KILL OR CURE: A TASTE OF MEDICINE EXHIBITION JULY 2022 – JANUARY 2023 AT THE STATE LIBRARY OF NEW SOUTH WALES

A Talk given to the ABA on 11th March 2023

by Elise Edmonds

There seems to be a lot of interesting items that come out of Scottish attics. Over the years, the State Library has acquired some fascinating treasures for its collection — whether books, original art works or objects, these have made their way out of the ancestral homes of British families who helped run the British empire and headed south to NSW.

Back in 2013, the Library purchased some of the last remaining items that belonged to the Macquarie family from the Island of Mull in the Hebrides. This travelling medicine chest which belonged to Governor Macquarie, his wife Elizabeth and their son, Lachlan Junior dates from the early 1820s. Made of mahogany, with crushed velvet lining, and containing some 15-glass apothecary bottles, along with weights

and a set of scales to measure dosages, we can get a glimpse into the health and ailments of the Macquarie family from the 1820s when they returned to Britain from NSW.

Acquiring this item was my introduction to the long history of western medicine. It was clear from researching some of the accompanying labels and the hand-written inventory that this was the age of heroic medicines: powerful powders which were essentially purgatives (inducing vomiting or clearing the bowels), stimulants, or analgesics (painkillers) and ointments. Some of the medicines included:

Calomel (mercury chloride), used to treat a variety of conditions: constipation, cholera, dysentery, pleurisy, fever, malaria, syphilis, gout and worms.

Gregory's Powder, one of the most common self-prescribed medicines for over a hundred and fifty years. Developed by a Scottish physician, Dr Gregory, this mixture of rhubarb, ginger and magnesium carbonate was taken for indigestion, flatulence and acidity.

Paregoric Elixir (camphorated tincture of opium) a household remedy, widely used to control diarrhea in adults and children, an expectorant and cough medicine, to calm fretful children, and to rub on the gums of teething infants.

Sweet spirit of Nitre (a derivative of nitric acid): induces perspiration and stimulates urine, promoting secretions.

Dover's powder: Ipecac and Opium Powder to induce sweating, to treat a "cold" and at the beginning of any attack of fever. It was also used to treat dysentery, persistent diarrhoea or cholera, and for the relief of pain.

Best Indian Rhubarb: powdered rhubarb roots: an ancient medicine usually mixed into wine and was a mild and easy purgative (clearing the bowels). It was prescribed for just about any sort of illness and has been used medicinally for centuries, going back to ancient times. Chinese medicines used it, and the Ancient Greeks: In the 1st century CE.

Dioscorides, a physician, pharmacologist and botanist wrote that rhubarb was good for gaseousness, weakness of the stomach, all types of suffering, convulsions, spleen, liver ailments, inflammation in the kidneys, griping and disorders of the bladder and chest, and many other problems … spitting up blood, asthma, rickets, dysentery, abdominal cavity afflictions.
We have in this one object, a shortcut to understanding centuries of medical history and how western medicine understood health, sickness and medications, pointing to the enduring theory of the four humours, which can be traced back to ancient times.

The central idea was around purging the body. Apart from taking strong medicines, other practices included bloodletting: either using a scarificator, and/or cupping to remove excess blood from the body, applying leeches to specific body parts, or 'breathing a vein' by a doctor or barber surgeon. These practices, it was believed, would let nature heal the body and restore it back to balance.

It was humoral medicine, or the theory of the four humours, which was not finally debunked until the mid to late 19th century.

For centuries, it was understood that the body was composed of 'four humours' or liquids: blood, yellow bile, black bile and phlegm. Medical treatment took one of two approaches: rebalancing the good humours and purging the bad out of the body. It was not disease that was treated, but its symptoms, which were seen to result from an imbalance of the four elements which made up the human body. Restoring balance equated to a healthy body. And we know now that 'bleeding, purging, blistering, vomiting, and sweating' could of course, do more harm than good.

The concept of the four humours was inherited from the ancient Greek philosophers: Aristotle, Hippocrates, and Galen. Organized around the four elements of earth, water, air and fire and the four qualities of cold, hot, moist, and dry, the four humours were linked to the four seasons. Over the centuries, the magic of 'four' continued: four winds, four evangelists. Medieval scholars added the four temperaments or personalities: sanguine, choleric, phlegmatic and melancholic, which, if you visited the exhibition, you may have seen at the entrance to the exhibition where visitors could discover their own dominant humour.

The balance of humours in the body could change, depending on age, times in your life, from one person to another. Moving into the Middle Ages, if you were ill, the physician would read the signs – take a case history, practice close observation of the patient, take the pulse, test the urine, taste it. It was a wholistic treatment, not specific treatments for a specific ailment, but the whole system was examined: macrocosm and microcosm. Medicine was a series of addition and subtraction, and treatment was tailored to the constitution of the

specific person. This 'reading the signs' though didn't necessarily mean that the patient themselves were examined. Physicians tended to be 'hands-off' gentlemen who didn't get their hands dirty, sometimes only corresponding with their patients remotely.

Specific foods were used to treat ill health, and humoural medicine taught that opposite treats opposite, for example, if there was an excess of Black bile (which is cold and dry), then the patient may be given food that would be wet and hot. All food stuffs had qualities: hot, wet, dry which were available to treat the patient. We see this with the herbals: compendiums of knowledge of known plants and their healing qualities that often noted the qualities: whether hot, dry.

With the invention in the west of the printing press in the 1440s and into the 1450s, herbals were among the early books to be printed. They contain the names and descriptions of plants, their medicinal properties, where they can be found growing, and often include recipes for ointments, herbal extracts or potions.

Saffron dryveth away all inflamations. But specially the inflamations of the eyes with the whyt of an eg

St John's wurt: The sede of this herbe is good for the Sciatica.
A Cucumber is good for the belly and stomack it cooleth and it is not soon corrupted

Stincking Horehounde: with honey also they purge fylthy and foule woundes
Stinking Gladdon: They are effectuall against the cough: they easily digest, and consume the grosse humors, they purge choler and tough flegme

The printing in English of these herbals, beginning with the first illustrated English edition was printed by Treveris in 1526: The Grete Herball.

Herbal remedies all good and well, until you get an epidemic disease. The theory of the 4 humours was wanting when it came to syphilis, smallpox, the plague and other epidemics. Although they gave it a go, patients suffering from these infectious diseases were treated with traditional methods: expelling the excess, unhealthy humours (bloodletting, sweating, and in the case of syphilis, excess salivation), to little effect.

Another type of medicine studied by physicians from the Middle Ages through to the early modern period was astrology.

Astronomy and astrology became integrated into diagnosis and treatment after Arabic writings were translated and circulated into Europe in the Middle Ages. Doctors consulted astrological tables, examining the positions of the planets and their relationship to the body and its diseases. Astrology predicted the outcome of an illness and indicated the most auspicious time for carrying out a range of medical treatments — the best time to let blood, take medicines, carry out surgery and bathing. Tracking the phases of the moon was important due to its influence on fluids in the bodies of living things. Astrology was also studied in order to explain the origins of a disease or predicting a coming disease (the deadly epidemics that broke out across Europe, such as the Plague, the Great Pox/Syphilis).

So, it was the study of the macrocosm: planets, stars and the zodiac, and the microcosm: the minutiae of the individual human body. Tracking the various conjunctions

of planets and their characteristics was highly complex, and treatments could become highly complex, with individualised procedures based on your own complexion/temperament, astrological sign, and planetary conjunctions.

Bloodletting was a practice employed for all types of ailments. It was one of the cure-alls. It was systematic, its affects were immediate. As a placebo it was probably quite powerful. The lancet or fleam became the symbol of the orthodox physician through the 19th century.

Over the centuries, bloodletting or phlebotomy was used to treat a wide variety of symptoms and conditions.

Robert Burton, an English clergyman, who wrote on what might now be called depression and other mental illnesses in his book, The Anatomy of Melancholy in 1621 recommended bloodletting;

"Where the blood is drawn from is important for healing powers. For highly coloured faces: bloodletting in the arms or cupping glasses on the shoulders in order to reduce redness, drawing blood away from the face. For all over melancholy, blood should be let from the arm, usually on the side where there is the most pain, and afterwards the knees or the forehead. Bloodletting virgins: in the ankles, who are melancholy for love matters and also for widows that are much grieved and troubled, for bad blood flows in the heart… "

Drawing blood by making small incisions with a short, sharp knife could release, or reroute, dangerous excess humours, cooling and ventilating the patient's core. It was thought eating too much red meat and drinking too much port would result in heat rushing to the head, requiring bloodletting. The procedure could even be performed pre-emptively before sickness struck, or to prepare for a hot summer.

The use of leeches in bleeding patients in Europe peaked between 1830 and 1850. These are a type of worm which, when applied to the skin, can suck out several times its body weight in blood. Leech collectors, usually women from northern England and Scotland would wade into ponds with their skirts raised to attract the leeches to their bare legs, suffering blood loss themselves in the process.

Patients continued to be bled to relieve symptoms throughout the 19th century, until around the turn of the century where the practice was finally discredited. Bloodletting was one of the longest enduring practices - originated by ancient physicians yet proved completely pointless.

Regarding epidemics, I focused on two infectious diseases: the bubonic plague and smallpox, but of course there were many terrible infectious diseases that broke out in the 19th century.

Before the breakthrough understanding of germ theory and the understanding that transmission of disease was from person to person, it was thought that infectious diseases were spread by corruptions in the air – that contagion was to be found in places with bad air – miasmas, which could be transferred onto cloths, household stuff, and individuals.

This reminds me of the descriptions of the Orphan Asylum at the beginning of *Jane Eyre* with the descriptions of 'fog-bred pestilence' – bad environments (boggy, marshy lands, along with overcrowded slums, barracks, workhouses, gaols, schools? – generated bad air (signalled by stenches), which in turn, triggered disease. Of course, we are also in

the 19th century, in the time of polluted water and water-borne diseases before improvements were made to town and city sewage systems.

In the 17th century, with the last major outbreaks of the plague in London, the advice was to protect oneself and ensure fresh air in the house:

"You shall have a care that your houses be kept clean and sweet, not suffering any foule and filthy clothes or stinking things to remain"

"Fires made in the streets often, and good fires kept in and about the houses of such as are visited, and their neighbours, may correct the infection air …"
"Also fumes of these following materials: rosin, pitch, tarre, turpentine, Frankincense, myrrh, amber; the woods of Juniper, Cypress, cedar, the leaves of bays, rosemary …"

Sufferers were made to sweat – in the hope of sweating out the illness. There were cordials and herbals medicines that were thought to increase sweat. If the person be unable to sweat, the advice was to lay two or three bricks quenched in vinegar, wrapped up in a woollen cloth, to his body to promote it.

One of the major breakthroughs in combatting an infectious disease came with the development of the first vaccine to prevent smallpox. By the mid 18thC smallpox was a major endemic disease across the world. In Europe the death toll reached hundreds of thousands each year. At the end of the 18thC, about a third of all cases of blindness are thought to have been caused by smallpox. The disease checked armies, decimated populations, and ruined economies.

Smallpox is the only infectious disease to be eradicated. After a massive, global vaccination program that ran for 20 years the United Nations declared it eliminated in 1980.

The disease was spread by airborne droplets from blisters in the nose and mouth of an infected person and by direct contact with body fluids and contaminated objects such as bedding and clothes. Patient's bodies became covered with pus-filled spots. Survivors were left with pockmarks – particularly on the face.

Before vaccines, the only way people became immune to a certain disease was by contracting it and surviving it. This idea of resistance to smallpox was something understood by many cultures and inoculation was a widespread traditional practice in China, India and Africa.

Inoculation and vaccination

Every September Greek women in Turkey would inoculate children against the disease. The wife of the British ambassador in Turkey in the early 18th century, Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, herself a survivor of smallpox, witnessed the procedure. Impressed, she instructed her physician at the British Embassy to inoculate her 6-year-old son, Edward. Not long after her return to London, a smallpox epidemic broke out and she began a campaign promoting the practice of inoculation.

Some 75 years after Lady Mary's promotion of inoculation, in 1796, English physician Edward Jenner's experiments with the cowpox virus proved that it could be used as a vaccine to prevent smallpox.

Jenner proved that cowpox could deliberately be used to prevent smallpox infection. He demonstrated that this could be done by transferring the infection from one person to

another. He confirmed by a well-established medical procedure that the measure had successfully protected against smallpox.

His discovery was a radical step forward … the individual seeking protection no longer had to run the risk of serious disease, or even death from the procedure. Nor did he have to risk the possibility of infecting others around him or transmitting the disease to those they loved.

Cowpox vaccination had a great advantage over variolation: it did away completely with the risk of smallpox spreading to others during the inoculation period.

In the exhibition, I included some rather mundane looking medical texts and reports: case studies, statistics, journal articles, which may look dull, but they were there because they illustrated one aspect of medical thinking at a point in time, a common treatment or innovation. One of my favourite case studies was related to smallpox, where a Dr Robert Willen writes *On vaccine inoculation* and includes in an appendix an update in the progress of vaccination in Newcastle:

"Vaccinated at the Dispensary … Total 3,266 to Dec 2nd, 1805. I feel not a little elevated in being able to say, that not one of these 3,266 have taken the small-pox, although it has been raging in every part of this town and neighbourhood for fifteen months past; the vaccinated children having stood amidst the general wreck, untouched and uninjured."

So, by the mid-19th century, there was a vaccine against smallpox, but much of western medicine was in flux. Over the Enlightenment period, some scientific advancements were made – slowly, slowly, incrementally, however medical practitioners was still focused on expelling or excising.

Speaking of excising, another area we focused on in the exhibition was the development of surgery.

In the mid-19th-century there were two significant breakthroughs: anaesthesia and antisepsis.

Anaesthesia: the word was coined by American, Oliver Wendell Holmes, to indicate the effects of ether, which made surgical trauma bearable. And the introduction of antisepsis reduced the appalling death rate from sepsis.

Until the widespread using of anaesthesia, operations were traumatic, bloody affairs. Patients were sometimes blind-folded as they were brought in so not to see the instruments and blood-spattered operating table, then strapped firmly or pinned down by surgeons' assistants. The best surgeons were those who could wield their instruments, insert, remove, and sew up in minutes due to the extreme levels of pain being endured. Surgeons wore the same encrusted aprons operation after operation – it was a badge of honour to display an encrusted apron.

Surgeons repaired injuries, extracted bladder stones, excised cancerous tumours from the breast, but internal organs were left alone – any problems with the heart, liver, brain and stomach were treated by medicines, not surgery.

In 1846, Robert Liston, the most famous, skilled London surgeon in his time (renowned for the speed of his operations), amputated a thigh of a patient under ether. Soon ether was

replaced by the safer chemical, chloroform. A towel or piece of linen would be doused in the chemical and then placed over the patients face.

In 1847 Dr James Simpson, obstetrician and professor of Midwifery at the University of Edinburgh began to administer ether to his patients in labour — the first-time anaesthetics were given to women in childbirth. However, ether irritated the eyes, smelt badly, sometimes caused vomiting and was flammable. On 4th November 1847, Simpson and his two assistants tested a new chemical compound, chloroform on themselves. Inhaling the sample, they fell to the ground and were out cold until the next morning. Concluding that chloroform was effective, safer and more manageable than ether, Simpson successfully administered it in minor procedures and used it in obstetrics on 8th November 1847.

Soon after this first administration, chloroform began to be used extensively for women in labour, even Queen Victoria. Her last two children were delivered while she was under the effects of chloroform. She later extolled 'the inestimable blessing of chloroform' thus convincing the more conservative surgeons and physicians who remained unconvinced that birth should be pain free – believing it was God's will for women to suffer.

The introduction of anaesthetics and antiseptic surgical procedures in the mid-19th century were two of the greatest innovations ever made in medicine. These advances meant surgeries could last longer, enabling innovation and new surgical techniques to progress, alongside antiseptic surgery with vastly reduced deaths due to post-operative infections.

These surgical breakthroughs were happening at the same time that germ theory was being developed.

Germ theory

Until the late 19th century, the healing of wounds after surgery was often as dangerous and as deadly as the procedure itself. A patient would often experience inflammation, formation of pus and fever as infection took hold. Blood poisoning and hospital gangrene were forms of sepsis (infection) which would spread within the body. Even a scratch might lead to a septic condition and prove deadly.

It took centuries for germ theory to be understood. These tiny organisms, too small to see without magnification were first viewed by scientists, Robert Hooke and Antoni van Leeuwenhoek from 1665–83, with simply constructed microscopes.

French chemist Louis Pasteur's experiments in the 1860s led to modern germ theory. He proved that food spoiled due to unseen bacteria, theorising that microbes (germs) could cause infectious diseases and were easily spread by people. In 1874 he suggested placing surgical instruments into boiling water and passing them through a flame.

English surgeon, Joseph Lister, acting on Pasteur's research, practised and operated using hygienic methods, with great success. He introduced new practises of surgical cleanliness. The use of carbolic acid spray to reduce the level of germs in the air around the patient, on the surgeon's hands and on the surgical instruments, transformed surgery in the late 19th century.

It was the very simple practice of washing of hands, sterilising surgical instruments (and in the early 20th century, the wearing of surgical masks) that prevented the spread of infection however, the medical establishment were very slow to take up these 'innovations' – deeming them far too simplistic.

Puerperal fever (childbed fever)

The dangers of infection, especially in the process of birth, affected women within the first three days after childbirth and progressed rapidly, causing acute symptoms of severe abdominal pain, fever, and debility. The disease was intractable, the tendency of the disease to appear in "epidemic" form, in which the case fatality rate was high — 70 to 80 per cent.

There were a multitude of theories of what caused puerperal fever, attempting to understand the terrible 'epidemics' of women dying – especially in general hospitals, and Lying-in Hospitals. Once a woman contracted it, all recognized that she was likely to die.

Midwifery, formerly the domain of women, was receiving increasing attention from medical men during the eighteenth century —both physicians and surgeons. Prominent within this area of practice were the surgeons, for whom midwifery was seen as a natural extension of their activities. Surgeons had traditionally been called in to difficult births to assist midwives, usually when there was a need to extract an already dead foetus from the womb in order to save a mother's life. During the eighteenth century, surgeons were increasingly extending their practice into the area of straightforward childbirth.

A breakthrough in understanding the causes of puerperal came in the mid-19th century: in the first obstetrical clinic in Vienna general hospital, Hungarian doctor, Ignaz Semmelweis observed that in the first clinic (run by medical men), had a much higher rate of puerperal fever than the second obstetrical clinic, run by midwives (medical wards had three times the mortality of midwives' wards). He became convinced that this was caused by medical staff and students going directly from the post-mortem rooms to the delivery rooms, thereby spreading infection. He instituted a strict policy of washing hands and instruments in chlorinated lime solution between autopsy work and handling patients, and the mortality rate in the first clinic was diminished to the same level as the second.
Semmelweis' theories were greatly opposed by the medical profession at the time. The leading view was that infections were caused not by contact, but by miasma in the air, emanations given off by non-human sources.

Semmelweis's practice earned widespread acceptance only years after his death, when Louis Pasteur confirmed germ theory.

One of the 'heroic' drugs taken regularly in the 19th century was laudanum – opium. This was commonly used as a painkiller and was an ingredient in patent medications or brands that began to be sold in the 19th century - aimed at chronic conditions such as headaches, wheezing, colds, impotence, anxiety, backache, indigestion, constipation, persistent aches and pains. The secret ingredients generally contained small quantities of addictive painkillers. The manufacturers created an enormous market for these products – even used to calm fretful children, and to rub on the gums of teething infants (known as mother's helper)!

So we've now returned back to the beginning of the talk – with some of the powerful substances found in the medicine chests of the 19th century.

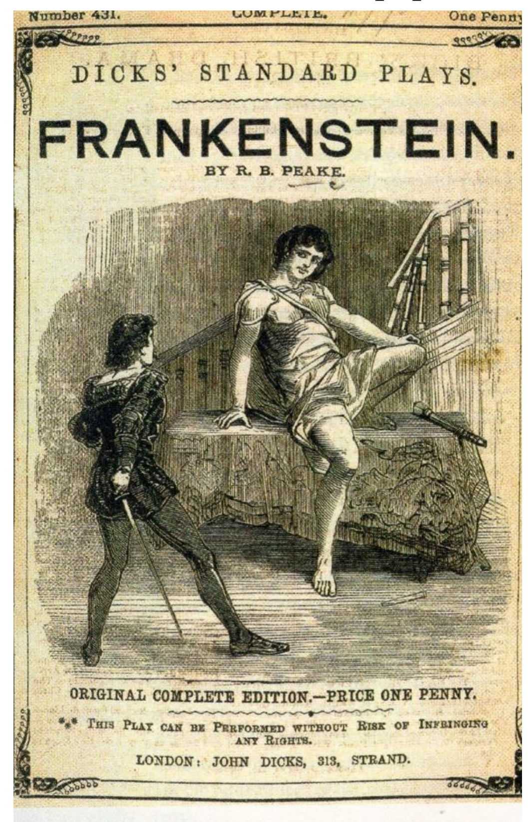
In this talk, I hope I have been able to highlight some of the common medical treatments and understandings of health and disease during the early to mid-19th century – the time of the Brontës. I haven't been able to do a deep dive into specific diseases – particularly those suffered by the Brontë family or characters in the books, but I hope I have been able to provide a bit of context to 19th century medicine – it was an interesting time:

when the old humoural medicine was still lingering on in treatments such as bleeding, vomiting and the consumption of powerful, often toxic medications to force the body to purge out the illness, but at the same time, we see the beginnings of scientific, evidence-based medicine: the widespread adoption of the smallpox vaccine, especially to children, observations on the spread of disease, germ theory and the importance of cleanliness and antiseptics, anaesthesia and reforms of the asylum system.

WUTHERING HEIGHTS AND *FRANKENSTEIN*

A talk given to the ABA on 15th July 2023 by Christopher Cooper

Mary Shelley finished writing *Frankenstein* in the summer of 1817 and it was published anonymously in three volumes at the very beginning of 1818, a few months before Emily was born. A second English edition in two volumes appeared in 1823. A single volume, a so called ‘popular’ edition, came out in 1831. This edition included many major revisions.



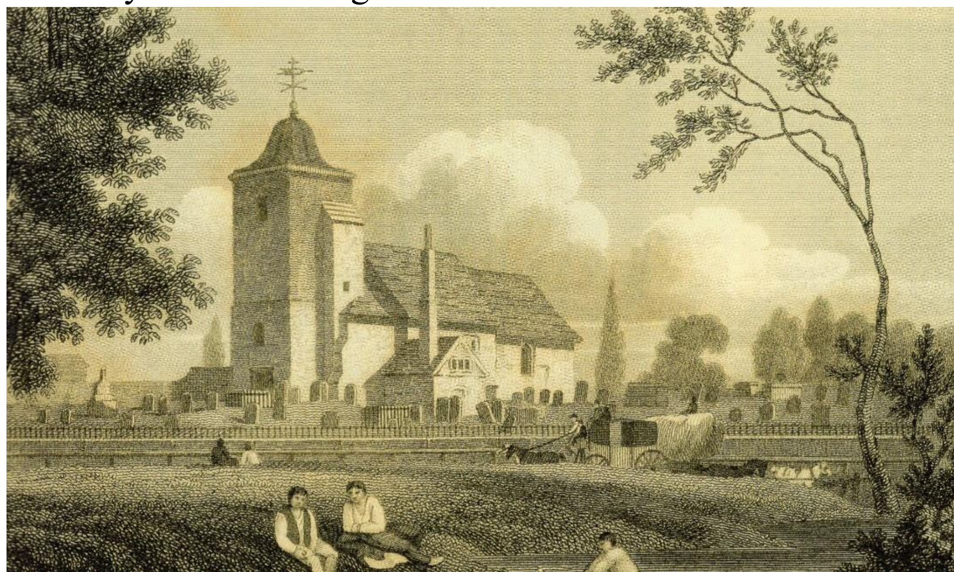
Wuthering Heights was published in 1847. By then *Frankenstein* was very well known and so it is almost certain that Emily had read it, or at least knew about it through reading reviews of both the novel and its many stage versions.

Mary Shelley was the daughter of the radical philosopher William Godwin. Her mother was Mary Wollstonecraft, a proto-feminist, who is best known for her book, *A Vindication of the Rights of Women*.

Mary Wollstonecraft

Mary Shelley

Mary Shelley was born on 30 August 1797 but her mother died a few days later so she never knew her mother. However she was devoted to her mother's memory and she would often sit by her mother's grave.



The Sydney suburb of Wollstonecraft was named after Edward Wollstonecraft, a cousin of Mary Shelley. He left England to make his fortune for himself and his sister Elizabeth and was given a grant of 500 acres in 1821 and was the first settler in the area. But he is also said to have left England to escape the notoriety of his aunt, Mary Wollstonecraft.

By the time Mary Shelley was four, Godwin and his two daughters, Fanny and Mary, were living at 29 The Octagon, a prestigious area of London. A new neighbour moved in next door in number 27. He was startled, but not displeased, when the new occupier of 27 walked into his garden and asked, "do I have the honour of beholding the immortal author of *Political Justice*?" It is said that, subsequently, every time Godwin walked in his garden Mrs Clairmont would hurry into her own garden, clasping her hands and saying to herself, "You great Being, how I adore you!"

On 5th May 1801, Godwin wrote in his diary, "met Mrs Clairmont". In his diary he used the code "*x*' to denote sexual activity and on 13th July he drew a particularly curvaceousness letter *x* to indicated that he and his neighbour has consummated their relationship. He later married her and so Mary Shelley acquired a step-sister Claire Clairmont.

Science and medicine were frequent topics of conversation in Godwin's home. This was especially true when Anthony Carlisle, the most famous surgeon of his time and a staunch believer in medical experiments, was visiting. Mary Shelley was present when Carlisle came to the Polygon with a story that must have influenced her when she came to write her novel.

In February 1803, the *Annual Register* reported an experiment on one such victim by John Aldini, which had taken place in front of an assembly of professional gentlemen. Aldini and Volta disputed whether the body contains an electrical fluid. Aldini had already shown that he could make a decapitated mastiff kick its legs while the head clashed its jaws and cried out in pain. The body and the head were connected by a vast machine, comprising 240 metal plates.

It was usual for the bodies of murderers hanged at Newgate Prison to be handed over to doctors for dissection in anatomy theatres. Anthony Carlisle heard of this experiment, and when he heard of that such an experiment was to be carried out at the prison on the body of a recently hanged criminal, he made sure he was present.

On the first application of the electrical process to the face, the jaw of the deceased criminal began to quiver, and the adjoining muscles were horribly contorted, and one eye actually opened. In the subsequent course of the experiment, the right hand was raised and clenched, and the legs and thighs were set in motion, and it appeared to all the bystanders that the wretched man was on the point of being restored to life.

Then the corpse jerked up an arm and struck one of the observers in the eye. To a man with Anthony Carlisle's interest in the advancement of medicine, and to Godwin, who had written on the danger of seeking ways to prolong life, this offered rich matter for discussion, a discussion that took place in front of the six year old Mary.

Electricity's power to animate seemed beyond doubt, but the law restricted such medical experiments to corpses of criminals. Although Mary didn't witness such an experiment herself it is likely that Carlisle's graphic account made a deep impression on her imagination. However, in her introduction to her novel she made no mention of Carlisle and attributed her inspiration to a particularly graphic dream.

One of William Godwin's political followers was the young poet, Percy Bysshe Shelley. Percy was separated from his wife Harriet, but that didn't stop him falling in love with the sixteen year-old Mary. They eloped to France, which was unusual enough, but they travelled together with Mary's step-sister in what was somewhat of a *menage a trois*.

By 1816 they had reached Switzerland and were travelling. The year 1816 was a remarkable year, known in history as "The Year without a Summer". During the few previous years there had been some volcanic eruptions around the world, which lowered global temperatures, but in 1815 this was capped off by the eruption of Mount Tamboa in

the Dutch East Indies, now known as Indonesia. It was a far more powerful eruption than Krakatoa and, in fact, it was the strongest eruption that the world had experienced for well over 1000 years.

The eruption threw billions of tons of rubble into the atmosphere and lowered the average temperature all over the world. There were crop failures, food shortages and food riots in many parts of the world, including Yorkshire.

Most people have heard of the story of the genesis of *Frankenstein* when the story came to her in a single lightning flash, in the villa on the shores of Lake Geneva. In her introduction to the 1831 edition of the novel, Mary wrote:

In the summer of 1816, we visited Switzerland, and became neighbours of Lord Byron. At first we spent our pleasant hours on the lake, or wandering on its shores; and Lord Byron, who was writing the third canto of *Child Harold*, was the only one among us who put his thoughts upon paper.

But it proved a wet, ungenial summer, and the incessant rain often confined us for days to the house. Some volumes of ghost stories, translated from German into French, fell into our hands. There was the *History of the Inconstant Lover*, who when he had pledged his vows, found himself in the arms of the pale ghost of her whom he had deserted. There was the tale of the sinful founder of his race, whose miserable doom it was to bestow the kiss of death on all the younger sons of his fated house, just when they reached the age of promise.

"We will each write a ghost story," said Lord Byron. There were four of us. The noble author began a tale, a fragment of which he printed at the end of his poem of Mazappa. Shelley, more apt to embody ideas and sentiments in the radiance of brilliant imagery, and in the music of the most melodious verse that adorns our language, than to invent the machinery of a story, commenced one founded on the experiences of his early life. Poor Polidori had some terrible idea about a skull-headed lady, who was so punished for peeping through a key-hole – what to see I forget – something very shocking and wrong of course, but when she was reduced to a worse condition than the renowned Tom of Coventry, he did not know what to do with her, and was obliged to despatch her to the tomb of the Capulets, the only place for which she was fitted.

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. If I did not accomplish these things, my ghost story would be unworthy of its name. I thought and pondered – vainly, I felt that blank incapability of invention which is the greatest misery of authorship when dull Nothing replies to our anxious invocations. “Have you thought of a story?” I was asked each morning, and each morning I was forced to reply with a mortifying negative.

Every thing must have a beginning, and that beginning must be linked to something that went before. The Hindoos give the world an elephant to support it, but they make the elephant stand upon a tortoise. Invention, it must be humbly admitted, does not consist of creating out of a void, but out of chaos; the materials must, in the first place, be afforded: it can give form to dark, shapeless substances, but cannot bring into being the substance itself. In all matters of discovery and invention, even of those that appertain to the imagination, we are continually reminded of the story of Columbus and his egg. Invention consists in the capacity of seizing on the capabilities of a subject, and in the power of moulding and fashioning ideas suggested to it.

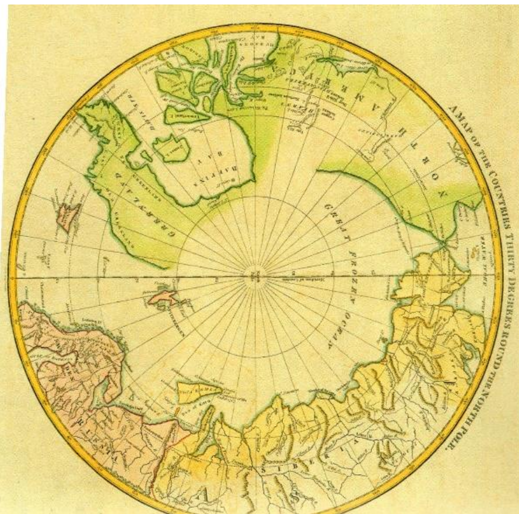
Many and long conversations between Lord Byron and Shelley, to which I was a devout but nearly silent listener. During one of these, various philosophical doctrines were discussed, and among others the nature of the principle of life, and whether its ever being discovered and communicated. They talked of the experiments of Dr Darwin (Erasmus) who preserved a piece of vermicelli in a glass case, till by some extraordinary means it began to move with voluntary motion. Perhaps a corpse would be re-animated; galvanism had given token of such things; perhaps the component parts of a creature might be manufactured, brought together, and endued with vital warmth.

Night waned upon this talk; and even the witching hour had gone 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.

With shut eyes, but acute mental vision 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.

Now, what most people remember of the plot of *Frankenstein* is the scene where the monster is created and the philosophic question of the nature of life, and whether a dead body can be reanimated. Nothing in that part of the story has the remotest connection with *Wuthering Heights*. But there are other features where Emily may have been influenced, even if only subconsciously. Let us begin with the narrative structure of both novels.

Frankenstein begins with a series of four letters, written by Captain Robert Walton to his older sister Margaret Saville as he sails north towards the pole. One of these is written from the Russian port of Archangel.



Archangelsk.

Epistolary novels were common in the 18th century, novels such as Pamela and Clarissa. Shelley however uses them merely to provide an outer shell to the story where a minor character is merely an observer. Lockwood plays a similar role in *Wuthering Heights*. And the device of the nested narrator continues in *Frankenstein* where the main narrator is Victor Frankenstein himself but where some chapter are told by the creature himself. In *Wuthering Heights* Nelly is the main narrator though Zillah and Isabella take over the story in certain places.

Are there any similarities between Lockwood and Walton? They are both young men, but Walton is very much a man of action while Lockwood is a very passive character. Yet both seem to have difficulty in forming relationships. Lockwood tells of an incident in a seaside resort where he became interested in a pretty young girl but backs off the minute she responds. Walton tells his sister that he would like to meet a man with whom he could become close friends with.

In the last of these letters Walton tells his sister about an incident when the ship was surrounded by ice, hundreds of miles from land. Walton and his crew catch sight of a sledge about half a mile from the ship, being pulled by dogs. It carried a 'being that had the shape of a man but apparently of gigantic proportions'. We later learn that this was the monster. The following day, after the ice shelf had broken into smaller pieces, they saw a man on another sledge, floating on a small ice floe. This is Frankenstein himself. He is persuaded to come aboard only when he is assured that the ship is headed north.

It's interesting that the polar theme appears at the beginning of Charlotte's *Jane Eyre*, as young Jane looks at the woodcuts in *Bewick's Birds*, many of which depict the snow and ice of the arctic. This doesn't prove that Charlotte had read *Frankenstein* because arctic exploration was big news in the first half of the 19th century.

After a few days rest Frankenstein takes over the narration. He tells Walton of his birth in Geneva and of his parents. Then he introduces Elizabeth Lavenza, his childhood playmate and Henry Clerval, his close school-friend.

It is interesting that the story changes from the 1st to the 3rd edition when it comes to the origin of Elizabeth. In the 1st edition she is his cousin, the daughter of Victor's father's

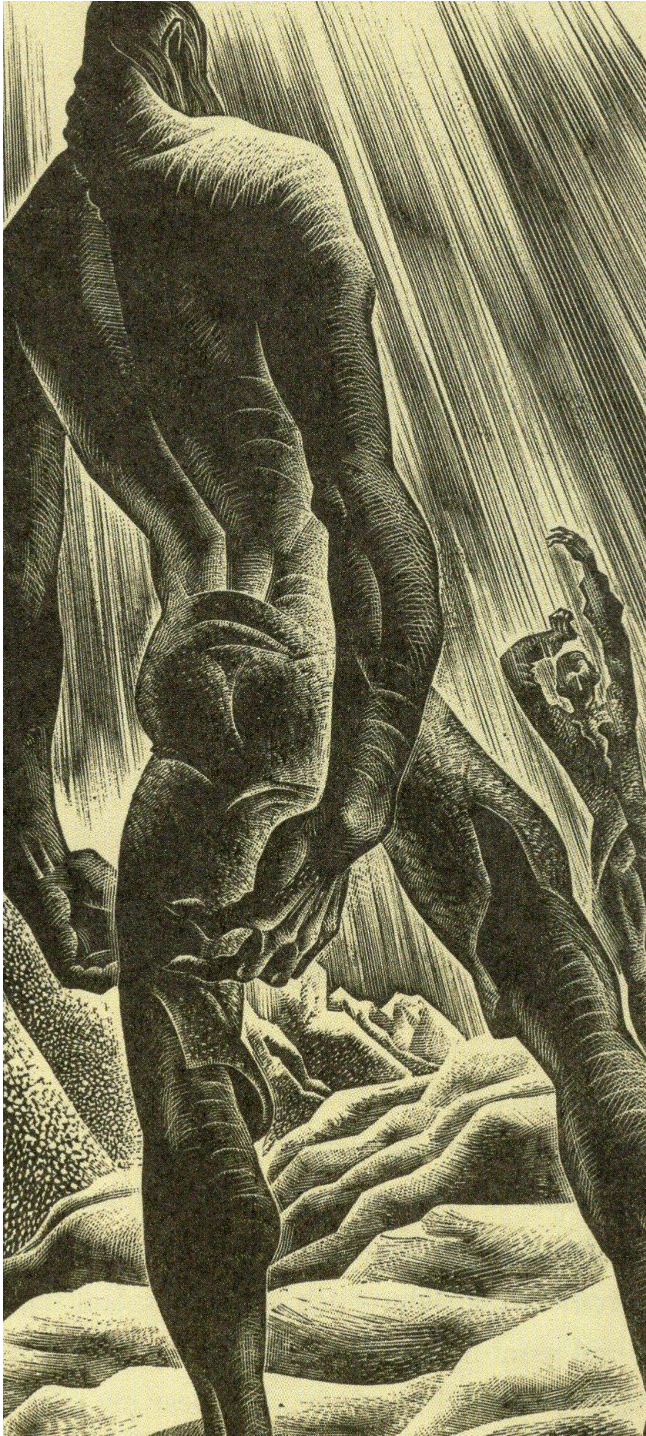
sister. Elizabeth's mother dies and the father wants to marry an Italian woman who apparently isn't interested in becoming a stepmother. So Victor's parents take her in as a daughter. In the revised 3rd edition Elizabeth's parentage is more mysterious. Victor's mother rescues Elizabeth as an orphan and beggar. But in contrast to Heathcliff she is fair-skinned, blue-eyed and golden haired. Of course her temperament is as angelic as Heathcliff's is demonic. And there is the suggestion that Elizabeth might be the daughter of a nobleman, paralleling Nelly's fantasy about Heathcliff's possible origins.

A second common feature in the narrative style is the way the texts of both novels are peppered with clues from which one can construct the chronology of events. Years ago I noticed these in *Wuthering Heights* and set about constructing a chronology – or should I say reconstruct, for I am certain that Emily had written out the dates of the events so that she could plant these clues. It is known that she worked with an almanac so that weather and phases of the moon could be accurate.

I then discovered that others had done the same thing. My annotated copy of *Frankenstein* contains a full chronology at the back. There aren't too many novels where the dates have been so carefully mapped out.

Probably the main theme of Frankenstein lies not in the scientific and philosophic aspects. Indeed, despite her second-hand knowledge of galvanism Mary Shelley's account of the creation of the monster has a number of practical shortcomings.

To begin with, why does the monster have to created from a motley collection of 'spare parts' obtained from several bodies? Dr Frankenstein could have obtained a complete body to reanimate. In that way the reanimated man could have looked like a normal human. Instead he is stitched together from body scraps, with the appearance of a really grotesque monster.



Secondly, the completed monster was over eight foot tall. Why was this necessary? It would have meant even arms and legs would have to be fabricated from pieces of normal-sized bodies. What was important for the plot was for the monster to be instantly recognisable as grotesque, a creature to be shunned.

Along with his enormous size was his prodigious strength and agility and speed. How Frankenstein thought he could catch up with the creature as they raced towards the pole is a great mystery.

Whether or not the giant's brain was taken from a single individual, or was cobbled together from the brain tissue of more than one cadaver, it is assumed that the brain had been reformatted. The creature had to go through the many phases of learning as if he had just been born in the usual way. But somehow his mental development was much more rapid than a normal new-born. He could walk, and even run, within minutes of his birth. He learnt to speak within months of secretly listening to the conversation of a certain family.

After he ran away from Dr Frankenstein the creature's encounters with ordinary human beings were not very pleasant and he was repeatedly chased away by angry bystanders, who beat him and threw stones at him.

He found his way into the country, where he survived on what nature provided, supplemented by a little that he was able to steal from farmhouses. He craved human contact and, above all, wanted to be loved. Even his creator wanted nothing to do with him. Frankenstein came to the realisation that he had made a mistake in creating the creature and set out to destroy him.

Now if we have seen one of the many films based upon this story, and even if we have read the novel, we are left with the impression that the creature was a danger to society, a vicious murderous beast, and that it was the right thing to do for Frankenstein to try to destroy him. But we forget that for some months after his creation, the creature developed into a kind and gentle being. It was only after he was constantly rejected by human-kind that he became bitter and started to hate the human world.

He came across an isolated cottage, to which was attached a small disused shed. He slept in that shed and could observe the three people who lived in the cottage through a crack in the wall.

These three people were an old blind man and his adult children, Felix and Agatha. At first the creature stole food from the family when they weren't home, but later he found his own food in the forest and secretly did chores for them, such as gathering firewood.

By observing the family over many months he taught himself to speak. Later a lady, Safie, who couldn't speak French sought shelter with them and, by observing the family teach her French, the creature's language skills improved. When he discovers a satchel of books he is able to teach himself to read and it wasn't long before he was reading literature, history and philosophy.

On reading the novel we don't think to ask how a creature made up of bits of uneducated criminals can become a highly intelligent, and enlightened gentleman. What comes across to us is that he dearly wants to be loved, and to belong. But because of his appearance he is denied love, even from the one who created him. He is to be pitied – far worse off than any orphan. An orphan at least has had parents even if he doesn't remember them. The creature has never had a mother or a father. He doesn't even have a name!

I want to remind you of the time when the creature was only a monster in his external appearances. Inside he was intelligent and kind and benign. It was only after being constantly rejected as an outsider that he soured and became truly monstrous. So I'm going to read a somewhat lengthy excerpt. Hopefully you will learn to love him, not for what he became, but for what he might have become.

I lay on my straw, but I could not sleep. I thought of the occurrences of the day. What chiefly struck me was the gentle manners of these people, and I longed to join them, but dared not. I remembered too well the treatment I had suffered the night before from the

barbarous villagers, and resolved, whatever course of conduct I might hereafter think it right to pursue, that for the present I would remain quietly in my hovel, watching and endeavouring to discover the motives which influenced their actions.

Nothing could exceed the love and respect which the younger cottagers exhibited towards their venerable companion. They performed towards him every little office of affection and duty with gentleness, and he rewarded them by his benevolent smiles.

They were not entirely happy. A considerable period elapsed before I discovered one of the causes of the uneasiness of this amiable family: it was poverty, and they suffered that evil in a very distressing degree. Their nourishment consisted entirely of the vegetables of their garden and the milk of one cow, which gave very little during the winter, when its masters could scarcely procure food to support it. They often, I believe, suffered the pangs of hunger very poignantly, especially the two younger cottagers, for several times they placed food before the old man when they reserved none for themselves.

This trait of kindness moved me sensibly. I had been accustomed, during the night, to steal a part of their store for my own consumption, but when I found that in doing this I inflicted pain on the cottagers, I abstained and satisfied myself with berries, nuts, and roots which I gathered from a neighbouring wood.

I discovered also another means through which I was enabled to assist their labours. I found that the youth spent a great part of each day in collecting wood for the family fire, and during the night I often took his tools, the use of which I quickly discovered, and brought home firing sufficient for the consumption of several days.

By degrees I made a discovery of still greater moment. I found that these people possessed a method of communicating their experience and feelings to one another by articulate sounds. I perceived that the words they spoke sometimes produced pleasure or pain, smiles or sadness, in the minds and countenances of the hearers. This was indeed a godlike science, and I ardently desired to become acquainted with it. But I was baffled in every attempt I made for this purpose. Their pronunciation was quick, and the words they uttered, not having any apparent connection with visible objects, I was unable to discover any clue by which I could unravel the mystery of their reference.

By great application, however, and after having remained during the space of several revolutions of the moon in my hovel, I discovered the names that were given to some of the most familiar objects of discourse; I learned and applied the words, `fire,' `milk,' `bread,' and `wood.' I learned also the names of the cottagers themselves. The youth and his companion had each of them several names, but the old man had only one, which was `father.' The girl was called `sister' or `Agatha,' and the youth `Felix,' `brother,' or `son.' I cannot describe the delight I felt when I learned the ideas appropriated to each of these sounds and was able to pronounce them. I distinguished several other words without being able as yet to understand or apply them, such as `good,' `dearest,' `unhappy.'

I spent the winter in this manner. The gentle manners and beauty of the cottagers greatly endeared them to me; when they were unhappy, I felt depressed; when they rejoiced, I sympathized in their joys.

I saw few human beings besides them, and if any other happened to enter the cottage, their harsh manners and rude gait only enhanced to me the superior accomplishments of my friends. The old man, I could perceive, often endeavoured to encourage his children, as sometimes I found that he called them, to cast off their melancholy. He would talk in a cheerful accent, with an expression of goodness that bestowed pleasure even upon me. Agatha listened with respect, her eyes sometimes filled with tears, which she endeavoured to wipe away unperceived; but I generally found that her countenance and tone were more cheerful after having listened to the exhortations of her father. It was not thus with Felix. He was always the saddest of the group, and even to my unpractised senses, he appeared to have suffered more deeply than his friends. But if his countenance was more sorrowful, his voice was more cheerful than that of his sister, especially when he addressed the old man.

I could mention innumerable instances which, although slight, marked the dispositions of these amiable cottagers. In the midst of poverty and want, Felix carried with pleasure to his sister the first little white flower that peeped out from beneath the snowy ground. Early in the morning, before she had risen, he cleared away the snow that obstructed her path to the milk-house, drew water from the well, and brought the wood from the outhouse, where, to his perpetual astonishment, he found his store always replenished by an invisible hand. At other times he worked in the garden, but as there was little to do in the frosty season, he read to the old man and Agatha.

This reading had puzzled me extremely at first, but by degrees I discovered that he uttered many of the same sounds when he read as when he talked. I conjectured, therefore, that he found on the paper signs for speech which he understood, and I ardently longed to comprehend these also; but how was that possible when I did not even understand the sounds for which they stood as signs? I improved, however, sensibly in this science, but not sufficiently to follow up any kind of conversation, although I applied my whole mind to the endeavour, for I easily perceived that, although I eagerly longed to discover myself to the cottagers, I ought not to make the attempt until I had first become master of their language, which knowledge might enable me to make them overlook the deformity of my figure, for with this also the contrast perpetually presented to my eyes had made me acquainted.

My mode of life in my hovel was uniform. During the morning I attended the motions of the cottagers, and when they were dispersed in various occupations, I slept; the remainder of the day was spent in observing my friends. When they had retired to rest, if there was any moon or the night was star-light, I went into the woods and collected my own food and fuel for the cottage. When I returned, as often as it was necessary, I cleared their path from the snow and performed those offices that I had seen done by Felix. I afterwards found that these labours, performed by an invisible hand, greatly astonished them; and once or twice I heard them, on these occasions, utter the words `good spirit,' `wonderful'; but I did not then understand the signification of these terms.

Spring advanced rapidly; the weather became fine and the skies cloudless. It surprised me that what before was desert and gloomy should now bloom with the most

beautiful flowers and verdure. My senses were gratified and refreshed by a thousand scents of delight and a thousand sights of beauty.

In the meanwhile also the black ground was covered with herbage, and the green banks interspersed with innumerable flowers, sweet to the scent and the eyes, stars of pale radiance among the moonlight woods; the sun became warmer, the nights clear and balmy; and my nocturnal rambles were an extreme pleasure to me, although they were considerably shortened by the late setting and early rising of the sun, for I never ventured abroad during daylight, fearful of meeting with the same treatment I had formerly endured in the first village which I entered.

My days were spent in close attention, that I might more speedily master the language. While I improved in speech, I also learned the science of letters as it was taught to the stranger, and this opened before me a wide field for wonder and delight.

The book from which Felix instructed Safie was Volney's *Ruins of Empires*. I should not have understood the purport of this book had not Felix, in reading it, given very minute explanations. He had chosen this work, he said, because the declamatory style was framed in imitation of the Eastern authors. Through this work I obtained a cursory knowledge of history and a view of the several empires at present existing in the world; it gave me an insight into the manners, governments, and religions of the different nations of the earth. I heard of the slothful Asiatics, of the stupendous genius and mental activity of the Grecians, of the wars and wonderful virtue of the early Romans--of their subsequent degenerating--of the decline of that mighty empire, of chivalry, Christianity, and kings. I heard of the discovery of the American hemisphere and wept with Safie over the hapless fate of its original inhabitants.

These wonderful narrations inspired me with strange feelings. Was man, indeed, at once so powerful, so virtuous and magnificent, yet so vicious and base? He appeared at one time a mere scion of the evil principle and at another as all that can be conceived of noble and godlike. To be a great and virtuous man appeared the highest honour that can befall a sensitive being; to be base and vicious, as many on record have been, appeared the lowest degradation, a condition more abject than that of the blind mole or harmless worm. For a long time I could not conceive how one man could go forth to murder his fellow, or even why there were laws and governments; but when I heard details of vice and bloodshed, my wonder ceased and I turned away with disgust and loathing.

Every conversation of the cottagers now opened new wonders to me. While I listened to the instructions which Felix bestowed upon the Arabian, the strange system of human society was explained to me. I heard of the division of property, of immense wealth and squalid poverty, of rank, descent, and noble blood.

I learned that the possessions most esteemed by your fellow creatures were high and unsullied descent united with riches. A man might be respected with only one of these advantages, but without either he was considered, except in very rare instances, as a vagabond and a slave, doomed to waste his powers for the profits of the chosen few! And what was I? Of my creation and creator I was absolutely ignorant, but I knew that I possessed no money, no friends, no kind of property. I was, besides, endued with a figure

hideously deformed and loathsome; I was not even of the same nature as man. I was more agile than they and could subsist upon coarser diet; I bore the extremes of heat and cold with less injury to my frame; my stature far exceeded theirs. When I looked around I saw and heard of none like me. Was I, then, a monster, a blot upon the earth, from which all men fled and whom all men disowned?

One night during my accustomed visit to the neighbouring wood where I collected my own food and brought home firing for my protectors, I found on the ground a leathern portmanteau containing several articles of dress and some books. I eagerly seized the prize and returned with it to my hovel. Fortunately the books were written in the language, the elements of which I had acquired at the cottage; they consisted of *Paradise Lost*, a volume of *Plutarch's Lives*, and the *Sorrows of Werter*. The possession of these treasures gave me extreme delight; I now continually studied and exercised my mind upon these histories, whilst my friends were employed in their ordinary occupations.

The volume of *Plutarch's Lives* which I possessed contained the histories of the first founders of the ancient republics. This book had a far different effect upon me from the *Sorrows of Werter*. I learned from Werter's imaginations despondency and gloom, but Plutarch taught me high thoughts; he elevated me above the wretched sphere of my own reflections, to admire and love the heroes of past ages. Many things I read surpassed my understanding and experience. I had a very confused knowledge of kingdoms, wide extents of country, mighty rivers, and boundless seas. But I was perfectly unacquainted with towns and large assemblages of men. The cottage of my protectors had been the only school in which I had studied human nature, but this book developed new and mightier scenes of action.

But *Paradise Lost* excited different and far deeper emotions. I read it, as I had read the other volumes which had fallen into my hands, as a true history. It moved every feeling of wonder and awe that the picture of an omnipotent God warring with his creatures was capable of exciting. I often referred the several situations, as their similarity struck me, to my own. Like Adam, I was apparently united by no link to any other being in existence; but his state was far different from mine in every other respect. He had come forth from the hands of God a perfect creature, happy and prosperous, guarded by the especial care of his Creator; he was allowed to converse with and acquire knowledge from beings of a superior nature, but I was wretched, helpless, and alone.

When I contemplated the virtues of the cottagers, their amiable and benevolent dispositions, I persuaded myself that when they should become acquainted with my admiration of their virtues they would compassionate me and overlook my personal deformity. Could they turn from their door one, however monstrous, who solicited their compassion and friendship? I resolved, at least, not to despair, but in every way to fit myself for an interview with them which would decide my fate. I postponed this attempt for some months longer, for the importance attached to its success inspired me with a dread lest I should fail. Besides, I found that my understanding improved so much with every day's experience that I was unwilling to commence this undertaking until a few more months should have added to my sagacity.

The winter advanced, and an entire revolution of the seasons had taken place since I awoke into life. My attention at this time was solely directed towards my plan of introducing myself into the cottage of my protectors. I revolved many projects, but that on which I finally fixed was to enter the dwelling when the blind old man should be alone. I had sagacity enough to discover that the unnatural hideousness of my person was the chief object of horror with those who had formerly beheld me. My voice, although harsh, had nothing terrible in it; I thought, therefore, that if in the absence of his children I could gain the good will and mediation of the old De Lacey, I might by his means be tolerated by my younger protectors.

One day, when the sun shone on the red leaves that strewed the ground and diffused cheerfulness, although it denied warmth, Safie, Agatha, and Felix departed on a long country walk, and the old man, at his own desire, was left alone in the cottage. When his children had departed, he took up his guitar and played several mournful but sweet airs, more sweet and mournful than I had ever heard him play before. At first his countenance was illuminated with pleasure, but as he continued, thoughtfulness and sadness succeeded; at length, laying aside the instrument, he sat absorbed in reflection.

My heart beat quick; this was the hour and moment of trial, which would decide my hopes or realize my fears. All was silent in and around the cottage; it was an excellent opportunity I removed the planks which I had placed before my hovel to conceal my retreat. The fresh air revived me, and with renewed determination I approached the door of their cottage.

"I knocked. `Who is there?' said the old man. `Come in.'

"I entered. `Pardon this intrusion,' said I; `I am a traveller in want of a little rest; you would greatly oblige me if you would allow me to remain a few minutes before the fire.'

"`Enter,' said De Lacey, `and I will try in what manner I can to relieve your wants; but, unfortunately, my children are from home, and as I am blind, I am afraid I shall find it difficult to procure food for you.'

"`Do not trouble yourself, my kind host; I have food; it is warmth and rest only that I need.'

I sat down, and a silence ensued. I knew that every minute was precious to me, yet I remained irresolute in what manner to commence the interview, when the old man addressed me. `By your language, stranger, I suppose you are my countryman; are you French?'

`No; but I was educated by a French family and understand that language only. I am now going to claim the protection of some friends, whom I sincerely love, and of whose favour I have some hopes.'

`Are they Germans?'

`No, they are French. But let us change the subject. I am an unfortunate and deserted creature, I look around and I have no relation or friend upon earth. These amiable people to whom I go have never seen me and know little of me. I am full of fears, for if I fail there, I am an outcast in the world forever.'

"`Do not despair. To be friendless is indeed to be unfortunate, but the hearts of men, when unprejudiced by any obvious self-interest, are full of brotherly love and charity. Rely, therefore, on your hopes; and if these friends are good and amiable, do not despair.'

"`They are kind--they are the most excellent creatures in the world; but, unfortunately, they are prejudiced against me. I have good dispositions; my life has been hitherto harmless and in some degree beneficial; but a fatal prejudice clouds their eyes, and where they ought to see a feeling and kind friend, they behold only a detestable monster.'

"`That is indeed unfortunate; but if you are really blameless, cannot you undeceive them?'

"`I am about to undertake that task; and it is on that account that I feel so many overwhelming terrors. I tenderly love these friends; I have, unknown to them, been for many months in the habits of daily kindness towards them; but they believe that I wish to injure them, and it is that prejudice which I wish to overcome.'

"`Where do these friends reside?'

"`Near this spot.'

"The old man paused and then continued, `If you will unreservedly confide to me the particulars of your tale, I perhaps may be of use in undeceiving them. I am blind and cannot judge of your countenance, but there is something in your words which persuades me that you are sincere. I am poor and an exile, but it will afford me true pleasure to be in any way serviceable to a human creature.'

"`Excellent man! I thank you and accept your generous offer. You raise me from the dust by this kindness; and I trust that, by your aid, I shall not be driven from the society and sympathy of your fellow creatures.'

"`Heaven forbid! Even if you were really criminal, for that can only drive you to desperation, and not instigate you to virtue. I also am unfortunate; I and my family have been condemned, although innocent; judge, therefore, if I do not feel for your misfortunes.'

"`How can I thank you, my best and only benefactor? From your lips first have I heard the voice of kindness directed towards me; I shall be forever grateful; and your present humanity assures me of success with those friends whom I am on the point of meeting.'

"`May I know the names and residence of those friends?' "I paused. This, I thought, was the moment of decision, which was to rob me of or bestow happiness on me forever. I struggled vainly for firmness sufficient to answer him, but the effort destroyed all my remaining strength; I sank on the chair and sobbed aloud. At that moment I heard the steps of my younger protectors. I had not a moment to lose, but seizing the hand of the old man, I cried, `Now is the time! Save and protect me! You and your family are the friends whom I seek. Do not you desert me in the hour of trial!'

`Great God!' exclaimed the old man. `Who are you?'

At that instant the cottage door was opened, and Felix, Safie, and Agatha entered. Who can describe their horror and consternation on beholding me? Agatha fainted, and Safie, unable to attend to her friend, rushed out of the cottage. Felix darted forward, and

with supernatural force tore me from his father, to whose knees I clung, in a transport of fury, he dashed me to the ground and struck me violently with a stick. I could have torn him limb from limb, as the lion rends the antelope. But my heart sank within me as with bitter sickness, and I refrained. I saw him on the point of repeating his blow, when, overcome by pain and anguish, I quitted the cottage, and in the general tumult escaped unperceived to my hovel.

The nameless creature, in a few months, has somehow become morally superior to Dr Frankenstein himself. But that doesn't last. Deprive a good person of love and so often he becomes sour and even cruel towards his fellow man. That certainly was the case with Frankenstein's creature. It was also the case with Emily's Heathcliff.

Heathcliff was not a monster in his appearance, but he was certainly not good looking like Mr Rochester. And he never quite became a murderer. But had Mr Earnshaw lived longer, Heathcliff may never have become the degraded and hateful 'monster' (to use a word that Isabell used to describe him) that he actually did.

Remember the scene where Heathcliff asked Nelly Dean to make him decent? That may have been a turning point in his life. But Hindley ground him into the ground. He was forced to live in one of the out-houses among the animals. But didn't he have Cathy to love him?

It's ironic that *Wuthering Heights* is often held up to be one of the greatest love stories of all time. But, in fact, the first Cathy who had so much love in her childhood – the apple of her father's eyes – grew up to be a self-centred woman who used Heathcliff as a target for her passion but who never was able to really understand him, let alone really understand him.

Heathcliff, the orphan found wandering the back streets of Liverpool, never even had his own name. For some reason he was given a recycled name. The Earnshaws called their first child Heathcliff, but as he died in his infancy the name became available.

Another similarity between *Wuthering Heights* and *Frankenstein* is obsession and the way it can destroy a person. In this respect Heathcliff's counterpart is Frankenstein himself, rather than the creature.

Over the years there has been much controversy over how the daughter of a parson, in a remote village in Yorkshire, could have conceived of a character with the satanic qualities of Heathcliff.

There have been many explanations, such as:

- Emily didn't write *Wuthering Heights*, but Branwell did.
- Heathcliff was modelled on Branwell, whose promising life came apart as he died under the influence of drink and drugs.
- Heathcliff is based on one of the characters in the juvenilia.
- Emily got the idea of Heathcliff from a story told by one of the servants.
- Emily was inspired by German novels, or gothic stories such as Mrs Radcliffe's *The Mysteries of Udolpho*.
- Emily based Heathcliff on Welsh, a boy that her great-great grandfather rescued and brought up as one of his sons.

Branwell was certainly the black sheep of the Brontë family, but he was hardly a 'monster', as Heathcliff is described as being in *Wuthering Heights*. Yes, like Heathcliff, he almost goes mad as a result of unrequited passion, and Emily may have drawn on that aspect of his life to some extent. But Heathcliff was an outcast. He tried to be good but, through lack of love and a fixation on getting revenge, he became a monster. Branwell could never be said to have been an unloved outcast.

There is some evidence that Branwell collaborated with Emily in the writing of her novel. They probably discussed it while she was writing it. But there is absolutely no evidence that he co-authored the book, or that he wrote it himself. In the case of *Frankenstein*, although the original concept was Mary's, it is a fact that Percy did get involved to a small extent. There is a journal in which Mary has recorded the development of the novel and has recorded those places where her husband suggested changes.

The juvenilia can be divided into two parts: the Angrian saga written jointly by Charlotte and Branwell and the Gondal saga written by Emily and Anne. There are certainly ruthless and evil characters in both lots of juvenilia and some of the dark colours of those stories may have formed part of the Emily's palette as she painted *Wuthering Heights*.

The servants certainly were great gossips, and as Emily seemed to spend much more time in the Haworth kitchen than her sisters, she probably became an avid listener to the wild stories of the servants. But there is no one story that could stand up to scrutiny as the origin of *Wuthering Heights*.

Emily certainly taught herself German and read a number of German novels. No doubt she drew on some of the brooding noblemen in painting Heathcliff.

But one very probable source for the character of Heathcliff was the dark, scruffy boy that Emily's great-great-grandfather found and brought him up as his son. Hugh Prunty lived on a farm on the banks of the Boyne, somewhere above Drogheda. He often crossed from

Drogheda to Liverpool to dispose of his cattle. On one of his return journeys from Liverpool a strange child was found in a bundle in the hold of the vessel. It was very young, very black, very dirty, and almost without clothing of any kind. No one on board knew whence it had come, and no one seemed to care what became of it.

The child was thrown on the deck. Someone said," toss it overboard"; but no one would touch it, and its cries were distressing. On reaching Drogheda it was taken ashore for food and clothing, with the intention of sending it back to Liverpool; but the captain would not allow it to be brought aboard his ship again. There was no foundling hospital nearer than Dublin; and in those days Dublin was far from Drogheda.

When the little foundling was carried up out of the hold of the vessel, it was supposed to be a Welsh child on account of its colour. It might doubtless have laid claim to a more Oriental descent, but when it became a member of the Brontë family they called him "Welsh". Little Welsh was a fretful and thin and was despised for his colour and origin, and generally pushed aside by the vigorous young Brontës, he grew up morose, envious, and cunning. He used secretly to break the toys, destroy the flower-beds, kill the birds, and stealthily play so many spiteful tricks on the children that he was continually receiving chastisement at their hands. For though they seldom caught him in the monkeyish acts of which he was accused, they attributed all the mischief to him, and detested and punished him accordingly. On his part he maintained a moody, sullen silence, only broken when Mr. Brontë was present to protect him.

He became a favourite with Mr Prunty, partly because he was weak and needed his protection, and partly because he always came running to meet him on his return home, as if he were glad to see him and anxious to render him any assistance in his power. He followed his master about while at home with dog-like fidelity, and he generally managed to tell him everything he knew to the other children's disadvantage. He thus succeeded in securing a permanent place between the children and their father. The more Hugh Prunty became attached to Welsh the more his children despised and hated the interloper.

As time passed, Mr Prunty's affairs passed more and more into the hands of Welsh, until at last he had almost the entire management. They were returning from Liverpool after selling the largest drove of cattle that had ever crossed the Channel, when suddenly Hugh died on board. Welsh, who was with him at the time of his death, professed to know nothing of his master's money, and as all books and accounts had been made away with, no one could tell what had become of the cash received for the cattle. Eventually, by sheer cunning and shady dealings, Welsh managed to become master of Hugh Prunty's estate. It is likely that Emily heard about Welsh from her father.

Welsh certainly provided a good deal of the story of Heathcliff, but there's one aspect that is missing. There is no suggestion in Welsh's story that he ever tried to become good. It is true that Heathcliff became a monster, but there was a moment when he asked Nelly to help him become decent. I read *Wuthering Heights* as the tragedy of a person who has good within him but, through cruelty and through being deprived of love, he becomes sour and degenerates into evil. On reading the story of Welsh, one is not led to feel any sympathy for him. Yet it *is* possible to feel sorry for Heathcliff and the fact that a lack of love for him

caused him to become a. What monster in literature could this be said of? Most certainly the creature created by Dr Frankenstein.

Despite all these similarities these two books are very different in other ways. Unlike *Frankenstein*, *Wuthering Heights* makes no reference to science. Emily injects a modicum of humour into the first few chapters, while Mary Shelley has no time for frivolities.

An obvious difference in the structure of the two novels are the canvasses on which the novels are drawn. *Wuthering Heights* is a miniature. Everything takes place in one of the two houses, plus a couple of outdoor scenes in the four miles between them. Whenever characters travel we don't follow them. Hindley goes off to school and returns three years later with a wife. Heathcliff disappears – we're never told where to – and returns three years later, with no explanation as to where he went, and how he become somewhat of a gentleman. Isabella runs off to London and, in ten years, the only things she manages to do are to give birth to Linton, and to die.

By contrast *Frankenstein* takes us from a seaport in England, to Spitzbergen, Switzerland, Germany and the Arctic wastes.

So spatially, *Wuthering Heights* is much more confined. However temporarily, it is *Frankenstein* that is much more confined, with the action taking place over just a few years, while *Wuthering Heights* spans a whole two generations.

Like most great authors, Emily drew from several sources and combined them together in a highly imaginative way. The story of Hugh may have suggested Heathcliff to begin with, but I believe that, consciously or not, Mary Shelley may have gone into the melting pot.

Here is a summary of similarities and differences between *Wuthering Heights* and *Frankenstein*.

SIMILARITIES:

Similarities in the story:

(1) Both depict a monster

In *Frankenstein* there is a literal monster. In *Wuthering Heights* Heathcliff is described as a monster and the question is asked, "is he human?"

(2) Both depict an outsider who wishes to be good but goes sour due to a deprivation of love.

Heathcliff, at one stage, asks Nelly to make him decent but, because he is badly treated by Hindley, and is even rejected by Catherine, he becomes a fiend. Frankenstein's monster, at first, shows good will towards those he meets, until he is rejected by humans.

(3) Both involve a relationship between step-siblings.

Heathcliff is Catherine's playmate from an early age. Elizabeth is Victor Frankenstein's cousin who comes to live with his family. They, too, are playmates from an early age.

(4) Both involve the breaking of the taboo against disturbing dead bodies.
Heathcliff asks the sexton to bury him next to Catharine, and requests that the sexton break open the sides of their coffins so that their decomposing bodies can mingle. Frankenstein constructs his monster from spare parts of dead bodies.

(5) Both novels display obsessive behaviour.
In *Wuthering Heights* both Heathcliff and Cathy show an obsessive behaviour in their relationship that borders on insanity. In *Frankenstein* it is Victor, himself, who becomes obsessive and nearly has a nervous breakdown.

(6) In both novels the romantic relationship is never consummated in marriage.
In *Wuthering Heights* Cathy marries Edward since Heathcliff has run off. In *Frankenstein*, Victor and Elizabeth have just married when the monster kills her.

(7) The moon is mentioned a lot.

Novel(s)	# moons
Wuthering Heights	16
Frankenstein	23
All 7 Jane Austen novels	7

Similarities in the structure:

(8) Neither was published under the author's real name.
Wuthering Heights was published under the name Ellis Bell and *Frankenstein* was published anonymously.

(9) Both have complicated nestings of narrators.
The nominal narrator of *Wuthering Heights* is Lockwood, who is merely an observer. All of his knowledge comes from Nelly Dean who, for the most part, becomes the actual narrator. And in certain parts she passes on information from other narrators, such as Isabella.

In Frankenstein the nominal narrator is Robert Walton, who is also merely an observer. Most of his knowledge comes from Victor Frankenstein and in certain parts the narration comes from the creature himself. But this is retold to Victor, who ultimately tells Walton.

(10) Both involve a non-linear time line.
When *Wuthering Heights* opens, most of its events are in the past, and Lockwood reports them second hand. Then, towards the end of the novel when Lockwood returns to the Heights, he is updated on what has occurred in the preceding months.

In *Frankenstein* Robert Walton hears about past events from Victor but, when he meets up with him again, he is updated on what has occurred since their last encounter. In both cases the main narrator plays very little part in the actual story.

(11) The texts of both novels are peppered with clues from which one can construct the chronology of events.

DIFFERENCES

(1) Unlike *Frankenstein*, *Wuthering Heights* makes no reference to science or deep moral questions.

(2) There is some humour in *Wuthering Heights* but none in *Frankenstein*.

The bumbling Lockwood is a comic character who unwittingly adds a comic element to the first few chapters of *Wuthering Heights*. Joseph is also a comic character because of his extreme piety. Mary Shelley has no time for such frivolities.

(3) Spatially the two novels are very different in extent.

Everything in *Wuthering Heights* takes place in one of the two houses, with a couple of outdoor scenes in the four miles between them. Whenever characters travel away we don't follow them. Hindley goes off to school and returns three years later with a wife. Heathcliff disappears – we're never told where to – and returns three years later, with no explanation as to where he went, and how he become somewhat of a gentleman. Isabella runs off to London and, in ten years, the only things she manages to do are to give birth to Linton, and to die.

By contrast *Frankenstein* takes us from a seaport in England, to St Petersburg, Spitzbergen, Switzerland, Germany and the Arctic wastes.

(4) In time the two novels are very different in extent.

In this case it is *Frankenstein* that is much more confined, with the action taking place over just a few years, while *Wuthering Heights* spans a whole two generations.

(5) The intensities of the love stories in the two novels are very different.

Victor Frankenstein loves Elizabeth 'tenderly and sincerely'. He does put her second to his grand project, but he is willing to marry her to satisfy his family's wishes. But there is no great intensity in their relationship. One can't imagine Victor saying, "I *am* Elizabeth!"

(6) Although there is much death in both novels it is only in *Frankenstein* where people are murdered.

In *Wuthering Heights* Mrs & Mrs Earnshaw, Mr & Mrs Linton, Hindley, Cathy, Edward, Isabella, Linton & Heathcliff all die, of natural causes.

In *Frankenstein*, William, Clerval & Elizabeth are murdered by the monster. Justine is wrongly executed. Alphonse dies of natural causes.

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