

# EYEING THE ABJECT: REAL SCIENCE AND FICTIONAL FRANKENSTEINIAN BODIES

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@BEDFORDA1



AS SCIENCE FACILITATES GREATER DEGREES OF INTERVENTION INTO THE BODY, IT DESTABILISES OUR KNOWLEDGE OF WHAT BODIES ARE, AND RUNS AHEAD OF OUR ABILITY TO MAKE MORAL JUDGEMENTS ABOUT HOW FAR SCIENCE SHOULD BE ALLOWED TO RECONSTRUCT THE BODY" (SHILLING, *THE BODY*, 4).



A CONFRONTATION WITH THE ABJECT...IN ORDER,  
FINALLY, TO EJECT THE ABJECT AND RE-DRAW THE  
BOUNDARIES BETWEEN HUMAN AND NON-HUMAN”  
(CREED, 53)

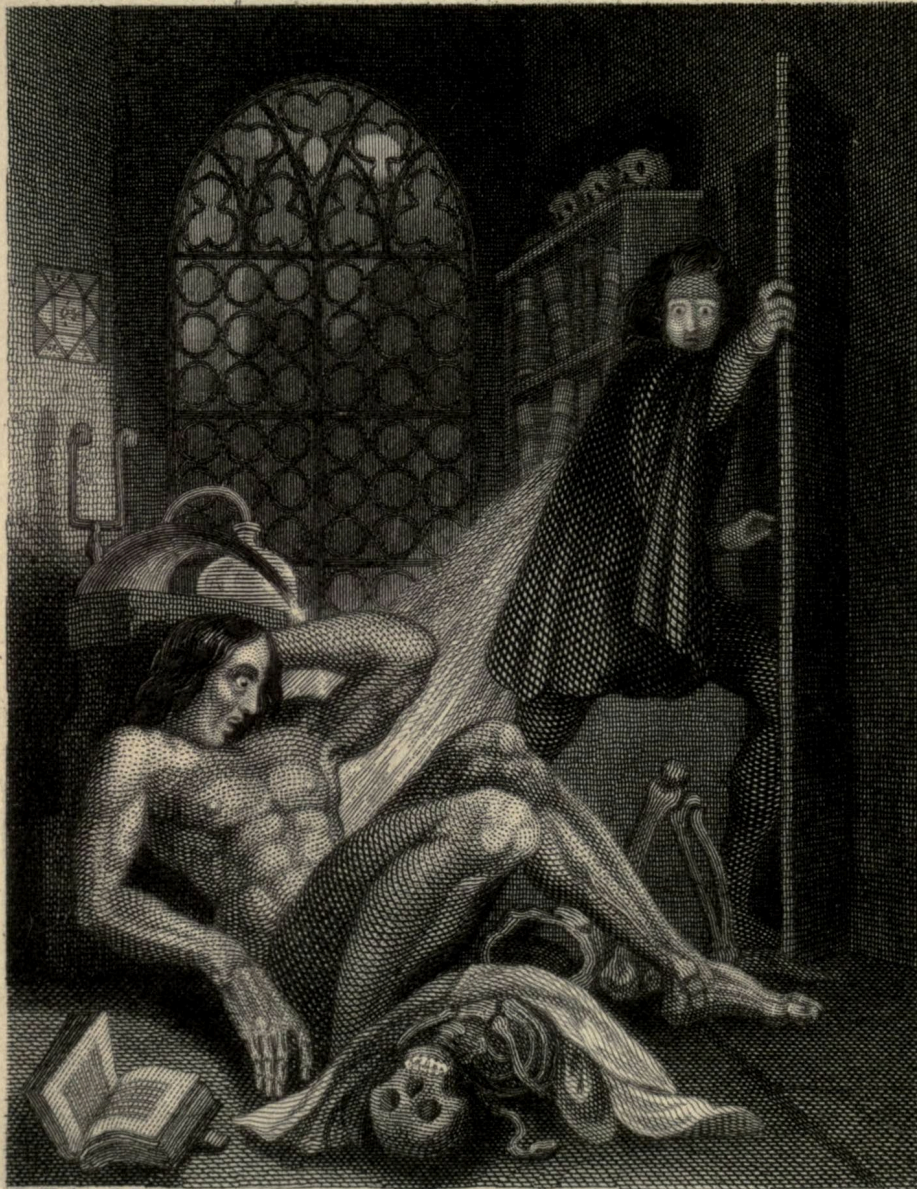


WHAT MAKES US HUMAN?



(HUMAN?)





*T. Holst, del.*

*W. Chevalier, sculp.*

FRANKENSTEIN.



CREATURE



WRETCH



DAEMON



MONSTER



“MONSTERS ARE TYPICALLY IMPURE AND UNCLEAN - THEY ARE IN BETWEEN DIFFERENT PHYSICAL, PSYCHOLOGICAL, ONTOLOGICAL STATES. SOME ARE COMPOSITE IN THAT THEY ARE MADE UP OF DIFFERENT PARTS FROM DIFFERENT ORDERS. SUCH AMBIVALENCE CONTRIBUTES TO THEIR DEVIANCE BECAUSE WE ARE NOT ABLE TO DEFINE OR CHARACTERIZE THEM” (133). THIS SPEAKS TO THE CORE OF THE CREATURE’S DILEMMA IN SHELLEY’S NOVEL: THERE IS NO MODEL BY WHICH HE CAN BE KNOWN AND CHARACTERISED (ARTT, 265)



A FIGURE OF FAILED SOCIALITY GROUNDED IN  
EMBODIMENT (KOCH-REIN, 45)



"UNEQUAL DISTRIBUTION OF VULNERABILITY"  
(BUTLER IN MURPHY, 243)



“AN INDICTMENT OF HOW SOCIETIES DEAL WITH THOSE  
CONSIDERED ILLEGITIMATE IN RELATION TO THE  
'MODERN OBSESSION' WITH CORPOREAL ORDER AND  
PREDICTABILITY AND WHO, AS A CONSEQUENCE, ARE  
TREATED AS HUMAN WASTE” (SHILLING, AFTERWORD  
263)



MAKING HUMANS



“PERHAPS A CORPSE WOULD BE RE-ANIMATED;  
GALVANISM HAD GIVEN TOKEN OF SUCH THINGS:  
PERHAPS THE COMPONENT PARTS OF A CREATURE  
MIGHT BE MANUFACTURED, BROUGHT TOGETHER, AND  
ENDUED WITH VITAL WARMTH,”



“THE IMAGES OF THE COHERENT BODY AND THE  
COHERENT SELF HAVE BOTH FRAGMENTED”  
(HELMAN,15).



ONE WAY THAT THE CAPACITIES ARE FORGED IN THE PUBLIC SPHERE IS THROUGH SF, WHICH SERVES AS A MECHANISM FOR ENGAGEMENT WITH BOTH DESIRABLE AND UNDESIRABLE SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNOLOGICAL FUTURES." (CONLEY, 245)



# THE ABJECT SELF



THE ABJECT HAS ONLY ONE QUALITY OF THE  
OBJECT—THAT OF BEING OPPOSED TO I”  
(KRISTEVA,1)



THE CREATURE'S RETURNED GAZE ALSO REMINDS  
FRANKENSTEIN OF HIS OWN CORPOREALITY AND  
THUS OF HIS OWN MORTALITY" (MOFFAT 241)



THE CORPSE, THE MOST SICKENING OF WASTES, IS A BORDER THAT HAS ENCROACHED UPON EVERYTHING. IT IS NO LONGER I WHO EXPEL, "I" IS EXPELLED. THE BORDER HAS BECOME AN OBJECT. HOW CAN I BE WITHOUT BORDER? (KRISTEVA, 3-4).



# BODILY BOUNDARIES AND ASSIMILATING THE ABJECT



A FUNDAMENTAL QUESTION THAT SHELLEY'S NOVEL CONTINUES TO POSE IN THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY: DOES VICTOR'S CREATURE REPRESENT THE THREATENING POSSIBILITY THAT SCIENCE WILL MAKE THE HUMAN SPECIES OBSOLETE?" (JOHNSON, 288)



LITERATURE...REPRESENTS THE ULTIMATE CODING OF  
OUR CRISES, OUR MOST INTIMATE AND MOST SERIOUS  
APOCALYPSES. HENCE ITS NOCTURNAL POWER  
(KRISTEVA, 208)



PRECISELY WHAT MAKES THE COHERENT BODY IMAGE  
POSSIBLE BECAUSE IT MARKS THE BOUNDARY BETWEEN  
BODY IMAGE AND WHAT IT IS NOT “ (WEISS 42)



60TH ANNIVERSARY  
COLLECTORS EDITION

# Dracula FRANKENSTEIN



# FRANKENSTEIN

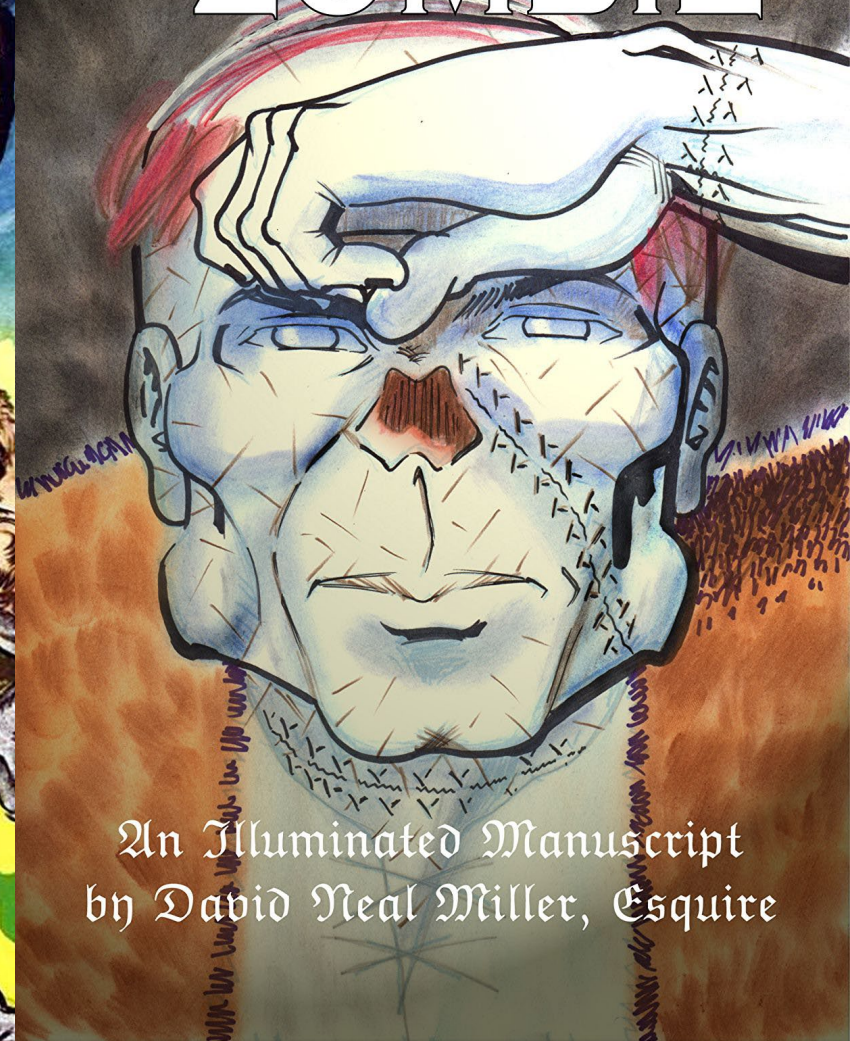
*meets*

# THE WOLF MAN



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# The FRANKENSTEIN ZOMBIE™



An Illuminated Manuscript  
by David Neal Miller, Esquire

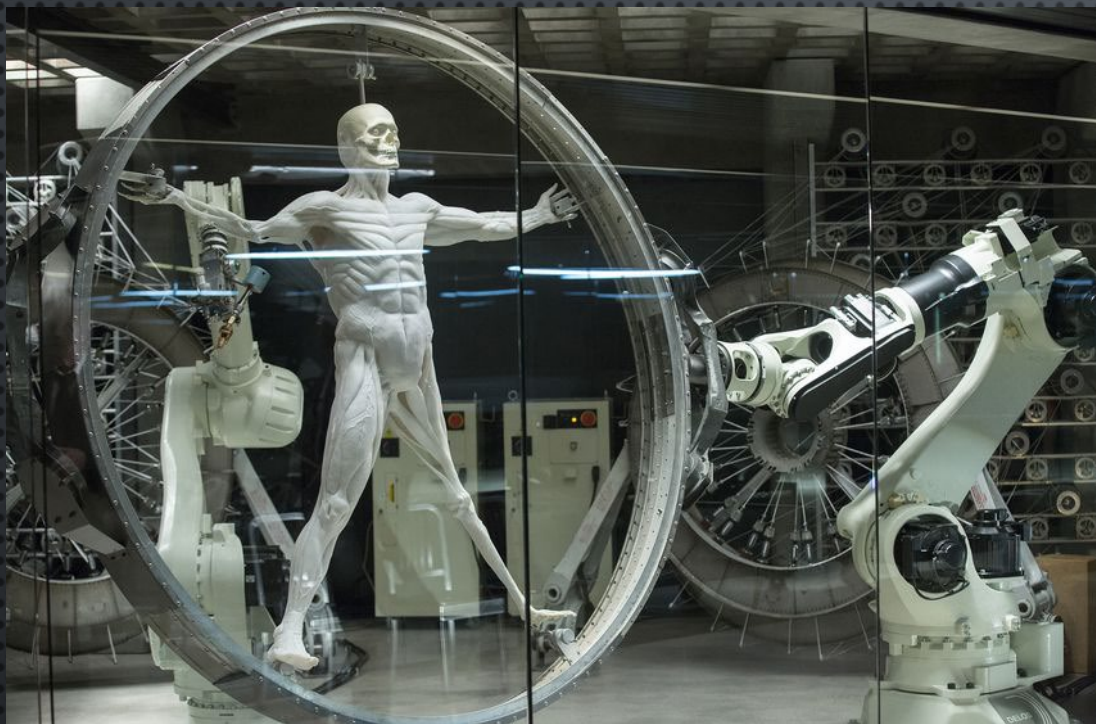


“TECHNOLOGICAL ADVANCES AND EXPERT  
KNOWLEDGE HAVE INVADED THE BODY AND MADE IT  
AVAILABLE TO BE WORKED ON AND RECONSTRUCTED”  
(SHILLING 182)



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THANK YOU