

MARY SHELLEY: THE DR FRANKENSTEIN OF DISCOURSE

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“GOTHIC TEXTS ARE FUNDAMENTALLY CONCERNED WITH THE ANXIETY ABOUT BOUNDARIES, THOSE THAT SHUT THE PROTAGONIST OFF FROM THE WORLD, THOSE THAT SHUT THE PROTAGONIST IN AND THOSE THAT SEPARATE THE INDIVIDUAL SELF FROM SOMETHING THAT IS OTHER. THIS CONCERN ABOUT WHAT IT MEANS TO BE HUMAN, OR WHAT IT MEANS TO BE “ME” IN A MODERN WORLD, IS ONE THAT IS CONSTANTLY ASKED BY SCIENCE FICTION”

Minter



“

THAT A MODERN SYSTEM OF SCIENCE HAD BEEN INTRODUCED, WHICH POSSESSED MUCH GREATER POWERS THAN THE ANCIENT, BECAUSE THE POWER OF THE LATTER WERE CHIMERICAL, WHILE THOSE OF THE FORMER WERE REAL AND PRACTICAL...

”



Frankenstein, 1818, p22.





The hunt for the North-west Passage



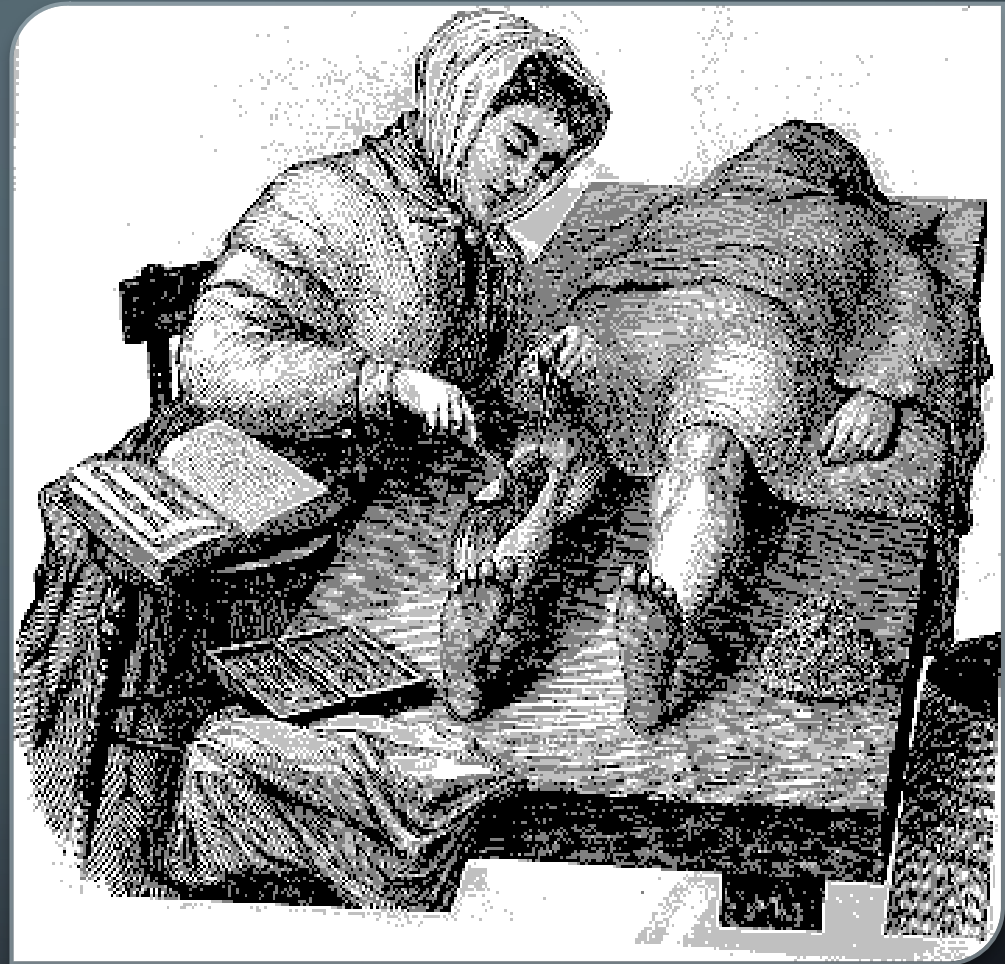
Benjamin Franklin experiments with lightning



19th century autopsy

“WE FIRST MUST HAVE
RECOURSE TO DEATH”

Shelley, 1818, p 31



“OF LIFE IS A CHIMERA. BUT THESE PHILOSOPHERS, WHOSE HANDS SEEM ONLY MADE TO DABBLE IN DIRT, AND THEIR EYES TO POUR OVER THE MICROSCOPE OR CRUCIBLE, HAVE INDEED PERFORMED MIRACLES. THEY PENETRATE INTO THE RECESSES OF NATURE, AND SHEW HOW SHE WORKS IN HER HIDING PLACES. THEY ASCEND INTO THE HEAVENS; THEY HAVE DISCOVERED HOW THE BLOOD CIRCULATES, AND THE NATURE OF THE AIR WE BREATHE. THEY HAVE ACQUIRED NEW ” AND ALMOST UNLIMITED POWERS; THEY CAN COMMAND THE THUNDERS OF HEAVEN, MIMIC THE EARTHQUAKE, AND EVEN MOCK THE INVISIBLE WORLD WITH ITS OWN SHADOWS

Frankenstein, 1818, p28-29.

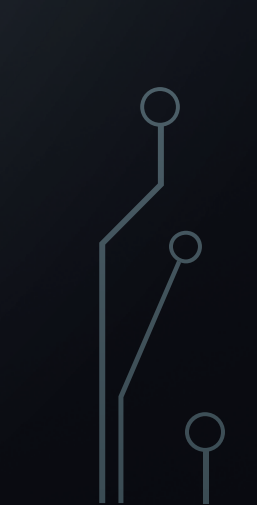


“

I IMAGINE THAT YOU MAY DEDUCE AN APT
MORAL FROM MY TALE

”

Frankenstein, 1831, p31.





“

“SUCH WERE THE PROFESSOR’S WORDS –
RATHER LET ME SAY THE WORDS OF FATE –
ENOUNCED TO DESTROY ME”

”

Shelley, 1831, p49



Air pump experiments





“

“CLEARED A SPACE FOR THE INTRODUCTION OF
ELEMENTS OTHER THAN THEIR OWN, WHICH ,
NEVERTHELESS, REMAIN WITHIN THE FIELD OF
DISCOURSE THEY INITIATED

”

Foucault, What is an Author?, p113.





The zombie apocalypse: is there a cure?



The final frontier: how do we respond to the unknown?



The rise of the machine: how do we control what we create?

MARY SHELLEY

Just as Dr Victor Frankenstein created his creature from many parts, so too Mary Shelley synthesised the concerns and changes of her time to give life to a new discourse through her fiction.



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