



## Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*: what made the Monster monstrous?

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*Abstract:* This paper discusses the genesis of the famous story of *Frankenstein* which arose from a dream experienced by Mary Shelley whilst on a holiday shared with her husband Percy Shelley, Lord Byron, Dr Polidori and her step sister Claire Clairmont. The novel relates how the creature created by Victor Frankenstein horrifies him, is rejected by him and called a monster. The monster's ensuing despair and subsequent murderousness is eloquently described. The whole book is clearly connected to Mary Shelley's experience as an infant whose mother died after giving birth to her and her subsequent loss, as a mother, of her own new born infant. It is suggested that the novel imaginatively describes what it is to have been primarily rejected as an infant and to feel regarded as a monster.

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No written work of the Romantic school of literature has been of greater interest to 20th century scholarship than Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*. Almost as much literary fascination has been aroused by its genesis as by the novel. This was at a house party in the holiday home of Lord Byron on Lake Geneva in June 1816; present at the Villa Diodati with Lord Byron were the poet Percy Bysshe Shelley and Mary Godwin, as she was then, plus her stepsister, Claire Clairmont, and Dr. Polidori, a young doctor. Mary Shelley's own account is in the preface she wrote 15 years later for the 1831 third edition of her novel, *Frankenstein*.<sup>1</sup> Through her journal and letters, and the diary of Dr. Polidori we know a good deal more about that time in Geneva than she disclosed in the preface.

Much has been written on *Frankenstein* from various points of view and it is not my intention to summarize or supersede these but, as an analyst, to explore Mary Shelley's relationship to it. In order to do this, I treat the preface of 1831

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<sup>1</sup> Frankenstein is the name of a hilltop castle near the Rhine which was visited by the Shelley party en route to Lake Geneva in 1816. Johann Conrad Dippel, a pastor's son, was born there in 1673. He became a fashionable physician who bought it later; he was also an alchemist and dabbler in human dissection. He adopted the name Dippel Frankenstein.

as if it were like a preliminary consultation, with the other parts of her history and the novel itself as what might have emerged in a subsequent analysis. So, let us start at this imaginary consultation.

We know that her husband, the poet Shelley, drowned in a boating accident in Italy nine years before in 1822 and that she has one surviving child, Percy, now aged 12.

Four years ago in 1826 she published another science fiction novel, *The Last Man*, in which a pandemic wiped out all humanity leaving one man anticipating his own death sitting in the ruins of Rome. She began writing *The Last Man* in 1824, the month that Byron died in Greece; so then, of the Geneva summer party, only she and Claire were still alive. Dr. Polidori had poisoned himself with prussic acid, aged only 21.

So let us imagine that Mary Shelley is consulting us in 1831 when, at 34, she is about to publish the third edition of *Frankenstein*.<sup>2</sup> She comes with a question on her mind, 'How did she, an 18-year-old girl, come to think of and dilate upon so very hideous an idea?'

As I would with a consultation, I will underline what seems significant in the preface and also what facts are missing, such as those that would have emerged in a subsequent analysis.

She begins by saying that, as the daughter of two persons of distinguished literary celebrity, she thought she should be a writer. Her father, William Godwin, was the famous radical author of *Enquiry concerning Political Justice*, and her mother, Mary Wollstonecraft, of the equally famed *Vindication of the Rights of Woman*. Her husband, Mary said, was very anxious that she should prove herself worthy of her parentage and enroll herself on the page of fame. Though as a child she wrote stories, these were realistic and nothing as compared with her secret daydreams, which were at once more fantastic and agreeable; they were her refuge when annoyed and her deepest pleasure when free. She emphasizes that she was not confined to her own identity in these daydreams, she became others and so peopled them with creatures far more interesting than her own sensations.

In the summer of 1816 the group in the Villa Diodati read German ghost stories to frighten each other. She remembers two of them as if they were told yesterday. One is of a lover who clasps his bride to whom he had pledged his vows, only to find himself in the arms of the ghost of the woman he had deserted. The other is of the sinful founder of his race, who is fated to bestow death on his beloved sons when he kisses them, they 'from the hour of the kiss withered like flowers snapped upon the stalk'. At Byron's suggestion, they agreed to invent a frightening story each. She adds that she listened to a discussion between Byron and Shelley on the basis of life and the hints of

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<sup>2</sup> 1831 is the year England came closest to revolution, when the House of Lords blocked the Reform Bill and mobs throughout the country destroyed houses and terrified opponents of the Bill. It was only resolved by passage of the 1832 Act.

reanimation that galvanism had given by producing movement in corpses. 'Perhaps the component parts of a creature might be manufactured, brought together and endued with vital warmth', she says (Shelley 1994, p. 195).

This interestingly also describes her method as a writer. She makes a strong statement about the creation of fiction: 'Everything must have a beginning .... Invention ... does not consist in creating out of void, but out of chaos; the materials must in the first place be afforded: it [invention] can give form to dark, shapeless substances, but [it] cannot bring into being the substance itself' (ibid., p. 195). In our terms, she is saying the unconscious has to provide the raw material for 'invention' to shape a story. This is very similar to Freud's idea of secondary revision making a narrative from dream elements, which he compared as analogous to a daydream. If we see this secondary revision-like daydream as a sort of closure putting the lid back on unconscious phantasy, sometimes I think we could see it working in reverse. And I suggest that Mary's daydream of scientific experiment opened a door to unconscious phantasies of a dreadful scene of childbirth.

When she went to bed that night in the Villa Diodati, this is what she describes: 'I saw with shut eyes but acute mental vision. The pale student of unhallowed arts kneeling beside the thing he has put together'. She saw, 'the hideous phantasm of a man stretched out and then, on the working of some powerful engine, show signs of life'. She emphasizes she was '*possessed*' by her '*unbidden and uncontrollable imagination*' far beyond reverie (ibid., p. 196). This clearly was no daydream. I would call it *a night terror*; a sleep-induced visual hallucination that persists on waking. Then she saw the artist rush away from his odious handy work, and she describes how he hoped that sleep might abolish his horror and the silence of the grave abolish the hideous, animated corpse. But when he opens his eyes, behold the horrid thing stands at his bedside opening his curtains and looking at him with yellow, watery but expectant eyes. She opened hers with terror at this point but could not rid herself of her phantom.

She tried unsuccessfully to distract herself by trying to think of a ghost story until, swift as light and as cheering, *she had the idea that what terrified her will terrify others*, that she needed only to describe the spectre that had haunted her midnight pillow to be free of it. She began the next day telling her story. This process that leaves her feeling cheery we would call projective identification and Mary Shelley was a past master of it: in her daydreaming, her story telling, and in the construction of her novels.

What she leaves out of this imputed consultation is of more significance than what is included. First, more on her 'distinguished parentage': she was the only child of William Godwin and Mary Wollstonecraft but she never knew her mother as she died from puerperal sepsis 11 days after giving birth. She knew her only from her writings and her childhood daydreams as she often sat by her mother's grave. It was on her mother's grave that Shelley seduced her when she was 16.

Mary had an older half-sister, Fanny, whose father was Gilbert Imlay, an American who Mary Wollstonecraft lived with in Paris during the French revolution and the subsequent 'terror'. He abandoned her when back in London, leaving her desperately suicidal. William Godwin helped her to recover and despite their mutual scorn of convention they married and Mary was the product of their union.

After his wife's death, Godwin was determined to produce a proper 'family' and he believed he had achieved this by re-marrying when Mary was four. However, Mary detested her stepmother who brought with her two stepsiblings, Charles and Claire. Godwin thought he had created a happy family; what Mary thought he created was a hell on earth.

The presence of Claire Clairmont, her stepsister, is one of the most notable omissions from her recollected account of the Diodati party. There were in fact five of them and it was Claire who had engineered their presence having seduced Byron a short time before in London. Also with them in Geneva was William, Mary's six-month-old baby. His name is of considerable significance: it was her father's name and, until she was born, it was her name, constantly spoken of by the expectant parents as they planned their son's education. Mary gave this name to her son, her second child, and it is the name she gives in her novel to Victor Frankenstein's little brother who is the Monster's first victim. Mary's first child was a girl who, born prematurely, died nameless a few days after birth. In her journal of March 1815 she wrote: 'Dream that my little baby came to life again ... I awake and find no baby ... I thought that if I could bestow animation upon lifeless matter, I might, in process of time, renew life where death had apparently devoted the body to corruption' (Moers 2012, p. 324). Her son, William, was born a year later.

When Shelley and Mary had eloped in 1814, two years before the holiday at Villa Diodati, they took with them Claire Clairmont: they became a *ménage à trois* of sorts. They were supposedly all advocates of 'free love'; 'Otaheite philosophers', Claire named them, referring to the stories of the promiscuity of the newly discovered islanders of Tahiti. When they signed the hotel register at Chamonix they provocatively described themselves as 'atheists' in the hotel register. But, by 1816, Mary's idea of bliss was to be *without* Claire: she wrote to Shelley, 'Give me a garden & *absentia Clariae* and I will thank my love for many favours' (Seymour 2011, p. 165). There were other unmentioned, uncomfortable facts: when they eloped in 1814, Shelley had abandoned his wife, Harriet, and their child when Harriett was five months into a second pregnancy.

So we have as unmentioned background facts to her nightmare: her mother's death in childbirth; Shelley's abandonment of Harriett and his children; her experience of having a dead baby girl; the birth of a son to whom she gave her own pre-natal name; and her increasing hostility to Claire. Over-determination seems to be an understatement.

But I think the immediate provocation of the night-terror is another omission: the drama that occurred during Byron's reading of Coleridge's poem *Christabel*.

This we know from Dr. Polidori's diary: 'LB repeated some verses of Coleridge's *Christabel*, of the witch's breast: when silence ensued & Shelley, shrieking and putting his hands to his head, ran out of the room with a candle. [I] Threw water in his face and, after, gave him some ether. He was looking at Mrs. S & suddenly thought of a woman he had heard of who had eyes instead of nipples, which, taking of his mind, horrified him' (Seymour 2011, p. 157).

*Christabel* is a strange, supra-natural, quasi-medieval epic written by Coleridge as a successor to *The Ancient Mariner*. Christabel, personification of virginal beauty, leaves her father's castle at midnight and goes to the wood where she rescues Geraldine, whom she takes to be a maiden in distress, who subsequently bewitches and seduces her. This is the passage that provoked Shelley's hallucination:

Beneath the lamp the lady bowed,  
And slowly rolled her eyes around;  
Then drawing in her breath aloud,  
Like one that shuddered, she unbound  
The cincture from beneath her breast:  
Her silken robe and inner vest,  
Dropt to her feet, and full in view,  
Behold! her bosom and half her side-  
A sight to dream of, not to tell!  
O shield her! Shield sweet Christabel.

(Coleridge 1985, p. 73)

This poem and Shelley's hysterical reaction were amongst the assembly of disturbing experiences, unconscious phantasies, guilty secrets and wishful daydreams that joined together to become a horrifying night dream of which the dreamer, Mary, no longer had control. Like the student of unhallowed arts, she just wished that it would go away, 'He hoped that he might sleep and that the silence of the grave would quench forever the transient existence of the hideous corpse which he had looked upon as the cradle of life' (Shelley 1994, p. 196).

Her night terror begins its daytime transformation when the dreamer becomes the author with a story that will terrify others. The creature's development continues as she makes it into a novel. *Christabel* played a further part when, two months later, Shelley read it aloud, this time without incident. The poem has two elements of particular relevance to Mary's novel: one is motherlessness and the other is gaze.

In the poem, Christabel said of her mother, 'She died the hour that I was born'. Gaze is also central in both *Christabel* and the novel. Coleridge, taking his cue from Milton, describes a transformation in Geraldine's eyes:

...the lady's eyes they shrunk in her head,  
Each shrunk up to a serpent's eye,  
And with somewhat of malice and more of dread,  
At Christabel she looked askance.

(Coleridge 1985, p. 82)

‘Askance’ is the word used in *Paradise Lost* when Satan looks on at Adam and Eve making love.

What do we think is passing through Mary’s mind, listening to Shelley read this together with Claire, as she hears Sir Leoline proposing to adopt Geraldine, and when Christabel pleads to her father: ‘By my soul I do entreat / That thou this woman send away?’ (ibid., p. 83).

### From night terror to novel

Mary dealt with her night terror by turning it into a short story and then, over nine months, into a novel. In this, Victor Frankenstein, ambitious young scientist, creates a living man from bits and pieces but when his creation actually comes to life he is horrified by its appearance and flees. He hopes to escape into sleep but he walks into a nightmare: there he meets and embraces his fiancé, Elizabeth, but at the first kiss she is transformed into the rotting corpse of his dead mother, with grave worms crawling in her shroud. When, horrified, he wakes, he sees the creature at his bedside looking at him expectantly with outstretched hand. In horror, Frankenstein rushes off again. From then, like Coleridge’s *Ancient Mariner*, he ‘doth walk in fear and dread / and having once turn’d round walks on / and no more turns his head; / because he knows a frightful fiend / doth close behind him tread’ (Coleridge 1985, p. 63).

From July 1816 Mary worked on the novel whilst concurrently reading *Paradise Lost*, and finished it in May 1817. A great deal happened in those nine months. They returned to England to relative poverty and to two suicides: Mary’s half-sister, Fanny, who felt excluded from the Shelley entourage, killed herself, and Harriet Smith, Shelley’s abandoned wife, drowned herself. Shelley and Mary married in December 1817, despite which Shelley failed in Court to gain custody of his two children.

On the positive side, the Shelleys’ marriage, though scorned as a bourgeois concession by Shelley and Claire, reconciled Mary with her delighted father, from whom she had been painfully estranged since her elopement. The Leigh Hunts, Keats’s main supporters, befriended them and, in their cheerful, child-filled home, dominated by Marianne Leigh Hunt, Mary experienced real happiness. She conceived again in December.

### The novel

The novel has a complex form. There are three narrators: Victor Frankenstein, the scientist; his creation, the Monster; and Robert Walton, who relays all their stories to his sister by letter. Walton does this whilst trying to find an unprecedented North Passage through the Arctic ice. The unusual structure and ambience of the novel only resembles one other—*Wuthering Heights*—which was written

30 years later by another great daydreamer, Emily Bronte. Muriel Sparks's apt biographical comment that 'until she wrote *Wuthering Heights* Emily Bronte did not know herself' (Spark & Stanford 1966) I think applies even more to Mary Shelley and *Frankenstein*.

We know from Mary's account of her daydreaming method that she inhabits three characters of her novel: she speaks for them and they speak for her. I think Robert Walton, intrepid, arctic adventurer, is an old daydream character from her childhood years in Scotland. Victor Frankenstein, the second narrator and the new Prometheus, is modelled on Shelley, Byron and William Lawrence, the controversial professor of evolutionary anatomy. The third and by far the most eloquent voice is that of the Monster and he speaks for Mary's unconscious, saying things she does not really know about herself.

He does so in two major passages: in the first, accusingly, he addresses Victor Frankenstein who created him and rejected him; in the second, over the dead body of Frankenstein, he explains his own destructiveness, his suffering and his guilt.

His first speech, some years after his disastrous birth, follows his first two crimes, the murder of the boy William, Victor's little brother, and his culpable incrimination of the nursemaid Justine, wrongly judged and executed. The central provocation of both these crimes is a locket worn by William, with a picture of his dead, beautiful mother, 'No mother had blessed me with smiles and caresses', said the monster. 'Remember', he said to Frankenstein, 'I am thy creature; I ought to be thy Adam but I am rather the fallen angel.... I was benevolent and good, misery made me a fiend. Make me happy and I shall again be virtuous.... Will no entreaties cause you to turn a favourable eye upon thy creature ... you my creator abhor me; what hope can I gather from your fellow creatures ... they spurn and hate me' (Shelley 1994, p. 78). He argues that the hateful, horrified eye turned on him as the newborn creature makes him a fiend.

The Monster explains that, after leaving his birthplace in Frankenstein's rooms, he eventually had found a family living in a cottage on which he could spy unseen. There with a mixture of observation and idealization he had learnt language, history and human relationships. He then found some books: *Paradise Lost*, *Plutarch's Lives* and *The Sorrows of Werther* (the key precursors of the Romantic writers), that formed the basis of his self-education. It was the horrified rejection of him by this ideal family when he finally plucked up courage to approach them that inflamed his anger. 'From that moment', he said, 'I declared everlasting war against the species. If I cannot inspire love, I will cause fear' (Ibid., p. 111). The Monster's proposed solution is for Frankenstein to create a bride for him who would reciprocate his love and thus render him benign. 'If any being felt emotions of benevolence towards me, I should return them a hundred-fold.... I would make peace with the whole kind ... my creator, make me happy; let me feel gratitude towards you for one benefit' (ibid., p. 119).

Frankenstein is reluctantly persuaded by this promise and prepares himself to do this, in remote Scotland. At the last moment, when he is about to give life to

this newly-created female whilst watched through the window by the Creature, he changes his mind and furiously destroys his work. The Monster, enraged, cries out, 'Shall each man find a wife for his bosom, and each beast have his mate, and I be alone? Remember', he says, 'I shall be with you on your wedding night' (ibid., p. 114).

There are then two more murders: Clerval, Victor's ideal, bosom friend, and Elizabeth, his bride, on their wedding night before their marriage was consummated. This radically changes the story: up to this point Frankenstein was haunted by the Creature; now, as his pursuer, he became the hunter and the Monster the hunted.

We do not meet the Monster again until Robert Walton finds him crouched over the dead body of Frankenstein, who died on board his ship. Victor's last effort had been to inspire Robert and his crew, by his rhetoric, to persist in their hazardous mission to their near certain death. Despite the rhetoric Robert Walton turned for home and survival, rather than heroic, fatal, failure.

The Monster, speaking over Victor's dead body, who had died of exhaustion in vain pursuit of him, says, 'in his murder my crimes are consummated.... O, Frankenstein, generous and self-devoted being, what does it avail that I now ask thee to pardon me' (ibid., p. 187)? The Monster describes how he was driven to a terrible revenge when Frankenstein, who destroyed his hopes of marital fulfillment, planned to marry, himself. 'When I discovered the author of my existence dared hope for happiness...then impotent envy and bitter indignation filled me with an insatiable thirst for vengeance. "Evil thenceforth became my good"' (ibid., p. 188), he says, quoting Satan in *Paradise Lost*. But he claims that though he inflicted pain on Frankenstein:

He suffered ... not the ten-thousand part of the anguish that was mine during ... its execution. A frightful selfishness hurried me on, while my heart was poisoned with remorse. My heart was fashioned to be susceptible of love and sympathy: and when wrenched by misery to vice and hatred, it did not endure the violence of the change without torture.... I was the slave not the master of an impulse, which I detested, yet could not disobey.

(Shelley 1994, p. 188)

And yet there is a flourish of final, masochistic triumph as the Monster leaves the ship, planning to die by fire. 'Farewell, Frankenstein... Blasted as thou wert, my agony was still superior to thine; for the bitter sting of remorse may not cease to rankle in my wounds until death shall close them for ever' (ibid., p. 191).

## Discussion

It gives a sense of the literary context in which she wrote *Frankenstein* to bear in mind it is contemporaneous with Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*. It has been said that this *Frankenstein* turned the genre of fashionable, superstitious,



Gothic novels into science fiction. It was the first novel to be written by a woman contemporaneously with her experience of childbirth. Mary actually was very fond of children but imaginatively describes the absolute horror of peri-natal rejection for both mother and child. The antithesis of Wordsworth's infant babe, who, 'nursed in his mother's arms ... doth gather passion from his mother's eyes' (Wordsworth 1979, p. 78), is the Creature, who looks expectantly only to see horror and hatred in them. This she unhesitatingly suggests means that he will only repeat this experience. There is then an interlude in the account of her creature's mental development that follows Locke's ideas and her father's 'Benthamite' views. These psychologically optimistic ideas are rudely interrupted by the next major experience of rejection by the Creature that leads to his war on the species.

As we listen to her Monster speaking of his experience, we hear the philosophical voice of David Hume rather than John Locke. Reason is the slave of the passions, natural beliefs inform daily life not golden reason according to Hume. 'I was the slave, not the master, of an impulse which I detested, yet could not disobey' (Shelley 1994, p. 188), says the Monster. In his first speech we could say he was in the paranoid schizoid position; in the second, he was in the depressive position. In the novel, his account reminds us that Melanie Klein's first description of the depressive position was of a psychotic version. 'But [it is] the ego's hatred of the id which is paramount in this phase ... it is the ego's unconscious knowledge that the hate ... may ... get the upper hand ... which brings about the sorrow, feelings of guilt and the despair which underlie grief, (Klein 1935, p. 270).

In Mary Shelley's novel, only Robert Walton, of her three narrators, survives: Victor Frankenstein dies after urging everyone on the ship to continue their suicidal mission; and the Monster leaves the ship to embrace a self-inflicted, painful death. Only Robert Walton, the intrepid explorer, remains, judiciously but reluctantly turning for home. The Monster of the 'deep unconscious' is returned to ashes, Frankenstein, the ego ideal, is safely housed in idealized posterity and Robert, the ego, steers back into more mundane and safer waters.

Mary Shelley's is not a 'Gothic novel'; unlike them, it is not a supernatural horror story: the creator's horror is the beginning of a natural tragedy. One when a mother looks at a newborn baby and sees a monster. This Monster is not super-human; he is all too human. Her daydreaming has not provided an escape from her unconscious; it has opened the door to it. However, she finds a new home for horror in the minds of her readers. 'And now', she says on launching a new edition, 'once again I bid my hideous progeny go forth and prosper. I have an affection for it, for it was the offspring of happy days, when death and grief were but words, which found no echo in my heart' (Butler 1994, p. 197). Though worse followed, including the death of two more children and of her husband, can we really accept her claim of happy days when death and grief were just words? Is not this retrospective denial? As her extraordinarily wise Monster says, 'Of what a strange nature is

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knowledge! It clings to the mind, when once it has seized on it, like lichen on the rock. I wished sometimes to shake off all thought and feeling; but I learned that there was but one means to overcome the sensation of pain and that was death' (Shelley 1994, p. 190).

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TRANSLATIONS OF ABSTRACT

Cet article parle de la genèse du célèbre roman *Frankenstein*, né à la suite d'un rêve fait par Mary Shelley, alors qu'elle était en vacances avec son mari Percy Shelley, Lord Byron, Le Dr Polidori, et sa belle-sœur Claire Clairmont. Le roman raconte comment Victor Frankenstein est horrifié et rejette la créature qu'il a créée, et l'appelle un monstre. S'ensuivent le désespoir et le côté assassin chez le monstre, qui sont décrits avec éloquence. Le livre entier est clairement relié à l'expérience précoce de Mary Shelley, dont la mère est morte en lui donnant naissance, ainsi qu'à la perte, en tant que mère, de son enfant nouveau-né. Il est suggéré que ce roman décrit de façon imaginaire ce qu'il en est d'avoir été rejeté précocement en tant qu'enfant et d'être considéré comme un monstre.

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Dieser Beitrag behandelt die Entstehungsgeschichte der berühmten Frankenstein-Geschichte, die einer Traumerfahrung von Mary Shelley entsprang, während sie sich gemeinsam mit ihrem Ehemann Percy Shelley, Lord Byron, Dr. Polidori und ihrer Stiefschwester Claire Clairmont auf einer Urlaubsreise befand. Der Roman erzählt, wie die von Victor Frankenstein erschaffene Kreatur ihn in Schrecken versetzt, von ihm zurückgestoßen und als Monster bezeichnet wird. Eloquent werden die beim Monster entstehende Verzweiflung und die sich daraus ergebende Mordgier beschrieben. Das gesamte Buch zeigt deutliche Verbindungen zu Mary Shelleys Erfahrungen als Kind, dessen Mutter bei der Geburt starb, als auch als Mutter, die ihr eigenes Neugeborenes verlor. Es wird vermutet, daß der Roman auf schöpferische Weise beschreibt was es bedeutet, primär als Kind zurückgewiesen und als Monster angesehen zu werden.

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In questo lavoro si prende in considerazione la famosa storia di Frankenstein che prese origine da un sogno fatto da Mary Shelley durante una vacanza condivisa con suo marito Percy Shelley, Lord Byron, Dr. Polidori e la sua sorellastra Clair Clairmont. Il racconto fa riferimento al modo in cui la creatura creata da Victor Frankenstein lo terrorizzò e da lui venga rifiutata e chiamata mostro. Viene eloquentemente descritta la conseguente disperazione del mostro e la susseguente ferocia omicida. L'intero libro è chiaramente connesso all'esperienza infantile di Mary Shelley, la cui madre morì dopo averla partorita e alla sua susseguente perdita, come madre, del suo stesso neonato. Viene da pensare che il racconto descriva in modo immaginario cosa deve essere stato dapprima sentirsi rifiutata da neonata e poi l'essersi sentita considerata come un mostro.

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В этой статье обсуждается происхождение знаменитой истории о Франкенштейне, появившейся на свет из сновидения Мэри Шелли в выходной день – сновидения, которым она поделилась со своим мужем Перси Шелли, лордом Байроном, доктором

Полидори и со своей сводной сестрой Клэр Клэрмонт. Роман рассказывает, как существо, созданное Виктором Франкенштейном, ужасает его, отвергается им и называется чудовищем, монстром. Красноречиво описывается отчаяние этого чудовища и последовавшая за ним смертоносность. Вся книга в целом явно связано с детским переживанием Мэри Шелли, мать которой умерла в родах, и с ее собственной потерей, уже самой в качестве матери, своего новорожденного младенца. В статье делается предположение, что роман образно описывает, каково это – быть отвергнутым младенцем и чувствовать себя монстром.

El presente trabajo discute la génesis de la famosa historia de Frankenstein, que emergió de un sueño experimentado por Mary Shelley mientras compartía unas vacaciones con su marido Percy Shlley, Lord Byron, el doctor Polidori y su hermanastra Claire Clairmont. La novela relata cómo la criatura creada por Víctor Frankenstein lo horroriza, es rechazada por él y llamada un monstruo. Luego se describe de manera elocuente la consecuente desesperación y subsiguiente capacidad asesina del monstruo. El libro completo se conecta claramente con la experiencia de Mary Shelley como infante, cuya madre muere luego del parto, y su subsiguiente pérdida, como madre, de su propio bebé recién nacido. Se sugiere que la novela describe imaginativamente lo que es ser rechazado primeramente como bebé, y cómo se siente ser considerado un monstruo.

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