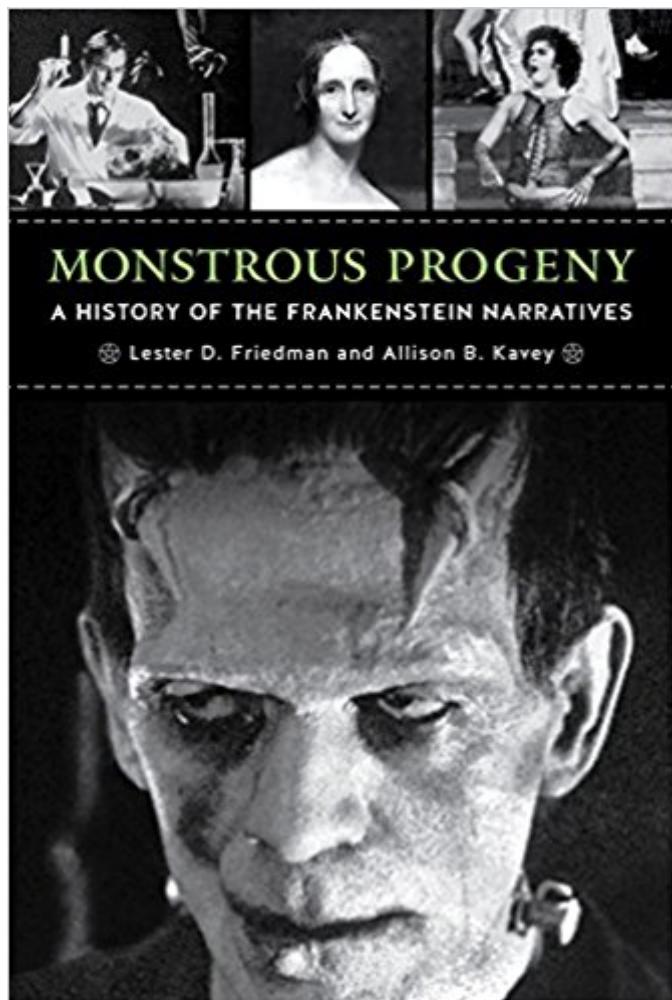


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Monstrous Progeny: A History Of The Frankenstein Narratives



Synopsis

Mary Shelley's 1818 novel Frankenstein is its own type of monster mythos that will not die, a corpus whose parts keep getting harvested to animate new artistic creations. What makes this tale so adaptable and so resilient that, nearly 200 years later, it remains vitally relevant in a culture radically different from the one that spawned its birth? Monstrous Progeny takes readers on a fascinating exploration of the Frankenstein family tree, tracing the literary and intellectual roots of Shelley's novel from the sixteenth century and analyzing the evolution of the book's figures and themes into modern productions that range from children's cartoons to pornography. Along the way, media scholar Lester D. Friedman and historian Allison B. Kavey examine the adaptation and evolution of Victor Frankenstein and his monster across different genres and in different eras. In doing so, they demonstrate how Shelley's tale and its characters continue to provide crucial reference points for current debates about bioethics, artificial intelligence, cyborg lifeforms, and the limits of scientific progress. Blending an extensive historical overview with a detailed analysis of key texts, the authors reveal how the Frankenstein legacy arose from a series of fluid intellectual contexts and continues to pulsate through an extraordinary body of media products. Both thought-provoking and entertaining, Monstrous Progeny offers a lively look at an undying and significant cultural phenomenon.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

This didn't turn out to be exactly what I had expected but I did end up enjoying what it actually was.

This is an academic volume for those interested in film studies or literature criticism. Or like myself, Frankenstein aficionados. The last couple of years I have re-read Shelley's Frankenstein and read some books on the author, the book and the pop culture becoming a very minor expert :-) This book starts off with a few chapters of academic literary criticism and study of the book, its themes, and the author. Then it briefly examines pre-1930s Frankenstein culture such as plays and literary references. Then a meaty portion of the book study's first Universal's 1930s/40s Frankenstein movie canon and then 1960/70s Hammer Films' Frankenstein canon continuation. This was the best part of the book for me as I've seen all these movies. The Universals with commentary on DVD and the Hammer films throughout my life on TV and DVD. Next, the book introduces four different types of "Frankenstein" films, ones that either retell the tale or only use one of the themes. This part gets pretty heavy duty towards academia blow-out for me as my interest waned having seen probably only about half of the movies discussed. The book is incredibly interesting but is not an easy read and more for the cerebral rather than armchair reader. I'm glad to have read it and will continue my personal study of the author, book, and the Universal movies in particular.

Not a plot. It's critical analysis. Excellent.

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