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Science Fiction Elements in Gothic Novels

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ABSTRACT

DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH

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SCIENCE FICTION ELEMENTS IN GOTHIC NOVELS

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This thesis explores elements of science fiction in three gothic novels, Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*, Robert Stevenson's *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, and Bram Stoker's *Dracula*. It begins by explicating the important tropes of science fiction and progresses with a discussion that establishes a connection between three gothic novels and the science fiction genre. This thesis argues that the aforementioned novels express characters' fear of technology and offer an analysis of human nature that is literarily futuristic. In this view, each of the aforementioned writers uses extreme events in their works to demonstrate that science can contribute to humanity's understanding of itself. In these works, readers encounter characters who offer commentary on the darker side of the human experience.

SCIENCE FICTION ELEMENTS IN GOTHIC NOVELS

A THESIS

SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF CLARK ATLANTA UNIVERSITY

IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR

THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF ARTS AND SCIENCES IN ENGLISH

BY

MABROUK ALSULAMI

DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Gothic novels are often a literary manifestation of science fiction since most gothic works focus on the imagined consequences of scientific innovation. Many critics observe this connection between science fiction and gothic literature. They maintain that gothic authors have used elements of science fiction as far back as two hundred years (Botting and Dale 12). In fact, several critics argue that gothic authors are the pioneers of science fiction. This study argues that Mary Shelley, Robert Stevenson, and Bram Stoker are some of these pioneers.

In Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*, Victor Frankenstein, the novel's main character, attempts to create a human being. However, instead of creating a human, Frankenstein creates something that turns out to be a scary monster. Although his creation has human features, everyone rejects the monster's humanity because they discern that he is not fully human. Feeling the need for revenge, the monster goes on a killing spree, retaliating against this rejection. He gets his revenge, although he does not convince them that he is a man.

The dramatic action of *Frankenstein* occurs in several settings, like Dr. Frankenstein's laboratory and a dark, forbidding wilderness. Each setting provides commentary on Frankenstein's desire to transgress boundaries, particularly the boundaries between the occult and the sciences and between the living and the dead. Throughout *Frankenstein*, the narrator presents the doctor's transgressions and demonstrates

that the horror of the novel lies in the mysterious way the main character violates established moral and scientific conventions.

Like Shelley's *Frankenstein*, Bram Stoker's *Dracula* explores transgression and the dissolution of boundaries. In a general sense, these things make *Dracula* a gothic and science fiction hybrid. *Dracula* begins by recounting the experiences of Jonathan Harker, a young Englishman who travels to Transylvania to assist Count Dracula, a Transylvanian nobleman. During their time together, Count Dracula becomes fond of Harker and eventually invites him to stay at his home. Harker accepts the invitation but slowly recognizes that he is more of a prisoner than a guest in Dracula's castle. Harker discovers that Dracula desires to drink the blood of Londoners since this sort of blood would give him power.

Like *Frankenstein*, *Dracula* concentrates on the transgression of boundaries by providing readers a number of characters who do forbidden things. In the case of *Dracula*, the transgressors seek to expand the limitations of human nature—namely, the limitations of death and mortality. However, their transcendence jeopardizes the morality and well-being of others characters. Both *Frankenstein* and *Dracula* demonstrate that innovation and creativity can adversely affect humanity. Thus, by exploring these issues do, the novels can be classified as crosses between gothic and science fiction.

The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde cannot be excluded from a discussion of gothic novels. *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* belongs to the science fiction genre because it shows how technology negatively influences society. The story's plot centers around London lawyer Gabriel John Utterson, who is on the verge of investigating strange occurrences in the life of his old friend. Like *Frankenstein*, Stevenson's *The Strange Case*

of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde is a combination of science fiction and gothic literature, since all of these works explore the frightening consequences of technology on humanity.

Gothic literature is a variation of romantic thought that inspires awe toward nature. Fundamentally, romanticism is a response made against enlightenment, a period that sought to revolutionize scientific thought and advocated for awareness of clinical knowledge. Reading and learning about these struggles often facilitate empathy on the part of contemporary readers, and it inspired the three gothic novels that are analyzed in this thesis.

As a pivotal part of gothic literature, terror allows readers to uncover various aspects of humanity (Parrinder 39). If not terrifying its readers, the plot of these three gothic novels, would have concerned contemporary readers; but its creativity would definitely cause them delight. This intermingling of terror and delight in literature of this kind not only explores the personal experiences and emotions of characters, but also causes readers to think about their own experiences and emotions. In this view, the pivotal concerns that gothic novels present often reverberate in contemporary culture. In an attempt to explore the science fiction elements of gothic novels, this thesis seeks to explicate some of the tropes of gothic and examine the connection between gothic and science fiction in *Frankenstein*, *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, and *Dracula*.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

For a very long time, the reading public did not fully understand why authors incorporated elements of science fiction in their works. However, it is now evident that science fiction is a medium used by authors to forecast the future. Essentially, science fiction originates from literary forms that are antithetical to realism. In fact, several critics classify science fiction as a fantasy type of literature.

However, in *Evolutionary Theory and Victorian Culture*, Martin Fichman interprets science fiction literature as realistic. In *Evolutionary Theory and Victorian Culture*, he argues that, although science fiction novels are usually fantastic, they usually capitalize on realistic aspects of science and culture in order to explore the fantastic. In this view, realistic things become important for science fiction novels because they are a means to an end—which is to say, “the real” becomes an instrument in these novels to understand the imagined. Fichman makes a strong case for this sort of thing in *Evolutionary Theory*. Considering his analysis, it is not very hard to see elements of realism in science fiction.

In *Critical Theory and Science Fiction*, Carl Freedman argues that the literature of science fiction is also gothic (1). According to Freedman, most gothic works achieve a very high level of relevance, meaning, and artistic quality by using science in fantastic and imaginative ways (9). For Freedman, however, this use of science constitutes a kind

of realism. Like Fichman, Freedman sees the realistic elements of science fiction as servicing the fantastic futures this genre portrays. For Freedman, both gothic and science fiction works use the real in order to explore imagined possibilities. For Sarah Fuller, this is the central message contained in gothic novels: romance emphasizes the power of irrationality over rationality (14). In an odd way, some science fiction works emphasize this notion as well. In Fuller's view, gothic novels are romantic reactions against the normal rationalization and secularization of life that started after the industrial revolution of the 18th century. She explains that this reaction is both rooted in the real and positioned in the imaginatively speculative. By offering such an analysis, Fuller connects the gothic novel to science fiction, realism, and romanticism but more closely aligns the genre with science fiction. Considering the genre's fascination with fear of technology and human innovation/interference, it is not hard to see that the gothic novel has some rather striking features of science fiction.

In *Frankenstein's Daughter: Women Writing Science Fiction*, Jane Donawerth argues that both science fiction and gothic literature require a rejection of reason. In Donawerth's view, this rejection makes gothic novels romantic. In fact, Donawerth reads these genres as "apocalyptic nightmare fantasy" whose plots feature demonic possessions and monstrous distortion. In this way, gothic novels take the form of science fiction as its chief manifestation in talking about future realism. This thesis explores science fiction elements that are incorporated in gothic novels.

Frankenstein by Mary Shelley is no exception to this kind of science fiction. In *Mary Shelley's Frankenstein as a Science Fiction Novel*, Chrisoula Bikiidou read *Frankenstein* as a unique blend of two genres, gothic and science fiction. For Bikiidou,

Frankenstein follows gothic convention by providing readers “tales within tales,” but it also incorporates innovative marvels of modern science (213). In Bikiidou’s reading, the lightning used by Frankenstein is seen to help mankind in the age of electricity. While others read this sort of thing as contributing to the novel’s romanticism, Bikiidou sees this as contributing to the novel’s science fiction element.

In *Frankenstein*, the dream of a mad scientist produces a monster who causes catastrophes. Such attributes are even more common in Stevenson’s novels. According to Stevenson, the whole genre revolves around an imagination of disasters, and this is what the author perfectly incorporates in the plot to send his message to the audience. The entire novel is focused on the aesthetics of destruction, alongside peculiar beauties found in causing havoc. The imagery of destruction in the work is linked to the elements of science fiction. It is indeed true that the genre is about science, but it is also concerned with the failures of experiments and the results of disasters. In other words, *Frankenstein* is a cross-fertilization between science fiction and gothic romance.

The fiction of destructive organism can be found in many gothic novels. *Dracula* is just a typical example. Charlotte Montague says as much in *Vampires from Dracula to Twilight*, which is regarded as a great guide to science fiction literature. Montague suggests that science fiction stories develop an imaginative tale, incorporating various aspects of science. According to Montague, *Dracula* focuses on a widespread “undead” curse propelled by a vampire (13).

Analytically, *Dracula* has close links with Darwinism. It is a story of natural selection, as seen in the Count and his victims’ attempt to overtake the inferior human population, so that they can be incorporated into the immortal vampire race (38).

Subsequently, the effect of science fiction is also present in other gothic novels. Its presence is also seen in *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*. According to Stevenson, the tale revolves around a lawyer investigating strange occurrences that happened to his old friend. The novel uses the concept of personality's impact on human beings. The blend is that of good and evil. Besides, the writers make a lot of effort in trying to link the text to current as well as future worlds. On one hand, the story helps in creation of expectation of future changes and on the other the provision of cognitive estrangement.

In view of these various elements that are common in gothic novels, it may be very difficult to dissociate gothic from science fiction. These gothic novels are entirely concerned with science. The authors are individuals who have an urge to explore the world in order to know the root cause of evil. In reality, man is not content with worldly imperfections and is always in a race to make it perfect. However, in this science of creativity, human beings end up with disasters. The authors capitalize on this aspect of science fiction to portray the knowledge of innovation as destructive to the world. In *Frankenstein* for instance, the author portrays a creature that destroys human life rather than by immortalizing it. This is also quite evident in the other works of authors. The man's mind and idea create what builds fear and terror. In reality, science fiction has been used in the gothic novels to foreshadow the future.

CHAPTER III

THE GOTHIC

The term “gothic” stemmed from the rich architecture established by Germanic tribes that were called the Goths. Later, the term expanded to encompass most of the medieval architectural styles (Von Simson, Otto and Ernst 12). The intricate and ornate style of this form of architecture proved to be the perfect backdrop for both psychological and physical settings in a new form of fiction. The form was based on elegant tales of superstition, suspense, and mystery. The gothic peaked between 1764 and 1840, which closely allied this movement to romanticism. However, its influence has extended to the present day.

The plot of gothic literature usually involves people, ghosts, and other supernatural phenomena, and complex and evil schemes, often against helpless and innocent victims. Gothic novels have a prevailing atmosphere of terror and mystery, termed “gothic,” because the creative impulse originated from medieval structures and ruins. Gothic novels usually employ settings like castles and monasteries with subterranean pathways, hidden panels, dark battlements, and trapdoors. The popularity of these kinds of settings was established by Walpole's *Castle of Otranto*. A more dramatic form of gothic literature can be found in Gregory Lewis's *The Monk*.

Presented as easy targets for satire, the ancient gothic literature started to decline because of their extravagant plots, though these atmospheric elements continued to haunt

the fiction of some prolific writers like Hawthorne and Poe. By the second half of the twentieth century, the term “gothic” was applied to romances that had themes and symbols borrowed from ancient gothic novels.

Actions in gothic novels take place in an old castle, usually abandoned, but sometimes occupied. These castles contain trap doors, secret passages, secret rooms, hidden or dark staircases, and panels with hidden levels. Moreover, these castles may either be connected to—or located near—caves that are a haunted. These surroundings are often dark and mysterious, with uneven floors. In horrific gothic novels, the setting is usually in caves inhabited by frightening creatures like monsters, or other deviant forms of humans such as zombies, vampires, and wolfmen.

In modern films and novels that employ the gothic, the setting can be a mansion or an old building. The mansion or old building maybe already dark, probably because it has been abandoned, or may seem airy and bright at first. When night comes, the lights fail at some dramatic point. According to Punter, this is usually because of an intense storm. The mysterious and dark setting establishes a sense of unease, provoking dread and fear (39). In addition, darkness usually gives room for the abrupt and frightening appearance of monsters, people, or animals.

There is also an atmosphere of suspense and mystery in gothic novels. Gothic works are always filled with a menacing feeling of terror, heightened by the unknown. Such an atmosphere is sometimes intensified so that characters only see a glimpse of whatever is presented (Botting, Fred, and Dale 48). Usually, the plot centers around a mystery, like a disappearance, or some other form of inexplicable events. In these works, persons suddenly die or disappear, contributing to the atmosphere of mystery and

suspense. In modern gothic films and novels, these mysterious events are often murders.

After the murders, bodies of victims are usually mutilated in manners that defy explanation; immediately afterward, suspense rises as to who is to be killed next.

Finally, there are prophetic aspects in gothic novels. These prophecies are often connected to either the castle or the inhabitants of the castle. The prophecy is normally confusing or obscure. Such prophecies are usually the products of legends.

CHAPTER IV

GOTHIC SCIENCE FICTION

Gothic science fiction can be described as a grisly sub-genre that blends science fiction and gothic literature. It tends to have atmospheric qualities that are common in gothic literature (MacArthur 159). However, gothic science fiction is not as horrifying as other gothic literature. Gothic science fiction takes classic elements of gothic literature and elucidates them scientifically. Features of gothic fiction include mystery, death, decay and darkness. Gothic fiction also includes haunted houses, the supernatural, castles, monsters, and madness. The typical character of gothic science fiction is a vampire, explained as aliens or disease (MacArthur 161). Therefore, gothic science fiction is a rich sub-genre in which apparently disparate categories lace together to create an amazing story.

Generally, gothic science fiction is a sub-genre of science fiction that has some conventions. The dark atmosphere of gothic fiction also integrates elements of science fiction (Botting 78). The features are vampires, especially vampires that are infected by a disease or aliens. In gothic science fiction, vampires are also considered products of parallel evolution. In some gothic science fiction, there are whole planets of vampires or creatures resembling vampires.

Other works in this sub-genre make use of gothic conventions in the context of outer space (Botting 80). Examples of such works include the films *Event Horizon* and

Alien. Some works combine gothic science fiction with other sub-genres. For instance, the movie *Blade Runner* is basically *neo-noir* but contains gothic features in its visual design and themes. According to Botting, most science fiction tales are cautionary narratives (82). They warn readers about the dangerous consequences of scientific advancement and technology. Because of their doom and gloom message, science fiction tales are fundamentally gothic.

Gothic literature is essentially the beginning of the horror genre and delves a lot on landscapes. Gothic novels, for instance, contain a lot of dark locations and places. They also feature evil (Brantlinger 37). This evil can be presented in the form of a monster, a phantom, or bad person. In the science fiction genre, some personalities are imagined figures based on science. They are usually presented in the form of monsters, ghosts, or crazy scientists. For example, in *Frankenstein*, there are a strong element of science, death of the innocent, a monster, and wild and ruined landscapes.

The gothic element in the story may consist of mystery, murder, curses, and ghosts (Brantlinger 32). The setting often has castles, secluded streets, chilly, mansions, and remote areas. Authors from the Victorian era started including the element of psychologically confused characters. Additionally, gothic literature is also characterized by romantic undertones.

The term “gothic” served as a descriptive word for a certain kind of story by Horace Walpole that was entitled *The Castle of Otranto: A Gothic Story*. Originally, the word implied a medieval style (Brantlinger 30). The Middle Ages were for the greater part of the eighteenth century considered barbaric; even though a longing had developed for the romantic grandeurs of an ideal middle age that hardly existed. In imitation of the

ghostly tale of Walpole, these novels became very common in mid-eighteenth century. According to Brantlinger, their popularity was closely linked to the development of romantic literature in general (42).

However, though readers and critics readily identify such romances as gothic, it is not appropriate to argue that these tales necessarily depicted the authors' conscious knowledge of what could be tying them together. Still, it is clear on reflection that deep similarities link these numerous tales.

Overall, in contemporary usage, "Gothic" is considered a romantic novel, having strong elements of the enigmatic or the supernatural. These elements usually involve the persecution of a woman in a deserted setting. However, this specialized and restricted use of the word, together with the marketing category linked to it, has very little to do with most science fiction. As common with most genres, science fiction—and, even, gothic literature for that matter—does not house a monolithic novelistic type. First, no one story will perfectly fit any structural definition, like gothic science fiction. Second, genres such as the gothic are often defined more clearly in retrospect. Third, nearly every story written employs to a certain extent, the use of at least two genres at the same time.

CHAPTER V
THE GOTHIC NOVELS

Scientific Invention in *Frankenstein*

Mary Shelley wrote the novel *Frankenstein* when she was barely eighteen years old. The novel is often interpreted as a gothic cautionary tale about the consequences of taking science too far (Freedman 26). Other scholars, however, argue that the novel can provide great insight about early optimism in science. Some critics have also claimed that *Frankenstein* can be understood from two main stances: human nature and science fiction. The entire novel revolves around scientific invention and its consequences. The novel's subject matter is the danger of experiments in the scientific field.

In the novel, the monster's reaction itself is a form of scientific achievement on which the entire plot structure is built. The protagonist, Victor Frankenstein, is an ambitious scientist and is inspired by his scientific discoveries (Shaw 6). Frankenstein's quest for outright knowledge and power only served to end in his destruction. Shelley conveys the message that thoughtlessness can cause self-destruction. She demonstrates the perilous aspects of the modern technical world. Shelley shows how scientific inquiry extends beyond human control as a result of too much emphasis on it without proper attention.

During years following *Frankenstein's* publication, English society had hopes for science. The hunt for knowledge was one of the most important characteristics of that

time (Branagh 65). It is in the same way that the protagonist in the novel seems to behave. Frankenstein desires knowledge and has a lot of optimism about the outcome of his experiments. The novel is read as an inquiry about the progress science. In the novel, the monster itself is a scientific invention of the protagonist. For instance, his height is eight feet, it's ugly, and tries to adapt itself to human society without success.

Unfortunately, all the people who see him do not like him. According to Freedman, the monster pursues revenge against his creator because of feelings of abandonment. At this point, readers can infer that the author is very critical of modern scientific invention and the motives of modern people regarding the future results of scientific invention (29).

The entire novel revolves around the protagonist's ambition. Some scholars have maintained that one of the most significant quests of technology is that of a new form of creation (Fuller 54). However, most scientists are oblivious as to the results of their scientific inventions. This desire reveals blindness to the impending danger of science. In *Frankenstein*, Frankenstein is the key figure of modern scientists who developed a monster as a result of his obsession with the pursuit of scientific knowledge. As a result, he eventually lost control over his own creation.

In the view of Fuller, the protagonist is forced to lose not only his family members but also his own creation, leading to total destruction. He distinguishes himself as an excessively curious man who wants to learn the secret laws of nature, because of his passionate love for science (57). This event in the novel is crucial symbolic as it represents the development of present day science. The protagonist's deeds in revolve

around the subject matter of scientific innovation and its consequences; this, therefore, positions the novel as science fiction.

The repugnant progeny that is both created in the novel represents the forbidden knowledge that is intrinsic in the unchecked scientific quest, particularly in the longing to overcome death. Shelley highlights the quest for the ultimate contravention, particularly, acquisition of knowledge about death, specifically its causes and effects (Baldick 42). In her work, she demonstrates that the conclusions about such inquiries are forbidden. Shelley's gothic text perceives the celebration of the quest for knowledge, specifically scientific knowledge, as problematic. Bikidou contends that gothic science fiction outlines the danger of getting into a cyclic trap from which the self cannot see anything but itself (7). Frankenstein's pursuit of enlightenment is transformed into an outrageous overreaching act that is deeply connected to the terror that his unconstrained imagination brings into the world.

The scientific revolution of the author's time includes both industrial and evolutionary aspect of the sciences. For instance, the scientific knowledge that Shelley transfuses into her novel originates from her knowledge of Luigi Galvani, Erasmus Darwin, and Humphry Davy (Donawerth 18). The novel itself exposes some of her understanding of science, demonstrating that she was conscious of experiments such as the animation of vermicelli that she directly mentions in her 1831 preface. It is this animation test that leads her to hypothesize that a corpse can perhaps be reanimated.

Mary Shelley infuses her novel *Frankenstein* with numerous elements of the gothic novel as well as romanticism. The novel is a 19th-century example of science fiction. According to Baldick, the novel should be read as the first authentic science fiction tale.

He proceeds to argue that in contrast to the earlier tales the novel's major character makes a personal decision and resorts to modern experiments in a scientific laboratory to reach fantastic results (44). The novel had considerable influence in literature as well as popular culture, spawning an entire genre of horror plays, films, and stories.

The tale of Victor Frankenstein, the irrational but ardent young scientist who innocently lets loose his outrageous creation, is a spicy concoction of disturbing speculation and gothic melodrama. The third narrative, vividly held back until halfway, represents the creature's story (Freedman 30). Written in a unique manner, the novel violently swings between poignant appeals, desperate exclamations, and menace. During the great showdown, the creature is seen begging his creator to focus further on experimentation and create to model a female companion with whom he can fall in love (Shaw 9).

Amidst such a dreadful ethical dilemma, the protagonist agrees. However, fearing the consequences, Frankenstein decides to destroy his female creation, turning the disillusioned creature into a ruthless demon. It is at this particular moment that the novel's central drama emerges. The novel does not merely concern the creation of life, but rather, the scientific ambition of technology (Branagh 69). It seeks to explore and examine the described moral choices and unanticipated ethical responsibilities that may be brought about by scientific advances. These include artificial life and intelligence, nuclear weaponry and power, invasive genetic editing or the genome sequence. All these, according to the novel, may have destructive consequences if irrationally adopted.

One striking irony renders Shelley's novel greater than any film. The irony also makes the book greater than even its reading as an anti-science tale (Branagh 71). The irony is that in these exchanges that ensue in the novel, the creature paradoxically

becomes even more human than his creator, Frankenstein. For instance, the creature produces eloquent speeches, begs for understanding, justice, human rights, and compassion. In their encounter at the Alps, Frankenstein's creature points out his creator's unique responsibility (Shaw 11). The scene reveals the enduring youthful imaginative intellect of Shelley. It argues that the outcast, the alien, eventually must have claims on humanity, the same way they have claims on science.

As eccentric as science may appear retrospectively, it is worth realizing that Shelley incorporates into her narrative cutting edge science. She does this by deliberately making scientific discovery the only means by which she examines transgression of knowledge (Shaw 12). However, Shelley initiates a critical examination of scientific inquiry.

Indeed, the science of this era was a romantic enterprise, in which scientific writers and lecturers sought to evoke sublime feelings in their audiences (Branagh 76). Such feelings were aimed at inspiring further efforts to transcend nature. This kind of motivation is vital because Frankenstein's determination to produce a being from dead matter centers on his efforts to surpass the natural order. This is revealed in his aim to go deeper into the respites of nature, and examine how nature works in its hiding places (Freedman 34). Shelley considers the scientific notion of having the right to subdue or penetrate nature just like the way she considers the arrogant beliefs held by Victor that he can be a sanctified creator. The two aspects are placed together in the same action; scientific transgression.

Throughout her novel, there is a manner in which Shelley depicts the efforts to control nature as hazardous. Shelley does not create her hideous progeny merely for dramatic effect (Freedman 36). Nor does she design events to take place in conjunction

with experiencing terrible and violent thunderstorms for that purpose. This strength of nature accompanies Victor's creation. The implication is that the natural rage or judgment is made to be experienced by Victor by this fusion of his creation with overpowering nature since he dared to interfere with the natural order of life.

According to Shaw, the fusion of nature and his creation can be read as a reasonable assumption, as the author constantly uses this creature to pass the severest judgment of the protagonist's failure (15). Since electricity is the device by which the protagonist endeavors to attain his god-like status, in a sense, it is poetic justice that nature appears to retaliate with lightning and thunderstorms (Branagh 80). The absurd amount of natural electricity that nature consistently churns out within the plot also underscores the interpretation that Victor fails in his endeavor to conquer or subdue nature. Thus, Victor fails in his experiments as well as in his romantic ambitions. Eventually, nature retains a grip on him as he eventually dies of natural causes, hence restoring the natural order of life that is followed inexorably by death.

It is indeed the uneasiness with pervasive science that places the novel's protagonist outside a purely Gothic cross-examination of boundaries, as this is focused on the penalties of scientific overreaching. By incorporating scientific theories in her novel, like Darwin's concepts of biological evolution, and Humphry Davy's obsession with electricity, Shelley illustrates her critical perception of the distortion of evolutionary progress (Freedman 38). Most readers can easily view Victor Frankenstein as a mockery of orthodox creationist theory. Such readers would simultaneously recognize Shelley's implied warning against the probable dangers inherent in the scientific improvements of modern science.

The enduring impact of Shelley's novel is mainly due to the fact that she combines the Gothic genre with an inquiry into the contraventions of scientific inquiry. In the classical sense, Shelley's story of horror is not a tale about a monster or a ghost (Branagh 82). Rather, it is an insight into the prizes of scientific or technological research. The major focus for Shelley's exploration of scientific deception is that the desire for knowledge, even when communicated through a scientist, only leads to tragedy and breaks confines that are prohibited and better left intact (Freedman 40). Science, rooted in the romantic desire to surpass society, fails to carry any good into society or to bring enlightenment.

Shelley, however, does not denounce science altogether. She only condemns the egotism of uncontrolled science that seeks to subdue nature at all cost. To this end, she conveys the message that, if science is using prohibited knowledge through control and manipulation of nature, then perhaps science that esteems nature by observation only proves to be the better option (Branagh 85). In *Frankenstein*, Shelley appears to approve of technological discovery since her inclusion of it generally speaks to a passion for scientific inquiry.

However, she is against the transgression that seeks to destroy or subdue the natural order that ultimately threatens humanity. Eventually, it is this concern about boundaries that forms the foundation of her critique of science. In Shaw's opinion, transgressing or overreaching against this border between life and death is revealed in the reality that there can never be any benefit, either to society or to Frankenstein through his discovery (17). Frankenstein's scientific work and his penetrating research only end up having tragic implications, not only to himself but also to those he adores (Freedman 42).

In the novel, the only way Frankenstein could achieve reclamation, would be to be accountable for his creation. It is in this sense that we argue that his failure to link with his creation is the greater part of the tragedy, as does his dangerous and careless wish to surpass his human limitation.

Victor Frankenstein can, therefore, be read as a representative of the entire tragedy of attempting to transcend the human limits of society, to break the confines of death, and by having a faulty desire to be like God. His sole purpose for creation is to unleash his creative power, thereby embodying the self that cannot recognize anything other than itself (Baldick 46). His desire to bring light into the world through technological inquiry, to establish a new reality, is ultimately ruined by the solipsistic deception of his ego. This clearly outlines the need for a gothic footing for Frankenstein.

According to Baldick, Shelley's criticism of scientific misdemeanor is grounded on the deep uncertainty of anyone who attempts to go against the social order like scientists whose desire to create are fueled by their selfish interests and reasons (49). It is essentially the relationship between the gothic and scientific features in *Frankenstein*, that renders the novel to be what we can call gothic romance. The combination of ghost tale elements along with modern scientific elements implies that Frankenstein does not only look into the past, but also gazes into the future.

Overall, in its depiction of the creature's birth, Shelley's novel is purely about science. This section that focuses primarily on Shelley's portrayal of Victor as a man of science, together with his experiment, shows how *Frankenstein* establishes different forms of experimental inquiry about the meaning of life, some allied to science, and others to alchemy. These concerns are a reflection of Shelley's concern with the radical political

system of her time. Generally, the novel examines the associations of dependence and disconnection between the concerns of politics and science in its plot and language.

The novel's form serves as a useful intellectual instrument, allowing these contrasting forms of thought to counter each other in colloquy rather than in resolution. The form of the novel, particularly Shelley's adoption of the gothic mode, allows for the confusions, errors, and contradictions of science to be underplayed and overlooked, and ultimately to be incorporated into the creative act of reading.

Science Fiction Elements in *Dracula*

Creative writers are known to be imaginative. The tales that they write are products of imagination. *Dracula* is a typical example of the heights that creativity can reach. In *Dracula*, Bram Stoker uses his imagination to come up with an incredible tale. He employs science fiction techniques to narrate the story of the vampire in *Dracula*. Stoker's work was published in 1897 and is classified as a gothic tale of horror. Bram Stoker tells us a tale of Dracula's intention to travel from Transylvania to England. Count Dracula is in pursuit of fresh and new blood. Dracula also aims to spread the "undead" curse.

The novel depicts the battle that ensues between vampires and the people under the leadership of Professor Abraham Van Helsing. In *Dracula*, the story is propelled by the vampire and it is anchored on Darwinian theory of evolution. According to Icoz, vampire legends continue to fascinate and frighten people all over the world. The story of the undead night-stalker that predominantly feeds on human blood has existed for many centuries and continues to this day (23). Several countries and cultures worldwide always have variations of the same folklore. In the words of Montague, in spite of the variation, the

science fiction in vampire stories always has a crucial element, which is extreme lust for human blood (20).

In the 19th century, an Irish novel writer of science fiction created a character who has reshaped vampire myth and science fiction. By the time it was published, the novel *Dracula* became a model for almost all the subsequent vampire narratives.

The Darwinian Science in *Dracula*

The scientific concept of Stoker's *Dracula* is complementary to Darwinism. The story can be viewed as a tale of natural selection because the Count and his victims attempt to overtake the inferior human population, so that they can be incorporated into the immortal vampire race (Stoker 38). Additionally, *Dracula* adheres to Darwinism when he emphasizes emerging species two of the story's protagonists are Darwinian experts.

Icoz suggests that the science of Darwinism is crucial to the plot of *Dracula*. Stoker, as a scientist, focused on the feeding habits of vampires (23). Thus, as a writer, Stoker was preoccupied with adoption of this theory in the creation of his myth (Disch 34). Count Dracula has the ability to intrude the barrier of species through the transformation of himself—either into a human being, wolf, or even a bat. Readers are able to see the vampire employing magical powers to gain control over the lower animals like the rats. As the hunters enter the Carfax, the count utilizes an entire pack of rats for the purpose of menacing the hunters (Stiles 23). Apart from acting as a type of an evolutionary throwback, Dracula is not sophisticated because of his animal appetites and hazardous impulses. He has an evolving brain which enables him to rival the ever rational faculties of people.

It is evident that the struggle that emanates between the vampire and the human

population can be read in evolutionary terms. In fact, it is depicted as a stiff competition that ensues among rivals in the food chain (Stiles 29). For instance, Dracula reminds Van Helsing and his band that he cannot be baffled by them. *Dracula* reveals the inversion of an order people take for granted. There is no guarantee that people cannot be converted to mutton by the superior predator, Count Dracula.

Dracula's vampirism overtakes that of his rivals by his ability to produce an infinite number of offsprings. It implies that in Victorian England, among the human population, Dracula is viewed as the aggressive predator (Icoz 56). Darwin observes that the optimal ecosystem must have a higher diversity of species. Consequently, this creates a sufficient allocation of the existing resources that prohibit the predator from overconsumption. According to Darwin's works, the spreading of Count's virus has features resembling the traits of invasive species (Stiles 23).

In this view, Stoker's novel is not only a chilling gothic narrative, but it is also a typical example of the dangers created by some species in the ecosystem. Both Darwinian evolutionary theory and the vampire figures in the novel explore the importance of death and the desire to escape from it. *Dracula* depicts Darwinian ideas on the struggle of maintaining a sufficient and stable ecosystem owing to the arrival of a superior and aggressive predator. The above concept links the concept of degeneration that implies that the process of evolution through the vampiric model is thwarted and converts a once blooming ecosystem to a bloodthirsty single-minded one (Stiles 34). According to Stoker, the gothic combined with the travel story presents a problem.

The author's utilization of Renfield befits the pattern. Dr. Seward diagnoses Renfield to be a zoophagous madman. However, Renfield's exact condition depicts

Darwinian natural selection that has gone mad (Stiles 40). His madness in a real sense implies cannibalism. It is darkly comic; written during the Victorian age, *Dracula* demonstrates the degeneration of a society that has undergone the most advanced levels of industrial capitalism. It appears to conclude that the vampires are now the potential ruling species on this planet.

Charlotte Montague purports that the evolutionary theory attempts to justify the infinite complexity and multiplicity in variations of life. It focuses on the natural laws of selection and their harshness that pit species against others (28). The fiercest killers, the swiftest runners, the strongest and the most prolific reproducers are the ones that survive and transfer their genes to the next generation (Stiles 43). On the other hand, the losers follow the path of extinction. Similarly, in Stoker's *Dracula*, the Count's claws and red teeth are frightening. By creating such a horrifying character Stoker embraces Darwinism. Van Helsing's science and parapsychology ideally seek to proclaim the human values using Darwinian theory.

According to Icoz, Van Helsing is revealed as a new type of scientific hero. He does not want to create another monster that will destroy the human population. Rather, he seeks to destroy the existing one (31). Additionally, his mission is not essentially to eliminate the representative of the devil. In achieving his goals, Van Helsing acts as a type of shaman to counter the skepticism and the contemporary materialistic forces that have corrupted England. Aside from fighting Dracula's influence using hypnosis and the transfusion of blood, he is supposed to fight Mina and Seward's heart and mind. He tries to join them in a league against Dracula (Stiles 45). Van Helsing's aim is the creation of a

new kind of miniature human society, a community composed of the faithful, which is capable of a collective fight against evil.

The Supernatural Concepts in *Dracula*

Count Dracula has strange features. These features are really supernatural and enable him to perform the act of bloodsucking (Stiles 45). According to Darwinian theory, these are the features that allow Dracula to thrive in the Victorian environment. The supernatural is the main advantage that Dracula has over the band of warriors. Here, we can study some of the enigmatic traits that the Count possesses over his rivals.

Readers of *Dracula* initially witness the Count through Jonathan Harker's eyes. While on a trip to Transylvania to assist in settling a property that has been purchased by Dracula in England, Harker writes in his journal about the mysterious and often unreal things he experiences as the guest of the Count (Disch 60). One of the things he witnesses reincarnates a Frankenstein-like image. After three days in the castle, when he is shaving in his room, Dracula pays him an impromptu visit. Harker can see the entire room behind him reflected in his mirror. However, he fails to see Dracula. After this, he gets startled and ends up accidentally cutting himself with the blade. Abruptly, the Count is transformed into a demon.

Harker says that as soon as the Count had seen his face, his eyes started to blaze with a demoniac fury. The Count tried to grab him by the throat. Harker was able to draw himself away while Dracula's hand touched the strings of the crucifix. The gesture made an immediate change in him. The fury passed so fast, that Harker could not believe it had occurred. Apparently, Harker is saved, but he is angry because Dracula throws out the broken mirror through the window. He questions how he will shave, and his preoccupation

regarding trivialities of grooming after escaping from the jaws of death is comic (Stiles 46). Dracula's sardonic retort is equally comic. He tells Harker to take care since it has become more dangerous in the country than Harker thinks. The magical and mystic detail of the Count's invisible face reflected in the mirror lacks a realistic explanation. As a vampire, it reminds us of Shelley's creature.

Van Helsing's science can be related to black magic. Harker is seen looking out through the window. He can see the Count when he climbs down the steep wall. He sees him hanging on a face-down posture above an abyss, with a billowing cloak. It is a bizarre scene and Harker finds it to be horrifying. Dracula is seen scrambling on all fours the same way that lizards always move along the wall. Dracula's strange smile telegraphs the belief that the Count is at one point less than human.

Readers are reminded of a scene where Harker, looks out through the window. He can see the Count making a vertical descent. This time, Dracula wears Harker's traveling clothes. In a way, the vampire has compelled Harker to swap places with him. Dracula has finally stolen Harker's soul image. Similar doubling goes on as the scene shifts to England. During this scene, readers meet Mina Murray and Lucy Westenra. Mina Murray is Harker's fiancé, and Lucy is her friend. These women become the preys of Dracula when he moves to England. The main plot in *Dracula* consists of stories that are repeated when hunters toil to alleviate Lucy from predation. They fail and begin a fight to save Mina.

The most bizarre duplication occurs when Stoker doubles the Count and Van Helsing, his primary foe. Van Helsing performs the role of a white magician, who is to

counter Dracula's black magic. However, Stoker presents Van Helsing as a scientist who specializes in Neurology with several impressive credentials.

However, the readers feel uncomfortable, because the bond between the Dutchman and Seward is ideally anchored on a parody of the vampire bonding. Clearly, as Van Helsing poisons him by using a gangrenous knife during an operation, Seward is the only bold one to suck away the poison from the wound. Seward, the student, saves the life of his teacher (Stiles 73). The use of garlic with a crucifix shows that Van Helsing blends science with witchcraft.

According to Montague, the way that Mina describes Van Helsing echoes Harker's earlier account of the Count. Van Helsing is a man of average height, well built with his shoulders set back, and a broad chest with a well-balanced neck. The pose indicates power and thought (41).

Harker describes the Count as tall and thin, very much like Van Helsing and both of them have bushy eyebrows and nostrils, with high and domed foreheads. Van Helsing's eyes can change rapidly from being tender to stern, like Dracula's red eyes (Icoz 45). They can shift immediately from craftiness to homicidal malevolence. Dracula is very similar to Van Helsing.

Physiognomy is an issue that is not accepted today. Nevertheless, from Harker's perspective, Van Helsing and Dracula are ideally matched. In *Personal Reminiscences of Henry Irving*, Stoker talks about contemporary Victorian society. Therein, Richard Burton and Alfred Tennyson have conspicuous and prominent canine teeth that indicate that they are fighters; they are not seen as pugilistic but spirited and indomitable (Disch

63). Tennyson is presented as ‘a great Newfoundland dog’ by Stoker, and it is meant to be a compliment. Dracula and Van Helsing also seem to have iron resolution.

Van Helsing’s shamanic-science influenced by Dracula’s black magic is questioned. In studying this issue, the heart of the novel is approached. Stoker’s physiognomic belief is linked to the idea that the physical traits of an individual can be used to categorize human beings into their psychological types (Stiles 67). Dracula and Van Helsing belong to the same class. According to Stoker, Dracula is threatening by virtue of his predatory status. Montague argues that the ideal curse from the undead is the manner in which they can get into the Victorian community and be able to subvert its traditional hierarchy.

The struggle between Dracula and Van Helsing can be read as a long fight to take control of Mina and Lucy's bodies. It is widely known that vampires only reproduce asexually. It is rather surprising to see that Dracula's attentions gravitate toward females in the human population (Montague 35). The reason for this is that his control over women will enable him to start anarchy. He will be able to control the human race’s biological destiny. When confronted by Van Helsing and his warriors, the Count mocks them; he says that all the girls, that all the people’s love, are his. Dracula boasts to Van Helsing’s band that through the women, the whole population will be his. They will be his creatures that will abide by his words and will become his jackals when he intends to feed (Stoker 395).

According to Montague (2010), the jackal’s image alludes to Stoker’s initial reference to the Count’s cold lion-like disdain stare. It also reminds the readers of the lizard that scrambles along the vertical wall and some other images (Disch 65). These

images are also used by the author to represent the female vampires. Aside from that, they reinforce the belief of Dracula's savagery.

The Relevance of the Science Fiction in *Dracula*

Bram Stoker's *Dracula* is a kind of science fiction that contains time capsules; it reveals the widespread ideas, thoughts, and beliefs of Victorian society. It paints a great picture of what the society was like as expressed in Stoker's novel (Montague 36).

Ideally, Stoker uses the scientific model of narration to tell the readers about how the Victorian period appeared. *Dracula* is the symbol that stands for society regarding character and actions.

The dated concepts that have been reflected in the science fiction of *Dracula* mainly focus on the ideas of sex, lust, and evil in equal measures that they were perceived in between 19th and 20th centuries. The society can be seen as a conservative one. During that era, homosexuality and sex were controversial issues. Emphasis was frequently put on the vitality of employing caution and awareness in such matters (Disch 66). The Victorian era insisted on modest lifestyles. Such beliefs are vast in *Dracula* and are often the pivotal point of the glorification of resistance of temptation. At the same time, it advises against the ever existing temptation for the 'forbidden fruit.' *Dracula* was authored and published before the Suffragette Movement decided that the standards set for women were extremely limiting.

The concept of evil prescribed by aggressive sexual behavior and temptations coincides with all the appalling antics of *Dracula*. Stoker's generation magnified the beliefs of the obscene antics of the character himself, adversely inflicting shock in the

audience (Disch 66). It made the pivotal contributions with regard to the controversial views that surrounded sex and sexuality in Victorian society.

Dracula is in general a monster narrative. On a larger scale, it symbolizes the end of the Victorian period. As explained above, the Victorian era adhered to strict religious values to sanitize society. However, the time comes when immorality, represented by the Count, penetrates into society. It is infectious and spreads through blood. Dracula spreads the undead curse by sucking blood and prolific reproduction. Ideally, the novel symbolizes the extraordinary rate at which immortality is gaining momentum in the Victorian England (Disch 67).

When *Dracula* taunts the people and says that he will make them all his slaves, it represents the complete erosion of proper norms that is about to take place in Victorian society. Historically, it can be proved that Victorian values were eroded by realism. It brings to mind the question as to whether Van Helsing and his group succeeded in destroying the Count. In the story, they kill the vampire. However, the deeds of the Count were not eliminated in a real sense because of the elimination of Victorian values.

Darwinian Theory in *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*

The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde is a work by a Scottish author, Robert Louis Stevenson. The novel was originally published in 1886. The work is popularly known as *Jekyll and Hyde*. The story revolves around a lawyer in London called Gabriel John Utterson who is on the verge of investigating strange occurrences that happen to his old friend. It entails Dr. Henry Jekyll and the wicked Edward Hyde. The novella is a work

of science fiction. Stevenson was intrigued with the concept of how personality manages to affect human beings. The story looks at how to combine good and evil.

The Dichotomy of Dr. Jekyll and Darwinian Theory

According to Fichman, the Victorian era was marked by immense progress and achievement in industrialization. The economy flourished as the society registered a gradual change (135). There was nobody that was more conscious of this fact than ‘the most dangerous man in the whole of England.’ That dangerous man was English naturalist, biologist, and scientist, Charles Darwin. Darwin published a controversial work, *The Origin of Species* in 1859. He postulated that human beings came from evolution that came from a lower species (Fichman 136). The idea terrified the whole Victorian society.

However, the biological process did not frighten the community. The Victorians had a different view of Darwinian theory. For the most part, they rejected it. Evolutionary theory nonetheless had rewritten history by challenging the Victorian concepts of morality, religion, and social status. Essentially, Stevenson’s novella functions as a tool that Victorian society used to study Darwinian theory, its relevance to the culture, and its potential for the human race.

Jekyll and Hyde falls into the class of Victorian science fiction. Victorian science fiction initially started in the 1850s. It was famous for its portrayal of societal changes and how these changes were influenced and dictated by science and technology (Fichman 139). Science fiction works such as *Jekyll and Hyde* were not meant to entertain Victorians. They performed a specific and genuine role in the community, in a period

when technology and science were rapidly gaining force in a culture that was once dominated by Christianity.

Jekyll and Hyde contributes to the creation of an expectation of change by the provision of a cognitive estrangement. It encourages readers to analyze the contingent nature of a region's culture (O'Neil 24). It looks at the potential expectations and realities of the oblivious, yet plausible, future.

The emergence of Darwinian theory and the several tandem theories which followed raised several questions. In Dennis O'Neil's article, *Pre-Darwinian Theories* the writer explains that according to the high religious belief in Europe in the 17th and 18th century, Biology was preoccupied with the living. The discipline was not concerned about the origins of living creatures (O'Neil 34). The majority of Victorians consisted of regular church goers. They read the Bible and believed in the Biblical creation story. According to them, God created Adam and Eve who later multiplied to fulfill the earth. They thought that the inhabitants of earth came from creation.

Darwinian theory grappled with the set primary beliefs and challenged to the creation concept; it emphasized humanity and the vital aspect of the future. Most people had the idea that regression acted as progress inside the social and natural orders. *Jekyll and Hyde* was actual science fiction. It became a tool for the exploration of the transition that was happening in society, once controlled by religious ties. It explains how Victorian culture was influenced by science.

As a character, Mr. Hyde is described as a primitive man, in accordance with the physical attributes of the evolutionary parents of the modern human being. These early humans came from the paleoanthropologists and those words that were utilized in the

description of Mr. Hyde in the story suggest obvious parallels. In *Early Transitional Humans*, Dennis O'Neil explains that members of *Australopithecus*, humanity's earliest ancestors, were traditionally lighter and shorter than the modern man. They walked on fours and were about half the height of the average *homo sapiens*. They weighed about seventy pounds. Stevenson's work describes Mr. Hyde as dwarfish (Stevenson 17). In the story, he is often referred to as a person of a small stature (Stevenson 22).

O'Neil claims that some of the widely known physical distinctions that occur between the modern man and his forefathers are evident in the skull and the facial features (9). *Australopithecus* possessed a small brain, a larger face, and a massive jaw with large teeth. These differences could have varied since the *Australopithecus* transitioned to the genus *Homo*. In *Jekyll and Hyde*, Stevenson presents Mr. Utterson, who comments on the features of Mr. Hyde, and says that Hyde gave an impression of a man with a massive deformity, one with the lack of nameable malformation. He adds that Hyde possessed a displeasing smile (Stevenson 17).

The statement makes the reader question Mr. Hyde's physical attributes, which enable Mr. Utterson to finally suspect his defect. Had it not been for of his small size, the abnormality would have been easy to isolate. Other terminologies that are employed in the description of Hyde is "troglodytic" that explains that Utterson views Hyde as a lesser evolved human being or one that is undergoing the transition (Stevenson 17).

Additionally, the idea that Mr. Hyde plays the primitive man is built in the way Stevenson is consistently courageous in his selection of words. The use of descriptive terms such as "hardly human" and "savage" entails the deliberate evolutionary undertones (Stevenson 17). Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde's dichotomy comments on the

Cesare Lombroso's stance on the 1870s post-Darwinian theory of the criminal human being. The dualism pits Hyde to be an archaic criminal that dwells inside Dr. Jekyll. Italian physician, Cesare Lombroso, was inspired by the ideas of social Darwinism. Lombroso came up with a hypothesis that involves the antecedent of evil or criminal behavior in the human being (Franklin 26). He postulated that there were specific traits and features that are shared among apes and savages. These links cohere with Lombroso's vast knowledge of Darwinian theory. It enabled Lombroso to deduce that criminals are indeed the evolutionary throwbacks amidst society. He adds that the remnants of ancestors are dormant within human genes. For some or even less fortunate individuals, the past reincarnates.

Charles Darwin believed that evolution theory offered some vital information that was needed in understanding the great puzzle of human ethics. Darwin had the belief that human morality ought to be approached in a similar way as the evolutionary process. Morality should be addressed as the evolution of physical features in the human being (Franklin 34). All of these changes agree with Darwinian theory of natural selection. There was immense pressure on the environment for survival. Organisms were developing new traits to adapt to the environment and to survive. The fear of extinction was growing. As a result, goodness was necessary for survival. Human beings had to adapt and fit well in the environment.

Consequently, evil emerged among people. The dichotomy of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde shows how one human being is capable of doing both good and evil. These are among the theories that were suggested by Darwin to explain the changes in morality in his work in 1871 titled, *The Descent of Man*. Even though not any of the biological concepts

of morality were firm and concrete, the Victorians put emphasis on them (Franklin 23).

Most of them wondered whether the Darwinian notions were heading in the right direction and what was supposed to become of the existing conventional solutions to the moral behavioral expectations that were issued by philosophy and religion.

In Franklin's estimation, it has been realized that the physical attributes of Mr. Hyde streamline with those of the primitive human being (1). However, Dr. Jekyll's details are yet to be scrutinized. At first, Dr. Jekyll appears to be civilized; he is a well-respected modern man. In the early parts of *Jekyll and Hyde*, Mr. Utterson offers a description of Dr. Jekyll. He says, that while sitting opposite the fireplace, he appeared to have the smooth face of a fifty-year old person. He had a kind face (Stevenson 19).

Even in this preliminary description of the character, there is a suggestion of something that is devious. The mention of something that lies dormant below the surface alludes to Lomborg's theory about the wicked man (Franklin 34). In a chapter in the novella, "Henry Jekyll's Full Statement of the Case," Jekyll attempts to give his explanations for his behavior. He says that the worst of his faults was that he had a particular disposition to gaiety.

He rendered several people happy but always found difficulty in the reconciliation of his inward desires of carrying his head high, and yet he wore a grave demeanor before people. Therefore, he concealed his pleasures, and that is when he arrived at the years of reflection and started looking around himself (Stevenson 48). He took his position in the world and remained committed to a profound duplicity in his life.

In the above explanation, he confesses that he experiences an internal struggle. The fight ensues between his natural pleasures and the great expectations of self that have been

anchored on him. To survive in Victorian society, people were expected to observe strict and high moral codes of conduct (Fichman 137). The case exemplifies the evolutionary adaptation of human beings that emerge from environmental pressures. In explaining this, Jekyll says that he learned to recognize the meticulous and primitive duality of human beings (Stevenson 49). He expounds on the two natures that were fighting within his consciousness; he was always radically both from an early age. The archaic nature links him to the post-Darwinian genetic remnants of his forefathers. Stevenson says that the transformation of Dr. Jekyll to Mr. Hyde was natural and human (51). It implies that there was nothing completely wrong with the duality of the personality.

Stevenson's Female Characters and Darwinism

According to Martin Fichman, the presentation of the female characters in the novella, *Jekyll and Hyde*, is ideally consistent with the Darwinian theory. Martin Fichman offers his explanation on this concept (135). Owing to the Darwinian reconstruction of the evolution of humankind, some of his colleagues came up with ideas on the field of anthropology, psychology, and gynecology to come up with a biological solution. They suggested that females were psychologically, anatomically, and intellectually distinct from the males. Their arguments were present on a biased scientific finding that the female was not able to match male intellectual triumph. They were convinced that women could at no point win the power and authority that the men had in possession (Fichman 139).

The above school of thought about the submissiveness of women is revisited by Stevenson in his novella. In *Jekyll and Hyde*, the female characters are described as being shorter. They are consistently portrayed to be weak, vulnerable, inferior and passive

(Fichman 136). Throughout the entire story, female characters appear four times. First, there is the young girl who is trampled by Mr. Hyde while on the street. According to Mr. Utterson's account, Hyde assaulted her and left her on the ground screaming (Stevenson 9). On the other hand, a doctor who is a witness to the incident claims that the girl was not harmed and was rather frightened (Stevenson 9). In spite of the lack of physical damage, the young girl was subjected to fear. The child is depicted as helpless and weak and physically overwhelmed by a man.

The maid that witnesses the brutal murder of Sir Carew via her bedroom window is the second female character. In her account of the night of evil, she appears to be powerless and naïve. Stevenson recounts her thoughts just before the brutal incident. It appears that she was seated in her box; she then fell into an amusing dream. She had never felt peaceful with men and never had kind thoughts about the world (21).

Additionally, after witnessing the tragic attack, she faints. Thus, she is merely the crime's witness and cannot be useful. It can be theorized that had she also been in similar danger, she would have been defenseless against the villain (Fichman 134). Aside from her, Dr. Jekyll's cook and butler are the women in the story. They want to make Mr. Utterson hear the differences that emanate in Dr. Jekyll's voice. It is reported that on seeing Utterson, the housemaid developed hysteria and started to whisper and was delighted to see him (Stevenson 34). The frenzy at the sight of a man, Mr. Utterson, is the depiction of weakness and irrationality of a woman in dire need of help. Furthermore, the desperation of the cook almost makes her surpass the boundaries that exist between social classes.

Aside from the deliberate lack of female characters in the story, sexuality is absent. It is purposely meant to talk about the Victorians' preoccupations that declined

the reproduction amidst the upper class and human species' future. Fichman explains that the primary dilemma which was posed by evolution was the fact that there was some chance for the human population to be graced by progress (139). He questions whether it would be marred by regression and degeneration. It is reported that from 1800 to 1900, there was a decrease in birthrate by forty percent. The decrease was more dramatic in the upper and the middle-class segments of the population.

Most people posited that the lower class reproduced a lot than the superior classes. It is believed that human evolution would tend to favor the undesirable traits in the bottom part of society. It would prohibit advancement and lead to a potential regression of the community and species at large.

In *Jekyll and Hyde*, it is assumed that all the male characters are bachelors. There is a lack of romantic relationships. In the description of female characters in the story, the author pays no attention to their physical appearance, and most of them are not given proper names. The reader is compelled to believe that there was infrequency of the sexual encounters between a woman and a man in the upper class of Victorian society. Consequently, this would account for the limited rate of reproduction in the upper class.

Overall, for inhabitants of the Victorian period, Darwin earned his reputation. He, alongside his theories, invoked fear amidst wonder. He questioned the authority and went ahead to rewrite history. He inspired Stevenson to write *Jekyll and Hyde*. Notably, some readers can perceive the novel as a commentary on the Christian concept of good and evil. As attractive as the ideas may look, it may be inconsistent with the ideal nature of the genre of science fiction. Even though religion held Victorian society's metaphorical

origin, both the notion of right and wrong and Christianity was never remotely technological or scientific. They were traditional concepts.

Additionally, if Stevenson had written *Jekyll and Hyde* powered by another unique scientific discovery, it would have never explained the deliberate and yet so obvious portrayal of Mr. Hyde as a primitive man. Indeed, there is no scientific finding in the era that could have inspired Robert Louis Stevenson's regular use of the imagery for description such as the evident primitive undertones. Through Mr. Hyde, savage and archaic man within the modern Dr. Jekyll, the author had the freedom compare the old and the new. Stevenson was able to fashion his characters as tools to explore and understand Darwinian theory, human nature, and Victorian society. Stevenson consolidated the thoughts of people in his novella and enabled them to view the future.

Common Sublime Elements in Gothic Novels

Gothic novels often contain supernatural elements such as ghosts, who are often linked to the demonic. Other supernatural features common to Gothic fiction are mysteries related to health issues such as psychological disorders (Geary 13). Although there are few mysteries in science fiction novels, many psychological disorders are traditionally viewed as issues of insanity.

Consequently, individuals who suffered from them were taken to be possessed by demons. Geary argues that probably the lack of sufficient knowledge on psychotic behavior makes this supernatural element interesting for many individuals (13). Even in the contemporary world, despite drug therapy, modern medicine, and counseling, there still exists an interest with things that are beyond human control or those that seem super-human.

Gothic novels are concerned with supernatural and mysterious happenings. For instance, in her novel *Frankenstein*, Shelley employs a rather mysterious situation to create the monster. According to Scarborough, the cloudy environment under which Frankenstein gathers the body parts to use in his experiment, as well as the employment of modern technology for strange purposes, creates this mysterious situation (27). Supernatural elements instill fear, wonder, suspicion, and they are difficult to explain or prove. Whether the audience is doubting or not, the influence of the supernatural is great in gothic literature. It is this existence of supernatural beings that creates the gothic mystery. Supernatural elements, therefore, form part of the few things that humans cannot explain (Scarborough 29). In gothic literature, the supernatural mystery enables the writers to let their imaginations go wild, while inviting also the imaginations of the audience. Shelley, for instance, uses the supernatural elements of macabre research to puzzle most readers. By so doing, she compels us to question our understandings of Frankenstein's use of the dead in his scientific research.

Gothic novels are also set in gloomy places such as old buildings, especially castles or rooms having secret passageways, towers, or dungeons. These gloomy places act as a backdrop for the circumstances (Andriopoulos 740). A common type of gothic tale is the ghost story. Additionally, far away areas that appear mysterious to the audience work as part of the setting for gothic novels. For example, the setting of *Frankenstein* is in continental Europe, in unfamiliar countries like Germany and Switzerland. Moreover, the inclusion of the chase scenes in the arctic moves the audience even further from England, to areas they have not explored.

Similarly, the setting of *Dracula* is in Transylvania, a place in Romania close to the Hungarian border (Geary 18). The laboratory that Victor uses serves as the perfect place for creating a new form of human being. Since scientific experiments and laboratories were not known to average readers, they contributed to an element of gloom and mystery. The mere thought of raising the dead in Shelley's novel is frightening. Shelley, therefore, takes advantage of this device that serves to enhance the bizarre feelings that her novel generates in the audience. The mere thought of raising the dead has an ability to make the average reader grimace in terror and disbelief.

In gothic literature, characters appear to bridge the supernatural world and the mortal world. For example, Dracula lives both as undead and as a normal person, operating easily between the two realms to accomplish his missions (Scarborough 33). Similarly, Frankenstein's monster appears to have some kind of communication between his creator and himself, since the monster is seen everywhere that Victor goes. Additionally, the monster moves with astonishing speed, a reason why he matches Victor in the race to the North Pole. Evidently, science fiction writers combine various ingredients to create impressive novels in the gothic tradition.

Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* can be considered one of the most renowned works of literature that employ the use of a mad scientist figure. For instance, Frankenstein motivated by his desire to understand the secrets of earth and heaven, creates a monster full of energy (Geary 22). However, the unnatural appearance of the monster rebuffs all those who look upon him. As a result, Frankenstein finds himself the maker of the filthy demon that seeks revenge on his creator for his misery. From the bushy wildernesses of southern Europe to the frosty wilds of the north, this monster haunts his creator until

death separates them. Although Shelley's novel is most commonly read as a pioneer of modern science fiction, the novel hinges on several conventions of gothic romance, in narrating the story about human-made terrors (Andriopoulos 745). The descriptions of nature in the novel contribute to the foreboding and dark atmosphere of doom.

In this novel, nature takes the place of the traditional castles, offering the obscurity and isolation required for Frankenstein's fights with his monster. Essentially, even the monster can be perceived as an extension of the supernatural (Geary 27). This is because, in the novel, the actual supernatural sensation is understandable regarding human-made terrors. Despite technological explanations, the monster in the novel embraces supernatural associations as a result of the culturally abnormal situation of reanimated life.

As a result, Shelley combines eighteenth-century super-nature with nineteenth-century technological thought, to come up with a new world of supernatural abilities. In the view of Stefan Andriopoulos, she creates the world in which a scientific man is godlike, and his scientific experiments, a new supernaturalism (746). However, despite the blend of supernatural and scientific imagination, writers of the early nineteenth century observed most of the supernatural beliefs of the eighteenth century. Just like in the earlier works, evil only enters human existence at the command of man. Therefore, Frankenstein, pushed by his desire to understand everything, opens the way for evil to permeate human life. For Andriopoulos, the novel portrays supernatural evils present in human life as consequences of man's desire to have knowledge and understanding of everything (747). Like most of the prolific writers of the same period, Shelley uses the supernatural aspect as a source of evil brought about by knowledge seeking man.

Many writers of the nineteenth century adhered to the earlier beliefs concerning

super-nature; they do not entirely copy the forms taken by these evils. Rather, they replace these old forms with other scientifically advanced situations (Scarborough 37). For example, magic mirrors change into magic telescopes; fortune tellers change to become advanced visions created by the displacement of space and time. However, not all these phenomena can be considered to be mere updates of the older forms. In other words, another new phenomenon such as reanimated life, found its origin in the supernatural world of nineteenth-century gothic fiction.

Overall, supernatural elements can be said to have a great influence on gothic writing. When a tale or a topic is saturated with a mystery, the attention of the reader automatically gets riveted. However, when we link this to the deeper mysteries surrounding life, fate, death, the nature of various things, as well as other common questions, we see the real aspect of the gothic element in life.

Summary of Science Fiction Elements

The early nineteenth-century gothic fiction is greatly concerned with science, particularly with scientists. Whether British or American, most Gothic writers portray humanity with a great desire for knowledge, as the main agent through which evil gets into the world (Hogle 35). Because man is no longer contented with worldly imperfections, he endeavors to create this perfection. However, as in *Frankenstein*, man ends up destroying life rather than preserving it. Hogle argues that much as man's mind builds the idea from which fear and terror materializes, in essence, the terrors are not imaginary (35). Rather, they exist, just like Frankenstein's monster. Shelley's use of man's mind as the main

creative agent from which no illusionary physical terror arises foreshadows future developments in the employment of man's ability to form illusory super nature.

While using shape-changing mystic phenomena, renowned writers concentrated on the early Victorian's anxieties and fears. From each part of the system, there was convergence of new ideas about the established cultural order (Brantlinger 5). The social order was not only threatened by the advancing middle class, but the old political system as well and by various reform movements that brought about a shift in power from the aristocracy to the affluent middle class.

Correspondingly, the industrial revolution brought about changes in England's economic order. Brantlinger contends that while using the supernatural, gothic writers reflect the fluctuating cultural perceptions of the ability of the mind to formulate its own terrors (7). In comparison to earlier works, nineteenth-century gothic fiction considered the mind to be unreliable. In *Frankenstein*, the mind could have been a deranged one, pushing Frankenstein to create a supernatural element. The same mind, by craving to know the secrets of earth and heaven, can create actual supernatural situations. The supernatural features in gothic romances also demonstrate the anxieties of the nineteenth century on the divided self.

For instance, in Shelley's *Frankenstein*, the theme of man's dualistic nature becomes apparent to readers. In the novel, the dualistic nature of man is presented as two distinct entities. Although the concern with knowledge and dualism extended into later examples of the gothic romance, this concern was now focused on the ability of the mind to create illusory supernatural fears for no apparent reason, without any physical provocations.

Although most science fiction writers in the nineteenth century used the ghost, some like Stoker made use of other supernatural elements for their tales of horror. In his novel *Dracula* (1897), Stoker uses vampire myths of folklore as a supernatural element. Just as earlier authors used the motif of the vampire, *Dracula* integrates the vampire myths into a narrative that reflects the shape changing subject of the nineteenth century (Wallace 58). Away from his hypnotic powers, the Count possesses the ability to change shapes. The vampire often takes the form of a bat, but it can assume a wolf-like appearance. Since *Dracula*, as opposed to earlier shape changers, has no limits, he has greater powers compared to a werewolf.

Besides the different physical appearances, *Dracula* remains in a third state of being undead. As a result, he can change his shape when in his third state, the undead. *Dracula* proclaims a return to the original form of the supernatural stories. In the nineteenth century, particularly its later half, the reader's taste for the short story. However, during the first half of the twentieth century, gothic novels started making a comeback. Certainly, most of the gothic novels composed in the first half of the twentieth century failed to embrace the form of the gothic romance. However, some of its features start appearing in the works of a few writers.

The gothic novels discussed in this thesis reflect the predominant trends in gothic science fiction over the last two centuries. Moreover, as a fictional formula, gothic romance offers a means of relating changes in the supernatural element of the formula with variations in the cultural views of super-nature for a given span of time. In a bid to trace the supernatural feature of gothic romance over the last two centuries, there has generally been a movement away from the external supernatural horrors to those that

have their origin in the mind. Gothic literature seeks to demonstrate that the fixed dualistic oppositions that occur in reality are essentially a construct.

It further attempts to show that there exists a blurred middle ground between what individuals often think are neatly branded terms. For instance, many gothic fictions examine this in the dualistic opposition of dead and alive. As a result, readers tend to think that there exists a particular boundary between the two. However, gothic science fiction deliberately distorts these dividing lines, enticing readers with figures of vampires, monsters, skeletons, and zombies. These figures attract the audience and they are also troubling, since they directly contrast with what the audience perceives is real.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION

Gothic novels can be read as literary works attempting to convey or negotiate the concerns of rationalism, enlightenment, the industrial revolution, and urbanization. Religious faith decreased dramatically with the development of new theories, such as Darwin's theory of evolution, which places humanity closer to animals (Botting 13). The subject of monstrosity, connected to the mysterious, have been used to symbolically describe human fears. In gothic and science fiction, the monster is unsettling as it crosses various boundaries that are culturally established, thereby destabilizing them. However, the gothic monster fundamentally acts as a means of establishing custom, by depicting what is strange. The three novels, previously discussed in this paper, emphasize the claim that monsters are used as social constructs that serve to mediate social anxieties and fears.

Frankenstein can be read as a manifestation of the fears of the consequences of overindulgence in science, which results in the collapse of social norms and loss of control. The novel also demonstrates how the moral decadence of one individual can place the whole society at risk. With its central themes of quest for knowledge and the revenge of the outsider, the novel represents concrete fears and anxieties of the consequences of seeking to civilize other nations, while addressing some other issues like revenge and the disastrous effects of unchecked progress on society.

The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde concerns the anxieties to the duality

of human nature and the fears of the animosity within human beings that seek to corrupt society. The novel conveys the concern that this inhumanity can sometimes get out of control and harm society. It, therefore, reflects anxieties about the potential for corrupt behavior in the civilized members of society. The novel also emphasizes how subscribing to one's impulses can be addictive and disastrous.

Similarly, *Dracula* portrays the anxieties of the darker aspects of human nature and its external dangers to society. The novel also conveys the message about the dangers that might come with degeneration of others. The fear that the degenerate can outnumber the morally upright is one of the major concerns of gothic novels. Moreover, *Dracula* resonates with Victorian anxieties for the disintegration of the British Empire as well as the ethics of its citizens. In all the above-discussed novels, the narrative structure reflects the horrors they present.

Additionally, these three books are fragmented texts. The fragmentation appears to reject the method of storytelling from a single reliable viewpoint, reflecting the confusion of what to consider credible and the possibility of fatally going wrong. The novels generally echo the clash of the new scientific theories with the traditional religious perspectives. The novels portray their atrocities with clarity to act as a reassertion of societal values and virtues, seeking to reinforce these necessities and values of social limits. Therefore, through monsters, gothic novels convey social anxieties while reinforcing social boundaries, by defining them through their contravention.

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