



# YALE NATIONAL INITIATIVE

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Curriculum Units by Fellows of the National Initiative

2012 Volume II: Storytelling: Fictional Narratives, Imaginary People, and the Reader's Real Life

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## **Empathy Through The Eyes of A Creature: A Journey Into Mary Shelley's Frankenstein**

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by Harriet J. Garcia

My curriculum unit uses the study of Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* to explore the power and danger of stereotypes, prejudice, and ostracism in society, specifically in the teen community. While Shelley uses a fictional "creature" as the victim of social judgment and cruelty, there are many examples of the "other" and "different" among the adolescents in our schools. There are a myriad of "different" traits that young people use to prejudge their peers: skin color, birthmarks, and physical disabilities are just a few of the markers of "abnormality" for our young teens. The imperative questions students must consider are: Do I take the time to listen to this person's words, to get to know them, to have a genuine chance at knowing a person? Are my eyes my only measurement of what I will know/assume about a person? Will his or her appearance be valid enough for me to make a judgment of someone? The genre of gothic literature, the elements of Romanticism in literature, the parallels between Mary Shelley and her novel, the use of epistolary narration and first person retrospective point of view, and character development are just a few of the elements we'll cover in this unit.

(Developed for World Literature/English IV, grade 12: recommended for World Literature/English IV, grade 12)

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