

## **Formed and Deformed Bodies: An Orientalist Criticism of Mary Shelley's Frankenstein**

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### **ABSTRACT**

This article analyses the time of great social and political changes of the early nineteenth century (the time of industrial and scientific revolutions), which found expression in Mary Shelley's Frankenstein. The novel has always been a subject of criticism. Most critics took the novel to be a scientific dystopia, or saw the work as a great resource for the analysis of human psychology. However, a less psychological, and a more social and historical criticism of Frankenstein will demonstrate that Mary Shelley, in fact, aimed at lampooning the political and economic systems of the West. Stripping away the super-ego of an age, she attacks imperialism, and reveals it as a great danger for mankind for it creates "formed" and "deformed" bodies. The "formed" body (Dr. Frankenstein) creates the "deformed" body (the Monster), and the two clash in the novel, a struggle which ends in the Arctic (or omphalos) with the destruction of the two. If Frankenstein and his Monster are taken as metaphors (Frankenstein standing for the scientific, capitalist western Christian world; and the Monster, the "bricollage" creation that stands for the East), then Mary Shelley's work can be read and evaluated as an allegory. Her message concerning the future is clear. The future is a neoimperialist dystopia. She reveals that the new socio-economic and socio-political orders of her time have already changed the natural frame of man and society, and this new world order will create a paradigm of conflict, leaving "civilisation" with little chance for survival.