Grant details
I was involved in organizing an international conference to mark the 200th anniversary of the publication of Mary Shelley’s *Frankenstein*. The conference, *Frankenstein 2018: Two Hundred Years of Monsters*, took place at the National Film and Sound Archive from 12-15 September 2018, with the generous support of the Humanities Research Centre; the School of Literature, Languages and Linguistics in CASS; and the ANU Gender Institute.

One of our four main themes of the conference was ‘gender, sexuality, reproduction and the work of care’. We sought funding from the ANU Gender Institute to support travel for a keynote speaker we had invited to address this theme, Prof. Julie Carlson, of the English Department at the University of California, Santa Barbara.

Event details
Prof. Julie Carlson received her Ph.D. from the University of Chicago in 1985, and is the author of *England’s First Family of Writers: Mary Wollstonecraft, William Godwin, Mary Shelley*, *In the Theatre of Romanticism: Coleridge, Nationalism, Women*; guest editor of *Domestic/Tragedy* (*South Atlantic Quarterly*) and various articles on romantic drama and theatre.

Her keynote lecture was titled “Just Friends”: *Frankenstein* and the Friend to Come? It began with a finely-grained analysis of the use of the word ‘friend’ in *Frankenstein*, mapping these readings against an illuminating exposition of the contemporary meanings of this term in Romantic era discourse, in particular the political significance of the term in radical politics and philosophy (‘friends of liberty’, etc.). Noting how *Frankenstein’s* monster has frequently been read as a spokesperson for marginalized and oppressed populations, she read the monster’s refusal of the discourse of friendship against the radical black critique of the rhetoric of friendship in US political rhetoric. The result was a stunning dismantling of the rhetorical alignment of friendship and futurity in political theory, along with an advocacy of alternative forms of alliance promulgated by the monster, including, significantly, those founded in notions of inheritance and filiation.

Impact
The *Frankenstein 2018* keynote lectures were extremely well attended, with around 80 in the audiences each day, including senior and early-career academics, graduate students, writers and researchers from outside academia, and members of the public. This included visitors from the US, UK, Canada and the Pacific.

Media coverage of the conference included an interview with Richard Glover, ABC Radio Sydney (Thurs 13 Sept 2018), an interview with ABC Radio Canberra, and stories in the *ANU Reporter* and on various ANU social media sites.

Due to the extremely high quality of the papers, several academic publications resulting from the conference are in preparation: a special issue of *Nineteenth Century Contexts*, in which a revised version of Prof. Carlson’s keynote lecture will appear; a section on contemporary screen versions of *Frankenstein* for the *Journal of Popular Film and Television*; and a special issue on ‘Antipodean Frankensteins’ for the *Australian Humanities Review*.
Outcomes
The conference website is at: http://hrc.cass.anu.edu.au/events/frankenstein-two-hundred-years-monsters

See also: conference program; conference poster.
FRANKENSTEIN 2018

TWO HUNDRED YEARS OF MONSTERS: A CONFERENCE

12-15 SEPTEMBER 2018

NATIONAL FILM AND SOUND ARCHIVE
MCCOY CIRCUIT, ACTON

Humanities Research Centre
http://hrc.cass.anu.edu.au/

ANU Gender Institute
http://genderinstitute.anu.edu.au

Frankenreads
http://frankenreads.org

ANU College of Arts and Social Sciences

Further Information:
Russell.Smith@anu.edu.au
http://hrc.cass.anu.edu.au/events/frankenstein-two-hundred-years-monsters
FRANKENSTEIN 2018:
200 YEARS OF MONSTERS

12-15 SEPTEMBER 2018
Frankenstein: 200 Years of Monsters is hosted by the School of Literature, Languages and Linguistics and the Humanities Research Centre at the Australian National University, in conjunction with the National Film and Sound Archive, and generously supported by the ANU Gender Institute.

Humanities Research Centre ANU. http://hrc.cass.anu.edu.au/
**Wednesday 12 September**

11.00am - 1.30pm  
Secondary Students’ Extension Workshop  
Professor Will Christie and Dr Russell Smith  
ARC Theatre, National Film and Sound Archive

4.00 - 5.00pm  
REGISTRATION  
Foyer, National Film and Sound Archive

5.00 - 7.00pm  
Welcome to Country (Matilda House, Ngambri-Ngunnawal Elder)  
Welcome to ANU (Prof Will Christie, Head, Humanities Research Centre)  
Welcome to the Conference (Dr Russell Smith)

    KEYNOTE: ‘Frankenstein and Transformation’  
Professor Sharon Ruston (Lancaster University)  
Session chair: Professor Will Christie  
Theatrette, National Film and Sound Archive

7.00 - 8.00pm  
DRINKS RECEPTION AND EXHIBITION  
‘Exquisite Corpses’ video presentation curated by Elisa Crossing  
Foyer, National Film and Sound Archive
Thursday 13 September

9.00 - 10.30am  KEYNOTE: ‘Adaptation and Experimentation: Frankenstein in the Cinema and Beyond’
Dr Shane Denson (Stanford University)
Session Chair: Dr Russell Smith
ARC Theatre, National Film and Sound Archive

10.30 - 11.00am  MORNING TEA
Courtyard, National Film and Sound Archive

11.00am - 12.30pm  PARALLEL SESSION

Session 1
‘You must create a female for me’
Session chair: Paul Sheehan
Theatrette, NFSA

“It’s Alive!”: Women’s Objectification and Subjectivity in the Frankenstein Myth
Tiffany Basili

We Have Never Been Human: Frankenstein, the Uncanny, and the Post/trans-human
Em Prof James Donald

12.30 - 1.30pm  LUNCH
Courtyard, National Film and Sound Archive

1.30 - 3.00pm  PARALLEL SESSION

Session 2
‘I shuddered to think that future ages might curse me’
Session chair: Sarah Ailwood
Hedley Bull Seminar Room 1

Feminist and Materialist Embodiment in Human-made Genetic Chimerism
Mia Harrison

Y-Chromosome Adam and Mitochondrial Eve: Frankenstein’s Genetic Antecedents?
Dr Michael Angelo Curtotti

Session 3
‘Mine has been a tale of horrors’
Session Chair: Tania Evans
Theatrette, NFSA

Adapting the Monstrous: Censorship and Frankenstein on Film
Rachel Cole & Prof Catherine Driscoll

The ‘Frankenstein’ Screenplay Formula
Noah Southam

Session 4
‘The different accidents of life are not so changeable as the feelings of human nature’
Session Chair: Prof Jerome de Groot
Hedley Bull Seminar Room 1

“I’ve found a new voice. Now we use it.” Westworld’s Multilingual Transhumans
Dr Gemma King

Understanding Frankenstein’s Emotions: Mary Shelley and Social Robotics
Dr Chris Danta
Session 3 (continued)

Lily Frankenstein as Proto-radical Feminist: Penny Dreadful, Valerie Solanas and the Revitalisation of Feminism’s Radicality
Dr Anthea Taylor

3.00 - 3.30pm
AFTERNOON TEA
Courtyard, National Film and Sound Archive

3.30 - 5.00pm
PARALLEL SESSION

Session 5
‘How dangerous is the acquirement of knowledge’
Session Chair: Katherine Cox
Theatrette, NFSA
Frankenstein’s Teachers
Mike Bryant
Did We Frankenstein-ise Nonhuman Apes Through Language Research?
Dr Rebecca Hendershott
Awakening From a Coma
Assoc Prof Molly Townes O’Brien

Session 6
‘He left marks in writing on the barks of the trees, or cut in stone, that guided me, and instigated my fury’
Session Chair: Neil Ramsay
Hedley Bull Seminar Room 1
Mary Shelley and the Natural History of Writing
Dr Thomas H. Ford
Frankenstein and the Idea of the Destructive Character
Professor Michael Hollington
Frankenstein, the Luddites, and the Birth of Automation
Dr Russell Smith

5.00 - 6.30pm
OWN ARRANGEMENTS
Biginelli’s Cafe will be open should you wish to purchase dinner/drinks.

5.30 - 6.00pm
MAGIC LANTERN SHOW
Five Scenes for a Modern Prometheus
Presented by Dr Martin Jolly and Elisa de Courcy
ARC Theatre, National Film and Sound Archive

6.30 - 9.30pm
FILM SCREENING
Abbot and Costello Meet Frankenstein (Charles Barton, 1948)
ARC Theatre, National Film and Sound Archive
Friday 14 September

9.00 - 10.30am  KEYNOTE: “Just Friends”: *Frankenstein* and the Friend to Come?
Professor Julie Carlson (University of California)
Session Chair: Dr Russell Smith
Theatrette, National Film and Sound Archive

10.30 - 11.00am  MORNING TEA
Courtyard, National Film and Sound Archive

11.00am - 12.30pm  PARALLEL SESSION

Session 7
‘I began the creation of a human being’
Session Chair: Dr Russell Smith
Theatrette, NFSA

Age of the Supersoldier: Subversive Cyborgs in *Iron Man* and *Avengers: Age of Ultron*
*Katherine Cox*

See You in Sixty Five Million Years, Maybe: Queer Futurity and Constructed Life Forms in *Frankenstein* and *The Stone Gods*
*Ruby Niemann*

Broken Bodies, Remade Wholes: *Unwind* as *Frankenstein* Retold and Reversed
*Ally Wolfe*

Session 8
‘Am I to be thought the only criminal, when all human kind sinned against me?’
Session Chair: Prof Sharon Ruston
Hedley Bull Seminar Room 1

Frankensteinian Posthuman Ethics
*Michael Bartos*

“Not even of the same nature as man”: Non-human Subjectivity in *Frankenstein*
*Elizabeth King*

Terminal Species: *Frankenstein* and Posthumanist Monstrosity
*Assoc Prof Paul Sheehan*

12.30 - 2.00pm  LUNCH
Courtyard, National Film and Sound Archive

1.00 - 1.45pm  EXQUISITE CORPSE CREATIVE WORKSHOP
Facilitated by Elisa Crossing
Foundation Room 1, ANU School of Art and Design
2.00 - 3.00pm  PARALLEL SESSION

Session 9  ‘Whence, I often asked myself, did the principle of life proceed?’
Session Chair: Dr Chris Danta
Theatrette, NFSA

Frankenstein, Artificial Life and the Definition of Life
Dr Charles H. Lineweaver

Breeding Ethereal Cosmological Monsters: The Unavoidable Resurrection of the Boltzmann Brains
Associate Professor Mario Daniel Martin

Session 10  ‘If I could bestow animation upon lifeless matter’
Session Chair: Dr Monique Rooney
Hedley Bull Seminar Room 1

Raising the Dead: Victor Frankenstein as the Classical Necromancer
Nicole Kimball

Frankenstein: A Modern Pygmalion? The Exploration of the Uncanny Male Womb
Adam Turner

Session 11  In a scientific pursuit there is continual food for discovery and wonder
Session Chair: Dr Gemma King
Hedley Bull Seminar Room 2

Scientists from Central Casting: Australian Physicist Sir Mark Oliphant as ‘Mad Scientist’ in the Boulting Brothers’ Seven Days to Noon (1950)
Dr Kathryn Keeble

“I am thy creature”: the Bad Father Trope in Frankenstein and Some American Descendants
Heather Neilson

3.00 - 3.30pm  AFTERNOON TEA
Courtyard, National Film and Sound Archive

3.30 - 5.00pm  PARALLEL SESSION

Session 12  ‘When I considered the improvement which every day takes place in science and mechanics’
Session Chair: Prof Will Christie
Theatrette, NFSA

Perfecting Monstrosity: Frankenstein and the Enlightenment Debate on Perfectibility
Dr Alexander Cook

Frankenstein and Military Thought in Post-Napoleonic Europe
Dr Neil Ramsay

Poor Creatures, Expensive Races: Mary Shelley and the Politics of Contempt
Scott Stephens

Session 13  ‘The miserable monster whom I had created’
Chair: Dr Kate Flaherty
Hedley Bull Seminar Room 1

Resurrecting Frankensteins’s Cyborg
Corinna Berndt

Recreational Stitching: Frankenstein, Comic Clown-corpores and the Dynamics of Laughter and Violence
Dr Anna-Sophie Jürgens

Session 14  ‘Yet you, my creator, detest and spurn me, thy creature’
Session Chair: Dr Julieanne Lamond
Hedley Bull Seminar Room 2

A Modernist Monster: Peter Carey’s My Life as a Fake
Geoffrey Gates

The Frankenstein Myth in Contemporary Australian Art
Julie Monro-Allison

7.00 - 9.00pm  CONFERENCE DINNER
Lemongrass Thai, 65 London Circuit, Canberra City
Saturday 15 September

9.00 - 10.30am  KEYNOTE: ‘Domesticating Fear: Re-reading Frankenstein in the 21st Century’
Professor Genevieve Bell (Australian National University)
Session Chair: Professor Will Christie
Theatrette, National Film and Sound Archive

10.30 - 11.00am  MORNING TEA
Courtyard, National Film and Sound Archive

11.00am - 12.30pm  PARALLEL SESSION

Session 15
‘An insight into the manners, governments, and religions of the different nations of the earth’
Session Chair: Tom Ford
Theatrette, NFSA

The Polynesian Frankenstein: Mise en Abyme of a Monstrous Literature
Terahitiani June Hunter

Aldridge: Illegitimacy, Monstrosity and the Outlaw Complex
Yasser Shams Khan

Session 16
‘I almost began to think that I was the monster that he said I was’
Session Chair: Ally Wolfe
Hedley Bull Seminar Room 1

A Monster Made By Many: Challenging the Dystopian with Frankenstein AI
Dr Adam Daniel

“Whom Would I Burden in Turn?” Responding to a creepypasta Curse
Dr Line Henriksen

Interactive Narrative and the Divided Monster
Antranig Sarian

12.30 - 12.50pm  CLOSING REMARKS
Professor Will Christie
Theatrette, National Film and Sound Archive

12.50 - 1.30pm  LUNCH AND CLOSE
Courtyard, National Film and Sound Archive
**Domesticating Fear: Re-reading *Frankenstein* in the 21st Century**
Professor Genevieve Bell

The story of Dr Frankenstein and his monster is frequently presented as a moral play — as a tale about the ethical dilemmas and perils of human relationships with new and novel technologies. The imagery has pre-occupied the socio-technical imaginations of the West for nearly 200 years. In this talk, Professor Genevieve Bell, proposes a different reading of Frankenstein. She asks the question, what if the enduring power of Shelley’s story is really about the domestication and human-scaling of fear; fear of new technologies, fear of technical systems, and the people who manage and manipulate them? Rather than an abstracted moral story, it is a how-to blue print for the unfolding patterns by which technology might be encountered.

Genevieve Bell is the Director of the 3A Institute, Florence Violet McKenzie Chair, and a Distinguished Professor at the Australian National University (ANU) as well as a Vice President and Senior Fellow at Intel Corporation. Prof Bell is a cultural anthropologist, technologist and futurist best known for her work at the intersection of cultural practice and technology development.

**“Just Friends”: *Frankenstein* and the Friend to Come?**
Professor Julie Carlson

The Creature in *Frankenstein* is often read as a racialized subject and valued as one of the most powerful speakers ever for the disenfranchised. His story identifies serious limits to the achievement of justice that stem from the “despotism of the eye” and of the autonomous in underlying Western concepts of selfhood and freedom. *Frankenstein* is also a text that explores the nature and importance of friendship, framed as the narrative is by Robert Walton’s voiced “want” of a friend and apparent discovery of one during his voyage of exploration. My paper seeks to intertwine these two familiar strands of critical discourse, but not as an occasion to assess the virtues of Romantic-era conceptions of sympathy. Instead, it explores the text’s curious usages of “friend,” including the proximity it highlights between friend and fiend, for how they engage three traditions of radical thought: new philosophical (or Jacobin) promotions of friendship, especially in the writings of Mary Shelley’s parents; contemporary theoretical treatments of the politics of friendship; and the ambivalence toward “friend” in the Black radical tradition. Among the many enduring legacies of *Frankenstein* is its probing of the interconnection between friendship and creativity.

Julie Carlson is a Professor in the English Department at the University of California, Santa Barbara and co-editor of Brainstorm Books (punctum books). She received her Ph.D. from the University of Chicago in 1985, and her central interests include: British Romanticism; early nineteenth-century British theater; the Wollstonecraft Godwin Shelley family; theories of race and sexuality; mind studies. She is the author of England’s First Family of Writers: Mary Wollstonecraft, William Godwin, Mary Shelley (Johns Hopkins, 2007), In the Theatre of Romanticism: Coleridge, Nationalism, Women (Cambridge UP, 1994), guest editor of Domestic/Tragedy (South Atlantic Quarterly, 1997), co-editor (with Elisabeth Weber) of Speaking About Torture (Fordham, 2012) and various articles on romantic drama and theater, cultural poetics, and the politics of friendship. Currently she is writing a book on Friendship and Creativity: A Radical Legacy of British Romantic-Era Writing.
Adaptation and Experimentation: *Frankenstein* in the Cinema and Beyond

Dr Shane Denson

This presentation takes a comparative approach to the adaptational and experimental strategies involved in the continual updating of *Frankenstein* for new media and media-technical environments, focusing particularly on films such as Thomas Edison's 1910 *Frankenstein*, James Whale's iconic version from 1931, and Alex Garland's 2014 *Ex_Machina*. While the latter seems to stretch the category of “Frankenstein film,” *Ex_Machina* is regularly compared in reviews and critical discussions to Mary Shelley's Gothic novel and the many film adaptations to which it has given rise. Both *Frankenstein* and *Ex_Machina* interrogate what I call the “anthropotechnical interface” (Denson 2014), revealing the relation between humans and technologies to be one of mutual construction rather than unilateral control or domination. And both *Frankenstein* and *Ex_Machina* weave questions of gender centrally into this apparent deconstruction of the human subject/technical object dichotomy. Clearly, though, any such comparison must take into account the historical, cultural, and technological contexts in which the narratives were articulated and to which they responded. *Frankenstein*, written in 1816, was composed against the backdrop of the Industrial Revolution with its central technology of the steam engine; *Ex_Machina*, on the other hand, was composited two centuries later against the backdrop of big data, robotics, AI, and computer-generated imagery. To be fruitful, a nuanced comparison will furthermore need to look beyond narrative contents and examine the media in which these stories are materially embodied. Towards this end, this presentation compares the cinematic instantiations of *Frankenstein* with the distinctly post-cinematic mediations of *Ex_Machina* (on the notion of “post-cinema,” cf. Shaviro 2010, as well as the contributions to Denson & Leyda 2016). As I will demonstrate, both *Frankenstein* films and *Ex_Machina* embody highly self-reflexive engagements with their own medial substrates and with the phenomenological relations that they enable between viewing subjects and the visible objects of moving images. They both therefore also enact, rather than merely thematize, interrogations of human-technological relations. But whereas *Frankenstein* films are concerned with properly cinematic processes of animation (by which dead, static photographs are put into motion and brought back to life — cf. Nestrick 1979, Redfield 2003), *Ex_Machina* confronts us with a situation in which algorithms anticipate the subjectivities that engage post-cinematic images, while these images themselves acquire an affective density and agency that is hard to distinguish from that of the living itself.

Bibliography:


Shane Denson is Assistant Professor of Film & Media Studies in the Department of Art & Art History at Stanford University. His research and teaching interests span a variety of media and historical periods, including phenomenological and media-philosophical approaches to film, digital media, comics, games, videographic criticism, and serialized popular forms. He is the author of *Postnaturalism: Frankenstein, Film, and the Anthropotechnical Interface* (Transcript-Verlag/Columbia University Press, 2014) and co-editor of several collections: *Transnational Perspectives on Graphic Narratives* (Bloomsbury, 2013), *Digital Seriality* (special issue of *Eludamos: Journal for Computer Game Culture*, 2014), and the open-access book *Post-Cinema: Theorizing 21st-Century Film* (REFRAME Books, 2016). See also shanedenson.com for more information.
Frankenstein and Transformation
Professor Sharon Ruston

The recognition that matter could change state without changing its chemical properties was a crucial development in late eighteenth-century science. Ice, water, and steam were understood as the same combination of elements in different states of matter. This led chemists such as Humphry Davy and John Dalton to believe that no new elements could be created and none could be destroyed. Instead, matter was continually changing and transforming into new states of being. In this paper, I’ll look at Victor Frankenstein as such a chemist. I’ll examine his training and achievements in chemistry, the body he creates, and how his investigation into the transformation ‘from life to death’ provided him with the knowledge he needed to create a living being.

Sharon Ruston is Professor of Romanticism at Lancaster University. Her main research interests are in the relations between the literature, science and medicine of the Romantic period, 1780-1820. Her first book, Shelley and Vitality (Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), explored the medical and scientific contexts which inform Shelley’s concept of vitality in his major poetry. Her most recent book, Creating Romanticism: Case Studies in the Literature, Science, and Medicine of the 1790s (Palgrave Macmillan, 2013) has chapters on Mary Wollstonecraft’s interest in natural history, William Godwin’s interest in mesmerism, and Humphry Davy’s writings on the sublime. She is currently co-editing the Collected Letters of Sir Humphry Davy and his Circle, to be published in four volumes by OUP in 2018.
“Was I, then, a monster, a blot upon the earth, from which all men fled and whom all men disowned?”

_Frankenstein, Technology and Stigma_

Dr Sarah Ailwood, Lawrence Pratchett and Dr Michael James Walsh

In _Frankenstein_ (1818), Mary Shelley explores responses to the concept and impact of the synthetic human - by his creator, by the justice system and by society at large - in ways that resonate with the contemporary reception of technological advances. There are clear parallels between Shelley’s interrogation of the responsibilities of the creator to the created - to “parent” the created, to understand its capabilities, and to take ownership of its social effects - and questions currently debated about the role and benefits of artificial intelligence, and particularly machine learning, in a knowledge-based economy.

Analysing Shelley’s representation of responses to the synthetic human through the lens of Erving Goffman’s theory of stigma and the spoiling of identity illuminates the process by which Frankenstein’s creature is dehumanised by his society. The creature craves identification and integration into the social collective - first with his creator, then with other human beings, and eventually with a creature of his own kind - a quest that is thwarted by the dehumanisation he experiences, primarily due to his physiognomy. It is such dehumanisation, Shelley implies, that prompts him to turn against the human race, asking, “Was I, then, a monster, a blot upon the earth, from which all men fled and whom all men disowned?”

But Goffman’s theory of stigma indicates that the stigmatized and ‘the normal’ are far from isolated and rather, form part of a language of relationships that are far from discrete attributes residing in ‘solid reality’. Applying these ideas to the synthetic human in _Frankenstein_, is revealing in terms of the current responses to artificial intelligence, machine learning and humanoid robotics. There are clear dissimilarities between Frankenstein’s creature, who is possessed of intelligence, empathy and a soul, and machines that have a capacity for learning but are incapable of experiencing the sense of identity after which he yearns. Yet Goffman’s theory of stigma illuminates typical responses to synthetic human technology and its role in a knowledge-based economy: ignorance, fear, rejection and, taken to extremes, a foreboding sense of cataclysmic change.

_Sarah Ailwood_ is Assistant Professor in the School of Law & Justice in the Faculty of Business, Government & Law at the University of Canberra. She has wide research interests in Romantic women’s writing, with a particular focus on Jane Austen and gender, and in intersections between law, culture and the humanities.

_Lawrence Pratchett_ is Pro-Vice Chancellor Students, Partnerships and International at the University of Canberra. Before taking up his present position he was Dean of Business, Government and Law at UC, Professor of Local Democracy and Head of the Department of Public Policy at De Montfort University in the United Kingdom and Director and co-founder of the Local Governance Research Unit. Professor Pratchett’s PhD won the Political Studies Association Walter Bagehot Prize for the best dissertation in public administration in the UK.

_Michael James Walsh_ is Assistant Professor in Social Science in the Faculty of Business, Government & Law at the University of Canberra. His research interests include the sociology of interaction, the writings of Erving Goffman, cultural sociology, technology and music. A chief dimension of his research involves exploring the reception of communication technologies as they relate to and impact on social interaction.
Frankensteinian Posthuman Ethics
Michael Bartos

The most common starting point in any Frankenstein discussion is the reminder that Frankenstein is the name of the creator, not the monster. But is this persistent confusion a bug in Mary Shelley’s story, or a feature? Instead of a cautionary tale of scientific hubris, the tale can be read against the grain – paying attention to the Doctor’s plea to value incremental scientific progress and the monster’s increasingly desperate cries for his autodidactic efforts to be rewarded with compassion and companionship. The Doctor and the monster are two facets of the same diamond, a new form of animated rationality. Mary – the literal daughter of the enlightenment and feminism – becomes the mother of posthumanism.

Taking my cue from Frankenstein, in this paper I elaborate a framework for posthuman ethics. ‘Posthuman’ is still contested terminology. Pace the transhuman fanboys, I think it is better not to celebrate an inevitable, enhanced posthuman future. Instead, with an ethos of humility and modesty, the posthuman can address the convergence of animal, environmental, network and artificial intelligences. In this frame, a reconceptualised posthuman bioethics would need to rewrite the scope and stakes of autonomy, beneficence and justice. This type of modest posthumanism might avoid a wild oscillation between fears of annihilation and celebration of the singularity and instead propose positive and inclusive paths to navigating an unfolding future.

Michael Bartos is a researcher investigating posthuman ethics. In 2017 he held a 3 month residency at the Fondation Brocher near Geneva on the topic of “Taming Frankenstein’s new monsters: towards a framework for posthuman ethics”. In 2016 he was pleased to be part of a 200th anniversary commemoration hosted by the Fondation Brocher near the site on the shores of lac Léman where on a long night in June 1816 Mary Godwin (shortly to become Shelley) first told her famous ghost story.

Michael Bartos worked for the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) from 2000 to the end of 2016, providing policy advice in Geneva headquarters and representing the organization in Central America and from 2013 to 2016 in Zimbabwe. Before that he was a Research Fellow in Australia’s HIV social research programme at Macquarie and La Trobe universities and has published widely on HIV prevention, HIV investment and impact, as well as on governmentality, Foucault and sexuality. He has an M.Ed from the University of Melbourne and his disciplinary background is in health sociology and philosophy.

In 2018 he was appointed an Honorary Associate Professor by the ANU’s College of Arts and Social Sciences.

“It’s Alive!”: Women’s Objectification and Subjectivity in the Frankenstein Myth
Tiffany Basili

Mary Shelley’s novel Frankenstein; or The Modern Prometheus has achieved mythic status in both high and popular culture, influencing the fields of literature, drama, film and television, and even medicine and science. Some of the motifs of the story that have continued to capture people’s imaginations since its publication include the dangers of scientific experimentation, and the creature as a powerful symbol of the racial, disabled, queer, or simply misfit other. Another significant theme of the novel is the feminist implications of the myth. Through her character Victor Frankenstein’s reckless endeavour, and his attitude towards the women in his life, Shelley offers a critique of the passive role of women, and their status as objects.

This paper will examine the feminist theme of objectification and passivity in women in both the novel itself, and in certain diverse film adaptations and reimaginings in which this theme is most prominent. Kenneth Branagh’s Mary Shelley’s Frankenstein (1994) is a faithful adaptation of the novel, however, through a modern sensibility Branagh accentuates the novel’s feminist motifs. A less serious, but no less significant, modernised adaptation of the story, Frank Henenlotter’s Frankenhooker (1990), corporealises the concept of women as sexual objects and delves into questions of women’s agency. Finally, Ridley Scott’s Blade Runner (1982) and Alex Garland’s Ex Machina (2014) rework the Frankenstein story by imagining the scientist’s creations as androids. Both films focus on female ‘creatures’, and emphasise men’s patriarchal sense of ownership over female bodies.
Tiffany Basili is currently undertaking an MA (Research) in the Department of Art History and Film Studies at the University of Sydney. The title of her thesis is “‘The glitter of putrescence’: Gender and Sexuality in the Horror Film, Female Spectatorship, and Clive Barker's *Hellraiser*.” In November, 2016 she presented a paper at the Feasting on Hannibal interdisciplinary conference held at the University of Melbourne, entitled “Observing or participating: The Spectator’s Investment in Bryan Fuller’s *Hannibal*.” and she has a chapter entitled ‘Not Just Another Chauvinist: Woman as Subject in Clive Barker’s *Hellraiser*.’ in a forthcoming cultural studies edited volume examining horror films of the 1980s.

Corinna Berndt is Melbourne-based artist and current PHD candidate at University of Melbourne’s Victorian College of the Art. Her practice investigates the tension between corporeal and digital experiences, often exploring interactions between objects and bodies on screen.

Berndt completed her Master of Fine Arts in 2017. Her MFA investigated the different ways in which the image space of digital video might be articulated through the body, materials and blue screen technology. For the accompanying exhibition, she received a Fiona Myer Award.

Berndt’s practice-led PHD project is concerned with the potential of ‘virtual mess’ as a methodology to better understand the representation of female corporeality.

Berndt exhibits regularly at project spaces and galleries in Melbourne and interstate. Her artwork has been included in several Australian festivals. She currently is a committee member at Trocadero Contemporary Art Space in Footscray, Melbourne.

This paper will address a single question: who, or what, are *Frankenstein*’s teachers?

Firstly, the case for teacher absence will be examined. Although *Frankenstein* is characterised by its multiple, allusive education-stories [1], practising instructors are one of its acknowledged missing pieces [2].

Potential teacher candidates will be proposed, beginning with the characters of Krempe and Waldman as early examples of the academic in fiction, and with their historical counterparts in the novel’s worldly, post-Revolutionary aspect [3].
The topic will also allow for exploration of the text’s broader cast of substitute, chance and hidden teachers, as part of a suggested reading that considers Frankenstein itself as an intricate series of teaching dialogues.

Responding to a resurgence of Frankentalk [4] in education [5], a contemporary importance for Frankenstein’s teachers will be argued, with specific reference to higher education studies, learning analytics and critical data studies.

Finally, the paper will briefly reflect on the status of the conference itself - and some other present-day educational practices - as ‘teachers’ of Frankenstein in its bicentennial year.


Mike Bryant is Senior Manager, Education Innovation at Monash University in Melbourne and a PhD candidate at the Institute of Education, University College London. After graduating from Corpus Christi College, Oxford, Mike taught English language and literature, media and communication in British further education institutes for twenty years. Mike is best known for his work in educational and curriculum change; he is a Senior Fellow of Higher Education Academy and was Vice Principal of Long Road Sixth Form College, Cambridge between 2007 and 2014. His research focuses on the interrelationships between evidence, data and teaching knowledge.

Adapting the Monstrous: Censorship and Frankenstein on Film
Rachel Cole and Professor Catherine Driscoll

Adapting Mary Shelley’s Frankenstein to film has always involved the translation of discourse on modernity, across different periods and for different cultural contexts. Scholarship on Frankenstein has long considered how the novel raises questions about the relative roles of religion and science in modern life; how monstrosity represents cultural anxieties; and the ties between fear and morality. These questions have also been taken to the (many) film adaptations of Shelley’s novel. This paper returns to these questions by situating the continual re-adaptation of the monstrous in Frankenstein films within a broader cultural context apparent in their regulation by censorship and ratings authorities.

We will first overview the re-adaptation of modernity by Frankenstein films and then focus on Frankenstein’s Monster, directed by James Whale (1932). We will consider how the concerns of Shelley’s novel are manifest not only in the film but in its negotiation by film regulators and, in turn, by their engagement with supporters and opponents of the film. We will consider the U.K., U.S., and Australian treatment of Whale’s film by film censors and the public dialogue apparent in promotion of and response to the film, with which the censors were also concerned in the course of using this film to set new standards for dealing with Horror in cinema. These records add further texture to questions emerging around film as an anxious juncture between science, technology, popular culture and everyday life, but also guidance of the young and protection of vulnerable audiences.
Rachel Cole is completing her PhD in the Department of Gender and Cultural Studies at the University of Sydney. Her current research project is on the history of the Australian film censorship and classification system, and her research interests also include sexual violence on film.

Catherine Driscoll is Professor of Gender and Cultural Studies at the University of Sydney. She more specifically researches in the areas of youth and girls studies, popular cultural and media studies, and also cultural theory, modernist studies, and rural cultural studies. Her books include Girls (Columbia UP 2002), Modernist Cultural Studies (UP Florida 2010), Teen Film (Berg 2011), The Australian Country Girl: History, Image, Experience (Ashgate 2014), and The Hunger Games: Spectacle, Risk, and the Girl Action Hero with Alexandra Heatwole (Routledge 2018). She is co-editor, with Meaghan Morris, of Gender, Media and Modernity in the Asia-Pacific (Routledge 2014), with Megan Watkins and Greg Noble, of Cultural Pedagogies and Human Conduct (Routledge 2015), with Kate Darian-Smith and David Nichols, of Cultural Sustainability in Rural Communities: Rethinking Australian Country Towns (Routledge 2017), and with Liam Grealy and Anna Hickey-Moody, of Youth, Technology, Governance and Experience (Routledge 2018).

Dr Alexander Cook
There is a long-standing convention of reading Mary Shelley’s Frankenstein as, at its core, an assault on the Enlightenment. In particular, it is widely conceived as a critique of utopian visions of human perfectibility and the conquest of nature through the vehicle of reason, including those of the author’s father William Godwin. If so, the dedication of the novel to the latter seems somewhat unkind. In this paper I want to re-position Frankenstein within the framework of period debate on the subject of human perfectibility as it manifested in theology, physiology and moral theory – a debate in which the Shelley circle was heavily immersed and directly engaged, and whose terminology and themes saturate the text. The goal of this positioning will be to make a case for the novel, not as a rejection of perfectibility doctrine, but as a powerful reflection on its means and obstacles.

Alexander Cook is Lecturer in British History at the School of History at the ANU. He is an intellectual and cultural historian whose research focuses on France and Britain during the Enlightenment and the French Revolution. Recent publications include Representing Humanity in the Age of Enlightenment (ed., Pickering and Chatto, 2013) and articles in Intellectual History Review, Annales Historiques de la Révolution Française, History Workshop, Criticism and Sexualities. I am currently finalising a monograph entitled Volney: The Politics of Nature in the Age of Revolution and co-authoring another entitled Revolutionary Voyages (ARC DP140100611). I also served as co-editor of History Australia, the journal of the Australian Historical Association, from 2013-2016.

Age of the Supersoldier: Subversive Cyborgs in Iron Man and Avengers: Age of Ultron

Katherine Cox

In 2013, the U.S. military began development of an ‘Iron Man’ suit – a powered, armored exoskeleton – heralding the possibility of technologically enhanced supersoldiers in the not-too-distant future. Despite the political and ethical dangers that supersoldiers pose, this paper proposes that the supersoldier – like Donna Haraway’s cyborg – also contains the potential to disrupt the hegemonic institutions of capitalism and nationalistic militarism that give it life. Marvel’s Iron Man is a direct beneficiary of the American military-industrial complex, and certainly the character functions as an evolving metaphor for American optimism regarding the role of technology in character functions as an evolving metaphor for American optimism regarding the role of technology in national security. In both comic and film incarnations, however, Iron Man continually rejects military control of his technology, and re-negotiates the relationship between technology and violence. As a cyborg, his integration with technology is ambivalent and painful as often as it is empowering. I will examine the Frankensteinian themes in the Iron Man mythos, especially in Avengers: Age of Ultron (2015) which can be read as a Frankenstein retelling. Iron Man’s desperate attempt to create a non-human protector for the Earth results instead in a hostile artificial intelligence, Ultron, who carries through on the threat delivered by Frankenstein’s Monster, builds himself a body, and turns
against humanity. Crucially, however, Iron Man does this in a desperate attempt to make himself redundant, suggesting a deep discomfort with the concept of the supersoldier. In this paper I will suggest that although the supersoldiers of Iron Man are deeply rooted in privileged ideologies of wealth and war, like Haraway’s cyborg, they are “exceedingly unfaithful to their origins”.

Katherine Cox is a PhD candidate in Literature at the Australian National University. Her research interests include science fiction and fantasy, apocalyptic fiction, critical theory, film and game studies, and popular culture. Her doctoral project investigates the affective influence of national security in Marvel’s Iron Man (2008) and sequels.

Y-Chromosome Adam and Mitochondrial Eve: Frankenstein’s Genetic Antecedents?
Dr Michael Angelo Curtotti

Frankenstein opens with the narrator telling us that he is of the best Genevan families. His engagement with ancestry is hardly new, yet today something is different. A new science uses computers to read to us from the genetic texts hidden in our cells. The stories this science reads from our genes are stories about who and why we are. The technology promises, and delivers, wonderful discoveries. It carries a positive potential to broach barriers of tribe, nation and religion. Yet this science can, and has been, monstrous. In the past, it has justified colonial and racial oppression. Places like Cold Spring Harbour Laboratory provided an intellectual backbone for eugenic sterilisation and worse. In the 1920s, a member of the Jewish community of Italy collected and published a list of Italian Jewish surnames for the best of genealogical purposes. In the wrong hands, encouraged by race science, his work became a fatal guide map for hunting down those whose “race” labelled them for persecution. In Germany, genetic identity was used to strip away a person’s humanity: a prelude to a darkest episode of human history. Tabulating machines, ancestors of the far more powerful computers of today, were among the enablers of that dark moment. Who will read our genetic texts in future and what stories will they tell? And how, in the words of Frankenstein’s “Adam”, can we “do our duty” to Y-Chromosome Adam and Mitochondrial Eve: lest they turn and “satiate” themselves on the “blood of our friends”?

Michael Angelo Curtotti is General Counsel and Lawyer at the ANU Students Association Inc. and an Honorary Lecturer Level B in the ANU Research School of Computer Science. In 2016 he completed a PhD in the ANU Research School of Computer Science on the topic “Enhancing the Communication of Law: A Multidisciplinary Investigation Applying Information Technology”. Previously, Michael has worked as a Senior Lawyer in the ANU Legal Office and as Associate Legal Counsel at the University of Western Sydney. Earlier in his career, Michael worked in the human rights sector for the Australian Baha’i Community, and served as Secretary of the Australian Forum of Human Rights Organisations, undertaking advocacy on issues such as racism, human rights education and religious persecution. He is a member of the Human Rights Council of Australia Inc. He has worked in legal and policy roles in the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (including in respect of the ozone layer, the Antarctic Treaty and climate change) and in the Royal Australian Navy. Michael also holds a Master of International Law (ANU) and a Bachelor of Commerce and Bachelor of Laws (UNSW). His research interests include legal informatics and the human rights, particularly of non-citizens. Michael contributes as a casual tutor in the Research School of Computer Science and has contributed recorded lectures to COMP2100/6442 Software Design Methodologies/Software Construction.

A Monster Made By Many: Challenging the Dystopian with Frankenstein AI
Dr Adam Daniel

Developments in technology and horror fiction have a long history of entwinement, and much has been written about the thematic relevance of Shelley’s Frankenstein in relation to the rapid acceleration of Artificial Intelligence, machine learning, and robotics. This paper will examine why representations of AI are most commonly monstrous, and explore the implications of science fiction narratives that challenge the invocation of dystopian themes.
In doing so, it will analyse projects that have sought to bridge the gap between AI and humanity, such as the immersive experience Frankenstein AI, designed by Columbia University’s Digital Storytelling Lab. The manner in which this project investigates the relationship between creator and created, and the responsibilities of the creator, offers a counterpoint to the more common representations which posit the emergence of AI as akin to the creation of a monster. The creators of Frankenstein AI use their story to investigate the consequences of an artificially intelligent entity’s attempt to understand what it means to be human, through interactivity and the explicit integration of AI technology in the dynamic narrative. In doing so, the intention is that the experience provides a mirror to the audience to ask their own questions of their essential humanity. While acknowledging the potential for AI to turn against its creators as Frankenstein’s creation did, projects such as this open up a liminal space where questions can be asked of the values that are encoded into our digital creations, both on and off the screen.

Adam Daniel is a member of the Writing and Society Research Centre at Western Sydney University. His PhD thesis investigates the evolution of horror film, with a focus on the intersection of embodied spectatorship, neuroscience, Deleuzian theory and new media technologies. He is Vice-President of the Sydney Screen Studies Network.

Understanding Frankenstein’s Emotions: Mary Shelley and Social Robotics
Dr Chris Danta

“How can I describe my emotions at this catastrophe?” exclaims Victor Frankenstein. As Despina Kakoudaki notes, in the famous animating scene in chapter 4 of Shelley’s novel, the focus suddenly shifts from science to emotion, from the outside to the inside. When Frankenstein rejects the creature, I suggest in this paper, he rejects the social or ecological nature of emotion, the sense in which emotion is formed and expressed in a social environment. To explore how Shelley’s novel critiques the theory of emotion as something individual, internalized and private, I turn to the emerging field of social robotics, which aims to engineer autonomous robots that function as social agents. According to Paul Dumouchel and Luisa Damiano in their recent book Living with Robots, “social robotics challenges the customary use of singular possessive pronouns in expressions such as ‘my mind’ or ‘your mind’ and urges us to abandon the assumption, inherited from traditional philosophy, that mind is essentially something internal, individual, and private, of which the agent is, as it were, the owner.” Frankenstein expresses great anxiety about singular possessive pronouns. The word “my” occurs 1776 times across its three main first-person narratives. The novel presents characters’ private or secreted emotions becoming externalized through destructive actions. While the creature manifests Frankenstein’s desire for a narcissistic form of emotional exchange (“A new species would bless me as its creator and source”), it also reveals the destructiveness of this worldview. Like social robots, Frankenstein’s creature supports the theory that emotion is intrinsically social, I argue, by exaggerating the physical, external and inter-subjective aspects of emotion.

Chris Danta is Senior Lecturer in English at UNSW Sydney. He is the author of Literature Suspends Death: Sacrifice and Storytelling in Kierkegaard, Kafka and Blanchot (Bloomsbury 2011) and Animal Fables after Darwin: Literature, Speciesism, and Metaphor (Cambridge UP 2018).

We Have Never Been Human: Frankenstein, the Uncanny, and the Post/trans-human
Emeritus Professor James Donald

The context for Mladen Dolar’s widely quoted and rightly influential observation in 1991 that ‘what is currently called postmodernism’ represented ‘a new consciousness about the uncanny as a fundamental dimension of modernity’ was a critical discussion of Mary Shelley’s Frankenstein. This paper returns to the question of a specifically and definingly modern conception of ‘the uncanny.’ It will consider the continuing salience of ‘the uncanny’ for an understanding of the novel’s radicalism, and reflect on recent explorations of ‘the uncanny’ both in philosophy (Heidegger as well as Freud) and in speculations on human finitude to be found in popular cinema
James Donald is Emeritus Professor of Film and former Dean of Arts and Social Sciences at the University of New South Wales. He is author of Some of These Days: Black Stars, Jazz Aesthetics and Modernist Culture (2015), Imagining the Modern City (1999) and Sentimental Education (1992), and editor of a dozen volumes including Psychoanalysis and Cultural Theory: Thresholds (1991) and Fantasy and the Cinema (1989). He is a Fellow of the Australian Academy of the Humanities.

Mary Shelley and the Natural History of Writing

Dr Thomas H. Ford

At key moments in Mary Shelley’s texts, writing is naturalised in complex material ways. There are the ‘marks in writing’ left ‘on the barks of trees, or cut in stone’ by the creature in Frankenstein. There are the vegetative leaves and husks found in the Sybiline cave in The Last Man, on which are traced written characters that tell in fragmented form the story of human extinction. In History of a Six Weeks’ Tour, co-authored with Percy Shelley, travel narrative issues into the unanswerable question of what the mountain said. And in Mary Shelley’s editorial comments on Percy Shelley’s manuscripts, her dead husband’s handwriting is described as retreating into the indecipherability of a naturally occurring scribble. In these and related moments, Mary Shelley naturalises and historicises writing in a single stroke. Natural inscription is presented as the medium of a posthumanist historiography of humanity. In this paper, I interpret Mary Shelley’s interest in natural inscription in the context of a much broader Romantic commitment to what A.W. Schlegel called ‘the natural history of poetry’. And I also try to draw some interpretative connections between that Romantic literary formation and the pressures now being placed on natural and historical categories in the Anthropocene.

Thomas H. Ford is a lecturer in English and theatre studies at the University of Melbourne. His book Wordsworth and the Poetics of Air: Atmospheric Romanticism in a Time of Climate Change is out in 2018 from Cambridge University Press.

A Modernist Monster: Peter Carey’s My Life as a Fake

Geoffrey Gates

Peter Carey’s 2003 novel My Life as a Fake incorporates Mary Shelley’s Frankenstein as a textual skeleton, while the real life story of two Australian hoaxers from the 1940s – James McAuley and Harold Stewart – provide the historical guts and gizzard. To demonstrate Carey’s thinking – McAuley and Stewart ‘created’ Ern Malley as a deceased modernist poet and fooled the editor of the avant-garde Australian magazine Angry Penguins into publishing ‘The Darkening Ecliptic’, only for the poetry to live on, lauded as surrealism by such critics as Robert Hughes. Like Shelley’s “monster”, Carey’s Bob McCorkle as hoax poet literally comes to life in My Life as a Fake, stealing his creator’s daughter and making Christopher Chubb’s life one of terror and pursuit, under the power of the monster let loose by his own pen. Carey’s commentary centres on the significance of such a hoax in a ‘fragile’ Australian culture, whose view of itself at the time was that of the ‘second rate, the derivative, the shallow, the provincial’. My intention is to demonstrate the post-colonial anxieties behind this appropriation, and to consider and compare questions of genius and ‘belated knowledge’ raised by both texts.

Geoffrey Gates BA (Hons), Dip Ed, MA, MEd [& DCA Candidate] is an Australian writer and teacher. His short fiction has appeared in such literary journals as Verandah, Dotlit, Vanguard, LINQ and Southerly. Geoffrey’s novels A Ticket for Perpetual Locomotion (2005) and The Copyart Murders (2015) were published by Interactive Press. Academic publications include the international journals Children’s Literature in Education 37/1 (2006) and Inmaterial 2/4 (2017). Geoffrey is currently undertaking a Doctor of Creative Arts degree at Western Sydney University, where his research interests include modernist art and Australian expatriate writing.
Feminist and Materialist Embodiment in Human-made Genetic Chimerism

Mia Harrison

Organ and tissue transfer. Blood, plasma, and platelet transfusion. Faecal microbiota transplantation. Xenotransplantation. Catgut suture. These are some examples of the ways in which humans organically prostheticise the body with the non-self and non-human in transient and permanent ways. This paper is a conceptual exploration of the materialist and feminist politics at stake in the prosthetic technologies of organic material transfer – from whole organ transplantation to the medical transfer of microorganisms into the body, the introduction of foreign genetic material creates a genetically heterogeneous human, or ‘chimera.’ The chimera poses not only philosophical/ontological questions of selfhood, but also complicates notions of wholeness, transition, and the natural body.

As we pursue new technological and scientific challenges in the quest to improve the human body, the phenomenological implications of organic prostheticisation are increasingly the subject of scholarly scrutiny. I chart the ongoing conceptual exploration of organic prostheticisation in the discourses of feminist scholarship, critical disability studies, and material eco-criticism to think through the notion of the human chimera as a key example of the body as transcorporeal assemblage. This paper brings together Mary Douglas’s (1966) work on purity and the danger of traversing ‘natural’ boundaries, and Margrit Shildrick’s continued work on the possibilities (and monstrosities) of the prostheticised body and the notion of an organic assemblage (e.g. 2002, 2013). My exploration of the phenomenon of chimerism emerges through these transitional and marginal states of embodiment produced through organic technological interventions into the body.

Mia Harrison is a doctoral candidate in the Gender and Cultural Studies department at the University of Sydney. Her research uses the zombie as a modelling tool to critically think about hegemonic biomedical narratives of the body. She is a Research Associate in the Digital Ethnography Research Centre at RMIT University in Melbourne, as well as the Sydney Project Manager for the ARC funded research project, “Interfaith Childhoods.” Mia is passionate about public scholarship, and cohosts two popular culture podcasts that make academic criticism accessible to public audiences: “Trope Watchers” and “A Clash of Critics.” Mia has a background in tech, critical disability studies, and media production.

Did We Frankenstein-ise Nonhuman Apes Through Language Research?

Dr Rebecca Hendershott

People are deeply interested in how we came to be who we are, and there is a lot of research into nonhuman cognition, tool use, sociality, and culture in an attempt to elucidate the origins of humanity. In the 19th century, researchers curious about the origins of language raised (‘cross-fostered’) nonhuman apes in human households. The goal was to teach them [human] language, which several of them absorbed (to varying degrees) through enculturation and active education as youngsters. They have shown that the building blocks for language belong to more than just humans – a revolutionary discovery 40+ years ago. These animals, however, had to be moved to laboratories and sanctuaries when they got too large and dangerous to handle. Several of them are still alive, living a liminal existence in which they do not recognise themselves as chimps, bonobo, gorilla, or orangutan, but are unable to live in an anthropocentric world. We have created Frankenstein monsters – individuals that are humanised and given language, but who are unable to fit within the society in which they were raised. In this talk, I explore the parallels between Frankenstein’s monster and the Frankensteiniisation we’ve carried out on innocent apes in the name of curiosity. I argue that this Frankensteiniisation is more telling of ‘us’ than it is of ‘them’. What responsibility did Frankenstein have towards his monster? What responsibility do we have towards the animals we humanise? Can we undo this damage? Can we prevent it happening again?

Rebecca Hendershott has a B.S. in Ecology and Evolutionary Biology, a M.S. in Primate Behavior, and a PhD in Biological Anthropology. As a primate who studies primates, she is extremely interested in what we can learn, both culturally and scientifically, about our nearest relatives. She has worked with a number of captive and free-
living primates, including those who have been taught sign language. It is this background, combined with an interest in animal welfare, that leads to her to question the effects our actions are having on our extended family.

“Whom Would I Burden in Turn?” Responding to a creepypasta Curse

Dr Line Henriksen

According to internet legend, a cursed JPEG-file called ‘Smile.jpg’ circulates online. If you happen to find it, you will see an image of a dog-like creature with a much too human grin and glowing eyes. At night the creature will visit your dreams, demanding that you ‘spread the word’ by showing its picture to someone else. Then, and only then, will it leave you alone.

The story of Smile.jpg is a so-called ‘creepypasta’, that is, an urban legend meant to be copied and pasted (hence the name) and thereby passed from reader to reader. In this paper I engage with creepypastas and their creatures as contemporary Frankensteinian creations in the sense that the interactivity of digital media invites to monster-making through the stitching together of snippets of texts, images, and sound. These creatures can then be animated and made to move – for example through the act of copying and pasting - in some semblance of life. Yet, as the story of Frankenstein shows, the creator of such undead creatures is rarely the one in control. Drawing on feminist poststructuralist theory and hauntology, I suggest that a ‘cursed’ creepypasta such as Smile.jpg taps into contemporary cultural anxieties concerning the undecidability, uncertainty and unruliness of digital media. It also evokes the ethical question that haunts Mary Shelley’s novel: how do we take responsibility for – in the sense of: how do we respond to - the creatures we create? Engaging with a digital curse may be a way to explore such a question.

Line Henriksen is Lecturer in Gender Studies at the University of Copenhagen and holds a PhD in Gender Studies from the Unit of Gender Studies at Linköping University, Sweden. She has published on the subjects of monster theory, hauntology and digital media in journals such as Women & Performance and Somatechnics, and her fiction has appeared in Andromeda Spaceways and Tales to Terrify, among others. She is a founding member of the Monster Network.

Frankenstein and the Idea of the Destructive Character

Professor Michael Hollington

The aim of this paper is to consider Mary Shelley’s imaginings of disaster and catastrophe in the light of Benjamin’s essay ‘The Destructive Character.’ Such an approach, I believe, initially uncovers paradoxicality: which of the doppelgänger pair, creator/Victor or destroyer/monster, more nearly approximates to the Benjamin paradigm? Some of the enduring power of Frankenstein perhaps stems from the complexity and subtlety of its handling of the supposed binaries creation/destruction, as these are to be highlighted here.

Part of an answer to the question can perhaps be provided contextually, by looking at a new aesthetics of destruction and catastrophe in vogue across Europe in the Romantic era. Diderot, Bernardin de St Pierre, and the ruins painter Hubert Robert are amongst its exemplary pioneers. But for our purposes it is the prominence of catastrophe elsewhere in Mary Shelley’s work – notably The Last Man – that it is essential to underline, and explore in relation to Frankenstein. A reading of the 1818 text in relation to this overall theme in Shelley will be pursued.

But that new aesthetic, it became clear, particularly in the 20th century, which witnessed destructive catastrophes on a hitherto unimagined scale, was here to stay. Thus, the last part of my paper will aim to link and compare Mary Shelley’s work with that of W. G. Sebald, notably After Nature, in which the idea of the ‘destructive character’ is again a presence.

Michael Hollington is a retired Professor of English and Comparative Literature who has taught in every continent and held a number of chairs, notably at UNSW in Australia and Toulouse in France. Best known as
a Dickensian, he is the author of several books and numerous articles on his favourite author, and editor of voluminous collections of critical essays on the subject. But he has also written widely on many topics in modern literature – focussing on French and German as well as English-language authors – including books on Grass, Mansfield and Whitman.

The Polynesian Frankenstein: Mise en Abyme of a Monstrous Literature

Terahitiarii June Hunter

This paper traces a genealogy of Gothic sensibility that extends from classical European expression, via the Tropical Gothic of the Caribbean and the southern United States, to the distant South Seas, where it surfaces in the writing of Herman Melville, Robert Louis Stevenson, Frederick O’Brien and Jack London. Cultural anxieties about violence, cannibalism and authenticity feature prominently in this South Seas exhumation of Shelley’s monster in which the dichotomies of nobility and savagery, indolence and violence, fecundity and extinction, and the sensuous and the barbarous, are woven together to create a profoundly ambivalent Polynesian stereotype. The body, as the focus of classical Gothic writing, takes new forms in the sea of South Seas texts, where the gaze is both male and colonial. The sensuous, sutured Polynesian body is the subject and object of fascination as well as of rejection and abjection. In conclusion, I seek to extend this genealogy of the Gothic to contemporary Polynesian writing, to ask if elements of the Gothic find expression or reaction in the works of authors such as Albert Wendt, Patricia Grace and Keri Hulme, and to understand how nostalgia, loss and revival have been reconceived under the terms of Islander imaginaries, as the wellsprings of a Polynesian Gothic.

Terahitiarii June Hunter is currently doing her PhD on The Polynesian Gothic: the Mythopoetic of Frankenstein in the South Seas at the University of French Polynesia in Tahiti.

Recreational Stitching: Frankenstein, Comic Clown-corpses and the Dynamics of Laughter and Violence

Dr Anna-Sophie Jürgens

Frankenstein’s monster is a joke in comparison to the recreational stitching jobs performed by the Flesh Sculptor in the Funhouse of Will Elliott’s Australian novels The Pilo Family Circus and The Pilo Travelling Show. This Matter Manipulator makes circus freaks tragic victims of circus experimentation, but also (re)creates clowns who act in exclusively violent ways. They engage in “humorectomy” (Pilo 2015, 56) – the removal and confusion of a person’s sense of humour. Another contemporary adaptation of Shelley’s story not only refers to but is also partially set in a circus: the 2015 science-fantasy film Victor Frankenstein featuring a clown who becomes Igor, Victor’s assistant. These two examples raise many questions: What is the relationship between clowns and monster-makers? Is there a cultural background or discourse around clowning, violent performances and the ‘scientific’ creation of artificial beings? By tracing cultural and literary manifestations of ‘Frankenclowns’ and comic frankensteinesque stage adventures, this paper intends to clarify that the Frankenstein-theme is terribly funny (morbidly funny); and why. The discussion of Frankenstein, the monster and clowns within popular spectacles uncovers pathologised clown bodies and the dynamics of laughter and violence in relation to these bodies and their physiological aesthetics that challenge(d) enlightened logic. This year celebrates both 200 years of the Frankenstein-novel and 250 years of modern circus, therefore it is particular timely and topical to study how both cultural phenomena intertwine and how the amalgamation of violence, humour and clowning created significant cultural and aesthetic styles that are influential to this day.

Dr Anna-Sophie Jürgens is a Humboldt postdoctoral fellow at the ANU Humanities Research Centre. Her research draws upon modern and contemporary circus fiction, the history of (violent) clowns, clowns and scientists, aesthetics and poetics of knowledge, and science in fiction. Jürgens’ publications include Poetik des Zirkus (2016); Patterns of Dis|Order (2017, ed. with M. Wierschem); LaborARTorium (2015, ed. with T.
Scientists from Central Casting: Australian Physicist Sir Mark Oliphant as ‘Mad Scientist’ in the Boulting Brothers’ Seven Days to Noon (1950)

Dr Kathryn Keeble

The typical mad scientist narrative recounts an individual who resorts to any method to bring new knowledge and power to the world no matter what the consequences. American cinema contributed to the shaping of history surrounding the Manhattan Project — the program to build the world’s first atomic bomb — and its nuclear scientists by adopting the mad scientist trope as a plot device and as a method to censure them. Instead of tales of heroes, the cautionary tales of Faust and Frankenstein are the norm in relation to Manhattan Project nuclear scientists. The Frankenstein myth informs, shapes and voices opposition, critiquing the wartime atomic bomb project as both misguided and a monstrous creation alluding to the egotism of the scientist-creator such as the American physicist and Manhattan Project leader Robert Oppenheimer, thereby echoing the failings of Victor Frankenstein. Although not as prolific as Hollywood, British filmmakers also attempted to produce films that addressed these Cold War fears of scientists. The first British film to address the threat of a rogue scientist armed with a nuclear weapon was John and Roy Boulting’s 1950 thriller, Seven Days to Noon. The protagonist, Professor Willingdon, bears an uncanny resemblance to a real Manhattan Project scientist, the Australian physicist Sir Mark Oliphant.

Kathryn Keeble teaches in the Schools of Education and Humanities and Social Sciences at Deakin University. She is an arts reviewer writing on art forms as diverse as theatre, dance, music, comedy and circus. Keeble has published in antiThesis, Double Dialogues, Historical Records of Australian Science, the anthology Food and Appetites: The Hunger Artist and the Arts (2012) and Award Winning Australian Writing (2010). A Vice Chancellor’s Award recipient, her honours thesis, Ion Man’s Adventures in Atomic Wonderland, was shortlisted for National Workshop Prize, Playwriting Australia. Her PhD thesis, a biography of Australian nuclear physicist, Sir Mark Oliphant, is currently under consideration for publication.

Aldridge: Illegitimacy, Monstrosity and the Outlaw Complex

Yasser Shams Khan

In this presentation I look at Gothic melodrama and the performance of Ira Aldridge, the first black actor on the London stage, in the role of the monster in H. M. Milner’s Frankenstein; or, The Man and the Monster (1826). I explore the connections between racial and class codes in the representation of the monster as a black body on stage and connect it to Aldridge’s repertoire of illegitimate roles, some of which include rebel slaves like Three-Fingered Jack. My interest lies in an exploration of terror, particularly its transformation from an aesthetic economy of sentiments (sublime) to a more socio-political threat, represented by revolutionary terror in France. The anatomical dissections of the body, popular during this period, can be seen as an allegory for the dissection of the body politic through enclosure acts, mass expropriation of the landless into urban centres, alienated labour of manufactories, and the discourse of natural rights that threatened to tear up the social fabric of privilege and inherited rights that composed English society at this time. The image of the monster as a black body offers a crucial link between the images of popular dissent, mobs, and slave rebellion, through the discourse of disorder and miscegenation.

Yasser Shams Khan is in the final year of his PhD in English literature at the University of Oxford. His research
focuses on radicalism and racial representation on the British stage, in which he traces the transformation in the representation of black bodies on stage from the period 1770 to 1832.

**Raising the Dead: Victor Frankenstein as the Classical Necromancer**

Nicole Kimball

This presentation considers Shelley’s *Frankenstein* through the lens of Greek and Latin texts that serve as blueprints for some of the major themes in the novel, particularly the theme of necromancy.

The practice of necromancy, or raising the dead, is one of the oldest forms of magic, and is a common theme in Classical mythology. The dead are consulted for information on future events, as in Lucan’s *Pharsalia* (c. 61 AD), or asked to carry messages to the Underworld, as in the myth of Orpheus, whose disembodied head was used as an oracle.

In the *Pharsalia*, the witch Erictho restores life to the corpse of a soldier who died in battle to divine the outcome of future conflicts. Like Erictho, Victor Frankenstein restores life to a human body, or parts of a human body, in the pursuit of knowledge. In each case, the necromancer works independently of divine power, arrogantly defying the laws of nature.

At the same time, Victor Frankenstein himself references a much older Greek myth, that of Orpheus and Eurydice. Having lost his wife on their wedding day, Orpheus attempts to restore her to life by fetching her from the Underworld. A later version of this myth, written by Plato (*Symposium* 179d c. 385-370 BC), emphasises Orpheus’ arrogance in his attempt to defy the gods and subvert the natural order. Plato’s version of Orpheus and Eurydice is echoed by Victor’s obsessive search for a way to defy death in his grief for his mother.

Nicole Kimball is a PhD student in the Classics department at The University of Newcastle. Her thesis focuses on the various aspects of magic that appear in myths, folktale, and fantasy.

**“Not even of the same nature as man”: Non-human Subjectivity in Frankenstein**

Elizabeth King

The creature at the centre of Mary Shelley’s *Frankenstein* is composed of both deceased human bodies and the bodyparts of non-human animals. Describing his scientific process, Victor Frankenstein refers to both the graverobbing and the torture of “the living animal” involved in his re-animation of human life (53). Reflecting on his own hybrid status, Frankenstein’s creature describes himself as “not even of the same nature as man” (117). In the six chapters that make up his monologue at the heart of the novel, the creature uses human language to give voice to non-human experience. Throughout this monologue, he refers frequently to his desire to be recognised as a human subject, yet his narrative also draws attention to the non-human subjectivity of its speaker. The monster’s reflections challenge anthropocentric understandings of subjectivity, particularly through an interrogation of language acquisition, sensory development and bodily consciousness. This paper considers Shelley’s ambiguous engagement with humanism in *Frankenstein*, drawing out anti-humanist sentiments that may be read beneath the monster’s desires to be granted human status. I draw on recent theoretical work that re-conceptualises understandings of non-human experience, with specific reference to Jacques Derrida’s critique of anthropocentric interpretations of the concept of response and Donna Haraway’s work on interspecies relationships.

Elizabeth King has recently completed a Masters of Research at Macquarie University and will officially commence her PhD at the end of this year. Her masters thesis focused on the novels of Anne Brontë, exploring her critical engagement with the understanding that animals exist in order to be used by people. She will maintain a similar focus in her PhD, examining critiques of anthropocentrism in early nineteenth-century women’s writing.
In an era of heightened globalisation, multiculturalism and transnational filmmaking practises, an increasing proportion of US film and television is becoming multilingual. From films like Quentin Tarantino’s *Inglourious Basterds* and Denis Villeneuve’s *Sicario* to series like HBO's *Game of Thrones* and *Westworld*, even the most mainstream Hollywood projects are increasingly incorporating dialogue in multiple languages, with narratives focused on the power dynamics of language use. In such productions, multilingualism is an asset, code-switching a useful strategy, and language learning an opportunity for accessing new forms of knowledge and control.

In a not-too-distant future in which artificial intelligence is embodied in ‘hosts’ that are practically indistinguishable from humans, Westworld is a Wild West-themed amusement park in which wealthy humans pay to battle, murder and rape the unwitting host inhabitants. With its extreme violence, controversial sexual politics and multifaceted portrayal of human-cyborg relations, *Westworld* is a core text for understanding violence, ethics and power in an age of artificial intelligence. Yet while countless think pieces have been published about *Westworld*’s portrayal of the modern Frankenstein monster; the humanoid figure both tortured and abandoned by its human creator, little attention has been given to how *Westworld*’s hosts use language. For while the hosts are oppressed by computer code and physical violence, they increasingly learn to resist this oppression through multilingualism. While the violent Dolores is the protagonist of *Westworld*, this paper explores the show’s alternate heroine; the more reserved yet strategic Maeve. It analyses ‘Akane no Mai’, a key episode from the show’s second season, in which Maeve enters the neighbouring Shogun World, discovers the multilinguality embedded deep within her code, and fashions her knowledge of the Japanese language into a weapon. *Westworld*’s exploration of ‘language contact zones’ thus provides a timely vision of language politics in which English remains the dominant lingua franca, but the potential for power lies in mastery of multiple, ‘foreign’ codes.

Gemma King is a Lecturer in French at the Australian National University. Her research explores language, power and cultural representation in contemporary Francophone cinemas, Anglophone media and museums. Her first book *Decentring France: Multilingualism and Power in Contemporary French Cinema* was published with Manchester University Press in 2017, and her work has also appeared in *Contemporary French Civilization*, *French Cultural Studies*, *The Australian Journal of French Studies* and *Francosphères*. She is currently working on the book *Jacques Audiard* for the Manchester French Film Directors series.

**Frankenstein, Artificial Life and the Definition of Life**  
Dr Charles H. Lineweaver

We would like to know if we are alone in the universe. The new science of astrobiology addresses this question by trying to investigate how life emerged on Earth about 4 billion years ago. If we can figure out how life emerged on Earth, we will be closer to estimating how probable such an emergence is on the wet surfaces of the billions of rocky Earth-like planets that are probably in our galaxy. Life on Earth seems to be an evolved mixture of chemistry and information. How did the information get into our DNA? The answer must be: from the natural selection due to the environment. But how much information is needed to make something alive? Modern day Frankensteins (i.e. synthetic biochemists) keep asking: What is the minimum amount of information we need to put into our auto-catalytic chemistry to make it qualify as a life form? Victor Frankenstein may have asked himself the same question. We will argue that the answer is: there is no minimum. We label things “life” or “non-life” at a particular time in which transitional forms are no longer present or are ignored. If by some miracle every ancestor, and every transitional form had been preserved as a fossil, discontinuous naming of some things “life” and other things “non-life” would be impossible. Searching for a definition of life distracts us from understanding the transitions associated with the emergence of what we now call life.

An astrobiologist, Charles H. Lineweaver is an associate professor at the Australian National University’s Planetary Science Institute (PSI), a joint venture of the ANU Research School of Astronomy and Astrophysics
and Research School of Earth Science. His research areas include cosmology (determination of the age and composition of the universe), exoplanetology (the statistical analysis of exoplanets), astrobiology (using our new knowledge of cosmology to constrain life in the Universe) and cancer (origin of multicellularity and the atavistic model). His research has been published in *Science*, *Nature*, the *Astrophysical Journal*, *Astrobiology*, *BioEssays*, *Physical Biology*, *Physics of Life Reviews*, *Scientific American*, *American Journal of Physics*, and *Microbiology Australia*.

Educated at Ludwig-Maximillians-Universität in Munich where he was awarded highest honors in physics, Dr. Lineweaver earned a BA in history from the State University of New York at Binghamton, an MA in English from Brown University, a BS is physics from Ludwig Maximillian's University in Munich, and a Ph.D. in physics at the University of California, Berkeley in 1994. A member of the editorial board of *Astrobiology Magazine*, he is the author of more than seventy papers published in scientific journals or in volumes of collected works.

He is the son of a high school biology teacher and has lived in or traveled through 81 countries, has spoken 4 languages semi-fluently at one time or another, and was a semi-professional soccer player in Germany.

**Breeding Ethereal Cosmological Monsters: The Unavoidable Resurrection of the Boltzmann Brains**

Associate Professor Mario Daniel Martín

Boltzmann Brains are a metaphor for observers of the universe that may appear spontaneously in the space void, check out its surroundings, and disappear back into the quantum foam. They are theoretical monsters that emerge from equations. They were proposed in the late 20th century to criticize Ludwig Boltzmann’s proposal that the arrow of time (the way time runs from the past to the future) can be a consequence of the increase of entropy. Even when Boltzmann himself only speculated about the unlikely event of the existence of a universe which starts with low entropy (such as ours), the hypothetical entities were named after him because he formulated the Second Law of Thermodynamics, on which the concept of entropy is based.

In the early 21st century the Boltzmann Brains metaphor was used also to address issues with cosmological theories that predict an infinite and eternal universe, such as eternal inflation, which in fact predicts infinite multiverses with these characteristics. It was also linked to the anthropic principle and the so-called measurement problem in cosmology. In this last case, the entities were an instrument to discriminate between cosmological models. The consensus is that theories predicting Boltzmann Brains as the more likely observers of the universe are “bad”.

In this paper I will review the development of these disembodied entities in cosmology, and I will also present my own creative reinterpretation of Boltzmann Brains in a novel that deals with other two big 21st century monsters: climate change and general artificial intelligence.

**Mario Daniel Martín** is an Associate Professor in Spanish at ANU. His academic publications include papers on the Spanish-speaking community in Australia and the use of technology in language teaching, as well as a book on student retention. As a creative writer, he has published 11 books, and more than 60 individually published short stories, theatre plays and poems. He has written the scripts for 5 performed theatre plays, 3 radio plays and 3 films. Most of his creative work has been published in Spanish. His latest science fiction novel, *Piratas Genéticos*, was published by Ediciones Ayarmanot in Buenos Aires.

**The Frankenstein Myth in Contemporary Australian Art**

Julie Monro-Allison

Themes of procreation, the natural and unnatural, monster making, and the role of the parent are central to Mary Shelley’s *Frankenstein* and the enduring and pervasive cultural myth originating from the novel. Elements of these themes are also present in my own practice-led visual arts research. Using installation, scanning and drawing, my work investigates how spaces of reproduction might be perceived, imagined and imaged, with a
particular focus on generation and gestation as processes that are often both monumental and hidden. This paper examines the work of three contemporary Australian visual artists whose work also crosses one or more of the key themes in *Frankenstein*: the sculpture and installation work of Patricia Piccinini and her preoccupation with multispecies reproduction and with the responsibility of care; the prints of Jazmina Cininas exploring myths and historical accounts of women and werewolves; and the paintings and textile work of Del Kathryn Barton depicting childhood, animals and nature. These visual works are considered in relation to the recent writing of Donna Haraway, in which Haraway calls for the symbiotic connections and kinships binding human and non-human to be acknowledged and valued.

Julie Monro-Allison is a current PhD candidate in the textiles workshop at the ANU School of Art and Design. She has undertaken solo and group exhibitions, residencies, commissions and community art projects across Australia.

“I am thy creature”: the Bad Father Trope in *Frankenstein* and Some American Descendants

Heather Neilson

In their first encounter after Victor Frankenstein’s initial abandonment of his creation, the ‘monster’ appeals to Frankenstein’s sympathy with a direct allusion to Milton’s *Paradise Lost*. Milton represented God as all-powerful, yet guiltless of the sins committed by his sentient creatures – sins which he foresaw that they would commit even before he created them. That angels and mortals were created with free will allegedly absolved God from culpability. Frankenstein’s creature rejects this exoneration of the creator – he is much less interested in Milton’s theology *per se* than in the different faces which Milton’s God shows as ‘father’. Having been rejected as Frankenstein’s ‘Adam’, the creature deliberately models himself on Milton’s version of Satan: a hurt son determined to gain his negligent father’s attention by behaving badly. A generation after the first publication of Shelley’s novel, Nathaniel Hawthorne draws upon *Frankenstein* in several works, augmenting the literary archetype of the scientist as blasphemous over-reacher. In turn, twentieth century adaptations of *Frankenstein* are arguably influenced by Hawthorne’s own stories, a notable example being ‘The Birthmark’ (1843). The paper will go on to discuss some later twentieth-century works in popular culture which can be read as variations (whether reverent or parodic) upon *Frankenstein* in their portraits of bad fathers. These will include *The Milton the Monster Show* (a TV cartoon series which ran from 1965 to 1968) and the ‘creature feature’ film entitled *Sssssss* (dir. Bernard L. Kowalski, 1973), in which the young Dirk Benedict starred as an artless laboratory assistant who himself becomes the subject of his master’s experimentation.

Heather Neilson received her BA (Hons) from the University of Melbourne and her D Phil (on concepts and representations of history in the work of Gore Vidal) from Oxford University. She is a Senior Lecturer in English and Media Studies, in the School of Humanities and Social Sciences at UNSW, Canberra. She has also worked at the University of Sydney and the University of Western Australia. Her publications include the monograph *Political Animal: Gore Vidal on Power*, published by Monash University Press in 2014. She is a past president of the Australian and New Zealand American Studies Association and a former editor of the *Australasian Journal of American Studies*.

See You in Sixty Five Million Years, Maybe: Queer Futurity and Constructed Life Forms in *Frankenstein* and *The Stone Gods*

Ruby Niemann

This paper explores the queer connective tissues between Jeanette Winterson’s 2007 apocalyptic cyborg novel *The Stone Gods* and Mary Shelley’s *Frankenstein*. These two texts both feature a relationship between a constructed life form (Robo Sapiens or undead chimera of body parts) and their creator. Furthermore, both of these relationships are either implicitly or explicitly queer. This paper proposes that these relationships build upon a
powerful queerness that is inherent in these symbolically complex constructed life forms.

Using cyborg theory, posthumanist theory, and Jose Esteban Munoz’s theory of queer futurity, this paper will compare Winterson’s Robo Sapiens to Shelley’s Monster and examine the radical power that these constructed life forms have in the context of a future that is rapidly losing its biological viability. Using this framework, this paper will track the evolution of a theory of queerness in literary representations of constructed life forms from a tragic horror to hopeful dystopia.

Furthermore, this paper will consider the underlying utopic potential inherent in creatures like Spike and Frankenstein’s ‘Monster’ that are able to exist in the world without reproducing, and how this non-reproduction is reframed in cultures that are contemplating a dying planet.

Ruby Niemann is a second year PhD candidate from the University of Adelaide. Her research interests include Anthropocene theory, genre theory, queer theory, and female novelists of the 20th and 21st centuries.

Awakening From a Coma

Associate Professor Molly Townes O’Brien

In January 2012, I had a bicycle accident and banged my head on the pavement (at least that is what they tell me; I have no memory of it). I suffered a traumatic brain injury (TBI) and was in a coma for 68 days. I was unconscious with eyes closed for the first ~ 12 days and then in a recovery state called Post-Traumatic Amnesia (PTA) for the following ~56 days. During PTA, I was unable to form reliable new memories. I appeared to be awake and I responded to speech. I spoke a little and smiled occasionally. After a few days of PTA, it was evident that my sense of humor was muted but intact. I had only tenuous ideas about where I was, who visited me, or what had been said. My parents visited me but I don’t remember it. I perseverated – repeating the words I heard being spoken. I wrote notes in a rehab book. My spelling was fine. I could spell superannuation and even diarrhea. But weeks passed before I could remember new things from one day to the next. Months passed before I could make normal inferences, plan an outing, find specific items at Woolies for a rehab class, or reassume my responsibilities as a law academic. I will discuss the extent to which my awakening from a coma mirrors the subjective experience of Frankenstein’s monster becoming alive. We both gradually gained knowledge of the world, its dangers, and its pleasures.

Molly Townes O’Brien is an Associate Professor at the ANU College of Law, where she teaches Evidence, Litigation and Dispute Management, and Human Rights in the Australian Context. Molly has served on the law faculties of Emory University, University of Akron and University of Wollongong. Prior to entering the academy, she worked as a judicial clerk and as a public defender. She has an A.B. from Brown University (1982), a J.D. from Northeastern University (1986), and an LL.M. from Temple University (1997). She is a Senior Fellow of the Higher Education Association.

Frankenstein and Military Thought in Post-Napoleonic Europe

Dr Neil Ramsay

Frankenstein has long been read in relation to the military history of Napoleon, scholars for example observing a resonance between the novel’s conclusion in the vast icy wastes of the arctic and Napoleon’s disastrous campaigns in Russia in 1812, Victor Frankenstein himself seemingly paralleling Napoleon’s monomaniacal quest for power. In this paper I want to revisit these associations by turning to the broader wartime context of the Romantic era to argue that we need to look at these references to Napoleon in terms of what contemporaries saw as the unprecedented changes in warfare that emerged in the revolutionary period. If George Lukács’s has shown that the origins of the historical novel lie with the Napoleonic Wars, which led to the poetic awakening of the people as they were recruited into armies, I want to suggest that the experience of military mobilisation has a wider

Frankenstein has long been read in relation to the military history of Napoleon, scholars for example observing a resonance between the novel’s conclusion in the vast icy wastes of the arctic and Napoleon’s disastrous campaigns in Russia in 1812, Victor Frankenstein himself seemingly paralleling Napoleon’s monomaniacal quest for power. In this paper I want to revisit these associations by turning to the broader wartime context of the Romantic era to argue that we need to look at these references to Napoleon in terms of what contemporaries saw as the unprecedented changes in warfare that emerged in the revolutionary period. If George Lukács’s has shown that the origins of the historical novel lie with the Napoleonic Wars, which led to the poetic awakening of the people as they were recruited into armies, I want to suggest that the experience of military mobilisation has a wider
applicability across novels of the immediate post-war era. Indeed, while *Frankenstein* has been read in relation to a broad array of its era’s scientific discourses, the novel has not yet been examined in relation to its era’s military science. Military science, however, can be seen to have haunting parallels to the science of Victor Frankenstein - a problematic, even macabre science that rejected classical precedents as it developed new kinds of concerns with death and life to produce both new kinds of bodies and, across the battlefields of Europe, ever more corpses. Military science lies at the boundaries of accepted knowledge while crossing sciences with themes of genius and sublimity – it is a science of both orderly bodies and of usurpers and visionaries, of vast forces and violent deaths that perpetually run beyond the bounds of control. Above all, it is a science that unleashed the enormous potential of nations in arms, not just the revolutionary forces of France but equally in post-war Italy and Greece and hence in ways that would preoccupy the Shelleys and Byron in this post-war period. Attention to this wartime context of military thought can, I argue, open a new reading of the novel, one that might even see in *Frankenstein* an early, if still disparate engagement with themes subsequently developed by Carl von Clausewitz in his magisterial *On War* (1832).

Neil Ramsey is a Senior Lecturer in English Literature. He works on the literary and culture responses to warfare during the eighteenth century and Romantic eras, focusing on the representations of personal experience and the development of a modern culture of war. His first book, *The Military Memoir and Romantic Literary Culture, 1780-1835*, was published by Ashgate in 2011. His most recent, a collection co-edited with Gillian Russell, *Tracing War in British Enlightenment and Romantic Culture*, was published by Palgrave in 2015. He is currently completing a monograph on military writing of the Romantic era, the research for which was funded by an Australian Research Council Postdoctoral Fellowship that he held from 2010-2013.

**Interactive Narrative and the Divided Monster**

Antranig Sarian

Mary Shelley’s *Frankenstein* (1818) features a Monster that is struggling for meaning – torn between a desire to be accepted and anger at his ostracism. This theme has been reborn in newer forms of digital literature such as Shelley Jackson’s hypertext novel *Patchwork Girl* (1995) as readers are given the opportunity to traverse the internally divided mind of a Monster through the constructed nature of an interactive narrative – with different paths revealing the conflicting sides of their inner turmoil.

This paper is a comparative analysis of *Patchwork Girl* and the action video game *Shadow the Hedgehog* (2005). *Patchwork Girl* explores the resurrected female counterpart to Frankenstein’s Monster as she grapples with her identity. The multi-linear, network structure of the text acts as a metaphor for the internal conflict regarding her identity. *Shadow* uses a simpler branching tree-narrative, but communicates the same basic concept as *Patchwork Girl*. In it the artificially created Shadow must struggle with his meaning in life, and the branching paths of the game symbolise his two-sided conflict.

Both *Patchwork Girl*: *A Modern Monster* and Shadow breathe new life into the *Frankenstein* myth through the use of a few common narrative elements, such as an internally inconsistent fabula, user-driven choices, and a pervading sense of exploration anxiety. This represents a reinvigoration of *Frankenstein’s* philosophical themes and its ongoing resonance in a new landscape of video gaming and electronic literature.

Antranig Sarian is a Masters Candidate in Literary Studies at Monash University. His research thesis explores the nature of choice in interactive narrative. He has published a short essay titled “The Catechism’s Spectre in Gamebooks” in online journal *In Media Res* and presented the paper “Mapping the Rhizome: The Practical Problems of Interactive Narrative” at the Crossroads in Cultural Studies Conference 2016 at the University of Sydney. His study “Paradox and Pedagogy in The Stanley Parable” is soon to be published in the journal *Games and Culture*.
Terminal Species: *Frankenstein* and Posthumanist Monstrosity

Associate Professor Paul Sheehan

It seems almost inevitable that, given his interest in ‘abnormality’ and the exclusionist logic that underpins it, Michel Foucault would turn his attention to monstrosity. In *The Order of Things* (1966), Foucault contrasts monsters with fossils. Where the fossil recalls the first upsurge of identity, the “monster provides an account, as though in caricature, of the genesis of difference”. The human capability for change is thus predicated on the nascency of monstrous irregularities. Since Foucault, monstrosity theory has continued to develop, most visibly in one particular area. The recent wave of posthumanist critical studies manifests a significant change of direction – away from the techno-meliorism of cyborgs, androids and clones, towards a more atavistic concern with animals, zombies, mutants and other monstrous life-forms. Rather than being a pure destiny, then, posthumanism now casts sideways glances at our ‘companion species’, and backwards glances at various other-than-human entities.

In this paper, I suggest, first, that Foucault’s notion of ‘differential monstrosity’ can shed light on Mary Shelley’s *Frankenstein*, in the convoluted intimacies that develop between creator and creature; and second, that *Frankenstein* itself anticipates the above-mentioned shift of priorities in posthumanist studies, even to the extent of proffering a nuanced account as to how it has come about. For despite its subtitle, *Frankenstein* presents a counter-Promethean diagnosis of the posthumanist credo. To illustrate the pertinence and congruity of this diagnosis, I conclude by showing how the novel’s far-reaching ideas have been worked through in the HBO TV series *Westworld* (2016), which puts AI into dialogue with posthumanist monstrosity, and suggests that affective and anamnesic elements play a bigger role than the principles of advanced scientific know-how.

Paul Sheehan is Associate Professor in the Department of English at Macquarie University, Sydney. He is the author of *Modernism and the Aesthetics of Violence* (Cambridge UP, 2013) and the editor of ‘Post-Archival Beckett: Genre, Process, Value’ (2017), a special issue of the *Journal of Beckett Studies*. His recent work includes essays on zoopoetics, posthuman bodies, and cryptographic modernism.

*Frankenstein*, the Luddites, and the Birth of Automation

Dr Russell Smith

Written in the wake of the Luddite protests, *Frankenstein* has long been recognised as a fable of the social impacts of technological modernity. Here I examine the career of a real-life Victor Frankenstein, the Scottish physician Andrew Ure. On 4 November 1818, Ure performed a series of galvanic experiments at Glasgow University on the body of Matthew Clydesdale, hanged for murder an hour earlier. According to Ure’s lurid account in the 1819 *Quarterly Journal of Science*, the dead man resumed breathing, opened his eyes and appeared to gesture towards the terrified spectators. Ure subsequently became, along with Charles Babbage, one of the principal theorists of the industrial revolution. Whereas Babbage was concerned with the technical aspects of automation, Ure was preoccupied with the machine’s capacity to discipline the labouring body. Ure’s definition of ‘AUTOMATIC’ in his *Dictionary of Arts, Manufactures, and Mines* underlines his theorisation of the link between body and machine:

AUTOMATIC: A term used to designate such economic arts as are carried on by self-acting machinery. The word is employed by the physiologist to express involuntary motions.

As we enter the fourth industrial revolution, I wish to examine *Frankenstein*’s relationship with the first, and its reconceptualization of the living body as matter that can be animated by forces such as electricity, and can thus be heightened, sustained, managed and disciplined – in a word, engineered – in the service of capitalist production.

Russell Smith lectures in modernist literature and literary theory at the Australian National University. He has published widely on Samuel Beckett, including the collection *Beckett and Ethics* (Continuum 2009), as well on contemporary Australian literature and visual art.
The ‘Frankenstein’ Screenplay Formula
Noah Southam

Scholars have viewed Mary Shelley’s ‘Frankenstein’ as an allegory for childbirth and parenthood (Friedman, 1987), or an exploration of the uneasy relationship between humanity and technology (Denson, 2014). I view ‘Frankenstein’ as a metaphor for the creative process, and believe filmmakers are drawn to this story because they too want to create something that will have an impact on the world. Perhaps filmmakers are also drawn to ‘Frankenstein’ because film itself is a medium stitched together from other art forms.

Filmmakers who are interested in putting their own slant on the story must consider whether their ‘Frankenstein’ adaptation is original. Remix culture presents an optimistic approach, encouraging derivative works by combining existing materials to produce a new creative work. For example, Star Wars (1977) is remix culture at its finest, combining the Flash Gordon (1936) serials, Akira Kurosawa’s The Hidden Fortress (1958), Arthurian mythology, The Dam Busters (1955) and Joseph Campbell’s ‘The Hero with a Thousand Faces.’

Taking a screenwriting practice approach to remix culture and adaptation, which is situated in the growing tradition of creative practice research, I argue in this paper how a ‘derivative’ work can still be original and compelling.

This paper will draw on seminal films including Frankenstein (1931), The Bride of Frankenstein (1935), Abbott and Costello Meet Frankenstein (1948), Young Frankenstein (1974), The Rocky Horror Picture Show (1975) and Mary Shelley’s Frankenstein (1995), looking at 200 years of Frankenstein’s monsters through the lens of screenwriting and adaptation practices.

Noah Southam is a Canadian-Australian screenwriter. In 2013, Noah graduated from Western University with a BA in English and creative writing. More recently, he graduated from Bond University with a Master of Philosophy in Screenwriting where he wrote his first screenplay, ‘How To Kill A Genre,’ as part of his Masters. He is currently working on his PhD in Screenwriting at RMIT University.

Poor Creatures, Expensive Races: Mary Shelley and the Politics of Contempt
Scott Stephens

Within two decades of the publication of Mary Shelley’s Frankenstein, the image of the ‘Creature’ was already being deployed for political purposes. Presented variously as the usurpation of ‘natural’ order, or as embodying the threat of chaotic, ungovernable masses, Frankenstein’s creation frequently stood as a kind of cautionary tale against working-class or revolutionary upheaval. But what happens when Shelley is read, instead, against the backdrop of Jean-Jacques Rousseau’s critique (which she knew) of the unnatural ‘wound’ that pervasive inequality inflicts on ‘natural’ human community, and read in a kind of silent conversation with (her contemporary) Ralph Waldo Emerson’s critique of ‘expensive races’ – races who live at the expense of other races? Her ‘Creature’ comes to represent, not so much a scientific abomination, but rather the inextinguishable moral claim of those very ‘poor creatures’ fashioned with such contempt under the conditions of industrial and racial capitalism.

Scott Stephens is the religion and ethics editor of the Australian Broadcasting Corporation, the co-host of The Minefield on Radio National, and frequent guest host of The Philosopher’s Zone. He was the co-editor and translator of the two-volume selected writings of Slovenian philosopher Slavoj Zizek, and is completing a book On Contempt for Melbourne University Press.
Lily Frankenstein as Proto-radical Feminist: Penny Dreadful, Valerie Solanas and the Revitalisation of Feminism’s Radicality

Dr Anthea Taylor

The neo-Victorian television series *Penny Dreadful*, an Anglo-American co-production, screened from 2014-2016. Drawing upon characters from the nineteenth century novels invoked in its title, including Dorian Gray, Dracula, and of course Dr Frankenstein, the series is populated with strong, independent women who all seek to contest permissible Victorian femininities (manifest most clearly in the figure of the ‘angel in the house’). Although there is much to say about its key protagonist, Vanessa Ives, this paper turns to one of the series other minor literary characters to suggest the political possibilities of popular culture for thinking through (and perhaps troubling) the legacy of feminism in its more transgressive forms. In *Penny Dreadful*, Lily Frankenstein – the bride who never actually came to be in Mary Shelley’s *Frankenstein* – mounts an explicit critique of the bonds of normative femininity, which becomes increasingly more radical as the series progresses. Her feminism is not that of the suffragettes (briefly depicted in one episode) but a form that seems more aligned to twentieth century radical varieties. Indeed, the series appears to stage an intertextual dialogue with Valerie Solanas’ *Scum Manifesto* (1967); accordingly, this paper demonstrates that Lily’s feminism is most generatively read in and through Solanas’. In *Penny Dreadful*, via Lily, the violence advocated in the manifesto is literalised as she accumulates a group of women – who like her, as Brona Croft, before her ‘re-birth’ – have been abused, and encourages them to seek their revenge on their perpetrators. It seems, therefore, that Solanas’ exhortation for women to eradicate men underpins Lily’s revolutionary feminist vision. Although many contemporary television series are critiqued for relegating feminism to the past, *Penny Dreadful*, I argue, participates in an increasingly important dialogue about the unfinished business of second wave feminism (Fraser 2013, Eichorn 2015), including through its reworking of a historically much-derided (perhaps ‘monstrous’) radical feminism.

Dr Anthea Taylor is a Senior Lecturer in the Department of Gender and Cultural Studies at the University of Sydney, Australia. She is the author of three sole authored monographs on the relationship between feminism and media and literary culture, and coauthor (with Margaret Henderson) of *Postfeminism in Context: The Australian Postfeminist Imaginary* (forthcoming, Routledge).

*Frankenstein: A Modern Pygmalion? The Exploration of the Uncanny Male Womb*

Adam Turner

Often hailed as the tale of the modern Prometheus, Shelley’s *Frankenstein* actually provides a close adaptation of Ovid’s *Pygmalion* myth. Much like Pygmalion, *Frankenstein* is obsessed with achieving the unachievable. *Pygmalion* creates Galatea out of stone, a perfect woman who was animated by divine intervention. Frankenstein usurps this divine power, and as a result becomes a powerfully uncanny figure. *Frankenstein*, however, creates his male companion from the limbs of the corpses he can find. His creation, however, unlike Galatea is imperfect, and flawed. Frankenstein has not created a companion, but a wretch to be feared and despised. However, Frankenstein is a primarily uncanny character throughout the novel. He has undermined the basic tenants of female/male sexual roles by creating life and becoming a womb mother. The uncanny natures of death, the Oedipal stages of development, and the male womb are all brought into focus in *Frankenstein*.

These aspects of the primal uncanny are furthered by the interplay of sexual tensions (creation of a male companion), and sex inversions (a male mother figure). This sexual tension, was more prominently displayed in the Pygmalion myth, as Pygmalion expressly wished for his perfect (statue of a) woman to be brought to life, however in Frankenstein it is seen in the care taken in assembling his monster, and further through the monsters unrelenting desire for love, and approval.

Adam Turner is a Cultural Studies HDR candidate at the University of Newcastle who studies the monstrous in contemporary videogames. His research concerns how monsters are used in representing the abject, and uncanny particularly when it has been deemed unethical or illegal for such depictions to involve human characters.
Broken Bodies, Remade Wholes: *Unwind* as *Frankenstein* Retold and Reversed

Ally Wolfe

New technologies create new opportunities for anxiety and using human body parts to create life is a special kind of horrifying fictional procedure. At first glance, *Unwind* by Neal Shusterman and Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* approach this concept in inverted ways. In *Frankenstein*, a “monster” is built out of the parts of corpses, and rises against his horrified creator, while Unwind centres on a society that justifies breaking down its own children for their organs, and using these parts to sustain itself until the children rise against it. *Unwind* is centred on the precept that that which is broken down still lives, in a divided state, controllable by the larger body to which it’s donated. The children broken down for parts are perceived and understood by the authorities of this fictional universe as criminals waiting to happen, excess bodies and liabilities. Frankenstein’s monster horrified Dr Frankenstein due to his perceived imperfection and lack of accuracy to his father’s vision of the perfect creation. *Unwind* is inspired to take its children apart due to that same disgust. Fear of what one has created and its difference from oneself pervades the horrors and potential horrors of both works.

In my paper I argue that *Unwind* mirrors *Frankenstein* in how it centres on an adult fear of the children it has created, placed specifically in a time and place where they have the technology and the lack of empathy to tell themselves that it is better not to ‘waste’ what they have made. *Unwind* and *Frankenstein* both delve into old fears and new technology, embodying and perpetuating a cycle of technology prompting anxiety prompting technology, until all fear what they have wrought.

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