

# Frankenstein and Democracy

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While Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* is a work of literature, and perhaps even the first work of science fiction, it is also a deeply political work. The action in the novel is timed to events in the French Revolution, and the issues explored express anxieties related to the gathering Industrial Revolution. The novel touches on Rousseau's political theories and issues of slavery and colonialism that rived Shelley's England. Even the creature itself – normally understood as a technological creation – can and has been taken as a metaphor for the things that people create politically, like states and corporations. This presentation will explore a variety of such political aspects of *Frankenstein*, relating them to the enduring value of the novel in this, its two-hundredth year.