Un film de Haifaa Al-Mansour
Dans les salles le 8 août 2018

4 pages en anglais pour découvrir le contexte historique du film et une interview de la réalisatrice.

SYNOPSIS

London, 1814. Mary Wollstonecraft Godwin, 16, starts a passionate affair with the poet Percy Bysshe Shelley, and runs away with him. Condemned by all, their story is that of two free souls who believe in progressive ideas. In 1816, the couple is invited to spend the summer at Lord Byron's residence in Geneva. The summer is rainy and the guests take up a bet: writing the best horror story. During a stormy night, Mary Shelley conceives the idea of the Frankenstein character. She is 18 and about to revolutionise literature and pop culture for ever...

affair liaison (amoureuse) / **to run, ran, run away** s'enfuir / **rainy** pluvieux / **to take, took, taken up** ici, se lancer / **bet** pari / **stormy** orageux **character** personnage.

(Wikimedia Commons)

MARY SHELLEY (1797-1851)

Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley was an English author. She wrote novels, short stories, essays, biographies and travel narratives. *Frankenstein; or, The Modern Prometheus*, written when she was only 18, is her most famous work. After the premature death of her husband, she spent much of her life editing and promoting his work. She is considered to have been a political radical, and promoted the idea of reforming society with cooperation and sympathy.

novel roman / **short story** nouvelle / **travel narrative** récit de voyage / **to edit** annoter, préparer (en vue d'une publication).

MARY SHELLEY CHRONOLOGY

1797	**Born,** 30 August, in London, from political philosopher William Godwin and feminist philosopher, Mary Wollstonecraft
1814	began a romance with poet and philosopher **Percy Bysshe Shelley**
1816	married Percy Bysshe Shelley. Spent the summer at **Lord Byron's** near Geneva and conceived the idea for her novel *Frankenstein*
1818	**Publication of *Frankenstein*.** Moved to Italy with her husband. Birth of her only surviving child
1822	**Death of her husband** in a sailing accident
1823	returned to England and devoted herself to her **writing career** and raising her son
1851	**died** in London at the age of 53 from a brain tumour

romance histoire d'amour, idylle / **sailing** navigation / **to devote oneself (to)** se consacrer (à) / **brain** cerveau.

ELLE FANNING AS MARY SHELLEY

Elle Fanning (1998) is an American actress and fashion model. In 2011, she starred in her breakout role in J. J. Abrams' sci-fi-drama, *Super 8*. She has since played in both blockbusters and independent movies.

fashion model mannequin / **to star** ici, tenir la vedette / **breakout** qui lança sa carrière / **sci-fi** de science-fiction / **drama** film dramatique / **blockbuster** superproduction.

THE DIRECTOR

Haifaa al-Mansour is the first female director from Saudi Arabia. She directed the documentary *Women Without Shadows* (2005), and her feature debut, *Wajda* (2012), is the first movie entirely shot in Saudi Arabia. It received worldwide acclaim. Haifaa al-Mansour's work encourages discussion on topics usually considered taboo, especially regarding the status of women.

director réalisateur(-trice) / **feature** film, long métrage / **debut** ici, premier / **to shoot, shot, shot** tourner, filmer.

"We wanted someone who could bring this elegance, effortlessness and subtleness to the character. Elle elevated the role."

Haifaa al-Mansour about her actress

LITERARY PORTRAITS

Lord Byron

Tom Sturridge

Lord Byron (1788-1824) was an English poet and one of the most influential figures of the Romantic Movement. He rose to fame with his autobiographical poem "Childe Harold's Pilgrimage", in which he depicted his travels from Belgium to Switzerland. He was a politician too, taking his seat in the House of Lords at 21. His contemporaries both celebrated and condemned him over his scandalous love affairs with both men and women.

influential influent, marquant / **to rise, rose, risen to fame** devenir célèbre / *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* (VF) *Le Pèlerinage de Childe Harold* / **to depict** dépeindre, décrire / **seat** siège (au Parlement).

Percy Bysshe Shelley

Douglas Booth

Percy Bysshe Shelley (1792-1822) was one of the most famous English Romantic poets, but he mostly gained recognition after his death. He was part of a small circle of Romantic poets, writers and progressive thinkers that included Lord Byron and Leigh Hunt. In his poems, there are recurring themes of rebellion against authority, interchange with nature and the pursuit of ideal love.

recurring récurrent / **interchange** échange, dialogue.

John William Polidori
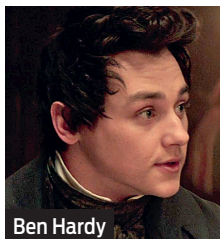
Ben Hardy
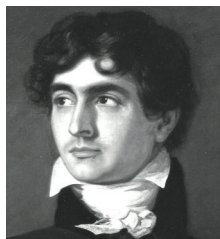
John William Polidori (1795-1821) was an English writer and physician. His most famous work, the short story *The Vampyre* (1819), was originally published without his permission and accredited to his employer, Lord Byron. He died at 26, cornered by depression and gambling debts.

physician médecin / **to corner** acculer / **gambling debts** dettes de jeu.

SCIENCE AND DEATH IN THE 19TH CENTURY

(SIPA)

Frankenstein was written in a time when science was obsessed by death, which is emphasized in the movie through the discussions between Mary Shelley and the physician Polidori. From the end of the 18th and into the 19th century, scientific investigations into the states of life and death proliferated. In 1774, two doctors, William Hawes and Thomas Cogan, set up the **Royal Humane Society** in London, with the goal of publishing information to help people resuscitate those who had drown. In 1786, the scientist Luigi Galvani discovered that frogs' legs twitched as if alive when struck by a spark of electricity. This marked the beginning of **galvanism**, which led to life-saving interventions such as the pacemaker and the defibrillator in the next century.

investigation enquête, étude / **to set, set, set up** créer, fonder / **goal** objectif / **to twitch** se contracter / **spark** étincelle ici, décharge / **galvanism** galvanisme (en médecine et physique, contraction d'un muscle stimulé par un courant électrique).

FRANKENSTEIN, THE FIRST SCIENCE FICTION NOVEL

The gothic novel *Frankenstein; or, The Modern Prometheus* is often hailed as the first ever work of science fiction. Victor Frankenstein, a young scientist, tries to create a human body in a wild scientific experiment, but creates a repulsive creature instead. Disgusted, he abandons his creation. Intelligent but unable to form bonds with human beings, the monster ends up taking revenge against his creator. *Frankenstein*'s philosophical subtext is important. It draws a parallel with the myth of Prometheus — *Frankenstein* also defied the laws of nature — and questions the relationship between humankind and the advances in science. Frankenstein's legacy has endured throughout the centuries. It has been adapted, parodied and referenced to on countless occasions.

to be hailed as ici, être considéré comme / **bond** lien, relation / **subtext** sens caché, signification métaphorique / **humankind** humanité / **legacy** ici, notoriété, postérité / **to endure** perdurer, résister.

(Wikimedia Commons)

(SIPA)
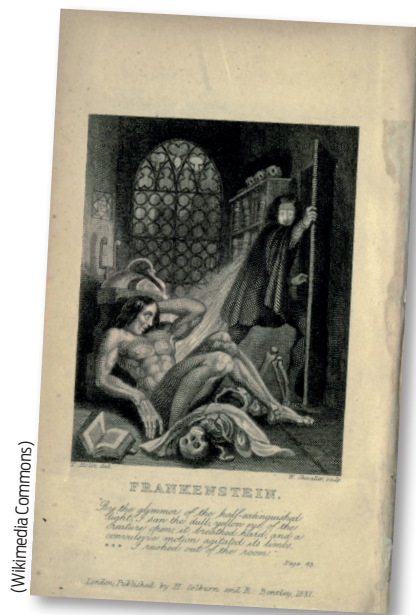
The Gothic novel, born in 1764 with *The Castle of Otranto* by Horace Walpole, was very popular in the early 19th century. It is characterised by a prevailing atmosphere of mystery and terror.

L'interview

"WHY ISN'T MARY SHELLEY FAMOUS LIKE JANE AUSTEN?"

Pourquoi Mary Shelley n'est-elle pas aussi connue que Jane Austen ?

La réalisatrice saoudienne Haifaa al-Mansour, dont les films examinent avec beaucoup de subtilité la condition féminine dans son pays, est de retour avec *Mary Shelley*, un très beau biopic sur l'auteure de *Frankenstein*. Quels aspects de la vie de l'auteure anglaise l'ont inspirés et ont résonné avec son travail ? Rencontre.

RENCONTRE AVEC
HAIFAA AL-MANSOUR
réalisatrice

1. Vocable: What drove you to make a movie about Mary Shelley?

H.A.M.: When I was sent the script, I was like: "Do you know that I'm from Saudi Arabia?", but it was amazing to read the script and sympathise with Mary Shelley's journey, growing up in conservative England. It wasn't as conservative as Saudi Arabia for sure but it had very similar ways in pressuring women to be or act in a certain way. The star at the time was Jane Austen, who wrote about love and jealousy, it was all in the domestic sphere, while Mary Shelly owned her voice and wrote something totally different. She wrote something about science fiction, questioning God and philosophy, which is very impressive for a young girl.

2. Vocable: Why did you focus on her life between age 16 and 18 only?

H.A.M.: Everything that happened in these two years pushed her into writing *Frankenstein*. I wanted to show the correlation between her life and the themes in the book. People questioned a lot her authorship because she first published it anonymously with Percy writing the introduction. The film is trying to give her back the credit she deserves. Piladori is also really important in the film because he's a man but, unlike Byron, he doesn't come from those states of power in society, and his authorship has also been questioned. Intellectual property was very much dictated by publishers at the time.

3. Vocable: A lot of verses are read throughout the movie. Was it important for you to put forward poetry?

H.A.M.: I think it was very important to hear the voices of the actual people and bring them to life. It was especially important to hear Percy's voice. Sometimes, when you read someone's poetry, you get closer to them, you understand them better — it's a real part of them.

4. Vocable: This is your first movie that is not set in Saudi Arabia. Do you see any similarities between this movie and your previous works?

H.A.M.: Yes, I just finished another film for Netflix, and all of them are about women. I don't really go after those projects; I just love them when they send them to me. I kind of sympathise with those characters. I felt really sad and angry when I researched and

Douglas Booth and Elle Fanning as Percy and Mary Shelley.

found out that Mary Shelley couldn't publish her book. That part of the script wasn't there, so I added it. It has happened 200 years ago and shouldn't happen anymore. Why isn't Mary Shelley famous like Jane Austen? She arguably created science fiction! We should claim her, as women, because if we have that legacy, it gives us confidence. ●

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1. script scénario / **to sympathise with** ici, comprendre, s'identifier avec / **to own one's voice** ici, s'affirmer

2. authorship paternité (d'une œuvre) / **states of power** ici, classes dirigeantes /

publisher éditeur

3. to put, put, put forward mettre en avant, en valeur

4. to be set ici, être situé / **to go, went, gone after** chercher / **to research** effectuer des recherches /

to claim se réclamer de, revendiquer (son héritage) / **confidence** confiance (en soi).