Coming to Life: The Illustrated Novel and Theodor von Holst's Creation of the 1831 *Frankenstein* Frontispiece

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ABSTRACT

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Henry Colburn and Richard Bentley published Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley's *Frankenstein* in 1831 with the additions of an authorial introduction, revisions, and Theodor von Holst's frontispiece image. Holst's illustration was the first-ever published image of Frankenstein and his Creature and engages with a number of diverse elements from the novel's publishing, public, and scientific histories. This thesis acts to place Holst's image back into a very specific time through the examination of *Frankenstein*'s publications, author, audiences, theatrical precedents, and notions of Romantic melancholy and Gothic wonder. Additionally, I examine how practices in academic art, traditions of anatomy, medical portraiture, and an alchemical revival reflect the novel's past and respond to its present 1831 socio-political conditions. By utilizing the medium of the book itself as a handled, illustrated novel, *Frankenstein*'s 1831 edition comes to life as a cultural "Frankenstein's monster."

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Introduction

Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley's *Frankenstein, or The Modern Prometheus* was first published in 1818, anonymously, and without illustration. By 1831, the story had been edited and re-published two additional times with its final iteration textually and visually emphasizing Victor Frankenstein's moral unrest at his success as a creator of life through an anatomical, chemical experiment. In the twentieth century, Frankenstein's monster would become an eminently visual creation, portrayed in cinematic media by Boris Karloff, Lon Chaney Jr., Bela Lugosi and other leading actors of Hollywood horror.[1] This thesis focuses on the first illustrated representation of Frankenstein and his Creature produced during Mary Shelley's life: the steel engraving added to the expanded edition of the text published by Henry Colburn and Richard Bentley in 1831. [Fig. 1] In addition to requesting an authorial introduction from Shelley for the 1831 edition's front matter, Colburn and Bentley commissioned the first-ever published illustration of Shelley's characters from artist Theodor von Holst (1810-1844). This paper examines Holst's frontispiece from the 1831 edition of *Frankenstein* through a series of vectors from the story's past to its scientific present to demonstrate Frankenstein's visual construction as an anatomist and the immortalization of his experimentation, creation, and warning against a monstrous mastery of anatomy in print.

Shelley's Victor Frankenstein famously makes a living being by assembling serried parts. Drawing inspiration from the novel's model, I too have approached Holst's frontispiece in a way that highlights the diverse elements that informed its formal and aesthetic creation as well as its role within an illustrated novel amidst shifting attitudes toward anatomy throughout the nineteenth century. In order to understand how the story developed in print, I begin my analysis

[1] Elizabeth Campbell, Colin B. Bailey, and Pierpont Morgan Library, *It's Alive!: A Visual History of Frankenstein* (New York: Morgan Library Museum, 2018).

with an examination of *Frankenstein*'s publication history from 1818-1831, including its introduction to the theatrical stage in 1823. Considering the publishing processes of Colburn and Bentley, I show how the additional written and illustrated paratext in their 1831 edition targeted shifting reading publics and the commodification of books as commercial objects. In this way, I highlight how publishers, author, artist, theatrical precedents, traditions of artistic anatomy, notions of Romantic melancholy and Gothic wonder, medical portraiture, and an alchemical revival all require equal footing when grappling with the medium of the illustrated novel.[2] In her invaluable history of aesthetics in publishing, Christina Banou has argued that "the book as an artistic object enables the publisher to create a recognizable profile and the reader to read, enjoy and be engaged, being thus satisfied with both content and object."[3] For the frontispiece to come alive, so to speak, we therefore need to apprehend all of the sundered factors that Holst's illustration mobilizes as an active component of the handled book rather than solely as a static, adorning image.

Colburn and Bentley and the Publications of *Frankenstein*

Frankenstein was first published in 1818 by Lackington, Hughes, Harding, Mavor and Jones of Finsbury Square, anonymously, and without illustration. However, the book's manuscript passed under the eyes of many publishers before entering print. Percy Bysshe Shelley, Mary Shelley's husband and famous English Romantic poet, brought the manuscript to his own publisher, in addition to others, claiming the anonymous text was written by a friend,

[2] The concept of an illustrated novel as medium has been more readily applied to the Victorian illustrated novel or periodical publication in the late nineteenth century, where images would be inserted within the textual pages of the story either through binding or an instructive list of illustrations that indicates the specific page the image is to be inserted. Here, I extend the idea of novel-as-medium to apply to any text that is combined with visual imagery; it is a single medium of three constituent media, written, pictured, and physically handled.

[3] Christina Banou, *Re-Inventing the Book: Challenges from the Past for the Publishing Industry* (Cambridge: Chandos Publishing, 2017), 19.

which led many to believe it was his own work. While Mary Shelley wrote the story, she and Percy Shelley edited the narrative together through many versions from 1816-1818. According to literary historian William St. Clair's examination of Shelley's text in his study on the Romantic reading nation, the Shelleys intended the novel to be considered seriously, hoping it would "change the perceptions, the knowledge, the understanding, and therefore the behaviour, of those who read or otherwise encountered it."[4] Excerpts from the preface of the 1818 novel thus read:

> The event on which this fiction is founded has been supposed, by Dr. Darwin[5], and some of the physiological writers of Germany, as not of impossible occurrence… I am by no means indifferent to the manner in which whatever moral tendencies exists in the sentiments or characters it contains shall affect the reader; yet my chief concern in this respect has been limited to the avoiding the enervating effects of the novels of the present day and to the exhibition of the amiableness of domestic affection, and the excellence of universal virtue.[6]

Mary Shelley was intimately connected to prominent literary, philosophical, and scientific circles, particularly through her parents, William Godwin and Mary Wollstonecraft, and her husband. Both Godwin and Wollstonecraft had rebellious voices in the eighteenth century. Godwin was a prominent and radical political philosopher who primarily theorized on anarchy, justice, and human rights, while Wollstonecraft was the first feminist author, arguing for the rights of women in society and politics.[7] A controversial Romantic author and poet of the

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[4] William St. Clair, *The Reading Nation in the Romantic Period* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 358.

[5] The 1818 preface refers to Erasmus Darwin, who Mary Shelley also directly references in her 1831 introduction: "the experiments of Dr. Darwin... who preserved a piece of vermicelli in a glass case, till by some extraordinary means it began to move with voluntary motion." For more on Erasmus Darwin's influence in *Frankenstein*, consider: Richard C. Sha, *Imagination and Science in Romanticism* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2018), especially "Obstetrics and Embryology: Science and Imagination in *Frankenstein*," 185-230.

[6] Mary Shelley, *Frankenstein, or the Modern Prometheus* (London: Lackington, Hughes, Harding, Mavor and Jones of Finsbury Square, 1818), 6.

[7] Sarah Higinbotham, "*Things as They Are*: William Godwin on Sympathy and Punishment," *Law, Culture and the Humanities* 11, no. 1 (Feb. 2015): 44-63, doi: 10.1177/1743872110388374; Wendy Gunther-Canada, *Rebel Writer: Mary Wollstonecraft and Enlightenment Politics* (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 2001).

nineteenth century, Percy Shelley's writing then interacts with Godwinian anarchism and a materialist philosophy of observable change that aligned with emerging scientific theories throughout the Enlightenment.[8] Although *Frankenstein* was published anonymously, the manuscript's association with Percy Shelley and reference to Godwinian ideation on virtue, particularly the beliefs in human perfectibility and justice, placed the narrative in conversation with eighteenth and nineteenth century reformist philosophy.[9] Authors who wished to initiate social and political change at this time began to utilize the increasing accessibility of the novel, prose, poetry, and fiction especially to circulate revolutionary thought throughout the nation.[10]

St. Clair maintains that publishers feared *Frankenstein*'s content because its reformist ties could upset the then-small reading public that was primarily "conservative, indeed reactionary, in its political and religious opinions."[11] With the 1818 edition's dedication to William Godwin, the anonymous author proposed an explicit and even more direct connection to Godwin's controversial philosophies.[12] Put simply, publishers were afraid to offend. Lackington, however, was known for publishing on magic, the illegitimate supernatural, and horror, with texts such as Francis Barett's *Lives of the Alchemystical Philosophers with a Critical Catalogue*

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[8] Michael Henry Scrivener, *Radical Shelley: The Philosophical Anarchism and Utopian Thought of Percy Bysshe Shelley* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2014); Anthony John Harding, "Signs of Change: Percy Shelley's Language of Mutability as Precursor to Darwin's Theory of Evolution," *Literature Compass* 13, no. 10 (Oct. 2016): 617-627, https://doi-org.proxy3.library.mcgill.ca/10.1111/lic3.12348.

[9] Wendy McElroy, "Godwin, William (1756-1836)," 211-212, in *The Encyclopedia of Libertarianism*, ed. Ronald Hamowy (Washington, D.C.: Cato Institute, 2008); William Godwin, *Thoughts on Man: His Nature, Productions and Discoveries, Interspersed with Some Particulars Respecting the Author*, reprint of the 1831 edition (New York: A.M. Kelley, 1969). Godwin concludes his book, writing: "human understanding and human virtue will hereafter accomplish such things as the heart of man has never yet been daring enough to conceive" (471).

[10] For more on the reformists' uses of literature and the growing reading public, please see: A. A. Markley, *Conversion and Reform in the British Novel in the 1790s: A Revolution of Opinions* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009; Ellen Malenas Ledoux, *Social Reform in Gothic Writing: Fantastic Forms of Change, 1764-1834* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013).

[11] St. Clair, *The Reading Nation*, 357-359. St. Clair explains that the number of biographical sources dedicated to the Shelleys and *Frankenstein* make it very clear that one of the book's intents was to 'steer the expectations of readers.'

[12] St. Clair, *The Reading Nation*, 357-359.

of Books on Occult Chemistry (1815), Thomas Heywood's *The Life, Prophecies, and Predictions of Merlin Interpreted* (1813), and Joseph Taylor's *Apparitions; or, the Mystery of Ghosts, Hobgoblins, and Haunted House* (1814).[13] In fact, these books, in addition to others, comprised a two-page advertisement that accompanied the Lackington firm's publication of *Frankenstein* as further works that may interest the novel's audience.[14] The Shelleys' supposed reformist intentions and Frankenstein's science was, in this context, shrouded in a fog of supernatural inaccessibility.

In 1823, William Godwin negotiated the publication of *Frankenstein*'s second edition from a different publisher, which was edited into two volumes instead of the original three, was lavishly printed to be sold at a high retail price, and was advertised as written by Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley.[15] Although the 1823 edition was not *published* under Mary Shelley's name, Godwin's insistence in advertising Shelley's full name with the novel perhaps undermined the mystifying work of Lackington's 1818 advertisement by re-associating *Frankenstein* with reformist philosophy. According to Pamela Clemit, Godwin supported and encouraged his daughter as "his fellow-author and literary heir" following her return to England in 1823 after the death of Percy Shelley, and that together, the two shed "light on the wider political, intellectual and artistic continuities between the era of the French Revolution and the pioneering reformist years of the early nineteenth century."[16] Clemit examines the mutual growth and influence the related novelists had upon each other, but outlines a distinct difference in their representations of

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[13] St. Clair, *The Reading Nation*, 359. "Lackington, Hughes, Harding, Mavor, & Jones," Romantic Circles: A Refereed Scholarly Website Devoted to the Study of Romantic-Period Literature and Culture, ed. Paul Youngquist and Steven E. Jones, University of Maryland, accessed 6 March 2019, https://www.rc.umd.edu/editions/frankenstein/V1notes/lackingt.
[14] "Lackington," Romantic Circles.
[15] St. Clair, *The Reading Nation*, 361.
[16] Pamela Clemit, "Mary Shelley and William Godwin: A Literary-Political Partnership, 1823-36," 285-295, *Women's Writing* 6, no. 3 (1999): 287, 286, https://doi.org./10.1080/09699089900200084.

the female role. For example, in his fiction, Godwin portrays a daughter-figure as a simple feminine icon of devotion, while Shelley writes a vivid, complex, and educative daughter who effects change in those around her.[17] Mary Shelley's fiction and creative identity as a writer thus came to reflect philosophies developed by both her father and her mother, a hybridity that is matched in the conglomerate make up of Frankenstein's creature and developed over the course of the novel's multiple publications and shifting audiences since 1818.

The second publication was initiated due to rumored stage adaptations of the story, the first of which, *Presumption, or the Fate of Frankenstein* by Richard Brinsley Peake, also entered theatres in 1823.[18] Because *Frankenstein* existed in approximately a mere thousand copies for the fourteen years following its initial publication, the story became known in nineteenth-century popular culture primarily through its stage adaptations rather than in Mary Shelley's text.[19] The popular conflation of the name 'Frankenstein' for the unnamed creation instead of his creator is actually rooted in the verbal play of stage actors, becoming a cultural norm by 1824 and lasting through today.[20] Shelley's story, or her characters at the very least, were therefore visualized and materialized both live and in print through costuming, makeup, sets, and play advertisements. *Frankenstein* was thus known literarily, visually, and culturally when the publishers Henry Colburn and Richard Bentley presented a newly edited and first-ever illustrated edition of the story in October 1831.[21]

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[17] Clemit, "Mary Shelley and William Godwin," 289. Here, Clemit examines Godwin's *Cloudesley* (1830) and Shelley's *Falkner* (1837).
[18] St. Clair, *The Reading Nation*, 361, 369. Forward, I will refer to Peake's play as *Presumption* to avoid its conflation with Shelley's text.
[19] St. Clair, *The Reading Nation*, 365, 367.
[20] St. Clair, *The Reading Nation*, 370.
[21] Stephen Hebron and Elizabeth C. Denlinger, *Shelley's Ghost: Reshaping the Image of a Literary Family* (Oxford: The Bodleian Library, 2010), 89.

Henry Colburn and Richard Bentley briefly shared a publishing partnership from 1829 until 1832 that witnessed the launch and success of their *Standard Novel Series* starting in 1831.[22] The reading nation and demand for fiction expanded in the early nineteenth century due to advances in printing techniques, such as the introduction of durable, steel engraved plates that decreased production costs by increasing the longevity of the printing plate, and thus led to the production of accessibly priced texts for a wider market. After a number of successful novel series, especially the *Waverly Novels* written by Sir Walter Scott and published by Robert Cadell beginning in 1829, Colburn and Bentley purchased the idea for their *Standard Novel Series* from John Burke in 1830.[23] In the 1830s, Colburn and Bentley began purchasing copyrights of out-of-print novels in order to sell them, newly outfitted, to libraries and individuals who did not, or could not, purchase the books when they were first produced.[24] The publishers' process was innovative as it enabled them to monopolize the ownership, printing, circulation, and sales of almost all the greatest Romantic Era and late-1830s fiction by recent popular authors such as, but not limited to, Jane Austen, William Beckford, Maria Edgeworth, Thomas Love Peacock, and Mary Shelley's father, William Godwin.[25] Bentley's original intention for the series was to build a collection of eighteenth-century classics, but he ultimately chose to focus on recent fiction due to a copyright misunderstanding with a series of work by Sir Walter Scott.[26] For living authors, the publishers would request sometimes extensive edits to the texts in order to print the novels in

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[22] A. Gettmann, "Colburn-Bentley and the March of Intellect," *Studies in Bibliography* 9 (1957): 197-213, https://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/40371203.pdf.
[23] Gettmann, "Colburn-Bentley," 209. The first advertisement for the *Standard Novels* even claimed, "Standard Novels—A Companion to the Waverly Novels," demonstrating their indebtedness to the *Waverly Novels*' success and structure.
[24] St. Clair, *The Reading Nation*, 361.
[25] St. Clair, *The Reading Nation*, 361.
[26] Gettmann, "Colburn-Bentley," 210. Bentley purchased the copyright of Ballantyne's Novelists' Library that included many of these classic works, each prefaced with 'the 'copious Biographical and Critical Memoirs' of Sir Walter Scott.' Unfortunately, the copyright to Scott's additions were not sold and Bentley's dedication to Scott and the *Waverly Novels* deterred his use of any text from this collection.

a single volume in addition to commissioning author introductions to be included in the new publications' front matter.[27] Colburn and Bentley sold the re-published series for less than a fifth of the price of new novels, describing many books in the series as 'Revised, Corrected, and Illustrated, with a New Introduction by the Author.'[28]

How were these illustrations coordinated? Although he was only involved in the publication for six months, John Burke—inventor of the *Standard Novels* format— assisted in overseeing printing, brainstorming embellishments, and approving engravings for illustrations during his time with Colburn and Bentley.[29] The publishers were additionally indebted to the model of Cadell's *Waverly Novels* for featuring and popularizing steel-engraved frontispieces.[30] *Frankenstein* was the ninth volume published by Colburn and Bentley in their *Standard Novel* series; consequently, they proceeded by pattern, requesting both an introduction and edits from Mary Shelley, along with the first published illustration of Frankenstein and his Creature. [31]

Commercial concerns cannot be neglected when assessing Frankenstein's visualization. As Banou has observed, the "paratext" or verbal and visual material included within a novel in addition to its imaginative fiction were:

> Considered mainly the publisher's responsibility… Front matter was developed and controlled mainly by publishers/printers and editors. Both visual and verbal paratext has been recognized since the beginning of typography as a privileged area for promotion,

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[27] St. Clair, *The Reading Nation*, 361-362. Recall that the majority of Bentley's owned texts, including *Frankenstein*, were originally published in three volumes rather than the single volumes in which he insisted on publishing them. In the case of deceased authors, Bentley would contact a family member to write a memoir of the author for the begging of the new publications. For more on "front matter," please consider "The Illustrated Novel as Medium," which begins here on page 12-15.

[28] St. Clair, *The Reading Nation*, 362. See pages 362-363 in addition to St. Clair's Appendix 6 in order to see a more complete breakdown of how this publishing technique affected cost. The series is alternatively known as *Bentley's Standard Novels*, *Colburn and Bentley's Standard Novels*, and *Colburn's Standard Novels*. There are multiple iterations because prints were often published under their names separately throughout their partnership. Consider also, Michael Sadlier, *Bentley's Standard Novel Series: Its History and Achievement* (Edinburgh: Printed for the Colophon, 1932).

[29] Gettmann, "Colburn-Bentley," 209-210.

[30] Gettmann, "Colburn-Bentley," 210.

[31] Hebron and Denlinger, *Shelley's Ghost*, 89; St. Clair, *The Reading Nation*, 357-373.

advertising, and building a relationship with the reader.[32]

Introducing illustration to Shelley's well-known story was thus beneficial to the publishers in many ways. Because the story had been published a number of times before 1831, Colburn and Bentley needed their edition to be different, to offer both familiarity and intrigue, as was expected from each of the *Standard Novels*. Front matter, as literary historian Michael Saenger has observed when writing about an earlier period, serves to introduce the text and "variously epitomize, privatize, publicize, metaphorize, aggrandize, trivialize, and ultimately transform and configure the text, the reader and the patron."[33] Because front matter comprises a novel's first pages, those with which an audience will first interact, the presence of front matter fundamentally alters what the novel is and how it is physically handled. Audiences will encounter a written and visual frame through paratext before ever reaching the literary narrative. In commissioning artwork for Shelley's fiction, Colburn and Bentley offer their buyers an object that interacts with *Frankenstein*'s literary and theatrical pasts by placing image in dialogue with text for the first time in the story's history.

Theodor von Holst's Frontispiece

Henry Colburn was personally responsible for commissioning Theodor von Holst's work for early volumes of the *Standard Novel Series*.[34] Through his professional networks, Colburn had come to know Holst and his reputation for producing powerful imagery.[35] For *Frankenstein*,

[32] Banou, *Re-Inventing the Book*, 44.
[33] Michael Saenger, *The Commodification of Textual Engagements in the English Renaissance* (Burlington: Ashgate Pub., 2006), 16.
[34] Max Browne, *The Romantic Art of Theodor Von Holst, 1810-44* (London: Lund Humphries, 1994), 24.
[35] Colburn had a professional relationship with writer Edward Lytton Bulwer, who he hired as editor of his *New Monthly Magazine*, demonstrating his trust in Bulwer's eye for strong work. Bulwer's assistant editor, Samuel Carter Hall, suggested considering illustrations and paintings from von Holst for publication and thus secured Holst's title page vignette and frontispiece designs for several volumes in Colburn and Bentley's series; Browne, *The Romantic Art of Theodor Von Holst*, 24.

Holst delivered a 2.75 by 3.63-inch rectangular design that was then engraved by W. Chevalier. The steel-engraved print shows the most dramatic scene in Shelley's story: the spark of life. From a low point of view, the audience sees Victor Frankenstein and his Creature in a narrow, cramped, lightly furnished, high-ceilinged study with a large, slightly adorned window and a stone floor. The room is scattered with a full, partially draped skeleton, an open book, at least two scientific instruments, and a stocked bookshelf topped with three skulls. Framed by the leaded tracery of a Gothic window, the narrow space emphasizes the Creature's monstrosity: he is nude, eight feet tall, and heavily limbed.[36] Staring wide-eyed as if in shock, the Creature dwarfs the clothed, standing figure of Victor Frankenstein who prepares to flee from the door at right. Littered with skulls that line bookshelves and literally underlie the Creature's bent knees, the room also features what literary historian Ian Haywood identifies as "a bell jar, two bottles connected by a tube, and a… horn-like set of Galvanic electrodes that hover above the Creature's head" on the edge of a desk.[37] Affixed to the left-hand wall above the desk is a square horoscope inscribed with symbols within diamonds and triangles, a feature to which I will return below. The text beneath the illustration reads, "By the glimmer of the half-extinguished light, I saw the dull, yellow eye of the creature open; it breathed hard, and a convulsive motion agitated its limbs… I rushed out of the room. Page 43."[38] However, the light source in Holst's frontispiece is far from 'half-extinguished.' Rather, it beams and radiates in visible, directional bands from an unknown source behind Victor Frankenstein. The light casts shadows on the wall opposite the fleeing figure and simultaneously illuminates the Creature's musculature and the lower half

[36] The Creature's size is cited in Mary Shelley's text: "I resolved, contrary to my first intention, to make the being of a gigantic stature, that is to say, about eight feet in height, and proportionably large." Shelley, *Frankenstein* (1831), Chapter 3.
[37] Ian Haywood, "Image of the Month: Theodore von Holst, 'Frankenstein' (1831)," Romantic Illustration Network (Nov. 2016), accessed 11 November 2017, https://romanticillustrationnetwork.com/2016/11/26/image-of-the-month-theodore-von-holst-frankenstein-1831/.
[38] Shelley, *Frankenstein* (1831), frontispiece.

of Victor Frankenstein's face as he rushes from the room. A light rendering of an almost-full moon resides in the top right panel of the window's upper arch, but it sheds no light into Frankenstein's study. Light therefore seems to radiate from behind Frankenstein, but illuminates his lower face as if it shines from his Creature; the shadow cast on the far-left wall suggests Frankenstein to be the light source, but the brightness of his creation's right knee suggests the Creature is also front-lit.

The steel engraving method employed for the printing of Holst's frontispiece is also notable. In his study of steel engraving, Basil Hunnisett addresses experiments by Charles Warren and his plate maker Richard Hughes from the 1820s as they sought "steel plates soft enough to engrave, hard enough to give a large number of impressions and thin enough to print on ordinary rolling presses."[39] The experimenters' resulting steel plate exploded the commercial importance of book illustration; through the new technique, single plates could print over seven thousand impressions without becoming unreadably worn for over a decade after its etching.[40] Steel plates were thus renowned for their longevity and could guarantee thousands of prints not only for illustrations within novels, but also for illustrations collected in albums outside of the text.[41] Steel engravings therefore offered publishers a method to produce high quality, high quantity, high profit prints.

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[39] Basil Hunnisett, *Engraved on Steel: History of Picture Production Using Steel Plates* (London: Routledge, 1998), 116.
[40] For example, Hunnisett discusses a plate that printed 5,000 copies in 1822, additional copies in 1832, and "were probably still in use for a 2,000 reprint in 1838;" Hunnisett, *Engraved on Steel*, 116.
[41] Hunnisett, *Engraved on Steel*, 123.

The Illustrated Novel as Medium

Theodor von Holst's artwork transformed Shelley's written narrative into an illustrated novel for the story's first time. Holst designed both a frontispiece and title page vignette for the Colburn-Bentley edition of *Frankenstein,* each of which Chevalier engraved for print. The frontispiece is the first illustration in a text that lies on the book's left side opposite its title page and often features either a full-page image or a large image above a caption or passage from the text. A title page vignette will then often depict a small scene and lie on the right page of an open text between the book's title and the details of its publication, meaning the two images are simultaneously visible to reader-viewers.[42] While the illustrations may seem a simple addition to the text, *Frankenstein*'s 1831 edition became a combined visual-textual medium with two interacting constituent parts. Holst's illustrations therefore transform both the medium itself and the role of its audience, requiring both literary and visual consideration, reading and viewing, of the newly imaged text. W.J.T. Mitchell has identified the combined visual-textual medium of the illustrated novel as an "imagetext" and discusses the inevitable affects images impose on the introduction, pacing, and emphasis of written material.[43] While illustrations placed within a text on a two-dimensional page punctuate scenes and interrupt passages, sentences, or even words, paratextual illustrations, those located outside the literary text in the book's front matter, ultimately act as objects of introduction, familiarity, and intrigue.

Where frontispieces in nonfiction texts often sought to aggrandize the author's authority and prestige, a key of the frontispiece in a fictional text was to visually introduce the story.[44]

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[42] I refer to *Frankenstein*'s (1831) audience as 'reader-viewers' because they confront both written and visual media through the illustrated text; they are both readers and viewers of the final piece.

[43] Brad Bucknell and Chritine Weisenthal, "Essays Into the Imagetext: An Interview with W.J.T. Mitchell," *Mosaic: A Journal for the Interdisciplinary Study of Literature* 33, no. 2 (Jun. 2000), 1-23. http://gateway.proquest.com/openurl?ctx_ver=2.

[44] A classic reading of the early modern nonfiction frontispiece is Steven Shapin, Simon Schaffer, and Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan and the Air-Pump: Hobbes, Boyle, and the Experimental Life: Including a Translation of*

Upon opening an illustrated novel, this image is the audience's first encounter with the narrative. Prior to reading any part of the literary text or, in fact, any text from the front matter, a perfect reader-viewer will consider the frontispiece. At a glance of the opening page spread, the viewer will first see Holst's rectangular frontispiece scene with the artist's and engraver's names printed under its lower left and right corners respectively, all of which is located above the name "Frankenstein," which is centered beneath the image and stamped in capitalized block lettering. [Fig. 2] As noted above, there is a short passage printed in a scrawling, italic font under the block-lettered title while a third, smaller script font to the bottom right directs the reader to "Page 43" within the literary narrative. Such page direction calls for a *tactile* encounter with the medium in addition to the illustrated novel's required reading and viewing; *Frankenstein*'s audience must read the text, consider the illustrations, and handle the constructed book in order to fully imbue the narrative with life.

The same small script font is additionally used for the final textual line on the frontispiece page: "London, Published by H. Colburn and R. Bentley, 1831."[45] Similar fonts and techniques are used on the title page, which is topped with the capitalized block lettering and reads, "Frankenstein, by Mary W. Shelley." The title page vignette sits beneath the title and author, directly beside the frontispiece illustration, and is similarly marked with the artist and engraver's names at the bottom corners. The italic font from the frontispiece spread reoccurs under the title page vignette as the illustration is similarly captioned by a first-person quote from Victor Frankenstein, this time from page 21. Finally, again, the publishing information punctuates the open page-spread at the bottom of the title page, this time in a capitalized block

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Thomas Hobbes, Dialogus Physicus De Natura Aeris, by Simon Schaffer (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1985), esp. 30-40.

[45] Shelley, *Frankenstein* (1831), frontispiece.

lettering that matches the title's font and functions to frame the composition's central scene. "Art historians," so Christina Banou has pointed out, "usually study [book] editions lavishly illustrated, with elaborative decoration whose artist is famous."[46] However, more comprehensive attention to *mis-en-page* shows the ways in which graphic elements become active components of storytelling and knowledge-production.[47] Take, for example, the italic font utilized for the quotes beneath *Frankenstein*'s frontispiece and title page vignette. This font is singularly used on the two-page spread for passages from the text that are first-person quotations from Victor Frankenstein; the italic font visualizes the character's voice. The script-font personalizes Holst's image and the imagetext composition, bringing life to Frankenstein by presenting the written account of the character's life event in a hand outside of the font used for non-fictional paratext details—i.e. the novel's title, its publisher, etc.[48] It is therefore not the illustration alone, but the combined work of artist, publisher, and author that brings the collaborative medium to life.[49]

However, the illustration and text do not only act two-dimensionally within the imagetext composition of the page. Theodor von Holst's design also engages the objecthood of the handled

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[46] Banou, *Re-Inventing the Book*, 32-39.

[47] On the latter, see D.F. McKenzie, "Typography and Meaning: The Case of William Congreve," in *The Book and the Book Trade in Eighteenth-Century Europe*, eds. Giles Barber and Bernhard Fabian (Hamburg: Dr. Ernst Hauswedell & Co., 1981), 81-126.

[48] The interaction of image and text is further examined throughout the Victorian Era with author-artist collaborations, such as Charles Dickens with Hablot K. Browne and Sir Arthur Conan Doyle with Sidney Paget. For further reading on the continued development of image-text relations, please consider: Richard Maxwell, *The Victorian Illustrated Book* (Charlottesville: The University Press of Virginia, 2002), Carol T. Christ and John O. Jordan, *Victorian Literature and the Victorian Visual Imagination* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995), Mary Elizabeth Leighton and Lisa Surridge, "The Plot Thickens: Toward a Narratological Analysis of Illustrated Serial Fiction in the 1860s," *Victorian Studies* 51, no. 1 (2008): 65-101, http://www.jstor.org/stable/20537366, and Lorraine Janzen Kooistra, *The Artist as Critic: Bitextuality in Fin-de-Siècle Illustrated Books* (Brookfield: Ashgate Publishers, 1995).

[49] Here, we may also consider the labor of bookmaking itself and the role of the book binder in the creation of this collaborative medium. However, according to John Sutherland's work about avid collector and scholar of nineteenth-century fiction, Michael Sadleir, the physical structure of novels truly came to fall "away from the printer and retailer to the publishing house: the publisher, in his modern form, had emerged" (155). I have therefore maintained my focus on the significance of Colburn and Bentley's role as publishers in *Frankenstein*'s physical construction rather than pursuing its binding history. Please see, John Sutherland, "Michael Sadleir and His Collection of Nineteenth-Century Fiction," *Nineteenth-Century Literature* 56, no. 2 (September 2001): 145-159, https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.1525/ncl.2001.56.2.145.

novel; it is a machined multiple made to be held, its pages turned, its media touched. Lying on the left side of an open-face book, the physical location of the narrative frontispiece within the construction of the illustrated text allows a figure, Victor Frankenstein, to rush from his study, through the crease of the book's spine, and into the story. Holst renders an almost page-thin door through which Frankenstein flees, inviting the audience to follow the character's departure, to touch the title page as Frankenstein touches the door, and enter into the pages of the novel. However, in a play on expectations, if reader-viewers engage the imaged title page as they are visually encouraged, they encounter Mary Shelley's authorial introduction to the 1831 edition rather than the narrative itself; or, as the frontispiece caption directs, they can jump into the illustrated action on Page 43.

Mary Shelley and Her Author's Introduction

What textual edits did Mary W. Shelley make to render her novel "standard" for Colburn and Bentley in 1831? Appropriately enough, she tells us a creation story in her introduction. In the summer of 1816 while on a trip to Geneva with her husband, Percy Shelley, and her half-sister, Claire Clairmont, visiting Lord Byron and his guest Doctor John Polidori, the eighteen-year-old Shelley began constructing her first literary creation.[50] When Lord Byron famously challenged his guests to write ghost stories, Byron and Percy Shelley had discussed the principle of life and the possibility of reanimation, themes that appeared in Mary Shelley's dreams.[51] Included in her 1831 introduction, the author recalls the nightmare that inspired her first novelistic foray:

[50] Hebron and Denlinger, *Shelley's Ghost*, 83.
[51] Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley, *Frankenstein or The Modern Prometheus; The Original Two-Volume Novel of 1816-1817 from the Bodleian Library Manuscripts*, ed. Charles E. Robinson (Oxford: The Bodleian Library, 2008), 21.

> I saw—with shut eyes, but acute mental vision—I saw the pale student of unhallowed arts kneeling beside the thing he had put together. I saw the hideous phantasm of a man stretched out, and then, on the working of some powerful engine, show signs of life, and stir with an uneasy, half vital motion.[52]

With the Creature's awakening, so she claimed in 1831, Shelley began her novel in Geneva and finished the first two-volume draft in England in April 1817 after working through drafts and iterations with her husband.[53] Scholars on Percy Shelley, Stephen Hebron and Elizabeth C. Denlinger, observe, "Everywhere on these sheets, alongside Mary's draft, one can see [Percy] Shelley's corrections, revisions and additions. He amends awkward words and loose constructions (particularly in the early chapters), suggests word changes, and adds short passages" that sometimes slip into his authorial voice rather than staying within M. Shelley's.[54] Percy Shelley's involvement in the text therefore led to long confusion and debate over who wrote the anonymous text in 1818 until the novel was advertised as Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley's during its 1823 publication run and officially published under her name in 1831.[55]

Mary Shelley's introduction to the *Standard Novel* edition therefore granted her the opportunity to claim and highlight her authorship for the first time in publication, as well as revise passages and whole chapters of the novel to her own interest. Beyond Shelley's editing and expanding the novel's scientific material—examined here in a later section—the author's revision provided what Judith Wilt has called "a more admirable and ideal and explicitly more

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[52]Shelley, *Frankenstein* (1831), 29.
[53] Hebron and Denlinger, *Shelley's Ghost,* 83-86.
[54] Hebron and Denlinger, *Shelley's Ghost,* 86.
[55] Hebron and Denlinger, *Shelley's Ghost,* 79-89. Mary Shelley was originally embarrassed by her novel, worried the text 'might sully the good names of Godwin, Wollstonecraft, and [P.] Shelley,' her literarily renowned father, mother, and husband (87). However, Mary revealed herself as the author after the much-respected Sir Walter Scott wrote and published a favorable review of *Frankenstein*, which further encouraged Godwin to insist on advertising the 1823 edition with his daughter's claim to authorship.

religious consciousness" to the narrative.[56] Consider the 1831 treatment of the creation scene: framed by Holst's visual rendering of the dramatic nightmare that inspired Shelley's story, the reader-viewer turns to the author's introductory account of how that dream had become real fiction. Directly following Shelley's above-quote describing her Geneva nightmare, she writes:

> Frightful must it be; for supremely frightful would be the effect of any human endeavor to mock the stupendous mechanism of the Creator of the world. [Frankenstein's] success would terrify the artist; he would rush away from his odious handywork, horror-stricken.[57]

Holst's Frankenstein thus bolts to Shelley's moralizing juxtaposition between her character's 'art' and God's role as creator, to paratextual front matter the audience must interact with prior to engaging Mary Shelley's narrative. However, as a scene that visualizes the very recursive look of creator back upon creation that Shelley herself was performing in 1831, Holst appeals to archetypal artistic precedents for thinking about creation that could have brought the novel more squarely into a religious framework.[58]

Theodor von Holst and the Royal Academy of Art

Theodor von Holst enrolled as a student at the Royal Academy of Art in London starting in 1824 at the age of fourteen.[59] Prior to Holst's enrollment, he sold his first piece of art to President of the Royal Academy, Sir Thomas Lawrence, and became an acquaintance and pupil of artist Henry Fuseli in 1820.[60] A child prodigy, Holst was known by 1827 for combining

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[56] Markman Ellis, *The History of Gothic Fiction* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2000), 142 and Judith Wilt, *Making Humans: Complete Texts with Introduction, Historical Contexts, Critical Essays* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2003), 14 and 13.
[57] Shelley, *Frankenstein* (1831), 29.
[58] A compelling reflection on this theme is Alexander Nemerov, "The Cauldron: Rubens's "adoration of the Magi" in Madrid," *Res: Anthropology and Aesthetics* 63-64, no. 63-64 (2013): 238-47.
[59] Browne, *The Romantic Art of Theodor Von Holst,* 14.
[60] Browne, *The Romantic Art of Theodor Von Holst*, 52.

Fuseli's distinctive style with famed Renaissance motifs and German Romantic medievalism.[61] Max Browne, a leading scholar on the artist, contends:

> The nature of [Holst's] eclectic approach and diverse borrowing, although unusual, was nevertheless in step with conventional doctrine: some fifty years earlier the Academy's first President, Sir Joshua Reynolds, had specifically advocated the adaptation and relocation of figures from Michelangelo into modern compositions.[62]

According to Gert Schiff, the art historian responsible for reattributing artworks to Holst that were long-mistaken for Fuseli's, Holst adapted Reynolds's rule at least once in a drawing that repurposed figures from Michelangelo's *Last Judgment* (1536-1541).[63] Whether or not Holst traveled to Rome himself to see Michelangelo's work, he would have undoubtedly been exposed to it through Henry Fuseli as the artist's student. During Fuseli's years of study in Italy, he "spent day after day, week succeeding week… lay[ing] on his back… with upturned and wondering eyes, musing on [Michelangelo's] splendid ceiling" in the Sistine Chapel.[64] Additionally, Holst could well have encountered the collection of primarily etching and aquatints, with some engravings, published as *The Italian School of Design: Being A Series Of Fac-Similes Of Original Drawings, By the Most Eminent Painters And Sculptors Of Italy* (1823) by fellow Academy student William Y. Ottley.[65] Ottley's published collection included an

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[61] Browne, *The Romantic Art of Theodor Von Holst*, 52.

[62] Browne, *The Romantic Art of Theodor Von Holst,* 15. See also, Gert Schiff, "Theodore Matthias Von Holst." *The Burlington* Magazine 105, no. 718 (Jan. 1963): 23-32, http://www.jstor.org/stable/873815, who writes, 'Sir Joshua Reynolds had impressed very forcibly upon his pupils… namely, that one should adapt figures from Michelangelo by changing their purpose without changing their attitude' (28).

[63] Schiff, "Theodore Matthias Von Holst," 28-31. Although Holst worked with Fuseli for a short five years before the mentor's death in 1825, Holst 'could copy [Fuseli's] drawings with such precision that they were almost impossible to distinguish from the originals' (Browne 15). Works were not reattributed to Holst until Professor Gert Schiff's project in the 1960s (Browne 11-12).

[64] Allan Cunningham, *The Lives of the Most Eminent British Painters, Sculptors and Architects Volume II* (London: J. Murray, 1830), 48.

[65] Ottley had travelled to Italy to further his artistic studies and complied a collection of Renaissance drawings that he had published in London in 1823. 'A study for the figure of Adam in the compartment representing his creation' after a drawing attributed to Michelangelo Buonarroti, 1832, by George Robert Lewis (1782-1871)," The Royal Academy of Arts Collection, accessed 6 March 2019, https://www.royalacademy.org.uk/art-artists/work-of-art/a-study-for-the-figure-of-adam-in-the-compartment-representing-his-creation.

etching and aquatint after Michelangelo's Adam. [Fig. 3] Therefore, it is possible to establish the conditions of possibility for Holst's *Frankenstein* frontispiece to have drawn upon Michelangelo's celebrated visual formulation of creator confronting creature.

Throughout Mary Shelley's narrative, Frankenstein's Creature often reprimands his creator's neglect by stating, "I ought to be thy Adam."[66] Considering Michelangelo's creation scene in his *Creation of Adam* (c. 1512) in comparison to Holst's Frankenstein to Creature, the morality Shelley enforces through her textual edits and introduction to the illustrated novel is furthered by the artist's design.[67] [Fig. 4] Both Michelangelo's Adam and Holst's Creature are statuesque, nude, reclining men, their bodies smooth, muscular, their right sides oriented to the foreground as their left twists to display shoulder, chest, and legs. The Creature's slack wrist and delicately animated fingers on his right hand share a similar gesture to that of Adam's reach toward his creator for the spark of life. However, Michelangelo's representation of God's relationship to Adam and Holst's Frankenstein to the Creature are highly juxtaposed. One creator approaches his creation with an extended arm, reaching to touch that which he created, while the other turns his back on his creature, lunging away from the life he has made; one locks eyes with his creation, while the other looks past his creature in awe-stricken horror. Additionally, as God's image made flesh, Adam lounges with one leg bent, the other outstretched, filling space and extending his solitary body as the perfect human creation. In contrast, Frankenstein's Creature, the imperfectly perfect humanoid creation, does not fit in his space; he is cramped, arms, legs, and torso bent, and contorts his body around a draped skeleton

[66] Shelley, *Frankenstein* (1831), 84. The Creature says, 'I am thy creature, and I will be even mild and docile to my natural lord and king, if thou wilt also perform thy part, that which thou owest me… Remember, that I am thy creature; I ought to be thy Adam; but I am rather the fallen angel, whom thou drivest from joy for no misdeed.'
[67] Please see, Wilt, *Making Humans*, 2003 for a literary examination of Mary Shelley's textual changes and the new morality/religiosity of Colburn and Bentley's 1831 edition.

that lies upside down between his shins. Adam extends his neck, looking back at his creator, while the neck of Frankenstein's Creature disappears completely as he stares, wide-eyed towards the life in his own figure or to the skeleton beneath him.

Curiously, Holst renders Victor Frankenstein's Creature with a seamless construction. The Creature does not appear patchworked from a conglomeration of graveyard parts; rather, his figure mirrors Adam's solid physique apart from the translucent right arm and left leg that show the bones beneath the Creature's skin. [Fig. 5] The translucent limbs are reconcilable to Mary Shelley's text; she writes that Frankenstein was unable to scavenge enough material to thicken the skin any more than to just cover that which lies beneath it, making musculature, veins, and arteries visible through the Creature's surface.[68] While the Creature's physique recalls the Renaissance nude, the translucence Holst employs recalls the *écorché* figures that were regularly used to display anatomical study from the fourteenth to eighteenth centuries. [Fig. 6 and 7] Renaissance *écorchés,* or flayed figures, were often posed in contrapposto or reclined positions to demonstrate the anatomical stretch and structural musculature beneath the skin as it would naturally act within an idealized male human form.[69] Anatomy had become a formal aspect of British academic education in 1768 when Sir Joshua Reynolds addressed "'a principal defect in the method of education' [to the Royal Academy of Art] in that the academies of art on the continent did not teach the correct method of anatomical study."[70] Reynolds thus appointed anatomist Dr. William Hunter as the Royal Academy of Art's first Professor of Anatomy in 1768, who was known to utilize living models, cadavers, skeletons, and *écorché* figures during

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[68] Shelley, *Frankenstein* (1831), 43. Shelley writes, 'His yellow skin scarcely covered the work of muscles and arteries beneath.'

[69] For additional reading on the development of the écorché and anatomical art, see: Magali Vène, *Ecorchés: L'exploration du corps, XIVe-XVIIIe siècle*, Paris: Bibliothèque nationale de France, 2001.

[70] Anne Darlington, "The Teaching of Anatomy and the Royal Academy of Arts 1768-1782," *Journal of Art & Design Education* 5, no. 3 (Dec. 1986), 265. Darlington here quotes, Sir J. Reynolds, *Discourses on Art* (Oxford University Press) 1981.

his lectures to medical and artistic students alike.[71] Professors that succeeded Hunter, such as Doctors John Sheldon, Sir Anthony Carlisle, and John H. Green, were known to adopt his teaching methods, and Theodor von Holst would have therefore been exposed to live anatomical study during his time studying at the Royal Academy.[72] Holst's depiction of the reclined, contorting figure with translucent limbs in *Frankenstein*'s 1831 frontispiece thus illuminates the perfected skeletal and muscular features of the Creature as they would have been demonstrated and studied in anatomical illustrations and lectures, both in his time as an artist during the nineteenth century and in Victor Frankenstein's time as a student of science in the eighteenth.[73] Holst's frontispiece displays both his own and Frankenstein's command of the male human form and anatomical practice.

What do we see when we apprehend the debt of Holst to Michelangelo and the academic anatomical tradition? Recall Mary Shelley's recursive look back at her creation through her 1831 authorial introduction, Victor Frankenstein's look back at his Creature, and now Theodor von Holst's look back at his artistic education. While we can see the precedents of Holst's image-making through the above elements utilized from his time at the Royal Academy, I suggest the artist explicitly demonstrates his bone-deep knowledge to complement Shelley's reflection and further moralize the Colburn-Bentley *Frankenstein.* Not only is steel-engraving used to extend the printing life of Holst's design, but his image actively intertwines art, anatomy, and commerce. Just as Shelley's introduction and revisions revitalized her thirteen-year-old

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[71] Darlington, "The Teaching of Anatomy," 265-267. William Hunter was Professor of Anatomy until 1782 when he was succeeded by Dr. John Sheldon for the continuation of anatomical teaching at the Academy (270). For further reading on Hunter's time at the Academy, consider transcriptions of his lectures in: William Hunter, *Dr. William Hunter at the Royal Academy of Arts*, ed. Martin Kemp (Glasgow: University of Glasgow Press, 1975).
[72] Sidney C. Hutchison, "The Royal Academy Schools, 1768-1830," *The Volume of the Walpole Society* 38 (1960-1962), 131. https://www.jstor.org/stable/41829338.
[73] Throughout Shelley's story, Victor Frankenstein is noted to have studied natural philosophy, chemistry, anatomy, physiology, and, in the 1831 edition alone, electricity and galvanism See, Shelley, *Frankenstein* (1818), 22, 28-31 and Shelley, *Frankenstein (*1831), 61.

narrative, Holst's illustration, demonstrative of a wealth of artistic resources, imbues the 1831 edition with visual relation to art's notable greats. Thus, as Shelley and Holst develop their media in the Colburn-Bentley edition, the newly revised and illustrated novel actively converses with social, political, and moral upheaval leading up to the Reform Act and Anatomy Act, both of 1832.

Theatre and *Frankenstein*'s Theatrical Past

Print culture and Academic art were not the only vectors bearing on Frankenstein's visualization with his Creature. In the late-eighteenth century, theatrical subjects had become an important and lucrative enterprise for ambitious British painters. Earlier in the century, actor David Garrick influenced a national obsession for William Shakespeare through his innovative stage presence, and thus caught the attention of audiences and artists alike.[74] William Hogarth, a friend of Garrick's, immortalized the actor in paint and then profited from engraved reproductions of his painted work in the 1740s and 50s.[75] Inspired by Hogarth, John Boydell's Shakespeare Gallery sought to make, circulate, and sell prints engraved after contemporary artists' painted scenes.[76] Boydell commissioned pieces for the gallery from 1789 until 1804 from artists such as Reynolds, Fuseli, George Romney, and James Barry.[77] Fuseli was regularly

[74] See, Rosie Dias, *Exhibiting Englishness: John Boydell's Shakespeare Gallery and the Formation of a National Aesthetic* (New Haven: Yale University Press, Published for the Paul Mellon Center for Studies in British Art, 2013); Peter Whitfield, *Illustrating Shakespeare* (London: British Library, 2013); Ronald Paulson, *Book and Painting: Shakespeare, Milton, and the Bible : Literary Texts and the Emergence of English Painting*. 1st ed. The Hodges Lectures, (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1982). For more on David Garrick, see: Gefen Bar-On Santor, "Shakespeare in the Georgian Theatre," in *The Oxford Handbook of the Georgian Theatre, 1737-1832*, eds. Julia Swindells and David Francis Taylor (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 214-228.
[75] Jane Martineau, *Shakespeare in Art* (New York: Merrell, 2003).
[76] Dias, *Exhibiting Englishness*.
[77] Stuart Sillars, *The Illustrated Shakespeare, 1709-1875* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008). For theatrical influence on Henry Fuseli, see: Andrei Pop, *Antiquity, Theatre, and the Painting of Henry Fuseli* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2015).

featured in Boydell's Shakespeare Gallery and similarly created images of David Garrick in the mid-1760s, such as *Garrick as Duke of Gloucester Waiting for Lady Anne at the Funeral Procession of her Father-in-law, King Henry VI* and *Garrick and Mrs. Pritchard as Macbeth and Lady Macbeth after the Murder of Duncan*.[78] Although the artists were commissioned to depict theatrical scenes, Constance McPhee writes that they approached:

> Their subjects as history painting and avoid[ed] overt reference to the stage. The finest compositions elucidate, rather than simply illustrate, scenes from the plays, and the overall project underscores the growing significance of reproductive prints as a source of income for both artists and publishers.[79]

The Shakespeare Gallery paintings, paintings inspired by both literature and the stage, were thus understood and taught as historical-theatrical works by Theodor von Holst's mentors.[80] They sought to subtly acknowledge the theatre while innovating beyond its arguably restrictive lighting, limited sets, props, scenes, moments. They sought to extend the story beyond the stage.

How then did Holst adapt his education in historical-theatrical painting to his frontispiece design for the Colburn and Bentley edition of *Frankenstein*? We must remember that the theatre was the venue in which the visualization of Frankenstein and his Creature had first been attempted via Richard Brinsley Peake's play, *Presumption; or, The Fate of Frankenstein*, in 1823. Franz J. Potter notes the narrative changes Peake made to Shelley's narrative in the production, stating:

> The drama not only simplified Shelley's complex narrative structure… it set a precedent… The impious act of creation, for example, takes place offstage and is

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[78] David H. Weinglass, *Prints and Engraved Illustrations By and After Henry Fuseli* (Brookfield: Ashgate Publishing Co., 1994), xv.
[79] Constance C. McPhee, "Shakespeare and Art, 1709-1922," in *Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History* (New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2000). https://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/shaa/hd_shaa.htm (November 2016).
[80] For more on Boydell's Shakespeare Gallery, see: John Boydell, *A Catalogue of the Pictures in the Shakespeare Gallery, Pall-Mall* (London: Printed for the proprietors, and sold at the place of exhibition, 1796). For further reading on the historical-theatrical Shakespeare paintings, please consider: Stuart Sillars, *Painting Shakespeare: The Artist as Critic 1720-1820* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006).

> witnessed by Frankenstein's comic side kick… In Peake's drama the creature truly become[s] monstrous as punishment for Frankenstein's impious presumption.[81]

Rather than present an image of the offstage creation scene, artist Thomas Charles Wageman designed a lithograph printed in London circa 1823 to commemorate actor T.P. Cooke's performance as the monster in Peake's production that dramatically captures the Creature's physical monstrosity. [Fig. 8] In the print, the monster stands at the vertical center of the composition; he brandishes a broken sword by the blade, its tip lying on the ground between his bare feet where a crouching Victor Frankenstein cowers. The monster's arms and legs are bare; his swirling cape drapes diagonally across his torso, partially revealing his chest and shoulders. A sheet wraps around the actor's extended upper left arm and right forearm, billowing monumentally behind his figure and adding to his character's size. Wageman renders thick, radiant white beams of light that cross the composition from the lithograph's upper right to middle left sides.

Due to the introduction of gaslight in the early nineteenth century, stage productions were able to increase the intensity of their light sources.[82] Tracy C. Davis writes, "gaslights... greatly enhanced [the light's] intensity, with strong overhead and side lighting particularly instrumental in rounding out the figure of the actor in space. As never before, the indoor actor was visible as a three-dimensional object within a scenic context."[83] The heightened illumination recalls today's stage spotlights. Wageman evokes the new lighting technology and its effects in his

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[81] Franz J. Potter, "The Monster of Morality: Mary Shelley," in *The History of Gothic Publishing, 1800-1835: Exhuming the Trade* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 147.

[82] Tracy C. Davis (1995), "'Reading Shakespeare by Flashes of Lightning': Challenging the Foundations of Romantic Acting Theory," in *European Theatre Performance Practice, 1750-1900*, ed. Jim Davis (New York: Routledge, 2016), 121-142 and Terence Rees (1978), "Gas Man's Duties. Lighting the Rehearsal. Exterior Lighting. Pilot Lights and Electrical Ignition. Rehearsing the Lighting," in *European Theatre Performance Practice, 1750-1900*, ed. Jim Davis (New York: Routledge, 2016), 295-310.

[83] Davis, "Reading Shakespeare," 934. Furthermore, Davis reveals that, before gaslighting, "actors were lit from in front (candles hanging over the forestage and audience), below (oil lamps or 'floats' at their feet), and the sides (wing lights on ladders masked by canvas flats."

print by emphasizing the tensed musculature of the monster's calves, arms, and neck with stark bright highlights against deeply shadowed ridges that would be more pronounced to an audience through the newly strengthened overhead stage lights. The actor's arms are stretched, his legs wide, and his character's figure maintains the majority of the image's space. By comparison, Frankenstein's dark, obscured figure is contained, cramped downstage within the lower right corner of the composition. The creator wears black—dark tights cover his visible leg, black sleeves cover his arms to the wrist, his shoulders are draped with a black cape that is trapped under his body. Frankenstein's neck is even covered with a white ruff, leaving his creator-hands and face as his only exposed flesh to juxtapose the Creature's display of skin. The beams of light do not reach the creator, negating their highlighting effects and leaving him dark. The set the characters occupy is empty beyond a banister in the composition's upper left, further emphasizing their contrasting figures. Beneath the image, a caption reads, "Mr. T.P. Cooke, of the Theatre Royal Covent Garden, In the Character of the Monster in the Dramatic Romance of Frankenstein."

How does Holst's 1831 rendering engage with this precedent? Like Wageman's depiction of T.P. Cooke's performance as Frankenstein's monster, Holst showers the Creature with a spotlight shining down diagonally from the composition's right side. [Fig. 9] The light beaming from behind Victor Frankenstein's back creates a range of bright highlights and deep shadows across the Creature's frame that emphasize his physique, recalling the play of light on Cooke's exposed body in Wageman's image. However, Holst heightens the light's drama and effect by stripping the Creature naked while throwing its cloaked creator into contrasting darkness. While omitting Wageman's archaizing white ruff, Holst's Victor Frankenstein wears a similar costume, thus rendering his protagonist in dark gentleman's garb from covered wrist to

stockinged foot. By outfitting Shelley's character in similar dress as Peake's costumed performer, Holst ensured Frankenstein's recognition amongst the story's metropolitan audience and those who had seen its printed depiction.

Yet, Holst also subtly plays with the identities of Frankenstein and his Creature as made popular by stage actors.[84] [Fig. 10] If we consider that Holst's scene is front-lit in addition to its overhead light in a continued reference to *Frankenstein*'s theatre and the advancement of stage lighting, the Creature's right knee and his massive left foot and inner calf catch the majority of the front lighting on his figure. [85] The strong light reveals the Creature's skeletal internal frame through his translucent skin. Directly aligned behind the Creature's lighted ankle, Holst has rendered a skeleton's foot, beyond which lay the black ankle and arch of Victor Frankenstein's stockinged, fleeing step. The Creature's foot, the front-most and most visible, reads as a combination of its upstage counterparts. As a living conglomeration of dead parts, Holst aligns the Creature's translucent ankle with visualizations of skeleton and human, of death and life; he renders the Creature an amalgamation of Frankenstein and his science. Because the creator's step is obscured in its surrounding darkness while his Creature's ankle is especially discernable in the composition's lighting, Holst makes Frankenstein's scientific creation the character's most visible feature to an audience, reader or viewer. Following the popular conflation and use of

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[84] St. Clair, *The Reading Nation*, 370. St. Clair writes, "From the start, the stage *Frankensteins* mocked themselves. They are full of topical allusions and jokes... By 1824 it was already common for the unnamed monster to be called 'Frankenstein' instead of the scientist who constructed him, a confusion put about by the actors. By the end of the century the reversal of the names had become so common that Fowler's *Modern English Usage* felt able to call it 'a blunder almost, but surely not quite, sanctioned by custom.'"

[85] Tracy C. Davis (1995), "'Reading Shakespeare by Flashes of Lightning': Challenging the Foundations of Romantic Acting Theory," in *European Theatre Performance Practice, 1750-1900*, ed. Jim Davis (New York: Routledge, 2016), 121-142 and Terence Rees (1978), "Gas Man's Duties. Lighting the Rehearsal. Exterior Lighting. Pilot Lights and Electrical Ignition. Rehearsing the Lighting," in *European Theatre Performance Practice, 1750-1900*, ed. Jim Davis (New York: Routledge, 2016), 295-310.

Frankenstein's name for his Creature, Holst thus visually renders Frankenstein and his science presenting as one through his creation.

Familiar with contemporary depictions of stage drama through his time in Fuseli's studio, Holst was also aware of the public's ability to recognize the faces of famous actors. An instructive model in this respect might have been William Hogarth's painting/engraving, *Mr. Garrick in the Character of Richard III* (1746).[86] [Fig. 11] Hogarth's Garrick appears as a startled, haunted Richard III who perches on the edge of a bed, half-lunging, half-falling to stage left. Although the figures stare in opposite directions, both Holst's Frankenstein and Hogarth's Richard III adopt similar facial expressions. Hogarth depicts the instant Richard III recognizes that he succeeded in attaining the throne through the death and murder of countless individuals—a moment of realized horror. Holst, in turn, shows Frankenstein's dreaded awe at the success of his dissection, reconstruction, and animation of a number of bodies into one being. Beyond their expressions, both figures share a halo of dark, voluminous hair that encircles their faces, a loose tendril grazing their right and left cheeks respectively.

The two characters are also placed within scenes set with props identifying their trades. Hogarth's Garrick is framed by the curtains of his tent, sword in hand, armor at his feet, with a crown and crucifix on his bedside table. The foreground is disheveled with a blanket falling from the bed to the ground outside the tent and a crumpled letter that lay beside the armor's upturned helmet, but each other item seems set in its place for display. In a similarly curated sense of dishevelment and display, Holst's Frankenstein's scientific instruments are perfectly aligned on his workbench, not at all as if they have recently been used to spark life, while the illustration's foreground is littered with a book that is falling open and a partially draped,

[86] I have chosen to consider the 1746 engraving of the 1745 painting so as to make a more direct visual comparison between Hogarth and Holst's designs as they were circulated in print.

upturned skeleton wedged beneath the Creature's legs. In his work on Fuseli, David H. Weinglass has argued that illustrating theatre "Freed [artists from] concerns with the actors' entrances and exits on a real-life stage, [and allowed] the artist… [to] narrow the frame of the action to as small and intense a compass as he desires."[87] A theatrical illustration could address the entrance or exit of a character without the limitation of fleeting stage action; an artist can capture both the exit itself in image, as well as the awe and dread that may quicken a character's step.

Although Theodor von Holst did not illustrate for *Frankenstein*'s 1823 theatrical production, his engagement with and reference to historical-theatrical painting techniques enables the 1831 frontispiece to interact within the medium of an illustrated novel. As previously addressed, the illustrated novel as media is constructed to entice audiences to experience a story literarily, visually, and tactilely. Since Frankenstein's touch of a page-thin door can reflect the turning of a book's page, I posit that, through its historical-theatrical reference, Holst's frontispiece further entices its audience by inviting them backstage, as it were, into the heart of the imaginative fiction. While Garrick falls to stage left as Richard III, Holst's Frankenstein, amidst the scene's spotlight and front light, can be read as exiting stage left. However, as a figure in an illustrated novel, the character's flight is not so simple as exit, stage left. Rather, Frankenstein's action invites the 1831 edition's reader-viewers to follow his departure off-stage to witness the secrets of creation. Of course, based upon the illustration's accompanying quote and its location before the author's introduction, Frankenstein may be leading the audience to Page 43 to disclose his own secret creation or he leads the reading public to Mary Shelley's disclosure of her own nightmare that inspired the creation of the story itself.

[87] Weinglass, *Prints and Engraved Illustrations,* xvi.

Frankenstein's Genre and Reading Public

Furthering Victor Frankenstein's active pursuit into the story, we must recall not only the role of Holst's frontispiece within Shelley's "standardized" novel, but its function in a larger *mis-en-page*. Again, below the steel-engraved illustration, is the following quotation of speech (itself a quote from the novel): "By the glimmer of the half-extinguished light, I saw the dull, yellow eye of the creature open; it breathed hard, and a convulsive motion agitated its limbs… I rushed out of the room. Page 43."[88] The ellipsis in the frontispiece's associated quote promises further explanation of the illustration without immediately providing it. The text on Page 43 that is excluded from the frontispiece quote through the ellipsis describes the classical beauty of the features that Frankenstein chose for the Creature and how they add to the horror of its animation after two years of work. By presenting the reader-viewer with three inky dots of the ellipsis symbolizing exclusion and a page number for elucidation beneath Holst's frontispiece, the full-page spread tantalizes the audience into further exploration. The *mis-en-page* conspires to create in the reader-viewer an immoderate curiosity like the very "ardour that far exceeded moderation" that had driven Frankenstein's ill-fated research.[89] Lorraine Daston and Katharine Park have argued that such a mingling of fear and awe are crucial components of wonder which they maintain was integral to knowledge in both the late middle ages and the early modern period:

> Wonders and wonder limned cognitive boundaries between the natural and the unnatural and between the known and the unknown… these boundaries were electric, thrilling to those who approached them with strong passions; to run up against any of these limits was necessarily to challenge the assumptions that ruled ordinary life.[90]

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[88] Shelley, *Frankenstein* (1831), frontispiece.
[89] Shelley, *Frankenstein* (1831), 43. Frankenstein says, "I had worked hard for nearly two years, for the sole purpose of infusing life into an inanimate body… I had desired it with an ardour that far exceeded moderation; but now that I had finished, the beauty of the dream vanished, and breathless horror and disgust filled my heart."
[90] Lorraine Daston and Katharine Park, *Wonders and the Order of Nature, 1150-1750* (New York: Zone Books, 1998), 20.

The scholars posit that the eighteenth century marks a distinct change in how wonder was viewed in scientific inquiry, that curiosity and knowledge became "more a cure for wonder than its product."[91] Theirs is a disenchantment story; by the turn of the eighteenth century, the scholars claim, wonder had "invariably lodged in passages glorifying God through his works… [i.e.] the geometry of snowflakes, [and] the anatomy of the human eye."[92] This arc is useful for apprehending the affects engendered by the 1831 packaging. Recalling Shelley's moralizing description of Victor Frankenstein's scientific exploration in her introduction and Holst's allusion to *The Creation of Adam*, the illustrated novel's 1831 audience was made to feel a frisson of anticipation no longer so unalloyed. With the addition of a frontispiece in accompaniment to Shelley's revised passages, the novel's 1831 edition might be seen to map the evolution of wonder through the end of the long eighteenth century by reshaping the 1818 Victor Frankenstein into a character who responds to a social friction between science and morality that would consolidate more fully by the end of the nineteenth century.[93]

One of the most significant socio-political debates of the nineteenth century was the morality of anatomical practice. Driven by the gross wonders of the human body, vitality, and death, anatomists were participants in the illegal procurement, and arguable defilement, of bodies for their studies since the start of anatomy as a science.[94] Put simply, anatomists were known to the public as grave-robbers, body snatchers, and, in some cases, murderers.[95] Historian Tim Marshall argues that the evolution of *Frankenstein*'s publication cannot be seen outside

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[91] Daston and Park, *Wonders and the Order of Nature*, 321.
[92] Daston and Park, *Wonders and the Order of Nature*, 322.
[93] William Hughes, "Victorian Medicine and the Gothic," in *The Victorian Gothic: An Edinburgh Companion*, ed. Andrew Smith and William Hughes (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2012), 186-201.
[94] Tim Marshall, *Murdering to Dissect: Grave-robbing,* Frankenstein *and the Anatomy Literature* (New York: Manchester University Press), 1-15.
[95] Throughout Tim Marshall's book in its entirety, he examines the "dead body business"—trade between surgeons and graverobbers, procuring bodies for trade via murder, etc.

legislation culminating in the Anatomy Act of 1832. The Anatomy Act "effected a permanent transformation of the practice and public perception of anatomy by granting anatomists access to unclaimed pauper bodies from workhouses," securing the legal legitimization of anatomical practice.[96] However, the Anatomy Act was simultaneously feared as it targeted the poor with potential dissection.[97] Literarily, Markman Ellis posits that the terror incited by Frankenstein's Creature stems from his unsocialized education, stating:

> The creature's unhappy realization is that he has an innate capacity for reason and feeling, but that inalienable qualities of birth and origins deprive him of justice and society… [T]he debate on the nature of science and enlightenment hosted by *Frankenstein* [therefore] articulates an enquiry into the state of society, gothicising both the spectre of radical reform and its political double, conservative reaction.[98]

Both Marshall and Ellis thus examine *Frankenstein*'s role within a societal ebb and flow, wherein reactions to scientific progress and class struggle alternate between the radical and the conservative, and which coincide with the politicized debates surrounding dissection practice that can be followed through the course of the novel's multiple publications.

It has been estimated that, in the long eighteenth century, some thirty-five percent of all novels published were then classified as Gothic novels.[99] Although there is literary debate as to whether *Frankenstein* is in fact a Gothic novel, it was only marketed as such to the public following the addition of Mary Shelley's 1831 introduction.[100] Christopher Frayling describes the Gothic genre as transgressive:

> the exaggeration and melodrama, the ornate style, the revisiting and reordering of well-worn generic conventions, the sense of a story which has often been told before, the sensational subject-matter, the conscious anachronisms… the villainess as taboo-breaker, the deliberate contrast between everyday material reality and a richly symbolic universe,

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[96] Marshall, *Murdering to Dissect*, 2.
[97] Marshall, *Murdering to Dissect*, 14.
[98] Ellis, *The History of Gothic Fiction*, 154-156.
[99] Christopher Frayling, "We live in Gothic times…," in *The Gothic Reader: A Critical Anthology,* eds. Martin Myrone and Christopher Frayling (London: Tate, 2006), 12.
[100] Frayling, "We live in Gothic times…," 13.

> the playfulness, the Gothic novel as being—in part—about itself, highly aware of its own fictionality.[101]

Following Frayling's line of argument, Mary Shelley's ornate narrative structure in 1818 and Victor Frankenstein's original love of antiquated natural philosophy, emphasized by Lackington's roster of publications advertised with the novel, could fall under Gothic categorization. But, again, it is Colburn and Bentley who transform Shelley's 1818 Romantic novel into an 1831 Gothic through their commission of an introduction. Re-printed amid heated debates regarding anatomical practice, class, graverobbing, dissection, and the ambit of science, the Colburn-Bentley *Frankenstein* met an audience acutely aware of the realities that inspired Shelley's fiction, imbuing the impossible narrative with the familiarity of lived experience. Additionally, Shelley's introduction brings a new, revised life to a story told many times before both through text and on the stage; the latter bringing an acute drama to the visual history of Shelley's narrative, which Holst maintains throughout his frontispiece image. However, proceeding from this investigation into the social tensions and anxieties surrounding anatomy in the nineteenth century, how did the addition of Holst's design, which operates within an academic anatomical tradition observed by the Royal Academy of Art, help to further secure *Frankenstein*'s consideration as a Gothic novel in 1831?

In Response to Anatomy

Anatomists have a long tradition of sitting for portraits to emphasize their professional proximity to life, death, study, and the body by utilizing recurring visual motifs such as skeletons, a variety of books, and a classically rendered human figure within a room of study or

[101] Frayling, "We live in Gothic times…," 15.

practice.[102] If used as frontispieces for their written research, these portraits would celebrate and demonstrate the anatomists' knowledge while personalizing their written scientific works and displaying themselves as gentlemanly scholars. In addition, if the anatomist is famous, a frontispiece portrait will add value to a printed text by presenting the sitter as a celebrity within his field.[103] Although Victor Frankenstein does not sit in his study—and is, in fact, fleeing his anatomical feat—Theodor von Holst fills the character's laboratory with scientific instruments as indicators of experimentation, a myriad of books as indicators of study, and bones as indicators of anatomical practice. He decorates the space with demonstrations of Frankenstein's learned expertise as in traditional portraits of anatomists. By incorporating recognizable anatomical motifs within the novel's 1831 frontispiece, Holst places *Frankenstein* within the long-eighteenth-century debate regarding anatomical study, and he visually reflects Mary Shelley's discussions on morality from her introduction by representing Victor Frankenstein as an anatomist who runs from his perfected art.

Prior to the long eighteenth century, we can see an engraving from circa 1670 that features Dutch anatomist Cornelius van Gravesande with demonstrative techniques to highlight the sitter's anatomical expertise as Holst employed for the Colburn and Bentley frontispiece. [Fig. 12] Despite the differences in date, location, and the more traditional composition of a sitter gazing out upon his viewer between Gravesande's portrait and Holst's illustration, both images

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[102] For an eighteenth-century look at the development of scientific/medical portraiture that sought to demonstrate expertise in a field, consider: Craig Ashley Hanson, "'Inspiring Reciprocal Emulation and Esteem': Dr. Richard Mead and Early Georgian Virtuosity," in *The English Virtuoso: Art, Medicine, and Antiquarianism in the Age of Empiricism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009), 157-192.

[103] Banou, *Re-Inventing the Book*, 48. While Banou speaks generally to frontispieces of famous authors and celebrity, there is significant scholarship on the effects medical portraiture imposed on the careers of surgeons. See, Aris Sarafianos, "The Natural History of Man and the Politics of Medical Portraiture in Manchester," *The Art Bulletin* 88, no. 1 (2006), 102-118, https://www.jstor.org/stable/25067227; Keren Rosa Hammerschlag, "The Gentleman Artist-Surgeon in Late Victorian Group Portraiture," *Visual Culture in Britain* 14, no. 2 (2013), 154-178, https://doi.org/10.1080/14714787.2013.780828.

show the anatomists dressed in gentleman's garb within their private spaces that are stocked with full bookshelves, classically rendered male figures, skeletons, open texts, and the scientists' names scrawled or stamped beneath their images. In the portrait of Gravesande, the classical male figure appears as a small statue standing upon the bookshelf, extending into space with its left arm and upturned face. In contrast, Frankenstein's Creature acts as a statuesque nude in the anatomist's study, cramped on the floor and limited by his awesome stature. Gravesande's study similarly houses a full skeleton that stands upright, posed in the doorway, eyelessly addressing the viewer, while the full skeleton in Holst's frontispiece grotesquely peers at its viewer from its back on the floor of Frankenstein's laboratory. Holst employs similar motifs in his illustration of Frankenstein as in traditionally composed portraits of seated anatomists, but he complicates the character's relationship with the living and the dead by literally turning it upside down and twisting it uncomfortably within a confined space. Holst additionally distances Victor Frankenstein from that which he ought to have mastered. The fictional anatomist flees from the success of his studies rather than dwelling comfortably amongst his instruments and discoveries.

Sir Joshua Reynold's 1786 portrait of Scottish surgeon and anatomist Dr. John Hunter references similar techniques and was likely accessible to members of the Royal Academy of Arts.[104] [Fig. 13] Hunter lived and practiced in London from 1748 until his death in 1793 where he worked as a surgeon and created a laboratory of comparative anatomy that led him to a number of medical discoveries.[105] As an important figure in anatomical practice, it is significant that we can see similar motifs of scientific expertise throughout Reynolds's portrait of Hunter.

[104] The portrait was painted by Sir Joshua Reynolds in 1786 and was then engraved and published by each William Sharp, Benjamin Beale Evans, and William Skelton in 1788.
[105] Jacob W. Gruber, "Hunter, John (1728-1793)," Oxford Dictionary of National Biography (September 2004), last updated 27 May 2010, accessed 11 March 2019, https://doi-org.proxy3.library.mcgill.ca/10.1093/ref:odnb/14220. Some of John Hunter's discoveries included collateral circulation, the cerebrally centered nervous system, the circulatory system, and the musculoskeletal system.

Hunter sits at a desk in his study, well-dressed with quill in hand and a piece of paper resting on the desk under his elbow. The room is unadorned besides a stack of two books on a drape over the doctor's desk, a book propped open for display that shows a series of skulls and skeletal appendages, two anatomical specimens kept under glass, and the lower legs and feet of a human skeleton that appears to hang on the wall within a display space. Hunter was known for having collected 13,682 natural history specimens throughout his practice, which initiated the Hunterian Museum at the Royal College of Surgeons in London, so he was and remains to this day a renowned figure in his field.[106] Therefore, the small representation of the famous surgeon's prodigious specimen collection presents his anatomical expertise and his immoderate curiosity of nature, the body, and vitality as profoundly as Victor Frankenstein's statuesque creation.

The contexts of each of these three portraits are far from the same, even from the basic perspective that two are historical and the other fictional, but each image depicts their subject in spaces filled with indications of active study, life, and death that are essential to practicing as anatomists. Despite its fiction, we can consider the 1831 frontispiece as expert anatomist Victor Frankenstein's introduction portrait to a written account of his scientific work because of Theodor von Holst's references to a tradition of anatomist portraiture. In this case, Frankenstein operates within the celebrity tradition of frontispieces featuring famous figures heightening the value of a printed edition.[107] As a character, Victor Frankenstein was incredibly well-known by 1831: he was recognizable to audiences through Holst's utilization of *Frankenstein*'s theatrical past and his anatomical mastery is visually celebrated through the Creature's Adam-like perfection. However, Frankenstein turns his back on his science and runs to Mary Shelley's description of his "unhallowed arts" rather than sitting comfortably amidst the living evidence of

[106] Gruber, "Hunter, John."
[107] Banou, *Re-Inventing the Book*, 48.

his stolen bones, snatched bodies, and robbed graves as his historical anatomist counterparts.[108] Rather than celebrating Frankenstein's acquired knowledge then, Holst's portrait of the scientist warns against it, warns against the pursuit of similar endeavors, of immoderate curiosity, of pushing the bounds of science and technology beyond a point that questions the humanity of what is created. Of the 1830s, Tim Marshall writes, "the relations between making and destroying [were] more deeply ambivalent, both in life and art… In the anatomy literature there is much slippage between the surgeon, the dissector, the murderer—and then the writer and artist: after all, artists have relied on anatomical dissection, and writers vicariously kill."[109] Colburn and Bentley thus offered their 1831 audience an illustrated text that utilized an artist's anatomical expertise and an author's literacy in the modus operandi of eighteenth-century medical students to further Mary Shelley's developing critique against the bodysnatching era and its indicative insatiable pursuit of knowledge.

Framing the Scene: Victor Frankenstein's Laboratory

Appropriately, Theodor von Holst adapted elements of a previous illustration he had worked on in the early 1820s to outfit Victor Frankenstein's study in his 1831 frontispiece; the artist incorporated elements from his illustration inspired by Goethe's writing, *Faust Standing in his Study Reading*. [Fig. 14] Although the *Faust* engraving is unfinished, Holst very clearly draws upon the print's setting for his 1831 image. Faustus stands in the middle-left of a high-ceilinged study in front of a large arched window adorned with a motif of circles and three small clover-like shapes at the top of its arch. Frankenstein's laboratory similarly features an even

[108] Shelley, *Frankenstein* (1831), 29. Victor Frankenstein admits: "The dissecting room and the slaughter-house furnished many of my materials," (75-76).
[109] Marshall, *Murdering to Dissect*, 13.

larger window with series of nine circles enclosed in square paneling with seven clover-like shapes in its top arch. The Faust composition hosts a fully stocked bookshelf that is topped with a skull, chalice, and a collection of flasks on its right side. A taxidermied bat hangs from the ceiling above the bookshelf and a frog hangs from the shelf's side. The shelf's base is a writing desk scattered with papers, a book, and an oil lamp topped with a tall, shining flame. Although Faustus's study holds a greater variety of objects than in Holst's composition for *Frankenstein*, the repetition of skulls atop Victor Frankenstein's bookshelf and the skeleton laid across his floor demonstrate the obsessive nature of his anatomical study, just as the variety in Faustus's space shows the breadth of his fervent search for knowledge.[110]

Goethe's fictional *Faust* is based on a series of legends regarding a historical figure from the sixteenth century who practiced a myriad of sorcery, alchemy, astrology, theology, and necromancy.[111] The literary character then developed into a German necromancer and astrologer who sells his soul to the devil to gain knowledge and power, and thus secures himself eternal damnation.[112] However, in Goethe's drama written in 1808 (Part I) and 1832 (Part II), he follows writer Gotthold Lessing's 1780 "enlightened rationalist" view that Faust's pursuit of knowledge is noble and would therefore ultimately lead the researcher to redemption.[113] Following Goethe's lead in altering the narrative, according to Max Browne, Theodor von Holst "appears to demonstrate his lack of interest in depicting literal translations from dramatic

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[110] The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica, "Faust: Literary Character," ed. Amy Tikkanen, Encyclopaedia Britannica, accessed 20 February 2019, https://www.britannica.com/topic/Faust-literary-character. For a further look at Faust, consider: Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, Howard Brenton, and Christa Weismann, *Faust: Parts I & II* (London: N. Hern Books, 1995); Paul Bishop, "*Faust*, Alchemy, and Culture," in *Analytical Psychology and German Classical Aesthetics: Goethe, Schiller, and Jung. Volume II, The Constellation of the Self* (New York: Routledge, 2009), 107-160; David Hawkes, "Faust and Enlightenment," in *The Faust Myth: Religion and the Rise of Representation* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 139-165.
[111] The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica, "Faust: Literary Character."
[112] The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica, "Faust: Literary Character."
[113] The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica, "Faust: Literary Character."

literature" by picturing "Faust, the disillusioned, ageing medieval scholar, [who] is described by Goethe as *sitting* in his study" instead as a young man standing, contemplating a text.[114] We have seen already some of the ways Holst carried this practice into his frontispiece for *Frankenstein*, particularly with the illustration's dramatic spotlighting versus Shelley's descriptive "glimmer of half-extinguished light," but how does the artist's use of *Faust*'s study impact his visual translation of the author's creation scene?[115]

Behind Faustus on the composition's left is the beginning rendering of the same scientific instruments that inhabit Frankenstein's study—a bell jar, two bottles connected by a tube, and a horn-like set of Galvanic electrodes.[116] The instruments in Holst's *Faust* print are only outlined, however, as the etching was not fully realized; the wall above Faust's work bench, for example, is completely bare while the other walls in the space are lightly textured with fine lines. [Fig. 15] In Holst's *Frankenstein* frontispiece, this section of the wall holds what appears to be an alchemical or astrological horoscope centered above the bench of scientific instruments. Scientific historian, Mark Harrison, addresses medical astrology writing:

> while dispensing with horoscopes and the zodiacal imagery typical of medical astrology in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, their basic assumptions about the influence of planetary and celestial phenomena on human health remained the same... they began to construe the relationship between the human body and the heavens in mechanical terms.[117]

Although Harrison notes the dispense of horoscopes in medicine, fifteenth- and sixteenth-century figures who studied astrology and the occult, such as Heinrich Cornelius Agrippa, were the

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[114] Browne, *The Romantic Art of Theodor Von Holst*, 81.
[115] Shelley, *Frankenstein* (1831), frontispiece.
[116] Haywood, "Image of the Month."
[117] Mark Harrison, "From Medical Astrology to Medical Astronomy: Sol-Lunar and Planetary Theories of Disease in British Medicine, c. 1700-1850," *The British Journal for the History of Science* 33, no. 1 (March 2000), 26, https://www.jstor.org/stable/4028064.

catalysts that started Victor Frankenstein's interest in and obsession with science and pursuing the secrets of nature before he began his studies at the University of Ingolstadt.[118] Holst thus emphasizes Frankenstein's initial influences by incorporating an astrological horoscope that would have been familiar to his inspirational natural philosophers in the young scientist's study. In addition, scientific historian Patricia Fara, has examined the eighteenth-century Lunar Society. She describes the society as an "informal group of provincial philosophers who met when the full moon would illuminate their journeys (and perhaps also their minds)," a group that emphasized the connection between the body and the heavens and maintained a close association with artist Joseph Wright of Derby.[119] Considering Wright's specifically titled painting, *The Alchymist, in Search of the Philosopher's Stone, Discovers Phosphorus, and Prays for the Successful Conclusion of his Operation, as was the Custom of the Ancient Chymical Astrologers* (1771), Fara notes the light of the full moon that shines into the pictured alchymist's study through Gothic windows, what would have been understood as the Lunar light of reason.[120] [Fig. 16] Holst again references historically astrological influences on Frankenstein's science by alluding to Wright's window and Lunar light. In his frontispiece, Holst renders a full moon in the rightmost arch of the window in Frankenstein's study that is placed almost exactly as the luminous moon in Wright's painting. [Fig. 17] However, Holst's moon casts no light into the scientist's study.[121] Interestingly, Markman Ellis notes, "The University of Ingolstadt, founded

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[118] Before beginning his studies at Ingolstadt, Victor states, "Natural philosophy is the genius that has regulated my fate; I desire therefore, in this narration, to state those facts which led to my predilection for that science… I entered with the greatest diligence into the search of the philosopher's stone and the elixir of life" by the age of thirteen. Shelley, *Frankenstein* (1818), 22-23.

[119] Patricia Fara, "Science in the Industrial Revolution Series: Lunar Philosophers," *Endeavour* 31, no. 1 (March 2007), 4, doi: 10.1016/j.endeavour.2007.01.007.

[120] Fara, "Lunar Philosophers," 5.

[121] While there are multiple light sources throughout Holst's frontispiece, the characters are primarily back-lit from the beam of light that radiates from Victor Frankenstein rather than from the window. Additionally, the shadow cast on leftmost wall by the Galvanic electrodes stretches up the wall behind the instrument, suggesting it is lit from the bottom of the composition rather than from the top, as would be the case with a luminous moon.

in 1472, was purportedly the *alma mater* of Faustus, a wanderer and vagabond who practiced necromancy and alchemy in the early sixteenth century with Agrippa, and formed the basis, in works by… Goethe."[122] Fictional Victor Frankenstein therefore shared the same university with historical Faust. It is instructive then that Holst depicts Frankenstein's study at Ingolstadt with elements borrowed from his own previous visualization of Faust's chamber and contemporary references to an astrologically motivated scientific past, thereby visually linking mysterious, learned inquiries at the same university laboratory some two centuries apart.

Alchemy: 'The Unhallowed Arts'

In her 1831 introduction, Mary Shelley claims that she was privy to discussions of galvanism and reanimation at the time of *Frankenstein*'s conception. This scientific context has also been affirmed by modern scholarship.[123] Of Shelley's 1818 text, literary historian Markman Ellis notes that the author's "diaries from 1816 record both [Shelley's] own reading of scientific work, and her enthusiastic commentary on the philosophical discussions at the Villa Diodati."[124] Ellis emphasizes Shelley's active participation within the long eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century scientific communities. It was at this time that alchemy experienced a revival after being transformed during the Enlightenment into a range of practices associated with irrationality and

[122] Ellis, *The History of Gothic Fiction*, 147.
[123] The following texts represent but a touch of the extensive literature surrounding *Frankenstein* and its science: Christa Knellwolf King and Jane R. Goodall, *Frankenstein's Science: Experimentation and Discovery in Romantic Culture, 1780-1830* (Burlington: Ashgate, 2008); Debra Benita Shaw, *Women, Science, and Fiction: The Frankenstein Inheritance* (New York: Palgrave, 2000); Carol Margaret Davison and Marie Mulvey Roberts, *Global Frankenstein* (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018); Susan E. Lederer, Elizabeth Fee, Patricia Tuohy, and the National Library of Medicine (U.S.), *Frankenstein: Penetrating the Secrets of Nature, an exhibition by the National Library of Medicine* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2002); Sylvia A. Pamboukian, "Orthodoxy or Quackery? Anatomy in *Frankenstein*," in *Doctoring the Novel: Medicine and Quackery from Shelley to Doyle* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2012), 17-48; Roslynn D. Haynes, *From Faust to Strangelove: Representations of the Scientist in Western Literature* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1994).
[124] Ellis, *The History of Gothic Fiction*, 142.

akin to magic.[125] Historians of science William R. Newman and Lawrence M. Principe have done much to problematize the familiar distinction between alchemy as an archaic, "consciously fraudulent" practice and chemistry as a modern and rational science.[126] Rather, Newman and Principe have illuminated the mutual development of both domains in the older field of *chymistry*[127]. Prior to the eighteenth-century Enlightenment, alchemists were viewed as experimenters and pursuers of knowledge rather than as isolated occultists.[128] Principe, along with Lloyd DeWitt, have also examined the changing representations of alchemists in art. The scholars offer a number of pre-Enlightenment paintings that show seventeenth-century alchemists seated within their laboratories stocked full of equipment, specimens, books, distillation instruments, hearths, and assistants, children, and animals. This casts the revived, nineteenth-century alchemist in a scene of great contrast to their seventeenth-century counterparts. Principe and DeWitt describe the alchemical revival, writing:

> The Romantic movement responded in part to the rationalism and classicism of the Enlightenment and stressed, among other things, emotion, naturalism, individuality, and a greater interest in and acceptance of the supernatural and the nonrational… Thus the protagonist of Goethe's early nineteenth-century epic poem *Faust* is a world-weary, disillusioned alchemist who is also a master of the black arts.[129]

Privileging wonder, intensity, and inquisitiveness, the Romantics adopted the post-Enlightenment view of alchemy as an esoteric science to fit its reflective individualism. The nineteenth-century alchemist therefore became a vehicle through which to demonstrate the potential consequences of untamed curiosity and scientific exploration.

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[125] Lawrence M. Principe and Lloyd DeWitt, *Transmutations: Alchemy in Art: Selected Works for the Eddleman and Fisher Collections at the Chemical Heritage Foundation* (Philadelphia: The Chemical Heritage Foundation, 2002), 32.
[126] William R. Newman and Lawrence M. Principe, "Alchemy vs. Chemistry: The Etymological Origins of a Historiographic Mistake," *Early Science and Medicine* 3, no. 1 (1998), 34, http://www.jstor.org/stable/4130048.
[127] Newman and Principe, "Alchemy vs. Chemistry," 64.
[128] Principe and DeWitt, *Transmutations*, 33.
[129] Principe and DeWitt, *Transmutations*, 33.

Post-Enlightenment alchemists were known for isolated laboratories, secret experiments, and for work done in the dead of night. Contrastingly, Ellis notes that enlightenment science and discovery were "publicly manifested in experiment and must be made public to become knowledge."[130] Ellis highlights how, despite Victor Frankenstein's perfected practice of the enlightenment science of chemistry and anatomy, his discovery and creation are ultimately alchemical in nature by post-Enlightenment terminology.[131] The character's conception of, collection for, and construction of his experiment are kept secret, hidden, and distinctly away from the public. From a literary perspective, it quickly becomes clear that Frankenstein's Creature— born of bones and bodies stolen under cover of night, constructed in secret for over two years, unclaimed by his creator until Frankenstein faces death— is an alchemical experiment. However, Shelley's consistent descriptions of Frankenstein's "pursuit of knowledge," "thirst for education," and desire to unmask the secrets of nature in her 1818 text simultaneously locate the protagonist's immoderate curiosity in legitimate seventeenth-century chymistry and the long eighteenth century's focus on wonder.[132] Frankenstein's 1818 science is therefore balanced between the post-Enlightenment embrace of chemistry and anatomy, Romantic individualism, and the historical alchemist's insatiability.

Ellis also notes, however, Shelley's substantial revisions to the scientific material between the 1818 and 1831 editions of the narrative, stating that they "all point to [the author's] continued interest in fitting the science to her novel's purpose."[133] Shelley's first edition repeatedly celebrates the young Frankenstein's charismatic intensity. Yet, a side-by-side reading of the 1818 and 1831 publications reveals how her previous celebration is revised to emphasize

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[130] Ellis, *The History of Gothic Fiction*, 144-151.
[131] Ellis, *The History of Gothic Fiction*, 141-156.
[132] Shelley, *Frankenstein* (1818), I. ii.
[133] Ellis, *The History of Gothic Fiction*, 142.

the roles of fate, destiny, or divine intervention, which came to inflect the alchemist in the Romantic Era.[134] In addition to Theodor von Holst's illustration for Goethe's *Faust,* we can consider François-Marius Granet's (1775-1849) painting, *The Alchemist* (c. 19th century). [Fig. 18] The painting hosts a familiar scene: a lone figure, standing in his study in front of a large window set in the tall wall of a high, vaulted ceilinged space. Dissimilar to the image of *Faust,* however, Granet's alchemist does not stand amidst a clutter of instruments, books, and experiments. Rather, the figure's space is relatively empty; there is a single experiment in progress behind the alchemist, but the additional benches or shelves simply hold two beakers, two vases, a globe, hourglass, and two discarded pieces of clothing. Principe and DeWitt posit that the painting is not about the nineteenth century, but rather sets a mood of "antiquity, melancholy, and disuse… a melancholy, hazy memory of a lost time: it tries to depict a pre-Enlightenment era before 'alchemy' was repudiated" within the constructs of the Romantic movement.[135] Granet's painting therefore demonstrates a Romantic appreciation for the alchemist's pursuit of knowledge and their sometimes supernatural interests, while critiquing what was understood as a quasi-scientist's antiquated methods as isolating in the post-Enlightenment era of science and technology.

Returning, then, to the frontispiece for *Frankenstein*'s 1831 edition, with the new publication's authorial introduction and textual edits, Holst's Victor Frankenstein can be seen to resemble the nineteenth-century revival alchemist, rather than the seventeenth-century chymist or the enlightened man of science. Frankenstein's laboratory is isolated, dark, nearly empty. In

[134] Shelley, *Frankenstein* (1831), Chapter 3. Please note that the 1818 and 1831 editions are structured very differently, as the former is printed in three volumes and the latter in one. Therefore, Chapter 2 from the 1818 edition corresponds to Chapter 3 in the 1831 edition, which is why I compare the language employed in the two chapters here.
[135] Principe and DeWitt, *Transmutations*, 33-34.

its Romantic conception, alchemy was viewed primarily as a quixotic hunt for the elixir of life and the philosopher's stone rather than with the seriousness and practical breadth of the chymical tradition Newman, Principe, and others have sought to excavate. Designing within this critical revival, Holst visually aligns Frankenstein's character, interests, and obsessions with the study of alchemy by surrounding Frankenstein with memento mori and, ultimately, evidence of his successful search for the spark of life. However, Victor Frankenstein turns his back (literally in the case of Holst's frontispiece) on alchemy once he begins his studies in earnest at university and focuses instead on the enlightenment sciences of chemistry and anatomy.[136] The astrological horoscope upon the wall of the character's study therefore reiterates that Frankenstein's initial and ongoing interests were that of the antiquated alchemist despite his ostensibly true, respected work as an anatomist. As science and technology rapidly and dramatically advanced throughout the nineteenth century and the public grew more critical of anatomy practices as they had in the past of alchemy, Holst's Frankenstein does not simply turn his back on a reminder of outdated science. Rather, Holst depicts Frankenstein as an accomplished man of enlightenment science, an anatomist with alchemical preoccupations, who runs from his perfectly monstrous experiment to a moral rather than scientific public record of his trials: "Learn from me, if not by my precepts, at least by my example, how dangerous is the acquirement of knowledge."[137]

Conclusion

Two hundred years after the novel's initial publication, Mary Shelley's name is now universally associated with *Frankenstein*, her famed creator and his notorious creation widely

[136] While Frankenstein may have studied legitimate, scientific alchemists, the time period in which the story was written imbues a critical lens upon all mentions of alchemy.
[137] Ellis, *The History of Gothic Fiction*, 151 and Shelley, *Frankenstein* (1831), 73-74.

acclaimed.[138] As a *visual* creature, however, Frankenstein had many "parents." Beyond Shelley, her 1831 publishers Henry Colburn and Richard Bentley as well as their illustrator, Theodor von Holst, maintain a similar responsibility for *Frankenstein*'s longevity. This thesis acts to place Holst's image back into a very specific time and to highlight a host of factors bearing upon it. In Holst's utilization of the narrative's theatrical past, historical-theatrical painting, religious reference, anatomical illustration, scientific portraiture, the Romantic revival of the alchemist, and its interaction with the text through the self-reflective medium of the illustrated novel, the artist creates more than the first-ever published image of Frankenstein and his Creature. Together with the paratextual additions installed by Colburn and Bentley, including Shelley's authorial introduction, and their utilization of innovative publishing techniques, Holst's frontispiece works to visualize the anxieties held by the nineteenth-century public regarding the anatomization of bodies and far-reaching scientific and mechanical development. In addition, the final medium of the illustrated novel created by Colburn and Bentley-Shelley-Holst emphasizes the author's warning message against immoderate scientific curiosity. Ultimately, each of these elements combine to reveal *Frankenstein*'s 1831 illustrated edition to be a cultural "Frankenstein's monster" itself, seamlessly constructed from seemingly disjointed elements—publishers, author, artist, theatre, the Renaissance nude, Romantic melancholy, Gothic wonder, anatomist portraiture, the meeting of medicine and art, an alchemical revival—to create a masterfully horrific physical object that was nightmarishly created, lost to theatre, and strongly re-introduced to a weary, curious, awe-filled audience.

[138] Throughout 2018, a variety of museums, libraries, and universities curated and hosted exhibitions, lectures, and seminars dedicated to *Frankenstein*. Additionally, in recent entertainment, there was a 2018 historical-fiction period-drama released by IFC Films in the United States titled, *Mary Shelley*, that focuses on the inspiration behind Shelley's creation and a 2015-2017 period crime drama series inspired by the 1818 text titled, *The Frankenstein Chronicles*, which features Theodor von Holst's illustration in many episodes.

Figures

*Images have been removed due to copyright.

[Fig. 1] Theodor von Holst, *Frankenstein*, 1831. Steel engraving by W. Chevalier, 9.3 x 7.1 cm. Chicago: The Newberry Library.

[Fig. 2] Theodor von Holst, H. Colburn and R. Bentley, and Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley, *Frankenstein*, opening page spread, 1831. Steel engraving, 202 pages, 18 cm. Chicago: The Newberry Library.

[Fig. 3] George Robert Lewis, *'A study for the figure of Adam in the compartment representing his creation' after a drawing attributed to Michelangelo Buonarroti*, 1823. Etching and aquatint in color on j. whatman wove paper, 475 mm x 322 mm. London: Royal Academy of Arts.

[Fig. 4] Michelangelo di Lodovico Buonarroti Simoni, *The Creation of Adam*, c. 1512. Fresco, 280 x 570 cm. Vatican: Sistine Chapel.

[Fig. 5] Detail. Theodor von Holst, *Frankenstein*, 1831. Steel engraving by W. Chevalier, 9.3 x 7.1 cm [whole]. Chicago: The Newberry Library.

[Fig. 6] *De humani corporis fabrica*, 1543. Photo-mechanical reproduction of print, 43 x 28 cm, plate 24. Montréal: The Osler Library.

[Fig. 7] Carlo Cesi, *Altra siuazione espirimente i muscoli*, 1679. Engraving, 38 x 25.1 cm. Montréal: The Osler Library.

[Fig. 8] Thomas Charles Wageman, *Mr. T.P. Cooke, of the Theatre Royal Covent Garden, in the character of the monster in the dramatic romance of Frankenstein*, c. 1823. Lithograph, drawn on stone by Nathaniel Whittock, 37 x 29.5 cm. New York: The New York Public Library.

[Fig. 9] Detail. Theodor von Holst, *Frankenstein*, 1831. Steel engraving by W. Chevalier, 9.3 x 7.1 cm [whole]. Chicago: The Newberry Library.

[Fig. 10] Detail. Theodor von Holst, *Frankenstein*, 1831. Steel engraving by W. Chevalier, 9.3 x 7.1 cm [whole]. Chicago: The Newberry Library.

[Fig. 11] William Hogarth, *Mr. Garrick in the Character of Richard III*, 1746. Etching and engraving, engraved by Charles Grignion, 41.6 x 52 cm. New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art.

[Fig. 12] Jan Verkolie, *Cornelius van Gravesande*, c. 1670. Mezzotint, engraved by Abraham Blooteling, 34 x 25.5 cm. Montréal: The Osler Library.

[Fig. 13] William Sharp, *John Hunter*, 1788, after Sir Joshua Reynolds. Engraving, 51.5 x 39 cm. Montréal: The Osler Library.

[Fig. 14] Theodor von Holst, *Faust Standing in His Study Reading*, 1820-1825. Etching, 19.2 x 15.2 cm. London: Trustees of the British Museum.

[Fig. 15] Detail. Theodor von Holst, *Faust Standing in His Study Reading*, 1820-1825. Etching, 19.2 x 15.2 cm [whole]. London: Trustees of the British Museum.

[Fig. 16] Joseph Wright of Derby, *The Alchymist, in Search of the Philosopher's Stone, Discovers Phosphorus, and Prays for the Successful Conclusion, as was the Custom of the Ancient Chymical Astrologers*, 1771. Oil on canvas, 127 x 101.6 cm. Derby: Derby Museum and Art Gallery.

[Fig. 17] Detail. Theodor von Holst, *Frankenstein*, 1831. Steel engraving by W. Chevalier, 9.3 x 7.1 cm [whole]. Chicago: The Newberry Library.

[Fig. 18] François-Marius Granet, *The Alchemist*, c. 19th century. Oil on panel, 61 x 48.3 cm. Philadelphia: The Chemical Heritage Foundation.

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