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# Frankenstein's Shadow

## A Bicentennial Assessment of the *Frankenstein* Narrative's Influence

A June 2016 1½-day symposium during the bicentennial of Mary Godwin (Shelley's) conception of *Frankenstein* at Centre Brocher in Hermance, Switzerland.

### Purpose:

The purpose of the June 2016 Brocher Workshop is to commemorate the origin of the *Frankenstein* narrative by bringing together scholars from many disciplines to assess its influence in different times and cultures, including its resonance in debates about public policy governing biotechnology, medicine, and other emerging technologies.

The *Frankenstein* narrative has been incorporated deeply into fiction, film, and popular culture. It has also influenced how we think about the ethics of medical technology and the role of science and scientists. Many policy reports about regulation of recombinant DNA, gene therapy, genetically modified foods, genomic editing, and novel surgical technologies invoke the Frankenstein myth (sometimes accurately, more often a version influenced by Hollywood derivatives).

### Time and place:

Based on reconstruction of events and textual references, scholars posit that Mary Godwin (who six months later married Percy Bysshe Shelley) conceived of the idea behind her 1818 novel in the wee hours of June 16, 1816 in Coligny, on the south shores of Lac Lemman, which is now along the E Bus route from Rive in Geneva to Fondation Brocher and Hermance. The symposium will take place on the 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> of June, 2016, ending just hours before the exact bicentennial.

### Program sponsors:

**Arizona State University:** David Guston (Consortium for Science, Policy and Outcomes, Virtual Institute for Responsible Innovation) and Edward Finn (Center for Science and the Imagination, School of Arts, Media and Engineering)

**University of Lausanne:** Marc Audetat and colleagues

**Duke University:** Robert Cook-Deegan (Public Policy, Biology, and Medicine)

## Day 1, 14 June 2016: The Frankenstein Narrative in Policy Debates

### Lunch and welcome

**Noon:** Welcome

- Dave Guston and Ed Finn to welcome everyone, explain Frankenstein Bicentennial events and ASU involvement (noon-12:08)
- Cécile Caldwell Vulliétty to welcome to Villa Brocher and Centre Brocher and introduce staff and explain about Fondation Brocher (12:08-12:15)
- Marc Audetat to welcome to Switzerland and mention this workshop in context of activities connected to Univ. Lausanne, other related events (12:15-12:22)

**12:25-1:30** Eat lunch, then over dessert, Robert Cook-Deegan to introduce Alexander Morgan Capron as after-lunch speaker

**1:35-2:00:** Keynote talk and Q&A in lunch venue

- Alexander Capron, “Frankenstein’s echoes in contemporary bioethical debates: lessons from the recombinant DNA and human gene therapy debates in the early 1980s for genome editing today” [How and why the President’s Commission explicitly addressed “playing God,” *Frankenstein*, and the Golem myths]

**2:00-2:15:** move to conference room

### **How the *Frankenstein* narrative has influenced perceptions of science, technology and medicine in bioethics and public policy**

**2:15-2:35**

- Henk van den Belt, “Frankenstein in debates about synthetic biology and genome editing technologies” (Netherlands)

**2:35-2:55**

- Kayte Spector-Bagdady, “Frankenstein’s shadow in contemporary debates about genomics and neuroscience in the Presidential Commission for the Study of Bioethical Issues” (US)

**2:55-3:15**

Reaction panel: Cook-Deegan, Capron

**3:15-3:30:** break

### **Frankenstein Beyond Biotech**

**3:30-3:50**

- Jack Stilgoe, “Responsible Innovation & Geo-engineering” (UC London)

**3:50-4:10**

- Olivier Glassey, Lausanne, “Artificial Intelligence and Robotics” [invited-Guston]

**4:10-4:30**

Reaction panel: Guston, Spector-Bagdady

**4:30-6:** Reception and break

### **Dinner**

**6-7:30:** Group dinner

**7:30-8:** After-dinner speaker: Lauren Beukes “Frankenstein’s echoes” in science fiction.

## Day 2, 15 June: The *Frankenstein* narrative in literature, culture, and science

Venue: Conference room

**9:00-12:30**

### Frankenstein in literature, film, and culture

*9:00-10:30: First session*

**9-9:20**

- Moshe Idel, Hebrew University, "Frankenstein and Golem" [invited-Guston]

**9:20-9:40**

- Marc Audetat, U Lausanne, "From Frankenstein to the Island of Dr Moreau, from Brave New World to GATTACA"

**9:40-10**

- Ioanna Solidaki, University of Lausanne "Frankenstein: Cultural Ramifications in Theatre & Film"

**10-10:30**

Reaction panel: Beukes, Lederer

**10:30-11** Break

*11-12:30: Second session:*

**11-11:20**

- Elizabeth Young, Mt Holyoke College, "Black Frankenstein"

**11:20-11:40**

- Dehlia Hannah, ASU, "The Year Without a Summer/Winter: Frankenstein and Climate Change"

**11:40-noon**

- Shannon Nicole Conley, James Madison University, "Monstrous Motifs, Imaginative Capacities, and the Governance of Assisted Reproductive Technologies"

**noon-12:30**

Reaction panel: Audetat and Finn

### **12:30-2: Lunch and post-lunch talk**

**12:30-1:30 Lunch**

**1:30-2**

- Charles E. Robinson: "The *Frankenstein* texts"

## 2-5 Museum exhibits and archives

### 2-3:30 *First Session*

#### 2-2:15

- Susan Lederer, “Frankenstein’s Shadow and the National Library of Medicine Exhibit”

#### 2:15-2:30

- Judith Guston, Rosenbach Library, “Frankenstein, Dracula, and the Monster Within”

#### 2:30-2:45

- David Anton Spurr, Bodmer Library and Museum, and University of Geneva

#### 2:45-3

- Liz Denlinger, New York Public Library, "The Horrors of My Secret Toil: Representing the Ethics of Victor Frankenstein's Labor in Museum Exhibitions”

### 3-3:30 Break

### 3:30-5 *Second Session*

#### 3:30-3:50

- Marcia Balisciano, Franklin House Museum, “The Modern Prometheus”  
[invited-Guston]

#### 3:50-4:10

- Juliet Burba, Bakken Museum of Minnesota “Mary Shelley and Her Monster”

#### 4:10-5:00

- Ed Finn, ASU, “Frankenstein Digital Museum” [Ed also makes transition to announce reception and dinner plans]

## 5-6 Break and local strolls to Hermance, shoreline, or wine fields

## 6-7 Reception

## 7-9 Dinner

Distinguished speaker and announcement of June 16 events and other activities  
[Caldwell Vulli  ty re events, Guston to introduce Langdon Winner]

#### 8:15 or so

- Langdon Winner, RPI, “Frankenstein and Autonomous Technologies”

**List of those confirmed (to be covered by Brocher):**

Henk van den Belt  
Elizabeth Young  
Jack Stilgoe  
Judith Guston  
Juliet Burba  
Charles Robinson  
Langdon Winner  
Dehlia Hannah  
Liz Denlinger  
Shannon Nicole Conley  
Lauren Beukes

**Those whose airfare to and from Geneva will be covered by Duke:**

Bob Cook-Deegan  
Alex Capron  
Kayte Spector-Bagdady  
Susan Lederer  
(Kym Weed, Keohane Fellow from UNC/Duke, PhD candidate in English)

**Those whose airfare to and from Geneva will be covered by ASU:**

Dave Guston  
Ed Finn

**Local**

Marc Audetat  
Ioanna Solidaki  
Brocher staff

*Pending international*

Moshe Idel  
Marcia Balisciano

*Pending local*

Olivier Glassey, Lausanne