

Combination Analysis of Dark Romanticism and Science in Mary Shelley's work Frankenstein

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Abstract: This study is a thematic and analytical research that explores the classic work of Mary Shelly under the title "Frankenstein" or as it is known "The Modern Prometheus". It is a synthesis of Romanticism and Science, separated into two sections, with a brief introduction to Gothic Literature in the book and critical analysis. The goal of this research is to compare and contrast the following characteristics: Enlightenment vs Romanticism, Knowledge versus Nature, the Scientific Revolution, and, last but not least, terror and suspense. This study is organized into three sections: Frankenstein and Science, Romanticism and the Novel, and, finally, Frankenstein and Gothic Literature.

Keywords: Analytics, Frankenstein, Mary, Romanticism, Enlightenments, Science, Gothic Literature

Introduction

In the history of literary movements, some 18th - century people felt that science and logic are beneficial and so things will merely continue on improving forever. This optimism typified the Age of Enlightenment. As a result, disillusionment and alienation increased, and the Romanticist movement arose as a reaction. The Romantics believed that the Enlightenment's advances were creating an oppressive, conformist society, and that science and rationality could never hope to truly understand the world and human personality, and that the modern world's progress came at the expense of cherished values from the distant past that were slowly dying out. To make a difference, these two following quotes represent the two movement: "One impulse from a vernal wood.....May teach you more of man, Of moral evil and of good, Than all the sages can." --William Wordsworth, for team Romanticism-- "People aren't going to change, for better or for worse. Technology's going to be so cool. All in all, the future will be okay!" --Randall Munroe, for team Enlightenment-- Romantic and Enlightenment themes are prominent in fiction. Taking an example of Enlightenment-flavored science fiction in which, it might depict the future as a world of progress, friendship, brotherhood and Crystal Spires and Togas, with barbaric forces threatening the new utopia (Star Trek). Romanticist-themed science fiction might portray the future as an unpleasant Crapsack World, with high technology but low social quality, full of depression, dehumanization and alienation (everything Cyberpunk) with the happy souls being those who escaped to the countryside, if possible (like in *We* and *Brave New World*). (TV. TROPS). However, the main example for this research is the portrayal of these two movements in Mary Shelly's novel 'Frankenstein'.

Literature Review:

This book was reviewed by critiques and even researchers at universities. In Loyola Marymount University, the novel was analyzed as a story about the daring of two individuals, loaded with gothic themes, and centered on dreams. Dreams play a contemplative part in the lives of the novel's two heroes as well as the antagonists, and they spiral around their lives causing many obstacles even after they are attained. A dream transforms the novel's original protagonist, Victor, into the antagonist. Throughout this enigmatic story, there are several situations where Victor becomes an enemy to his own family. (From Shelly .102).

Based on Charles Shug, the easiest method to resolve the moral quandary offered by Frankenstein, whether to identify with Frankenstein or his creation. According to him is to read the book as a romantic poetry and focus on its form. The reader must "listen intently to the workings of the artist's mind as it molds and directs the work of art" in Romantic literature, which emphasizes the theory of experience above analysis and reflection and mixes the episodic narrative with lyrics, all of which are obvious in Frankenstein. Even at the end of the story, Frankenstein is unable to make a resolution about his moral obligations or acknowledge to his own guilt, lending credence to Schug's thesis. Finally, Schug writes, the growth in vision and knowledge is what counts in Romantic masterpieces like Frankenstein.

Another review by Glance quoting: The story of Victor Frankenstein is success to create life from dead matter, his success and the catastrophic results of that success, are too well known to require retelling (Glance 31). Though Glance considers adopting a comprehensive approach to describing the novel's entire notion of achievement through dreams. Also, the heroes' responsibilities in this novel have been juggled throughout the plot. Sometimes the monster is the protagonist, while other times it is either Victor or Walton. Yet, in the end, I shall spotlight the story's genuine protagonist, who positively shapes the narrative.

Research Purpose, hypothesis, and Questions:

This paper analyses the famous work of Mary Shelly under the title “Frankenstein” or as it is known “The Modern Prometheus”. It is a merge analysis of Romanticism and Science in which they will be divided into two parts in addition to a brief introduction to Gothic Literature in the novel and critical analysis. The purpose of this study is to discuss the following characteristics: Enlightenment versus Romanticism, Knowledge versus nature, the scientific revolution, last but not least horror and suspense. As a conclusion, the research questions of this paper are as following: in what extent does Mary combine the two movements Enlightenment and Romanticism? How does Mary depict Science and Imagery at the same time? What are the presented elements of Gothic Literature? This research is divided into parts: Frankenstein and Science, Romanticism and the novel, last but not least, Frankenstein and Gothic Literature.

Frankenstein and Science Mary includes science in her novel. The reference to Frankenstein is nearly solely dedicated to describing why Shelley opted to devour herself on the idea of galvanism, which led her to a bold dream about the creation of life through electrical movement. "I saw - with shut eyes but acute mental vision, - I saw the pale student of unhallowed arts kneeling beside the item he had put together," she writes, "I saw – with shut eyes, but acute mental vision, – I saw the pale student of unhallowed arts kneeling beside the thing he had put together. I saw the hideous phantasm of a man stretched out, and then, on the working of some powerful engine, show signs of life, and stir with an uneasy, half vital motion." (Shelley 1). This just adds to the evidence of Shelley's connection with the scientific experiment of galvanism that was taking place at the time. Galvanism was the most recent scientific research being performed in Europe at the time. Yet, Mary Shelley goes so far as to name a Darwin experiment in which he was successfully able to make a specimen of vermicelli move in a glass vase. This scientific discovery was introduced by Scientist Luigi Galvani was dissecting frogs when he accidentally touched a brass rod to a steel knife, causing a distinct movement of muscle in an otherwise dead frog. (Frankenstein Project)

However, electricity remained a mysterious new discovery in the late eighteenth century, to which all type of natural phenomena were incorrectly attributed. It became entangled in a debate between two schools of scientific thought about the fundamental principles of life. Vitalists, as represented by the Leiden school of physiology, held that the soul, or essence of life, was somehow separate from the body, leading in a dualist approach. A materialist viewpoint that positioned the vital force as an intrinsic aspect of the body, mechanists considered the body as a machine with all necessary operating parts contained inside it. (Hutchins, 2021)

In a lecture represented by the professor Ildiko at the Cambridge University, he described how the story is rich in imagery of light, a metaphor that was frequently employed to describe the French Revolution. She reviewed the novel's subtitle, 'The Modern Prometheus,' recalling how Prometheus instigated strife between humanity and the Gods by catching fire and being severely punished for it. The bringer of light is a well-known symbol of the Enlightenment, and Ildiko described the work as a result including both Enlightenment Science and the long eighteenth century, as well as Romantic poetry. (Hutchins, 2021)

The Beginning of the Scientific Revolution, and the man as God

The narrative depicts man as God. Giving life to an inanimate object is an act reserved solely for God. But, in the narrative, by Victor's invention, man created life. It alludes to a time when science prevailed. It implies that science may be a god in this regard. It implies that science may provide man with the impossible—that man can become a deity. From the book analysis, we can say that what was formerly considered 'impossible,' such as the gift of a healthy heart, has now become a possibility in modern times. Heart transplantation is a frequent procedure these days. And science made it possible. This transition is provided by the novel Frankenstein. Even the development of the monster represents Science's success. We can see from the story of Frankenstein that science is similar to God. Science may also offer life. (Study Moose, 2020)

Frankenstein as a Romantic work:

Mary Shelley was a key figure in the late-eighteenth and early-nineteenth-century Romanticism movement. The Industrial Revolution had just begun when Mary Shelley published her first and most popular novel, Frankenstein or the Modern Prometheus, in 1816. New inventions were produced, and the world as we knew it changed quickly. Shelley explores the dangers of such rapid and unfamiliar advancement in her work. The novel's main character, Victor Frankenstein, aspires to triumph over nature by attempting to bring something inanimate to life. He succeeds in creating a live thing, but the creature turns against him and ends Frankenstein's life. In Frankenstein, Mary Shelley contrasts nature's beauty and serenity with the destructive powers unleashed by interfering with scientific development. Her themes are consistent with the concepts of Romantic poets: she recognizes the value of infancy and emphasizes nature as a counterpoint to the advancement and devastation of Industrialism and progress. She, like her contemporaries, aims to promote the

idea of returning to nature and a youthful state of creativity rather than destroying lives by fighting nature's course. (Anneli, 2006)

Victor Frankenstein represents the idea of using one's imagination to gain a greater perspective and vision of everyday life. Victor is depicted by Shelley as a man who is destined for achievement through experimenting but falls short owing to unattainable standards and thoughts. The creature, on the other side, is seen battling with morals, humanity, and even the environment. In the single quote, "The human senses are insurmountable barriers to our union.... and if I cannot inspire love, I will cause fear..." (Shelley 167) It is clear that this work is taking a unique edge that no other romance novel has taken before.

The novel is considered as Dark Romanticism, a subgenre of Romanticism, the difference between the two is the first emphasizes on human fallibility as well as the human inclination to sin and self-destruction, especially in the context of social reforms. As a result, human condition is seen as pessimistic in Dark Romanticism whereas it is seen optimistic in Romanticism Several significant criteria characterize a Dark Romantic work as a literary genre when analyzed. The four primary elements and features to search for are as follows: an individual prone to sin and self-destruction, the anthropomorphizing of Evil, nature as evil and spiritual, and an individual's incapacity to make positive changes. (Study-Smarter, UK). Dark Romanticism is similar to Gothic Literature when it comes to horror, science-fiction, and terror in which it is going to be introduced in the following section.

Gothic elements on the novel:

Frankenstein used gloomy scenery to heighten tension and predict upcoming events. When Victor is about to breathe life into the monster he describes how "it was on a dreary night of November" (Shelley, 34). This is a subtle indication that things are not going as planned. The monster's birth will be a watershed moment in Victor's life, one he will come to regret. The dismal scenery later in the same chapter informs the reader of Victor's error. Victor affirms that he "felt impelled to hurry on, although drenched from the rain which poured from a black and comfortless sky." Shelly (36). The sky is a metaphor for Victor's transgression. Another gothic part of the novel is demonstrated through the anguish of the main characters, beginning with the monster in pain and continuing throughout the book. It largely consists of him confronting DeLacey and subsequently fleeing the community due to discomfort. Victor's anguish at losing his loved ones, as well as his loss of capacity to enjoy nature due to agony, demonstrates gothic characteristics. Gothic novels are filled with mystery and suspense, and in Frankenstein, Walton's voyage through an unknown environment offers the reader a sense of curiosity and wonder about what that feels like. The novel's romantic elements are demonstrated via the strength of the person. Victor and Robert Walton have a distinct idealized status in the narrative because they are people with varied interests. Walton has a need for knowledge, so he embarks on a romantic journey to the North Pole. Victor, in contrast side, aspires to live a life he has idealized. The characters are also seen acting emotionally, impulsively, and irrationally, demonstrating their romantic element. (Study-Corgi, 2022).

The way Mary Shelley composed Frankenstein is really intriguing, and it takes a few reads and some more in-depth research to fully grasp. At first sight, it appears to be a standard gothic about a monster and his creator, but after a few more reads, the deeper romantic influence and critique of the romantic view become clear. The work is a great gothic that ties to the culture for which it was written and the fear it seeks to convey. The gloomy topic and dubious activities of the main character highlight the novel's gothic tone. Victor's attempt to build the world he desires is horrible and ultimately futile. This is used to demonstrate that romantics are dreamers and that reality will shape its own destiny. One man cannot easily create life and play with the future. Fate cannot be avoided, and hoping for a better future is pointless. The work instills in the reader a sense of hopelessness. One can only aspire for a better future, and attempting to construct one like Victor will result in disaster. Frankenstein is a truly gothic novel because of its underlying, deeper significance. (UK Essays, 2023)

Conclusion:

To conclude, this paper shows how two movements were included in the novel, it highlights these elements of Science and Knowledge versus nature, the challenge of a man to God and how science and knowledge can mess with him. The aspects of Romanticism in the novel and the analytical perspectives of darkness and evilness. Last but not least, the brief introduction to Gothic Literature. For further research, it is highly suggested to analyze and compare the novel to the cinema as Frankenstein was adapted to different versions of movies (12 adaptations), this means that the story as being part of Sci-fi makes a great impact in popular culture.

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