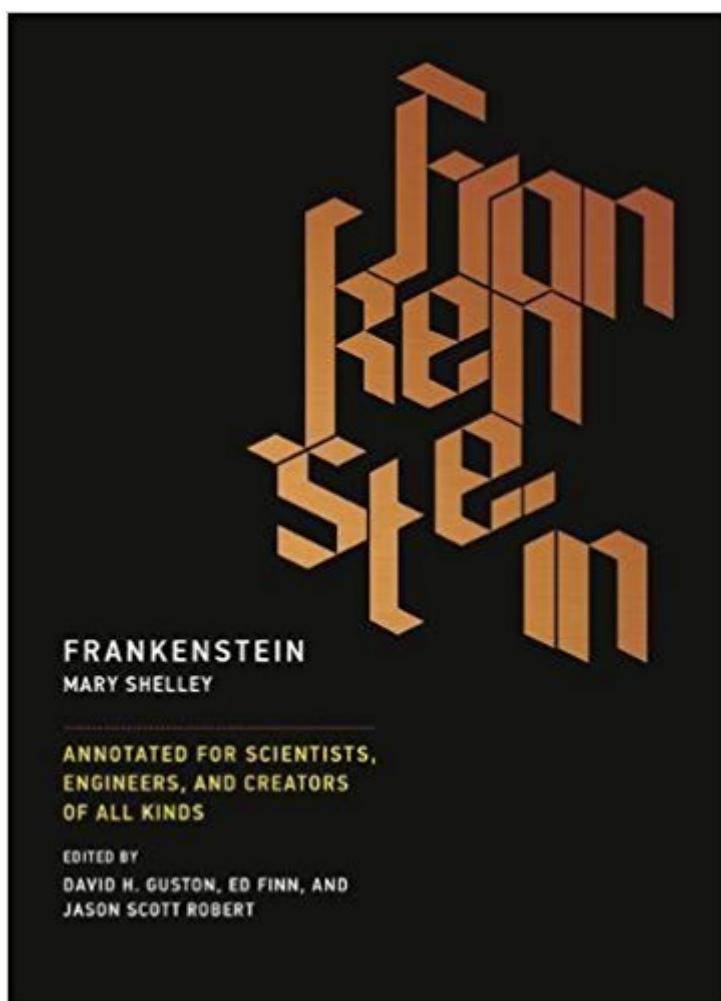


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Frankenstein: Annotated For Scientists, Engineers, And Creators Of All Kinds (MIT Press)



Synopsis

Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* has endured in the popular imagination for two hundred years. Begun as a ghost story by an intellectually and socially precocious eighteen-year-old author during a cold and rainy summer on the shores of Lake Geneva, the dramatic tale of Victor Frankenstein and his stitched-together creature can be read as the ultimate parable of scientific hubris. Victor, "the modern Prometheus," tried to do what he perhaps should have left to Nature: create life. Although the novel is most often discussed in literary-historical terms -- as a seminal example of romanticism or as a groundbreaking early work of science fiction -- Mary Shelley was keenly aware of contemporary scientific developments and incorporated them into her story. In our era of synthetic biology, artificial intelligence, robotics, and climate engineering, this edition of *Frankenstein* will resonate forcefully for readers with a background or interest in science and engineering, and anyone intrigued by the fundamental questions of creativity and responsibility. This edition of *Frankenstein* pairs the original 1818 version of the manuscript -- meticulously line-edited and amended by Charles E. Robinson, one of the world's preeminent authorities on the text -- with annotations and essays by leading scholars exploring the social and ethical aspects of scientific creativity raised by this remarkable story. The result is a unique and accessible edition of one of the most thought-provoking and influential novels ever written. Essays by Elizabeth Bear, Cory Doctorow, Heather E. Douglas, Josephine Johnston, Kate MacCord, Jane Maienschein, Anne K. Mellor, Alfred Nordmann

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Customer Reviews

This new, remarkable annotated edition of Frankenstein with its accompanying essays brings the 'modern Prometheus' flawlessly into our century in a manner sure to inspire scientists and nonscientists in a conversation that Shelley herself might not have foreseen but surely would have encouraged. (Arthur L. Caplan, Drs. William F. and Virginia Connolly Mitty Professor, founding head of the Division of Bioethics at the School of Medicine, New York University) This wonderful new edition is a happy addition to the critical literature examining the meaning of the tale for our twenty-first-century commitments to heroic science, engineering, and technology. (Rachelle D. Hollander, Director, Center for Engineering Ethics and Society, National Academy of Engineering) The Promethean tale of Frankenstein is a rich source of questions about the price that scientists and the public pay for knowledge. This annotated edition rescues the classic allegory from popular culture's caricature and presents it with a framework for exploring the questions raised. Among the many questions, perhaps the most important is, when scientists either from amoral arrogance or negligent lack of foresight present a discovery society is not prepared to deal with -- nuclear weapons, engineered gene lines, climate modification -- what is the scientists' responsibility going forward? Is it merely to watch in horror as the knowledge is unleashed on society? (Rush D. Holt, Chief Executive Officer, American Association for the Advancement of Science; Executive Publisher, Science Family of Journals)

David Guston is Professor and Founding Director of the School for the Future of Innovation in Society at Arizona State University, where he also serves as Codirector of the Consortium for Science, Policy, and Outcomes. Ed Finn is Founding Director of the Center for Science and the Imagination at Arizona State University, where he is also Assistant Professor with a joint appointment in the School of Arts, Media, and Engineering and the Department of English. Jason Scott Robert is Lincoln Chair in Ethics, Associate Professor in the School of Life Sciences, and Director of the Lincoln Center for Applied Ethics at Arizona State University.

Great for academics and those really, really into studying this work.

The classic story of Frankenstein still has much to teach us in our modern world. If you want to get all of the footnotes as they appear in the text, however, you should get the print copy of this book.

This edition is my first encounter with Frankenstein. As such I can't speak to the quality of the story

as it compares to past editions, however, I greatly appreciated the annotations. The annotations either gave context for understanding events in the story as they pertained to Mary Shelley's world, or prompted reflection by asking questions - especially regarding the ethics of the scientific enterprise. As for the story of Frankenstein - I enjoyed it, but will likely not read it again. However, I thoroughly enjoyed the accompanying essays and will very likely revisit them in the future. While this book is marketed to "scientists, engineers, and makers", I think that anyone would benefit from thinking on the many issues this book and the accompanying essays raises. I highly recommend it to anyone curious about ethics, philosophy, or the role of science in society.

If you teach science and engineering students in particular, I think it would be helpful as the annotations tie the text explicitly to world they are looking to inhabit. I think it will be a nice change of pace for my literature students as well. It will help them get outside the text.

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