

Conflict Between the Themes of Love and Revenge in Mary Shelley's *The Modern Prometheus*

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Abstract - Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley's "The Modern Prometheus" was amongst some of the earliest Science fictions ever written. The Modern Prometheus or Frankenstein is a Gothic novel where Mary Shelley portrays Victor, an idealist who brought a monster to life and The Monster, a human-like beast out to take revenge after getting abandoned by its creator. Mary Shelley was very much influenced by Romanticism, probably because of Percy Bysshe Shelley, a prominent romantic poet and philosopher and her husband. This brought a scene of Romanticism in the Gothic novel. It is evident through the portrayal of nature and the way Mary represents the relationship between the characters of the novel. Victor abandoned his creation and thus he sets out to take revenge on Victor. The Monster attacks those Victor loved thus presenting a conflict between the themes of Love and Revenge. This research work is going to examine the frequency and magnitude of the conflict by understanding the characters and their fates.

Index Terms - Mary Shelley, The Modern Prometheus, Romanticism in Science Fiction, The Modern Prometheus: Love as a Theme, The Modern Prometheus: Revenge as a Theme

I. MARY SHELLEY

"And Shelley, fourfam'd,—for her parents, her lord, / And the poor lone impossible monster abhorr'd." (Leign Hunt; The Blue-Stocking Revels) The Modern Prometheus or The Frankenstein is one of Mary Shelley's most prominent works. Shelley was born in London on August 30, 1797. Her mother was a renounced feminist, Mary Wollstonecraft. She lost her mother of a puerperal fever after 10 days of her birth. William Godwin, Mary's father, was a political journalist. For most of the part of her childhood days, Mary interested and educated herself in her father's elaborate library, spending most of her time in her father's intellectual friend circle, which included Samuel Taylor Coleridge and William Wordsworth.

In 1801 her father got remarried to Mary Jane Clairmont, Jane already had two children before the marriage. The relationship between Mary and her stepmother was very shallow because Jane never like the kind of relation Mary had with her father, she was envious of Mary. Jane often tried to drive the two apart and not only from her father but from her only love, books. However, none of this shook Mary, and at the age of 14, she published her first poem, Mounseer Nongtongpaw. Mary was sent to live in Scotland with William Baxter, a family friend, in 1812. Mary became close to Baxter's two daughters, Christina and Isabel, during this time. This experience provided her with the family life she lacked in London.

She returned to London at the age of 16, where she met one of her father's political supporters, the young Percy Bysshe Shelley. Despite the fact that Percy was still married to his first wife, Mary began a romantic relationship with him. The couple eloped in France, causing tensions between Mary and her father. The couple spent some time in Europe together before struggling financially. They also suffered the tragic loss of their first child in 1815, when Mary gave birth to a baby girl who died after only a few days.

The couple spent the summer of 1816 near Geneva, Switzerland, alongside Lord Byron, John William Polidori, and Jane Clairmont. On one rainy evening, after the group sat and had a small horror story telling competition, Lord Byron suggested that should all write their very own horror stories and this is when Mary came up with the idea for her novel Frankenstein.

Frankenstein got finally published around 1818 through an unknown publication as a new novel by an unknown author. People had assumptions that Percy Shelley had written the book because he wrote the introduction, nevertheless it was a huge success.

At the age of 24 Percy Died leaving Mary Shelley a widow. During this period, she wrote numerous other novels, such as Valperga and The Last Man. She began to spend a lot of time promoting her husband's, Percy's poetry to ensure his place in literary history.

Mary Shelley died on February 1, 1851, at the age of 53, from brain cancer. Nonetheless, nearly a century after her death, one of her novels, Mathilde, was finally published in the 1950s. However, Mary Shelley is best known today for her classic novel Frankenstein.

II. THE MODERN PROMETHEUS

In 1814 Maria ran away with the poet Percy Bysshe Shelley and they married two years later. During that time, they spent a few days at Villa Diodat on Lake Geneva in Switzerland. Here they and their friends Lord Byron and John Polidori decided to invent stories for entertainment. Not famous poets, but Polidori and Mary Shelley created the most memorable work in Villa Diodati. Polidori's *The Vampire* was a moderately successful novel at the time, but the story of Frankenstein has remained in the public imagination since its publication.

At the end of the novel, the story is told by an English Arctic explorer who helps Victor Frankenstein in the final stages of his pursuit. Frankenstein is a talented young medical student who discovers the secret to bringing the dead back to life. He is obsessed with the prospect of becoming a man. The resulting creature is lonely and unhappy; he is an outcast seeking murderous revenge for his plight. Frankenstein chases the creature as it escapes. Frankenstein meets the scientist at this point and tells him his story before he dies from his wounds. The novel has been adapted to film several times, but none have succeeded in conveying the novel's Christian horror and philosophical precision.

The novel begins with a series of letters written by the explorer Robert Walton to his sister Margaret Saville. The stranger, later revealed to be Victor Frankenstein, begins his narration. Frankenstein then describes how his childhood friend, Elizabeth Lavenza, became a member of his family. Victor grows up in a close-knit domestic circle, where he thrives, and is fascinated by the natural world's mysteries. He begins his research with outdated alchemists and then moves on to electricity. Victor's mother dies of scarlet fever, which she contracted while nursing Elizabeth back to health, just before he leaves for Ingolstadt University. He is discouraged in his studies of natural sciences, but he continues his studies after hearing an encouraging chemistry lecture. Frankenstein then describes how his childhood friend Elizabeth Lavenza became part of his family. Just before leaving for Ingolstadt University, Victor's mother dies of chicken pox, which she contracted while nursing Elizabeth well. Obsessed with discovering the secret of life, he learns everything his teachers have to teach him and begins his exciting and engaging work with a living creature. After meeting Henry, she contracts nervous fever and is well when she receives a letter from Elizabeth. After reading Elizabeth's worried letter, Victor recovers and introduces Henry to his professors. Victor learns from his father that his brother Wilhelm has been murdered. Justine was accused of William's murder, but Victor believes that her being is guilty. Victor believes he is innocent, but he is executed. Victor is depressed after Justine's execution and thinks about Elizabeth and his father to avoid suicide. The monster tries to help them in a difficult situation, begins to learn their language and admires their graceful forms, being aware of his own injustices. A new guest who does not speak the common language moves into the cabin monitored by the monster, and he learns the language by teaching it to him. After some eavesdropping, the monster learns the history of the cabin family and tells Victor about it. The monster finds a bag containing clothes and books and decides to explore the books to learn more about the world. He tells Victor about William's murder and Justine's punishment, and then asks Victor to create another creature to be his companion. The monster convinces Victor to give him a female monster companion because his violent actions are the result of his desperate loneliness. Victor delays the creation of the female creature to gather information about England. Victor convinces Henry to stay with his friend so that he can continue working on his creation alone. Victor gives in to his fears and destroys his work in another creature, incurring the monster's wrath. When the monster threatens him, Victor decides to stay with Henry. Victor learns that the murdered person is his friend Henry, who has the monster's handprints on his neck. Her father will stay by her side until she is found innocent. Victor and his father return home and begin preparations for the wedding. He remembers the threat of the monster and hides it from Elizabeth, who is still worried about her recurring illnesses. After the wedding, they go to the family home. Victor believes that the monster's threat was a challenge to a duel with him. When he puts Elizabeth to sleep, he discovers that the monster planned to kill her. Victor tries to inform the judge about the monster, but he refuses to believe him, and Victor vows to dedicate his life to destroying it. Victor decides to leave Geneva in search of the monster, who leaves only clues and taunts about his whereabouts. They get to the bottom where Victor falls ill and asks Walton to continue the search. Victor dies just before Walton and his crew leave for England, and the monster is found weeping over the corpse of its creator.

(Shelley, 1818)

III. Romanticism in science fiction

Despite the fact that Frankenstein is often cited as a critique of the visionary fantasy, its inclusion in the Romantic canon paved the way for the study of Romanticism from a science fiction perspective in two obvious but easy (for obvious reasons) ways. The first is that Frankenstein is a prose story. British Romanticism was considered a strictly poetic genre, especially through the lens of New Criticism. This is a critical truth, regardless of the general diversity of European Romanticism or the confused understanding of what constitutes poetry in the prose of Wordsworth and Shelley. The canonization of Frankenstein reawakened critics to the universal diversity underlying romance. Second, it made it possible to identify continuities and connections in the apparently "high" and "low" texts of the period. Ironically, this distinction was not as important for writers of the time as for later generations of readers, but Frankenstein legitimizes a work that combines romance and science fiction. (Corbett, 2001)

Science was presented as a way to solve humanity's problems, and scientists were hailed as the saviors of the world. However, writers of romantic-era fiction and modern science fiction share a fear of the future that humanity might create when science is unleashed. Nathaniel Hawthorne explores the power of science in human hands. Rappaccini's Daughter and Nathaniel Hawthorne's *The Birthmark* both feature scientist fathers and husbands, and both stories end tragically. Devotion to scientific experimentation separates these men from their humanity. This attitude is still prevalent in science fiction today. Science influenced the general public in the 20th century without considering the consequences. Science causes social change. Ray Bradbury's *Fahrenheit 451* presents the same lack of humanity as Hawthorne's scientists, but on a social scale. The Montagues embrace science and technology because they have always been present in their lives. For both Hawthorne and Bradbury, a world ruled by science leads to the destruction of families, the failure of society, and the elimination of violence as irrelevant. Man's desire to dominate and destroy creates a direct link between the romantic and modern science fiction periods. (Nash, 2011)

Wollstonecraft, Mary Shelley was an important figure in the Romantic movement of the late 18th and early 19th centuries. The Industrial Revolution had just begun when Mary Shelley wrote her first and most popular work, *Frankenstein, or The Modern Prometheus*, in 1816. New inventions were made and the world as we knew it changed rapidly. In her novel, Shelley explores the dangers of such rapid and unknown development. The main character of the novel, Victor Frankenstein, tries to conquer nature by trying to bring something lifeless to life. He succeeds in creating a living creature, but the creature turns against him and ends Frankenstein's life. The creature has no name and it is unclear whether it should be considered a monster or a human. In *Frankenstein*, Mary Shelley compares the beauty and serenity of nature to the destructive forces unleashed when science interrupts progress. His themes match the ideas of the Romantic poets: he recognizes the value of childhood and emphasizes nature in contrast to the progress and destruction of industrialization and progress. Like his contemporaries, he seeks to promote the idea of a return to nature and childhood fantasy rather than destroying human lives in opposition to the course of nature. (Elsasser, 2006)

Romantic writers described nature as the greatest and most perfect force in the universe. They used words like "sublime" (as Mary Shelley describes Mont Blanc in *Frankenstein*) to describe the immeasurable power and impeccability of the natural world. Victor, on the other hand, describes the crowd as "half-hearted." The consequence is clear: burdened by trivial concerns and many shortcomings such as vanity and prejudice, humans pale in comparison to the perfection of nature. So it should come as no surprise that when imperfect humans interfere with Frankenstein's perfection of nature, crises and suffering ensue. In his arrogance, Victor tries to discover the "secrets of creation", to "pioneer a new way" by breaking into the "citadel of nature". But just as a wave can overcome the strongest swimmer, nature eventually wins and Victor is destroyed in his foolish attempt to control his power.

IV. THE MODERN PROMETHEUS: LOVE AS A THEME

Wormhole attack in wireless sensor network can disturb the routing process and ultimately degrade network performance. In this paper, we have presented existing wormhole attack types and their detection mechanism. Wormhole detection in a dynamic WSN setting is an open research area. A good research direction for wormhole detection is integration of trust based systems and time or distance bounding wormhole detection techniques. Few names are more synonymous with monster stories than "Frankenstein." Boris Karloff's lumbering freak with bolts in his head has become the common perception of Frankenstein's monster.

Despite the horror elements, the book on which the films are based is actually a study of human relationships. There is a connection between Victor Frankenstein and his family and friends, especially his bride Elizabeth. Victor has a relationship with the monster he created. From that relationship springs the monster's relationship with the world around him, a complex web in which he longs to love and be loved (as in the family from which he is "adopted" and from which he learns a lot), but is rejected by everyone who sees him. The monster's desire to ride is company, but his evil appearance prevents him from receiving it. When humanity rejects him, he turns to his creator and asks Frankenstein to create a bride for him. When Victor finally refuses, the monster directly and indirectly kills everyone Victor loves. The monster longs for companionship and love, but even his creator continues to reject him.

Perhaps the monster's greatest relational loss is his lack of communion with his creator. Victor constantly repents of the demon he created and refuses to have anything to do with him. As a result, the monster is cut off from all possible relationships and resorts to violence and vengeance:

"I am malicious because I am miserable. Am I not shunned and hated by all mankind? You my creator, would tear me to pieces, and triumph; remember that. And tell me why I should pity man more than he pities me?"

This conversation is at the heart of this relational longing. The ache of utter loneliness forms Frankenstein's monster's heartbeat and drives him to seek love first. However, as his subsequent words demonstrate, that same ache drives him to seek vengeance by taking away everything and everyone Victor loves:

"I will revenge my injuries; if I cannot inspire love, I will cause fear, and chiefly towards you my arch-enemy, because my creator, do I swear inextinguishable hatred. Have a care; I will work at your destruction, nor finish until I desolate your heart, so that you shall curse the hour of your birth."

The monster keeps his dark promises, and Victor ends his days in the same solitude he condemned his creation to, fueled by a desire for vengeance like the monster. As the saying goes, "Like creator, like creature." We could even call the monster an *imago hominis*, or, more specifically, an *imago Victor*.

The story of Mary Shelley is tragic. But, for the Christian reading the gruesome story of Frankenstein's monster, the beautiful reminder is that our Creator is nothing like Victor Frankenstein. Victor refused to marry the monster, but when God saw Adam's loneliness, he made him a bride. Victor abandoned his creation; God walked in the garden with Adam and Eve. Even though our sin separates us from the thrice holy God, we are reconciled to Him through Christ. We have everlasting communion with our Creator in Christ, and we have true fellowship with one another. These truths should move us to praise a Creator who loves and does not abandon His people—a Creator who is not a Frankenstein.

V. THE MODERN PROMETHEUS: REVENGE AS A THEME

After the mistakes of creating Victor Frankenstein's monster, Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* presents the dangers of revenge and isolation due to rejection. The entire course of the novel focuses on one main theme: revenge as a result of isolation. The reader must witness the creature's isolation throughout the novel. As the story progresses, the question arises as to why revenge becomes a consequence of isolation. Living in a place shunned by everyone, including your creator, would drive everyone insane, not to mention a creature resurrected by a mad scientist. Many children in today's society grow up without parents, usually in poor foster homes with strangers. Looking at the lives of the abandoned, it becomes clear why many people seek "revenge" after living in isolation: difficulties and mental instability. (Manzano, 2018)

The theme of vengeance emerges in *Frankenstein* through the characters' motivations and actions. Victor Frankenstein is a young, ambitious scientist obsessed with the creation of life. He isolates himself from his friends and family to study and devotes all of his time to the construction of his creation. Despite his success, he is horrified by the results. He is horrified as the creature comes to life because, despite his meticulous efforts, he finds its monstrous appearance horrifying. He flees in terror, abandoning the creation to care for himself. People attack him because of his large, unusual stature, and he must survive alone in the wilderness. One day, he comes across a family living alone in the woods and observes them to learn about their language and customs. They, too, attack him because of his appearance after growing to love this family. The creature blames Victor, his creator, for abandoning him as a result of the cruelty he endures.

The creature believes it is Victor's responsibility to look after him and demands that he creates a companion in his image. Victor is appalled and terrified of his actions after completing a woman companion, and he destroys the new being, prompting the creature to decide to avenge his pain on humanity.

As a result, the creature goes on a murderous rampage. He strangles Victor's younger brother, William, to death when he finds him alone in the woods. He then frames Justine, Victor's beloved maid, who is prosecuted and hanged for the crime. He then murders Victor's long-time friend Henry Clerval, whom he sees as caring for Victor. On their wedding night, the creature kills Victor's new wife, Elizabeth, in a final act of annihilation. This horrifying scene sets Victor on his own path of vengeance.

Now that Victor is alone, he vows to kill the creature in retaliation, believing that he owes it to his loved ones and the rest of the world to destroy what he created. He follows the creature north, but he becomes ill from the cold. Victor is rescued by explorer Robert Walton, who is also on a mission of discovery. He dies of pneumonia after telling Walton his story. The creature discovers Victor's body and laments all of the damage he has caused. When he sees Victor, the creature feels remorseful because he loved him like a father. He promises Walton that he will commit suicide and set himself on fire because that is the only way he will find peace and avoid further harm. Despite the lack of confirmation, he leaves on an ice raft and is dragged away from Walton's ship. (Garcia, 2022)

VI. CONCLUSION: CONFLICT OF THEMES

The main character of the story, Victor Frankenstein, is torn between two competing desires: to have a family and a simple life, or to be recognized as a genius. There is an internal conflict that drives the plot forward: her heart yearns for love and peace. However, his mind is devoted to science. Viktor had a family and a beloved wife; he lived in a luxurious home but gave up everything to fulfill his dreams. However, Frankenstein's superior intelligence makes him too self-absorbed to realize that he is losing all humanity and harming others.

Victor overestimates himself as a god and creates a monster as a result. Surprisingly, Victor Frankenstein's creature is driven by the same conflict. He is torn between the desire to be loved and the desire for revenge. The main character's scientific discovery sets off a chain of terrible events. The monster kills him, his brother and his bride. Frankenstein's will and determination to achieve his goal is admirable. Mary Shelley states unequivocally that Victor's arrogance can spell disaster for anyone.

From the moment the "bow" opened its "watery eyes", the relationship between the creator and the creature changes from anger to hatred to pity and a shred of mercy, from fear to revenge and destruction. Throughout the novel, Mary Shelley made excellent use of language and imagery to describe the intense emotions of both Frankenstein and his monster. Many topics are covered, such as care versus nature, peace versus turbulence, and love versus hate. These themes are used to explore and develop the complex relationship between Frankenstein and his monster.

When a monster approaches Victor in the mountains and asks for a female companion, Victor allows himself some sympathy for the monster's lonely life. "I felt sympathy for him and sometimes wanted to comfort him," Victor said, but those feelings were quickly replaced by the old feelings of resentment and anger. He agreed to deal with the monster because he felt that "justice was due him as well as my companions." This is where Shelley's theme of love versus hate becomes clear. The monster's heartfelt plea to Viktor to give him someone to love is heartbreaking.

Victor changed his mind one evening after starting to collect body parts for the new female monster, and the relationship changed dramatically as a result. "I previously reasoned with you, Slave, but you have proven yourself unworthy of my pity." Remember that I have power; you believe you are unhappy, but I can make you so miserable that the light of day will be repulsive to you. You are my creator, but I am your master; please obey!" (20th Chapter). On Elizabeth's wedding night, the monster has become the hunter. *Revenge! As his desires are forbidden, the monster's love turns to hatred.*

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