

Week 5: Mary Shelley, *Frankenstein* (1818)

Monster Theory:

1) The monstrous body is pure culture. A construct and a projection, the monster only exists in order to be read. [...] Like a letter on a page, the monster always signifies something other than itself'.

- Jeffrey Jerome Cohen, 'Monster Culture (Seven Theses)', in Jeffrey Jerome Cohen (ed.), *Monster Theory: Reading Culture* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1996), p. 4.

2) A 'refusal to participate in the classificatory "order of things" is true of monsters generally: they are disturbing hybrids who externally incoherent bodies resist attempts to include them in any systematic structuration. And so the monster is dangerous, a form suspended between forms that threatens to smash distinctions'.

- Jeffrey Jerome Cohen, 'Monster Culture (Seven Theses)', in Jeffrey Jerome Cohen (ed.), *Monster Theory: Reading Culture* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1996), p. 6.

Body structure – text structure:

3) Mary Shelley's novel articulates 'the idea of an artificially assembled being whose piecemeal identity challenges the Enlightenment notion of the well-balanced, organic whole (whether body or text).

- Catherine Spooner, *Fashioning Gothic Bodies* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2004), p. 11.

Theological definitions of the human:

The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* states that, 'the human person, made in the image of God, is a being at once corporeal and spiritual' (no. 362) and that 'The human body is human and living precisely because it is animated by a spiritual soul' (no. 364).

Week 5 suggestions for further secondary reading:

On monstrosity, monstrous bodies and monster theory more generally:

Dani Cavallaro, *The Gothic Vision: Three Centuries of Horror, Terror, and Fear* (London: Continuum, 2002) (PN 3435.C2) (See the chapter, 'Monstrosity')

Jeffrey Jerome Cohen, 'Monster Culture (Seven Theses)', in Jeffrey Jerome Cohen (ed.), *Monster Theory: Reading Culture* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1996), pp. 3-19.

Kelly Hurley, *The Gothic Body: Sexuality, Materialism, and Degeneration at the Fin de siècle* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996) (PR 868.G6)

Markku Salmela and Jarkko Toikkanen (eds), *The Grotesque and the Unnatural* (Amherst, NY: Cambria Press, 2011) (PN 56.G7)

Catherine Spooner, *Fashioning Gothic Bodies* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2004) (GT 738.S7)

On *Frankenstein* (1818):

Fred Botting, 'Reflections of Excess: *Frankenstein*, the French Revolution and Monstrosity' in Allison Yarrington and Kelvin Everest (eds), *Reflections of Revolution: Images of Romanticism* (London: Routledge, 1993), pp. 26-38. (PR 447.R3)

Jessie Givner, 'The Revolutionary Turn: Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*', *Gothic Studies* 2, 3 (December 2000), pp. 274-291. (Available online via the library)

Ellen Moers, *Literary Women* (London: W.H. Allen, 1977) (PN 481.M6) (See the chapter, 'Female Gothic')

Esther Schor (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Mary Shelley* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003) (PR 5398.C2)