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FRANKENSTEIN
CREATION AND MONSTROSITY

Edited by Stephen Bann

REAKTION BOOKS
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because she sensed something of the psychological complexities of a thirst for grand knowledge. Since the idioms she deployed were of her time, we can appreciate their immediacy in the context of late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century anxieties about what unveilers of nature were like. Such people were potentially monstrous, in historically specific ways. At the same time, we, like Mary Shelley, also appreciate that the dangers of desiring knowledge are not limited to a particular historical moment, hence fears of monstrous forms of knowing can never be assuaged.

In the course of writing this essay I became aware that I was pursuing, and was being pursued by, a Monster of fearsome proportions and indistinct shape. If Mary Shelley’s Monster has no name, paradoxically, in recent decades it has been given more identities than Melville’s great white whale, and indeed, Frankenstein’s Monster has been compared to Moby Dick. A recent bibliography includes some 300 books and essays on Frankenstein, but it is not comprehensive. Monstrous indeed.

Two works published in 1979 signalled the shift in critical theory surrounding Mary Shelley’s novel: *The Madwoman in the Attic* by Sandra M. Gilbert and Susan Gubar, which brought the Monster into the area of Feminist studies; and George Levine and U.C. Knoepflmacher’s collection of essays, *The Endurance of Frankenstein*. Both marked Anglo-American critical theory turning to examine the repressed presences beneath the surface conformity of Victorian fiction. This approach was further developed by Levine’s *The Realistic Imagination* (1981), which presents Frankenstein as the fountain-head of what has been termed ‘Victorian realism’. For Levine, the objective concern of the eighteenth-century novel drained it of a symbolic dimension, and, in reaction, novelists evoked the Monstrous to give form to inarticulate subjective fears and desires:

As reality becomes a kind of destructive and formless flood, we arrive at an art that focuses on individual consciousness, the only remaining source of meaning and action. . . . The mystery depends upon closely observed, but opaque, surfaces of ordinary things, which then transform, by metaphor, reiteration, or variation, into something else [the Monstrous].

Levine traces a development from Mary Shelley’s creation of Frankenstein’s Monster, through Jane Austen, George Eliot, Trollope and Thackeray, to the fiction of D.H. Lawrence.

Interest in the Monstrous has developed in other areas of literary criticism. Marxist writers, such as Franco Moretti in *Signs Taken as
Wonders (1983), have found in the Monster and the vampire potent images of social repression. Moretti sees the Monster as an image of the rebellious poor, whom the breakdown of feudal relations has forced into brigandage, poverty and death. 4 On vampires he aptly cites Marx: ‘Capital is dead labour which, vampire-like, lives only by sucking living labour, and lives the more, the more it sucks’. 5 Poststructuralist studies of the Monster have been surveyed by Fred Botting in Making Monstrous (1991). Botting finds the Monster a perfect trope through which to express the inarticulate, the blind, la différence in literature. He compares the interaction of Frankenstein and the Monster in Mary Shelley’s tale with the way Lacan, Derrida and Barbara Johnson interpret Dupin’s search for the missing document in Poe’s short story ‘The Purloined Letter’. He notes that the Monster and Poe’s unnoticed letter each ‘function like a signifier, possessing its bearers as it blinds those who seek it out’. 6 Botting also relates the Monster to Barthes’ concept of the multiplicity of creative writing, where everything is to be disentangled, nothing deciphered. He later points out that when Foucault describes the continuity of the author’s presence in his literary creation, écriture, this has affinities with Frankenstein projecting his identity into the Monster. To modify a paragraph by Paul Sherwin:

If, for the orthodox Freudian, [the Monster] is a type of the unconscious, for the Jungian he is the shadow, for the Lacanian an objet à, for one Romantic a spectre, for another a Blakean emanation; he has also been or can be read as Rousseau’s natural man, a Wordsworthian child of nature, the isolated Romantic rebel, the misunderstood revolutionary impulse, Mary Shelley’s abandoned baby self, her abandoned babe, a [Barthian] aberrant signifier, [Derrida’s] différence, or as a hypostasis of godless presumption, the monstrousity of godless nature, analytical reasoning, or alienating labor. 7

This summary does not, of course, exhaust the modern interpretations of Frankenstein. The Monster features in Gillian Beer’s examination of the Darwinian debate on evolution, and she relates it to Caliban in Browning’s long poem ‘Caliban upon Setebos’. 8 Homi Bhabha and others have considered the Monster as a representation of the colonized Other. Mary Shelley’s Monster has overlapped with other myths of creation and the Monstrous, notably, as will be explored below, with Pygmalion and Galatea, a fable that has obvious affinities with the Frankenstein story. As Burton R. Pollin notes, 9 Mary Shelley was alerted to Ovid’s story through Mme de Genlis’s dramatic sketch Pygmalion et Galatée, which Shelley read shortly before writing Frankenstein. In this Galatea is initiated into the evils of mankind through her reading of human injustice, in the same way that Mary Shelley’s Monster learns of human injustice through the books in the De Lacey’s cottage.

The popularity of the Pygmalion legend in the nineteenth century has been explored by J. Hillis Miller in Versions of Pygmalion (1990), and Marina Warner has considered its relevance for gender identity in Monuments and Maidens: The Allegory of the Female Form (1985). To some extent the Pygmalion and Galatea myth merges with the story of Frankenstein and his Monster, with Ovid’s fable of ideal love turning into one of malign possession. In Robert Buchanan’s early poem, ‘Pygmalion: an Allegory of Art’ (c. 1840), Galatea is indeed a Vampire figure:

> Then the Dawn<br>stared in upon her: when I open’d eyes<br>I saw the gradual Dawn encrinsh her<br>like blood that blush’d within her, – and behold<br>she trembled – and I shrieked. 10

It is important to note that up to this point we have considered Mary Shelley’s story as primarily a textual creation. There is good reason for this: indeed, if any text was constructed to illustrate the relationship between langue and parole, or the nature of écriture, it is surely Frankenstein. It contains a narrative within a narrative; if we include the Monster’s self-revelation when he tells his story to Frankenstein, the work contains three concentric discourses. The book is a palimpsest of subtexts, including the Bible, and works by Aeschylus, Milton, Coleridge and Shakespeare. Frankenstein approaches his quest to create life through reading Paracelsus, Cornelius Agrippa and Albertus Magnus. The Monster, too, creates a selfconscious identity by its precocious browsing through Volney’s Ruins of Empire, Milton’s Paradise Lost Plutarch’s Lives, Goethe’s Sorrows of Werther, and the eavesdropped histories of Felix and De Lacey. Addressing Frankenstein, the Monster cries: ‘I should have been your Adam’, and compares himself to Satan. The intertextual nature of the novel is signalled by its very subtitle: ‘A Modern Prometheus’.

In its turn, Frankenstein was rapidly imbedded into subsequent texts. Mrs Gaskell, significantly confusing Frankenstein with his Monster, writes in Mary Barton (1848):

> The actions of the uneducated seem to me typified in those of Frankenstein, that monster of many human qualities, ungifted with soul, a knowledge of the difference between good and evil.<br>The people rise up to life; they irritate us, they terrify us, and we become their
enemies. Then, in the sorrowful moment of our triumphant power, their eyes gaze on us with a mute reproach. Why have we made them as they are; a powerful monster, yet without the means for peace and happiness?  

The structure of Mary Shelley’s tale appealed immediately to an age anxiously searching for new identities in a changing society. The Monster became an image used by social commentators, cartoonists and satirists. In *Punch* magazine alone, there have been a succession of representations of the Monster, from Victorian images of the British working classes, the Irish labourer, and Tsar Nicholas I, to a modern cartoon of Mrs Thatcher as Frankenstein creating a monstrous Conservative party for her unholy pleasures. It also entered the world of the novel. Dickens’s *Great Expectations* (1860–61), for example, is a veritable Chinese box of Frankenstein motifs. Magwitch attempts to ‘create’ a gentleman out of Pip, a blacksmith’s apprentice; Miss Havisham tries to fashion a heartless Monster out of the adopted Estella; Pip discovers that by being the focus for the convict’s ‘expectations’, he created a new identity for Magwitch. The reference here to *Frankenstein* is explicit:

The imaginary student, pursued by the misshapen creature he had impiously made, was not more wretched than I, pursued by the creature which had made me . . .

Monster-making is the common denominator in the interwoven subplots of *Great Expectations*. Estella slaps Pip as she utters ‘You coarse little Monster’ (my italics). In turn, when Pip goes to London as a newly fashioned ‘gentleman’ he turns Frankenstein himself:

For after I had made this monster out of the refuse of my washerwoman’s family, and had clothed him with a blue coat, and the boots already mentioned, I had to find him a little to do and fret deal to eat; and with both of these horrible requisites he haunted my existence. This avenging phantom was ordered to be on duty at eight on Tuesday morning.

If Mary Shelley’s novel becomes imbedded in Victorian literature, it found another, and different, place in the non-literary culture. This ‘popular’ version of the Monster differs from its literary origins, and not only in its freedom from intertextual complexity. Where the Monster in the novel is usually invisible to anyone but Frankenstein, appearing only by moonlight, and erupting into a physical presence in isolated episodes of violence, the popular tradition foregrounds the Monster’s size and physicality. Where Mary Shelley’s Monster thinks, reads and reasons, the Monster of popular tradition is illiterate, and usually mute, expressing
intense but inarticulate feelings through mime. To understand this popular tradition, we must turn to the theatre. The trail leads us back to the fable of Pygmalion and Galatea, and in particular to Jean-Jacques Rousseau's 'scène lyrique', *Pygmalion*, written in 1762 and first performed in 1770. Mary Shelley, who was lodging in the Villa Diodati on the banks of Rousseau's Lake Geneva when *Frankenstein* was conceived, may well have known this piece, which by 1812 had become a well-known work in Rousseau's œuvre.

Rousseau refashioned the classical myth, and gave it its modern form. In Book x of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, the depraved Propoëtesides deny Venus's divinity, and, in revenge, Venus turns their women into prostitutes with hearts of stone. They disgust Pygmalion, who in reaction to their crude lust creates and falls in love with an ivory statue. This is rewarded by Venus, who brings the effigy to life, and Pygmalion marries her, although, in Ovid's version, the statue remains nameless. Rousseau changes the story, leaving out the plot of Venus and the depraved women, removing the erotic tone, and focuses on the creative power of the artist's passion and imagination.

To dramatize the intensity of Pygmalion's emotion, Rousseau developed a form for which he coined the term 'le mélo drame'. In his *Essai sur l'origine des langues* he argued that gesture and inarticulate sound are more elemental than speech, and in order to exploit this theory he wrote *Pygmalion* as monologue intercut with passages where music and mime transcend the words into a higher realm of experience. The piece is an orchestration of the passions. Although the gods are invoked, all the interest is focused on Pygmalion. The effect is that of a profane Mass, with the inanimate transubstantiated into flesh and blood not by divine agency, but through the artist's emotion and creative imagination.

Rousseau himself wrote *Pygmalion* in a period of exhausted depression, after creating the heroines of *Julie*, ou *La Nouvelle Héloïse* (1761), two fictional women that were more real to him than those in actual life. Perhaps for this reason, Pygmalion's last words in the play to Galatea are 'I have given you all my being, I only live in you'. In Ovid there is no such sense of loss. Rousseau sounds a dark note, which Mary Shelley may have remembered when she came to write her own myth of creation.

Although no performance of *Pygmalion* is recorded on the British stage, contemporary theatre in England had its own Monsters, and in 1823, when Mary Shelley's creation first appeared on the boards in Richard Brinsley Peake's *Presumption*, or *The Fate of Frankenstein* at the English Opera House, the play inherited an already established tradition of theatrical prodigies. These Monsters were to bring together a curious grouping of theatrical types, including the statue, the Wild Man, the Clown; and, related to these, the stage sailor and the fairground 'freak'. Diverse as these Monsters may appear, they share a cluster of characteristics. They are ambivalent in identity, hovering between the human and the alien. They are physically powerful, and at the same time verbally inarticulate, sometimes mute. They respond ecstatically to music, and their emergence on the stage is directly related, as was *Pygmalion* itself, to the rise of melodrama.

Pygmalion bringing Galatea into life, and Frankenstein raising the Monster, both draw on the dramatic effect of the moving statue. This is related to the nature of theatre itself. The role of the Monster as the objectified Other has affinities with the place of masks in traditional theatre, and the puppet-like figures of the *commedia dell'arte*. Traditional melodrama relates simultaneously to intense subjective experience and to objective, highly stylized forms of appearance, speech and situation. Actual statues, from Hermione in Shakespeare's *The Winter's Tale*
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(1610), to Mozart's vengeful effigy in *Don Giovanni* (1787), come to life on stage. Gothic melodrama also used moving statues for sensational effect, beginning with the vision of the Bleeding Nun in Monk Lewis's *The Castle Spectre* (1797) and continuing this practice well into the nineteenth century. Thus the anonymous *Lekindal or, The Sleepless Woman* (1833) features three fiends who, for their crimes, are turned to stone, but are later reanimated on stage by the power of the wizard Zobaldi. A decade later, the Royal City of London Theatre was offering *The Skeleton Hand: or, The Demon Statue* (1843), also anonymous, which included the following:

Scene by moonlight – Pedestal with statue. TERRIFIC INCANTATION! Herman endows the statue with reason.

The Statue falls in love with the heroine Lestelle, and commits a murder for which her sweetheart Wolfgang is accused. Wolfgang is saved from execution for the crime at the last moment, and the Statue appears from behind, mounting a peak of rock with Lestelle in its arms. Soldiers fire at it, the rock is blown up, and the Statue falls into a waterfall. Wolfgang rescues Lestelle, and a gigantic Skeleton Hand, the sign of retribution, appears above, in a GRAND TABLEAU.

In its half-human, half-alien identity, the moving statue was allied to another Monster type, the 'Wild Man'. *Obi, or, Three-Finger'd Jack* (1801) is a serio-pantomime by John Fawcett, with music by Samuel Arnold, that played at London's Theatre Royal, Haymarket, later transferring to Covent Garden. Obi is a runaway Jamaican slave who uses sorcery against the slavers. Although monstrous in size and demonic in his vengeance, Obi evinces a bravery and dignified power that associates him with the Noble Savage, and, specifically, with the black rebel hero of Aphra Behn's *Oronooko: or, The Royal Slave* (c. 1678) which was successfully dramatized by Thomas Southern in 1695. The actor Richard John Smith had been given the sobriquet 'O' because of his celebrated playing of the title role in the first production of *Obi*. It is therefore significant that he should move from this to impersonate the Monster in H.M. Milner's *Frankenstein: or, The Man and the Monster* (1824), exploiting the same acting style, and again achieving great success.

*Obi* can be placed alongside two other popular early nineteenth-century plays that feature European 'Wild Men'. Thomas Dibdin's *Valentine and Orson* (Covent Garden, 1804) has origins in a medieval Flemish legend popular in English chapbooks of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and it also has echoes of Shakespeare's *The Winter's Tale*. It shows how the wronged Empress Belisanta of Greece is banished following a false accusation, taking with her the infant twins, Orson and Valentine. Orson is carried off by a she-bear, who suckles him; Valentine is brought up as a knight at the court of Pepin, King of France. As a young man Valentine is sent out to destroy a Monster, who is terrifying the surrounding country. The 'Monster', though Valentine does not know it, is his lost brother Orson. Valentine fights and subdues Orson, taking him back to the court. Starting as a mocked, drunken beast, Orson is tamed. He wears courtly clothes, gains manners and shows chivalric prowess, although he remains dumb. As he has been brought up by a bear, he can handle a magic shield that can only be used 'by a man not nursed by a woman', and with this he defeats an evil giant that is threatening the court. In the end Orson recovers his speech, and wins the hand of a lady.

*Valentine and Orson* is set in the romantic past. In C.J.M. Dibdin's *The Wild Man* (Sadlers Wells, 1809) the Monster inhabits an exotic island evocative of a pre-historic Eden:
When the scene opens, it is just previous to day-break; the Volcano is emitting from its crater; the lava runs down its sides and is reflected in the water, and the scene (supposed to be lighted by it) exhibits a lurid, igneous hue. Music. The Wild Man comes from the cave; seems delighted with the eruption of the Volcano, and expresses his delight by outre antics and a kind of chattering; and at length runs up the rock into the cave again.

As the morning breaks, the villain Rufus enters bearing a young boy, and is about to stab the boy to death when he is frightened off by a wild boar. The Wild Man emerges, and sees the child. He is quite delighted with it, and taking it up in a careful, but awkward manner, he carries it into his cave. We learn that the child is Adolpus, the son of Prince Artuff, ruler of the island. Muley, a Moor and the island’s Vice-Regent, has arranged that Rufus kill the boy in order that he himself might usurp the kingdom. The play, whose complicated plot includes a curious intrusion from Don Quixote and Sancha Panza, was largely a vehicle for the performance of Joseph Grimaldi (1778–1837) as the Wild Man. The demands made on Grimaldi, who exploited all his experience of acting pantomime and dumb-show, were immense:

It was the most difficult part [Grimaldi] ever had to play – the multitude of passions requiring to be portrayed and the rapid succession in which it was necessary to present them before the spectators, involving such tremendous demands upon his nervous system that after the close of the first act he would stagger off to a small room behind the prompter’s box and sob and cry aloud [so] that those about him were very often in doubt, up to the very moment of his being called, whether he would be able to go stage for the second act.

The Wild Man’s physical prowess was illustrated in the first act, in which he chases the wild boar that has terrified Rufus, returning with the Boar’s leg, which he has torn off; yet, about to kill Artuff, he is easily restrained once ‘the child beats him with his hand’. The Wild Man is also preternaturally affected by music. When Artuff plays his flute,

the Wild Man appears quite softened by the melody – which Artuff increases to ‘moderato’ – the eyes of the Wild Man brighten, and he expresses joy – Artuff increases to ‘furioso’: this strain excites the Wild Man’s feelings to passion and ferocity; and after running about furiously, tearing his hair, &c, he makes a spring at Artuff, but the child gets between them... Artuff plays ‘affetuoso’ – this softens Wild Man, who cries; – Artuff increases to jig time – Wild Man dances with delight...

The various exploits, which illustrate the Wild Man’s immense strength and agility, culminate in the defeat of Muley and the restoration of Artuff and Adolphus to their rights to the island. In a water pageant (Sadler Wells at this time featured a large water tank), the state barge passes across a lake, the Wild Man swimming before it. Muley seizes Adolphus and leaps into the water, but the Wild Man rescues the boy (yet again), and holds Muley under the water as a final spectacle opens up at the back of the stage.

To the Wild Man we can add to the genre of stage Monsters, curiously, the Clown. From 4 October to Christmas Eve 1806, the part of Orson in Valentine and Orson was played with enormous physical exertion by Joseph Grimaldi, who, as already has been noticed, was later to act the ‘Wild Man’. Between these two performances he played the Clown in the 1806 Covent Garden pantomime Harlequin and Mother Goose; or, The Golden Egg, with such effect that he gave the role its Victorian sobriquet, ‘Joey’. Grimaldi gave the Clown an identity that has largely continued through to today: a white-faced acrobat with elements of the grotesque; a comic figure undercut with pathos. Although Grimaldi played the Wild Man covered in skins, and the Clown in parti-coloured Harlequin dress, there was the same underlying persona, one simultaneously human and alienated.

Finally, two other figures lurk on the fringes of Monster iconography,
the ‘freak’ and the stage sailor. The freak belongs to sideshows and exhibitions largely outside the theatre, although the ‘Elephant Man’ was to feature in both theatre and literature. A related if much later example of the Monster as freak can be seen in the film *King Kong* (RKO, 1933), where the great ape, a modern incarnation of Dibdin’s ‘Wild Man’ (Kong even inhabits a similar primeval forest) is captured through his sensitivity to beauty (Fay Wray as Anne Darrow), and is turned to violence by the New York society that exploits him. The ‘freak’ has obvious affinities with Frankenstein’s Monster, separated from society by its monstrousity, and yearning for a humanity it can never share.

In contrast, the stage sailor is separated from his fellows by his very perfection. By mid-century the most famous stage Tar was the athletic T.P. Cooke (1786–1864), a former sailor. Cooke’s other starring role was as Frankenstein’s Monster. The connection may appear tangential. But on the early nineteenth-century stage, the sailor, with his curious nautical speech and heightened physicality, united strength and goodness with an innocence that made him also an outsider and natural victim. In Cooke’s most famous naval part, that of William in Douglas Jerrold’s *Black-Ey’d Susan* (Surrey Theatre 1829), the hero saves his wife Susan from an attempted rape, impulsively striking down a drunken assailant who turns out to be William’s captain. William only escapes execution by a last-minute intervention of Providence when it is discovered he had been discharged from naval service previous to the time of the assault. Melville was later to draw on the sailor’s traditional dumb innocence for *Billy Budd* (1891).

Frankenstein’s Monster on stage shared, therefore, an established iconography of Monsters, and dramatic variations in their allegiance to Mary Shelley’s original. The playbill to *Presumption!* or, *The Fate of Frankenstein* (Covent Garden, 28 July 1823), takes both the scientific and Faustian elements in Mary Shelley’s novel. The playbill declares that

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 in such an imagination; yet, in assuming it as the basis of a work of fancy, I have not considered myself as weaving a series of supernatural terror. Exhibited in this story, is the fatal consequence of that presumption, which attempts to penetrate, beyond prescribed depths, into the mysteries of nature.1

A different version, however, was being offered across the Thames at the Coburg Theatre, a playhouse nicknamed the ‘blood tub’ for its allegiance to sensational melodrama (later it was to become the Old Vic). An early afterpiece was entitled *Frankenstein: or, The Demon of Switzerland*, staged on 18 August 1823: this claimed to be based on a still earlier version by H.M. Milner. The surviving text by Milner, *Frankenstein: or, The Man and the Monster*, was performed at the Coburg three years later (3 July 1826), and probably incorporates parts of the earlier versions. Whatever its tangled history, Milner’s version was the vehicle for O. Smith’s portrayal of the monster, and by the 1830s this was being taken as the standard stage version.

From the opening scene, the play significantly departs from Mary Shelley’s original. Frankenstein is not an obsessive private scholar but a celebrated scientist being entertained by the Prince del Piombino, who has given him a room in a pavilion in which to execute his greatest experiment. The Prince is encouraged to do this by his attractive sister, Rosaura, who has romantic designs on Frankenstein. Frankenstein already has an illegitimate child by Emmeline, a country girl he seduced and abandoned. The moral implications of Frankenstein’s neglect of his family responsibilities is developed in ways unthinkable in Mary Shelley’s original.

The play opens, however, not with Frankenstein, but with Strutt and Lizetta. Strutt is Frankenstein’s servant, a comic inversion of his master: ‘My master’s a great man, and I’m like the moon to the sun, I shine with a reflected brightness’. Where Frankenstein is obsessed with fame, Strutt is primarily concerned with food and drink, and, together with Lizetta, with more natural forms of creation:

Strutt [peering through the pavilion window]: Would you believe it, Lizetta, from all I can see, I really do think, at least it seems to me, that my master’s making a man.

Lizetta: Making a man! – What, is he not alone?2

Later, Lizetta’s father is to shout after Strutt and his eloping daughter: ‘Go, both of you, and people the world with monsters, if you will’.3

Milner’s Frankenstein brings the Monster to life and is repelled mainly by its ghostly appearance. Frankenstein cries ‘Instead of the fresh colour of humanity, he wears the livid hue of the damp grave’,4 and his horror is followed by a piece of highly physical pantomime:

[The Monster] is surprised at the appearance of Frankenstein – advances towards him, and touches him; the latter starts back in disgust and horror, draws his sword and rushes on the Monster, who, with the utmost care takes the sword from him, snaps it in two, and throws it down. Frankenstein then attempts to seize it by the throat, but by a very slight exertion of its powers, it throws him off to a considerable distance; in shame, confusion, and despair, Frankenstein rushes out
of the Apartment, locking the doors after him. The Monster gazes about it in wonder, traverses the Apartment; hearing the sound of Frankenstein’s footsteps without, wishes to follow him; finds the opposition of the door, with one blow strikes it from its hinges, and rushes out.\textsuperscript{55}

Milner’s Monster shows clear affinities with the Wild Man. He compassionately rescues Frankenstein’s betrayed mistress, Emmeline, who has collapsed while wandering with her child in a storm. The Monster brings her to shelter, and is attempting to befriend her child when Emmeline’s father, Ritzberg, fires at him and wounds him, driving him out. The Monster shows innate gentleness and love of children, and sensitivity to music. Later, in a climactic scene, after he has been turned against mankind by the cruelty he has received, he again captures Emmeline and her child, bearing them to ‘a tremendous range of craggy precipices, near the summit of Mount Etna’. After declaring, in mime, that all his friendly overtures to Frankenstein had been repelled with ‘scorn and abhorrence’, the Monster binds her to a rock and ‘whirls [the child] aloft’, preparing to dash it down on the rock:

At this moment a thought occurs to Emmeline – she pulls from under her dress a small flageolet, and begins to play an air – its effect on the Monster is instantaneous – he is at once astonished and delighted – he places the Child on the ground – his feelings become more powerfully affected by the music, and his attentions absorbed by it. At the air his feelings become more powerfully excited – he is moved to tears: afterwards, on the music assuming a lively character, he is worked up to a paroxysm of delight – and on it becoming mournful, is quite subdued, till he lays down exhausted at the feet of the rock to which Emmeline is attached.\textsuperscript{56}

While Mary Shelley’s version stresses the impotent isolation of the Monster, Milner’s creation appeals much more openly to the audience’s sympathy. He is pitted against Frankenstein, the heartless seducer of Emmeline, and the autocratic Prince del Piombino with his designing sister. In a dramatic climax the Monster enters the palace, and bare-handed routs the Prince’s armed guards. Finally, the Monster ascends to take the throne itself:

[Frankenstein] seizes on the Monster – the Monster dashes Frankenstein to the earth, and by an exertion of his immense strength breaks through the opposing line – the Prince gives the word to fire – the Monster, snatching up the Officer holds him as a target before him – he receives the shots and falls dead – the Monster rushes up the steps of the throne and laughs exulting – a general picture is formed, on which the Drop falls.\textsuperscript{57}

Although mortally wounded – by Strutt, not by Frankenstein – the Monster holds centre stage to the end, defying the Duke’s troops and leaping into an erupting Mount Etna.

It is the ‘popular’ Monster rather than the literary tradition that has survived most potently into the present, particularly through its transposition to film. The first film version of Frankenstein was by Charles Ogle (Edison Studios, 1910), who presented him white faced and clown-like, as shown in the reproduced still from the film. This also apparent in Universal Studios’ version of 1931, in which the Monster was mimed by an obscure actor Henry Pratt, who was to make his name as ‘Boris Karloff’. Whale’s film is probably the most important single retelling of Mary Shelley’s story, shaping a visual image that has become firmly identified with the Monster in later films, in representations across the range of the mass-media, and in a major development of the Frankenstein legend there is no space to consider here – science fiction.

Whale’s film differs radically from Mary Shelley’s literary prototype.\textsuperscript{58} By the 1930s, the popular image of the scientist had changed: in a period of technological advance, the scientist could do no wrong, and the smartly groomed, prosperous Frankenstein, played by Colin Clive, with his society wife Elizabeth, embody hope in the future for a decade threatened by the Great Depression. In Whale’s film the creation of the Monster takes place not within the privacy of Frankenstein’s darkened study, but in a Gothic tower, (salvaged by Universal Studios from their recent hit, Dracula, of 1931), and surrounded by all the paraphernalia of quasi-magical science fiction. The act of creation is witnessed by a group that includes Victor, Dr Waldman, and even Elizabeth. Once the Monster has come to life, all are jubilant, and a delighted Frankenstein cries without apparent irony: ‘Now I know what it feels like to be God!’\textsuperscript{59}

Having removed the central point of Mary Shelley’s story, Frankenstein’s self-destructive obsession, the script-writers (Robert Florey and Garrett Fort) had to find other explanations for what went wrong. To do this they went back to Milner’s device of splitting Frankenstein into two and divided him between the successful scientist and a self-parodying alter ego, his servant. Florey’s creation of Fritz is darker than Milner’s Strutt, and the film presents him as a hunchbacked simpleton who is in every respect the mirror opposite of his suave master. It is Fritz who is chosen to steal a perfect brain from Dr Waldman’s medical school, but he drops the chosen specimen and scuttles off with a jar labelled ‘DIsjunctio cebrei—Abnormal Brain’, the brain of a typical criminal. Frankenstein creates the Monster without reading this unusually large notice, and it is only on bringing the Monster into the light that he becomes aware of a serious flaw in its nature.
In spite of his ‘abnormal’ brain, the Monster as portrayed by Karloff is closer to the Wild Man and to Milner’s Monster than to a typical criminal. Karloff’s Monster is drawn sympathetically to children. In one scene it plays with a girl by the water, dropping her into the lake only because it thinks she is a flower, and so will float with the other blossoms. (Universal’s sequel, The Bride of Frankenstein of 1935, follows the earlier stage tradition further when it shows the Monster’s love of music). Karloff’s face is heavily made up with white in the pantomime clown tradition, although it invokes pathos without comedy. While Mary Shelley’s Monster speaks, the Monster of Florey and Fort remains as dumb as it was on the nineteenth-century stage, expressing through mime an essentially sympathetic character.

In Whale’s film of 1931 the Monster dies in a blazing mill. This change from the novel has attracted some attention. It has been suggested that Florey got the idea because he wrote the filmscript while lodging over the Van der Kamp Bakery in Los Angeles, whose trade mark was a windmill. But why should a bakery trademark suggest a burning mill for the end of the Monster? The answer lies in the stage tradition. We have seen that fiery endings were a feature of stage melodramas. In Milner’s version of Frankenstein the Monster dives into the erupting flames of Mount Etna. The climax of the burning mill entered stage history as early as 1812 with Isaac Pocock’s The Miller and his Men, a play perpetuated into the twentieth century by the popularity of toy theatre versions that were enjoyed by, among others, Winston Churchill. The Miller and his Men tells of another stage Monster, Grindoff, who by day is a respectable miller but by night, as the robber chief Wolf, leads bandits. His headquarters is in a mill overlooking the village, to which he is tracked at the climax to the play. The underground power magazine is fired, and Grindoff dies in the blaze.

The dramatic éclat of the burning mill was the basis of the play’s success, and it offered a natural ending to a film that throughout, as Richard J. Anobile notes, owes more to the techniques of stage than to those of the cinema. This ending not only takes over a popular melodramatic spectacle: as a closure the burning mill modifies the significance of the Frankenstein legend as a whole. In the novel Frankenstein dies in the cold, and although the Monster declares it will die on a funeral pyre amid the ice, we see only its sleigh disappearing into the eternal snow. The final focus in the novel is on Walton, a potential Ancient Mariner made wise by Frankenstein’s story, who saves his own and his crew’s lives by returning to home and friends. In the plays and the film the Monster remains defiant at the centre, destroyed but not defeated in an apocalypse of flame. Its death, if death it is, foregrounds the tragedy of the outcast and the rejected.

But if the film shows continuities with the nineteenth-century stage tradition, it also diverges from it. However sympathetic the portrayal of Karloff’s Monster, according to Florey’s script it is an outcast not because society is unjust, but because as a Monster it has been given the wrong brain. Although its drab clothes, in contrast with those of his wealthy creator, indicate a lower-class identity, the plot implies that the Monster’s tragedy is caused by mental abnormality. The film ends not
with the Monster, but with the servants tittering over the information that Frankenstein's injuries will not prevent him fathering a son by Elizabeth, who does not die but survives to provide Frankenstein with a happy bourgeois family.

Yet the myth cannot be deflected by a twist of the plot. Few who see the film feel that the Monster is simply the victim of a switched brain, nor in the popular imagination can the Monster be disposed of so easily. The film was made in 1931. Ahead lay the Great Depression, and beyond this World War II, Auschwitz, Hiroshima, Vietnam. The sequel, made in 1935, begins with the image of a monstrous hand rising from the debris of the mill, a hand groping upward, menacingly . . .

5

Impressionist Monsters:
H. G. Wells's 'The Island of Dr Moreau'

MICHAEL FRIED

In a little-known story by Rudyard Kipling, 'A Matter of Fact', published in his collection of 1893, Many Inventions, three newspaper men on a tramp-steamer from Capetown to Southampton undergo a horrific experience. One morning their little vessel, the Rathmines, is buffeted by a series of tidal waves generated by the eruption of an underwater volcano; then, in a blinding white fog, they hear what they take to be the steam-siren of another ship, frighteningly close to them; at the same time they become aware of an appalling smell, as of something from the bottom of the sea; and then there is this:

Some six or seven feet above the port bulwarks, framed in fog, and as utterly unsupported as the full moon, hung a Face. It was not human, and it certainly was not animal, for it did not belong to this earth as known to man. The mouth was open, revealing a ridiculously tiny tongue - as absurd as the tongue of an elephant; there were tense wrinkles of white skin at the angles of the drawn lips; white feelers like those of a barbel sprang from the lower jaw, and there was no sign of teeth within the mouth. But the horror of the face lay in the eyes, for those were sightless - white, in sockets as white as scraped bone, and blind. Yet for all this the face, wrinkled as the mask of a lion is drawn in Assyrian sculpture, was alive with rage and terror. One long white feeler touched our bulwarks. Then the face disappeared with the swiftness of a blind worm popping into its burrow, and the next thing that I remember is my own voice in my own ears, saying gravely to the mainmast, 'But the air-bladder ought to have been forced out of its mouth, you know.'

A moment later the fog blows away and the men see the sea, 'gray with mud, rolling on every side of us and empty of all life'. There follows a long passage that I give in its entirety:

Then in one spot it bubbled and became like the pot of ointment that the Bible speaks of. From that wide-ranged trouble a Thing came up - a gray and red Thing with a neck - a Thing that bellowed and writhed in pain. Frithiof [the boatswain] drew in his breath and held it till the red letters of the ship's name, woven across his jersey, straggled and opened out as though they had been type
References

4 Louis James: Frankenstein's Monster in Two Traditions
This essay was originally planned as a joint venture with Dr Jan Shepherd, who provided key material on the drama. She died tragically before the piece could be completed, and this essay is dedicated to her memory.

2 In Fred Botting, Making Monstrous (Manchester, 1991).
5 Moretti, op. cit., p. 91.
6 Fred Botting, Making Monstrous, pp. 7–12.
11 Mrs Gaskell, *Mary Barton* (1848), ch. 11.
12 See Chris Baldick, In Frankenstein’s Shadow, ch. 1.
14 Ibid., ch. 40.
15 Rousseau’s *Pygmalion* (1770) was the first work to be identified as a ‘melodrama’. The experiment belongs strictly to the evolution of opera rather than drama; however it does have relevance to the development of stage melodrama. See, for example, Peter Brooks, *The Melodramatic Imagination* (New Haven and London, 1976), and Janet Shepherd, ‘Music, Text and Performance in English Popular Theatre, 1750–1840’ (University of London thesis, 1991).
16 This is discussed in Brooks, op. cit., pp. 66, 87. Brooks’ chapters 3 and 4 are relevant here.
17 Playbill in the Pettingell Collection, Templeman Library, University of Kent at Canterbury.
18 From a playbill for the Royal City of London Theatre, 2 February 1843, in Pettingell Collection, Templeman Library, University of Kent at Canterbury.
21 From a playbill in Louis James’ collection.
23 Milner, *Frankenstein*, ii, ii.
24 Ibid., i, iii.
25 Ibid.
26 Ibid., p. 24.
27 Ibid., i, vii.
29 Anobile, op. cit., p. 96.
30 Ibid., p. 5.
32 Anobile, op. cit., p. 6.

References

5 Michael Fried: Impressionist Monsters: H. G. Wells’s *The Island of Dr Moreau*’
2 Ibid., pp. 192–4.
5 It may be useful to have this passage in mind throughout what follows:

Once the line encountered the body of a dead soldier. He lay upon his back staring at the sky. He was dressed in an awkward suit of yellowish brown. The youth [the novel’s protagonist, Henry Fleming] could see that the soles of his shoes had been worn to the thinnest of paper, and from a great rent in one the dead foot projected piteously. And it was as if fate had betrayed the soldier. In death it exposed to his enemies that poverty which in life he had perhaps concealed from his friends.

The ranks opened covertly to avoid the corpse. The invulnerable dead man forced a way for himself. The youth looked keenly at the ashen face. The wind raised the tawny beard. It moved as if a hand were stroking it. He vaguely desired to walk around and around the body and stare; the impulse of the living to try to read in dead eyes the answer to the Question. (Stephen Crane, *Prose and Poetry*, ed. J. C. Levenson, New York, 1984, pp. 101–2.)

6 See his *The Gold Standard and the Logic of Naturalism: American Literature at the Turn of the Century* (Berkeley, CA, 1987). This is as good a place as any to thank Michaels, Stephen Bann, James Conant, Frances Ferguson, and Ruth Leys for helpful conversations about particular points in the present essay.
7 H. G. Wells, *The Island of Dr Moreau: A Variorum* (Athens, GA, and London, 1993); hereafter cited as *Moreau*. Page references to this edition will be given in parentheses in the text. I might add that I am currently at work on a book to be called ‘Almayer’s Face: Rewriting Literary Impressionism’ in which the present essay, or the material in it, will be subsumed.
9 Maps, charts and diagrams, with their elision of the distinction between writing and drawing (or imagining), are a basic impressionist motif. *Heart of Darkness*, again, is an obvious example, as is *Kim*, which juxtaposes mapmaking in the service of imperialism to the lama’s novel-long labours on his religious chart/diagram. Significantly, the latter is torn in two, disfigured, in the climactic encounter with the enemy agents, in the course of which the lama is also struck in the face (an action the reader registers as one of shocking violence). The mention of *Kim* leads me to add that *spying* – a special case of seeing – is another impressionist motif, as in *Under Western Eyes*, *The Fifth Queen*, and *Children’s The Riddle of the Sands*. (In the last of these, maps printed in the body of the text play a crucial role; I shall have more to say about all these works in ‘Almayer’s Face’.
10 See Fried, *Realism, Writing, Disfiguration*, p. 125.
11 See ibid., p. 96 and passim.
13 It hardly needs stating that Pound’s horrified, disgusted description of the ‘black-faced creature’ and the other beast-men trades on contemporaneous racist discourse to achieve some portion of its effect. What is less obvious is Wells’s attitude towards that discourse: as Philmus remarks, the first draft of the novel contains more blatantly
References

21. Rudyard Kipling, 'Wireless', in Traffics and Discoveries (1904; Harmondsworth, 1957), pp. 181-99. Kipling's 'The Mark of the Beast', cited in n.15, is also pertinent here. Its climax comes when the narrator and a friend, Strickland, torture the faceless Silver Man with heated gun-barrels to force him to cure a case of 'hydrophobia' that he had caused. The narrator writes:

I understand then how men and women and little children can endure to see a thing burnt alive; for the beast was moaning on the floor, and though the Silver Man had no face, you could see horrible feelings passing through the slab that took its place, exactly as waves of heat play across red-hot iron — gun-barrels for instance.

This last sentence is not exactly a case of regression from print to writing but together with the blank space between paragraphs that follows (the only such space in the text) it invites us to imagine the deliberate elision of a written description too horrible to lend itself to print.

22. As Philmus remarks (Introducing Moreau, pp. xxi, xlvi, n.65), Moreau's views are very close to those expressed by Wells himself in Province of Pain, an article published in Science and Art (February 1894), pp. 58-9. The article concludes with Wells saying that 'the province of pain is after all a limited and transitory one; a phase through which life must pass on its evolution from the automatic to the spiritual; and, so far as we can tell, among all the hosts of space, pain is found only on the surface of this little planet' (H. G. Wells: Early Writings in Science and Science Fiction, ed. R. M. Philmus and D. Y. Hughes, Berkeley, CA, and London, 1975, pp. 198-9). But Wells's identification with Moreau in this regard only underscores the problematic status of pain in the novel as distinct from the article.

Note, by the way, the curious connection Wells draws between the province of pain and the surface of the earth. Earlier in the article he writes: 'The province of pain ... is merely the surface of his body, with “spheres of influence”, rather than proper possessions in the interior, and the centre seat of pain is in the mind' (p. 196). The concept of surface, of course, played a considerable role in contemporary discussions of literary impressionism, and its prominence in Wells's article suggests that writerly considerations may have been entangled with strictly scientific ones.

23. Thus the Grand Lunar's brain is described by Cavor as 'very much like an opaque, featureless bladder with dim, undulating ghosts of convolutions writhing visibly within' (H. G. Wells, The First Men in the Moon, 1901; London and Glasgow, 1954, p. 258).
24. In Experiment in Autobiography, Wells reports that in response to Miss Healey's criticism of his verse that his poem had no feet (see n.18 above), he had replied: 'The humming bird has no feet, the cherubim round the Matter-Dorset have no feet. The ancients figured the poetic effusion as a horse winged to signify the poet was sparring of his feet' (p. 251).

See, for example, Ford Madox Ford, Return to Yesterday (1921; New York, 1972), where he explains: 'The trouble ... with Conrad and myself was this: we could not get our own prose keyed down enough. We wanted to write, I suppose, as only Mr W. H. Hudson ever wrote — as simply as the grass grows. We desired to achieve a style — the habit of a style — so simple you would notice it no more than you notice the unobtrusive covering of the South Downs. The turf has to be there, or the earth would not be

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green... We wanted the reader to forget the writer - to forget that he was reading' (p. 216).

27 More broadly, it perhaps expresses the same sort of critique not just of Hudstonian but also of Comradian impressionism (as understood by Wells, not by Ford) that Wells develops in one of the most interesting sections of Experiment in Autobiography (pp. 525–532). 'This incessant endeavour to keep prose bristling up and have it "vivid!" all the time defeats its end', Wells argues. 'I find very much of Conrad oppressive, as overwrought as an Indian tractacy, and it is only in chosen passages and some of his short stories that I would put his work on a level with the naked vigour of Stephen Crane' (p. 531). The larger question of Wells's particular slant on impressionism requires to be dealt with at greater length.


6 Michael Grant, James Whale's 'Frankenstein': The Horror Film and the Symbolic Biology of the Cinematic Monster
3 J. L. Schefter, 'Schefter on Schefter', Wide Angle, 61 (1982), pp. 54–63. This article consists of translations from L'homme ordinaire du cinéma (Paris, 1980). Schefter's arguments should be sharply distinguished from those of ‘apparatus theorists’ such as Jean-Louis Comolli, Jean-Louis Baudry and Stephen Heath. Unlike these thinkers, Schefter is not concerned to address issues of ‘subject positioning’ or ideology.

4 As Donald Davie has argued in a very different context; see The Poet in the Imaginary Museum (Manchester, 1977), p. 98. I am deeply indebted to Davie's arguments throughout the first section of this paper.

5 Ibid., p. 194.
6 Ibid., p. 103.
9 Carroll, p. 17.
10 Ibid.
11 Ibid.
14 Carroll, p. 19.
17 Hacker, p. 288.
18 Ibid., p. 289.
19 Ibid.
20 Hacker, p. 296. A relation between two objects is 'internal' (in Wittgenstein's sense) if it is inconceivable that these two objects should not stand in this relation. Wittgenstein writes in the Remarks on Frazer: 'one might illustrate the internal relation of a circle to an ellipse by gradually transforming the ellipse into a circle; but in order to assert that a given ellipse in fact, historically, came from a circle (hypothesis of development but only to sharpen our eye for a formal connection' (p. 96). For a further discussion of the significance of the Remarks, see Paul Johnston, Wittgenstein and Moral Philosophy (London, 1989), pp. 26–51.
21 Wittgenstein, Remarks, p. 46.
23 Ibid., p. 1
24 Ibid., i, §533.
25 Stanley Cavell, Must We Mean What We Say? (Cambridge, 1989), p. 81.
26 Carroll, p. 21.
27 Ibid.
28 Ibid.
30 Ellis, p. 48.
31 Ibid.
32 Dillard, Horror Films, p. 27. Cited by Ellis, p. 67.
33 Cited by Ellis, p. 68, n. 80.
34 Cited by Ellis, p. 64.
38 Cited by Wasserman, p. 203.
39 Ellis, A Journey Into Darkness, p. 63.
41 Wittgenstein, Remarks, p. 66.
43 Frank Cioffi, 'Wittgenstein and Obscurantism', Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society, suppl. vol. LXIV (1990), p. 12. It is this article that occasioned Hacker's essay of 1992. Cioffi has also written on Frazer and Wittgenstein in 'Wittgenstein and the Fire-Festivals' in Ludwig Wittgenstein: Critical Assessments, iv, ed. Stuart Shanker (Beckenham, 1986), pp. 312–33. In this article, Cioffi concludes 'that what [is] called for by the notion of human sacrifice [is] neither an historical nor a causal enquiry, but rather an attempt to unravel the web of associations wound round the subject by nature and the unavoidable conditions of humanity' (p. 312).
44 Hacker, p. 281.
46 Ibid., p. 66.
47 Hacker, p. 298.

7 Jasia Reichardt: Artificial Life and the Myth of Frankenstein
2 Throughout this essay, therefore, I shall refer to Victor Frankenstein as Victor and to the creature he makes as 'Frankenstein'.
7 Time (14 February 1994), p. 11.