable to the second research question. The history of feminism starting from the time when Mary Shelley wrote *Frankenstein* and the subsequent two centuries is highly significant for the visual research that will analyse the portrayal of women in the story of *Frankenstein*. This point of view will later become evident in the methodologies chapter of this dissertation.

The following next chapter will outline the contemporary context related to this research which will be further developed.



33. Original Wonder Woman concept art. C. 1940's. Art by Harry Peter.

V. Contemporary Context

V.1 A popular culture icon

The main objective of outlining the contemporary context of the representation of *Frankenstein* is to highlight the socio-cultural influence this story has in western culture. Furthermore, this section will clarify the reason that the visual research is still relevant in today's society. In addition, this section will define key concepts such as a classic character and note main events that influenced how *Frankenstein* has managed to remain a pivotal part of our culture during these two hundred years through its numerous representations.

V.1.a What makes a classic?

Defining a classic character in visual terms is much like defining a classic piece of literature. Although there can be some debate on what exactly makes a *classic* there are a few qualities that are common to most classic literature and characters. According to Esther Lombardi, “a classic must express artistic quality ... it is an expression of life, truth and beauty” (2017, para. 3).

Moreover, a classic should stand the test of time. Although it represents the period in which it was created, the work should have enough merit to last long after it was originally conceived (Lombardi, 2017, para. 4). In *Frankenstein's* case, this has been discussed as Victor Frankenstein being the embodiment of Anthropocentrism, yet the themes and issues present in the novel are still very relevant to today's society.

A classic also should have a certain universal appeal, stretching beyond the borders of its creation:

[It] touches readers to their very core beings, partly because they integrate themes that are understood by readers from a wide range of backgrounds and levels of experience. Themes of love, hate, death, life and faith touch upon some of our most basic emotional responses (Lombardi, 2017, p. 5).

Most importantly, a classic makes connections: The observer clearly understands what influenced and inspired the author [and other great works of literature]. In this framework, this could applied beyond the boundaries of literature into other streams of media. This has also been applied to *Frankenstein* through the items discussed in the theoretical and historical contexts.

Frankenstein meets yet exceeds all of Lombardi's definition of a classic character. The scope of this story that goes beyond literature will be presented in the next few chapters of this research.



35. A scene of *Dracula*. 1931. Universal Studios.



34. 100 Greatest Books Ever Written. C. 1970s. Easton Press.

V.1.b Frankenstein's creature

Defined in the beginning of this dissertation, speciesism is considered to be a derived form from anthropocentrism, which Kallman goes on to elaborate:

[Anthropocentrism is a] philosophical viewpoint arguing that human beings are the central or most significant entities in the world. This is a basic belief embedded in many Western religions and philosophies. Anthropocentrism regards humans as separate from and superior to nature and holds that human life has intrinsic value while other entities (including [nonhuman] animals, plants, mineral resources, and so on) are resources that may justifiably be exploited for the benefit of humankind (2015, p. 5).

Kallman quotes Richie Nimmo [who] “claims that the most basic anthropocentric view on the differences between human animals and nonhuman animals is that humans are considered subjects, and nonhumans objects” (2015, p. 5).

Historically, the distinction between humans and nonhumans was defined in terms of reason, language, and the belief in an immortal soul. René Descartes advocated the above-mentioned distinction (De Grazia, 2002, p. 4). According to Gary Steiner, Descartes believed that nonhuman animals were analogous to machines because they supposedly lacked reason, language, and immortal souls. Nevertheless, Descartes did not exclude the human body from his theory (Kallman, 2015, p. 6).

During the Enlightenment era, Kallman quotes André Krebber, nature was interpreted “as a mere mechanism” (2011, p. 322); Therefore, “Human bonds with nature were rejected” (Kallman, 2015, p. 8). Kallman continues to argue, “The Enlightenment and its advocacy of anthropocentric ideology, then, can be said to have encouraged a certain divide between that which was associated with nature such as nonhuman animals, and that which was regarded as part of society, namely human animals” (2015, p. 8).

In this line of thinking, any association between human and nonhuman animals was considered to be unnatural, as Ryder notes, “Although the naturalness

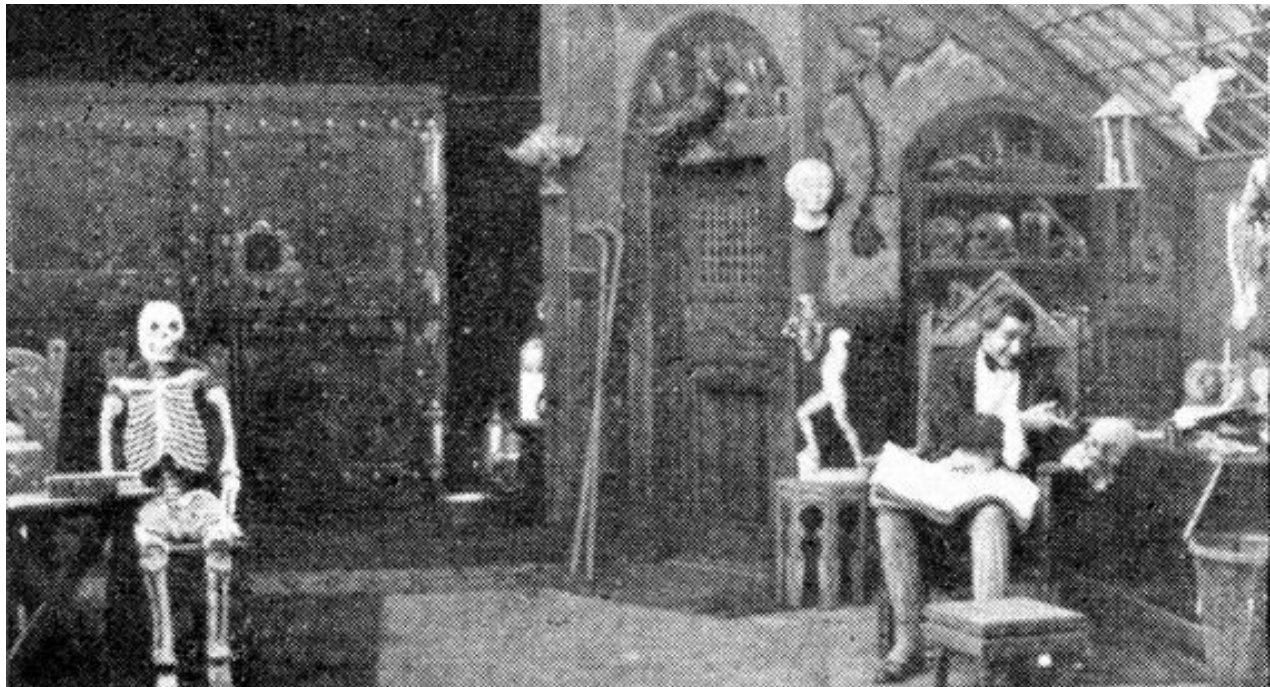
of nonhuman animals was sometimes despised, any unnaturalness on [the part of humans] was regarded with even greater horror” (2000, p. 224).

Many interpretations of *Frankenstein* consider Mary Shelley to be criticising the philosophy so prominent during her time with displays of Victor Frankenstein as being the embodiment of an anthropologist ideology during the Enlightenment. In fact, Lars Lunsford questions Victor’s genuine interest in human life: “Victor Frankenstein doesn’t value life in the absolute” (2010, p. 174). What he truly seeks is recognition, glory, respect and honour for himself (Kallman, 2015, p. 12). In this process he disregards the impact that might have on his creature and those surrounding him that he claims to love dearly. In Shelley’s own words (2012), Victor describes his creature in detail:

His limbs were in proportion... His yellow skin scarcely covered the work of muscles and arteries beneath; his hair was of a lustrous black, and flowing; his teeth of pearly whiteness; but these luxuriances only formed a more horrid contrast with his watery eyes, that seemed almost of the same colour as the dun-white sockets in which they were set, his shriveled complexion and straight black lips (p. 50).



36. A still of the Monster in the first *Frankenstein* film. 1910. The Edison Kinetogram.



37. A still of Victor Frankenstein in the first *Frankenstein* film. 1910. The Edison Kinetogram.

Upon completing the Victor's creation, it was apparent that "the monster's appearance did not seem to conform to Victor's original idea" (Kallman, 2015, p. 18). Image thirty-six depicts the first visualisation of the creature on print.

Victor's initial idea was to create a being using parts of corpses and other materials without the natural process of reproduction, which would include a female partner. His aspirations were to: "Create a new species based on human characteristics, and not a human being per se, the monster's looks are unfamiliar to Victor, and therefore jarring" (Kallman, 2015, p. 18). Kallman notes, "Victor's labours ultimately become not an experiment to create a human being but rather an experiment in speciation (McLane, 1996)" (Kallman, 2015, p. 18).

Kallman elaborates upon Victor Frankenstein's own words: "I had selected his features as beautiful. Beautiful! - Great God! (Shelley, 1993, p. 50)" (2015, p. 18). When his creation comes to life and does not appear as his creator had envisioned, he is directly neglected. Victor starts referring to his creature as an object, calling him *it* and *thing* amongst other pejorative terms, differentiating the *monster* from humankind. With his anthropological ideology Frankenstein considers humans as divine beings, thereby identifying him as a "godlike creator to some extent" (Kallman, 2015, p. 19). As Kallman continues to elaborate, the distinction between Frankenstein's creature and the

human species can be interpreted as validating to "Victor's anthropocentric notion of humankind as unique" (2015, p. 19).

Kallman (2015) concludes: "The following description of the monster supports the fact that Victor not only excludes him from humankind, but also perceives him as a nonhuman animal by portraying his appearance as animalistic" (p. 19).

I saw the dull yellow eye of the creature open; it breathed hard, and a convulsive motion agitated his limbs (Shelley, 2012, p. 50).

This reference can be interpreted as a cue to the creature not belonging to the human species because of his yellow eyes. In other parts of the book, Shelley goes into detailed descriptions of Victor's cousin and love interest, Elizabeth, about how her angelic appearance and clear blue eyes contrast to the creature's dull yellow eyes. In affirmation, Jackson Petsche remarks, "Victor appears disgusted by the animality of his creation, and by the confrontation with that animality especially in the form of its gaze" (2014, p. 101). On this subject still, Petsche goes on to offer another reading: "Victor's terror at the sight of his monster exemplifies an anthropocentric anxiety at being looked at or addressed by the nonhuman" (2014, p. 102).

How do all these interpretations and readings as well as the descriptions of the creature's appearance in Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* translate graphically? Nowadays the image we have in mind of the monster known as Frankenstein is not exactly the same as what has been discussed thus far. This begs another question: how did the creature go from the 1818 description to the unintelligent, squared headed, zombie like monster we think of today? In a later section, the text and graphic material will be analysed side by side in combination with the application of the methodologies. The following sections will introduce the main milestones the representation of *Frankenstein* in order to establish the starting point of the visualisations of the creature.

V.1.c The first images of *Frankenstein*

The first illustration depicting Frankenstein's creature ever created for an edition of the novel is the frontispiece of the 1831 edition of the novel, published by H. Colburn and R. Bentley in London, United Kingdom. In this black and white illustration, there are two figures represented, Victor Frankenstein and his creature, spread across the floor, wide eyed and looking strikingly human. The remainder of the page contains the quote:



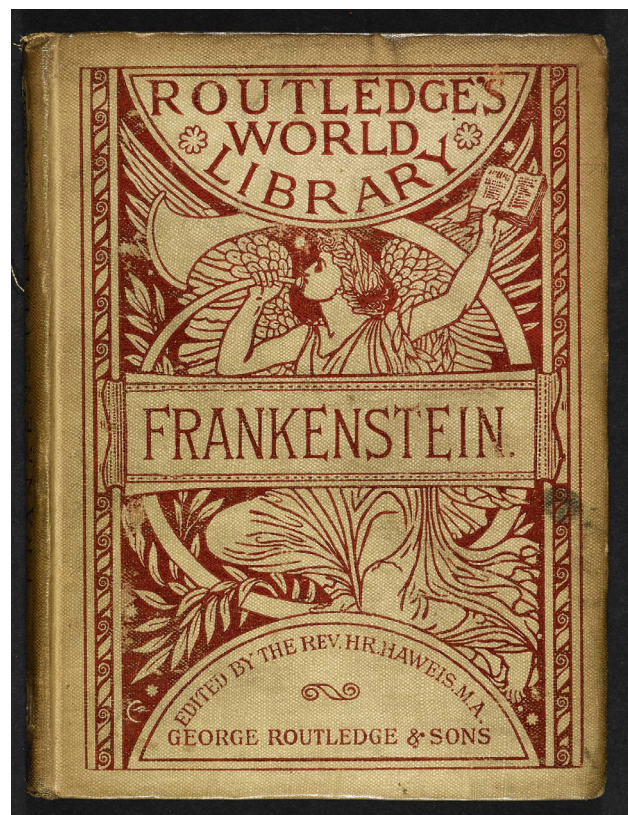
38. First illustration of the creature on print: frontispiece of *Frankenstein, or the Modern Prometheus*. 1831. H. Colburn and R. Bentley, London UK.

*"By the glimmer of the half-extinguished light. I saw the dull, yellow eye of the creature open; it breathed hard and a convulsive motion agitated its limbs, *** I rushed out of the room"* (Shelley, 1831, p. 1).

Based solely on this illustration (image 38), the colour of the creature's eyes and his skin tone are left up to the words of Mary Shelley, but based on his body proportions, it is clear that the creature is indeed *larger-than-life* (Frayling, 2017, p. 93) in comparison to a scared looking Victor. The latter seems to be fleeing the scene, after his creature comes to life as it is described in the novel.

Images 39 and 40 represent two of the oldest *Frankenstein* covers still available online. There is little information available about these designs and no clear reference or representation of the creature on the cover. This becomes relevant to the reader when analysing the first visualisations of *Frankenstein*.

In closing, because of the research about the speciesist interpretation of *Frankenstein*, the depiction of the creature is scarce in the first few editions of



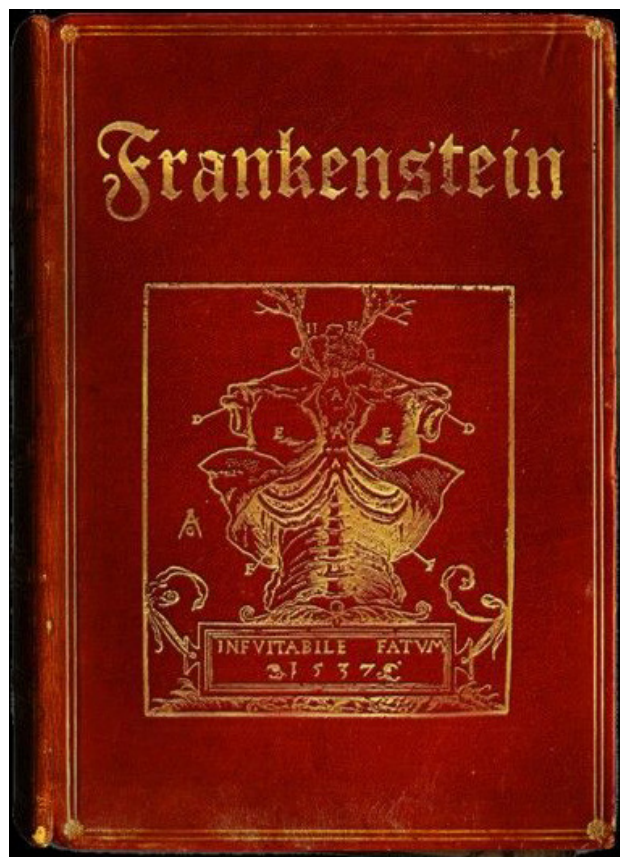
39. One of the oldest book jackets available of *Frankenstein*. 1886. Published by George Routledge & Sons of the Routledge's World Library.

the novel and the stage adaptations lacked illustrations of the characters, focusing instead on the typographical playbills, as it will be soon discussed. The methodologies will resume and further analyse the visual material. The next items of this chapter will be divided by one of the most significant milestones that *Frankenstein* has faced within the two centuries it has become part of popular culture: Boris Karloff.

V.1.d *Frankenstein* in film before Boris Karloff

After the contextual introduction presented thus far, the following chapters of this dissertation will discuss the collected data of book jackets and film posters. This section specifically will highlight the importance of one, if not the most relevant, milestones in the history of representations of *Frankenstein*, the iconic interpretation of the creature by Boris Karloff, for the 1931 Universal Studios adaptation.

The oldest book covers collected for this research have no additional specific illustrations of the creature, as noted on images 39 and 40. They are mainly typographical covers, with more figurative illustrations, using elements such as lightning bolts, medical instruments, other scientific motifs, and landscapes.



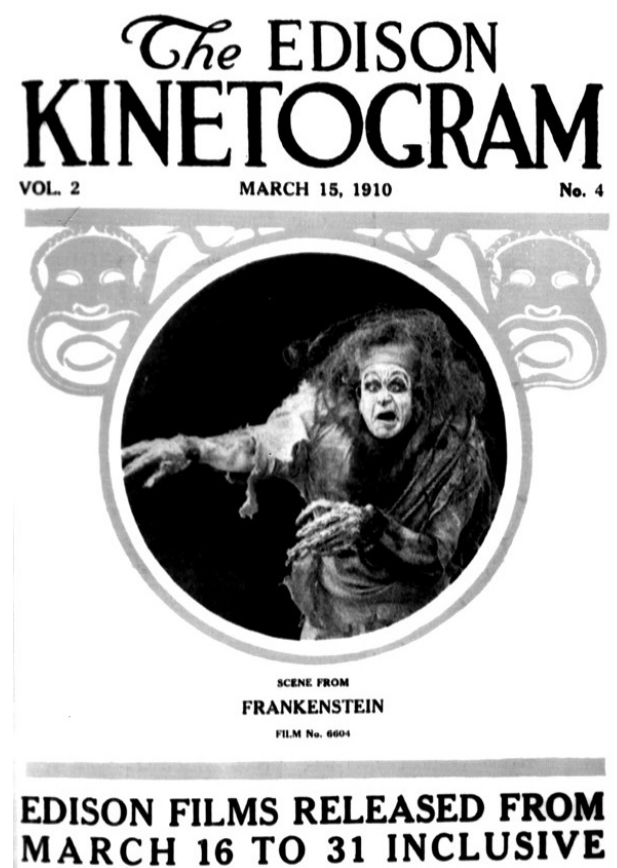
40. No background information could be found about this old *Frankenstein* book cover design.

The most prominent colours used in the book jackets of later *Frankenstein* editions are black, red, green and blue, as it will be demonstrated in later sections.

The representation of women in the book jackets specifically is nearly non-existent, except for a few that use the portrait of Mary Shelley on the cover. This lack of female representation alludes to the equally absent female representation in the novel itself. This will also be discussed in more detail in the following sections of this research.

The first *Frankenstein* film was produced in 1910, and still available today (see picture 41). The film is a thirteen minute silent black and white, starring Charles Ogle as the creature and Augustus Phillips as Victor Frankenstein. The film was produced in the United States by Edison Manufacturing Company and has a black and white poster promoting its premiere date. Frayling (2017) elaborates further on the appearance of the creature:

Had the mad scientist (Augustus Phillips) create him by alchemical means from a huge bubbling pot which transmutes a skeleton into a hideous figure with bulbous eyes, misshapen body and frizzy



41. Poster of the first film adaptation of *Frankenstein*. 1910. The Edison Kinetogram.

hair; ... One clever touch had the scientist looking into a mirror and seeing the Monster, until he banishes the Monster's image, it fades, and 'Frankenstein sees himself in his young manhood' (p. 99).

The poster depicts the practical information about the film as well as an image of Ogle as the creature. Similar to the first illustration (picture 38), the creature appears to have the same long dark hair and long hands, although his shoulders appear to be broader than originally conceived. Regarding the comparison to the first 1831 illustration Frayling (2017) also notes: "Another had the hand of the Monster opening the studded iron door of the laboratory and the scientist rushing off in terror—like in the 1831 illustration" (p. 99). According to multiple sources, this is the visual representation most similar to the original concept from the novel and the original illustration.

Other than that, in film, there were only two releases dating both 1915 and 1920. This was before the most famous face of *Frankenstein* reached theatres in 1931. Both of the films *Life without Soul* (1915, USA) and *Il Mostro di Frankenstein* (1920, Italy) are lost films: there is no longer a record of them, except for the posters and stills.

In the nineteenth century there were other adaptations of *Frankenstein*, namely political cartoons and theatre plays. There are also interesting visual records of these. In the methodologies chapter this will be resumed and discussed; however, for the purposes of the contemporary context those will not be discussed at the present time.



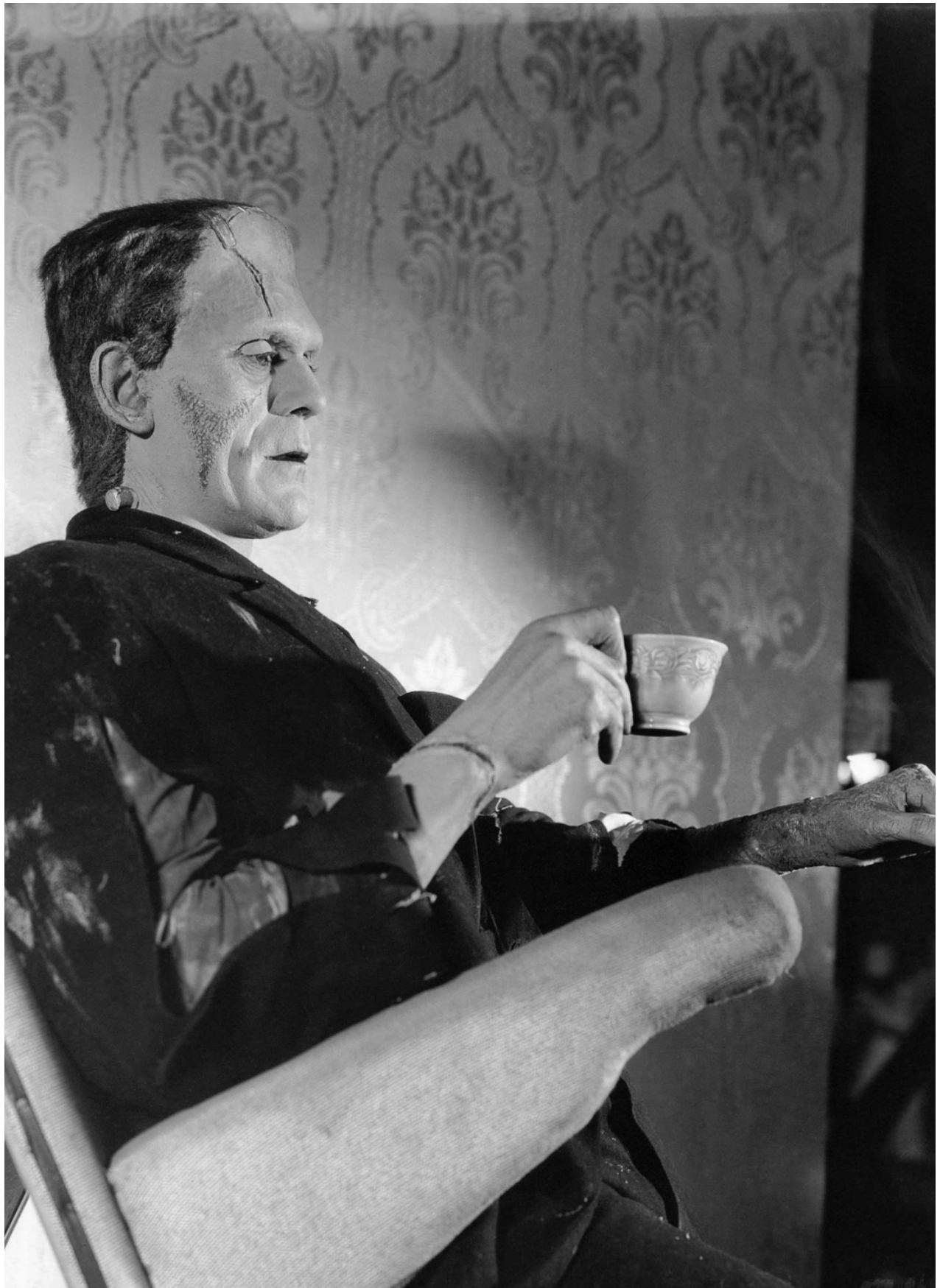
42. Poster of the film *Life Without Soul*, starring George de Carlton as Victor Frankenstein and Percy Standing as the creature. 1915. Lost film from Ocean Pictures.



43. A still of the film *Il Mostro di Frankenstein*. 1920. Lost film from Albertini Film.



44. Poster of the film *Il Mostro di Frankenstein* starring Luciano Albertini as Victor Frankenstein. 1920. Albertini Film, Italy.



45. Boris Karloff relaxes on the set of *The Bride of Frankenstein*. C. 1935. Universal Studios. John Kobal Foundation.

"The monster was the best friend I ever had"—Karloff

V.1.e *Frankenstein* and Boris Karloff

Boris Karloff was a British actor born November 23, 1887 in London to the name of William Henry Pratt. He became famous worldwide after his sympathetic and chilling portrayal of the creature in the classic horror film *Frankenstein* in 1931. Thanks to Karloff's tender and sympathetic performance, the film became an overnight sensation (Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2018, para. 1) propelling his acting career.

When picturing Frankenstein's creature in our minds, the image that pops up is certainly that of Boris Karloff, even if that name is unknown to younger generations. In the same fashion that *Frankenstein* played a major role in Karloff's career, Karloff himself played a major role in making *Frankenstein* a household name in the twentieth century horror films:

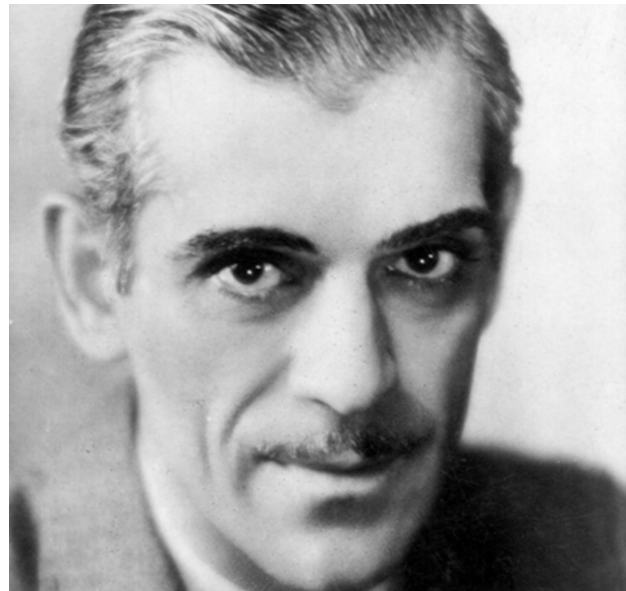
When the actor (Karloff) starred in a succession of frightening films such as *The Old Dark House* (1932) and *The Mummy* (1932), the name 'Karloff' became synonymous with horror and the macabre; for a few Universal films of the period, he was billed only by his surname (The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2018, para. 2).

Boris Karloff reprises the role of Frankenstein's creature twice, in the sequels *Bride of Frankenstein*, in 1935; and *Son of Frankenstein*, in 1939. Curiously, in 1958 he switched roles and played Baron Victor Frankenstein in *Frankenstein 1970*, where:

He was tortured at the hands of the Nazis for not cooperating with them during World War II and he is now badly disfigured. As his family's wealth begins to run out, the Baron is forced to allow a TV crew shooting a documentary in his monster-making ancestors to film at his castle in Germany (Jeremy Lunt, 2018, para. 1).

The effect of Boris Karloff as the face of Frankenstein's creature went beyond film and Hollywood. Several book jackets published throughout the twentieth century used the stereotypical face of Karloff as a major graphic element in the cover designs. The detailed visual matrix of this inspiration will be discussed in the methodologies chapter, some examples can be seen on images 48-51.

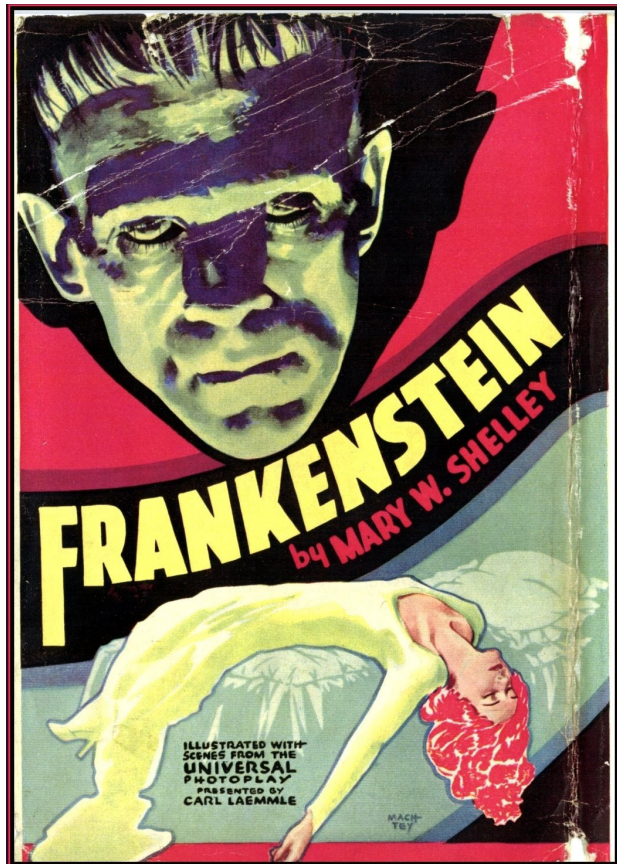
The last couple of sections have introduced the speciesist standpoint that supports the visual representation of Frankenstein's creature; it has outlined the major milestones in terms of depictions of the creature, primarily the effect of Boris Karloff as the creature has had in the past eighty years.



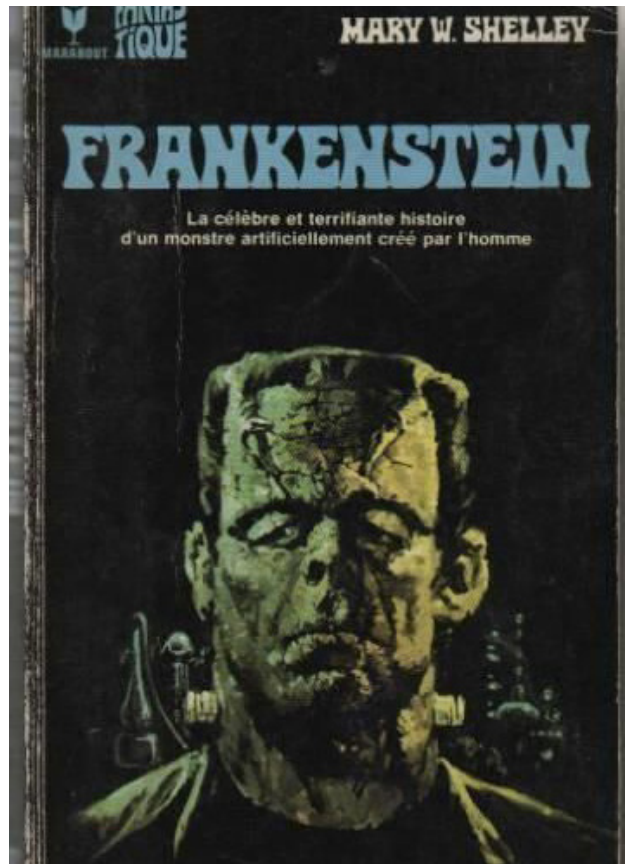
46. Picture of Boris Karloff, British actor. 1887 - 1969. Hulton Archive/Getty Images



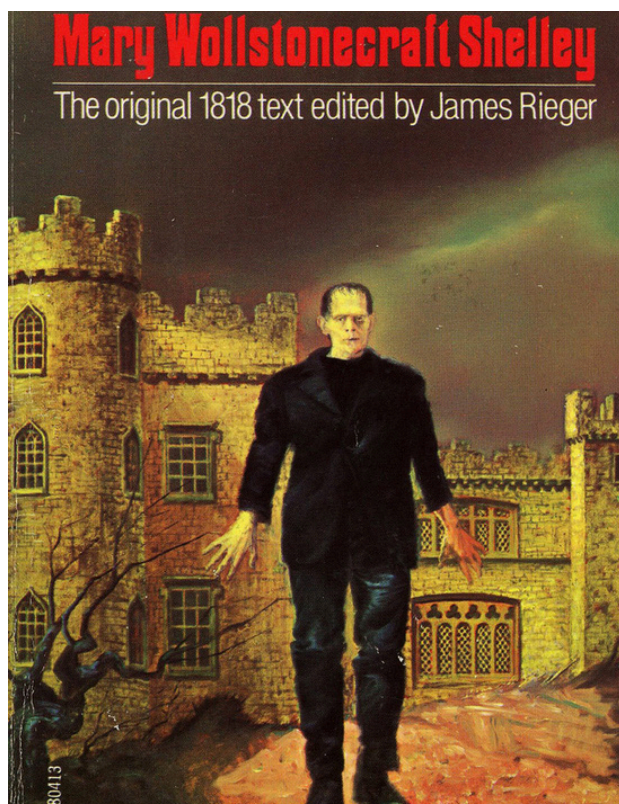
47. Boris Karloff as the Monster in *Frankenstein*. C. 1931. Universal Studios



48. American edition of Shelley's novel. 1931. Photoplay illustrated by Frank Mactey. Published by Grosset & Dunlap.



50. French edition of *Frankenstein*. 1976. Published by Marabout S.A.



49. Another Boris Karloff inspired edition of *Frankenstein*. 1976. Published by Pocket Books.



51. A recent Boris Karloff inspired edition of *Frankenstein*. 2013. Published by Penguin Books.

V.2 Bicentennial Anniversary

V.2.a *Frankenstein* in Literature

Mary Shelley is considered a groundbreaking author for different reasons. Primarily, being a female author in the nineteenth century was challenging. Additionally, Shelley put pressure on herself and felt enormous pressure from her husband to live up to her parents' name. None of this made her life as a young author any easier. Mary, however, managed to overcome these challenges with her work in *Frankenstein*; as Othello Knudsen (2012) puts it:

Mary Shelley did break ground with her 'hideous progeny' not only because she incorporated ideas from a contemporary science into her story but also the mere fact that she was young and a girl was astounding to the critics and readers (p. 22).

The feminist message behind *Frankenstein* is not obvious at first sight which is why women are not represented in the early visualisations of this story. On that subtle message Knudsen (2012) elaborates: "Due to the circumstances of the period concerning women and the expectations to them, writing was, as mentioned earlier, 'an abnormality' for women to attempt" (p. 22). Ellen Moers (1978) defines the limitations that were imposed on women's education:

Male writers have always been able to study their craft in university or coffeehouse, group themselves into movements or coteries, search out predecessors for guidance or patronage, collaborate or fight with their contemporaries. But women through most of the nineteenth century were barred from the universities, isolated in their own homes, chaperoned in travel, painfully restricted in friendship. The personal give-and-take of the literary life was closed to them (p. 43).

Mary Shelley's dismissiveness about her gift to write is defined today as anxiety of authorship, an issue that is present in *Frankenstein*. John Milton's *Paradise Lost*, originally published in 1667, discusses the themes of the fall of man and the role of Satan. Shelley carefully curated the following poem into her novel:

*"Did I request thee, Maker, from my clay
To mould me man? Did I solicit thee
From darkness to promote me?"*
(Milton, 1667, pp. 743-745).



52. Illustration from *Paradise Lost* from John Milton. 1667.

Whether Shelley (1831) was insecure about assuming her creation as her own or claiming her husband's "far more cultivated mind" played a key role in the creation of *Frankenstein* (p. 4). One fact remains to this day: this story changed the course of literature, and as an extension its visual representation in popular culture. Shelley's personal struggles with her relationships, are present in her novel; and the message has inspired countless other works in literature, film, theatre, and in art.

*Prometheus did create
A man of many parts
from beasts derived*
(Spenser, c.1590, canto 10).

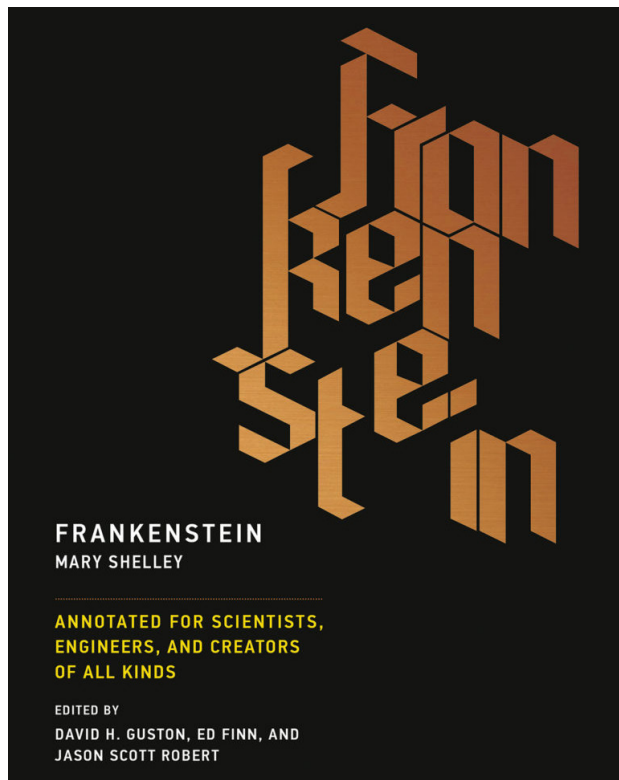
In memory of the two-hundredth anniversary of *Frankenstein* there have been quite a lot of movements online and elsewhere marking and discussing why this story continues to captivate people today. Stilgoe (2016), author for The Guardian notes, "Shelley had hit upon the idea that would become *Frankenstein*, or *the Modern Prometheus*, the cautionary tale that has provided a vocabulary for the relationship between science and society ever since" (para. 1).

In short, one of the most valuable lessons Mary Shelley's legacy teaches is not "to play God, don't over-reach [sic], don't unleash uncontrollable forces, don't treat humans as material, don't act alone" (Stilgoe, 2016, para. 4). These imperatives might sound simple and overused at this point, and yet on the whole, it is the simplicity of Shelley's message that makes this cautionary tale timeless. Recent political changes, the climate crisis, the ever developing science can still be traced back to Shelley's warning from two hundred years ago.

The Keats-Shelley Association of America and partners held a series of events and initiatives in honour of the 200th anniversary of *Frankenstein*, featuring especially an international series of readings of the full text of the novel during Halloween 2018.



53. Futurography: *The Spawn of Frankenstein*. 2017. ASU



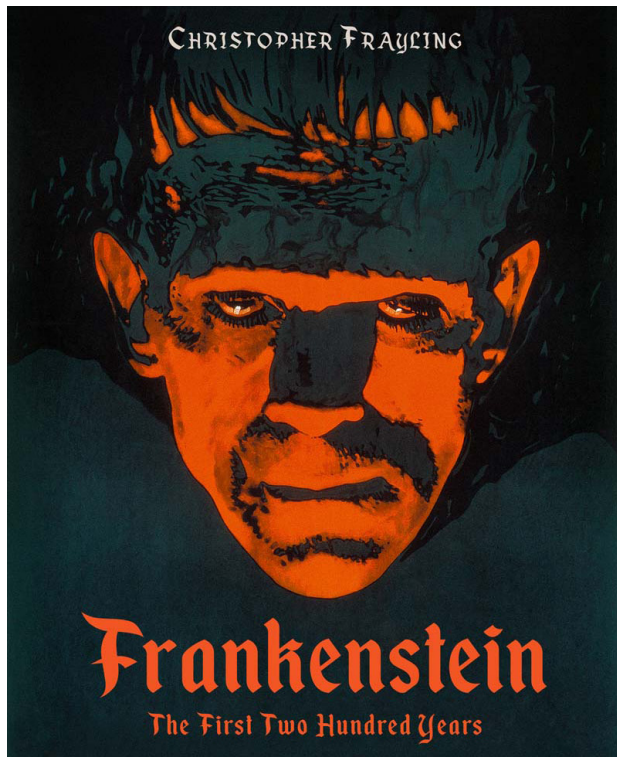
54. *Frankenstein: Annotated for Scientists, Engineers, and Creators of All Kinds*. 2017. MIT Press.

Another project, from Arizona State University invited members of the public to engage with monstrous ideas in playful way, describing Shelley's visionary work, "No work of literature has done more to shape the way people imagine and its moral consequences than *Frankenstein, or the Modern Prometheus*" (The Frankenstein Bicentennial Project 1818-2018, ASU).

The multimedia, graphic, and literary repercussions of this classic story remain a relevant subject today. The January, 2017, installment of Futurography, "The Spawn of *Frankenstein*", explored the cultural and scientific legacy of *Frankenstein*. The package features articles on modern-day biohacking; the need for open, transparent science; echoes of Victor and the creature in recent film and popular culture, from *Ex Machina* to *Westworld*; what artificial intelligence researchers can learn from Victor's mistakes; ethical debates around animal vivisection in the 19th century; connections between *Frankenstein* and the anti-vaccine movement; and the evolving linguistic dynamics of the prefix *Franken-*, which has taken a life of its own. For example, in the urban dictionary, the term *Frankenstorm* is used to describe "a hurricane and winter storm hybrid, involving a 'monster' combination of high winds, heavy rain, extreme tides and snow. A Frankenstorm carries with it a risk of fatalities, power outages and severe property damage" (Cliomuse, 2012, para. 1). The term *Frankenfood*, also derived from Shelley's work, is used to describe genetically modified foods. Even Tim Burton's film *Frankenweenie* takes a twist with a dog being brought back to life with electricity, these are some examples of *Frankenised* words (Dictionary, 2018, para. 3).

At the end of 2017, just a couple of months before the bicentennial anniversary of *Frankenstein*, Sir Christopher Frayling, a renowned Gothic scholar, published *Frankenstein: The First Two Hundred Years*. This book traces the journey of Shelley's *Frankenstein* from limited-edition literature into the bloodstream of contemporary culture (Frayling, 2017, p. 80).

Discovering this book became an essential reference for this dissertation. It provided and included new research on many topics like the novel's origins; a facsimile reprint of the earliest known manuscript version of the creation scene; visual material on adaptations for the stage, in magazines, playbills, in print, and in book publications of the nineteenth century. All amounted to a deeper understanding of the author and her work as well as the first visualisations of this story resulting in a more targeted re-



55. *Frankenstein The First Two Hundred Years*. 2017. Written by Sir Christopher Frayling. Reel Art Press.

search for the visual representation of *Frankenstein*. The first half of Frayling's book served as a source of theoretical information about the origin of *Frankenstein* and the second half, entitled Visual Celebration, displaying a carefully curated collection of images concerning all aspects of *Frankenstein*, served as inspiration for the appendix of this dissertation.

This book bares a very similar theme to this research; however, it does differ into two key perspectives: the focus on the graphic representation of *Frankenstein* rather than the novel itself. Also, the two specific research questions. While there is an important visual element to Sir Frayling's book, it is a celebration, with beautifully selected images that do not necessarily contain a critical analysis as this dissertation does.

In September 2018, a hundred artist group show gathered to celebrate a momentous bicentennial anniversary in Los Angeles. The exhibition, curated by the Ecuador-based illustrator Chogrin, was titled *Frankenstein 200*. Gwynedd Stuart (2018) from the Los Angeles Magazine details about the exhibition: "*Frankenstein 200* celebrates a novel that makes us ponder 'life, science, love, and death.' Chogrin adds, 'It is the quintessential story of creator and creation, which is why I think many artists are immediately attracted to it' " (para. 2).



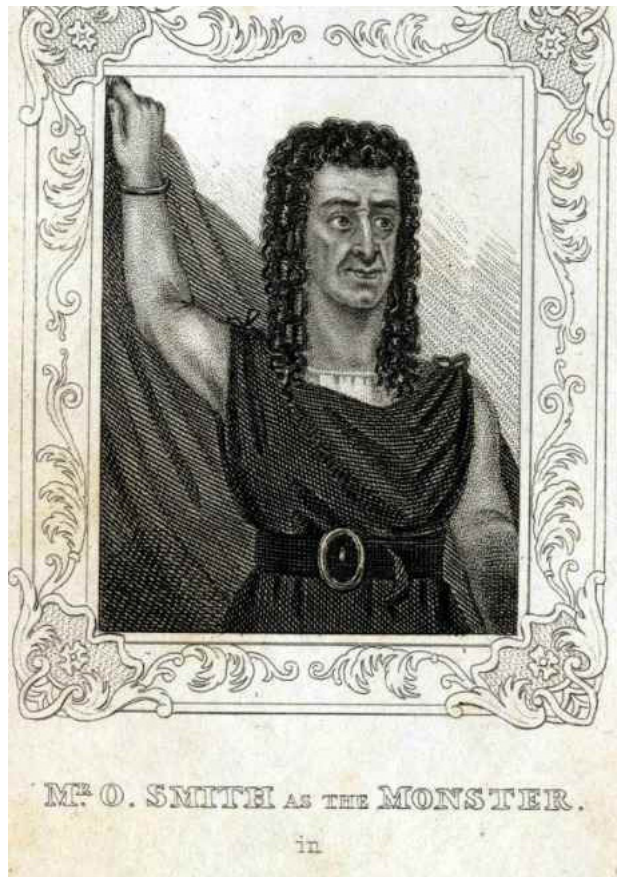
56. *FRANKENSTEIN 200th ANNIVERSARY*. 2018. Curated by Chogrin. Exhibited at the Corey Helford Gallery in Boyle Heights, Los Angeles.

No matter whether it was in literature or another visual art-form, *Frankenstein* was able to captivate audiences for the past two centuries and while—at times—becomes repetitive, it has also managed to influence countless other stories, and all the above mentioned projects celebrating this bicentennial anniversary are only a small testament to that. Some of these have been discussed in this contextualisation chapter, while other, visual examples will be discussed in the methodologies chapter.

V.2.b Frankenstein in Theatre

The first ever attempt at a visualisation of *Frankenstein* was not in print. In fact, the theatre adaptations of Mary Shelley's novel have a long-lasting impact on how *Frankenstein* has been represented. The majority of the film adaptations have little resemblance to the original novel because the first films of *Frankenstein* did not use the novel as inspiration; instead, they relied upon the first theatre productions.

As early as 1823, only five years after the first publication of *Frankenstein, or the Modern Prometheus*, Richard Brinsley Peake adapted for the stage in a play entitled *Presumption; or the Fate of Frankenstein*. Given the success of the play, Mary's father, William Godwin, published the second edition of the novel



57. A poster for: *Presumption; or, the fate of Frankenstein.* 1826. Retrieved from the Hinton Collection.



58. A lithograph for the production of the play *Presumption; or, the fate of Frankenstein.* 1826. Wikimedia Commons.

in the same year. However, Brinsley Peake was hardly the one to re-invent this story. Steven Earl Forry, an expert in dramatic history, cataloged nearly one hundred stage adaptations between 1821 and 1986. He writes in “Dramatizations of *Frankenstein*, 1821-1986: A Comprehensive List”:

Pre-Karloffian dramatizations played an important role in disseminating popular conceptions—and misconceptions—of Mary Shelley’s novel, from the incipient gothic melodramas such as Peake’s *Presumption*, Henry M. Milner’s *The Demon of Switzerland* and *The Man and the Monster* (1826), and Merle and Antony’s *Le Monstre et le magicien* (1826) to their burlesque counterparts—*Humgumption; or, Dr. Frankenstein and the Hobgoblin of Hoxton*, *Presumption and the Blue Demon*, and *Frankin-Steam; or, The Modern Promise to Pay*—through political burlesque in the form of William and Robert Brough’s *Frankenstein; or, The Model Man* (1849), the musical comedy of Richard Butler and Henry Chance Newton’s *Frankenstein; or, The Vampires Victim* (1887), the farce of Paul Dickey and Charles Goddard’s *The Last Laugh* (1915), and finally Peggy Webling’s drawing room melodrama *Frankenstein: An Adventure in the Macabre* (1927) (Forry, 1987, p. 65).

The last drama adaptation of Forry’s list *Frankenstein: An Adventure in the Macabre* (1927) was the main source of inspiration for the 1931 film version of *Frankenstein*, directed by James Whale and starring Colin Clive and the iconic face, Boris Karloff. Although no image of this play could be found, other theatre illustrations and playbills will be presented in the visual analysis section of this research.

V.2.c Frankenstein in Film

In short, *Frankenstein* has remained relevant not only in literature through numerous published editions but also in narrative elements that became blueprints to other books that were adapted into stage plays and in screenplays.

The anniversary of two hundred years of the original tale is important in itself; however, in addition to the cinematic heritage of the representation of *Frankenstein*, there are more than fifty films that were made in the course of a century. The characters and the story evolved with time, culture and technology and ranged from adaptations of the original novel, to the expansion of the family of the creature. This gave life to unfulfilled ideas from the 1818 edition or made the space for countless other interpretations of the classic group of characters aside from the importance of the author's personal life in her fictive creation as told in the latest film released in 2018 entitled *Mary Shelley*.

The contextualisation of this dissertation started with the introduction of key terms and theories that are essential for the subjects herein discussed with the theoretical context.

The historical context followed the aforementioned theories by introducing the main principles and events that were prominent when Mary Shelley wrote *Frankenstein*. Consequently, this affected the initial visualisations and representations of this story.

The contemporary context started by defining what is a *classic* in terms of popular culture to discussing the speciesist interpretation of Shelley's novel in order to analyse the graphic evolution of the depiction of Frankenstein's creature. From the first images of this creature to the latest projects celebrating the bicentennial anniversary of *Frankenstein* this section only highlighted the relevancy of a visual research.

The next chapter will demonstrate and discuss the context insofar presented through the visual research and collected material. This will be divided by the application of methodologies, and when suitable, by each research question or media source.



59. Posters of the biopic film about Mary Shelley, of the same name, starring Elle Fanning as Mary Shelley. 2018. Curzon Artificial Eye.

VI. Methodologies

The following sections in this dissertation will gather the contextual data insofar presented and move one step further with the application of the methodologies and analysis of the visual research.

First, Mary Shelley's words that are supported by the discourse analysis serve as the foundation to the legacy of *Frankenstein* into other cultural and visual representations.

Secondly, the visual matrices methodology help to visualise the graphic material as a whole and to assist the data processing mechanism in order to discover patterns that either support the research questions or connect the information with the results of the analysis using the other two methodologies.

Thirdly, the semiotics analysis provides a deeper understanding of the images presented in the research and helps sustain the concrete research hypothesis.

Along with the analysis of the images collected in the visual research, the methodologies chapter supports the three main theoretical references: They are the two masters theses that support each of the research questions, as well as the book of Sir Christopher Frayling, *Frankenstein The First Two Hundred Years*. Frayling introduces new relevant research for the contextualisation of certain images as well as a concise analysis of *Frankenstein*.

The methodologies are strategically presented to provide the reader a progressive picture of the investigation, from the words of Mary Shelley, to the full evolution of the graphic representation of *Frankenstein*.

VI.1 Discourse analysis

Discourse analysis is an applied linguistics concept that can have many definitions formulated from various theoretical and disciplinary standpoints. "In linguistics, 'discourse' is sometimes used to refer to extended samples of spoken dialogue, in contrast with written 'texts' " (Fairclough, 1992, pp. 3-4).

This research is not the product of a literature studies and therefore will not focus on the linguistic aspects of discourse analysis. However, applying a critical discourse analysis to the original text of Mary Shelley alongside images that support those points in question will be helpful in complementing the dialogue between the graphic data and textual data. According to Fairclough, "Critical discourse

analysis is concerned with continuity and change at this more abstract, more structural level, as well as what happens in particular with texts" (2003, p. 3). Furthermore, it is important to understand the source material of *Frankenstein* in order to evaluate the evolution of its graphic representation.

The *sociological aspect* of discourse analysis is the linguistic concept mainly in focus for this research. Fairclough better defines the term discourse: "The term **discourse** (in what is widely called 'discourse analysis') signals the particular view of language in use I have referred to above—as an element of social life which is closely interconnected with other elements" (2003, p. 3).

The approach to this methodology consists of the analysis based on the Systemic Functional Linguistics of the original 1818 text of Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* together with the two master theses in the bibliography that together with the support of the visual representation of *Frankenstein* will build a foundation for the investigative questions. On the subject of Systemic Functional Linguistics, Fairclough goes on to define:

The main point of reference within existing literature on text analysis is Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL), a linguistic theory and associated analytical methods particularly associated with Michael Halliday (Halliday, 1978, 1994)... SFL is profoundly concerned with the relationship between language and other elements and aspects of social life.... This makes it a valuable resource for critical discourse analysis... (2003, p. 5).

At a preliminary phase of this research, I collected and organised the graphic data in chronological order. Nonetheless, during the process of application of the methodologies it became apparent that the order of visual material should follow and be applied according to the methodologies and the relevance of the subject being discussed. Hence, I reorganised the visual material and included the images that were not discussed individually in the appendix of this dissertation. The following sections will be divided by the notes of Shelley's original edition and subsequently the research questions.

VI.1.a Applied to Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*

This section will begin by analysing the discourse in Mary Shelley's original novel and applying it to pertinent images, with the support of other references. This will serve as a foundation to analyse the discourse relevant to the research questions in the following sections. Recalling the scarce female representation in the novel, this analysis is more broadly applicable to the first research question, what was the graphic evolution when representing the creature.

In popular culture, Frankenstein's creature is often portrayed as a senseless *monster*. As seen on picture 60, the taglines *More Terrifying! More Destructive!* depict a creature who lacks intelligence and emotions altogether making it a sensational villain for the genre of horror. Nevertheless, from the original written words of Mary Shelley, many critics have interpreted the creature in a different light. Frayling (2017) elaborates on the extent of the creature's ability to learn based on literature:

In her novel, the creature learns how to live from the three books he is reading: he learns about emotional intelligence, sensibility and human friendship from Goethe's *The Sorrows of Young Werther*, about human achievements and admirable heroes of past ages in a volume of Plutarch's *Lives* (or *Parallel Lives of Greek and Roman heroes*) and about himself as the new Adam from Milton's epic *Paradise Lost*, which 'excited far deeper emotions'. 'The possession of these treasures gave me extreme delight,' he says. 'I now continually studied and exercised my mind upon these histories...' (p. 42).

Initially, Victor details how he methodically planned to bring his creation life, "I had worked hard for nearly two years, for the sole purpose of infusing life into an inanimate body" (Shelley, 1818, chapter 4, para.

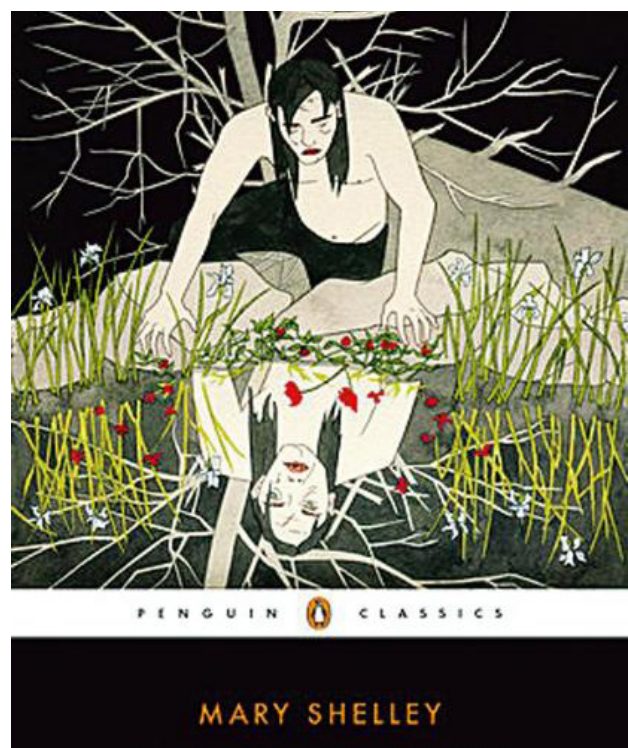
3³). Frankenstein even describes how he envisioned his creature's physical appearance: "[I had] selected his features as beautiful. Beautiful! - Great God! His yellow skin scarcely covered the work of muscles and arteries beneath; his hair was of a lustrous black, and flowing; his teeth of a pearly whiteness..." (Shelley, 1818, chapter 4, para. 2). The cover design on figure 61 shows an unusual depiction of the creature. Looking very humanised and staring at his own reflection on the water, this type of representation of the creature is seldom seen in popular culture. It makes an intriguing choice for the bicentennial 2018 edition of the Penguin Classics including texts and letters from Shelley and the original 1818 text. As previously discussed, the original text is considered to be less edited by Shelley and therefore more authentic. The representation of the creature in the 1818 text and the 1831 texts is also subtly different, which is reinforced by the depiction on figure 61, characterised as a more humanised creature.

Upon the creature's first breath and the opening of his eyes Victor is surprisingly disgusted by his creation: "He approached; his countenance bespoke bitter anguish, combined with disdain and malignity, while its unearthly ugliness rendered it almost too horrible for

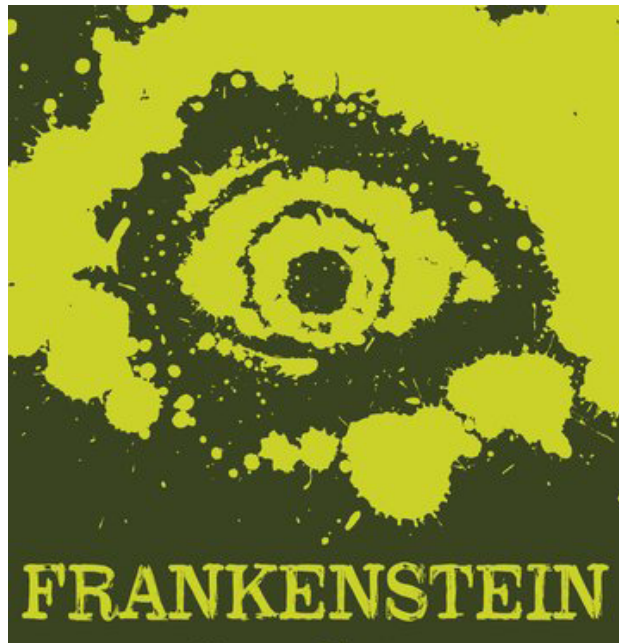
3 The edition of *Frankenstein, or, the modern Prometheus* used in this dissertation is the original 1818 text in Kindle format. It does not contain the page numbers, instead the chapter and paragraph are indicated.



60. Poster for *Frankenstein's Daughter*. 1958. Layton Films.



61. *Frankenstein: The 1818 Text*. 2018. Penguin Classics.



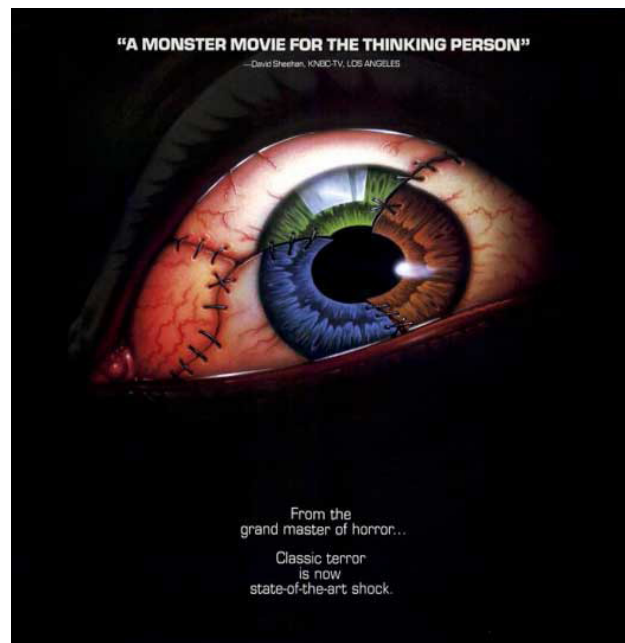
62. A book cover of *Frankenstein*. 2014. Scholastic Classics.

human eyes” (Shelley, 1818, chapter 2, para. 7). Jackson Petsche remarks, “Victor appears disgusted by the animality of his creation, and by the confrontation with that animality specially in the form of its gaze” (2014, p. 101). Two examples of the focus on the gaze of the creature as described by Mary Shelley can be seen on figures 62 and 63. The first is a recent edition and book cover design, the latter a film poster for the 1990 *Frankenstein Unbound*. Depicting the “animality of the creature’s gaze” (Petsche, 2014, p. 101) has been a recurring representation of *Frankenstein* in modern versions, with picture 63 even incorporating the stitched up visual convention attached to this story.

On several occasions Victor displays his anthropocentric ideals. Alexandra Kallman resumes, “The anthropocentric Enlightenment encouraged a pronounced divide between society and nature, and between humans and nonhumans” (2015, p. 8). His point of view becomes clear throughout the novel:

Victor does not seek the position as creator for the benefit of the new species, or of humankind for that matter; his objective is to be in control, and to have power over other beings, an aim which correlates with his ideas of dominance inherent in humans (Kallman, 2015, p. 13).

According to Kallman (2015), the immediate differentiation between creator and creature “not only indicates a desire to establish a pronounced species-boundary in order to alienate the monster from humankind ... but also that Victor does not wish to be associated with animalism” (p. 21).



63. Poster of *Frankenstein Unbound*. 1990. 20th Century Fox.

After being rejected by his creator, the creature flees the laboratory. Being filled by hatred, he murders Victor’s younger brother, William. Consequently, the creature hides in the mountains. Kallman analyses the discourse in this section of the novel, “The fact that the monster is maltreated when he enters human society, and then escapes into nature to find shelter indicates that the monster, in this scene, makes an early association between humans and pain. He learns that humankind is ‘barbarous’ ” (2015, p. 23).

In his refuge, he observes a family of locals, the De Lacey’s. Encouraged by what the creature witnesses through the family’s interactions, and his books, the creature learns about emotions and how to speak. This demonstrates that he is a being capable of a certain degree of emotional intelligence. Kallman goes on to frame it even further, using the perspective of the speciesist approach present in *Frankenstein*: “The monster not only learns that humankind is the primary cause of his suffering, but also that they do not sympathise with him because he is not part of the same species” (2015, p. 23).

The speciesist theory is based principally on the human belief of being superior to nonhuman species. However, Kallman argues that: “The text highlights another possibility in which human sympathy is extended to some species, but not others” (2015, p. 24). Once reunited, Victor makes that notion clear to the creature, by comparing him to a “vile insect”:



64. Monster and the maker meet in the film: *Frankenstein*. 1931. John Kobal Foundation/MoviePix/Getty Images.

‘Devil!’ I exclaimed, ‘do you dare approach me? and do not you fear the fierce vengeance of my arm wreaked on your miserable head? Begone, vile insect! or rather stay, that I may trample you to dust! and, oh, that I could, with the extinction of your miserable existence, restore those victims whom you have so diabolically murdered!’ (Shelley, 1818, chapter 2, para. 8).

The creature, experiencing neglect and being mistreated by all his human encounters since coming to life articulates towards his creator: “‘I expected this reception,’ said the daemon. ‘All men hate the wretched; how then must I be hated, who am miserable beyond all living things!’ ” (Shelley, 1818, chapter 2, para. 9).

Although he is perceived as a *daemon* [sic], the creature’s intentions are pure and “benevolent, and therefore he should not be maltreated” (Kallman, 2015, p. 24). In another display of the creature’s capacities, he goes as far as to philosophically question Victor:

Yet you, my creator, detest and spurn me, thy creature, to whom thou art bound by ties only dissoluble by the annihilation of one of us. You purpose to kill me. How dare you sport thus with life? Do your duty towards me, and I will do mine towards you and the rest of mankind (Shelley, 1818, chapter 2, para. 9).

In this excerpt the creature directly challenges Victor’s ethical morality in selfishly bringing him to life only to reject him and sentence him to a life of loneliness and despair. A depiction of the encounter between creator and creature can be seen on image 64. The creature tries to reach a compromise by promising

to stop the murders and hopefully, in return, achieve some peace with Frankenstein: “I am thy creature, and I will be even mild and docile to my natural lord and king...” (Shelley, 1818, chapter 2, para. 12).

The discussion here goes deeper than the relationship between creator and creature or parent/child. From Kallman’s perspective: “Discourses of speciesism should not be concerned with whether nonhuman animals possess reason or language, but whether they can suffer or experience happiness” (2015, p. 7). With that argument, the creature convinces Victor to prove his creator’s image of him wrong: “Oh, praise the eternal justice of man! Yet I ask you not to spare me: listen to me; and then, if you can, and if you will, destroy the work of your hands” (Shelley, 1818, chapter 2, para. 14). He articulates clearly and rationally:

Believe me Frankenstein: I was benevolent; my soul glowed with love and humanity; but am I not alone, miserably alone? You, my creator, abhor me; what hope can I gather from your fellow-creatures, who owe me nothing? They spurn and hate me (Shelley, 1818, chapter 2, para. 14).

Nonetheless, not even his impassioned confessions, “You have made me wretched beyond expression” (Shelley, 1818, chapter 2, para. 15), were enough for Victor to show any remorse or sense of responsibility for his actions: “You left me no power to consider whether I am just to you, or not. Begone! relieve me from the sight of your detested form” (Shelley, 1818, chapter 2, para. 15).

"If I have no ties and no affections, hatred and vice must be my portion..." (Shelley, 1818, ch. 9, para. 14).

In yet another display of his emotional capacities, the creature reveals in great detail his learning process while he observed the De Lacey's in the mountains:

By degrees I made a discovery of still greater moment. I found that these people possessed a method of communicating their experience and feelings to one another by articulate sounds. I perceived that the words they spoke sometimes produced pleasure or pain, smiles or sadness, in the minds and countenances of the hearers (Shelley, 1818, chapter 4, para. 10).

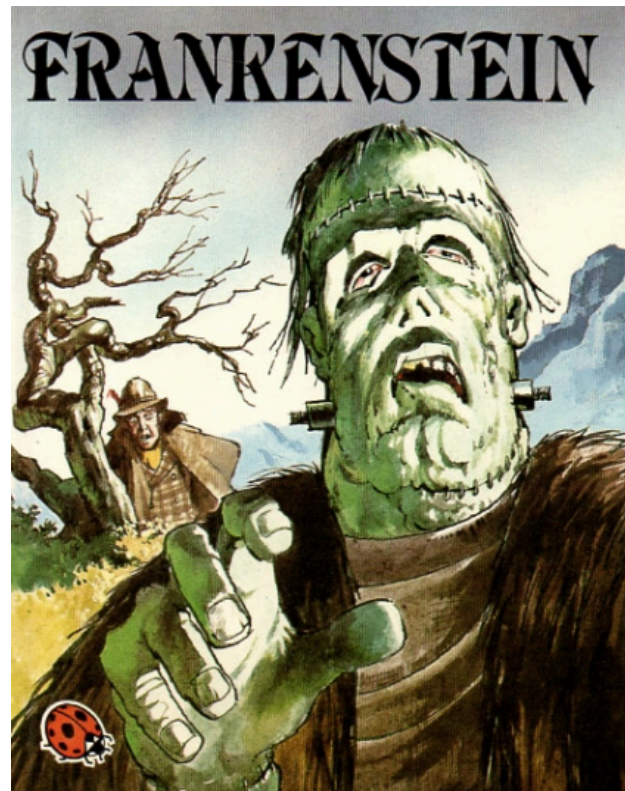
In an attempt to convince his creator that his experience in the mountains changed his perspective on humanity and gave him hope that not all humans were as vile as Victor had been to him, the creature says, "The gentle manners and beauty of the cottagers greatly endeared them to me; when they were unhappy, I felt depressed; when they rejoiced, I sympathized in their joys. I saw few human beings beside them;" (Shelley, 1818, chapter 4, para. 11). This display is not represented on the book cover seen on figure 65, which depicts a deformed creature.

Discussing how the creature learned to read and speak, he says: "At first I had neglected them; but now that I was able to decypher [sic] the characters in which they were written, I began to study them with diligence. It was your journal of the four months that preceded my creation" (Shelley, 1818, ch. 7, para. 8).

The creature articulates the motive behind his murderous behaviour, blaming the circumstances in which he found himself in since being introduced to human society:

I am malicious because I am miserable; am I not shunned and hated by all mankind? You, my creator, would tear me to pieces, and triumph; remember that, and tell me why I should pity man more than he pities me? (Shelley, 1818, chapter 9, para. 5)

Victor's response to the creature's demeanour when presenting his arguments are again based on his physical appearance and therefore neglecting the creature's feelings: "A fiendish rage animated him as he said this; his face was wrinkled into contortions too horrible for human eyes to behold;" (Shelley, 1818, chapter 9, para. 6). Figure 65 exemplifies such a description: a contorted face, disfigured, "too horrible for human eyes" (Shelley, 1818, chapter 9, para. 6).



65. A cover of *Frankenstein*. 1984. Ladybird Books. England.

The creature concludes what he calls his *failed existence*, explaining: "When I became fully convinced that I was in reality the monster that I am, I was filled with the bitterest sensations of despondence and mortification. Alas! I did not yet entirely know the fatal effects of this miserable deformity" (Shelley, 1818, chapter 4, para. 13).

On one hand, Victor seems to consider the creature's ability to learn and feel, "His tale, and the feelings he now expressed, proved him to be a creature of fine sensations..." (Shelley, 1818, chapter 9, para. 8). On the other hand, this confession is one of the few, if not the only, of him showing any inclination of empathy towards his creation.

The majority of this discourse analysis pertains to the support of the graphic representation of the creature. From the words of Mary Shelley to the images that were discussed in this section, the research shows how Shelley's words do not always translate visually. In that framework, the lack of female perspective is harder to retrieve from Shelley's 1818 text. Nonetheless, with the support of Sir Frayling's research, this dissertation analyses some of the historical and theoretical context of Mary Shelley's personal life at the time of *Frankenstein's* conception, publication and soon thereafter.



66. Charles Ogle as the creature in the first *Frankenstein* film. 1910. The Edison Kinetogram.

The reason behind not analysing the original text from the feminist perspective as much, is that in the original 1818 work of Shelley, the message is a very subtle one, not as often expressed. On that line of inquiry Louise Othello Knudsen (2012) outlines two possible interpretations:

Already two different interpretations present themselves: one which reads *Frankenstein* as a personal insurrection and critique of the author's life and circumstances, with a focus on lack of parental love and egotistical male figures, and another which reads the novel as a public critique of the patriarchal society and its shortcomings with a focus on the roles assigned to men and women. That it can be read as a critique of society and perhaps even as feminist criticism is also seen in the novel's treatment of science; the different forms and its implications (p. 26).

The creature's perspective, on the other hand, and the speciesist treatment he receives throughout the novel, are clearly more evident making it more obvious when analysing the representation of the creature.

Towards the end of *Frankenstein, or the Modern Prometheus*, the creature concludes, "I, the miserable and the abandoned, am an abortion, to be spurned at, and kicked, and trampled on. Even now my blood boils at the recollection of this injustice" (Shelley, 1818, Vol.3, Walton In Continuation, para. 44).

One interpretation for this heartfelt declaration, according to Othello Knudsen is a reflection of how Mary Shelley, herself, oftentimes felt in her interpersonal relationships with Percy Shelley, with her father and society in general:

A closer look [into *Frankenstein*], and a second reading, reveals its deep roots in a mind frustrated with her egotistical husband, but also with a patriarchal society where women had limited possibilities in comparison to their, what was supposed to be, male equals (2012, p. 26).

Siv Jansson manages to summarise *Frankenstein's* core message in a simple paragraph:

Frankenstein is not a simple battle between good and evil; it is not a ghost story, nor really a gothic novel. It defies a single interpretation, engaging instead with some of the crucial social and public questions of the period (Jansson, 1999, as cited in Knudsen, 2012, p. 26)

In popular culture, the creature's display of intellect is rarely seen in the visual representations of *Frankenstein*. A small proof of that has been introduced in this discourse analysis. In the following application of methodologies that will be discussed in depth.

VI.1.b Applied to the representation of Frankenstein's creature

Through different sources of research, the discussion thus far supports the idea that Mary Shelley's conception of the creature is a criticism of the society in which she lived, in the early nineteenth century. Shelley's work reflects the rapid evolution in science, industrialisation, and her personal relationships.

The following section approaches the representation of Frankenstein's creature in the novel from 1818 to the revised 1831 edition, into the bloodstream of popular culture (Frayling, 2017, p. 80) through the stage adaptations to the political cartoons from the nineteenth century, and then to *Frankenstein's* debut in the cinematic world.

With the support of Alexandra Kallman's *Speciesism in Mary Shelley's Frankenstein* academic work and Sir Christopher Frayling's *Frankenstein The First Two Hundred Years* celebratory book, this section analyses the discourse of the speciesist standpoint when it comes to the depiction of the creature.

Shelley approaches relevant subjects for the twenty-first century: The debate of men playing God, nature's response to speciesist behaviour, the role of women in a repressive society. Knudsen frames the message well, "In her novel, she [Shelley] distinguishes between the science which only tries to *describe* and that which tries to *control* or *change* through human intervention" (2012, p. 21).

The creature's first visual representation in 1823, was in the play by Richard Brinsley Peak adapted for the stage called *Presumption; or, the fate of Frankenstein*. The novel was first published anonymously without illustrations. Sir Christopher Frayling describes the critic's reaction after the publication of *Frankenstein, or the Modern Prometheus*:

Nine reviews appeared in 1818—four unfavourable, two mixed, two favourable and one supportive review article by Walter Scott. *The Edinburgh Magazine* (March 1818) echoed the concern about whether the novel had a moral purpose, or had it simply been written to shock. If it didn't have a moral purpose, what was the point? But the review was more positive than the *Quarterly* overall:

Here is one of the productions of the modern school in its highest style of caricature and exaggeration. It is formed in Godwinian manner, but many likewise of the benefits of that model. In dark and gloomy

views of nature and of man, bordering too closely on impiety,—in the most outrageous improbability,—in sacrificing every thing [sic] to effect,—it even goes beyond its great prototype; but in return possesses a similar power of fascination, something of the same mastery in harsh and savage delineations of passion, relieved in like manner by the gentler features of domestic and simple feelings. There never was a wilder story imagined, yet... it has an air of reality attached to it, by being connected with the favourite projects and passions of the times (2017, pp. 76-78).

Upon the publication of *Frankenstein* the connection to Godwin's philosophies and principles were immediately perceptible. The fact that Percy Shelley wrote the preface certainly did not help the anonymity of the author (Frayling, 2017, p. 76). Frayling collects more reviews and research on the subject:

The review [from *The Literary Panorama*] concluded with the most specific suggestion so far as to the authorship:

We have heard that this work is written by Mr. Shelley; but should be disposed to attribute it to even a less experienced writer than he is. In fact we have some idea that it is the production of a daughter of a celebrated living novelist (2017, p. 78).

This is one of the earliest speculations attributing the authorship of *Frankenstein* to Mary Godwin. Only five years later Richard Brinsley Peak stage adaptation catapults *Frankenstein* into a new spectrum: Godwin wrote to Mary, on February 1823, that 'thought [*Frankenstein*] can never be a book for vulgar reading, [it] is everywhere respected'. He couldn't have been more wrong about the 'vulgar'—or indeed the respect—as he was to discover only a few months later. Because on July 22nd, he wrote again, just as Mary was preparing to leave Italy and returned home via Paris.

It is a curious circumstance that a play is just announced, to be performed at the English Opera House in the Strand next Monday, entitled, Presumption, or the Fate of Frankenstein. I know not whether it will succeed. If it does, it will be some sort of feather in the cap of the author of the novel, a recommendation in your future negotiations [sic] with booksellers (Frayling, 2017, p. 80).

By then Percy had tragically passed away in a boating accident in Italy and Mary was still haunted by the shadow of her parentage and controversial husband. In an article by *The Drama*, they could not resist pointing out to readers of "the play's distant, scandalous parentage" (Frayling, 2017, p. 86):

[Mary Shelley is] the widow of PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY, and the daughter of Mr. GODWIN, the author of *Political Justice and other celebrated works*. The novel itself is one of the boldest of fictions; and did not the authoress [actually Percy], in a short preface, make a kind of apology, we should almost pronounce it impious (Frayling, 2017, p. 86).

A few images remain from *Presumption*. This illustration (fig. 67) for the playbill, the creature is seen in a much larger proportion to Victor fallen on the ground, defensively positioned against his creation. With arms spread widely, and a frightful look in his eyes the creature appears (with the exception of his size) to be rather human, with no evidence of him being composed by dead flesh and other “material” (Shelley, 1818) as described in the novel. “In *Frankenstein* Victor creates, not only using dead matter, but also without a woman and that combined with his inability (as a single parent) to give his ‘offspring’ love and care results in a monster” (Othello Knudsen, 2012, p. 21). That description does not translate on this illustration, on one side the creature’s body language, eyes and Victor’s bodily response seem to indicate the monstrous character of the creature, its physical resemblance to humankind falls short of fitting into the classic *monster* depictions that took over popular culture a century later.



67. Illustration of *Presumption, or the Fate of Frankenstein*. C. 1823. Theatre Royal English Opera House.

The costume choice and the dagger or cross in the creature’s hand is vaguely similar to a depiction of Jesus, making a connection to religion seldom seen in *Frankenstein*’s representations (image 67 and 68). The creature’s body size is analysed by Othello Knudsen: “In the creating process of the creature Victor does not have the amount of patience that would have allowed the creature to be made in a correctly proportioned size. This lack of patience is also a lack of empathy...” (2012, p. 22).

The next image (fig. 69) shows the original Theatre Royal English Opera House’s playbill for *Presumption, or the fate of Frankenstein* which includes a paragraph from the novel’s preface and mentions new scenes, dresses, and decorations. Here it becomes clear that the creature’s costume did not originate from Shelley’s *Frankenstein*.

The inspiration for the play’s title, *Presumption! Or the Fate of Frankenstein* is unclear. Frayling elaborates on the plays title and reference to its source of inspiration:

None of the journal reviews of the novel, in 1818, had even suggested that the book might be a parable about ‘presumption’—or that it contained *any* moral lessons apart from Godwinian ones. Most of them had complained that *Frankenstein* did not contain a moral at all. But *Presumption* was there to fill the gap. The theatre’s playbills were in no doubt about this:

The striking moral exhibited in this story, is the fatal consequences of that consequences if that presumption which attempts to penetrate, beyond prescribed depths, into the mysteries of nature (2017, p. 86).



68. Old engravings: Jesus Christ - the winner of death and hell. 1880. The book *History of the Church*. Vector by S_Kohl.

The whole of the Audience of the House has been embellished with
NEW AND SPLENDID DECORATIONS.
 TWELVE ELEGANT NEW CUT GLASS CHANDELIERS
 have been added, and are to be lighted with WAX in addition to the
NEW LARGE CENTRE GAS LUSTRE.
 The Seats and Condition of the Boxes and Pits, and the whole of the Upholstery Work of the Theatre, are entirely NEW.

This Evening, MONDAY, July 28th, 1823,
 Will be produced (for the FIRST TIME) an entirely new ROMANCE of a peculiar interest, entitled
PRESUMPTION!
FATE OF FRANKENSTEIN.
 WITH NEW SCENES, DRESSES, AND DECORATIONS.
 The MUSIC composed by Mr. WATSON.

"The event on which this fiction is founded has been supposed, by Dr. DARWIN, and some of the physiological writers of Germany, as not of impossible occurrence.—I shall not be supposed as according the remotest degree of serious faith to such an imagination; yet, in assuming it as the basis of a work of fancy, I have not considered myself as merely weaving a series of supernatural terrors. The event on which the interest of the story depends is exempt from the disadvantages of a mere tale of spectres or enchantment; it was recommended by the novelty of the situations which it develops; and, however impossible as a physical fact, affords a point of view to the imagination, for the delineating of the human passions, more comprehensive and commanding than any which the ordinary relations of existing events can yield."
 From the Preface to the Novel of FRANKENSTEIN.

The striking moral exhibited in this story, is the fatal consequence of that presumption which attempts to penetrate beyond proscribed depths, into the mysteries of nature.

Frankenstein, Mr. WALLACK.
 De Lacey, (a banished Gentleman) Mr. ROWBOTHAM,
 Felix De Lacey, (his Son) Mr. PEARMAN,
 Fritz, Mr. KEELEY,
 Clerval, Mr. J. BLAND, William, Master BODEN,
 Hammerman, Mr. SALTER, Tanskin, Mr. SHELDON, Guide, Mr. R. PHILLIPS, Gypsy, Mr. H. PHILLIPS,
 (-----) Mr. T. P. COOKE.
 Elizabeth, (Sister of Frankenstein) Mrs. AUSTIN,
 Agatha De Lacey, Miss L. DANCE,
 Safie, (an Arabian Girl) Miss POVEY, Madame Ninon, (Wife of Fritz) Mrs. J. WEIPPERT.
 Chorus of Gypsies, Peasants, &c. &c.
 Messrs. Bowman, Dutton, Lodge, Myers, Povey, Saunders, Shaw, Sheriff, Smith, Taylor, Tett, Walsh, Willis,
 Meddams & Misses Bennett, Beasly, Dennis, Goolwin, Lodge, Jersell, Southwell, 2 Billiton, Vials, Vidall.
 After which (Third Time this Season) O'KEEFE'S Musical Entertainment, called

THE RIVAL SOLDIERS.
 Captain Cruizer, Mr. ROWBOTHAM, Sergeant Major Tactic, Mr. W. BENNETT,
 Lenox, Mr. BROADHURST, Snatcher, Mr. PEARMAN, Corporal, Mr. MEARS,
 Nipperkin, (third time) Mr. W. CHAPMAN,
 In which Character he will introduce the Comic Song of "THE NIGHTINGALE CLUB."
 Mary, Miss HOLLADAY.
 To conclude with (Second Time this Season) the Operatic Farce, called

SHARP AND FLAT.
 Sir Peter Probable, Mr. W. BENNETT,
 Captain Belrose, Mr. BROADHURST, in which Character he will sing "My native land, good night!"
 Solomon Sharpwit, (second time) Mr. W. CHAPMAN,
 Nikey, (second time) Mr. KEELEY, Brisk, Mr. SALTER,
 Rosabel, Miss HOLLADAY, Jemmy, (second time) Mrs. J. WEIPPERT.

Boxes 5s. Second Price 3s. Pit 2s. Second Price 1s. 6d. Lower Gallery 5s. Second Price 1s. Upper Gallery 1s. Second Price 6d.
 Boxes, Places, Private and Family Boxes, may be had of Mr. SEVENSONS, at the Box-Office, Strand Entrance, from 10 till 4.
 Doors open at half-past six, begins at seven.—VIVA! MEN.—No Women returned.—Lovers, Priests, Marquis Court, Drury Lane.
 AT THE ILLUMINATED TRELLIS ARCADES
 will be opened for the reception of the Visitors of the Theatre at SECOND PRICE, which will commence at NINE o'clock.

Mr. WALLACK
 (who can perform only for a limited period previous to his return to America) being nightly revived with enthusiastic plaudits, will appear in a new Character This Evening; and repeat the Character of Roderick Dhu, on Wednesday and Friday.

Miss LOUISA DANCE will appear in a new Character This Evening; and on Wednesday and Friday, as Ellen, in the revived Opera.

Mr. W. CHAPMAN, being nightly received with great applause and laughter, will perform, This Evening, Nipperkin, and Solomon Sharpwit, and on Wednesday and Friday, the Part of Marston.

Mr. RAYNER, having received the most enthusiastic applause throughout his whole performance of the arduous Character of Gilan, in The MILLER'S MAID, and the whole Entertainment, having been honoured with the exclamations of crowded Audiences, it will be repeated To-morrow and Thursday.

Miss KELLY
 will perform, To-morrow and Thursday, Phoebe, in The MILLER'S MAID.

To-morrow, The MILLER'S MAID, with (first time at this Theatre) the Farce of WHERE SHALL I DINE? and other Entertainments.
 On Wednesday, The KNIGHT OF SNOWDOWN, with other Entertainments.

69. The playbill of the stage adaptation *Presumption, or the Fate of Frankenstein*. 1823. English Opera House.

In fact the "mysteries of nature" (Frayling, 2017, p. 86) were as prominent in the novel as in the stage adaptation and later in other representations of *Frankenstein*. All the scientific foundation of the novel is eluded and the actual creation scene remains a great mystery. "Actually, in *Presumption* the creation scene took place offstage, so it was unlikely to cause fainting in the stalls, and there were plenty of horrors to come in Acts Two and Three" (Frayling, 2017, p. 86). This could be interpreted in different ways: One may be that the creators of the drama did not have the technological means to display the creation; and another could have been that Shelley is vague about the creation moment in the novel; or maybe the creation simply happens elsewhere to protect the audience of such a horrific scene. Frayling further suggests:

The leaflets were disturbing the audience in encouraging even more rowdiness in the pit than usual. When they continued to be circulated for five nights in a row, the management of the Opera House felt obliged to write an open letter:

It is to be remembered that the Right Honourable the Lord Chamberlain [the state censor] sanctioned the piece by granting his License, which License would certainly have been withheld, had the Drama been of an IMMORAL TENDENCY. The piece also continues to be performed to crowded and fashionable audiences; and whatever difference of opinion may exist respecting its merits as a dramatic work, not one Critic has objected to it on the score of morality (2017, p. 86).

Mary Shelley had the opportunity to go see *Presumption* in August of 1823, once she returned to England. Frayling recovers a letter written by her:

Mary began her account of the experience—written to Leigh Hunt in Florence—with a joke about Byron, who, as everyone knew, awoke one morning and found himself famous:

But lo and behold! I found myself famous!—Frankenstein had prodigious success as a drama and was about to be repeated, for the twenty-third night, at the English Opera House. The play bill amused me extremely, for in the list of dramatis personae came '—— by Mr. T. Cooke': this nameless mode of naming the unnameable [sic] is rather good...[F.] is at the beginning full of hope and expectation—at the end of the 1st Act the stage represents a room with a staircase leading up to F's workshop—he goes to it and you see his light at a small window, through which a frightened servant peeps, who runs off in terror when F. exclaims 'It lives!'—Presently F. himself rushes in horror and trepidation from the room and while still expressing his agony and terror, '——' throws down the door of the laboratory, leaps the staircase and presents his unearthly and monstrous person on the stage... (2017, p. 86).

Around the time Shelley wrote this, two other stage productions were on their way, Henry Milner's *Frankenstein, or, The Demon of Switzerland*, which includes an original (for the stage) scene in which the creature "holds a long conversation with his maker" (Frayling, 2017, p. 87), at the Royal Coburg Theatre (also known as the Old Vic) "and a farcical burlesque" (Frayling, 2017, p. 87)—*Humgumption; or, Dr. Frankenstein and the Hobgoblin of Hoxton*. In total "*Presumption* would inspire at least fourteen English and French versions or burlesques within three years of its opening" (Frayling, 2017, p. 87). That remarks the relevance of the more detailed analysis into *Presumption*, since together with the original text, were a major factor in propelling *Frankenstein* into the bloodstream of popular culture (Frayling, 2017, p. 80).



70. The first French adaptation of *Frankenstein*: *Le Monstre et le Magicien*. 1826. Bibliothèque Nationale de France.

The first French theatre adaptation opened in June 1826, five years after the publication of the translated novel, at the Théâtre de la Porte Saint-Martin, entitled *Le Monstre et le magicien* by Jean-Toussaint Merle and Antoine-Nicolas Béraud. The illustration of the creature in *Le Monstre et le Magicien* (fig. 70) is quite similar to the English representation of *Presumption* (fig. 67), which is coherent with the timing of these plays.

The first visual representation of *Frankenstein*, to appear in print, was the inside cover of the 1831 revised edition. This is one of the most significant editions of *Frankenstein, or the Modern Prometheus*, published thirteen years after the original. Mary Shelley not only matured from an eighteen year old girl into a grown woman but she also went through some life-changing events. For one, her husband Percy died in 1822, with two of her children passing away in the meantime, first little Clara Everina died a few months after the first publication of *Frankenstein*, at age one. A year later her first son, William, died age 3.

Whether these traumatic events had an influence on the 1823 and 1831 editions or not, Shelley wrote: “I certainly did not owe the suggestion of one incident, nor scarcely of one train of feeling, to my husband, and yet but for his incitement, it would never have taken the form in which it was presented to the world” (1831, *Introduction*). When critics suggested the extent of Percy’s influence on the first edition in 1818, Mary had been at times evasive; however, Louise Othello Knudsen quotes Anthony F. Badalamenti (2006) insisting that: “There is no evidence that his [Percy’s] editing altered the plot or the story overall (425)” (As cited in Knudsen, 2012, p. 25).

Sir Frayling provides a bigger scope on the context of Mary’s situation and what prompt her to re-publish *Frankenstein* in 1831:

At the beginning of 1831, she [Mary Shelley] wrote to Charles Ollier that ‘things can never be worse than now—unless London were on fire’. Ollier was by then working as an adviser to Henry Colburn and Richard Bentley who had joined forces as publishers in New Burlington Street. Bentley had recently launched his ‘Standard Novels’ series of cheap, small-format, cloth-bound versions of out-of-print novels—with a couple of illustrations and an introduction—and William Godwin’s *Caleb Williams* had been one of the first in the series (1830) (2017, p. 91).

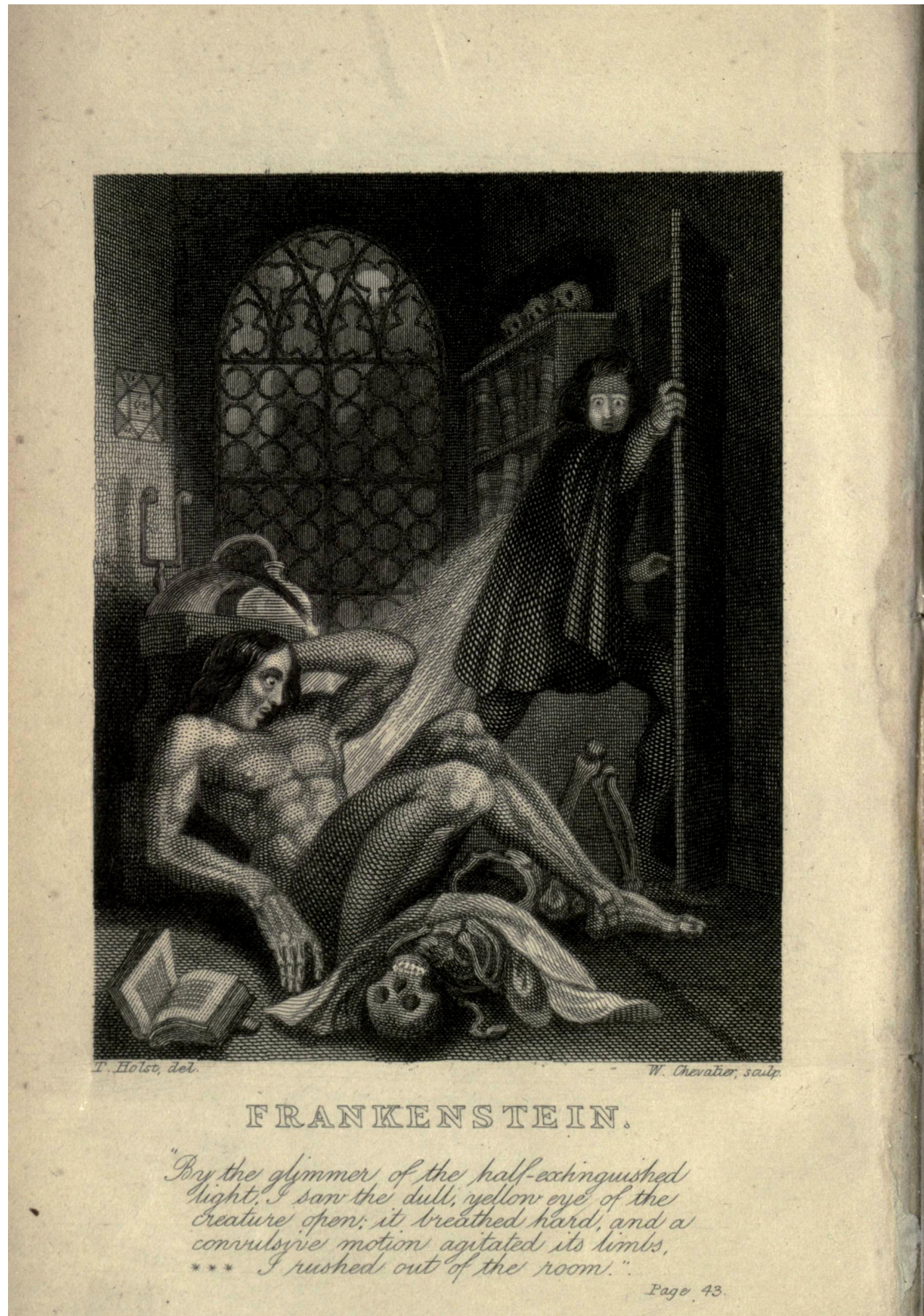
Soon after Shelley wrote to Ollier: “‘Have they any idea of publishing *Frankenstein* in their edition?’ This time, she would be the initiator, not her husband or father. By the end of June, she had agreed terms with Colburn and Bentley...” (Frayling, 2017, p. 91).

Comparing the changes between the original 1818 and the 1831 edition Frayling goes on to analyse:

The text of *Frankenstein* was substantially revised by Mary Shelley, to become a Standard Novel. She claimed in her *Introduction* that ‘the alterations... are principally that those of style’, but they in fact went a lot further. The parallel between Robert Walton’s ‘love of the marvelous’ and Victor Frankenstein’s project was given new emphasis, from the beginning of the novel onwards (2017, p. 92).

Mary Shelley removed many of the references to new scientific ideas, thus detaching the novel from its original intellectual context and the issues that were being debated both publicly and in the Byron-Shelley circle. On that subject Frayling further elaborates:

From the evidence of the published texts of *Frankenstein* (1818 and 1831 editions), although Mary Shelley was attentive—and sensitive—to contemporary scientific debates, she did not feel at



71. Illustration for the frontispiece of the 1831 edition of *Frankenstein, or the Modern Prometheus*. 1831. Illustrated by T. Holst and engraved by W. Chevalier.

all comfortable writing about them except in broad, general terms. There is actually remarkably little in the way of scientific *detail* in the novel, given the circumstances of its genesis, and given Percy Shelley's—and her father's—predilections. Victor Frankenstein—deliberately—never explains the final stage of his research.

... This discovery was so great and overwhelming, that all the steps by which I had been progressively led to it were obliterated, and I beheld only the result... I see... that you expect to be informed of the secret with which I am acquainted; that cannot be: listen patiently until the end of my story, and you will easily perceive why I am reserved upon that subject (2017, p. 30).

The literary differences between the two most significant edition becomes relevant when discussing modern visual representations of *Frankenstein*. Recent productions were not based on the stage adaptations nor on the original source, but on the 1831 revised edition. The extended discussion of Mary Shelley's relationship with science will continue in the discourse analysis section from the feminist perspective of the research questions.

Another perceptive observation from Othello Knudsen remarks: "The treatment of science in *Frankenstein* is at great length formed as a warning against the rapidly changing science which tries to control nature and turn man into God" (2012, p. 20). This reflects on a sentiment present in the novel and often represented in the graphic material of *Frankenstein*, "This disrespect for the powers and laws of nature will produce monsters" (2012, p. 21).

The illustrations present in the 1831 edition, together with Shelley's now famous *Introduction*, were also a new element for *Frankenstein*. Since the novel's first publication in 1818, there were no other forms of representing this story visually, other than the dramatisations. Frayling analyses the two illustrations:

One striking feature of Standard Novels number 9 is the two illustrations—the first-ever attempts to visualise the novel rather than the dramatisations, which we must assume Mary Shelley approved. They were the work of the young painter and illustrator Theodor von Holst, pupil and disciple of Zurich-born Henry Fuesli, also the earliest British artist to illustrate Goethe's *Faust* in the late 1820s ... He was just twenty-one years old when *Frankenstein* was published in 1831, and pleased to have been commissioned by Henry Colburn after leaving the Royal Academy Schools (2017, p. 93).

The first illustration, a steel engraving (figure 71), created by W. Chevalier for Mary Shelley's novel, displays the moment Victor brings his creature to life and is confronted by his [the creature's] *dull yellow eyes*. Victor's facial expression appears as though he was struck by horror, while his body language indicates that he is ready to flee the laboratory. Frayling analyses the visual elements in the illustration in great detail:

This very larger-than-life creature is very muscular—his skin seems too tight for him—and looks as though Frankenstein has aimed at classical proportion: but his eyes are bulging and he seems to owe something to the theatrical performances. The props lying around the laboratory are Faust-like (2017, p. 93).

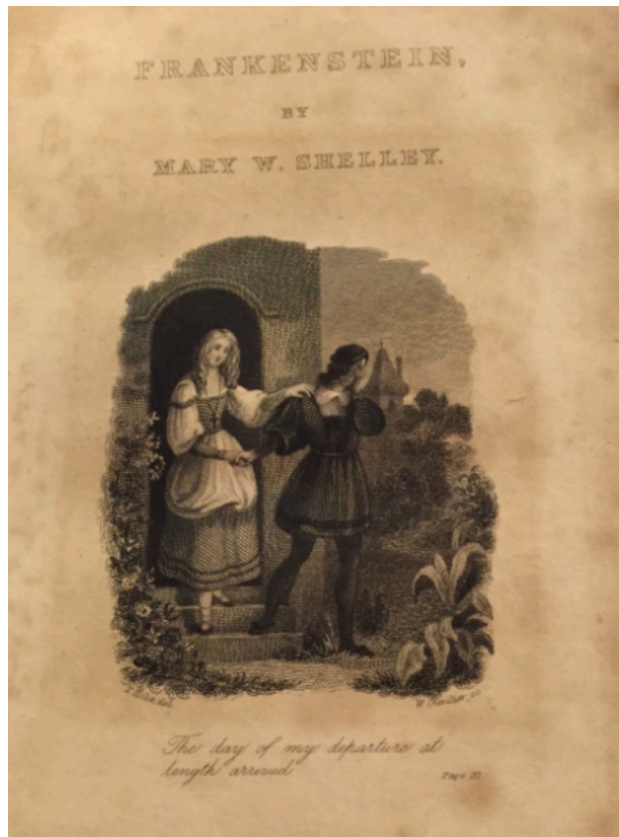
The second illustration produced by Von Holst is the title page vignette seen on figure 72. It shows Victor, in what resembles a Renaissance outfit, turning away from Elizabeth "with his hand in cheek in the conventional acting gesture, a Swiss tower in the background" (Frayling, 2017, p. 93).

The contradiction in these images lies with the hints that the story may be set in the early modern, Renaissance era, not the late eighteenth century as Shelley's text suggests. Frayling provides a possible reason for this: "Von Holst was taught by Henry Fuesli in the last few years of the veteran artist's life, in the early 1820s, and was profoundly influenced by his style and choice of subject-matter" (2017, p. 93).

Mary Shelley's mother, Mary Wollstonecraft had a connection to Fuesli, sparked by a "hopeless passion" (Frayling, 2017, p. 95) in the late 1780s and early 1790s. Mary Godwin [Shelley] also met Fuesli and was familiar with his background, so much so that she even based "the chilling scene of the creature fulfilling his prophecy 'I shall be with you on your wedding-night' directly on the design of [a Fuesli's] painting" (Frayling, 2017, p. 95).

The 1831 edition brought Mary Shelley some financial stability, if only for a short period of time. As Frayling elaborates on the last of her remuneration from *Frankenstein*, he also sheds light to another reason for having a lack of visual [and textual] representations of Shelley's novel until the 1880s, long after she had passed away:

The 30£ she received for the copyright—no royalties—was the last financial reward Mary Shelley ever earned from *Frankenstein*. There was talk in autumn 1838 of publishing the novel in the even cheaper series *The Romanticist and Novelist's Li-*



72. Illustration for the first page of the 1831 edition of *Frankenstein, or the Modern Prometheus*. 1831. Illustrated by T. Holst and engraved by W. Chevalier.

brary, which would have made her a little money, but the copyrights owners refused permission. Mary Shelley explained, [Colburn and Bentley] 'bought the copyright of *Frankenstein* when it was printed in the Standard Novels'. Where this left the original 1818 edition, she was not sure: 'I do not know what the laws are'. So *Frankenstein* remained virtually out of print—even beyond the expiry of the 1831 copyright—until the 1880s (2017, p. 95).

During the Industrial Revolution the representation of *Frankenstein* took a role upon the British political history. Only a year after the 1831 revised edition of Shelley's novel, the *Reform Bill* was passed by British lawmakers. This act aimed to expand voting rights to booming industrial cities that previously had no political representation. Eric J. Evans comments on the relevance of this act, "Looked at from a modern perspective, 1832 can be seen as the vital first step on the road to full, representative parliamentary democracy" (1994, p. 2).

Understanding the importance of this act is key to understanding how the representation of Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* functions in political history. The first political cartoon inspired by the gothic novel was



73. Reform Bill's First Step Amongst His Political Frankenstein. 1833.

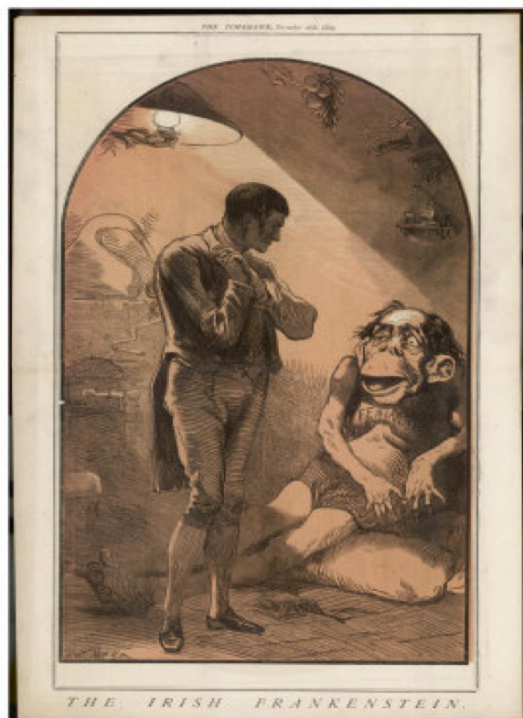
published in March 1832 for the *McLean's Monthly Sheet of Characters*. The image depicts William IV's decision to create peers and let the Act continue (Forry, 1990). The cartoon, published before the act was approved, implies that if the Bill were successfully passed, then the power that was once held solely by the Royalty would be given away to the people.

Some of the depictions of *Frankenstein* in different media do not have visual record to include in this research. The second cartoon was published for the *Figaro* in London. At this time the Prime Minister, Grey, stands above the Creature who in turn represents the "new electorate and feeding the Creature's political power" (Forry, 1990).

The Tomahawk is another major cartoon published in the series of Irish political issues (figure 74). Matt Morgan illustrates the 1869 graphic that aims to oppose the Irish Fenianism as a result of John O'Mahony Fenian's Brotherhood. "The cartoon was published along with a story called 'The Monstrous Legacy', about an evil man who constructed Fenianism" (Forry, 1990).

John Tenniel, the name behind the *Alice in Wonderland* original illustrations, appears on the *Frankenstein* political scene with this depiction of the Irish nationalist leader, Charles Stewart Parnell after the Phoenix Park murders (figure 76). George L. Levine even goes so far as to connect it to Shelley's novel by quoting her, again referring to Parnell as the creature, "The hateful and blood-stained Monster... yet was it not my Master to the very extent that it was my Creature?... Had I not breathed about my own spirit?" (1982, pp. 167-171).

A recurring theme throughout the nineteenth century cartoons used Frankenstein's creature to represent the working class. Perhaps one of the most recognis-



74. *The Irish Frankenstein*. 1869. Illustrated by Matt Morgan.

able *Frankenstein* cartoons, illustrated by Tenniel and published on *Punch* in 1866 was *Frankenstein Brummagem* (figure 77). In the cartoon, the creature waits for voting rights to be given to him, while in the bottom of the illustration it is written: *John Frankenstein Bright. I have no fe-fe-fear of ma-manhood suffrage!* Lederer (2002) explains the origin of the word, “The name *Brummegem* comes from the vernacular pronunciation of Birmingham, which was an English city known for cheap jewellery and toys” (pp. 33-36).

While the re-publishing of *Frankenstein* slowed down throughout the nineteenth century due to the copyright limitations, the creature stayed relevant in the political sphere, whether with the Reform Act or the constant tensions with the British-Irish relations. In early 1882, the first major British-Irish cartoon made it to the *Punch*. Forry describes it: “*The Irish Frankenstein* depicts a large Irish man as the monster, attacking an innocent British man walking past” (1990). Once the copyright of *Frankenstein* expired in the 1880s, publishers took a renewed interest in the novel, while the political cartoons were still going strong, as can be seen with the graphics here represented and the historical context of this dissertation.

Moving on to a different media source, the first film poster, which has been previously mentioned in this research, pictures The Edison Kinetogram’s *Franken-*



75. *The Irish Frankenstein*. 1843. Illustrated by John Tenniel.

stein. This black and white, silent thirteen minute film (still available online), was first released in 1910. The poster depicts the creature taken from a scene of the film, centered and framed by a gray circle and two illustrated masks as a symbolic representation of the dramatic arts. Additional information about the release of the film, the dates and the production company are also present in this image. This particular depiction of the creature in this film is one that, until this day, is most similar to the vision of Mary Shelley in the novel. On one hand, this depiction physically resembles the first illustration of the 1831 edition; on the other hand, not much about the creature’s demeanour can be observed solely from this poster.

The fact that this is a silent film also highlights another interesting topic. According to Kallman, “Supposedly, Shelley gives Frankenstein’s monster a voice to criticise anthropocentric notions, and human exploitation of nonhuman animals... To defend speciesism based on the fact that nonhumans lack rationality and language is faulty logic” (2015, p. 25). This reading evidently does not translate into the 1910 film representation of the creature. Since it is a silent film, the creature only expresses himself with exaggerated motions, hence failing to give him “a critical voice” (Kallman, 2015, p. 25) and reinforcing the long lasting stereotype that the creature lacks reason and emotions.



THE IRISH FRANKENSTEIN.

"The baneful and blood-stained Monster * * * yet was it not my Master to the very extent that it was my Creature? * * * Had I not breathed it my own spirit?" * * * (*Extract from the Works of C. S. PARNELL, M.P.*)

76. The Irish Frankenstein. 1882. Illustrated by John Tenniel.



77. The Brummagem Frankenstein. 1866. Illustrated by John Tenniel.

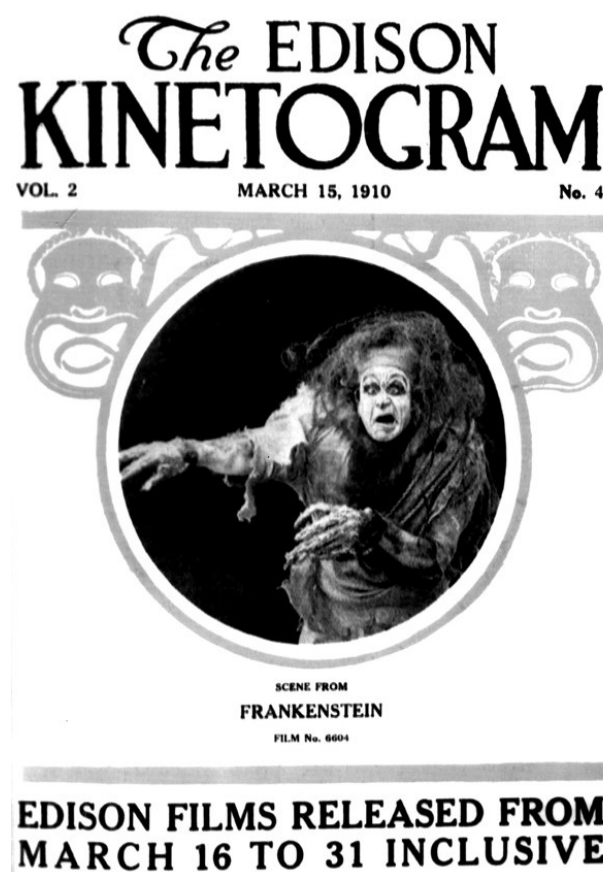
Considering the time period in which *Frankenstein* was conceived, Shelley characterises the creature as a vegetarian. Shelley writes in her novel, “My food is not that of man; I do not destroy the lamb and the kid, to glut my appetite; acorns and berries afford me sufficient nourishment” (1818, chapter 9, para. 9). Percy was also a vegetarian, suggesting that the creature’s characteristic to humankind’s sense of superiority to other nonhuman animals by enslaving them as food sources. As Kallman puts it: “The vegetarian theme is not obvious at first glance, but functions as an implicit means to emphasise the more apparent critique of anthropocentrism” (2015, p. 31). On the subject of the moral dilemma imposed by Shelley’s narrative, Kallman continues her analysis:

The text draws on the theory that human exploitation of nonhuman animals is a form of slavery, and that no nonhuman, or human, would assent their existence to slavery for the benefit of a ‘superior’ group of beings, which the monster resolutely concludes (2015, p. 27).

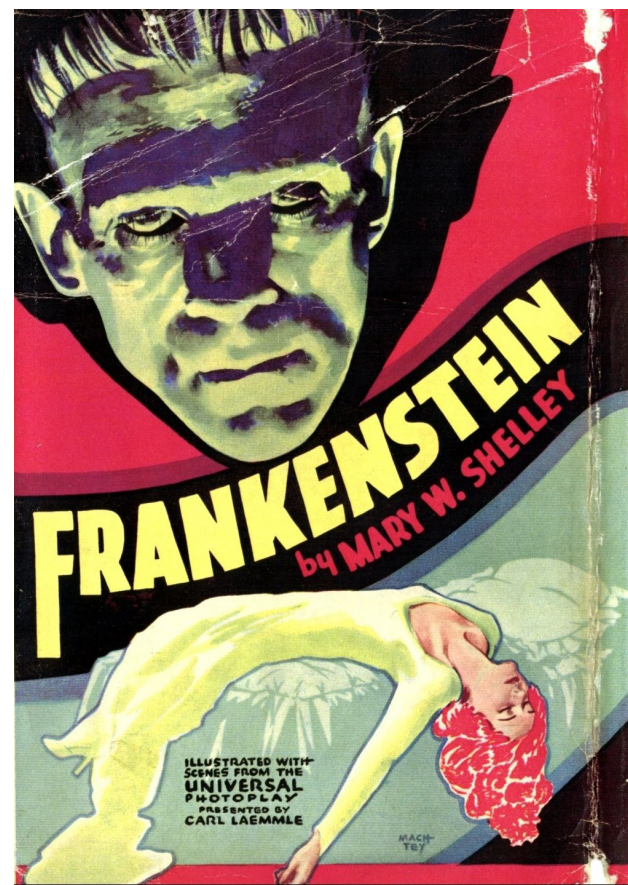
This interpretation of Shelley’s text is often not represented in the visual material including the creature. The release of the 1931 film *Frankenstein*, directed by James Whale, had a major impact on the represen-

tation of the creature hereinafter. With the famous face that embodied the creature in the form of Boris Karloff, many book jacket designs were inspired by it, as it can be seen on figure 79. None of the images presented in these pages suggest the critical attribute that the creature is vegetarian. About figure 79, Budrick elaborates: “Publisher Grosset & Dunlap took advantage of the film’s success and released Photoplay Editions of the novel that featured scenes from the movies. The first Photoplay edition was bound in red cloth with black lettering” (2017, para. 4).

The release of *Frankenstein* (1931) marks a significant turnaround for the history of the visualisation of *Frankenstein* that goes beyond the more apparent reasons already discussed and demonstrated with the images of this section. From the moment the 1931 film was released, the representations detach themselves from the original time and context in which the novel was conceived. That includes critical views on Enlightenment and anthropocentrism that initiates an insatiable demand from the masses in popular culture. Before the film’s release Kallman explains the Enlightenment principles questioned by Shelley in *Frankenstein*:



78. Poster for the first *Frankenstein* film. 1910. The Edison Kinetogram.



79. Book jacket inspired by the *Frankenstein*. 1931. Designed by Frank Mactey. Grosset & Dunlap.

The text criticises Enlightenment speciesism in the sense that the treatment of non humans would not improve with the capacity to communicate through human language. This suggests that the perception of nonhuman animals as inferior and less sentient than humans would remain even if non humans were to display language proficiency (2015, p. 25).

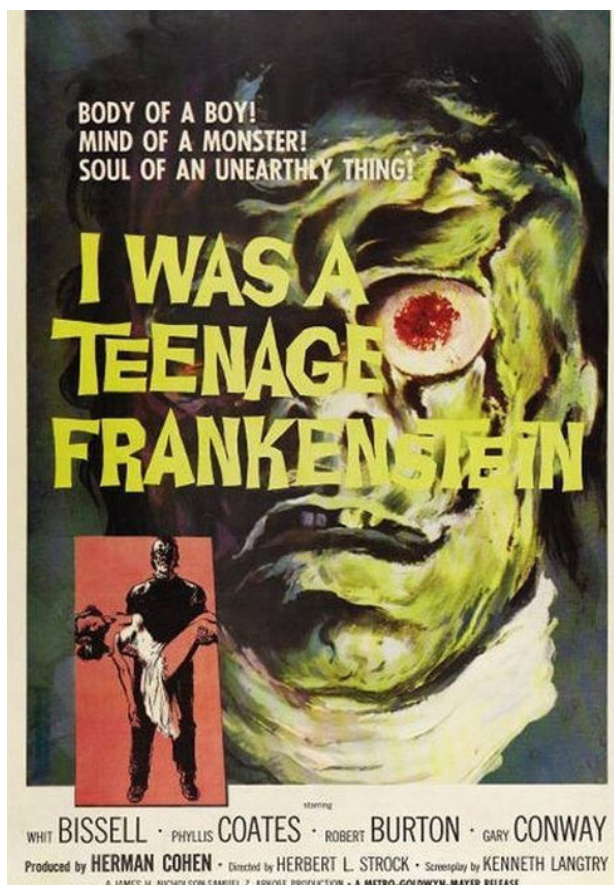
After 1931 this criticism to speciesism stopped being the central message and a new era of representing *Frankenstein* was to begin. In a turn of events, the critic view upon anthropocentrism by portraying the creature as intelligent and relatable started to have the opposite effect. The creature began to be depicted with as little aesthetic appeal as possible as a tool of provoking horror on the audiences. This can be observed in a number of book jackets and film posters, like the one seen on image 80, the poster for *I Was a Teenage Frankenstein* (1958). Depicted as animalistic, deformed, and monstrous definitely affirms the species boundaries, as seen on figures 80 and 81.

One year after the success of Whale's film *Frankenstein*, Budrick explains: "In 1932 and after the success of the Photoplay editions, Nino Carbe (1909–1993) created the illustrated edition of *Frankenstein* for

Grosset & Dunlap" (2017, para. 6). The source of inspiration for Carbe is undisclosed, and this depiction (see image 81) of the creature seems to drift quite far from any references made in the book or in film. In fact, based on the sharp canine teeth of the illustrated creature, this depiction seems to belong more to the stereotype of a vampire than the *man-made monster* created by Victor Frankenstein. The use of the colour green, however, that not inspired by the references in the original text, demonstrate a recurring colour attached to this character from films and other book cover designs. The typeface used in this cover is assimilated with a number of the film posters, as exemplified on figure 82.

Oftentimes, the representation on the graphic material is an aggressive, hideous, animalistic creature, beyond the creature described by Shelley in 1818 the edition of *Frankenstein*. These types of representations can be seen in images 78, 80 and 81. Kallman describes the conclusions the creature draws based on species boundaries with a quote from McLane:

McLane argues that the monster realises that sympathy does not transcend the species barriers, and that sympathy is only possible within the same



80. Film poster of *I Was a Teenage Frankenstein*. 1958. Santa Rose Productions.



81. Book cover alludes more to a *Dracula* inspiration rather than *Frankenstein*. 1932. Designed by Nino Carbe.

species... Such a reading reveals the human tendency to exclude nonhumans in their capability of sympathising ... which supports the text's deconstruction of the species borders (2015, pp. 24-25).

This reading usually supports the precedent for the creature's representation in popular culture. The sensationalist interpretation of *Frankenstein* emphasises the need to portray the creature as the villain, an evil monster not only in his demeanour, but also in his physical appearance. This representation has been so far discussed in figures 60, 65, 66, 78, 80 and 81. In the following methodology sections, other examples of this sensationalist representation of the creature will be discussed in detail. Kallman resumes the original conception of the creature as in Shelley's novel:

The monster's attributed qualities of reason and language directly oppose Enlightenment conceptions of nonhuman animals as soulless machines, which Shelley's criticism of speciesism draws on. Moreover, the depiction of the monster's humanity and Victor's inhumanness blurs the boundaries between the species... (Kallman, 2015, p. 34).

In 1931 Universal Pictures released *Frankenstein*, with Colin Clive as Victor Frankenstein and Boris Karloff as the creature who made him a Hollywood household name. Different posters promoted the film, but I will first discuss figure 82. This poster's painting style depicts the main character's heads, the creature in a circular frame, and a woman, Elizabeth, with a long white dress and veil, likely her wedding gown. The title is red with a black stroke in a handwritten typeface, and the subtitle is centered underneath it in yellow with the words: *The man who made a monster*. The film was directed by James Whale, and in the background of the poster there is movement in the brush strokes, and the silhouette of a windmill. This poster's most relevant element for this analysis is the depiction of the woman, Elizabeth, a point that will soon be resumed.

Figure 83 shows a book cover design clearly inspired by Karloff's version of the creature with this 1975 edition from Pocket Book. It was designed by Mara McAfee (1929–1984) who “was an actress, a dancer, an illustrator and an American Pop artist. Her works often featured contemporary subjects and was usually satirical in nature” (Budrick, 2017, para. 4). The cover references the creature's larger-than-life proportions: In it the recurring yellow is present, in the title, the creature's skin tone and the overall sphere of the illustration.

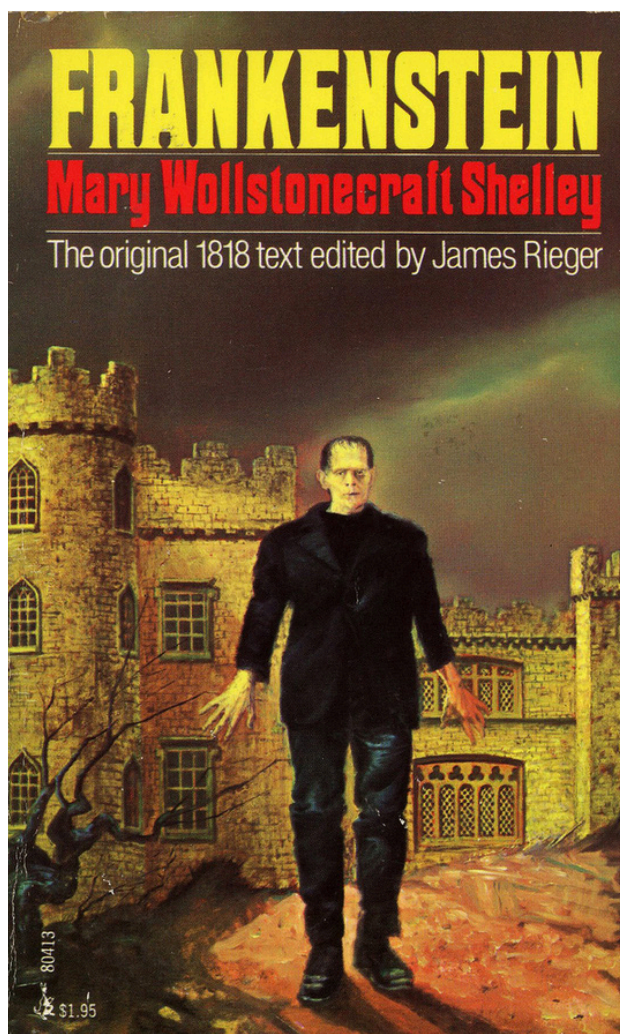


82. Poster for *Frankenstein*. 1931. Universal Studios.

After the success of *Frankenstein* (1931), Universal Studios quickly released a sequel, *The Bride of Frankenstein* (1935) with the same team. Colin Clive and Boris Karloff reprised their roles as Dr. Frankenstein and the Creature.

Other posters from *The Bride* will be analysed in greater detail in the **VI.3.a Semiotics applied to the representation of women in *Frankenstein*** section of this dissertation. Nevertheless, figure 84 is worth discussing in this section because it depicts the creature in a more tender and humanised manner. The French version of the film *The Bride of Frankenstein*'s poster focuses on the creature and his female counterpart. He looks smitten at her while gently holding her hand, coloured in warm tones and the Karloffian traditional costume while the Bride looks quite cold and indifferent. The additional text about the film is written in an art nouveau inspired font, reflecting the period in which the film was released.

The Universal Studios series of *Frankenstein* films continued for almost two decades with a total of nine films being released between 1931 and 1948. More of the posters and visual materials from these films will be discussed in the **Visual matrices and Semiotics** sections of this chapter.



83. Book cover of *Frankenstein*. 1975. Illustrated by Mara McAfee. Pocket Books edition.

The analysis discourse of Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* and thereafter with other representations in popular culture from the last two hundred years do not always reflect the same image of the creature. While, in the original novel, Frankenstein's creation was an intelligent and compassionate being, his treatment by his creator caused him to make disastrous decisions which ultimately contributed to his isolation from society. On one hand, critics and scholars interpret Mary Shelley's words as a warning to the audience about the dangers of playing with the natural order of life through technology and science—a timeless debate that still preoccupies society today, two centuries later. On the other hand, analysing the discourse present in Shelley's novel, many have come to interpret *Frankenstein* as a work that reflects her personal struggles and challenges with her personal relationships. In addition to that reading, many interpret *Frankenstein* as a critique of the speciesist thinking of the Enlightenment period in which she lived.

The representation of *Frankenstein* in popular culture often reflects an interpretation of the novel; and, as time passed by, the visual elements evolved with the cultural context. The Enlightenment notions present in the original novel faded away to make place for the horror and Expressionist movement that transpired between the end of the XIX century and early XX century. In more recent decades, the prefix *Franken-* has been adapted and applied to modern ethical debates about genetically modified foods and other scientific experiments.

The many versions of *Frankenstein* started to focus on the inhumane aspects of the creature instead of the emotionally capable being of 1818, and as time went on, each representation took a different point of view inspired by a variety of dramatic adaptations and other sources in film and literature.

This section analyses some of the discourse present in the 1818 edition of *Frankenstein*, supported by a speciesist reading of Mary Shelley's novel. The analysis is accompanied by images that are relevant to the discussion and shows examples with the creature's visual representation.

With references like Alexandra Kallman's *Speciesism in Mary Shelley's Frankenstein* (2015), and Sir Christopher Frayling's *Frankenstein, The First Two Hundred Years* (2017), the analysis shows how Shelley's original concept as the creature characterised as a capable, intelligent and sentient being able to rationalise his emotions and experiences. When compared to the visual representation, this portrayal shows a contrast between *Frankenstein* of Shelley's words and *Frankenstein* visualised by popular culture.

More often than not, the creature is sensationalised and exploited as a horrific villain that had little more to offer than a couple of words and a murderous rampage. As Kallman puts it, in relation to the terminology cleverly used in Shelley's novel, "Human beings do not refer to the exploitation of nonhuman animals as murder so as to understate the brutality of killing" (2015, p. 25). On that note, the issue of humans treating nonhumans as inferior to our kind is still very relevant today. For commercial purposes of the film industry, the stereotype of the nameless creature often mistaken as **Frankenstein** is that of an unintelligent, irrational monster. This drifted far from the 1818 concept or Shelley's intended message which suggests that humankind should be more mindful of how we use science and technology.



84. A French poster for *The Bride of Frankenstein*. 1935. Universal Studios.

gy for the well-being of all living creatures. Kallman summarises another reason why this popular culture icon remains timeless beyond only the literary novel:

Shelley's novel is timeless in the sense that the sub-text in *Frankenstein* is as relevant today as it was when it was first published in the early nineteenth century, if not more so because of the ever growing industrialisation of sentient beings. (2015, p. 35).

Before I conclude the **discourse analysis** section of this methodology chapter, I discuss the second research question, the role women played in the representation of *Frankenstein* and the female representations graphic evolution in various media. Similar to this section, I follow discourse analysis for discussion accompanied by images and figures.

VI.1.c Applied to the female representation in *Frankenstein*

This section analyses the underlying feminist message in Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*. Together with images that support this reading the discourse analysis builds the foundation to discuss the evolution of female representation in *Frankenstein* with the main support of Louise Othello Knudsen's academic work.

Much like the underlying speciesist message, many critics interpret a strong yet subtle message of feminism within Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*. The novel's exclusion of female characters might be overlooked on a first reading, but upon a closer look, a few questions arise. According to Knudsen, taking into consideration Mary Shelley's parentage, "It is puzzling that *Frankenstein* focuses almost solely on male experience, and does not allow the women of the story voices, instead most of them die" (2012, p. 3).

In earlier sections of this dissertation, I discussed the motive behind Shelley's deliberate choice of scarce female representation possibly attributed to a few different factors: First is her anxiety of authorship. Shelley often expressed feeling inadequate or less capable than that of her husband's or her parents talents as writers, noting Percy's "far more cultivated mind" (Shelley, 1993, p. 2). It is also relevant to point out that this is an eighteen year old young woman living in the early nineteenth century; it is natural for her, as a first time novelist, not to possess an abundance of confidence. Furthermore, in the period in which Shelley lived, Knudsen points out, "Mary Shelley's marginalisation of female characters, and killing of the 'angelic' women, is seen as a counter reaction and as a refusal to portray women in those limiting de-

scriptions" (2012, pp. 3-4). By *limiting descriptions* she means the defenseless, vulnerable, domesticated roles that women played at that time. Based on the few female characters in the novel, Elizabeth, who was Victor's cousin and love interest; and Justine, a childhood friend of the Frankenstein family, both were idealised characters killed off early in the story. These women can be seen on figures 85 and 86, in scenes from the 1957 film *The Curse of Frankenstein*.

Once *Frankenstein* was anonymously published in January 1818, there was much talk concerning the authorship behind the novel. Frayling discusses in his book the introduction written by Percy, and the Godwinian attributes of the novel, and immediately connects Mary's inner circle to *Frankenstein*: *The British Critic* (April 1818) ... wrote about the author's identity in their review article:

The writer of it is, we understand, a female; this is an aggravation of that which is the prevailing fault of the novel; but if our authoress can forget the gentleness of her sex, it is no reason why we should; and we shall therefore dismiss the novel without further comment (2017, p. 78).

There were other tough reviews like the one above, a factor that only contributed to Shelley's anxiety of authorship even further. However, there were some positive critics, such as the one from a family friend:

Mary Shelley wrote to Walter Scott that she was delighted to read 'approbation of such high a value as yours'. But she was concerned that the *Preface*, and Shelley's covering letter, had been misinterpreted by him. She wrote on June 14th 1818 from Bagni di Lucca:

Mr. Shelley soon after its publication took the liberty of sending you a copy but as both he and I thought in a manner which would prevent you from supposing that he was the author we were surprised therefore to see him mentioned in the notice as the probable author,—I am anxious to prevent your continuing in the mistake of supposing Mr. Shelley guilty of a juvenile attempt of mine; to which—from its being written at an early age, I abstained from putting my name—and from respect to those persons from whom I bear it. I have therefore kept it concealed except from a few friends.

This was, so far as we know, the first time she had admitted her authorship to anyone outside family and close friends (Frayling, 2017, p. 78).

In the text above Mary also tries to justify her actions that lead to Scott's review by saying that it was her *juvenile attempt* and not Percy's. Shelley also affirms that



85. In *The Curse of Frankenstein* the creature even destroys the women that surround him: Elizabeth (Hazel Court). 1957. Hammer Film Productions.



86. In *The Curse of Frankenstein* the creature even destroys the women that surround him: Justine (Valerie Gaunt). 1957. Hammer Film Productions.

this should not reflect poorly on her famous name. This demonstrates Mary's deep concern of living up to her name and not to embarrass her spouse or father, let alone insult the memory of her dear mother.

There is much debate on the subject of how much Percy Shelley actually contributed to the final 1818 edition. Some critics say that his notes and work were more on the technical aspect, ensuring the narrative was eloquent and that the novel was coherent. Still others say it went further. Anne K. Mellor argues:

Mary Shelley's willingness to accept virtually all of these revisions strikingly reveals her own authorial insecurity, her deference to what she saw as Percy's more legitimate literary voice ... and above all the hierarchical relationship that existed between her husband and herself (1989, p. 5).

The differences between the 1818 and 1831 editions also affected the female characters in the novel. Frayling discusses the growth between Mary Godwin of 1818 and Mary Shelley of 1831: These additions or revision of 1831 confine some of the complexities and ambiguities of the 1818 edition, give Victor Frankenstein more of a conscience, introduce references to Christianity and Destiny, present scientific research as potentially dangerous and incorporate some of the melodramatic conventions of the popular stage versions of the 1820s....] Some commentators have treated the 1831 edition as the text of which Mary Shelley was 'the sole author, acting independently'—as more authentically hers and therefore more interesting than 1818.... It is also true that the Mary Shelley of 1831 was a very different person to the Mary Godwin of 1816—and writing at a very different time; ... There was growing agitation for parliamentary reform. Mary, meanwhile, was concerned to downplay her late husband's radical past and passion for reform and to distance herself from them, for all sorts of reasons (2017, p. 93).

In her *Introduction* of the 1831 edition Mary describes her obstacles and struggles when she conceived the story as well as a source of inspiration that led her to writing the horror story, claiming that, "[She] was triggered by a conversation between Byron and Percy about the principles of life and the developments made in natural science" (Shelley, as cited in Frayling, 2017, p. 74).

One major difference in the characters between the two editions is the relationship between Victor Frankenstein and Elizabeth Lavenza. In 1831, "Elizabeth Lavenza became the daughter of a Milanese nobleman, 'a sweet orphan' or 'my sweet Elizabeth'—much sweeter than in 1818—rather than Victor's cousin: the scandalous whiff of incest might, perhaps, in 1831 reflect badly on the author" (Frayling, 2017, p. 92).

The reviews after the revised edition was published were also vastly different than the critics of 1818. The *London Literary Gazette* had written in November:

Frankenstein is certainly one of the most original works that ever proceeded from a female pen. The merits our feminine writers possess, are tact, feeling, the thoughtfulness born of feeling, a keen perception of the ridiculous, or a touching appeal to sympathy. Not one of all these is the characteristics of the work before us; it appeals to fear, not love; and, contrary to the general *matériel* in the writings of women, has less of the heart in it than the mind... We should recommend [its pages] on the same principle that physicians prescribe alteratives (as cited in Frayling, 2017, p. 96).

The change of tone between the critics from 1818 and 1831 demonstrate a different cultural mindset within that gap. Such a rapid evolution in female representation can also be seen on the film posters of the twentieth century. Figures 87 and 88, with a gap of forty years, demonstrate the vast difference in



87. Poster of *Frankenstein*. 1931. Universal Studios.

female representation in popular culture. Naturally, this evolution relates strongly to how western society has evolved in relation to the treatment of women, which necessitated the introduction of feminism in the historical context chapter of this research.

When arguing for a women's rights as creative minds and paying tribute to the pioneers of female literature, Ellen Moers argues:

It is the right of every woman writer of original creative talent to be outraged at the very thought that the ground needs to be broken especially for her, just because she is a woman; but it is wrong for the literary scholar and critic [...] to omit paying their humble toll of tribute to the great women of the past who did in fact break ground for literary women (1978, p. 63)

Knudsen goes on to say: "Mary Shelley did break ground with her 'hideous progeny' not only because she incorporated ideas from contemporary science into her story but also the mere fact that she was *young* and a *girl* was astounding to the critics and readers" (2012, p. 22). Here it becomes significant to discuss the reason behind focusing on the discourse of the



88. *Los Monstruos del Terror*. 1970. Eichberg Productions.

author nearly as much as the female representation: The rare instances where women are represented in book jackets are when Mary Shelley's portrait is used. She became such an influential author with her work in *Frankenstein* that she is the only female depicted on book covers, as seen on figure 89.

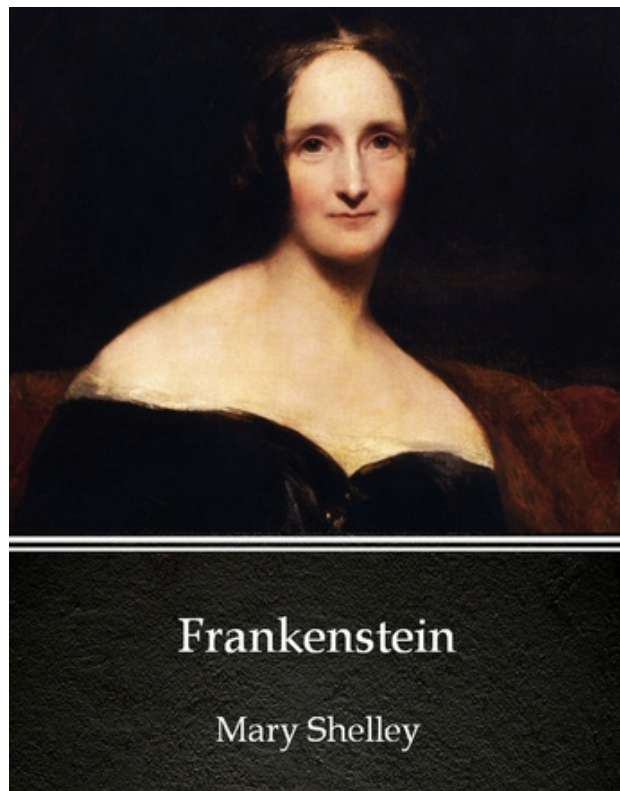
Analysing the narrative structure of the novel Othello Knudsen explains, "*Frankenstein* has a symmetrical (narrative) structure.... The story is told by the three male narrators which begins with Walton, then Victor, it then moves to the creature, then back to Victor, and at last, to Walton again" (2012, p. 28). This strategy, according to Siv Jansson (1999), provides interactions between the main characters and allows them to introduce some of the key themes in the novel while excluding others, namely the female characters, "Each of the three main characters has important conversations with the two others, and this triangular pattern also marks the exclusion of all other characters from the story" (As cited in Knudsen, 2012, p. 28). An example of the female exclusion in the representation of *Frankenstein* book covers is demonstrated on figure 90. Instead of featuring any female characters, the covers usually focus on the creature, on Victor or are just typographical. Women are not even depicted as secondary figures in book covers as they are in film posters. I will further develop this juxtaposition with the application of the visual matrices.

Knudsen affirms that Shelley's deliberate choice in this narrative structure is a way of subtly criticising the role women played in society, "She [Shelley] might at times have operated with a male discourse in her stereotyped representations of women but only so that she could discreetly criticise that confining discourse" (2012, p. 25).

Another tool Shelley uses to criticise the confining patriarchy of her time is through the circumstances in which Victor brings the creature to life, with the exclusion of a female partner. Othello Knudsen elaborates upon Mellor's suggestion:

Reproduction was a concept which underwent investigation and changes as a result of new findings but there was a time where it was suggested by Erasmus Darwin, amongst others, that reproduction in plants depended more on the male than on the female which 'only' had to supply nourishment and oxygenation. Subsequently, he ascribed all monstrous births to the female, the argument being that deformities occurred because of failure at nourishing properly (2012, p. 21).

Attributing all monstrous births to the female is one idea that becomes significant in the discussion with the graphic representation of women in film posters. This will be analysed more in depth in the following methodologies sections.



89. A rare book cover of *Frankenstein* with a female depiction: a portrait of Mary Shelley. 2017. Delphi Classics (Parts Edition).

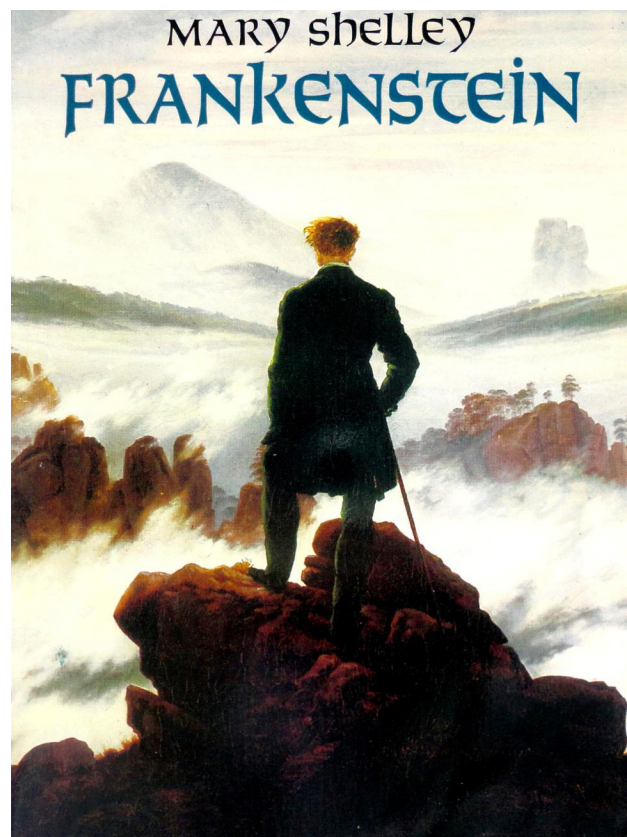
Although Mary Shelley was older and wiser in 1831, and demonstrably more confident, the society of the time had not evolved much. The patriarchy was still predominant and the reviews of the first play made sure to prove that point. Frayling collects a review of the first stage adaptation:

But the advice to fathers, 'Do not take your wives and families', in time-honoured fashion, helped to ensure the play's success. The *Theatrical John Bull*, summarising the controversy, observed acerbically:

You have only to tell a Cockney that an Exhibition is shocking—abominable—impious, and off he starts to bear witness to the fact, without even staying to wash his face! (2017, p. 86).

Here the *father* figure is the head of the family, the literal patriarchal figure that decides what his wife and family should and should not see. Figure 91 is a sign issued to warn theatregoers against the immoral nature of the play *Presumption* in Birmingham.

Outside the novel, in the nineteenth century, females were seldom represented in *Frankenstein's* adaptations, book covers or political cartoons. Women were seldom included in political life, as discussed in the contextualisation chapters of this dissertation.



90. A book cover depicting Victor Frankenstein on the top of a mountain. 2013. Dover Thrift Editions.

tion. In the visual matrices, the complete scope of the lack of female representation in other than cinematic artforms will be discussed thoroughly. In book jackets the rare female representation usually comes in the form of Mary Shelley herself. Publishers from modern editions occasionally use the famous portrait of Shelley, as seen on figure 89.

A woman is depicted in film posters for the first time with the infamous 1931 featured film *Frankenstein*. Elizabeth is seen dressed in a conservative white nightgown, revealing as little skin as possible and symbolising the angelic, innocent figure (fig. 92). Similarly, the wedding night prophecy of the creature's threatening to kill the newly wed Elizabeth to Victor is one of the most frequently portrayed scenes of women in the early Hollywood adaptation.

"I thought again of his words—'I will be with you on your wedding-night' " (Shelley, 1818, ch. 3, para. 16).

In Shelley's novel the creature promises Victor to stop murdering his family and friends if the scientist is able to provide him with a female mate. The creature states: "I demanded a creature of another sex, but as hideous as myself: the gratification is small, but it is all that I can receive, and it shall content me. It is true, we shall be monsters, cut off from all the world..." (Shelley, 1818, chapter 9, para. 7). However, Victor does not complete the female requested by the creature and ultimately destroys his experiment.

The seed of a female mate for the creature was one planted by Shelley two hundred years ago waiting to be fulfilled. Four years after the success of James

Whale's *Frankenstein*, in 1935, the sequel was released in the form of *The Bride of Frankenstein*. On the poster (fig. 93) the tagline with two females pictured on the poster reads: Who will be the Bride of Frankenstein? To the left of the creature is the head of the creature's mate, blending her iconic hairstyle with the outline of a question mark. Elizabeth is to the creature's right, appearing apprehensive; and, again, dressed with conservative clothing, white and buttoned up to her neck. Underneath the depiction of the character another line reads: Who will dare?

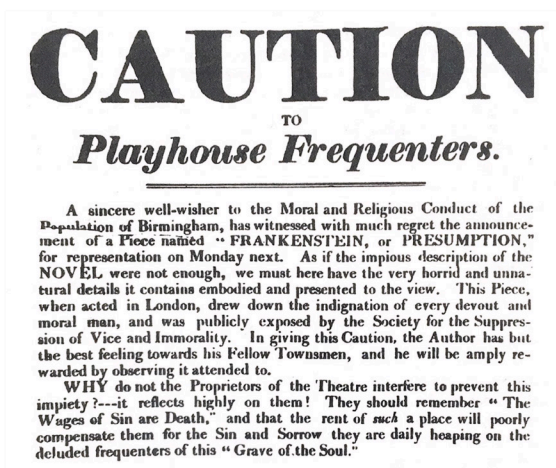
In the film's prologue the dialogue mixes the narrative of the novel with the circumstances of its origin. A photograph of this scene is displayed on figure 13. Frayling describes the scene:

Set in a solitary villa perched on a mountaintop during a violent thunderstorm, where Lord Byron (Gavin Gordon), Percy Shelley (Douglas Walton), and Mary Shelley (Elsa Lanchester—it should have been Mary Godwin, but still) discuss a sequel to *Frankenstein*—in a giant Regency salon—before the book has even been published (2017, p. 105).

The dialogue at times portrays Mary's character similar to the real life one; and other times, it is different than what her letters to family and friends would suggest. Sir Christopher Frayling thoroughly analyses the prologue:

'My purpose was to write a moral lesson,' says the apparently prim, demure Mary, 'the punishment that befell a mortal man who dared to emulate God.' She [Shelley] squeals at the sight of a pinprick resulting from her embroidery [fig. 94]. And yet she is wearing a particularly low-cut dress (which worried the censors), and when Byron says 'she is an angel' she replies, 'You think so?' The script specifies: 'at this moment there is a rolling peel of thunder as though it were in the nature of applause.' 'Look at her, Shelley,' adds Byron, 'can you believe that bland and lovely brow conceived of Frankenstein—a monster created from cadavers out of rifled graves—Isn't it astonishing?' Ignoring the fact that Byron has misunderstood the book by confusing scientist and monster, she then says—in a speech filmed but mostly cut after previews, possibly for censorship reasons:

Mary: I don't know why you should think so—what could you expect? We are all three infidels, scoffers at all marriage ties, believing only in living fully and freely in whatever direction the heart dictates. Such an audience needs something stronger than a pretty little love story. You say look at me; I say look at Shelley—who would suspect that pale pink and white innocence, gentle as a dove,



91. A warning to theatregoers. 1824. Private Collection.

was thrown out of Oxford University as a menace to morality, had run away from his lawful spouse with innocent me but seventeen, that he was deprived of his rights as a father by the Lord Chancellor of England and reviled by society as a monster himself. I am already ostracised as a free thinker, so why shouldn't I write of monsters? (2017, p. 108).

The Bride of Frankenstein (1935) was less successful than the first, but it managed to secure a long list of films in the *Frankenstein* franchise, "The 'F' word had become a brand, a name on the tin" (Frayling, 2017, p. 108). Although *The Bride* was the first, it certainly was not the last *Frankenstein* film to include Mary Shelley as a character. Ken Russell's *Gothic* (1987), Gonzalo Suárez Rowing with the Wind (1988), and Ivan Passer's *Haunted Summer* (1988) also used the author as a character in the film. Frayling notes: "Usually, the emphasis is on mind games, drugs and sex, and on the contrast between Regency manners and dark imaginings; Mary somehow turns the hothouse atmosphere, and the weird happenings, into a novel about scientific license" (2017, p. 108). Frayling goes on to say:

In all these films, Mary becomes an onlooker or a recorder—not an active participant: the real story is about Lord Byron. Her novel *Frankenstein* is either based on fact, or on a literal haunting. Evil

genius Dr. Pretorius from *The Bride* was reincarnated in *Frankenstein: The True Story* (1973), co-written by Christopher Isherwood and Don Bachardy, as Dr. Polidori himself (James Mason), who becomes a manipulative mesmerist. This introduced a queer element to Victor's experiment, with the handsome creature (Michael Sarrazin) able to say the one word 'Beautiful' (2017, p. 108).

Frayling's conclusion is not only pertinent when it comes to the representation of Mary Shelley in *Frankenstein's* franchise, but it also exemplifies the general depiction of female characters, especially in the early films. Women were frequently portrayed as the vulnerable, the *damsel in distress* and secondary characters. Decades later, in the 1970s the narrative started to change. A more specific, visual overview of this evolution will be discussed in the **Visual Matrices** and **Semiotics** methodologies.

The discourse analysis of the feminist standpoint in this section is reflective of the lack of female representation within Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*, which consequently impacted the first visualisations of this novel. Thus far this dissertation presents information supporting Shelley's 1818 text in addition to analysis by Othello Knudsen and Fray-



92. Poster of *Frankenstein*. 1931. Universal Studios.



93. Poster of *The Bride of Frankenstein*. 1935. Universal Studios.



94. Elsa Lanchester in the role of Mary Shelley in *The Bride of Frankenstein*; she also plays the role of the Monster's Bride. 1935. Universal Studios.

ling with particular images of popular culture from the past two hundred years. Shelley's complex relationships with the male figures in her life and the tragedies she experienced are all present in her work whether in 1818, 1831 or later in the many biographical works done about her. As Frayling notes:

By the age of twenty-seven, the age when most scholars studying *Frankenstein* today are just finishing their doctoral theses, Mary Shelley felt 'as an old woman might feel. I may not love any but the dead'. The morbidity of *Frankenstein*—especially when viewed in retrospect—certainly had roots in the real world (2017, p. 96).

The **discourse analysis** methodology provides a foundation for the deconstruction of Mary Shelley's words when investigating the visual representation of *Frankenstein*. The first research question, with the support of Alexandra Kallman's *Speciesism in Mary Shelley's Frankenstein* (2015) combined with the analysis of the visual representation of the creature is at times similar to Shelley's concept. While at other times the creature's depiction is exploited to fit the role of a hideous *monster* in the genre of horror.

The second research question, with the support of Louise Othello Knudsen's *Reading Between the Lines: An analysis of Mary Shelley's Frankenstein, or the Modern Prometheus, using Horace Walpole's The Castle of Otranto as an example of male discourse about women*, analyses how the subtle yet defining criticism of the patriarchal society in which Shelley lived in the nineteenth century was visually translated into popular culture. Although the female representation in *Frankenstein* has had a remarkable evolution in the film posters for the past two centuries, it was not a linear trajectory. Through the examples of book jacket designs, excluding female characters in the novel heavily contributed to the lack of female visual representation. However, it also contributed to Shelley's importance of her groundbreaking novel and the feminist discussion, placing her own portrait in the book covers instead of Victor or the creature. Although in minority, this is still a significant representation of *Frankenstein*. The next methodology provides a broader visualisation of the evolutions pertinent to each research question.



95. Poster of *Gothic*. 1986. Virgin Films.

VI.2 Visual matrices

Visual Matrix is a qualitative method of research used for scoping the visual data in “shared experiences, stimulated by sensory material relevant to a research question. It is led by imagery, visualisation and affect, which in the emotional matrix take precedence over discourse” (Froggett, Manley and Roy, 2015, p. 1).

According to the Swiss linguist Ferdinand de Saussure, language is understood as a system of signs (Bestley and Noble, 2005, p. 89) that I discuss more in detail in the **Semiotics** section of this chapter, but the basic principles are relevant for this section as well. Russell Bestley and Ian Noble note, “Although a separate discipline with a much broader remit than graphic design, communication studies incorporates a series of useful analytical and descriptive methodologies which relates strongly to graphic and visual communication” (2016, pp. 116-117).

This research belongs to the study of visual communication, so to answer the research questions: *What is the graphic evolution of the creature?* And *How did the female representation evolve graphically in Frankenstein* with the rapid evolution of our western society in the last two hundred years, the most appropriate methodology to study the large amount of visual data is to relate it to visual matrices.

In the foreword written by Ellen Lupton, a graphic designer, writer, curator and educator, she describes the role of a designer in visual research, “A designer is a creative intellectual who makes systems and things, studying the world of objects, users, and information in order to create living acts of communication” (As cited in Bestley and Noble, 2016). In other words, the visual matrix in a research context can be defined by offering “a methodology concerned with capturing complexity, with social and affective processes of ‘becoming’, and with a multi-sensory range of experience” (Froggett, Manley and Roy, 2015, p. 4).

Bestley and Noble frame the process of visual research “in concise terms, critical thinking in visual communication is an attitude and an approach to questioning the value of design proposals or outcomes that is grounded in theory and its relationship to making” (2005, p. 172). Which in turn, supported by Frayling’s book, the visual matrices will bring together elements of the discourse in the representation Mary Shelley’s *Frankenstein* and its visual impact.

This section gathers a greater scope of visual data presented thus far and includes new material yet to be displayed. There will be different matrices according to the context in which they serve to exemplify a point relevant to the research questions. The first visual matrices developed during a workshop given by Pedro Almeida, in 2017, introduced strategies to define the research questions in the initial phase of this project. Furthermore, the visual matrix analysis serves as a foundation of qualitative research that is further elaborated in the next methodology, **Semiotics**, where the rhetoric and signs offer ways⁴ of analysing the social and historical context of the visual representation of *Frankenstein*.

VI.2.a First Visual Matrices

In the first stage of research the visual matrices served as a strategy to define the broad scope of the research questions, as previously stated. Upon a second phase, I discovered the potential of using visual matrices as a methodology. Initially, I collected and divided visual data into: book jackets, film posters and theatre playbills; then I organised it in chronological order.

The initial displays for this dissertation are found in the following images: 96 defines the broader context for this dissertation, 97 focuses on

⁴ Words retrieved from Ellen Lupton’s foreword in the 3rd Revised edition of Russell Bestley and Ian Noble’s *Visual Research*, 2016.



96. First Visual Matrix produced, defining the general context of this research. 2017.

book jackets, and then 98 depicts the film posters.

I explore the images and review particular graphic elements more deeply to ascertain how they relate to the research questions, to technical information about the designers when available, and to the year of production. The latter is important when it comes to the socio-cultural context in which the images are created because of how certain graphic elements evolve together with the popular culture style and trends throughout the years.

I created the first matrices without a clear strategy in mind other than per media and chronological order; but I found them instrumental for a couple

different reasons: Although I chose *Frankenstein* as the broad theme for this dissertation, I did not define the research questions early on. Upon visualising all the images as a whole, I made a few connections. What caught my eyes was the role women played in the film posters. It is worth mentioning, however, that at this stage, I did not consider either the original novel or my prior knowledge of the film plots. I drew these conclusions from the visual material I collected and displayed on these matrices. Another observation I made with this exercise was how different the creature is portrayed in a variety of book jackets and film posters. This revealed, among other things, the impact that the Boris Karloff version of *Frankenstein* had on how popular culture viewed this story in general beyond its cinematic representations.

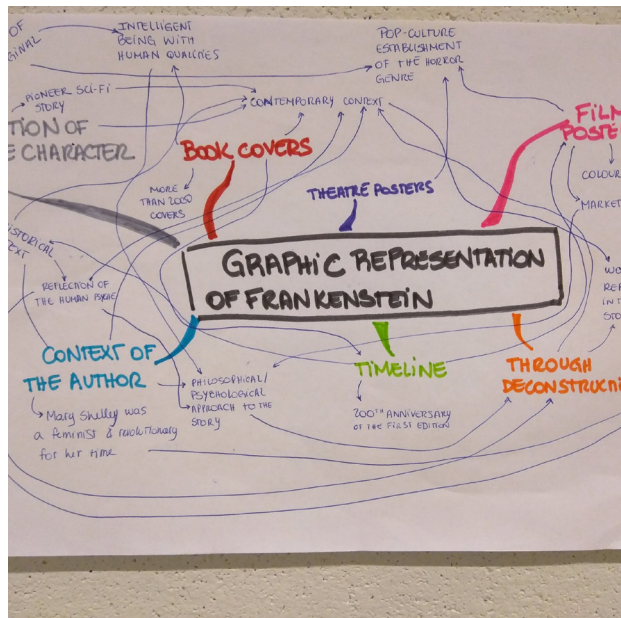
Based those observations, I created mind maps to better organise the different possibilities of research questions and strategies to study *Frankenstein*'s visual legacy (figs. 99 and 100). By defining the historical, theoretical and contemporary contexts widely elaborated in the first phase of the dissertation, it became more clear what the research questions would be.

In a later stage, I developed other matrices to visualise the different sub-categories within the two main research questions. I develop these further with the next items that are supported by Sir Christopher Frayling's own research. I divide material for this methodology by media and begin with book jackets and film posters and then I end with other media.

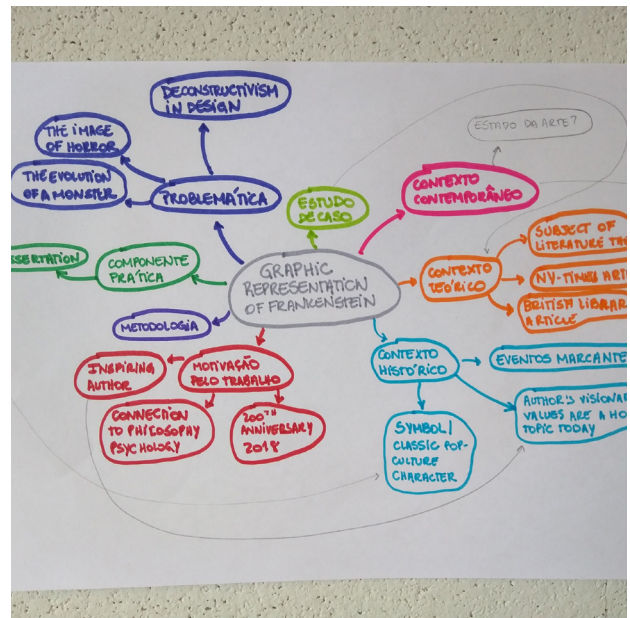


97. Another initial visual matrix with *Frankenstein* book covers. 2017.





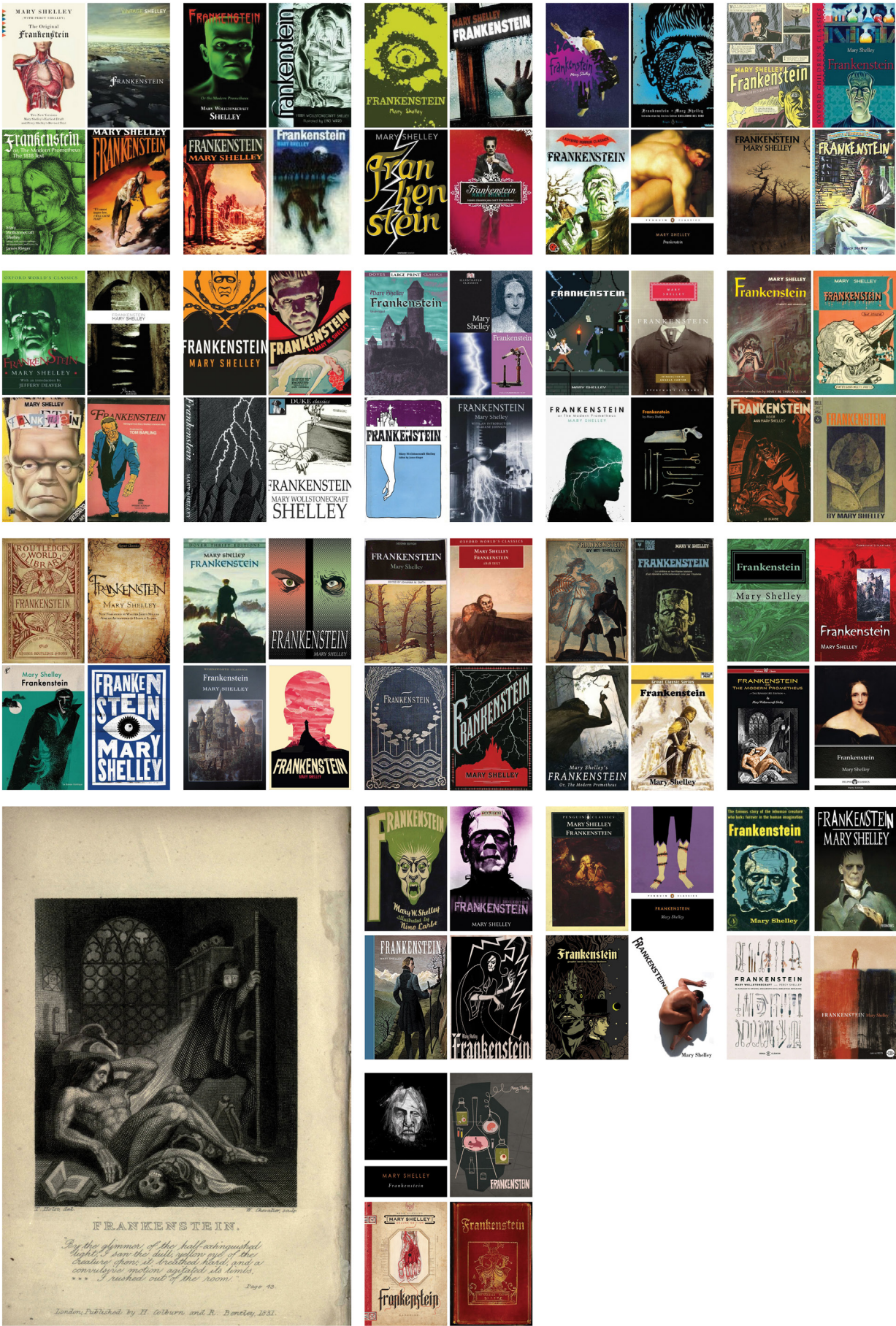
99. Mindmap developed during the definition phase of this research. 2017.



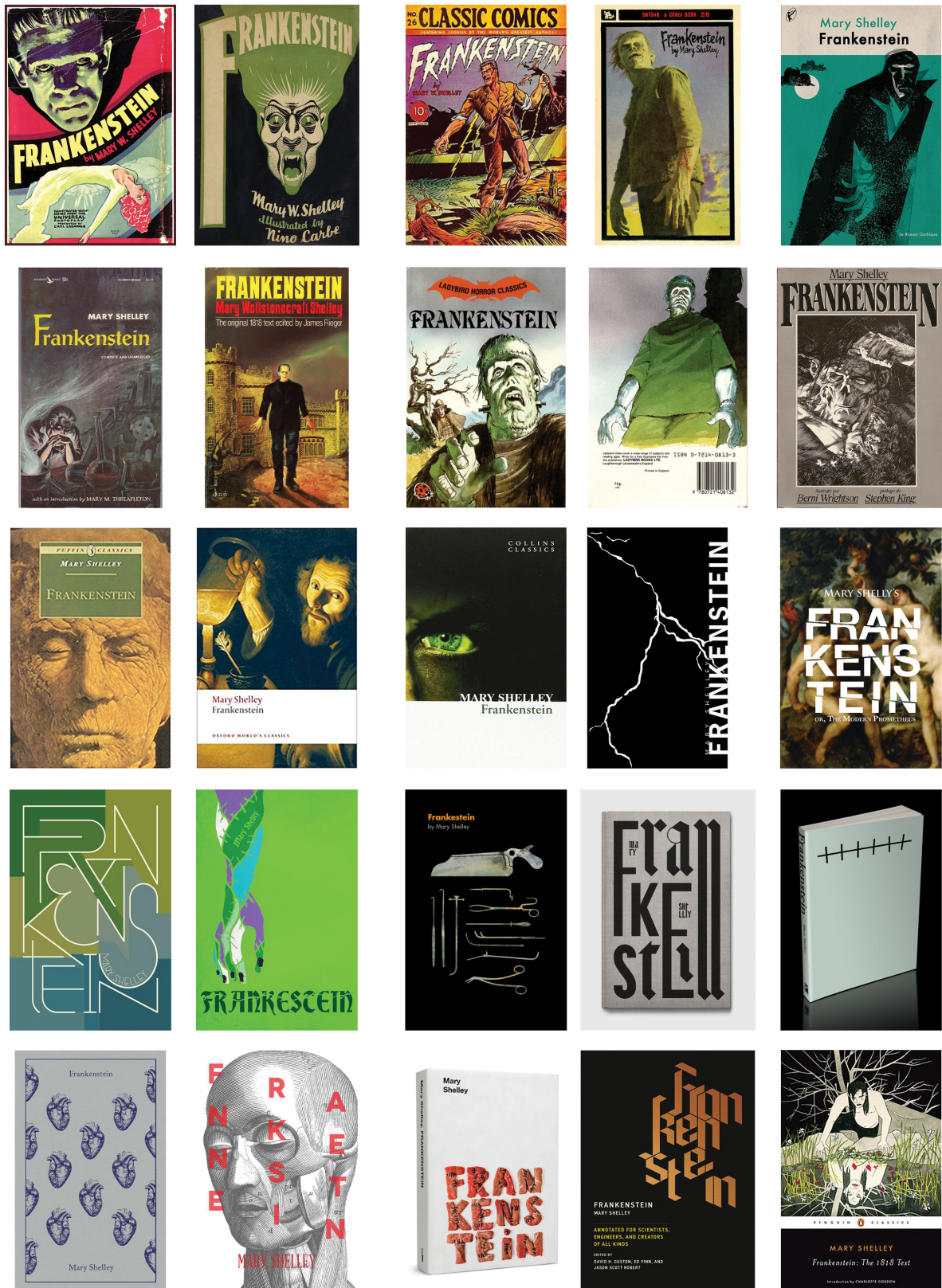
101. Mindmap developed to define the boundaries of the context of this research. 2017.



100. The total view of the work produced during the workshop. 2017.



102. Initial seventy seven book cover designs collected for this visual research. 2018.



103. Additional book cover designs gathered in a secondary phase of this visual research. 2018.

VI.2.b Book Covers

I collected a sample of one hundred book covers during this research. This section presents a selection of these book jacket designs. Many of the online images available for me contain little to no background information, which I will explain when relevant.

The matrix on figure 102 displays the seventy seven *Frankenstein* book designs initially collected. The image in larger proportion is the previously discussed frontispiece of the 1831 edition. After I compiled the first matrix, I made a few observations that I previously discussed. Others will follow.

I first noticed the lack of female representation as reviewed in the previous methodology. The occasional illustration uses Mary Shelley's portrait, reinforcing the notion from earlier discussions about how, in the novel, female characters do not have a voice. The second observation is with Boris Karloff's version of the creature impacts a number of cover designs. I produce other matrices to discuss the sub-categories of visual elements on the cover designs.

Some of the covers noted on image 102 are repeated on the first matrix, image 97. At the time I collected the images, they offered background information about the artist and year that they were created. A number of covers noted on the matrix displayed on image 103 are designed for Recovering the Classic Project. It presents designers and illustrators the opportunity to propose a new cover for 100 novels.

A recurring thematic element in the representation of *Frankenstein* is *lightning*. Although it is not widely elaborated upon by Shelley in the novel, lightening is commonly depicted in visual history. I previously discussed the author's fascination with galvanism and scientific experiments. Frayling observes details regarding the theme:

The pioneering work of the Garnerin brothers must have stayed with her, for over ten years later, on December 14th 1814, she noted in her *Journal*, which was shared with Percy:

... go to Garnerin's lecture—on Electricity—the gasses—and the Phantasmagoria—when return at half past nine Shelley goes to sleep...



104. Visual matrix displaying one of the long lasting visual elements attached to the story of *Frankenstein*: the lightning. 2019.

The Phantasmagoria was a mixture of magic lantern slides, optical illusions, and—as a climax-spectacular displays of electricity (2017, p. 20).

The scientific motifs most commonly seen on *Frankenstein* cover designs can be divided into three major groups as displayed on image 105: The first is defined by the illustrations with an *anatomic* approach to Shelley's novel. In each design, a specific part of the human anatomy is displayed, loosely interpreting the novel. Designed by award winning artist, Coralie Bickford Smith, the image of the hearts is a minimalist cover for the 2014 Penguin edition. Whereas the hearts might suggest love or Shelley's romantic qualities in the novel, a scientific perspective might propose a morbid vantage point (Kumar, 2018, para. 9).

The second category the group I identify by *scientific instruments* some of which Victor could have possibly used to animate his creature. Those scientific instruments are closer to the novel, even though they remain as an abstract approach to visualise the story.

The third scientific motif focuses upon the origin of Victor's building of the creature with flesh that came from dead matter. Additionally, the fifth image (from left to right, top to bottom) could easily belong to this category. In short, the scientific designs focus upon the deconstruction aspects of the novel, rather than the characters' literal representations.

The flesh focused cover is an example of a clever mixture of a more literal visualisation that manages to be innovative. The designer, Pol Alert, created this cover for a typography project, which was displayed at the Shillington Education portfolio. I will discuss this specific design again in the semiotics section. The following excerpt from Frayling helps to connect the message between this flesh cover and the novel:

In her *Introduction*, she wrote 'Perhaps a corpse would be re-animated; galvanism had given token of such things...' and she added:

I saw—with shut eyes, but acute mental vision,—I saw... the hideous phantasm of a man stretched out, and then, on the working of some powerful engine, shows signs of life... (2017, p. 27).

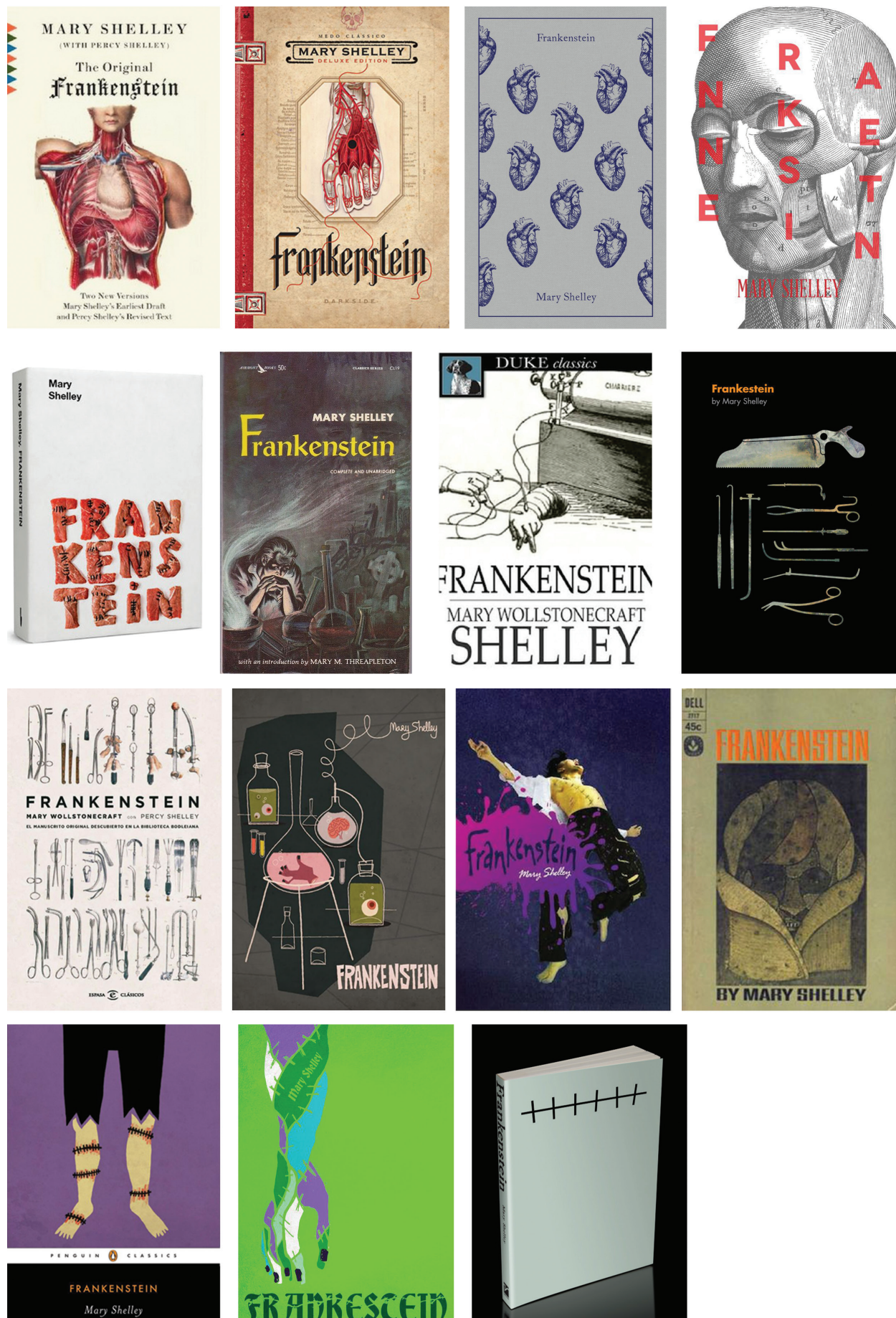
Nature is another recurrent visual thematic element among the different book cover designs. Within the theme about nature, two components surface on the covers of the matrix. The first is trees, and in particular, bare trees that allude to the Swiss Alps, scenery from Shelley's novel. More importantly, however,

are the mountain ranges that appear in a number of *Frankenstein's* covers. A majority of the mountain illustrations reveal Victor on top as he contemplates the view. Although appearing innocent, this depiction seems to be a metaphor as the scientist equates himself as the God-figure while he stands on top of the world. Othello Knudsen elaborates, " 'To be more than man' is another way Mary Shelley points to science and scientists attempt to control nature and, in a way, become Gods" (2012, p. 34).

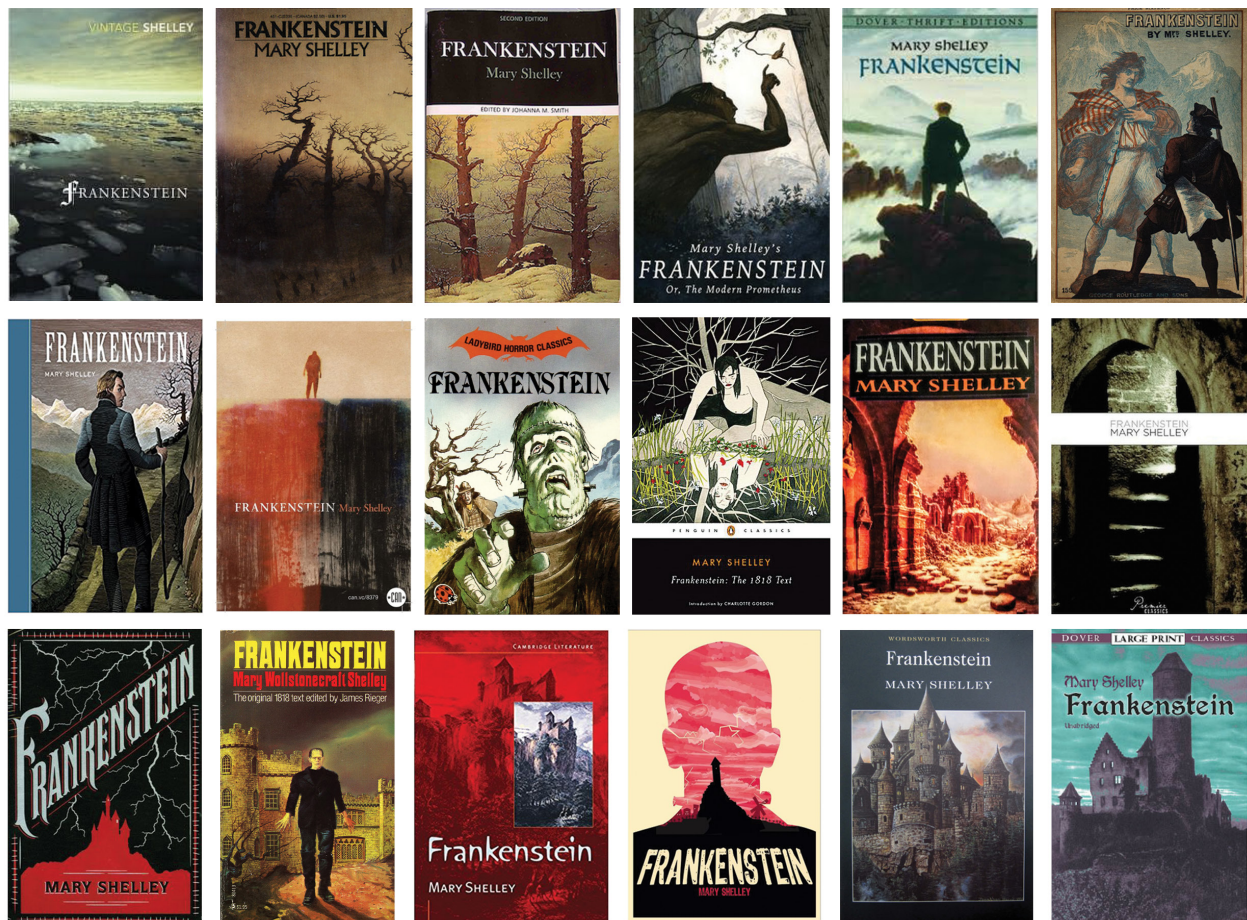
The second element within the *nature* subcategory that is relevant to this research is the frequent representation of castles. On the original novel there is no specific mention of Victor, or any of the characters, living in a castle. Although the Frankenstein family clearly can afford all the privileges of leisure, education, and culture, there is no mention of a castle (Frayling, 2017, p. 23). In fact, Frayling provides a different theory for Mary's inspiration behind the name *Frankenstein*:

On the last leg of their journey which took them from Mannheim to Mainz (September 2nd-3rd), they looked in at the town of Gernsheim. And from there—looking east and upwards towards the northern foothills of Magnetberg—they could see the outer tower and bridge tower of Castle Frankenstein. Mary and Percy went for a 'walk for three hours' around the region, by themselves rather than with Mary Jane... The castle was not a grand medieval construction: it had domesticated turrets, a wood-and-brick structure with half-timbering, and it resembled a fortified *schloss* rather than a fully-blown Gothic castle. But it had a terrific name, meaning 'castle or rock of the Franks', and a legend associated with it—the legend of the alchemist and necromancer Johann Konrad Dippel, who was born a refugee in the castle in 1673 (and thus signed himself 'Frankensteiner'). Dippel, it was said, had even experimented with a life-giving mixture of blood and bone, distilled from animal and human bodies stolen from graveyards and slaughterhouses. In the forest behind the castle, there was reputed to be a 'fountain of youth', and the rocks were naturally magnetic: compasses point towards them.

Neither Mary Godwin nor Percy Shelley mentions the castle or its legendary resident. But they could well have seen it, and Mary at least could equally well have recollected the name. In her forties, she wrote that she would dearly like to spend a summer back in the region—with its memories of the first days of young love: and 'to hear *still more* of its legends'. Still more than the legend of Castle Frankenstein? (Frayling, 2017, p. 23).



105. Visual matrix displaying book covers with visual elements inspired by the scientific aspect of *Frankenstein*. 2019.



106. Matrix showing cover designs with some nature inspired elements. 2019.

Whether the depiction comes from the Castle Frankenstein in Germany or from artistic license is unknown. It could simply be a coincidence. The last visual motif that I discuss in this section is the undeniable effect that Boris Karloff has had in the depiction of Frankenstein's creature. The next matrix aims to demonstrate exactly that. While image 106 shows a variety of the creature's representations, with some similar to Shelley's original concept and, others that are quite different, the following matrix of images, 107, manifests a clear source of inspiration from Boris Karloff and his famous *monster*.

Before I discuss the film poster matrices, it is suitable to include the following excerpt from Frayling's book (2017) analysing how Mary's father, William Godwin, reacted to some negative reviews in 1818, and what would soon become of Shelley's *Frankenstein*:

William Godwin had evidently been right to react badly to the *Extract* introducing *The Vampyre*: it fanned the flames, and did no favours to his daughter. But it was too late. *Frankenstein*, and the circumstances of its creation, were well on their way into the bloodstream of popular culture (p. 80).

Frankenstein's "way into the bloodstream of popular culture" (Frayling, 2017, p. 80) starts with the book covers present in this visual analysis. The full scope of the book covers presented demonstrate the variety of visual representations beginning with lightning bolts, castles, mountains, stitched up bodies, monsters and men. Initially I randomly divided and categorised the images to identify the commonalities with the visual elements. Whether influenced directly by Mary Shelley's work or other ramifications of *Frankenstein*, the covers show a wide range of representations of the creature. In contrast, they also exhibit the lack of female representation, an aspect that remains faithful to the novel itself. Once combined with arguments presented in the discourse analysis, these visual matrices provide a deeper understanding of the graphic evolution through which the creature has progressed.

In the next section, I gathered film posters and analysed them following the same strategy applied here.



107. Matrix showing the book covers with a clear inspiration drawn from Boris Karloff's interpretation of the creature. 2019



108. Different posters for the same Frankenstein film. 1931. Universal Studios.

VI.2.c Film posters

So far the discussion supports the different categories in which the book covers can be divided and where the visual matrices help to see the totality of *Frankenstein* representations by forming connections between recurring themes within *Frankenstein* book cover designs. According to Russell Bestley and Ian Noble, “Visual research covers two main themes when related to what might be termed analytical and propositional methods—the deconstruction of existing visual work and the development of new design strategies and methods” (2016, p. 92). This format outlines my intention for the next few sections: I take what has been deconstructed and analysed, implement the same process with the visual matrix methodology, and then deconstruct even further in the semiotics analysis.

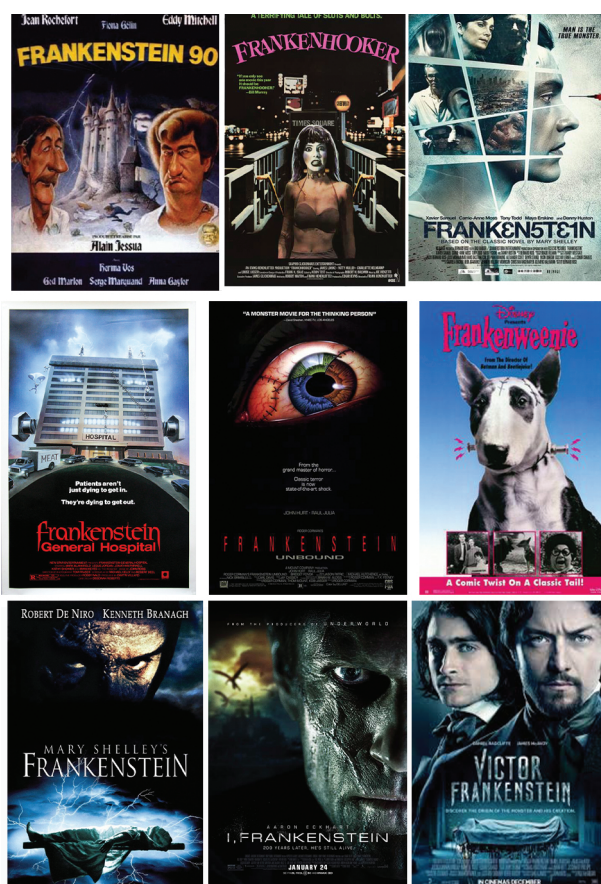
In the course of the last two hundred years, there have been fifty-five films in which the creature of Frankenstein either appears as the leading star or has a minor role. These films include *Frankenstein*, *Young Frankenstein*, *The Bride of Frankenstein*, *Abbott and Costello Meet Frankenstein*, *The Monster of Frankenstein*, *Son of Frankenstein*, and *I was a Teenage Frankenstein*. This does not include the countless other films that were either inspired by *Frankenstein*’s themes or narrative such as, *Der Golem*, *Life Without Soul*, *Man Made Monster*, *Gods and Monsters*, and more. From using the creator/creature’s relationship to the dangers of toying with science, and the significance of what *Frankenstein* means to popular culture is too strong. In fact, the visual legacy both in the films and graphic material created to promote them is truly remarkable.

For this research, I collected and categorised more than one hundred film posters. By selecting the ones most relevant to the research questions and more closely connected to *Frankenstein*, I then divided those films into the matrices seen on images 110 and 111. Films that were not directly related to Shelley’s novel were eliminated from the matrices but when relevant might be discussed in the other methodologies. This matrix allows a full overview of each film’s title, year of production, country, production company and the actors who played Victor Frankenstein and the creature. This clear and organised method is practical to visualise the necessary information for the poster analysis. However, the practicality of these matrices (figs. 110 and 111) lim-

its the graphic analysis due to the lack of overview and the small size of each image. For these reasons, I produced the matrices on images 112 and 113.

From the Universal franchise from 1930s until the films in the 1970s one thing can be clearly observed on matrices 108 and 109. In the beginning, it was common to create a few different posters for the same film, mainly different countries would produce different posters. An example of this can be seen on figure 108. With the world becoming more globalised in the past few decades, the posters started to become much more universal, hence why these matrices (fig. 112 and 113) are displayed in chronological order. These matrices represent (following from top left to right) the images for older films that can have a few different posters and the posters on fig. 108 and 112 display a more global image with single posters for each film.

The matrix for image 114 with horizontal posters further exemplifies similarities and differences of the posters from the 1930s. Only posters for films between 1915 (with *Life Without Soul*) and 1974 (with *Frankenstein and the Monster from Hell*) have horizontal posters. This alludes to globalisation affecting the standardisation aspect of the industry.



109. Modern posters that have one global poster. 1984 - 2015.

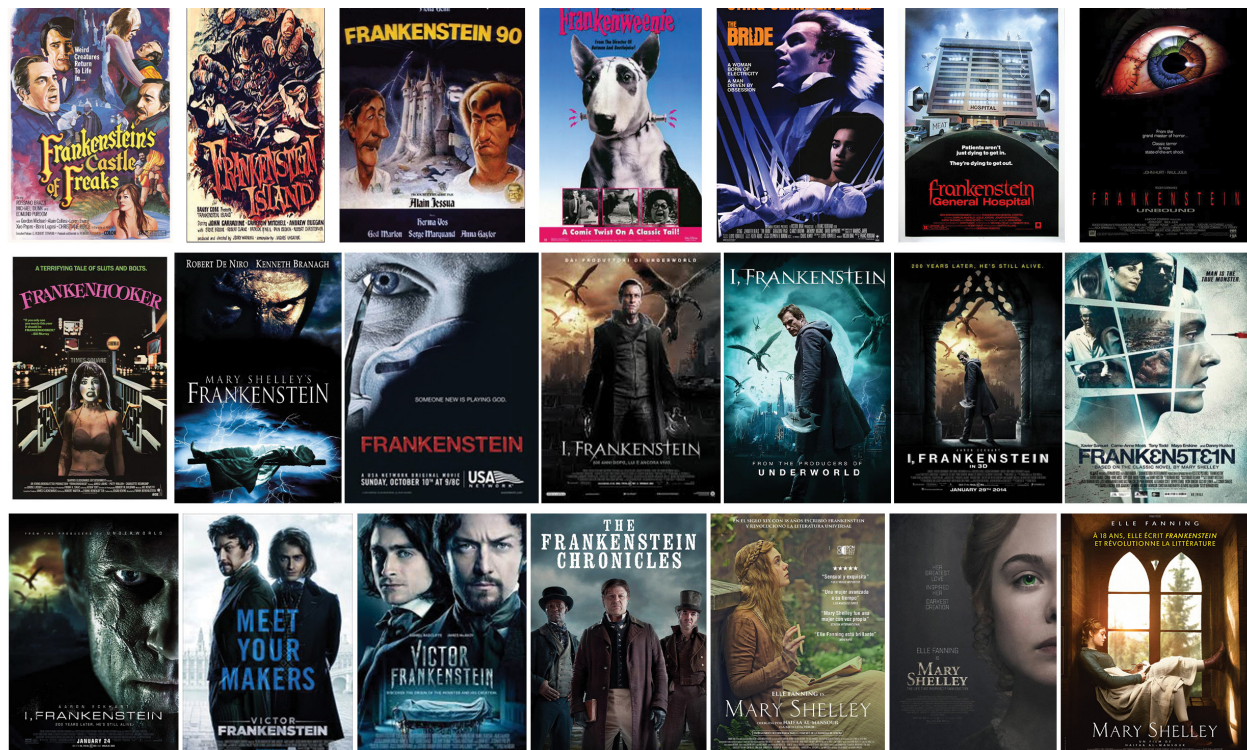
Film Title	Year	Country	Actor (Dr. Frank)	Actor (monster)	Production Company	Poster	Other Versions					Observations
Frankenstein	1910	USA	Augustus Phillips	Charles Ogle	Edison Manufacturing Company							
Life without soul	1915	USA	George de Carlton	Percy Standing	Ocean Pictures							Lost Film (Spin-off)
Il Mostro de Frankenstein	1920	Italy	Luciano Albertini		Albertini Film							Lost Film
Frankenstein	1931	USA	Colin Clive	Boris Karloff	Universal Studios							
Bride of Frankenstein	1935	USA	Colin Clive	Boris Karloff	Universal Studios							
Son of Frankenstein	1939	USA	Basil Rathbone	Boris Karloff	Universal Studios							Son of the original dr. Frankenstein
The Ghost of Frankenstein	1942	USA	Cedric Hardwicke	Lon Chaney Jr.	Universal Studios							
Frankenstein Meets the Wolf Man	1943	USA	-	Bela Lugosi	Universal Studios							
House of Frankenstein	1944	USA	-	Glenn Strange	Universal Studios							
House of Dracula	1945	USA	-	Glenn Strange	Universal Studios							Spin-off
Abbot and Costello Meet Frankenstein	1948	USA	-	Glenn Strange	Universal Studios							
Bride of the Monster	1955	USA	Bela Lugosi	-	Rolling M. Productions							Inspired by Bride of Frankenstein
The Curse of Frankenstein	1957	UK	Peter Cushing	Christopher Lee	Hammer Film Productions							
I Was a Teenage Frankenstein	1957	USA	Whit Bissell	Gary Conway	Santa Rose Productions							
The Revenge of Frankenstein	1958	UK	Peter Cushing	-	Hammer Studios							Sequel of The Curse of Frankenstein
Frankenstein's Daughter	1958	USA	Donald Murphy	Harry Wilson	Layton Films							
Frankenstein 1970	1958	USA	Boris Karloff	Mike Lane	Aubrey Schenk Productions							
Orlak, el Infierno de Frankenstein	1960	Mexico	Andrés Soler	Joaquín Cordero	Filmadora Independiente S.A.							
The Evil of Frankenstein	1963	UK	Peter Cushing	Kiwi Kingston	Hammer Film Productions							
Frankenstein Conquers the World	1965	Japan	Koji Furuhashi	-	Toho							
Frankenstein Meets the Space Monster	1965	USA	Robert Reilly	-	Futura Entertainment Corp.							
Jesse James Meets Frankenstein's Daughter	1966	USA	Narda Onyx	-	-							

110. Visual matrix produced to organise the film posters of the twentieth century, in chronological order. 2018.

Frankenstein Created Woman	1967	UK	Peter Cushing	-	Hammer Film Productions														
Frankenstein Must Be Destroyed	1969	UK	Peter Cushing	-	Hammer Film Productions														
The Horror of Frankenstein	1970	UK	Ralph Bates	David Prowse	Hammer Film Productions														
Los Monstruos del Terror	1970	ES, DE, IT		Ferdinando Murolo	Eichberg Productions														
Dracula vs. Frankenstein	1971	USA	J. Carroll Naish	John Bloom	-														
Lady Frankenstein	1971	Italy	Joseph Cotten	-	Condor International Films														
Dracula Contra Frankenstein	1972	ES, FR	Dennis Price	Fernando Bilbao	Prodif. ETS														
Frankenstein '80	1972	Italy	Gordon Mitchell	Xiro Papas	M.G.D. Film														
La Maldición de Frankenstein	1973	ES, FR	Dennis Price	Fernando Bilbao	C. Fénix Films														
Flesh for Frankenstein	1974	Italy	Udo Kier	Srdjan Zelenovic	Braunsberg Productions														
Frankenstein and the Monster from Hell	1974	UK	Peter Cushing	David Prowse	Hammer Film Productions														
Young Frankenstein	1974	USA	Gene Wilder	Peter Boyle	Crossbow Productions														
Frankenstein's Castle of Freaks	1974	Italy	Rossano Brazzi	-	Classic Film International														
Frankenstein's Island	1981	USA	John Carradine	-	Cerito Films														
Frankenstein 90	1984	France	Alain Jessua	-	Louis Duschese														
Frankenweenie	1984	USA	Barret Oliver	-	Walt Disney Pictures														
The Bride	1985	USA	Sting	Clancy Brown	-														
Frankenstein's General Hospital	1988	USA	Mark Blankfield	Irwin Keyes	New Star Entertainment														
Frankenstein Unbound	1990	USA	Raúl Juliá	-	A Mount Company Production														
Frankenhooker	1990	USA	-	-	Levins-Henenlotter														
Mary Shelley's Frankenstein	1994	USA	Kenneth Branagh	Robert DeNiro	Japan Satellite Broadcasting, Inc.														
Frankenstein (TV Film)	2004	USA	Thomas Kretschm	Vincent Perez	USA Network														Reinvention of the original story
I, Frankenstein	2014	USA	Aden Young	Aaron Eckhart	Lakeshore Entertainment														
Frankenstein	2015	USA	Danny Huston	Xavier Samuel	Bad Badger, Summerstorm														
Victor Frankenstein	2015	USA	James McAvoy	Daniel Radcliffe	Davis Entertainment Company														

111. Visual matrix produced to organise the film posters of the twentieth century, in chronological order. 2018.





112. & 113. (left and top) Matrices displaying *Frankenstein* film posters. 1910 - 2018.

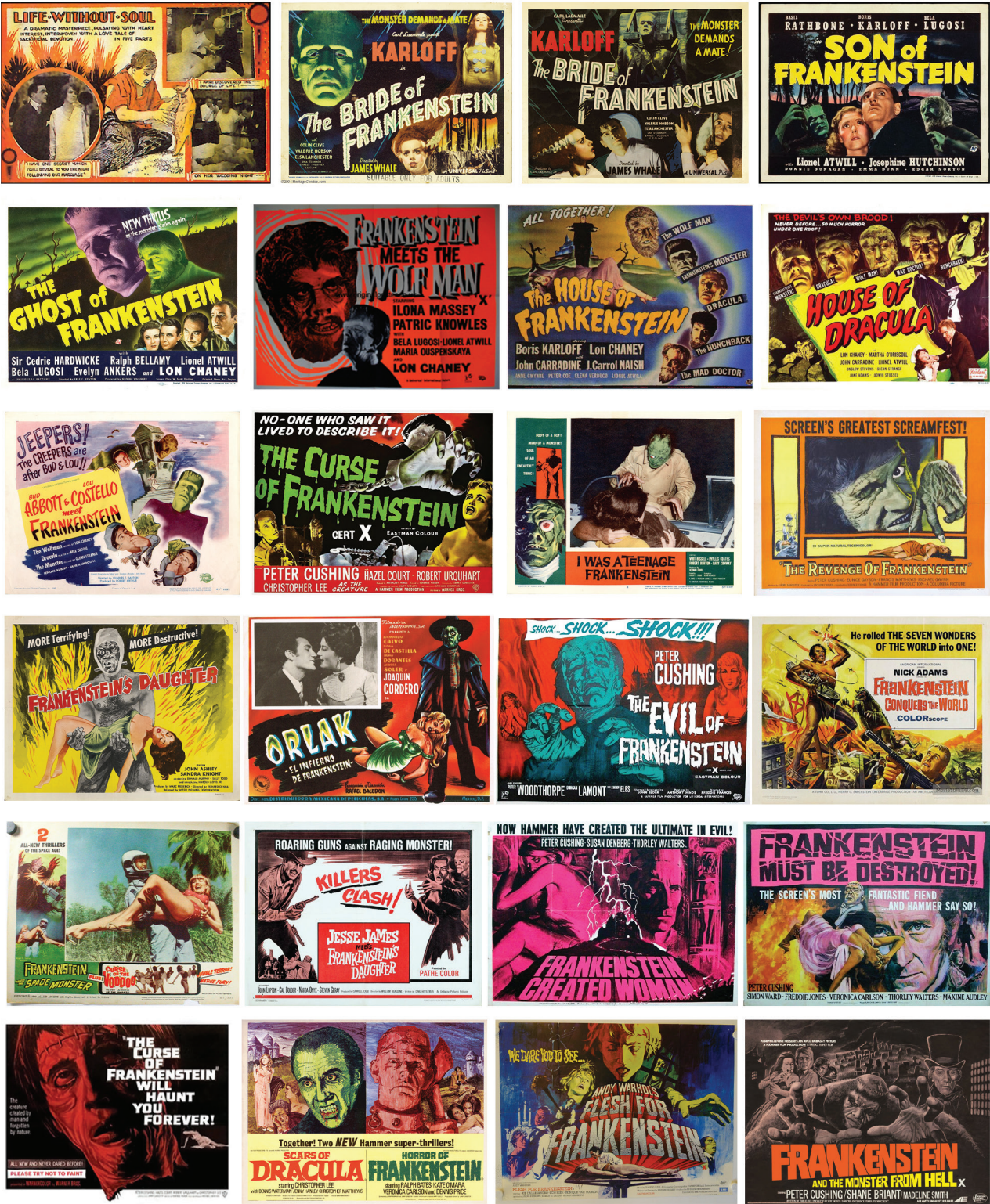
Although the categorisation of colour use does not provide much value to this analysis and research questions, it can be noted that the style and colouring of the posters also went through a significant evolution. While in the early posters the predominant colour seems to be yellow, going through a period where the films went through an erotic phase where the predominant colour is red; more recent films seem to have a colder colour palette to it. Black and blue are the favourable tones in the matrix seen on image 113. Such observations and others more relevant for the investigation of the research questions will be discussed in depth during the semiotics section of this dissertation.

Another initial observation when looking at these matrices (fig. 112, 113 and 114) is the clear evolution of how women are represented in the posters, from the white and angelic damsel in distress seen on the posters of *Frankenstein* (1931); to objectified and villainous, seen on the poster of *Lady Frankenstein* (1971). This evolution is reflective of the role women played in society at the same time the films were being released. Again, I will discuss this more in depth during the semiotics section of this dissertation. I created the matrix on image 115 by fading the original colours of the posters, thereby enhancing only the female representation. This technique allows the evolution of how women were portrayed in the *Frankenstein* film posters to become highly visible.

I previously discussed the effect Boris Karloff had on the *Frankenstein* brand in this dissertation and as depicted in the matrix on figure 116, and it will again become apparent. Frayling discusses the obstacles Universal Studios and the team behind *Frankenstein* (1931) had to go through:

Universal Studios' *Frankenstein* (1931) had a difficult birth: two directors (Robert Florey then James Whale), two creatures (Bela Lugosi then Boris Karloff), three or more screenplays, and two possible endings (one where the scientist survives, the other where he perishes: both were shown at previews to gauge audience reaction). But one consistent feature, during its long gestation, was a viewing of some German expressionism films—horror films made between 1919 and 1927 in the Germany of the unstable Weimar Republic which grew out of the earlier Expressionism movement in painting, literature and theatre... (2017, p. 101).

In the beginning of the twentieth century, the avant-garde movement occupied an important place in the artistic and cultural circle. Bestley and Noble note: "Many of the 20th century art and design movements connected to modernism, such as De Stijl, constructivism and the Bauhaus, endeavoured to celebrate functionalism and rationality under the maxim that 'form follows function'" (2016, p. 119). Frayling explores the Expressionist attributes of the 1930's films based on *Frankenstein*:



114. Matrix displaying the horizontal film posters. 1915 - 1974.



Methodologies - Visual Matrices



116. Universal Studio series of Frankenstein. 1931 - 1948. Universal Studios.

Universal's *Frankenstein* fused a domesticated form of Expressionism, overacting, an irreverent adaptation of an acknowledged classic, European actors and visualisers—and the American carnival tradition—to create an American genre. It began to look as though Hollywood had actually invented *Frankenstein*, *Dracula* and *Dr. Jekyll* (2017, p. 102).

This Expressionist quality to the films can also be observed on the first posters. Looking on matrix 116, the first image on the top left and the first *The Bride of Frankenstein* displayed directly underneath it demonstrate those qualities. Frayling notes the visual elements present in the *Frankenstein* film:

So far, the Hollywood version stuck more or less to theatrical tradition. But then, the serious changes began. Instead of a blazing alchemical cauldron and some loud bangs, Henry Frankenstein (as he was called, as in Webling's play) now had a fully equipped laboratory which was a curious mixture of 1816 and 1931: incomprehensible dials, a huge Voltaic battery, a Wimshurst machine, lighting-arc generators, piles of Bakelite bric-a-brac and Leiden jars and an adjustable metal hospital bed. Result: 'It's moving—it's alive—it's alive—it's alive—it's alive. It's ALIVE' (2017, p. 103).

Before Mary Shelley wrote *Frankenstein*, there were debates about the scientific progress and the influence humankind might have had on the natural order of life. However, in fiction Shelley is considered a pioneer when it comes to the *monstrous births* conversation, going further than that with her depiction of the mad scientist. On this topic Frayling (2017) elaborates:

Frankenstein created the definitive movie image of the mad scientist, and in the process launched a thousand imitations: all subsequent film versions of Mary Shelley's novel have had to take into account how plot, characterisation and makeup conform to or differ from the Universal Studios template. The screenplay kept Fritz ... and a child like, grunting monster (mimed, touchingly, by the forty-four-year-old Boris Karloff), but changed the line 'it lives!' from the original play into 'it's alive'... (p. 103).

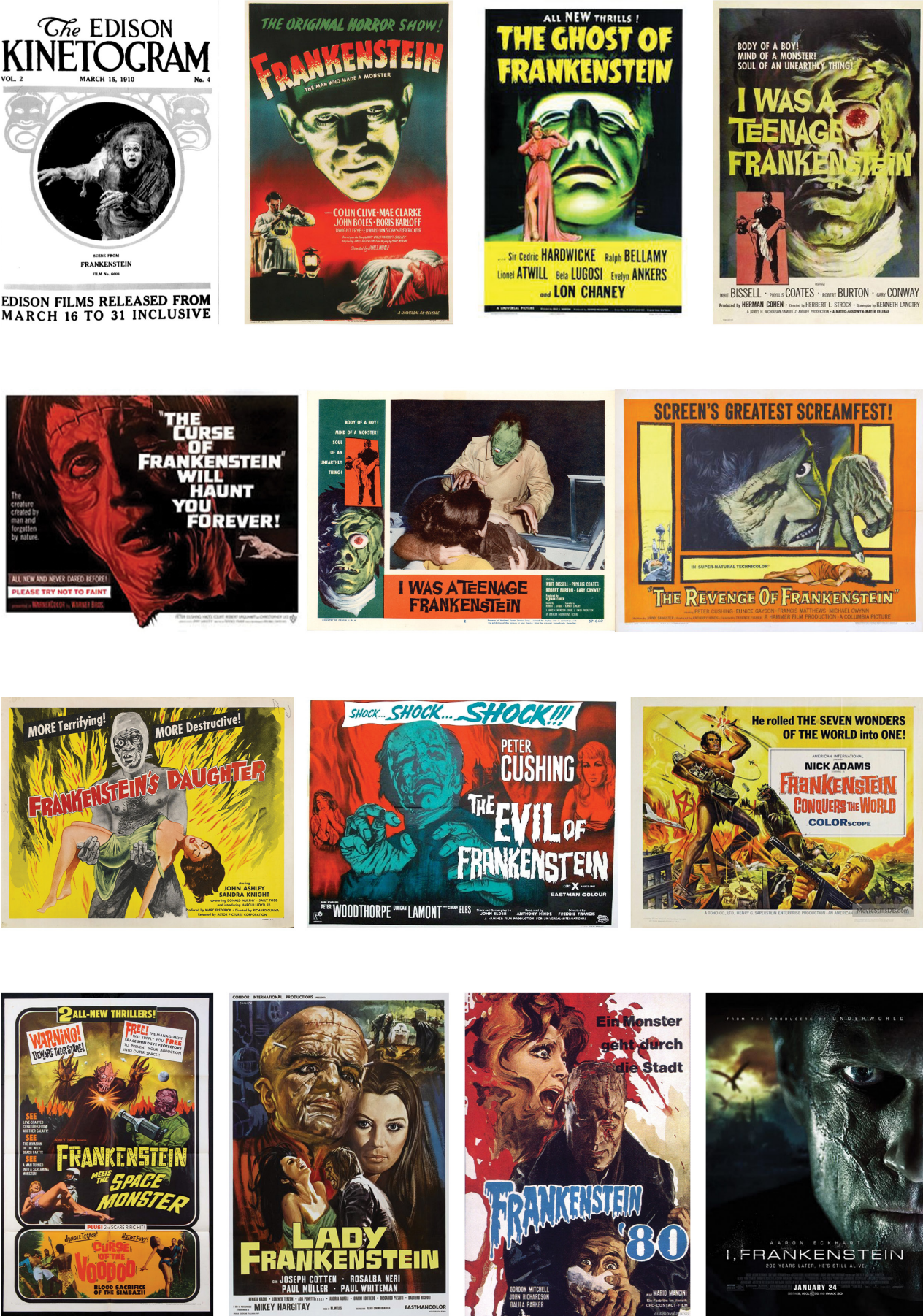
In Hollywood, the creature had many interpretations and recreations. Some were more faithful to Shelley's creature, and some were depicted as hideous in order to provoke emotions and horror in the audiences. The creature soon became the *monster* which automatically gives a more pejorative connotation to it, clearly defining the species boundary. Kallman notes, "Victor's immediate differentiation between himself and the monster not only indicates a desire to establish a pronounced species-boundary in order to alienate the monster from humankind" (2015, p. 21).

As it can be seen on the next matrix (fig. 117) some interpretations of the creature are considered more humanised, like he could belong to our species, as seen on the poster of *Frankenstein* (second image from left on the top line). While others have taken a more literal approach to the *monster* and presented him like being created from dead flesh from cadavers, as displayed on the poster for *I Was a Teenage Frankenstein* (1957). As time passed by, current events influenced the representation of the creature, as seen in *Frankenstein Meets the Space Monster* (1965) released at a time when the space exploration was very relevant. Frayling argues on the philosophical reasoning behind the creature's appearance:

In the book, as Percy Shelley wrote, the creature becomes ugly because he is treated as ugly; lacking a family of his own, he destroys his creator's brother, best friend and wife: his real tragedy the idea of Frankenstein as mad scientist, the film gave much more emphasis than the novel to his isolation from the mainstream scientific community (the 'peer group', in today's terms)—his DIY experiments are like those of a back-street abortionist—and to the fact that his work seems to have no practical value, for the betterment of society: there is a strong distrust of intellectuals, and of abstract thinking—a distant memory of the Puritan tradition, perhaps—plus a critique of Henry Frankenstein for not being more down-to-earth, more like a cracker-barrel Tom Edison (2017, p. 104).

With so many *Frankenstein* films, it became repetitive to retell Shelley's tale and stay relevant; therefore, film makers incorporated different types of monsters and various crossover films in order to maintain and captivate that hardcore horror audience. Examples of that are displayed on the posters of *Frankenstein Meets the Wolf Man* (1943), *House of Frankenstein* (1944), *House of Dracula* (1945).

At this time, scientific developments and social events started to influence the representations in popular culture like for example the space exploration debate in the seventies. During that time period women are represented as more independent and sexualised rather than the damsel in distress as seen on matrix 118. There is a "sexually explicit version of the *Frankenstein* story based on erotic Italian comic strips" (Firsching, 2018, para. 1) named *La Maldición de Frankenstein* (1973). Women are either presented as the *monster* or the scientist, or portrayed as powerful, objectified and villainous. Nonetheless they are given more emphasis in the *Frankenstein* films.



117. Matrix displaying the ranges of depiction of the creature. In some he is seen as a more humanised character, while in others he is depicted as monstrous as possible. 1910 - 2014.

Another clear sign on the posters often used to captivate audiences is the taglines and catch phrases from “We dare you to see it! We double-dare you to forget it!” From *The Revenge of Frankenstein* (1958) to “Only the monster she made could satisfy her strange desires” in *Lady Frankenstein* (1971). These taglines play an important role in the film posters by satisfying the demand of the masses. Frayling provides an insight in what *Frankenstein*’s story had become in Hollywood:

In short, the original novel had been reworked as a fast-moving, audience-grabbing melodrama. Although *Frankenstein* was an early talkie, Karloff’s performance as the Monster really belonged to the world of silent film. The film distilled the complexities of the novel to a simple Faustian morality tale about the social responsibility of science, and the transgression of God’s/nature’s laws, at a time—just after the Wall Street Crash of 1929—when scientists and ‘experts’ were being regularly vilified in the popular press for all their broken promises of the 1920s (2017, p. 104).

With the massive success of the Universal Studios *Frankenstein* franchise, Hammer Studios in the UK decided to take a different approach with *Frankenstein* films between 1957 and 1974. The posters for these films can be seen on matrix 119. Frayling details the approach of the British production company:

It took Britain’s Hammer Films to start a new tradition—in colour, with a repressive Victorian setting, more gore and a new repertory company of performers—with Terence Fisher’s *The Curse of Frankenstein* (1957), Peter Cushing as a ruthless Baron Victor and Christopher Lee as his cadaverous, scarred monster). The success of this film founded the ‘Hammer House of Horror’ brand, and it was followed by Fisher’s *The Revenge of Frankenstein* (1958), *Frankenstein Created Woman* (1967), *Frankenstein Must Be Destroyed* (1969) and *Frankenstein and the Monster of Hell* (1973); also Freddie Francis’s *The Evil of Frankenstein* (1964) and Jimmy Sangster’s remake/parody of *The Curse*, the script of which he had written thirteen years earlier, now called *Horror of Frankenstein* (1970) (2017, p. 109).

Frayling continues analysing the key differences between the Universal franchise and the Hammer Studios series of films:

Whereas the Universal series seemed more interested in the Monster, Hammer made Baron Victor the focus of attention. As in *Frankenstein* (1931), he was promoted to the aristocracy: in the novel, he is a member of a ‘distinguished’ middle-class family with a tradition of public service as chief magistrates; now he had become a Baron. And with that came elegance, ruthlessness, arrogance and also, in a double life, a public image of charity work:

philanthropist by day, Byronic villain by night. He was also old, unlike the young research student of Mary Shelley’s imagination. With each film in the cycle, Fisher and Cushing played variations on the heroic and the villainous, until in the final film he behaves like Dr. Mengele (2017, p. 109).

The visual matrices presented in this section are a key methodology during the research process of this dissertation. Throughout the research I used the matrices to visualise the graphic material of the film posters and discover connections, and disparities between the many interpretations of *Frankenstein*. In short, Sir Christopher Frayling makes a synthesis about the broad spectrum of the creature’s depictions throughout the twentieth century films:

The creature, meanwhile, evolved from the brutish (in *Curse*), to the cannibalistic (in *Revenge...*), to the seductive (in *Woman*, played by *Playboy* model Susan Denberg, who has had ‘the soul of a man’ somehow transplanted into her body by an ‘energy machine’), to the pathetic (in *Destroyed*, where scientist Dr. Brandt’s brain is sewn into Professor Richter’s body), to brutish again (in *Hell*, where he is played by British Heavy-weight weightlifting champion Dave Prowse, in a simian bodysuit). The series began in a lunatic asylum and it ended in one (2017, pp. 109-110).

Before concluding the visual matrices section of the methodologies, it is worth discussing the repercussions of *Frankenstein* in other media. The earliest theatre play was the first means to visualise *Frankenstein*; as a result, they play a key role in the dissemination of the story in popular culture.

VI.2.d Other media

The *Frankenstein* universe expanded into several different media throughout the years. That includes novels, comic books, theatre, films, games and political cartoons. Although the theatre adaptations are not as broadly explored as other media, they represent a significant milestone in the evolution of *Frankenstein*’s representation.

Adapting Mary Shelley’s classic novel is not easy. Furthermore, I was challenged to find enough visual material to analyse the early stage adaptations, because not much has survived. However, the next matrix (fig.121) displays playbills and images of the early stage adaptations. The theatre plays were successful in keeping *Frankenstein* relevant in popular culture. On that subject Frayling argues:



118. In this matrix, the *Frankenstein* films that took a more sexualised stance on the story conceived by young Mary Shelley in 1818 are on display. 1967 - 1990.



119. Hammer Studios series of Frankenstein films. 1957 - 1974.

As late as 1930 Hollywood script writers were despairing of ever adapting the property successfully—even though stage adaptations had by then been proliferating for just over a century, including most recently one called *Frankenstein: An Adventure in the Macabre* (1927) by the playwright, novelist and former child actress Peggy Webling, which in revised form became one of the sources used by Universal Studios (2017, p. 87).

As previously discussed in this research, the early stage adaptations play a crucial role on the representation of *Frankenstein* in popular culture. The earliest play was the first attempt to visualise Shelley's creation and some elements that were incorporated in the plays have had a long lasting effect on the graphic legacy of this story. Sir Christopher Frayling provides a more thorough insight on the subject:

The three melodramas (*Presumption*, *Le Monstre et le Magicien*, and *The Man and The Monster*) recount the story as a conventional moral allegory, and established a series of theatrical conventions which were to have a very long shelf-life... A laboratory with lots of glassware; and a door for the monster to break; the triumphant line 'It lives!'; The characters reduced to four basic types—hero, villain, threatened heroine, comic rustic; the key scenes reduced to creation, abduction of the heroine and destruction (2017, pp. 87-89).

The images on the matrix (fig. 121) represent the first ever visual representation of *Frankenstein* in the 1823 adaptation *Presumption! Or the fate of Frankenstein* and the 1826 French adaption entitled *Le Monstre et Le Magicien*. Prior to the 1831 revised edition of the novel, the images on this matrix are the only visual representation of this story. They have a similar style in terms of hair and clothing, which is hardly surprising, given the fact that *Monstre et Le Magicien* only had *Presumption* as a visual reference. I previously discussed an in depth analysis of the creature's appearance in the **discourse analysis**.

Aside from the stage adaptations and the book covers, there is another prominent visual representation of *Frankenstein* in the nineteenth century: the political cartoons. Mary Shelley surely did not expect her creation to evolve into so many different representations, impacting all aspects of social life two centuries after she published. Frankenstein's *monster* is often used to represent the masses in political cartoons, and they show, as Steven Earl Forry puts it, "Dissolute and unbridled forces" (1990, p. 47). This matrix (fig. 122) reunites some of the images available of the political cartoons from the

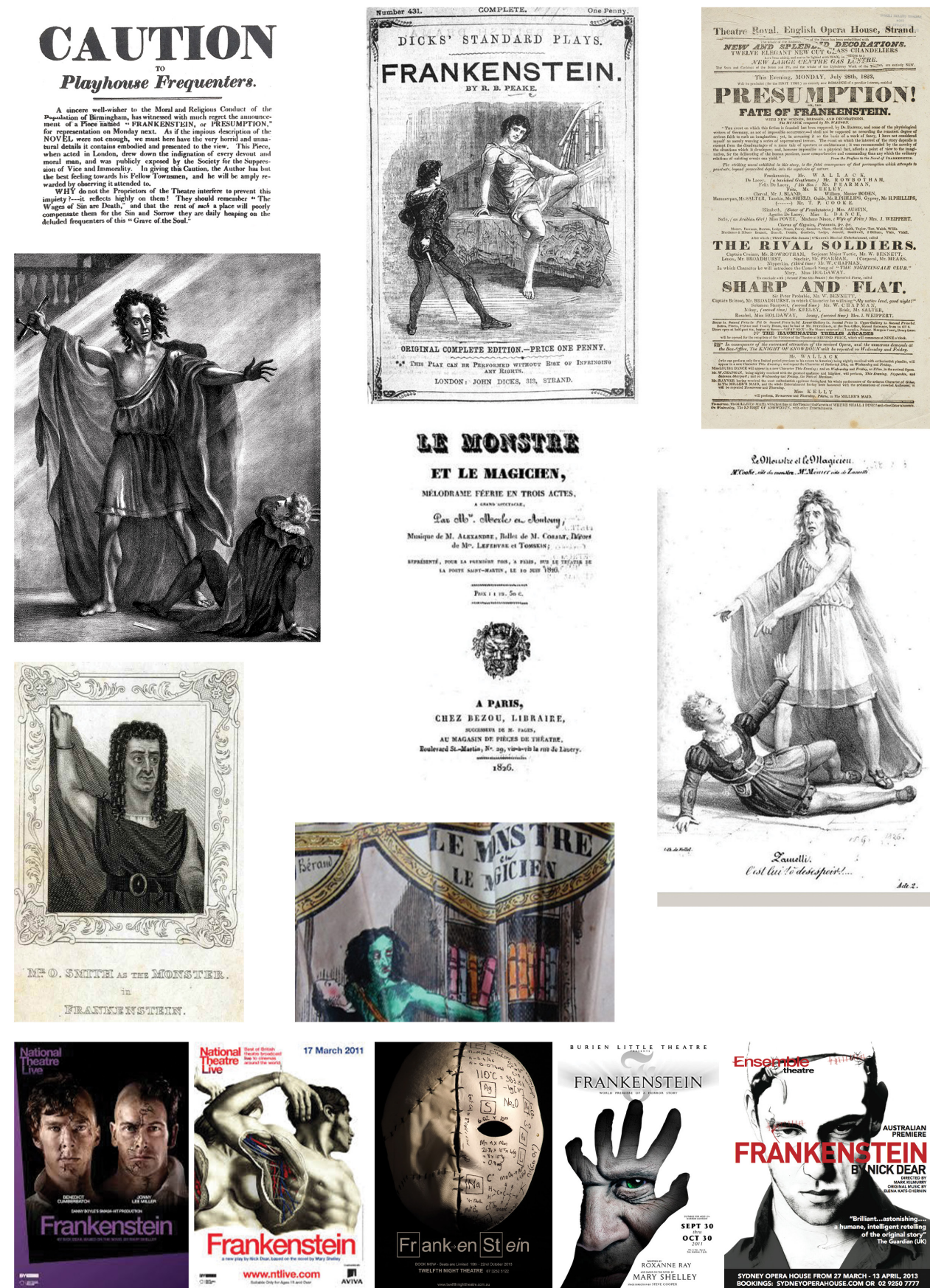


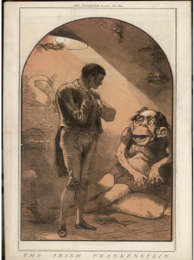
120. Are WE Franksteins? 1940. Contributor Berryman, Clifford Kennedy. Library of Congress.

nineteenth century. The creature in the political sphere then becomes a victim, the oppressed character, unlike the representation in film where he is depicted as the villain. Here the creature is comparable to the people, offering a more humanised image.

With the advent of time and with world standards changing, *Frankenstein* remains relevant. Used during World War II, political cartoons humorously discussed the advancement of genetic science. On image 120, a "World War II cartoon shows Mussolini and Stalin staring in shock at Adolf Hitler who has become a war monster, wearing plated armor with enormous studded boots, firing guns in all directions and unleashing bolts of lightning" (Library of Congress, 1940). This is an example of how *Frankenstein* has been used as a twisted tool to communicate a political issue.

More recently, *Frankenstein* inspired a samba school in Rio de Janeiro's famous carnival parade in 2018 to criticise the ongoing political woes that has taken over the country for much of the last decade. The following theme of "Monster is one who does not know how to love. The abandoned children of the motherland who gave birth to them" (Lopes, 2018, para. 2, translated freely from Portuguese). The school, called Beija-Flor, approached the corruption scandals and economic crisis that have turned the country's political stability up side down. Lopes' metaphor connects the *monster's* neglect by its creator with the people of Brazil who have been abandoned by its political class (2018, para. 2, translated freely from Portuguese).

121. Matrix displaying the playbills and posters of the first stage adaptations of *Frankenstein*. 1823 - 1826.



122. Matrix displaying the political cartoons inspired by *Frankenstein*. 1821 - 1882.



123. Beija-Flor criticises social injustice and intolerance in politically inclined carnival parade. 2018. Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. Image by Júlio César Guimarães.



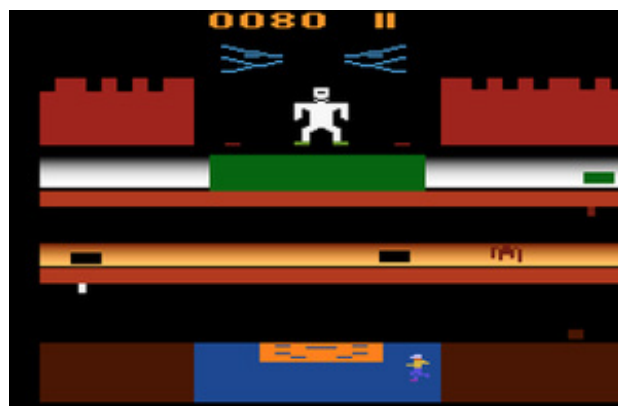
124. Comics and graphic novels inspired by Frankenstein. 1994 - 2015.



125. Atari video game inspired by *Frankenstein*. 1983.

Frankenstein has also been an important character in various comics and graphic novels. From faithful interpretations, to the adaptations of adaptations with either big names such as DC or lesser known artists, the comics universe provides popular culture a variety of stories and versions of Shelley's creation.

In more recent decades, *Frankenstein's* representations have expanded into other media like video games, even having a celebratory *Frankenstein 200* (2016) created by the Arizona State University Center for Science and the Imagination, and supported by a grant from the National Science Foundation. The transmedia Alternate Reality Game (ARG) *Frankenstein 200* puts players in the middle of the action in a story where Mary Shelley's classic tale collides with modern science. Players perform experiments, explore hidden areas of research, and assist a pair of young scientists as they unravel a mystery in an innovative digital experience. Other *Frankenstein* inspired games have been developed in the late 1980's and 1990's. From computers to Gameboys, and from augmented reality to other media, Mary Shelley's creature remains alive in media far beyond literature and cinema.



126. Atari video game called *Frankenstein's Monster*. 1983.

Through the **Visual Matrices** methodology I presented a full scope of the visual research from the beginning to the end of this dissertation. With all the visual data displayed side by side, elements presented in the images, book covers, film posters, and in other sources of media establish connections and disparities. Through different media, I attempted to answer the research questions by using book covers depicting the creature, by using films showing a significant evolution with the representation of women, and by analysing how the social cultural context affected the relationship on the female representation. With this methodology, I collected, organised and analysed the visual data.

With the first methodology, I provided a discourse analysis to support the research questions using Mary Shelley's novel and other ancillary references. The first question regards the graphic evolution of the creature from the speciesist standpoint, and the second seeks to reveal how women are graphically represented in the story of *Frankenstein*. This section provides a method of displaying the images clearly and visually, in order to establish similarities and disparities that are investigated by the research questions. Taking the information discussed in the first methodology, **discourse analysis**, this section builds a foundation in preparation for the next methodology, **semiotics**, that will analyse the signs and symbols present in the graphic representations of *Frankenstein*. More images that are not individually discussed in this section will either be included in the semiotics or in the appendix.

VI.3 Semiotics

In the third and final methodology with the process of this visual research, I continue to introduce the investigation from past methodologies as well as the contextualisation chapters and apply the semiotics to the secondary level of research. Analysing the meaning of certain visual elements present in the representation of *Frankenstein* allows for a deeper understanding of the visual legacy of this story, while also supporting the research questions.

According to Ellen Lupton: “Research is about looking for something in a focused and systematic way” (Lupton’s foreword in Bestley and Noble, 2016). This definition certainly applies to this research. The aim of this dissertation is to look specifically into the evolution of the representation of one of the most iconic horror stories in western culture based on two different approaches: How the creature envisioned by Mary Shelley, starting in 1816 and coming to the public sphere in 1818, became the *monster* we know as *Frankenstein* today? In other words, what is the graphic evolution this character has had in the past two hundred years? And the other question is: What role did women play in the original novel and again, what was the graphic evolution of the female representation in the past two centuries? The systematic part of Lupton’s definition has been presented in this chapter, with three key methodologies that supported this research and assists the visualisation of the collected data.

The research has, thus far, **analysed the discourse** present in the original 1818 edition of *Frankenstein*, the changes presented in the 1831 edition and the impact the first visualisations of this story has in the overall evolution of the representation of *Frankenstein*. This analysis builds the foundation to look at the visual research critically; and also connects facts and interpretations to graphic data through the **visual matrices**. Finally, the last methodology, **semiotics** aims to bring all the information together into an analysis of the symbols and signs that brought *Frankenstein* to this moment in history, or as Frayling’s title says, *The First Two Hundred Years*.

Semiotics is a field of linguistics that studies the process of signs. Charles Sanders Peirce, an American philosopher, logician and mathematician, heavily influenced the studies of what a sign is:

A sign, or *representamen*, is something which stands to somebody for something in some respect or capacity. It addresses somebody, that

is, creates in the mind of that person an equivalent sign, or perhaps a more developed sign. That sign which it creates I call the *interpretant* of the first sign. The sign stands for something, its object (Peirce as cited in Daylight, 2012, p. 2).

Roland Barthes, a French theorist and philosopher also claims that “semiology remains a tentative science” (1977, p. 9). When it comes to applying semiotics to a practical field such as visual research, Russell Bestley and Ian Noble discuss the visual literacy in design practice:

The study of the interpretation of meanings within symbols or visual constructions is known as *semiotics*, which also relates to areas such as image and text. Semiotics or semiology can be thought of as signs and how they operate in the world. It can also be understood in terms of connotation and denotation: the relationship between the literal or primary meaning of something and its secondary, interpreted meaning (2016, p. 40).

The elements of semiology, as presented by Barthes, could be divided into four main headings⁵: *I. Language and Speech; II. Signified and Signifier; III. Syntagm and System; and IV: Denotation and Connotation* (Barthes, 1977, p. 12). Although they are all part of the semiotics broad terminology, not all are crucial and applicable to this research or may have in some capacity been previously discussed in the last two methodologies.

In the **visual matrices** section I briefly introduced the definition of *language as a system of signs*, according to linguistics. Bestley and Noble present the terms of signifier and signified in concise terms:

Ferdinand de Saussure proposed that the basic unit of any language is a sign or phoneme. A sign is made up of a signifier (a sound or image) and a signified (the concept of meaning). The relationship between the signifier and signified is arbitrary. There is no logical or natural connection between the spoken sound or graphic representation and the object itself (this is known as duality). The connection or relationship is established in its use by English speakers. Saussure was concerned with the structure (*langue*) rather than the use of language (*parole*) (2016, p. 95).

Taking “its starting point from the earlier ideas of structuralism proposed by Saussure and Peirce [deconstruction] is significant as a theory or framework for considering the exploration of the opposition between speech and writing” (Bestley and Noble, 2016, p. 128). The theory is also applicable

⁵ Terminology extracted from Barthes: *Elements of Semiology*, 1977, p. 12

to the deconstruction of images, when considering Mary Shelley's words from *Frankenstein*. In particular how different artforms have revealed various elements when applied to graphic representations.

Lastly, it is important to define the concepts of connotation and denotation for the context of the semiotics analysis of this visual research. In this theory, Bestley and Noble offer two different meanings applicable to both texts and within the context of images: "Primary, literal meaning—denotation—and secondary meaning—connotation. This can be applied to all visual signs" (2016, p. 128).

Summarising the concept of semiotics in the context of this visual research, Bestley and Noble define it as:

The study of signs is also known as semiotics—a term coined by the American philosopher Charles Peirce. His theories related to language, logic and semiotics and stated that there are three principal kinds of signs: icons, indices (or index) and symbols. Icons are likenesses that convey the idea of the thing they represent by imitating them—such as a photograph of something. Indices or indications convey information by their physical connection with the thing they represent. Symbols are general signs that have become associated with their meanings by their use and convention (2016, p. 95).

As previously reviewed, the point of view for the female representation pertains primarily to the film posters because it is not as present in other graphic media. As a result, female representation is the first point of view for discussion. After that, the first research question will be discussed in detail.

VI.3.a Applied to the representation of women in *Frankenstein*

In the **historical context** chapter of this dissertation, I introduced the principles of feminism and its relation to the socio-cultural context of the past two hundred years. There, I began the discussion the role women played at the end of the eighteenth century, the beginning of the nineteenth century and the evolution of women's rights movements in the twentieth century. Mary Shelley's mother, Mary Wollstonecraft made efforts to raise awareness to the issue of the education rights inequality between men and women with *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (1792). However, her personal life and scandalous⁶ liaisons were the focus of attention instead of her work.

As a young female writer, Mary Shelly had her own insecurities: Publishing a novel with themes of science and its monstrous consequences was too much for critics to handle in the nineteenth century. Nevertheless, publishing *Frankenstein* anonymously in 1818, Mary had an imprint of *Godwinian* values and adding to that Percy's introduction, were not enough to maintain her anonymity. Mary Shelley attempted to further explain her choices in the 1831 *Introduction* by excusing her young age and gender as a culprit for her imagination of such a *hideous* story. Going as far as claiming that she was simply imitating others before her, Shelley wrote:

"My dreams were at once more fantastic and agreeable than my writings. In the latter I was a close imitator—rather doing as others had done, than putting down the suggestion of my own mind" (1993, p. 1)

Whether this demonstrates her lack of confidence in herself, as discussed before, her *anxiety of authorship* and the pressure to live up to her name, or her lack of confidence in a woman's place in society in general, this message carried on to the first representations of *Frankenstein*. It takes more than a century to see a real change in how women are portrayed in this story. Louise Othello Knudsen discusses the themes present in Shelley's work and its relation to how women are portrayed: "How men through the language and arguments of science tried to establish themselves as superior to women and justify the exclusion of women from various aspects and at the same time eliminating women's importance in society" (2012, p. 21).

As seen in the earlier methodology sections, the representation of women in *Frankenstein* was scarce beyond the novel, in theatre and other media up until James Whale's *Frankenstein* in 1931. The women's role changed slightly in the century that *Frankenstein* had become a part of popular culture. Although women replaced men at work during World War I, they were still expected to be in charge of the domestic life. After the war, men remained the "rightful breadwinners" although women had since then earned the right to vote in 1918 (Shneiderman, 2018, para. 1).

When *Frankenstein* was released in 1931, the posters depicted women as the angelic, pure, damsel in distress role of a conservative worldview. This interpretation could have two different sources: First, the films are truthful to the original work of Shelley, if

⁶ Scandalous for that time period



127. Poster of *Frankenstein*. 1931. Universal Studios. USA.

not somewhat a little more patronising than the author had envisioned. Second, could be related to the socio-cultural context in which this film was released. As I previously noted, the Great Depression of 1929 set feminist movements a few steps back. Women were again mainly responsible for the maintenance of the household, holding a more passive role in society. This can be demonstrated in images 127 and 128.

In the first posters, the female characters are often depicted in white, referencing a prophecy the creature gives Victor Frankenstein, "I will be with you on your wedding-night" (Shelley, 1818, chapter 3, para. 18). Elizabeth appears in a floor-length white dress, long-sleeved, high neck, veil, embodying the image of the pure damsel. Other than that, women occasionally are depicted with a smaller head shot than that of their male co-stars. An example of this can be seen on image 127.

A common depiction of women in the early twentieth century posters is the vulnerable and stereotypical *damsel in distress* representations. There are dozens (see image 115) posters where the woman is



128. Another poster of *Frankenstein*. 1931. Universal Studios. USA.

depicted unconscious, sprawled on a bed, limp body angelic as ever, and with modest clothing. Once again this exemplifies the faithful choice to adapt Shelley's work about how the creature murders Victor's bride on their wedding night and remains within the expectations of female roles in society in general and in the film. A first example of such a visualisation can be seen on image 128; others will follow.

Four years after the iconic *Frankenstein* film was released, the 1935 sequel, *The Bride of Frankenstein* aimed to resolve Mary Shelley's unfulfilled promise. The next poster (fig. 129) starts with the tagline, "Warning! The monster demands a mate!" And sets the tone for the story. In the centre the creature is prominently depicted in a shadowy illustration in his greenish Karloffian look. The peculiar depiction in this poster is the fact that the creature is centered between two female characters. Starting from the bottom right where Elsa Lanchester, as The Bride of Frankenstein, is depicted with her hair merged with a wavy effect outlining the depictions of the creature and Elizabeth. The latter, played by Valerie Hobson, looks down with a face that emanates empowerment.



129. A poster of *The Bride of Frankenstein*. 1935. Universal Studios. USA.

Mary Shelley unknowingly paved the way for a series of sequels better than she could have ever imagined. In the novel, Victor could not bring himself to complete his female version of a creature.

The Bride of Frankenstein was the first adaptation to represent women more extensively since 1818, with two female characters: Elizabeth, and now with the creature's mate being introduced to the *Frankenstein* universe as well. Albeit the fact that both the monster's bride and Elizabeth wear similar white gowns with conservative silhouettes, there is a clear distinction between the significance of the pure damsel and the vulgar vilified depictions of the empowered female characters.



130. A French poster of *The Bride of Frankenstein*. 1935. Universal Studios. USA.

A decade after the release of the first in the Universal Studios franchise, *The Ghost of Frankenstein* (1942) did not focus on women in the plot nor on posters. However, a different depiction is introduced with little representation for women. At a time where pin-up models were at an all time high in popularity, during World War II, this poster (see image 131) depicts the female in a modest gown (for current times), with a v-neck cleavage but at the same time displaying the lady's bare legs. Note that on this image the costume is no longer the pure white that was previously linked to Elizabeth's wedding night. Instead the colour is replaced by a pink blush tone, a very feminine and sensual colour.

The following two Universal Studios *Frankenstein* films represent women in the same fashion as *The Ghost of Frankenstein*. Both 1943's *Frankenstein Meets the Wolf Man* (fig. 132) and 1944's *House of Frankenstein* (fig. 133) depict women in blush coloured dresses. A difference, however, reveals more cleavage, offering a pin-up twist to the traditional unconscious vulnerable pose of the earlier films. On image 133 the female character does not display cleavage; rather, exposes her lower leg and looking demurely scared, instead of outright frightened.



131. *The Ghost of Frankenstein*. 1942. Universal Studios.



133. Poster of *House of Frankenstein*. 1944. Universal Studios.



132. Poster of *Frankenstein Meets the Wolf Man*. 1943. Universal Studios. USA.

Women are mostly represented in *Frankenstein* film posters in two main positions: lying unconscious either on a bed or being carried by a male counterpart or screaming terrified from the monster.

Although the length of the dresses shorten and the cleavage deepens as the decades pass by, the helpless position of women remained rather similar. All the images presented in the last three pages (127, 128, 129, 130, 131, 132 & 133) belong to the Universal Studios series of *Frankenstein* films. This fact reinforces the interpretation that the evolution of female representation is due to the time and socio-cultural changes, not production company or country.

What the images demonstrate is how the colour changes within a decade from a pure white to blush and pink, very feminine and sensual colours. In addition, the amount of skin displayed also had a significant change within the first film released film in 1931 (image 127) and the depiction on image 132, released in 1943.

From the colour of the gown and a little bit of cleavage or leg display, the clothing shrinks even further in the late 1950s. As seen in images 134, 135 & 136, the amount of skin is more than a simple cleav-



134. Poster of *The Curse of Frankenstein*. 1957. Hammer Film Productions. UK.



135. Poster of *Frankenstein's Daughter*. 1958. Layton Films. USA.



136. Poster of *Frankenstein 1970*. 1958. Aubrey Schenk Productions. USA.

age. It becomes the shoulders, and the legs are displayed up to above the knee. While there is a visible change in costume, the position of women is still the aforementioned *damsel in distress*. On image 134 the woman screams, terrified and depicted underneath the claws of the creature, where the tagline says, "No-one who saw it lived to describe it!"

The poster for *Frankenstein's Daughter* on image 135 the female character is lying unconscious on the arms of the creature, with the tagline reading "More terrifying! More destructive!". This film was a low budget adaptation of Shelley's novel where the grandson of Frankenstein creates a female counterpart of the *monster* who ends up going on a killing spree. In this poster the focus lies on the innocence of the female character rather than a vilification of her.

Although in small letters, the warning on the poster of *Frankenstein 1970* reflects the same sentiment on the image. The warning reads: " 'Frankenstein 1970' is the most blood-freezing horror ever created! This picture may be too dangerous for people with weak hearts! Beware!". Here the main female portraiture shows a woman shrinking away from the creature who pursues her. Meanwhile a family illustrated in smaller proportion do the same.

The film *Bride of the Monster* technically does not belong to the *Frankenstein* universe, but this poster is still relevant for discussion in this dissertation. The depiction of the woman (fig. 137) is strikingly similar to that seen on fig. 135. This film takes inspiration on the theme of *Frankenstein* by using a *mad-scientist/monster* plot and even comparing it to the classics on its tagline: "More horrifying than DRACULA... FRANKENSTEIN." This is one example of how influential *Frankenstein* (and its representation) has become in popular culture.

Another socio-cultural relevant factor in the representation of women in the film posters is the country of production for each film. Notably, Universal Studios franchise characterised women in a more conservative appearance in comparison to the European films. In Hammer films, the British production company also depicted women on image 140 in a relatively conservative and traditional manner for the late 1960s. At a time where important feminist movements were thriving, with many younger citizens questioning the traditional social values and the gender equality being much of the social focus, these posters (see figures 138, 139 & 140) fall short of female empowerment.



137. Poster of *Bride of the Monster*. 1955. Rolling M. Productions. USA.



138. Poster of the cross-national *Los Monstruos del Terror*. 1970. Eichberg Productions. Spain, Germany and Italy.

A cross-national film produced by Eichberg Productions and in collaboration among, Germany, and Italy was released in 1970. The poster (fig. 138) illustrates a woman wearing pants instead of a dress or night gown for the first time. She runs away from the monsters with a terrified expression and exposes her bare stomach from a short top which is unprecedented when compared to other illustrations.

Around the same time, the Hammer Film series was in full steam. Images 139 and 140 reflect two films belonging to the Hammer series, *Frankenstein Created Woman* (1967) and *Frankenstein Must be Destroyed* (1969). On these images the female characters are again depicted with the damsel in distress role, the first shrinking away in horror while wearing a minimal skin tight gown. On figure 140, the female character screams in terror while being carried away by the *monster*, a recurrent depiction of women. Hammer Studios makes sure to note their distinguished franchise on the taglines for posters 139 and 140: "Now Hammer Have Created the Ultimate in Evil!" and "The Screen's Most Fantastic Fiend... and Hammer Say So!"



139. & 140. Posters of *Frankenstein Created Woman* and *Frankenstein Must be Destroyed*. 1967 and 1969. Hammer Film Productions. UK.

Starting from the 1970's there is a shift in the representation of women in *Frankenstein's* films. In 1971 another European film, *Lady Frankenstein*, was released. Cavett Binion (2018) describes this film as a

Lurid but entertaining Italian/Spanish twist on the *Frankenstein* legend [that] begins with Baron Frankenstein (Joseph Cotten) being assisted in his research by his sultry daughter Tania (Sara Bay). The doctor's first attempt at a stitched-together creation results in a lumpy, pop-eyed monstrosity with little of the expected respect for its creator. In fact, the monster begins its rampage by murdering the Baron and escaping into the surrounding villages. The younger Frankenstein returns from medical school with newly-acquired surgical expertise and a desire to follow in her late father's footsteps (para. 1).

The clothing of the female on image 141 is very tight to the body, similar to the clothing on images 135 and 137. Here the roles are reversed and for the first time the female character is truly given the role of power. That can be exemplified with the tagline on image 141: "Only the Monster She Made Could Satisfy Her Strange Desires!". Although putting a *woman's desires* as a focus point could be seen as progress, it also demonstrates that the female character is still heavily objectified and sexualised. The fact that only a nonhuman creature can satisfy her *strange* desires alludes to the pre-conceived idea that her desires are not natural; hence, she is not empowered but objectified. The sexual aspect is seldom prominent in *Frankenstein's* story or its spin-offs up until this film came out. Although this might have been the first *Frankenstein* film with a sexualised adaptation, but it is certainly not the last.

In another poster for *Lady Frankenstein* (fig. 142) besides the bigger depiction of the creature and the lab instruments, there is an entanglement of two bodies dividing the picture horizontally that makes the erotic nature of *Frankenstein's* representation visually clear. The two naked bodies interlacing with one another is also an unprecedented visualisation and adaptation of Mary Shelley's novel.

In the full swing of the 1970's, the European cinema industry was reflective of the *free love* cultural movement. Robert Firsching describes *La Maldición de Frankenstein* as a Sexually explicit version of the *Frankenstein* story (that) was based on erotic Italian comic strips. Dr. Frankenstein (Dennis Price) and his servant Morpho (Jesus Franco, who directed) are at work in the lab when a carriage pulls up carrying a bird-woman named Melissa (Anne Libert). Sneaking into the



141. & 142. Posters of *Lady Frankenstein*. 1971. Condor International Films. Italy.

castle, Melissa and her driver Caronte (Luis Barboo) kill both the doctor and Morpho, then abduct the monster (Fernando Bilbao). They really serve an evil count, Cagliostro (Howard Vernon), who wants the monster for his own nefarious ends. Several versions of the film exist, but all linger on the sexual possibilities of the story. Ranging between 80 and 90 minutes, each version differs only in the amount and frequency of graphic couplings (2018, para. 1).

The sexual nature of the film is very much present on this French poster for *La Maldición de Frankenstein*, 1973 (img. 143). The featured black and white head of a screaming woman is the last remaining connection to the traditional depiction of previous film posters, with the torn paper giving way to the new generation of the representation of *Frankenstein*. That is seen underneath the ripped paper with a couple of naked bodies, two women and a man, seen in the bottom of the image. The man turns his back to show that his hands are tied back. A blonde woman with a distressed look on her face crouches next to him while behind her the head of yet another woman with disheveled hair and an open, gaping wide mouth expresses more ecstasy than horror.



143. Poster of *La Maldición de Frankenstein*. 1973. C. Fénix Films. Spain & France.

On image 144, another poster of *La Maldición de Frankenstein* depicts a more subdued scene. In illustration rather than photograph, the heads of the main characters are displayed with the female on the front and centre looking powerful rather than fearful.

Rebecca Flint Marx (2018) writes a synopsis for another sexually explicit *Frankenstein* adaptation. The film, entitled *Flesh for Frankenstein*, from 1974, is humorously described as: Incest, necrophilia, and Joe Dallesandro? It must be Andy Warhol. Warhol did indeed co-produce this 1974 schlock spectacular—originally presented in 3D—that was directed by Factory favourite Paul Morrissey. Starring Udo Kier in the role of “Ze Baron,” *Flesh for Frankenstein* is a horror story for a new ‘n’ lewd generation. This time around, the mad scientist has created the nymphomaniacal-inclined Adam and Eve, whose mission it is to spawn a new race. Along for the ride—somewhat literally—is a lusty stable boy (Dallesandro) whose main duty it is to entertain the Baron’s equally lusty wife/sister. Sex, gore, unconvincing bat attacks, and the highest camp this side of the Appalachian Trail combine for a dizzyingly outrageous midnight movie (para. 1).



144. Poster of *La Maldición de Frankenstein*. 1973. C. Fénix Films. Spain & France.



145. Poster of *Flesh for Frankenstein*. 1974. Braunsberg Productions. Italy.

The poster for *Flesh for Frankenstein* (1974) once again depicts a female character explicitly as long as she is the *villain* of the story. The female version of the creature is depicted naked, with the scars and other apparatus necessary for her creation.

After the 1970s the female depiction in *Frankenstein* film posters declined once again, with films attempting to reinvent this classic story. Women are once again in the background of the plot, not front and centre. The last relevant poster in this section is *Frankenhooker*, 1990 (image 146). Although this American film was released sixteen years after the last posters analysed, the female character preserves more of her modesty. Although there is undoubtedly a large amount of skin on display, the character wears a bra and underpants, which compared to image 145 is more covered.

The tagline is also indicative of how females are often portrayed in these erotic films discussed here: "A terrifying tale of sluts and bolts." This is yet another example of the less clothing women wear, the more objectified they are. Women are either *sluts* who possess *strange desires*, or they are *damsel in distress* cloaked in white high neck gowns.



146. Poster of *Frankenhooker*. 1990. Levins-Henenlotter. USA.

This section discusses in more detail the principles of semiotics. Supported by the analysis of connotation and denotation present in the female representation of *Frankenstein* film posters semiotics reveal certain symbols indicating the secondary meaning behind them. From earlier versions staying more closely attached to Mary Shelley's original novel to the strides society made in regards to women's place in society, to worldwide historical events that influenced the scenic arts, the depiction of women are all connected. The progress of what role women played in the representation of *Frankenstein* has not always been linear; but it surely has come a long way since the subtle hint in Mary Shelley's work criticising the patriarchal society in which she grew up and the legacy of her mother's work when it came to women's rights to education.

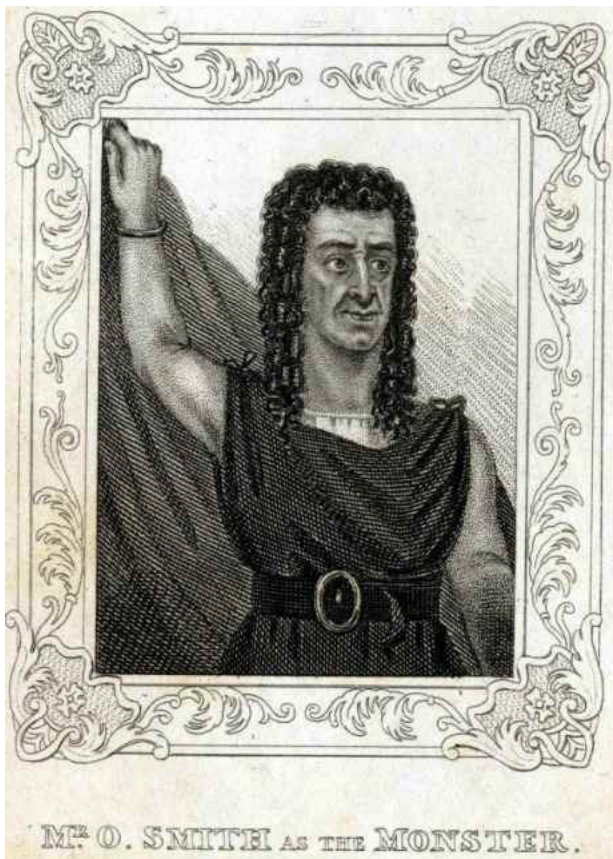
The following section examines the semiotics in the representation of the creature of Frankenstein.

VI.3.b Applied to the speciesist treatment of the creature

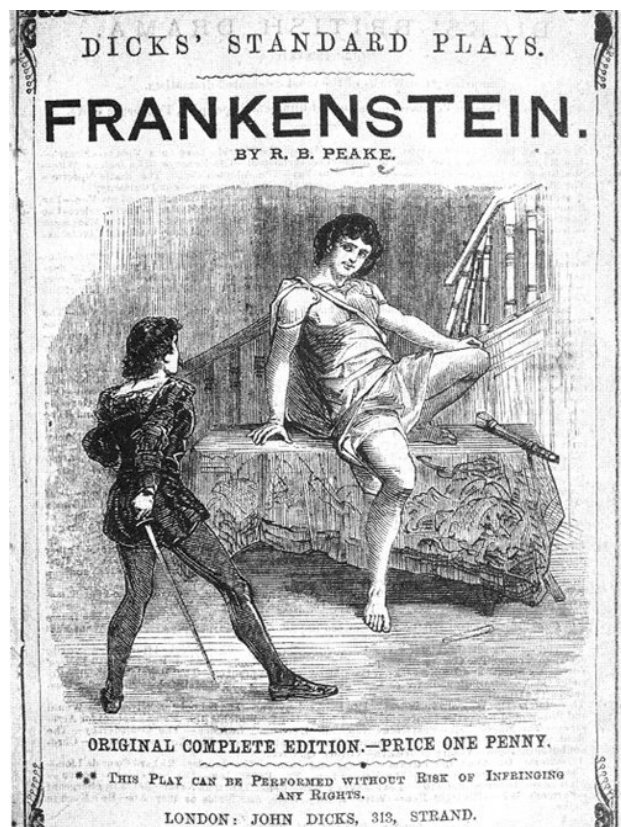
Thus far, I have discussed the graphic evolution of Frankenstein's creature from a speciesist interpretation of Shelley's novel and later visual representation. With the support of Kallman's thesis *Speciesism in Mary Shelley's Frankenstein* (2015), this point of view has been analysed and demonstrated throughout the historical context, into the analysis discourse, and thereafter with the visual matrices. This section looks more closely into the instances when the creature is depicted as the *inferior*, *monstrous* and downright a *heinous villain*, and also review the instances where the creature is seen as more than a *monster*, which stems from the messages present in Shelley's work.

Whether mainstream popular culture has exploited the creature in order to instigate horror and disgust in the audience or the more rare instances where the audience could actually empathise with the creature and believe that he too, was worthy of a caring parent, this section defines and analyses through the application of semiotics and visual material most relevant to the framework of the creature's depiction.

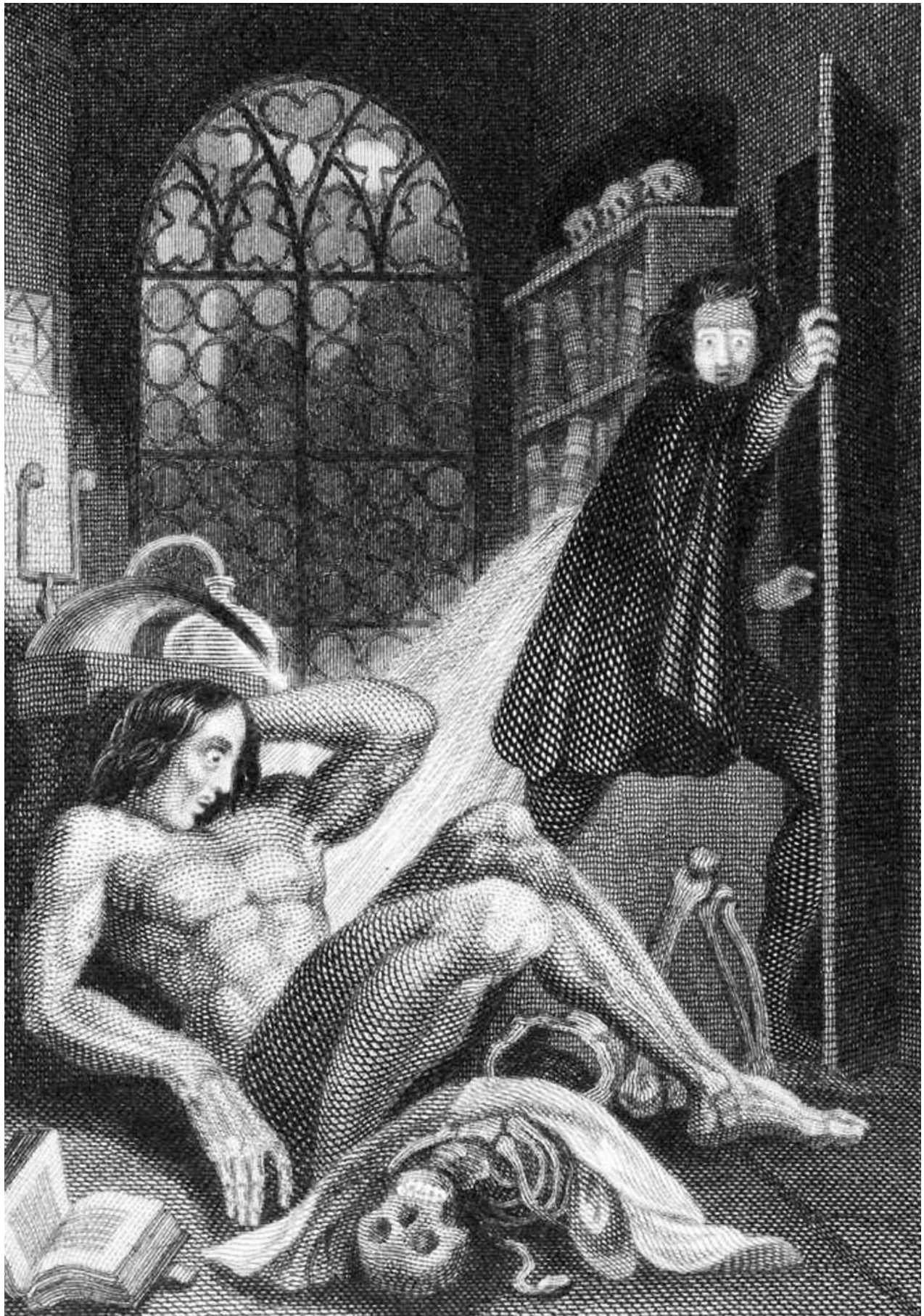
In the original *Frankenstein* novel, Victor creates a new species based on parts of a corpse and other undisclosed material. Although the scientist claims that he "selected his [the creature] features as beautiful" (Shelley, 1818, chapter 4, para. 2), it is hard to believe that any outcome made from an assembly of cadaver parts could be anything aesthetically appealing. However, this idealism on Victor's part only supports his anthropocentric mindset and Shelley's subtle criticism to those ideals. As soon as the creature comes to life, the creator changes his language when describing the creature, "He was ugly then; but when those muscles and joints were rendered capable of motion, it became a thing such as even Dante could not have conceived" (Shelley, 1818, chapter 4, para. 4). The treatment the creature receives from Victor has a significant impact on the plot, with the creature eventually confronting the scientist's choices: "Cursed creator! Why did you form a monster so hideous that even you turned from me in disgust?" (Shelley, 1818, chapter 7, para. 8). It is relevant to discuss the original words of Mary Shelley in this section because the way Victor treats the creature and society has an impact on the first visualisation of this novel. Later with the film posters, this relationship between creator and creature is reflected graphically, hence supporting the speciesist treatment outlined in the research question.



147. Illustration of the first adaptation of *Frankenstein*. 1823.



148. Poster of the first adaptation of *Frankenstein*. 1823.



149. Illustration of the frontispiece of *Frankenstein, or the Modern Prometheus*. 1831. Illustrated by T. Holst.

On the one hand it can be argued that Frankenstein designed his hideous creature without any regard to its consequences in an attempt to boost his ego by controlling science. Anne K. Mellor puts it, “Mary Shelley clearly heeded Davy’s words, for she presents Victor Frankenstein as the embodiment of hubris, of that Satanic or Faustian presumption which blasphemously attempts to tear asunder the sacred mysteries of nature” (1989, p. 94). On the other hand, it can be argued that Shelley’s intentions behind the creation of a new species was a criticism to the rapid development of technology and men’s innate ambitions to become superior to other species. Mellor continues to argue that Mary Shelley’s treatment of science as an “Implicit warning against the possible dangers inherent in the technological developments of modern science” (1989, p. 114).

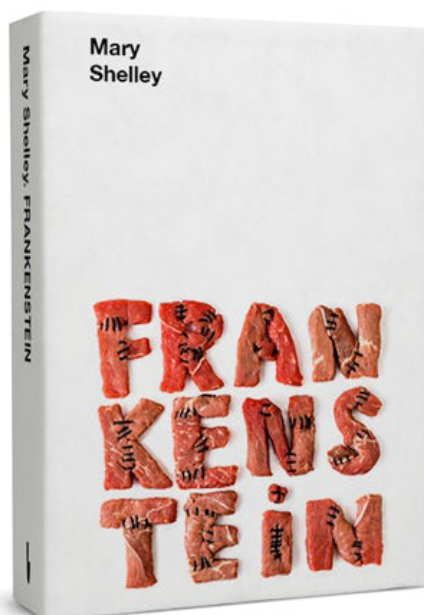
In the first visual representations of *Frankenstein*, the creature lacks a radical distinction between the human species and the one created by Victor. Both in the theatre posters for *Presumption* and the 1831 revised edition of *Frankenstein, or the Modern Prometheus*, the creature is represented in a more humanised style, either due to the lack of technological resources, or simply to remain faithful to Mary Shelley and her vision of an empathetic creature. It was not until later that the creature became the caricature of a *monster* with no name and no species. This can be seen on figures 147, 148 and 149. On the first two illustrations, not only does the creature lacks any *monstrous* qual-

ities, but he also lacks any threatening appearance at all. On figure 148 the creature’s bodily position and facial expression is quite sympathetic, opposed to the character of Victor, seen holding a sword defensively.

The only characteristic on these images (148 and 149) that can be attributed to the creature not belonging to the human species is the body proportions. Against the other characters it becomes apparent that the creature is much bigger.

When critically reading the text of Mary Shelley, Alexandra Kallman analyses the effect the creature’s appearance has on his demeanour and actions throughout the story, arguing that “The disadvantageous aesthetics of Frankenstein’s monster is the primary reason for his predicament, because his appearance is associated with animalistic malice and bestiality” (Kallman, 2015, p. 21). This argument is initially not reflected on the creature’s graphic representations.

Mary Shelley’s unique decisions in creating her novel contribute to *Frankenstein* as a timeless and classic story. Certain symbolic elements that formed her creature are overlooked in popular culture in spite of the elements that mainstream media often exploited in order to provoke as much shock and horror with twentieth century audiences as possible. This point will be exemplified with images in this section.



150. Book cover design of *Frankenstein*. 2015. The Shillington Education Typography Design. Created by Pol Alert.

One significant element is that Frankenstein's creature is a vegetarian. According to Kallman's speciesist approach to *Frankenstein*, this deliberate strategy from Shelley is used to criticise anthropocentric ideals and the very current day debate of the meat industry's treatment of nonhuman animals. Kallman elaborates: "Although the monster does not easily find edible foods in the forest, he does not once consider the possibility of hunting for meat, which points to his conception of the unnaturalness of killing another being to satisfy one's own needs" (2015, p. 32).

Jackson Petsche writes that "[c]arnivorism, as a system, depends upon the speciesist recognition of the intellectual and emotional superiority of humans, and an ideology that rests upon the notion that it is natural to consume nonhuman animal flesh" (2014, p. 104). As briefly mentioned prior, Percy Shelley was a vegetarian, which was not common in the nineteenth century. However, this has significantly changed in western society. The enslaving of animals for the sole purpose of satisfying human demands is still a very sensitive and current debate. Petsche describes the relation between the monster and vegetarianism:

Frankenstein's monster is a 'monster' because he is meat that was not consumed and brought back to life. What was intended for the human ta-

ble comes to life and defies the social order. His vegetarianism only serves to reinforce the horror which his corporeal being presents to human society. Both his body and his diet invoke the 'strange system of human society' (2014, p. 107).

Image 150 is a Shillington Education Typography Design, from 2015, created by Pol Alert. This cover playfully uses typography and elements of the raw origin of the creature, being built from the dead flesh of corpses, without ever showing the character itself. It manages to be creative and truthful to the creature in an innovative way, making this design efficient.

The vegetarianism element of the novel is rarely represented graphically, and this cover design successfully mixes one of the more modern interpretations, a sign with stitches and dead flesh. Kallman argues that the meat is a significant element because men often disassociate the meat they consume with a living, breathing creature worthy of empathy and kindness: "This points to society's reasons for concealing the operations inside of slaughterhouses, which involve the transformations of living beings to dead products ready for consummation" (2015, p. 32). Kallman concludes that "Victor's indifference and perception of the body parts as 'materi-



151. Poster of *Il Mostro di Frankenstein*. 1920. Albertini Film.



152. Poster of *Frankenstein*. 1931. Universal Studios.



153. Poster of *The Bride of Frankenstein*. 1935. Universal Studios.

als' can be related to the disassociation between nonhuman animals, and their flesh as a finished product for human consumption" (2015, p. 33).

Shelley introduces another relevant element and current point of discussion: Victor's creation has no name. Kallman notes, "The fact that the monster is nameless is an important aspect in the text's criticism of the meat industry. To not give a name to the monster is to deny him an identity, which makes it easier to regard him as an object" (2015, p. 33).

In that sense, Kallman argues that Mary Shelley consciously gives the nameless creature a voice as a means to criticise the anthropocentric ideology that was predominant in her era: "Frankenstein's monster's voice is not only used as a means to criticise anthropocentric ideology, but also to advocate a peaceful coexistence between different species" (Kallman, 2015, p. 27). This creates confusion in popular culture for mistakingly calling the creature **Frankenstein** instead of the creature. It is clear that the speciesist thinking is evident with depictions of the creature named as a *monster*.

The images 151, 152, 153 and 154 demonstrate this either in the title or the tagline. On image 151 the first Italian adaptation of Shelley's work is entitled *The Monster of Frankenstein*. The tagline of Universal's infamous *Frankenstein* reads: "The man who made a monster" referring correctly to the scientist's name. In 1935, *The Bride of Frankenstein* gives life to the seed planted in Shelley's novel, and the posters summarises it with the tagline: "The Monster Demands a Mate!" (fig. 153). In 1943 the confusion between the nameless creature and its creator are evident on the poster of *Frankenstein Meets the Wolf Man* (fig. 154).



154. Poster of *Frankenstein Meets the Wolf Man*. 1943. Universal Studios.

The more that versions of *Frankenstein* were adapted during the twentieth century as the Enlightenment period faded, the further Shelley's principles are represented. Thus the creature became more animalistic and horrific. Louise Othello Knudsen provides a simple yet concise synthesis of the process this story underwent: "The media is also responsible for the public's idea of the creature as monstrous and infantile when in fact he is eloquent and loveable in Mary Shelley's original story" (2012, p. 27).

In 1910 the first film of *Frankenstein* was released. Due to the film being silent, the creature acts like a less than capable, ignorant being. This over-exaggerated visualisation of the creature is figure 155.

Twenty one years later, the image of the creature was sedimented beyond repair with the film that propelled *Frankenstein* to one of the most iconic horror films of popular culture. Frayling wisely synthesises what James Whale's depiction of the creature did for the rest of Hollywood and the horror genre in the thirties, forties up until current days: Instead of Mary Shelley's well-proportioned but scary creature, her new Adam, and instead of *Presumption's* dark-haired brute in a blue body-stocking, the Monster became a more literal thing of scars and stitches and skewer ... His huge dome-like forehead and big feet made him resemble someone with an acromegalic condition and a serious pituitary problem: an image of disability (like many of the 'monsters' designed by Hollywood makeup people in the 1930s) rather than of beauty gone wrong. Universal Studios briefly toyed with the idea of making their monster look like a robot, half-human and half-machine—an idea from *Metropolis* that continued into some of the posters

The EDISON KINETOGRAM

VOL. 2

MARCH 15, 1910

No. 4

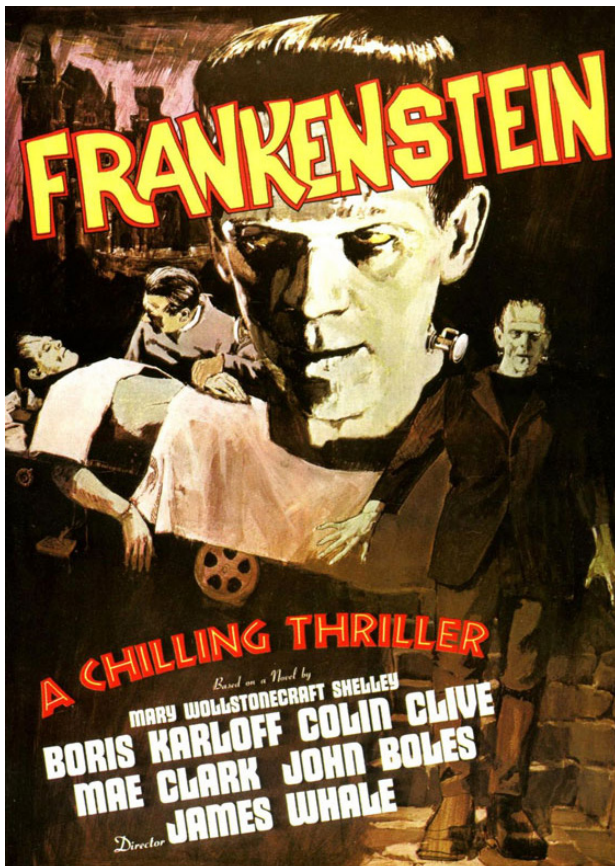


SCENE FROM
FRANKENSTEIN

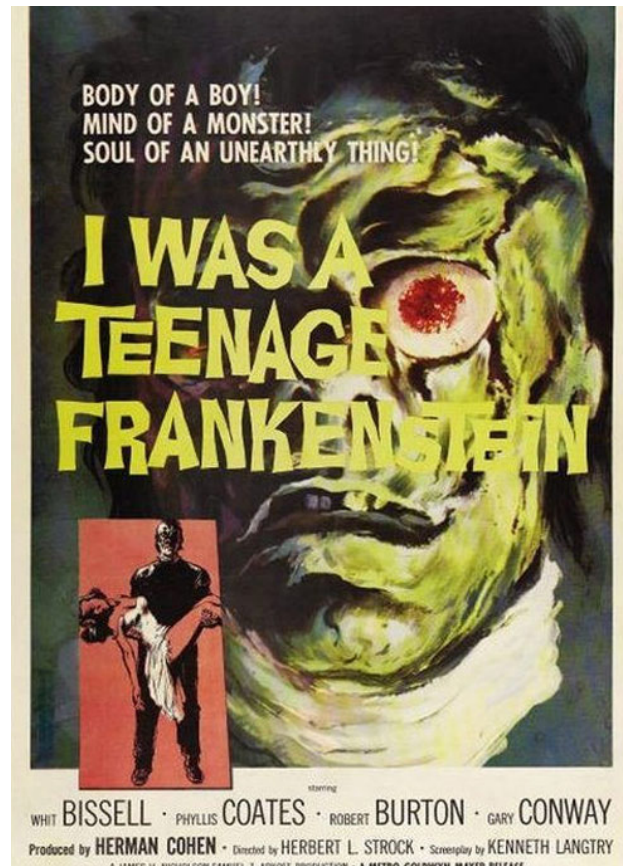
FILM No. 6604

**EDISON FILMS RELEASED FROM
MARCH 16 TO 31 INCLUSIVE**

155. Poster of the first cinematic adaptation of *Frankenstein*. 1910. The Edison Kinetogram.



156. Poster of *Frankenstein*. 1931. Universal Studios. USA.



158. Poster of *I Was a Teenage Frankenstein*. 1957. Santa Rose Productions. USA.



157. Poster of *The Evil of Frankenstein*. 1963. Hammer Film Productions. UK.



159. Poster of *The Curse of Frankenstein*. 1957. Hammer Film Productions. UK.

and pre-publicity: but the only remnant of that design idea was the steel bolt through Karloff's neck, something to plug him into (2017, p. 104).

Frayling's examples are visualised in some of the posters on images 156, 157, 158 and 159. The figure on poster 156 depicts the infamous 1931 creature with bolts on his neck and the abnormally big feet that Frayling mentions. On image 157 the dome-like forehead is front and centre.

The other two images (158 and 159) portray the creature very deformed, and the taglines reflect the sensationalist approach to the creature's representation. The poster's tagline, for *I Was a Teenage Frankenstein*, released in 1957, on image 158 reads: "Body of a Boy! Mind of a Monster! Soul of an Unearthly Thing!". This is a clear example of the exploited creature in order to provoke disgust and horror in the audiences.



160. The evil scientist Rotwang, in his alchemical laboratory in *Metropolis*. 1926. Universum Film (UFA). Germany.

On the poster for *The Curse of Frankenstein*, 1957, the creature appears pitiful with a stitched forehead and eyes rolling back into his head. The tagline in small letters on this poster (image 159) reads: “The creature created by man and forgotten by nature”. This is an interesting choice of words for this film.

The infamous creation scene is also a relevant point of discussion. In the novel, Mary Shelley remains mysterious and does not reveal much about the technical and scientific process that Victor endures in order to bring his creature to life. Some research discusses her keen interest in galvanism⁷ and the effect Phantasmagoria⁸ might have had on a young Mary Godwin. The truth of it is, that the actual creation scene was as elusive in the novel as it was in the first adaptations of *Frankenstein* for stage, all the audience was aware of, is that it happened backstage. In film however, this mystery sparked a renewed interest and was an opportunity for Hollywood to tell their version of the story.

7 Science effect named after Luigi Galvani, who investigated the effect of electricity on dissected animals in the late 1700's.

8 Phantasmagoria was a form of horror theatre that used one or more magic lanterns to project frightening images such as skeletons, demons, and ghosts onto walls, smoke, or semi-transparent screens.

The creation scene in James Whale's *Frankenstein*—the delivering spark of light—owes much more to the sequences in Rotwang's laboratory in Fritz Lang's *Metropolis* (1926) [image 160] than to Mary Shelley; and Karloff's Monster is closely related to the sleepwalking Cesar in Cagliari and to Paul Wegener's *The Golem* (1920 version) (2017, p. 102).

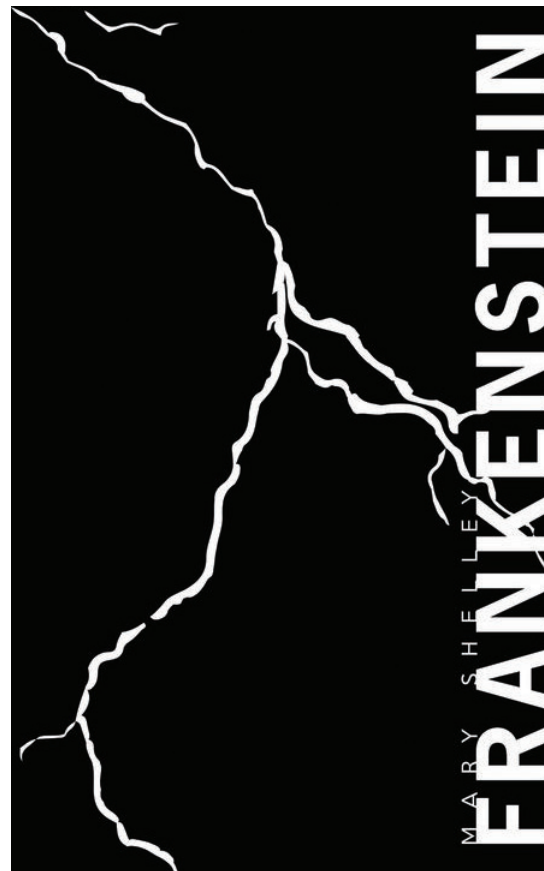
Although the lightening bolts were present in the 1931 film, they are not represented on the film posters. This visual element was, however, catapulted into several book covers hereinafter. Along with the stitches originally present in Shelley's work and the bolts coming out of the creature's neck, an element designed by filmmakers, the electricity is the most commonly depicted element attached to the stereotype of *Frankenstein*. This can be seen on figures 161, 162 and 163, with the first (image 161) as a Barnes & Noble Single Volume 2012 edition with lightening and the silhouette of a castle. The other two illustrations (fig. 162 and 163) belong to unpublished projects inspired by Mary Shelley, also include lightening and figure 163 that frames a silhouette of windmills and a castle.

The mysterious circumstances surrounding the creation scene is one of the most exploited strategies when it comes to the representations of *Frankenstein*, offering not only visual and graphical signs that would for-

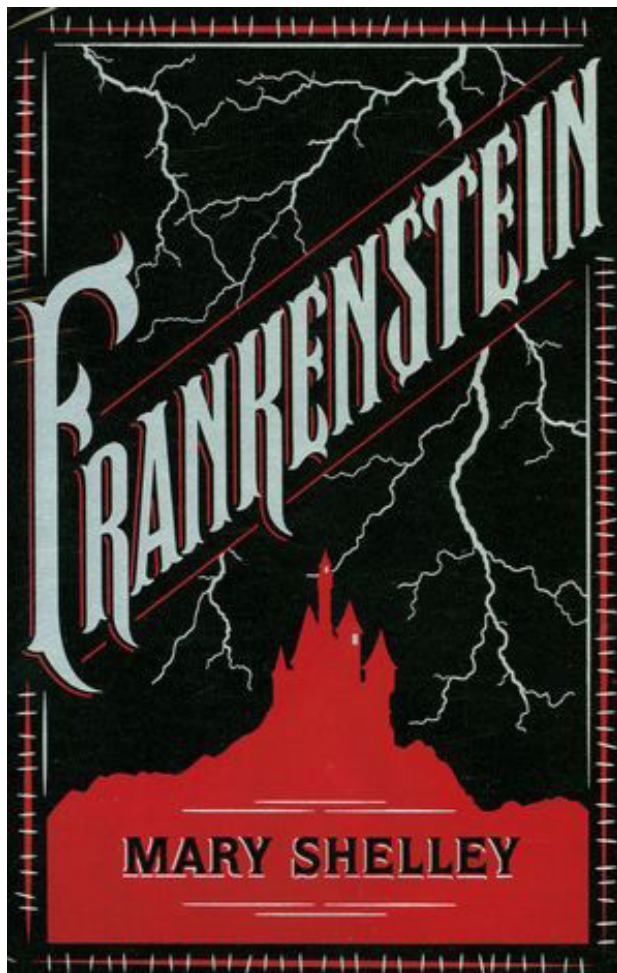
ever become attached to it, but also the epic phrase: it's alive! On the subject of what the *mystery* represents in terms of message to the audience, Frayling elaborates:

Hollywood here becomes the great leveller: if the audience doesn't understand it, or grasp the thought process, then it *must* be evil. Science is expected to stay within certain boundaries—represented by trustworthy Prof. Waldman and the Academy—and it is expected to be not only comprehensible, but practical or applied as well. The boundaries are set by God and nature, through the wisdom of age and maturity. The scientist is expected to value domesticity and to keep his emotions on an even keel, rather than sacrifice his life to some BIG IDEA (2017, p. 104).

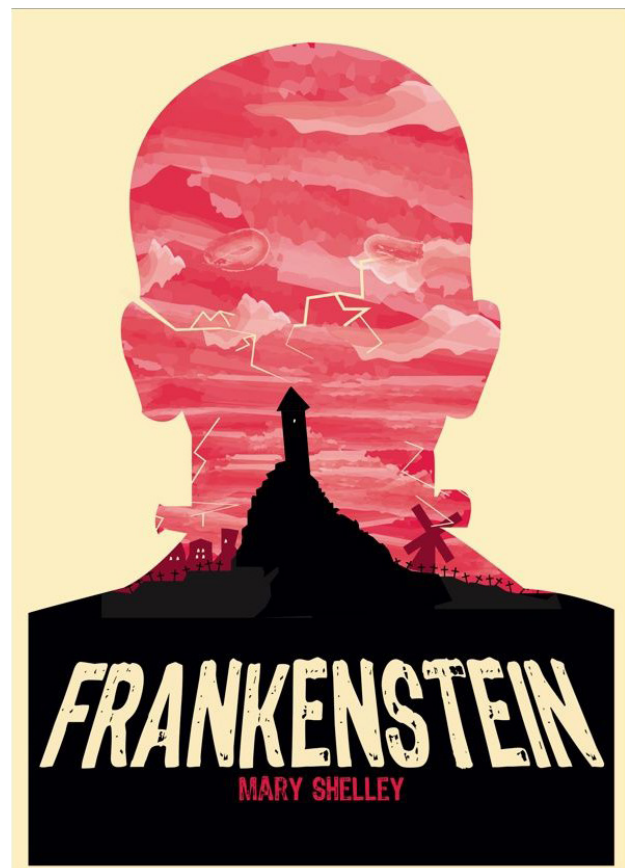
Through the process of deconstruction in the semiotics section, I dissected the origin of each type of graphic representation of the creature. From Mary Shelley's words in *Frankenstein* to the influence that other contemporary stories had in her work, theatre plays, films, and then book jackets, all reiterates the idea that popular culture is interconnected.



162. Book cover created for the Recovering the Classic Project. 2010. Designed by Nick Fairbank.



161. Book cover design with electricity thematic. 2012. Barnes & Noble Single Volume Leatherbound Classics.



163. Another unpublished cover design *Frankenstein*.

The speciesist standpoint has provided an analysis that often looks at the graphic depictions of the creature beyond the literal words of Mary Shelley. Furthermore, the subtle criticism present in her work at times transcends into the realm of graphic design and the representations of this story, while others stray away. As Kallman concludes, “The monster’s lack of identity, and his scrutiny of humankind’s perception and treatment of him as a nonhuman being, combined with his capability to communicate through language, problematise humankind’s justification of their sense of superiority” (Kallman, 2015, p. 34).

With the **discourse analysis**, the words of Mary Shelley together with related images can be interpreted and analysed deeper than what meets the eye. In the **visual matrices** analysis the patterns and connections can be compared and displayed side by side, laying out the source of inspiration of the graphic material and how that evolved in the span of two hundred years. And lastly, with the **semiotics** analysis the two previous methodologies come together in an effort to support the investigation and present the results. During this analysis, the deconstruction process displays the nature of *Frankenstein*’s timeless underlying themes and the reasons why it is still relevant today, two hundred years after being introduced to popular culture.

Conclusion

In January 1818 *Frankenstein, or the Modern Prometheus* was first published anonymously. The starting point of this research looks deeply into the graphic legacy that this classic story has had upon its bicentennial anniversary. My preliminary research led to *Frankenstein's* author, Mary Shelley, and her circumstances as a young female writer in the beginning of the nineteenth century. Mary Shelley became a great source of inspiration to me. Although Shelley's background and the literary dialogue in her debut novel serve as contextualisation for the visual research, the observations drawn from the book covers and film posters conflict with Mary's forward thinking principles. The investigation then outlines two distinct paths: What is the evolutionary process in the graphic representation of the creature? And What is the female representation in *Frankenstein*?

The support of two academic works were indispensable for the contextualisation of this research: The first is *Speciesism in Mary Shelley's Frankenstein* by Alexandra Kallman (2015) which analyses the discourse of *Frankenstein* from the standpoint that Shelley criticised the anthropocentric ideology that dominated her environment in the Enlightenment era. The second is *Reading Between the Lines: An analysis of Mary Shelley's Frankenstein, or the Modern Prometheus, using Horace Walpole's The Castle of Otranto as an example of male discourse about women* from Louise Othello Knudsen (2012). The analysis of this dissertation applies arguments present in both master theses mentioned above, along with a thorough research presented in *Frankenstein: The First Two Hundred Years* (2017) by Sir Christopher Frayling to the evolution in the graphic representation of *Frankenstein*.

In a time where the relationship between humans and nature is ever so complex, and the world is shifting towards more conservative and traditional governments, the themes of *Frankenstein* manage to remain relevant in popular culture. The discussion of parents neglecting their children, anthropocentric world-views that humans are the superior species, and the constant tense fight for gender equality are present not only in Mary Shelley's novel but also in the representation thereof. It is hard to grasp the fact that what started as a silly ghost story contest with a group of bored friends has become one of the most influential popular culture characters to date.

Mary Shelley's novel has been turned into films, plays, ballets, operas, musicals, television shows, and television series, novels and graphic novels, cartoons, paintings and prints, illustrations, advertisements, and poems. The universe of *Frankenstein* is so rich that its visual legacy expands into thousands of adaptations. Even if one has never seen a single film of *Frankenstein* nor read the original source, there is a clear picture of what this *monster* looks like.

This dissertation focuses on two different interpretative standpoints of Mary Shelley's work that remain highly relevant in today's issues. Kallman (2015) argues:

The fact that *Frankenstein* was published in a time when human superiority over other species was taken for granted, one hundred and fifty years before the rise of anti-speciesist discourses and movements, shows how Shelley was ahead of her time (p. 34).

This interpretation of *Frankenstein* supports the visual research presented in this dissertation where the creature of Victor Frankenstein is more often depicted as a *monster* not capable of reason and emotions rather than the vegetarian compassionate vulnerable creature imagined in 1818. Furthermore, in the film posters discussed in the methodologies chapter, the exploitation of the creature as a tool to spark horror and disgust in the masses is more prominent than what Shelley had initially conceived. Based on the first visualisation of the creature for the 1823 stage adaptation as

well as the first illustration ever to be published in an edition of the novel in 1831, the images presented in this dissertation demonstrate a clear difference of who the creature is. This conclusion can be drawn when comparing those images to the film posters of the twentieth century. In this framework, Shelley's original warning message of compassion towards all sentient beings although respected on a few occasions, has mainly dissipated in the course of two hundred years.

The second research question aims to investigate the reasoning behind the lack of female representation in *Frankenstein* in the novel which directly affects the representation in other visual media in the last two hundred years. The interpretations for the scarce representation of female roles in *Frankenstein* have stemmed from Shelley's own experiences as a young author in a male dominated field and from her home life. In addition, this interpretation also highlights the dangers of female exclusion when it came to the scientific evolution. Through her discourse in *Frankenstein*, Mary presents similarities in the personalities of Victor Frankenstein and her husband Percy, while suggesting that men too, are capable of causing monstrous births, and that the responsibility of procreation does not solely lie on a woman's reproductive abilities. The lack of female representation translated often to the book covers, which are almost all exclusively focused on the male characters or other abstract elements, with the exception of the covers that depict Mary Shelley's portrait. Starting in the 1930's, film posters represent women as the classic Gothic *damsel in distress* role. In the course of decades (in western society) the relationship with a woman's rightful place in the social sphere has changed, directly reflecting their representations.

In the 1970s, the era of free love even created the time and space for *Frankenstein* to be the inspiration for erotic Italian comic strips. The posters clearly display that it is unacceptable for women to have passive roles any longer and the culture demanded more action from them. While some might consider this progress, the images analysed in the semiotics section also demonstrate that women are heavily objectified through women's clothing, facial expressions, and taglines suggesting that they have their own *strange sexual desires* that must be attended to by the *monster*. This issue draws a line not only between the species boundary, as discussed in the posters of *Lady Frankenstein*, but also in the boundaries between men and women. They are either the daughter, the wife, the damsel or the villain, objectified and sexualised. After decades of these types of female representation, Mary Shelley herself, became the source of inspiration for biographic works. Frayling (2017) notes:

[Talking about Kenneth Branagh's *Mary Shelley's Frankenstein*] This fidelity to a famously difficult-to-adapt novel—which also showed awareness of critical debates of critical debates surrounding *Frankenstein*—confused critics and audiences. It went against the longstanding conventions of 'mad science' films—Universal, Hammer, the lot—and a long time ago... The film was not a box-office success in the U.S.A. (p. 110).

Initially, the visual research was categorised per research question and chronologically; however, during one of the revisions of the methodologies, another approach became more befitting. During the discussion of each film poster and each book cover, the analysis became repetitive and in certain instances, not as relevant to the discussion. Based on the references and the line of investigation in the methodologies, I decided to divide the analysis for each research question when that was suitable and to analyse images individually only when pertinent in relation to the context of discussion. This also impacted the decision to create an appendix where other images that were not individually discussed could be presented as part of the celebratory bicentennial anniversary origin of this research.

While the representation of *Frankenstein* has always managed to maintain a certain level of relevance in the cultural and popular sphere throughout the nineteenth and twentieth century. It was not until Universal Studio's 1931 *Frankenstein* film that consolidated the visual brand of this iconic character. As Frayling elaborates:

Such notoriety, as in 1823, ensured the film's success. *Frankenstein* made in excess of \$1 million on first release (twice as much as *Dracula*), and has been called 'the most important and influential of all American horror films'. Its innovations effectively superseded the source material in the public imagination (2017, pp. 104-105).

Frankenstein achieved a classic status for all the reasons mentioned above along with the scientific debate that Shelley presents. While a lot has evolved and changed in the first two hundred years of *Frankenstein's* cultural relevance, this story is the epitome of what defines a classic. Whatever was happening in the western society, whatever challenges humankind faced, *Frankenstein's* representation could always be applied to the contemporary context. The visual research herein presented highlights exactly that. Frayling summarises this argument:

In the nineteenth century, the anxieties were more broadly-based: social, political, economic as well as scientific. In the twentieth, the strong emphasis in the public domain has been on the scientific. Where the films are concerned, the anxieties about science may change—medicine in the 1930s, nuclear physics in the 1950s (after Hiroshima), first IVF birth in 1978 'The Frankenstein myth becomes reality'—the Human Genome Project in the 1990s, robotics and artificial intelligence in the 2000s, 'Frankenstein foods', synthetic microbes, three-parent families, animal-human interfaces (growing human organs in animals and vice-versa), and the new eugenics today—but the iconography and the foundation myth have proved surprisingly resilience as ways to express them from vitalism to medicine to physics to biology to genetic engineering to computer science... to who knows? (2017, p. 110).

Mary Shelley could have never imagined the impact that her work has had, not only in the literary world but also in the visual history of popular culture. From monsters, to creatures, to mad scientists and damsel in distress, to the Boris Karloff's stereotype, *Frankenstein* has truly become one of the most recognisable icons of popular culture.

This research analyses the visual legacy of *Frankenstein* based on the two distinct yet related points of view. The connection could be drawn that Mary Shelley used both the creature and the female characters as the victims of patriarchy. With the support of three methodologies, I examined Shelley's original text and its interpretations both in word and images with the discourse analysis. From gathering book jackets, film posters and theater playbills into the visual matrices I noticed certain patterns and signs emerge, for example how the female garments represented in the film posters got smaller with each passing decade, or how the creature is visually exploited to instill horror in the spectator. Those signs were then deconstructed and analysed in the semiotics section of the methodologies. From the creativity of using raw meat to represent the creature in the Shillington Education book cover to the objectification of the female character on the posters of *Flesh for Frankenstein*, the visual signs resonate the timeless nature of Shelley's work. The fact that the prefix *Franken-* is used nowadays to refer to modern ethical debates in gene manipulation or genetically modified foods exemplify the impact *Frankenstein's* themes have in our culture still today.

This visual research would have been very different without the phenomenal research and visual celebration of Sir Christopher Frayling's work. This journey opens new doors that many people might not have heard about before when it comes to *Frankenstein* while consolidating even further that the timeless piece of work young Mary Shelley has given us. In conclusion, Frayling offers one last brilliant synthesis of what *Frankenstein* (and its representation) means to popular culture:

*In short, after its first two hundred years, **Frankenstein lives!** Maybe the novel is more talked about than read—like Stephen Hawking’s *a Brief History of Time* (1988)—but it still lives. And Mary Shelley has proved to be as influential as her father, her mother, and her husband—if not more so, which would have surprised her mightily. With *Frankenstein*, she has provided us with a creation myth which works for today. And it all began with a ghost-story contest, a parlour-game, a serious young woman of eighteen years old who had run away with her boyfriend, and some very stimulating company—and a thunderstorm which kept them indoors...*

Sir Christopher Frayling, 2017, p. 111.



164. A black and white photograph of Boris Karloff as the Monster in Frankenstein. 1931. Universal Studios.

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APPENDIX



THE FREE SILVER FRANKENSTEIN.





