Women's Writing, Volume 12, Number 3, 2005

"Have You Thought of a Story?" Galland's Scheherazade and Mary Shelley's 1831 *Frankenstein*

REBECCA NESVET

ABSTRACT Internal evidence from Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* and its 1831 Introduction reveals Antoine Galland's translation of the *Arabian Nights* as the source of many of the novel's most significant themes and imagery. From Scheherazade's legendary experience and her own, Shelley constructs a lineage of female survivalist storytellers crossing temporal, geographic, and cultural boundaries. For the text of *Frankenstein*, Shelley appropriates the telescopic structure, the character of Safie, and several anecdotes and images. In her Introduction to the revised edition of 1831, Shelley more conspicuously emphasises the parallel with the *Arabian Nights*, reliving Scheherazade's struggle and triumph when she takes up Byron's intimidating storytelling challenge. Shelley's use of Scheherazade's stories and life story suggests that in her own perspective, to quote the Introduction, her "invention" of *Frankenstein* comes not "*ex nihilo*", but out of Arabia.

In her 1831 Introduction to her 1818 novel *Frankenstein, or, The Modern Prometheus*, Mary Shelley responds to a question she claims intrigued many readers of the earlier editions: "How [had she,] then a young girl, c[o]me to think of ... so very hideous an idea?" Shelley states that "[t]he Publishers" want to know "the origin of the story".[1] Agreeing to explain, she hints: "Every thing must have a beginning ... and that beginning must be linked to something that went before", as "[i]nvention ... does not consist of creating out of the void."[2] Ann K. Mellor provides one response to the publisher's question. "Mary Shelley created her myth single-handedly. All other myths of the western or eastern worlds," Mellor declares, "whether of Dracula, Tarzan, Superman, or more traditional religious systems, derive from folklore or communal ritual practices."[3]

Close readings of the 1831 edition of the novel and the new Introduction Shelley composed for it reveal imagery and themes appropriated from an early

Western European translation of the *Arabian Nights*, a collection of "folklore" that legendarily originated, to use Mellor's terminology, in "the eastern world". Furthermore, in interpolating the character and experiences of the *Nights*' narrator-heroine Scheherazade into not only her novel but also its aetiology as explained in the Introduction, Shelley identifies a mythical tradition or lineage of female storytellers for whom literary creativity is a survival strategy, and locates herself in this tradition. In light of the influence of the *Nights* upon Shelley's construction of the novel and Introduction, and the implications of this influence for her view of her story's origins and her own authorial heritage, we must rethink Mellor's claim that *Frankenstein* owes little or nothing to "folklore". We must also rethink the assumption – which is certainly not exclusive to criticism of this particular novel – that the myths and literary traditions "of the western or eastern worlds" can be clearly or meaningfully identified, separated, and polarised.

The literary culture of late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century Europe was saturated with appropriations of Antoine Galland's translation of the *Arabian Nights.* In 1704, Galland published the first volume of his French-language *Les Milles Nuits et Une*, the first European translation of a version of *Alf Layla wa-Layla*, or "One Thousand Nights and One Night". The version of this body of folk tales consulted by Galland was written in Middle Arabic, a language used *c.*1200-1600 in Persia.[4] An unattributed English translation of Galland's *Nuits*, titled *The Arabian Nights' Entertainments*, appeared in 1800, proved immensely popular, and was reprinted in 1809, 1814, and 1816. Many European and a few American Romantic writers, including Diderot, Montesquieu, Clara Reeve, William Wordsworth, Robert Southey, Jan Potocki, Thomas Moore, Washington Irving, and Edgar Allan Poe, wrote novels, poems, and tales inspired by or parodying the *Nights*.[5] Fatma Moussa-Mahmoud has studied the eighteenth- and nineteenth-century European craze for "Oriental" tales, and found evidence of extraordinary popularity. "[T]here were so many preposterous imitations of the *Nights*," Moussa-Mahmoud writes, that, in eighteenth-century Europe, "some genuine translations such as the *Persian Tales* and the *New Arabian Nights* were long taken for forgeries."[6]

Of the writers in Shelley's circle at the time she composed *Frankenstein*, Byron wrote several best-selling verse romances set in fanciful constructions of Ottoman lands; and in Percy Bysshe Shelley's *Prometheus Unbound* (published 1819, commenced 1818), the Titaness "Asia" plays the role of Prometheus's lover and saviour. As Robert Irwin notes, Samuel Taylor Coleridge and Thomas de Quincey both read the *Nights* as children and later recalled having been traumatised by the tales.[7] Brian Alderson has surveyed the marketing of bowdlerised editions of the *Nights* as children's literature. Two best-selling examples of this genre were Richard Johnson's *The Oriental Moralist: or, the Beauties of the Arabian Nights' Entertainments* (*c.*1791), from which is "expunged every thing that could give the least offence to the most delicate reader", and

the unattributed 1829 *Oriental Tales: Being Moral Selections from the Arabian Nights' Entertainments*.[8]

Like Coleridge, de Quincey, and many of their contemporaries, the author of *Frankenstein* may have been introduced to the *Nights* as a child. "Respecting the books I think best adapted for the education of female children from the ages of two to twelve," her father William Godwin wrote in a letter of 1802, "I will put down the names of a few books, calculated to excite the imagination, and at the same time quicken the apprehensions of children." The subsequent titles include "*Robinson Crusoe*, if weeded of its Methodism, and the *Arabian Nights*".[9] If Godwin practised what he preached, and his daughter did in fact read the *Nights* at an early age, her interest in the *Nights* and in "Orientalism" was not limited to childhood. A reading list inscribed in her journal of 1814 includes the entries: "Ochley's History of the Saracens", "Caliph Vathek" (William Beckford's *The History of Caliph Vathek*, 1786), and "New Arabian Nights", probably the aforementioned 1792 text.[10]

Before tracing Shelley's appropriations of Galland's *Nuits* in *Frankenstein* and its Introduction, it may be useful to summarise briefly the elements of the *Nights*' frame story that will be most germane to this discussion. In the 1800 English translation, two princes, Schahryar, the Sultan of Persia, and his brother Schahzenan, the Sultan of Greater Tartary, witness their wives committing adultery and murder them. Consequently, Schahryar then convinces himself that "there is no wickedness equal to that of women" and "in order to prevent the disloyalty of such [women] as he should afterwards marry", he decides "to wed one every night, and have her strangled the next morning".[11] Soon, "the commendations and blessings which the sultan had hitherto received from his subjects" cease and are replaced with "imprecations" against him.[12] Schahryar's gynocide jeopardises his public image and threatens to destabilise his rule. At this point, Scheherazade, the daughter of Schahryar's grand vizier, plans to stop this reign of terror. She asks her father to offer her in marriage to Schahryar, which after many horrified protestations he reluctantly does. She then instructs her sister Dinarzade to hide herself in the bridal chamber and to emerge early in the morning, before dawn, and demand to hear her sister tell a story before dying. Beginning with this story, Scheherazade captivates Schahryar with a thousand-and-one-night-long series of iterated tales, each broken off at dawn at a suspenseful point, obliging Schahryar to postpone her execution until the following morning so he may hear the conclusion of the latest tale. These tales make up the interior text of the *Nights*, and, after Scheherazade has told them, Schahryar reconsiders his misogyny and his insane law. He renounces the policy of serial rape and murder, and regains "the blessings of all the peoples of the large empire of the Indies".[13]

Shelley's 1831 Introduction contains many echoes of this story. She recalls the now-legendary rainy evening in July 1816 at Byron's house in Switzerland when she, her host, Percy Shelley, and John William Polidori read

from "some volumes of ghost stories, translated from the German into French".[14] In a scene that strikingly mirrors Scheherazade's experience, Shelley narrates:

> "We will each write a ghost story," said Lord Byron, and his proposition was acceded to ... I busied myself to *think of a story* ... I felt that blank incapacity of invention which is the misery of authorship when dull ... *Have you thought of a story?* I was asked each morning, and each morning I was forced to reply with a mortifying negative.[15]

Byron plays Schahryar's role by making the storytelling "proposition", which is immediately "acceded to". Shelley exaggerates the stakes in this game: a negative response, given in the morning, to the question "*Have you thought of a story?*" would be "mortifying". This scenario becomes particularly resonant in the light of Scheherazade's experience, as the word "mortifying" derives from the same root as "death", and therefore may carry morbid connotations. For Scheherazade, to fail to come up with an interesting story by morning would be literally fatal. Shelley's word choice ratchets up the dilemma of writer's block to suggest a crisis of that degree.

"*Have you thought of a story?*" is one of two complete sentences in the 1831 edition that are italicised for emphasis. The other, appearing in the text of the novel, is Frankenstein's reiteration of his Creature's intimidating promise: "*I will be with you on your wedding-night.*"[16] In the *Nights*, Schahryar's promise to be with many women, including Scheherazade, on their wedding nights implicitly incorporates a death threat. Frankenstein interprets the Creature's promise:

> I shuddered to think of who might be the next victim sacrificed to his insatiate revenge. And then I thought again of his words – "*I will be with you on your wedding-night.*" That then was the period fixed for the fulfilment of my destiny. In that hour I should die, and at once satisfy and extinguish his malice ... I resolved not to fall before my enemy without a bitter struggle.[17]

The Creature's multiple murders and generally antisocial attitudes, like Schahryar's, are his reactions to his perceived betrayal and the frustration of his desire. The tangle of morbid and erotic imagery in this passage, and particularly Frankenstein's understanding of his "struggle" with the Creature in terms that suggest sex ("satisfy and extinguish") or a fight for survival ("not to fall before my enemy"), also parallels the conflict between Scheherazade and her bridegroom. The Creature is "insatiate" in his pursuit of the "fulfilment" of Frankenstein's destiny, which must "extinguish" the fire of his emotions, but these emotions, like Schahryar's, are hate and revulsion. Like Schahryar, he is looking for "victims" to sacrifice to his "revenge" on their wedding nights. Frankenstein's reference to premature, violent, and preannounced death as his "destiny" is also telling: in the *Nights*, the vizier tells Schahryar what he

perceives to be his daughter's attitude toward the marriage she has requested: "The sad destiny ... could not scare her; she prefers the honour of being Your Majesty's wife one night to her life."[18] Here, as in *Frankenstein*, "destiny" means "death". In the vizier's view, Scheherazade's desire for Schahryar overrides her survival instincts. Really, nothing could be further from the truth. She resolves, like Frankenstein, to engage her wedding-night companion in an intense "struggle", and arms herself with stories to fight for her survival. The Creature/Schahryar instigates a battle, which Frankenstein/Scheherazade intends to fight.

Both *Frankenstein* and the *Nights* begin with a frame story, which introduces a series of interior tales. As Gregory O'Dea points out in his 1997 study of the "tales" Shelley wrote in the 1820s and '30s for *The Keepsake* (an ornate, annually published, illustrated anthology marketed as a Christmas gift for young women), she was not unfamiliar with the frame-and-tales structure of the *Nights*, Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*, and other such texts. O'Dea explains:

> The "tale" is an ancient and amorphous narrative form ... unlike the novel and the short story ... *A Thousand Nights and One Night* and Boccacio's *Decameron* set their tales in larger structures that include not only other tales but meta-narratives or framing situations in which the tales are told.[19]

Frankenstein is a similar literary box puzzle, taking the form of a series of letters written by the Arctic explorer Robert Walton to his sister. Walton's life, like Scheherazade's, is in danger. If he does not die of the cold, starvation, or shipwreck, it seems likely that his restless and frightened crew will kill him so they can return home. As David Collings has pointed out, Walton ends each of his letters (except, worryingly, the final one) with a statement that he will write again if he lives another day, and with his signature.[20] Each time we read this promise followed by Walton's name, we know he has won another day of life from the uncertain and perilous future. Like Scheherazade, Walton addresses his narration to his sister, but the reader knows that she, like Dinarzade, is a device Shelley supplies to allow her audience, like Schahryar, to receive the stories without directly asking Walton to tell them. The state of affairs on-board Walton's ship resembles the political climate of Schahryar's Persia. "I would sacrifice my fortune, my existence, my every hope to the furtherance of my enterprise," Walton resolves, and judges "[o]ne man's life or death ... but a small price to pay for the ... knowledge which I sought."[21] If Walton is willing to die for "the furtherance of [his] enterprise", he probably values the lives of his crew at similar (or lesser) worth. His boundless lust for glory parallels Schahryar's lust, to which the "existence" of many of his female subjects is sacrificed. The angry sailors, like the Persians, are beginning to hate their irresponsible and narcissistic despot.

Walton's narcissism is another characteristic he shares with Schahryar. Both of their destructive lusts are exclusively self-serving because they are

apparently at odds with the desire and well-being of other people involved, and Walton's pointless mission to conquer the distant, inhospitable, and probably agriculturally and industrially non-productive territory of the North Pole must prove as barren as Schahryar's deadly marriages, in which his wives do not live long enough to produce children.[22] When Frankenstein is brought on-board Walton's ship, he attempts, like Scheherazade, to dissuade Walton/Schahryar from his selfish, unpopular, non-productive, and potentially deadly mission by telling his own story as a cautionary tale. When Frankenstein shares his story with Walton, they are both in Walton's cabin, where Walton has put the exhausted invalid Frankenstein to bed. As Walton's dating of the letters he writes after Frankenstein's arrival (5, 13, and 17 August) indicates that nearly two weeks pass after Frankenstein is lodged in the cabin, and Walton establishes early that his guest is too weak and ill to be moved, it seems that Frankenstein never leaves the cabin (or the bed), and Walton either stays up all night, for several nights, watching him in it, or sleeps in the cabin with him, neatly paralleling the setting of the corresponding parts of the *Nights* story in Schahryar's bedroom. In content and structure, *Frankenstein*'s frame mirrors that of the *Nights.*

Other details in the novel also derive from the *Nights*, and Shelley draws on the interior tales narrated by Scheherazade as well as the frame story in which she appears. In comparing himself to "the Arabian who was buried with the dead", as Joseph notes, Frankenstein alludes to Sinbad the Sailor, the hero of a *Nights* tale appearing in Galland's translation and probably fabricated by Galland.[23] When Frankenstein's friend Henry Clerval introduces him to "Persian, Arabic, and Sanscrit" literature, Frankenstein finds "not only instruction but consolation in the works of the Orientalists", and digresses into hyperbole:

> Their melancholy is soothing, and their joy elevating, to a degree I never experienced in studying the authors of my own country. When you read of their writings, life seems to consist in a warm sun and a garden of roses, – in the smiles and frowns of a fair enemy, and the fire that consumes your own heart. How different from the manly and heroical poetry of ancient Greece and Rome![24]

As Moussa-Mahmoud notes, Galland's *Nuits* was the most famous of "the works of the Orientalists" and the genre of the pseudo-Oriental "tale" grew from imitations of the *Nights.* Although Frankenstein's literary criticism seems very subjective and almost comically saccharine, he specifies that in the literary traditions of the Middle East and India, the implicitly feminine and organic claim a place not afforded in the "manly" classical and neoclassical traditions of the Western European canon. However, Shelley's most significant appropriation of the *Nights* is probably her transplantation of the character Safie from the *Nights*' tale of "The Callenders and the Three Women of Bagdad" into

Frankenstein. The heroines of this tale are three unusually resourceful sisters (the male protagonist is amazed to see them shop for groceries without assistance, and to find that they live together in a house of their own without any male guardian) named Zobeide, Amine, and Safie. In *Frankenstein*, Shelley introduces a woman from Arabia named Safie, who proves instrumental in the Creature's development. In the de Lacey episode, the Creature recalls:

> [S]ome one tapped at the door. It was a lady on horseback ... The lady was dressed in a dark suit, and covered with a thick black veil ... She held out her hand to Felix, who kissed it rapturously, and called her ... his sweet Arabian ... when they separated, Felix ... said, "Good night, sweet Safie."[25]

When Safie travels to Europe, the Creature learns about the patterns, codes, and rituals that are supposed to indicate love. Then, as Felix and his father and sister teach Safie to speak, then read and write their language, the Creature eavesdrops and develops speech and literacy, and first realises his potential to become a civilised or enlightened member of human society. Like Schahryar, the Creature learns love and humanity from the overheard speech of a scholarly Arabian woman. By transposing Safie from "The Callenders and the Three Women of Bagdad" into her own narrative, Shelley links the *Nights* and *Frankenstein.* Shelley's "Arabian" woman's literal journey from her homeland in Turkey across Italy to Switzerland reflects the figurative journey of the *Arabian Nights* from Middle Eastern to Western European culture. The Creature explains that before Safie arrives in Switzerland, she and Felix meet in Paris; she manages to "express her thoughts in the language of her lover by the aid of an old man, a servant of her father, who spoke French".[26] When Safie recites her life story to Felix and is overheard by the Creature, she is effectively translating herself into that tongue in which Galland first introduced the *Nights* to Europe. Later, on Walton's ship, Frankenstein makes a final translation of Safie's recollection into the language of the English explorer, in which it is communicated to Walton's sister and Shelley's original reading audience. This process exactly replicates that of the *Nights*' transmission from its Arabian origins to French and English. In the Safie episode, Shelley depicts the process by which bodies of legend are transmitted between places, languages, and cultures, and individual storytellers, listeners, and readers.

The depiction of Safie's relationship with her mother and her unwitting transmission of her mother's intellectual and ideological legacies to the eavesdropping Creature and his audience forms a fictional literary tradition centred around a character appropriated from the *Nights* and culminating with Walton's transcription of Frankenstein's confession for the edification of his sister. Shelley depicts the message Safie imparts as a survivalist one and associates it with the ideas she encountered in the writings of her own mother,

Mary Wollstonecraft. The Creature recalls that "the young girl", Safie, "spoke in high and enthusiastic terms of her mother", as this woman had:

> taught her to aspire to higher powers of intellect, and an independence of spirit forbidden to the female followers of Mahomet. This lady died, but her lessons were indelibly impressed on the mind of Safie, who sickened at the prospect of again returning to Asia, and being immured in the walls of a haram.[27]

Like most women of her time, Wollstonecraft was to a considerable extent "enslaved" by her society; however, she "spurned" such "bondage" and the "religion" in which she "instructed" her daughter (posthumously, through her writing and example) is the belief that women may "aspire to the higher powers of intellect ... and independence". In *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (1792), Wollstonecraft associated the conventional state of women in her own society with prevalent stereotypes of women in Islamic societies: "In a seraglio ... the epicure must have his palate tickled ... but have women so little ambition as to be satisfied with such a condition?"[28] Scheherazade, for one, is far from devoid of "ambition" and demonstrates a great deal of "intellect" and "independence". The "religion" and survival strategy that begins with Scheherazade is thus passed down in two parallel lineages: from Safie's mother to her daughter, and from Mary Wollstonecraft to hers. From that point, the Creature transmits it to Frankenstein, who repeats it to Robert Walton, who transcribes it in a letter to his sister Margaret Walton Saville, who has the same initials as Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley, who reveals the entire story to the readers of *Frankenstein.*

Scheherazade's and Safie's participation in this tradition of intellectual pursuits and assertion of independence allows them to survive individually and influence other women and men in politically beneficial ways. Conversely, in both *Frankenstein* and the *Nights*, the women who effect no positive changes in their acquaintances and societies, and are murdered, are those who do not use their voices; and their deaths are linked with the silencing of the human voice. In the *Nights*' frame story, there is no recorded dialogue between Schahryar and any of his one-night wives; and they do not question or attempt to prevent or forestall their executions. When Frankenstein entreats his fiancée Elizabeth to reserve any questions about his strange behaviour until the morning after their wedding, she agrees, but, before morning, she has been killed. Exactly like Schahryar's victims, Elizabeth is murdered by strangulation, which cuts off the voice, silencing before killing. These women are the antithesis of the archetype of the verbally empowered woman who British writers had identified with Scheherazade long before 1816. Moussa-Mahmoud notes that in 1756, Dr Alexander Russell wrote from Aleppo that "oriental men of fashion were lulled to sleep with 'stories told out of the *Arabian Nights' Entertainments* ... which their women were taught to repeat for that purpose'".[29] Here, Russell suggests that

the Turkish women replicate Scheherazade's performance in order not to convince, but to *incapacitate* men. Russell's report displays anxieties about the power that Scheherazade-derived storytelling invests in women (and specifically in "Oriental" women) and takes from men.

In Shelley's Introduction, storytelling does not threaten men's awareness or control, but it serves the female storyteller as a survival skill. The novelist recounts how she at last does "*think of a story*":

> My imagination ... possessed and guided me, gifting the successive images that arose in my mind with a vividness far beyond the usual bounds of reverie. I saw ... the pale student of unhallowed arts ... He would hope that, left to itself, the spark of life he had communicated would fade ... On the morrow I announced I had "thought of a story".[30]

Shelley's "announcement" is the first moment in the Introduction in which she depicts herself speaking out loud. This is a cataclysmic moment, both in the story she is telling and in the development of *Frankenstein* as a text. In 1817, she had allowed her husband to write a Preface to her novel explaining the story's origins in a first-person voice that appears to be hers, and to include this in the published version of her novel. In 1823, her father reprinted the 1818 version, with its Preface, and little or no intervention from her. By 1831, the "young girl" who wrote the original text of the novel had become a 34-year-old established (if still officially anonymous) author. She had published three novels and various other works and, since her husband's death in 1822, had lived and worked in relative autonomy for nearly a decade. At that point, she seems to have found herself able and willing to write and publish her own explanation of her story's origin.

In the 1831 Introduction, Shelley concludes that the creative process of female storytellers, as demonstrated by Scheherazade, can involve men, but the storyteller's audience must not assume that these men have played authorial roles. She claims:

> At first I thought but of a few pages – a short tale, but Shelley urged me to develop the idea at greater length. I certainly did not owe the suggestion of one incident, nor scarcely one train of feeling, to my husband, and yet but for his incitement, it would never have taken the form in which it was presented to the world. From this declaration I must except the [1818] Preface. As far as I can recollect, it was entirely written by him.[31]

She claims that as the story grew from "a short tale" of "a few pages" to a three-volume novel, her future husband provided inspiration and "incitement", but did not write the novel itself, and contributed only the original Preface, which she has since updated with her Introduction. This "incitement" mirrors Scheherazade's husband's thousand requests that she should continue her narration, inspiring but not informing her. These men do not determine any

"incident" or "train of feeling" related in the tales they hear; neither does Byron, who disappears from the final paragraphs of the Introduction after Shelley answers his challenge by finding her story.

Female storytellers and writers have not (as Frankenstein feared of his second, female Creature) taken over the earth or disempowered men. On the contrary, too many women in Shelley's era and more recently have found it difficult to launch their stories into print and public consciousness, not least because writing by women (like literary or cultural traditions originating outside Western Europe and Europeanised North America, or disseminated largely by oral transmission rather than in print media) has often been assumed to have no identifiable or relevant place in the history of English literature. However, as Shelley argues in the Introduction: "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."[32] She realised the "capabilities" of the *Nights*, and fashioned a creation myth suggested in some crucial details by characteristics of her source. In the relative absence of strong precedents within a unified, well-publicised tradition of female storytellers, the author of *Frankenstein* appropriated the mythical figure of Scheherazade – the storyteller-protagonist of a work derived from "folklore", recorded in Arabia, translated into French, then English, and impossible to isolate as an exclusively "Western" or "Eastern" cultural creation – to "*think of a story*" that would become an enduring and pervasive legend.

Acknowledgements

Many thanks to Ros Ballaster, David Collings, Damian Walford-Davies, Andrew Hadfield, and Jyoti Mohan for their encouragement and constructive criticism.

Correspondence

Rebecca Nesvet, University of Gloucestershire, Swindon Road, Cheltenham GL50 4AZ, United Kingdom (upstart_crow2@yahoo.com).

Notes

[1] M.K. Joseph (Ed.) (1998) *Frankenstein* (Oxford: Oxford University Press), p. 5. The novel was first published in 1818, and reissued in 1823 by William Godwin; the novelist seems to have had little involvement in the preparation of this reprint. All quotes from the novel are taken from Joseph's edition.

[2] Ibid., p. 8.

[3] A.K. Mellor (1998) *Mary Shelley: Her Life, Her Fictions, Her Monsters* (New York and London: Routledge), p. 39.

[4] R. Irwin (1996) *The Arabian Nights: A Companion* (New York: Penguin), pp. 10-11.

[5] Jyoti Mohan has alerted me to the influence of Galland's *Nuits* and other examples of "Oriental" and Orientalist literature in the works of Diderot (*Les Bijoux Indiscrets*, 1748) and Montesquieu (*Lettres Persanes*, 1755).

[6] F. Moussa-Mahmoud (1988) "English Travellers and the *Arabian Nights*", in P.L. Caracciolo (Ed.) *The Arabian Nights in English Literature* (Houndsmills: Macmillan), p. 95.

[7] Irwin, *The Arabian Nights*, pp. 263-266.

[8] B. Alderson (1988) "Scheherazade in the Nursery", in Caracciolo, *The Arabian Nights in English Literature*, p. 84.

[9] Mellor, *Mary Shelley*, p. 9.

[10] Beckford's Vathek is the grandson of Harun al-Rashid, the hero of several *Nights* tales. The *New Arabian Nights* Shelley cites is not to be confused with Robert Louis Stevenson's *New Arabian Nights* (1882).

[11] R. Mack (Ed.) (1995) *The Arabian Nights' Entertainments* (Oxford: Oxford University Press), p. 9.

[12] Ibid., p. 10.

[13] Ibid., p. 892.

[14] Joseph, *Frankenstein*, p. 7.

[15] Ibid., p. 8.

[16] The text's third and last italicised complete sentence, also from the Introduction, is "*It was on a dreary night of November*" (Ibid., p. 10). The first line Shelley wrote of the short story that evolved into *Frankenstein*, this sentence is italicised because it is a quote, not, apparently, for particular emphasis.

[17] Ibid., p. 169.

[18] Mack, *The Arabian Nights' Entertainments*, p. 16.

[19] G. O'Dea (1997) "'Perhaps a Tales You'll Make It': Mary Shelley's Tales for The Keepsake", in S.M. Conger, F.S. Frank & G. O'Dea (Eds) *Iconoclastic Departures: Mary Shelley after Frankenstein* (London: Associated University Presses), p. 63.

[20] In conversation, May 2000.

[21] Joseph, *Frankenstein*, p. 98.

[22] As orthodox heterosexual morality identified the creation of legitimate children as the primary or sole purpose of marriage, non-procreative sex (which Schahryar effectively practises until marrying Scheherazade), even within marriage, was conventionally judged self-centred and wasteful. In the end bracket of the *Nights*' frame, it is revealed that over the course of the thousand nights Scheherazade has given birth to three children, including a son who becomes heir to the sultanate. Scheherazade cancels out not only the destructive nature of Schahryar's desire, but also its narcissistic non-productivity.

[23] Joseph, *Frankenstein*, p. 53n. Galland's *Nuits* includes stories that have no identifiable precedent in any surviving pre-eighteenth-century text of *Alf Layla*

wa-Layla. These include "Sinbad the Sailor", "Ali Baba" and "Aladdin". As countless commentators have observed, those tales that have most pervasively entered the European and North American cultural consciousness are mainly Galland's interpolations.

[24] Ibid., p. 69.

[25] Ibid., pp. 116-117.

[26] Ibid., p. 123.

[27] Ibid., p. 124.

[28] S. Tomaselli (Ed.) (1995) *Mary Wollstonecraft: A Vindication of the Rights of Men and A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), p. 98. According to the *Oxford English Dictionary* (1989), the term "seraglio" is defined as an "enclosure; place of confinement". Byron (in *Don Juan*, 1821-24, and elsewhere) and Percy Shelley (in *Hellas*, 1821) refer to the confinement of an Ottoman ruler's concubines in the "seraglio".

[29] Moussa-Mahmoud, "English Travellers", p. 96. Here, the active role of the woman and the man's vulnerability correspond to the era's Western stereotyping of Asian men as languid and feminised.

[30] Joseph, *Frankenstein*, p. 9.

[31] Ibid., p. 10.

[32] Ibid., p. 8.