

“Frankenbitch[es]”: Adapting Frankenstein’s Female Monster in Literature and Film

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‘How could you imagine that fire would kill me? Fire gave me life! Lightning, the fire from heaven; the fire of Life itself, the fire of Prometheus, the fire of the gods that Man stole’ (Hand 9)

Introduction

Mary Shelley's novel, *Frankenstein* (1818), has inspired numerous film, literary, and other forms of adaptations, along with works of pastiche and parody. As Lissette Lopez Szwydsky argues, “Adaptations, parodies, and other forms of imitation (not the novel) kept the creature alive in the popular imagination in the nineteenth century; today the monster is a global icon. New media continues to bring new adaptations not only for theater, film, and television, but also radio, comics, web series, novelizations, and video games” (Adaptations 133). Even people who have not read Shelley’s novel have encountered the creature or the mad scientist in some version. Though many adaptations focus on Frankenstein’s male creature, some of the most interesting adaptations of the novel are those engaged with the female monster, The Bride. She is never animated in Shelley’s novel, and yet she reflects an integral part of our culture,

our idea of monstrosity, and our definition of femininity with her pale face, white streak in the hair, and white bridal shroud. With James Whale's *Bride of Frankenstein* (1935) as most people's reference point for Shelley's female monster, she has continued to haunt popular culture, and, in turn, has been a site for potential disruption. Adaptations of The Bride disrupt the traditional narratives of gender and monstrosity. Elizabeth Hand's novel *The Bride of Frankenstein: Pandora's Bride* (2007), Frank Henenlotter's *Frankenhooker* (1990), and Tyler MacIntyre's *Patchwork* (2015) embody the cultural fascination with The Bride and her monstrous feelings. In some sense, she represents female struggle and also the hope of disruption. These texts can be used to trace the female creature as a cultural representation of the monstrous woman. Because she is a stitched monster but still aesthetically attractive in the texts I discuss, she queers expectations of beauty.

The Bride is a combination of text, myth, and iconography. Linda Hutcheon argues, "Whatever the motive, from the adapter's perspective, adaptation is an act of appropriation or salvaging, and this is always a double process of interpreting and then creating something new" (20). The texts discussed in this article simultaneously salvage the life of the female monster and create new experiences. They are unable to completely erase and rewrite the previous version. Szwydky argues The Bride is a palimpsestic: "The palimpsest metaphor allows us to engage with work that adapts not only the so-called "original" text, but also the multiple versions in between connecting primary sources to their adaptations across forms, media, and time" (*Penny Dreadful*). Each iteration of The Bride is written on top of other adaptations, with the previous versions never completely erased.

The Bride is a killjoy because she refuses to play along. The fear inspired by The Bride is akin to Sara Ahmed's version of a killjoy who "'snap[s] the bond,'...understood as snapping the affective tie of the family as well as the bond of reproduction, understood as fate, or even fatality" (*Willful Subjects* 114). Feelings like love and compassion glue a community together, and those that do not participate or feel a certain way disrupt community. In Shelley's novel, Victor Frankenstein accepts his creature's demand to create a fellow being that will understand and sympathize with the creature's experiences.

Victor gets as far as constructing the body only to destroy it in a moment of “ethical concern.” He fears The Bride will corrupt and disrupt the world as the monster has. Her potential for killing joy is the reason he destroys her. Interestingly, he also questions the ethics of creating a creature against their will. She inspires both fear and sympathy here. In all of the adaptations discussed in this paper, The Bride refuses to participate the way she is expected to.

The Bride’s narrative disruption is queer. The bonds Ahmed discusses, those that tie us to “normal” or “straight,” are the very ones that are adapted and queered by adaptations of The Bride. In the adaptations discussed in this essay, she snaps bonds—whether she accepts the male creature and they live happily ever after as monstrous outcasts or she refuses to love the male creature—or reroutes them. We can read the bond as disrupting expectations for women and corrupting them by suggesting other possibilities. As a monster who is refused creation because of her potential to break affective bonds, or is destroyed after snapping those bonds, the female monster has complicated discussions of monstrous female feeling. I argue corruption and disruption are intertwined in the Frankenstein Bride narrative. This essay explores the possibilities that adaptations as a queering process gives us.

The palimpsestic process is a queer one. In this essay, I argue recent adaptations have provided The Bride with queer and disruptive sources of possibility. I use the word “queerness” in the tradition of Pamela Demory. Adaptation as a form is particularly adept at offering us queer potential:

To adapt is to modify, to evolve, to transform, to repeat, imitate, parody, make new. To queer something is to make it strange or odd, but also to turn or transform it. To queer, then, may be to adapt; to adapt is to queer.... To identify something as an adaptation is to recognize it in relation to something else—something prior, something that for at least some people is more original and more true. Similarly, to identify something as queer is to place it in relation to something that seems to have been already established as “normal” or “straight.” (1)

To adapt is to write on top of and write in between the original text. If adaptation is a queer process because it makes odd and transforms a previous text, then The Bride is a queer figure.

Scholars have long noted *Frankenstein*'s feminist potential. Ellen Moehrs argues *Frankenstein* is the original female gothic because it is a story "upon what follows birth: the trauma of the afterbirth" (126). Moehrs specifically speaks to the creator/created relationship between Victor and the male monster and the negative feelings that follow after the birthing process. Ann C. Hall also discusses reproduction and its connection to Mary Shelley's life. While scholarship on reproduction and parenting is certainly important in discussions of *Frankenstein*, especially considering Mary Shelley's experience as a mother², discussions focusing solely on motherhood distract from the potential of Shelley's monsters as monsters. If we let ourselves explore what makes The Bride a queer killjoy, we inevitably run into the monstrous feelings they experience and invite in us.

From her first appearance on screen, The bride been a queer figure. Most of us recognize the white bridal dress and the signature hair-style of James Whale's *Bride of Frankenstein* regardless of our engagement with Mary Shelley's text. The Bride is the woman, the monster, and the victim are collapsed into one body. Because these boundaries are porous, there is fission which produces possibilities. Combining queer theory and adaptation not only intervenes in the language of adaption, but also expands the meaning of possibility. In particular, I explore the ways texts starring The Bride have engaged with questions associated with queer, feminist, and adaptation theory. I examine *Pandora's Bride* as a text that allows for The Bride's possibility to exist for itself and *Frankenhooker* and *Patchwork* as texts that let her practice her messy possibilities. The Bride's corruption allows for disruption and alteration—either possibility in choosing in no mate, or possibility in alternative communities.

The Bride's Queer Potential

In Mary Shelley's novel, the creature demands a mate from his creator. He argues Frankenstein owes him a companion of sympathy, one who will feel his pain because she too is deformed: "You must create a female for me, with whom I can live in the interchange of those *sympathies* necessary for my being. This you alone can do, and I demand it of you *as a right* which you must not refuse" (111; emphasis mine). The monster believes a mate will create a network of feeling that his maker and other humans have excluded him from. Though Frankenstein agrees to create a Bride for the creature out of a mixture of compassion, guilt, and hope, he destroys her in the middle of his "filthy process" because the possibility of The Bride and her monstrosity is too terrifying (128). In his explanation to Walton, Frankenstein justifies what is arguably the most violent scene in the novel, the literal ripping apart of female creature's body, because she is an unknown: "I was now about to form another being, of whose dispositions I was alike ignorant; she might become ten thousand times more malignant than her mate....She, who in all probability was to become a thinking and reasoning animal, might refuse to comply with a compact made before her creation. They might even hate each other" (129). Victor justifies her destruction by pointing to her potential to feel shared sympathy with the male monster, the possibility of negative feeling, or an unshared feeling. The Bride causes Frankenstein fear and sympathy.

Contemporary adaptations of the female monster explore how The Bride's possibility for dis/pleasure makes her monstrous. Jack Halberstam associates monstrosity with possibility. Halberstam argues the gothic monster cannot be read singularly. To understand the terror the monster and its body causes, one must consider the monstrous body's relation to anxieties about class, gender, sexuality, and race. Arguing that totality is a distinct feature of gothic monsters, Halberstam claims the resurgence of those monsters in the later Victorian Gothic result from an anxiety and desire to establish a distinctly non-British identity. Monstrous bodies, as Halberstam puts it, are 'remarkably mobile, permeable, and infinitely interpretable' (21). Because they cross the boundaries of race and gender, they are 'totalizing' in their causation of fear. Halberstam's idea of the monster as able to cross all kinds of borders

indicates why we feel certain bodies that have certain feelings are monstrous. It is their possibility that is monstrous.

Male characters destroy The Bride for her disruptive possibility. Before Frankenstein destroys her body, he rationalizes that she may want to destroy humanity—that she might not will the right way. Victor is either afraid that she will feel pleasure for the monster, no pleasure at all, or some kind of violent pleasure. In *Bride of Frankenstein*, she snaps the familial bond between her, the monster, and humanity when she refuses the male monster. Her refusal disappoints almost everyone involved. Pretorius is disappointed because his dream to create a new race is ruined, and the monster is frustrated because he will not have a wife. She spoils the both male monster's wishes and her creator's will, making her a killjoy.

Much of our cultural memory of The Bride is actually through James Whale's *Bride of Frankenstein* rather than Shelley's text. In the film, Dr. Pretorius, a fellow scientist of Frankenstein, and Frankenstein (renamed Henry) collaborate after Pretorius blackmails Henry into continuing his construction of the perfect race. When her bandaged body is finally revealed (see Figure 1) and unwrapped by the two men, the female creature rejects the male monster that she is intended for—prompting the male monster to say, “She hate me. Like others” (Whale). Her rejection motivates the monster to destroy the tower with himself, The Bride, and Pretorius inside. Although the monster lets Henry and Elizabeth Frankenstein escape, he refuses to release any of the other characters because they “belong dead.” The creature belongs dead because she is death—death to the “natural” order of things and death to the male character's hopes.



Figure 1. The Bride about to be revealed by Dr. Pretorius and Henry Frankenstein.

The film complicates the normative dichotomy between proper and improper femininity. Proper femininity is non-sexual, unimposing, and virtuous. Elsa Lanchester plays both The Bride and Mary Shelley, and her iconic scream is one of the most memorable parts of her limited screen time. At first glance, Lanchester as Shelley represents a contrast of female “purity” to Lanchester as The Bride’s “corruption.” Byron calls Shelley an “angel” as she is engaged in a proper feminine activity—sewing. But, this reading is complicated when the audience considers Shelley is the creator of something monstrous. Byron asks Percy Shelley, “Can you believe that bland and lovely brow conceived of Frankenstein—a monster created from cadavers out of rifled graves?” He suggests that Shelley may appear angelic and participating in the proper feminine sphere, but her mind holds monstrous things. Though Mary Shelley questions Byron’s assumption that angelic things cannot produce the

monstrous, she lessens the subversive potential by explaining she wrote as a “moral lesson” against playing God. The subversion also lessons a bit because Byron’s misappropriation of the name Frankenstein could show that even if Shelley can produce horror, she is still misread by men. However, the film starts the succession of adaptations that broaden the story of the female creature.

The springboard for queer adaptations of *The Bride* is the moment in which she stares off-screen. The choice to look off-screen is not *The Bride* looking longingly at a different male option than Pretorius and Frankenstein (see Figure 2). It is a creation, no matter how briefly, of alternative spaces of possibility. We can infer that looking off-screen is to desire her own space: to refuse the two options (choose the monster or choose the creator) presented to her and choose a third—her own. The physical space she inhabits in this scene is important. In “What's in a Frame?: The Authorizing Presence in James Whale's *Bride of Frankenstein*,” Ann Marie Adams argues the female characters in the film are often seemingly put in a middle position—*The Bride* with Pretorius and Henry and Mary Shelley between Lord Byron and her husband, Percy Shelley. Eve Sedgwick argues the relationship between the homosexual, the homosocial, and the homophobic is often mediated by a love triangle. More specifically, a love triangle that consists of two men vying for the affection of a woman. The desire and affection between Pretorius and Henry is mediated by their desire for *The Bride*. She is literally “in the middle.”

Scholars often talk about queerness in terms of James Whale and the character of Pretorius³. However, I argue queerness can also be found in *The Bride*. In both scenes where Lanchester is in the middle of two men, her desire queers or adapts: “Similarly composed shots picture each woman situated (or perhaps triangulated) between two men, and each scene ends with a female 'creature' choosing neither one mate nor the other, but looking significantly off-screen while verbally expressing herself” (Adams 411). Instead of following the creature or returning to the embrace of her male creators, she begins to write her own story. However, it is not a completely satisfying moment. *The Bride* is killed and Shelley fades off-screen. But, it is important to examine as a starting point because it launches queer adaptations.



Figure 2. The Bride screams after looking at the male monster.

The Bride kills male joy by failing to feel the joy they envision for her. She is an example of Frankenstein's failed promise, the male creature's failed desires, the failure of the creator and the monster's relationship, and the failure of a patriarchal context. Interestingly, failure can also be seen in the failed feelings of the female monster, or a failure of the right kinds of pleasure. We are not leaving monstrous failure behind as we move towards more contemporary texts; rather, we are moving to texts that code failure as possibility. As Mary Shelley says in the prologue, "That wasn't the end at all."

Choosing Difference in *Pandora's Bride*

Elizabeth Hand's novel, *Pandora's Bride*, expands The Bride's queer or disruptive potential by casting her as the protagonist of this officially licensed sequel to Whale's film. Instead of dying in a fire because she "belongs dead," The Bride, called Pandora in the novel, lives, rescues others, and adopts a non-normative community that excludes sexual desire. The novel begins with The Bride saving Dr. Pretorius from the

fire. The two characters take refuge in Weimar Republic Germany with Pretorius's mutant children. Henry and Elizabeth Frankenstein and the male monster hunt Pandora for their own seemingly suspicious reasons. The novel ends with a final confrontation between Pandora, a newly-reanimated Henry Frankenstein, Elizabeth Frankenstein, a fembot, and the Frankensteins' yet to be animated army of murdered women. In between, there is a child killer, a group of boys that live in the dangerous woods, and speakeasys. As an adaptation, it's a mash-up of tropes that include Whale's physical description of The Bride and Shelley's potential.

In Hand's novel, Pandora is the new myth creator and an archetypal killjoy. Pandora embodies Victor Frankenstein's fears because she has a consciousness, and it is disruptive. In *Pandora's Bride*, there is a repetition of mind language: "I already knew my own mind.... you will recall that I did actually possess a mind" (11-12). Readers will recognize this language from Shelley's text when Victor destroys her after thinking of her possibility. She chooses her own name after refusing the one suggested by Pretorius—Lilith, the fallen woman—because she does not see herself as one. The Bride, at least in this novel, is both a mythic creature and creator of her own myth. She chooses the name of Pandora: "'Dr. Pretorius said that someday a woman will write of the New Eve. So I will be the New Pandora. I will not be any man's bride or any man's toy. Whatever strengths I possess, whatever I have hidden inside of me, whatever I unleash upon men, I will do so knowingly'" (32). Pandora wants to create and "unleash" her own story. In Hesiod's *Works and Days*, one of the sources for the cultural myth of Pandora, Pandora unintentionally lets misery loose on the world while leaving Hope in the box. In Hand's novel, Pandora controls her fate.

To adapt something is, in some sense, to destroy and create anew. If Pandora is a creator of myth, she is also a destroyer. After Henry and Elizabeth kidnap young women to create an army, Pandora challenges them in an amphitheater under Berlin. After being confronted with the army of newly dead women, she decides that they are better off dead: "'Henry Frankenstein butchered these women. I will not see them revived as slaves. Better that they be returned to their families and brought to final rest in familiar

ground, than that they live forever in servitude'" (195). She decides to burn the amphitheater to the ground. In some sense, she is returning to her beginning—fire. But, instead of being consumed by it, she is the one who controls it. She makes the explicit choice to save the women from a cruel fate of enslavement by destroying them.

Pandora destroys the bodies because she refuses to deny hope. Elizabeth and the fembot try to convince Pandora to join them and abandon her friends because "Men will never change.... What does it say of men, that their creations can transform themselves, when they cannot" (198). They believe that men are evil and will continue to create for greed. If the three women joined forces, they could rule the world. Pandora refuses because she believes that there is the potential for good after recognizing it in the men like the male creature and Dr. Pretorius around her.

Pandora's motivation for destroying the army is not completely satisfactory. In Whale's film, the monster burns the tower because The Bride refuses him. In Hand's novel, Pandora burns the unanimated corpses of the women not because they refuse Pandora or have the potential to, but because she believes they do not have the possibility of refusing Elizabeth. Instead of seeing them as women with the potential for desire, she sees them as puppets. She recognizes the similarities between her and the women but distinguishes herself from them because she was animated with choice. It is almost as if Pandora is destroying her origin story when she destroys the women.

Hand adapts, or queers, the Frankenstein myth in her treatment of Elizabeth. To further complicate the idea of passive women, Elizabeth kills Henry and then reanimates him as her slave: "'Behold your master.... It was not enough that he create an army of women to serve him and his colleagues: he would have his wife serve him as well'" (196). After discovering him with the fembot, Elizabeth kills him: "'And so the traitor met the fate he intended for me'" (197). Throughout most of the narrative, Pandora and other characters refer to Elizabeth as a "slug, or a wilted dandelion" (13). She is the butt of Pandora's disdain because she is passively responsible. She proves to be actively vindictive, however. After convincing a female robot to seduce Henry, Elizabeth asks Pandora to join the pair and make a deadly trio. In Shelley's novel and Whale's film, Elizabeth is a

side character with some autonomy. In *Frankenstein*, she is the longsuffering fiancée waiting for her lover to return from his adventures. But in Hand's novel, she becomes the villain and attempts to take over the world.

So, what differentiates Pandora and Elizabeth from each other? Both are women, both have been taken advantage of, and both want to enact their own desires. Elizabeth offers Pandora a new family, a new kind of community, if she allows the mass animation. To explain her refusal, Pandora tells Elizabeth that "Your experience is not mine, and my *choice* is not yours" (199; emphasis mine). Their choices are their own. They are both willful, but Pandora uses her will to see the hopeful potential in the world. As she says when she chooses the name Pandora, what she unleashes will be her choice.

While *Bride of Frankenstein* explores The Bride's potential for willfulness or her refusal only to destroy her very quickly after, *Pandora's Bride* provides her with the opportunity to refuse and live. Hand's novel ends with Dr. Pretorius, Elizabeth, and Pretorius's menagerie of grotesque children offering a community to the male monster, named Smith in this version. Pandora refuses to become his wife, still; instead she offers to be his "helpmate—a true friend" (206). Their relationship will not be sexual but intellectually pleasurable. Their relationship will be one of survival and hope. If we return to Sara Ahmed's definition of killjoy as "snapping the [social] affective bonds" of proper relationships, then Pandora and Smith's decision to combine forces and survive together is an example of them killing joy because they form a bond that is not heteronormative. The next set of texts that explore The Bride in this article combine willfulness with sexual pleasure.

Sexing The Bride

Frankenhooker, directed by Frank Henenlotter, and *Patchwork*, directed by Tyler MacIntyre, queer The Bride's sexual pleasure. These two satirical horror films involve The Bride figure consciously choosing and, to some extent, creating herself and her own sexual pleasure.³ Satire is a genre that is particularly fruitful for non-normative possibilities, especially with gender and sexuality. *Patchwork* and *Frankenhooker* offer the viewer the possibility

of both immoral and moral play. Pamela Demory argues that “bodily pleasure, promiscuity, infidelity, multiple partners, erotic play are all terms that appear in recent discussions of adaptation—all suggest resistance to normative ideas about sexual morality and thus are queer. Queer resists the categories of proper/improper, appropriate/inappropriate, moral/immoral, faithful/unfaithful” (7). The monstrous woman is always feared for her potential disruption similarly to the fear that adaptations disrupt the “original” narrative. Whereas Whale’s unnamed Bride is denied pleasure and Hand’s Pandora engages with pleasure that is not sexual, MacIntyre’s and Henenlotter’s respective Brides are sexual represented as both desired and desiring. *Frankenhooker* and *Patchwork* are both satires which allows them to adapt and play with The Bride’s disruptive potential in alternative ways.

Patchwork’s and *Frankenhooker*’s Brides create their own pleasure in a non-normative way. In *Frankenhooker*, Jeffrey animates his fiancée, Elizabeth, with body parts from sex workers after he accidentally kills her (Figure 3). Even though Elizabeth remembers bits of her previous life after animation, she also inherits the memories of her “sisters.” She tells Jeffrey, “I feel so strange. As if there was so many different women inside of me” (Henenlotter). In fact, one could argue that, as the film’s climatic finale reveals when she animates her fiancée Jeffrey with the body parts of the sex workers, she does so to create an alternative kinship. She tells Jeffrey, “Granted, what I did may be a bit unorthodox. But, hey, you look great....I love you, Jeffrey, and we’re together, again. All of us together, again” (Figure 4). On the surface, she’s reestablishing the heteronormative relationship between a male and female partner with the materials available to her. More interestingly though is the possibility that the ‘all’ she refers to is herself, the women, and lastly, Jeffrey. As some critics have argued, Elizabeth “might even prefer” the situation (Szwedky and Pribbernow 322). Because, after all, we know that Jeffrey’s methods of reanimation are imperfect. It is a strong possibility that the women’s consciousnesses will come through as they did with Elizabeth’s first animation. At the very least, this final scene makes room for alternative representations of

queer female monstrous pleasure and is the most explicitly queer ending of the many *Frankenstein* film adaptations.



Figure 3. Jeffrey realizes he has been reanimated with female body parts.

The women that combine bodies in *Patchwork*, *Ellie*, *Jen*, and *Madeleine*, share a queer and disruptive relationship as monster and creator. The three women are murdered and are reanimated in one combined body (Figure 4). The women retain their separate consciousnesses. *Jen*, *Ellie*, and *Madeline* eventually work together and experience shared violence. The women murder *Jen*'s ex-boyfriend and systematically murder the men they suspect killed them. It is a revenge fantasy scenario. The women's victims include a fraternity brother who tried to seduce *Ellie* before her murder. He insists that he's a "good guy," so he cannot be the murderer. His claim of being a "good guy" rings empty when the viewer remembers all of the women he takes back to his room after they get drunk. To be clear, I am not pointing to an inherent connection between queerness and violence. What I am pointing to is the Frankenstein myth's possibility of deviation—even when that deviation is

controversial and violent. If we define queer as Demory does, as placing it “it in relation to something that seems to have been already established as “normal” or “straight,” (1), then three women in one body going on a revenge spree is abnormal.



Figure 4. The Bride confronts the frat boy.

In addition to the queer relationships these creatures have to themselves, one of the ways in which adaptations of *The Bride* disrupt the narrative is through sexual desire. Unlike *The Brides* discussed in the previous sections, these Brides have sex. After her animation, Elizabeth heads to Times Square, the sex worker's old stomping grounds, to get money. Elizabeth isn't fazed when she accidentally murders her clients; she just grabs their money and walks away. It is not a romantic or sexy moment. Elizabeth does not desire sexual pleasure here, but she does desire the pleasure of profit. In *Patchwork*, the three women have sex with Jen's old friend Garret in a grotesque parody of regular sex scenes. They tie Garret up and take

complete control. When they kiss him, the staples from their face fall into his mouth. Earlier in the film, they had to staple their finger back on, and it is this finger they shove into Garret's mouth for him to suck in an obvious reversal of penetration. If you want to fetishize a female monster, this is what it would legitimately look like. It also shows that monstrosity always implies a certain amount of willfulness or desire—whether that is for money or sexual pleasure.

Frankenhooker comments on the male gaze. Before her reanimation, Elizabeth was considered overweight. When Jeffrey is planning on reanimating her, the camera spends a significant amount of time lingering on a diagram of a female body. Jeffrey mutters the things he wants to change on Elizabeth's original body, like a mole or her chicken neck, as he writes mathematical equations. The scene plays to the male gaze. But, because it is so ridiculous and Jeffrey is so obviously meant to be a bumbling, problematic, male character, it draws attention to that gaze. When he finds the newly animated Elizabeth at a bar, he tells her, "You're not a hooker, Elizabeth" (Henonlotter). Jeffrey does not expect Elizabeth's displays of desire when she leaves him to go searching for money after he reanimates her. It is not a sexual desire either, but a desire for money. Her first words after being reborn are "Want a date?" and "Got any money?" Although the relationship between capitalism, labor, and sex is certainly important, an adequate discussion is beyond the purview of this paper. However, because sex work is often read as willfully refusing authority or the appropriate bonds of monogamous, heterosexual relationships, *Frankenhooker* uses it to comment on monstrous bodies.

Willfulness can certainly be heroic, but *Patchwork* and *Frankenhooker* suggest that sometimes the willfulness and desire is for the sake of themselves. That monstrous will can create its own pleasure. Is The Bride monstrous in earlier films because she refuses the reproductive bonds that her creator intends, either bonding with a male monster or the creator himself, or is she selfless because she refuses unnatural ties? Does she owe something to the other monster and to us? Before Garret dies, he says, "This really wasn't worth it," so we can anticipate his unhappiness at being reanimated (MacIntyre). On the other, why should it be up to women that have already undergone the trauma of

being murdered and stitched together into one body to save the world? Instead, Jennifer and Ellie simply find pleasure in perversity. Instead of sharing Jeffrey's notebooks and scientific findings with the world, Elizabeth reanimates him and thus the other women.

Conclusion

Patricia MacCormack notes, "Sociological systems presume certain volition in the deliberate 'monstrization' [sic] of the body, seeing their functions as decoding these willful acts. They demand the other speak in the language of the dominant so they may be interpreted" (258). When we encounter bodies that refuse, whether that refusal is to act, look, or feel a certain way, that refusal is read as deliberately antagonistic against the norm and therefore coded as "monstrous." The Bride's monstrous body is attributed monstrous feelings by those she encounters. MacCormack connects monstrosity to refusal, and my argument throughout this essay has been that contemporary adaptors have queered The Bride's disruptive refusal and showed its pleasurable possibilities.

Bride of Frankenstein, *Pandora's Bride*, *Frankenhooker*, and *Patchwork* show how Shelley's female monster allows for a queer narrative and process. Though Whale portrays her as doomed to death, MacIntyre and Henenlotter offer her the possibility of vengeful pleasure. Hand builds her a non-normative community. If we use Halberstam's idea of monstrosity as totalizing—as made up of gender, sexual, class, and racial boundary crossing—then we have to see the female creature as representing a liminal body that causes fear and sympathy simultaneously. We can read this liminality as possibility. For Demory, "A queer perspective on adaptation can be a way of resisting normative ideologies and of revealing the fissures, absences, or silences of canonical texts" (4). These absences, fissures, or disruptions Demory names are avenues of possibility in and beyond Shelley's text. As Hand's Pandora says, "Humans—ordinary humans, anyway; what the world called 'normal—seemed to limit the range of their emotions and attachments" (120). *Frankenhooker* and *Patchwork* play with these avenues in grotesque but disruptive ways.

Frankenstein's female monster is a queer figure. Mary Shelley's text may provide an unsatisfactory ending for the female creature, but it does provide a springboard to explore the themes of monstrosity and desire that are more subtly represented in her novel. MacMormack argues, "A queer ethics of monsterring becomes a *practice*, an activity to evoke affects and open up to affects unthought of" (261). *Frankenhooker* and *Patchwork* further blur lines with the willful impulse of monstrous female potential made possible through their visual mediums, allowing viewers to identify with a queer narrative. These texts too play with failure, but they do so in the sense that the creator's failure opens up alternative avenues. As *Frankenstein* continues to be a text that inspires and influences, *The Bride* will always haunt us and our ideas of femininity, monstrosity, and feeling.

Endnotes

- ¹ There were earlier adaptations. For example, *Frankenstein* (1910), *Life Without a Soul* (1915), and *Il Mostro di Frankenstein* (1920).
- ² Four of Mary Shelley's pregnancies resulted in a miscarriage or children that did not survive early childhood.
- ³ See Eberle-Sinatra, Michael. "Readings of Homosexuality in Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* and Four Film Adaptations." *Gothic Studies*, vol. 7, no. 2, 2005, pp.185–202.

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