



MARY SHELLEY'S

FRANKENSTEIN

MARY SHELLEY

- ▶ Born in London in 1797
- ▶ Mother was Mary Wollstonecraft-
women's rights activist
- ▶ Father was philosopher William
Godwin
- ▶ Her mother died in childbirth, so
right from the beginning, love and
death were linked in her life



SHELLEY (CONT.)

- ▶ She eloped with her lover, Romantic poet Percy Bysshe Shelley, at age 17
- ▶ She gave birth to a daughter prematurely at age 18. The child died a few days later.
- ▶ She wrote *Frankenstein* at just 19.
- ▶ Her husband drowned in a boating accident when Shelley was just 24.
- ▶ She died from brain cancer at age 53.

GOTHIC ELEMENTS IN FRANKENSTEIN

- ▶ Evokes terror
- ▶ Appearance or influence of the supernatural
- ▶ Innocent heroine
- ▶ Cruel villain

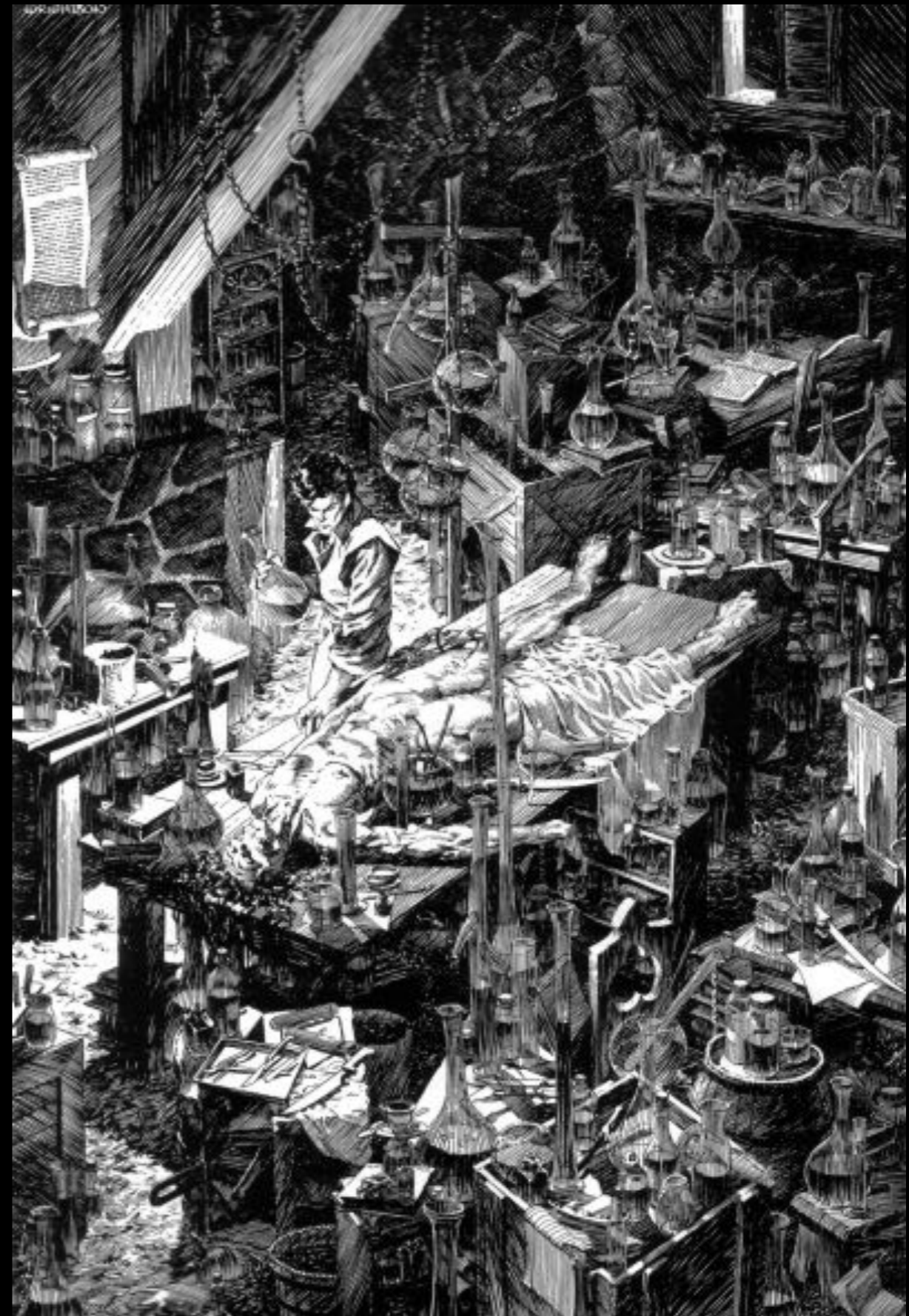


INFLUENCES FOR FRANKENSTEIN

- ▶ Frankenstein was written in the early 19th century during an age of great scientific discovery. One of the major themes in the novel, the idea of creating life out of dead material was the subject of research at the time. For instance, an Italian scientist called Galvani had applied electrical hooks to the body of a criminal that had been executed by hanging. After the first experiment, Galvani reported excitedly that the body had shown signs of movement and the left eye had opened.

INFLUENCES (CONT.)

- ▶ Another theme in the novel is Frankenstein's idealistic wish to create a better world and to free people from disease. Many people believe that the fact that his dream goes so tragically wrong reflects what happened during the French Revolution, which saw the revolutionaries' cries of "Liberty. Equality. Fraternity!" destroyed by the violence of the new regime.



THE NOVEL

Settings: Switzerland, England, France, Scotland, and the North Pole during the 18th century.

Genre: Gothic

Published in 1818

Alternate Title: The Modern Prometheus

Originally published anonymously due to the fact that Shelley was afraid it wouldn't be taken seriously because she was a woman.

