

Frankenstein 2018: two hundred years of monsters

12-15 September 2018

The Australian National University, and National Film and Sound Archive, Canberra

Nearly two centuries after its anonymous publication on 1 January 1818, Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein; or, The Modern Prometheus* remains as topical as ever. Its core story—of a recklessly ambitious and naïve scientist whose artificial human-like creature arouses only horror and disgust, and escapes control to seek revenge on his creator—has become, for better or worse, *the* techno-scientific fable of modernity. First adapted for stage by Richard Brinsley Peake in 1823, and for film by Edison Studios in 1910, the story has inspired more theatre, film, television and other adaptations than any other modern narrative, with more than 50 screen adaptations appearing in the 2010s alone. From Fritz Lang's *Metropolis* to Alex Garland's *Ex Machina*, and *The Rocky Horror Picture Show* to *The Addams Family*, the Frankenstein myth reaches into every recess of high and popular culture.

We invite proposals for 20-minute papers or 3 x 20-minute panel sessions from scholars across the humanities, sciences and social sciences that respond in interdisciplinary ways to this most interdisciplinary of novels, including, but not limited to:

- Literary studies, especially of the long eighteenth century, Romanticism, Victorian and neo-Victorian literature
- Re-tellings and re-imaginings of the Frankenstein story in various modes and genres, e.g. SF, steampunk, speculative fiction, slash fiction, etc.
- Film, television, theatre and performance, and visual studies
- Digital humanities, reception studies, histories of popular culture and media ecologies
- Gender studies, queer theory and the history of sexuality
- Disability studies and posthumanism
- The history of medicine, especially reproductive technologies
- Science and technology studies; images and imaginaries of science and scientists
- The history and philosophy of biology, especially in relation to vitalism
- Ecocriticism and the Anthropocene
- Affect theory and the history of emotions
- Frankenstein and race, colonialism, empire
- Global and local Frankensteins, e.g. Australian Frankensteins
- Frankenstein and material history
- Cyborgs, robots, artificial intelligence and machine learning
- Synthetic biology, genetic engineering and artificial life

To maintain order among this menagerie of monsters, we propose the following four overarching themes, each of which will be addressed by one of our keynote speakers:

Frankenstein in 1818: historicising the monster

(Professor Sharon Ruston, Lancaster)

Frankenstein as scientific fable: from grave-robbing and galvanism to synthetic biology and machine learning

(Professor Genevieve Bell, Australian National University)

Adaptation and experimentation: Frankenstein in film and other media

(Assistant Professor Shane Denson, Stanford)

Frankenstein's queer family: gender, sexuality, reproduction and the work of care

(Professor Julie Carlson, University of California, Santa Barbara)

Please send proposals for papers or sessions—including a title, 250-word abstract, and brief author biography—to Dr Russell Smith at russell.smith@anu.edu.au.

The deadline for proposals is **23 February 2018**. Proposals will be reviewed by a committee comprising scholars from the humanities, sciences and social sciences, and we will endeavour to inform applicants of the outcome within two weeks of the submission deadline. Please note that we will endeavour to notify overseas applicants earlier if they submit proposals before the submission deadline.

For further information and updates, as well as information about the Humanities Research Centre's annual theme for 2018, **Imagining Science and Technology 200 Years after Frankenstein**, see: <http://hrc.anu.edu.au/2018-annual-theme>. Please direct any inquiries to Penny Brew at hrc@anu.edu.au.