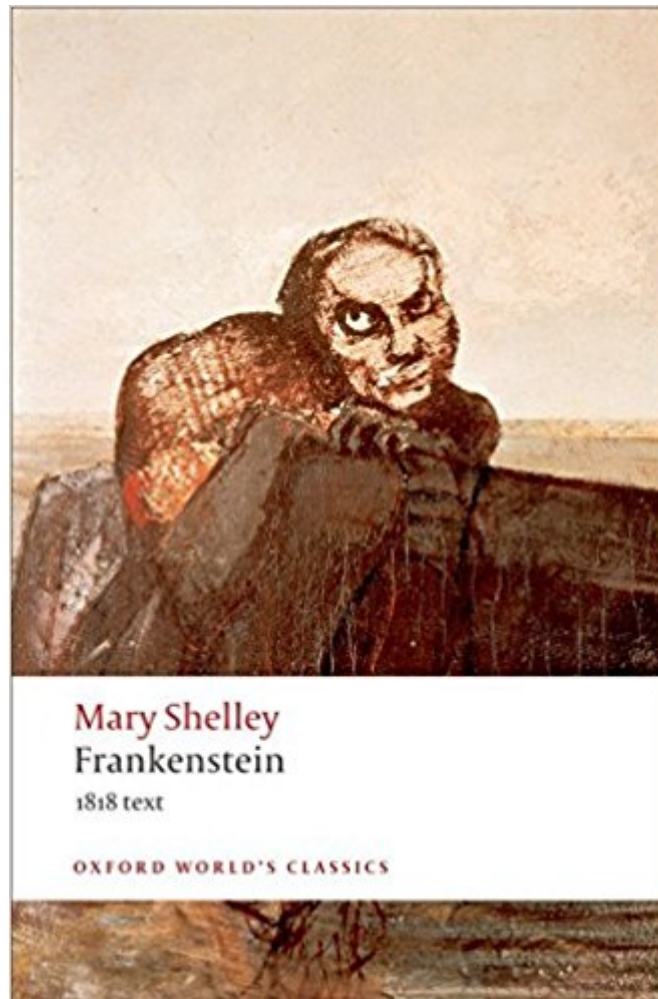


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Frankenstein: Or The Modern Prometheus - The 1818 Text



Synopsis

Shelley's enduringly popular and rich gothic tale, *Frankenstein*, confronts some of the most feared innovations of evolutionism and science--topics such as degeneracy, hereditary disease, and humankind's ability to act as creator of the modern world. This new edition, based on the harder and wittier 1818 version of the text, draws on new research and examines the novel in the context of the controversial radical sciences developing in the years following the Napoleonic Wars. In addition it shows the relationship of Frankenstein's experiment to the contemporary debate between champions of materialistic science and proponents of received religion.

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Customer Reviews

Much like Bram Stoker's "Dracula", Mary Shelley's "Frankenstein" is a story we all think we know, but really don't. Very few films have consciously attempted to follow the novel too closely (which shouldn't detract from the excellent James Whale/Boris Karloff film, or its masterpiece-sequel, "The Bride of Frankenstein"). Thus, everything popular culture "knows" about "Frankenstein" does not originate from literature, but from films. This is a shame, in a way, because the novel itself is, if not the progenitor, an early vessel of so many archetypes found science fiction and horror.

The basic

plot remained intact when transferred to other media. Swiss medical student Victor Frankenstein discovers the secret of life (which he never reveals, lest someone repeat the mistake). He then puts together a body, essentially a man, from various corpses. He then becomes horrified by the creature he has built, and abandons. The creature, suffering a great deal of neglect and abuse, still manages to get a thorough education, and learns of his lineage. After murdering Victor's younger brother, and framing the family maid, the creature tells his (admittedly) sad tale to his "father", and then demands a mate. Victor, in a panic, agrees, then thinks better of it at the last moment, destroying the new bride. In retaliation, the creature murders all of Victor's loved ones (including his wife), and leads Victor on a merry chase across the world. Most probably know that Mary Shelley wrote this book in response to a challenge issued by Lord Byron, during a vacation at Lake Geneva. (Along with this story came John Polidori's "The Vampyre", the first English vampire novel.) Most probably also know that Shelley went on to write other works of imaginative gothic fiction.

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