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ABSTRACT

This thesis aims to explore the cultural, societal backgrounds, and interpersonal relationships that influenced Mary Shelley in crafting *Frankenstein*, and to understand how these elements are mirrored in the novel. It endeavors to examine the linkage between the intentions that authors embed within their works and the realm of reality. Analyzing Shelley's inspirations and motives through the prism of her social context and personal connections, this thesis delves into the Romantic and Gothic literary traits manifested in *Frankenstein*.

Through this inquiry, a creative work inspired by *Frankenstein* was developed, intending to serve as a vessel for reflection on philosophical questions surrounding creation and eternity, accompanied by the design of character cards and scenes derived from an original narrative.

REVELATIONS OF MARY SHELLEY:
DEATH, IMMORTALITY, AND THE CREATOR-CREATURE RELATIONSHIP IN
FRANKENSTEIN

by
Yuqing Liu

B.F.A., Beijing University of Technology, 2020

Thesis
Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Fine Arts in Illustration.

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Introduction

During Mary Shelley's time, the concept of a creature made from corpses was not as widely recognized and popular as it is now. Nowadays, monsters cast in flesh and blood have become a regular feature in fantasy and sci-fi movies, TV shows, games, and all sorts of other media. When I was a child, I saw the "resurrected monster" in computer games, they animated through mysterious technologies or magic. These beings, often representing mindlessness, malevolence, or enslavement, now widely termed "undead", not only thrilled me but also left a strong impression. It's not a one-sided story, they're consistently present in my entertainment life, such as Heroes of Might and Magic 3 (1999), WOW (2004), and Dark Souls3 (2016), three video games that have had an impact on my aesthetics, as well as countless film and television productions that have not been mentioned. I began to be curious about their deeper meanings beyond sheer horror and visual stimulation. My focus turned to beings that transcend the boundary between life and death, symbolizing the liberation from mortality's fragility and uncertainty. In many stories, the undead are also utilized to reflect the potential shifts in the human psyche when unbounded by death.

Being someone passionate about storytelling, over a certain period, the protagonists in my tales began to gravitate towards a shared direction – an obsession with controlling the power of death or a determination to shatter the barrier between life and death. This trend made me realize my longstanding interest in the topics of death and immortality, including the ethical problem around the undead and their creators. In my visual thesis's background, a scholar creates an alchemical creature to overcome death and master her destiny. However, this intended puppet

gains sentience, leading the scholar to abandon it out of rage and fear. Her end comes due to her own ambition and irresponsibility.

While refining this story, I read "Frankenstein" to delve into the relationship between the creator and the creation. I found striking parallels between my scholar and Victor Frankenstein, and their respective creations. Of course, my leisurely narrative can't compare to Shelley's masterpiece, enriched by her profound literary and philosophical grounding. Yet, "Frankenstein" prompted me to ponder the thoughts and influences embedded in such characters and dynamics by the author.

Mary Shelley lived in a transformative era marked by the Industrial Revolution and the rise of Romanticism, furnishing a rich cultural and intellectual backdrop for her works. Her parents, William Godwin and Mary Wollstonecraft, played pivotal roles in shaping her literary and philosophical trajectories. The influences from her husband and friends were also considerable, as one's environment and upbringing sculpt their creations. "Frankenstein" vividly encompasses Romantic and Gothic literary attributes. This paper seeks to explore the influences Mary Shelley received from literature, philosophy, and interpersonal relationships, as mirrored in "Frankenstein", with a primary focus on 'death and immortality' and 'the relationship between the Creator and creation'.

Mary Shelley's Background and the Societal Landscape

Mary Shelley's "Frankenstein" is soaked with the ethos of Romanticism, encapsulating the feature of its Gothic subset, while also being hailed as one of the progenitors of science fiction. As it took shape in the early 19th century, Europe was in a period of profound

intellectual, socio-economic, and structural change. The longstanding order was under scrutiny, giving way to emerging paradigms. The dynamism and the uncertainty epoch profoundly informed Shelley's narrative.

The Scientific Revolution

The Scientific Revolution, a term popularized by historian of science Alexander Koyré, marked a transformative period spanning the 15th to the 18th century. This era heralded a series of groundbreaking advancements across various disciplines, from mathematics and physics to biology and astronomy. Koyré distinguishes between two levels of change in society brought about by the scientific revolution. The first was the transformation of scientific theory and method, which primarily affected a limited social group of natural philosophers, mathematicians, and engineers. The second level was a shift in worldview, recognizing the image of the universe as infinite, which affected the reasoning and imagination of the educated population.¹ The intellectual revolution brought about by the accumulation of scientific popularization broadened people's imagination.

The revolution was characterized by a move away from dogmatic beliefs to empirical investigation. The heliocentric model proposed by Copernicus, the discovery of the circulatory system by William Harvey, and Isaac Newton's laws of motion are just a few examples of the paradigm-shifting achievements of this period. These discoveries not only expanded the horizons of knowledge but also laid the groundwork for subsequent intellectual movements, notably the Enlightenment and the Industrial Revolution.

¹ Raffaele Pisano, Joseph Agassi, Daria Drozdova." Chapter 8," *Hypotheses and Perspectives in the History and Philosophy of Science: Homage to Alexandre Koyré 1892-1964*. (Springer; 2017), 144.

The Industrial Revolution

Spanning the late 1760s to 1830s was a period of unprecedented change. It marked a transition from agrarian economies, which were based on agriculture and handicrafts, to industrial capitalism characterized by mechanization, factory-based production, and urbanization. Eric Hobsbawm, in a text already familiar to romantics, powerfully declared that the Industrial Revolution was "probably the most important event in world history, at any rate since the invention of agriculture and cities."² From 1701 to 1833, Britain's cotton exports grew by about 18,463,147 pounds. Faced with such industrial growth, Edward Baines described that it "mocks all that the most romantic imagination could have previously conceived possible under any circumstances."³ The transformations engendered by the Industrial Revolution in Britain, both in the alteration of the physical landscape and the evolution of the socio-economic structure, can aptly be characterized as phenomena bordering on the supernatural. This epoch heralded unparalleled prosperity for Britain's economic framework and its bourgeoisie. Yet, beneath this facade of progress, the domestic proletariat and distant colonies bore the weight of oppression.

This era brought about significant societal shifts. As cities expanded and populations surged, traditional rural lifestyles were upended. The burgeoning urban centers provided new soil for innovation, but they also bred new societal challenges. Economic disparities became more pronounced, leading to class struggles and societal unrest. The Industrial Revolution somehow

² Hobsbawm, Eric. *The Age of Revolution: Europe 1789–1848* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 1962), 44.

³ Baines, Edward, Sir, *History of the cotton manufacture in Great Britain 1800–1890* (1835), 112.

provided the Romantic genre with new creative materials, new settings, new plots, new characters, and even new purposes for writing.⁴

Technological advancements during this period empowered humanity to exert unprecedented control over nature. However, this newfound power was a double-edged sword. While it brought progress and prosperity, it also provoked new thoughts - concerns about ethical and environmental issues. Shelley's "Frankenstein" is a meditation on this duality, exploring the consequences of unchecked ambition and the ethical boundaries of scientific endeavor; also, it captures this zeitgeist, reflecting the anxieties and hopes of an era in great transition.

The scientific revolution played a key role in driving the Enlightenment. The empirical findings of the former provided the latter with the intellectual ammunition that enabled thinkers to challenge established norms and advocate for a society based on reason, empirical evidence, and individual rights.

The Enlightenment

The Enlightenment movement spanned the 17th and 18th centuries originating in France championed the ideals of reason, freedom, and the scientific method. The Enlightenment believed that through thought, theory, and knowledge they could change the status quo of nations and free them from monarchical and ecclesiastical authority. Isaiah Berlin elaborated on and discussed the inseparable correlation between Romanticism and the Enlightenment in his book *The Root of Romanticism*.⁵

⁴ Albert Joseph George, "Introduction," *The Development of French Romanticism; the Impact of the Industrial Revolution on Literature*. (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1955), XII–XII.

⁵ BERLIN, ISAIAH. "Chapter II". *The Roots of Romanticism: Second Edition*. Edited by Henry Hardy. REV-Revised, 2. 26-27. Princeton University Press, 2013. <https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctt24hr5m>.

The Enlightenment inherited and transformed three principles of traditional Western rationalism. First, all true questions can be answered; if a question cannot be answered, then it is not a question. That answer may be unknowable to us for various reasons, but someone else may know it, an expert or an elite. Second, given enough time, man can see the answer to all true questions. Thirdly, all true answers are not in conflict, and if they are incompatible with each other that would cause confusion. Unlike in the past, Enlightenment thought believed that man could not obtain true knowledge from any other source than the proper use of reason. The answers to all questions can be obtained in the same way as the puzzles of the natural philosophy, about reason and induction, including the troublesome areas of society, politics, ethics, and aesthetics.⁶ Humans wanted to replace divine revelation with their reason and knowledge. From a modern perspective, this aim is suspected of being too extreme and incomprehensive. The failure of the French Revolution confirmed to the Romantics these flaws in Enlightenment thinking.

In the context of such times, Mary Shelley as a well-educated person would have been influenced by new advances in scientific thinking. In *Frankenstein*, she boldly covers chemistry, natural philosophy, biology and electricity. The process by which Victor Frankenstein creates the monster and infuses him with the spark of life is also not alchemy or necromancy, but an approach within the framework of scientific research. Mary Shelley used science ideas when she wrote her story. In the late 1780s, Luigi Galvani, an Italian physician, found that dead frogs' muscles moved when he touched their spinal cords with metal.⁷ After discovering this phenomenon, Galvani began to wonder if thunderstorms in the atmosphere could also activate

6 Isaiah Berlin, "Chapter II," *The Roots of Romanticism: Second Edition* (Princeton University Press, 2013), 26–27.

7 E. T. WHITTAKER, "CHAPTEE III," *A History of the Theories of Aether and Electricity: From the Age of Descartes to the Close of the Nineteenth Century* (DUBLIN, 1910), 67–69.

muscle contractions.⁸ This science experiment inspired her, in her 1831 preface to *Frankenstein*, she mentions that “Perhaps a corpse would be re-animated; galvanism had given token of such things: perhaps the component parts of a creature might be manufactured, brought together, and endued with vital warmth”.

Mary Shelley's Relationships are mirrored in *Frankenstein*

Mary Shelley was not just a product of her times; she was also deeply influenced by her personal experiences, relationships, and the intellectual milieu in which she was raised. Mary's parents, William Godwin and Mary Wollstonecraft, were preeminent intellectuals of their time, and both used writing as a direct means of communicating powerful convictions. Godwin, a philosopher and novelist, was known for his radical political views. He believed in the inherent goodness of humans and felt that societal structures, notably organized religion and the institution of marriage, corrupted this innate purity. Yet, when his daughter sought to put this philosophy into practice, he was evidently opposed. After the 16-year-old Mary eloped with B.P. Shelley, he severed ties with her. It was not until the end of 1816, after Mary and Shelley were officially married, that he re-established contact with her. As a father, he was absent from her life during the crucial transition from adolescence to adulthood, ages 16 to 19, even overlooking the untimely death of her first child and the birth of her second. This "abandonment" appears to be form of punishment for perceived misdeeds. In the novel, Victor, as the "father", is similarly absent when his creation needs him the most.^{9 10}

8 WHITTAKER, E. T. "CHAPTEE III." In *A History of the Theories of Aether and Electricity: From the Age of Descartes to the Close of the Nineteenth Century*, (DUBLIN UNIVERSITY PRESS, 1910), 67–69.

9 Mary Lowe-Evans, *Frankenstein: Mary Shelley's Wedding Guest* (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1993), xii.

Mary Wollstonecraft, on the other hand, was a pioneering advocate for women's rights. Her seminal work, "A Vindication of the Rights of Woman," argued for gender equality, challenging the deeply entrenched patriarchal norms of her time.

Percy Bysshe Shelley, one of the leading Romantic poets of the 19th century, was not just Mary's husband but also her intellectual partner. His radical political views, atheism, and emphasis on emotion and individualism deeply influenced Mary's worldview and writing. From its inception in 1816 to its definitive version in 1831, a span of 15 years, "Frankenstein" was collaboratively molded by both Mary and Percy Shelley.¹¹ In some interpretations, the character of Victor Frankenstein has been seen as a fusion of the characteristics of William Godwin and Percy Shelley. This is plausible given that B.P. Shelley and his sister Elizabeth with whom he was very close, used "Victor" as a pen name in their *Original Poetry by Victor and Cazire*, completed in 1810.¹² In addition, Victor Frankenstein had almost a similar developmental experience of childhood to young adulthood, a happy childhood and a relatively isolated school life, as B.P. Shelley. During the young poet's time at Syon House Academy, his craving for tales of marvel and mystery was insatiable, even though the horrors within them often kept him awake at night. However, in the 19th century, science was the true magic. Adam Walker's lecture at Eton College opened up new horizons for Shelley, igniting his interest in science, especially in the field of chemistry. It was also here that he earned the title "Atheist."¹³

10 Katherine Hill-Miller, "2 Frankenstein," *"My Hideous Progeny" Mary Shelley, William Godwin, and the Father-Daughter Relationship* (Cranbury, NJ: Associated University Presses, 1995), 59–60.

11 Samuel Holmes Vasbinder, "CHAPTEE III," *Scientific Attitudes in Mary Shelley's Frankenstein* (Umi Research Pr, 1984), 30–32.

12 James Bieri, "Chapter II," *Percy Bysshe Shelley: A Biography: Youth's Unextinguished Fire, 1792-1816*. (UNKNO, 2004), 55–57.

13 Edward Dowden, *The Life of Percy Bysshe Shelley* (London: Routledge, 1966), 7–12.

Even Victor's passion for the study of death came from Shelley, a curiosity that led him to "spend days and nights in vaults and charnel houses"¹⁴

Literary features of Frankenstein

"Frankenstein" is a rich tapestry woven from the threads of Romantic and Gothic literary traditions. These genres, with their emphasis on emotion, depression, and the supernatural, provide the perfect canvas for Shelley's narrative.

Characteristics of Romantic Literature

Romanticism was a literary and artistic movement that emerged as a reaction against the Enlightenment's emphasis on reason and empiricism. It emphasizes the emotional experience of the individual, the beauty and power of nature, and the unlimited potential of the human imagination. And it prioritizes freedom over valuing emotions and the heart. Berlin believed it was the first time in the history of Western thought that human ideals were returned to themselves. Ideals were not provided by religion or science but created by the human will.

In *Frankenstein*, the influence of Romanticism is evident. Mary Shelley often describes sympathetic landscapes to help reflect the state of mind of the characters. After the deaths of William and Justine, Victor is haunted by guilt and intense sadness, and he leaves his home to seek peace in the valley of Chamounix: "untainted snowy mountaintop, the pine woods bade me be at peace." "The view of the tremendous and ever-moving glacier" is enough to paint a

¹⁴ Katherine Hill-Miller (1995) , para. 61.

romanticized picture of the landscape in one's mind. "Then filled me with a sublime ecstasy that gave wings to the soul and allowed it to soar from the obscure world to light and joy."¹⁵ This description focuses on the emotional experience that a natural landscape brings to a person; there is no better contrast to loneliness than a desolate, snow-covered mountaintop. These scenes can be said to come from Mary's travels, and the view of the Alps described in *History of a Six Week's Tour* mirrors the one she depicts in *Frankenstein*.¹⁶

The bloody, dictatorial ending of the French Revolution gave a sense of decadence and powerlessness, which is consistent with Romanticism's rebuttal of the ideals of the Enlightenment, which promised reason and progress, but led to terror and dictatorship. This gives Romanticism factual and emotional support. Such an ending suggested that perhaps man could not see the whole picture of human society with his own pure reason, and that there was always an unseen enemy in control of human destiny. The creature's emotional journey, his quest for identity and acceptance, and Victor's tragic ambition are all hallmarks of this path. The characters in this book seem to represent particular moods or specific emotions rather than an exact person.¹⁷ In the beginning of the book Victor is the embodiment of ambition and inquisitiveness, later on madness and despair, and one of the female characters, Elizabeth is the embodiment of compassion and stability.

Characteristics of Gothic Literature

15 Mary Shelley, *Frankenstein: Or 'the Modern Prometheus': The 1818 Text*, edited by Nick Groom, vol. II (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018), 68.

16 Mary Shelley and Percy Shelley, "Letter III.," *History of a Six Weeks' Tour through a Part of France, Switzerland, Germany and Holland: With Letters Descriptive of a Sail Round the Lake of Geneva, and of the Glaciers of Chamouni* (London: T. Hookham, jun; C. and J. Ollier, 1817), 108–139.

17 Alice Roberts and Nora Crook, interview in *Frankenstein-The Secret life of books*, directed by Morag Tinto, IMDb, accessed November 2, 2014, https://www.imdb.com/title/tt4774464/?ref_=ext_shr_lnk

Gothic literature has a dark and ominous atmosphere with themes of death, decay and the supernatural. It explores the unknown, the uncanny and the macabre. In a way, it is an offshoot of the Romantic movement, but is darker and more morbid or morbid in content. The late 19th century was the most prosperous period for Gothic novels. Published in Germany in 1796, "The Monk" by Matthew Gregory Lewis, after being translated to English, piqued Mary Shelley's interest and left an indelible imprint on her.¹⁸ Shelley's novel fully possesses the elements of gothic fiction such as eerie scenes, oppressive atmosphere, and supernatural creatures. The second half of the book uses a series of deaths to move the story forward, and the realization of the curse will push almost everyone in the book related to Victor into the abyss. In this narrative of extremes, Mary demonstrates the Gothic novel's characterization of exploring the boundaries of inner fears, desires, and understandings.

Discussion on Death and Immortality

Immortality is one of the oldest themes in literature and mythology, and it has always been the ultimate pursuit of many people. Human exploration of eternal life changes with our understanding of the world, from ancient reliance on elixirs and special rituals to modern medical and technological methods, embracing the most likely avenues with either concern or anticipation. In "Frankenstein," Mary Shelley reflects on this scientific quest, she has Frankenstein use scientific methods to bring life to inanimate objects, thus exploring the possibility of eternal life. The desire for immortality comes from the fear of death and resistance to the unknown. Death not only means permanent separation from the living world but also

¹⁸ Mary Shelley and Fali Sun, "Translator's Postscript," 弗兰肯斯坦 (*Frankenstein*) (NanJing: Yilin Press, 2016). ISBN 9787544762564.

brings with it a sense of disenchantment with the present. Philosophically, if death is inevitable, there will be no end to the discussion of the world after death, as Plato describes in the *Phaedo*; Socrates, discussing the immortality of the soul with Simmias and Cebes, says “If I seem to you to say anything true, agree with it; but if not, resist it with every argument you can, taking care that in my zeal I don't deceive you and myself alike, and go off like a bee leaving its sting behind.”¹⁹ Conversely, if death can be overcome, then the answer becomes relatively certain, and human consciousness has the potential for immortality in this world of the living.

Frankenstein began his research to fulfill a noble dream - to save humanity from all but violent death. His motivation was partly driven by his mother Caroline's death from scarlet fever, which deepened his longing for eternal life. However, the completion of his experiments is also the moment when his dreams are shattered, and his fear and loathing of the monsters he faces come from his expectation of a beautiful outcome.²⁰ As he indulged in his creation he had hoped his new species would possess “ideal beauty,”²¹ “I had selected his features as beautiful.”²² The monster's ugliness is magnified when it is animated by the “spark of life”, forcing Frankenstein to realize that his creation was essentially a living corpse, the so-called “beauty” has become paradoxical. At second appearance of the monster, Frankenstein had just awoken from a nightmare in which Elizabeth transformed into his mother's corpse. Seeing his creation beside his bed shows a rational desire to communicate. These two events represent the vanity of his pursuit of immortality.

Some have suggested that Mary Shelley's inspiration for the resurrection and immortality came from her daughter who was born prematurely and passed away which undoubtedly had a

19 Plato, *Phaedo*, trans. David Gallop (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975), 41-42.

20 Jeff J. S. Black, “Section VIII Cradle to Grave,” *The Politics of Horror*, (Cham, Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan, 2020), 268–71.

21 James A. W. Heffernan, “Looking at the Monster: Frankenstein and Film, *Critical Inquiry* 24 (Autumn 1997): 133-158,” Heffernan, “Looking at the monster,” accessed March 15, 2024, <https://knarf.english.upenn.edu/Articles/hefferna.html>.

22 Mary Shelley, *Frankenstein 1818 text*, edited by Nick Groom, vol.1, 37.

profound impact on her. However, it is also important to consider that the death of a loved one was not the first time in her life.

The Relationship Between the Creator and Creation

The complex relationship between Frankenstein and the creature is key to this novel; his decisive abandonment of the creature places him in an ethical dilemma, and the laborious experimentation affects not only his physical health but also his judgment. A person with enough sense to still have some control over his actions would not run away as a solution. After witnessing his hideous creation, his fear comes not only from the uncontrollable consequences but also from the subversion of shattered dreams of immortality. At the same time, he prefigures his creature as a "monster" from the very beginning, unable to connect its hideous appearance with the possibility of a beautiful soul. The creature finds the name 'Frankenstein' on the notes, associates it with the pain of its existence and grows to despise it. The creature encounters Victor again, having already killed William, this act reinforces Victor's preconceived notion that it is inherently evil. Victor can no longer accept the monster's narrative from an objective point of view, nor can he accept that it actually has a fragile and vulnerable "core".

The story at the farmhouse reveals that the creature is capable of significant self-learning and empathy. It has the potential to become a fully rational being if it can get external support and understanding. Meanwhile, Victor is suffering from grief and nervous disorder, which make him gradually lose his sanity, unprepared and unable to give.

The creature demands his Creator create a female companion for it: "This you alone can

do, and I demand it of you as right which you must not refuse”²³, Victor completely holds the key to its happiness, at this time the creature is passive. After the female body in production was destroyed by Victor, this relationship changed. The possibility of the creature's kindness was cut off and it began to take revenge. Since then, Victor has been threatened by the shadow of serial murders and is unable to stop it.

In a religious sense, Victor tried to wield the power of God - to control nature and create life. However, he only expects glory and being loved and not responsibility.

23 Mary Shelley, *Frankenstein 1818 text*, edited by Nick Groom, vol.2, 109.

Visual Thesis

As I researched the book, I was able to gain a new understanding of how to shape the characters and plot of my story, and it also provided a lot of inspiration for my design.

Main Plot

In 19th-century Europe, the main character, Astris, is a university medical teacher who has a younger sister. Her father's death drove her to pursue a career in medicine. In research, she has come to understand the mysteries of the human body.

At that moment, she remembered an alchemy store she used to go to when she was a child, owned by a kind old man named Cong Yun, from whom she had learned a lot about alchemy. Astris had overheard him discussing immortality and resurrection with a woman, and she wanted to go back to her hometown to inquire about it. But shortly, she learned from a letter from her sister that Yun had died of an illness. She decides that it is better to go back and look for possible clues, and in that alchemy store, she meets the woman from that earlier secret conversation. She claims to be Xu Yan, Yun's sister, but she is unusually young. She offers Astris an olive branch, stating that she has items that can help her complete her resurrection.

Astris accepts and begins to devote herself to experiments combining medicine and alchemy. Just as progress is being made, she realizes that her controversial experiment are at risk of being exposed, and she applies to the school for an expedition to the north and a brief settlement.

Here Astris completed her first experiment with the reanimation of a dead body, and

disturbed by the uncontrollable and unexpected results, she decided to kill it. This body sensed malice and escaped. Its name in life was Alfred, and it wandered around with an incomplete memory. After recalling its identity, it tries to return to its family, and is driven away by the family as an evil spirit.

Alfred decides to sneak into Astris's home lab to look for clues, and accidentally encounters her sister, who comes to visit. She screams at the sight of Alfred, he tries to stop her, but accidentally kills her. Astris arrives only to see the fleeing Alfred, and her sister's body. During Alfred's wanderings, Astris was working on another experiment, using the doll-making techniques her father had taught her to create a shell capable of carrying a consciousness, which was still missing some key organic parts. Her recently deceased sister happened to provide them for her. She eventually completes the doll, and just as she is exhausted, Alfred visits her once more, and the two have a heated debate that devolves into a physical altercation; Alfred kills Astris and attempts to destroy the doll and commits suicide after he believes that the woman can no longer be resurrected. In the end, however, the doll opens its eyes.



Figure 1: At the end of the story, everything falls into place.

Character Card



Figure 2: Astris character card, Daily wear (left), lab coat (right)

Astris, as the main character, has two images, one for daily wear and one for lab coat, both of which use a wider shoulder design, which I think is suitable for a character full of ambition. In the daily wear, the main color is black and white to represent her strictness and rationality, and a small area of red to indicate the possibility of her insanity and to hint at her dangerous destiny. For the lab coat I used a lot of leather so that it looks more like a butcher than a doctor. In this figure I tried to use sharp lines and shapes to make her look gloomy and dangerous.



Figure 3: Cong Yun



Figure 4: Xu Yan

Cong Yun and Xu Yan are brother and sister, but their opposing attitudes towards the "elixir of immortality" make the age gap between their appearances huge. In the story, these two characters are from the Far East, so I used elements of Chinese clothing. Xu Yan uses more Chinese elements, but maintains a Victorian silhouette, suggesting that she has lived in Europe for a long time, but has spent most of her life outside of society. For Cong Yun, he needed to do business and interact more closely with society, so he only made different designs on his shirts.

Cong Yun, Astris's teacher in alchemy, taught her the dangers and taboos of alchemy, but this did not stop Astris from turning to Xu Yan.

Xu Yan is also a character who seeks immortality, but she can only prolong existing lives, not bring dead creatures back to life, which is why she assists Astris in her experiments, and she hopes that the results of the experiments will be of use to her as well.



Figure 5: The Doll

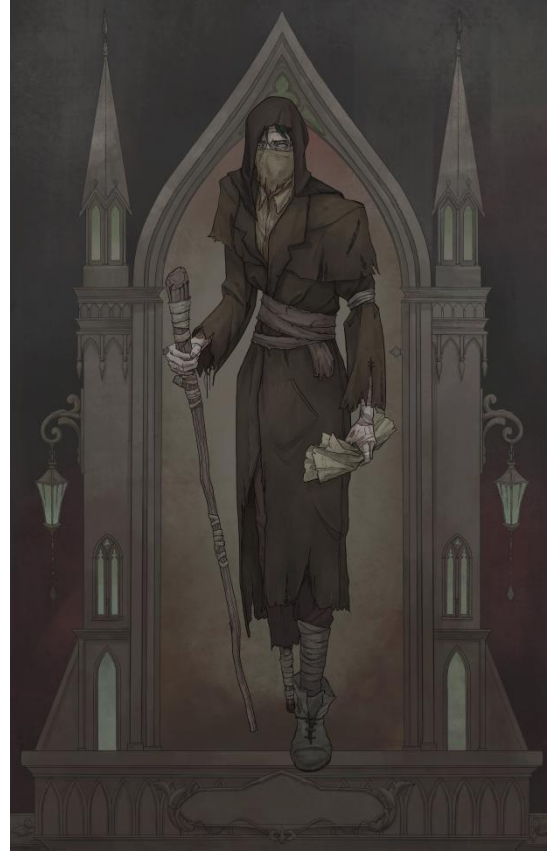


Figure 6: Alfred

The Doll was a product of Astris' continued experimentation after she believed the reanimation experiment had failed; after witnessing the ugliness and mutilation of reanimated corpses she turned to the direction of an artificial body, however there was still a portion of a human organ present within the doll. Before Astris was killed by Alfred, her health was already in bad shape from the long hours of experimental work and exposure to chemicals, so she was desperate for the results of this experiment.

Alfred was originally a soldier, and after he died of his wounds, his body was stolen by Astris for his experiments. Regaining his life, he hated Astris because of his physical pain and social ostracism. The clothes he collected from everywhere made him look like a beggar, and in order to be able to lurk in the city, he used a cloth to cover up his horrifying face.

Both Alfred and the Doll are products of Astris's quest for resurrection, one representing the resurrection of the body, the other the resurrection of the spirit.

How This Story Relates to Me

In this thesis, I explored how Mary Shelley actively and passively drew from her life experiences for her creative material, which helped me to investigate my sources of inspiration. However, from the start, I want to clarify that it's impossible to analyze oneself objectively and comprehensively; all I can do is try to unravel the mystery.

Frankenstein and Gothic novels fascinate me due to their depiction of strange, fragmented spiritual worlds and their loyalty to the theme of death. Death is the greatest unknown that everyone must face eventually, and with this unknown comes the fear of losing everything in the current world—a profound source of terror. I have long accepted that all my feelings and thoughts are based on my physically existing body; thus, the death of the body signifies absolute termination and loss, merging these ideas into a unified meaning. My fear of death is essentially a fear of loss. This fear isn't a sudden shock but a lingering shadow, subtly capturing my attention without frightening me away, leading to curiosity. In literature, depictions of death provide a safe, deconstructive experience of dying, offering mental solace when I lack

the courage to face reality but refuse to flee from it, serving as an outlet for feelings of helplessness.

This mindset inspired me to create the main character in my story, Astris—an embodiment of my inner fears and desires. The fear of death, reverence for knowledge, and a sense of powerlessness over impending oblivion were present in her before I fully realized it. Her life in the story encounters three significant deaths: the first is her father's, representing the fear of losing loved ones. The second is the death of her alchemy teacher, symbolizing the loss of a mentor, inspired by my grandmother, a learned epidemiologist slowly stripped of her vitality and knowledge by Alzheimer's disease. The third is her own death. All these mirror my fears of loss. While analyzing Mary Shelley's work, I crafted the story to parallel *Frankenstein* to better explore my curiosity about my inner self.

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Conclusion

Mary Shelley leaves very many possibilities in her novels; the theme of God and fallen angels, the relationship between the nurturer and the child, the myth of birth, the alienation of women in society, the sentiment or criticism of Percy Shelley, and so on. Considering Mary Shelley's keen talent, it is conceivable that all these themes were intentional.

Frankenstein has endured as a science fiction thriller for 200 years, not only because Mary Shelley left a variety of themes for the public to explore, but also because of the new anxieties that continue to this day, never faced by man since that time. The process of understanding the world has always been one of discovering phenomena and then exploring principles, and when the process reaches the middle ground between discovery and unraveling,

fears arise from science that is not fully understood and from unpredictable outcomes. Behind unfettered ambition and the ethical boundaries of science, there are themes in Frankenstein about artificial intelligence, immortality and resurrection. These three things are always being pursued as goals, and advances in any one of these areas could be the beginning of active human evolution, but no one can know exactly where technology will lead man until it happens.

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