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Frankenstein (New Casebooks)



Synopsis

Emerging from the shadow of popular reproductions, Frankenstein's importance in debates about gender, culture and politics has been dramatically affected by recent developments in criticism and theory. This volume collects the most significant contemporary work on the novel from Marxist, Psychoanalytic, Historicist, Feminist, Poststructuralist and Postcolonialist perspectives. The book reflects the way that monstrosity in its literary, historical and philosophical context raises crucial questions for modern issues of sexuality, class, science, race, language and identity.

Book Information

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Introduction
Production and Introduction: The Case of Frankenstein, Paul O'Flinn
The Politics of Monstrosity, Chris Baldick
Narcissism as Symptom and Structure: The Case of Mary Shelley's Frankenstein, Joseph Kestner
What is a Monster? (According to Frankenstein), Peter Brooks
A Feminist Critique of Science, Anne K. Mellor
Bearing Demons: Frankenstein's Circumvention of the Maternal, Margaret Homans
Narratives of Seduction and the Seductions of Narrative: The Frame Structure of Frankenstein, Beth Newman
Frankenstein with Kant, Barbara Claire Freeman
Otherness in Frankenstein: The Confinement/Autonomy in Fabrication
Three Women's Texts and a Critique of Imperialism, Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak
Back cover blurb: this book "...reflects the way that monstrosity in its literary, historical and philosophical contexts raises crucial questions for modern issues of sexuality, class, science, race, language and identity."

Having been fortunate enough to study under Dr Botting when at university, I am in a position to have heard many of the theories espoused in this book as tutorial topics. Here, of course, there is a variety, but nevertheless the substance is all reasonably similar: that the treaties of Gothic apply to aspects of both the cultural and social infrastructure without consideration to either restraint or boundary, beyond a notation of where the parameters are breached. Dr Botting's major difficulty is his insistence on writing in the nude. It became a regular talking point, for while I was at Lancaster he would sit starkers in his (glass fronted) office, writing furiously, reading furiously or smoking furiously, or all three, and he would often pass many hours in this fashion, and one would only ever hear a sound from him when some stray ember of ash found its way downwards, with the result that a catatonic cry of "yaroo! my knadgers!" could be heard all across Lancaster's picturesque campus. It is indeed a compliment to his sturdy Northern built that Dr Botting's nudity did not make him a laughing stock. Indeed, I know of several people who were in no little way intimidated by his, erm, intellectual presence, and did not feel that they could endure his presence for an entire class. Of course, there is more to Frankenstein than Fred Botting's nudity, although many have confused the two. It is a much observed factor of Mary Shelley's writing that the juxtaposition of humanity and ignorance, or inhumanity and great learning, offer explanations of the outside world. Personally, I found this a worthy addition to the case book series, which began with a series of essays on Shakespearean plays. Frankenstein may not be the funniest text of the Romantic period, but it does attract the hairiest professors.

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