

Selections from Ganz Notes for TFS 8, 1 on Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* (1818)

TEXTS

Shelley, Mary. *The New Annotated Frankenstein* (2017), edited by Leslie S. Klinger, Introduction by Guillermo del Toro, p. xiii. Liveright Publishing of W.W. Norton & Company, Ltd. Kindle Edition. ISBN 978-0-87140-949-2 (e-book).

Shelley, Mary. *Frankenstein: the 1818 Text* (Penguin Classics). Introduction by Charlotte Gordon. New York: Penguin Random House, 2018. Ebook ISBN: 9781524705701.

The Cambridge Companion to Frankenstein (2016), edited by Andrew Smith. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016.

ABOUT SERIES 8 OF THE FABER SESSIONS

John 17 (NJB) –

⁹ It is for them that I pray.
I am not praying for the world
but for those you have given me,
because they belong to you.*

¹⁰ All I have is yours
and all you have is mine,
and in them I am glorified.*

¹¹ I am no longer in the world,
but they are in the world,
and I am coming to you.

Holy Father,

keep those you have given me true to your name,ⁱ
so that they may be one like us.*-[1]

The *Oxford English Dictionary* at "**monster**": "A person of repulsively unnatural character, or exhibiting such extreme cruelty or wickedness as to appear inhuman; a monstrous example of evil, a vice, etc."

We are living in a time when both in America, and in the world at large, monsters are exercising their influence, monsters who keep, and bind, our attention. Their power, when encountered in a time when we feel powerless, persuades many of us to surrender to them our freedom. The "powerfulness" of monsters is provenly seductive; we are (apparently) fascinated at the way they defy any attempt to control them.

The primary sign that monsters are among us is the fear that we feel as a pervasive atmosphere - it is the very air we breathe. St. John Paul II identified "a culture of death" and its effects on all of us.

Monsters scare us. Yet, their powerfulness is surprisingly weak because it absolutely depends on our participation, on our willingness to let them scare us. Monsters need us to be afraid of them, for us to become fear-*full*.

Monsters spawn fear in others because they ARE fear - they do not *have* fear; they *are* fear - full of fear. This begins to explain why they react so violently to any who scare them.

But when we have learned how to become fully awake (mature, grown-ups), who are alive in our soul's powers, we are the formidable presences in the world whom monsters truly fear. We are "temples of the Holy Spirit"; we are "God's children" (all of us, not just special ones of us); and Christ the Lord is our brother.

All of this is terrifying to monsters, both the human ones and the greater-than human ones.

This, then, is a Faber Sessions about the discernment of spirits, and in specific relation to fear.

Rumi (translated by Coleman Barks) - *Rumi: The Big Red Book: the Great Masterpiece Celebrating Mystical Love and Friendship*, translated by Coleman Barks, 2010). ISBN 978-0-06-190582-7

Keep walking,
though there is no place to get to.

Do not try to see through the distances.
That is not for human beings.
Move within,
but do not move the way fear makes you move.
Walk to the well.
Turn as the earth and the moon turn,
circling what they love.
Whatever circles comes from the center.

* 1:10g; Lk 22:32

* 16:15; Lk 15:31; 2 Th 1:10

* 1:10g; 10:30p; Ga 3:28; 3:35t; Nb 6:24

[1] [*The New Jerusalem Bible*](#) (New York; London; Toronto; Sydney; Auckland: Doubleday, 1990), Jn 17:9–11.

QUOTES

St. Augustine of Hippo (354-430 CE), *Confessions*, translated by Maria Boulding (2002) - "For great are you, Lord, and you look kindly on what is humble, but the lofty-minded you regard from afar. Only to those whose hearts are crushed do you draw close. You will not let yourself be found by the proud, nor even by those who in their inquisitive skill count stars or grains of sand, or measure the expanses of Heaven, or trace the paths of the planets."

David Foster Wallace (d. 2008) - He wrote: "Both destiny's kisses and its dope-slaps illustrate an individual person's basic personal powerlessness over the really meaningful events in his life: i.e. almost nothing important that ever happens to you happens because you engineer it. Destiny has no beeper; destiny always leans trenchcoated out of an alley with some sort of 'Psst' that you usually can't even hear because you're in such a rush to or from something important you've tried to engineer."

Rainer Maria Rilke (1875-1926) - "The quieter we are, the more patient and open we are in our sadnesses, the more deeply and unerringly a new revelation can enter us, and the more we can make it our own. Later on, when it "happens" - when it manifests in our

response to another person - we will feel it as belonging to our innermost being." [Borgeby gård, Sweden, August 12, 1904, from *Letters to a Young Poet* - Barrows, Anita; Macy, Joanna. *A Year with Rilke* (p. 251). HarperCollins. Kindle Edition.]

Guillermo del Toro (2017)^[1] – "Her questions [Shelley's], like Milton's, became universal, ontological questions. The exquisite Via Crucis she crafted for her creature speaks to all outsiders and will continue to do so for centuries to come. **For if Hell is others, then the creature experiences it like no other protagonist before him or since. And when he recognizes his true plea and the unforgiving circumstances of his existence, he quests to kill his God, to seek his God and curse him, for in lieu of love he chooses the one emotion he can dispense at will: hatred.** But like all art, the final element in this composition is paradox: when you silence your God, when you free yourself of him and realize he was himself a lonely man—simply a man—then you finally find yourself entirely, inescapably alone." [Shelley, Mary. *The New Annotated Frankenstein* (2017), edited by Leslie S. Klinger, Introduction by Guillermo del Toro, p. xiii. Liveright Publishing of W.W. Norton & Company, Ltd. Kindle Edition. ISBN 978-0-87140-949-2 (e-book).]

C.S. Lewis, *The Great Divorce* (1945)^[2] – 'Everyone who wishes it does. Never fear. There are only two kinds of people in the end: those who say to God, "Thy will be done," and those to whom God says, in the end, "Thy will be done." All that are in Hell, choose it. Without that self-choice there could be no Hell. No soul that seriously and constantly desires joy will ever miss it. Those who seek find. To those who knock it is opened.' [Lewis, C. S. *The Great Divorce*, Chapter 9, p. 75. HarperCollins. Kindle Edition.]

The Oxford Dictionary of National Biography – "Re-evaluation of Mary Shelley's literary achievements is currently very much in process, and her overall significance is yet to be recognized. More than 245 editions of *Frankenstein* have been published, including translations in Chinese, French, German, Hebrew, Italian, Japanese, Spanish, and Swedish. If she had created only *Frankenstein*, her significance in literary history would be secure; but a full understanding of the import of all of her major works may change our understanding of literary history

as well."

Jill Lepore in *The New Yorker*, 12 February 2018 - But the politics of *Frankenstein* are as intricate as its structure of stories nested like Russian dolls. The outermost doll is a set of letters from an English adventurer to his sister, recounting his Arctic expedition and his meeting with the strange, emaciated, haunted Victor Frankenstein. Within the adventurer's account, Frankenstein tells the story of his fateful experiment, which has led him to pursue his creature to the ends of the earth. And within Frankenstein's story lies the tale told by the creature himself, the littlest, innermost Russian doll: the baby.

Jill Lepore in *The New Yorker*, 12 February 2018 - By the eighteenth-fifties, Frankenstein's monster regularly appeared in American political cartoons as a nearly naked black man, signifying slavery itself, seeking his vengeance upon the nation that created him.

Jill Lepore in *The New Yorker*, 12 February 2018 - **What made Mary Shelley's work so original, Ellen Moers argued at the time, was that she was a writer who was a mother.** Tolstoy had thirteen children, born at home, Moers pointed out, but the major female eighteenth- and nineteenth-century writers, the Austens and Dickinsons, tended to be "spinsters and virgins." Shelley was an exception.

[1] *Wikipedia* - **Guillermo del Toro Gómez** (born October 9, 1964) is a Mexican filmmaker, and author. He directed the Academy Award-winning fantasy films *Pan's Labyrinth* (2006) and *The Shape of Water* (2017), winning the Oscars for Best Director and Best Picture for the latter.

[2] *Wikipedia* - *The Great Divorce* is a novel by the British author C. S. Lewis, published in 1945, and based on a theological dream vision of his in which he reflects on the Christian conceptions of Heaven and Hell. The working title was *Who Goes Home?* but the final name was changed at the publisher's insistence. The title refers to William Blake's poem *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*. *The Great Divorce* was first printed as a serial in an Anglican newspaper called *The Guardian* in 1944 and 1945, and soon thereafter in book form.

"GALVANISM"

Erin Blakemore in *Smithsonian* magazine (4 December 2015) – "Ruston write that Shelley was inspired by the concept of galvanism – the idea that scientists could use electricity to stimulate or restart life. **Name after Luigi Galvani [1737-1798]^[1], an Italian doctor, the concept came about after Galvani was able to make a frog's legs twitch when he hooked the animal up to an electric charge.... Electricity was a new and barely understood force when Galvani performed his experiments on dissected animals during the late 18th century, so it makes sense that people thought it might just be able to make creatures come alive after death...** In *Frankenstein*, Shelley only mentions the word 'galvanism' once in a passage where the hubristic Dr. Frankenstein describes how a lecture on electricity caused him to throw away everything that he knew about science."

PROMETHEUS

The *Oxford Classical Dictionary* at "**Prometheus**" – "Prometheus, divine figure associated with the origin of fire and with Hephaestus, developed by Hesiod into a figure of greater weight. The name, of unknown significance, was given the sense 'Forethought' by Hesiod, who added a contrasting figure Epimetheus ('Thinking after the event'). His father is Iapetus.... In the *Theogony* of the Boeotian Hesiod (506–616) Prometheus is bound to a pillar, his liver eaten daily by an eagle and nightly renewed until finally he is freed by Heracles. This is traced back to a meal shared by men and gods where Prometheus tricks the gods into feasting on bones and fat, explaining the division of victims after sacrifice and also the distance which now separates men and gods. **Zeus in anger removes fire from men, but Prometheus steals it and gives it to man**, who is then further punished by Hephaestus' creation of woman, foolishly accepted by Epimetheus (see Pandora) ... **Prometheus' defiance of the gods, of significance already in the Renaissance, captured the romantic imagination (for instance, Shelley's *Prometheus Unbound*) and has profoundly influenced most modern artistic and literary genres (see H. Hunger), notably because of the monumental nobility in the *Prometheus Bound* of**

Prometheus chained to the rock, hurling defiance at Zeus, and despising mere thunderbolts. The trickery with which Hesiod characterizes this culture-hero has attracted interest in the light of trickster heroes in other mythologies, notably North American."

[1] *Britannica* – "**Luigi Galvani**, (born September 9, 1737, Bologna, Papal States [Italy]—died December 4, 1798, Bologna, Cisalpine Republic), Italian physician and physicist who investigated the nature and effects of what he conceived to be electricity in animal tissue. His discoveries led to the invention of the voltaic pile, a kind of battery that makes possible a constant source of current electricity."

THE ONE UNNAMED

I should alert the reader that I have been calling Frankenstein's creation the "Monster"; other critics and screenwriters will often call him the "Creature" instead. **In the author's introduction to the 1831 edition, Mary Shelley avoids both words, using instead "phantasm," "handywork," "thing" (two times), "hideous corpse," "phantom," "spectre," "progeny," and "offspring" to name her creation.** Percy Shelley studiously avoids any word for the creation in the preface he wrote for the first edition, and in his review of his wife's novel he uses the words "creature," "abortion," and "anomaly" in three incidental places, but he names him five times as the "Being." Both of the Shelleys thus seem to avoid using a single word (except Percy's neutral "Being") to name the creation, and no clear pattern of denomination appears in the text of the novel, where he is called by different characters the different names of "monster," "creature," "daemon" (typographically represented as "daemon" in this edition), "being," "wretch," and "devil." **By having no single name, the Monster has perforce a universality that embraces all of mankind;** indeed, when Mary Shelley saw in the playbill of the first theatrical performance of her novel that a mere "———" was being played by Mr. T. Cooke, she remarked in a letter to Leigh Hunt that "this nameless mode of naming the un[n]ameable is rather good" (although Richard Brinsley Peake's *Presumption; or, The Fate of Frankenstein* more often than not denominated the creation a "monster"). **In effect, Mary Shelley forces each reader (and viewer) to be complicitous, having to use a name and make a moral**

judgment about Frankenstein's creation: those who use the word "Creature" tend to sympathize with him (and excuse his actions); those who use the word "Monster" tend to hold him accountable for his murders. By attending so emphatically to the nameless, Mary Shelley indirectly asks the reader also to consider the etymologies of the forenames and surnames used for the other characters in this novel.... **However, what horrifies us the most is not the Monster but the responses to the Monster.** At the very center of the novel, the Monster is spurned by Felix (the happy), Agatha (the good), and Safie (the knowing). Even more horrible is the Monster's own self-deprecation in his final words to Walton: "You hate me; but your abhorrence cannot equal that with which I regard myself." **Frankenstein, ultimately, is a novel about self-loathing...** [Shelley, Mary. *Frankenstein: The 1818 Text* (Penguin Classics). The essay, from which this quotation comes, appended to the novel (pp. 168-169) called "How to Read Frankenstein" was written by Charles E. Robinson (2008). Penguin Publishing Group. Kindle Edition.]

From the "Introduction" by Charlotte Gordon -

Rejected by the human beings he meets, Victor Frankenstein's creature laments that he is alone in the world and sets forth to find the father who has abandoned him. But when the creature finds his father, the young scientist pushes his "son" away, just as Godwin had pushed Mary away. Outraged and hurt, the creature says, "If I have no ties and no affections, hatred and vice must be my portion." He declares that he will continue his campaign of vicious reprisals unless his creator makes him a female companion: "I am alone and miserable. Man will not associate with me, but one as deformed and horrible as myself would not deny herself to me. This being you must create."

By depicting the creature's suffering in such palpable detail, Mary asks the reader to sympathize with him. In her hands, he becomes an abandoned child, gone wrong because of the ill treatment of his creator.

Mary's attention to *the creature's point of view* turns her novel from a tale of the supernatural to a complicated

psychological study. She moves from exploring the creative power of humankind—a favorite theme of Shelley and Byron—to plumbing the depths of human nature. ***Frankenstein is not simply the story of a brilliant inventor and his invention; it is the story of what happens after the act of creation. What are the consequences of Victor Frankenstein's invention? What are his responsibilities? What happens to everyone else as a result of his creation? And most important of all, what happens to his neglected creation, the creature?*** [Shelley, Mary. *Frankenstein: the 1818 Text* (Penguin Classics), p. 13. Introduction by Charlotte Gordon. New York: Penguin Random House, 2018.]

THE CREATURE

VOLUME 1, CHAPTER 4 – The Awakening - It was on a dreary night of November, that I beheld the accomplishment of my toils. With an anxiety that almost amounted to agony, I collected the instruments of life around me, that I might infuse a spark of being into the lifeless thing that lay at my feet. It was already one in the morning; the rain pattered dismally against the panes, and my candle was nearly burnt out, when, by the glimmer of the half-extinguished light, I saw the dull yellow eye of the creature open; it breathed hard, and a convulsive motion agitated its limbs. How can I describe my emotions at this catastrophe, or how to delineate the wretch whom with such infinite pains and care I had endeavoured to form? His limbs were in proportion, and I had selected his features as beautiful. Beautiful! - Great God! His yellow skin scarcely covered the work of muscles and arteries beneath; his hair was of a lustrous black, and flowing; his teeth of a pearly whiteness; but these luxuriances only formed a more horrid contrast with his watery eyes, that seemed almost of the same colour as the dun white sockets in which they were set, his shrivelled complexion, and straight black lips. The different accidents of life are not so changeable as the feelings of human nature. I had worked hard for nearly two years, for the sole purpose of infusing life into an inanimate body. For this I had deprived myself of rest and health. I had desired it with an ardour that far exceeded moderation; but now that I had finished, the beauty of the dream vanished, and breathless horror and disgust filled my heart. Unable to endure the aspect of the being I had created, I rushed out of

the room, and continued a long time traversing my bed-chamber, unable to compose my mind to sleep. [Shelley, Mary. *Frankenstein: the 1818 Text* (Penguin Classics), p. 52. Introduction by Charlotte Gordon. New York: Penguin Random House, 2018.]

FRANKENSTEIN & CREATURE MEET

As I said this, I suddenly beheld the figure of a man, at some distance, advancing towards me with superhuman speed. He bounded over the crevices in the ice, among which I had walked with caution; his stature also, as he approached, seemed to exceed that of man. I was troubled: a mist came over my eyes, and I felt a faintness seize me; but I was quickly restored by the cold gale of the mountains. I perceived, as the shape came nearer, (sight tremendous and abhorred!) that it was the wretch whom I had created. I trembled with rage and horror, resolving to wait his approach, and then close with him in mortal combat. He approached; **his countenance bespoke bitter anguish**, combined with disdain and malignity, while its unearthly ugliness rendered it almost too horrible for human eyes. **But I scarcely observed this; anger and hatred had at first deprived me of utterance, and I recovered only to overwhelm him with words expressive of furious detestation and contempt.** "Devil!" I exclaimed, "do you dare approach me? and do not you fear the fierce vengeance of my arm wreaked on your miserable head? Begone, vile insect! or rather stay, that I may trample you to dust! and, oh, that I could, with the extinction of your miserable existence, restore those victims whom you have so diabolically murdered!" **"I expected this reception," said the daemon. "All men hate the wretched; how then must I be hated, who am miserable beyond all living things! Yet you, my creator, detest and spurn me, thy creature, to whom thou art bound by ties only dissoluble by the annihilation of one of us. You purpose to kill me. How dare you sport thus with life? Do your duty towards me, and I will do mine towards you and the rest of mankind.** If you will comply with my conditions, I will leave them and you at peace; but if you refuse, I will glut the maw of death, until it be satiated with the blood of your remaining friends." "Abhorred monster! fiend that thou art! the tortures of hell are too mild a vengeance for thy crimes. Wretched devil! you reproach me with your creation; come on then, that I may extinguish the spark which I so negligently bestowed." [Shelley, Mary. *Frankenstein: the 1818 Text*

(Penguin Classics), pp. 81-82. Introduction by Charlotte Gordon. New York: Penguin Random House, 2018.]

THE TALE OF THE CREATURE

"Thus, I relieve thee, my creator," he said, and placed his hated hands before my eyes, which I flung from me with violence; "thus I take from thee a sight which you abhor. Still thou canst listen to me, and grant me thy compassion. By the virtues that I once possessed, I demand this from you. Hear my tale; it is long and strange, and the temperature of this place is not fitting to your fine sensations; come to the hut upon the mountain. [Shelley, Mary. *Frankenstein: the 1818 Text* (Penguin Classics), p. 83. Introduction by Charlotte Gordon. New York: Penguin Random House, 2018.]

Human Beings as "Double" – Double-Ganger (*doppelgänger*) -

"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. [Shelley, Mary. *Frankenstein: the 1818 Text* (Penguin Classics), p. 95. Introduction by Charlotte Gordon. New York: Penguin Random House, 2018.]

The *Oxford English Dictionary* at "**double-ganger**" – "The apparition of a living person; a double; a wraith."

Who/What am I? – 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, endowed 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?** [Shelley, Mary. *Frankenstein: the 1818 Text* (Penguin Classics), p. 95. Introduction by Charlotte Gordon. New York: Penguin Random House, 2018.]

The Outsider/One Who Does Not Belong - I admired virtue and good feelings and loved the gentle manners and amiable qualities of my cottagers; but I was shut out from intercourse with them, except through means which I obtained by stealth, when I was unseen and unknown, and which **rather increased than satisfied the desire I had of becoming one among my fellows.** [Shelley, Mary. *Frankenstein: the 1818 Text* (Penguin Classics), p. 96. Introduction by Charlotte Gordon. New York: Penguin Random House, 2018.]

Adam's Pain – No One is Like Me – “But where were my friends and relations? No father had watched my infant days, no mother had blessed me with smiles and caresses; or if they had, all my past life was now a blot, a blind vacancy in which I distinguished nothing. From my earliest remembrance I had been as I then was in height and proportion. I had never yet seen a being resembling me, or who claimed any intercourse with me. What was I? The question again recurred, to be answered only with groans. [Shelley, Mary. *Frankenstein: the 1818 Text* (Penguin Classics), p. 96. Introduction by Charlotte Gordon. New York: Penguin Random House, 2018.]