Human Forgetfulness and Animal Memories in *Frankenstein* and *The Last Man*

Der Wanderer über den Nebelmeer, Caspar David Friedrich (1818)

"Who shall conceive the horrors of my secret toil, as I dabbled among the unhallowed damps of the grave, or tortured the living animal to animate the lifeless clay?"

(*Frankenstein*, 42)

"A strange multiplicity of sensations seized me, and I saw, felt, heard, and smelt, at the same time … By degrees, I remember, a stronger light pressed upon my nerves, so that I was obliged to shut my eyes"

(Frankenstein, 93)

"Why do you call to my remembrance circumstances of which I shudder to reflect, that I have been the miserable origin and author?"

(*Frankenstein*, 91)

"Locke pointed, now some three centuries ago, to the importance of memory for anchoring a sense of individual continuity over time. … As historians of the novel have long recognized, an intensification of attention to memory underwrote the phenomenal rise of literature in the centuries after Locke"

(Frances Ferguson, "Romantic Memory," 509-510)

"I spurred my horse, who addressed his free limbs to speed, and tossed his gallant head in pride… I bared my head to the rushing wind, which bathed my brow in delightful coolness… My horse grew tired – and I, forgetful of his fatigue, still as he lagged, cheered him with my voice and urged him with the spur. He was a gallant animal, and I did not wish to exchange him for any chance beast I might light on, leaving him never to be refound"

(*The Last Man*, 403-404)

"The distance we had come was not less than fifty miles, yet he shot down the Boulevards swift as an arrow; poor fellow, as I dismounted at the gate of the castle, he sunk on his knees, his eyes were covered with a film, he fell on his side, a few gasps inflated his noble chest, and he died. I saw him expire with an anguish, unaccountable even to myself, the spasm was as the wrenching of some limb in agonizing torture, but it was brief as it was intolerable. I forgot him, as I swiftly darted through the open portal, and up the majestic stairs of this castle of victories...."

(*The Last Man*, 404)

"Such detours mark where something untoward or unexpected may enter (the narrative) as a matter of importance"

(Theresa M. Kelley, "Taking Chances," 210-211)

"Raising questions of history, memory, and politics (all of which are rooted and invested in particular conceptions of time and being), … is ultimately about the possibilities of justice-to-come, the tracing of entanglements of violent histories … as an integral part of an embodied practice of re-membering"

(Karen Barad, "Troubling Time/s," 213)

"A robin red-breast dropt from the frosty branches of the trees ... its panting breast and half-closed eyes shewed that it was dying: a hawk appeared in the air; sudden fear seized the little creature; it exerted its last strength, throwing itself on its back, raising its talons in impotent defence against its powerful enemy. I took it up and placed it in my breast. I fed it with a few crumbs from a biscuit; by degrees it revived; its warm fluttering heart beat against me; I cannot tell why I detail this trifling incident – but the scene is still before me"

(*The Last Man*, 311)

"For the Enlightenment novelist, memory has the power to alter environments and things in the world; it can change our stories of the past, and it can use stories to change present circumstances"

(Sarah Eron, *Mind Over Matter*, 20)

"The presence of something like chance, contingency, and accident in Romantic temporality … speaks to a different regard for interruptions and possible swerves that do not carry forward or achieve an imagined telos or end. What they do convey instead is an invitation to take up the unexpected, to recognise in its very latency some inkling of how possibility, chance, and even counterfactuals … might be opportunities for moving ahead"

(Theresa M. Kelley, "Taking Chances," 213)

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