

Bobby Acacio Arts and Sciences Scholarship

A person from history I would love to have breakfast with is Mary Shelley. From my first reading of *Frankenstein*, I have been incredibly interested in her history and her impact. I'm going to try my best here to give a short summary of her history for background, but I'm going to warn you: I have an extreme tendency to ramble. Daughter of Mary Wollstonecraft, one of the most famous and impactful feminist philosophers, and William Godwin, a philosopher who is considered one of the first exponents of utilitarianism and the first modern proponent of anarchism, she came from a family of incredibly intelligent writers. At the age of 16, she ran away with Percy Shelley, who became her husband after the death of Percy's first wife. Following their marriage, they had 4 children together, though only the 4th child, Percy, survived. Although her son Percy survived, she soon lost her husband Percy in a storm while he was sailing.

My interest in Mary Shelley is mostly surrounding her writing of *Frankenstein*. It was a novel she began writing at 18 years old while she was on vacation with Lord Byron, who was one of the most significant figures of the romantic movement. This history is incomprehensible to me: how did she meet another extremely important writer, and *how* does a *teenager* manage to write a novel that is considered one of the first and most important science fiction novels? I know there are some people who disagree with its classification as a science fiction novel, but I wholeheartedly view it as such. Shelley wrote *Frankenstein* during a very important era of scientific discovery, and used the idea of galvanism, which is the idea that dead tissue could be reanimated using electricity, in order to back the novel with actual scientific notions of the time.

The reason she interests me is because of the way she was able to write a novel concerning both science and important philosophical questions. *Frankenstein* was an important address of people's simultaneous fear and desire for innovation. The character Dr. Frankenstein was a direct

embodiment of this fear. He created a monster, and then abandoned it after succeeding in his scientific experiment because the monster was hideous. Because of this abandonment, the monster later turns on people and searches for vengeance against Dr. Frankenstein. The reason this interests me is because Shelley managed to create a timeless story, which has become central in concerns about bioethics and the idea of biologically engineering animals, and even people.

Throughout the story, Shelley addresses injustices, tragedies of birth, class and race all through the creation of a nameless monster — allowing the modern reader to find relevance to today's world. She also uses Frankenstein to show the impact of ego: how Frankenstein's ego led to his creation of the monster, and later his abandonment of the monster because of the way it looked. Ever since I read it, I have admired Shelley's ability to incorporate her love and interest in both science and philosophy to create an extremely impactful, immortal story. Long story short, the reason I would love to talk to her is because she was extremely intelligent and creative, and managed to write a classic by using her love of two subjects, which I admire.

I would like to thank your scholarship committee for your consideration and time. It is unbelievably kind and considerate for committees like yours to set aside care and funds in order to help Wyoming Area students in their future endeavors.