

# Mary Shelley, Frankenstein

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Lecture 11

The Gothic Contexts

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Week 3. Mary Shelley,  
*Frankenstein*  
*Lecture 3A: The Gothic  
Contexts*

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Hello, and welcome to Week 3 of the popular Gothic Novel Course. In this week, I'm going to talk about Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*. In particular, I am going to talk about the Gothic context, which led to the writing of this fantastic Gothic fiction.

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**Mary Shelley**

**Mary Wollstonecraft Godwin  
(1797-1851)**

'the daughter of the radical philosopher William Godwin, who described her as 'singularly bold, somewhat imperious, and active of mind'.

Source: <https://www.bi.uk/people/mary-shelley>






Mary Shelley was born Mary Wollstonecraft Godwin, and she was the daughter of the radical philosopher William Godwin, who described her as 'singularly bold', which means uniquely bold. She was extraordinary in some respects and somewhat of an imperious and active mind. She had an independent mind, which was kind of had its own mechanisms for thinking through things. And she was very, very active and agile with regard to rational thinking.

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**William Godwin**

'Social philosopher, political journalist, and religious dissenter who anticipated the English **Romantic** literary movement'

Source: <https://www.britannica.com/biography/William-Godwin>



She was the daughter, as I mentioned of William Godwin and William Godwin was a very famous in that period; and he was a social philosopher, a political journalist, and a religious

dissenter. So you can see the singularity of Mary Shelley and its origins in the father figure, and he anticipated the English Romantic literary movement.

So she had fantastic parents who were very well read, who were independent thinkers, who were dissenters. As you can see, he was a religious dissenter and so you can see the kind of influences on Mary Shelley and we also know if we read Mary Shelley's biography that her father was very, very influential and that he encouraged Mary's avid reading. So, she had a lot of very, very influential impact on her from a very, very early age.

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## Mary Wollstonecraft (Mary Shelly's Mother)

Her mother, who died days after her birth, was the famous defender of women's rights, Mary Wollstonecraft(1).

'Mary Wollstonecraft's A Vindication of the Rights of Woman was a ground-breaking work of literature which still resonates in feminism and human rights movements of today.'(2)

(1)Source: <https://www.bl.uk/people/mary-shelley>

(2)Source: <https://www.bl.uk/collection-items/mary-wollstonecraft-a-vindication-of-the-rights-of-woman>



Let us look at her mother. Her mother was Mary Wollstonecraft and she was the one who wrote A Vindication of the Rights of Woman, which was a ground-breaking, a radical text of literature, which can be classified as one of the first feminist texts, one of the first text which also talked about human rights issues of the female gender. So you can see what kind of mother she had and unfortunately, her mother died days after her birth. And these two figures, the mother and the father were well known writers of the day, very, very influential and independent minded figures.

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## Percy Bysshe Shelley

> [Percy Bysshe Shelley](#), praised 'the irresistible wildness & sublimity of her feelings'.

> In December 1816 Harriet Shelley apparently committed suicide.

In a matter of weeks, Shelley and Mary Godwin were officially married.

Source: <https://www.bl.uk/people/mary-shelley>

Image source: <https://www.bl.uk/objects/0ercv-bysshe-shelley>




Now let us look at the husband, who was Percy Shelley, so Mary Wollstonecraft Godwin married Percy Bysshe Shelley and Shelley praised the irresistible wildness and sublimity of her feelings. So, you can see the kind of similarity of judgment in some ways, while Percy Shelley calls her character, wild, irresistibly wild you can see the father calling her singularly bold. So, you can see her as a woman who had a very, very fierce streak of mind, very active and fierce streak of mind, which Percy found irresistible and Mary Shelley and Percy married in December 1816. So the context is there for you on the slide.


And the sublimity of her feelings is also very interesting. The way Percy describes her feelings as sublime, as provoking some kind of awe on the person in front of her. So, we see a character being sketched, very interestingly, by all these figures, who knew her very closely and the idea of wildness, the wildness of singularity and the intensity of feelings all emerge, when we want to think about Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley.

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**FRANKENSTEIN ;**  
OR,  
**THE MODERN PROMETHEUS.**  
—  
IN THREE VOLUMES.  
—  
Did I request thee, Maker, from my clay  
To mould me man? Did I solicit thee  
From darkness to promote me?—  
**PARADISE LOST.**  
—  
**VOL. I.**  
—  
London :  
PRINTED FOR  
LACKINGTON, HUGHES, HARDING, MANBY, & JOSEPH,  
FINSBURY SQUARE.

'A ghost-writing contest on a stormy June night in 1816 inspired *Frankenstein*, often called the first true work of science-fiction.'





Source: <https://www.britannica.com/entry/frankenstein>

Now, we have the title page of Frankenstein, or The Modern Prometheus, which was published in 1818. And there is a reference to Paradise Lost on the title page. “Did I request thee, maker, from my clay to mould me man? Did I solicit thee from darkness to promote me?” so you can see, the voice which is rebelling, which is questioning the maker on the title page. So it is a unique text. And what gave birth to this text is going to be the subject of this lecture today. So a

ghost-writing contest on a stormy, June night in 1816, inspired Frankenstein which is often called the first true work of science-fiction as well.


So there are two things in this quotation that I have mentioned on the slide. One is a ghost-writing contest and the other is science fiction. So two labels immediately come to mind when we think about our Frankenstein, one is Gothic, the other is science fiction. And it emerged, so there was a kind of a collapse of these labels with regard to this narrative and this narrative was born out of a writing contest.

So let us see who kind of initiated it, what happened where, when?



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## Lake Geneva

'[Mary Shelley](#), composed Frankenstein in 1816 at Lake Geneva while staying with [Lord Byron](#), John Polidori, Claire Clairmont and [Percy Bysshe Shelley](#).'



Source: <https://www.bl.uk/romantics-and-victorians/articles/mary-shelley->






So Mary Shelley composed Frankenstein in 1816 at Lake Geneva, where she was staying with Lord Byron, John Polidori, Byron's physician, Claire Clairmont, who is Shelly's sister and Percy Bysshe Shelley. So they all staying together at Lake Geneva, and it was at this setting in 1816, that Frankenstein was apparently composed.

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**Villa Diodati**

Where Byron, Mary and Percy Shelley, Claire Clairmont, Polidori told each other ghost stories in 1816.





So, this is another contemporary image, a 19th century image of that Villa Diodati, where they stayed.


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**Lake Geneva**

'Mary Shelley, composed Frankenstein in 1816 at Lake Geneva while staying with Lord Byron, John Polidori, Claire Clairmont and Percy Bysshe Shelley.'



Source: <https://www.bl.uk/romantics-and-victorians/articles/mary-shelley->

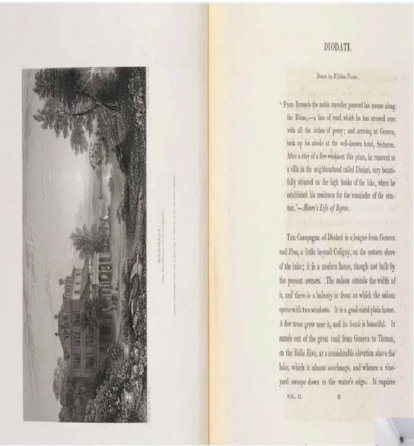



And this is also a contemporary image, contemporary as of now.

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Villa Diodati

Where Byron, Mary and Percy Shelley, Claire Clairmont, Polidori told each other ghost stories in 1816.





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And this one is 19th century. So it is in this Villa Byron, Mary and Percy Shelley Claire Clairmont and Polidori told each other ghost stories to pass the time in 1816. And one of the stories, that was written out of this contest was Mary Shelley's Frankenstein. We also know that Polidori's The Vampyre was also the product of this kind of ghost-writing contest.

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## Horror poem

'One evening Byron read some verses from [Samuel Taylor Coleridge's](#) poem 'Christabel' in which the character of Geraldine, (who appears as a woman, but is actually a Lamia, or disguised serpent), seeks both the spiritual and physical possession of the beautiful and innocent Christabel. Percy Shelly, clearly affected by the claustrophobic environment and the hypnotic power of Byron's reading of the poem fled the room screaming, apparently horrified...'

Source: (Buzwell, 2014)



NPTEL




So they kind of spend this group of literati, these literary figures, Byron and Shelley, they pass the time by telling each other ghost stories and one evening, a horror poem was read out, and let



us see what the poem is. So Byron read some verses from Samuel Taylor Coleridge's poem Christabel, a gothic poem, in which the character Geraldine, who appears as a woman, but is actually a Lamia, or disguised serpent, seeks both the spiritual and physical possession of the beautiful and innocent Christabel. So context for this poem is that, a disguised serpent is trying to possess a very innocent, young, beautiful young woman, Christabel and Percy Shelley was clearly affected by the claustrophobic environment, they all travel together in that Villa Diodati and hypnotic power of Byron's reading the poem, kind of made him to flee the room screaming, apparently horrified. So, that was the environment, the atmosphere in which all these figures took inspiration for their own works.



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## Lord Byron's 'ploy'



'The vital spark that gave the novel life however was [Lord Byron](#)'s suggestion one evening at the Villa Diodati, as candlelight flickered within the house and lightning flashed across the surface of the lake outside, that those present should turn their hands to the writing of ghost stories'.

Source: (Butwell, 2014)




So it is apparently Lord Byron who kind of throws the gauntlet, he is the one who kind of initiates this competition, the ghost writing competition, ghost stories writing competition, and he is the one who apparently gave the vital spark that give the novel Frankenstein, its origin. And it was his suggestion on one evening at Villa Diodati, "as the candlelight flickered within the house and lightning flashed across the surface of the lake outside, that those present should turn their hands to the writing of ghost story."

So what is very clear is that this is not Great Britain. They are holidaying and it is apparently a very, very weird summer in which lots of catastrophe has happen in several places and there is

lightning, natural elements are not being very friendly. And they are passing the time, these friends are passing the time telling each other supernatural stories. And at this moment, on one evening, one bizarre evening, Byron says let us all write stories, tell stories to pass the time.

So the land is foreign, the atmosphere is in its extreme in terms of the natural elements. So all these elements in themselves kind of create an effect on the people who are already telling each other literary supernatural narratives to pass the time and in this heady cauldron of feelings and impacts and effects, Frankenstein the novel is born.


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## Villa Diodati

'With thunder and lightning rolling down from the mountains and across the lake, the candlelit interior of the Villa Diodati became the home to discussions about galvanism and the principles of animation, with Polidori's medical knowledge acting as a balance for Byron and Percy Shelley's more speculative imaginings'.

Source: (Buzwell, 2014)



Let us now look at some of the associated topics which were discussed in that Villa Diodati among these friends. And once again, the context or the atmosphere is important because there is thunder and lightning rolling down from the mountains across the lake. So, nature is in its really wild mood. Wildness is something that we need to kind of, hang on to when we want to think about the origin of the novel, Frankenstein.

So the candlelit interior of the Villa Diodati became the home to discussions of not only gothic narratives, but also to subjects such as galvanism and the principles of animation, animation bringing life back to inanimate things. With Polidori's medical knowledge, we should remember Polidori is Byron's physician, and he brings the medical knowledge to the table. And there is

science which is balancing out the most speculative imaginations of Byron and Shelley. So, they are talking about literary narratives of gothic text.

They are talking about galvanism, they are talking about animation, bringing life back to the dead. So these topics are related to one another, even though there is science on one side and supernatural subjects on the other, spiritual stuff on the other. So you can think about these discussions as the atmosphere as the gothic context for Frankenstein.

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## Mary Shelley

'Many and long were the conversations between Lord Byron and Shelley, to which I was a devout but nearly silent listener. During one of these, various philosophical doctrines were discussed, and among others the nature of the principle of life, and whether there was any probability of its ever being discovered and communicated. They talked of the experiments of Dr Darwin... who preserved a piece of vermicelli in a glass case, till by some extraordinary means it began to move with voluntary motion'.

<https://www.theguardian.com/theguardian/2012/nov/26/mary-shelley-frankenstein-preface>



Now let us see what Shelley, Mary Shelley herself had to say about this kind of environment. And she says, which is Mary Shelley's own words, and she says, I quote, “many and long were the conversations between Lord Byron and Shelley, to which I was a devout but nearly silent listener.” So she is kind of listening to the conversation between Shelley and Byron, quietly and she is absorbing the subjects, which are being talked about.

And during one of these, various philosophy documents were discussed and among others the nature of the principle of life. The nature of life itself was also talked about and whether there was any probability as it ever been discovered and communicate the idea of how to make life, how to create life, that principle is also being talked about and how could it possibly be discovered and how could that message be communicated that discovery be passed on.

So, these are some of the subjects that they are talking about, and we know, because we have read Frankenstein, we know that all these topics have also been literary. All these topics are being also discussed in the novel that how the spark of life can be and did kind of was discovered and all these are put into practice by the central character Frankenstein, in his creation of the monster.

So, you can see where Mary Shelley could have drawn on with respect to those literary discourse of the principle of life, the spark for this discourse of life could have gone back to these discussions. And they talked of experiments of Dr. Darwin, they means, Byron and Shelley they talked about the experiments of Dr. Darwin, and who apparently preserved a piece of vermicelli in a glass case, filled by some extraordinary means it began to move with voluntary motion. So it kind of took on life of its own and there is motion in that vermicelli, in that piece of vermicelli.

So he can see how interested people then were about how to create life, how to kind of act as God which Frankenstein does and you can see in the connection to the quotation from Paradise Lost, where God is being questioned and asked, Did I ask thee to make me? Did I ask you to create me? So all these questions, the idea of creation is as kind of discussed in this literary text, gothic narrative of Frankenstein.

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## The Year Without a Summer

'The year without a summer', as 1816 became known, provided the perfect backdrop to the telling of bleak, macabre and doom-laden Gothic tales.

Source: (Buzwell, 2014)

**DR. JIDULAKSHI PRASAD**

Paris, June 20—We continue to receive the most melancholy news from Germany on the extraordinary weather which affects nearly the whole of Europe. The excessive abundance of rain has caused disasters almost everywhere. In Saxony, the Grand Duchy of Wurttemberg, and in the fertile valleys of the Rhinegelder, there is no longer any hope for agriculture. The snows of winter still cover the mountains. In Switzerland the lakes and the rivers have broken their dykes, carried away their bridges, and inundated the country. The Canton of Basle has sustained dreadful injury. In the plains the corn and the potatoes are under water. The elevated grounds only afford some hope. This calamity appears almost general; all travellers report that it is experienced in Turkey, Hungary, Italy, Germany, and throughout all the East of Europe. The Host is exposed in the Chapel of the Tuilleries for the prayers of forty hours. The Court will attend the celebration this evening.

Letters from Canada state, that such a quantity of rain has fallen in the course of that town, that the rivers on which timber is floated have risen so high that some have overflowed some bridges...



1816, the year in which these friends, holiday in Lake Geneva, where they spend their time in Villa Diodati is known as the year without a summer. Because it was, as I said, in terms of its weather, it was really bizarre. And there are dreadful incidents, apparently volcanoes erupting in Indonesia. So, in terms of the climate, it is really unsettling, it is macabre and that year, that summer became the perfect backdrop to the telling of a bleak, and doom-laden gothic tales.

So there is an external stimulus that idea seems to be reinforced when we look at the narrative surrounding the origin of Frankenstein.

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The slide features the title "Sources of Mary's imagination" in a serif font, underlined. Below the title is a paragraph of text: "The contemporary interest in galvanism, anatomy and the spark of life, together with the thunder storms outside and the candlelight within, all took root in Mary's imagination and found their way into her novel." A small source citation "Source: (Buzwell, 2014)" is located at the bottom left of the text. In the top right corner, there is an NPTEL logo consisting of a circular emblem with a stylized figure and the text "NPTEL" below it. In the bottom right corner, there is a small video inset showing a woman with glasses speaking.

So by now, we are very clear about the sources of Mary's imagination that produced Frankenstein. One is galvanism, the other is the idea of the spark of life and how it could animate things. And plus there is this thunderstorms going outside and there is candlelight within Villa Diodati. So these are some of the external influences on Mary's imagination. So all these took deep root in Mary's imagination and found its way into Frankenstein.

So, we need to talk a little bit more about galvanism because that idea is keep on recurring in conversations around the gothic context of Frankenstein.



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## Galvanism

'Shelley was inspired by the concept of galvanism—the idea that scientists could use electricity to stimulate or restart life. Named after Luigi Galvani, an Italian doctor, the concept came about after Galvani was able to make a frog's legs twitch when he hooked the animal up to an electric charge.

Electricity was a new and barely understood force when Galvani performed his experiments on dissected animals during the late 18th century'

Source: (Bakemore, 2015)



So what is galvanism? And what is the story? So Shelley was inspired by the concept of galvanism, the idea that scientists could use electricity to stimulate or restart life. And where did we get this name galvanism from? So it is named after Luigi Galvani, an Italian doctor. And the concept was put together after Galvani was able to make a frog's legs twitch when he hooked the animal up to an electric charge.

So the idea of giving electricity and bringing our life back to the dead is associated with this notion of galvanism. So electricity was a new and barely understood force when Galvani found his experiments on dissected animals during the late 18th century.

So this discussion of galvanism on the part of Shelley and Byron, and we had the doctor, the physician Polidori, as well in 1816 with them. So all these kind of scientific and pseudo scientific concepts had a deep influence on Mary Shelley and this is important, because we know that Frankenstein put this monster together from disparate body parts. So the idea of putting together things and stitching it back and giving it life is a very, very interesting concept in there and it is connected to the subjects, such as these galvanism and animation, which were being kind of hotly discussed during the 18th century, during the end of the 18th century.

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## Scientific Context

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'The doctor mentioned here was Dr Erasmus Darwin (grandfather of Charles Darwin) whose home in Lichfield is now a museum. He was a famed medical doctor and poet, a renowned botanist and herbalist, who is known to have given lectures on anatomy in the cellar of his own home'.

Source: (Richardson, 2014)




There was a Dr. Darwin mentioned early on and we need to remember that that was Erasmus Darwin, not Charles Darwin. It was Dr. Erasmus Darwin, grandfather of Charles Darwin, and he is the medical, or he was also very famous medical doctor, a renowned botanist and herbalist and he gave a lot of lectures on anatomy in the cellar of his own home. So the topics of interest with regard to anatomy was also important to Shelley, Mary Shelley.


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## Graveyards

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'Mary Shelley grew up during the era of the bodysnatchers. ...the only legal source of bodies for dissection was the gallows - dissection played an essential part in medical training, helping students to learn about the human anatomy.

Source: (Richardson, 2014)



Now, we have talked about Villa Diodati, we have talked about galvanism, animation. We have talked about the weather, the really wild weather, during, during 1816, the year without a summer. So we have talked about all these connected ideas.

We also need to think about graveyards. The image and the narrative surrounding graveyards in the late 18th century, would also have had a great influence on Mary Shelley for these reasons, because Mary Shelley grew up during the era of the bodysnatchers.

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## Bodysnatchers

'But there were not enough murderers' bodies to supply the needs of all the medical students of London. .... Anatomists offered cash to gangs of bodysnatchers, who would go out at night to dig up the freshly buried dead'.

Source: (Richardson, 2014)



In other words, bodies were in fact, there were not enough dead bodies of murderers available for doctors, for medical students. And so what they had to do is, the doctors had to pick gangs of bodysnatchers. And they would dig up the freshly buried dead and hand it over to the doctors and medical students for a payment. So that is how the students got sufficient bodies in order for them to do the examination, dissection and learn about the human anatomy.



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## Bodysnatchers

'When Mary and Shelley had been courting, they often met up in the churchyard at Old St Pancras, which served a large parish, and many dead were buried there.

Being comparatively lonely, St Pancras churchyard had a local reputation as a favoured place for bodysnatchers. Mary Shelley would have known this: after all, she had grown up in the close vicinity.'


Source: (Richardson, 2014)



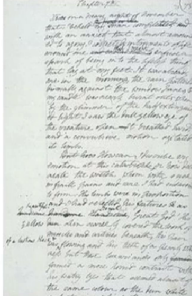
The graveyard is also very important setting for her Mary and Percy Shelley because when they had been courting, they apparently often met up in the churchyard of Old St. Pancras, which served a large parish, and many dead were buried there. So this was a graveyards which was comparatively lonely and it had a local reputation as a favoured place for bodysnatchers. So Mary Shelley would have known this because she had growth up in close vicinity to this particular churchyard.

So the idea of bodysnatching, the idea of murderous bodies being found dismembered, I guess stealing bodies and selling them to doctors for medical experiments. All these are important elements, which would have fed Mary Shelley's imagination and all of this would have contributed to the structuring of her very, very radical Gothic tale Frankenstein.

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## Context



Mary Shelley's manuscript draft of Frankenstein begun at the Villa Novati with marginal notes by Percy Bysshe Shelley

'It was a casual play to while away a few hours in an atmosphere of delicious fear, but it resulted in two iconic tales: Mary Shelley's [Frankenstein](#), a story of scientific transgression and a cautionary warning about the need to take responsibility for one's actions; and John Polidori's [The Vampyre](#), a tale which influenced Bram Stoker's novel [Dracula](#)'

(Buzwell, 2014)


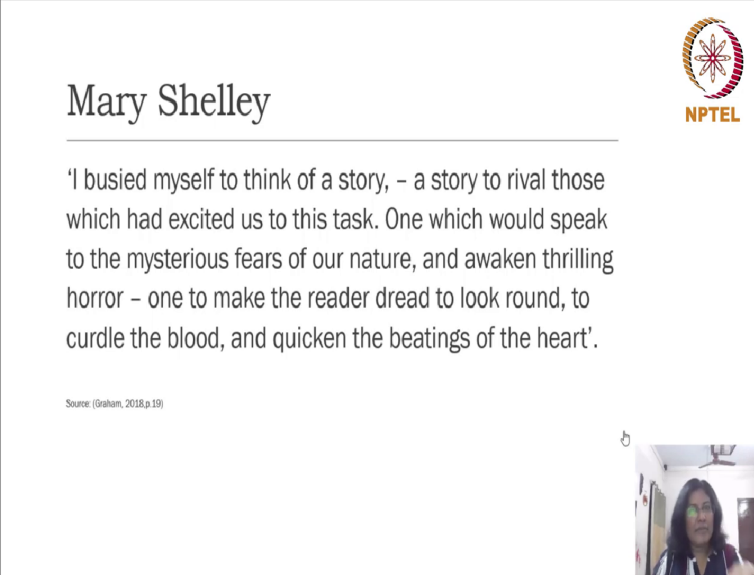


Image source:

Now, we realize that this casual play, the game of writing Gothic short stories is segregated in two very significant text, one is Mary Shelley's Frankenstein. The other is Polidori's The Vampyre, a tale which influenced Bram Stoker's novel Dracula.

Frankenstein is a story of a man's transgression and it is a cautionary tale about the dangers of science, as well as it is a cautionary tale which kind of asks an individual to take responsibility for his or her actions. So it is a very interesting tale with multiple purposes embedded in it. And I have an image of the manuscript drafted Frankenstein and on the margins we can see Shelley's comments, apparently it is believed that Shelley is, Shelley had kind of had an influence of about 4,000 words in this novel. Shelley is the husband Percy Shelley, so he is supposed to have kind of changed about 4,000 words in this capacious novel, there is a minor influence.

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The slide features a title 'Mary Shelley' in a large, dark font. Below the title is a quote: 'I busied myself to think of a story, - a story to rival those which had excited us to this task. One which would speak to the mysterious fears of our nature, and awaken thrilling horror - one to make the reader dread to look round, to curdle the blood, and quicken the beatings of the heart'. The quote is enclosed in a thin rectangular border. In the top right corner of the slide is the NPTEL logo, which consists of a circular emblem with a star-like pattern inside, and the text 'NPTEL' below it. In the bottom right corner, there is a small video feed window showing a woman with dark hair, wearing a dark top, speaking. The background of the slide is white.

Mary Shelley, what did she say about the origins of her work Frankenstein. She says, “I busied myself to think of a story, a story to rival those which had excited us to this task.” She wanted to compete and compete really seriously and produce a story that would kind of strike dread into the heart of the person who is reading it.

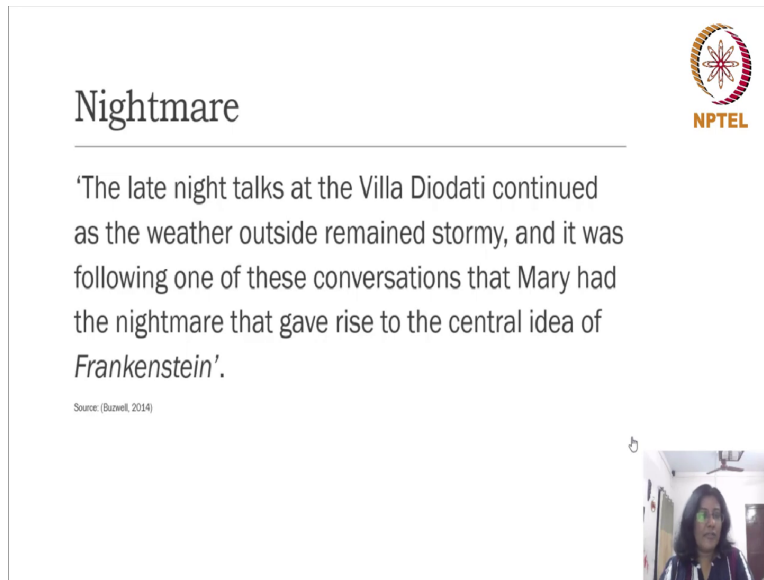
So she says, “one of which would speak to the mysterious fears of our nature, an awaken thrilling horror, one to make the reader dread to look around, to curdle the blood, and quicken the beatings of the heart.”

So, she did want to kind of provoke a particular set of emotions on the part of the reader through this text, and she says that this text would kind of speak to the mysterious fears of our nature, something mysterious about which we used to kind of, which we used to kind of be frightened about. And she also decided to kind of provoke horror in the minds of the reader, something that would really curdle the blood and create a spine tingling moments on the reader and quicken the pace of the heart.

So she really was after producing a really macabre, really scary gothic text. And so she had the gothic genre in her mind when she was thinking about this structure and content of the story. Perfect gothic tale, if we think about this as the intention of the writer and the idea of fear, the mystery, the word mysterious is very important because one of the purposes of gothic fiction is

to kind of provoke fear. It is very basic, intention on the part of gothic text and that fear is a primitive fear, which is in everybody. So it would address that notion, which is in the heart of every reader. So it is a very popular kind of text because of this, because every individual is capable of things scared, because fear is a primary, a primitive quality and Mary Shelley is trying to address, reach that kind of primitive spark in every human being.


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**Nightmare**

'The late night talks at the Villa Diodati continued as the weather outside remained stormy, and it was following one of these conversations that Mary had the nightmare that gave rise to the central idea of *Frankenstein*'.

Source: (Buzwell, 2014)





And all these talks that this group had been having, if we kind of think about it, the idea of galvanism, animation, the gothic poetry, such as close to about being read by Byron, which is scared, apparently scared Shelly and all this ghost-writing competition all these talks about the principle of life and how to bring it back. All these talks at the Villa Diodati continued as the weather outside remains stormy. And it was following one of these conversations that Mary had, the nightmare that gave rise to the central idea of Frankenstein.



So there was a particular moment, during the stay which led to the creation of Frankenstein, because she kind of has a dream about an incident, the key incident in the novel and the nightmare itself is created because of all these external incidents, including the stormy wild weather, as well as the wild subjects that are being discussed. So there is a symbolic as well as a literal manifestation of the wild in those days leading up to the writing of Frankenstein.

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Mary in her 1831 preface to the book:

'Night waned upon this talk, and even the witching hour had gone by before we retired to rest. When I placed my head on my pillow I did not sleep, nor could I be said to think. My imagination, unbidden, possessed and guided me, gifting the successive images that arose in my mind with a vividness far beyond the usual bounds of reverie. I saw - with shut eyes, but acute mental vision - I saw the pale student of the unhallowed arts kneeling beside the thing he had put together. I saw the hideous phantasm of a man stretched out, and then, on the working of some powerful engine show signs of life and stir with an uneasy, half-vital motion ...'

Source: <http://knarf.english.upenn.edu/Coh1/1st10.html>



And this quotation is by Mary herself, Mary Shelley, and she wrote this in the 1831 preface to the book, and let us see what she has to say. “Night waned upon this talk,” it is very literary, if you look at this passage, it has a lot of dosage of the literally, night waned upon this talk. Waned is an interesting word waning and waxing, it is like the moon. “Night waned upon this talk, and even the witching hour had gone by before we retired to rest.”

So they go to bed really late. “When I placed my head on my pillow I did not sleep, nor could I be said to think. My imagination unbidden, possessed and guided me, gifting the successive images that arose in my mind with a vividness far beyond the usual bounds of reverie. I saw with shut eyes, but acute mental vision. I saw the pale student of the unhallowed arts kneeling beside the thing he had put together. I saw the hideous phantasm of a man stretched out, and then, on the working of some powerful engine show signs of life and stir with an uneasy, half-vital motion.”

So this is the nightmare, the scene that comes to her mind is that the hideous image of a man stretched out and on the working of some powerful engine showing signs of life and stir with an uneasy half-vital motion. So she kind of dreams that really key moment of the dead coming back to life, of only being kind of given reference to his life, the spark of life and we have a reference to the student, the medical student as well who is kind of kneeling by that thing, which is going to get life from the hands of the students.

So, this is being dreamed by Mary and this is born out of her imagination, which is kind of giving her very clear vivid picture. And we know what led to this kind of nightmare and you can see how the story seems to kind of come into the mind of Mary Shelley, it is born out of instinct, it comes deep within the recesses of the human mind. So the birth of the story is not any kind of rational, not due to any kind of rational process, but it is more of this cauldron of imagination, which all of which right that apparently does not seem to have any control. So if this imagination comes unbidden, without any seeking of it on the writer's part, on Mary's part it possess her. So the spark of creativity is kind of a spirit, which possesses the writer.

Thank you for watching. I will continue in the next session.