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Artificial Minds and Literary Worlds in Mary Shelley's Frankenstein

A B S T R A C T

Artificial Minds and Literary Worlds in the novel Frankenstein by Mary Shelley explores the complexity of the use of artificial intelligence motives in the masterpiece of a Gothic novel by the author. The current question cuts across the multifaceted image of the artificial mind that was personified by the creature created by Victor Frankenstein in its many facets and explored in detail in relation to the Shelley narrative techniques, the themes echoed in the novel, and the interactions between characters. Placing the novel in the context of the larger Romantic and scientific discourses of the first half of the nineteenth century, the paper sheds light on how Shelley criticized the unbridled scientific ambition and the ethics of creating artificial life. The study also questions existential issues such as identity, alienation, and the quest to seek knowledge which is evident in the tragic journey of the creature. Using interdisciplinary prisms that cut across literature, philosophy and science, the work explains why Shelley continues to be relevant in the modern discussion of AI ethics, human nature and the boundaries of scientific inquiry. In the end, this academic study of the novel Frankenstein deepens our understanding of the artificial minds and the ways of representing the world of writing, which reveals the timeless impact of this masterpiece on the views on technology, humanity, and ethics.

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العقول الاصطناعية والعوالم الأدبية في رواية فرانكنشتاين لماري شيلي

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المستخلص

تتعمق هذه الدراسة في الاستكشاف العميق لموضوعات الذكاء الاصطناعي (AI) داخل عمل شيلي الرائد في الأدب القوطي. وتهدف إلى تحليل التصوير المعقد للعقل الاصطناعي من خلال شخصية مخلوق فيكتور فرانكشتاين، المعروف عادةً بـ "المخلوق". ومن خلال تحليل دقيق لتقنيات السرد عند شيلي، والعناصر الموضوعية، وديناميكيات الشخصيات، تسعى هذه الدراسة إلى الكشف عن التعقيدات المحيطة بوعي المخلوق وتفاعلاته مع المجتمع البشري. وبوضع الرواية في سياق الخطابات الرومانسية والعلمية الأوسع في أوائل القرن التاسع عشر، تسلط هذه الدراسة الضوء على نقد شيلي للطموح العلمي غير المنضبط، وما يترتب عليه من تبعات أخلاقية في خلق حياة اصطناعية. كما تستكشف هذه الدراسة الموضوعات الوجودية المتعلقة بالهوية، والاغتراب، والسعي وراء المعرفة، والتي يجسدها المسار المؤلم لرحلة المخلوق. ومن خلال عدسات متعددة التخصصات تشمل الأدب والفلسفة والعلوم، تبرز هذه الدراسة أهمية شيلي المستمرة في النقاشات المعاصرة حول أخلاقيات الذكاء الاصطناعي، وطبيعة الإنسان، وحدود البحث العلمي. وفي النهاية، فإن هذا الاستكشاف لرواية "فرانكشتاين" يعمّق فهمنا للعقول الاصطناعية والعوالم الأدبية، ويقدّم رؤى حول الإرث الدائم لعمل شيلي في تشكيل التصورات المتعلقة بالتكنولوجيا، والإنسانية، والأخلاق.

الكلمات المفتاحية: الذكاء الاصطناعي ، ديناميكيات الشخصية ، الخطاب الفلسفي ، العوالم الأدبية ، الطموح العلمي.

Introduction

In Frankenstein’s prologue, Mary Shelley describes how her nightmares served as inspiration. She tells her readers that she dreamt of a horrifying ghost of a man stretching out, and then, as if pushed by a strong engine, it began to exhibit lifelike characteristics and stir with a tremulous, semi-vital motion. It must be terrifying because the result of any human attempt to make fun of the incredible machinery that created the universe would be extremely terrifying. This imagery of man-made, artificial entities emerging from the "slab" and coming to life has been repeated countless times throughout the novel. The world of Frankenstein is one that is filled with darkness, shadows, and fear. These three words and the different versions appear constantly in the text of the novel; we see these words visually in the hundreds of stage and film adaptations of this work, where the neck-bolted creature played by Boris Karloff frequently appears; and we feel this gloomy darkness, and terror when we read the numerous news articles about genetic engineering, cloning, Franken foods, and the most recent unearthed Franken virus, which was announced in September 2015. The inspiration for all of these allusions comes from a teenage girl named Mary Godwin, who ran away to the Continent accompanying poet Percy Bysshe Shelley, who was already married. Shelley's Frankenstein groundbreaking combination of science, ethics, and imagination offers a chance to consider how the public perceives science and to contextualize recent scientific and technological advancements, particularly in the context of artificial intelligence, genome manipulation, technology such as machine learning, and reconstructive medicine. While

Frankenstein evokes the thrill of seemingly limitless human creativity, it also raises important questions about our shared and individual accountability for fostering the results of our creativity and placing limitations on our ability to alter the world (Cordeski,2018:189). The current study aims to provide a comparative review of the themes that underlie the story of Mary Shelley's "Frankenstein" and the ethical issues raised by the creation of artificial intelligence in light of the incidents of the story and its implications. We want to raise awareness of the importance of responsible and ethical AI practices by returning to the articles, books, and criticism written by well-known people, critics, and recent research articles. The forecasting tale of "Frankenstein" must serve as a lesson for us as we adopt an approach that is multidisciplinary that integrates philosophy, ethics, and technology to control the development of AI in a way that respects everyone and ensures the welfare of mankind (Cordeski,2018:198).

An overview of Mary Shelley's "Frankenstein"

Mary Shelley is an English writer is most famous for her Gothic book Frankenstein, which is known as The Modern Prometheus. Frankenstein is a story with a unique plot and intriguing storyline, but it's also a brilliant fable about the perilous and even disastrous effects of technological advancement when moral values or risk fail to withstand it. This novel's lasting appeal and its position in world literature are due to its hidden implications. Moreover, it serves as a very helpful cautionary tale against AI in the future that hopes to achieve an important scientific advance (Jensen et al, 2020:530).

The story revolves around Victor Frankenstein, a brilliant young scientist with a background in chemistry and knowledge of other sciences, creates a giant monster out of parts of dead people and uses a brilliant technique to bring it to life. But frightened, he leaves his creation as soon as he watches it come to life. The man- made creature encounters human hostility while it moves around aimlessly and without any guidance, which turns it into a vengeful, insane whose vengeance is especially directed against its creator. On the eve of their wedding, it kills without hesitation the dearest people to Victor. It kills his younger brother and even his bride. The protagonist attempts to hunt his beast, which takes him all the way to the North Pole, where he dies after he gets exhausted. This tragic dynamic shed light on the threat of cyberphilosophy; as Moor & Bynum (2002) states in their book "as computer technology becomes more powerful and autonomous, the moral agency and responsibility of its creators become paramount in preventing unintended, harmful consequences" (p.6).

Upon witnessing his death, the creature feels sorry for Victor`s death and resolves to end his own life. He then sets off on a floating island and soon finds himself "lost in darkness and distance," "never to be seen again"(Shelly,2003, p.221). Thus, the novel vividly dramatizes the impact of science on modern life and our ongoing fear that the creations of our intellects might be beyond individual human control. Frankenstein is mysteriously predicting the advancement of our modern technologies. The reader gets a complete vision of technological advancement and the emergence of artificial human life, an event that is more quickly going on today than ever before Although Frankenstein depicts these concepts in terms of the most ancient myths of Western culture, it nevertheless embodies contemporary concerns by reimagining old tales of creation and birth, Mary Shelley created a contemporary story of creation in Frankenstein (Newey,1990, pp18-20).

The link Between Frankenstein and AI

One of the most fascinating and revolutionary technologies of the present time is artificial intelligence (AI), which has changed a number of fields and altered how humans interact with computers and knowledge. The notion of "Artificial Intelligence" was used to describe the intelligence exhibited by machines using a wide range of algorithms. Artificial Intelligence is not just a technical study focused on creating machines that can assist humans or even outperform them in a variety of tasks, primarily intellectual ones (Byrd & Paquette, 2023, p.332). It is also a psychological science that seeks to expand our understanding of how the human mind processes by duplicating the key elements of human cognitive functions. But this quick development also raises important moral questions and has societal ramifications. In a future when artificial intelligence (AI) dissolves the lines between humans and machines, we find ourselves walking on the same ground that Mary Shelley did with her classic novel *Frankenstein.* In her introduction of Mary Shelley's 1831 *Frankenstein*, she wrote, "Frightful must it be, for supremely frightful would be the effect of any human endeavor to mock the stupendous mechanism of the Creator of the world." (Patowary, 2023, p.121). A close scrutiny of this quotation increases our doubts about artificial intelligence (AI), as endeavors to mimic human intelligence present ethical dilemmas when it comes for creating supper capabilities. Shelley's warning story is a question -raising reminder of what might happen when we interfere with forces that are beyond our grasp (Cordeski,2018, p.200).

The story concerning Victor Frankenstein can be used to explain the fears that artificial intelligence could eventually trigger the end of humanity. One group of researchers believes that when the artificial intelligence and human cognition are on par, a sharp turning point will follow in the history of humanity. This short age is bound to end in a premature manner, as artificial intelligence is going to surpass human intelligence, which will be caused by the strength of powerful computational structures and faster learning protocols. This is the case with the creature in *Frankenstein*: its rate of processing and accumulating knowledge is much quicker than those of a human being right after its creation. The parallel between Shelley's creature and AI stands out especially in their speed of processing information as the creature notices; "I may boast that I improved more rapidly than the peasant who understands a dirty language." (Shelley,1994, p.115).

The most important centrality of both the book, *Frankenstein*, and the development of AI today lies in the problem of responsibility. The relevant question is theassignment to culpability of the disasters that are caused by the beast. Victor Frankenstein is the one who neglects his responsibility in relation to the thing that he brings to life, and this is what causes tragic effects. Developers and researchers in the artificial-intelligence field also face a similar ethical dilemma; they will not just be expected to be accountable to the integrity of the workings of the systems that they spawn, but also to the larger societal consequences that these systems can cause. Besides, the echo between the Frankenstein monster and the spirit of Artificial Intelligence development highlights the fact that scientific breakthroughs, which lack control and moral guidance, may end up in unpredictable, catastrophic consequences (Roncaglia, 2018, p.35). The same trend is also present in Artificial Intelligence, during which the pace of technological advancement often overshadows the ethical consideration. The unabated quest of Artificial Intelligence that is more advanced, can provoke the risk that

practitioners will unknowingly disregard the dangers associated with the spread of such technology. Possibly, the compulsion to act in an ethical and responsible manner can be overshadowed by the need to promote and develop the capabilities of artificial intelligence to take over the world order. As Wallach (2018) states the challenges of this development where, "the sheer momentum of technological innovation routinely outpaces our capacity to establish necessary moral and regulatory safeguards" (p.417) Therefore, to make sure that artificial intelligence will be a tool of good and will contribute to the improvement of human welfare, researchers and professionals have to align advancements with ethical vigilance as the field of Artificial Intelligence is developed (Roncaglia, 2018, p.47).

Ethical Issues in Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*

Science and technology are now an integral part of our society than they were in Mary Shelley's day. Looking ahead to the third century after Mary's age, the door was opened to what could be the most widespread scientific and technological experiments to date: the creation and design of living things via synthetic biology techniques, the creation and design of systems at the solar scale through climate engineering, and the incorporation of computer algorithms and potentials into almost every aspect of global society, including our very being (Uzun, 2024, p.1)

Kayaaltı& Belenli (2021) observe "this feeling of fear and power that accompanies creating something new is where Victor's invention and Artificial Intelligence meet" (p.41). The goal of both projects is to use technical expertise and knowledge to create something innovative and extraordinary. But the novel raises other ethical issues; namely that this quest of scientific knowledge devoid of moral considerations raises important ethical concerns about the limits of human ambition and the potential hazards of assuming the role of a creator or a god. Victor Frankenstein is portrayed by Shelley as a clever yet vulnerable figure, which serves as a warning to the consequences of playing the role of a creator. She writes, "A new species would bless me as its creator and source; many happy and excellent natures would owe their being to me" (p.54). Granting AI human characteristics without thinking of the implications is seen by many critics as a defiance of God. Victor's creature looked to humans for acceptance and understanding, and as a result of being rejected and left alone, he suffered terrible outcomes. The creature is forsaken by his creator who left it without an identity or even a name. The creature is given the name of his creator. The novel's idea of identity is further emphasized by Victor Frankenstein's abandoning of his creature. The creature seeks retribution after experiencing fear and rejection in response to his longing for acceptance as well as affection. The monster complains, "I am malicious because I am miserable," (p.140) at one moving moment. Is It not universally despised by all people? "The Frankenstein". Here comes the sense of alienation. The creature experiences a sense of alienation when he is deserted by his creator. This emphasizes the grave repercussions of disobeying one's obligation to take care of one's creation and letting it adrift without direction or assistance. Also, different levels of responsibility are required for the invention and application of Artificial Intelligence. Similar to this, giving Artificial Intelligence human-like emotions without fully comprehending their ramifications could result in unanticipated moral issues. The forsaken and rejected monster created by Victor Frankenstein goes through extreme pain,

which has disastrous effects on everybody around him. In the same way, Artificial Intelligence systems devoid of appropriate protections and human values consideration may have unanticipated harmful effects.

Moor and Bynum (2002) argue that Artificial Intelligence systems should not violate human rights, and they should not cause harm to a human, both physically and emotionally. This is the guiding principle of the necessity to base the Artificial Intelligence development on the sound ethical framework which would focus on human protection and well-being. (pp.10,14) The unfortunate consequences of unrestrained technological ambitions are based on the ignorance of the ethical consequences of such activities. There are also fears that the provision of robots with a human level of intelligence has the potential of causing similar consequences.

The recent blistering development of Artificial Intelligence technologies raised the level of concern regarding their ethical aspect. These issues can be traced through historical literary archetypes, including the writing of Mary Shelley, whose work, Frankenstein is the precursor of the possible outcomes of generating independent beings. The story provokes one to ponder about the boundaries of creation and the role of creator. In the present-day setting, it is important to examine the ways in which AI innovations impact various spheres of society and to make sure that they do not contradict human principles and values but lead to the general well-being (Patowary, 2023, p.126).

Dr. Wendell Wallach, the famous Artificial Intelligence ethicist takes the ethical aspect of Artificial Intelligence by asking the question that is, in case we create thinking machines that replicate the human cognitive and emotional processes, then is it our responsibility to make sure that they make ethical decisions? This question serves as a reminder of the pressing need to imbue Artificial Intelligence with a sense of morality, which Victor Frankenstein failed to do, which can be attributed to his lack of ethics in character. In addition, the quest to obtain knowledge is one of the main themes of the novel by Shelley; it is a tragic element in the life of Victor and other main characters. The obsession with the afterlife and science leads to the main cause of problems in Victor, and his tragic end is already predetermined when he chooses his education over intimate relationships and looking after himself (Botting, 2021, p.14). Also, similar ethical issues are highlighted by Jensen and Whyte in *Algorithms at War: The Promise, Peril, and Limits of Artificial Intelligence* published in the Journal of Artificial Intelligence Ethics. They claim that with Artificial Intelligence development, we should be careful about possible consequences of development of something with intelligence and autonomy just like we can learn. Newey (1990) remarks about the themes, in which the narrative is based: the work dramatically illustrates the consequences of science on the modern life and our constant fear that the products of our thought can surpass the individual human control (94).

The interest of Victor in afterlife and the scientific investigation is the main cause of his troubles, and his tragic destiny is predetermined when he puts his studies on one hand before his relations with beloved people and his own person. The pursuit of knowledge, though it is the main theme of the plot, has a negative impact on other characters. Victor, a young talented man that leaves his family to go chasing his scientific life, eventually loses himself and his family. This was the first outward expression of his desire when he began his activity

of trying to revive the dead. He then dedicated the two years of his life to this goal. In describing the technological progress, Frankenstein provides the readers with an image of the artificial human life that is gaining momentum like never before. Shelley puts these ideas into the context of ancient Western myths, but somehow, these issues represent the prevailing issues of science, technology, and scientific worldview in the present day. Reinterpreting ancient narrations of creation and creation, Mary Shelley created a modern creation story in Frankenstein (Cambra-Badii, et al.,2020, p.2).

Conclusion

Frankenstein is a story with a unique inspiring plot and intriguing storyline, but it's also a brilliant allegory about the life-threatening and even disastrous effects of technological advancement when moral values or risk awareness aren't allowed to stand in the way of it. This novel's everlasting success and its position in international literature, in my opinion, are due to this additional level of reading. It can also be viewed as a very helpful cautionary tale for any operation in the future that hopes to achieve an innovation in science. As AI develops, it will be necessary to compare Victor Frankenstein's disastrous quest of creation with it in order to learn important lessons that will guide the righteous and moral application of AI. The book illustrates the risks of scientific advancement devoid of moral reflection as well as the results of uncontrolled passion. Victor Frankenstein emphasizes the need of ethical responsibility in scientific endeavors by showing how his obsession with knowledge and the creation of life ultimately leads to disastrous ends. AI creators need to be mindful of the possible effects of their inventions on society, much as Victor did not foresee the consequences of giving life to his monster.

He creates a hideous monster and Frankenstein runs away from the devil. The monster brings destruction on the life of his creator (on Frankenstein's life) in an attempt to take revenge from him for forsaking him. The story weaves together a multitude of ideas. The Frankenstein myth's most important and relevant subject is probably the uncontrolled quest and application of knowledge, as well as the immense power of such information when it ends up in the hands of someone who is willing to defy the laws of nature. Regarding the appropriate extent of his scientific experiments, Dr. Frankenstein is uncontrolled. His obsession with learning everything he can about the natural world has led to a wrong perception of both society and the natural world. Frankenstein raises issues regarding the role of God, personal accountability, morality, and above all the legitimacy of humans playing the role of God and creating artificial life. Frankenstein defies the rules of conventional creation myths because the Doctor creates life only by using his tremendous scientific knowledge, which is presented in the novel as enhanced chemistry, without the aid of the gods. In essence, Frankenstein is a retelling of the classic creation stories. This is the story of how man assumed the divine function of the gods by generating life in his laboratory, displacing both God and the human mother as the primary generator of life. He takes action based on the belief that he knows enough to realize his dream. Frankenstein breaks all of nature's laws of time and rhythm by creating a monstrous being without taking into consideration any ethical issues or adopting any responsibility for his creation.

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