

Grau d'Estudis Anglesos

Treball de Fi de Grau

Curs 2018-2019, G1

# Frankenstein:

# Defending the Creature from his Misrepresentation on a Selection of Book Covers

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Barcelona, 11 de juny de 2019



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# *FRANKENSTEIN*: DEFENDING THE CREATURE FROM HIS MISREPRESENTATION ON A SELECTION OF BOOK COVERS

#### Abstract

This paper aims to defend the Creature in Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein or the Modern Prometheus* (1818) from the frequent misconception about his nature, intentions and behaviour. With this aim in mind, the paper begins by examining every portion of the novel in which this character is mentioned, thought of or interacted with, in order to objectively illustrate the Creature's original portrayal in the text. Secondly, the representation of the Creature in a selection of book covers is explored and compared with his depiction in Shelley's text. Book covers often show a distorted image of the Creature that both reflects and reinforces the existing confusion about him. This paper also studies whether the negative portrayals of the Creature on book covers have improved over time and reaches some tentative conclusions on the reasons for both the misrepresentations as well as the relatively recent emergence of more positive images.

Keywords: Frankenstein, Mary Shelley, book covers, representation, Creature

# *FRANKENSTEIN*: DEFENSA DE LA CRIATURA DE SU MALA REPRESENTACIÓN EN UNA SELECCIÓN DE PORTADAS DE LIBROS

#### Resumen

Este estudio, que trata la obra *Frankenstein o el Moderno Prometeo* (1818) de Mary Shelley, tiene como objetivo defender a la Criatura de la frecuente y errónea concepción acerca de su naturaleza, intenciones y comportamiento. Teniendo en cuenta tal objetivo, este proyecto comienza por analizar cada pasaje de la novela en el que este personaje es mencionado, en el que se piensa en él o se interactúa con él, de manera que se ilustre de manera objetiva la representación original de la Criatura en el texto. Por otro lado, este estudio explora su representación en una selección de portadas de libros, ya que, a menudo, estas ofrecen tales imágenes distorsionadas de él, que refuerzan la consiguiente confusión. Es por esto que este trabajo tiene por objeto estudiar si acaso los retratos negativos de la Criatura en dichas portadas mejoran con el tiempo, y así sacar conclusiones tentativas acerca de las razones para las tergiversaciones ya mencionadas, y el motivo del surgimiento de algunas representaciones más positivas en los últimos años.

Palabras clave: Frankenstein, Mary Shelley, portadas de libros, representación, Criatura

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#### **1. INTRODUCTION**

The first publication of Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein or The Modern Prometheus* was a three-volume edition published on 1 January 1818 by a London company called Lackington, Hughes, Harding, Mavor & Jones (fig. 1). Published anonymously, dedicated to her father, William Goodwin, and with a preface by Percy B. Shelley, the edition ran to just five hundred copies.



edition of *Frankenstein* or *The Modern Prometheus* (1818) As this publication was not successful enough, a second edition consisting of two volumes was published in 1823, this time acknowledging Mary Shelley as the author of the novel, which Siv Jansson describes as a "modest success" in the "Publisher's Introduction" of the Wordsworth Classic's edition of *Frankenstein* (1999, p. xvi). Finally, in 1831 the revised and popular version of the text we are familiar with nowadays came out. An introduction by the author was provided, where she explained the events that took place in Villa Diodati in the summer of 1816 that prompted the creation of the tale, and stated that "I have no changed no portion of the story; nor introduced any new ideas or circumstances. I have mended the language where it was so bald as to interfere with the rest of the narrative [...] leaving the core and substance of [the story]

untouched" (1999, p. 5).

These three initial editions were soon followed by more, eventually leading to millions of copies of the novel being put into circulation and, hence, its consequent worldwide impact. The earliest editions had plain covers or covers adorned with simple flourishes, but as technology advanced, images could be added to the covers, whose aim, from my point of view, is, in all novels, to anticipate what is to be found inside the book. In other words, every illustration on the cover conveys a given interpretation of the text. At the same time, however, Mary Shelley's words "[...] leaving the core and substance of it untouched" (1999, p. 5) often resonate in my mind when I see how the Creature is represented on some covers.

In the collective imagination, a clear image of the Creature's physical appearance tends to prevail: always wearing dark clothes, Victor Frankenstein's evil-eyed creation is gigantic, with scars and stitches all over his greenish skin which join together the different parts of the bodies of which he is formed; he has short, dark, lustrous hair above a big forehead pierced by screws. We tend to imagine him in one of two postures: with his arms stretched out and suspended in the air, his big hands and darkened nails in sight, or with his menacing claws ready to kill. And yet, if this is what we 'know' about the Creature, what do we really 'know' about him? Is this the being Mary Shelley wrote about? If he is not, why is such a distinct image of him so prevalent in the popular imagination?

Created by Theodor van Holst and engraved by William Chevalier, the first and only image included in the 1831 edition of *Frankenstein* (fig. 2) shows a human-looking Creature with abundant, dark, limp hair, and somewhat larger proportions than young Frankenstein. Since the latter is seen, as the novel indicates, leaving the laboratory, fearful of the being he has created, - his smaller size could be explained because of his position in the background of the illustration. The being looks muscular, with some parts of his body darker than others as result of their diverse origins, but there are no scars, no screws, no disproportionate extremities or evil face. He looks, if anything, confused.



Fig. 2 Image of the first and only illustration in the second edition of *Frankenstein* (1831)

Since images on book covers often 'give a face' to (some of) the characters, they play an important role in shaping or guiding the reader's imagination, asking what has happened between the 1831 portrait of the being and current ones is highly a question.



Fig. 3 Image on the Creature in James Whale and Carl Laemmle Jr.'s film *Frankenstein* (1931) Why have we stopped imagining the Creature as van Holst and Chevalier did? When did that first illustration begin to be replaced by images that often lead us to think that *Frankenstein* is a scary tale than a reflection on human life and behaviour?

The best-known film adaptation of the novel (fig. 3) and the most influential on the popular image of the being is *Frankenstein* (1931), directed by James Whale and produced by Carl Laemmle Jr, with the famous actor Boris Karloff as the Creature. This was the first extended and sound adaptation of the novel and it is precisely from this film that the typical

image of the being described above is drawn, being the first representation in which he shows screws in his body, even though the novel mentions nothing about it. The influence of this portrait was such, that it was used as the base for all the representations of the Creature that came afterwards and that continue to be produced today.

Although it can be considered that film adaptations are the origin of the 'misrepresentation' of the Creature, it is not possible to compare novels and films when the result is expected to be the decision of which of the two genres is better. As Mireia Aragay indicates in *Books in Motion: Adaptation, Intertextuality, Authorship* (2005), there is a hierarchy by which literature becomes the valued object while films are judged to be a copy of the original, implying that they should be "faithful" and, therefore, transforming fidelity into adaptation studies' aim (p.12). George Bluestone answers to this in his book *Novels into Film* (1957) defending that "the two media are essentially different in that the novel is linguistic, conceptual and discursive, while film is primarily visual, perceptual and presentational" (qtd. in Aragay, p. 13). Thus, each film adaptation is a reading of the novel and they should be valued as such, making impossible the comparison between the genres to draw conclusions about how much the Creature should resemble Mary Shelley's description.

It should be noted that film adaptation is a topic I introduce because it is crucial to understand how the figure of the Creature has evolved over time, but I do not analyse it deeply in the present work due to space problems, and, therefore, I will devote myself entirely to, in the first section, the analysis of the three different narrators in the novel and their description of the Creature, in order to study how he was originally portrayed; and, in the second section, to the analysis of a selection book covers by both Spanish and international publishers, in order to establish a comparison with the text's representation of the Creature. The reasons for my decision to explore this specific area have to do with the following hypothesis. In my opinion, there has been, in recent decades, a popular turn towards psychology. This seems to me to be both indicative of, and to result in, an increased sensitivity to the emotions, including the emotional dimension of art. In this context, *Frankenstein* has been intensively reread over the last two decades in search of a more positive reading of the Creature. In 2018 the novel became 200 years old, and several biographies of Mary Shelley were released, whose covers both made sure that it

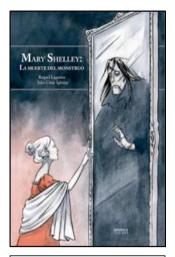


Fig. 4 Image on the cover of Júlio César Iglesias and Raquel Lagarto's biography of Mary Shelley Mary Shelley: *La muerte del monstruo* (2018)

was clear that she was the author of *Frankenstein* and which reimagined the Creature as a more vulnerable being (fig. 4). This drew my attention to the fact that something seemed to be changing and that, gradually, a fairer representation of the character was emerging. I therefore started wondering whether the representation of the Creature on book covers over the years, combined, of course, with film representations, might have triggered misconceptions of the character. My expectations upon starting my research was to find that book covers for Shelley's novel have evolved from a negative and/or violent representation of the Creature in the older editions to more positive or neutral ones over the last three decades, which is why I also provide third section which consists on different classifications of the selected book

covers, one of them according to their publishing date.

It should be noted that my motivation to work on the representation of the Creature is due to my personal experience: I was convinced that the story was that of a cruel monster who, turning his back on his creator and disobeying the rules, his evil nature pushes him to commit horrible crimes, his greatest aim being to spread evilness all over the world. I do not know the reason for this general misunderstanding that is never cleared off and which goes further every time, beginning with the misinterpretation of the Creature's intentions and ending with him being given the name of his maker. I strongly disagree with the characteristics that the Creature is generally acknowledged and, therefore, one of the reasons why I am writing on this topic is because I want to defend him. Precisely because the Creature is a suffering, living being, and Mary Shelley leaves no room for questioning that, especially because she enabled the reader to empathise with him by giving him a voice, I refuse to refer to him as 'monster' or 'it', but instead I use the words 'Creature', 'Being' and 'he' all over this work. In my attempt to defend this character from any misjudgement, I refuse to use words or pronouns which may dehumanize him since, according to my own reading of the novel, the Creature is the most human character in the story, and this is what has driven me to write about it.

# 2. THE REPRESENTATION OF THE CREATURE IN THE NOVEL

In the first part of my TFG I analyse *Frankenstein or the Modern Prometheus* in search of the original representation of the Creature, in order to be able to establish a comparison with his portrayal in book covers in the second section. To do this, I have analysed the three narrators –Robert Walton, Victor Frankenstein and the Creature, in order of appearance–: after a brief presentation of each character, every sight, thought or interaction they have with the Creature throughout the novel is objectively exposed, except for the Being, who is analysed in himself. This also means that each character's description of the Creature, both physical and behavioural, is analysed, as well as every narrator's internal conflicts and battles, so the reader may judge how reliable and fair their narrations are in accordance with the figure of the Being. Besides, a section on an analysis of these characters according to different writers and critics that have studied the novel is provided to understand every narrator's nature, choices and behaviour.

#### 2.1. Robert Walton

Robert Walton is the first narrator to be found in the novel. He is an explorer who writes letters about his time abroad to his sister, Mrs. Margaret Saville, so his narration is always epistolary. He writes a total of four letters before the first change in the narrative voice. In those letters, Walton explains much of his life, as Lee E. Heller points out in her chapter "Frankenstein and the Cultural Uses of Gothic" (1992): "Walton describes how books, the primary tools of his self-education, have shaped him and his choices. He characterizes himself as 'passionately fond of reading', but adds that as a boy he was 'self-educated [...] and read nothing but [his] uncle Thomas' books of voyages'" (p. 332). The reader learns that his wish is to reach the North Pole to make a discovery whose impact on mankind he can foresee in his imagination. He says that this expedition has been the favourite dreams of his early years (Shelley, p. 14), and Heller argues that "His goals, noble and dangerous, are the product of the unguided childhood reading that has been almost the sole influence over him" (1992, p. 332). Nonetheless, Walton's ambition, which makes him turn his back to his father and travel the world in search of fame, also leads him to loneliness. He writes to his sister several times about the emptiness he feels inside, a void he wishes to fill with the company of a good friend, especially now that he is overseas and has little contact with people.

During Walton's narration, the reader is told about the Creature for the first time. In his fourth letter to Mrs. Saville, Walton explains the extraordinary scene he has witnessed: "We perceived a low carriage, fixed on a sledge and drawn by dogs, pass on towards the north, at the distance of half a mile: a being which had the shape of a man, but apparently of gigantic stature, sat in the sledge, and guided the dogs" (Shelley, p. 20). Two hours later, he finds Victor Frankenstein sick in the open sea and gets him on board. He takes care of him and, from Walton's point of view, their friendship is immediate, even desperate.

Near the end of the novel, the reader finds a section called "Walton, in continuation", where Walton continues his narration after Victor Frankenstein's tale. He shares his thoughts with his sister on how strange and terrific it was, but leaves no room for questioning his good friend. Although he has had no chance to interact with the Creature, whenever he refers to him in his letters, he uses the terms "his persecutor", "the monster" and "his enemy". In contrast, when he mentions his friend Victor Frankenstein, he chooses "glorious creature" or "admirable being" (pp. 160-1).

When Victor Frankenstein dies, the Creature appears and mourns him. Walton, shocked by the sighting of such a being, describes him as follows:

Over him hung a form which I cannot find words to describe; gigantic in stature, yet uncouth and distorted in its proportions. As he hung over the coffin, his face was concealed by long locks of ragged hair; but one vast hand was extended, in colour and apparent texture like that of a mummy [...] Never did I behold a vision so horrible as his face, of such loathsome yet appalling hideousness (pp. 166-7).

Nevertheless, when he sees the Creature is in terrible pain because of his creator's death, he admits he feels moved: "my first impulses, which had suggested to me the duty of obeying the dying request of my friend, in destroying his enemy, were now suspended by a mixture of curiosity and compassion [...] I was touched by the expressions of his misery" (p. 167). However, when he remembers Victor Frankenstein's death, he decides not to trust his feelings and he insults the Creature, calling him "wretch" and "hypocritical fiend" (p. 168). After the Being jumps out of the ship, close to the end of the novel, Walton expresses no feelings about it and leaves the reader with the description of how the Creature is "borne away by the waves and lost in darkness and distance" (p. 170).

#### 2.1.1. Analysis of Robert Walton in relation to the Creature

Robert Walton is an essential character as regards the interpretation of the novel since he is not directly involved in the story between Victor Frankenstein and the Creature, and so provides an outsider's point of view. He represents the perspective, experience and feelings of those who reject the Creature throughout the novel, and his narration will inevitably be taken into account by the reader as s/he decides –if s/he does– whom to empathise with. Walton's role in the novel, then, is a key one, as he plays two specific roles.

On the one hand, according to Jansson "Walton is used to establish the nobility of Victor's character, and also to introduce the 'love for the marvellous' which functions as an explanation and exoneration for Frankenstein's experiments" (1999, p. xxiv). The fact that Walton appears at the beginning of the novel and introducing his ambition to the reader by explaining his dreams to Mrs. Saville, anticipates and justifies Victor Frankenstein's own dreams and projects, but also his failures.

As Mary Lowe-Evans points out in her chapter "Reading with a "Nicer-Eye": Responding to Frankenstein" (1992), "*Frankenstein* provides rather obvious clues about the precise nature of the reader's role" (p. 219). In writing to his sister about the progress of his adventure, Walton makes the reader take the position of Mrs. Saville, so then s/he is expected to see Walton with what Lowe-Evans calls the 'nicer-eye', that is, from the perspective of the kind, caring sister who misses his brother while he travels the world chasing an admirable aim. At the same time, "Walton has more right to expect sympathy from his loving sister than from an anonymous reader of his letters, which may explain why the reader is given Margaret's role" (Lowe-Evans, 1992, p. 219). For that reason, the reader, being made aware of Walton's excitement about his adventure and his feelings when he has to give it up, is able to empathise with him. In this way, the text is preparing the reader for the introduction of Victor Frankenstein, a character who, ideally, has to be seen with Elizabeth Lavenza's 'nicer-eyes' (Lowe-Evans, 1992, p. 224).

On the other hand, taking into account Walton's external position to the events happening in Victor Frankenstein and the Creature's narrations, Walton's other function in the text is to illuminate the reader as regards the consequences of both points of view. In this other role, it is more challenging for the reader to have recourse to Mrs. Saville's 'nicer-eye'. Walton ends up befriending Victor Frankenstein, who feels empty after the loss of his loved ones, and not the Creature, who is condemned to extreme isolation and reclusion from the very beginning. When Walton and the Creature meet in the ship's cabin, the explorer is not merciful towards the Being, even though he is as aware as the reader is of the three incidents the Creature has had with humans. At this point, as Lowe-Evans says, the reader's "sympathy for Walton has reached its nadir" (1992, p. 226). The ultimate outcome of the novel's ending, then, is the reader's empathy towards the Creature and the belief in his version as the one to be trusted.

# 2.2. Victor Frankenstein

Victor Frankenstein is the main character in the novel and the second narrator. He is Genevese and comes from a distinguished family. At the age of thirteen he discovers natural philosophy, which he describes "the genius that has regulated my fate" (p. 31), and with it, he finds a volume of the works of Cornelius Agrippa, which he shows to his father, who dismisses it claiming that it is useless and "sad trash" (p. 31). Although Victor's love and respect for his father remain untouched, he still resents him: "If, instead of this remark, my father had taken the pains to explain to me that the principles of Agrippa had been entirely exploded [...] I should certainly have thrown Agrippa aside, and have contended my imagination [...]. It is even possible that the train of my ideas would never have received the fatal impulse that led to my ruin" (p. 32). He moves to Ingolstadt for college, where he learns a great deal about chemistry and masters all the necessary skills to start his ambitious creation whose benefits for future generations he dreams about: "So much has been done [...] more, far more, will I achieve: treading in the steps already marked, I will pioneer a new way, explore unknown powers, and unfold to the world the deepest mysteries of creation" (p. 38).

The moment the Creature is finished becomes a turning point in Victor Frankenstein's existence. He cannot help rejecting the being to whom he has given life:

"His limbs were in proportion [...], his yellow skin scarcely covered the work of muscles and arteries beneath; his teeth of a pearly whiteness; but these luxuriances only formed a more horrid contrast with his watery eyes, that seemed almost of the same colour as the dun, white sockets in which they were set, his shrivelled complexion and straight black lips" (p. 45).

He regrets the two years of hard work he has spent on this project, depriving himself from rest and health, and he is both angry at and fearful of the result: "I had selected his features

as beautiful. Beautiful!" (p. 45). After this, Victor Frankenstein's life becomes tormented, filled with terror and fear, to the point that he becomes seriously ill. Immersed in high fevers and being taken care of by his friend Clerval, he spends a season in bed raving about his ambitious creation, whose fatal result becomes the secret he must carry with him.

Victor Frankenstein's encounter with the Creature happens when William is murdered and he travels to Geneva to attend the funeral after receiving his father's letter. While he is watching the storm in the open air while thinking about his brother, he sees the Creature for a few seconds: "it was the wretch, the filthy demon to whom I had given life" (p. 60). His train of thoughts leads him to believe that the Being is to be blamed for the murder of William, and leaves no room for questioning this notion: "Could he be [...] the murderer of my brother? No sooner did that idea cross my imagination, than I became convinced of its truth [...] He was the murderer! [...] The mere presence of the idea was an irresistible proof of the fact" (p. 60). His repudiation of the Creature is such that it brings the worst out of him: "My abhorrence of this fiend cannot be conceived. When I thought of him, I gnashed my teeth, my eyes became inflamed, and I ardently wished to extinguish that life which I had so thoughtlessly bestowed" (p. 71).

The third encounter with the Creature takes place during Victor Frankenstein's ascension to the summit of the Montanvert. Before they even exchange any words, he is ready to kill the Being: "I trembled with rage and horror, resolving to wait his approach, and then close with him in mortal combat" (p. 77). Victor Frankenstein is on the defensive, insulting the Creature, until he agrees to listen to his tale "partly urged by curiosity, and compassion confirmed [his] resolution" (p. 79). However, after the Being explains the events that led him to misery, Victor Frankenstein admits he is moved but he does not grant him the benefit of the doubt: "Shall I create another like yourself, whose joint wickedness might desolate the world? [...] your evil passions will be renewed and you will have a companion to aid you in the task of destruction" (pp. 111-2). In the end, Victor Frankenstein decides to create another being because he feels that he has a duty to his creation, but also because the Creature is stronger than him and he would not succeed in a confrontation with him.

During the time he is supposed to be engaged in creating another being, he is terribly unhappy because he feels he is the slave of his creation (p. 113). He fears that the female the Creature has asked for "might become ten thousand times more malignant than her mate, and delight for its own sake, in murder and wretchedness" (p. 126). He tortures himself thinking about his task:

"Even if they were to leave Europe, and inhabit the deserts of the new world, yet one of the first results of those sympathies for which the demon thirsted would be children, and a race of devils would be propagated upon the earth who might make the very existence of the species of man a condition precarious and full of terror" (p. 127).

His fears consuming him, he decides to destroy the female body he has started to create. At this point, the Creature appears and tells him, "I shall be with you on your wedding night" (p. 129), which Victor Frankenstein interprets as meaning that will be the day when they will finally confront each other. Nevertheless, Elizabeth is murdered, and not much later, Alphonse Frankenstein dies. Having lost Clerval too, Victor Frankenstein thinks about suicide: "Then the appearance of death was distort although the wish was ever present to my thoughts; and I often sat for hours motionless and speechless, wishing for some mighty resolution that might bury me and my destroyer in its ruins" (p. 139). He dies chasing the Creature, and asks Walton to kill him whenever he has the chance, so his task will finally be completed.

# 2.2.1. Analysis of Victor Frankenstein in relation to the Creature

Victor Frankenstein can be seen from two different perspectives depending on whom the reader decides to empathise with, if indeed s/he decides to empathise with any character at all: he can either be considered to be the protagonist or the antagonist. Therefore, in what follows the character is analysed from the two angles.

On the one hand, according to Pilar Vega in *Frankensteiniana: La tragedia del hombre artificial* (2002), "Frankenstein is innocent" (p. 233). First of all, Vega justifies her vindication of Victor Frankenstein by arguing that most of the sympathy the reader experiences towards him has to do with the relation between his ideal dreams and the meagre results he achieves; nonetheless, Victor Frankenstein is not to be blamed, since, in her view, it is innate for humans to dream irrationally and it is nature which, in the end, lets the expectations down (2002, p. 233). Vega claims that it is understandable for Victor Frankenstein to be both horrified by the Creature and to reject him, since he was meant to be created in the image and likeness of men and what has taken place is not a creation but a catastrophe (2002, pp. 208-9).

According to editor Johanna M. Smith in her chapter "A Critical History of Frankenstein" (1992), in his posthumous essay "On *Frankenstein*" (1832) Percy B. Shelley raises a question: who is to be held accountable for the Creature's monstrosity? (p. 190). Shelley answers that it is society's fault to have created such a 'monster', since he thinks that in "divid[ing] [...] a social being from society, [we are] impos[ing] upon him the irresistible obligations [of] malevolence and selfishness" (qtd. in Smith, p. 191). However, he concludes that, in the end, it is no one's fault since everything has to do with the Creature's natural propensity for evil.

On the other hand, Victor Frankenstein can also be seen from a less empathetic perspective. To begin with, although his impressions when he sees his creation alive for the first time may seem understandable, his ensuing behaviour is counterproductive. In a panic, he leaves the laboratory and then comes back "throw[ing] the door forcibly open as children are accustomed to do when they expect a spectre to stand in waiting for them on the other side" (Shelley, p. 48); when he sees there is no one in there, he can "hardly believe that so great a good fortune could have befallen on [him], [...] [his] enemy had indeed fled and [he] clapped [his] hands for joy" (p. 48). In other words, from the very beginning, Victor Frankenstein is turning his still silent, unknown being into a monster by his rejection. In this way, Shelley shows that "creation' doesn't stop at the moment of life" (Jansson, 1999, p. xvii).

In his chapter "The Monster and the Imaginary Mother: A Lacanian Reading of Frankenstein" (1992), David Collings puts forward a psychological reading of Victor Frankenstein's lifestyle choices and behaviour towards his creature. According to Collings, with Victor Frankenstein having understood his father as discouraging him from studying chemistry, "[he] tries to recreate his mother in science" (1992, p. 247), but he is unable to recreate her as a female body, and creates a male monster who resembles his own mirror-image instead (1992, p. 249). The ultimate consequence of this is the questionable father-son relationship the maker sees himself obliged to have with the Creature and his consequent abandonment.

#### 2.3. The Creature

The Creature is the other main character and Victor Frankenstein's creation. He is given a voice to explain to his maker what he calls "an account of the progress of my intellect" (Shelley, p. 98), leaving no room for speculations on his behaviour, assumptions on the nature of his being or (unconscious) unfair judgments of his person.

In his tale, the Creature details the evolution of his existence. Gradually, he discovers the sunlight, the moon, the fire, the heat, the cold, and his different feelings, senses, and needs (pp. 79-82). Without any guide or assistance, naivety leads him to situations in which he tries to establish contact with humans. Each attempt is not just unsuccessful but it leaves an indelible mark on him that he will never be recovered from and which will make him decide about his fate. The first incident takes place when he arrives at a village and enters a house: "I had hardly placed my foot within the door, before the children shrieked, and one of the women fainted. The whole village was roused; some fled, some attacked me, until, grievously bruised by stones and many other kinds of missile weapons, I escaped to the open country" (p. 82). The hovel he hides in is attached to a little house; through small chinks in the wall he can see the DeLacey family. One day, he finds in the woods a leather portmanteau with some books inside. These books shape his perspective towards his existence: Goethe's The Sorrows of Werther with which he learns about feelings-, Plutarch's Lives -with which he learns republican values- and Milton's Paradise Lost -with which he learns about good and evil- (Heller, 1992, p. 336). After months of preparation, the second incident occurs: the Creature finally decides to enter the cottage, but he ends up being rejected as speech fails to override his physical appearance. The third and last incident happens when he is in the forest and sees a young girl fleeing playfully from someone and falling into the rapid stream. The Creature rescues her, but when the child's carer sees him with the girl, he aims a gun and shoots at him. "This was, then, the reward of my benevolence!" (Shelley, p. 108).

Discouraged and condemned to isolation by the human race, he hides in the woods, where he suffers from cold and hunger. During this period, he starts to blame Victor Frankenstein for having created him "Cursed, cursed creator! Why did I live?" (p. 104) and wishes for revenge. He kills William in full knowledge of who he is. In murdering the young boy, he experiences contradictory feelings that, ultimately, result in transitory happiness: "Clapping my hands, I exclaimed: I too can create desolation" (p. 110). He claims that he used to be benevolent and good, but misery made him a fiend (p. 78).

The Creature's first conversation with his creator is only ephemerally successful since it eventually leads to more sorrow into his life. When Victor Frankenstein agrees to listen to him, the Creature asks for a female partner and promises to stay away from humans in the future: "Our lives will not be happy, but they will be harmless" (p. 112). He shows understanding towards Victor Frankenstein since he hates himself too, but he is also firm in his threat of becoming evil if his creator does not yield: "If you will comply with my conditions, I will leave them and you at peace, but if you refuse, I will glut the maw of death, until it be satiated with the blood of your remaining friends" (p. 77). Months later, when Victor Frankenstein destroys the female companion, the Creature adopts the position he has warned his maker about, even if it makes his life even more miserable, as he finds revenge the ultimate aim of his existence.

When Victor Frankenstein dies, the Creature mourns him in the ship's cabin and shows his true nature: he is well-meaning and regrets all the lives he has taken away, including his creator's. "Think you that the groans of Clerval were music to my ears?" (p. 167), he asks Walton. He begs forgiveness from the lifeless body of Victor Frankenstein but he admits he has more than once wished for his maker's death. The novel concludes with his tragic decision to end his life.

#### 2.3.1. Analysis of the Creature

As is the case with Victor Frankenstein, the reader may see the Creature as one of the protagonists or as the antagonist of the story.

On the one hand, according to Jansson, "The balance of sympathy at the novel's conclusion is firmly in favour of the Creature" (1999, p. xiv). When the Being explains how, abandoned as he was, he started to have his first experiences with his senses and emotions, and with nature, and how he even learned how to blink as if he was a baby, the reader's sympathy towards him is immediate.

When the Creature sees his own reflection, he understands the repulsion he inspires and he repudiates himself too, but he does not stop there. The Creature wants to achieve a more bearable life, and he starts trying to do it by learning how to communicate. His effort requires great patience, and, in spite of the difficulties, it is a process he decides to see through for the sake of the reward that will never arrive, in contrast to Safie's. Safie and the Creature are connected because they try to learn language as foreigners. The difference between them is that "Safie is welcomed in part because she has a story to tell

that establishes her identity [...]. The monster, however [...] has no parents or relations; only an unspeakable secret can explain him" (Collings, 1992, p. 255).

By reading Goethe, Milton and Plutarch, the Creature learns language, but he also learns that there is no one like him in the world. He learns about the myths of creation, yet feels unable to relate to them as he has had life bestowed on him through the process that is described in Victor Frankenstein's papers. What he learns from books cannot be applied to his reality, since his readings are contradicted by his experiences of rejection and which always lead to fatal conclusions. While his physical appearance continues to provoke terror, he is condemned to isolation (Heller, 1992, p. 337). The final result of this is that the Creature adopts the evil 'identity' everybody expects from him in his attempt to take revenge on his creator. The reason why he kills William and condemns Justine is because he defines himself in relation to Victor Frankenstein (Collings, 1992, p. 256). In sum, mirroring his creator's behaviour is the Creature's ultimate way of trying to cope with his existence.

On the other hand, Vega has a less favourable view of the Creature. She claims that the Being's physical appearance is such that the reader's empathy for him is only possible because s/he is as 'blind' as old DeLacey (2002, p. 212). Therefore, the reader cannot experience the horror the characters in the novel do. Moreover, Vega argues that even if the Creature was treated with kindness, the result would be the same. He would still be unable to find his place in the world: "Nunca el monstruo, ciborg o criatura podrán escapar a la verdad de sus orígenes y, consecuentemente, borrar por completo la sensación de que ellos son distintos, diversos, otros con relación a aquel que fue generado como uno y auténtico" (2002, p. 134).

Besides, the Creature's self-education is seen by Vega as questionable. She claims that the being's attempt to join in society is selfish, since he only takes his own feelings into account while he ignores those he provokes on people when he shows himself: "la sobrevaloración del lenguaje por parte de la Criatura obedece el propósito de la auto justificación. El monstruo esgrime la belleza de sus sentimientos como bandera que le autoriza a cruzar el umbral del amor ajeno" (2002, p. 212). In short, Vega defends that the Creature was created for a reason and he should obey his creator's decision of abandoning and banishing him, and that he should not feel entitled to anything in relation to his maker.

## 3. THE REPRESENTATION OF THE CREATURE IN BOOK COVERS

In the second part of my TFG, I analyse how the Creature is represented in a selection of book covers. In order to demarcate the scope of what would otherwise be an unmanageable project, I have, firstly, chosen the world's largest publishing houses that have a division working in Spain, namely, Penguin Random House and Hachette Book Group. Secondly, I have chosen to include Oxford University Press and Burlington Books, which are the chief providers of adapted texts for English language learners in schools and high-schools. These international publishers have a considerable number of independent Spanish imprints which have been selected according to their size, found in the official website of each company, as well as to the type of books they publish, in accordance with the interest of the present work. Finally, at a national level, I have chosen Spain's most important publishing house, Editorial Planeta. Unfortunately, due to the space limitation of the present work, I will only analyse three book covers per publishing house (unless there are less than three covers available), and the rest of the material that I have found but that I have not been able to show and analyse in the body of this project will be found in Appendix 2.

# 3.1. Penguin Random House

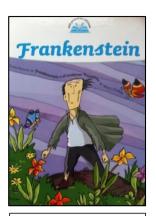
Penguin Random House (PRH) is the largest<sup>1</sup> publishing house in the world. Headquartered in New York City, this American company was established in 2013 as a result of the merge between Random House and Penguin Group. PRH became famous for being the first company selling low-priced paperback literature, and, at the present, according to its official website, it releases 70,000 digital and 15,000 printed books a year, and has more than 100,000 eBooks available worldwide (n.d., 2015).

Penguin Random House is home to nearly 275 independent publishing imprints in the world and it has a division in Barcelona called Penguin Random House Grupo Editorial, which publishes 1,700 titles a year, has more than 8,500 authors in its catalogue, and owns 40 imprints, each of them specialized in different areas and readerships. The imprints that have published editions of *Frankenstein* and that I have chosen to analyse are Alfaguara, Literatura Random House and Penguin Clásicos.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> I have been unable to find reliable sources that support this statement, and this information does not appear in Penguin Random House's official website. When searching for 'largest publishing houses' on the Internet, the first result is Penguin Random House, and this is repeated in different websites and blogs, among which Wikipedia can be found.

#### 3.1.1. Alfaguara

Alfaguara's considerable fame both in Spain and Latin America is due to the fact that it aims to challenge language barriers in Spanish language literary creation. Headquartered in Madrid, it publishes not just the best that is written in both places but also fundamental international authors who have been or continue to be influential beyond their geographical and linguistic provenance (n.d., 2015).



To begin with, the children's edition of *Frankenstein* shown in fig. 5 was published in March 2008 and belongs to a collection called Alfaguara Infantil Mis Primeros Cuentos, aimed

Fig. 5 Shelley, M. (2008). *Frankenstein*. Buenos Aires: Alfaguara





(as it is shown in fig. 6), its cover shows a friendly representation of the Creature, seemingly located in the very first passage of his narrative, when he discovers his senses and admires nature. I think this is probably the best possible choice for the cover of a children's book, mainly because it links the Creature to an innocent baby or child at that same stage in his life. Besides, the information on the back cover announces that this little book is a

compilation of experiences the being goes through in his learning process during his search for Victor Frankenstein. To sum up: a positive and instructional book.

for pre-schoolers<sup>2</sup>. Illustrated by Cristina Picazo, who specializes in books for children

This other edition of Frankenstein

(fig. 7) was released by Alfaguara in July 2008 and belongs to a collection called Serie Roja, aimed for young readers. I have been unable to find consistent information about the illustrator, so I cannot look at other samples of their work so as to come up with conclusions on the kind of relationship they establish with the

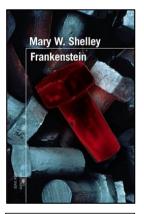


Fig. 7 Shelley, M. (2008). *Frankenstein.* Buenos Aires: Alfaguara

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> The collection and the target audience of the book covers analysed will always be provided as long as I have been able to find this information.

texts<sup>3</sup>. In any case, in my opinion, this is negative representation of the Creature. The bunch of screws seem to allude to the process of creation of the Being, yet the novel never mentions any screws at all. So the presence of the screws on this cover may be due to earlier representations that similarly included them, as mentioned in the introduction (pp. 2-3). The Creature, then, is portrayed as a creation rather than a living and feeling being in this cover, and, therefore, I consider it fails to represent the character.



Aires: Alfaguara

Finally, the edition shown in fig. 8 was published by Alfaguara in 2009 as part of a collection of 20 books offered with each copy of the monthly magazine *Revista*  $\tilde{N}$ , associated to the Argentinean newspaper *Clarín*. This cover contains an image taken from James Whales' film adaptation of *Frankenstein* (1931). At first sight, this representation seems to be close to the physical appearance of the Being as described in the novel – except for the crucial fact that he has screws on his body, most visibly on his head–. I believe that the choice of this particular image for this cover aimed at people buying *Revista*  $\tilde{N}$  to immediately recognize the novel via the famous film based on it. In other words, the purpose was entirely commercial. In short,

although this cover does not represent the textual Creature fairly, it does capture the culturally constructed and received image of the being closely.

# 3.1.2. Literatura Random House

Literatura Random House is an imprint which was previously called Mondadori, an independent Italian publishing house founded in 1907. Mondadori was very active during the First World War and became famous later on for its successful editions of detective novels. In 2001 it became a part of Penguin Random House Grupo Editorial and it was established in Barcelona, and in 2014 its name changed to Literatura Random House.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> Unfortunately, this has been the case for all the book covers whose illustrator I do not provide in my analyses. This is due to my inability to get hold of all the books physically, and have consulted them online.

This edition (fig. 9) of *Frankenstein* was published in 2018. The cover shows the image of a castle it has been impossible for me to identify with any of the places described in the novel. This led me to consider the possibility it might be related in some way to Villa Diodati, Lord Byron's house, where Mary Shelley, Percy B. Shelley and John Polidori were invited and where she came up with *Frankenstein*. Nevertheless, Villa Diodati (fig. 10) is far from being similar to the castle portrayed in this illustration. I would suggest the choice is connected to a castle's frequent associations with darkness, fear and terror. The upwards visual perspective gives an impression of imposing stateliness, probably with the purpose of magnifying the dangerous immensity of the place. In addition, the red sky and the

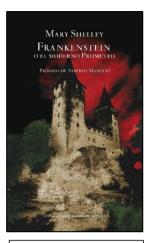


Fig. 9 Shelley, M. (2018). Frankenstein o el Moderno Prometeo. Barcelona: Literatura Random House



Fig. 10 Lord Byron's house, Villa Diodati in Cologny, Switzerland

# 3.1.3. Penguin Clásicos

perhaps even nightmarish tale. The question that arises is: is the novel supposed to be frightening? The contest in which Lord Byron defied his guests to participate in required them to come up with ghost stories (Shelley, 1999, p. 3), namely, frightening tales. In sum, this cover gives an impression of the Creature that harks back to historically earlier negative representations rather than connect with recent, more positive ones.

Set up in 2015, Penguin Clásicos is the Spanish imprint of Penguin Classics. Established in Barcelona, it inherits a considerable reputation from its parent company, which boasts decades of impeccable publishing work. Its aim is to produce affordable paperback classics "so everyone can enjoy universal literature"<sup>4</sup> (n.d., 2015).

dominant shadows and dark tones in this drawing, point forward the novel as a frightful,

Since 2015, Penguin Clásicos has just published one edition of *Frankenstein* (fig. 11). The cover depicts three stitches that metonymically evoke the Creature's body, not just as a physical and recognizable characteristic of him, but also, I would suggest, as an

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> This is my translation from the Spanish original "hace llegar a todo tipo de lectores los clásicos de la literatura universal". All subsequent translations from Spanish sources are my own.

emotional one, concerning the miseries he has to go through and the indelible mark they leave on him. Moreover, the fact that the background is white refutes the image of the Creature as having greenish skin that still dominates the popular imagination, and brings us closer to Shelley's description. Although I believe that this cover means progress towards a fairer representation for the character, I judge it neutral since it is still in the way.

# 3.2. Hachette Book Group

Hachette Book Group (HBG) is the world's second<sup>5</sup> most important publishing house and the leading trade publisher in the US. Founded in 1996 and headquartered in New York City, HBG

was purchased by two French companies, Hachette Livre and Lagardère Publishing, and began to specialize in educational books, thereby becoming the third largest trade and educational book publisher in the world. According to its official website, it produces more than 1.400 novels, 300 books for young readers and 700 audiobook titles a year (n.d., 2006).

Hachette Book Group is home to 25 imprints and it has a division in Barcelona called Hachette España. It is the leader of the educational sector in the country, and, over the years, it has moved from instructional books to other areas, as for instance literature and humanities, about which it published 2.600 titles in 2017. Its most famous imprints – and the ones to be analysed– are, from large to small according to their size: Anaya, Alianza Editorial, and Barcanova.

#### 3.2.1. Anaya

Founded in 1959 and established in Madrid, with 8.300 titles in stock and releasing 600 per year, Anaya is Hachette España's most famous imprint. It has always aimed for instructional readings and has recently innovated with projects oriented to teaching and learning methodologies but keeping the best of the traditional way of learning (n.d., 2006).

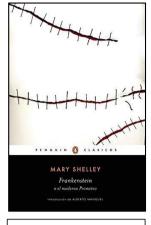


Fig. 11 Shelley, M. (2015). Frankenstein o el Moderno Prometeo. Madrid: Penguin Clásicos

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> As it was the case of Penguin Random House, I have been unable to find reliable sources that support this information. Nevertheless, taking into account that PRH is, presumably, the largest publishing house, all the subsequent companies analysed in the present work will appear in order according to their number of annual publications.

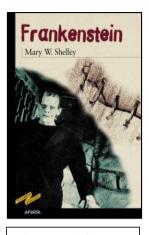
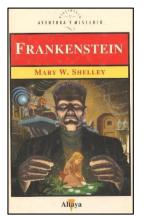


Fig. 12 Shelley, M. W. (2001). *Frankenstein*. Madrid: Anaya The edition shown in fig. 12 was published by Anaya in 2001 and belongs to a collection called Tus Libros Selección, aimed for Primaria students. As happened in fig. 7, the cover shows an image of James Whales' film *Frankenstein* (1931). Next to this image, there is another of a scar attached with staples. Unlike fig. 8, I do not consider the purpose of this image to be commercial. As this is an edition for children, I believe that, by providing such a portrait of the Being, the aim is for children to find it easier to give a face to the Creature, but this may be counterproductive since they might focus more on the 'ugliness' of his physical appearance rather than on the beautifulness of his

feelings. Besides, I believe that the part of the scar with staples is unnecessary, since the previous image already shows them and the novel never says that Victor Frankenstein uses staples to join the scars. In sum, I do not consider this cover to represent the Creature fairly.

This illustrated edition (fig. 13) of *Frankenstein* was published by Anaya in 2004 and it belongs to a collection called Tus Libros, aimed for young readers. The illustrator is Miguel Rodríguez Cerro, who, licensed in Fine Arts, also illustrates comics, graphic novels and vignettes. I do not consider this cover to be a fair representation of the Creature. The character is found in the open sea, with the glaciers in the background: a recognizable



landscape of the novel. However, he seems to be trapped in a cobweb I have found no coherent reason for. He looks something between evil and scared, and his physical

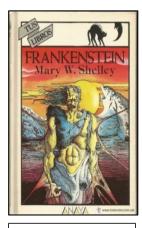


Fig. 13 Shelley, M. W. (2004). Frankenstein. Madrid: Anaya

appearance looks monstrous. I consider the image to denote negativity, and, therefore, not good for children, since this portrayal may keep them away from the reading's explanations about the humanity of this character.

Fig. 14 Shelley, M. W. (1993). *Frankenstein*. Barcelona: Altaya Interestingly, the same illustrator, Miguel Rodríguez Cerro, also drew a cover (fig. 14) in 1993 for Ediciones Altaya, which belongs to Editorial Planeta De Agostini since 2009 and which

specializes in collectible publishing works both in Spain and Latin American countries. This edition belongs to a collection called Biblioteca de Aventuras y Misterio, aimed for young readers. The cover shows the Creature with a human look, very different from his monstrous representation in fig 13. The Being is shown watching closely the image of a girl, the protagonist of the novel's third incident. She seems to be playing with the flowers that float in the lake. Behind the Being, there is an image of Victor Frankenstein creating him. I consider this cover adequate, despite the fact that the monster's gaze is open to several interpretations, since it shows essential elements of the novel: the creation process, the Being himself, and the girl, who represents, from my point of view, the monster's innocence and the misfortunes he has to deal with. In relation to fig. 13, I would suggest that this edition was inspired in James Whales' 1931 film adaptation of the novel, not just because of how the Creature is represented, but also because of the image of the girl in the lake, who is not mentioned to be playing with flowers in the novel, but she is shown to be doing so in the film, as it will be explained in fig. 16. Therefore, I believe the illustrator has provided two representations of the Creature, one according to how the reader may imagine the Creature (fig. 13), and the other according the popular vision of him (fig. 14), probably because of the different publisher's demands.

#### 3.2.2. Alianza Editorial

The second most popular imprint is Alianza Editorial. It was created in 1966 and headquartered in Madrid. It has 4.000 titles in its catalogue and releases 250 works a year. It is famous because of its editions of the most famous authors of Spanish and Hispanic

American literature, but also international authors such as like Salinger, Golding, Kafka, Brecht, Schopenhauer or Freud (n.d., 2006).

The edition shown in fig. 15 was published by Alianza Editorial in 1994. The cover shows some metal, old machine. Although the image can be understood as neutral since it connotes the process of the making of the Being, I would suggest it can also be understood negatively since it reduces this character to a mere metal creation, and, then, his humanity is lost. In short, I believe this covers fails to represent both the Creature and/or the novel, which is not just about the creation of the Being.

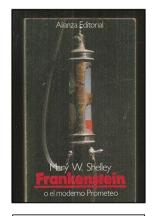


Fig. 15 Shelley, M. W. (1994). *Frankenstein o el Moderno Prometeo*. Madrid: Alianza



Fig. 16 Shelley, M. W. (2004). Frankenstein o el Moderno Prometeo. Madrid: Alianza

This other edition (fig. 16) of the novel was published by Alianza Editorial in 2004. The cover is an image of James Whales' 1931 film adaptation of *Frankenstein*. This particular passage of the film shows the Creature with a little girl who teaches him how to make daisies float in the lake. The being thinks that the child would float as well if she was in the water, so, naively, he decides to throw her to the water, but she drowns. This is different from what happens in the book: he saves her from drowning and the child's carer thinks the Creature is hurting her so he aims a gun and shoots him, completing the third incident the Being has with humans. In my opinion, this cover is a fair one, since this image represents clearly the true nature of the Creature: innocent, well-meant, and looking forward to love and to be loved. Moreover, as it has been pointed

out before, the physical appearance of the Being is close to Shelley's description, except for the fact that he has screws.

Fig. 17 shows Alianza Editorial's newest edition of the novel, published in 2018 on the occasion of the bicentennial. The image on this cover shows a face covered by beads. On the one hand, not showing the face of the Creature is, from my point of view, positive, since the reader will not focused on the 'ugliness' of the Being. However, this image can be confusing because it reminds more of the monster of the Mummy. This is bad, not only for confusing one being with the other, but also because the Mummy is a supernatural being related to the paranormal, while the Creature is related to the ambition of humans for the creation of the majestic and the colossal. It is for this reason that I do not believe this cover represents the Creature fairly.

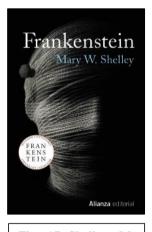


Fig. 17 Shelley, M. W. (2018). *Frankenstein*. Madrid: Alianza

#### 3.2.3. Barcanova

Barcanova was created in 1980 and it is the imprint of reference when it comes to Catalan language educational content. Headquartered in Barcelona, it has 2.000 titles in its catalogue and a capacity of 200 books per year. It comprises from the earliest ages to adult instruction, and its main aim is to encourage reading and creation, especially in children (n.d., 2006).

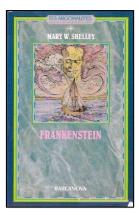


Fig. 18 Shelley, M. W. (1992). *Frankenstein*. Barcelona: Barcanova This edition (fig. 18) of *Frankenstein* was published by Barcanova in 1992. It belongs to a collection called Els Argonautes, aimed for children. The illustration in the cover consists of a small boat in the middle of the open sea from which emerges a grey smoke between which the face of the Creature can be seen. That his head is in the sky connotes certain evilness on the part of this character. His position up there can be interpreted as the Being always observing his maker, chasing him, and it also implies a latter confrontation with him. I do not consider this cover to represent the Creature fairly as it provides a negative, untrue image of this character.

The edition shown in fig. 19 was published by Barcanova in 2009 and it belongs to a collection called Antaviana Nova which comprises classics aimed for young readers. Its cover shows an image of a jar which contains what looks like brains. I do not consider that this cover represents the Creature fairly because it reduces the character to the unpleasantness of this image, meaning, the superficial 'ugliness' of his physical appearance. Such a portrait of the Being can be shocking for children since it separates them from their own reading and understanding of the Creature as a being that suffers and dies from sadness and loneliness.



Fig. 19 Shelley, M. W. (2009). *Frankenstein*. Barcelona: Barcanova



Fig. 20 Shelley, M. W. (2018). *Frankenstein.* Barcelona: Barcanova

Finally, this edition (fig. 20) of

*Frankenstein* was published in 2015 by Barcanova, and belongs to a collection called Clàssics a Mida, which consists of classic literature adapted for teenagers. However, the image shows the Creature in the top of a mountain, with frozen hills in the background. He is on his back, in a posture, I would suggest, that is one of rage, with his arms raised and his clothes and hair moved by the blizzard. I believe this cover represents the Creature fairly since it shows him in one of his most natural moments: surrounded by loneliness, consumed by fatigue, anger and frustration, and having been abandoned by the joy and warmth of his heart, this image shows the Being desperate after having seen his female mate being destroyed.

# 3.3. Burlington Books

Burlington Books was established in Greece in 1986 and it is "Europe's most respected publisher of English language teaching materials" (n.d.). With two million students learning from its titles, it was the first publisher specialized in English textbooks and other instructional material for the educational world (n.d.).

It was established in Barcelona in 1994 as Burlington Books Spain. It is Spain's market leader as it is the chief provider for ESO and Bachillerato English language content. Plus, it produces supplementary materials as readings, and grammar and summer books (n.d.).

To begin with, the edition in fig. 21 was published by Burlington Books in 1997 and it belongs to a collection called International Series, which consists of adapted classics for children, and it has reading comprehension activities at the end of the book. In any case, it shows both Victor Frankenstein and the Creature in the maker's laboratory where he is reacting to his finished creation: he looks scared and hesitant, hiding his face almost instinctively, desperate for protection. The Creature lies on a table, opening his eyes for the first time. This cover portrays a specific passage of the novel which occurs exactly as it is illustrated in this image. I believe the Creature's physical representation seems



Fig. 21 Shelley, M. (1997). *Frankenstein*. Barcelona: Burlington Books

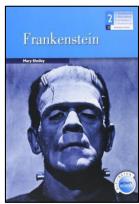


Fig. 22 Shelley, M. (2013). *Frankenstein*. Barcelona: Burlington Books

close to Shelley's description and, there is

no indication of negativity or evilness in the way this character is portrayed. Nonetheless, I do not consider that that is enough for the cover to be judged positive, so I believe that it is neutral.

This other edition (fig. 22) was published by Burlington Books in 2013, and belongs to a collection called Activity Readers, which consists of adapted classics for Bachillerato students with a CD for listening comprehension exercises and reading comprehension activities at the end of the book. The cover shows the face of the Creature played by Boris Karloff in James

Whales' film adaptation of Frankenstein (1931). Unlike figs. 8 and 12, this image shows

the Creature, I would suggest, broken-hearted and desolated. It expresses the Being's exhaustion and his understanding that he is condemned to isolation for life. In this case, I believe that the choice of this image is for teenagers to know about the famous film that was inspired in this book, maybe for a class exercise. I consider that this cover represents the Creature fairly –except for the screws in his head the novel mentions nothing about–, because I consider this image makes readers to be more predisposed to understand the Creature's emotions rather than being focused on his physical appearance.

# 3.4. Oxford University Press

The first book printed in Oxford is dated in 1478 (n.d.). Nevertheless, Oxford wasn't a formal press until 1668, when it was established as the Oxford University Press (OUP) we are familiar with nowadays (n.d.). OUP publishes more than 6.000 titles a year, including dictionaries, teaching materials, children's books, journals, scholarly monographs, printed music, etc., and sell more than 110 million units each year (n.d.).

OUP was established in Barcelona in the year 1991 and it aims to "improve the Spanish educational system by establishing a conversation with both teachers and students and understanding their needs" (n.d.). Its most famous imprint is Oxford Educación, which produces educational material for both ESO and Bachillerato (n.d.).

This edition (fig. 23) of Frankenstein was published by Oxford University Press España in 2000, and it belongs to a collection called Oxford Bookworms Library, which is written for secondary school students and has seven different reading levels, from A1 to C1 (n.d.). The cover shows an evil-faced, human-like Creature fleeing from a group of people who watch how he carries what looks like Elizabeth's dead body. This passage never happens in the novel: the Creature kills Elizabeth during the night of her wedding with Victor Frankenstein while the latter is outside the room. That the Being is watched while carrying Elizabeth's body triggers the reader's understanding of the novel as a compilation of his crimes and not as an account of his misfortunes.

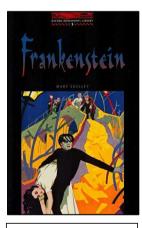


Fig. 23 Shelley, M. (2000). *Frankenstein.* Barcelona: Oxford University Press

I believe this cover leads to wrong conclusions on both the Creature's nature and intentions, and, therefore, fails to represent him outside the set of evil deeds he is assumed to carry out in the popular imagination.

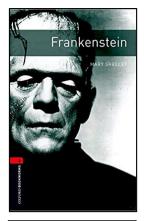


Fig. 24 Shelley, M. (2007). *Frankenstein.* Barcelona: Oxford University Press

Fig. 24 shows an edition published by Oxford University Press in 2007, which belongs to the collection Oxford Bookworms Library, mentioned before (fig. 23). The cover shows another image of Boris Karloff's character in James Whales' film adaptation of *Frankenstein* (1931). This is one of the most famous pictures of the Creature: showing his screws as it is characteristic in this representation, he has his eyes closed and his face expresses how tired and upset he is. As it was the case in fig. 22, I believe the choice of this image for this cover is due to the fact that this edition is for Bachillerato students who will focus on the Creature's feelings rather than on his physical appearance. Besides, it can as well be the case that the students need to know about this famous

film for a class exercise, as mentioned earlier (fig. 22). In short, I consider this cover to be very self-explanatory of the Creature's feelings, and I believe it has positive effects on the readers' conception of the book since it predisposes them to be more understandable of the character.

Finally, this edition (fig. 25) of Frankenstein was published by Oxford University Press in 2017, and it belongs to a collection called Oxford Children's Classics, which consists of adapted classics for teenagers which also include reviews. recommendations, quizzes, and other materials (n.d.). However, this comic-like image shows the clear confrontation between the characters: up in the mountain, the Creature of two disproportionate size, and below, with the hair moved by the wind, Victor Frankenstein, watching his creation. The image is quite modern and colourful, and the fact that it looks like a vignette makes it much more attractive for children. The sentence "There's a monster on the loose" dramatizes the plot, as it common in

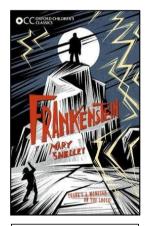


Fig. 25 Shelley, M. (2017). *Frankenstein*. Barcelona: Oxford University Press

comics. In short, I believe that this cover does not only represent the Creature, but also the novel itself, because it is the first one that has been analysed that takes into account the confrontation of these two characters, and without any need to put a face to them.

# 3.5. Editorial Planeta

Editorial Planeta was founded in 1945 and headquartered in Barcelona. According to its official website, "it is the most prestigious publisher with the most influence in the Spanish-speaking world" (n.d.). It also convenes every year the Premio Planeta, the most outstanding of Spanish contests, along with others of great literary relevance (n.d.).

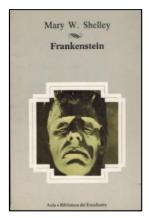


Fig. 26 Shelley, M. (1984). *Frankenstein*. Barcelona: Planeta Fig. 26 shows the first edition of *Frankenstein* that Editorial Planeta published in 1984, and belongs to a collection called Aula Biblioteca del Estudiante, which consists of copies of universal literature classics aimed for high-school students. The cover of this early edition is quite simple and light coloured, with a white frame for the image of Boris Karloff's character in James Whales' film adaptation of *Frankenstein* (1931). The Creature is seen from the front, and his expression is the same as in fig. 22 and 24, where the exhaustion and sadness the being radiates in this image has been pointed out. As it was the case in the examples yet mentioned, I believe the choice of this cover is positive since it anticipates the

Creature's suffering to the reader, who will be more predisposed to read his tale and understand his feelings after seeing this cover.

Finally, this other edition (fig. 27) of *Frankenstein* was published by Editorial Planeta in 2012. It belongs to a collection I have been unable to identify, but the typographical font has led me to believe that it is aimed for children since it reminds of a very famous children's TV show of the 1990s called *Goosebumps* (fig. 28), which consisted in a collection of horror stories based on the books of Robert Lawrence Stine, a horror American writer. I believe that this cover is charming for young readers since it



Fig. 28 Letter typography used for the TV show Goosebumps (1995) suggests that the novel is a scary tale, which it is, as it has been explained in fig. 9. I also consider that by showing

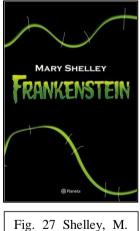


Fig. 27 Shelley, M. (2012). *Frankenstein*. Barcelona: Planeta

the Creature's scars in the cover, it connotes not just his physical appearance, but also his misfortunes, but, as it was the case in fig. 11, I consider this cover is a neutral one because it connotes progress but it is still in the way.

# 4. FURTHER ANALYSIS ON THE BOOK COVERS

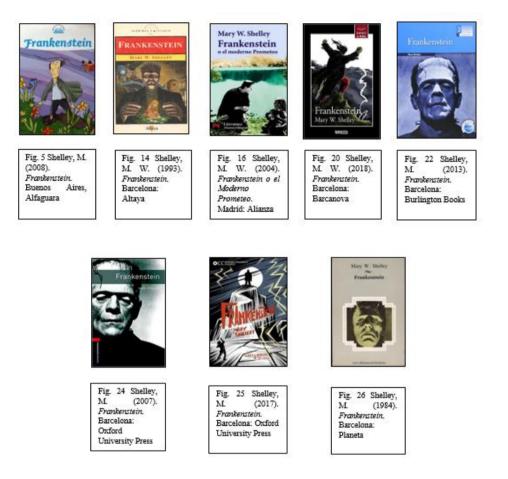
This last part of my TFG aims to provide three different classifications for the selection of book covers which have been analysed in order to be able to establish connections between the first and the second part of the present work so as to come up with conclusions.

First of all, the chief classification of these covers consists on, according to the main aim of this TFG, how fair is the image they provide of the Creature. Taking into account the results of the analyses in the previous section, the book covers which show a negative or unfair image of the Being are nine:



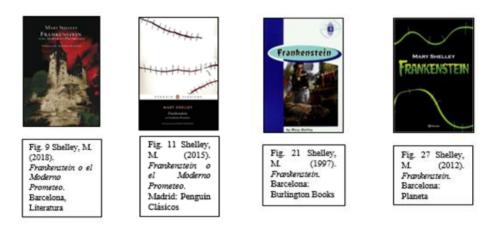
All these covers contribute to the 'monstrous' idea of the Creature that rule the popular vision of him. This happens, not just by portraying the Being as an actual monster (figs. 13 and 17), but also by reducing him to a piece of metal (figs. 7 and 15) or to the unpleasantness of his physical appearance (fig. 19), by showing him with an evil look (figs. 8 and 12), by suggesting cruelty and bad intentions (fig. 18), and by depicting him as a murderer (fig. 23).

The book covers which show a positive or fair representation of the Creature are eight:

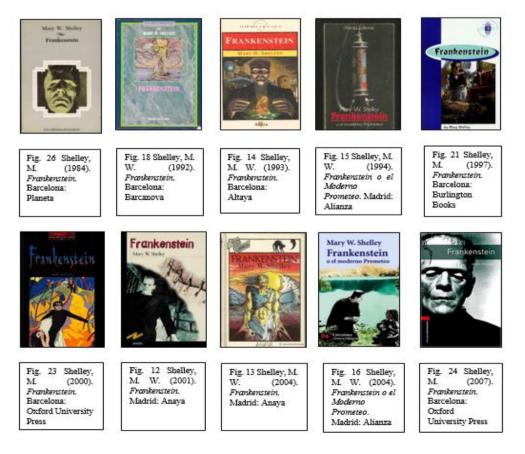


It should be noted that, of these eight covers, three of them are almost the same image (figs. 22, 24 and 26), which consist of the desolated face of the Creature, embodied by Boris Karloff in James Whales' film adaptation *Frankenstein* (1931). Also, of the remaining five covers, just two of them (figs. 20 and 25) do not show the Being according to the popular image of the character, driven by the representation of the Creature in the famous film, since they show the Being on his back (fig. 20), and the Creature behind the shadows (fig. 25), so there is not possible way his face can be seen and judged according to whether he is similar or looks like Boris Karloff's character, but most probably, he does, as in the rest of the covers.

The remaining images, as the analyses show, are considered to be neutral, except for fig. 9 (see below), which represents negatively not the Creature but the whole novel, as it has been pointed out before:



Another classification of the book covers and according to the second aim of the present work is by their publication date, in order to study the veracity of the hypothesis stated in the introduction by which the negative representation of the Creature improves over the years. Then:



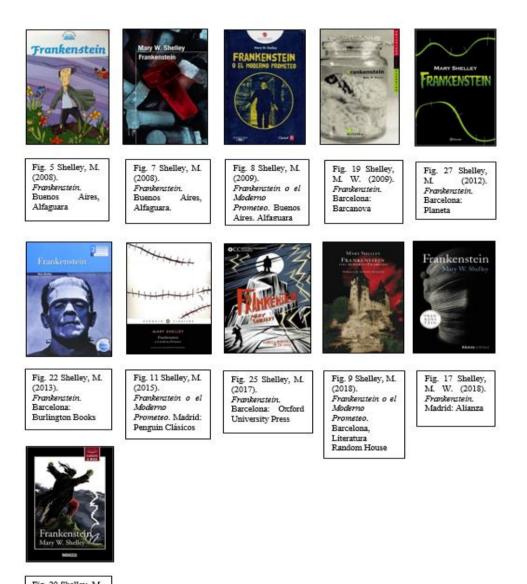


Fig. 20 Shelley, M. W. (2018). Frankenstein. Barcelona: Barcanova

Unfortunately, from a general point of view of the selected book covers, there is no significant evidence that the representation of the Creature improves over the years. The covers that provide a negative image of the Creature and the ones that represent this character in a positive way are very well distributed in the timeline that the present work has covered, and it is hardly possible to establish a pattern, for example about when have negative images of the Being been more propitious.

It should be noted that, from my point of view, it is a good sign that the first edition analysed (fig. 26), published by Planeta and dated in 1984, shows the face of the Creature, which, as it has been already indicated above, is beneficial for the representation of the character. However, the next edition (fig. 18), published by Barcanova and dated in 1992, shows the Being stalking Victor Frankenstein, with which the positive points that were won with the previous publication are lost.

The decision of Alianza to publish such an edition of *Frankenstein* in 1994 (fig. 15), reducing the Creature to a mere creation, in the same way that Alfaguara did in 2008 (fig. 7) or Barcanova in 2009 (fig. 19), breaks with the succession of portraits of the Creature in which he is seen, which are not always successful, as it has been already pointed out, but which, when they are, show great progress. The worst of these three mentioned images, I would suggest, is the most recent one (fig. 19), since the unpleasantness of the image of the brains will inevitably cause the reader to attribute it, in some way, to the Creature as well.

Lastly, a third possible classification of the book covers is according to the target audience they are aimed at. There are four types of readers according to the collections they belong to: children and/or primary-school students, teenagers and/or secondary-school students, young readers<sup>6</sup> and adults<sup>7</sup>.

To begin with, there are five editions for children and/or primary-school students:



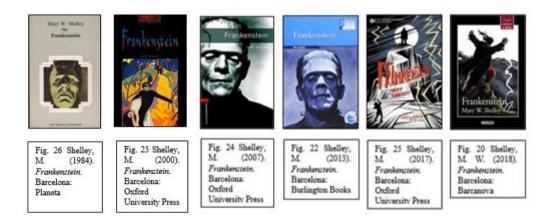
As it has been pointed out before, only one of these images (fig. 5) provides a positive representation of the Creature. If analysed chronologically, it does not seem that these adapted novels for children worsen the image of the Being over the years: the first cover (fig. 18) is the one which provides the most damaging representation of the character,

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup> Unfortunately, this group's book covers' collection just mentioned that they were aimed at 'young readers', not specifying if they were primary or secondary-school students. Therefore, I have analysed this group as a mix between children and teenagers.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup> I have been unable to find consistent information on most of this group's book cover's collection, and, therefore, on their target audience, but, according to their illustrations, it seems to me that they can be aimed at adults since there is no sign in the illustrations that they are aimed at students or children.

and, then, it follows one (fig. 21)that has been judged as neutral according to the previously performed analyses. The cover published by Anaya in 2001 (fig. 12) is only a small step back in where later on (figs. 5 and 27) there is an improvement that makes the difference compared to the previous illustrations. In this case, the premise that the selected covers improve over time, at least referring to books aimed at children, is proved right.

Secondy, there are six book covers for teenagers and/or ESO and Bachillerato students:



Chronologically, this is a positive sequence of book covers since just one of them (fig. 23) represent the Creature negatively. I would suggest that the explanation for the choice of this book cover published by Oxford University Press in 2000 may be that it is more charming for teenagers to read a novel which seems to be about murder than other texts. However, that is not what the novel is about and, in my opinion, it is no excuse to make a character look like what he is not. Nevertheless, it seems that OUP corrects this in 2007 (fig. 24), by showing the expressive face of the Being, and later on, in 2017 (fig. 25), by showing his loneliness. In this case, the hypothesis is proved to be right again.

The young readers' group counts with four book covers:



According to their publishing dates, this sequence shows the impoverishment of the image of the Creature over the years. It should be noted that the lack of specification of the collection to which these covers belong, and, consequently, of their target audience, destabilizes this analysis since these books may be aimed at one of the groups that have already been analysed, which means that the positive outcome that has been concluded would change, or the result of the present analysis would be another. In any case, as it has been already mentioned, just one of these covers (fig. 14) provide a fair representation of the Creature, and the others contribute to the 'monstrous' conception of him in the popular image (fig. 13), or reduces him to a mere unpleasant, metal creation (figs. 7 and 19).

Finally, there are six book covers for adults:



As it has been already pointed out before, just one of this book covers provide a positive image of the Creature (fig. 16). This can be judged as a failed sequence regarding the improvement of the image of the Being over the years. Chronologically, the book cover in fig. 15, published by Alianza and dated in 1994, shows a metal, old machine which connotes the process of the making of the Creature. It is such a great progress that Alianza published the following image (fig. 16) ten years later, which shows the Being in one of his most moving moments. However, it is striking that the same company publishes an edition (fig. 17) that covers the Being's face, making it unrecognizable and confusing since it reminds more of the Mummy. On the other hand, the next image's (fig. 8, dated in 2009) book cover's purpose is entirely commercial, as it has already been pointed out, and fig. 11, dated in 2015, shows progress towards a fairer representation of the character, but is still not powerful enough to be considered a positive image of the Being. In any case, fig. 9 and 17 end with this glimmer of hope in 2018.

## **5. CONCLUSIONS**

This TFG has defended Mary Shelley's Creature from his misrepresentation in a selection of book covers, one of the many areas where this character is distorted, something that triggers indelible presumptions in the popular image of this being that last for decades. As it has already been demonstrated in the first section of this work, the character is an innocent, well-intentioned, kind and affectionate being who feels lacking of love. Sadly, this is not the image of him that is usually shown: according to the analyses in the second part of this project, the Creature is frequently portrayed as a violent, cruel, merciless, murderous and, above all, inhuman being. However, these are not the only findings of this work since other illuminating discoveries have been made.

In general, the results of the analyses of the book covers have fulfilled the expectations of this work. The second part of this TFG has shown that the number of covers that misrepresent the Creature is almost the same as the ones which provide a positive image of him (nine and eight, respectively), which means great advance but also a long way to go until there are more book covers that represent the Creature fairly than the ones which do not do so. Although the results of the classification by publishing date in the third section have shown that there is no significant evidence of improvement over the years, that is not true of the classification by readership, and this shows progress towards a fairer representation of the Creature.

As regards other characters as Robert Walton or Victor Frankenstein, it should be noted that they are misrepresented too. On the one hand, Robert Walton does not appear in any of the book covers. As it has been explained, he is an essential character in the interpretation of the novel: he exonerates Victor Frankenstein and illuminates the reader with the two narrations' consequences. That Walton is not included in the book covers is, probably, due to he is a secondary character, but, in my opinion, he could have been portrayed in illustrations like fig. 14, which shows a montage of images of different moments of the novel. On the other hand, although the novel has Victor Frankenstein's surname in its title, he barely appears in the book covers. The editions in which he is represented are just three (figs. 14, 21, and 25). In fig. 14, he appears simply creating the Being. In fig. 21 and fig. 25, he is shown scared of his creation, instinctively trying to protect himself with his arm; in these cases, Victor Frankenstein seems to appear in the covers just to emphasise how terrifying the Creature is. Moreover, although in analysing Victor Frankenstein and the Creature in the first section of this work it was provided a number of reasons both for and against these characters, it seems that when it comes to the representation of the Being, covers represent him favourably and unfavourably, but that is not the case for Victor Frankenstein, who is represented neutrally or positively. In sum, it seems that all characters in *Frankenstein* are misrepresented –or not represented at all– in book covers.

Finally, an essential finding in this project has been the importance of James Whales' film adaptation Frankenstein (1931). Unfortunately, this is an area that my TFG has not covered due to space problems, but it would have been very interesting to explore it along with other film adaptations to see how the Creature has evolved over the years, especially since Boris Karloff's disguise of him seems to be the origin of what have been hundreds of representations of the Being. Looking at the book covers, just one (fig. 13) out of the fourteen which show an image of the character do not follow his physical pattern -and, in fact, fig. 13 could be an exception since, as it has already been pointed out, it might be the result of the publisher's demands to the illustrator-. My conclusion on this matter is that it will be very difficult to change this image of the Creature which has been so deeply implanted in the popular vision of him. An evidence of this is that the oldest edition analysed (fig. 26) shows Boris Karloff's portrait, probably aimed at people buying the novel on which the famous film was based on. Then, I strongly believe that, instead of changing this image, publishers should work on showing the Creature's virtues, independently of what he looks like, which, precisely, it is *Frankenstein*'s main moral message.

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## **APPENDIX 1: ONLINE SOURCES FOR BOOK COVER ILLUSTRATIONS**



Fig. 4 Iglesias, C. and Lagarto, R. (2018) *Mary Shelley: La muerte del monstruo*. Madrid: Diábolo Ediciones

Retrieved from https://bit.ly/2XoRv46

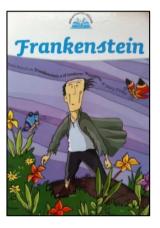


Fig. 5 Shelley, M. (2008). *Frankenstein*. Buenos Aires: Alfaguara

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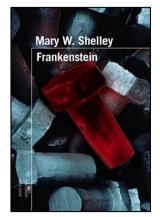
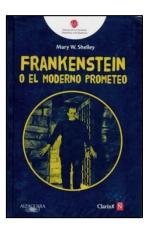


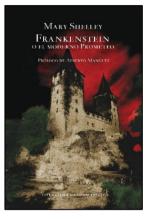
Fig. 6 Blanch, T. (2018). *No Despertis Vells Fantasmes!* Barcelona: Animadellibres

Retrieved from https://bit.ly/2JWIpbM

Fig. 7 Shelley, M. (2008). *Frankenstein*. Buenos Aires: Alfaguara.

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0 MARY SHELLEY

Fig. 8 Shelley, M. (2009). *Frankenstein o el Moderno Prometeo*. Buenos Aires: Alfaguara

Retrieved from <a href="https://bit.ly/2JTpVZF">https://bit.ly/2JTpVZF</a>

Fig. 9 Shelley, M. (2018). *Frankenstein o el Moderno Prometeo*. Barcelona: Literatura Random House

Retrieved from <a href="https://bit.ly/2XnnC4c">https://bit.ly/2XnnC4c</a>

Fig. 11 Shelley, M. (2015). Frankenstein o el Moderno Prometeo. Madrid: Penguin Clásicos

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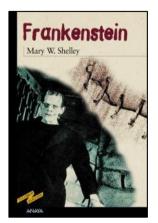
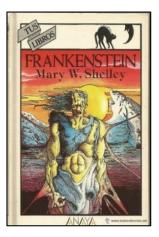
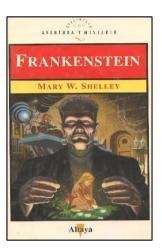


Fig. 12 Shelley, M. W. (2001). *Frankenstein*. Madrid: Anaya Retrieved from <u>https://bit.ly/2HSpHzN</u>





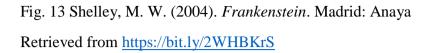
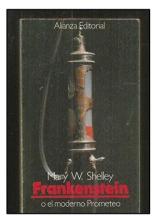


Fig. 14 Shelley, M. W. (1993). Frankenstein. Barcelona: Altaya

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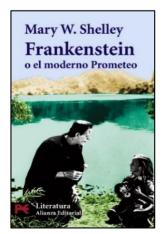
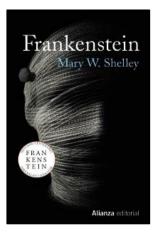


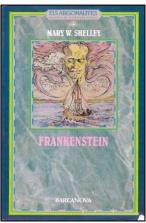
Fig. 15 Shelley, M. W. (1994). Frankenstein o el Moderno Prometeo. Madrid: Alianza

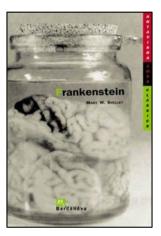
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Fig. 16 Shelley, M. W. (2004). Frankenstein o el Moderno Prometeo. Madrid: Alianza

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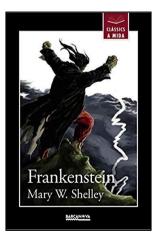


Fig. 17 Shelley, M. W. (2018). *Frankenstein*. Madrid: Alianza Retrieved from <u>https://bit.ly/2WmVIc8</u>

Fig. 18 Shelley, M. W. (1992). Frankenstein. Barcelona: Barcanova

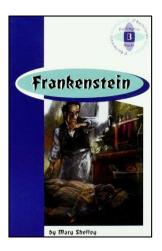
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Fig. 19 Shelley, M. W. (2009). *Frankenstein*. Barcelona: Barcanova

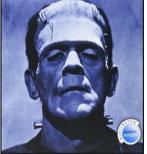
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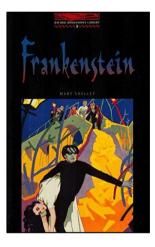
Fig. 20 Shelley, M. W. (2018). *Frankenstein*. Barcelona: Barcanova

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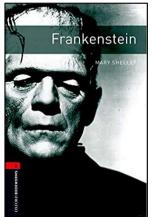


Fig. 21 Shelley, M. (1997). *Frankenstein*. Barcelona: Burlington Books

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Fig. 22 Shelley, M. (2013). *Frankenstein*. Barcelona: Burlington Books

Retrieved from https://bit.ly/3191vAW

Fig. 23 Shelley, M. (2000). *Frankenstein*. Barcelona: Oxford University Press

Retrieved from <u>https://bit.ly/2HUZRv7</u>

Fig. 24 Shelley, M. (2007). *Frankenstein*. Barcelona: Oxford University Press

Retrieved from https://amzn.to/2wAn5A1

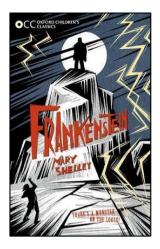


Fig. 25 Shelley, M. (2017). *Frankenstein*. Barcelona: Oxford University Press

Retrieved from <u>https://amzn.to/2W8XUz2</u>

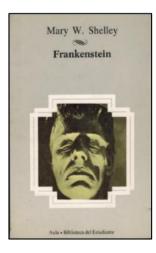


Fig. 26 Shelley, M. (1984). *Frankenstein*. Barcelona: Planeta Retrieved from <u>https://bit.ly/2Wb1hp5</u>

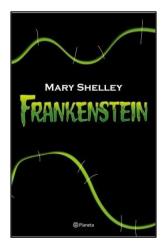
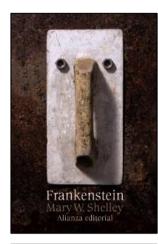
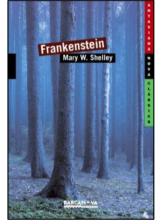
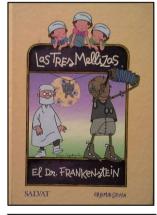


Fig. 27 Shelley, M. (2012). *Frankenstein*. Barcelona: Planeta Retrieved from <u>https://bit.ly/2HS016m</u>

## APPENDIX 2: FURTHER EXAMPLES OF BOOK COVER ILLUSTRATIONS FOR *FRANKENSTEIN*









Shelley, M. W. (2011). *Frankenstein*. Madrid: Alianza Editorial

Retrieved from <a href="https://bit.ly/2wAECbh">https://bit.ly/2wAECbh</a>

Shelley, M. W. (2012). *Frankenstein*. Barcelona: Barcanova Retrieved from <u>https://bit.ly/2HV3gtF</u>

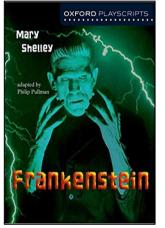
Orteu, F., Antón, G, and Martí, G. (2000). *Las Tres Mellizas: El Dr. Frankenstein.* Barcelona: Salvat

Retrieved from <a href="https://bit.ly/2Woe5ND">https://bit.ly/2Woe5ND</a>

Shelley, M. W. (2007). *Frankenstein o El moderno Prometeo*. Madrid: Cátedra

Retrieved from <a href="https://bit.ly/2WKRr1p">https://bit.ly/2WKRr1p</a>







Mary Shelley Frankenstein 1818 text Oxford World's classics



Shelley, M. (2011). *Frankenstein*. Barcelona: Oxford University Press

Retrieved from https://amzn.to/2ESpOcu

Shelley, M. (2011). *Frankenstein*. Barcelona: Oxford University Press

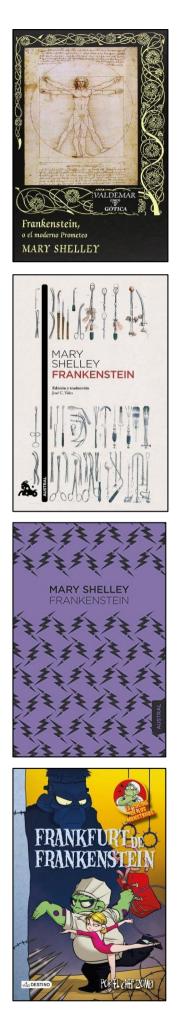
Retrieved from <a href="https://amzn.to/2QLv9XO">https://amzn.to/2QLv9XO</a>

Shelley, M. (2011). *Frankenstein*. Barcelona: Oxford University Press

Retrieved from https://bit.ly/2wFgbta

Shelley, M. (2008). *Frankenstein*. Barcelona: Oxford University Press

Retrieved from https://bit.ly/2HUzG7J



Shelley, M. W. (2013). *Frankenstein o El moderno Prometeo*. Madrid: Valdemar

Retrieved from https://bit.ly/2MuJ2eF

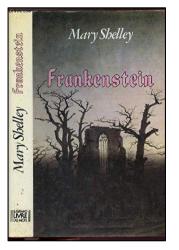
Shelley, M. W. (2006). *Frankenstein*. Madrid: Cátedra Retrieved from <u>https://bit.ly/2WK4ekM</u>

Shelley, M. W. (2006). *Frankenstein*. Barcelona: Austral Retrieved from <u>https://bit.ly/2Xx4BMU</u>

Shelley, M. W. (2017). *Frankfurt de Frankenstein*. Barcelona: Editorial Planeta

Retrieved from https://bit.ly/2XsSRuy









Shelley, M. (2014). *El Misterio de Frankenstein*. Barcelona: Editorial Planeta

Retrieved from https://bit.ly/2MtAvIP

Shelley, M. (1988). *Frankenstein*. Barcelona: Blackie Books Retrieved from <u>https://bit.ly/2Z77dBe</u>

Shelley, M. (2013). *Frankenstein*. Madrid: Nórdica Libros Retrieved from <u>https://bit.ly/2Z7OIMZ</u>

Shelley, M. (2018). *Frankenstein*. Madrid: Nórdica Libros Retrieved from <u>https://bit.ly/2EQNz4O</u>