

Historical and political

Galvanism – re-animating a corpse using electricity. In 1803, Giovanni Aldini, Luigi Galvani's nephew stating that carrying out galvanism on a freshly executed criminal was human, because it may relieve grief to those who are exposed to drowning, suffocation and other accidents

The author

Births and deaths

Her own mother died from poisoning after giving birth to Mary Shelley

Early deaths of Mary Shelley's 3/4 children

When her first baby died she wrote in her journal "dream that my little baby came to life again; that it had only been cold, and that we rubbed it before the fire, and it lived" – this could link to Victor's dream that led him to creating the creature and bringing life from death

Losses of her husband Percy Shelley and friend Lord Byron

It is a very common theme in Frankenstein

Percy Shelley's first wife, Harriet committed suicide whilst pregnant with his child as he left her to be with Mary Shelley

Beloved Attachment to her father William Godwin

In letter to friends she talked of "(her) excessive and romantic attachment to my father", "until I met (Percy) Shelley I could just say that (Godwin) was my God... I remember of many childish instances of the excess of attachment I bore to him"

Could link to the Electra complex and Victor's romantic attachment to his mother and sister. He basically disowned Mary after she and Percy eloped.

William Godwin's remarriage

Godwin remarried after Wollstonecraft's death because he felt he was "totally unfit to educate (his children)"

He married his next-door neighbour Mrs Mary Jane Clairmont

Mary hated her, once saying at the age of 17 "I detest Mrs G. she plagues my father out of his life"

There is a link made here. Victor creates the creature in the opinion that it will be great and beneficial, just as Godwin remarried to improve the lives of his children, including Mary.

However both the creature and Clairmont brought great misery to those who brought them into the picture

That 'ungainly' Swiss summer of 1816

Mary Shelley wrote Frankenstein as part of a challenge set by Lord Byron when she, him and Percy were holidaying in the Swiss Alps

There is a general mood of the of that trip in Frankenstein

Byron described the summer as "I was half mad... between metaphysics, mountains, lakes, love inextinguishable, thoughts unalterable"

Percy Shelley 'over reaching heroes'